

Points of Quietude

Juri Markkula's paintings oscillate between being objects and images. Their idiom is simultaneously physically tangible and illusorily evasive. A peculiar contradictory condition that manifests itself through the paintings' almost supernatural perfection. Despite immediately establishing a strong presence, there is a lingering feeling that they are somewhere else. The spatiality of the works cancels out our existing space.

This ambiguous uncertainty applies particularly to Juri Markkula's *Duo Chromes*. His red, green, blue or black pictorial objects are close-up and exaggeratedly blown-up representations of twigs, grass and leaves. A type of cross-section of nature's bottom strata in which the motifs are drawn out in depth. Viewed from the side, the unpainted edge of the deep relief is visible; however, when viewed from the front the paintings become seductive pitfalls for the gaze. This vertiginous feeling is the result of the fact that the milled relief has been painted in two different tones. Thus, the *Duo Chromes* only look like monochromes. A paradox that increases the illusion of the works.

Juri Markkula's *Mono Chromes* are of a different aspect. Their formal character is rather more abstract. Here, nature seems to have vanished, or been erased. For the most part they appear like flattened colour masses with a shimmering smooth surface, or as refined mirrors without reflective surfaces. Are these objects that gaze inward? That turn their backs on us? Showing off their dazzling elegance and their hermetic extravagance, the *Mono Chromes* attract us with an exposed seal but their appearance is transformed as we move in front of them. Imperceptibly, the colour changes into a different tone, which had previously lain dormant in the rough margin of the painting. The shift would appear to be the result of our movement but is actually an effect of the pigment of the paint. The illusion is real.

Juri Markkula's two series of works are occupied with different kinds of densification and both are characterised by a ghostly visual refinement. The image, the object, the motif, the colour – all the components of the painting are enveloped in a supreme concentration. A point of absolute quietude. Which is broken only when the viewer enters.

Magnus Bons

Translation: Olsson Diamond Text