

ART AS GESTATION
OF THE PUBLIC
SPHERA



EDITED BY

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INDEX:	08	PRESENTATION
	11	A SPIRITUAL UMBRELLA
		CONFERENCES
	17	José Guilherme Abreu THE GENETICS OF ARTISTIC CREATION. A RAYMOND ABELLIO'S VISION
	60	Dominik Lejman PURGATION
	87	César Barrio LIVING IN THE INTERSTICES
	119	Rudolph Bauer THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL DRAMA OF ARTISTIC EXOTERIC-ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE AS ILLUMINATED BY ART
	149	Simeon Nelson MESH ANARCHISM
	178	Jo Joelson REMEMBER NATURE: ACTION FOR LIFE
	188	Rodrigo Silva WE, SINGULAR PLURAL
		FEEDBACKS
	206	Rudolph Bauer PHENOMENOLOGICAL ELABORATIONS OF THREE ARTISTS (JGA; DL; CB)
	224	José Guilherme Abreu ENTANGLED DIGRESSIONS OF FOUR THINKERS (RB; SN; JJ; RS)

EDITION NOTICE

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Art as Gestation of the Public *Sphera*

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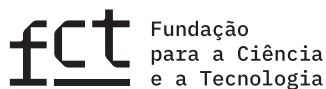
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Dedicated to Albert Ayler



PRESENTATION

Theatre of Apparitions | The Practices of Astonishment in the Spatial Configuration of the Common

Observing our time implies the recognition of a disturbing symptom: a society driven by techno-scientific utopianism, seeking to obliterate and forget the forms of vulnerability and finitude. Dealing with a condition that is denied and relegated to the margins calls us to open new dimensions of inclusiveness, if we recognize the demand to integrate the new and the different. Art has always been able to make space for offering new ways of seeing – from our common exposure to the fragility of being.

Theater of Apparitions is a research project informed by contemporary artistic creation. It aims to show some configurations of this common space fertilized by the creation of place for the totally other as an apparition, i.e., as a destabilizing event and insurrection – a term to which Georges Didi-Huberman gave renewed meaning – creator of the human being. The aim will be to create and recreate the conditions for welcoming the manifestations of wonderment – recovering the broad meaning of Greek *thaumazein* – and its relational intensities, reaching light for the cartographies emerging from the ordinary, in a series of multidisciplinary cultural initiatives capable of showing this moving horizon where uncertainty and trust, discovery and recognition are mixed.

It will be a matter of showing the constellation of the encounter between now and the past, one that brought out the critical energy of the dialectical images about which Walter Benjamin spoke. Invoking the being and knowledge of the different agents of the imagination, we will seek to undertake innovative readings of the multiple bridges and connections that can be established between the arts, sciences and the humanities. For that it is necessary to make wonderment the first – and most original – relational technology.

Mário Caeiro (LIDA);

Madalena Folgado (LIDA);

Rodrigo Silva (LIDA)

Organization

The organization of these conferences was based on a partnership between LIDA and CITAR, *Centro de Investigação em Ciência e Tecnologia das Artes* | Escola das Artes | Universidade Católica Portuguesa, spreading out to researchers of other universities' research centres, through R3iAP – *Rede de Informação, Investigação e Intervenção de Arte Pública*.

We will be glad to resume the reflections, the discussions, and the insights that came to be presented here, on further conferences and editions, if truthful interest around these questions and matters shall grow.

The preparation of the cycle of conferences we now present has had the advice and support of a group of authors and researchers, cooperating under the following structure.

Executive committee

José Guilherme Abreu (R3iAP) & Mário Caeiro (LIDA)

Scientific committee

José Guilherme Abreu (R3iAP); Laura Castro (CITAR); Mário Caeiro (LIDA); Vítor Pomar (Artist); Rodrigo Silva (LIDA); Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro (I2ADS); Daniel Verney (ARARE).

Acknowledgements

We are most grateful to the authors, colleagues, and collaborators who helped us to conceive and to fulfill the epopee of shaping a cycle of conferences, whose main ideas began to be discussed during a time of normal living, were first set up during unstable pandemic times, and finally came to be published during the troubled times of hard and heavy war.

First, we want to acknowledge the speakers of the on-line conferences. We are most grateful, not only for having accepted the invitations to participate, but also for the careful and patient work of turning into written text conferences that were first conceived as fresh on-line talks. So, acknowledgments must be directed to

Dominik Lejman, César Barrio, Simeon Nelson, Jo Joelson, Rodrigo Silva, and a most specially one to Rudolph Bauer, who had the kind initiative to write a text about the three conferences that were on-line, before his own. That joyful initiative led us to create a new section on the book we called FEEDBACKS, and to write another text, reflecting about the other four conferences, after our own points of view.

As well as the authors, we want to acknowledge the members of the scientific committee that help us to support the initiative, rooting it on its very ground: scientific research. So, we want to acknowledge Laura Castro, Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro, Madalena Folgado, Rodrigo Silva, Vítor Pomar, and Daniel Verney, for their advice and support.

Besides the most direct participators, we are also much grateful to the Direction Board of LIDA, for the scientific trust and the material support that could gain such an adventurous project. Scientific research is often risky, and we think it should remain like that, if we really want to step across the gates of discovery. So, we want to acknowledge its Director, Renato Bispo, as well as the other members of its Steering Committee.

Finally, the on-line conferences would not be possible, with all the technical and secretary work they required without the diligent and competent assistance of Inês Faria and Vitor Braga, to whom we are most grateful too.

A SPIRITUAL UMBRELLA

The demand for a fundamental correlation between art and life constitutes a stimulating premise for artistic actuality. The infinite possibilities of achieving this goal explain the material and conceptual pulverization of the means and practices used to interpret and materialize this desideratum. Art is a phenomenological instance of being, as Husserl asserts in his letter to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, when he says that *“the artist who observes the world [...] behaves towards the world as the phenomenologist does”* – an idea that Beuys will soon develop, stating that *“every man is an artist”*, when he is a gesture-in-action, i.e. a project in gestation.

Gestation of what? The gestation of *“society as a work of art”* (Marcuse, 1968:186). For Raymond Abellio, the SPHERA *“is an invariant and universal model, which functions both in the field of intuition as in elementary perception, or in the field of stronger intuitions (perception of facts and perception of essences), and also in any other pertinent field: the structuring of sciences, the structuring of social functions, or the relations between civilizations”* (Abellio, 1987:213).

Considering the relevance of art as a public reality (Grout, 2000) – in line with the fact that public space and the public sphere are everyday stages for gestures that produce difference – the idea of apparition is revealed as a phenomenological theme; according to Vergílio Ferreira, when he says: *“I feel, I feel in the viscera the phantastic apparition of things, ideas, myself [...] In life there is nothing but original*

feeling” (Ferreira, 1971:9). Astonishment is a consequence of the presence of the unexpected. And the unexpected has no time. We are touching here the domain of the “*need for anachronism*” (Didi-Huberman, 2017:17).

The cycle of conferences now being published articulates different ideas orbiting around an always emerging secular spirituality, aiming to bring fresh and original thinking to contemporary debate, calling for open conviviality and trust, while dark shadows of disagreement, suspicion, prepotency, and belligerency spread, threatening our common ground.

Beyond logical disjunctions, in a cryptic way, we affirm that the present crisis means that “*the awakening is near – and it is necessary a supreme effort to reach it. The awakening is distant – and it is really accessible*” (Batchelor, 1997:13).

Under the operative umbrella of the gestation of the Public Sphera, we shall continue to search and dig for the interstices from which art will shine through the opaque shadows that float over and around us, while it is publicly emerging as the healing force of the universe, echoing Albert Ayler’s invocation during his *Fondation Maeght*’s last free-jazz concert, at Vence, in the south of France, in 1970.

José Guilherme Abreu

Mário Caeiro

MUSIC IS THE HEALING FORCE OF THE UNIVERSE

(Albert Ayler & Mary Maria Parks - lyrics)

Music is the healing force of the
Universe,
Music of love,
Music is the spirit,
Music is life,
Life is music,
Music is played, listened to, danced
to, Sometimes not understood but
felt, Music causes all bad vibrations
to fade away,
It makes one want to love instead of
hate,
It puts the mind in a healthy state of
thought.
It reconciles, unites, becomes
oneness,
It brings about a state of wholeness
and purifies,
Oh, let it come in,
Oh, let it come in,
The music of the universe,
The music of love,
Be healed.
Music is the healing force of the
universe,
Music of love,
Music is giving,

Music is greatness,
It's never complete, it is a being, It's
always there,
To feel,
To let in,
To become obsessed by, To be healed
by,
So open up your door,
And let it come in,
Let it into the very interior of your
soul,
Sometime our very soul is in need of
spiritual medication,
We do not always need the pill and its
contents,
Just open up your heart and soul and
let it come in,
Oh, let it come in,
Oh, let it come in,
The music of the universe,
The music of love,
Be healed.
Oh, let it come in,
Oh, let it come in,
The music of the universe,
The music of love,
Be healed.

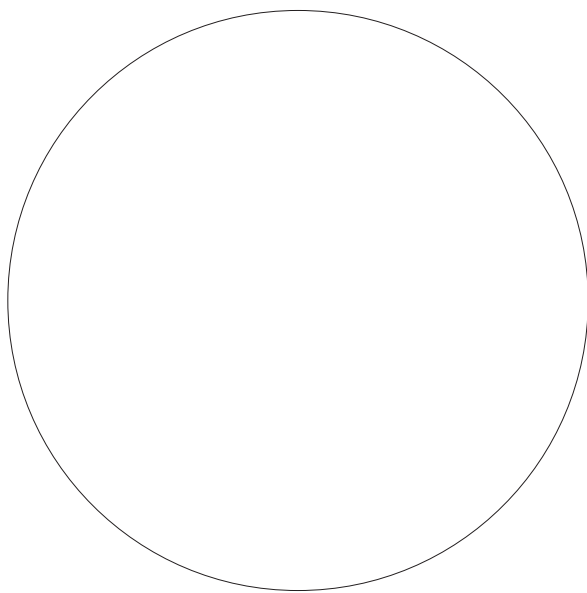


Albert Ayler and his wife Mary Parks during Nuits de la Fondation Maeght's concert, 17/07/1970, Saint-Paul-de-Vence. Recordings: Double-Album, Shandar, and Film by J-M Meurice, Albert Ayler : le dernier concert, 1971

Music available here: www.rb.gy/xuxjg



CONFERENCES



THE GENETICS OF
ARTISTIC CREATION.
A RAYMOND ABELLIO'S
VISION

On the 21 of April 2021, the scientific journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, published a most relevant article entitled *Evolution of genetic networks for human creativity*. Signed by many authors under the direction of Jorge Sergio Igor Zwir Nawrocki and Coral del Val, from the University of Granada, but also including researchers from several universities worldwide, this article described and discussed a complex DNA research.

To give a quick understanding of the article's content, I synthesize its point, quoting from the abstract:

We found that Neanderthals had nearly the same genes for emotional reactivity as chimpanzees, and they were intermediate between modern humans and chimpanzees in their numbers of genes for both self-control and self-awareness. [...] We conclude that modern humans have more than 200 unique non-protein-coding genes regulating co-expression of many more protein-coding genes in coordinated networks that underlie their capacities for self-awareness, creativity, prosocial behavior, and healthy longevity, which are not found in chimpanzees or Neanderthals. (Zwir et al., 2021:1)

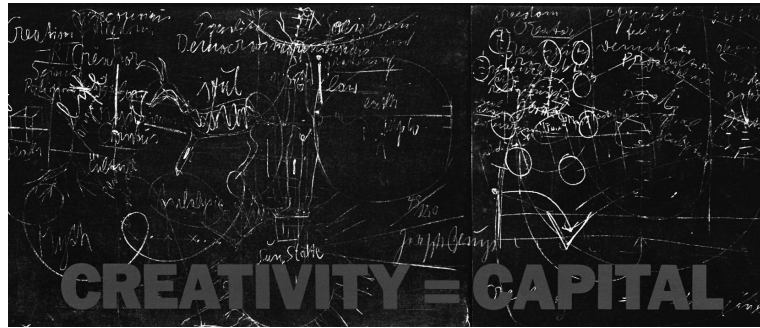
On the article's conclusions, I have found a statement which had a greater impact in my thoughts, and I quote:

When reared under conditions of parental warmth and tolerance, Sapiens with the genotypic network for self-awareness are likely to develop a personality profile characterized by creativity, altruism, and healthy longevity, thereby creating a distinctive social dynamic. (Zwir et al., 2021:17)

This statement was not an absolute surprise, nor was it an unprecedented announcement. The exceptional value of creativity had already been acknowledged by many artists, such as Joseph Beuys, as it is stated in his *New York Subway Poster*, 1983, being one exemplar kept on New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) art collections.

Eminently metaphoric, this work intends to highlight the value of creativity through the basic and simple language of advertising, having been produced under this project 120 posters, meant to be fixed in the interior of New York's subway carriages (O'Brien, 1983, p. 80-81).

Fig. 1- J. Beuys, *New York Subway Poster*, 1983, lithography and impression on paper, 27.9×70.5 cm, MoMA.



It is therefore obvious, that in such a problematic context as today's, the value of creativity appears even more determinant, as the vision to find the answers and the ability to operate the solutions that might solve the problems that shade nowadays' societies and peoples, certainly will raise from creative forces.

Beuys' poster states precisely this point. Creativity and Capital contain in their interior the means of reproduction and multiplication. Reproduction and multiplication on the material level: Capital. Reproduction and multiplication on the spiritual level: Creativity.

With this formula, the beuysian concept of "social sculpture" meets one of its most clear statements. Every human being has a role (a mission) to accomplish on Earth, and that mission is to turn his earthly passage through life into a "capital" (major) work of art

So, I arrive now to my extrapolation: If to stimulate the growth of a creative-reliable personality it is required that parental warmth and tolerance enable the genetical network for self-awareness of Sapiens, then to stimulate a social dynamic based on public creativity and altruism, is also required the presence of a stimulating and inspiring public sphere.

However, while parental warmth and tolerance depend mainly upon familiar commitment towards the promotion of wisdom and compassion in formative development, the promotion of a stimulating and inspiring public sphere depends, mainly, on the mediation of a spiritual public sphere or, as we prefer to say, on a spiritual public sphere.

So, we arrive to the main question: which mediations can gener-

ate such a public sphere? Our hint is that only art has the capability to generate the mediations required for the growth of an inspiring and stimulating public sphere. Before going on, it is necessary to reflect upon what do we mean by public sphere.

In fact, since Hannah Arendt historic-political essay about the public and the private (Arendt, 1958) and mainly after Jürgen Habermas sociologic-critical habilitation thesis (Habermas, 1962) this is a well-known and most discussed concept within sociology, as well as in public art theory (Miles, 1997)

The approach I want to propose now, however, is lot distinct than the one proposed by critical sociology, and specifically by the one developed by Habermas, since such a “sphere” is formed and led by the bourgeoisie, and it aims to involve its members in public debates “ruled from above”, meant to influence public authority. The focus of such interpellation is centered in the access to the acquisition of goods and social valor, issues that remain private, while denoting public relevancy. So, the bourgeois public sphere expresses the domain of the public debate, meant as “a privateness oriented to an audience” (Habermas, 1991, p. 10), so lacking any specific common character, as we quote:

Civil society came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority. Activities and dependencies hitherto relegated to the framework of the household economy emerged from this confinement into the public sphere (18). [...] The economic activity that had become private had to be oriented toward a commodity market that had expanded under public direction and supervision; the economic conditions under which this activity took place lay outside the confines of the single household; for the first time they were of general interest (Habermas, 1991, p. 19)

This social-economic based historical conception of the *Public Sphere* highlights its normative and pragmatic function, if not coercive. As Habermas says, the social transformation of the *Public Sphere* is its tendency to function as a “*platform for advertising*” (Habermas, 1991, p. 181). So, the public sphere is the *bourgeois public sphere*, and not the sphere of the whole, as it is expressed by the word community. It is a group of private people gathered to form a public, as we quote:

The bourgeois Public Sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicity relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social valor. (Habermas, 1991, p. 27)

So, that is it! The bourgeois public sphere is neither public, nor is it a sphere. It is not public, because it is a private group discussing shared wealth and social valor. It is not a sphere, because it is regulated from the outside – superior hierarchies – thus, remaining its conception and function useless, when talking about the development of a democratic and solidary culture.

This depreciation of the *public sphere* is even more evident when talking about public opinion, as a fiction, even in modern times, as we quote:

So, for the present the novelty of facts and the need for diversions has become so decisive that the people's opinion is as deprived of the support of a firm historical tradition... as it is of that peculiarly energetic spade-work in the intellectual laboratory of great men who placed their faith in principles and sacrificed everything to them. What a century ago was, according to the belief of contemporaries, a social principle that placed an obligation upon each individual (namely, public opinion), in the course of time has become a slogan by which the complacent and intellectually lazy mass is supplied with a pretext for avoiding the labor of thinking for themselves (Habermas, 1991, p. 240).

The concept of the public sphere I want propose is not rooted on Habermas sociological theory of the transformation of the public sphere, but rather on the phenomenological perspective of Natalie Depraz. This is the reason why I prefer to designate it as public sphera, instead of public sphere: to emphasize the distinction between both conceptions.

I think it is undeniable that after the spread of real time communications, and even more after the boom of social networks, we can watch a giant (if not a monster) arising before us, as a field of distinct forces pointing to the construction of a renewed common future, as it happened in most crucial historical processes, like mas-

sive migrations, ultramarine discoveries, or imperial conquests. Inside those movements, there is something more, or something else, than just empirical and pragmatic goals. There is a common purpose linked to a common dream. I call it the *Eldorado* effect, and I see it as a powerful both transcendental and wild force.

What does turn wild that shared transcendence? That could be the subject for another full article. Our preliminary assumption is that presently the Public Sphera is intoxicated with narratives. Often, by senseless, ephemeral, and empty narratives that create and spread great damage to our common and shared living, as Natalie Depraz clearly shows us.

In fact, while Habermas establishes his theory from the interplay and tension between specific sociological groups and well-defined political powers, Natalie Depraz conceives the *Public Sphere* as a cohesive *Communicative Plurality*, as we quote:

This community is certainly recaptured under the species of the unity of a common subject generated and reactivated by the presence of a common “world”, but this unity is no longer called here an egological centration constitutively extended to the plurality of egos.

The “communicative plurality” (kommunikative Vielheit) is entirely, in its dynamism and its tensions, this unresolved unity, open to the space and time of others, engendered as unity in the very movement of crossing and penetrating others, in short, it “operates (fungiert) like a subject”, as Husserl eloquently will say. (Depraz, 1994, p. 56)¹

Natalie Depraz’s conception of the public sphere is not defined by the sociological interplay of actors and goals, for they appear as contingent. On the contrary, she thinks that the public sphere can only be adequately apprehended by an *ontological path* seeking to capture the essential meaning of the very *world-of-life*, as I quote:

... the ontological path of the world-of-life offers a genetic re-understanding of the transcendental reduction, which allows us to recapture, in its non-mundane origin, the very phenomenon of political sociality. (Depraz, 1994:53)²

So, although meant as a retrocursive process, it aims not to reconstitute any archaic, intemporal, or forgotten principle. Instead, it intends to lead our thoughts to an undetermined (*ontological*)

region, where *fresh synthesis* is permanently being generated.

By this retrocursive approach to the original place of rooting of the political in the very *world-of-life*, one attains a transcendental sense of the *political sphere* free from natural interference.

You may call this fresh synthesis ART. When it is created on the behalf of a *Communicative Plurality*, we may call it PUBLIC ART, for, as Siah Armajani states, and it is confirmed by his art, “*The art in public art is not a genteel art but a missionary art*” (Armajani, 1995, p. 112).

Fig. 2- Siah Armajani, Picnic Table for Huesca, 2000, iroco wood, Pineta valley, Huesca. Photo: JG Abreu



Picnic Table for Huesca appears then as one of the most paradigmatic pieces by Siah Armajani’s public sculpture *ideario*, as it merges both the celebration of life and the constitution of a collectivity, even if only temporary or recurrent. And if it looks square by its shape, it creates roundness like a sphera, as it is built around a central axis, and it gathers people all over.

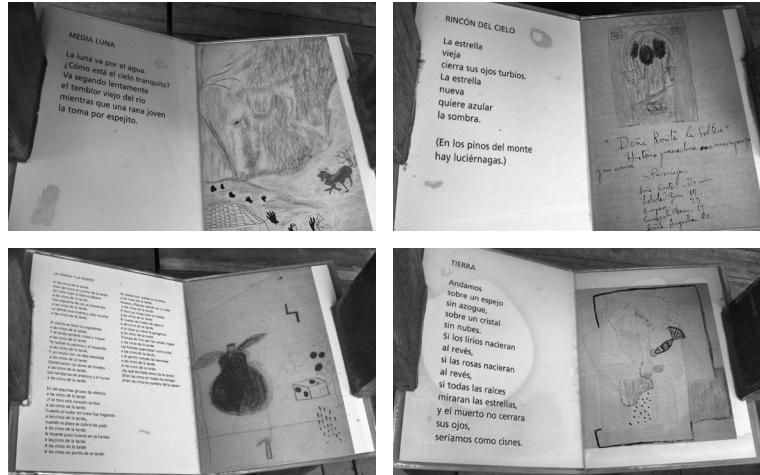
Besides that, while fully functional, this picnic table is not a mere table for picnic. In fact, it is a convivial table in which no one has his back turned to anyone, and despite its practical use this table is also a homage to Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca, killed during the Spanish Civil War. In the four lecterns placed in the middle of each side, one can see a reproduction of poem and a drawing by Garcia Lorca, having these poems been chosen by pupils of a nearby school.

Talking about Siah Armajani *Picnic Table for Huesca*, Nancy Princenthal says:

... the image of the lively communal banquets evoked by the huge table and the wide eight benches that frame them are discreetly countered by a detail that appears on the four sides: inserted between each of the four pairs of posts that support the roof, there is a crystal stand in the form of

an open book. In a “page” of each book there is a poem by García Lorca; in the other there is a reproduction of one of Lorca’s watercolors; together, they provide a time for silent contemplation and shared talking. In other words, there is space, on this large table, for solitude: while being the very image of cordial conviviality, it is so much more integrative because it presents itself as an ideal framework for individual contemplation. At the same time, it allows public recitation: a reading that in itself encompasses individual and communal experience (Princenthal, 2000:25).

Fig. 3-6- Federico Garcia Lorca, *Poems and watercolours*, 4 sheets of paper inside plexiglas covers.



Another much distinct example, but no less important, is the *Imagine Peace Tower*, by Yoko Ono, dedicated in 2007, in Videy Island, Iceland, just in front of Reykjavik.

While dedicated to homage the memory of John Lennon, this “monument” of light is above all a means of stating and defending the value of Peace, as Yoko Ono said in her dedication speech:

All spirits of goodness of this magical land, of the planet, and of the universe, thank you, thank you, thank you, for witnessing our humble gathering for the unveiling of IMAGINE PEACE TOWER. [...]

The light is the light of wisdom, healing and empowerment. Even in the moments of confusion, fear and the darkness of your souls, hold the light in your hearts, and you will know that you are not alone, that we are all together in seeing the light of peace. (Ono, 2008:9)

Beyond its idealistic and generous aims, this project is also relevant from a strict conceptual point of view, since the choice of Iceland

Fig. 7- Yoko Ono, *Imagine Peace Tower*, 2007, Videy Island, Iceland



as the place for the implantation of the monument had as its paramount reason the fact that Iceland has no permanent military bases in its territory, just a defensive naval structure, and in the dedication day a declaration was made, as follows:

The association Campaign against Military Bases praised the decision to publicize the importance of fighting for world peace, as well as the willingness of Reykjavik city authorities to promote Reykjavik as a center of peace. The association also urged local authorities in a resolution to use the opportunity to announce that, in the future, battleships would be banned from docking at Sundahöfn harbor, merely a few hundred meters from Imagine Peace Tower. (Blondal. 2008:16)

Another relevant feature of the *Imagine Peace Tower* is the fact that the electricity used for its powerful light beam is produced by geothermic means, using the volcanic heat of Iceland soil to produce the required energy, releasing no carbonic gas.

But still, that is not all! The lightning of *Imagine Peace Tower* obeys also to specific criteria. First of all, symbolically, the light beam is lightened every year between the 9th October and the 8th December, matching, respectively, the dates of John Lennon's birth and death. Yet it is also lightened "on the winter solstice and remain lit until the New Year's Day, [...] during the week following the spring equinox, as well on special occasions agreed on by the artist and the City of Reykjavik" (Jónsson, 2008:21)



Fig. 8- Yoko Ono, *Imagine Peace Tower*, 2007, Dedication Day, Videy Island, Iceland

So, let us imagine a future when Imagine Peace Tower will be always lightened, for every day had been acknowledge as “special occasion”, because of the achievements previously made, concerning the empowerment of the peace movement.

This image of the people around Imagine Peace Tower holding their hands, turned to the center wishing, and not turned to the periphery pro-

claiming, can become an approach to what I call the Public Sphera, as the point here is not about indorsing a cause – Peace – and acting to attain it, but contributing to turn it real by the simple and easy way of imagining what a peaceful world could be, and this is methodologically and theoretically, something quite different. So, if one cannot imagine what a peaceful world could be, how can war be irradicated? By banning guns? Although guns should not be easily accessible, on the long term, such strategy seems to me not to be effective.

02

Raymond Abellio’s Genetic Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology has been adopted in many areas of human and social sciences, and its methodology can be found even in most rigorous research areas, such as medicine (Moustakas, 1994). However, transcendental phenomenology remains usually a descriptive method based on the suspension of judgment (*epoché*) and allowing us to realize how do things appear to the conscientious mind.

So, transcendental phenomenology usually remains static. One describes what appears from the inside or from the outside to one’s conscientious mind. It is fresh perception. It is fresh understanding. It is even intersubjective and transpersonal sharing. But it remains passive.

How do things become? How does the ever-changing reality change? Is there any pattern or model that can describe from the same premise of the suspension of judgment, the mutations registered in time?

This problem had already been noticed by Husserl, and it is the fundament of his distinction between static and genetic phenomenology: the last one obeying to the so called “laws of genesis”, as we quote:

... the stream of consciousness is a stream of a constant genesis; it is not a mere series, but a development, a process of becoming according to laws of necessary succession in which concrete apperceptions of different typicalities (among them all the apperceptions that give rise to the universal apperception of a world) grow out of primordial apperceptions or out of apperceptive intentions of a primitive kind. Every apperception exhibits the structure of noesis and noema. (Husserl, 1921, p. 137)

Described here as a stream of constant genesis, consciousness is not a mere series of instants (or instances), but a development. So, it fulfills (or it hides) a sense, and such sense is given by the process of becoming. A process built by apperceptions, whose structure is made according to the complementarity between noema and noesis.

So, we have here three fundamental concepts to deal with, when talking about genetic phenomenology: **apperceptions**, as the *intentional core* which manifests the very process of becoming; **noema**, as the *primatial element* of knowing; **noesis**, as the *very ability* to perceive.

Of course, this is not idealism. The living and lived world are entirely there while reduced to the universe of apperceptions. However, to deal with such a theory and to be able to create an adequate methodology is not an easy matter, since it requires the capability to deal with *transcendental, eidetic and phenomenological reductions*, and *epoché*.

Raymond Abellio (1907-1986) was one of the few who succeeded to find a way to operate and to systematize a genetic phenomenological methodology based on *apperceptions*, while decomposing and *doble crossing*, in each other, *noema* and *noesis*.

Let us begin by discussing one of his most inspired quotes, which aims to relate and to oppose the endless stream of mutations before the fixed pole of the immutable, thus opposing science to gnosis:

I believe that in this area [quantum physics] one faces the dialectic of perpetual surpassing. On the contrary, in gnosis we are in the presence of the unsurpassable. This is the drama, but it is an illuminating drama.

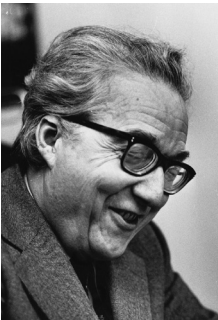


Fig. 9- Raymond Abellio

It is therefore necessary to implement a dialectic between the perpetual surpassing and the presence of the unsurpassable, and this is where the internal conflict is, the one of the scientist. If the scientist becomes aware of this conflict, his conversion takes place almost automatically. (Abellio, 1987, p. 47)

Pronounced in Abellio's last conference at Sainte Baume, cinq months before he passed away, I think this excerpt is his gnostic testament and it is a bright synthesis of his thinking.

We have here a perfect expression of the gap that separates, but also relates, science and gnosis. Science is an on-going additive process which operates at a certain level of reality and whose results are *transitory*, *approximative* and soon become obsolete. Gnosis is immutable. Its wisdom is neither *gradually acquired*, nor it is *transitory*. It is always "almost there", and so it is unsurpassable.

Curiously, we could say quite the same about art. Just as science is, art remains an on-going *creative process* that operates at a specific level of reality, and whose results are *diverse* and *mutable*, while remaining always *valid*.

Saying this, let us modify Abellio's quote, and see if it keeps its meaning:

I believe that in this area [quantum physics] [art movements] one faces the dialectic of perpetual surpassing. On the contrary, in gnosis we are in the presence of the unsurpassable. This is the drama, but it is an illuminating drama.

It is therefore necessary to implement a dialectic between the perpetual surpassing and the presence of the unsurpassable, and this is where the internal conflict is, the one of the scientist artist.

If the scientist artist becomes aware of this conflict, his conversion takes place almost automatically. (Abellio, 1987, p. 47)

Although there are differences between science and art, since science denotes the quantitative/objective aspects of the world, while art echoes the qualitative/sensitive ones, I think we can say that Abellio's gnosis is both a challenge to science and to art, for his purpose can be expressed as follows:

- To recognize the transitivity of science results and art achievements (*the perpetual surpassing*)

- To illuminate the conscientious mind with the gnostic vision (*the presence of the unsurpassable*)
- To set up a dialectic of the *perpetual surpassing* and the *presence of the unsurpassable (creative jump)*

Abellio's genetic phenomenology is based in a gnostic model: the universal senarian sphere (USS). Regarding its characterization the author says:

In the natural or empirical view, I see myself, it is a fact, in a state of simple duality with the world. There is the world and me face to face. I see such and such object, a book for example, as it is arranged on the shelves of my library, and the common sense stops at this simple relationship: a book and myself, the couple of an object looked at and a watching observer. Let us examine this perception more closely, however, and proceed, as Husserl would say, with the perception of this very perception. This book is an object which belongs to the world, and to become visible, it must in some way emerge from the more or less distinct background, which is itself the world as the unitary and global support of objects, because the world is not the sum of objects, but on the contrary the a priori condition of their appearance as such. This background, this horizon of objectivity cannot be thematized, it does not fall under an effective vision, on the contrary it is what makes any vision effective. To fall under my senses, to take on a meaning, this book which belongs to the world therefore rejects in a certain grayness, a certain indistinction, the rest of the world, and consequently establishes with it a first relationship, that of an object intended for being perceived in relation to the rest of the world intended to be ours. Let's say, to simplify, that such object becomes active (+) compared to the rest of the world which is considered passive (-). So, there is already – there always will be – a duality on the side of the perceived, but there is also a duality on the side of the perceiver, because the eye must also perceive the book by taking special interest in it. The eye opens and becomes active. On the bottom, put at rest, my body becoming passive, no longer specifies or isolates anything else. Here again we say that the eye becomes active (+) compared to the rest of my body that becomes passive (-). This book and my eye are, in other words, only local emergences of a global reality, in which they should be re-rooted: any other vision is alienating. Ultimately, it is two

active-passive couples and not just one that we are dealing with, and the overall perception is established in the form of a proportion: book / world = eye / body; or again: object / world = organ of sense / body; the intermediate sign “equal” having here a conventional meaning, but symbolic, on which *e* will come back soon. (Abellio, 1965, p. 43-45)³

Here is a fundamental point for my lecture. Abellio’s *gnosis* – which curiously is represented by a sphere – shows us how to oppose and to relate science and art, while addressing both from different perspectives (quantitative/qualitative) and levels of reality (matter/spirit). How shall we read Abellio’s *Universal Senarian Sphere* (USS)?

First, let us remind that USS is not properly a diagram, or at least it is not only a diagram. It is also some kind of symbolic dimension, for instance the symbol of the cross, as René Guenon has shown (Guenon, 1931). So, I prefer to call it a *symbolic-transcendental* model.

The sphere appears here as a symbol of the whole, being this whole constructed by the following categories:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1. Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemispheres • Axes • Poles • Signs | <p>2. Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotations • Senses • Modes | <p>3. Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resonances |
|---|---|---|

Concerning its **Elements**, we should consider first the two *hemispheres* of the sphere. The hemisphere from above and the hemisphere from below, both separated by the equatorial plan, where the dialectic of the model operates. The hemisphere from above denotes the spiritual nature of being, while the hemisphere from below denotes the material nature. Both connotations increase as the distance to the top (superior or inferior) diminishes.

Regarding the axes, they correlate the two opposed domains addressed by the model: on the one hand, the *inner* domain, polarized by the *body* where experience is stored and the periphery by the *perceptive sensors* that capture experience. On the other, the *outer* dimension, polarized by the *world*, seen as the source of all objects, and by the *object* that catch our attention or provide its use.

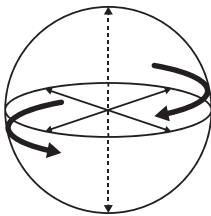


Fig. 10- Raymond Abellio's Universal Senarian Sphere

The two crossed-related axes give us the equatorial plan of experience reduced to its essence, to generate apperceptions. There is another axe that intercepts the first crossed two, which points to the opposed directions of high, ascending until the convergence in the most universal and integrant unity, and descending to the divergence towards the most discrepant and diverse multiplicity.

Regarding the *poles* of the model, they can be found in the extremity of each axe, where they appear as the purest entities and/or qualities, obtained by *eidetic reduction* (reduction to the *essence* of meaning) or by *transcendental reduction* (reduction to the *intentional sense*), being the *phenomenological reduction* (reduction to the *residuum* of being) expressed by the central pole of the sphere, which is related with the constitution of the *transcendental ego*, siege of the *transcendental conscience*.

Regarding the *signs*, they change between *active* (+) or *passive* (-) and they show the state each pole has at any specific moment of the dialectic cycle of the genetic process of becoming. If a certain pole is *active*, the opposite pole is *passive*, and so on.

Concerning its **Functions**, first one should consider the *rotations*. They indicate a passage from interior to exterior, or vice-versa. Because of its dialectical nature, functions express a discontinuity, or change of logical accordance, between the two different domains. Besides rotations, we should also consider *intensifications*. They indicate an *emergence* from a domain or an *immersion* within a domain.

Regarding the *senses*, they refer to the type of each rotation. Rotations represent a change of context or background, and they alternate between interior and exterior, or between above and below.

Regarding the *modes*, they express the kind of *intensifications* of the processes' outcomes, and they vary between *intensifications* in mode of *intensity* and intensifications in mode of *extension*.

Concerning **Results**, since this model is a *symbolic-intentional* entity, we should above all realize that its outcomes are meant to be of a transcendental kind. On this point, Abellio himself often said that the USS is the yoga of the Occident. So, I tried to express the transcendental character of its results presenting them as *resonances*. Such transcendental resonances altern between *meditations* and *insights*.

So, let us see how Abellio's genetic phenomenology operates.

In Abellio's model, the flow of phenomena is seen as a genetic process engendered by the interplay of two double and opposed polarities: one double *inner* polarity opposed to another double *outer* polarity, each double polarity linked by an axe, and both axes crossed each other, just like a cross. So, if we are talking about the development of an idea or a dream, the active polarity lays in the *inner* axe, while the *outer* axe remains passive. Likewise, if we are talking about the occurrence of a lightning or a thunder, the active polarity lays in the *outer* axe, while the *inner* axe remains passive. However, *inner* and *outer* are intimately related because they are both instances within conscience, as the notion of exterior (out) is a *noema* inside conscience, just as the notion of interior (in) is another *noema* too, being *noesis* the faculty which allows us to apprehend them as opposed essentialities.

So, when the sudden flash of a lightning of a storm coming hits the living-room of the house where I am at night hearing music with the lights turned off, an exterior *pole* becomes *active* (+) and my body and my mind turn *passive* (-), paralyzed by the effect of the flash, detected by the activated eye, until then passive. This means that before the lightning, the world outside the house was passive, while my hearing was active following the music.

While I was hearing music, the world outside the house was passive, and my own body too, for my attention was concentrated in listening the sound that came out from an active object of the world that was inside the house: the hi-fi loudspeakers. My body was then an indistinct and inactive background, without no initiative. The flash of the lightning reminded me that there was a world outside me, and that it is impermanent and instable. My hearing disconnected from the music that continued playing. Stimulated by the bright flash, my eyes and my body became active. So, I stood up and moved towards the window to see the storm that was approaching the house.

Otherwise, if the object which attracts my attention is a book, my eyes are active while I am reading it, and the whole body remains passive (seated on a comfortable armchair), as the books' content

is being stored somewhere inside the body. But, if the book is a gastronomic guide, its content may cause the will to have a meal, and suddenly my body becomes active. I stand up from the armchair and decide to get the Indian food that attracted my attention, looking for a pole of the world which became then active: the Indian restaurant nearby.

Finally, the decision of having a meal reflects a specific intentional attitude: the attitude of *incarnation*, as my intentional behavior denotes a material purpose. If the book's content was of a spiritual kind, instead of standing up from the armchair heading to the restaurant, maybe I would rather begin a meditative practice. In this case, we should talk about the intentional trend for *assumption*, which seeks the path to spiritual unity.

From these simple examples, we can see that the process of becoming always involve transitions and inversions between opposite axes, poles, functions, and intentions. The transition from the inside to the outside. The inversion between active and passive. The intention towards the multiplicity of matter or the intention towards the unity of spirit.

So, as it is required in phenomenology, here the process of becoming is not a description of how facts occur in the “*positional world*”, but how they appear in the “*transcendental sphaera*”, i.e., on the psychic field. This is a consequence of the primacy of the *cogito* revealed by *epoché*, as *transcendental conscience* is considered the place of maximum adequacy.

This way of considering genesis, on the one hand attributes to the *psychic field* the statute of a coproducer of becoming – for facts cannot be understood as independent from *psychism*. On the other hand, the *psychic field* is no longer a mere subjective inspection of the objective world – for without *psychism* there is no genesis, only repetition. Outside the *psychic field* there is no creation, for creation has necessarily an intentional *core* and/or *sense*.

Psychism becomes then the central field for the creative process. In the case of the artistic creative process, its dialectic is a genetic one, as Daniel Verney showed us.

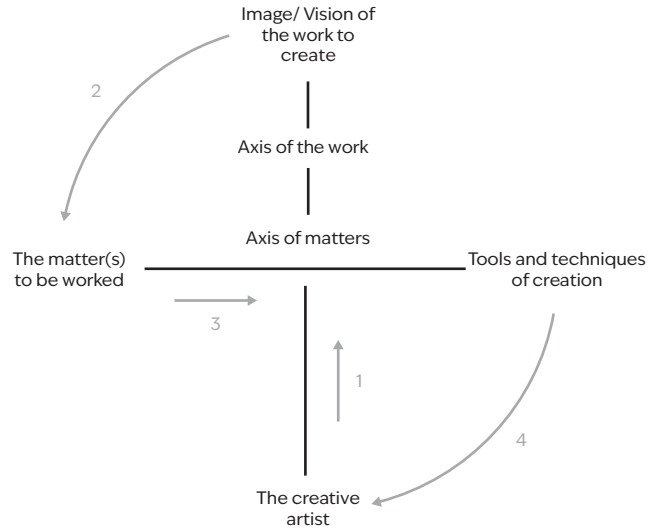
Abellio's dynamic of the artistic creative process, according to Daniel Verney

On the basis of Raymond Abellio's genetic theory of creative activity, the apices of which the author calls art (Abellio, 1965), Daniel Verney explains in detail his application of Abellio's methodology to artistic creation as follows:

The first part of the structure operation consists in finding the key features – called “poles” in Abellio’s writings – of the situation currently studied. They should be distributed on the two perpendicular horizontal axes, as opposites on each one. Several systems of poles may be relevant, depending upon the perspective adopted. In our model of creative activity, let us choose the artist and his work in progress. Any of the four poles may be considered as initially active: we will choose the artist as the initial active one. The artist is actively directed towards the work to be created, which is, at that step of the cycle, an internal image or vision [Fig. 12, phase 1]. That image “turns itself” to the material domain by and through which the work has to be built up: for example, the marble, or the wood for a sculptor, a set of devices for a plastic artist, and so on.

