

chromatic matters / Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke



**DAUGAVPILS
MARK ROTHKO
ART CENTRE**



ser-pen-tin acrylic on posters, 60 × 89 cm, 2000 *Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre Collection*
sketchbooks 1992-1998

Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke: To painting and beyond, a pictorial dialogue

While Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke's art is all about painting, she has never been afraid – indeed rather eager in fact – to challenge her own medium of choice. The original dialogue she subtly introduces between the support, the canvas, and the actual “painted presence” (rather than a static given image) that is presented to the viewer, is both instantly seductive and intriguing for a good reason. The artist paints as a dancer dances, taking into her stride all the visible and invisible particulars, re-configuring the open space that she subtly demands for her art, by the way of determined moves and unexpected dynamics. With Maibritt, canvas surface, frame borders, paint strokes, drips, are deftly submitted to an unwritten law: that of the specific artwork in the make, in which they all are to play an equivalent active role, and more and more in volume, though without eclipsing the core of their identity: paintings. Paintings in architecture, paintings spreading in space, kinetic surfaces, series and groups of wall size works, series of “cubic paintings”, they all convey the genius of a common basic practise that has progressively, and gloriously, emancipated itself from its original prerequisites.

Arrived in Paris at an early stage of her career, the artist discovered its Supports-Surfaces group whose protagonists aimed at an art that encompassed external materials, and freed the painted canvas from the frame, thus challenging the supremacy of the delimited image. Maibritt had, even before that, been deeply impressed by the American Abstract Expressionists' breakthroughs as regarded the relation between paint and canvas, canvas and frame, painting as a finished object, among whom Mark Rothko who was to remain a lasting inspiration. Maibritt felt a particular kinship with Rothko and started a series of works whose painterly dialogue of two great horizontal clouds of colour defined a painting that was visually eschewing its surface limitations. With *ser-pen-tin*, 2000 and



dark-bleu-turquoise acrylic on posters 235 × 175 cm, 1996 *Meinertz Collection, Denmark*

dark-bleu-turquoise, 1996, both present in the present exhibition, the artist definitely rendered a referential homage to Mark Rothko while imposing in her works a definitely different interaction between motif and surface. In both instances her deliberately huge blotches of colour are so to speak riding a very rough terrain, subjected to a canvas horizontally split in two, drips of colour defying the logic of a sole and only position in space... there is no meditative serenity as in Rothko's paintings but rather a painter's "ring" where shots are coming from different perspectives... The canvas presents itself more as a fighting field, where all elements are trying to make their way... multidirectional drips of colours defy the idea of a one-dimensional experience.

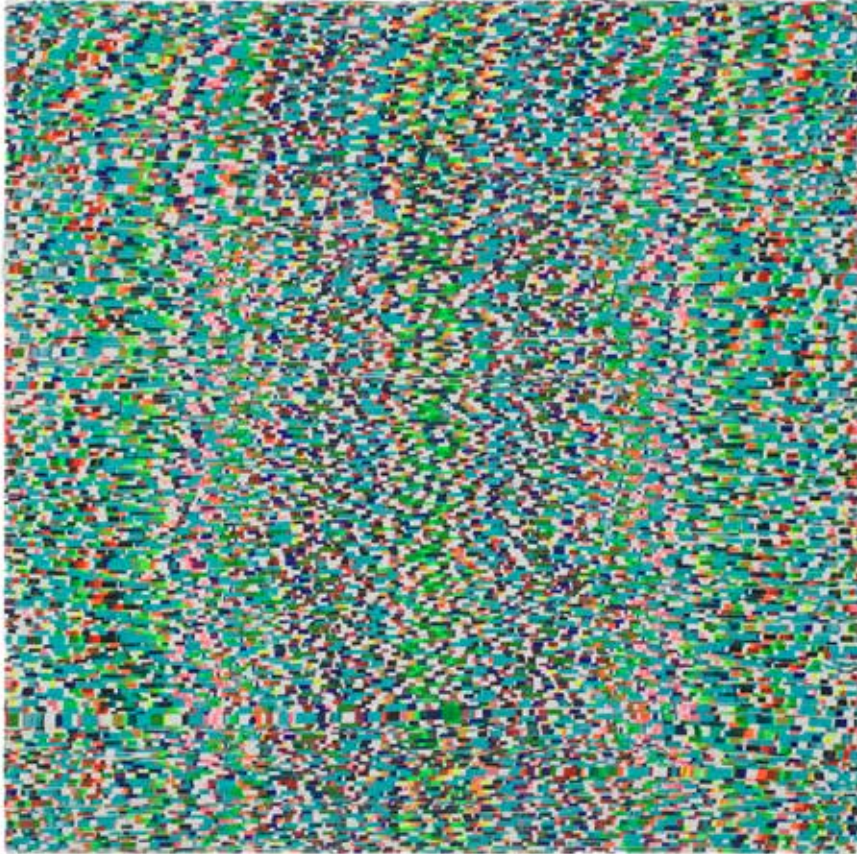
In a different vocabulary but no less efficiently the more recent series of *colour-galore* and *static-romance* and *chroma-flirt* also defy a one-dimensional approach to them. All prerequisites are here definitely challenged by the artist. The artist reconstructs, and covers, here the surface of the support, by the infinitely patient and meticulous building of a kinetic image made or the "weaving" of multiple coloured units. A deftly constructed surface that presents sizzling shapes that visually vibrate, and that wraps itself over the sides of what has become as much of an art object as a painting. That "object" can indeed take on a cubic form but also extend to an architectural size, especially when joined by similar works of wall dimensions. The *static-romance* series that had started its emancipation from the mere surface has developed into an architectural entity without losing its artistic identity.

Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke has deftly taken the grand modern tradition of painting by storm and thus created an exquisite and original development of most of its attributes while adding a spice of her own. Her colours and shapes, and their subtle interplay, have a direct emotional impact. Maibritt creates as she lives. And she does live and paint with depth and brio.

Ann Hindry

Paris, June 2019

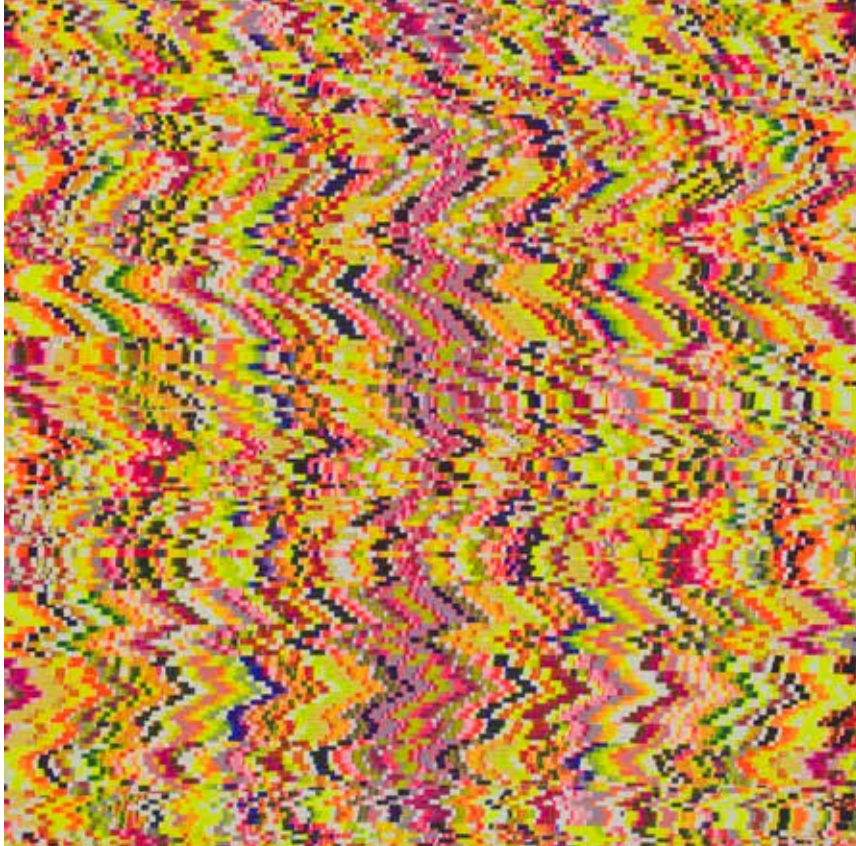
Art historian and critic, director of the Renault Art Collection



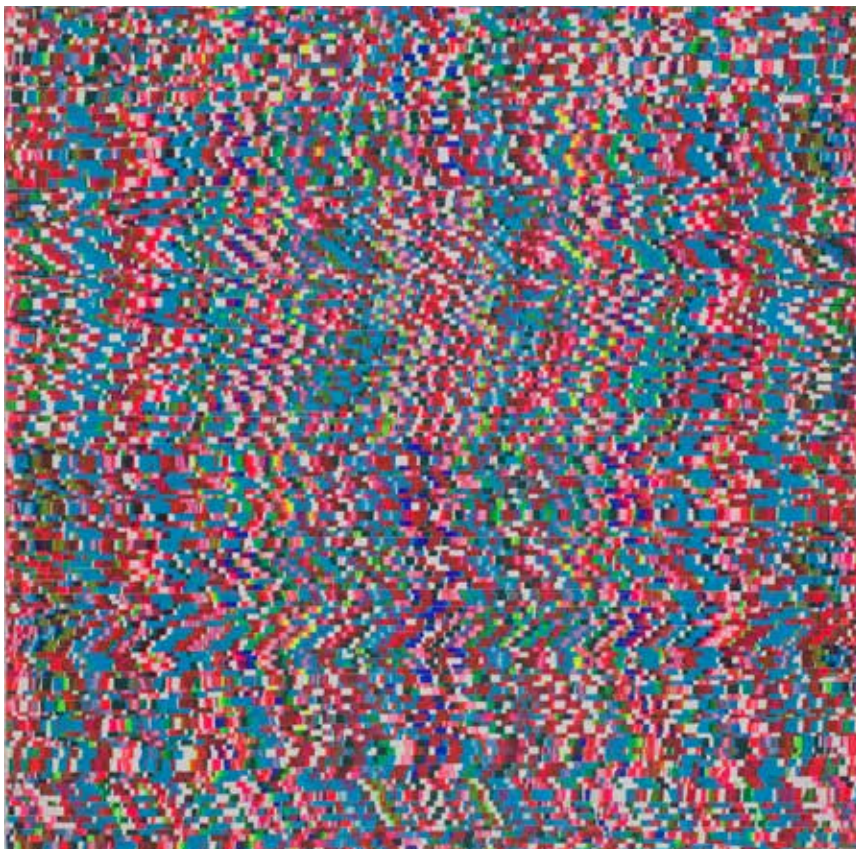
chroma-flirt no 14 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 40 × 40 × 3,5 cm, 2017



