

The Survivors

Robert Bernier

For many art collectors and art lovers the name Renée duRocher is highly significant, and with good reason! This artist has been painting professionally for over three decades, and her work can be seen in numerous galleries across Canada and the United States. Those who have followed her artistic development, even through its more remarkable transformations, know that Renée duRocher has always maintained the same direction, the same determination and the same artistic premise; a premise on which her approach, fundamentally unchanged since she started out, is based.

What has changed, perhaps, is the way duRocher inscribes that approach on canvas, the angle from which it is observed and interrogated. As for the rest, whether it be her preoccupations

or her manner of constructing pictorial space, the artist has succeeded in preserving a similarity of content. Actually, what interests duRocher most, and what consequently distinguishes her from other painters, is her interrogation of time, and more precisely its dimension as a transmitter of knowledge, a

connecting thread of understanding, small or great, which, from century to century, fashions the human adventure. This constant, unflagging preoccupation with time in no way affects duRocher's creativity. On the contrary, it enriches it, and is enriched by it. In fact, the artist's entire body of work should be seen



Provenance, techniques mixtes sur toile, 2001, 76 x 76 cm



Le culte de l'ange, techniques mixtes sur toile, 2001, 76 x 76 cm

from beginning to end to capture both its rectitude and its diversity.

Renée duRocher works in series, made up of sequences of varying length, each representing a different point of view of the same theme in relation to the whole. The artist is methodical, acting reflexively and embarking on a given path only after a process dominated by observation, analysis, research and concentration. Her approach, however, is not all rationality. Although she does take a lot of time to consider before going ahead full steam on a new series, it is also because she wants to feel the subject imposing itself, assuming its place.

In her present series, which she's been working on since 1998, Renée duRocher targets durability, the survivors - us, as it happens - of humanity's long journey. Her paintings evoke

the notion of transmission, that of knowledge and culture, but above all of the great ideas and ideals which have woven the tapestry of who we are today, both as members of society and as individuals. In her methodological transcription of reality she resorts to images which are more the property of symbols, such as photographs of cathedrals, icons or citadels. These illustrations, glued to the supporting background, constitute the starting point of her reflection, the pillar on which the ensemble of her approach will be grafted. This explicit collage echoes an implicit, even artificial collage, by the way the artist organizes the elements composing her canvas. These elements are often very different in nature - when considered in isolation no link seems to unite them. They resemble a vast assembly which, like a

hieroglyph, becomes clear and meaningful only through association. The intelligence of duRocher's approach is found precisely in this dimension of reciprocity between the nature of her subject and the manner in which she organizes her canvas.

In short, Renée duRocher's painting is the convincing testimonial of a person questioning her roots in life and calling out to us with a reflection in which, it must not be forgotten, we are the main actors... ●

Renée duRocher

5 to 17 November at Galerie Walter Klinkhoff,
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