

JEAN PIERRE SERGENT INTERVIEWED ON RADIO CAMPUS BESANÇON BY AURÉLIEN BERTINI | 3 PARTS | BESANÇON FINE ARTS & ARCHEOLOGY MUSEUM | SEPTEMBER 10 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Download the PDF

Radio campus Besançon Radio campus Besançon sets up its studios in the MBAA conference room for this special program in partnership with the mobile art center concerning the exhibition dedicated to Jean-Pierre Sergent "the 4 pillars of the sky".

Around the table: J-P Sergent, artist-painter, Nicolas Bousquet, in charge of the cultural development of the Museum and Louis Ucciani, Director of the Mobile Art Center and Lecturer at the University of Franche-Comté.

With on the set: Chloé Truchon, Alexie le Coroller and Amélie Pérardot.

Transcription by the students of the LP METI.

Filmed on the location by the artist

PART 1 | [SEE THE VIDEO](#)

Aurélien Bertini of Radio Campus: Direction to North America to begin this program, with music by the Navajo Indians, whose members are spread throughout Arizona, New Mexico and Utah in the United States. A song from this Native American tribe, which you, Jean-Pierre Sergent, painter and artist, acquired from the National Museum of the American Indians in New York. So hello first of all.

- Jean-Pierre Sergent: Yes, hello dear Aurélien, hello to everybody!

- AB : So, please explain us precisely what you finally feel; when you listen to this kind of music?

- JPS : Yes, well, it really plunges me into joy and a kind of inexpressible cosmic connection, that is to say that one feels that they belong to the world, to Nature and that they are full of energy. It is this energy that really interests me yes! And it's also very soothing too. It's a community that sings, they all sing together, they belong to the same "tribe".

- AB : So, you are a Franco-American painter born in Morteau. You studied architecture in Strasbourg and painting at the School of Fine Arts in Besançon. In 1991 you crossed the Atlantic, first to Montreal, then two years later to New York (1993), a city in which you stayed for ten years (until 2003), I think you told me that earlier, and in which, by the way, your work began on found objects, the Sculpture-Paintings and serigraphs on Plexiglas. You now live in Besançon and a temporary exhibition is dedicated to you: "The 4 pillars of the sky", at the Museum of Fine Arts and Archaeology where we are live on Radio Campus Besançon. So, it is a large wall installation of 80 square meters, including 72 paintings on plexiglass of square unit format, we will talk about it again, it has its importance, so it is installed in the large staircases of the museum. In the end, it is impossible to miss it when you are visiting the Museum. To get back to the song that we are listening now, you have

submitted several titles, several pieces of music, I chose this one because, it is such a sonorous indication of your influences, of your creative process, songs that help visions and dreams, shamanic songs of trance, incantation and its vibrations; precisely, they breathe in your works, in your work that involves the body, spirituality and the enjoyment of being alive. So, as I said, we came here at the invitation of the Mobile Art Center and the Museum of Fine Arts and Archaeology, for this special program, which is part of the nocturnes proposed by the Museum. So, around the table: Jean-Pierre Sergent, we heard you already. Nicolas Bousquet is at our side, in charge of the cultural development of the Center's Museums, good evening.

- Nicolas Bousquet: Good evening Aurélien.

- AB: Good evening to Louis Ucciani, Director of the Mobile Art Center and Senior Lecturer at the University of Franche-Comté, good evening.

- Louis Ucciani: Good evening.

- AB: Are you all doing well? Ready for this new radio night? The set will be completed later by Alexie le Corollaire and Amélie Pérardot, our 2 journalists who will each come to look at your work in their own way, with some surprises... Students also from the pro LP METI, exhibition and information technologies, will also come to talk to us about their work and then about this dimension of of the installation and its hanging. That's what we listened to for this first intro and I also wanted us to listen to an interpretation of Bach by Glenn Gould, to talk about this famous vital energy that we can look for when we create. Jean-Pierre Sergent, do you listen to this music when you are in your studio?

- JPS: Not really when I'm working, because I'm too focused on my art really, I can't do two things at once, but I've known Glenn Gould interpretations for years and when we talk about energy, for me, I feel that Europe has lost its energy but Bach, he has this universal energy, the energy of the heart, the energy of joy and it's really something that fills me up and makes me want to live, there's no other word for it. And in this excerpt we hear Glenn Gould seeking for the right notes and sometimes we hear seagulls passing by and he is shouting out where he is climaxing so to speak. Because it is really pleasurable to be a creator, really. And that's what I also feel when I work.

- AB : So how does this creative process take place for you?

- JPS: Well, I look for, collect and find images. When I was in New York before, there were no computers, I used to go take pictures in museums, whereas nowadays, with the internet, you can access a large database. So on Twitter, sometimes I find images, for example, it can be from Egypt or other cultures and so as soon as an image speaks to me, I keep it in stock over the years... For example, I'm working now, with images that I made 10 years ago and then it turns out that at that moment given T, I want to use that image. I work on them with Illustrator or Photoshop on my computer.

- AB : So, to come back here, from what we can see, how did you created precisely this installation? I think it's one of the biggest you've ever done?

