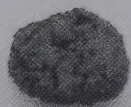


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Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs.

Albert Camus















**YVES KLEIN:
WITH THE VOID,
FULL POWERS**

HIRSHHORN / WALKER ART CENTER

**ORGANIZED BY KERRY BROUGHER AND PHILIPPE VERGNE
TEXTS BY KERRY BROUGHER, PHILIPPE VERGNE, KAIRA CABAÑAS,
KLAUS OTTMANN, AND ANDRIA HICKEY**

Published on the occasion of the exhibition Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers, organized by Kerry Brougher and Philippe Vergne for the the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and Walker Art Center.

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Washington, DC
May 20–September 12, 2010

Walker Art Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota
October 23, 2010–February 13, 2011

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PREFACE

Richard Koshalek
Director
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Olga Viso
Director
Walker Art Center

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 1954, a young and obscure artist produced one of his first and most radical works. *Yves Peintures* was a portfolio that included ten tipped-in color plates and a preface by Yves Klein's good friend Claude Pascal. The plates, each captioned with "Yves" and a city such as London or Tokyo, suggest that these are reproductions of paintings done by Klein during his travels in the early 1950s. In truth, the plates are commercially colored papers, not reproductions at all, and the works never existed. The paintings only exist as concepts in the mind of the viewer of the portfolio. Likewise, the preface, conceived by Klein rather than Pascal, is merely a series of lines with no actual text. This simulation of sentences and paragraphs was an early comment by this innovative artist on the impossibility of explaining his work, something he would struggle with throughout his career as he continued to question and expand the definition of art.

Klein's goal was no less than radically to reinvent what art could be in the postwar world. Through a diverse practice, which included painting, sculpture, performance, photography, music, architecture, and writing as well as plans for works in theater, dance, and cinema, the artist shifted the focus of art from the material object to the "immaterial sensibility"; he levitated art above the weariness induced by the Second World War, resurrecting its avant-garde tendencies, injecting a new sense of spirituality, and opening doors for much to follow in the 1960s and beyond, including Pop, conceptual art, Minimalism, monochromatic painting, perceptual experimentation, and performance. Thus, Klein is important to consider not only for his own art and times, but also as a crucial figure in the evolution of contemporary art in general. The self-proclaimed "painter of space," Klein artistically and literally leapt into the void and there discovered the full potential of his vision. As Albert Camus so memorably wrote in the visitor book to Klein's 1958 "Void" exhibition at Iris Clert's gallery, *"Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoir"* [With the void, full powers], encapsulating succinctly both the artist's agenda and his legacy.

It is this re-examination of Klein's career and legacy that is at the core of this retrospective. The exhibition is the result of a shared interest in Klein's work between us and our respective museums as well as a mutual desire to approach Klein in a new

way. Both institutions, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the Walker Art Center, have a commitment to Klein and have a major work by him in their collections. We discovered that each of us wanted to do a retrospective that not only attempted to investigate Klein as the maker of beautiful objects, but also as a thinker, a philosopher of contemporary life whose work paved the way for future generations.

Therefore, it is necessary not only to create an exhibition of his physical works, but to resurrect the artist himself. Mere words, and even to a degree the art objects themselves, cannot fully reveal the essence of Klein's aspirations. Rather, it has been our desire in this, the first American overview of his career since 1982, to revive Klein as a living entity in many ways, not merely through his paintings and sculptures, but through his studies, drawings, films, and translations of texts. In so doing, we hope to have the artist communicate directly with the viewer and reader.

Such an exhibition then, which leaps beyond conventional expectations, requires a great deal of passion and dedication from all those involved. We are grateful to the staff and Board of Trustees at both the Hirshhorn and Walker for their generous support as well as to the many individuals worldwide involved. Very special thanks are due to Richard Koshalek and Olga Viso, directors of the Hirshhorn and Walker, respectively, who have ardently believed in the importance of Klein's work, steadfastly stood behind this exhibition throughout its development, and willingly challenged the boundaries of what museums can do.

This exhibition in many ways is also a partnership with the Yves Klein Estate and Archives. We are very grateful for the generosity, humor, grace, and collaborative spirit that Rotraut Klein-Moquay and Daniel Moquay brought to this project, along with the knowledge and expertise of Philippe Siauve, Constance Perrot, and Anne Anthony at the Yves Klein Archive in Paris. Without these individuals' dedication and zeal, this ambitious undertaking could never have been realized.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals and institutions who loaned the many important objects, among them Neal Benezra, Director, and Gary Garrels, Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Alfred Pacquement, Director, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou; Glenstone; Josef Helfenstein, Director, and Franklin Sirmans, former Chief Curator, The Menil Collection; Gilbert Perle, Conservateur en chef, Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice; Yuko Hasegawa, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Dr. Magdalena Broska, Director, Adolf-Luther-Stiftung, Krefeld; Corice Arman, The Armand P. Arman Revocable Trust; HAP Collection; Robert Mnuchin and Dominique Lévy of L&M Arts, LLC; and Krystyna Gmurzynska, Director, Galerie Gmurzynska; Dr. Martin Hentschel, Director, Kunstmuseen Krefeld; and Sr. M. Natalina Todeschini, Monastery of Saint Rita, Cascia, Italy; and numerous private collections. Our thanks also to others who

played a key role in facilitating specific loans, including Ted Bonin of Alexander and Bonin Gallery; Rita Venturelli and Michele Giacalone of the Italian Cultural Institute in Washington, DC; and Tommaso Astarita, Professor, Georgetown University.

To our catalogue contributors we express sincere gratitude. Noted Klein scholar Klaus Ottmann not only explores Klein's writings and conceptual project with astute clarity in his essay, but also obligingly allowed us to reprint numerous translations of Klein's writings and graciously translated additional texts for this catalogue as well as exhibition materials. Kaira Cabañas, Director of MA in Modern Art/Critical and Curatorial Studies, Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, offers an incisive investigation of Klein's film works that significantly expands our understanding.

Like the exhibition itself, this catalogue has been a unique partnership bringing together the talents of staff at both institutions. The Hirshhorn's Director of Curatorial Administration and Publications, Deborah Horowitz, painstakingly and insightfully shaped this volume, not only playing a pivotal role in the development of the catalogue but in every facet of this exhibition. The Walker's Design Department, including Director Andrew Blauvelt and Senior Designers Dante Carlos and Emmet Byrne, employed their extraordinary design abilities to create a truly distinctive publication that captures the spirit of both the exhibition and the artist. The Walker's Publications Director, Lisa Middag, ably guided the production process from its inception to publication and ensured the excellence and timeliness of the final product. The Hirshhorn's Art Publications Assistant, Caitlin Woolsey, exercised her keen attention to detail and editorial skill throughout in invaluable ways. We are also particularly grateful to the Hirshhorn's Exhibition Coordinator Lawrence Hyman for going beyond his usual deft perseverance managing exhibition planning and logistics to offer essential assistance with finalizing checklist details.

It would be impossible to recognize by name every member of the truly exceptional staffs at both museums who have made essential contributions to this project, but we would like to recognize the ingenuity and dedication of all. In particular, at the Hirshhorn, we want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of Al Masino, John Klink, Scott Larson, and the entire exhibits staff for their inventiveness and problem-solving abilities in installing this varied and nuanced exhibition; Melissa Front and Barbara Freund for their skillful handling of registrarial issues; Bob Allen, Beth Skirkanich, and Emily Sloat-Shaw for their creative designs for exhibition materials; Milena Kalinovska, Ryan Hill, Kevin Hull, and Kristy Maruca for their innovative approach to the associated events, lectures, and talks that offer the public a range of ways to explore the exhibitions; Susan Lake, Gwynne Ryan, and the entire conservation staff for ensuring the condition of these works; Gabriel Riera, Erin Baysden, Jennifer Rossi, and Jenny Leehey for their public relations efforts; Jennifer Barrett, Charlotte Mikk, Julie Briggs, and Julia Mullenger for their

ingenuity in fundraising; Rich Reichley and April Martin for overseeing all administrative, budget, and contract details; Jessica Beck, Karen Perry, Dawn Uscher, and Midori Yamamura for assistance with research, administrative details, and travel arrangements. We are also grateful to Associate Curator Kelly Gordon and New Media Specialist Jeff Martin for their skill with integrating archival films into the exhibition. We would also like to acknowledge Alyssa Reiner, Smithsonian Office of Contracting, and Katherine Tkac, Smithsonian Office of Risk Management, for the many hours they devoted to making this exhibition come to pass. And special thanks to trustee Dan Sallick for his special efforts on behalf of the exhibition.

At the Walker, special thanks go to Chief Curator Darsie Alexander, who offered critical insight; Registrar Gwen Bitz, who expertly orchestrated an extremely complicated insurance, shipping, and installation process; Visual Arts Administrator Lynn Dierks, who adroitly handled the myriad details. We are very grateful to former Curatorial Fellow Andria Hickey, who shepherded the project with effectual dedication through numerous transitions and made a valuable contribution to the catalogue. We would also like to express our thanks to Curatorial Assistant Eric Crosby for his diligence and extraordinary attentiveness, which were of great assistance for both the catalogue and exhibition.

Additionally, Curators Peter Eleey, Betsy Carpenter, and Siri Engberg provided essential feedback and enthusiasm, and Performing Arts Senior Curator Philip Bither and Film/Video Curator Sheryl Mousley and their staffs offered unwavering assistance. Our deep appreciation goes out to the Walker's Program Services staff, including Director Cameron Zebrun and Exhibition Technicians Kirk McCall, Doc Czypinski, Peter Murphy, Phil Docken, Bob Brown, and David Dick, who channeled their expertise to deal with swathes of pigment, forests of sponges, and intangible voids. Sarah Schultz, Director of Education and Community Programs, as well as Sarah Peters, Associate Director of Public and Interpretive Programs, and their colleagues provided perceptive counsel as we discussed the most effective ways to share Yves Klein's voice with visitors. Additionally, we would like to express our appreciation to Robin Dowden, Director of New Media Initiatives, and her talented staff, who ensured that Klein's work will be accessible beyond the physical space of the museum's galleries; Ryan French, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, and the other members of his department for enthusiastically striving to expand the visibility of the exhibition and related programs in the Twin Cities; Christopher Stevens, Chief of Finance and Development, and Marla Stack, Director of Special Projects Fundraising, and their colleagues for their endeavors to ensure the financial viability of this exhibition in the midst of economic uncertainty; Mary Polta, Chief Financial Officer, for her backing on fiscal issues; Phillip Bahar, Chief of Operations and Administration for his unflagging strategic efforts;

and Photographers Cameron Wittig and Gene Pittman; Archivist Jill Vuchetich, former Assistant Archivist Daniel Smith, and Librarian Rosemary Furtak for their unswerving assistance with research.

We'd also like to express our sincerest appreciation to those who have lent their support in less direct but equally essential ways, including Nora Halpern and Sylvia Chivaratanond, for their unwavering support and patience during the development and realization of this exhibition.

Finally, we join Richard Koshalek and Olga Viso in recognizing the generosity of our sponsors, without whom this exhibition would not have been possible. For providing critical early support for research travel, advice, and help in building relationships we are thankful to Ambassador Pierre Vimont and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States/FACE, especially Roland Celette, Armelle Pradalier, and Blanche Tannery. We are incredibly grateful to honorary Walker trustee Bruce Atwater and his wife Martha and honorary Walker trustee Judy Dayton for their early and enthusiastic support for this project. To Joel Wachs, Pamela Clapp, and the entire Board of Trustees at the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, we give our heartfelt thanks for their generous underwriting of our efforts to share Yves Klein's inventive work with audiences in the United States. We are also deeply grateful to Hirshhorn trustee Constance R. Caplan and Lewis and Barbara Shrensky for generously supporting the exhibition and tour. Crucial funding for the production of this catalogue was provided by Sotheby's, and we want to especially thank Lisa Dennison and Nina Del Rio for their understanding of the importance of this publication. Additional support for the catalogue was provided by L&M Arts in New York, representing the Estate of Yves Klein, and we are grateful to Dominique Lévy and Robert Mnuchin for their key assistance. We also want to thank Heather James Fine Art and James Carona for kindly supporting the catalogue. For underwriting the exhibition travel needs, we want to acknowledge Delta Air Lines as the official airline partner and thank Walker trustee Ben Hirst for providing this significant sponsorship. For their major support of the Hirshhorn Museum's presentation of the exhibition, we are extremely grateful to Glenstone and Steven and Lisa Tananbaum. For their generosity in making the Walker's presentation possible, we are truly thankful to Walker trustee Pat Denzer and his wife Lisa, Walker trustee Nadine McGuire and her husband Bill, and Walker trustee Donna Pohlada and her husband Jim. We also want to gratefully acknowledge Walker trustee John Taft and Martha Baumbach of RBC Wealth Management for sponsoring the Walker's presentation of the exhibition and special programming at the Hirshhorn.

Kerry Brougher
Deputy Director and Chief Curator
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Philippe Vergne
Director
Dia Art Foundation

ART IS MEANT TO DISTURB, SCIENCE REASSURES. —GEORGES BRAQUE

Yves Klein's oeuvre, even though very simple and straightforward, remains subject to various interpretations. It is a work founded on the nature of sensibility; it is direct, spontaneous, based on the notions of truth and vision, a mission of placing art at the center of life—a domain which artists, creators, poets access easily.

To try to understand this, or try to have the proof of it...is the enemy of art itself. Yves Klein always received recognition from his peers, "his brotherhood of sensibility." I wish for the visitors of this exhibition to take a moment to abandon themselves in the spirit of the work, to listen to that interior song which derives from it, to let it go, immersing themselves in the free flowing blue pigment.

Picasso used to say: "It is not because I do not speak English, that English does not exist." The language of sensibility exists; it is here in front of you. Let it submerge you. It is a message of peace, of joy, of liberty; it is a song of glory.

I am filled with great joy to be able to return to Washington nearly fifty years after our first visit. I wish to thank Richard Koshalek, Olga Viso, Kerry Brougher, Philippe Vergne, and the entire staff at both the Hirshhorn and the Walker who worked so hard and were so dedicated to bringing this project to a happy ending.

Rotraut Klein-Moquay

THE IMAGINATION IS THE VEHICLE
OF SENSIBILITY. TRANSPORTED
BY THE IMAGINATION, WE ATTAIN LIFE,
LIFE ITSELF, WHICH IS ABSOLUTE ART.
—YVES KLEIN





INVOLUNTARY
PAINTING

KERRY BROUCHER

I AM NOT AN ABSTRACT PAINTER. —YVES KLEIN¹

AM I A PAINTER? ALL RIGHT THEN, I'M A PAINTER. —YVES KLEIN²

MY FUNDAMENTAL SELF IS AT WAR WITH MY MULTIPLE PSYCHOLOGICAL
PERSONALITIES. —YVES KLEIN³

Pages 16–18

Yves Klein making Fire Paintings
with models at Centre d'Essais
du Gaz de France testing center
in Saint-Denis, February 1961

Figure 1

Yves Klein

Le ciel au-dessus de Nice
[The Sky Above Nice],
published in *ZERO*, 1961



1

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

The quest for a new kind of painting began, inconspicuously enough, on a rocky beach in Nice in the summer of 1947. The first step on this new journey, which would ultimately involve travels through space and time, leaps into the void, and the illumination of matter, involved no brushes, pigment, or support—only the imagination.

Three bold young men lounging on the beach, two of whom would become major artists and two of whom would die long before their time, like mythic conquerors or Allied generals, playfully divided up the world. Armand Pierre Fernandez (known as Arman) claimed the animal realm; their friend, Claude Pascal, all plant life; and the third man, the one who would become a leader for the others and a scout in the territory of the immaterial, took the mineral terrain, the kingdom where alchemy was possible. This third young man, Yves Klein, when he stared up into the azure haze above Nice, imagined levitating upward like a balloon, carried so high that he was able to sign his name on the opposite side of the sky before falling back to earth. According to Arman, Klein then proclaimed “the blue sky is my first artwork” (figure 1).⁴

Later that same year, Klein, who had been studying the mystical society of Rosicrucianism, pasted onto the cover of one of the workbooks that he regularly received from a fellowship in Oceanside, California, a simple blue disk. “This,” he declared to Arman, “is what the paintings of the future will look like.”⁵ At the tender age of twenty, Klein had embarked on his great “Monochrome Adventure,”⁶ which would ultimately lead to his signature blue monochromes, optical works that, perhaps more than any painting before, rejected any kind of representational reading or material sensibility and pointed the direction toward an immense “Blue Revolution.”⁷

As his quest was bound up in the difficulties and complexities of art’s emergence from the postwar quagmire, it took Klein seven years more to understand and embrace fully the role he seemed to have been born for, that of artist as magician and explorer. Being a mere painter was never going to be enough for Klein; his desire was to fly above what had gone before, to leap over the ruins of war, to reinvent art as a positive activity with a renewed social and spiritual underpinning, and to create an expanded and expansive form of art-making. From the start, he was in a tug of war between art’s past and future, between being a

producer of objects in order to establish that he was indeed an artist and being a kind of artist-sorcerer with an act requiring no props. To be considered an artist, one had to paint; but to dematerialize art, to make it part of a grand adventure that redefined the very reason for art's existence, one had not to paint.⁸ In a sense, Klein was forever levitating in the bright hazy blue air, caught between the material world below and the immaterial above, forever signing paintings that would remain invisible to the rest of us.

Both the act of painting and the physical object were problems for Klein. He felt early in his career that "paintings, of whatever kind, abstract or representational, have...the effect of the bars on a prison window."⁹ Throughout his career, he was constantly having to explain that despite the material existence of the pigment on the canvas, his creations were not paintings in the traditional sense, but were rather "beyond what is visible," that they were not a continuation of the dialogue of abstract painting at all but were attempts to see into the "absolute."¹⁰ As Pierre Restany, critic and champion of the *Nouveaux Réalistes* [New Realists], with whom Klein would become associated, stated, the artist "didn't paint to paint, but to reveal his truth."¹¹ Klein's paintings were not static physical objects, but vehicles to move the viewer to another state, a place "where color becomes full and pure sensibility."¹² And painting was a means for transporting Klein himself into the air and beyond the problems of the medium in a destroyed and devastated landscape. The many flights he made convinced him that art could change the world; upon his occasional returns to earth, he brought with him new concepts for nothing less than the "the total freedom of mind and body."¹³

PAINTING AFTER THE RAIN

Klein's early investigations into the monochrome come at a critical moment in European art history. Artists in the immediate postwar period were in a rather schizophrenic state. Many were still in exile, and the edgy avant-garde tradition formally spearheaded by Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaists as well as the early Surrealists was depleted and impotent. How could avant-garde audaciousness succeed when the destructive forces of the Holocaust and the atom bomb overwhelmed any attempts at shocking the viewer or undercutting expectations? Dissipated and divided, the avant-garde returned to the underground. Duchamp began work privately in 1946 on *Étant Donnés* [Given], a piece that would not be fully shown until 1969,¹⁴ while Max Ernst labored on his summation of the state of Western humanity, *Europe After the Rain II* (figure 2), in 1942, finishing his last major work only after arriving in America. Following Sartre's 1946 text "Existentialism and Humanism," many artists returned to the human figure, their anxious, impudent early work giving way to a dark psychological angst that needed a more representational approach. Giacometti, for example, whose works of the 1920s and 1930s had, as Rosalind Krauss observed, a "violent and indefinable emotion doubtless having some relation with unconscious sexual desires,"¹⁵ shifted to the body and went vertical with his emaciated, corpse-like figures. These forms appear, like European art itself, to be fading in the wake of the war, and, as artistic gestures, appear to shrink from the overwhelming memory of loss and the hopelessness of survival in the atomic age. European abstraction, which had been borne out of blazing mystical concepts of spirituality, synaesthesia, and a desire for utopianism, transitioned from such metaphysical concerns to a more inward, psychological region. Wassily Kandinsky's and František Kupka's colorful, overt compositions created at the inception of a modern abstract art that unashamedly investigated transcendence through visual music gave way to the darker concerns of such *art informel* artists as Wols (Wolfgang Schülz), with his compact psychodramas, and

Jean Fautrier (figure 3) and Jean Dubuffet, whose chalky, encrusted bodies appear as if painted from charred flesh itself. Unlike the Americans, who were not living directly in the war's wake and who would soon be experimenting with horizontality, flatness, gesture, and base materialism,¹⁶ the Europeans were in desperate need of a fearless swashbuckler, an audacious *provocateur* who could lead art out of the all-too tangible devastation and overtly earthbound condition and back into the metaphysical realm, one beyond even Kandinsky's dreams.



2



3

Klein grew up experiencing the effects of the war (he was sent by his parents to the village of Milhars during the liberation of Paris)¹⁷ and came of age in the immediate postwar era. His parents, Fred Klein and Marie Raymond, were both painters, and despite being shuffled back and forth between them in Paris and his Aunt Rose Raymond in Nice, he clearly experienced the art community first-hand. Robert Fleck has explored Klein's relationship with his parents, particularly his mother, who had considerable success as a painter, and sees in Klein's work a rejection of his mother's congealing of line and color in favor of pure color.¹⁸

However, Klein's "Monochrome Adventure" cannot be explained only through the psychology of family relations. Nor was it a simple rejection of the contemporary *art informel* practices of the immediate postwar period. Rather, Klein's concept of the monochrome is no doubt a means of incorporating his parents' reliance on vivid color into a system that simultaneously embraced their work and

Figure 2

Max Ernst
Europe After the Rain II,
1940-42
Oil on canvas
21 1/16 x 58 3/16 in.
(54.9 x 147.8 cm)
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum
of Art, Hartford, Connecticut.
The Ella Gallup Sumner and
Mary Catlin Sumner Collection
Fund (1942.281)
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADACP,
Paris. Photo © Wadsworth
Atheneum Museum of Art/
Art Resource, NY

Figure 3

Jean Fautrier
Dépouille, 1945
Mixed media on paper on linen
45 x 57 in. (114.3 x 144.8 cm)
The Museum of Contemporary
Art, Los Angeles
The Panza Collection
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADACP, Paris

yet veered away from the painting of his time. His desire seems to have been no less than the reestablishment of art's metaphysical foundations and—as if bent on creating a destructive force as powerful as the war and the atomic bomb—dismantling, even eradicating the notion that art had to be a material object separate from human experience.

Around 1950, while on a trip to Ireland with Claude Pascal, Klein tried his hand at painting in the manner of his mother and father—creating semi-representational landscapes, often with horses and birds (figure 4). These small watercolors on paper were realized in striking pure blues, reds, and yellows, colors similar to the blue, rose, and gold Klein would later choose for his monochromes. Although akin to his father's work (figure 5), even among these early pieces there is evidence of Klein's desire to free himself from shape and line. The horses and birds are depicted by quick, almost calligraphic strokes of the brush, and the animals are nearly always portrayed as rearing up or even flying. Employed as a horse keeper at the time, Klein seems to identify with the animals—with the power of the horses, their speed, and their ability to become almost airborne and with the birds' capacity to soar through the sky. There is a longing for freedom in these early pieces that would fully reveal itself in his later work as well as an embrace of color as a means of undermining the representational aspects of painting.



6

Klein seldom referenced other painters, but one notable exception was Eugène Delacroix (figure 6), who Klein adopted as his personal champion, a knight of colors to do battle against Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres' insistence on line, a tradition Klein felt was still being perpetuated by most postwar work and holding it back.¹⁹ Klein's decision to elevate color over line is manifest in his 1954 storyboard for a film titled *La Guerre (de la ligne et de la couleur) ou (vers la proposition monochrome)* [The War (of line and color) or (toward a monochrome proposition)] and in two small works done the same year. One of these depicts a stage, framed by a drawn curtain, with what appear to be three monochromatic rectangles, placed as if characters in some play about art (pages 76–77). In the other, Klein has narrowed the players to one large red rectangle, a single character hovering behind the proscenium arch and framed majestically by the stage curtains. Perhaps unconsciously, Klein directly addressed the problem of painting after the war and proffered a solution. If representational painting was trapped by postwar existentialism, then the way out of this gray predicament was to free painting from all representation, even beyond his mother's abstract paintings, with their cubist "depictions" of circles, triangles, and lines (figure 7). In Klein's watercolors, he literally pulls the curtain back on the art of the future with the monochrome at center stage. Simultaneously, he seems to suggest that painting can no longer exist as a static object, but must be a kind of performance, a dramatic device that interacts with the audience. Painting takes on an anthropomorphic sensibility, becoming a living entity that transcends its inert history.

It is a dramatic gesture by such a young artist. In their own quiet way, the watercolors recall such dramatic visual music performances earlier in the century as the 1915 American premier of Alexander Scriabin's *Prométhée, Le poème du feu* [Prometheus, a poem of fire], 1908–10, or Matiushin's *The Birth of Light, Color, and Volume*, performed in 1922, both of which featured color and light in theatrical performance.²⁰ These little-known but important watercolors foreshadow Klein's later attempts at blurring the lines between painting, performance, and installation and demonstrate that he was already redefining painting as something beyond objecthood.

Later in his life, Klein wrote about this period:

In 1946 I was painting or drawing either under the influence of my father... or...my mother, an abstract painter of compositions of form and color. At the



4

Figure 4
Yves Klein
Untitled Drawing, 1950
Watercolor on paper
9 ½ x 9 ½ in. (25 x 25 cm)

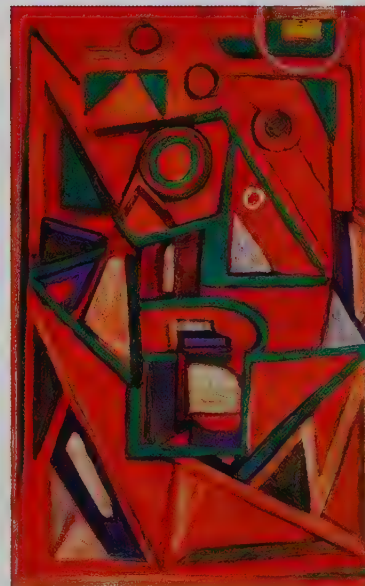


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Figure 5
Fred Klein
Untitled, 1946
Oil on canvas
22 ½ x 18 ½ in. (58 x 48 cm)
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Figure 6
Eugène Delacroix
Liberty Leading the People,
1830
Oil on canvas
102 2/5 x 128 in.
(260 x 325 cm)
Louvre, Paris
© The Bridgeman Art Library

Figure 7
Marie Raymond
Fond rouge, 1946
Oil on canvas
36 x 25 ½ in. (91.5 x 64.7 cm)
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris



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same time, "COLOR," the sensuous pure space, winked an eye at me irregularly, yet with stubborn persistence. This sense of the complete freedom of sensuous pure space exerted upon me such a power of attraction that I painted monochrome surfaces to see, with my own eyes to SEE, what was visible in the absolute. I would not consider at the time these attempts as having pictorial potential, until the day, around one year later, when I said to myself, "Why not." The "WHY NOT" in the life of a man is what decides everything, it is destiny. It is the sign that conveys to the inexperienced artist that the archetype of a new state of things is ready, that it has ripened, that it can be brought forth into the world.²¹

Well, why not—why could not a single color be pictorial? This pivotal question was at the heart of Klein's ambivalence about painting, which was itself becoming the life force behind his emergence as an artist. The very dichotomy of wanting to paint and yet not wanting to paint would be the dialectic that would produce Klein's fully formed art.

THE MONOCHROME ADVENTURE

This kind of painting-not painting was extended in 1954 in two books Klein published financed by his Aunt Rose: Yves Peintures [Yves Paintings] (pages 84–87) and Haguenaault Peintures. Each book contained a preface consisting solely of ruled lines, rather than text, as if Klein himself were still unable to articulate what he was trying to achieve; or, perhaps, implying that by not saying what the works were about, he was leaving it to the viewers to decide for themselves, thereby initiating a persistently essential element of his work: the need for the viewer to act as a participant in order to complete the work. Each book has ten color plates "depicting" monochromes of various hues and signed "Yves" in the lower right corner, with notations indicating that they were, at least in theory, created by the artist in various cities around the world in the early 1950s. Both Thomas McEvilley and Nan Rosenthal have noted that it is highly unlikely that such paintings ever existed and that these plates are not reproductions at all, but instead are an example of Klein the "trickster."²² Throughout his career, there is much evidence of Klein's inclination to fool the spectator; as a boy, he was a fan of Mandrake the Magician. Like a magician's, Klein's "deception" was always integral to the performance overall, a part of the act, as it were, and, as such, part of the meaning of the work. If there were not twenty early monochromes done in cities around the world, then, like a magic show, there is pleasure in the illusion of the existence of these works. The fun is in the suspension of disbelief, in not giving in to the temptation to doubt the evidence of the eye.

But even if these works only existed as "reproductions," it is clear that Klein had been toying with the concept of the monochrome for some time. Claude Pascal recalled that during a trip to London in 1949, Klein made a series of small pastel monochromes that he installed in their room and invited friends to see.²³ Despite the fact that the people who saw the works scoffed at them and Klein himself declared that he disliked painting (Pascal refers to the reluctant artist as "an involuntary painter"²⁴), he was nevertheless seriously invested in creating these pure color forms.

It is not surprising that what might be considered Klein's first real exhibition occurred in 1955 in a judo school he ran for a short time on the Boulevard de Clichy in Montmartre. A dedicated practitioner of judo who had studied in Japan and in 1954 published an instruction book entitled Les Fondements du Judo [The Foundations of Judo], Klein found linkages between his role as judoka and that as artist:

"Judo has helped me to understand that pictorial space is, above all, the product of spiritual exercises. Judo is, in fact, the discovery of the human body in a spiritual space."²⁵ He reportedly hung several large monochromatic works in the school in various colors—blue, white, and pink—which he used as meditation devices.



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A mere month later, Klein had an exhibition of monochrome paintings at the Club des Solitaires in Paris. The show was not seen by many nor did it receive much attention, but it was viewed by a young critic, Pierre Restany, who immediately recognized much of what Klein was trying to accomplish and who would eventually form a "partnership" with the artist to promote this new kind of art (figure 8). As observed by Thomas McEvilley, this partnership was mutually beneficial.²⁶ For Restany, Klein was the vehicle to art world notoriety; he was able to champion this new approach to art, to take a position in the art community, and argue for it. For Klein, who, despite a number of writings, was never able to articulate thoroughly what he was trying to accomplish, Restany became "the educated voice which he himself lacked but deeply desired. When words were required, Klein interposed Restany between himself and the world...."²⁷ Furthermore, it became Restany's job to try and explain why the artist's paintings were not paintings in the traditional sense.

It was at this point, possibly because of the conviction and support of Restany, that Klein seems to have adopted fully the notion of becoming a professional artist. Shortly after the Club des Solitaires exhibition, Klein asked Restany for his help in getting another gallery show, and it was not long before Klein's monochromes appeared at the Galerie Colette Allendy in an exhibition titled *Yves Klein: Propositions monochromes* [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions].²⁸ Restany wrote the preface to the exhibition catalogue and asserted that Klein's work rejected the then prevalent forms of *art informel*, veering away from the angst, existentialism, and humanism of postwar painting toward something completely different.²⁹ In this text, Restany began his explications about painting as something greater than painting by comparing Klein's work to Kasimir Malevich's Suprematist *Black Square*, c. 1923 (figure 9):

But here there is precisely neither black square nor white background, and we are at the heart of the problem. The aggressiveness of these various color propositions projecting forth from the walls is only apparent. The artist here

Figure 8
Yves Klein with Pierre Restany
at the performance of
*Anthropométries de l'époque
bleue* [Anthropometries of
the Blue Epoch], Galerie
internationale d'art
contemporain, Paris, March
1960

Figure 9
Kasimir Malevich
Black Square, c. 1923
Oil on canvas
41 7/10 x 41 7/10 in.
(106 x 106 cm)
State Russian Museum,
Saint Petersburg
Photo © Erich Lessing/Art
Resource, NY



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requests of the spectator this intense and fundamental moment of truth, without which all poetry would be incommunicable.... One cannot suspect him of any attempt at wall decoration. The eye of the reader, so terribly contaminated by the external object, having all too recently escaped the tyranny of representation, will seek in vain the unstable and elementary vibration, the sign by which he is accustomed to recognize life, the essence and goal of all creation—as though life were nothing but movement. He is finally obliged to seize the universal without the help of gesture or the written line, and so I pose this question: where, and to what degree of tangible clarity, is the spiritual then situated in art? Has the omniscient dialectic turned us into mechanisms of thought, incapable of all sincere accommodation? In the presence of these phenomena of pure contemplation, the answer will be given to you by the few men of good will who still survive.³⁰

Although Klein was most certainly grateful for Restany's support and poetic articulation of his endeavors as an artist, he was less comfortable with the critics's linkage of the monochromes to Malevich. The problem was that for Malevich painting was still about an image, even if that image was merely a black or red square on a white ground. Klein, on the other hand, could "no longer approve of a 'readable' painting.... [His eyes were] made not to read a painting, but, rather, to see it. Painting is COLOR, and Van Gogh proclaims, 'I long to be freed from I know not what horrible cage.'"³¹

For Klein, the cage was painting itself and its reliance on representation and earthly concerns, elements he believed abstraction merely perpetuated rather than transcended. Because of this limitation, he viewed himself as closer to Van Gogh, despite the artist's depictions of things, because of his overt reliance on the power of color. This complex attack on abstraction would be a driving force behind Klein's work hereafter, and it proved not only a difficult concept to practice in painting, but also to articulate in words. Klein instead chose a different method to communicate his ideas—drawings or diagrams that illustrate his position relative to Malevich (pages 103–05). In a 1958 sketch, Klein represents Malevich in the act of painting; he works at an easel studying his subject matter: one of Klein's monochromes. Thus Malevich's canvas contains the painted image of the monochrome, and he cannot get beyond making an illustration, even if that picture appears to be abstract.

Klein's rejection of Restany's equation with Malevich may have been somewhat unfair. Like Klein, Malevich was attempting something daring, and while it is minimal in design and a positive image on a negative white ground, it could be argued that Malevich's black Suprematist square, which he repainted several times (like Klein with his monochrome series), was not meant to be seen as a singular painting but as part of system of signs that could be copied in a kind of continuum, and that, as Ad Reinhardt would later note in relation to his own black paintings, was a "sign which refuses to signify."³² Like Reinhardt, Klein was seeking a form of painting that was "alchemical, and beyond time. It represents nothing."³³ In fact, the first use of the black rectangle was in the Futurist opera *Victory over the Sun*, 1913, as a scenic design element perhaps not dissimilar from Klein's own painted stage with curtain drawn to reveal a red rectangle.³⁴ Both Malevich and Klein seem to have had as a starting point the theatrical potential of the art object and its use outside of the conventional territory of visual art. In addition, Malevich shared Klein's interests in the spiritual; he was an adherent of P. D. Ouspensky's beliefs in a "fourth dimension" and was familiar with other esoteric ideas such as Theosophy (which also deeply influenced Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian), yoga, Buddhism, and even the occult.³⁵ Like Klein, who was fascinated with overcoming the effects of gravity and who would later create plans for a pneumatic rocket powered by air

(pages 262–63), Malevich was a proponent of flight and had a strong interest in the cosmos.

Whatever the case, it is clear that by 1956 Klein was ready to embrace not merely the notion of being an artist, but also an instigator of a revolution. That same year, he became a Knight of the Order of Saint Sebastian, an assembly that traced its roots back to archers in the time of Charlemagne. This membership reignited a boyhood fascination with costumes and underscored his interests in ritual and esoteric teachings that had first found an outlet in his interest in Rosicrucianism. Now, as a conquering hero, it was time for a true revolution. During 1956, Klein attempted to attack the problem of monochromatic work. As the juxtaposition of various colors and shapes lent paintings a decorative aspect when displayed together on the gallery wall, he began boldly to narrow the monochrome down to one color—blue. Max Ernst’s rain, although continuing to fall on Europe, was about to turn into a blue rain, a rain that would wipe clean all “exterior contamination” and would transform painting into “pure sensibility.”³⁶

THE BLUE ROSE

On January 2, 1957, Restany “presented” an exhibition of Klein’s work at the Galleria Apollinaire in Milan (figure 10). Called Yves Klein: Proposte Monochrome, Epoca Blu [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions, Blue Epoch], the title no doubt had certain ironic overtones toward Picasso. Eleven unframed wood panels, all approximately the same size, were displayed together.³⁷ Each piece was covered, including the sides, with a textured surface, created by rolled-on pigment. The paintings were not hung directly on the wall but were supported on poles that allowed them to float just in front of it. All eleven paintings were an intense, luminous, yet “dark ultramarine” that Klein would later designate as International Klein Blue or IKB. (A red painting was also included in the show but was hung in a separate room.) Strangely, although these pieces were almost identical, each had a different price.

Restany, clearly influenced by the artist’s critiques of his last essay, now warned the public and critics in his catalogue essay not to compare these pieces to the work of Malevich but to consider each work separately and experience the “complete autonomy of the color.” Restany now claimed the work was closer to Giotto than to the originators of abstraction:³⁸

...Blue dominates, reigns, lives. It is the Blue-King of the most definitive of surmounted frontiers, the Blue of the frescoes of Assisi. This full void, this nothing which encloses Everything Possible, this supernatural asthenic silence of color which finally, beyond anecdote and formal pretext, makes the formal grandeur of a Giotto.³⁹

In the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, Giotto depicted the life of the patron saint of animals in a series of panels dominated by the color blue, in which architecture and figures are set off against a flat, monochromatic sky, with angels, horses, and devils occasionally floating in the flat cobalt field. The blue, which seems almost a cutout pattern, is often complemented by red and gold, two colors, as already noted, that would also play a major role in Klein’s work. For example, in Saint Francis Giving His Cloak to a Poor Man, 1298 (figure 11), the blue sky dominates the landscape and leads the eye to Saint Francis, his blue robe forming the first “panel” of a “triptych” completed by the gold cloak and red gown of the poor man. This arrangement would be similar to that created by Klein in 1960 when he produced a large-scale triptych consisting of blue, gold, and pink panels or his 1961 small votive offering to Saint Rita, given to her shrine in Cascia, Italy, that consisted of sections of rose and blue powdered pigment and gold leaf, all encased in a plexi-glass box (page 217).

Figure 10
Exhibition Yves Klein: Proposte Monochrome, Epoca Blu [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions, Blue Epoch] at Galleria Apollinaire, Milan, January 2, 1957



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Figure 11
 Giotto di Bondone
 Saint Francis Giving His Cloak
 to a Poor Man, 1298
 Mural
 106 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 90 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.
 (270 x 230 cm)
 Upper Church, San Francesco,
 Assisi, Italy
 Photo © Scala/Art Resource,
 NY



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Giotto's use of monochromatic planes of bright blue coupled with a world below depicted more three-dimensionally with shadow and substance, creates a strange dichotomy, a clash of spiritual signs—a deep blue nothingness, to use Gaston Bachelard's phrase—set against the fragile beginnings of one-point perspective and a fictional arena where a dramatic reality could be played out. This intriguing hybrid form, caught between the Gothic and the Renaissance, between the abstract and the naturalistic, parallels Klein's own quest to build a bridge, a transportation device, in fact, that could fly the viewer from this world to the immaterial.

Despite this affinity between Klein's work and that of the Italian master and Restany's attempts to position Klein within the safe house of Giotto's quasi-representational world, critics attacked the Apollinaire show, asserting, for example, that it "is not even impudent, it is merely comical."⁴⁰ One critic, Dino Buzzati, however, took the show more seriously, writing a piece titled "Blu, Blu, Blu," that, as Restany later observed, established Klein's notoriety, which would only grow from this moment forward.⁴¹ As Buzzati's title encapsulates, the Galleria Apollinaire exhibition introduced Klein's "Blue Period" and his aim of inciting a "Blue Revolution" that would lead to nothing less than the transformation "of modes of thought and action...."⁴² The dominant energy behind this revolution found its source in the notion of color as a means of defining the immaterial. With the Galleria Apollinaire show, Klein reconfirmed his rejection of line for color. Not only was each panel

the same blue color, but the color was applied by a roller, eschewing any need for drawing or mark-making with a brush.

Clearly some of Klein's interest in color arose out of his parents' painting, itself dominated by vivid color schemes, as well as his interest in Delacroix's writings; however, his fascination with Rosicrucianism certainly also played a role in his adoption of color as the key component in his art as well as his interest in painting as a means of achieving immaterial sensibility. Klein had become interested in Rosicrucianism in 1947, the same year he signed the sky. It should be clarified that Klein was familiar with a modern version of Rosicrucianism founded by Max Heindel in Seattle in 1909 as the Rosicrucian Fellowship, a group that, like a number of others in the early twentieth century, grew out of the original esoteric Rosicrucian Doctrines that have their origin in Christian Rosencreutz, Knight of the Golden Stone, and which may date back as early as the sixteenth century.⁴³ Indeed, the rose-cross is one of the symbols of Rosicrucianism, a combination of Christian faith and passion. Klein studied Heindel's The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception and accompanying workbooks for about five years. As Thomas McEvilley and Klaus Ottmann have noted, several Rosicrucian concepts became central in Klein's own evolving philosophy. For Rosicrucians, there is no such thing as empty space; all space is filled with "*Spirit*" and matter is simply crystallized, inert spirit, the negative side of spirit.⁴⁴ Heindel wrote of the end of the age of matter and the beginning of an age of open space, a time when spirit will exist free of form.⁴⁵ When the new age occurs, we will have the ability to levitate through mental activity. An emphasis is also placed on science, paralleling a series of art movements in the 1950s such as *Arte Nucleare* (Klein would sign their manifesto in 1957),⁴⁶ which also focused on the intersections of art, science, and technology. According to Heindel, science would become an extension of religion.

Colors were also essential to Heindel, particularly the primaries red, yellow, and blue—akin to Klein's rose, gold, and blue. These three colors "are God and make up the true godhead"; they "correspond to the three aspects of God."⁴⁷ Throughout his life, Klein was drawn to ritual and ceremony, and as he was raised a Catholic, he was likely familiar with the original symbolism of the Church, in which red signified the suffering of Christ and blood; violet, humility; white or silver, life; yellow or gold, fruitfulness; green, fecundity and youthfulness; black, death and destruction; and blue, the heavenly sphere and godliness.⁴⁸

This relationship of color to spirituality in art was one of the foundations of abstraction in the twentieth century. Artists such as Kandinsky and Kupka had attempted to expand the ability of painting to elicit other senses beyond mere sight. In his 1912 treatise On the Spiritual in Art, Kandinsky suggested that "sight must be related not only to taste, but also to all the other senses,"⁴⁹ thereby creating a kind of synaesthesia. The correspondence between color and sound, between the chromatic variations in visual art and the harmonic vibrations of music, fired the imagination of many artists early in the century and led to the belief that the correspondence of color to music could create an abstraction appropriate for the "new epoch of the great spiritual."⁵⁰

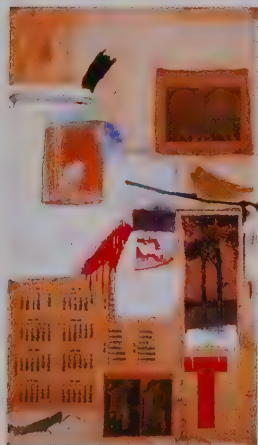
While Klein had rejected Restany's attempts to link his work to Malevich's, Klein's use of color brings his work closer not only to Delacroix's, as he himself suggested, but also to those practitioners of synaesthesia in the early twentieth century. Indeed, Kandinsky wrote that "The deeper the blue the more powerfully it draws man toward infinity and awakens in him the nostalgia for Purity and for the ultimate suprasensible [realm]."⁵¹ For Klein, colors were "living beings, highly evolved individuals that integrate themselves with us, as with everything. Colors are the true inhabitants of space."⁵² Similar to his contemporary, the composer Olivier Messiaen, who was also a devout Catholic, Klein seems to have been drawn

Figure 12
Robert Rauschenberg
Factum I, 1957
Oil, ink, graphite, crayon, paper,
fabric, newsprint, and paper on
canvas
61 ½ x 35 ¾ in.
(156.2 x 90.8 cm)
The Museum of Contemporary
Art, Los Angeles
The Panza Collection
© Estate of Robert
Rauschenberg/Licensed by
VAGA, New York, NY

Figure 13
Robert Rauschenberg
Factum II, 1957
Oil, ink, graphite, crayon, paper,
fabric, newsprint, and paper on
canvas
61 ¾ x 35 ½ in.
(155.9 x 90.2 cm)
Museum of Modern Art,
New York. Purchase and an
anonymous gift and Louise
Reinhardt Smith Bequest (both
by exchange)
© Estate of Robert
Rauschenberg/Licensed by
VAGA, New York, NY



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to the notion of synaesthesia; in his essay "My Position in the Battle Between Line and Color" he re-presents Arthur Rimbaud's poem "Vowels" that equates letters with colors ("Black A, White E, Red I, Green U, Blue O: vowels").⁵³

It should also be remembered that with the exception of certain artists such as Giotto, Delacroix, and Van Gogh, artists with whom Klein identified, his avowal of color and the monochrome, his need "through color...[to] become acquainted with the immaterial,"⁵⁴ undermined a tradition in art history that, for the most part, had imprisoned color, holding it at bay through the concept of linear drawing and various aesthetic "rules." In *Chromophobia*, David Batchelor details this history of color and how it has been isolated and confined. He examines the fear of color, such as eighteenth-century painter Joshua Reynolds' belief that "a brilliancy of tints" is "weak and unworthy of regard."⁵⁵ Often this fear seems to stem from the association of color with the sensuous and ecstatic, or, as Roland Barthes has described it, "Color...is a kind of bliss...like a closing eyelid, a tiny fainting spell."⁵⁶ Hallucinogenic, dreamy, dazzlingly sensual, color hurls the artist into dangerous territory, into uncontrollable worlds, places like paradise or hell, states of transmutation, where creativity is psychedelic and free from the limitations of the logical mind. Even such representational artists as the early Netherlandish painters, like Jan and Hubert van Eyck, found the end of reality and the beginning of God in their astonishing use of paint to elevate the everyday into the otherworldly, and vibrant fabrics, jewels, and ornaments take on a hyper-real sensuality through the rendering of light and color. Klein also appreciated this point of transcendence, the embodiment of the spiritual in the hues of the material:

The life of color! And it is this that brings to mind for me COLOMBO and its merchants of precious gems who empty before you their pouches filled with sapphires, aquamarines, rubies, making little piles on a table covered with soiled, uncolored velvet. What a spill! What infinite scintillation!

This is what I seek to find again in colored matter, this unique and living spill, filled at once both with luxury and serenity.⁵⁷

This extrication from the mundane is not unlike that captured in J.-K. Huysmans' 1884 novel *A Rebours*, in which a "sapphire has kept its fires inviolate, unsullied by contact with commercial and financial stupidity," or in Aldous Huxley's 1954 *The Doors of Perception*, in which the author elucidates, under the influence of mescaline, a place where "the shadows fell on the canvas upholstery, stripes of a deep but glowing indigo alternated with stripes of an incandescence so intensely bright that it was hard to believe that they could be made of anything but blue fire...."⁵⁸

*

Of equal importance to Klein's approach to color in his watershed Galleria Apollinaire exhibition was his challenge to the notion of the unique object. About a year after the show, Klein would write a text explaining his radical decision to create eleven nearly identical ultramarine monochrome paintings yet price them differently:

In the course of my second Paris exhibition at the Colette Allendy gallery in 1956, I displayed a selection of PROPOSITIONS of colors in varying formats.... I attempted to attain that degree of contemplation where color becomes full and pure sensibility. Unfortunately, this occasion made apparent that many spectators were slaves to their manner of seeing: they were much more sensitive to the relationships of the PROPOSITIONS to each other and tended to recreate decorative and architectural elements out of the colors.

This forced me to go much further in my experiments and to present in January 1957 at Galleria Apollinaire in Milan a show devoted to what I dared to call my "Blue Period."... The show included ten [sic] paintings in dark ul-

tramarine, all of them rigorously identical in tone, value, proportion, and size. The passionate controversies that resulted and the deep emotions provoked among persons of good will who were prepared to suspend the sclerosis of old conceptions and set rules testify to the importance of the event.... We absolutely must realize—and this is no exaggeration—that we are living in the atomic age, where all physical matter can vanish from one day to the next to surrender its place to what we can envision as the most abstract. I believe that for the painter there exists a sensuous and colored matter that is intangible.... It is no longer a question of seeing color but rather of “perceiving” it.”⁵⁹

The notion that one painting could be exactly like another—yet unique at the same time—was in the air during the late fifties. In the same year that Klein had his *L’Epoca Blu* exhibition, Robert Rauschenberg created two works, *Factum I* and *Factum II* (figures 12 and 13), that, despite the use of collaged imagery, were still within an Abstract Expressionist style that included drips of paint; Rauschenberg’s attempt to remake a more or less gestural work seems to undermine the very core of New York School painting, which was supposedly rooted in autobiographical gestures and unconscious mark-making.⁶⁰ Klein’s exhibition and paintings also questioned the notion of art as merely the byproduct of an individual and rather presented works that transcended the artist and are, as Klein noted, about “something far more important.”⁶¹ They are about the individual looking at them and his or her experience with the immaterial caused by the vibrations of the blue in the painting; Klein’s work is not about Klein in the way that Franz Kline’s work is about Kline the artist or Mark Rothko’s paintings about Rothko’s view of the world, but instead attempt to harness a sacred power that creates that “degree of contemplation” that allows color to transcend “pure sensibility.”

This approach to the medium rejects both the notion of painting as a window through which the spectator passes into a fictive space and as a personalized existential drama. Rauschenberg’s use of collaged images and his attempt to create a double of something seemingly not reproducible as well as Klein’s creation of identical blue panels at once circumvented representation and undermined the authoritarianism of Abstract Expressionism. Painting’s window was destroyed, and within a few years artists like Andy Warhol would pointedly conflate art, the real world, and contemporary icons by replicating such images as Campbell soup cans over and over in identical paintings or within the same canvas.⁶²

PAINTING THE INVISIBLE

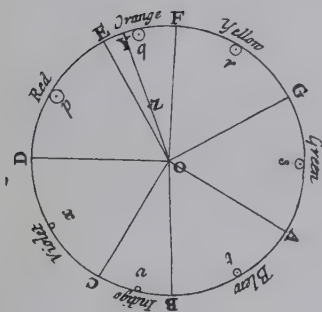
For Klein, painting had never been just about painting. During the last five years of his life he seemed determined to distance himself further from the act of painting while simultaneously expanding the notion of what painting could be. As early as 1951, Klein was already thinking of painting in different ways; he had written in his diary about the possibility of installing his monochromes with musical accompaniment. And in “The Monochrome Adventure,”⁶³ Klein claimed that in 1947 he had composed “a great monotone symphony.”⁶⁴ Music had played a major role in his youth, and he had a particularly strong interest in jazz. He played the piano, frequently visited nightclubs, and wanted to become, at one point, a jazz musician, occasionally sitting in with bands.⁶⁵

Klein describes his *Symphonie Monoton-Silence* [Monotone-Silence Symphony] as having

forty minutes duration (although that is of no importance, as one will see) [consisting] of one unique continuous “sound,” drawn out and deprived of its beginning and of its end, creating a feeling of vertigo and of aspiration outside of time. Thus, even in its presence, this symphony does not exist. It exists



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outside of the phenomenology of time because it is neither born nor will it die. However, in the world of our possibilities of conscious perception, it is silence—audible presence.⁶⁶

Klein's monotone experiment recalls Robert Fludd's 1617 monochord apparatus, a theoretical musical instrument meant to make visible the distances between musical pitches by using only a single string (figure 14). The pitches reflect Newton's breakdown of the light spectrum into various color bands (figure 15). As described by George Hersey in *Architecture and Geometry in the Age of the Baroque*, the monochord was an allegorical instrument, illustrated with layers of earth and atmosphere equated with the pitches all the way up to God's hand at the top, which is seen tuning "the great single string of the universe."⁶⁷ The device is surrounded by spheres representing the elements, planets, and spiritual regions while the sun and stars shine down on the instrument, creating a visual version of the invisible world of the music of the spheres.

This diagram offers an important parallel for understanding Klein's monochromes. The use of a single color, like the use of one note drawn out, creates a sense of the infinite, of continuous immaterial space, of which we are catching (or hearing) only a brief glimpse, a point of possible entry, a tiny invitation to experience, perhaps ever so slightly, the vast reality "beyond what is visible."⁶⁸ The symphony is audible, it is present, but it is silence as well, just as the IKB paintings are present, but are not what they appear to be; they are not paintings but instead are presences of the invisible, of the "indefinable."

The theorist Renato Poggioli has proffered a link between the concept of silence and abstract painting. Echoing Klein, Poggioli suggests that silence allows art to free itself "from the prison of things,"⁶⁹ while critic Donald Kuspit argues that in such works:

the artist is attempting to function shamanistically.... It is the heart of what the artist Mimmo Rotella called the "mythical metamorphosis," a metamorphosis that is art's responsibility. The attempt to articulate what Klein called "the great emptiness" or what Group 0 called the "zone of silence" as demonstrations, not simply signs, of spiritual presence is pure shamanism.⁷⁰

The ZERO group, which was founded in Dusseldorf in 1958 by artists Heinz Mack and Otto Piene, created before disbanding in 1960 three publications, one of which was designed by Klein and featured a blue monochrome illustration cover with ZERO 3 at the bottom (page 135). Other artists associated with the group included Günther Uecker, Piero Manzoni, and Lucio Fontana. Like Klein, the ZERO group was devoted to discovering new directions for painting, a goal that led the artists associated with the group to experiment with creating smoky trails burned onto canvas with a candle (Piene), hammering nails directly into the painting's surface (Uecker), and slicing the canvas (Fontana; figure 16) in order to find new "dimensions" beyond the surface of the painting and its conventional use to create illusions and representations.

Klein himself was also committed to extending the painting surface into three dimensions, out into the viewers' space, and thereby blurring the lines between painting, sculpture, and architecture. During the late 1950s, Klein produced a number of works that, with a startling variety of forms, expanded the territory of the "Blue Revolution": releasing 1,001 blue balloons from Saint-Germain-des-Près prior to the opening of his exhibition at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris on May 10, 1957; lighting the Fire Tableau (figure 17), a blue monochrome with Bengal fireworks embedded into the surface, at the Galerie Colette Allendy in Paris on May 14, 1957; and including in this "world of blue" double show, as Restany called it, blue tapestries, a blue folding screen planted on blue pigment, blue obelisks, even blue rain, achieved by hanging thin rods covered with blue pigment from the ceiling.



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17

Figure 14
Robert Fludd
"The Divine Harmony of the
Universe: The Hand of God
Turns the Peg to Tune the
Universe" from *Utriusque
Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et
Minoris, metaphysica, physica,
atque technica Historia* [The
Metaphysical, Physical, and
Technical History of the Two
Worlds, Namely the Greater and
the Lesser], c. 1617
Oxford Science Archive
Photo © HIP/Art Resource, NY

Figure 15
Isaac Newton, color wheel
published in *Opticks*, 1704

Figure 16
Lucio Fontana
Spatial Concept: Expectations,
1967
Oil on canvas with black gauze
21 1/2 x 26 1/6 in.
(54.6 x 66.2 cm)
Hirshhorn Museum and
Sculpture Garden, The Joseph
H. Hirshhorn Bequest, 1981
(86.1857)
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome

Figure 17
Yves Klein with Bengal Fire
Tableau in Colette Allendy's
garden, Paris, May 1957

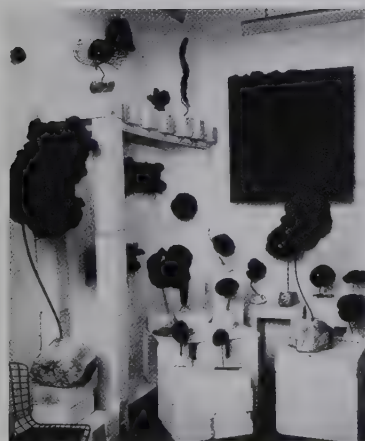
Figure 18
Gelsenkirchen Opera House,
Germany, 1959

Figure 19
Installation view of *Bas-Reliefs
dans une forêt d'éponges* [Bas-
Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges]
at Galerie Iris Clert, Paris, 1959

Perhaps the most important of these attempts at enlarging painting's domain was Klein's commission for the Gelsenkirchen Opera House in Germany between 1957 and 1959 (figure 18). Working with the architect Werner Ruhnau, the artist created six enormous blue monochromes. Placed in the lobby and cloakrooms, these pieces allowed Klein to distance himself further from the act of conventional painting, aligning it more closely with architecture and installation. If the idea of Klein's painting had been to sensitize the viewer to the immaterial realm, the Gelsenkirchen project allowed him nearly to create a world, as Nicolas Charlet calls it, that is "blue on the surface and a void within."⁷¹ Through his sculptural objects and the enormous blue "wall murals" that, despite their vast scale, depict nothing, Klein expanded the notion of painting by moving it away from the conventions of canvas, flatness, and fictive space.



18



19

As early as 1956, during his experiments with his blue monochromes, Klein had become fascinated by the sponge's ability to absorb color,⁷² by "the beauty of the Blue in the sponge, of that extraordinary capacity of the sponge to soak up anything—in this instance Blue!"⁷³ In 1959, again at the Galerie Iris Clert, Klein opened an exhibition that he titled *Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges* [Bas-Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges] (figure 19). In effect, the sponges reversed the flow of the monochromes; if in his monochromes Klein had wanted to reveal that "Blue has no dimensions...[it is] beyond dimensions..."⁷⁴ and create a portal to the zone of immaterial sensibility, attaching sponges to the painting's surface brought a kind of weight and materiality back to his work; yet he still avoided, perhaps even more than with the monochromes, conventional painting. By attaching sponges, the zero degree of Klein's blue monochromes gave way to an absorption into this world of the "other side," a way of demonstrating the immaterial in something material, a means of bringing the invisible spiritual realm into the dominion of flesh. Without the artist having actually to paint, the sponge absorbed the essence of immateriality. Klein could more clearly demonstrate the immaterial and yet move even further away from the act of painting. The sponge, which, like the roller, was an incidental instrument of the artist studio, became the primary signifier for the immaterial and a substitute for painting. The apparatus had become the painting.

A similar approach had been taken by ZERO group artist Fontana in the early 1950s in his *Pietra* series, in which he attached colored glass stones to his canvases, thereby capturing a kind of color out of space, an essence of the cosmic in our

world. Later, in 1962, Klein carried this approach even further when he bundled together rollers he had used for making his monochromes and sponge reliefs since 1956 (page 245). Blue, pink, gold are here brought side by side, not in a painting, but in the painter's tools, the devices that had dipped into the infinite and returned to the material world.

Klein's overlap with these ZERO group artists, however, was perhaps strongest in an area of interest that was the focus of the second issue of ZERO: light and movement. The use of white as a source for creating perceptual effects was integral to Klein's early monochromes and later, perhaps most notably, his carefully planned white-washing of the Galerie Iris Clert space in Paris in 1958 as a means of impregnating the space with this presence for his installation La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée [The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility] known as Le vide [The Void] (pages 109–12). Creating an anti-gallery, a white-washed space, a void, but one that was not empty but rather charged spiritually by the artist's presence, echoes the other ZERO group members' use of white in their paintings.

All of these innovations allowed Klein to distance himself from the actual act of painting. His mistrust of conventional painting and his insistence on the glory of color over the mundane reality of line moved him away from the practice of mark-making; instead, the sky was signed without having been painted first; paintings were "reproduced" in books without ever having been made; ultramarine blue was rolled—not brushed—onto canvas using a binder and dry pigment; and an exhibition was created without the use of objects on the walls. Painting, at least painting as it had been tamed, shrunken, packaged, and reduced to the service of representation, could not contain his vision.

