Axel Vervoordt Gallery





Resilience Pierre Culot & Tsuyoshi Maekawa

September 30 – November 25, 2023

Terrace Gallery

Axel Vervoordt Gallery is pleased to present Resilience, an exhibition at Kanaal's Terrace Gallery that places the work of the Belgian ceramicist and sculptor Pierre Culot (Malmedy, 1938 – Incourt, 2011) in dialogue with recent paintings by the Japanese artist Tsuyoshi Maekawa (° Osaka, 1936).

Although Culot and Maekawa never met, striking conversations and correlations arise when viewing the artworks together. Both artists have a profound admiration for materiality. Their distinctive approaches display an overwhelming energy and never-ending urge to give life to matter. They created art out of total freedom, without any dogma or scholarly academism. The title of the exhibition takes direct inspiration from the artists' expressive oeuvres, and the word's physical and metaphysical meaning. Maekawa aims to heal the wounds of post-war Japan by stitching his burlap canvasses, whereas Culot's monumental clay sculptures stand silently like sanctuaries, or walls, while conjuring opposing notions of embracing or defending the space they occupy.

Pierre Culot was a Belgian artist who wanted to build a bridge between British, Japanese, and French traditions. Culot saw nature as the sole generator of life and beauty and he considered earth or clay as his primary material, forming the heart of the process. His works evolved from basic forms and shapes, such as bowls, plates, and jugs, to more daring, elaborate forms shifting beyond functionality towards architecture. His works are marked by monumentality and freedom, but overall, by a love for materiality.

Working with Bernard Leach, Culot discovered the traditions and finesse of Japanese ceramic art. During trips to Japan, he was inspired by the gestural approach to ceramics, marked by fingerprints, scratches, and edges pressure-welded into what appears to be unfinished shapes. He abandoned round shapes in favour of square and rectangle. In most cases, he worked with 'slabbing', which is attaching slabs of clay together by guillochage, a robust technique that allowed him to create large pieces.

Resilience presents a selection of works from the early 1990s: ten huge vases, partly glazed. These large vases embody proportions similar to a human torso. "They are the affirmation of my permanence," Culot said. He added a touch of dark green or grey-green glaze to the edge of a vase or to its interior, achieving an unexpectedly decorative effect of dripping paint. He paid considerable attention to the edges, which gives a perceived sensitivity to the two planes.

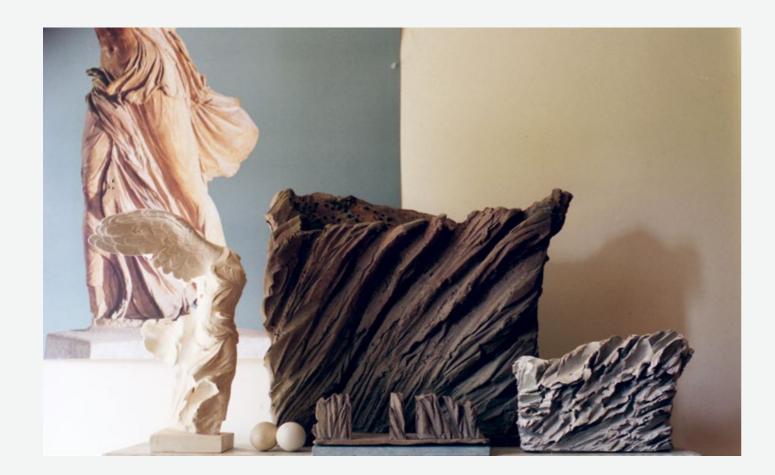
The idea of building sculptures by extrapolating his pots was a logical next step. In 1990, Culot presented his first "Homme debout" (Standing man), tall quadrangular stoneware works combining several hollowed-out, glazed elements designed to accommodate plants. The exhibition includes one of these monumental sculptures.

