

# LandEscape

A R T R E V I E W

Anniversary Edition

**MIYA ANDO  
RÜDIGER FISCHER  
YONA LEVY GROSMAN  
BARBARA BARTOS  
YE'ELA WILSCHANSKI  
LEE TAL  
GREG CONDON  
EDAN GORLICKI  
XIAOHONG ZHANG**

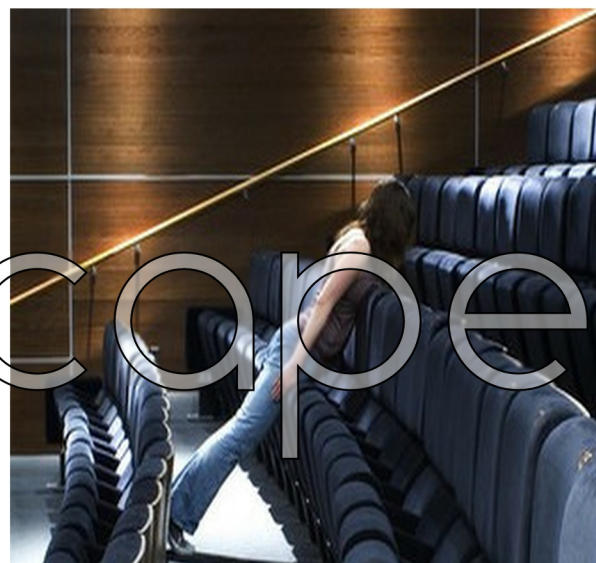
*Emptiness The Sky (Shou Sugi Ban)*

84 x 84 x 84 Inches, Charred Wood, Metal Paintings.

Installation created for The 56th Venice Biennale, 2015

**ART**  
Contemporary Art Press





## A R T R E V I E W



**Edan Gorlicki**

Israel

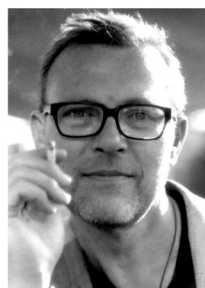
*Edan's work always explores psychological and emotional realms. He believes that through personal experience he can use his work as a mirror for both his audience and himself. Every work of Edan has been a personal and touching transparency of what we all as humans go through on a daily basis. Through his work he has dared to approach these difficult issues and expose them respectfully yet courageously to his audience.*



**Barbara Bartos**

Romania

*Many pedagogues of art believe that before learning cinematography, a great director must learn the art of the still photograph. I went the exact opposite way. I studied the great films noir of yesterday and today because the sheer expressive power and minimalism of monochrome really speaks to me. There is such a range of emotion, beauty, despair, and violence that can be painted with monochrome.*



**Rüdiger Fischer**

Serbia

*My work is of narrative nature, it opens up a space from which the recipient can think ahead. The works contain one (or more) questions that you can talk about. Mostly my questions research the relationships between reality and possible reality, between sign and matter. You can say: I am suggesting a narrative. And as well: I am creating a situation.*



**Yona Levy Grosman**

Israel

*Yona Levy Grosman is a multi-disciplinary artist, whose artistic activity comprehends paintings, video art, drawings, poetry and essays. Her paintings reflect the desert topography, the harsh and blinding light, the emptiness. She uses heavy texture and bright colors keeping the acrylic glossiness. Her style is figurative with abstract tendencies. But her paintings are by no means realist.*



**Xiaohong Zhang**

USA

*Landscape painting was regarded as the highest form of Chinese painting. My creative focus has been on the Traversing Medium and Re-appropriating Motifs in Contemporary Art with continuous investigation of traversing traditional art form of Chinese landscape ink wash painting through the concept of contemporary western art setting.*



**Miya Ando**

USA

*Applying traditional techniques of her ancestry, Miya Ando skillfully transforms sheets of burnished industrial steel, using heat and chemicals, into ephemeral abstractions suffused with subtle gradations of color.*

*She says: "I have a deep appreciation for the dynamic properties of metal and its ability to reflect light."*





**Greg Condon**  
USA

My animation is intrinsically linked to my life. My stories draw equally on my past and present, freely mixing distant memory with recent observations. While on the outset I use abstract and non-linear images, my films are always focused on a thematically unified, autobiographical narrative. I do not animate in one particular medium but focus on specific themes I try to express through whatever materials seem appropriate.