FLESH AND SHADOW

The logical next step for Klein was to find a way of making a painting without touching it at all, to remove all material traces of the artist. In his essay "Truth Becomes Reality," the artist writes about the steps leading up to the creation of his Anthropometries.

Having had rejected brushes as too excessively psychological already earlier, I painted with rollers, in order to remain anonymous and at a "distance" between the canvas and myself during the execution, at least intellectually.... Now, what a miracle, the brush returned, but this time it is alive: it was the flesh itself that applied the color to the canvas, under my direction, with a perfect precision, allowing me to remain constantly at an exact distance "x" from my canvas and thus continue to dominate my creation during the entire execution.⁷⁵

On the evening of March 9, 1960, Klein created a performance for the opening of the new Galerie internationale d'art contemporain in Paris that brought to a climax experiments he had been undertaking since 1958.⁷⁶ By staging a formal event complete with nine musicians performing his Symphonie Monoton-Silence, for Klein the entire evening was, in a sense, an attempt to turn art history on its head and undercut the concept of the bohemian artist. Dressed elegantly in evening attire, white gloves (like Mandrake the Magician), white bowtie, and the Maltese Cross of the Order of the Knights of Saint Sebastian, Klein appeared, followed by several nude models. Klein "conducted" the models' movements, had them apply ultramarine blue pigment to their bodies, and then guided them as they pressed their bodies onto large sheets of paper (figure 20). The nudes of art history—of Giorgione, Titian, and Manet—appeared in the flesh, no longer mere representa-

Figure 20
Klein and a model during an
Anthropometry performance
at the Galerie internationale
d'art contemporain, Paris,
March 9, 1960
Photo by Shunk-Kender. © 2010
Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York/ADAGP, Paris. Photo
© Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

tions or passive objects, but “living brushes,” figures who literally painted themselves. Once the performance was done, what remained was only an impression, a trace, an absence rather than a presence of a representation. The imprint left by the models’ bodies, rather than receding into a fiction, remained a fact, a mark denoting the “flesh itself that supplies color to the surface....”⁷⁷ The artist demonstrated that he no longer needed to paint, yet was still capable of making paintings.



20

The Anthropometries, as Klein called these works, clearly had their playful side, and in a work such as *People Begin to Fly* from 1961 (pages 170–71), recall the artist’s belief in levitation and desire for freedom from the body itself, the joy of total liberation from the material world and the magician’s ability to raise his subjects off the ground without touching them. But the Anthropometries also had a darker side, reminding us again of Klein’s constant attempts to reinvent painting in the wake of the massive destruction of the war. The mark left by the body was also not unlike the human shadows imprinted on the wall after the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima; tellingly, also dating to 1961 is Klein’s *Hiroshima* (page 68–69), with its “shadows...in the desert of the atomic catastrophe, terrible evidence, without a doubt, but evidence of hope all the same, hope for the survival and permanence albeit immaterial, of the flesh.”⁷⁸

Flesh and shadow, the material and the immaterial, creation and destruction—these concepts led ultimately to Klein’s last major series, the Fire Paintings, the body of work in which he distanced himself the most from conventional painting. The inspiration for these works may have come to Klein one night during 1961, when the artist and his model and future wife Rotraut Uecker visited Larry Rivers in his New York studio. After Rivers had fallen asleep, Klein decided to try an experiment. He lit a number of candles and placed them around the dark room, then had Rotraut disrobe and posed her in front of a large mirror. According to Rotraut, he studied the light and reflection for some time, a sort of contemporary version of Vermeer’s use of the camera obscura or Velázquez’s use of the mirror to see reality more intensely than under normal conditions. Rotraut has commented that

she believes the warm glow of the candles against flesh in the darkness, as seen in the world of the mirror, gave Klein his inspiration.⁷⁹ Like Alice through the looking glass, Klein uses the “painting” not as an object but as a mirror, a vehicle for the transportation of the mind into another world, a dimension without gravity, where the body ceases to exist as a substance and becomes instead a flickering warm essence hovering in space.

In early 1961, Klein had a major exhibition, Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer [Yves Klein: Monochrome and Fire], at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany. His most extensive show to date, Klein not only displayed his monochromes, sponge sculptures, and Anthropometries, but also created a wall of fire and two “fountains” of fire in the garden (pages 229–31). Like the ceremonial creation of the Anthropometries, Klein set the stage, igniting these pyrotechnics at the opening event in the twilight, thus creating an impressive inferno of blue transitioning to orange flames, elemental animations shimmering in the indigo magic-hour.

These fire fountains launched Klein’s Fire Paintings series, which would preoccupy him until his death. By holding paper or board against the fire sculptures for a brief amount of time, Klein was able to get smoky burn marks, traces of partial destruction that ironically resulted in a new kind of creation. Like the Anthropometries, these burns were the remnants of an action, a ghostly residue replacing the weighty, preconceived material mark of the conventional artist. An element with a life of its own, fire becomes in these works the co-creator, at one with the artist himself. Klein had once again succeeded in making a painting without painting.

A few months after the Krefeld exhibition, Klein used the spaces of Gaz de France to create with a large flame-thrower various-scaled Fire Paintings. Seeing the event as a kind of performance, Klein documented the simultaneous act of destruction and creation, and also had a friend standing nearby wearing a fireman’s helmet, suggesting to the viewer that the authorities were collaborators in the creation of these “dangerous” works.⁸⁰ Klein brought the Anthropometries and Fire Paintings together in some of these works; by placing nude women against the canvas and spraying water on them, then having them step aside before blow-torching the surface, he composed traces of flying bodies that emerged as the result of a destructive act. Fire destroyed the prison of the material world, allowing the body to fly, to hover, like Klein had years before over the beach in Nice.

In an often quoted statement, Klein observed that “My paintings are the ‘ashes’ of my art.”⁸¹ It is a telling and ironic assertion indicating that painting was not the intentional result of Klein’s practice but only one rather indispensable step in getting there. But the word ashes suggests more than painting as a secondary phenomenon. With his use of fire, whether roman candles implanted in the surface of a painting, the Krefeld fire fountains, or the alteration of a surface with a flame-thrower, Klein sought creation within the act of destruction. The new human being, the one capable of levitating out of the immaterial, rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the war; the artist’s job was to show the way, to find pathways for the development of a new immaterial sensibility, a blue society out of the black devastation of the recent past. If Klein wanted to rise, indeed, to levitate, above the ruins of war, the conventions of art, and the potential annihilation of the world in the atomic age, the way to do this was not by avoiding destruction but by embracing it. Fire became a means of eradicating the old and giving rise to the new. Like other artists of his generation—Fontana and his cuts, Alberto Burri and his perforations, Günther Uecker and his nails driven into the painting’s surface, Mimmo Rotella and his layers of torn posters, or Gustav Metzger and his acid paintings that destroyed themselves as quickly as he could paint them—Klein employed destruction in order to annihilate the damaging potential of society and to replace it with a constructive future.



21

Klein lying beneath *Ci-gît l'Espace* [Here Lies Space], 1960, at his apartment, 14, rue Campagne-Première, Paris, c. 1960
 Photo by Shunk-Kender. © 2010 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADACP, Paris. Photo © Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

In 1960, Klein created *Ci-gît l'Espace* [Here Lies Space] (page 209). It is an unusual work, as it is a “monogold” meant to be installed flat on the floor, or rather, as if it is floating some inches above the ground, an illusion instilled by placing some simple blocks under it. The piece sums up much of Klein’s oeuvre; all the colors are there: a gold background with a blue sponge relief wreath and artificial pink flowers attached. Later, Klein had himself photographed by Harry Shunk lying underneath the object, which acts as a monument or tomb for the artist (who would die a mere two years later) and places him in the role of the force creating levitation, the means of making a static work turn into a gold magic carpet for transporting the viewer to cosmic elsewhere (figure 21). Unlike conventional tombs, this one, at least for Klein, intimates that death does not hold a terrifying darkness but rather a sense of light and the passage into a blue immaterial world through the alchemical properties of gold. The piece suggests escape and freedom—death as a means of liberation.

In this work and others, Klein introduced a kind of “lightness” to art at a time when culture in general was hung-over with the heaviness and existential drama of a world war, the Holocaust, and the inception of the atomic era. This heaviness was not confined to Europe; in America, artists also tended toward weightiness, the high-handedness of the American New York School insisting on wrestling with the White Whale of personal dramas, with the artist’s psychology made into a painted image unlike any other and infused with the overtones of Kabbalah or biblical seriousness. When we review Klein’s output—his interest in small pastel monochromes, his reproduction of paintings that never existed, the ultramarine blue pigment gently rolled onto the surface of a panel and hung floating out from the wall, his creation of empty space infused with his aura, his capturing of blue rain, his invention of air architecture, his desire to blur the role of the artist with that of the conductor or magician, or his leap into the void, we encounter a different kind of art, one, as Italo Calvino might define it, of “lightness” over weightiness. As Calvino put it:

Were I to choose an auspicious image for the new millennium, I would choose that one: the sudden agile leap of the poet-philosopher who raises himself above the weight of the world, showing that with all his gravity he has the secret of lightness, and that what many consider to be the vitality of the time—noisy, aggressive, revving and roaring—belongs to the realm of death, like a cemetery for rusty old cars.⁸²

The irony of Klein’s use of the monochrome is that rather than requiring less of the viewer, it requires more. The monochrome invites the viewer to first concentrate on his or her optical perceptions to a heightened degree not necessitated by representational painting. Klein’s shift to perceptual effects, and opening up of painting to include the world around it, clearly paved the way for later artists who would carry these experiments even further. Calvino’s “lightness” became, in the hands of many of them, light itself—Klein’s desire for weightlessness being transformed into a physical sense of buoyancy within immersive environments. Among these torchbearers were the so-called Light and Space artists out in the American West, like Doug Wheeler, Robert Irwin, Maria Nordman, and James Turrell, who were particularly inspired by a philosophy of perceptual phenomena, and Jannis Xenakis with his Polytope light and music installations. More recent artists such as Olafur Eliasson and Doug Aitken continue to reject conventional painting for works that engulf the viewer and offer altered states of perception. All of these artists, often relying on monochromatic color created not by pigment but by light, embraced Klein’s interests in expanding the concept of painting to include installation, archi-

texture, and the alteration of normal perception. Like Klein's *Le vide*, these voyages require the spectator to embrace seeing in a new way, one that heightens all the senses and sharpens the visual aspects of the mind, leading it to perceive the world in new ways.

We can only think of Klein like some strange object himself that came, only for a short time, from the heavens to open our eyes and minds. One of his last works was a model for a pneumatic rocket (page 261), a missile driven by air that would leave the earth never to return. If we can mentally hop on board Klein's Leonardo-like invention for only a moment, perhaps we can travel with him back in time to the site where it all began, on the beach in Nice in 1947, joining Klein as he signs the sky and creates his first artwork. It is as if this artist, this magician, came to fruition all at once—as if he fell off his own rocket from the future and plunged to earth, dropping like a philosopher's stone in the midst of his sympathetic companions, filled with stories of worlds beyond our sight. Like an object in an H. P. Lovecraft story, he was “nothing of this earth, but a piece of the great outside; and as such endowed with outside properties and obedient to outside laws.”⁸³

*

So was Klein a painter or not? His desire was always total freedom, freedom from the material world, and freedom from the conventions of art-making. Through color he had “a feeling of complete identification with space” and was “truly free.”⁸⁴ He was, after all, the self-proclaimed “painter of space.”⁸⁵

His was no less than an adventure intended to change the rules of painting, to move it to another place, to open up new possibilities for future generations of artists. Klein was indeed a painter, but an involuntary one, one who out of necessity embraced this old-fashioned approach to art-making, not so much to subvert it as to expand it. His monochromes offered merely a glimpse of a fragment of a blue infinity while his monotone symphony, through the abstraction of music, made tangible a small piece of time stretching into the past and future simultaneously. Klein did not choose to be a painter; rather, he painted because he needed to create an earthly element for us to behold in the hope that these poor substitutes for the immaterial sensibility, these conventional objects, would, under the right circumstances, transport us beyond their material states. The only way to accomplish Klein's mission was to be a painter. As Klein ultimately admitted, one “does not become a painter; one suddenly discovers that one has always been one!”⁸⁶

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EARTH, WIND, AND FIRE
OR TO OVERCOME
THE PARADOX OF YVES KLEIN,
THE MOLECULAR CHILD
WHO WROTE TO
FIDEL CASTRO ON HIS WAY
TO DISNEYLAND

PHILIPPE VERGNE

IN ALL THE ARTS THERE IS A PHYSICAL COMPONENT WHICH CAN NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED OR TREATED AS IT USED TO BE, WHICH CANNOT REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY OUR MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND POWER. FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS NEITHER MATTER NOR SPACE NOR TIME HAS BEEN WHAT IT WAS FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL.

WE MUST EXPECT GREAT INNOVATIONS TO TRANSFORM THE ENTIRE TECHNIQUE OF THE ARTS, THEREBY AFFECTING ARTISTIC INVENTION ITSELF AND PERHAPS EVEN BRINGING ABOUT AN AMAZING CHANGE IN OUR VERY NOTION OF ART. —PAUL VALÉRY¹

There might be a paradox implicit in trying to organize a retrospective of the work of Yves Klein, an artist who claimed that his paintings and sculpture were merely “the ‘ashes’ of [his] art.”² On the surface, however, it makes perfect sense. All the elements to create a successful exhibition are crystallized around the personality of an artist who burnt the candle at both ends and left an impressive body of innovative, influential artworks—a myth almost too messianic, and who, like fellow artists Piero Manzoni, Blinky Palermo, and Pino Pascali, had a career too short and a life lived too fast. Seven years dedicated to artistic production, and then Yves Klein was gone. Barely older than Jesus when he died, Klein’s imprint on the creative landscape of the second half of the last century is as deep as that of a stigmata. It is still felt, but we do not fully comprehend why, or we take this mark for granted, belief in the myth perhaps overwhelming critical analysis. With Klein, one risks elevating devotion to the relics of his life and mystique over his aesthetic project.

Yet the myth, although almost too perfect, is deserved. Seven years of commitment to nonstop production of ideas, projects, and artworks, enough to fill the lives and careers of numerous artists. One question recurs concerning artists like Klein who disappear too early: what would they have gone on to create if they had not faded prematurely? Or is the real question, did they evaporate because their contribution was complete? For Yves Klein, perhaps the time was not right, perhaps society was not prepared for the next step, for his artistic concepts and their implications for the art world and culture at large. Klein did, after all, attempt to overcome the problematics of art. He considered the artworks he made, which I refer to as relics, to be the ashes of his true artistic project. Brilliant ashes. Beautiful debris, which we cannot help but revere, as he gave them the attributes of icons, as with the monogolds, or his votive offering dedicated to Saint Rita, the patron saint of lost causes (page 217).

What is the nature of the paradox that might inhabit every Klein exhibition? It is the very notion of an exhibition as an experience constrained in space and time and articulated around a series of objects. Therefore, Kerry Broucher and I had to face this conflict when approaching this retrospective, and I would like to share a bit about the methodology. This project began for me in 2003 in Yves Klein’s apartment on rue Campagne-Première in Paris, a location where Klein produced numerous works and where many of his friends, including Arman, Martial Raysse, Raymond Hains, and Pierre Restany gathered around what became the amorphous movement known as *Nouveau Réalisme* [New Realism].

At the time, I was researching a potential acquisition for the Walker Art Center. The work in question was one of Klein’s Anthropometry paintings, Suaire de Mondo Cane [Mondo Cane Shroud], 1961 (page 167). This piece, one of the rare Anthropometries executed on gauze, was conceived under specific circumstances and could almost be interpreted as the shroud of the artist himself. In 1961, Director Gualtiero Jacopetti proposed to include Yves Klein in his movie Mondo Cane. Klein consequently made an Anthropometry on two layers of translucent gauze so that the camera could record through the fabric and from behind the

bodies, the “living brushes,” imprinting themselves onto the canvas. The resulting film, which can be considered the first global exploitation movie, rather than treating seriously Klein’s process, was instead disrespectful of the integrity of the artist and his work. The virtue of the film, nevertheless, was to place emphasis on Klein’s relationship to the action and the process of making a moving image.

Looking closely at the painting that later entered the Walker Art Center collection and comparing it with the film itself, I noticed some discrepancies between what was on the canvas and what ended up on the screen. Slight discrepancies, but discrepancies still. When questioned about it, Rotraut Klein-Moquay, the artist’s widow, recalled that before even going in front of the camera, Klein rehearsed with the models.³ Suaire de Mondo Cane was the object produced during this rehearsal; the location of the painting created in the film is not known. Comparing this preliminary painting and the film reaffirmed how deliberate Klein was and how far removed his process was from the impulsive instinct of Abstract Expressionism, *abstraction gestuelle*, and École de Paris. Klein’s awareness of the camera, of the moving image, is striking; it is as if the celluloid of the film appeared as an alternative medium for his work, as if the translucent quality of the gauze was a surrogate for the transparent nature of the film negative.

Suaire de Mondo Cane might be the ultimate Klein, not necessarily for the obvious reasons, but because, in many ways, it signals Klein’s interest in and attraction to what lies behind the art object, encompassing other disciplines, such as film, theater, music, and architecture. Moreover, this particular Anthropometry, in which the bodies are atomized by the transparency and porosity of the fabric, more than in other works from this series, emphasizes how far Klein was reaching, the intensity with which he sought to give a visual presence to a cosmic, spiritual body, to the immateriality of the aura, which neither photography nor film, nor an exhibition, could truly capture. Everything in Klein’s short career leads toward a nothingness that overlays and envelops his own conception of a wholeness in which everything is blue. Or in Paul Eluard’s words, “the earth is blue, like an orange.”⁴ Klein’s gaze was cosmic and spiritual; his work touched upon evanescence; he strove to formulate an environment in which traces of his art, the vestiges of his own hand, would be superfluous.

This specific Yves Klein, this molecular Klein, deeply interests me. This is an artist whom no exhibition, no attempt to bring order to the work, the persona of the artist, or his world through a rational and systematic analysis can truly represent beyond merely displaying the objects left behind—the ashes of his art.

As contradictory as it seems, it was necessary to me to treat Klein as a living artist before confronting the artworks. One cannot begin with the exegesis, but with the artist’s voice, as if Klein did not die on June 6, 1962, just after he declared that he would only produce immaterial works from that point forward. As if, on that day, he himself became immaterial, atomized, everywhere, with everyone, one to one, always, forever, now, and then. In other words—still here.

The task was to extract from hundreds of pages of writings, letters, musings, and theories, published and unpublished, something that can reposition how Klein is perceived. I am not sure whether he is actually the last step before performance art or the first step toward it; I am not sure whether the questions painter/not painter; proto-conceptual, proto-land art, proto-Pop, proto-artist as entrepreneur are relevant. At a moment when museums are struggling to understand their relationship to the performative, to the ephemeral, to the object, Klein seems not only to have anticipated these questions, but also, more than that, to have disallowed spending time to answer them, as they seem regressive and constraining to the artist and to the work. The question is not so much should an institution acquire this work, this performance, this idea. The real question, if we have ambi-

tions to change the character and the structure of our institutions and the way they represent our times, is what is the nature of the transaction, symbolic or real, for objects, projects, knowledge? One of Klein's legacies might be the recognition that not everything can be represented through an exhibition, not every artwork can be destined for the museum.

Yves Klein was gifted, and he made a gift of his works. The economy of the gift was integral to his thinking and his transaction of the *Zone de sensibilité picturale immatérielle* [Zone of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility] (pages 114–19). Yet, it must be asked, as he himself suggested, is it possible truly to acquire a work by Yves Klein? Clearly, at least in one sense of “acquisition,” it is possible for a museum or collector, public or private, to take possession of an object by Klein. Is it an artwork by Yves Klein or the ashes of a larger project? For are these paintings and sculptures that have entered art collections really works by Yves Klein? They are tangible objects conceived and made by Klein, but perhaps they are not truly artworks. They could be the precursors that anticipate the real work, that which is the object of a gift. Klein's conceptual project rather than his aesthetic objects are available to everyone attentive enough to perceive them. What if Klein envisioned an art-making in which the art lay not in an object, but in a breathless, transitory experience—something that is always already gone? What if all the monochromes, the sponge reliefs, monogolds, Fire Paintings, and Anthropometries were just a significant yet preliminary draft for an art still to come? Just artifacts. Klein himself wrote, “my paintings are not my definitive works. They are the leftovers of a creative process.”⁵

What would be left? Earth, wind, and fire?

Is it possible to write a different story of Klein's oeuvre that reverses the focus, locating his paintings and sculpture—the traditional, physical manifestations of his creative process—at the periphery? With Klein, one can identify a deliberate path toward the elimination of classical categories such as “painting” and “sculpture.” “Classical” for two reasons: by the nature of the media and because Klein always claimed he was a representational painter, and that, rather than being abstractions, as many perceived them, his monochromes were, in fact, true depictions of space.⁶ In “Loi Originale du Sujet Connaisseur” [The Original Law of Knowledge], he wrote the following: “Abstract, non-objective, non-figurative painting, call it what you want, is an action anti great Nature, a theft.”⁷ He went even further when he wrote: “Abstract painting is the picturesque literature of psychological states. It is impoverished. I am delighted that I am not an abstract painter.”⁸ In another text, he stipulated: “My monochrome propositions are landscapes of freedom.”⁹

In his essay “Les Grands Seigneurs et Propriétaires d'Aujourd'hui” [The Lords and Owners of Today], Klein declared, “my paintings are here, exist, like ownership titles.”¹⁰ The paintings are important but secondary. They serve as stand-ins for what Klein sought to embrace: space, void, and freedom. Klein argued that his monochromatic propositions picture this landscape of freedom: “For me, the art of painting is to produce, to create freedom in the first material state.”¹¹ If you listen to Klein, and trust him, he is a realist of a new age liberated from the burden of materiality, of materialism.

One could even argue provocatively that the monochrome paintings, blue or otherwise, do not have distinctive, individuated aesthetic qualities, but are relatively interchangeable. One painting is not better than another. Blue is blue. A larger one might appear more blue than a smaller one, but even that differentiation could be argued. Would the artist agree that his monochromes offer limited aesthetic value? Certainly, this assessment would raise a stir in the art world, from institutions to the auction market, but one aspect of Klein's “Blue Revolution” was to attempt to change the fiduciary and fetishistic structure of the art world. His intent was made clear at Galleria Apollinaire in Milan in 1957, when he assigned

different prices to a series of identical paintings.

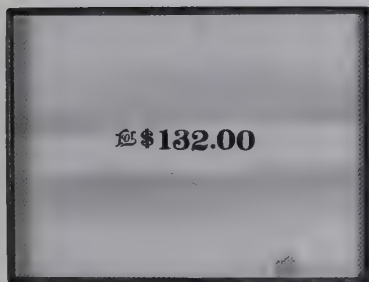
This defiance of the market economy was in keeping with the spirit of the time. Instances of other artists following similar strategies are plentiful; for example, in the 1960s, Edward Kienholz created a series of almost identical watercolors (figure 1), differentiated only by numbers painted in the center of the canvas—their price. Thus both Klein and Kienholz questioned a market-driven paradigm. Klein also sought to reinforce the equivalence principle of his paintings: one is not better or worse than the next. Furthermore, his serial method of production stressed not only that the works are all similar, but also represented the way in which Klein strove to remove his own subjectivity and individuality, renounce aesthetic intentions, and, perhaps, even authorship.

Yet Klein, as groundbreaking and forward-looking as he may have been, was still the product of postwar France. His understanding of seriality, or the way it is embodied in his work, was mechanical. His process was not based on awareness of a culture saturated and dominated by images and products—the society that Andy Warhol sought to transcend when he embraced silkscreening in the early 1960s (figure 2) around the time of Klein's death. Klein still belonged to the era of the artist as an art worker, a period preceeding that of the artist as an entrepreneur delivering goods and services: Klein was pre-industrial; Warhol was post-industrial.

One work, however, might contradict this statement—a work I consider one of Klein's most important, and perhaps most radical, although certainly one of his lesser known and acknowledged creations. *Yves Peintures* [Yves Paintings] is a small booklet (pages 84–87) originally published in Madrid in November 1954. It is composed of sixteen sheets of unbound paper, printed on one side only, ten of them containing tipped-in sheets of found, colorful, commercially printed paper that are seemingly reproductions of monochromatic paintings (although these paintings never existed). Each monochrome is signed “Yves,” given a random dimension, and titled with the name of a city in which Klein had lived. Every booklet is unique as the sequencing of colored “monochromes” varies in each. Following exhibition catalogue protocol, the publication begins with a preface, the text of which consists of three pages filled with horizontal black lines. The text was designed by Klein to parody a traditional introduction and is signed by Klein's friend, the poet Claude Pascal.

Yves Peintures is both humorous and revolutionary. A mockery of catalogues and their prose, the work might also be a tongue-in-cheek statement about the impossibility of reproducing a work of art and its “aura,” in a post-Benjaminian way, as well as the simple impossibility of painting itself. It is also akin to Klein's statement about his quest for the immaterial: “Regarding my attempt toward immateriality...it is impossible to provide you with a photograph” (figure 3). This booklet even defies the notion of authorship and copyright as its plates are found, ready-made colors—ready-made monochromes suggesting that the hand of the artist, Klein's hand, is unnecessary.

This discreet booklet may hold a notable place in the history of the twentieth century, after Matisse's cutouts and Duchamp's Readymades, and delineating what this work predates could just open the door to an entire reconsideration of Klein's legacy. The text “signed” by Claude Pascal paves the way for Marcel Broodthaers' *A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance*, published in 1969. Broodthaers' work is a direct appropriation of the first edition of the French Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé's poem of the same name, published in 1914, but with all the words erased and substituted with black lines that correspond to the layout of Mallarmé's poem. Pictorially, *Yves Peintures* anticipates generations of artists, from Ellsworth Kelly to Gerhard Richter and Giulio Paolini, who found in industrial color charts the sources of the ultimate painting, of all possible paintings.



1



Figure 1
Edward Kienholz
For \$132, 1969
Watercolor and stamped ink
on paper
12 ¼ x 16 ¼ x ½ in.
(31.1 x 41.3 x 1.3 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art,
New York. The Judith Rothschild
Foundation Contemporary
Drawing Collection Gift
(purchase, and gift, in part, of
The Eileen and Michael Cohen
Collection)
© Nancy Kienholz. Courtesy LA
Louver. Photo © The Museum
of Modern Art/Licensed by
Scala/Art Resource, NY

Figure 2
Andy Warhol at the Silver
Factory, 1966–67
Photo by Billy Name. Courtesy
the Andy Warhol Museum,
Pittsburgh
© 2010 The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc./Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York

Yves Peintures might very well be the beginning and the end of Klein as a painter. By so early on producing the impossible—non-reproductions of paintings that did not exist—and producing an image of paintings that defy the world of images, he may have felt compelled to move backward in order to move forward and actually paint the monochromes that he brilliantly anticipated. With Yves Peintures, Klein might have gone too fast and too far, too early, for circumstances, postwar France, and the world at large not yet prepared to accept the ultimate conclusion of this booklet.

But both Klein's and Warhol's artistic practices encapsulate a quality of this removed production of works: the artist is the impetus, but the art object can be realized by anyone. Warhol embraced this consequence by establishing the Factory. Klein, although he may have been willing to consider a more detached method akin to that which Warhol developed and allow the works to proliferate beyond his direct, literal control, was also acutely aware of the artist's integral role. The deliberate ways in which Klein positioned and orchestrated his life, art, and the public's encounters with his work, demonstrated his faith, and at times his humorous faith, in the importance of his position as an inspired genius. Nevertheless, this does not minimize the ways in which he at once furthered the status of the painting as an object and, conversely, attempted to move away from it.

In his writing, Klein articulated how crucial it was for him to remain at a distance from the artistic process. For example, for the Anthropometry paintings, Klein never applied paint directly to the canvas, but instead choreographed and issued instructions to the models, who served as "living brushes" covered with blue pigment (International Klein Blue); the movements of the models' bodies, rather than Klein's own hand, activated the canvas. Klein asserted that he refused to dirty his hands in the process, although photographs document that this is not actually the case.

Klein conceived of his work beyond its physicality and as "*une peinture post-vue*" [post-visual painting]¹²—works that function on a phenomenological level. Each of his canvases could be understood as a sliver of space made solid. Therefore, the space that truly interested Klein was not delimited by the canvas, but was, in fact, experiential space: "My paintings are 'pictorial presence.'"¹³ He was reaching beyond the painting itself, without necessarily, as Lucio Fontana did, physically altering or challenging the basic premises of the medium. Klein never wished, as Joan Miro did, to assassinate painting, which seemed to him an insufficient gesture or, even by this time, an outmoded concern.

As his ambition transcended the traditional parameters of art, Klein's experimentation reached beyond the medium of painting. He desired to inhabit space literally. His body, as well as that of the viewer, was the center of his *cogito*, his knowledge. The body for Klein was a permanent condition for the experience of sensory space, an essential manifestation of one's perceptual openness to the world. As he himself did, he intended for his paintings to leap into space, into the void. Klein established a principle of equivalence between space and the world: "...in my paintings I succeeded in suppressing the space that exists in front of the painting, meaning that the painting's presence is invading the space of the audience itself."¹⁴ Klein's conception of his art—perhaps more than the art itself—anticipated and eventually influenced artists such as James Turrell, who have made space, the experience of it, and its condition of perception the core of their aesthetic investigations. As the Italian collector Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo recalled after visiting Turrell: "There was no object, nothing but a relationship to the sky."¹⁵ This observation evokes a parallel with a small photograph taken by Klein of Le ciel au-dessus de Nice [The Sky Above Nice] (page 19), which depicts, as the title suggests, the sky above Nice. With this image, which actually seems to

contradict the artist's handwritten statement that "in regard to my attempt at the immaterial...[it is] impossible to give you a photograph"¹⁶ (figure 3), Klein anticipated the notion of an art, and eventually a life, emancipated from objecthood. He attempted to capture not only space but also the nature of perception. It is not a nihilistic pursuit, but an attempt to move beyond the pictorial to engage with a purely aesthetic, transcendent experience.

Figure 3
Yves Klein, "Quand à ma tentative de l'immatériel... impossible de vous donner une photographie."

Quand à ma tentative
de l'immatériel...
impossible de vous
donner une photographie

3

Klein's attraction to spirituality and mysticism is evidenced in his affiliation with Rosicrucian theories and the Order of the Knights of Saint Sebastian, and his faith in Saint Rita, to whom he dedicated a marvelous votive offering. But one also wonders whether Klein was not more attracted to the rituals, to the theater entrenched within the rituals, than to the religious belief systems themselves. In French, *spirituel*, which translates into English as spiritual, can signify either involvement with religion and mysticism or being humorous. Klein might just have been both.

As with spirituality, in his painting, Klein was trapped between being the most avant-garde artist of his time and having a residual reluctance to reject tradition. He did not entirely give up painting—but almost. According to Klein, perception goes beyond the tangible world, beyond visual discernment. Perception is being in the world; it is a continuous process that integrates all the senses, the physical as well as the social body. A good example of this tension is the artist's project *Les Cinq Salles* [The Five Rooms]. The project, which was never realized, was published in his edition of *Dimanche*, a faux newspaper that Klein had printed and distributed in Paris on November 27, 1960. In it, Klein observed:

The link between spirit and matter is energy. The combined mechanism of these three elements generates our tangible world, which is claimed to be real but is in fact ephemeral. It is for this reason that for such a long time theater has been spectacle, and we shall emerge from this disaster only if we decide to disregard energy. It is at that moment that extraordinary and extra-dimensional illumination will be accomplished and that one will be directly within spirit and matter, without any intermediaries!¹⁷

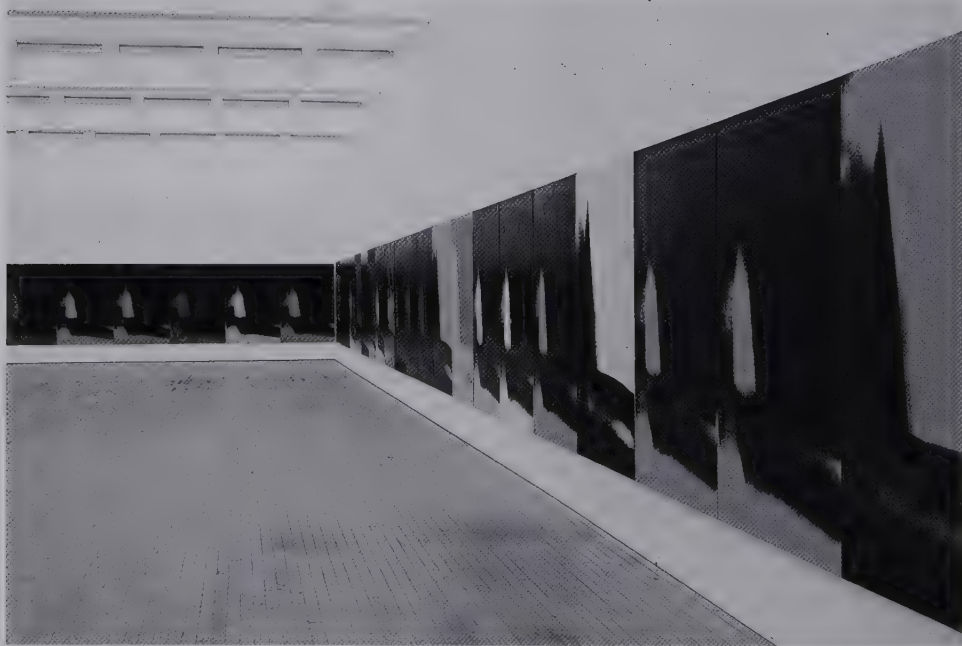
Klein went on to describe a theatrical installation composed of five rooms. The first would hold nine monochromatic International Klein Blue paintings of identical format; the second would be an empty, immaculately white room; the third would house nine monogolds identical in size to the blue monochromes; the fourth room would be empty and dark, almost black; and the fifth would accommodate nine monopink paintings, identical in size to the blue and gold canvases. The artist then described a scenario in which the audience would be invited to wander through the rooms, dragging balls chained to their ankles.

Figure 4
Mark Rothko, interior of the
Rothko Chapel, Houston, Texas
© Rothko Chapel
Photo © Nicolas Sapieha/
Art Resource, NY

Figure 5
Andy Warhol
Shadows, 1978–79
Installation view at Dia:Beacon,
New York
Collection Dia Art Foundation
Photo by Bill Jacobson
© Dia Art Foundation
© 2010 The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Visual Arts,
Inc./Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York



4



5

It seems clear that the purpose of the paintings in this environment is not aesthetic delectation or contemplation. Any aesthetic element seems to be pulled between two poles: the contemplative quality of Mark Rothko's *Chapel*, 1964–71 (figure 4), and Warhol's *Shadows*, 1978–79 (figure 5), which Warhol himself qualified as *décor* or *disco* Rothko.¹⁸ The paintings serve as an ambient element to impregnate the viewer with sensibility. Klein intended for viewers, whom he referred to as *lecteurs* [readers], to be soaked, saturated with "raw matter."

In his essay "La Sensibilité c'est de l'Enthousiasme Pur" [Sensibility is Pure Enthusiasm], Klein predicted:

...mankind will allow itself to be soaked in raw matter, "sensibility of space" and will then impregnate his sensibility thus space-conditioned, a new human vehicle, with a new immaterial meaning of our body that would have been by then discovered and scientifically studied and will travel in immeasurable space, not by going through it, but by inhabiting it. The new aristocracy will then be composed of humans with strong and pure sensibilities, able to dissolve themselves in the infinite.¹⁹

Writing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Klein and his vision were perceived as an aberration. He envisaged a nonmaterial world, not necessarily informed by Marxist theory and what would be later developed as the dematerialization of the art object, because he understood intuitively the limits of our traditional system of artistic representation. Did he succeed in freeing himself from these modes? Yes and no. As adamantly as he sought to render his artwork immaterial, to a certain extent objects remained a necessary component to demonstrate his ideas. It was as if Klein were reluctant to meditate without providing traces of his thought process.

Klein expanded beyond painting rather than suppressing it, and his conception of sculpture was dependent upon his desire to make solid immaterial sensibility. Klein's folding screen (page 127) allowed color to wrap around the *lecteurs*. The pink and blue rain (page 133), which hang suspended in the middle of the room as if to saturate their surroundings with an element that signifies and defines space, share the same experiential underpinnings. Colors, and specifically his own International Klein Blue, held symbolic value for Klein. Blue was the hue and form of his understanding of nothingness, of the pure immaterial sensibility that radiated from his paintings and sculptures.

In his plan for the installation of *Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges* [Bas-Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges] from 1959 (page 144), the space was saturated with canvases and sponges. The sponges were positioned as the *lecteurs*, the ideal viewers, and, due to their own materiality, they stood for "beings soaked in blue pigment,"²⁰ awash in blue immaterial sensibility to the core of their own being. If Klein's International Klein Blue was the tangible manifestation of immaterial space and sensibility, the impregnated sponges were therefore one with space. The sponges represent the viewer, not just in front of the paintings, but in the middle of the space—at one with the space. Symbolically and pragmatically, the artist chose sponges because they absorb. They can be transfigured.

In his essay "Transfiguration," Klein described this process:

To transfigure oneself means thinking at every instant about the essence of purity; breathing does the rest; meaning in and on the physical body; it distributes a new life which is imprinted on every single atom and which reconstitutes all the infinitesimal particles of the ordinary physical body into a transfigured body.²¹

This notion goes back to what the artist called the "new aristocracy of humans"²² who would be able to dissolve themselves in the infinite. It is easy to see why Klein was often labeled a messianic mystic, but this characterization might be a sim-

plistic way of avoiding the true import of his ideas or an opportunity to dismiss his statements as regressive and delusional. In many ways, the immaterial world that Klein perceived and sought to convey does not seem so absurd today, in a time when wireless communication allows us to be, in some sense, present everywhere, with everyone, all the time.

This atomized body is truly at the center of Klein's work: the first Anthropometry (IKB Godet, 1958, page 134) represents the artist's initial use of "living brushes," although in this instance, the models' painted bodies rubbed on the canvas produced a monochrome painting rather than the distinct imprints of bodily form that would come to be so recognizable as Anthropometries; Suaire de Mondo Cane, with its ghostly, translucent medium, shows the bodies being invaded by space. Hiroshima, 1961 (pages 168–69), dramatically illustrates humans atomically dissolved into the infinite. Hardly a political statement about the bomb, Hiroshima is not Klein's Guernica²³; the painting reveals that the "Blue Revolution" was scientifically possible. Klein's revolt would not happen in blood, but in blue. He envisaged atomizing the body with perceptive sensibility and space rather than with deadly radioactivity.

Similarly, Klein's Le Saut dans le vide [Leap into the Void], 1960 (pages 194–95), has less to do with the history of performance art as we know it than with a conviction that he could levitate, that his body could truly enter space. This gesture, symbolic or not, was not about leaping across the disciplines and challenging the limits of sculpture through the use of the body and its own limits, but was focused on creating a powerful, genuine out-of-body experience.

In an insightful review of B. W. Joseph's book Beyond the Dream Syndicate,²⁴ Jason Smith discussed the concepts of the "molecular child" and the "molecular interval." These two ideas are fascinating when considered in relation to Klein. "Molecular child" is borrowed from Gilles Deleuze's writing about Dziga Vertov and Man with a Movie Camera in Cinema I: The Movement-Image; Deleuze described a constellation of micro perceptions that give birth to the "molecular child," or the new communist man:

It is not that Vertov considered beings to be machines, but rather machines which had a 'heart' and which 'revolved, trembled, jolted about and threw out flashes of lightning,' as man could also do, using other movements and under other conditions, but always in interaction with each other. What Vertov discovered in contemporary life was the molecular child...the material child, as much as systems which are called mechanisms or machines."²⁵

Ultimately, Klein's "Blue Revolution" was not exclusively an aesthetic one, but a social one. Yet it needed to start with the object and aesthetics in order to model his long-term ambition toward a new or at least different society.

The notion of "molecular interval" is borrowed from Carlos Castaneda's book The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way to Knowledge,²⁶ in which the author described how the absorption of peyote, monitored by a shaman (Don Juan), led him to have an out-of-body experience. Ultimately, Castaneda was learning about the act of perceiving energy directly as it flows in the universe; such a perception, or what he called a "dark sea of awareness,"²⁷ is the culminating pinnacle of shamanism. What Castaneda experienced was the potential for human beings to transcend everything that is known. The shaman's quest, therefore, is to reach a level of pure energy and become an inorganic being. This journey is a cognitive revolt, striving toward complete freedom. Klein may not have been a shaman, or perhaps he was (as the Italian artist Alighiero e Boetti was once labeled) both a shaman and a showman,²⁸ but his "Blue Revolution," his blue sea of awareness, was transcendence leading toward the true realization of immaterial being.

Did Klein succeed in freeing himself from artistic and social conventions?

I would argue yes, for his most radical achievements lie not at the center of his creative endeavor, but at the periphery. Through his performances, actions, theater, music, film, and architectural works, Klein did free himself, by envisioning a utopian world.

His self-liberation from artistic conventions was made apparent in his essay "Le vide m'appartient" [The Void Belongs to Me], in which he stated: "...from now on I do not wish to say anything anymore, I do not wish to do anything anymore, not even go to the exhibitions I am invited to participate in and I insist my name not be mentioned in catalogues."²⁹ And in 1959, for an exhibition in Antwerp with Robert Breer, Pol Bury, Heinz Mack, Enzo Mari, Bruno Munari, Mecker, Dieter Rot, Jesus Raphael Soto, Daniel Spoerri, and Jean Tinguely, Klein did not contribute any artworks *per se*, but merely attended the opening and announced a statement he borrowed from Gaston Bachelard: "First there is nothing, then there is a deep nothing; then there is a blue depth."³⁰ In so doing, he signified that his presence was enough; simply by being there he had altered the nature of the space with his immaterial sensibility. No traditional art object was necessary any longer.

Figure 6
Yves Klein presenting his
statement on immaterial
presence at the Hesselhuis,
Antwerp, June 1959



6

Klein's most spectacular statement, though, remains his presentation of the void at Galerie Iris Clert the previous year. Titled La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée [The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility], the exhibition, which came to be known as Le vide [The Void] (pages 109–12), comprised an empty white gallery filled with the artist's sensibility. Klein's void, if it is even accurate in his case to refer to it as a void—an obscene, absolute emptiness—is grounded more in an Eastern understanding of presence and absence. The artist lived in Japan from 1952 to 1954 and was certainly familiar with Zen Buddhism's conception of nothingness: an absence that still retains the holistic fullness of potential and absolute awareness. Klein's sense of the immaterial is therefore less appropriately part of art history's dematerialization of the art object, as Lucy Lippard has theorized,³¹ than it is part of a broader, more global history of art and ideas beyond a Western modernist tradition.

However, Klein's work does continue to be tied to this Western tradition in the sense that he remained essential as artist/author. He did not kill the author, as

Roland Barthes would do. Therefore, one must ask if it would even be possible to re-install *Le vide* for an Yves Klein exhibition. I believe it would be impossible, as Klein, the artist, would need to be present in the room to fill it with his immaterial sensibility, to install the state of absolute awareness—an absolute awareness that the walls of the gallery could not contain but could retain. Klein's conception of art, of his painting and performance, as well as immaterial sensibility, defied language as much as it challenged the conventions of the traditional exhibition. The most accurate articulation of Klein's creative process and intentions might be the French poet Charles Estienne's *cris bleus* [blue cries].

When Klein asked Estienne to produce *cris bleus* in 1957, he was certainly aware of the experimentation of François Dufrêne and his *Crirhythmes*, a form of sound poetry that defies the implicit structure and rules of verbal communication. Klein was also aware of Antonin Artaud's theatrical defiance of the status quo, as when Artaud recorded *Conférence de la Sorbonne* in 1933, and of the power of the poet's voice in *Pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu* [To Have Done with the Judgment of God], in which Artaud cries, screams, grunts, and uses onomatopoeia as his means of utterance. Produced for French National Radio in 1947, Artaud's performance was immediately censured in 1948.

Klein's work resonates with Artaud's defiance of the complacency of conventional theater; Klein's 1959 text "Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art" [Overcoming the Problematics of Art], might have been his way of echoing Artaud's voice. In *Le Théâtre et son double* [The Theatre and Its Double], 1938, and, in particular, the essay "The Theater of Cruelty," published in this volume, Artaud exposed theater to multiple modes of expression and scenic elements, including sound, color, screams, and movements, in order to bring the audience fully into the action, to be physically affected by it—changes he deemed necessary to empower theater to remain relevant beyond the mere spectacle.

In "Theater of the Void," published in *Dimanche*³² (pages 78–81), Klein outlined his own theory, in which he emphasized that theater could no longer be synonymous with representation or spectacle. Klein's theater was a spectacle enacted without actors, without stage design, without a stage, without an author, without an audience. The theater of the future was, for Klein, an empty room: the theater of the void. The only time that truly matters is the time of the theater experience; the only character of import is the spectator. The theater is its own reality, as the monochromes are their own reality. Klein believed that in the history of dramatic experimentation, only Artaud sensed the coming of what he was proposing.

In *Dimanche*, nevertheless, the artist went on to outline a series of theater projects ranging from hiring passersby as actors but not asking them to do anything besides just sit, unnoticed, amidst the crowd while the audience was in the theater. The theater would be closed the night of the "premiere."

Another project, *Sensibilité pure* [Pure Sensibility], consisted of chaining spectators to their chairs and eventually gagging them during the presentation as a security measure. The curtain would rise with an acoustic "monotonous inundation." The stage, white, with curved corners, would remain empty. Then beautiful girls, nude or in bikinis, would mingle with the male spectators while handsome, naked men would attend the female audience members. After the first half hour, the fizzing sound would fade. Another half hour would pass in absolute silence, during which the spectators would stare at the empty stage. Then the curtain would lower and the audience would be freed.

Before the proposed stage experimentations outlined in *Dimanche*, Klein had in 1954 also completed a series of monochromatic watercolors, *Monochromes jaune, rouge, et vert* (scène de théâtre) [Yellow, Red, and Green Monochromes (Theater Scene)] (page 72) and *Monochrome rouge* (scène de théâtre) [Red

Monochrome (Theater Scene)] (page 73), which were to be installed on theater stages rather than on walls, disrupting the conventions of both exhibitions and theater, suggesting that painting and artists have fallen in the realm of spectacle and entertainment; thus Klein anticipated Guy Debord's La Société du Spectacle [The Society of Spectacle], 1967, by thirteen years.

In many ways, Klein's conception of theater as the location of social order was akin to the German playwright Bertolt Brecht's. Klein used the stage to blur the lines between public and private, spectator and author, contemplative passivity and active engagement. For both Brecht and Klein, theater had very little to do with spectacle or with institutions where one can witness rows upon rows of people "transported" in a largely inert state, victims of their own emotions. Klein strove to abolish the traditional notion of stage, and, therefore, anticipated the experimental performance art that flourished in the 1960s and 1970s. It is difficult not to recall the premeditated absurdity of Fluxus performances under the oversight of George Maciunas or Ben Vautier: trapping audiences inside or outside of a theater; transporting the spectators in a bus deep into a forest. It is also difficult to look at Klein's scènes de théâtre without thinking about the infamous "frustrating happening" staged by the collective Buren Mosset Parmentier Toroni (BMPT) in the auditorium of the Musée des Art Décoratifs in Paris on June 2, 1967. After inviting the audience to a happening, the four artists left the attendees facing four canvases displayed on the stage. This disavowal of what it meant to engage with art, as well as the established rituals associated with art salons, exhibitions, openings, and socializing, as well as the mores attached to theatrical performances, resonates with Klein's attempts to antagonize and evade artistic and societal conventions throughout the seven years of his creative production.

While Klein first conceived of his Symphonie Monoton-Silence [Monotone-Silence Symphony] in 1947, he did not actually transcribe the piece, which consists of one note sustained by the orchestra for twenty minutes followed by twenty minutes of silence, until 1961. Despite coming from vastly different backgrounds, Klein and the American composer John Cage (1912–92) both opened many doors musically and philosophically, offering a radical re-envisioning of music and the experience of listening. For Cage, silence was about the desire to replace mastery, to let go of the control embedded in verbal or musical communication in favor of an open-ended play of ideas. His silence was a form of resistance, and his 1950 essay "Lecture on Nothing" might find some commonality with Klein's "Theater of the Void." Cage's silence opposed the status quo of dominant culture, as did Klein's symphony and his monochromes.

Cage's most groundbreaking and provocative legacy is the belief, implicit in his work, that music cannot be separated from other sound; it is a continuous presence in our environment, and it is listening and perception that are intermittent. Art is everywhere, and it is up to us to capture it. While working on his film One, 1992, an abstract meditation on light and shadow, Cage declared: "I look forward to the pleasure of seeing a film that does not have a plot, doesn't have characters, which has, so to speak, nothing."³⁴ This notion is not far from Klein's ideas about painting with no narrative, theater with no plot, music with no melodic progression.

Klein's Symphonie Monoton-Silence also holds a place in the history of avant-garde minimal music, which later included, among others, the Theater of Eternal Music, a mid-1960s musical collective formed by La Monte Young, which included John Cale, Angus MacLise, Terry Jennings, Marian Zazeela, Tony Conrad, and Billy Name. This group focused on experimental drone music and the sensory saturation of uniformity, and was stylistically linked to the neo-Dada concepts and aesthetics of Fluxus and John Cage's oeuvre. Theater of Eternal Music experimented with an aesthetic immersion in constant sound, sustaining one note for hours,

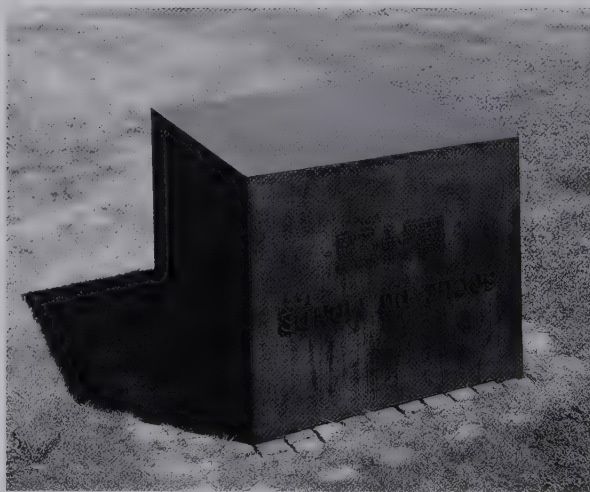
Figure 7
Piero Manzoni
Socle du Monde
[Base of the World], 1961
Iron and bronze
32 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{16}$ in.
(82 x 100 x 100 cm)
Heart—Herning Museum of
Contemporary Art, Denmark
© 2010 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome

Figure 8
Excerpt of letter from
Mathais Goeritz to Yves Klein,
July 30, 1960

Figure 9
Luis Barragán, architect, in
collaboration with Mathais
Goeritz, *Satélite Towers*
[Satellite Towers], Mexico City,
1957–58
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allowing musician and audience to reach a state of transcendence induced by pure resonance. In Klein's *Symphonie Monoton-Silence*, time no longer flows, it no longer accomplishes anything; the moment defies the notion of continuity.

Envisioning performance outside the confines of traditional spectacle, Klein conceived of a project called *Capture du vide* [Capture of the Void],³⁵ for which an entire city or country would serve as the stage. At a designated hour, the population would be invited to return home, and the outside world would be left empty, void, silenced for two hours—but not necessarily silent, just devoid of human noises, thus naturally incorporating ambient urban and natural sounds into the project. After two hours, Klein proposed that he would be thrown alone into this vacant world, thereby being made aware of an environment free of people. The artist's experience would then serve as a measure of the absence of human presence, addressing directly the deep impact people have on the world and on nature. Klein's scenario is echoed by writer Alan Weisman's recently published book *The World Without Us*,³⁶ a study of humanity's effect on the environment and the planet, which ultimately explores a world free of the burden of human civilization. Klein's interest in this subject is underscored in his unpublished essay "Naturométrie" [Naturometry],³⁷ and another controversially titled "Je raserai tout à la surface de la terre" [I Will Raze Everything at the Surface of the Earth].³⁸ The artist needed to appropriate the world to accomplish his ambition and "Blue Revolution." Klein's aesthetic program, which could not be contained by galleries or theaters, could be viewed as a global, environmental one, and his conception of immaterial sensibility, if applied to the world around us, could be brought to bear on one of the most crucial debates of our time: the environmental crisis and humanity's impact on nature.



7

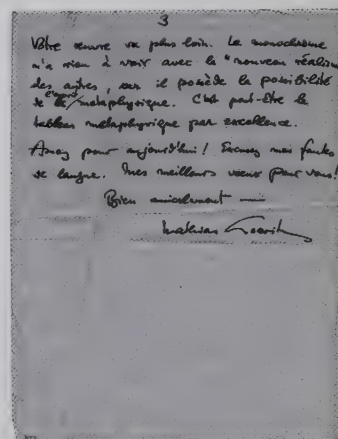
Extending his explorations to the planetary level in his *Cosmogonies* series, he focused on earth and its elements. By capturing wind and rain on a canvas tied to the roof of his car, by painting a globe, by casting planetary reliefs, Klein filled the universe with sensibility, beyond the confines and expectations of what had long been considered the art object (pages 153–59). In 1961, Italian artist Piero Manzoni created *Socle du Monde* [Base of the World] (figure 7), a large square pedestal on which is inscribed, upside down, the work's title. That same year, in the same way that Klein had signed the sky in Nice in 1947, Manzoni signed "human sculptures," thereby transforming the people of the earth and, by extension, the entire world into a sculpture. Every aspect, each nook and each worm, human and nonhuman, was, from that point on, a Manzoni sculpture.

Yet Klein's Cosmogonies are slightly different. Manzoni, as radical as his gesture was, remained within the framework of art. Klein's vision extended beyond. He did not seek to turn the whole world into art with works such as his Cosmogonies. It was about embracing perception in the spirit of John Cage, a continuous, time-less awareness of and engagement with pure sensibility, liberated from materiality—a pure aesthetic experience of the world. It was an experience that would lead Klein toward the most complex aspects of his work: his research dedicated to *architecture de l'air* [air architecture], urban design, and social renewal. Earth, wind (or air), and fire were the primary materials of his architectural explorations, illustrated by hundreds of sketches and plans, articulated in many essays, reaching beyond classical architecture to involve movement, from sketches and a model for a self-propelled pneumatic rocket, to aeromagnetic sculptures and self-levitating tubes (developed with Jean Tinguely), which, using the passage of air and hydrogen, would levitate, defying gravity, resolving the problem of sculpture requiring a pedestal or support, and could possibly be applied to architecture (pages 252–53 and 260–61).³⁹ For several years, with architects Werner Ruhnau and Claude Parent and designer Roger Tallon, the artist investigated the possibilities of immaterial architecture, such as roofs and walls made of air, which would regulate the temperature, and, at the same time, protect interiors, as well as designs for creating public plazas organized around fountains of fire and water (pages 230–31 and 235).

In 1969, architecture critic Reyner Banham wrote a revolutionary essay titled “The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment” in which he articulated the importance for architecture in reconciling human needs, environmental matters, and technological progress. He stressed the importance of environmental engineering in architecture and design and strongly advocated for the strategic use of natural energy, such as solar power, when planning a building. His concern beyond human comfort demonstrated a sense of civic responsibility at a time of growing anxiety about the depletion of Earth's energy resources and the pollution of the biosphere. His research was not motivated by the utopian vision of Klein, but perhaps only because Klein belonged to another time when energy and environment were not yet recognized to be in crisis. Yet Klein somehow anticipated a discourse that is now central to our culture. Living with no traces, leaving no traces, no carbon footprint.

Klein was extremely committed to air architecture and, according to his lecture at the Sorbonne on June 3, 1959, titled “L'évolution de l'art vers l'immatériel” [The Evolution of Art Toward the Immaterial],⁴⁰ it was the pinnacle of his aesthetic investigation. He even corresponded with architect Philip Johnson, who collected Klein's artwork, comparing their ideas and architectural projects⁴¹ (pages 246–51), although Klein eventually complained that Johnson “borrowed” his idea for a fountain of water and fire that the architect planned to have built at the 1964 New York World's Fair.⁴²

Klein also exchanged letters in 1960 with the Mexican sculptor, painter, architect, and poet Mathias Goeritz (figure 8). Goeritz is primarily known for his concrete Towers of Ciudad Satélite, built in Mexico City in collaboration with architect Luis Barragan (figure 9), the aesthetic of which seems to match Klein's desire to “raze everything on the surface of Earth, until it is flat and fill valleys with mountains and then pour concrete all over the continents.”⁴³ Goeritz was interested in publishing an article on Klein in the magazine *Arquitectura*. In a fascinating letter, Goeritz explained that he believed Klein's work was the antidote to nihilistic individuals and that it went beyond *Nouveau Réalisme*, offering the possibility of a new metaphysical framework.⁴⁴ This exchange and Goeritz's interest in Klein's work demonstrates the influence of the artist's thinking beyond his artistic outputs,



8



9

and the ways in which his ideas not only challenged prevailing notions of what constituted art, but also extended to the world of experimental architecture and experimental lifestyle.

As visionary as Klein's ideas were, with links to Antonio Sant'Elia's Futurist architecture and even resonating with Hans Scharoun and Bruno Taut's utopian visions, architecture, for Klein, was a conduit, a stage leading to a more ambitious, holistic project:

The architecture of air has in our minds always been just a transitional stage, but today we present it as a means for the climatization of geographical spaces.

The principle of privacy, still present in our world, has vanished in this city, which is bathed in light and completely open to the outside.

A new atmosphere of human intimacy prevails.

The inhabitants live in the nude.

The primitive patriarchal structure of the family no longer exists.

The community is perfect, free, individualistic, impersonal.

The principal activity of the inhabitants: leisure.⁴⁵

Klein's "Blue Revolution" was no longer merely focused on art or aesthetics. He dreamt of a new society, and his art—the monochromes, sponges, Fire Paintings, and so on—were the vehicle for his vision, mock-ups of a better world, or at least a different one. Klein had some knowledge of the subversive Situationist and Lettrist milieu, and his "Project for an Architecture of Air" demonstrates his connection with the polemical ideas developed by the Dutch artist Constant, the architect of the Situationists. Constant developed New Babylon, a minutely detailed utopian plan for the city of the future. He sought to formulate a new urbanism, detailed through countless drawings, models, sketches, collages, essays, manifestos, conferences, and films, striving to erode conventional social structures.

New Babylon envisioned a society in which the need to work would be replaced with the creative play of interacting desires; it would be a place where traditional architecture would disintegrate alongside the social institutions that had supported it for so long. In Constant's plans, a network of immense, multi-level interior spaces proliferate, covering the planet. These interconnected subdivisions were to float above the ground.

Klein was certainly thinking along the same lines at a time, the late 1950s, when a spirit of revolution was in the air. The world was shaking itself out of the postwar atmosphere and freeing itself from outdated modes, many of which would not survive the revolutionary moments to come in the 1960s and 1970s. Klein's philosophical notions and artistic practice certainly played a role in these changes; when he declared, "I will raze everything at the surface of Earth," he was speaking, at least in part, about obsolete values, models, and ways of thinking.

Klein's work is a project for a revolution phrased with his own means and language, pigments, canvases, sponges. It might be viewed as comparable with the way in which *Nouveau Roman* was conceived as a literary form, rejecting the protocols of traditional novels articulated around plot, action, and characters. *Nouveau Roman* brought forward a concept of the novel predicated on things, objects, and material details rather than a meta-narrative. Klein was interrogating painting, and art in general, in a similarly revolutionary way. In notes written on December 27, 1954, he observed:

I believe that in the future one will get to painting only paintings of one color at a time and without anything other than color.... In literature there might be a way to get to the same point...a funny novel without plot, without closure, without subject, without message, and only with an atmosphere, a feeling of the same quality, very regular, profound and unified....⁴⁶

This statement parallels what Alain Robbe-Grillet described in Pour Un Nouveau Roman [For a Nouveau Roman]⁴⁷ as the future of the novel beyond naturalism, fantasy, and metaphysics, embracing a new form of realism freed from the cult of humanism, less anthropocentric, without protagonists or linear narrative. This kind of novel would offer a "hole in the narrative," no longer a representation or record of reality outside of itself, but a reality all its own. This is a new realism in the same way that Klein's monochrome paintings puncture a hole in the pictorial tradition.

