



GUILLAUME COUFFIGNAL



CATALOG

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“Guillaume Couffignal does not make Art Brut, Art Singulier, or outsider art. There may never be a word or name for the exquisite sculpture this self-taught artist makes. Of one thing we can be sure; it isn't mainstream. It is powerful and beautiful and to me that is all that matters. I don't care if they never find a name for it. When I was a kid I used to go alone to the Museum of Modern Art in New York just to look at two pieces; Wilfredo Lam's painting; 'The Jungle', which hung near the coat check in the lobby, and 'The Palace at 4 AM' by Alberto Giacometti. Giacometti's piece profoundly excited me on every level of my being. It was theatrical, it was strong and delicate at the same time; it had a 'silence' to it one could only feel in an environment bathed in a spectral light. Perhaps best of all to me, it answered very few questions, if it answered any, without giving up any of its power. I have much the same reactions when I watch Couffignal's work respond to light and shadow. He too is very much aware of the edgy music of silence. He also captures something primal, something not primitive in and of itself, but a part of my

emotional and cellular memory and make-up that is also primitive. Primitive as in immediate and real. In this sense the word is not about an aesthetic but about a personal and deliberate approach to process. Had Giacometti called his piece 'Theater at 4AM' instead of 'Palace' it would have mesmerized with the same graceful internal chemistry. I looked at it and made rituals in my imagination to match its understated potentials. It was Einstein on the Beach years before Einstein on the Beach. I saw robed figures and nudes with their bodies painted starkly moving from nuanced chiaroscuro to rosy light. Theater. Couffignal does call some of his pieces theaters. Perhaps they are. But they are not homogeneous buildings with expected passageways and seating areas. If they are amphitheatres, they have been built for a desert night sky. These are theaters in which dreams take over. They are not populated by strange beings like the Surreal Palace was. But the entire piece is a spectral presence, a spirit. They are active in a very strange manipulation of temporal tension in that something momentous has just happened or is about to happen. The magic

is that we populate them with our own phantasms, our own archetypal dramas of surreal import. He is able to draw this out in us by his deceptively simple manipulation of materials and color, and it is at this point that he calls upon his African experiences and his mastery of one of the oldest elemental procedures in the world; the making of objects through the lost wax process in which the original shape or form is burned away, the resulting hollow filled with molten metal; in this case, bronze. We would not do justice to these pieces, however, if we only looked at them in terms of how they are made. He doesn't hide the sources but he reduces them to serve the sculpture itself. We see the wood scraps, the plant materials, the fragments of coiled basketry that went into the making, but we also see the end result of this three-dimensional collaging, the moves in the dance of bricolage, so much more dangerous than two-dimensional collage because of the unpredictability of all its elements, including fire. Couffignal has learned to control accident, to shape it till it submits to his own needs. This is an alchemical concept and ultimately he is the

image who gives 'it' its poetry. These pieces do give architecture to their poetry. His boats are ephemeral, they drift through a sea that is more mythic than wet. They, like all his pieces, are textured like adobe and straw, like the buildings of Mali, like the cracked surface of the African earth, the textures of man passage through time. His theaters force our eye to climb ancient spiral paths before we are aware of stairs or viewing areas to sit where the priest or priestess has not yet arrived. And in the ultimate trickster move you reach out expecting to touch wood or clay and despite the seeming fragility and thinness of the material your hand encounters bronze, eternal, classic and rendered completely wild by Couffignal."

*Randall Morris, July 2016, Brooklyn, New York*

*Architecture #1, 2019*

bronze and patina

72 x 26 x 15 cm

3.500 EUR



*Architecture #2, 2019*

bronze and patina

60 x 24 x 15 cm

3.500 EUR



*Architecture #3, 2019*

bronze and patina

52 x 22 x 11 cm

3.300 EUR



*Architecture #4, 2019*

bronze and patina

71 x 29 x 15 cm

3.500 EUR





*Architecture #5, 2019*

bronze and patina

58 x 41 x 14 cm

3.300 EUR



## GUILLAUME COUFFIGNAL

Artist-founder knowing the technique on the fingertips, Guillaume Couffignal excels at finding this particular moment of perfect harmony of form and substance. It goes to the essential and its “boats”, its “theaters” are visions sublimated and stripped, sculptures whose footprint durably marks the retina.

*“To sculpt is to remove the flesh until you feel the skeleton under your fingers , the original substance of everything”.*



