

February 13 to March 14, 2020

Opening on February 13

PRESS RELEASE

**ALAIN VEINSTEIN**

*Monts et merveilles et menus plaisirs*



*Monts et merveilles*, 36 x 86 in, acrylic on canvas, 2019

**"Painting, like writing, is opening your eyes wider, observing more closely, bringing to the forefront what you don't normally see."**

**Alain Veinstein**

La Forest Divonne Gallery organized Alain Veinstein's first exhibition in 2017 in Paris. Since then, he continues to paint with passion by developing a brand new series of paintings on the theme of mountains.

We are pleased to present this year the most recent works of this "young artist" with a remarkable experience. He, who has interviewed so many writers, poets and personalities from the art world, can only have an atypical, striking and poetic look at the landscapes that surround him.

"(...) Here, one must take pleasure in Alain Veinstein's painting, in the scopic impulse that it stirs, in the celebration of colours and shapes. But it must also be taken seriously. Because it builds a universe, a language, with its grammar, its obsessions.(...)

But more often than not we feel a worry, a strangeness. Alain Veinstein's world is populated with allusions, enigmas, he proceeds by magnifications, by displacements, by agglomerations and condenses. A rhetoric, made of signs and clues, is put in place. (...)

Alain Veinstein has spent most of his life interviewing others. With painting, it was himself he began to interview. In an interview that one can rightly imagine will be infinite."

Bernard Comment

Alain Veinstein, "Papiers peints", Seuil editions, collection Fictions et Cie / Seuil, May 2017

### ***Mountains and Wonders***

I had at least one certainty when I was painting in the past: I will never paint mountains. A mountain was as terrible as a face, but in disproportionate proportions. It opened - as Cézanne and Giacometti had shown so well - to an infinite confrontation.

From childhood, mountains inspired me with terror. By their disproportionate development, no doubt, which I perceived as a kind of accident of reality worthy of a setting at the end of the world. They provoked in me, to a very high degree, an anguish announcing an imminent danger.

When I took up painting again recently, by chance during trips to Japan and then India, my eye constantly alert, I felt a deep emotion as I observed the drawing of the mountain ridges. Intensity replaced violence. The terrible no longer foreshadowed the worst, but the extraordinary, which must have aroused admiration and fascination. It promised mountains and wonders...

In short, what once seemed to me to close the horizon, invited me to try to move forward in painting, both disturbed and attracted by the ridges, needles, chains, peaks, peaks...

The paintings exhibited, in various formats, supports and techniques, reflect this ambition.

### ***Pleasure Menus***

If I had been an American painter, I would have done some very large paintings. But on this side of the Atlantic, I have a studio of such modest dimensions that they make this project impossible.

Moving from one extreme to the other, I fell back on a more realistic program: making the smallest paintings in the world.

The exhibition therefore includes a series of numerous paintings on paper, in color and black and white, which also takes up the theme of the mountain, but in 10 x 15 cm format.

Alain Veinstein

## OPEN GROUND

I discovered the work of Alain Veinstein through his writing, a writing in which the earth, the grain of the earth, was an interlocutor (1). A very material land, that you dig, that you dig but elusive as is emotion that shapes you or a metaphysical and brief feeling of space. In fact, a space on the ground, stripped of everything, that I find in his last book *À n'en plus en finir* (2) when he writes: "There, on the other side of the wall, I have always imagined a bare land, deserted areas as far as the eye can see. It may be that when I was born and opened my eyes to the world, it was this land that appeared to me (...). There became for me beyond what one imagines. Beyond any horizon. »

Before being a writer, Alain Veinstein was a painter, and he never forgets this, as if he carried within himself these "below" and "beyond" words, this space which we can say precisely what it is "nowhere". That of a painting where it is not a question of image or object but of space and form. As a new painter, Alain Veinstein goes, resolutely, towards this land where the painting is more alive than nature, because its movement, unlike the four seasons, has no end, no death and no beginning again. He is there and he is the one to be approached by the gestures of painting that seek life and maintain it on a few square centimetres of canvas where it will no longer be hidden.

This undertaking is anchored in the reality of the world as a night, a mountain, a body can be but, even more, in an abstract "real", that of a mobile thought that links us to these forms that Alain Veinstein paints. It is this profound experience of perception, of presence and disappearance, of metamorphosis and projection towards a place that we must now inhabit, for a time, to be the companions of its birth.

