

Intervju made by Bronwyn Griffith with  
Matthias van Arkel, autumn 2010

What materials were you working with before you started working in rubber?

Large quantities of oil paint, plasticine (a non-drying modeling clay), and other materials for installations and site-specific works. Sometimes no additional material at all, just a reduction of an existing wall.

Platina silicon rubber is a very unusual material for a painter. How did you discover platinum silicon rubber?

In 2003, I was included in the group exhibition "Invasion" at Dunkers Kulturhus. I exhibited two works including Cut Open, a large sculpted cube in plasticine and a custom-made wooden table. A rubber manufacturer Sven-Ingvar Olsson saw this work and immediately suggested that I come and try working with silicon rubber at his factory.

Plasticine is a wonderful material—like a dry, pliable paint—but very fragile. Rubber had similar qualities but with the advantage of being transparent and durable. I could create a true three dimensionality in my work, both

paintings and sculptures, not just illusionary.

Why did the rubber appeal to you?

It has an industrial quality that when worked in a painterly style becomes a kind of rebellious means of expression, especially when exhibited indoors. Works have an incredible presence in a room not just pictorially but also because they are so physically tangible.

Is it a durable material?

Platina silicon rubber is extremely durable. It is used to coat ancient sculptures to protect them from air pollution. It is also used in the food industry for conveyor belts because it tolerates extreme temperatures, going directly from oven to freezer, without leeching toxins. Light resistance is also high because of its tight molecular structure. Surprisingly, it contains components similar to glass.

How has your aesthetic been affected by the material? Are they interdependent?

The creation of these works is passes through several stages and is dependent on different

machines, creating a kind of distance to the romance of abstract painting. The process itself becomes a kind of filter that involves a certain amount of chance, to which I have to react. There is physical resistance in the material itself. The elegance and facility of skillful brushwork is reduced and replaced by a sense of discovery and invention. Method versus intuition are two of the parameters that I work within.

For many years I have reduced the supports (for example canvas and other grounds for my paintings) and when I paint with silicon rubber, color is all that remains. Works are like site-specific paintings, hung directly on the wall—suspended in their own color.