

Dynamic forms, Houseago lying feagures' world

06/10/2011

Dynamic forms, gutted, devastated sculptural masses, knurled, monumental, anthropomorphic. A bridge between classic and futuristic vision, Houseago's oeuvre reveals itself with a totemic aura...



Published on Thursday, October 6th, 2011

The postmodern architecture of the building housing the International Centre of art and landscape in Vassivière, designed by Aldo Rossi and Xavier Fabre, has hosted over twenty years artists such as Claude Lévêque, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Joseph Kosuth, Yona Friedman, Thomas Hirschhorn. Today the structure is directed by Clare Palmer, curator of the first French solo exhibition dedicated to Thomas Houseago (1972, Leeds - lives in Los Angeles).

Several works of the British artist are literally invading the art center and the woods surrounding the lake; here are located also about sixty works by contemporary artists. What Went Down, this is the title of the exhibition. It has been organised in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford and the Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach; the main objective of this exhibition is to make the point between past and future, revealing the cracks, finding a place for tradition in the contemporary world. Monumental

works by Houseago, certainly well integrated with the environment, are inspired by cartoons, science fiction films, music by Bob Dylan, art by Picasso to Brancusi. All these elements create a spontaneous dialogue with the visitor; he becomes able to recall an atavistic world, almost undergoing a process of ierofanizzation, taking the viewer over a kind of sacred object simultaneously.



Thomas Houseago, Cyclops No. 1, 2009

The path opens onto Plaster The Gate (2009) a lintel decorated with two Cyclops which, playing like embossed telamons, mark the passage from inside to outside the art center. Houseago uses materials ranging from bronze, plaster, wood to the graphite. This is an important part in his work to such an extent that sometimes the artist draws on the completed sculpture, like he did in The Kinski (2010) and in The Electric Mask (2010), thus recalling the ancestral inner paths conceived by Jean Dubuffet.

The female universe is also present in some of his works. For example, in the figure Rattlesnake (2011), the Cyclops woman evoking the show's title, was originally a redwood tree, then carved and covered with aluminium; then there's The Golden Spoon (2011), a large spoon, made on the size of the artist, which golden colour is reminiscent of the grain and the concept of nurturing and motherhood.

The two electric lanterns are rather imposing, The Large Lamp (2011) 4-meter only on the island of snakes, a small island on Lake Vassivière, and Large Lamp II (2011) located in the lighthouse,

the architectural complex of the centre, reminiscent of those sacred fires and its vast symbolism. The hall of the small theater studies greets the artist's dreams, thus allowing a close look at the technique used. Here we find Museum (2011), a wooden model of his ideal museum. In this dramatization of space are inserted, similar to Roman ruins, the monuments limbs of Hand / Arm Study II (2010), or large aluminium wheels for Sunrise / Sunset (Coins, 2010) and Coins (Stacked, 2010).



Thomas Houseago, Lying Figure (Mother Father), 2011

Large Owl III (for B, 2011), a memorable in-studio work, which is a huge carved head of an owl-eyed, empty, lying on the grass feagure, which follows Lying figure (Mother Father, 2011), a headless body gently stretched to the belly, which features recall one of the first works by Houseago, Sister (Brussels, 1996) of over three meters long. Houseago's work is significant, revealing, but "a symbol does not explain but rather, it mentions a still transcendent meaning" (CG Jung).

curated by livia de leoni

Show visited on September 3rd
Centre international d'art et du
paysage

Ile de Vassivière – 87120 France
Opened daily from 11 a.m. alle 7 p.m.
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