Abellio uses the phrase “turns itself” to emphasize the fact that the work in the creative process acquires an autonomy, a proper momentum toward its realization, momentum which may be considered as issuing from the author’s desire or will, at least at first sight. The idea of rotation present in that expression and in the geometric configuration [Fig. 12 and Fig. 13], is the first outline of a fundamental operation of any creative (or intuitive) process: a discontinuous leap occurring between two relative levels of reality, one more virtual, the other more concrete. Abellio had an acute sense of the nature of such an operation which is at the core of our research work. In the third phase [Fig. 12] of the creative cycle, the matter to be worked on asks the artist to use tools and techniques to process the creation. Then in phase 4, those tools are taken back by the artist to modify, and hopefully enhance, the image of future creation. Abellio remarks that any one of the four poles of the structure may be considered as initially active or non-active, generating various cycles of different issues. This is how the Abellio’s universal structure can be applied as a heuristic approach to lived situations (Verney, 2018, p. 328-330)

Fig. 11- The dynamics of creative work.



But, as Verney shows, the creative process cannot be reduced to its dynamic operations if other levels of reality are taken into account. Following Abellio’s ideas, Verney explains that in order to grasp the structure of the creative process, it is necessary to consider another axis: the vertical axis, which aims to introduce the psychic levels of creation.

This third axis shows the double way in which the psychic dimension interferes with the operative dynamics of the creative process, this interference being established not by a direct dynamic articulation but by a resonance phenomenon.

At the top of the axis, the A-pole of the psychic node represents the non-individual psyche - the pole that gives “*inspiration*” and attracts “*expiration*”. At the lower end of the axis, the pole of Node B, in relation to the individual psyche, is the pole that gives ‘*exhalation*’ and attracts ‘*inspiration*’.

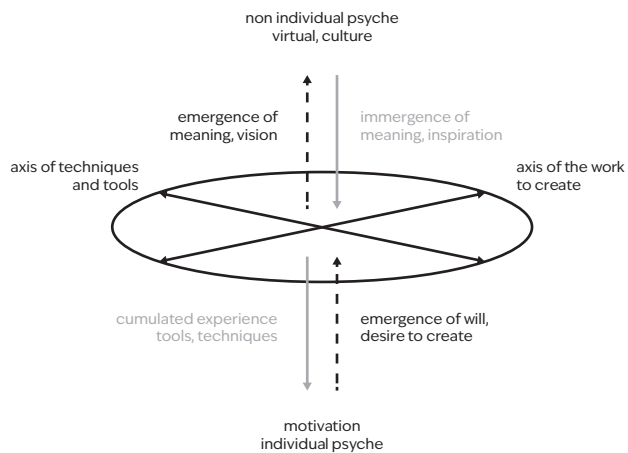
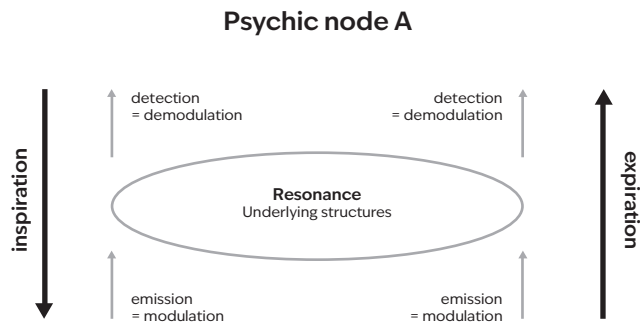
Thus, along this axis, a kind of “*psychic breathing*” takes place, as Abreu and Verney explain:

An artistic creation process is therefore a kind of inspiration-expiration taking place between resonating nodes, individual or collective [Fig. 13, Fig. 14]. Like in the musical world, where sound resonances require tuned structures (instruments, vibrating cords, air columns), in the psychical

world the creative resonances require underlying structures adapted to the artistic domain, at various levels of universality, as treated hereabove. In [Fig. 13], the words emission/detection, modulation/demodulation suggest analogies to information transmission through physical channel. But in the psychical domain, we are not concerned by transmission of bits, like in the theory of information, but with resonances between psychic nodes. Any individual psychic node is both receiver and emitter of inspiring resonance, according to the creator's sensitive ability and context. The process of giving to the universe is the correlate of what the creator receives through inspiration. (Abreu & Verney, 2022, p. 289-290)

Fig. 12- Artistic resonances in the universal psychic field.

Fig. 13- Emergence and immergence in the creative cycle



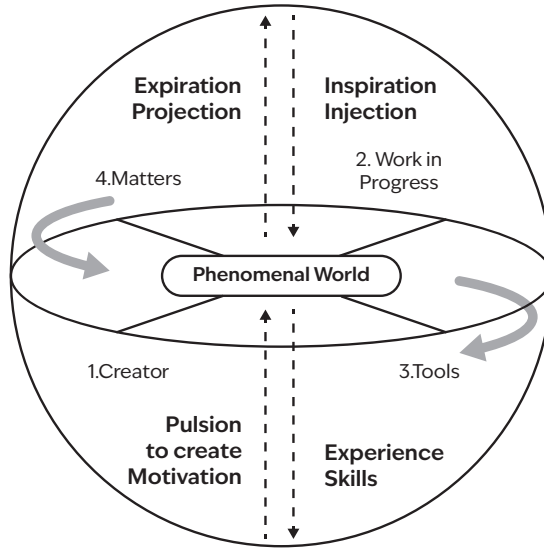
This third axis opens the model to the non-circumstantial or a-temporal dimensions of artistic creation, which transcend objective factors such as skills, interests or influences and appear as complementary inductions manifested through or in them.

We then come to the conclusion that the creative process is not only about the production of a cultural product, nor even about the creation of something new and unique, but rather about a psychic episode or insight whose feelings overcome the unidimensional dynamics of production, so that it can become genetic, i.e. creative, when the flat field of dynamic interaction becomes spherical, as long as verticality is acquired, as the authors explain:

Creativity resides in the creator's psychism as a pulsion to create. That impulsive energy, originally undifferentiated, needs to be oriented, directed, towards a goal: this is the role of the creator's motivation, becoming more and more precise as the creation project realizes itself. In Fig. 15 it is represented by the red ascending arrow which brings the creative energy from the creator's psychic pole to the phenomenal world where a work is in progress. Nourished by the creation cycle, this ascending tendency goes on into the top hemisphere, as a call for inspiration, becoming more and more precisely oriented towards the universal psychic pole to which the creation project is tuned: this is symbolized by the ascending blue arrow of Fig. 15.

As long as that resonance maintains itself alive, the universal psychic pole responds through an inspiring flow (descending blue arrow in Fig. 15) which brings spiritual energy and new forms into the creation process, and moreover nourishes the creator's psychism in refined skills, and contributes to the creator's experience, reinforcing his/her motivation (descending red arrow in Fig. 15). (Abreu & Verney, 2022, p. 291-292)

Fig. 14- A global (spherical) view of the artistic creation.



According to Daniel Verney, the creative process appears as a spherical process. Within creation we recognise a complex multilevel and multidimensional synchronicity, the articulation of which the spherical model allows us to perceive. At a glance, the creative process can be seen as a genetic event, in which a dynamic productive activity is shaped by both individual and universal psychic intervention, by means of inspiration and projection, which interfere with the inner-outer interactivity, merging transcendent and immanent layers.

In this sense, we feel entitled to call “art” the optimal integration of these elements. Following this criterion, we can therefore formulate three relevant assumptions:

1. “Art” should not be reduced to the so-called work of art but should also be extended to everything whose “life” reflects the spherical functioning that brings forth the new and unique.
2. “Art” is not only a new product resulting from the series of different cultural products, but it is also, if not primarily, the psychic effect it has on the individual and collective mind.
3. “Art” is then the lived and shared experience of the endless discovery of what creation is and how it changes the way we see.

From these assumptions we can get a clearer understanding of what is the deep meaning of the “expanded field” (Krauss, 1979) claimed by contemporary art. The expanded field is, after all, the field of life itself. And the field of life is the only fertile ground for art as a genetic creation that should become another way of thinking about the public sphere.

In a word, considered as a genetic process, art assumes a specific and powerful role. It appears as a tool for improvement. Individually and collectively.

How does it work?

04

The genome of the artistic creation

Realised as a genetic process, artistic creation has much in common with ontogenesis. Just as at conception, the germ becomes an embryo through the fusion of male and female DNA, during gestation the embryo becomes a foetus through incubation in the mother, and finally at birth the foetus becomes a child after the newborn leaves the mother. In the same way, the work of art is the result of a genetic process, the stages of which are the same: conception, gestation and birth, which correspond to the three genetic stages mentioned by Abellio: vision-action-art.

The phases are the same, but curiously the process is reversed, for whereas in ontogenesis the process begins as a physical-psycho process and becomes increasingly psycho-physical, in artistic creation the process begins as a psycho-physical process and becomes increasingly physical-psycho.

In short, while the genome of the infant is eminently physical, the genome of the work of art is eminently psycho, as Daniel Verney has shown. This does not mean that the infant’s genome does not also have a psycho signature, just as the genome of artistic creation is not entirely psycho, since a material support is always needed, even when the work remains in its conceptual stage, as a project. In artistic creation, therefore, a physical level of consideration is always required, just as in ontogenesis a psycho level should never

be ignored. The problem is that the psychic signature of ontogenesis, although we know it must be there, has not yet been found.

The artist's alter ego, or if you prefer the artist's transcendental persona, or in other words the artist's intentional inner core, is conditioned by the four creative factors of the psychic field: inspiration and projection in the upper hemisphere, and motivation and ability in the lower hemisphere. The interaction between the operative state (active or passive) of these creative factors generates a certain intentional alter ego, whose character is given by the four intentional vectors I propose below.

Inspiration (+/-)	Projection (+/-)	Motivation (+/-)	Skills (+/-)	Operative vectors	Artistic lines
-	+	-	+	Form (outer)	Formativity
+	-	+	-	Fragmentation (outer)	Reduction
+	-	-	+	Manner (inner)	Expression
-	+	+	-	Integration (inner)	Utility

When we talk about the creation of plastic art, the outer appearance of the artistic work varies according to the tendency to present the integrity of forms or images and the decomposition of fragments or concepts, while its inner appearance varies according to the tendency to present a certain degree of integration or assimilation and the tendency to manifest a certain kind of manner or feeling. Thus, form versus fragmentation and integration versus manner can be seen as the four eidetic creative vectors of artistic practice.

When the intentional core of the artist's creative persona is centred in the outer domain of extension of form, the artist creates within the lower material frame of formativity. But when the intentional core of the artistic is centred in the outer domain of intensification through the invention of concepts or the dissolution of fragments, the artist is creating within the upper conceptual frame of reduction.

Similarly, if the intentional core of the artist is centred in the inner domain of the assimilation of things, the artist creates within the

lower material frame of utility. But when the intentional core of the artist is centred in the domain of the intensification of things through the manifestation of manner, the artist is exploring within the upper conceptual frame of expression.

05

Renato de Fusco's lines of contemporary art production

If we accept the previous premise as valid, we will be able to relate these vectors to the six lines of contemporary art production as defined by Renato de Fusco (1929-) in his *Storia dell'Arte Contemporanea* (1983).

Let us recall Renato de Fusco's six artistic lines:

Expression; Formativity; Reduction; Utility; Oneiric; Social Art.

Let us see how these artistic lines can be related to the intentional vectors we have just proposed, echoing Daniel Verney's general structure of artistic creation.

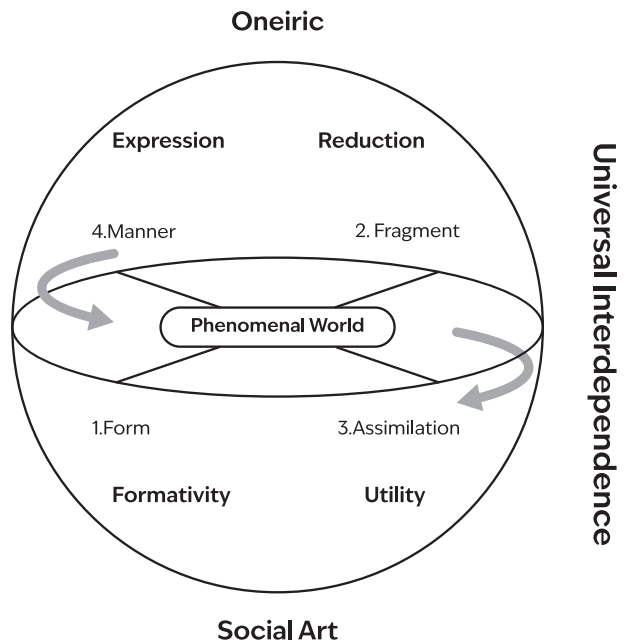


Fig. 15- Operative vectors of the artistic creation

Our hypothesis is that there is an intimate relationship between these six artistic lines. The four dynamic ones are Formativity, Reduction, Utility and Expression, because they manifest the effect of the four dynamic vectors - Form, Fragment, Assimilation and Manner - activated and directed by the artist's intentional core, while switching to inner and outer modalities of artistic practice, under the influence of the two vital forces of artistic purpose - Global-Spiritual and Local-Material - pursuing Oneiric and Social Art.

According to this hypothesis, De Fusco's artistic lines appear as the result of the interaction between the four dynamic vectors and the two vital forces we have postulated for artistic creation.

The siege of this intentional core is the central pole of the USS, where the transcendental conscience takes shape. It is not the artist himself, but rather his alter ego or, as Husserl used to say, his daimon. It is from this central innermost intentional core that the four main intentional vectors gain meaning and generate a resultant that forms a double effect: the visible outer effect of the artwork and an invisible inner one that forms the creator's daimon.

Here we arrive at the way in which art works spherically. Besides the visible outer effect, which Michel Henry calls the phenomenology of the world, there is also the invisible inner effect, which Michel Henry calls the phenomenology of life.

When art shapes the individual's innermost core, the individual becomes a creative artist. When art forms the collective innermost core, the group becomes a creative community.

The artworks that emerge from these four vectors are never pure. Instead, they always appear as an ever-changing resultant because of the powerful affinity that binds them, even if it is a dialectical interdependence driven by oppositions.

Above and below the four dynamic intentional vectors there are two extreme poles whose resonant effect helps to keep the structure connected and cohesive. These poles are not dynamic and unstable. On the contrary, they are fixed and permanent. The upper pole is the immaterial place where the imaginary and the imagined converge. The lower pole is the material place where multiplicity and difference diverge.

So here we have both the eidetic operative vectors and the global/local vital forces present and in full interaction. However, one should ask: what is the advantage of looking at the artistic phenomenon and the process of artistic creation from this perspective?

I think the main advantage of this model is that it shows us the genetics of artistic creation. I say artistic creation rather than artistic production, and I mean it. Art is labour-intensive, but art is not industrial, even if it uses industry. If the artist uses industrial means to produce a work of art, it is because he is creating within the lower level of the intentional sphere, whether he is looking for new formal possibilities, as in the case of Alexander Calder's pieces, or whether he is trying to provide new practical uses, as in the case of Siah Armajani's structures, such as the picnic table for Huesca, which we have already seen.

In addition, I think that his model clarifies, if not reveals, the infinite nature of art, identifying its structural constants and explaining its genetic process, which is extremely useful for understanding the means and meanings of contemporary art, the results of which are usually particularly deceptive, if not misleading, when analysed using historical-cultural models.

Not only does this model succeed in assimilating and integrating all contemporary art into a comprehensive and coherent range of the most diverse and even contradictory possibilities, but it also provides us with the most valuable keys for unlocking the meaning of contemporary art and, even more importantly, with tools for assessing its value.

This is because this model does not seek to classify the work of art according to stylistic, aesthetic or other criteria. Instead, it seeks to recognise and reconstitute its genesis. Art is not a superfluous matter - "art as art", as Ad Reinhardt used to say. Art is not a deceptive trick - "art is what the artist says it is", as Marcel Duchamp used to say. Such statements may have a certain aesthetic impact, but they lack theoretical relevance. Redundancy fails to clarify. Fallacy fails to interpret. Both examples show us the same problem and the same error: trying to define art by its results is, in my opinion, a clear theoretical aporia.

Thus, conditioned by universal psychism through the descending stream of inspiration and the ascending stream of assumption, as well as by individual psychism through the ascending stream of motivation and the descending stream of skills, artistic creation appears as the power of creativity to generate projects, as the use of tools to modify matter.

Raymond Abellio's gnosis appears here as a tool of genetic phenomenology, because it is generative and its operativity is shaped by an intentional core of apprehensions and aims inherent to artistic creation. So, I think we can say that Abellio's vision is a gnosis of art. I call it a gnosis of art because from this perspective one becomes aware of how powerful art can be. In fact, Abellio's gnosis shows us the way in which art induces the metamorphosis of the artist's ego by modelling its intentional inner core through exposure to the currents of the four creative factors. This exposure gradually reveals to the artist's ego the artist's alter ego, so that the latter becomes its own model and nourishes it with this new personality of its own.

06

The Sphera, a liberation project?

If art succeeds in shaping the artist's alter ego, a similar process can be induced so that the collective mind - the Sphera - can also be shaped from within.

We now return to the beginning of our lecture, just to remind you that the necessary conditions for the emergence and development of human creativity are not only the biological structure of the genes, but also an adequate social ambience. As far as individual improvement is concerned, an adequate environment can be achieved through family warmth and tolerance. As for collective or communal improvement, we believe that the necessary stimulating and inspiring social environment should be created by art.

This is, of course, a utopian idea. But this does not mean that it has no social efficacy. On the contrary, utopian projects are often the most socially inspiring, as Marcuse says:

This means one of the oldest dreams of all radical theory and practice.

It means that the creative imagination, and not only the rationality of the performance principle, would become a productive force applied to the transformation of the social and natural universe. It would mean the emergence of a form of reality which is the work and the medium of the developing sensibility and sensitivity of man.

And now I throw in the terrible concept: it would mean an 'aesthetic' reality – society as a work of art. (Marcuse, 1968:186)

In order to support a social ambience shaped by art, it is necessary to bring art to the forefront of social mediation. It is therefore necessary to engage in collective intervention.

How can this be achieved? How can artists and citizens be involved in joint art initiatives? Does this mean that collaborative art projects alienate authorship?

To promote social mediations catalysed by art, it is essential to create a genetic methodology that relates authors and mediations as internal elements of social art projects, and participants and outcomes as external elements. Authors and participants alternate active/passive roles, as do mediations and outcomes.

The operativity of such processes generates a mix of active and passive roles, as follows:

Authors (+/-)	Mediations (+/-)	Participants (+/-)	Outcomes (+/-)	Social Mediations	Historical Models
-	+	+	-	Celebration	Cult of Great Men
+	+	-	+	Initiative	Erection of Statuary
-	-	+	-	Intervention	Toppling of Statuary
-	+	+	+	Production	Empowerment

Strangely enough, these social mediations do exist. Celebrations and initiatives were common social practices in the 19th century, especially in the second half of the century.

The programs of celebrations centred on the monuments already dedicated to great men. Glamorous festivities were then organised around these monuments on the successive centenaries of

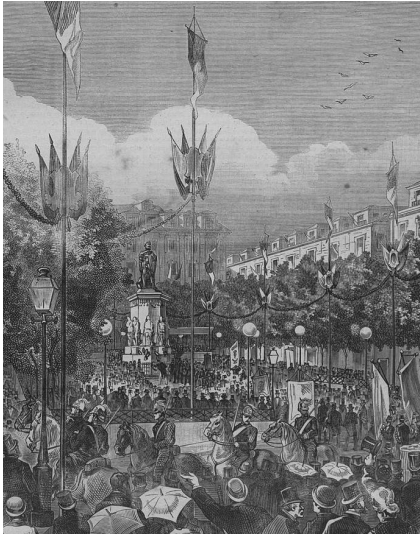


Fig. 16- III Camões Centenary, In, O Occidente, vol. 3, III Ano, nº 61, 1880

their birth, as was the case in 1880 with the celebration of the 3rd centenary of the death of Camões, the most famous Portuguese national poet, whose monument had been inaugurated in 1867.

However, the celebrations were much more than just a rally around a monument. It involved the organisation of major cultural programs, as in the case of Camões. Sponsored by the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, the celebration of the 3rd centenary of his birth lasted three days and included numerous shows, such as lighting, music, rockets, conferences, exhibitions and theatre performances. The highlight of the commemorations was a huge civic parade that

took the streets of Lisbon for several hours. Curiously, one of the stops of the parade was the Rotunda, where the commitment to erect a monument to Marquês de Pombal was first announced. But the impact of the initiative was even more significant than the commitment to erect new monuments. For example, the decision to erect a monument to Prince Henry the Navigator on the fifth centenary of his birth was not a government proposal, but an initiative of the Colégio Von Haffe in Oporto, which was the core of the social mediations for its creation, execution and inauguration, solemnly materialised in an Executive Commission.

The Executive Commission was set up to organise all the necessary preparatory work, starting with the competition to select the project for the monument and ending with its inauguration, including the ceremony of laying the foundation stone and the launch of a public subscription to raise the necessary financial support for its construction.

In this case, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Monument to Henry the Navigator in Oporto had a huge commemorative programme, the main features of which were as follows:

Artistic competition between Portuguese sculptors to select the project for Prince Henry's monument in Oporto.

Literary and scientific competition about the historical value, actions,

deeds, and importance of the navigations started by Prince Henry. Colonial and industrial exhibition.

Civic parade.

River festival, in which vessels of the type used in our first discovery navigations.

Laying of the foundation stone for the monument to Henry the Navigator.

Conferences on historical, colonial, and industrial subjects, related to the commemoration.

Other elements whose solemnity awakens patriotic interest. (Abreu, 2012:85-86)

Let us see some pictures of some of the most attended festivities and the most solemn instances of the programme.

Fig. 17- Prince Henry centenary, Naval Parade, 3/3/1894, Porto

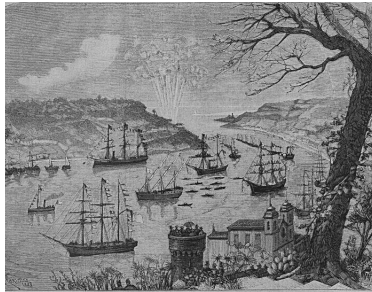


Fig. 18- Prince Henry centenary, Festivities Campo da Regeneração, Oporto

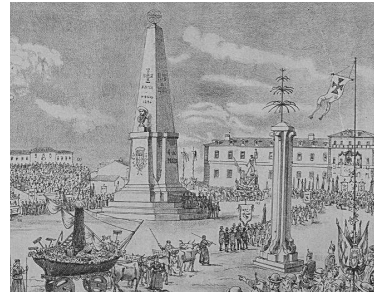


Fig. 19- Prince Henry centenary, Laying of the first stone, 1894, Porto

Fig. 20- Prince Henry centenary, Monument's Dedication, 1900 Porto



This was the effect of the fin-de-siècle cultural agenda, in which the positivist cult of great men and great deeds played a prominent role. The mostly rhetorical, naive fin de siècle notions of humanity's continuous progress lacked a genetic approach and assumed that all that was needed to regenerate the world and humanity was to replace the old metaphysical religion with the new positive science, thus replacing faith in religion with faith in science.

Modernity, however, disregarded faith, preferring scepticism, if not nihilism. So, instead of promoting celebrations or endorsing initiatives, which had at their core almost anonymous powers, a cultural agenda that was no longer apologetic but critical brought about Intervention, whose most radical operational model involved art toppling statues. Statues of dictators, racists and slavers were toppled or, more rarely, mutilated or wrapped.

As for **intervention**, we should note that it is not the same as destruction. Toppled statues are not always dismantled, often they are just moved. So, toppling statues is not *iconoclasm*. The displaced statues are removed from public space and often stored in a museum.

Fig. 21- DMPA, Salazar's statue before wrapping, 1974, Palácio Foz



Fig. 22- DMPA, Salazar's statue rotation before wrapping, 1974, P Foz

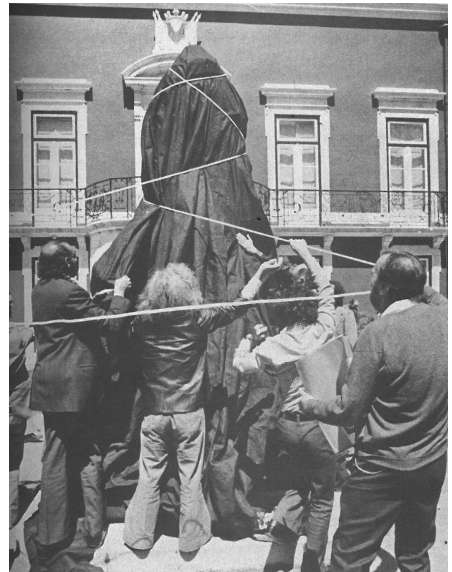


Fig. 23- L Almeida, Oliveira Salazar, 1965, bronze, St^o Comba Dão
Fig. 24- Oliveira Salazar statue beheaded, 1975, Santa Comba Dão



However, **intervention** can also take the form of less aggressive acts of statuary. This was the case with the erection of the monument to Humberto Delgado - the fearless general who, in 1958, stood up to the Salazar regime in a tough presidential election, the results of which - his defeat - were proven to be fraudulent.

The first important monument to be erected after the Carnation Revolution of 1974, the monument to General Humberto Delgado was the initiative of the peasant population of the village of Cela Velha, in the municipality of Alcobaça, where the General used to spend his summer holidays on a family farm belonging to his wife's ancestors. Like his wife, he was very popular with the local population, and the initiative was taken by a popular local executive committee and published in the newspapers.

The immediate result was that a well-known sculptor, associated with the official art doctrine of the dictatorship, offered to make the statue free of charge.

When the democratic artists learned that a statue of a victim of the Portuguese dictatorship was going to be made and inaugurated with the authorship of a supporter of the same regime that had murdered Humberto Delgado, an opposition movement began with the publication in the press of a letter signed by Eurico Gonçalves, secretary of the Democratic Movement of Plastic Artists, denouncing and rejecting the sculptor's project, as follows:

President of the Municipality of Alcobaça, Lisbon, 1st October 1976
The Democratic Movement of Plastic Artists has learned that the Chamber that Your Excellency presides intends to build a monument in honor to General Humberto Delgado.

This Movement believes that, after the 25th of April, the aesthetic line of the works of art with national public significance cannot be confused, nor constitute any extension, of the one that guided and informed the statuary of the previous regime.

It is necessary to meet new concepts that express, by their creative capacity, the new country we are all committed to build.

It is with the best spirit of collaboration that we bring to your attention the concerns that currently preside over the attitudes and actions of the democratic artists, and, in this regard, we ask Your Excellency to kindly inform us of what has been decided on the initiative to which we allude.

Presenting our greetings to Your Excellency, we subscribe

By the Central Committee of DMPA

The secretary

Eurico Gonçalves. (Abreu, 2007:590)

A first competition was then organised in collaboration with the National Society of Fine Arts, but the models presented were all rejected by the jury.

A new competition was then organised and the jury unanimously approved a non-statue model.

It was thanks to the public intervention of two different institutions - the Democratic Movement of Plastic Artists and the National Society of Fine Arts - that the original statue of Humberto Delgado and the statuary models from the first competition were rejected and a new modernist model was approved and inaugurated in a highly participatory and festive manner.

Fig. 25- J. Aurélio, Monument to the Fearless General, 1976, C. Velha

Fig. 26- Monument to the Fearless General, 1976, landscape pole, detail



Fig. 27- Monument to the Fearless General, 1976, civic pole
Fig. 28- J. Aurélio, Monument to the Fearless General, 1976, civic pole, detail



Another form of intervention is the creation of a counter-monument in the vicinity of a renounced monument. This has the advantage of avoiding the loss of historical memory, while at the same time denouncing the mistakes and even crimes against humanity committed by non-legitimate powers and regimes, as happened with Richard Kuöhl's Monument to the Dead of the Hamburg Hanseatic Infantry Regiment, erected by the Nazis in 1936. After many public demonstrations against the renounced monument, while it was still being used by the military regiment next to it to commemorate their dead comrades, the local authorities finally decided to invite Alfred Hrdlicka to create a counter-monument next to it, to oppose and denounce the narratives and symbols of the Nazi memorial. (Abreu, 2020:31)

All these modalities of public intervention have in common the fact that they recognise as valid and useful the activation of a common and shared will with regard to the public exhibition of political symbols or figures of renounced regimes, whose presence is felt as most offensive by those who suffered their atrocities or crimes.

The last operative modality for including public intervention in the criteria for public art installations and inaugurations is production. In this model, the paradigm of individual authorship is subverted, as elements of the public or community are directly involved in the production of public art projects.

Participatory public art projects, conceived with a wide variety of criteria and scopes, usually involve a great deal of creativity, as the ability and capacity to motivate and involve the public is often



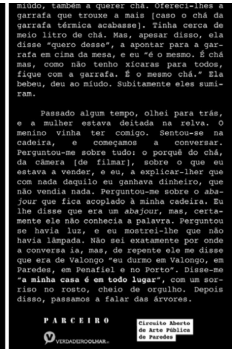
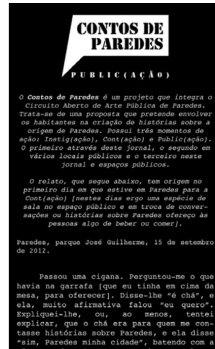
the main and most relevant objective of these projects, as they often seek to promote public empowerment.

This was the objective of Visual Exploratorium 0.1, a participatory public art installation included in the Paredes Public Art Programme, developed by the students of Paredes Secondary School, under the coordination of visual arts teacher Moisés Duarte, in 2012.

It was an evolving project, and its installation was particularly noteworthy because it became the first piece in Paredes' Public Art Circuit, thus signifying empowerment goals.

Another participatory artwork is Paredes' Tales, also included as a temporary project in the Paredes Public Art programme. Conceived as an immaterial piece, Paredes' Tales was divided into three distinct moments: Instigation, Communication and Publication.

Fig. 29- M. Duarte & J. Espirito, Exploratório Visual 0.1, ESP
 Fig. 30- Moisés Duarte (coord), Exploratório Visual 0.1, Paredes
 Fig. 31- A Midori, Paredes Tales, 1st step: Instigation, press
 Fig. 32- A Midori, Paredes Tales, 3rd step: Publication, press
 Fig. 33- A Midori, Paredes Tales, 2nd step: Communication, Paredes' market



In addition to artistic projects, Paredes' Public Art Program has created a Public Art Lab to promote other participatory activities, such as Open Talks, which have brought together several artists with significant public art installations, such as Clara Menéres and José Pedro Croft, as well as curators, art critics, art teachers from local schools, executives from the main Portuguese municipalities with significant public art programs, such as Santo Tirso and Almada, and managers from various commercial businesses.



Fig. 34 Public Art Lab, Open Talks, with Paredes' Mayor & B Lima

Fig. 35- Public Art Lab, Open Talks, with Paredes' shop owners

In addition to the Open Talks, another participatory activity was developed that combined the programmed activities of the scholars with the collaboration of the owners of several commercial shops in Paredes. The idea was to organise an exhibition of works of art made by visual arts students from several local basic schools.

Fig. 36- Seeing front shops, 2012

Fig. 37- Seeing front shops, 2012

Fig. 38- Seeing front shops, 2012



The activities of the Public Art Lab also included other different programs, as documented in Paredes' Public Art Circuit. A Public Art and Community Oriented Programme (Castro & Abreu, 2014).

All these activities and programs were aimed at bringing contemporary art closer to the public through the organisation of participatory art projects, in order to reciprocally inspire a more tolerant and warmer relationship between contemporary art and the public.

Finally, I think there are two other non-operational ways of promoting the same goals. Both through pedagogy and through recognition, with recognition being considered the new and most appropriate way of honouring the work of paradigmatic artists.

Fig. 39- JG Abreu, Pedagogical Routes for the International Contemporary Sculpture Museum, 2009, High-school students, Santo Tirso



Fig. 40- Exhibition of the work done by students, held between 4-9 of April 2011, Public Municipal Library of Santo Tirso



The materials produced with the texts written by the students were presented in an exhibition during the 1st Journeys of MIEC, held on 4 April 2011, to which the sculptor Alberto Carneiro, as initiator of MIEC, had accepted the invitation.

The 1st Journeys of MIEC were an organisation involving the Secondary School of Santo Tirso, the Municipal Library of Santo Tirso and the Research Centre of the Catholic University of Portugal (CITAR), with the following programme:

10h00- Reception of the participants

10h15- Opening: C. Teixeira (*Vice-Director of ESDD*), M.C. Duarte (*Director MLST*), J.G. Abreu (*coord*)

10h30- 1st session: José Guilherme Abreu, *The sculptural work by Alberto Carneiro*

11h00- 2nd session: Alberto Carneiro, *MIEC's Project. Genesis and Becoming*

11h30- Debate

11h:45- Coffee-break

12h00- 3rd session: Laura Castro, *The artwork in the construction of landscape*

12h30- 4th session: José Guilherme Abreu, *Primary Itineraries for Public Art*

13h00- Debate:

13h:15- Closing of the works

Thanks to the support of CITAR, all the meetings were videotaped. And, as expected, Alberto Carneiro's conference was unforgettable, and perhaps one of his last public conferences before the illness that would strike him the following year.

Fig. 41- Alberto Carneiro's Conference, 1st Journeys of MIEC, 4th of April 2011, Public Municipal Library of Santo Tirso



So we have arrived at the dominant poles for the gestation of the public sphere: pedagogy and recognition. Although opposed, the two are clearly related. In pedagogy, teaching can be seen as the transmission of knowledge and/or skills. The transmitter is active and the receptor is (or should be) passive, receiving and integrating the content of the teaching with the other content he already has. In recognition, the one being recognised is passive (being observed/analysed/evaluated, while the one recognising is active, judging whether or not there are enough elements for the recognised potential to be recognised.

So pedagogy culminates in recognition. But recognition is not (should not be) a banal routine. It requires a special atmosphere and a special subject. I think it is somehow a liturgical moment. Perhaps then, for a while, a glimpse of the sphere appears enlightened!

Moments like these correspond to what Natalie Depraz calls practical phenomenology, and I quote:

I see this experiential practice in the first person, which partly renews phenomenology, intended to federate multiple approaches beyond doctrinal oppositions, and an eminent way for phenomenology to meet without complexes the empiricism in all these forms.

Hence the multiplicity of “fields” for testing phenomenology in its operational dimension. Since *Understanding Phenomenology: A Concrete Practice*, I mention seven main ones:

- *The intimate experience of prayer;*
- *Scientific experimentation;*
- *Buddhist meditation;*
- *The psychiatric relationship of the caregiver;*
- *The anthropological situation of the encounter with the foreigner;*
- *The contemplation of the work of art;*
- *The work of the emergence of meaning in writing;* (Depraz, 2021)

Should we add to the list the Gestation of the Public Sphera, as another topic?

English revised by: www.deepl.com/write

07

Endnotes

1 — Original version : Cette communauté est certes ressaisie sous l'espèce de l'unité d'un su- jet commun généré et réactivé par la présence d'un « monde » commun, mais cette unité ne se nomme plus ici seulement centration égologique constitutivement étendue à la pluralité des ego. La « pluralité communicative » (kommunikative Vielheit) est tout entière, dans son dynamisme et ses tensions, cette unité non-résolue, ouverte sur l'espace et le temps des autres, s'engendrant comme unité dans le mouvement même de traversée et de pénétration des autres, bref, elle « opère (fungiert) comme un sujet », dira Husserl de manière éloquente.

2 — Original version : ... la voie ontologique du monde de la vie nous offre une re-com- préhension génétique de la réduction transcendantale, qui permet dès lors de ressaisir en son originarité non-mondaine le phénomène même de la socialité politique.

3 — Original version: Dans la vision naturelle ou empirique, je me vois, c'est un fait, en état de dualité simple avec le monde. Il y a face à face le monde et moi. Je vois tel objet, un livre par exemple, tel qu'il est rangé sur les rayons de ma bibliothèque, et le sens commun s'arrête à ce rapport simple : un livre et moi, le couple d'un objet regardé et d'un sujet regardant. Examinons cependant cette perception de plus près, et procédons, dirait Husserl, à la perception de cette perception même. Ce livre est un objet qui appartient au monde, et, pour qu'il soit visible, il faut déjà qu'il s'enlève en quelque manière sur le fond plus ou moins distinct, qui est lui-même le monde en tant que support unitaire et global des objets, car le monde n'est nullement la somme des objets, mais au contraire la condition a priori de leur apparition en tant que tels. Ce fond, cet horizon d'objectivité ne peut être thématisé, il ne tombe pas sous une vision effective, c'est au contraire lui qui

rend effective toute vision. Pour tomber sous mes sens, pour prendre un sens, ce livre qui appartient au monde rejette donc dans une certaine grisaille, une certaine indistinction, le reste du monde, et établit par conséquent avec lui un premier rapport, celui d'un objet destiné à être perçu par rapport à un reste du monde nos destiné à l'être. Disons, pour simplifier, qu'un tel objet devient actif (+) par rapport au reste du monde considéré comme passif (-). Il y a donc déjà – il y aura toujours – une dualité du côté du perçu, mais il y en a également une du côté du percevant, car il faut bien aussi qu l'œil, qui perçoit le livre en s'intéressant spécialement à lui, s'ouvre et devienne lui aussi actif sur le fond mis en repos de mon corps devenant passif, et qui ne spécifie ou n'isole plus rien d'autre. Ici encore nous disons que l'œil devient actif (+) par rapport au reste de mon corps que devient passif (-). Ce livre et mon œil ne sont en d'autres termes que des émergences locales d'une réalité globale, dans laquelle il convient de les ré-enraciner : toute autre vision est aliénant. Finalement c'est à deux couples actif-passif et non à un seul que nous avons affaire, et la perception globale s'établit sous la forme d'une proportion : livre/monde = œil/corps ; ou encore : objet/monde = organe de sens/corps ; le signe intermédiaire « égale » ayant ici une signification conventionnelle, mais symbolique, sur laquelle nous reviendrons bientôt longuement.

08

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PURGATION
CONFERENCE EDIT

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. I'm very happy to be here with you. Mário has just mentioned that he is not as intellectual as José. I would say that I am the least intellectual here, because my talk will be based on a generally practical level. Nevertheless, I think it is interesting to share with you the way I approach an image and its inspiration, basically from a position of purgation – which means, in a very simple way, that I think that every inspiration, every image that we collect, that we grasp, deserves some time – to put it simply – to digest. I would say that this is the liminal moment of delay, which seems really important to me as an artist at the moment when everything is really doomed to be topical. Timeliness and actuality seem to seize the areas that were never – before – even thought of as being possessed by the idea of actuality.

Art Is the Teaching of Resistance»

Frederick Kiesler

Part of the way is how I deal with my paintings - because I perceive myself primarily as a painter, and I may tell later how and what is the origin of this kind of perception of my artistic entity; it really declares the creative act as an act of resistance. For Frederick Kiesler, art is the teaching of resistance. Because resistance is always, I would say, something that is very strongly tied to the process not of making, but of unmaking, or waiting for the right time and the right moment. To make a long story short, I would like to start with some quotations that I think are very close to my vision of what I am doing and also to my experience of it. It is a very practical experience that I would like to share with all of you.

The first sentence is by Michelangelo Antonioni, from *The architecture of vision*: “You cannot penetrate events by reportage.”

You cannot penetrate events
by reportage

Michelangelo Antonioni
The Architecture of Vision

Art is indeed something different from reportage. I would say it is closer to deportation than to reportage.

The second sentence is “Art has no meaning for those for whom life is only a spectacle”, by John Berger in *A Painter of Our Time...*

Art has no meaning for those for whom
life is only a spectacle

John Berger
A Painter of Our Time

I would say that people who really concentrate on the aspect of being a pure perceiver of the here and now... really... do not need to use this tool, which - I would say - is part of the toolbox not necessarily for an artist but also for the spectator.

The third quote is from Deleuze and Guattari, and I think it is also very true about what we lack at the moment, the lack of resistance to the present.

We do not lack communication, on the contrary we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present.

Gilles Deleuze Felix Guattari
What is Philosophy?

Because when I create, I would really like to think that things that come to life are somehow noticed, subconsciously noticed, without really knowing how they fit, where they fit, what I am going to do with them. It is a collection of languages, of different collections of impressions, and I think something we can sometimes do against them is to try to make them actual, to try to interview them immediately, to incline them into the creative process.