According to Rudi Fuchs, "They are objects of impressive craftmanship, developed in a vivid and contemporary artistic understanding of form, material, and process. Though when we see their strong and compelling presence as objects, it becomes irrelevant whether they are art, craft, or both. What is important, however, is that they are pottery, because Pierre Culot is one of those rare artists who has been able to prevent pottery from slipping into futile preciosity, and to give this craft back its ancient nobility"1.



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The exhibition also presents three capitals, or chapiteaux, produced in 1993. These sculptures—with no underside—are made of terracotta struck with a piece of wood, a very primitive technique related to African traditions. They are made of grey clay, coloured with chromium oxide, and influenced by cuneiform writing executed with sticks. During the process, Culot and his assistant Pascal Slotmakers saw the resemblance with Greek pleated garments and made the comparison with the Winged Nike of Samothrace, the masterpiece of Greek sculpture now in the Louvre.



Throughout a career spanning many decades, Tsuyoshi Maekawa, a former Gutai member, has never stopped working and continues to use his sewing machine as a medium to suture his canvasses resulting in woven paintings. The act of stitching and bending canvasses into folds and pleats resembles a form of therapy. He used his art to heal the wounds of the war, not to reveal them. Even at the age of 87, Maekawa returns to his studio daily with the same drive for creativity. The exhibited recent works are being shown to the public for the first time.

Maekawa returns to his preferred burlap material for its raw, rough texture. Made from hemp fibres, he appreciates this humble and ubiquitous material that was used as bags for rice and grains. He focusses on the material composition of the artwork, not on its presentation. He incorporates sewn, wrinkled, and twisted waveforms in canvasses airbrushed with acrylic paint, exploring the material's infinite possibilities.

Often compared to the work of Lucio Fontana—for his sculptural investigation of the canvas —and to Alberto Burri—for his love for burlap sacks—Maekawa, faithful to the Gutai philosophy, refuses to be compared to other artists. "I have been creating works for over sixty years now. I think I have concentrated on exploring matter. In particular, I have been persistent about investigating cloth and experimenting with it."2

Resilience is one of the first major exhibitions featuring Pierre Culot's work following the artist's death in 2011. The exhibition coincides with the publication of a recent monography, Pierre Culot. 1938-2011 (Mercatorfonds, 2023). In the 1970s, he had solo exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and V&A London, Palais de Tokyo in Paris among others. Maekawa has been part of the gallery's roster for many years.





Pierre Culot *Homme debout* (Standing Man- Stele - 3 elements) ca. 1990 Stoneware, partly glazed 158, x 66 x 23 cm A0823.130





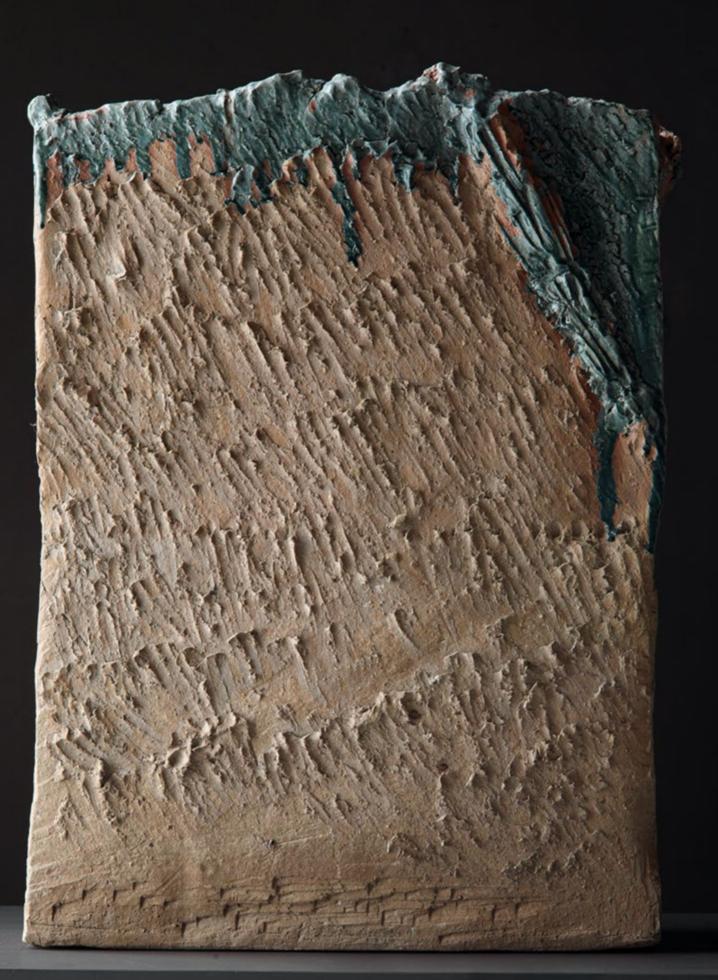
Pierre Culot Vase with base, ca. 1990 Stoneware 78 x 68 x 20 cm A0823.122 Pierre Culot Vase, ca. 1990 Stoneware, glazed 65 x 72 x 25 cm A0823.127





