



"LAYERING & UNLAYERING THE SACRED"
INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST JEAN-PIERRE
SERGEANT
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AUGUST 14TH 2026 | [LINKEDIN](#) |
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Elena Shliakhtina is an art historian and cultural heritage professional with solid experience in art custody, collections and exhibitions management.

Much of her professional experience was developed at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, where she supported more than 20

exhibitions, managed restoration and collections records, and worked with artworks entrusted by leading museums, including the State Hermitage. She has also collaborated with artists on exhibition texts, catalogue materials, and other art-related publications.

INTRODUCTION BY ELENA SHLIAKHTINA

As an art historian, I approach every work of art through questions: What idea was the artist trying to express? How was the work created? Why did the artist choose these particular images, materials, and techniques? Usually, we search for answers in the artwork itself, in documents, and in its historical context. This time, I had a rare opportunity to ask the artist directly. In this conversation, Jean-Pierre Sergent reflects on the ideas, experiences, materials, and working processes behind his art.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

E. S. BIOGRAPHY. ON YOUR WEBSITE, YOUR BIOGRAPHY SEEMS TO DISTINGUISH QUITE CLEARLY BETWEEN THE EARLY PERIOD IN FRANCE, THEN MONTREAL, AND THEN NEW YORK.

But after that, the structure appears to change: the later years are described less through places or chronological periods and more through series of works. How do you understand this shift?

J. P. S.: Yes, you are absolutely right, as every artist has to find his own way, his own technique, his own theme that he will feel comfortable to develop as an artistic process and his own materials... As for me, after having painted abstract paintings with oil and later on with acrylic, for more than ten years, in France (1984) I felt more comfortable in reintegrating some images; little by little, into some large color fields of plane surfaces, thus including some contemporary press images clips and mixing them with some old traditional patterns, in Montreal (1991-1993) and later on in New York (1993-2003)...

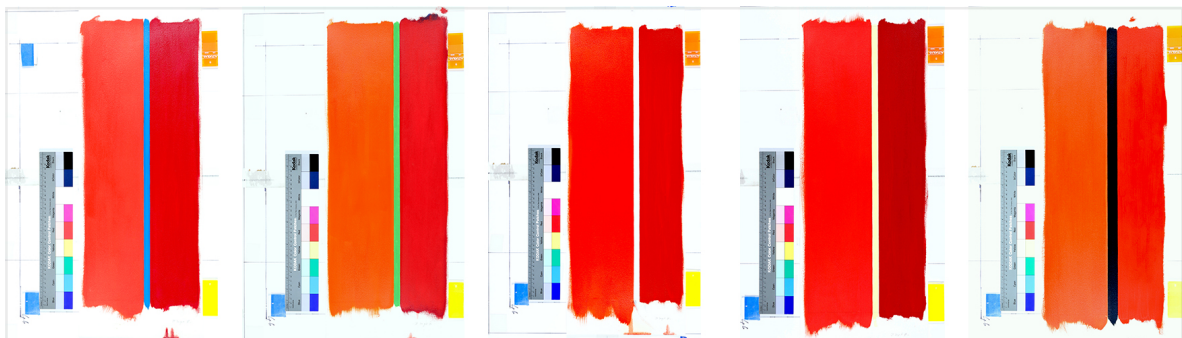
Actually, in Besançon, France, in 2026, I am working for some years with silk-screened images, even if it's a long and fastidious process. Especially since I am working by myself at the studio, it stays the technical way which is giving me the more freedom, and doesn't bore me as I can choose and print whatever image I would like to print and in whatever color I like to. in being however, of course, limited by the size of the silkscreen frames for the size of the printed image.

E. S.: DO MONTREAL AND NEW YORK REPRESENT, FOR YOU, A PERIOD OF SEARCHING THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO THE FORMATION OF YOUR ARTISTIC LANGUAGE?

And do the later series develop within that already established language?

J. P. S.: Absolutely, since I moved my studio back to France in 2004, after having setting up and organised all my studio materials in my former Long Island City location, where I had even bought, to my former boss, Georges Drexel, in LIC, the old big printing press table which belonged before to Andy Warhol. I also bought from him a drying rack for my papers and a plotter, in order to cut out the red inactinic films with my images that I draw out from my computer. Having moved my studio to North America, allowed me to discover a totally new way of differently living, working and thinking about Art and its deep meaning.

A SERIES OF SOME ABSTRACTS OIL ON PAPER WORKS FROM FRANCE, 1984



- 5 x "Untitled", oil painting on Arches paper glued with rabbit skin glue, 76 x 28 cm, France 1984

As I used to live before, on a farm where I had raised some horse and living all by myself, as an hermit, in the Jura Mountains (1981-1991); so It was for me a complete turnaround, to live in some major metropolitan areas as Montreal firstly (1991-1993), and then New York (1993-2003). It was thus there, somehow where I had fully embraced what we can call the true consumer society, with all its different individuals and selfishness excesses (all the "me, myself and I") characters, as in Europe where people were, at the time, much more generous, but things have changed a lot today, and in Europe, people have also become quite individualistic. I have to witness as well every social irrationality, disruptions and dysfunctions, plus also meeting so many artists friends, who had moved

also there to get famous and get an artistic career somehow...

2 POLAROID PHOTOS AT THE MONTREAL STUDIO BY ALAIN PRATT (1992)



- 2 Paintings including several materials: news papers, Plexiglas, ropes, fence net, glass beads and acrylic paint on canvas, #1: 167 x 2,76 cm, #2: 2,76 x 2,76 cm, 1992

E. S.: BEGINNINGS: SURFACE, SUPPORT, AND THE FIRST VISUAL LANGUAGE,

In your early works from the 1980s in France, you often used modest, everyday materials: newspaper, cardboard, acrylic paint, and wood panels. In these works, the newspaper is not only a support, it also creates a visual structure, rhythm, or grid underneath the painted surface.

Did you already think of the newspaper as an image in itself, a texture, or a witness to the world around you?

Could this use of newspapers already create a link between contemporary images and more archaic or symbolic forms?

J. P. S.: Yes, in fact, in France I started using newspaper sheets from the famous French newspaper 'Libération', and I used to glue them onto plywood panels that I built myself in order to have an exact right size for my paintings. As an artist, I always wanted to get out, to exit most of the ideas that would be imposed on Art : I wanted to stop painting on canvas, to stop using expensive oil paints, to escape any artistic guidelines, any sense of what should be done or not. And I am still doing that to this day.

As you said, contemporary daily newspaper images represent the visual information of what is happening right now, right in front our astonished and stunned, wide-eyed gaze, plunging very deeply into at very heart of our own societies...



- #1 - #3, "*The Dance of Today's News*", paintings including several materials: news papers, acrylic paint screen-printed on cardboard and lead or cooper sheets, fence net, glass beads and acrylic paint on unmounted canvas, 1,52 x 1.21 cm, Montreal 1992.

For example, today, in July 2026, a lot of forests are burning all over France, so if I was still working with press clips, I would have certainly used some of those images today, in order to stay as up-to-date as possible with local and global terrible and troubling news!

One can't anymore today, if you have your own consciousness awake of your direct surroundings and in witnessing all what happens in the World, just make Art, and just paint some "flowers" or "landscapes"... As today, so many things are happening around us: environmental disasters, the breakdown of social links between people, animal species disappearing, cultural collapses, despairing of each and every First People, wars raging across the globe, etc...

So, you have to take responsibility for what you would like to present to the public : either to pander to the audience or to take a stance of resistance and criticism.

As Picasso did when he painted his *Guernica*, one of his main art works, as well as with his *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, which was at that time, a slap right in the audience's face! But this one was an aesthetic shock, whereas *Guernica* was a true political cry!

Or unless, of course, if ever one artist can still develop his own superior meditative power and technical spiritual dimension, that could transcends time and all aesthetic standards, like painters as Johannes Vermeer (1632

- 1675) or Caspar David Friedrich (1774 - 1840), the famous German romantic landscapes painter etc...

E. S.: LOOKING BACK AT THAT EARLY PERIOD, DO YOU SEE IT AS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR LATER INTEREST IN LAYERING, COVERING, HIDING, AND REVEALING IMAGES, OR WHAT WE MIGHT CALL VEILING AND UNVEILING?



"The mysterious & magical process of screen printing", photos by Christine Chatelet, Besançon Studio, September 13th 2018.

J. P. S.: Yes, I really like and enjoy mixing information together, and the more different and far away information are, the more it could create confusion into the viewer's mind. And I really enjoy also losing myself into the working process, as I absolutely hate knowing in advance what and how the painting will finally look! It's particularly true with the works on Plexiglas, as it is painted as a reverse glass painting technique and I absolutely can never know before applying the latest coat of monochrome paint with my brush, what the final painting will be. Specially that the front surface of the Plexiglas panels are, during the working process, protected by a greenish plastic film, so it's impossible to guess what the painting will look like when finished...

Integrating different images and information, as it's happening all the time in real life, as for example, if you just go out for a walk for food shopping or even taking some walks into nature, you will have, in front of you, billions of particles of information. I always remember my painting art teacher Mr Jean Ricardon, who always told me: *"To paint is to choose what do you like to paint, it's a choice!"* He was totally right, but somehow, having lived in New York for so many years, I discovered that, one can live also simultaneously into several layers of realities and levels of

understanding other cultures and representations of the World, all at the same time, simultaneously.

As you can, in NY, eat a hot dog just in front of the MET, and five minutes later, to be in a state of ecstasy right in front of the magnificent *View of Toledo* (1595-1600) from El Greco, then after that, being totally stunned and in deep primal trance in front of some huge Asmat Totem Poles from New Guinea. I learned that in New York, to be more open minded, very curious and very attentive to the full diversity of human art forms and cultures, to draw sustenance from it, and enjoy them to the fullest!

E. S.: MONTREAL AND NEW YORK: COLLECTING IMAGES AND BEARING WITNESS: You have written about your need to collect and salvage images from newspapers, especially during your Montreal and New York years. What kind of images were you looking for at that time? You describe the world of the early 1990s as noisy, violent, consumerist, and full of desire and fear. Did working with press images become a way for you to bear witness to that world...



- #1, #2, "News From Montreal" # 1 & 2, 1992, News paper clips & photocopies on acid free paper, acrylic paint and objects on Plexiglas sheets, x 12 panels (35 x 17,5 cm), total dimension size: 35 x 2,14 cm, Montreal.

J. P. S.: I have always been attracted by erotic and sensual images of women's bodies, or sexual interactions representations, as well as some violent images! In order to illustrate, for the violent images of disasters, and bear witness to the immense stupidity and the unclassifiable, appalling capitalist attitude that emanates from all those press images and

from secularisation (the destruction of everything which was at some point sacred, not too long ago). Talking about that subject matter, I would recommend to watch this movie from Canadian movie director Denys Arcand, *Les invasions barbares* (2003):

This is what I said about it in my [*Notes de Besançon 2023*](#)

One of the main scenes in the film that moved me the most is the one where the filmmaker, in a large, dark warehouse, films—in a very gentle, slow, and nostalgic manner—countless statues of Christ on the cross and the Virgin Mary statues, as well as all those votive and religious objects that were once so essential and sacred; all those ciboria, tabernacles, priestly chasubles, and other items—which were salvaged, gathered up like scrap metal, common trash, and insignificant rubbish, and are now piled up and heaped there, hastily, without care or respect, in this immense, impersonal industrial warehouse. And yet what beauty and hope still emanates from all these fallen angels, born of beliefs dating back two thousand years. Objects coming originally from all the Catholic churches that were forced to close during the last recent years in Quebec, due to a lack of practicing Christians in a country that was so Christian and so bigoted right up until the 1960s and 1970s. Objects once so revered, adored, and imbued with so many hopes and votive prayers— that today cannot even find buyers in auction houses. This goes to show that Art value is always time relative, consubstantial with, and parallel to a particular era beliefs and society dictate.

So of course, necessarily, in using contemporary press clips now, even if nowadays there are images chosen from the internet, there are also most of the time porno-graphic ones, is allowing me to take stock of, to assess the state of our natural environment and our cultural environment as well... As for the Art, I just found out today, that the last two art galleries, in my beautiful City of Besançon, are closing this summer...

