



Vallée
art contemporain

Jean Gaudreau

Artistic Approach

My approach concerning the integration of recycled copper in my artworks started in 2011, when I was offered the opportunity to acquire fragments of the Château Frontenac's old roofing. Working with pieces taken from this jewel of Quebec City's heritage was for me not only an honour, but also a way to explore other avenues of the artistic creation. Having been entrusted with a piece of the copper, I felt invested with an important mission : preserving a page of our history by giving it a new life through a resolutely current approach.

I first had to tame a material that was thus far alien to me. So I folded, hammered, and brushed pieces of copper until they surrendered their secrets. It took me a year to master the art of handling the copper, an approach that demanded the acquisition of several pieces of equipment and the development of a new space in my workshop.

Since I trained as a painter, I chose to start my approach par producing artworks that would combine painting with the insertion of fragments of copper (numbered). It is by screwing these fragments on plywood, by gluing them on the canvas and by overlapping them that I was able to create an original arrangement. This handling of the copper also led to an in-depth transformation of the work. On the canvas, I start with the upper space and I affix a fragment around which the development will continue. It is said that some of these works evoke artists that I like, such as Klimt and Kandinsky, but these similarities are superficial, since I bring to this endeavour a decidedly personal touch.

This exploratory path has given rise to a new plastic language in my practice, an avenue that I continue to deepen. I focus my energy on the transformation of the copper and on the different ways to integrate it to my artworks. I have to give it the opportunity to exist on its own and to evolve naturally at the heart of my paintings.

In terms of the mediums used in the creation of these works, let us mention a few such as pastel, acrylic, oil paint sticks, lacquer, varnish and spray paint. I also took care to number each piece in order to obtain the traceability of the fragments hailing from the Château Frontenac's roof. It is a way of reminding their uniqueness. The pursuit of this approach made me realize that these paintings have acquired a new dimension, that is to say, they are similar to sculptures. We can thus talk about relief paintings.

Controlling of the metal in a two-dimensional environment prompted me to turn to the multiple possibilities of sculpture, a discipline I've been practising for several years. Thus the Château Frontenac's "sky" took on the forms of the multiple characters born of this famous building. The recovered copper gave birth to various characters borrowing from different personalities related to Quebec City's the past.

Declined in alchemists' towers or in vases lush with timeless flowers, these characters have contributed to the outreach of the Totem Frontenac, a name that goes beyond the historical concept.

Once again, the copper goes through a major transformation as I cut , fold and brush it. The original colour of the copper blends in with the verdigris covered surfaces lending the ensemble an interrelation between present and past. In those sculptures, the transformation possibilities are more numerous since this third dimension allows me to work not only in depth (as in the paintings) but also in height and width. The various components are assembled, pierced by the metal, creating, shaping pinions, bouquets or fireworks, according to the imagination of the creator. The potential is thus multiplied.