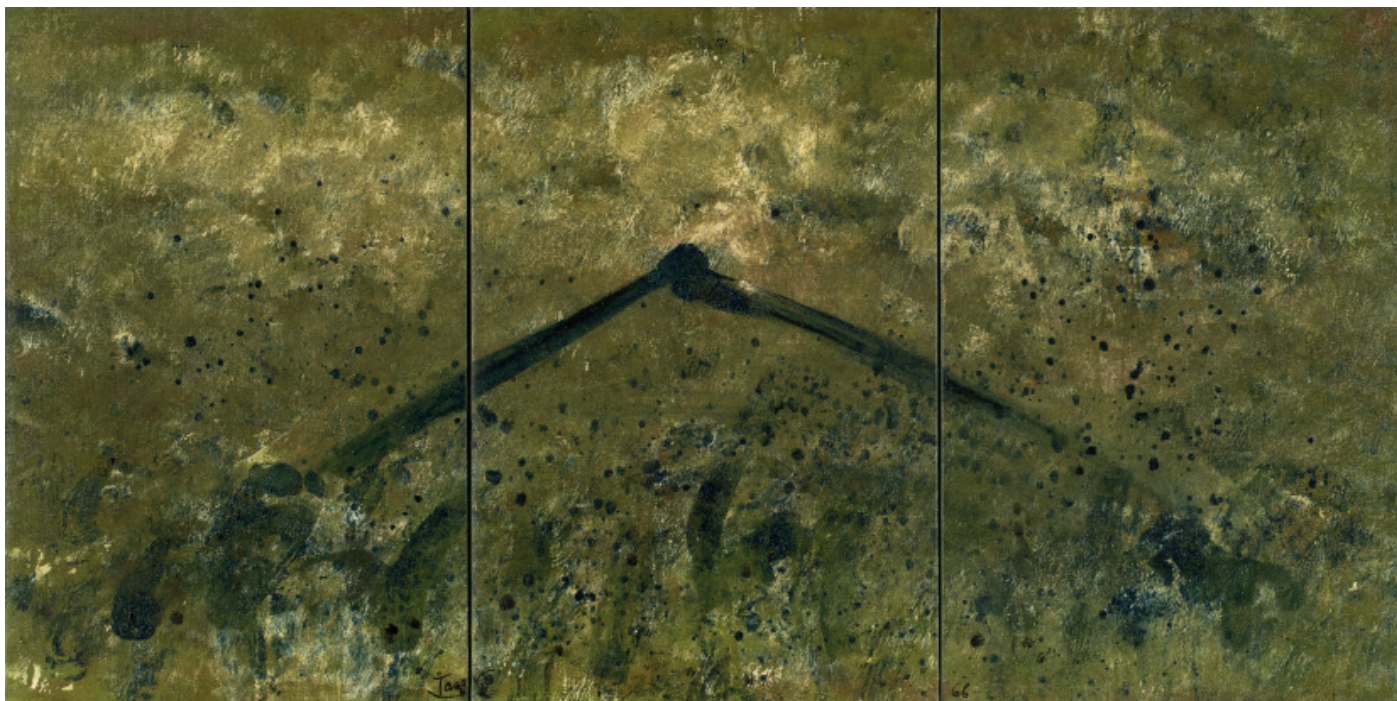


The Painting of T'ang Haywen

April 25th to June 8th 2024



Untilted, triptych, Oil on canvas, 91 x 180 cm

Looking at the work of T'ang Haywen inevitably leads to an attempt to discern an individual journey out of the collective background which brought Asian and Western art together during the 20th century. In this analytical attempt, the Taoist canons of Chinese painting carry the weight of their millennia, but it will take considerable expertise for those whose eye and mind have not been trained in the classical aesthetics of China to determine whether T'ang's painting is more traditional than innovative or more Western than Chinese.

The pictorial canons of that time were laid out by Xie He (6th century) and are as follows:

Vitality of the work expressed through spiritual consonance.

Use of the brush follows a well-structured method.

Faithfulness to the object in representing forms.

Appropriate distribution of color.

Composition based on the hierarchy of colors.

Transmission of the past models in the creation of copies.



Last Ray, Oil on canvas, 53,5 x 46 cm.

The works largely escapes these canons, whether through the transposition of colors or through a very free treatment of form and the third dimension.

T'ang explicitly refers to three Western masters who were outside of the 20th century: Turner, Cézanne et Gauguin, along with the exception of Matisse.

What becomes clear is how much T'ang's creation, both his oils before 1970 and his inks, a medium definitively adopted around that time, easily fits into the innovative trends of the second School of Paris, particularly its lyrical or informal aspects.

There's nothing to prevent placing T'ang in the midst of a « cloud » of forms and gestures, which would include the abstract landscape art of Debré or Lopicque, of Tal-Coat or the entirely gestural art of Degottex, alongside with whom he exhibited, of Marfaing, or even of Soulages.



Untitled, diptych, Ink on Kyro cardboard, 70 x 100 cm.

And one will not be consoled by the near-total destruction of his work done in 1965 in San Francisco in a fire, which would have shed additional light on his engagement with Western modernity.

Another clear aspect of T'ang's painting is its complete lack of servility. Regardless of his sources of influence or references, his works and style are immediately distinguishable and identifiable. He is a « remarkable » personality in both senses of the term, both figuratively and literally: he is free.



Untitled, 1965-70, Oil on canvas, 76 x 61 cm

Galerie Hervé Courtaigne - Abstraction & Outsider Art - 53 rue de Seine - 01 56 24 23 00

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*The photos used above are available in high definition
with Max Matta Fletcher.*