

Excerpts from the Correspondence Boris Wolowiec - Orsten Groom

Boris Wolowiec - Writer

A few sentences from Boris Wolowiec to Orsten Groom

A letter from Boris Wolowiec to Jean-Daniel Botta transmitted to Orsten Groom by Florian Caschera.

Thank you very much Jean-Daniel for telling me about the existence of this painter.

He is an obviously stunning painter.

Orsten Groom has indeed magnificently integrated Basquiat for the ramshackle dripping (...) or Karl Appel for the invigorating and thunderous impact of colour.

There is also a virtuosity of tangled balance, of balance through multiple entanglements, the dervish entanglement of figures that resembles Frank Stella's painting-sculpture.

Finally, by the painting composed as a net, a net thrown over the space in order to catch the figures in flight, Orsten Groom's painting has an undeniable Pollockian aspect. (...)

Through his intuition of painting as a mudflow, glued with the mud of light itself,

Orsten Groom would thus be a kind of Pompeian painter.

Groom would use the eruption of the volcano, the eruption of the painting volcano in order to radiograph the presence of human figures.

The silhouettes of his paintings then sometimes look like fossil decals. (...)

There is also this astonishing intuition of the canvas as the back of a stained glass window.

I think it's an extraordinary formula.

And it relates to the problem that I have evoked in my own way in *Fenêtre*¹.

What does the back of the translucency look like?

Painting would thus be a way to show the back of translucency and even the ass of translucency.

So I have the feeling that what Orsten Groom is attempting to do is to provoke the coincidence between the prehistoric cave's wall and the back of the stained glass, or rather to transform the wall of the prehistoric cave into the back of the stained glass (...)

Groom's attitude towards colour is sometimes quite close to that of Picasso in the era of the red, yellow and orange crucifixions.

Groom indeed thinks of colour as a value.

Groom knows very well the power of chaos of colour, the power of anarchy of colour, despite which he tries to dominate it in thought.

Groom turns colours into complementary values, values that complement each other at the four corners of the frame (to use his expression).

And this time Groom is no longer Pollockian, for him color is not what causes the explosion or implosion of the frame, at the contrary he wants to frame the color, frame the color by complementarity, in this his fatras remains a chessboard and he then bounds to Mondrian. (...)

1 Window - Boris Wolowiec - éditions Lurlure

I also have the feeling that the issue of breathing is at the heart of this painting.

It's as if Groom breathes with his heart and impels blood with his lungs, hence the asphyxiation, the epilepsy of asphyxiation.

What is remarkable is that for Groom the breathing is not given by the world, by the space of the world, the breathing would rather be stolen, the breathing would be stolen from the other, stolen from the other man. (When Groom evokes the cave paintings of prehistory he superbly indicates that the man who painted figures of men, silhouettes of men, probably died suffocating).

And yet Groom also recognizes this principle of breathing, the rapture of breath as an authority. So paradoxically for Groom, theft is the law, the theft of breath rules. (...)

Groom thus tries to paint the laughter of asphyxiation, the laughter of the apocalypse, the asphyxiation laughter of the apocalypse.

There is a smothered laughter inside his paintings, a laughter asphyxiated by its very proliferation, a laughter asphyxiated by the proliferation of its brilliance.

This suffocation would be the suffocation of shame, of what Agamben calls Kafka's liberation from shame.

«He (Kafka) had in front of him a humanity (...) that had been expropriated from any experience other than its shame - shame, that is to say, the pure and empty form of the most intimate feeling of the self. For such a humanity, the only possible innocence would have consisted in experiencing shame without discomfort. (...) This is why Kafka seeks to teach men the use of the only good that remains: not to free themselves from shame, but to free shame. »

G. Agamben, *Idea of Prose*.

Dali-Rouault

Hello there Orsten Groom,

I thought your interpretive technique might be strangely similar to Salvador Dali's paranoid-critical method. For Dali this method is a way of integrating the irrationality of phenomena with the rationality of thought.

The difference, however, between your painting and Dali's is that you do not interpret images of the psychic unconscious, you rather interpret motifs of the optical unconscious, you rather seek to interpret both randomly and rationally the silhouette motifs of the optical unconscious by the game of arranging these motifs within the same space of conflicting distance, of polemical indifference. (...)

There is also another painter who, like you, has tried to invent kind of parietal icons, Georges Rouault. Your painting would then resemble a kind of interpretation of Rouault's painting according to Dali's paranoiac-critical method. Thus defined, it would therefore have an indisputably Frankensteinian aspect. (...)

Your silhouettes also sometimes look like some kind of tattoos.

You would then try to register tattoos on the back of a stained-glass window, on the back of a stained-glass cave. And who knows, you would try to tattoo the silhouettes of humanity, the silhouettes of the apocalyptic disappearance of humanity (that of Sheol, therefore) on the surface of the wall of light, on the surface of the stained-glass wall of light.

Coma Volcano

Hello there, Orsten Groom,

“Figures pollinate each other”

For you painting appears both as vomit and as pollination.

For you the volcano of painting occurs as what vomits the pollination of space, as what vomits the prehistoric pollination of space or the anhistoric, anachronistic pollination of space.

Painting thus gives to feel a pollination impulse, a vomited pollination impulse.

(This idea of pollination is quite close to Deleuze’s rhizome).

And what is pollinated in this way is undoubtedly Poland’s Nowhere, to use Jarry’s famous formula:

«The scene takes place in Poland, that is to say nowhere. ».

What appears to be both vomited and pollinated is the royal nowhere, the aristocratic nowhere of Poland, the aristocratic nowhere of Poland that Gombrowicz also experienced.

Poland i.e the part of the zero as the part of fire.

Poland, that is to say, fire’s part of zero.

