

**Marie-Claude Bouthillier, *Apparitions***

Marie-Claude Bouthillier's work is first and foremost guided by the possibilities of painting and the textile nature of the canvas that supports it. The numerous series that she presented in the past showed a strong interest in motifs as well as language, that of words, matter, grids, all expressed with a rare and singular sensibility. One recalls the series in which motifs of grids and points commingled with an accumulation of initials (*mcb*), combining self-referentiality and self-presentation in a common field of reflection. *Apparitions*, her latest series is born of the desire to reflect on drapery, fabric, and the canvas which well beyond carrying the charge of the line or colours, well beyond allowing acrylic to be absorbed in its meshes or in being fixed under the encaustic, becomes a pretext for the pure exercise of painting. Have artists not always used drapery, with its folds and hollows, as the most exhilarating of escape hatches?

These *Apparitions* reveal volumes, hollow bodies, and represent an entirely new approach for Bouthillier, whose work has not been exhibited in Montréal for far too long. The works show, unveil and bring forth this invisible layer, albeit essential to painting's designs, which dwells between the canvas and the representation, and which Marie-Claude Bouthillier calls the "breach." On the surface the motifs form images, not so much in their direct apprehension, but rather through a dismantling of the aesthetic knots and outgrowths. This second reading produces a reversal of the subject. One encounters ovoid forms that one suddenly wants to fill in, others one no longer attempts to see, except to name or place them alongside forms which one believed to have recognized at first glance. The subjects, feminine, for some, have been chosen solely for the form they carry; here the drapery covers, it supports, indicates but also envelops and contains emptiness.

For Bouthillier this textile examination is but a pretext for this apparition; it is the cognitive interface of an obligatory dialogue between the container and its contents, the support and that which it supports. It is about the disembodiment of bodies in favour of the apparition of painting, of the images and the delicate poetry they call forth.

Yann Pocreau, translation Bernard Schütze