

GILLES AILLAUD. RECENT ACQUISITIONS

17.11.2023 – 11.01.2024

Galerie Loevenbruck
12, rue Jacques-Callot

The exhibition “Gilles Aillaud. Recent Acquisitions” presents six paintings by Gilles Aillaud, from *Boite de serpents* (1967) to *Plage d’Hauteville* (1990) and a watercolor titled *Paysage* (1980).

Gilles Aillaud (1928–2005) was a painter, poet and stage designer. At his beginnings, he was one of the politically engaged artists who used to come together at the Salon de la Jeune Peinture and who would later be collectively grouped under the label *Figuration narrative*. As a way of marking the group’s rejection of the heritage of Marcel Duchamp, Aillaud produced a collaborative work together with Arroyo and Recalcati that symbolically represented Duchamp’s death. Throughout the 1960s and 70s however, Aillaud would primarily focus on a single theme: animals in zoos. Calling upon surprising compositions informed by the architecture of these artificial environments that attempted to recreate nature, his flatly painted works convey the voyeuristic fascination and feeling of unease underlying these scenes of caged animals. “When I paint enclosed or displaced animals, I am not painting the human condition directly. It is not Man in the form of a monkey who is in the cage, but rather Man who put the monkey in the cage. What I am interested in is the ambiguity of this relationship and the strangeness of these places where this silent and unpunished confinement takes place”, he said. After this period, Aillaud went on to paint the vast, bright landscapes that he had observed during his travels to Africa or Greece, a second phase of his painting production that opened out to nature set free.¹

Today, current questions about our relationship with living beings highlight the importance of the keenly awaited retrospective “Gilles Aillaud. Political Animal”, on view at the Centre Pompidou until 26 February 2024.

1. Alfred Pacquement in *Natural Histories. A Focus on the French Scene*, curator invited by Art Paris, 2021.