The Art of Eugène Carrière

15 January - 4 March 2023
Opening Sunday 15 January 2 pm - 6 pm

Curator Serge Lemoine



Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

Galerie Jocelyn Wolff | 43 rue de la Commune de Paris | 93230 Romainville | Tuesday to Saturday 10 am - 6 pm | +33 1 42 03 05 65 | www.galeriewolff.com

« Some old passions become tinged with obscurity, a circumstantial obscurity in the precise case of my interest in the work of Eugène Carrière, which dates back to my visit to his exhibition in Strasbourg in 1996. These ghostly figures, this play of shadows and off-fields that characterise Eugène Carrière's brunailles*, find numerous, possibly infinite echoes in the cinema, in the work of contemporary (Medardo Rosso) and later artists (Léon Spilliaert), echoes that reactivate both my memory of this work and my attraction to it. In the context of a parallel reflection on the critical fortune of artists, Eugène Carrière's success at the end of the nineteenth century is difficult for me to understand today, as is the (even relative) oblivion to which he has now been relegated. This play of rediscovery, return to grace and disappearance, like the fluctuation of the parameters that make up the contemporaneity of a work of art, are at the heart of the concerns of a contemporary art gallery. In the case of Carrière's work, it is not their monochrome nature, nor their iconography that particularly interests me, but rather this aspect of the loss of the subject in the world that surrounds it, the product of a stylistic process which can also be found in the works on paper.*

Thus, with the idea that a stylistic analysis might confer a greater readability on this a body of work which has been plunged into obscurity, I thought it would be interesting to entrust the curatorship of the exhibition to Serge Lemoine, whose outlook encompasses the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who is passionate about geometric abstraction as much as about the painting of Puvis de Chavannes, and who was at the origin of the Auguste Rodin Eugène Carrière *exhibition at the Musée d'Orsay in 2006. This exhibition is also part of an even broader perspective, and could well serve as an introductory chapter to our spring exhibition on the theme of grisaille. Whilst the research work of the gallery mainly develops thanks to our artists' monographs, it is also consolidated by regular thematic inspirations, encouraging a flow between registers and centuries. The work of Eugène Carrière, whose nebulousness transforms shapes and matter into air, is the very image of this inspiration.»*

_ Jocelyn Wolff

L´art d´Eugène Carrière
by Serge Lemoine

At the Musée Rodin in Paris, there are always paintings by Eugène Carrière on display alongside the great sculptor´s masterpieces. This was Rodin´s wish: not only as a gesture to their long relationship and friendship, but also in recognition of the artistic value which the sculptor attributed to the painter´s works.

The twentieth century has passed and the Carrière´s name has been all but forgotten. His works are in all the museums, but many are no longer on display. The artist nevertheless met with considerable success in his time, making portraits of all the leading figures, from Clemenceau to Verlaine, by way of Gustave Geffroy, together with innumerable portraits of his family. As weel as helping him to benefit from public commissions, his strong social standing and the input of generous ideas enabled him to set up a mixed painting studio, the Académie Carrière, which was frequented by Matisse and Derain»

Eugène Carrière´s art was recognised and appreciated in his time, the period characterised by the realistic painting of Courbet and Bastien-Lepage, the so-called academic painting represented by Gérôme and Bouguereau, at the same time as Impressionist art, Degas and the movements that followed in succession up until the advent of Symbolism. Eugène Carrière´s work was in a completely different register: very narrow, intimate, primarily made up of affectionate representations of his family, portraits, a series of unrecognisable landscapes and a handful of still lifes. Nothing of the fresco, no history painting, no epics, no grandiosity, but rather the figure and the feeling as an obsession. A style, always the same,



a palette without color, restricted to earth tones, using only chiaroscuro to shape the forms, which would gradually become more blurred. At the risk of abstraction. A lean, fluid material, quick brushwork, broadly applied, which eliminated details with no concern for description. Basic compositions, reduced to the essential, a series of figures drawn from the depths and removed from any form of narration.

All these contrasts, all these paradoxes, require further investigation. This is the premise of the exhibition presented at the Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, which attempts to define Eugène Carrière's art in order to understand his contribution to the history of painting. The focus will be on his style, based on chiaroscuro, and on his broad and fast brushwork, which became a signature in itself. The exhibition will present a collection of oil-painted canvases, together with drawings and prints, bearing witness to the originality of his art which now seems so contemporary.

Serge Lemoine was a professor of art history at the University of Dijon, France from 1969, at École du Louvre in Paris from 1981 to 1986 and at Sorbonne University from 1989 to 2010. He has been director of the Musée de Grenoble from 1986 to 2001 and director then president of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris from 2001 to 2008. Specialist in abstract art, constructivism, Dadaism, purism and kinetic art, he has directed numerous research projects and exhibitions in these fields, extending to those of photography and design. In 1976, Serge Lemoine has become interested in Eugène Carrière by writing the catalog of the Granville collection at the Museum of Fine Arts in Dijon. In 2006, he initiated the exhibition Auguste Rodin, Eugène Carrière presented at the National Museum of occidental Art in Tokyo, then at the Musée D'Orsay in Paris.
He has organised exhibitions shedding light on the birth of modern art between the nineteenth and twentieh centuries: *Kurt Schwitters* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (1994); at the Musée de Grenoble *Signac et le Néo-impressionninsme* (1997), *Le sentiment de la montage* (1998), *L'esprit nouveau - Le Purisme à Paris 1918-1925* (2001), at the Palazzo Grassi, Venice, *Vers l'art moderne De Puvis de Chavannes à Matisse et Picasso* (2002), at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, *Aux origines de l'abstraction (1800-1914)* (2003), *Le néo-impressionnisme De Seurat à Paul Klee* (2005), *Maurice Denis* (2006), *Ferdinand Hodler* (2007), *Lovis Corinth* (2008); *Vienne 1900 : Klimt, Schiele, Moser et Kokoschka* at the Grand Palais (2005); *Renoir Renoir* at the Cinémathèque française (2005); *L'art de Monet et sa postérité* in Tokyo at the National Art Center (2007); *Dans l'intimité des frères Caillebotte peintre et photographe in Paris* at the Musée Jacquemart-André (2011). He organised exhibition *François Morellet* at the Centre Pompidou (2011), *Dynamo Un siècle de lumière et de mouvement dans l'art 1913-2013* at the Grand Palais, Paris (2013), *Actie <-> Reactie. 100 jaar kinetische kunst* at the Kunsthal Rotterdam (2018). He is the author of many books, including publications about Piet Mondrian, François Morellet, Aurelie Nemours, with her catalogue raisonné published in 2018, and *Nicolas Ionesco Du spirituel dans l'art* published in 2022. He directs the collection devoted to the writing by Jacques Thuillier, of which 6 volumes have already been published.

Visuals for press



Eugène Carrière, ***Elise riant,*** 1895, lithography on wove paper, courtesy of Galerie Jocelyn Wolff



Eugène Carrière, ***Etude pour Passants,*** ca 1890-1885, oil on canvas, courtesy of Galerie Jocelyn Wolff



Eugène Carrière, ***Rodin sculptant,*** 1900, lithography on Japanese paper, courtesy of Galerie Jocelyn Wolff

CONTACT & INFORMATIONS

Preview by invitation only | 15 January 2022 | 11 am - 2 pm

Public Opening | 15 January 2022 | 2 pm - 6 pm

For press enquieries, images, interviews and additional information :

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