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Rising²
(Surgissement à deux)

They're a couple. He sculpts, she photographs. They are two; they live together, their works lie side by side, know each other, speak to each other – and love each other.

Most artists are alone; their solitude haunts their oeuvre and sometimes pulls it downward into storied misery. Here, quite rarely (by contrast I think of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner), there are two: their solitude is doubled. Moreover: this doubled solitude makes their two oeuvres larger, it multiplies their logics of unforeseeable encounters, it circulates the desire that enhances them, it makes possible what the world's simultaneous globalization and disappearance into the virtuality of networks is making increasingly impossible: the mad simplicity of a relationship—what I call love.

Juxtapose this totem in forged black iron by Alain Kirili and these strange oculi photographed by Ariane Lopez-Huici; conjugate this celestial sphere mysteriously looming out of the ashen folds of the universe with these rubbery strings forming silhouettes in weightlessness: what happens between them? What happens in you? Their play on visibility is infinite: an invisible bacchanalia, a silent conversation, overflowing volumes, strangeness sung. Here space meets you or, simply, here space loves you.

In a sculpture by Alain Kirili, in a photograph by Ariane Lopez-Huici, what immediately becomes evident is: *someone is there*.

This someone is not alone, in the sense of unhappy subjectivity: this someone is a volume of thought that desires—*it thinks of the other*, of all the others who are not itself; and this thought, which is in every sculpture and every photograph, makes the world open itself with love: blocks erected, slits willed, grooves, twists, embraces, wrestling, masturbations, abductions, nudities, drunkenness.

When I see a sculpture by Alain Kirili, I glimpse divinity. As it is put in Homer: “he saw the god.” Yes, in Kirili, the hammer at the forge rumbles with the laughter of a calm god.

And when I look at photographs by Ariane Lopez-Huici, I realize that this god is Eros, the same one Parmenides tells us was born before all the other gods: Eros who emerges directly from Chaos, and who in some traditions is likened to a demon—a troubling, tumultuous force that inhabits, for example, the exuberant body of Dalila, as she intensifies the motions of a plump sibyl, with her primordial hilarity and overwhelming flesh.

The word “love” erupts immediately when I think of this couple of artists. Nothing in it blares out, nothing in it is saccharine: Eros is a god who knows that which is terrible.

The oeuvres of Ariane Lopez-Huici and Alain Kirili thus possess a threatening truth, a troubling knowledge that seems to come from darkness, even though neither ever indulges in the cynical teeth-grating that inhabits contemporary art like a poison: their power is propitious, their timbre is liberated—their works spread out in the affirmative tracing of joy, delighted like a couple making love.

Look at these painted forged iron pieces by Alain Kirili, these blocks of universe, these declamatory stones, these assemblages that, in their laughter, bid farewell to petty enclosure, these painted plasters throwing off red flames that speak sexual churning, these iron wires twisted upon themselves like storms of desire, these dancing rubber strands.

Look at these bodies photographed by Ariane Lopez-Huici: bodies that hold each other tight, that struggle, that exult; bodies that tear themselves away from the metrics, programming, and norms of fashion images; bodies with insolent tranquility, fleshy and rebellious, in crude postures, with disturbing joys; bodies that aren't afraid of their suffering, their fat, their aging; bodies that can know themselves, that project their excess just as easily as their lack, that don't keep themselves from existing; bodies that affirm time and their final destinies, and the courage to live in nudity in a living present.

“Artists are initiates,” Alain Kirili says often. They have access to *another country*—one that gives you knowledge about death. There is a path that leads through the heart of hell, but is protected from damnation. On this path artists make their way: they pass through, like Job, *so they can tell you*—and so that they can invite you too to witness this unharmed, or, in other words, to reinvent pleasure.

Here we enter a high, airy space, where the air itself opens up, transpierced by metal. Alain Kirili's forge work creates shadows, and all of its darkness brings light to a colorless world.

Violence of voluptuousness, black throat, arms spread wide, a grasping sex: the black depths of Ariane Lopez-Huici's photographs, sounding chasms, eyes from caves. The bodies erupt from an original wall that is the hole of the species.

In both artists, there is a fundamental affirmation of guiltlessness, or in other words, of that which is not absorbed by hell—that which resists it.

Hell (planetary society) attacks us every day; it seeks nothing else: to reach us, to sap our strength so that we end up joining forces with what destroys us, with destruction itself.

An artist—and here there are two—is someone who doesn't get fooled by the devil; who never ceases, who has the endurance and the cunning, to outplay the nihilist strategy—to escape capture.

Whence these exuberant exorcisms: these couples in Ariane Lopez-Huici who grapple, clutch, and knead one another; these iron wires in Alain Kirili that reach ecstasy suspended in mid-air.

These are shamans: they have internalized the cry—*il grido*. The scream doesn't dominate their range; to the contrary, their mouth smiles, like those of spouses on Etruscan tombs: and this is because their fundamental joy is able to digest the blackness. A blackness that they *have*, the same way we say a musician has a good ear, but which, for them, doesn't get the last word.

This is conjure. That's how I see Kirili's statues, these elevations that salute the invisible; and that's how I take in Lopez-Huici's ecstatic portraits and sexual roar.

This game is never easy, as the demons are hungry and they will eat your life. The gesture Kirili and Lopez-Huici manage to accomplish is a sort of exorcism or counter-magic: they attack death itself, with forms that leap upward. Like Basquiat said, "Riding with death." Riding on the back of one's own death—the noblest of rituals.

