

Private language, public imagery

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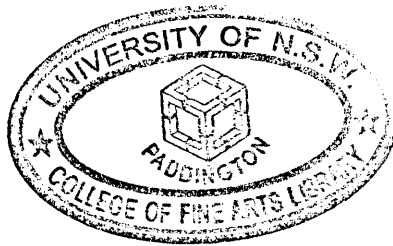
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NATHALIE HARTOG

***PRIVATE LANGUAGE
PUBLIC IMAGERY***



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University of New South Wales,

In fulfillment of the requirements for

The Degree of Master of Fine Arts (Research)

May 2004

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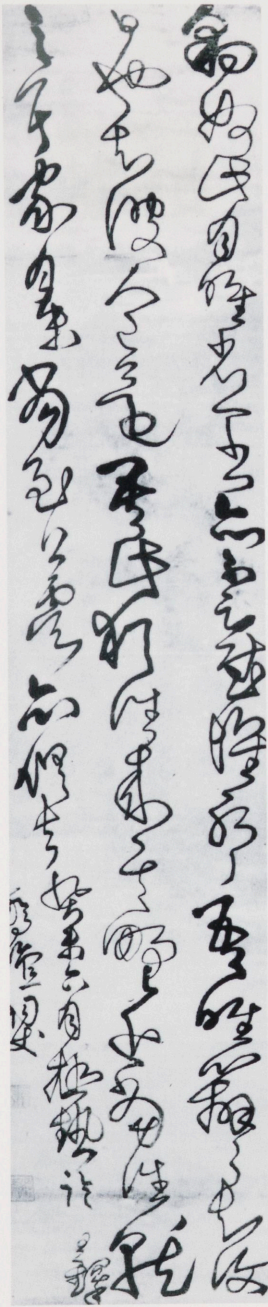
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ABSTRACT



The process of my research explored the idea of correspondence between the visual representation of different languages and my graphic interpretation of those languages. I allowed my mind to travel through time to various cultures such as Arabic, Celtic, Chinese and Latin. I then examined their different forms of writing and communication.

Wang Tom Copying a Letter by Wang Hsin-chih, 1643, hanging scroll, 268,5 x 54,5 cm. From Embodied Image, Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection, Princeton University Press, 1999, p 354.

SUMMARY

My research began with a time when communication within cultures existed only as an oral language. The written language, as such, had not yet developed. Words were symbols, mark making, a device to memorize and transfer codified spoken words onto a surface.

I then examined the fact that societies evolved and felt the need to establish a formal way of recording and imparting their knowledge. This was regarded as a way of communicating with divinities which was only accessible to those who were considered to occupy positions of power in society. To members of all cultures, language was a means of achieving a divine level and reaching for a God. For example In China the first form of writing had an oracular function, " for the emperor to be in touch with the gods and read their intentions towards him and the country." and "...for the Sumerians the knowledge of writing was associated with the order of the world..".¹

My final investigation studied languages such as Arabic, Celtic, Chinese and French and how, and, despite the existence of developed form of languages, societies still feel the need to explore other ways of communication.

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church, until relatively recently, celebrated mass in Latin, the language of the scholar and inaccessible to the common people. For the illiterates it held a magic power and amplified the importance of the images. The apostles, and other saints, were represented with a book in their hands with line imitating a script to convey their authority over the mystery of the trinity. In the scene of the last judgement, the resurrected hold a book in their hands. Church attendees who had no knowledge of Latin would search for their own meaning through the interpretation of visual images on the walls and ceilings. Forty years ago, the Catholic Church recommended the use of a living language for the celebration of mass instead of Latin². Mass was then celebrated in the language of each individual country. The idea was to enable people to participate in the service, thus facilitating a common and unifying access to the rituals of the Church, rather than the alienation of the congregation through the use of the Latin language. This decree has created a schism in the Church, as some members of the Catholic community wanted to retain the Latin mass despite it being a dead language.

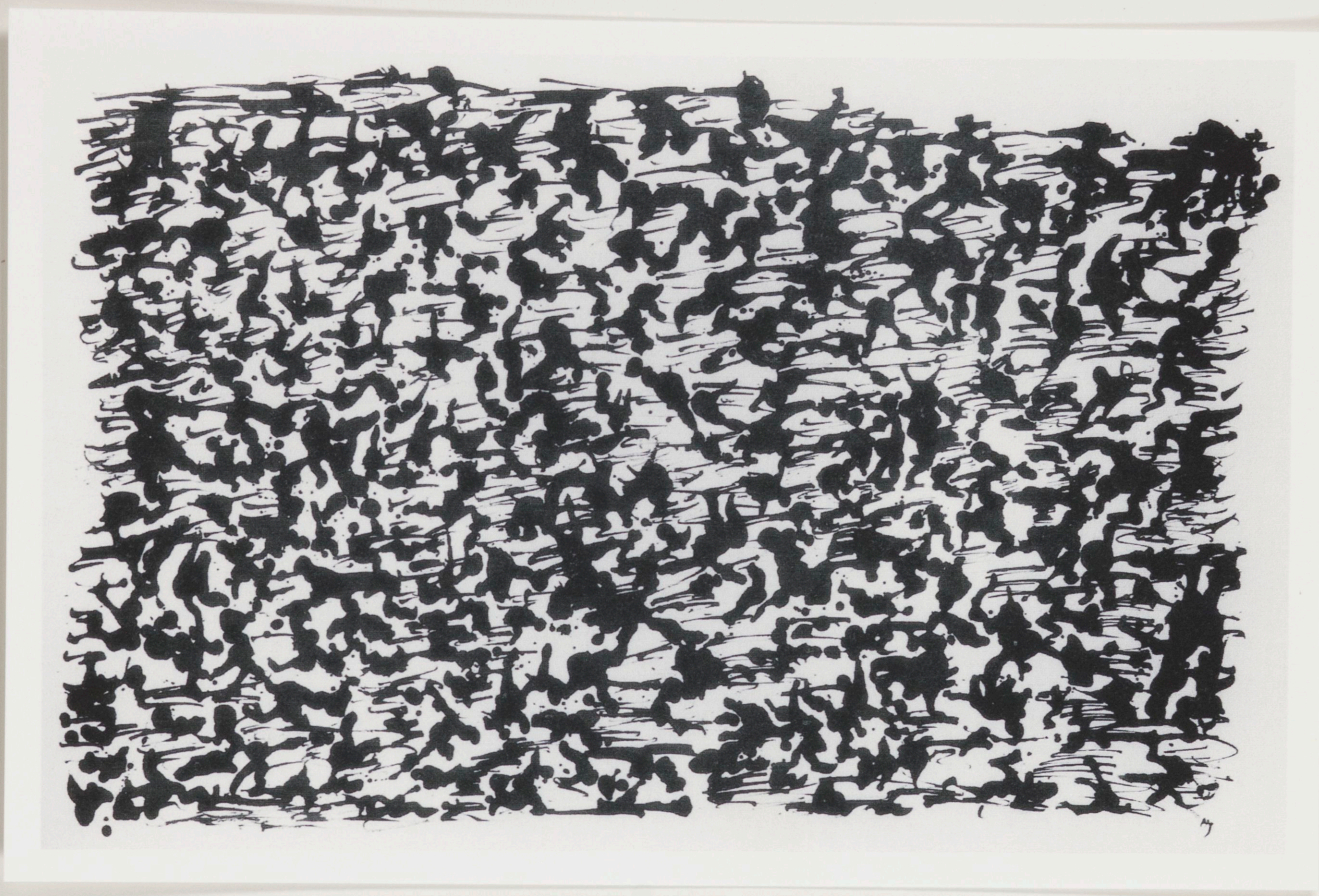
They felt they were losing the original idea of communion. One would think that, to be able to understand would be a preferable means of communicating one's feelings. The majority of Catholics did prefer to understand the rituals of the mass through the recital of words they could understand. However there was a minority who regarded the Latin language as a symbol as the words retained their spiritual significance which enabled the Church attendees' spirit to reach a higher plane.

The use of language, by religious institutions and the powerful, as a way of conserving the existing order through its inaccessibility to the common man has been well documented. However language and writing at the personal level has the potential to create a level of flux and change. By writing we attempt to place our ideas in a material medium that can be referred to by others and ourselves in the future. These ideas can also be subsequently interpreted differently by others and even by us with the passing of time.

The process of my research placed me in a similar situation. I examined visually the apotheosis, through my art practice, of an exegesis of different languages. The research posed the questions, how was it that the same meaning could be expressed in so many different ways by different cultures?

Would I need to understand a language for it to communicate its meaning? I looked at a language I don't understand in an oracular way: a narrative with images, to be interpreted and put in an order like words in a sentence. It became an abstraction in opposition to a representation of a language I know. It was an investigation of the subconscious.

The Surrealists defined that point in time as a "moment of intuition"³, a moment that balances itself on the edge of time, before stepping into an imaginary time ruled by our subconscious. The resulting images were not controlled. They were a representation encouraged by the memory of what societies have experienced over time. This is what André Breton also refers to as our History. It is our past and present. For the Surrealists, the dream was a means to access the subconscious and to reproduce it through their writing and imagery.

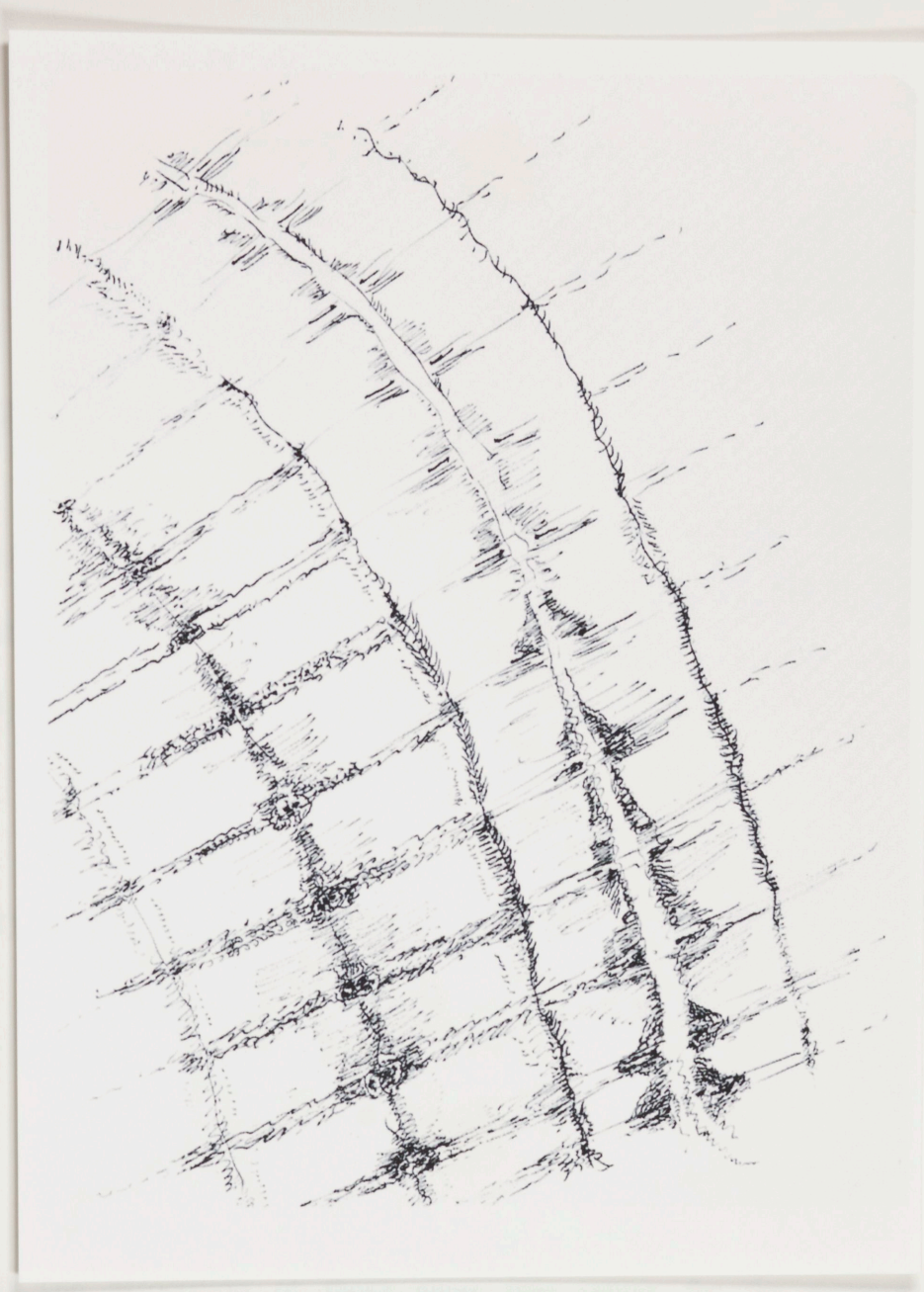


Henri Michaux, "sans titre", 1960.

Le regard des autres. Galerie thessa herold. P 115.

It is that "moment of intuition" which externalizes those layers of sedimentation of History. Its representation through different mediums becomes an unconscious re-creation of the past into the present. We also experience life differently because of so many differences within the human experience as well as so many different languages.⁴ Furthermore many forms of writing, through history, have developed as a result of the different conceptions of the environment to be represented. For example, in Egypt water would be represented by the Nile and in China by a big expanse of water, in Mayan writing water would be a jar because water was rare and precious. Over time these signs have been modified or have disappeared.

As well as the Surrealist artists, William S. Burroughs tried to experience that move into the subconscious by using hallucinogens to stop "reality as we know it" to rediscover his history and reveal it with his writing and images. Indians also used hallucinogen. Their drug was called "cohoba" as a "god-revealing" plant. So through time and geographical positions, Man has always undertaken a quest for the subconscious/God to be revealed and to communicate through different codes, written or pictorial, a message to the present time.



Henri Michaux, "dessin de réagrégation", 1962/1963.

