

INCREASING THE RANGE OF ART

TREBUCHET

DELCY MORELOS CRISTINA IGLESIAS SINTA TANTRA

ECOLOGY

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CRISTINA IGLESIAS

NOVEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY
LOS ANGELES

DELICY MORELOS

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2023

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN
PARIS

**CANNOT SEPARATE
THE AESTHETIC PLEASURE**

**OF SEEING A BUTTERFLY
AND THE SCIENTIFIC
PLEASURE OF KNOWING
WHAT IT IS.**

– VLADIMIR NABOKOV

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Sinta Tantra

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SURRO

UNDING

SINTA TANTRA: INSTALLATION AND IMMERSION



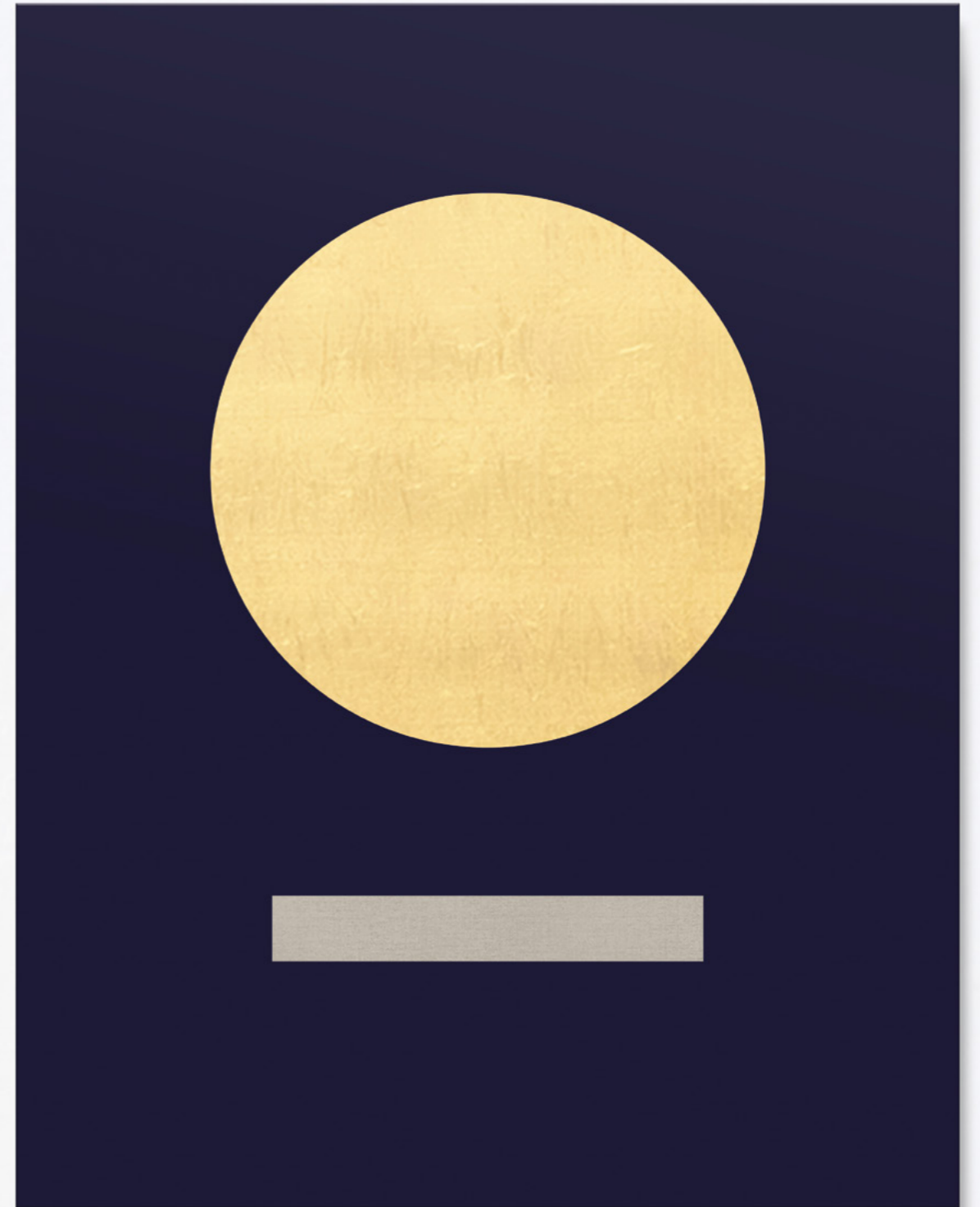
Mind the gap... Between the shown and the known, we paint our landscapes as people and people as landscapes. We read the world in a face and get to know the world as personal. Whether in art or commerce, how we impose a reality upon the world clashes with the knowledge that the world exists outside our complete control.