One of the most iconic examples of *Nouveau Roman* is Alain Robbe-Grillet's Project for a Revolution in New York City, published in 1970; an uneventful novel, a flat plot comprising a succession of erotic, sadistic details unfolding in a urban landscape where intimacy appears to be obsolete, in a city doomed to be erased from the surface of earth. This text resonates with Klein's idea of painting as a restrictive medium that he could overcome—a traditional art form that could give way to the pursuit of a critical means to represent the possibility of a different world.

Klein's embracing of a revolutionary spirit is further demonstrated in the letter he sent to Fidel Castro (figure 10), applauding the "success of [Castro's] revolutionary enterprise,"⁴⁸ and complimenting his courage, honesty, and audacity, as well as conveying the artist's own revolutionary views.

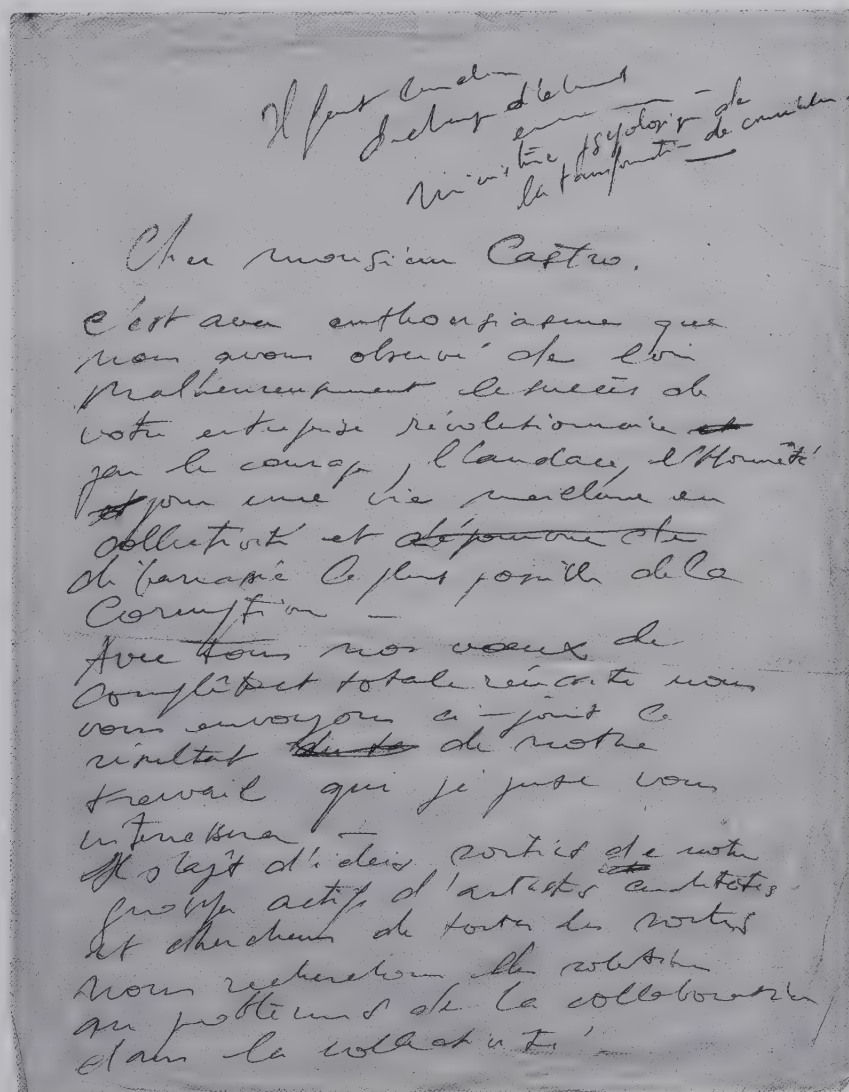


Figure 11
Yves Klein's and Rotraut's
tickets to Disneyland, Anaheim,
California, 1961



11

Klein was a paradox, as was his time. In terms of revolutionary architecture, the mid- to late 1950s witnessed another project dedicated to a better collective future, a visionary plan that had nothing to do with International Situationism or Communism—Tomorrowland and Disneyland. Klein visited Disneyland in 1961 and experienced firsthand Walt Disney's utopian vision (figure 11). But even if Klein and Disney's dreams of urban planning appear similar, Disney was inspired by the very American model of a small town main street, yet, influenced by recent scientific and technological innovations, he was also fascinated by an optimistic view of a comforting yet space-age future. Klein's revolution was neither technological nor political but, rather, aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual. Most importantly, it was for real; although more abstract in nature, Klein's "Blue Revolution" was as rational as the artist was himself a realist. To emphasize this reality, Klein wrote that "the theory of immaterialization denies the spirit of science fiction."⁴⁹

The "Blue Revolution" was not a fantastical, disembodied dream for some possible future, but was grounded in the potential for change that Klein recognized in the present. The artist's revolutionary vision is summed up in his 1961 painting *Architecture de l'Air* [Air Architecture] (page 264), which encompasses the most salient aspects of the artist's work: the molecular bodies of the Anthropometries floating in space; International Klein Blue; the framework for an Eden encompassing urban landscapes, and a manifesto:

Air conditioning on the surface of our globe.

...

The technical and scientific conclusion of our civilization is buried in the depths of the earth and ensures
the absolute control of the Climate

on the surface of all the continents
which have become vast
communal living rooms.

...

It is a sort of return to the garden of Eden of the legend (1951).

...

The advent of a new society destined
to undergo deep transformations
in its very condition itself. Intimacy, both personal
and in the family, will disappear. An impersonal
ontology will be developed.

The willpower of Man will at last regulate life
on a constantly "wonderful" level.

Man is so free
he can

even levitate!

His occupation: leisure.

The obstacles that
traditional architecture used to put up with
will be eliminated.

Body care will occur through new methods,
such as "The air bed."⁵⁰

Freedom—this is the ultimate Klein, complete with all his contradictions. The quest to be free is for Klein, who wrote that "being satisfied is mediocre,"⁵¹ the impulse toward—the leap toward—uncertain yet pivotal possibilities.

Klein's "Blue Revolution" was, and is, a nondenominational one. His revolution is of the same blood as Deleuze's molecular child, stimulated by continuous immaterial sensibility, so subtly nuanced yet expansive that no single essay or exhibition can truly capture its significance. This is the paradox of Yves Klein's work. As beautiful, startling, and convincing as this or any retrospective may be, it only makes visible the ashes of his artistic process. The true artwork is everywhere around us, in rain and wind and cockroaches⁵² and fire, from Saint Rita to the entire atmosphere, in everything that Klein penetrated and re-imagined through his creative process.

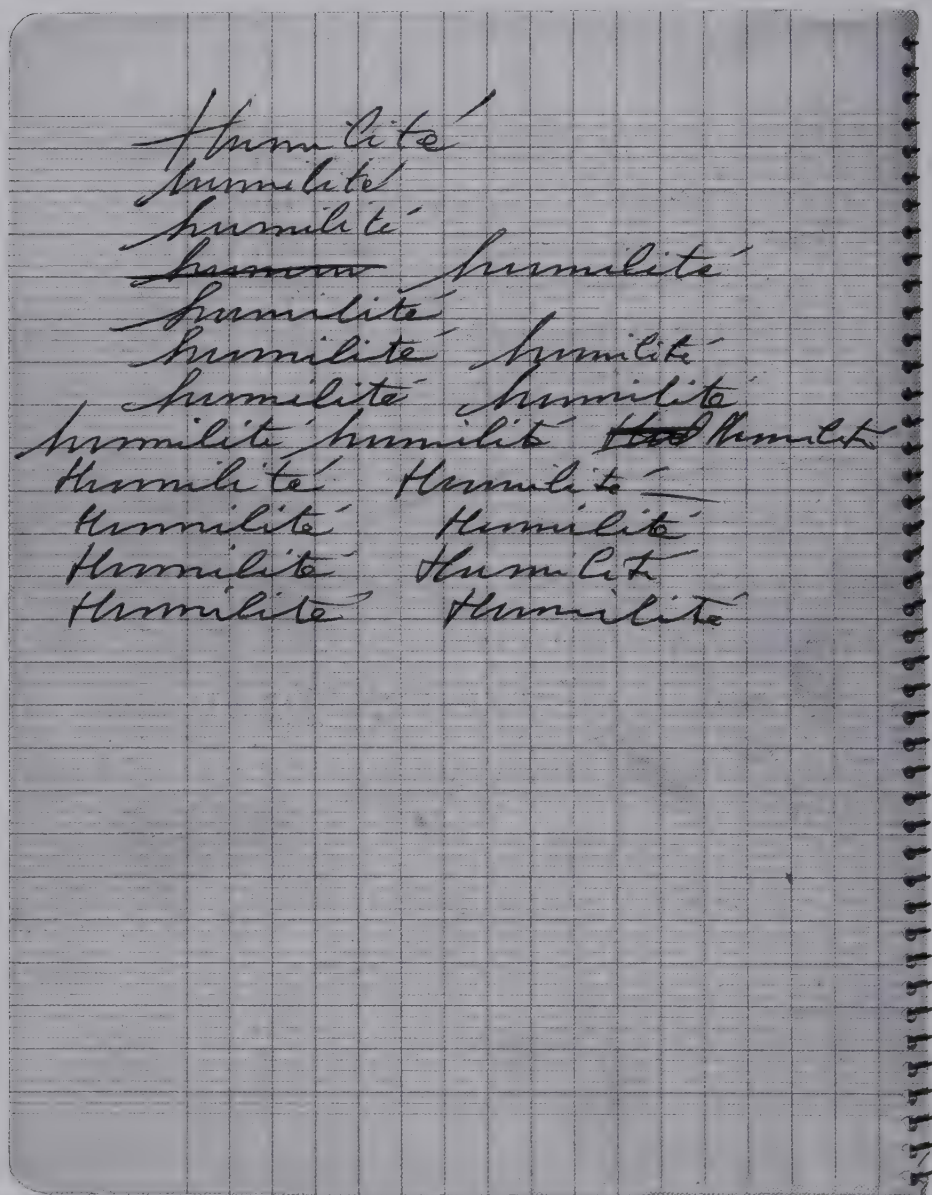
Thus, to respect Klein's desire to enter space and immaterial sensibility, the only viable retrospective of the artist's work could be conceived as follows: select the most beautiful and striking of his works in private and public collections; bring them, even if at great expense, to your institution; install them with as much care as if the future of art was at stake; then close the galleries to the public for forty-eight hours; de-install the exhibition and return all the pieces to their owners; open the empty, pristine galleries to visitors; only if it seems necessary, broadcast Charles Estienne's *cris bleus* in the galleries, which are by this point emancipated from art objects, but saturated with the essence of infinite space, immaterial sensibility, possibility. The viewers would then experience "*les plein pouvoirs*" [the full powers]⁵³ of their own awareness, and the exhibition would amaze the vision, although not the eyes. As the final touch, serve methylene blue cocktails, the same Klein served at his openings, which make one's urine blue for twenty-four hours. The spectators would enter the world pregnant with Klein's "Blue Revolution," which they would then spread, making the world blue.

This would be marvelous. It will happen, one day; the day we will be able to admit collectively that the world is, as Yves Klein discovered, "flat and square."⁵⁴ Then the exhibition would not be measured in terms of success or failure, because it would be immeasurable. Until the day when society at large is ready truly to

Figure 12
Yves Klein, "Humilité Humilité
Humilité" [Humility Humility
Humility], 1957

encounter Klein's radical concepts (figure 12), until we truly understand that the world of ideas can exist beyond material manifestations and traces, we, and art and social institutions, will remain incomplete, and Yves Klein will continue to be misunderstood. Yet this misunderstanding might actually expose possibilities, for definitive comprehension often blinds one from truly seeing, from fully welcoming the mystery and power of immaterial sensibility and accepting the transformation of our very notion of the nature and meaning of art.

Let's not forget that when Albert Camus wrote in 1958 "*Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs*" [With the void, full powers], he was not only assessing aesthetic powers, but also was commenting on General de Gaulle's seizing constitutional full power in an attempt to resolve a conflict away from home—the Algerian War. With his full power came the beginning of a social revolution, and, ultimately, the end of an era. We hope our Klein "Blue Revolution," starting in Washington, could today again signify a change beyond the walls of the museum.



NOTES

Special thanks to Deborah Horowitz and Caitlin Woolsey for their assistance with this essay.

1 Paul Valéry, "The Conquest of Ubiquity," in *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, vol. 13, *Aesthetics*, ed. Jackson Mathews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 225.

2 Yves Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," 47, and "The Monochrome Adventure," 143, in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, ed. and trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007) [hereinafter *YKW*].

3 Interview with Rotraut Klein-Moquay by the author, 2004.

4 Paul Eluard, *Shadows and Sun/Ombres et Soleil: Poems and Prose (1913–1952)*, trans. C. Buckley (Durham, NH: Oyster River Press, 1995).

5 Yves Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*, Yves Klein Archives.

6 Yves Klein, 1957–1958: *Je peins d'après modèle*, Yves Klein Archives.

7 Yves Klein, "La Loi Originale du Sujet Connaissant," in *Classeur Mon Livre*.

8 Yves Klein, journal entry, Saturday, 7 [September] 1957, in *YKW*, 14.

9 Yves Klein, journal entry, Friday, 23 August 1957, in *YKW*, 13.

10 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

11 Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in *YKW*, 141.

12 Klein, "La Loi Originale du Sujet Connaissant."

13 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

14 Ibid.

15 Quoted in Daniel Birnbaum,

"Eyes," *Magazin 3* (Stockholm, 1995).

16 Yves Klein, "Dialogue avec moi-même." This title was assigned posthumously in 1983 to a tape-recorded stream of consciousness Klein documented in his apartment in Paris. See *YKW*, 207, which follows the transcription made by Marie-Anne Sichére and Didier Semin.

17 Yves Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche': Five Rooms," in *YKW*, 115–16.

18 Warhol wanted to have *Shadows* installed as a décor in the nightclub Studio 54 during the heyday of disco music in New York.

19 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, 1937, representing the bombing of *Guernica* during the Spanish Civil War.

24 Jason Smith, "Minor Keys: Jason Smith on Branden W. Joseph's *Beyond the Dream Syndicate*," *Artforum* XLVII, no. 2 (October 2008), 89.

25 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 39.

26 Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way to Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

27 Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan*.

28 Annemarie Sauzeau Boetti and Alighiero e Boetti, *Alighiero e Boetti: Shaman—Showman* (Cologne: Walther König, 2004).

29 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

30 Klein quoted Bachelard often, including reading aloud a segment from Bachelard's *Air and Dreams* (chap. 6, "The Blue Sky"), in which he describes the blue depths

of the sky, during his speech to the Gelsenkirchen Opera House Commission in 1958. Klein again quoted this line in his text "Overcoming the Problematics of Art." See *YKW*, 41 and 56.

31 Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

32 Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche': The Theater of the Void," in *YKW*, 101–05.

33 As Marcel Duchamp, who attended the event, labeled it.

34 John Cage in conversation with Henning Lohner in *Writings Through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 290.

35 Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche': Capture of the Void," in *YKW*, 107–08.

36 Alan Weisman, *The World Without Us* (New York: Picador), 2007.

37 Yves Klein, "Naturométrie," in *Classeur Mon Livre*.

38 Yves Klein, "Je raserai tout à la surface de la terre," unpublished essay, Yves Klein Archives. In this essay, Klein writes: "I will raze everything at the surface of Earth, until it is flat. I will fill the valleys with mountains, then I would pour concrete all over the continent...." If exploring Klein's influence on American art, one might consider Michael Heizer's monumental, ongoing *Earthwork, The City*, in light of this statement by Klein.

39 "Yves Klein has been seeking already for a number of years, at the fringes of his monochrome work, to free sculpture from its pedestal." Excerpt from typewritten document, Yves Klein Archives, trans. Klaus Ottmann.

40 See *YKW*, 72–98.

41 Yves Klein, Letter to Philip Johnson, April 10, 1959, Yves Klein Archives.

42 Yves Klein, Letter to Philip Johnson, October 2, 1961, Yves Klein Archives.

43 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

44 "In the following issues [of *ARQUITECTURA*] I would like to also have articles on Tinguely, Armand, and Hains. Maybe you can help me—I would be really grateful. Personally I am 'against' their art, but I do not doubt that—in the general confusion of life today—they are the most 'advanced' and most interesting artists of the present moment. Unfortunately, I no longer believe in art as an expression of nihilistic individuality—the negativity itself they advance is in the long run too boring, and only the declaration of the 'Rights of God' can save the situation of modern humanity from its profound spiritual poverty—with all its logic of the 'Right of Man.' The current art is an expression of this splendid misery. Your work goes further. The monochrome has nothing to do with the 'new realism' of others because it possesses the possibility of a metaphysical spirit. It is perhaps the ultimate metaphysical picture. Enough for now! Excuse my language mistakes. My best wishes to you! Warm regards—Mathias Coeritz." Pages two and three of Mathias Coeritz, letter to Yves Klein, July 7, 1960, Yves Klein Archives, trans. Klaus Ottmann.

45 Yves Klein and Werner Ruhna, "Project for an Architecture of Air," in *YKW*, 174–75.

46 Klein, *Classeur Mon Livre*.

47 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un Nouveau Roman* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1961).

48 "Dear Mr. Castro, It is with enthusiasm that we have observed, unfortunately from afar, the success of your revolutionary enterprise by virtue of your courage, audacity, and honesty for a better collective life that is free of corruption to the greatest degree possible. With all our wishes for a complete and total success, we have enclosed the result of our own work, which we think will be of interest to you. These are ideas that have emerged out of our active group of artists, architects, and researchers of all kinds. We are

seeking solutions to the issues and problems of collective collaboration." Yves Klein, letter to Fidel Castro, 1958, Yves Klein Archives, trans. Klaus Ottmann.

49 Klein and Ruhna, "Project for an Architecture of Air," 174–75.

50 Yves Klein, manifesto inscribed on the painting *Architecture de l'air*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. Translated in Yves Klein: *Air Architecture*, eds. Peter Noever and François Perrin (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 85.

51 Klein, "Dialogue avec moi-même," in *YKW*, 204.

52 Yves Klein invented a board game based on cockroach races, wherein he designed tracks, organized betting evenings, and documented these events with photographs.

53 When writer Albert Camus visited Klein's exhibition *Le vide* at Iris Clert's gallery in 1958, in the guestbook he wrote: "*Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs*." [With the void, full powers].

54 "The Earth is Flat and Square" is the heading of one section of Klein's essay "The Monochrome Adventure," in *YKW*, 162.

PLATES

I

My old Monotone Symphony of 1949, which was performed under my direction, by a small orchestra on March 9, 1960, was destined to create an "after-silence" after all sounds had ended in each of us who were present at that manifestation.

Silence.... This really is my symphony and not the sounds during its performance. This silence is so marvelous because it grants "happenance" and even sometimes the possibility of true happiness, if only for a moment, for a moment whose duration is immeasurable.

To conquer silence, to skin it and cover oneself with its hide, to never be chilled again spiritually. I feel like a vampire face to face with universal space!

Excerpt from "Truth Becomes Reality," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 187–88.

My life should be like my symphony of '49, a continuous sound from its beginning to the end, at once united and universal, having neither beginning nor end.

A duration, which appears and suddenly comes to life, for a time, which is experienced perhaps in feeling, perhaps in the physical body.

From a note titled "Tableaux, et sculptures de 1961," trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Just as I created a "monotone-silence-symphony" in 1947, composed in two parts—one broad continuous sound followed by an equally broad and extended silence, endowed with a limitless dimension—in the same way, I shall attempt to put before you a written painting of the short history of my art, to be followed naturally at the end of my expose by a pure and affective silence.

My expose will close with the creation of a compelling "a posteriori" silence whose existence in our communal space, which is, after all, the space of a single being, is immune to the destructive qualities of physical noise.

Much depends upon the success of my written painting in its initial technical and audible phase. Only then will the extraordinary "a posteriori" silence, in the midst of noise as well as in the cell of physical silence, generate a new and unique zone of pictorial immaterial sensibility.

Excerpt from "Chelsea Hotel Manifesto," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 194–95.

Partition de la Symphonie Monoton-Silence

[Score for Monotone-Silence Symphony]

1947-61

Ink and graphite on paper

16 7/16 x 11 5/8 in. (41.8 x 29.5 cm)

1/0" Klein
Symphonie - "Monoton-Silence"
1947 --- 1961

Durée: 5 ou 7 minutes
Plus 44 secondes de
Silence absolu.

Pour Orchestre
interprétation très vive
et très continue.

3 K.

3 Kb.

3 Co.
(in f)

S

A

T

B

Viol. S.

V

Viol. C.

CB

diviser 6 (donner deux groupes)
qui s'alternent et s'achèvent.

Composition de
l'Orchestre

2	Chantiers
10	Violons
10	Violoncelles
3	Flûtes
3	Hautbois
3	Cordes
3	Contrebasses

Yves Klein as orchestra conductor, Gelsenkirchen (front view)

1959

Black-and-white photograph

6 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (16 x 22.5 cm)

Yves Klein as orchestra conductor, Gelsenkirchen (back view)

1959

Black-and-white photograph

6 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (16 x 22.5 cm)





Monochromes jaune, rouge, et vert (scène de théâtre)
[Yellow, Red, and Green Monochromes (Theater Scene)]
1954
Watercolor and graphite on paper in spiral-bound notebook
5 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. (13.3 x 21 cm)



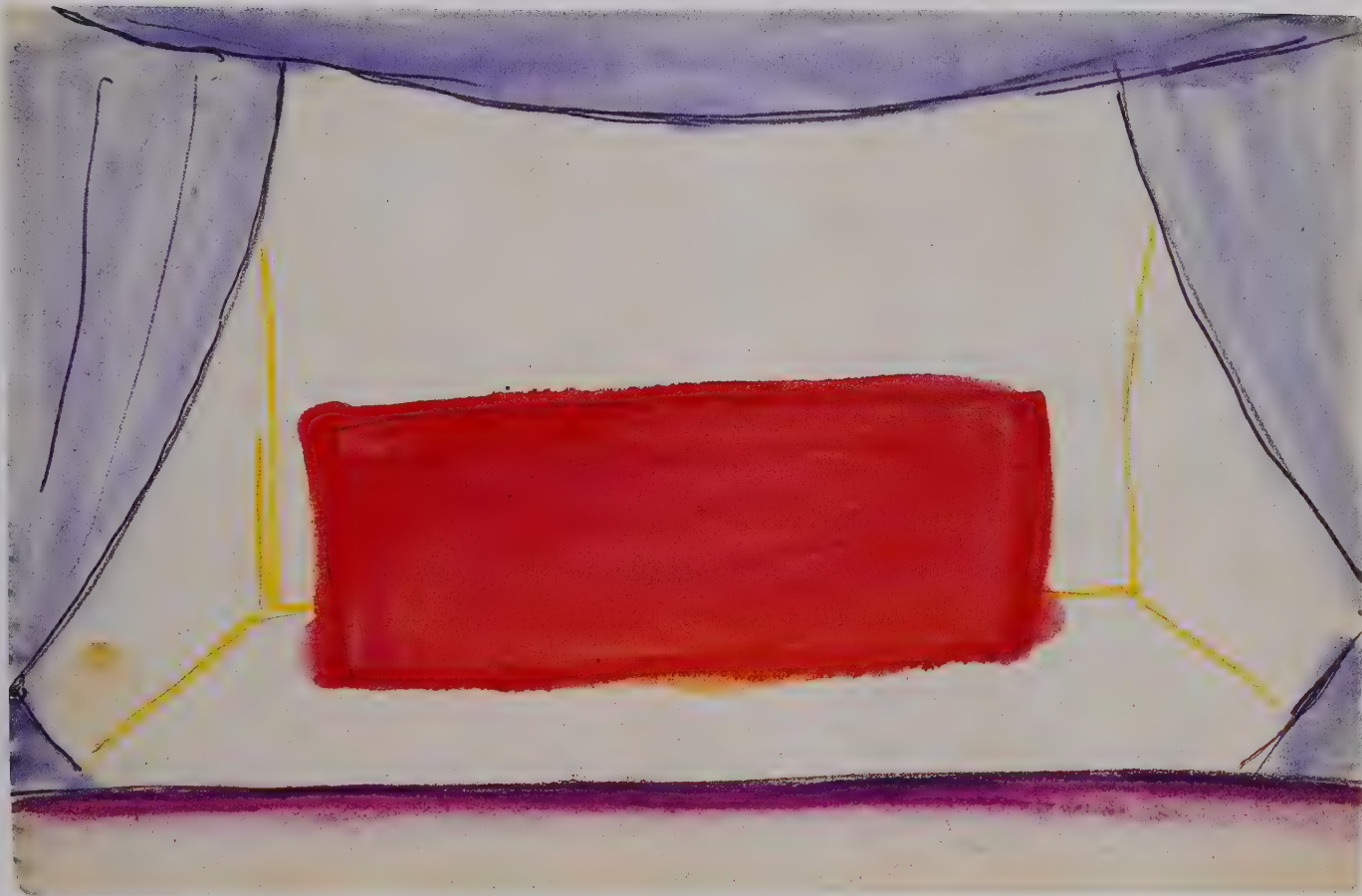
Monochrome rouge (scène de théâtre)

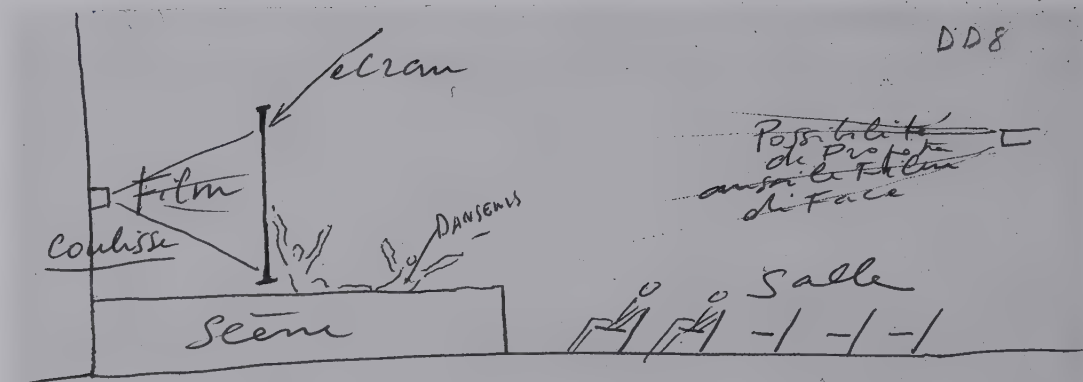
[Red Monochrome (Theater Scene)]

1954

Watercolor and graphite on paper in spiral-bound notebook

5 ¼ x 8 ¼ in. (13.3 x 21 cm)





X - Là, si l'on décide interpréter en ballet, commence à mon avis le rôle du danseur. Au fond de la scène, d'écran, sur lequel est projeté le film, décor mouvant, soit normalement de face, ce qui peut donner des effets curieux de projection sur les danseurs; soit, par derrière, en coulisse (par réflexion dans plusieurs miroirs au fond de scène n'est pas assez profond.) Les danseurs, qui jusqu'à présent se tenaient couchés fermement, invisibles, se relèvent lentement et commencent à danser les contours de la main par exemple puis les tracés digitaux - On peut même incorporer une danse suggestive légèrement érotique de découverte des formes humaines par l'homme caressant la femme et la nature tamille ensuite - - - - - se leurs yeux s'ouvrent, et, ils voient qu'ils étaient nus et se couvrent de feuilles de figuier. ?)

Le dormeur—l'inverse—dessins
[The Sleeper—the Reverse—Drawings]

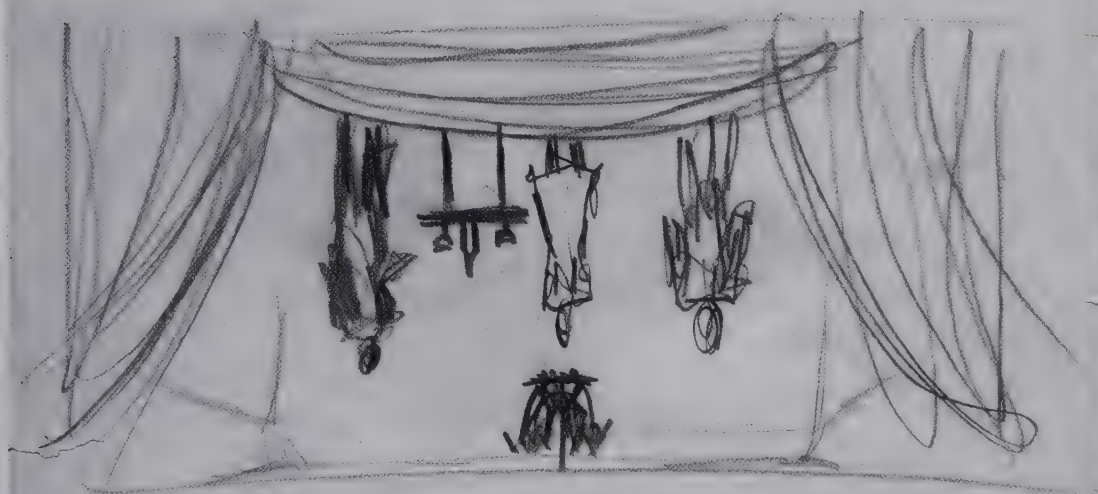
c. 1958

Graphite on paper

10 5/8 x 8 1/4 in. (27 x 21 cm)

DD 9

Le dormeur
l'inverse — dessin



Esquisse de scénario La Guerre (de la ligne et de la couleur) ou (vers la proposition monochrome)
[Outline of a scene for The War (of line and color) or (toward a monochrome proposition)]
1954 (1957)

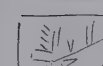
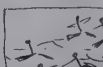
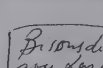
Typescript and ink on paper
10 5/8 x 8 1/4 in. (27 x 21 cm)

2

IMAGE	SON	TEXTE
		Profitant d'un besoin qu'éprouve le premier homme de projeter sa marque hors de lui, la ligne réussit à s'introduire dans le royaume jusqu'ici inviolé de la couleur.
Sur l'image bleue unie soudain apparaît une main (empreinte préhistorique de main - Castello Espagnol Abbé Breuil)	Départ musical	Abel et Cain : Meurtre Rêve Réalité
Lentement la main s'enlève sur l'écran		
		Rapidement maîtrisée la pure couleur, sans couleur universelle dans laquelle baignait celle de l'homme en état de Paradis Terrestre, est emprisonnée, commentent, ciselée, réduite à l'esclavage.
La main disparaît progressivement. 3 doigts, puis 2 seulement dessinent dans l'air des tracés linéaires... Apparaissent alors successivement les tracés aux lignes préhistoriques relevés par l'abbé Breuil à Ormaiztegui de la Pena et Alta Mira Espagnole.	La musique s'écroule suit l'image à l'écran	Dans la joie et le délire de sa victoire perdue, la ligne subjuguée l'homme et lui imprime son rythme abstrait à la fois intellectuel, matériel et spirituel - le réalisme n'apparaît bientôt.
		Le premier moment de stupéfaction passé, l'homme préhistorique réalise qu'il vient de perdre la vision. Il se reconnaît et découvre la forme figurative.
Tracés ornés de rouge de Hornos de la Pena ou de Peck-Merle dans le Lot. Tracés australiens de la tribu Worora. Port Georges agrémentés aussi de pieds!		Se propose forme figurative d'abord et ensuite celle de tout ce qui l'entoure, les animaux tout spécialement et des végétaux
		

affaiblissement d'une tête et d'un bras au PLAFond

3

IMAGE	SON	TEXTE
		Réalisme et abstraction se combinent alors dans un horrible mélange machiavélique qui devient la vie humaine terrestre et c'est la mort vivable l'horrible cage, comme dit Van Gogh plusieurs milliers d'années plus tard. La couleur est asservie par la ligne qui devient écriture...
Corps schématiques et chasseurs (Nuestra Señora del castillo Almaden Abbé Breuil)		... D'une fausse réalité, la réalité physionomique figurative. La ligne s'organise en terrain conquis. Son but : Couvrir les yeux de l'homme sur le monde extérieur de la matière qui l'entoure et le mettre en marche vers le réalisme. Au loin dans l'homme s'éloigne sans pouvoir le quitter tout à fait sa vision intérieure perdue à la place de laquelle se crée un vide atroce pour les uns, bouleversant ou merveilleusement romantique pour les autres et il prend place pour devenir la vie intérieure, l'âme déchirée par l'actualité de la ligne
		Le couleur souillée, humiliée, vaincue, se cependant préparer tout au long des siècles, une revanche, un soulèvement plus fort que tout.
Herdes guerrières Cueva del val del charco del agua amarga (terruel)		(D'après les dessins de l'abbé Breuil)
		Ainsi l'histoire de la très longue guerre de la ligne et de la couleur commence avec celle du monde de l'homme et de la civilisation. Le couleur méticuleux fait des signes à l'homme toutes les fois qu'il ressent le besoin de peindre (phénomène
Figures courant - Basson to - Afrique du Sud		
		

De l'origine de la ligne avec des perles et de la couleur avec du charbon et du cuir.

IMAGE	SOUND	TEXT	IMAGE	SOUND	TEXT
<u>INTENSE WHITE</u>	Nothingness	Nothingness	<i>The Fire</i>	A dramatic intensification of the continuous sound	Taking advantage of a need by the first man to make a mark beyond himself, the line is successfully introduced into the, until now, inviolate kingdom of color.
<i>4 sec</i> uniform	Progressive Unfolding Of a unique sound	"	...	Beginning concrete Music	X ultimate beginning of the... See supplementary page
<i>FIXED</i>	Continuous sound	"	Upon the uniform blue image suddenly appears a hand (the pre-historic imprint of a hand— Spanish Castle, Abbé Breuil)	Linear concrete music follows the finger drawings	
Progressive passage from white to yellow in 24 images	XXXXXXXXXXXX	"	...		
Citrus	Progressive sonorous passage		...		
<u>YELLOW</u>			...		
<i>4 Sec</i> uniform			The hand vanishes progressively, 3 fingers, then only 2, draw traces of lines	Concrete music follows the image on the screen	Dream (Cain and Abel: Murder)
<i>FIXED</i>	Continuous sound	"	In the discovered clay...		Reality
Progressive passage from yellow to red in 24 images	Progressive sonorous passage		Then successively appear the prehistoric finger drawings lifted from obscurity by Abbé Breuil at Hornos de la Peña and at Altamira in Spain.		Increasingly harnessed, pure color, the universal soul in which the soul of man bathes in the state of terrestrial paradise, is imprisoned, compartmentalized, cut apart, and reduced to slavery.
<u>Ultra RED</u>			...		
<i>4 sec</i> uniform	Continuous sound		...		
<i>FIXED</i>			...		
Progressive passage from red to blue in 24 images			Line drawing encircled in red at Hornos de la Peña or at Pech Merle in Lot county.		In the joy and delirium of its triumph by ruse, the line subjugates man and imprints upon him its intellectual, material, and emotional abstract rhythm. Realism will soon appear.
BLUE... uniform ultramarine			Line drawings by the Australian Worora tribe, Port Georges, also composed with the use of feet.		
<i>5 sec</i>			...		
<i>FIXED</i>			...		
			<i>3 Sec</i>		
			...		
			<i>FIXED</i>		
			<i>Focus on a cow's head on the cave ceiling at Altamira.</i>		When the first moment of stupefaction passes, prehistoric man realizes that he has just lost his vision. He recovers by finding figurative form.
					First his own figurative form and then the form of all that surrounds him, especially the forms of animals and plants.

YVES KLEIN PRÉSENTE :
LE DIMANCHE 27 NOVEMBRE
1960

NUMÉRO
UNIQUE

**FESTIVAL D'ART
D'AVANT-GARDE**
NOVEMBRE - DÉCEMBRE 1960

**La Révolution
bleue
continue**

Dimanche

SEANCE DE 0 HEURE A 24 HEURES

27 NOVEMBRE

**Le journal
d'un
seul jour**

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THEATRE DU

UN HOMME DANS L'ESPACE !

Le théâtre se cherche depuis toujours. Il se cherche depuis le début perdu.

Le grand théâtre, c'est l'Eden en fait : l'important est d'établir une bonne fois nos positions statiques, chacun d'une manière individuelle et non plus perennelle dans l'univers. Depuis longtemps déjà l'annonce parous que le plus le poète, le plus le poète pas d'autre aujourd'hui je tiens à dire aussi : « Je suis le poète, le sculpteur, le poète à dire : « Je suis ». L'on m'objecte sans doute que cela a déjà été écrit de toutes sortes de manières variées, c'est certainement vrai. Par conséquent, le poète peut-être cela, mais conscient, bien conscient d'avoir atteint le droit de dire : et voilà que, pour moi comme pour tous, il n'y a plus rien à faire, le théâtre officiel, aujourd'hui, c'est « être » et je « suis » bien évidemment tout ce que l'on veut bien que je « sois » et même tout ce que l'on ne veut pas que je « sois » : j'attends même à ne plus « être », du tout un jour !. Mais, que l'on se y trompe pas : il ne s'agit pas de moi quand je dis je, moi, mon, etc.

C'est parce que l'esprit dans lequel je vis est un esprit d'immense stabilité et continu, un esprit classique, que je n'ai aucun caractère d'avant-garde de cette avant-garde qui, elle, vieillit si vite, de génération en génération.

Mon art n'appartient pas à l'époque, pas plus que l'art de tous les grands classiques : n'appartient aux époques où ils ont vécu, parce que je cherche avant tout, comme eux, à créer dans une révélation, cette « transparence », ce « vide », incommensurable dans lequel vit l'esprit permanent et absolu débarrassé de toutes dimensions !

Non, je ne me laisse pas prendre à mon propre jeu en parlant aujourd'hui d'un théâtre du vide avec un tel avant-propos orgueilleux, égoïste, que je n'ai même sans doute en apparence : mon théâtre prendra une valeur universelle dans la mesure même où nos contemporains connaîtront mieux ma pensée que moi-même je ne la connais car elle est de milliers, ils la reflètent des milliers de fois alors que moi je suis seul.

Je me rends très bien compte que je ne présente, tout seul, en dérivant ces lignes avec ce qui semblerait une sorte de complexité du plus fort je signale à ceux qui seraient assez aveugles et maladroits pour ne donner l'avant-garde d'attacher mon exaspération du moi qu'il est bien facile de maintenir à la défiance mais à cette sorte de défiance que sont les veilles des grandes victoires définitives pour ceux qui savent s'exposer.

J'ai lutté contre ma vocation de « peintre », en partant au Japon pour y vivre l'aventure Judo et Arts martiaux actuels : de même j'ai lutté contre ma vocation « d'homme de théâtre » : mais précisément, le Judo par la pratique physique et spirituelle des Kata, s'est constituée malgré moi, ma formation dans cette discipline de l'art qu'est le théâtre, d'une manière imprévisible, mais tout aussi profitable et profonde, sinon peut-être plus encore, que n'importe quelle autre. En présentant ce qui suit, j'obéis à une nécessité profonde, j'agis en réalité plein de gros bon sens. J'ai moi-même et Shabazz pour moi que dans leur œuvre, se trouve cette transparence du vide qui n'est pas.

ACTUALITÉ

DANS le cadre des représentations théâtrales du Festival d'Art d'Avant-Garde de novembre-décembre 1960, j'ai décidé de présenter une ultime forme de théâtre collectif qu'est un dimanche pour tout le monde.

Je n'ai pas voulu me limiter à une matinée ou à une soirée.

En présentant le dimanche 27 novembre 1960, de 0 heure à 24 heures, je présente donc une journée de fête, un véritable spectacle du vide, au point culminant de mes théories. Cependant, n'importe quel autre jour de la semaine aurait pu être aussi utilisé.

Je souhaite qu'en ce jour la joie et les merveilleux résonnent, que personne n'ait le trac et que tous, acteurs, spectateurs, conscients comme inconscients aussi de cette gigantesque manifestation, passent une bonne journée.

Que chacun aille dehors comme dehors, circule, bouge, remue ou reste tranquille.

Tout ce que je publie aujourd'hui dans ce journal est antérieur à la Présentation de ce jour historique pour le théâtre.

Le théâtre doit être ou doit tout au moins tenter de devenir rapidement le plaisir d'être, de vivre, de passer de merveilleux moments, et de comprendre chaque jour mieux le bel aujourd'hui.

Tout ce que je publie dans ce journal ont été mes étapes jusqu'à ce jour glorieux de réalisme et de vérité : le théâtre des opérations de cette conception du théâtre que je propose n'est pas seulement la ville, Paris, mais aussi la campagne, le désert, la montagne, le ciel même, et tout l'univers même, pourquoi pas ?

Je sais que tout va fonctionner très bien indubitablement pour tous, spectateurs, acteurs, machinistes, directeurs et autres.

Je tiens à remercier ici M. Jacques Folléri, directeur du Festival d'Art d'Avant-Garde, pour son enthousiasme, en me proposant de présenter cette manifestation « le dimanche 27 novembre ».

YVES KLEIN.

du tout synonyme de « Représentation » ou de « Spectacle ». « Importants chercheurs qui, eux, ont été d'avant-garde, comme Taboroff, par exemple, voulaient théâtraliser le théâtre. Envisageant plutôt du monde, me de la théâtralité dans la vie quotidienne, pensée - geste - parole.

Stanislavsky, réaliste extrême, aurait souhaité la mort effective et définitive de l'acteur qui doit jouer sa mort en scène. Le précurseur Dada Vakhtangov enferme le public dans une salle de théâtre pendant deux heures dans le seul but cynique de le renfermer tout simplement. Cet événement faisait partie, d'ail-

leurs, de non « théâtre de la parole » et s'intitulait « La Seconde insolite ».

Le Tchécoslovaque Burian créa un théâtre synthétique : les personnages de ses pièces, « Rondo et Juliette », étaient des machines fantastiques et infernales qui évoluaient sur la scène pendant que les acteurs en costume dialogaient et les textes. Ambiguëment montait des pièces laconiques de dix minutes, coupées de discussions : les discussions faisaient partie évidemment du programme. Ce qui l'amenait à déclarer souvent à son public, qui lui commandait d'avancer ses représentations, qu'il était prêt à supporter les formules, les coups pour lui, mais, en aucune manière, les pairs.

Les photographes dans « Les Morts de la Tour Eiffel », de Jean Cocteau, sont aussi de très beaux phénomènes.

Il serait trop long de citer toutes les tentatives qui ont été faites pour sortir de la convention, de l'opérette, de l'académisme, dans le domaine du spectacle de la représentation théâtrale depuis le début du siècle. Je crois que presque tout a été fait, jusqu'à Jacques Folléri dans sa mise en scène de la pièce de Tardieu ces temps derniers, qui fait entendre des voix sur la scène où trois personnages éternels sont là pour tout décor et toute prose : l'idée d'ailleurs est de faire vivre et parler les décors.

Bravo ! — Quel bonheur que ces arts actuels, mais attention ! J'avais bien le feeling, mon œuvre théâtrale n'a rien, absolument rien à voir avec l'une quelconque de ces directions ou recherches sans portée, avec celles d'André Artaud, qui sentait, sentait ce que je propose aujourd'hui ici. Cependant Artaud, comme bien d'autres « Grands », du vrai théâtre, se perdait dans cette fausse conception artificielle et intellectuelle du Verbe qui en a dérivé tant si longtemps. Pour ma part, je ne suis qu'une chose, c'est « qu'un commencement était le Verbe, et le Verbe était Dieu » deux fois « être » pour deux fois « Verbe » plus « Dieu », en tout cinq points qui si on les médite un peu, disent bien ce qu'ils veulent dire : le « Verbe » dans cette forme n'est pas « Parole » articulée ni même énonciative.

Ce que je désire : Plus de rythme, surtout plus jamais de rythme !

Elle n'est œuvre ni pas une « recherche », elle est un sillage. Elle est la manière même de la vitesse statique vertigineuse, à laquelle je me propulse sur place dans l'immense attention encore, je tiens à bien préciser que je ne dis pas, en parlant de mon œuvre : « C'est bien plus beau parce que c'est inutile » ! Non, je dis : « C'est ainsi que sera ainsi, et personne ne pourra jamais rien faire pour que ce ne soit pas ainsi » ! Pourquoi ? Parce que, précédemment, c'est « ce que je suis » !

« Ainsi, très vite, on en arrive au théâtre sans scène, sans décor, sans scène sans spectateur, plus rien que le créateur seul qui n'est vu par personne, excepté la présence de personnes et le théâtre-spectacle commence ! L'acteur vit sa création : il



(Photo Shunk-Korder)

Le peintre de l'espace se jette dans le vide !

Le monochrome qui est aussi champion de judo, célèbre noir 4^e dan, s'entraîne régulièrement à la lévitation dynamique ! (avec un sautiflet, au risque de sa vie).

Il prétend être en mesure d'aller rejoindre bientôt dans l'espace son œuvre préférée : une sculpture aéronautique composée de Mille et un Ballons bleus, qui, en 1957, s'envola de son exposition dans le ciel de Saint-Germain-des-Près pour ne plus jamais revenir !

Libérer la sculpture du socle a été longtemps sa préoccupation. « Aujourd'hui le peintre de l'espace doit aller effectivement dans l'espace pour peindre, mais il doit y aller sans être, ni rechercher, ni non plus en avion, ni en parachute ou en fusée, il doit y aller par lui-même, avec une force individuelle autonome, en un mot, il doit être capable de léviter ».

Yves :

« Je suis le peintre de l'espace. Je ne suis pas un peintre abstrait, mais un peintre en figure, et un réaliste. Soyons honnêtes, pour atteindre l'espace, je me dois de me rendre sur place, dans cet espace même ».

Sensibilité pure

Une petite salle.

Les spectateurs, après avoir dément payé chacun leur entrée, assez chère... pénètrent dans la salle et prennent place.

Le rideau est baissé. La salle s'illumine.

Dés que la salle est pleine, un homme se présente sur la scène, devant le rideau toujours baissé et déclare :

« Mesdames, Messieurs en raison des circonstances, et pour nous allouer être contraints de vous enchaîner chacun à vos

sièges (et, de plus, vous ballonner) pour la durée de la représentation. »

« Cette mesure de sécurité est nécessaire, afin de vous protéger contre vous-même en présence d'un spectacle particulièrement dangereux, d'un point de vue affectif pur ! »

« Mesdames, Messieurs d'avance nos regrets au personnel qui ne pourraient supporter d'être ainsi enchaînés et ballonnés avant le lever du rideau et nous les prions amicalement de bien

seul quitter la salle pour se faire rembourser à la sortie. Au cas où personne ne s'enchaînerait à son siège, la salle sera tolérée dans la salle pendant 15 minutes. Merci ».

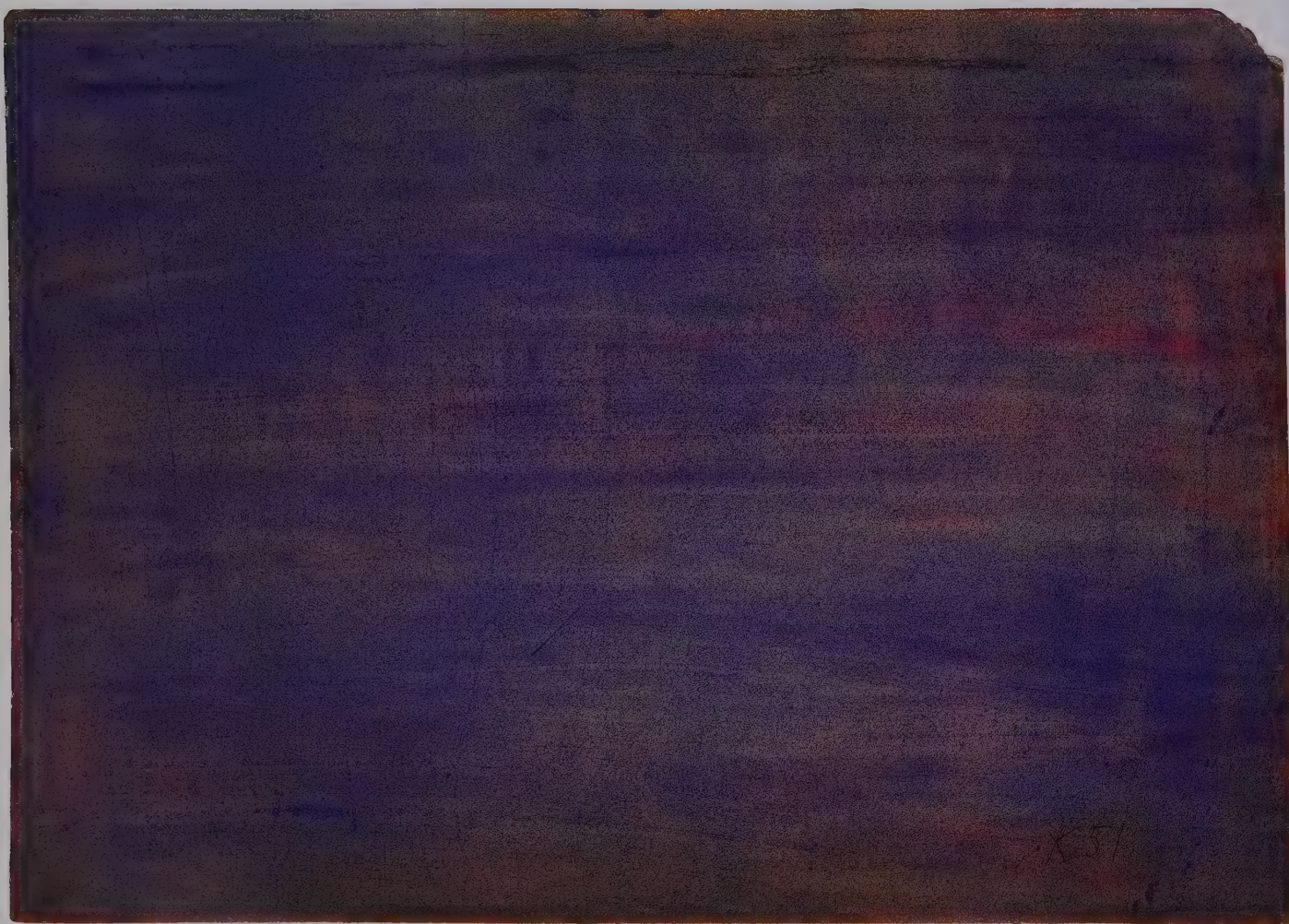
Aussitôt un groupe d'entraîneurs-baillement pénètre dans la salle et, systématiquement, rang après rang, paralyse rapidement tous les spectateurs.

L'ESPACE, LUI-MÊME.

● SUITE EN PAGE 2

● SUITE EN PAGE 2

Untitled Double-Sided Orange and Blue Monochrome
(D 8), 1951
Pastel on cardboard
22 ¼ x 31 ½ in. (56.5 x 80 cm)



Untitled Yellow Monochrome

c. 1952

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard

3 ⁹/₁₆ x 7 ¹/₂ in. (9 x 19.1 cm)

Untitled Purple Monochrome

1952

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard

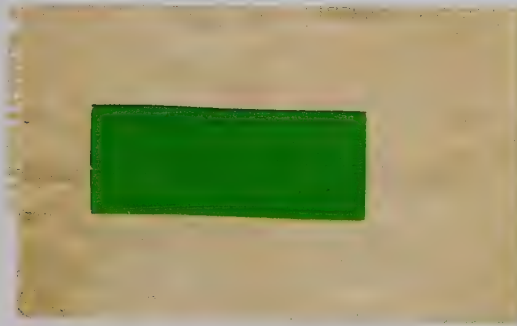
5 ³/₄ x 8 ¹/₂ in. (14.6 x 21.6 cm)

Untitled Green Monochrome

c. 1952

Dry pigment and fixative on paper

4 ⁵/₁₆ x 7 ¹/₁₆ in. (11 x 17.9 cm)



Pages 84–87
Yves Peintures [Yves Paintings]
1954
Printed paper
9 5/8 × 7 1/2 in. (24.4 × 19.1 cm)

YVES

PEINTURES

PREFACE DE
PASCAL CLAUDE

YVES

PEINTURES

10 PLANCHES
EN COULEURS

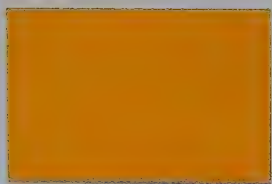
PREFACE DE
PASCAL CLAUDE

[illegible]

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(The page contains horizontal ruling lines.)

PLANCHES



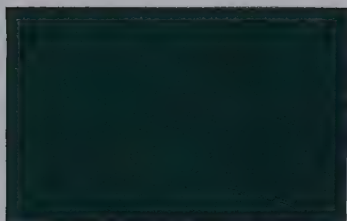
YES

A TOKIO, 1952 (DIXON)



YES

A NICE, 1961 (DIXON)



YES

A PARIS, 1964 (DIXON)



YES

A PARIS, 1964 (DIXON)



YES

A MADRID, 1964 (DIXON)



YES

A PARIS, 1964 (DIXON)



YES

A PARIS, 1954 (DIECKHOFF)



YES

A TOKYO, 1952 (DIECKHOFF)



YES

A LONDRES, 1969 (DIECKHOFF)



YES

A MADRID, 1954 (DIECKHOFF)

Cette édition illustrée de
10 plaques en couleurs
a été achevée d'imprimer
sur les presses du maître
imprimeur Fernando
Frauco de Sarabia à Ma-
drid, Jean, L le 19 novem-
bre 1954.

Il a été tiré cent cinquante
exemplaires numérotés
de 1 à 150.

EXEMPLAIRE N°

Tous droits réservés pour tous pays
PROPRIÉTÉ DE L'AUTRUA

Untitled Red Monochrome

(M 38), 1955

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

19 ¹¹/₁₆ x 19 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (50 x 50 cm)

Untitled Green Monochrome

(M 5), c. 1954

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas

22 ⁷/₁₆ x 15 ³/₄ in. (57 x 40 cm)

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 44), 1955

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

15 ³/₄ x 53 ¹/₂ in. (40 x 135.9 cm)



Untitled Yellow Monochrome

(M 84), 1955

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel

49 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 49 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (125 x 125 x 8.5 cm)



"Expression de l'univers de la couleur Mine orange"
[Expression of the Universe of the Color Lead Orange]
(M 60), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on cardboard on panel
37 7/8 x 89 in. (94.9 x 226.1 cm)



X. mai. 55.

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 30), 1955

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel

39 ⁷/₁₆ x 25 ⁵/₁₆ in. (100.2 x 64.3 cm)

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 8), 1956

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

39 ³/₈ x 9 ¹³/₁₆ in. (100 x 25 cm)



Untitled Yellow and Pink Monochrome

(M 36), 1955

Dry pigment and fixative on canvas

22 ¹/₁₆ x 13 ³/₁₆ in. (56 x 34 cm)

Untitled Yellow Monochrome

(M 19), 1956

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on panel

8 ¹¹/₁₆ x 6 ⁵/₁₆ in. (22 x 16 cm)

Untitled Orange Monochrome

(M 6), 1956

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas on panel

22 ⁷/₁₆ x 14 ¹/₂ in. (57 x 36.8 cm)



Untitled Green Monochrome

(M 35), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

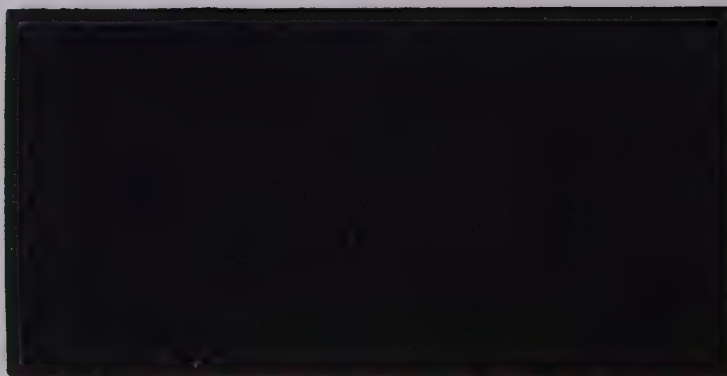
23 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (60 x 40 cm)

Untitled Black Monochrome

(M 78), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

12 x 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (30.5 x 59.7 cm)



Untitled Pink Monochrome
(MP 19), c. 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
36 ¼ x 28 ¾ x 1 in. (92 x 72 x 2.5 cm)

Untitled Pink Monochrome
(MP 27), c. 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on fabric on panel
15 ¾ x 13 ¾ in. (40 x 35 cm)



It is the monochrome that makes me the most intoxicated. I have tried I don't know how many styles. I have been as much of a painter as is permitted; I have advanced and become avant-garde; I have passed through all the periods; I have been insatiable and drawn from wells of pleasures and consolations, which have already left me jaded. In any case, I do believe that it is only in the monochrome that I truly live pictorial life, the painterly life of which I have dreamed. This was precisely what I have hoped for in painting! I find myself within it, in the special matter, the pictorial matter, and I have blossomed. It is true, I am for the first time inebriated and fully satisfied in painting monochromes. The life of color!

Excerpt from "The Monochrome Adventure," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 143.

Many people have found themselves very much drawn to and even in some way hypnotized by the presence of my ultramarine blue paintings, while afterwards they may find themselves discomfited and depressed; others have wept with incomprehensible joy in front of my "crayon orange painting and have afterward felt entirely regenerated.

Excerpt from a letter to Jacques Tournier, a journalist at *Nouvelles Littéraires*, August 5, 1955. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

My paintings are "pictorial presences," the pictorial material that is or is not impregnated by the artist who fashions it, works it, and applies to it, etc., and have an autonomous, independent, and individual life. In my opinion, it is a kind of chemical, tangible material state endowed with universal human sensibility (or nature transmuted within us and rendered in pictorial matter) and also, in addition to that, but not necessarily, spiritual matter (I distinguish the nonhuman spiritual from the sensible that is essentially and foremost human), thus the painter would be this alchemist who seeks the Philosopher's Painting, his philosophical matter would be pictorial matter.

The painting or paintings of such a painter would exist in space that is

more or less vast and unlimited. One must be vast and thus above all unlimited and bathe in the immensity of the immeasurable sensitivity (for me, all monochrome colors united); the movement exists only in the static presence of a colored state sparkling of life, latent power, and violent forces, in which the universe is bathed.

When confronted with so great a vision, which does not cease to emerge from the monochrome, it is inconceivable for me to register any dirty trick or human shrewdness in this intensive manner of achieving tangible representation of these spaces.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

It was during this year at the "SAVAGE" studio that I perceived the illumination of matter as a profoundly physical quality. When I returned home to my room in the evenings, I did monochrome gouaches on pieces of white cardboard and also increasingly used a lot of pastels. I was very fond of pastel tones! It seemed to me that, in pastel, each grain of pigment remained free and individual without being killed by the fixative medium, and I made some very large works, but, alas, when sprayed with a fixative, it lost all their brilliance and its tone darkened, and without fixative it unfailingly deteriorated and, little by little, turned to dust; the beauty of the color remained, but without pictorial strength.

I had no affection for oil paint. The colors seemed dead to me. What pleased me, above all, were pure pigments in powder form, such as I often saw at the wholesale paint suppliers. They had a brilliance and an extraordinary, autonomous life of their own. This was truly color in itself. The living and tangible matter of color.

