



CLEARING

RASPBERRY RISING

An exhibition of works by
Jean-Marie Appriou
October 15 – December 10, 2016

Jean-Marie Appriou: If the ground floor of the exhibition were a tarot card combination, how would you interpret it?

Gallien Déjean: If we were to consider your sculptures as the major arcana of a tarot spread, the first room of your exhibition would without doubt fall under the influence of the Tarot de Marseille's nineteenth trump - The Sun. Visitors cross the threshold to be welcomed by a bas-relief reminiscent of Etienne-Jules Marey's chronophotographs representing our daylight star in three successive states: the rising sun (adopting a style which might bring the patterns woven into Jean Lurçat's tapestries to mind), its intermediary magmatic phase and the setting sun whose tremor is reflected like a mirage.

Upon entering the room we are immediately taken aback by the presence of a blazing, radiant fire in the hearth, animating the many types of metal which come together to form this new series of sculptures: hammered zinc faces, tin solder joints, gold leaf coating on bas-reliefs, braided steel hooks, etc. The parallel drawn between the fireplace and its symbolic twin, the bas-relief depicting the sun, is striking. I noticed that opposite the fire, or should I say within the fire's sphere of influence, you have placed a sculpture representing Mercury, the planet closest to the sun. This celestial body appears to open up and give birth to ships. It is as if you are layering Mercury's astronomical, alchemical and mythological significances: while "Philosophical Mercury" designates the generating principle of the world in Hermeticism, Mercury is also the Roman patron god of travel, commerce and communication.

In this respect, I've always been impressed by the way the symbolic syncretism that informs your work seems to meld with techniques you are perfecting or rediscovering in the studio (ceramics, cast iron, repoussé, soldering). The fusion of metals or minerals in your furnace and kiln becomes an alchemical mirror, reflecting the amalgamation of myths. Within this syncretism a number of cultural archetypes (sun, planet, heart, ship) become the major arcana of your sculptural tarot deck, while the minor arcana are perhaps the ceremonial bouquets with which the exhibition is interspersed. These figures create a vast network of meanings belonging to the collective unconscious. According to C.G Jung, archetypes are fundamentally characterised by the fact that they combine a symbol with an emotion. They therefore correspond, in Jung's words, to the "potential of psychic energy", constituting all human activity and orientating libido. Henceforth, you will understand why I prefer not to give a complete answer to your question - as this unconscious is collective in essence, I will allow people to explore it themselves.

J-MA: If the first floor of the exhibition were a constellation, how would you interpret it?

GD: According to the constellation of the horse or the aeroplane, it seems our era is threatened by an imminent downfall. We are calmly drifting towards twilight. But new desires are about to surface and at sunrise it might just be time to start everything over, in another way.

J-MA: Could that be the wish expressed by the ex-votos shaped as faces/ships?

GD: Possibly.