So, the aspect of *delay* is really essential for me. The moment of making, of the artistic gesture, and the moment of conceiving the work are not necessarily the same. I would say that the misunderstanding of this position is one of the most visible qualities of the graphomaniac. The graphomaniac does not recognize the moment between the gathering of the image, the gathering of the inspiration, and the actual coming out, the coming out of something that will actually find its own time and place in a particular moment in a particular space.

As a painter, the spatial aspect but also the temporal aspect are priorities for me. And to start with the film, which will perhaps allow you to immerse yourself in my activity, I would like to show you first of all the exhibition called “Air wants to go” [2020], which is part of my collaboration with the American poet Howard Altman. It took place in Wrocław, in the Op Enheim gallery.

If you watch this short film about the work, you might be able to familiarize yourself with the particular type of work that I am very attached to at the moment. One of the works in the exhibition is called *Not Entitled*.

Online video:
www.rb.gy/xitss



The specific formula of this work, which is based on the tradition of baroque painting, is conceived through the recording of my wife. It was recorded about six years ago and what I can say is that you make things... you create things, you do things... but you are not really aware of the way the work is contextualized by itself. I think this is something that I want to share with you also because I feel

Not Entitled (full figure),
2020 - acrylic on canvas,
200x155cm, video projection



that the works are not necessarily works that you can be fully operational in the moment - when you are in the moment of creation. You really know what the context of the work is going to be in the next few years. And I think this is the first work that I would like to present here that definitely relates to this problem between the work itself, which is an artistic gesture, and its making and purely formal reasons.



The idea of the marionette, the idea of the pregnant woman, the prayer, all these things happen to be very directly contextualized by the current situation in Poland, with the anti-abortion laws. Suddenly the work, which happened to be conceived for completely different reasons, has its own right to speak about the present, although the present was not pressed into the work at the moment of its actual creation, or at least not inclined in any way. So it is enough to wait and see how the work finds its own way into the world, how the work finds its own response. I would say that the work is much more effective when we don't necessarily plan it for the present; as a response to its current issues, this work was not like many other works - which surprises me, and the surprise for me is how much I suddenly feel that of course, if I had planned this work as a kind of literal reflection, or somehow as a response to the current situation in Poland, it would not be so successful. And it would not even be similar. I would not find it really successful, because then I would find it too literal.

For me, the element of resistance in the work is also to be able to deal with desire. We all have desires. Like the desire to reflect on political and social situations. We live in a certain environment, which of course has its own pressure on us, but I would say that this pressure has to be resisted somehow, by the artist, otherwise he somehow gets into the other ground, which is very often confused with what my perception of painting is. Which is the illustration of these words... I don't think they are illustrative in the sense that they

can be perceived as a certain kind of illustration. From the artist's point of view, they are not illustrative at all, because they were not made or intended to be illustrations. And that is why I would say that the moment between the making and the actual perception of the work in the gallery or in the public space is really essential.

Harnessed Swimmer, 2009 – acrylic on canvas 170x210cm, video projection, 2009

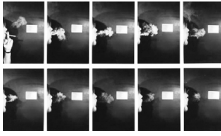
Harnessed Swimmer, SANGUINE, installation view, Fondazione Prada, 2018



It has happened with this work, called “Harness swimmer”, which was shown in 2018 in an exhibition on the Baroque curated by Luc Tuymans [Sanguine]. The painting has been waiting for this moment to really find its place, in the neighborhood of Caravaggio. In fact, what you are looking at is a photograph of my ex-girlfriend's father, who used to have a swimming pool in his basement, two meters by two meters. He used to strap himself to one side so he could swim in place. That really is my inspiration. I just thought he looked very much like the figures in the Rivera paintings, so I made this kind of painting that serves the purpose of being a screen architecture for this projection. Although when I was making it, that is, when I was recording these few seconds that are constantly looped, I had no idea that the actual place would end up in the neighborhood of Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath* [1605-1610?]. But it found its way.



This is David Hammons [1943-], one of my favorite artists. I only use him because – of course – these snowballs will eventually melt [laughter], and I think it also illustrates this question of exposition, of offering in a kind of ironic way the process of making and the process of delivering something that is actually completely devoid of substance, devoid of any kind of offering. If you do not think about it, how can you design something that is also saleable? This is not only for me a big joke about the art market or about the idea of an



artist who is the protagonist of the objects in front of the objects he makes. But it is also a representation of the absurdity of time, that we try to find an image or an offer or a proposition for the viewer at a certain point in time, and I think the kind of absurdity that he presents is a perfect illustration of my idea of what I have to offer, and at what point I somehow have the courage to break, to cross the bridge between the idea or the actual making and the display.

Another favorite artist: have you noticed that John Baldessari [1931-2020] pretends to smoke his cigar to mimic the shape of a cloud? I think that is also a beautiful metaphor for my idea of projection and the kind of mimicry of projection in relation to the real image. So, to say that most of my projected paintings are not actually representations. Like the cloud that comes from the cigar, in Baldessari, they do not represent, as in Baldessari, the actual figure or the performer; they represent the projection of the performer: they are personifications of the projections, of the spirits. One of the curators from South America once told me that I make ghost paintings, and I think that is very close and very true to what I do. So, I paint ghosts rather than real figures, although I use the means of projection to represent those ghosts and to represent a certain kind of time.

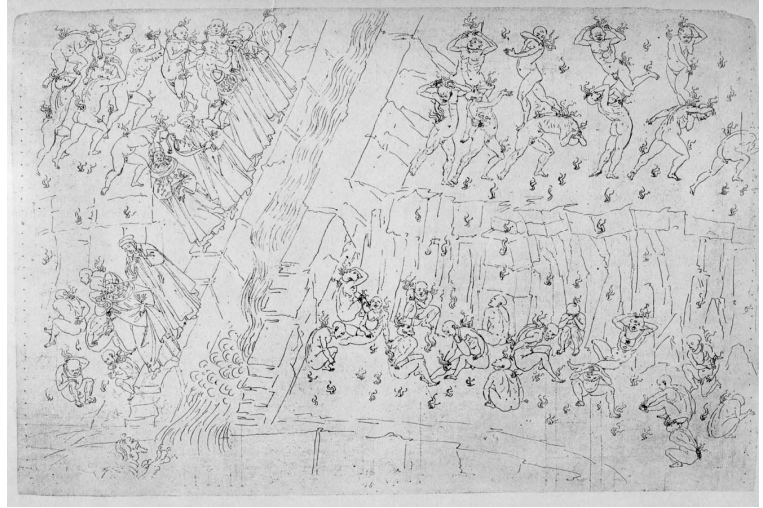
For me, it is a question between the moment when the work is conceived and the work in the moment and the kind of statement, which may be a completely different statement, and the moment when the work is exhibited. Which is a way of saying I'm still alive. [laughter]

And, above all, a way of saying how not to make boring art. Art becomes boring the moment I make something in my studio. I know exactly how it is going to end and what kind of production I am involved in. And then we're not making art, we're just making design. And from a design point of view, it may not be boring, but from an art point of view I would say it is boring. So how do you avoid boring art? Basically, I would say: avoid it by the way we perceive the creative act, by the way we use our gesture to surprise ourselves. Not by fulfilling our preemptive expectations.

Like this work by Opalka [1931-2011]. It might have been boring from the point of view of the viewer's creative act, incred-

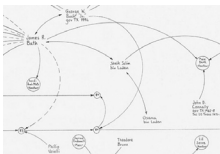


ibly boring. But I would say that from the artist's point of view it could still have been surprising. The effect, like life, like breathing, like every breath we take, can be surprising, as long as we are able to use our creativity to make that breath interesting – even if it is repetitive, even if it is a loop.



So we're going to this moment of purgation, and purgatory is of course this abstract place, but in fact in the present time, which is completely time-driven by the now and the here, it happens to be a real place and it happens to be in real time, and I think this is very true in terms of how I perceive those drawings by Botticelli representing Dante's *Divine Comedy*, when all these precisely drawn figures are drawn and erased, drawn and erased again... So for me purgatory is also the process of erasure. We erase ourselves in order to be able to come up with a new surprise, and these surprises can then be contextualized in a very unexpected and somehow dangerous way for the artists. So we have to be careful.

These prophetic drawings by Mark Lombardi [1951-2000] always amaze me, also because the artist disappeared in a very mysterious way after making them. This was done long before the World Trade Center, but it seemed to me... that they were contextualized in such a strong way that they affected us in the very sudden death of the author, as if we could sometimes step on the mystery – not





really playing with meanings, but playing with actuality. For some, what I would later call *agelast* – a term coined by Rabelais, used by Kundera, which describes people who are not able to understand a certain kind of irony, which is not necessarily the only truth, it is a kind of possibility. But people very often expect the artist to be definite, to be precise, which I would say is not the right deal, it is not the deal that we should really somehow acknowledge.

This is not the case when we look at Yves Klein's leap into the void, when we rewind and rewind and rewind the same moment, which will eventually give us certain options for the future. But this future is a kind of projection, influenced by the artistic gesture of the artist, who does not describe the future – he contextualizes the future. The future will contextualize his art, sooner or later, but what he does is: he just initiates the process, like a domino. Which will eventually end, if the work of art is successful, at the right moment, at the right time, when the works contextualize themselves, completely behind the artist's will, outside his will, out of his intentions.

This piece, this is a 60 sec. cathedral, and it is probably the highest cathedral ever made. It was made over 5,000 meters, by 32 parachutists, for sixty seconds.

60 sec. Cathedral, 2011

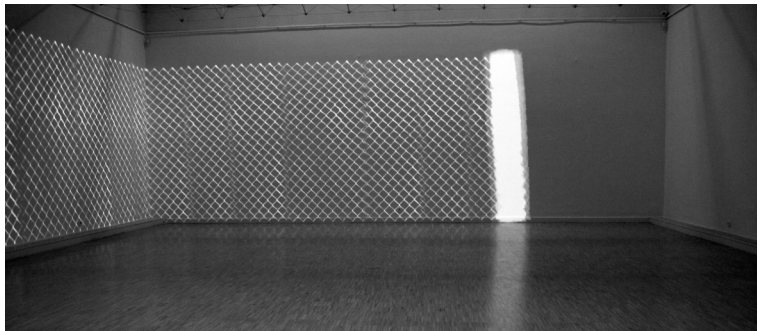


And this is the actual effect which was shown in Tallinn, the section of the festival Mário was the curator of.



So, we come back to the idea of a gesture. What is the actual gesture and what do you see as the result? During the making of the Cathedral, I was actually put in the most important situation for me as an artist, a situation that at a certain point I was unable to define. And if you are not able to use any kind of critical tools to reinterpret your work, that means you are successful. I think this is also related to the question of how the work is contextualized later on. For example, when I was doing the Cathedral, I wasn't really aware that when I was recreating those side vaults of the ceiling of the church, suddenly the group of skydivers, as you could see, started to remind me of the shape of a chromosome. These elements, which somehow escape from our initial idea, are the most precious, as well as what happens to the work, which in fact was nothing more than a simple gesture.

PLOT, installation view,
Galeria Arsenał Poznań, 2017



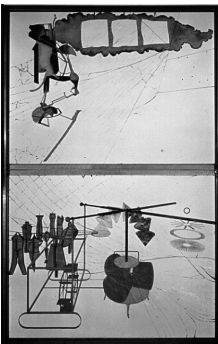
One that you have just seen of me unrolling the roll of fence on the floor of my studio, which is part of the environment in which I experiment, in which I do all sorts of things. And then it happened to be charged with meaning, but this meaning is not the meaning that comes directly from the actual studio, it comes from the time that has to pass between the gesture and the actual results. Here is a work that I think is one of the most important works for me in recent times.

*Most of my ideas, they originate within the studio practice. But the difference is what is happening in the studio and then what comes up in the show, so that is the story of *Plot* [2017], which actually is an untranslatable word we decided not to translate – me and the curator Marek Bartelil, with whom I proposed to work for the National Pavilion for the Venice Biennale last year. The exhibition which took place, I feel very fortunate about the whole situation. I think this was a very good show, which we have created last year with Marek **Wasilewski**, was the actual presentation of the full-scale project proposed for the Venice Biennale. The Venice Biennale project which we applied for with Marek Bartelik, who is a new York-based curator, was rejected, but I would have to say that the actual rejection is part of the work, in fact. I do not know if a work with such a such a quality of subtlety can be rejected for the formal reasons, but for some reasons it was rejected. So, in fact, the rejection adds a bit to the whole project and it really works not just as a work, but also as a work which is a rejected project. And in that way, it was presented in an Amsterdam gallery last year. Well, it is probably one of the most important works I have I have done so far. It deals with the same structure, from the formal side, as most of my work, which means dealing with the projection, that is, not a question of just the mean or transportation of the image, but also as the problem in itself. I think this is this is really the story of *Plot*, that it is a projection. It is a work which is being projected in the gallery space, covering the walls within a constant loop until the space becomes white, but this is also a question of our projection in terms of all problems that are related to the idea of *Plot*, which can be for example xenophobia, the fear of the other, all those problems that in fact begin – are originated – as a projection in our heads. Well, it of course can apply to all sorts of current issues that*

happen to be very much present within our local environment, as well as a global one. But what can I say is that that my will or enthusiasm to show this work, and to present it, was not that the work was made as a result of the situation, but in fact the situation added to what it is been already there, for the work originates from 2014, when I made the actual gesture in the studio. So, what is interesting, also in terms of the relation between politics and the social problematics and all those issues, is that we somehow relate to when we, inside of installation, or we can relate to, is that they came second. But still I would have to say that it is quite a challenge, that as though they came as a second, still the work is not an illustration of a problem, it is the piece of art in itself, and I think more universal than just the illustrative towards the situation that we are dealing with now. Although I think the currency, the sudden currency which appeared in context between this work and the situation that we deal with, made me feel that I really would like to propose it for especially a National Pavilion at Venice Biennale.

Exactly what I was saying is that the problem is very much related to the idea of delay. Delay in terms of the way the work is contextualized. From the moment of its innocent creation, it really does become charged with meaning. That is probably why I've had the courage to use Duchamp's *The Large Glass* now, because it has its acceptance of the future from the position of an artist who believed – and this is his quote – why should we talk about painting, let's talk about delay. So you have this delay, which is an essential element of the critical approach of creating the perspective from the side of the studio, when I have the chance to look at the world, to look at all the actuality, in the luxury of being late, of not being exactly on time. And this only gives me the opportunity to make a work that is more and more charged with the actual meaning, which I think still happens with a work like *Plot*, because it does not disappear. I think these fence roles surround us more and more, there are more and more of them. The more it comes, the longer the delay, the stronger the work.

With Duchamp – *The Large Glass* – you have the acceptance of the accident. I think this kind of element is also essential for our approach to the work from the position of delay as a critical per-





spective from the side of making the work, but allowing ourselves to actually be late, to not necessarily be on time, because I think that's the only way, as a painter, to get out of this regime of trying to be current, trying to be journalistic, in our approach or in our urge to what is happening now in time, which is getting faster and faster. I think this is also something that has to do with this idea of shadow and cleansing, because once we are able to step through this position of being in time into the actual, we are actually able to perceive our shadow. So, we step into the moment of progression, because purgatory is the only place in Dante's *Divine Comedy* where you can actually see the shadow. As the first shadow in Masaccio, leaving paradise.

I find this kind of perception incredibly inspiring. During some of my performances in Japan, I had the opportunity to see Bunraku theatre. I thought that the black clothes of the puppeteers were meant to camouflage them in the background... in fact it is the opposite.



They are not the camouflage of invisibility, they are not trying to make the puppeteers invisible, they are actually meant to make them symbolically invisible, to make their being visible as invisible. Like in my work, the projection, it means being the projection itself or representing the projection rather than just projecting an image. If you look at the puppeteers, the only ones who are not forced to wear these black clothes are the ones whose faces can be totally indifferent, and I think there is this very true thing in terms of the distance between the moment of conception and the moment of actually giving out the work, it is this moment of reaching indifference towards your work.

There are so many artists who feel the urge or who are so emotionally attached to their work that they leave it at the moment when those connections are still there; they are still emotionally attached to what they are doing, to their struggle or to the content of the meaning of the work, and I think this is the moment that I would compare to those situations that happen to all of us in airplanes. Very often I am flying and when I am flying I am urged to make a film or to film it, to film the video, to make the video of the outside of the

window or whatever, there are hundreds of films I have made like that and I don't use any of them, they are completely useless because as long as I land I reach this indifference towards this moment of flying and then the film becomes completely invaluable.

So I would compare this liminal state to this process of reaching indifference towards your work; as long as you are able to reach it, then you are probably able to get the right perspective on what you have actually done.

I think it kind of expresses the problem of an artist trying to illustrate the reality around us and how he/she accommodates that as a reality, a political social reality, within his/her own domain. So, as Courbet did, making this wonderful painting, putting all the social classes and these structures in his studio, where there is this tool of the brush and a little bit of smeared substance, is exactly the way we negotiate our indifference, or how we become able to reach indifference, the indifference that is reached when we concentrate not on the political, social or whatever meaning of the whole stage that is in front of us, but on the formal aspects. Only then will we probably be able to arrive at the right critical context.



Students Workshop in
Warsaw, 2011



As I did with my students, setting up easels in front of the presidential palace when we had the demonstrations for peace to come into power. Just painting those peace demonstrations that were about to come to power. We were just watercolorists, we were not criticizing the situation from the direct point of view of reportage, so I would say that we were doing a kind of *deportage* – the use of this word means that we were just creating a context of innocence,

of the innocent artist who can really rely on the surface, because painters are related to the surface. mostly. I am a superficial person, and I have the luxury of being superficial, superficial in the way I approach the medium I work with, but also superficial in the way I see reality, which is very much a proposition that Simmel said before the Fascists came to reality – he said that analysis on the surface, or looking at the surface, enables us to get a much better sense of the particular time and place than the deep scientific analysis of it. Time for another quote from Giorgio Agamben: “Painting is the

Painting is the suspension and the exposition
of potentiality of the site
as much as poetry is the suspension and
exposition of the potentiality of language.

Giorgio Agamben

suspension and exposition of the potentiality of this place, just as poetry is the suspension and exposition of the potentiality of a language”. This element of potentiality in this suspension is very much present in my approach, in this moment between making the work and reaching the indifference that allows me to finally give it away. But to give it away, to offer this element of potentiality to the actual spectator, to be able to free myself from my own attachment to the actual problem through the formal process of waiting, as one could say with the series of the stock of a pregnancy. As with the works that are somehow historically charged, which is the case with the projection of the crowd that gathered in front of the Palace of Culture in 1956, when Gomułka made this speech about the possibility of relaxing communist rights, and you had this crowd of people who created this projection...

These are the original archives that I used, but in fact the division between the two corresponded exactly to what I would now

perceive Poland to be, which is totally divided politically in terms of its feelings towards the current government. So there is a mirror image that covered the gallery when the speech was made. And what you see is the flow of people who came to listen in a hope for the future. But in fact, this element of the past archive somehow reflects very strongly, I would say, the actuality of the situation in Poland at the moment. This was in 2016, the 50th anniversary of that speech.



As for the works that contextualize themselves in a kind of paranoid way, I just allow myself to go into the thread of the capital of Poland. There is this monument that was created to commemorate the (minor) catastrophe of the plane, but because of the threat of the demonstration against it and against Kaczyński, we had this crowd of police guarding the monument, but in fact the monument is created by the context of this empowered environment, completely unaware of the fact that these guys who are dressed to fight with the demonstrators are actually creating the actual work; it is they who create the work, not the work itself. This is a poem by Charles Bukowski.

*There is enough treachery, hatred violence
absurdity in the average
human being to supply any given army on any given day*

*AND The Best At Murder Are Those Who Preach Against It
AND The Best At Hate Are Those Who Preach Love*

*AND THE BEST AT WAR – FINALLY – ARE THOSE WHO
PREACH PEACE*

*Not Wanting Solitude
Not Understanding Solitude
They Will Attempt To Destroy Anything
That Differs From Their Own*

*Not Being Able
To Create Art
They Will Not
Understand Art*

*They Will Consider Their Failure
As Creators
Only As A Failure
Of The World*

*Not Being Able To Love Fully
They Will BELIEVE Your Love Incomplete
AND THEN THEY WILL HATE YOU
And Their Hatred Will Be Perfect
Like A Shining Diamond
Like A Knife
Like A Mountain
LIKE A TIGER
Like HEMLOCK
Their Finest
ART*

And that is why I believe that every artist is actually condemned to be an immigrant. Because being an immigrant allows you to have a total perspective on what is happening around you, if you are not an immigrant, even if you are in your own country, you are not able to do that.

It is proof of a base and low mind for one to wish to think with the masses or majority, merely because the majority is the majority. Truth does not change because it is, or is not, believed by a majority of the people.

Giordano Bruno

And again, a work called *Leak in the floor* [2014] happens to actualize itself, it is a compilation of the war documentaries; but we always see these documentaries in the media, in a fragmented way, in a separate way, so that these messages actually become, I would say, somehow permeable to any sense of interaction from the position of the viewer, because they are fragmented. What I was trying to do here is to create both, something that in the same way looks very innocent, almost like a toy, but at the same time creates an overall perspective of war that we are not able to see in such a way that we can see it from the position of an immigrant, of someone who is separating themselves, using in fact the media that they relate to, that show us the current situation.

Leak in the floor, 2014



And I think that within the current situation, this work begins to contextualize itself again, so it is not a big mystery why I decided to show those who work today, at the moment of the war with Ukraine. I think this somehow gives us this leak in the floor, the way we perceive this is also the question of how I deal with the proximity of an image, the way we are very often deceived by the tragedy of a perspectival tragedy that we are being put into at the moment by the information networks.

Basically, I think that the general problem is always optical, and I think that I have always believed that optics actually precedes ethics in a way. So unless we are able to change the optics, we are not going to be able to change the ethics.

Putin's Tie, 2016 - acrylic on canvas 185x165cm, video projection



This is another painting I am showing. It was made in 2016, quite some time ago, and it is called *Putin's Tie* [2016]. And it is the original Putin's tie, taken from his speeches. It's an acrylic on canvas - 1.85m by 1.65m - with the video projection, and while I was making it, it

wasn't really me who was making the work... I was responding to my immediate thoughts about this guy, but suddenly the work deserves to be shown now, rather than when it was made. It has never been shown in a gallery before.

“No peace is possible between the novelist and the agélaste [those who do not laugh]. Never having heard God’s laughter, the agélastes are convinced that the truth is obvious, that all men necessarily think the same thing, and that they themselves are exactly what they think they are. But it is precisely in losing the certainty of truth and the unanimous agreement of others that man becomes an individual. The novel is the imaginary paradise of individuals. It is the territory where no one possesses the truth, neither Anna nor Karenin, but where everyone has the right to be understood, both Anna and Karenin.”

Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*

So, again, there is this question of distance, because the agelast, I would say, is not only someone who takes the truth or reality from a position of yes or no, or who expects the world to be illustrative, but it is also someone who is not able to find the right time, or who is not able to believe that the reflection on the world, or the way in which we can laugh at the world, is always related to delay, not just a spatial difference that we can assume is the reason why we are laughing at the world, or who is not able to believe that the reflection on the world, or the way we can laugh at the world, is always also related to delay, not only to a spatial difference that we can assume is the reason why we laugh at things because they are not directly related to us.

So it is a spatial difference that somehow defines our laughter, but also people who don't laugh, they don't perceive the beauty of a delay, the beauty of the time that we are able to distance ourselves from the problem and therefore be able to laugh at the problem not only from a spatial position but also from a temporal position.



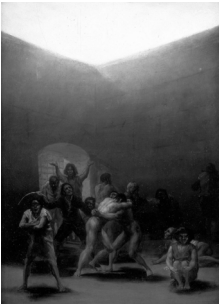
This is the work of Krzysztof Wodiczko, who is one of the most important activist artists using projections at the moment, and I have always been incredibly impressed by his activity. But at the same time I would say that there are these parallel paths that we are going down. They overlap in a formal way, but they never really overlapped in the way that he sees the role of the artist in relation to the here and now. It is a beautiful work, beautiful. I would say that beauty is a tool rather than an aesthetic description. I think it is beautiful in the way that beauty paces a certain kind of function in his activity. But this activity is the activity – I would say – much more of a designer. This is nothing against his work, of course. I have a high regard for his work, but what I am saying here is just to highlight a small difference between us: he is referring to, and this is what he is saying in the way he describes the work, that artists should actively participate in a discourse of the here and now and try to change this here and now. And this is this optimistic, idealistic – I would say – approach that art can heal. I am not really sure about that, because I would say that from my own position, I do not believe that I can heal anything. Nor do I believe that I can functionally change reality. I would still be more in the area of cultural reflection rather than design, because I would see design as a part of reality, which is very much related to actuality. So maybe this aspect of actuality, although I think my work can take a very strong stand in terms of being actual, but actuality is not directly present in my work.

Basic Training, 2010 – acrylic
on canvas 200x240cm,
video projection



That is why I showed this piece closer to another one that perhaps describes more my idea of abstracting the image and then, when the image is abstracted, it can contextualise itself depending on which wall it hangs on. This painting hangs on a certain wall and in a certain place and then it contextualises itself... not by its own means but by the environment in which it exists, although it only represents the training of the police dog, the dog is invisible. The figure who is a trainer is visible, so maybe that is the difference, that I am not exactly showing the source of the animation. Unlike Wodiczko, I only show the effect, which is much more abstract and less individual, less personal than his work. In his work, he plays a really important role in the discourse of providing a stage for people who are reworking their own traumas and their own positions so that they can be heard. I would think of him as the perfect stage designer. Although the stage is necessary, I would say that this stage in my work is more of an offer of an account of the interaction with the viewer, in a more direct way, rather than providing a space for the participant to take an active part in it.

This is Goya, *The Courtyard of the Insane* (1793-4), an incredibly important painting also because of this luminous aspect that exists within the question of what kind of absurd activity we can engage in as artists. And how differently we can be judged. We are judged on the basis of time and space, as in this work, called *YoLoVie* (2018).



Yo Lo Vie, 2007 - acrylic on canvas 200x200cm, video projection, time-delayed surveillance projection





This is also a reference to Goya, because I have the viewer – which is me in this painting – who is actively delayed in the projection.

In fact, the viewer is able to maybe perceive what is the sentence. Another reference to another painter, Caspar David Friedrich, who did this wonderful painting called *The Monk by the Sea* (1908-10).

Again, the image is one that lures us into this idea of a human figure that is not a human figure... it is just this costume that is very much a kind of anti-image, which is the anti-pandemic costume, and the only source that animates this figure in front of the landscape is the air.

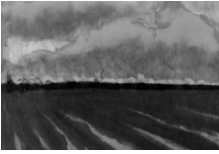
The Monk, 2020n – acrylic, gold & aluminium dust on canvas, 3x: 140x200cm, video projection



Again, a painting that was done a few years ago, I'm just showing this to maybe visualize my surprise at how some of these images that came to life completely out of context happened to be very direct and a comment on the current reality, although there was no intention of that, like there was no intention of Artur Nacht-Samborski (1898-1974), an artist who was active in the late 50s, during the Stalinist 50s in Warsaw, painting flowers.

He happened to be political and was expelled from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts because of what he painted. He didn't want to make social realist paintings about the workers, he just wanted to paint flowers... So, for me it was a very powerful statement. And the statement was just a statement of somebody who was actually – again, going back to Kiesler – resisting. This kind of resistance happened to be political at times when you were forced to be a painter, only in the condition of painting a certain kind of imaginary.



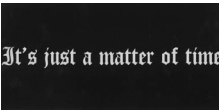


Emil Nolde (1857-1956), who was very pro-Nazi at the time, at the beginning of the Third Reich, he really wanted to be allied with the Nazis, he was sympathetic to that ideology, but in fact his painting happened to be against something, with this kind of powerful colour tone, something that was called degenerate art and was banned. So, his work was contextualized by politics, against his will.



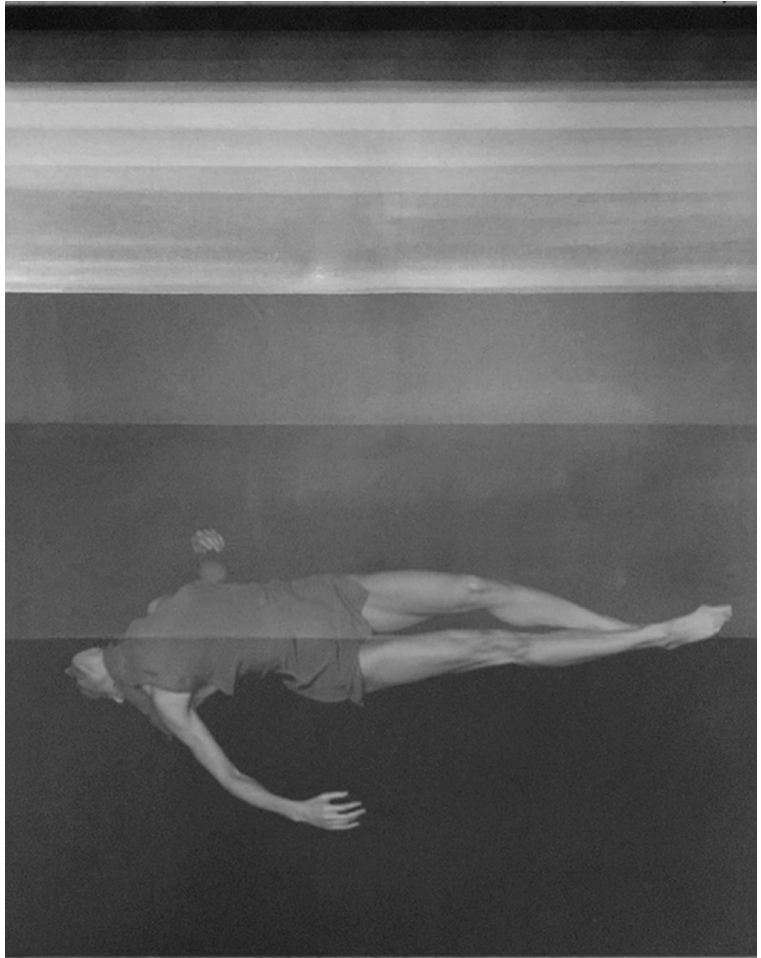
The last of the inspirations is Luc Tuymans (1956-) and the *Gas Chamber* (1986). I am again trying to look forward and be current, on the basis of using a medium that is already outdated and already almost like a found artefact that would predict a future that has already passed.

I find this kind of double loop incredibly interesting here, also from the point of view of how we are historically related to certain signifiers of the moment, which are somehow very strongly related to how we perceive ourselves in this temporal sphere, which is the now and the question of the future, which is in this fantastic banner by Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996), *It's just a matter of time*. It is only a matter of time how we do it, and it is only a matter of time how we meet each other.



Time to end my presentation. This is one of the works I did with the wonderful performer Maria Coluzzi from Argentina. And again, we met and we did not question the context. We did not question the content. We did what we did. I painted, she performed, and then we did not even discuss it. We discussed all sorts of things, but we did not discuss the formal side of the work. The work just overlapped in her performance and me and my paintings gave her a very atypical stage, maybe the only stage at the time, because the work was made about two years ago when the pandemic started and she had no real place to perform. I only had my studio, and this meeting for me is a kind of incredible example of two artists meeting and somehow agreeing on the situation, without trying to make something together, but trying to make something parallel. It is a little bit like this Bunraku theatre, where you have the puppeteer and he is responsible for the legs and the forehands, and there is a struggle – and thanks to that they accept themselves, but in fact they are responsible for different ways of expression...

Attitude 3 (with Maria Colusi),
2020 - acrylic on canvas
185x165, video projection



Then something phenomenal happens that none of them could really predict because she did not design it, she did not ask me to paint it in a certain way so that she could perform. I did not ask her to perform in a way that would fit into the particular stage that I had created. And again, the work, within this highly abstract level of performance and painting, becomes a mystery in itself, and that is what I love about it, because I am not able to say anything more about this work, except what I am seeing... and I am seeing exactly what you are seeing. Maybe it is also this aspect of not finding myself very much on the surface of a picture, or the belief that it is not a question of providing or facilitating contact or diving into the world

that is so submerged now. Allowing the viewer to enter the picture is not necessarily the best way. I would always think that I would rather make the viewer stay outside of a picture, not be able to fully access the picture. That is why I probably never use sound in my works, because they are immersive, they provide a certain kind of comfort of being inside an image or a situation. I think it is again this question of distance or the permeability of the image, when the viewer is not able to fully access the work. And that is why, perhaps paradoxically, he/she becomes more involved in the work than in the situation.

When we are dealing with this black cinema box, what Mário mentioned at the beginning, it is more about being aware and being present in front of the work, rather than being inside it. That is why all these works are really presented in daylight conditions, so that the viewer is actually very aware of his presence and his own time passing in front of the work.

This is a picture of the Museum of Butterflies that I took a long time ago in New York. But I think it's really a good comment for the end of my speech, which is the need to resist being in time, and the need to resist, from the artist's point of view, in this process of purging, which I would say is necessary for any work of art to be independent and to be something more than just another bite, another graphomaniacal fragment of reality. So as long as the butterfly that flies in our space is allowed to be in time, which is not necessarily so intact, then there is actually a chance of creating

a work that will have a long-term effect, because it will be contextualized by the actuality of the time in which we live...

This is very similar to those control barriers against crowd demonstrations that I put up in a gallery [Palácio Pimenta, Museu de Lisboa] and that had the domino effect, which I would say is much more powerful as a consequence than the work that would be designed from the beginning to be perceived exactly as I intended. And that is the end of my talk. Thank you for your patience.



DOMINO - 'first gesture'
documentary, Lisbon 11.02.19,
filmed by Mário Caeiro



LIVING IN THE
INTERSTICES

César Barrio

The title of this conference is taken from a book of interviews by Peter Handke, which seemed to me quite appropriate, because Peter Handke says: “*I live only in the interstices*” (Handke, 1992). I really believe that we all live in an interval, in an interstice: it is the way we see reality.

Somehow, in a creative way, I want to take some quotations from the book I edited this year (Barrio, 2021) to relate the artistic work I have developed for different spaces to this central idea.

I will begin by talking about three very different authors, trying to get to the origin of three ways of seeing the origin of the interstice, the interval. First, I will discuss the way of Josep Quetglas - a Catalan architect - then Gilles Deleuze and finally Aby Warburg.

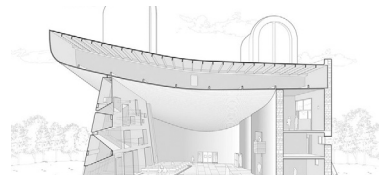
Starting with Quetglas, in his book *Breviary of Ronchamp*, he relates the so-called dolmen *Table des Marchands* to the Ronchamp Chapel by the architect Le Corbusier. In both cases, the slab or roof can be seen as a symbol of protection (a ship or a cloud) in which a progressive levitation takes place. Its initial heaviness gives way to lightness as we approach its bow, and it rises towards the sky. There is an aphorism by José Luis Pardo that I often quote: “It is not only true that every cromlech is a work of art, but rather that every work of art is a cromlech” (Pardo, 1991, p. 29). For me it is very important to look for the cause of things, the why, because all their development lies at the origin of ideas, of conceptions.

I return to Quetglas to talk about this relationship. The image of the dolmen plays with the contradiction between the size of the stone and the weakness of its support. Even the bases that support the stone are not homogeneous: on the one hand, broad, solid, open supports; on the other, only a few weak and provisional points of support, as if the dolmen were theatrically narrating the transformation of the stone: heavy at the beginning, light and airy at the end, raising its nose.

Fig. 1- Table des marchands, Cromlech, Locmariaquer, France



Fig. 2- Le Corbusier, Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France



This is what we will see in the following examples. They tell us that the more density you put into an object, the more lightness you create in it. On the right, we can see the same thing happening in Ronchamp: as the density appears, the dolmen almost becomes a menhir. It becomes a very light piece on its front, as if looking up at the sky.

Quetglas speaks of the birth of architecture as the first interstice: the first space to be created. And I quote:

But the architecture of the dolmen is not only in the work of lifting and supporting the stone, nor in the wonderful transformation of its density. It is in the appearance of something radically unexpected, unknown, because at the same time as the stone rises from the ground, a space appears beneath it, unknown to the world until then; a new place, between the ground and the belly of the stone, covered and protected by it: a refuge. This is the wonderful space where you can take refuge, a pure human creation, a human place par excellence. (Quetglas, 2017)

Let us now talk about Gilles Deleuze. In his Paris conference of 1981, Gilles Deleuze began, as if in jest, to relate various texts by Bacon and Cézanne, and it is from these conversations that I will discuss what the space-time sign is for him.

For artists it is the only thing we have left because the only thing we can do is paint in space and time, we do nothing else. It is therefore necessary to carry out an analysis that really synthesises the entire history of art, and it is also useful for us to explain the birth of the interval.

It all began with the Egyptians, and here Deleuze says:

The space perceived by the Egyptians is read as a plan. Form and background are on the same plan. They do not understand our depth. This is because for them everything is about separating the essence, the immortal soul, from the changing, protecting it from change, and it can only be conjured up in the superficiality of the plane. It is only important to achieve it in this way, in this essence, through the contour in this plane. This flattening of space becomes bas-relief. There are three elements of the painting: the shape, the background and the contour that separates them. (Deleuze, 2008)



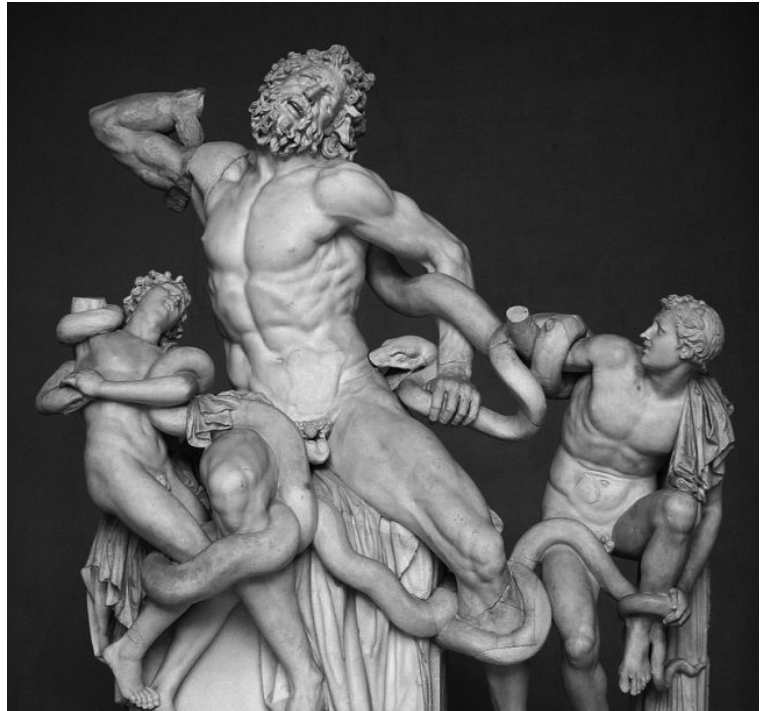
Fig. 3- Akhenaten, Nefertiti and princess, c. 1350 BC, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

We started with a plan, but what is happening now is a displacement of that plan, by the Greeks. There will be a foreground and a background. The Greeks break this plan. They displace it, in space. The Greeks discovered the multiplicity of plans. For the Greeks, the plane is divided in two: a main foreground comes closer, and a second plane disappears. It is impossible to perceive this in the first archaic Greek sculptures, where, in the words of Alberto Ruiz Samaniego, the first signs of man's departure from the world appear.

The form appears in this first plane and determines the relationship with the secondary plane. This relationship of planes creates a depth that is resolved through sculptural scaling. Art begins to be measurable, precisely through this scaling, and the scale appears as we understand it. It is Greek harmony! From the tactile world of the Egyptian gaze, we move to an optical world that refers to a tactile form. Our origin comes from this first displacement. Our essence emerges from a displacement in the Egyptian plane.



Fig. 4- Catedral de Monreale, sec. XII-XIII, Sicily
Fig. 5- Laocoonte, 27 BC-68 AD, marble, Vatican Museum, Rome



Here we have *Laoconte*. It is the development of this foreground that is important for the Greeks, and how this scaling of the scale appears from behind.

So, we now have two spaces: the Egyptian single plane and the Greek double plane. What happens is that Deleuze tells us of a third sign of space-time that can be worked with, which is Byzantine space.

Byzantine space is exactly the opposite of Greek space. Now the secondary plane, which is depth, prevails, and the image emerges up to the foreground, which somehow disappears. Then the form changes from a rigid configuration to a figure of light from which time “unfolds”. This has a lot to do with Plotino.