Pierre Culot Vase, ca. 1990 Stoneware 64 x 61 x 20 cm A0823.128 Pierre Culot Vase, ca. 1990 Stoneware, partly glazed 60 x 58 x 24 cm A0823.129



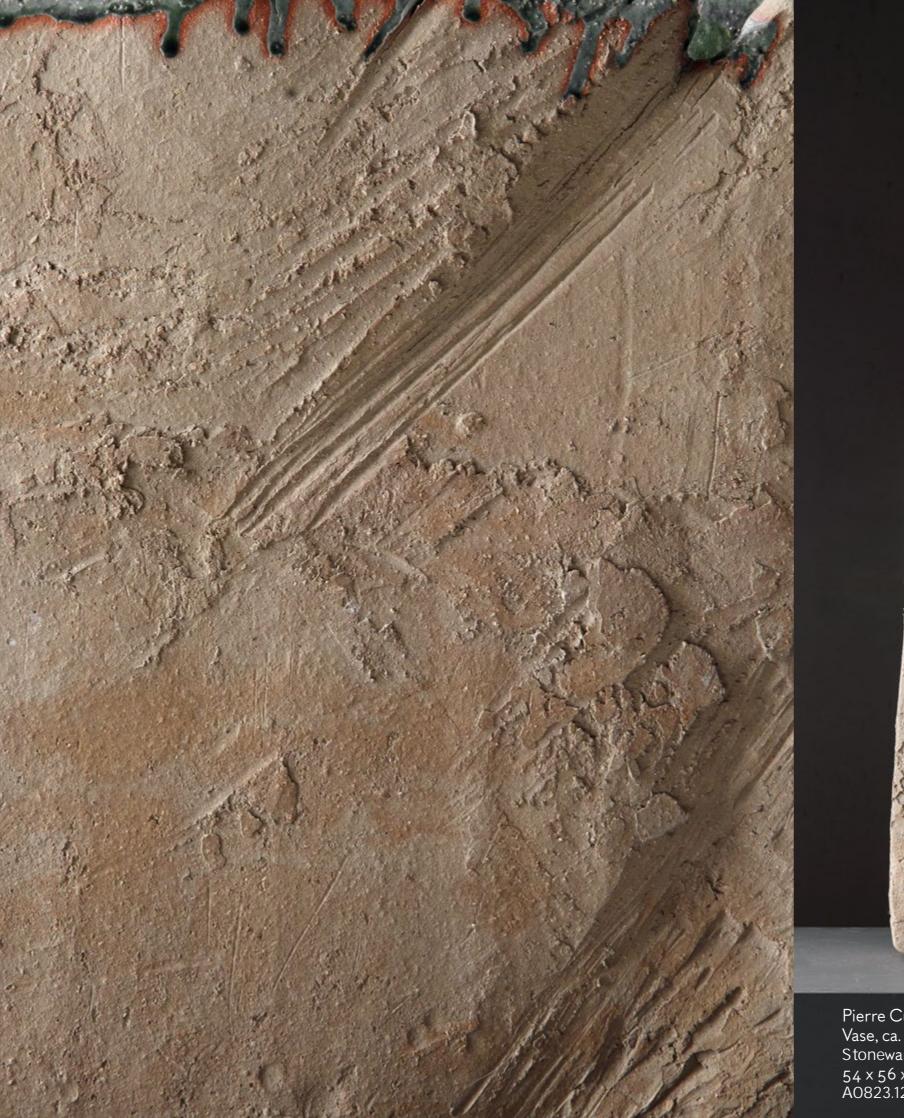


Pierre Culot Vase, ca. 1990 Stoneware, partly glazed 84 x 64 x 25 cm A0823.125











Pierre Culot Vase, ca. 1990 Stoneware, partly glazed 54 x 56 x 19 cm A0823.126 Pierre Culot Vase ca. 1990 Stoneware 62 x 72 x 22 cm A0823.120









Pierre Culot Chapiteau (Capital), 1993 Grey Clay 63 x 79 x 46 cm A0823.133







Pierre Culot Chapiteau (Capital), 1993 Grey Clay 45 x 75 x43 cm A0823.132 Pierre Culot Chapiteau (Capital) 1993 Grey Clay 61 x 78 x 42 cm A0823.131













Bio Pierre Culot

1938

12 January: Jean Culot is born in Malmedy, the last of five children.

1950 The Culot family settles in Namur.

1953 Painting lessons with Yvonne Perin.

Mid -1953 – F e bruary 1957 Studies at the School of Arts and Crafts in the Abbey of Maredsous, in the ceramics section.

1955 First major journey, to the Algerian Sahara.

1957 Starts apprenticeship with Antoine de Vinck.

1958

Spends several months studying at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels of La Cambre in Brussels. Meets Miche Wynants.

1958 (Autumn)

Accepted at the Leach Pottery in St Ives, Cornwall. Stays with the painter Patrick Heron at Eagles Nest. Here he meets, among others, John Reeve, Richard Batterham, Anne Kjærsgaard, Helena Klug, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott and Atsuya Hamada.

1959-61

Military service in Africa.

196

Back in Belgium, Pierre settles on ceramics and sets up a workshop in Rue du Luxembourg in Brussels.

1962

Exhibition with Miche Wynants at Galerie Vendôme, Avenue Louise, Brussels.

