

## CORRESPONDENCES

Musée d'Orsay / Contemporary Art

3 June -- 14 September 2008

***This exhibition is supported by Audi.***

### **Christian Jaccard, *Minuit et minuit "écart"* / G.H. Breitner, *Moonlight*, 1887-1889**

Born in 1939, the artist Christian Jaccard, whose works involve the combustion process, takes his inspiration from symptoms, dreams and obsessions in the daily environment and from different bodies in nature.

Taking fire as his starting point, he brings out two notions which are found side by side in his work: *ignigenous* expansion and the development of the *Supranodal Concept* (an accumulation of knotty textures).

A tool of thought and a tool of work, ignition reveals the successive states coming off the alchemy of flames in a flash, releasing its powdery traces. These are captured as the medium for the pictorial device.

In this "Correspondence", Christian Jaccard draws a comparison with *Moonlight*, by G. H. Breitner, in which he perceives an affinity between this painting and the combustion phenomena in his own work. In the chiaroscuro of this painting, he detects an affinity between the heterogeneous elements specific to the phenomenon of combustion and the rhythms and contrasts of Breitner's pictorial expression.

Whether implied or allegorical, Jaccard is examining here the erosion of time and energies which keep altering our perception as they split and leave residues on ignition. Moreover this erosion becomes the source of production of a reflection charged with allusions and metaphors.

### **Konrad Klapheck, *The Questions of the Sphinx* / Gustave Moreau, *La jeune fille thrace portant la tête d'Orphée* [*The Thracian Girl carrying the Head of Orpheus*]**

Konrad Klapheck, born in Düsseldorf in 1935, visited the Gustave Moreau Museum in 1957. There he discovered a fantasy painting, *The Thracian Girl carrying the Head of Orpheus*, in which Moreau reveals himself as a forerunner of Surrealism, as well as the image of a self-confident woman, a femme fatale. Konrad Klapheck, the only child of a widow, saw this as the figure of a dominating woman.

When he started his series of paintings in 1955 on the theme of machines, a theme which dominates his work, he invented titles according to the principle of associations of ideas and noted that typewriters always had titles linked to masculinity (*The Supermale*, *The Chief*, *The Legislator*) whereas sewing machines had titles referring to femininity. (*The Mortified Fiancée*, *The Superfemale*, *The Mistress*). The image of the dominating woman, the femme fatale, the unknown, enigmatic woman keeps reappearing.

The title of the sewing machine version, painted in 1984 and currently on show at the Musée d'Orsay, comes from Greek mythology: *Les Questions du Sphinx*. It was a favourite theme of both Ingres and Moreau. The figure of the great machine with metal feet guiding the red thread in the needle takes its inspiration not only from a real sewing machine, but also from a photograph of a praying mantis, the female insect which, once it has mated, devours its male partner.

In Gustave Moreau's *The Thracian Girl carrying the Head of Orpheus*, the image of the femme fatale reaches its apotheosis. The young girl looks lovingly at the head of the mythological poet with whose death she may have been involved.

Man's fear of woman has long been a fundamental element of the world in Konrad Klapheck's paintings. However, like Gustave Moreau, he also attempts to extol her beauty, wisdom and kindness.

**General curator:** Serge Lemoine, Professor at the Sorbonne, assisted by Laurence Madeline,

curator. Musée d'Orsay

### **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

**Opening hours:** Daily, except Mondays, 9.30am to 6pm, Thursdays 9.30am to 9.45pm.

**Admission:** Museum entrance ticket: full rate: €8.00; concessions: €5.50

**Access:** Entrance through the square, 1, rue de la Légion d'Honneur, 75007, Paris

**Publications:** *Konrad Klapheck/ Gustave Moreau*, 160x240 format, paperback, 64 pages, bilingual edition English/French, joint publication by Musée d'Orsay/Argol, 15 euros.

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**Information:** Website: [www.musee-orsay.fr](http://www.musee-orsay.fr), tel, +33 (0)1 40 49 48 00