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Anne-Marie Jugnet, *mourant, chacun, seul, de peur*, 1990

PARIS

Anne-Marie Jugnet

Froment and Putman

The words painted or photographed by Anne-Marie Jugnet float enigmatically in their cold, neutral space, suggesting a challenge or judgement made by an unidentifiable voice. These are not the artist's words, but words for which the artist serves as intermediary. They are not aggressive, and they do not buttonhole; rather, their implacable, calm presence insists that we find some application for them.

The earliest of the works on show was also the least representative, both in the relative 'richness' of its form and in the clarity of its procedure: *mourant, chacun, seul* and *de peur* ('dying', 'everyone', 'alone' and 'of fear') are four blue rectangles of wood aligned in a brass frame, with each block bearing one of the titles and a comma in light, copper-coloured, Baskerville lettering. It is clear that the work mimes its proposition, the separation of the four blocks repeating the separation enacted by the commas and stated by the titles; to this cool language game can be added the blue glaze on the wood — French idiom speaks of *peur bleue* — and the englobing effect of the frame, as in *chacun* — there is no exception to this condition.

The same cannot be said of the remaining works, in which the use of austere black, greys and whites advertises their own physical emptiness. The aim now seems to give resonance, to strain the attention. *Immense oubli* ('Great Forgetting', or oblivion) offers only small, thin black writing in the middle of a white space, the words being as small as possible with their fragility being emphasised by the ground. The work aspires to immateriality while at the same time denying it. *Laissons les temps passer* is written in white on white, again on the verge of imperceptibility. The conjunction of the temporal idea and pure whiteness is reminiscent of Roman Opalka's obsessive concern to document his existence through painting, as others live out their time, in a series of works that move from black to

white, through every shade of grey. Here, however, the whites and greys do not signify a process but create an element. It is impossible to avoid psychological or spiritual connotations when defining the space of these works because despite their clinical finish, their rhetoric is one of depth.

Jugnet seems aware of the dangers implicit in this combination. In the most interesting of the works on show — *Devenir tout, Sans dire mot, Penser a rien, Etre là* — she uses photography to blur the forms of words, presenting them as a barely discernible — illegible in the case of *Devenir tout* — haze of white on a graduated grey ground. The 'statements' achieve an intense presence although remaining somehow physically unfocused; this effect is heightened by the reflective glass covering the works, which integrates elements of the surroundings, in particular the spectators. The works are distinct presences, emanations which do not so much confront us as offer an extension of our thoughts while posing questions about their own origins.

Charles Penwarden

ZURICH

Giro Annen
Galerie Walcheturm

Vaclav Pozarek
Kunstraum Aarau

Giro Annen (b. 1957) freely uses elements from both minimal and figurative art. Trained in photography, he is fascinated by strongly modelled surfaces and his most recent pieces follow on from earlier, more figurative, works in clay shown at the Zurich Shedhalle in 1988; these were created in front of a working television and shown in sequence as three-dimensional statues. The fluidity of modelling in the new work establishes a kind of rivalry with the stasis of objects distributed erratically around the space. Although they are hand-made, they have something of the ready-made about them, like archaeological finds from the present day, offered as art works in the gallery and subject to a particular kind

of reading.

The three wall-pieces by Vaclav Pozarek (b. 1940) in Aarau's temporary new exhibition space seem at first to have little to do with Annen's work. The playful, craftsmanlike and precise wooden constructions are variations on the theme of a vertical, horizontal or diagonal plane and question the notion of an ideal vertical. The planes lie diagonally in various boxes and their location in the space seems to orientate them towards the perpendicular. Although there are duplications, otherwise identical pairs of boxes gain individual identity through their location in the space, becoming constructs of memory or of vague foreknowledge. Sculptural extravagance determines the positioning and presentation of minimalist boxes. It also creates a hazardous, distanced, connection with the exhibition space — the walls themselves come under scrutiny as duplications of the vertical.

If Donald Judd's boxes are variants within a series, Pozarek's principle of twinned sculpture and the combination of various different works casts doubt on the idea of series and variation. The brown tea-chests



Vaclav Pozarek, view of installation at Kunstraum Aarau, 1991