Excerpt from "The Monochrome Adventure," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 154.

Through color I feel the sentiment of complete identification with space; I am truly liberated.

When color is no longer pure, the drama can take on frightening proportions.

Total freedom represents a great danger for those who do not know what it is.

Novices keep asking me: "But what does it represent?" I could answer, and I did so in the beginnings, that it simply represents blue, by itself, or red, by itself, or that it is the landscape of the world of the color yellow, for example. This is not inaccurate; it is, in my opinion, of the greatest importance. In painting a single color by itself, I leave behind the phenomenological "spectacle" of ordinary, conventional, classical easel painting.

One could say to me, "agreed," no more lines, no more drawing, but why not two colors?

[...]

The canvas is like an individual; I desire to consider it as it what it is and not to judge it, above all, not to judge it!

When there are two colors in a painting, a struggle is engaged; the viewer may extract a refined pleasure from the permanent spectacle of this struggle between two colors in the psychological and emotional realm and perhaps extract a refined pleasure, but it is one that is no less morbid from a pure philosophical and human vantage point.

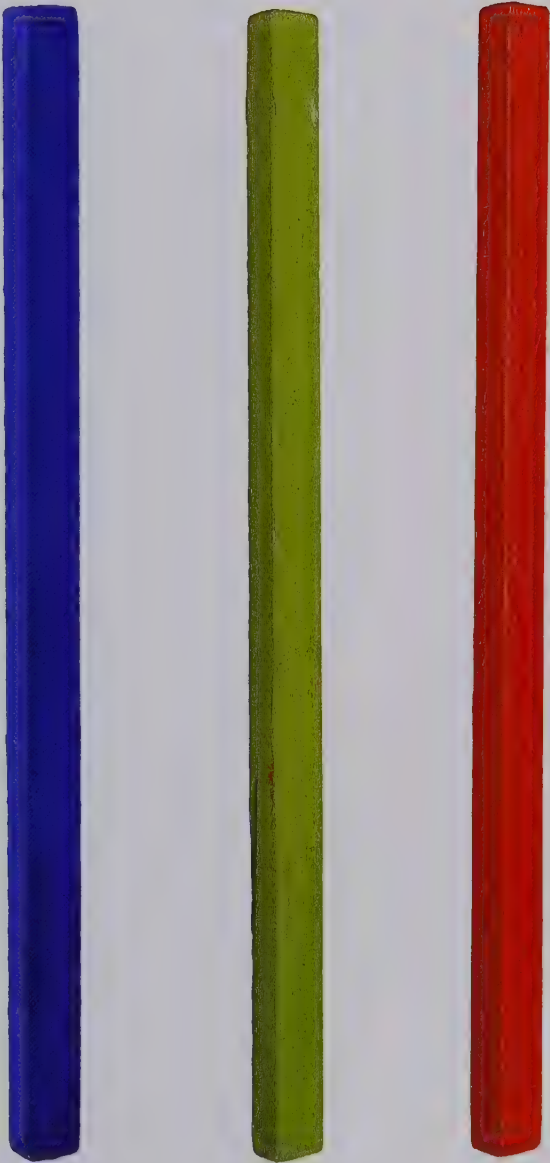
Excerpt from "The Monochrome Adventure," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 137ff.

Untitled Blue Monochrome
(M 113), 1956

Untitled Green Monochrome
(M 50), 1956

Untitled Pink Monochrome
(M 49), 1956

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
Each: 19 ¹¹/₁₆ × 1 × 1 in. (50 × 2.5 × 2.5 cm)

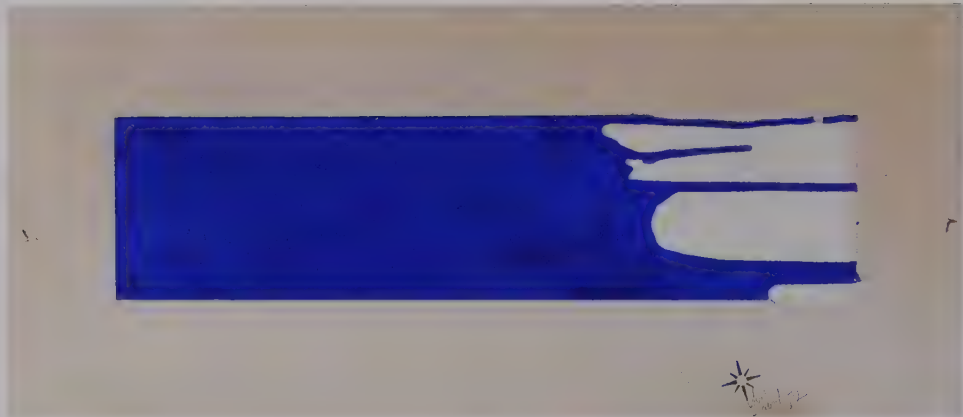


Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 179), 1957

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard

11 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 25 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (28.1 x 64 cm)

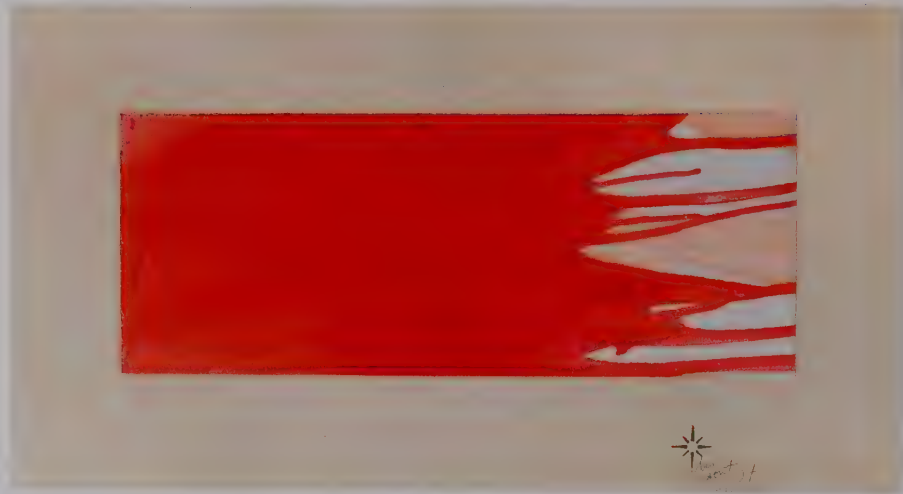


Untitled Red Monochrome

(M 82), 1957

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard

13 x 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (33 x 60 cm)



Untitled Pink Monochrome
(D 27), c. 1959
Crepe paper and paint
7 ⁷/₁₆ x 6 ⁵/₁₆ in. (20 x 16 cm)



Untitled Monochrome

(M 52), c. 1957

Aluminum

13 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (33.2 x 29.5 cm)



Untitled White Monochrome
(M 15), c. 1957
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas
16 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 25 ⁹/₁₆ in. (43 x 65 cm)



"The blue color of the sky has been defeated by the Suprematist system, has been broken through, and entered white, as the true real conception of infinity," wrote MALEVICH.¹⁰ "I have overcome the lining of the colored sky, torn it down and into the bag thus formed, put color, tying it up with a knot. Swim in the free abyss, infinity is before you."¹¹

And this is why I can say, at the age of thirty, in 1958, that when MALEVICH burst into space as a tourist, around 1915 or 1916, I was there already to welcome him, and he visited me, for I was the proprietor, the inhabitant or, rather, the co-proprietor and co-inhabitant, already and always. The position of MALEVICH in relation to me makes it possible to leave by the static speed of the immeasurable spirit of the phenomenology of time and allows me to say honestly and calmly that MALEVICH painted a still life based on one of my monochrome paintings.

Excerpt from "The Monochrome Adventure," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 169–70.

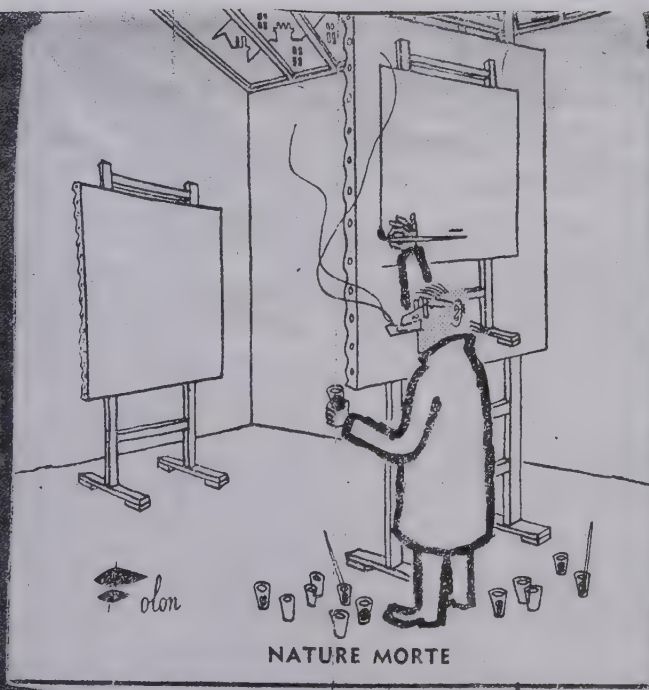
"Position de Malévitch par rapport à moi"

[Position of Malevich in Relation to Me]

c. 1959

Ink on paper on paper

7 ¹¹/₁₆ x 7 ⁵/₈ in. (19.5 x 19.3 cm)



Position de Malévitch
par rapport à moi !
en relation de la
figure au motif = du sujet

"Malévitch ou l'espace vu de loin"
[Malevich or Space Viewed from a Distance]

c. 1958
Ink on paper
12 1/2 x 8 7/16 in. (31.8 x 21.4 cm)

Malevich or Space
Viewed from a Distance

monochrome
serving as a still life for
Malevich for
his composition

Malevich

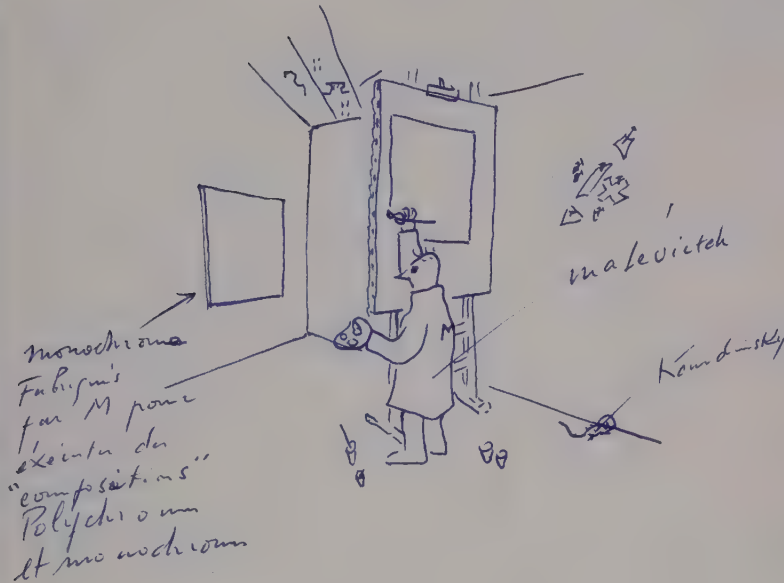
Kandinsky

The real position of
Malevich in
relation to myself!

Outside of
the phenomenology
of time!

— Y. K.

Malevich ou l'espace
vu de loin



Véritable
Position de
Malevich
Par rapport à
Moi !
en dehors de la
Phénoménologie du
Temps !

Y.K.

"Malévitch ou l'espace vu de loin"
[Malevich or Space Viewed from a Distance]
c. 1958
Ink and graphite on paper
10 5/8 x 8 1/4 in. (27 x 21 cm)

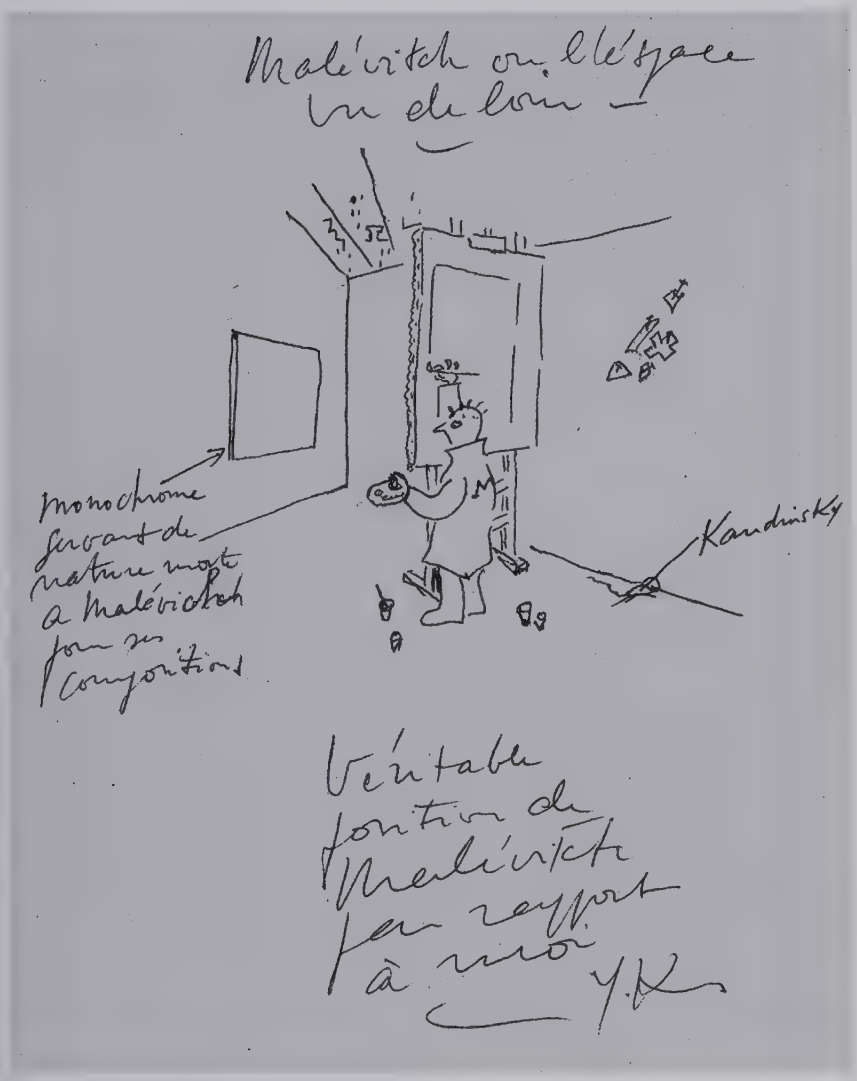
Malevich or Space
Viewed from a Distance

monochrome
serving as a still life
for Malevich
for his composition

Kandinsky

The real position of
Malevich in relation
to myself

— Y. K.



"IKB Essentiel, Potentiel, Spatial..."

[IKB Essentiel, Potential, Spatial...]

c. 1959

Graphite on paper

7 7/8 x 4 7/16 in. (20 x 11.3 cm)

I.K.B

ESSENTIEL

POTENTIEL

ESPACE SPATIAL

INCOMMENSURABLE

~~VITESSE~~ VITE

STATIQUE

DYNAMIQUE

~~IMMATERIELLE~~

ABSOLUE

PNEUMATIQUE

PUR

PRESTIGIEUX

MERVEILLEUX

EXASPERANT

INSTABLE

EXACT

~~IMPREGNATION~~

SENSIBILITE

SENSIBLE

IMPREGNE

IMPREGNANT

IMMATERIEL

"Evolution de l'art vers l'immatériel"
[Evolution of Art Toward the Immaterial]

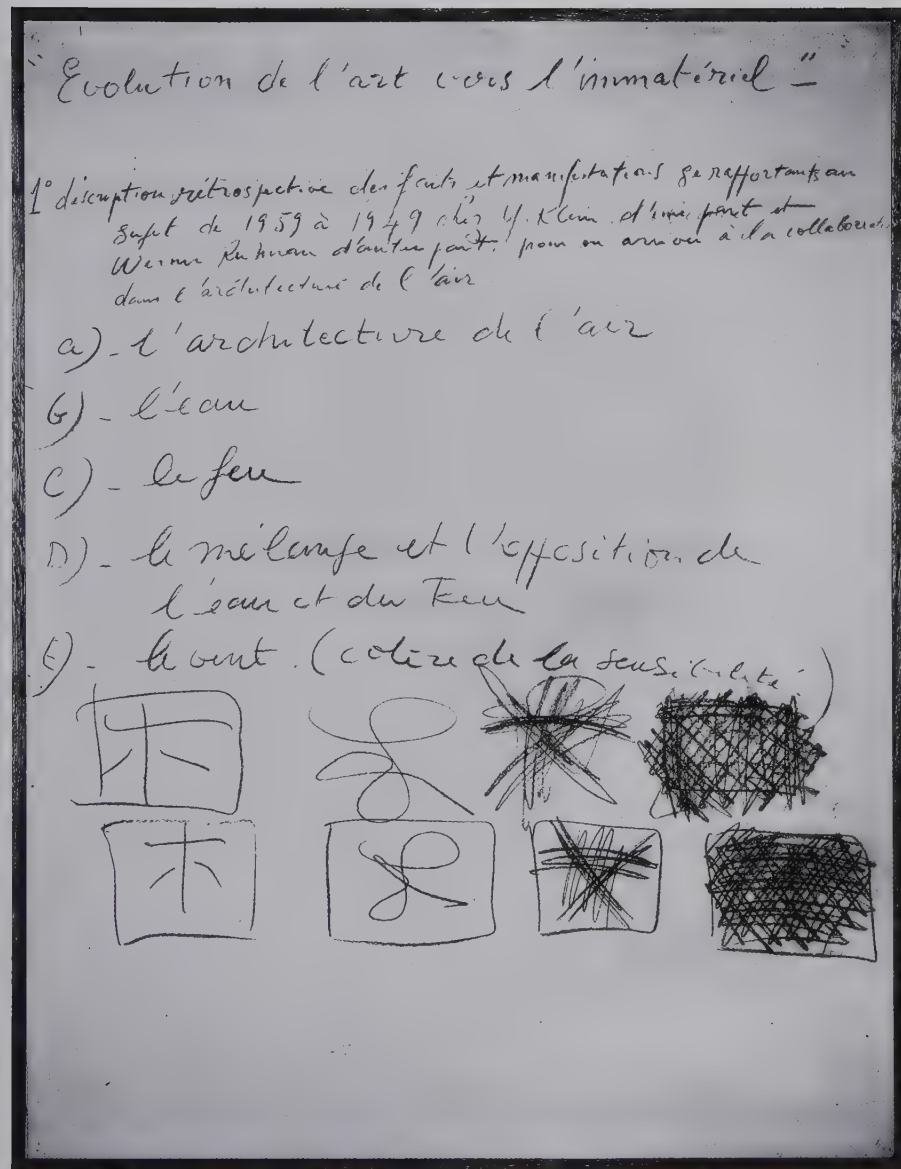
c. 1959
Charcoal on paper
56 11/16 x 43 11/16 in. (144 x 111 cm)

"The Evolution of Art Toward the Immaterial"

First retrospective description (1959-1949) of accomplishments and events pertaining to the collaboration between Y. Klein and Werner Ruhnau on an architecture of air.

- a) the architecture of air
- b) water
- c) fire
- d) the combination and juxtaposition of water and fire
- e) wind (the ire of sensibility)

[the Japanese character (ho), which Klein executed during his Sorbonne lecture]



Today I foresee that in the future the real manner of going into space, of going further, infinitely further than our solar universe and the universe beyond, will not be by means of rockets and missiles and satellites, but by impregnation. Man will let himself be imbibed by the first matter, the "sensitivity of space," and, thus impregnated and conditioned with sensibility, will become a new human vehicle, a new immaterial perception of our body, which for the moment is in a latent state within us. It will then have been charted and studied scientifically. Man will travel into immeasurable space not by traveling through it but by dwelling within it. The new aristocracy will be composed of men of strong sensibility, serene and pure, capable of dissolving into infinity.

When exhibiting or presenting myself in public, I am consistently bombarded by the question: "And afterwards, what will you do? Impossible to go further," as Dino Buzzati wrote in the *Corriere della Sera* (January 1957) on the occasion of my exhibition of the Blue Period: "In fact, by renouncing the figurative as formal purity, and as abstract expression, it will be impossible to go further than that in the centuries to come."

One year later, my exhibition of immaterial pictorial sensibility proved that it was possible to go further, and further still. The trick for me is quite simple: I am in a spiritual state that becomes more amplified each day; my only problem is to keep this state pure and authentic and not let it be contaminated by psychology.

If it remains true that the world of tangible matter is a direct reflection of the spiritual world, then you will understand why I shall never have any problem renewing myself every year in public. Each time it will be new and unexpected, as long as I manage to stay within the pure and spiritual exploration of pure sensibility!

"Sensitivity" is "pure enthusiasm," a joy that is at once profoundly gay and grave.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

An artist must "simply" be, where he is, very tense and radiant. His radiance must, for sure, be achieved by impregnation, not by the linear rays that pass through space like tourists.

This tension must be impregnated in universal tension and then, suddenly, "art appears."

[...]

Take the process of digestion, for example; it takes place within us, despite ourselves and unconsciously, and is thus very pure; we unveil all the organic morbidity of nature by exploring it, and in so doing we commit the same error committed by ADAM and EVE, who lived, illuminated and sensible, within the great sensibility that suffused all of nature in its grandeur. When Adam and Eve tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they were suddenly filled with shame; "they saw that they were naked and covered themselves with fig leaves." This was the beginning of the psychological epoch of man.

Interior searching should not be conducted intellectually but rather affectively by the one and unique all-powerful sensibility; this is the voice of "life"; it is to gather the fruit of the Tree of Life that was also to be found in Eden.

The serpent, the evil, in the Garden of Eden, was the line, the drawing, the contour, the form... "their eyes will open"....

I am not preaching obscurantism but, quite to the contrary, the reconquest of pure sensibility, the contact with space that permits us to live ourselves, and by ourselves, and everywhere at once in the universe.

The consequence of the taking into consideration the psychological world is the drama of man who since that time has regarded himself as the center of the universe (and then, let us not forget one thing, that there were two extraordinary trees in the Garden of Eden: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life! For me, there is no good or evil. As for the resolution of every dilemma, a third thing is the solution, "life," the true and the beautiful...art) and observed the exterior from the interior as a function of itself and through itself, such that he should be very easily impregnated by the hypersensitive sensibility infinitely extendable into all things.

... "Alright, then, the Boeotians would say, after reading all this verbiage, but

where is your work, after all that, for us to see."

Response: look at my silence, look around you; if you see, you will see my work.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Today's Authentic Realism

Figurative painting, as well as the painting referred to as abstract, is condemned!

Today there is much talk of a return to figurative realism... This is true, it is in preparation, but it is clearly naive to think of it, as some do, as an immediate return to still-life or landscape painting!

Alongside my monochrome attempts, in a profoundly classical spirit, I have for some time affected a return to realism, to an authentic realism of today and tomorrow, by way of the IMMATERIAL!

My zones of stabilized immaterial pictorial sensibility, immoveable and expandable beyond the limits of the infinite, are created through a dynamic and wondrous contemplation of nature in all its aspects and moments.

For me it is no longer about putting brush to canvas but about establishing, in a permanent and highly durable manner between myself and nature, which in fact are one, the NEO-FIGURATIVE canvas that is both the most real and the most immaterial, and gives its "readers" [lecteurs] or, better, those who "LIVE" such events or pictorial climates through pure behaviors, a spectacle, more precisely, a "STATE" of the quality, permanence, and transparency of that which such artists as VERMEER, REMBRANDT, GIOTTO, and MICHELANGELO gave their own age!

Paris, September 1959. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Pages 109–12

"La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée"

[The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility]

1958

Black-and-white photographs

7 1/2 x 7 1/16 in. (19 x 18 cm)









Zone de sensibilité picturale immatérielle, Series 5, Zone 1
[Zone of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility....], from the exhibition catalogue Comparaison
1962

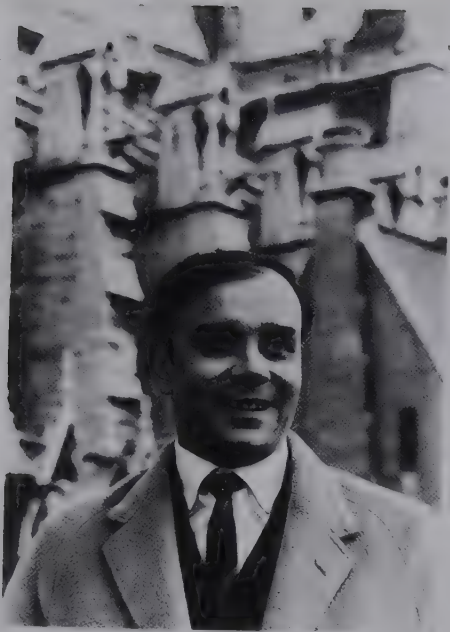
Printed paper
8 1/16 x 8 1/16 in. (20.5 x 20.5 cm)



VILLECIE	HAINS	ROTELLA	
Niki de SAINT-PHALLÉ	DUFRENE	TINGUELY	ARMAN
SPGERRI	RAYSSÉ	ANOUI	



Yves KLEIN - Le Monochrome : une zone de sensibilité picturale immatérielle.
Zone n° 1, Série n° 5.
La zone de sensibilité picturale d'Yves Klein, immatérielle, extra dimensionnelle, existe en soi. Son « merveilleux » constitue l'essence même du nouveau réalisme : ni les murs, ni les dimensions de la salle où elle se trouve exposée ne correspondent à sa vraie réalité. Son intégrité est ailleurs, partout ; inutile d'en dire plus.
P. R.

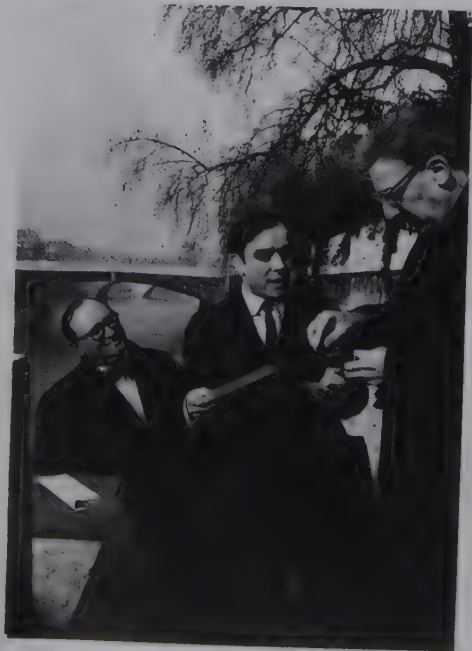


VENTE-CESSION DE LA ZONE
N°1 de la SÉRIE N°4
160 Grammes d'or FIN (999,9)
Contre "SENSIBILITE Picturale IMMATERIELLE"

"DE LA MATIERE POUR DE
L'IMMATERIEL."
"DE L'OR POUR LE VIDE."



TEMOINS: M=BLANKFORT, M= BORDEAUX, LEPECT, PRESIDENT "SALON COMPARAISONS". M= VIRGINIA KUNDRAVIL de la DWAN GALLERY LOS ANGELES M= Jean-LARCADE - M= union de Goldstein M= PIERRE DESCARBIEUX.



7 Lingots d'or Fin
soit
70 Grammes vont
être jetés dans la Seine



l'acheteur: MICHAEL BLANKFORT
 ÉCRIVAIN. Hollywood. USA.



20 Grammes (soit deux lingots sont
 remis au Directeur du MUSÉE

(Commission pour le Musée qui a
 authentifié l'œuvre
 immatérielle.)



LA ZONE N°1 série N°4 de
 SENSIBILITÉ PICTURALE
 IMMATERIELLE
 APPARTIENT A. M. BLANKFORT

IL RESTE 14 lingots

YVES FAIT LA PART DE
 LA NATURE : 7 lingots...
et se réserve sa part :
 7 lingots.



et de plus vient de
s'intégrer à lui, CAR
 l'or, a été rendu à la
 NATURE ...



Michael Blankfort Ache
 son Regu

The mining of the pictorial immaterial zones, extracted from the depth of the void, which I possessed by that time, was of a very material nature. Finding it unacceptable to sell these immaterial zones for money, I demanded in exchange for the highest quality of the immaterial the highest quality of material payment—a bar of pure gold.

Incredible as it may seem, I have actually sold a number of these pictorial immaterial states.

So much could be said about my adventure in the immaterial and the void that the result would be an overly extended pause while still immersed in the present erection of my written painting.

Excerpt from "Chelsea Hotel Manifesto," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 198.

The economy is the elective domain of vain illusions and of constructions in which the suppositions denote the insufficiencies of the prior analysis. Certain schools believed to perceive a good number of realities, but this approach to economic matters has too often remained only an approximation. Some down-to-earth physiocrats did not know, while exhausting the gangue of the sensuous universe, to break up the materiality of the cosmos in order finally to reach the definition of the unknowable by the sudden awareness of the marginal unity of space. A new effort came to light in the 1930s with the Keynesian school and its Full Employment Policy; but if the vocation of employment was able to lead to a valuable therapeutic amount, the complete failure of the general public to recognize spatial intensity could only lead once more to a quantitative approximation. We see therefore that everything is analyzed in terms of failure, and the balance sheet of composite economies today reveals only a large deficit.

A new era must thus appear in which a qualitative perception of the energetic field of the economy can at last orient the fundamental inertia of the "living" towards a dynamic conception of creation. For me this concept finds its foundation in the wealth, each day

more elaborated, of spatial patrimony. It stretches out like a great fresco that awaits its monetary label. In fact, I challenge reserves and currencies: riches accumulated from the glories of the past but perilous mortgages of the structures of the present. No need henceforth for these wasteful intermediaries whose facticity hollows out a past between the intellectual prehension and the very quality of the values seized. Adhere therefore to the real, and, beyond a pure system of representation, let us then turn more simply towards the acceptance of the intrinsic value of matter, residing essentially in the notion of quality.

Upon this structurally qualitative foundation, each corporation will be made to deposit in the vaults of the Central Bank, previously emptied of all deposits of metals, their masterpiece of the profession. Said masterpieces, thus gathered, will materialize the basic spiritual direction of the country, providing free access to any and all evolutionary potentiality—the sole source of progress. This permanent example, a catalyst of latent power, in maintaining in the spirit a stable sampling—but one that remains open—will finally allow to cast the foundations of a system of barter that is fundamentally healthy and sheltered from economic quantitative variations.

In fact, the suppression of fiduciary circulation eliminates also the slightest possibility of a cyclical evolution of the classic inflationary spiral. Overproduction, instead of presenting useless growth of qualitatively enumerable riches, will no longer be a pure and simple loss of strength but a general emulation whose constructive quest will contribute to the splendors of the future. In the international arena, the creation of a standard representative only of a quasi-spiritual value will prevent the development of any form of commercial Malthusianism, and will end, on the contrary, conflicts over customs duties, the motion of quality becoming a multiplier of past antagonistic national economies.

These brief opening comments on a possible economy of tomorrow, should we desire it, already provide glimpses into the enormous possibilities of a system that, at last, reconciles universal moral and intellectual aspirations with the most peremptory economic imperatives. Tomorrow, to be sure, the

economic world will greet a new era and I shall at least have had the satisfaction to have known its awakening.

In such a system, the wealthy man would necessarily be an authentic genius in his specialty. Which, at last, will be only just.

"Sketch and Broad Outlines for the Economic System of the Blue Revolution," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 60–61.

Boîte à lingots d'or [Case of Gold Ingots]

c. 1959

Case, blue pigment, and gold ingots

2 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 4 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (5.6 x 11 x 3.5 cm)



Yves Klein and Dino Buzzati engaged in the ritual transfer of immateriality,
January 26, 1962
1962

Yves Klein and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Blankfort engaged in the ritual
transfer of immateriality, February 10, 1962, Series 4, Zone 1
1962

Yves Klein and Claude Pascal engaged in the ritual transfer of immateriality,
January 26, 1962, Series 1, Zone 6
1962



Carnet de reçus pour les Zones de sensibilité
picturale immatérielle (series 0)
 [Receipt book for Zones of Immaterial Pictorial
 Sensibility (series 0)]

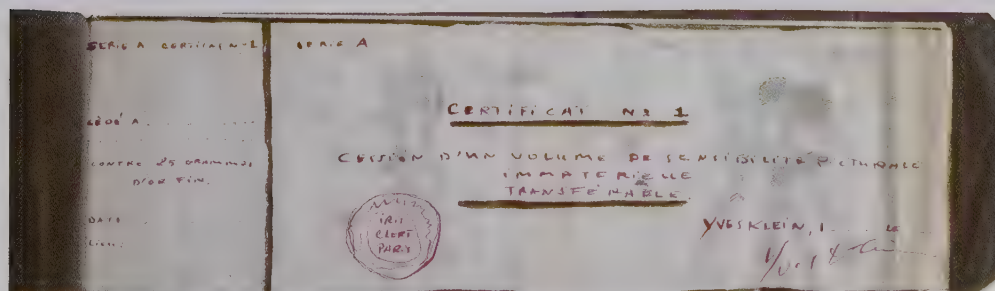
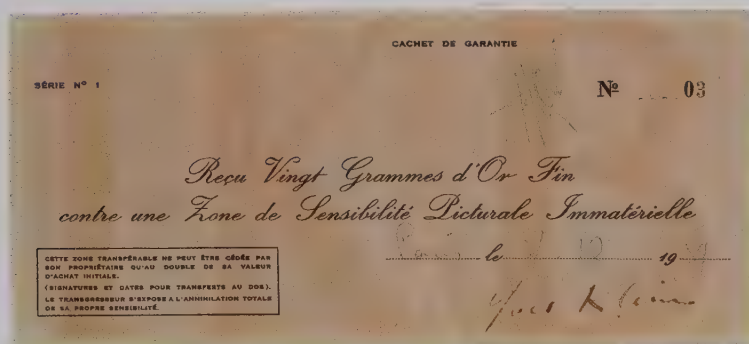
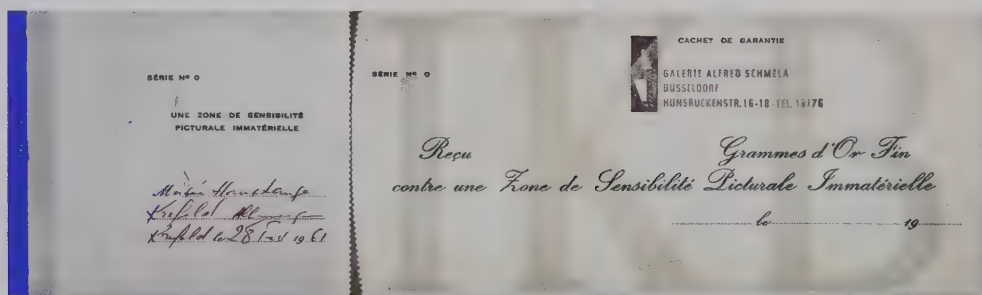
1961
 Printed paper and ink
 3 7/16 x 11 3/4 in. (8.7 x 29.8 cm)

Receipt to Mr. Paride Accetti for transfer of a
Zone of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility (series 1, no. 3)
 against twenty grams of fine gold

1959
 Ink on paper
 3 15/16 x 13 in. (10 x 33 cm)

Maquette de carnet à souches pour les cessions de volumes
 de Zones de sensibilité picturale immatérielle transférable
 [Maquette of a Receipt Book for Zones of Transferable Immaterial
 Pictorial Sensibility]

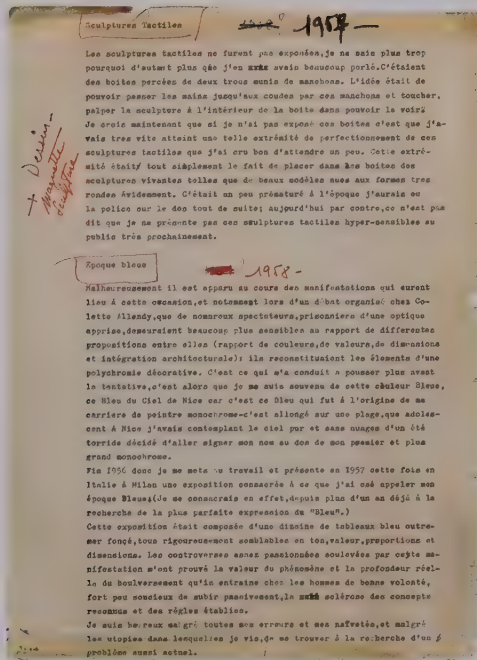
1959
 Ink, gold paint, and gouache on paper
 3 15/16 x 13 in. (10 x 33 cm)



Typescript and ink on paper
11 ⁵/₈ × 8 ³/₈ (29.5 × 21.3 cm)

These were not exhibited. I don't really know why any more. They were boxes, each pierced with two holes fitted with sleeves. The idea was to be able to put one's hands inside the box up to one's elbows and to touch and examine the sculpture in the interior of the box without being able to see it. I now believe that I declined to exhibit these boxes because I very quickly had attained such an extreme perfection in these tactile sculptures that I believed it wise to hold them back for a little while. This extreme perfection was quite simply to have installed living sculptures in these boxes, living sculptures such as beautiful and evidently shapely nude models. At the time, this was a bit premature; the police would have been on my back right away. This is not to say that I may not present these hypersensitive sculptures to the public some day soon.

Excerpt from "Notes on Certain Works Exhibited at Galerie Colette Allendy," in Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 22–23.



Sculpture tactile [Tactile Sculpture]

(S 22), c. 1957

Wood and paint

56 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ x 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ in. (143 x 50 x 50 cm)



From 1956 to 1946, my monochrome experiments in various other colors but blue never let me forget the fundamental truth of our age—that is to say, form no longer is a linear value but rather a value of impregnation.

Just an adolescent in 1946, I went to sign my name on the underside of the sky during a fantastic “realistico-imaginary” journey. That day, as I lay on the beach at Nice, I began to hate the birds which occasionally flew in my pure, unclouded blue sky, because they tried to bore holes in my greatest and more beautiful work.

Excerpt from “Chelsea Hotel Manifesto,” in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 199.

Unfortunately, it became apparent from the responses to that occasion, and especially during a debate organized at Galerie Colette ALLENDY, that many of the spectators, being prisoners of a conditioned way of seeing the relationships between the different propositions (relationships of colors, of intensities, of dimensions and architectural integration), were recombining the canvases in their mind into one single polychrome installation. It is this that led me to push my attempt further still, this time in Italy at Galleria Apollinaire in Milan, in an exhibition dedicated to what I dared to call my Blue Period. (In fact, I had already dedicated myself for more than a year to the search for the most perfect expression of Blue.)

This exhibition included ten paintings in dark ultramarine blue, all of them rigorously similar in tone, intensity, proportions, and dimensions. The rather passionate controversy that arose from this manifestation proved to me the value of the phenomenon and the real profundity of the upheaval that comes in its wake to those unwilling to submit passively to the sclerosis of accepted ideas and set rules.

[...]

Blue has no dimensions. “It is” beyond dimensions, while the other colors have some. These are the psychological spaces. Red, for example, presupposes a hearth giving off heat. All colors bring forth associations of concrete, material, and tangible ideas, while blue evokes all the more the sea

and the sky, which are what is most abstract in tangible and visible nature.

Excerpt from “Speech to Gelsenkirchen Theater Commission,” in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 41.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL ULTRA SECRET

“THE BLUE REVOLUTION”—
Movement aiming at the transformation of the French People’s thinking and acting
In the sense of their duty to their Nation and to all nations.

Address: GALERIE IRIS CLERT
3, rue des Beaux-Arts
Paris—Vme.

Mr. President EISENHOWER
White House
Washington, D.C.—U.S.A.

Excerpt from Letter to Eisenhower, May 20, 1958, in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 25.

APRIL 1958

My exhibition of immaterial blue at the IRIS CLERT Gallery, where the public came into conscious contact for the first time in the world with pictorial sensibility in its pure state, was for me the launch of a new life. I had already long since worked on this problem. The year before, in 1957, I had tried out this idea on the second floor of the Colette ALLENDY Gallery, with a small exhibition for several friends as well as for those who by chance went upstairs to see if there was something else “to see.” I had not announced it; it was during the time of the “Blue Period.”⁶ Tangible and visible blue was triumphing everywhere, both at IRIS’s and at COLETTE’s, as dazzling as the firework display that I had given during the opening reception. This time, at IRIS’s, I left some physical and visible blue color on the street outside: a blue dais, blue displays, and the Obelisk that was illuminated in blue, alas only for one evening, on Wednesday, but no longer on Monday because of jealousy (see

the letter to the prefect). Inside was the true blue, the blue of the blue depths of space.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Mr. Secretary General of the
International Geophysical Year, IGY
UWO, New York City, N.Y., USA

Mr. Secretary General,

Several luminaries have protested how various saltwater bodies were named: the Red Sea, the White Sea, the Black Sea, or the Yellow Sea, without one having been named the “Blue Sea.”⁷ I propose that you employ to advantage my expertise in perfectly monochrome blue matter. By means of remuneration that we can discuss (but one that must, of course, cover the cost of IKB (International Klein Blue) plankton—in my view the coloring agent best suited to this task—as well as my artistic contribution), I place myself entirely at the disposition of the I.G.Y. for the execution of this act of reparation.

Regards,

P.S. There is no danger to the red fish.⁸

Letter to the Secretary General of the International Geophysical Year, in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 27. [⁶a word play: in French, *les poissons rouges* also means goldfish.]

Untitled Sculpture

(S 1, 3, 4, 5), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on cubes on plexiglass

Each: $7 \frac{1}{16} \times 4 \frac{3}{4} \times 3 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (19.5 x 12.1 x 9.5 cm)



Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 104), 1956

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on canvas on panel

30 ¹¹/₁₆ x 22 ¹/₁₆ x 1 in. (78 x 56 x 2.5 cm)

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 108), 1956

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas

19 ¹¹/₁₆ x 19 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (50 x 50 cm)

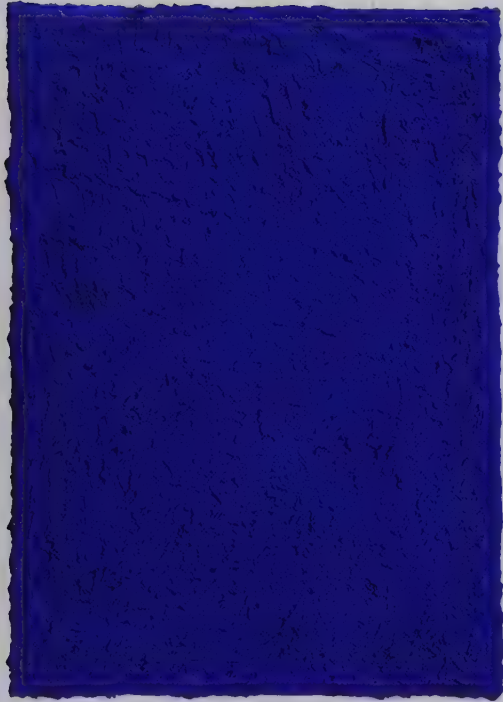


Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 46), 1955

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

26 x 18 1/8 x 13/16 in. (66 x 46 x 2 cm)

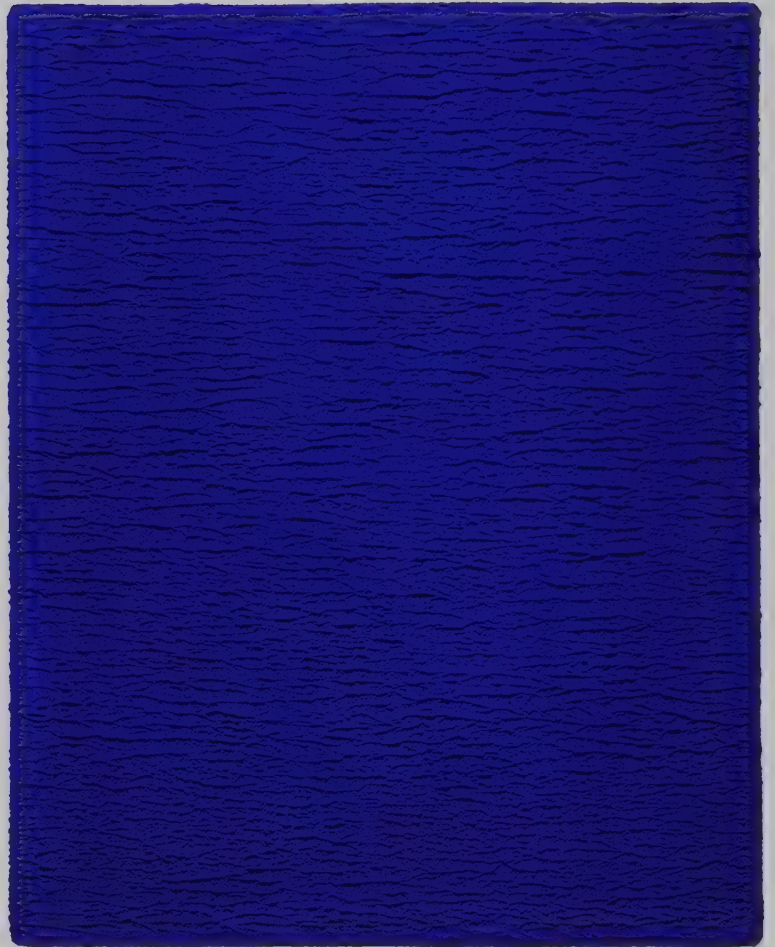


Untitled Blue Monochrome

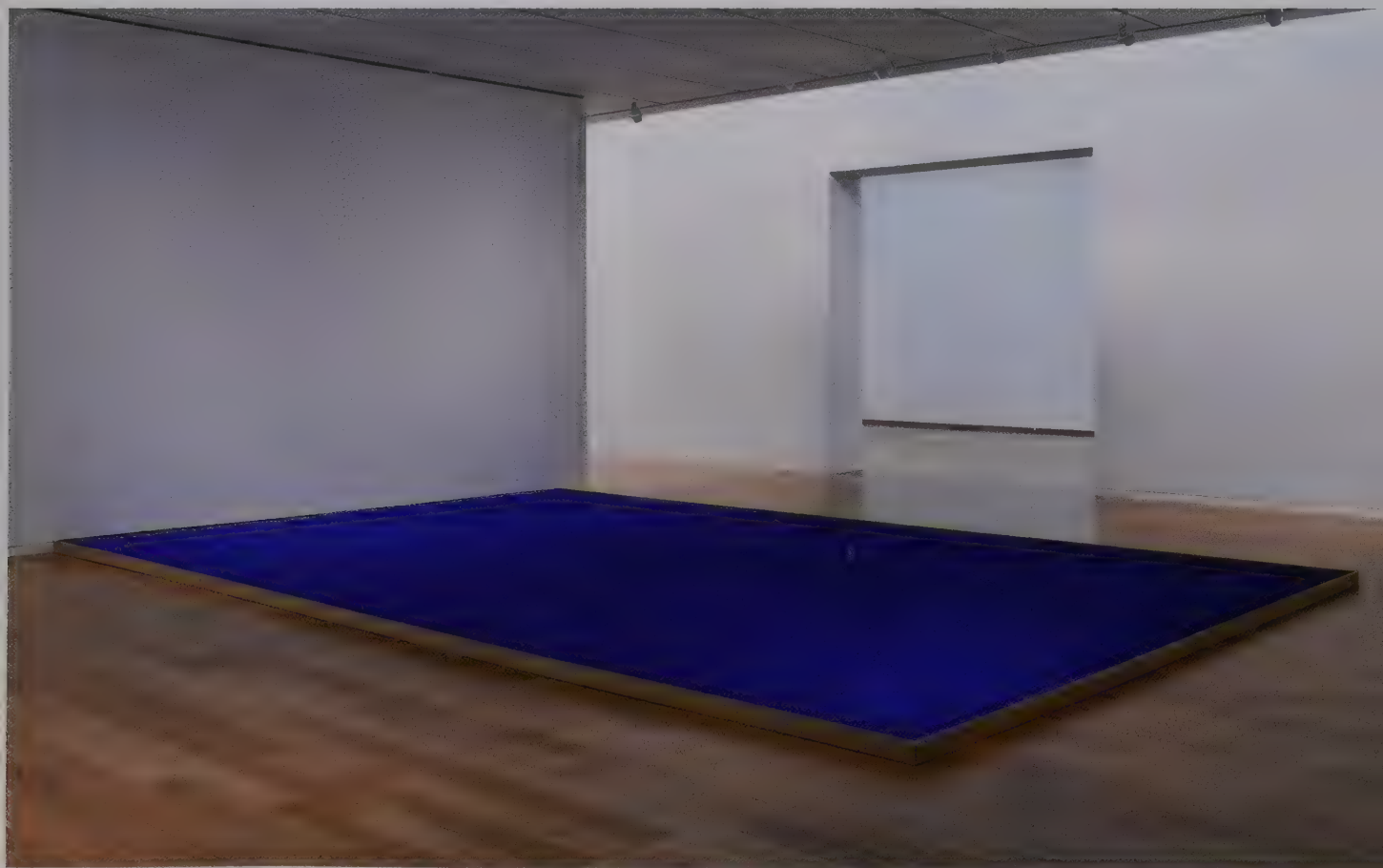
(IKB 67), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

36 1/4 x 28 3/4 in. (92.1 x 73 cm)



Pigment pur bleu [Pure Blue Pigment]
(PIC 1), 2010 (re-creation of 1957 and 1961 piece)
Wood tray with dry pigment
Dimensions variable



Paravent [Folding Screen]

(IKB 62), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panels

59 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 137 $\frac{13}{16}$ x $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (150 x 350 x 2.2 cm)



Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 42), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

78 ³/₈ x 60 ¹/₄ x 1 in. (199 x 153 x 2.5 cm)



Untitled Blue Monochrome
(IKB 74), 1958
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
78 x 54 5/8 in. (198.1 x 138.7 cm)



California

(IKB 66), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

76 ³/₄ x 165 ³/₈ x 2 ³/₈ in. (195 x 420 x 6 cm)





Untitled

(S 18), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on metal stem on stone

28 $\frac{15}{16}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{9}{16}$ in. (73.5 x 35 x 37 cm)

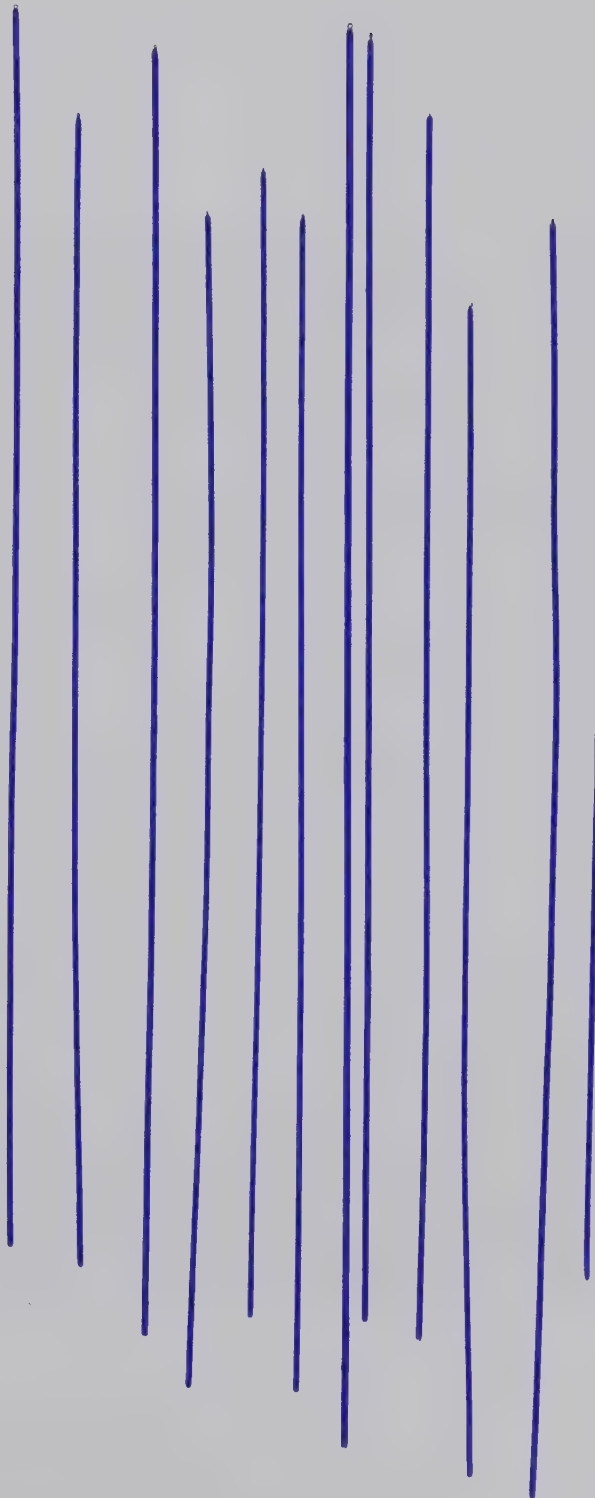


Pluie bleue [Blue Rain]

(S 36), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on wood dowels

82 ¼ x 12 x 7 ⅞ in. (208.9 x 30.5 x 18.9 cm)



IKB Godet

1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel

59 ¹/₁₆ x 77 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (150 x 198 cm)



Envelope and invitation addressed by Yves Klein to Rotraut Uecker

May 25, 1959

Envelope, blue stamp, and invitation card

4 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 6 $\frac{11}{16}$ in. (11 x 17 cm)

Envelope addressed by Yves Klein to himself

April 22, 1958

Envelope and blue stamp

3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (8.6 x 17.9 cm)

"Solution de 1958 au problème du socle...Obélisque illuminé en bleu..."

[1958 Solution to the Problem of the Base...Obelisk Illuminated in Blue...]

1958

Ink on paper

8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (21 x 15 cm)

ZERO 3 (maquette pour la revue ZERO)

[ZERO 3 (maquette for the magazine ZERO)]

(IKB 13), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on cardboard

8 x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (20.3 x 21.3 cm)

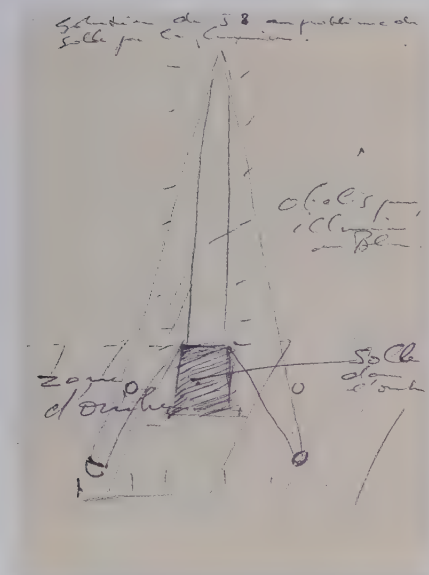
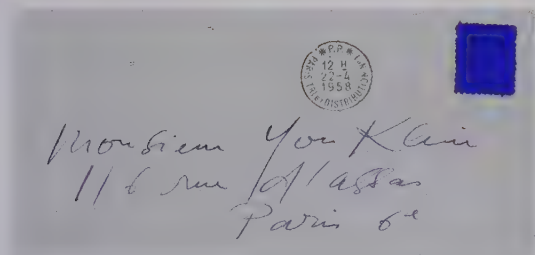
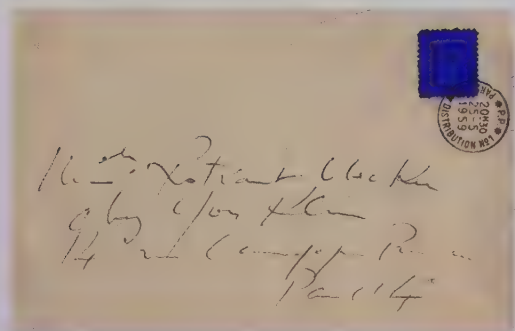
ZERO 3 (revue ZERO)

[ZERO 3 (magazine ZERO)]

1961

Printed paper

7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (20 x 21 cm)



"Excavatrice de l'espace" [Space Excavator] (collaboration Tinguely-Klein)
(S 13), 1958
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on metal disk on electric motor with metal feet
8 ⁹/₁₆ x 6 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (21.7 x 17 cm)



Untitled Blue Sponge Relief

(RE 21), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel

78 ¼ x 64 ¾ x 6 in. (198.8 x 164.5 x 15.2 cm)



Sponge sculptures—It was also on this occasion that I discovered sponges. While working on my paintings in my studio I sometimes used sponges. Evidently, they very quickly turned blue! One day I perceived the beauty of the blue in the sponges; this working tool all of a sudden became a primary medium for me. The sponge has that extraordinary capacity to absorb and become impregnated with any fluid, which was naturally very seductive to me. Thanks to the natural and living matter of sponges I was able to make portraits of the “readers” of my monochromes, which, after having seen and traveled into the blue of my paintings, returned from them completely impregnated with sensibility, just as the sponges.

Excerpt from “Notes on Certain Works Exhibited at Galerie Colette Allendy,” in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 22–23.

With the sponges, savage living material, I was able to create portraits of the audience of my Monochromes, who, after having seen and traveled into the blue depths of my paintings, reemerge immersed by their sensibility just like sponges.

Presentation text for the exhibition at the Galerie Colette Allendy, 1959, in *Yves Klein USA*, trans. Constance Perrot and Chrisoula Petridis, 23.