Ceramicist Lison Guerry-Verdet frequents the workshop.

1963

Visit of the studio of ceramicist and art critic Fujio Koyama selecting Pierre's work for the upcoming International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art, traveling all over the world and one work is acquired by the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto.

Miche and Pierre marry. During the summer, in Italy they meet painter Giorgio Morandi.

1964

With Antoine de Vinck, Pierre represents Belgium at the International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramic Art at the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art.

First claustras, in stoneware, for a private residence in

Brussels. Meets Robert Delpire, who introduces Pierre and Miche to the Parisian network.

Pierre exhibits at Galerie Delpire, Rue de l'Abbaye in Paris. Pierre and Miche move into an old farmhouse in Roux- Miroir in Walloon Brabant, Belgium.

Birth of Charlotte Culot.

1965 Exhibition at Galerie Objekt, Zurich. Participates in the International Exhibition of Contemporary Ceramics at the Musée Cantini in Marseilles.

1966

Produces two claustras for the auditorium of the Tour du Midi in Brussels. Exhibition at Galerie Interart, Luxembourg. Exhibition at the Téo Jakob gallery, Geneva.

1967

Creates Mur de pierres d'âge viséen (Viséan Age stone wall) for the University of Liège. Creates a claustra wall for the Hilton Hotel in Brussels. International trade prize at the Faenza International Ceramic Art Competition for his Vases de Sol (Floor vases). Birth of Joseph Culot.

1968

Creates a claustra wall facade for Ado Chale's gallery in Brussels. Creates a wall-sculpture in concrete for Dordrecht Town Hall, Netherlands.

