

Roland Palmaerts

Ardour and radiance

Well known to art lovers, Roland Palmaerts' body of work leaves no-one indifferent. With a flourishing career of more than thirty years, the energetic Belgian artist is the personification of passion pursued with continuously renewed creation, constant artistic implication and a determination to transcend limits.

In watercolour, acrylic or mixed media, Roland Palmaerts never hesitates to explore matter to depict his vision. The constant presence of glorious lighting effects that transport the observer between dream and reality is one of the characteristic features of his work. To him, light is a reflection of spirituality, an exploration of the life and death duality that is expressed with strong contrasts. In substance or in transparency, his rural and urban subjects are imbued with lyricism and aestheticism sustained by an unfailing technique. Rich and luminous colours, a steady brushstroke and an innate sense of beauty are examples of technique serving imagination. The artist's leitmotiv is to "render the invisible perceptible, see the music and hear the painting."

Driven by the desire to explore the flow of creative energy, Roland Palmaerts never prepares his supports nor does he draw sketches in advance. With deft gestures, lines take life on the canvas. Following a rush of ideas and emotions, a scene emerges that will unfold in the fragility of the moment. "All is vibration and movement, hence music." The superb washes, textures and bright colours materialize through his powerful gesture. Chiaroscuros add a dramatic and spiritual note, a space where the observer can imagine his own narrative. Gifted in effecting atmosphere, the artist adroitly creates this space where minds can wander in delight while retaining a resolutely figurative base.

Born in Belgium in 1953, Roland Palmaerts saw both his father and grandfather using paintbrushes. He started using them himself at seven years old by tackling the Flemish masters, nothing less, his ambitious nature already apparent at this young age. At ten, he wins a national "Tintin" first prize, the first of numerous recognitions he will receive throughout his career. He studies art at the Athénée School in Brussels, then at Saint Luc Institute.

In the early 1970s, he joins the Belgian armed forces as paracommando, an experience that was high in emotions. Art, however, remains his true calling. He immigrates to Canada in 1980 and

works as graphic designer and illustrator for major advertising agencies. His sound training in drawing and oil painting soon make of him a well sought-after artist, his reputation growing slowly but surely.

Seeking a more personal expression of creativity, he becomes a full time artist at the age of 28. With his bold personality and entrepreneurial energy, he is evidently destined for success and ascending self-expression. Favoring watercolours for over twenty years, he exhibits his works in Canada and Europe on more than one hundred occasions. He also hosts well attended training workshops, as well as a great number of television shows. He develops and sells artistic products such as instructional videos and paintbrushes created specifically for his technique. He is the subject of two book publications, the first recounting his journey and featuring his body of work (*Palmaerts, l'homme, l'artiste*, 1990, Éditions de Mortagne) and the second (*Le monde de la couleur*, 2009, Ulisse-ditions) is an analysis of pigments intended for artists. Based on his own experience, he describes his vision concerning tint combinations (minerals, dyes, sediments) and demystifies certain myths associated to colour.

In 2013, he throws himself into an extraordinary challenge and creates an event that will be inscribed in the Guinness book of records. For his 60th anniversary, he proposes to create a giant watercolour painting: 60 meters of art in 60 hours. In association with the French city of Arches, well-known to watercolourists for its high quality paper, he meets the challenge working 3 days and 2 nights without any sleep break. The training required to be able to accomplish this feat as well as the organization details will occupy him during two years. He realized this somewhat far-fetched dream with virtuosity, once again demonstrating the extent of his talent and his mastery of the medium.

Annually zigzagging between Québec and Belgium, the artist wishes nothing less than to continue to extend his own boundaries. With generosity he shares his knowledge by holding technical workshops. His Canadian and European reputation having been proven, he nurtures the dream of exhibiting his works in the United States and in Japan.

Isabelle Gauthier



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