

LOUIS CANE 1974

**Opening Saturday March 14, 2015
From 4pm to 9 pm**

Why show five works that Louis Cane created between 1972 and 1974?
Dare we say because they haven't sprouted a wrinkle despite being folded and put away for 4 decades?

It's not a very formalist response, but it cuts to the quick as Louis Cane did with these paintings. First he spread a out canvas on the floor (in the beginning they were sheets) and cut out a rectangular swathe which he folded over. Like Jackson Pollock or Helen Frankenthaler, Louis Cane painted on an unstretched canvas on the ground. But that was far from the Cedar Bar, and Clement Greenberg was digested as he was translated.

Because, after 40 years in storage, these paintings are almost more surprising now than at first view. In those days, one daren't evoke the painter's craft, since the critics were all advocating pictorial praxis.

In a text from 1972, Louis Cane described his method:

"First: the canvas is on the ground, entirely spread out, no drawing nor any kind of mark intervenes to limit the color. Simply the color will cover some of the white ground. Second: the canvas is folded in half lengthwise, I trace and cut the fabric then spread out the canvas afresh. Third: having applied the color, I reconsider the new image; I highlight or accentuated the forms and essentially I 'do what it takes to please myself'."

That same year, Marcelin Pleynet explains that Louis Cane (and Dezeuze and Devade) propose to "come to grips with that which, in multiple forms, has invested in the religiosity of art to point the repressed, the materialist base and the productive forces which are constituent."

At that time, one was quite the formalist (and for some, somewhat Maoist). Today, few readers are tempted to peruse the publications that disseminated these texts, and now conserve them. But these paintings by Louis Cane continue to titilate our sensibilities. Last century, one saw them as the realization of a praxis. In 2015, we admire the economy of means and the visual polyvalence. IThe flap produced by the incision in the canvas opens a space on the wall. This space is not part of the painting yet remains integral to the picture. Back then, Louis Cane questioned pictorial space by considering Chinese painting. To liberate himself from the conventions of Renaissance perspective without renouncing pictorial space it was necessary to start with discourse. Today only the painting endures and with it the work's persisting pertinence.

Rachel Stella

Rachel Stella defends hard line modernism, with a particular interest in periodical studies, ekphrasis and printmaking. She has published essays about Benjamin Péret, Black Mountain College, Ad Reinhardt, Jonathan Williams, Aldo Crommelynck, Supports/Surfaces. Forthcoming in 2015: «When Kitsch Becomes Form» in Investigations : the expanded field of writing in the works of Robert Morris (ENS Lyon), «On the Record» in Eileen Gray: E1027 (University of Texas, Austin).