**Ye'ela Wilschanski**  
Israel

Using my body and voice to express myself, is what I have been doing since I was born. As an artist, my body and voice are the most readily available raw materials to create from and about.

I started my way as an artist sewing clothes for my dolls. I needed to sketch my sewing designs, and those sketches progressed to paintings.



**Lee Tal**  
Israel / USA

I'm trying to produce several effects and influences between the objects the space and the abstract background. One of the key components in my work is the space itself.

And the possibility to minimize the artistic abstraction that is already a reality in art .so I can combines between this two orders, as I'm attempting to bring them both into a new concept.

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**Soundscape Instrument.** Italy: Toffia. Hills, 2012 (detail).  
Gouache and perforations on paper, mechanical music box, laser-cut  
plywood box; box: 15 cm x 15 cm 9 cm; paper: 70 x 6.8 cm



# Barbara Bartos

Lives and works in Rome, Italy

**M**y work explores the image in an experimental way using a variety of media, from audio-visual projects to site-specific environmental interventions, drawings, paintings and prints. Current investigations revolve around **what is** an image and **how** different forms of perception shape its meaning.

*I tend to work by limiting myself to a few essential materials, each piece being the product of an elaborate generative process. The subsequent works are hybrids between my conceptual framework and nature – conveyed through the media employed. I attempt to strike a balance between human intervention and nature, creating works that hover at the threshold between my conceptual premise and the organic growth of the constituting materials.*

*The Soundscape Instrument is an object that translates painted landscapes into sound. The 'scores' are detailed gouaches on paper of actual landscapes, which subsequently are perforated following unique features of the landscape, (i.e. the horizon line, the lines of the trees, the pattern of the birds flying, etc.). Once perforated the painting is played via the music box. The process of creating each painting-score goes*

*from the visual to the audible, thus the resulting sound is not composed in the traditional sense, but generated by the image via a translation process in order to make it legible by the mechanism. The instrument can produce 30 chromatic notes, but the resulting melody is not tonal, as it is not guided by any music theory concepts.*

*Each painting contains in itself 4 different melodies, as each strip of paper can be played (passed through the instrument) in 4 different ways - forwards, backwards, forward flipped and backwards flipped. At this time, the project consists of 7 different landscapes-scores, and continues to grow. This series is a work in progress, evolving with every new place that I experience, thus becoming a polyphonic illustration of all the spaces I inhabited.*

*I look at this as a translation project, one that reveals an unexpected synchronicity not only between visual and audible perception, but also between nature and culture.*

**Barbara Bartos**

<http://www.barbarabartos.com/>



# Barbara Bartos

An interview by Josh Ryder, curator  
with the collaboration of Katherine Williams

[landscape@europe.com](mailto:landscape@europe.com)

***Ranging in a wide media, Barbara Bartos accomplishes a suggestive investigation about the liminal area in which personal perception of an image blends with collective imagery: in Soundscape Instrument that we'll be discussing in the following pages she carries out the difficult task of creating a lively symbiosis between instinctive perception and a refined cultural analysis that invites us to go beyond a traditional relationship between audio and visual information. One of the most convincing aspects of Bartos' approach is the way she unveils that Art is a vehicle not only to express feelings, but to dissect them, grapple with them, and integrate them into a coherent unity. I'm particularly pleased to introduce our readers to her refined artistic production.***

***Hello Barbara and welcome to LandEscape: to start this interview, would you like to tell us something about your background? You have a solid formal training and after your studies in your native country, you moved to the San Francisco Art Institute, where you earned a MFA: moreover, you later had the chance to attend classes at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland: how did these experiences influence your evolution as an artist? In particular do you think that formal training***







**Barbara Bartos**

(photo by Alessandro Balsamo)





**Soundscape Instrument.** Installation view. Photo credits: Martha Gut





***does inform the way you currently conceive your works?***

Yes, I believe that my formal training has had a very strong influence on how I've learned to see, and how I later approached my practice. As you mentioned, after graduating from the Visual Arts Academy in Cluj, Romania I pursued a MFA degree at San Francisco Art Institute. This was a major change for me both as an artist and as a person. It has opened me up to new art forms and approaches; it gave me the freedom to experiment in other fields and to place my work in a larger context. That being said, I believe this process was constructive to me, particularly due to the solid formal art education I've received; it could have easily been destructive, or at least disorienting because of the huge difference in that way art is taught in the US compared to the Eastern Europe.

