



Claudio Coltorti

Your perception doesn't make it easier

April 10 – May 17th. 2025

The blue hour is the only time of day named after a color. It's the moment when one hemisphere shifts from twilight to darkness, and diurnal birds stop singing to make way for those that inhabit the night.

During this change of scene that characterizes the blue hour, the world holds its breath and plunges momentarily into silence.

Synonymous with the suspension of worlds, it's hardly surprising that this color appears in solid swathes in Claudio Coltorti's latest series. Made from Prussian blue pigments mixed with black, the velvety patches soften his most contrasting compositions. At the heart of movement, they serve as markers, allowing the eye to slow down and better grasp the figures grappling with the canvas.

Gathered at Galerie Hussenot for the artist's second solo show, the new works stand in stark contrast to those presented in 2022, when his paintings radiated warmth and the black mirror of the telephone, and its artificial light were placed at the center of intimate scenes formed by the still figures.

Today, as if swallowed in by this light and the universes it contains, the paintings are set in motion, accelerating. They become radical and fragmented ('All that follows is true', 2025). They raise the question of the strength and of the fractions of images that flash before us day after day, and of feeling unable to paint after being so assailed.

Figures that used to stand side by side are now intertwined in complex compositions. Turning into a more abstract form, Coltorti's figures are treated as both a geometric element and a human presence. Scales blend, and the roundness of a face or hand evolve into a landscape-like shapes ('Rêve éveillé' and 'Figura/paesaggio', 2025). By re-abstracting his compositions, Claudio Coltorti blurs the lines and confronts us with the loss of substance and meaning we sometime feel in the face of our contemporary society's restless flow of images.

While he constantly travels from one world to another, from the frame of his screen to that of his window and canvas, he carries with him only perceptions of color and movement. Stripped of their original violence, the images suddenly appear strikingly soft.

Softness is the key to Coltorti's work, which always oscillates between despair and rebirth, the will to fight and the need to retreat. It infuses every inch of his work: the texture of the wiped linen of the canvas gives the impression of a scene perceived from the hushed intimacy of the home, the confrontations in which we only perceive the arms of its protagonists seem to be sensual embraces, and the beam of the telephone radiates like a beacon in the night.

These canvases, conceived on a human scale, are accompanied by smaller works, dusty, melancholy landscapes ('Val di Susa dal treno', 2025) that seem intended to propose an alternative temporality – that of our real world, allowing us to apprehend the exhibition with the perspective necessary to re-act to it.

Claudio Coltorti paints from memory. Some are his own, others are collected from his telephone feed. He stages them as fragmentary re-compositions, reinterpreted as he paints. He suggests and lets himself be surprised by what happens through the act of painting. Once the work is finished, the accident makes the artwork, and what the artist thought was a tree becomes a body; a car, a landscape; a profile, an architecture.

In this way, he operates the same mechanism that we use to remember our dreams when we wake up: simple abstract impressions during the night, it is the minute we switch over to wakefulness that pushes us to make sense of these images and compose a semblance of narrative thread.

Since the silent suspense of the blue hour is now inhabited by the outrageousness of our twilight scrolling, Claudio chooses to replay the compositions specific to dawn, allowing us to dream along with him. The reality of the day takes over again ('La réalité vue par deux pigeons', 2025), rearming us.

If the blue hour warns of the death of light¹ and hangs over the exhibition as well as some of his works ('I feel as if I might be vanishing', 2025), Claudio Coltorti seems to have found its remedy: by constantly experimenting with the metamorphosis of colors and forms, he makes it possible to reinvent our collective stories.

Suddenly, the idea of crossing over to the other side appears safe and infinitely sweet.

Justine Daquin

¹ Joan Didion, *Blue Nights*, 2011