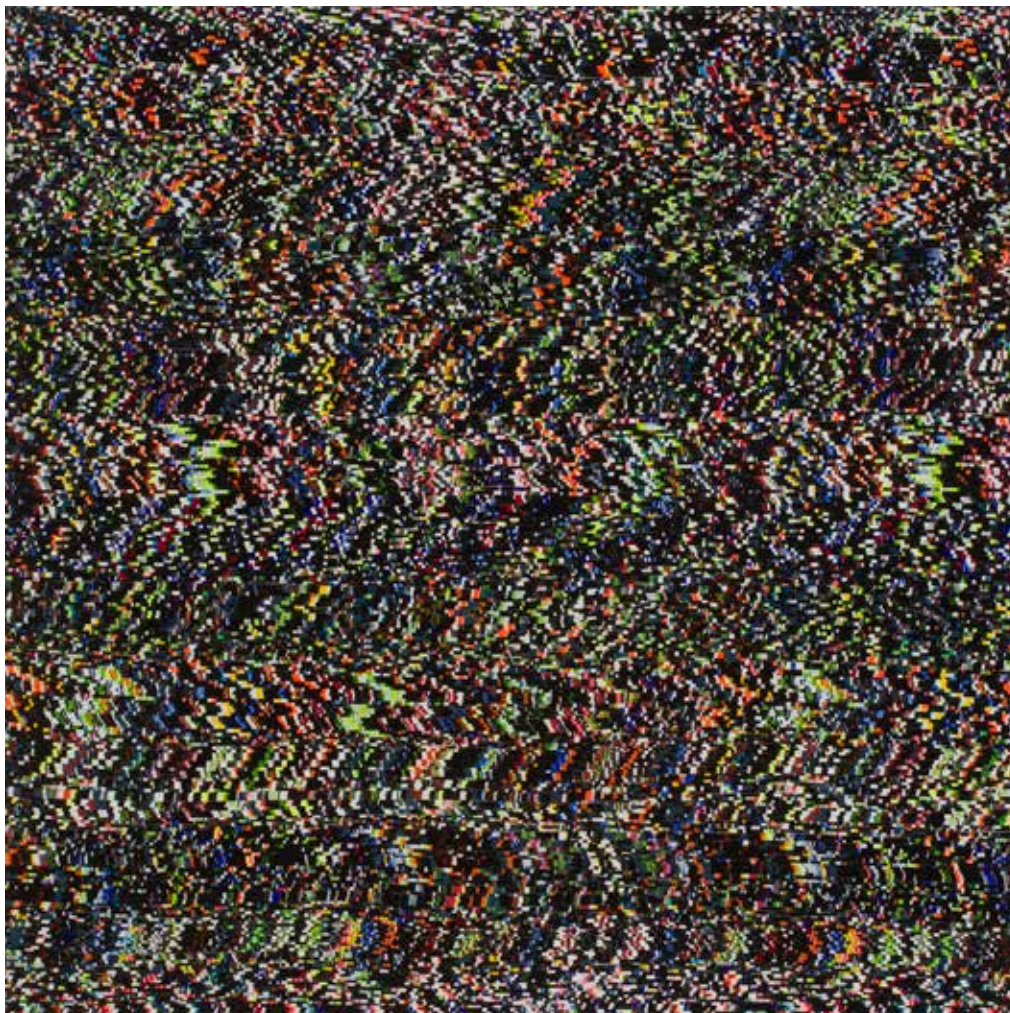
chroma-flirt no 59 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 40 × 40 × 3,5 cm, 2018



