



La démarche

**ART  
ISTI  
QUE**

**Louis Biron**  
Artiste plasticien

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# Introduction

Man is deeply fascinated by Nature, the subject of inspiration, worship and scientific obsession. Both have a complex and intertwined relationship, a mythical subject crystallized by Orphic and Promethean attitudes. In the current context of global environmental crisis, we need to rethink the way we interact with Nature. Art is a way of reuniting us with the living, it materializes a disinterested dialogue and allows us to convey an aesthetic perception, renouncing utilitarianism in favor of wonder, thus leading us onto the path of contemplation.

*“However, in a world of cities and megalopolises where Nature is rarely accessible other than through the representation we make of it, I question its effectiveness today in the face of the urgency of our situation. **If art is to be a response to the challenge of ecology, it needs to rethink its creative processes, which consist in applying to matter what comes from the mind, in favor of a system that includes Nature, capable of faithfully retransmitting its experience and perception.** To reach out to the living, I imagine collaborative processes whose co-production would be the interpretation of a new world. I like to maintain a very simple relationship with Nature. I consider its existence to be sufficient to be a source of creation, so I try to materialize its expression and reveal its artistic dimension through a non-invasive approach, supported by artisanal techniques. I imagine creative processes that enable Man and Nature to co-create works whose characteristics vary according to their implications.”*



# A new approach

## Rethinking Man and his relationship with Life

### ORPHIC ATTITUDE, PROMETHEAN ATTITUDE

Man has always felt a deep fascination with Nature, the subject of inspiration, worship, scientific obsession<sup>1</sup>, culture and life. Undeniably linked to Nature by his origin, he has developed with it, thanks to it and without it<sup>2</sup>. A complex, intertwined relationship, a mythical subject crystallized by Orphic and Promethean attitudes<sup>3</sup>. Following Pierre Hadot's example, and reflecting our relationship with Nature, Louis Biron does not penalize these attitudes, which he considers to be inseparable<sup>4</sup> in human beings. But in order to meet the greatest challenge of our century, that of ecology, we urgently need to change our relationship with the living world.

### A NEW ROLE FOR THE ARTIST

The artists' sensitivity enables them to approach Nature with gentleness and respect. The art they produce, more mobile and accessible than Nature, materializes a selfless dialogue between Man and his environment. Thanks to this interaction, Nature plunges Man into a contemplative state.

### CONTEMPLATION

The current context leads Louis Biron to question the artist's ability to convey his aesthetic perception as closely as possible<sup>5</sup> to reality, and the quality of the interaction he creates. The experience of Nature is lived empirically, and it seems essential to him to rethink our modes of interaction and representation in order to guide us along the path of contemplation. Like Aristotle and, to a lesser extent, Buddhism<sup>7</sup>, contemplation<sup>6</sup> is a kind of ascent and progression of the spirit. It is a trigger for human and spiritual development, enabling us to reposition ourselves in relation to the world and change the way we perceive living things. Nature takes us back to our own origins, reflecting our souls. Respecting it is a way of respecting ourselves and others.

## New modes of artistic production

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION ON THE LIVING BEING AND ITS PRODUCTIONS

The Industrial Revolution brought about a paradigm shift in the relationship between Man and Nature. Like Catherine Chevalley, the artist believes that we perceive our environment from a utilitarian point of view<sup>8</sup>. The processes of industrial production<sup>9</sup> lead to standardization<sup>10</sup>, rationalization and exploitation. Man is inseparable<sup>11</sup> from Nature, since he is its product. This is why he inflicts on the human species the same shortcomings he inflicts on the plant and animal worlds. And it is in this universe that Man builds himself as an individual, identifying himself only by the structures of which he himself is the author, and thus perpetuating the phenomenon<sup>12</sup> of the unawareness of others from generation to generation.

