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Bernard Piffaretti

KLEMM'S

Duplication is a Question

Duplication is a negation, not fraught with heroic pathos, which paradoxically questions, shows the canvas and speaks painting. When there is sufficient clarity or density in the paint on the first side of the canvas (which is either to the right or to the left of the central mark), the simple act of redoing, almost identically, everything that was painted the first time round, has the effect of cutting off any subjective effects due to the painting's form, style or colour, so that it is now just painting. It is not a copy, because a copy is made in relation to a final state. It really is a matter of displacement, of a wholly repeated time. A "theft", to quote Gilles Deleuze once again.

Thus, the paintings are only real in the time of the movement from one side to the other. It is no longer possible to establish a chronology or a series. Each painting arises from a contrast with the one or ones that went before. The paintings are all different but all quite similar.
As you will have understood, the only finality that this duplication, this fact, can have, is to speak of the pursuit of this practice. Of the materiality of the painting right up to its manifestation. And that is what fascinates me.
Duplication is not deconstruction because it shows all the painting all at once. It is a sort of apparition, a "conscious hallucination" (quoting nobody). The more I show the primacy of the formal the more I escape formalism.
Forms eat forms. It is a case of self-declared self-cannibalism.

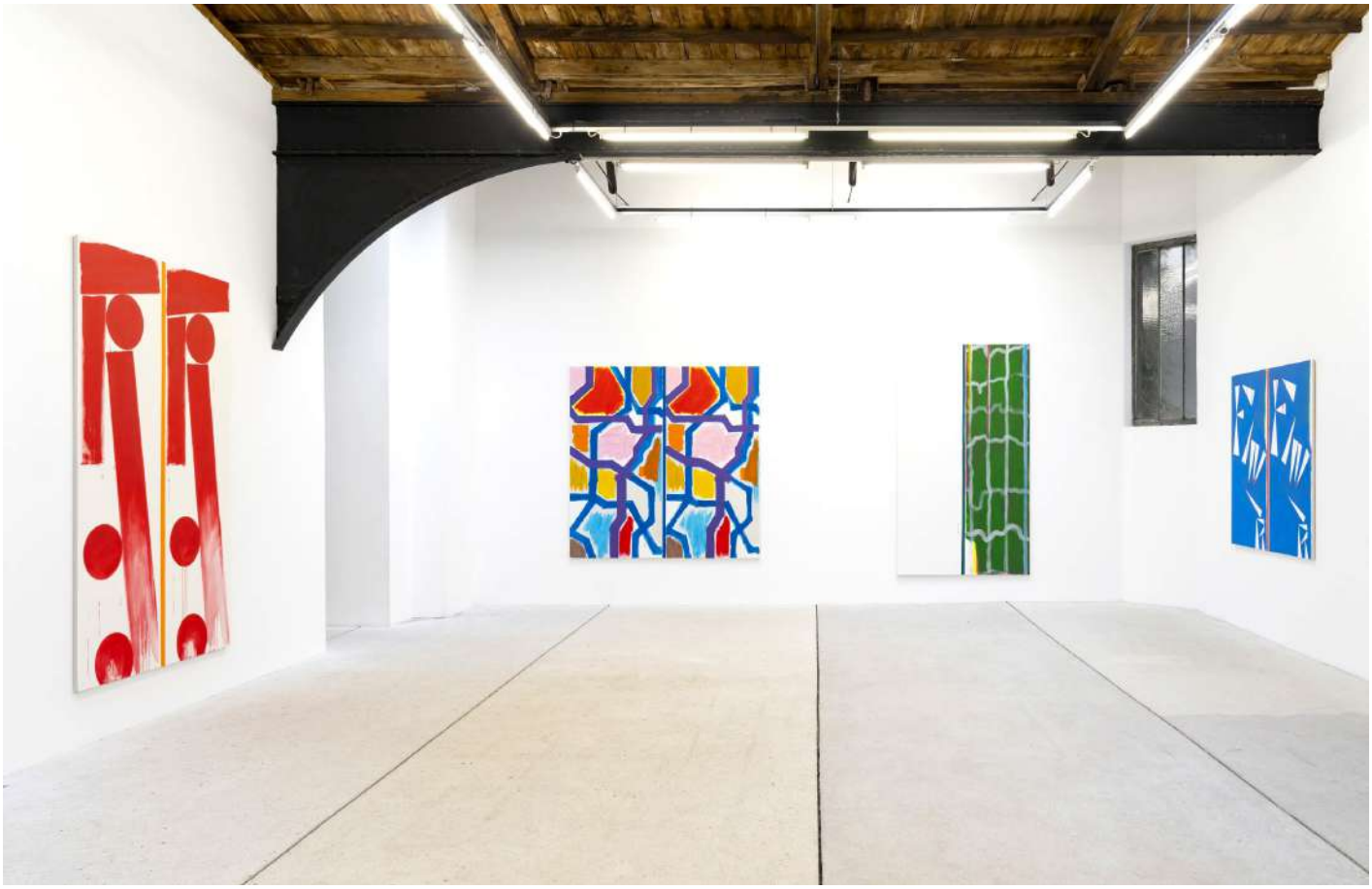
Duplication is a kind of "update", and, here, I refer to the writings of Pierre Schneider, where he positions psychoanalysis as the emblem, precisely, of this "update".
I quote: "To free myself (from this traumatic vision), I am asked to go back in time to when it happened. The answer, I am told, is to relive it, but also, as I do so, to record its chronology, which means: write its (his)story".
I too make my way back to the arkhí, like an archaeologist, converting the lived past into present knowledge, step by step. When I reach it, I make the origin switch into history. I desacralise it, banalize, destroy it.

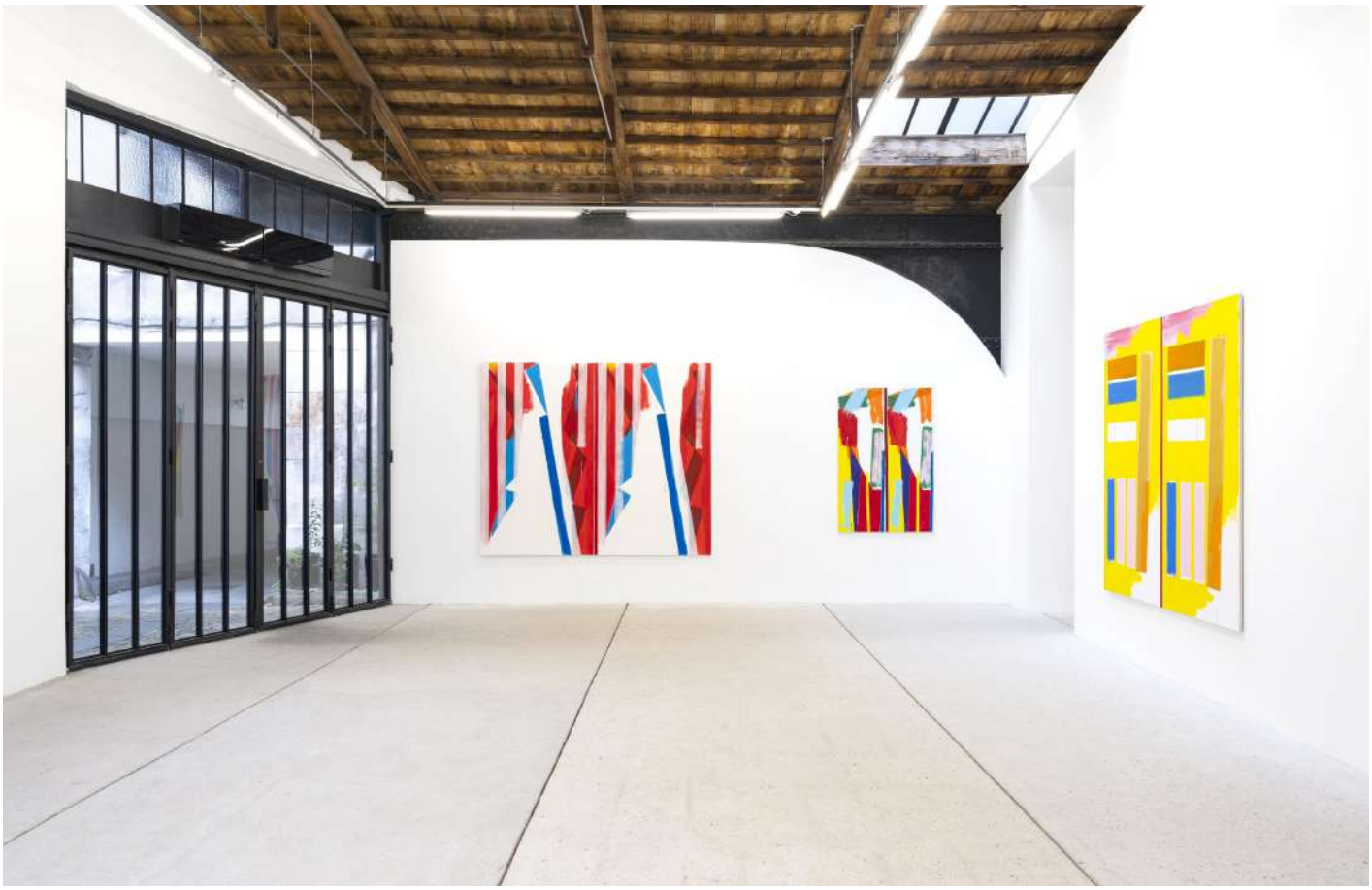
Duplication reveals the effect of an after-image, expressing a "second time" that exists in the history of painting. Here again, I duplicate Pierre Schneider. The echo of the Pietas will be David's Death of Marat. The double of Fra Angelico's Christ before his Tomb will be Watteau's Gilles. Painting is full of these second acts. Duplication is the tool of a negative constant that obliges me to impose no iconographic obligations. It is through this paradox that the equalisation of all iconographic possibilities, which is the true "subject" of my painting, can occur. This duplication will produce an active nihilism, in the sense advocated by Dubuffet. As he himself says, "only nihilism is constructive".
I don't take myself for a Zarathustra of painting, but I do paint with an acceptance of this eternal recurrence which will have a double meaning. First of all, that of the painting, just paintings, then of my capacity as a painter, just a painter. (...)

excerpt from Bernard Piffaretti, "La question du double", symposium March 26-28, 1996, Ecole Régionale des Beaux-Arts du Mans.

