

# Robert Zandvliet

## *le corps de la couleur*

Press release  
Esther Darley

30 January - 06 March 2021

In Robert Zandvliet's new series of paintings, color bursts off the canvas. Until now, color had been a matter of intuition for Zandvliet; the choice depended very much on his motif. But here the reverse is the case: color determines the image. As an irresistible magnetic force, it influences and seduces us even before we've recognized its form. In this way Zandvliet explores what he calls 'the color's body', the shape in which a color is optimally manifest. For as Rudolf Steiner once put it, color is under no circumstances ever real but always an image of something. But does each color have such a form, a body in which that emerges the most distinctly? And how does that form influence our perception of color? For Zandvliet, 'Le corps de la couleur' – a series of monumental paintings, all in the same format – is a constant search for the effect and the essence of color. "Not until I've found the color's form," he says, "can I then let go of it."

The way in which a color is optimally manifest differs with each of the paintings in this series. In the pale bluish *Inkarnaat*, Zandvliet painted layers of thinly applied colors that subtly filter through each other. Only the soft pink contours suggest buttocks, isolated from the body. The color seems to change with every movement of the viewer. In *Yellow*, on the other hand, the color lies on the canvas in bright horizontal bands. The yellow sets the image in motion: it radiates in the middle, and gently recedes at the top and bottom. But the greyish band in the middle, in which a blurry landscape seems to loom forth, makes the yellow sharp and forceful.

And then there is *Terra*, a seductive weave of pink, orange and brown hues that overlap each other in sparsely painted bands and mottled areas, while the linen shows through here and there. Roof tiles may come to mind at first, but because Zandvliet avoids perspective and merely suggests contours instead of defining them, we're overwhelmed by the color that shines at us in all sorts of gradations. Each color thus requires its own approach.

With his titles Zandvliet manages to heighten our perception of the colors. The Dutch word *Inkarnaat* means 'the color of flesh', which comes from the Latin word *Incarbare*, meaning 'embodied in flesh' or 'incarnate'. And *Grène*, where feathery grass in varying shades of green literally seems to dance back and forth before our eyes, is an ancient Celtic word for both grass and growth, which points to the origins of 'green'.

In 'Le corps de la couleur' Zandvliet untangles the meaning of color and seeks a new perspective in order to arrive at its essence. The result, as attractive as it is elusive, heightens our capacity to interpret and perceive.

translation: Beth O'Brien