To illustrate the process, I basically came into the Masters program as an experimental printmaker and left making bio-art installations involving live bees. Years later, this experience resurfaced when I decided to pursue courses in digital fabrication and physical computing at University of Southern Switzerland in an attempt to give myself the means to pursue ideas which my current technical knowledge did not allow me to develop. Maybe I'm 'old school', but I believe that artists need to have the skills to produce their own work (or at least for the most part). I want to have the skills to make the works I envision.

I think an artist's perception of the world depends on how much agrees to this point. I am sure that for me this comes from the many years of formal education in the arts, but I have to say I've been lucky to experience other forms of art training, which, I think, gave me a more balanced approach to art-making.

***Multidisciplinarity is a crucial aspect of your art practice and I would suggest to visit <http://barbarabartos.com> in order to get a wider idea of your multifaceted artistic production: you seem to be in an incessant search of an organic, almost intimate symbiosis between several disciplines, taking advantage of the creative and expressive potential of Video as well as of Sound: while crossing the borders of different artistic fields have you ever happened to realize that a symbiosis between different disciplines is the only way to achieve some results, to express some concepts?***

Actually, I am convinced that only a symbiosis between different disciplines can allow me to express my ideas. I have always been in search of new forms of expression because most of the time I feel constrained by the medium. My ideal work would be poly-sensorial, a complete immersive experience, something that would allow anyone to have synesthesia-like experience. For now, I have limited myself to combining two or three disciplines in one project, experimenting slowly with different permutations between forms of expression in an attempt to produce works that go beyond the immediate understanding.

I am convinced that the world we perceive through our senses, and which we process through our brains is only a fragment of what is. Modern scientific discoveries from biology to particle science have begun to prove this fact, but between a logical understanding and a personal revelation there is a huge gap. I think art can fill it, or at least can provide the means for a profound personal experience, which can give a new meaning to the word 'understanding'.

With every work I attempt to come a step closer to this ideal, and this is why I cannot

