

Claudia Chaseling. The artist behind the grand-scale spatial paintings

By Vanessa Souli ([/about/vanessa-souli/](#)) - Friday, October 13, 2017



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The major preoccupation in Chaseling's work is of social, political and environmental character. Her paintings bring forward a frustration on the current state of thinking of humanity with a focus on nuclear weapons, genocides and conflict. A recurring motif which acts as the foundation of much of her work is the impact as well as the sociopolitical causes of nuclear violence; her paintings consist of successive references to the use of depleted uranium in nuclear weapons which are known for their massive destructive potency.

Claudia's unique creations presuppose a clear, direct engagement with space in order to show their real magnitude. Without exaggeration, one could claim that Chaseling's work becomes the space itself, expanding beyond all conventional dimensions of painting. The room serves as the canvas – a tool to facilitate the process of creation rather than hinder it. The boundaries between the object as an artwork (positive space) and space as its container (negative space) are dissolved as brushstrokes become purposeful 'hits' on the wall and floor only to melt out all together in a unified concept with multiple layers.

Claudia's works boast a deep research foundation which is revealed when one scrutinizes the various levels of the work; she works with mixed materials, creating a strong visual commentary within a wider historical framework. Her latest works have intensively dealt with the Iraq War and nuclear contamination from 1945 till today.



Claudia Chaselings in her studio, 2017. Photo credit: Elena Marlis Gerstl

Vanessa: How would you describe yourself as an artist and the relation of your personality to your work?

Claudia: I would describe myself as a painter. Color is my language and the way I express myself the most clearly even without words.

Vanessa: Have you done something without color?

Claudia: Yes, lots of drawings. I sometimes do very 'traditional' things, like going out and drawing stuff. However I am never really interested in what I see naturalistically but rather in the structure of and behind things. Instead of objects, I collect forms and I am always inspired by how the light shapes and reflects on this form. I am interested in the dynamic relations of light and objects and in the invisible space in between elements.

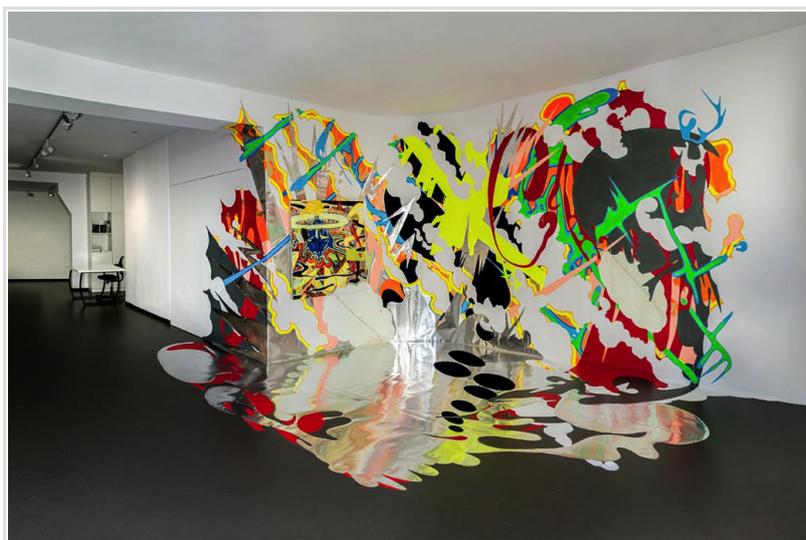
Vanessa: Would you say then that you are interested in a platonic view of things?

Claudia: I think, definitely not platonic. I would rather use the term fractal geometry. But I also find this too narrow, because it's about the visible in the world. I am mostly interested in what is behind the visible.

Vanessa: What is the process of creating a spatial painting?

Claudia: There is always a 'subject' in my work. There are particular subjects that touch me, and usually I research those over a long period of time so as to accumulate a lot of visual material. I physically visit some place (that are my

source material) so this idea grows and in the end I have in mind how I can use the visuals for my work. If possible, I take on-site pictures myself but if I can't be on sight then I usually try to visualize the place through reproductions. I never use the photos themselves though because there is too much information in a naturalistic copy of nature. Afterwards, I make sketches with pencil and then drawings and watercolors from the photographs as drafts, assembling different information together . . . And this is how I start a work. It doesn't matter if it's on the wall or the canvas. With spatial paintings, I always need to know the space very well; I need to have photos of the space, drawings of the space, and know its proportions. From this point onwards I start applying my idea. I lay my idea above the space and I want the space to go towards a particular direction with it. And every subject I paint has a particular notion I want to have in the space as well.



'inquisition', 2016. Aluminium, egg tempera and oil on wall, floor and canvas, 290 x 800 x 310 cm. Galerie Dirk Halverscheid, Munich. Photo: Beate Winter. (c) Claudia Chaselung and VG Bild Kunst Bonn 2017

Vanessa: I find it a little bit contradictory to have all this beautiful colorful work and on the background to have something so sad and dark. What do you think?

