

We are linked together by some memories of 1939-1941. A Military Academy of cadets in Laval, after then the choice for Aviation. There were two Air Force Academies : Versailles then Rabat. Escaping from the black-out, the light, the space, the discovery of an unexpected Morocco, out of time, which didn't contradict Delacroix. Giving ourselves up to orientalist fascinations and to freedom we were given, we were a few to live in «medina» in a Arabian Hotel.

Miraculous «delay», before the roundabout which were likely to scatter the effectives. The known ending didn't give us the opportunity to taste it.

Neither Baron-Renouard, nor we were discharged. More training, more bonus from our flight, more braids all over our sleeves. For a year longer, we were told to stay in a strange organism, neither military nor civil, curiously named Armistice Army.

For me, the march ended right there. For Baron-Renouard, it kept on going. More than respectably. Like flying over super fortresses for six years, in which were for the world the climb from the deep.

This is not to differentiate our *Karma* by starting to talk about this preamble, for the reason is that the initial course of his life was to me unique regarding other painters of the generation who were known during the years following the Liberation.

I invoke memories, because, since Rabat, since the first phase, and without any hesitation about his future life, Baron-Renouard, as he seemed to demonstrate about himself, having his own certainty, could only aim at becoming a painter and nobody else. Like no-one, in the group, he showed me his destiny as precisely as it could be.

This was surely meant to be, because of the fact he was born in the temple, he was the grand-son of Paul Renouard, talented and famous artist, for whom, all what his time offered him was and endless resource.

The grandson has the same vital «accent», the same curiosity coping with reality... Is the first experience he knew an explanation for his need of space and panoramic discovery ? Looking down from a cockpit, the earth is a world without frontiers, purified of what is ephemeral, without anecdote. Baron-Renouard has a way which shows gladness, terrestrial requirements, which only limits are colours and forms, in every aspects.

No-one can be less sedentary. He would go from place to place.... He's got friends in Paris, Geneva, Tokyo. He is delighted by Japan. Mexico, Teheran, Bagdad, Sofia invited him in turns. He always seemed to be ready for moving. Ready for a flight, like in the past when he were in the field.

Greedy in advance of what he would discover, and find again. No dispersion, under the wings of the aircraft, the world remains a «weft», an invitation. The profession, trustly, full of tactile inventions, the work-room, are building up another universe. His canvas show it. In there, the forms are joined together, are superposed in complex architecture, a kind of verticality. He re-invents his own memory, what his own vision gave him in his Bretagne or in Kyoto.

Baron-Renouard - as a painter and as a man - lived his existency without loosing this love for life, or let's say optimism. We shall thank him...

In an era full of violence, non-sens and moroseness, his work keeps intact in its light the trust which, since the beginning, urged him to this life.

Camille Bourniquel

## Abstract and imaginary naturalism

Seven years in the officer corps, during the last war, made Baron-Renouard sensitive to the flowing atmosphere of the region he used to fly over, views high above horizon at a thousand-meter altitude, at the nature's breath and greatness ; this feeling would be found once more in a work demonstrating sharp sense of cosmic dimension, impregnating, in spite of themselves, those who had practised aviation. If these causes allow us to understand the work characteristic of the artist, definitely he wasn't capable at the beginning to master pictorial expression, but after an evolution quite significant, originally figurative, because progressively representative of what we call «Abstracted Imaginary Naturalism».

Re-apprehension can only be revealed by «imaginary» channel, it means that the artist not being in front of motif, can only recreate it by projecting on the canvas all kind of feelings he had collected previously, when he was staring at the motif or landscape : tactile feelings, olfactory ones, visual ones, auditory ones, those transformed by psychical phenomenon ; then after stored in memory, after then «decanted» by alchemy of subconsciousness, and eventually transcribed in a special way.

