

Numéro

The colorful follies of Bernard Frize at the Center Pompidou and at the Perrotin gallery

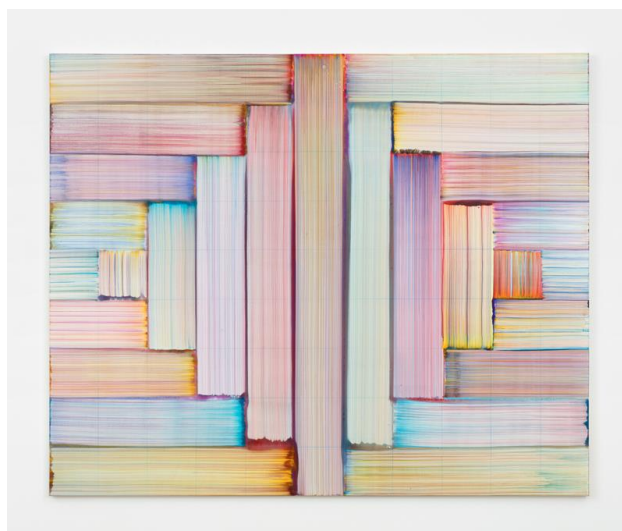
ART

From the end of May to the end of August in Paris, two retrospective exhibitions celebrate the painting of the French artist Bernard Frize. In a few works, discover behind the scenes of his fascinating practice.

Abstract painting is far from having revealed all its secrets, and the abundant work of Bernard Frize can testify to it. Celebrated in Paris all summer long by two personal exhibitions, one at the Pompidou Center and the other at the Perrotin Gallery, the latter has been painting the possibilities of pictorial practice for over forty years. In 1977, the French artist introduced it to the public through a series of canvases built by perpendicular acrylic colored lines.

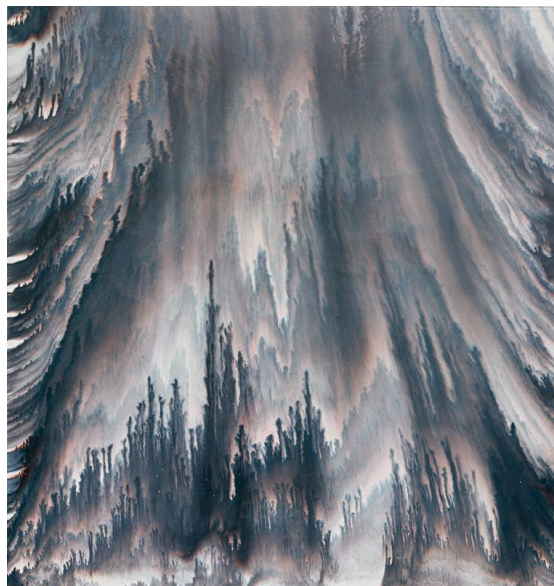
"Painting is a way of exploring ideas and giving them a body to live in order to be seen and shared."

Since then, Bernard Frize has been able to explore the potentialities of the material and the support through many techniques, which result in surprising works of precision and freedom: the use of patterned rolls, dried lacquer or ink and drips, mother-of-pearl are all processes that he has discovered and refined over the years. As the artist himself says, *"painting is a way of exploring ideas and giving them a body to inhabit in order to be seen and shared."* If chance sometimes seems to reign in his abstract compositions, they never escape the establishment of a precise protocol presiding over their conception. To discover the work of this materialist and colorist relentless, discover the secrets of realization of some of his emblematic works.



Structured canvas, released painting: *Haoh*, 2018

"The stress releases the action". This series of very recent works presented at the Perrotin gallery resonates with the motto of the movement Oulipo, pronounced by the writer Georges Perec. Bernard Frize structures the surface of the canvas by horizontal and vertical lines that he draws with a brush brush flat and very wide. The mixture of acrylic and resin helps to shade the paint, which becomes more watery and changing: within this precise grid, the color is released thanks to the material.

