

"IMPROMPTUS INTERVIEWS" BETWEEN ARTIST JEAN-PIERRE SERGENT & MARIE-MADELEINE VARET PHILOSOPHER | 3 PARTS | BESANÇON STUDIO | Thursday September 27th 2018 | English translated by Linda TeStroete Bassard

1/3: ABOUT THE SHAKTI-YONI SERIES IN GENERAL - [Watch the video](#)

Jean-Pierre Sergent: Hello dear Marie-Madeleine, thank you for coming to see me at the Studio. you were passing through Besançon and I said here, maybe we'll shoot this little video.

Marie-Madeleine Varet: Thursday the 27th, a date to mark! Blessed! Jean-Pierre's workshop is a sanctuary! It's a blessing to be here! Explain us this beautiful title a little bit? Please explain to us what are the themes behind this beautiful title a little bit? Which is maybe not so obvious to most of us?

JPS: *Shakti* is in India the female energy, it is all that recreates the world. The *Yoni* is the female sex, the opening, the cave, the place where Life simply springs forth.

MMV: And the place of all the meetings...

JPS: Birth, life, death... In the *Book of the Tibetan dead*, it is necessary to choose the new vulva by which one reintegrates his next life.

MMV: And for continuity. All the themes that are in your recent works where have you taken them from...? Where did you find the iconography? Do you have like a corpus of images?

JPS: I get a lot of images on the internet, pornographic or erotic images... But also images of flowers, birds, stones... Hindu yantras

MMV: This is for the image and in relation to inspiration? Is inspiration related to things you have read? This desire to promote this philosophy..., this art of living...

JPS: Yes, it's more an art of living, rather than a philosophy.

MMV: Because you get your inspiration from the text!

JPS: Yes, that's right, often.

MMV: In order to feed, to feed your art. And then you have this momentum, this movement towards the image.

JPS: For it is more an art of living than a philosophy. This is the philosophy of many pre-industrial societies.

MMV: So there are these two aspects that are interesting. Yes it's often true! Then you have this impulse, this movement towards the image. In order to feed your art.

JPS: It may be a comment, it is the memory of all that is disappearing.

MMV: Yes, that is also an other dimension!

JPS: We were just talking about desire at the moment and we feel that in our societies desire is exacerbated by the consumer society. But somehow, the human being's desire to be alive disappears. As if we were washed out!

MMV: Washed out....

JPS: As if our vital energy had left.

MMV: Do you have the feeling that it is unique to the West?

JPS: As everyone has said, there are many books that have been written about the decline of the West. Nietzsche was of course talking about it. We must find back Dionysus, and the life forces.

MMV: Do you have any idea what is causing this decline?

JPS: It's complicated, it's multiple. Undoubtedly Industrialization, the overproduction of materials, cars... We are drawing on all natural resources, but also human resources. The men are exhausted today. And the body also? That's what's still...

MMV: Because all this work, *Shakti*, is a kind of glorification, an apology of the body in all its glory. For in his ecstasy, in his trance, in his access to another world in pleasure and in the whole. A way of attaining transcendence through the body and not through ideas, through the intellect.

JPS: Yes, exactly!

MMV: There is this kind of connection. And I still think, since I've known you, you have this will to express the richness and durability of being through the body! Through desire, through pleasure, through climax, all these elements...

JPS: The body is the only thing that can be controlled. Yet it is necessary to have the intelligence to understand these mechanisms, not all can be understood. To respect, I believe it is a matter of respect!

MMV: To have respect, yes!

JPS: As the Amerindians respected Nature, we must respect our bodies. And afterward, one can live in harmony. Because many people that do not respect their bodies are not in harmony with their surroundings.

MMV: Of course! And do you think that there is this fear, a kind of disavowal of physical pleasure, which can be related to this disrespect of the body? This kind of fear that makes that...? In all that you show, there is an exaltation of pleasure. I have the feeling that today we are below, behind, backwards, in relation to this immense domain that reaches a beyond. As you just said before. I have the feeling that today self-realization is done by the material and no longer by this object that we all carry around, which is our body.

JPS: You can't call it an object!

MMV: It is a subject object, of course! I have the feeling that it is put a little bit in brackets. By both great sexual freedom, which, by a strange phenomenon, is translated into... a regression of pleasure and desire.

JPS: Yes, it's paradoxical. It is above all a regression of love. It is a non-acceptance of the other also. I do not advocate for hedonistic pleasure, I advocate for pleasure in fusion.

MMV: In fusion, of course...! And this radiates through all your work.