XXL, 2025
installation view Cessyon & Bénétière, Wandhaff, Luxembourg

Sans titre, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 97 x 146 cm



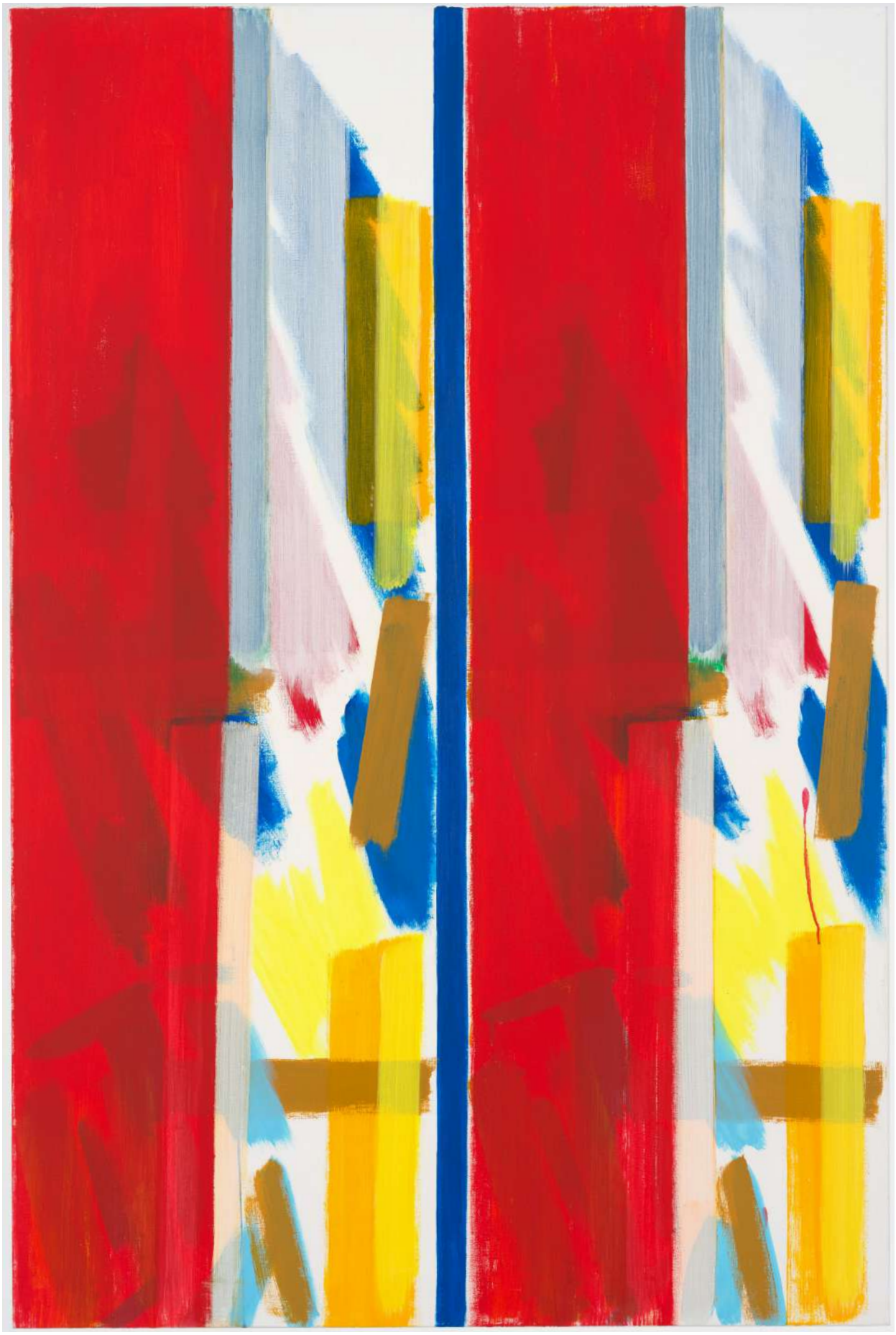


Pour finir encore, 2024
installation view Gallery Frank Elbaz, Paris, France

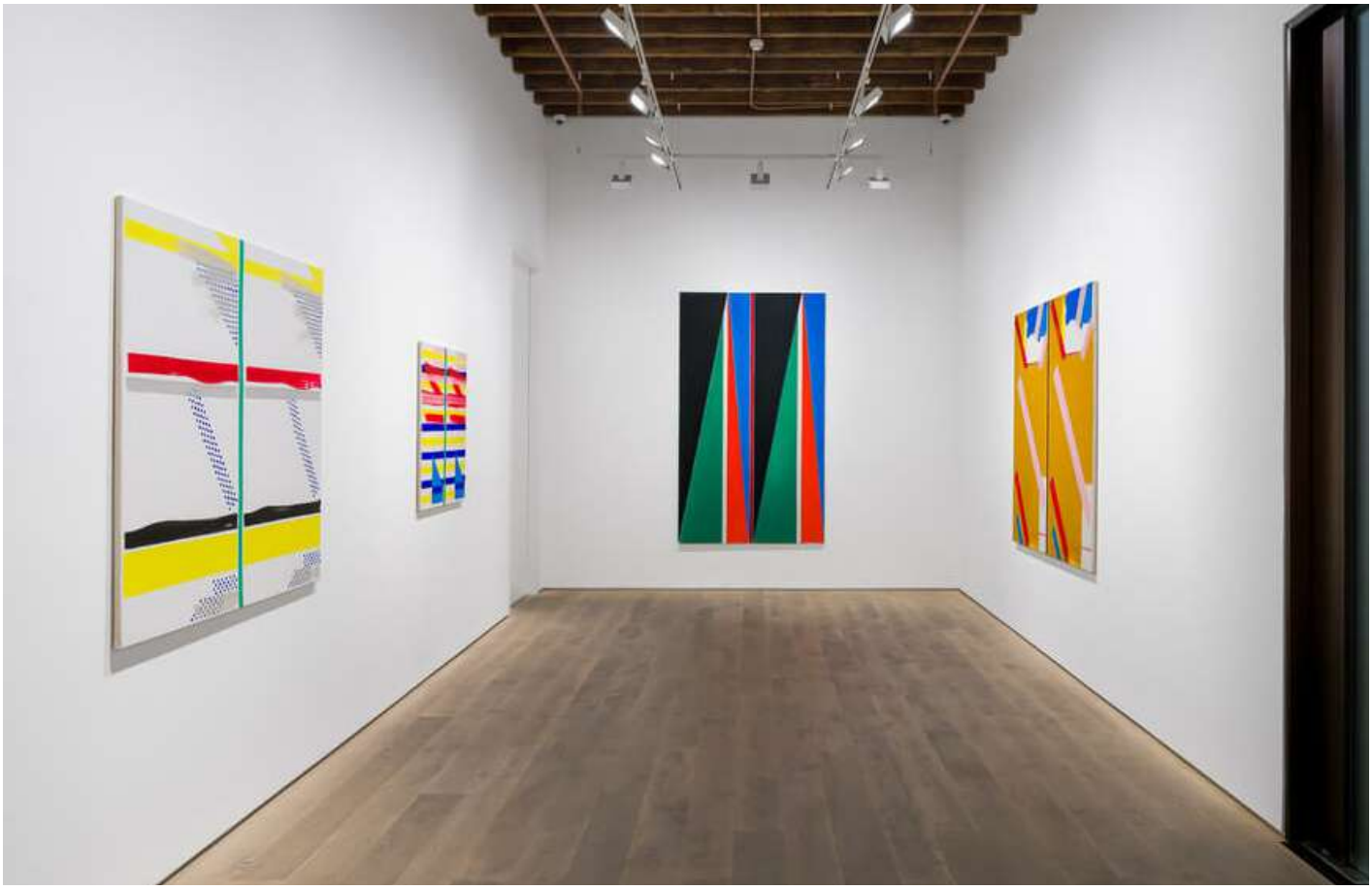
Sans titre, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 97 x 146 cm

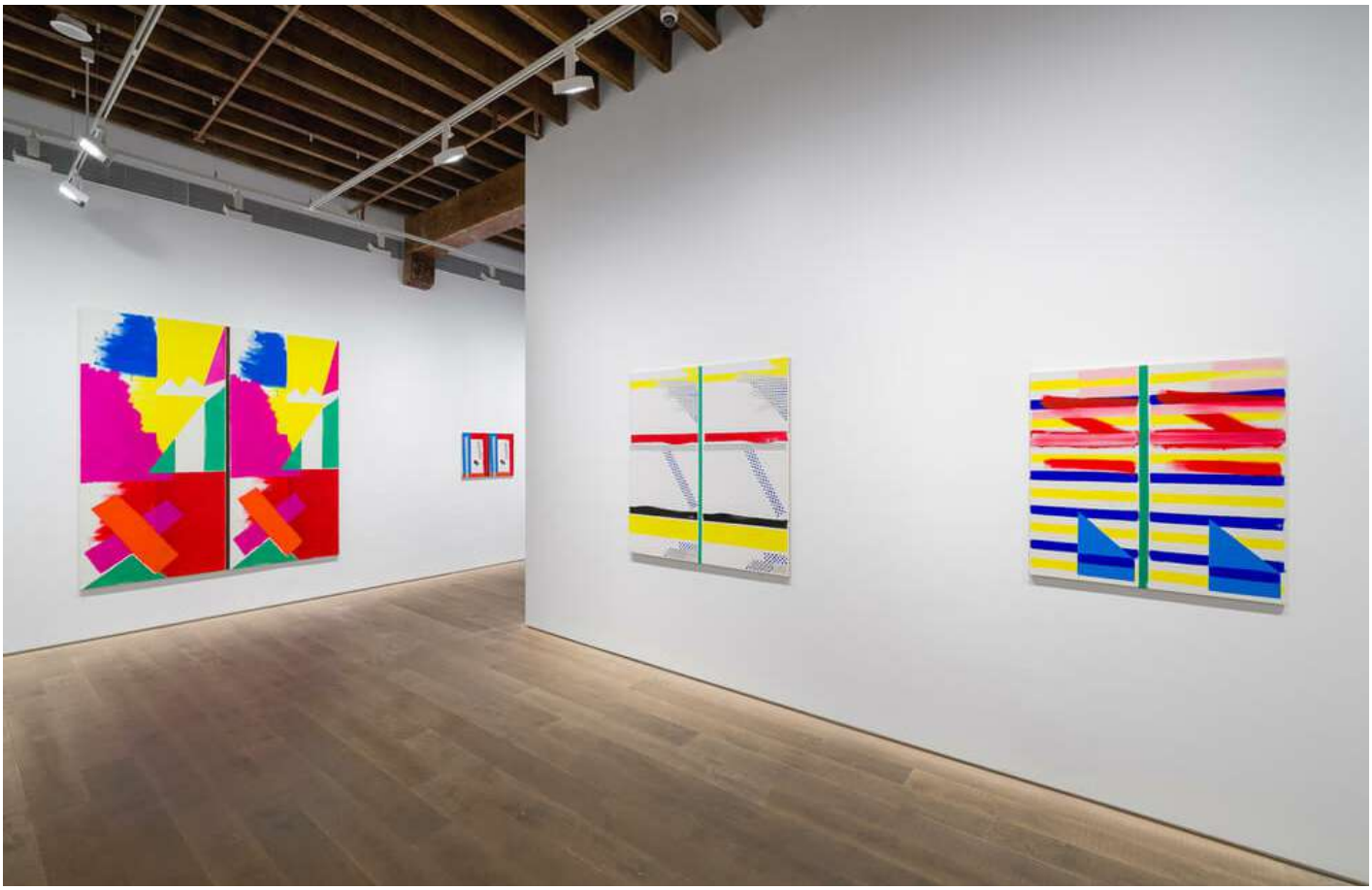
sans titre, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 46 x 97 cm