Chambre Syndicale des Céramistes et Ateliers d'Art prize at the International Biennial of Art Ceramics at Vallauris, France. Poteries dans l'atelier exhibition at Roux-Miroir.

1969

Visits the retrospective of sculptor Eduardo Chillida at the Kunsthaus Zürich.

1970

Creates a concrete exterior wall with wood formwork imprints and a wall covering in washed concrete for the entrance hall of the Crédit Communal building in Brussels. Creates of a cedarwood wall for the Romi Goldmuntz Foundation in Antwerp. Creates large wooden sculptures.

Based on an idea by Robert Delpire, Jacques Wolgensinger, head of communication and advertising for Citroën, orders cast and glazed stoneware vases, known as Vases Citroën. An estimated 5,000 vases leave the workshop.

First creations of so-called 'composite' pots, in glazed or partially glazed stoneware.

Exhibition Pierre Culot at the Romi Goldmuntz Foundation, Antwerp.

Exhibition Grès composés de Pierre Culot, Galerie Baucher-Feron, Brussels.

1971

Foreign trade prize at the Faenza International Ceramic Art Competition for his Composed Pots.

Elected a life member of the International Academy of Ceramics. Solo exhibition 50 pots blancs et quelques autres, Galerie Delpire, Paris.

Solo exhibitions Pierre Culot ceramiek at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the Dordrechts Museum, Netherlands.

1972

Wins the Koopal Prize, awarded by the Belgian govern- ment, for a wooden sculpture.

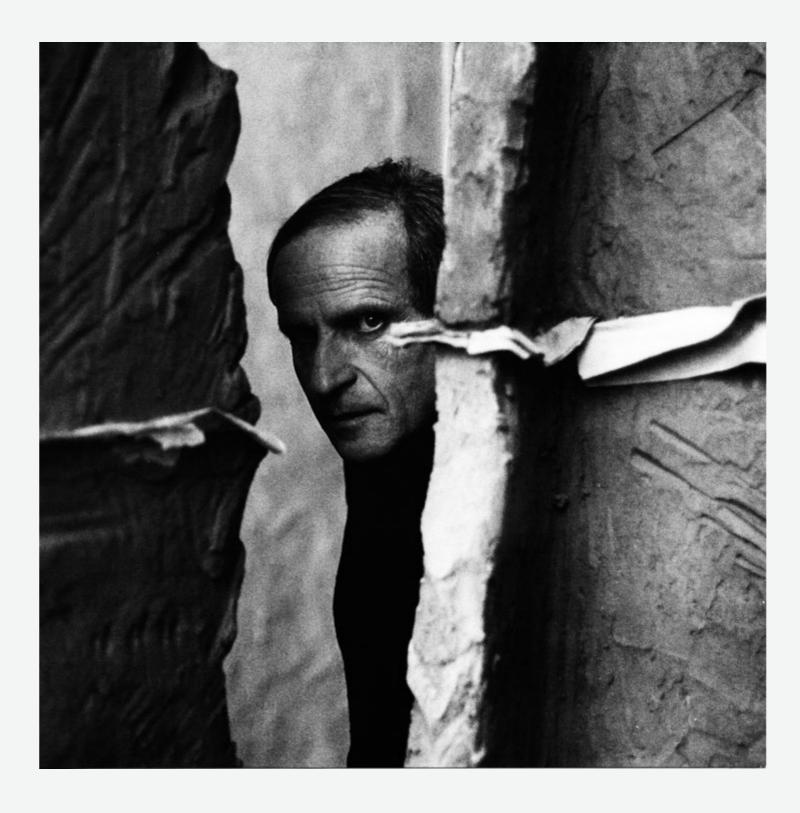
Creates a sculpture in waxed oak for the Électro-gaz company in Brussels.

Creates a wooden sculpture for the Banque Bruxelles Lambert in Tournai, Belgium.

Exhibition at the Cultureel Centrum de Vaart, Hilversum,

Netherlands.