Le regard des autres, Galerie thessa herold, p 84

DEVELOPMENT

My investigations into this "moment of intuition" developed into three stages:

- 1) A visual representation of the observation of the subjects/objects. A drawing *"which keeps the memory"*.
- 2) The codification of the visual representations. The words are not yet quite definite but have started to develop into a more complex structure than the original pictures. They are representations *"not of the words but of the murmur of the words"*⁵.
- 3) The association of those signs into syntax for the purpose of communicating and recording.



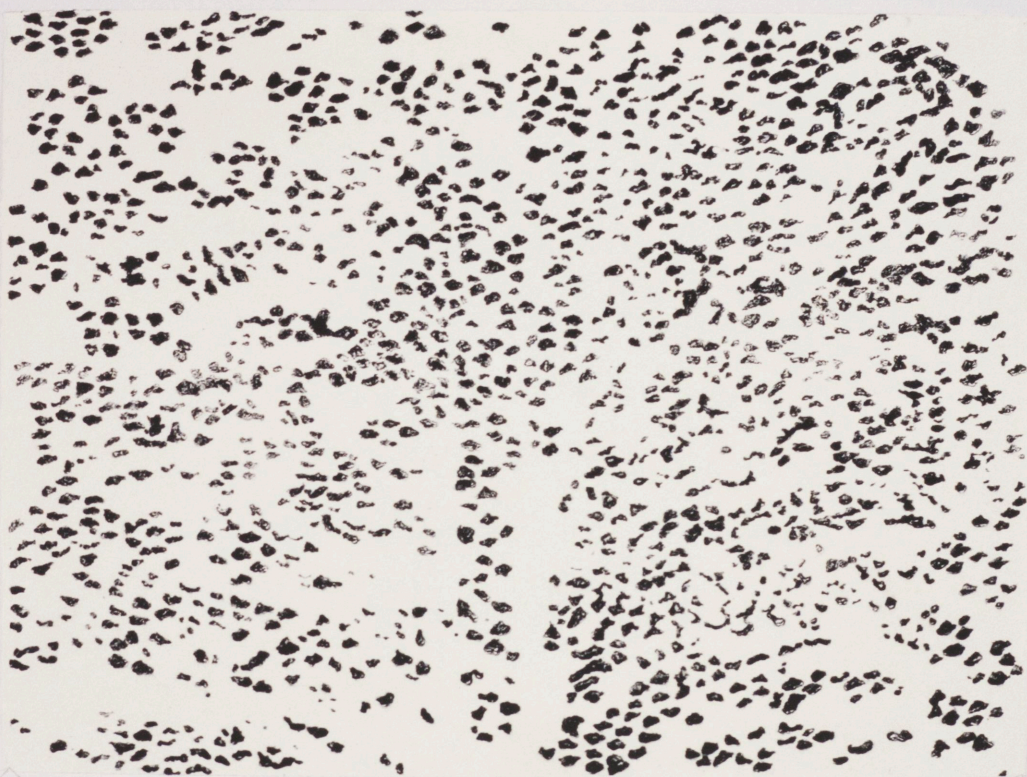
*Andy Goldsworthy, Dumfriesshire clay wall, made and film for "La Danse
du temps", June 1999, Time, Thames and Hudson, p 89*

1) Visual representation of the observation of subjects/objects

The cave paintings were the first written form of language through the tracing of sign lines, which was the first physical representation of an idea. Some of those marks are very detailed representations of animals or humans based on the observation of the everyday experience. The cave painters had a profound knowledge of their environment, they then simplified observed forms to a gestured drawing. To be able to understand this process, one has to move back through time, to the time of childhood when drawing was a simple form of communication before the knowledge of an alphabet. The technique of frottage/rubbing brings one back to the "introduction or pseudo-introduction of the original"⁶. The frottage is a transfer, a copy of an original form but it only reveals parts of the subject. It is sometimes used like a negative film to decipher images and texts eroded by the weather. One's hand is like the weather, when it moves across the subject, as it applies more or less pressure and renders the image in dark or light tones. It is also only part of an introduction because one, deliberately or not, ceases to represent the whole subject. The notion of time in the frottage is important because it uses an existing object and it is an inventory of the past.⁷

A) Grass Tree

I decided to follow the same process and to choose a natural form with which I was fascinated, a grass tree. I thought of the geographical position of Australia and its isolation from the rest of the world which makes many of its plants and animals so unique in the sense they retain their original form with no cross pollination or cross genetically. I also found it interesting that the grass tree is the only tree I know of, which can be easily decomposed, literally pulled apart.



"Grass Tree VIII", Drypoint, 79 x 106,5cm⁸

The trunk is made of strips of "wood" which can be separated. Taken out of their context, those pieces look like cockroaches. They don't relate to the outside appearance of the plant but they have a lacquered finish similar to the wings of the cockroach. The inner part of the plant is an intricate web of fibres in the shape of a tub with large veins. I took a cross section of the tub of fibres and it appeared to resemble a piece of weaving. The plant is comparable to building blocks put together by nature. It is the only tree I can pull apart that I could theoretically put back together to its original form. It is like writing, the composition and decomposition of a sentence.

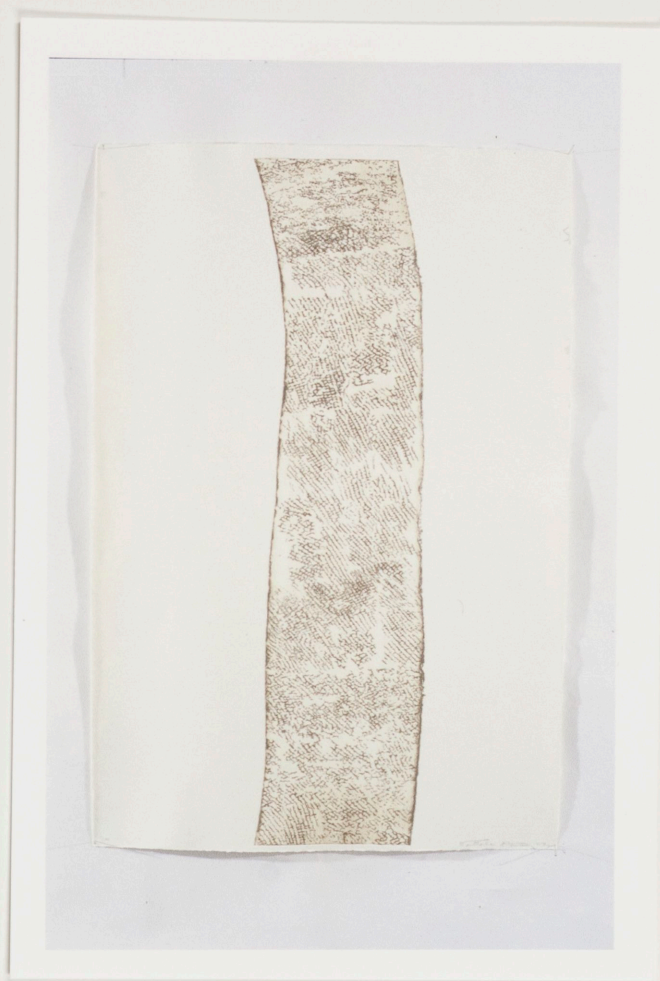
When I researched how to develop images relating to the Grass Tree, I wanted to use senses other than the visual, somewhat like the first humans would be accustomed to. If I could decompose the plant physically, I could recompose the plant in a sensorial manner.

During the development of the images I concluded that I wanted to forget any previous knowledge I had of the form of the grass tree, I wanted to forget what I already knew of the plant. I rubbed the surface, I used only my tactile sense. I tried to discover the form that Diane Waldman describes as "to liberate the mind of preconceived ideas, to release the words". The images I produced are a translation of the tactile into the visual, how it looks to feel. They are only a perception of my sensation, a tactile sensation.

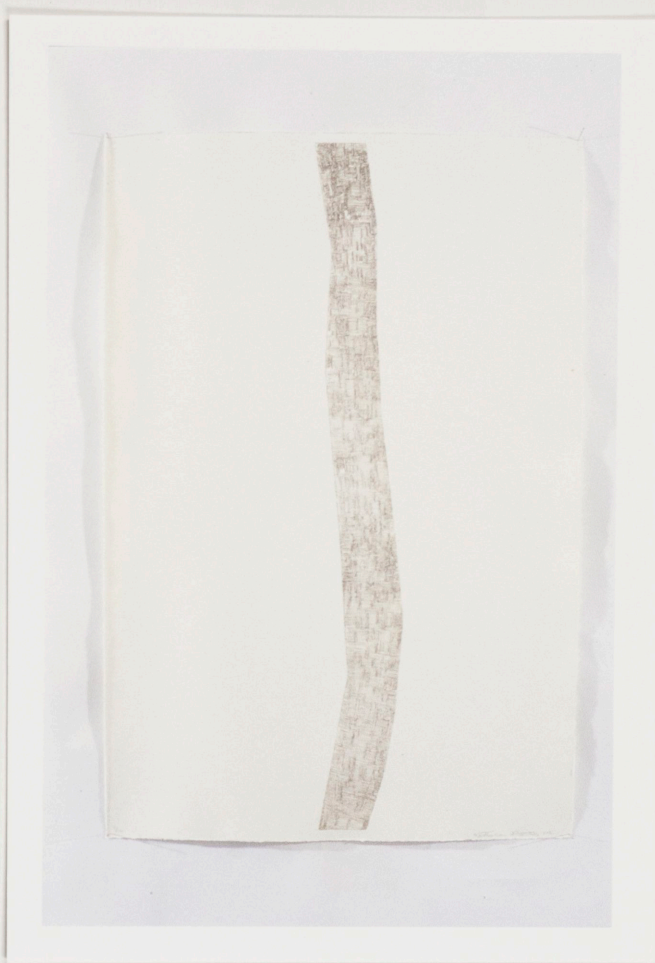
The association of two or more of the representations of the grass tree creates syntax and a codification into a visual form. This is my first form of written language, an object that could express a message. Like Max Ernst, to replace "phonetic combinations" by "optical combinations" to arrive at the collage or the frottage".⁹ The frottage becomes a form of written language. It is a transfer of tactile response into a visual narrative to establish a connection with the viewers or readers.



"Grass Tree I", drypoint, 79 x 54 cm



"Grass Tree II", Drypoint, 79 x 54 cm



"Grass Tree III", Drypoint, 79 x 54cm.



"Grass Tree IV", Drypoint, 79 x 54 cm



"Grass Tree V", Drypoint, 79 x 54 cm.

My series of pictograms Grass Tree I, II, are based on frottage. Grass Tree III is based on my visual perception, it is the drawing of what I see inside the core of the plant.

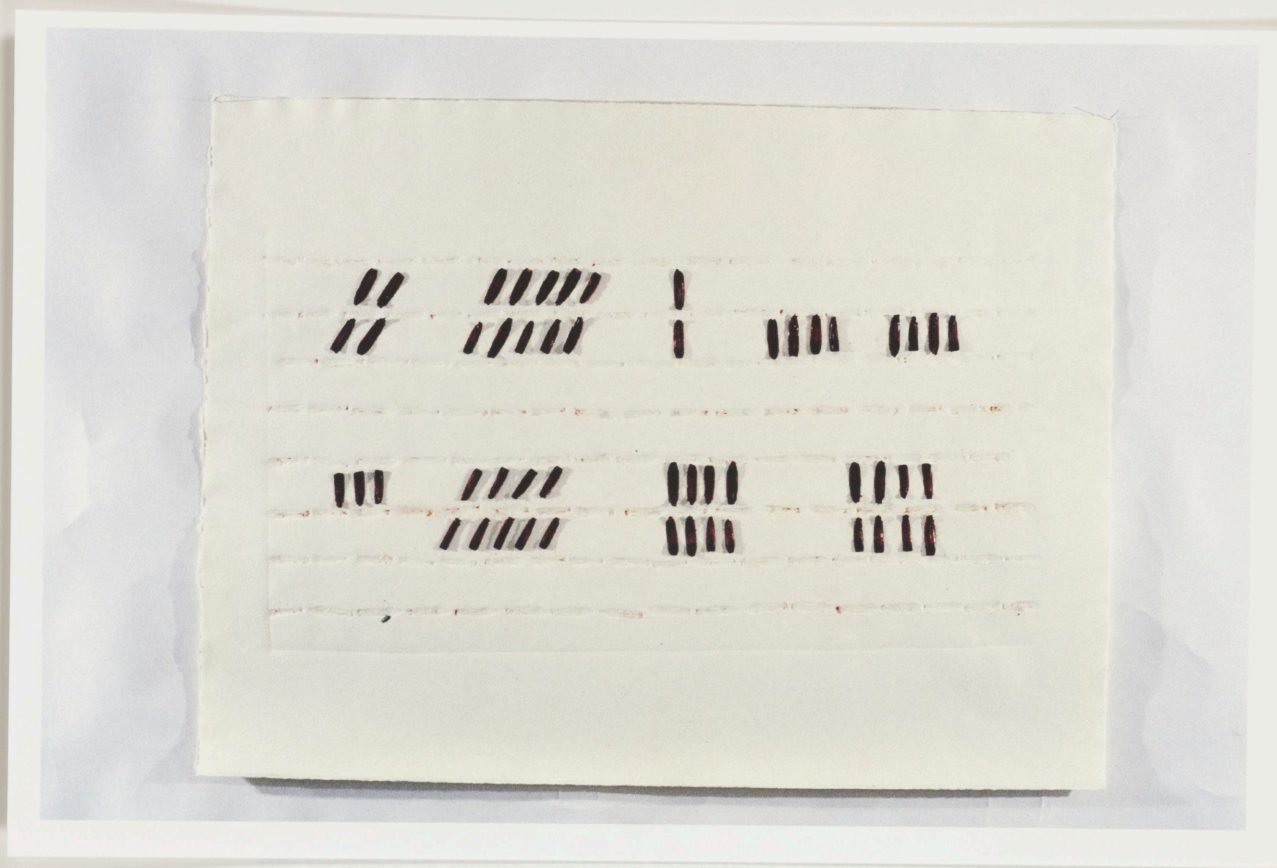
Grass Tree IV and V are the association of signs to establish a meaning, a composition associating pictograms I, II, III together like letters put together to reveal the meaning of a word. The association of images is the beginning of a codification of a form of language.