His work, transgressing simple psychological manifestation of joy of living or exaggerated tragic suffering, reveals : balance, unity, force, showing he's in full possession of his faculty as a simple man or as a painter, showing he can dominate immediate psychical motions, through his mind no feeling will be filtered which is not consistent with his personality as a «aware man» he wants to be above all : harmony, density, balance, mastery. Great artist, skillful, Baron-Renouard, one of the best representative of the «abstracted» imaginary naturalism, he is a kind of painter, the most typically French, regarding his skills.

Henry Galy-Carles  
Writer  
*extract*

François Baron-Renouard chose to deal with a language of his time, in osmosis with authenticity of formal and poetic approach which finds equivalences between reality and imagination. Art is an invention like nature has been by the most Demiourgon geometers. Like many modern painters since the revolution operated by cubism, Baron-Renouard re-invented the nature by resorting to colours and forms convergence. Thus, he brings life to his canvas through tactile space and the light he creates. Construction and coloured irradiation are the two poles on which Baron-Renouard's work is built up. His deepened sense in plastic art fullness, he had learnt from his masters Legueult and Brianchon from the group Poetic Reality, from Desnoyer as well about space density, from a synthesis of geometrical rations and diversity of sensorial values. But beyond a pictorial heritage he masters, he knows he will reach his goal, only by representing reality as «True» as it can be.

For Baron-Renouard, everything goes on through his own experiences and progress of thoughts in a particular relation with Nature. From Bretagne to Japan, where he had been often since 1960, the hugeness of space is shown on his canvas. This is not meant to imitate, at any moment, but to invoke.

The cosmic vision of Baron-Renouard is only used for mutual exaltation of forms and colours aiming at regenerating. His painting is naturalism kind which formal language comes from his poetic feeling about Nature.

Lydia Harambourg  
Historian-Art Critic, January 1999  
Author of «L'Ecole de Paris 1945-1965»  
Painters dictionary, 1993  
*extract*

Baron-Renouard understood for a long time that painting shall not only be the living memory of view, but the reflection of intimate states as well. He learnt, by the same way, from oriental people, not to try to dominate nature, but to adapt himself to its influence. Therefore, his adventure could only show significant flows of the universe, here exhibited by a set of equivalence with halting sound.

But in spite of improvisation, the organization is full of vigilance, well-made and arranged by regulating hand, which gathers forms and colours in the same motion. The autonomy of parts, separating blank zones and others full of vitality, respects the «Gold Number». Eventually, one will understand, through a lively and worrying speaking way, that Baron-Renouard uses experience and efficiency with «fusing» gesture, but always under control.

Powerful and subtle, warm and modest, Baron-Renouard's works invite us as much for mediation as for communion with life.

Gérard Xuriguera  
Art Critic  
*extract*

**B**aron-Renouard invites us to a stroll in the immediate spheres. When looking at his paintings we have the feeling of a soaring, a journey in the reality of a make-believe. Real as a matter of fact as the imaginary is a spiritual truth, realisms being only fiddled and tendentious documents.

Baron-Renouard's pilot eye has not been without influencing the glance of the painter. Therefore, we may say that Baron-Renouard is a realist of space, yet, his large and luminous patches are very precise and constructed and constructed are his paintings. They are «Cezannian» architectures above and beyond the Earth.

With Baron-Renouard, it seems to me it is already beyond the human, a sensibility colouristically diversified such as the last traces of our feelings, our spirits.

Eugène Ionesco  
Writer  
*extract*

**I** shan't keep to myself (would I desire it I could not) the pleasure Baron-Renouard's painting brings me ; it is literally delightful.

Since I have been knowing it (may be thirty years) I may observe a work going towards liberty like a river rolling down the ocean and the river keeps going wider and wider. So saying it seems to me I start drawing the geography and cosmography of this work.

Sceneries from the sky or interior visions, labyrinths and soarings, lakes and snows, very precious irrigations on the surface of the painting, echoes of the large and shiny patches (like the gongs of an exotic band) the poetic spirit forming the core of this painting reaches us through one of the round waves it develops and leads us to belong to the «planet Baron-Renouard». For sure, the voyage will be marvellous.

