

# THE PILL®

*Coverings, memories, confidences*

Joël Riff

Mireille Blanc paints images of images. In her studio, on a fresh, untouched canvas roughly cut out and attached to the wall, rectangles fill with colours. Oil paint is applied from paintbrush to the canvas, sometimes augmented with other incidental objects. The smoothness of the brushstrokes has become characteristic of Mireille Blanc's work. Marks accumulate in a constellation around the ascribed area and seem to come alive in orbit. A surplus of material. Testing of colours. These techniques occupy an intermediary space between the palette and the work of art itself. The evidence of these techniques will often be effaced by the layout of the painting, lost in invisible folds or abandoned gestures. Rags lie on the ground. A dog breathes in the corner. Such details may one day find themselves portrayed in future works, if someone chooses to immortalise them. Everything contracts, suspended on a stage. The frame provides focus. The diaphragm of an optical instrument. It is a matter of directing the eye and maintaining the focus. In her meticulous framing, the painter makes an art of edges and borders. The framing defines the fragment and its limitations, both elevating and passing judgment upon the work. It is the frame that makes the final cut in Mireille Blanc's paintings.

Mireille Blanc imagines layers of emotion and nostalgia. It is not depth she brings to this act, so much as a completely new dimension - neither the third nor the fourth dimension, but one that evades enumeration. Her practice uses painting to reveal the reality of loved amateur photographs. The child of the 1980s grows up in an era in which she witnesses the democratisation of photography, punctuated by waits for photos to be developed, frequent printing errors, and the surprise of recovering a forgotten moment whilst flicking through a photograph album. Then from one century to the next, all this becomes diluted by the immediacy of digital photography. Thus the used, worn quality found at the heart of her work, a method of production infused with the materiality of memories, blurred by a reflection, worn away by an indentation, cut off by a border. Analogue photography, which has been overtaken by the digital camera, comes into play very early in this process. Although the artist may sift tirelessly through the world, her desire to paint is not sparked by any remnant or vestige available. That which must be represented makes itself known. This spark is found in familiar even familial images.

Mireille Blanc throws a necessary veil over the surfaces. Her paintings are characterised by this delicate film or fabric, rather than a more sophisticated layering. This separates us from what we believe we see there. Panel or drapes. Awning or pelmet. Shutter or blinds. Depending on the context, there are numerous terms for these screens that serve to separate two worlds. Things take place behind the facades. And the fabric makes it possible to crease or distort our perception of things. Its delicacy carries the stigmata of artificiality, and attributes to the objects a specific texture, a tangible sensation. This resonance leads to an awareness of the mechanisms of representation and the many detours and intermediaries it necessitates. Visual obstacles will continue to accumulate, distancing us from the sources or origins. In a house, the hangings that have for decades carried the imprint of the window's outline, the trinkets that wait for something or someone, the view from the windows. Natural photographs. Hangings and other pieces of decorative embroidery provide fertile metaphors for the painter, but are also cherished as a motif. Their outdated designs provide an additional layer to this ophthalmic chemistry, by way of figurative landscapes or intricate decorations. This accentuates the strategies of formation and concealment within the movement and the play of the curtains.