- JPS : Yes absolutely, it's thanks to Mr. Nicolas Surlapierre who is the Curator of this Museum and with whom we had this project for several years and who

once told me: "It would be nice if your works could come to decorate, between quotation marks, the staircases of the Museum. " And it was postponed a bit because of a lack of budget from the City, but we finally did it last year, at this exact date, exactly one year ago. and I really need to thank all the technicians who worked for more than a month on this project because it's complicated to put all that together. But I have chose the images according of this idea of elevation, because in each tribe there is a place called axis mundi where people can communicate with their spirits or ancestors. So humbly, I hope to talk to the spirits... But whether or not they still exist, it is another question!

- AB : Considering the resonance of the magnificent exhibition location, it's a good place to do it anyway, we're really into something acoustically very interesting. So, at first glance, yes it's colorful, there are ethnic motifs, it's inspired by the divinities, perhaps Nicolas Bousquet and Louis Ucciani can also talk about it, when finally, beyond this first glance, what does appears to us?

- NB: To say a word about this presentation of Jean-Pierre Sergent's work, it is part of a museum curatorial program that allows us to see and rediscover their collections through the work of different contemporary artists. Obviously, Jean-Pierre's works resonate particularly within our walls in relation to different aspects of our collections. We have archaeological collections dating back to Ancient Civilizations, we have extra-European collections too, even if they are not on permanent display, although we can see some of them, currently, in an exhibition around Monin. We have erotic works, since this is also a strong source of inspiration for Jean-Pierre and, concretely, our spaces are intended to host works by contemporary artists; we will perhaps come back to this a little later. But this installation, *The Four Pillars of the Sky*, completes the decorative elements of the museum's architecture, which is a bit austere for its 19th century part, the staircases which were designed by an architect, we will say of neoclassical inspiration, named Pierre Marnotte. This architect planned a whole decorative ensemble in the common areas of the museum. With elements of course friezes, columns, murals as can be seen in many museums of that time, as in Marseille, Amiens or Nantes; but in Besançon, finally, there was not this painted decoration or decoration brought back on the building, for lack of budget at the time. Marnotte had taken a particularly shocking view of it. And so, somewhere, one comes to repair a kind of injustice done to this creator, to this architect, by inviting Jean-Pierre to exhibit his works in the stairs and so, obviously, the notion of ascent is strong, it reasons in relation to the work of the artist. In relation to the religious, mythical, cosmological symbolism that can be found there, but it also brings back a colorful dimension, an energy, as Jean-Pierre was saying just before, which is also that of a Museum that is transforming itself, that changed its image at the time of its rehabilitation. We want to be a museum that is today in touch with the issues of our time, with societal issues, and we also want to effectively capture and transmit this energy to our visitors, so that they can rediscover all our collections with a new and perhaps more inventive glance than they could have had before visiting the Museum.

- AB : So, it's true that it works really well when you arrive by the main

staircase, you can already see the Besançon City sky and you are still struck by the size of this work, which immediately catches you in the face, I'd like to say. So 72 paintings were chosen from a series (The Entropic Suites), which you did between 2010 and 2015. So how did you choose them exactly?

- JPS: To be honest, I have chosen works that were not too explicitly erotic, because we didn't want to cause any problems, neither for the Museum nor for the City. It's useless to provoke a controversy, but I don't mind, because I have a stock of maybe 300 paintings, so there's nothing to worry about choosing some. I chose them according to the directions too, North, South, East, West and I'm really, as I said earlier, I'm very influenced by the axis-mundi and the 4 directions because that's the place where we center ourselves and that's the place of passage so these stairs are a place of passage too somewhere.

- AB : And you, how do you do to center yourself?

- JPS: Well: "Learn how to know yourself." Already I think you have to know yourself, get rid of a lot of things because we do have a lot of shit in our head somewhere... It's not hidden, it's right in our heads! Opening boxes and often it's not even boxes that you need to open it is really trying to think differently. I think that we artists have, for some of us... the freedom to create somehow our own path, well it sounds a bit pretentious to say that, but I have the impression that this is what I'm looking for somewhere. I hate being chained up, I hate submissions and I try to find my freedom through a very square structure, very set, my formats are also always the same size; 1,05 x 1,05 m.

- AB : So they are meaningful formats?

- JPS: Absolutely, we talked about that the other day. It so happens that I've been working on this format for several years, since Montreal, and one day I asked myself: but why 1.05 meters? And in fact it's the golden section of my body, as in the body, according to Corbusier rules... or also the Greeks, who knew about this golden section, it happens to be 1.618 and I am 1.72 m, it happens to be exactly 1.05 m at my belly button. So my body found it like the bees found the Hexagon. It's intuitively organic designed somewhere. I like this idea of working with the body and that the body is the master of what it does.

- AB : So how exactly do you do it, when you glean images, we're going to say at a time when digital has not imposed itself, that is to say that somewhere the body is invested, well I have the feeling that you visit places, you take some photos, there is a physical relationship and when you go from this axis of work to a digital axis of work, does it change anything for you ? Aren't you losing a physical dimension?

- JPS: No, because I find it again throughout the silkscreen printing process, because silkscreen printing is very corporeal. It's hard work to expose the screens and when I paint large formats on Plexiglas, it's very, very physical. So there's this whole physical stage. I can also feel that on working on the small formats, because we have to reclean the screens, expose them, so my body is always present when I am working. It's not only computer work.

