

pascALEjandro L'androgynisme alchimique

4 September - 9 October 2021

47 rue Saint-André-des-Arts
Paris 6

Kamel Mennour is pleased to present "Alchemichal Androgynous", an exhibition specially dedicated to the work of pascALEjandro. For the last fifteen years, Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky and Alejandro Jodorowsky have been creating a joint body of work, a 'spiritual child' whose makers' name is a fusion of their own. This nucleus of magical creation, the product of their artistic and amorous union, emanates with a passionate, human conception of love and life.

Kamel Mennour: Dear Pascale, dear Alejandro, at the moment I am speaking with pascALEjandro, your spiritual child, whose works I am greatly looking forward to showing soon at the gallery. Can you tell me a little more about pascALEjandro's genesis? How was s/he born?

pascALEjandro: pascALEjandro was born out of our love for each other. When we first met, it was not just an encounter, we recognized each other. Our love preceded us: the universe wanted the last three letters of Pascale's name to be the same as the first three letters of Alejandro's. And then the universe wanted us not to have a child. We had wanted to, despite the difference in age, but nature would not have it so. That's how pascALEjandro came into the world, a symbolic child with just the same energy as any biological child would have had. It is a third entity, the fruit of our love, who would not exist without one or the other of us, and who changes and grows autonomously. In our case, this two-part creation is probably even stronger than if we had had a biological child. We are in agreement with one another on a number of levels: intellectually, emotionally, sexually, and bodily (which corresponds to the four aces of the Tarot: sword, cup, wand, and pentacle), and these elements of concord keep developing. It's why pascALEjandro is constantly developing.

Kamel Mennour: How did pascALEjandro start making work?

pascALEjandro: Pascale and Alejandro each had a very strong ideal of love. Alejandro wanted to share his life with someone who understood art the way he did. Ideally, he wanted to marry a painter, with whom he could really share what they had in common. Pascale had waited for this encounter like a premonition. She could describe Alejandro even before meeting him, before even knowing who he was. Seventeen years ago, after we met during a Tarot reading, Alejandro went to the gallery where Pascale was exhibiting and bought one of her paintings, without even seeing it! We became a couple almost instantaneously. Pascale discovered drawings that Alejandro had made a long time ago. He suggested she colour them but she didn't want to interfere with the integrity of those precious, archival drawings. So Alejandro proposed to make new ones that she could colour. That's how this two-person work was born, under one name: pascALEjandro.

Kamel Mennour: When I talk about this exhibition, people tell me that Alejandro used to do Tarot readings for free in the cafés in Bastille. You met thanks to the Tarot. Does pascALEjandro use the Tarot?

pascALEjandro: Yes, we met through the Tarot because for decades Alejandro did indeed do free Tarot readings in a café in Paris for thousands of people from all over the world. He did it as a gift to humanity. Pascale came to one

The exhibition "Alchemichal Androgynous" is accessible from Tuesday to Saturday from 11 am to 7 pm at 47 rue Saint-André-des-Arts, Paris 6.

For further information, please contact:
Jessy Mansuy
Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin
+33 1 56 24 03 63
galerie@kamelmennour.com

Press contacts:
Margaux Alexandre
Pierre-Maël Dalle
communication@kamelmennour.com

of his readings and their encounter was a revelation for both of them. For Alejandro, the Tarot is a sacred language. When you memorise the cards, they enter your unconscious like an architecture that orients your thinking. Alejandro reads the Tarot almost every day, and he has absorbed it. You have to be in an almost saintly state in order to be able to read without there being a risk of exercising power over the other. You must be in a state of absolute benevolence and non-judgement towards the other. Every day, Alejandro discovers new ways to read it. It's like a perpetual creation that reveals itself to itself, and Pascale is his first, astounded spectator, since he practices it on her. The Tarot is the exploration of a world, a way of knowing oneself. It gives you keys to understand the present through analysing the past, so that you can act in the future. The Tarot is very present in pascALEjandro's life, as a benevolent guide.

Kamel Mennour: So pascALEjandro is influenced by the Tarot. Is there an influence on the works?

pascALEjandro: Our painting has an emotional and spiritual content that the viewer must discover for him or herself. No one really knows what we wanted to express. For instance, with *YES*, you can't say whether it's a man or a woman. The figure says Yes. But who does it say it to? Why? Find out what I am. That's the message. There are always two points of view in our paintings, like in the Tarot, where the arcana are not strictly negative or positive, but rather their meaning depends on the way the cards are placed. Arcanum XIII for instance, which can represent death, can also be a sign of great change, of transformation. It's similar in our works, in the sense that their meaning is never fixed and definitive. We have been fascinated to discover that their interpretation can completely change depending on who is looking at them, according to that person's physiology, their history, their sensibility... And it is always something true, sometimes it even reveals aspects of the piece that had escaped our attention until then.

