

How to say the unspeakable is a question that has haunted painters since the first handprints on cave walls. It is this fear that Béatrice Le Hodey confronts and which she translates into a figurative language which sometimes lapses into abstraction.

This struggle is above all part of his secret garden as it is responsible for his most intimate movements of the heart. But if the painter allows herself to be guided by the power of her feelings, there is however no personal revelation – nothing of the self-portrait – in these paintings which explore what in individual experience belongs to the universal domain.

To give meaning to her work, she had to “enter into what I don’t know how to do” she says – quoting the painter Marlène Dumas whom she admires – and find a pictorial language which abandons the “pretty” in favor of the TRUE. To the point that this right-hander often chooses to paint with her left hand to avoid falling back into the ease of seduction. Dark or violent colors, thickness of the brushstroke or lightness of the ink line, imperfections and shadings charge each representation with an intense expressiveness imbued with deep humanity.

A trip to South Africa is the origin of his latest series. Faced with the insurmountable contradictions of this country – torn between vitality, violence, faith, optimism and despair – she had to find an “image-voice” that could express this humanity torn by its impulses of life and death.

In these trees as red as blood, the energy, the shock, the ardor to live beyond hidden pains strike the viewer. This use of the tree as a poetic expression of the desire to live opens up to the tragic complexity of human life, perhaps in search of a new relationship with the world.

Text by Isabelle Poujet, 2024