

**GUY FERRER**

*Revelations*

FRONT COVER (DETAIL)

*Clown*

mixed media on canvas  
150 x 150 cm

RIGHT

*Bobineau*

oil on linen canvas mounted on wood  
75 x 55 cm





EVERARD READ

CAPE TOWN | JOHANNESBURG | LONDON

CIRCA

**GUY FERRER**

*Revelations*

31 March – 27 April 2017

## GUY FERRER

### A painting is like a poem\*

By Patrizia Rigoni

Guy Ferrer is never alone. Of course, his work as an artist is rooted in solitude and in the shoring up of permanent creation, but when you contemplate all his work, the first thing that rapidly springs to mind is that he is not alone.

Ferrer is not alone because he is completely immersed in the world, listening to its many voices. He is also not alone because, within those irresistible tensions of seeking, he is continually forced to live with questions and their unstoppable nature.

Ferrer is not alone because he is within the space in which he moves and the time that bears him. For an artist, space and time are not two simple concepts or easy abstractions: space and time are two living companions, always around him, behind him, and beneath his feet. They wake at the moment he does, and in a certain way they pursue him. Thus Ferrer is never alone, he is always CO.

CO is the title of the work which Ferrer has included in this important London exhibition. And I have decided to dedicate my introduction to CO. I would like to invite you sit down with me in front of this work, in order to read it together, just as one would with a poem, beginning with the title.

CO is a particle that combines, that unites everything with everything else. CO has antique origins, it comes from Latin, a nominal prefix, which in European languages remains the definitive link between one thing and another, something that transforms that which it connects.

In Italian there are hundreds of words that begin with CO, one would have to list them all to understand the extent of their beauty. Commencing with the first perhaps, one of the most important in our modern world 'communication' - the conjunction of phenomena that enable the distribution of information. To communicate highlights Latin expressions that are 'communis', in other words common to all, and 'communicare', meaning to make common, which implies the

participation of someone, the fact of agreeing with someone.

We can find the same richness of vocabulary in French. Similarly in English, where the definition of CO is 'acting, being or existing together'. Wikipedia has an abundance of explanations for the meanings of this particle: CO is a union, participation, simultaneity, assimilation.

So from this point of view, CO becomes a word of the future, because it aims to unite, not separate. CO replaces old divisions of knowledge and the fragmentation of disciplines of the nineteenth-century, with an idea of complex understanding, co-existent, co-hesive, co-laborative.

CO suggests, in the very idea of the word, the first instrument we use to communicate. And Ferrer knows this well, he moves well between words, his is a 'poetic art' - the urgent necessity of co-habitation, even Tolerance, itself a word that inspired Ferrer to create that mammoth work of nine sculptures, each one the form of a letter, the letters composing T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E – with its own religious and spiritual dimension. Nine letters for an all-round reflection on the destiny of humanity: within a symbolic dimension liberally gathering an invitation and an urgency regarding the vexatious problems of contemporary life. That is to say that Ferrer, as an artist, continues to pose the question of all questions, asking himself daily what is the great ethical responsibility of art – and also attempts to offer us a response.

And yet, let us stand in front of CO, to return to our analysis of the concrete nature of the canvas. CO is divided into two halves – even Ferrer's signature is divided in two, his central 'RR' forming a mirror image. It is as if we are in front of the pages of an open book.

There is a figure on the left and the drawing of an open vase on the right. The first CO, the first dialogue to be revealed is that between the artist and the shape, between

PAGE IV–V (DETAIL)  
*Bons Baisers*  
mixed media on canvas  
130 x 195 cm

LEFT (DETAIL)  
*Kibuyus*  
mixed media on canvas  
195 x 130 cm

PAGE 4 (DETAIL)  
*Co*  
mixed media on canvas  
130 x 162 cm

thought and object. The artist cannot be alone because he is in front of the shape that he sees.

The shape is not the real object, but rather the representation of it. Yes, of course, there is a vase as a container, a vessel, a receptacle that must hold something – but from where? From the earth and materiality? Or perhaps instead from the sky? What shall we put in this amphora with its very Mediterranean form? Oil? Water? Honey? Plant seeds? Or perhaps gusts of wind? Or simply imagination, which for an instant reorganizes our chaos and allows us to create a different order?

The shape of the vase is open, almost only a line, enough however to separate the space inside from outside, to establish what is included and what is excluded, how we divide up what interests us, that which the artist suggests we organize in terms of value, choice, importance.

Each of us can choose how to interpret that shape, and above all what we want to fill it with. This is only the first dialogue that speaks to us. But already it draws us in, it invites us to communicate with the work in its entirety. We are hooked. We are no longer so very far from Ferrer, if we look closely at this canvas. We are already together with him, sharing the same emotion. We share his doubt. Indeed, if we continue to ‘read’, a new dialogue emerges in each of the halves.

On the left, as we have said, there is a figure. A human figure, certainly, but it is the figure of an artist. The artist creates himself, designs himself. The traces that define him are black, thick lines, made with decisive brushstrokes, which do not allow for second thoughts. An almost oriental gestuality, like the brainwave of a Zen Master who sits contemplating a white page for months and then with a single line draws the form without once lifting his hand.

The same line makes this figure, rounded at the base, almost a shape in itself: the artist is in a dialogue with himself; the artist is his narrative, the artist *becomes* his narrative. His arms are a sequence of rings in a chain, the progressive concatenation of constructing oneself, of making oneself whole.