- AB : So Jean-Pierre Sergent is a contemporary artist. Exactly what does it change for you, a Museum that reopened its doors in November 2018 after 4 years of gestation of this new project, it is not necessarily a usual line of work,

contemporary art for you. So how does the presence of Jean-Pierre's work fit into this new project?

- NB: Let's say that contemporary artists have always been present at the Museum of Fine Arts and Archaeology. We're lucky to be in a territory with a School of Fine Arts and with many creators, simply, we've changed a little bit the way we think about including contemporary art in our collections. We have completely rethought the paths in a thematic chronological manner. With a journey that begins in the Paleolithic and ends with modern art, and throughout this journey we wanted to give counterpoints, off-beat points of view. So, in different ways, but the most relevant way, or one of the most relevant, at least was to invite artists to present works directly related to our collections. So the idea was not necessarily to have a permanent presentation since we are starting with presentations that last more or less a year, so we are almost at the end of our second year of operation. So there is a first installation of contemporary works called "And the desert is moving forward" for the inauguration and which ended with the first anniversary of the museum. Nicolas Surlapierre, who is the director of the center's museums and who is also a specialist in contemporary art, sets up these hangings with this temporality so as not to weary the eyes of our visitors and always sharpen their curiosity.

It is also the vocation of the museum to help young artists to launch themselves, to exhibit, but we also have a lot of pleasure in welcoming nationally and internationally recognized artists such as Jean-Pierre Sergent. For the second exhibition on the notion of "Nothing to see" or "How to see things differently", we obviously chose to invite 6 artists: 2 men, 2 women and 2 missing persons. So obviously this choice was a little bit, how to say, guided by the desire to make our collections dialogue with artists from the region, so we invited Claudie Floutier, Barbara Dasnoy, but also we invited Didier Marcel and Jean-Pierre Sergent for the living, but also 2 artists of the region who are unavoidable and not necessarily sufficiently honored in the most important museum of the region, namely Jean Messagier whose works we unfortunately do not have in our collections but who still deserved to be exhibited at some point in the museum, and then Jean Ricardon who was also a very important artist. So, we made this installation that will be completed in a few weeks for the 2nd anniversary of the museum where we will have a new hanging that will change; on the other hand the work of Jean-Pierre Sergent, "The 4 pillars of the sky", will stay a little longer in the Museum. Jean-Pierre makes us the pleasure and the honor to make us benefit from it a little longer; it is true that it is a piece which found its place in our staircases but obviously, as we do not necessarily have the means of acquisition sufficiently important to make the acquisition of it in a definitive way and well, we expose it as much as we can. But in any case, it's really another way of exhibiting contemporary art to have these annual rotations, so that we can always renew the artists' view over our collections and also to exchange with our visitors, the way of conceiving what really is a Museum, that is to say, it's not only a place with an exhibition, as the visitor you interviewed said, who is "frozen", but exhibitions change, permanent

exhibitions as well as temporary exhibitions, we may come back to this later on with our next temporary exhibition, but in any case, Jean-Pierre's work has found its true place, for a time, in the museum and we are very happy about that.

- AB: Jean-Pierre Sergent it is important to you, and what does it change for you to be exhibited here, at the Museum of Fine Arts?

- JPS : Well, of course, I'm very happy and very honored because it's been 15 years since I came back from New York and I found it a bit difficult, precisely, to show his work, because there are very few places dedicated to contemporary art in Franche-Comté, or these places are quite difficult of access for some reasons X, Y or Z, and it's because of this meeting with the director Nicolas Surlapierre, it worked out pretty well between us as he flashed on my work and for me, it's really an extraordinary chance, yes!

- AB : So we talked about vibration and energy already, and there was a question inevitably coming up, and it made me think perhaps also of one of the partners of the Museum of Fine Arts, which is the Higher Institute of Fine Arts and which, a few years ago, proposed an exhibition in Narbonne, at L'Aspirateur, in which you took part I believe? I hope so, maybe not?

- JPS: At L'Aspirateur? Yes, absolutely yes.

- AB : So it was an exhibition in 3 parts and there was one of the questions that were asked: is the artist a shaman? So we can see that there is something around this duet (artist-shaman) in some way, we don't know which one feeds the other? But you, precisely, on this occasion, what did you wanted to show?

- JPS: From the exhibition in Narbonne? In fact it was with Laurent Devèze, who is a friend and Director of the School of Fine Arts, and all the artists present were showing more or less shamanic works, trance works... And of course, that's what fascinates me, we've already talked about it, trance fascinates me, because it's accessing something else, it's forgetting the body a little and finding its fullness and its spirituality somewhere. Shamanism is what allows you to find your spirituality in the first sense of the term. A bit like when we are born, we have this experience of life or when we die, we don't really remember it anymore, but hey, it doesn't matter, it's not very serious, they are vital experiences... Art is a life experience, of course, it's absolutely certain.

- AB : So Louis Ucciani, we are often working together, especially around Fourier, and what I appreciate about you is that in the end there is always a Fourier dimension somewhere. For example, is there a link to be found between Jean-Pierre Sergent's work and Fourier's philosophy?