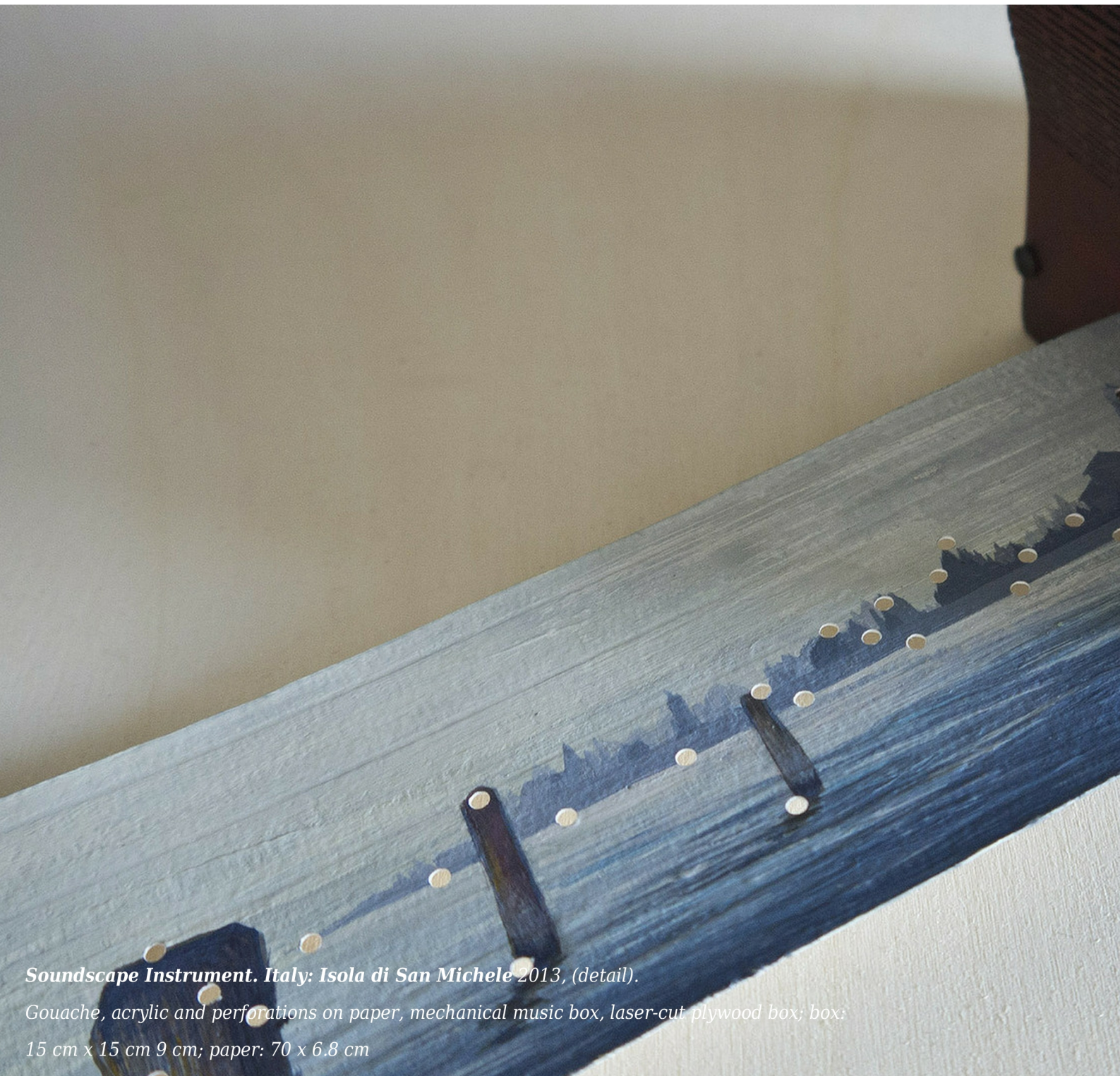






**Soundscape Instrument.** Installation view. Photo credits: Martha Gut



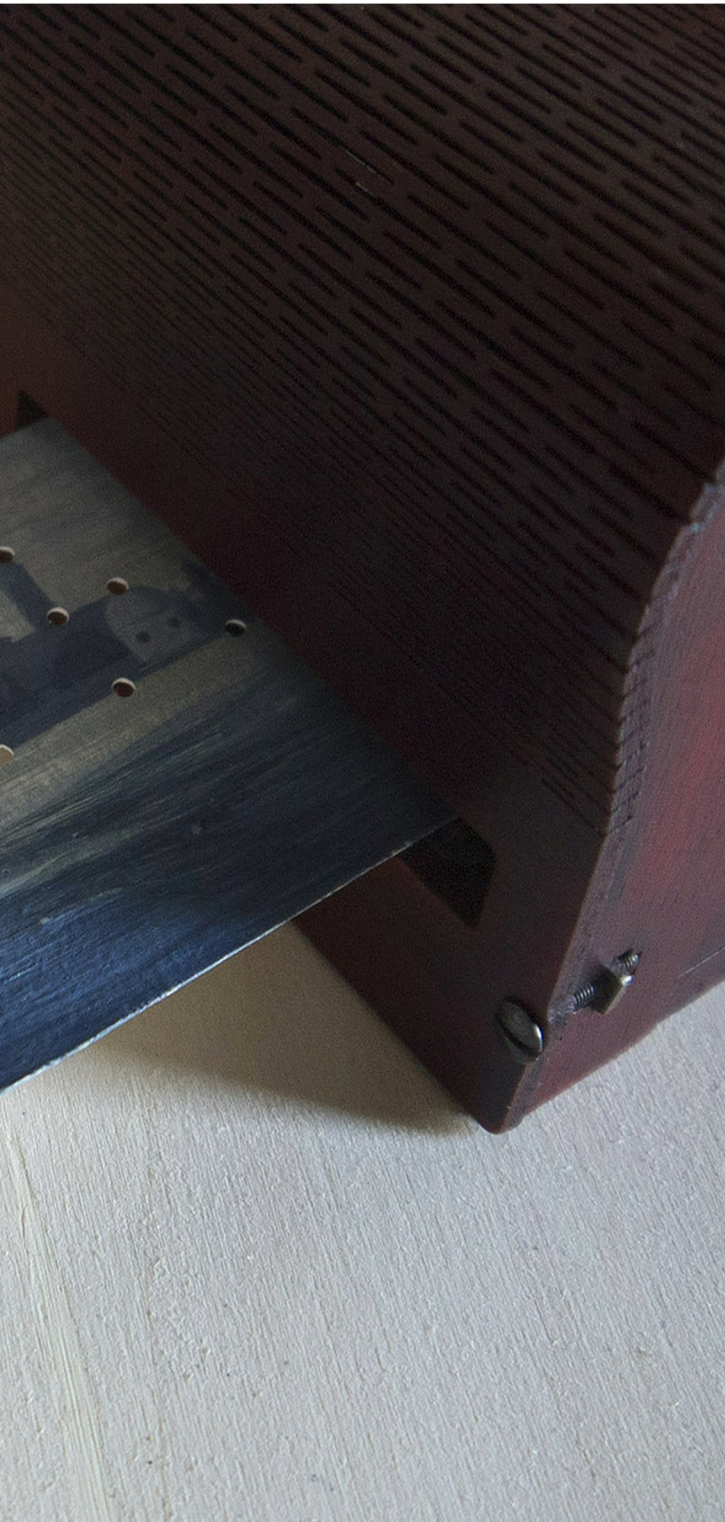


**Soundscape Instrument. Italy: Isola di San Michele 2013, (detail).**

Gouache, acrylic and perforations on paper, mechanical music box, laser-cut plywood box; box:

15 cm x 15 cm 9 cm; paper: 70 x 6.8 cm





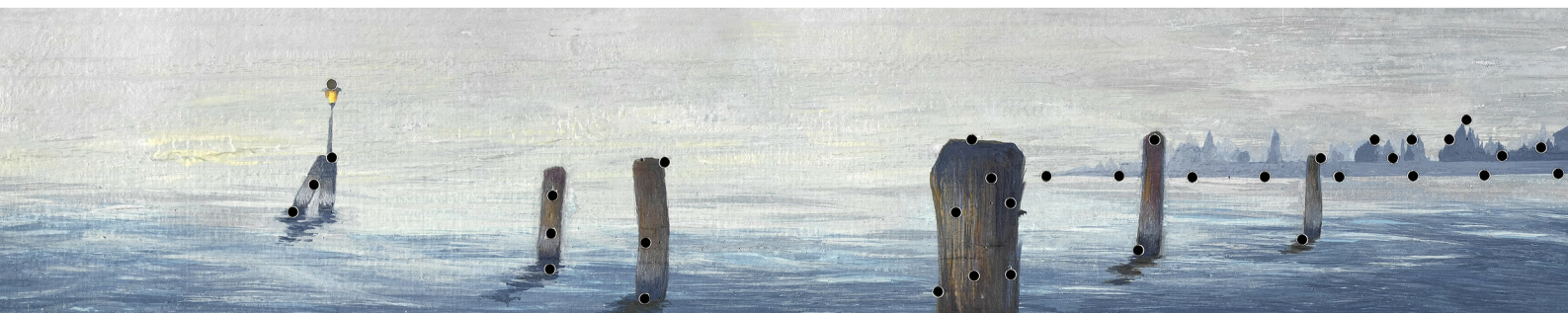
limit myself to one discipline, one medium or one form of expression.

***Now let's focus on your artistic production: I would start from Soundscape Instrument, an extremely interesting project that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article: when I first happened to get to know it I tried to relate all the visual and sound information to a single meaning. But I soon realized that I had to fit into the visual rhythm suggested by the work, forgetting my need for an univocal understanding of its content: in your videos, rather than a conceptual interiority, I can recognize the desire to enable us to establish direct relations... Would you say that it's more of an intuitive or a systematic process?***

The initial spark, the idea is always an image for me. It is very intuitive; I could even call it a vision. Once the process of bringing this vision into the real world begins the development for me is systematic, but that remains 'behind the scenes'. My goal is to make possible the essence of my vision to others via the work, to spark a personal vision in the viewer. It will not be the same image I had, as we each bring our own experiences and knowledge to what we see, and we construct our understanding of the world on this, but the encounter with the work could illuminate a facet of the world invisible until now, or may give form to an ineffable feeling.

With the Soundscape Instrument, I initially had just an intuition that an image could imbed musical meaning, but it wasn't until I've start making the paintings and played them to others that I was convinced it was a valid route to pursue. I needed to see that others perceived the synchronicity of the image and sound as I did. Even though each person's experience of the piece is psychologically





**Soundscape Instrument. Finland: Fields, 2012.** Gouache, acrylic and perforations on paper, 70 x 6.8 cm

conditioned, the perception of a correspondence between the audio and the visual remained a constant.