Kombi, 2023
installation view Klemm's, Berlin

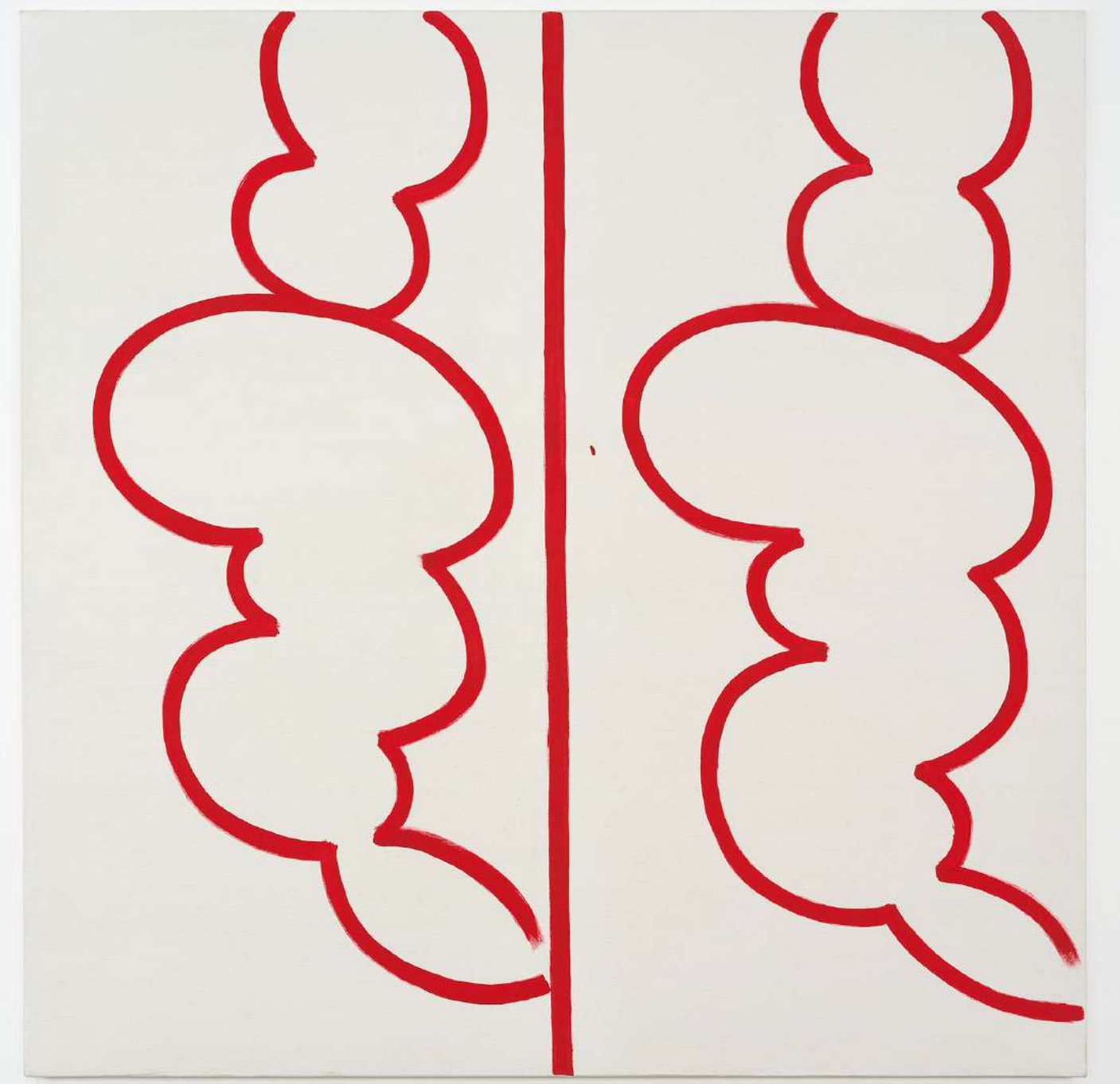


Sans titre, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 146 x 97 cm





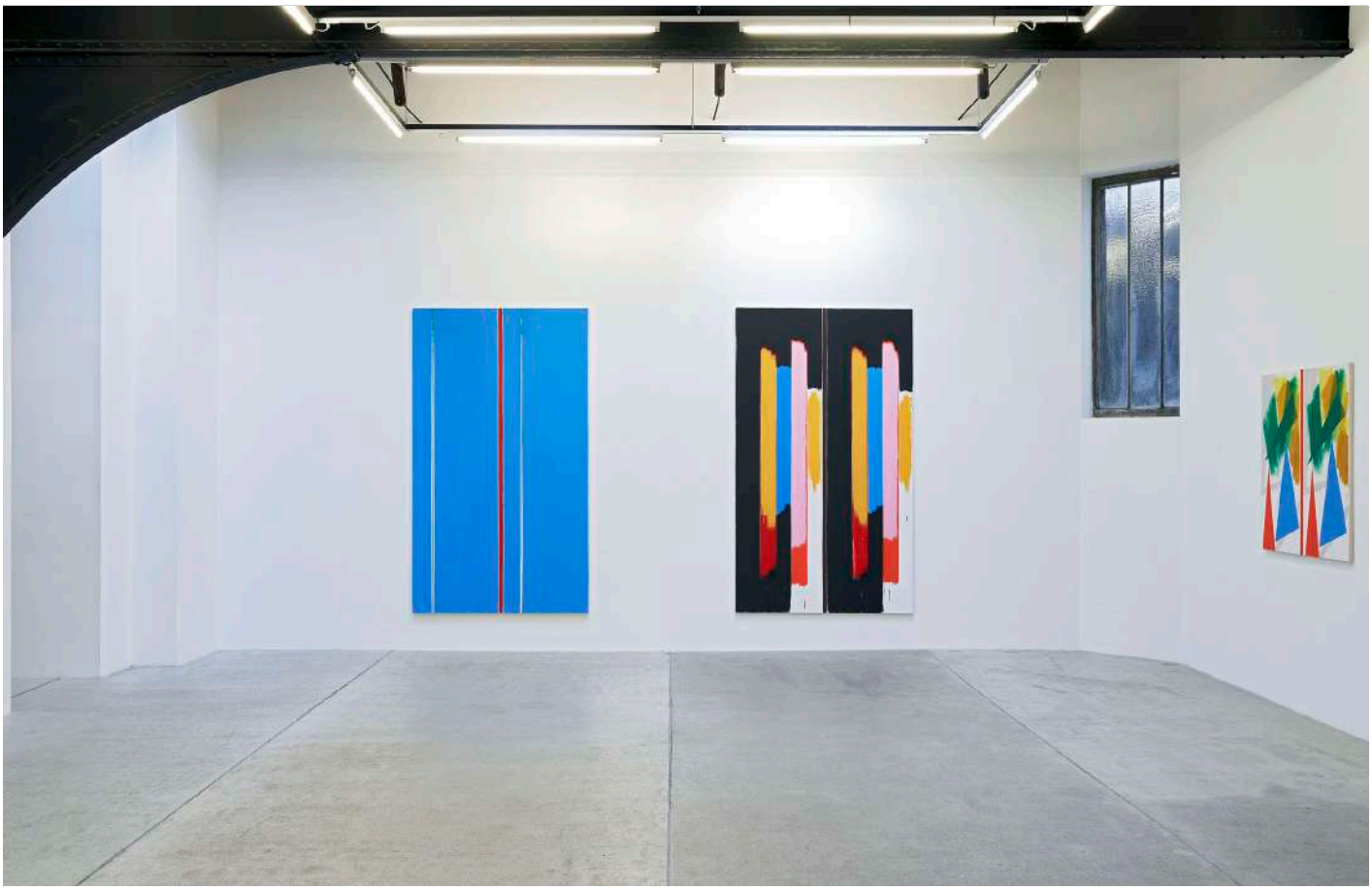
Twin Peaks and Company, 2021
installation view Lisson Gallery, Shanghai, China



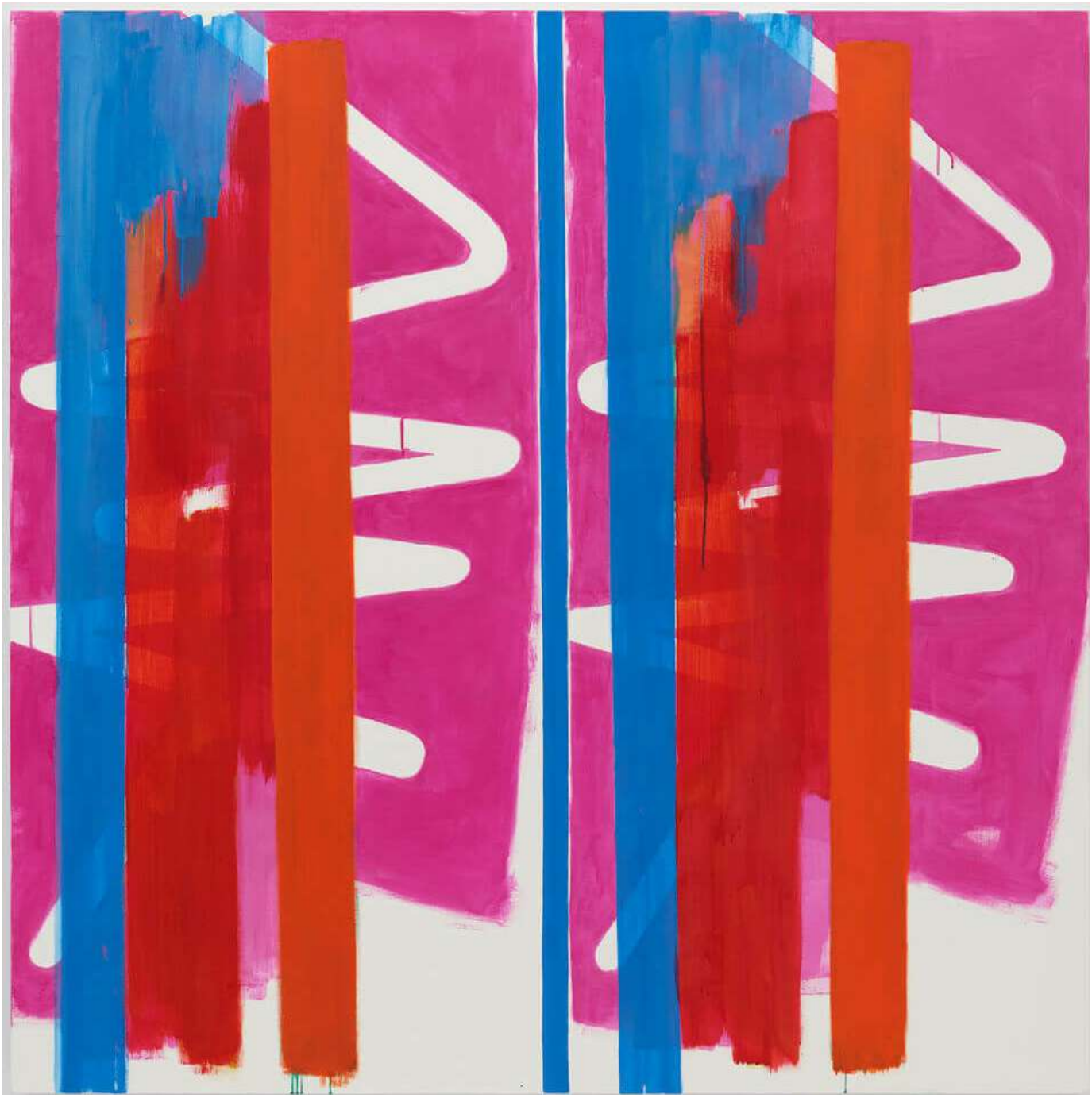
Sans titre, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

