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**Meeting with Tatiana Trouvé, exhibited at the Center Pompidou: "To dream is to live in the world"**

Jean-Pierre Criquei



Known for her sculptural installations and her fabulous drawings, the Franco-Italian artist is honored at the Center Pompidou, from June 8 to August 22, 2022, as well as at the Gagosian gallery in Paris, from June 8 to September 3, 2022. She returns with the curator of her exhibition at Beaubourg, Jean-Pierre Criquei, to the themes that run through her immensely poetic work: the perpetual movement of the world, dreams, disorientation and oblivion...



*Portrait and studio shots: Jonathan Llense*



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**Jean-Pierre Criqui:** Your exhibition at the Center Pompidou is entitled “The great atlas of disorientation, chapter 2”. Atlas was a mythological character who carried the celestial vault on his shoulders. It is also a common term that designates a collection of geographical maps...

**Tatania Trouvé:** I don't carry the world on my shoulders, I assure you. [Laughs.] I am referring more to geographical maps and, of course, to large atlases which have always fascinated me with their ability to bring together sets of knowledge about the world. The idea of “*disorientation*” is also essential to me. Artistic practice is a place of disorientation since doubt assumes a driving role. If, throughout my career, I had had certainties, I think I would have only done one piece. But what interests me above all with disorientation is that it allows us to perceive again. If you get lost during a walk and are disoriented, you immediately become more attentive to the elements around you... Things turn out differently. Perception needs a form of focus and disorientation.

*“The hanging allows a journey of the gaze: a very physical journey, of the body, a journey in a space”*

The title of the exhibition specifies “*chapter 2*”, because a first exhibition, “*chapter 1*”, in a smaller format, preceded it. Do you feel like you are writing your great atlas of disorientation chapter by chapter?

No, but I like stories and narratives. I think that my work and in particular my sculptures are crossed by stories. It is something that continues and evolves. The idea of “*chapter*” reflects a movement, something that continues and evolves. Yes, my atlas is an atlas of movement, of everything that cannot stop, of everything that cannot be represented, precisely.



*Portrait and studio shots: Jonathan Llense*



*"Notes on sculpture" (2021). Patinated Bronze, Brass, Concrete and 215 paint. 122 X 64 X 42cm.*

**This exhibition includes drawings and sculptures, but it is distinguished by a total consideration of space. For you, it is not simply a matter of placing or hanging pieces, but of understanding in an integral way the place in which these works will take place. You install very large curtains, monumental furniture... And the floor is entirely covered with a large design, like a chaotic map that transforms the entire space.**

It's quite fair. I tried to recreate a journey for the gaze, where things circulate and come together constantly. It is this form of disorientation that makes it possible to connect the drawings and the installations. There are also bench-sculptures, hybrid elements that make the link with all the other elements of this installation. The hanging allows a journey of the gaze: a very physical journey, of the body, a journey in a space, because we pass under the works, we sit in the middle of them, we walk on the drawings...

***"I like architecture when it is built against housing. An architecture in which what is exterior can also become someone's interior world, a world where they could live freely."***

**We find ourselves in a sort of “*ambiente*”, an Italian term used by Lucio Fontana from the end of the 1940s, and which, in your home, refers to a very strong relationship with interior architecture.**

My father was a professor at the school of architecture in Dakar, but he was more of a sculptor. In fact, I was more influenced by radical architects like Ugo La Pietra. One of Ugo La



Pietra's statements always accompanies me: *"To live is to be at home everywhere."* For me, it consists less in being interested in the interiors, in the dwelling, than in this experience where the outside world is constantly intertwined with the interior world. I would like to mention here Henry David Thoreau who, in his book *Walden*, describes this scene: the narrator takes out all the furniture from the cabin where he lives, and he realizes that his furniture is better outside, in the forest. There, the inner and outer world mingle. I like architecture when it is built against housing. An architecture in which what is outside can also become someone's inner world, a world where they could live freely. Something that would be crossed by streams.



