WILLIAM BLAKE
JEANINE GEBELE
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ALEJANDRO BARRÓN
THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL
ASTROLOGY SYMBOLS
DALÍ THEATRE-MUSEUM
THE INVISIBLE PLANET
POETRY AND THE MUSE
SUNSET WINGS
MUTATION URBAINE
CROSS DRESSING
PARANORMAL FILMS

ROMANTICISM AND TRANSCENDENTALISM IN PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE, MUSIC & THE ARTS

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PREFACE

Paradox Ethereal is a quarterly digital magazine possessing a re-enactment character and related to the Arts, Romanticism, Aestheticism and Symbolism. We flirt with Music - folk, ethereal, or experimental forms - Esoteric Traditions, Traveling possessing an exploratory character, Art in all its magnitude and types, the Absurd in full glory, everything Retro or Vintage, Nature, Literature, Psychology, Philosophy and above all the Transcendental. If a reader feels he/she is one of us we accept contributions. «The artist is the creator of beautiful things», Oscar Wilde said. Beauty is a fuel and imagination the vehicle. Welcome to the trip!

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CALL FOR SERIOUS SUBMISSIONS

“THE ARTIST IS THE CREATOR OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS”
Oscar Wilde
It is not a rare phenomenon politicians of the same party, members of the same family, or the same group, to fail in communication. Conversation becomes like an exercise, you need to stretch topics often, for fear of pulling a muscle; leaving with the illusion that communication took place, and a feeling of emptiness and solitude. Plain, common references, shared “tribe” traits do not help either. Appeals for help are mistaken for aggressive behavior, politeness to inadequacy is perceived as collaboration, and so many other unorthodox paradoxes.

Philippe Blanche said “Negative egregores and tribal instincts dominate and destroy everything precious and essential, rather than supporting spontaneous creativity handled by individuals. Leader of the anthroposophy movement, Rudolf Steiner said rightly and in a visionary way that Arhiman spirit is leading this (post) modern world”.

Nevertheless, in distant countries, in remote parts of the world, or even in the same continent, there are people with whom we speak the “same language”, we share the same feelings; even our silent pauses are interpreted in an identical manner. Fresh breeze… I named these people “Citizens of the Invisible Planet”. The Invisible Planet exists, the land of Communication right inside the dimension of the physical planet, Earth. Citizens of the Invisible Planet do not have to physically meet in order to come to an understanding, or resort to the most precious fruit of human interaction, creation. Tangible and ethereal at the same time, it accomplishes what practical and physical communication cannot even imagine, harmony.

What are the characteristics of the invisible planet? And how all these people became citizens? The answer lies with references, all of them share a common characteristic; references. Books, paintings, the creators’ visions, mysticism, abstract thoughts blown in the astral wind, in any part of the Earth on any period, become the Great Teachers, the Family Bonds, the Cosmic Glue, the Ligament, creating the subtle network of communication among the people of the Invisible Planet.

Paradox Ethereal Magazine is a meeting spot of these people, and so the story goes, as these people come closer they find a part of them in the world within the world. They do not wonder why things are the way they are, why symbols or words appear, because they already know… Images become symbols, words become bridges and nobody asks why… No need for herds, tribes, races or mass practices, no need for direct explanations, silence definition or symbols explained. A thank you to all past citizens of the invisible planet that, being dead now, with their works they left us the Invisible Dictionary, the Ethereal Grammar, the Visual Semantics of the Invisible Planet…
"I write about my feelings, and get a picture of it in my head, then I combine them."

photographer interview
Germany
Mary Vareli: Jeanine, when did you start photographing? Have you attended any art school or are you self-taught? Do you work as a photographer?

Jeanine Gebele: I started my work in 2013, more particularly on July the 13th, meaning to make unique emotional photos, so I realized I should create a page for what I’ve done. I never went to an art-school. There was a time when I drew a lot and often, it was reassuring for me, I was able to escape from the everyday life and forget bad thoughts. Unfortunately I’ve no more time for this. To come back to your question, I have taught myself everything and it is just intrinsic therapy, not my job. I have a full time job and wear white, hard to believe.

How would you describe your style and technique?

It’s hard to describe. I would assign no particular style to my photos, I just reflect my emotions. I get pictures in my head through my emotions and I set them to my images. However, I think in my photos it can be seen that I’m madly in love with the past.

You manage to create images that follow the tradition of Pictorialism quite successfully. Are you influenced by any particular photographer?

Thank you, there are few great photographer whose work I like very much, Henry Peach Robinson for example. But I wouldn’t say that they have influenced me.

What equipment do you use? Favorite lenses?

I use the Nikon D3200, it’s a good one and my favorite lens is the Nikon AF-S Nikkor DX 18-105 mm.

Can you describe how and when you use flash, video light, reflectors and natural light?

It depends on the lighting conditions and the
idea for the photo.

The topics of your images vary from romantic depictions to horror encounters. Is this something that depends on your mood?

Among other things, I have many faces and show they. I like to slip into different personalities.

Is melancholy a gate to creativity?

Yes, definitely! I walk much in nature, particularly in forests, we have beautiful trails here in Thuringia. I thinking about so much things though I walk through, memories haunt me.

It is you in the images right? How do you set the scene, using a tripod, or do you have an assistant?

Yes, it is me. I use a tripod, I do everything myself, as well as the edit of the photos.

What is the difficulty a photographer faces when shooting himself/herself?

It is difficult to find the “perfect shot” with a great pose for the photo and even more difficult from itself.

Tell us more about the leading title of your images, i.e. “Self-Inflicted Photography”.

As a child I was diagnosed with a personality disorder and have struggled since then with depression. I hurt and cut myself, disease caused. These are “Self-Inflicted” wounds. Sometimes you can see these wounds on my photos. Therefore, this is where the name of my photography comes from.

Is the occult a main influence?

Yes, there was a time when I dealt a lot with occultism and demonology. I’m still dealing with it, but now more with the paranormal, I think there is more between heaven and earth, not something like god and satan you know, but something other; what we can’t see and the science can’t explain.

Don’t worry, I don’t eat cats or make them prey. I have two cats at home, they even sleep with me in a bed, I love them.

Abandoned houses and mental institutions, isolated nature seem to prevail in images other than self portraits. I guess you are not a person that loves the city.

I hate crowds, it’s too much for me already to live in a my small town. Fortunately, I live in one of the quietest quarters of my town, it is like a small village. I’m glad to be alone, it is a change for me to let my thoughts simply flow. But sometimes it’s a curse too.
What is your shooting routine?

I make photos every weekend because I have a lot to do during weekdays.

Do you enjoy exhibitions? Have you exhibited your work?

Yes, for “The Drill Hall Gallery” in Australia, they asked me if they may be exhibiting a few photos of me.

Have you published your work? Are there books, cards, illustrations, CD covers?

I published some photos of me for a few Depressive Suicidal Black Metal Bands as CD covers. For example, Lifeless, Freak Funèbre, or Black Hate. They’re also videos on youtube with my photos, of course they asked me before for permission.

Are you working on any project currently?

Yes, I work on photo project for my page on Facebook, I’ll create a new photo album, it will have the title “The Book of Mental Illness”, I will try to represent all mental illnesses photographically with a morbid art. I also work on a music-project, it is a Black Metal project. I’ve already started writing lyrics, but I can work on this more from March on.

What else inspires you?

Books, music and poems.

What frightens you?

Life.

Favorite musicians?

They’re many, many Black Metal bands I really like. But if I enumerate them all the interview would arise to 10 Pages. To keep it short, Xasthur is my absolute favorite band.

Favorite authors and directors?

J.R.R Tolkien and William Shakespeare. I have no favorite directors, I’m not the media type.

Other favorite photographers?

Currently not.

You write beautiful poetry that is combined with the images. Do you write looking at the image or do you shoot inspired by the mood of the poem?

I write about my feelings, and get a picture of it in my head, then I combine them.

Favorite poets?

Edgar Allan Poe, Johann Wolfgang von Ghoete, Lewis Carroll and Stephen Crane.

Thank you!
Mary Vareli: Jennifer, you are the daughter of the symbolist painter Jose Luis Ruissó, in what way has this influenced your decision to become a painter?

Jennifer Jennsel: I think that my father has been the most important influence for me to become an artist and especially a fantasy painter, he taught me to paint but also to see nature through the eyes of a fantasy language, I discovered that I could create new symbols to express things with a personal language where the limit is only creativity.

Was your father your only teacher?

He has been the most important teacher of painting for me, but I try to be always learning from every painter that I admire from different periods of art.

Your field of painting is fantasy art, tell us more about your choice.

Personally I like the freedom that I find in fantasy art very much, the infinite space for creativity; fantasy art uses languages like visual poetry, metaphors and many symbols, fantasy art came to me on a natural way, first because of the influence of my father’s paintings but also because when I was a child, my family lived in the country, the fact to be close to nature offered me every day many beautiful spectacles which I could easily link to the world of literary classical tales of fantasy and also to legends and mythology.

Where do you draw your topics from?

Often I have an idea for a new painting or drawing, so I make sketches of this, I define the idea, and then I try to take this to the canvas, during this process I also look for sources that can be useful for the development of my work, I try to get elements like photos of models to study their anatomy, photos of nature and many things, sometimes I also work with real models and everything that can provide me with some visual information that I study and I adapt to my work through my own imagery, sometimes I also like to work using completely only my imagination without any study or reference of any model.

Your characters are mostly female ones, why?

I think that because I am a woman it is easier and more natural for me to express myself through female characters, sometimes they also work as a kind of alter ego for me, they are always interacting with their surroundings, even so, sometimes there appear also men on my paintings and they can also be the central topic, but mostly there are women.

When you paint a topic emerging from imagination, how do you visually keep in touch with this? Reading about the topic, visiting related places, listening to music, something else?
I think that a little from all of this; when I have an idea for a painting I try to get involved in all the elements that get me closer to this; I like to listen to music that creates a special atmosphere that I feel it gets me closer to the theme that I am painting, I also like to read or get information that I think it has to do with the theme of my painting, and if it is possible, I visit special places or get special things...I try to take and bring home everything that could be useful to make contact to the spirit from my paintings...

What is your painting routine? Waiting for your muse or painting every day?