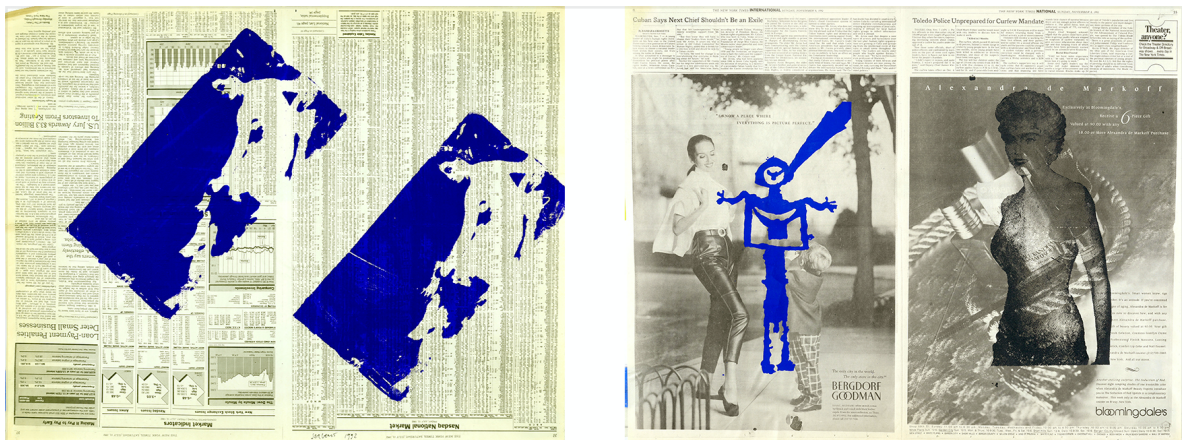
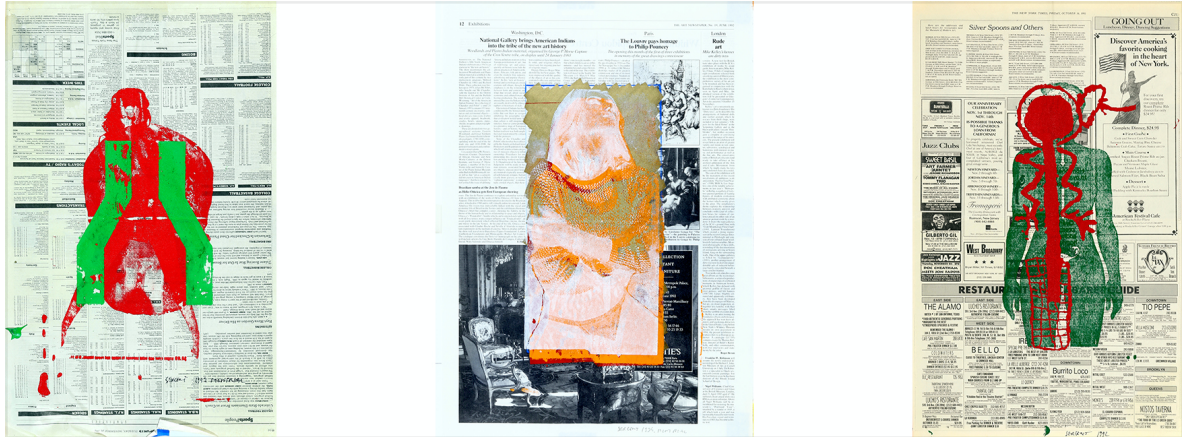
Not even mentioning, of course, the countless wildfires all over France and elsewhere, the Rivers that have run dry, or all the farmers driven to despair by these terrible climate changes and its resulting floods and droughts... WHAT A BIG MESS!

E. S.: IN THE HIDDEN SILKSCREENS AND RELATED WORKS, IMAGES OFTEN SEEM TO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR INSIDE PATTERNS, LAYERS, AND PRINTED STRUCTURES.

Was this "hidden image" already important for you as an artistic method? Many works from this period contain echoes of archaic or prehistoric forms: signs, triangles, animal-like forms, and body-like shapes. Were you

consciously interested in prehistoric art, petroglyphs, cave art, or archaic symbols at that time?

SILKSCREEN PRINTED ON NEWS PAPER FROM "THE FORGOTTEN PORTFOLIO", #1 MONTREAL & #2 NEW YORK (1992-1993)



- # 1 - 3, "The Hidden Silkscreens #15, #87, #28", 1992, hand-silkscreened acrylic paint and acrylic paint on newsprint, unique print, 67 x 52 cm.

- # 4 - 5, "The Hidden Silkscreens #65, #74", 1992, hand-silkscreened acrylic paint and acrylic paint on newsprint, unique print, 52 x 67 cm.

J. P. S.: Yes absolutely, I really like mixing things up with all different kind of images, as you said, geometrical designs, coming from traditional geometric patterns, from some old almost unknown tribes, as the Asmat, or of some traditional archeological Greek potteries or Roman mosaics

from Pompeii, or even Middle Ages manuscripts illustrations mixed altogether with women bodies in orgasms, sex and erotic texts, it's thus creates a syncretism—a new, unified universe endowed with a fresh and distinctive aesthetic power that is far stronger than any single isolated image!

As for the prehistoric art, I went to visit the Pech Merle Cave in France (-17 000 BC) with my sister, long time ago, and also the most famous replica of Lascaux #1, in the Périgord area, South West of France. It was a completely immersive physical and spiritual experience to find myself face to face, directly across from, and physically engaged with—immersed in and surrounded by—all these magnificent drawings of horses, these symbols painted and engraved on the walls and, above all, on that fabulous clay ceiling, which remains, even today, de facto, fresh and alive, and upon which so many shamans, artists, women, and children have added and etched their marks, thus creating unforgettable and unique collective works of art... An intense and powerful collective energy emanates from it. These drawings have been added one on top of the other, layering over the course of nearly ten thousand years, during the various periods when the cave was visited...

This had given me the feeling of being part of an artistic community, belonging and placing myself within the long perspective of time, over deep Time, into a profound timelessness or even Eternity. And I almost wanted to add to those drawings my own fingerprints, to be part of it, and to belong to some deep and timeless human communities...

It was such an aesthetic epiphany, that I began then afterward, to superimpose images, layering images, into my silkscreen prints, one on top of another, without worrying about what was the connection that united or opposed them, and thanks to this prehistoric aesthetic model of teamwork creativity, I was able to enter into my contemporary creative process.



- #1, Collective drawing on the ceiling of the Pech Merle Cave, South West France (-20 000 / 17 000 BC).
- #2, "*Suspended Time*", acrylic paint screen-printed on the backs of Plexiglas panels & colored Plexiglas, 1,40 x 1,40 m, exhibited at the French Institute, NYC, 1996.

I have also been influenced deeply by many petroglyphs from all cultural backgrounds, but, at the point of time, this ceiling at Pech Merle grotto remains my greatest surprise, as Georges Bataille stated in his really interesting book about Lascaux:

"The interweaving suggests that the existing decorations were insignificant at the time a new image was drawn." in *Lascaux or the Birth of Art*, (1955)

In my Art I also often add graffiti, as they don't belong to any particular culture, an ancient roman graffiti, look about exactly the same as a contemporary Japanese one. Drawn on contemporary walls, these are pussies, vulvas, cocks, and ejaculations of sperm—or even piss—all of which spring, in an anarchic way, from the true and sole unquenchable desire to copulate and climax. In this sense, graffiti belongs to no particular culture or aesthetic. It exists by and for itself, even though there are, for the most part, drawn in enclosed spaces—in restrooms—where, after all, we piss, shit, and sometimes fuck, just like everyone else. But these are true cries of desire; and they thus break free from all social and moral and cultural constraints and reveal the urgent, imperious presence of the body and its unquenchable wishes for orgasms and climaxing!

IMAGES OF GRAFFITI



- #1, - "*Large Paper #15*", 2001, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.
- #2, - "*Eve, Adam & the Graffiti*", New York, 1995, acrylic hand silk-screened on Rives B.F.K. paper, 58 x 39 cm.

E. S.: PLEXIGLAS, SILKSCREEN, AND THE PALIMPSEST.

Your later works on Plexiglas create a very different physical presence. What did Plexiglas give you that paper or canvas could not?



- Artist mural installation of the "*4 Pillars Of The Sky*", Besançon Fine Arts & Archeology Museum, photo by Mathieu Allard, August 24th 2023.

J. P. S.: Yes, firstly with the Plexiglas squares panels modules at always

the same dimension of 105 cm by 105 cm, as for, I can mount them onto big walls, as tiles, and create thus, huge monumental wall installations. The final overall dimensions of the exhibited work will therefore depend on the space available at the exhibit location places: Galleries, Cultural Center or Museums. For example, my last exhibition "[The Four Pillars of the Sky](#)", was exhibited from September 2019 to September 2023, in the two stairwells of the Besançon Fine-Arts & Archaeology Museum (the oldest Museum in France). This was a fresco-installation of seventy-two paintings covering a total surface area of eighty square meters and to date, it was my largest and most monumental mural installation.



- "*Cosmic Mechanics of Sexual Ecstasies*", monumental mural installation of 24 paintings (1.05 x 1.05 m), screen-printed acrylic on Plexiglas, 8.40 x 3.15 m,, Maison Laurentine,, Châteauvillain, France, 2020

- Firstly, assembling paintings on a wall is like playing a childish construction game of displaying, on and off different units, as I keep trying, removing and adding pieces until I get a final result that I'm happy with! So, every new installation creates a new display, a new emotion, a new aesthetic choice and shock! it's the "FRESCO-PLAY" and an artistic statement, a composition for which I can choose the paintings from my entire collection of works on Plexiglas created over so many years...

- Secondly, the Plexiglas is giving to those paintings a special light, an aura, a presence, as in the reverse glass painting of some old Russians icons—because the light is reflected there, along with the shadow cast by any viewer passing by. And it also gives the colors a much stronger and more intense glow, fresh, pure and untouched, or touched by pure light and untouched, as if the very substance of the paint were alive, vivid, resonant, and vibrating almost as if they were lit from within. In short, it's like a magical spiritual presence! The painting surface skin's that breathes, screams, and revels in a fusion of colors, shapes, and ecstatic

orgasms!

- Thirdly, by its special really large scale dimensions, as twenty square meter for example, the viewer is thus inside the painting physically all together, in walking in front and as in looking at it and exploring this large, colourful paintings, he is necessary part and merge into the painting, into my universe, and immersed, merged fully and completely, inevitably into it. He enters—not only with his gaze, his eyes, but also with his entire body—and thus can merge, physically, intellectually, and sensually also—whether he wants to or not—into a total fusion a merging with my work.

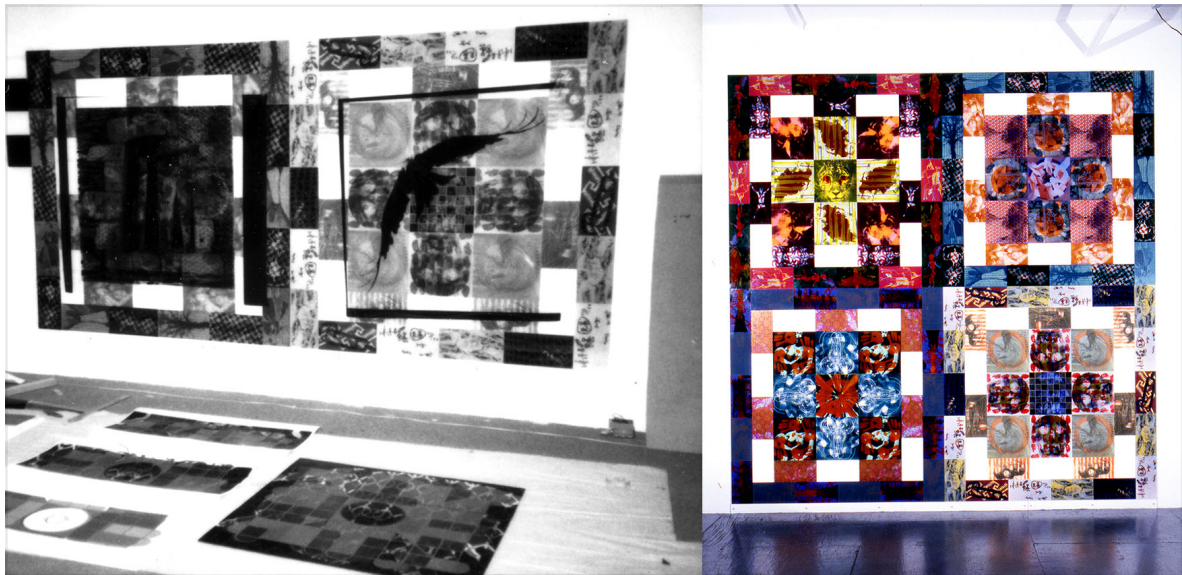
This fusion, however, requires a letting go attitude, as into every true and real spiritual revelation and it is then allowing things to unfold, allowing oneself to enjoy the experience, in placing trust into the artist who, de facto, will then lead you, as into a path, into other different and magnificent colourful universes.