The conceit of art is that we can change it, and perhaps art makes the best of a bad hand, a feint that tells us that if we hold our nerve we can alter the trajectory of events. In her public and private work, artist Sinta Tantra addresses the world from both a physical and cosmological standpoint. Her public work *A Beautiful Sunset Mistaken for a Dawn* (Canary Wharf, 2012) made a place where big and small ideas intersect through a neat language of bold geometric symbols, tracing smoke trails of imagined presences and creating mysterious corners for the viewer to explore. Where do we sit in it all? With reference to her work at Canary Wharf, Sinta explains:

“It’s a balance of inserting my identity and my artwork, something that looks out into a sense of formal architectural scale and feeling and the relationship between body and something that’s framed as art. [With public art] I take into consideration a bit of the history but more about the movement and flow of how people walk around. So the bridge is quite an interesting one, because you have movements in all aspects. You have movement on the top of the bridge, which is super exciting, because you’ve got a train going through it. It presents itself to you as you come out of the tube station. You could be on the bus or you could see it when you swim in Canary Wharf.”

In working towards a concept of the ‘socioecological’, Debbie Kaspar, in her essay ‘Ecological Habitus: Toward a Better Understanding of Socioecological Relations’ (Kaspar 2009), suggests that we should consider the concept of ecology as a nexus of relations existing within a specific social, biophysical and historical context. Knowingly or not, we create and are created by the idea of where we are and the implications of that environment. For example, while different people will have different ideas of what Canary Wharf (a high-rise financial district in London) means, there is a concept of Canary Wharf that people have emphasised by building and maintaining it in a certain way. The ideas which thrive reveal a power to manifest a concept of place in an architectural and commercial context. However, it is the people in themselves who bolster these ideas (or not). Different branches of people demonstrate a variety of ironic, adjacent or resistant stances towards the concepts of power,

**A SPIRITUAL SENSE OF
PHYSICALITY MEANS THAT
YOU’RE CONTRIBUTING
SOCIALY, PHYSICALLY TO
THE WIDER COMMUNITY**





**VECTORS IN HER
WORK, TOUCHING ON
COLONIAL HISTORY AND
TROPICALISM**

capital and corporate entities that Canary Wharf, for example, is seen to epitomise. Moreover, changes in time, light, water or temperature alter the physical effect of the place on the individual, casting symbolic shadows over the grand stories written skyward.

“For research, I watched [the bridge] for 24 hours. I wanted to understand the flow of how people walked around and how the space was activated. There’s always people there because ‘Money Never Sleeps’, so there’s always people working on particular floors. And so there’s always a bit of activity. And then armies of people coming from eight to six, seven, the rush hour period. So it was interesting studying the flow of people, and you put yourself against the flow of the tide, how the time of day and how the sun rose and sunsets.

“For me it’s about understanding the concept of time when I look into a project, a space, and it’s absorbing that energy and creating something afterwards. So it goes through some filter. I don’t know how to describe it, but it’s how I base a lot of my work. I’m not interested in portraying a particular story or narrative, it’s the narrative or story you [the viewer] bring as well. With a lot of abstract work, the story that you bring into the work comes from understanding time and space in that particular location, filtered through a creative process.

I’m interested in the immersive journey the viewer is taking, where the journey starts and finishes and how I want them to navigate around the space, and creating areas which punctuate and recede. I often describe myself as a painter / public artist but actually the roots of my work come from installation. And even when I do a straightforward painting show, the importance of creating an immersive experience is actually the priority.”

A number of motifs - lines, circles and Matisse- or Miró-like organic shapes - recur in Tantra’s work. Her use of deep universal symbols creates a dreamlike atmosphere. However, the concrete nature of these shapes gives it a lucidity and strong sense of intention. When abstract work fails it feels stylistically glib, flatly contrived or clichéd, and yet there is a power that continues to call people to explore it as a vehicle for a creative vision. Tantra’s work, aware of its internal space (in her private works) or how it works with its environment (in public works), manages to encapsulate or enhance an immanence, the presence of place. But this isn’t a didactic description of place; it’s open, inhabitable, and contains anchors to pique experience, terrains of meaning to discover. One of the common shifting elements in her work is the circle:

Goddess, 2023

“No one’s actually asked me about the circle. When I started circles a few years ago it was different from what I’m thinking now. Circles now are probably more about nature and relationships to the cosmic. Not necessarily planets either, but something - well - a lot of my work is about universality.

