Anne Neukamp

Mathieu Poirier
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For all the apparent concision of her paintings, Anne Neukamp's work is full of tortuous, or rather intertwining paths. Each work is a kind of palimpsest, like a parchment scraped clear and reused. Image after image, fragment by fragment, the successive layers of paint do not cover each other so much as intertwine and conjugate in an interlace as formal as it is semantic.

However, rather than those confused fluxes of messages and stimuli found, say, in the late collages of Robert Rauschenberg, the result is a "Pop" reductionism in the tradition of Roy Lichtenstein's Brushstrokes and the tyre treads of Peter Stampfli: logos, schemas, lettering and other images, previously reduced and made "effective" by the communications industry, exist now only as silhouettes, traces or enlarged fragments, tilted, switched and sometimes proliferating.
For Anne Neukamp does not so much shape and inform the gaze as bring forth a new and questioning form, which refuses to yield itself as a manifest sign. As for her palette, which is certainly luminous, it is more muted (apart from one or two primary colours) than those of her Pop predecessors. These pictorial elements partake of an abstraction by hybridisation –Bruno Latour's "hybrid objects" come to mind.
According to this principle, every sign, even the arched "M" of the McDonald's logo, turned 90 degrees and partially masked by a flat swath of paint, becomes an uncertain form. This deformation goes hand in hand with an impression of depth and relief, achieved by classic illusionist technique: the play of perspective, modelling, shading and gradations offer a powerful impression of depth and volume. Although intensely worked, the pictorial surface remains as flat as possible, without blistering or other textural effects.

For, from the clear and neutral ground, handled as if it had been erased –suggesting a faded form– to the monochrome silhouettes, and the articulated forms reminiscent of those mechanical schemas appropriated by the Dadaist Francis Picabia before 1920, what Neukamp does is very much painting, painting whose surface absorbs analogous elements in the plane of the support much more than it actually presents them for consumption. Contrary to advertising or any kind of information using images to manipulate, these enigmatic pictures do not in any way communicate information but convey instead the questioning of its transmission, which they sensuously short-circuit.