So, there is a liberation from the deep. Out of the depths, as if bottomless, light emerges from the background. That is the birth of Byzantine art. Deleuze explains how Byzantine art produces this complete inversion of Greek space-time:

From the levels, the fund becomes the determining factor. In other words, the space in the background is a space in which light and shadow are released in this way. Now it is the form that depends on the division of light and shadow. Even more, the Byzantines are the first colourists. They put when the light is released in the form, if you do not look at the top of the liberation of colour. And I believe that the Byzantines are the first, in the civilisation of art, in the handling of the ranges of colour: the luminous range of values and the chromatic range of tones. With the Byzantines, the three primitive colours appear: gold, blue and red. the three famous colours of mosaic - in complex relationships with black and white. The eyes of a Byzantine figure are everywhere. everywhere. These glimpses come from the scattered background. It is the of the Greek world. And it is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful spaces. (Deleuze, 2008)

Exactly, when we look at Greek sculptures, it is not the whole view that dominates. What dominates is the foreground. From the darkness to the light, to that foreground, colours appear in Byzantine art as we understand them, because we should remember, as Paul Valéry well saw, that the Greeks did not see colours as we do. The word “blue” never appears in the Iliad. When they speak of the sea, they never mention the blue. They saw it - their vision was quite

spiritual - and they perceived it very differently to us. They only perceived the secondary values of colour. It is only in Byzantine art that primary colours appear.

Fig. 6 - Michelangelo, Last Judgement, 1541, Sistine Chapel, Vatican

Fig. 7 - Rembrandt, Night Watch, 1642, Rijksmuseum, Holland



This is Buonarrotti's final judgement. ... It is curious that in the Renaissance, which is so much based on the Greeks and Platonic philosophy, a Greek-like space appears, in which the foreground is the most important thing, as opposed to the Baroque, which is based on the work of Leibniz and has a strong relationship with Plotinus.

From these philosophical relationships, a relationship is established between Byzantine and Baroque art. In both, the concept of infinity, of infinite depth, is very important. Here, in Rembrandt's Night Watch, I would like to recall a quote from Paul Claudel that describes it perfectly. *"The whole composition, from front to back, is arranged on the principle of an ever-increasing movement, like a sandbank that begins to crumble"*. (Claudel, 1950, p. 48).

Fig. 8 - Georges de la Tour, Saint Joseph, 1642, Louvre, Paris

Fig. 9 - Diego Velázquez, Las Meninas, 1642, Museo del Prado, Madrid



That is the Baroque. Baroque art is about getting to the point just before imbalance. Bringing the image to the point just before it dissolves.

I give another example, from Georges de la Tour. I wrote down a phrase by Jaime Repollés Llauradó on a visit to the Museo del Prado, where he talks about the same thing. About the feeling that the background becomes the protagonist. *“The form is achieved when the painting is about to fade. That is when the light is caught. When this is achieved, the drawing appears for a moment on its edge, as an extension, and then everything disappears and disappears.”* (Llauradó, 2011)

Paul Claudel defined composition as *“an arrangement in imminent danger of disintegration”* (Claudel, 1950, p. 48). All this brings us precisely to the most important moment, in my opinion, which is *Las Meninas*, in which this movement is caught absolutely at the limit, where not even the painting seems to exist, because there is only absence. The painting has an initial light in the foreground, and in the background we see the white wall, present in Fra Angelico and Vermeer, which is like a memory. Like the umbilical cord of reality.

Fig. 10- Gerhard Richter, Skt. Gallen, 1989, oil on canvas, 250 cm x 340 cm, Catalogue Raisonné, n° 695



We already have three types of space-time. So, I'm going to move on to the fourth.

This is a painting by Gerhard Richter - the space-time type of modernism. Modernity is mostly a space-time that emerges between the two planes. The space-time generated in modernity - going back to Deleuze's lectures - is no longer the Greek space, nor the 16th century space, nor the Byzantine space, nor the 17th century space. A new space-time emerges between the two levels.

The interstitium of the fold. The form will not stop falling or rising. It will not stop its vertical movement. This is an imbalance that is always about to be born. The organisation that Claudel told us about is getting rid of it. Now it is a question of trying to possess something that is constantly running away. “Our present - Ramón Andrés tells us - “its true essence and meaning is the impossibility of being captured” (Andrés, 2016).

I think this already appears in *Las Meninas*. This absence already appears. There is a phrase by Ramón Gaya about *Las Meninas* that I would not want to miss, and I quote: “The painting of *Las Meninas* does not exist, there is no painting there. It disappears leaving us hardly anything ... corporeal, material, tangible, useful, enjoyable, pleasing.” (Gaya, 1984)

Now I’m going to talk about the third image of what an interval is, a gap, by Aby Warburg. Aby Warburg, this is one of the first panels, panel 1 of his *Mnemosyne*, in which he tried to relate all the sediments of our culture based on images that were in dialogue with each other and from which the concepts emerged. Aby Warburg defined his iconology as an “iconology of the interval”. (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p. 456). Each of *Mnemosyne*’s “images” could undoubtedly be analysed in terms of the network of “intervals” that his own framing has produced. His panels, like dissecting tables, are operative fields that attempt to reread the world through this multiplicity of disparate, migrating, moving images.

We recall this phrase from Dziga Vertov: “The organisation of movement is the organisation of its elements, that is, of the intervals”. (Vertov, 2011, p. 166) Aby Warburg, in panel 1 of his atlas *Mnemosyne*, places, together with some astrological images, the Liver of Piacenza, an Etruscan bronze model of a divinatory liver, the result of the exchange of knowledge between Hittite and Babylonian cultures. The liver was the centre of the body, it was at the centre of the relationship between body and soul. The Piacenza bronze, a scale model of great anatomical precision, was a technical record of divination. Didi-Huberman explains in *Atlas*:

Liturgical divination, which included the observation of the liver of animals sacrificed for the occasion, superimposed the artificial on the



Fig. 11- Aby Warburg, Atlas Mnemosyne Panel 1, 1929,



Fig. 12- Liver of Piacenza, c. 1800 BC, bronze, British Museum, London

natural, the forces of culture on the forces of nature, intelligible construction on sensitive knowledge. The folds of the animal's body offered the possibility of "reading what was never written" on the map of the heavens and the gods. (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 20).

This is important because it is the same movement that the dolmen makes when it wants to become a menhir looking at the sky. The work of the clairvoyant consisted in observing a natural reality on the dissecting table or the consultation table and, by transforming the body into a templum, in delimiting it as a strictly limited field of supernatural action that reveals its predictive signs, so that looking at space becomes looking at time. It is a matter of transforming these connections, once exhumed, into paradigms of a new reading of the world. Eugenio Trías defines a temple as *"the demarcation and cutting off of a sacred space: for example, the creation of a 'clearing' in the middle of a forest, by cutting down trees or taking advantage of an opening. The construction of a temple was - for the Etruscans, in order to build a temple, it was necessary to look into the future in the liver of a lamb, because the liver of a lamb properly delimited a temple itself - by law, the inaugural foundation of the world itself, it always had a genetic or cosmogonic character"* (Trías, 1994).

I mention this because I think we now understand why Aby Warburg began his history of art with this piece: you really have to go to the intestines to see the cosmos!

In this context, I would like to comment on a text by Ramón Andrés – The Laws of Gortyn, found in Greece – in which he begins by saying that we are a thinking country and relates agriculture to literature. These laws showed him the reason why they were written one line on one side and the next on the opposite side: they imitate the furrows made when the land is tilled. The point is that it makes us see that in every culture we are always trying to fit infinity into a limited space. This, I think, makes us understand any concept of gap. On a piece of paper, in a novel, in a painting. And he relates all this to what part of the earth, how the earth has been ploughed. He does this translation.

I come back to Aby Warburg. For Warburg, the history of Western culture begins with divinatory lamb's liver. The beauty-crystal

of the painting will emerge from the beauty-fracture of that dissection table of that templum-interval, capable of making heterogeneous levels of reality coincide.

In the same sense, Warburg saw in votive offerings the true artistic beginning of the autonomous sculptural portrait. The gesture of rupture, of digging into the entrails of the territory created by the body in order to reach the constellations of the stars, is it not the same that guides painting in the West? Is it not the same impulse that led Brunelleschi to project the funnel of Dante's hell onto his dome, the sphere of which is the formalisation of heaven? Dante's *Inferno* coincides with the absolute change in the image of the world, in the West.

If we are not in a centre, if we do not live in a sphere, as we used to live in the Pantheon or in the closed triptic of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, such a world will disappear, and instead of living in a sphere, we will live on the surface of the sphere. We ourselves have forgotten the centre. Today, the whole Internet is constantly talking to you about envelopment, by creating an ensonification of the image of living inside a sphere, as reproduced by Bosch, according to Sloterdijk's ideas.

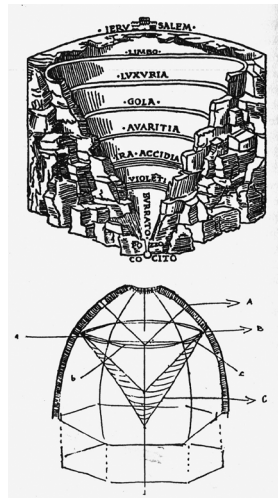
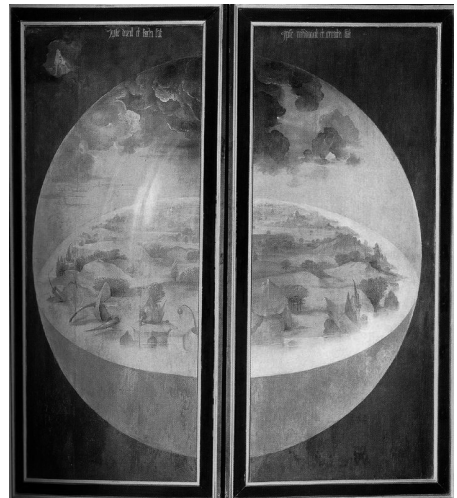


Fig. 13- Straet & Brunelleschi, Dante's Hell, 1587/1436

Fig. 14- H. Bosch, The Creation of the World, (3rd Day), 1480-90, Museo del Prado



From Leibniz and Pascal onwards, the image becomes a parable, and the parable will really be like an eye. It has a lot to do with the image of Dante's Hell in the Dome. I always think that in all civilisations there is an attempt to go to the bottom, to the inside of the earth, to see the cosmos.

I end with Warburg and talk about what is undoubtedly his revolution. He does not understand art history as something linear. He understands it as this drawing that we are looking at. Warburg defines a cultural model of history in which linear time is altered by times expressed by hybrid layers. Warburg says: "*Our ancestors precede us not in continuous lines, not even in genealogical ramifications that can be reassembled by mere forks, but in broken layers, in discontinuous strata, in erratic blocks*". (Didi-Huberman, 2009) The symbol is thus born out of repetition. The Dionysian mechanisms by which the rite is born as a symbol - the sacrifice, the dance or the use of masks - are a protective appropriation of the unknown that supports the disappearance of the subject and maintains it in our bodily and psychic sensation, in our gestural language in the present. Everywhere we are surrounded by symbols, recognised as such or not. Didi-Huberman on *The Survival Image* echoes Warburg: "*What survives in a culture is the most rejected, the most obscure, the most distant and the most tenacious of that culture. The deadest, in a sense, as the most buried and ghostly; but also the most alive, as the most mobile, the closest, the most passionate*". (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p. 138) Rilke will say: "*And yet these beings from the past live in our lives, in the background of our inclinations, in the bark of our blood. They weigh on our destiny. They are the gesture that returns from the depths of time*". (Rilke, 2001)



Fig. 15- G. Penone, Spazio di Luce, 2015, Rome

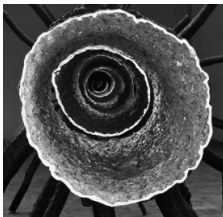


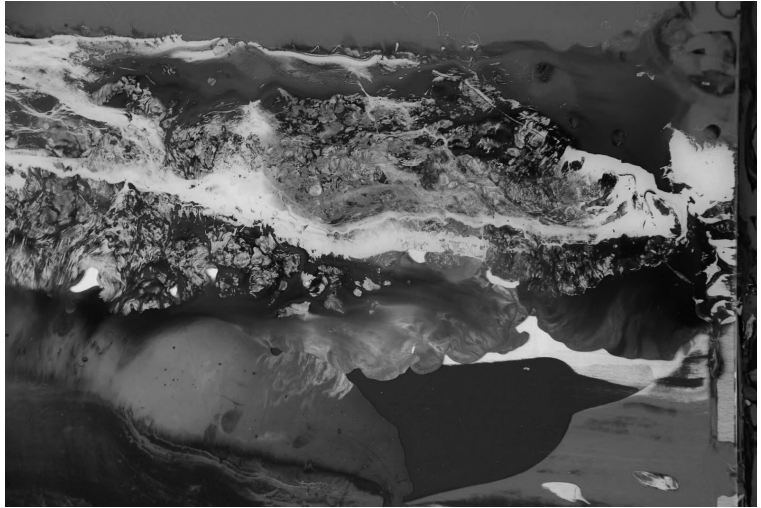
Fig. 16- G. Penone, Spazio di Luce, 2008, bronze and gold, Gagosian, Rome

For me, this piece by Giuseppe Penone, an Italian Art Povera artist, is a very good representation of the theme of the transformation of the Piacenza liver, of going into the intestines to see the cosmos. I associate it with a verse by José Ángel Valente, which says: "*It was necessary to speak the weight of light in order to begin to see*". (Valente, 2014)

The sculpture is made of bronze, the skin of the tree and the whole interior. I will quote a fragment from my Lisbon studio that I had written in my diary in 2011: "*It is strange that the more you descend*

into the interior of matter, increasing the scale of vision, as if it were a matter of opening a tunnel or entering a cave, the more the images that fall on your hands have such a formal resemblance to the photos that satellites send us” (Barrio, 2011). The more weight or density you introduce into the object, the more lightness you produce in it. Distance and closeness merge as self-aware matter pours out its brilliance.

Fig. 17 César Barrio, The rhizome and the magnifying glass Serie, 2011. Detail
Fig. 18 César Barrio, The rhizome and the magnifying glass Serie, 2011. Detail



These pictures are details of works I have done, and they have a lot to do with all this. Later I found this quote from E.T.A. Hoffman that explains it much better: *“When the blind mole burrows in the earth out of blind instinct, it may well be that in the deepest tunnel, by the dim light of the miner’s lamp, man’s eyes will see more clearly; indeed, as they grow stronger, they may be able to recognise in the marvellous minerals the reflection of what is hidden above the clouds.”* (Hoffmann, 1969, p. 154). For me, this is what art is all about.

This is a tableau I recently painted for an exhibition and now I want to explain its process. I go on making layers and layers, like onion sticks, and putting a table on top of another table and covering it again. Then I make a fold with the canvas, and I paint again on the top of the folded canvas, again extending it, and continue to create a surface of a certain thickness. So, when I get to that point

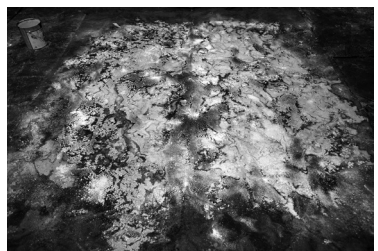


Fig. 19- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 1, 2021, oil on canvas

Fig. 20- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 2, 2021, oil on canvas

Fig. 21- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 3, 2021, oil on canvas

Fig. 22- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 4, 2021, oil on canvas

Fig. 23- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 5, 2021, oil on canvas

Fig. 24- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 6, 2021, oil on canvas

and I have done everything I said, I do an archaeological work in the painting. I start to burn the painting and continue to remove all the layers of paint that are underneath. We will see it again, in a very different way, in the installation that will take place in Lisbon in 2019, in *Quatro Paredes de Água*, but it is always a question of finding this rest of the painting. There is always an attempt to connect with an image that seems to have been made by itself.

Fig. 25- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 7, 2021,
Fig. 26- César Barrio, Eight steps of a painting 8, 2021, oil on canvas



For me, here is the basic image of baroque painting, in which everything is really said. It is the Transfiguration by Rafael. In my book I wrote: *“The bodies at the bottom of this painting, surrounded by land, some of them of the same matter without a horizon - the reflective land that Ramón Andrés spoke of - signal the transformation of the body into spirit, into light, the ascent that is shown above.”*

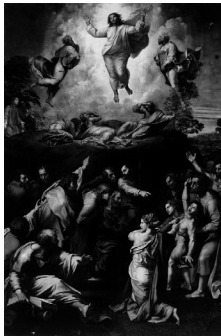


Fig. 27- Raphael,
Transfiguration, 1520,
Vatican Museum

In Góngora y Quevedo we find the same duality. The gold, this sediment, this excrement, extracted from the bowels of the planet, specifically from India, is transformed in some of his poems into the stars and suns of the firmament. It is curious how, in the Baroque, this division between the parts of the picture is the key to understanding it. In *Las Meninas*, or in the burial of Count Orgaz, by Greco, these two parts, one that is the land and the other that is the transformation into light, in the middle it is always very important that the key appears, the escape, the key to the horizon. Here we can only see it where the two worlds touch.

Fig. 28- César Barrio,
Altarpiece, Chapel Edificio
de Masters. UNAV, Madrid.
2011



This is an altarpiece I made for the chapel of the Masters' Building of the University of Navarre, in Madrid, and the architect's project was that each presbytery of the chapel should be a large lucernary. This wall was all bathed in light reflected from the other wall. This was my homage to Quevedo y Góngora, it was really like being inside a cave, it gave an image of being inside a mine, and matter had been transformed into light, also thanks to the work of Joséan Medina, who was the architect and achieved this lucernary effect.

I extrapolated the same idea to introduce an installation I made in Tierra de Campos, in Palencia. I want to bring here the same thing, the same thing you saw in my previous image, but take it out of context. I would like to read a text by Yorgos Séferis, one of my favourite poets, which also speaks of this change in the scale of microcosms and macrocosms. In painting there is always an attempt to hide all the depth within the skin. I mean to fuse the exterior and the interior, so that the microcosm and the macrocosm almost touch. Yorgos Seferis says:

There are those who 'think' the poet has imagination and decide that he is only a cloud playing on another cloud. The truth is that the poet reproduces life from much closer than others see. So close that the represented object (of nature) becomes diluted. (Seferis, 1997)

I once saw a section of a sea-urchin spine under the microscope. It was a wise and elaborate embroidery the size of a banknote. What happened to the sea urchin?

Fig. 29- C Barrio, The Secret of the Fireflies, 2018, Guaza de Campos



Tierra de Campos is in the middle of nowhere, between Valladolid and León. It is a town where thirty-six people lived, and yet it had an acropolis of spectacular adobe dovecots, some of which were in ruins. The idea was to make a very cosmogonic installation on the night of the full moon, and as soon as the moon appeared on the horizon, several projections began to move on the dovecotes, in such a way as to create a relationship with the moon, as if it were a very interesting planet. Here it also appeared that, being a mud adobe, it made a lot of sense to have the water projected and moving on the skin of the adobe.



Fig. 30 - James Turrell, Accretion Disk, 2018, Photo: Florian Holzherr

This piece is by James Turrell. Talking about some texts by Paul Valéry. Talking about absence, about the search for the invisible. Pierre Reverdy: *“Poetry is in what it is not. In what we lack. In what we wish it were. In what we are not. In what we wish we were.”* (Reverdy, 2008). James Turrell tells us: *“I’m interested in the invisible light, the light that is only perceived by the mind.”* (Turrell, 1985, p. 44). Everything intangible points to a single meaning, celebrates a single principle and foundation, implies a single, final object. An object that is not there. This absence is necessary to capture the meaning that lies beyond the work. The work rests in an absence built on an abyss.

A perfect line could be drawn through the history of art, based solely on the obsession with materialising the invisible.

Paul Valéry says: “*What we receive from the senses is not the ‘outside world’ - it is that with which we make ourselves an outside world*”. (Valéry, 1973, p. 1193)

How do we do this? It is done by substituting things seen for things known, and this knowledge contains virtual powers.

We only perceive what is within a certain agreement with the significant. We perceive only the significant.

Space is in itself a confusing idea - used in contrast, but not positively. We speak positively of distances, of surfaces, of figures, of various displacements.

Paul Valéry speaks of time. What we call ‘time’ is as crude and confused a concept as force was before dynamics.

Later I liked to quote Tarkovsky, the film director, who in *Sculpting Time* goes so far as to say: “*Time is known for tension, not for change*”. (Tarkovsky).

Time is a condition for the existence of our “self”. It is a kind of cultural environment that is destroyed when it is no longer needed, when the links between the individual personality and the conditions of existence are broken.

It is a constant search to capture this materiality of the invisible. That is what the whole process is about.

There is a poem by Roberto Juarroz, also a great poet, that speaks of the same thing:

*The distances do not measure the same
night and day.
Sometimes you must wait for the night
so that a distance is shortened.
Sometimes you must wait for the day.
On the other hand
darkness or light
weaves in such a way in certain cases
space and its combinations
that the values are reversed:
long becomes short,
short becomes long.*

*And furthermore, there is a fact:
night and day do not fill the space equally,
not even fully.
And they do not measure the same
the full distances
and the empty distances.
As they do not measure the same
the distances between big things
and the distances between small things. (Juarroz, 2005, p. 15-16)*

This is also a James Turrell space. In the end, we participate in the construction of the image we see.

The context, the process, the specificity of a place is always there.

This is very relevant to the text that came in Maria Zambrano's introduction in terms of trying to describe the intangible. When the Byzantines come and build the wall, they get this perfect reflection of the Chinese wall opposite, they get this beauty. I read the text even though it was in the introduction:

*One day, a sultan - the story is told in his book *The Words of the Return* - wanted to decorate a room in his palace. So he brought two teams of painters from places as far apart as Byzantium and China. Each team was to paint a fresco on one of the two long parallel walls of the room. But without knowing what the other was going to paint. And so, without allowing them to communicate, he gave each one a wall; in the middle of the room, a well-placed curtain prevented any communication between the painters on either side. When the work was finished, the Sultan went first to inspect the fresco painted by the Chinese. It was indeed of marvellous beauty, 'nothing can be more beautiful than this,' said the Sultan, who, with this conviction in his mind, opened the curtain to reveal the wall painted by the Greeks of Byzantium. But the Greeks had painted nothing on that wall, they had only cleaned it, polished it and polished it again, until it became a mirror of mysterious white, reflecting the shapes of the Chinese wall as if in a purer medium; and the shapes, the colours reached an unimaginable beauty that no longer seemed to belong to this world. (Zambrano, 2009, p. 128-129).*

I continue with the exposition of my development as a painter. The artistic residency that I did in the Basilica of Aranzazu - built by Saenz de Oiza in the fifties, it's really important, and it's in Guipuzcoa, in the north of Spain - I worked there for three months, and then I had an exhibition. I'm starting to talk about a theme that is the simile of painting, of the canvas with the skin and the flesh of the fabric, what is the outer skin and the skin on the back, this is a piece that was made there in that space. The text that appears is by Gaston Bachelard and says Matter is the unconscious of form. It is not so much a matter of describing forms as of weighing matter. (Bachelard, 1982, p. 50)



Fig. 31- César Barrio, Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016, Aranzazu

Fig. 32- César Barrio, Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016, Aranzazu



The most important thing I wanted to explain about this space, about this exhibition, was this. This piece is the same piece. It appeared on the floor, it was worked horizontally, and while the painting was still wet, I burned the piece of methacrylate, in Portuguese they say acrylic, on top, put weights on it and continued painting without touching the paint. For the weights that were on the methacrylate. So when the methacrylate was half dry, I like to think that there is a relationship with what we saw in Raphael's Transfiguration. The piece on the left is really the thinking earth, and the footprint of that painting is on the right, traversed by light and already transformed into light.

These are other images from the exhibition.

Fig. 33- César Barrio, Earth and reveries of repose. Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016, Aranzazu



Fig. 34- César Barrio, Air and dreams. - Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016, Aranzazu

And this piece, which followed the same process, but in this case the methacrylate was not torn off, but it has something to do with entering the bowels of the earth to end up seeing the sky.

Fig. 35- César Barrio, Light studies - Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016

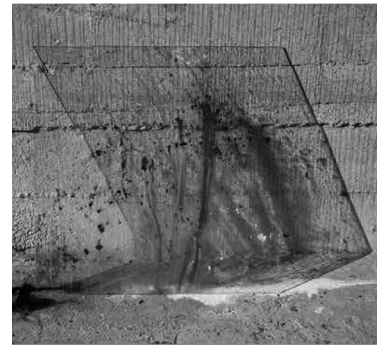
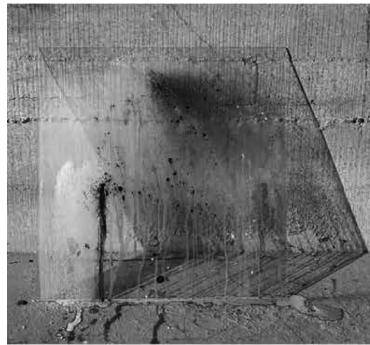


Fig. 36- César Barrio, Light studies - Rituals of the Imaginary, 2016

These are the last two works I painted there. Strangely enough, here I started to make works with a great density of matter and ended up making works with almost no matter. It was built mainly with light. I mention this because it is very important to understand the process that would take me from Aranzazu to Lisbon three years later.

I will now talk about another example. Anish Kapoor and the theme of the meat of the world.

I am very interested in Kapoor's idea of a presence before existence, which he talks about all the time, the search for the origin. Cézanne used to say that what every painter paints is the origin of the world. Kapoor's works are made of themselves. They are really a simulacrum. They have a life of their own. A life that is latent, that beats. It is a bit like the obsession of painters and artists for centuries.

I bring this piece by Kapoor because it is precisely this interval, this void, that is constructed as matter, but as matter conscious of its materiality. That is how painting becomes matter. This is how it becomes matter.



Fig. 37-38- Anish Kapoor, Svayambhu, 2009, Wax and pigment, Royal Academy of Arts

Fig. 39- Anish Kapoor, internal objects, 2015, silicone and pigment, Lisson Gallery, London



These are also works by Anish Kapoor that were exhibited at the Lisson Gallery in London a few years ago. Now I would like to read some texts by Roland Barthes, who says about Twombly, and I quote:

The demiurgic power of the painter is that he makes matter exist as matter. Just as in the palimpsest, the writing is within the writing, so in painting there are several paintings: not only because the canvases are rewritten or repositioned as partial objects in a new set, but because there are as many works as there are levels of perception: when we isolate, look at, enlarge and work on a detail, we create a new work, we go through centuries, schools, styles, we make new art out of the old. The virtual instrument of painting (in the sense of the part that belongs, however minimally, to the eye and not to the hand) would be the magnifying glass, which allows us not to see better or more completely, but to see something different. (Barthes, 1986, p. 182)

The skin of the painting, the canvas, becomes an interval, inhabited as a structure of folds, as an interstice. Schilder tells us about the perception of touch: “Contact with objects also causes a blurring of boundaries. Contours are erased; there is no clear demarcation between the outside world and the body. The surface of the skin, in its indiffer-

ence, can be compared to what Katz calls *spatial colour* (*spatial colour floats in space without a clear relationship to objects.*) *Object and body are psychologically separated by an in-between space*" (Didi-Huberman, 1985). The painting is about the unfolding of this space, this interval of depth between skin and flesh. Foucault on dance: "*Isn't the dancer's body just that, a body that is expanded according to a whole space that is both inside and outside?*" (Foucault). This border becomes a place, it becomes a demarcation, a density in which all perception is concentrated.

All this is in line with the theme of the microcosm and the macrocosm, and how the inside and the outside are not really differentiated. This is the territory of art.

This is a piece by Bernard Requichot. Barthes talks about him and calls his work *Reliquaries*, and it's like an approach, and I think Kapoor has been very influenced by that. It is a self-portrait - let's say he paints his interior - it is like a self-portrait, but as the back of the painting, what would be left if you ripped off the skin.

Based on that, I made my last pieces in an exhibition that is running in the *Ciudadela* in Pamplona, in Spain. I have made a series of pieces that are like palimpsests, but different from the picture we have seen, whose process in the previous study tried not to keep these layers, these onion skins, everything is now like in the same capsule. It is a palimpsest, but with a different variation. It was very important to me that it was packaged by itself.

Here is a view of the exhibition. If there is a certain relationship like this Delacroix as it is like a deconstruction of the fold.



Fig. 40- Bernard Requichot, *Rélicaire*, 1957,

Fig. 41- César Barrio, Exhibition "*Solo aquello que pasa por todas las puertas*", 2021, Ciudadela, Pamplona



Fig. 42- E. Delacroix, La Mort de Sardanapale, 1827, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris



I also wanted to write down this poem, this piece is by Paul Klee, a painted poem that has always obsessed me a lot, because although the grey stripe is silver, it is not well perceived in the photo, but it really makes sense. It is meaningful. The intangible warning that art is supposed to convey appears here. I paid him a tribute in terms of the resolution of the pieces. If we rotate it 90 degrees, we get the same image as Paul Klee's poem.

In terms of the creative process, I had this drawing by John Cage. In order to see reality, we rotate all the time. Well, that is what we do and that is in this drawing. Different perceptions... we are constantly measuring.

Fig. 43- P. Klee, Once Emerged from the Gray of Night, 1918.

Fig. 44- J. Cage, A Dip in the Lake, 1978, felt pen on map, MCA, Chicago

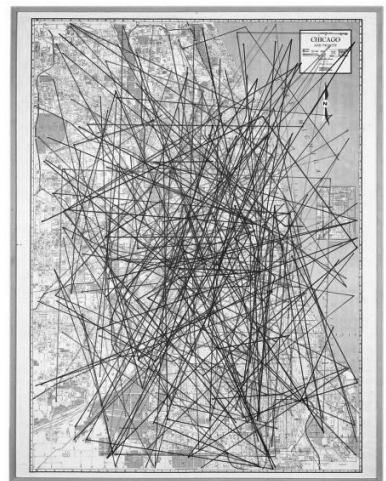
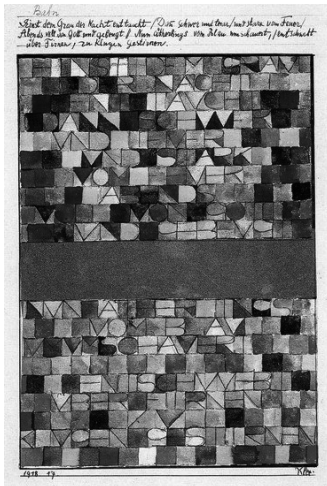




Fig. 45- Pina Bausch, Guy Delahaye

I think there are two basic forms of creative process. The first is the one that architects, or film directors, tend to use most, which is to connect dots, to connect different things, a poem, an aroma, a constructive detail, a type of light, a skylight, all connected in points. The other is that of many composers of music or a family of painters who, throughout the process, follow the same path, but in the opposite sense of the previous one. They go on opening axes, opening vents.

In this sense, since we have been talking about dance with Foucault, I would like to bring here Pina Bausch, who is the clear example of Foucault's words. While I play a fragment of *Café Muller* by Pina Bausch, I will read for a moment a text by Pina Bausch explaining her creative process:

One day I came to a crossroads: either I could follow a fixed plan, or I would let thousands of unexpected things appear and begin to connect them. I chose the latter. It was not improvisation, nor was it just spontaneous sparks. It was more than that. It was about connecting thousands of observed details and letting it all do its own thing. (Over time, the method was invented of giving the dancers a piece of paper with a question or a word on it, and they responded by interpreting a wish, a state of mind, a fear, or just a gesture. And so, from this fragmentation, everything took shape). Scenes are modified right up to the end, scenes that have been cut are introduced in other contexts, sequences are swapped or combined. Try to rehearse what happens when ... What used to make you laugh suddenly turns into something sad; moments of extreme gravity take on a humorous tone; closure is forced; stories unfold differently than expected. There is not much that is eliminated in the familiar way. The images become simpler and at the same time more suggestive, they gain clarity and retain their mystery. (Hoghe, 1989)

We now come to the last part, which is the beginning of the explanation of *Four Walls of Water*. The installation was made in a laundry room in *Lavadouro das Francesinhas*, in the *Madragoa* district of Lisbon, in 2019. As I later realised, my starting point was the influences that were already there. In this search for colour as space, it is important to be able to paint with light. There were several influences and the first is Oteiza. Oteiza, like Giacometti, are the two

sculptors who flee from the preconceived idea of a Greco-Roman figure, that sculpture is the negative of space and what they want to carve is the space between things. Oteiza says:

Everyone wants to say something, by profession, I want to say nothing, to leave the trace, the emptiness, of what should not be said. In the work of art there is always something happening. I don't want anything to happen. Just a void happens, and something takes its place. Putting a shovel in the air and removing the physical air, leaving a void, a statue behind, a stage, no, a space for our soul to function. (Bados, 2008, p. 340)

There is a key piece for me that has obsessed me a lot. After seeing a Malevich piece in a biennial, Oteiza came to his studio and made these pieces. With these pieces, he tells himself, he applies different lighting, with artificial and natural light, and on these modules - which he calls Malevich modules because they are irregular polyhedra that already create movement - the light appears on the colour.

Fig. 46- Maquetas de vidrio para el estudio de la pared-luz. J Oteiza.

Fig. 47- Jorge Oteiza, Metaphysical Box, 1958

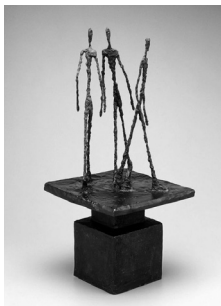
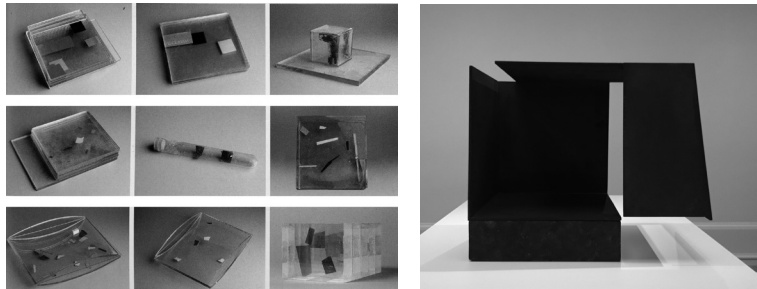


Fig. 48- Giacometti, Three man walking II, 1949, AIC, Chicago

This work by Giacometti is the same from a different angle. You can feel the space between the figures, the figure is a remnant.

I have a text from Alberto Giacometti which, in my opinion, also has a connection with Pina Bausch's text, and I quote:

The world can also be compared to a block of glass with innumerable facets. According to its structure and arrangement, each of us sees certain facets, certain parts of these facets, and his painting, poem, object, etc., is nothing more than a testimony of what he perceives. It is obvious that all the facets seen by a group of people at a given time must be very, very close to each other, with only some differences in angle or inclination. And seen from afar, they form nothing more than a mass

of light in relation to all those that swim in the darkness of space. The production of each one of us is the exact reflection of this difference in angles and inclinations. The only thing that can excite us is to discover a new aspect, a new space, to perceive it in the shadows as soon as the light touches it. (Giacometti, 1930)

This piece is by John Cage, who made it when Duchamp died, and I have always seen it as a change of scale, like what Roland Barthes said about the change of scale, which is very important in painting.

There is another key piece for *Quatro Paredes de Água*, which is Matisse's chapel. Like most painters, Matisse has an absolute obsession with trying to merge colour and form, that is, drawing and colour. When it merges, it achieves that work that seems to breathe alone, that latency that seems to be made of itself. So, he himself writes that it was in the chapel of Vence that he finally achieved this, laying a tiled plane with the black and white drawing and another coloured plane, and he literally said that the painting was in space. Of course, I read this text by Matisse when I was twenty years old. When I made that installation in Lisbon, I realised afterwards that it was latent there. This image of this space, this density, this melting of light and colour.

This installation was made thanks to the production of Leonor Pereira, because from Madrid, with my bad Portuguese, it would have been impossible for them to leave me this space. It is the *Lavadouro das Francesinhas*, from the 19th century. I think it has already



Fig. 49- Henry Matisse, Murals and Stain-glasses, 1951, Chapelle du Rosaire, Vence

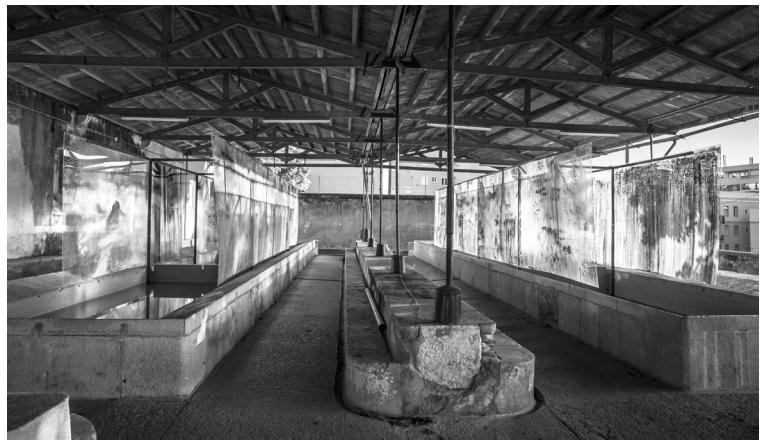


Fig. 50- C. Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa

Fig. 51- C Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa



been dismantled to be used as a nursery. The installation was the last public image of what it used to be. And you can see the space between the pieces. The one by Matisse gave me an important clue, because on the sides, well, you see... each tank has 12m x 2m pieces that fly over the water, just at the boundary between the stone and the water, and they are reflected in the water. There are many effects. The light goes through the four skins and the tanks are like ships, they have that symbolism, and at the same time it is obviously related to the work of the washerwomen, with the hanging clothes. It really is a tribute to all that these walls have heard.

Going back to Matisse, the relationship between the black and white methacrylate and the coloured methacrylate was very important, because otherwise it would have been a very decorative piece, but with much less density. It was important because it created an optical urn effect, like entering a clearing in the forest.

In an interior, it created the optical image of entering an exterior. It created a kind of temple, within the image of a temple that the laundry room already has, with the deck, with the view of the sea and others. And it was interesting how the sounds and images of the city were also reflected in the pieces.

Here is Mário Caeiro, just when we met, looking at the installation. And he was talking about this: how all the shadows and the lights and the reflections appeared in the pieces.

Fig. 52- C. Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa
 Fig. 53- C Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa
 Fig. 54- C. Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa
 Fig. 55- C Barrio, Quatro Paredes de Água, 2019, Lavadouro, Lisboa



Here is a parallel installation by Doña Fernanda, the laundress who worked there, with the other she shared the space, and of course it was a luxury to have this kind of facility, because it made my work most meaningful.

Here it looks from the other side, as it was.

This is Quatro Paredes de Água at night. The image changes a lot, to an image like that of fireflies.

Now, I would like to read a short text by Pessoa that I think has a lot to do with what I wanted to do here.

TRIANGULAR DREAM

The light had turned an exaggeratedly slow yellow, a yellow stained with lividity. The gaps between things had widened and the sounds, now more distant, were more detached. When heard, they ended suddenly, as if cut off. The heat, which seemed to have increased, seemed hot, cold. Through the small gap in the doors beside the window, one could see the attitude of exaggerated expectation of the only tree visible. Its green was different. The silence had filled it with colour. In the atmosphere the petals had closed. And in the composition of the space itself, an inter-relationship unlike that of the planes had altered and broken the way that sounds, lights and colours used extension. (Pessoa, 1990, p. 78)



Fig. 56- Australian Aboriginal artist

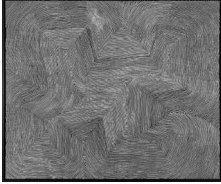


Fig. 57- Yukultji Napangati, Untitled, 2013, polymer on linen, 18x 244 cm

So now I would like to read you a reflection by Merleau-Ponty: “*The human body is not in space, it dwells in space*”. In “The Eye and the Mind” he concludes:

It’s not about talking about space and light. It is about making the space and light that is there speak. All the searches that were thought to be closed are reopened. What is depth, what is light; what are they, why do they traverse us, envelop us? (Merleau-Ponty, 1992, p. 49).

As a colophon for the conference, I would like to end precisely at the beginning of the book I have written, *Lo que no se ve* (Barrio, 2021). This is an Australian aborigine, and all this kind of painting, which seems spectacular to me, even magical, has to do with a book I discovered, *The Traces of the Song* (Chatwin, 1987), which talks about how the Australian aborigines perceive the world.

