



Painting the thresholds

October 2024 Fabbrica del Vapore, Sala Messina

The Fonds de dotation Barotte Madau e TArt, in collaboration with the Fabbrica del Vapore, presents a series of meetings-dialogues on art taking place during the Jean-Marie Barotte retrospective .

Painting the thresholds - October 2024.

- 1) 10th of october 2024, 18 :00 - Genesis of language**
- 2) 17th of october 2024, 18 :00 – Theater – putting into play – the creative process**
- 3) 24th of october 2024, 18 :00 – Philosophical research – Here, language is silent**
- 4) 31rst of october 2024, 19 :00 - Philosophy and spirituality – All stands in a precarious balance**

These meetings and dialogues will be based upon an in-depth analysis of the creative process of Jean-Marie Barotte. The main purpose of these meetings is to open up an experts discussion table on the conditions that structure the "language".

To this end, philosophers, psychoanalysts, curators and journalists will be invited to speak.

Thresholds/Passages

Philosophical Appointments on the Art and Work of Jean-Marie Barotte:

1. *Puisse cette main où l'esprit s'est blotti, être pleine de semences** - May this hand where the spirit nestled, be full of seeds.

Toute existence a besoin d'un témoin – All kind of existence requires a witness

2. *Le jeu du Je* – Me in play

3. *Ici, s'éteint le langage** - Here, the language is silent

4. *Tout se tient en équilibre précaire* – Everything stands in precarious balance

* *E.Jabes - Le Livre des marges*

La matière vivante - Thought becomes form : the artistic process of Jean Marie Barotte

The complex language of Jean-Marie Barotte, defined by his admirers as cultured art, is the starting point for a series of encounters with the Milanese public and a range of personalities who will investigate the artistic process in its different aspects: formal intellectual and spiritual.

To understand the work of Jean-Marie Barotte, it was necessary to develop a methodology able to decode his language which traces a pathway of the soul in matter. Implementing this decodification was key, in order to approach his secret garden, made up of thoughts, readings, sketches, notes, books, sentences jotted down, and unfinished works. Grasping the profound meaning of this new language, whose alphabet is made up of signs, light and shadows, of letters and the hidden senses of unfinished words, opens up new horizons for the beholder. This work is a source of inspiration for a broader study with personalities from the Milanese and transalpine cultural world. The guests called upon to participate in the dialogues will investigate the complexity of the creative process in art and the need to structure new languages in art.

The thematic axes around which the meetings will develop were thus identified by subdividing the artistic work of Jean-Marie Barotte along six starting points:

1) Genesis of a language 10th of october 2024, 18 :00 Is diversity, the awareness of being singular, one of the conditions of the artist?

Speakers : Marco Bazzini art critic and curator of the exhibition JMB : a retrospective; Federico Crimi, conservator of the JMB archives; philosopher and art critic Roberto Paolo Malaspina.

*Puisse cette main où l'esprit s'est blotti, être pleine de semences**
May this hand where the spirit nestled, be full of seeds.

For Barotte, recognising his own diversity and accepting it, was a fundamental step towards identifying his own private sign, id est the germ of a singular language, transformed into a language for himself and for others.

It is a matter of exploring experiential paths that allow one to find *modes d'emploi* * that reveal singular worldviews, by those who is considered or who feels different.

(*ref. psychoanalyst Monique de Kermadec)

"Jean-Marie Barotte was considered a special person and was aware that he was, he assumed his uniqueness until the end; the need to create his own language can arise from a discomfort, a diversity, a feeling of inadequacy, the impossibility of communicating with a common language." (Maria Cristina Madau)

2) Theatre - putting into play - the creative process – 17th of october 2024,18 :00

Speakers : Sara Chiappori, theater play critic and press journalist ; Marzia Loriga, director , Giacomo Agosti theater play critic, Accademia Belle Arti Brera.

Le jeu du Je – Me in play
Ou est ce Je? – Where is this Me?

Kantor's legacy : Barotte's pictorial research begins with drawings made on paper from hotel rooms during tours with director Tadeusz Kantor, the fragile support almost seems to emphasise the precariousness of the travel trace. His long experience with master Kantor provided JMB with a profound understanding of the "mental space" used by this director - not a physical space but an intangible evocation - intangible that allows the viewer to make it his own. Barotte transposes this concept into painting, transforming matter and space into evocative mental scenes.

