

# L'ÉTÉ DE LA FORÊT



FRICHE DE L'ESCALETTE  
ARCHITECTURE NATURE SCULPTURE

GALERIE 54 / ERIC TOUCHALEAUME  
ART + ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

# L'ÉTÉ DE LA FORÊT

SCULPTURES BY FRANÇOIS STAHLY  
PIERRE TUAL | MYRIAM MIHINDOU

+ BUNGALOWS JEAN PROUVÉ

For the fifth consecutive summer, Éric and Elliot Touchaleaume, the owners of the Friche de l'Escalette, are offering visits of this unique industrial heritage site, which is part of the Parc national des Calanques de Marseille. This year, in partnership with Galerie 54 / Éric Touchaleaume, its romantic ruins will host works by three sculptors that span sixty years of creation, from 1960 to now.

*L'été de la forêt* by François Stahly is a monumental set comprising some fifty totems in wood sculpted in different sizes. 'Selected pieces' from the Stahly estate are also on show - in the spacious volumes of an old workshop that has no roof, which is the nucleus of the future Friche de l'Escalette exhibition gallery.

*Reliefs*, 'foldings' in Corten steel by Pierre Tual, proclaim their aerial grace. *Rakus and Savons*, two poetic installations by Myriam Mihindou, are on show in Jean Prouvé's *Pavillon 6x9*, alongside his *Bungalow du Cameroun*. These icons of nomad architecture designed by the 'sheet-metal wizard' from Nancy have been shown at the Friche in the two preceding runs.

# L'ÉTÉ DE LA FORÊT

FRANÇOIS STAHLY (1911-2006)

In 1966 the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris mounted a retrospective that introduced sculptor François Stahly to the general public. *L'été de la forêt* received special acclaim. In an interview, Stahly said of it: *'This set gave me a whole new impetus, which in sculpture is akin to the idea of the sacred'*.

Aware as he was of the ornamental role assigned to sculpture in the context of architectural commissions, Stahly decided to rid himself of all constraint by creating an independent monumental set.

Working in the haven of peace that was the garden at his Meudon studio, as of 1960 he slowly put together *L'été de la forêt*, with no commission, no constraints, no budget and no schedule. Inspiration came from memories

of the high Swiss forests of his childhood, and from the primeval stands he discovered in his frequent stays in the United States. Stahly put into this work 'the authentic respiration' that would make it one of his major productions.

From this 'sacred wood' emanates a benevolent force, an indefinable feeling of mystery that inhabits its oaken uprights and stacked conic sections, shaped by the chisel to form a magic circle whose symbolic threshold is marked by two tall pieces leaning one against the other.

*'(...) Nowadays, with the threat of pollution constantly growing, we are starting to feel our affinities with clouds, waters, leaves, and lands, it may be then that in François Stahly we see the first modern sculptor of environment, the first to conceive again of sculpture as a place where it might be possible to be together.'*

PIERRE DESCARGUES.

FRANÇOIS STAHLY, ÉDITIONS LA CONNAISSANCE, BRUSSELS, 1975.



*L'été de la forêt* at Kykuit, the Rockefeller estate at Tarrytown.



*L'été de la forêt* in the garden of the studio at Meudon.

Its skyward thrust expresses the artist's innate desire to interact with the cosmos, 'the desire to go beyond the self, the desire to communicate with all that is living.'

In reply to an interviewer who asked him: What is sculpture: poetry, mysticism? Stahly said straight off: 'Yes, a mysticism'.

*L'été de la forêt*, which we are honoured to present in a preview at the Friche de l'Escalette, was last seen in public at the 1966 Musée des Arts Décoratifs show. In the more than half a century since then it guarded the grounds of Kykuit, the Rockefeller family home for the past four generations, at Tarrytown in the Hudson Valley north of New York.

Nelson Rockefeller, a fervent admirer of Stahly's work, had purchased it for his property. When his estate was put up for auction in January 2019, it came back to France.