JPS: Yes, Thank you !

MMV: This fusion there, because one cannot take a piece, one is irradiated!

2/3: ABOUT THE SHAKTI-YONI SERIES ON YELLOW WANG 80G PAPER -

[Watch the video](#)

MMV: So, if you'd like to introduce us to these wonders. There are two types of support?

JPS: Yes, there are two types of support because the colors react completely differently. On this yellow paper, I manage to have a kind of tonality like one finds on pottery. By adding several layers of paint. Paintings made on pottery are what impresses me the most. Because there is a subtlety. I like terracotta because it is of the clay! I really like paintings made like this.

MMV: Magnificent, you comment a little bit on them at the level of the... Are you still working on the Patterns?

JPS: Yes, yes, yes...! This is a prehistoric image. It may be a Hindu drawing, it is the presence of a goddess, or a divinity. It is true that many images are erotic, sexual images. They show the trance, the body in trance, the body that rejoices, the body that is climaxing.

MMV: Unbelievable!

JPS: Before you came, I chose some.

MMV: Beautiful, Very saturated colors, one has the impression to see precious stones in transparency. Look at these blues! I am fascinated by the mystical blue that is always present in your work.

JPS: But this is the first year I have used colored inks.

MMV: That's so beautiful!

JPS: This is Indian ink, in general, I print one or two layers of images. And then after the evening I put a little Indian ink or green ink. It is a work in progress that builds.

MMV: Of construction and metamorphosis also. I like that aspect, which has a kind of evolution. According to your mental state, spiritual. It is the stratification of the elements, it accumulates like that over time.

JPS: For example, these small flowers collected from a Japanese manga. This is a Peruvian drawing, you see! A textile, that's it, we find it there about...

MMV: And that's it, on this paper, the effect is not the same at all! It's very weird, you'd have to confront them! Beautiful, yes, yes, yes, yes, really interesting as a result!

JPS: There is this kind of fragility, this kind of ephemerality in the works on Wang paper, which I love very much.

MMV: You can almost see the texture, it's very strange. You speak of the ephemeral side.

JPS: Of course our life is totally ephemeral, so we must also speak of the ephemeral.

MMV: Knowing that beauty survives us is very reassuring.

JPS: Not quiet sure of that ! At least there was beauty! There are so many things that no longer exist nowadays!

MMV: Yes, it's true, continuity anyway, there are substrates like that are...

JPS: It's beautiful in the green tones too. This one is white. There I wanted to paint with white Indian ink, but it didn't work, so I printed it white, straight away.

MMV: And there you were able to continue, to enrich, to find very, very innovative things in your work technique?

JPS: But technique is mastered. It's been since I worked with Indian ink.

MMV: There is always behind it this inventiveness, of which you spoke about a moment ago. From the moment you see a work, you can extend it, you can transform it... That's why I was talking about metamorphosis, I think it's beautiful.

JPS: Yes, it's a nice word!

MMV: With regard to technique, it made it look noble!

JPS: This grey is beautiful!

MMV: Oh yes! Very, very beautiful!

JPS: In fact, I want to talk about the presence: whether it be a flower, a tree, or a woman. Perhaps it is one of the most forgotten notions, the presence in the world? To be present in the world.

MMV: It is a very important philosophical theme! Even in relation to objects, not only to living beings,

JPS: But the paradox is that I speak of ecstasy, and ecstasy is the only time when we are no longer present in the world!

MMV: It is very paradoxical.

JPS: It is very paradoxical. As in death or in birth. It is a little bit like the divine presence. It's very paradoxical.

MMV: At the same time, it is perhaps an increased presence in the world, like increased consciousness. I believe in that a lot, on the contrary. It is not, this feeling of having passed a higher stage, it is not an absence, but on the contrary, it is a strengthening of the being. I firmly believe in it.

JPS: Yes, you are totally right. See, with yellow ink!

MMV: Ah, it's beautiful! It seems as if it makes you feel like you're gushing out! What is the view of our contemporaries on such iconography?

JPS: A lady came to see me at the Wopart fair in Lugano, and she told me that my images of bondage bothered her.

MMV: Just recently?

JPS: But I understand that because we understand sexuality with our personal history, inevitably, someone who has had suffering in his sexual life or who has never known pleasure, can hardly understand these images of ecstasy. That makes sense!

MMV: I have difficulty understanding them. Because there is a refusal, almost of... That is to say, a person who is confined with his own frame is still very dangerous. For me it is a form of refusal to open up to...