In Grass Tree VI, I embossed the "pieces of wood", which are part of the trunk, to form an imaginary line. The lines are for me the symbol of writing.

They are horizontal as the representation of the writing for the Latin alphabet. Those broken lines are the stuttering, a beginning of a more complex association of marks/drawings which, eventually, will develop into a type of syntax.

B) Ogham language

The Ogham writing was peculiar to the Celtic population of the British Isles and is dated from the fourth century AD. I used it for its simple forms of lines and as an approach to represent the written form of language. *First the line and the line with the writing became a support for my interpretation.* In Grass Tree VII, I used the trunk parts to write in the Ogham alphabet the words Grass Tree.



"Grass Tree XI", embossing and collage, 79 x 106,5cm

This process reminded me of an experiment Paul Bach-y-Rita did with visually impaired people. A TV camera was attached to the head of the person and the image was transferred to a vibrator. The vibrator in contact with the skin would react to each pixel of the image. The person would have different groups of vibrations according to the density of the image enabling the visually impaired person to "visualise" an image through tactile stimulation and place the person into a visual spatial context.¹⁰

The notion of time, of history, the need to communicate and to represent the observation of subjects/objects, reinforced my appreciation of "Primitive" Art as a form of writing. The Art Premier is the realisation of the essence of communication contained therein a simple observation and an understanding of the environment. Through a reconnection with this source of a sense of aesthetic, I tried to re-experience what it would be like to rediscover that direct representation.

C) Musical language

This Art Premier is also represented in music such as that of the Pygmies in Africa. They live in a dense environment and, through their art form, describe the dimension of the forest, how to move within that space and how to relate to it and other people moving within it by vocal codification.¹¹ The difficulty of seeing each other in a dense forest is replaced with the sound of the voice, codified to recognize who the person is and how far that person is within the forest.¹²

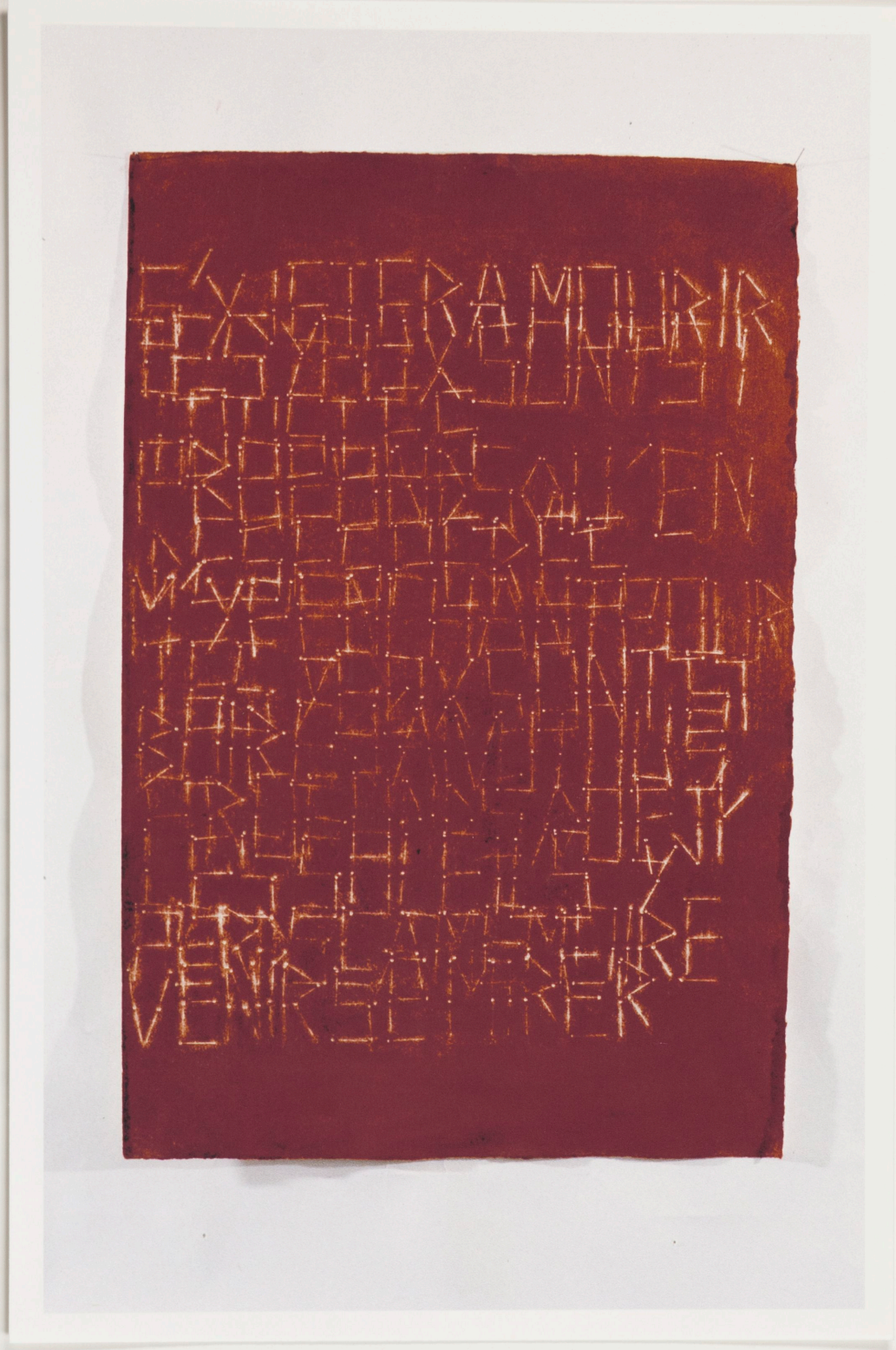
To fully explore the idea of a sensorial experience and to try to communicate, like the Pygmies, with sound I worked in cooperation with Allyson Newman, a music writer. I asked Allyson to help me codify the sounds of the Grass Tree. It is, again, like blindfolding myself, not to look but to listen and imagine with sounds. We recorded the pieces of the trunk falling, we scratch its surface like the prints. We reproduced the dot marks, the linear effect of the vein inside the plant. Some sounds are punctuation marks with finally voices alluding to the formulation of communication. The music is a series of audio images echoing the prints. The marks of the prints are a score of music. When I listened, the images accompany me and relate to what I set out to achieve a full sensorial experience.

(See Allison Newman's statement in Appendix I, Gaelic translation in Appendix 2 and attached CD.)

2) Codification of those traces into recognisable signs.

Those early written forms resulted in the simplification of their representation. It enabled societies to develop a written language by associating marks, lines and symbols to form syntax and also to record information. For example the Scythe in Darius sent a message which represented only a bird, a mouse, a frog and five arrows. It meant: unless you can change yourself into a bird to fly or a mouse of the swamp, you won't be able to escape our arrows. That ideogram/pictogram established a correlation between the signs and what it signifies: idea, word or object.¹³

To develop an understanding of the codification of signs I used a poem written by Aragon "Les yeux d'Elsa". Some years ago in France my husband and I went to the "Le Club des Poètes" with a friend from Iran who couldn't understand French but liked listening to the language and poetry. He requested "Les yeux d'Elsa". So strong was his feeling that he cried. To this day, I remember very vividly this event. That is why I decided to use the same poem to experience the sensation of being a stranger to the different form of written languages. I intended to explore and to create my own understanding of those different forms of writings.



"Les Yeux d'Elsa II",

(J'ai vu tous les soleils y venir se mirer)

embossing and pastel, 79 x 54 cm

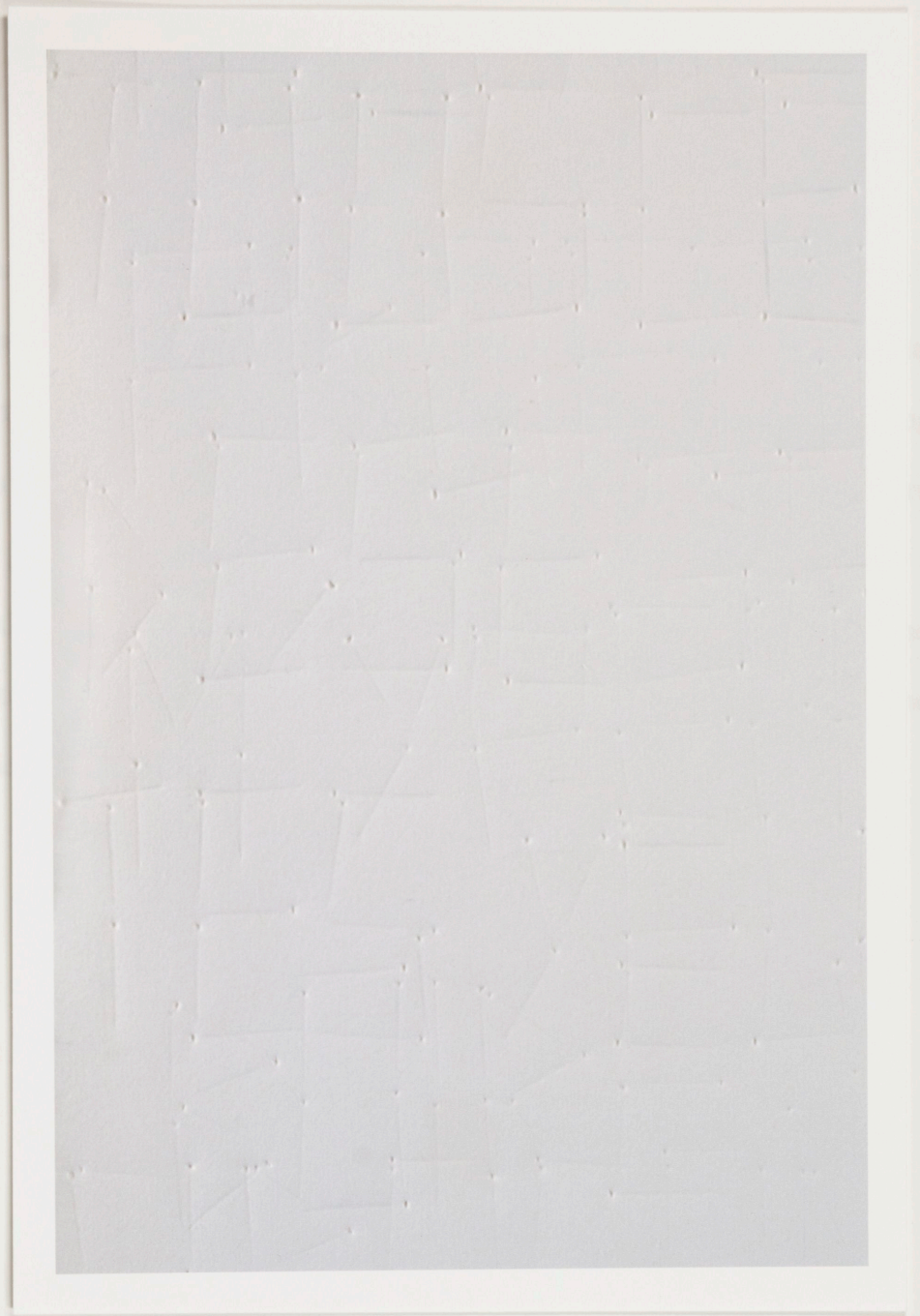
A) Cuneiform writing

I started with the earliest known form of writing, Cuneiform.¹⁴ It is a simplification of the representation of subjects/objects into lines and, to develop my own interpretation, I reversed the process. From my form of writing, which is the Latin alphabet, I transformed the text of the French poem "Les yeux d'Elsa" into cuneiform shape letters using nails. I used nails as a reference to the shape of the stylus. I made two plates, each plate is two lines of the first verse of the poem. Then I embossed on the paper one plate on top of the other. I followed the same process of pushing the "nails" into the clay, I pushed nails into the paper writing the first four lines of the poem. I rubbed the surface of the embossing, highlighting the lines to reveal the words like I rubbed the surface of the grass tree to discover its form.

B) Mayas' writing

"The Maya were one of the first peoples in the Western Hemisphere to develop an advanced form of writing."¹⁵ "Its form had to stay obscure... like a veil as the world is enigmatic."¹⁶

In my work, "Les yeux d'Elsa III", the embossing of the text becomes invisible, hiding the real like the Mayas' writing and, like the Mayas' writing I used poetry. The words used by the Maya in their poem urge the reader, the priest, into the edge of the real. I think to read poetry is to enter a labyrinth of words that has been accumulated over the existence of humanity and to use words is the quest to represent it.¹⁷ Maya writing is also like a mirror due to the double meaning of some words, because to choose one meaning is to hide another.



"Les yeux d'Elsa I"

(Tes yeux sont si profonds qu'en me penchant pour boire)

embossing, 79 x 54,5 cm

As a printmaker, I must think in reverse because the action of printing is a mirror effect, the plate has one meaning and to print is to reverse that meaning. My first gesture is not revealing, only when the action of printing is completed the intent is exposed. When I peel the paper off the plate I turn a page, like a book to follow onto the next stage of the story.

Also poetry is a form of writing that hides the real, it is like a rebus and Aragon, in his poem, uses imagery relating to his struggle with darkness and death. The last lines of the poem read:

"Il advint qu'un beau soir l'univers se brisa

Sur des récifs que les naufrageurs enflammèrent

Moi je voyais briller au-dessus de la mer

Les yeux d'Elsa les yeux d'Elsa, les yeux d'Elsa".

(It happened that one night the universe shattered

On the rocks that the drowned set alight

I saw shining above the sea

The eyes of Elsa, the eyes of Elsa, the eyes of Elsa.)

