

# Jean Larivière

From April 12<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019

## « Portraits et Paysages »

*(Portraits and Landscapes)*

***Opening with the presence of the artist  
Thursday 11 April from 6 pm to 8.30 pm***

Born in 1940. Lives and works in Paris.

Following his studies in 1963, at the School of Fine Arts in Angers, Jean Larivière began a research work on movement, space and time that led him after ten years to the realization of kinematic images «Never Always». Consisting of sequences of photograms and photographs reworked at the line, superimposed infinitely by a subtle set of layers and filmed with colour cinemascope, the film with surreal accents impresses Matta and reveals the formal vocabulary that he will develop later in his photographs.

After many encounters, the most notable of which remain those of Chris Marker, Salvador Dali, Roger Vadim or Barney Wilen, he turns to advertising photography imposing his technique, his formal and iconographic register.

In 1978, Maison Louis Vuitton invited him to create a catalogue whose photographs led him from Guadeloupe to Rajasthan via New York and Montreal. Those photographs mark the beginning of a long collaboration with the brand beyond the advertising commission.



*Portrait d'Andrée Putman, 2003*

Inkjet

Diptych Cm 154,5 x 116,5 each

“A little because of his fetish elephant - stuffed - and a lot because of his photographs, I have a hard time imagining Jean Larivière other than as a big child and a magician.

As a child, I am convinced that he wanted to remain so, thus preserving visions and an imaginary that his condition - official - of «applied photographer» could very often have called into question to make him fit into the mold of the claim, was it luxury or stylish.

Magician, he became so, by perfecting «tricks», know-how, the least important of which is not his knowledge of the light and the fineness of treatment that he dedicates to it. I am, each time, captivated, in the etymological sense of the term, by his lights, his ability to pass from the vibrations of gray to contrasts, from the contradictions to the degraded, even to make them coexist on the same image, to the smallest detail of the final prints.

From fashionable portrait, from staging to landscape, from travel chronicle to still nature, he mocks genres, transcends them to assenate us, with his obvious sweetness, images that could not have existed as they are if it were not for photography.

The Larivière, who for twenty years proposed a dream imagery for Louis Vuitton, is also an artist who dialogued with abstraction, who posed himself in a very serious way – among other things around the portrait- the question of figuration, who explored the possibilities of storytelling, who one day decided, in a very serious way, to be part of a history of photographic classicism by remaining attentive to movements, research, plastics and graphics of his time.”

(Christian Caujolle)

Extract from the catalogue of Jean Larivière’s exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris in 2006



*Jeune Fille Epson, 1985*  
Argentic edition on baryta paper  
cm 174 x 134



*Jules Merleau-Ponty, 1985*  
Argentic edition on baryta paper  
cm 174 x 134

## Preview

It has now been some 15 years since Jean Larivière gave any sign of life. His brilliant work on advertising and fashion is remembered, especially his close collaboration with renowned baggage handler Louis Vuitton. This was carried by a very personal and ambitious declination of the theme of the journey, at the limits of the possible, and relying on a great complicity with the brand's management. In the context of commissioned photography, Jean Larivière has established himself as the author of constantly renewed visual adventures, evolving in the margins of usual remarks. His sense of direction, his demanding compositions, his mastery of lights and black and white were appreciated.

If he did not make any more mention of him, he did not stop to work, to search and to produce silently, stubbornly, in his amazing studio-workshop on Rue Popincourt in Paris. A space "inhabited" by all kinds of collections of objects, more unusual and unexpected than the others, that reveal the child that he has never ceased to be and his immoderate taste for exploratory journeys, whether on land or sea, or in the sky. A universe reflecting the original spirit that animates his creations.

Today, he returns in a kind of softly way, in a gallery in the Saint-Germain district, with obviously the desire to make known that he is still there, highlighting some major pieces of his past productions. But it also foreshadows, with a diptych paying tribute to Andrée Putman, what he plans to deploy more widely in the future. For the time being, he shows works that immediately impress in their very large format, and this dimension is reflected in all that he currently achieves. As for the principle of the diptych, it echoes his research in which photography composes each time with another medium: drawing, video, sound... Proposals of which some motifs are inspired by fragments of autobiography, particularly related to his childhood. Photography is always present in his approach, including in his most sophisticated inventions, like a trunk with multiple drawers that creates the «portrait» of the wind captured in different parts of the globe. A bit like a Marcel Duchamp who had in his time locked in a glass bulb the Air of Paris.

Jean Larivière likes to talk about portrait, even when it is an object that he photographs; apparently inanimate, but only in appearance. For the object, in each of his achievements, is mixed with life, with thought. And if the act of creation is for him something extremely serious and profound, it is never really detached from a form of game. It is this ambivalence that precisely characterizes his personality, his life course and the work he concentrates to build.\*

Gabriel Bauret, April 2019

*\*Jean Larivière is preparing an edition that will bring together all of his work undertaken since the 1960s.*



*Le Fumeur de Mandalay, 1996*  
Argentique edition on baryta paper  
Cm 156,5 x 126,

## ABOUT GALERIE PIÈCE UNIQUE

**PIÈCE UNIQUE GALLERY** headquarters have been based in Paris since 1988, specializing in masters of contemporary art. For almost 30 years, we have been an advisor to private, corporate and public art collections worldwide.

Pièce Unique Gallery has organized a large number of key exhibitions for art collectors. Working directly with artists, these exhibitions have included CY TWOMBLY, CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI, GEORG BASELITZ, LOUISE BOURGEOIS, YAYOI KUSAMA, ERIK BULATOV, DENNIS OPPENHEIM, BERNAR VENET, SOL LEWITT, BEVERLY PEPPER, REBECCA HORN, EDUARDO CHILLIDA, CHRISTO, GEORGE CONDO, JAUME PLENSA, ENZO CUCCHI, JAMES BROWN, ROSEMARIE TROCKEL, MIMMO PALADINO, ALIGHIERO & BOETTI, JANNIS KOUNELLIS, MARIO MERZ, DANIEL BUREN, DONALD SULTAN, JEAN PIERRE RAYNAUD and many other leading international artists.

The Gallery has two separate show rooms in Paris and is generally present at most key international Art Fairs such as Miami, Dubai, New York and others...

GALERIE PIÈCE UNIQUE 4 rue Jacques Callot 75006 Paris  
PIÈCE UNIQUE VARIATIONS 26 rue Mazarine 75006 Paris  
Tel. +33 (0)1 43 26 85 93

[www.galerie-pieceunique.com](http://www.galerie-pieceunique.com)  
[gallerypieceunique@gmail.com](mailto:gallerypieceunique@gmail.com)