Usually “I wait for the muse to come, but then I try to convince her to stay as long as it is necessary for that I get completely ready a painting,” yes, it happens that suddenly I have an idea about a new painting, so, I try to define this idea and to work on this very hard to try to get this completely ready, but sometimes it happens that “there is no more dialogue with the painting,” sometimes I just can’t make completely contact to this and then it is better to let it rest for a while and to wait for the moment when I can make that contact to this work again, sometimes I work with a single painting until I finish this, but usually I have various paintings that I am working along with; I work in one of them and then I let it rest for a while to continue working in another one.

Do you feel the need to experiment with other painting fields and themes in the future?

To experiment with other fields of painting and other themes is something that I used to do parallel to my own creations, I like to work in other fields of painting because this help me to practice and to develop more the elements like the technique, the composition, the colors, etc...“Painting is something alive that needs frequently to be fed from much work and new learning”.

Tell us more about the techniques you use.

I work mostly with oil painting and graphite drawing but I also work with other tech-
niques like watercolor, acrylic, and also pastel, scratch, charcoal, etc. Sometimes I also like to make experiments with a variety of new materials and different techniques…

You seem to place emphasis on feeling, like all true romantics do, do you share this opinion?

Well, I think that every kind of art is something that cannot happen without involve your feelings on this, painting for me is a very important needing in my life, is something that provides to me a space to express free my thoughts, my emotions and beliefs, painting is a possibility also to get away from the things that hurt me or that I don’t understand, but it also offers a space for denounce, at the same time painting is a space to propose, to create and to have hope.

What else inspires you?

Everything that deeply touches my feelings is an interesting theme to express in my paintings; usually my paintings have a story to tell. I love the themes of fantasy, the universal mythology and literature, but I also like using symbols and imaginary characters to represent things that happen in my own life and have a strong impact on my soul; my son, my husband, my family. Also, sometimes, things that happen in the contemporary historical events of Mexico and the whole world.

You live in Berlin now. Do you also participate in exhibitions in Mexico?

Yes, I have much contact with Mexico and I still have participated in a pair of exhibitions there in the last years.

How has life in Berlin helped you in your art?

To live in Berlin has given to me the chance to have a deep contact to a very interesting city with a very strong spirit that speaks on its culture, on its History and its people, Berlin is a multicultural city with a very expressive character, I think that the resulting of this it has been that I have realized much more what I am, my “mexicanity”, I think
it is natural that sometimes I feel homesick and the echo of this is that actually there are more Mexican symbols and themes on my artworks, but by other hand, there are also new themes that have to do with the German culture, specially with mythology, legends and literature.

Your husband is the expressionist painter Willi Büsing. Is living with another painter the dream of every painter? Or creativity is an individual matter?

Well, personally I think that share life together with another artist can give you many great experiences because your couple share many similar interests to yours, your couple is also your colleague and this can have a very productive interaction and collaboration, but this condition also needs from much responsibility to be conscious that you are going to interchange frequently different points of view about art and the process to work on this.

On the other side I think that it is very important to keep your own creativity independent of the personal relationship and the work that sometimes you can do in collaboration with your artist-couple, for my husband and for me, those conditions have not been a problem because from the beginning of our relationship we were very conscious that we have different styles of painting and we have handled this condition with much respect, we have even worked together in a few paintings.

Do you enjoy exhibiting your work? Tell us about your exhibitions.

To exhibit my paintings gives me the chance to know the different interpretations that other people make about my work, is very interesting to talk directly to people because it also happens that some people help me sometimes to discover special elements on my paintings from which I was not so conscious about, I also like to see the different reactions and emotions that my work produce in others, I especially like when people don’t know that I am the painter and I am close to them to listen what they say about my work.

Painters that influenced you?

Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, José Luis Ruissó, Jorge Quiroz, Sulamith Wulfing, Frida Kahlo, Ernst Fuchs, the surrealists, the symbolists, the pre raphaelites, the visionary art, the gothic art, the renaissance…

Favorite writers? Poets, Philosophers?

Italo Calvino, Gabriel García Márquez, Kafka, Tolkien, Shakespeare, the Grimm brothers, Arthur Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Alfonsina Storni, Roberto Arizmendi. The works from those writers and poets have provided me frequently inspiration to create some of my
paintings. I cannot say that I have a special favorite philosopher or school of philosophy to follow, more than this, I try to know, to understand and to learn a little from all of them, you can also learn everyday important lessons from the most unexpected people and circumstances.

What advice would you give to a young painter?

To be loyal to your own artistic ideas, to understand that painting is a way of life with many efforts to do but also with many spiritual satisfactions, painting is a dare for every day but it can also be an adventure and a shelter, painting can be a very jealous lover but also a friend, a confidant and a voice for your spirit, your painting will stay on this world when you will not be here anymore, your painting will speak about your dreams, your wishes and your beliefs. Your painting will be forever a portrait of your soul.

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www.vagallery.com/jennifer-jennsel.html
Mary Vareli: Alejandro, do you remember the first time you realized you wanted to be a painter?

Alejandro Barrón: It was just when I decided to get into the Art School.

You graduated from the National School of Arts, Mexico but you define yourself as self-taught, why?

As long as I was a student, I just worked at the lithograph workshop, I wasn't into painting studios and unfortunately they didn't give me the education I was looking for. Since 2004 I started with painting exercises by myself and that's how I begin to settle down my profession.

What made you choose realism as a means of expression? Do you think this will change in the future?

Since I was working on graphic artwork then painting, I always went attracted by human figure. I worked a lot with portraits and I got more and more identified with body language, details, the flesh, textures, etc. I really do not think that this will change in the future...

I trace some elements of magic realism in your work as well. Am I right? A Little, I’m not only into mimesis, I like to represent people or objects in a subtle way into unusual environment. More than to relate something, I look for a gestured, symbolic and emotive artwork.

I noticed you do not try to idealize anything, you present the body with its flaws, the skin as it is, even cat personalities in their predator look. Are you fighting idealism?

I have no conflict with idealizing but I just don't feel identified with. I think things are beautiful the way they are and it's not necessary to distort something to make it interesting. There are so many details on the skin and the things around us to delight us for a lifetime.
Tell us more about your technique. Do you use experimental forms?

My technique is more traditional, I pick up traditional techniques and printed materials, I don’t experiment with them.

Your images balance between erotic images and darkness, introversion, symbols, occultism, curiosities, cats. What inspires you? Are these images part of your everyday life?

Sure, all of these are part of my daily life, that’s what I see and surrounds me. Darkness is a personal taste for the antiquity tenebrist painting, symbols just enrich the interpretation.

What is your painting routine?

I work throughout the day about 5 to 7 hours, six days at week.

You said that out of the 12 year you work only the last seven were successful. Why? What is the role of the Monterrey gallery in your career?

I have been painting for 11 years. The lasts seven have been the more productive because growing professionally I decided to begin exhibiting solo shows at 2007 and that increased my vision to keep on looking for art places.

Arte Actual Mexicano Gallery, from Monterrey, was the first one to bet on my work and have been selling out the major part of my pieces, that’s how I little by little started to be known better in Mexico and abroad.

I can tell you are unconventional as a personality, judging from your work.

I feel I’m a normal person, I just express my ideas the way I think it is more convincing.

Tell us about your best and worst exhibition experience. How do you feel during exhibitions?

I feel good at exhibiting my work, because I like to know I can transmit something to the others. There haven’t been a lot of bad experiences but when I consider that something’s not satisfactory I prefer to leave it out of my professional history.

I have noticed you do not participate in exhibitions and Biennales in Mexico. Why?

Sometimes I participated in competitions and Biennales with no favorable results so I stopped to spend my time in something that became unnecessary and preferred to focus on production and exhibition by myself. Recently I decided to exhibit once again in Mexico City.
Because of the museums and galleries that valued my work very little in the past and the little support and attention, I made the decision to fall away from the art scene in this city.

Do you sometimes face “the painter’s block”?

I guess not always ideas can flow like we wanted, but the best for me is to not put pressure on me and do some other things while the block goes away.

What is your advice to young painters?

My advice is to work hard and always with the goal to get better and to learn. Not to think about early success, if they don’t know the art trade yet.

Are you working on something new right now?

Yes, I’m working on some pieces for collective exhibitions for these first months of the current year. One painting will be part of the grupo Milenio collection here in Mexico with a project named “El Mural del Milenio”. Everything’s still on process…

Favorite writers? Favorite music?

Writers, Gabriel García Marquez, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, William Shakespeare, Mario Benedetti, among a lot…


Other painters that inspire you?


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The Hudson River School

Nature, formal Beauty and Cultural Vitality
Approaching the sublime and luminous landscapes in pictural art

Essay by Philippe Blache
Genesis of an aesthetic movement, its representative ideals

Beyond any political and ideological belonging, the Hudson river school was born and theorized inside the romantical period and its aesthetic sensibility.

At the border of the expressive romanticism and of the transcendental naturalism, this school was above all a collective and faithful attempt to re-install the solemn beauty of nature and its perfection in the heart of mankind, surrounded by a nostalgia of the divine peace. This original peace can be found in the contemplation of the nature and in wild original landscapes which are sanctified by the holy.

The Hudson river school tried to develop a new understanding mode where Man and Nature entered in a reflective and unbreakable totality. In North America and associated to the romantical effervescence, the mysterious prestige of the nature is firstly depicted by painters such as Thomas Cole, Asher Brown Durand, Thomas Hill and William Hart.

Thomas Cole who remains among the most famous founders is coming from a British migrants family. Cole started to make professional living of his paintings in New York. He first ventured in the wild Catskill mountains (located to the west part of the Hudson river). He took his inspiration from the forest environment, to the rich ecosystem and natural diversity of the region to establish his painting style, absorbed by a breathy romantical flavor.

The purpose of Thomas cole is to use the scenery of the pictures to describe and celebrate the triumph of the nature and in a certain extent to reflect a moral meaning around this “back to nature” imperative.

From this imperative comes the only state and activity capable to transcend the human condition in a now doleful and declining civilization process, this after the apotheosis of the classicism era. The sentimental and moralist obedience of Cole are mysteriously exalted in most of his painting creations. From Cole and to his followers the Hudson river school is a great heritage of traditionalist principles where the wild and sovereign nature is seen, appreciated, contemplated and worshiped as a temple for noble souls who interrogate human destiny.

