Horizons

Line

The lines across his watercolours are made in pencil. Hadrien Loumaye draws them on his canvases too, when he wants a line to be straight, but not predictable. A straight line drawn by hand is always irregular. Then he puts a gesture of paint along the line, but it always deviates. The edge of the painted line does not exactly match the pencil.

Light

Metal beams cast shadows on the wall opposite his studio. He places a red painting on the floor, near a window. At a different time of the day, the shadows fall inside his atelier. He lays his canvases down and traces the lines. It allows him to step away and respond to what he sees.

In Loumaye's paintings, both light and lightness come from the surface of the canvas. He takes care not to overdo it. If he uses dark colours, he leaves an open space. Often no more than a mark or two on raw canvas. Or he joins a dark painting with one that is more open.

Texture

If he uses gesso, he applies it in a thin layer with a sponge. It leaves long strokes that I still see through the paint. His gestures are light, and quite permanent, quickly absorbed by the thinly grounded cotton. The oil paint he uses is diluted, and dries fast. It lets him approach the delicacy of watercolour. Sometimes a mark or layer is still wet when he adds another gesture. Then the two merge.

Time

He shows me a few flipped canvases. Traces of gesso and blue paint have bled through to the other side. Economy of gesture, economy of means. Sometimes, when he notices a mark on a scrap of canvas, he stretches it too. Though he makes his works quickly, he finds it a pleasure to spend time with them, to allow them to change, and take on

new relations to each other. They join in diptychs and triptychs, and evolve into space.

Space

The minimal workings of Loumaye's canvases allow him to make new compositions, create pairs attached at the side, or one atop another. Recently he has begun to work with paintings in the form of lines crossing in space, one placed on top of the other at a slight angle. It's another kind of gesture. During his spring residency at Fondation CAB, he began to work with unstretched canvas. He made marks on loose cotton and hung the sheets on the walls, letting them fold over and cover each other, responding to the site.

Study

At CAB Loumaye turned to Turner's watercolours, to copy them in his own way. Studying the work of others allows him to step back from his ego and see his work from the outside. Reflection gives him space, expands his horizons. One painting on the wall, raw canvas with dark blue lines, suggests a geometrical landscape, though again, no line is truly straight. Learning from Mondriaan, says Loumaye. Artists like Piet Mondriaan, Agnes Martin, Josef Albers, Henri Matisse, appear in his research, visible if one pauses to look their way. His works coexist with their chosen precursors, but are not dependent on them. For Loumaye, visual beauty takes precedence.