

FABIENNE VERDIER

1962



Fabienne Verdier, *Saint Christophe traversant les eaux I. Hommage à Hans Memling*, Le triptyque Moreel 2011, pigments and ink on canvas, 244 x 135 cm © Jean-Louis Losi, Courtesy Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

FABIENNE VERDIER's *Saint Christopher Crossing the Waters I. Hommage to Hans Memling (2011)* is one of the exceptional works from her dialogue with the Flemish Masters, shown within the collections of the Groeninge Museum in Bruges and the Erasmus House in Brussels in 2013, and also presented in the exhibition *Fabienne Verdier, The Crossing of Signs* in 2014 at Hong Kong City Hall as part of French May. For nearly four years, the artist studied six masterpieces by van Eyck, Memling, van der Weyden, and van der Goes, establishing a dialogue with these Flemish Masters while bringing her own perspective into play. These works were subsequently shown at the gallery in the exhibition *Energy Fields* in autumn 2013.

"Flemish masters sacralized reality," explains Fabienne Verdier. A study of glazes, of correspondences between her own water-based glazes and those of a Van Eyck in oil. Work on gold grounds, on the refraction of light. A search for detail from which she draws inspiration to conceive her pictorial gesture.

The "Christ bearer" emerges from a fissure, unless he is its author, carving a path forward—for it is indeed a question of advancing: the saint at the center is the only figure in action, also the only one attempting to cast a glance toward us (...) the red skillfully cast upon his body—echoed by the family couple—contrasts with the overall composition animated by soft tones, Maur and Gilles as dark monks, while the Son of God, delicately haloed, sets the rhythm of Christopher, his human steed. And, by extension, he regulates the cadence, the silences, and the pulsations of all humanity (...)

What if the subject itself were to disappear completely, becoming nothing more than a flash of energy? If all that remained of matter were its music and vibration, what would Hans Memling's Moreel Triptych be?

Fabienne Verdier offers us a striking transposition.

Gilles Clément, excerpt from the text *Representation or Transposition of Nature, Fabienne Verdier, the Spirit of Painting, Homage to the Flemish Masters*

After studying at the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Toulouse and undertaking nearly ten years of apprenticeship in China with great Chinese masters (a story recounted in *Passagère du Silence*), Fabienne Verdier developed a highly personal, inward, and spiritual form of painting. Drawing on an ancestral technique in order to transcend it, she reveals a succession of inspired flows. Her painting extends the experiments of American abstract painters such as Tobey, Kline, Still, Pollock, and de Kooning, and continues the work of artists who explored the line such as Matisse, Michaux, and Degottex. A spontaneous expression born of absolute mastery, a knowledge of the past enabling the grasp of the present moment and thus linking East and West, the work of Fabienne Verdier—exhibited at the gallery from 2009 onward—seeks to reconcile everything in a single great Breath. Her contemplation, during her long stay in China in the 1980s, of high plateaus enables her monumental brush composed of 35



Fabienne Verdier, *Crossing Signs*, 2014, French May Festival, City Exhibition Hall, Hong-Kong

horse tails to transcribe waterways, mountain ridges, and the cracking of the earth's crust in a teeming nature. Firmly positioned vertically on her horizontal, telluric backgrounds composed of layers and underlayers, Fabienne Verdier transports us into a universal gravitation, linked to the multiple dimensions of space, which takes form within the very substance of her ink.

«How can life be transmitted into the matter of paint?» the artist asks in her studio notebook: through light, through movement, through constructive momentum...

To undertake the journey toward these paintings made in Flanders between 1436 and 1484, after numerous visits to the museum, I asked a photogravure artist friend to spend two days in the galleries refining the chromatic qualities of each photograph of the paintings, in order to then produce life-scale prints as faithful as possible to the colors and intensities of each canvas.

I then lived for several months with these reproductions hanging on the studio walls. I even placed the Portrait of Margareta Van Eyck in my bedroom, facing my bed. This daily companionship with the subjects, compositions, choices, questions, tonalities, interplay, and spirit of each painter led me to engage in work as a researcher—or rather as a surveyor, a geographer. In studio notebooks, I recorded in the form of notes, collages, and sketches the ideas or analogies inspired by my active contemplation of these paintings.

For each of these masterpieces, I alternately focused on composition, lines of force, certain details, and backgrounds. I realized that the richness of these paintings allowed, with each shift in the focus of the gaze, the discovery of new dynamics. Beneath the apparent stillness of these canvases, where the subjects seem weightless, captured in an instantaneous temporality that appears frozen, immobile, one nonetheless discovers—on the contrary—a surge of great vitality.

(...) in Hans Memling's Moreel Triptych, one plunges into the refractions, turbulences, and shimmering reflections of the water that encircle the steps of Saint Christopher (...)

Fabienne Verdier

From October 22, 2025 to February 16, 2026, the Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Palais de Chaillot, is dedicating to the artist the solo exhibition *MUTE*, curated by Matthieu Poirier. The exhibition brings together around forty large-scale works by the French artist (born in Paris in 1962), created between 1996 and 2024. Its title, "mute," which means "silent" in English, is also the imperative form of the French verb muter ("to mutate"). It invites us to experience the silent vitality—or, in other words, the mutating muteness—of Fabienne Verdier's works.

From China to Corsica, from the fjords of Norway to the Saint Lawrence River in Quebec, Fabienne Verdier travels the world to map the visible and invisible forces that traverse the universe and shape landscapes. Painting becomes a field of experimentation: gravity, flow, vibration, telluric, luminous, or sonic waves. She invents an unprecedented pictorial language, the result of a hybridization of knowledge and singular technical innovations—pendulum brushes, gravitational tools, glaze alloys, filmic sketches. Her research opens up a new, sensitive, and visionary territory of terrestrial energy and imagination in contemporary art. Her works are held in numerous public collections: Musée Cernuschi, the Pinault Collection and the MNAM-Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Barbier-Mueller Museum in Geneva, the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, the National Museum in Oslo, the Kunsthaus in Zurich, the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, the Camille Claudel Museum in Nogent-sur-Seine, the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, the Saarland Museum in Saarbrücken, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Dijon.

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CROSSING SIGNS

on Thursday, the 15th of May
at EXHIBITION HALL, HONG KONG CITY HALL
At 6pm

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1st floor, Hong Kong City Hall
1, Edinburg Place
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