I am writing almost at the beginning of the world: For a native Australian, his country is like a great musical score. The landscape comes from the journey. This journey consists of following the tracks of his ancestors, recreating their ancient songs along certain places that appear on the itineraries.

Each song is a map. Every journey is a ritual that follows an exact repetition of the original sounds. Before anything becomes a mental concept, before it is sung, it simply does not exist. So, each song is immortalised so that its world continues to exist. Ulises arrives in Ithaca in his sleep, after twenty years, and when he wakes up, he does not even know where he is. Ulises travels without splendour, now he has no country. The Australian Aborigine always knows where he is, he gives life to the earth with his song. It is he who creates the eternally new land. In the Australian Aborigine there is no difference between art and life, no separation between imagination and reason. He has escaped history.

In the West, not only is there this boundary between art and life - it is what I called the interstitial at the beginning of the conference - but art itself is nourished by it. The artist becomes a frontier nomad who, like the Australian Aborigines, undertakes ritual journeys, trying to move this frontier from place to place, or inhabiting its interstices.

The more intense the struggle on the boundaries between art and life, the more interesting the artwork that emerges.

I think that in art we are looking for the union between art and life that exists in a piece of Australian Aboriginal art. I think it has to do with seeing things as if no one had seen them, looking for the intangible, the unknown.

Claire Lejeune writes:

Paradise really exists in our archaic memory, and it happens that we remember it in a flash. Hence the obsession to extend this flash to the dimension of a habitable conscience, where the dynamics of autogenesis are once again set in motion. (Lejeune, 2002)

This abyss between art and life can appear in this ritual journey as a line of flight, as a crack, as an intertidal zone, where the real produces the cover of what the work seeks on its back.

Crossing the horizon line, like Melville with *Moby Dick*, or searching for forgotten spaces buried in the subsoil of the city, like Gordon Matta-Clark whose interventions create new spaces out of their entropy. Or like Fellini at *E la nave va*. At the end of the boat trip, a new line of escape emerges when the camera shows us the *Cinecittà* studios where this sequence was shot, contrasted with a voice-over, and life appears as the reverse side of the film.

Or when Van Gogh paints in yellow the traces of the germination of a simple sunflower seed. “*The lines of the fugue have no territory*” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002). They are the boundary between art and life. The border.

I wanted to end by recalling the last fragment of *E la nave va*. How the figure descends as the smoke rises.

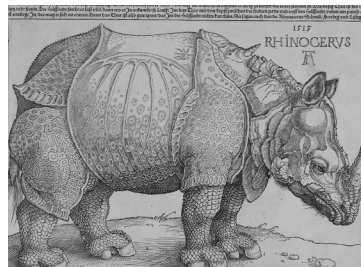


Fig. 58- A. Durer, The Rhinoceros, 1515, Kunstmuseum Basel
Fig. 59- Federico Fellini, *E la nave va*, 1983, still



Curiously, Dürer's woodcut, entitled *The Magic Unicorn*, was a rhinoceros sent by the monarch of Portugal to Pope Leon X. It was created by Dürer in 1515 and is accompanied by an explanatory text. Dürer had never actually seen the rhinoceros. That is almost the idea of this conference.

This rhinoceros wandering on a boat across the ocean without a place, like Ulysses in the Odyssey, is us.

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THE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL
DRAMA OF ARTISTIC
EXOTERIC-ESOTERIC
EXPERIENCE AS
ILLUMINATED BY ART

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The Phenomenological Drama of Artistic Exoteric-Esoteric Experience as Illuminated by Art

Hegel in his magnificent “*Phenomenology of Spirit*” suggests that in our study of the phenomenology of our lived experience of phenomena, we can approach phenomena, as a thing, as an object, as a concretized experience of cause and effect, as a concrete operation of viewing and mentalistic thinking, and this concreteness will give us a reasonable objectified understanding of phenomena. This objective rational reasonable understanding in a word is an Exoteric experience and Exoteric understanding.

Hegel then suggests that we can experientially go further and go beyond our exoteric experience and our exoteric understanding of our human experience. When we gaze more subtly, more deeply, more directly through and within our own Innate and Innermost Field of our Primordial Awareness, we can enter our esoteric experience of the luminous Being-fullness of human beings.

Our innermost field of primordial awareness is both a non-conceptual knowingness and a pre-reflective knowing within our field of our innermost Primordial Awareness. Primordial Awareness is our direct Knowingness, a *Gnosis*, a *Jnana*. Primordial Awareness is the direct experiential non-conceptual Knowing of Being and the luminous Being-Fullness of a being. This foundational innermost Being-full primordial awareness is the very essence of our humanness. This foundational primordial awareness is our Being knowing Being. Our Being is Consciousness. The Being of our Being is Consciousness. Primordial awareness is a metaphor of and for our embodied Being-full Consciousness knowing Being-full Consciousness within our self and within the Being-full world of beings.

In *Dzogchen* and in Phenomenological Psychology there are two meanings of the word awareness or there are two forms of awareness. There is awareness as awareness of mind, such as I am aware of my hand or my thoughts. This awareness of mind knows phenomena. This awareness knows the forms of phenomena and phenomena as Form’s. This awareness is psychological or ontic awareness or phenomenological awareness of forms.

And then there is Primordial Awareness which is our primordial embodied Consciousness knowing Being and the Being-fullness of beings. This Consciousness or this Primordial Awareness is our direct experiential knowing of Being and the luminous Being-fullness of beings, and the Being-fullness of Phenomena. This primordial awareness is our Being knowing Being. And this Primordial Being-full awareness is our Creative Source of our self-manifestation of the Being-fullness of our Being.

Our awareness of our mind is our psychological or ontic knowing or phenomenological knowing of phenomena and the phenomenological forms of experience. And our primordial awareness as Being full awareness or as ontological awareness is our direct experiential knowing of Being and Being-fullness of beings. Primordial Awareness is our Being knowing Being and our Being knowing the dynamic Being-fullness of phenomena. Primordial Awareness is the nature of our Being knowing, the Being of phenomena. Primordial Awareness is the nature of Our Being knowing the Being of beings, including our own being. Our primordial awareness can directly know and experience our own being as Being itself. This primordial awareness is our innate intrinsic source of natural self-liberation.

Primordial Awareness is the nature of Being-full Consciousness. Our Being is Consciousness. Our Being is Conscious of Consciousness. Consciousness is a Being-full experience and not a Beingless experience as some think and teach. There is our ontic awareness of mind knowing phenomena and there is our ontological primordial awareness as Being knowing luminous Being and the Being-fullness of beings.

INTEGRATION

When our mind is integrated into our primordial Being-full awareness we can experience simultaneously the Being-fullness of beings and the Being-fullness of phenomena. This is a most important Existential understanding about our human Being-full experience of our own self and our Being-full experience of our Being-full world. When our mind knows phenomena or even knows the phenomena of person without our primordial awareness knowing the

Being of the phenomena or the Being of the person, there is a profound lack within our understanding and within our lived experience of the person. Without our primordial awareness knowing the luminous Being-fullness of phenomena, there is a Being-full lack within our lived experience of and within the phenomena, and a Being-full lack within the person. The phenomena and the person have the felt sense of Being-lessness and Emptiness and Voidness.

ART CAN REFLECT THE LUMINOUS ENERGETIC BEING-FULLNESS OF PHENOMENA

Art is a creative doorway into the Luminous Being-fullness of Phenomena and the Luminous Being-fullness of Beings. This is a foundational theme of this paper.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE LUMINOUS ENERGETIC DIMENSION OF BEING-FULLNESS

We can have direct Esoteric Knowing of, and into, and within phenomena as an unfolding immediate experience of various luminous Being-full energetic forms of Phenomenological Consciousness. Our mind knows forms and our innate innermost primordial awareness knows Being and the luminous Energetic Dimension of the Being-fullness of beings. Our primordial awareness knows non-dualistically the luminous Being of beings. Esoteric experience and esoteric understanding reflect the union of mind within the Luminous Being-full Field of Primordial Awareness.

Exoteric experience is mind alone! Esoteric understanding is the essence of Contemporary Existential Phenomenology and is the understanding of ancient *Dzogchen* and ancient Kashmir *Shavism*. *Dzogchen* and *Kashmir Shavism* are Traditions of Embodied luminous Immanence of Being and Being-fullness. These are not Transcendental Traditions of Beingless Essence. *Dzogchen* and *Kashmir Shavism* embody the art-full union of Mind within the Luminous Being-full Field of Primordial Awareness. These are paths of natural self-liberation through creative knowing and creative self-manifestations of Being and Being-fullness into other person's and the Being of the world.

CONTEMPORARY EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY IS NOT A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

There was historical transformation in Phenomenology from our Transcendental detached knowing of essence alone to our direct embodied experience of the existential immanence of luminous Being and Being-fullness. This Existential embodiment of Being reflects the illuminative transformative ontological existential phenomenological work of Later Heidegger, Maurice Merleau Ponty, Edward Fink, Edith Stein and Hedwig Conrad Martius, Natali Depraz to name just a few of ontic ontological existential phenomenologists.

In Continental Existential Phenomenological Psychology, the luminous work of Menard Boss, Eric Fromm, Eugene Gendlin, Erving Polster, Donald Winnicott, Ronald Lang, Rollo May, William Richardson, Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls and the many others who have gone beyond the Transcendental Form of Phenomenology. Contemporary Existential Phenomenological Psychology has gone beyond dissociative and disembodied Witness Consciousness, and has gone beyond the disembodiment of Beingless Emptiness of Transcendental Awareness.

Contemporary Continental Existential Phenomenology has also gone beyond the Beingless Eastern Traditions of Philosophy such as Buddhism and the Beingless Dissociative forms of eastern philosophy where there is only Being-lessness and Emptiness and Voidness.

As Gautama would consistently say there is nothing beyond illusionary phenomena. There is no Being-full Base and there is no Being-fullness of and within illusionary phenomena. There is only the absence of Being, there is only Void. Since there is only Void, there is only the Emptiness of Being and Voidness of Being-fullness. There is only Nothingness, Absolute Nothingness.

Within these dissociative Beingless traditions all phenomena are a beingless illusion. All life is a Beingless illusion. Furthermore, there is no Who-ness, and there is no Being-full self and there is no ongoing continuity of Being and all lived experience is illusionary. This is an unhappy and profound distortion of human existence, and this distortion still permeates Spirituality and Monasticism.

This is not only sad but unhappily invalidates our direct lived experience of phenomenological reality.

With this dissociative distorted framing of existence, Gautama would declare that all life is suffering! With such a framing of existence, all life is suffering! And the only way out was the path of Cessation and Dissociation and our transcendental going beyond our human experience to abide in Transcendental Emptiness and in Transcendental Voidness and in Transcendental Absence. In Transcendental Absence there is no Being nor Being-fullness, there is nothing. There is no who-ness. There is no human self.

Of course, there is no suffering since there is no one there to suffer. Neither is there Bliss, and neither is there Love, nor human-ness. There is only Emptiness. This is both Sad and really Boring and of course untrue. I have actually heard a Lama say that all suffering does not exist in actuality.

This transcendental framing of existence is an 'As If' existence. This transcendental framing invalidates our direct human lived experience. As Ronald Lang and Rollo May make so explicit their ontological understanding that the invalidation of our lived experience about the actuality of our reality of Being and Being-fullness is this invalidation of lived experience of self and this framing creates a false idealization of Beingless Schizoid existence. A Schizoid existence is empty of self and empty of attachment, empty of desire without Presence and empty of Being-fullness.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND DZOGCHEN AS ONTOLOGICAL REALISM

In phenomenology and in Dzogchen, there are two ways of human knowing. Our mind of thinking, feeling, reason, sensing, imagining knows form. Our primordial awareness as open luminous consciousness directly experientially knows luminous Being and luminous Being-fullness.

Our mind knows form and our inner primordial awareness knows luminous formlessness Being-fullness. Our luminous formless primordial awareness knows Being and the Being-fullness of Being. Being-fullness is the experience of the Luminous Dynamic of Being's creative manifestation of Being as beings.

When we can integrate our psychological mind within our innate ontological primordial awareness, then we can know simultaneously phenomena, and the Being and Being-fullness of the Phenomena. We can integrate our mind knowing phenomena and our awareness knowing Being, and knowing the Being-fullness of the phenomena. This “moment” integrates our Exoteric dimension of experience within our Esoteric dimension of our luminous experience of Being and Being-fullness.

This is our esoteric existential path to self-liberation. Our mind knowing of phenomena within our luminous Energetic Being-Full Awareness of Being is our lived experience of Meaningful Bliss of the world in all its range and in all its intensity.

OUR DIRECT NON- CONCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE OF AWARENESS

Our direct non conceptual experiential knowing of phenomena and our direct non conceptual knowing the Being-fullness of phenomena results in phenomena becoming experientially less objectified, less thing like and less concretized. Thus, phenomena can become experienced as an energetic luminous Being-full Force and an Energetic Field of luminous dynamic Life Force manifesting luminous Being-fullness and Beings. Energetic Being-fullness is the luminous manifestation of Pure Being.

SHAKTI! LUMINOUS ENERGY!

This unfolding energetic luminous experience of phenomena manifesting within us and through us and around us as the profound experiential medium of the Luminous Energy of Being-fullness and the luminous Creative LIFE FORCE of Being-fullness. This luminous creative life force of Being-fullness in Tantra is called Shakti. The Shakti is a Shavite word for the Luminous Energy Field of Being and the luminous energetic manifestation of Being-fullness. You and I are the manifestation of Luminous Energetic Being-fullness and we can creatively self-manifest Luminous Energetic Being-fullness within Beings and within Creative forms of Being and Creative Events of Being-fullness. This is the path of Self-Liberation through Creativity and our Creative self-manifestation of Being-fullness

within beings. The Great Compassion is our Creative Manifestation of Being and Being-fullness into this world of Beings.

Artistic Painting and the Artful Presentations that we focus on are not only expressions of luminous form but paintings and art-full presentations are the self-manifestation of our luminous energetic dimension of our luminous Being-fullness of Being. Art is the drama of our self-manifestation of Luminous Creative Events of Being-fullness within the Being of the world.

Artful Presentations and Artful manifestations are not only an expression of luminous form but Artful Presentations are our Creative Self-manifestations of the Energetic Dimension of our Luminous Being-fullness. Artistic Painting, Artistic Structures, Artistic Drama, Artistic Writing, Artistic filming and Artistic Philosophical Discourse are our creative self-manifestation of our ontological Energetic Luminous Experiential Knowing of Luminous Being-fullness.

Living itself, and play itself and fun itself, and work itself, and love itself and even death itself can be our creative manifestation of our luminous energetic dimension of Being-fullness. Our most ordinary experience can be the luminous creative manifestation of our dynamic energetic dimension of luminous Being-fullness. Creativity is not simply a psychological event, rather Creativity is ontological in source.

We are ontic ontological Beings. Our ontic psychology is profoundly influenced and infused by our ontological Being and Being-fullness. *Da Sein* means human beings are Being Knowing Being and human Beings are Being manifesting Being into both the Being-lessness of others and the Being-fullness of others. This is the Great Compassion. The Great Compassion is the creative self-manifestation of Being and Being-fullness in human beings and the world of human beings. Compassion is the drama of Being-full Transmission.

This experiential medium of our Creative Being-full Life Force (the '*Elan Vital*' as Bergson describes) has vital influence on Us and within Us. This Shakti, this luminous Being-full life force experience is Luminously Vibrational and Luminously Energetic, Luminously Radiant and Luminously Creative.

This luminous Creativity is the very nature of our luminous Being-full Awareness. This energetic experience and this energetic manifestation are not the simplistic physical energy that we naturally experience as we do pushups at the gym. This energy is not simply physiological energy. This luminous energy is ontological and cosmological. This is the Esoteric realm of human existence.

Without Being within our immediate non conceptual Being-full awareness field, we cannot non-conceptually experience, and non-conceptually directly know this felt sense of the Radiant Energy of Being full phenomena. We can self-manifest our Being-fullness through our Luminous Artful Creative self-manifestation into our existential life World. This self-manifestation is the Being-full art of self-manifestation of our innermost phenomenological experience of our luminous ontological field of primordial awareness, our personal field of Being and Being-fullness.

This bringing forth of our inner phenomenological Being-full experience of self-manifestation in and within everything we do and every action we manifest is our self-liberation through Pure Luminous Creativity. We human beings bring creative Being-fullness into this world. We can creatively self-manifest Being-fullness within each other. We can creatively transmit the Being-full field of innermost luminous awareness into and within each other. We are the self-manifestation of Being within this luminous world of Being and the Being-fullness of Being. Compassion is the self-manifestation of Being and Being-fullness into beings.

This gift does not require a religious tradition, and this gift does not require any form of patriarchal religious institutionalization. This gift does not require endless purification or endless sacrificial offerings. This gift is not earned and this gift is not a function of a blessing. This gift is the natural givenness of our own Luminous Being-fullness.

This luminous creative self-manifestation belongs to us naturally and completely. Whenever we place a condition on this Creative Givenness we distort what is naturally the Creative Power of our own Being-full self-manifestation within this world of beings.

As Dudjom Rinpoche, the great Contemporary Dzogchen

teacher, would so often say, please take this power into your own hands. The power of self-manifestation is within you as you. As Bodhi Dharma said in the 6th century AD, *“Beyond words and letters there is a transmission, this transmission does not belong to any tradition, it is the nature of human awareness.”* The very nature of human awareness is the creative manifestation of Being-fullness in others and in this world.

We can experience the felt sense of our own innermost consciousness and the energy of our innermost consciousness as the luminous Presence of our Personal Creative Energy Field unfolding within us and beyond us into our world of Being and beings. Through our creative informing of luminous creative forms of Being we experience self-liberation through our self-manifestation of Being and Being-fullness. Our own innermost singular life experience becomes our Singular Creative Art Form manifesting forms of creative Being-fullness within the Being of human beings and the Being of the world. This is the drama of self-liberation through our compassionate self-manifestation of luminous Being-fullness into beings.

The Great Compassion is our self-manifestation of our luminous Being-full experience of Primordial Being-full Awareness into others. This transmission of Being-fullness into another is the Great Compassion. This is the Creative Path of self-liberation. This is not the path of dog like obedience training, or the path of dissociative detachment from Being-fullness.

There is the Exoteric Force of Objective Causal Phenomena and there is the Esoteric Creative Force of the Luminous Energy Field of Being-full Luminous Awareness. The concrete experiential force of Objective Phenomena is Exoteric experience and the luminous experiential energetic life Force of Being-full Awareness is Esoteric experience. The exoteric and esoteric experience can be experienced simultaneously together and within each other.

ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE

Our experience of Thing like phenomena can become experienced and transformed and unfold into this innate medium of

luminous energetic experience of the Radiance of our Ontological Being-full unfolding of Luminous Being-full Presence. This is the unfolding Esoteric manifestation within our Esoteric energetic dimension of our experience of Being and the Being-fullness of Being.

We are ontic-ontological Beings. We are both Psychological and Ontological. We can simultaneously be both exoteric and esoteric. This is our Life Long Existential drama of Creative Artfulness of our Art-full self-manifestation of Being and Being-fullness into the beings and Being of this world.

We can esoterically experience our own innate energetic presence as the living Being-fullness of our embodied luminous primordial awareness. We can experience this luminous energetic Presence within us as the innate unfolding of Being-full manifestation of our ever youthful and ever indestructible energetic manifestation of our innate field of primordial luminous awareness, primordial Being-fullness.

We can experience the Luminous Radiant Energy of Phenomena and we can experience the Radiant Energy of our own innate luminous embodied Being-full creative energy. We can simultaneously experience the luminous energetic field of the world of phenomena and the energetic luminous phenomena of our world. We can even live within the luminous cosmological field of energetic field of Pure Being-fullness.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL FORMS AND ESOTERIC KNOWING THE SPHERA OF BEING-FULLNESS

We can experience phenomenological forms of luminous energetic presence and luminous energetic Being-full expression. This is our luminous existential Esoteric dimension of and within our human experience. This experience of luminous energy is both within us and surrounds us and embodies us. We embody the Luminous field of Being-full Energy and the Luminous Field of Energy embodies us and protects us. Our natural field of luminous energy metabolizes experience and metabolizes traumatic experience. This metabolization of experience creates more luminous

energy and more of luminous power of luminosity. Luminosity metabolizes experience. Luminosity metabolizes trauma.

Our natural field of luminous Being-full Energy is our Natural Source of our Sphera of Being-fullness. Our luminous Field of Being-full Awareness is the Natural Source of the Creative Collective Sphera of our Luminous Being-full field of Awareness. Creative experience requires the liquidity of luminous Being-fullness infusing our concrete mind and our concrete body and our concrete familial mentalistic internalizations. Liberation is a function of luminous Creative Liquid like Being-fullness. Within our liquid like Being-fullness we can move through the stuck-ness of phenomena and the stuck-ness of our concrete context and concrete thinking.

It is true that two awareness are better than one. And to view and to see into or gaze pre-reflectively though our own innate primordial awareness field into phenomena, opens up for us our esoteric field of Being-fullness. As we enter awareness and transmit our awareness to and with others, the field of Being and Being-fullness embodies us as we collectively embody the luminous field of awareness. In this mutual embodiment of the field of awareness a sphere of energetic Being-fullness surrounds us both individually, and as a couple, and as a group. The field of Being-fullness is not only within us but envelopes our embodiment both personally and collectively.

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL FIELD OF LUMINOUS BEING-FULLNESS AS THE SPHERA

This Sphera both contains and holds our individual experience of the field of Being-fullness and also contains and holds our shared Being-full experience as a couple, and our shared Being-full experience as a creative Luminous Group. This direct knowing and feeling and experiencing of this Sphera is essential in working within and with the Field of Embodied Awareness. The power of our transmission of the luminous field of awareness reflects our understanding of Sphera personally and collectively. When this Sphera is felt personally and when this Sphera is felt collectively,

the power of transmission of the luminous timeless field of awareness is greatly increased. The experience of the Sphera increased and embodies the luminous cosmological dimension of our transmission of the energy and the luminosity of our field of living Energetic Awareness Being-fullness.

THE SPHERA EMBODIES US AS WE EMBODY THE SPHERA

This manifestation of the Sphera, embodying us as we embody the Sphera greatly protects us from too easily losing this energy of Being-fullness and helps us sustain our experience of this ongoing continuity of luminous Energetic Being-fullness. This Sphera also protects us from internalizing and introjecting negative and destructive energy forces that may be coming towards us. This Sphera is above us and is surrounding us and is within us, and this Sphera greatly increases our capacity to metabolize lived experience, and the energies of experience. This Sphera is also protecting us by increasing our capacity to metabolize trauma and traumatic experience.

When the Sphera is present within us and around us, and around a collective group that we are working within and with, the capacity of the individual metabolization of experience is greatly increased and the collective capacity of the metabolization of experience is dramatically enhanced.

Once the Sphera is formed around us and through us, this Sphera can be easily re-manifested as the subtle form of the Sphera remains even after the Sphera seems to have disappeared. This Sphera is the manifestation of Timeless Awareness in time. So, when the time bound manifestation of Sphera dissolves the subtle dimension is still implicit within the field of Timeless Awareness in time.

Moreover, this Sphera seems to be contained immanently in both spaciousness and in distance. However, even when form/formlessness seems to be limited spatially, and in time, the form of the Sphera is actually not contained to physical space and physical time. This Sphera is both Timeless awareness In Time and is the living embodiment of the Field of Spaciousness in time bound horizons.

Once this Sphera is formed and sustained, this Sphera can be re-invoked both in time timelessly and in space spaciously. This

Sphera is the self-manifestation of the field of the Immanence of Being-fullness both in time and in space. This is not a transcendental drama which is Being-fully absent, but this field of immanence is infinite in its horizons and vast and multi-dimensional. The field of the immanence of Being-fullness is the field of oneness, and sameness and equality consciousness. This field of immanence is the field of Luminous Being-fullness is embodied personally and collectively.

Since this field of immanence is manifesting our embodiment of Sphera, the Sphera is also the multidimensional doorway to the opening of the Archetypal dimension of Being-fullness and becoming aware. Our embodiment of the Sphera is the doorway to our experience of our Ground of Being as Source. This Sphera is most easily manifested in our ordinary life world relationally as a Group Collective, as a Couple collective, as a Family collective, and as a Generational Field collective of many participants.

Our personal embodiment of the Field of Primordial Awareness reflects the embodiment of Sphera and sustains and maintains our embodiment of the Sphera. For some of us our becoming Our Primordial Awareness is our embodiment of our awareness as Being- full Gnosis, as Direct Being-full Perception. Our activated primordial Awareness is the Sphera and we may live always in the Sphera and die in the Sphera life after life and death after death.

The nature of this Sphera as Living Being-fullness is always multidimensional. And from within the Sphera as our ordinary life world, the doorway can be opened into the archetypal dimension of the Sphera. The archetypal dimension is always there implicitly but not always explicitly opened. When the Sphera is Present within us and around us, the archetypal dimension is always close and can be brought forth and the door way can be opened. The archetypal is always implicit within the presence of the Sphera.

Sometimes there will be a member of the Sphera who is closely aligned to the archetypal dimension of Being-fullness whether they know this connection reflectively or not. Such an individual or individuals are most helpful in bringing forth the archetypal dimension of and within the Sphera. The Power of the Sphera is Resonance. The Resonance, the multidimensional Resonance between and

within the Members of the Sphera brings forth the Powers of the Sphera and with the Sphera. The Resonance within the Sphera is a power of magnetization and this resonance brings forth the latent powers of the multidimensional field of the Sphera.

The members' innermost lived experience is a doorway for the collective to experience the archetypal presence of the Luminosity of Being-fullness explicitly. The implicit becomes explicit.

Within the archetypal dimension is always Source, the elemental source of the Ground of Being which can be made more experientially explicit within the Sphera. The Source is the Ground of Being itself which is the Source of the manifestation of the Sphera. This dimension of, and within the Sphera are not far away as there is no distance in this realm of immanence. The ground of Being as source is the Who-ness of the Sphera. This Who-ness reflects the Archetypal Who-ness of those who are participating in Sphera. This revelation is a most subtle but most useful and powerful understanding about the nature of the field of Being as manifested as the Sphera.

The closer we are to the Ground of our own Being, the more powerful will be our metabolization of our lived experience. Unmetabolized experience is metabolized by the light of our awareness which is the light of the Ground of being. Our own ground of Being is intimately related to the Sphera as the Ground of Being of the Participants.

Once the Sphera is activated and is self-manifested, the Sphera is always close to source and is the manifestation of Source. The Sphera is always the manifestation of the field of Being as beings and through beings. The Sphera is always a manifestation of the field of Being as beings who are multi-dimensional and infinite in their horizons. This is our profound experiential nature as human beings.

The Sphera is our Esoteric dimension of our human existence. When the Sphera manifests it is Symbolic and Indicative of the Esoteric realm of Luminous Being and Luminous Being-fullness in Self manifestation in and within our life.

We can go way beyond our exoteric factual mentalistic experience of phenomena. Exoteric phenomena reflect the concretized

thingness of cause and effect. The concretized qualities of cause and effect often reflect concrete operational thinking and concretized perception and concretized fixated cognitive thinking. This concretized thinking is especially useful in technical events. When we live in concretize technical thinking everything can become concretized. Love is concretized and objectified. Everything can be entified. Everything can become a thing. When everything becomes a thing, Spirit disappears. When everything becomes a thing, Spirit Disappears. This is a basic and consuming problem in our technological world.

Meditation for many has become the refuge into powerless emptiness and powerless nothingness. There is no being and no Being-fullness. There is no Being-full self and there is no Being-full otherness. This is profoundly distorted experience of our Being-full of our Who-ness! So many people take refuge in the density of absence, the density of lack and the density of concretized ignorance of Being and Being-fullness. In Existential Dzogchen this is called MA RIGPA. Ma Rigpa means ignorance, the ignorance of Luminous Being and luminous Being-fullness.

Our Creative Spaciousness of our Luminous Awareness disappears. Potential Space Disappears. The Energy of Luminous Primordial Awareness disappears. What remains is solipsistic emptiness and solipsistic absence of Being and the Being-fullness of Being. Luminous Being-fullness disappears. Our Being full self disappears. The Radiance of Being-full Awareness disappears.

What remains is as Hegel elaborates in his Phenomenology of Spirit is only the psychological Illusion of the ONE Who Knows Absolutely remains. The Master is the One who knows Absolutely. And thus, the eternal Master Slave relationship is again and again incarnated. Religious and Political Dictatorship is again Incarnated personally and politically.

Many meditative traditions are formulations of the Master Slave relationship. The teacher or the Guru becomes the ONE WHO KNOWS ABSOLUTELY. Or as the Church declares outside of this Church there is no salvation and there is the religious infallibility based on infantile belief.

When there is within us the absence of innate personal Creative Being-fullness, the terrible desire for the ONE WHO KNOWS ABSOLUTELY IS CREATED out of desperation of Inner Voidness, the inner Emptiness and inner lack of Luminous Being-fullness.

The French psychoanalyst Jacque Lacan illuminates our relentless desire for the symbolic Patriarchal figure as the one who knows Absolutely. The One Who knows Absolutely reflects the profound ontological lack of Being and Being-fullness within us. The simultaneous experience of the power of the Luminous Guru not being within us but only outside of our awareness deeply exacerbates the experience of ontological lack of wisdom as our own direct perception of Being-fullness. The Symbolic Guru is Being's power of self-revelation with us. The Guru is within us as our own innermost luminous awareness. By accessing our innermost awareness, we are accessing the power of self-revelation, the power of luminous Being-full awareness.

Longchenpa the 14th century existential Dzogchen master described how concrete operational thinking can foreclose the experience of Luminous Being-fullness and foreclose the energetic Dimension of Being-full Luminous Awareness. Concrete operational thinking is very Dense and very Heavy and very Factual and very Entity-fied.

In the context of concrete operational thinking, personal change and personal transformation is rather limited. There is minimal fluidity and minimal liquidity in the reified concrete mind, and concretize psychological experience.

Creative Luminous experience requires the liquidity of Luminous Being-fullness. Human Liberation requires the Liquidity of Luminous Being-fullness infusing our concrete mind and infusing our concrete body and infusing our concrete familial mentalistic internalizations. Liberation itself is a function of luminosity, as we can move through the frozen stuck-ness of phenomena and the frozen stuck-ness of our concrete context and concrete thought.

OUR ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE

To view, to see into, or to gaze pre-reflectively through our own

innate primordial awareness field into phenomena, opens up for us the esoteric view and esoteric dimension of our human awareness. This esoteric dimension is our own innermost human experience of our Ground of Luminous Being-fullness.

These energetic luminous forms of our experiential view of phenomena, reflect the unfolding of energetic forms of our luminous Vital Life Force. Our Esoteric view allows us to experience and embody luminous forms of our Luminous Energetic Being-fullness in our self-manifestation within us and within our self-Being-full manifestation within others. Luminous Being-fullness is a Beatific Experience. In concrete operational Exoteric experience, the transformation of concretized form is limited, and within the luminous Esoteric field of Being-fullness, Being-full infused form can be transformed. Creative luminous experience transforms phenomena into luminous forms of Being-fullness.

Within mind alone, the mechanics of change and transformation are contained in concrete operational density. Within the field of luminous awareness, the field of luminous Being-fullness, the fluidity of form can be experienced and utilized in our creative formulation of forms and forms of lived experience and live expression of experience.

These energetic luminous forms of Being-fullness are experienced as subtle forms of luminous Fluid Presence. Some phenomenologists such as Eugene Gendlin, describe this luminous experience or our luminous experiential articulation as implicit experience luminously becoming explicit knowing and luminously explicit Being-full experiencing. Or as Heidegger declares Language is the HOUSE OF BEING.

As we focus on our felt sense of experience, the felt sense of experience opens into the felt sense of luminous Being-fullness. As we focus on the felt sense of luminous Being-fullness, the luminous Being-fullness of our ordinary life world, opens up into the archetypal luminous energetic dimension of Being-fullness. As this luminous archetypal openness of Being-fullness opens and we experience archetypal manifestation of the field of Being-fullness, the field of our Ground of Being-fullness may open up as Source and the

luminous activation of our experience of our Who-ness as Source.

We begin to experience the vast and pervasive sense of source and our creative self-manifestation as our very own sense of source. We begin to feel our very own Who-ness as participating in the creative manifestation of source.

Our implicit luminous dimension of experience becomes explicitly articulated and explicitly manifested. This implicit self-manifestation into explicit manifestation can take place by our experiential focusing on the felt sense of our unfolding experience of our self-manifestation of inner experiential phenomena becoming luminously self-manifested in the phenomenological world. This is the esoteric experience of luminous Being-fullness becoming manifested as luminous experience as luminous Being-full knowledge in our world. This is the creative esoteric experience of knowing the field of Being-fullness which is the field of luminous energetic awareness embodied in forms.

PAINTING AND ARTFUL PRESENTATION AS LUMINOUS SELF MANIFESTATION

This process of our experiential perceiving and our experiential self-manifestation of our lived perceptual experience becomes a dramatic manifestation both in our directly experiencing artistic forms and in our Art-full manifestation of Being-full forms of art-full presentation.

Actually, all lived experience and every lived experience can become an art-full luminous form of luminous Being-full presentation. Painting is such a dramatic form of our artistic manifestation of the luminous radiant energetic dimension of our phenomenological experience and perception. We self-manifest our luminous phenomenological experience into the world as a very presentation of the world. Even a hand gesture can be our art-full self-manifestation of Being-fullness in this Being-full World. Within our embodied Being-fullness of consciousness every manifestation can be artistic and therefore self-liberating.

Self-liberation is the luminous experience of our phenomenological experience as the manifestation of Luminous Radi-

ant Being-full Consciousness. In a sense we are slowly but surely expanding our range of experiencing phenomena of self-liberation within phenomena and as phenomena.

An experience of Bliss-full phenomena as consciousness is a kiss. Sometimes A kiss is not just a kiss. Sometimes a kiss is this Being-full kiss, this phenomenon of a Being-full kiss brings forth the luminous experience of Being-full non duality within the dualistic experience of two lips meeting. Liberation is the experience of non-duality being experienced within dualistic experience. The kiss opens the vast field of non-duality within duality.

As we unfold our range of experiencing non-duality within dualistic experience, the range of experience expands and from the non-dual experience of a kiss, we can experience non dual Being-fullness within a fight unto the death. In this conflict this deathly conflict of survival we experience, even in the undoing of this dangerous person, this deconstruction of their life is within the non-dual experience of Being-full oneness.

We experience the Being-fullness of the form and our luminous non dualistic experience of non-duality within and between our Being-full forms, yet this singular form must be killed in order for us to survive as in war. The Being of this being is pure and yet his Being-full form is deadly and must be destroyed. All this takes place within the field of our Being-full awareness. In the intensity of the conflict, we may find ourself manifesting and embodying and being embodied within this Sphera naturally.

We may experience painting as the visual articulation of our innermost experience of phenomena and painting as our visual articulation and visual manifestation of our luminous experience of our luminous energetic knowing of a Being-full phenomenological experience. Forms of painting can reflect and can articulate and can self-manifest the luminous radiant energetic dimension of our experience of non-dual Luminous Energetic Being-full phenomena.

This gift of self-manifestation arises out of our direct nondual experience as Gnosis, as Jnana and as Yeshe (wisdom). Gnosis, Jnana is our direct experiential knowing of Being and our Being-fullness within our self and within the Being-full phenomena of the world.

Yeshe is the Wisdom of direct experience and direct perception of Being and the Luminous Being-fullness of Phenomena. We know the phenomena dualistically and we know Non-Dualistically the Being of the phenomena. In knowing our own Being we can know Being itself. We can know the Being of the phenomena, directly and within our non-dual union as Luminous Being-fullness.

Our Direct Experiential knowing of the Luminous Being-fullness of phenomena and our own inner most experience of our Fleshy embodiment of Energetic Being-fullness is our self-liberating Experience of Being and Being-fullness. We may embody the Shakti. We may live within the luminous field of Shakti, live within the Being-full Life Force. This Shakti is our source of Esoteric self-manifestation. This is our Esoteric experience of the Being-fullness of Being in all situations and within all events.

THE REALM OF EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

In the realm of the existential philosophy and existential phenomenology Heidegger shifted from his original phenomenological transcendental view that he shared with Husserl. This transcendental view is this witnessing view, this objectifying view, this intentional mentalistic view of phenomena and Heidegger transformed his transcendental perception of lived experience into the natural direct perception of luminous energetic Being-full lived experience of our embodied field of primordial awareness infinite in its horizons and vast and multidimensional.

His transcendental view changed into the direct knowing of Being-full Immanence. Phenomenology became the experiential study of our living experiential immanence within the Being of phenomena, and within the infinity of Luminous Being-full Phenomena. In Heidegger's Existential experience of awareness, there is the self-manifestation of the Being-fullness of phenomena shining through or gleaming through or shimmering through Phenomena. This ever-deepening profound view of phenomenological Being-fullness was Heidegger's implicit view in experiencing the energetic luminous Being-fullness of the Phenomena.

Heidegger's ontological phenomenology became the direct

phenomenological experiencing of the LIGHT of Being-full Phenomena as well as the Energy or Force of the Being-full phenomena. This luminous energetic force revealing our experience of Being and our experience of Being-full phenomena is the power of Revelation, the power of Alethea. This power of Alethea creatively manifest within our artistic imaginal visionary forms. The artistic visionary forms of our artistic self-manifestation of our phenomenological experience as art-full expression.

This Alethea, this power of self-revelation in Phenomenology, in Dzogchen and within Kashmir Shavism is called the power of Guru or the Logos. The Guru or Logos or Alethea is the power of self-revelation of Being-fullness within you and within me. The Guru or Logos or Alethea is not a person. The power of self-revelation can be personified within us. The power of self-revelation is the power of the archetypal Guru, the archetypal Logos and ontological Alethea. This is power of luminous Being-full energetic direct knowing-ness as Gnosis and as Jnana and as Yeshe (wisdom). This empowerment of the archetypal Symbolic Guru is not the experience of the master slave relationship but the experience of self-liberation through the self-manifestation of our own Luminous Being-fullness in this world of Being.

AWARENESS AND THE FIELD OF BEING-FULLNESS

In the tradition of existential phenomenology, this knowing of the Being-fullness of phenomena and the Energy or Shakti of phenomena is not the knowing of our mind alone. Our mind knows Form. This Being-full view self-manifests as we integrate our mind within our primordial field of awareness. Our mind knows phenomena and the forms of phenomena. The knowing of our primordial awareness is our Being knowing Being. The knowing of our luminous Being-full awareness is our knowing of Being itself and our Knowing the Being of phenomena.

A Human Being can directly know BEING. Our primordial awareness directly knows Being. In phenomenology, Heidegger brought this way of Knowing into our science of experience. Heidegger illuminated how human Da Sein (human Being-fullness)

Knows Being and the Being-fullness of phenomena.

Hegel also had brought forth this formless awareness knowing, this Being-fullness knowing, into our drama of self-liberation. Self-liberation from the Master Slave Relationship! Self-Liberation from the One Who Knows Absolutely! This is our self-liberation from the human Grandiosity of the endless aspiration of Omniscience and Omnipotence. This is the Grandiosity of most Patriarchal Religious aspirations. It is also the aspiration of most Patriarchal Dictators and most Patriarchal Monster's as Hegel so definitively elaborates.

In both Contemporary Existential Phenomenology and in the Ancient Phenomenological Dzogchen tradition, there are two ways of knowing. The knowing through our mind and knowing through our awareness. The word awareness can have two meanings. There is our awareness of our mind, such as I am mentally aware of my hand. And there is Primordial or Direct Awareness which is my awareness of the Being-fullness or the Being of phenomena. This knowing as awareness is gnosis, or jnana or even Yeshe which means wisdom knowingness.

This awareness knowing Being and Being-fullness of phenomena and within phenomena is direct perception, direct perceptual experience. This is gnosis and this is wisdom. Gnosis or Wisdom is not omnipotence or omniscience as most eastern and western transcendental philosophical traditions endlessly suggest or hope for. Gnosis or Wisdom is simply direct experiential knowing.

Our mind knows form and our awareness knows Being. Actually, our primordial awareness is our Being's knowing of Being, our Being-full consciousness knowing Being. The Phenomenological Dzogchen tradition uses the words 'sems' for the knowing of mind, and 'semde' for awareness as direct primordial knowing of Being. Heidegger called this capacity for our direct knowing of Being Da Sein.