For all these painters, the heritage of the founder fathers is a hope for the future. They are devoted to their home-land which is cherished and which represents a place for human paradise that should be preserved integrally. With authenticity the painters of the Hudson school are describing under a realistic and spontaneous angle the spiritual gleam and
the high sensuality of a nature which guarantees an access to freedom, to a humanistic-religious feeling. The more contemporary attitude of a writer such as John Muir perfectly restores this state of mind when speaking about treasured national parks and where sensorial plenitude meets a preserved natural beauty:

“So glorious a display of pure wildness, acting at close range while cut off from all the world beside, is terribly impressive...the rainbow light forming one of the most glorious pictures conceivable.”

Self-reliance grounded to nature

The Hudson river school artisans express the original symbolical meaning offered in magnificent nature manifestations and deep sceneries, their attitude is contemplative but also philosophically constructive and in touch with the birth of the ecological consciousness.

They are attentive observers of the nature and whose artwork reflects in perceptually affective content the splendid and genuine intellectual ideas of Ralph Emerson, the main figure of transcendentalism ethico-philosophical tradition. Through nature, its specific scenes and settings they suggest a reflective and meditative exploration on the depth of human very own nature. This view is at the center of a conceptual idea developed by Emerson: “self reliance”. The motivation and mission objective of the Hudson river school are not only suggestive, didactic and symbolical but also moral.

The concept of self-reliance and its moral quality is experienced in practice and with authenticity when life is accepted in its simplicity, adventure, independency, magnanimity and dignity without disrupting the natural roots of humanity.

Practical wisdom, self-esteem, autonomy and the ascetic version of everyday existence are intimately associated in the naturalist moral conception. For the Hudson river school, their meditation on nature imply art, virtue, ethical view in a unified movement. Their moral objective is to participate to a modern initiation of human beings in favor of an ecological consciousness, to offer a superior life model, respectful to nature. Their attempt is at the same time aesthetic, religious and pragmatic. Their intellectual posture is just the contrary to a pessimistic vision, they do believe in the natural kindness of human being.

The artisans of the Hudson river school are also receptive and sensitive to the “philosophy of correspondences” established by the “transcendentalist circle” guided by Emerson. The “romantic science” of Schelling and his “naturphilosophie” prefigured this thought when expressing the organic components of life and the reciprocal strength or “vital force” between the human world and the
natural world. The lyrical and metaphorical qualities of Emerson’s “nature writing” admits the idea of a personified nature, an intimate proximity between the human being and the contemplated, observed nature.

From this aesthetical position rises a particular spirituality, an ethical obligation which consist to edify a relationship between the contemplator and forms of nature inside a metaphorical dialogue, the subject and the object are replaced on the same ontological plan. From this dialogue rises an education, a sentimental one (as described by Schiller) then a spiritual one.

**Children** are predisposed to experience the very depth of Nature, the external world in such way, with analogies, metaphors and symbols, with an appetite of pure knowledge. In his painting *the voyage of life* Thomas Cole distinguishes this childhood period from the period of trouble and confusion of Manhood disconnected to the early and golden voyage of youth.

Adepts of the “philosophy of correspondences” many American pioneers of the “nature writing” (Emerson, Thoreau, Muir…) cultivate an affinity with the aesthetical thought and with the art-style developed by the Hudson river school in its sincere and detailed naturalistic depictions. **The Aesthetic strength** and popular success of these paintings had an influence in the development of an ecological consciousness. This is only from Nature and its respect that the human society can be structured in its ethical originality. The “nature writing” offers an ideal of the human society based on the “natural realism”.

**Influence of the Hudson river school on the romantical nationalism**

A sacred passion linked the representative figures of the Hudson river school to the great nature. This romantical experience of nature also comes to enrich and motivate the cultural foundations of the idea of a nation. The mystical sympathy turns to a societal communion supposed to be lived by an authentic community whose destiny is sanctified by an immutable and ancestral nature, a cherished territory.

The national culture is unified to a moral consciousness and to a feeling of belonging to a language, a traditional heritage, local traditions but also by making explicit, primeval references to landscapes and an ecological attachment to a region or a bounded territory. The luminous landscapes painted with delicateness, love and generosity by the Hudson...
river school are linked to a popular consciousness and participate to a gallery of symbols in the development of a spiritual renewal. Those landscapes accompany traditional poetries and are elevated among symbols of auto-determination, freedom of people in a particular geographical area.

The Hudson river school participates to a rediscover of nature through disinterested contemplation. This thoughtful rediscover honors the heritage of ancestors and reiterates the organic link between the generations, between people and the lighthearted regional, territorial and national unity.

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http://igloomag.com/author/philippe-blache
John Frederick Kensett, Sunset Over Lake George

Thomas Cole, The Voyage of Life Old Age, 1842
John Frederick Kensett, View on the Hudson

Church, Frederic Edwin, Aurora Borealis
Thomas Cole - Moonlight

Jasper Francis Cropsey, Sunset Eagle Cliff
Sanford Robinson Gifford, Sunset, Bay of New York (1878)

Thomas Doughty, Mountain Lake with Man Fishing
Asher Brown Durand, *Pastoral Landscape*, 1861

Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire Desolation* (1836)
ASTROLOGY AND ITS SYMBOLS
THE LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL

Essay by Elisabeth Mantovani

"In your chest reside the Stars of your destiny"
Schiller, Wallenstein
The astrological symbols can’t be explained rationally, they reveal universal archetypes and synchronisms.

The symbols influence constantly our psyche both at conscious and unconscious levels more than we can imagine. There is nothing that can replace the symbol in the essential communication of ideas and thoughts. In fact, the symbols, due to their nature, surpass any language barrier, permitting a kind of unique and essential communication of those points directly to the causes.

Since the beginning of modern space exploration, scientists in their research concerning extraterrestrial life sent symbolic signals in the outer space, signals that can be interpreted by other forms of life or cultures similar to ours. Otherwise, an eventual first approach would be impossible through the words, language.

Because of its axiomatic simplicity, the symbolic language has always been a vehicle of the spiritual truths taught to humanity through the symbols adopted by the various religions and philosophies in the world. Also, Astrology uses for this purpose the language of symbols, considered to be a science that leads to the understanding of the human being and his relationship with the Universe.

The communication and the meditation through the symbols help the human being to develop his consciousness, to get over the barriers of his individuality with the purpose to incorporate inside him a universal reality and join with it.

Only by incorporating inside him the Universe, can the human being transcend the worldly life events that generate anxiety and fears that wear him out, and enter a superior level of consciousness, in which he has transcended the pall of his perceptions, making them not to be an obstacle or a source of troubles anymore, but instead a vehicle of wider understanding.

The more a human being develops the ability to understand, by means of his consciousness, the more he is able to actualize an awakening inside himself; in the same manner he becomes able to assimilate the
spiritual world, and to perceive it also in common daily life facts. In this way the truths transmitted through the great Mysteries of the religions and the spiritual traditions of the whole world, taught through symbols, become accessible to him, and he is able to interpret them without absorbing, undergoing or contesting them passively.

The fascination and the power of the astrological symbols played a fundamental role in the history of humanity, a role whose importance is often much too understated.

The study of Astrology dates back 2000 years B.C., however, astrological symbols were found even in the caverns of the Neolithic Age, written on the rocks or on the remains of bones. This is only an example, among many others that confirm how Astrology really played a fundamental role (even if in a certain way and at certain times, it was a secret operation) along with the course of human evolution and then its history, affecting the human society; politics, religion, philosophy, psychology and medicine. The last two sectors have recently reinserted Astrology, although not yet officially. Among the stars contemplated by the Earth inhabitants in the ancient times, a particular importance was attributed to the 12 constellations that gave the names to the signs depicted in the various Zodiacs with almost identical figures everywhere. Getting in touch with the meaning of these images, and these symbolic nomenclatures, means getting inside one of the more fascinating sectors of the astrological studies; the one of the archetypes.

The origin of the Zodiac is still partially unknown: it seems to be more ancient than belonging to any source we are referred to until now. From studies about the Zodiac it appears clearly that it is strictly related to the science of the Numbers, practiced in the Middle East by the Arabs and then by the Hebrews and, having almost completely disappeared today.

Zodiac comes from the Greek Zodiakòs Kyklos, that means “Constellations Circle”. Zodiakòs can be also be related to zòdion (sign, celestial figure), that is an abbreviation of “zoon”, which in Greek means animal, or “a living one”. Zodiac then can be intended as “circle of the celestial figures” (the constellations), or also as “circle of the animals” (or living ones). Another origin of zodiac is in fact Zoe, that means life and Zoo, that means living.
The basic principle expressed in the Zodiac (or life movement), can be found in the ancient figure of the Ouroboros, the snake that bites its own tail. This symbol represents an evolution path that from the beginning leads to the end, in a never-ending rhythm in which all the things are united and where everything that comes from the One returns to it. Not casually the Ouroboros is depicted at the entrance of some sanctuaries of ancient Greece where, among other meanings, it’s also synonymous of the Aeon, the lifespan.

The symbolism of the Zodiac is almost inexhaustible, and increasingly its true essence and origin becomes unknown because today we have almost totally lost the ability to think through images. The cyclicality of the Zodiac rhythms silently unveils the dimensions of both physical and metaphysical times that interact between themselves, and which are revealed to us by the daily and millenary dance of the stars.

The great Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, in his research on the human psyche, focused his attention in a particular way on Astrology and other symbolic systems inside religions and esoteric doctrines. This material was considered by Jung useful to understand that world, hidden in symbols and images that he called “collective unconscious”. The consciousness and the knowledge of this dimension, according to Jung, help the human being to get in contact with his secret modalities, recovering the contact and the meanings of the concepts related to “spirit” and the “divine” principle.

According to Jung, the unconscious is divided in layers: one that is superficial, named “personal unconscious”, where the contents removed from our conscious experiences are placed, and another, deeper one that is not derived from personal experiences or achievements, but is innate. This deeper layer is the “collective unconscious”. It is called collective because its contents are universal; they are the same everywhere and for all individuals.

While in the “personal unconscious” we find the effective contents, the contents of the “collective unconscious” are the archetypes. The definition of “archetype” is already present in some very ancient books, for example in the ones from Saint Augustine who, as it’s well known, before becoming one of the masters of the Roman Church, was fascinated by the philosophy of Plato. This is what is written in one of his early writings: “original ideas [...] that have not been created [...] are contained inside the divine intelligence”.

The contents of the collective unconscious, in fact, have to do with archaic images that
are present inside the human psyche since the most remote times. The archetypes, which are the images of the collective unconscious, take form through the fairy tales, the myths, the esoteric teachings where they stop to be unconscious and become conscious formulas, although not consciously elaborated, emerging in the symbols.

