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## PALÉZIEUX

### ŒUVRES SUR PAPIER

Four little volumes that look like notepads appropriately enough introduce the work on paper of the Swiss painter and engraver Gérard de Palézieux (Vevey 1919-Veyras 2012). Palézieux received his training at the School of Fine Arts in Lausanne and thereafter moved to Florence, where he lived for the duration of the Second World War. He then returned to Switzerland and settled in the canton of Valais, where he remained until his death.

Light, factories and the Italian countryside were the recurring themes of his poetics, which were at times close to the sensibility of Giorgio Morandi, whom Palézieux met in 1953 and with whom he kept in touch until the Bolognese painter's death. But his work also reveals the influence of a number of other figures, for instance his handling of light owes much to Canaletto and Claude Lorrain.

Following a trip to Morocco in 1969, he turned to the medium of watercolour, which enabled him to broaden his approach and dispel any lingering heaviness in his quest for pure luminosity. It was thanks to his stay in Venice from 1972 that Palézieux found the conditions that suited his temperament best: the immediacy and lightness of watercolour made the medium ideal for the retreat from the world in the search for wisdom that he borrowed from classical Chinese painters. From that moment, the engraver began to experiment much more freely, enthusiastically adopting new techniques, such as aquatint and monotype, which he found ideal for conveying the passing of time with great subtlety in his highly sensitive landscapes.

Solitary, trusting his instincts, faithful to his emotions, Palézieux never turned his back on the painting he learned from his masters. "I'm retarded", he used to say. "Isolated in a century that's slipping past me". Keeping his distance from all currents and all overt posturing, he retained a view of the world that was nonetheless always extraordinarily sharp and had a strangely durable quality. In his painted or engraved pictures, he depicts things and places with a discretion that brings into focus the uncertainties and failures of our times; however, he never overplays his hand or strains after effect. His snow watercolours and sugar-lift aquatints speak of a retreat from the light, of the irresistible power of time, setting an art that attempts to relate to the simple and the universal against contingent matters and personal preoccupations.

**Ger Luijten** studied the History of Art at the University of Utrecht. From 1987 to 1990 he was curator at the Graphic Art Cabinet in the Boijmans Museum in Rotterdam before working in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, first as head curator in the print department, then as head curator in the Rijksprentenkabinet from 2001 to 2010. Since 2010, Ger Luijten has been director of the Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, in Paris. He is the editor of *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700*, a key work on prints in the Low Countries.

**Florian Rodari** has a background in both literature and the history of art. After seven years in the Cabinet des estampes de Genève, he was appointed director of the musée de l'Élysée in

Lausanne, where he remained until 1983. He then worked as an independent curator and regularly organized exhibitions for museums in both Switzerland and abroad. Florian Rodari has written numerous books and collected his essays on engraving in a single publication that came out under the Gallimard imprint with the title *L'Univers comme alphabet*, while 5 Continents Editions published *Claude Mellan. L'écriture de la méthode* in 2015, *Impressions fortes. L'estampe en cent chefs-d'œuvre. Collection de la Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex* in 2017, and *Picasso. Lever de Rideau. L'arène, l'atelier, l'alcôve et Traverser la lumière* in 2018.

**Alain Madeleine-Perdrillat** is a French art historian and was born in Paris in 1949. He worked at the Réunion des musées nationaux for several years before moving to the Institut national d'histoire de l'art. He has written an important monograph on Seurat (Skira, 1990), a study of Nicolas de Staël (Hazan, 2003) and a number of essays on writers, poets and painters. Alain Madeleine-Perdrillat has also translated several works by Roberto Longhi, *La Vie d'un peintre* by Gino Severini (Hazan, 2011) and, more recently, *L'Originalité de Thomas Jones* by Lawrence Gowing (Fage éditions, 2017).

**Peter Schatborn** is emeritus director of the Rijksprentenkabinet at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. He was Guest Scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles and has curated exhibitions at the Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris, and The Frick Collection, New York. He specializes in seventeenth-century Dutch drawings.

**Catherine McCready** is an intaglio artist and head of the collections at the Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex, where in particular she is in charge of the inventory of Palézieux's work on paper. Catherine McCready was very close to the artist, who towards the end of his life entrusted to her the task of printing his engravings.

**Pierre Vogt** is a professor of cardiology, engraver and photographer. He was born in the Valais, where he got to know Gérard de Palézieux well, often painting watercolours with him. Pierre Vogt is currently chairman of the Fondation William Cuendet & Atelier de Saint-Prex.