- LU : Yes, but about what is not necessarily present and visible in this exhibition here. So, I'm going to come back to one thing, it turns out that it's been 15/20 years since we met in Besançon within the art scene, and I was happy to have put together an exhibition on the links between Franche-Comté and New York. We had worked together at that time and this link Franche-Comté / New York, it should be known that it is eminently carried by Charles Fourier. And that Fourier left from here, or he stayed in France, but his disciples left for the USA, many communities were born in the USA thanks to

Fourrier and, notably, it will be a work that we will do this year, notably the Chelsea Hotel, which is the place for the artists, which was created by a disciple of Fourrier. In the Fourierist tradition. So there you have it, the link is there, and the other link is indeed the erotic, which we will perhaps talk about later? But I can see one thing, I would like to pick up on what was earlier said, since the music playing of the Navajo and Glenn Gould, finally, we realized that they are doing the same job, at some point! They are in the same place of creation, in search of, says JP Sergent of a spirit that might no longer exist. In any case according to him, who has completely deserted the world we are in. So it is as a philosopher that I approach his work because I don't know how to approach it. We've talked about it a few times, but it's a work that's hard to describe. It's not painting, not installation as such, it's a way of representing a world that may not be there, that may no longer be there and that is in the process of being constituted. And to see these images being silkscreened behind the Plexiglas, what do we see being applied? We can see a confrontation... I'm going to say this rather in another form: this art is for me anthropological art and not ethnographic. JPS is using ethnographic elements, with popular images that he finds a little bit everywhere, in our contemporary society and in past societies and he compresses them. Finally, one has the feeling that ethnography, that is to say, the lived experience, the spirit of the shamans who may have disappeared, is frozen into the anthropological, which is the science of today; the discourses that we all have towards the past and that the spirit, could no longer pass through it. And the work that JP Sergent seems to be doing is to create the framework that could make something pass through it. This something, he will perhaps talk about it later on about what is this spirit?

- JPS: Thank you.

- AB : So it is 19:25 on Radio Campus Besançon and we are going to make a small musical break, I remind you that you can listen to us on the 102.4 frequency.

Musical break Circle Dance Songs, Navajo Songs 1933 & 1940, Partita n2, J. S. Bach, Glenn Gould & Seger Madu, Gamelan Angklung, Music Of Bali

PART 2 | [SEE THE VIDEO](#)

- JPS: Yes, so here we hear gamelans from Indonesia. Antonin Artaud was crazy about this music because it's really a music that moves, that sweeps away all the harmonious tones. It also brings back this cosmic dimension, you can feel this, this absolutely incredible energy and this joy of being alive somewhere and communicating. I really love that. It's also chaos somewhere, it's a bit of organized chaos, by and with the music.

- AB : Here it is and we'll say it again, all we'll hear in this show in the end, is music from your library, cleverly chosen for this day. Louis Ucciani, maybe you also want to react to what JPS just said?

- LU : Yes, there are some things that I could possibly react to. The music that

was brought in, that might lead to a question. Does Art need music? That is to say, does the work that you do when you collect, as you do, images from different times, different places, different obediences and you compact them on the canvas which is here the Plexiglas. When we do this kind of work, we are in the negation of time. We are in something that makes us erase all temporality, all the strata that we saw earlier when we visited the museum, where we recompose the famous archaeological strata... Here, we compact everything. And so, when we compact, we remove the temporality, we remove the sound and we remove the music. It's a bit of this paradox that I would like to question, that is to say, how is it that we accompany the painting, (so we're actually on the radio and we're in the place of the sound). So, as it was said earlier, how difficult it is, when you do this work, to paint, to listen to music at the same time, it's impossible. Here, I'm asking the question again from another angle. Does Art adapt itself to music or is it not the negation of it? Which is not to say, by the way, that there is a place for music and a place for painting.

- AB : Or a place for both like radio ? Jean-Pierre Sergent ?

- JPS : No, I wouldn't manage things like that, I wouldn't think like that. I believe that an energy is an energy. Whether it comes through music or through painting. The important thing is that we receive it, I think it's a notion of pleasure. And you're absolutely right in what you say about the compression of time; there's a very beautiful phrase from the Upanishads, which is a book of Hindu sage that says: "There is no joy in the finite, it is the infinite that we must seek, O Venerable One, I seek the infinite." This is exactly that in Art! One tries to search for the infinite and the infinite has no time, as you just said. It's a bit pretentious, but it's true, what we're looking for is to get out of a given era. Because an era is necessarily restrictive from the point of view of morality, philosophy, religion, of course. That's what I'm looking for, to get out of an era, by mixing into my work, several successive time periods, I can find something that enlarges me. It's like when I was in New York, I was feeling bigger than when I was in France. It's a bodily sensation.

- AB : Nicolas Bousquet?