Do-Do-Do
(RE 16), 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel
78 ³/₈ x 64 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 7 ¹/₁₆ in. (199.1 x 164.9 x 17.9 cm)



Untitled Gold Sponge Relief

(RE 47 II), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges, gold leaf,
and pebbles on panel

17 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 31 ¹/₂ x 2 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (45.6 x 80 x 7.5 cm)

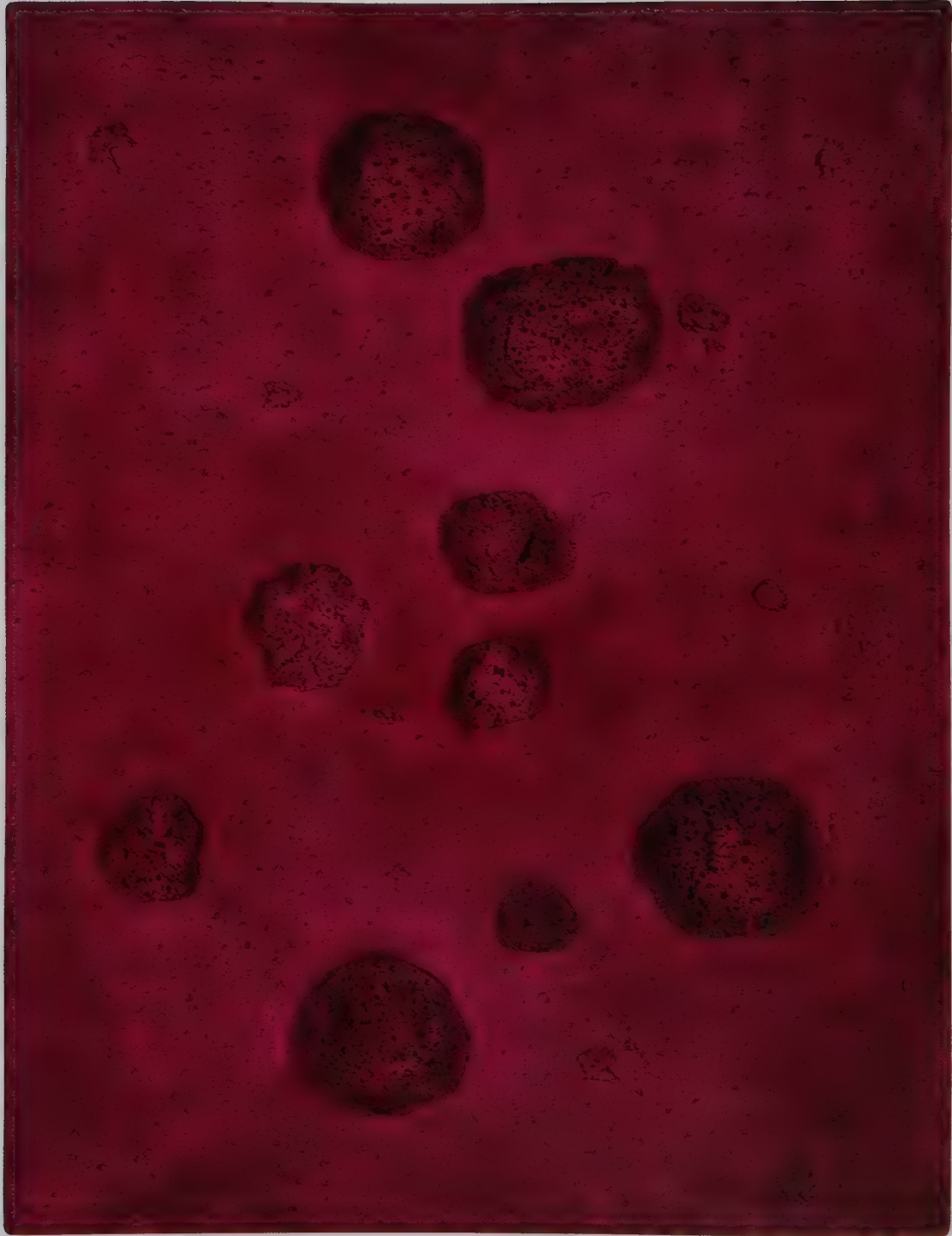


Le Rose du Bleu [The Pink of the Blue]

(RE 22), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel

78 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 60 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. (199.1 x 153 x 16 cm)

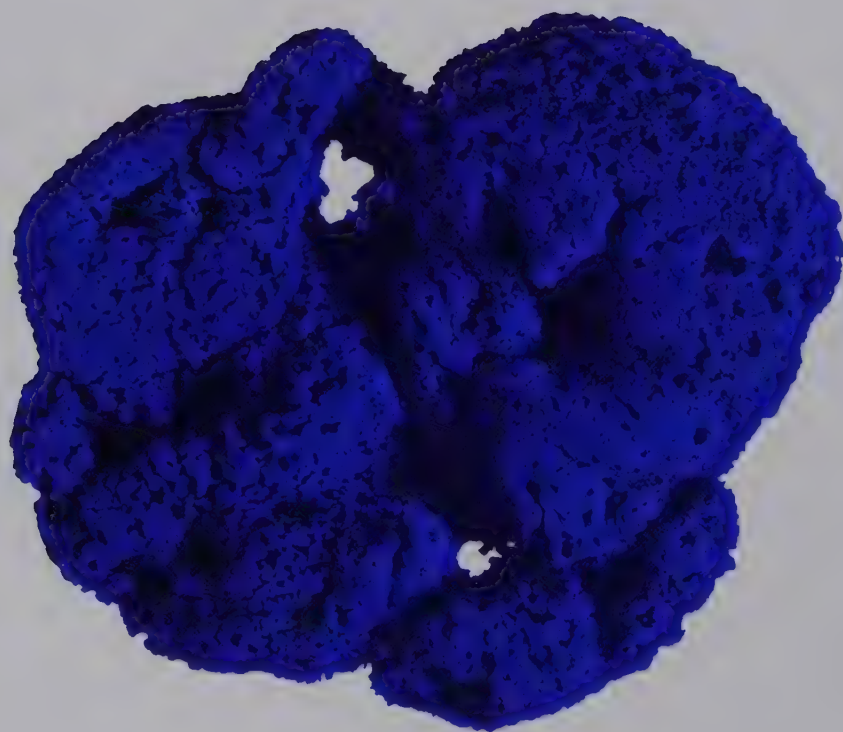


Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 21), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge

13 ³/₄ × 11 ¹³/₁₆ × 4 ³/₄ in. (34.9 × 30 × 12.1 cm)



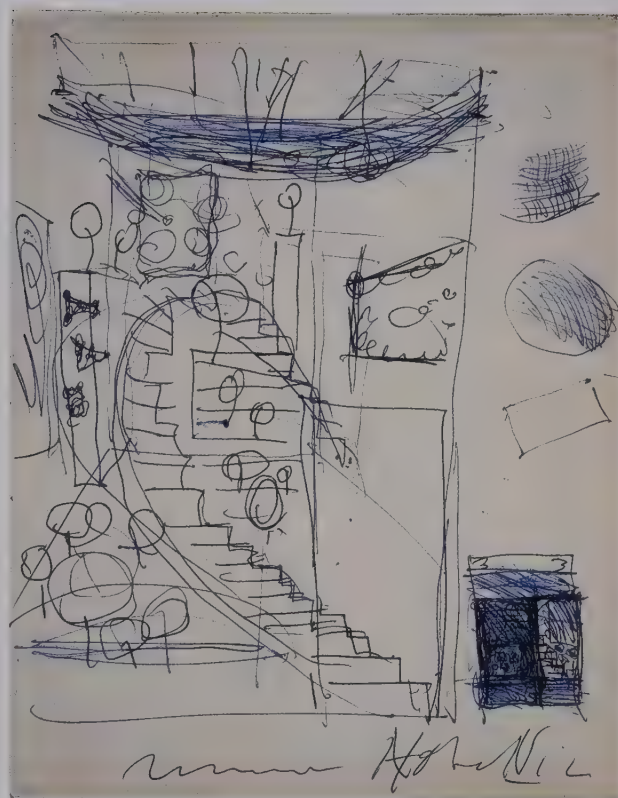
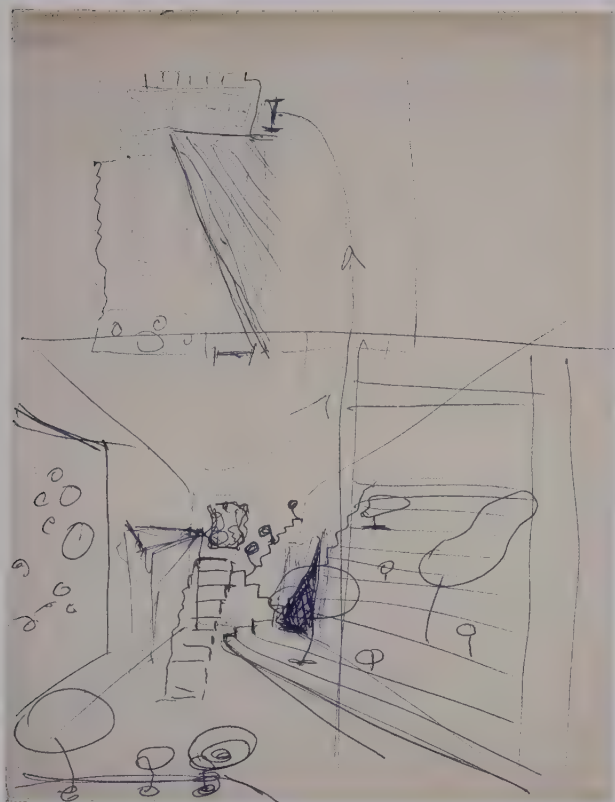
Yves Klein in his apartment at 14, rue Campagne-Première, Paris, c. 1959



Plan pour l'accrochage de Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges
[Installation Plan for Bas-Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges]
1959

Ink on paper

Each: 12 ¹³/₁₆ x 9 ¹³/₁₆ in. (32.5 x 24.9 cm)



Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture
(SE 212), 1959
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem
24 1/8 x 5 1/8 in. (62.1 x 13 cm)

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture
(SE 180), 1957
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
44 1/8 x 15 3/4 x 15 3/4 in. (112.1 x 40 x 40 cm)



Lecteur IKB elegant [Elegant IKB Reader]

(SE 173), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone

16 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 12 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (41.5 x 32.5 x 18 cm)

Le veilleur [The Observer]

(SE 174), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem

12 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 12 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (32.1 x 31 x 24 cm)

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 165), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on metal

7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (20 x 13 x 13 cm)



Untitled Pink Sponge Sculpture

(SE 206), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone

9 ¹³/₁₆ × 7 ⁷/₈ × 4 ³/₄ in. (24.9 × 20 × 12.1 cm)

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 218), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone

13 ³/₄ × 7 ¹/₈ × 2 ¹/₈ in. (34.9 × 22.5 × 6.7 cm)

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 89), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone

16 ⁹/₁₆ × 7 ⁷/₈ × 3 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (42 × 20 × 10 cm)



Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 284), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural coral on metal stem on stone

25 x 15 x 8 in. (63.5 x 38.1 x 20.3 cm)

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 251), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone

29 ½ x 11 ¼ x 5 ¼ in. (74.9 x 28.1 x 13.3 cm)





Untitled Coral Sculpture

(SE 288), 1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural coral

12 ¼ x 12 ¼ x 5 ½ in. (31.1 x 31.1 x 14.3 cm)

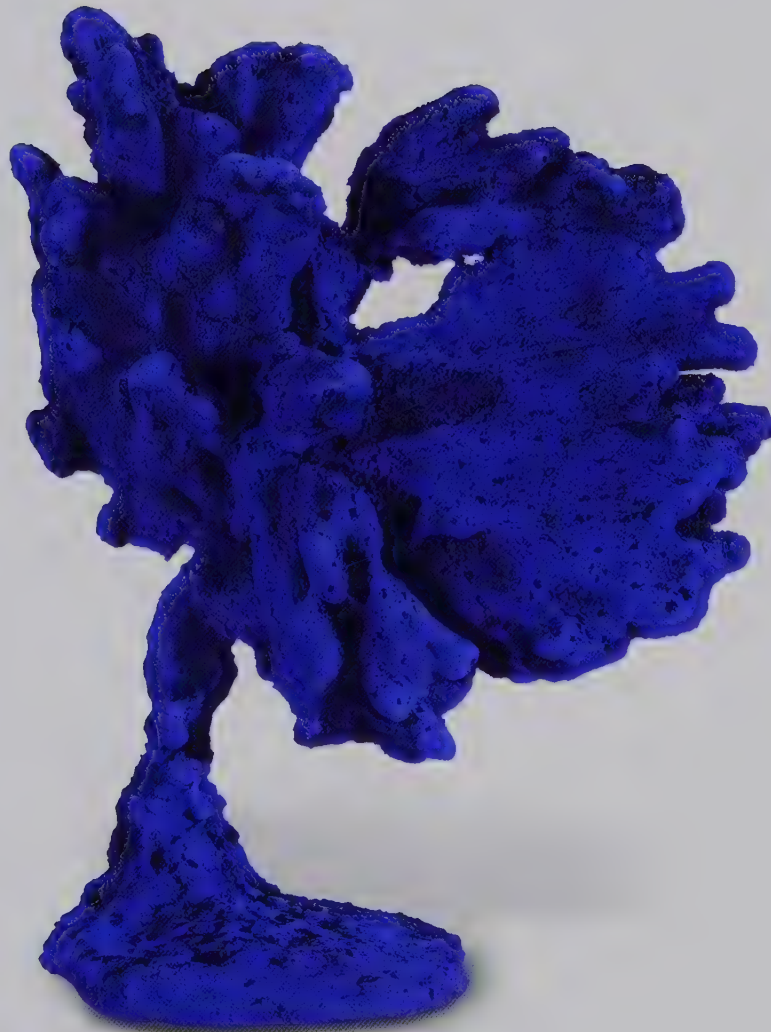


Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 33), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on plaster

16 ⁹/₁₆ × 14 ⁹/₁₆ × 7 ¹/₈ in. (42.1 × 37 × 20 cm)



A few months ago, for example, I felt the urge to register the signs of atmospheric behavior by recording on a canvas the instantaneous traces of spring showers, of south winds, and of lightning (Needless to say, the last mentioned ended in a catastrophe). For instance, a trip from Paris to Nice might have been a waste of time had I not spent it profitably by recording the wind. I placed a canvas, freshly coated with paint, upon the roof of my white Citroën. As I zoomed down Route Nationale 7 at the speed of 100 kilometers an hour, the heat, the cold, the light, the wind, and the rain all combined to age my canvas prematurely. At least thirty to forty years were condensed into one day. The only annoying thing about this project is that I have to travel with my painting all the time.

My atmospheric imprints of a few months ago had been precluded a year ago by vegetal imprints. After all, my purpose is to extract and conclude the trace of the immediate from any incidence of natural objects—human, animal, vegetable, or atmospheric circumstances.

Excerpt from "Chelsea Hotel Manifesto," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 196.

But let us return to the facts; still there in the studio with my models, in 1956, I am reading the journal of Delacroix and suddenly these lines appear: "I adore this little vegetable garden...this gentle sunlight over the whole of it infuses me with a secret joy, with a well-being comparable with what one feels when the body is in perfect health. But all that is fugitive; any number of times I have found myself in this delightful condition during the twenty days that I am spending here. It seems as if one needed a mark, a special reminder for each one of these moments."

What an artist needs is the disposition of a reporter, a journalist, but in the wider sense of the words, one perhaps no longer understood today.

I understand now the spiritual mark of these momentary states. I understand it through my monochromes; and the mark of the momentary states of the

flesh through in the imprints pulled from the bodies of my models.

...But the mark of the momentary states of nature?

...I leap outside and there I am on the riverbank amidst the bulrush and the reeds. I dust everything with pigments and the wind, which bends the delicate stems, comes to apply it with precision and delicacy upon my canvas that I thus present to the trembling nature: I obtain a vegetal mark. Then it begins to rain, a fine spring shower; I expose my canvas to the rain, and it is done. I have captured the mark of rain! The mark of an atmospheric occurrence....

Excerpt from "Truth Becomes Reality," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 188.

Untitled Cosmogony
(COS 12), 1961
Dry pigment and fixative on paper
41 ⁵/₁₆ × 29 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (104.9 × 76 cm)



Untitled Cosmogony

(COS 8), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paperboard on canvas

25 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 19 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. (64 x 49.1 cm)



Untitled Cosmogony

(COS 18), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas

25 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (65.6 x 49.5 cm)



Le Vent du voyage [The Wind of the Journey]

(COS 27), c. 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas

36 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (93 x 74 cm)

Untitled Cosmogony

(COS 25), c. 1961

Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas

40 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (102.6 x 60 cm)



Untitled Planetary Relief

(RP 12), c. 1961

Dry pigment and fixative on plaster on panel

37 ¹³/₁₆ × 27 ³/₁₆ × 2 ¹/₄ in. (96 × 69.1 × 5.7 cm)

Lune II [Moon II]

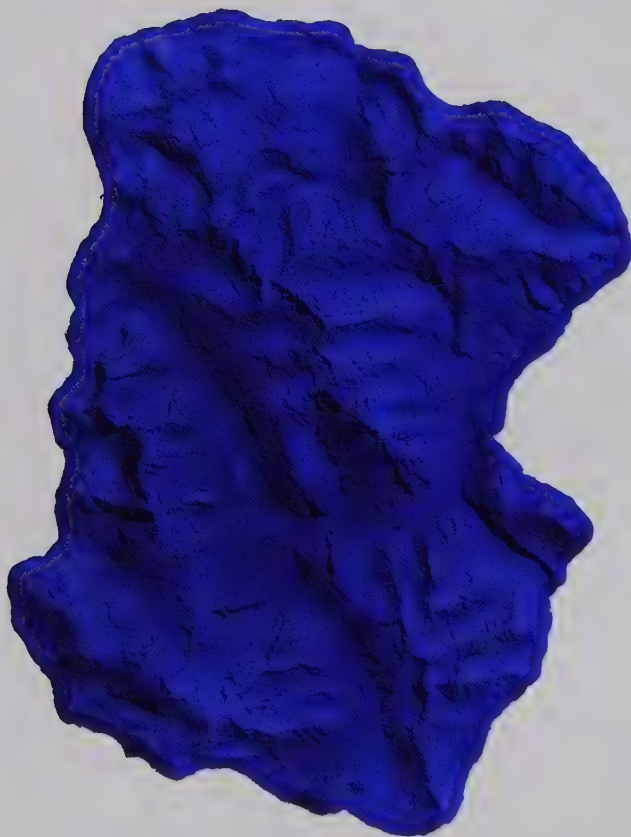
(RP 21), 1961

Dry pigment and fixative on plaster

37 ³/₈ × 25 ⁹/₁₆ × 2 ³/₄ in. (95 × 65 × 7 cm)



Terre [Earth]
(RP 19), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on plaster
21 ⁵/₁₆ x 17 ⁵/₁₆ x 3 ¹/₈ in. (54.9 x 44 x 7.9 cm)



Globe terrestre bleu [Blue Terrestrial Globe]

(RP 5), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on polyester globe on metal base

14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (37.5 x 24.4 x 21.4 cm)



Untitled Blue Planetary Relief

(RP 23), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on hollow metal ball

9 ¹³/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ in. (24.9 × 22.1 × 22.1 cm)



The creator must command his creation, keep it at a distance, in order to paint without touching the paint, the canvas, or the brush.

However, in order to maintain "continuity" between the creator and his creation, it is necessary to employ living intermediaries between the creator and his work. The tools of flesh, the nude models in the studio, are the new living brushes of the painter of today; these models must paint with their bodies only, i.e., the trunk and hips, nothing more. The hands and feet, the psychological parts of the body, should be used by the models merely for smearing paint of a chosen color onto their bodies. Which is obviously the color blue!

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

One will easily understand the process: at first my models laughed at seeing themselves transposed onto canvas in monochrome, then they become accustomed to it and loved the values of the color, different for each canvas, even during the blue period where it was more or less the same tone, the same pigment, the same technique. Then while pursuing the adventure of the "immaterial," little by little, I ceased producing tangible art, my studio empty, even the monochromes were gone. At that moment, my models felt that they had to do something for me... They rolled themselves in color, and with their bodies painted my monochromes. They had become living brushes!

Having had rejected brushes as too excessively psychological already earlier, I painted with rollers, in order to remain anonymous and at a "distance" between the canvas and myself during the execution, at least intellectually... Now, what a miracle, the brush returned, but this time it is alive; it was the flesh itself that applied the color to the canvas, under my direction, with a perfect precision, allowing me to remain constantly at an exact distance "x" from my canvas and thus continue to dominate my creation during the entire execution.

That way my hands stayed clean, and I no longer dirties myself with paint, not even the tips of my fingers. The work completed itself in front of me, with the absolute collaboration of the models, and I was in a position to show myself

worthy of it by welcoming the work into the tangible world in a fitting manner wearing a tuxedo.

It is at this time that I noticed "the marks of the body" at each session. They disappeared immediately, for it was required that everything should become monochrome.

These marks, pagans in my religion of absolute monochromy, hypnotized me right away, and I worked on them secretly, always in absolute collaboration with the models, in order to share the responsibilities in case of a spiritual bankruptcy.

The models and I practiced a perfect and irreproachable scientific telekinesis and it is thus that I presented "The Anthropometries of the Blue Period," first privately at Robert Godet's in Paris, in the spring of 1958, and then again, in a much more perfected form, on March 9, 1960 at the Galerie internationale d'art contemporain.

Excerpt from "Truth Becomes Reality," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 186-87.

Yves Klein and model Elena Palumbo creating an Anthropometry at his apartment, 14, rue Campagne-Première, Paris, 1960



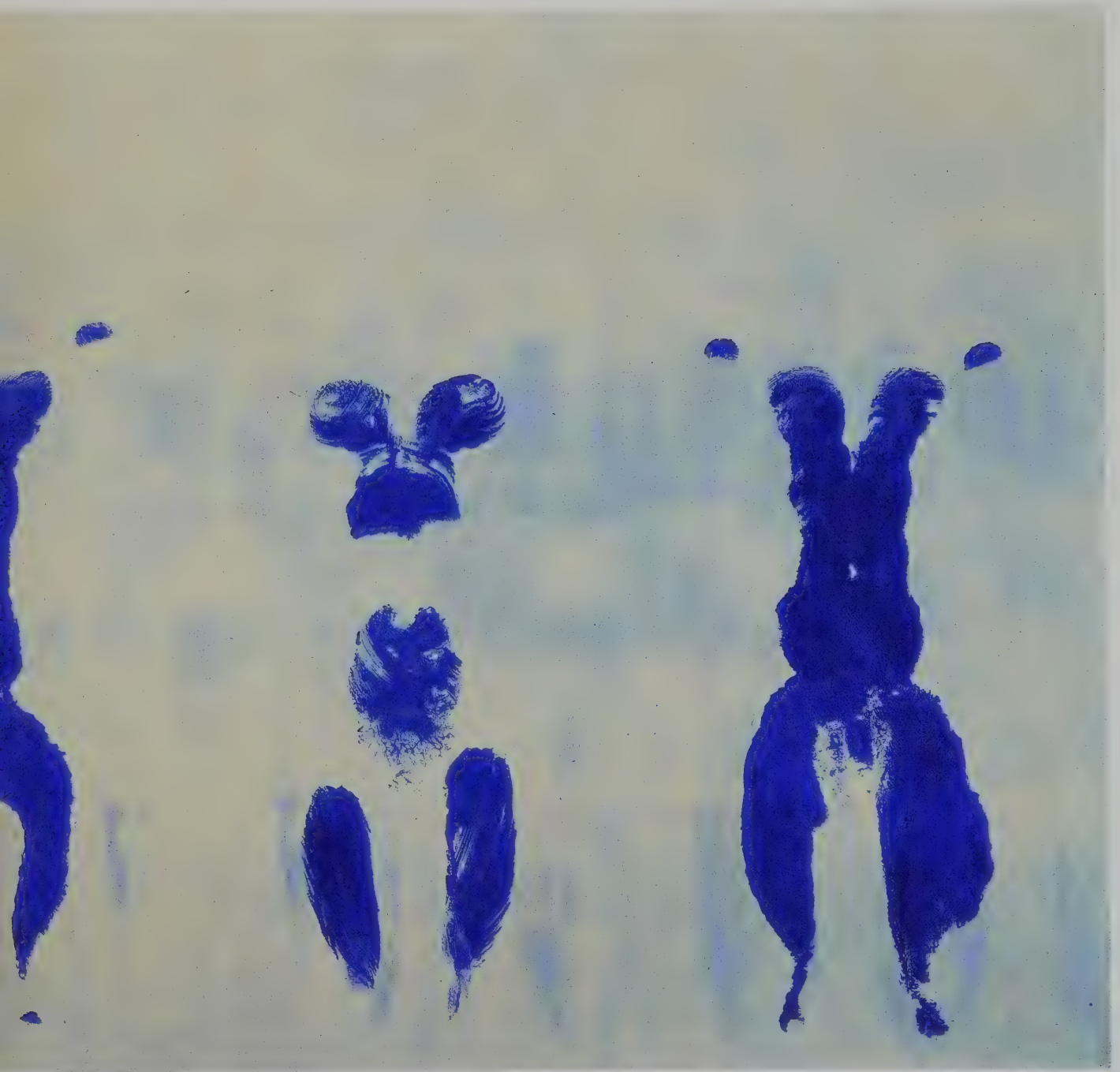
Untitled Anthropometry

(ANT 100), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas

57 x 117 7/8 in. (144.8 x 299.4 cm)





"Jonathan Swift"

(ANT 125), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas

70 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 106 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. (180 x 270 cm)



Untitled Anthropometry

(ANT 154), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas

102 × 70 1/8 in. (259.1 × 178.1 cm)



Screenplay

Scene 1

Setting: A large studio

- a) Hanging on the walls are
(at the beginning only):
= a large blue monochrome
= a large blue relief
- b) In the middle of the floor,
a large covering of white paper
(4 m x 2 m 80 cm)=
Young nude female models are
reclining on its surface=
They are posing.
- c) Nearby, a 3-meter-deep pool filled
with liquid blue
(2 m 50 cm x 1 m 20 cm)=
The idea: one single palette, one
single color.
- d) An easel with a white canvas 60 Fig.
- e) On the floor, next to the easel, two
canvases 60 Fig.
- f) Next to the pool:
= a thick paintbrush
= a large roller
= a thick sponge
= a regular sponge

Actions:

- a) Yves paints the monochrome on the
easel with the thick brush. (Watch
him brushing away.)
- b) Yves paints the 2nd monochrome on
the floor with the roller.
- c) Yves paints the 3rd monochrome
with the two sponges. (Furiously
erasing the effects of handprints.)
- d) Each time, in order to paint his
monochromes, he successively dips
the thick brush, the roller, and the
sponges into the blue pool.

— Palette!

— During the painting, in the
beginning, the camera only films the
monochrome hanging on the wall in
the scope of action.

— From time to time, Yves glances at
the models and the monochrome on
the wall.

— In the end, Yves, after having
finished his last monochrome with
the sponges, looks at the all-blue
sponges, hesitates, then sticks them
onto the still-fresh last monochrome.

— The camera then films the large
relief on the wall.

Excerpt from "Screenplay for *Mondo
Cane*." Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Suaire de Mondo Cane [Mondo Cane Shroud]
(ANT SU 8i), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze
92 1/8 x 116 15/16 in. (234 x 297 cm)



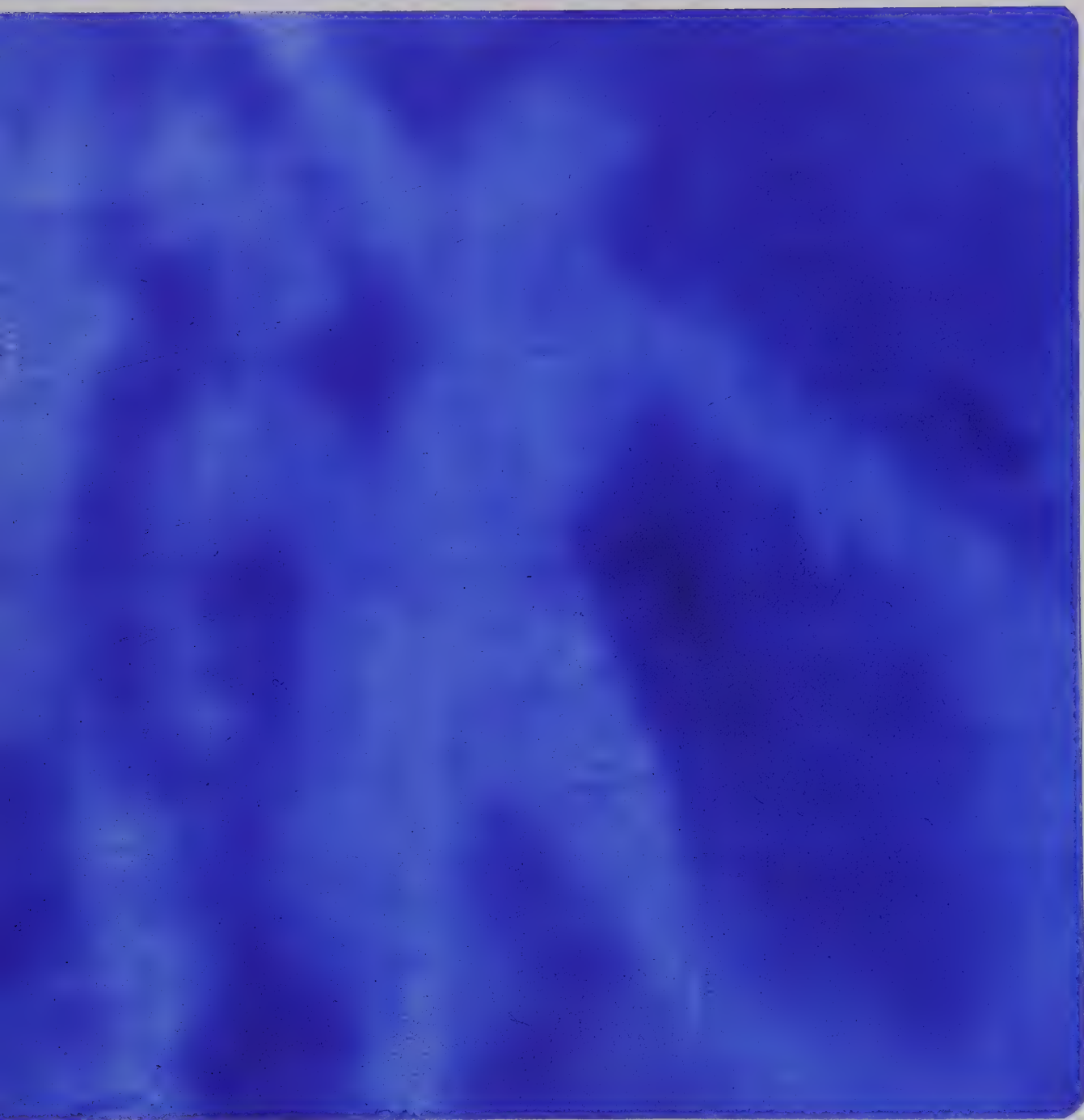
Hiroshima

(ANT 79), c. 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas

55 x 119 ⁷/₁₆ in. (139.7 x 303.3 cm)



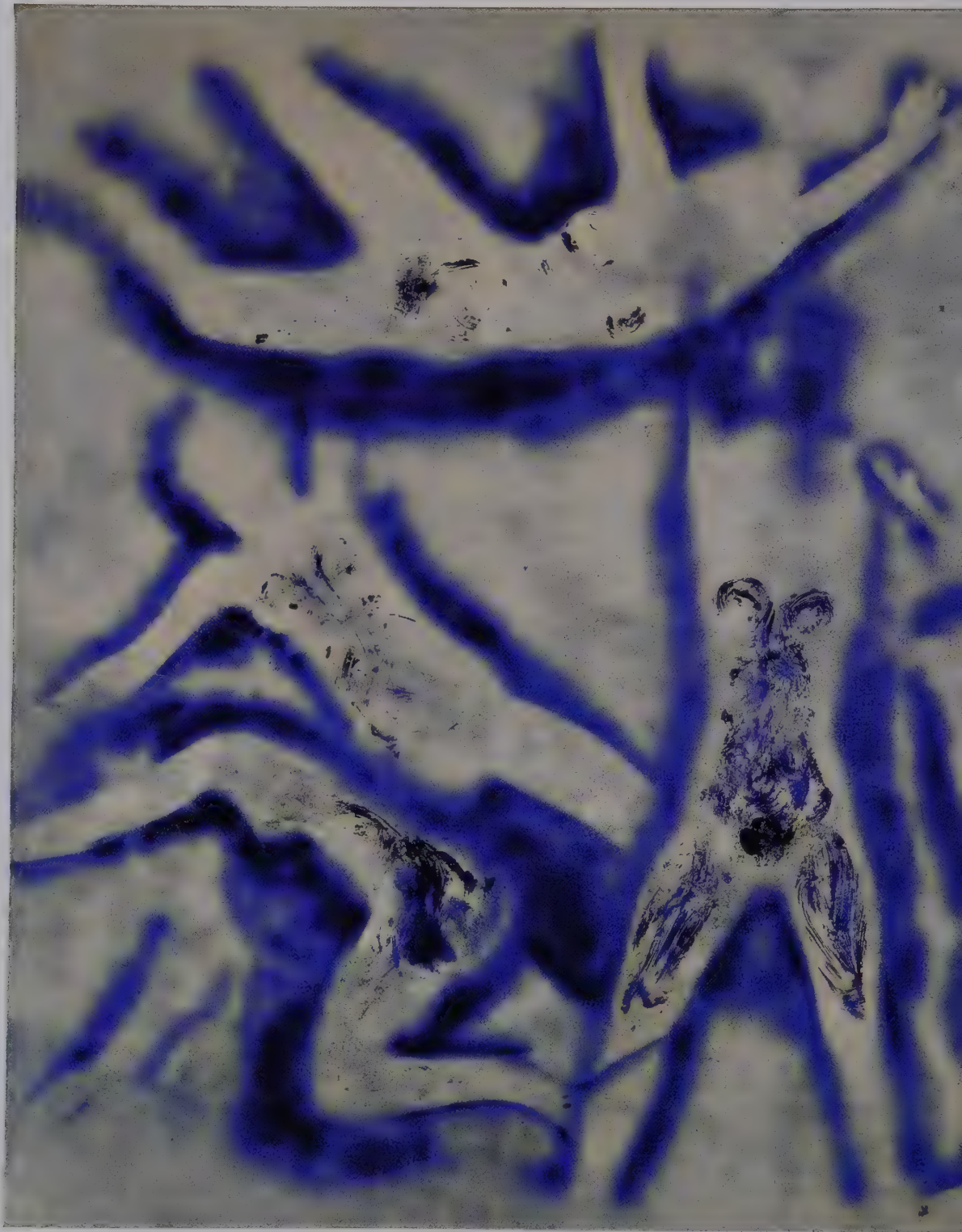


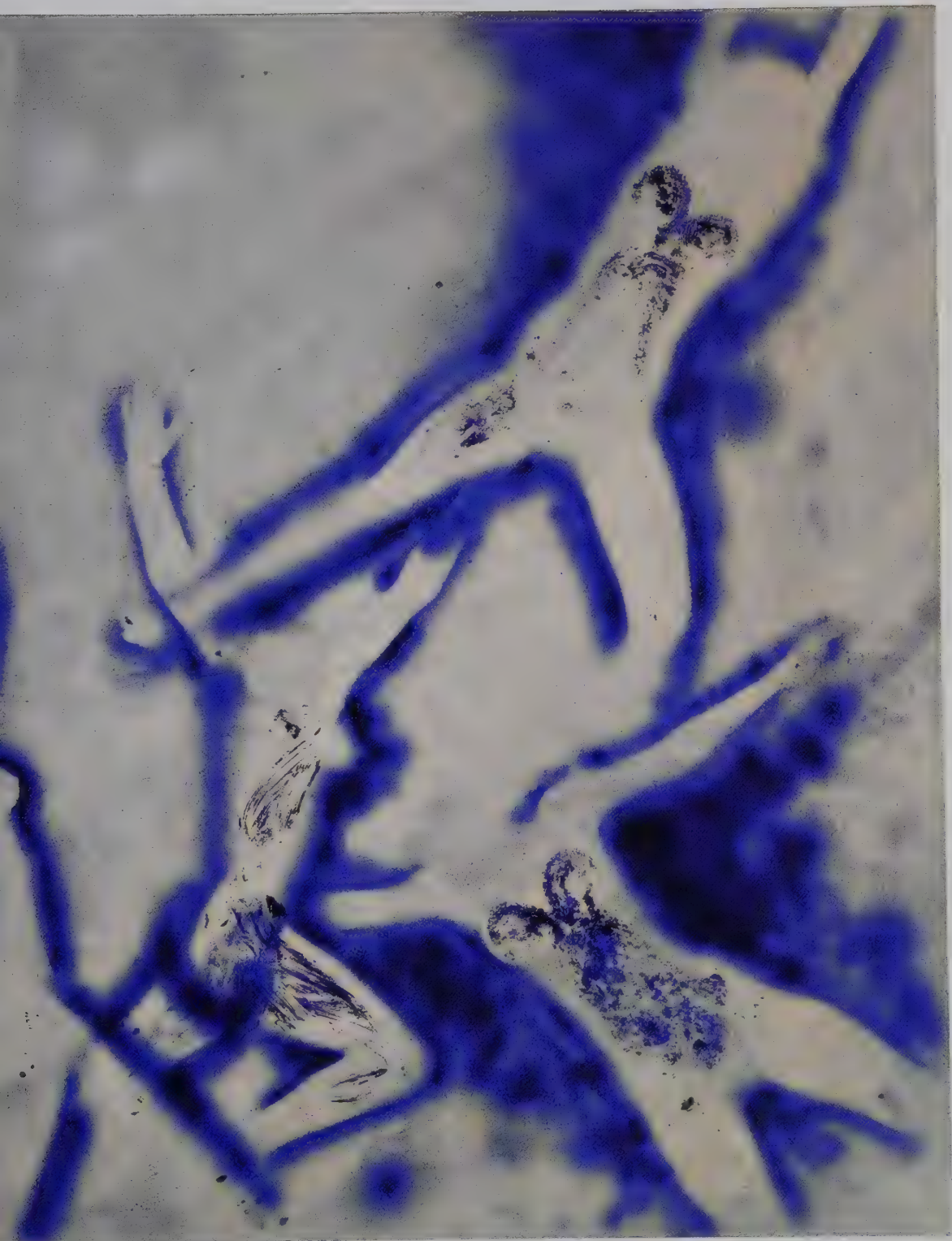
People Begin to Fly

(ANT 96), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas

98 ½ x 156 ½ in. (250.2 x 397.5 cm)









GHOSTLY PRESENCE

KAIRA CABAÑAS



While casting a retrospective glance on his film production in 1985, Guy Debord wrote the following: “the painter Yves Klein, whom I knew at the time of *Hurlements* and who attended the first, very tumultuous showing of this film, was dazzled by a convincing 24-minute sequence of darkness, and must have derived from that, some years later, his ‘monochrome’ paintings which—enveloped in a bit of zen mysticism during his famous ‘blue period’—made many an expert cry genius.”¹ Produced in 1952, *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* [Howls for Sade] is Debord’s first foray into film. A sound film without images, *Hurlements*’ soundtrack consists in part of appropriated texts spoken by Debord, fellow artists, and friends: when someone is speaking, the screen remains white, and, during moments of silence, the screen is black. With a total running time of one hour and fifteen minutes, only twenty minutes contain light and sound. For the final twenty-four minutes, the viewer sits in total darkness and silence.²

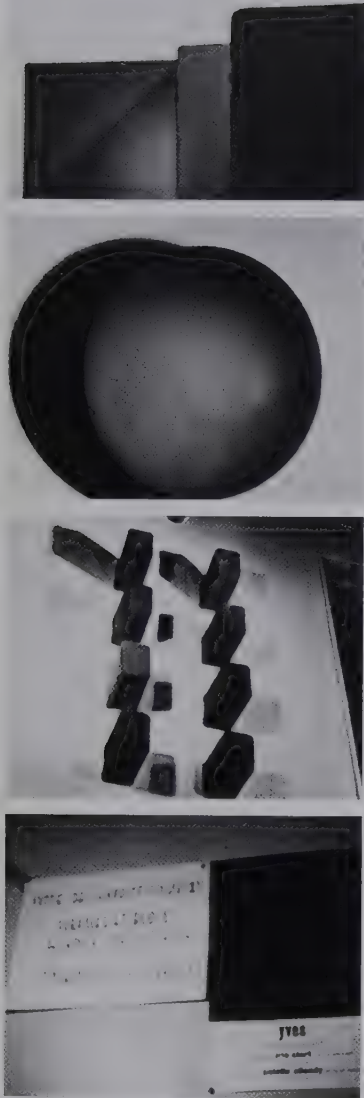
Klein did indeed attend the first screening of *Hurlements* at the Ciné-club d’Avant-Garde on June 30, 1952, but he would not have seen the final sequence. By all accounts, the film was not shown in its entirety on that day.³ Due to the “tumultuous” response that Debord evoked, the film-club management stopped the screening, and it was first shown in full four months later at the Ciné-club du Quartier Latin’s Salle des Sociétés Savantes. Thus Debord’s assertion that *Hurlements*’ final sequence served as Klein’s inspiration is misleading, even though he does not go so far as to take sole credit for the development of Klein’s work.⁴ After all, Debord continued, “When it comes to painting, it is not I who could possibly obscure the glory of Yves Klein. That is, rather, what Malévitch had done 40 years before.”⁵ Here, Debord, as he had done almost thirty years earlier in the pages of the *Internationale situationniste*, suggests that Klein’s work constitutes an instance of neo-avant-garde repetition vitiated of critical force.

Yet by insisting on Klein’s presence at the screening of *Hurlements*, Debord also tellingly locates Klein in the heady mix of *Lettrisme* [Lettrism], an avant-garde movement headed by Isidore Isou, as well as the Lettrist cinematic experimentation that informed Debord’s own early production and the structure of *Hurlements* just as it did the work of Klein. While speculation about how Debord’s film might have “influenced” Klein’s work peppers the increasingly expansive literature on the Situationists, in this context, the specificity of Klein’s work and its relationship to cinema, as well as his work with film, is left both unresolved and unremarked.⁶ Even though Klein was never officially part of Lettrism, the Lettrist films of 1951–52 provided the discursive ground within which Klein began to imagine his way into the materials of painting and, ultimately, his way out.⁷

*

To document his dual exhibitions at Galerie Colette Allendy and Galerie Iris Clert in May 1957, Klein produced the film *Yves Klein: Propositions Monochromes* [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions].⁸ The first sequence of Klein’s documentary introduces the range of his monochrome production, which included a blue folding screen, a rectangle of pure pigment located on the floor, a round disc, eight rectangular blocks arranged in two vertical lines on the wall (with a “magic” wand that appears to point them out), a monochrome of horizontal format followed by the *tapisserie bleue* [blue tapestry] of vertical format, both hanging in front of a white curtain (figure 1A–C). In the final two shots of the sequence, Klein stands behind a table that displays a smaller version of the screen and then an image of a white curtain with a number of blue wands (part of Klein’s *pluie bleue* [blue rain]) swinging back and forth from the ceiling as the camera pans down to frame Klein’s friend Bernadette Allain surrounded by the wands.

The film then cuts and frames two signs placed on the gallery wall: one is a



1A-D

poster announcement for Klein's dual exhibitions, and the other, with an arrow extending from its upper-left-hand corner, reads: "Exhibition continues on the 2nd Floor: Surfaces and Blocks of Pictorial Sensibility. Pictorial Intentions"⁹ (figure 1D). In the first shot of this second sequence, Klein enters the frame from the right and turns to face the wall, gesturing with his hands as if to present an invisible painting. The second shot frames Klein on the far right-hand side of the image, keeping the blank wall visible. From this position, Klein looks up and then down; he looks left and then brings his head back to the right and, like an "art amateur," scrutinizes the wall, repeating the lines of sight—up/down, left/right—inscribed in the earlier sequence's subjective camera shots.¹⁰ The film then abruptly cuts to Klein shown walking from behind and turning around to sit on the radiator cover at the entrance to the space (which is also framed at the outset of the sequence). Klein leans back and slightly furrows his brow in an expression of a potential buyer's skepticism and fixes his gaze on the wall (i.e., the invisible painting) to his left (figure 2A–C).

With the enactment of these "pictorial intentions," Klein avoids the indexical recording and instantiation of process as it is played out in paint (as in the work of *art informel* painters) and instead points to something that is otherwise unseen, a space he declares filled with "pictorial sensibility." While the first shot presents Klein the "artist" pointing to an invisible work, the second and third shots reveal him performing the "art amateur" and "art buyer" (or dealer), respectively. Each shot constitutes an art-viewing (and hence social) relation, as he acts out the subject positions that a contemporary viewer might occupy—artist, amateur, buyer.¹¹

Today, *Yves Klein: Propositions Monochromes* is entirely silent. But in addition to playing the artist, amateur, and buyer in the space of "pictorial sensibility," Klein intended his film—at least those shots including the monochrome work of what he called his "Blue Period"—to include a soundtrack: the voice of an art critic. In this instance, it would not be the words of Pierre Restany, who had written two texts for Klein's past shows and appears twice in the film (first in Allendy's courtyard and then in the gallery office). Rather, the accompanying soundtrack would not reproduce intelligible words at all, thereby rejecting the descriptive and often *belle lettriste* language common to the critical art discourse of the time. In a 1957 manuscript concerning these exhibitions' films, Klein maintained:

I needed a commentary, preferably spoken by an art critic. So I asked Charles Estienne if he would willingly cry, for the twenty-minute duration of the film, blue cries [*cris bleus*].

The longest and most voluminous blue cries possible, drawing inspiration from the painting in my studio on the rue Campagne-Première.

It was very successful and I must say that the film will retain the prestigious commentary that Charles had the courage to perform [*accompagner*] with profound conviction at the time.¹²

In short, Klein proposes a soundtrack of blue cries (or screams) for a film documenting blue paintings (figures 3 and 4).

Given Klein's repeated insistence in his writings on "direct and immediate perception-assimilation" and "no more mediation,"¹³ what seems important for Klein was less the notion that the screams register as blue in color *per se* through some synaesthetic perceptual modality but, rather, that in performance they abandon any reliance on the graphic traces of written language. In this way, the screams would operate at the level of voiceover, and, in this case, art criticism, enacting what Klein hoped pure color—and not line—would accomplish in the realm of painting.

Beyond Klein's professed desire for immediacy and a new ground for communication in the realms of painting and language, respectively, how are we to



Figure 1A-D
Stills from Yves Klein:
Propositions Monochromes
[Yves Klein: Monochrome
Propositions], 1957



Figure 2A-C
Stills from Yves Klein:
Propositions Monochromes,
1957



Figure 3
Yves Klein, "Les cris bleus de
Charles Estienne" [The Blue
Cries of Charles Estienne], 1957

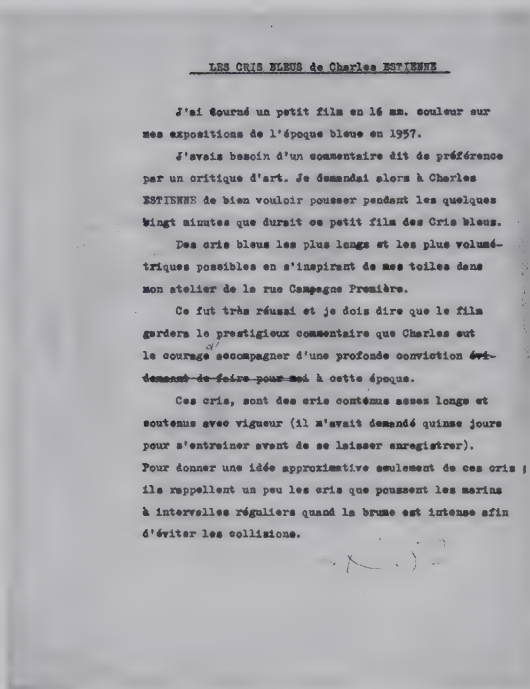


Figure 4
Charles Estienne performing
cris bleus, Paris, 1957

2A-C

3



4

Figure 5
Yves Klein, Lecture at the
Sorbonne, Paris, June 3, 1959

Figure 6
Still from Yves Klein:
Propositions Monochromes,
1957

understand the would-be soundtrack in relation to his monochromes and, more specifically, to the communication of his “pictorial intention” in the otherwise empty space on the second floor of the Galerie Colette Allendy? Does one need to know, for example, that Colette Allendy’s gallery was formerly the home of her late husband René Allendy and that he was one of the founders of the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris in 1926, counting among his many patients René Crevel, Anaïs Nin, and Antonin Artaud? Or that Yvonne Allendy (René’s first wife and Colette’s sister) had supported Artaud’s short-lived Théâtre Alfred Jarry, and René had also invited Artaud to give a lecture about his theories on theater at the Sorbonne in 1933? At this time, the Allendys offered the second floor space of their home at 67 rue de l’Assomption to Artaud, who, bereft of any locale, had nowhere else to rehearse.¹⁴ Thirteen years later, in the wake of her husband’s death, Colette Allendy opened her gallery (which existed from 1946 to 1960) on the house’s ground floor, and eventually granted similar use of the second floor to Klein.¹⁵ Thus perhaps it comes as little surprise that in the context of his own lecture at the Sorbonne on June 3, 1959, Klein transmitted via tape recorder not only a version of Estienne’s cry together with a “monotone cry” by François Dufrêne, but also a “very beautiful cry” by none other than Artaud¹⁶ (figure 5).



I would like to return to the final image in the second sequence of Klein's film, in which the artist turns and sits on the radiator cover and from this position gazes at the invisible painting on his left. When Klein rises, looking straight at the camera, the radiator cover begins to shake, and he turns to stabilize it with his hands. This action would be unremarkable were it not for the fact that the sequence begins by framing the radiator (before the camera pans up and Klein enters the frame) and ends with Klein's emphatic gesture (figure 6). Is it, perhaps, the ghost of Artaud that interrupts the seamless transmission of Klein's pictorial intention in this final shot? Contemporary witnesses attest to Klein's knowledge of Artaud's "presence" in the space.¹⁷ Thus, what are we to make of Artaud's specter? Did he make the radiator cover continue to quiver, evoking an invisible force that Klein attempted to quell?

*

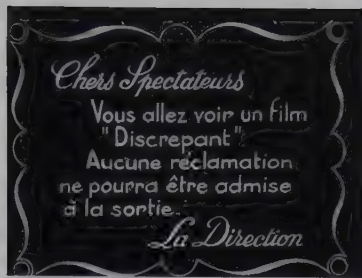
In Artaud's proposal for a theater of cruelty, speech returns to the body and is no longer governed by a script. In the collection of essays published as *Le Théâtre et son double* [The Theatre and Its Double] in 1938, Artaud argued in no uncertain terms against theater's subordination to language, which he understood as both writing (i.e., plot) and intelligible speech. In "No More Masterpieces," he affirmed, "Let us do away with this foolish adherence to texts, to written poetry. Written poetry is valid [only] once and then ought to be torn up."¹⁸ The primary objective for theater as for poetry, on which their effectiveness depends according to Artaud, is their condition of possibility: "the action of movement and spoken things, never reproduced twice."¹⁹ Therefore, Artaud's screams were in part about the search for a unique and unrepeatable experience. "What his howls promise us, articulating themselves under the headings of *existence, flesh, life, theatre, cruelty*," Jacques Derrida explains, "is the meaning of...an art which no longer yields works, an artist's existence which is no longer a route or an experience that gives access to something other than itself."²⁰ Moreover, Artaud's theater was not a spectacle to be looked at from a distance, but one to be lived by the spectator from within the singularity of the spatiotemporal experience it created. Artaud insisted, "no gap between life and theater."²¹

Whether Klein was reading Artaud directly or having his ideas filtered through his friend Dufrêne (or even Raymond Hains),²² there is no doubt that Klein contrived Estienne's *cris bleus* in the wake of the various howls, guttural noises, coughing, moans, and other onomatopoeic sounds and glossolalia that interrupted not only the phonetic poetry but also the soundtracks of the early Lettrist films he attended. With his advocacy of Lettrism, Isidore Isou understood the letter as the new ground by which to achieve true communication and considered the word "the first stereotype."²³ Existing alongside recognizable phonemes (and at times words), the physicality of the sound in Lettrist poetry was meant to transfer poetic experimentation from the private realm of graphic representation to the public arena of performed speech.²⁴ In their attempt to bypass Dadaist efforts through a reinvention of language based on a theory of breaking down letters, the Lettrists, following Artaud, insisted on further foregrounding the centrality of the body in the production of sound.²⁵

Responding to the history of fascist propaganda and the postwar prominence of Hollywood film, Lettrist cinema is remarkable for challenging the cinematic apparatus and its institutional model of spectatorship almost twenty years prior to its theorization in cinema studies. In his canonical discussion of the cinematic apparatus, Jean-Louis Baudry explains, "the meaning effect produced does not depend only on the content of the images but also on the material procedures by which an image of continuity, dependent on the persistence of vision, is restored



6



7 A-B

IMAGE :
En toutes lettres sur l'écran :

SON.
KRE PUCTE
KRE PUKTE
PEK LILÉ
KRE PEKTE
S KREK
PTD (Antonin Artaud)

IMAGE.
Mouvements latéraux des mâchoires d'Antonin Artaud dans le rôle de Marat
de « Napoléon » d'Abel Gance.

SON.
Mais préfixe tout cela, et pour moi, le lettrisme ne reste au fond qu'un
vice inscurable : L'étre, l'être, la lettre et le Néant. C'est faire du son pour avoir
l'âme, de l'éloquence avec toute cause et laisser la musique s'y rompre le cou.

IMAGE.
Ecran défilé longitudinalement en une dizaine de tranches. Défilé très rapide
d'habilles verticales, de droite à gauche.

SON.
Esquissent :
HOUMKIR VASSABMAR VJALN HOLST TEHIRFF
HOUMKIR VASSABMAR KSSUHEYL TEHIRMAR (bis) DYORFF.

Chœur :
EPILO HIMK OLOUEPILDMK BOLOUE PARM BOLDIMK
PARAM PARM BOLDOME (bis)

Solo :
OKSSORX O SRA PEHELESSEM ORBRONOD DEUM
GLANGUJUGLE
Chœur :
EPILO HIMK etc. BULDOMK.

Solo :
SORONDLE SARANDLE SAGNE SORONDLE SOGNE STOONE (bis)
SANGUIRULO ULGUE EMEUSEGNE MOSSOONE ? : MOSSOONE ? :
MOSSOONE OUIRULO EMASAGNE.

Chœur :
EPILO HIMK etc. BULDOMK.

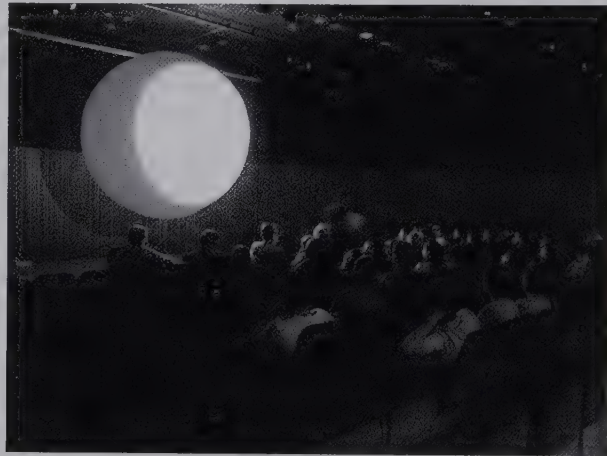
Solo :
OKSSORX OSRA etc.

Chœur :
EPILO HIMK etc. BULDOMK.

IMAGE.
Deux parapluies s'ouvrent et se referment, l'un vu de dessous, l'autre de dessus,
jamais en harmonie, inscrites chacun dans une étoile, se tenant chacun la moitié de
l'écran.

SON.
Comme disait l'autre en parlant de sa voiture : « Il ne faut pas lui gratter sous
les ailes parce qu'elle est sonorisée. »

from discontinuous elements.”²⁶ From Isou’s uncoupling of the unity of image and sound in what he calls “*montage discrèpant*” [discrepant editing] (figure 7A–B) to Gil Wolman’s use of a weather balloon instead of a flat image screen in *L’Anticoncept*, 1952 (figure 8), as well as Dufrène’s total abandonment of the filmstrip, each Lettrist “film” challenged cinema’s established conventions (e.g., continuity editing, synchsound, screen) as well as the necessity of its image support (i.e., filmstrip), in order to generate new conditions and communities of viewing. Crucial here is the Lettrists’ physical—that is, bodily—conception of cinema, primarily through the embodied and volumetric predominance of sound (not necessarily speech), which challenged the persistence of vision and the “reality effect” produced with the advent of sound synchronization in 1927.²⁷ It was the Lettrists, then, who recast and elaborated Artaud’s proposal for theater in the realm of film, pursuing a kind of “direct” cinema that explicitly took up Artaud’s legacy in their desire to move from the space of representation to the event itself.²⁸



8

On January 25, 1952, Klein attended the screening of Isou’s *Traité de bave et d’éternité* [Treatise on Venom and Eternity] at the Studio de l’Etoile in Paris, some months after it had already achieved notoriety at the Cannes film festival.²⁹ With this work, Isou employed *montage discrèpant* and also drew directly on the celluloid, a procedure intended to exacerbate and produce what he called the “*ciselante*” [chiseled] image.³⁰ Approximately three months later, Klein attended the premiere of Dufrène’s *Tambours du jugement premier* [Drums of the First Judgment] in Cannes on May 4. Known today primarily for his work in phonetic poetry and for showing the back of urban posters, Dufrène went even further than Isou in his assertion of sound’s independence from the photographic image and beyond Wolman in his rethinking of film’s support (figure 9).

In the darkened theater, an individual—whom Dufrène calls “*diseur*” [pronouncer/sayer]—was stationed in each corner, armed only with a flashlight and a script. Wolman and Marc’O read and sang “aphorisms,” respectively, while Debord spoke the image track and Dufrène recited phonetic poetry.³¹ Performed in a theater, the “film” enacted a displacement of attention from image to sound and from screen to space to the extent that cinema’s effects were no longer tethered to its technological mechanisms and materials (the camera, filmstrip, projector, and screen in this case). Explicitly framing his work in relation to Artaud, Dufrène claimed that the *diseur* should have “a voice that varies in intensity from the natural tone to the most irritating artifice,”³² thereby disallowing any easy or self-evident verbal consumption in a manner that went well beyond the intelligible

speech reproduced in the first two parts of Isou's soundtrack for *Traité*. In the wake of *Tambours*' performance, Dufrêne explains how no one talked about this "imaginary film" except, that is, the Lettrists and Klein. He recalls, "from that moment and until his passing away, when speaking with me [Klein] rarely failed to greet me with '*Salut O toi l'Auteur du Film sans Ecran ni Pellicule*' [Hello to you author of the film with no screen nor filmstrip]."³³

Returning to Klein's film, as a documentary, it would have offered an alternative to conventional sound film insofar as the sound, which was recorded live, would not have matched a visual source (i.e., Estienne) within the frame. Here, the voice of the critic that usually explains artistic practice and thus inscribes it within an articulated body of knowledge is reduced to sustained cries.³⁴ Yet unlike the cinematic work of his Lettrist peers Isou and Maurice Lemaître, the celluloid of Klein's film remains untouched. No "chiseling" or other intervention disrupts its status as a visual document of his work. What the film communicates is Klein's challenge to the medium of painting and the integrity of the canvas support, either by abandoning it entirely in favor of "pictorial sensibility" or through the use of fire, as recorded in *Feux de Bengale: Tableau de feu bleu d'une minute* [Bengali Fires: One Minute Blue Fire Painting], 1957. This said, we still have not answered the question of how to understand Artaud's legacy in relation to Klein's work. Should Klein figure as one of what Derrida calls Artaud's "'illegitimate sons?'"³⁵

*

TOUTE L'ÉCRITURE EST DE LA COCHONNERIE.

—ANTONIN ARTAUD³⁶

Mediated by his exposure to Lettrism and framed in relation to his own immanent declaration of himself as a painter, I wish to suggest that Klein initially attempted to articulate an analogous critique of representation in painting and ultimately hoped, as Artaud did, to move away from imitation and symbolism. There are differences and reversals of terms, to be sure. Klein conceived of the colored surfaces of his monochromes as "poetic moments" full of "poetic energy" and as an animate entity: "the paintings are living presences."³⁷ Just as Artaud sought to go beyond psychological theater, Klein charted a "new space" for painting by championing pure color over line—the latter, he tellingly claimed, perpetuates a "reign of cruelty."³⁸ Klein wanted to restore for the viewer self-presence through color as "the spectator [*le lecteur*] of a painting with lines, forms, composition, remains prisoner of his/her five senses."³⁹ By 1955, the artist had moved beyond the subjective expressionism of *art informel* (what he calls "picturesque literature about psychological states"⁴⁰) and the rationalist abstraction then on view at the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles. For Klein, line constitutes our "psychological boundaries, our history, our education."⁴¹ In his writings, line as contour, form, and composition takes on the oppressive role that plot and dialogue held for Artaud.