Unfortunately, here, in France at least, viewers remain truly rationalists and they always want to understand, what? They are always on their guard; they are and remain very skeptical and highly critical of my work—which is a real shame and difficult for me to understand and accept. You can never look at Art, have a revelation, or merge with a work of art while calmly and innocently holding onto your hand, your little silver spoon!

E. S.: A TECHNICAL QUESTION: HOW DOES ACRYLIC SILKSCREEN BEHAVE ON PLEXIGLAS OVER TIME?

Are there particular challenges in preserving, storing, or exhibiting these works? Do the colours change over time?

VIEW OF THE JPS LONG ISLAND STUDIO'S, QUEENS, NEW YORK & ONE EXHIBITION IN NYC, 1996



- #1, View of JPS Studio in Long Island City, NY. 1996.
- #2, View of the installation at the group exhibition "*Body, Trace, Memory*", Eight Floor Gallery, NYC, 3,50 x 3,50 m, NYC, 1996.

J. P. S.: Yes that is a true legitimate and relevant question, that I have been also asked to myself over the years. And, in fact, the Plexiglas sheets are made of acrylic based material and I am printing and painting on it, with acrylic paint: so it's exactly and absolutely the same chemical molecule! A few years ago, I asked that exact same question to a chemist who visited my studio and who had been working in a Plexiglas factory in the Lyon area and, as we all know that the first Plexiglas from 1960's, were somehow yellowing after some time... He then told me that the current acrylic sheets of Plexiglas nowadays are totally physically stable because, during its manufacture, a large amount of antioxidant is added to it, which stabilises it over time! It should therefore remain perfectly stable both physically and visually and won't turn yellow...

And of course, the panels are still nevertheless fragile to handle, and when I install them with my assistant Jeff or with museum technicians, we always wear gloves and take great care not to damage the corners and the edges of the paintings. But so far, everything has gone smoothly. You still have to avoid exposing those Plexiglas paintings to direct sunlight, because the panels can extend by a few millimeters under intense heat. But who would ever display a work of art in direct sunlight! You can't even imagine doing that to Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*!

But I would like to quote, at this point and time, something about the art material artists are using for their Art, by the famous sculptor Richard Serra, in an interview published after his death in 2024 on Twitter:

Richard Serra: *"I think the idea that people find raw materials ugly—or that another material isn't ugly—is really tied to the media's indoctrination by corporations and bourgeois "good taste"! You know, first it was plastic, then stainless steel, and now bronze and Corten steel—which are being taken for a ride, so to speak. Probably in 25 years, once Corten steel has disappeared and we're no longer building with it, we'll feel like we're dealing with wrought iron. [...] I think this taste isn't really tied to knowledge of the material but rather to indoctrination: STEEL IS BAD! BRONZE IS GOOD! MARBLE IS GOOD! WOOD IS BAD! I mean, all this stuff cracks me up!"*

It's always about the same old question, is the material used in the working process the true value? (like marble for Michelangelo?) or the creative part, the genius of the artist, which are more valuable? Have the wood poplar panels on which Mona Lisa is painted have any value? Or all the layers of oil painting? The brushes? Or the greatness of Vinci's creative mind?

All that appear to me much more as fetishism, as someone will buy in auction any painting for billion of dollars or, to put it more flippantly: the white gloves worn by Michael Jackson or some of Madonna's panties.

I think it will be appropriate here to mention as a striking example of this problem, the 'famous' sculpture *For the Love of God* by English artist Damien Hirst produced in 2007. It consists of a platinum cast of an 18th-century anonymous human skull encrusted with 8,601 flawless diamonds, which is, for me truly the utmost paragon of human artistic hedonist stupidity, not regarding business smartness, of course! As it's just, for me, some business oriented, a prime example of human artistic hubris. Of course, the artist will never lose any money on in this marketing operation. Even if he had to invest a lot in expensive raw materials to produce its piece. This art work is just a joke, a college prank, as this skull, is almost the exact replica from an old Aztec mask, encrusted with turquoise at the time, from the British Museum. Aztec Art, which I respect highly, as those 'Mexican' masks were fixed on the face of the dead Kings or Queens in order that their images could survive after death, as a mirror effect, following them into all the different underworld levels, that the dead has to encounter during their journey into the postmortem underworlds, Aztecs or Mayans.

Here is nothing about Dead, it's just about the most amount of money, death, snippets of supermarket spirituality—so uninteresting and so

incredibly tacky and ultra-kitschy! Its skull is built with an intrinsic and considerable value due to the precious raw materials from which it is made: diamonds and platinum... just another sign coming from of our ultra consumer society! No more comments!

As for me, the materials are not so important, even if I had to change it, after moving to Canada in 1991, where I was supposed to work with the important Moose Gallery in Toronto, were Jerry, the director at the time, had told me not to work anymore on Masonite and use newspapers as they were too acidic!

That's today the true reason why, I had chosen to paint, from that time, on Plexiglas panels, which is a neutral and non acid material...

But, anyhow, here are a short list of the kind of Art created and different supports and so different from our canvas or wood panels, I really appreciate you looking at. As for, that the viewer will understand what kind of works of art and from which culture, are truly captivating to me on a deep and profound level...



- 1, JPS in **Cuernavaca**, Mexico, photo by Olga Rincon, 1996.

PLEASE WATCH THIS VIDEO ABOUT THAT EXACT SUBJECT MATTER:
[THE IMAGINARY MUSEUM OF JEAN-PIERRE SERGENT | 30 IMPORTANT](#)

ARTWORKS CHOSEN BY THE ARTIST (29 July 2019)

And also: "My paintings are germination, cosmogonies, energy systems, artistic exterminations..." in [Notes New York - 1993-2003](#)

I have always been fascinated by paintings created on media other than canvas or wooden panels. For example, the paintings in prehistoric caves, the paintings on Greek vases, Maya, and Moche, the paintings on Egyptian tombs and wood sarcophagi, Islamic ceramics, prehistoric Chinese pottery, Aztec and Maya codices, medieval manuscripts, Tibetan mandalas, graffiti violently carved into the walls of modern cities, Indian miniatures gouaches paintings, the Mola blouses of the Kuna women of Panama, the spirit-painted white bodies of the Selk'man Indians of Tierra del Fuego, the finger-painted designs on the ceiling of the Pech-Merle cave, the shamanic drums of Siberia or the Americas, the loincloths painted on strips of bark by the Mbuti and Mangbetu Pygmies, Japanese shunga prints, the magical animals spirits designs painted on Sioux tipis, the dream maps on bark by Australian Aborigines, the sand paintings of the Navajo, the paintings on wooden shields by the Asmat, the ceremonial masks of Mexico and Guatemala, etc...

ELENA SHLIAKHTINA'S SHORT NOTE ON JEAN-PIERRE SERGENT'S SILKSCREEN TECHNIQUE

In Jean-Pierre Sergent's work, silkscreen is not only a technical process or a method of reproducing images; it becomes a way of thinking and constructing the image itself.

For readers less familiar with the process, silkscreen is a printing technique in which an image is transferred through a mesh screen. The image is prepared on the screen, while the areas that should not print are blocked with an impermeable material. The screen is then placed over the chosen surface, and paint is pushed through the open areas of the mesh, usually with a squeegee. In Jean-Pierre Sergent's work, this process is especially important because it allows images to be repeated, layered, displaced, and partially hidden, creating the dense visual structure he describes as accumulation and palimpsest.

The screen functions almost like a membrane: it allows the image to pass through, but it also transforms, filters, fixes, and distances it from its original source.

What is especially important is the tension between mechanical repetition and the artist's physical gesture. Silkscreen is often associated with serial production, but in Jean-Pierre's work it becomes highly personal and almost ritualistic. Each printed layer carries a different colour, rhythm, pressure, and decision. The repeated image is never simply repeated; it is

displaced, covered, intensified, or partially lost within the next layer. This is why the technique is so closely connected to the idea of the palimpsest. Images do not disappear completely when they are covered; they remain present as traces and memories. In this **s20240906-jpsergent-at-work-2024-178ense**, silkscreen brings together contemporary images, archaic signs, erotic bodies, sacred symbols, and ornamental structures within one dense visual field, where each layer continues to vibrate beneath the surface.



- #1, Working in the Besançon studio #5, drawing on transparent acetate films, Summer 2024.
- #2, Portrait of the artist working in his Besançon studio #5, silk-screening his images, photo by Sonia Oysel, July 7th 2018.
- #3, Working in the studio #20, exposing the silk-screen frames with the positives films, photo by Lionel Georges, August 13th 2024.

E. S.: YOUR TECHNIQUE IS OFTEN BASED ON ACCUMULATION: IMAGES ARE REPEATED, LAYERED, COVERED, AND PARTIALLY REVEALED. Do you see your works as palimpsests, where each layer keeps the memory of the previous one?

J. P. S.: That's exactly how Life itself works and develops, as palimpsests: generations follow one after another: Skulls, skeletons, and bones endlessly covering, above skulls, skeletons, and bones endlessly covering...

This is the exact and precise mechanical process of Life and all living things... We're born, we live, we reproduce sexually, and then we all die! It's exactly the same throughout my creative process with the images I choose to print, overlaying one over the other one! Not one is more

important than the other one! And the final result is like timeless rocks layering... some geological strata that have been cut through and exposed to time: one layer after the other, it's truly an accumulation process, adding images, in order to get to the last final touch, where nothing can be added neither withdrawn. That's it, it's done and completed, It gushes forth, It's radiant, it enlightens, and it's ever-present, just as a medieval manuscript would!

And of course, all the images that have been printed, even if, at some point, in the final prints, we can hardly see them fully, they are still present as an aura, a spirit, a deep and joyful memory that nourish physically the art works exactly the same as in our real life. As our beloved departed and ancestors are still living within us. Creating thus that fertile ground of memories and history, from which we draw strength every day—in our work, in our daily lives, and, of course, in our dreams.

The overwhelming abundance and overload of erotic information and emotions are meant to transport the viewer directly into a state of spiritual transcendence and images are, in fact, the very nourishing sustenance of Life!

As Carl Gustav Jung once said in his Commentary on the *Mystery of the Golden Flower*, a really ancient Taoist text:

"Everything of which we are conscious is an image, and image is soul by itself."

E. S.: WHEN THE VIEWER LOOKS AT THESE WORKS, IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO FIND ONE "MAIN" IMAGE.

The eye moves through a labyrinth of colours, signs, patterns, and symbols. Is this visual complexity essential to your idea of the work, or is it also a kind of game between the artist and the spectator?

J. P. S.: Yes, my work is definitely a treasure hunt for the viewer, and it demands and requires an effort on their part, because nothing in it really obvious or predictable—there's a profusion of images drawn from multiple cultural references! In this way, I want to create an aesthetic chaos that is unsettling and overwhelming. It is really an energetic and aesthetic chaos! Because my work cannot be grasped—neither rationally, nor visually, nor culturally, nor even aesthetically—without letting go of one's preconceptions and preconceived notions... And furthermore, it is very distinctive and unique in its direct, "in-your-face," and highly provocative approach; this requires effort and initiation, just like in any true and deep spiritual experience!

I once wrote in New York that beauty is born of confusion (in [On Beauty And So On... \(2014-2026\)](#)), and then, when we're confused, moved, or deeply shocked by something, we then forget everything—and we are forgetting ourselves as well; we're fragile and vulnerable. Perhaps it's this state into which I'd like to immerse the viewer in my works.

Yes, a state of aesthetic confusion so that they can finally enter the work and the heart of its subject matter—Life itself. It's not meant to be malicious, but it's true that I like to unsettle people, and I think that's one of the most important and primary roles of art and artists. But of course, there must be substance behind that shock, that provocation... which is no longer the case for most artists, who use only the first part—the shock, the provocation—without adding any substance, any meaning behind it! Their work are as empty as the minds of most of our contemporaries—who would want to die in front of a Jeff Koons? Personally, I'd rather die in front of a Rembrandt or a Vermeer, just in case I could ever choose!

E. S.: MAYAN DIARY AND THE SPIRITUAL-EROTIC IMAGE: IN MAYAN DIARY, YOU BRING TOGETHER MAYAN SOURCES, EROTICISM, SHAMANISM, COSMOLOGY, AND IDEAS OF DEATH AND AFTERLIFE. What was your first encounter with Mayan culture, and why did it become so important for your work?

J. P. S.: I get the chance to travel several times, with my dear girlfriend Olga, who is of Colombian origin and has the Indian look. We have been visiting several Mexican Pyramids locations as Uxmal, Monte Alban and Chichen Itza, as well as also the Museo Nacional de Antropología of Mexico. Needless to say that facing and discovering the strong cosmic, spiritual and physical energies of those sculptures and architectures and also the telluric power and life-forces of the Toltec, Mayan, Aztec, Mixtec Arts, and of course, not to mention how the vivid, stunning, vibrant colors of the tunics worn by modern-day Maya women and the magnificent ancient pottery, had shaken me to the core of my soul forever. It was like losing my virginity once again!