### AN ARTIFICIAL REPRESENTATION OF NATURE

They predicted it, and history bears witness to it. Industry has divided mankind, and the arts<sup>13</sup> have risen up against it. Inspired for the most part by Nature, considered an absolute necessity for people of all kinds, everywhere and for everyone, in order to restore the essence and dignity of this world. But reintegrating Nature into our environment does not simply mean making it the subject of a performance. Indeed, as the many mimetic<sup>14</sup> and stylized<sup>15</sup> representations can attest, these modes of personification<sup>16</sup> reflect above all a desire to control this entity through its physical materialization. And despite a certain realism, it is impossible for man to reproduce the spontaneity or surpass the perfection of the living. So we lose all interest in imitation.

### COOPERATE WITH NATURE

*"I believe we need to put Nature back at the center of our world. To this end, we need to go beyond the simple representation of living things, and set up means of co-production that enable them to take part in the construction of our world. From this collaboration, semi-human forms emerge, manifesting a cooperative aesthetic, the product of a symbiotic living system, abolishing the boundaries between the natural and human worlds and marking the beginning of co-evolution. But while respect and harmony seem inherent to this phenomenon of co-participation, they are not inescapable."*



1 / « Le développement aveugle de la technique et de l'industrialisation, aiguillonné par l'appétit du profit, met en péril notre rapport à la nature et la nature elle-même ». (HADOT, Pierre. Le voile d'Isis, essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de Nature. Folio essais. 2008)

2 / « Nous vivons dans un monde si totalement transformé par l'homme que nous rencontrons partout les structures dont il est l'auteur... de sorte que l'homme ne rencontre plus que lui-même ». (W. Heisenberg, La nature dans la physique contemporaine, 136,137 p.)

3 / « L'attitude prométhéenne est inspirée par l'audace, la curiosité sans limites, la volonté de puissance et la recherche de l'utilité... » (op. cit. 136 p.)

4 / « Il est extrêmement intéressant de rencontrer en Léonard de Vinci un esprit qui a réuni en lui l'aspiration prométhéenne à utiliser la nature au service de l'homme et l'attitude, que j'ai appelée orphique, d'observation respectueuse et admirative de la nature » (op. cit. 163 p.)

5 / « Cela veut dire : ne plus percevoir les choses d'un point de vue utilitaire... Cet aspect émotif, donc subjectif, de la perception esthétique est très important : on parle de plaisir, d'émerveillement devant la beauté, mais aussi de terreur devant le sublime. » (op. cit. 282 p.)

6 / « Rappelons-nous Hölderlin : « Ne faire qu'un avec toute chose vivante, retourner, par un radieux oubli de soi, dans le tout de la nature ». (op. cit. 408 p.)

7 / La contemplation est le sens le plus élevé de la méditation qui aux côtés de l'écoute représentent les éléments essentiels de la pratique du Dharma étant la réalisation de l'enseignement de Bouddha dans notre vie quotidienne.

8 / The « mécanisation de la nature » was a dreaded phenomenon at the beginning of the industrial era, as it translated the world view from a utilitarian point of view (op. cit. 204 p.)

9 / MUTHESESIS, Hermann. Travail manuel et production de masse. Paris. Gallimard. 1992. 325-326 p.

10 / VIÉNOT, Jacques. Proposition d'une doctrine de l'esthétique industrielle. Rapport général. 1952. 49-51 p.

11 / « L'animal ouvre devant moi une profondeur qui m'attire et qui m'est familière. Cette profondeur en un sens je la connais, c'est la mienne. Elle est aussi ce qui m'est le plus lointainement dérobé... » (BATAILLE, Georges. L'animalité, Théorie de la religion. Paris. Gallimard. 1976. 294 p.)

12 / Our urban world is embodied in a mirror, the one and only reflection in which man identifies himself. According to Jacques Lacan, the formation of the function of the «I» is made possible by the presence of the «other». This «natural» other is non-existent, so how can we become aware of it?

