

RENÉE

## duRocher

The Big Picture

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Renée duRocher has made quite a place for herself in the visual arts world of Québec and Canada, and that's on top of her huge success in the US capital.

**A**lthough she has been active in the gallery world for over three decades, Renée duRocher still has a lot to say. Likewise, we as art amateurs are far from having grasped all of the nuances and idiosyncrasies that are present in her work and her artistic journey. From the beginning, one of duRocher's central thematic concerns has been durability and timelessness. But in her work, these two do not stand in opposition with the finality of life. On the contrary, these two forces compliment each other, mutually giving each other sense and purpose. Comprehending this relationship is fundamental to a deeper understanding of the ensemble of duRocher's work.

As conscious beings, we cannot remain insensitive to the passing of time and the fact that one day we will no longer be on this earth. Time, which gave us life, will one day become our executioner! Although this may seem contradictory, it is actually

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and Galerie d'Avignon, Montréal;  
St-Laurent & Hill, Ottawa;  
Roberts Gallery, Toronto;  
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the basis for the transmittal of knowledge. The challenge of the attentive observer lies in being able to judge this state of the world—our status of victim and survivor—in a lucid manner. Is this macabre dance mere cruelty, or is it the very exhalation—in the absolute sense—of life? Renée duRocher has always been fascinated by this enigma, this extraordinary and terrifying destiny of ours. Without ever becoming romantic or complacent about it, duRocher has always managed to look for what is essential: not at the finality of things but at their continuation. This explains at least partially the significant spiritual dimension that is present in her work. During interviews, she admits that she has faith, but always adds that she doesn't feel obligated



Le temps suspendu, technique mixte sur canevas, 122 x 152,5 cm

Renée duRocher likes to work in series and as a general rule, once she has finished one she rarely goes back to it.

to talk about it; in fact she refused to admit that her work was spiritual for a long time. Over the years, she has come face to face with this aspect of her work and then struggled to accept it, probably because her first intention as an artist has always been to look at the world in a neutral manner. Over time, duRocher has accepted the fact that these two elements – her spirituality and her desire to be objective – are not totally incompatible at all.

Renée duRocher likes to work in series and as a general rule, once she has finished one she rarely goes back to it. The exception to this rule is of course her series on contemporary dance, a theme which she has yet to exploit to its full potential. A true admirer of contemporary dance, duRocher believes it has much in common with the visual arts. Her inspiration for most recent series is Abou Simbel<sup>1</sup>, much in the same way that other have inspired her work: Sainte-Sophie Cathedral in Turkey and the Xi'an mausoleum dedicated to Emperor Qin, discovered in 1979 and where one can now see the famous clay army of life-sized soldiers, to name just two.

Renée duRocher, an eternal explorer, feels a deep need to travel the world. Her travels, in fact, are fertile breeding grounds for inspiration. Her trip to Egypt last spring, which occurred at a moment in her career when her creativity was at a standstill, proved to be a veritable creative launching pad for her as she entered a new phase of work.

Next year will be particularly busy for duRocher, who has many projects and exhibits in her future. What is wonderful about her creative process is that each and every one of her projects contributes to the big picture.



Amazing Abou Simbel, technique mixte sur canevas, 91.5 x 152.5 cm

1 Abou Simbel is an Egyptian city located on the border of Lake Nasser. The site is world-renowned for its temples built by Ramses II (XIX dynasty). Ramses II's temple, which honoured divinities such as Rê-Horakhty, Amon and Path and the defied pharzo, and Hathor, should have been engulfed by the Nile a dam was built. A Unesco initiative saved the temple in 1965: it was dismantled and rebuilt on the summit of the Libyan mountains.

The French, German, Italians, Swedish and Egyptian engineers had to :

- protect the site from the waters of the Nile by bulding a temporary dike that measured over 350 metres
- separate the temples from the 310.000 tons of rocks without using explosives

- divide the temples into 1000 blocks weighing between 10 and 30 tons in order to transport them and put them back together again at their new site.

The budget for this project, which was completed in 1968, was 42 Million dollars.

A Swiss explorer by the name of John Lewis Burckhardt discovered Abou Simbel, then covered in sand, in 1813. This archeological site was painted by David Roberts, who visited this extraordinary place some 25 years later. Source : [www.inseculs.com](http://www.inseculs.com)