The first black ring is almost at the base of the painting, just like the amphora opposite. The identity of the artist is composed in the gesture of watching, of observing. It is almost impossible to separate his anatomy, as if it were simply corporeal, art and identity are fused, they are con-fused.

The gaze is ambiguous, curious, winking. There is the merest suggestion of a head covering (a Jewish skullcap?), something that adds a sense of moderation, of the ancient, of reverence and tradition. But still this is not all. There is another, fundamental, dialogue in the world of CO that we are traversing.

Ferrer is a man who is at ease with colour: his whole life he has manipulated and studied it. And this leads us to the third dialogue, no less vital than the other two: because the design of the artist is in black but the shape is in orange. So orange it is almost gold. So orange it is almost light. An orange laden with meaning, in front of that black, written face.

We look at the word and colour, and poetry and painting are merging. We search for and reflect the story of things with the things themselves, their poetic reach and chromatic illumination, through doubt and finally – at least for a short period of time, that which is allowed us – the order of things. Of the world outside us and the one within. Of the one that exists objectively and the one that we create, two dimensions that can never match, because our eyes, hands, and hearts choose what and how to make reality.

Between narrative and description, Ferrer’s art moves like all European painting, between the need to tell and the desire to describe. The painting is a white canvas, Ferrer has left its grain, its porosity untouched; everything is rendered essential, synthesized in the rigour of that confrontation between figure and shape, so that the space always remains to be defined, the possibility is left open, art can invent (and perhaps *must* invent?) every time.

We can all see, watch, listen. The canvas is naked because it has no other purpose; the form is open because it only establishes the idea of containment. Containing not the materiality of objects but their meaning, as in Rilke’s ‘melody of things’. *‘All division and error is due to the fact that men seek the common in themselves instead of seeking it in the things behind themselves, in the light, in the landscape, in the beginning and in death.’*

Ferrer confided in me that he considered changing the title of this work to call it ‘10’. And perhaps, by the time of this exhibition, he will have done so. One and zero, a vertical beginning and the roundness of the zero, affirmation and expansion. But above all the unique principle of human unity and the basis of our numeric systems: as if to say

a CO to infinity, a sort of fractal of CO, the principle of transcendence.

Because the more Ferrer pushes the earthly question, the more he enters it, the more he rises to the ether, he pushes beyond us, above us, into the hereafter. He breaks through the visible to search the invisible, to continually remind us that it exists, and to offer it to us, if we wish to understand it. In this way the threshold between painting and poetry is broken down, to demonstrate what we have missed, caught up in the superficiality that often drowns us.

Ferrer is never alone, chased by space and time like living souls in the cosmic dimension that co-ntains and com-prehends us all, even before we fall to earth as artists and individuals with a sense to discover, with a sense to fulfill. With that amphora which exists still in front of us like a mirror, with certainty and like a co-mpanion, like that which reflecting in our eyes as a ‘thing’ redefines us as human beings and calls us to a duty of responsibility.

Again, as Rilke writes: *And to lay the foundation for a work of art – that is, an image of deeper life, of our more than daily, always possible experience – we have to put both voices, the voice of this hour and the voice of a group of people within that hour, into a proper relationship and balance them.*

I am not convinced that ‘10’ is better than CO, but I understand Ferrer’s intention. I listen to him. I always like what he tells. Even more so when he confesses to me: ‘I always have many doubts, but I have one great certainty. There is always someone else with me. This is for sure’.

Who knows who he was thinking of, when he told me this, standing above one of his new works laid out horizontally, like a small field ready to cultivate and grow, with a still-loaded spatula in his hands.

But I am certain that within that ‘someone else’ there is a crowd of voices, a myriad of subjects, dead and alive, space and time, black words and golden colours, echoes of personal duties and collective sentiments, divinities and glances, earth and sky, animals and objects, seeds and breezes, falls and resurrections, that which is outside and that which remains inside, in conclusion the life that runs ahead us, the life that we need to hold on to.

**Patrizia Rigoni**  
January 2017

*Educational sociologist Patrizia Rigoni lives in Trieste, Italy and has published novels, poetry and short fiction, as well as several essays and autobiographical writings. Her work has received a number of literary awards. From 2000 onwards, with Azienda Parola, using Narrative Medicine methodology, she become involved in training practices designed for academic specializations for public bodies and private companies.*

*Rigoni has been the artistic director of the Festival de la rose - Livres, Musique et Vin for five years, and offers aspiring writers help towards the publication of their books. In 2011, she launched La Charge des Cent-Unes, which encourages dialogue between women entrepreneurs from various sectors. In 2014, she opened the École Sherpazade écriture, a writing school open to all.*

*\*Ut pictura poesis:* poetry is like a painting. The expression derived from the poet, Horace’s ‘Ars poetica’ is commonly used because the two art forms have similar rules; however for the Latin poet, the meaning was different. It signified that some poems and paintings can be understood immediately while others need to be observed with a critical eye, others need to be looked at close up, or looked at again, yet others should be observed in penumbra. Horace was not the only writer to compare painting and poetry, Aristotle and Simonides of Ceos did so before him. This is a clear sign that classical thinkers had immediately understood the strong connection between them, recognizing also the need that many artists have to express themselves in both genres, as words are not always enough to express the inexpressible and sometimes painting needs to be separated from the material. A human being who can express themselves in very different artistic fields can be considered lucky, as is one who simultaneously succeeds in deploying poetry and art.