Let us call this place: mountain, field or landscape. The earth, this time, is no longer "on the ground". Become painting, it is a cosmos, there in front of us, physical, tangible, solid as a matter that the sight allows to seize, to go through, to appropriate as does the heteronym of Pessoa, Alberto Caeiro.

This earth is traversed, fleeting and yet, thanks to the painting, constructed by a paradoxical feeling of permanence.

Alain Veinstein takes up a classic subject from the history of painting to plunge us into it, in search of renewed vitality. Nature situates us in the universe but a universe manifesting itself through a mysterious, organic abstraction that never ceases to "give body". It provokes a deep feeling of interiority, contradicted, "swayed" by the outside world, by a composition traversed by colours and figures in weightlessness. It is necessary to know how to see the inside and outside of a "country".

If I look at it attentively, I am aware that I am constantly moving from one dimension to another. I experience the thickness of intimacy, of a substance, like the radiance of the light of a star, the darkness of a ujac, a crumbling ground like the joyful dance of pictorial creatures. I am in this beat, this breathing between the recognition of a subject called mountain and the impossibility of naming it. I am in it and out of it. I am at the heart of reality, like Caspar David Friedrich's walker, who is at a point of balance and imbalance allowing, through black and colour, through painting itself, to live a mental "song of the slopes" (3) and thus, by the force of things, to preserve the awakening, to be on the lookout.

(1) *Répétition sur les amas*, Mercure de France, 1974

(2) *Seuil*, Fiction et Cie, 2020

(3) Bruce Chatwin



*Monts et merveilles*, 11 x 9 in, oil on canvas, 2019



Polyptych *Monts et merveilles*, 2019

## EXHIBITION

2020 : *Monts et merveilles et menus plaisirs*, Galerie La Forest Divonne - Paris

2018 : *Papiers noirs*, exposition personnelle et lectures, Centre International de poésie, Marseille

2017 : *Papiers Peints*, Galerie La Forest Divonne - Paris

## BIOGRAPHY

Studied law and political science.

1969: Joined the ORTF as an administrator in the personnel department.

1972: joins the ORTF's programme management as head of radio and literary and artistic television programs.

1975: joined Radio France as advisor to the director of France Culture.

1978: he created *Les Nuits Magnétiques*, a daily program that would become *Surpris par la nuit*.

1985-2014: he presents *Du Jour au Lendemain*, a daily rendez-vous with the author of a book

Since 2015, he has devoted himself to painting, as he explains in his book *Papiers Peints* (ed Seuil), where he tells the story, with 60 illustrations, of the revival of his vocation as a painter long suspended

## PRICES

2001: *Prix Mallarmé*, for *Tout se passe comme si*

2003: *Grand Prix de poésie de l'Académie française* for the body of his work, vermeil medal

2010: *Prix de la langue française* for the body of his literary work

2014: *SCAM Grand Prix* for the whole of his radio work

## NOVELS AND POETRY

*Répétition sur les amas*, Mercure de France, 1974

*Recherche des dispositions anciennes*, Maeght, 1977

*Vers l'absence de soutien*, Gallimard, 1978

*Corps en dessous*, Clivages, 1979

*Ebauche du féminin*, Maeght, 1981

*Même un enfant*, LeCollet de Buffle, 1988

*Bras ouverts*, Mercure de France, 1989

*Une seule fois, un jour*, Mercure de France, 1989

*L'accordeur*, Calmann-Lévy, 1996 et «Folio», n°3086

*Violente*, Mercure de France, 1999 et «Folio» n°3527

*Tout se passe comme si*, Mercure de France, 2001

*Bonnes soirées*, Farrago, 2001

*L'intervieweur*, Calmann-Lévy, 2002

*La partition*, Grasset, 2004 et «Folio», n°4414

*Dancing*, Seuil, 2006

*Le développement des lignes*, Seuil,

2009 *Radio sauvage*, Seuil, 2010

*Voix seule*, Seuil, 2011

*Scène tournante*, Seuil, 2012

*Cent Quarante Signes*, Grasset, 2013

*Du jour sans lendemain*, Seuil, 2014

*L'introduction de la pelle*, poèmes 1967-1989, Seuil, 2014

*Les Ravisseurs*, Grasset, 2015

*Venise, aller simple*, Seuil, 2016

*A n'en plus finir*, Seuil, coll. «Fiction et Cie», 2019

## INTERVIEWS BOOKS

*Les Heures lentes*, with Henri Thomas, Arléa, 2004

*Entretiens*, with Sam Szafran, Flammarion, 2013

*Entretiens*, with André du Bouchet, l'Atelier contemporain, 2016

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