

PAN

AMSTERDAM

THE MILLEN HOUSE



Tableau brûlé, 1978

Charred wood

80 × 100 cm (excluding display case)

Unique

Signed and dated "24.5.1978"

Provenance:

Galerie Swietec, Düsseldorf

Private Collection, Belgium

Created on 24 May 1978, *Tableau brûlé* belongs to Bernard Aubertin's celebrated Tableaux Feu series, the body of work that established him as one of the defining artists of the international ZERO movement. By the late 1970s, Aubertin had developed a radical artistic language in which fire itself replaced paint as the primary medium. Rather than treating combustion as an act of destruction, he regarded it as a creative process—one that revealed the intrinsic qualities of the material through transformation.

The carefully controlled burning of the wooden surface produces a rich monochrome that is anything but uniform. Beneath its deep black appearance lies an intricate landscape of charred ridges, fissures and subtle relief. As light moves across the surface, shadows emerge and disappear, activating the work through texture rather than colour. Like many artists associated with ZERO, Aubertin sought to eliminate illusion in favour of direct physical experience, allowing light and material to become the true subject of the work.

Presented alongside *Monocromo Rosso* (1961), this sculpture-like panel reveals the remarkable consistency of Aubertin's artistic vision. Although the medium has shifted from pigment to fire, both works investigate the same fundamental questions: how a single, seemingly monochrome surface can generate depth, rhythm and movement through its interaction with light. Just as the painted relief of *Monocromo Rosso* transforms red into a spatial experience, the charred relief of *Tableau brûlé* allows black to become equally luminous and tactile. Together they trace one of the most compelling developments within post-war European art—from monochrome painting to fire as an autonomous artistic medium.

Executed only a year after Aubertin's participation in Documenta 6 (1977), this unique work represents the mature phase of his practice and demonstrates why his Tableaux Feu are considered among the most significant contributions to post-war European abstraction. Rarely encountered on the market, they remain powerful examples of an artist who transformed one of humanity's oldest elements into a rigorous and unmistakably modern visual language.