Claudia: I think it's quite aggressive, especially the neon colors represent the toxicity, and the empty fields the destruction. Of course my work is aesthetic with the goal to draw the observer in but there is always something more to see. Here (showing me the work Inquisition) you can see a US A10 war aircraft that mostly carries rockets and the dark

oval shapes are in the painting are taken from the shape of oil fields. For me it is necessary to paint the codes of the visual information and it is important that these references are in the painting. Otherwise I can't paint. I can't paint just abstract, I always need this visual motivation and the subject I want to communicate.



'Hadzici', 2016. Aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas 140 x 140 cm. Courtesy Magic Beans Gallery. (c) Claudia Chaseleng

Vanessa: *To me, your work seems like a performance because of this ephemeral character that it might get scraped off the wall anytime. How would you comment on that?*

Claudia: I would call it time-based, but if you call it performance, then this is what I would call my action in the space. Every painting performs the process of painting. My work is really about the result, about the final aesthetic.

Vanessa: *Speaking of aesthetic results, I have seen that much of your latest works have included oval canvases. Could you give more information on this choice?*

Claudia: Reflecting on the Spatial Paintings I realized that in some works there seems to be a formal contradiction between the painted biomorphs and the rigid traditional

form of rectangular stretched canvasses. If the paintings on canvas would merge more with the forms of the wall painting through their size, this contradiction would partly fade. My goal is therefore to merge the three dimensional Spatial Paintings on walls with my two-dimension paintings on canvas. Therefore, I developed the first series of oviform paintings on canvas with an oval shape with one end being narrower than the other. Seen from a particular angle, the shape of these paintings can form a circle. I decided to call this first series of paintings oviforms. This term describes these shapes as oval-like, non-even, symmetrical ovals. The oviforms facilitate the viewer's 'three-dimensional illusion' while moving around the wall paintings, with the illusion carried across by the paintings on oviform canvasses, this making their effect also spatial. The oviform canvasses are directly extracted out of the large-scale paintings on walls, thus giving the work a more homogenous result.



'due to the heat', 2017. Silver leaf, egg tempera and oil on canvas 148 x 100 cm (oviform). Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York. Photo: Anna Berry. (c)

Claudia Chaseling and VG Bild Kunst Bonn 2017

Vanessa: Now a more personal question: what was the most important part in your career?

Claudia: There have been many important points in my career and key events that made my path as an artist. One special moment I want to point out is the publication of my monograph 'Claudia Chaseling - Spatial Painting' last year. The 2 year process of making this book was an intense time of analyzing, looking at and reflecting on what I had made as an artist, where I am now and pinning it all down. The initial idea to make this book was from the artist Milovan Destil Markovic and we collaborated throughout the whole production of it, for what I am very thankful. Other crucial roles in the book had the Australian artist eX de Medici and the authors Bojana Pejic, Johannes Honeck, Benedikt Stagemayer and Barbara Steiner. This artistic-intellectual dialog for my work and its contextualization has been a catalyzing factor.

Vanessa: *I think this is my last question. What is your dream as an artist and a person?*

Claudia: I have a few. But basically my wish is to keep going as I do, with my good surrounding by great artists and people, healthy minds, good studio spaces....

Vanessa: *That sounds good. Thank you very much.*

Claudia: Thank you too.

Claudia Chaseling completed her studies in visual arts with two Masters Degrees from the University of Art in Berlin and the Australian National University in Canberra. In 2013, she was awarded a research fellowship by the Australian National University and she is currently a PhD Candidate as Doctor of Philosophy in Visual Arts. Chaseling has participated in numerous exhibitions internationally with a focus on Australia, Germany and the USA. Current exhibitions of her are *Site-Mutative Painting* at Magic Beans Gallery Berlin and *Experimental Berlin* at Richard Taittinger Gallery New York. Her upcoming projects involve the solo exhibition *Silent* at the Wollongong Art Gallery, NSW, Australia, a solo exhibition at Yuill Crowley Gallery in Sydney and her participation at the Lorne Sculpture Biennial, Victoria, Australia in collaboration with the artist Milovan Destil Markovic.

For more information on Spatial Paintings, click here (<http://www.claudiachaseling.com/spatial.html>)

For information on the artist click here (<http://www.claudiachaseling.com/vitae.html>)

Image on top: 'black swan', 2017. Aluminium, egg tempera and oil on canvas, 250 x 170 x 230 cm. Courtesy of Magic Beans Gallery Berlin. Photo: Martin Peterdamm. (c) Claudia Chaseling and VG Bild Kunst Bonn 2017

By Vanessa Souli

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