

Gilles Mihalcean *Des paquets d'histoires*. January 13 - February 20, 2016

Galerie Laroche/Joncas is very pleased to present *Des paquets d'histoires* a solo exhibition of new sculptures by Gilles Mihalcean from January 16th to February 20, 2016. This will be the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

Active since the late 1960s, Mihalcean was a leading force behind the development of the region's unique sculptural field in the 1980s. His rough-hewn organic forms are contained, buttressed and framed by the smooth precision of right angles and hard materials, often wood, that obliquely refer to the Minimalist tendencies of the 1960s. In contrast to the professed simplicity of Minimalism, however, these juxtapositions proffer associative and poetic intensities that derive from their incessant movement between small and vast, inside and outside, reality and imagination.

As prolific as he is adept at working in a range of scale—from his spectacular 14-metre-high public art piece *Monument à la Pointe* (2001) and to the recent major commission at the MUHC (McGill University Health Center), to the intimate philosophical propositions that comprise his latest output—Mihalcean's work is unified by his canny sense of juxtaposition and humour, and his ability to make live metaphors from latent materials.

Mihalcean's recent works seamlessly incorporate such means as plaster, wood, found objects and natural fibres. They are heterogeneous and do not rest on formal templates. They pose questions and propose riddles to us, on spatial, material, and linguistic registers.

Though endowed with different tools, the child, viewer and artist are equal constituents in this game, related by their desire to see both the inner and outer realities of things and their attempts to reconcile them.

One of the most fecund capacities of sculpture is to generate and embody a flexible language that operates on several levels: tactile, formal, linguistic and historical. Working through over a half-century of change, Mihalcean has adapted his artistic language accordingly, but seemingly by asking himself simple questions: how do these things fit together? And, what if we could see the other side, as well?

Natalie Zayne