

## POND, BENEATH THE SURFACE

Following a narrow trail, the traveler walks through mountains and crosses lakes under starlit nights, his breath mingling with the elements as he begins to perceive the bigger picture and make connections. It is thus that Rose Morant's work emerges in the perception of the viewer.

Through an intimate approach, and drawing from animist traditions, Rose Morant aims to restore a cosmic awareness of the world. She links this intimate feeling of being one with a wider frame to sense memories: the surface of black water in a Tokyo pond covered in bright, translucent lily pads, the golden leaves of a Russian fall, shattered glass in the aftermath of a typhoon in Hong Kong, or droplets of water suspended on lotus flowers along Asian lakes.

Seizan Gallery presents the installation *Pond* in four different seasons, an inner landscape carried by the deep light emanating from shades and textures of black. *Pond* restores this inner movement with endless attention to the materials it features.

The natural creating process of the pieces demands that viewers pace themselves as they slowly take in the work: just as the material is born out of the combination of a powder made from dried flower petals—used as temple offerings in Southeast Asia—and lacquer tree sap. Each coat of lacquer then awaits the natural evaporation of any water held within the magma.

Like the minimalist artist Lee Ufan, Rose Morant pays particular attention to the materiality and simplicity of the natural materials she uses in her work. She also adds her own sense of agency<sup>1</sup> through a selective efficiency in what she embeds within her pieces and in how she organizes her installation. Space, gaps, rhythm, and the placement of objects and stones all reflect a specific organisation and take on a singular power. *Pond's* four seasons act as a temporal undulation.

"I have here a lovely subject of small islands level with the water,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Claude Monet in 1895 to his daughter-in-law Blanche Hoschedé. The myriad of small translucent and oval jades constellating the horizontal surface of *Summer* allows for an iridescent chill to come through from the dark water where lily pads float like small islands.

Water is a constant in Rose Morant's work. This is doubtlessly because, whether in its liquid, gaseous, or solid form, it is alive and imbued with memory. Water on a symbolic level traces a path back to the source of what is sacred.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Claude Monet, lettre à Blanche Hoschedé, 1 March 1895, Fondation Claude Monet, fonds Monet, no. 276.

Ice's sculptural work raises the idea of water as a memory conduit and the delicate balance of life's movement, continuously needing to be recaptured. The abstraction in her work conjures up the archetype of a pictured landscape, fixed in a distant memory.

Rose Morant encapsulates these vast landscapes in a microcosm, which results from the inner tension between how humans are confronted with materials and how matter is given back to the world she observes.

Her work is one of a cosmo-geographer exploring themes of memory, movement, and light. The canvases covered with a powder of dried flower petals are animated with shapes, creating a subtle dialog between the pale alabaster, lacquer lily pads, golden shards, and a surfacing translucence. Time at a standstill invites us to meditate as the golden lacquered panels reflect the invisible subject of this contemplation.

Like painters before her, such as Rothko or Monet who played with color and light, Rose Morant shapes materials into a spiritual space dedicated to expressing the deep emotions that are channeled through her. In some ways, she could claim as her own the words of Pierre Soulages: "I like to go toward, or rather allow to come to me, what inside of us is most deeply embedded, most secret."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Pierre Soulages and Anne-Camille Charliat, *L'intériorité dans la peinture: Entretiens* (Paris : Hermann, 2019).