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Alice Anderson's Spirit Machines

By Anne Charlotte Michaut, January 22, 2022

The Fontevraud Modern Art Museum, open to the public in May 2021, presents an original route, built on formal and conceptual correspondences between various pieces from the collection of Martine and Léon Cligman, which brings together works of modern art. (from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century), but also many extra-European objects.

The proposal by Alice Anderson (born in 1972) as part of the first edition of "Connections\Collections", an annual invitation by a contemporary artist to dialogue with the collections, is a great success. In consultation with the museum team, the Franco-British visual artist has chosen to disseminate her "spiritual machines" throughout the tour, assemblies of technological objects coated with copper wires through a performative process of "memorization". Embodying for her digital connectivity, the copper wire is omnipresent in her practice, which mixes our hyperconnected society with extra-European mythological and cultural references and revisits ancestral techniques, in particular weaving. Whether in relation to a Cycladic statuette, a funerary mask, or even sculptures by Germaine Richier, these totems, or "female power figures", as the artist calls them, almost seem to have been created especially for the museum. In Fontevraud, the work of Alice Anderson, imbued with spirituality, animist thought and ecological awareness, invites us to rethink our relationship to objects, nature and time. The room presenting sculptures from the series Itineraries of a body, suspended from the ceiling and seeming to come alive thanks to the play of shadows, is splendid. It is accompanied by a recording of the transitional dance that the artist has produced with other performers in dialogue with these works, in order to reinject energy into them.