Take gold. Throughout the ages it’s always been a fascinating material. People are drawn to it. And it’s the same with circles. Recently I was in Norway and I saw cave paintings and there was a circle-shaped thing. There’s something beyond the present that connects us, maybe ancestrally, or from generations or civilizations ago from different periods. So I love the universal, how the shape has presented itself, throughout the ages, throughout different languages from whatever time that gives connection. The people in the street might find abstract work quite difficult to comprehend. But they can read simple things; a circle, a line, even if they might not necessarily know what it represents.

When you reduce the work to a few elements (gold, circles, lines), when it is a lot more minimal or reduced, in a way you focus on the balance of things that are known. Perhaps they have even existed in different times and civilizations and centuries. And you could read into that however you want as a visual artist, or you also have things that come from the artist’s hand. I use particular shapes that come from my drawing. I love that combination of having something known and unknown because it gives a prompt for the viewer to read an abstract work.”

This idea of a totality of effect, rather than a reductionist logic of interpretation is perhaps an optimistic signpost for contemporary art. After the bombastic, publicity-hungry era of the YBAs, this meditative approach offers an answer to the question ‘why is art meaningful now?’ The psychological background to 2023 is a self-conscious society of productised social responsibility and output-oriented personal development (see mind hacks, the 4hr-work week, increase focus and avoid daydreaming). As a result, surface-level, pop-influenced art such as KAWS, Hirst and Banksy are read at least in an immediate or unreflective way. They are social footnotes to a capital culture that often rejects intangibility or nuance for column inches on shock and a price tag. They are the sugary flavours that titillate, but also heighten our hunger for more substantial fare, a land of our own amongst satisfaction and distraction, a pilgrimage to what we hope is a solidity of self.

Over the past five years questions of identity have often been conflated with an historical narrative defined by post-

**THE BRIDGE IS QUITE
AN INTERESTING ONE,
BECAUSE YOU HAVE
MOVEMENTS IN
ALL ASPECTS**

A Beautiful Sunset Mistaken For A Dawn, Canary Wharf London, 2012





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capitalist or post-colonialist contexts. Such contexts are relevant in that they allude to both 'how we got here' and 'what it means to be here', but are limited in that they often do not show a positive way forward. Tantra tacitly summons these vectors in her work, touching on colonial history and tropicalism in places, and yet the central work is to synthesise these connections with a change in perspective. Juxtaposing the day-to-day traffic of financial transactions in Canary Wharf with lunar perspectives and tidal motions links our realities forward and back. Ecologies must be considered as sites in dynamic flux. We live in active repose amongst drifting symbolic galaxies, analogous to quantum superposition where we exist in multiple states at any one time.

"[My sense of ecology] comes from my fascination [with the world] and probably developed from working in the public realm. Ideas around scale and how we could be this small - we're really *small* - but actually in our heads we feel big because I suppose there's the ego involved. If you're Balinese, you have this awareness of the universe and your ancestors. And it's that scale of going from big to small you feel it even in a city, when you're listening to podcasts on your earphones and you're thinking about this realm, but then you're activating the city. And whether it's somewhere in Bali with its religious festivals and family life, or you're in a city or alone and you're running, getting the tube, getting Ubers, whatever, this idea of the massive in a spiritual sense of physicality means that you're contributing socially, physically to the wider community that you belong to."

A socioecological perspective offers the viewer a deeper appreciation of public works that exist in a particular place, and also abstract works in general. Artworks by their nature encourage us to include our own cultural position into their appreciation. What we see and recognise in a work has a lot to do with who we are, and better works separate themselves from the lesser by revealing the patterns and dynamic relations that tie us to place and unite us.

THE ART MARKET

PROFILE: SIMON DE PURY

Artworks exist within an ecosystem of activity, collaboration and economics. The key milestones in an artwork's life; conception, execution, appreciation and sale, see it move from a private concern of the artist to the private concern of the owner. Most artworks spend little time in the public eye, which makes physical exhibitions still a quintessential art experience.