In 1954, Klein created a storyboard for a film titled *La Guerre (de la ligne et de la couleur) ou (vers la proposition monochrome)* [The War (of line and color) or (toward a monochrome proposition)]⁴² (page 76). Although the film was never realized, the script outlines the battle between line and color, the legacy of *disegno* versus *colore*, as indexed in the history of art. Visually, the film begins with four monochrome shots that change from white to yellow, yellow to red, and then red to blue, thus establishing the primary colors as both subject and object of perception and endowing each shot with a continuous musical tone.⁴³ The film next cuts to an "ancient" hand impression, which represents the first sign that introduces, according to Klein, "line" into the "kingdom" [*royaume*] of color. Other "linear" images—from hunters with bows and arrows to engravings and hieroglyphs—

Figure 7A–B
Isidore Isou, Stills from
Traité de bave et d'éternité
[Treatise on Venom and
Eternity], 1951

Figure 8
Projection of Gil Wolman's
L'Anticoncept [The
Anticoncept], 1952.
Reconstruction with weather
balloon in "Próximamente en
esta pantalla. El cine letrista,
entre la discrepancia y la
sublevación" at the Museu d'Art
Contemporani de Barcelona,
October 6, 2005

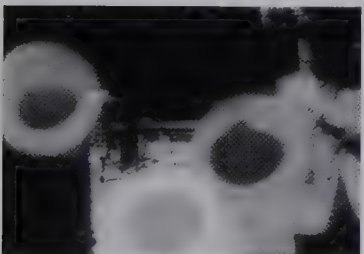
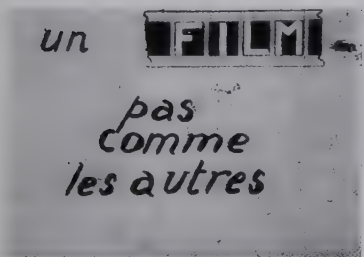
Figure 9
François Dufrêne
Tambours du jugement premier
[Drums of the First Judgment].
Script published in ION. Paris:
Jean-Paul Rocher, 1999



10



11



12 A-B

appear while the text narrates the battle, describing how “line subjugates man” and engenders a “torn soul.”

Klein’s script makes reference to painting in China, India, and Japan, but he dwells more specifically on the history of Western art, from the rivalry between Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Eugène Delacroix to the Impressionists and ultimately Kasimir Malevich. Klein’s insistence on color over line is maintained throughout his writings. He continually thematizes color’s historical status as both supplement and sensible impression, reversing its secondary status in idealist aesthetic discourse and explicitly aligning himself with colorists such as Delacroix. But *La Guerre* is in many ways a conventional film. It stages a drama, albeit one specific to the history of art, that ultimately gives way to images accompanied by a descriptive, even didactic, voiceover narration. In the same way, his subsequent 1957 film, despite the prospective “discrepant” sound, remains conventional; the sequences are bereft of any radical manipulation or superimposition.

Klein’s film works from 1953 to 1962 number approximately sixteen and vary in both production and effects.⁴⁴ They range from scripts that were never realized to completed films employing professional cameramen, such as Albert Weil (who recorded Klein’s work for Gaumont). Some examples show Klein in the various roles he assumed: from a judoka in 1953 (figure 10) to an orchestra conductor for his *Symphonie Monoton-Silence* [Monotone-Silence Symphony], the performance of which accompanied the *Anthropométries de l’époque bleue* [Anthropometries of the Blue Epoch] in 1960 (figure 11). These films, alongside his multiple photographic self-representations, demonstrate the persistent importance of the role of media in his process and in the production of his multifaceted artistic identity.

Other films, such as the 1957 *Propositions Monochromes* described earlier, feature Klein’s monochromes and at times provide extreme close-ups of their surfaces (as with the work shown at Iris Clert’s). Blue pigment fills the image frame, evoking the opening shots of *La Guerre*. Such close-ups recur in other instances, such as in *Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d’éponges* [Bas-Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges] from 1959. Klein carefully orchestrated not only the documentation of his work during exhibitions (e.g., *Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer* [Yves Klein: Monochrome and Fire], 1961, and *Antagonismes II* [Antagonisms II], 1962) but also the process of its creation—perhaps nowhere more marked than in his film of the *Anthropométries de l’époque bleue*.⁴⁵

With the production of “immaterial pictorial sensibility,” however, Klein cleaves painting from any of the possible effects it might achieve in his application of paint. By abandoning canvas as a support for his work, Klein developed what I will call a “painting séance,” taking a cue from Maurice Lemaître’s designation of his Lettrist work in film as a “séance de cinéma” (séance translated as “session” by Lemaître).⁴⁶ Lemaître’s *séance de cinéma* (or *syncinéma*) amplified Isou’s chiseling of celluloid as well as the independence of sound from image (figure 12A–B). With *Le film est déjà commencé?* [Has the Film Already Started?], Lemaître also challenged the integrity of the conventional screen, expanding it, as it were, to include draperies and objects that were waved in front of it as well as the incorporation of the spectators’ bodies when they would stand, both provoked and unprovoked, to speak. What is more, the entire theater staff, from managers to ushers, became part of the work, thereby shifting the terms of film’s reception from the screening to the séance.⁴⁷ Described in *France-Soir* as a “cinéma tridimensionnel” [three-dimensional cinema], what was crucial to Lemaître was the dissolution of the separation between the space of the theater and the space of the screen (figure 13). Enlisting precisely those elements that are usually considered extrinsic to the cinematic viewing experience, Lemaître’s script is tellingly divided into three parts: sound, image, and “salle” (figure 14). Here, nonsynchronization occurs not

...tristique, comme tout art véritablement authentique, est humanitaire et social. Il professe le désir de voir des lo-
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CREATION « LETTRISTE »
La première du « cinéma tridimensionnel » aura lieu ce soir au quartier Latin sous la protection de la police

La « Bataille d'Hernani » du cinéma lettriste sera livrée ce soir. Surprise : la société « Bourgeoisie » — représentée par sa police — protégera l'œuvre et la personne de Maurice Lemaître, disciple préféré, bien qu'hérétique, du « pape » Isou, promoteur du « cinéma tridimensionnel ».

Le directeur de la salle du Cinéma Club du quartier Latin, où sera projeté « Le film est déjà commencé », tient, en effet, à ses fauteuils et n'a accepté son rôle périlleux d'intimateur qu'avec la promesse d'une solide garantie policière.

Maurice Lemaître — qui a 25 ans — a découvert une technique qu'il juge supérieure à celle du cinéma « discrétant » de son maître Isou. Le cinéma discrétant consistait à dissocier le son et l'image (exemple : tandis que la voix du commentateur disait « J'ai vu les noces d'or d'un vieux couple », on voyait passer sur l'écran les visages de Danielle Delorme et Daniel Gélin), à sacrifier cette image en la tachant, en la griffant, en la piétinant, voire en la retournant, pieds en l'air et tête en bas, enfin à la recouvrir de graffiti, de dessins sommaires et de chiffres.

Auto-protection

Le cinéma tridimensionnel, lui, mélange les vues projetées sur l'écran et des personnages réels qui opèrent sur la scène au milieu d'objets divers. Tous les « coups » sont permis, bien entendu, et les échanges écran-scène de ce curieux « combinat » cinéma-théâtre ne sont limités que par l'imagination des protagonistes.

Maurice Lemaître, avant de savoir que les agents seraient de la partie, avait d'ailleurs prévu l'évacuation

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Figure 10
Yves Klein, Still from Scènes de Judo [Judo Scenes], Japan, January 1953

Figure 11
Yves Klein, Still from Anthropométries de l'époque bleue [Anthropometries of the Blue Epoch], March 1960

Figure 12A-B
Maurice Lemaître, Stills from Le film est déjà commencé? [Has the Film Already Started?], 1951. © 2010 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Figure 13
Press clipping from France-Soir, December 8, 1951

Figure 14
Script for Maurice Lemaître's Le film est déjà commencé? [Has the Film Already Started?], 1951 © 2010 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

Le film est déjà commencé ?

Organisation d'une Séance de Cinéma

SON

IMAGE

SALLE

NÉANT

NÉANT

Les diverses nuances avec lesquelles le son du film est dit n'ont pas été notées si elles ont été résolues dans le film lui-même.

Le problème de la voix est trop complexe pour être abordé ici. Des comédiens sont devenus célèbres par leur voix, dans le film sonore. Alors que l'avènement du parlant en a réduit d'autres au chômage.

Mais Lemaître, qui a horreur de sa voix, croit à l'indéfinie perfectibilité de l'homme, et améliore sans cesse celle-ci. Une telle création dans le son du cinéma ne peut que s'accompagner d'une création parallèle dans le domaine de l'expression de ce son.

Un écran portatif de couleur rose sera installé devant l'entrée du cinéma aux néons tous éteints, dès que la nuit se sera allongée sur le boulevard. Une heure avant la séance et jusqu'à celle-ci, un opérateur impassible y projetera des classiques du film : « Intolérance de Griffith », par exemple. Sur le trottoir, devant la salle, seront écrits en lettres énormes, d'un blanc yaourt, les mots : « Ici, à 20 h. 30, séance de cinéma » avec une flèche dont la pointe sera dirigée vers la caisse. Au dessus de cette caisse, sur le fronton, une gigantesque affiche, sans aucune illustration, indiquera le titre du film : « Le film est déjà commencé ». De chaque côté du hall d'entrée, sur les murs, des photos sous verre représenteront :

a) Un baiser (gros plan), les vedettes important peu,

Figure 15
Yves Klein, *Le vide* [The Void],
1958. View from the street,
Galerie Iris Clert, Paris

Figure 16
Le vide, installation view



15



16

only between image and sound (as with *Isou*) but also between what is on and off screen, continuing Artaud's emphasis on the "volumetric potential of the 'off-screenness' of sound."⁴⁸ One of the film's intertitles made the stakes patently clear: *un film pas comme les autres* [a film unlike the others].

If Lemaître and his fellow Lettrists waged an attack on the traditional terms of spectatorship—the frontal subject-object relationship that defines the primary axis of conventional theater and cinema, respectively—Klein claimed to have similarly reworked the institutional model of spectatorship in relation to painting, a model he believed also lingered in abstract art. It is precisely by tracking the shift from representation to event, screening to *séance*, that we might further specify how the Lettrists' challenge to the apparatus of cinema drove Klein's reformulation of painting and ultimately his abandonment of its conventional support.⁴⁹ Klein's indebtedness to Lettrist cinema is not to be located in his films as film *per se*, but rather in his staging of "immaterial pictorial sensibility," perhaps nowhere more notorious than in his subsequent production of the exhibition known as *Le vide*.

*

On April 28, 1958 (also the artist's thirtieth birthday), Klein presented *La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée* [The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility] at the Galerie Iris Clert. Popularly referred to as *Le vide* [The Void], Klein's film of the exhibition documents the *mise-en-scène*: it begins with a brief shot that pans from the sky down to the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts* on the rue Bonaparte at the end of the small street (the rue des Beaux-Arts) where Iris Clert's gallery was located.⁵⁰ Next, a medium shot shows the gallery's neighboring passageway adorned with long blue curtains; the camera pulls back slowly to reveal the entire façade as well as the gallery windows painted in Klein's signature International Klein Blue. As the scene continues, we see the sidewalk, street, and three men entering the dim passage. The film then cuts to a perspective from within this darkened space; Klein appears from behind a blue drape, which blocks the view into the interior of the gallery. He ties the drape back (off-frame) to allow access inside. The next shot, still from the vantage of the passageway, shows an empty vitrine inside the gallery and a white curtain, which frames the left side of the doorway (figures 15 and 16).

The film continues with an establishing shot of the gallery's empty interior space. On the far left, a lamp shakes and rotates frantically, causing light to move across the space (a low-budget effect that gives form to the "immaterial pictorial sensibility" purportedly exhibited therein). The next shot frames the entrance to the space (with its two white curtains) and begins a slow, approximately 180-degree pan that follows the wall to the front of the gallery (where we see the gallery desk) and stops at the edge of the vitrine on the opposing wall. The film then cuts to a close-up of a wall, highlighting the white paint and its application, as light visibly pulsates across its surface. In the final shot, Klein is framed on the far left. We see only part of his body as he stands in front of the gallery desk looking down at the pages of an open book with writing on the left page and a drawing on the right (perhaps the gallery's *Livre d'Or*?).⁵¹ Suddenly, he moves swiftly, extending his right arm, to turn the book's page. The film ends.

On the occasion of the exhibition's public opening, Klein would additionally activate the ritual progression, already documented in the film, from the street to the interior of the gallery.⁵² As shown in the film, the gallery's street entrance was closed, so the some 2,500 visitors (according to Klein) entered through the adjacent passageway, walking through the blue curtains that framed the entrance where two private guards checked invitations and two Republican Guards dressed

in full regalia were stationed. This space also served as a reception area, where visitors were offered cocktails of Cointreau, gin, and methylene blue. At the back of the passage, where two more guards restricted admittance to ten at a time, the visitors entered the gallery that Klein had repainted white. The empty interior—Klein's space of pictorial sensibility—was to be perceived as the immaterialization of the blue exterior.⁵³

Press responses at the time ran the gamut from lauding the space's incalculable powers to denouncing the presentation of white walls as a joke. And while critics repeatedly insisted on the exhibition of "a white wall,"⁵⁴ Klein averred in a radio interview with André Arnaud for Europe 1, "I did not display color on the walls, it is an illusion, again one of the latest, because in reality what I want to present here this evening is not at all the walls of this gallery but the ambiance of the gallery."⁵⁵ For Klein, the work was not void, "because, in fact everything happens in space [*tout se passe dans l'espace*]."⁵⁶ Klein further maintained, "the immaterialization of painting...must act upon the sensuous vehicles or bodies of the exhibition visitors with much more effectiveness than ordinary, physical, representational paintings."⁵⁷

I have elsewhere explored Klein's description of the specificity of the experience generated by *Le vide*.⁵⁸ As narrated by the artist in his text "*Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art*" [Overcoming the Problematics of Art], 1959, the crucial scene unfolded as follows:

9:50 p.m. In the Gallery, I suddenly notice a young man about to draw on one of the walls. I rush to stop him and I ask him, politely but very firmly, to leave. While accompanying him to the small door to the exterior where the two guards are posted (the crowd in the gallery is silent and waits to see what will happen), I shout to the guards who are outside: "Seize this man and throw him out with violence." He is literally expelled and disappears caught by my guards.⁵⁹

Framing the events in ten-minute intervals as they might unfold in a film script, Klein concluded:

10:10 p.m. 2,500 to 3,000 people are in the street; the police in the rue de la Seine and the firemen in the rue Bonaparte are trying to push back the crowd toward the quays of the Seine....

10:20 p.m. Arrival of a representative of the Order of St. Sebastian in full regalia (bicorn and cape with a red Maltese cross)....

On the whole, the crowd enters the Gallery angry and leaves completely satisfied. What the Great Press will be compelled to record officially in writing is that 40% of the visitors are positive, capturing the pictorial sensible state, and seized by the intense climate that reigns, terribly, within the apparent void of the exhibition.⁶⁰

Given the absence of any photographs of *Le vide*'s opening—that is, no images of the police or firemen, the bodyguards, knights, or the crowd—Klein's text self-consciously crafts a firsthand account that both describes the event and reproduces it in the present.⁶¹ The space of immaterial pictorial sensibility documented in the film is thematized as a purified space that restricts any form of active engagement, resulting in a ritualized state of total spatial control.⁶²

The presence of Republican Guards served to signify and symbolically encode *Le vide* as a space presided over by the French state while simultaneously legislating visitors' behavior. In cooperation with these and the four additional private guards that Klein employed, visitors to *Le vide* complied with the exhibition's spatial organization, which commanded their bodies' movement (e.g., waiting in line, entering in groups of ten)⁶³ and equally prescribed their gestures (showing invitations, not writing on the pristine walls). The space's effectiveness—

what Klein called “the intense climate that reigns terribly”—depended upon the visitors conforming to the norms implied in such rituals. To the extent that the public (or at least 40 percent of it, according to Klein) bestowed their collective recognition on the event, Klein made the implicit violence of his strategies visible: not only through the graffitist’s expulsion from the space, but also through the remaining visitors’ silent, compulsory witnessing of this act. Klein went even further: he made the bodily dimension of ritual’s functioning explicit by infiltrating—literally and materially—the visitors’ bodies, because the cocktails they were so innocently served made them urinate blue.

Rather than disguise the performativity of the space or the attendant social conventions through which *Le vide* was produced, Klein gave space—as a specific form of symbols, operations, and interactions—the character of an event. But *Le vide* hardly suggests any simple or pure liberation from representation, rather—and this is crucial—it points to an engagement with power beyond the “reality effect” of representation and the accompanying unitary perceptual focus that so troubled the Lettrists and Artaud. With *Le vide*, Klein abandoned painting, but only to entrench the medium more firmly, as it were, in a discursive “apparatus” beyond its material support—from the commercial transactions for visitors’ “impregnation” in the space to the presence of Republican Guards—that regulated the experience of space and the subjects it produced. Even so, a tension ensues between the hyperbolic performative activation of the gallery and the “immediacy” that such means were supposed to put into effect.

*

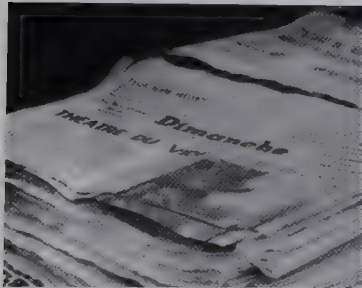
TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO BE BOTH GENTLE AND CRUEL, TO KNOW HOW TO CONTRADICT ONESELF. —YVES KLEIN⁶⁴

Two and a half years later, the question of spectatorship took center stage again in the pages of Klein’s four-page newspaper *Dimanche*, which served as his contribution to and publicity for the Festival d’art d’avant-garde and also became the subject of one of his films. Given the potential that his “theatrical” production might go unnoticed, Klein advertised the work in this format, mimicking channels of mass communication such as the “real” French *Journal du Dimanche* (the Sunday edition of the Paris daily *France-Soir*). He distributed his paper to various Parisian kiosks on November 27, 1960. Under the column heading “Actualité,” Klein explained his decision in the context of the festival to “present the ultimate form of collective theater that is a Sunday for everybody.”⁶⁵ He declared a “day of festival, a true spectacle of the void.”⁶⁶ This theater had as its objective “the pleasure of being, of living,” his field of operation ultimately extending to the “entire universe”⁶⁷ (figures 17 and 18).

While Klein’s words may evoke the work of sociologist Irving Goffman, whose 1956 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* regards the everyday as a type of “theater,” what is in fact more noteworthy are the terms the artist employed to historicize his theater in the lead article accompanying the headline “Théâtre du Vide” [Theater of the Void] as well as his proposals for various theatrical scenarios. Klein began, “The theater is forever searching; it searches for lost beginnings.”⁶⁸ He continued, “For me ‘theater’ is not at all a synonym for ‘representation’ or ‘spectacle.’”⁶⁹ With this statement, Klein simultaneously acknowledged a long lineage of avant-garde experimentation and disavowed his work’s relation to that of other directors—from Constantin Stanislavsky to his contemporary Jacques Polieri.⁷⁰ Klein affirmed that his work “has absolutely nothing to do with any of these directions or research [in theater]...except perhaps with those of Antonin Artaud, who sensed the coming of what I propose here today.”⁷¹



17



18

Stupéfaction monochrome

Les spectateurs convoqués entrent dans une salle vide dont le sol est recouvert de riches tapis très épais en longue laine blanche et où leur sont distribuées des pilules bleues à consommer sur-le-champ.

Deux ou trois minutes plus tard, les personnages ayant consommé ces pilules tombent sous l'effet du stupéfiant : c'est-à-dire, une agréable torpeur dynamique

dans laquelle apparaît un espace immense intérieur comme extérieur bleu, bleu uni monochrome.

(Cependant, dans ce bleu, deux autres couleurs semblent bien distinctes et séparées les unes des autres : c'est l'or et le rose, mais tout est bleu uni I.K.B. en fin de compte.)

C'est la béatitude des paradis artificiels en bleu.

Tout le monde s'y prélassé.

Figure 17

Yves Klein, Still from Dimanche, 1960. Film footage by Albert Weil

Figure 18

View of front page of Dimanche, November 27, 1960

Figure 19

Clip from third page of Dimanche

19

Klein's published script proposals evoke a desire for immediacy and direct communication, one in which the experience of the spectator is key. For Sensibilité pure [Pure Sensibility], Klein explained that the spectators take their seats, while a man on stage announces, "Ladies and Gentlemen, due to circumstances, this evening we are forced to chain everyone to their seats (and, in addition, to gag you) for the duration of the performance. This measure of security is necessary in order to protect you from yourselves in the presence of this particularly dangerous performance from the point of view of pure affection."⁷² While a group of "chainers" and "gaggers" enters the auditorium, a "fizzing" sound acoustically fills the space. "Beautiful young girls...mingle like hostesses with the male spectators in the auditorium and comfort them" with handsome young men providing the same service for the females.⁷³ The first half of the performance is filled with the fizzing sound, while the second half is silent. Only after the complete hour has passed are the spectators set free. Consider also, for example, Klein's proposal for Stupéfaction monochrome [Monochrome Stupefaction] (figure 19) in which the "convened spectators enter an empty room" and receive "blue pills to be consumed on the spot. Two or three minutes later, they collapse under the effect of the drug."⁷⁴ Falling into an "agreeable dynamic torpor," they experience a "uniform monochrome blue."⁷⁵

Klein's scripts thematize a body, one forcibly subjected to or even overpowered by sensation in a way that effectively breaks the "protective barrier" that traditionally separated viewers from the stage. Klein hoped to restore the purity of presence in his work, one without difference, and one not subjected to line—what he, let us recall, called a "reign of cruelty." But in abandoning line, and ultimately color, in the service of "pure sensibility," Klein's theater proposals remain no less governed by other techniques of power—here territorialized in a modality of forced reception dependent on Klein as sovereign director. Klein's scenarios suggest an outright assault, both external and internal, on their prospective viewers, one already anticipated in his ritualized production of Le vide.

Artaud's aesthetic was also about an assault on spectatorship; he described his desire to "mesmerize the audience's sensibilities" and to "surround the spectator in the most physical ways, leaving him immersed in a constant pool of lights, images, movements, and sounds."⁷⁶ With Klein's use of a newspaper as support

for his work, however, the reader is not so much forced to experience his proposed events and their intense sensations as he or she is sensorially informed about them.⁷⁷ Indeed, the private mode of reading inherent to Klein's newspaper runs counter to Artaud's aim to unleash the senses as a means by which to "circumvent the linear transitivity of visual confrontation."⁷⁸ This disparity is clear in Klein's film produced on the occasion of *Dimanche*'s publication.

The film, shot by Albert Weil, begins by showing images of various historical sites in Paris and the city's rather empty Sunday streets. It then reveals a kiosk with *Dimanche* on display, continuing with shots that focus on the economic transaction at the moment of purchase. Next, various individuals with *Dimanche* in hand are shown entering the Galerie Rive Droite. Once inside, they read the pages of the newspaper in Klein's presence; for one visitor, Klein points to the caption under his famous leap: "*Le peintre de l'espace se jette dans le vide*" [The painter of space leaps into the void]. The film's final shots show a man walking down the street as he reads *Dimanche*. The film ends with an extreme close up of the "Actualité" column, panning down its lines so as to give the viewer time to read it in full.

With *Dimanche*, Klein seemed to deliver his work and its sensible effects wholly to the newspaper's commodified form as well as its informational conceit. He even sent eight copies of the newspaper to the Ministry of Information, with a letter noting that in doing so he was acting "in compliance with the law."⁷⁹ By extension, the success of Klein's project is due precisely to how he mobilized the performative efficacy of newspaper conventions: e.g., masthead, headline and lead story, photographs with captions, even using the exact typography of the "real" *Dimanche*.⁸⁰ In *Dimanche*, these conventions both describe and present the work while simultaneously "creating" that which they describe, a mode of performative signification already established six years earlier with his publication of the "catalogue" *Yves Peintures* [Yves Paintings]. But where the deluxe catalogue produced the "effect" of the artist Yves Klein's monochrome production (i.e., there are no works that actually correspond to the so-called reproductions pasted therein), what also emerges as central to an understanding of *Dimanche* is the violence of the content, one that might be historically specific given the fraught context of the French-Algerian War, thereby bringing the reality of the street to both his proposals for the stage and to the newspaper as a site that regulates the domain of speakable discourse.⁸¹

By way of conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the monochrome reproduced on the lower-left-hand side of the front page of *Dimanche*. The caption explains, "*L'espace, lui-même*" [Space itself]. At first glance, the image seems to reproduce one of Klein's monochromes, but it is, in fact, composed solely of the grayscale of the newsprint. Here, Klein provided a kind of "pure" painting, no gap between the image and its representation; the monochrome's former materiality has given itself over completely to the pressures of the media—a substanceless visuality whereby the immediacy of space is media-produced. Just diagonal to this image and also on the front page is Klein's notorious *Le Saut dans le vide* [Leap into the Void]; its extended caption explains, "Today the painter of space must actually go into space to paint, but he must go without tricks or fraud, and not in an airplane, parachute, or rocket. He must go there himself.... In a word, he must be capable of levitating." Klein's front-page photograph served as both documentation and illustration of his proposal for an immediacy unfettered by bodily limitations or technology at the same time that it exposed his reliance on the media's "tricks"—in this case darkroom techniques that were the condition of possibility for his seamlessly montaged leap.⁸²

If Artaud's howls and screeches haunted the spaces of Lettrist cinema, shifting the terms of film's production and reception from the screening to the séance, from

the representation to the event, Klein charted a similar move in what I have called his painting séances. But where the Lettrists employed dissociative strategies—from the disjuncture produced between speech and sound, sound and image, and between screen and space—to resist representation, Klein's painting séances are not performances that resist representation but rather are explicitly and knowingly *performative*—that is, their efficacy depends on precisely the facts and practices that govern the appearance of a message and is bound to both social convention and public ritual.

Klein declared an art premised on immediacy and direct perception, but, in the end, his work reveals this immediacy as decidedly fraught. Whether it be through the hyperbolic activation of space in *Le vide*, whereby actual violence ensues when the behavioral codes are breached, or the presence of a ghost in Allendy's second floor space, at each and every turn the means by which Klein produced "immaterial pictorial sensibility" proves to be at odds with what he declared. When abandoning painting's conventional support, Klein animated rather than dissolved his work's discursive frame, continuing to signify "painting" but doing so in the absence of a material referent. On account of Klein's "immaterial pictorial sensibility" painting becomes a séance: at once a ghost of its former presence and at times even the presence of ghost.

NOTES

Author's note: My analysis of Klein's film *Yves Klein: Propositions Monochrome* and *Le vide* derive in part from my article "Yves Klein's Performative Realism," in *Grey Room*, no. 31 (Spring 2008): 6–31. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French sources are mine.

1
Guy Debord, *Considerations on the Assassination of Gérard Lebovici*, trans. Robert Greene (Los Angeles: Tam Tam Books, 2001), 30.

2
The final film differs significantly from the script published in *ION* in April of that year, which originally included an image track. See the script for *Hurlements en faveur de Sade*, reproduced in *ION* (Paris: Jean-Paul Rocher, 1999), 219–30. This volume presents a facsimile of the original *ION* published in 1952 by the Centre de Création.

3
See Frédérique Devaux, *Le Cinéma Lettriste: 1951–1991* (Paris: Paris Expérimental, 1992), 120.

4
Regardless of whether Klein saw *Hurlements'* final sequence, he would have understood the film's basic structure as well as its negation of representation and its abandonment of the emotional inflection often granted to speech.

5
Debord, *Considerations on the Assassination of Gérard Lebovici*, 30–31.

6
See, for example, Thomas Y. Levin, "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 342; Jean-Marie Apostolides, "Du Surréalisme à l'Internationale situationniste: la question de l'image," *MLN* 105, no. 4, French Issue (September 1990): 749.

7
Prior to initiating his public career as a painter with the production of the small catalogue entitled *Yves Peintures* (1954), Klein informally participated in the Lettrist milieu of Isidore Isou, publishing his essay "Des bases (fausses), principes, etc. et condamnation de l'évolution" in the first issue of *Soulèvement de la jeunesse* in June 1952.

8
To the best of the author's knowledge, two films precede the production of *Yves Klein: Propositions Monochromes*. One is *Scènes de judo* (1953) and the other, from 1956–57, includes shots from Klein's studio and his variously colored monochromes. All films are described based on their restoration in 1999 by the Centre Georges Pompidou and included in the *Yves Klein Archives Cinématographiques*.

9
The author is using the American designation of "second floor" for the original French "*premier étage*."

10
The author owes this observation to Denys Riout's discussion in *Yves Klein: Manifester l'immatériel* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), 38.

11
For an extended discussion of the film, see the author's "Yves Klein's Performative Realism," 12–16.

12
Klein continues by describing the aural quality of the cries as "reminiscent of the cries that sailors shout at regular intervals in order to avoid collisions in dense fog." Yves Klein, "Les cris bleus de Charles Estienne," in Yves Klein, *Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art et autres écrits*, eds. Marie-Anne Sichère and Didier Semin (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2003), 56. [Hereafter cited as *Le dépassement*.]

13
Ibid., 84.

14
See Nicolas Charlet, *Yves Klein, machine à peindre* (Grignan, France: Éditions Complicités et Colophon, 2003), 78 (note 15).

15
In addition, Camille Bryen mentions how in the late 1940s, Colette Allendy also

offered housing to Artaud during his sojourns in Paris. In the courtyard garden of her home, Klein's friend Raymond Hains first met Artaud. See the extract of a 1976 text by Camille Bryen reproduced in *Raymond Hains* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2001), 16. Jacques Villeglé confirms, "Colette Allendy a hébergé Antonin Artaud." E-mail correspondence with the author, March 9, 2009. See also the comments on Artaud in *Cheminements 1943/1959* (Saint-Julien Molin Molette, France: Les Sept Collines, 1999), 29, 36–37, 74.

16
In his journal entries of 1957, Klein reports having presented "very long and continuous human screams" via tape recorder in the context of his lecture-discussion at the ICA in London. He, however, does not identify the source of the cries. *Le dépassement*, 47. Nan Rosenthal suggests that the Artaud cry in the context of Klein's Sorbonne lecture was more than likely faked, given that Artaud died in 1948. However, it could be that Klein had access to a recording. See Nan Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation," in *Yves Klein, 1928–1962, a Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue (Houston and New York: Institute for the Arts, Rice University and The Arts Publisher, 1982), 115.

17
Nan Rosenthal also explains that this space had previously been the consulting room of René Allendy. See Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation," 118; Nicolas Charlet affirms, "plusieurs témoins ont explicitement entendu Klein évoquer le souvenir d'Artaud dans la salle de l'étage supérieur," *Yves Klein*, 78 (note 15).

18
Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Victor Corti (London: Calder & Boyars, 1970), 59.

19
Ibid. [author's emphasis].

20
Jacques Derrida, "La parole soufflée," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 174.

21
Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, 84.

22
Raymond Hains also attended Artaud's last public appearance—the lecture at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier on January 13, 1947. Also, in 1946, Artaud's *Les malades et les médecins* as well as *Aliénation et magie noire* were transmitted on the radio, while his final work *Pour en finir avec le Jugement de Dieu* was banned the day prior to transmission in February 1948. Existing as a handful of clandestine copies, the recording disappeared for forty years. See Stephen Barber, *The Screaming Body/Antonin Artaud: Film Projects, Drawings, and Sound Recordings* (London: Creation Books, 1999), 93–106.

23
See his "Le Manifeste de la Poésie Lettriste" in *Introduction à une nouvelle poésie et à une nouvelle musique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 12.

24
For a crucial discussion of the Lettrists' emphasis on public performance, see Hannah Feldman, "National Negotiations: Art, Historical Experience, and the Public in Paris, 1945–1962" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2004), 143–205.

25
For some Lettrists, sound was not to be produced discretely in the mouth, but engendered by the body. It is their shared concern to produce singular somatic and bodily sound that led to Gil Wolman's *Mégapneumies* and François Dufrené's *Crhythmes*, developed in 1950 and 1953, respectively. The *Mégapneumies* were based on breath, while the *Crhythme* is an extended vocal technique that had no "score" and existed for recording tape alone.

26
Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 290.

27
Already in 1929, in anticipation of the effects of sound's synchronization on cinema, Artaud declares: "There is no possible identification between sound and image. The image presents itself

only in one dimension—it's the translation, the transposition of the real; sound, on the contrary, is unique and true, it bursts out into the room, and acts by consequence with much more intensity than the image." Antonin Artaud, as cited in Barber, *The Screaming Body*, 16. In Artaud's film, scenarios, noises, and screams were to interrupt the flow of visual images, opening onto a cinematic experience that, like his work in theater, aimed to resist representation. At issue for Artaud was not the introduction of a soundtrack *per se*, but rather that sound would be circumscribed to reproducing only speech. By the time of *The Theatre and Its Double's* publication his take on cinema was largely pejorative, claiming that it "murders us with reflected, filtered and projected images that no longer connect with our sensibility." Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, 64. Artaud's conception of cinema exists for the most part in theory and not in fact; he wrote fifteen scenarios but none, except *La Coquille et le clergymen*, 1928, under Germaine Dulac's direction, were produced.

28
In this way, the Lettrists continue the dialectic between stage and screen already at work in Artaud. See Denis Hollier, "The Death of Paper, Part Two: Artaud's Sound System," *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 27–37.

29
See Devaux, *Le Cinéma Lettriste*, 55–62.

30
For the entire first part of the film, the soundtrack reproduces a debate at a film club, with the protagonist Daniel explaining how photographs will be destroyed *par la parole* [by speech] and the necessity of going beyond the photo, while the subsequent parts (2 and 3) explore the *ciselure* [chiseling] of the image through the manipulation of the celluloid by writing, negative sequences, and 180-degree rotation as well as the disintegration of intelligible speech.

31
The film was originally meant to have an image track but it was ultimately abandoned. See Devaux, *Le Cinéma Lettriste*, 276 (note 83).

François Dufrêne, "Prodrome," in *ION* (Paris: Jean-Paul Rocher, 1999), 196.

François Dufrêne, "Une action en marge du Festival de Cannes 1952," in *Archi-Made*, eds. Marie-Anne Sichére and Didier Semin (Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 2005), 39. Following his attendance of *Tambours*, Klein writes in his essay "Des bases (fausses)" about finally being able to speak to Dufrêne about his *films sans pellicules*.³² Klein goes on to describe "a world without dimension, a world from which we cannot escape because we have forever been searching within ourselves. That is why we never find the place of the true spirit within us." See Klein, *Le dépassement*, 22.

In December 1954 at one of the Monday evening soirees organized by his mother, Marie Raymond, Raymond Hains, and Jacques Villeglé presented two experimental films (more than likely their collaborative *Étude aux allures* [1950–54] or *Villeglé's Paris Saint-Brieuc* [1950–52], or perhaps part of Hains's *Pénélope* begun in 1950), while Klein showed a film about judo. See the chronology in Yves Klein: *Corps, couleur, immatériel*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2006), 286.

Derrida, "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation," in *Writing and Difference*, 234.

Artaud's phrase can be translated as "All writing is rubbish."

Klein, *Le dépassement*, 235–36.

Ibid., 135.

Ibid., 81.

Ibid., 43.

Yves Klein, "My Position in the Battle Between Line and Color," in *ZERO* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1973), 10–11. (Originally published in English in the first issue of the German art journal *ZERO* in April 1958.)

See his "Esquisse de Scenario" reproduced in *Le dépassement*, 27–39.

Much more work needs to be done on the role of sound and music in relation to Klein's practice.

See the filmography published in Yves Klein: *Corps, couleur, immatériel*, 310. The author bases her number on the films for which Klein exercised oversight.

Klein's collaboration with the director Gualtiero Jacopetti, whereby he restaged a performance of the Anthropometries for the film *Mondo Cane*, 1962, proved disastrous from the artist's point of view. See the discussion in François Albert, "Yves Klein vu par le cinéma," in Yves Klein: *Corps, couleur, immatériel*, 259–63.

To the best of the author's knowledge, there is no record of Klein having attended Maurice Lemaître's *Le film est déjà commencé?* in December 1951 or the first presentation of Gil Wolman's *L'Anticoncept* in February 1952. Nevertheless, he would have known about their work.

See Maurice Lemaître, *Le film est déjà commencé? Séance de Cinema* (Paris: Éditions André Bonne, 1952).

Hollier, "The Death of Paper," 32.

Klein's work could also be read, albeit more literally, in relation to Dufrêne's assertion that the work of cinema was ultimately to "doubt the very essence of cinema through the existence of 'IMAGINARY CINEMA.'" See Dufrêne, "Prodrome," 196. The creation of imaginary art was further explored by Isidore Isou in his "Introduction à l'esthétique imaginaire," *Front de la jeunesse* 7 (May 1956). The author thanks Christian Lebrat for referring her to this work.

Many thanks to Jian-Xing Too for confirming the building's identification.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing this essay, the location of this book and the source of the image remain uncon-

firmed. Neither Klein's archive nor Iris Clert's gallery papers contain this material. The author thanks Philippe Siauve at the Yves Klein Archive for following up on this, as well as Béatrice Sarno, Documentaliste principale at the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, who consulted the Fonds Iris Clert on her behalf.

The following paragraphs on *Le vide* derive in part from the author's "Yves Klein's Performative Realism," 19–22.

The author follows Klein's description as presented in his book *Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art* (La Louvière, Belgium: Éditions Montbliart, 1959) and reproduced in Klein, *Le dépassement*, 80–117. Klein's account of *Le vide* differs in some details from Iris Clert's recollections in Iris Clert, *Iris-Time (L'artventure)* (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 2003).

"Vernissage d'un mur blanc," *Le Figaro*, April 30, 1958.

André Arnaud, "Interview pour Europe 1," in Yves Klein (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1983), 197.

Klein, *Le dépassement*, 85 [author's emphasis].

Ibid., 96.

See the author's "Yves Klein's Performative Realism," 19–27.

As reproduced in Klein, *Le dépassement*, 91–92 [author's emphasis].

As reproduced in *ibid.*, 92–93 [author's emphasis].

Nan Rosenthal analyzes Klein's use of the "historical present tense" in "Assisted Levitation," 118.

This is also corroborated by contemporary press accounts. See "Vernissage d'un mur blanc."

Contrary to Klein's description, Iris Clert explains that the visitors entered two by two. See Clert, *Iris-Time (L'artventure)*, 165.

Klein, *Le dépassement*, 287.

Yves Klein, "Dimanche,"

reproduced in *Le dépassement*, 174.

Ibid.

Ibid., 174–75.

Ibid., 176.

Ibid., 177.

Klein apparently participated in one actual theater performance: Polieri's production of Jean Tardieu's *Une voix sans personne* (1954) in February 1956. See footnote 60 in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, ed. and trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007), 103.

Klein, *Le dépassement*, 179.

See Yves Klein, "Sensibilité pure," in *Le dépassement*, 182–84.

Ibid.

See Yves Klein, "Stupéfaction monochrome," in *Le dépassement*, 195.

Ibid.

Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, 63, and Artaud as cited in Hollier, "The Death of Paper," 34.

The events described in the pages of *Dimanche* approach what Guy Debord describes as "pseudo-events." Debord maintains, "The pseudo-events that vie for attention in the spectacle's dramatization have not been lived by those who are thus informed about them." Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 114.

Hollier, "The Death of Paper," 34.

As cited in Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation," 126.

In this way, Klein continued what Nan Rosenthal once described as a "pattern of fraudulence" in his work. *Ibid.*, 128.

One might say that in fictional form, Klein describes a violence that the French state did not want publicly stated. Just three months earlier, the publication of the *Manifeste*

des 121 had been censored in France. Signed by 121 intellectuals, predominantly artists and writers, the manifesto claimed that "resistance to public powers is respectable." For more information on the *Manifeste des 121's* censorship, see Jean-François Sirinelli, "Les intellectuels français dans la bataille," in *La France en Guerre d'Algérie, November 1954–juillet 1962*, eds. Laurent Cervereau, Jean-Pierre Rioux, and Benjamin Stora (Paris: Musée d'Histoire Contemporaine—BDIC, 1992).

It is worth mentioning in this context that Klein's first leap actually took place from the second story of Colette Allendy's residence on January 12, 1960. Thus, at least initially, Klein framed his leap in relation to the space "haunted" by Artaud. The second leap, from whence the montaged photograph derives, took place nine months later at 3 rue Gentil Bernard in the Paris suburb of Fontenay-aux-Roses in mid-October 1960.

Klein's work enacts what might be called, pace Derrida, a *performative contradiction*: his discursive acts proved the opposite of the immediacy he declares. Or, in J. L. Austin's terms, what he *does* is the opposite of what he says.

PLATES

II

"Obsession de la lévitation" (Le Saut dans le vide)
[Obsession with Levitation (Leap into the Void)]
1960
Black-and-white photograph



Le Saut dans le vide [Leap into the Void]

1960

Black-and-white photograph



1969

Printed paper

12 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (31 x 23 cm)



Yves Klein, Saut dans le vide, Paris 1960

I first met Yves Klein in 1962 when he came to this country (America) for an exhibition at Dwan Gallery in Westwood, California. Knowing him only by reputation and being somewhat in awe of the theatrical production aspects of his work, I made a small suitcase containing toy dolls, press releases and a jar of International Klein Blue (sort of a working-travelling kit), which I presented him (rather tongue in cheek) on his arrival. A warm friendship ensued and one day he gave me an Immaterial.

An Immaterial is a very difficult work. In its final distilled aspect, it is probably pure art because nothing physical exists. It works this way: The buyer-collector of an Immaterial would give Yves money; in fact, quite a bit of money for the ownership of the Immaterial. Yves would then issue a receipt for the money which was printed on very special paper, the stub of which I believe was filed somewhere by someone for record purposes. Yves would then divest himself of the money by "throwing the gold", which meant actually scattering the money in the mountains from a plane or dropping it in the ocean from a boat, etc. The buyer-collector then completed the gesture by burning the receipt so that artist and owner each had nothing but the art experience.

In my particular case, Yves' untimely death prevented his "throwing the gold". However, at a later date, his wife, Rotraut, and Arman cast gold leaf from a boat on the waters of the Mediterranean in his name, symbolically completing my Immaterial.

Edward Kieny

La Rêve du Feu [The Dream of Fire]

c. 1961

9 ⁷/₁₆ x 7 ¹/₁₆ in. (24 x 18 cm)



Untitled Fire Painting

(F 125), 1961

Scorched cardboard on panel

22 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 78 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (57 x 200 cm)



Untitled Fire Painting
(F 11), c. 1961
Scorched cardboard on panel
24 x 19 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (61 x 50 cm)



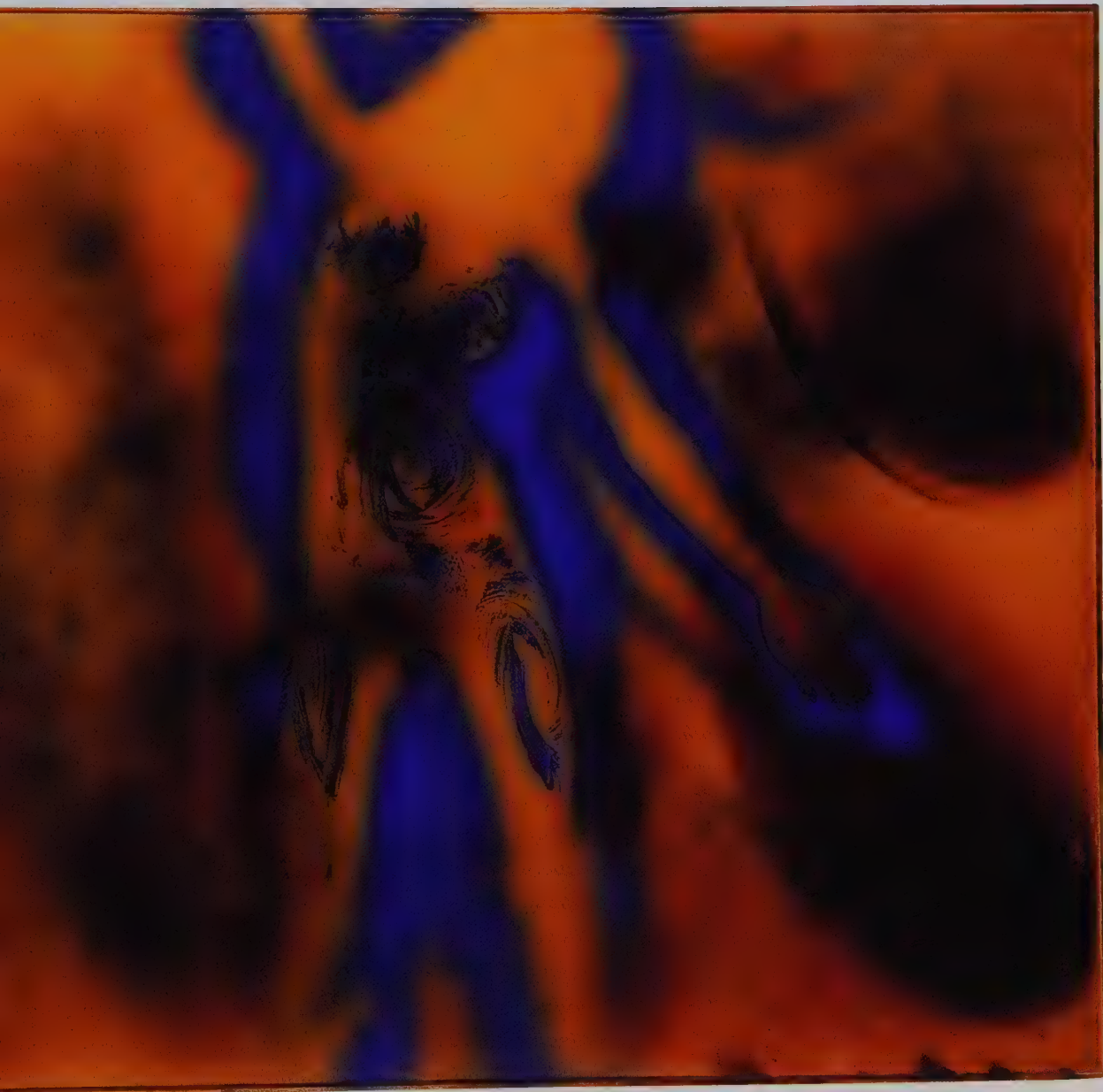
Untitled Fire-Color Painting

(FC 1), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on scorched cardboard on panel

55 1/2 x 117 15/16 x 1 3/16 in. (141 x 299.5 x 3 cm)





Untitled Fire Painting

(F 82), 1961

Scorched cardboard on panel

55 7/8 x 119 3/4 in. (141.9 x 303.8 cm)





Untitled Fire Painting

(F 81), c. 1961

Scorched paper on fiberboard on panel

51 ¼ x 98 ½ in. (130.2 x 250.2 cm)





Untitled Fire Painting

(F 27 I), 1961

Scorched cardboard on panel

98 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 51 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (250 x 130 cm)

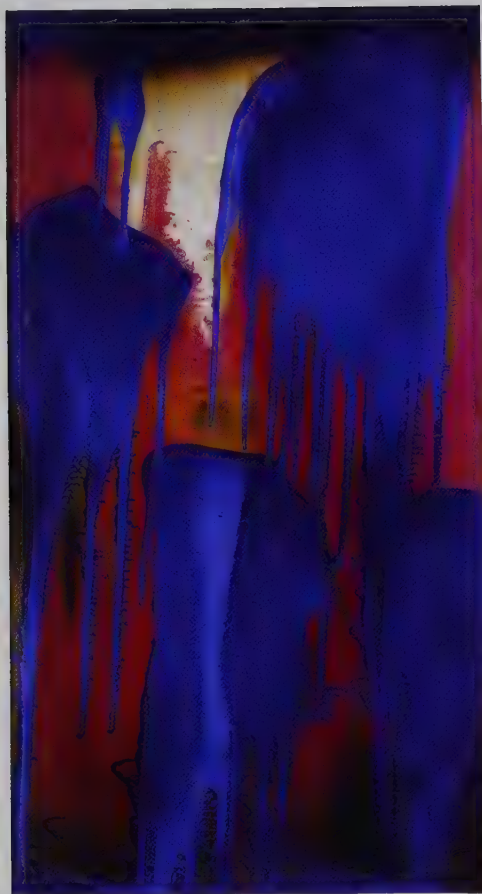


Untitled Fire-Color Painting

(FC 3), c. 1962

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on scorched cardboard on panel

53 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 29 ¹/₈ in. (137 x 74 cm)



My monochrome attempt has conducted me to the blue, the blue showed me the immaterial. The immaterial announced THE VOID. In the heart of the VOID as in the heart of man, fires are burning. Paradoxically man always understands the definite element which is nevertheless undefinable.

Fire has created the civilization and has established the reign of the human in nature. All facts that are contradictory are genuine principles of universal explanation. Thus fire is a human reality as well a cosmic state. Where THE VOID is found there also lies fire. Blue is fire, gold is fire, rose is fire as well. Standing between the blue and the fire I know now that essentially I am a realist of today and yesterday, as well as tomorrow.

English text for Yves le Monochrome exhibition catalogue, Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

It was in 1955 that I first presented my Fire Paintings. Right away I realized the immense possibilities of this living material. If all that changes slowly is linked to life, then all that is transformed rapidly is explained by Fire.

Handwritten text. Trans. Constance Perrot and Chrisoula Petridis.

In London I worked secretly for about a year to earn my living in the Old Brompton Road framing shop of one of my father's friends, Robert Savage. It was there that in assisting in the preparation of glues, colors, varnishes, and gildings that I first came near raw materials and handling them in bulk. In applying coat after coat on the frames between sanding, taking great pains to avoid any undesired imperfections or irregularities, I first glimpsed a beautiful white distemper, clean and dry. Then, after the second coat, it was a very pale reddish gray or a translucent pink. It was necessary to constantly examine the surface closely, from about five to six centimeters away, to inspect it in detail (my vision was perfectly normal), and to see if it was consistently silken, smooth, or deliberately rough.

And then, the gold! Those leaves literally fly away with the slightest movement of air and have to be caught in flight with a knife in one hand and the gilders cushion in the other. The leaves are delicately placed on the surface to be gilded, prepared with a base and moistened with gelatinous water beforehand. What material! What better training with respect to pictorial matter!

Excerpt from "The Monochrome Adventure" in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 153–54.

CORNY BAD TASTE KITSCH ... IN SEARCH OF BAD TASTE

It is impossible to translate the quality of the word "corny" or "kitsch" into French; it exists in the distant and traditional association of the words "mauvais gout" (bad taste).

...Is bad taste natural?

...Is bad taste artificial, a product of society?

American bad taste is perfect and potent, but European bad taste is terrible because it is sparse and much nastier; it is always morbid.

Delacroix sublimated bad taste against the attack of being literary.

The new notion of "bad taste," good taste? Even worse.

By attacking the corny we again become barbarians, a great circular force.

The genius, the asserted childhood, the child: we love the whole circus, the brilliant and booming colors, the noisiness, even the vulgarity is marvelous to the eye of a child; it is a sign of being in tune with life.

We have no intention of occupying ourselves with good taste; that would be in poor taste. I like playing with bad taste the same way I like to play with fire.

In Search of Bad Taste Corny—Kitsch

The objective of this manifest is to denounce that state of things designated under the name of bad taste, as being one of the most essential components of art.

If truth be told, it has to be said that as of now the "corny" or "kitsch" is a new notion in art.

To say that great art has always been in bad taste, would not be fair, but it is correct to assert that the almost systematic use of the same vitality of bad taste has been used effectively in the construction, the creation of all works of art, throughout history. Works of art become companions of the soul, the universal human soul.

The truth for Man by nature is not style, it is not academic dogma, nor anything ideal, the truth which is truly good is the corn, the bad taste, kitsch, because they are a loyal friend, full of human comprehension, the great nature, it is cruel and beautiful in itself, but visiting for the duration of life with works of art that are thus our guides.

We hope that critics and others, Dada, do not right away affiliate us, our Dada, with their Dada.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

Ci-gît l'Espace [Here Lies Space]

(RP 3), 1960

Dry pigment, synthetic resin, natural sponges, and artificial flowers on
gold leaf on panel

49 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{15}{16}$ in. (124.9 x 100 x 10 cm)







Le Silence est d'or [Silence is Golden]
(MG 10), 1960
Gold leaf on panel
58 ¼ x 44 ¾ in. (148 x 114 cm)



Untitled Gold Monochrome
(MG 7), c. 1960
Gold leaf on panel
78 3/8 x 60 1/4 x 3/4 in. (199 x 153 x 2 cm)



Untitled Gold Monochrome
(MG 8), 1962
Gold leaf on panel
32 1/16 x 28 3/4 in. (81.4 x 73 cm)



Arman Portrait-Relief

(PR 1), 1962

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on bronze on gold leaf on panel

69 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 37 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (176.1 x 94.1 x 26 cm)



Au nom du bleu, de l'or, de l'immatériel...

[In the name of Blue, Gold, and the Immaterial...]

1960

Dry pigment, gold leaf, and ink on paper

3 3/4 x 11 13/16 in. (9.5 x 30 cm each)



Au nom du
Bleu,
de l'or,
de l'immatériel...
Pour Monochrome
vous souhaitez
"La Chance"
en 1960!

Ex-voto dédié à sainte Rita de Cascia par Yves Klein
 [Ex-voto dedicated to Saint Rita of Cascia by Yves Klein]
 1961
 Dry pigment, gold leaf, gold ingots, and ink on plexiglass
 5 ½ x 8 ¼ x 1 ¼ in. (14 x 21 x 3.2 cm)



The BLUE, the GOLD, the PINK, the IMMATERIAL, the VOID, the architecture of air, the urbanism of air, the climatization of vast geographical spaces for a return of human life to the legendary Edenic state. The three bars of fine gold are the proceeds from the sale of the first four ZONES OF IMMATERIAL PICTORIAL SENSIBILITY. [...] Under the earthly guardianship of Saint Rita of Cascia: pictorial sensibility; the monochromes; the IKB; the sponge sculptures; the immaterial; the static, negative, and positive anthropometric prints; the shrouds; the fountains of fire and water; the architecture of air; the regulating of geographic spaces, thus transformed into constant Edens rediscovered on the surface of our globe; the Void. The theater of the void; all the particular marginal variations of my work; the Cosmogonies; my blue sky; all my theories in general. May my enemies become my friends, and, if that is possible, may any attempt against me never harm me. Make me and all my works invulnerable. So be it.

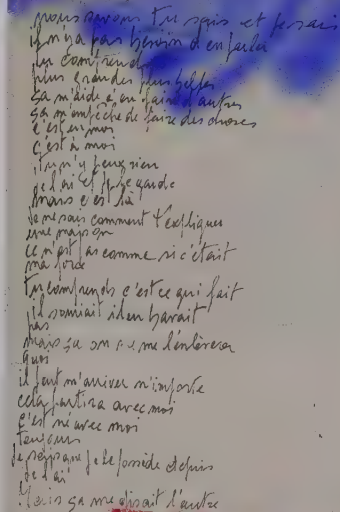
May my work in Gelsenkirchen always be beautiful, more and more beautiful, and be recognized as such and as soon as possible. May the fountains of fire and walls of fire be executed by me without delay in front of the Gelsenkirchen Opera House; may my exhibition in Krefeld be the greatest success of the century and be recognized by all. Saint Rita of Cascia, saint of impossible and desperate cases, thank you for all the powerful, decisive, marvelous aide that you have granted me up to now. Thank you infinitely. Even if I am personally unworthy of it, grant me your aide again and always in my art and always protect everything that I have created so that even in spite of myself it should always be of great beauty.

Excerpt from "Prayer to Saint Rita," handwritten document placed within Ex-voto, February 1961. Trans. Klaus Ottmann in Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein, 180–81.

Store poème [Scroll Poem]
(with Arman, Claude Pascal, and Pierre Restany)
(ANT SU 15), 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on fabric
582 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (1480 x 77.9 cm)







BLEU

ROSE

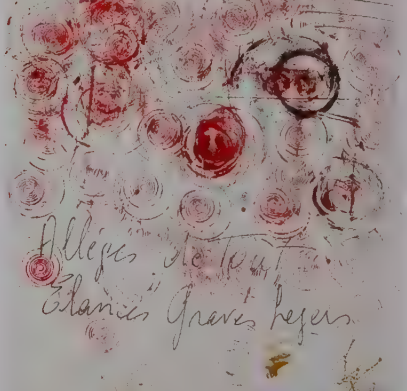
BLEU ROSE

la plénitude des choses au delà
 de tous jugements de Paris c'est
 travers ma trinité qu'il pleure
 je la respire, et le paradis.



la Nature, imitativement, météorisée.
NATURE. Le Mode par excellence,
que c'était un MODE DE LA
fossiles) ont fini par oublier

de l'époque (et pas seulement les humanistes)
que la plupart des esprits distingués
moitié du XX^e siècle,
du Veld pendant la 2^e
on a tel. Mont R.



Alleges de tout
Ehancis Graves beyers

Que de Sells mines

à la puissance définitive de

BRASILIA rendue d'ell.

Nationnels.

HEUREUX TEMPS, où

[illegible]

Martyrs du plus beau
des mythes: L'EQUATION
DU BONHEUR.

Le stage-pédagogie est une véritable pédagogie
de l'ÉPIQUE INTÉGRAL. *HK JP*
A Toul, le 12 mars 1982 *And*

c. 1959

Ink on paper

11 1/16 x 9 1/16 in. (28.1 x 23 cm)

(1)

"ARCHITECTURE DE L'AIR"

Buget aux noms de

- YVES Klein ^{N^{re} Française} _{artiste Peintre}
- et
- Werner RUTHNAU ^{N^{re} Allemande} _{Ingénieur Architecte}

Par des moyens techniques
connus (turbines, souffleries etc...)
l'air est propulsé à une vitesse X
(selon la distance) et ainsi
est créée une pellicule d'air
protectrice des intempéries
c'est à dire un toit invisible
et immatériel existe —

patented in the name of

- YVES Klein < N° 1 French painter
- Werner RUHNAU < N° 1 German engineer, architect

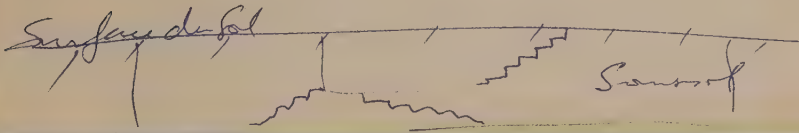
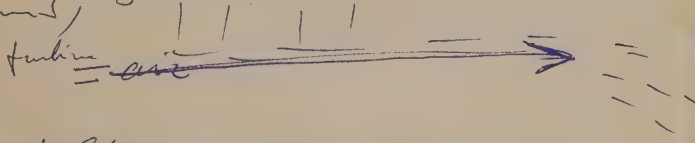
With common technical means (turbines, wind tunnels, etc.) the air is propelled at a speed (relative to the distance) and thereby a protective layer of air is created, that is to say, an invisible and immaterial roof.

The functional goal of the architecture of air is to propose the creation of air-conditioned volumes of a type that protect 20 meters of ground from

atmospheric phenomena and others—and to install thus a kind of "living" on the surface while closets, supplies, kitchens, bathrooms, showers, toilets, etc. are placed below ground.

turbine	air
above ground	below ground

Le But final de l'architecture
de l'air est de proposer la
création de volumes climatisés
de sortes de Zones protégées
des conditions atmosphériques
et autres à la surface du
sol — et d'installer ainsi
des sortes de "living" en
surface pendant que la
zone sol est organisée et
installée pour recevoir, dépendant
jardins — réservoirs — cuisines —
Bains, salle d'eau — WC etc...

