

ATELIER PIERRE CULOT



This time, Imagicasa takes you to the studio of the Namur-based Pierre Culot, one of Belgium's greatest artists, in his own home and studio. Most of the creations of this sculptor and landscape painter are still intact. Today, the Brussels atelier presents an unparalleled retrospective of his work since his death in 2011.

One of the greatest European ceramists of the post-war period, Pierre Culot created work that lived thoughtfully on the border between art and functionality. From the 1970s, sculpture became more important in his work and his art has been shown at the Stedelijk Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Palais de Tokyo. We would like to take you through his story. The artist grew up in Namur and from his adolescence showed an interest in the world of antiquity and the arts. He trained at the Atelier de Céramique in Maredsous. He continued his studies with Charles Leplae at the École nationale supérieure d'architecture et des arts décoratifs de la Cambre in Brussels. He then trained with Antoine de Vinck, a famous post-war Belgian ceramist, and perfected his skills with the potter Bernard Leach in Cornwall in the United Kingdom. Not much later, in 1962, he set up his first studio in Brussels and soon began collaborating with Sylvie and René Baucher-Feron.





He was not only a plastic artist, but also a landscape painter, designer and even collector. In his large collection we find works by Robert Deblander, Elisabeth Joulia, Antoine de Vinck and Piet Stockmans, among others. During his lifetime, he also exhibited them in the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels, and in the mid-1970s and 1990s a number of museums outside the country, such as in London and Amsterdam, devoted monographic exhibitions to the artist. As a ceramist, Pierre Culot received many international awards. However, he avoided confining himself to one discipline and opened himself up to sculpture, an art form that became increasingly important in the course of his career. In 1973, the artist was awarded the Belgian Jeune Sculpture prize. A much sought-after landscape architect, he has also designed numerous private gardens and public sculpture gardens.

Today, Pierre Culot's house, his garden and his workshop are part of the Atelier Pierre Culot. Located 45 minutes from the Belgian capital, it is always open by appointment. Since 2016, Joseph Culot breathes new life into his father's home and works. Together with two friends and associates, Dimitri Jeurissen, founder and creative director of

the graphic agency Base Design, who works as a consultant for institutions such as MoMA in New York and companies such as Silversquare, which offers coworking spaces, and Arnaud Van Schevensteen, creator of the project, Joseph Culot keeps his father's memory alive. The aesthetic approach of the current Atelier Pierre Culot is deeply influenced by his parents, who are also artists. 'My mother, now 88 years old, still creates everyday things because for her, art is everywhere. I too love tradition, but if I have to abandon it for certain reasons, I don't hesitate,' says Joseph Culot.

ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM

His collection consists mainly of wood and fire art (vases in ceramic, glass or metal objects) and design (utensils, furniture, tables and lamps since the 1960s). In Belgium and during their travels, Miche and Pierre Culot collected ceramic objects: plates, pitchers, bowls, cups, dishes and bottles. The artist's idea of building a collection took shape as the increasingly numerous pieces piled





up on the shelves. The furniture includes works by the ceramists Jean and Jacqueline Lerat, Yves Mohy, Robert Deblander and Elisabeth Joulia. Culot also acquired creations by Michael Cardew, several bottles by Bernard Leach and porcelain pieces by the Australian Hanssen Pigott. Here and there, these works stand alongside ridge tiles from Picardy, some Strebelles, a few Art Deco columns, and ceramics by Claude Champy. The vintage objects that are still available are in great demand by specialists and enthusiasts at auctions; it is a visit to the haven of his worldly knowledge.

Since 1964, when his father Pierre died, not much has changed in the studio and the main house. This wonderful place with a garden is surrounded by sculptures made by himself, where the relationship between function and form in the design pieces is essential. 'I myself find a lot of inspiration in my parents' work. Especially with my father and therefore I am only too happy to continue his legacy,' we hear from Joseph Culot. Natural materials such as clay, stone and wood are used. Colours are also essential in the designs, depending on the occasion and the mood. But white, green and blue are mixed together. He also finds it very interesting to

work with (landscape) architects and designers to open up possibilities. Currently, they are finalising a collaboration with Antwerp's Graanmarkt 13. 'They are very open-minded, I like that. Some of the barrels we make have been displayed in the two-star restaurant 'Le chalet de la Forêt' in Brussels.' His inspiration comes from everywhere, but a great example of him is architect Charlotte Perriand. The way she worked with wood, took pictures during her time in Japan, is something that reminds him of his mother's work. Nature is another of his great sources of inspiration. A stone on a beach, a deserted bench in a park, the shape and the drawing of a piece of freshly cut tree trunk that fell after the last winter storm, can give him a lot of inspiration. But talking to friends, sharing ideas and

concepts, going back to your studio, trying things out, starting again, sometimes getting a result that disappoints you. According to Joseph Culot, you learn from everything.

In short, Pierre Culot's art is a blend of centuries-old pottery tradition and extraordinary and recognisable creativity, which makes him a cross-fashion artist. In our opinion, he represents the essence of the word 'timeless'. 🌿 (Text: Elke Aerts)



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