



MILAN
GALLERIA 10 A.M. ART
FROM 24 MARCH TO 27 MAY 2022
ESTHER STOCKER
“RETURN TO RATIONALITY”
text by Angel Moya Garcia

The socio-economic roots of the irrationality that runs through society today is not simply a distortion created by the coronavirus pandemic; they run far deeper and farther back in time. The irrational has historically and cyclically infiltrated the social fabric, prompting an unreasonable willingness to believe in pre-modern superstitions, anti-scientific prejudice, baseless theories and conspiracies. Beliefs that Covid doesn't exist or that vaccines are dangerous seamlessly intertwine with flat earthism, questioning September 11 and the moon landing, or the theory that 5G is a sophisticated tool for controlling the populace. Seeking refuge in the irrational may be the result of subjective expectations going unsatisfied or a way of finding a frame of reference to explain events hypothetically shrouded in uncertainty because of a priori skepticism of all systems.

Not only are conspiracy theories and irrational interpretations a wholesale breach of Occam's Razor (the principle whereby the simplest explanation should always be preferred), they are above all a vision or reading of specific events in which rationality is besieged by cognitive detours, post-truth, factionalism and a lack of trust in institutions responsible for analyzing the facts and coming up with a shared version of reality. As cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker argues, rationality only emerges without forced or instrumentalized evasion in a community of people who reason and identify one another's mistakes via ongoing research, upholding a significant commitment to objectivity, neutrality and truth.

This is the backdrop to Esther Stocker's exhibition *Return to Rationality*, where once again the artist demonstrates her attraction to formal paradoxes, “errors” and playing with optical balance. Although in the past her research often sought to defend or emphasize the concepts of anarchy, irrationality or freedom from fixed or overly rigid systems, current events have prompted her to question the need to return to some form of rationality. As an expression of this, the exhibition at Galleria 10 A.M. ART in Milan is laid out as an environmental installation on the main floor and a series of paintings and sculptures on the lower floor, in which a succession of elements create disturbance and interference, challenging and questioning the limits of order, perceptual consistency, and each individual's responsibility within the community.

The exhibition is laid out as a system of openings, forms that seek to create a certain settled, normalized, unassailable and objective rhythm subverted by the intrusion of minimal distortions. Invaded by imperfections and dashed expectations, the logic, intuition, rigour and imagination inherent to the mathematical method assert themselves as indissoluble categories in this otherwise theoretically perfect system. An ensemble of eternally repeated modules creates an apparently ordered visual cadence, to which the artist adds anomalies and exceptions that capture our attention, setting off a rhythm that reminds us the subjective perception of a larger system may only be defined through reciprocity and a shared consensus regarding intent, vision and objectives.

Esther Stocker's hallmark abstractionism and geometry are projected on two parallel tracks that come together: as a spatial painting or expanding pictorial space in the installation, and as paintings and sculptures that engender a focusing, static synthesis. She conjures up a framework of debate around specific issues through free forms that detach from order: desire, the role of imagination, open logic, the ambiguity and uncertainty of a system, mathematical precision and its breakdown, raising questions about things that we thought we knew and take for granted. Without giving in to the constant fugue towards the irrational that is a hallmark of present-day reality, the artist attempts to cast doubt on principles followed and accepted as dogma, seeking out a new paradigm that, as in the scientific process, has the ability to reorder our awareness of the reality we inhabit.

ESTHER STOCKER
"RETURN TO RATIONALITY"

Milan, Galleria 10 A.M. ART (Corso San Gottardo, 5)
24 March - 27 May 2022

Opening: Thursday 24 March 2022 at 5 p.m.

Opening hours: from Tuesday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and from 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
On other days by appointment only

Free entry

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