

J Young, *Moment*

Present and chaos

Paul Ardenne



J Young, one of the masters of contemporary Korean art, has a taste for the confrontation between man and nature. The frequent presence of a human-sized stone in the part-pictorial, part-sculptural compositions of this disciple of Lee Ufan are an indication that a work of art is more than a decorative object, it is a sign and a reminder of human presence at the heart of the world. It falls to art to express something beyond form.

Moment, a series of artworks begun in 2014, sees J Young take the more radical road of brutal confrontation. Sheets of metal painted smooth (the most recent examples sprayed in automotive paint shops) are literally attacked by the artist. Folded, stamped, sometimes scraped, deformed, as if subjected to sudden assaults, contrast with their initial appearance. This expression of disorder promotes the concept of mishap or catastrophe, in a perspective that would not be denied by Paul Virilio—a philosopher who believes that sooner or later, everything that is created exposes itself to abuse by circumstance. The same applies to paint, as seen by the destructured creations of *Moment*.

The title of the series itself refers explicitly to a brief moment in time, a short interval, an event. At any time and against all expectation, the perfect piece, an expression of human genius, is left damaged and broken, as if defeated. It is the uncompromising energy of nature, both physical and human, that uses jolts and unexpected movements, without logic, according to rules which can neither be codified nor normalized.

Moment – the poetics of *impact*.

Through the interplay of references in the work of J Young can be found certain touches of the work of John Chamberlain, an historical artist known for his exhibitions of elements of bodywork from cars involved in accidents. The same industrial origin of the paint, the same collision effect that deforms the surface of the metal. But do not be mistaken... J Young's quest is distinguished by its spiritual depth. Here, it is not a question of giving the onlooker the impression that chance alone—or mishap—determine the choices made by the artist. It is clear that in refusing to play God, he diminishes the importance of Man's role, of his own, and of ours. Each piece in *Moment* is a wake-up call, reminding us that claiming to have everything under control is illusory. Codifying the laws of physics is one thing, governing the result is quite another, it is much more complex and never guaranteed.



J YOUNG, *Moment*, panneau métallique bleu poinçonné | Courtesy Galerie Mo.J

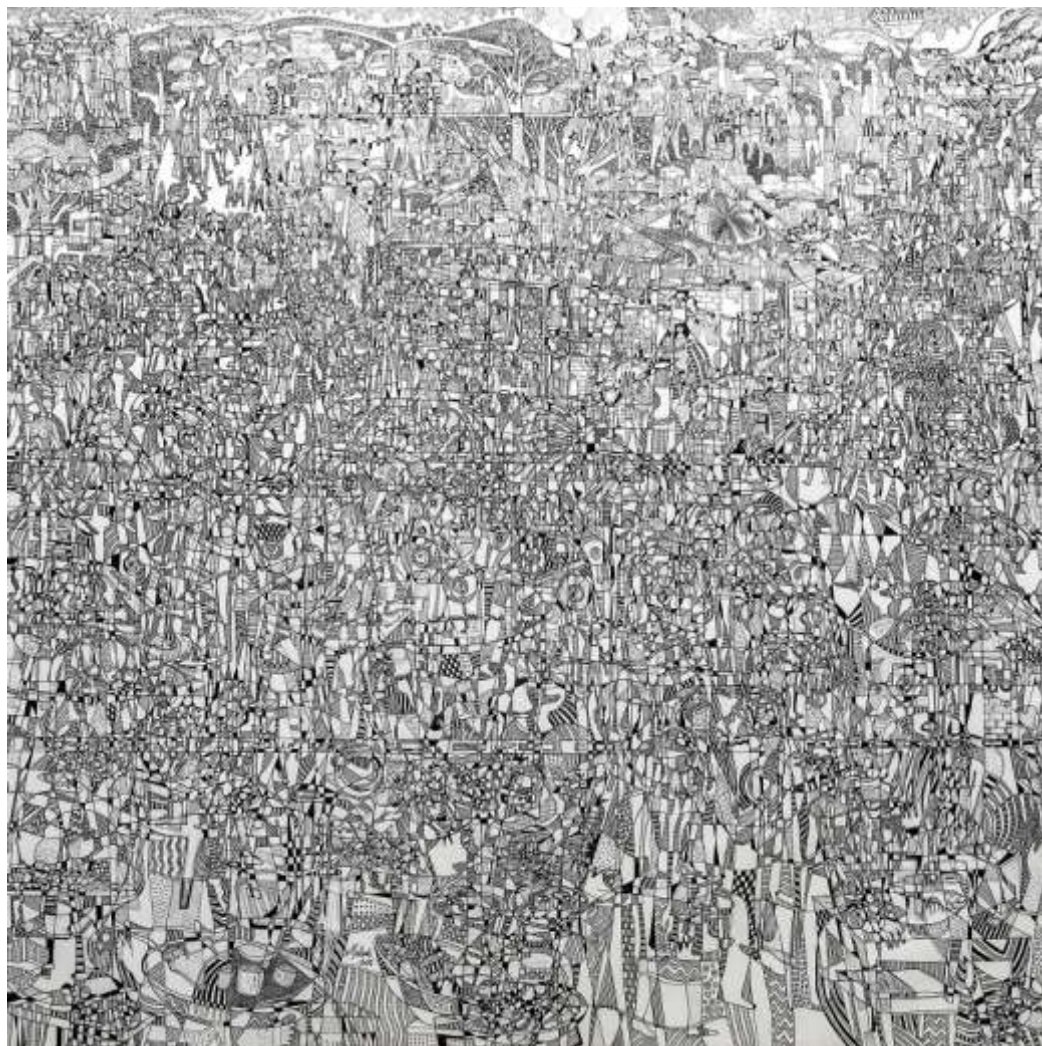
Moment, a series of highly expressive works of art full of barely-contained violence, is in its own way a representation of time: continuum and chaos, continuity but also discontinuity. Something develops perfectly, then an accident occurs, shattering the beautiful order of established reality. The art thus speaks of time—not of eternity, stable and ideal, but of rhythm, a temporality constantly affected by shocks, sudden impulses and disturbances.

The particular understanding of time highlighted by J Young can be accurately measured by comparing it to what emanates from the paintings of Congolese artist Houston Maludi, simultaneously presented on its Art Paris stand by the Mo.J Gallery.

While J Young regards impact as sacred, Houston Maludi delivers a representation of accumulation or sedimentation in his highly graphic canvas in black and white with a great deal of fine detail in ink. In *African Life 2*, Maludi makes full use of his graphic system described as “Quantic Symbiotic Monochrome Cubism”, capturing in a single moment an infinite number of scenes from daily life: people walking in the street, homes and everything that happens inside, trees leaning over roads, animals, moving vehicles, etc. All represented by

an accumulation of strata like a palimpsest, and which the onlooker can examine at leisure thanks to its transparency, gradually discovering transposed forms after patient study. In contrast, *Moment* by J Young is a vision driven back to a given moment, to the observation of an accident that calls into question all that had been settled.

Two different ways of understanding our relationship with time—reminiscent for Houston Maludi, and accidental for J Young. To each their truth.



Houston Maludi, *African life 2*, 2016
Encre sur toile, 100 x 100 cm, Signé et daté. N° Inv. HM1608018