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FABIENNE VERDIER

SUR LES TERRES DE CÉZANNE

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Spectators tend to contemplate the works of Fabienne Verdier, an artist who was capable of bringing together contemporary art and Oriental traditions in her painting, powerfully expressing harmony and chaos, but also the mystery of beauty in the world.

Fabienne Verdier's paintings and her artistic and spiritual universe are explored following a chronological itinerary that examines several crucial moments of her biography. You will discover her connection with Chinese calligraphy, her study of abstract expressionist painting and of Flemish art, culminating with her most recent research on the connection between sonic and pictorial waves.

This volume, which accompanies the artist's retrospective to be held in Aix-en-Provence in three different locations (Musée Granet, Pavillon Vendôme, and Cité du Livre), displays Verdier's artistic development marked by the constant dialogue with schools of thought deriving from different cultures and historical periods. Her creative process is the product of a hybridization of various forms of knowledge which becomes manifest through unique technical choices such as the use of giant brushes and special glazes. The three locations in which the show will be held will mirror her *modus operandi*: at the Musée Granet you will be able to follow her artistic career, at the Cité du Livre you will learn more about her research on the connection between painting and music, especially string quartets. Finally, the Pavillon Vendôme will house a project based on the relationship between language and plastic shapes, displaying large works created based on pairs of words: labyrinth-freedom, strength-shape, emptiness-vibration, song-disaster.

Today the evolutionary transformations that mark Verdier's poetics are channeled through a meditation on her immersive relationship with nature, an aspect that is analyzed in what she calls her "nomadic studio" and finds a fulcrum in her most recent work produced in the area around Mount Sainte-Victoire, incidentally a subject which was quite dear to Cézanne. However, the themes that come together in her nomadic studio are many, one certainly being the constant evolution of the workshop itself, but also the influence held by context and landscape, as well as the development of new painting devices.

Fabienne Verdier was born in France in 1962. When she completed her studies in fine arts, she undertook a research trip to China (1983–1992), where she encountered the great painters who survived the Cultural Revolution. She tells of this experience in her book *Passenger of Silence* and is mentioned in *L'unique trait de pinceau*. She then turned to the works of abstract expressionist painters. In 2014 she inaugurated her studio at the Juilliard School where she founded her first laboratory researching sonic and pictorial waves. In 2015, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Petit Robert, with Alain Rey she explored the relationship between lexicography and

painting. In 2017, for the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, she designed a video installation offering a multi-sensorial experience (music, painting, and moving images) so viewers could delve into the heart of her creative process. In 2018, the artist brought to life her so-called "nomadic studio," the aim of which was to paint out in the open with her oversized brushes: she attempts to measure herself with nature in the effort to express its beauty and frailty. This studio was installed in the area of Mount Sainte Victoire. Fabienne Verdier's work is on display in many countries and is included in many public collections, among which some of the most noteworthy are the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Kunsthaus in Zurich, and the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich.

Alexandre Vanautgaerden is a historian and art historian who, aside from teaching these subjects, has directed a series of documentaries and cooperated with several cultural programs for the Belgian television. He was director of the Musée de la Maison d'Erasmus in Brussels from 1994 to 2012 and later of the Bibliothèque de Genève until 2018. He has always been interested in the connection between the world of creation and the world of research from an interdisciplinary perspective. His most recent project was a reflection on the relationship between linguistics, analogic dictionaries, and abstract painting. In this spirit, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Petit Robert, he worked with Fabienne Verdier and the linguist Alain Rey. Furthermore, he organized a show in Brussels (2013) on Fabienne Verdier's notebooks concerning her work on the Flemish Primitives and a show at the Voltaire Museum in Geneva (2017) on the experience of language.

Alain Berthoz is a neurophysiologist. He has been a professor in physiology of perception and action at the Collège de France since 1993.

Bruno Ely has been head curator of the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence since 2008.

Bernard Foccroulle is a musician, composer, and conductor.

Charles Juliet is a poet, playwright, and novelist. In 2017, he was awarded the Grand prix de l'Académie française for his work.

Germain Viatte has been curator and director of a number of museums. In 2013, he participated in Fabienne Verdier's work *L'Esprit de la peinture, Hommage aux maîtres flamands*.