

## MARC COUTURIER

### *L'Embarquement...*

October 7<sup>th</sup> – December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*"Mankind has a forest. It is what Marc Couturier's art tells us, he is, by saying it, the Man of the third day. Man can lose his forest. He then becomes the Man of the night and not of the day anymore. He can recover it though. He does it by becoming the Man of the sight, of the secret and the intimacy. He is then the Man of the endless day. It is also what tells us Marc Couturier, who is not simply the Man of the third day, but the Man walking towards the endless day."* Bertrand Vergely\*

For his first exhibition at the gallery, Marc Couturier invites us to travel, to walk with him towards this endless day. He wants to make visible and materialize a very personal spirituality. Sensitive to the imperceptible, to the margins between visible and invisible and to the evanescent character of things, he offers to embark with him in order to show us those.

From the gallery's doorstep, we dive into the Aucuba leaf's pattern, dear to the artist. This subtle fusion between vegetal and sidereal wraps us up along the travel. The Aucuba leaf flutters in the wind (*Aucuba constellation*, 2018), appears at the surface of a light box (*Aucuba leaf*, 2016) then lets its trace on the 23 pastels that are as many "*thoughts for Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-1789)*", executed in homage to the Swiss pastellist, that vibrate before our eyes. Natural light, sparsely present in the exhibition space, seems to emanate from the artworks.

A little further, a landscape appears in front of us, than another: here, in a case of wine (*Redressment, St Ferme Abbey*, 2018), there, on a cardboard stained with ink (*Redressment, the black islands*, 2012). These are "redressments", a concept defined by the artist in the nineties. This term designates a movement or a state. The artist chooses, collects and "redresses" all kind of objects, materials and surfaces generally found, "not made by human hand", in which appear providentially before our eyes landscapes and faces. Then, they accompany us as many invitations to contemplation, "elaborate" redressments placed in 3D frames\*\*. This technology, rather unusual in the work of the artist, stays discreet, serving the landscape it frames. On the way, a *Tondo*, made by human hand, punctuates the visit. Realized with a silver point on a panel prepared with stucco, it is the product of a spontaneous and continuous gesture, permanent dialogue between the will and the intuition of the artist. In an alcove levitates a bark filled with water, offering us a moment of suspension, a poetic timeless image. The *Gold lawn* and the *Silver lawn*, 2018 seem to arise from the ground. Along with the blade emerging from the wall at the entrance (*Blade*, 2016) these are as many luminous appearances that are revealed to us and illuminate our path.

The journey ends immersed in the inks of the *Marbles* series that synthetizes the dialectic of Marc Couturier's work: between what comes as a result of the human presence and intention, and what comes as a result of nature and divine creation. In these compositions, the vegetal emanates as the pure chance, a stain formed freely with the progression of the water and the ink on paper. In contrast, the vase clearly indicates the human intention and the mastery of the shaping human hand.

\* in *Le Troisième jour*, Bertrand Vergely, Marc Couturier, ed. Le Promeneur, 2012.

\*\* realized in collaboration with the studio Constance Guisset.

Marc Couturier was born in 1946, he lives and works in Paris. His work was recently exhibited at the Domaine de Kerguéhennec (2018), on the occasion of the presentation of the Fondation Cartier collection at the Power Station in Shanghai (2018) and at the SeMA in Seoul (2017), at the Grand Palais and the Espace Muraillé in Geneva (2017), at the Domaine de Chaumont sur Loire (2016), at the Centre Pompidou Metz (2016 & 2010), at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris (2015), at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2014), at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in Paris (2012), at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (2008). He has exhibited at the Fondation Cartier in Jouy en Josas (1987, 1989 and 1993) and participated to the exhibitions *Traces du sacré* at the Centre Pompidou (2008), *La Beauté* in Avignon (2000) and *Les Magiciens de la Terre*, at La Villette (1989). His work can be found in private and public collections: Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, as well as in several FRAC. He made stained glass windows for the church Saint-Léger in Oisilly (Côte-d'Or), a cross and a glory for the choir of Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral in Paris, for Saint-Denis Church of Saint-Sacrement in Paris. Two monumental « Tremblements de ciel » (or blades) are erected in Tokyo and in the area of the Centre Pompidou Metz.