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Jean-Gabriel Lambert

Du côté de la lumière



Puerto Vallarta no 2, acrylique, 80 x 90 po.

Plonger le regard dans une toile, c'est comme y plonger de tout son corps. L'abandon que l'artiste a su atteindre dans son geste vient subrepticement « accrocher » le spectateur, comme un hameçon, et le tire à l'intérieur de son monde.

Toutes ces références aquatiques ne sont pas fortuites, car en s'immergeant dans le travail de Jean-Gabriel Lambert, on peut bien s'imaginer être au fond de l'eau et regarder vers le ciel pour voir toutes les couleurs y danser. Comment décrire autrement des couleurs intenses mais non criardes, des



Paisa Kullana no 4, acrylique, 80 x 100 po.

mouvements exubérants mais doux. Comme filtrés par l'eau et la lumière.

Natif de Montréal et artiste dans l'âme, Jean-Gabriel Lambert, 53 ans, entreprend d'abord des études dans un domaine scientifique sur une bienveillante recommandation familiale, mais il ne tarde pas à bifurquer pour suivre sa passion : le théâtre. Il s'y dédiera pendant 10 ans, travaillant autant la scène et le cinéma que la télévision. Puis, il ajoute des cordes à son arc en étudiant la danse et le chant. Mais les auditions, les inévitables refus, le processus de recherche de travail font naître une anxiété qui, à la longue, fusera. D'un naturel timide, toute son énergie y passait : « Affronter les gens dans une audition me rendait malade », se souvient-il. En 1995, tout en maintenant ses engagements au théâtre, il se met à griffonner.

Une amie peintre lui suggère d'acheter les matériaux et de tenter l'expérience. Il répètera l'exercice du dessin pendant trois ans, puis il exposera timidement aux regards d'autrui ses premiers jets, tellement différents des toiles d'aujourd'hui bien que portant déjà le langage de l'abstraction. L'accueil sera très positif, un réel encouragement à persévérer.

On devine chez Jean-Gabriel Lambert un sens de l'intuition, une grande sensibilité doublée d'une détermination à poursuivre ses buts. Car c'est vraiment à partir de ce moment que la roue de sa carrière d'artiste peintre se met à tourner, non seulement parce que les réactions sont élogieuses, mais parce qu'il s'y est, comme il l'avait fait avec l'art dramatique, dédié à fond. « J'ai ressenti un bonheur immense dans



Step by Step, acrylique, 40 x 20 po.

ainsi qu'avec le public est un précieux atout dont il se réjouit. « Lorsque mes toiles sont accrochées, que les lumières sont allumées, je mets mes beaux habits et c'est comme un show, j'aime ça. L'acteur en moi refait surface au vernissage. »

Il est toujours actif dans ce domaine et se retrouve occasionnellement sur un plateau de tournage. Pour lui, il importe que la transition d'une carrière vers l'autre se soit déroulée de façon harmonieuse et naturelle. « Avoir ressenti une frustration due au manque de travail du métier d'acteur aurait été épouvantable. Je suis très chanceux. » Ce sentiment d'être privilégié, cette appréciation de son sort sont récurrents dans son propos. Le métier de peintre, parce qu'il offre les volets d'expression, d'intériorisation et d'extériorisation est la suite logique de sa première quête d'acteur.

Sur les cimaises de grandes galeries depuis plusieurs années, Jean-Gabriel Lambert dirige sa carrière d'artiste peintre selon une « recette » éprouvée : quelques mois par année au Mexique, histoire de bien absorber la lumière et les couleurs de son lieu fétiche, et le retour printanier vers Montréal, pour coucher sur toile ses visions lumineuses. **I**

Isabelle Gauthier

Jean-Gabriel Lambert est représenté par les galeries suivantes : Hollander York, Toronto, Ontario, Dante Puerto Vallarta, Mexique, West End, Victoria, Colombie-Britannique et Edmonton, Alberta.



Summertime, acrylique, 20 x 20 po.

Jean-Gabriel Lambert

Looking Through the Water



Le retour, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 in.

Diving into one of his paintings is total submersion. The freedom Jean-Gabriel Lambert has achieved in his gestural approach surreptitiously attracts the viewer like a hook and draws you into his world.

These aquatic references are not gra-

uitous because when you enter into his work you can well imagine yourself to be at the bottom of a lake looking up at the sky and seeing the colours dance. How else can you describe colours which are intense but not harsh, an expansive gestural approach which remains soft, except by saying that they look

as if they have been filtered through water and light.

Born in Montréal 55 years ago, Lambert has the soul of an artist. And like many another, didn't start out to be one. Instead he started out studying science on the recommendation of a family friend. Science didn't appeal to him and



Spectaculaire #10, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 in.



Spectaculaire #6, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 in.

soon he found himself studying theatre arts, dance and singing. He spent ten years working in film and television.

While he still occasionally works as an extra the life of an actor was not for him. He is shy by nature and auditions and the inevitable refusals which make up part of an actor's life gave him a powerful sense of anxiety. "Going to auditions made me sick," he says.

In 1995 while still active in the theatre he started drawing. An artist friend suggested that he buy artist's materials. For three years he continued to draw and finally showed some of his work to friends. While his work then is very different to what he does now he was already beginning to speak in the language of abstraction. The reaction to his work was very positive, an encouragement to persevere.

You can sense the intuition in Lambert, a great big sensibility that is doubled by a determination to achieve his goals. Starting to draw was a turning point in his artistic career, not only because he received praise for his work but because once more, just as he had once felt in the theatre world he felt himself fully dedicated to the project and the process. "I feel a great happiness when I paint."

On his first trip to Mexico he fell in love with its light, colour and culture. The following year he returned and approached the most important



Le Jardin, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 in.

gallery in Puerto Vallarta with his work. The gallery agreed to represent him. This had a profound impact on his career because it opened the doors to other galleries in Vancouver and Edmonton, and most recently, in Toronto. "When you have joined the big galleries your only choice is to improve."

Inspired by colour and form Lambert works in a intuitive manner, to the sound of music. The dancer in him emerges as he applies colour to canvas, making it dance in his characteristic style. His body and mind are both completely engaged when he paints. Lambert usually works with a large spatula and he works quickly. His colours must remain as pure as possible given the work at hand, too much manipulation will muddy the waters.

It is a technique that he has perfectly mastered but one which required time to master. "In the beginning all my pictures were cinnamon coloured," he says laughing. Those days are far behind him now as his luminous yellows and reds reveal.

Every experience is valuable and his background as an actor comes out when it comes to a vernissage or dealing with potential clients. "When the paintings are hung and the lights are lit, it's show time. I love it. During a vernissage the actor in me comes out again."

Through his career as a painter he has kept a foot in the acting world. For



El Fuego, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 in.



Dancing #11, acrylic on canvas, 56 x 56 in.



Spectacular # 8, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 in.

Lambert it has been important that his transition from one career to the next has taken place in a harmonious and natural fashion. "Feeling the frustration from a lack of work in the acting profession was horrible. I am lucky." His appreciation of just how his fortune has changed shines through. The art of painting has become the logical end to his artistic progress allowing as it does for Lambert to exercise his actor's métier through both internal and exterior expression.

With his paintings having been hung in the best galleries for some time now Lambert directs his career according to a proven formula. He winters in Mexico where he recharges his batteries and absorbs its light and colour. In the Spring he returns to Montreal where he puts his luminous visions on canvas. ¶

Isabelle Gauthier

Jean-Gabriel Lambert is mainly represented by the following galleries: Hollander York Gallery, Toronto; Dante Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; West End, Victoria, B-C and Edmonton, Alberta.