—  
*Stahly is quoted in italics in the text.*

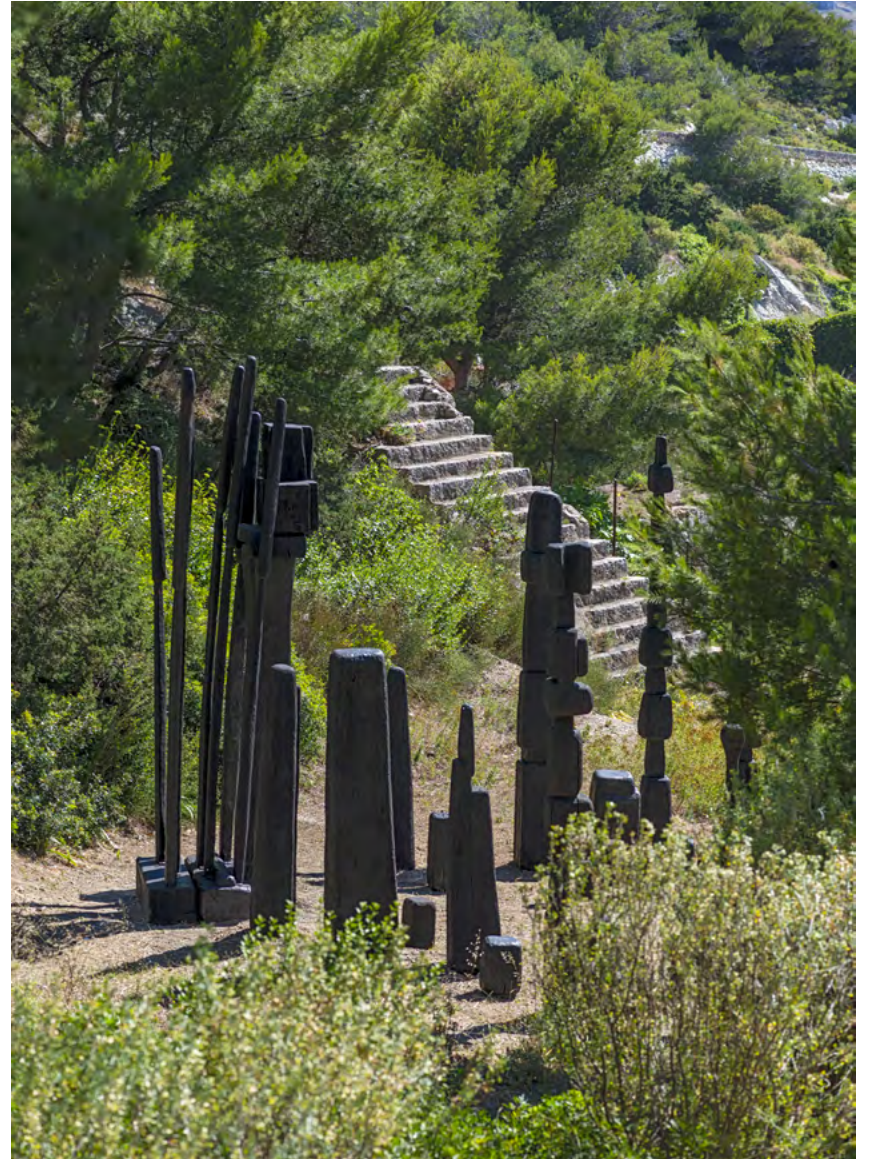
*cf. stahly.fr/lete-de-la-foret/ Pierre Mougin 2019.*

*'(...) there was Arp and Brancusi: for the insiders, but also the discovery of primitive sculptures and, beyond forms, the craving for the pure sources that quench the thirst of the spiritual fathers (...) which teach the love of life and keep alive the gift of wonderment before the world that it is given to approach through certain aspects of art.'*

FRANÇOIS MATHEY  
FRANÇOIS STAHLY EXHIBITION CATALOGUE,  
MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS, PARIS, 1966.