Sans titre,, 2013
acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

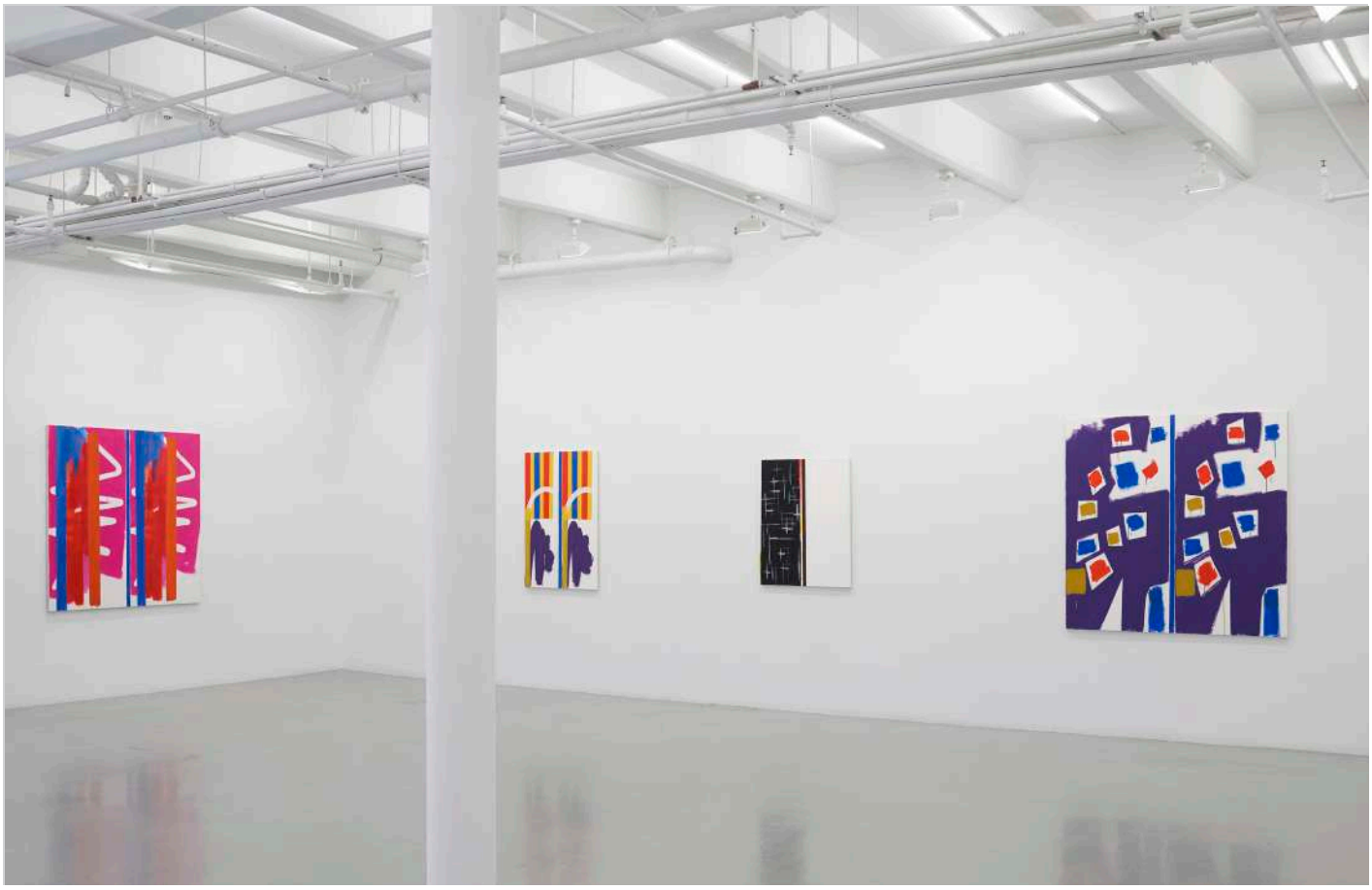
sans titre, 2020
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