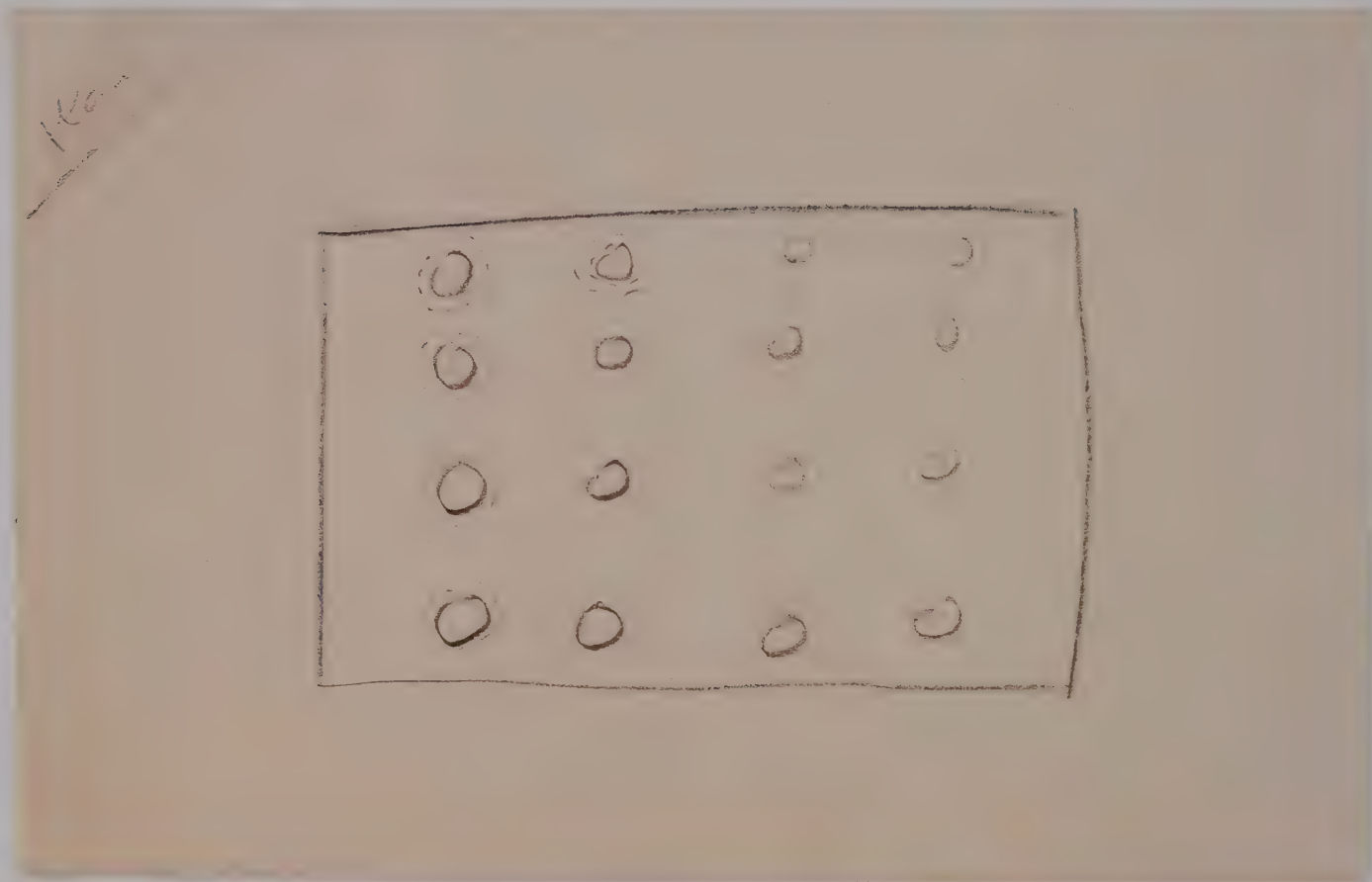


"Plan"

c. 1959

Graphite on paper

6 1/8 x 9 7/8 in. (15.6 x 24 cm)



11 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (28.1 × 21 cm)



Mod. n° 58973 (Création d'un toit d'air) [(Creation of an Air Roof)] 1

Preparatory Drawing

1959

Ballpoint pen ink and graphite on tracing paper

5 5/16 x 8 1/16 in. (13.5 x 20.5 cm)

Mod. n° 58973 (Création d'un toit d'air) [(Creation of an Air Roof)] 2

Preparatory Drawing

1959

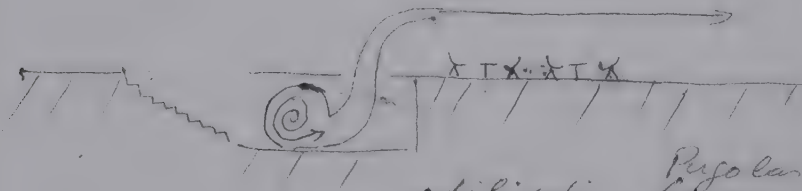
Ballpoint pen ink on tracing paper

5 5/16 x 8 1/16 in. (13.5 x 20.5 cm)

Creation of a roof of forced air using / known industrial methods to create a / layer of invisible air protecting from the mechanical / conditions of the atmosphere and also air-conditioned / and conditioning. / Use: pergolas / garages / stadiums / bungalows / urbanism.

Translation by Brian Holmes published in Didier Semin: The Painter and His Model on Deposit (Yves Klein Archives, 2001). The Yves Klein Archives holds three unstenciled drawings on tracing paper, done in preparation for this one and practically identical, including the first drawing on this page.

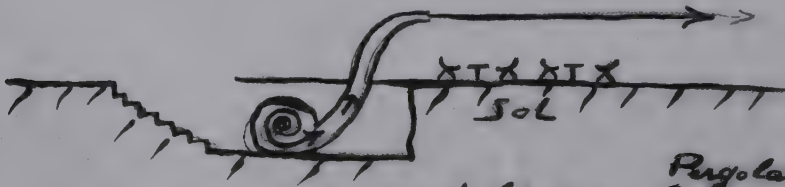
Création d'un toit d'air soufflé à l'aide
de moyens industriels connus pour créer une
pellicule d'air invisible protectrice des condi-
tions de l'atmosphère et aussi climatisée
et climatisée.



utilisation: Pergolas
Garages
Stades
Bungalows
Urbanisme

1959

Création d'un toit d'air soufflé à l'aide
de moyens industriels connus pour créer une
pellicule d'air invisible protectrice des condi-
tions de l'atmosphère et aussi climatisée
et climatisée.



utilisation: Pergolas
Garages
Stades
Bungalows
Urbanisme

1959

Mod. n° 58973 (Maison atrium toit d'air)
 [(House Atrium Air Roof)]

1959

Ballpoint pen ink on tracing paper
 4 7/8 x 7 13/16 in. (12.4 x 19.8 cm)

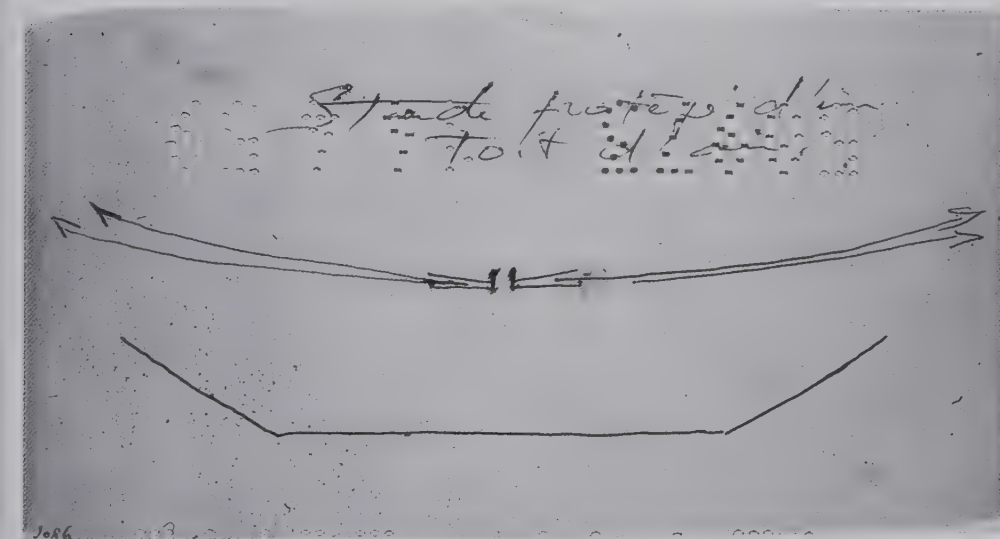
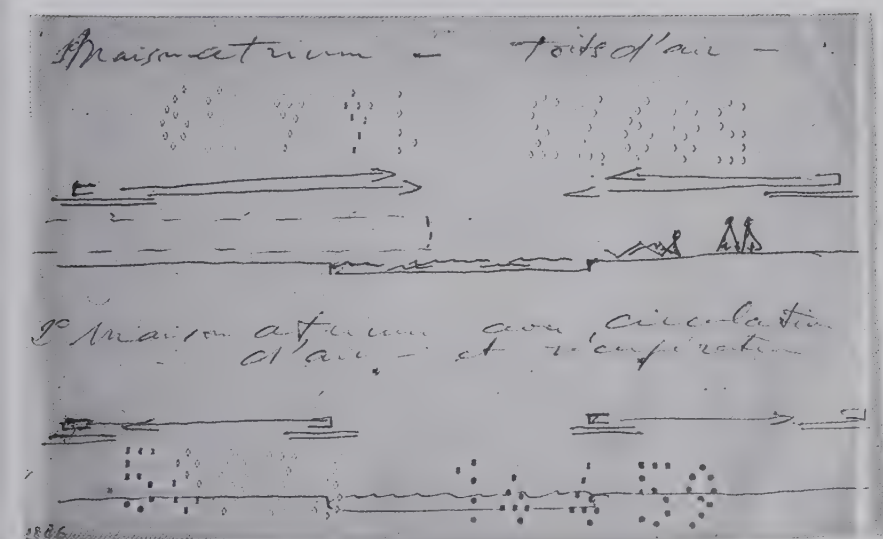
Mod. n° 58973 (Stade protégé d'un toit d'air)
 [(Stadium Protected by an Air Roof)]

1959

Ballpoint pen ink on tracing paper
 4 1/4 x 7 3/4 in. (10.8 x 19.7 cm)

Atrium-house—air roofs / 2nd house atrium
 with circulation / of air—and recycling.

Translation by Brian Holmes published in Didier
 Semin: The Painter and His Model on Deposit
 (Yves Klein Archives, 2001).



"Institut mécanique du fluide..."

[Mechanic Institute of Fluids...]

c. 1960

Ink on paper

6 x 14 1/4 in. (15.2 x 37.5 cm)

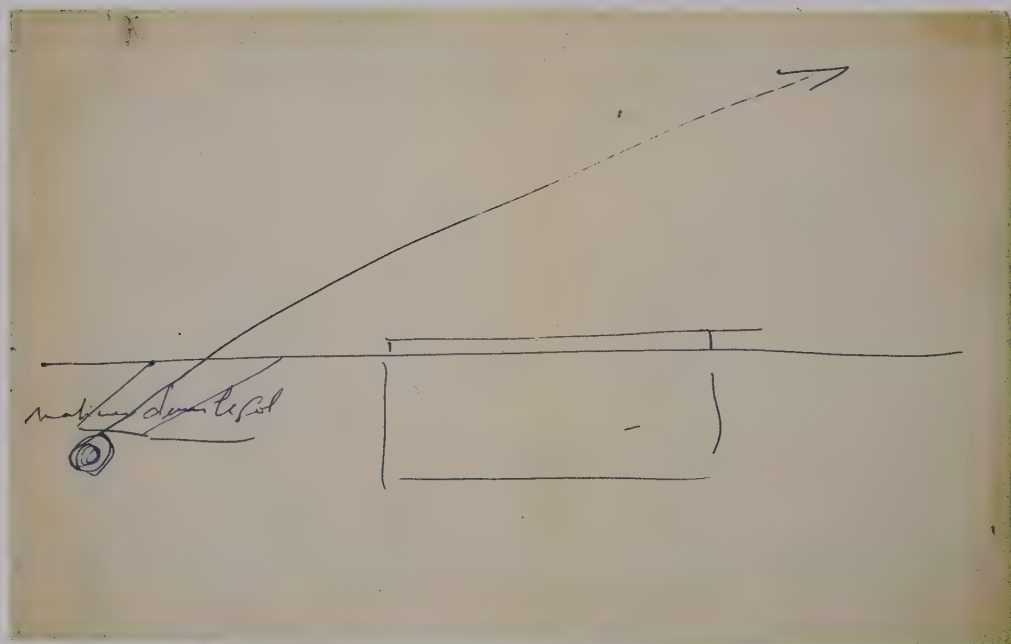
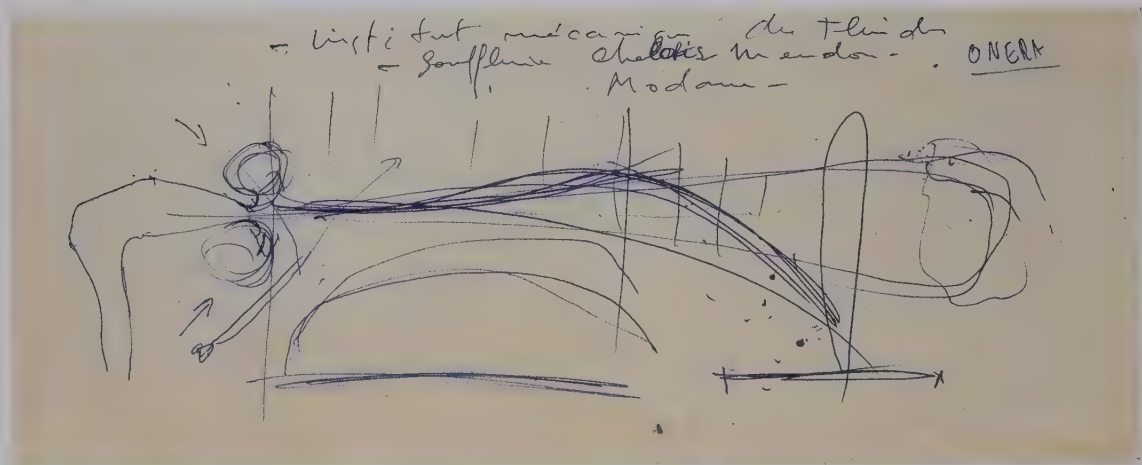
"Matières dans le sol"

[Components Within the Surface of the Earth]

c. 1959

Ballpoint pen ink on paper

8 7/16 x 13 3/8 in. (21.4 x 34 cm)



"Tableau de Feu/Mur de Feu" [Painting of Fire/Wall of Fire]

c. 1959

Grease pencil on paper

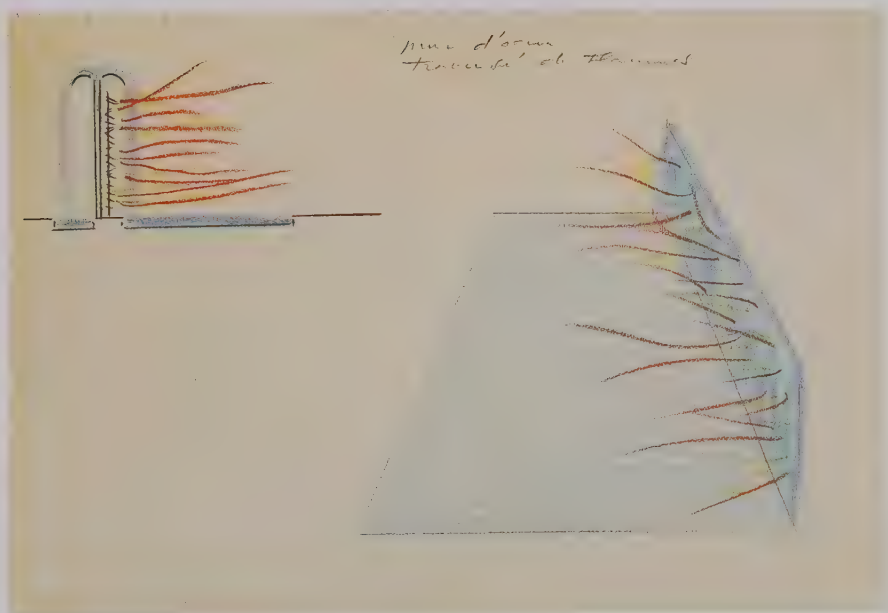
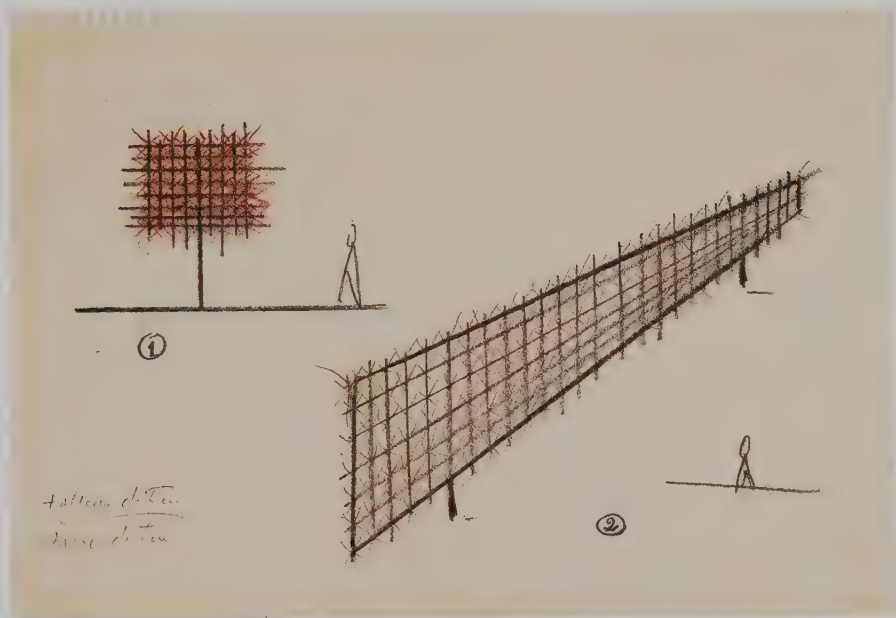
14 $\frac{9}{16}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (37 x 54 cm)

"Mur d'eau traversé de flammes" [Wall of Water Traversed by Flames]

c. 1959

Grease pencil on paper

14 $\frac{9}{16}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (37 x 54 cm)



"Fontaines d'eau et toit de feu"
[Fountains of Water and Roofs of Fire]

c. 1959

Ink and watercolor on paper on canvas

14 ³/₁₆ x 17 ¹/₈ in. (36 x 43.5 cm)

"Fontaines d'eau et toit de feu"

[Fountains of Water and Roofs of Fire]

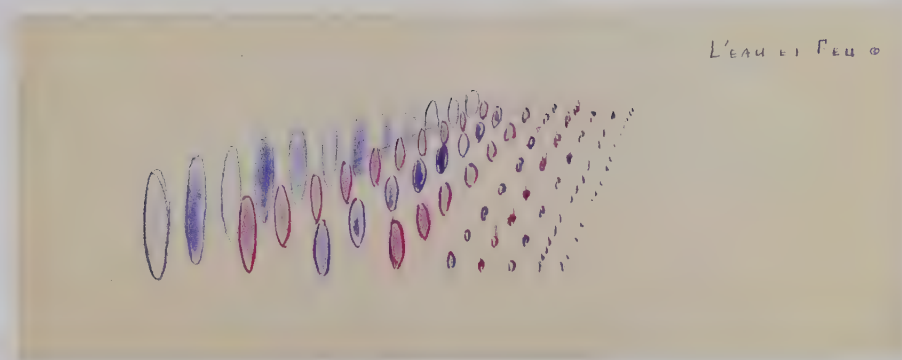
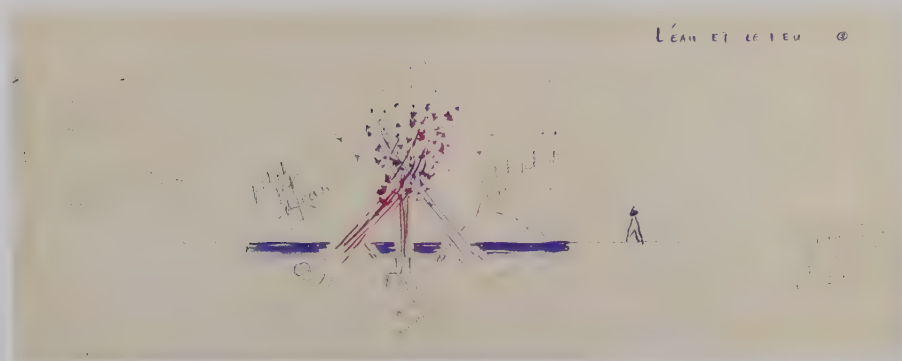
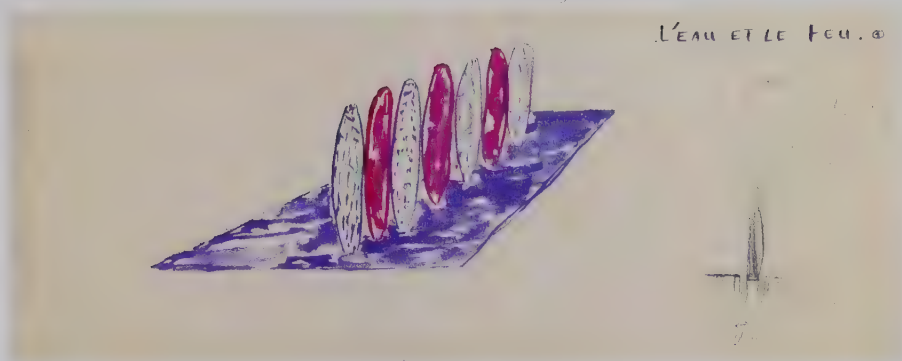
c. 1959

Ink and watercolor on paper

18 ¹/₈ x 16 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (46 x 43 cm)



"L'Eau et le Feu" [Fire and Water]
 c. 1959
 Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper
 Each: 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (14.9 x 36 cm)



Concept for the Fire Fountains at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld

1961

Paper cut-out and ink on black-and-white photograph

Each: 9 1/8 x 6 7/8 in. (23.2 x 17.4 cm)



Musée de Krefeld (Ruhr)
Vue du fond de la Pelouse
sur le Musée intérieure.
trois flammes hauts respectives
3m, 3m50, 4m et diamètre 80cm



Musée de Krefeld (Ruhr)
Façade sur la Wilhelm-Höf-allee
une flamme : 1m50 de haut
15cm de diamètre du corps

Exhibition Floor Plan for Krefeld Museum

1960

Ink and colored pencil on tracing paper on canvas

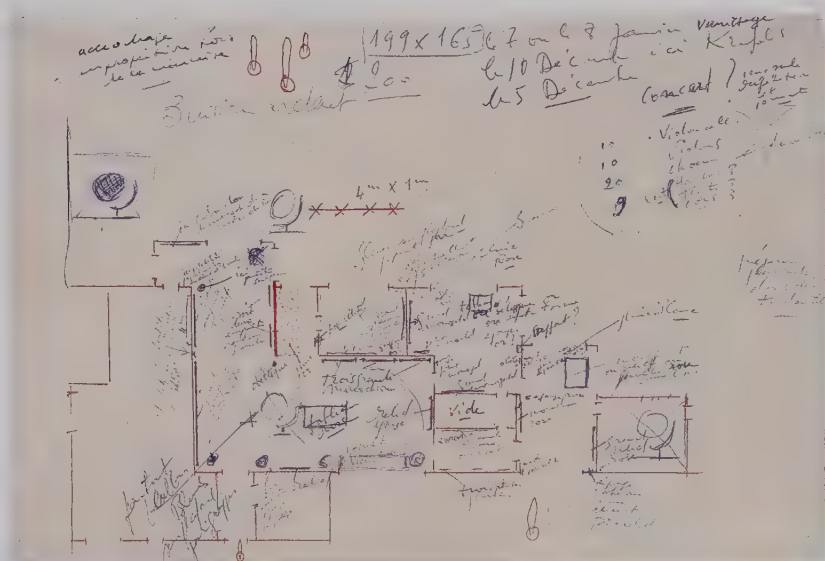
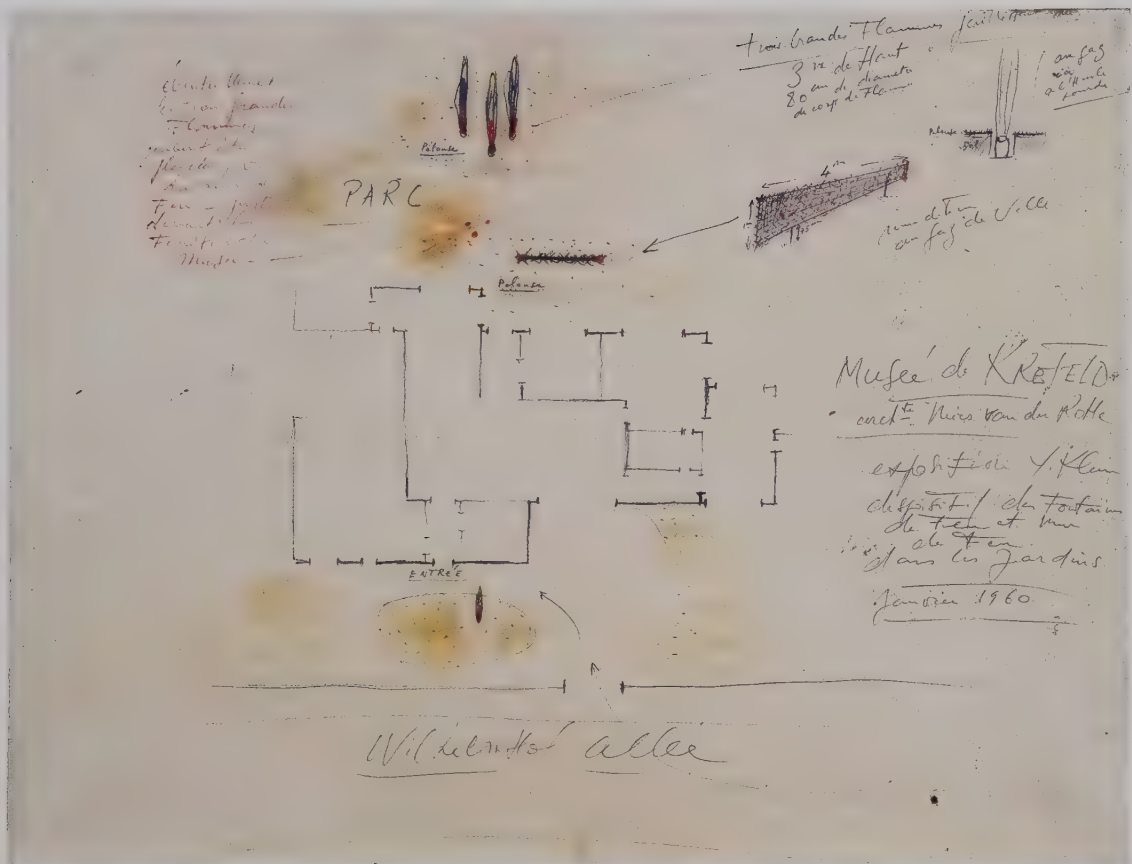
22 5/8 x 29 1/2 in. (57.5 x 74.9 cm)

Exhibition Floor Plan for Krefeld Museum

1960

Ink on tracing paper on canvas

13 9/16 x 19 5/8 in. (34.4 x 49.8 cm)

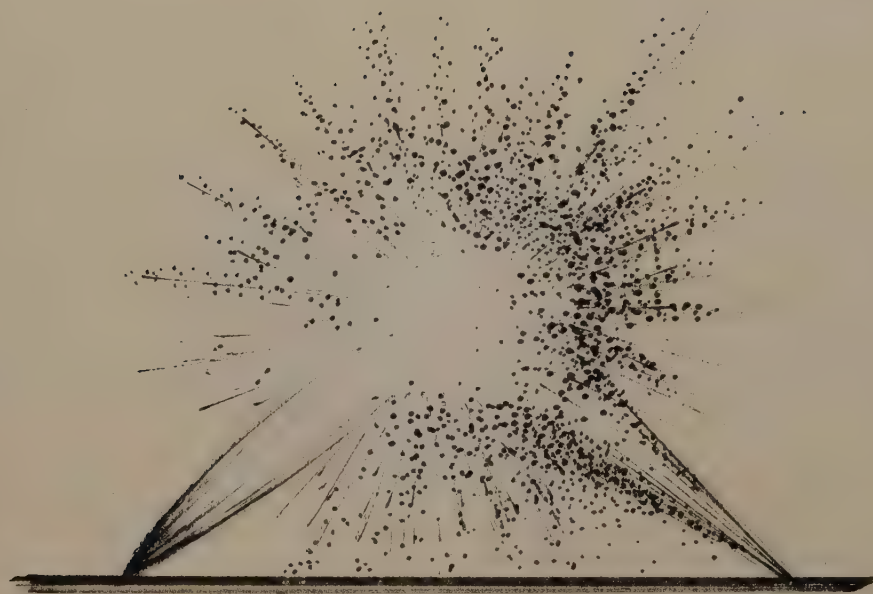


Fontaines d'eau et de feu "Le choc permanent"
[Fountains of Water and Fire "The Permanent Shock"]

1958

Graphite and ink on paper

11 ⁵/₈ x 14 ³/₈ in. (29.5 x 36.5 cm)



"Projet pour une place publique..." [Project for a Public Space...]

c. 1959

Ink on tracing paper on canvas

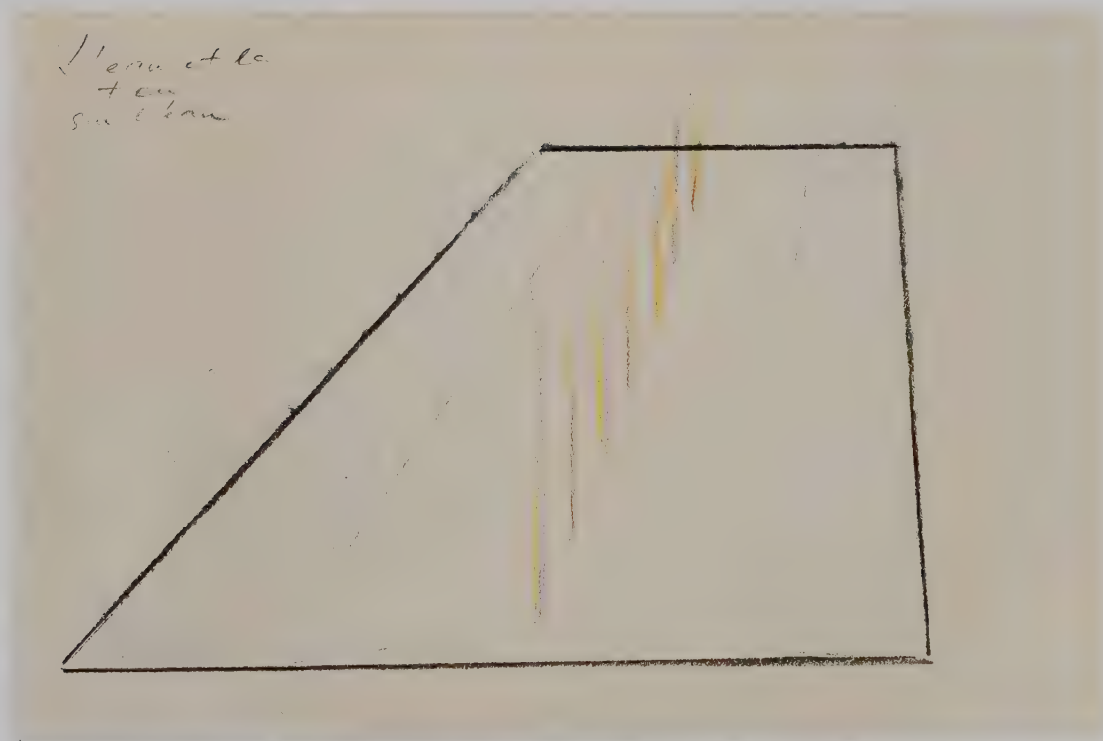
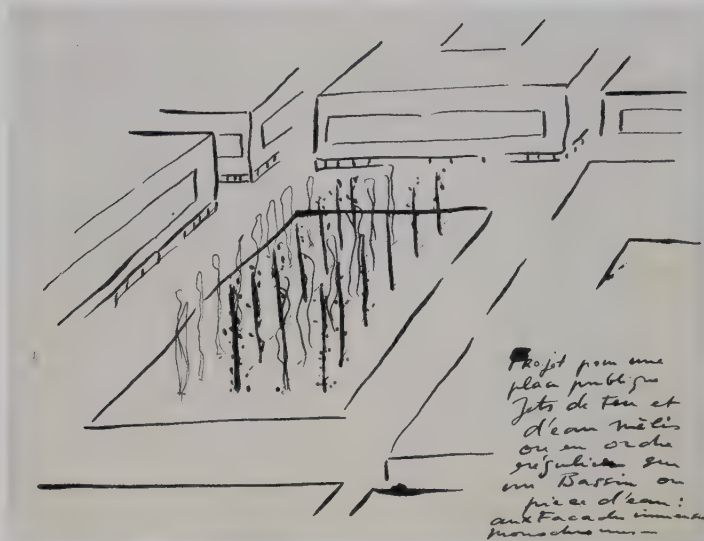
9 1/16 x 12 3/16 in. (23 x 31 cm)

Fontaine de feu pour une place publique [Fire Fountain for a Public Space]

c. 1959

Crease pencil on paper

14 9/16 x 21 1/4 in. (37 x 54 cm)

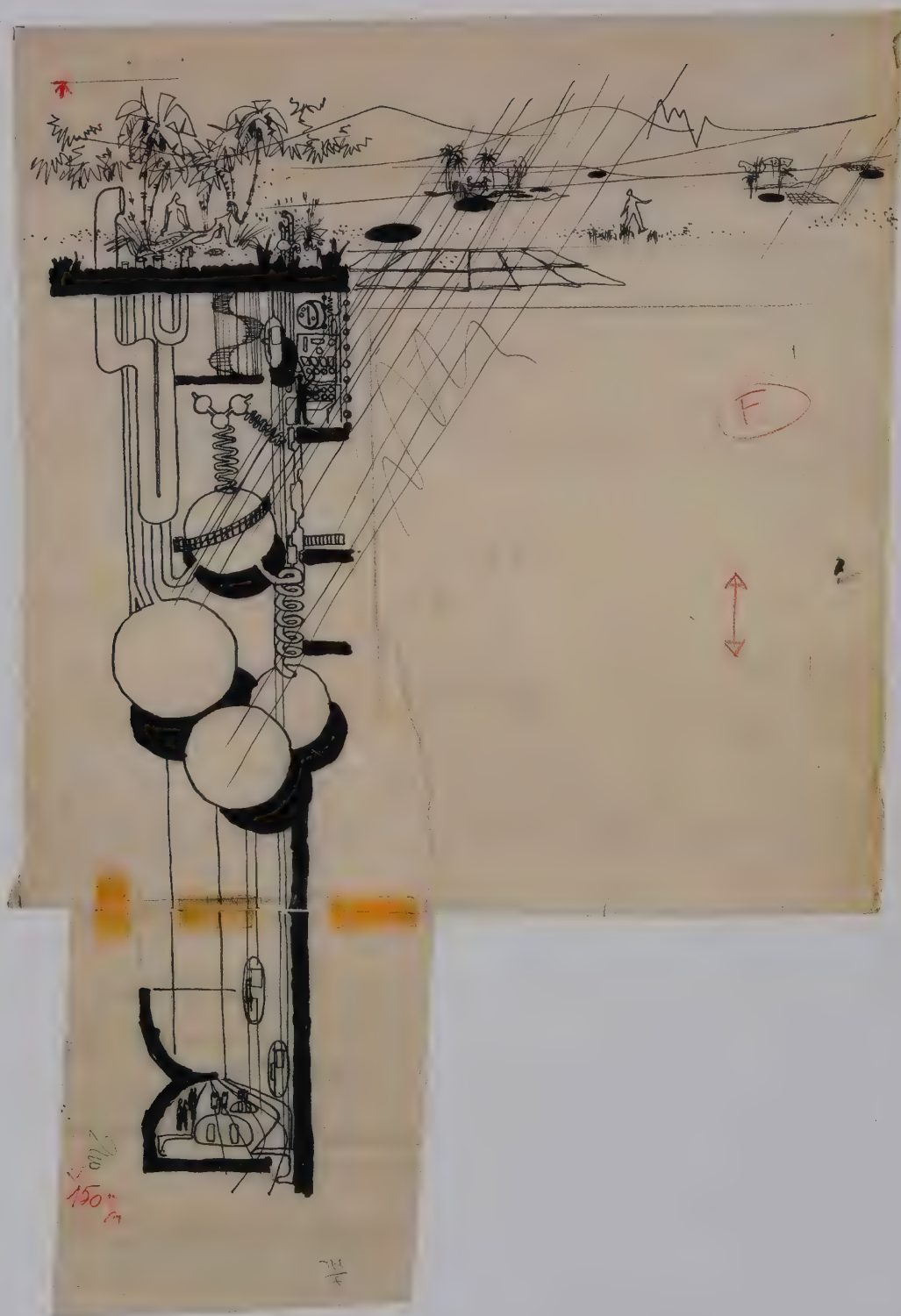


Sous-sol d'une cité climatisée (Climatisation de l'espace)
[The Underground Climatized City (Climatization of Space)]

c. 1959

Ink and graphite on tracing paper

28 3/4 x 18 7/8 in. (73 x 48 cm)



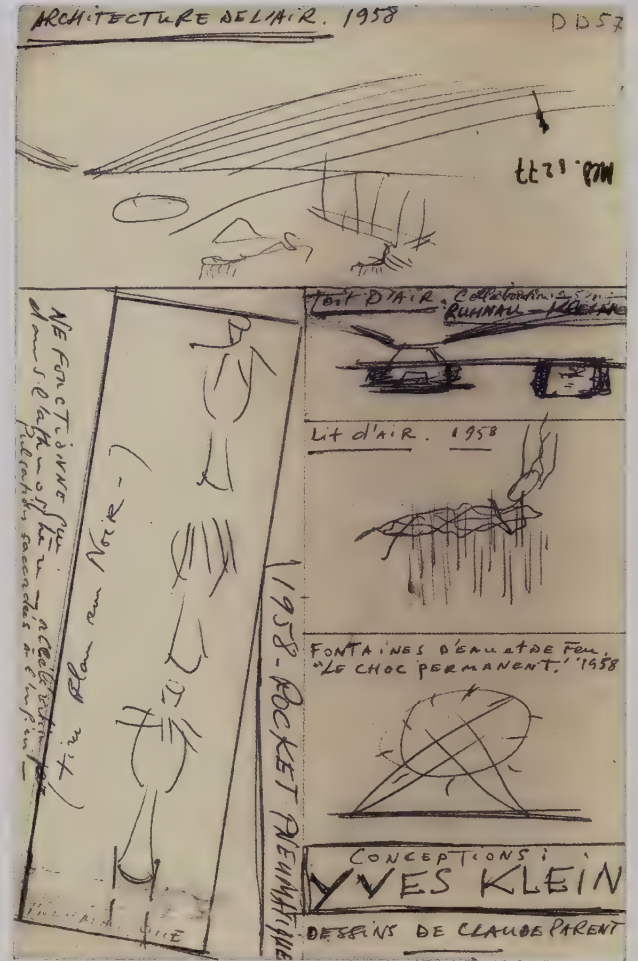
"Architecture de l'air, 1958...Climatisation de l'espace..."

[Air Architecture. 1958...Climatization of Space...]

1958-62

Ballpoint pen ink and graphite on paper

20 7/8 x 6 11/16 in. (53 x 17 cm)



"Climatisation de l'espace 1951" [Climatization of Space 1951],

from the exhibition catalogue Antagonismes II

1962

Printed paper

8 7/8 x 6 1/8 in. (22.5 x 15.5 cm)

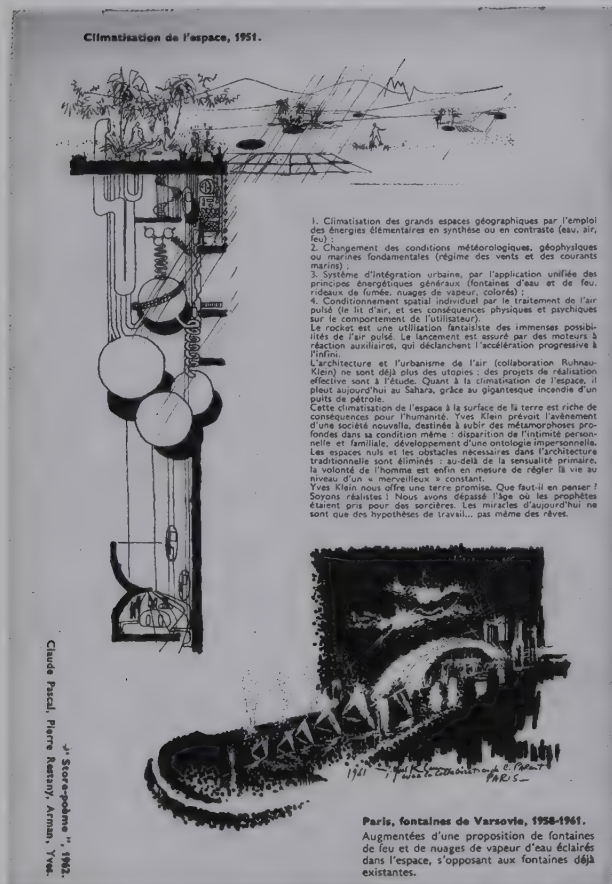
"Architecture de l'air...Climatisation de l'espace..."

[Air Architecture...Climatization of Space...], from the exhibition catalogue Antagonismes II

1962

Printed paper

8 7/8 x 6 1/8 in. (22.5 x 15.5 cm)

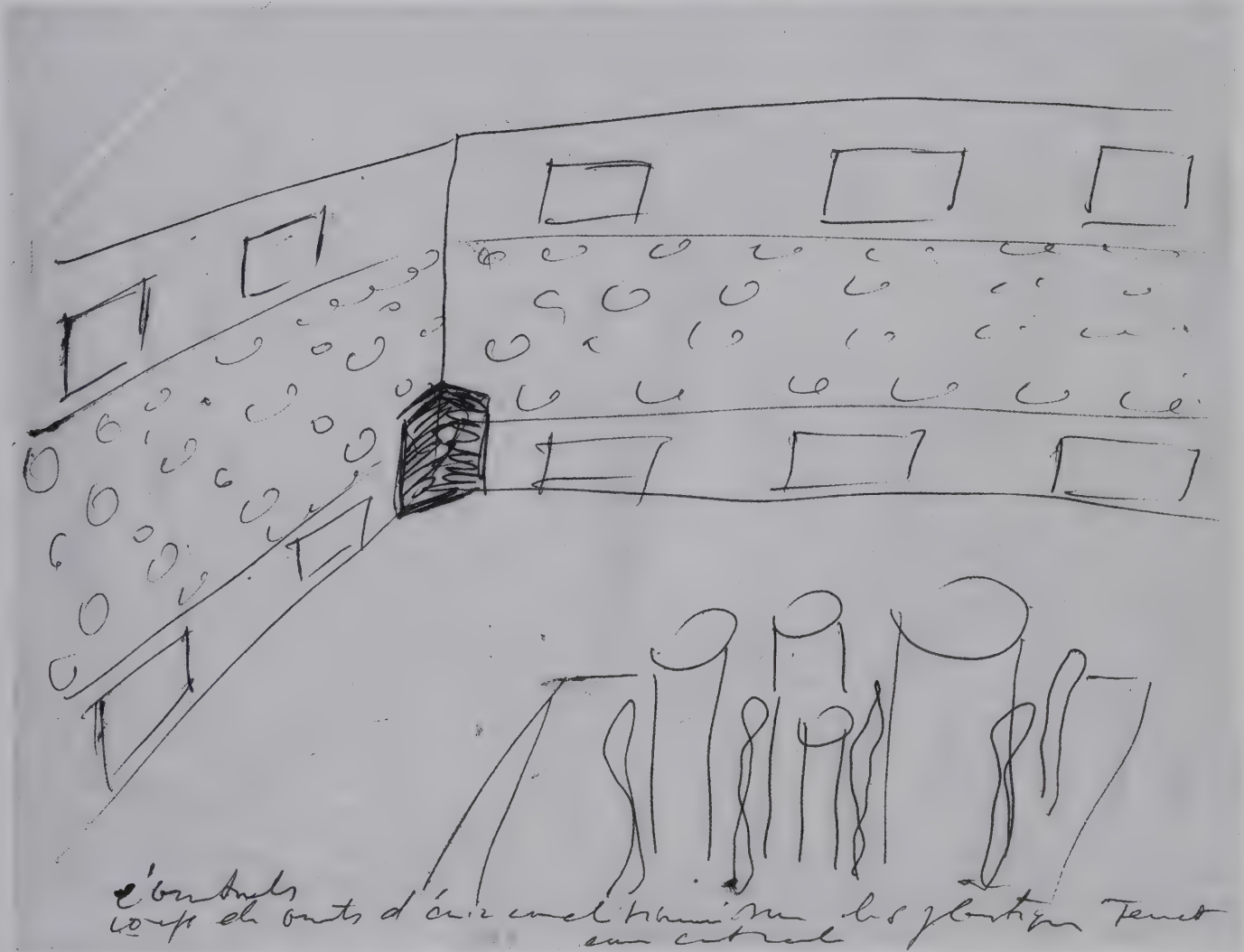


"...air conditionné..." [...air conditioning...]

c. 1959

Ink on paper

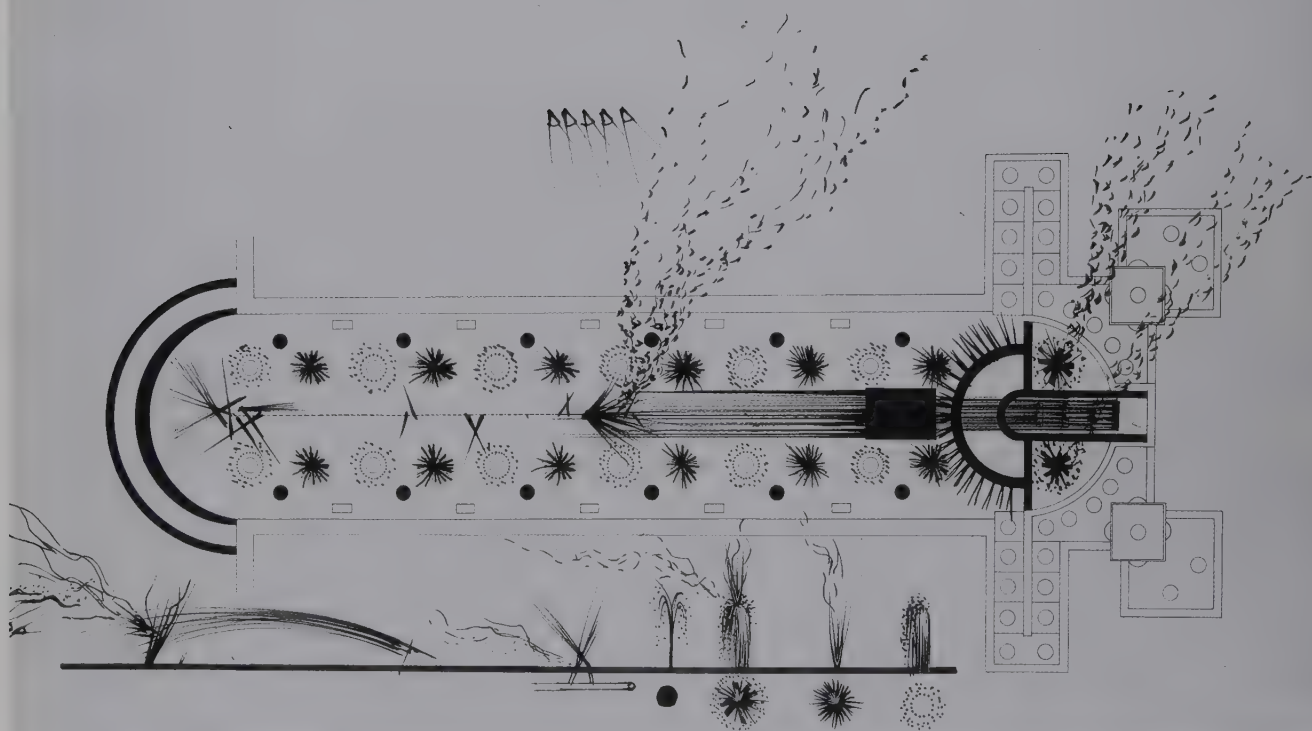
8 ⁷/₁₆ x 10 ¹³/₁₆ in. (21.4 x 27.5 cm)



Projet pour les Fontaines de Varsovie
[Project for the Fontaines de Varsovie, Paris]

c. 1961

Ink on tracing paper on canvas
26 3/8 x 35 1/16 in. (67 x 89.1 cm)



Fontaines d'eau et de feu [Fountains of Water and Fire]

c. 1960

Watercolor, gouache, and ink on paper on canvas

20 1/8 x 29 1/2 in. (52.5 x 74.9 cm)



Projet pour les Fontaines de Varsovie
[Project for the Fontaines de Varsovie, Paris]

1961

Pastel on paper

29 ½ x 42 ½ in. (74.9 x 108 cm)



Cité climatisée (toit d'air, murs de feu, lit d'air)
[Climatized City (air roof, walls of fire, bed of air)] (with Claude Parent)

1961

Ink and graphite on paper

19 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 26 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (50 x 67.9 cm)

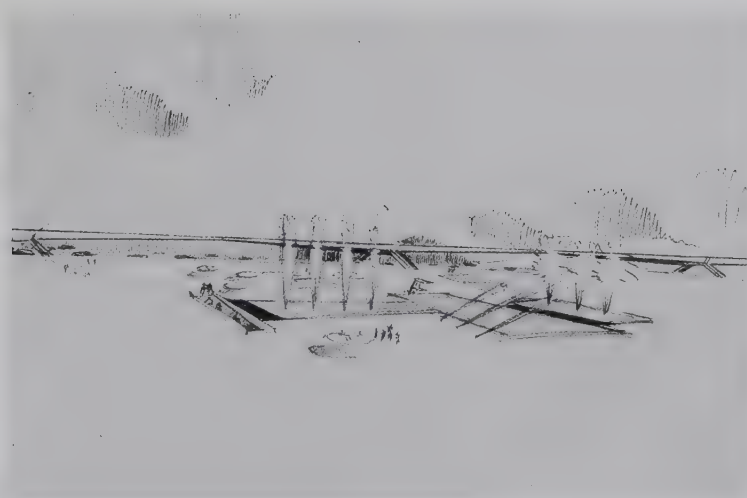
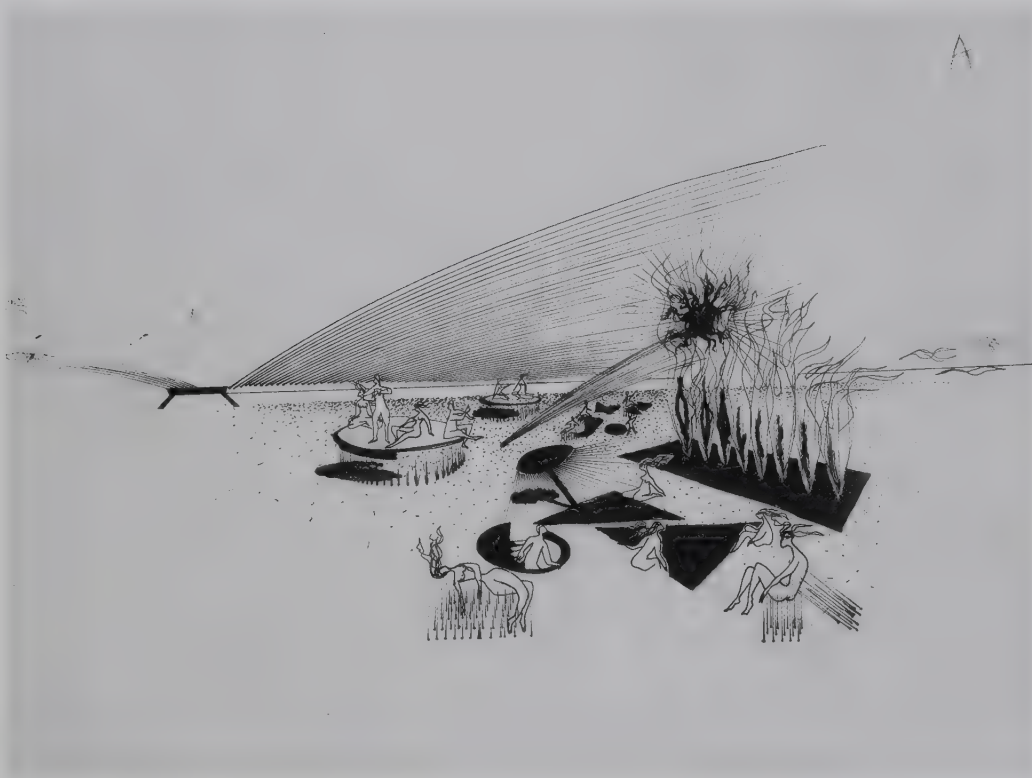
Cité climatisée—"Accès à l'eden technique"

[Climatized City—"Access to Technical Eden"] (with Claude Parent and Sarologo)

1961

Ink and graphite on paper

10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (26 x 36 cm)



I decided to select one country in order to refine in it the climate, the pictorial sensibility in the first material state into stabilized and dynamic pictorial sensibility.

I chose FRANCE....

The atmosphere in FRANCE is unlike anywhere else. Here, I shall repeat what already I have communicated to the journal Arts on the occasion of their inquiry on the ideals of young painters, which they quite dishonestly published only in parts. My response to the seventh question, ambition: painting will lead me to political power. This is presently my sole potential of pictorial evolution in the future....

It is not with rockets, missiles, or Sputniks that modern man will achieve the conquest of space. That's the dream of present-day scientists who live in a romantic and sentimental state of mind that belongs to the nineteenth century.

It is through the terrific yet peaceful force of sensibility that man will inhabit space. It is through the impregnation with human sensibility in space that the ardently desired conquest of this space will be achieved. For human sensibility is capable of anything in immaterial reality; it can even read in nature's memory about the past, the present, and the future.

It is our potential for effective extra-dimensional action!

And if necessary, here is some proof of this assertion:

In the Divine Comedy, Dante describes with absolute precision what no traveler of his time could possibly have discovered: the invisible constellation of the northern hemisphere known as the Southern Cross. Jonathan Swift, in Voyage to Laputa, gives the distances and periods of rotation of two satellites of Mars, although they were unknown at the time.

When the American astronomer Asaph Hall discovered them in 1877, he realized that his measurements were the same as Swift's. Seized by panic, he named them Phobos and Deimos, "Fear" and "Terror"! With these two words, "Fear" and "Terror," I find myself before you, in the year 1946, ready to plunge into the void.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

I once thought to present an exhibition in Paris as follows:

The convened public enters the gallery and finds itself in an empty room. The floors are covered with rich carpets of very thick, white wool, with blue pills dispersed throughout to be consumed on the spot.

Three minutes later, those having consumed these pills collapse under the effect of the drug: that is to say, an agreeable, dynamic stupor in which appears an immense interior-exterior blue space! Uniformly monochrome blue.

This is the beatitude of artificial paradises in blue!

Everyone basks in it!

I thought of giving the exhibition the title: "Monochrome Stupefaction."

However, because of the trickery required, I will never present such an exhibition.

With the exhibition of the architecture of air I desire to exhibit "the tube!"

This tube is the fruit of my collaboration with Tinguely.

It is the static speed that in its wake makes evident the essence of universal blue everywhere.

This tube will probably be pneumatic, but this time also in a more objective sense than what I usually give to my pneumatic period, i.e., the period of air, of sensibility, of immaterial quality! This tube will be made of elastic material and be inflated with hydrogen or helium and float in the air. Without a doubt, chains will be required to keep it in place in order to prevent it from rising to the ceiling. This, yet again, is an example of the conflict against the support or base of sculpture, the struggle against the forces of terrestrial attraction.

Typewritten text. Trans. Klaus Ottmann.

With the three classic elements—fire, air, and water—the classic city of tomorrow will be constructed and will finally be flexible, spiritual, and immaterial.

The idea in space, of using pure energy as a material for construction for mankind, no longer seems absurd in this order of thinking.

Gelsenkirchen, 15 December 1958

Excerpt from "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, trans. Klaus Ottmann, 66.

"Assemblage de rouleaux à peindre usagés"
[Assemblage of Used Paint Rollers]
(S 7), 1956-62
Paint rollers on metal
10 ¼ × 8 ¼ × 7 ⅛ in. (26 × 21 × 17.9 cm)



Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson

April 10, 1959

Typescript on paper

10 3/4 x 8 7/8 in. (27.3 x 21.4 cm)

Yves Klein
14, rue Campagne Première
Paris XVI^e

Paris, 14^e avril 1959

À Monsieur Philip Johnson - Architecte.
375 Parc Avenue
New York 22
NY Plaza U.S.A.

Cher Monsieur,

L'architecte Werner Ruhnau et moi vous avons fait
parvenir nos idées sur une certaine architecture de l'air,
il y a quelques mois de cela je crois.

Plusieurs de mes amis, de retour de New York, ont
entendu beaucoup parler de cela dans divers milieux amé-
ricains.

Je serais très intéressé et heureux de savoir si nos
plans et idées sommaires ont été publiés par une revue
quelconque aux Etats-Unis.

Puis-je me permettre de vous demander d'avoir l'ex-
trême amabilité, de bien vouloir me signaler les publica-
tions éventuelles de ce projet auquel nous tenons beaucoup
Werner Ruhnau et moi.

J'ai eu le plaisir de faire la connaissance de Madame
Marie Kallery hier soir chez Madame Iris Clert ; nous avons
beaucoup parlé de vous. Permettez moi de vous dire toute ma
reconnaissance pour l'intérêt que vous avez bien voulu à
ma tentative monochrome.

Veillez agréer, Cher Monsieur, l'assurance de mes
sentiments distingués.

Dear Sir,

A few months ago, the architect Werner
Ruhnau and I sent you our ideas on a certain
architecture of air.

Several of my friends, back from New York,
heard a lot of talk about this in various
American media.

I would be very interested and happy to know
if our plans and summaries of our ideas
have been published by any magazine in the
United States.

May I ask to have the extreme kindness of
you telling us of any publications about this
project which is very dear to Werner Ruhnau
and myself.

I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance
of Ms. Marie Kallery yesterday evening at Ms.
Iris Clert's and we talked a lot about you. Allow
me to express my gratitude for the interest that
you have shown in my monochrome endeavors.

Please accept, dear Sir, the assurances of my
highest consideration.

Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson

October 12, 1959

Typescript on paper

10 9/16 x 8 1/4 in. (26.8 x 21 cm)

YVES KLEIN

14 rue Campagne Première
Paris 14ème.

Gelsenkirchen le 12 octobre 59

A monsieur PHILIP JOHNSON
Architecte
375 Park Avenue NEW YORK 22
NY Plaza U S A!

Cher monsieur,

Je suis désolé de ne pas avoir eu le plaisir de vous rencontrer lors de votre dernier passage à Paris. Iris Clert m'a dit que je pourrai me permettre de vous écrire pour tenter d'obtenir d'une manière ou d'une autre soit une invitation pour une université ou académie pour Werner Ruhnau et moi-même afin d'y donner nos conférences avec les projections présentées en SORBONNE en Juin dernier sous le titre de L'Évolution de l'Art et de l'Architecture vers l'Immatériel ! ... Soit plus simplement peut-être obtenir une BOURSE comprenant voyage et séjour ce qui serait vraiment merveilleux.

Est-ce possible?