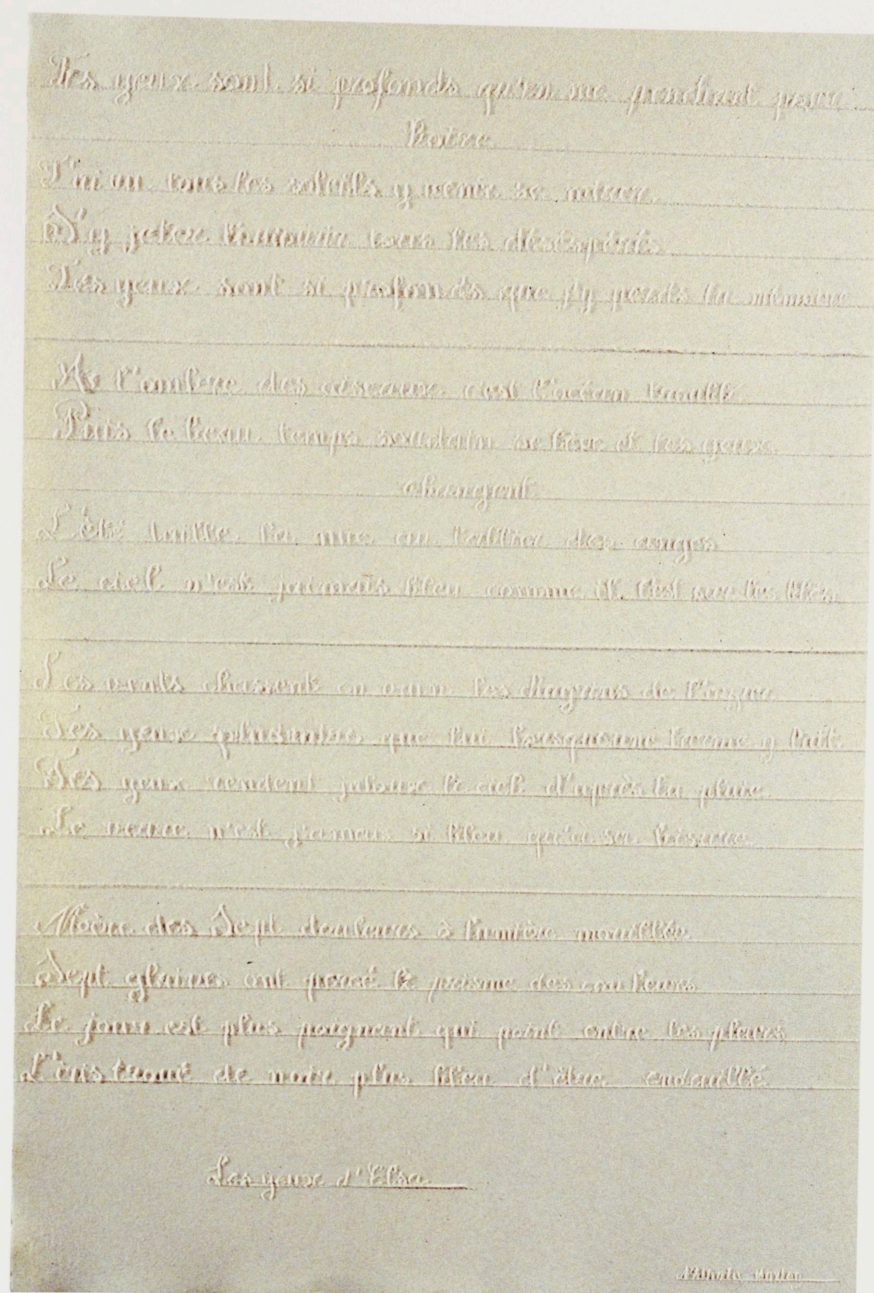
(My translation)

3) Association of those signs into syntax for the purpose of communication and recording.

During the research, I remarked that all first forms of writing had a spiritual connection, a God-like act. The purpose of writing was to establish a relationship with divinities or with another world. Even as late as last century people attempted to create a new form of writing. The idea came from a dream-vision, something spiritual like Frederic Bruly Bouabre. "On March 11, 1948, he had a religious vision that shaped his life, and hence took on the mantle of a prophet, it became part of his mission to do for his own language what the script he had learned in school did for the language in France. He began almost immediately the creation of an alphabet in which to write Bete (his spoken language), and in later years he developed a system for transcribing not only any African language, indeed, any language at all. It offers a hope of hoarding ancestral wisdom...The sultan Nyoja also had a dream that led to the creation of a script."¹⁸ They both were prophets or heads of state, placing them above ordinary mortals.

A) Language using the Latin alphabet in French.

With the engraving of the poem on paper I wanted to represent the realization of a form of writing using the Latin alphabet. The text written "white on white" prefigures the happening of a new form of writing. I also considered the idea that the first forms of writing had a spiritual connection. Inside the first catholic churches, the walls were often painted white. Moreover white is the sum of all colours. It rejects all rays of the colour spectrum therefore we could say white is black inside. If we go back to the painted wall of the church and the early meaning of white, it could have symbolized the pure environment inside the church and relate to the first day of the creation when light was created. In opposition, the other side of the church's wall is black representing the human condition with its original sin; so the church itself acts as a container of both, creation and redemption.



"Les yeux d'Elsa IX"

(Les vents chassent en vain les chagrins de l'azur)

engraving on paper, 79 x 54,5 cm

This is what I decided to depict in the engraving of the poem on the natural colour of the paper, a reference to the early symbolization of white which stood for east and west. It represents the "rebirth" of the sun, a brilliant white, to its "death" a mat white. It is a simple observation of nature and used by many cultures within their philosophy and religion. The page stays white like a silence preceding a voice. It is represented by the shadow made by the text. White stands for the period of transition between the visible and the invisible, a period of change. I carved the letters onto paper like the recording on stone or clay of the Cuneiform writing. It is, on one hand, only a shadow of a mark because time erases memory, but also to engrave is to want to make an indelible mark. When I was making the image, I felt like I was tattooing, scarring the paper¹⁹.

It brought me back to my days at school where we were made to write pages and pages of calligraphy. The teacher always reminded me that I am left-handed. It seemed to her that writing and the left hand could not work together and I was always singled out. Was it because she was a nun and left has bad connotations: on the day of the final judgment, the chosen one will sit on the right of God? I believed her and for years I hated my handwriting. So for me, that image is symbolic of my own judgment: it represents my desire to create against the experience I had at school.

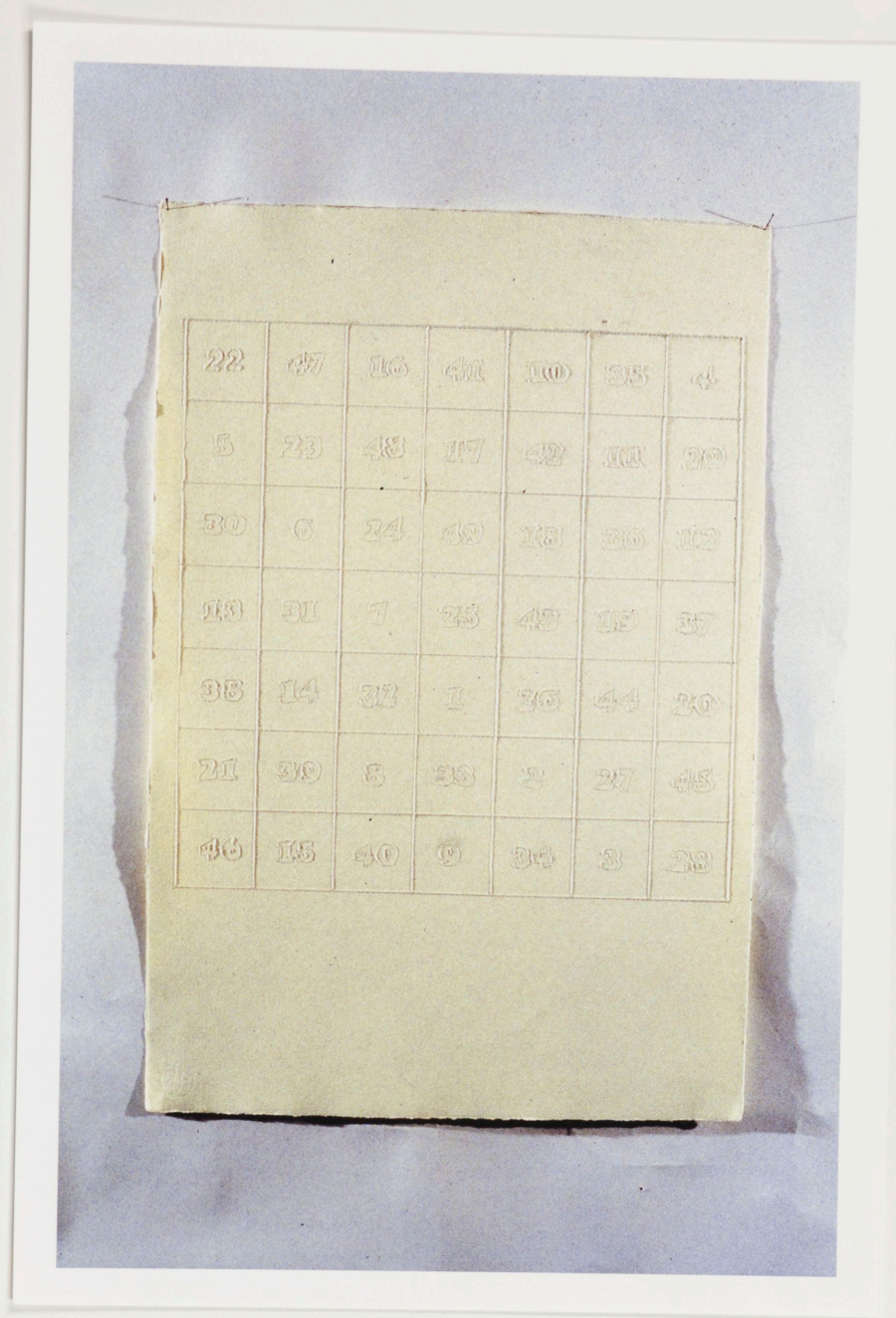
B) Arabic writing

I also wanted to examine the spiritual connection of writing. I first started researching the Arabic form of writing. The reason is, I was still thinking of my Iranian friend and also, being brought up as a Catholic, I wanted to learn about another religion and their forms of representations used to communicate with their worshipers. One common point with Christianity is that, at the beginning was the Verb and the Verb is the beginning of the creation. In the Muslim religion, Mecca and its doctrines (l'Islam) were developed in the language of the revelation and the Koran is in Arabic²⁰²¹.

Arabic writing is "founded upon a code of geometric and decorative rules; an art which, in the patterns which it creates, implies a theory of language and of writing...As the religion of an invisible God, early Islam had to compete with the pre-existing totemistic religions [and] had to eradicate and blot out the memory of such established practices. But this prohibition conceals another approach, no less influential, which fits absolutely into a fundamental theory of the divine origin of writing." ²²

Abdelkebir Kathimi and Mahammed Sijelmassi also mentioned that the word Qur'ān (Koran) is of divine origin because Allah spoke Arabic first: so the Qur'ān is not seen as a Gospel to be revealed in any language."²³

Also the iconic representation of the world is not possible for Muslims unless it is unrecognizable,²⁴ sometimes there is a cross over a human figure to dispel his realistic representation. To avoid that issue, calligraphy and sophisticated patterns were created on Pythagorean reasoning that the reality of the world is based on mathematical principle. The geometrical shapes become a sort of language of the universe.

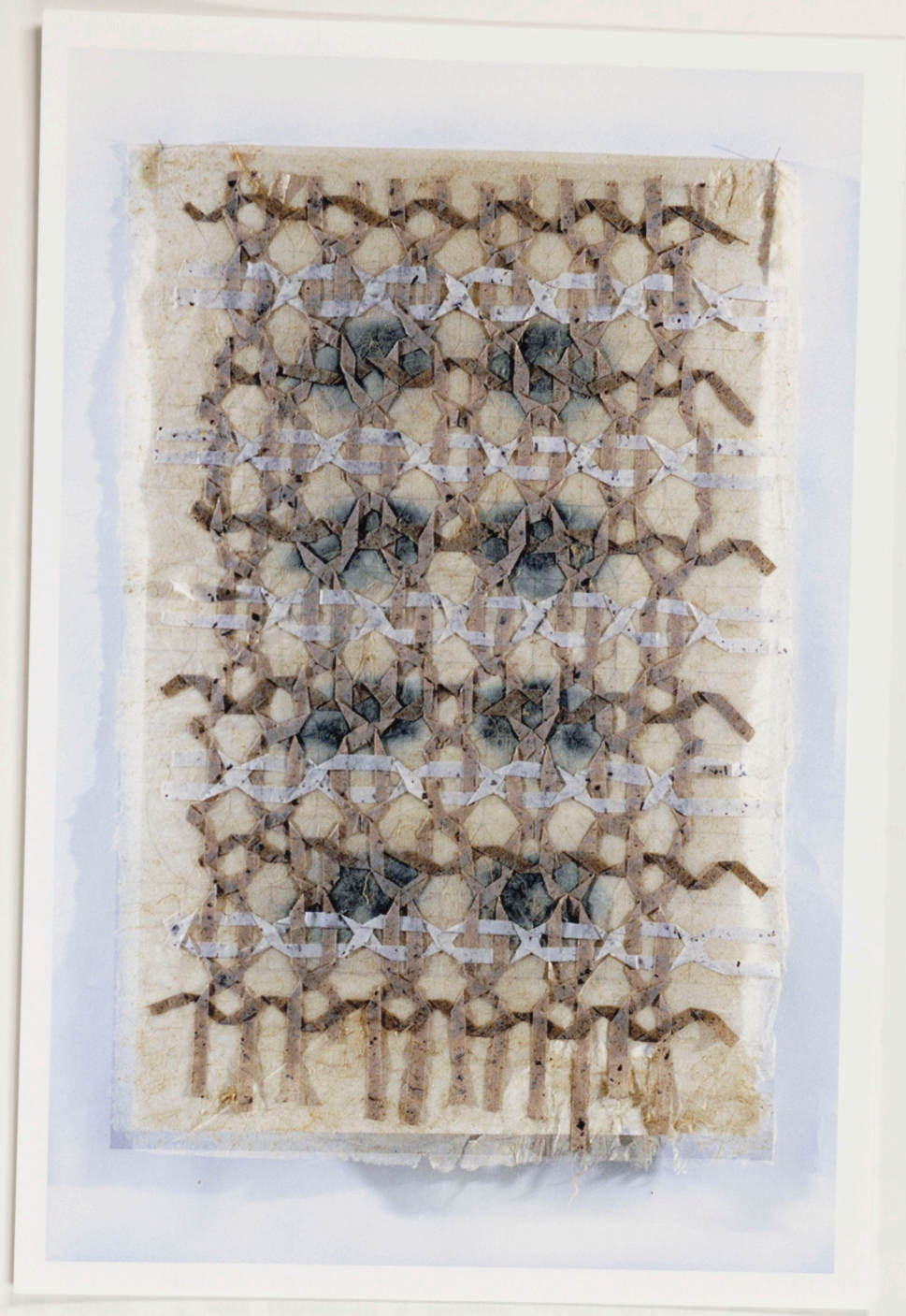


"Les yeux d'Elsa VII"

(L'été taille la nue au tablier des anges.)

