

## André Boucher / Photographer

### **Fundamental structures of Matter and the Imaginary**

The photographs making up the nucleus of the Illuminations series by André Boucher have been taken in Montreal, Saigon, Vietnam and Central America. They are the capturing of light as perceived through the frozen walls of the Ice Buddhas, inside The Lantern House of Dam Sen Cultural Park, and, in Central America, light reflected on eroded wood and corroded metal. Due to the juxtaposition of a mirrorimage, the picture, divided in two, offers a perfect symmetry. Nothing, however, could explain the unforeseen wonder of the shapes emerging into the light. In the few images taken in Central America, these silhouettes resemble the figures inhabiting pre-Colombian mythologies, whereas, in those shot in Vietnam, one recognizes ancient Asian or Indonesian symbols and imaginary beings. As if these forms proceeded from some fundamental structures of Matter or the Imaginary. Mesmerizing! At the core of the enduring reality of matter, Myth reasserts its precedence.

### **ILLUMINATIONS**

A sudden light quickening one's mind, brilliant light, visions of supernatural phenomena, extraordinary brightness which the divine pours into a man's soul, trance that takes over the mystic and which he experiences to the point of hallucination, all those meanings concur in this title Illuminations which summons Rimbaud the seer, his call to the clairvoyant and to the surreal. For we are indeed talking here about the enlivening power of the imaginary when it inhabits with intensity the perceptions that begot it. Light that paradoxically reveals itself to become a gateway to a mystery. The light of revelation weaving bonds between the visible and the invisible.

The photographs making up the nucleus of this exhibition have been taken in Saigon, Vietnam. They are the capturing of light as perceived through the frozen walls of the Ice Buddhas, inside The Lantern House of Dam Sen Cultural Park. The eye of the camera has penetrated the ice. An aurora borealis becoming iridescent in the depths of a tropical glacier. A new step in the oeuvre of André Boucher. Grace arises once more to sanction his intimate intuition of the soul of things, the Anima Mundi. From one picture to the next an initiation journey unwinds in front of our eyes. At the bounds of pictorial language, between the inexpressible and silence, new dynamics of visual perception

fertilize these abstractions with rich sensory data transposed to crystal clear images; magical images, full of wonders, vibrant with the dimension of the spirit.

The principles of art, as they were crystallized in the Six Canons by Hsieh Ho, a Chinese painter from the sixth century, point out that the authentic work of art is a spiritual operation. Tapping into the energy of the universal mind, the artist must let the cosmic energy flow within his work of art. For him, the spirit is an active principle which hurls itself towards things, generating them to better apprehend them. Lastly, Hsieh Ho confides to us that balance and symmetry are the preeminent characteristics of the spiritual world. We find both of them triumphing throughout this new constellation of photos from Asia. Due to the juxtaposition of a mirror, the picture, divided in two, offers a perfect symmetry, as with the animals developing a perfect harmony of their spots, their ocelli. To give geometry is to render immutable. And in the center of this spatial partition, sustained emblem of equilibrium and duality unfolds an intuitive tapping into the soul of the World. For nothing could explain the unforeseen wonder of the forms emerging into the light. In the few images taken in Central America, these silhouettes resemble those inhabiting pre-Colombian mythologies, whereas, in those shot in Vietnam, one recognizes Asian or Indonesian figures. As if these forms proceeded from irreducible structures of Matter or the Imaginary. So at the core of the enduring reality of matter, Myth reasserts its precedence. The artist turns the key to the dream-world.

Nowadays, science and art, these two vast areas of the imaginary, erase their mutual conceptual borders, converging towards a new approach to total knowledge, gnosis, and illumination. The quantum interrelation of the universe has become a fundamental reality and pushes back the frontiers of the possible. The universe, as some quantum physicists claim, may have eleven dimensions. These pictures seem to take part in their coalescence. A heraldic stylization irradiates here its receding polarities.

The ice becomes a window through which we discern the sibylline trajectories of inexhaustible life. Color in its radiance and pulsations transmits us a feeling of intangible space. The mystical quality of this art resorts to the affect, to feeling as well as to the imaginary. Color stirs up sensuality, addressing emotions on an undeniable primary register. The formal simplicity allows the striking subtleness of the color equilibrium; the slightest details of these worlds reach us with the intensity of a hallucination; they fill us with a strange happiness, unusual yet ethereal. A world of wonders dawns on us, symphonic. A bestiary comes to life within these dawns. Nocturnal births from inertia arising with august meditative poses. Nature spirits, sacred animals, creatures from another dimension, nurtured by the flames of an invisible future. They peer into the inside of our world.

These pictures prompt an experience of the numinous, this encounter powerful enough to stir us totally with a disconcerting connection to that which is beyond us, awakening the spark of the divine. We recognize in our fascination the sacred torment of the

Symbolists, the unforeseen lightning of the fortunate instant that enjoys what never was. The splendour of light uncreated. Imagination, wrote William Blake, is the signature of God.

Paul-Georges Leroux

## **REFLECTIONS THROUGH AN ICE BUDDHA**

Was she delivered on earth as amino-acids enclosed in meteorites; did she appear in the higher atmosphere inside hydrogen molecules or along the scalding springs disturbing the icy depths of the ocean, life needs in order to spread out one essential element: water. Water, these two syllables weighty with limpidity and with the elusive elapsing of time which only seeks to flow.

Siddhartha contemplated on the water his reflection which was surrounded by lively solar shimmering. He experienced illumination and became Buddha. Water brought him the awakening, the radiance of a sudden bedazzlement. The dazzle of art, this gaze of beauty, this all-embracing way of perceiving things can also reach out towards another kind of awareness and help us develop some vigilance.

By sublimating our corroded environment, André Boucher with Imprints of Time had given us in the same wide angle a reminder of our responsibility towards it. These reflections of light through an Ice Buddha, in the city of uncle Hô, make us reflect about another ice, another water. Each day, a sole Greenland glacier sends off into the sea enough icebergs to supply the city of New York with water for a year. Each day twenty-two thousand people die because of unhealthy water, more than a billion have no access to water, and two billion have no way to make it healthy. We cannot live without water. We cannot live underwater. We must slow down global warming and arrange things so that everyone has access to drinkable water.

## **THE SPACE SALTIMBANCO**

To describe an artist as cosmic is to assert that his representation of the world holds power to give concrete shape to the infinite, that he is without restriction present to the

world and to space. It is this ample vision I recognize in the characters inhabiting André Boucher's Illuminations. The Space Saltimbanco of the Illumination suite 9, the Mayan Minotaur from Bestiary suite 7 or the Asian Pallas Athena of Illumination suite 4, all stroll around the cosmic universe of the possible. These choices are not calculated but intuitive and necessary. They set down the genetic law of an inventive and playful oeuvre, in a state of weightlessness inside the fullness of a mystery. That of the fabric of the World.

Inuit hunters affirm that their dreams can reveal where are hidden the animals they track down the following day. This image hunter has pursued a Vietnamese dream up to the Ice Buddha of Dam Sen Cultural Park in Saigon to bring back a game bag ridden with constellations of hatching worlds, of staggering sidereals.

Paul-Georges Leroux