However, not many people realise that most auction houses are also open to the public and that another chance exists to see rare works before they head off into private collections. For auctioneers like Simon de Pury (b. 1951), his career has given him the opportunity to see many private works and, collaborating with buyers and sellers, he has a key understanding about how and why art moves. The traffic of masterworks from all periods is thus a seismic understanding of the greater forces at work in the art world.

It's hard to imagine a better seat to view the ongoing history of art from than de Pury's. From chairperson of Sotheby's Switzerland to working in art advisory to his extensive charity work (said to have raised several billion dollars) to his regular presence in television and film, this arch interlocutor has fostered, directed and surfed trends since the 1980s. In his first interview with *Trebuchet* we asked de Pury to reflect on what he's learnt, how to get started in collecting and what the future holds for art in the UK.

A lot has been made of London losing its central role in art. What's your take on its current situation?

London remains the third most important auction centre after New York and Hong Kong. It also is a city where the world's leading commercial galleries are all well represented. As for artists themselves it is far less important today where they are based.

For a while Berlin and then Los Angeles had attracted artists from all over the world through lower costs for adequate studio spaces. [Now,] through Instagram and TikTok, artists can draw attention to their work wherever they live and work. Seoul is currently having the greatest impact on global youth

culture in all aspects of the arts. Tokyo, which played this role in the late 1980s and 1990s is also becoming more and more vibrant again. Finally, many people wrote off Hong Kong far too quickly during the pandemic. It will not only retain its status as a leading art market centre and cultural hub, but further build and consolidate that position. The biggest cultural projects of the 21st century are being developed in Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

What drew you to Japan in the 1970s?

I have always loved how the timeless traditional Japan lived in harmony with the bustling contemporary Japan. This is even more the case now than it was in the 1970s. What was done in the islands of Naoshima is a must for any art traveller.

What's driven you to expand your activities from being an auctioneer into other new areas, such as your online platform de Pury?

We live in a world where everything changes constantly. The art market has tried to resist change quite successfully for a while. On a personal level, it is not just contemporary artistic creativity that fascinates me the most, but also trying to pre-figure how the market will evolve. If you take the market for art works valued between \$10k and \$3m, it is still being handled in an inefficient way, which results in far too high commission rates needing to be charged. For the market to reach its true potential they will need to come down substantially.

You are famously superstitious. How does that sit within your life as a rational auctioneer?

The spiritual dimension is something that we all have in ourselves but that we tend to neglect because of the demands of daily life. The true mediums and magicians are the artists that can show us a world we don't yet fully know exists.

What does inclusivity mean in an auction context?

I have always found the art world to be far more inclusive than any other segment of society. When I started working at Sotheby's in the 1970s I loved the fact that there were no barriers based on background, gender, sexual orientation,

age, religion or colour. I took it for granted until many years later when I joined the board of a financial asset management company and found it disconcerting in meetings to be seated around a table with only men with a very similar background to mine. Over the past few years, artists themselves who were confronted with many barriers to get recognition have at long last begun to experience a much more level playing field thanks to the conscious effort of cultural entities to address the injustice of the past.

How should someone buy their first piece?

You should first identify what makes you tick and excites you personally, as I don't believe you should collect with your ears but with your eyes. Within what draws you to art there will be a checklist of very rational points that you can go through to make sure that you spend your money not purely on an emotional impulse.

Three guiding principles for avoiding buyer's remorse?

Checking the physical condition, the provenance and the authenticity of an artwork are three of the, maybe twelve, rational criteria I was referring to in my answer to your previous question.

The art traveller's essential pack list?

Nothing that you need to pack. A boundless curiosity and thirst to discover new things are a prerequisite. A pair of good sneakers is essential since you will need to walk a lot.

What will happen to your art collection when the final gavel falls?

It will be dispersed so that other collectors or accumulators can experience some of the same joys I did when I acquired some of the artworks or objects I felt the need to own.

Which of your paintings still holds the most compelling fascination for you to this day?

Possibly some of those that I don't own anymore. You always yearn for what you don't have. In any case, we can't take any work with us when we go, but we are privileged to be their guardians for part of our terrestrial journey.

Next: Gary Morrisroe, *Simon de Pury*, 2023



Photo by Gary Morrisroe. Image courtesy of Simón de Pury. © Gary Morrisroe

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