RENÉ DEROUIN

In 2016, multidisciplinary artist René Derouin celebrated his 80th birthday, as well as over 60 years of artistic practice. The two events serve as a pretext to discover his extraordinary work through an immersive film, projected during approximately 40 minutes in a 360-degree dome. Derouin remodeled, in connection with the important places he came across during his journey.

In the form of a "road movie", the film's plot revolves around Derouin's creations in relation with the key places that marked his journey: life in his native land in Quebec, the trips back and forth to his host land in Mexico, his exiles around the world, including in Japan and especially in America with a crossing of the United States and a passage in the Great North. Halfway between an art film and an experimental documentary, Territoires des Amériques is above all an immersive artistic experience at the heart of René Derouin's work, combining graphic animation and location filming.

In a north-south axis, his numerous continental travels prove to be as much a source of artistic inspiration as the theatre of his questions on identity: "Who are we? Where are we from?".

First asked by his teachers when he attended the Esmeralda School of Fine Arts in Mexico in 1955, these questions have been with Derouin ever since. As short as they are deep, these questions have guided his art in multiple media over the decades: sketches and drawings, engravings and prints, statuettes and installations. With its fragmented geography, the immersive experience of Territoires des Amériques offers a response to Derouin's quest for identity: Americanity – an identity common to the American continent from north to south, an identity of acculturation and migration, an identity in perpetual motion. Without submitting to the chronology of events, Territoires des Amériques offers a unique journey through Derouin's migrations and several of his major works. The film's plot is made up of a series of geographic and symbolic territories. Each sequence reveals graphic representations of a territory, images inspired by visual archives and revisited existing works of art. Spectators are enveloped by soundscapes specific to each virtual landscape, making them migrate and even uprooting them.

At the heart of each of these spaces—source of inspiration, source of questioning for Derouin—his works are inserted. They come alive, cohabit, and their different eras collide. For each area, Derouin's portrait is complemented by archival footage of the artist and original video of his current artistic practice. Filmed in close-ups, his hands alter the material and his art changes the space. During this voyage, an original piece is revealed in fragments, from its development to its completion. The journey culminates with the unveiling of the work, created for the film by Derouin.

The work completely surrounds the spectators in the dome, embodies the artist's journey, and expresses all of his Americanity.

This immersive film takes Derouin out of galleries and museums. Through its 360-degree projection in a dome, this art film places the general public directly in relation with his work. The proposal remains coherent with the artist and his interest in an open dissemination of contemporary art.

Territoires des Amériques proposes an encounter with a prolific artist, and offers above all a privileged access to his long and enriching reflection on society and Quebec's identity in the heart of the American continent.

[Productions figure 55]

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