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FRANCE
MYRELINGUES LA
BRUMEUSE

Lyon is known as the city of a thousand languages. Legend and myth swirl at its shores and it is a place where fiction and truth overlap. This spirit is captured in Myrelingues La Brumeuse, a historic novel written by Claude Le Marguet about the fictional birth of the silk industry in 16th century Lyon. Its title (translated approximately as A Thousand Misty Languages) has become indicative of the city itself. eL Seed chose the title of this novel for his project for the 14th edition of La Biennale De Lyon (2017) to convey the sense of mystery the city evokes.

The event, held under the title Floating Worlds (CHK), was a showcase of artworks “docked in the heart of a territory whose identity was partly shaped by the ubiquity of water in a city that rose from the waters and through which the Rhone and the Saone run”.

It is fitting then that eL Seed’s Myrelingues La Brumeuse comprised a 120-metre stainless steel calligraphic installation suspended between two bridges along on the banks of the Saône. The words it spelled were from Fernand Braudel, a historian who wrote of Lyon:

Le destin de Lyon n’est pas plus simple que celui du fleuve. Toute ville, sans doute, est un être compliqué, Lyon plus qu’une autre, qui frappe l’historien par sa richesse, ses brusques transformations, ses originalités, voire ses étrangetés. Elle n’est pas la même d’un siècle au siècle suivant et, plus contrainte qu’allant de son plein gré, elle passe sans fin d’une originalité à une autre.

The destiny of Lyon is no simpler than that of the river. Every town, no doubt, is a complicated being, Lyon more so than any other. It surprises the historian through its richness, sudden transformations, originality and even its strangeness. It is not the same from one century to the next, and is constantly transforming, going from one originality to the next.

Translated into Arabic and carved in eL Seed’s distinctive lettering into a sculptural installation, this art work was a subtle and thoughtful addition to the city’s biennial. Its highly polished surface acted as a mirror, reflecting the water and the city beyond to create the effect of an illusion so, it was not clear where the calligraphy started and where the river ended.

This is in direct contrast with his usual works where bold colours and form pop out from the surroundings. However, as eL Seed’s practice is pinned around the place where aesthetics and meaning collide and every artwork he creates is a direct response to its surroundings. This is no different.

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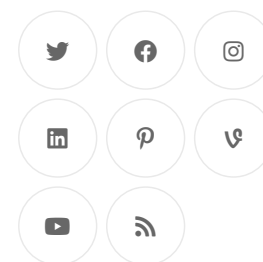
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