Oil painting - Ligne Bleu

Object: Oil painting

Date: 1969 (painted)

Artist/Maker: Asse, Geneviève, born 1923 (painter (artist))

Materials and Techniques: Oil and crayon on paper

Museum number: P.9-1981

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, room WS, case R, shelf 53, box L

Public access description

'Silence and a flood of light saturate the void - in her paintings Geneviève Asse embodies the pulse of life. In the emptiness of their silence there is the vibration of music - there are tensions, taut like the string of a bow. Avoiding the rich variety of illusions and phantasmagoria that painters can improvise she offers for our contemplation a subtle stimulus produced by a magic enclosure devoid of images but which is an image in itself, full to the brim with food for the imagination and expanding into limitless space.

Today science defines outer space in terms of light years and black holes, a mathematical and computerised language which leaves me bewildered, but the eye and the hand of Genevieve Asse open for me immeasurable distance through a window of human proportions which is also the mirror of a fundamental need for freedom.

Along a far distant horizon I see the breakers, the white horses announcing the approach of day. Darkness yields to the victory of light, one star being enough to dispel an encirclement of total obscurity. The triumphant advent of light, the colour of dawn in these paintings illuminates my innermost depths.

Blue is the colour of silence, of dreams and of endless space.

I am enchanted by this image of infinity. It's vision is human. Its poetic vibrations travelling from the coast of Brittany find echoes on our own shores. Tenderly Genevieve Asse beckons us out on paths she has discovered, chartered and rediscovered. With the assurance given to her by the light of primeval intuition she leads us into serene expanses of undefiled space, she provides for us a transcendental ladder of escape. carried upwards the opaque kernel of daily life comes to life, expands, opens out into the fertile mist in which reality resides.'

The above quotation is from: Roland Penrose, Preface to Geneviève Asse (London: Taranman, 1980)

Born in Vannes, Brittany in 1923, Genevieve Asse’s childhood was spent between Rhuys and the Gulf of Morbihan, a region that was to have a profound effect on her painting. From 1940 she studied at the Ecole Nationale des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. Although visual art would become her primary medium she showed an interest in theatre. Between 1942-3 she studied mime under Charles Dullin and took part in courses initiated by Jean-Paul Satre on Elizabethan drama. It was at this time the painter Othon Friesz introduced her into the Atelier of the Groupe de L'Echelle at Montparnasse.

Asse spent World War II as an ambulance driver. In the years that followed she worked as a fabric designer for Bianchini-Ferier, Flachard and most significantly Jean Bauret, through whom she met Nicolas de Staël, Bram van Velde, Poliakoff and Kandinsky among others. In 1961 she exhibited at the Lorenzelli Gallery in Milan and at the Galerie Krugier in Geneva.

Asse has worked in stained glass, tapestry and ceramics as well as painting. She has also illustrated a number of books including Pierre Lecuire’s L’Air (1964), Samuel Beckett’s Abandonne (1972), Silvia Baron Supervielle’s Les Fentres (1976) and Charles Juliet Un Lointaine Lueur, (1977).

Ligne Bleu is a work typical of Asse in its exploration of bold colours, space and light. The prominence of the colour blue is common in her work.
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Object history note
Purchased, 1981

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O134716/ligne-bleu-oil-painting-asse-genevieve/