

felice varini

rectangle, ellipse & disques, 2010

opening Saturday, April 10th at 3pm

Swiss artist Felice Varini has been creating a body of work that situates itself on the frontier of pictorial creation for close to thirty years. His work and his paintings develop beyond the canvas. Urban landscapes and closed spaces with pronounced architectural features are his terrains of action, in which geometric figures are inserted in the space at regular and irregular intervals so that the work can be considered in its visual coherence from a specific point of view.

Felice Varini has created the installation *rectangle, ellipse & disques* for the galerie Xippas in its stairwell. Except for a small number of projects, the monumental and emblematic stairwell remains a passageway that few artists have invested since the gallery opened in 1991. The simple geometric forms of Varini's installation dramatically change one's perception of the space and counteract the complexity of its architecture.

Even the title of the work makes reference to the complex relationship between forms and the space, that becomes the support of the *œuvre*. The rectangle is the threshold of the stairwell that predates the work; the ellipse is the painted part of the work; and the discs refer to the empty zone in which the eye wanders and is lost. Over the span of a year, the visitors of the galerie Xippas will be able to experience this vertiginous work, whose form accompanies our ascension into the space of the gallery's temporary exhibitions, and which gives the visitor a consciousness of the proportions of their body *vis-à-vis* the surreal proportions of the space.

As Varini writes, *"Architectural space, and all that it encompasses, is my terrain of action. These spaces are and continue to be the primary canvases of my painting. For each project, I invest a different space in situ, and my work thus evolves with relation to the specificities of the space. In general, I study the site, taking into account its architecture, its materials, its history and its function. Working with these different spatial considerations, I choose one point of view, around which my intervention takes form.*

What I call point of view is a point chosen with precision, generally located at my eye level, and if possible, located in an obligatory point of passage, like an opening between two rooms or a landing... However, this is not a prerequisite because many spaces do not have a determined circulation pattern. The choice is thus often arbitrary.

The point of view functions as the point from which to read the work, a possible departure point from which to approach the painting in the space. The painted form is coherent when the viewer is at the point of view. When the viewer steps away from this point, the work encounters space, generating an infinity of points of view of the form. Hence, I do not consider the work effective from the initial point of view; rather it is one point of view among multitudinous views that the viewer can experience.

Even if I establish a particular reference to the architectural characteristics that influence the form of the installation, my work remains nonetheless independent of the architecture that it confronts.

The point of departure for constructing my paintings is a real situation. This reality is never altered, erased, modified...I am interested and enticed by the space in its complexity. I work in the 'here and now.'"

Felice Varini was born in 1952 in Locarno, in the Swiss Canton of Tessin. He lives and works in Paris.

Among his numerous installations in public spaces, Varini's interventions took place in the Swiss village of Vercorin (2009); at the Nagoya University in Japan (2008); in the French town of Saint-Nazaire (2007 & 2009); in the Bay of Cardiff (2007); at the MAC/VAL- Contemporary Art Museum of Val de Marne at Vitry-sur-Seine, France (2005); at the Peugeot headquarters, Avenue de la grande Armée in Paris (2002); and at the Société Générale headquarters in la Défense, France.

In 2009, he participated in the *Niigata Water and Land Art Festival* in Japan, and in 2008 he participated in the Singapore Biennial. The *Maison rouge/Fondation Antoine de Galbert* in Paris exhibited his work in 2007, as well as the Osaka Art Kaleidoscope and the Musée Antoine Bourdelle, Paris, in 2006. Varini made an installation in the Orangerie at Versailles for the *Nuit Blanche* in 2006. Also in 2006, realized *Sept droites pour cinq triangles (Seven straights for five triangles)* on the rue Ambroise Paré and the Gare du Nord, both in Paris. This work was presented previously at the Place de l'Odéon in Paris in 2003 and was acquired by the municipality of Paris.

NEWS :

Design Vertigo, exhibition organized by Design Miami & Fendi, Spazio Fendi, Via Sciesa 3, Milan Italy, April 14th-18th, 2010.

Monumental work *Square with four circles*, installation in the city of New Haven, CT. Inauguration June 4th, 2010.

For more information, please visit Felice Varini's website: <http://www.varini.org/>