



Galerie Champaka

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Exhibition

Fétiches & compagnie by Jacques de Loustal

October 8 to November 7 2010

(Private view October 7 from 6:00pm to 8:30pm)

In the manner of Blaise Cendrars and G.M.G Le Clezio in literature, Jacques de Loustal is the “traveller” of comics. For many years, at random during his trips to Africa, he has collected painted wooden figurines called “Colons”. These fascinating characters are the mysterious, even “cosmic”, protagonists of the paintings and unpublished drawings in “Fetishes & Company”.

An exhibition

The stylisation, immobility and indifference of the “Colons” were a revelation for Loustal. *This sparked a change in my drawing and allowed me to reclaim the static aspect of my characters. So much so that, not being a sculptor myself, I painted figures on canvas in my own way, in the “colon” style, of musicians on their pedestal. During a stay in Abidjan, I even asked a local sculptor to create a figurine from one of my paintings. So these little characters have always accompanied me and when Galerie Champaka suggested an exhibition about my African projects, I found that this all made sense, between a tribute to these small silent Africans and an exhibition in the Sablon district, famous for its fascinating galleries of African art.* With the theme of the exhibition sharply defined, Loustal multiplies his technical and stylistic variations, while staying with an overall consistency.

An artist

Jacques de Loustal was born April 10, 1956. An architecture student, he starts publishing illustrations in the late '70s in *Rock & folk* magazine, whose editor-in-chief is Philippe Paringaux. From this magical meeting are born short stories which appear in *Métal Hurlant*. For (*A Suivre*), the duo create THE cult graphic novel about jazz : *Barney and The Blue Note*. Following this, come among others, *Hearts of Sand* and *Kid Kongo*. Each of these works emit a “little music” of their own. Loustal likes to take unusual routes with writers close to his imagination : Jérôme Charyn (*Les frères Adamov*, *White Sonya*), Jean-Luc Coatalem (*Jolie mer de Chine*, *Rien de neuf à Fort Bongo*) or more recently Tonino Benacquista (*Les amours insolentes*).

Loustal also works as an illustrator for books (with a predilection for the work of Simenon), the press (including *The New Yorker*) and advertising. A great lover of travelling, he brings back from his wanderings spellbinding sketchbooks.

Painting, with comics, remains Loustal’s favourite garden to explore. He has been exhibited among others in Amsterdam, Brussels, Geneva, La Paz, Paris and Strasbourg.

The “Colons”

This term refers to the statuettes which portrayed the presence of the white man across Africa since the beginning of the twentieth century. The “Colons” are a category of people whom the artists or those commissioning them would have dealt with in their daily lives: colonial administrators, soldiers, traders, missionaries. Initially, these statuettes were tinted with vegetable dyes, portraying the whites as they were perceived by the African artisans, through a filter of traditional aesthetic canons. Later, the sculptors moved away from “primitivism” to address more faithful, realistic representations, but without abandoning a kind of naivete, focusing on detail, if not specifics.