

mine eyes dazzle

Esther Ruiz & Juan De La Rica

Eugène Delacroix said «*When subject, form and line first touch our thoughts, color has no sense for intelligence but every power on sensibility*».

It is a colorful flanerïe that sobering galerie offers in this exhibition : color sculpted by neon - «color-light» Matisse used to say, or laid in large flat areas. Color, undeniably linked to light, has always been used by artists to express a personal and intimate language that belongs to the subjective world of our feelings and impressions defining us only. It is also thanks to color that we observe and understand the world, and it is associated with all of our senses and perceptions. The multimedia American artist Esther Ruiz and the Spanish painter Juan De La Rica offer various colorful propositions that explore both in surface and in depth the possibilities offered by color.

For these two artists, working with color as a primary tool allows an important reflexion on space - the artist's but also the spectator's. For the Basque painter, surface is flat and decorative just as in a Matisse painting, whereas for the american artist, it reflects itself in a multiple echoes. However, both allow us to enter their own realities and to see their worlds lighten up by their personal vision.

It is a poetical and dazzling journey in which you are invited in this exhibition, wherein sensorial perceptions and feelings mingle in an enchanting ballet of colors and luminous echoes.

Inès Molière

Esther RUIZ

Born 1986. Houston, Texas

Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York

Esther Ruiz sculpts light and gives it a material presence as bewitching as it is intriguing. The American artist used a reduced language : a panel of mediums limited to industrial materials - neon, mirror, acrylic - and a shimmering color palette. This vocabulary combines both minimalist influences - Esther Ruiz does not hide her admiration for Eva Hesse - and the tangy and seductive colors of Pop Art.

Her series *Wells*, begun in 2014, presents itself as luminous installations with abstract and ambiguous shapes. To describe this series, the artist explains “*The imagery I work with is born out of exploring and researching fictional places imagined in my mind.*” The games of reflections invites oneself to enter another reality in constant change. The minimalist vocabulary allows the artist to shape a collection of emotions, memories, sound and light impressions in a strange and alluring body.

The mirror rigidity contrasts with the fascinating light of the neon and subverts our expectations. These abstract bodies evoke ancestral celestial or aquatic entities that captivate us. The watcher is pleasantly transported in this unreal space where the games of luminous echoes and altered perspectives seems to forbid us from escaping these intriguing pieces.

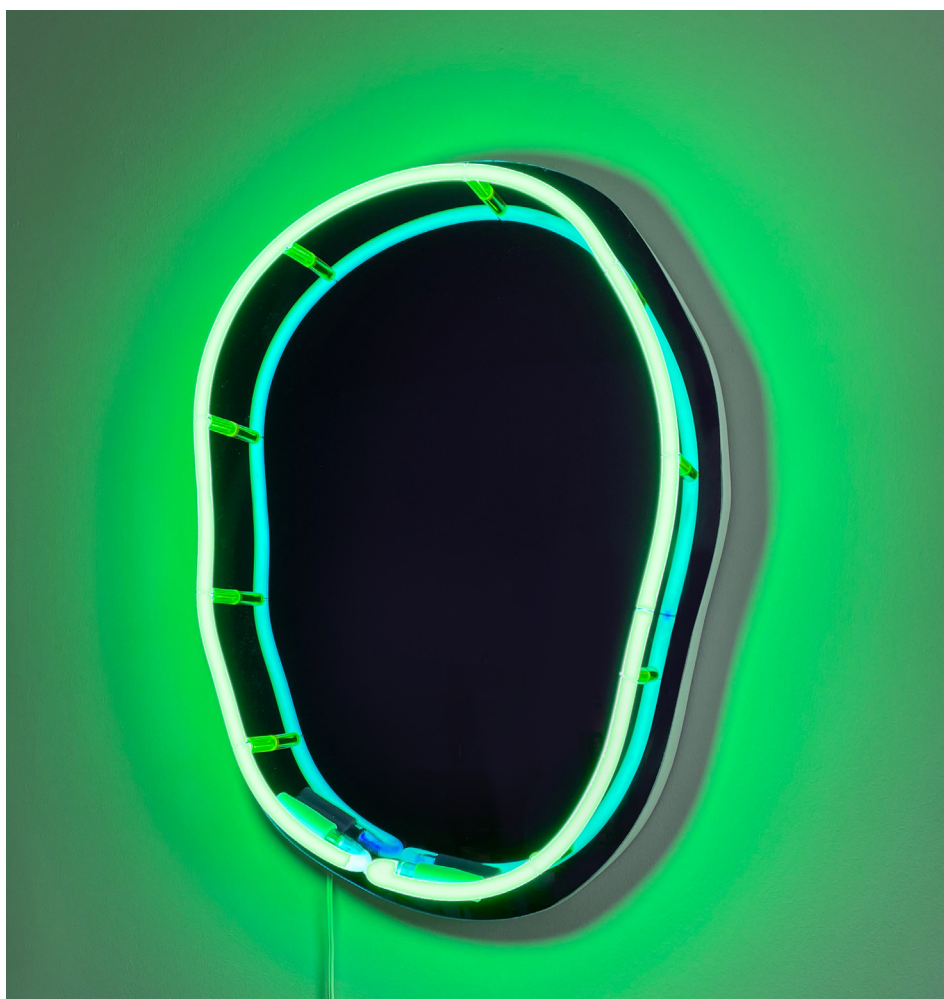
“*The one to whom nature begins to uncover its mysteries open to all, feels an irresistible fondness for art, its worthy interpreter*” said Goethe. Esther Ruiz studied geology, and her abstract creations combine the chance of natural forms and the subtle presence of the Artist hand, that shapes and molds light and industrial materials. The ambiguous space thus presents itself as the experience of a communion of two foreign bodies. Her sculptures, with meditative accents, invite to the contemplation of space and time. Neon and fluorescent colors recall the colorful palette of Pop Art, and popular culture more generally, and Esther Ruiz was early seduced by their soft luminescence. The result gives a tangible presence to light first, but also to the fictional places created in her and reflected by the echoes of bizarre shapes of her Wells. Light and color are common tools for the artist, who molds them and manipulates them as he pleases. From a scientific perspective, color is however a simple sensation of intangible light captured and transformed by the eye. It is nevertheless a total engagement, both physical and visual that are formed by these delicate luminous wells.