Participates in a presentation of Belgian Crafts in Ankara, Turkey.



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1973

Creates a sculpture-wall for the ASLK-CGER in Brussels. Exhibition Sculptures de Pierre Culot in the garden of the Roux-Miroir presbytery.

Exhibition 5 Sculptors – 5 Materials at the Musée d'Ixelles/ Museum van Elsene, Belgium.

Exhibition Grès : Cinq potiers explorent la terre. Culot, de Vinck, Joulia, Lerat, Mohy, Musée du Verre, Sars-Poteries, Nord department, France.

Group exhibition Contemporary Ceramics, Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland.

Exhibition Ceramic Art of the World 1973, alongside Antoine de Vinck and Carmen Dionyse, Calgary, Canada. Pierre and Miche travel to Japan. Meeting with Sh ji Hamada.

1974

Solo exhibition Pierre Culot Ceramics, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the museum acquires two pieces. Exhibition Céramiques de Pierre Culot, Galerie Créateurs Saint-Germain, Paris.

Group exhibition The Craftsman's Art in Belgium, Cartwright Hall, Bradford, England. Exhibition Belgische beeldhouwkunst at Middelheimmuseum in Antwerp. Group exhibition, Galerie Delpire, Paris. Second visit to Japan.

Meets Andrée Putman.

1975

Exhibition at Jean-Charles de Castelbajac's home in Paris. The Sèvres National Ceramics Museum acquires a ceramic by Pierre Culot.

1976

Second group exhibition Céramique contemporaine at the Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts in Lausanne, Switzerland. Trip to India and visit to Chandigarh.

Exhibition Céramiques de Pierre Culot, Bank Brussels Lambert, Brussels. Exhibition at Galerie Convergences, Paris. Exhibition at Galerie Delpire, Paris.

Creates a sculpture for the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Exhibition Antoine de Vinck et Pierre Culot, Galerie Baucher-Feron, Brussels.

Group exhibition Poterie de Roux-Miroir, with René Bosman, Thiébaut Chagué, Hélène de Mévius and Lyn Fuss, at the Roux-Miroir studio and Galerie des Carmes, Wavre, Belgium.

1980

Creates a sculpture commissioned by the Ministry of the French Community, Belgium.

Exhibition Pierre Culot, les coulisses d'un atelier, as part of the Arts, Sciences and Techniques programme at the University Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. Presentation of ceramics from his personal collection along-

side his works. Exhibition at Galerie Écart International, Paris.

Exhibition at the Theo and Annie Balmer gallery in Basel, Switzerland.

Exhibition at Galerie d'Theeboom, Amsterdam.

Exhibition at Galerie Ligne, Brussels.

Exhibition La pierre à travers les âges at the Sart-Tilman Open-Air Museum, Liège, Belgium.

Group and thematic exhibition Ceramics and Porcelain from Belgium, Faenza Exhibition Centre, Italy, and the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels.

1981

Ćreates a monumental sculpture on Place Montesquieu in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.

Creates a sculpture-wall for the University of Antwerp. Landscaping for the European Space Agency in Redu, Belgium. Exhibition Pierre Culot, Galerie de la Prévôté, Aix-en- Provence, France.

Exhibition Pierre Culot Keramiek in Wedemark, Lower Saxony, West Germany.

Exhibition Pierre Culot, keramische Vormen, Galerie Het Kapelhuis, Amersfoort, Netherlands.

Group exhibition Drei Keramiker aus Belgien, with Antoine de Vinck and Carmen Dionyse, Museum Bellerive in Zurich. Presentation of new works and new acquisitions from his collection.

Exhibition Pierre Culot, Hetjens-Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany.

1982

Exhibition at the Galerie Galuchat, Brussels.

1983

Construction of a wall for the entrance to the Bibliotheca Wittockiana in Brussels. Exhibition at Galerie Ligne, Brussels. Exhibition Pierre Culot at the Kalmthout Arboretum, Belgium.