# SELECTED WORKS

FRANÇOIS STAHLY



1

2→











5+6



7→





### 1. Cinq stèles, circa 1970

Pink travertine from Turkey, One-off piece, unsigned, 99 x 115 x 50 cm. The first casting of a series in bronze limited to eight copies, approved by the Comité François Stahly, to be numbered 1/8 to 8/8 with 4 artist's copies, is under production by the Fonderie Susse. Bronze patinas and stone bases will be identical to those of the sculpture *Deux stèles*.

Scaled-down version that differs from the monumental sculpture *Cinq stèles Rämibühl* (1971/74) installed in the park of the Realgymnasium Rämibühl in Zurich.

### 2. Chaîne d'eau, 1959-1960

Bronze with well-worn green/grey patina, cast at time of creation, has neither signature nor founder's mark, 400 x 15 x 15 cm. The first casting of a series in bronze limited to eight copies, approved by the Comité François Stahly, to be numbered 1/8 to 8/8 with 4 artist's copies, is under production by the Fonderie Susse. Another posthumous casting in bronze is in existence, with a variant sunk in a bronze trough. This *Chaîne d'eau* is one of four exemplars sculpted in wood, all of which are different. It began as a commission from architects Paul Herbé and Jean Le Couteur, for the creation of rainwater downpipes for the cathedral of Algiers. Only two bronze exemplars were cast, because the commission was cancelled when Algeria became independent. Following which it saw service as downpipe at the sculptor's studio in Meudon.

### 3. Colonne d'eau, 1959-1960

Aluminium with patina from natural corrosion, cast at time of creation, one-off piece, bears the artist's signature, no founder's mark, 209 x 33 x 33 cm, height without 202 cm wooden base used at the time of first mounting. The 5/8 exemplar extends the bronze casting series of four exemplars begun when the sculptor was still alive; it is in production by the Fonderie Susse, with the approval of the Comité François Stahly. It is in fact the extremity of the preceding *Chaîne d'eau*, turned upwards.

### 4. Flèche, 1950-1955

Bronze with well-worn green/grey patina, cast at time of creation as single exemplar, modelled from an exemplar sculpted in wood that has differences, bears the FS monogram, no founder's mark, 211,5 x 45 x 22 cm, height 197 cm without base in pierre d'Occitanie added recently.

### 5. Deux stèles, 1980

Bronze with medal patina, sole exemplar, both stelae bear the sculptor's signature and the stamp of the founder Clementi 1/8, 97 x 50 x 50 cm, height 89 cm without base in pierre d'Occitanie added recently. Variation of two stelae from the *Cinq stèles* set.

### 6. Méduse, 1959-1974

Bronze with well-worn green patina, cast during the sculptor's lifetime, bears his signature and the stamp of the founder TEP 3/8, 104 x 70 x 60 cm. Bronze casting begun in 1974 after the original *Méduse* sculpted in wood in 1959, with certain differences. A version was also sculpted in marble.

### 7. Abstract bas-relief, 1950s

Aluminium with patina by natural corrosion, cast at the time of creation, one-off piece, bears the FS monogram and the stamp of the artist and art publisher Carrare Editore Erminio Cidonio, 100 x 239 x 10 cm. Research into animated patterns sculpted in relief gave rise to a great many works in the 1950s and 60s. Among the best known are the two enormous *Vitraux-Reliefs* in stone agglomerated with blocks of crystal for the church of Saint-Rémy at Baccarat (1952-56), and the transparent *Mur-Relief* and bas-reliefs for the Meudon studio. The pattern of this work figures in several works and brings to mind the wavy traces made on sand when the tide goes out.

### 8. Vénus Hottentote, (large version), 1941-1974

Bronze with slightly corroded black patina, posthumous casting of a bronze series begun in 1974, bears the sculptor's signature and the stamp of the founder TEP 4/8, 100 x 55 x 50 cm. The theme of the primitive Venus with ample forms fascinated Stahly, who did several versions of it at the outset of his career.