It is impossible to discover what an archetype is related to because it refers to a multiplicity of facts and sensations not pointing to a unique form elaborated by rational thinking; the image and the symbol then suggest that multiplicity, as they elaborate in a comparative way the synthesis of the archetype content.

In mythological research, myth was always connected to the solar, lunar, meteorological, vegetal representations. According to Jung these myths are instead psychical manifestations that unveil the essence of the soul.

The ancient men who used to observe the manifestations of nature didn’t care at all about the objective explanation of those phenomena: they felt the need to relate any experience and to make it coincident to a psychical occurrence. For example, it wasn’t enough for them to see the Sun rising and setting; according to Jung each one of these natural events roused up the necessity of a psychical occurrence. Therefore, the Sun, with its motion, had to represent the destiny of a God or a hero, who finally lives only in the human soul.

All the mythologized natural events such as the lunar phases, the Universe, the summer, the rainy season, are not at all allegories of such events, but symbolic expressions of the unconscious drama of the human soul that becomes accessible and visible through the natural phenomena that are their reflection through a projection process.

Astrology has then expressed, since the ancient times, the Mysteries of the soul in wonderful images, for this reason each good astrologer would have to be overall a good connoisseur of his own psyche and his own Heart, because the psyche already contains all the images from which the myths rose. Only the ones who have not recognized these “projections” in their inner firmament can believe in the superstition of the astral influences, said Jung.
stars and planets indicate the major causes that reflect themselves in the microcosm through the worldly events. The synchronicity theory elaborated by Jung describes in fact the connection between some events that occur in a synchronous mode and the fact that these events have a commonality of meaning.

Observing the stars means to unveil this synchronicity: to synchronize our interiority with the outer phenomena world, to hook up the microcosm where we live to the comparative dimension of the macrocosm where planets and stars live: they are indicators of the bigger causes that reflect themselves in the earthly phenomena.

“In your chest reside the Stars of your destiny”, wrote Schiller in his Wallenstein, and this phrase summarizes without any other explanation the usefulness and the fascination of the Astrology pointed out by Jung’s discoveries.

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Astrologer, expert in History of Art and Symbolism, tourist guide of Italy
“In my experience, inspiration can come as a single word or a pair of rhymes, a single line, or lines, a rough informal outline, or even the entire poem as if dictated by a third party into the mind.”
WHAT IS POETRY?

Musings on becoming a poet, by a muse-poet who is very good at explaining

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st
into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.
(William Shakespeare, Sonnet 38)

SEVEN STEPS TO BECOMING A POET

1. Be lucky in your incarnation to have the gift of poetic inspiration. In absence of this, lavishly and fervently and frequently invoke Thelxinoë, Arche, Aoidē, Meletē, Mnémē, Euterpe, Erato, Polyhymnia and Kalliope.

Devotion to incarnate Goddesses is also most efficacious:

“No Muse-poet grows conscious of the Muse except by experience of a woman in whom the Goddess is to some degree resident; just as no Apollonian poet can perform his proper function unless he lives under a monarchy or a quasi-monarchy. A Muse-poet falls in love, absolutely, and his true love is for him the embodiment of the Muse.... But the real, perpetually obsessed Muse-poet distinguishes between the Goddess as manifest in the supreme power, glory, wisdom, and love of woman, and the individual woman whom the Goddess may make her instrument... The Goddess abides; and perhaps he will again have knowledge of her through his experience of another woman...”

(Robert Graves, The White Goddess).

2. Read the poetry of the greats in the tradition. Opinions differ as to the exact number and identity of these "greats", however Chaucer, the Gawain poet and Shakespeare can safely be included in the English canon.

3. Write and practise poetry regularly for years before seeking to publish anything. This is the first invocation of Meletē.

4. Acquire an education in linguistics generally, but especially the syntax, semantics, morphology, phonology, phonetics and etymology of your language. This is the second invocation of Meletē.

5. Do not practise "slam", "rap", "bush" or other so-called performance poetry, as these are not poetry. Poets may work within these comedic or musical genres as they will, just as poems may be adapted as song lyrics, but nevertheless, they are not in themselves poetic genres: a specific poem may take the form of a rap, but rap, in general, is not poetry.

6. Words are the bricks of the temple of poetry: never miss the opportunity to acquire new words: when reading, always consult a reputable dictionary when encountering words you don’t know or can’t explain the meaning before continuing perusal. It is useful to maintain lists of such words, and to practise incorporating them into your discourse and practice. This is the third invocation of Meletē.

7. Understand this: poetry, like all true art, is
formal, i.e. **the artistry lies in the beauty and economy of form, not in the quality of the idea expressed, or of the image expressing it**; formal beauty can be achieved even though the subject matter and/or imagery are disturbing or distasteful.

**GOLDEN RULES OF COMPOSING POETRY**

1. **Never waste words**: each and every word must contribute to the poem in at least one way, just as each brushstroke must contribute to the overall painting, or each note to a piece of music, or each gesture to a dance.

2. **Don't tell stories, create an image**: "paint" a "picture", as it were. If you want to make narratives, write a short story or novella. Narrative poetry is a dead formalism: its origins and finest exponents are from a time when epic poetry was the only mass medium of a largely illiterate population. 21st century poetry exists within the context of numerous, and increasing, narrative media, and its relevance today perforce requires a more deeply cognitive function than simply linear narrative. Therefore, invoke Euterpe and Erato in preference to Kalliope.

3. **Don't lecture**: if your theme (see below) is polemic, illustrate your policy by imagery, rather than try to educate with ideology. If successful, this is also a far more effective way to impress your policy on your audience than direct pedagogy.

4. **Poems must have themes**. Theme is not subject matter, which poems also generally have, nor is the theme the image, although in the best poems, theme and image are unified.

**THEME, SUBJECT, IMAGE**: when you realise these distinctions, and their connectivity, you will begin to approach the possibility of writing genuine poetry. Therefore, invoke Aoidé.

5. **Practise and master some classical forms**, then you will be in a position to know if it is necessary or desirable for the purpose of a particular poem whether traditional formalism may be discarded or not. Pablo Picasso did not begin painting as an abstract expressionist, but rather first practised for many years the traditional formalisms of drawing and painting before being able to transcend them. This is the fourth invocation of Meletē.

6. **Learn what is meant by "half rhymes" and scrupulously avoid them**, unless your form specifically requires them. If your end rhymes include both full and half rhymes, strive for consistency or a patterned development in their deployment. Half rhymes are the cheap tricks of the song lyricist, where the musical setting carries the formal beauty of the work at the expense of literary skill. However, it may sometimes be the case that the overall beauty of a particular poetic image is sufficient to allow seemingly casual use of half rhymes (see, e.g. "Hymn to Night"). The important thing is to know and understand the
distinction, and to practise control of it. At no point should slavish strict adherence to formalisms like these overpower the beauty and economy of the poem, however this is not a license to ignore them either. The best poems, and by "best" I mean "most formally beautiful and flawless", are those where the unity of theme, subject, and image converge with such precise control of form that the rigid rules of its structure appear perfectly natural and intuitively obvious. This is the fifth invocation of Meletē.

7. Which brings us to convergence of the aspects of poetic structure, which is the central doctrine of this manifesto, and the first law of IGP=93 poetics. Alluded to above, the principle of convergence, whereby theme, subject, image, and form approach a holistic unity, is the hallmark of truly great poetry. Strive for convergence, but for a convergence whose appearance is natural and effortless.

The second law of IGP=93 poetics is: economy and unity of image. I can't stress this enough. This law may be violated, but only by hacks, in disposable practice studies by students, or as a particular, potentially powerful and clever, formalism of its own. However, true poetic artistry requires the ability to sustain an image from the title and epigraph to the coda. As previously remarked, only by achieving such skill can one skilfully dispense with it on occasion.

I have already touched on the principle of economy of image: just as every brushstroke must seamlessly contribute to the overall image in picture painting, or it is a flaw, so in poetry, each word or phrase or stylistic affection must form part of the overall effect or image, or it is a flaw, and often destroys the otherwise beauty of the poem. This is what I mean by economy.

Related to this, and superior to it, is unity of image: don't mix your metaphors, unless intentioned for deliberate effect. For a perfect example of unity of imagery, see "The Cuckold's Song".

"The Cuckold's Song" also perfectly exemplifies my third law: avoid repetition. Despite the example's title (which is, rather, consistent with the sustained imagery of the poem, as the reference is to bird-song), poems are not songs (although they may be used as such): it is not a standard practice that poems have choruses or refrains, for example, unless such are part of a particular formalism employed for a particular composition. Poems are not songs, though many songs are in fact poems, and many poems can be and should be sung. One might go further and argue that songs, and particularly lovesongs, are a type of poem.

Those songs whose lyrics may be counted as poems are those of which the beauty and economy of their lyrics can stand alone, independent of their musical setting; conversely,
if, when deprived of its musical context, the words of a song are ordinary, trite, or artless, then this song is not a poem, but a purely musical work with a part for voice. This digression into the relative musicality of poetry and the poetics of songmaking, although an important point of contention in any discussion of poetics in the mass media age, was really to illustrate my third law: avoid repetition, except as a deliberate, considered effect, or implicit formalism. As "The Cuckold's Song" shows, strict adherence to this law, coupled with perfect unity of imagery, makes the overall effect more powerful the longer it is sustained.

The fourth law of IGPO=93 poetics is: aspire to inspiration. Poetry is a sublime and spiritual manifestation of divine desire to communicate to humanity. The sole purpose in practising and mastering forms and techniques, acquiring vocabulary and understanding grammatical, morphological and phonetic patterns, and adhering to the refining principles of poetics, i.e., your discipline, study and practice of the art of poetry, is not that any of this will make you into a poet, but it will make you a better poet, if the Goddess and her Daughters have favoured you with Their graces and anointed you a poet. Thus, when the inspiration comes, you will be ready to receive, refine, revise, and transmit it. Therefore invoke Thélxinoë and Arche, Nuit, Babalon and thine own Angel, and invoke often.