13 / The Art and Craft movement advocates the construction of an ontological and ecological aesthetics. (LOGÉ, Guillaume. Renaissance sauvage, l'art de l'anthropocène. Puf. 2019. 64-65 p.)

14 / The goddess Isis is an example of a personified representation of nature (op. cit. 404 p.)

15 / The process of stylizing nature is strongly criticized by the artist John Ruskin, who sees it as a way of representing nature as a machine. (DURANT, Stuart. Ornement, un panorama de l'art décoratif de 1836 à nos jours. Arthaud. 1987)

16 / « D'une part l'idée de secret de la nature était ... associée à une certaine personnalisation de la nature, et elle impliquait une opposition entre... un extérieur et un intérieur. » (HADOT, Pierre. Le voile d'Isis, essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de Nature. 1re éd. Gallimard. 2004. 407 p.)







# Empirical processes

## Observation and personal approach

NATURE AND DESIGN

Today, many designers make nature their subject of study. They do not all approach it in the same way, and most of them<sup>17</sup> seek to control living things. The natural processes from which they draw their inspiration aim to improve the living environment for mankind, from which Nature can sometimes benefit in the background. However, there is no guarantee that these technical innovations will not be used as a substitute for our industrial manufacturing processes, and end up being nothing more than a new way of instrumentalizing the living world.

REINVENTING THE CRAFTSMAN'S ROLE IN THE DESIGN OF LIVING THINGS

Faced with these issues, a new generation has emerged, with the aim of re-inventing collaboration with Nature: The New Artisans. Despite the associative nature of their work, many of these creators perceive Nature for the goods it produces, and the resulting objects remain essentially utilitarian. This type of object is interesting because it's innovative in its mode of production, and it keeps our behavior unchanged. Bio-integration<sup>18</sup> is first and foremost a change in our relationship with the world, rather than the contribution of a technique, and if, beyond a forward-looking and innovative approach, we can initiate fundamental changes in the way we evolve, let's do it.

A PERSONAL APPROACH

*« My approach leads me to apprehend the living in a completely different way, considering its existence<sup>19</sup> as sufficient to be a source of creation. I materialize its expression and reveal the art that is inscribed in it thanks to a non-invasive approach, requiring the convergence of skills specific to arts and crafts and biology. I imagine creative processes allowing Man and Nature to co-create works whose characteristics vary according to their degree of involvement. This collaboration is above all an introspection centered on my role as a creator, my will to be all-powerful and my capacity to dispossess myself of it. It allows me to glimpse a liberating act of abandonment. And for good reason, Nature's intervention is not conditioned by our cultural heritage, it invites me to deconstruct my gesture and to move towards purer expressions. Through this co-production, I try to put Nature back at the center of our world. I propose semi-human works, a manifesto of a cooperative aesthetic<sup>20</sup>, which abolishes the boundaries between the natural world and the human race. An approach oriented towards a new consciousness of aesthetics, that of the hybrid, which promotes the awakening of consciousness and marks the beginning of a co-evolution. »*

17 / Plagiarists practice biomimicry, they imitate behaviour in the natural world, but work with technologies and materials from industrial and digital production. Bio-Hackers genetically reprogram nature in order to imagine our synthetic world of tomorrow. The new alchemists create hybrid organisms between the living and the non-living. The agents provocateurs explore the future in a prospective way by raising ethical questions related to these new possible relationships between nature and the notion of high-tech ecology. (Fondation EDF. En vie aux frontières du design. Catalogue d'exposition.)

18 / The integration of living beings as collaborators, co-creators of the project, participants in its birth, its interactions and its evolution over time. (LOGÉ, Guillaume. Renaissance sauvage, l'art de l'anthropocène. Puf. 2019. 183 p.)

19 / « Kant entendait le fait de trouver son plaisir dans la pure existence de la beauté naturelle... » (HADOT, Pierre. Le voile d'Isis, essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de Nature. 1re éd. Gallimard. 2004. 283 p.)