- NB: Yes this link with the deep time, with the compression of styles, forms, even forms of spirituality. Finally, it is the whole approach of museums, to concentrate objects that have lost their initial functions, which may have a shamanic function for certain objects, for example, the painted pebbles of the Azilian, that we present in our showcases. Objects that have been desacralized and that come from different churches in Besançon or elsewhere, from the cathedral, for example the statues of the Jubé. We also have works related to Gallo-Roman cults, with representations of Zeus, Mithra and some others... But what is interesting to see is that once these objects enter the Museum, they lose their religious functions but they keep their spiritual functions. We find ourselves with a compression, like this, of forms of human sensibility that continue to speak to today's visitors through the centuries and today's sensibilities. And Jean-Pierre's work echoes this function of the Museum, to preserve, beyond the initial function, on the contrary to bring out this notion of

the sacred, through a compression, a reappropriation. In our collections we have several polyptychs, works composed like this of shutters, for example the very beautiful Altarpiece of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows by Bernard Van Orley which is also composed, in addition to the representation of the Pietà, of two shutters with prophets from the Old Testament, which had evoked the coming pains of the Virgin. The altarpiece was closed except for religious presentations and services, and so one could not see what was inside; it was opened afterwards and one discovered, as a revelation, what was inside. The work of JPS is a little bit of that as well; there is a side of searching for meaning, for understanding, for dialogue between the different strata that make it up, and this relationship to the sacred speaks to us and to our visitors and finally echoes what we may encounter at random, during these visits to the museum.

- LU : If I may, on the history of the infinite and the finite, I'm going to correct the Upanishad and dare to contradict it and interpret it and say a little bit the opposite around. All right, I'm seeking in the canvas, in the art object, to reach infinity, therefore to go beyond its finitude, but I create this way a perfect finitude that contains infinity. That is to say, I don't have to disperse myself to seek the infinite, it is in the perfect parcel which is the finite.

- JPS: Yes, of course, but it's a sentence like that, because Art is still a search, artists are searching somewhere.

- LU: And that's when I asked myself about museums and how they work. I happen to be in charge of the METI license for the students, which prepares them for the curatorial exhibition profession. And of course we regularly ask ourselves the question of what is an exhibition? And it's true that there, "The Four Pillars of Heaven" which are precisely in what was presented earlier, in this staircase that goes up to the sky or down. This could be the march of time perhaps? It becomes interesting, because it is composed of accumulated finitudes. It is a little bit this report that I would like to question and which would answer the question about Fourier. The whole problem with Fourier is how the individual can merge into the community and be realized in the collective, and there, how a painting is realized in a set of paintings. This is somewhat the question, and the exhibition in this stairwell actually takes on a different meaning than if it were in a museum room.

JPS : It's true, you are absolutely right.

- AB : So, in a museum, there are works, but fortunately there is also an audience. Yesterday, Amélie, you were here with your microphone, just waiting for another type of gleaning, collecting words from visitors, and you offered us a selection of a few testimonies.

- Amélie Radio campus: Yes, so like you said, I've been walking around this MBAA looking for testimonials about the work of JPS. To know that in order to access his creations, you have to go through an arduous path, because of the health crisis. These works are hung above the two main staircases.

- Testimony 1: I like it, it's both restful and abstract. You can manage to see motifs and perceive things little by little.

- Testimony 2: It looks like some trance.

- Testimony 3: There is both meaning and no meaning. Afterwards, it's contemporary art, I'm not an expert in this field. It's this side that's a bit disjointed... but, when you look a little closer, you see that there's still a whole search and meaning.

- Testimony 4: The checkerboard design bothers me a bit. But each little square in itself is a very precise work of art that I like very much with the colors in every paintings. But the whole installation set up bothers me a little. Is it only one artist who did this? So, He surely liked to make parts of his Art well dispersed, so as not to gather it all together as we are used to do.

- AB : JPS, is that correct ?

- JPS: Yes, this whole audience is right. Except that it is the artist who is right, in the end, because it is us who are doing the work somewhere. And of course, one apprehends a work of art with one's culture, one's bodily experiences too, especially in my work, it's very important. Sometimes I do exhibitions where I show erotic work and there are often women who come to see me and tell me that my work disturbs them. Approaching a work of art it has to do with the way one has been loved, pampered or not, or even beaten. And therefore, we apprehend it with our bodies and I hope that my work speaks to the body first and then to the spirit, if however indeed, we still can access that part of our humanity.

- AB : We'll talk about this erotic dimension in a few moments, of course.

- LU : I just wanted to pick up on what this lady said, we'll come back to that. But earlier, you had defined the fact that you wanted to live without hindrance and obviously not in chains. And it's true that we often saw, and I think the lady could react to this, to this women we see, chained and shackled, in your work in general?

- JPS: Maybe, yes, maybe?

- LU : I really don't know, that a question one can ask?

- NB: Just to react to these reactions from our visitors, it really pleases me because it goes in the direction of the Museum's approach, which is to be a generous, welcoming museum that tries to offer its visitors experiences, so not all experiences are pleasant. But one can see that these visitors were surprised and visibly, for the most part, interested. Not all of them necessarily understood deeply the work of JPS, but we still have media that can help them go further if they wish. In any case, it was an experience for them and obviously, it marked their visit, so for us it's a win win situation.

- Amélie Radio campus: For the listeners who are listening to us and who have not yet seen these works, they are laid out like huge puzzles and fit directly into the building.

- Testimony of a Swiss woman: These works fit perfectly into the space. I really like how it fits with the floor. And I appreciate that there is contemporary art, after all the older stuff I've seen, that's also really great, but the modern stuff reminds us of our time.

- Testimony 5: It's hard to say like that, I would say maybe different forms of spiritualities, stars, an oriental side. All this obviously with a modern aspect.