“*In such reveries that seize the meditating man, details wear away, picturesque fades, the bell does not ring anymore and space expands without limit.*”

Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetic of Space*.



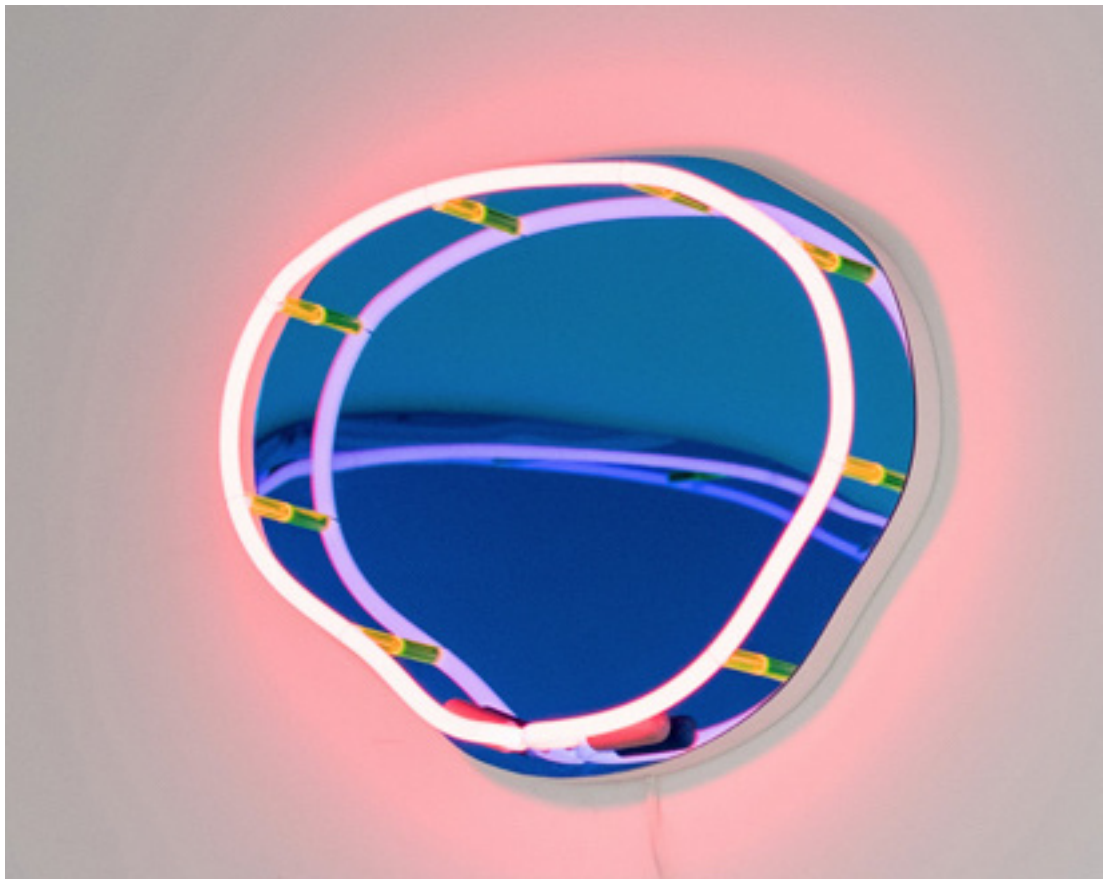
Esther Ruiz,
Wells XXXII,
2022,
MDF, neon, acrylic mirror, paint, hardware,
58,4 x 8,9 x 69,2 cm.



Esther Ruiz,
Well XXIX,
2022,
MDF, neon, acrylic mirror, paint, hardware,
43 x 9,5 x 58,4 cm.