Hence this smiling verticality, this defiance of heaviness, these excessive bodies, this outward push that ritually animates the oeuvres of Kirili and Lopez-Huici, and destines them to FOUND.

Indeed, foundation is what is happening here: the founding of a free space.

As I write this text I'm listening to a record that Alain spoke about to me one evening in New York: Max Roach and Anthony Braxton's *Birth and Rebirth*. Pulsations of counter-magic, spells and counter-spells, freedom of space suddenly enlarged by music.

Immediately the name of Dionysus comes into my head, the god with bull's horns, crowned with serpents, the dancing god—who cannot be bound.

And suddenly I think: Ariadne [*Ariane*] and Dionysus.

Each hears the affirmation of the other, and makes it the object of an *other affirmation*.

Life is not unworthy of being desired on its own account, and there's no need to inveigh against it to make it livable; being two (or two together) clarifies what philosophy has labored to formulate: this couple affirms affirmation.

The Mysteries of Ariadne.

Dionysus carries Ariadne to the heavens; the jewels of Ariadne's crown are stars. Reciprocally, Ariadne lavishes the clarity of erotic destiny upon the drunken god.

Thinking depends on the forces that take control of one's thoughts. For Ariane Lopez-Huici, these forces are sexual. She has no fear. I can improvise a definition: *Joy exists in proportion to the absence of fear*.

The goddess according to Ariane dances with all-desiring eyes. She has the power of an eternally all-devouring little girl: this is Dalila. But she is also a river of hair swirling magnificently around a bust that's been brutally severed: this is Priscilla.

For Kirili-Dionysus, verticality summons. The assemblages listen, the modeled clay calls out. Iron bars shaped at the forge, twisted iron wires, silhouettes of signs: these sculptures decompress the heaviness that is our common lot because they *raise* a voice.

Rising voices. Enlarging the horizon. Extension that founds itself. Open space for the great game of time.

Matter set into motion, launched upward, thrown into space, every more supple and spiraling, like a voice. These are gestures and soon they will be so light that Kirili's sculptures will float in the air, like saxophone solos.

A surface shaped with rhythm, welcoming the arrival of the god.

Clearly, this god or this goddess is the opposite of religion (today religion is society itself): *believing* has nothing to do with it, much less joining.

This god is part of a deepening of the sacred itself through art; he offers himself in bursts even as he vanishes, slipping furtively between volumes, along curves, through interstices, whispering the pleasure that speaks the truth of being: he reminds us that there is someone, and that this someone is capable of loving.

For spiritual combat takes place at every moment. Not in the church, or in any place dedicated to liturgical servility; it takes place through bodies, voices, embraces—in the struggle between love and hatred, in whoever, at every moment, is separating light from darkness.

Here, finally, are Kirili's *Commandements*. I've loved them for a long time. I don't know where this gathering of small forms comes from. It's as if these forms compose a burning text: Kirili himself speaks of an alphabet. They're letters that burst forth from the immensity of languages, that carve up the babel of tongues and in its midst spread out their choreography of primordial writing.

Confronting the *Commandements*, one gets the feeling of a calm *tabula rasa*; one feels, in an obvious way, that things have hardly begun: we await the beginning, the origin itself has yet to occur, but it's coming, it will happen: the origin is still coming.

It seems to me that I have always known this silent population that belongs to nothing but its own sense of expectation, that seems concerned with nothing but its invocation; and it seems to me that I have always been part of this millennial overflowing, that I have always recognized the voice that runs secretly through this field of atoms, this iron fervor, this extra-terrestrial material.

Free extension, where there is nothing we must answer to, where matter is left to itself, or in other words to the breath that turns it toward time.

If space *takes place*, as it does in Kirili and Lopez-Huici, this is not necessarily so that we can live in it: space opens itself in order to be born. Free spaces of invocation. Spaces of movements, where speech can move freely.

Breath of Kirili's *Commandements*, that raise themselves up like so many vertical voices and mark off a space outside social coordinates: an entirely ritual cadastral map, whose very simplicity is part of an invocation, an appeal. A clearing, the opening of a

region. A “speaking runway” [*“piste parlante”*], as Sollers has put it. A site for the advent of a god.

It seems to me that these *Commandements* have always existed, as if the Hebrew desert, ancient China, and the Dogon country of the Bandiagara cliffs in Mali, had all made this multiple rising possible—this population of signs emitting their immemorial gestures: an unconstrained space that opens onto the free voices of time.

This blossomed one morning on earth, far from countries or borders. It arrived by the hand of an inhabitant of this earth. It’s a memory that gathers, a memory that calls, that crosses surfaces, that now welcomes its neighbors plaster and iron, all of Kirili’s other works, but also these faces, these bodies, these Borromean spheres seized by the eye of Ariane Lopez-Huici.

So yes, it’s starting to come, and it’s coming from all over. To understand what happens when these photographs, these sculptures, and music come together, you need to be there, some night, at 17 White Street in Tribeca, NYC, where Ariane Lopez-Huici and Alain Kirili live, and experience one of the free jazz performances they arrange with musician friends.

The musician passes by, like Dionysus with his flute, and invents a voice that animates the sculptures and the images. This voice rises up, it opens a path, it *founds*.

Then there are no more photographs, or vertical terra cottas, or sounds; there’s no more photographer, sculptor, or musician: there is only a re-starting of time, an invisible vibration, a sort of embrace that mixes works and beings, a marriage, a smile: that of Ariane Lopez-Huici and Alain Kirili.

Translated by Philip Barnard