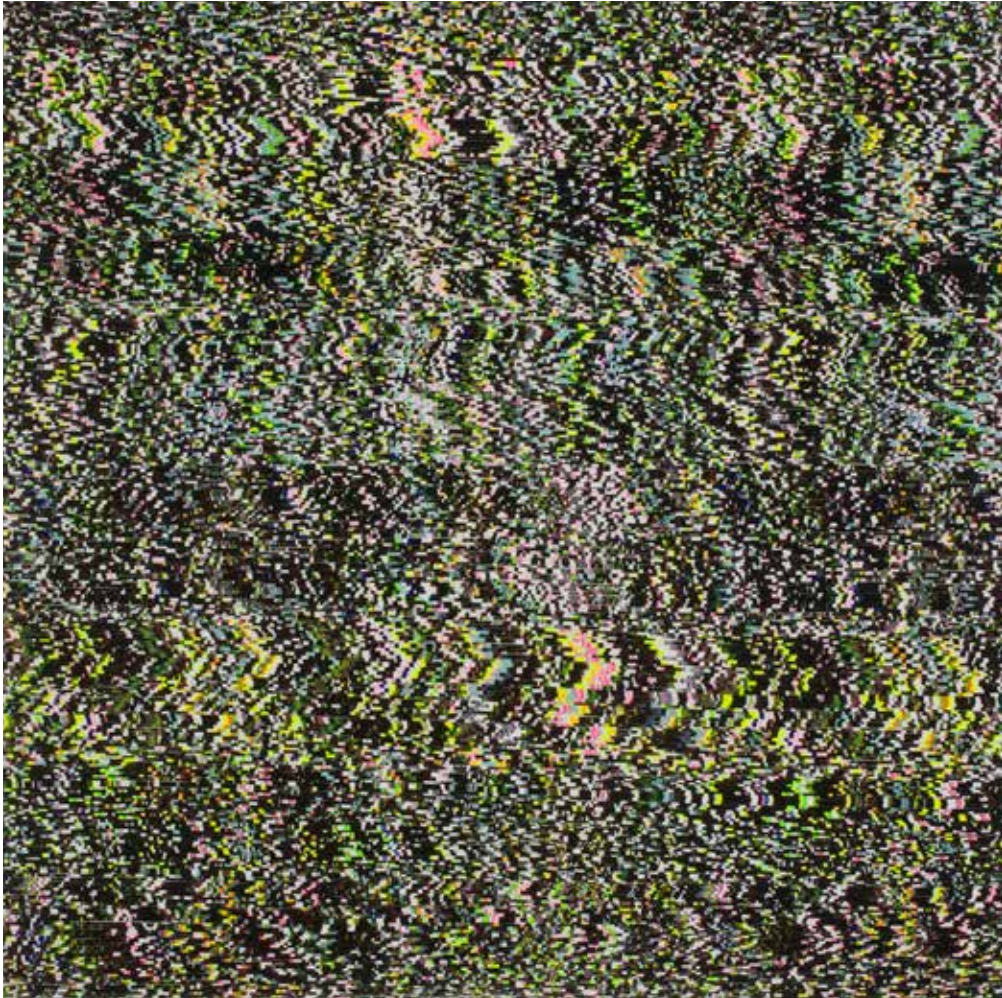
chroma-flirt no 69 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 40 × 40 × 3,5 cm, 2019 *Private collection, Copenhagen*



