

The metronome and the lyre: Rozand in the Hébert museum

There is a ten of them in the Hébert museum garden. The artist named them: “Orées” [Edges]. These steel sculptures, beautifully rust-coloured, in harmony with the green trees, are Therms: the advanced emissaries of the industrial world at the edge of nature. They take man back to his origin. Human-sized or sub-monumental, they express the uplift, the vertical elevation similar to those magnificent examples raised behind them by the orography of the Alps. But what makes them still more mysterious, is that they make the spectator meet light, and meet the day’s hours, from dawn to twilight. More: they reveal one’s internal clock, made of moods, sensations, spatial orientations, feelings and furtive tension. Then they fully become the *Horae*, the Hours, those antique divinities who articulate human time.

The first sculpture is rightly called *Métronome*. When looking at full face, the eye follows the ascending line forming one side of a square, then the median line of a vertical angular steel-plate, and finally, drawn by its shade, the edge of an overbalanced rectangle. That line, along its veering trajectory, unites the steel surfaces which space tears apart, and gives them a rhythm. Jean-Patrice Rozand draws a lot and from long ago. The hand which draws positions the eye among the most different spatial contexts. Drawing starts the assembling, and the welding line on the plates follows its inflexions. Setting the plates in space and joining them skilfully develop the movement that already exists in the sketch. Conversely, the design grows richer from the spatial experience. It is a metronome movement.

Rozand does not work sculpture in the round: he makes the relief hollow by deepening the plans and the accents brought by the diagonal construction; he biases surfaces and the secant plans facing the spectator. Though there is a privileged side of the sculpture, conferring it a “face”, so as to carry on the process of anthropomorphisation started by the sculptor but consciously never finished, a twist is necessary if one wishes to experience a piece by Rozand: quite an experience as the eye does not know what will be found at the rear or on the other side.

Wounded Knee is more fragmented and contradictory than *Métronome*. It answers a tendency which the sculptor most often tries to hold back, as a *mezzo voce* hummed song: a lyrical

expression, sometimes painful. He is not an exhibitionist sculptor, he is conscious that in some sculptures which his work might call to mind – Archipenko, Brancusi, Lipchitz, Giacometti, Calder, Chillida, Di Suvero, Caro – the dramatic vibration is always restrained by material and shape. Rozand takes up sculpture from post-cubism that preferred the line, the opposition between solids and gaps, the contrasting spacing out of plans rather than the heavy monolith or the rugged group by Rodin. But he is an artist belonging to his epoch: he learned much from Mark di Suvero and the genuine sculpture “school” which, in the nineties, bloomed at *La Vie des Formes* in Chalon-sur-Saône, around the American artist, his studio-barge and Marcel Evrard’s personality. There he creates his own relation to sculpture, which can be defined as a cenesthetic experience. In other words one feels sculpture both as the release and the medium for one’s sensations. The spectator projects his own body onto it and livens up from the rhythm of its lines, its colours, linking himself to the environment, to space and light.

Wounded Knee shows a cut across a curved line, whether, a little further, in the grove, *Ebre* and *Malik* play curves and straight lines, openings and plans in a complementary way, evoking some landscape or a standing portrait. My preference is for *Olympe* that takes up with the liveliness of *Pour Pina Bausch* (2005) shown in the exhibition “Sculptures hautes, hiératiques”, which Bruno Mory devised at the château de Cormatin in 2005, with a beautiful text by Gilbert Lascault in the catalogue. Twirling around, and not much Olympian, rather Olympic or Olympe de Gouges, this figure calls to mind the body of a dancer, obliquely stretching along a biased vertical line, whether the scallops and the horizontal plans cut-out as a flower corolla, look like a fluid skirt. But how attractive the illusion of the deconstructed plans - when closely seen - which the lateral point, threatening the eye, so quickly erases!

In the large meadow, *Eudoxe* is the matching piece to *Métronome*. Named from the Greek scientist who calculated the number of days in a year and conceived the world as a group of homocentric spheres round the still centre constituted by the planet, it combines movement and stability. As a big human figure, it could be called *contrapposto* with one vertical leg standing on the ground, and the other, oblique, relaxed and forming a double volute.

That double composition, combining the metronome and the lyre, regularity and free expansion, seems dividing into figures both opposed and broken, such as *Bibal* or *Zéphyr*, and others, steady and more firmly standing, such as *Solo* or *Pit Cairn*. In *Bibal*, the almond-

shaped hollow seems – optically – to push the open plan into an obtuse angle, so demonstrating the positive and structuring action of empty space in sculpture, whether the fork crowning *Zéphyr*, seems to express the wind blowing through the leaves, the tree trunk itself bending obliquely.

Zéphyr is oddly-shaped in a Calder's way, and *Solo* figure presents itself in the manner of an Archipenko's or Zadkine's sculpture, a slow meditation enriched by the subtle triangulation of the metal pieces. Shade itself starts there a mysterious dialogue with the statue, not far from the painter Hébert's tomb.

Jean-Patrice Rozand sometimes leaves traces of his grinder on the steel plates: they look like scratches of emotion. "One will be able to play with the echoes, the resonances in between the pieces; sculptures create spaces around themselves", said the sculptor. When a sculpture is fine, it's because it has music inside.

Translated from
Thierry Dufrêne (20th May 2010)