

Ceysson & Bénétière

# Claire Chesnier

*Rayer le jour, le soir étain*

LYON

26 October - 2 December 2023



« Surrounded by obscurity,  
we'll see in the dark  
looking through  
someone else's fingers. »<sup>1</sup>

## Vacant Landscapes

In reality, in front of this painting where color emancipates itself from the subject matter, one mainly thinks of Rothko. Chesnier openly admits her admiration for this pioneer of abstract expressionism. Rothko, whose colors, usually applied in transparent glazes, give rise to rectangular configurations symmetrically superimposed on an almost monochromatic background.

Just like him, in the works of the French artist, the color areas with blurred contours are like chromatic stretches of boundless radiant luminosity. Here, no details are subordinate to a whole but a swathe of paint, a coloring matter invading the surface. Boundless landscapes that resist the possibility of being traversed by a gaze, fields expanding infinitely and remaining inaccessible to the viewer. Each work addresses, in its own way, the problems of forms and colors, the relationship between opacity and transparency, between what veiled and unveiled, between saturated tones or velvety materials. There is no indication on the creation of the painting, no traces of a brush, no gestural touch signaling the process.

There is an astonishing contrast between this wide array of nuances sliding upon each other and the precision with which they are executed. This meticulous, perfectly controlled painting invites the viewer's gaze to "decipher" the chromatic variations but keeps it at a distance. Unlike Rothko, who claimed to create a place where viewers are invited to enter, Chesnier's work, full of restraint, preserves itself, so to speak.

In this palette of colors, a line seems to separate the top - always brighter - and the bottom, always darker - perhaps sky and earth. However, this imaginary line, which some call the horizon, moves as one approaches it. The viewer gets lost in this space that eludes fixed references, in this field of uncertainty where the authoritarian gaze gives way to the hesitant eye.

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<sup>1</sup> Hanne Bramnes, "14 décembre", Chant d'hiver, 2014, in, Le poids de la lumière, Ed. Erès, 2018, p.723.

# C e y s s o n & B é n é t i è r e

André Breton wrote in 1941 about Yves Tanguy: "The appearance of Tanguy in the Neptunian light of clairvoyance gradually tightens the thread of the horizon that had broken. But with him, it is a new horizon, the one on which the landscape, no longer physical but mental, will establish itself." Is it this mental landscape that Claire Chesnier aims for?"

Itzhak Goldberg  
*Art historian*

## Contacts and information

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Exhibition from October 26 to December 2, opening on October 26 at 6pm.

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