***The way you accomplish such effective synesthesia in the process of translating painted landscapes into sound invites the viewer to a suggestive semantic restructuration that has reminded me of the ideas behind Thomas Demand's works, when he stated that "nowadays art can no longer rely much on symbolic strategies and has to probe psychological narrative elements within the medium instead". While conceiving Art could be considered a purely abstract activity, there is always a way of giving it a permanence that goes beyond the intrinsic ephemeral nature of the concepts you explore. So I would take this occasion to ask you if in your opinion personal experience is an absolutely indispensable part of a creative process...***

***Do you think that a creative process could be disconnected from direct experience?***

We create the world every time we look at it, consciously or unconsciously. So, I'd say that nothing we do can be disconnected from our direct experience.

The most impressive proof of this is illustrated by a quantum theory study conducted at Weizmann Institute of Science demonstrating that by the very act of watching, the observer affects the observed reality – "the greater the amount of 'watching,' the greater the observer's influence on what actually takes place." It is an extreme example, but it does point to the fact that nothing we do is done in a vacuum, and this is foremost true of the creative process.

***The impetuous way modern technology has nowadays came out on the top has***



**Soundscape Instrument. Italy: Isola di San Michele, 2013.** Gouache, acrylic and perforations on paper, 70 x 6.8 cm





***dramatically revolutionized the idea of Art itself: in a certain sense, we are forced to rethink the intimate aspect of constructed realities and especially the materiality of the artwork itself, since just a few years ago it was a tactile materialization of an idea. I'm sort of convinced that new media will definitely fill the apparent dichotomy between art and technology, and I would dare to say that Art and Technology are going to assimilate one another... what's your point about this?***

I agree with you that modern technology has revolutionized the idea of Art, moving it from a tactile materialization of an idea, as you say, to just the materialization of an idea. But I do not see a dichotomy between art and technology. To me technology is a tool that can be used (if deemed necessary) towards the much broader and complex goal of making Art. A pencil was 'new technology' when it first appeared, oil

paints were 'new media' when invented and the artists who adopted them were seen as 'pioneers' in the 15th century.

The development of new media and new materials is not showing any signs of slowing down, and I am one who's always on the lookout for the latest material or process that may facilitate the translation of a concept into reality. So to go back to your statement, Technology and Art cannot assimilate each other (which would imply the annihilation of both), because, in my opinion, one is the means and the other the end of a complex process. They can definitely have, and will continue to merge - in specific occasions - in order to generate works that were not conceivable a few years ago, but this to me is a natural growth process when media and concepts meet.

***Another interesting project of yours that has particularly impacted on me and on which I***











***Wisdom of the Earth, 2005.***

*Bee hive [Apis mellifera], plant [Dracaena marginata], hydroponic system,  
mini video camera, TV set, polyurethane, wood, acrylic tubing.  
Installation view; Detail of the bee-brain.*





**Thinking Tree**, 2011. C-print, 33 x 55 cm. Long exposure photograph of environmental intervention.

*would like to spend some words is entitled Thinking Tree: I have appreciated the way you have been capable of bringing a new level of significance to signs, and in a wide sense to re-contextualize the concept of the environment we inhabit in. This is a recurrent feature of your approach that provides the viewers of an Ariadne's Thread, inviting them to challenge the common way we perceive not only the outside world, but also our inner dimension... By the way, I'm sort of convinced that some information & ideas are hidden, or even "encrypted" in the*

*environment we live in, so we need -in a way- to decipher them. Maybe that one of the roles of an artist could be to reveal unexpected sides of Nature, especially of our inner Nature... what's your point about this?*

Thank you for bringing up this point. I have always intrinsically believed that there is more to the world we perceive than what meets our senses. For a long time I could not explain this, and it wasn't even at a conscious level. Later on, meditating on what really is that makes me make art, and what is the common thread that