Engraving on Hannemuhle paper.

79 x 54,5cm



"Les yeux d'Elsa IV"

(Tes yeux sont si profonds que j'y perds la mémoire)

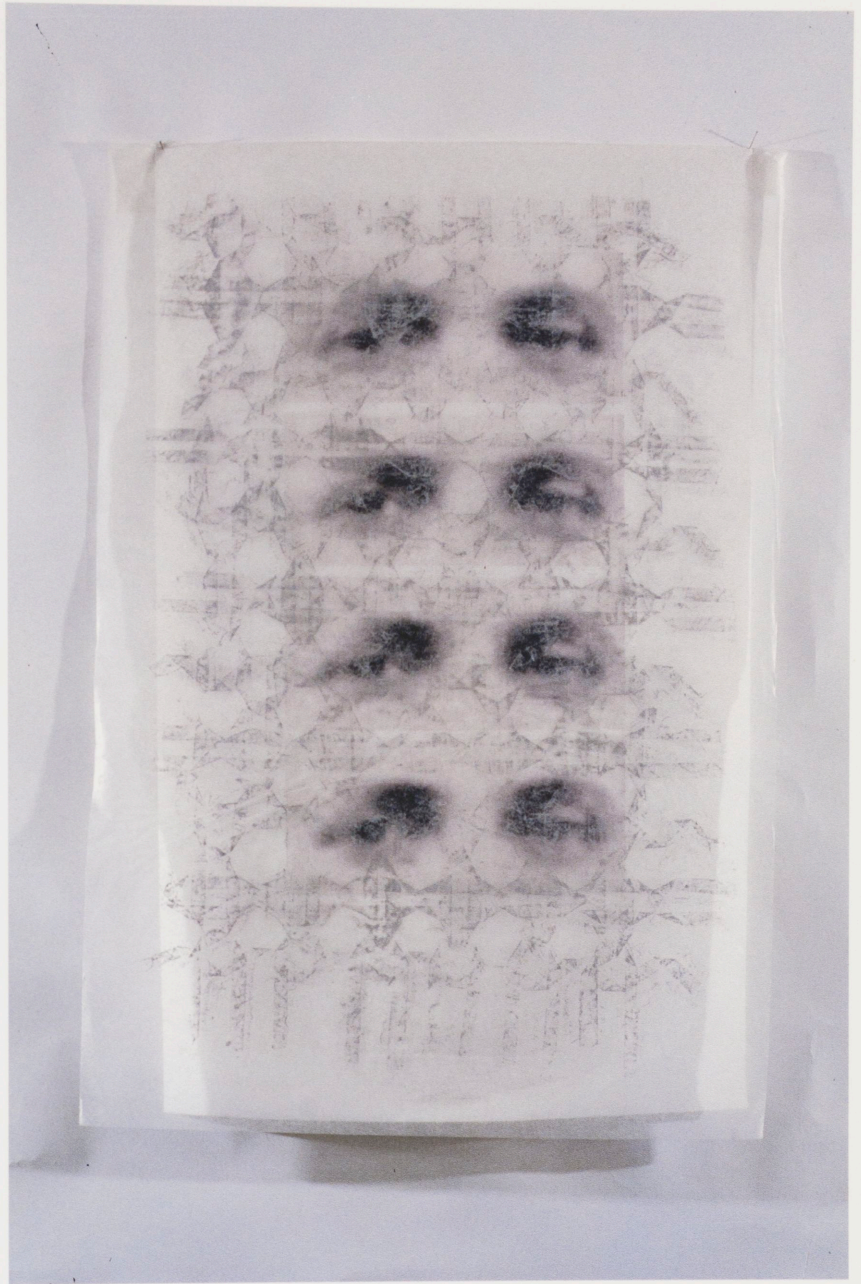
Handmade NZ flax paper, paper braiding and giclée digital print, 83x60 cm

Keith Critchlow, in his book on Islamic pattern, describes the concept of the creation of different configurations as starting from the dot, to the line to describe a plane, the "plane rotates or moves to describe (or create) the solid dimension" which represent the corporeal world. This dimension in turn can be brought back to the dot: "the path of re-absorption". From within that circle are the triangle, the hexagon and the square, they are the foundation of Islamic geometric patterning.

I set myself the task of deciphering the very intricate patterns in their architecture based on this knowledge of algebra. Knowing that the dot and the circle were the first step in the creative process, I started in the same manner and, like all form of writing, the lines move up and down and across the page.

The process became more complex when I had to define where the circles should cross for drawing the lines to form the pattern.

When I was drawing the sequence of circles, it did create for me a strange meditative feeling, may be like a Dervish turner would feel I suppose, going in circle. I was repeating a gesture which became like an "écriture automatique". I imagined how one might represent "The eyes of Elsa", an ode to love, in an architectural manner, within the conceptual premise of Arabic architecture. I used the number seven, as measurement for the circle. Seven is the number for the planet Venus and Venus, in the Greek mythology, is the goddess of love. I used that number as a rule to build my architectural language. The circles have a seven centimeters radius.



"Les yeux d'Elsa V"

(A l'ombre des oiseaux c'est l'océan troublé)

pastel frottage and giclée digital print , 83 x 60 cm

The drawing is a succession of circles creating crossing points and joined to form a pattern. The succession of patterns is for me like a narrative. The forms are like characters attached together to create a whole.

When the page was covered with circles, I drew the diametres across all circles and, to form the patterns, I traced lines crossing at the centres and the ends of the diameters of all the circles. All those lines form geometrical shapes. The crossing points and lines, when followed with the weaving of the paper, create a pattern with lines of stars.

C) Language of colours

Aragon applies a succession of symbols that engages the reader into the force of the imaginary. It is also with his suggestive words that I investigated diverse forms of language. His writing alludes to all sort of interpretations. After my investigation into Arabic architectural language, I felt compelled to superimpose colour symbolism to it.

I developed another geometric pattern with my interpretation, using colours, of the first stanza of the poem.

"Tes yeux sont si profonds qu'en me penchant pour boire

j'ai vu tous les soleils y venir se mirer,

S'y jeter a mourir tous les désespérés

Tes yeux sont si profonds que j'y perds la memoire."

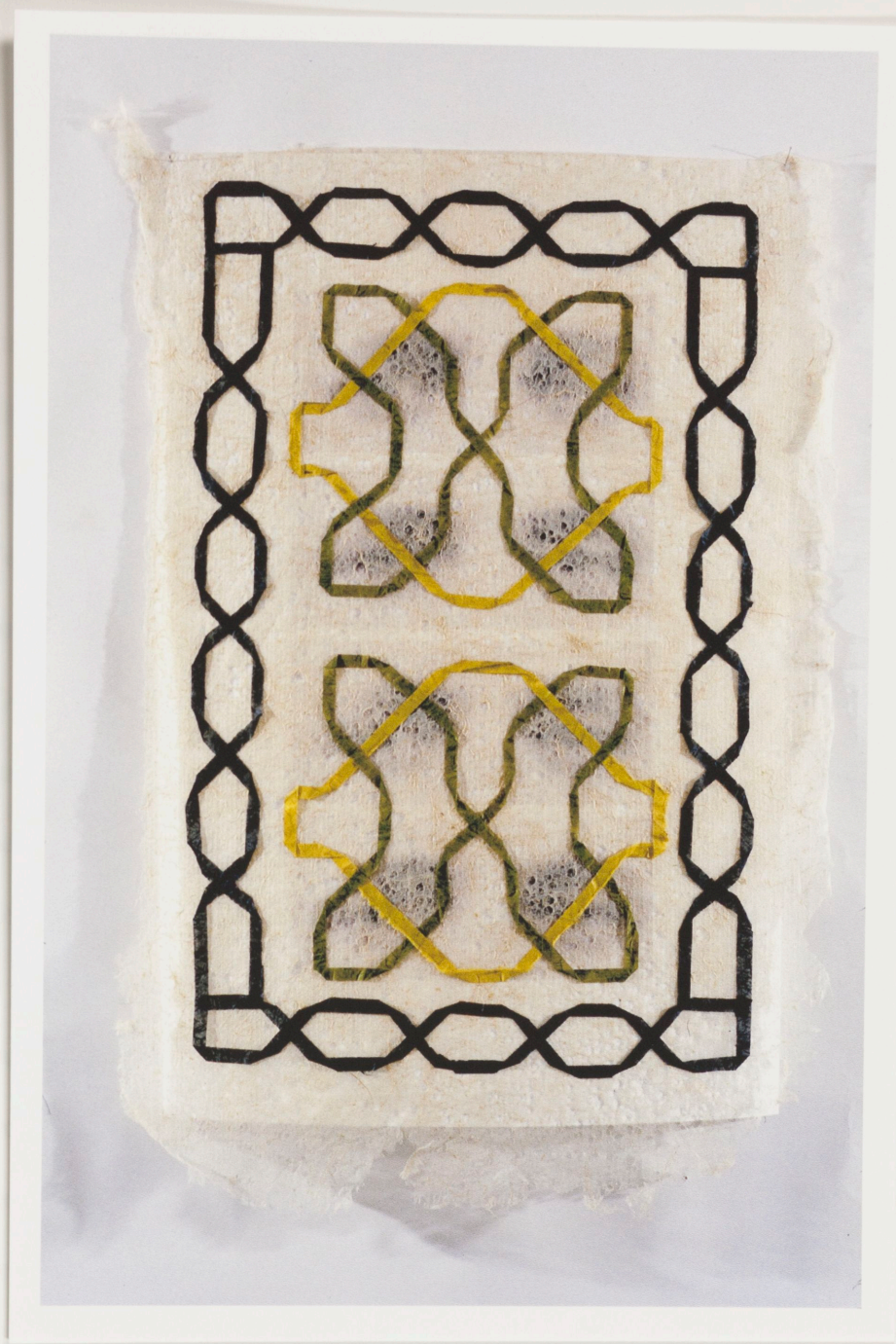
(Your eyes are so deep when I lean to drink

I see the reflection of all the suns

Coming to die all the desperate

Your eyes are so deep that I loose my memory.)

(My translation)



"Les yeux d'Elsa VI"

(Puis le beau temps soudain se lève et tes yeux changent)

Handmade NZ flax paper, paper braiding on giclee digital print, 83 x 60 cm

I used three colours: blue, yellow and green.

Blue is the colour of the Eyes of Elsa and is defined as a deep colour, where the eyes can't meet any obstacle, it refers to the first line of the poem.

Yellow is the colour of intensity, violence and evokes the second and third lines.

-Green it is the colour between yellow and blue. It is a Freudian colour, based on the Oedipus complex because it is the colour of refuge and oasis the "regressus ad uterum". For Islam it is the colour of redemption, colour of their flag as well as the cap worn by the prophet sent by Allah²⁵.

In the three images, *Les yeux d'Elsa* III, IV and V, I reproduced her eyes four times, like in the stanza of the poem. Also, because of the early prohibition of the representation of human form and the importance of geometric patterns to replace it in the world, I veiled her eyes as women would do in some part of the Islamic world.



