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Fernando Costa

Johan-Frederik Hel Guedj

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This is the first book dedicated to Fernando Costa, an eclectic, self-taught artist, born in France to a family that arrived in the country on foot from Portugal while fleeing the dictatorship of Salazar in 1970. Costa dissects enamelled street signs, cuts them up, smoothes them off, and reassembles the pieces by welding them onto large metal plaques to create works of extraordinary originality. The result is striking, as shown in this colourful monograph. Some are figurative, the cousins of Pop Art, infused with a personal element, as they include tragic or comical moments and figures who have influenced the sculptor during his lifetime: the cyclist Tom Simpson, The Beatles, and Josephine Baker. Other works flirt with abstraction derived from Cubism and the mechanical music of Edgar Varèse. All display freedom, movement, energy, and the interplay of primary colours. Whether small in size or imposing triptychs, the works of Fernando Costa achieve a rare feat: imbuing metal with emotion. Text in English and French.

Fernando Costa (born 1972) lives and works near Sarlat in Périgord, France. The success of this self-taught artist was totally unexpected. Since 1998 he has collected damaged street signs in France and elsewhere, and transformed them into artworks. In 2013, he was the eighteenth artist selected to create the 'Art Car' for Le Mans 24 Hours car race: a recognition of his talent, in the footsteps of Calder, Warhol, César, Arman, and Jeff Koons. **Johan-Frédérik Hel Guedj**, a French writer, has published two novels (*Le traitement des cendres, L'amour grave*), a collection of short stories (*De mon vivant*), an account of polar exploration (*Chercheurs d'éternité*), and an essay on Orson Welles (*La règle du faux*). He lives in Brussels and writes on contemporary art in the daily newspaper *L'Echo/De Tijd*.

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