

ICONIC DOTS

GAVIN RAIN

Opening event: Porto Cervo, August 11th 2018 – 19:30

The 2018 exhibition season of SimonBart Gallery in Porto Cervo and Poltu Quatu continues with “Iconic Dots”, solo show of the South African artist Gavin Rain.

The title of the exhibition summarizes the two predominant aspects of Rain’s work: it refers both to his habit of portraying faces-icons of our time, and to the particular technique with which the artist creates his paintings and for which he is now known throughout the world.

Studies in art, psychology and neuropsychiatry make the research of Gavin Rain an absolutely unique and transversal investigation. The artist manages to translate cognitive activity into a visual expression: starting from the perceived datum, he reworks the image and reorganizes it into formal structures. The colored circles interfere with the perception of the eye and, depending on the distance from which they are observed, show a carefully defined portrait or a completely abstract image.

In the artist’s works there is the intense and ancient association between art and science, the one that has accompanied the history of global art over the centuries. Rain undoubtedly looks to the Impressionists and to the pointillist Seurat, who first broke the images in dots of color, also recalls the constructivist art of the Russian Avant-garde whose appeal is in the color composition but in his works resounds also the echo of the German school and of the Bauhaus which analyzed the instability of forms and the ambiguity of color in the same way.

Rain, just like his precursors, experiments with new techniques, breaks down the image of the face to be reproduced in chromatic shades and creates color blocks that separate thanks to a grid in which he arranges the precise position of the dots. He calculates the size and thickness of each dot and he studies the color composition of the circles so the eye can perceive them as a single color. The final result of the work is the result of the original sign of the artist and his intense mathematical study on the reflection and refraction of light and the consequent variants of optical perception.

There is also a profound cultural reflection behind an intense technical work. Like Andy Warhol reproduced the icons of society to free them from the fetishistic value and empty them of meaning, so Gavin Rain invites us to reflect on the value of images, on the sense or non-sense of the visual information from which we are constantly bombarded. The work of the South African artist emphasizes the importance of two fundamental and separate phases of knowledge: the perception and understanding that often overlap and cancel each other out. So Gavin Rain asks for an effort to the public that is not only visual but also intellectual because basically “perception requires commitment”.

Gavin Rain

Gavin Rain was born in Cape Town on 23 March 1971. He studied Art and Neuropsychology at the University of Cape Town in the 80's and 90's. Rain has been painting his whole life, but started with pointillism around 2003/2004. Earlier in his life, he planned to study architecture, to try and combine his two interests: art and mathematics. He regularly has solo exhibitions all over the world in renowned galleries and art fairs.

In 2009 Rain was chosen by the 2010 Fine Art Group (licensed under FIFA) to complete 12 portraits for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, taking place in South Africa, alongside artists such as Esther Mahlangu and Keith Calder. In 2011, Rain participated in the 54th Venice Biennale, in the Republic of Costa Rica pavilion with an original portrait of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. In 2013, he presented in the Republic of Bangladesh pavilion with a work entitled "Lena".

Up close, Rain's paintings consist of small concentric dots painted in different colors of acrylic paint. From a distance your eye puts these colors together into one. The further the viewer steps back, the more clear the portrait becomes.

He starts his paintings by making a sketch of the portrait he wants to paint. To decide the place of the dots on the canvas, he either uses a grid, made of strings, or projection. The grid takes about ten hours to make, but is more accurate than using projection, so Rain still uses both techniques. Then he picks the colors for the final dots. He starts by deciding the final color that he wants a dot to be and starts working backwards. Rain has a list of 14.000 different dots that he has made. Out of this list, he picks the combination that creates the color he wants. Another important part of the technique is changing each dot size. The white canvas Rain uses as a background means that the smaller the dot, the more white background around it. So the bigger the dots, the darker an area gets and the smaller the dots, the lighter the area becomes. This, combined with the distant final color each dot makes is how the image is created. However, the colors of separate dots will merge together into a new color as well. So, it's not just each dot but also a combination of dots that makes the color.

SimonBart Gallery
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Promenade du Port - Porto Cervo
07021 – Arzachena (OT)

Poltu Quatu
07021 - Arzachena (OT)

It is possible to visit the exhibition every day, from Aug. 11th to Sep. 1st 2018.
Opening hours: 10:00 / 13:00 - 18:00 / 00:00

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