ALMINE RECH

Seyni Awa Camara - John McAllister Sculpting Earth, Painting Sensations

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Almine Rech is pleased to present *Sculpting Earth, Painting Sensations*, an exhibition that creates a unique dialogue between the artists Seyni Awa Camara and John McAllister. Their artworks seem to emanate from the same source: the Earth. Two artists, rooted in a lasting and immutable sense of time, give life to this exhibition.

Seyni Awa Camara's sculptures embrace traditional craft to fashion creatures evoking the ambiguous divinities of the indigenous arts. With raw materiality, her sculptures affirm their tangible presence, while the solid colors in McAllister's paintings suggest a luxuriant reverie.

In his work, McAllister does not simply seek to "document the world as it is." On the contrary, his paintings are part of the tradition of major twentieth-century artists such as Matisse and Bonnard. He strives to capture light without limiting himself to simply depicting the contemporary world. Instead he emphasizes a kind of representation that is connected to geologic time and the unchanging world of sensation.

His vivid palette, with shades of pink, red, and orange, evokes sunrise on Earth before the arrival of humankind, in the midst of luxuriant, fertile nature. These are the colors of the dawn of the world.
The verticality of Camara's sculptures, with their solid connection to their base, contrasts with the minimizing of perspective in McAllister's paintings, and allows viewers' eyes to relax. Witnessing the two approaches in this exhibition produces a feeling of wholeness and well-being.

– Milena Oldfield, researcher

Seyni Awa Camara

Seyni Awa Camara is a Senegalese ceramicist renowned as the "Magicienne de la Terre" in her local community. Growing up in Casamance, she learned traditional pottery techniques from her mother and later expanded her craft to create not only utilitarian ceramics for her family but also intricate sculptures sold in the local market. Initiated into her art alongside her twin brothers by the forest spirits during adolescence, Seyni's life and work reflect the mysticism inherent in the animistic practices of African villages.

John McAllister

The influences of French masters such as Matisse, Bonnard, or Braque during his fauvist period reveal John McAllister's obsession with the spectral qualities of light and its capture. The vibrant palette concentrated on a close range of colors (often lavenders, reds and purples) produces a distinctive and luxuriant blast. In his large-scale paintings and panoramas, the dualism of flat picture surface and illusionistic depth upsets traditional perspective. Against backgrounds of geometric or foliate patterns that suggest exotic textiles, ersatz wallpaper or other artworks, each work depicts a still life, landscape or decorative interior often elegant yet bordering on the decadent. Opening a window which is simultaneously poetic and metaphoric, John McAllister is playing both the role of contemporary viewer and artist.