



Hands off – Nature's gestures

“... (the hand) is the organ of the organs, the active agent of the passive powers”
Aristotle

Out in the countryside not far from Cuxac d’Aude there is an old almond tree. He’s survived at least one hundred winters, scrub fires, heat and drought, quite a character. I have drawn him many times sitting on a rock, a place that is very peaceful and quiet, breathing in the scents of the garrigue. One day I noticed a branch lying on the ground and I suddenly had this image of a hand. A hand with thyme growing around its fingers. An open hand, a friendly gesture, giving.

That was the start of an artistic adventure.

Much younger whilst studying art, drawing hands was one of the disciplines. I found them fascinating, and still do... because... they are a passport to life... they gesticulate, wave, show, caress, hit, give, heal, gather...

They were communication before speech, a phantom tongue, hands which relate, which tell stories. Rough like the bark of a tree, or smooth, delicate, almost transparent. They have a personality, they express our character.

Hands... our ‘feeling’ eyes. Without hands, where would we be ?

And yet it's our hands that interfere with Nature.

“The hand is essentially the organ of the mind, the medium of its expression...”

Sir Charles Bell, Scottish surgeon.

Nature... in the hands of Man ? Man whose hands spoil, tear, rip up, which poison...
On the contrary, it's us, the little dried up leaf that is likely to be blown away by the
breath of Nature.

“ If you play with fire you will get your fingers burnt ”... Old saying

For the theme “Hands Off - Nature's gestures”, I will create about 15 sculptures using
branches that I have found in the garrigue and maquis... Almond, genista, scrub oak,
box, azerolle, olive ...

Branches

Knotty trunks, branches fashioned,

Shaped by time

Limbs tortured by the wind

Empty soul linked to the origins of time

Shitao, chinese monk and artist, XVII century

The garrigue, a beautiful, secret garden, heavily scented and so mysterious. The
hiding place of ten thousand treasures. You delight in spending time in our midst, it's
your play ground, but at the same time we are your rubbish bin, a dirt track for bikes,
a washing line for discarded plastic, a graveyard of wrecked cars... Why ? Don't you
notice, don't you care ? It's such a fragile place, we suffer under Mans presence, there
are threats from invading plants and animals, climate change...

Spare a thought for us...

Make a gesture for Nature

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