IMAGES FROM MEXICO



- #1 & #3, "*Cōātlīcue*", the Aztec goddess, (skirt of snakes).
- #2, "*The Flayed One*" is a life-size red terracotta figure, the embodiment of *Xipe Totec*, the Aztec god of renewal, nature, agriculture, and rain. He flays and strips himself to nourish humanity, symbolizing the corn kernel shedding its husk before sprouting. Natural History Museum of New York.

To encounter so many forces—at once sexual, morbid, and libidinous: stone, granite, snakes, countless skulls, and of course *Cōātlīcue*, (the Aztec goddess who gave birth to the moon, stars, and *Huītzilōpōchtli*, the god of the sun and war.) the monolithic goddess, at once maternal and cosmic; very ugly, monumental and scary, yet she remains very sensual, just like any true Goddess worth her name!

To discover also some Aztec priests in ecstatic trance performing human sacrifices, then wrapping around themselves, the victims' skin, to steal their energy and thus, assuming their identity, becoming true sacrificers, and even eating their hearts to draw out, down to the very marrow, the vital energies necessary for survival... It was Life and it was Death, and their intertwined and inextricable connections Cycles... Knowing that the priests could travel—thanks to their shamanic trances, sometimes induced by self-inflicted bleeding from their penises—to fall into trance and enter other levels of reality, was simply absolutely fascinating and Pre-Columbian Art had given me some strong and unforgettable art and life lessons, that I will never forget!

And it had absolutely nothing to do with what I had known before and which is so properly and innocently called "Art" in France and Europe! That was alive! Sexual! Dissonant! Disharmonious! Chaotic! The biggest, most vital mess I'd ever encountered, with Death, of course with skulls and skeletons all over! An aesthetic of the Real, the Living, bloody bodies sexualized, the one that pisses, fucks, gets hard, and shits! (It was no longer those famous Greek "*Kouros*" statues, so aesthetic and so

constipated by normative standards of beauty...!) It was the living energy of the primordial Earth (*Pacha Mama*), the Moon, of the Cosmos and the Sun, which they even fed with human sacrifices on each and every day!

FUCK AND FORGET DEEPLY ALL EUROPEAN ART WHICH IS TO BE THROWN ONCE AND FOR ALL INTO THE TRASH AND THE DUSTBIN OF ART HISTORY!



- #1, Pyramid of Uxmal, Yucatan, Mexico
- #2, *El Tigre*, The Jaguar Throne inside the "*Templo de Kukulcán*" (El Castillo), Pyramid of Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico
- #3, Plan of the cosmic "*Axis Mundi*" at the former pyramid of Tenochtitlan, Precolombian Mexico

This is the text I wrote about this series of works on Plexiglas:

"UXMAL - NEW YORK, A "MAYAN DIARY" (New York, 2000)

- "*When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet, I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.*" C.G. Jung

Uxmal; from those ghostly ruins there still emanates the magic energy of a whole civilization. New York; is where I live, a place that will also become one day, with the perpetual gnawing of time, a faded and forgotten skeleton.

This body of paintings was created in a musical, serial, tonal and repetitive style.

The main image is one of the Mayan corn-god *Wak-Chan-Ahaw*. the one who made everything happen, who created the universe, and who fertilized the world. He is dressed, or undressed, by two beautiful naked women, mothers-lovers-goddesses who throughout their gestural offerings bring him back to life, to germination. This image is a metaphor for the human soul resurrection from the underworld journey after defeating the Lords of death. This scene from the Mayan mythology takes place on the first day of creation, under water, in the primordial sea, and therefore has a very strong relationship to cosmogonies and the human unconscious.

Some images come from contemporary pornography, also featuring its archetypes of phallic resurrections and germinating offerings. Other images are from shamanic drawings, some are spatial representations of the *Axis Mundi*, while others are drawing from shamanic journeys I have experienced under hypnosis. There is also some vulvas genetic patterns, and some imprint of classical Mayan vases and ground-stone chisels.

What should be also be said about this first series of monumental art works on Plexiglas, is that it did occur because of three very important encounters in my life, three conjunctions, three significant moments, which changed my life for ever, as essential and fundamental revelations! Because about the exact same time periods, simultaneously and by coincidence, in a kind of cosmic convergence, when I had visited the countries of Mexico and Guatemala:

- 1. I meet my therapist Glenda, a close friend of my dear old friend Johnes Ruta. She initiated me to the shamanic trances though Ericksonian hypnosis sessions, which really had opened my mind as well as my body to spirituals trips, as the all writers of the beat generation have done: Kerouac, Ginsberg, Snyder...
- 2. Several trips to Mexico have been still shaking me deeply and I got lucky enough to buy there several Mexican masks, most of them of *E/ Tigre* (the tiger animal spirit) and some ancient pre-Columbian stone axes, and potteries. To this day, they are still in my studio, and they undeniably add a specific Mexican touch—and a very strong and powerful spiritual presence!
- 3, At the same time I meet also a woman lover from African and Apache background. Sexually it was also a kind of profound and new unbelievable sexual revelation and initiation.

So finally, the Mayan Diary series is all about that four main themes: SEX, SHAMANISM, COLOUR AND ART!



- #1, "Large Paper #156", 2001, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.
- #2, "Mayan Diary #94", 2010, acrylic paint screen-printed on the backs of Plexiglas panels & colored Plexiglas, 1,40 x 1,40 m.

Here is an excerpt from the book *The Four Suns* by Jacques Soustelle to better understand the deep and complicated meanings of some Aztecs rituals and cultural practices:

Thus, men know that, with the gods' help, yet another battle has been won against nothingness. [...]

But the Sun refused to move unless the other gods burned themselves in turn. And so the gods sacrificed themselves, and ever since then, the Aztecs—who considered themselves 'the people of the Sun'—have been condemned to imitate them, so that the universal machinery might continue to turn.

- *So human blood was, in a way, the world's energy?*
- *Exactly, and it was needed constantly to fight against this tendency toward degeneration, against entropy.*

VISUALS OF MAYAN TUNICS



- 3 traditional Mayan women's tunics that I bought with my friend Olga in Panajachel, Guatemala, in 1998.

To conclude this chapter, I must also share a brief anecdote about the important weaving work of traditional Maya women tunics, which, I believe, is recounted in the book *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path* by Linda Schele, an American anthropologist who has traveled extensively in Mexico and Guatemala. She recounts meeting, in a tiny village, an elderly weaver of traditional Mayan women's tunics, adorned with cosmic, human, and spiritual symbols: animals, connections to the earth, the sea, and the cosmos, and so on. She asked her this pertinent question:

- *"But you weave and design patterns so small and complex that no one on Earth can truly see or understand them?"*

- The weaver replied, smiling very humbly, fully aware of an ultimate and spiritual truth that the American interviewer was unaware of and would likely never understand:

- *"Yes, of course, you're probably right, but even if no human being can see them, God alone can see and understand them!"*

In fact, that is exactly what it means to be an artist: even if no one truly understands our work, we are always speaking—somewhere—to a kind of God, to a common and universal spiritual energy that transcends us all... in the Great Cosmos, that is how it is!

Just have a look at some Pollock's paintings and the Sand paintings from the Indian Navajo shamans, and so on, and so on...

E. S.: IN THESE WORKS, EROTIC IMAGERY IS NOT PRESENTED SOLELY AS SEXUALITY. IT SEEMS CONNECTED TO BIRTH, DEATH, TRANSFORMATION, AND COSMIC ENERGY.

How do you understand the relationship between eroticism and

spirituality in your art?

J. P. S.: Yes, absolutely—for me, adding and layering erotic images in abundance, almost *ad nauseam*, one on top of the other, as in a Tantric ritual, is an artistic means of stepping outside the ego as well as the profane world, to enter—paradoxically and almost alchemically—through imitation, (much like in the act of masturbation, where we all get aroused, all alone by ourselves, at the sight of a woman climaxing, screaming! and ejaculating on the other side of the screen!); through consubstantiation as well, when the image takes root within us as in a dream and were everything merges together as a Whole.

At that very moment, there are no longer any discrepancies, no paradoxes, in a world that is absolutely sacred, radiant, pure, and transcendent! All of this is described absolutely beautifully in this lovely little passage from the **Pilgrim's Psalms** by the wise Indian hermit and traveler, Tukaram (17th century):

All of this is described absolutely beautifully in this lovely little passage by the wise Indian hermit and traveler, Tukaram (17th century):

"PILGRIM'S PSALMS", TUKARAM

XXVIII

*At the touch of fire,
all becomes fire and remains so.
Name, substance, nature—
what remains afterward?
At the touch of the magic stone,
iron becomes adornment for the world.
Flods, rivers, streams—
at the touch of the Ganges, they become the Ganges.
At the touch of fragrant sandalwood,
all wood becomes sandalwood.
With the touch of their feet,
the saints have blessed Toukâ:
where can one find any dissimilarity?*



- "*Karma-Kali, Sexual Dreams & Paradoxes #39, #2 & #41*", 2022, acrylic hand silk-screened and Indian ink on Rives B.F.K. white 250g paper, unique print, 76 x 56 cm.

In fact, I also love things that slips away, that switch apart, what breaks the boundaries, what is rebellious and on the fringes. Or, nowadays, at least, in France and in the West in general, everything and anything is dissected, analyzed, and proven scientifically and rationally. We no longer have any sense of the Whole, of the the global picture, of the vast interconnectedness between all things, all living beings—the interconnection, the grand Cosmic Mechanism, or even, more simply, the boundless generosity of Life and its diversity—all of which are shrinking like shrunken skins! Apparently one must dissociate everything, separate everything, in order to understand—and to buy and sell it!

IN [NOTES DE NEW YORK - 1993-2003](#)

Our societies operate on the basis of negation:

No to sexuality,

No to love,

No to nature,

No to animals,

No to plants,

No to spirits and gods,

No to communication...

Yet my work is part of the World's vast diversity and destiny, which de facto includes sexuality, orgasms, travels into other worlds, eroticism, tantric rituals and cosmic energies as for, spirituality of course, all of that being strongly connected and glued together, into a collective creative globale energy—and that poses no problem, because it is a Whole, a Unity, from which nothing can be taken away or added.

Surely Morality has nothing to do with Art; to be an artist is to be FREE, period!

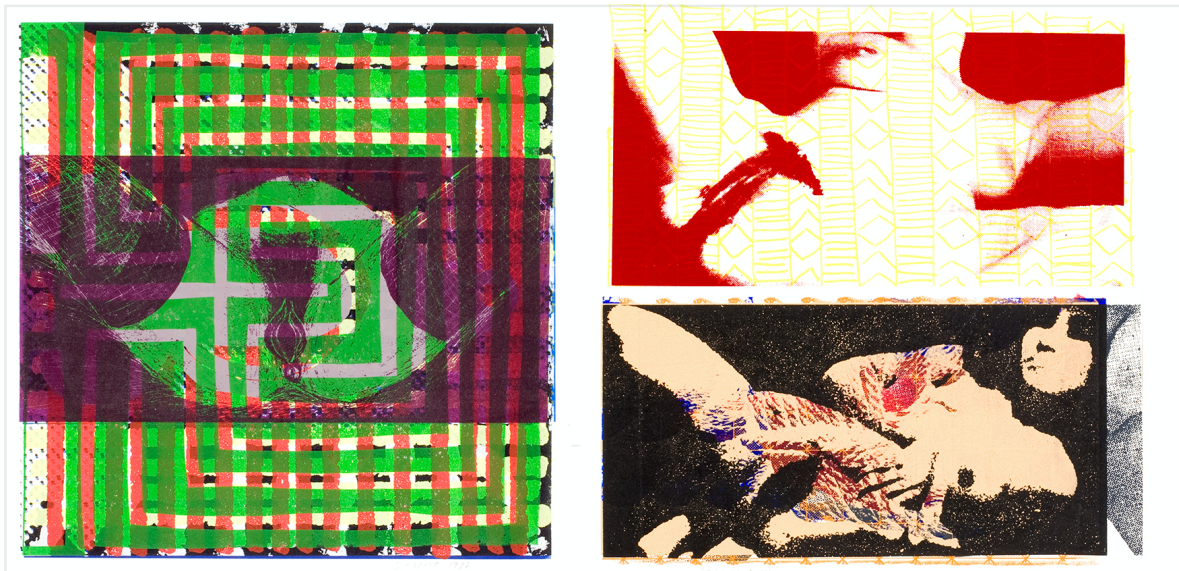
There is absolutely no conflict or opposition between sexuality and spirituality—nor should there ever be. One does not contradict the other, at least not in my work, and that is my main mantra!

