

I bring you to Le Havre tonight because of the city's public swimming pool. La piscine. It's called Les Bains des Docks. It's located on the city's docks, slightly industrial and warehouse'y area. You have to cross foot bridges to get there and try not to get blown away by the wind. It was designed by the architectural firm Ateliers Jean Nouvel and was completed in deux mill weet. 2008 seems strange but it can also make sense. The inspiration of the pool was that of the ancient Roman thermal baths, but if we consider the look and feel of the year 2008 in the context of a revival of Roman thermal baths plus a city with a modernist bent and an affinity for beton, a growing aging population, 16million euros, et voila vous arrive at l'image et le feeling of Les Bains des Docks perfectly.

Jai recocommedne quand vous visite, you get a ticket for the balneotherapy section. The in....terior of the in...door pool is covered in millions of tiny, white tiles. I say millions because sure, maybe it's in the hundred thousands, but let's say millions. The balneotherapy is for whales, no it sounds like it's for whales, but it's for people. It's a certain amount of different pools of water with different combinations of bubbles and things to do with the water and the bubbles, streams. There's one long L-shaped pool that you can underwater jog, or walk, to become stronger. You can hang out in this part like the Romans did or like the whales do, for as long as you desire, devenir plus fort, plus relaxe, having une petite sieste, or thinking about how did I end up at this place.

Once you leave here, you can finally get to the real pool.

So,
You're at the pool, splish splashing, getting your exercise in that boring but impressive way of doing the back and forth laps making you try as hard as you can do to another one because you're so forte and strong swimming like one athelte olympique or you're just going at cinquante% capacity peute-etre, Mostly you're probably just watching the people around you and feeling the sensations of being immersed or demi-immersed, smelling the smells.

There's one pool perpendicular to yours that is collecting women. Femmes of all sizes but of similar ages. First there was un or deux, then there are cinq or sies. They are starting to make a formation. They have different bathing suits on, not all the same. Now there are two lines of 8 or 9 women in each line. They are moving in-place, warmly. Trying to do some sort of warming up. ca chauffe. Warming up in the cold, cholorinated water in this moderne, public place. More women have joined the lines and now there is a third line of them and some women a little further out of the line, outliers, like some of us here tonight, and more women hurrying around to get into this liquid form. They are bouncing and bobbing and smiling to each other. Some of them are talking together and some of them are not.

There's a very energetic force. Like a witch's caldron. Something very powerful about to happen.

PAUSE (drink water)

He appears. He's wearing a neon colored polo shirt, athletic sneakers, sport shorts. He has a very clean coupe de cheveux. I think he has a mustache and he seems to be from what we call The Global South. Puerto Rico, Brazil, maybe Indonesia or even Greece. Possibly Costa Rican, or Guatemalan.

He is incredible. Il es incroyable.

He is made of pure happiness in an abundant, abundant volume. He has different props, accessoires.

Les femmes sont tres heureuses de le voir. He waves bonjour and blows some bisous around. He knows the women in the front row by their first names.

There's music that gets a little bit louder, than you hadnt noticed before because of all the other stimuli. It's pop music, the hits from the radio. You know the words, everyone knows the words.

You have found yourself in the middle of the beginning of the water aerobics class in the modernist swimming pool of this city in Normandie that was bombed to pieces in World War II, and you are witnessing a euphoria that comes from the combination of these contextual things plus this group of highly and not-so-highly motivated women being guided by this messiah of a man. He gets them to move in zero-gravity, gets their hearts battre de plus en plus vite, gets them dancing and singing and laughing and smiling, getting them healthier and plus forte with every pump and lift. They love him. You love him. We love him.

You realize that the only possible thing to do is to make a commemorative bust of this man. You need to make a statue of the man who brings so much with him tout les jours to the la piscine, aux gens, aux femmes. Il fait très froid et il pleut dehors, but no one cares because there's nowhere else that's better to be than to be with him , listening to his instructions about comment bouger le corps dans l'eau , to the beat , and feel good.

To make a bust of this man, we need to find out his name. Or maybe we don't.

We need to remember better what he looks like in order to sculpt his face out of wax that would then become the "LOST WAX", you remember learning about this method dans lecole that had no real application or meaning to you until you found yourself in l'atelier bronze.

To make a bust of this man, we need to find a photograph of him sur internet and bring it to the labo to the 3-d printing machine. The 3-d printing machine will have to guess about what the derrier de sa tete looks like and it will have to guess a lot of the details actually because 3-d is different than 2-d, everyone knows that.

To make a bust of this man, we need to hire a court-room sketcher or actually a sketch artist that the police use to draw criminals based on the descriptions of people who they traumatized. But he's not a criminal and he hasn't traumatized any one, not at all. We want to commemorate his greatness and his glory. So maybe it's not the right approach.

Maybe we just find him again also using the internet somehow, call him, explain to him what you want to do, buy him an aller-retour, pick him up at la gare, bring him to l'atelier, hire a sculptor.

So you decide how you want to create the material to then make the mold of his likeness. The mold will take an incredible amount of time. Hours and hours.

At la fondry, you will watch the technicians change their outfits to wear these space-suits with gloves and boots so that they are safe from accidents. They will fill the mold of the water aerobics instructor with the molten bronze. It will look like it's all on fire; this adds to the glory of this guy. He's the best guy and he deserves fire and metal and beauty and artists and technicians working on his likeness.

We will wait for the bronze to cool down and then we can break open the mold and he will appear through this alchemical process like that that existed in the chlorinated water with the energy and power of the women who are his pupils.

The last part of the process is to nettoyer the guy and that means using some tools to liberate his shininess. Because that's the thing about him, he was and is so shiny, brilliant. You will have to use levels and degrees of sandpapers to make him shine, and shine more. When you can finally see yourself in the surface, in the surface of his face, you know he's ready to be displayed.

-Sophie T. Lvoff
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