



oil on canvas, ca. 130⁵/₈ × 78".



Helmut Federle, *The Woman and the Cross*, 1983, acrylic on canvas, ca. 27¹/₄ × 19¹/₂".

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Since there is never any sense in Galiani's work of truly threatening catastrophe, the ostentatious painterly displays to which he resorts lie only on the surface, evoking only phantasmagoria and an estheticizing nostalgia for a lost age. Lightning may strike, volcanoes erupt, streams of wind and water burst forth, but these events have no paradisaical or infernal justification; they are pure apology for a decorative style. In this there is neither a Renaissance obsessive scope nor a Mannerist awareness of death.

—LUCIANA ROGOZINSKY

Translated from the Italian by Meg Shore.

St. Gallen

HELMUT FEDERLE, Galerie Susanna Kulli:

This show signaled a new phase in Helmut Federle's painting. His palette, which was previously restricted to black, white, gray, and yellow, has been expanded to include green, red, blue, and orange, and his austere compositional principles have in a certain sense also been called into question. Not that Federle's spartan work has become in any way extravagant; now as before, his canvases are characterized by their inimitable reserve, which contains both presumption and modesty. They come out of solitude—not hermetic seclusion, but a kind of self-oriented concentration on essence. This conscious, deliberate attitude allows the artist to surrender, to give himself over to the Other without becoming engulfed, and without his vulnerability rendering him open to threat.

Federle's works develop in a painstaking process of concentration. Painting becomes the means through which the vision—the image—is crystallized into reality through a meditative procedure and in discrete stages of manual work. The canvases are definitely intended to be understood in emotional terms; even if the compositions appear on first inspection to be Constructivist concepts, we are dealing with the painting of content. This is emphasized in the new work by the confrontation of severely geometric forms—squares, rectangles, triangles, and, in a new development, segments of circles—with tachist elements. These latter represent a further evolution in Federle's approach as a painter, which in its calculated sloppiness was always at war with the strict discipline of his forms and colors. Against this background, some aspects of the works become legible in a nonabstract way: the geometric qualities of a composition recede as a schematic figure, a skyline, or a game with the artist's initials emerges. This content-oriented, narrative/emotional, "literary" factor is also expressed in titles—*The Woman and the Cross*, 1983, for example—which point beyond the composition and address other layers of the image.

But it is above all the quality of the color that suffuses these severe works with emotion. For the most part, Federle applies thin washes of color, in glazes. Color fields are laid on top of one another so that their values constantly change according to the underpainting. Layers of paint, particularly the upper ones, remain individually perceptible, allowing the viewer to survey the process by which the work was created. From the

partially visible underlying pencil sketches we can read the initial idea for the work and can trace how, stage by stage, it has developed into a painting. The interpenetration of color fields has a three-dimensional quality: the superimposed layers are in intimate contact, they impart of themselves to each other, soil and smudge each other, ebb and flow in an intertwining clearly suggestive of the erotic.

Federle works his paintings to avoid brilliance or virtuosic display. Sensual experience is carefully moved from the esthetic realm to the realm of holistic perception, a realm in which, against compositions of Constructivist rigor, a controlled apprehension of the organic is possible. For all their dull-looking picture surfaces these works are rooted in an emotional underground; they are force fields in which the most contradictory energies compete.

—MAX WECHSLER

Translated from the German by Leslie Strickland.

Paris

JULIAN SCHNABEL, Galerie Daniel Templon:

"It is, of course, a luxury to create art and, on top of this, to insist on expressing one's own artistic opinion. Nothing is more luxurious than this. It is a game and a very good game, at least for me; one of the few games which make life, difficult and depressing as it is sometimes, a little more interesting." (Max Beckmann, 1941).

For at least two reasons this statement can lead into a discussion of the work of