

## Fabienne Verdier in Majunga Tower

The bulk of the Majunga Tower's 97,000 tons are anchored on four pillars underneath the entrance hall space. Imperceptible to the observer, the center of the building's static forces is located between these pillars, forming an area charged with an invisible energy. This "void" was to be the essential source of inspiration for Fabienne Verdier's work, having been commissioned in March 2013 to complete a monumental painting for the new structure. Fascinated by scientists' claims that only 5% of the Universe's total mass is visible, Verdier set out to uncover an archetypal form expressing this dynamic, however inaccessible to our senses. In concrete terms, she has sought to capture in the act of painting the forces at play between the load and weightlessness characterizing Majunga Tower. The work was conceived to mirror the energies exerting their power over the space and occupy the 8 × 13-meter wall facing the main entrance, between two of the four foundational pillars.

The personal exchanges between Jean-Paul Viguier and Fabienne Verdier confirmed the latter's approach, even revealing an astounding affinity between the creative dogmas of architect and painter. Both artists are in pursuit of a formal language pared down to its bare essentials. The two aspire to the highest level of modernity, utilizing and developing the most advanced technical means in their respective domains. Such means are employed in reconciling technique with nature, rationality with intuition and order with chance, resulting in the creation of livable environments.

The Majunga Tower does not exist as an immovable colossus, erected against the movement of life. The glass facade with its three independent yet linked vertical strips seems itself to express telluric forces. The pliability required for any such building to resist the elements — the 195 meter tower is designed to sway up to 25 centimeters under strong winds — is thus not hidden by axial geometry, but on the contrary deliberately revealed by the angles and curves of the architecture, a choice implying that the usual negative perception of "instability" is abandoned here in favor of a relationship of trust.

Even the interior offers the possibility of deliberate contact with nature. The spaces are to be bathed in daylight, with functioning windows up to the top floor. The fresh air and hum of daily life will thus remain a constant, in particular from the outdoor areas accessible on every floor by the 5,000 occupants of the building.

The Majunga Tower is the achievement of an architectural utopia. Fabienne Verdier recognized within the project certain aspirations that she has tirelessly pursued for years. Her vertical painting in some ways takes the pulse of the earth and the heavens, pursuing the vital dialogue between the void and material forces. That is precisely the core of Viguier's architecture: "This space", he says, "allows one to hold nature in his hands and assimilate its forces." The two artists thus combine the near and far, tangible reality and the intangible. The vital energies of the elements constitute the essential ingredients of their work, in the artists' quest to serve and respond to the needs of humanity.

Fabienne Verdier's painting aims to enter into unison with a tower that both vigorously occupies space while poetically embracing it. For the occasion, the painter once again expanded her traditional Asian calligraphy brushes, simultaneously reducing them to their essential. To create a 7 × 12-meter painting and produce brushstrokes exceeding one meter in width, the painter first attached four brushes, undoubtedly a reference to the four weight-bearing pillars, to a support. This enormous apparatus could be moved around with two sets of handlebars fitted to a plate where the brush handles were replaced by a hoist. Yet after several months attempting with water and ink to regulate and master the flow, the artist realized that, in using a tool consisting of four smaller ink reserves rather than a large central one, the modulations of the resulting brushstrokes had lost their vitality. She therefore chose to lighten the load of the device in her search for optimal energy. That the Majunga Tower exists is essentially thanks to its carefully conceived "heart" or center, much like the brush finally adopted, with its empty space where the ink accumulates. Fabienne Verdier thus invented a powerful yet extremely sensitive tool, capable of transmitting impulses as well as a divining rod.

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