

POL TABURET – THE BURDEN OF PAPA TONNERRE

29.03.25 – 13.07.25

Can a scream that erupts from the depths of our being become proof of our existence, saving us from an endless fall into the depths of the abyss of life? What if our voice fails us, or it is never heard? Where is one's own place when there is none – fleeing from placelessness?

Pol Taburet explores the architecture of our present, traces the frequencies of the soul and sends us on a transcendental journey whose sound culminates poignantly in the silence of nothingness. Resonating bodies as the burden of their conditioning of torments, fears, desires and dependencies. Scream, scream, scream – dark silence.

Papa Tonnerre is the protagonist and title of Taburet's virtuoso transmedia production at the Schinkel Pavillon, part of a trilogy of exhibitions. *Oh, If Only I Could Listen* is currently on view at the Pabellón de los Hexágonos in Madrid, and the presentation for the Bienal de São Paulo is in preparation. Taburet interweaves different media such as painting, drawing, sculpture as well as sound into a scenographic intervention, creating an immersive experience. With an address that is not merely metaphorical, Taburet offers a truly multi-sensory experience. To what extent can an image penetrate our reality – become the image of our present? And can sculptures be alive? Perhaps by moving around them, transforming our perception into a kind of internal film in which we can find ourselves as actors?

The appearance of Papa Tonnerre may be determined by the imagination of those who encounter him as a figure born mute, punished with the knowledge of the secrets and guilt of others. How much knowledge of the world can people bear, and what happens when they cannot? The work is based on a fable-like story by Taburet, inspired by the linguistic structures of Creole, which tells of Papa Tonnerre's struggle for his voice in dialogue with occult forces. He is warned of the moment when he will receive his voice and be cursed by those who have entrusted him with their secrets. Those who judge him to live in damnation, never to be heard again.

The Berlin exhibition opens with this scene of condemnation. It is depicted by means of furniture reminiscent of that used by authorities. Universal, expressionless and here in a monumental form that refers to systems whose logic is to judge life. They can obviously become a labyrinth from which there is no escape or in which one can achieve self-determination. The heavy burden of life seems to be represented in all the sculptures cast in bronze, as here in the birds present. They convey a supra-temporality of hierarchies and their perversion of controlling and punishing bodies. Taburet visualises the unspeakable, the unexhibitable and the unforeseeable.

Taburet takes possession of the architecture of the Schinkel Pavillon and appropriates it for the staging of his exhibition, which permeates time and space. The view outside is blocked by felt-covered walls that almost swallow the sound in the room. The orthogonal shape of the room, all the more present, becomes the stage for an artistic interweaving of different media. Taburet merges narrative pictorial spaces with the narratives in the exhibition space.

In the new series of large-format paintings interwoven with his presentation, bodies and spaces become the scene of psychological emotions in their distortion, fragmentation and intensification. In Taburet's reference to Christian iconography, the faces are characterised by barely discernible individual features, yet they have an expression as if they were in intermediate worlds. The gazes freeze and the flashing faces seem in many ways monstrously frayed. The constellations of figures are set in dark pictorial spaces, with an emphasis on the fragile and vulnerable. The backgrounds of the supposedly dark walls become large fields of colour, monochrome grey to black surfaces, when viewed over a longer period of time. Basic geometric forms are transformed into energetic fields of association. Clear edges cut razor-sharp dividing lines into the atmospheres that Taburet emotionally composes. Black, with its history of symbolism, becomes the backdrop for dramatic scenes of power, control, oppression, heteronomy, fear and grief. Taburet pushes the creative potential of colour or non-colour to its tolerable limits. Sensory stimuli, orientation and legibility are subjected to pictorial provocation. Taburet ingeniously draws on a history of painting that he simultaneously revises and rewrites.

The sacred and the ritual emerge in their momentousness, unfolding their spiritual potential in every corner of the paintings. Dressed in universally recognisable clothing, the figures become carnes of communities that are nevertheless marked by loneliness and betrayal. The occult breaks through, whether in the white robes of a witch as a bringer of salvation, melting with energy, or in the magical headdresses of other protagonists. A body sinks into a white tablecloth, which becomes a recurring prop and sign of a threatening innocence.

Taburet impressively collages a multitude of painterly influences into his canvases, whose themes become resonant bodies of our present. Influenced by popular culture, from fashion, music, TV shows, cartoons and comedy to poetry and film history, but above all biographical experience, he creates a unique artistic expression. Taburet describes his grandmother's family roots in the Caribbean and it's interconnectedness with a variety of cultures as a major inspiration. Taburet says: 'I want to use this history because it's an open door to collage and recomposition, and because it's preexisting. [...] I collage a lot of things.'

A large number of similarly designed bronze heads, their mouths distorted and closed, seem to represent a collective of speechlessness. They form the prelude to the second part of the exhibition on the lower floor. It is a poignant visualisation that suggests an otherworldly communication. In their arrangement, they seem to observe the viewer, fixing them with a terrifying gaze. Another sculpture embodying death also appears here, which Taburet calls Hunter and whose mere presence visualises the fear of life.

Not far away, lithographs take up the theme of the hunt, a leitmotif of the exhibition. Driven, fleeing or fighting for their lives, the creatures between human and animal seem on the verge of collapse, trapped in the forecourt of hell. In Taburet's words: 'They're stuck in some kind of theatre on earth where the gods come to play.' The formal language, characterised by improvisation and automatism, resembles an act of liberation. Yet the images confront us with brutal states of powerlessness and inferiority. The creatures' existence oscillates between abstraction and figuration, documenting a struggle between nightmare and reality. Their fate becomes a representation of the unrepresentable.

