

## *The Four Seasons*

Alexandra Marini

Introduction to the catalogue « Les Quatre Saisons », Monaco Modern'art, 2010

Philippe Pastor, in his new series, brings the issue of Man, irrevocably linked to Nature, to its critical point. The series highlights man's disregard for climatic upheavals, and the ever increasing estrangement from earth's biological cycle, which is of course the changing seasons. The artist brings his sensitivity to a world where man has lost his reference points, initiates an uncompromising work. By creating directly in Nature and with Nature, he hopes to be at the very core of things. The central themes of this series are the creative tools and Creation itself.

The canvases are unconventionally laid on the ground. With his instinct as his sole guide, the artist pours over, with his characteristic vehemence, various natural pigments. As with the abstract expressionists before him, the canvas becomes « an arena in which one may act ». The artist cultivates the feeling of the pictorial space's frontality, while the colours reaffirm themselves through the sinuosity of movement, revealing the speed of the gestural execution. His compositions integrate the weather, minerals and plants found here and there, nearby. For Philippe Pastor takes a stand where art involves experience more than explanation, requiring physical commitment rather than mere observation. He exists in the immediacy of sensation. Once these gestures have been performed, creating previously unknown chromatic compositions, these canvases will be allowed to gestate on site for various months.

This step is decisive in the creative process: a dialogue with Nature is born, a chemistry, an intimate coherence. As the seasons pass, the canvasses are invaded by the various organic elements of their immediate surroundings. Nature reasserts her rights. Stimulated by an endless movement, the work continues to develop increasingly, bearing in itself the notion that each trace, each presence becomes a reminder and a means to communicate.

Philippe Pastor, in turn, reinvests the canvas. Thus, Man and Nature engage in more than mere dialogue: their interaction parallels a merging of forces. This last step constitutes a pause in the artist approach: by selecting an area of the canvas, a « canvas in the canvas », as it were, he seeks to create « intensity points » which condense, within themselves, the entire creative process and reflect the vigour of his commitment. The resulting effect is striking, producing compositions which rival each other in their uniqueness and place the spectator in a state of direct emotional receptiveness.

There, where the One blends with the Universe, The Four Seasons plunge us to the heart of humanity's culture, to the very bosom of mother Earth. Viewing his strong, sincere work raises our awareness of Man's blindness, which the artist unremittingly censures in his painting. And if, in the artist's mind, our current way of life distances us from Nature's primacy, his work – through that empathy which is unique to Art – can draw us back to it.

Alexandra Marini