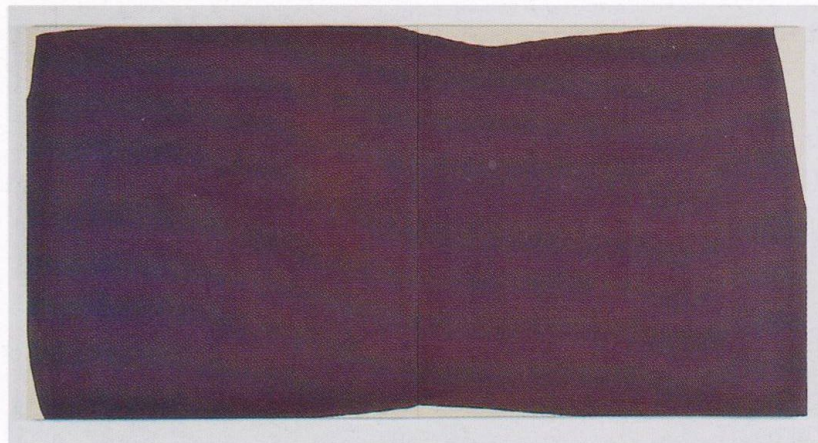


# Stéphane Bordarier

GALERIE JEAN FOURNIER

In the nine untitled works presented here, all from 2010 and 2011, Stéphane Bordarier pursues the exploration of painting—more specifically, of color—that he began in the early 1980s and has since steadily deepened. As in the past, he works on his canvases flat, spreading out the paint with the aid of spatulas or scrapers over a base of wet rabbit-skin glue, the drying time of which determines the duration of the piece's execution—a few hours at most. During this process, the color not only attaches itself to the support but also acquires, as it mixes with the glue, a material quality that is very particular, at once opaque and transparent: A kind of matte skin forms that, as it absorbs light, renders perceptible the infinite nuances and variations enlivening its surface. Accordingly, Bordarier does not develop his colors in advance, but rather on the canvas itself, as one can see by examining



Stéphane Bordarier,  
*Untitled, 10 VIII 2011*,  
oil on canvas, diptych,  
55 1/8 x 110 3/4".

the edges of his paintings. Drips—here blue and yellow, there red and blue—bleed together to create greens and purples; they aren't uniform and, above all, they visibly retain the opposite qualities of the primary colors, cold or warm, from which they stem. It is as if Bordarier were returning to a certain childhood memory of painting—the enchanting discovery of the possible metamorphoses of color—while engaging in a dialogue with the already long history of the use of pure color and in particular with Color Field painting and the monochrome.

The formats of these large paintings (mostly horizontal diptychs made of two square canvases) as well as the height at which they were installed here enabled the viewer's immersion into the color sensation—or rather the color *sensations*, plural, since variations in light throughout the day tended to modify perception of them and since the surfaces, as one plunges into them, prove to be far from homogeneous. Stepping forward and back, moving down the length of the paintings, viewers could discover fleeting nuances, nearly imperceptible internal movements. In doing so, we became aware of what constitutes, perhaps, one of the most important aspects of this group of works. One saw how the field of color subtly plays with the edges; never does the color in fact fully cover the surface. There always remain some reserved areas of canvas, especially near the corners of each square. One thus perceived the general movement that yielded these fields of color. Just as Bordarier says that he is “chased away” from the canvas by the setting of the glue, one could say he chases away the paint—and that's what engenders the feeling of expansion characterizing these works: a movement that sometimes overflows the edge and flirts with the side of the support, elsewhere just missing it at the last moment, as if as late as possible. Thus a tension is established between the strict geometry of the stretchers and the somewhat distorted fields that seem to peel off and fold over, like old or dog-eared pages, obliterating the corners, pulling them toward the center, into the heart of the color vibration.

—Guitemie Maldonado

Translated from French by Molly Stevens.