This piece is an enlargement in bronze done by the sculptor and differs in certain details from the wooden *Vénus Hottentote* sculpted in 1941/42. It was named by the writer Henri-Pierre Roché, Stahly's first collector and patron. Roché was a larger-than-life figure, the author of Jules et Jim and a close friend of Marcel Duchamp. In the 1910s he introduced the artists of the Parisian avant-garde to the United States, including Brancusi, of whose works he was an impassioned collector.

### 9. Naissance (large version), 1958-1974

Bronze with slightly corroded black patina, posthumous casting of a bronze series begun in 1974, bears the sculptor's signature and the stamp of the founder TEP 3/8, 84 x 100 x 40 cm, height without 64 cm steel base.

### 10. La forêt de Tacoma, 1961-1966

Bronze with beautiful verdigris patina owing to prolonged exposure to maritime climate, posthumous casting, bears the sculptor's signature and the stamp of the founder TEP n°1/8, 254 x 45,5 x 33,5 cm. *La forêt de Tacoma* belongs to a set of works sculpted in wood inspired Stahly's life-long love of forests. Among the best known from the same period are *L'écho de la forêt*, 1963, which is composed of four groups of sculptures that partition the public lobby at the Maison de la Radio in Paris, and of course *L'été de la forêt*, whose treatment is in a more primitivist vein.



# RELIEFS

PIERRE TUAL (1941)



Pierre Tual plays with metal, preferably Corten steel, in the same way as others play with paper. Ten of his *Reliefs* are on show at l'Escalette, pinned to a sheer stone wall amid the ruins as if to accentuate the weightless feel of these sheet steel 'foldings'. A spider-leg arch guards the entrance to a tunnel. Inside Jean Prouvé's *Cameroun bungalow*, two regular stacks of metal sheets serve as low tables.

Pierre Tual is jovial by nature but discreet; he lives with his wife the artist Françoise Paressant on their property in the wilds the Perche region. Tual works solo, full of passion and stored energy, which he puts to ingenious use folding large metal sheets, sometimes with the help of an ancient tractor.

He has won many prizes and some of his large-format sculptures have found a place in street space, among which *Arche* in green lacquered steel, which was installed in 1989 on rue Jussienne, a pedestrian lane that joins rue Étienne Marcel in the Les Halles area. Other major works are *Cascade des Longchamps* in Corten steel at Rennes (1984) and *Terrasses de l'Agora* at Évry (1987).





# RAKUS AND SAVONS

MYRIAM MIHINDOU (1964)

With her installation *Transmissions*, composed of enamelled ceramic shafts hung from the branches of an ancient pine bent over by the mistral, Myriam Mihindou caught the interest of visitors to the Friche de l'Escalette in 2019. She is back again this year with two more delicate installations: *Rakus*, modellings of enamelled clay, and *Savons*, carvings in worn blocks of soap veined with all the colours of old ivory.

With their erotic undertones these strange objects bring to mind certain creations by Merret Openheim or Marcel Duchamp. But unlike these forerunners, who dealt with objects individually, Mihindou prefers accumulating them to create dreamscapes that immerse the viewer.

The two distinct sets are suspended by cords from the metal frame of Jean Prouvé's *Pavillon 6x9*, whose weathered and worn look is perfectly suited to artworks that evoke the passing of time. Myriam Mihindou's works are on show at the Friche de l'Escalette with the generous collaboration of the Galerie Maiä Muller, who represent the artist in France.



The life and work of Myriam Mihindou are inseparable. Born in Gabon of an African father and a French mother, she is a nomad artist whose work tells stories of mixed origins and reflects multiple identities.

Myriam Mihindou questions the status of womankind and the experience of exile and borders, awakening collective and personal memories.

Whatever the medium she chooses, the artist conjures up and makes use of the body. Her work has been shown at major venues, including the Biennale de Venise in 2017, which hosted a memorable performance entitled *La Curée*.







