

## Véronique Wirbel

1950-1990, French Visual Artist

Born in 1950, Véronique Wirbel was a French visual artist with a rich and discreet journey, marked by great formal freedom and a constant introspective quest. Trained in the plastic arts at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, she subsequently held the position of assistant in the painter's workshop to Jacques Yankel, with whom she collaborated in the constitution of an important collection of contemporary Ivorian art known as Vohou Vohou.

Her work was influenced among others by Jean-Michel Basquiat, and mixes expressionism, abstraction and figuration, anchored in a desire to explore memory, childhood and beyond.

In parallel with her artistic practice, Wirbel participated in the 1984 distribution of the film *The Favorites of the Moon* by Otar Iosseliani.

Her work experienced had an important turning point in 1987 with the Africa series. *Memories of Africa*, a set of drawings and paintings marked by the intensity of memory and personal experience.

In 1989, she was requested by the International Monetary Fund to make one of the five portraits for the Revolution, on the occasion of the bicentenary of the French Revolution, alongside collectives and contemporary artists like suburbs-Banlieue, François Bricq, Benoît Luyckx and Ana Rosita Richardson.

Véronique Wirbel died prematurely on September 14, 1990, at the age of 39.

In 1992, a posthumous tribute was paid to her in Paris at the National Museum of Arts of Africa and Oceania as part of an exhibition on the Yankel Donation to which she had contributed.

In 2004, twelve of her drawings from the Africa series were exhibited at the Maison Populaire de Montreuil. Her works also integrate the contemporary art collections of the Seine-Saint-Denis department.

Her work appears in public spaces: in particular, colorful panels for the facade of the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry school group in Villepinte.

Véronique Wirbel's work is distinguished by her emotional force, her aesthetic independence and its autobiographical density. It is part of a tradition of painting as introspection and exorcism. For her, painting is "revealing an inner world", expressing deep emotions, childhood, anxieties, sexuality and memories in an extravagant "tohu-bohu" of signs, colors and shapes.

"I like the darkness of intimacy, the heart of the bowels of the past, to project myself towards elsewhere ... An escape outside the real present - weighing too often."

Little known to the general public, Véronique Wirbel's work now deserves a rediscovery. Her artistic intransigence, her refusal of compromises, her formal freedom and her deeply poetic universe place her alongside singular artists who marked French contemporary art from the 1980s.

