



Musée de l'Orangerie

Philippe Cognée

From March 15th to September 04th, 2023 - Musée de l'Orangerie



Philippe Cognée (1957)

Entre chien et loup, 2023

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For the Musée de l'Orangerie, the artist has created a series of original works that take an acute and subtle look at Monet's Water Lilies.

Philippe Cognée occupies a special place in the art of his generation; this is due to his unflinching adherence not only to figurative painting, but also to a technique that determines the appearance of his images. Within his chosen protocol, he preserves the radicalism of a method by which he detaches himself from the pictorial work and uses techniques approaching those of mechanical reproduction. His starting point is always photographic; the image is then transferred to the medium and reproduced using encaustic paint; finally, the painter uses an iron to melt the wax. The shapes combine and the contours fade, creating the blurring or fusion that he systematically seeks. Thus chance is introduced into the final resulting image, which is distorted and held at a distance.



Creating art, stresses Cognée, “is attempting a form of introspection within the subject-matter itself”. In this, he concurs in one of the fundamental aspects of Monet’s slow and complex development of his “Grand Decorations” (“Grandes décorations”): as he progressed in his unceasing work, he wondered about what he was trying to achieve, about the ultimate purpose of his unparalleled undertaking, and he sometimes despaired of being able to complete it. Like *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)*, Cognée’s works are, above all, paintings and it is we who – through an operation of the mind – reconstruct their subjects, whether crowds or landscapes.

The artist has designed a collection of original works for the Musée de l’Orangerie, which offer an acute as well as subtle perspective on *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)*. After spending his childhood in Benin, Africa, Philippe Cognée entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Nantes in 1975. The paintings he has exhibited in the early eighties enjoyed increasing success over the following decades. The exhibition “It’s the Apples that have Changed” (“Ce sont les pommes qui ont changé”), at the National School of Fine Arts in 2000, established his place within the new developments in painting. His series, *Carcasses (Carcasses)* was exhibited at the MAMCO in Geneva in 2006; then the Musée de Grenoble devoted a vast exhibition to him in 2012. Over the past ten years, numerous exhibitions have been held in Europe and in Korea. The Musée Bourdelle is devoting an exhibition to him at the same time as Contemporary Counterpoint (Contrepoint contemporain).

Curator: Sophie Eloy, Head of documentation, the library, the archives and research at the Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris, France