## PAVILLON 6X9

JEAN PROUVÉ (1901-1984)

## BUNGALOW DU CAMEROUN

JEAN PROUVÉ & ATELIER LWD

For the third season in a row the Friche de l'Escalette is presenting two light-weight nomad architectures, one designed for the north, the other for the south, both of which embody the inventive genius of Jean Prouvé, a pioneer of prefabricated construction. They are perfectly suited as exhibition spaces for historic design pieces, and modern and contemporary art.

Apart from works on the site, all year round the small team at the Friche de l'Escalette runs a restoration workshop the aim of which is to make these museum architectures useful again rather than leave them empty once the annual exhibitions are over.

Another project concerns the re-fitting of the *Bungalow du Cameroun*, which was originally designed as a dwelling for teachers in remote bush areas. The idea is to fit it out as holiday units with all the required mod-cons of today, to be powered by renewable energies. Modules containing bathroom, kitchen and storage will occupy the four corners of the bungalow, with furnishings that use the sliding doors of the *Placard Brazza* designed by Charlotte Perriand and Jean Prouvé for the *Unité d'Habitation Air France* in Brazzaville (Congo).









FRICHE DE L'ESCALETTE  
ARCHITECTURE NATURE SCULPTURE  
SUMMER 2020 EXHIBITION





*Slowly but surely, the Friche de l'Escalette is finding its place in the summer cultural programme of Marseille, offering a broad public discovery tours of its unique industrial heritage site as well as exhibitions of light-weight architecture and sculpture.*



## THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT: MAKE THE FRICHE DE L'ESCALETTE INTO A CULTURAL VENUE

### PRESERVE A UNIQUE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SITE.

The site is outstanding by its topography, its architecture, its background, its state of conservation and its location in the south of France, which is traditionally less industrialized than the north and east. The brownfield of the old lead factory at l'Escalette carries a dual testimony still visible today; first by the type of industry, metal extraction, and second as a reminder of the intense industrial activity that spread along the coastline south of Marseille in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, from Madrague de Montredon to Callegouge.

The builders of the plant – who remain unknown – used the lie of the land to position the different phases of the industrial activity carried on there. All the buildings were designed to fit perfectly into the ground line. Although none of the roofs survive and the walls are in ruin, it is uncanny to see how what is manmade is in harmony with the stony landscape. Colonnades, basins and solid stone walls opened by arches and oculi bring to mind a neo-classical masterwork by Nicolas Ledoux: the salt mines at Arc et Senans, with their brick-and-stone ovens, tunnels and rampant flues, an architectural set astonishing by its quality and grand scale.

The factory operated from 1851 to 1925 and grew organically. It is one of the few industrial sites dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that has not been changed beyond all recognition. In spite of its ruined state, the entire extraction process can still be traced today, even by non-specialists.

Since it lies within the territory of Marseille' Parc National des Calanques, even though it is a private initiative the Friche de l'Escalette is bound by strict constraints. However ambitious our aims may be, the idea is to keep things simple and gentle.

In respect of archaeological procedure, all the ruins on the high ground will be conserved, consolidated and kept as they are.

On the low ground, the ample spaces of the old workshops, which are in reasonable condition even though their metal roof frames were dismantled during the Occupation, will be used

as exhibition galleries, public reception facilities, artists' residences, and studios for creation and restoration, where works specially designed for the site will come into being.

The *Buvette-Épicerie de l'Escalette*, which operated from the 1930s to the 1970s, will be reborn as the *Bistrot de l'Escalette* offering visitors and hikers food and drink.

A joinery and metal workshop for restoring historically significant pieces exhibited on the site has been operating since 2011.





### **PRESERVING PLANTLIFE SPECIFIC TO RUINS**

The charm of walking about amidst these romantic and mysterious must be preserved at all costs.

To this end, whatever the difficulties, contrary to what is usual in stonework and architecture, the plants that have taken over these walls will be protected insofar as is possible, at least the best examples. As in some of the temples at Angkor

Wat, the fascinating process by which living things take over inanimate architecture will be part of the site experience. Reinforcements and metal clamps will be added where needed, to protect parts made fragile by spreading roots.