Kao Feng-hang , "In Wind and Snow", 24,1 x 28,7 cm

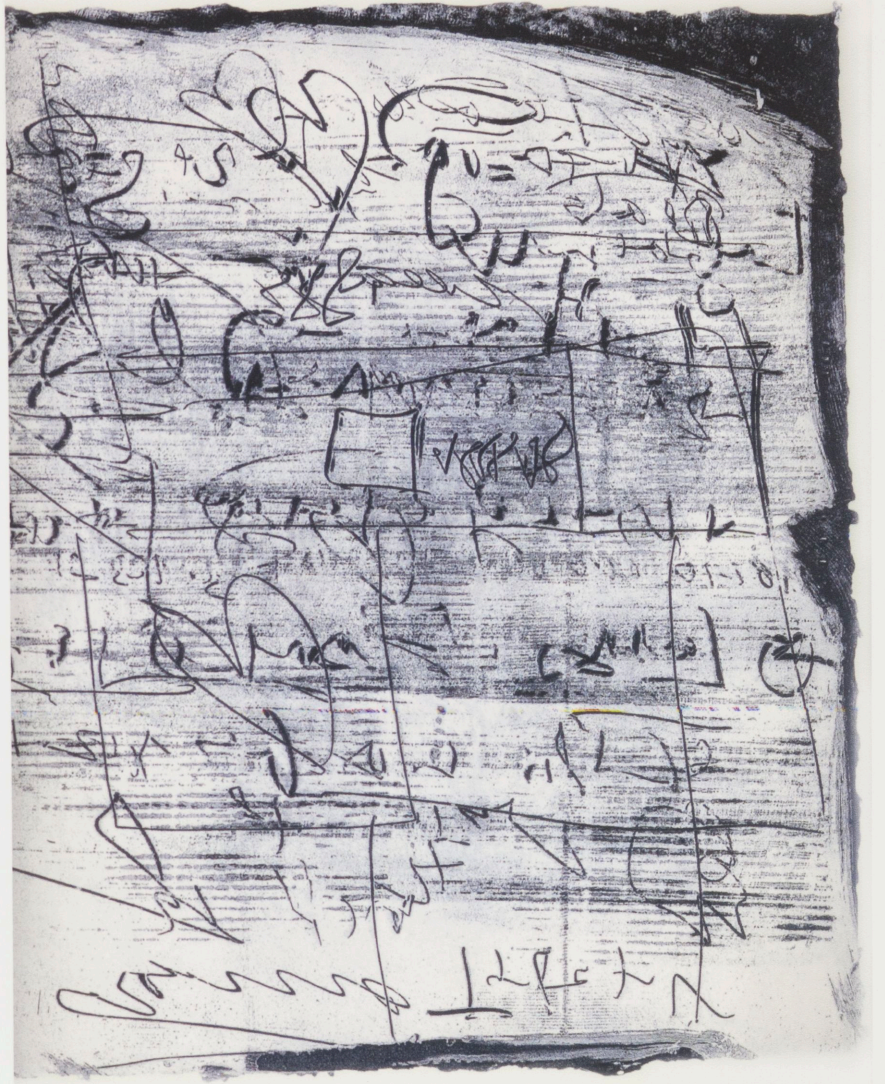
From Embodied Image, Chines Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott

Collection, Princeton University Press, 1999.

D) Chinese language

In the Chinese culture, to be able to write used to be only for the elite. They had talismans, with a text "Fu" written with intricate lines which could only be read by the spirit.

To compare with Latin, it is only when the letters are put together that it means something. To learn the Chinese alphabet is to learn a gesture, a pictogram/ideogram that started as a codification of "signs" that were found in nature such as tortoise shells. From these signs it was thought that the priests could gain insights into the "invisible powers operating within the universe"²⁶. The Latin alphabet is arbitrary giving only one sense to the language. One can understand a word only when the letters are joined together and there is only one way to write that word in a specific language. It is the opposite in Chinese writing which is animated and summarizes: a visual representation of the subjects/objects, the codification of those traces into recognizable signs and the association of those signs into syntax for the purpose of communication and recording. Each group of "lines" expresses a whole.



Josep Vicenc Foix

"Lestació", 1984, Eau-forte.

*From Tàpies ou la poétique de la matière p132, Bibliothèque nationale de
France, éditions cercle d'art.*

A child, from any cultural background, when learning to write, would start with a pictogram and then evolve to an alphabetic form of writing.²⁷ The child, at this early stage, is writing as if she were tracing early Chinese characters and as yet not affected by the various ways of writing. The child's drawings then designate a word or the idea of the word.

From my understanding of Chinese calligraphy, I looked at my environment in the same manner. I observed the light projected on what was around me, the negative and positive shapes formed by the trees and wrote them on lightweight Kozo paper. One of the qualities of this paper is its transparency. I can create layers upon layers to give a sense of perspective but it also allowed me to overlap the marks to invent an alphabet based on natural shapes found within nature. The rhythms, originating within the land, provide a visual space of imaginary words and the assemblage of these words construct a sentence.



"Mulga Bush"

Collage of drawing on Kizuki Kozo paper, 79 x 106 cm.

E) Numerological language

Arabic numerals are also found in the Latin alphabet. The Arabic culture had a very strong knowledge of mathematics, algebra and astrology. Very sophisticated patterns were developed in their architecture based on this knowledge. The grid of numbers I used is also based on the number 7. The darker tone demonstrates the symmetry in the placing of odd and even numbers, and this arrangement has much calculating symmetry.²⁸

Also numbers were used to create a number-alphabet. It was employed by some to gain a better understanding of the Scriptures.²⁹ Even entire books were written in number-alphabet³⁰. Numbers have an occult power, and only imagination can decipher this language.

I invented my own code to research another reading of the poem by Aragon. Numbers refer to quantity but also to the order of things. Each number has its own personality and is a reflection of the cosmos. I could write words according to the sum of the numbers and what they represent, a translation from letters to numbers and from the numbers to words.



"Les yeux d'Elsa X" detail

(Tes yeux plus clairs que lui lorsqu'une larme y luit),

Kizuki Kozo paper casting on Handmade NZ flax paper, 94 x 83 cm.

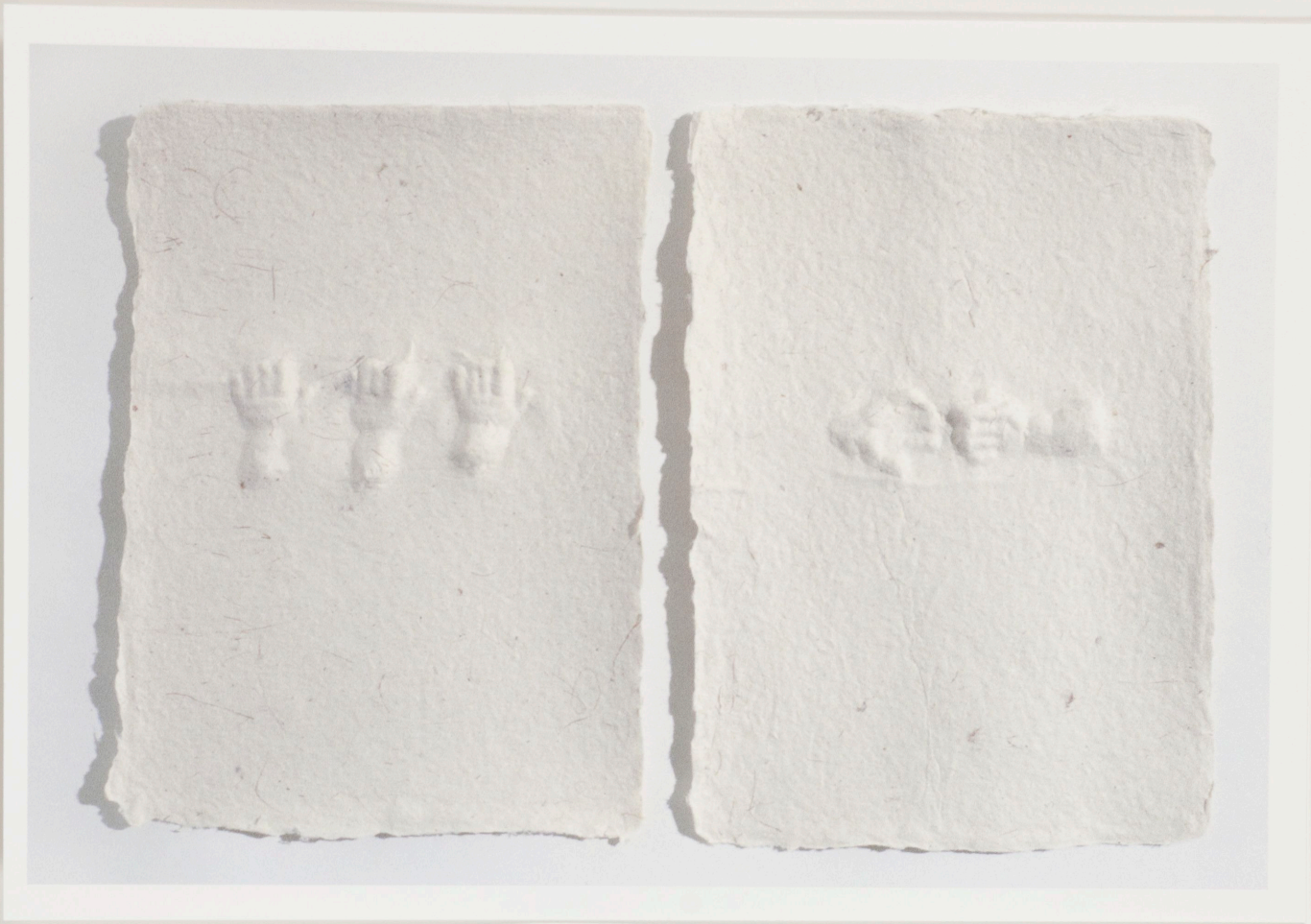
F) Body language

The frottage I started with, made me aware of the gesture, the connection my hands made with objects. To delete other senses increased my dependency on one form of perception. My hands became a form of expression, making signs, gestures, another language communicated through part of my body. Body language is our first form of expression. When we are born, we cry. Through history, such as the "Chansons de gestes" and the "Commedia dell'arte", the body is used as a means to tell a story. My little embossing of the hands could denote one's feeling such as: openness, questioning and togetherness, but may be, in other cultures these gestures could describe something else.³⁰ Also sign language is used by deaf people and each letter as its equivalent with the different positioning of the hands and fingers. When developing these images, it was at the time of protest against a "pre-emptive war" on Iraq. I felt angry and that my voice was not heard, like being behind a sound proofing glass. The work "War" is that representation, red hands sliding against the glass with pain and the word "war" in sign language, my only means of communication. Strangely, the letter W has no sign and I had to use the letter V twice, for the W, which is now used to symbolise Victory.



"War"

Engraving on paper and hand painting, 79 x 54,5cm



"Hand and Hand I and II"

hand casting with mounting board and natural fibres, 21,5 x 16 cm each.



"Hands and Hands III and IV"

Hand casting with mounting board and natural fibre, 21,5 x 16 cm each.

G) Braille language

Another form of language, which uses the hands, is Braille. Raised dots placed in specific orders corresponding to a letter of the alphabet. With the tip of the fingers, a person can touch the dots and understand the text. A visually impaired person uses this form of writing. Some years ago I nearly lost my sight and it made me aware of the importance of my five senses. If one is lost, one has to develop the other four senses to compensate for the missing sense. I used Braille for that reason and mainly because it represents a form of codification of a language. I veil the paper as it can't be touched and, we, as viewers, don't understand its meaning.³²



"Les yeux d'Elsa XI" detail

(Tes yeux rendent jaloux le ciel d'après la pluie)

19 x A4 hand cast with handmade cotton paper with Kizuki Kozo paper.

CONCLUSION

By using a specific language the artists define themselves within a specific culture and/or geographical position. As I find myself with an English speaking culture and have learnt to abide by its rules and conventions, my approach to other cultures and their forms of writing was as an untrained observer.

The question I have therefore asked myself in my artworks is, can I begin to understand and interpret language unknown to me in a new and personalised manner? Can the text "contest the representational limits of the landscape painting"?³³ Maybe it is for these reasons that, over time, societies have developed a vocabulary within a vocabulary. They codified their alphabets, they drew with the text³⁴ and used the symbols of numbers. Roland Barthes in "Lesson"³⁵ mentions there are as many languages as there are desires. With the languages I researched and represented, I used association of signs which for me were symbols of those specific cultures, a virtual space to perceive and conceptualize languages. The third-century philosopher Plotinus, admired the Egyptian hieroglyphs because "gods do not contemplate propositions but realities, and that ideas, far from being just mental pictures, have a genuine existence."³⁶ Even in the Renaissance, man and the church viewed Egypt as the "spring of wisdom".

In the center of the nave in the Siena Cathedral there is a mosaic of Hermes Trismegistus handing over a book on which is written "Receive, O Egyptians, the gift of literacy and law. With his other hand he points to a stone on which is carved

"God, the creator of all, created a second, visible God, and this was the first God made and the one in which he took pleasure: and he love His own Son, who is called the Holy Word."³⁷ Their signs were looked at as being the essence of a meaning, as direct philosophical or theological communication by symbols and not by language.³⁸



"Hieroglyph",

Kizuki Kozo paper, 92 x 22 cm

In my works "Burnt landscape" and "Bird Nest", I establish an interplay between signs and my subsequent narrative, an interpretation of possible meanings. When I visited the south coast, I noticed that the leaves on the ground were seized into time that represented the event of a bush fire. Each side of the track was layered with black, dark blue leaves. Because they were forming that continuous line, I could not take my eyes off them. I was reading their shapes and their multiplicity as a somber score that looked like early recording of music. (The monks in the Middle Ages, developed a sign system, not very precise, but enough to remind the interpreter of the melody. Those signs were called "neumes" and were like punctuation marks and personal references only understandable by the reader.)³⁹ I felt these leaves were better signs to write with than any words and to relate these signs to their support made of natural plant fibres. Paper being a traditional method of recording information, casting with paper of a "Bird Nest" leaf stood for signs that could be likened to a hieroglyph.



