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SYMONDS, PEARMAIN, LEBON
IRON LADY
OPENING
FRIDAY 28th APRIL
EXHIBITION
29.04.2017 - 17.06.2017



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First, rose with bright bergamot highlights calls freshness to mind, but this floral can't hide its capriciousness. Aldehydes are accompanied by fragrances of rose and jasmine. The aldehyde note is now surrounded by pelargonium and rose absolute, which somewhat softens the sharp metal note of the original composition, ending with a comfortable combination of oak moss, vetiver, musk and balsamic notes. The lily of the valley is very pleasing, the rose light and not heavy-handed: there's a soft powderiness, but when you close your eyes you are also reminded of that iconic green creation, Vent Vert (it shares notes of muguet and rose, as well as peach, with that Balmain classic). Wet mossy notes, geranium – and a blink-and-you'll-miss-it hit of Lapsang Souchong smokiness after it's been spritzed. Then – just like a summer's morning when the temperature climbs – those floral notes start to open, and warm the fragrance up. The fragrance of aldehydes is pure and fresh, and reminds one of the odor of clean linen just brought into the house from the fresh frosty air. An unexpected middle arises: oak moss, vetiver and musk quickly take over, setting up the deeply quixotic finish.

Inspired by the French avant-garde, the classic fragrance of Rive Gauche was designed by Yves Saint Laurent to show in scent the independent and unpredictable spirit of YSL Rive Gauche Prêt-à-Porter. The iconic Chanel N°5, of the Right Bank, is the quintessential symbol of haute couture, the embodiment of restraint & maturity, the bottle's stopper, cut like a diamond, inspired by the geometry of the Place Vendôme.

For Iron Lady we synthesised 50% Rive Gauche 50% Chanel No.5
Fragrance conceived in collaboration with Martin McGeown

The Speaking Body

I would say that the real is the mystery of the speaking body, the
mystery of the unconscious

Jacques Lacan

[...] we have not only passed from prohibition to permission, but to incitation, intrusion, provocation, and forcing. What is pornography but a fantasy that has been filmed with enough variety to satisfy perverse appetites in all their diversity? There is no better indicator of the absence of sexual relation in the real than the imaginary profusion of the body as it devotes itself to being given and being taken.

Jacques-Alain Miller

When asked if I might provide a short text to aid the contextualization of this Symonds Pearmain project I was in the midst of reading Richard Leeman's essay 'Cy Twombly's Speaking Body' in the catalogue of the current Twombly exhibition at the Pompidou in Paris in which the French art historian references Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic notion of the 'speaking body' and Jacques-Alain Miller's 2014 proposal of this as the theme for the Tenth Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis in Rio 2016.

Lacan's provocative statement that 'the real is the mystery of the speaking body' and Miller's proposal seemed immediately to lend themselves to the provocations unleashed by Symonds Permain project, a project which engaged a performative critique of the fashion system involving a promotional film and billboard image advertising a putative perfume provocatively named The Iron Lady, and the design of a garment collection and fashion show entitled "Haute Militaire 2017"; a project which seems to me to be an attempt to loosen capital's inflexible grip on the fashion world and let the infernal treadmill of its seasonal cycle of production and exchange give way to the liberating jouissance of aesthetic performance.

Roger Cook
April 2017