## PRESENTING LIGHT-WEIGHT ARCHITECTURE, OR THE 'CABANON SPIRIT'

Every year in July-August an exhibition in partnership with Galerie 54 / Éric Touchaleaume opens to the public.

The aim of the organizers is to ensure that the Friche keeps its poetic dimension and to encourage the 'cabanon spirit' dear to the people of Marseille... as it was to Jean Prouvé and his co-workers, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret and of course Le Corbusier, who spent his summers in his legendary cabanon at Roquebrune.

Apart from light-weight structures by Prouvé and other Modernist pioneers, in a few years time – when the installations at the Friche make it feasible - an international competition on the theme of the cabanon will be held. Mass standardization of construction materials has put paid to these vernacular week-enders so expressive of the ingenuity and poetry of their origins as cabins for gardeners and fishermen.

Architects, designers and artists too will work to a brief demanding creativity, light weight, nomadism and eco-friendliness...

**2016** Jean Prouvé, Habitat tropical du Cameroun

**2017** Plastic Utopia

**2018** Jean Prouvé, North-South

**2019** Jean Prouvé for living

## PRESENTING MODERN & CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE

Sculptures and installations chosen for their capacity to resonate with the site's architecture and landscape are laid out every year. In time, a permanent display will scan the visit itinerary.

**2016** Marjolaine Dégremont « *Touching the sky* » and Vincent Scali « *Fragments* »

**2017** Max Bill *Pavillon-Skulptur II*

**2018** Parvine Curie, Stahly, Lardeur, Haber and Coulentianos

**2019** Myriam Mihindou « *Transmissions* »

***The discerning public is invited to follow the evolution of our long-term project for l'Escalette every summer.***

The Friche de l'Escalette, Galerie 54 / Éric Touchaleaume, and Éric and Elliot Touchaleaume would like to thank:

Le Comité François Stahly  
Parvine Curie  
Catherine Stahly and Pierre Mougin  
Bruno Stahly †  
Antonin Stahly  
Scarlett and Philippe Reliquet  
Olivier d'Antin  
Pierre Tual and Françoise Paressant  
Miryam Mihindou  
and Galerie Maïa Muller

Marie-Alexandrine Yvernault  
Stéphanie Guitard  
Olivier Diss  
Martial Vigo  
Philippe Alexandre-Delaigue  
Victor-Emmanuel Camusso  
Robin Baudet and Enzo Contamin  
Luc Verdavaine  
Christian Baraja and Éric Lasalle  
Helena Ichbiah and Jean-Charles Abrial

Elise Humbert  
Véronique Janneau and Maëlys Arnou  
of the Observatoire agency  
Connaissance des Arts  
and especially Guy Boyer  
Le Journal des Arts  
and especially Marie Potard  
La Provence  
and especially Gwenola Gabellec  
... and all the publications and journalists  
who have shown interest in our project.

The CIQ de l'Escalette  
and its Président René Costaglioli  
The Parc national des Calanques de Marseille

DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATION  
Éric Touchaleaume

PHOTO CREDITS  
François Stahly archive photos  
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Sculptures by Pierre Tual at the Friche de l'Escalette  
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Rakus and Savons by Myriam Mihindou at the Friche de l'Escalette  
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Courtesy Galerie Maïa Muller

Pavillon 6x9 Jean Prouvé at the Friche de l'Escalette  
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Bungalow du Cameroun Jean Prouvé  
& Atelier LWD at the Friche de l'Escalette  
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Works by François Stahly, Pierre Tual, Myriam Mihindou,  
Jean Prouvé, Jean Prouvé & Atelier LWD ©ADAGP Paris 2020

DESIGN *Sch&Kar*





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ARCHITECTURE NATURE SCULPTURE**

SUMMER 2020 EXHIBITION  
PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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