- So, among these visitors, there were also local people and even Dutch

people. Elie was passing through Besançon and decided to come to the museum; she stopped in front of "The four pillars of the sky" intrigued :

- Testimony of Elie: It's very colorful and represents different regions of the world, because you can see lotuses, squares, butterflies, different images of animals. I think it also looks like Indonesian ikat fabrics. It's kind of a way to reunite the world.

- So for Elie, she explains to us that it's very colorful, that there are a lot of regions of the world represented here, so you can see lotuses, butterflies, different representations of animals. And also fabrics, at least, that's what she says, that it looks like Indonesian fabrics, and anyway, she likes the way this art work bring the world together.

- AB : Yes, that's also a dimension that hasn't perhaps been addressed enough, even though it has been suggested, but obviously it's a gleaning that concerns the whole world.

- JPS: Absolutely, I'm a New Yorker, I've learned to understand different aspects of the several cultures there, my life has been fulfilled and enriched like that. I don't want to talk about my private life too much, but I lived with friends coming from different backgrounds, my girlfriend was from Latin America; I had girlfriends from Africa, Japan, China. That's the diversity of life in New York, that's what is really interesting and challenging.

Musical break: Gamelan Angklung, Music Of Bal, Eminem - Steve Berman, The Marshall Mathers

PART 3 | [SEE THE VIDEO](#)

- AB : "This album is less than nothing, I can't sell this fucking record, Tower Records told me to fuck off. Tower Records told me to shove that record up my ass! Do you know what it feels like to have a record up your ass? I'm gonna lose my fucking job over this. You know why Dre's record was so successful? It hits big screen TVs, '40s emotions and blonde bitches with big tits. I can't sell that shit. Either you change the record, or it's not coming out." So that's a choice also on your part, Jean-Pierre Sergent; it's an opportunity for us to talk about this dimension that we talked about earlier, the sexual and erotic dimension of your work which, in the end, is an integral part of your work, there we may have dissociated a little bit, but here it is. So you wanted to broadcast this title, on which purpose did you really want to do that?

- JPS: Because it clearly shows that we have entered a world that is totally politically correct, that is to say that, as we said with Louis Ucciani, I've been around in Besançon for years and my work has never been shown in a museum, so it's really an important event for me, because there's this whole sexual side of my work that disturbs people eminently; it's frightening and I sell practically nothing, because people can't morally do it. I do have doctor friends, who have the money to buy it, but they tell me: One can't put that in a dining room. But somehow, I could answer them that the place of Art is not necessarily in their dining room. And I think the Art World suffers a lot from this

political correctness, because if you look closely at the art market today, 90% of the art that is sold is something that can always be sold in Dubai, Hong Kong, New York, or India, and, of course, you don't have to shock the bourgeoisie. It's a real and inescapable problem for real artists, in quotes, for artists who give sense into their works, as one might say, yes.

- LU : Yes, but that's the paradox of compression, because on the one hand, we're going to look for it in Art, we're going to look for traditions a little bit everywhere, and Art finally defends itself, or society defends itself, by compacting its resistances. What it does is that we have a common taste all over the world; while this work manages to show, that's why it is strong, it manages to show the traces of myths that are perhaps ancient myths. What interests me is how it arouses aesthetic pleasure, we'll say, and therefore philosophical reflection from the logic of transgression, which is as old as the world, there too, but why, it's always the same themes that are transgressive? That is to say, just as when we have the perfect finite, we find infinity, we can say that when we find the perfect body, perhaps we also find a form of infinity?

- JPS: Yes, transgression allows us to access space. Yes, that's right, transgression is important for change. Yes, it's absolutely connected, yes.

- AB: Nicolas Bousquet?

- NB: Yes, what is interesting is that a visitor from the eighteenth or nineteenth century who would find himself in the museum today, would be particularly shocked, because finally, on our picture rails, we exhibit eminently erotic works which for several centuries now have finally lost their transgressive side; but, for example, if we see *The Nymph at the Spring* (1537) by Lucas Cranach, it is an eminently erotic painting. Moreover Jean-Pierre was inspired by it and it is also present in the catalog that we will release together. The fact of having characters, young women, even young men, languished on paintings in our large 19th century room that we walked through and which is just a stone's throw from here; the Courbet room, Courbet himself also has eminently erotic compositions? And nowadays, of course, they hang on the walls of the Musée d'Ornans, on the picture rails of the Musée d'Orsay and on our own picture rails. So, finally this place of eroticism and eroticism in Art and which is a poncif, one could say, of the museums. Simply, transgression evolves, that is to say that what could shock in Roman times, was no longer what could shock in the 19th century. And in the twenty-first century, today, even if, it sometimes happens that our visitors get shocked, we hope that what we present will not distort the way we want them to look at our collections but, on the contrary, enrich them. And that's what's important with Jean-Pierre's work, whether it's his works with a mystical or spiritual dimension or his works with an erotic dimension, there is always this aspect to refer to Man, to his deep feelings and roots and to what connects him to Nature. And this sexual dimension is profoundly, in some kind natural and animal, one could say, and this is why it flies over the centuries and runs through the works that are exhibited in museums.

- AB : In any case, these works can be seen in tis Museum Conference Room,

which is not totally accessible or which is accessible by reservation only, I believe? Some people may see it as a debasing of women, reducing sexuality to a sexual act, and then of course one can answer that perhaps the vision of the West and castrating, in any case, that there is perhaps a form of rejection of bodies? Jean-Pierre Sergent?

