

AQC0507

Nanopublication — First Sculpture-Text Diptych with Narrative Misdirection Mechanism

by Arnaud Quercy · A Happy Man · 2024



ARTISTIC METHODOLOGY FIRST PERSON EMBODIED ARTISTIC PRACTICE PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH HIGH

First Sculpture-Text Diptych with Narrative Misdirection Mechanism

"A Happy [1] Man" (2024) is my first sculpture-text diptych, where the ceramic form actively participates in narrative misdirection rather than illustrating the story. The egg-shaped head with its geometric divisions, rectangular void, and restrained earth-toned surfaces initially encodes professional anticipation and suspended waiting - supporting the reader's assumption of human birth. Only through the accompanying text does the viewer discover Léonard is a gardener awaiting an orchid's bloom, at which point the sculpture's botanical palette and organic form resolve into their intended reading. The face functions both as portrait and as the mechanism of enchantment itself - a "spell" that breaks only when the story reveals the speaking flowers.

CONTEXT

"A Happy Man" marks a significant expansion in my practice - the first time I've paired a sculpture with an accompanying narrative text to create a unified diptych work. While I have created numerous diptychs in other media, this represents my first sculpture-text pairing. The piece belongs to the "Spells and Magic" collection, created during sessions with master ceramist Isis Gondoin at the Profils et Reliefs workshop in Paris.

The sculpture employs terre cuite with fine chamotte, finished with my standard beeswax and pigment mixture technique that characterizes the Spells and Magic works. The earth-toned palette - bronze,

moss green, and cream - emerges from this process, creating matte surfaces that ultimately support the botanical revelation once the narrative misdirection resolves.

The narrative strategy relies on careful ambiguity: the accompanying short story describes Léonard in professional garb, checking instruments meticulously laid out on a nearby table, awaiting a "birth" under the watchful moon, surrounded by waiting women asking anxious questions about timing. The geometric severity of the sculptural form, the rectangular void suggesting masked anticipation, the professional restraint of the composition - all initially support a medical/obstetric reading.

Only when the text reveals "Ce n'était pas le cri d'un nouveau-né qui brisa le silence, mais plutôt l'éclosion silencieuse et majestueuse d'une œuvre d'art de la nature... Oh, c'est une orchidée!" does the misdirection resolve. At this moment, the sculpture's organic egg form and botanical palette snap into their intended meaning - the professional instruments become gardening tools, the anticipation becomes horticultural patience, and the birth becomes bloom.

The "magic" of the Spells and Magic collection operates here through this spell of misreading - a narrative enchantment where speaking flowers and the gardener's lunar ally participate in transforming professional waiting into horticultural wonder. The sculpture doesn't illustrate this transformation; it enacts it, serving as both Léonard's face and the mechanism of the trick itself. The viewer experiences the misdirection visually before the textual revelation, making the ceramic form an active participant in the enchantment rather than a passive illustration of the story's events.

REFERENCES

- [1] Arnaud Quercy (2024). A Happy Man — Catalog raisonné. <https://arnaudquercy.art/en/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0507.html>
<https://arnaudquercy.art/fr/catalogue-raisonne/AQC0507.html>
- [2] Quercy, Arnaud. "Un homme heureux" (short story). Independently published, Paris, January 2024. Legal deposit: 19 January 2024. Copyright registration UV5E2M1, Copyright-France.com.
- [3] Quercy, Arnaud. "A Happy Man" (ceramic sculpture). Terre cuite with fine chamotte, beeswax and pigment mixtures. 17.0×12.0×37.0cm. Spells and Magic collection. Created at Profils et Reliefs workshop, Paris, 2024. Certificate 20240120-0003.

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