

THE WORD MADE VISIBLE dialogues in black white grey

Following the donation to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Cambrai, at the end of 2003, of a collection which included a number of artists who came from the geometric abstraction movement, and a large group of works by Guy de Lussigny, the Musée Matisse at Cateau-Cambrésis, and then the LAAC (*Lieu d'Art et d'Action Contemporaine*) at Dunkirk, each gave André Le Bozec *carte blanche*, within the framework of the donation he made to these institutions, to pursue the exploration of the possibilities offered by Lussigny's work.

These exhibitions led the collector to reflect on the direction to take in a new collection, experienced as a progressive release, in the sense of being at once a recovery of autonomy and a fresh appropriation of an adventure he had shared with his companion, Guy de Lussigny.

The exhibition at the Musée des Ursulines in Mâcon proposes a broad outline of this collection.

Guy de Lussigny loved to talk at length, especially about art. Throughout his life he sought to share with other artists, living and dead: Severini, the artists of Sienna, Piero della Francesca, Freundlich, Herbin, Albers. With some, Dewasne, Nemours or Calderara, the exchanges were regular.

Le Bozec relates how the encounter with Lussigny, the everyday life of an artist with his doubts and creative changes of direction, were decisive factors in the sharpening of his *eye* and in the development of the collection. But it is above all after the demise of his friend that he rethought and organized what he had achieved, spontaneously, trusting in his own instinct, in the course of some forty years.

Now alone and the trustee of the artist's work, he continues the inventory of these intimate conversations, associating famous names and others which are little known, weaving embroideries of correspondences, making and unmaking, seeking out and watching as drawings, gouaches, acrylics, engravings and sculptures, taken out of drawers and cupboards, combine before his eyes, works which at times have been forgotten, have lain dormant.

The chromatic pretext, adopted by André Le Bozec—black white grey—emerged quite naturally after he had realised that the white canvasses in Guy de Lussigny's work constituted a central concern of the artist. Another ensemble, at the heart of this work, developed in blacks and greys, became more explicit in his eyes at that point, like a ring or corollary of this centre, around which Lussigny has never stopped varying his refined compositions in innumerable harlequinades of colour.

Elaborated around this white core, the exhibition brings together the works of sixteen artists.

A small group of works, including drawings by Delahaut, Herbin and Freundlich, establishes the historic link with artists who influenced Lussigny in

his youth. These works also illustrate the spirit of the *cabinet d'amateur* that he likes to preserve in his collection. They are also the trace of the kinship, more or less recognised or emphasised, which unites the small number of artists here present, who were contemporaries of Lussigny.

Among the exhibits, many of which can be seen for the first time, are works by Douglas Allsop, Ode Bertrand, Andreas Brandt, Eve Gramatzki, Pascal Levrague, madé, Aurélie Nemours, Josef Neuhaus, Alan Reynolds, Klaus Staudt, Hans Steinbrenner, Friedhelm Tschentscher and Marie-Thérèse Vacossin.

Though often typical of the individual character of the majority of these artists, there are works that illustrate an exception in the work of some others: a white piece by Steinbrenner, a gouache by Gramatzki in particular.

For André Le Bozec, building a collection is above all a way of inventing another voice inhabited by the various ranges and limits that one recognises as being part of oneself in each work. It involves, depending on chance encounters and intuitions, creating links between contrasting individualities. Feeling his way forward, this wanderer in the world of art renders palpable the dialogues between works which address each other without being acquainted with each other.

If a dialogue is established between these solitary works, it is not mere talk, still less a discussion (Be wary of those who cannot talk without discussing, said a Father of the Desert), but springs from another source. Whether, standing aloof, they keep their distance, answer each other, look each other up and down or goad each other on, these works serve an invisible and silent world, which requires a subjective response to resonate.

They are like short plays that the collector's eye presents and renders visible, and which filter a sensibility, a temperament with its grisailles, a celebration of the in-between.

Certain combinations call for the spectator to stay patient so that the network of fibres and meaningful glances, suspended between a crashing or a crackling, between a flash and subdued light, can come into being. Focused on these micro-dialogues, the gaze seizes, in a vague or obvious manner, what the quest for a fine balance has woven in a randomly intuitive way.

A cry or a murmur, tranquillity or keen emotion. The encounter makes it possible for unexpected harmonics or dissonances to be heard. Confronting, opposing or moving away from the works, what we have called *the word* becomes audible, where eye and ear work in concert in a subtle synaesthesia.

Our eye listens, said Claudel, and perceives an apparition, which is a sort of spell. The fruits of a tropism, which has concentrated the strength and the density of the occasion of their birth, these works bind before our eyes, within us, their tiny embryonic roots and trace the faceless face of a sensitivity and awareness which beckons us to follow.

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Translated by John Baker