- JPS: Yes absolutely, Japanese people don't have the same relationship to sexuality as we do, of course. We talked a little about it among ourselves the other day. Japanese, with their Shintoist animist religions, which are very ancestral, think that nature is animated, as in all animist societies. It is as there were spirits everywhere! And to define the specific place and space of a spirit, they bind it; they make a link around a tree and they define this tree as sacred where a Kami (deity or Shinto spirit) lives, in a manner of speaking. So the idea of bondage comes from this old practice, to make a body sacred somewhere. Yes, it is not a humiliation, it is a rather a sacralization!

- AB : In Japan?

- JPS : In Japan, yes, but now cultures are interpenetrating, why not in France ? I mean, I don't want to reduce my life because it pisses someone off in Besançon that I'm working on the theme of bondage. I don't practice it at all, I'm not interested in it. I hate being chained up and I hate chaining anybody up... But I find that these images show ecstasy and it's like before, when we had Saint Teresa of Avila in ecstasy. Before, ecstasy was eminently religious only, which led us later to sexual ecstasy, as Georges Bataille talks about in his book on eroticism. But what interests me more specifically, is to talk about eroticism, because it is still the primary mean in order to regenerate and generate Life. You lose so much when you don't have joy in life and no eroticism... it's terrible!

- AB : We get back to sexual climax precisely...

- LU : Yes, but I was also thinking, on the side, for those who don't see, because we're on the radio and there's the absence of the image problem; I thought that if I had to explain this painting to people who haven't seen it, I would take it back to Matisse so there's not much of transgression a priori. We're at Matisse's or Warhol's, obviously, for the support and the material, and there are winks to Keith Haring? So I don't know if I'm saying these three names if that ring a bell to you?

- JPS: Yes, I'm a little less close to Keith Haring work but closer to Basquiat, really yes. I love the energy of Basquiat and Matisse, we talked about it for a very long time in the interview we had the other day with Nicolas Surlapierre, the Director of the Museum, we talked firstly about the beautiful paper cut-outs of Matisse, because it's exactly the same technique as silkscreen printing. Exactly, I put colored flat tints on my paintings, that's exactly it.

- LU : So that's why it's an answer somehow, it's still part of the History of Art, one can see the filiations and it's true that Jean-Pierre Sergent is one of the rare artists to continue on this really special path.

- NB: I totally agree with you; it's true that the idea is to continue our presentation, we stop; on the George Besson Room's with his magnificent donation of this art critic who includes several Matisse. And indeed, our still life

by Matisse refers perfectly to this dimension at the same time, of compression of the plans but also an erotic dimension, since we see that there is there, inside, a sculpture of a naked woman and especially, what is important to know, is the filiation, somewhere, with the artists of Jean-Pierre's generation. But new creators too, since we continue to work with the School of Fine Arts, we talked about it, we had a planned exhibition of drawings that could not take place during the period of lockdown, but in any case what is important for us is to enrich the glance carried by our visitors and not to think that, when one is in a museum, he is only dealing with works of dead artists or lost or distant civilizations, but on the contrary, to see that this richness of the decorative motif, of the pictorial motif, of the religious motif, finally, finds an echo, still today, in the creators. And I think that the effectively erotic-transgressive dimension that can be found in different works of the museum, finally, is not so present in the works of Jean-Pierre. That is to say, we can indeed discuss certain practices represented, but in any case, the spiritual dimension seems to prevail in his images. At last, that's my feeling.

- AB : So the clock is ticking and I wanted to talk about something else, of course. Obviously what is great when we work as a journalist on an artist like you, when you go on your website, you have information ! There, we are really very pleasantly surprised, since there are, I think so we talked earlier, about the 72 works... and I was wondering if there are not 72 videos maybe, more or less or something like that?

- JPS: More than 300 yes! It's true, I am filming a lot of video interviews.

- AB : Yes, there is a lot of video interviews, and so I invited my colleague Alexie to research about this communication aspect, on which we'll talk about it again later and which is very important for an artist.

- Alexie, Radio Campus: So yes, when you search for the name Jean-Pierre Sergent on the video part of Google, there are exactly 50,600 results listed and the first page of the search engine is totally dedicated to you. An artist that one cannot ignore. When we seek deeper on your website, it is indeed more than 72 videos that we find classified by years and kinds. From reportages to portraits, through the retransmission of conferences, exhibitions and so on... I watched the discussions or rather the interviews with and by your friends, a former professor, an art historian or philosophers. Do you remember the 1978 to 1981 years? when you were at the Besançon School of Fine Arts, your color teacher was Claudie Floutier. That was 40 years ago, and since then it is a profession that has disappeared, but your friendship has remained intact: "So that's something you have to know, you have to know that it's something quite wonderful for me because we've remained friends during all that time, despite the empty times and the different space-time etc. But hey, distance doesn't abolish thought, so thought was there, there and there and it it has been there very early! Because I had spotted you at school, because you were already a bit eccentric. You weren't obedient, you were attentive, but you weren't the one who wanted to hear something without deeply reflect on it"

So you had been spotted at school by Claudie Floutier and since then your reflection has continued to grow and this resource, you communicated it,

notably with Marie-Madeleine Varet, philosopher: "Hector Lagos: We are going to talk about a loner, he is a painter and the decoration here, so this table which is a work table with also behind us, this big wall. And so this painter, Jean-Pierre Sergent, whom you know very well and you like a him lot? Marie-Madeleine: Whom I like very much, who has become not only a friend that I respect, but who has especially brought me into a universe that I had not yet approached, at my age, which is perhaps worrying! But that's the way it is, I admit it and that this discovery has changed many things in my life!"