\*Rainer Maria Rilke, *Notes on the Melody of Things* (1898) 37 and 21.



## A Quest for Revelations ...

*'Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.'* (Job 42.3)

Quoted to me one day by our much-regretted friend Gérard Barrière, this Biblical text is, I believe, a fairly good summary of the artist, that strange receptor encumbered with sensitivity, a reflector of his times, oscillating between intuitions and revelations.

Numerous things motivate the artist: a desire for fame or money, a thirst for recognition, his anti-conformity, etc.

As for me, and undoubtedly in addition to a little of all that, I seek above all to create instances of sharing.

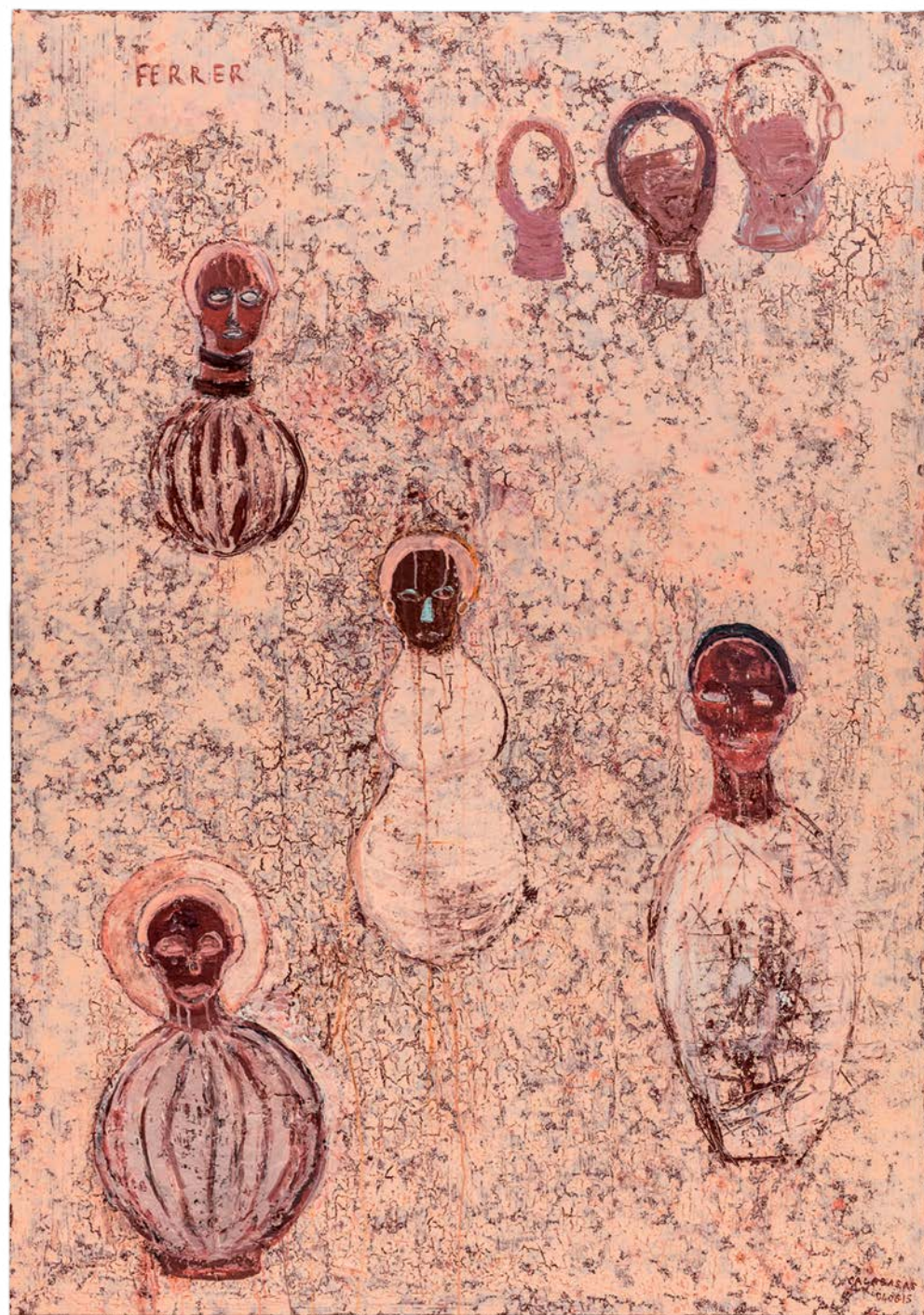
After all these years spent working in sculpture and painting, I am able to affirm that art is the most beautiful means that man has found to resonate with his fellow men, and perhaps to resonate with the creative principle ... nature ... a god?

To be an artist is to stand on the singular bridge between the beings that constitute art. Beyond the surface divides of cultures and civilizations, the emotion of beauty, of harmony—though so difficult to define — can act universally.