In my experience, inspiration can come as a single word or a pair of rhymes, a single line, or lines, a rough informal outline, or even the entire poem as if dictated by a third party into the mind but once, which reminds me to suggest, as a valuable adjunct practice, the practice of memory retention, particularly short term memory, as, as has happened to me, one of my finest poems ("Love in the Shade") appeared to me in this manner: fully formed and "dictated" by a "voice" not apparently my own, and spoken once only, at a moment when I did not have a pen and paper readily to hand. My memory was all I had as I rushed to find means to record it before it faded. Fortunately (I believe), I succeeded, though right to the limit of my recall. Therefore, invoke Mnêmê.

So, in conclusion, I emphasise DISCIPLINE. The essence of discipline is that in binding yourself with vigilant practice, adherence to the tradition, and competence in the forms and techniques of poetry, you will at last become free to write real and possibly even great poetry.

Therefore, in recapitulation, discipline yourself to:
1. Read acknowledged poetry.
2. Educate yourself about language generally.
3. Practise, and severely criticise your
efforts. Not everything you start will be finished, or good, but it may be useful to write bad, or even non-poetry, if you are disciplined enough to self-criticism of your work (see 4. below). The utility in this is that it strengthens your character, makes your INTELLECTUAL HONESTY more robust, and gives you more avenues to explore in practice.

4. The final discipline is that of self-honesty, the hardest discipline of course, but you must truly be your own worst critic if you truly a poet: you must reject, or repair if possible, flawed efforts, however attached you are to them. Therefore: REVISE, REVISE, REVISE.

Very few poems are perfect as first written. It takes practice and effort to become sufficiently detached from the creative inspirational ecstasy to honestly and critically revise them. With practice it is possible to do this virtually immediately - with a lot of practice. At the elementary level, sufficient detachment may entail putting aside the inspired effort for a day or a week or more. Do not be dismayed if your revisions go into innumerable generations, or that you "unrevise" on a later occasion. All this is normal. The best test for a revision, or competing revisions, is to read them aloud. Poetry, while not singing, nevertheless is intimately tied to the structure of human speech, and must not diverge too far from this whilst simultaneously not depending on exclusively acoustic artefacts for its emotive force.

Therefore revise and reread, but at sufficient emotional distance from the normal and natural blind love that the creative feel for their creations, as in parents for children, or the lover for the beloved.
Your own Angelic muse is able to guide you as to the particulars of your own specific discipline, study and practice, I can, of course, only point out what is generally true from the basis of my own particular experience with the grace and love of the Muse and Muses.

**Hymn to Night (not: him tonight?)**

The blue skinned goddess
is opening her eyes
She bends her body
across the evening skies
Her heart the moon,
with planets she’s adorned
And from her womb
the galaxies are born
the stars so distant
shine down upon this earth
blessing each one of us
given a human birth
and yet, down here
we squabble and we fight
in ignorance
of eternal light
The cuckold’s song.

Lay your eggs in my nest,
I will cover and always love them.
And you will stretch your wings and fly,
Answering the hunting call of your species.
Our chicks grow under my breast.
You the glorious Star above them.
I can find them morsels and keep them dry,
In this bower of my bluest bits and pieces.
When it’s time for the first fledgling’s test
And a mild sun discovers our autumn,
They will see you stooping far on high,
And now, like you, their soaring instinct never ceases.
They will join the flock at your behest
But we would never shove them.
With me upon the forest floor and you the sky,
The niche is safe between the treetops and the breezes.
I become an old duck like the rest,
migrate beyond the need to smother them.
You will guide them with your mountain aerie cry
As Spring’s keen thermal lofts them where it pleases.
They follow the setting sun into the West,
behind two old birds only joined to mother them.
Though you climb on eagle wings, we still are nigh
Flying in formation to where the peace is.
Love in the Shade
In the Lust was the Garden
whose Tree I found:
the bones of jesus lay around
and at the gate stood Satan:
"What brings thee here from the flesh? Hither is none.
Here are the corpses of love-sucked ones.
Know ye that beyond this is death?"
"This death is mine!" to him said I and crossed the beam.
There beyond the sensual dream
I found Shade beneath the lovely sky.

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Gustave Moreau, Hesiod and the Muse, 1891
“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour”

Auguries of Innocence
Rebellious poet, engraver and painter, William Blake is considered to be an originator of the early Romantic movement. His greatness was unrecognized during his lifetime, but his timeless work is still a source of imaginative vision and inspiration.

He was born on November 28, 1757 in the Soho district of London, at 28 Broad Street. Son of James and Catherine Blake he had 4 brothers and a sister. His father was a shopkeeper, a Baptist attracted by the ideas of, Swedish scientist and theologian Emmanuel Swedenborg. Blake never went to school, but learned to read and write taught by his supportive mother. By all means, he was free to enjoy nature, to explore the fields and discover his own, later distinct visions.

Thank God I never was sent to school
To be flog'd into following the style of a fool

Blake lived in a world of visions since childhood. Crabb Robinson recounts William’s experience, as his wife remembers Blake’s description. “The first time you ever saw God, she says, was when you were four years old and He put his head to the window and set you a-screaming.” According to Gilchrist’s study, when he was ten, while he was leisurely walking on Peckham Rye, by Dulwich Hill, the boy looked up and saw a tree filled with angels, “bright angelic wings, bespangling every bough like stars”.

At the age of 11 he began to write “Poetical Sketches”, his first poems, his own imagination and visions.

How sweet I roamed from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride
Till I the Prince of Love beheld
Who in the sunny beams did glide
(Poetical Sketches)

Fortunately, his parents encouraged his artistic talents, so he was sent to Pars's drawing school, where Blake elaborated on the classical forms of Raphael, Michelangelo, Giulio Romano, Durer and Martin Heemskerk. Finishing school he was later trained as an engraver by James Basire for 7 years and after a few months of training he made his first known engraving, “Joseph of Arimathea among the ruins of Albion”.

Blake’s favorite literary sources, the Bible, Milton, Shakespeare and Dante, were also major painting inspirations for his later works. In 1779 he became a student in Royal Academy of arts and he was officially trained to be a painter.

When Blake was 22 years old, London suffered days of violence, the Gordon riots, an
anti-Catholic protest. Churches, prisons and houses were burned and Blake was, maybe accidentally, part of the mob that burned Newgate prison. The flames and destruction marked him and affected his vision of society and art.

In 1781, during his visit to the area, William met Catherine Boucher at Battersea, in the south part of London, near river Thames. Catherine immediately recognized him as her future husband. One year later they got married. Blake taught her to read, write and express her visions. She was a dark haired, attractive, vivid girl. Blake’s words show his expectations:

*In a wife I would desire what in whores is always found the lineaments of gratified desire*

(Blake’s notebook)

For five years, since 1785, the Blakes live at 28 Poland Street, it was there on a tavern where William met the Druid enthusiasts. The Ancient order of Druids was one of his first contacts with the occult, spiritual quest and sects along with Swedenborg society and Bloomsbury.

Blake’s favorite brother, Robert, was very ill at the age of 19, so William stayed with him day and night without sleep. This room was another place of visions for him. In February 1787 Robert died and some years later Blake wrote:

*Thirteen years ago I lost a brother and with his spirit I converse daily and hourly in the Spirit and See him in my remembrance in the regions of my imagination [...] The Ruins of Time build Mansions in Eternity*

One night, after his brother’s death, Blake saw Robert in a vision, presenting him a new method of printing his works, the illuminated printing. He used this technique on his Illuminated books. In the 1780s Blake met Thomas Taylor, his main influence on Orphism and Neo-Platonism.

In 1788 he published “All Religions are One” and “There is no Natural Religion”, his first Illuminated books. They were a series of philosophical aphorisms. In 1789 he published...
“Songs of Innocence” and began writing “The Book of Thel”. In 1790 he wrote “Marriage of Heaven and Hell” and in the next five years “Visions of the Daughters of Albion”, “America a Prophecy”, “Europe a Prophecy”, “Songs of Experience” and “The First Book of Urizen” were also published. “The Book of Ahania”, “The Book of Los”, and “The Song of Los” followed.

In 1800 Blake moved to Felpham, Sussex to work for William Hayley. On August 1803 there was an incident with a soldier, accusing William for assault and sedition. Blake was found not guilty; however, he moved back to London.

In 1804, Blake began to write and illustrate “Jerusalem” and “Milton a Poem”. Exhibitions followed but they were unsuccessful; bad reviews made him sad, as he was sinking into poverty. He decided then to work on Book of Job and Dante illustrations until 1827.

THE WORLD OF INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE

Pipe a song about a Lamb!
So I piped with merry cheer.

[…]Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!

[…]Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read

The unity of arts, the connection of artistic forms like painting, poetry, music and literature, was Blake’s main vision. Art is the voice of God in his inspiration. This is the concept of Songs of Innocence Introduction. It is also the way William shared his poetic imagination. The world of Innocence is Blake’s Paradise, a place of blossoms and celebration, a state of childhood, free imagination and joy. The world before the Fall. In the “Laughing Song” everyone is the active creator of this world, through images, words and songs. Feelings and activities bring Innocence to life.

In “The Echoing Green”, there’s a powerful relationship of people with nature. Old men are happy to the cheerful sound of children; they do not worry about life and death. They lived as children and their joy echoes in all ages.

Such, such were the joys
When we all girls and boys
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green

The world of Experience, is the opposite of Innocence, the material world of rules and regulations, the collective voice of aged men, our society.

Selfish father of men!
Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!
Can delight chained in night
The Virgins of youth and morning bear?

In the Introduction of the Songs of Experience and “Earth’s Answer”, there’s a vision of a world gone very wrong. A jealous father, selfish and cruel; imprisoned earth. In “London” and “The Garden of Love”, Blake shows his opposition to organized religion and points the source of this jealous father.

So I turned to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore
And I saw it was filled with graves
And tombstones where flowers should be

And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds
And binding with briars, my joys and desires.
In every cry of every man
In every infant’s cry of fear
In every voice, in every ban
The mind-forged manacles I hear

Human mind created these chains and London is far from Paradise, a real hellish picture. People slaved, chained. They are victims of war and diseases. Industrial Revolution changed things for worse. The place where the sun never shines, rain doesn’t fall. These two elements in “Holy Thursday” represent God and Innocence.

In “A little boy lost”, a child questions authority. Education is the iron chain of society and organized religion and the imagination of the child is burned with regulations. Creativity is chained.

“The Human Abstract” is mostly a political poem where poverty and mutual fear, are ways to rule in modern society. The Tree of Knowledge, a human invention, bears the fruit of deceit that grows every day. The apple, the mystery that parasites feed on.