This resource and this openness, you may also owe it to your experiences around the world. Here is an explanation in this excerpt with Jean-Louis Garillon, bio-quantician doctor: "JLG: You have been experienced the trance yourself? It's very interesting because it's a human experience but at the same time, for the artist that you are, it's an opening to other fields, to other dimensions... And let's say, that gave you what feeling? What sensation at first? To exist differently or to perceive things and your inner dimension differently than before?"

JPS: It's like another life! It's like discovering another life truly,

JLG: Yes, another part of life?

JLG: Another part of life!

JPS: Yes, another part of life with stronger, brighter colors and spacial translations, which means that you can travel...

JLG: In space and time!

JPS: In space and time!

JLG: Yes, okay!

JPS: And that's cosmical somehow!

JLG: Yes!

JPS: This cosmic revelation that I had in Egypt, it was revealed again throughout shamanic trances.

JLG: Ok, I would even say it's quantum, that what we name nowadays the quantic!

JPS: That's it, quantum!"

But in the end, the real question and the real answer is with Thierry Savatier, an art historian and Gustave Courbet specialist: "Thierry Savatier: There's a question that everyone always asks themselves when it comes to an artist, it's that we consider that an artist is someone a bit particular and we wonder how one becomes an artist. So that's my first question: as for you, how did you decide to become an artist one day?"

JPS: Well, it's not really a decision, it's more a life path, I believe. Yes it's a path of life! It's not a decision, but you still need a lot of strength and determination to continue working as an artist, of course! And it's what fills me with joy and happiness. That's really what gives me the most happiness in life, being an artist!" So Jean-Pierre Sergent, when is the next video that tells another part of your life?

- JPS: Very soon, yes, I can't live without that because in hearing all his friends' voices, I feel really honored and blessed. It's a very, very harsh choice, to live this artist life. But I feel very honored to have met so many great people who

look at my work with kindness and interest, so maybe we'll have an interview at the studio; maybe we'll talk with Aurélien, it would be interesting to show you the studio. But really, being an artist is being able to share things and informations. And I'm lucky, because, I learned how to communicate in New York, because when I was there, we had no digital yet and I couldn't do interviews unfortunately, but today, that we have digital cameras, I spend a lot of time; I just spent almost 2 months editing the interview we did with Nicolas Surlapierre and it's not a time that is wasted. Because we often talk about artists, but we don't certainly know what they really thought. We only have their work to try to understand them. Some have written but not so much and, for me, it's a privilege that I can, first of all write, secondly filming interviews and be able to diffuse my work, because if I don't diffuse it, I don't exist. And likewise, if I don't sell my work, it doesn't exist neither. So it's a bit of a respect for me and my work, to show it, to have it exhibited, to make it known and appreciated. So, I am here to defend it, in some way, I'm the greatest defender of it. But Marie-Madeleine or Nicolas or there are many other friends who want to defend it too. Because it must be said that to enter the Art Market, is practically mission impossible nowadays. Art doesn't sell and at less than \$50,000; you have no chance of entering the market if you sell even at €5,000, so it's of no interest, it becomes very pernicious, it becomes almost vulgar, when you go to the Basel Art Fair, you're astonished to see so many mediocre things. One shouldn't judge things too much, but hey, so much art that's a bit easy to sell!

- AB : This program is coming to an end and to go further, there is precisely this video you were talking about, Jean-Pierre Sergent just now, with Nicolas Surlapierre, the Director of the Museum.

- NB : Yes, absolutely Nicolas Surlapierre conducted this interview, it will be edited soon, so it's the very last one. For us, the role of museums it is also of defending the work of artists and making them express themselves, allowing them to present their works in confrontation with our collections. We just printed out the exhibition catalog's based on Jean-Pierre's work: "The 4 Pillars of Heaven", and we will soon be holding a conference as part of the "Journées du Patrimoine". We have invited Thierry Savatier, whom we heard earlier, to come and talk to us about eroticism in Art. He is a specialist who has also written a very beautiful work on Courbet's L'Origine du Monde painting and it will be a very interesting dialogue with Jean-Pierre. So, I invite, obviously, all the listeners to come for these Heritage Days to this encounter and then obviously, we try to work around the development of artists from the region and you will come for, we hope, our new Contemporary Art Exhibition in November for the 2nd anniversary of the opening of the museum.

- AB : Thank you all very much for participating to this emission: Louis Ucciani, thank, you Nicolas Bousquet, thank you, Jean-Pierre Sergent, thank you.

- JPS: Thank you all.

- AB : I would also like to thank my two colleagues: Amélie and Alexie for bringing their added value to this program. On the technical table it was Chloé Truchon, thank you Chloé. So I'm going off the direct now and in any case this

program will be in replay on the Soundcloud of Radio Campus Besançon. Nice evening to all of you.

Musical break: Steve Berman skit, Eminem & Polyphony of New Guinea