François Bergot  
Chief Curator of Museum of France  
*extract*

## His own freedom

**B**aron-Renouard considers nature or external world a main supply of his inspiration and try, by a subjective way, to fix in his paintings all the feelings he had known in contact of the outside world. These feelings, stored in his memory, are chosen deliberately and are purified before showing up as an art work. So, we can say Baron-Renouard is the painter, the most representative of this tendency. When he went to Japan, for the first time in 1960, the artist came back home the heart so full of beauty spirit of this country. Since then, through research about how to re-create feelings one has got ; this emotion is shown through his canvas «homage to Hiroshige», reflecting in a lovely way his philosophy, his incarnation of Art.

Despite of what we can call his naturalism abstracted and visual, Baron-Renouard is not interested at all in reproducing external forms, but he rather tries to find out an inspiration «topic» out of them. Contemporary painting style, all in abstracted language, is without nature visual description, but conveys the artist own poetic feelings thanks to colours, full of complex symbolics and affected shades. He has inside of him, a kind of a strange magic, which makes perceptible the tiniest emotion. All these shapes prove intense and fundamental receptivity of his work and his artistic individuality which is an exceptionally refined essence.

In conclusion, I will quote, to define the art of Baron-Renouard, an extract from Hegel : «only when the pictorial art will reach its own liberty that it will get to the top of the true art. It can assume its true role only when it will rise up to spheres where are religion and philosophy and only when it changes, into one of the ways of expression or consciousness figuration of divine interest, essential for human beings, of spiritual truth the most communal. This art, then, looks like philosophy and religion, but is different in one way : art can even express the sublime in a sensual form and make it by the way, in its natural appearance, nearer to our sense and our sensibility.»

Alexander Watt  
Dallas, 1962  
*extract*

**B**aron-Renouard is a poet. We feel it as soon as we get in his workroom. It is, first of all, the cantor of the light. A light which is shed into blue strips, red, brown stripes, joining and penetrating each other, coming between each other and eventually put into a surprising harmony.

The «flying impression» which is shown in his canvas lets us get rid of ordinary and daily things. Baron-Renouard talks about nature, he transposes it in his mind and nature comes out after being turned into an abstracted way. It is, in my opinion, exactly what makes his work demonstrate incomparable freshness.

But one can also listen Baron-Renouard's work, for it is made a music stave. «There is nothing closer than music and painting are», says the artist. When we take a look at his paintings, we are wrapped by harmony, a harmony of tones, of depth and of rests.

Night and day, the tireless painter works and sees how poetical and musical message can be transmitted so that we can enjoy.

Ch. Dong  
«The silk road»  
November 1996  
*extract*

## Internal frontier

**I**t seemed to me that Baron-Renouard's canvas were as much poetic internal landscapes, landscapes wandered by effluvium where force, mystery, panic are combined with dream, with tenderness, with human brainpower in quest of unity, pacificatory union. A kind of extasy-exaltation in view of the Nature, which will be turned into pictorial action.

Later, I met the artist. After having appreciated the work, I enjoyed having an esteem for the man. I learnt from him the affection he had vowed to the memory of this tutelary grandfather, the painter-engraver Paul Renouard, ancestry which urged him, to a great extent, to choose his way. I learnt one thing more about his participation as an aviator officer, during the last war, at North-Africa campaign, Alsace and Germany. I had already known about his multiple social activities, his devotion for art and artists cause, about the responsibility he had been assuming.

Baron-Renouard's painting is, above all, a *vibrating space* where the first feelings he had in view of the Nature, of its spectacle, hidden, in the subconsciousness, are projected inequivalence through forms and colours after the «psychical activity» had processed them in its laboratory.

The approach is at the same time, ample, soft, free and sometimes with a hidden violence. Violence contained in the unifying harmony of graphic and chromatic elements. Colours are in motion, are organized, are spread over like musical subjects. They are orchestrated. They turn into timbres, these timbres react on each other before melting away in the general song of the composition. Baron-Renouard does not deny the affective link between his work and music.

