

François Carrier: Material Expansion

Dorota Kozinska

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FRANÇOIS CARRIER

Material Expansion

By Dorota Kozinska

YOUTH AND AMBITION GO HAND IN HAND, AND IN ART, OFTEN LEAD TO WORKS THAT COMPEL BY BEING BOTH AUDACIOUS AND TENTATIVE. SUCH IS THE CASE WITH FRANÇOIS CARRIER, WHOSE TEXTURED ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE COMMANDS A DIFFERENT AND UNBIASED PICTORIAL APPRECIATION.

In giant leaps, this young Quebec artist has been testing his creative mantle, beginning with early, smaller works with lyrical undertones, to his recent large format paintings. Although faithful to his earthy palette and executed in the heavily textured mixed media technique he developed, Carrier's new pieces are, nevertheless, a departure.

In his preceding series *Reliquus*, the title implied a literal reading, and kept the viewer searching for meaning in the abstract compositions.

Separate yet undeniably fraternal, *Reliquus 16* and *Reliquus 17* hinted at a presence in the tactile landscape, whether in the accidental shape of the etched lines that mapped fragments of the paintings, or in the habitable space Carrier created.

Referring to the Latin word for *relic*, Carrier attempted to imply a reading of the works, unaware of the futility, even danger, of such eagerness.

These paintings spoke for themselves, fresh as they were, attesting to a talent that needed no external attributes. Even without the telltale titles, these early works are reminiscent of fragments of ancient murals, faded and peeling, etched by the passage of time and the invisible forces of nature.

Be as it may, each artistic endeavour, each series, has propelled Carrier on his creative path, culminating – for the time being – in an explosion of fervour, a drastic rescaling of the imagery, and its compositional reconfiguration. His use of plaster on masonite gives his new works a sculptural dimension; the layers are thicker, the surface gouged by crevices where once delicate lines were scratched onto it. Deep grooves and raised ridges invite a play of light and shadow, and there is also a new intense focus on colour.

Verging on three-dimensional, these 59" x 30" paintings-cum-reliefs offer no immediate interpretation, remaining, as it were, *Untitled*.

Their sense, and presence, lie in their physicality, and in the unhindered, audacious use of material. To that extent, Carrier follows in the footsteps of other Quebec artists like Pierre Patry, François Samson, or even the highly stylised Dominic Couturier; painters whose works are marked by masculinity and an inescapable earthiness. While gender and geographical location can be unreliable, if not irresponsible, factors in discussing art, they nevertheless speak to the human element in every creative accomplishment.

In the realm of visual expression, these tendencies are neither unique nor avant-garde, they are, however, individual and as such, irreplaceable. Carrier's talent is his own, and it is still evolving. By abandoning the maturity and



Untitled
Diptych 80 x 48
Mixed media
Courtesy Galerie Lydia Monaro

sophistication of his earlier works for an experimental expansion of his visual landscape, he proves to be daring, and as such, promising. □

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Galerie Lydia Monaro
34, St-Paul O.,
Montreal, QC, H2Y 1Y8
Tel.: 514 849-6052
www.galerielydiamonaro.com