“How beautiful this sad world is”

« *Ce qu'il est beau ce triste monde* »

‘Wat een mooie, trieste wereld’

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“HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS SAD WORLD IS”

EXPOSITION An astonishing conversion that makes Christlike sculptures and testimonies from Treblinka coexist within the space of the splendid Eric Dupont Gallery. When you read this text the exhibition will be closed, yet it will be remembered that an artist made this encounter possible, even if some would qualify it as unexpected in nature.

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Since his work on the stained-glass windows of the Saint Gildas des Bois Abbey, Pascal Convert has not ceased exploring the intransparency of glass so as to trouble our points of view on history. It is by weaving the transparency of glass with a heterogeneous material that he offers a fresh perception of historical events in *Le Temps scellé*, *Joseph Epstein et son fils* [Time sealed, Joseph Epstein and his son]. This was also the case for the *Souches de Verdun vitrifiées* [Vitrified Verdun Stumps].

With the *Passion* exhibition, he pushes the experience further yet, by opening up the spectre. Three human-size recumbent statues, made of wood then carefully crystallized by Olivier Juteau, a master glass-maker, are arranged in three places within the spaces of the gallery that can be associated to the nave of a church, and four panels in the shape of a diptych occupy the walls that appear as the transept. The three “Crystallizations” give the figure of Christ a softness, a smoothness thanks to the polished touch of the glass. Only the barbed wires incrustated into the piece are a reminder of the suffering of the scene. The diptychs, placed at the back of the gallery, immediately catch the visitor's attention who views the installation in a

global perspective. As large open books, they unfold lines of Yiddish writing taken from an unpublished journal of a Treblinka survivor. Entitled *The Blue Ink*, it gives its colour to the panels, genuine stained-glass windows in which the light dies in the lines of the writing. The direction of the flow in the gallery echoes the biblical injunction of the *Zakhor* in the space of the exhibition, placed under the sign of sharing. In another room, next to the *Reliques* of arms and legs and of crystallized fragments of a library, appears a photo taken from the artist's personal archives : “Summer 1939”. A couple still smiling. “How beautiful this sad world is” (a quote taken from the manuscript of Mr. Baum, a survivor of Treblinka, *The Blue Ink*, written between 1942 and 1944 in the region of Kielce in Poland). ■

Isabelle Galichon

(Translation: Sarah Voke)

→ Learn more

◆ *Passion*, an exhibition of Pascal Convert that was held from 15 March to 14 June 2014 at the Eric Dupont Gallery, Rue du Temple 138, 75003 Paris.

◆ Part of the exhibition will travel to Korea for the Busan Biennale, in the Autumn.

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