The painting of Baron-Renouard having crossed the hidden internal frontier, offers generously to our eyes the profoundness, the brightness of a CERTAINTY.

André Verdet  
Writer  
*extract*

**O**ut of the informal comes all elements from virtual landscape or those coming from internal vision. The voyage of Baron-Renouard is one haunting Chinese and Japanese painters, always working on the brink of legitimacy, going from what has been seen to what one has not contemplated yet, through calligraphy and cosmic paintings, continuous swaying between what is going to be and has been, privileged moment of a creation in rough shape, an all revelation one can sometimes see it near, sometimes see it far, depending on your eyes which glance at the matter or on the forms...

As a Nature host or as a cosmos part, you will feel the close communion which links you to Another, to what is not you ; but in the same time, you won't be lost and confused, like in a portrait, because, created by an artist hand, each work sends us a little bit of ourselves...

Vadim Elisseeff  
General Inspector of Museums of France  
*extract*

**T**he path parameters of the existence and the work of Baron-Renouard meet each other and separate from each other, move away from each other and come back together in order to bring life to a painting of one life, devoted to art and to people who create it or admire it.

We, Bulgarians, have our own reasons to respect and to have warm feelings for the outstanding French artist. Respect for his work, representing a significant range of plastic arts. Warm feelings for the friendship he had been showing us and for his particular bent for Bulgaria and his contribution to European and worldwide civilization. One must understand that for Baron-Renouard, art sense and vocation go together with international cultural action, the act of creating is intimately linked to the act of sharing, as the consciousness of the «eternal» transcends the ephemeral presence of what is temporal.

Milan Milanov  
Former Ambassador of Bulgaria in France  
*extract*

**T**he destiny of a painter with his miracles, his chance, his luck, the liberty attitude and determinism, is the perfect symbol of human history.

Baron-Renouard's painting is for me, each time an opportunity to contemplate this certainty. The paintings are the mirror our irrational logic which leads of lives.

What would be these virtual landscapes, this internal world, this colours and forms mixture, this mastrum of energy incarnated in a painting, if spirituality did not dominate the hand of the creator. What Baron-Renouard delivers me are, at the same time, the maze of his mental power to be conceived, his capacity in calligraphy, his cosmic sense, his love for matter, and always-by inviting us to take part at the privileged moment of the creation - he tells us an essential truth : we are not here by chance in the universe, ephemeral entity with no beginning, and no end, a simple foam at the surface of time.

The work of Baron-Renouard's thanks to the pace and rhythms, the melody value, the harmony in chaos, establishes superior connivance which raises up the signal of the absolute in the devil's cauldron.

André Parinaud  
Art Critic  
*extract*

**M**ay I be allowed to make a double comparison. I think about the long-time work for the fishing nets to be manufactured by craftsmen or by a whole family, those nets one could see being made along the coasts. A work which requires patience, and this for a thing that will be soon thrown into the immensity of the sea from where it may take out the thousand sparkles of the wanted fish. Definitely, all of this are in Baron-Renouard, living at the seaside, meticulous craftsman although his eyes are turned towards a larger horizon, and whose canvas, mosaics, stained glass window works appear to us as being full of enormous «plastic provender». In fact, one can say we find each of his works as : meticulously woven by hundreds coloured particles, knowingly elaborated and associated... This is an aspect of this job, no carelessness for more precise meaning, beyond the canvas and the net, which show a beginning of distances, this is also the mirror for who knows to find out his own internal landscape.

J. Rudel,  
Tokyo, 1997  
Emeritus Professor of Sorbonne  
*extract*

**O**nce, during a difficult time in my life, when friends have disappeared (as far as the true ones were there) and simple knowledge was gone, during a pause between two meetings of a international jury in Sofia, François Baron-Renouard accosted me, at a moment I was alone, and opened his note book where one could read : «How your friends can help you ?». I didn't remember what I could have answered him, but that was enough for me.

