

## EXILE

*The artist works to restore an ideal order, which will never be brought back. But he works, since a human perfection exists: that of human perfectibility<sup>1</sup>.*

*It seems to me that the individual stands today at a crossroads, faced with the choice of whether to pursue the existence of a blind consumer, subject to the implacable march of new technology and the endless multiplication of material goods, or whether to seek out a way that will lead to spiritual responsibility, a way that ultimately might mean not only his personal salvation but also the saving of society at large<sup>2</sup>.*

It is by walking that I became a gallerist, walking and then stopping in order to take time and observe what was present around me, listen to those who consecrated their lives to art. This everyday confrontation with beings, with objects that were firstly unknown to me, definitely marked my vision and my way of being in the world. This exhibition, which I call *Exile*, is my attempt to go back to the origins of this vision in order to determine its genesis, evaluate its fecundity and to better embrace, by highlighting it, what brought it to life.

Going into exile means going against “*we will all say the same thing*”. The artist is an exile. Not an exile from his country – though he may also be so – but from the social group. I would even say an exile from himself, from his existence<sup>3</sup>. In this case the word exile should not be understood as the exile from a nation but rather as the exile from a *presence*, divine at its origin, lost forever: a phenomenal absence. Immersed in this double exile the artist starts to move and then makes his way. Immobility or control by anticipation are prohibited.

This exile is related to a condition; it is not a punishment but rather a mission, which aims to reveal fragments of truth and to free an — often silent — discourse, that will go beyond the doer. *Being an exile* means being inventive and making a powerful enough gesture to escape from the obliteration of differences. It is a matter of standing out of the game, remaining in the margins and their inexhaustible requirements, and formulating a word strong enough to make one’s own world happen.

These exiles don’t explain: they say. Every authentic piece of art thinks well beyond itself; what it is capable of saying far exceeds what it wants to say<sup>4</sup>. It is not enough to stop on the appearance of these works, on their pure image or their simple materiality; with their discretion, they offer themselves simply, waiting for you. You can observe them for a long time and experience something, or experience nothing at all; you can sweep your glance on their surface with disregard, without being moved; merely touching an art work leaves you out of its transcendental dimension. Every great work of art is the place of a particular creation, of an original thought that gives birth to something that couldn’t exist before. Its silence is stronger, it requires something that is infinitely precious: Time. Maybe you will be able to recognize the vocabulary they are made up with. But would you be able to read the message contained in these forms, colours, gestures and words? The work is made in such a way that the essential flees away from any thought it awakes will not succeed to get the essential; everything in this work is fluid as though it tries to escape from the eye or the hand that would like to grasp it. Indeed, these works are questions, they suggest the meaning but not the explanation. It is because I have been frequenting them for a long time that I know their capacity of transgression, I believe in their mystery and —

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<sup>1</sup> André Néher, *Moses and the Vocation of the Jewish People*, Seuil, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Andrei Tarkovski, *Sculpting in time: reflections on the cinema*, translated by Kitty Hunter-Blair, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2003, p.218.

<sup>3</sup> Four of the five artists presented emigrated. According to Greg Madison’s description in his essay *Existential Analysis*, they are *existential emigrants*: the essential reasons for their exile are not economical or political, but their choice testifies of a deep and determined desire *émigrés existentiels*. We are entitled to ask the following question: « wasn’t it at home that they felt the most exiled? »

<sup>4</sup> Mark-Alain Ouaknin, *Tsitsoum*, p.83. Albin Michel 1992.

providing you surrender — I know the freedom they give birth to. Results of research and doubts, they give meaning and perpetually remind me that *I don't know*, but it is powerful enough to make me keep on.

Because my gallery is focused on the *content*, the works I present are generally not exposed to immediate comments. As I have already mentioned, the works don't provide an easy explanation, they are all profoundly rooted in the history, they are relatively disinterested in the noise of everyday life and its spectacle, their company authorize us to fight, to consider defeats and especially to experience and to share possible surprises.

*All my days have I grown up among the wise*<sup>5</sup>, I have grown up in the space they left me. For me this vacant space is the space of the passer, of the bridge<sup>6</sup> — the one which echoes with my family name — a bridge that I have built between their worlds and the society. This bridge helps to fight against the routine, against the *usual* and not the *near*.

« What we encounter at first is never what is near, but always only what is common. It possesses the unearthly power to break us of the habit of abiding in what is essential, often so definitively that we never come to abide anywhere<sup>7</sup> ».

Our mission is to share the necessity of a return to the prolific sources of the origins. By this selection I would like to surprise you like I was surprised, to plunge those who come into the wonder in which I was plunged; I would like to accompany them far away from the places where those who want to belong seem to succeed but systematically fail, without knowing it, because they are only striving to leave a mark. What characterizes these artists is the fact that *they don't belong*. Sometimes by indifference, always in the solitude, they<sup>8</sup> were capable to built a world, and by this, to participate in its infinite reparation. What happens in their world can only be an expression of this primitive and essential exile, and the universes they create help us to free ourselves from the incertitude of the future.

Eric Dupont

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<sup>5</sup> Pirkei Avot, Ethics of the Fathers

<sup>6</sup> « of the bridge » translates as « du pont » in French

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *What is called thinking?*, translated by J. Glenn Gray, 1968, p.129, Harper & Row Publishers.

<sup>8</sup> Hyun Soo Choi, Paul Pagk, Carlos Kusnir, Damien Cabanes, Siobhan Liddell.