

In front of the unknown

Florian de la Salle is in search of a link between motion and matter . What defines this link is a suppleness which reconciles rigour and detente, resistance and thrust, centre and periphery. The gesture assembles, carves, sculpts, moulds, winds, kneads, combines, cuts, pastes, pushes in, folds, sketches, restores, prolongs, colours, rolls up, and the list extends with the actions. It concentrates the vital breadth of a body, sustains the power of thought, releases energy in diverse modes of expression and inspiration, forces one to both search and rapidly perceive. The material has the compactness and benevolence, the euphoria and severity, the uncertainty and attractiveness, the assurance and transparency, the appeal and promise, the lustre and insistence of wood, bee's wax, paraffin, copper wire, perspex, resin concrete, of a mirror, blotting paper, salt, enamel, porcelain and many other solicitations. Without letting down its guard, conscious of the dangers and illusions, it is open to all incursions, responds to everything that displaces it, surprises it and reduces it to its most elementary level, where it enters into resonance with itself and affirms itself with the greatest intensity.

Motion and matter only open up to one another, only give themselves up reciprocally in all their fullness by letting themselves mutually penetrate. Now this can only happen through a relation that is continually redistributed and based on values of reception and exchange. It results in the constant presence of a multiple experience which unsettles the acquired order, provokes and links the appearance of differences and the evidence of correlations, and engages the process of their unavoidable mutations. The gesture thus acquires its own materiality and without confounding with it, accords with the substance that generated it. The material becomes aware of the gesture and yields to the demand of being put to the test, without losing control of its resources.

From this unique alliance emerges a form that defies rigid determination. The diversity of its orientations allows the most strange juxtapositions. This form conjures up side by side the real and the imaginary, sensitivity and rigour, fluidity and roughness. It is not based on any disorder or fantasy, but proclaims an independence which frees it from all narrowness.

Sentinel, tool, echo, architecture, dream, circulation, vestige, checkerboard, phantom, addition, reminiscence, vocabulary, surprise or pact, it appears like a pure passage from one level to another and unfolds like an invitation to investigate, a desire for light, but also retracts like a forbidden shadow, a closed space, a silence. It requires sustained attention, not to be understood but to give it the time to bring to the surface of its uncertainty the interplay of encounters and the panoply of bifurcations and curves. Florian de la Salle thereby echoes indirectly the burning question of René Char, "How can one live when not in front of the unknown?"

Didier Arnaudet, March 2019