

# SUZANNE TARASIEVE PARIS

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## JEAN BEDEZ

### *Heaven is watching us*

08 September – 06 October 2018

Opening Saturday 8 September 2018 from 6 to 9pm

Looking up to the works of Jean Bedez invites us to welcome the wilderness of aesthetic oxymora born from an erudite creative act that imposes, in the same breath, an elevated *Time of innocence* dusted in graphite. Surrounded by the tumult of legendary struggles running across unformulated collective thoughts, the monumental violence of a Florentine Renaissance battles with the presence of images borrowed from popular culture: the luminous Italianness of a symbolic Piazza della Signoria and the blackest of darkness into which wild Savonarola follows his bloodthirsty path; the diachronic nature of time, unattainable as much as unfinished – and the *Nouveau roman* dating hinted at with a very Nathalie Sarraute imaginary *Planetarium*; the floating diagonals, the blurred perspectives or the flawed ridgelines falling prey of a *sfumato*; the aerial lightness arising from the creative genius of the alchemist and the crust of the earth battered under the hoofs of a bull whose massive presence - sculpted into the flesh of the marble - commands a silent fight; the setting of a décor with theatrical ornaments and the thunder caused, not only by the collapse creating disorder within the frame, but also by the chaos of industrial no man's lands that force open the draperies of an abandoned palace just like the one in Marienbad; the kinetic movement of a duel directed by Scorsese and the stillness of sacrosanct objects preserved under invisible glass covers. Lubitsch is a liar: "Heaven can wait", but it is watching us.

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The object of Jean Bedez's drawings is haunted by the representation of the "deep forces" of the tensions pervading public power. Equally, the artist, turned culturalist historian, is called to the Florentine Renaissance wars when, through the sharp plurality of his stroke, he renders, under the unexpected guise of fresco painting style fragments, the archetypes of a warlike violence with exploratory paroxysms. The apostolic preachings of totem figures that populate the chronicles elicit his talent, newly cartographic a times and imaginatively cosmogonic at others. Like a deflected *camera lucida*, Jean Bedez's drawings elude scale, shifting the sumptuous "macro" to slit the detailed "micro"; they expose the torments of the already baroque luxury of a Lorenzo de' Medici torn between his art and his faith.

Once again, a relentless Jean Bedez broaches the question of the ruling of time. This *Tempus*, both mathematically and historically inscribed in the Merleau-Ponty like skin of the paper, like the newly dated landmarks of a "world history" mapped elsewhere, questions the issues of present time that replicate, in the contemporary space, the lavish and decadent past splendour of a fantasised Italy, rustling with gold as much as with "Blood Dark". Outside of self-practices (time at work / working time), decipherable under the multiple sets of graphite, Jean Bedez's drawings interrogate, from a wide angle, the time of the artwork, both object and subject, as it refracts the Event confronted with what actually is. Thus Jean Bedez puts forward an Augustinian contemporaneity stemmed from the present, "memory of things past and expectation of things to come". He scrutinises the flashing moment which, postponing the ephemeral, roots itself into a historical depth which has still remained poetical as the pencil marks enable mysterious reveries. Jean Bedez seizes space: he builds, and immediately unbuilds the patrimonial ruins strangely associated with factory cymas awaiting both rehabilitation and redemption, themselves born of the effects of time or "catastrophe". And suddenly, manufacturing slags of erasure, Bedez, a conscious critic, fractalises a ceiling and shocks into being a chasm, and an abyss, too.

Jean Bedez's overarching subject matter is assuredly politics. Beyond chiasmus, his creative work belongs in a cultural history of politics as much as in a political history of culture. At the heart of it is a triad along distinct repertoires: first, power, then, battle, and, lastly, actors (in attendance or not), face to face, back to

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back, as if in a game of chess, as if organising deployment strategies over visible or invisible territories, defined or limited. Jean Bedez captures the “thought-drawing” of the ornament, and observes, on the pyre of vanity, as the scene is set for the monumentality of a place: hotel hall, great salon, church, throne room or famous place, suddenly taken out of the frame, as if displaced by the muffling of a dizzying fall unfolding the ghosts of smoked air columns. Henceforth the artist expands the artwork reconfigured by the heaps and aggregations - constrained or not - maimed with scars and fragmentary debris, set, in the manner of *unica*, in a *u-topos* only himself knows.

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Jean Bedez’s decision work, which has no equivalent, blasts a Starobinskian beauty. Historical and historicised to the extreme by scholarly patches intertwined with Pop *corners*, his work also convenes immediacy, welcoming history’s, but also art history’s memories. Adjusting the archeological shards of a dia/anachronic frieze, he elicits the “tales and legends”, scholarly or vernacular, of a transnational tale, undertaken at the turn of Renaissance and lost in the radicalities of the Cold War. Jean Bedez breaks bloc logic as if detaching watermarks, twisting lines and cracking marble. He refuses elementary reductions, chooses to scoff at the national narrative like he scoffs at its language. A cinephile, the creator lays horizon structures and, rightly, the sky bears witness to him.

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