

# PHILIPPE PASTOR Burned Trees

Press Kit



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**Cover Photo : D. GICQUEL**



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# Philippe PASTOR

## The Burned Trees

**For its art and environmental initiative, the United Nations Environment Program, with the collaboration of The Natural World Museum of San Francisco, has decided to house a permanent exhibition of forty "Burned Trees" by the artist Philippe PASTOR at their head office in Nairobi, Kenya, from March 31, 2006 to present.**

*"I saw the fire burning down the mountain. I cannot resign myself to such destruction and I don't want to forget it. Looking at such mutilated nature, I am horrified and feel a deep feeling of rebellion towards the authors of this disfigurement... This scene of desolation is nothing but a mirror of our society." Philippe PASTOR*

These sculptures were created from the calcified tree trunks from the forest Garde Freinet in the Var, south of France, which were devastated during the summer of 2003 by fires of criminal origin, as well as negligence. They give new life to these large trees, some of which are more than a century old. Through his work, the artist shouts his anger and revolt and wishes to sensitize the world to the damage caused by forest fires and the need to preserve our natural resources.

The decision of the United Nations Environment Program to expose forty of Philippe Pastor's Burned Trees at its head office in Nairobi is a true recognition of his work but also of the values and the message of the artist.

*"Philippe PASTOR'S extraordinary art echoes both the beauty and the tragedy of these sentinels of the natural world. His work brings beauty and understanding to the chaos of nature's destruction and reminds us that to cherish is the first step to conserve." UNEP*

Revealed March 31st on the occasion of the departure of Mr. Klaus TOEPFER, Executive director of UNEP, "Burned Trees" represent a testimony of the work of this former Minister of the Environment in Germany which worked within the organization during these last eight years.

**Mrs. Wangari MAATHAI, Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2004**, was present and spoke for a long time to Philippe PASTOR. She is an ecological activist and Former Kenyan Environmental Secretary of State and received the Nobel Prize in 2004 for her contribution in favor of durable development, democracy and peace. She expressed her appreciation for his initiative.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, need any more information, or photos.

You can also visit web site: [www.philippe-pastor.com](http://www.philippe-pastor.com)

Sincerely,

Carol Denn, [info@monacomodernart.mc](mailto:info@monacomodernart.mc)

# The Burned trees at the United Nations Environment Program

## The United Nations Environment Program

“UNEP, established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment. To accomplish this, UNEP works with a wide range of partners, including United Nations entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

UNEP work encompasses:

- Assessing global, regional and national environmental conditions and trends
- Developing international and national environmental instruments
- Strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment
- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology for sustainable development
- Encouraging new partnerships and mind-sets within civil society and the private sector.”

Source : [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

## The choice of Philippe Pastor's “Burned Trees”

Trees and forests are at the heart of sustainable development in helping the poor and the destitute in order to guarantee them an endurable life. They are sources of food during times of drought and famine, as well as construction materials and natural pharmaceuticals. They stabilize the soils, act as natural water pumps to bring moisture into the air; they are the pools of rivers and lakes, and soak up the pollution that causes climate change. Sadly, trees and forests are also victims of poverty. They are cut down for fuel and cleared for often unsustainable agriculture.

Philippe PASTOR'S extraordinary art echoes both the beauty and the tragedy of these sentinels of the natural world. His work brings beauty and understanding to the chaos of nature's destruction and reminds us that to cherish is the first step to conserve.

## Opening day of the exhibition



31 mars 2006 –Left to Right:

1-Mr. Philippe Pastor, Artist, 2-Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the ONU-HABITAT 3-Professeur Wangari Maathai, 4-Mr. Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director , 5-Mia Hanak, Executive Director, Natural World Museum in San Francisco

## The burned trees

### I don't want to forget...

*"I saw the fire burning down the mountain; I cannot resign myself to such destruction and I don't want to forget it. I am horrified looking at such mutilated nature and feel a deep feeling of rebellion towards the authors of this disfigurement...This scene of desolation is nothing but the mirror of our society..."*

« Thus the painter and sculptor Philippe Pastor expresses his anger against the fatal madness of these men. Each year, whole forests are devastated on five continents.

