

Elaine M Goodwin.

The Lady of Exeter settled in Burgundy

It is a calm personal revolution, a quiet rebellion, she would say, that led Exeter's Lady, Elaine M Goodwin, to leave Britain for France. She has just opened in Couches, Burgundy, an exceptional gallery, a setting for mosaic, where now all art lovers jostle.

It is there, and nowhere else, in this great and majestic Burgundian building that looks like a Greek temple that we have met, surrounded by artists and friends. She has just organized an important presentation of works by Dulgald MacInness, Lucio Orsoni, Anick Chaima and Edda Mally: *Take 5*, an exhibition where the creations respond to each other in such a harmonious and subtle way that one asks how such a space could be deprived so long of mosaics. Magic of art? Magic of the place?

If you ask Ted, Elaine's cat, what he thinks about it, he will tell you right away: it's me who decided everything! Legend tells us that, alone in his Exeter apartment, he had a real nostalgia for the big world. It was while sitting on the lap of his mistress, in front of the screen of a computer he formulated everything. How to find somewhere else? Go north? Too cold ! Go south? Too expensive ! Go West ? Too much wind !

It is in Couches, in France, in the middle of the vineyards, that he set his sights! We suspect him of wanting to take his mistress away from the British. It must be understood that there, she is a star and that he has conceived an authentic and sickly jealousy.

It all started a few years ago when Elaine received exceptional recognition from the University of Exeter, an honorary doctorate, for her outstanding contribution of the art; which annoyed Ted who wanted his mistress for himself ... Obviously, he would not have seen that this distinction is great news for the world of mosaic, news that should rejoice all those who creation is passionate about Europe and the world. This is the first time, indeed, that a university is thus highlighting an art that we; and we are many, will defend tooth and nail. We must see it as more than an honour, and as a call to enter mosaic into the Register of Fine Arts. The beginning, perhaps, of many other distinctions that will come, hopefully, to honour mosaicists in universities all around the world.

Ted's indiscretion, informed by the feline-connection of the old continent, lets me know that Exeter, who owns a good dozen of Elaine's works, will soon devote a major retrospective to her: *Journeying to Light*, at the Royal Albert Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM) for her forty years dedicated to an art which, in the United Kingdom, arouses a lot of passion today.

Unlikely and very far from any speculation on Brexit, when it comes to mosaic, the British are some of many to have made the trip to Couches, to view a very European gallery where we can, for some time still, contemplate works by Austria's Edda Mally, Anick Chaima from France, Lucio Orsoni from Italy, Dugald MacInness from Scotland. Ted, who has become one of the best mosaic specialists, wanted

me to go around with him and explained that this is a great representation of what the mosaic can offer.

There is a beautiful illustration of what has always preoccupied Elaine, her concern for the Humanities certainly, but also her taste for eclecticism. Dugald, we can not be surprised, holds a major position. He occupies a prominent place, one recognized by the entire international community. He has not abandoned the shale of Argyll, his home county, where he seeks tirelessly the colours of Scotland. He has long used a rock that is the beauty of his works, mosaics of deep tranquility that all suggest the incredible ability of Dugald to give us time and colours. Ted's eye has seen a discreet evolution of spaces and size, the arrival full of promises of colourful keys as strong and discreet as their author.

Lucio Orsoni does not derogate from the tradition of beauty received from his ancestors in Venice. His compositions have a taste for smooth and bright materials that he has always loved. In each of his works, we find the neighbour and aesthetic accomplice that Elaine has always appreciated: an invitation to travel, the spirit inherited from Venice.

Edda, Ted tells me, carries in her suitcases some of the beautiful mosaics that the AIMC had entrusted to her during a previous congress. Here she has her own which he particularly appreciates: large glass birds, vessels with prominent prows. Slender mosaics, all of volume and ready to take you away. She puts the light and the colours that are found also in the works of fusion of AnnikChaima, compositions, desired and sought-after concretions that celebrate the magic of glass, light and colour embedded in the single movement of the cast iron. We would like to see them extended by the hand of the artist. The mosaics size is little. She seems fascinated by the colour that glass re-deploys and that leaves her subjugated, ready to dare more and discuss with matter the imperious tyranny of light.

All of gold and silver, Elaine's works are impressive. 'They capture the light' tells me the Mayor of Couches, Emile Leconte, who is very impressed, and delighted to see them here, in this place he has known so well, with a magic he no longer thought to find other than than in the greatest wines of Burgundy. 'It is because,' says a connoisseur, 'the mosaics reflects the spirit of its author, her soul, taken here, shut up for a thousand years in this beautiful bottle, in this magnificent gallery of Couches that makes us all think of Greece.'

It is found in the style and manner of Elaine M Goodwin's, rare and precious and unique works, hers certainly, and also found in those artists she chose. Ted, who often looks into the mosaics of his mistress, says that they do not just capture the light; they return it as mirrors deployed, the image of others, the multiple and plural image of the mosaic.

In Couches, we can only discover the generosity of Elaine, choices that do not exclude elitism, the search for perfection, qualities that she likes to find in artists like Pierre Soulages, Jeanne Reynal or Giorgio Morandi. It keeps, with many others, the constant concern to inscribe in the long term the numerous roads of the mosaic medium.

P. Macquaire (1) Chartres, France. October 2018

(1) Derniers livres parus

*Un essai de transformation sociale, le quartier Picassiette à Chartres*, L'Harmattan, Paris 2018. *L'homme ou le travail, à toutes fins utiles*, collectif, Téraèdre, Paris 2015.

*Le Cercle des Homards, Hoëdic une île entre rumeur et naufrage*, Petra Paris 2013.