

## **Raphaëlle Goethals**

### **ARTIST'S STATEMENT**

With its immobile, bordered presence, painting asks us for time, humility, patience and reflection. In the vast space in front of us, in the field of consciousness drawing us in yet staring back at us, we succumb to a powerful gravitational pull where we can recognize ourselves.

Focusing on painting as a space of exploration, Raphaëlle Goethals has used wax and resin as her signature medium for the past fifteen years. Probing the physicality of the materials, Goethals works in a process of layering, pouring, scraping off, effacing, leaving traces of earlier information; having established her own vocabulary in the form of distinctive groups of paintings which evolve concurrently.

Goethals preoccupation with space, depth, and the fundamentality of light testifies to her continuing interest in the evolution and history of painting and in the point at which language originates. Her vast surfaces refer to a Jungian space, a semiotic world, an uncoded, unarticulated space of interpretation. At the intersection of the intuitive and the decisive, these paintings celebrate uncertainty and flux. The internalized landscape is reduced to its minimal resonance: the sound of the wind, the dust on a windshield, and the further abstracted notion of nature.

Trusting an intuitive sense of rightness, and acknowledging the inescapable history of the medium, Goethals is interested in blurring of boundaries. For example, as a verbal and cultural surimposition, the discreet presence of the grid anchors us in present time. An unapologetic nod to modernism and the vocabulary of painting, it coexists here with vast, glowing, sublimely luminous surfaces. While gestural, Goethal's work display a remarkable restraint. The patient eye will discover discreet references to art historical antecedents whispering from behind her painted veils.

The complexity of materials, the seductively patient layering of material is extravagant, yet takes us to the essence, stripped away of any distractions and aiming for a clarity of thought. Constantly bombarded with information, we are increasingly accustomed to simultaneity of experiences. These paintings, with their distilled, vulnerable, and subtle surfaces remind us to stop and pay attention. Luring the viewer in a space of contemplation, the current body of work attempts to bridge the personal and universal, the expressive and the minimal. We are exposed to the vulnerability of present times. Ultimately, the paintings are massively silent.

Raphaëlle Goethals, April 2009