doi:10.32020/ArtandDoc/33/2025/24

SUMMARY

Leszek BROGOWSKI

Bernard Brunon: A Layer of Acrylic Paint on Dry Plaster

Painting has three meanings for Bernard Brunon: To paint in order to be an artist painter; To paint one's apartment or to be a house painter; "My work as a house painter has become my work as an artist," he concludes after resolving this logical syllogism (in his book, *THAT'S PAINTING Productions*, Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2008, p. 69).

He reached this conclusion at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. This was a time when conceptual art was beginning to exhaust its creative possibilities, and the widespread return of expressive painting was just around the corner. Brunon's idea is rooted in the work of Ad Reinhardt, also a painter, but a conceptual one, whose tautological statements about the definition of art became the basis for Joseph Kosuth. So, when we speak of painting (both Reinhardt's and Bruno's), we're on conceptual ground. However, it's not just about the definition of art, but about a specific economics of art. Bruno's company, That's Painting Productions, can provide all kinds of services, for residents and gallery owners. It's the same painting, but a different value—artistic and marketable. Because there are things in art that are invisible, like the difference between a house painter and a painter. This is a purely conceptual, semantic difference. Theorists like Stephen Wright have undertaken to unravel the knot of dependencies that Bruno created, seeing in his art a renewed question of the relationship between art and reality, a task set us by Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaists. Just like a ready-made object, painting can be a work identical to a non-work (of art). The novelty in Bruno's concept is not the painting-object, but the role of the viewer, who is to be semantically active, thinking rather than looking. This is also the point where Bruno's concept of painting intersects with Reinhardt's. However, art history, from early modernism and the Incoherents, through geometric abstraction, to minimalists and the post-avant-garde postmodernism, provides evidence of the philosophical dimension of painting, that, contrary to aesthetics, painting is a thinking machine. Laurent Marissal cleverly critiqued Bruno's concept: as an artist, he wanted to work for his company. Bruno refused. Reflections on the dialectic between artistic and labor work end when the creator's individuality and their right to their own creation threaten to be questioned.