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Fabrice Samyn || *Twilight's Gaze*

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The dualism of the world and the attempt to understand it induce Fabrice Samyn to ask metaphysical questions about the nature of time, the visible and the hidden, the present and the non-present, and the relation between representation and its meaning. During the course of the centuries different philosophical currents and religious systems have created the basis for an understanding of reality and methods of cognition. Similarly, Samyn seeks answers through his artistic production. The subject of art should be eternal, timeless and unlimited. At the same time, however, its objective presence is necessary. How is it possible to grasp intangibility in a painting? What are the consequences for representation? Would it still be the actual description of an object, remaining in direct relation?

In 2007 Samyn creates a group of photographs called *Sinai*, showing shapes reminiscent of rocks or lunar landscapes. The first impression is deceptive, however, as these are the headless sculptures of ancient gods. With these works Samyn not only presents his subtle and clear aesthetics, he also proves his great linguistic sensitivity.

The title "Sinai" refers to the mountain on which Moses received the tablets of the Ten Commandments from God. The third commandment reads (Ex 204): *You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.*

For centuries, in various religions the approach towards representational art has been very strictly shaped by this command, from unconditional affirmation to the strict prohibition of representations. Samyn asks: where is the idol located? Does its veneration affect the representational or metaphysical level of the work?

The current exhibition, *Twilight's Gaze*, is another attempt to answer this question. Interested in the paradox of depicting something that actually exists in nonbeing, Samyn explores the limits of perception between the tangible and the invisible. He tries to reposition the essence of representation and to achieve balance between iconoclasts (destroyers of images) and iconodules (admirers of images).

The figure of Moses returns in the group of six paintings called *Twilight's Gaze*, which forms the core of the exhibition. On the paintings one can see the sculpture of Moses burning in the dark. Step by step, the figure and its representation disintegrate, so that in the end only an abstract silhouette remains. This tremendous process of deconstruction of form emphasizes the representation's content in a particular way. The cognitive process is shifted towards the metaphysical level of the work. The transcendence of form leads to a union of antagonistic views on the image's status as well as its representation.

Following the thoughts of medieval mystics, Samyn combines two opposing paradigms: the real and the metaphysical. For him, cognition is empirical because it begins with the perception of the object. The next step in cognition is the abstract conception of what is contained within the perceived object. By abstracting from sensual images, the viewer overcomes the empirical and discovers the essential.

As Samyn deconstructs form and frees it from literal representation, content and meaning of the work are emphasized. Through his aesthetic approach, which unites the objective and spiritual sides of the work, Samyn creates a common level of understanding for the different ways of understanding representation. However, the reference point of understanding should not only be explored as a purely theoretical construct for capturing the aporias of questions of representation. Rather, the artist sees it as a platform for reconciliation for today's social, cultural and political conflicts and controversies that have their origin in the sensitivity to representation.