JPS: Yes, but we cannot ask everyone to be open to art!

MMV: Yes and no, it's totally obvious. Since it is the most natural and primitive thing, that is why I am always amazed that there is this intellectual retreat.

JPS: Sexuality can be hurtful as well.

MMV: I have no doubt, as life itself is a wound. It is a fact of experience to be wounded. There is no turning back from... The human body is like a..., and the female sex is the first wound, primordial. Which you have shown so well, moreover. It is beautiful!

JPS: It's a drawing of a shaman who wears wings like that!

MMV: Very, very, very, very beautiful. Has it occupied all your summer?

JPS: Yes I worked all summer long.

MMV: With joy? There is this kind of sharing between the artist and his work, this circulation of energy.

JPS: We feed one another. It is very rewarding! I'm going to show you now the small works on BFK paper, it's quite different... As I told you before.

3/3: ABOUT THE SHAKTI-YONI SERIES ON RIVES BFK 250G PAPER - [Watch the video](#)

JPS: We were talking about the support.

MMV: The two types of support you have selected.

JPS: The red is beautiful too!

MMV: Red is very, very beautiful! It has an intensity, a velvet.

JPS: Almost Cardinal purple.

MMV: Yes, that's right, I didn't dare to talk about it in terms of the themes.

JPS: But in fact the church has understood the value of colors well. Like lapis lazuli blue. Giotto's works are very fabulous... all the primitive Italians. That is also beautiful!

MMV: It is very, very beautiful. And always this side... like a piece of precious cloth laid so carelessly... With all the edges, the irregularity. Chance. A form of fragility, as you said earlier.

JPS: Yes, it is very important, someone can't paint flowers without knowing that it is ephemeral, that is what makes them important! And likewise as for of women's beauty. It is also a Hindu yantra.

MMV: It's so beautiful!

JPS: Yes, I really want to give the impression that it is obvious, that we should not feel it laborious.

MMV: Exactly, yes, yes, yes. That's very fair, what you just said, it impresses me. Like all your work has, as it did the first time I came in and saw this wall. At the same time there is the coexistence, the cohabitation of all these Plexiglas paintings, and at the same time, there is this incredible unity that is obvious. That I find fascinating about your work. It's a real tour de force, a king of magic trick!

JPS: This blue one is also beautiful!

MMV: Blue is beautiful. It is as if it were the skin of an animal, the bark of a tree... This sensual touch is very physical. The hand is naturally attracted. Even without gloves!

JPS: For it is true, my work must be sensual.

MMV: Scales, it's very, very beautiful.

JPS: It's a little like the Caryatids.

MMV: The silhouettes, yes, it's very Greek!

JPS: The Parthenon! It's a bit darker, but it's also beautiful! It is almost like a presence in a dream.

MMV: Yes, chiaroscuro.

JPS: Something that returns to dwell in us, as in the Rembrandts paintings. Moreover I have sold a work to Lugano, black on black, an image of a

bondage.

MMV: Beautiful too! I worship these positions... of grace.

JPS: But, I incorporate erotic images that many people consider trashy.

MMV: That's it, Trash, that's the the word to say it: garbage!

JPS: While I find in some of them, not all of them, a certain serenity.

MMV: The poses of these women are... That's why I was so fascinated by the "*Large Blue*", which is a pure wonder, both of eroticism and of greatness. There is something truly spiritual and very elevated in the way in which you have dealt with this magnificent work. Glorious!

JPS: "Human, too human". Welcome to Nietzsche! It's beautiful this blue, a little Klein blue.

MMV: I am fascinated!

JPS: Often while working on the images on the computer, I mix firstly the erotic image with patterns. That the body may be integrated into a kind of matrix.

MMV: In fact, it need a long work of preparation what you are completing? It's not only just a direct throw!

JPS: There is a lot of preparation for the screens...

MMV: Well, I am very grateful, as always and more and more. To discover your work step by step, I think we are discovering you step by step. It's something very.... There is both slowness and deepness at the same time. Such are the dimensions that you pass through like this with great ease and happiness, moreover.

JPS: Marie-Madeleine, did you want to add anything?

MMV: Thank you! And also for the discovery of the new mural, which I had not yet had the joy of discovering. It is sublime, sublime. It is a dream, to have the space to fill it with this form of both immanence and transcendence. There is reall immanence, because we are there; and then there is elevation, that happiness of being in Jean-Pierre Sergent's space-time. Thank you again!

JPS: Thank you Marie-Madeleine, thank you very much.