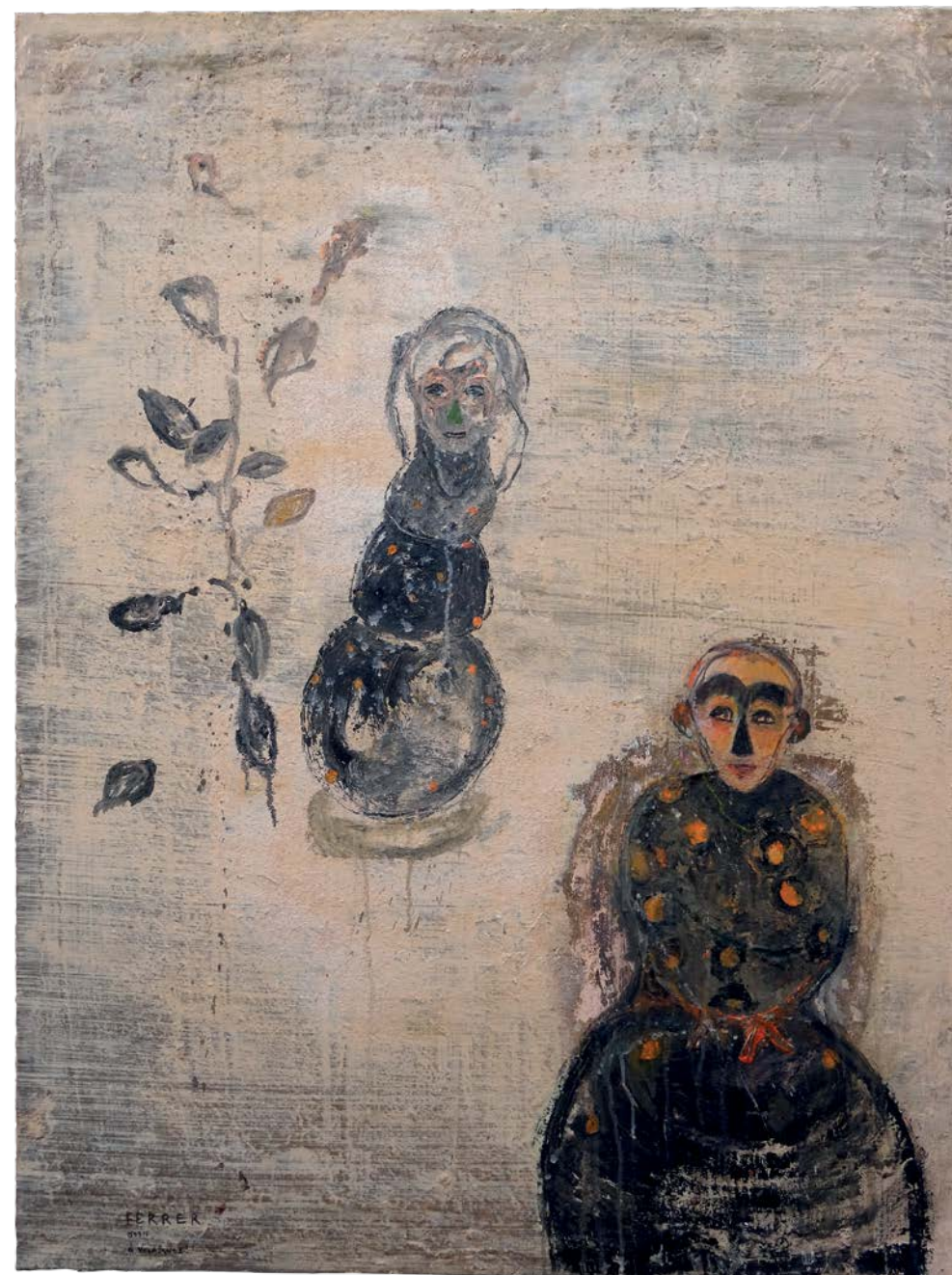
I work as a sculptor and painter in the way that others take to the road as nomads, without knowing exactly where they are going but sure that the road is the right place for them and trusting in their destiny.

I paint and sculpt paths to follow to find meaning – in life and death, in fullness and emptiness, in light and shadow, in our precariousness, in our eternity. Paths to share.

