European Commission

Berlaymont Summa Artis II

1 Contemporary Art Collection

Berlaymont Summa Artis II

27 Contributions

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President of the European Commission
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Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
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The European Commission has invited all Member States to take the floor and present their own artistic contributions to the *Berlaymont Summa Artis II* collection of contemporary art. In the next pages, art critics, curators and representatives of the different lending institutions offer us their personal views on current artistic trends in their countries and the work of the artists who have been selected for this exhibition.

Our sincere thanks to all the artists and the following institutions who have contributed to the *Berlaymont Summa Artis* collection:

Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
FPS (Federal Public Service) Economy, Belgium
German-speaking Community of Belgium
Christian Silvain Foundation, Belgium
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M HKA (Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp), Belgium
The Union of Bulgarian Artists
Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture
Czech Ministry of Culture
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The Danish Art Foundation
Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Spanish Ministry of Culture
Estonian Ministry of Culture
The State Art Collection, Finland
Fonds national d'art contemporain, France
Hungarian Ministry of National Resources
The Office of Public Works (OPW) of Ireland
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lithuanian Artists' Association
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Latvian Artists' Union
Malta Council for Culture and the Arts
Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE)
Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
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Romanian Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
The National Public Art Council of Sweden
Slovenian Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
Government Art Collection of the United Kingdom

Le Triomphe de la Paix
Roger Somville
Belgium, 1964
Wall tapestry
13.30 × 4.70 m

European Commission

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Lower ground floor

Audiovisual Service
Press Area

Belgium

LE TRIOMPHE DE LA PAIX

Roger Somville est un des grands peintres de l'art belge contemporain qui, outre son influence sur la peinture réaliste et expressionniste, a contribué au renouveau de la tapisserie et de la peinture murale. La tapisserie «Le Triomphe de la Paix» a été conçue pour une organisation internationale (en l'occurrence l'OTAN à Paris) et fut ensuite exposée au Palais des Nations Unies à Genève. Tant son caractère monumental et ses dimensions que son thème central semblaient la destiner particulièrement à représenter l'art belge contemporain dans un lieu comme le Berlaymont, siège d'une institution européenne et carrefour des nationalités.

La conception d'ensemble de l'œuvre possède une force et un caractère grandiose qui frappe d'emblée le spectateur. Le sujet a été inspiré à Roger Somville par le poème de Bertold Brecht, «An die Nachgeborenen». Il est dédié aux lendemains de guerre et à l'espoir qui soutient les hommes engagés dans un combat pour la paix.

« *...Le bateau symbolise la solidarité des peuples du monde entier, de toutes les races, dans la lutte pour la paix et la justice sociale* [souligné par l'artiste]. *L'enfant, assis sur les épaules de son père, exprime la pérennité de la cellule familiale. L'oiseau perché sur la tête de l'enfant, traduit la paix triomphante...* ». (Roger Somville, 1963)

L'artiste poursuit sa description et énumère les sentiments et les valeurs exprimés dans sa composition: inquiétude, dangers de la guerre, et puis amour et «souffle de la liberté emportant irrésistiblement les peuples vers un avenir meilleur, plus just».

Ensuite il détaille l'esprit général de la tapisserie «composition épique de caractère monumental, basée sur le rythme et le chatoiement des couleurs et des contrastes violent». Il termine par les mots de «victoire, optimisme, triomphe de la vie sur la haine, l'imbécillité humaine». Cette tapisserie est, pour lui, un «manifeste du nouveau réalisme». Par ces mots l'artiste a exprimé tout ce qu'il a voulu traduire par cette œuvre qui restera une de ses créations les plus marquantes.

Marie-France Coumont
Attaché, Operational Communication Service FPS (Federal Public service) Economy, SMEs, Self-Employed and Energy

Roger Somville — Né à Schaerbeek, le 13 novembre 1923. Etudes chez Charles Counhaye (La Cambre). Membre-fondateur de la «tapisserie de Tournai» (1946), de «Forces murales» (1947), de la «Céramique de Dour» (1951), du «Mouvement réaliste» (1969) dont il est l'un des principaux représentants aux plans national et international, du «collectif d'art public» (1979). Auteur de nombreuses œuvres murales,w notamment à la station de métro Hankar à Bruxelles et à l'U.C.L, Louvain-la-Neuve. Prix Koopal (1957) et Prix de la Critique (1968-69). Nombreuses expositions en Belgique, à l'étranger et participations aux salons d'ensemble nationaux et internationaux. Son œuvre est représentée dans les musées, les collections publiques et privées belges et étrangères. Ecrits : «Pour le réalisme», «Hop là! Les pompiers les revoilà!» (Ed.Cep, Bruxelles, et le Pavillon, Paris, 1970 et 1975), «Peindre» (Ed. Luce Wilquin, 2000)

(extrait du site Internet de «Maison Elsa Triolet-Aragon»)

THE TRIUMPH OF PEACE

Roger Somville is one of the most prominent painters of contemporary Belgian art who has had a large influence on realistic and expressionist painting, while at the same time contributing to the renewal of interest in tapestry and murals. The tapestry "The Triumph of Peace" was conceived for an international organisation (NATO in Paris) and was subsequently exhibited at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. Its monumental character and size as well as its central theme make it particularly well fitted to represent contemporary Belgian art in a building like the Berlaymont, the seat of a European institution and meeting point of nationalities.
The overall concept of this work of art has a powerful strength and character which strikes the onlooker immediately. Bertold Brecht's poem, "An die Nachgeborenen" was the inspiration behind Roger Somville's tapestry. It is dedicated to the aftermath of war and to the hope which supports men involved in a fight for peace.
"*... The boat symbolizes the solidarity of the peoples of the whole world, of all races, in the fight for peace and social justice* [underlined by the artist]. *The child, placed on the shoulders of his father, expresses the enduring nature of the family unit. The Bird perched on the child's head, depicts the triumph of peace...* ".
(Roger Somville, 1963)
The artist continues his description listing the feelings and values expressed in his composition: concern, the dangers of war, then love and the "breath of freedom driving people towards a better, fairer future".
He goes on to explain the general concept of the tapestry "epic composition of a monumental nature, based on the rhythm and the shimmer of colours and violent contrasts". He finishes using the words "victory, optimism, triumph of life over hatred and human stupidity". This tapestry is, for him, a "manifesto of the new realism". By these words the artist has expressed everything he wanted to say through his work, which will remain one of his most outstanding creations.

Roger Somville — Born in Schaerbeek, on 13 November 1923. Studies at Charles Counhaye (La Cambre). Founding Member of the "Tournai Tapestry" (1946), of "Mural Forces" (1947), of "Dour Ceramics" (1951), of the "Realistic Movement" (1969) of which it is one of the most relevant representatives at national and international level, and of the "Public Art collective" (1979). Author of numerous mural works, in particular at the underground station Hankar in Brussels and in the Catholic University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve. Koopal price (1957) and Criticism Prices (1968-69). Numerous exhibitions in Belgium and abroad, and participations in the national and international overall fairs. Its work is represented in museums, and in public and private Belgian and foreign collections. Writings: «Pour le réalisme», «Hop là ! Les pompiers les revoilà!» (ED Cep, Bruxelles, et le Pavillon, Paris, 1970 and 1975), «Peindre» (ed. Luce Wilquin, 2000)

(Extract from the Internet site of "Maison Elsa Triolet-Aragon")

Le Triomphe de la Paix (detail), Roger Somville, 1964 — Wall tapestry, 13,30 × 4,70 m

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MEZ.

mezzanine

Roger Somville