# The Eye of Horus: the Sculptures of Armen AGOP

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Escaping the Armenian genocide of 1915, Armen Agop’s family fled to Egypt. The birth of the artist in Cairo in 1969 would never have occurred without the “Flight to Egypt” episode whose religious connotation, prophetic, perhaps marks his search for the maintenance of life in stone. Here again, in Cairo, he studied sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts where he also became assistant. His work is rewarded with several international prizes, including the “Prix de Rome” in 2000. It is also in Italy that he lives and works today, in Pietrasanta (it is not invented). In addition to Armen Agop’s numerous exhibitions at international exhibitions, the third is being held in Brussels at the LKFF gallery under the title “Emergence”.

Armen Agop presents a set of sculptures, less than ten, mostly in black granite, some hanging on the wall and others on pedestals. Fixed but alive, they accept to be touched by the visitor, to participate in the moment of their meeting. The artist defines his pieces as “transcontemporary” in that the desire to create is part of the human species and that the works are loaded with experiences that are not limited to their time.

Contemporaneity is not here a historical classification but rather an experience, a presence that stands between the artist, the work and the visitor. A presence that the material possesses and with which the artist enters into relationship. The pieces of granite smoothed without being brilliant, with their clean lines that do not make them cold or foolish, seem to come from another star. There emanates from them a cosmic power that puts us in the face of what Roger Caillois, speaking of stones, called the “mysticism of matter”. The shape of the sculptures, sometimes elongated and aerodynamic, sometimes circular or oval, holds the celestial boat as the divine shield. We will remember the words of Master Eckhart, this great mystic quoted by Marguerite Yourcenar: “The stone is God, but she does not know that it is, and it is the fact of not knowing it that determines it in as a stone. The sculptures of Armen Agop are the betyles these “stones come from the sky and keep the property to move freely in the air,” as Caillois still described them. They provide a serene energy that transforms the gallery into an unusual zen space.

Whether it’s granite or bronze, Armen Agop chooses black. “Black is a force,” wrote Matisse. Moreover, an oval piece sculpted by Agop and placed on the wall is not unlike the black mirror painted by Matisse (Anemones in the black mirror, 1920), like a large pupil no longer reflecting anything. Armen Agop has removed the grains of granite, but the glitter of the stone remains, the tiny flecks that animate the inert by meeting our eyes. And perhaps it is still Egypt that has guided the choice of black as a positive and fertile value: “The Egyptian black was said kem, who gave Kemet, ‘the black earth’ (name of ancient Egypt) at the base of the term El-Kimya or alchemy, an operation which makes it possible to obtain the philosopher’s stone by the invariable passage from the Work to Black to the Work to the White, then to the Work to the Red “.

The smooth, smooth, polished granite does not give rise to a simple superficial surface sculpture. Here the stone contains an interiority that seems to flow through the point and the crest. Armen Agop inserts into his works sometimes a tiny peak overhanging the surface, sometimes an infra-thin suture, the crest, which project them into the possibility of an extension. The artist thus introduces disjunctive processes into the smooth form, letting it live in the imminence of overflow. Through this tiny self-transcendence, the works penetrate deeper into the spectator’s space, they also invite a reflection on temporality, that of the critical instant (peak, peak) in apparent immobility. It is our very precariousness that Armen Agop gives to see by including the index of an upheaval in the impassibility of the stone. The point and the crest here are traces of an unknown temporality, of a timeless origin that the artist relates to Egypt where he was born. Recalling that Egypt was called ‘black earth’ “because of the black, very fertile slime left by the Nile,” Annie Mollard-Desfour highlights the link that Pharaonic Egypt establishes between black and fertility, rebirth , “Values ​​personified by the deities with black flesh and by the black eye prolonged by a drop of the god of the sky and spirit of light, Horus”. Is not this a drop of the god Horus that Armen Agop would have received and transmitted in the tiny point of a black circle?

Emergence, by Armen Agop, LKFF Gallery, 15 White Street, Brussels, Belgium. Until March 30, 2018.