*Guy Ferrer*  
March 2017



*Calabasas*  
mixed media on canvas  
162 x 114 cm



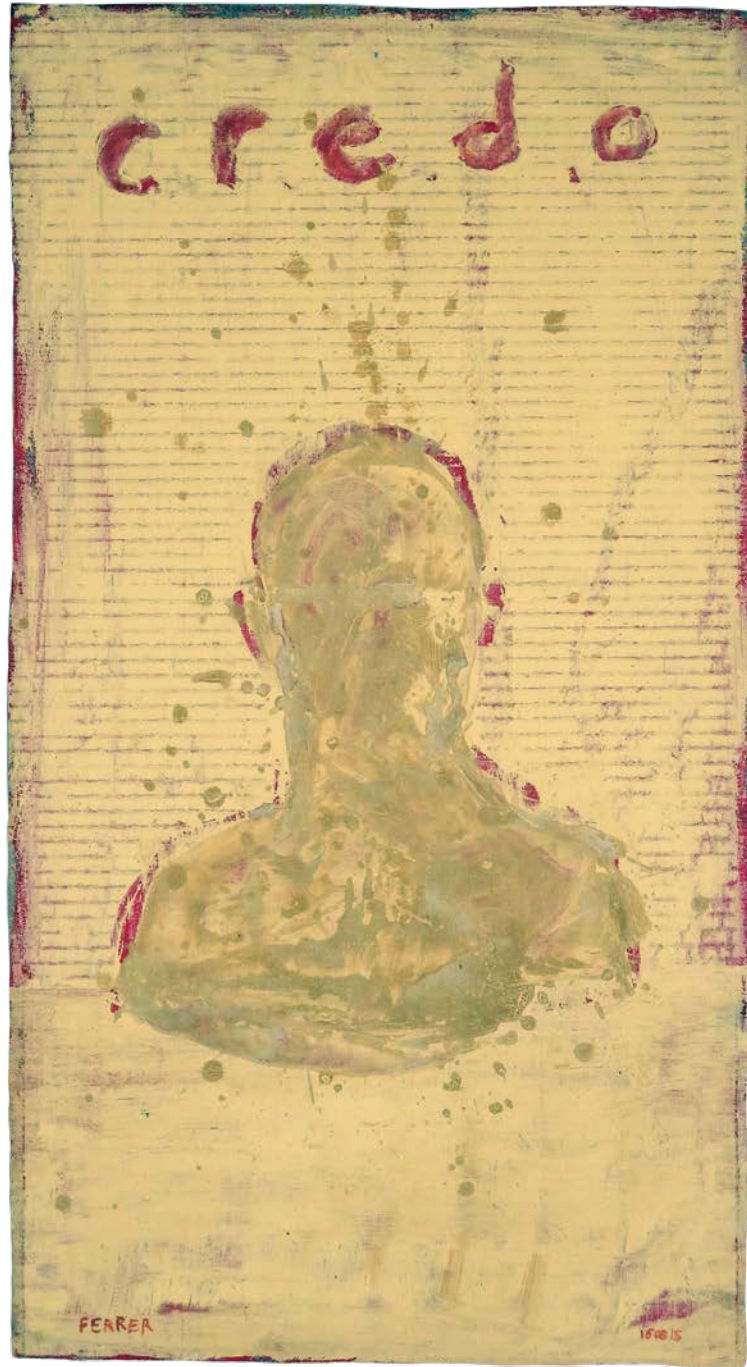
*A Velasquez*  
oil on linen canvas  
130 x 97 cm



