

Following his first ever New York show at the French Consulate, French painter Jean-Pierre Sergent presents his new exhibit, *Suspended Time/Temps Suspendu*, at the French Institut/Alliance Française until the end of June.

The paintings, composed of images silk-screened on plexiglass panels, are presented either in linear formation or in a square arrangement. A water lily, a statue of Venus, an old, broken window, and the execution of a bull all seem to be compressed in this flat and

death. Lastly, dreams, contemplation, and wisdom are to be found."

The second installation was inspired by a painting from Breugel, "The Fall of Icarus." "Icarus is falling, and everybody goes on working in the fields. That's what's happening today, so many things are falling, and nobody sees them. My work is linked to a kind of geography, like Navajo Indians who do their paintings on the floor. There is always north, south, east, and west. The color of an object changes upon its direction," says Sergent.

As he explains, the exhibit it has been designed for this specific location at the request of the FI/AF. "I usually work with a lot of erotic images but because it's a public place, I had to come to an agreement with the FI/AF. In a way, it was interesting because I had to use images that are as violent as erotic ones." For Sergent, the best way to reach the dream, the unconscious, is to start from desire, a desire that can be associated with religion: "My research is also led by an interrogation on the possibilities of living in a society completely unsanctified. I want images with a meaning, holy or not, that doesn't matter; images with a certain power. That's what makes me use taboo, prohibited, violent, or erotic images. A shape, for example, can be empty. It's culture that brings a meaning

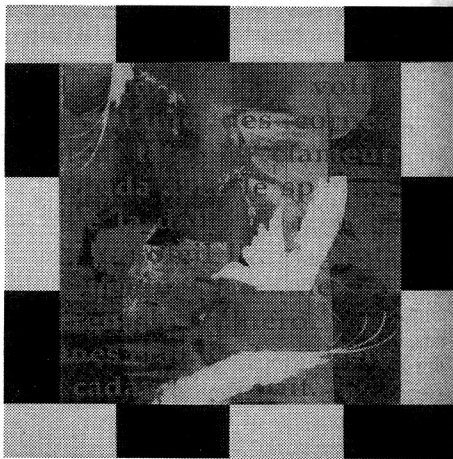
limited space. "Things have been stopped by the photo and the movement is then recreated by putting them together," says Sergent. Texts taken from Georges Bataille's *Story of the Eye* and Alfred the Musset's *Gamiani*, have also been added.

According to Sergent, the first installation can be interpreted as a kind of initiation: "the sudden appearance of the verb, of the energy, followed then by the animality with its confusion, the consciousness of historic time and

to it. Nowadays we use shapes, we put them on the top of each other to build, it's practical but not spiritual." Painting is then an interrogation of time, and images have to become magical in order to get back their spiritual meaning.

After doing abstract painting for ten years, Sergent began silk-screening while he lived in Canada. "I had no roots there. And for some reason, I started reintegrating

images in my work. In the process, silk-screen is like the inversion of a traditional painting. What you see first, is what has been printed first. I like people to discover the



painting after a certain time. But that's what is specific to painting, you don't have to be a victim of time; there is a freedom of the spectator," says Sergent. A freedom reinforced by the fact that, because of the plexiglass, the public dares to touch the work and play with its reflections.

Sergent is also preparing a new exhibit, *Territoires Nomades*, for which he is currently taking pictures of North American Indians.