E. S.: THE FEMALE BODY APPEARS AGAIN AND AGAIN IN YOUR WORK AS A POWERFUL, OPEN, GENERATIVE IMAGE.

At the same time, the male body is often reduced to the phallus rather than shown as a full figure. Is this contrast intentional? What does it mean for you?

J. P. S.: EXUBERANT PLEASURE —NOT SADNESS OR MORBID SIN— ARE AT THE ORIGIN POINT OF HUMANKIND!

THE FIRST SCREEN PRINTS IN NEW YORK WITH NAKED WOMEN BODIES & VULVAS, 1994



- # 1-3, "*First Screen Prints from New York #110, #21, #16*", Acrylic silk-screened on Rives BFK paper, unique print, 56 x 76 & 38 x 56 cm, 1994.

A completely serious—and by no means simple—way to answer your question about this significant, overwhelming, unambiguous, and omnipresent presence of the female body in my artwork would be to quote here, quite aptly and in a simple and entirely appropriate manner, this superb, sensual line from Michelangelo Antonioni's film *L'Avventura* (1960), starring the magnificent blonde actress Monica Vitti, who is at once sensual, mysterious, and enigmatic...

Deeply aroused by the purely erotic works of a young artist, displayed all over his studio—works that, in fact, looked far too much like very poor copies of Picasso's paintings... one of the two female visitors, a friend of Monica Vitti's in the film—very bourgeois and prim, yet completely aroused, titillated, and deeply impressed, disturbed, uncomfortable, and getting wet in her panties at the striking nudity and the overwhelming, obviously sexual obscenity of the bodies depicted in his paintings—then asked the artist, with curiosity, candor, and mischief:

- "*But why do you always and systematically paint only naked women's bodies?*"

- The artist replied quite simply: "*I have seen countless landscapes, but I have never seen one as beautiful and sensual as a woman's body can ever be!*"

So that's why I am simply painting always naked women in ecstatic

orgasms, and sexual climax!

As nothing, to this day, has ever impressed me more, sexually, visually, sensually, and had never given me more pleasure into my real life, as all the rest, seems to me just poor *ersatz*, forgery and facsimile of it...

THE UNIVERSAL AND ENDURING FASCINATION WITH WOMEN'S GENITALS AND VULVA



- "Entropic Suites #130", 2015, acrylic paint screen-printed on the backs of Plexiglas panels & colored Plexiglas, 1,40 x 1,40 m.

- "Mayan Diary #136", 2010, acrylic paint screen-printed on the backs of Plexiglas panels & colored Plexiglas, 1,40 x 1,40 m.

"The body of the woman is the overwhelming triumph of flesh. The woman is a concrete universal; she is a world, not an externalized world, but under the world, the warm interiority of the world, a compressed internalized world." Gilles Deleuze

We have to admit it: everyone—men and women alike—is fascinated by the female vulva. One need only recall the immense impact of that scene from Paul Verhoeven's famous film *Basic Instinct*, where Sharon Stone mischievously uncrosses her magnificent legs and reveals her pubic area—which we know is bare naked, as the story tells us—and everyone imagines seeing it, touching it, caressing it, possessing it, bringing it to orgasm, and penetrating that exposed sex.

The part we don't really see, but everybody know is there—an immense embodiment of feminine mystery and the quintessential erotic scene. As

are, in fact, many scenes featuring actresses filmed completely naked in steamy sex scenes by this director in other films such as *Black Book* and, more recently, *Benedetta* with French actress Virginia Efira...

And in all these films, the woman's body is always shown in its entirety and completely naked—breasts, vulvas, etc.—and experiencing orgasmic pleasure, not merely as a sexual object, but also, and above all, as a deeply conscious and spiritual being.

This is truly exceptional and very rare in cinema, where most actresses are merely objects of desire, mere sexual obsessions under the insistent, masochistic, voyeuristic, libidinous, and perverse gazes of male directors.

Here, of course, we think of Hitchcock and the platinum-blond Tippi Hedren (so pure, so innocent, and yet so sensual and erotic) being attacked and bitten by birds—phallic symbols—in his film *The Birds* (1963).

But also Catherine Deneuve, in Luis Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* (1967), as mud is thrown onto her body—bound and offered up, her purity and beauty untouchable, unattainable— a virgin sexually defiled by shit, her beauty and ego thus completely destroyed, annihilated, so that she might fully become an anonymous object of desire, available to all viewers through dreamlike fantasies of surrealistically pure pleasure!

All of this reminds us that this fascination with the vulva is truly universal and timeless, and we can, of course, recall here Gustave Courbet's famous painting *The Origin of the World*, which, after so many years of the female genitalia being forgotten and concealed, restored its full dignity and thus fully reintegrated it, not only into the history of art, but by making the vulva, once again, an image that is publicly viewable and appreciable—and more than that, not merely acceptable within intimate, private settings.

And, as Peter Greenaway so aptly put it in a dialogue from his famous film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, where someone says at one point, this famous line: "*Men love women, women love women, and even dogs also love women!*" It is, indeed, a true and undeniable fact!

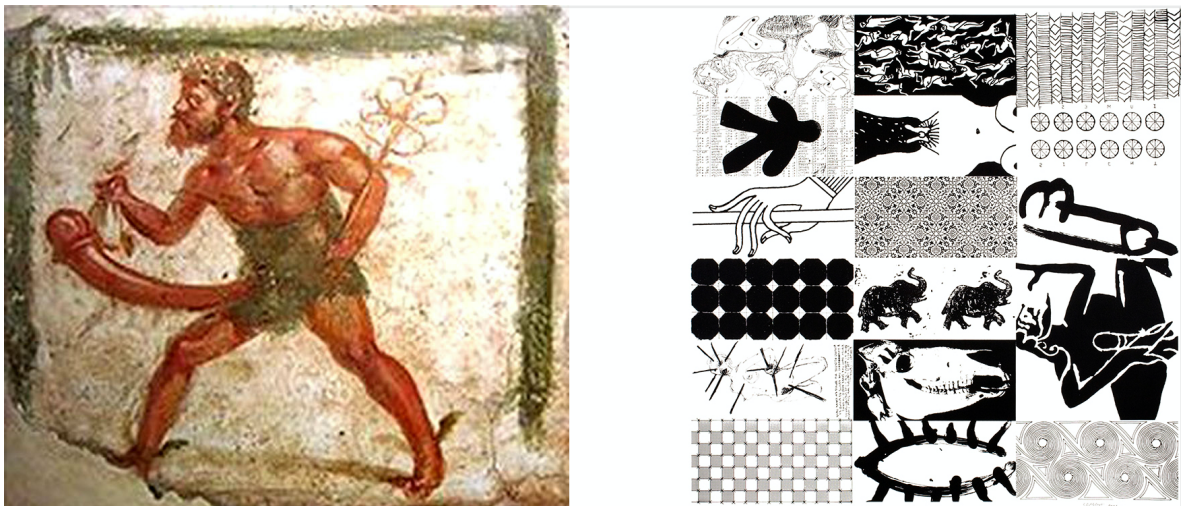
All of this reminds us that this fascination with the vulva is truly universal and timeless, and we can, of course, recall here Gustave Courbet's most famous painting *The Origin of the World*, which, after so many years of the female genitalia image's being banished, forgotten and concealed, restored its full dignity and thus fully reintegrated it, not only into the History of Art, but by making the vulva, once again, an image that is

publicly viewable and appreciable (But not for children, of course) and more than that, not merely acceptable within intimate boudoirs private settings.

And I'm also interested in strength, power, and Feminine cosmic force-task power and energies, like those of Indians goddess *Durga* or *Kali* from the Indian mythologies, as I believe that they could escape totally the straight linear male historical time narrative, in order to enter into the circular fertile, repetitive, and regenerative Life Cycles rhythms of Nature as a whole.

And, yes of course, on the opposite, subsequently, I am not too interested in representing male bodies, as being a man and knowing all its mechanic and anatomy perfectly, I am not too crazy of speaking of my own body, neither about myself.

I really like the opposite as well as the male-women double sexual energy. Even though sometimes, I showcase some images of entranced male shamans, or masturbating or ithyphallic Gods as *Dionysos* (the ancient Greek God of wine, merriment, and theater), *Bes* (ancient Egyptian god of childbirth, fertility, sexuality, humor, and war), or *Priapus* (phallic Greek god of vegetable gardens)!



- #1, *Priapus* (phallic Roman-Greek god of vegetable gardens).
- #2, "*Large Paper #24*", 2001, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.

Secondly, I am not too crazy either about all the male long and bloodily heroical Men stories about heroes going out to war and conquering women and enslaving some other part of territories and destroying other

cultures of humanity, as all the Homeric characters, and all the big Men as Hector, Achilles, Ulysses, Caesar, or even Christopher Columbus, all the conquistadors and all the Napoleons, etc...

And to joke a bit about the Trojan War and *The Odyssey*, the new movie just getting out those days, directed by Nolan, please read this small poem from a disrespectful and mocking anonymous Roman writer from the first Century AD, highly irreverent, subversive, and also very mocking of all these "male-games":

"THE GAMES OF PRIAPUS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF EROTIC EPIGRAMS", BY FLORENCE DUPONT

68, HOMER REVISITED

I sound like an uneducated, crude peasant

forgive me: I'm a country bumpkin, not a bookworm.

*I'm a boor, yet from listening to my master
read all day long,*

I know two or three Homeric etymologies by heart.

What we call "spurting cum," Homer called a "thunderous geyser. [...]"

That cock stole his tender lover from his buddy Achilles.

The girl belonged to Peleus's son, but she preferred his cock to his own.

*Yet he, Achilles, when he sang his funeral lament,
got a harder erection than the strings of his lyre.*

That is the origin of his famous wrath and of the "Iliad".

The sacred song came from his cock. [...]"

No one wielded his weapons better than my dear Ulysse

his bow as well as his cock;

*since he's gone, it's up to you to prove yourselves now
show me what you're worth.*

So I may choose my hero and make him my husband,

*Penelope, I could have won the contest and you would have chosen me,
but at that time I didn't exist yet!*

Isn't it better to make jokes about all those big male-driven wars all over the World, today and throughout history? It's just ridiculous and obnoxious! Maybe it is better to laugh it off a little humorously and not taking them too seriously.

As for me, one again, I am more interested by the feminine karma-force-task power and energies closer to that of Indian goddess *Durga** or *Kali***, from the Indian mythologies, as I believe that they could escape absolutely the straight linear male historical time, in order to enter some other circular fertile cycles, repetitive, and regenerative rhythms of Nature, the endless cycles of Life and Death throughout sexuality, of course!

** Durga: The Inaccessible One, is one of the most important deities in Hinduism, regarded as the principal aspect of Mahadevi, the Ultimate Reality.*

*** Kali, "The Black": is, in Hinduism, the goddess of preservation, transformation and destruction. He who worships her is freed from the fear of destruction. She destroys evil in all its forms and especially the branches of ignorance such as jealousy or passion.*

IMAGES OF PENIS AND VULVAS



- #1-3, "*Karma-Kali, Sexual Dreams & Paradoxes* #139, # 24 (2022) & #2" (2024), acrylic hand silk-screened and Indian ink on Rives B.F.K. white 250g paper, unique print, 76 x 56 cm

HOWEVER, HERE ARE BIG PHALLI THAT EJACULATE SEMEN!

Regarding the constant use, in my work, of the countless large, ejaculating penises that feature prominently in my paintings—because it is a very sacred and very positive symbol! For example, in the book that a friend of mine brought me back from Bhutan: *Phallus, Crazy Wisdom from Bhutan*, by Karma Choden, it says:

The phallus protect, aids fertility and challenges the human ego. The strike of the erect thunderbolt phallus is enough to tickle your ego down to flaccidity.

Indeed, contrary to what one might think, the obscene images are not something gratuitous or irreverent; it undoubtedly serves a very specific purpose, as it also help to dismantle any established order, reintegrating sexual freedom into the social order—just like any true spiritual practice! For, in traditional cultures, obscene words and images have always served a ritual function of challenging the gods—to destabilize them and overturn moral or even aesthetic notions! And besides, they're also so funny and absurd that—as this quote so aptly puts it—they completely and permanently annihilate the viewer's ego, while making the audience laugh and throwing them off balance! So here are a few big, ejaculating penises and some obscene words....

