

On Claude Guénard:

So boxing. Boxing? Yes, boxing, that is, that art of giving and receiving. And seeing his swollen eyelids, his slightly battered nose, you understand that Claude Guénard has received a lot. You don't have the time to worry about it secretly observing his broad massive hands, placed on the steering wheel, or rather grasping it as though he promised himself to do a figure of eight, while we drive to his studio, you guess with relief that he also had to give a lot. But now we're warned. So boxing, because that is how he paints, with the same fervor, the same generosity of his whole body, the same capacity to suffer, to take a beating, the same time that's running. All of a sudden, you're no longer surprised that before his canvases you catch yourself twisting your torso, dodging, sidestepping. Because we're really watching a fight. The confrontation is violent, the colors spurt like the blood of an open eyebrow, coagulate more than dry, swell, take shape, the gesture does not allow any repentance, it forces its way through, looks for the weakness, the opening, in such a way that the figures come out of it knocked out, deformed, mutilated, and in the same way as on the edge of a boxing ring, as on the edge of the unbearable, sometimes you close your eyes, which doesn't stop the painting any more than the fight, but in scarcely the time it takes to take a dark break between two rounds in which you see all the colors, and you've missed a sequence, for example, those plush toys that he smashes on the canvas – down for the count. Going back to his corner, Guénard can take a moment to catch his breath. He looks beyond the fight perimeter and lays eyes on a Velasquez that he revisits after Manet, on a landscape, a port, a river. Has he become subdued? Has he settled down? Don't believe it, do you recall Monzon, Tonna and the others? How can you imagine that this water that sweeps along so much painting can ever sleep?

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