

Michel Oriano,
Director of the Institut Français,
requests the pleasure of your company
at the preview of the exhibition

PETER BRIGGS

**Collages and Sculptures
1991-1993**

Tuesday 5 October 1993
6.30 pm - 8.30 pm

Exhibition open until Friday 29 October

**GALERIE MATISSE
INSTITUT FRANÇAIS**

PETER BRIGGS





Gymnopédies emblématiques
1992 – Bronze
38.5 x 18 x 10.6 cm

Front cover:
Clair de lune sur l'estuaire
1993 – Bronze
38 x 15.5 x 14.5 cm

COLLAGES AND SCULPTURES 1991-1993

Images fall flat on the page. Old postcards, collected at flea markets and in junk shops are chosen for their balanced photographic quality of detail and lighting, their choice of geography or geology, their particular tone of sepia. Shuffled and spread over my work table, each card fixes photographically a point in space and a moment in time brought up to the present by their continued existence. The perennity of their quality of light, the stark simplicity of their fine detail, their modest scale stare at me across time and space.

On the opposite side of the table is a small collection of books, technical manuals which explain how to prune fruit trees. The one I prefer "L'Arboriculture fruitière en images" published by Larousse in 1937 is printed on cheap paper that has yellowed with age. It absorbs the sepia ink I use and allows the printed images to stand out against their brown backgrounds. It tears perfectly, stains and blots settle into its surface like mould on cut bread. Contours of drawings soften as the ink seeks out unsullied, unsaturated areas to occupy. The illustrations show a plant world as a stereotype. Each apple tree is every apple tree and vice versa. My drawings integrate this emblematic imagery and create areas of colour that allow the coincidence of the

collage to take place. Coincidence, two things which happen simultaneously, colours that merge, lines that slip from one surface to another are the stuff that my collages are made of.

More difficult to explain in English is the vocabulary used in these technical manuals. Terms common to sculpture and fruit growing abound. Branches have particular growths that share a name with some of the most intimate parts of the human body. Semiology of language gives a sense to the forms.

Groseilleur
20 x 13.5 cm



Formes à donner aux arbres
18.5 x 12 cm

“Tailler” in French means to prune, but also to cut, to carve, to form. A branch cut from a tree is the starting point of most of the sculptures in this exhibition. Just as a photograph captures light so does a tree, the memory of that light is laid down in the annual rings and is described in the smooth curves as the tree reaches up towards the sky. The thickness and the height vary in proportion as the tree grows, the branch swells out, becomes rigid, its surface becomes rough.

This constant evolution, changing but always obeying the same logic, allows me to choose from an almost infinite

variety of ready-made forms. Pruning (= tailler) is the sculptural equivalent, cutting out rather than cutting in. As in grafting I use wax, not only to glue the pieces of wood together but as an extension of the structure, establishing a new shape with modelled forms, not mimicking but creating a parallel between surfaces and forms modelled by nature and by the hand.

Branches are inverted (as are photographs in the collages), light is reversed, landing strips for light are impressed on the soft, warm wax as it cools. Stored in a deep freeze, the sculptures are brought out to be cast in series, the wax and wood burnt out of the moulds, one off, both simultaneously replaced by the bronze.

Images fall flat on the page and are hung on the wall, the sculptures sit up and stare from waist-level: both organize space emblematically. The photographic illusion of texture and depth jumps from the collages and settles on the sculptures, the tactile reality of the sculptures transmitted by the spectators' gaze back to the collages, is frustrated by the glass and the frames that cover them. What remains is the memory of light, light into form, wax into metal, a form of synaesthesia, an extension of sensitiveness, where light has become immediately tactile.

Peter Briggs

Ce Plaisir superbe de forcer la nature
1992 – Bronze
47.2 x 19.5 x 14.7 cm