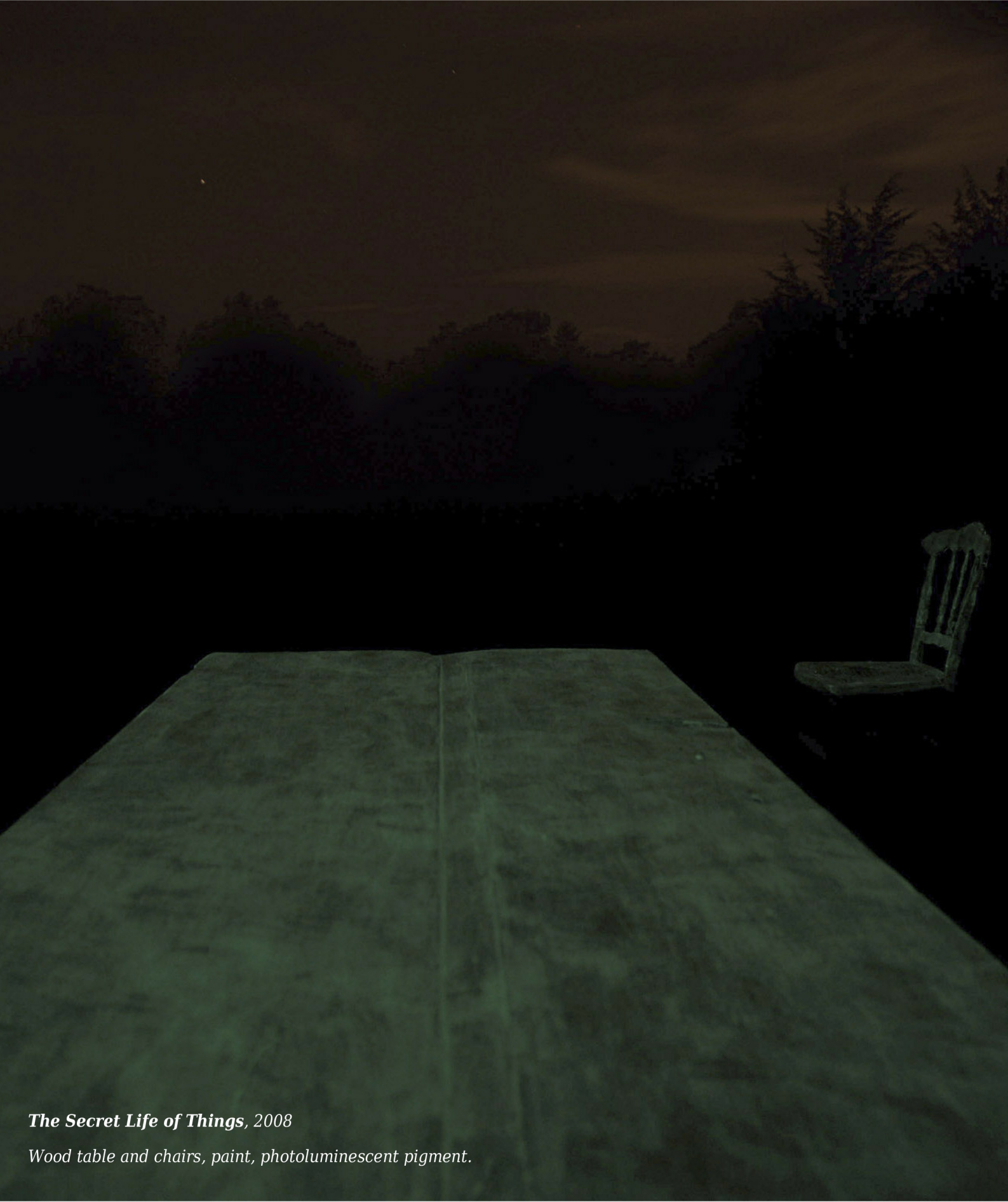


***Thinking Tree***, 2011. C-print, 33 x 55 cm. Long exposure photograph of environmental intervention.

ties my body of work, which as you said earlier, is always shifting between forms and media, I've discovered that I am always looking to decipher, translate, and reveal the invisible. As you so keenly observed, I feel challenged by the task of upturning people's common perceptions or preconceived ideas with the images I create. I believe that such a moment of semiotic disorientation holds the potential for a revelatory understanding.

Thinking Tree is an example of how I use a relatively new technical medium (a transparent photoluminescent pigment that has the ability

to absorb light and reemit it with a delay, giving the impression of phosphorescence) as a means to make visible something that has always been there: the unexpected similarity in the growth pattern of the tree and that of our nervous system. Going beyond a simple formal analogy, the image shows how each form is the direct consequence of a specific function. The structure of our nervous system and the structure of a tree's crown are not random; the same laws of self-organization rule both. This is not a conceptual piece; it is an illustration, a



***The Secret Life of Things, 2008***

*Wood table and chairs, paint, photoluminescent pigment.*



visualization of the continuum between our inner nature and that we call 'the environment'.