20 / An aesthetic question emerges from these processes. The notions of monstrosity, grotesqueness, ugliness, disgust, largely cultural, are brought into play... (LOGÉ, Guillaume. Renaissance sauvage, l'art de l'anthropocène. Puf. 2019. 184 p.)

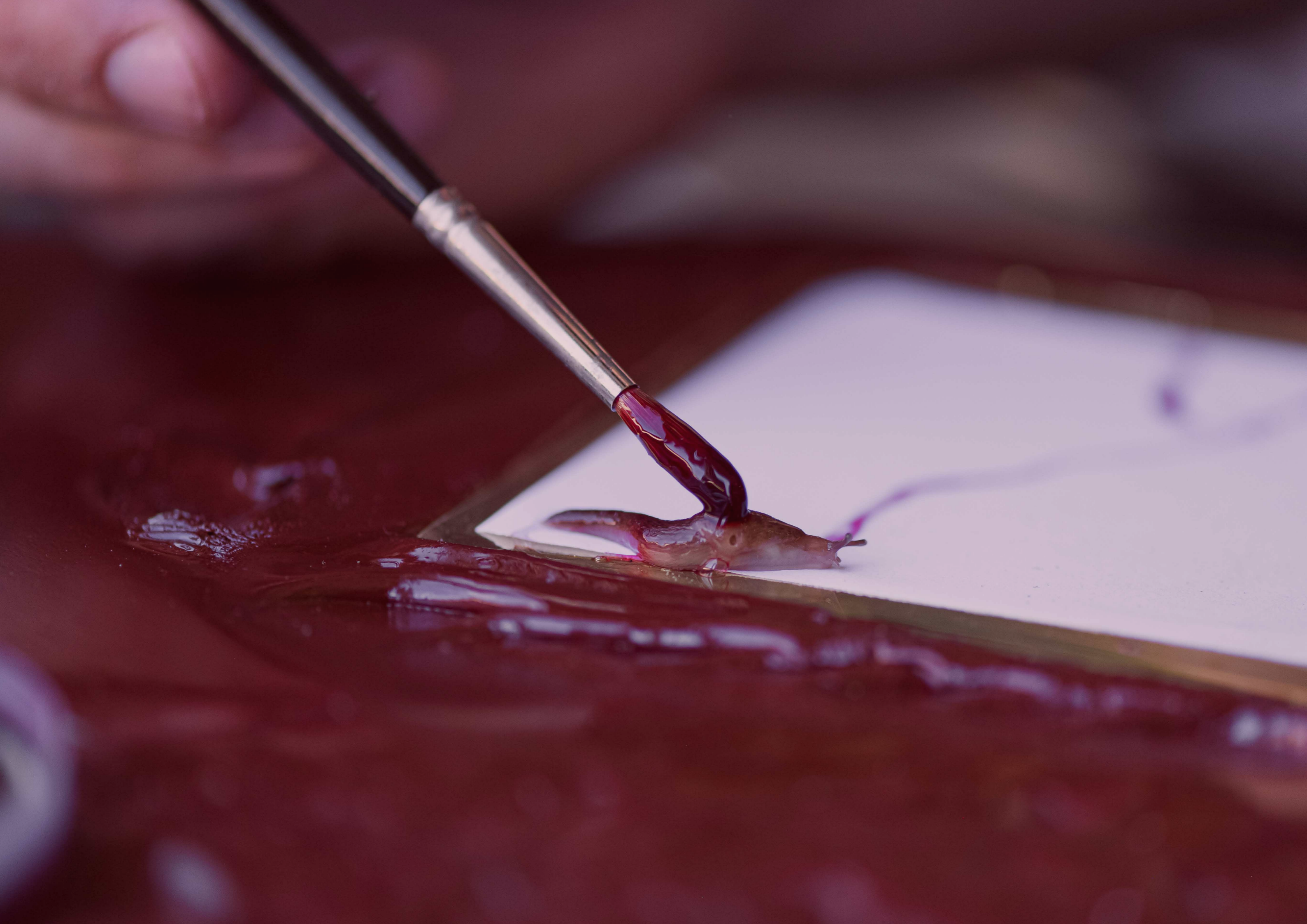


## Mode of production of the work

This participatory approach, extended to non-humans, is expressed through processes requiring the convergence of skills specific to arts and crafts and biology. The realization of the work is co-dependent on the will of the creators and the conditions of the environment in which it can be exercised. To this end, the production process integrates environmental parameters that are specific to them.

### Structural process

The artist's need to materialize the expression of Nature led her to take an interest in an environment that naturally preserves its traces. The earth is home to an abundant pedo-fauna, unknown to the general public yet essential to its functioning. This substrate veils and preserves their existence. In its original environment, the earth is not "contained" and its beings evolve freely. His work consists in redefining this environment and thus rethinking the object of investigation as a vivarium in order to reveal Nature's interpretation of it. The vivarium is designed according to the characteristics of the species he works with. This is achieved by integrating their vital needs and anticipating their behavior. In this way, the living space he provides is viable, and incorporates systems for extracting living things naturally. Once the extraction is complete, he molds the imprint left by Nature. The molding process puts such a strain on the substrate that it needs to be compact enough to resist, yet flexible enough