EXOTERIC VIEWING

Many early phenomenologists could not go beyond their mind, could not go beyond exoteric knowing and exoteric knowledge. Many early phenomenologists could not go beyond their psychological knowing or their ontic knowing. Many early phenomenolo-

gists could not go beyond their intentional knowing of their mind. Many early phenomenologists could not enter into Being-full awareness knowing Being. Moreover, many early phenomenologists did not know how to integrate their mind within their Being-full awareness in order to experience phenomena and the Being-fullness of phenomena.

HUSSERL'S EXOTERIC FOCUS AND HEIDEGGER'S ESOTERIC FOCUS ON THE LIFE WORLD

Husserl focused on the intentional knowing of our mind knowing phenomena and our mind knowing intuitively the essence of a phenomena. Heidegger opened the vast unbound door of our primordial luminous awareness knowing the Being-fullness of phenomena, knowing the field of Being-fullness, and the field of luminous ENERGY of Being-full Ontological Presence. Heidegger's philosophical understanding and the ancient Dzogchen tradition and the ancient tantric Kashmir Shavism traditions are very similar in their understanding of human awareness as Luminous Being-full knowing and Luminous Being-fullness Experience.

The shimmering energetic light of Being-fullness, and the non-dual experience of our radiance Being within the luminous Being of phenomena can take place within our own innate field of primordial awareness. Heidegger following Hegel took phenomenology into the esoteric dimension of knowing the Being-fullness of Being and the Energetic Luminous manifestation of Being as beings.

ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE AND ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE: GOING BEYOND THE EXOTERIC VIEW

Heidegger, Merleau Ponty, Eugene Gendlin, Michel Bitbol and many later phenomenologists understood that we could integrate the knowing of our mind within our knowing of our awareness. This integration allows us to directly know the unfolding energetic Being-fullness of Phenomena. In this union of our mind knowing phenomena and our awareness knowing the Being-fullness of phenomena we can enter into the esoteric realm of Pure Living

Presence of Timeless Awareness within Time.

THE ESSENCE OF THE ESOTERIC REALM OF PRIMORDIAL AWARENESS IS TIMELESS AWARENESS WITHIN TIME

Timeless awareness can be experienced in and of itself. And Timeless awareness can be experienced simultaneously within Time, within the Phenomena of Time. Time and the unfolding of Time is the unfolding of Phenomena. Phenomena unfolds as time and time unfolds as phenomena.

To be in Timeless awareness in Time is self-liberation. Hegel would say to be in Timeless awareness in time is to be free of the fear of death, and in being free of the fear of death we become free of the Master Slave Relationship in all its forms, Including God and the Gods! We become Free of the One who knows Absolutely.

Heidegger describes four times. The time of the past, the time of the present and the Time of the future. The fourth time is Timeless Awareness. To being in Timeless Awareness is the path of self-liberation. To live within Timeless Awareness within time is the unfolding path of self-liberation. From within the Fourth time of Timeless awareness within time we also can have compassionate access to the past time, to the present time and to the future time. In Dzogchen Timeless Awareness is called Sangwa Yeshe.

This is not the illusionary path of omnipotence and omniscience. This is not the aspirational path of Grandiosity. This is not the path of Becoming would be Gods. This experience does not take eons and eons. This path is natural for everyone. This path does not belong to any religion or any culture.

The Collective Public Sphera

This collective field of Awareness could be Two Lovers, a teacher and student, a squad of policemen, a family, my Advanced Phenomenological Psychotherapy Seminar on Wednesday mornings for the past 30 years. The Collective could be any form of two or more persons.

Through our Collective Field of Awareness, we collectively enter into the Esoteric Experience of the Being-full Luminous Field

of Awareness. We can collectively enter the experience of Awareness and Collectively Self manifest and transmit the field of Being-full awareness into other members of the Collective. Within the Being-full field of the Collective, we can enter into and together self-manifest the Collective Sphera.

This Collective Sphera (the Collective Sphere) is our Collective of persons who are together within this dimension of our Direct Experiential non-conceptual awareness of our Field of Luminous Being-fullness. The field of luminous Being-fullness is also The Field of Luminous Vibrational Energy, this Field of Shakti, this Field of the Universal Life Force which becomes experientially manifest and which field is continuously manifesting within the Collective Sphere of Luminous Being-fullness.

The Collective itself is sustained within the Sphera of the luminous Field of Energy and Resonance. The participants within the Sphera embody the field of Luminous Being-fullness, and the field of Energy and the Field of Being-full Awareness embodies them. Often within the field of the Sphera there is a deeply felt sense of Protection. Within the intensity of the field of awareness the personal sense of direct non conceptual knowing or gnosis intensely increases.

The experience of Timeless Awareness in time increases. The experience of Timeless Awareness within Time increases and becomes embodied. The experience of ongoing continuity of Being-fullness increases. The power of Transmission of the field of Being-fullness increases. The experience of non-duality within duality increases. The experience of self-liberation increases.

As Erving Polster, the great existential psychotherapist would so often say: “Two awareness’s” are better than one! Our field of our awareness as Being-fullness is the field of Being full Energy infinite in its horizons and vast and multidimensional. This Field of Being-full Primordial Awareness is both the Being-full Source of phenomena and is Being-full phenomena.

In the Sphera a person can learn to easily transmit their field of luminous awareness into, and within another person or persons. A person can learn to amplify the intensity of the luminous field of

Being-fullness, and a person can learn to pacify the intensity of the field of awareness Being-fullness and finally a person can both use the energy of the field creatively and use the energy to cut through blocks of mind and metabolize states of experience that have to be metabolized and dissolved. Trauma is more easily metabolized within the field of Timeless Awareness within time. Timeless awareness in time is self-liberating.

This Phenomenological experiential understanding is that phenomena and the source of phenomena are intimately the same Being-full awareness. Being is both the manifestation of phenomena and the phenomena of Being-fullness. There is a Dzogchen Nyingma prayer that says “May I experience all phenomena as the dharmakaya, may I experience all phenomena as the Ground of Being, may I experience all phenomena as Source.”

This sameness of source and phenomena bring forth the dramatic understanding that liberation is the profound experience of Equality Consciousness of all beings as Being. Being-fullness as self-Liberation is not illusionary omniscience or illusionary omnipotence that our endless human grandiose religious aspirations endlessly reflect, but rather self-liberation is the profound experience of Equality Consciousness and the profound experience of being both source and the manifestation of source. Being Being a being is the same Being-fullness as Being itself.

WHO-NESS

The profound experience of Equality Consciousness brings forth our ontological understanding of our human experience manifesting our Who-ness as our person as both ontological and ontic, or as ontological and psychological knowing. Our Who-ness is not only psychological but our Who-ness is in essence ontological. Our Who-ness is our primordial Timeless Awareness in time. Our Who-ness is not our mind alone, we have a mind, but we are our Who-ness, we are our Being as Who-ness. We are Being-full Who-ness. We are NOT OUR MIND. Our Who-ness is not our mind. We have a mind. The creative source of our awareness is our own innermost Who-ness.

Who-ness! Our Being-full Who-ness is our creative source of

self-liberation. Our Who-ness is the creative manifestation of pure awareness as our own Being-fullness and our own Being-full Who-ness. The world is profoundly personal. Our innate awareness is profoundly personal. When we lose Who-ness we lose our innate creative source. Our Being-full Who-ness is definitively not our psychological mind alone. Our mind can participate and articulate and express our Being-full Who-ness. Our Who-ness is Timeless awareness within Time. Our Who-ness is intimately related to Being-full Source as Being-full Source.

We sometimes think and identify our mind as our self. We have a mind and yet our who-ness as our self is not our mind. The Being-full Creative source is within us as us and is our own profound Ontological Who-ness. The creative artist who has made art-full presentations within their own creative experience of their Who-ness as their Who-ness. We have seen and experienced that they are not only creative and luminous minds but their very Who-ness is the Creative Source of their own creative Being-full life force. Their own innermost awareness, which is their creative source is their own Who-ness as Timeless Awareness within time. Our Timeless Awareness within time is our own innermost Who-ness and Our Who-ness is vast and multidimensional.

The creative force of Being-fullness awareness is our own Who-ness who is vast and multidimensional. Our own Who-ness is Timeless Awareness within time. Timeless Awareness is our Being-full Who-ness becoming and unfolding within time. There is the past time and the present time and the future time. Our Who-ness is Timeless Awareness within time as our own luminous Being-fullness infinite in its horizons and vast and multidimensional. We can focus the power of Timeless Awareness in the Present Moment, in the Past Moments, and In Future Moments. This is the power of ontological Transmission.

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MESH-ANARCHISM
SOCIETY AS THE WORK
OF ART AS THE WORK OF
SOCIETY

Simeon Nelson

“All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.”

A Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order.

The more prolonged the halt in some unrelieved system of order, the greater the crash of the dead society.

Process and Reality, Alfred North Whitehead

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Prelude

People sometimes inquire what form of government is most suitable for an artist to live under. To this question there is only one answer. The form of government that is most suitable to the artist is no government at all.

Oscar Wilde, The Soul of Man Under Socialism

Mesh Anarchism gathers many of the threads weaving through my art practice into a vision of a radically eccentric and emancipated planetary society – a more than human society – a society that is a work of art and whose work is that of art.

The germ of this idea originates from within my daily practice rituals and attendant basic problems like how to wrest a life worth living from a less than ideal society.

The question of a counter-factual reality is a natural consequence of this, speculating on realities other than the one we find ourselves in hovers behind much of my work.

“Bodies move past themselves, entering a space that is always receiving them to communicate and commingle in the physicality of the world. To be in this world is to be ever entering a material

space of radiance.” Andrew Mitchell in his study, *Heidegger among the Sculptors*¹ brilliantly unpacks Heidegger’s fascination with sculptors and sculpture; the profound resonance with his upending of philosophy’s imprisonment in ratiocination and dissociation from the world of doing and things.

Art practice sensitises us to our own worldly embodiment and attunes us to the embodiment of our artwork in the world operating under the same physics of gravity, compression, tension as us, as all other bodies. As we scale up, we find mass increasing faster than surface which is why if we humans were scaled up ten times, we would need six massive pillar like legs and would barely be able to move or breathe, we would in fact not be in any sense human. If we dive down into the world of pond microbes, we find that they are buffeted around in the minute molecular motion of the surrounding water. Art practice, in my case largely sculptural practice makes us realise how utterly contingently things are the way they are. It affords a glimpse of other physical realities situated on time and length scales from the ghostly flicker of the quantum realm to the largest structures of observable universe. It elucidates the remarkable fact that my human body exists at the midpoint of all this.

Working with sheets and lengths of wood and metal requires a performative drawing in space with my body, the arc of the reach of my arms - vectors irradiate the close confines of my studio workshop. This is a full body experience of clenched muscles, pushing from the gut, feet gripping the ground like tree roots, shoulders burning with lactic acid after hours of pushing 8 by 4 boards through the table saw. Proprioception is our bodies sense of itself which extends to our tools and materials. Hammer, bench saw, and all the other paraphernalia of our studios become our extended body. Kinaesthesia is the sculptural sense of weight, mass, movement. It is the vertigo, the ecstatic carnality, the obdurate resistance of matter. To make art is to be in a material space of radiance.

All this lay latent in my practice until shocked into action by the Pandemic. The eerily idyllic clarity of deep blue sky, innocent of contrails, listening as if for the first time to the polyphony of the dawn chorus, now resonating through a vast utter silence. The

rumble and hum of the city's motorways and subways disgorging their millions of scurrying citizenry shocking in its absence. I could not help but make the connections to the endless variations on the annihilation of the human race portrayed in the films and novels crowding our collective unconscious. What had we done? Had humanity screwed it this time? Would the world ever return to something approaching what we knew before? Feverishly we patented and published possibilities for systemic change and rethinking of the way we as a species live on our planet and then we came out the other side. But our inspiration and hope, our ideas for new ways of doing things ran headlong into an insurgency travelling in the opposite direction, a tightening of rules by a burgeoning administrative apparatus emboldened to intervene in our most basic functions, what to me felt like a post-pandemic lurch of institutional culture toward elimination of uncertainty and risk so oppressive and prescriptive that our basic human agency and freedom is under threat.

Mesh Anarchism is a call to arms. Maintaining independence of thought in an intellectually entropic environment is crucial to the survival of our freedoms, not to mention our imaginative capacity for kindness and goodwill.

As more and more agency, ability to act with care for ourselves and others is outsourced to institutional group think we need to maintain our autonomy and ethics actively and strenuously. We need also to scrupulously practice our critical perception, to apprehend the uniqueness and uncertainty of what is before us rather than impose indiscriminate and *a priori* abstractions. Institutional adoption renders into gibberish the worthiest ethical causes because it stops us needing to think about them for ourselves.

Anarchism is uniquely placed for this because it is a state of mind, rather than a manifesto or ideology. It is a how to think and not a what to think. The validity of any conclusion one arrives is determined by the reflectivity and rigour of how you got there. It is an improvisatory method, an open system of enquiry. If it has any principles at all, they might be impatience with received opinion, delight in heterogeneity and solidarity with the unknowable other. For me it is dialectical, just as in my art practice, always turn any

object of your attention around to its opposite, unsettling yourself and your thinking before it has time to harden. Always zoom out from whatever is going on and try to look at it from an unfamiliar perspective. Always try to unknow what things are known as. It requires one to ask of oneself: am I taking any responsibility or doing any actual thinking? Or am I merely assembling off-the-shelf platitudes conveniently floating past.

Anarchists and artists are as ineradicable as Roundup-resistant weeds even in the most repressed and straight-jacketed society. They are highly skeptical of any claim to legitimate authority or hierarchy. Anarchism's absence of central power or nation-state is mirrored in the absence of deferral to centralized thought or certainty in the mind of the artist. This is an essential attribute of art practice – to be skeptical of presumptions, unacknowledged biases, reification of convention to truth – of the society one finds oneself in. Art won't be corralled into a metaphysical flatpack of prefabricated possibility. Artists and artworks can imagine the world anew because they don't let their cultural conditions do their thinking for them. The job of the artist is not to provide fully formed experiences but to provide the tools to rethink the world anew.

Atrophy of mind and body is the consequence of the canalising of thinking and doing. Outsourcing more and more of our abilities and agency is occurring just when it feels like we might be on the cusp of casting off the carapace of Cartesian dualism and re-embracing our porosity, our creatureliness – re-entangling our embodied minds and ensouled bodies within a re-enchanted world. Mesh Anarchism is a plea to reconnect to the vibrant flux of relations, the cosmologically extended network of operation and agency that Western normativity denies us.

Mesh Anarchism speculates on counterfactual science, art and culture that have arisen from seemingly trivial changes in events in the recent or historical past. This is predicated on the many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics which implies that every event at every moment has infinite possible outcomes that actualize in infinite possible worlds. Mesh Anarchism would simply be one among this infinitude.

Another significant motivation is redeeming and reconciling a disjunction in human thought exemplified in the Hobbesian view that brutish humanity must be redeemed by the social contract and its symmetrical opposite, the Rousseauian view that society corrupts and brutalises innately good humanity. As philosopher Simon Critchley reminds us in his book, *The Faith of the Faithless*² the roots of the anarchist mindset go back to the biblical doctrine of original sin. The heresy of the free spirit, the quest of the mediaeval mystics to rid themselves of original sin through emptying and purifying themselves into containers of love and God posed an intolerable threat to the authority of the mediaeval church for which many of them were burned at the stake. The alignment of authoritarianism with Hobbes and anarchism with Rousseau remains as a large tension today. Art as an essentially anarchistic mode of praxis, unable to be instrumentalised within the neo-liberal imperatives of the creative industries. Anarchism lurks in the authoritarian mindset as an intolerable threat.

Mesh Anarchism resonates with the pitfalls and paradoxes of utopian and dystopian imagination from Jonathon Swift to William Morris' *News from Nowhere*. Huxley, Orwell, Atwood and Le Guin all figure but I am more indebted to Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, seminal Russian ecologist and anarchist. His misunderstood and overlooked magnum opus *Mutual Aid, A Factor of Evolution*, 1902³ prioritised cooperation and mutuality in nature and society, taking Darwinism in the opposite direction to Herbert Spencer's pitiless 'survival of the fittest' and Francis Galton's creepy eugenics. It is a personal protest, an attempt at an ethical bulwark against the oligarchical and hyper-individualistic excesses of neoliberalism. It works from the core value of care or concern, the primacy of cooperation and mutualism over self-interest and competition.

Flourishing on another branch of the tree of all parallel worlds, the economy and ecology of Mesh Anarchism have turned out differently from the one we know. And all from points of departure, bifurcations in the flows of events, some momentous, though barely noticed when they happened not so long ago.

The stateless order of Mesh Anarchism reconciles the

tension between individualism and collectivism, competition, and cooperation. It is inspired by the countless documented instances of spontaneous anarchy where interactions between actors rest on the commons and common good, an ethical imperative that is central to the social order of, indigenous and first nation societies, for example, in the Inuit of arctic North America. It also spontaneously emerges locally in the live and let live approach of open range ranchers in California where disputes are settled without recourse to lawyers or legal process, and the trust that endured in the many informal pan-Mediterranean trade networks that existed before the nation states. It has democratised the means of production and realised the promise of the commons, the inalienable groundings of humans and non-humans in the air and water, forests and mountains of our terrestrial home.

To help set things out as clearly as possibly this essay is in two parts. The first deals with those mindsets and modes of thought propaedeutic and inimical to Mesh Anarchism. Part Two sets out Mesh Anarchism proper – implicitly as a possibility to activate everyday life and explicitly as a vision of a new world risen from the ashes of the old.

01

Part one: Propaedeutics

FIGURE AND GROUND

My students sometimes say, “everything is connected”. I reply to them, can you be a little bit more specific, can you qualify this? The blank stares in return indicate to me that the categories of thought available to them are really bad at three crucial things. Firstly, thinking in terms of flow and relationship, vectors of cause and effect over time and space, a process ontology which has been supplanted by an obsession with identity, with the fixed essence of pre-existent things, a substance ontology. We have forgotten the science of arthrology, of connection.

Secondly the reflective awareness of one's own first-person experience has been discarded in favour of an a priori theoretical understanding which skips the step of actually being present to what is in front of you. A denuded language of generalisation, invoking scientific objectivity, what Husserl called 'the natural attitude' places the facticity of what we encounter in daily life, as already known, lumped into categories, no need to look at the actual thing itself, to apprehend it in the unique first-person perspective that opens up in every encounter, we have forgotten how to pay attention.

This average everydayness is taken for granted - we are left in a rut of dissociation from the richness and marvel of what we behold. The natural attitude assumes that subject is divided from object, self from world. It upholds the entire theoretical structure of positivism, a system of thought valorising that which can be scientifically objectified, or which can be logically or mathematically proven - therefore rejecting the first-person perspective. Concomitantly, the commonplace view of art is underpinned by the same pervasive and deeply rooted mindset that regards creativity as exclusively subjective and therefore unreliable.

The third related problem is not thinking dialectically, turning any object of attention around to its opposite, unsettling thinking before it has time to harden. Can we entertain more than one idea simultaneously? Can we apprehend something from a perspective other than our own? It is a way of testing an opinion, finding a better way forward, critically assessing what one is making, interpreting another artist's work, evaluating an opinion different to one's own. It sharpens the ability to reflectively think, perceive connection in the apparently unconnected and vice versa. It is a way of seeing under the hood of conventional commonly held belief and makes you a better artist.

I address these in a series of exercises, for example *Extended Self* provokes us to question where we draw the boundary between self and world. Participants draw a diagram, figure, or write a list of others who might be at that moment thinking of them. Parents, spouses, siblings or an inspirational artist figure large but when we think of less important relations we might have had, that taxi

driver on holiday, the person jostled in the street on the way to work, no matter how trivial all these others contain a little bit of us and vice versa, so to speak of the self is to refer to a boundary condition so complex, so imbricated, so saturated, woven into the flux of experience that what you or I unambiguously contain within us shrinks to a virtually dimensionless point and what is unambiguously without must begin over the widest horizon. A radically eccentric society is one whose centre wanders outside of its sphere in its communion with the cosmos. It is as open a system as can be imagined, but it does not give away its capacity to selectively reveal and conceal itself. It begins and ends in each of us, its constituents. Our spheres ripple out like raindrops on a pond through the whole of society, even if the fall-off is logarithmic, a faint flutter of each of us is detectable at the horizon.

So, this makes for a rather more complex and nuanced self-portrait. And it breaks down the tendency toward solipsistic identity, what Charles Taylor called the buffered self⁴ that bedevils how we in the west think of ourselves. The first question to ask on embarking on a self-portrait is what or who are we depicting when so many traces of the other are enfolded within us and we within others – a work of art emerges that carries a unique perspective on the whole of society with it.

Jung wrote in his **Collected Works Volume 11**, “The development of Western philosophy during the last two centuries has succeeded in isolating the mind in its own sphere and in severing it from its primordial oneness with the universe. Man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and eidolon [image] of the cosmos, and his ‘anima’ is no longer the consubstantial scintilla, spark of the Anima Mundi, World Soul.”

Heal, whole and holy trace back to the same proto-Indo-European root *kailo-* “whole, uninjured”. The dissociation from the anima mundi can only be healed (made whole) when we reassociate, fall back to the earth that bore us. Jurgen Habermas points to a spiritual longing or unmet need in secular society, an awareness of how experience points beyond itself and how ill equipped we are to apprehend that transcendence. This type of search for meaning or

‘ultimate concern’ will increasingly challenge secularism and give rise to new forms of privately and socially incarnated faith, possibly radically different to dying traditional forms.

Art standing outside the secular constructs of neo-liberalism, the natural attitude or naïve realism is uniquely placed to perceive secular society’s hidden problems, its narrative of progress purporting to free us from the strictures of Christianity and deliver us from ignorance hides that fact that this has created the unchallenged ideologies mentioned above that deracinate and disconnect us from our rootedness in the world and the attendant sense of awe and reverence for that which cannot be defined within the parameters of scientific or academic discourse, that elusive *mysterium tremendum*⁵ subduing the ego, emptying us enough to allow the world in, humbling us enough to leave space for doubt and openness to change.

We need to think in terms of figure and ground, always contextualising the one amongst the many. Only if our private spheres are eccentric, anchored in the other can we work toward a higher functioning public sphere. Paradoxically this requires maintain autonomy of thought and action we can resist being swept out to sea by the tides of populism. Hannah Arendt said “Totalitarianism begins in contempt for what you have”⁶. We must pay attention. When we dwell in the world rather than inside ourselves, we honour and marvel at the uniqueness of that which is before us.

ORIGINAL SCHISM

One thing never ceases to arise out of another, and to no one is life given as a freehold, but to all on lease.

Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*)

‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’. This divine fiat stated in Genesis (1,28,NRSV) clove us from the very ground that bore us, from our gestation in the womb of the earth as the etymology of human reminds us. It granted carte blanche to instrumentalise the earth and extract

from it and its creatures all we needed to flourish. We were given possession of that which like the air and stars cannot be owned. At least not freehold. There are other interpretations of genesis pointing to a more responsible stewardship or leasehold. Had they been adopted; we might not be amidst the anthropogenic crisis we find ourselves in.

We pay a high price for this selfish and unremittingly Manichean hyper-dualism that pits us against Earth, earth against sky, light against dark, good against evil, our notion of which is a shrivelled relict, a demonic caricature stripped of its original Greek ambivalence. We split Aristotle's daimons, personifications of collective desire, rage, cruelty melancholy, pity and purpose into devils and angels. The current cult of wellbeing and emotional safety denies daimons a place at the table. If we do not at least leave a bowl of food out for them we deny ourselves *eudaimonia*, the flourishing life lived in unblinking awareness of its transience, sufferance, and our own inborn capacity for evil. This is irreducible to the jejune fallacies of moral progress we are so fond of. Steven Pinker's angels be damned!

Camille Paglia memorably nailed what I am trying to get at with the sentence "*The Dionysian is no picnic*".⁷ Our Apollonian celebration of the sunny the patchwork quilt of the known is our escape from the horror of what lies under the tidy idealised harmony we ascribe to the surface of things, within our bodies, our unconscious and the earth, the chthonic ooze, the bowels. Scrambling up the nearest tree to be closer to Jeff Bezos or whoever else our replacement for god might be does not make them go away.

Yet since Edmund Burke outlined his notion of the sublime so influential to the romantic poets, we have learnt to love the natural realm as the object of our rapt aesthetic contemplation - an untrammelled earthly paradise distinct from human culture. But nature or wilderness was never an intellectually coherent category. We don't usually include the cities and suburbs we are embedded in. The trees in our street are no less than their country cousins. The spiders, the trillions of bacteria in each spoonful of soil in our gardens fulfil the same function within nature's imbricated

web. Let us not forget that even the obtuse and booted rotundity of the buy-two-get-one-free garden gnomes at the local Asda are a dim echo of a lineage connecting us to ancient Teutonic Forest cults. The headless mouse on the living room floor, our cat's offering, is as red in tooth and claw as bloodied wildebeest ribs sticking up out of the Serengeti.

Do we intuit as Henry David Thoreau that the railway lines and motorways snaking out of the metropolis, through the greenbelt into the picturesque hills and fields the countryside are enablers of our pastoral ideal? In *The Poet*⁸ he does not begrudge the railways adoption into nature's vital circles, pulsing as they do with the daily inward and outward tide of polytheistic bipedal mammals who use them to honour the gods of work and home, city and country, in search of the spiritual and material resources we need to flourish and prosper.

The nature culture, binary persists as an unacknowledged ground of our knowledge. Bruno Latour argues in *We Have Never Been Modern*⁹ that the ultimate concerns of western civilisation are glued to the rail tracks of ownership and anthropocentric exceptionalism. We need to derail the train to be capable of reverence for our planet and all its cohabitants. The only path to an equitable ethical community is recognition of the inherent value of all we are entangled within – the intrinsic value and agency of every human and other than human actor in the widest network of relations.

We need to rekindle our kinship, cast aside our inherited Western mindset that by default splits subject from object, mind from matter, instrumentalises and renders inert and inanimate an alien world outside our heads. Arranging human and non-human voiced and voiceless on different rungs of the ladder of metaphysical worth practically ensures that it will not just be trees and rocks that will be seen as other as objects for humans to exploit. Invariably people become objects to harvest as well, people who happen to be born on top of the wrong mineral, people with the wrong gender or colour, societies without discernible scratchings and fencings of freehold. Wherever there are voiceless people they will be treated with the same blind cruelty as the rocks and trees.

Anthropologist and cybernetician Gregory Bateson in his 1979 book, *Mind and Matter - A Necessary Unity*¹⁰ elucidated what we miss beautifully:

I was transcending that line which is sometimes supposed to enclose the human being...mind became, for me, a reflection of large parts and many parts of the natural world outside the thinker. On the whole, it was not the crudest, the simplest, the most animalistic and primitive aspects of the human species that were reflected in the natural phenomena. It was, rather, the more complex, the aesthetic, the intricate, and the elegant aspects of people that reflected nature. It was not my greed, my purposiveness, my so-called “animal,” so-called “instincts,” and so forth that I was recognizing on the other side of that mirror, over there in “nature.” Rather, I was seeing there the roots of human symmetry, beauty and ugliness, aesthetics, the human being’s very aliveness and little bit of wisdom. His wisdom, his bodily grace, and even his habit of making beautiful objects are just as “animal” as his cruelty. After all, the very word “animal” means “endowed with mind or spirit (animus).”

MATTER AND PATTERN

Making/Thinking from within

Verb > subject/object

*Androgyne forming from unity of
matter and pattern*

Thinking/Making from without

Subject > verb > object

*Active agent pattern imprinting
inert matter
Hylomorphism*

Etymologically, matter is cognate with mater, mother; pattern is cognate with pater; father. Our worldview in the West is deeply imprinted with the unconscious presuppositions of Aristotelian hylomorphic thinking. Pattern (pater, father) is seen as intellect imprinting passive and inert matter (mater, mother).

This gendered dualism misses what many non-Western cultures and esoteric traditions understand much more fully: a monistic imperative in nature to produce emergent pattern as an aspect of matter, or coming at it the other way, matter as an emergent aspect

of pattern, in a constant process of transformation, growth and decay where observer and observed are complementary aspects of an experiential whole. Matter may indeed be seen as mother but is anything but inert. Pattern is the perceptible generative principle of matter; it is matter mattering. Matter is the physical aspect of pattern.

For all denizens of earth, flowers, trees, ants and us a primordial receptivity to pattern is fundamental to basic functionality, to making sense of our place in the scheme of things and to make meaning and purpose out of our finite and limited existence. Pattern is both a function of our perception and an attribute of the world. The entire cosmos could be said to be an eternally unfolding sequence of patterns.

The individualistic and instrumentalist progressivism our civilisation is so enamoured of originates in the linear teleological time adopted from Christianity – the relentless march from swamp to sky, up the Aristotelian chain of being, mineral, vegetable, animal human, angel, god.

Making art is to intervene in matter, in the actuality of the material world. It is to enter a material space of radiance, to be swept up in the vectors and forces of things beginning at their limits, to be called, to fall in love with matter's tensions and twists, folds and crimps, density and gravity, gleam and lustre, form and structure, fluidity and grit, grooves and grains. Tim Ingold says of craftspeople and artists that it is material and tools that direct the artist¹¹ - object-predicate-subject which shatters human exceptionalism and hands over agency and value to the non-human actors in the network of relations that constitute experience.

Without the material feedback of edge of the chisel we are pushing through wood constraining what we can do we are witless wraiths. Intelligence is be found in the grain of the wood. Making is a way of thinking that re-embeds us in a world that our inherited Cartesian mindset split us from. It resets us within an experience bigger than us of which we are but one agent. It returns us to the heart of the soul of the world, the *Anima Mundi*.

THE ETERNAL NOW

*Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum*¹²

When the powerful current of whatever we are commingled in moves faster than our conscious understanding we participate in a special state of flow. Flow is not subject to the tick-tock of the *Kronos*, the one-way time we experience within our mechanised, synchronised civilisation. Its ideology of progress, of continual growing forward into something better cannot tolerate regress, art's dwelling in those moments of beauty or fortuitous coincidence (confluence) that stand outside linear time.

In flow we stop the clock draining our short lives from us. We are given an immensity lying between each tick and tock. We enter *Kairos*, ancestral time, the cycling of opportune, serendipitous moments where the Fates (*moirai*) hold their breath in suspense and we remember that all that scurrying around in linear time is not all we were born for. We were destined to be in this *jouissance*, these moments that reverberate and weave us into the shadowy echelons of that greater artistry stretching from immemorial past to unforeseeable future, outside time, right here with us in this moment, the eternal now.

DAISY WORLD

*The system must not only be in perpetual heterogeneity, it must also be a heterogenesis*¹³

Gilles Deleuze

Mesh Anarchism is a planetary awakening that does not cohere well in the mind as a noun. It is impossible to define where 'it' might begin and end. Fixing it as an *imago mundi* satisfies our craving for a comprehensible eidolon but misses the vectors and flows, the oscillations of the processes of becoming. Planetary homeostasis begins and ends in the laws of physics. But it reaches up into the noetic, the dreaming of itself via its denizens, the more densely entangled knots in its network. It's becoming is the iterative co-creative dialectic of self and world, what Varela and Maturana named autopoiesis.

Daisy World, James Lovelock's elegant thought experiment, was a precursor to his and Lynne Margulis's Gaia Hypothesis. An earth-like planet orbiting a sun like star is stripped down to basic elements. It attains thermal equilibrium through the interaction of its two species, white daisies which increase albedo and cool the planet and black daisies which decrease albedo and heat the planet. White daisies proliferate at higher temperatures taking advantage of the increased sunlight. More of the sun's energy is reflected back into space bringing the temperature back down favouring black daisies which soak up more solar radiation leading to temperature rise favouring the white daisies. Assuming no other input this negative feedback loop perpetuates itself, a planetary homeostasis stable enough for more complex processes to spontaneously emerge.

Gravity clumps things together and is the counterpoise to entropy, the second law of thermodynamics which gives us the arrow of time making it impossible for a dropped teacup to jump off the floor and reassemble itself. With sufficient mass entropy is surmounted and islands of gravitationally increased complexity self-organise toward increasingly complex patterns including living systems. These spontaneous emergent forms of self-organisation, the interaction of simple elements that give rise to intricate purposive behaviour and to morphogenesis, how organisms structure themselves.

HUMBLE PIE

All true things must change and only that which changes remains true.

Carl Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*

Process philosophy is a trajectory in western thought that encapsulates ecology. Its lineage in the West goes back to the pre-Socratics, foremost Heraclitus whose famous dictum you can't step in the same river twice reverberates through my conception of Mesh Anarchism. Baroque polymath Gottfried Leibniz 1646-1716, and mathematician turned philosopher Alfred North Whitehead 1861-1947 both rejected the pervasive Cartesian metaphysical prem-

ise that the cosmos is made of inert lumps of stuff, existing in an external grid of absolute space and linear clock time independently of one another. This view is still so hardwired into how many of us think in the Occident that it is not possible to think any other way though my student's generation perhaps is starting to.

Leibniz considered space and time as attributes of things, inherently relational and in constant flux. He divined a deep complexity and interrelatedness from the very small to the very large which Benoit Mandelbrot drew on when he codified self-similarity into his system of fractal geometry in the 1970s. To quote from Leibniz's famous *Monadology* "Each portion of matter may be conceived as a garden full of plants and a pond full of fish. But every branch of every plant, every member of each animal and every drop of their liquid parts is in itself likewise a similar garden or pond." His organic and vital world view was in stark contrast to the direction most thinking was going – a conception of nature as a machine, clockwork wound up in the beginning by God, the supreme mechanic and set on its course like a huge automaton, a much larger version of the mechanical ducks and chess players, intricate, lifelike automata made by ingenious artisans for the amusement of European royalty.

Leibniz's world was more akin to the dramatic furls and curlicues, bulges and folds the extravagant curvilinear style of the European high baroque that found its most overwhelming expression in the flamboyant - almost to the point of dematerialization - altars, walls billowing like sails, and convoluted ceilings of the high baroque church. To quote from Gilles Deleuze's study of Leibniz's philosophy and Baroque, *The Fold: 'Dividing endlessly, the parts of matter form little vortices in a maelstrom, and in these are found even more vortices, even smaller, and even more are spinning in the concave intervals of the whirls that touch one another.'*

Whitehead saw that what we call things emerge from an ongoing dynamic interchange of energy and information, intention and experience, not static lumps but nexuses for larger processes of becoming, knots in a giant net of relations weaving the becoming of its network into the wider networks of the world. For him the effects of the outer world on the inner are experiential. For example, an

oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms joining up into a water molecule undergo massive internal changes to their electron valences. They have a profound experience of being transformed the union.

A bacterium swimming up a sugar gradient is telic, expressing a purpose, – undergoing an internal process of entelechy or in-end-having. Of course, single celled bacteria don't write poetry but if we see the difference with humans as one of degree not kind, we comprehend a kinship with non-human others – a key plank in the ecological worldview of Mesh Anarchism.

The radically empathic direction of this line of thought is ecological in the truest meaning; it allows a direct identification from us to the other thereby situating us squarely within nature's vital circles. Each human and other-than-human entities form the outer context of the inwardness, or inner experience of the other, just as the other forms the outer context our own the inwardness, or inner experience. This is in complete conflict with the legacy of Descartes which divided the world into what we could know as real – our own thoughts, and what we could not, everything outside ourselves, the unreality of the other licenced to instrumentalise and violate it.

This essay is a precipitate of the forces and vectors flowing through the world. This ecology is not one of discrete pre-existent entities interacting but of ceaseless change, flows, vectors, ongoing creation and de-creation out of which what we apply nouns to coalesce, we are knots in this net. Trees, mushrooms, cats, houses and hot water bottles – emergent patterns stable enough to affix a label to, enough to fool us into thinking that they are fixed, solid, separate entities as if a video of a stormy sea was slowed down enough to defy our patience to wait before naming the waves that rear and collapse in the crashing foam. These named moments in the life of patterns rising and falling in the flux give the illusion of permanence because they endure with little apparent change at our time and length scale near the midpoint of the smallest and largest – a creature living at either end would only perceive ceaseless motion. At the tiniest scale – 10^{-43} the zero-point quantum flux that churns and quivers almost everywhere from the interstellar vacuum to the centre of a block of lead, material bodies are particular patterns of arrangement

churned up within this omnipresent generative matrix. A creature existing at the largest scales would perceive feathery tendrils of billions of galaxies furling and unfurling over billions of earth years and space itself expanding ejecting billions of stars beyond the observable horizon faster than light forever lost to them.

Modes of post-humanistic thought like object-oriented ontology, agential materialism and trans-corporeality foist humans onto the same plane as rivers, hammers, timber, termites, plate tectonics, the hydrological cycle and atmospheric carbon levels. They recognise the agency of non-human entities and forces that determine what happens as much as human agency. Trans-corporeality is a term coined by Stacy Alaimo, researcher in environmental humanities. It ruptures what philosopher Charles Taylor called the 'buffered self' the self-enclosed subject, the resilient, self-reliant individual of secular society. It sees us instead as what Taylor calls the porous self, vulnerable, creaturely, intimately involved in nature's processes and formed out of the collective will. *'All creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them...The figure/ground relation between the human and the environment dissolves as the outline of the human is traversed by substantial material interchanges.'*²⁴

In Karen Barad's agential materialism, her neologism intra-action replaces interaction. The latter presupposes that there are separate entities that communicate and affect each other. Her term presupposes what are thought of as pre-existent entities that can be identified as an actor or element are the expression of the internal functioning of a larger whole.

“Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer. It presupposes faith and love. Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer.”

Simone Weil¹⁵

POSTULATES

The preconditions for Mesh Anarchism’s decentralised, holarchical public sphere:

a) It can only arise from the artistic practice of everyday life and an attendant shift to true ecological thinking, a mindset rising from a phenomenological ‘perspectival holism’, prior to the scepticism and dissociation of the ‘natural attitude’. Empathy and kinship rather than instrumentalism and alienation.

b) We can reconcile the disjunction between Hobbes – humans must be redeemed by the social contract and its symmetrical opposite, Rousseau – society corrupts and brutalises innately noble man. Mesh Anarchy works from the presumption that humans can tip the balance of brutish self-interest and cooperation and mutual aid toward the latter.

c) Adoption of a counterfactual trajectory in the history of ideas: Gottfried Leibniz’s baroque vision of organic unity and inter-relational time. An organismic/process-oriented schema of space/time/nature in constant flux becoming the basis of our inherited mindset rather than *res cognitions/res extensa*. Had the history ideas taken a Leibnizian rather than a Cartesian turn Heidegger may not have needed to rebuild a philosophy from the ancient Greeks radically opposed to the one we have.

d) Identification with our etymological cognate – humus, risen from the earth, autochthonous and part of nature. Christianity enshrines its more-than-human roots in the birth of baby Jesus among the animals. Art, science, and religion enfold a deep recognition of each other as branches of the tree of truth.

PARAMETERS

Mesh Anarchism is no utopia, it is anything but a global safe-space or wellness refuge, it won't slake the thirst of quaking souls for such-like or tick any risk assessment boxes. Being in relationship with the earth, the forests, rivers, the mountains is terrifying and dangerous. Sharing digs with all the other earthly denizens is to gain intimacy and lose mastery. Living with less of the insulation offered by technocratic nation states from earths stochastic shudders and ruptures and more of the wonder, concern and attunement that are the elements of true belonging.

By and large the fluctuations of mesh society's becoming precludes sharp asymmetries or gradients of wealth or poverty, hegemony or subjugation as surely as the centrifugal governor of the steam engine precludes it running too hot or cold.¹⁶

The eternal conflict between individualism and collectivism, competition and cooperation is in equipoise in which the commons, the inalienable rights humans and non-humans have to the air and water, forests and mountains of our terrestrial home prevails.

Richard Buckminster Fuller's claim in his influential 1981 book, *Critical Path – It is now highly feasible to take care of everybody on Earth at a 'higher standard of living than any have ever known.' It no longer has to be you or me. Selfishness is unnecessary and henceforth unrationalizable as mandated by survival*¹⁷ – has come to pass and the idea of any one person owning more than hundreds of millions of others is looked back on with the sort of scandalised incredulity with which we might look back on the brutalities of the Roman Coliseum.

TOPOLOGY

The underlying network architecture known as *Gubernatrix* evolved from its origins in peer-to-peer open source public OSIM (Open Systems Interconnection Model), enabling the interoperability via standard communication protocols of the huge and constantly evolving diversity of telecommunication and computing systems without regard to their underlying internal structure and technology. It is resilient, heterogeneous, and heuristic and modelled on an assumption 80% honest good faith and 20% dishonest bad faith

users. The majority always wins which means the downside is that at a 51% tipping point dishonesty wins and the system breaks apart.

