**The art of the footsteps**

Regarding the book project; “Notre Petit Immigré” of Luvier Casali

I met Luvier Casali for the first time when I went to Asunción for the 2006 Matisse Prize. In the text that I had written for the catalog of the exhibition, I already had brought to my mind a possible encounter between Luvier and the Lac de Grand-Lieu.

Two years later, as a winner of the Matisse Prize, I invited him to come to work on the lake shores and at the Abbey.

This book is the result of our collaboration because, since then, Luvier has settled in Nantes.

For some years now, artists have been called to Grand-Lieu. Each one of them brings his personal view into this inaccessible and almost invisible space, to create works that are deeply anchored into it. The work of Luvier Casali comes into this logic. In « Notre Petit Immigré », Luvier, foreign to the place, drags us into a surprising and derisory odyssey, abandoned to the tides in a diminutive raft, made of a single wood plank and some boards of isolation material to ensure its buoyancy. A vessel launched in the waters for an improbable journey from one shore to the other, across the lake.

Like those immigrants that jump in the seas, endangering their lives, to reach Europe, land of Cockaigne….Also as the indigenous Guarani from Paraguay, that long before the arrival of the Europeans, went out in search of their paradise: « the land without evil ». Unlike the paradise of the Christians, his is part of this world, it has a geographical reality. It is the place of the beginning, where the ancestors rubbed shoulders with the gods and heroes. It has been said that such place can be specifically reached while still alive. It has also been said that it looks more like heaven than like earth. In the image of Grand-Lieu?

Here is what Luvier tells us in « notre petit immigré », he devotes himself to his art of the footsteps, in danger of the currents. He goes from the journey across the lake, where he lets himself to be taken by the stream to a promised land, to the immobility of the abbey, which becomes a shrine of pilgrimage, a place of imperceptible motion of the senses: laid on the ground, the raft becomes a base on which the artist lays, and rests…

Art of the footsteps, as when he carries out his engraving work. When he applies and applies once again a coat of ink on the plate, and when he runs and runs once again the stencils under the press.

Motion, this moment when a man leaves a place to go to another, this moment hanging in the middle of nowhere. Demultiplication of the motion to another place, where the body is nothing more than a footstep.

Luvier Casali is searching for a place where art would be his only worry, some sort of paradise lost, which becomes closer in each one of his displacements.

**Arnaud de la Cotte**

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