to be hollowed out. To this end, he integrates various natural materials to meet all these needs. The impression obtained after casting is cleaned, consolidated and sent to a firm for hard printing. The work is self-generating under these conditions, but cannot survive without some form of maintenance. Highly sensitive to external variations, temperature and humidity must be kept stable, and daily observation is essential to compensate for the slightest contingency.



## Graphics process

In a second phase, the artist turned his attention to an above-ground environment in which to materialize nature's processes of creation. Inspired by Bodyart, notably by Yves Klein, he developed a process for preserving the imprint of the living through the use of food colorants. The colorants are neutral solutions, which he handcrafts from natural elements that are not harmful to living things. Applied with a brush, they spread progressively as the individuals move forward. As contact between Nature and the support is essential, the artist has chosen to work with crawling species such as gastropods. He harvests them from environments close to the place of creation and puts them back in the same place after their performances. This imprint left by Nature is integrated into the support when it has the particularity of being durable, or becomes the subject of an independent graphic work. Metal





# Artist's signature

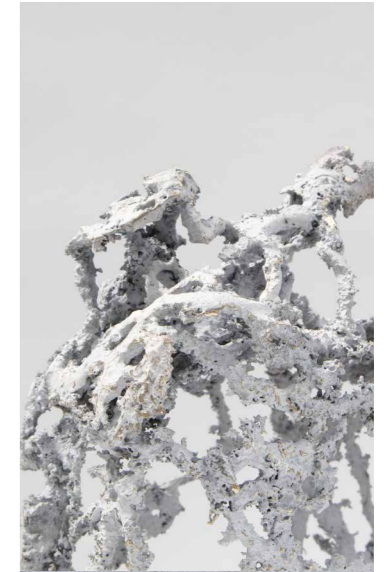
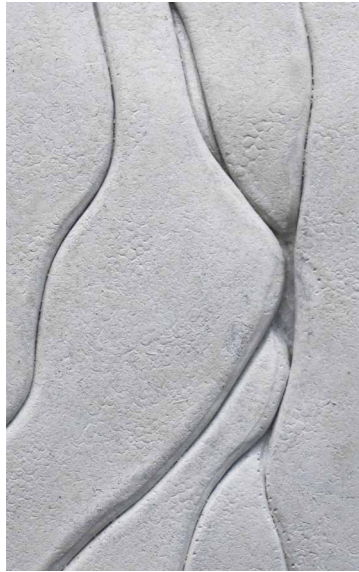
*“Over the past 10 years, I've been working to create a plastic vocabulary characteristic of my practice. This lexicon is exemplified in the use of certain shades of color, shapes and in the expression of natural motifs resulting from these bio-integration processes.”*