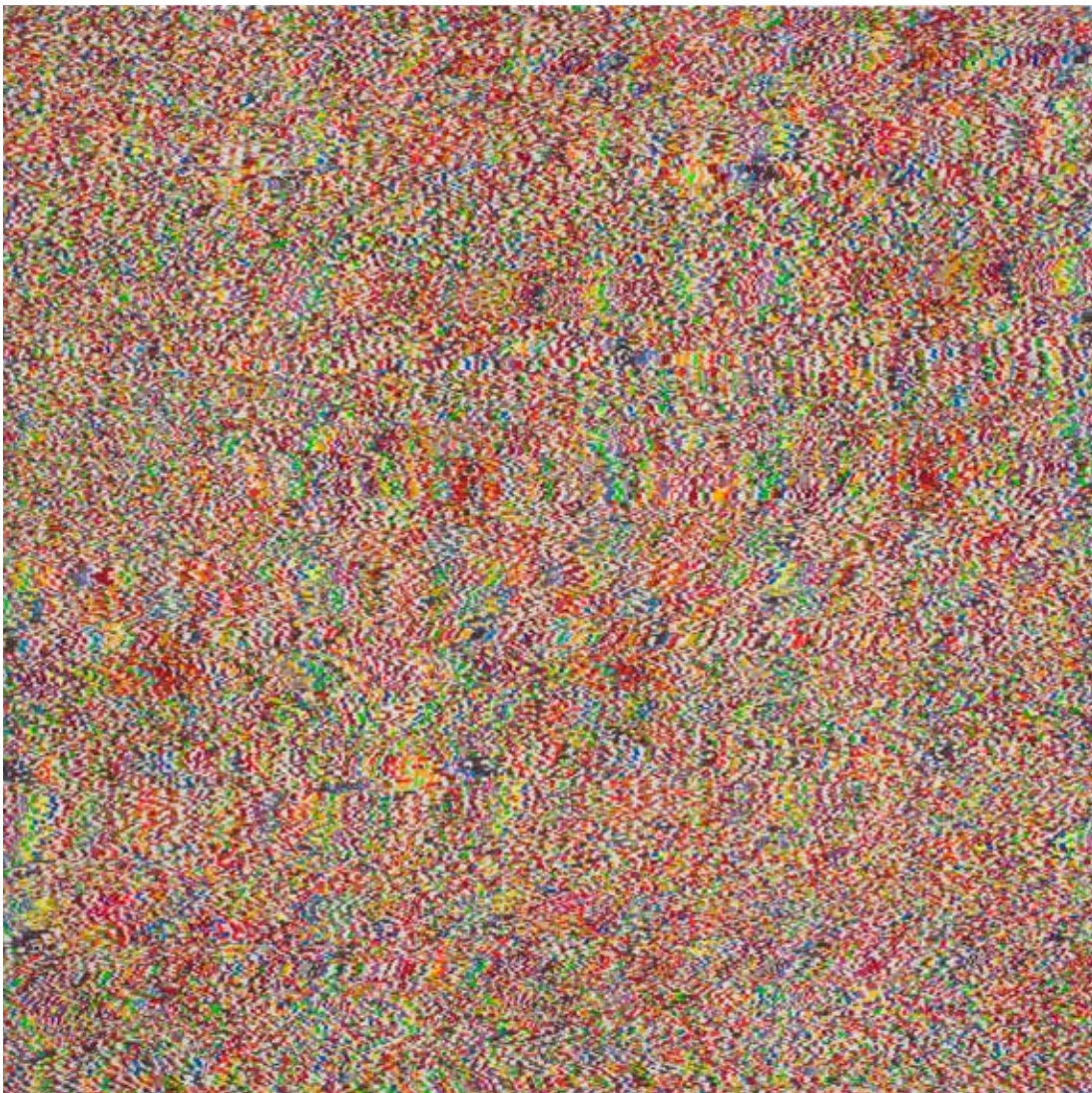
chroma-flirt no 63 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 40 × 40 × 3,5 cm, 2019



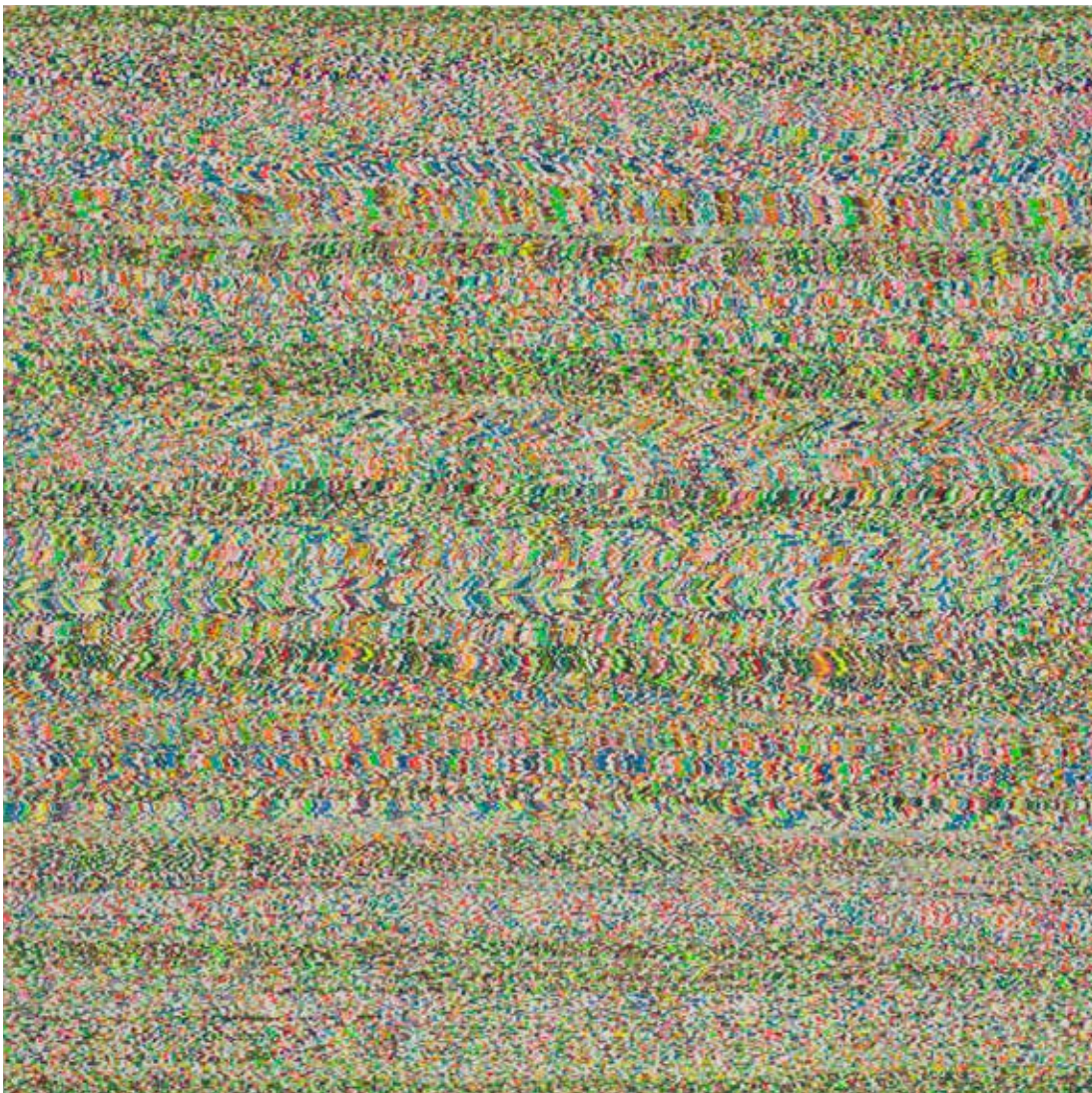
black-flirt no 04 series II acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 76 × 76 × 3,5 cm, 2018