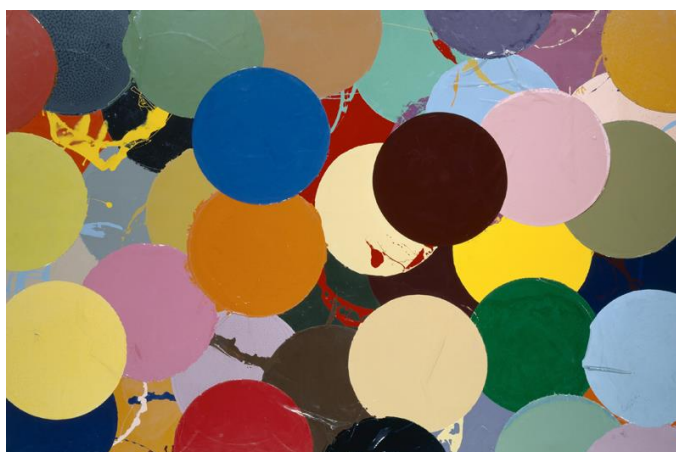


Laziness at work: *ST78 n°2*, 1978

While Bernard Frize has always been attentive to the establishment of precise protocols, his practice also shows a saving of time and material. A year after the completion of his first series, he tries to reproduce his effect thanks to the Roulor, a paint roller already including on his own surface a pattern allowing, by soaking the color, to make his own wallpaper. By applying it on canvases of different formats, the artist gives pride of place to the random properties of the object and allows laziness to speak.

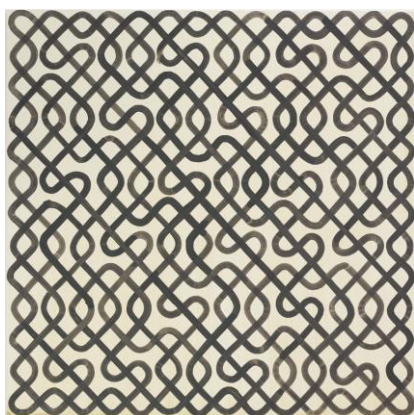
Pearly colours and dark landscapes: *RAMI*, 1993

In order to create this series of astonishing compositions on the border of the figurative, the artist has created a veritable pictorial mixture mixing ink and mother-of-pearl with acrylic. This liquid material is then controlled only by its orientation of the canvas: the patterns are formed according to its more or less contained runs. By this process, Bernard Frize allows chance to dominate the canvas, subject to the effects of this emulsion.



Paint, Pots and Skins: *Suite Segond 120F*, 1980

The discovery of this other technique must, there too, much to chance: one morning, Bernard Frize notices in his pots of industrial lacquer a crust formed by dried paint. He carefully extracts fine circular skins, which he uses as stickers to compose his canvas. The dry surface and the cool underside of these "skins" allow a natural collage where the paint spreads freely.



Continuous vibrations: *N° 10*, 2005

This work presents one of the key actresses of Bernard Frize's painting: the line continues. To achieve this technical feat in just twenty minutes, the artist is inspired by a mathematical theorem constructing space from a single line that never crosses. This then winds the canvas, creating a fascinating labyrinthine mesh where the eyes go astray.



Painting with others: *Rassemblement*, 2003

This time, the continuous line dear to the artist gives rise to a collaborative work. In all, five people are involved in this ten-hand work, a panel necessary to invest an area of more than 7m2. The brushes then pass from hand to hand without ever leaving the canvas.



At the frontiers of optical art: *Isaac*, 2004

By constructing these gradients in oil painting, Bernard Frize is illustrated in a great mastery of trompe l'oeil. Distributed in this way, these sinuous and colorful lines create a visual vertigo that is reminiscent of the illusions provoked by optical art. The works come to life in tune with their moving spectator.



Contrasting Clouds: *Travis*, 2006

In order to realize these multicolored clouds, the artist begins by painting a flat brush where he pre-compartmentalizes the color, which allows him to then draw simultaneously distinct and contrasting lines. Fast and efficient, this method allows him to create immediately and at once his works, on which the artist never returns after their realization. In *Travis*, he chooses to associate distant and complementary tones to compose a set suffocated by the color which, according to his words, "doubts and seeks".