

## *Michel Chapuis*

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*CHAPUIS, Michel - French, 20th century.*

*Born 11 August 1925, in Chateau de Beauvoir. Painter. Figures, Landscapes.*

*Michel Chapuis entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux, in 1944. He is also a poet, and in 1949, was a member of the Comité National des Ecrivains (National Writers' Committee), which had links with the Communist Party: through it he met Eluard, Aragon and Tzara. He later got to know Prevert, Picasso, Zervos and Queneau (who published a collection of his aphorisms, entitled *Batons Rompus*, through Gallimard in 1958), and became friends with Roger Vamand and Edouard Pignon. In 1960, he became a television producer. His programme credits include *Plaisirs des Arts* (Pleasures of the Arts) and *Terre des Arts* (Land of the Arts) with Max-Pol Fouchet, Jacques Floran and Jean-Luc Dejean; *Voir* (Seeing), *La Peinture se cache* (Painting in Hiding) and *Champs Visuels* (Visual Fields) with Pierre Schneider and *Le Monde des Arts* (The Arts World). Then, in 1963, he became friends with Poliakoff and Brauner. In 1975, he started producing a programme called *Pont des Arts* (Bridge of the Arts) on the radio station France-Culture; he has also published anthologies of poetry and art books. In 1992, he published a monograph in the form of an autobiography, entitled *Les Sources de l'Oeuvre* (Sources of the Work).*

*From the very beginning, Chapuis has made no concessions in his paintings and they are sometimes quite brutally executed; once dry, they still bear the trace of the rapid, violent gestures that launched the colours onto the canvas. He works passionately; he started out as essentially an abstract painter, and these works made up a large proportion of his output, although he went on to destroy most of them. However, he retained the self-assurance of abstraction in the arrangement of his compositions. His paintings, with their striking, sometimes harsh, colours, may initially recall the Fauves and, when areas of colour are given black outlines, he is reminiscent of Rouault. The assertive Expressionism of some of his compositions, which are populated by frightening monsters and ghostly silhouettes, alternately evokes Odilon Redon and Edvard Munch. His rich, thick, velvety paint is very similar to that used by his friend Bengt Lindström. Finally, the simplicity of his works and the strength of the materials he uses are to some degree related to Art Brut.*

*It was not until 1969 that Michel Chapuis decided to stage his first solo exhibition, at the Galerie Villand-Galanis in Paris, having previously refused to do so. He claimed: 'it is horrible to hang one's paintings for the first time. Through them, I am offering up the most intimate part of me'. Since then, he has shown his works in solo exhibitions in 1980 (a retrospective at the Maison de la Culture in Amiens, Picardy) and in 1988, at the Galerie Arts et Civilisations in Quimper.*

*BIBLIOGRAPHY:*

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