*Portrait and studio shots: Jonathan Llense*



*Untitled. From the Les Dessouvenus series (2018). Black pencil, bleach and glued paper on paper laid down on canvas. 125 X 200 X 3.5cm.*

**Recently, you also spoke to me about planets, and collisions of planets, movements of stars.**

I was talking above all about diagrams, diagrams that show things that are in motion. I was talking about Aboriginal dream tracks. Among Aborigines, the dream is very important, it defines their relationship to the world. Their perception and practice of dreams are very different from those encountered in Western societies. For them, the dream is not something that comes from the unconscious, that would be detached from our way of being. The dream has a real collective reality, it determines the organization of the day and the movements. In fact, I am interested in all these diagrams which try to represent things which, without being fixed, are extremely important and structuring for knowledge and societies. The drawings and diagrams that I will do on the ground will take up these sets of knowledge, which will be formalized when they are drawn, but which will then constantly change. Thus, these diagrams will be redrawn and erased by the footsteps of all the people who come to visit the exhibition. At some point, I stop something that, anyway, cannot be stopped, and which will be doomed to be reconfigured by the movement of visitors.

***“The world was dreamed. Therefore, to dream is to inhabit the world.”***

**In his book *The Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin refers to the “songlines” of Aboriginal people, who trace the webs of consciousness and pathways along which they travel and dream. In the Aboriginal world, there is thus a great indistinction between dream and reality. We never know absolutely if we are dreaming or if we are, on the contrary, dreamed by someone else.**

That's quite right. The world was created by the beings of the dream who gave it its reliefs and its forms. The world was dreamed and, therefore, to dream is to inhabit the world. This complementarity of dream and reality interests me a lot. And moreover, if you look closely at my drawings, you see that they include sorts of interiors, sorts of human presences, but without you knowing very well what they really are, because they never include representations or portraits. Despite everything, I think that the human presence is everywhere in my work.

**Yes, but signified by its absence.**

Many worlds are present in my work, such as that of plants. I am very interested in biological phenomena. Intelligence can be defined by a certain ability to understand and react to things that happen. When we humans face danger, we start running, while the plant finds itself unable to do so. It stays where it is and must find a way to defend itself, for example by producing toxins or by communicating with the other plants that are around it and which will help it call on insects that will attack the plant. aggressor.



*Portrait and studio shots: Jonathan Llense*



*The Guardian (2021). Patinated bronze, onyx, marble, paint, brass and resin. 21 X 58 X 65cm.*



**Within the exhibition, you also present your *Guardians*. These are sculptures representing seats on which are installed various objects that can relate to the presence of someone who is not represented, who is not there. A *Guardian* without a Guardian, precisely.**

They are a bit like Alberto Caeiro's Herdsman, heteronym of Fernando Pessoa. They make it possible to reflect on the world, to keep a passing world and to think about it. There is also *The Guardian* newspaper, which took this title because there are values to defend: a democracy without independent information is nothing. Symbolically, this newspaper wants to be the guarantor of this idea. My *Guardians* were born to join a community. These are works that are made to be with other works, but also to designate a gaze.

**And the guards also send us back to the museum.**

Yes, they are guarantors of knowledge.

**Can we dwell on your series of drawings *Les Dessouvenus*. Where does this word come from?**

It designates people who lose their memory, who are suffering from Alzheimer's disease. In Brittany, it is used in everyday language. I was struck by the beauty and delicacy of this word. It evokes the idea of unfolding in reverse, as if it were something that operated from the inside, and was not suffered. The use of this word also symbolizes a way of being together: being with an "unremembered", it's not just being with someone who is sick that you have to put in a hospital, it also designates another way of perceiving...others, of connecting, of building your world. If I am sensitive to language, it is because it designates our relationship to the world. I think calling someone 'unremembered' and not someone 'with Alzheimer's' modifies the relationships that we can share together in a common world. In fact, more broadly, what also interests me is how we human beings perceive things, and how others, non-humans, also perceive them, and how that connects us. I may see a tree as something that will give fruit, or wood to make fire. Perhaps a bird perceives it as a place to land, or as a branch on which to nest. And the tree is, too, all that.

**Exhibition at the Center Pompidou, Paris, from June 8 to August 22. Exhibition at the Gagosian gallery, 9 rue Castiglione, Paris, from June 8 to September 3.**