

ADELAIDE CIONI

Shape, color, taste,
sound and smell

GUY MEES

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sound and smell

curated by
Cecilia Canziani

12.04–8.06.2019

Opening
Friday 12 April
6–8.30 pm

Adelaide Cioni was born in 1976 in Bologna, studied drawing at UCLA, Los Angeles, and holds a BA in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome (2015). With an MA in contemporary history and a master's degree in Literary Translation (both from the University of Bologna), between 2002 and 2012 she translated American literature for Italian publishers (David Foster Wallace, John Cheever, Richard Ford). In 2012 she completed the translation of John Cheever's journals for Feltrinelli and decided to quit translating, thereby starting her artistic practice. In 2014 she was resident for six months at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris and won the Premio Celeste. In 2015 she was resident in Villa Sträuli, Switzerland. In 2016 she moved to Umbria, and opened with Fabio Giorgi Alberti an independent space/studio called "Franca". She has exhibited in independent and institutional spaces, in Italy and abroad, among which a solo exhibition at MAMbo in Bologna: *à propos de bacchelli 5*, curated by Elisa del Prete and Home Movies in 2015.

Guy Mees was born in 1935 in Mechelen, Belgium and died in 2003 in Antwerp. His work has been the subject of major museum solo exhibitions, including those held at Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels (1990 and 1993); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp (2002); Museum Leuven, Belgium (2012) and recently *The Weather is Quiet, Cool, and Soft*, curated by Lilou Vidal, at Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz, Vienna (2018) and at Mu.ZEE, Ostend, BE (2019). Work by the artist is represented in several museum collections, including Museum Leuven, Belgium; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp and Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

Galleria P420 is proud to present – for the first time in a double exhibit – the work of the Belgian artist Guy Mees (Mechelen, 1935 – Antwerp 2003) and the research of the Italian artist Adelaide Cioni (Bologna, 1976).

Separated by geography and generation, different in their use of materials, the works of the two artists are presented in individual spaces in the gallery in two distinct exhibits carrying the same name: *Shape, color, taste, sound and smell*.

The first room contains recent pieces by Adelaide Cioni in wool, flannel and cloth; acrylic on paper. The subjects are simple, direct, taken from a collective imaginary that crosses vernacular culture and modernist language. Iconic images that defy interpretation and narration: the pattern of a cloth is a checkerboard, a sea, a compositional grid. A circle is a sun or a black hole. A stain is a flower – and a stain.

The second room features a body of work by Guy Mees belonging to the *Lost Space* cycle and limited to the 1980s and 1990s – cut-outs of paper and canvas installed directly on the wall, color escaping from the frame – and a work in pastels on photographic paper, part of the artist's successive study on the relationship between color and space (and the space photographed – it is worth noting – is that of the home, an experiential, non-abstract space).

Lost Space is also the name Mees assigned to a series of works made in the 1960s, and of a text written by the theater director Wim Meuwissen to which the artist returned, calling on the intervention of the copywriter Willem-Joris Lagrillère, entrusting a translation to Henri-Floris Jaspers, and rethinking the piece through annotations and permutations of the order of the phrases. The title of the exhibitions is taken from this text. The space referred to by these lines – one of the very few writings by Mees, who was famously reluctant to narrate and to conceptualize his work – is a room in his home, left empty, white, but open to his friends, a room that "makes artifice more difficult, tactility easier". This lost space "defines only the body: shape, color, taste, sound and smell".

The *Shape, color, taste, sound and smell* are therefore those of the viewer, invited to engage in an immediate interaction with the works, without superstructures. An engagement that is also corporeal: my volume in front of the volume of the work, in the same place.

The works of Mees and Cioni, placed side by side, but each in its own location, clarify a shared idea of painting as color freed from its support, pure autonomous form, non-narrative image, manifested in its direct and immediate relationship with the viewer, in the space. Apparently simple poetics, which thanks to the light grace of immediacy make serious play correspond to apparent spontaneity, precision of gesture, fragility and modesty of material, and a luminous monumentality.