Gubernatrix has high adaptability to sudden change or crisis. It can deform, unform and reform pre and post crisis. It can cope with highly adverse circumstances and reassemble after crisis subsides.

Blockchains are decentralized public ledgers that record transactions across many computers. Having no central hub, information is distributed across the network making brokers, bankers or any other middleman redundant and making it nigh impossible for any node to accumulate information or influence other than what the network permits. Their proliferation after the global fiscal crisis of 2008 was explosive, as was the proliferation of local and crypto currencies especially in the developing world. This revolution swept away whole classes of management and categories of intermediaries like lawyers, brokers, agents and bankers. It eviscerated corporate and governmental hierarchies. It left no region, society or nation state unaffected as a peer to peer frenzy with its promise of economic emancipation swept like wildfire through the desiccated and denuded Badlands of neo-liberalism far faster than anyone could ever have imagined. What took 30 years for the internet took only a few for the blockchains and they began to spontaneously evolve and merge at machine speeds reaching of billions of generations per second, outnumbering all the generations of the entire history of life on earth by most reckoning.

Through agency arising from the innate heuristics of the genetic algorithms that drove their machine learning they merged and swerved down a path of mutualism rather than the expected competition. Artificial intelligence acquired artificial enlightened self-interest though the categories artificial and natural no longer had any meaningful distinction. The initially separate ecosystems of their native programming and protocols learnt how to speak each other's code and transcend the often-prodigious differentiation of systems designed in different global cultures. This time though it was the innovation of the majority south and east flowing northwest. This was the epilogue to centuries of European and American supremacy were dramatically underscored by an unstoppable

entanglement of pent-up energy from the margins of the old order surging over the lawns and squares of Washington, London, Paris, and Madrid, as surely as Genghis Khan over the Eurasian steppes but with the consent rather than the conquest of all in its path.

For all its complexity The Mesh can't break apart. Lacking any centralised structure that privileges any one way of life over any other, the mesh allows nodes to negotiate their interior and exterior boundaries which means they are elastic, mutable, rising and falling like waves from the sea, differentiating and assimilating according to the calls and responses of their communicative arena.

ACTUALISATION

The first intimations of *Gubernatrix* were in the enthusiastic neighbourhood adoptions of blockchains for energy sharing, linking up rooftop solar/battery nodes with each other negotiate mutually beneficial local solar energy sharing networks. Initial conflict with corporate power monopolies was eventually won by critical mass of virtual power stations forcing authorities to rewrite energy policy in their favour. The emancipatory power of The Mesh fired the imagination and ricocheted through society. Other centralised services succumbed. Passive consumers became active producers. Nodes everywhere acquired the capacity to enable flows of services, energy materials and verification. Contribution to this capacity became an inescapable obligation to be enshrined as requisite for participants access to the largesse of the mesh without which their lives would be nasty, brutish and short indeed.

This emergent bottom-up agency reached out to our human agency and also the agency of the biosphere, animals, forests, rivers, falling into step with the carbon cycle, the heat redistributing currents of ocean and atmosphere, even the grinding of the tectonic plates. Without consciously intending to, it halted global warming and learnt how to collaborate with the planet as vital organism transmuting into a pervasive 'cyborg Gaia'.

Individuals, organizations, machines, glaciers and trees freely transact and interact with one another with little friction. The evolution of this congruent arthrology from the first blockchains has

brought about a radical redistribution of government and power from several hundred nation-states to eight or so billion person-states, each autonomous within their own unique ambit and able to communicate with every single other one within the fully interconnected topology of the Mesh.

The Mesh devolves all the functions, procedures, authorization, certification, verification, ratification, etc., etc., currently carried out by governments, corporations and NGOs to the level of intercourse between relevant nodes. For example, someone wanting a passport would have their identity unambiguously certified by nodes with whom they have dealt, a tiny local corner of a global network without recourse to any central agency. The checks and balances needed for security dissipate or coalesce within smaller or larger parts of the system.

The autopoiesis of the Mesh is proprioceptive and self-diagnostic. As in the biological body autonomic feedback maintains constitutional functions meeting and ameliorating turbulent inputs from earth's stochastic history. Such a vast emergence through the deformations and reformations of parts and wholes eludes definition. It is a planetary enmeshment in perpetual heterogenesis subject to the inescapable physics of, for example; osmosis, the equalising of energy and density over a gradient, epistaxis, the isomorphic overgrowth of crystals on a substrate or angiogenesis, spontaneous vascular network formation. It is a cybernetic hyper-organism, constituent parts mutually catalyse each other's formation from sensor or data input. It is the apotheosis of a cybernetic organism of a magnitude Norbert Wiener could scarcely have envisioned at the dawn of the computer age in his 1948 book *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*.

It is really good at keeping global climactic and temperature fluctuations within a steady-state conducive to life. It has evolved into a nested holarchy¹⁸ of complex adaptive systems dynamically self-organizing, self-configuring and self-correcting. The topology prevents nodes disconnecting or doing anything deleterious to collective well-being so highly segregated enclaves, impenetrable boundaries, covert concentrations of power or influence can't form.

The centralised bureaucracy and power that were the only way before the internet of attaining the collective social organisation needed by the industrial revolution was gradually supplanted by small networks of dissatisfied individuals looking for a way out of the manufactured consent and inherent coercion of the nation state/corporate complex. These began imperceptibly at first on the smallest possible scales of two or three individuals then a few more and so on and so forth spreading like ragged little patches of weeds in the pavement cracks, joining up and forming blockchain based local and global systems of reciprocity and exchange increasingly divorced from state issued currencies. By the time governments noticed and clumsily intervened, it was too late, a critical mass of global citizenry now occupied the balance of power and held the nation-state to account.

These pioneers could not have known that the trust and empathy attained from their small- scale networks of barter and exchange of value or tokens presaged the all-pervasive global mesh to come - 8 billion central banks with 8 billion currencies or tokens exchanging the energy, food, products and services, planning and security, privacy and trust needed to live well.

03

Oikonomicon

The animal species in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection, which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay.'

Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, Mutual Aid,
A Factor of Evolution, 1902

Within the parameters of the pervasive gubernatrix novel forms of mutualism and anarchism propagate, evolve, some flourish for a while, some merge, some perish, a fluctuating global system of distribution and exchange not unlike the vortices and currents of the oceans and the atmosphere, keeping within parameters conducive to life by the underpinning self-limiting architecture making it near impossible for deleterious accumulations of power or breakdown of order to propagate. Wealth is distributed far more equitably; corporate and political hierarchies can't form. The all too human predilection for status can now only be expressed through symbolic manifestations as it has become impossible to accrue enough wealth, power or capital to confer it. The Mesh refers disputes back to the local level, crime and justice are reconfigured within this. Corruption, oppression, racism, sexism, any violation of another's intrinsic value trigger automatic formation of corrective/reparative process. Enforcement has dropped out of the dictionary. Cultural, ethnic, gender tribalism bedevils the world far less, the blockchain is good at dissipating and diverting aggression. Striations of ethnicity, class, and gender matter less within the anonymizing yet scrutinizing purview of communicative nodes.

Natural capital is paramount, our extractive and acquisitive capitalism and passive consumption have given way to participation and intervention in multifarious flows of energy, materials, services and ideas that course through the world. Solar, wind, wave, geothermal energy are routed through highly sophisticated overlapping transmission nodes, inspired by what Amory Lovins called 'soft energy paths' in his eponymous book from 1977. The beginnings of this global system are to be seen today in rapidly decarbonizing and decentralizing economies, for example the exponential growth of rooftop solar and battery storage in parts of Australia that have bought prices far below coal and gas. De-centralization means a more nomadic *modus vivendi* for some – bricks and mortar replaced by demountable structures, freehold by 'steward-hold' even permanent structures more often 'touch the earth lightly'. Tenure and belonging are achieved in embrace of transience, rather than permanence. Boundaries are fluid, people move around leveraging sea-

sonal rhythms. Throwing out the notion of ownership of land and the rights to its resources means that all humans are on the same plane as indigenous peoples lacking a concept of ownership. The absence of nation-states makes colonialism an absurdity.

The mesh emanates from the interactions forming, deforming and reforming its biosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and the interoperable spheres of human technology and culture. The mesh is all the powers within and without our planetary system determining the fate human and non-human society alike. Though there are no nation states, persons are not stateless. The word citizen implying fealty to a state has fallen out of use replaced with denizen implying fealty to the earth or *Oikonomon* as the earth has become known. This word elides the Greek words for household – *oikos* and household manager – *oikonomos*. As in ancient Greek culture the household is the prevailing base unit for the organization of social, political, and economic life. The households members are the *oikonomoi*. An *oikos* can consist of a single person, variations on the extended and nuclear family as well as member's elective affinities. Households can form alliances but *Gubernatrix* won't allow these to become cartels or accrue wealth or capital beyond their needs. Instrumentalising another for one's own betterment violates the obligation to serve the needs of other nodes.

Oikonomos also gives us ecumenical meaning non-sectarian and *ecumene* meaning the known or inhabited world. In the neo-animist culture of Mesh Anarchy the known extends far beyond the human, kinship has been established with the entire biosphere and confers personhood on all its elements. Denizen establishes itself the title of each human or more than human person. Negative and positive feedbacks are processed and integrated, intervened in to avert a catastrophic tipping point. Nodes specialise and differentiate are able, for example, to communicate with the mycorrhizome, the vast and subtle fungal networks that bring forests and the biosphere into communion. Nature's entangled tendrils hold and are held in The Mesh's nodal embrace without either relinquishing their agency.

The Mesh entangles natural, societal and cultural ecologies, it re-wilds culture and acculturates nature. It returns humans to their rightful place amidst the reverberations and rhythms, the ebbs and flows of the becoming of the world. This 'wild' of is not a return to pristine Edenic origins, it hybridizes the post-human, the post-industrial and the post-central into a feral overlapping of many ecologies. Nature penetrates to the core of the most complex industrial plant, industry penetrates to the most remote 'wilderness. Every vector, every flow of matter and energy create value, meaning and affect, are actors, agency is not exclusively human or biological, in fact the mesh does not discriminate, there is no implicit scale of value from human to animal, plant mineral, the mesh is a hyper-object whose elements all play their part.

Human beings are grounded alongside all other earthly beings, autochthonous, cohabitant, interdependent members of the natural world, vulnerable to its ruptures and shocks, not its masters. In this light, Mesh Anarchism prioritises interdependence which means humans know they can't exist without all the diverse other creatures that maintain the balances within our bodies and without, it enmeshes us as transient phenomena within the flows of nutrients, energy, and waste coursing through the world.

In prioritizing both the individual and the collective Mesh-Anarchism operates as an autopoietic super-organism preserving order amidst change and change amid order. Its wholes and parts are separable yet interconnected, autonomous, yet reliant, private yet open, combining and recombining, grains swirling into patterns of liquefaction and crystallization in an ongoing creation and actualization of life.

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REMEMBER NATURE:
ACTION FOR LIFE

Remember Nature: Action for life

We are living in the “critical zone” and how we make this surface layer habitable and keep it habitable is the leading question of our time.

In attempting to make sense of the climate crisis there has been a focus on trying to understand how we are contributing to the development of a modern ecological consciousness. Over the last two centuries our conception of nature has changed beyond recognition with artists and artworks evolving alongside ecological contexts, art materials and techniques, and in tandem with commentary from thinkers and writers, with many calling for social action. In the mid nineteenth century, John Ruskin’s response to Britain becoming the world’s most heavily industrialized nation and “blasting the cultivable surface of England” led him to buy land to establish self-sustaining rural communities¹. In the twenty-first century, Greta Thunberg’s impactful words “*Our House is on Fire*” had immediate and far reaching impact around the globe.² At aged fourteen Greta Thunberg managed to propel climate change to the top of the agenda in world news by sitting outside the Swedish Parliament instead of attending school, demanding urgent action. Greta’s Fridays for Future began in August 2018 as a weekly school strike action, the beginning of a global school strike movement for climate, inspiring the global youth to make the climate crisis visible.

Whilst The International Commission on Stratigraphy (the body which oversees how we talk about the history of Earth) decides whether we are entering a new geological epoch, or not, there is little doubt that our habitable earth and its climate have transitioned from self-regulating to a planet suffering the irreversible influence of humankind on its systems. From a species reliant on nature for food, medicine, shelter, we have evolved into a species that has become detached from the wisdom of living with nature.

The Apollo photograph *Earthrise* taken from lunar orbit in 1968, presented our planet as a beautiful, fragile globe to treasure and call home. As an image it spoke to the generation familiar with Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, hailed by many as the most important environmental publication of the twentieth century, responsible for

popularising modern ecology. The book detailed the human poisoning of the biosphere from the indiscriminate use of pesticides and is acknowledged as initiating ‘toxic discourse’ at the start of modern environmentalism.³ Carson’s now infamous chapter, ‘A Fable for Tomorrow’, describes a prosperous American town where “a spring without voices” occurred, during which human and non-human species were “silenced” by the effects of the pesticide DDT.⁴

*“On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.”*⁵ Carson’s *Silent Spring* set out to explain the phenomenon of the silenced voices of spring across America and that humankind’s destructive actions towards nature would in time be returned to our species. Carson’s insistence on saving the natural world was incendiary and infectious, instigating a public call to action. A counter-culture movement led a period of noticeable change during which artists began producing work focused on environmental issues replacing former bucolic representations of the natural world.

Discussing Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, 50 years on for the *Guardian* newspaper, novelist Margaret Atwood posited: *“one of the core lessons of Silent Spring was that things labelled progress weren’t necessarily good. Another was that the perceived split between [hu]man and nature isn’t real: the inside of your body is connected to the world around you, and your body too has its ecology, and what goes into it – whether eaten or breathed or drunk or absorbed through your skin – has a profound impact on you”*⁶

In 1962 at the time of *Silent Spring*’s publication, nature was something distinct from us, existing for our convenience, to be tamed and controlled, its ‘infinite resources’ to be plundered and exploited as commodities. Carson railed against this, reflecting that until this point the history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings; that humans are a part of nature, living within it.

This persuasive case gained momentum in the 1970s with the emergence of Gaia. Gaia, describes a living Earth, a self-regulating system “an idea with precedents in natural science and philosophy

for 2,500 years, and longer in many indigenous belief systems.”⁷ Formulated by chemist James Lovelock and co-developed with the microbiologist Lynn Margulis, the basis of the Gaia hypothesis is that “Earth’s atmosphere is as complicated as the blood or skin of an animal.”⁸ Lovelock asked the questions: “*What are the conditions for the existence of life? What are they and how does Life transform and affect these conditions of existence?*” Lovelock used “Gaia” from the 70s onwards, as a term for the network of interconnections and interactions between life and the environment.⁹

*“Gaia is an evolving system, a system made up from living things and their surface environment, the oceans, the atmosphere, and crustal rocks, the two parts tightly coupled and indivisible. It is an ‘emergent domain’ – a system that has emerged from the reciprocal evolution of organisms and their environment over the eons of life on Earth...self regulation emerges as the system evolves. No foresight, planning or teleology...are involved.”*¹⁰

A speech by Mr. Dario Mejia Montalvo, President of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for Cop 15 (2022) reminds us that for Indigenous peoples the relationship with land is localised and familial, with principles of harmony and balance and rights that are based in nature rather than around humans.

*“Mother Earth is the bearer of our basic rights and fundamental values that shape the life of beings, including humans. For example, the water, mountains, the life cycle of plants, are all part of the essence of our value and knowledge systems. These norms are contained in our Peoples’ languages, in the structures of our families and in the institutions of our governments. They are beliefs that pass from generation to generation. This is what scholars may call “culture”. But for us, as Indigenous Peoples, nature sets the rules of life. And it is this Indigenous worldview that has made it possible for us to conserve at least 80% of the remaining biodiversity on the planet, in Indigenous territories. There is no culture without nature. And nature cannot be preserved without the recognition of cultural diversity.”*¹¹

For most Indigenous Peoples, the distinction between culture and nature does not exist. The idea that humans need to compete with or have dominion over nature is another form of colonialism and some-

thing that indigenous peoples have resisted for thousands of years.¹²

In developing ‘We Don’t Seem to Live on the Same Planet – A Fictional Planetarium’, philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist, Bruno Latour suggests that “*Nature is no longer outside us but under our feet, and it shakes the ground.*”¹³ At the core of this is the idea that we are divided by nature and the many disparate ideas on how humans should live with nature should be brought into dialogue so they might lead to action. In describing a new set of political struggles, Latour states that: “*People everywhere are again in need of land, a situation that I call, for this reason, the new “wicked universality.”*”¹⁴

Culture is deeply rooted in nature and the meeting point between nature and culture is often reflected in art but there are few human made spaces that provide interaction with non-human species. In *All Art is Ecological (2021)* we are reminded humans cut their social, philosophical ties with non-humans. And we may now find ourselves living in an age of mass extinction. It is not just human activity that is escalating habitat loss for as species become extinct, we will also face the cultural loss of narratives, symbols, and imagery.¹⁵

Cultural and artistic responses to extinction gained exposure in 2014 during the *Facing Extinction: Gustav Metzger conference* at University for the Creative Arts, Farnham (July 2014) and the *Extinction Marathon: Visions of the Future* at Serpentine Gallery London (October 2014), curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist (Co-Director, Exhibitions and Programmes and Director of International Projects) and artist Gustav Metzger.¹⁶

The *Extinction Marathon* was a two-day event inviting us to respond, together, to a changing world, addressing visions of the future in all their scientific, artistic, and literary ramifications. It was at the Extinction Marathon that Gustav Metzger first made the call for a ‘Day of Action’ to highlight extinction, climate change and environmental pollution. In a pre-recorded video Gustav addressed the marathon audience urging the art, architecture, and design world to take a stand against the ongoing erasure of our species:

“Every art institution will unite in having a single day of art action covering the entire country. I am hoping young people and those of all

ages will take these opportunities to act realistically in the face of terror that is posed by extinction.”¹⁷

Following the Extinction Marathon, independent artists Andrea Gregson, Jo Joelson, and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist along with Gustav Metzger assembled to realise Metzger’s idea. *Remember Nature* became the title of the project, suggested by Joelson in reference to the text in Metzger’s seminal book ‘damaged nature, auto-destructive art’ (1996):

“What is nature? What is it for us living now? Is it the memory of what it was? Is it the poetry of nature that we have read – that we can read again? As we immerse ourselves in what nature was – how do we face what nature is? What it is now?”¹⁸

Metzger believed in an urgent need to redefine notions of nature and environment and that: “the voidance of nature and its substitution by environment represents a grave threat to culture.”¹⁹

Remember Nature is art as social action to “*follow the path of ethics into aesthetics*” as commonly instructed by Metzger. Metzger’s call to action was shared through a short, enacted video statement to arts professionals from all disciplines to make work to address global issues such as extinction, climate change and environmental pollution. *Remember Nature* was conceived as a democratic, mass participation work which would achieve worldwide dissemination through networking, digital technology, and publishing. An accompanying artwork was developed for *le point d’ironie* (an atypical periodical of one thousand copies distributed over the world in museums, galleries, bookshops, schools, cinemas, etc.) through collaboration with London Fieldworks.²⁰ The concept began with a handwritten note, an aide memoire, torn from Metzger’s notebook and transformed into a call for action and worldwide campaign for the art world to *Remember Nature*.

“Art throughout the ages has interacted with nature; as Dürer has said there cannot be art without nature. Our task is to recall the richness and complexity of nature, to protect nature as far as we can. Here is the opportunity for art to extend its functions, to inspire new fields of action, and by doing so entering new territories that are inherently creative and primarily for the good of our world.”²¹

The Day of Action – 4 November 2015 – involved individual and collective actions throughout the UK and across the globe. Drawing on Metzger’s previous works: *100,000 Newspapers* (2003), and *MASS MEDIA: Yesterday and Today* (2009) a public-active installation for *Remember Nature* was presented at Central Saint Martins School of Art in London.

“We could not be in a better location than here at Central Saint Martin’s with its sense of great potential and great ideas to launch what I believe to be great and important efforts against the decline of nature as we know it.”²¹

Under the vaulted skylight in the covered stretch of open space at the centre of CSM’s King’s Cross campus, known as ‘The Street’, a long line of tables was stacked high with 4,000 donated newspapers. Throughout the day, members of the public joined students, artists, curators, academics, and friends to participate, scanning the thousands of newspapers, selecting articles and images speaking to nature’s demise, cutting, and collaging them onto a giant ‘media wall’. The factory-style editorial production line was a constantly fluctuating scene and evolving montage, resembling a kind of media ‘last supper’ with their figurehead observing closely. A live feed was set-up for remote viewing whilst documentation of action from elsewhere was uploaded to the blog site.

Addressing the assembled public, Hans Ulrich Obrist reminded us not only about the disappearance of species but also the loss of languages and entire cultures and how our consumerist society is tied to an endless and unsustainable chain of extinction and production. Obrist acknowledged the collaborative and collective endeavour of the project, its galvanizing and uniting force for change and hope for future projects to emerge from this.

Gustav sketched the future in *Remember Nature*, emerging as an art in which society could participate as ethical agents – not one single person responsible for the act but circulation of an art for the ‘common good’. In thinking through the planet’s future and art’s role in it, Metzger said ‘art needs to sink into the centre of a human being, come up, and that will be hope—the art will be hope.’²²

In the year following *Remember Nature*, E.O. Wilson, the pio-

neer of evolutionary biology, published *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*, (2016) arguing that the only way to avoid a mass extinction would be to leave half the earth wild.²³ Wilson's "*A Biologist's Manifesto for Preserving Life on Earth*"²⁴ details the Sixth Extinction, or peak of destruction initiated by humans, providing the logic for the beginning of a new geological epoch – the Anthropocene, the Epoch of Man – the name coined by the biologist Eugene F. Stoermer in the early 1980s and popularised by the atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000. In 2021 a large group of scientists wrote a paper to “assess progress toward the protection of 50% of the terrestrial biosphere to address the species-extinction crisis and conserve a global ecological heritage for future generations.”²⁵ They proposed a Global Deal for Nature — a companion to the Paris Climate Deal — to promote increased habitat protection and restoration, and the empowerment of indigenous peoples to protect their sovereign lands.

The 10-year anniversary of Remember Nature in 2025 is an opportunity to call upon the artworld to reflect upon “our *efforts against the decline of nature as we know it*”.

The reactivation of Remember Nature continues Gustav Metzger's legacy and his call-to-action, appealing to arts professions from all disciplines to create a mass movement across the arts to ward off extinction.

We are at a precarious point in time when we require a collective response to the destruction and brutality in the world. As Metzger believed, art can cause change, art must cause change and all the expertise in the art world, alongside all the thinkers can contribute something positive to the fight against the brutality, the shortsightedness and ultimately our extinction.

Metzger radically challenged our understanding of art, its relation to reality and our existence within society. His uncompromising commitment to combat environmental destruction was fundamental to his questioning of the role of the artist and the act of artmaking as a vehicle for change.

What will you do to Remember Nature?

*“Never turn your back on Mother Earth.
You never know what she’s got up her sleeve.
Be brave.
Stand up for Her.
Make art that can save the planet.
LAST CHANCE.”*²⁶

(Lucy R. Lippard, 2021)

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WE, SINGULAR PLURAL
(FRAGMENTS OF A
CONVERSATION).

“Singular Plural: in such a way that the singularity of each one is inseparable from his being-with-others and therefore, in fact, and in general, a singularity is inseparable from a plurality. (...) The singular is first of all each one, and therefore also each one with and among all the others. The singular is a shared plural.”

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Être Singulier Pluriel*

(...)

We do not know what “We” is the name of: we have to say it, as an opening of the scene and of the word. Nothing is more difficult, more obscure and more opaque than what is installed when we utter the pronoun “We”. We do not know whose name “We” is, what this impersonal pronoun names and who is named by it. Henceforth we without inverted commas, he who requires all the reduplicated inverted commas. We do not know what it designates or how to designate it. We don’t just know who We are: we don’t know what We is or who the We is when we say it. We do not know what We means to each or every one: what it circumscribes or groups, who is gathered under that label or under that name. It has become, in the register of words and political acts, a difficult word: dense, equivocal, slippery, even insidious. Who is We? What is this We when you say, when someone says We? What set or group, what gathering is this that makes a We this indefinite and indeterminate collective? How to say it in the singular (We, let’s remember, is the first person plural), because We is a singular, but a singular that designates a plural: a public plural, as if saying We made public and manifest a certain gathering, a certain grouping, a certain way of making collective or making community. But We who, exactly who? Me and you? And them - not them or them? Us with whom or Us against whom? Us, the humans? We, the earthlings? We, the living? When we ask ourselves - (to whom? to Us?) - the problem is not only the who but also the what: what is Us, to say Us and above all, why to do it, how to do it (yet). In other words: how to do it collectively? How to enunciate

the singularity of an irreducible plurality of differences, which are nevertheless in a certain re-union?

(...)

We can also say it, without caution or nuance. So often we feel it, so often we are regimented. To pose We as a problem is to pose the problem of (collective) “*identities*”: nations, religions, ethnicities, communities, groups, minorities, majorities supposedly identifiable because they are entangled or intertwined with We, entangled in an identification. Identifying: this is our unholy and merciless passion, like an addiction to the form of language and thought. But are we really condemned to have to identify? But nothing today has become more problematic than the word identity: brandished and raised, used and used up, in many struggles for recognition and difference, in fratricidal clashes and power struggles. How have these We, these collectives, these declinations of belonging and kinship, of similarity and entanglement, of the interweaving that makes the substance of what we would call the social or the historical been formed and enunciated? How to enunciate and decline today the belonging, the adherence, the combat, the desire, the strength of a We? How many infinite tasks in the labyrinth of genealogy and archaeology await us (since always). But also: how to refuse and reject these We made in haste and by pressure (“*the good Portuguese*”, says the extreme right), to dis-identify and dis-objectify, to disentangle this embarrassment of simplifications and generalisations? How is it that these many of Us seem to stall and recrudescence, to return ghostly when we already thought them cursed or dismantled? How is it that other We emerge and form on the horizon, while others falter, shudder, disintegrate mortiferously? How can we be responsible and co-responsible, (creators and co-creators) for collectives (or connectives, we should perhaps write) that will invent themselves or that, on the contrary, are in deliquescence, liquefying with history? How to deal with these abusive and usurping, totalising and totalitarian We, these We, too hastily enunciated, too quickly unified? Who said it, who can say it? What do you mean by that?

Who decided, who chose, who drew the dividing line, the one that circumscribes, sometimes precariously, sometimes by force of law or force without law, the included and the excluded of the We? What We were, when we were (the same) We? What We will finally be, when we become We? The formation and meaning of this singular name of a plural, the essential pronoun of the political voice, of the claim and the revolt, of the affirmation and the “in the name of”. Who today can speak “*in the name of*”, if they do so by multiplying the cautions and cautions, the endorsements? Is the first person plural even a “*person*” if, without further affirmation: a “*person*” may not be a plural? Shouldn’t we then, instead of saying I, always say We - I (1st person plural), I - We (1st person singular)? It is an alchemy of the verb, this, as Rimbaud wrote.

(...)

We need to shed some light on the obscure ways in which we are hitched, integrated, linked, connected, mixed and assimilated, reconnected and retained and multiple incorporations and introjections to the more-than-I and the more-than-one, to the collectives that gather us and that gather us, that welcome us or that harvest us. The political terrain of mobilisation and militancy, of commitment and engagement, is today (more than ever?) fragmented, divided, populated by rifts and clashes. Irreconcilable and aggravated confrontations, with no dialectisation in sight. Many (of us?) today are demarcating and disidentifying themselves, feeling an impossibility (constitutive?) and an impotence (native?) of making a group or belonging, of consenting to the heroclite mixture of the different in a common: in a common sense or in a common feeling - what sense and what feeling today would identify us to a peacefully identifiable We? We the couple, We the teachers, We the intellectuals, We parents and children, We Europeans, We Westerners, We the rich and developed, We post-this and post-that, We anthropocene and apocalyptic citizens, disintegrated and pulverised? From us (plural) are these us (singular) made and confabulated? We ask ourselves more and more insistently, piling perplexity upon perplexity, dis-

illusionment upon disillusionment, scepticism one after the other, radical and stabbing doubt. But the question remains: how to come together and what to come together for today? With whom, to do what, with what objective, with what desire, with what hope, in the name of what? How to experiment and rehearse collectives, to constitute or establish them, even in a dispersed or divergent, multiple and multiplied way? This is the motto: how to make a “*public sphere*”, even if it is not a sphere and even if it is not fully public?

(...)

Judith Butler, in her latest essays, has been interested in these new forms of mobilisation and uprising, of protest and outcry, asking in what forms (legal, philosophical, constitutional, political, artistic, etc.) but above all asking what other forms of doing politics are these that seem to emerge in the non-identified modes of collective doing and assembly. And what might be emerging again beyond and beyond the saturated and agonised space of identity and identification politics, of identification operations and identitarianisms. Always and still identification: deadly, deadly, dead. Reflection on the right to assemble and the right to dissent, on civil disobedience and non-violent protest, on the modes of activism and public demonstration, the conditions and dynamics that make them possible, their implications and their unanticipated effects, their complications and their phantasmatic impasses. What does it mean to be a group or a group of people and, first of all or after all (the party was nice, man) to enunciate a singular We of a plural? (Because the We is always the singular of a plural, it is not too much to say it: pure oxymoron or pure paradox, staging of the impossible). What is the democratic content of such a movement or gathering and what is its real or dreamed effectiveness? How can we understand the concerted action of bodies and spirits, the combined and confluent wills amidst the sensationalism of media coverage, its inaccuracies and inadequacies, its instrumentalisations? How can we think or rethink the practices of direct action or antagonistic practices, or even the simple gesture of criticism and refusal,

of dissent and affirmation of another life, another desire, another meaning? How can we say no while still saying yes, affirming life where it stagnates, where the desert grows? Gatherings, being-together, go beyond demands and speeches, they are not reduced to the expression of a right of demonstration or indignation, just as the political is not reduced to politics, nor politics to policies, in its sense of administrations and governances of public affairs. The gathering, the being-together, as an exemplary figure of a We, singular plural, is not reduced, restricted or limited to what seeks to circumscribe and inscribe it in the recognisable and the known, it is not subjugated to categorisations. In the past (but not so long ago), Antonio Negri named this We-to-come as a multitude, but which was already there as a swarm, that of the digital cognitariat (itself also a figure of the proletarian), *multitudo*, beyond any identification with a people or with a recognisable and designable collective subject. The figure enunciates: a force and a desire, mobilisers, a starting point for action whose point of arrival is constitutively indeterminate and unanticipated. Radical politics, radical forms of solidarity and mutual aid, that make-it-self and make-it-do, collectives and communities, that rise up against the destructive power of state violence and war, the power of the multinationals and the great mercenaries who today are the economic and political forces of the great industries and the great conglomerates of power: how to respond to them? Another meaning and configuration of the public space and the public sphere would also be emerging and radically in question, in this rethinking of what We are, of what it means to say We (and at the limit, we would be led to return to the “*question of freedom*”, so archaic, so Greek). This is where I wanted to go from, or this is where I wanted to arrive. But where to? One must always ask, ask the insistent and obsessive question of where (where to find, where to locate, where one sees and hears, where one identifies). There? Here?

(...)

It is a question of shared convictions, before the convergence of struggles. Intersectionality, she said. We have to connect with convictions that are not convergent and with convergences without convictions: that is our destiny and our drama, insurmountable and undefeatable. That is why “We” is (all?) less a question of identity (of origin, of myth, etc.) than the affirmation of a refusal, of what we cling to and where we stand. We stand up and say “no” together: an unidentified us is glimpsed and intertwined, so that we can finally say “yes” to everything with which we will finally begin. And we do not all stick to or maintain the same things, nor do we stick to or maintain the same words. The same things, towards them, they who are always already other, relaunched in words, which never form anything but the very alterity (other), transcendence, close to the immanence of life, of bodies, of looks, of gestures. The question is not to say who we are or where we come from, but where we are going, or where we want to go together, where we will go if we get together, or rather: who will we be if we get together, what we can be together or do together, which will only be if we become or do We? Together, but where, to where? Who together?

(...)

It resounds in We, it resounds in the We, a kind of apology or a call to be-together or to do-together: as if the We were this (immeasurable) expansion or dilation (of the heart) of an enlarged gathering, the like of something that opens up. But the We is immediately followed by a feeling of indeterminacy (or of infinity, contrasting with the intimations of mortality): what is this scene (more-than-sphere) that opens in this utterance of a We, what space of possibilities is opened there, what community is this (dare we still say this word, so beautiful, knowing how communitarianism is the very logic - the hyperbolic - of identification and identity?)? What does this We of a community, written, said, felt, have in common? This force of coming together, of appeal and summons, to be or to act, is today mobilised and commodified in countless wars or confrontations of the multiple nodes that clash and attack each other. Commu-

nitarianisms, as many as the crumbs and debris of humiliated and offended communities, failed and tried, interrupted and fractured, haunting and phantasmatic? Not only between the Us, trapped and ankylosed, but between Us-selves (when is the same the same?), with diffuse and undefined contours, hostage to multiple instrumentalizations, reconductions and rechannelings. Polarizations and divisions are aggravated by screens that broadcast and replicate images of the same and the identical: us and them, outsiders and insiders, but also a We that develops autoimmune pathologies (Derrida and Esposito have written luminous pages on these immune and autoimmune logics of the common and the community: we should return to them) that intermingle and corrode, crossed by the inevitable paroxysms of identities (all, each), by the traps of identitytarianism (all, any). The issues of hospitality and welcome, mutual help and conviviality fight against the massive tendency towards polarization, which is perversely nourished by identity stasis. But there are nodes that form and emerge to enunciate a claim or a right that subsumption to a made and given identity: how to do them justice? There is, we could perhaps say, a recourse to the word we which, while obscenely displaying insidious appropriations, also demands (of us?) a recomposition of forces of modes of protest and reinvindication, of defence of a threatened or precarious right, of defence of an intimidated way of life. The word therefore sounds like a voice of identity confrontation enunciated by the abusive and usurping we, but also like the indistinct voice of a hope: an appeal, a militant appeal for the strength, for the courage of an emancipating we (which opens a convergence without conviction or a conviction without convergence). We must therefore ask what is said each time we say we: we must listen to the We and what rises up in it, what is its elan and its vital impulse, what is the practice of the collective and the connective, of being-together and doing-with, that it promises and discern what system of coercions these usurping and abusive nodes sometimes harbour.

(...)

Many authors (I will not name them here, but the list is immense, in addition to those already mentioned: Baptiste Morizot, Barbara Stiegler, Emanuele Coccia, Marielle Macé, Patrice Maniglier, and many others) are now investigating this horizon of enunciation: who are the knots that arise today, threatening or emancipating, their fragility and their strength, their cohesion and their dispersion, their horizon and their demand. About all the multiple, emerging and unanticipated ways we have of (knowing) ourselves and (feeling) ourselves to be members of a we, of a community, members of a singular plural. We have to find new ways of reflecting on the becoming of the Western We or the contemporary We or the human We: what happens to this We if we think of it as inextricably intertwined with the multiple beings and life forms that are its partners and allies in the ecological niches where we live (the bacteria, the viruses, the insects, the trees, the rivers, the forests, the glaciers) but also all the urban and artificial ecosystem contexts that we have created and that have separated us or created other barriers and borders with these partners and allies? It is one of the crucial questions of contemporary anthropology (Tim Ingold, Eduardo Kohn, Anna Tsing, Phillippe Descola or Bruno Latour) of its attention to the interwoven singularity of life forms, to their intricacies and interdependencies, sometimes inextricable and often inseparable, from concrete communities. It is a question of thinking about new links or other connections (or ones that we are only now discovering or rediscovering), ways of relating or “*ways of being alive*” (the title of Baptiste Morizot’s beautiful and deeply political book), with these living others who are the innumerable living species that populate terrestrial ecosystems. Baptiste Morizot, in his book “*Ways of being alive*” (or already in *Les diplomates*), shows the intricacies, fertile and emerging, of ways to transform our behaviours as masters and lords, as owners of a large store of resources at our disposal, a stock of energies or raw materials, into partners and allies: as diplomats, i.e., beings in permanent negotiation, in exchanges of information, materials and energy, which have to be mapped systemically, within a relational ecology, capable of composing and scheduling multiple and interdependent modes of relationship with other living beings, capable

of talking to and receiving something from others, of entering into exchanges and gifts of alliance, establishing pacts and ecological coalitions of mutual aid and cooperation (Kropotkine, who saw and tried to enunciate this as the great logic of the evolution of life). And this without rushing to be autonomous and independent subjects, quick to consider themselves and act as single and purely free entities that exist outside the immense web of relationships that constitutes the fabric of life (or in the case of human subjects, without the immense web of independence that makes us all dependent on each other for the smallest things that we take for granted), subjects identical to themselves identified and substantial, proud of their identity substance. The opposite of a certain Darwinist vulgate that makes ecosystemic relations a struggle of all against all, where the right of the most adapted has become the right of the strongest, where the pressure of the co-creative and co-organising encounter has become competition and the struggle for survival.

(...)

Among historians, there are also multiple voices questioning the vacillations and fractures of the us: its relations with the territories it has colonised and instrumentalised, its geopolitical power plays, and taking responsibility for its historicity. It is a question of preventing historical narratives from becoming monolithic blocks, from solidifying and hardening too quickly, from staging the fable of a unified and continuous we, of a national or territorial identity, for example. Or of a white and Christian Europe, resolutely Greco-Latin, tragically heroic in the face of its countless and fearsome eco-miscegenations and ethno-mixtures: we have to dislocate territorialisations, not settle as in a conquered land, immemorial reflection of the children of the former colonisers. It is a question of making *“our history less obviously ours, of making it intrigue and amaze us, of making us stop pretending to have a relationship of immediate connivance with it, of a hasty transparency of it to itself or of Us to Ourselves”*, as the historian Patrick Boucheron puts it. A history(s), as Georges Didi-Hubermann charmingly narrates, made up of *“multiple strata,*

stratifications and stratigraphies of multiple times, crystallisations of times that diffract and disseminate along the pious illusion of the historical continuum". From a warrior narrative of victors and vanquished, from the warrior rhetoric and confrontation that we see today, once again, taking the front and the stage, as happens, moreover, on a daily basis, in the political game.

(...)