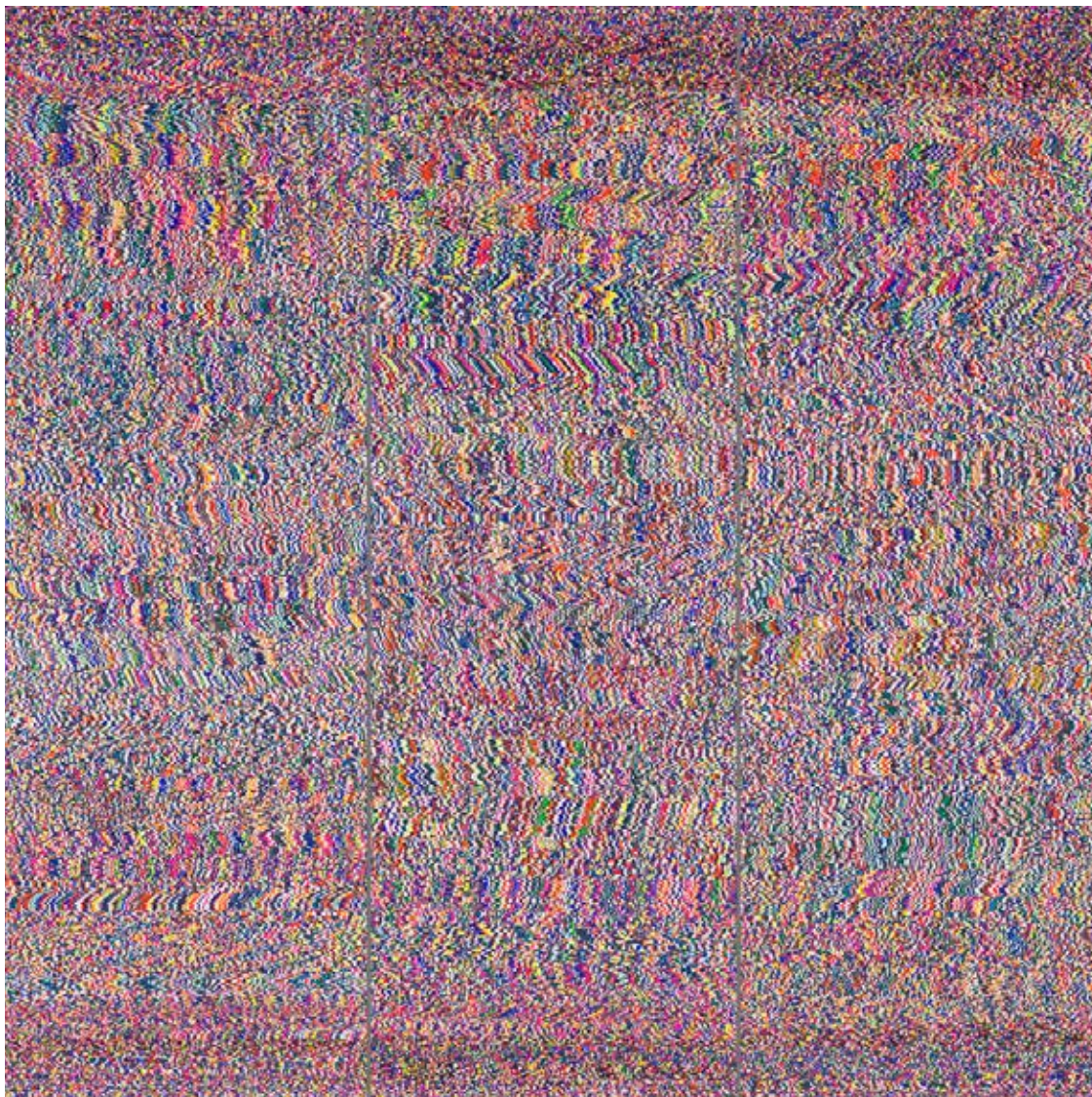
black-flirt no 07 series II acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 76 × 76 × 3,5 cm, 2018



tosca no 04 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 121 × 121 × 3,5 cm, 2017