The Tree concept also appears in the Snow White story and in the Garden of Eden. The loss of Innocence, and everything that follows.

Children of the future age
Reading this indignant page
Know that in a former time
Love, sweet love was thought a crime
In the age of gold
Free from winter’s cold
Youth and maiden bright
To the Holy Light
Naked in the sunny beams delight

Paradise is the image of Innocence and there was not shame until the fall of creation. A girl lost her innocence in “A Little Girl Lost” because now is ashamed for being naked, ashamed for her sexual feelings that religion demonizes. Sexual shame is also the sickness in “The Sick Rose”.

In “My Pretty Rose Tree”, the Tree concept appears again. Shame of sex makes people become jealous and possessive. That makes pain rise in every relationship. The gender categories as human invention are exposed in “To Tirzah”. They are larger than the actual biological differences with big contrast in roles, pride and shame. This shame again, is imprisoning for everyone.

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

[...]Did he who made the Lamb made thee?
The Tyger is a terrifying creation, a result of our world of Experience. The transformation of the gentle Lamb to the powerful Tyger is also a part of maturation a picture of political and social changes of 18th and 19th centuries. Mankind is terrifying but also tamed and this is obvious in the illustration of the poem, a horrific creature, yet tamed. Kathleen Raine traces sources in Gnostic and Hermetic mysticism that the Lamb was created by the Son of God and Tyger by Demiurge, the third person of gnostic and cabbalistic trinity.

The maze of too much logic and reason is the concept in “The Voice of the Ancient Bard’. Problems can be solved with vision not by false logic, the trap that leads to mental death. Vision, the poetic genius is the voice of Innocence, the voice of God in us

URIZEN

What Demon hath form'd
this abominable void
This soul - shudd'ring Vacuum?
Some said it is Urizen. But unknown,
abstracted
Brooding, secret, the dark Power hid!

Urizen is a major part of Blake's mythology. He is the Reason (your reason) and the horizon, the limit. He is the limiter of eternal delight - energy, the Lawmaker. Urizen is pictured as an architect who created this world, using his compasses. He is the jealous, distant father from the “Songs of Innocence and of Experience” The creation of the physical world and the separation from Eternity was part of the fall. Geometrical shapes and tools like compasses in Blake's illustrations are connected with Urizen. In the famous painting “The Ancient of Days Setting a Compass to the Earth” by his work “America a Prophecy”, “Europe a Prophecy” in the “Book of Urizen” and “The Four Zoas”. Orc is the revolution in the material world, result of the separation of Los (creative imagination) and Enitharmon (spiritual beauty). Orc and Urizen are parts of the beginning and the end in the 7 historical cycles of Blake's mythology. In “The Four Zoas”, trembles at the child’s revolutionary imagination.

I will arise, explore these dens and find that deep pulsation
That shakes my caverns with strong shudders
If the doors of perception were cleansed
Everything would appear to man as it is,
Infinite

The book starts with a dangerous journey in Hell, a journey through life and the arrival in Heaven. Biblical scenes and suggestions, build the idea that body and soul, good and evil, God and man are not separated. Heaven and Hell are contraries, opposites need for mankind to evolve.

Without contraries is no progression.
Attraction and Repulsion,
Reason and Energy,
Love and Hate, are necessary to Human Existence.
From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil.
Good is the passive that obeys Reason.
Evil is the active springing from Energy.
Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

The joy of balance in Creation seems to be the reason God made the dual state of quality for man. In the “Songs of Innocence and of Experience” Blake points these two contrary states of the human soul, Heaven and Hell. Swedenborg’s “spiritual equilibrium” between good and evil is rejected by Blake for the theory of contraries, the elements of progress.

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom

By the marriage of contraries, Heaven and Hell, Blake means that we can cease valuing one contrary above the other in any way. Christian dualism is a negation, beyond the balance of contraries.

THE EPILOGUE

In the summer of 1827 Blake became ill, but still working on a print “Urizen creating the Universe” in his bed. When he finished, he threw it down and said “Kate, you have been a good wife; I will draw you a portrait”.

At 6 pm on Sunday 12 August 1827 he died in presence of his wife and a neighbor, at the age of 69. “I am going to that country, I have all my life wished to see”. He was happy, his eyes bright and he signed visions from Heaven. His funeral was in Bunhill fields, without a gravestone to mark the grave.

In October 1831, Catherine was ill and in her last hours she was repeating texts. She was calling “her William” to say “I am coming to you, it would not be long now”. ♦

Illuminated books

c.1788: All Religions are One
There is No Natural Religion
1789: Songs of Innocence
The Book of Thel
1790–1793: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
1793–1795: Continental prophecies
1793: Visions of the Daughters of Albion
America a Prophecy
1794: Europe a Prophecy
The First Book of Urizen
Songs of Experience
1795: The Book of Los
The Song of Los
The Book of Ahania
c.1804–c.1811: Milton
1804–1820: Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion

Non-illuminated books

1783: Poetical Sketches
1784–5: An Island in the Moon
1789: Tiriel
1791: The French Revolution
1792: A Song of Liberty
1797: The Four Zoas
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*Francis Gilbert - Songs of Innocence and Experience: A Study Guide
*The complete poetry and prose of William Blake (edited by David V. Erdman commentary by Harold Bloom)


CONTACT

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Blake’s Ancient of Days. The “Ancient of Days” is described in Chapter 7 of the Book of Daniel. This image depicts Copy D of the illustration currently held at the British Museum.

Monument near Blake’s unmarked grave at Bunhill Fields in London.
“The breaking stones
Against the bones.
Shattered and scattered
The empty veins and untold pain
Splattered in patterns.
The ghost lights burn at every turn,
licking flames of heresy.
And wicked tales that I need to tell,
lest I cast out to the sea.

Oncoming sunset
where the gravestones sit,
confusing, gloomy
Crucifixion and execution,
howling within the trees.

Driven straight to the breaking point,
Listen to desires and wants:
“One more chance, I’ll pass away”
With no return
to haunt me again someday.
I have heard the spirit’s lament,
Heartbreak and the tears that are spent.

Swan songs wishing hearts away,
Just to return and haunt me again today.”

“I am nervous to shut these tired eyes,
terrified of what lies on the other side.
I’ve been betrayed the past several nights
by basic dreams morphing into frights,
waking up colder than the winter night
outside,
but I’m getting really tired, so I’ll swallow
my pride.
There is really nowhere I can hide...”

”It’ll eat me alive,
It spreads like wild fire,
I feel so empty inside,
It never goes away,
and I just wanna fade,
Sometimes I don’t wanna get out of bed,
Because I feel so dead,
The pain never goes away,
Sometimes I think of hurting myself
Thinking maybe It’ll end this eternal hell,
It’ll eat me alive,
Until I wanna die,
It never goes away,
and I Just wanna fade,
It’ll eat me alive,
Until I end my own life.”
Dalí Theatre-museum
FIGUERES, SPAIN

Description and photos by Mary Vareli

“I want my museum to be like a single block, a labyrinth, a great surrealist object. It will be a total theatrical museum. The people who come to see it will leave with the sensation of having had a theatrical dream.”

Salvador Dalí
THE DALÍ THEATER – MUSEUM
the old municipal theater of Figueres, is situated behind the church of Sant Pere, were Dalí was baptized, something he loved to emphasize.

In the courtyard, on the walls of the old theater, we see the mannequins welcoming us between the remains of the burnt beams, the grotesque monsters, the eight bas-reliefs from the “art an trades” series produced for the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris and the metaphysical wash baths that seem like angels. The courtyard is dominated by the imposing Cadillac in the centre, the sculpture of The Queen Esthere by Ernst Fuchs, that pulls the Trajan’s Column made of tyres, homage to the Roman emperor, the marble bust of François Girardon and the Dalí-treated Slave, by Michelangelo, together with Gala’s boat and black umbrella, elements that, according to Dalí, comprise the biggest surrealist monument in the world.

Dalí wanted the theatrical museum to be his crowning work, especially the square called Gala – Salvador Dalí, to be placed within the setting. Starting from the introductory space where he exhibited some of his preferences and obsessions and ending in the stage of the museum, beneath the cupola, where he was buried. The introductory space includes references to Science, with the homage to Newton, Academic Art, with three sculptures by Meissonier, Innovative Art, with the TV-Obelisk by Wolf Vostell. Catalan Thought, with the monument to Fransesc Pujols, also containing the figure of Ramon Llull. The outer square is complemented with one of Dalí’s own works, containing the cardboard head of a monster, supported by a stand made of eggs, with small dolls as eyes and teeth and a television on the forehead.

The Cupola is a stunning geodesic structure that became the symbol of the museum and Figueres. An effect of mirror images is created at night, when the reflection of the cupola is seen on the glass wall separates the Cupola from the garden, creating the illusion of a second space.

“Start the house with the roof, just as the great architects of the Renaissance did, who imagined what the cupola would be like before all else.”

Entering the museum we see the Vestibule, the space of immersion into Dalian memory, receiving the codes of artists and events of his career that were significant to him. Treasure Room follows, a room upholstered in velvet, conceived like a casket for keeping jewels, containing some of the most important works of art of the museum. Fishmongers Crypt is the space beneath the cupola where we see a work of art Dalí produced throwing live octopuses over the paper on the floor, Head of Beethoven. The idea of the name was given as the room was used as a fish market in the past. There are more rooms, like the famous Mae West Room, a room made three-dimensional application of a two-dimensional image of the face of Mae West and the second and third floor with anthropomorphic mouths as entrances and precious works of art. Any kind of description is inadequate; one must visit the museum to feel its glory.  

Paradox Ethereal  

MV
"Our goal is to carry beauty, serenity and harmony through sounds and words, to follow our hearts, to be mediators of something higher that whispers and sings through us, plays music on strings of our souls."

La Donna della Fiamma, Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Mary Vareli: When was the band created and how many members are you? Any session musicians?

Aleks Āulaukis: The band was created in 2006 when I took the guitar in my hands again, after 12 or something years break. I felt I just needed to, the force inside of me had to come out... it did, with music. We were four in the beginning: me, my wife Tanya, Vladimir, who played the flute, and Anastasia on keyboards. We met together on the 8th of September at our apartment for the first rehearsal and we made 'Dirge' on Thomas Lovell Beddoes. I remember we were really inspired! Some months later we started to record the first album, after a short time Anastasia left the band...

