

GREGOIRE SCALABRE, THE ART OF SCULPTING FORMS

From an early age, Grégoire Scalabre has been fascinated by clay. He had to crack the secret of it, tackle its resistance, and master the appropriate skills to finally design useful objects, then artworks from his imagination.

Backed by his apprenticeship in Dieulefit and Longchamp, where he learnt the basics of ceramics, Grégoire Scalabre has been constantly innovating. He applies himself to building forms by setting pieces together: "crosses", "waves", which are typical of his first creations. These several practices demonstrate his complete mastery of gestures and techniques —that's how he manages to create new forms while training young ceramists in his school.

From 2008 to 2010, I invited him to a residency within the Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres. In collaboration with Galerie NeC, we had first agreed that he would create pieces in relation to the savoir-faire and history of the prestigious institution, which has been hosting the greatest artists and ceramists for a long time.

His first challenge was to master the knowledge of porcelains, whose composition is very specific to the Manufacture –one cannot know for sure how the substance will react when creating a new form. Not only did Grégoire Scalabre manage to understand this material to perfection, but he also worked closely with Sèvres high-skilled technicians regarding throwing, moulding and enamelling. In these circumstances, he achieved a monumental artwork, "Astrée": a genesis of a porcelain galleon, made of ten thousand thrown and enamelled pieces, that looks like living matter. A work of art worthy of Sèvres greatest ceramists.

His work greatly evolved during and after this residency. He has now become a real sculptor, and gives clay a very expressive power by using broad lines, generous curves, and enamelled, smooth or hammered coatings.

A strong presence emanates from these works. Together they form a truly creative architectural landscape based on Haussmann-style stucco moldings, which have now become an integral part of the repertoire of Sèvres.

With his latest work, entitled "*Unidentified endless movement*", Grégoire Scalabre keeps following this direction. The pure geometric forms are encircled by a rim, which once again refers to organic architecture. These creations constitute a new technical challenge, highlighted by the spraying of black marble powder and the metallic sheen of jasper-like bronze patina.

With his sculptures, Grégoire Scalabre turns out to be one of the greatest ceramists taking part in the revival of contemporary ceramics. Although close to fine arts and design, his work is first and foremost the work of an accomplished sculptor.

David Caméo

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