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PRESS RELEASE

HERVÉ TÉLÉMAQUE

25 FEBRUARY – 18 MAY 2015

GALERIE DU MUSÉE AND GALERIE D'ART GRAPHIQUE,
MUSÉE, NIVEAU 4

With 74 works in the form of paintings, drawings, collages, objects and assemblages, the completely new retrospective devoted by the Centre Pompidou to Hervé Télémaque encompasses the entire career of this Haiti-born French artist, and reflects all the diversity and consistency of a challenging body of work with undeniable visual power, spanning the late Fifties to the present day.

After spending three years in New York, where he became familiar with the abstract expressionism that influenced the assertive gestures of his first paintings, Hervé Télémaque settled in Paris in 1961. At this time, he became close to the Surrealist group. On canvas, he orchestrated the meeting of objects from consumer society and popular culture, which led to joyous « visual short-circuits ».

His paintings based on these « Mythologies quotidiennes » gave their name to an outstanding exhibition in July 1964, which Hervé Télémaque co-organised with Bernard Rancillac. These works, often with a biographical element, are constructed as metaphorical sequences with a critical import halfway between counterculture and anti-colonialism. They also explore the complex relationship between image and language.

Like other artists of the Narrative Figuration movement, of which he was one of the main protagonists, Hervé Télémaque turned to acrylic paint and the opaque projector, which led him to « cool down » his style and focus on flat tints and regular lines. At this period, he also began to question the traditional medium of painting, using articulated frames with atypical forms or materials, sometimes placed directly on the ground. In 1968, he stopped painting to devote himself to a series of disturbing « sculptures maigres » (lean sculptures).



When he returned to painting in 1970 with the « Passages » period, Hervé Télémaque tackled collage for the first time, taking a new look at current techniques – as can be seen in the series of « Selles » (saddles) and « Maisons rurales » (country houses), which showed the very process used to produce them. During the Nineties, he began a series of large charcoal drawings, whose dark forms and sophisticated cut-out effects dialogued with a large number of reliefs in salvaged wood covered with coffee grounds.

The 2000s were a period when he cast a fresh eye on the world, after returning to his African roots. His works at this time were notable for their frequent allusions to «negritude», and more precise comments on current political topics. In the middle of the decade, he made an unexpected, highly fertile return to a striking new pictorial form.

The works presented in the exhibition – 35 paintings, 11 collages, 9 drawings, 12 objects and 7 assemblages – mostly come from French public collections. Recently the artist made a donation, adding further to the Centre Pompidou collection. Most of this is on show in the exhibition.

A book edited by the exhibition curator, Christian Briend, will be published to go with the event. 272 pages, co-published by the Centre Pompidou/ Somogy Musées de Marseille. With contributions by Bénédicte Ajac, Jean-Paul Ameline, Renaud Faroux and Pierre Wat.

The exhibition will move to the Musée Cantini in Marseille from 19 June to 20 September 2015.

PRA PRATICAL INFORMATION

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Opening

Exhibition open 11 am – 9 pm
every day except Tuesday

Admission

€11-13€ depending on time
concessions €9-10€
Valid the same day
for the Musée National d'Art
Moderne and all exhibitions
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(holders of the annual pass)

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exhibition design