*Clown*  
mixed media on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



*Penseur*  
mixed media on canvas  
130 x 162 cm



*Credo Rouge*  
mixed media on canvas mounted on panel  
70 x 37 cm

PAGE 9  
*Head 3*  
bronze  
70 x 45 x 19 cm





*Co*  
mixed media on canvas  
130 x 162 cm



*Kalao Man III Opera*  
bronze  
200 x 37 x 30 cm



*Domino*  
bronze  
75 x 17 x 22 cm



TOP  
*Bons Baisers*  
 mixed media on canvas  
 130 x 195 cm



BOTTOM  
*Bons Sentiments*  
 mixed media on canvas  
 114 x 146 cm



*Trois Rois*  
 mixed media on canvas  
 162 x 130 cm



*Kibuyus*  
mixed media on canvas  
195 x 130 cm



TOP  
*Passion*  
gold paint on tar paper  
78 x 88 cm



BOTTOM  
*Mina*  
acrylic, goldleaf and gutta on silk  
46 x 60 cm



*Voyant Or*  
mixed media, goldleaf on cotton fabric  
62 x 48.5 cm



*Prince*  
ink on hand-made paper  
21 x 15 cm



PAGE 16  
*Tete*  
ink on hand-made paper  
15 x 21 cm



ABOVE  
*Tau*  
mixed and lead on linen canvas  
130 x 97 cm



ABOVE  
*Secret Dialogue*  
 mixed media on paper  
 56 x 40 cm

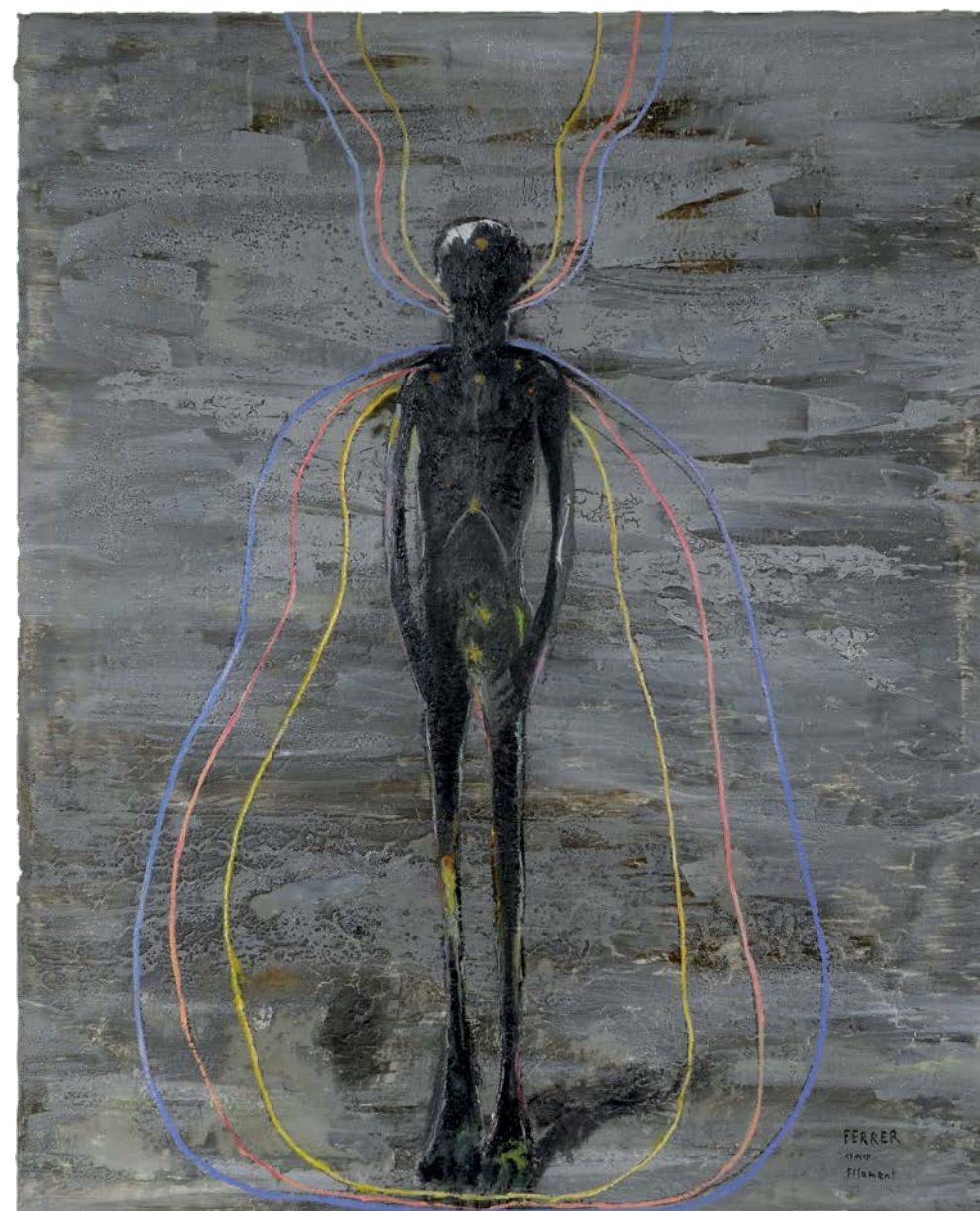
LEFT  
*Tribal*  
 mixed media on paper  
 44 x 41 cm



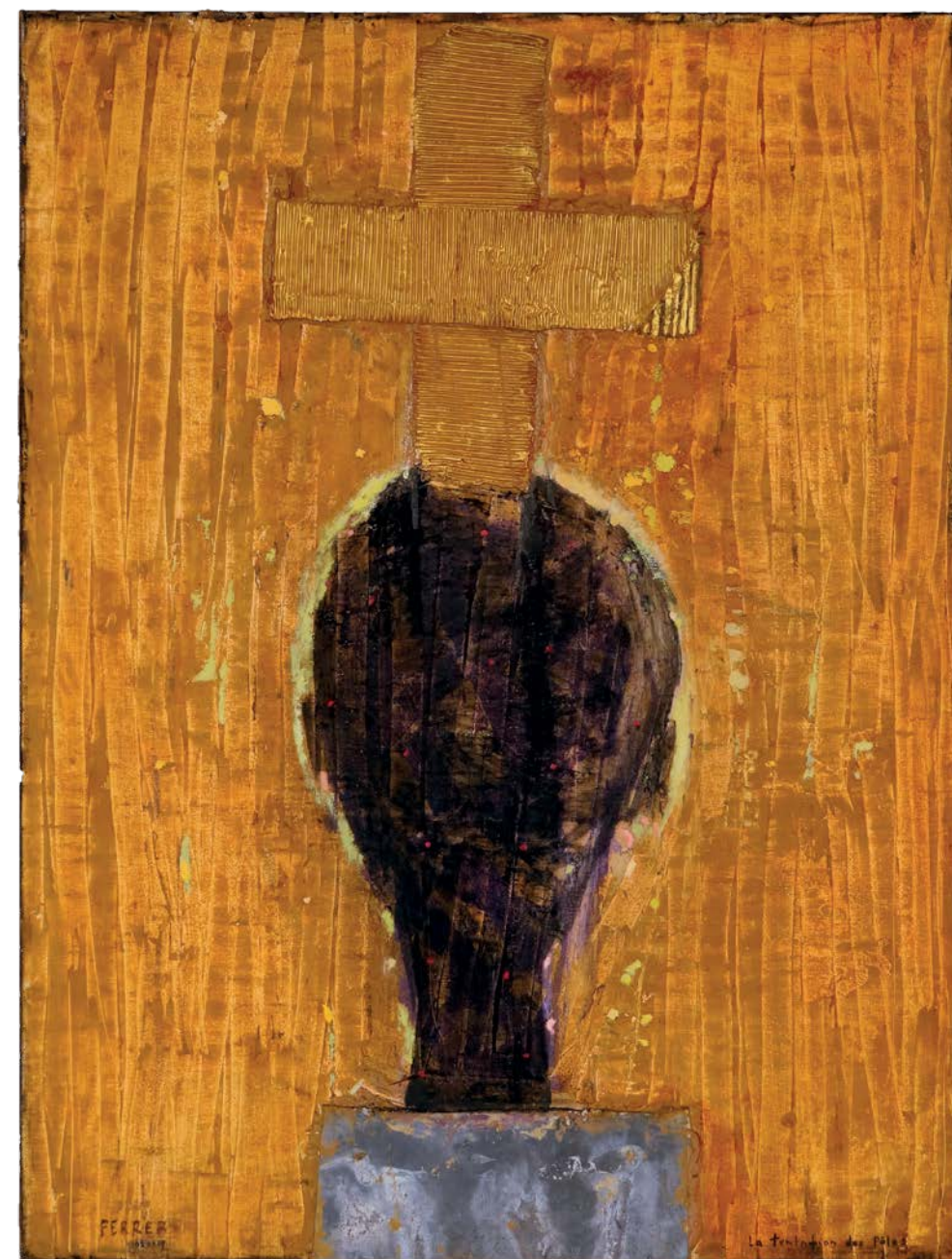
*Complicite*  
 bronze  
 56 x 42 x 42 cm