"Burnt Landscape",

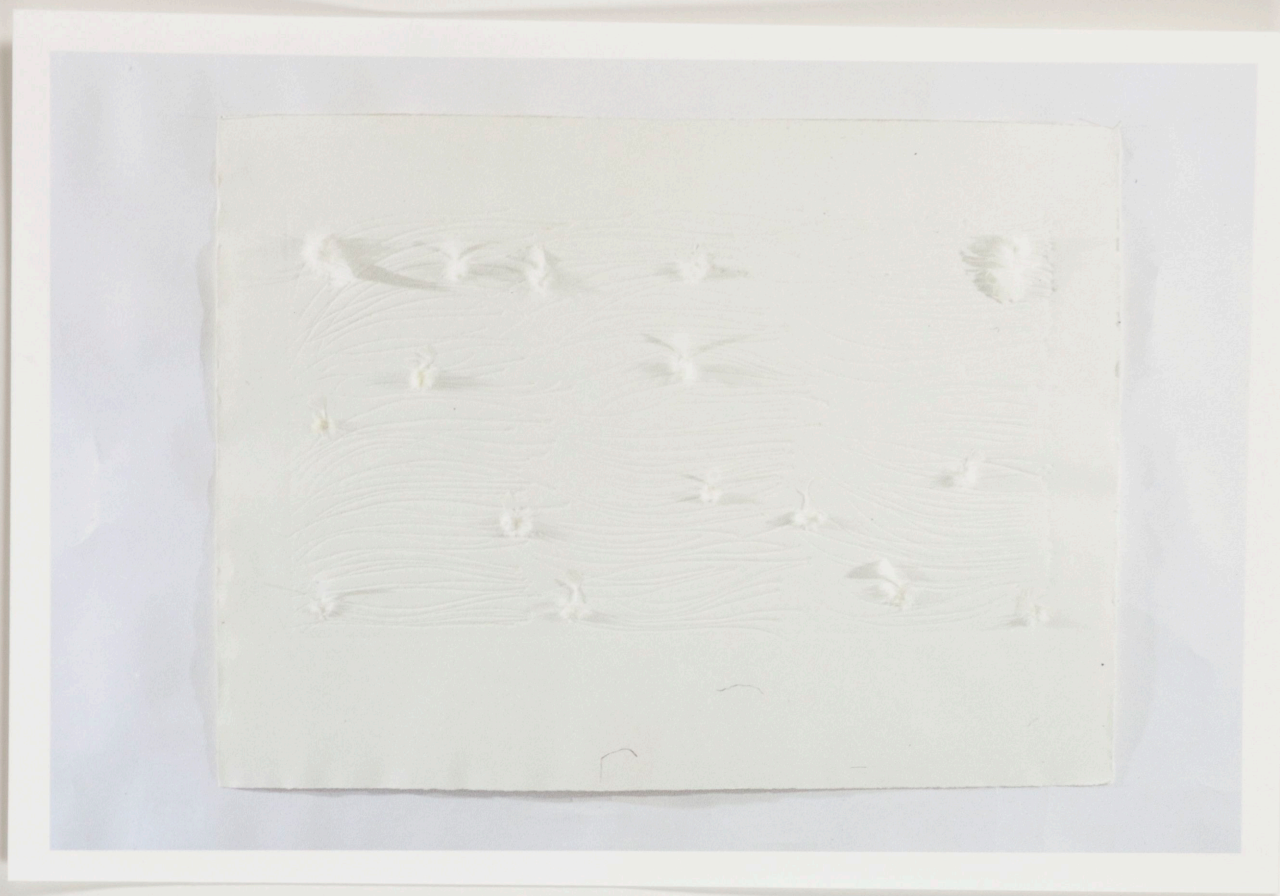
Leaves, hand made NZ flax, banana and mixed fibre papers, 80 x 80 cm



"Burnt Landscape" detail.

Do images demystify words? In some respects they provide much more information and emotion than can be provided by writing, eg "an image speaks a thousand words". Now we are seeing a change of the meaning of certain words inflicted by the pressure exerted on us by the environment we live in. Surfing was meant to happen in the water not on a computer, if one is gay it means he is a homosexual but not necessarily happy. Are we the main vehicles of change or do we receive the pressure to change from our environment?

Language was used to conserve and preserve an existing order and at the same time it played an important part in the development of nations, as they were able to communicate more efficiently through the development of their language by creating new words. But this idea of language as a means of communication has always been challenged because the notion of language as objective has never been possible. We can only write with the tools and knowledge we have acquired until now. We are necessarily constrained by our moment in history.



"Every year in November"

Embossing with feathers, 79 x 106 cm



"Every year in November" detail.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Zali, A (2001), *La naissance des écritures*, dossiers d'archéologie, no 260, p9

² <http://www.ebior.or/Encyc/Vatican%/2011htm#liturgie>. Vatican II made some fundamental changes such as a new constitution on liturgy and the use of a living language. It was the first decree of the council legislated the 4th December 1963.

³ Waldman, D. (1992), *Collage, Assemblage, and the found object*, Phaidon Press, p 158.

⁴ The front page of the magazine "Courier International", 2003, claims there are 6700 languages on the planet.

⁵ *L'aventure des écritures*, (1997) Bibliothèque nationale de France, p20.

⁶ Harp, H. (1975), *Max Ernst*, Catalogue Galleries nationales du Grand-Palais, Paris, p60.

⁷ Rispail, J..L. (1991), *Les surréalistes, une génération entre le rêve et l'action*, Découvertes Gallimard Littérature, Evreux, France, p56. Max Ernst describes the use of frottage in his work: "Frappé par l'obsession qu'exerçait sur mon regard irrité le plancher dont mille ravages avaient accentué les ratures [...], je me décidai à examiner le symbolisme de cette obsession, et, pour venir en aide à mes facultés méditatives et hallucinatoires je tirai des planches une série de dessins en posant sur elles au hasard des feuilles de papier que j'entrepris de frotter à la mine de plomb". {Stunt by the irritable obsession the ravaged marks, left on the timber flooring of my room, made on me, I decided to explore the symbolism of this obsession, and, to help my meditative and hallucinogenic faculties, I put randomly pieces of paper on the floor to create rubbing with graphite. My translation.}

⁸ Sue Blackburn took all the photographs of my art works.

⁹ Waldman, D. (1992), *Collage, Assemblage, and Found Object*, Phaidon p159

¹⁰ Humphrey, N. (1993), *An history of the mind*, Vintage Books, Berkshire, Great-Britain, p58.

¹¹ Meurant, G. & Farris Thomson, R. (1996), *Mbuti design: Paintings by Pygmy Women of the Ituri Forest*, New York, Thames and Hudson, p194.

¹² Ibid. the author links better understanding of Art Premier to "the Modernist" revolution. It awoke the viewer to a visual emancipation, concentrating on movement, emotion and personal involvement."

¹³ Zali, A. (2001), *La naissance des écritures*, Dossier d'Archéologie, France, no 260, p11.

¹⁴ The name comes from the Latin word meaning "wedge-shaped" because of the peculiar way in which the characters were formed, the marks were pressed into moist clay with a square-tipped reed, called a stylus. This instrument left a curious wedge-shaped mark. Cuneiform writing is the most important form of writing in the ancient Middle East. The signs were imbedded in clay giving a sculptural quality. In itself clay was very symbolic as it was thought man had come from silt. So to write on clay linked the scribe to the creation of man in a biblical sense as God created Adam from the earth. Cuneiform writing and its use lasted a long time due to the cultural influence of Babylon. Clay was an easy medium to transport and because it was fired or left in the sun to dry, it has survived all these centuries. Man developed a need to record, such as the marking of time for farmers, but also to register possession of money and land. It also refers to men encounter with other men. It was not enough any more to relate to one's environment but also to relate to other culture. Men were becoming more knowledgeable and inquisitive through their travelling therefore a necessity developed to register and share information.

¹⁵ *The World Book Encyclopedia*(1990), World Book, Inc. vol. 13, p 322.

¹⁶ *L'aventure des écritures* (1997), Bibliothèque nationale de France, p 62.

¹⁷ Boccara, M. (2001), *Dans la nuit des mots Mayas*, Dossiers d'archéologies, France, no 260, p 26. In the Mayas' tradition, the priest used poetry to communicate with the Gods. They called their writing k'ab ts'ib which means writing/painting of the obscure, of the night, to hide the real. For the Sharman (the priest) it is like going to hell to fight darkness with his writing, his poetry. The struggle is won when he dies, he becomes a lord of the night. "Writing is to learn to die".

¹⁸ Allighiero e Boetti & Bruly Bouabre, F. (1995), *Worlds envisioned*, Dia Center for the Arts, New York City October 6, 1994- June 25, 1995.

¹⁹ Zali, A. (2001), *L'ambiguïté de l'écriture, entre dévoilement et secret*, Dossiers d'archéologie, France, no260, p 84. "To write is to make an effort within an idea to represent an idea not yet known, something which is not readily representational, more between verb and image... The letter is opaque it doesn't help to see the meaning." (my translation)

²⁰ Mervin, S. (2001), *Histoire de l'Islam*, Champs Universite, Flammarion, p 8.

²¹ Troupeau, G. (2001), *L'écriture arabe entre emprunt et adaptation*, Dossiers d'archeologies, no 260, p 46. Arabic writing has only fifteen characters to write twenty-eight phonemes. Scribes write simple points, double or triple, above or under to differentiate the nine letters which mark the consonants.

²² Abdelkebir Khatibi, A. & Sijelmassi, M. (1994), *The splendour of Islamic calligraphy*, Thames and Hudson, New York, p14,18.

²³ Abdelkebir Khatibi, A. & Sijelmassi, M. (1994), *The splendour of Islamic calligraphy*, Thames and Hudson, New York, p18.

²⁴ Critchlow, K. (1976), *Islamic Patterns, an analytical and cosmological approach*, Thames and Hudson. Foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, p 6 "Islam brought into being an aniconic art wherein the spiritual world was reflected in the sensible world not through various iconic forms but through geometry and rhythm... a way of seeing numbers and figures as keys to the structure of the cosmos and a symbols of the archetypal world and also a world which is viewed as the creation of God in the sense of the Abrahamic monotheisms".

²⁵ Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1982), *Dictionnaire des symboles*, Robert Lafont, France, p1002

²⁶ Chevalier, J. & Gheerbrant, A. (1982), *Dictionnaire des symboles*, Robert Laffont, France, p1002.

²⁷ Stafford, B.M. (1979), *Symbol and Myth, Humbert de Superville's Essay on Absolute Signs in Art*, Associates University Presses, New Jersey p 134. Moses Mendelssohn, an eighteenth-century philosopher, developed the theory that only naïve signs or signs without artifice used by the artist can represent the sublime. It then triggers the mind of the viewer to imagine more than what is presented. Because Naivete represented "the concepts of simplicity, nobility, beauty of thought and truth therefore sublime."

²⁸ Critchlow, K. (1976), *Islamic Patterns, an analytical and cosmological approach*, Thames and Hudson, p52.

²⁹ Tatlow, B. (1991), *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*, Cambridge University Press, p 127.

³⁰ Ibid. p111

³¹ Jean, G. (1989), *Signs, Symbols and ciphers. Decoding the message*, Thames and Hudson, p 37. The 6th century religious Saint Benedict, founder of many monasteries, wrote in his

³¹ Le Brun, A. (2001), *Surrealism desire unbound*, Princeton University Press, p 308. Aragon as a surrealist, was concerned with the exploration of the subconscious, its representation into words and images as well as Andre Breton with its "Song-Objects". "Their affirmation of desire as a physical intuition of the infinite [of the] challenge posed by the body to the mind [and] only an approach that took account of the senses could hope to come to terms with the extraordinary influence that desire exerts upon our lives."

³² Ibid p 308

³³ Some medieval Hebraic bibles are written in the shapes of pattern. Arabic writing also uses drawing to write. Also poets, such as Jacques Prevert, drew with texts.

³⁴ Barthes, R. (1978), *La leçon*, Edition du Seuil, France, p 24.

³⁵ Pope, M. (1999), *The Story of Decipherment, from Egyptian hieroglyphs to Maya Script*, Thames and Hudson, p 21.

³⁶ Ibid,

³⁷ Ibid, p 190

³⁸ *Larousse Tome II*, (1966), Librairie Larousse Paris, p1094. Neume comes from the Latin word neuma, which means figure, sign. They were musical notation placed above syllables to be sang, and used, in ecclesiastic literature during the VIII to XIII century. They looked like punctuation marks placed to show the interval between notes.

APPENDIX 1

LES YEUX D'ELSA

**By
ARAGON**

Tes yeux sont si profonds qu'en me penchant pour
boire

J'ai vu tous les soleils y venir se mirer
S'y jeter a mourir tous les désespérés
Tes yeux sont si profonds que j'y perds la mémoire

A l'ombre des oiseaux c'est l'océan troublé
Puis le beau temps soudain se lève et tes yeux changent
L'été taille la nue au tablier des anges
Le ciel n'est jamais si bleu comme il l'est sur les blés

Les vents chassent en vain les chagrins de l'azur
Tes yeux plus clairs que lui lorsqu'une larme y luit
Tes yeux rendent jaloux le ciel d'après la pluie
Le verre n'est jamais si bleu qu'à sa brisure

Mère des Sept douleurs ô lumière mouillée
Sept glaives ont percé le prisme des couleurs
Le jour est plus poignant qui point entre les pleurs
L'iris troué de noir plus bleu d'être endeuillé

Tes yeux dans le malheur ouvrent la double brèche
Par où se reproduit le miracle des Rois
Lorsque le coeur battant ils virent tous les trois
Le manteau de Marie accroché dans la crèche

Une bouche suffit au mois de Mai des mots
Pour toutes les chansons et pour tous les hélas
Trop peu de firmament pour des millions d'astres
Il leur fallait tes yeux et leurs secrets gémeaux

L'enfant accaparé par les belles images
Ecarquille les siens moins démesurément
Quand tu fais les grands yeux je ne sais si tu mens
On dirait que l'averse ouvre des fleurs sauvages

Cachent-ils des éclairs dans cette lavande où
Des insectes défont leurs amours violentes
Je suis pris au filet des étoiles filantes
Comme un marin qui meurt en mer en plein mois d'août

J'ai retiré ce radium de la pechblende
Et j'ai brûlé mes doigts à ce feu défendu
O paradis cent fois retrouvé reperdu
Tes yeux sont mon Pérou ma Golconde mes Indes

Il advint qu'un beau soir l'univers se brisa
Sur des récifs que les naufrageurs enflammèrent
Moi je voyais briller au dessus de la mer
Les yeux d'Elsa les yeux d'Elsa les yeux d'Elsa

I have been unable to find a translation of the poem in
English.

The language of poetry is the hardest from of writing to
translate. I have only made an attempt with two verses I
used in my research. The words Aragon used reveal a
freedom that a translation would imprison. It is why my
Iranian friend responded to it not for the meaning of the
words but for what Barthes describes as the
displacement of language.

APPENDIX 2

The sound design in this piece was inspired directly from the Grass Tree itself. The tactile nature of the plant and its unique structure suggested that a highly textured soundscape was needed to represent this plant and of course Nathalie's work.