Creates a wall and a garden for André Rousselet's home in Paris. The Sèvres National Ceramics Museum acquires a further group of works by Pierre Culot. Exhibition Sacrée Terre, Maison de la Culture, Amiens. Exhibition Pierre Culot, Galerie Galuchat, Brussels.

1985

Exhibition The Ceramics of Pierre Culot, Liberty Retail Ltd, London. Exhibition Pierre Culot céramigues, Maison de la Culture, Namur, Belgium.

1986

Exhibition at Galerie Le pays, Le Vigan, Gard department, France.

Meeting and collaboration with art dealer and collector Axel Vervoordt.

1988

Visits Yemen with a group of French architects. Yemenese architecture influences Pierre Culot who, upon his return to the studio, begins a series of exhibitions titled Architectures en terre. Exhibition Architectures en terre, Roux-Miroir. Exhibition Serres et folies at Galerie Triglyph, Brussels.

1989

Creates a sculpture-wall for Tractebel in Brussels. Exhibition at the Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam acquires a ceramic.

1990

Creates the sculptural garden The Island of Tranquility for the head office of Raffinerie Tirlemontoise, Belgium. Solo exhibition Architectures en terre, Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Exhibition at Galerie Éditère, Paris. Group exhibition L'Europe des ceramists, Abbey Saint-Germain, Auxerre, France.

Pierre Culot opens a workshop in Eppe-Sauvage in northern France. Exhibition Architectures en terre, Galerie Monochrome, Brussels. Group exhibition Keramik als Leidenschaft, Museum

Bellerive, Zurich. Solo exhibition Pierre Culot, Belgien Keramik-Architekturen,

Museum Bellerive, Zurich. Presents several works during the exhibition Collection Fina

Gomez, 30 ans de céramique contemporaine at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

1992

Creates a sculpture for the Stibbe Tower (now 2Amsterdam) Exhibition Jardins-sculptures. Sculpture-gardens, Fondation pour l'Architecture, Brussels. in Amsterdam. Exhibition Architectures en terre, Galerie La Cité, Luxembourg. 2000 Exhibition Chambre de verdure, Roux-Miroir. Creation (since 1998) of a wall for the embellishment and the reconversion of Parc Heintz in Luxembourg. Participates in a travelling exhibition Ceramic Expressions Exhibition Jardins-scultures. Sculpture-gardens, Parc Heintz Park, Luxembourg and Egmont Palace and park, Brussels,; in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Presents a work during the exhibition Terres neuves -Céramiques acquises par la Communauté française de Egmont Palace acquires a sculpture. Belgique (1979-1991) at the Maison de la Culture in Tournai, Exhibition Jardins-sculptures. Sculpture-gardens at Galerie La Cité, Luxembourg. Exhibition at the Galerie First Time, Brussels. Belgium. Participates in the 3rd International Ceramics Competition Mino in Japan. Exhibition at the Centre Culturel, Godinne, France.

1993

Creates a sculpture for the Mémorial de la Vendée in Lucssur-Boulogne, France.

Exhibition at Galerie Christine Marquet de Vasselot, Paris. Exhibition Architectures en terre, Galerie La Cité, Luxembourg.

Exhibition at Galerie Christine Marquet de Vasselot, Paris. Participates in the Découverte 93 fair at the Grand Palais in Paris.

Participates in the second edition of the International Garden Festival, Domaine Chaumont-sur-Loire, France. Participates in the exhibition Kerami Ikka 1993 at the Etelä-Karjalan Taidemuseo, Finland.

Participates in the Fête des Jardins at the Château d'Ay-wiers in Couture-Saint-Germain.

1994

Participates in the exhibition L'architecture en briques au xxe siècle, École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Normandie, Darnétal, France. Parisian gallery owner Christine Marquet de Vasselot purchases a sculpture.

1995

Creates two sculptures for the sculpture garden at Université Catholique de Louvain, Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, Belgium. Exhibition Chapiteaux at Galerie La Cité, Luxembourg and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Exhibition Jardins-sculptures. Sculptures-jardins, Maison de l'Architecture, Paris and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Exhibition at the Conseil d'Architecture, d'Urbanisme et d'Environnement du Rhône, Lyon, France. Exhibition at Eppe-Sauvage for a Northern France open studios event.

