

Jean-Christophe Couradin, a hymn to five dimensions, 2016

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Since he stopped making boxes, articulating the interior and the exterior, Jean-Christophe Couradin has tirelessly devoted himself to experimentation and the production of volumes and surfaces that may be positioned at the frontier of four types of spaces immersed in a three-dimensional volume: optical, kinetic, haptic and mathematical.

The viewer's gaze flows from one sculpture to the next and the works seem to provide a sense of movement to everything around them, especially the large bronzes—perhaps one of the reasons why so many people want to acquire them for their home. As critics have pointed out at every possible opportunity, it is even more striking that such sculptures foster an irresistible desire on behalf of the spectator to touch them, all the while concretizing fundamental situations in topology. Hence the strong attraction they exert, and the fascination.

Undoubtedly, we are reminded of Brancusi but also of Leonardo da Vinci, for the “turbine” aspect of many shapes, or the “whirlwind”, even if in reality, it is a whirlwind that is frozen in place.

Here is a man who succeeds in prodigious fashion at doing several things at once, using his extremely talented hands. The intrinsic splendour of the wood, which he uses as much as he can, is also worth mentioning, with its veins and grain, density, colour and shade, as well as the choice of admittedly rare specimens. All of these aspects endow this very pure object with its fifth essential dimension: hylic glory, from the word “hyle” meaning matter in Ancient Greek, and significantly, wood is the paradigm of all matter. All of this is very remarkable, indeed.

The beauty of Jean-Christophe Couradin's art in terms of today's contemporary production deserves praise. Furthermore, the artist appears to enjoy a secret glory: his extraordinary art draws affiliates, initiates, seasoned connoisseurs, assiduous collectors, practitioners, instrumentalists, and musicians of all horizons. One can play with their fingers the sonata or symphony of a sculpture by Jean-Christophe Couradin. And one can live with it. Rare are the artists who summon such a degree of intimacy.

There is also a certain mystery to Jean-Christophe Couradin. What makes him such an intuitive mathematician? What Platonic ideals guide him? What model does he contemplate? What laws do his fingers obey? A mystery that this wonderfully warm man, of a rare simplicity, exquisite kindness, and superb talent, refuses to divulge.

Categorizing the curves of his complex volumes is a difficult endeavour. Moreover, their nature obeys in part, the characteristics of the wood used: the potentialities it presents, the size of the available block, etc. There are surfaces of expansion, undulation, vibration and flight (bronzes) but there are also, perhaps more so, involute moments, which invite comparison with seashells, and add to the mystery rather than simplifying it. The question can once again be asked: what is the guiding force behind the artist? In a way, Jean-Christophe Couradin does as nature does, with constancy and whim. When he works, he is undoubtedly closer to nature than anyone else. One might perhaps see in this an expression of Western Taoism. His medium-sized pieces generally have two poles: a navel or underside, and a more open surface, often endowed with subliminal sexual characteristics. However, in my opinion, it is the flight path of each piece that is the most fascinating aspect. The flaring or opening of an immarcescible ebony defies description. (Or as the humble artist might surmise: it's not bad!). Jean-Christophe Couradin's sculptures provide a tremendous sense of relief.

They are hymns, perhaps of very great significance, which he has conjured forth through the splendour of the wood, and sometimes bronze. May he be assured, with affection and admiration, that these hymns are heard, in all their astonishing dimensions, and that they will be heard more and more.