Kamel Mennour: That means the viewer has a role to play.

pascALEjandro: Absolutely! The viewer helps create the work. It's an open field, there's no closed interpretation. It's a window, an opening on to a world that we don't want to wall in, where everyone should be able to recognize themselves, read things that address themselves directly to them, exactly like in the Tarot. There's another parallel between the Tarot and our painting. When Alejandro reads the Tarot, he can maintain a certain distance, since he is fundamentally an artist, and a recognized one to boot. He doesn't need the Tarot in order to exist in the eyes of other people. So he can do it almost like a saint would. In the same way, when we make a joint work, which is more than just a collaboration because it's not Pascale and Alejandro, or Alejandro and Pascale, it's pascALEjandro, each of us makes ourselves invisible in order to make room for this third entity that has come from our union. In a way, it's a very good exercise for the ego, because we believe that an artist should serve his or her work and not his or her ego. In this case, we're forced to. Working together means sacrificing the ego and that's what's so wonderful about a joint creation.

Kamel Mennour: You have worked together for the cinema also. Where does the work on the films differ from the work on the drawings?

pascALEjandro: There are two distinct things. When it's pascALEjandro who creates, Pascale and Alejandro are on the same footing and efface themselves in order to let this third, transpersonal entity take over. The drawings work on the principle of shared creation. The medium is graphic and pictorial but it can develop into something else, film for instance. The colours for *La Danza de la Realidad*, *Poesia Sin Fin*, and *Psychomagie, un art pour guérir* were created by pascALEjandro. When Alejandro Jodorowsky directs a film, the team he asks to help him will place itself in the service of his vision, Pascale included. She made the costumes for *La Danza de la Realidad* and *Poesia Sin Fin*, and she was the director of photography for *Psychomagie, un art pour guérir*. In this instance, she places her own creativity in the service of Alejandro's vision. He is the film's director and its chief creator.

There is no separation between life and art for us. Everything is united in an open principle of shared creation, or one of communicating vessels, a back-and-forth between our respective creations.

Kamel Mennour: Since we're talking about colour, Pascale, is it codified? When you receive Alejandro's drawings, do you know already what colours you're going to use?

Pascale: It's basically intuitive. Alejandro believes that he receives his drawings from his unconscious. When he gives them to me, I first concentrate on absorbing their climate. Then I mentally divide them into zones of light and shade, warm and cool, then the colours come like in a dream. The surprising thing is that when I worked alone, my colour palette was deliberately very limited to rather cool colours, even the absence of colour: blacks, greys, above all light, even in darkness... When I started colouring Alejandro's drawings, widening my chromatic field was an obvious direction, and now there's no limit. I let them come to me, because I think colours are above all light. Colour enters into a dialogue with the drawing, gives it flesh and blood. If you look at pascALEjandro's formal development, you can see that line and colour progressively mingle with one another. I give myself more permission to go into the line with the colour now, with love of course. I didn't give myself so much permission before, I respected Alejandro's line too much to touch it, so in a way I involuntarily held up the fusion that is at work now. In the end, neither can exist without the other. It moves us to feel that when Alejandro finishes a drawing, the colour awakens it. But obviously, without the drawing, this colour on its own would be meaningless.

Kamel Mennour: And how does psychomagic come into all this?

pascALEjandro: Psychomagic is a therapy that Alejandro created for healing psychological troubles through acts rather than speech, through directly addressing the unconscious. Healing comes from acts, not words. Once he has identified the problem or the fantasy, Alejandro proposes a poetic act for freeing oneself from it, since you can sometimes understand a situation intellectually without managing to resolve it. One of our artworks deals with the death of Alejandro's son at twenty-four. In the painting, you see Teo in two lights. There is the tragic event of his death, and at the same time the festive joy of his final moments. Representing him in this way is a way of exorcising this dramatic event. Psychomagic is a way of achieving a catharsis that can help us get out of difficult or painful situations by getting our unconscious to accept them.

Kamel Mennour: I'd like to end by asking you to tell me a little about *pascALEjandro forever*. The drawing shows a tomb with a photo of the two of you surrounded by oversized bees. It's a very unusual work...

pascALEjandro: This work illustrates our own death. It's also an act of psychomagic: exorcise the terror of separation and of death in general. It's almost a way of fulfilling it, of executing it symbolically or metaphorically in order to exorcise this fear. Alejandro is ninety-two-and-a-half years old, for us he has one foot in the other world, but in the end death can come at any time, at any age, and the most terrifying thing is separation. We face each other: we cannot pretend that we are not mortal. So we asked ourselves the question: what if we died together? That way we aren't afraid. Being conscious of time gives things their proper weight and makes it all the more essential to live our love and carry out our work. In a way, we are lucky to have this sword of Damocles hanging above us because it has made us aware of many more things, much faster, and now we live in an eternal present.

Kamel Mennour: *Un amor sin fin...*

—

Born in 1972 in Paris, Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky is a painter, photographer, costume designer and stage designer.

Born in 1929 in Tocopilla, Chile, Alejandro Jodorowsky is a filmmaker, poet, comic book writer and creator of psychomagic art.

Exhibited in many museums around the world, pascALEjandro has created the colors of Alejandro Jodorowsky's films: *La Danza de la Realidad*, *Poesía Sin Fin* and *Psychomagie, un art pour guérir*.

A screening of *Psychomagie, un art pour guérir* is scheduled on September 18 at the Centre Pompidou-Metz followed by an act of social psychomagic proposed to the public by Alejandro Jodorowsky, and then a public meeting with Pascale Montandon-Jodorowsky and Alejandro Jodorowsky to discuss pascALEjandro's work and the exhibition in the gallery.