## Patine échaillon, the heritage of a color

Échaillon patina takes its name from the marble stone quarried by the artist's family for almost 70 years in his native region. A massif formed over 150 million years ago, the Échaillon features a variation of limestone layers, creating stone in three distinct colors: pink, yellow and white. A profusion of fossilized species testifies to the region's biodiversity, due to the ancient presence of a sea and a tropical climate. The Biron quarries have left their mark on the history of sculpture and architecture, notably with the collaboration between George Biron, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and Alfred Recoura, winner of the Villa Médicis, Premier Prix de Rome and Chief State Architect. The Échaillon stone accompanied Louis Biron throughout his life, from the walls of his Grenoble school to the most beautiful monument in Paris, without ever revealing itself to him. It was not until much later, when his obsession with mineral hues was already evident in his early work, that his family heritage became apparent to him. Since then, he has never ceased to develop his chromatic palette, thanks to the expertise of French craftsmen specializing in hot patina.







## Random cracks

The imprints resulting from the graphic process of bio-integration are interpreted by the artist as fissures. They underline the absurdity of the subjects represented, invested by deforming their surfaces and supports. For him, this plastic translation of Nature's imprint is a way of impacting the work as a whole.

## Hybrid shapes and pattern

Bio-integration processes have led him to develop a vocabulary of hybrid forms, oscillating between figuration and abstraction. This stylistic opposition enables the viewer to immediately grasp the origin of the subjects invested, thanks to contours that echo familiar forms, and to interpret their content in any way he or she wishes. He exploits this principle of projection to create a form of writing, a dialogue between Man and Nature.



## Artisanal process

Metal is his favorite material. The artist loves the idea that he can immortalize and intensify the expression of nature through the use of different mounting, sculpting, casting and/or bronze jewelry techniques. The realization of his projects is based on more contemporary design methods. In particular, polygonal modeling, more commonly known as digital sculpture.

Her training at the Ecole Supérieure de l'Architecture d'Intérieur et du Design Boulle enabled her to hone a creative spirit through the expression of a skill: chasing, commonly defined as the ornamentation and sculpting of metal. Chasing enables him to deform metal by exploiting its malleability. Gestures are slow, orchestrated, precise and suddenly imbued with a strange intensity. Metal is a demanding material, full of contrasts.

Lucien Falize will say about chiseling : « *Le ciseleur a le devoir de faire dire au métal ce que le sculpteur n'a pu lui donner ; ce que ni le livre ni la terre ni la cire ni le bois ni le marbre ; cette fleur de l'épiderme, le chairé de la peau, la maille du tissu, les nervures des feuilles, le moiré des fleurs ; tout cet infini délicat qui charme l'œil et donne la couleur et l'esprit à la matière.* »







# Conclusion

Louis Biron's artistic approach integrates the living in all its modes of existence and expression. He makes Nature the main actor in my design. It leads him to rethink the way we apprehend it through our modes of artistic production, via contemplative processes. Whether structuring or ornamental, they materialize a work that invites Man to reposition himself in relation to the world, and to ask himself existential and determining questions. Thus, by revealing the art<sup>21</sup> present in Nature, Man will interact and identify with it. He will cease to dissociate himself from it and to dominate it, since it expresses his continuity.

21 / «Si l'homme se considère comme faisant partie de la nature, parce que l'art est déjà présent, il n'y aura plus d'opposition entre la nature et l'art. L'art humain sera la continuité, le prolongement de la nature. Il n'y aura plus de domination entre nature et l'homme ». (HADOT, Pierre. *Le voile d'Isis*, essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de Nature. 1<sup>re</sup> éd. Gallimard. 2004. 131 p.)

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