IMAGES OF EXPOSED SILKSCREEN FRAMES, SUMMER 2024



DESCENT OF DEITIES

At the Lhabotd - summoning deities - ritual in Trongsa and Wangduephodrang, a Phajo (shaman) chants and invokes the deities to descend to earth through a cotton string and a ladder with the tip of its railing carved as a phallus. Another ritual in the same region called Bala Bongko is performed to appease Radarp, the local deity, by uttering obscenities.

Here is a quote about this crazy Bhutanese monk: *The Divine Madman, Drukpa Kunley, Tibetan Tantric Yogi*, by Geshey Chaphu.

"Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529) was born in Tibet and also lived in Bhutan, after shooting his magic arrow there! In Bhutan, he is still revered today and has been elevated to the status of a national hero. He is a monk yet at the same time detests all dogmas, mantras, monasteries, honours, religions, and all wealth..."

He loves always to have sex with women and show off his dick everywhere and all the time! He is truly The "Crowned Anarchist" — ref. to Antonin Artaud, *Heliogabalus or the Crowned Anarchist* —the quintessential example.

INTRODUCTION

Kunley's sexual activity is just one of the means he uses to free people from ignorance—that universal psychosis that obscures within all of us the Buddha-nature inherent in being—and to uproot static conceptions of who we are and what we should and should not do. The genius of his therapeutic skill lies in spontaneous speech and action that awaken awareness of authentic existential reality. Insults and laughter are the deft means he employs to urge beings to abandon the lethargic acceptance that results from their attachment to conventional forms. All of Drukpa Kunley's relationships are governed by the art of his desire to attain enlightenment alongside others and in a lasting way.

THE OBSCENE MANTRA

After downing a few sips of chang with his guest (the peasant), Drukpa Kunley, feigning ignorance, asked him the reason for his visit. The old man timidly asked for a teaching to practice in order to attain Enlightenment. - "Well," declared the unrepentant sage, ostentatiously waving his empty

bowl in the direction of the servant girl, "I'm not quite sure what to tell you... All right, here's the thing: if you recite this mantra aloud a thousand times a day, you'll be liberated from samsara:

"Om mani pedmé Houg."

The Jewel is in the Lotus.

I contemplate the old woman's cunt, which resembles an impenetrable, spongy flask.

I meditate on the old man's penis, which dangles like a withered radish.

I take refuge in the triumphant semen

Of my incomparable master,

Who, through the firm lotus of

The young beauty, spreads waves of bliss.

"Om mani pedmé Houg."

Back home, the peasant told his wife and his youngest daughter—whom he had not yet been able to marry off due to lack of means—about his encounter with his master. And to conclude, he chanted the mantra for them that he was supposed to recite a thousand times a day. The blushing maiden fled the room, shouting that he was crazy, while her mother grabbed a broom to silence that disgusting old man who, rosary in hand, continued to recite the salacious words. [...]

Months went by. One evening, something disrupted the mother and daughter's dinner. A deafening silence had fallen over the house. It had been a full hour since the hum of the mantra had last been heard. The next morning, too, there was no chanting. When the daughter brought up the bowl of buttered tea, the tsampa for dinner was still sitting in front of the attic door. She opened the door and saw the silhouette of her father in meditation—silent, motionless, wrapped in a blanket from head to toe. The daughter approached and gently pulled at the fabric. She then discovered a luminous form in five colors. The physical body had transformed into a rainbow body. It dissolved before the young woman's incredulous eyes, filling the air with a heavenly melody!

What a beautiful story that teaches us that no matter the method or content of our prayers, what matters really is to believe in them and never stop reciting our mantras; liberation will ultimately come at the end of the path, even if regular people don't really understand it!

In fact, of all bodily functions, I much prefer ejaculating to taking a shit or peeing! It's so much more pleasurable!

And the final, undeniable point is this: absolutely all of us—you and I—were born from the womb of a mother and her vulva! And we spent nearly nine months there, as fragile and delicate little human beings. It is therefore there—in the uterus, in that space of birth—that our intellectual development, as well as all our earliest pleasures, emotions, aspirations, and joys, took root—that place known as the uterus, the womb, which we all know so well and which we must honor and revere.

And what's more, as if to confirm this undeniable fact, everything is inexorably pointing in that direction... I am currently reading Henri Vincenot's beautiful book, *The Stars of Compostelle*, which recounts the construction of a new Cathedral in Burgundy, France, during the Middle Ages—in the 13th century—by countless journeymen, monks, priests, carpenters, sculptors, masons, painters, and others. In it, the Prophet, the book's central main mysterious character, says the following about the vulva symbol he just carved on his column:

"Here's the proof, Companion: I've left my mark on the column, you see over there. Go take a look!" We went over, and sure enough, we saw a mark engraved on the shaft of the column, at eye level. It looked a bit like an almond, with two curved lines connecting at the two tips.

- And what does your symbol mean, Prophet?

- You see it—it represents the opening through which you passed to emerge from your mother vulva and come wailing into this world, Companion! It is the Vulva of the World. I chose this symbol because it is the origin of all humanity, you stupid idiot!

Where did he come up with all that knowledge?"

So, of course, the very first images ever drawn by humanity are naturally, phallic and vulvar—or the interpenetration of both at once!

Pleasure and its unfulfilled sharing are the first and ultimate emotions that men and women have shared equally since the dawn of time—along with, of course, grief for the dead and suffering. It works both ways and for both of them!

VULVA PATTERNS



- #1, #3, "Large Paper #28 & #16", 2002, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm, New York.
- #2, "Large Paper #168", 2008, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.

These unquenchable desires also function mechanically through mimicry and imitation, as pornographic images de facto inducing a strange state of masturbation and orgasmic ejaculations. These images provoke desire, by the projection of the self into an infinite, insatiable, and imperishable need to possess the other and, ultimately, to bring him or her to climax. Our pleasure leads to the other's pleasure—through mimicry, through a transcendental, fusional sharing. As André Malraux shows in *The Temptation of the West*:

"The entire erotic game lies here: being oneself and the other; experiencing one's own sensations and imagining those of one's partner. From sadism and masochism to feelings that depend on a spectacle, humans are subject to this duality, the final manifestation of the ancient forces of fate."

The solitary man or woman masturbating in front of the orgasmic sex scenes, thus imagines, as they gaze with eyes wide open with amazement, pornographic images, through which they can imagine encountering other beings—more beautiful, more sensual, more open—possessing an immediate capacity for pleasure and ecstasy, allowing women to climax fully and obscenely, to the point of multiple, incessant, furious, and screaming orgasms, repeated with cries that defy all and every ancient mythological scenario.

So, of course, these are images projected from another world—almost like reminiscences, some still-warm ashes projected from ancient, primordial mythologies. These images create spaces for encounter like those of immemorial times, those when humans were still communing with Gods

and Goddesses, from all corners of the world. Take, for example, the Siberian shamans, with their heavy costumes adorned with lead fetish statues and magical symbols, and beating their drums on which geographic designs, represent the four corners of the World—the *Axis Mundi*—loudly beating: Boom! Boom! Boom! chanting their journeys to the rhythm of the heartbeat to seek out and heal the lost souls of the dead or those of the sick, and so on, and so on.

In a way, I think that pornographic imagery, far beyond its primary, purely commercial, materialistic, and financial function (because today, this business is what matters most and its annual turnover is equivalent to that of the military-industrial industry!), nevertheless conveys a very human dimension; after all, these over-sexualised bodies of porn stars, with their plump, exaggerated lips, always sucking on big dicks, with breasts like shells and stiff, hardened nipples and with vulvas and anuses fully open and offered up...

Physically, they aren't so different from our girlfriends or faithful wives—except that, on a certain level, one step further, these bodies represent the oversized realm of myths, legends, and dreams!

MORE! BIGGER! ALWAYS MORE! UNTIL THE OVERWHELMING TOO MUCH EJACULATION!

E. S.: COLOUR, CHEMISTRY, AND THE PHYSICAL LIFE OF THE IMAGE.

You write about colour almost as a living substance, with its own density, history, and chemical origin.

How important is the material and chemical nature of pigments for you?

J. P. S.: I use colours as a second skin, a second breath, and if it was my own heart beats! It's some raw natural and somehow magical substances, which is fully alive, for me and I must respect it. You know it's a bit like cooking: if you order industrial food it will surely destroy and kill your body. As for me I am vegetarian, and I remember having had a Japanese girlfriend, Mayumi, visiting me at the studio, she used to cook for us, once, she was cooking zucchinis really slowly and having much more respect for the food than I had. So, you have to learn your lesson "live and learn!", as in the Japanese *Tokyo Delices* movie, where the old woman Tokue cooks for six hours the Azuki beans in order to make *dorayaki* cookies, small crepes filled with candied red beans and she said at one very important and essential point : "*You really have to listen carefully to what the beans are telling you!*".

Somehow, paint and painting is like cooking, you have to listen to paint in order that, what you like to create, could be in full harmony with your physical energy at that time and also as in any rituals, that you can feel strongly connected to the paper, the sky, your physical movements and your ancestors as well. Otherwise, it will never be at the right tone, neither the right energy!

E. S.: YOU OFTEN MIX COLOURS IN A VERY PERSONAL WAY, SOMETIMES USING OLD ACRYLIC INKS FROM YOUR NEW YORK YEARS. Do you think of colour as memory?



- #1, Portrait of the artist in his Besançon studio #23, in front of the bookshelf and the Mexican masks, photo by Sonia Oysel, July 7th 2018.
- #2, Portrait in the Studio with the pots of painting, photo by Lionel Georges, September 18th 2015.

J. P. S.: This is absolutely right, as I use my silkscreen ink as a kind of yeast for making bread rise. Within all my series of painting container, some of them came from my New York studio, so they are already twenty-five years old, the paint is still fresh and I like to mix it with brand new paint. For example, if I want to print a new red colours, I will add a medium cadmium red to some old paint in order to create, each every time a new shade of red to print a particular image. Thus, this 'new' ink, will carry, within its ADN, the memories of all the red I had printed already before with the same can of paint... So, yes, I am seeing images and colours as memories of Time, of souvenirs of some strong emotional experiences that I had lived, some important memories...

E. S.: LATER WORKS: SERIALITY, REPETITION, AND RITUAL.

In later series such as [Mangas, Yantras Y Otras Cosas 2029-2014](#), [Shakti-Yoni: Ecstatic Cosmic Dances 2016-2017](#) and [Karma-Kali, Sexual Dreams & Paradoxes 2024](#), repetition becomes very important. Is repetition for you closer to visual rhythm, meditation, ritual, or obsession?



- "Shakti-Yoni: Ecstatic Cosmic Dances #06, #26, #10", 2018, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 250g paper, edition 3/5, 25 x 25 cm

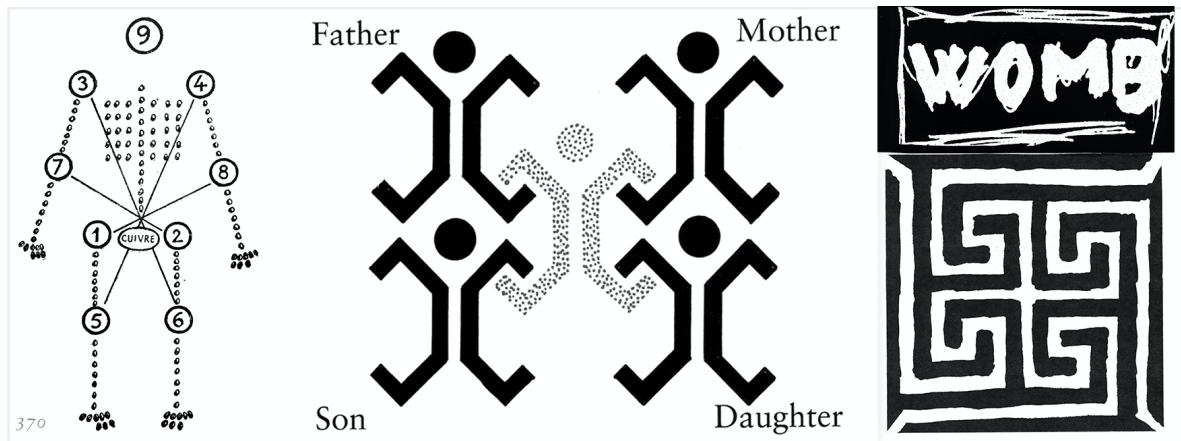
J. P. S.: No, it's mainly about the silk-screening process itself, as it is always a serial and repetitive process... As you noticed clearly, silkscreening is as a ritual, a working session is always an important time period, as out of Time and Space. It could be physically entrancing too, because of the noise of the printing table, the smell of the inks and the physical move of my own body. It's like a cosmic dance during which, my body could leave behind some traces and memories of pleasures given and received. And I am feeling, after a long printing session, as in a state of exhaustion, like after a long, fulfilling, and pleasurable orgasm, because I take such pleasure in mixing and then spreading the colors onto the paper and Plexiglas, and seeing—finally, sometimes after so many years—the images I've worked so hard to redraw on my computer, that come finally to life. It's a truly repetitive and exhilarating process, which is, of course, steeped in and infused with noise, music, rhythm and ecstasy. Much like the trances of the dancing whirling dervishes or levitating monks, it's an ecstatic experience achieved through a unique artistic practice.

