

Galería Elba Benítez



NATALIA ZAŁUSKA

Rhythms and Figures

May – June 2021

"Understanding art comes from looking at art." Natalia Załuska

Natalia Załuska's painting derives from the tradition of minimalist abstraction: minimalist in its vocabulary of simple geometric forms, its prevalence of monochrome color planes, its abiding sense of straightforwardness; and abstract in its eschewing of references to and representations of recognizable elements from the 'real' world. This lineage clearly informs *Rhythms and Figures*, Załuska's current exhibition of new work at the Galería Elba Benítez; and yet at the same time, it is only a starting point for a process of exploration that leads to a very different destination.

Rhythms and Figures (the title alludes to Maria Jarema, the Polish abstract painter of the 1950's whose work is a point of reference for Załuska) consists of seven large mixed media works that combine a number of different artistic techniques — painting, collage, drawing, *bas relief* sculpture, assemblage — into sensually hybrid objects which might be considered as belonging to a form of "constructed painting." Overlapping planar surfaces of various materials accumulate, like compressed strata in geological formations, rendering a final surface that is far from planar. Color planes are overlaid onto these surfaces but do not quite align with them, like photographic double-exposures, ever so slightly out-of-sync. The hues and shades of the colors themselves — color is essential to Załuska's work — create a harmonious chromaticism that is sometimes soothing, sometimes bracing. Taken together, the meticulous orchestration and delicate execution of these multiple layers and layerings give rise to a resonant dissonance of color, volume, line and surface.

But beyond the powerful presence of the physically substantial works in *Rhythms and Figures*, there is also an almost performative sense that we are following the artist as she explores not only the visual space she has created, but also the process she has arrived at for creating that visual space. Hence perhaps Zaluska's choice to reveal the backs of the works, where the planning and construction of these 'constructed paintings' can be seen. But on a more important level, the sense of exploration that emanates from *Rhythms and Figures* results not so much from glimpsing the hardware and support structures as from sensing that we are able to follow the trains of visual and aesthetic thought through which the works themselves were both conceived and given birth. As a result, in sharing with us these processes, Zaluska ultimately draws us into them, creating works that lead us to feel that in contemplating them we, too, have entered into a kind of exploration; and that this exploration -- or perhaps all exploration -- is itself a destination.

George Stolz

Natalia Zaluska (1984, Krakow; lives and works in Vienna and Warsaw) has recently exhibited in international institutions such as the SCAD Museum of Art (Savannah, 2020); Foksal Gallery Foundation (Warsaw, 2020); the Kuntshalle CCA Andratx (2020 and 2014); the Muzeum Narodowe (Gdansk, 2019) and the Kunstraum Potsdam (2019). Previously, the artist exhibited at the Razem Pamoja Foundation (Krakow, 2018); the Polnisches Institut (Düsseldorf, 2018); the Kunsthalle Krems (2017); the Lentos Kunstmuseum (Linz, 2015); the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (2013 and 2012); the Kunstforeningen GL STRAND (Copenhagen, 2013) and elsewhere. She was featured in the exhibition *The Sky is Blue in Some Other Way: A Diagram of a Possible Misreading*, curated by Adam Budak at the Galería Elba Benítez in 2014.

Rhythms and Figures is the first solo show by Natalia Zaluska at Galería Elba Benítez.

With the collaboration of



Natalia Zaluska, *Untitled*, 2021. Photo credits: Piotr Bekas