Then people came and went. Sometimes I felt that SW is a project for session musicians only. Finally I found people (most of them already were or became later my friends) who help me with the band, with recording sessions, no matter how often we meet: Mark Zinger on violin, Anna Ivanova on cello, Vladimir and Tanya of course. Sometimes I invite different musicians just for one or two sessions...

How would you characterize your style?

I don’t know... I could say it’s a romantic neofolk, neoclassical music combined with poetry, but it would be just a direction to a listener. It tells you nothing until you listen, just words...

What instruments do you use?

We use a wide range of instruments. The basis of most songs is mostly made by an acoustic guitar, then it’s the violin, the cello, the flute, the piano, the melodica, percussion, the glockenspiel, bells and many more. Often it is a song that dictates what we shall use: bandura or accordion, or it could be some field recordings I interweave into melodies. I love tiny music machines, music boxes, they allow creating a special, magical atmosphere, but generally everything that makes sound could be useful. Sometimes I buy and study new instruments like musical saw or psaltery, they will appear on future records of Sunset Wings and other projects I’m involved in.

Sunset Wings is an inspiring name, what is the story behind it?
Well, there is no special story. We could not find a name for a long time. One day, it was before our first show, we were asked to give a name for the ad – they should write something! Tanya opened a book of Rossetti’s poems and pointed at a poem entitled Sunset Wings. As I also had the same idea for the name as an option – we decided to keep it.

Why you do not appear on stage very often?
Do you enjoy live shows?

Yes, I enjoy live shows if I’m not on stage ;) Speaking seriously, it’s a complicate question for us as everyone is busy with his jobs, some have children etc. It’s not easy to get together for rehearsals, not easy to move abroad. Sometimes Tanya and I play as a duo. Generally I’m more inspired in the process of creating music, not reproducing it in front of an audience… I’m too shy ;)

Tell us a few things about your first three albums. Label, release, main theme.

‘Covering for Solace’ was released by Wrotycz records on cd in 2009, it was the first bright unique experience for me. When we started in 2006 I could not imagine what happens next, I had also a hard period of time in my life. Then music filled me up, it brought me solace, serenity, the songs started to appear one by one. But nothing was planed; all happened in a very natural way, I was literally covered with a head...
The leitmotif for the second album, ‘Farewell’ came from ‘Eastern Front’ label, they invited us to take part in a compilation dedicated to a composer Michał Kleofas Ogiński, it was also a tribute to those who died in WWII. We made our version of his famous polonaise, ‘Farewell to the Fatherland’, but finally the sampler was cancelled and the guys suggested us to make an album for ‘Eastern Front’. So we kept the motive of ‘farewell’ and the second album appeared. The third cd ‘Shining Thro’ the Veil of Night’ was released by Wrotycz in 2013; it’s dedicated to Night, the Parent Goddess. We used ancient hymns as well as romantic poetry, lullabies. My friend Alexander Vorodeyev from Ukraine made a beautiful artwork for a digipack. Three of you albums are released by Wrotycz Records (Poland) and one by Eastern Front (Israel).

What is your next choice of a label?

I think of Wrotycz Records as of a home for Sunset Wings, Szymon and Iwona are my good friends, so I don’t want to leave the Wrotycz family.

Your fourth album “Lifetime as a Child at Play” was released in November 2014. Tell us about it.

It took about five years for us to finish the album. It is filled with childhood memories, melodies that I heard inside of me being a kid (and for unknown reason could not forget for years), rapture and fears, tears and melancholy of the age of innocence. The melodies float among voices of children, sounds of wind, rain, tower bells; melancholic songs in Russian, English and Italian alternated with gentle instrumental pieces winged by Mark’s violin. I want to notice again the enchanting artwork, this time made by our local artist, Alexandra Shvedova.

You said that “the band tries to carry a beauty, serenity and harmony through the sounds, bright and sometimes melancholic
melodies.” Tell us more about your artistic goals.

The main goal is to follow our hearts, to be mediators of something that whispers and sings through us, plays music on the strings of our souls.

The lyrics are famous poetry as well as songs written by you, right?

We mostly use poetry pearls of bygone ages: Blake, Rossetti, Keats, Frost, Kipling… Yes, I use a couple of my own texts as well.

Tell us about your friendship and collaboration with Vladimir (aka Volosy). Vladimir was the mastermind behind the legendary Brudenia label, a well-respected musician.

Vladimir is a good friend of mine; we know each other for more than 20 years. He opened gates to the world of independent music for many people in our town when started a record shop, the legendary ‘Bunker’ – a place that became a limelight for intelligent musicians and music lovers. Vladimir was bringing arrays of non-commercial music from independent labels, he started ‘Brudenia’ label and introduced people Romowe Rikoito and Neutral; he released well-known bands such as Orchis, The Legendary Pink Dots, Tear Garden, Attrition…

He was the mastermind of ‘Prutenä’, a local festival of dark/neofolk/ritual music in the beginning of millennium. Vladimir has a dark-ambient project Ossaserpia, he also performs and releases his albums under nickname ‘Volosy’. At the moment, after a pause Brudenia is reviving, this year a vinyl by Legendary Pink Dots will be released.

What is the relationship of the band with Romowe Rikoito?

I followed the band from the beginning, though we became friends with Johnny, Anna and Viktoria since I’ve started the recording sessions for Sunset Wings’ debut album. Vladimir and Johnny had a studio, Anna and Viktoria kindly consented to help me with cello and flute, Elena played violin for two songs.

My friendship with Niktorius started later when I initiated a compilation ‘Rose of Memory, Rose of Forgetfulness: a tribute to T.S. Eliot’. I suggested him write a new song for the sampler, Romowe Rikoito had a long pause in their activity at that time. We both had ideas, I think he was missing the creative process, so two ‘sister songs’ were made - one of them was a collaboration between Romowe Rikoito and Sunset Wings. Since that time we began to work on the songs for a new album of Romowe Rikoito, we shared our common interests in the past and present of Prussia – a wasteland of reality, history and dreams, in its culture, legends, tradition and rites. As a result of this work and friendship a new album ‘Undēina’ appeared. By the way, some days ago the album was released also as a double vinyl by Dangus label.

Aleks, you have created two more projects that merged, Āustras Laiwan, and Ŕirikura, tell us about them.

Āustras Laiwan is my intimate solo project concentrated on my memories, dreams, re-
flexions and states of mind and soul. I feel it as more ambient and meditative project, filled with melancholy of Prussia, inner music, sounds of nature, bright sadness and silent rapture.

Éirikura is a collaboration between musicians from Sunset Wings, Romowe Rikoito, Knocknarea (I used to play bass guitar in this band years ago) and Johanna Doyle – a poetess from Ireland and our common friend. Some guest musicians are involved as well. The name ‘Éirikura’ is a combination of two names belonging to goddesses of Celtic and Prussian origins and related to Earth, fertility, cycles of nature.

Johanna writes most of the texts, they are subtle, romantic and philosophical the same time. She has a beautiful voice and recites some of her poems by herself. We also use poems in Gaeilge as well as lyrics in Prussian written by Niktorius, Ilya Levashov from Knocknarea and me. Most of the music is written by me, we have also some songs written by Ilya.


There are a lot of things planned: a debut album by Āustras Laīwan is almost ready, soon we finish the album for Éirikura, I work on mixing new songs for Sunset Wings’ next release and record one more album that will be dedicated to D.G.Rossetti’s poetry. We continue working on new songs for Romowe Rikoito; I have ideas for videos… This summer or autumn the debut album of ‘The illusion Of Silence’ – a project made by my close Italian friend – will see the light of the day. Me, Tanya, Anna and Johnny were delighted to take part in this album: the idea, music and poetry are astounding.

**You have participated in interesting collections so far. What is your favorite one?**

I’ve already mentioned ‘Rose of Memory, Rose of Forgetfulness’, the sampler was released as a collaborative work of Wrotycz Records and Brudenia in 2012. It incorporated friendly bands and musicians who know each other personally since ‘Prutena’ festivals. The original idea was to unite friends in one tribute to a great poet, to create or renew relations, to revive Brudenia as label. It was a pleasure for me to work on this compilation, to communicate with people – everyone who took part made an amazing job! I found new friends or became closer with some others working on the sampler. I still think that ‘The Dry Salvages’ is one of Sunset Wings’ best songs…

**Favorite writers?**

Different writers in different periods of my life. Just some names without any order: Aldous Huxley, Michel Tournier, John Fowles, Umberto Eco, Kurt Vonnegut, Strugatskiye brothers; Russian classics; books/works of Mircea Eliade, Inayat Khan.

**Favorite musicians?**

There are many bands and musicians I admire of. It’s incredible – you can discover something new and beautiful every day. I think Michael Cashmore is one of the most delicate and genuine contemporary musicians.
Favorite painters?

The Pre-Raphaelites

**SUNSET WINGS**

*by Dante Gabriel Rossetti*

Tonight this sunset spreads two golden wings
Cleaving the western sky;
Winged too with wind it is, and winnowings
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings
Of strenuous flight must die.
Sun-steeped in fire, the homeward pinions sway
Above the dovecote-tops;
And clouds of starlings, ere they rest with day,
Sink, clamorous like mill-waters, at wild play,
By turns in every copse:
Each tree heart-deep the wrangling rout receives,—
Save for the whirr within,

What inspires you most in life?

Life itself is a most inspiring and disturbing thing. We all have to learn how to Love.

**CONTACT**


BANDCAMP http://sunsetwings.bandcamp.com/music

You could not tell the starlings from the leaves;
Then one great puff of wings, and the swarm heaves
Away with all its din.
Even thus Hope's hours, in ever-eddying flight,
To many a refuge tend;
With the first light she laughed, and the last light
Glows round her still; who nathless in the night
At length must make an end.
And now the mustering rooks innumerable
Together sail and soar,
While for the day's death, like a tolling knell,
Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
No more, farewell, no more!
Is Hope not plumed, as 'twere a fiery dart?
And oh! thou dying day,
Even as thou goest must she too depart,
And Sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
As will not fly away?

On the Wings of the Morning, Edward Robert Hughes
ALEXANDRE GARCIA
Le Hibou, musician,
visual artist

BAND INTERVIEW
Post Industrial
Neoclassical

“Deserted landscapes, strangers’ walks, a hidden shadow, post-apocalyptic cities or ancient temples hidden in the jungle, the flight of a bird, the sound of high heels, a spider web, old postcards, the sound of bells, children’s smiles and expressions of the elderly, the crescent moon, the intense look of a feline, fragrance of wild roses, Ocean Mist, the eternal ice...”
Mary Vareli: Alexandre, tell us about the creation of band and the story behind the name.