1996

Creates a wall as part of the rehabilitation of the industrial heritage of the Moulins de la Meuse in Namur, Belgium. Creates sculptures and gardens for the CFE Group in Brussels.

Creates a sculpture area for the entrance lobby of the Céodeux factory in Lintgen, Luxembourg.

Exhibition Architectures en terre, Bibliotheca Wittockiana, Brussels.

1997

Creates L'Arche, a monumental sculpture for the World Trade Center, Boulevard du Roi Albert II in Brussels. Creates a sculpture for La Défense district in Paris. Creates a sculpture for the sculpture garden, Université Catholique de Louvain in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, Belgium.

Member of the board of judges for the Young Belgian Art Prize.

2001

Exhibition Belgian Sculptors and Painters, with Pascal Slootmakers, Bram Bogart and Gerald Dederen, Bangkok. Exhibition Poterie de Roux-Mirror at Galerie Ortilles Fourcat, Paris

Purchase of ceramics for GSK corporate headquarters in Brentford, London.

2002

Creates the Porte de la Connaissance, a sculpture in the form of a portico, at the Uccle municipal library in Belgium. Exhibits a monumental sculpture for the 4th Biennale de Mons, Patrimoine et création. France.

2004

Creates the sculpture Fruit du mur, for his work Bocage de la transplantation, Université Catholique de Louvain, Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, Belgium.

Exhibition Recyclage in the Parc Tournay-Solvay, Brussels. Exhibition Portes entr'ouvertes at Roux-Miroir, Belgium.

2005

Pierre is the victim of an attack and is seriously injured.

2006-2007

Ceramics exhibition at Roux-Miroir, Belgium.

2008

COBEREC Metals acquires Porte des Lions, a monumental sculpture created in 2004 for the exhibition Recyclage, installed with the agreement of the IBGE, the local environ-mental authorities, on Boulevard du Souverain, Brussels.

Pierre Culot dies on 9 March 2011, aged 73.

Selected bibliography

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-Anne BONY, Pierre Culot 1938-2011, Paris: PIASA Éditions, 2014.

-Gita BRYS-SCHATAN, ed., Guide for a Labyrinth: Art in the City, Brussels: Éditions de l'ISELP, 1999.

-Christian CAREZ, Attention, un Nikon peut en cacher un autre , Brussels: Éditions Vokaer, 1975.

-Catalogue du Musée en plein air du Sart-Tilman, Liège: Centre d'Animation et d'Intégration des Arts plastiques, 1980.

-Catherine CNUDDE, Jean-Jacques HAROTIN and Jean-Pierre MAJOT, Pierres et marbres de Wallonie – Stenen en Marmers van Wallonie, Brussels: Archives de l'Architecture Moderne, 1987, p. 90.

-Christophe DOSOGNE and Wivine de TRAUX, L'art dans la ville – Promenades à Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve, Louvain-La-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2009 (reedition).

-Rudi FUCHS ed., Pierre Culot. Jardins-sculptures. Sculptures-Jardins, Paris: Seuil, 2000.

-Pierre PUTTEMANS and Lucien HERVÉ, Architecture moderne en Belgique, Brussels: Éditions Vokaer, 1974, p. 247.

- Pierre-Olivier ROLLIN, 'Les Moulins de la Meuse. Le Mur de Pierre Culot', in Quand l'Art épouse le lieu. Intégration d'œuvres d'art dans les bâtiments de la Région wallonne, Namur: Ministère wallon de l'Équipement et des Transports, 2000, pp. 48–58.

Public installations and acquisitions (selection)

- -Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zürich
- -Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
- -Musée national d'art modern de Kyoto
- -Musée national de Céramique de Sèvres
- -Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
- -Egmont Palais, Brussels
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
- -Victoria & Albert Museum London