***While many contemporary artists as Michael Light and Edward Burtynsky use to convey in an explicit way environmental or political message in their photographs, your works seek to maintain a more neutral approach: rather, you seem to invite the viewers to a personal investigation about the themes you touch on. Maybe that the following assumption is stretching the point a little bit, but I think that The Secret Life of Things reveals the connection between different cultural spheres which describes such a real-time aesthetic ethnography: you seem to be drawn to the structured worlds we inhabit and how they produce a self-defining context for our lives and experience... do you agree with this analysis? Moreover, what could be in your opinion the role that Art could play in sociopolitical questions?***

With The Secret Life of Things - a table and two chairs placed in an isolated natural environment which transform at night into ghostly objects, floating over the grassy field - I touch on another theme: the point in space where nature and culture meet. I am particularly drawn to the intersection between, as you say, our structured, designed worlds and the neutral, chaotic natural world, between our structured time and the glacial time of nature. In this contrasting intersection one can perceive the limits we put on ourselves, on our experience of time and space. I try to put in perspective what we think is real, what we believe as important, what we perceive as urgent.

In general, in my work, my interest is not in making explicit statements, but I rather seek a more intimate interaction with the viewer. I

hope the work can spark an internal probing, a personal "aha!" moment.

Relating to your second question, I believe the role of Art in sociopolitical questions takes place exactly at this intimate, personal level. Changes need to happen first on the inside before they can have an effect on the outside. Art can make change if it first puts us in the situation to question our thought patterns, our modus operandi, our fear of sincerity.

***Moreover, I noticed that you seem to induce the viewer to abandon himself to his associations, looking at time in spatial terms and I daresay, rethinking the concept of space in such a static way: this seems to remove any historic gaze from the reality you refer to, offering to the viewers the chance to perceive in a more atemporal form. How do you conceive the rhythm of your works?***

As mentioned before, in my works I tend to blur the lines between fixed reference points, consequently the works go beyond making statements that point to a certain place or time, rather they take the perception, emotional response or experience of the viewer and raise it to a metaphysical level. The rhythm of each work is dictated by the viewer, because, to me, the actual work is born in the liminal space between the two.

***During your over twenty-five years long career your works have been extensively exhibited both in Europe and in the United States, including a recent participation to The Engine Room, at the Morley Gallery, London. So, before taking leave from this interesting conversation I would like to pose a question about the nature of the relation with your audience: in particular, do you consider the issue of audience reception as being a crucial component of your decision-***



***Soundscape Instrument. Italy: Toffia, 2012. Gouache and perforations on paper, 70 x 6.8 cm***

***making process in terms of what type of language for a particular context?***

With every project, be it a drawing or a more complex installation, I see myself as the one who creates the conditions for an encounter between the work and the viewer. Similar to the Master in a Tea Ceremony, I prepare the conditions for this unique meeting, but I do not have complete control over its final outcome. The actual work forms in this spatial-temporal meeting point, and it generates a different piece every time.

I don't want to have complete control over it. I want it to morph, change, grow, transmute and eventually transcend its original setup. So, to answer your question, in a way, the

audience is always a key component in the development of a project, but the language of the work is more determined by the idea I want to express. Later I find ways to free it, either through the use of: living organisms (Wisdom of the Earth, Philosopher's Stone), transforming materials (Thinking Tree, Secret Life of Things), or devising forms that allow for audience's participation through permutations (Haiku) or direct interaction (Soundscape Instrument).

***Thanks a lot for your time and for sharing your thoughts, Barbara. Finally, would you like to tell us readers something about your future projects? How do you see your work evolving?***

I'm continually searching for ways and media that would allow me to materialize my ideas.



***Soundscape Instrument. Italy: Sabina Hills, 2012. Gouache and perforations on paper, 70 x 6.8 cm***





Currently, I'm really interested in working between music and visual arts. I find a rich field of exploration in translating images into sound and vice versa. I'd like to further develop the Soundscape Instrument by going from the small music box to an Organetto di Barberia, a type of street organ that uses as score large pieces of perforated paper and would allow for a more complex audio-visual experience. Another project that has been on my worktable for a while is a series of tactile drawings – drawings that use the Braille alphabet to encode both text and visual meaning.

We're lucky to live in a world we have yet to explain, so there still is surprise and wonder, if one opens up to it. I think my work is evolving more towards these liminal translations of the

visual into other forms of perception - small experiments in meeting and discovering our Nature.

I would like close by thanking you for this inspiring conversation, and for giving me the opportunity to introduce my work to your readers.

An interview by Josh Ryder, curator  
with the collaboration of Katherine Williams

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