



Christian Jaccard, *Anonyme calciné, Figure 19° (Les Figures), 1980*
Combustion on canvas, 61 × 50 cm, anonymous painted portrait (woman in prayer) from the 19th century whose combustion has destroyed a part of the image, donation, 2017.
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Press release

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Christian Jaccard

Énergies dissipées

4 March – 25 May 2020

Galerie du Musée, Level 4

In 2017, visual artist Christian Jaccard made an outstanding donation to the Centre Pompidou. This first public presentation, which also includes his works previously acquired by the museum's collections, reveals a powerfully original artistic path, which interprets the world through two dominant notions, i.e. 'bind' and 'burn'. French-Swiss artist Christian Jaccard was born in 1939 and gained fame in the 1960s for his bindings and burnings. He questions traditional pictorial and sculptural techniques through his use of dyes, fire and knots. The exhibition showcases his works from the 1970s to 2008, and looks back on the genesis of a collection. The exhibition examines and reveals the artist's personal take on dispersed energies, in addition to the diversity of his research over several decades.

Through his schooling and cub scout activities, Christian Jaccard developed a fascination for the *Boatswain's Manual* and camp fires. He collected fossils and developed an interest in industrial waste and fingerprinting. His job as a colour engraver for a printing house (from 1964 to 1975) led him to explore impregnation processes and the manufacture of specific tools. Knots and bindings, tracks, prints, folding, braiding and stamping shape his artistic vocabulary and technique. While his work bears a certain resemblance to the preoccupations of the Supports/Surfaces group, resulting in the inclusion of his work in some of their exhibitions, he was never actually a part of this movement.



In the 1970s, his tools consisted of cords, which replaced the paintbrush to leave their traces on the support. At the same time, he explored the pictorial technique of combustion, using fire as another marking tool. Slow or fast burning was inspired by ancestral techniques of stubble burning, or slash-and-burn farming, which consisted in burning grass and forest land to fertilise the soil.

From 1977 to 1983, the use of combustion inspired new series, such as *Anonymes calcinées*, *Trophées*, or *Toiles brûlées*, which opened a new perspective for the artist. He subjected anonymous paintings (from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries) to a slow heat, thus breaking down their coloured dyes. Their initial aspect, as carefully restored portraits and religious or mythological scenes, was transformed as the combustion technique attacked certain parts of the image to leave other parts more visible.

In 1984, his 'Chemin de Cendres' drew similarities with Land Art, a further means for the artist to cover his tracks and avoid any form of classification. He pursued this exploration in Bieuzy (Brittany), at the Chapelle de la Trinité in Castennec, as part of the 'Art in Chapels' exhibition season.

During a trip to Italy, he developed the concept of 'rouge émis' ('emitted red') in tribute to the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius. The dilution of fire and paint and the subtle variations resulting from their encounter on the canvas became the subject of the polyptych.

In the 2000s, his outdoor work produced in abandoned sites such as industrial wastelands, liberated his relationship with the painting format without disavowing his origins. His studio became nomadic and ephemeral. Presented in film form, the 'Tableaux éphémères' are the result of 'a nomadic process, during which the combustion of thermal gel releases thousands of powdery specks which gradually form an entity within an architecture'.



Interview with Christian Jaccard

Interviewed by Jean-Pierre Criqui
Exhibition curator, Curator at the Musée National d'Art Moderne

A line of fire runs through a large part of your work, what 'kindled' this ?

Christian Jaccard – I was sent to secondary school at a very early age and then joined the cub scouts where I learnt the Boatswain's Manual and became fascinated with camp fires. I was hypnotised by the bursts of flame, their unpredictable and fleeting dances; their energy released, then consumed and reduced to ash. This long-buried memory awoke later and unexpectedly through experiments with stubble burning and combustible materials.

What principles guided your choices for this donation and how does this ensemble add to your works which already feature in the Museum's collection ?

CJ – The choice and the aim of the donation are to put into perspective the acquisitions made by the Musée National d'Art Moderne over the last decades, as well as to express my gratitude to those who have taken an interest in and brought their expertise to these works. Bind and Burn are two tools forming a paradigm which applies a method of seeing and presents a certain dynamic of the world. Between bound and ignited paths, my intuitions are guided by the entropy of contradictory yet concomitant forces. Their appropriation, the occasional transformation of their original use and the exploration of these parallel paths are the expression of a confrontation of dispersed energies (released then subjected) which, stigmatised by the choice of materials, supports and thus application, like the whimsies of chance, materialise a phenomenology of traces. The dynamic of my intuitions speculates and wagers on how these two paths will converge without ever merging. The works chosen reveal, elaborate and justify the method through which the sources and then the trails of their energy bind, develop, spread, ignite, transform, consume and die out. This is a storyline in which the forces of attraction and repulsion exalt each other relentlessly to leave behind works of various types; these are the objects of the donation.

Can you say a few words about film, which is currently one of your favourite media ?

CJ – Even if they are both receptacles, the difference between the retinal eye and the focal eye fascinates me. While the embers burn during mural combustions, the kinetics of recorded images with their succession of instants initiates a spectacular unfolding of the sudden chemical process. As a medium and a support, film records, documents and replays the fugitive path of an incandescent theatre to its extinction and the emergence of its carbon trace. The techniques of the 'ephemeral work' and 'video-combustion' form part of the process of dispersed energies.



Appointment

Press opening

Tuesday, March 03, 11h – 13h

Guided tour by Jean-Pierre Criqui
from 11:30

Press opening concomitant with the ones of
Wols and China ↔ Africa

Practical Information

The Exhibition

Christian Jaccard - Énergies dissipées

04 March - 25 May 2020

Galerie du Musée, Level 4

Curator **Jean-Pierre Criqui**,
curator at the National Museum of Modern Art

The Centre Pompidou

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Opening times and Admissions

Every day from 11am to 9pm, except Tuesdays and May 1st
€14, reduced €11 / Free for those under 18.

Young people under 26*, teachers and students at schools
of art, drama, dance and music and members of the
Maison des artistes may visit the Museum for free and buy
tickets for exhibitions at the concessionary rate.
Free admission for Centre Pompidou members.

Reservations and print-at-home tickets on :
www.billetterie.centrepompidou.fr

* Nationals of Member States of the EU or the European Economic Area aged
18-25. Valid the same day for the Musée National d'Art Moderne and all
exhibitions.

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At the same time

Yuan Jai

05 February - 27 April 2020

Salle Focus, Museum, Level 5

Mutations / Creation #4

26 February - 20 April 2020

Gallery 4, Level 1

China ↔ Africa

04 March - 25 May 2020

Museum, Gallery 0, Level 4

Wols

04 March - 25 May 2020

Galerie d'art graphique

**Christo and Jeanne-Claude
Paris !**

18 March - 15 June 2020

Gallery 2, Level 6

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