

## A body traversed by the world

*Remember, men, from the cavernous depths within yourselves,  
that your skin was not always your limit.*

Roger Gilbert-Lecomte

*I participate in the gravitational pull of the planets in the fault lines of my mind.*

Antonin Artaud

Who am I? Fascinating question, the most fascinating of all. What being do we state, what being do we experience or feel when we say «I»? Are we really sure who we are? Do we really, seriously believe, in our heart of hearts, that our inner immensity can be limited, reduced, circumscribed? Let us go then. Let us look at the paintings of Jörg Langhans. Look closer. This is painting that brings the world into a body. Painting that, more precisely, tells and shows us what painting has always done: it makes the world enter into a body. The universe, its trees and its rivers, its obscure depths, its mountains and forests, its liana of the unconscious.

Where have we already seen those peony-torsos, these sky-blue bodies? Bodies filled with mouths, busts gaping with caves? Where have we already gazed upon such bodies, entwined in the wild grasses of the whole world? If not India, country of the sign-being, where bodies are represented as landscapes filled with gods, horizons, planets, constellations – India, where for millennia we have heard it repeated that there is no difference between us and the world, that the world is not in opposition to us. That we are woven of the same fabric as the world itself.

«Tat tvam asi» - «You are That» - says the *Chandogya Upanishad*, in an oft-quoted statement that marks the essential identity of each being and of the universe. In Jörg's work, nothing is separate from anything, everything resonates as one. His «Immobile Traveller» is the antithesis of the sealed-off individual, of an identity limited to a locality, a possessive «me». It is a landscape-being, it is everywhere. An open space, a warehouse of the world. Where those vehement engravers pass and blaze in the same profoundly ancient and the radically new *courant* : Van Gogh and his hat of quantum candles, Soutine and his blood-streaked inspirations, Soutter and his sheer drops into redemptive chaos – but re-harmonized, re-pacified even, accompanied by strange and almost soothing depths of silence, by that which flowers endlessly then filters through in the contemplations so dear to Morandi.

Everything that is not shot through with poetry is mere anecdote. This may be a foregone conclusion, but even so, it is perhaps a good thing to remember, in a period given over to academic kitsch and the official avant-garde. It is also good to remember yet once more, that

art is not a pastime, but – along with love, of course – the most serious thing in the world. Attention paid to life in total. Attention paid to attention itself. To opening.

Open up space, such might be Jörg's order (or disorder) of the day. Open it up at every instant, ever wider, ever more vast. His «Immobile Traveller», close in spirit to headless body dreamed of by Georges Bataille, does not think with the head but with the red mille-feuilles of the heart. It doesn't think from between the ears but from between the lungs. Lungs traversed by the sky. A collector of sparks, a trapeze artist with eyes wide open: it descends into the night of the body to be traversed. To unlearn. To find the hands of vision. To open its consciousness to what is – and not to what is said of it. To work with emptiness. To suspend words and descriptions, masks, facades and farce. To make of painting a window through which the universe can look upon itself.

Zeno Bianu

( translated by Sahrah Bartlett )