“The world’s revulsion gives me complete courage.”

I have the feeling that this attitude seems very close to Van Gogh’s.

For you, as for Van Gogh, revulsion occurs as what paradoxically offers a strength of courage, a strength of integrity, a strength of upright courage.

Integrity paradoxically appears at the moment of revulsion.

This pattern of revulsion is that of the volcano.

And this desire of becoming a volcano would also be a way of wanting to become the very matter of space.

“The injunction would then indicate: Not to be in space, but to be space “

“Volcano: Angels Puppet Show”

The space then resembles for you a kind of angelic eruption, the eruption of angels of time, the vomit of time angels, the eruption of angels from the immemorial prehistory of time, the vomit of angels of the immemorial prehistory of time, namely what P. Quignard calls the Yore.

The space resembles for you the eruption of yesteryear’s angels, the vomit of angels of Yore.

I finally have the feeling that what gave you this intuition of space is the coma, the event of coma.

The strength to paint is indeed for you thus of coma, of the coma volcano, the strength of the vacuum volcano of coma.

The coma volcano is not however the sleep of the volcano, it is rather precisely its revulsion, it is the revulsion of the volcano’s slumber.

The coma volcano revulses the volcano’s slumber and thus reveals a volcano of sleep even more terrifying than the awakening of the volcano or the volcano of awakening.

So, for you, to paint is to breathe the coma volcano.

To paint is to breathe the coma volcano as a screen of emptiness, it is to breathe the prehistoric coma volcano as the future’s screen of emptiness.

Medusa Wheel of Electricity

Hello there Orsten Groom,

“I have sometimes wondered whether the painting is a page, an encyclopedia or atlas page, an omniscient ledger that combines, that sums up the knowledge of every thing in every language within a maddened subjective.”

It is as if for you a painting shows a kind of spinning book, a book that turns like a wheel.

It is indeed obvious that you are a painter who is both literary and cinematographic.

For you, to paint would also be making a book spin in a cinematographic way, or rather to make a mass of books turn in a cinematographic way.

Painting would be for you the gesture of cinematographically turning books in order to amalgamate books with space, in order to amalgamate the books with the intertwining shreds of space.

Your painting would thus be in search of an encyclopedic wheel, or even an encyclical rosace.

For you a painting would be the cinematographic rosace of the mass of books, of the boiling mass of books.
(...)

“Their layers are there like an electrified medusa flesh.”

Yes indeed, so you try to meduse painting, to electrically jar painting, to meduse painting with the computer screen, to jar the painting with the computer's electric encyclopedia.

Your painting is the raft of the Medusa of the whole history of painting, all the figures of the history of painting decompose and rot there by floating on a kind of lava of electricity, on a hallucinogenic lava of electricity.

A painting for you would also be, who knows, an attempt to make a cave float like a raft.

To paint would be to make the prehistoric cave float like a raft on a magma of lava, on a magma of electric lava, on a magma of hallucinogenic lava, on the hallucinogenic magma of electricity.

3. The Knowing Body of the Painting

Each canvas is a series of pictorial convocations that rubs with everything with which a syntonic contact could have been made.

Orsten Groom gladly evokes his etymological passion and the investigation that goes into the creation of each painting.

The corpus is built up from extremely volatile metonymic relationships which, linked together in an irrational but not arbitrary way, operate as a cut through the disparate.

Diverse iconographies but also opposing registers resonate, integrating the metabolism of the painting.

The inscription of these jumps between different iconographies, languages, texts, registers, produces a shaping of knowledge at the same time as a process that can be seen.

The painting is a scholarly (and knowing) sorcerer, which manifests a specific space-time: far away brought back as within reach, ready to be met, alert for presence.

It is a space of the surface of things, of the leap, of the interval, of the gap, without any anchoring, a point of view or even a passage.

Each painting is more like a courtroom than it deals with a subject: it equates a fragment or something from an immensely well-known work with an everyday object, in a way that they both exist, and it is possible to meander between them.

Thus, every figure acts with one side and reacts with another.

It appears on the canvas as torn from its context, re-connected during the investigation, then transformed by its montage according to the rule of the painting.

With Picasso, Mondrian, Kafka, others who pass by and come back on the canvases, it is perhaps something else again, like what the painting debate with, sources and mirrors that surround its reason, its issues, and allow to establish a back and forth of the commentary.

4. Mundus

Divisions, contradictions, overkill allow the possible union of haunting and play, caricatured distortion and rigidity, stain and maze.

Grotesque figures mix with skeletons, tortures, oboes and trumpets.

Human history in all its nightmarish aspects is exposed to facetiousness.

But it is a paradoxical transparency that makes it possible to read the signs of impenetrability. The Etruscan rite sets up a *Mundus*, a circular foundation pit dedicated to the Manes (the souls of the dead), the mouth of hell that establishes a link between the surface and the underground world.

Are the figures poured into the painting as memorial traces, taken from the event, drained into the present, as the remains of what has been shattered?

Caught in a fabric of extended relationships, they are often incomplete.

The ordeal of painting works and oppresses them, shortens their outline, encloses them in a promiscuity where they are foreign powers to each other, while they manifest a solidarity with the nowhere they spawn in.

This is how they are concerned by what is happening.

Without the suffering the world inflicts them, they would not express themselves.

Neither do they make the world speak, it is the world that never stops pouring out, representing itself, manifesting itself to the point of saturation.

The power to affect, if it is local - in the sense that it is not global - remains non-localizable and diffuse. It is not exercised on individuals.

Affliction is not a state of mind, it is a relationship, both burning and icy, which produces fact (i.e. absurdity), the consequence of a decision.

That is to say the decision has no foundation, but only effects,
- of which the gesture of painting here achieves the equidistance.