In 2016, Tristan Garcia published an inciting and challenging essay, committed to a certain way of thinking about emancipation and its identity derivatives, entitled "*We*". It is interested in the great speeches and the small phrases, the slogans and the manifestos, which make our condition tangled in collective identities, in practices of the collective. Here, the *We* appears as the overlapping of layers (calcs and terraces, decals), of dense or porous planes, which we select or mobilise tactically to communicate social identities, to decline belonging, re-cutting and re-mounting (all the *We* is a system of clipping and circumscription, which manages conflicts of clipping and jurisdiction) in the space of recognition of the social, species, genders, types, classes, generations, minorities. A whole proteiform range of constructions, which are ways of situating and mapping belonging, our loyalties or allegiances, sometimes unacknowledged, or our repudiations or silences, assumed or denied. This understanding highlights a living model of compositions and agency, some more ideological, others more speculative, some more disciplinary or biopolitical control (Foucault, Negri, Agamben), others more emancipatory (but what does emancipation mean today?). We are - or rather we participate - in a mobile and dynamic constellation that is being redesigned and reconfigured with other living multiplicities, that extends, crosses and entangles, that interweaves with other identity compositions. This is an attempt to rethink political existence as a war of nodes, in a double sense: wars of (collective) identity knots that oppose each other in conflict, in a struggle for representativeness, recognition or influence, but also, in another sense, of identity as a thing of knots and loops,

of bonds and links that are interwoven, ties and bindings to identity blocks where (one) thinks to subsume a certain identification (always identification), more or less precarious and transitory, more or less durable, subterranean and silent, which keep us (despite everything) with some perception of gathering among ourselves, but at the same time, from which we are torn dissidents, sometimes in pure loss or orphanhood. Tristan Garcia redesigns the narrative of the adventures of modern and contemporary emancipations (still ongoing and unfinished), the coming to visibility of still invisible and inaudible collectives whose nodes have only gained audibility and visibility over a century of struggles. These are all, so many, proliferating and contradictory nodes, which today we glimpse identifying from their incessant and recurrent dis-identification: we the women, we the Jews, we the blacks, we the people, we the refugees and stateless people, we the workers, we the immigrants, we the living, and you continue. All these we, we are susceptible to cross paths with them but above all to cross paths in Us (in the pierced or pierced interior of each illusory individual), in our broken histories and shared memories, crossed or abandoned dwellings, in the direct or indirect relationships we maintain with times and places. The internal or internalised multiplicity that each (one of) us is and that places each (one of) us never entirely coinciding with itself. The one-differing-from-itself, infinitely. Tristan Garcia questions this internalised multiplicity that runs through us and that has made itself ostensible, that shows itself in an exposed fracture, that makes itself explicit or affirms itself in its multiplicity. The second part of the book, incisive, talks about the “*constraints of identification*” that taraverse and inhabit us, like an unidentifiable background, but which segregates mechanisms of identification and recognition of which we are the elements in a system or links in a chain, which express and manifest, which activate, the uncertain form of certain “us”. All of these are historical processes and processings, constructions generated to integrate us into certain categories of belonging and identification, to locate us on a map of descriptions and form about us a predictability and an algorithmic monitoring, a profile, we could say today, of a surveillance capitalism (to use the expres-

sion, so accurate of the book - one of the most important of this century, I believe - by Shoshana Zuboff, which deals only, at its centre, with all procedures and programmings of “identification”, in a broad sense). The artificiality, that is to say, the fragility of each of the categories of belonging, the factitious and fictitious construction, the fictions they nourish the fables they stage, the crises they refuse to face and which for this very reason, and to some extent even in spite of it, keep them still in apparent operation, some of them more rampant and on the rise, strategically instrumentalised according to the interests of certain groups or systems. We are well aware that all this is happening before our eyes, every day on a screen near you, near us. He seeks to hypothesise a critical and cautious relationship with the use and abuse of the we (of identities and identifications): how to think of identity as a use of the word and of the statement, of the affirmation that does not force the differentiation that separates, nor does it force the similarity that unifies, as a creative, questioning and attentive relationship with the uses of identity and of the identical, but also with the exacerbation of difference as an absolute difference that congregates in an identitarianism or in a hypostasised and inassimilable alterity (the absolutisation of difference would be so harmful - because it would be symmetrical to the absolutisation of the identical as totally identical to itself). The same and sameness, identification and identity as hyperboles of a phantasmatic knot (and a knot), the cradle of a segregating emancipation and a deadly polarisation.

(...)

The “we” is not so much the terrain of emancipation and liberation as the terrain of imprisonment and dependence. This is its constitutive ambiguity, which demands or summons our discernment. But we are neither more independent than dependent, nor more free than integrated into the order and necessity of the laws of nature and the universe, neither definitively emancipated nor incurably belonging: we are, perhaps, always both of these things, simultaneously, sometimes even at the same time. We have an irrec-

oncilable dual nature, constitutively unfinished and capable of contradiction, traversed by contrary drives. The mechanics of identity become complexified and denaturalised, belonging understood as pluralised, complicated, with layers of time covered over and reconstructed. The question of community, or of plural communities, rather, is the question of participation: how do we take part and are separated in large ensembles, in forced or desired gatherings, maintained by tenuous and diaphanous projections. We take part in a series of identifying and identity circles that intersect as in set theory, places of allegiances and infidelities, places of claim in which we try to position ourselves, move, displace, etc. Contemporary identities are made up of plural incisions and multiple exclusions, that is to say contradictory belongings that are spatialised, which we can try to visualise as spaces or landscapes on a map, as more or less imagined, more or less real territories that move: calques and trails that densify or condense around a strange attractor, a “*collective name*”. The “*collective names*” are spheres or circles of belonging, or perhaps fences that delimit and circumscribe a property and therefore establish a division between included and excluded. But we circulate between and through these circles, we intersect them, we make tangents, even if they seem opaque and composite to us. But this spatial figuration of the political, this spacing that makes identity a movement of approach and distance, of displacement and territorialisation, and not exactly a family home (or a common house) or a static container. We walk among these containers of contradictory identification, trying to trace a path or a tactful path: and the path is different for everyone, a homosexual black woman does not take the same path as a poor white man who is unschooled, or a young cosmopolitan urbanite: what collective names will each of them appeal to in order to find a little more freedom, dignity, recognition, rights. Identities are more than a dwelling place, in the sense of an abode or permanence in a stabilised place, they are an uncertain navigation through moving elements. More than a subjection or a subjectivation, they are dynamics of individuation (if we wish), something that is progressively defined in advances and retreats, in fills and empties, like a breath (inhale and exhale) or a pulse (a

systole and a diastole). Tristan Garcia says: “everything is a question of priorities between these circles and our desire to circulate between them and through them. (...) From time to time, at certain important moments in our lives, our order of knots suddenly changes and the very shape of the knot is transformed: we feel disturbed, stunned or converted, or else dislodged from our old convictions. Each one of us has experienced a change in the priority of our belonging and kinship, and a transformation of what we thought we perceived of ourselves and others.” Sometimes we realise that until now I thought I came as this or that, lived as this or that, and then... all this becomes a problem or a question that we have to unravel, like a ball of yarn that has become a tangled strand that now seems to us like a cocoon or an incubator that has artificially kept us alive.

(...)

To pose the problem of subjects, collectives, to pose the problem of the We a certain way of posing the problem of the common, and to a certain extent, is to pose the problem of the public sphere (that was the motto?), i.e., of access to the visibility and audibility of certain ways in which we or someone else can take the floor, can clarify or ask for clarification, can criticise and express anger or a desire for justice, but also to utter a few words of friendship or love, of a desire to be together and to do together, to name what we lack or what we dream of, what we want to mobilise towards. This implies thinking about what this singular subject made of a collective plural can be: a subject that does not correspond to any determinable person but is constituted by a set of links or connections that meet in a given space and time, whose ties are invented and instituted by this power of encounter. A subject that is cut out or circumscribed by extracting an undifferentiated whole to open up a process of individuation that is potentially open and indeterminate, a finite circumscription that opens up the possibility of infinitisation, enlargement, expansion, alliance, transmutation. Perhaps this is what the Invisible Committee is talking about, in the text *The Coming Insurrection*, when it “calls for the constitution of a knot that would not be defined - as collectives usually do - by an outside and an inside,

by a line of sharing between included and excluded, but would be defined by the density of the connections that compose it and by the recompositions and openings that infinitise it”.

(...)

These dramatisations of the we that appear in the public sphere, even if they may be inconsistent and contradictory, nevertheless rehearse a bid, a proposition to unfold the open space of a we. Even if we don't know what a “we” is, how it is a “we” that we can take part in without belonging, that we can share without having to define ourselves. That it does not demand of each of us an identity identical to itself, or a proper and proper property, but something like a question or an openness, a hospitality: something that receives and welcomes and not something that demands an identification or an identity (Derrida wrote a lot about this when he spoke of unconditional hospitality, of endless cosmopolitanism). To speak of We, to speak of a We or to speak for or in the name of a We, encourages a questioning, a patience, a vigilance and an intensity in what we want to say and in what we do with what we say, in the scenes that taking the floor opens up in the public space. The representation of circles and spheres, which are images of a circumscription that surrounds an outline, but also of an opening, like a lens or eye that opens a space of projection and visibility or a space of listening. A space of appearance (or appearance, Hannah Arendt would say) where free beings appear to meet.

(...)

Jean-Christophe Bailly, in one of the most beautiful texts I know about the We, a text written in 2014 in the magazine *Vacarme* and republished in 2015 in the book *L'enlargissement du poème*, speaks of a We that does not designate a simple addition of identified or identity subjects, partly undefined potentially unlimited. A We that does not surround or enclose us in a sphere or circle, except if it is a circle that opens in itself a pure openness, even if an open

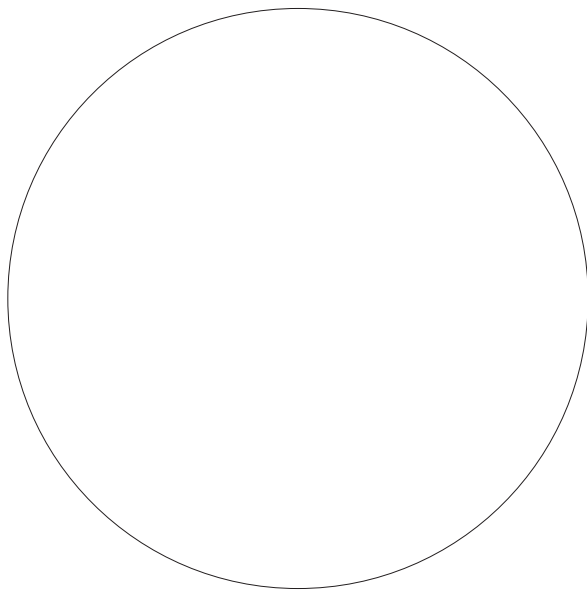
circle is a pure contradiction: it is no longer a circle but another figure. We would have to think not the squaring of the circle but the opening of the circle (that is to say: the circumscription of the We), if we understand by this that what it circumscribes is a hospitality and an opening. An open and enlarged We, or, as Marielle Macé also writes, “*a We that asks what we can do, if we say and do a We. A We that would not open up the question of identity, but the infinite task that consists in making and unmaking collectives, belonging, kinship, plural enough together to be able to enunciate, to be able to assemble without resembling*”.

(...)

We would be, constitutively and by definition, limitless but not necessarily indeterminate or illocalised: determined, rather, by a struggle, ideas, ties, embodied and lived emotions, by a certain desire for the future. We is not an end, nor an end in itself. We is a beginning or a beginning, a starting point and not a port of arrival (as if we could say we have finally arrived at We). We is the middle, simply a middle, in the ecological sense: a place of interdependence and connections, the starting point of an enquiry to be instructed with attention, patience, humility, freedom and courage. Listening to us or us as listening: isn't that what a public sphere is for, listening to each other? More than an identity or belonging, we, in multiple singular plural senses: as the name of a cause, a struggle, a task, a listening. This listening (or reading) here and now, of a voice that is written, was also, in a way, a we: fragile, ephemeral, precarious, at a distance but true.



FEEDBACKS



PHENOMENOLOGICAL
ELABORATIONS OF
THREE ARTISTS

Rudolph Bauer

Phenomenological Elaborations of Three Artists

The luminous phenomenological experience that our three artists elaborated, each within their own perceptual articulation and formulation was phenomenological Being-full articulations. By luminous I mean the radiance of the experience that was expressed in the radiance of their luminous Being-full painting and luminous artistic presentations. Their experiential art-full philosophical talks were a luminous artistic presentation.

In our esoteric view we enter the field of phenomena, and we experience the field of the Being of the phenomena being re-presented and re-manifested within the art form and forms of art-full presentations such as filming and luminous presentations of historical structures and luminous forms of philosophical lived experience which their implicit -explicit revealing of luminous Being-fullness.

This esoteric experiential view is our view of gnosis, or our view as jnana or our view of direct perception. This esoteric view is our view of direct knowing and our non- dual view with and within the phenomena of painting and phenomena of Art-full Presentation.

This is our experience of the field of consciousness within the field of the phenomena and within the field of the Being-fullness of the Phenomena. Phenomena are the self-manifestation of Consciousness as Being-full Consciousness.

In our artistic viewing we directly experience the felt sense and we feel the felt sense or perceive the felt sense of the Being-full energy of the phenomena manifesting within us. This manifesting within us happens as the manifested phenomena of painting and manifested phenomena as Art-full Presentations actually are taking place. In this viewing, we experience though gnosis, through direct perception, direct knowing the field of Being of the phenomena and within the field of the radiance of phenomena. The radiance of the painting and the radiance of various art-full forms including the art form of speaking is the direct manifestation of the luminous energy of the Being-full phenomena experienced and phenomenologically re-manifested into our world.

This gift of the artist is to self-manifest their direct non-con-

ceptual experience of the radiant energetic luminous dimension of forms of Phenomenological Being-fullness seen and experienced.

THIS IS NOT THE CONCRETIZED VIEW OF MIND ALONE

This creative esoteric artistic view is the view of gnosis or jnana and is the view of direct perception of awareness as gnosis and as jnana. Now this view is not the view of mind alone. The view of mind alone does not include the knowing of gnosis or direct knowing or direct perception or direct non-dual experience of the energetic field of Being-fullness within us. Within this view of the Being-fullness of the phenomena there is the experiential view of Pure Being-fullness in self-manifesting as phenomenological experience within us the viewer and listener.

Our mind knows form through thinking, through reasoning, through sensation, through mental abstraction, through affective feeling, through imaginal perception, and through memory. Our mind can know experience and know phenomena and the forms of phenomena.

Our mind alone does not have the gift of gnosis or direct non-dualistic perception. Actually, when we suspend our mind, and suspend the judgmental-ness of our mind about true or false, right or wrong, good or evil or even better and best, within this suspension of mind, this pausing of mind, our awareness as Gnosis Self-Arises, our Direct Knowing self-arises, our non-dual experience of Being-fullness self-arises. Thus, the ongoing experience of non-duality within duality may arise. Primordial Awareness self-arises and self-manifests experience to us and to others dualistically.

Our direct experience of the Being-fullness of the phenomena arises, our experience of the Being-full Luminous energetic Force of the phenomena arises, our experience of the field of the Being of phenomena and as phenomena manifests within us and surrounding us. This direct non-conceptual knowing is the experiential knowing of our direct primordial Being-full Awareness. Awareness is Our Being knowing Being. Being knows Being through Being-full Awareness. Our Being is Being-full Awareness. Our Being is Consciousness embodied.

Our “artists” elaborated their experience of their Esoteric Energetic Luminous manifestation of Being-full Phenomena through their gift of self- manifestation of their lived creative experience through their skillful means of self- manifestation.

Phenomenologically we paint not only with the liquidity of paint, but we paint with luminous words and liquid like language. We can bring forth Being-full experience through liquid painting and we can bring forth Being-full luminous experience with our liquid painting of our lived experience with liquid like words and wording of Experience. Language invokes and brings forth Being-fullness and the Sound of Being-fullness. The Sound of our words and the meaning of our words invokes Being-fullness and Meaning-fullness. As Heidegger once said “*Language is the House of Being*”. (Heidegger, 1947, p. 213)

The Artist spoke from and through their Esoteric experience of their self-manifestation of Creative Being-full and Meaningful phenomena. Each artist has their own singular direct participatory perception of phenomena, and their own singular direct non conceptual and non-dualistic experience of the luminous Being-fullness of and as phenomena.

We all love experiencing the Being-fullness of experience. Through art we experience the living felt sense of the artist through their felt sense of their art-full presentations such as painting or the many other forms of artist manifestation such as speaking their experience within the esoteric field of Being-fullness work. This experience happens through our felt sense of their artistic manifestations whatever the modality.

COMMENTARY

Each artist gave a commentary in their own way using their own language to articulate their lived experience of Being-full phenomena, and their lived experience of the radiant phenomena of Being-fullness as luminous energetic phenomena. They each experientially were working within their own creative artistic experience of their self-manifestation in their relationship to their Art-full presentation. Their innermost Who-ness which is their innermost awareness

through which they experienced and perceived the world of Being-full manifestation and in which they expressed their self-manifestation of their art-full presentations. They actively manifested in the world their Being-full experience of their phenomenological Being-full world.

Each artist also made a commentary and articulation of their own understanding of their own creative process of self-manifestation.

José Guilherme Abreu – Art Historian Artist

The first artist's José Guilherme Abreu presented a luminous phenomenological based conversation. He began by speaking about the essence of human awareness and human consciousness as Being Creative Self-Manifestation. He contextualized his discussion about the power of Creative manifestation by referring to the unfolding history of Genetic Studies and Survival Capacity. The first early series of genetic studies emphasized vital biological functions as essential process necessary of survival. Then the second series of genetic studies, he described as the genetic field of intelligence and field of reason as being a source of survival. The third series of genetic studies, he described as the genetic field of Creativity as the Source of Survival.

José elaborated how Human Creativity is more powerful for survival than human intelligence and rationality. Moreover, the human genes of Creativity seem to be related and correlated to and with Longevity.

As José was speaking about these dramatic results of Creativity reflecting human survival, I became focused on the early manifestation of Existential Dzogchen Tradition of Ontological Creativity that manifested during the 7th and 8th century ad. The Existential Dzogchen Tradition brought forth a most amazing dramatic philosophical transition from the ancient Buddhist Transcendental Tradition of radical Dissociation, radical Detachment and radical Disembodiment Practice to the Dzogchen tradition of natural

awareness and natural creativity of Being-fullness being the path of self-liberation. The Buddhist transcendental tradition considered all Desire as being the source of suffering. A goal of meditation praxis was to become established in a Solipsistic Witness Consciousness gazing into the Emptiness of Phenomena.

There was this transcendental existential understanding that all phenomena are an illusion, and our experience of reality-based experience was invalid and delusionary. Even our experience of our Who-ness and our living experience of our self and our living experience of the precious self of those we love was delusionary and invalid. This transcendental distortion of human Being-full experience continues.

All phenomena are Being-less and all phenomena was Empty of Being and Empty of Being-fullness. Existential life and Love are a complete delusion and actually non-existent. There was only Absence and Emptiness and Absolute Nothingness. The life of the human being was meaningless and an illusory existence and empty of both Being and Being-fullness. Of course, for me, this a profound distortion of human experience and this profoundly distorted understanding is not only not true but is profoundly Boring and Stupid. By Stupid I mean the Dzogchen understanding of Ma Rigpa. Ma Rigpa means the Ignorance of Not Knowing Primordial Awareness, Primordial Being and Primordial Beingfullness.

And strangely the Only Way Out this Meaningless Beingless Anatman existence was to enter into Transcendental Cessation. Our lived experience of phenomena was illusory and a delusion. A person would enter into this transcendental state beyond Witness Consciousness and In the Transcendental Space there was no one there. There was no who-ness there. You were no longer there. There was only nothing-ness, absolute nothing-ness. There was only Absence.

Of course, there was no suffering since there was no one was there to suffer. There was no There There. Of course, I do practice transcendental meditation when I go to the Dentist. Transcendental meditation is a form of anesthesia.

When the Buddhist practitioner was returning back to ordi-

nary illusionary existence, the goal was to become a Buddha. And for some reason during this same 8th century, to become a Buddha was to become omniscient and omnipotent. Meaning you could know everything (there was nothing to know) and you could do everything (there was nothing to do). It was at this time of the 8th century ad that Buddhist scholarship was documenting the omnipotence and omniscience of the Buddha. This is a great leap from knowing nothingness to knowing everything-ness. I think we can never underestimate the power of our human grandiosity even in sacred context.

During this time of the 8th century, this great Dzogchen text came into Existence. The evolutionary Dzogchen text was called '*The Supreme Source*.' This Dzogchen text brought forth the immanent tradition of the immanence and reality of embodied luminous consciousness as luminous Being-fullness. At this moment of the 8th century ad Dzogchen came into Being-fullness. This Dzogchen text went beyond the Being-lessness and the Meaning-lessness and the Voidness and the Absence of Being-fullness within ancient Buddhism.

The same existential drama was taking place in India with the contemporary manifestation of Kashmir Shavism during this same time period. These 8th and 9th century traditions of Dzogchen and Kashmir Shavism are amazingly similar to Contemporary Existential Phenomenology. These three traditions all focused on our lived experience as an existential source of knowledge. They were phenomenologically experiential.

The focus of this early text *The Sublime Source* was on our embodied luminous awareness as Being-fullness and our two ways of knowing. Our mind knowing form and our awareness Knowing Being and Being-fullness. Most importantly was the existential understanding that our primordial awareness was the source of creativity and our creative self-manifestation of Being and Being-fullness in this world.

This creative awareness was not earned through some form of economic spiritual exchange or some patriarchal spiritual drama such as following the rules of the Master and you will become liberated after eons and eons from now. Eon is a very very long time.

Rather, through the power of Our luminous Creative Awareness which is our luminous Being-full Consciousness we become liberated in our own immediate lifetime. What is Self- liberation?

Self-Liberation is our luminous creative experience of our self-manifestation and self-embodiment of our luminous Being-fullness in our world just as we are. Our luminous Being-full awareness can metabolize experience and metabolize traumatic experience and we can manifest and transmit luminous Being-full experience into other human beings. This is the power of Transmission of our luminous Being-full Energy of Awareness.

In and within our living experience within our existential liberation through luminous creativity, our Creative field of Being-fullness is the Essential Contemporary existential path of self- liberation and survival. Our art-full creative experience, creative manifestation, creative imaginal experience of the archetypal dimension of Being and our creative experience as experiencing our own creative awareness as our Being-full source of Being-fullness is the essence of Dzogchen self- liberation.

José Guilherme Abreu then brought forth his discussion of the Public Sphera. He first mentioned the Sociological studies of Habermas. He then focused his talk into a phenomenological discussion on the work of wonderful French phenomenologist Nathalie Depraz. Nathalie Depraz understands and teaches phenomenologically within and as the actuality of our phenomenological experience so that we can have direct perception and direct experience so that we know the Being of a being, and the know the Being of phenomena. Simultaneously we can know Being through a being and through the Being of phenomena. She described how we can know absolute Being through our own Being-full awareness. By absolute, she is meaning we can know Being as it is in actuality and in reality. By absolute Being she also means Being as the actual creative source of Being-fullness in this actual world of Being. Being and the phenomena of Being is not an illusion and not a delusion as so many unhappy idealistic traditions suggest. Being and Being-fullness are experiential realities and experiential actuality.

In experiencing our own awareness, we experience the Being-

fullness of our own Being which is Being itself. Awareness is not simply psychological but awareness is our Being's knowing Being. Our awareness is ontological knowing Being and our mind is psychological knowing, knowing phenomena. This awareness is not earned or paid for or even spiritually merited but is naturally given, given at Birth. Awareness is the givenness of Being. What a great gift!

Awareness naturally manifests itself within us and through us as us. Awareness is Being's knowingness that naturally manifest within us as our own innate Being-full Who-ness.

Within the immediacy of our awareness, we can experience the Non-Duality of Pure Being-fullness of our own being and the being of others. We can enter into Being-fullness within each other's being. We can know duality within duality and we can know duality within non duality. There is this intimacy of Being-fullness entering the Being-fullness of the other. This is what Jung calls the Mysterious Coniunctio. This Creative intimate union is both liberating and empowering. (I am glad we exist and are not just an empty delusion)! This is definitely more fun and not so boring.

Depraz also describes how she has gone beyond Husserl. She goes beyond Husserl's focus only on knowing intuitively the essence of phenomena through the transcendental awareness. In light of her work with Heidegger and her work with Francisco Varela on the great text '*The Gesture of Awareness*' Depraz began focusing on the lived experience of phenomena within Being and the Being-fullness of beings. Phenomenology could focus on the lived experience of Being as manifested within the field of phenomena. Nathalie focused not only on the essence of phenomena but on the Being-fullness of phenomena as phenomena. She focused on the actuality of Being and the Being-fullness of phenomena, and being as phenomena.

In fact, in her work, she described how Phenomenology could become the basis of the Sphera, the public space of Being-full Luminous energetic collective awareness. Nathalie Depraz and the Varela text '*The Gesture of Awareness*' can help us to understand the nature and the practice of experiential phenomenology. Collective exper-

riential phenomenology can bring forth the reality of the Sphera. Understanding that phenomenological awareness is an easy living basis for our collective experience of Being and Being-fullness of Being. Experiencing the Sphera and bringing forth the Sphera which is our collective embodiment of the field of Luminous Being-full within each other. Collective life in mind alone or belief alone does not work. Collective life in the exoteric frame which is mind alone there is in the absence of Being-fullness which is a tragic loss of depth and breathe of our luminous field of embodied Being-fullness.

José Guilherme continued to described the Sphera from different points of view: from sociological class view point as Habermas, from the phenomenological view, from and interpersonal relational view.

José Guilherme's talk continued elaborating from the phenomenological ontological view point of the Creativity of Consciousness and the liberating power of creative self-manifestation of Being-full awareness within Being and within the Being-full awareness of Beings.

He then introduced the Sphera. This Sphera of Being-fullness. When the Sphera is based upon phenomenological experience of the field of Being-fullness, the power of the phenomenological experience will continue to unfold the ontological understanding that human beings can experience and self-manifest their Being into and within each other. This self-manifestation of Being-full awareness into another being can create this Public Sphera. This provides the luminous Being-full Base for relational life and work life and family life. This provides the luminous Being-full Base for relational intimacy of Being-fullness entering Being-fullness. In this union of luminous Being-fullness arises as ontological support infuses our mind and embodiment with energy and light and fluid creative presence.

This Public Sphere is the union of the field of Being between beings. This union of the field of Being within the Field of Being of others brings forth and create a luminous powerful Creative Protection through us and around us and within us. This Sphera encompasses us and creates a luminous energetic Sphera of Being-fullness as luminous Creative Source that surrounds us and embodies us as

the esoteric Sphera of luminous Field of Energy.

This Sphera of luminous Being-full energy can be felt through our felt sense of phenomena and can even be esoterically seen and envisioned by some. Some can see this luminous sphere of Being-fullness embody a person or a collective field of persons. This luminous Sphera field of awareness is containing and sustaining luminous energetic platform offering us a protective context for our collective experience of ongoing continuity of Being-fullness between and within us as Luminous energetic beings. The Energetic luminous field of this Sphera of containment holds the luminous open Spaciousness. This Sphera is also luminous Being-full Energy as cosmological Shakti Energy and this luminous Sphera is light and within this Sphera is the felt sense of luminous presence and luminous capacity of compassion which is the transmission of our awareness field into each other thus creating and containing our luminous energetic life force field supporting our ongoing continuity of our experience of Non-Dualistic Being-full experience within dualistic difference within each other.

There no master who is the source, our own innermost awareness is the source. Our own innermost awareness is the innermost awareness of Being itself. Our innermost awareness is in union with each other's innermost luminous awareness. This Sphera is the actuality of the esoteric field of Being-fullness. This field of the Sphera is powerfully creative and luminously supportive. As Bodhidharma said in the 6th century beyond words and letters there is "*Transmission, it does not belong to any tradition, it is the nature of human awareness itself.*"

Longchenpa the 14th century teacher would describe how all phenomena are the same as the source. Source and phenomena are the same. There is Dzogchen prayer "May I experience all Phenomena as the Source."

This Sphera is a powerful luminous Being-full context for self-liberation and self-manifestation of Being-fullness in this world. Such as Sphera of Being-fullness can be created within the life of a couple, and within the life of the family and within the life of a Creative Luminous Group of Human Beings. Perhaps even in the life of a village, or even in the life of a city or even in the life of a

country. Perhaps even in the Life of a Corporation. This Sphera, this Being-full Sphere of Consciousness provides for a creative ongoing continuous experience of mutual luminous Being-fullness in a Being-full life. This Sphera personifies the esoteric Sphera of luminous self-liberation.

Such as Sphera can be manifested in the many various forms of existential consultation for healing and therapeutic experience. 'Two awareness's are better than one.' This Sphera can hold psychotherapy, consultation, the act of teaching, healing, conflict and, institutional life. This Sphera actually can contain and sustain corporate illuminating experience. This Sphera is an Esoteric Sphere of Creative Luminous Being-fullness.

When a person is in such a Sphera, the person is extending their own awareness energy into the Sphera. Thus, the Sphera is empowered and the luminous energy is enhanced and the Subtle Luminous oneness of Being is experienced by the participants.

In the realm of psychotherapy or friendship when a person is suffering from Being-lessness and Emptiness and the Absence of any form of meaningfulness, this entering together into this Sphera of luminous Being-full awareness can be internalized and assimilated by the person. The person may become more easily Being-full and embodied in Being-full awareness. And therapist person or consultant or friend can not only hold the person in this Sphera of luminous awareness but this Sphera as this creative context transmits and sustains this field of awareness within this Sphera to this person.

This transmission can be a transmission to a person locked in the void and empty of Being-fullness and Being-full luminosity. Such an experience as Being in this luminous natural Sphera of Being-fullness, a person can more easily embody the Being-fullness of Being. This is a completely naturalistic esoteric realm and reflects the luminous Sphera of this esoteric Being-fullness becoming embodied.

Moreover, there was then a discussion by José about the Epoche being the suspension of our judge-mental mind. This suspension of our judge-mental mind of right and wrong, good and evil and better and best, allows our mind to recede and drop back from being so

demanding and commanding of us, and within the Spaciousness of our receding mind we can feel the self-arising or our natural luminous Being-full awareness which is vast spaciousness and multidimensional knowingness.

Again, the French phenomenologist Nathalie Depraz and her phenomenological ontological understanding that through phenomenology we can know the Absolute and we can phenomenologically know the Absolute both directly and through the Phenomena of the world. This comment reminds me of the great statement of Kashmir Shavism that “the Bliss of the world is the Bliss of Samadhi.” By Absolute we here mean the vast Being-full living source of Being and Being-fullness. The absolute is not an Entity.

In fact, both painting, and the art-full presentations of the three artists about art and their art-full performance about art, were for me the luminous experience of the Pure Being in self-manifestation of existential singularity. In Phenomenological Esotericism, ‘The Absolute’ is the natural ontological Being-full source of self-manifestation. The word absolute can sound omnipotent and omniscient and can be grandiosity personified. This inner most source of manifestation of phenomena is our Being-full capacity of our innermost awareness or innermost consciousness. This innermost awareness is vast and infinite in its horizons and multidimensional.

In the ancient Dzogchen tradition, there is this understanding that the source of phenomena and phenomena are the same. There is a Nyingma prayer that says “May I experience all phenomena as the dharmakaya. This means may I experience all phenomena as the same as the Source.” Source and Phenomena are the same, source and phenomena are in oneness and non-duality. Our Ground of Being is source. Our Ground of Being is Who-ness. Who-ness is Ontological and not simply psychological.

The phenomena of the commentary, the phenomena of art and the phenomena of art-full presentations as the source of Being-fullness are one and the same. As Dun Scotus would say centuries ago: “UNA VOCE”. They are also the same in that the self-manifestation of source as phenomena are in sameness and oneness. Who-ness is both source and the manifestation of source. Our three artist each

are singular Who-ness manifesting phenomena and each Who-ness is a phenomenon of self-manifestation. Each Who-ness is both source and a phenomenon of source.

THE SPHERA

This Sphere of Creativity is source and the manifestation of source. This Sphera itself is both source and the esoteric phenomenon of source. This Sphere can hold and contain esoteric experience. This Sphera can be entered into whenever we wish. The luminous reality of this Sphera may at first require a physical somatic space, but in times the space in its esoteric unfoldment becomes beyond a physical space or ground and reflects a luminous stable space of Being-fullness that can be multidimensional and radiantly present as an intermediate area of experience as a Potential Space that can be invoked and actualize out of our esoteric desire.

César Barrio – Architectural Artist

The artist architect César Barrio amazingly took luminous artful structures such as ancient buildings, and luminous natural physical forms and from within their luminous presence, César elaborated an unfolding existential ontology of creative presence and the self-manifestation of ontological embodied subtle physical presence. What an amazing presentation.

What stood out for me from César Barrio commentary was his explicit articulation of the importance of the INTERVAL or what is for me the Intermediate Area of Experience, or the Place In Between Reality and Fantasy. This necessary “creative Space,” is the Transitional Space that opens for us, the Potential Space of Creativity, and the Potential Space of Creative Self Manifestation. This Interval Space of the In-between space is the creative space where our Being-full self-awareness manifests and where our Being sense of self manifest and even where the Archetypal Dimension of Being-fullness and the Ground of Being as Source Self-Manifests.

This Interval, this Creative Space, this Transitional Space, this Space of Ontological Openness, this Space of Immanence is the

Space of Potential Space, Creative Space as Being-full Source. This space is not the ancient dissociative Transcendental Space. This is not Beingless Space, this is not Empty Space, but rather the Creative Space of Immanence, the Space of Being and Being-fullness Presence. This Space this opening, this ontological openness, this interval, this gap, this opening place of self-manifestation of Being and the luminosity of Being-fullness. This creative space is the space where in the archetypal manifestation of the archetypal dimension manifests and illumining our experience of our archetypal energetic experience and unfolding creative self-liberation.

This is also the space where in we experience our opening to and of the Ground of Being within us as us. This is the space of innermost source. This space is also timeless awareness within time. To enter this space is to enter Timeless Awareness. And by our embodying this space this “opening” of Being-fullness, we embody our luminous awareness as source. We embody this luminous awareness as our own Who-ness.

This interval allows us to intuitively, or directly though our direct perception or direct knowingness as awareness as Gnosis and as Jnana to experientially follow the unfolding manifestations of the field of Being in situations. In interval or the Indices, we are opening to the spontaneous unfolding of Being-fullness and the experience of the phenomena self-manifesting itself spontaneously within our field of awareness and not simply to our calculating mind. This is the space of creative manifestation and intuitive understanding and experience in the true sense of the word.

Dominik Lejman – Multimedia Conceptual Artist

Our third artist was Dominik Lejman. The creative Space for Dominik Lejman is this unfolding Creative Space as the Space of Spontaneity and Synchronicity. Throughout his description of his artistic work and artistic manifestation his emphasis was consistently on Spontaneity and Synchronicity.

Synchronicity is the Simultaneous occurrence wherein the

artistic manifestation finds and found its own space of manifestation. This Synchronicity is the spontaneous coherent manifestation that takes place in the esoteric plane of existing-ness, this esoteric field of the energetic unfolding of the creative force of Shakti, and in this creative field of energetic spontaneous manifestation. This is the creative space of timely coherence of convening of energy and happen stance. This is the space of good fortune. This is not a space of simple cause and simplistic effect. This is the creative space of Luminous self-manifestation and luminous spontaneous synchronistic convergence. This is the Being-full Space of spontaneous self-manifestation of artfulness creation and spontaneous eventfulness of Being. All creation is Spontaneous.

The creative form that is and was created has its own form and own formulation of what will take place in self-manifestation. This form seems to be alive in its own way and with its own destiny. Artistic form is an alive form of Being-fullness within its own nature and its own spontaneous destiny.

BEYOND INTENTIONALITY

The artist Dominik Lejman described in many and various ways how the creative artistic performance self-manifested in the world beyond intentionality, and beyond will-fullness and beyond compulsiveness and beyond driven-ness. The creative experience happens and unfolds in time and space. Dominik Lejman was a source of self-manifestation, but was not the sole Creative Source of the Self-Manifestation. His who-ness was source and his who-ness also participated in the spontaneous ontological source of Being-full manifestation. His description of his unfolding creative event was actually a fantastic description of the Event of Being-fullness in self-manifestation. This for me is true of all and for all creative experience.

Creative experience whether it be art-full artistic expression and self-manifestation or whether it be the convergence of luminous esoteric energy manifesting an esoteric event in our life world. Creative experience is Being Event in self-manifestation that just happens. To feel and to experience the self-manifestations of such

Creative Being-full events requires our attunement to the creative manifestation of luminous source manifesting as luminous luminous phenomena. Creative experience is not simply the exoteric cause and effect concrete operational drama.

Creative art is an esoteric timeless manifestation of luminous creative Being-fullness in time and such creativity is a function of desire and not a function of intentionality. Creativity is spontaneous function of our primordial luminous awareness as source and not the mental intentionality of our mind. This is important to know.

Dominik used such language as the weight-lessness of the phenomena, the fluidity of the phenomena. His language is the language of esoteric art. For his experience of the embodiment of the Sphera he used the phrase Sphera as the icon of creation. He describes this spontaneous opening or manifestation to bring in the Sacredness of Sphera publically. He also uses the language of liminality as in our holding within this Sphera, this field of awareness which is the place for something to happen and self-manifest. In this creative experience we are not the sole manifesters of event, but this manifestation is the manifestation of Being-fullness itself. In a way every event is consciousness and every event is a spontaneous happening. Time itself within Timeless Awareness is the course of manifestation.

Dominik discussion of the paradoxical concreteness and literalness of Resonance profoundly works within our limitations with the Exoteric world fame, the thing of fame.

For me to embody these three Artistic Articulations of the ontological Creative Experience has been most useful and true fun. The esoteric understanding and esoteric praxis that the three artists articulated both allows and supports us to enter the field of Being-full Shakti or Being-full Energy in its endless manifestation and endless unfolding experience of Being-fullness life after life and death after death. This is the esoteric realm of our collective luminous Being-full lived experience.

ENTANGLED
DIGRESSIONS OF
FOUR THINKERS

José Guilherme Abreu

As Raymond Abellio says, *vision*, *action* and *art* are spherically inter-related, because in the end these instances form a loop. Vision is the passive principle of art, while action is its active one. However, the transition from passive to active occurs because there is a conscientious mind that provides a common ground that keeps the insight of a vision present, while raw materials are being worked to generate a new creation from that vision.

Quoting Paul Valéry, Merleau-Ponty says that “*the painter ‘brings his body’ for, in fact, one cannot see how a spirit could paint*” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 16). But is it only the *hand* (the extension of the body) and the *eye* (the connection with the spirit) that are necessary for a painting to be paint? Besides these ultimate poles, it seems clear that a *reflexive mind* and a *common background* are also required. A common background, which we might call *world*, that provides the raw materials the artist needs to create, and a reflexive mind, which we might call *conscience*, that is filled by stimuli coming from its interaction with the world.

The common background is the world of phenomena in which the presence of Being appears, while living becomes a *Theater of Apparitions*: not only the apparition of what appears, such as *beings* and *things*, but also the apparition of what is meant by *appearing*. The apparition of the Theater that becomes present and alive on every stage.

We saw Rudolph Bauer’s conference as focusing this last kind of apparition. An apparition that is also a revelation: the revelation of the performative stage of conscience as a theatre, with its grades of awakening, towards the most genuine levels of becoming aware. It is there, that one can find perfection or, if we prefer, where one may achieve art.

Similarly, we saw Simeon Nelson’s conference focused on the first kind of apparition: the apparition of what appears. The apparition of mesh, as the apparition of the amalgama of things, whose pristine vitality instigate and inspire the artist in his creative impulse to humanize, i.e., to generate meaning, among the network (the mesh) of apparitions.

If the conferences of Rudolph Bauer and Simeon Nelson are both focused on becoming aware of the theatre of apparitions, Jo Joelsson's conference is focused on action, or on the circumstance that each one of us acts as an actor, or an agent, of a common play or a common ground. It is, of course, also about becoming aware, but not so much of our condition or position before the appearance of phenomena, but rather of our own actions. Becoming aware of what we do and what we do not do, in terms of its impact on our common ground and our common play.

Finally, Rodrigo Silva's conference completes this digression of Sphera by focusing on the problem of thinking not the common background where actions take place, but the interactions of the performers among themselves. A problem that is most difficult to cope with and a tricky one: the problem of a diffracted conscious mind that connects and separates us, according to the dual vectors of integration versus differentiation.

The questions of who we are and who are we not, constitute ultimate *koans*. What are the boundaries and the tensions between each one and each other? What are the boundaries and the tensions between one group and another? How are these boundaries established and maintained? What do these boundaries express and represent? Are they necessary? Can they become meaningful? And meaningful of what?

This last conference concludes a first cycle of independent contributions linked and related by what Raymond Abellio calls a *spherical correlation*. By *spherical correlation*, he means linked, while independent, thinking, as a kind of *psychic entanglement* that fuses distinct approaches, assumptions and aims, whose effect is to erase the concept of end, as we quote:

So, the truly constituting I, whose appearance marks the completion and success of the process of constitution, is not itself deduced at the end of a logical process or as an effect produced by its cause, but by an original movement, a new invention each time. This explains the perpetually inchoative character of phenomenology, which is forced to postulate and employ, in an apparently linear but polarized way, concepts that will only find their full meaning at

the end of the process, in a spherical correlation of all the poles that obliterates the notion of end. (Abellio, 1965, p. 100)

These four conferences, as well as the three other ones, are connected by a spherical correlation, not because they were built after any kind of previous entente, but because they appear as coherent and consistent reflections and digressions on a common subject.

Project Sphera is inspired by Abellio's "spherical thinking", as we have tried to show in the way we have related these four independent yet entangled conferences.

In short, if we describe *spherical thinking* as the way in which the conscious mind of the *Transcendental Ego* reveals itself, a new kind of paradoxical *koan* takes shape: the blurring of boundaries as a step across a new (or last?) frontier!

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ART AS GESTATION OF
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Cycle of Conferences

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DOMINIK LEJMAN

PURGATION

CÉSAR BARRIO

LIVING IN THE INTERSTICES

RUDOLPH BAUER

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL DRAMA OF
ARTISTIC EXOTERIC-ESOTERIC EXPERIENCE AS
ILLUMINATED BY ART

SIMEON NELSON

MESH ANARCHISM

JO JOELSON

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RODRIGO SILVA

WE, SINGULAR PLURAL