(T.Kantor's Mental space, text by Antonello Zanda)

In order to be able to create, Barotte enters the game: entering the game allows him to find practices for his next steps. Installing this creative process generates practices that allow him to

acquire the means to elaborate a transformation in which borders can turn into thresholds, doors, and generate different and singular patterns of expressivity, bearers of different languages. In this creative process, a creative condition is established: *l'enjeu*, the stake, which generates a singular vision, transforming it into language: *en je*, in me, embodying matter and intangible.

3) Philosophical research - *Ici, s'éteint le langage* - Here, language is silent.

24th of october 2024,18:00

Speakers : art critic Viviana Gatica, philosopher Giuseppe Di Liberti, philosopher Pascal Taranto.
Translation : Myrtille Montaud

How to listen to the silences evoked by a language that probes the inscrutable?

From the very beginning of his research, Jean-Marie Barotte investigates the philosophical themes that will accompany him throughout his career. In formal composition appear signs, letters and figures, which make up the alphabet of his language, comparable to hieroglyphic language, encapsulating the profound meaning of his thought. In his works, the formal composition, materials and colour constitute philosophical scenes, mental spaces, into which each element refers, as in a play of mirrors, to literary references. The artist devotes himself to an endless research, alternating periods of reflection and study with periods of realisation of the works. These long periods of study allow him to investigate and refine his research, from several points of views: formal, expressive conceptual and spiritual. His language becomes layered as he goes deeper and deeper. Barotte creates cosmogonies that question us about time, passage, death, existence. Reference authors include Jacques Derrida, San Juan de La Cruz, Edmond Jabès, Maurice Blanchot.

4) Philosophy and spirituality - All stands in a precarious balance

31st of october 2024 : 19:00

Speakers : novelist Dominique Dussaussoy, Lama Sonam Chopel. Chiara Gatti, art critic and head of MAN museum from Nuoro and curator of the JMB retrospective exhibition.

Starting from a transversal reading of Jean-Marie Barotte's work, a dialogue will be opened on the spiritual journey and the intellectual and psychoanalytical path that constitutes the artistic creation in the history of art and in contemporaneity. In the cycle *La Noche Oscura*, dedicated to the search for the light that emerges like a glimmer from the darkness, the artist marks a fundamental step in his pictorial research, his blacks will no longer be painted with traditional techniques, but will be the result of a long work of sedimentation of the burning of candles and oil lanterns, a gesture that recalls the evocative image of the hermit who with his lantern illuminates the long path. His artistic production ends with the series *Tout se tient en équilibre précaire*. In the last works of December 2020, Barotte through his works speaks to us, prepares us to the moment when he will be no more. These works reveal the strength of his language, they take us by the hand, with grace and reserve, accompanying us to the other side, reminding us that the shadow of death is white, ... is light. These works testify to the extreme point in matter, they are thresholds towards the inscrutable. Barotte in his linguistic research plays with words, creates opposing mirrors that turn the image upside down. In his notes he writes:

L'univers s'écrie dans le corps - L'univers s'écrit dans le corps.

The universe cries out in the body - the universe is written in the body.

In the first utterance is where one becomes aware of the abyss.

In the second utterance, it is the universe writing in a multitude of forms. Creation of one's own language - Toute existence a besoin d'un témoin

The cycle of meetings

For the Milanese events at the Fabbrica del Vapore, we are benefiting from the collaboration of professors and teachers from the Università Statale of Milan, the University of Aix-Marseille, the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera Milan and the intervention of distinguished intellectuals. The set of conferences represent a serie of in-depth studies, enabling the public to understand the complex process of artistic creation and to unfold the recognisable code that distinguishes the language of each artist. Each meeting will be structured as a roundtable. Federico Crimi, curator of the cataloguing of the archive of works by Jean-Marie Barotte will be present through all the meetings, alongside with Maria Cristina Madau, life companion and artistic partner of JM Barotte, historical witness of the artist's career from 1990 until his death.

From the 5th to the 31st of October, for the entire duration of the JMB retrospective, such conference shall take place each week.