Alexandre Garcia: In the year 2008 I needed to create a new solo project, a continuation of my previous musical projects (NUIT CLOSE, M@nGrOvE Le hibou, Chronique Nocturne, IDORu...) that is much wider in music and has no limit ... a virtual cinema projection between painting, photography, music and poetry ...) like image and music were one.

The name came to me while reading "Périphériques" by Maurice G. Dantec and flipping through it, here and there some of his books. My first compositions, tests were inspired by the poetry of Jim Morrison "The Lords and the New Creatures" for music 'Sombre humide et froid', Lovecraft's poetry for music 'Paysage Ancien', painting by Jean-Pierre Ugarte for music 'Le Passage' and the world of cinema of the 40s for music 'Lèvres Silencieuses'.

You introduce yourself as "Le Hibou" (The Owl). Tell us more!

This goes back there a very long time to 1992, an old friend Eric called me well, I enjoyed and from that night owl mesmerized me. It reflects my personality in some cases: hidden, reserved, strange, silent and lonely..

Which genres describe your music?

"Unclassifiable", as I cannot be characterized by only one genre of music, or “Other”. Jazzy rhythms, South American, folklore from all backgrounds and glean sounds, hardcore rhythms, classical and industrial music and minimalist post rock, these are the voyages "mutation transformation", soundscapes from nowhere , or close to home: Unusual landscape, tortured, trouble, ominous, dark, lost, isolated, obsessive, broke ... Or Post Industrial and Neoclassical to simplify it!

What inspires you?

Deserted landscapes, strangers' walks , a hidden shadow, post- apocalyptic cities or ancient temples hidden in the jungle, the flight of a bird, the sound of high heels, a spider web, old postcards, the sound of bells, children's smiles and expressions of the elderly, the crescent moon, the intense look of a feline, fragrance of wild roses, Ocean Mist, the eternal ice...

You also arrange the music, right?

The fact that I self-produced some of my albums or sometimes alone with my friends gives me great satisfaction , to chose ourselves the CD format (design and choice of tracks) etc. Of course it's not so simple to find companies for pressing and duplication following the originality of the CD, but you get there. What I like is to start from scratch (this something that is empty) and finalize it entirely, it's great!

Mutation Urbaine is a solo project. Do you consider yourself more of a solo musician?
I will say that it is vital for me to compose alone, to start from scratch and see firsthand its evolution and outcome without the need of a third party! However I like to share, collaborate and work as a team, so these two different skins fit me very well :-)
But I think in the future I will work increasingly alone because I lost much time trying to carry out projects with others, sometimes it does not work.

You currently work on another project LARYNX AND CLAW with Scott Batty (Lyrics, melodies, voice). Tell us about this.

Larynx and Claw (Manchester/Paris). I met Scott at a concert of his previous band The Art Of Skinlessness. I liked his performance and his human touch. Simple and straightforward. So I suggested a possible collaboration and a few months later he called me :-)

The project started in early 2011 with Scott Batty (Lyrics, melody, voice) and me, Alexandre Garcia, (Bass, folk/guitar and FX). Our first compositions were very intense and over time more and more ethereal and melodic. Very difficult to describe our music, we can say: Alternative, cold psychodelia and folk industrial.
We played recently in Bourges and Cherbourg, Nantes, Paris to Cirque électrique, La Société de Curiosités and Pop-in, Prague and Vienna...

Our music was broadcast on Salford City Radio (Uk) and Radio Aligre (Fr). I am very proud of this collaboration, and we have self-released our first album "The Ear Watches, The Eye Listens", now we are seeking a label. Also we are looking for dates to play or to share the stage with other artists. We have no manager, so all help is welcome!

I would like you to write some words that describe each one your releases.

2014 - "A travers La Nuit"
First album, (7 titles) released on bandcamp. Both titles "Sombre humide et froid" and "Une Ville éclatée" are inspired by the poetry of Jim Morrison "The Lords and The New Creatures". In this album I wanted to express wandering souls drowning in the obscure city in the depths of a torn night.

I took a long time to finish it because I had to pause my project when I started working with Scott for the band LARYNX AND CLAW, around 2011.

2013 - the Jules Vernes Compilation
I had already participated in a compilation "Beyond the Mirror of Time" for the German label Shelley Schellack with my other project CHRONIQUE NOCTURNE with EmmA Wyrd. We have re-proposed another compilation in memory of Jules Verne. But at that time EmmA was not free, so I accept it for MUTATION URBAINE. Also a good opportunity and I love the novels of Jules Verne!

2011- HOMO EDAX
I discovered Frédérique Bruyas on myspace at the time and I liked some of his readings. Later
she asked me to work with her and compose for extracts Victor Hugo's novels. Honestly I was really flattered and at the same time as if the roof was falling on my head! The excerpts she chose it was really hard to compose; now I am very proud! Well I took a year to close the deal as I had already started another project with Scott Batty.

2009 - "Ville Imaginaire"

I am very proud of "Ville Imaginaire" A demo? In fact it is a pure album of six titles, totally authentic but I did not know it at the time because my vision was sudden and did not come back. It was my first jets, my first inspiration. "Ville Imaginaire" was broadcast on the net label Moscow CLINICAL ARCHIVES.

You also create the graphics of your albums, tell us about your influences concerning Art.

I love the world of Enki Bilal, H.R. Giger, Scott Batty, Luis Royo, DALI, BOSCH, Georges de la Tour, Ashley Wood, John J Muth, Kent Williams, drawings of Victor Hugo, Ernest Pignon, Frank Frazetta, Edward Burne-Jones, Jean Delville... and many other artists, like David Lynch, Jean Cocteau, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Hitchcock, Marcel Carné, David Cronenberg, Guillerm Del Toro, Dario Argento!

I can tell you adore Victor Hugo's novels, other writers that have influenced you?

I also like Baudelaire, Gustav Meyrink, Kafka, especially Smila of Peter Høeg, Iدور by William Gibson, The World of Null-A by A.E van Vogt and MU The lost Continent by James Churchward, also Artaud, François Villon, Pierre de Marbeuf, Jean Ray, Henry Miller, Sade, Allan Poe, Jean Genet, Stephen King, Robert Bloch...

I also have a nice collection of MARABOUT FANTASTIC and SCIENCE FICTION ;-)
Thank you Mary from the bottom of my heart for this interview for this exceptional "ParadoxF Ethereal Magazine".

My pleasure!

CONTACT

http://mutationurbaine.bandcamp.com/album/a-travers-la-nuit

https://sites.google.com/site/mutationurbaine/

https://soundcloud.com/mutation-urbaine

https://www.facebook.com/MutationUrbaine.Officiel

Le Hibou photo by Trident (2004)
Vulnicura is the ninth studio album by Icelandic musician and singer Björk. It was produced by Björk, Arca and The Haxan Cloak, and released on 20 January 2015 by One Little Indian Records. Björk said the album expresses her feelings following her breakup with artist Matthew Barney. The album is primarily composed of string arrangements and electronic beats, as a return to the sound Björk worked on her 1997 album Homogenic. The involvement of Arca came in late stages of the writing process, which Björk described as “such a contrast, the most fun music-making I’ve ever had, with the most tragic subject matter. Praise has centered around the “emotional honesty and musical daring” used to portray the album’s deeply personal themes. The lyrics have been described as some of her “strongest and most moving” and Björk’s voice “miraculously expressive”.

Hyperview is the third studio album by American punk rock band Title Fight. It was produced by Will Yip, and was released on February 3, 2015 through ANTI-. The band premiered a video for the track “Chlorine” through music publication The FADER on December 1, 2014. Hyperview is Title Fight’s first release with ANTI- Records. Bassist Ned Russin said “We were looking at bands like maybe Dinosaur Jr. and the Beach Boys — we were looking at the moment where they found something that had never been done before and was now being done well. We were just chasing that energy.” This work gives an icy, yet dynamic feeling, full of experimentation and great racks like “Murder Your Memory” and “Your Pain Is Mine Now”. It’s refreshing to find a band with such forward progression as Title Fight.

Flame haired Northern Irish singer songwriter Janet Devlin introduces herself to North America with her debut album Running With Scissors. The 10-track album is full of folk-driven pop songs and heart touching ballads, showcasing Janet’s unique and enchanting vocals which first caught the public’s attention in the UK X Factor in 2011. For the 19 year-old singer, Running With Scissors is a soulful album about growing up, becoming independent and dealing with a whole new range of emotions. In early January 2014, Janet debuted a new live version of her song “Delicate”, (written with Jack Savoretti and a new addition to the general release album) performing with Tom Dibb (guitar and vocals), in a BalconyTV session. She won the Balcony TV Global Music Rumble two weeks in a row on the 2 and 9 March and again on the 23 March.
CLASSICS TO SEE BEFORE YOU FLY

9 Films about the paranormal
Alitta virens (common names include sandworm and king ragworm; older scientific names including Nereis virens are still frequently used) is an annelid worm that burrows in wet sand and mud. It is classified as a polychaete in the family Nereididae. (Source: Wikipedia)
Cross-dressing

“Cross-dressing is the act of wearing items of clothing associated with the opposite gender within a particular society. Cross-dressing has been used as a literary trope in modern times and throughout history. It does not, however, necessarily indicate transgender identity. Nearly every human society throughout history has expected distinctions to be made between males and females by the style, color, or type of clothing they are expected to wear, and likewise most societies have had a set of social norms, views, guidelines, or even laws defining what type of clothing is appropriate for each gender. Cross-dressing has been practiced throughout much of recorded history and in many societies. There are many examples in Greek, Norse, and Hindu mythology. A reasonable number of historical figures are known to have cross-dressed to varying degrees and for a variety of reasons. There is a rich history of cross-dressing found in folklore, literature, theater, and music. Examples include Kabuki and Korean shamanism.

The term cross-dressing denotes an action or a behavior without attributing or implying any specific causes for that behavior. Some people automatically connect cross-dressing behavior to transgender identity or sexual, fetishist, and homosexual behavior, but the term itself does not imply any motives.” Wikipedia
Frances Benjamin Johnston (right) poses with two cross-dressing friends, the "lady" is identified by Johnston as the illustrator Mills Thompson.

Frida Kahlo, who occasionally dressed as a boy.
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