*Famille (fond gris-vert)*  
mixed media on canvas  
130 x 97 cm



*Filament*  
mixed media on canvas  
162 x 130 cm



LEFT  
*Titan*  
 bronze  
 204 x 59 x 47 cm

ABOVE  
*La Tentation des Poles*  
 mixed media and collage on canvas  
 116 x 89 cm



PHOTO: PASCAL LACOMBE

## GUY FERRER

(b. 1955, Algeria)

Guy Ferrer is French, of Catalan and Italian descent. Over the past thirty years he has developed an international reputation as a painter and sculptor, with exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world. In addition to painting and sculpture, his work also encompasses writing and architecture.

Ferrer has worked in Paris, Los Angeles and other international cities, including New York, Caracas, Lima, Beijing and Johannesburg where he has created temporary studios. In 2012, the establishment of his studio in French Catalonia marked his return to the Mediterranean.

Recent honours include a monumental bronze sculpture for the French embassy in Singapore and a large fresco for the French embassy in Bakou, Azerbaijan. The OECD

commissioned and permanently displays a large triptych by Ferrer entitled *Liberté-Egalité-Fraternité*.

*T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E* – a major sculptural work created in 2007 in response to contemporary religious tensions – has been widely acclaimed and displayed in France, Germany, the United States, Poland and the United Arab Emirates.

Ferrer's work is represented in private and corporate collections around the world. He has developed artistic partnerships with several companies including Lefranc & Bourgeois, Champagnes Nicolas Feuillatte, Champagnes Jacquart and Le Bon Marché in Paris where Ferrer's monumental bronze, *La Pourvoyeuse* and painting *Leaves and Life* are permanent installations.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 Solo exhibition  
Galerie Christine Colon, Liege (Belgium)  
Bronze sculptures - Retrospective plein air exhibition Jardin des Plantes des Capellans, Saint-Cyprien (France)]- Envie d’écrire, sourire et dessiner - Galerie Nathalie Gaillard - Private House, Paris (France)  
Gilles Naudin Galerie, Paris (France)
- 2016 Festival of Faiths, Louisville - Kentucky (USA)  
Dessins, estampes, sculptures - Galerie Chantal Melanson, Annecy (France)  
Beirut Art Fair – with SUD Gallery – Beirut (Lebanon)  
Collector - Banque Nationale de Paris, Paris (France)  
Collection Day – with Nathalie Gaillard and Sophie Deschamps – Espace Bosquet, Paris (France)
- 2015 Galerie Castang Art Project, Perpignan (France)  
T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E – Courts of the Medieval City of Carcassonne, Carcassonne (France)  
5\* Hotel de la Cité, Carcassonne (France)
- 2014 OR’aïsons Chantal Melanson Gallery, Annecy (France)  
T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E and NONLa Guerre Campo Santo and Chapelle de la Funeraria, Perpignan (France)  
T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E and NONLa Guerre Couvent des Minimes, Perpignan (France)  
Échos de Chine with Sophie Deschamps/Nathalie Gaillard and the Foundation Coffim Galerie 104, Paris
- 2013 De soie, de bronze, de papier Amarrage Gallery, SaintOuen (France)  
T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E n°3/8 perennial public installation Montpellier (France)
- 2012 Xun Contemporary Art, Beijing (China)  
Lille Art Fair with galleries GNG, CastanGalerie and Ricard Nicollet Lille (France)  
Xun Gallery, Shanghai (China)
- 2011 Palais des Rois de Majorque, Perpignan (France)  
Cheng Xin Dong Gallery with Alliance Française in Shanghai Beijing (China)  
Patrick Bartoli Gallery, Marseille (France)  
Lille Art Fair with CastanGalerie Lille (France)
- 2010 Racines Gilles Naudin Gallery, Paris (France)  
Salwa Zeidan Gallery, Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)  
Die Galerie, Séoul (South Korea)