During the summer 2003, the Massif des Maures was particularly devastated with 17 000 flaming hectares. The fire killed ten people including three firemen. There have not been such fires since 1973. In Latin America, extensive fires threaten the ecosystem. Will it ever end? Will the destruction of nature be inescapable?

Before towering disaster, we can lose courage, and give up. So much so that man feels impotent in front of the threat. We can also increase energy to protect the forest to prevent that it doesn't start again. Towns, the local authorities and many residents are working for just that. But still there needs to be greater awareness and a re-launch of good citizenship.

It is I think the role of artists to denounce the abuses of society and to remove the language of renouncement from the ecological engagement. For that, it is necessary to learn once again to see and love the world.

Since autumn 2003, Philippe Pastor has gone into the forest which he liked so much, to cut some burned trees, with the authorization of the Mayor of La Garde-Freinet. The painter put all his energy to cut, transport and carve these black trunks, trees killed by negligence or criminal violence. Thus, the black trunks were going to become again trees. The action is undoubtedly derisory but how poetic. The artist extracted negligible residues of the destroyed forest, at the price of considerable effort. Thus, with this almost nothing, he makes sculptures, trees paired with colours. There is a form of pleasure to see these trees find again their way to beauty under the sky of the Riviera. It is a rescue that only artists and poets have energy to carry out to term.

From beginning to end, the work is exhausting. But the beauty of the gesture has the force of being obvious. One has to see Philippe Pastor cutting the tree in half, in two pieces, then making decorative geometrical cuts on the front and in this way uncovering the inside of the tree.

He cuts with a chainsaw at the heart of the wood's veins then he deposits the colour. The grooves dug and coloured have the vitality of the sap and the violence of the knife. All this is a desperate attempt to mark what symbolized, yesterday, life.

These murdered trees are drawn up proudly between sky and earth because an artist refuses to forget.

Philippe Pastor's trees reflect his personal vision of life. Full of sap and beauty, it can easily fall into artifice and self-destruction. The burnt rind echoes the fire that burns in the eyes of those who, in the last works of the artist, "cannot see." All they worry about is appearance. Whether they are alcoholics or devastated couples, love spreads like the sap through tar flows, in spots and scratches. However, neither the fire nor the tar can completely hide the timid signs of hope and tenderness. Philippe's trees, to be seen from both sides, symbolise the tension between the desire to live and the threat of self-destruction.

These trees burned on one side, painted on the other, have the same offhand grandeur as the Warriors, painted by Philippe PASTOR when he gone back from trip to Saint-Domingue. Armed with a lance like others with an attaché case, they leave for the hunt, secured of their importance.

The ironic charge of such posturing plays on the fact that it mirrors the pretence of the devastation in this corner of the world, near Saint-Tropez.

In this work, existential, love dances with death. The old couple, of mythological origin, hoists indeed the attempt of the painter to height of myth. The Burned Trees, to be viewed from both sides, symbolize the fundamental tension of humanity which is the desire to live versus the threat of its loss. Doesn't it have all the symbolism of fire, this ultimate life which can bring death? »

## The artist's work

"He pours the colour on a large thick sheet of paper, then stops and says, with a luminous smile, listen... «When you saw into a tree, it hurts my leg. "It is the voice of Leo, the companion of painting which tirelessly listens like others would count the stars. Leo Ferré is his friend. He has the same zest for life and the same tenderness. He shows me the mountain, half carbonized, all these trees brutally struck down in the middle of their growth.

Of these trees, only the trunks remain, like tarred posts, without electric wire. The mountain was beautiful with its natural colours, roasted by the sun to which the cicadas sang. Now, they sing in the carbon environment, in a sorry landscape where no one walks anymore. The trees full of sap brought a little freshness.

