

PAULINE BAZIGNAN

BATAILLE

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Rather like a writer facing the blank page, Pauline Bazignan is also haunted by the prospect of leaving her mark on the immaculate surface of a new canvas. If she does indeed take up arms and enter the struggle, it is only so that the meaningful and intimate relationship she has established with her subject can come to life at the heart of this virgin territory. Her approach aims to tame the space and provide it with the lines that will become emotions and, in an almost indescribable manner, express the artist's soul. Bazignan battles to leave apparent the traces of her dominion which, as the painting advances, become a motif in their own right amidst the recurrent corolla motif embodied by paint runs and the explosion of expressive effervescence that gradually takes over the entire canvas. The artist's trademark compulsive all-over approach leads to a dense, but paradoxically airy entanglement; each painting is like a palimpsest with successive flows of paint that create one drip and run after another. For Pauline Bazignan, painting is all about generalising the sources of tension, whilst doing away with any form of hierarchy between the figure and the background by means of an intricate interlaced design that we would be hard pressed to unravel. She breaks free from all constraints, liberating her gestures and letting her fluid colours run wild creating the signature paint runs that are the aesthetic driving force at the heart of every artwork. "Rather than leaving the painting, the paint runs clash within the frame revealing unexpected forms"¹. And so, sometimes deliberately and sometimes by making the most of chance, Pauline Bazignan allows her colours to run and create different poetic visual effects; the object becomes the subject and as such, refutes the classical theories of painting.

For her first solo show at Praz-Delavallade Paris, Pauline Bazignan takes us on a trip through time back to 1432, when the Florentine Renaissance painter Paolo di Dono, better known as Paolo Uccello, recounted the story of *The Battle of San Romano*. Uccello needed three very large panels to recreate this epic event, a heroic battle between the forces of Siena and Florence, which Bazignan reinterprets in an astonishing transposition. In Uccello's paintings, Niccolo da Tolentino, the commander of the Florentine troops, confronts the Sienese army. Battle rages and the sound of clashing swords echoes across the plain near the town of San Miniato in the heart of Tuscany. Pouring forth on all sides, foot soldiers bearing pikes and lances confront other infantrymen holding their pavis² in front of their bodies to protect themselves from the deadly spikes. A first wave hurls itself at the enemy, which is followed by

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1. Guillaume Cassegrain, *La couleur histoire(s) de la peinture en mouvement (Xle - XXle siècles)*, 2015

2. The pavis is a large square or oval shield designed to protect the entire body and used by foot soldiers in the Middle Ages.

a counterattack in a chaotic melee of cavalymen, lances and horses, including the Florentine commander's white horse that cuts a swathe through the enemy troops as he unseats Bernardino della Ciarda. For her part, Bazignan adopts the role of a chronicler portraying this confusion in a unique pictorial disorder of her own in which each act of painting bears witness to the final triumph of Florence over Siena. In this epic undertaking, the artist's "narrative paintings" go from light to dark, as if Bazignan were using colour to express the notions of victory and defeat, a transition that makes these dreamlike paintings even more forceful, imbues them with conviction and tinges her series of paintings and the fragile ceramics that make up the exhibition with the sweet smell of freedom. «Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible»³.

René-Julien Praz

Pauline Bazignan (b. 1974 in Paris, FR), lives and works in Paris. Graduated in 2005 from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts of Paris, her work has been since exhibited within personal and collective exhibitions in France and abroad: Centre des Monuments Nationaux, Fort Saint-André, Villeneuve-lez-Avignon, FR, 2019; Centre d'Art Contemporain Les Moulins de Paillard, Poncé-sur-le-Loir, FR, 2016; Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, FR, 2016. Pauline Bazignan's work is included in numerous private and public collections including: Groupe Fiminco, Fondazione Benetton and Ville de Montrouge.

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3. Paul Klee