- 2009 T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E et OEuvres récentes Die Galerie and Goethe University, Frankfurt (Germany)  
Fragiles Résistances Nathalie Gaillard Gallery, Paris (France)  
Elsewhere Brothers with French Institute of South Africa and Nirox Foundation, EverardRead Gallery, Johannesburg (South Africa)  
Face to face with Amarrage Assocation François Mitterrand Park, SaintOuen (France)  
Puls’Art Guest of Honour Le Mans (France)
- 2008 T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E n°2/8 perennial public installation crown prince’s court of Government Palace Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)  
Art ParisAbu Dhabi with Nathalie Gaillard Gallery Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)  
ArtElysées with Gilles Naudin Gallery Paris (France)  
Meeting with Colors with Pierre Dufrasne Gallery Magnanerie de Seillans (France)  
Time Witness Workshop of the Laundrette, Sarlat en Périgord (France)  
Territories SCAPE Gallery, Corona del Mar (United States)  
Triptych with Gilles Naudin Gallery Angers (France)  
African Influences Gilles Naudin Gallery, Paris (France)
- 2007 T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E n° 2/8 courtyard and museum La Monnaie de Paris (France)  
Art ParisAbu Dhabi with Nathalie Gaillard Gallery Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)  
American Northern Peruvian Cultural Institute (Lima) and Museum of Contemporary Art of Arequipa (Peru): double exhibition organized by the French Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and the French Alliances of Lima and Arequipa  
Golden Man AmbrogiCastanier Gallery, Los Angeles (United States)  
Faces / Landscapes Attis Art Gallery, Washington (United States)
- 2006 Hotel Meurice, Paris (France)
- 2004 Chapman University, Orange (United States)  
Le CorpsOutil Castle of SaintOuen (France)
- 2001 Musée Français de la Carte à Jouer, IssylesMoulineaux (France)
- 2000 ArtParis Chantal Melanson Gallery, Annecy (France)  
Shakan Gallery, Lausanne (Switzerland)

- Adler Gallery, Gstaad (Switzerland)  
M.M.G. Gallery, Tokyo (Japan)
- 1997 Kouros Gallery, New York (United States)  
Saddam Hussein Center, Baghdad (Iraq)  
ChacMool Gallery, Los Angeles (United States)  
France Embassy, Amman (Jordan)
- 1996 SignoHumanoSimbolo Museum of Contemporary Art of Caracas (Venezuela)
- SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
- 2017 Art Karlsruhe – with Die Galerie – Rheinstetten (Germany)  
Puls’Art, La Sculpture d’Aujourd’hui – Parc du Tessé, Le Mans (France)  
The M’dina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale, Malte  
Art Montpellier - with Castang Art Project - L’Arena, Montpellier (France)
- 2016 2016, Chinese New Year : Four European artists Art works exhibition - Xun Art Gallery, Beijing (China)  
100 Heads - Die Galerie, Frankfurt Am Main (Germany)  
Opening Group Show – Everard-Read / CIRCA Gallery, London (England)  
Outdoor Group Exhibition - Thermal Park Le Fayet, Saint-Gervais (France)  
Je vous **écris** d’un pays lointain – Galerie des Hospices, Canet en Roussillon (France)
- 2015 Mdina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale Malte Shijiazhuang Museum, Shijiazhuang (China)
- 2014 Affinités with Xun Art Gallery National Art Museum, Xiamen (China)  
EverardRead Gallery, Johannesburg (South Africa)  
Beirut Art Fair with Sophie Deschamps/Nathalie Gaillard Beirut (Lebanon)  
Beijing International Art Fair with Xun Art Gallery Beijing (China)  
Song Zhuang Art Center with Xun Art Gallery Beijing (China)  
Opening exhibition Castang Art Project Gallery, Perpignan (France)  
Les Flâneries d’Aix : Aix en OEuvres Aix en Provence (France)  
Parce que c’était lui, parce que c’était nous xhibition saluting

- Michel Bentolila Amarrage Gallery, SaintOuen (France)  
Libérations – Thermal Park Le Fayet & City Hall, SaintGervais (France)
- 2012 Royal Castle, Collioure (France)  
House of Catalanity, Perpignan (France)  
SainteAnne Chapel, Tours (France)  
Xun Comtemporary Gallery, Beijing (China)
- 2011 Biennale 2011, IssylesMoulineaux (France)  
Lefranc&Bourgeois Collection Musée de Tessé, Le Mans (France)  
Exhibition saluting Joaquim Vital Baudouin Lebon Gallery, Paris (France)  
Rituels de terre Pascal Lacombe (ethnography) & Guy Ferrer (paintings) La Flèche (France)
- 2010 Espace Roset with CastanGalerie Perpignan
- 2009 Sculpture Triennale Zamek Poznan (Poland)  
Mosaïques Troyes (France)  
Passions croisées Objects of ethnographic collection of Pascal Lacombe and works of Guy Ferrer  
CastanGalerie, Perpignan (France)  
Original lithographs: dream and revolution of artists and MMG Utsunomiya museum of art, Utsunomiya (Japan)  
Art Paris with Nathalie Gaillard Gallery, Paris (France)
- 2008 Art Sénat T.O.L.E.R.A.N.C.E sculpture Paris (France)  
Wind in the Branches monumental sculptures Guest of honour Paris (France)
- 2007 Art Miami with AmbrogiCastanier Gallery Miami (United States)  
Shanghai Art Fair – with AmbrogiCastanier Gallery Shangai (China)
- 2004 European Hospital George Pompidou with Art et Espoir Association Paris (France)
- 2002 The Force of the Spirit : 30 Artists against the disease of Alzheimer Pierre Cardin Space and Drouot Montaigne, Paris (France)
- 2001 Sculptors and the Animal Museums of Fukushima, Kirishima, Yamanashi and Mie (Japan)  
Salon Artuel Beirut (Lebanon)



PHOTO: CHRISTELLE CARLE

## EVERARD READ

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