In fact, previously, the great French artist had lent a helping hand to Bulgarian art. And if we had to talk about Bulgarian presence in France, about outstanding exhibitions at the «Salon d'Automne», if we had to talk about cultural co-operation, we would have to quote incontestably and above all, the name and the work of Baron-Renouard, by the time when political and artistic prejudice accumulated for years have to be overcome. The strongest thing was that this exceptional painter, living in the world of his non-figurative painting, had seen through the feature of the well-defined Bulgarian art, plastic and spiritual values thanks to which we could compete with the European tradition.

Baron-Renouard was and remains for us a discovery as much as artistic as human, showing he lives his life by glorifying the spiritual fertility and fullness.

Svetlin ROUSSEV  
Former President of the Union of Bulgarian artists-painters  
*extract*

Space...

... **T**he exhibition title from itself reveals the dimension of Baron-Renouard's work. Because it is really an imaginary and endless space that the artist invites us to discover, a space vibrating with energy, with motions and colours.

Huge horizons, the craving for freedom, Baron-Renouard had known these on board of his flying fortress, during the forties. After that, the aviator got inspiration from new spirituality he had gotten to know through contacts he had made in North Africa, in the East, in the Far-East.

His work had always been guided by the model incarnated by his Grandfather Paul Renouard, painter and engraver of the beginning of century, by the taste for perfection and by a high curiosity for the world in which he lives.

The works shown at the Bénédictine Palace for the spring of the new millenium, are recent and reflect a very small part of this man's life, tireless, always ready for a flight. These paintings and tapestry-making, where Brittany colours and oriental lights are laid side by side, will be able to convey the strength and the love of life which had been animating him since the beginning.

Gérard Mathias  
Chief Executive Officer  
Bénédictine s.a.

## Bénédictine sponsorship : a genuine company culture

**I**n Fécamp, a town steeped in the Art and History of Normandy, there soars the spire of a truly unique building : the Bénédictine Palace.

The Bénédictine Palace, with its unusual, magical Gothic-Renaissance architecture, is an open invitation to the discovery of a historic tale and of a product. It is here that the Bénédictine and B & B liqueurs are produced, the export sales of which represent 95 % of production.

Sponsorship is an important part of Bénédictine's corporate culture. The first sponsorship actions date back to the 19th century when Alexandre Le Grand, the company's founder, decided to open the doors of his private collection and of his company to the public.

Since 1988, the Bénédictine Palace has also offered a stage for today's art. Old industrial rooms were transformed into a large 400 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition area for contemporary art. Over the last twelve years, more than 60 exhibitions have been held in the Bénédictine Palace. There is always something going on. There are two objectives to these exhibitions : display work from famous contemporary artists such as Miro, Niki de Saint-Phalle, Braque, Dubuffet, César, Calder... on the one hand, and give young talented artists access to a national audience.

Through its cultural policy, Bénédictine always helps children learn more about art. As part of the exhibitions held by Bénédictine, local children get a chance to meet with artists.

In 1997, Bénédictine was awarded the Télérama prize during the Corporate Sponsorship Oscars (Oscars du Mécénat d'Entreprise) organized by Admical.

# BARON-RENOUARD

Born in Vitré (Ille-et-Vilaine) in April 19th, 1918, Paul Renouard's grand-son, painter and engraver, officer of the Legion of Honour, of Order of Merit and of the Arts and Letters.

Graduated of Superior National School of Decorative Arts.

Apprentice of Legeult, Brianchon, Desnoyers.

Called up in 1939. - Air Officer, Campaign in North-Africa, Alsace and Germany, discharged in 1946.

Model-maker of the magazine A.C.E. (Art, Culture, Economy), 1946-1947.

Model-maker with Cassandre of the magazine Occident, 1947.

Set up the «Revue de la Danse», magazine of dance, Artistic manager, 1948.

