

Peter Schuyff

Warp & Weft

25.10.2023

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“But do your work, and I shall know you.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to introduce *Warp & Weft*, a solo exhibition by the Dutch-born American artist Peter Schuyff. This marks Schuyff's first solo presentation in Asia. Coinciding with the Hong Kong exhibition, Schuyff will also display a collection of works at the MASSIMODECARLO Beijing space, playfully titled *Weft & Warp*. This wordplay emphasises the interchangeability of horizontal and vertical elements and the dynamic interaction of upward and downward forces.

The Hong Kong exhibition focuses on a diverse range of works, spanning from the 80s to the present day, with the theme of repetition at its core. Schuyff succinctly affirms, “I want to make works that look good if I have my glasses on or off”.

While this new body of work consists entirely of oil on linen, the *Warp & Weft* series draws inspiration from the art of knitting. Schuyff himself employs a weaving-like technique, working horizontally and then vertically. Although he humorously confesses, “I'm too busy painting to knit,” he finds parallels in the rhythm of his practice, remarking, “I like to talk about knitting because of the repetitive left to right top to bottom nature of my practice. Once I get going there is not much to think about. I have clever hands; I'm very good at knitting”.

The craftsmanship inherent in weaving, combined with Schuyff's deft brushwork, takes precedence over any specific narrative or meaning. The process becomes almost therapeutic, evoking a sense of spirituality and hypnosis. Schuyff's works serve as a canvas for his unrelenting obsession with technique, aiming for a level of perfection and mathematical precision.

This obsession with geometric repetition can be traced back to the early days of Schuyff's career in the 1980s. In the heart of New York City's East Village during that vibrant era, Schuyff was immersed in the energy of an artistic revolution. Living in the historical and iconic Chelsea Hotel while gravitating towards personalities like Andy Warhol and exhibiting in galleries like Pat Hearn, Gagosian and

Leo Castelli, Schuyff attempted to create works emptied of their meaning, celebrating the creative act of painting while dealing with the problem of nothingness.

Schuyff recalls the Minimalist manifesto when Donald Judd and Frank Stella famously declared, “What you see is what you see.” While Schuyff embraces and explores this notion of nothingness in his work, what endures is his artistic dexterity, labour, and deft craftsmanship.

Schuyff's compositions are far from arbitrary; instead, they reflect a meticulous consideration and appreciation for both the number of units and the choice of brushes. These elements collectively contribute to the distinctive character and impact of each piece. Schuyff's limited colour palette, primarily featuring red, yellow, blue, and occasionally green, arises not from deliberate selection but rather from his desire to relinquish control and allow the paintings themselves to dictate these choices.

The resulting artworks serve as tangible representations of the time, effort, and skill invested in their creation. Schuyff emphasises, “With these paintings, it's very important that the paint is consistent in amount, viscosity, saturation, speed and gesture. This takes a lot of dexterity. The paintings make most of the decisions but I'll take full credit for the dexterity. I see myself as more athlete than poet.”

Describing himself as an athlete introduces a physical and visceral aspect to Schuyff's art-making process. This suggests that his creative approach entails not only mental effort but also physical intensity, involving labour and exertion. As the artist himself puts it, the collection of units serves as “a reckoning and account of the calories I've burned.”

Warp & Weft prompts viewers to explore the intricate relationship between artistic rules, represented by the horizontal and vertical lines defining the painted texture, the labor these principles demand of the artist, and the realm of boundless creativity. It encourages contemplation of the autonomous decisions made by the artworks themselves and the imaginative space it opens for the audience's interpretation.

Peter Schuyff

Peter Schuyff (b. 1958, Baarn, Netherlands) is a prominent member of the Neo-Geo movement that emerged in New York in the 1980s.

Born in the Netherlands, he later moved to the United States, where he made a name for himself with his unique approach to painting. His work is characterised by his use of geometric shapes and his ability to create light and movement by applying thin layers of acrylic paint. As one of the most innovative artists of his generation, Schuyff continues to push the boundaries of abstract art, exploring new techniques and concepts.

In 2017, Le Consortium, Dijon, presented 'Has Been', a retrospective of Schuyff's work made between 1981-89. His more recent public exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, New York (2014); New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2005); and The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, US (1996). Schuyff's work can be found in the permanent collections of MOMA, New York; MOCA, LA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and The Fisher Landau Foundation, New York. Schuyff lives and works in both Amsterdam, NL and Bari, IT.