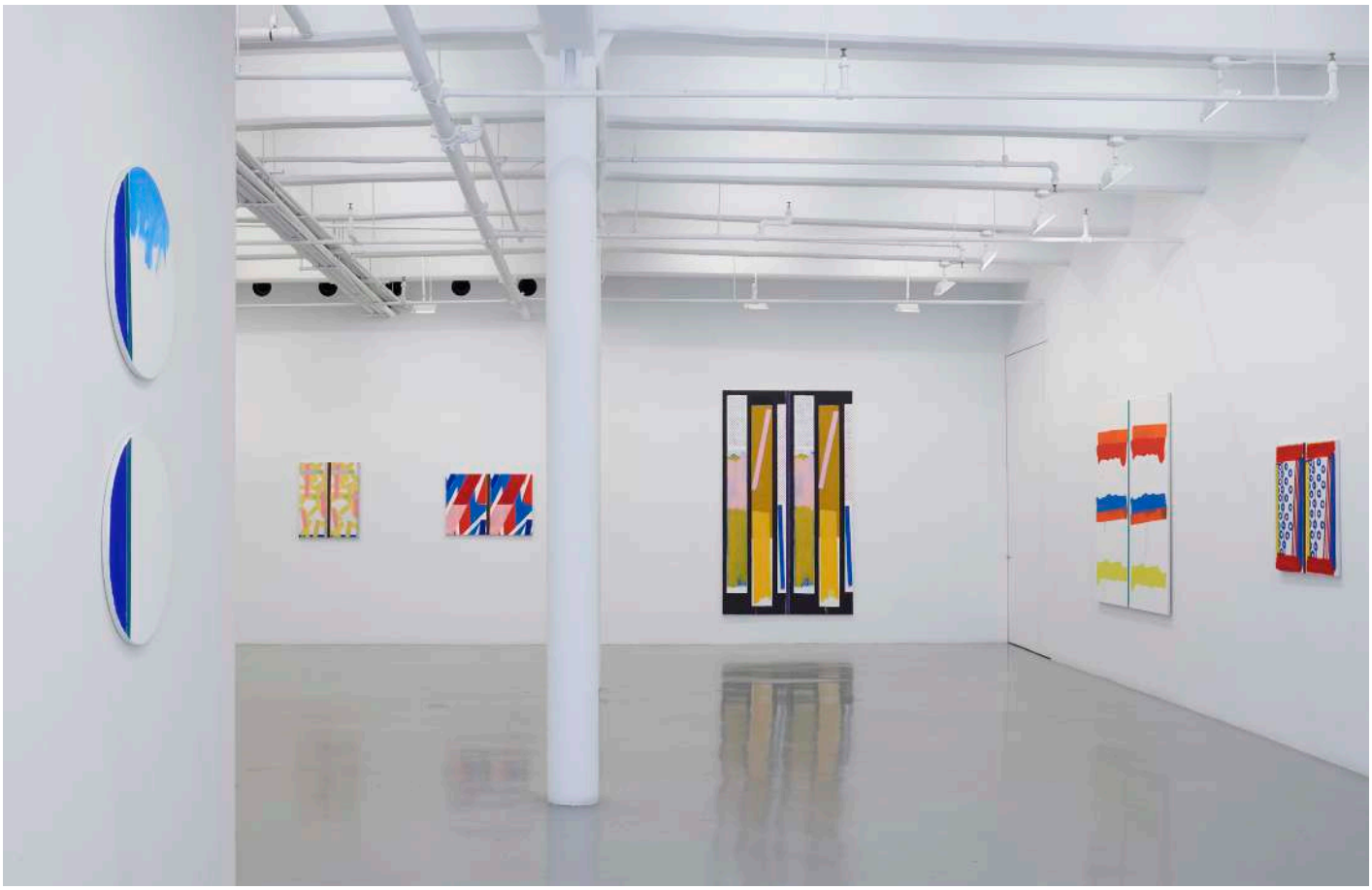


Acteur, 2020
installation view Gallerie Frank Elbaz, Paris



Untitled, 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

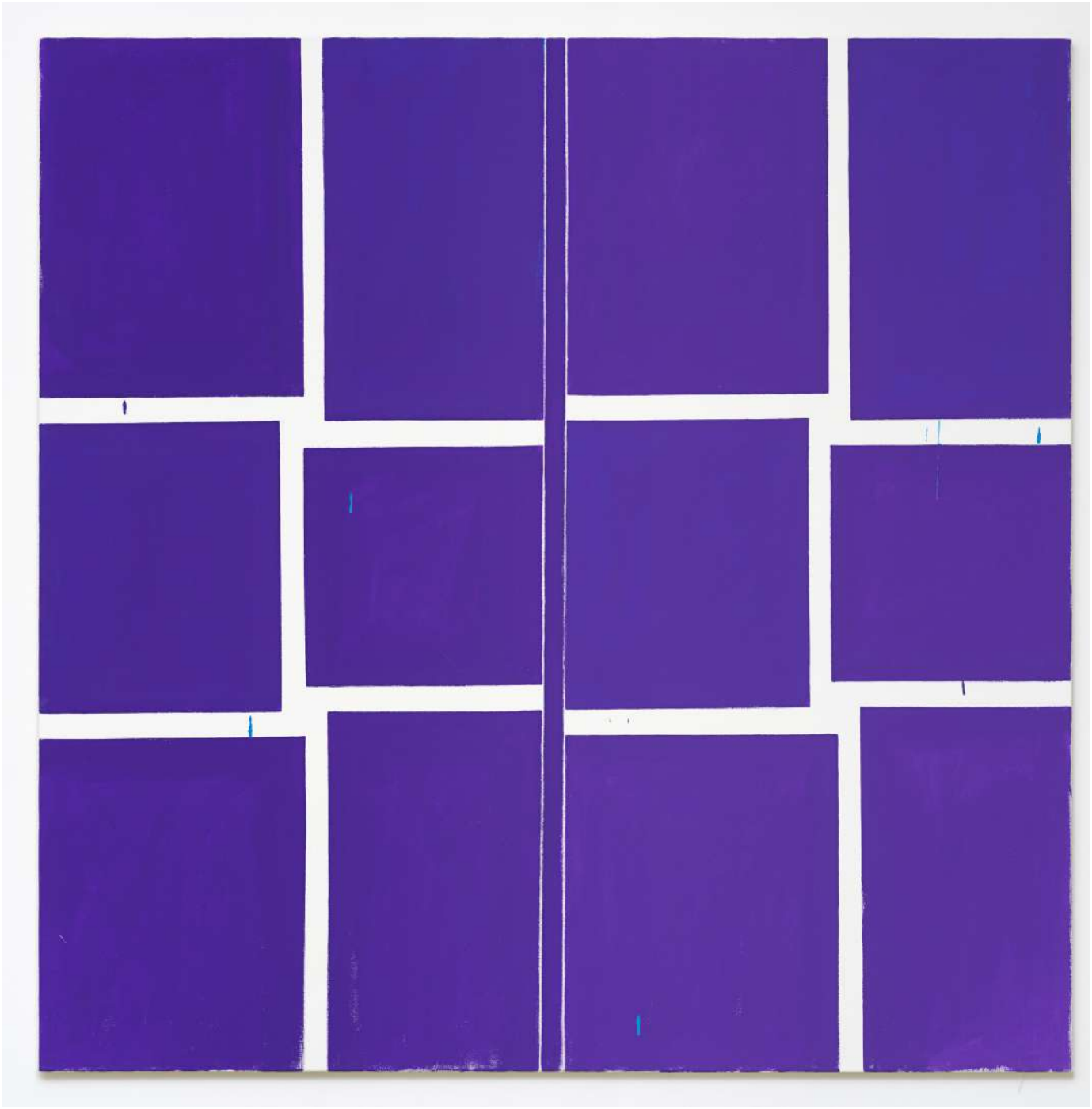




Bernard Piffaretti, 2019
installation view Lisson Gallery, 10th Avenue, New York

Bernard Piffaretti, 2019
installation view Lisson Gallery, 10th Avenue, New York

Sans titre, 2013
acrylic on canvas, 180 x 130 cm

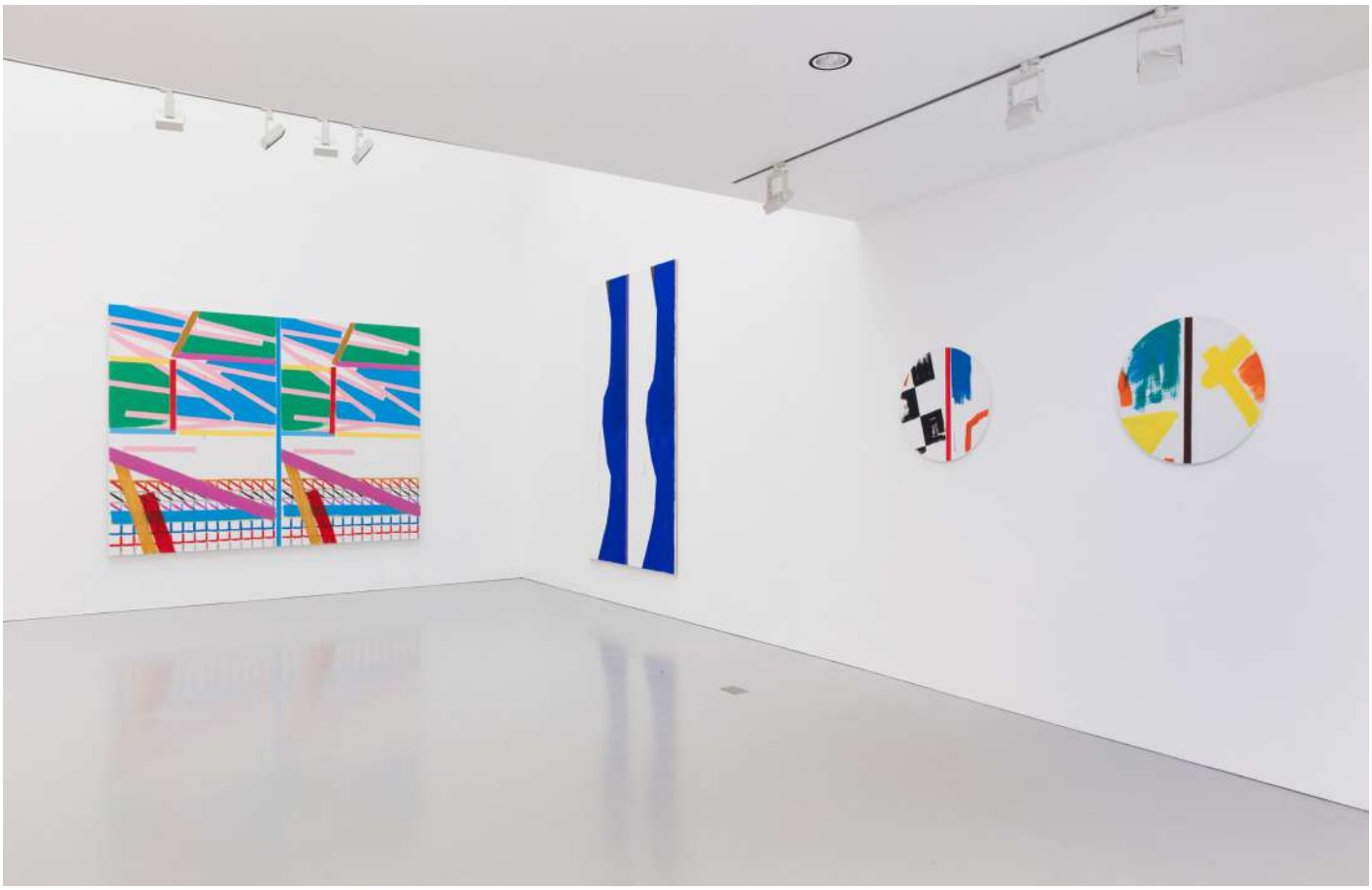


Untitled, 2018
Acrylic on canvas, 170 x 170 cm

Kontinuum, 2018
exhibition view, Klemm's, Berlin

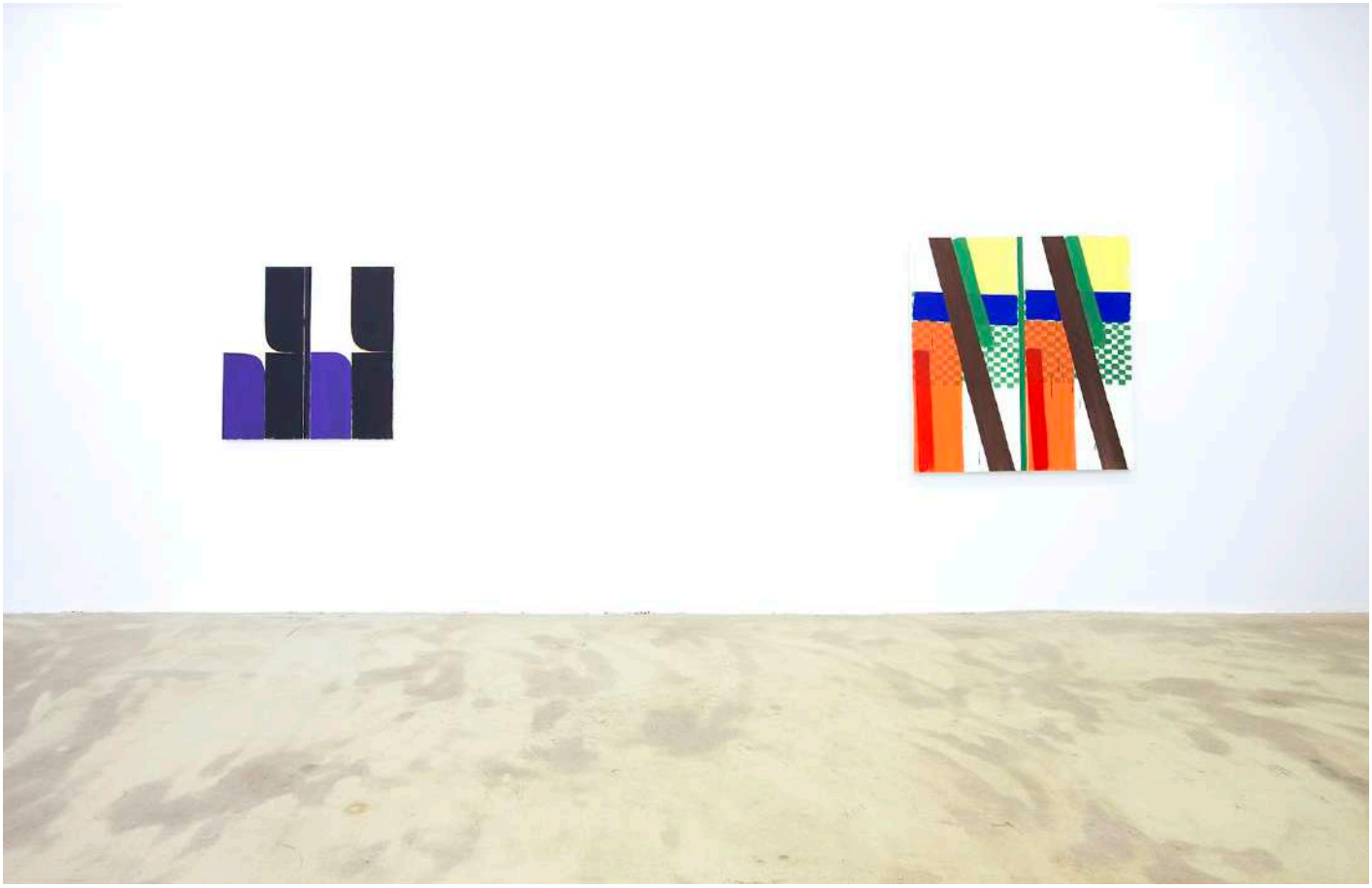
Sans titre, 2018
acrylic on canvas, 200 x 150