E. S.: YOU OFTEN COMBINE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT IMAGES WITH SACRED GEOMETRY, MANTRAS, ARCHAIC PATTERNS, AND MYTHOLOGICAL

REFERENCES.

What happens for you when these two worlds meet in one image?

ABOUT THE ARCHAIC PATTERNS



- #1, "*Dogon Kinship chart*": The Dogon of West Africa lay out a scheme of a man on the ground, with Stones to illustrate the marital relationship of the eight clans composing their society. Large stones mark the four primary joints on each side of the body (shoulders, elbows, hips, knees), here numbered by the anthropologist to indicate the relative social rank assigned to them by the Dogon.

- #2, Single figures excerpted from genealogical patterns emphasis this split, from New Guinea; and from Porto Rico. So do certain patterns from Polynesians tattoo, and Patagonian robe. This division symbolizes the composition of any offspring from the union of a male & female from exogamous moieties. On a social level, it illustrates the tribe's dualistic nature.

- #3, Drawing from JPS to print as an image.

As for about what we known as "patterns", that was yet another incredible and priceless discovery, because in New York—where I used to go almost every other Sunday, as a ritual, to visit the MET—there was always, back then, a street vendor's stand right in front of the entrance on Fifth Avenue selling art books at bargain prices. I'll always remember that very special moment when I bought that superb and priceless book *Patterns that connect: Social Symbolism in Ancient & Tribal Art*, by Edmund Carpenter and Carl Schuster:

(Carl Schuster (1904-1969) had discovered a set of patterns designed by ancient peoples to illustrate their ideas about kinship. They tattooed and

painted such "statements" on their bodies and clothing, and carved them on tools, game boards, pots, ceremonial objects, coins and other items, and carried these with them wherever they went. Through broad comparative study, Schuster decoded this iconography, which lasted over 10,000 years, crossed continents, and outlived most of the cultures that sheltered it.)

Discovering and reading this really interesting book was, for me, both a visual shock and an aesthetic revelation and explanation. For all too often, when faced with works from Non-Western Wultures, we tend to think that the motifs in the designs are merely decorative and aesthetic, when in fact that is not the case at all: each motif has a deep and meaningful significance. Very often, they represent and symbolize ancestral genetic connections and the interpenetration of the masculine and the feminine, sexual and clan-based unions, and all tribal and social interactions. A particular animal will serve as the totem spirit of a particular tribe or shaman...

Within these patterns, everything interacts and intertwines across multiple and diverse cultural, social, and genetic dimensions.

This is truly the very essence of life and of Humanity in all its destiny, grandeur, and splendor! These patterns are, in a sense, the visual memory of our common Humanity.

And even though today, I no longer truly understand their deep and meaningful significance, by reworking them, reusing them, and incorporating them into my screen prints, I breathe new life into something that once existed—I bring it up to date and present it to the contemporary viewer. It's a bit like a cultural reappropriation—one that is, in fact, essentially vital, a sacred nourishment and essence that I drink, just as the Maya drank the blood of their victims, so that I can continue to live and survive in a world that is utterly meaningless, stupid, and ultimately absurd without Art and extra-personal and extra-temporal human connections and without the bonds between people that transcend the individual, the ego, and Time!

When it comes to patterns, we mustn't forget that everything that is alive is built according to a pattern; they are, in fact, the very structures of Life!

And, having experienced this firsthand, I'll never forget those deeply moving moments when, after helping the mares give birth, I'd gather up the afterbirth of the newborn foals from the ground and feed it to my two dogs, Poupoune and Pepette, who absolutely loved eating that delicacy! (and whom, like all my horses, I miss terribly today!).

And to physically touch it with my own hands—to feel that warmth and

that strong scent of Life, somewhat like the smell of blood, semen, female fluid, manure, and even the very scent of the sexual act!—has always left a deep impression on me and moved me profoundly.

In fact, this envelope is structured entirely of blood vessels, extending throughout this "Pouch of Life"—this nourishing, matrix-like pattern that serves, of course, as the reference for all our blood vessels and nerves that make up our own bodies, and naturally for all the trees, leaves, and flowers. These patterns are therefore everywhere—they are, once again, the very fundamental geometrical structure of all Life on Earth!

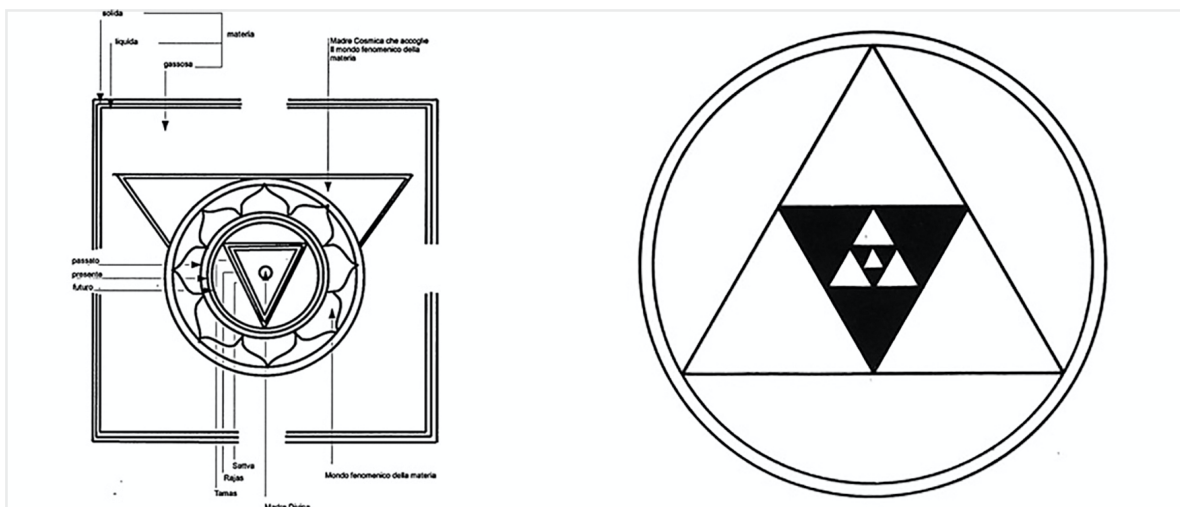
These patterns are also present in all the geometric structures of the Sacred, as I mentioned in my text: [Influences IV](#) (2012)

It does indeed seem that the multiplication, repetition, and myriad profusion of images can induce a trance-like state in the artist or the viewer. This resembles the technique of repetitive Buddhist chants that endlessly repeat the name "*Namu Amida Butsu*"—always the same—in order to forget one's own identity, one's *ego*, and thus escape the the limitations of material things to ultimately connect with the universal and find spiritual peace in a state of *Satori*.

So, undoubtedly, nearly a third of my images are inspired by and make use of these repetitive motifs.

And also in my text: [Écrits II - De la beauté et cetera...](#) (**On Beauty And So On...**), 2014

BEAUTY - GEOMETRY



- *Traditional Hindus Yantra Yoni drawings and diagrams.*

Geometry can also exist on its own, for and by itself, for even in prehistoric caves we can see the emergence of certain geometric designs consisting of grids, lines, and systems of points harmoniously organized. Personally, I'm fascinated by and really enjoy working with patterns—which are, in fact, motifs repeated endlessly and can be found on many pieces of pottery, clothing, and tattoos, across all eras and cultures.

PATTERNS, POTTERY, BASKETRY & TATTOOS

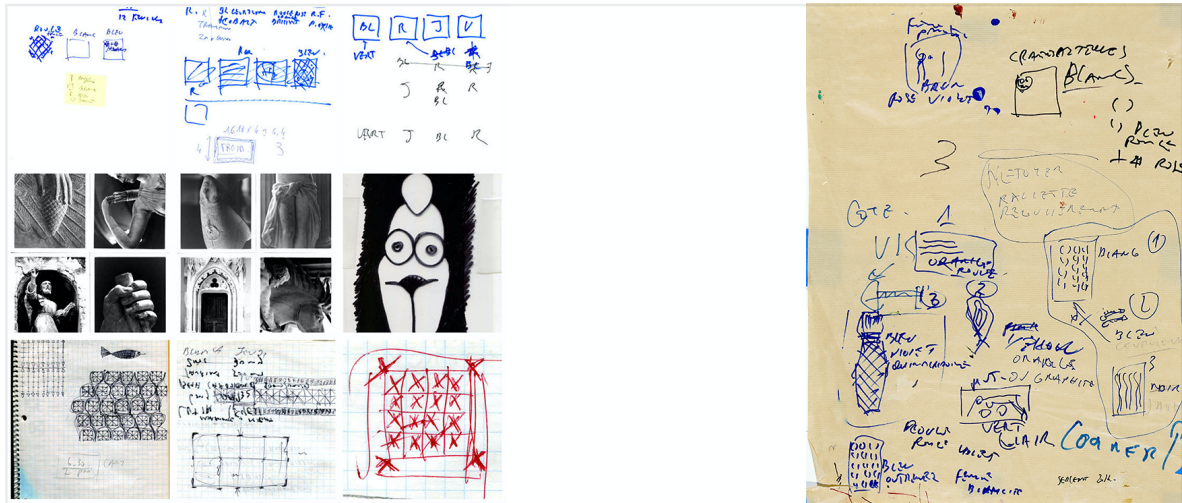


- Photos of potteries motifs taken at the MET Museum, New York, March 2005.

Contrary to what one might think, these motifs are not merely decorative; for the most part, they represent concepts, symbols, and ideas—in fact, a coherent syncretic system that allows humans to situate themselves socially among their peers, but also within the greater Universe. I particularly appreciate all the geometric Hindu *yantras*, which are complex symbolic systems—at once infinitely beautiful and simple—yet from which also emanate a sensuality, a purity, and a transcendental cosmic eroticism.

For example, they depict ten triangles embodying the destructive-creative power of the goddess *Kali*; this is always the union of feminine symbols (downward-pointing triangles) with masculine symbols (points or upward-pointing triangles). They are thus the very embodiment of the interpenetration of life, masculine and feminine of the moment of the creation of Life, the world, and every living entity... The origin of the Big Bang or the *Bindu* point.

PHOTOS, DRAWINGS, WORK DIAGRAMS & WORK NOTES, FROM NEW YORK (1994-2003) & BESANÇON (2010-2015)



"FRAGILE ABSOLUTE: WHY IS THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE WORTH DEFENDING?" BY SLAVOJ ZIZEK

STRUCTURE AND EVENT

"The idea of the act understood as real means that every authentic act exists in an in-between space, between Time and Eternity. [...]"

In short, a true act is a paradox: that of a "timeless" and eternal gesture that transcends eternity while simultaneously opening up the dimensions of temporality and historicity."

Yes, and as Zizek said in this extract, I am also dealing with the "In-between" spaces, gaps in time and information, that are very important as I really want to change the way of understanding of the viewer, in creating an aesthetic shock, a paradoxical situation of misunderstanding, or simultaneously a cosmic revelation...

I like blurring the lines by presenting images whose deeper meanings are completely opposite to one another—one juxtaposed above the other—allows me to create, *de facto*, what Mircea Eliade called the "BREAK IN LEVELS."

– *"The quintessential shamanic technique consists in passing from one cosmic realm to another: from Earth to Heaven, or from Earth to the Underworld. The shaman knows the mystery for breaking of the levels."* Mircea Eliade, in *Shamanism and the Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*.

This level discontinuity can enable humans to step out of their flat horizontal materialistic existence and, thanks to the *Axis Mundi* (cosmic axis, axis of the world, pillar of the world, center of the world and/or the connection between Heaven and Earth), enter another spiritual vertical dimension, right there, within that painted space and surface.

And it is this *Axis Mundi*, used by all the shamans of the Earth—who are represented by trees—or by all elevated sites such as the Egyptian pyramids of Giza, the Mayan ruins of Uxmal, or the Inca ruins of Machu Picchu—places of encounter with their Gods and spirits, etc.

This blurring of information was, to some extent, what the Surrealist artists of the mid-twentieth century had already attempted to do with their "exquisite corpses" for example, to break free from a classical, ageing, and outdated aesthetic and thus re-enter the energies of a renewed world, which had to change completely, since the old world had been destroyed firstly by the First World War, and then, to add insult to injury, by the Second World War as well.