Ex-professor Ranson and Monceau Academy, with Singier and Chastel.

## Prize & Decorations

Prize of the City of Venice, 1948.

1950 - Prize of the two-yearly of Menton (Prix de la biennale de Menton), 1957.

Oscar International of painting, Cagnes sur Mer, 1972.

Silver Medal of the «Society of incentive for Art and Industry», Gold Medal, City of Courbevoie 79, Vermeil Grand Medal of City of Paris.

Since 1949, has participated in more than 300 exhibitions (particular or collective) in France and abroad (Paris, Geneva, New-York, Tokyo, Mexico, London, Munich, Dallas, Teheran, Cracovie, Bagdad, Sofia, Dusseldorf, Beyrouth, San Marino, Shanghai, Teipei...)

Wall decorations since 1960 : Mosaics, stained glass window work, Tapestry-making.

## Museums

National Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

Museum of City of Paris.

Château de Lourmarin Foundation.

National Museum of Modern Art : Los Angeles, Sofia, Sursock Beyrouth.

Seiji Togo Museum, Tokyo.

Museum of Informal Art, Nakagawamura.

Museum of Rennes, Cagnes, Epinal, Saint-Maur, Dunkerque, Vichy...

## Bibliography

Arts, The Studio (London), Knowledge of Arts, (Aujourd'hui) Today, Prism of Arts (Prismes des Arts), Pittura Francese (Milan), The Parisian (Les Parisiens) (Tokyo), Academy of Paris (Ecole de Paris), Bolafi Catalogue (Catalogue Bolafi) (Italie), Look at the Contemporary Painting, The Contemporary World (Bordas), Encyclopaedia of the 20th Century Larousse, The Connoisseur (Connaissance London), Misué (Tokyo), The Violet Legion, The Half Century, Polytechnic Review 76 (Revue Polytechnique 76), Garden, Gallery of Arts 78 (Galerie Jardin des Arts 78), Who's Who since 79, The Tsukuru 79, Vision Art 81, The Nippon Bijutsu 81, Gallery of Arts, Feb. 84, Nagomi, May 84, The eye, The Official 93, The Europe Bulgaria 95, the Silk road 1966. In Paris, Artists' cafés and their legends 1999-2000. Publication Le Yomiuri Shimbun. The technique of art under the management of Jean Rudel, Elisabeth Brit, Sandra Costa, Philippe Piguet, 1999 Flammarion.

The abstract art of Michel Ragon, Michel Seuphor 1974, International Calendar of Fine Arts, Benezit, History of «Salon d'Automne» from 1903 until now, issued by Ides et Calendes 93, the abstracted Art by Michel Ragon, Michel Seuphor.

Exhibitions Calendar, Preface and texts : François Bergot, Roger Bouillot, Camille Bourniquel, Vadime Elisseeff, Tako Enna, Henry Galy-Carles, Waldemar George, Rio Yanagui, Lydia Harambourg, Eugène Ionesco, Milan Milanov, Jean-Pierre Missoffe, André Parinaud, Luis Porquet, Charles le Quintrec, Svetlin Roussev, Jean Rudel, André Verdet, Alexander Watt, Gérard Xuriguera, etc.

## CONFERENCE-FILM-TV

Academy of Paris, Contemporary Art, Phnom-Penh, December 1966, Space in the Modern Painting, Painting and Music - Unesco, Architecture, Industry, Plastic Arts, 86 - Arts of the streets, Dunkirk 88 - Symposium, Art of the City, Praga 87 - Defense of Plastic Arts, Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg, Jan. 91 - Many times in jury 89/90/91 «International Festival of Art Film». Film Exhibition Château Musée Cagnes-sur-Mer, Video Poignonec - Video for National Library Imago - Jean Desville's film.

President of «The Painting Department of «Salon d'Automne» former secretary of the «House of the Artists» Maison des artistes, the President of Honour of the Plastic Arts International Association, for Unesco, President of French Committee, Member of the French Commission for Unesco.