



## FONDATION OPALE

- ≡ Cultural foundation
- ≡ Exhibition

### Press release

## Fondation Opale enters into *RESONANCES*

From this June on, Aboriginal artists will meet their counterparts from the international contemporary scene in Fondation Opale's new exhibition entitled *RESONANCES*, in Lens / Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

Between June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Fondation Opale will be showcasing its new exhibition, *RESONANCES*. It follows its debut show *Before Time Began* that introduced the origins of contemporary Aboriginal art to the broader public. Today, the foundation brings the collections of sisters Bérengère and Garance Primat into dialogue, with more than 90 works from all over the world which will continue to fascinate the visitors.

Highlighting the intrinsic connections and universal themes conveyed by artists from the antipodes, the exhibition presents a journey in five chapters. Throughout a light scenography, each chapter proposes a confluence of artworks in their varied medias, materials and chroma. The walls are black, ochre and red: the shades of the Australian desert. Visitors set their steps right into a night of times immemorial, when the primordial Being was buried deeply underground. Then they will discover the Tales of the earth and the skies, followed by the Power of transformation. Further down the journey, the Secrets of Mother Earth and The Origins are revealed, as the light of the day will finally unveil the First Being.

Selected excerpts:

- *Récits de terres et de ciels* (Tales of the Earth and the Skies): Jean Dubuffet's near eponymous work (*Récit de Terre*) opens the exhibition, echoing a piece by Aboriginal artist Rover Thomas Joolama. In addition to the strong formal link between these two works composed of organic material, raw earth and natural ochres extracted from the ground, both artists address the sacred bond between the human, the Earth and its creation.
- *Pouvoir de métamorphose* (Power of Transformation): for Tomás Saraceno, transformation materializes in spiderwebs. In a triptych, the artist offers a cartography of the spider's moves. This approach, addressing territory and memory, is illustrated on a canvas by Freddie Timms, steeped in the songline, the beats and the rhythms of the landscapes of East Kimberley. For Aboriginal artists, all creativity, whether human or natural, is rooted in the Dreaming. The spider evokes a dance, almost a trance. Together, they compose a ballad.

- *Secrets de la Terre Mère* (Secrets of Mother Earth): Sally Gabori created a visual language when, aged 80, she began painting with acrylic. *My Country* is a self-portrait in which she reasserts her connection to the ancestral land, a warm and welcoming home. Facing her canvas, the sculpture entitled *Mutti* (mum in German) by Beninese artist Romuald Hazoumè, represents not only the protective mother but also a very specific time in history: the migrations of peoples from Africa towards Europe and Angela Merkel's welcome.
- *Les Origines* (The Origins): Mother Earth, procreation, womb and roots can be found in the cave in which *Annunciation* by Sam Falls is revealed and displayed next to *Mother Rainbow Serpent* by John Mawurndjul. As with Aboriginal peoples, Falls' approach summons up the passing of time: through his canvases, he maps out forests, notably those destroyed by fire in California. They resonate gruesomely with the devastating fires which consumed Australia this winter.
- *L'Être premier* (First Being): terrestrial richness can bring to life the primordial woman/man. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri celebrates this birth on a huge fresco, like a depiction of vibrating elements on which the mark of Man is emblazoned on the earth. In response, Ugo Rondinone's granite archetypal beings, *The Pleased and The Delighted*, remind us with a humour devoid of irony, that humans and nature are one.

An original soundtrack was created by the composer Mathieu Lamboley for *RESONANCES*. This score is present throughout the exhibition, combining string, wind and percussion instruments with the powerful and resonating voice of the great master of *yidaki*, Djalu Gurruwiwi, evoking *Banumbirr*, the Morning Star.

## The exhibition

*RESONANCES*, from June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 until April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Art gallery open from Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm. L'Opale restaurant: open Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, 9:30 am to 7 pm; Friday and Saturday 9:30 am to 11 pm.

Curators: Ingrid Pux and Hervé Mikaeloff, with Georges Petitjean (Fondation Opale's head curator).

Alongside the main exhibition, Fondation Opale's Special Focus space will host three projects: the first (June-September 2020) as a solo show of Australian Indigenous photographer Michael Cook, the second (September-November) on the work of Italian architecture agency *Superstudio*, and the third (November 2020-April 2021) on French, Czechoslovakia-born sculptor *Vladimír Škoda*.

## The foundation

Established in December 2018, Fondation Opale is the only contemporary art centre dedicated to promoting contemporary Aboriginal art in Europe. It fosters dialogue between cultures and peoples through art. With over nine hundred works of art, the Collection Bérengère Primat constitutes one of the most important collections of contemporary Aboriginal art in Europe. As for the Dragonfly Collection created by Garance Primat, it comprises works of modern and contemporary artists from across the continents, as well as objects and minerals. The exhibition *RESONANCES* also includes pieces on loan from the Arnaud Serval Collection, from the MAGNT, Darwin and from the Gwinnett Collection in Adelaide, Australia.

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