Speakers: Chiara Gatti, art critic and head of the MAN museum from Noro, Marco Bazzini art critic and curator of the exhibition JMB : a retrospective, Federico Crimi, conservator of the JMB archives; philosopher and art critic Roberto Paolo Malaspina, Sara Chiappori, theater play critic and press journalist ; Marzia Loriga, director , Giacomo Agosti theater play critic, Accademia Belle Arti Brera, art critic Viviana Gatica, philosopher Giuseppe Di Liberti, philosopher Pascal Taranto, novelist Dominique Dussaussoy, Lama Sonam Chopel. Chiara Gatti, art critic and head of MAN museum from Nuoro and curator of the JMB retrospective exhibition.

Giacomo Agosti teaches the methodology of art critics and the performance practices in Brera Academy. He showed sound installations derived from classical or innovative operas in the Museo del 900, Poldi Pezzoli, Napoli's national museum, Comacina island and Théâtre Renzo Piano from L'Aquila. In 2013, he directed the first modern revival of *Due Ragazzi Savoardi* from Nicolas Dalayrac for the orchestra Milano Classica. In 2003, he founded the association *Il Nuovo Mondo* to promote 20th century music and the artistic exchanges with the overseas Chinese community. He is a member of the managing board of the club Ferrobedò from Milano. He published *L'Isola delle Sirene* with editor Ricordi about the homosexual culture and the American musical comedies, from Busby Berkeley to Betty Grable.

Marco Bazzini is teaching history of fine arts at the Fine Arts Academy from Urbino, he is also teaching the history and critic of contemporary design in ISIA Design School from Firenze. He is the scientific head of the Emilio Isgrò Archives and the Marco Bagnoli Archives. He is currently collaborating with the Foundation Dynamo Camp about its programmes and artistic events. From 2007 to 2013, he was heading the contemporary art center Luigi Pecci de Prato.

Sara Chiappori, journalist and theater plays critic, lives and works in Milano. She writes about leisure and culture for La Repubblica and its magazines. She is also a contractual lecturer at the Civic school of Theater Paolo Grassi from Milano. She wrote the volume « Strehler. Il gigante del Piccolo » (2022) for the Mimesis editor, and, for La Nave di Teseo, she wrote « Chili 1973 » (2023).

Federico Crimi is an expert in the history of architecture and landscapes transformations, publishing various essays and monographies on these subjects. He catalogued for the Tate Britain of London a complete set of drawing from Turner made during his tour of the lakes Maggiore, Como and of Milano. He is the scientific catalogist of the Italian Episcopal Conference for the works of art and architecture of the Milano's diocese. During years 2020-21 he was in charge of the litteralistic archives of Vittorio Sereni et Piero Chiara from Luino (Va). Since 2022 he

is in charge of the scientific and cultural programming of the civic museum Parisi Valle from Maccagno (Va).

Giuseppe Di Liberti teaches aesthetics in the university Aix-Marseille, he is a member of the Center Gilles Gaston Granger (UMR 7304). His researches concern the notions of artistic systems, the french Lumières aesthetics, contemporary theories about images and the cognitive dimensions of the aesthetic experience.

Dominique Dussaussoy novelist and essayist, followed various parallel paths: sciences, psychoanalysis, classical music, travels and business in Asia. He has been practicing Soto Zen buddhism since 1975 and was ordained monk in 1979. He published various essays, traductions and novels..

Chiara Gatti is an historian and art critic. She writes for "La Repubblica", especially "il Friday" and "Robinson" magazines. She is heading the museum MAN from Nuoro. She wrote three volumes about the works of Leone Lodi (Officina Libraria 2015-2017). With Léa Vergine, she wrote « Art is not respectable people's concern » (Rizzoli 2016). She collected and edited the essays' selection of Giorgio Mascherpa into « the emotion and enchantment of art. From Loto to Fontana » (Ceribelli 2019). With Interlinea, she published Insolite natiività (2012), Chagall, The dream of a christmas night (2018), Art's snowfalls (2021) and Under a good star (2022), A golden story (2023). She organised exhibitions for public or private institutions, notably Baj : Giotto and the fountain, The golden space ; Emilio Isgrò. The horse syllogism ; Matisse. Metamorphosis; Giacometti and Fontana : the research of the absoluteness ; Guernica. Against all wars.