We leave the studio to join the forest, the carbonized post forest. Two loggers accompany us. The painter chooses his trunks, kinds of scars in blue. The taking away is a symbolic system, just as it is enough to gather a poppy in the middle of a completely red field to feel fragile. We carry the black trunks in order to slice them into sections, to see inside. This is the gesture of an artist, gesture of a poet, who opposes the human madness with disdain of a word. These few recovered trees, cut up then carved in a network of coloured veins cry better than any tear nature disfigured. Coal on the side of the bark, colour in the bed of the wood, is there where sight does not ordinarily get to penetrate. Grooves, dug in intravenous, have the vitality of the sap and the violence of the knife. The scar is everlasting. Desperate attempt to mark what symbolized, yesterday, life. These ravaged trees, today cast in concrete bases, draw up themselves proudly between earth and sky because an artist refuses to forget. Like so many others, he saw fire devastating the mountain. Like so few, he will not resign to its destruction.

"Who remembers the fire? » Pastor asks himself. Here, life returned to its rhythm, with its batch of festivals and parades. The summer will be perhaps, once again, deadly?

Me, I think about Leo, in this studio where everything runs except the colour. This blotting paper absorbs the overflow and makes the colour reappear below.

I think about this painter, wounded by life, who gouges into bleeding dead trees hoping to bring them back to life. »

The town of Sainte-Maxime, near the devastated forest exposed forty two of these trees, gathered in solid mass at the Neuenbürg roundabout, which is the required passageway to get to Saint-Tropez, visited mostly during the summer period, spring 2005 until January 2006. This project was carried out in partnership with association for the revival of the Sainte-Maxime forest, chaired by the footballer David Ginola and whose action is to sensitize the population but also to reintroduce animal and vegetable species on devastated spots. The trees were offered for sale with the profits going toward the Sainte-Maxime forest association.

## The artist

Philippe PASTOR is first and foremost an observer. Each one of his works finds its origin in reality. He seizes the true feeling of human nature which takes refuge behind an attitude of being and spontaneously he will sketch the expression on his drawings books.

He began his work by a series of characters he has met during his trips, such as « **St Tropez Couples** » and « **The Alcoholics** ». Beyond his fascination for the plenitude of loving sentiment, of which he already sensed was artificial and forced, his reflexion fell onto the fall. The moment when man gives in definitively to his fate and his misfortune, his painting evolves, his features begin to hollow out.

Consequently, his motifs blossomed. There are more pressing, more largely occupying the canvas, contaminating virgin spaces with bursts and lines. A rhythm appears supported by the colours that are more marked and darker. The medium is done thicker.

From now on, master of his technique his work brushes constantly on total abstraction and he integrates new materials suddenly in competition with the power of the pictorial medium with other materials, other techniques. Philippe Pastor manufactures his own colour from pigments that he collects during his voyages. The mixtures of which only he has the secret never finish to amazing him. He invents his "brushes:" stick of wood, pine needles and thick drawing charcoals. Cardboard, earth, tar, pigments are liquefied and spread out with more or less violence making it possible for a group of primary forms to suddenly appear. These forms are without immediate attachments to reality. Only the luminous bursts of the pigments and the artist's desire to control could give these scattered pieces the thickness which allows the spectator to perceive there the full expression of our time and to recognize some identifiable figures and characters there.

The series "**The new warriors**", "**Bitches**" and "**Free Series**" show the fragile human comedy: faces and bodies which are unrecognizable and on the softest canvases, reconciliation, the couple and love. His paintings are filled with strong colours (ruby red, bright yellow and dark black) and with brutal forms that are always describing moments of life.

Self-destruction is one of the last topics approached by Philippe Pastor, through his sculptures and his painting. Thus, "Burned Trees", emblematic sculptures of the destruction of the forest echo a series of paintings on paper entitled « **Self-destruction** ». Some of these trees are decorated with pieces of steel entitled damaged cars. Thus, Philippe PASTOR wanted to bring the self-destruction closer to the man by way of the traffic accident and the self-destruction of the trees by the fire.