Esther Ruiz,
Well XIX,
2019,
MDF, neon, acrylic mirror, paint, hardware,
65 x 9,5 x 45 cm.



Esther Ruiz,
Well XXXIV,
2019,
MDF, neon, acrylic mirror, paint, hardware,
61 x 9,5 x 45 cm.

Juan DE LA RICA

Born in 1979. Bilbao, Spain

Lives and works in Bilbao, Spain

For the Spanish painter Juan De La Rica, painting boils down to one thing : having fun while painting and exploring painting as a medium.

His paintings with saturated and striking color areas revisit with humor, and sometimes a hint of irony, a myriad of subjects, ranging from portraits to still lifes, including large religious paintings. The synthetic and precise line asserts a great technical mastery of the medium used, oil painting, and a keen sense of perspective and volume through expressive and stylized compositions.

The repertoire of themes in which the Basque painter draws allows him to interrogate painting both as a tool and as a picture per se. If you ask him about his favorite subject, he easily answers that every motif remains an option. The seeming simplicity of his works reflects a desire to analyze technical effects on iconographic archetypes, but also to alter and modernize them. The portraitist is portrayed in *El Retratisista*, and saint Paul is laying on the ground in *La conversión de San Pablo*, much less gloriously than the Caravage's saint Paul in his work of the same title. In both paintings, the main subject however remains a plot excuse for the painter to develop his technique : no matter the motif, lines and colors arrangements are aesthetically coherent.

Juan De La Rica draws his inspiration in a large iconographic repertoire. If the composition problems reflect the Italian painters from the Quattrocento - he likes to quote Piero della Francesca or Giotto - his work also refers to the Basque School of painting of the first half of the XXth century. This regional movement, whose representative are the Zubiaurre brothers or Ramiro Arrue among others, is interested in the representation of the Basque folklore, that we find in the physiognomy of Juan De La Rica's characters, or in the chosen themes, such as the portrait of *Koldo*. He combines this traditional pictorial style with the comics aesthetic, or even to American Pop Art, which is reflected in the large colorful areas. In addition to being inspired by Italian Masters, the painter also draws from a more contemporary corpus of references : film and comics stills, internet found images, and in a more intimate and personal way, pictures from his own family album.

This imagery, accessible to everyone, is simplified and aestheticized thanks to admirable technical solutions and a vibrant color palette. It is no coincidence that the superposition of motifs evoke collage : Juan De La Rica likes to start working by a digital superposition of images, which he then paints on the canvas with oil painting. The painter has not been using this technique for a long time, and it represents a challenge in itself. Oil painting, in contrast to gouache or acrylic, needs a long drying time, but the artist learnt to work with this difficulty. He paints alla prima, a creative process invented by Italian Renaissance painters that consists in painting in a single stroke, by layering colors without waiting for the successive layers to be fully dry. This complex technique allows a great expressivity and was especially favored by the Impressionists and the Ecole de Barbizon for the spontaneity and the rapidity of movement, that provides the spectator with a colored visual impression than realistic shapes.

Juan De La Rica manages to master this artistic method that allows him to "express himself and communicate ideas that cannot be expressed with words". The result is splendid, the colors are shimmering, the form is synthetic and the line pure, offering an open narrative and a space for free interpretation to the watcher.



Juan De La Rica,
El Retratisista,
2020,
oil on canvas,
92 x 73 cm.



Juan De La Rica,
Koldo,
2022,
oil on canvas,
65 x 54 cm.



Juan De La Rica,
La conversión de San Pablo,
2021,
oil on canvas,
146 x 114 cm.



Juan De La Rica,
La Gran Jarra Negra,
2022,
oil on canvas,
92 x 73 cm.

sobering

adjectiv :
tending to make one thoughtful

Traduction : Qui donne à réfléchir.

In 2002, Patricia Kishishian and Jean-Claud Ghenassia create Annual art magazine - artists such as Laurence Weiner, Jonathan Monk, John Stezaker, Sarah Morris have given their support to the realization of limited edition. For about ten years, the magazine has been promoted in some of the biggest museums and best librairies, and also on international fairs like Art Basel.

In 2013, sobering opened its doors. In continuation of Annual Art Magazine conceptual research, the galerie now offers a variety of propositions and heterogeneous aesthetic interactions, by establishing exhibitions displaying both emerging and experienced contemporary artists. Through a rich corpus of opposite horizons, the name of the galerie reveals this primary function of contemporary art that Paul Klee explicit in his Creator's Creed: « *Art does not reproduce visible, it makes visible* »

87 rue de Turenne
sobering
75003, Paris
soberinggalerie.com

Directors
Patricia Kishishian
Jean-Claude Ghenassia
pk@soberinggalerie.com

Assistant
Baptiste Léger
baptiste@soberinggalerie.com
+33 (0) 6 75 72 82 87

Graphic design: Inès Molière

Copyrights © 2022 Sobering galerie