Sans titre, 2018
acrylic on canvas, 170 x 170 cm

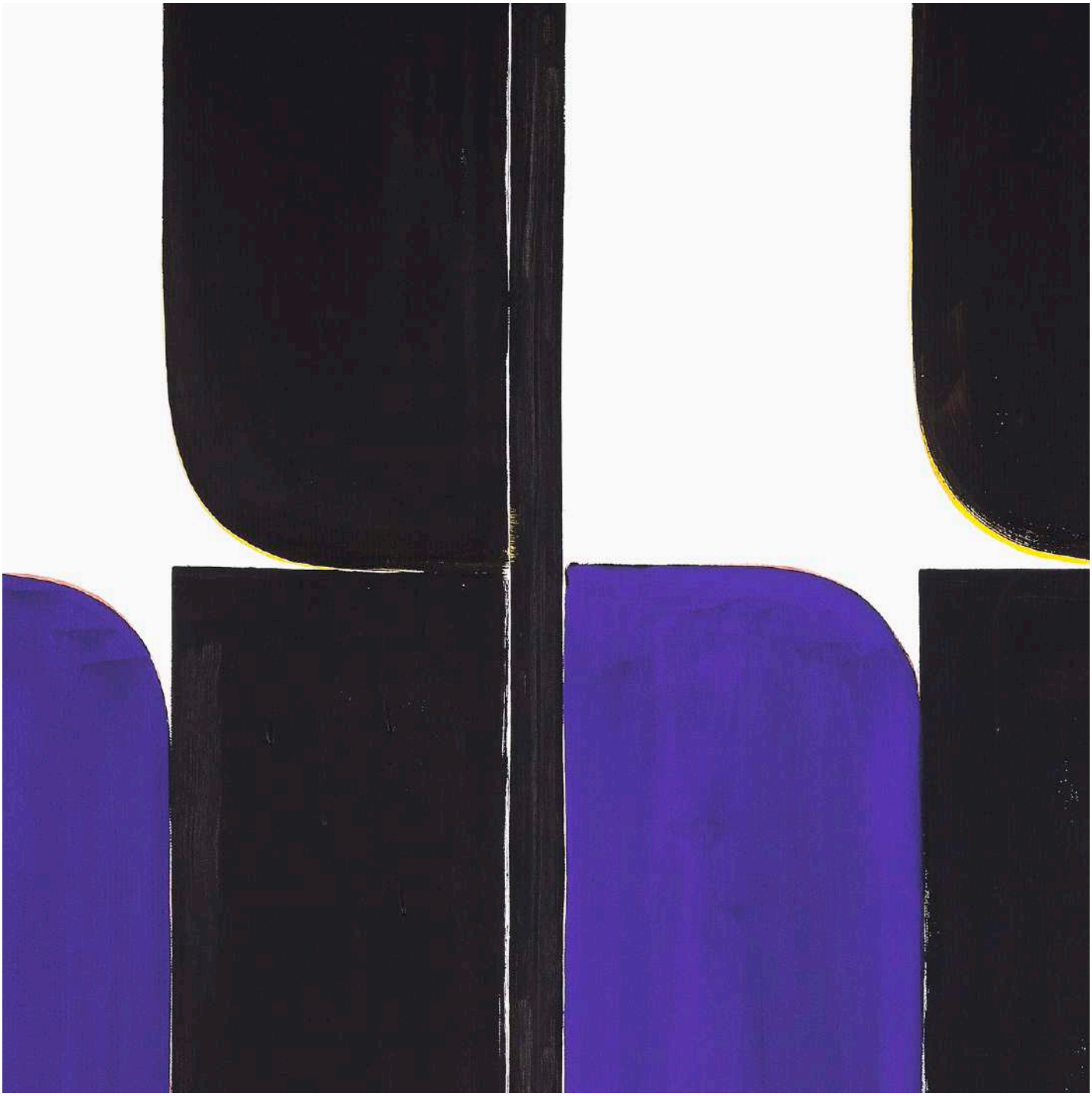


Caligram, 2017
exhibition view, Kate Macgarry, London

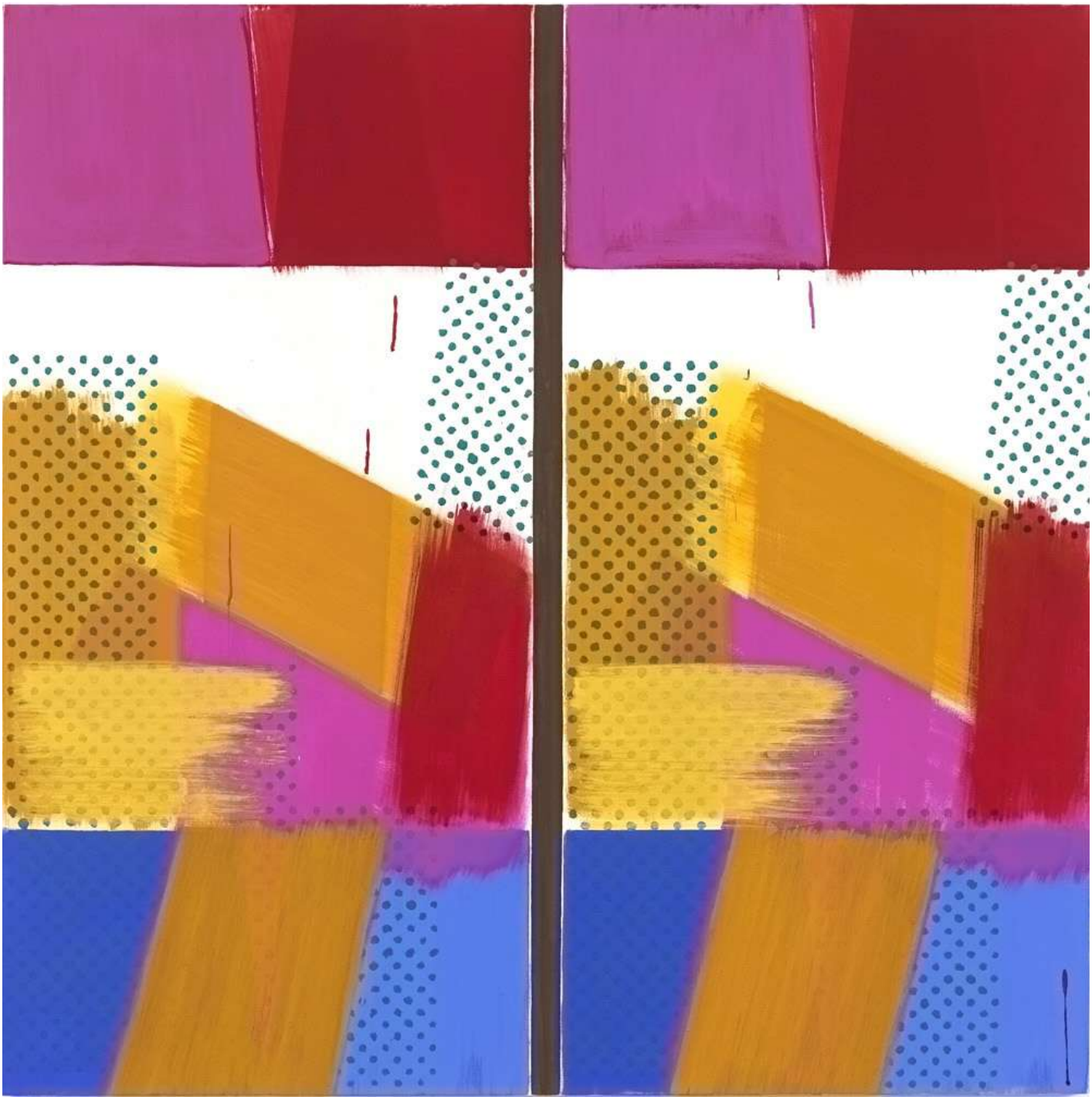
untitled, 2017
acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