Viviana Gatica, art critic, she devoted the last decades to the reinforcement of the cultural links between France and Italy. She planned and organised many institutional events, including the programme of the commemorative exhibitions for the 70th anniversary of the French Institute in Milano ; as well as many retrospective exhibition of famous french artists in the Bagatti Valsecchi museul, the French Institute and the Carrousel in Le Louvre. Graduated from the Fine Arts School of Panthéon-Sorbonne university, she obtained a 2d degree master of Cultural Institutions and projects Management as well as in Sciences and techniques of exhibitions. Her academic researches focus upon contemporary art's ecosystems in France and Europe in the era of globalisation. She is an invited lecturer about Cultural Patrimonium for the milanese universities.

Marzia Loriga, chairwoman and artistic manager of Alkaest theater, director and comedian. From year 1980 to 1987, she was an actress in the plays of Tadeusz Kantor and took part in Teatr Cricot2. In 1984, with the italian actors chosen by Kantor, she founded the Teatro Alkaest Company ; the first play " Parade without crocodile" was produced and shown by the CRT of Milano. Director and actress of various plays produced by the CRT, she also involves herself in social theater, organizing and directing various shows played in different prestigious festivals in Italy and abroad.

Maria Cristina Madau is an artistic director and a multidisciplinary artist, staging various theater plays and international operas and directing different interdisciplinary projects. Since 2023, she founded and chairs the Foundation Barotte – Madau, FDBM, based in France and manages the research center of this foundation.

Roberto Paolo Malaspina is an historian of arts and doctor in aesthetics. His concerns encompass contemporary art's history and theory, visual culture, gender and queer studies. He is also an independent curator and co-founder of the contemporary art magazine TBD-Ultramagazine.

Lama Sonam Chopel entered the Dharma at the age of 8 and studied in the Nyingmapa school. In 1988, he was named by His Highness Kyabje Karma Rangjung Kunkhyab teacher of buddhist

philosophy and spiritual head of the Marpa Institute. Since then, following his master's will, he has been perpetuating the transmission and teachings of the Shangpa Kagyupa lineage.

Pascal Taranto is professor in philosophy at the university Aix-Marseille, head of the Granger Center and member of the University Institute of France (IUF).

Biography of Jean-Marie Barotte

1954 - 2021

Born in Milan in 1954, from a French father and an Italian mother, Jean-Marie Barotte frequented Milanese theatre circles after graduating from Vittorio Veneto High School. In the 1970s, he studied anthropological theatre at Comuna Baires, an independent Argentinean theatre founded in Buenos Aires in 1969, and settled since 1977 in Milan. During those years, he continued his theatrical experience through the group of actors who, with Mario Montagna, founded Teatro-i in Milan. In 1980, Barotte approached the world of international research theatre working as an actor in the famous company directed by the director and painter Tadeusz Kantor. During the same period, he also worked with the Milan company Teatro Alkaest. In 1987, he participated in Documenta Kassel 8 with Kantor's play *Machine of Love and Death*.

At the end of the 1980s, strengthened by the experience he gained alongside the great director, Barotte felt the need to develop his own language. His visual research began during theatre tours with the first drawings he made on stationery from the hotel rooms he stayed in during his travels. To give form to his thought, Barotte then embarked on a new path. He realised that theatrical practice no longer corresponded to his expressive needs and ended his life as an actor to devote himself entirely to painting. Literature and philosophy are the tools that will accompany him on his journey. His dual culture of origin, French and Italian, combined with the Spanish culture that has always fascinated him, deeply nourishes his reflection. He chooses to live between Milan, Paris and Ibiza and allows himself to be traversed by the history and spirit of the places that host him. This extraordinary cultural permeability allows the artist to create a unique stylistic signature that shines through in his works.

In 2008, he exhibited the installation *Tout ne tient qu'à un fil* in Milan, on the occasion of the collective exhibition project *La Giostra dell'Apocalisse* presented at the Rotonda della Besana.

In 2014, the Fondazione Stelline hosted the artist's first solo exhibition in Milan entitled *NEROCENERE*.

On the occasion of Milan EXPO 2015, as part of the collective exhibition project *Oltre la CENA, un'ULTIMA SCENA* set up at the Institut français Milano, in collaboration with Fondazione Stelline and Politecnico di Milano, the artist created the installation *Ultima Suite*.

The author's last solo exhibition *Lo que queda del fuego* (What remains of the fire - homage to Jacques Derrida), was presented in 2017 at Club Diario de Ibiza, exhibition space of the local newspaper in Ibiza.