

Whether Jean-Patrice Rozand's sculptures take the risk of appearing in our present, it is not to answer the order of "being with their time". What the sculptor takes up in his works, others looked for it before, or will look for it. Such an unmistakable style is not a process to attract the medias fond of remarkable identities. He knows that there is no progressing in art, except the way leading every artist from one work to another, punctuating the road. His worries lead him far from fashions: towards the archaic Greeks or the Lobi sculptors of Africa, without avoiding the so close "moderns". He knows that art history is a succession of processes and systems elaborated to seize what no human activity dares approach: a temporary truth that can be shared, expressing the tragedy of our condition and the excitement of scoffing at it. Beyond words.

Jean-Patrice Rozand entered the wide universe of sculpture in the round through an original device, using only flat surfaces, assembling them in such a way that they never close over themselves.

In sculpture, material and volumes hold the first role. Light and shade – its true associate – often play foils. However the movement of the sun transforms everything lighted in a virtual mobile: the rotating shadows form or obscure contours; light gives colour and texture to surfaces.

When disposing his metal plates according subtle incidences, Jean-Patrice Rozand traps light. For displaying hues, modelling material or transparency. Skilful at patinas, he gives it colour and smoothness while, along the hours, the intensity of light changes, slowly setting the masses around the axis constituted by the plans junctions. There is something troubling - and not disappearing as you get conscious of it, but rather intensifying: in spite of the reassuring feeling brought by the clear principle of a folded surface, one is never facing a recto-verso dispositive: the side masked by the one you are looking at (as many sides as steps for walking around the sculpture) is neither the reverse nor the negative of what you were just absorbed in. An unsuspected angle, an unexpected buttress, a masked return contradict and confuse what the logical mind and the thrust of the form anticipated. The simplicity of the method opens up upon an abyssal complexity. That disconcerting process keeps curiosity alive and forbids any precocious judgement.

Gripped by that scholarly curiosity, caught by the steel that frame them, imprisoned by shade as if in a pit, the air masses rise in clouds and tremble before their shapes could be guessed. But here the pit has been erected in broad daylight around some upright swords.

Without insisting on this aspect, some works are sexed: columns... slits and lips. All play seduction, offering a glimpse to catch. One tries excitedly to guess what is concealed: curves unveiling or masking each other, surprised before they disappear, details hidden in the intimacy of shadows ... an erotic and sophisticated grace to which they cannot be reduced, but a charm to be shared.

In spite of that evidence, the sculptures are not exhibitionist, they stand in front of us with some austerity. The consequence of the exactness necessary to master such a geometry. Banishing the right angle, they adapt to a limited range of acute angles and to a restricted use of curves, always constrained by a bundle of arcs and tangents, owing little to lyricism and expressionism.

Gilbert Lascaux stresses Jean-Patrice Rozand's fascination for the poetry of mathematics and his high demanding for the "right"¹ thing. But such exactness is neither application of Euclidian formulas nor scholarly equations. The aim is to catch "a pure movement of light... an extremely precise rustle"², avoiding as well the discipline of a system as the emphasis of metaphor. So Jean-Patrice Rozand remains neutral when facing all that could come under pathos or suggest a psychological interpretation. He trusts abstract forms without making use of them to the benefit of a simplistic narrative. Like katas in martial arts, each sculpture of Jean-Patrice Rozand is a result that concentrates the fruit of an experience. It is both an autonomous entity and an element in a series. It fulfils a clear function in a precise situation. It has its own balance, its own aesthetics and its own harmony. From a fixed point it takes hold and control of its own space and environment, looking for the most economical technical pureness to the benefit of the biggest efficiency.

As elegant sentinels, those steel swords cleave silently the air, with the determination of a samurai. No doubt they protect us from futility.

¹ *Sculptures hautes, hiératiques*. Château of Cormatin, Bruno Mory Gallery, 2005.

² Catherine Mesnard-Bornibus, *La musique du hasard*, J.-P. Rozand, Romans Museum, september 1997.

Translated from
Yvain Bornibus (april 2010)