No Chronology, 2016
exhibition view at Klemm's Berlin

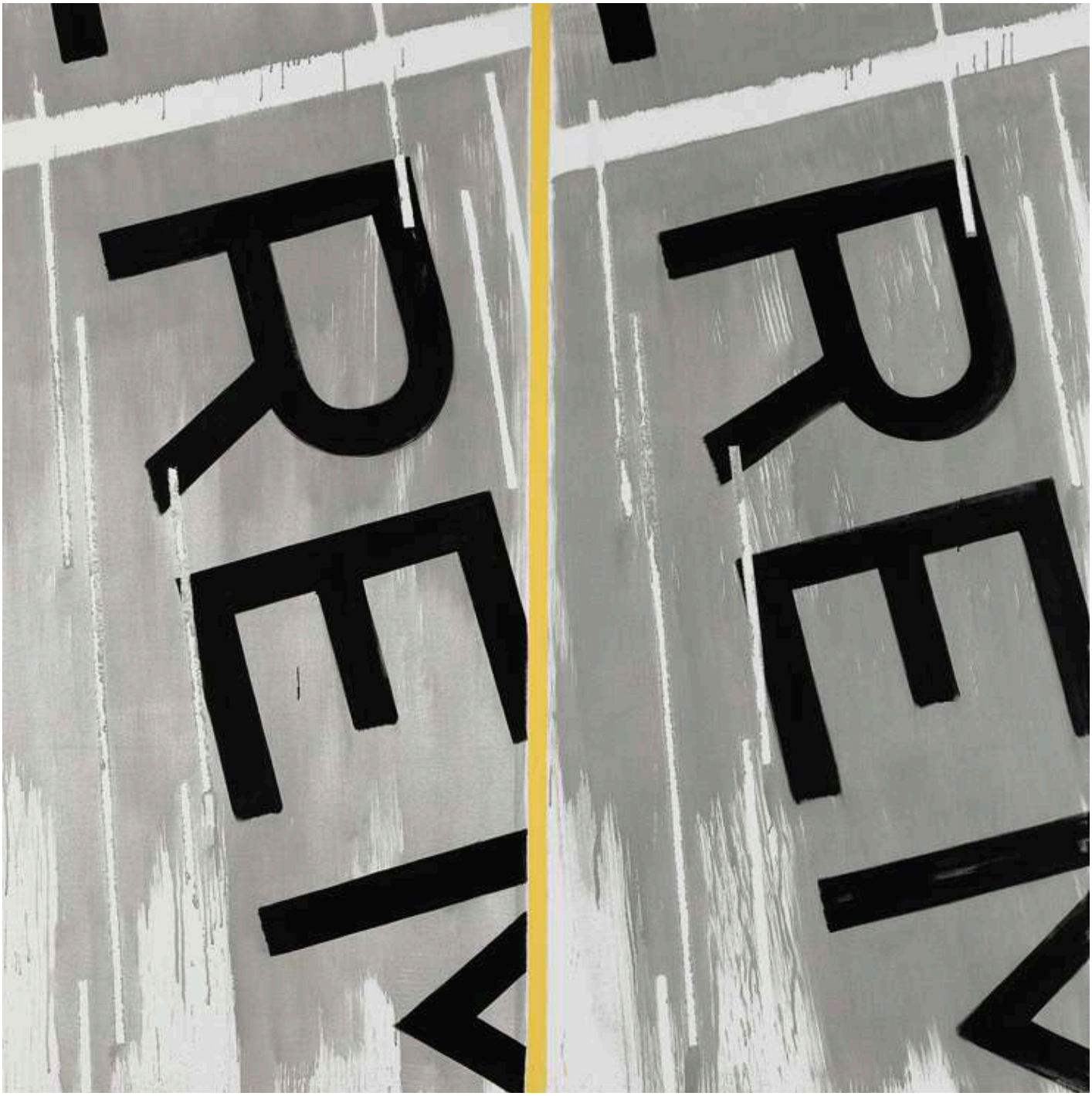


untitled, 2016
acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



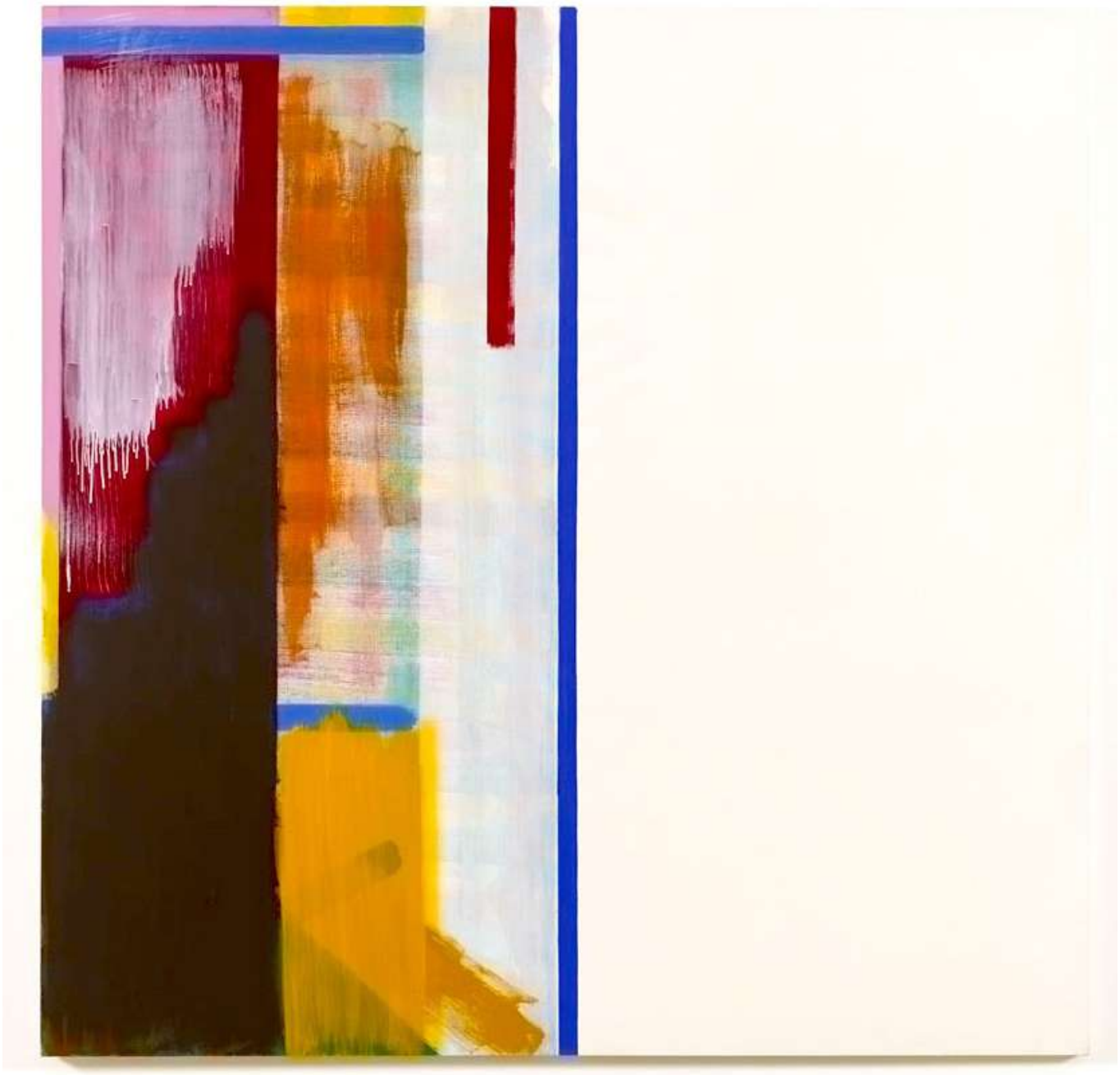
Sans titre, 2013
acrylic on canvas, 130 x 130 cm

Re-marquable, 2014
exhibition view at Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris



untitled, 2014
acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 cm

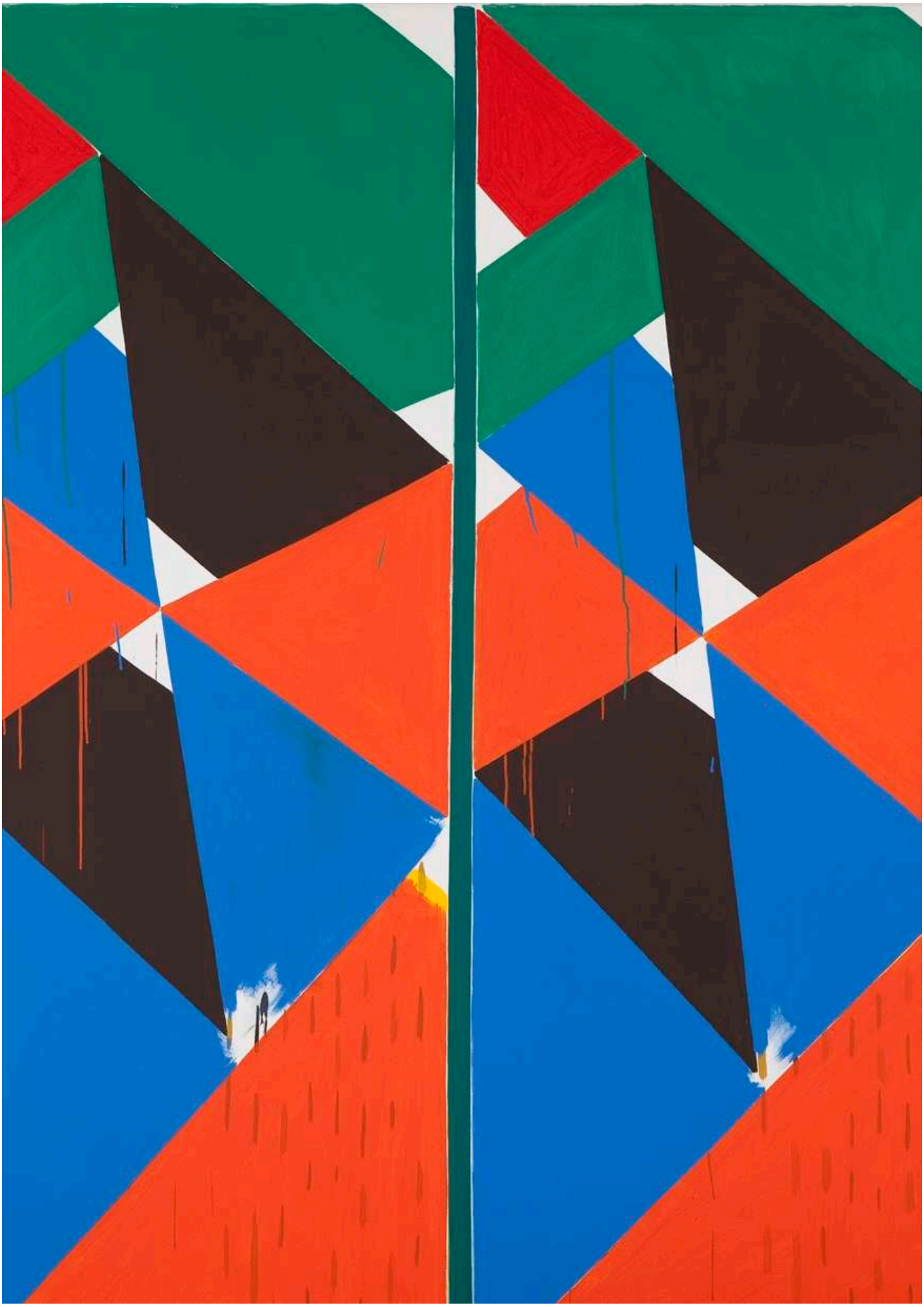
Mitte, 2013
exhibition view Klemm's, Berlin



Inachevé, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180 cm

Sans titre, 2013
acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

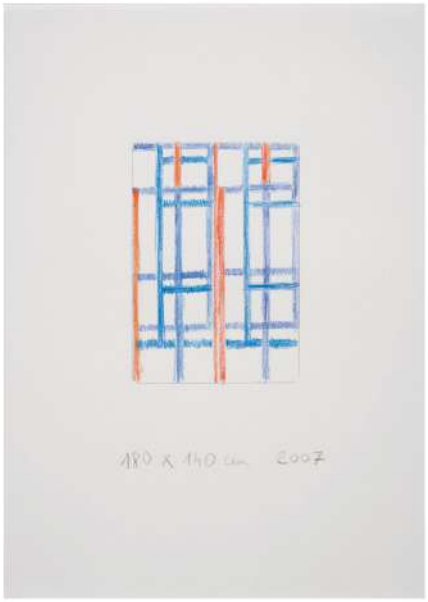
Sans titre, 2011
acrylic on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



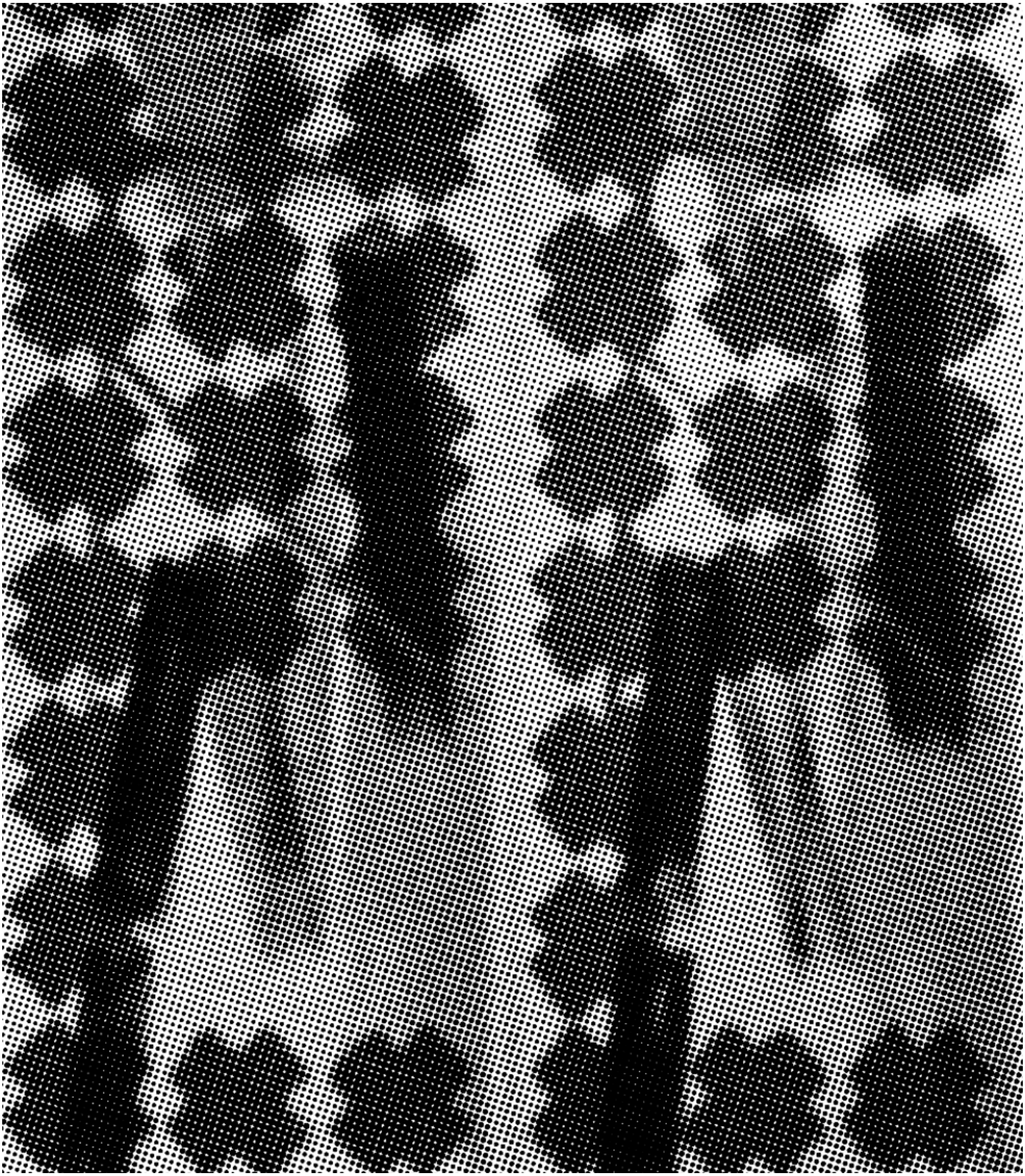
Inachevé, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 180 x 180 cm

Chronique du tableau 2002-2006, 2007
exhibition view Centre d'art contemporain de Sète, France

Sans titre, 2021
Acrylic on canvas, 140 x 140 cm



Drawings after paintings (dessins après tableaux), 1998-2007,
color pencil on paper, each 29,7 x 21 cm



poncif, 2012-2013
16 px, each 126,5 x 44,5 cm

By reproducing the painting with no other reason than the a posteriori affirmation of having done it, the drawing makes its work of being out of work, makes this redundancy an occasion of the work's meaning, the opportunity to question the nature of the painter's activity when he paints the second half, when, in a sense, he repaints, but also an opportunity to question his activity when he paints the first half, to question, more precisely, the very feeble reasons he may have for increasing day by day the collection of motifs he has undertaken, which seems to correspond to no special form of heroism, the opportunity to question the very activity of painting that does not really do justice to its sources or its ends, no more than to its pretexts or excuses.