A destructive-constructive impulse, so to speak, and a desire to regenerate the World as well as all artistic languages. This was one of the most significant artistic aspirations, essential for recreating new aesthetic models and perhaps new forms of spiritualities and ethics.

It is Lautréamont's famous line from *Les Chants de Maldoror*: "*The chance to encounter on a dissection table between a sewing machine and an umbrella.*"

This was the quintessential example of the "*convulsive beauty*" championed by André Breton.

Although I am not really surrealist by nature, I must acknowledge my debt to their works, which opened pathways to the unconscious, precisely and simultaneously with psychoanalysis. Everything is connected, of course! And yet, I never would like that my work be analyzed from a psychoanalytic perspective, in that particular way.

For I am certain that all my work—staging images drawn from all over the World and from very diverse cultures—rather represents and embodies a New York-style international melting pot!

Without any initial intention, I simply wish to accumulate elements in order to create and gather more diverse energies, within a single painting; it is an accumulation and a merging of ostensibly different, contradictory, and

varied energies, thereby creating a surplus of energy characterized by some high entropy!

In fact, isn't my new series of paintings on Plexiglas appropriately titled "*Entropic Suites*"?

E. S.: LOOKING BACK,
HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE BODY CHANGED OVER TIME?

J. P. S.: But of course, just as an elephant or a whale grows wiser with age, we come to know our bodies better and better as we grow older. And above all, I'm reading more and more interesting books, not on how to age wisely — since there's really nothing we can do about that anyway — but on how to understand, with ever greater intensity and love, all the spiritual diversity of the World. As for my diet, I've been a strict vegetarian for over twenty-six years.

I'll leave you to reflect on these superb excerpts from Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) a great English writer who lived the second part of his life in Japan where he acquired his great wisdom:

– "*KWAÏDAN: STORIES AND STUDIES OF STRANGE THINGS*", LAFCADIO HEARN

THE ANTS, I

This morning, after last night's storm, the sky is a pure, dazzling blue. The air, delightful, is filled with sweet, resinous scents emanating from the countless pine branches lying on the ground, snapped by the hurricane. From the nearby bamboo grove, I hear the flute-like call of the bird singing the Lotus Sutras. All is peaceful, for the south wind is blowing: the long-awaited summer has finally arrived. Butterflies in bizarre Japanese colors flit here and there; cicadas whistle; wasps buzz; gnats dance in the sun; and ants are busy repairing their homes devastated by the storm. I think of a Japanese poem: "The poor creature now has no place left to take shelter: gone are the ants' homes during the rain of the fifth month!"



- 1-3, "Lady of the Ants #30, #45, #62", 2003, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 250g, unique print, 25,5 x 25,5 cm.

– KAMIS AND TORII, SPIRITS, GHOSTS, AND THE WISDOM OF JAPAN

IX

I search for an image of the Divinity or Spirit that presides over these places, among clusters of multi-branched candelabras. And I see a mirror, a pale, round disc of polished metal in which my own face is reflected, and, behind this mockery of myself, the ghost of the distant sea. Just a mirror—symbolizing what? Illusion? Or that the Universe exists for us only as imagination, as a reflection of our own souls? Or the ancient Chinese teaching that we must seek the Buddha only within our own hearts? Perhaps one day I will be able to discover all these things. [...] Then the mirror's mockery comes back to my mind. I begin to wonder if I will ever be able to discover what I seek outside of myself. That is to say, outside of my own imagination.

E. S.: HAS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRED CHANGED OVER TIME?

J. P. S.: "Most intellectuals and most artists belong to the same type. Only the strongest of them force their way through the atmosphere of the bourgeois earth and attain to the Cosmic. The others all resigned themselves or make compromises." Hermann Hesse

As Hermann Hesse said, It's always a daily struggle to access the sacred, and nothing is ever taken for granted. But I should add that, throughout my life, I've had some profound, powerful, and spiritual experiences that

have, step by step, gradually taught me to understand and approach these very thorny and delicate subjects—which are very difficult to communicate, since they are beyond religion and lack any fixed descriptive framework or written instructions like specific religious experiences. They belong to the intimate realm of contemplation, poetry, trance, transgression, and ecstasy...

However, being able to transcribe them into images—such as in my shamanic trance journeys depicting encounters with animal spirits or female healing entities—allows me to bear firsthand narrative witness to them.

Even if this greatly disturbs viewers who mistake me for a gentle and innocent dreamer...

But in reality, having been able to accumulate all these experiences of cosmic and shamanic trances, as well as all my sexual and physical experiences, gives me great strength today to continue developing my art. Even though I am faced with significant financial difficulties most of the time, in a way, this has also given me greater physical and intellectual strength and has developed and sharpened my intuition and awareness, as well as my desire to survive at all costs as an artist.

Because there are always more things present around us that are interconnected than we realize or think of.

Here are, for example, two accounts: first, that of an initiatory dream, and second, of one of the several shamanic trances I had experienced in New York in the 2000s, from my Notes New York - 1993-2003:

– DREAM #1



- #1, "*View of Toledo*", El Greco, 1596–1600, oil on canvas, 121 × 109 cm, Metropolitan Museum, New York
- .- #2, "*Large Paper #15*" (patterns of the soul leaving the Earth from West to East), 2015, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.
- #3, "*The Hunters in the Snow*", Pieter Bruegel The Elder, 1565, oil on wood panel, 117 × 162 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria

It was day and it was night; it was not day and it was not night. An immense concave beam of light swept across the earth from west to east (see Rembrandt's painting *The Philosopher in Meditation*. This light was composed of billions of energized particles, bombarding the space of this helical form—a vortex; at the center and extending to infinity was a nucleus of pale blue and pale yellow light, somewhat like a dematerialized sun. I could touch this light with my right hand as it passed like an eclipse over the Earth's surface, and I showed Olga how easy it was to enter and exit the light. Nearby was a calm, flat lake, gray and heavy as lead, over which five to seven wild geese—black and silent—flew in formation. (See Bruegel's painting, *The Hunters in the Snow* for the birds, and El Greco's *View of Toledo*, for the colors—the gray of the lake and the green of the mountains.)

Nearby, a white mare was waiting for me, pawing the ground with impatience, young and spirited like Pegasus.

Questions: Was this light composed of the souls of the dead leaving the Earth? Was it a dream of shamanic initiation?

– SHAMANIC JOURNEY #3



- "*Large Paper #30*", 2001, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm
- "*Beauty is energy #1*", 2003, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 76 x 56 cm

- "*Large Paper #10*", 2001, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm

I was in a dark place, with no light at all, and I was suffering from loneliness and feeling afraid; the place suddenly turned blood-red and filled with heat—I believe I had returned to the womb of the universe. I was a Maya warrior who loved women and flowers too much, and who transformed into a jaguar (*El Tigre*) with great energy. *El Tigre* showed me the forest and the rivers. She licked my face affectionately, and I swam with her in the river. I really loved the way she moved like a cat; she played with me, and we loved each other very much. Then I found myself as a Roman warrior, and I don't remember very well—it all became chaotic.

E. S. : WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE VIEWERS TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT YOUR WORK THAT IS OFTEN MISSED OR MISUNDERSTOOD?

J. P. S.: I really think that today it is completely impossible and illusory to believe that the public can truly appreciate Art in general—and my work in particular—for what it is worth. And unfortunately, I've had a bitter and resounding experience of this, since my monumental 80-square-meter installation at the Besançon Museum of Fine Arts—though magnificent and monumental— it brought me absolutely no contact, nothing! Neither any sale nor any new encounters...

It's as if people were walking by my work without even seeing it. As if they were completely numb, brain-dead, lobotomized...

So, is this just a cultural issue? Is it a matter of attention toward works of art that no one can look at it anymore today? Or that people can't even appreciate or analyze it due to a lack of cultural literacy? Is the age of Art definitively over? It could very well be, because I have the impression that, all around the World, we have entered what can undoubtedly be named and defined as a new POST-CULTURAL era!

In any case, all the beautiful and powerful vital energies present in my work speak for themselves and only to an infinitesimal portion of the population—just to a few very close friends who are highly cultivated and have been fortunate enough, not only to have traveled and read extensively but also to have worked abroad.

I seriously believe that my work presence is too strong, way too much; it is too rich, too exhilarating, and it overflows with simultaneous layers of information... so the viewers are drowned into their own bewilderment and

their selfish despair and humongous ego, and finally, not understanding anything at all!

But my work doesn't speak only to this highly educated audience; for sometimes I also welcome into my studio a few people who have absolutely no deep artistic background but who, nevertheless, react very positively to my work—even physically! In contrast—and sometimes paradoxically—highly educated people, who often have a historical background in a very straight, linear, scholar, aesthetic, and historical conception of Art, cannot find a place or a point of reference for my works... They then say countless foolish things, as is perfectly illustrated by this little anecdote I shared in my most recent lecture: *Shakti & the Metacosmic Void*, at the Mulhouse Museum of Fine Arts on March 13, 2026.

One day, two people came to see me at the studio, including a lady who had worked at Beaubourg Museum and also the Guimet Museum in Paris, and who had kindly come to the studio with her friend—who, I presume, had no artistic background whatsoever...

And this lady said this lovely little phrase to me that truly took me by surprise, gave me great pleasure, and warmed my heart: "*Mr. Sergeant, your work on that wall really makes me want to be dancing!*"

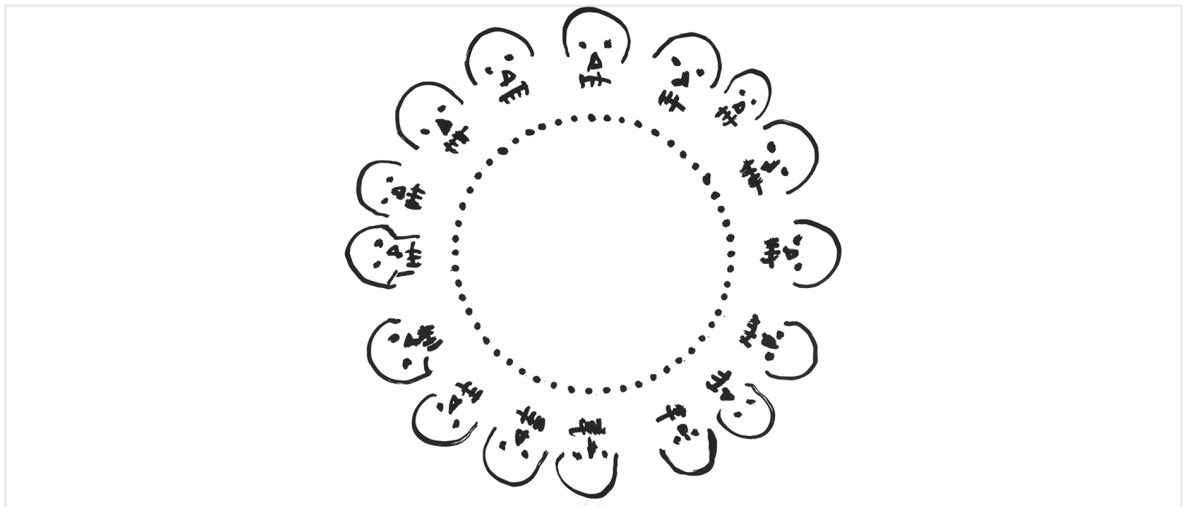
There you go! But, on the other hand, the lady—who had studied art and culture professionally for twenty or thirty years—didn't feel that energy at all, and she didn't feel the overwhelming urge to dance either! That's just how it is; you can't please everyone...

TOO MUCH CULTURE KILLS CULTURE!

I also sincerely believe that the presence of my work is far too strong, far too powerful! It's also too rich, too exhilarating, and it's brimming with countless layers of information that overlap... so much so that viewers drown in their own confusion, their lack of cultural understanding, their perplexity, their selfish despair, and their immense and pitiful, oversized, overinflated egos! In the end, they no longer understand anything at all; faced with my work, they are destabilised!

"*Jean-Pierre, that's the artist's life—it's beautiful but that's a bit sad!*" as my dear Italian friend Pierro Baroni who had been forced to work in the sulfur mines in Italy during Mussolini's time (WWII), with whom I used to go trout fishing when I was a child, would often say to me! Let's absolutely not forget all the people who have loved, helped and guided us—parents, partners and friends—through this long, intense and very special artist's

life!



- "*Large Paper #158*", July 2010, acrylic hand silk-screened on BFK Arches white 280g, unique print, 122 x 107 cm.

Jean-Pierre Sergent, Besançon studio, August 14th 2026

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