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Exhibition

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GIUSEPPE PENONE REGARDS CROISÉS *Edited by Bernard Fibicher*

Every great sculptor is said to be also a great draughtsman, and Giuseppe Penone adds substance to this claim. The first exhibition of one of the leading exponents of Arte Povera in a Suisse Romande museum inverts the traditional "method" that consists of displaying Penone's sculpture accompanied by preparatory drawings. The Lausanne show instead takes his drawings as the point of departure, in both the literal sense of the physical sketch and as a pun on the French "dessin," meaning a broader design or project, the fruit of thought set down on some support, chiefly paper. And indeed, as far as the Italian artist is concerned, drawing and writing themselves do not mean merely "exploring form, but giving greater freedom to the imagination."

Giuseppe Penone's art explores the processes of nature and the relationship between man and nature. Crayons (mineral) and charcoal (vegetable) are the extension of the artist's hand and fingers that come into contact with the paper (wood), a sort of second skin that records ideas, structures, and feelings. The rubbing of green foliage against tree trunks turns nature itself into the raw material of drawing. The potential available to drawing is simply huge: the artist can use it to reveal what is already there, or to give free rein to his imagination and create whole new worlds.

Penone also owns a small collection of drawings by other artists, part of which will be displayed in the exhibition in Lausanne and is included in the book. Although seeming not to bear any similarities in terms of style or content to works in Penone's own hand, these drawings nonetheless enter into a subtle dialogue with his oeuvre, his person, and his thought. It is no accident that the Turinese artist has "adopted" them and incorporated them in his draughtsman's imagination. The result is a less well known, more intimate Penone.

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