In the work of Bernard Pifaretti, drawing lies behind his painting, that word here having a very different meaning from under. Rather than having a preliminary function, it has the status of a confirmation: by reproducing the painting, it draws what the painting has done, how one half of the painting has reproduced the other, and in no event does it reiterate the method, since each drawing is made outright, as a whole, with the concern to embrace the particular modality of the mime on the occasion of that particular motif, taking up a posture that would consist in trying to renew the experience, and which would obviously be false under the circumstances, leading not to the representation of that particular painting, but to the presentation of the sketch of another.

Just as skeletons can only really be brought to light after the event, after the body, although they constitute its undeniable underlying assumption, the drawings of Bernard can only appear after the paintings. Like skeletons, whose dance is more grating in life than it is informative in death, about which they have already forgotten all they knew, the round of Bernard Pifaretti's drawings executes the merry dance of his paintings, confirming their precious singularity, which is that of having drawn time, of having, for a time, embodied the miraculous awareness thereof. And like them, finally, their quantity refers more to the sense of their anonymous resemblance than to that of the singular identity of each one, which, if that were necessary, gives a particularly clear measure of the degree of abstraction of this painter's approach.

Jean-Philippe Vienne, March 1998

untitled, 1993
acrylic on canvas, 180 x 221,5 cm

Biography

Born in 1955 in Saint-Etienne, FR
Lives and works in Paris, FR
1974 - 1979 study at Beaux-Arts de Saint-Etienne, FR

Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

2026
2026
Painting & Caption, Kate MacGarry, London, UK
2025
XXL, Ceysson&Benetiere, Wanhaff, Louxembourg
2024
Pour finir encore, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, FR
2023
KOMBI, Klemm's, Berlin, DE
2022
Pick Up, Lisson Gallery, New York, USA
Ridgeline, Kate MacGarry Gallery, London, UK
On Double, National Gallery of Washington, US
2021
Double, Blanc International Contemporary Art Space, Beijing, CHN
KWM Art Center, Beijing, CHN
Twin Peaks and Company, Lisson Gallery, Shanghai, CHN
2020
Acteur, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, FR
2019
Bernard Piffaretti, Lisson Gallery, New York, US
Kontinuum, Klemm's, Berlin, DE
2018
Duel, Galerie Marta Cervera, Madrid, Espagne
A Guest + A Host = A Ghost, Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
2017
Calligram, Kate MacGarry, London, GB
Nachbilder, duo exhibition, Kunstverein Schwäbisch Hall, DE
2016
No Chronology, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, FR
2015
Moving Pictures, Cherry & Martin, Los Angeles, US
Juste retour (des choses et des mots), FRAC Franche-Comté, Besançon, FR
Nous sommes deux soeur jumelles: Bernard Piffaretti - Martin Barré, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes (Hangar à bananes), FR
2014
Re-marquable, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, FR
2013
Mitte, Klemm's, Berlin, DE
Report, Cherry & Martin, Los Angeles, US
2011
Montage, Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris, FR
2010
Avant/Post, Frac Haute-Normandie, Rouen, FR
Sarabande, Le Portique, Le Havre, FR
2009
On inachève bien les tableaux, Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Etienne, FR
2008
Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint Etienne, FR
V.O (version originale sous-titrée), Musée Matisse, Le Château-Cambrésis, FR
2007
Presque Suisse, Mamco, Geneva, CH
Chronique du tableau 2002-2006, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Sète, FR
2006
Poncif, Galerie Beaumont Public, Luxembourg, LU
2004
Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, FR
2002
Galerie Cheim & Read, New York, US
Galerie Itsutsuji, Tokyo, JP
2001
Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, FI
Beaumont Public + König Bloc, Luxembourg, LU
Palais des Beaux Arts, Charleroi, BE
2000
Va-et-vient / Come and Go, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, FR
1998
La Box, Bourges, FR
Galerie Jean Fournier, FIAC, Paris, FR
1997
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg, LU
1996
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, FR
Galerie Iris Bruckgraber, Cologne, DE
Institut Français de Cologne, DE
1994
Institut Français de Thessalonique, GR
1993
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg, LU
Château de Chareil, Chareil-Cintrat, FR
Centre d'Art de Flaine, FR
1992
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, FR
1991
Tableaux 1982-1990, Villa Arson, Nice, FR
Städtische Galerie, Göppingen, DE
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, FR
1990
Institut Français d'Innsbruck, AT
1988
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg, LU
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, FR
1986
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, FR
1985
Musée Sainte Croix, Poitiers, FR
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg, LU
1983
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, FR

Group Exhibtion (Selection)

2024
Hors Format, MAMC, Saint-Etienne, FR
Unfolding. Klemm´s, Berlin, DE
On Flourishing, Klemm's, Berlin, DE
2022
Wuhan Biennale, Wuhan, CHN
TWENTY, Kate MacGarry, London, UK
The Double Identity and Difference in Art since 1900, National Gallery of Washington DC, USA (forthcoming)
Hommage à Shirley Jaffe, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, FR
Nouvelle accrochage des collections, MNAM, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2021
Crash, Surplus Space, Wuhan, CN
All I think About Is You, Galerie Georg Nothelfer and Kunstsaele, Berlin, DE
2019
Realitäts Check, Kunstraum Postdam c/o Waschhaus, Potsdam, Germany
Collection. La composante Peinture, FRAC Bretagne, Rennes,
1989, The end of the 20th Century, Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain
2018
A Page from My Intimate Journal (Part I), Gordon Robichaux, New York, USA
2017
Fifteen, Kate MacGarry, London, Great Britain
Agora, Galerie R-2, Paris, France
Meandering, Absractly, galerie frank elbaz, Dallas, USA
Joy in Repetition, galerie Onrust, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Nouvelles acquisitions, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France
Collections, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Nantes, France
2016
Reflections: Larry Bell, Anne Collier, Bernard Piffaretti, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, USA
2015
Abstraction / Figuration, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, France
Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, USA
2013
Cover up, Galerie Krinzinger, Wien, Austria
group show, galerie frank elbaz, Paris, France
Herald Street, London, Great Britain
Verein Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, Germany
source codes, KLEMM'S gallery, Berlin, Germany
2012
Où donc, et quand?, Oeuvres des Frac Bourgogne et Frac Franche-Comté, Château de Tanlay, Frankreich
2011
Masterpieces of Museum of St Etienne, Daejeon Museum of Art, South Corea
2010
Reproduire, le 6B, Kurt-forever, Saint-Denis, France
Lost in translation, Centre international d'art contemporain, Pont-Aven, France
Luxe, calme et volupté, Le Studio, Berlin, Germany
Le tableau, Galerie Cheim & Read, New-York, USA
Galerie Miquel Alzueta, Barcelona, Spain
Babel, Frac Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France
Répétition dans l'épilogue, Galerie L. Corty, Paris, France
2009
Domaine de Kerguéhennec, France
Le Printemps de Septembre, Toulouse, France
Galerie Beaumont Public, Luxembourg
2008
L'entrée, CRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, Sète, France
2007
50 ?, Musée Paul Dini, Villefranche sur Saône, France
La couleur toujours recommencée, Hommage à Jean Fournier, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France
2006
Peintures Malerei, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany
La force de l'art, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, France
La peinture en principe, Centre d'art de l'Yonne, Château de Tanlay, France
Idées de la peinture, Hommage à Martin Barré, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France
2005
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, France
B.a-ba, domaine de Kerguéhennec, France
Les apparences sont souvent trompeuses, CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France
Le bonheur des peintres, Musée d'art moderne, Collioure, France
2004
Pour les oiseaux, FRAC des Pays de Loire, Carquefou, France
De leurs temps, Musée des Beaux Arts de Tourcoing, France
Le syndrome de Babylone, Centre d'Art Contemporain de la Villa du Parc, Annemasse, France
2003
Simple marks, Galerie Cheim & Read, New York, USA
2002
Centre d'art contemporain, Sierre, Switzerland
Fondation d'art contemporain Daniel et Florence Guerlain, Les Mesnuls, France
Voilà la France, Musée Luigi Mallè, Dronero, Italy
2001
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, France
Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria
2000
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg
Galerie Jean Fournier, Paris, France
Basse Normandie et Abbaye aux Dames, Caen, France
1999
Centre d'art contemporain, Pougues-les-Eaux, France
Amitiés signifiantes 1, Centre d'art contemporain, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France
1998
Le dessin en procès, Le Château d'eau, Bourges, France
Les règles du jeu – Le peintre et la contrainte, FRAC
1997
Abstraction / Abstractions – Géométries provisoires, Musée d'art moderne, SaintÉtienne, France

Made in France, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Openstelling, Musée de Hasselt, Belgium
Peintures françaises, Villa Médicis, Rome, Italy

1995
Présences françaises, Brussels, Belgium
Le Capitou, Fréjus, France

1994
Galerie Françoise Knabe, Frankfurt, Germany
Paso Doble, Musée d'art contemporain, Lausanne, Switzerland
Ludwig Museum im Deutschherrenhaus, Coblence, Germany

1993
Toni Grand / Bernard Piffaretti, Art Transit, Marseille, France
Zentrum Paris, Klagenfurt, Austria

1992
Too French, Hara Museum ARC, Japan
Folkwangmuseum, Essen, Germany
Robert Miller Gallery, New York, USA

1991
Mouvements, Galeries contemporaines, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
Correspondances, Musée d'art moderne, Saint-Étienne, France
Too French, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong, China
Kampnagelfabrik, Hamburg, Germany
Kunstverein, Friburg, Switzerland
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Mulhouse, France

1990
Une collection pour la grande Arche, La Défense, Paris, France
Bewegungen, BASF Feierabendhaus, Ludwigshafen, Germany

1989
Correspondances, Berlinische Galerie, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany

1988
Galerie Beaumont, Luxembourg
Hommage à la France, Fondation Sonja Henie-Niels Onstad, Oslo, Norway

1987
Les inédits du Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Étienne, Musée Saint-Pierre, Lyon, France
Carte blanche à Yves Michaud, CREDAC, Ivry-sur-Seine, France

1986
Galerie Barbara Braathen, New York, USA

1985
La Voie abstraite, Hôtel de Ville, salle Saint-Jean, Paris, France
18 artistes français, Nouvelle Biennale de Paris, Créteil, France
L'autre nouvelle génération, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden

1984
Sur invitation, Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris, France
L'autre nouvelle génération, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, France

1983
Fragments et Figures, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Montréal, Canada

1982
Fragments et Figures, CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France
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