In Taburet's work, the senses of sight and hearing become instruments of knowledge. His artistic work reflects psychological and physical torments, past and present, that refuse to be ignored. He experimentally mobilises a multifaceted perception that, in its decentralisation, corresponds to our present.

– Jana Baumann

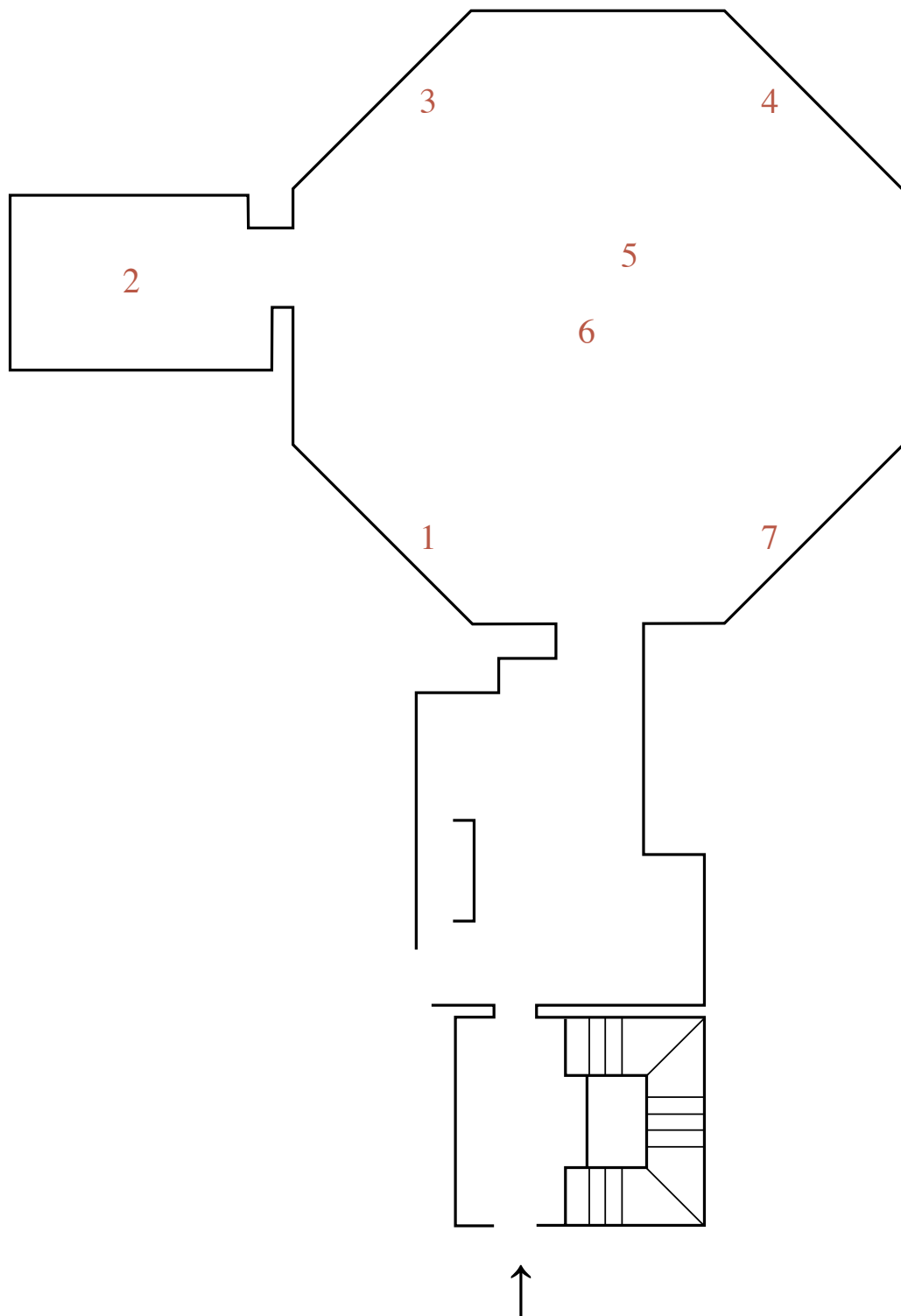
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DOWNSTAIRS



1. Pol Taburet
Because he spoke, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 200 x 200 cm

2. Pol Taburet
Papa tonnerre's tales, 2025
 lithograph
 group of 12
 37 x 47 cm (each)
 edition of 90 plus 20 artist's proofs

3. Pol Taburet
In the beam's eye, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 200 x 200 cm

4. Pol Taburet
Soldier, 2025
 bronze
 148 x 35 x 30 cm
 edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs

5. Pol Taburet
And we all danced on the bully's beat, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 200 x 200 cm

6. Pol Taburet
Papa, 2025
 bronze
 151 x 30 x 30 cm
 edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs

7. Pol Taburet
Crawlers and monkeys, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 200 x 200 cm

8. Pol Taburet
To hide, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 46.5 x 66.5 cm

9. Pol Taburet
To curse, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 46.5 x 66.5 cm

10. Pol Taburet
To meet, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 46.5 x 66.5 cm

11. Pol Taburet
My Dear II, 2025
 bronze
 120 x 64 x 63 cm
 edition of 5 plus 2 artist's

12. Pol Taburet
Tarred and feathered, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 230 x 230 cm

13. Pol Taburet
To tell, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 46.5 x 66.5 cm

14. Pol Taburet
The nest, 2025
 bronze, wood
 166 x 81 x 93 cm

15. Pol Taburet
Mother was incandescent that night, 2025
 acrylics, alcohol-based paint and oil pastel on canvas
 230 x 230 cm

UPSTAIRS

