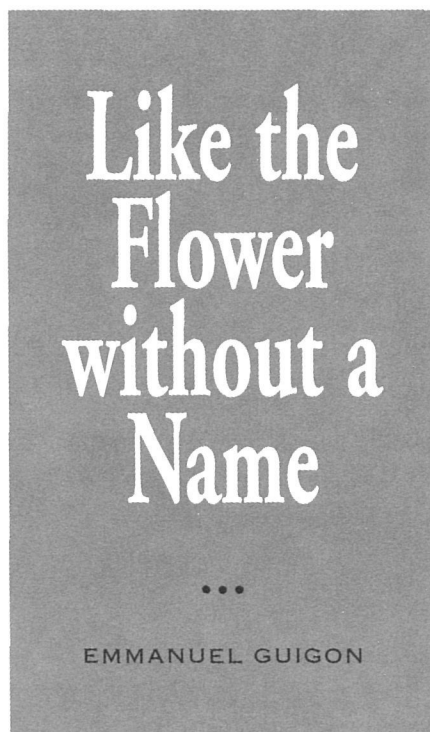


Dreams about flowers are sometimes dreams about geometry: for example, those of the painter Medina Mesa. Predominating in them are geometric forms, and especially triangles, which seem to lend the elements of a rigorous demonstration. This very austerity is a trap. Here the spirit of geometry becomes sarcastic: it plays its tricks upon itself. It calls everything into doubt. As if it wished to think in a happy rigorousness (where the happiness is *more or less visible*). He invites us not to draw distinctions where none exist. Medina Mesa does not trust the radical cuts that want to put order everywhere. His works refrain from emphasis, from tragic pronouncements. They do pose important problems (those of form, of colour, of space, of balance and imbalance, of unity and explosion, and a few others). But these problems are posed calmly, with a certain distance, with a sort of looseness that does not demand that we take them seriously. In this painter's work, lightness and gravity are never opposites. Nearly all these toings and fro-ings, this logic of the return to the same and to the always different is one of the ways in which art can be conceived as a suspension of the utilitarian temporality of ordinary experience. It is doubtless this suspension that Baudelaire was talking about when he called upon artists to "extract the eternal from the fleeting".



Some people may find themselves bored by the repetition of the same forms. They should consider the Oriental text quoted by John Cage: "if something bores you after two minutes, try it for four minutes. If boredom persists, try eight, sixteen, and thirty-two minutes, and so on. You will discover that there was no boredom at all, but rather lively interest." That is how some paintings work. Excess would amount to a sort of defense against boredom. It allows all "perfect fits" to be combated. In this sense, the attitude of Medina Mesa is exemplary. He knows that knowledge is no business of art. His work turns again and again to the same models, and testifies to this: for a long time now, when he paints a shape, he paints it to the point of exhaustion. Exhaustion of the sense of something that goes on forever, but where, suddenly, a cut is made, there is a

pause in the fascination that blocks by eyes and my speech. What is not exhausted is the inexhaustible presence of the thing before him, its power to fascinate that marks the pause in the movement of the sense. Does the painter seek to tear away the veils of appearances, the fancy dress, to reveal its supposed secret? Does he believe that art reveals a secret sense? He paints, I believe, to experience the naked, insensate presence of the thing itself. Standing before it, he exhausts his attention. A moment comes when the thing remains present even when the eyes are gone. This exhaustion of the presence of the looking at things is an *enigma*: here is found the point of irradiation. It is this hope, this progress toward neutrality which, opening the painting, calls for an irradiating passion; it is this hope that devours the name: that which resembles the nameless flower. It is this hope of reaching painting, the possible beginning of representation, and its de-objectivisation, its ruin. The triangle: nothing. Or almost nothing. And this almost nothing, without a doubt, must be "said with flowers", as was once prescribed for expressions of love. Some works –those that I like the best– are born from such thoughts, and develop them. It is through this manner of fascinated attention that things, in art, become thought.