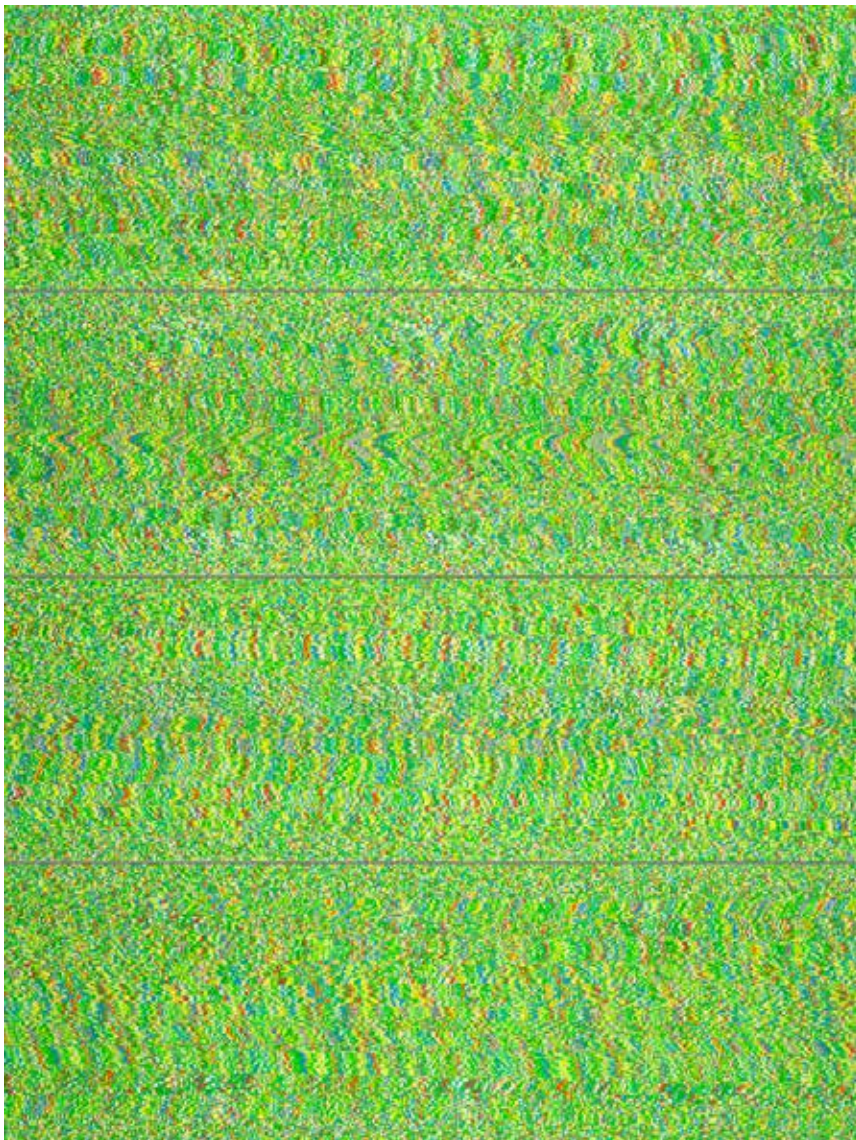
tosca no 10 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 121 × 121 × 3,5 cm, 2018



