

Exhibition

June 6 - July 29 2017
opening Tuesday June 6

FRONT

Toni GRAND - Pierre TAL COAT
"the choice of the state of nature" or
The persistence of harmonics.

Man's presence in nature and / or painting couldn't be better expressed. The landscape is humanized effortlessly : man or woman doesn't modify it by imposing the architecture of its forms... (Jean-Pascal Léger)



Toni GRAND, *Sans titre*,
Circa 1970-76,
Bois collés, écorces,
90 x 10 x 6 cm

Recently, when in the same conversation, the names of both Pierre Tal Coat and Toni Grand were uttered, the harmonics of a same chord suddenly resonated within me. As if the distant echo of a thing both known and silenced escaped from these two notes played together. As if a common « sympathetic » vision of the world and nature preexisted at the source of their respective work.

Addressing Tal Coat's work, Henri Maldiney talks of a « fundamental relationship between Tal Coat and the universe that isn't aggressive but sympathetic ». As is said of sympathetic chords, those we do not strike but simply vibrate by resonance - by sympathy - due to their sole proximity to the strike chords. Toni Grand's work operates in a similar way. Confronted one to the other, both of these works benefit from that same relation.

For Tal Coat, as well as Toni Grand, anything destined to oblivion should be retained, kept, but with the same concern of never over-burdening what isn't obvious. A similar approach to silence as well, main requirement to access. A formal experience of a commemoration, of a permanence. A relic of that which is remembered. The sculptor and the painter strive to birth the contained form, to let it appear instead of bringing it to light. To make « the invisible there » visible (cf Maldiney).

« I was struck by the attractiveness of stone. Of stone, or even of a tree... A great tree-trunk. The need of laying one's hand on a stone or on a tree to feel... I don't know what... » (Pierre Tal Coat). One can see both their hands so clearly, caressing. A similar gaze both artists lay on trees, wood, barks. When Tal Coat draws barks, pebbles or flints, Toni Grand works with wood and stone. But beyond examples and quotes, there is a common semantic field to both artists. A vocabulary that expresses a similar attachment to nature, to space. To their practice as well.

Tal Coat talks of rifts, incisions, Toni Grand splits and chops. One used « the Gaelic context, the stone and forest, the celtic soul » as an inspiration, the other concentrated on the various use of stone and wood, manipulating carpentry boards and tree branches (oak in particular), chopping, cutting, carving, squaring them off...

And then there's fire. One cannot mention without horror how parts of both their work was burnt away. This fire in which harmonics became ashes, ashes dancing like flames. Like those which rise up in the night once the fire has been vanquished and that carry within the destiny of things destroyed but not forgotten. Up high, in the sky, these « ashes verging on blue » are still dancing (André du Bouchet).

Christophe Gaillard

Born in Brittany, **Pierre Tal Coat** (1905 - 1985) was admired by and friends with great XXth century artists like Calder, Giacometti, Miro, Staël and poets, Gertrude Stein or André du Bouchet.. He embodies a fierce freedom of painting. His entire life, he strove to reproduce through the space and living matter of his painting, the deep harmony of painting and nature. His work was shown in a retrospective at the Grand Palais in 1976 but also promoted by the Galerie de France, Galerie Maeght and Galerie Clivages. He represented France in great international art manifestations such as the Venice Biennale (1956) Kassel's Documenta (1955/1959), or the Sao Paulo Biennale (1994).

After being taught sculpture in various parisian studios, **Toni Grand** (1935 - 2005) starts showing his work in the middle of the 60's. He takes part in the Venice Biennale in 1982 and Kassel's Documenta in 1997. Important european museum will show his work such as Centre Pompidou, Paris (1986), Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon (1989), Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (1994), Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes (2003), MAMCO, Geneva (2013).



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