These sculptures give new life to these large trees, some of which are more than a century old. Through his work, the artist shouts his anger and his revolt and wishes to sensitize the world to the damage caused by forest fires and the need to preserve our natural resources.

Because it is just that, the work of Philippe PASTOR is: to give our world, a more open and rougher representation and especially to attest to the violence which does not cease to mould it.

## **BIO/CV**

### **Philippe PASTOR**

Born 1961

Lives and works in Monaco

Technique: pigments, earth, water and fire

## **2007**

**Italy, Biennale de Venise**, June to November 2007

## **2006**

**Italy**, National Centre for Art and Culture, Institute of Ecumenical Studies Venice 27 October to 22 November 2006

**France**, Contemporary Fine Art Gallery Saint-Tropez July 1 to August 15, 2006

**Kenya, Head Office of UNEP at Nairobi (United Nations Environment Program)**, Sculptures exhibition, *"Burned trees"* March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006 to present

**France**, Festival du Peu in Bonson, Sculptures exhibition, *"Burned trees"* July 15th to 30th 2006

**France**, Nice, Soardi Gallery, Old Matisse studio, *"Itinerant Exhibition" 2005, December 15th to 2006, February 25th*

## **2005**

**Romania, National Museum Cotroceni**, Bucharest, *"Itinerant Exhibition"*

**Italy**, Collective Exhibition, San Leo, *"Saline Alchemy"*

**France**, Le Lavoir Vasserot, Saint-Tropez, *"Itinerant Exhibition"*

**France**, Sculpture exhibition in town, Ste-Maxime, *"The burned trees"*

**Italy**, Galerie Poli Art, Milan, « *The strange cheerfulness of a sad "cansun"* »

**Monaco**, Sculpture exhibition in town, Monaco, *"The burned trees"*

**San Marino**, Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, San Marino, *"The strange cheerfulness of a sad cansun"*

**Italy**, Gallery Ca d'Oro, Roma, *"Pastor"*

**Italy, Museum of Antiquities**, Turin, Collective Exhibition *"Nutrirsi con l'arte"*

## **2004**

Belgium, Cap d'Art Gallery, Genval, *"The new warriors"*

France, Bruno Delarue Gallery, Paris, *"The new warriors"*

## **2003**

**Monaco**, Gismondi-Pastor Gallery, Monaco, *"Passing"*

**Usa**, Monaco Modern Art Gallery, Miami, *"Saint-Tropez Couples"*

## **2002**

**France**, Le Lavoir Vasserot Gallery, Saint-Tropez, *"Saint-Tropez Couples"*

## **Catalogues**

### **2005**

*"Philippe PASTOR – The strange cheerfulness of a sad cansun"* Text: Duccio Tromabori. Photos François Fernandez et Didier Gicquel, Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art of San Marino, Editor Christian Maretti

### **2004**

*"Nutrirsi con l'Arte, or Nourish with Art,"* Museum of Antiquity, Turin, Text: Barb Giovanna, Verso l'Arte Editions,

*The new warriors* Text : Damien Sausset. Photos: François Fernandez et Didier Gicquel

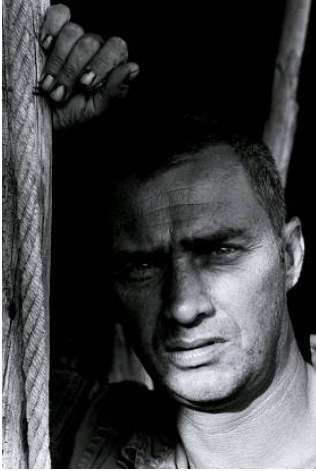
### **2003**

*Philippe Pastor Recent works*, Text: Damien Sausset. Photos: François Fernandez et Didier Gicquel

### **2002**

*Saint-Tropez Couples*, Text: Nadine Bauer. Photos : François Fernandez

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