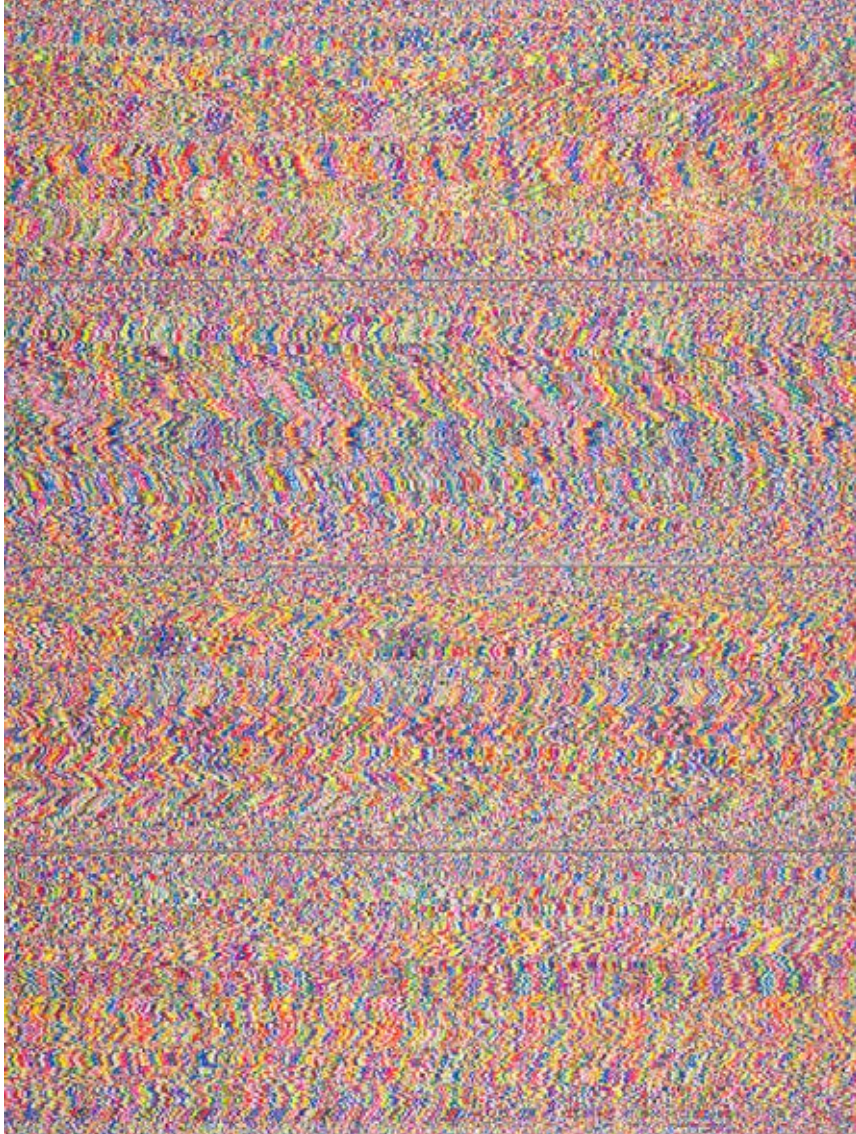
static-romance no 04 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 180 × 180 × 3,5 cm, 2019



colour-galore no 02 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 240 × 180 × 3,5 cm, 2019



colour-galore no 03 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 240 × 180 × 3,5 cm, 2019



colour-galore no 04 acrylic/oil/paper/canvas 240 × 180 × 3,5 cm, 2019

Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke was born in Copenhagen in 1967. She arrived at the Paris Ecole des Beaux-Arts from Denmark in the late eighties, where she studied painting until 1993. She lived and worked in Paris from 1986 until 2011; she currently lives and works in St Leonards-on-Sea, UK.

Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke has, by invitation, participated over the years in a number of artists' residencies around the world, including Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre in Latvia (2009) and The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in Connecticut (2007).

She has exhibited regularly throughout Europe since the early nineties. Recent solo exhibitions include *Colour Galore* with Maria Lund in Paris (2018), as well as exhibitions at Galerie Pugliese Levi, Berlin (2017, 2018), *This way Up* at Lucy Bell Fine Arts, St Leonards (2014) *Toquades* at Politikens Forhal, Copenhagen (2012), *Aspectus* at Galleri Weinberger, Copenhagen (2012) and *Twist and Tease* at Galerie Maria Lund in Paris (2011). Recent group shows include: *Almost Nothing* at Galerie Pugliese Levi in Berlin (2019), *Here comes the Sun* at Galerie Maria Lund, Paris (2015), *Ellipse* curated by British artist Erin Lawlor, at A3, Moscow (2014) and *Lust & Colours* at Banja Rathnov Gallery in Copenhagen (2013).

Her work is included in a number of private and corporate collections in Europe, North America and Asia, including Cerrutti Milan, Giorgio Armani France, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, as well as being present in the collection of Mark Rothko Art Centre in Latvia.

In the summer 2019, Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke is presenting a solo exhibition *Chromatic Matters* at Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre in Latvia. The show is her first solo exhibition in a Museum and showcases recent collage-paintings from 2016-19 in relation to, and dialogue with, selected early works on posters from the late nineties. *Chromatic Matters* is curated by Farida Zaletilo and will be on view until 8 September 2019.

chromatic matters / Maibritt Ulvedal Bjelke

05.07.2019 – 08.09.2019

DAUGAVPILS MARK ROTHKO ART CENTRE

www.rothkocenter.com

Exhibition curated by Farida Zaletilo

Editor **Farida Zaletilo**

Text **Ann Hindry**

Photographs **Colin Mills, Tim Nathan, Graeme Williams**

Print catalogue design **Pāvels Terentjevs**

Digital adaptation **Mel Algar**



**L. F. FOGHT
FOUNDATION**



DAUGAVPILS
MARK ROTHKO
ART CENTRE