This plant is represented on paper in a very story-like nature and the association of the Ogham language led me to design a composition that was quite aurally descriptive. I wanted my composition to parallel the development of language: hence the progression of simplistic sound to complex soundscape. Apart from the human voice, the first musical instruments would have been wooden and stone-like, used to create the tapping of rhythms. This composition reflects this concept and juxtaposes it with today's use of digital sound that can now be made by machines.

Many of the sound samples heard in this composition are true recordings of the Grass Tree itself. I aimed to focus on the way in which the plant can theoretically be taken apart piece by piece and then put back together like a puzzle. When touching the plant, it is hard not to notice the sounds that it makes as you pull it apart or hold the pieces in your hand. The composition aims to capture the real sounds of the various parts of the plant.

I used Nathalie's work as a basis in which to structure the sound so that it reflects each image accordingly like a story unfolding. The sound is very granular in parts, as I wanted to evoke a very organic soundscape of natural-like sounds. Of course this is ironic considering how technology has been used to record and create the sounds in this work. But this in itself reflects the development of language from its initial stages through to computer based languages. It's all communication and it all tells some sort of story.

The composition builds up in layers as does the images it represents, until at the end when language is both seen and heard. The work ends with the whisper of a child's voice. The human voice is of course an instrument we use to communicate. Spoken in Gaelic, it expresses the Ogham writing represented in Nathalie's work.

Allyson Newman

APPENDIX 3

Extract from the first chapter used in the recording of the music for grass tree.

I thought of the geographical position of Australia and its isolation from the rest of the world which makes many of its plants and animals so unique in the sense they retain their original form with no cross pollination or cross genetically. I Chose a natural form with which I was fascinated: a grass tree, I found it interesting that it is the only tree I know of, which can be easily decomposed, literally pulled apart. The trunk is made of strips of "wood" which can be separated. Taken out of their context, those pieces look like cockroaches. They don't relate to the outside appearance of the plant but they have a lacquered finish similar to the wings of the cockroach. The inner part of the plant is an intricate web of fibres in the shape of a tub with large veins. I took a cross section of the tub of fibres and it appeared to resemble a piece of weaving. The plant is comparable to building blocks put together by nature. It is the only tree I can pull apart that I could theoretically put back together to its original form. It is like writing, the composition and decomposition of a sentence.

When I researched how to develop images relating to the Grass Tree, I wanted to use senses other than the visual, somewhat like the first humans would be accustomed to. If I could decompose the plant physically, I could recompose the plant in a sensorial manner.

During the development of the images I concluded that I wanted to delete any previous knowledge I had of the form of the grass tree, I wanted to forget what I already knew of the plant. I rubbed the surface, I used only my tactile sense. I tried to discover the form that Diane Waldman describes as "to liberate the mind of preconceived ideas, to release the words". The images I produced are a translation of the tactile into the visual, how it looks to feel. They are only a perception of my sensation, a tactile sensation. The association of two or more of the representations of the grass tree creates syntax and a codification into a visual form. This is my first form of written language, an object that could express a message. Like Max Ernst, to replace "phonetic combinations" by "optical combinations" to arrive at the collage or the frottage".¹ The frottage becomes a form of written language. It is a transfer of tactile response into a visual narrative to establish a connection with the viewers or readers.

My series of pictograms Grass Tree I, II, are based on frottage. Grass Tree III is based on my visual perception, it is the drawing of what I see inside the core of the plant.

Grass Tree IV and V are the association of signs to establish a meaning, a composition associating pictograms I, II, III together like letters put together to reveal the meaning of a word. The association of images is the beginning of a codification of a form of language.

In Grass Tree VI, I embossed the "pieces of wood", which are part of the trunk, to form an imaginary line. The lines are for me the symbol of writing. They are horizontal as the representation of the writing for the Latin alphabet. Those broken lines are the stuttering, a beginning of a more complex association of marks/drawings which, eventually, will develop into a type of syntax.

¹ Waldman, D. (1992), *Collage, Assemblage, and Found Object*, Phaidon p159

A) Ogham language

The Ogham writing was peculiar to the Celtic population of the British Isles and is dated from the fourth century AD. I used it for its simple forms of lines and as an approach to represent the written form of language. First the line and the line with the writing became a support for my interpretation. In Grass Tree VII, I used the trunk parts to write in the Ogham alphabet the words Grass Tree.

This process reminded me of an experiment Paul Bach-y-Rita did with visually impaired people. A TV camera was attached to the head of the person and the image was transferred to a vibrator. The vibrator in contact with the skin would react to each pixel of the image. The person would have different groups of vibrations according to the density of the image enabling the visually impaired person to "visualise" an image through tactile. It is the realisation of the essence of communication contained therein a simple observation and an understanding of the environment. I tried to re-experience what it would be like to rediscover that direct representation and also to be able to communicate through a codification of the sound relating to the grass tree.

Translation in Gaelic by Clare Walsh and read by Mary Clarke.

An Crann Féir – the Grass Tree

Sílim gurb í staid tíreolaíochta na hAstráile agus an tsli ina bhfuil sí imeallaithe a mhíníonn na plandaí aisteacha agus an beatha ainmhíoch éagsúil anseo gan cros-síolrú nó tras-ghineolaíochtú le gnéithe beatha eile. Roghnaigh mé foirm nádúrtha gur chuir mé speis ann, an Crann Féir (the Grass Tree)*. Is é an taon chrann gur féidir dianscaoileadh go héasca – píosaí de a stracadh óna chéile. Tá an stoc déanta as píosaí ‘adhmaid’ gur féidir iad a bhriseadh óna chéile. As a gcomhthéacs, is cosúil le ciarógaí na píosaí seo – níl said gaolta le cuma an phlanda ach tá críoch lacaireach orthu cosúil le sciatháin na ciaróige. Taobh istigh den phlanda, tá bailiúchán compléasach de snáithíní i gcruth tobáin le feitheanna móra. Thóg mé trasghearradh den tobán snáithíní agus d’fhéach sé mar phíosa fiodóireachta. Is cosúil le bricí curtha le chéile go nádúrtha é an planda seo. Is é an taon chrann amháin gur féidir a loit agus a athchruthú go teoiriciúil, cosúil le habairtí chruthaithe agus scriosta sa phróiseas scríbhneoireachta.

Nuair a rinne mé taighde ar chonas íomhánna den Chrann Féir seo a fhorbairt, rinne mé iarracht gan a bheith teoranta den íomhá fheiceálach, agus d’iarr mé féachaint air le súile ár sinsirigh. Más féidir liom an planda a scrios go fisiciúil, bheinn in ann é a athchruthú i modh ceadfaíocha.

Agus na híomhánna á fhorbairt agam, bheartaigh mé dearmad a dhéanamh ar aon réamheolas a bhí agam faoin gCrann Féir. Chuimil mé an craiceann le mo lámha agus rinne mé iarracht an fhoirm go ndéanann Diane Waldman cur síos uirthi mar shlí chun an aigne agus na focail a scaoileadh saor ó réamhthuairimí a thuiscint. Aistriú ón mothú fisiciúil go dtí an mothú radharcach atá ar bun agam sna saothair seo, aistriú ó chuma fisiciúil an chrainn go dtí an mothú a spreagann sé. Níl i mo chuid oibre ach tuiscint ar mo mhothú fisiciúil. Cruthaíonn an nasc seo idir dhá nó níos mó íomhá den Chrann Féir comhréir nó códú teanga i

bhfoirm radharcach. Is é seo mo chéad fhoirm den teanga scríofa; earra gur féidir leis teachtaireacht a chur trasna. Cosúil le Max Ernst, ceapaim gur féidir comhcheangal fónéimiúil a chur in áit chomhcheangail radharcach chun na híomhánna nó an frottage** a shroichint. Tá an frottage mar chuid den teanga scríofa. Is aistriú ón bhfreagra fisiciúil go hiniseoireacht radharcach é chun teagmháil a dhéanamh leis an léitheoir nó leis an lucht féachana.

Tá frottage mar bhunús de mo shraith d'íomhánna Grass Tree I agus II. Tá Grass Tree III bunaithe ar mo thuiscint radharcach, léaráid den rud a fheicim i gcoirilár an phlanda. Is gréasán de chomharthaí iad Grass Tree IV agus V, úsáidte chun brí agus míniú a aimsiú ar nós litreacha aibítire curtha le chéile chun focail a chruthú. Tá an coibhneas seo idir na híomhánna mar thús chódú teanga.

I Grass Tree IV, chabhraigh mé na ‘píosáí adhmaid’ atá mar chuid den stoc chun líne samhlaithe a mharcáil. Tá na línte seo mar shiombail den scríbhneoireacht, dar liom. Tá siad cothrománach, cosúil leis an aibítir Laidine. Is tús stadach iad na línte bhriste seo, tús le córas léaráidí agus deartháin níos compléacsaí a athraíonn go foirm choimhréire ag an ndeireadh.

Teanga Ogham

Ba leis na Ceiltigh amháin a chónaigh in Éirinn agus sa Bhreatain an teanga Ogham a luaitear leis an 4ú aois. D'úsáid mé é toisc a línte simplí, slí an soiléir chun teanga scríofa a léiriú, ceapaim. Ar dtús, thacaigh an líne agus an líne leis an scríbhneoireacht le mo chuid tuairimí. In Grass Tree VII, d'úsáid mé cuid den stoc chun na focail Grass Tree a scríobh as Ogham air.

Chuir an próiseas seo thriail a rinne Paul Bach-Y-Rita le daoine le bacanna radharcacha i gcuimhne dom. Cuireadh ceamara teilifíse ar cheann an duine agus aistriódh an íomhá go tonn chreataise. Trí theagmháil leis an gcráiceann, rachfadh gach mionchuid den íomhá i bhfeidhm ar an nduine agus bheadh critheanna éagsúla, a láidreacht ag brath ar thomhas na híomhánna chun cabhrú leis an nduine dall an íomhá a fheiscint trí theagmháil fisiciúil leis an ábhar. Seo bunchoincheap na cumarsáide, bíodh rud simplí le léamh agus tuisceannach don timpeallacht. Rinne mé iarracht an léiriú thuasluaite agus an chumarsáid trí códú fuaime a athaimsiú agus a thuiscint.

Translated by Clare Walsh, from Ireland

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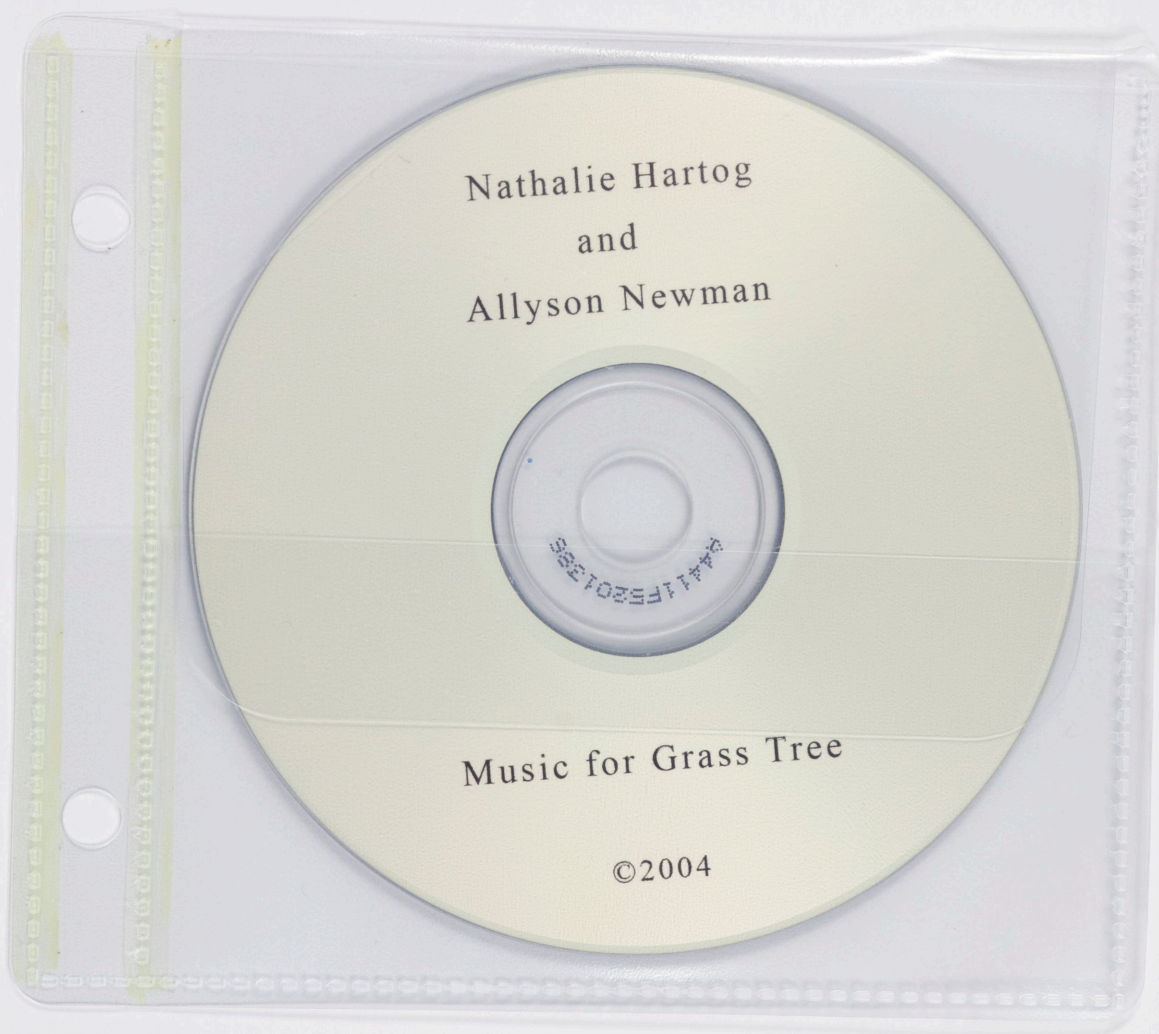
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