Je ne sais pas très bien ce qu'il faut faire pour cela, je joins à tout hasard nos deux curriculums sans trop savoir s'ils seront utiles. Vous êtes vraiment très aimable de bien vouloir vous occuper de cela pour nous, je ne sais comment vous remercier d'avance infiniment. Tous nos travaux à Gelsenkirchen seront terminés dans deux mois environ et nous ne revons pas à autre chose-ensuite- que d'aller voir ensuite NEW YORK Dans l'attente, veuillez croire en mon meilleur souvenir

I am sorry not to have had the pleasure of meeting you during your last visit to Paris. Iris Clert told me that I may write you to try to get another invitation to a university or academy for Werner Ruhnau and myself, in order to give our lecture with projections, which we presented at the SORBONNE last June under the title "The Evolution of Art and the Architecture of the Immaterial"!...Or simply a scholarship including travel and subsistence would be wonderful.

Is this possible?

I do not really know what to do about it. Just in case, I am attaching our two curricula, without knowing whether they will be useful. You really are very amiable to kindly look after this for us. I do not know how to thank you enough in advance. Our work in Gelsenkirchen will be completed in about two months and we dream of nothing else than to go to NEW YORK next. In the meantime, I remain with warmest regards.

Letter from Philip Johnson to Yves Klein

October 29, 1959

Typescript and ink on paper

10 3/4 x 8 7/16 in. (27.3 x 21.4 cm)

375 Park Avenue New York 22 N Y PLaza I 7440 Philip Johnson Associates

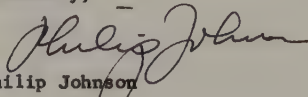
October 29, 1959

Mr. Yves Klein
14 rue Campagne Premiere
Paris 14, France

Dear Yves Klein:

I am sorry you got the impression that I could help you get to this country. As fond as I am of your work, I know nothing about any way that it could be done at this time. I am not familiar with any organization that has funds for foreign artists, I am sorry to say. I shall certainly keep my ears to the ground, however, and if there is any possibility, I shall let you know.

Sincerely,


Philip Johnson

PJ:mam

2569

August 17, 1961

Typescript on paper

10 5/8 x 8 1/4 in. (27 x 21 cm)

YVES KLEIN
14, rue de la Campagne Première
P A R I S (XIVème)

Paris, le 17 Août 1961

Monsieur Philippe JOHNSON
375, Parc Avenue
NEW YORK 22 N.Y. Plaza
U.S.A.

Cher Ami,

Au cours de mon récent séjour aux Etats-Unis, j'ai eu la surprise d'apprendre que des fontaines d'eau et de feu allaient être construites pour être l'une des principales attractions et décorations de la prochaine "WORLD FAIR" de New York.

Comme vous le savez certainement, je suis incontestablement à l'origine de cette proposition d'intégration architecturale et urbaine.

Les fontaines d'eau et de feu, l'utilisation de ces deux éléments, les chocs de jets d'eau et de feu dans tous les effets possibles que l'on peut obtenir avec les techniques actuelles dans un but décoratif urbain ou architectural sont à la base de mes recherches et de mes théories depuis plus de dix ans.

Comme je me souviens très bien vous avoir entretenu de ces questions vers 1958 à Paris lors de votre visite chez moi, je viens vous demander de bien vouloir faire remarquer de ma part à l'Administration, ou aux Ingénieurs qui s'appêtent à construire ces fontaines pour la "WORLD FAIR" de New York, que je ne réclame rien quant à des royalties ou honoraires, non, tout ce que je désire et c'est bien naturel : c'est, d'être tenu au courant de leur projet et collaborer avec eux comme conseiller artistique puisque je suis tout de même, aujourd'hui officiellement, à la base de cette idée des fontaines d'eau et de feu.

L'argent ne m'intéresse pas; je suis, comme vous le savez, de la race des artistes qui ne vivent ni d'argent, ni d'amour et d'eau fraîche, mais tout simplement de l'orgueil de leurs découvertes et créations.

De nombreuses publications dans le monde entier, depuis plusieurs années, ont parlé, montré des dessins et projets signés de moi sur les possibilités d'intégration urbaine et décorative de l'eau et du feu.

.....

October 2, 1961

Typescript on paper

10 3/4 x 8 7/16 in. (27.3 x 21.4 cm)

Yves KLEIN
14, rue de la Campagne libre
PARIS XIVe

Oct 61

Mr. Philippe JOHNSON
375, Park Avenue
NEW YORK 22, N.Y. Plaza

Dear friend,

During a recent visit to the United States, I was very surprised to learn that fountains of water and fire are going to be constructed as one of the principal attraction and decoration at the next "WORLD FAIR" of New York.

As you certainly know, I am incontinentably at the origin of this architectural and urban integration.

The fountains of water and fire, that is to say the utilization of the shock of these two elements, and all of the effects that one can possibly obtain with the recent technics, with a decorative or architectural view, have been the basis of my research and my theories for the last 10 years.

I spoke to you at length about these questions in Paris in 1958, when you came to my house. I am not asking the Administration or the Engineers who are constructing these fountains for the "World Fair" of New York, neither for Royalties or any financial remuneration. I would however like to collaborate with them as artistic counsellor, because, as you very well know, I am officially considered the creator of this idea of fountains of water and fire.

I am not interested in their money, only in preventing my idea to be used without my name being cited. Many publications in the whole world have spoken, published drawings and projects signed by me, on the possibilities of urban and decorative integration of fire and water since several years.

In two theoretical lectures delivered at the Sorbonne in 1959, I have developed this subject and its affective, psychological and social consequences in all its technical dimensions.

./...

252A

October 17, 1961

Typescript and ink on paper

10 3/4 x 8 7/16 in. (27.3 x 21.4 cm)

375 Park Avenue New York 22 N Y Plaza 1 7440 Philip Johnson Associates

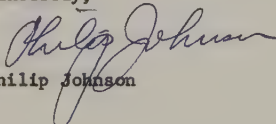
October 17, 1961

Mr. Yves Klein
14, rue de la Campagne lere
Paris XIV, France

Dear Yves Klein:

I am sorry that you are upset about the World's Fair work in this country. Actually, the effects here will be very much the same as they were in the World's Fair of 1939, when the same fire and the same water was used. I am sure your designs are entirely different and in actuality, the designer, Mr. Donald Oenslager, tells me he has never heard of your work. The engineer of the Project is Mr. J. F. Hamel of Los Angeles who also did the fountain for the Fair in 1939. There is nothing new and nothing revolutionary that could have been derived from your work. I assure you that I wish to help you in any way I can, but in this case the American designer is innocent.

Sincerely,


Philip Johnson

PJ:mam

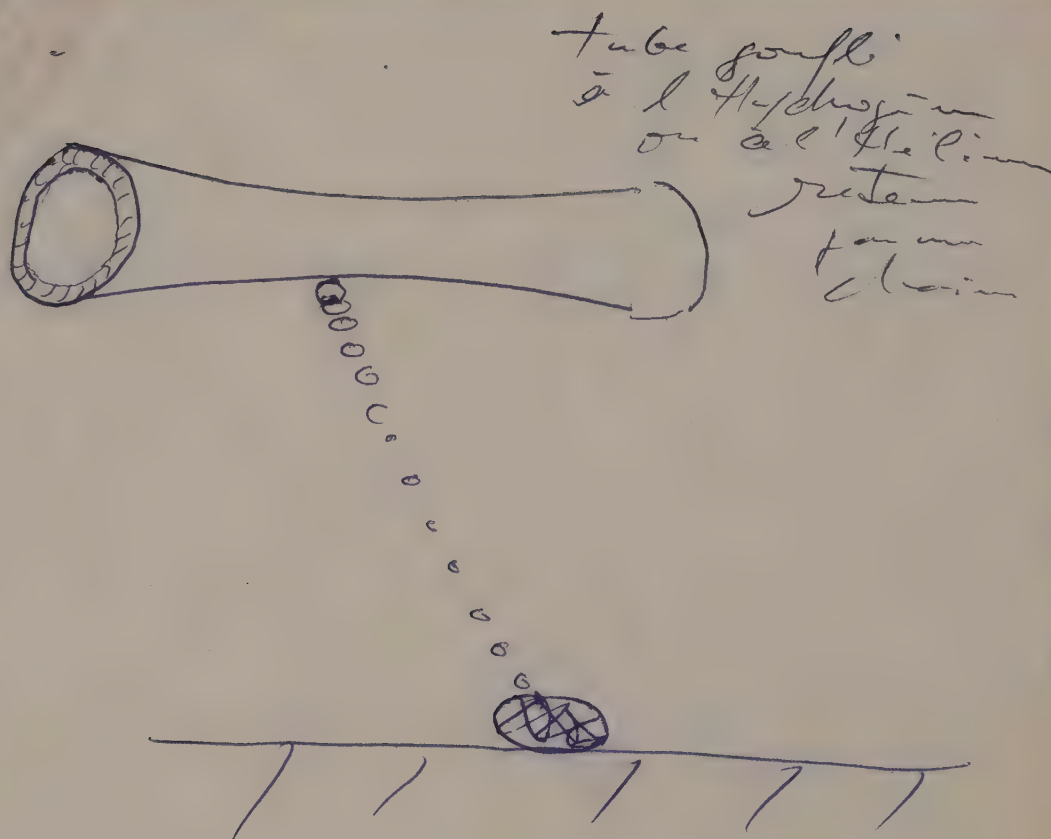
"Tube gonflé à l'hydrogène ou à l'hélium..."

[Inflated Tube of Hydrogen or Helium]

1958

Ink on paper

6 1/4 x 8 1/4 in. (15.5 x 21 cm)



2102

"Solution Tinguely Klein pour la Lévitación du tube..."

[Klein's and Tinguely's Solution for a Levitation Tube...]

1958

Ink on paper

6 ¹/₁₆ x 8 ¹/₄ in. (15.4 x 21 cm)

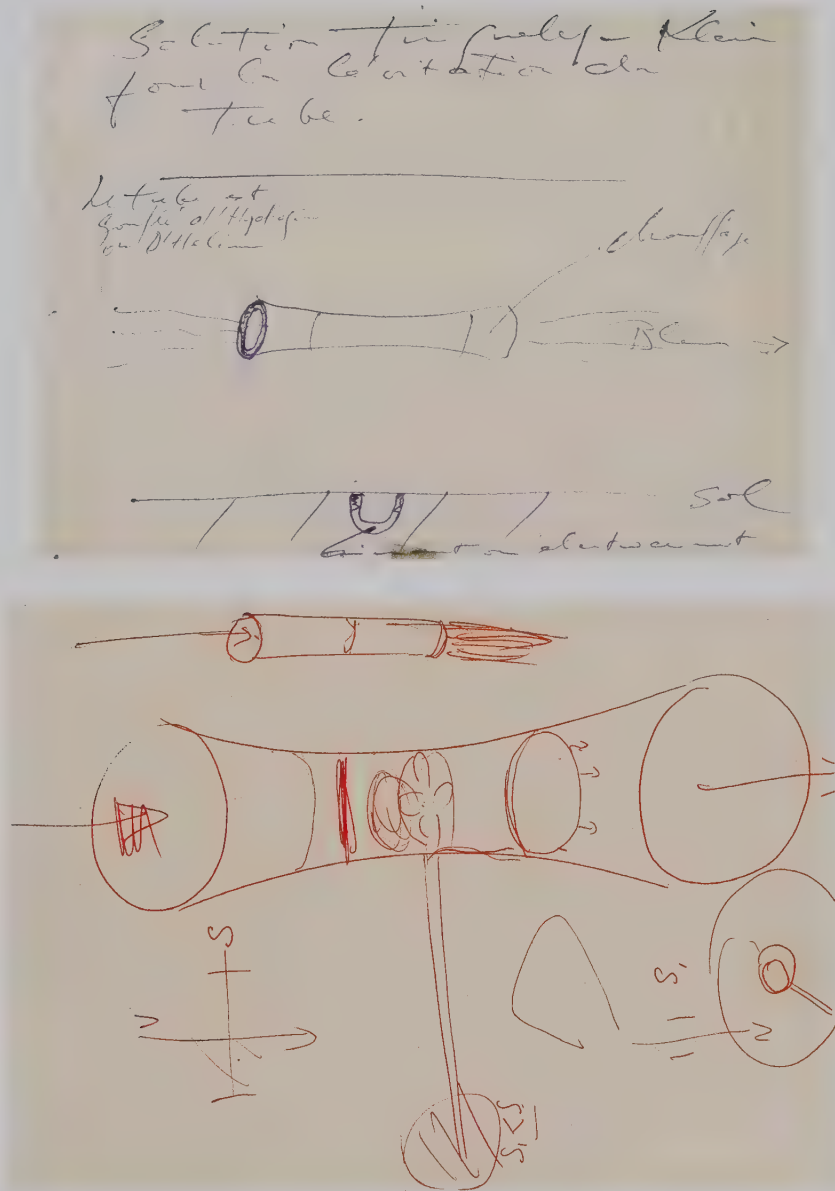
Projet pour un tube en aluminum lévitant

[Project for a Levitating Aluminum Tube]

1958

Ink on paper

8 ⁷/₁₆ x 11 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (21.5 x 29.7 cm)



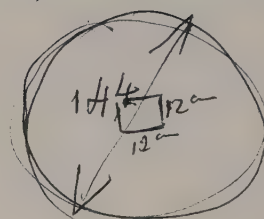
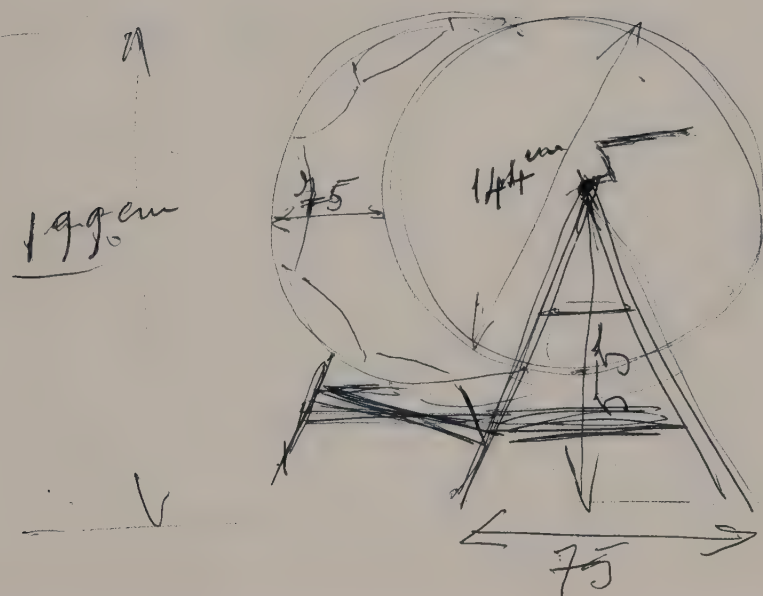
"Machine pour s'entraîner à léviter"
[Machine for Training Oneself to Levitate]

c. 1959

Ink on paper

8 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 13 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. (21.4 x 33.8 cm)

*Machine pour s'entraîner
à léviter -*



72
72
444
199
144
55

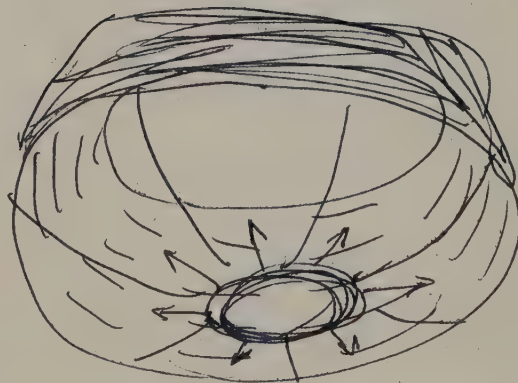
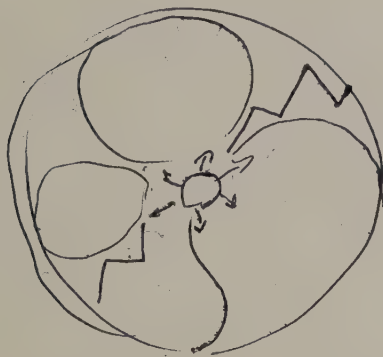
Untitled Drawing

c. 1959

Ink on paper

8 ⁷/₁₆ x 13 ⁵/₁₆ in. (21.4 x 33.8 cm)

IV
Leffach



Sculpture aéro-magnétique [Aeromagnetic Sculpture]

1959

Ink on paper

12 3/16 x 8 1/4 in. (31 x 21 cm)

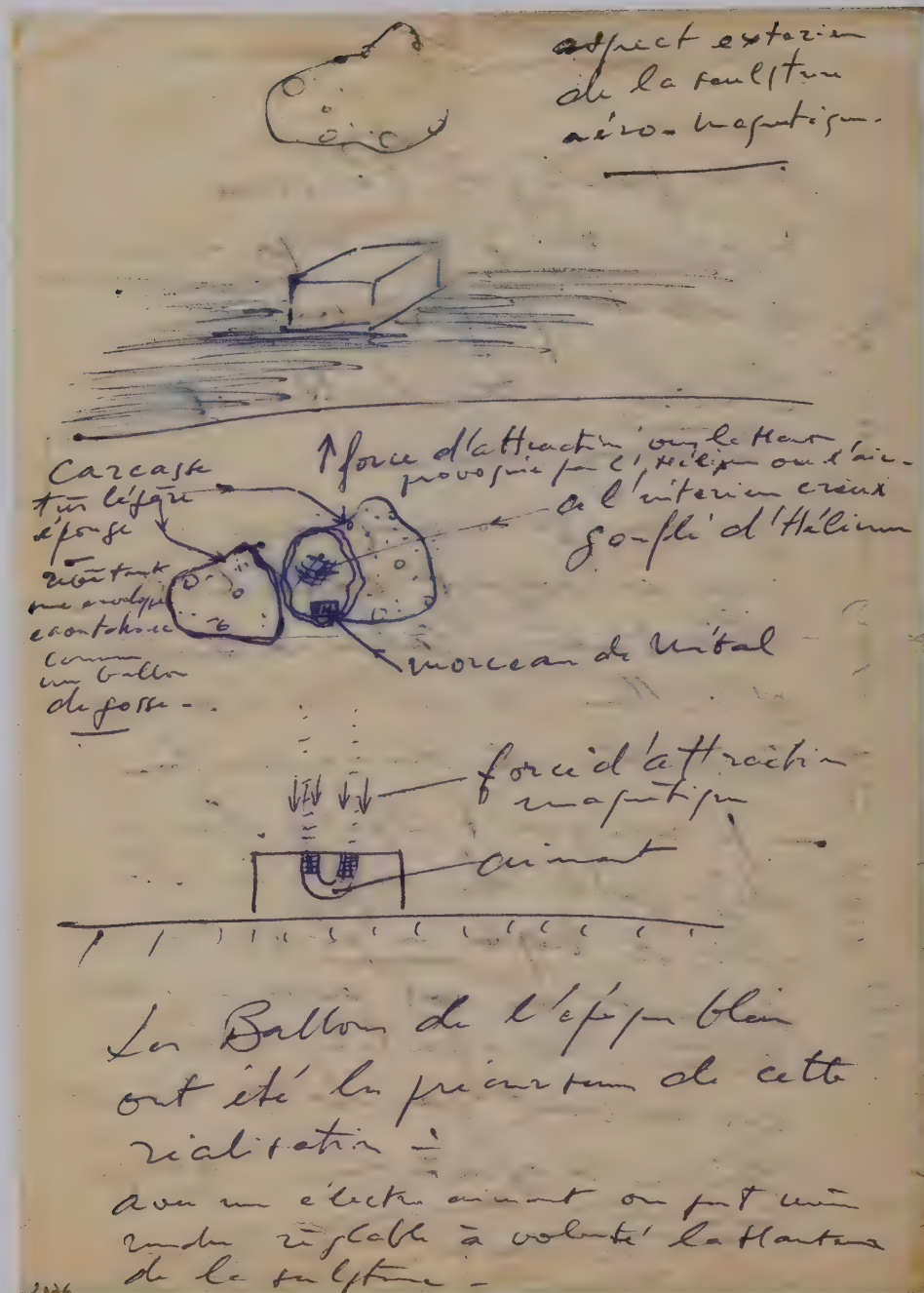
Sculpture aéro-magnétique (Cascia)

[Aeromagnetic Sculpture (Cascia)]

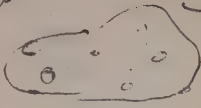
1959

Ink on paper

12 3/16 x 8 1/4 in. (31 x 21 cm)

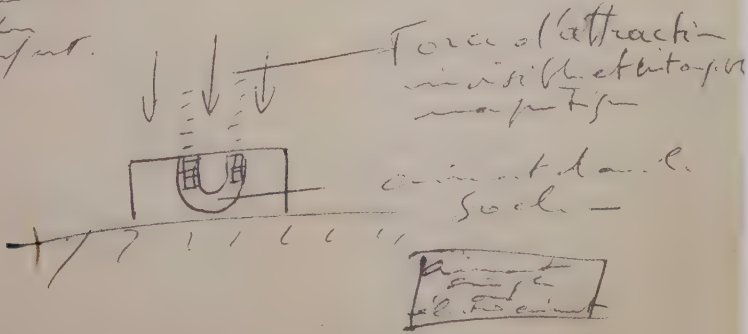
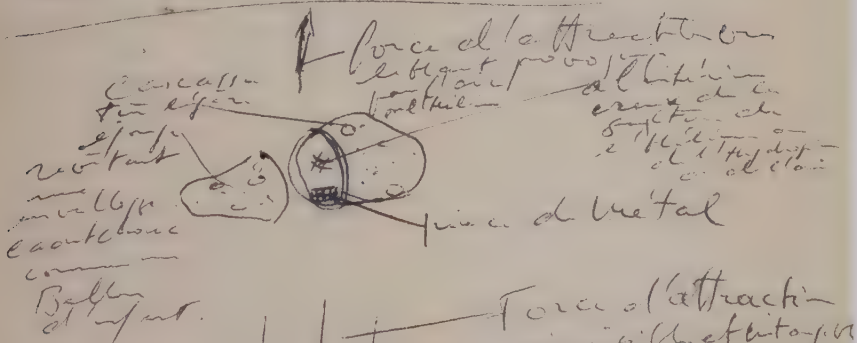
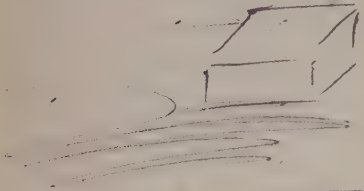


Cascia
le 21 mai -
1914



Le ... à ...
... et ...
... cet ...
... -

aspect extérieur
de la sculpture
à la main



Le ... ciment pour ...
de ... à ...
de la sculpture
...
...
...

"Sculpture aéro-magnétique..." [Aeromagnetic Sculpture...]

1959

Ink on paper

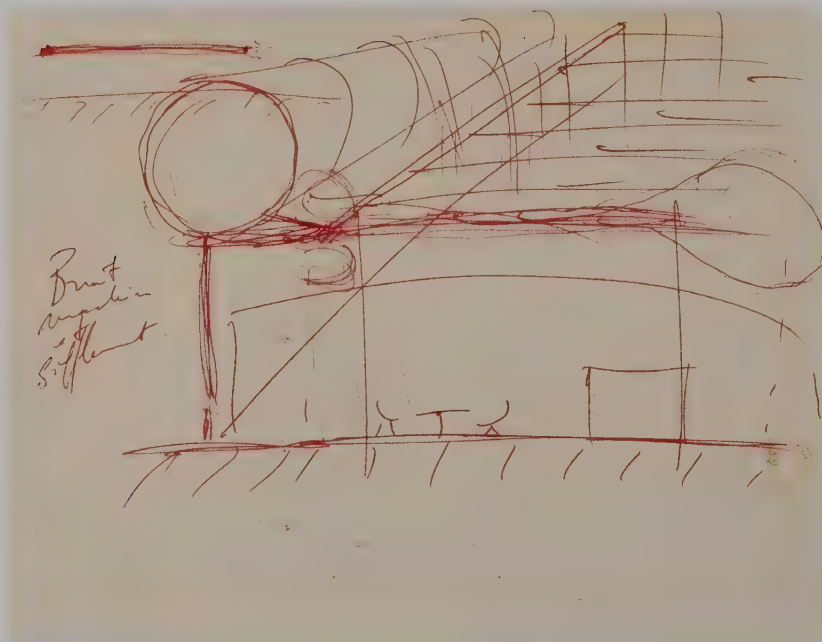
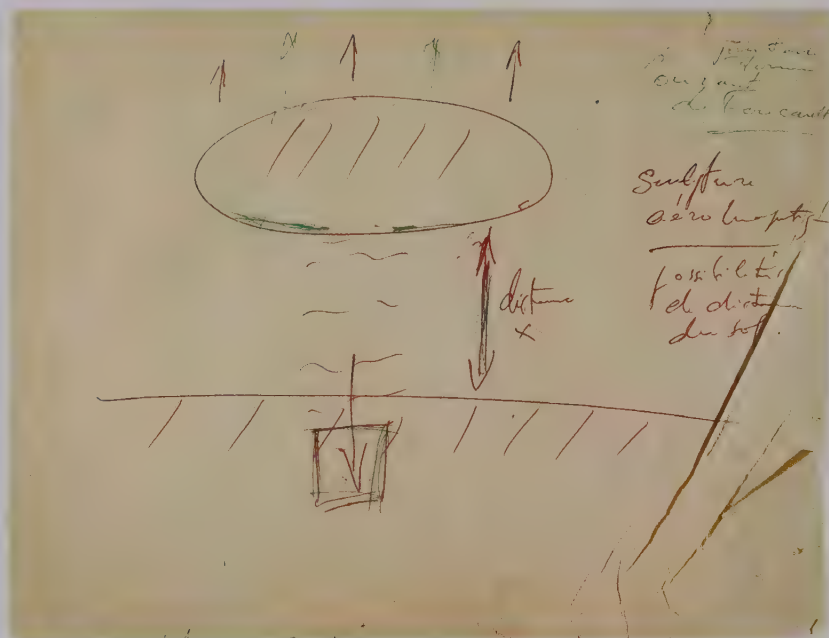
8 ¼ x 10 ⅝ in. (21 x 27 cm)

"Bruit machine et sifflement" [Fog Machine and Whistle]

c. 1959

Ink on paper

8 ¼ x 10 ⅝ in. (21 x 27 cm)

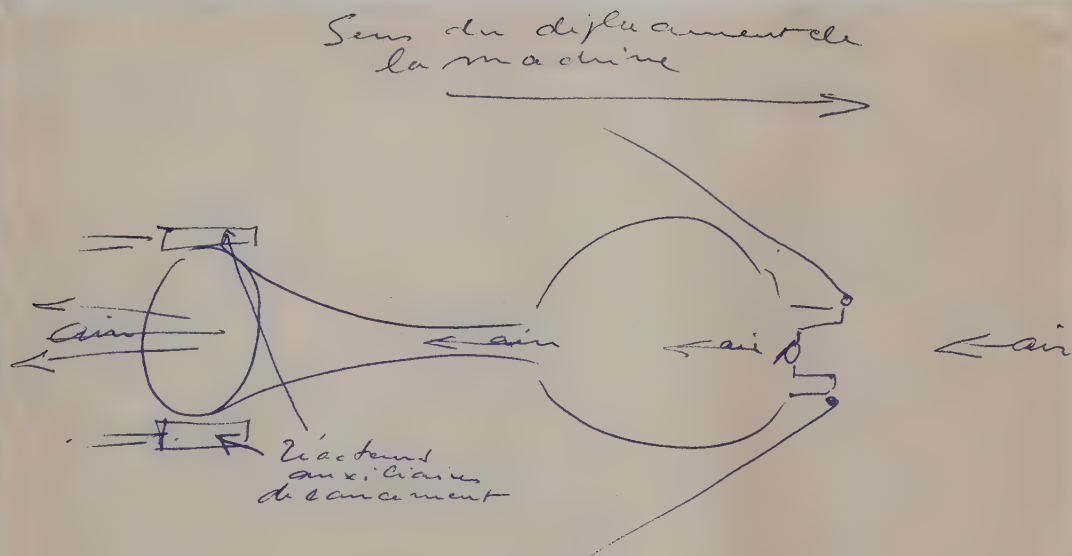


"Machine qui part et ne revient jamais" (projet Rocket)
[Machine that Leaves and Never Returns (Rocket Project)]

c. 1959

Ink on paper

10 $\frac{13}{16}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (27.5 x 21.4 cm)



ne fonctionne que dans
l'atmosphère -

Machine qui part et
ne revient jamais!

"Rocket pneumatique..." [Pneumatic Rocket...]

1958

Charcoal on paper

12 5/8 x 16 1/16 in. (32 x 41.7 cm)

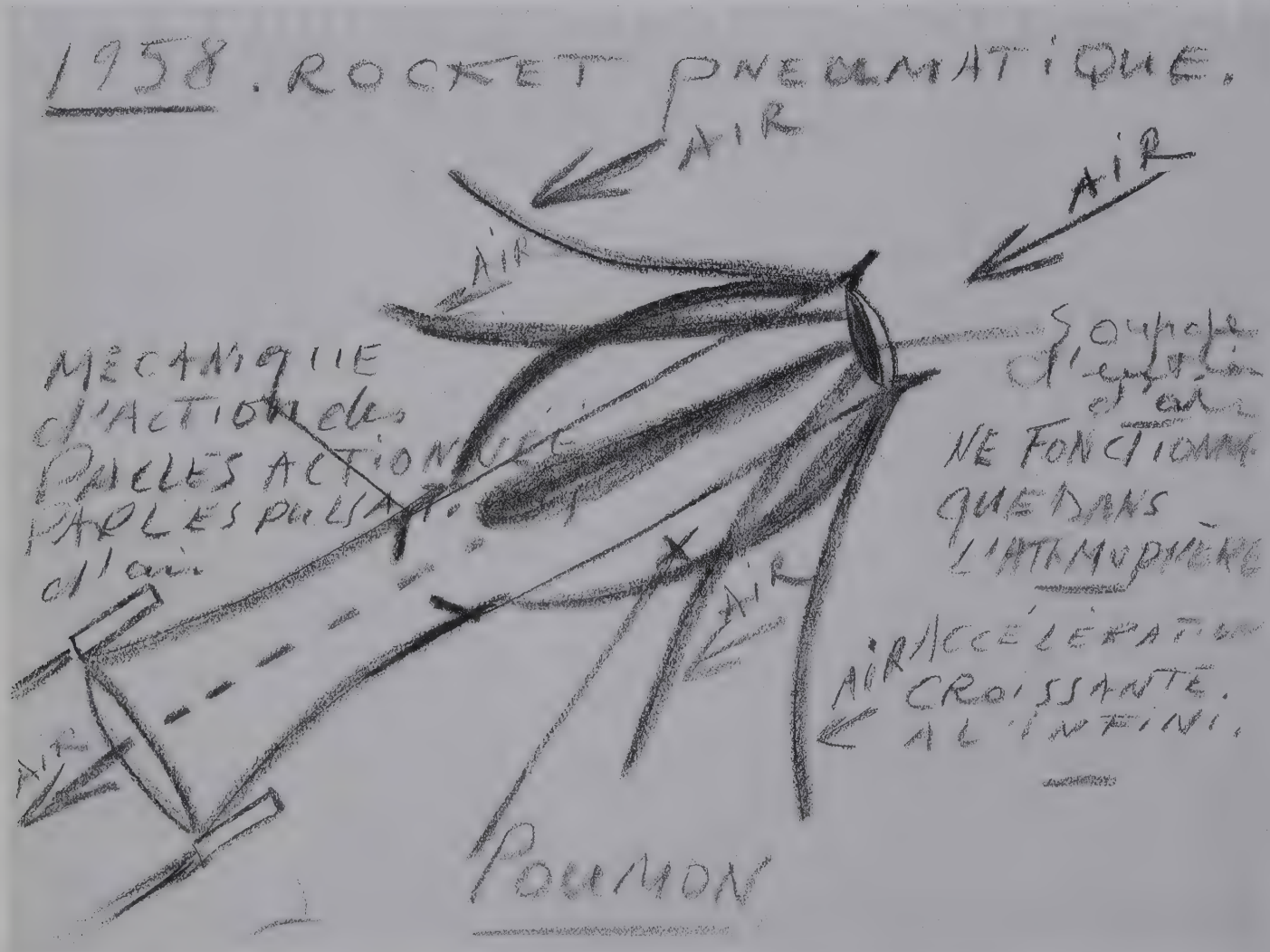
Rocket pneumatique (maquette Tallon-Technès)

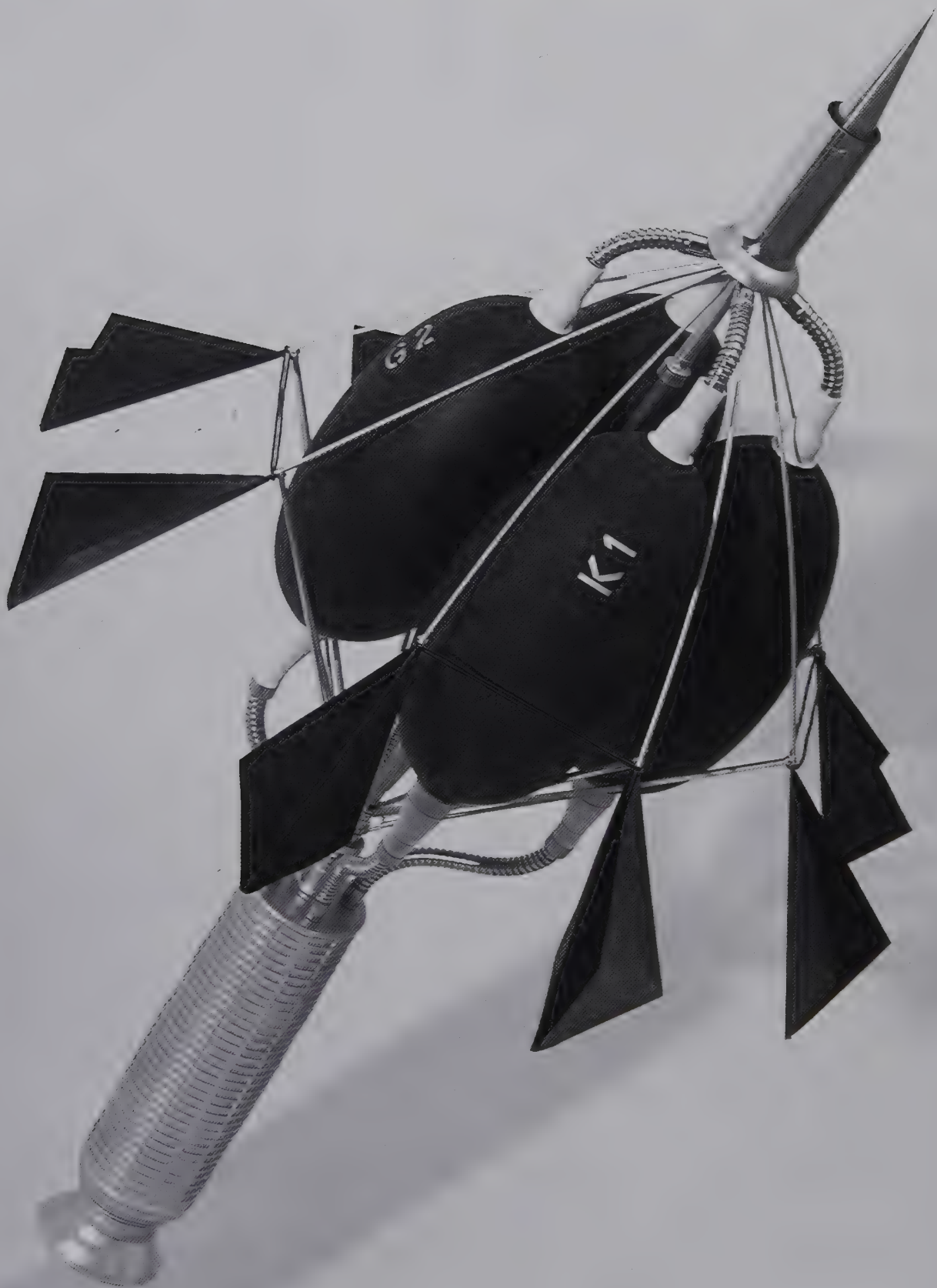
[Pneumatic Rocket (maquette Tallon-Technès)]

1962

Chrome and rubber

32 5/16 x 25 9/16 x 30 5/16 in. (82.1 x 64.9 x 77 cm)



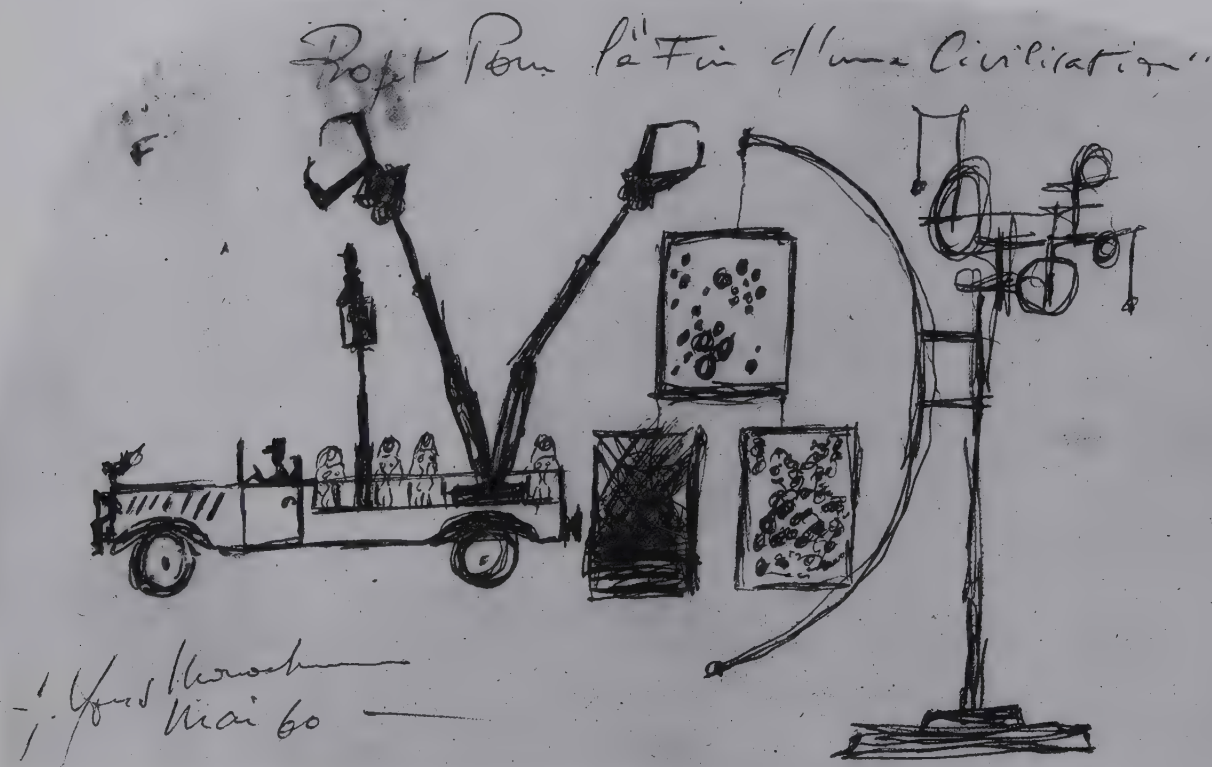


Projet pour la fin d'une civilisation [Project for the End of a Civilization]

1960

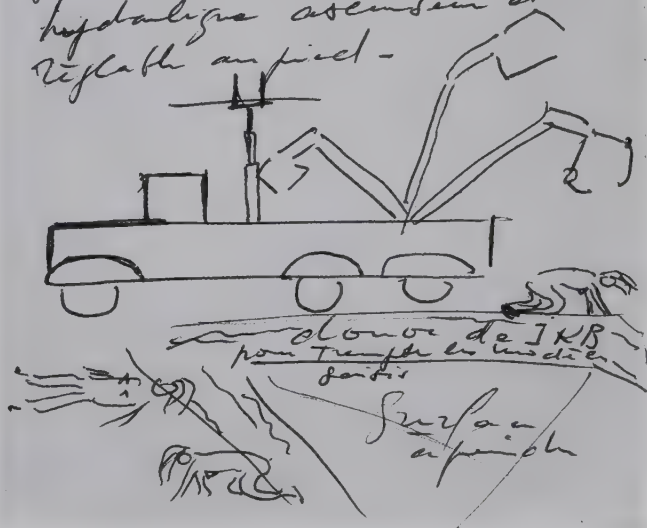
Ink on paper

7 1/16 x 12 3/16 in. (17.9 x 31 cm)



"Procédé" de décoration ou
d'intégration architecturale et
produits obtenus par application
du dit procédé!"

2
Un camion est transformé et
muni de Bras pivotants et
articulé hydrauliquement ou
mécaniquement - (sorte d'évacuateur
de terrement de chantier.)
- trois ou quatre de ces
Bras sont sufflés sur le
Camion bondé - par une
poutelle de commande
hydraulique ascenseur et
réglable au pied -



"L'acclimatation de l'atmosphère à la surface de notre globe"
... la conclusion technique et scientifique de notre civilisation
est enfoncée dans les
entrailles de la terre et assure
le confort par le contrôle absolu du
Climat à la surface de tous
les continents, devenus vastes
Salles de séjour communes.

... C'est une sorte de retour à l'eden
de la légende. (1951.)

.. Vivement d'une société nouvelle, destinée à
subir des métamorphoses profondes dans sa
condition même. Disparition de l'intimité
personnelle et familiale. Développement
d'une ontologie impersonnelle.

La volonté de l'Homme peut enfin
régner libre au niveau d'un
"merveilleux constant".

L'Homme libre,
l'est à tel point, qu'il
peut même léviter !
Occupation : Les loisirs.
.. Les obstacles autrefois sur les chemins
l'architecture traditionnelle sont
éliminés.

Sous du corps par des méthodes
nouvelles, telles le lit d'air

Architecture de l'air [Air Architecture]

(ANT 102), 1961

Dry pigment, synthetic resin, and charcoal on paper on canvas

102 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\times$ 83 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (261 $\times$ 213 cm)





YVES
"LE PHILOSOPHE"

BLAUS OTTMANN



I AM NEITHER A LITERARY MAN, NOR AM I A MAN OF SOPHISTICATION.

I AM AN ARTIST AND I LOVE MY FREEDOM, WHICH IS TOUCHED
NEITHER BY VANITY NOR BY STUPID CANDOR, EVEN IF I HAVE, FROM
TIME TO TIME, A BRUSH WITH IDIOCY. —YVES KLEIN¹

Pages 266–68
Yves Klein, Lecture at the
Sorbonne, Paris, June 3, 1959

With the French publication of Yves Klein's collected writings in 2003² and its English translation in 2007,³ more facets of the artist's visionary thinking have become accessible to a broader public. To let Klein's own thoughts come to the fore is the main purpose of this essay, a daunting task, not least in the face of the flood of art historical and critical writings that have been produced since the artist's untimely death at the age of 34 in 1962, and his habit of freely quoting, in his writing and public declarations, from books—notably Eugène Delacroix's journal, Vincent van Gogh's letters, the philosophical writings of Gaston Bachelard, and the phenomenological writings of the art historian and Louvre curator René Huyghe. Klein often did not bother to give proper credit to his sources, not because he was disrespectful of intellectual ownership or wanted to pass on someone else's ideas as his own but because of an absolute belief in *creative collaboration*—that ideas are to be owned and shared by all. In fact, Klein borrowed indiscriminately not only from books but from everyone he met. He very much resembled his blue or pink sponge sculptures, the *lecteurs* [readers],⁴ which are portraits of the viewers of his art who while contemplating his canvases become impregnated with the pure sensibility of color. Klein absorbed ideas like his sponges absorbed color.

The artist's method of "cutting and pasting" from numerous sources that often remained unnamed is reminiscent of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* that, while widely praised as one of the classics of English literature, has been subjected to accusations of plagiarism or the unacknowledged use of sources since its original publication in 1817, especially because of his habit of paraphrasing or loosely translating German philosophers without giving them due credit (his so-called "German borrowings"). Coleridge's book, unequalled in its wisdom and stylistic idiosyncrasy, is at once autobiography and a work of literary criticism, a reader of poetry and a primer to the German philosophy of his time. One critic described Coleridge's as "the greatest book of criticism in English, and one of the most annoying books in any language. The thought of Coleridge has to be pursued across stones, ditches, morasses; with haste, lingering, and disappointment; it turns back, loses itself, fetches wide circuits, and comes to no visible end."⁵

While some art historians have expressed caution as to the actual depth of Klein's reading,⁶ it is quite evident from his published writings and notes that he was a voracious reader of books on art, science, and philosophy.⁷ He had a thorough knowledge of Max Heindel's Rosicrucian writings and also read several books by Bachelard and closely studied Huyghe's two popular works on the philosophy and psychology of art, *Dialogue avec le visible* [Dialogue with the Visible] and *L'Art et l'Homme* [Art and Mankind].⁸ Through them, he, in turn, became acquainted with the ideas of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Henri Bergson, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, among others.

While previous studies on Klein have focused primarily on various art historical aspects and the biographical facts of his life and work, as well as their spiritual, religious, and social context,⁹ the philosophical ideas suffusing his work have not yet been sufficiently explored. This may be due in part to a lingering sentiment that denies Klein much original thought and proposes instead that the ideas expressed in his art and writings are mostly those of his longtime collaborator, the critic Pierre Restany.

Such critiques fail to consider that Klein had, in effect, developed the quintessence of his art and thinking long before he met Restany. Concurrently with the *folie à deux* of Klein and Restany, there was the amorist synergism of Klein and Allain: Klein's companion and early collaborator in the mid-1950s, Bernadette Allain, an up-and-coming architect¹⁰ who published the first major article on (and interview with) Klein in a critical review¹¹ and helped him with the proposal for the Gelsenkirchen Opera House competition. Before Allain and Restany, there was the intellectual triangle Klein-Arman-Pascal: the poet Claude Pascal and the artist Arman (Armand Pierre Fernandez), Klein's friends, travel companions, and fellow judoka and Rosicrucian students from Nice.

As Pascal and Arman wrote later (conspiring in their friend's campaign to codify his personal and public mythology¹² by predating his most important artistic achievements, the blue monochromes and his body prints):

In 1947 we, Yves Klein, Arman and me, in our twenties, are faced with this imbecile sea where the old of France and of art is wasting away. We are wearing shirts besmeared with our feet and bare hands and we are nursed by the gold and iron contained in the air. In need of a temple we did find a cave. The walls were covered with funereal blasphemies and signs...feet and hands sticky with paint and a wall that is monochrome and blue.... Yves Klein is right when he says that our work was already finished when it was hardly imagined.... That is where the monochrome bursts its rockets into the domain of the sensitive, illuminating the space that seemed forever sealed off by Hamletism, Raphaelism, and the housekeepers of J. S. Bach.¹³

1947: Three young men draw a triangle that links their concerns and their research: Yves, Claude and myself. Claude uses up his time to listen to the screams of the stars, almost alongside him I plunge towards the lunar homeland; Yves rebuffs the night by signing the blue sky and hates the holes made by birds; it is the age when all teenagers want to possess the universe.¹⁴

Writing came easily to Klein. He was an avid letter writer, an enthusiastic public speaker, and a gifted essayist. While his use of grammar was often liberal, his style was eloquent yet, at times, guileless and sincere like Van Gogh's letters, and, at other times, overly ornate, enriched with poetic citations and lofty ideas that addressed the ethical and aesthetic questions that concerned him as an artist and as a human being.

Klein was a natural prose writer, exemplifying the "prosaic character" in the French tradition, which Jules Michelet, the great nineteenth-century historian, credited as the "democratic genius of France": "France is the country of prose.... The democratic genius of our nation appears nowhere more clearly than in its eminently prosaic character, and it is indeed in that character that it is destined to raise the whole world of intelligences to equality."¹⁵

Klein's emphasis on style must be viewed in the context of the French notion of civilization. Unlike his contemporaries, especially the Teutonic-shamanistic Joseph Beuys or the orgiastic Viennese actionists Otto Mühl and Hermann Nitsch, Klein always presented himself and his art in a proper, *civilized* manner—notably during his performances of the Anthropometries, when, dressed in white tie, he had nude young women cover themselves with blue paint and press their bodies onto white sheets of paper while directing them from a distance like a Master of Ceremonies, barely touching the women or the paintings himself.

In 1828, the historian and future prime minister of France François Guizot announced in his lectures on the "The General History of Civilization in Europe" that "France has been the centre, the home of civilization in Europe,"¹⁶ and, by 1852, when Alphonse de Lamartine, the nineteenth-century poet and politician,

founded the journal *Le Civilisateur*, “civilization” had become synonymous with France.

When Yves Klein arrived in New York to show his blue monochromes at Leo Castelli’s gallery in 1961, it was not so much his work that the New York art world objected to but his style. For years to come, American reviewers continued to focus on Klein’s appearance, dismissing him as an “entertainer and idea man.”¹⁷ Pop Art, as Roland Barthes observed so keenly, was anti-style; it was about neutralizing identity:

Pop art is well aware that the fundamental expression of the person is style. As Buffon said (a celebrated remark, once known to every French schoolboy): “Style is the man.” Take away style and there is no longer any (individual) man. The notion of style, in all the arts, has therefore been linked, historically, to a humanism of the person.... There is, as I see it, a certain relation between pop art and what is called “script,” that anonymous writing style sometimes taught to dysgraphic children because it is inspired by the neutral and, so to speak, elementary features of typography. Further, we must realize that if pop art depersonalizes, it does not make anonymous: nothing is more identifiable than Marilyn...; they are in fact *nothing but that*: ...teaching us that identity is not the person: the future world risks being a world of identities...but not of persons.¹⁸

Unlike Beuys in Germany and Klein in France, Andy Warhol shifted the personality away from himself and onto his objects, or even his critics (he would frequently tell interviewers to write the answers to their questions in his place). Klein’s style was an essential part of his art and of its humanism. Even when he yielded the actual production of a painting to his models during the making of his Anthropometries, he never conceded his role as artist. His presence in these performances was essential, very unlike Warhol’s productions, wherein the artist would simply turn on his film camera and then walk away, letting those in front of the camera take control.

Wittgenstein’s famous dictum that “ethics and aesthetics are one”¹⁹ has to be read in the context of the philosopher’s understanding of philosophy as a living practice. Ethics includes an aesthetical component, and vice versa. For Wittgenstein, as for Nietzsche before him, art and morality are closely tied. All aesthetic activity is also ethical, just as philosophy is a practice of life, a *Lebensphilosophie*. It is through style that philosophical and aesthetical practices become authentic. Philosophy and art are forms of life:

To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life [*Lebensform*].²⁰

—
Language is an activity or a form of life: “The term “language-*game*” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an *activity*, or of a form of life.”²¹

In the 1930s, Wittgenstein wrote in his diaries that “style is the general necessity seen sub specie aeterni.”²² The note is directly related to a remark found in his 1915–16 notebooks: “The work of art is the object seen sub specie aeternitatis; and the good life is the world seen sub specie aeternitatis. This is the connection between art and ethics.”²³

Both remarks relate to a reference in Spinoza’s *Ethics* where he links the term “sub specie aeternitatis” (under the aspect of eternity) to human freedom. Hegel writes about Spinoza’s *Ethics* that there is “no purer and loftier morality...; the eternal truth is man’s sole purpose for his actions.”²⁴ In Book II of his *Ethics*, Spinoza introduces the notion of ideas as active concepts rather than passive perceptions [*at conceptus actionem mentis exprimere videtur*] and ties these active ideas to man’s free will [*libera voluntas*].²⁵

In a letter to the Austrian publisher Ludwig von Ficker, Wittgenstein wrote that the meaning of his *Tractatus* is "ethical," and that the work consists of two parts—one transcribed on the page, the other unwritten: "My work consists of two parts: what is on hand and everything I did *not* write. And it is precisely this second part that is most important. The Ethical is quasi defined from within by my book."²⁶

Style endows language and art with authenticity; it gives them an authentic voice, grounds them in life. For Klein, as for Wittgenstein, the work consists of two parts: one is materialized in the pigment; the other is immaterial, *lived*, or enacted in performances. Style is not a fashioning of power to attain a desired end but an ethical practice: to exist as a living work of art:

"True painters and poets" neither paint nor write.... Their presence and the sole fact that they exist as such is their great and unique work. And there, truly, one returns to, or rather, there one attains the masterpiece, and not as with today's painters who coin money with their canvases instead of painting them. A painter must paint a single masterpiece, constantly: himself.²⁷

—

Painters should resemble their paintings, which end up becoming stand-ins for them, in a sense, for they create, they procreate art, or rather not: it is life that they create, the first life, life itself.²⁸

Klein regarded art as an act of grace. Art has to become life: "Life...is absolute art." Artists have to give up their egos and, at the same time, infuse their art with their own lives:

I am, therefore, for both an extreme individualism and for a total depersonalization, which may seem paradoxical but, in the final analysis, is not so if one tries hard to think in terms of sensibility, in terms of the static character of absolute movement in space. This means, and I shall come back to this, "life itself."²⁹

THE STRENGTH OF FRANCE

Yves Klein was, first and foremost, a French artist. Louis Pasteur once remarked that science does not have a fatherland. But even philosophy, which is typically focused on universalities, needs to be discussed within the characteristics that nationality produces, and this is even more true for the discussion of an artist's work and thought. Art is grounded in a sense of belonging or place. Klein not only became the embodiment of French art in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but was also France's self-appointed ambassador, a Frenchman who, in truly French fashion, declared a social and economic revolution initiated by his "Blue Period."

The general Anglo-Saxon prejudice toward French culture, epitomized by Henry James, held that the French mind is primarily concerned with the senses at the expense of the intellect. It was Henri Matisse, after all, who proclaimed that he worked without theory, finding himself driven forward by an idea that could only be grasped bit by bit as it grew with the picture. Unlike Matisse's, Klein's art, despite its obvious sensuousness, was driven by intellectual curiosity. He rejected the traditional notion of the artist as an individual who is guided toward the creation of his work by some unknown power or genius. From the very beginning, after emancipating himself from his parent's artistic ways,³⁰ Klein made intellectual decisions based on philosophical ideas, which he developed over the years in collaboration with artists, architects, and writers into a personal system of ethics and aesthetics that encompassed art, science, architecture, music, literature, and politics.

Of Javanese-Dutch-German heritage in his paternal line and French Provençal on his maternal side, Klein propagated a unique global patriotism that at once claims to be universal and yet is defined in French terms [*"Vive la situation euro-*

péenne Gelsenkirchen!"]³¹ not unlike today's notion of "glocalism," described as "a social process that is especially evident in cities where it consists of the concurrent drives toward globalization and localization...[as a] diffused social action...that can be interpreted as a kind of ideal and cultural movement oriented towards linking the benefits of globalization to local situations, and toward governing globalization also through local situations."³²

Klein's patriotism is rooted in his enthusiasm for the French Revolution and its egalitarian, universal ideals. In a letter to President Eisenhower, Klein wrote, "I believe to set an example to the entire world of the grandeur of the great French Revolution of 1789, which infuses the universal ideal of 'Liberty—Equality—Fraternity'...."³³

Klein repeatedly declared his intention to turn all of France into an immense work of art, with its citizens as pigment, to be titled France or The Blue Revolution:
I want to take the surface of all of France as the canvas for my next painting.
This painting will be titled: "The Blue Revolution."³⁴

—
I find myself obliged to take power in France (the country where an intense quality of sensibility in its natural material state reigns and constantly radiates). It is not the act of seizing power that interests me but the possibility of realizing a monochrome painting in my new style, "the refinement of sensibility," on the scale of ALL of France and in France itself, on this extraordinary terrain, in this shrine of the world, this future support of the highest quality, using as pigments "the people and both the tangible and the intangible nature of a dynamic, explosive and pneumatic quality in the highest degree."³⁵

—
Each individual in my system will be considered by me during the creation of my painting "France" as a grain of pigment.... In order to fix the independent individualities of the great dynamic multitude to the surface of "France," I want them to discover that they are artists; everyone is an artist, a creator, and a refiner of sensibility without knowing it.³⁶

France and only France was his canvas: "I have chosen FRANCE not so much because I live here and I am French but because the French land is the richest in the world in spiritual, sensuous, natural radiance.... The strength of France is art [*La force de la France, c'est l'art!*]."³⁷

In one of the many prayers Klein wrote to Saint Rita of Cascia, he asks God to make him the official head of France and grant him "the opportunity to create [for Him] the most beautiful country in the world—the blue land—a land where everyone, at all times and in all places, follows the will of God." He continues,

O my Father, God Almighty, may the Blue Revolution take place, and may it supplant everything that came before. May it establish me—without my having a hand in it—as the official head of France with the approval of all. Above all, may it come about peacefully, without bloodshed or civil commotion. One day, I would like to be in this position, without anyone complaining about it. On the contrary, I would like everyone to be happy about it, even the communists. Then, the greatest culture in the world shall be born.³⁸

In his tribute to Delacroix's life and work, Charles Baudelaire asserted: "Flanders has Rubens; Italy has Raphael and Veronese; France has Lebrun, David and Delacroix."³⁹ In expectation of some raised eyebrows, he added, "a superficial mind may be shocked, at first, by my bracketing together these names, which stand for such different qualities and methods.... But...there is between them, a common relationship...their love of the great, the national, the immense and the universal." These artists all produce what Baudelaire calls "great machines." Today,

Baudelaire's statement could be appended to include Yves Klein. Klein's "Blue Revolution"—"the refinement of sensibility on the scale of ALL of France"—may be the greatest of all "great machines" in the history of art.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

According to the French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, philosophy is a discipline that involves creating new concepts. Science, art, and philosophy are all equally creative. According to Deleuze and Guattari, all true concepts require conceptual personalities [*personages conceptuels*]: every philosophical idea is linked to its originator in much the same way as a work of art is grounded in the personality of the artist, and thus all artists can be considered conceptual personalities.⁴⁰

Artists, like philosophers, poets, and scientists, seek to understand life at its deepest level. Focusing on the areas of knowledge, duty, and destiny, the eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant defined the objective of philosophy as providing answers to three fundamental questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for?⁴¹ These questions, which address knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics, are at the core of all religious, philosophical, scientific, and artistic pursuits. What unites these various disciplines is that quest for meaning, for the answers needed to create an ethical framework for one's life.

Unlike the major monotheistic religions that suppose the answer and construct an ethical system upon a soteriological canon, philosophers, scientists, and artists are engaged in the "running against the boundaries"⁴² of knowledge in an effort to come closer to the ultimate truth, which, by definition, is forever unattainable. Even salvation or immortality does not solve the ultimate riddle of human existence, as Wittgenstein observed:

The temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say, its eternal survival after death, is not only in no way guaranteed, but this assumption in the first place will not do for us what we always tried to make it do. Is the riddle solved by the fact that I survive for ever? Is this eternal life not as enigmatic as our present one? The solution of the riddle of life in place and time lies outside space and time.⁴³

KLEIN'S ETHICS OF GRACE

I SAY, "YOU ARE GODS, CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH, ALL OF YOU...."
—PSALMS 82:6⁴⁴

Yves Klein's philosophical and artistic ideas are suffused with his Catholic faith. It was his true philosophical foundation and it drew him to Rosicrucianism as he struggled with "the problematics of art." In his constant attempt to bridge the chasm between his salvific Catholicism and the nihilistic philosophies of his time, Klein's art evolved, subsequently producing his most original philosophical ideas.

Through Iris Clert, Klein met the Dominican friar Gilles Vallée O. P., who in 1952 had founded La Galerie du Haut Pavé, an exhibition space for young artists in Paris; when Vallée was asked by the artist Orhon Mubin what came to his mind when he thought of Klein, Vallée answered, "God."⁴⁵

Klein published two major texts during his lifetime in which he addressed the predicament of modern art explicitly in philosophical terms: "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," which introduces his *ethics of grace*; and "The Monochrome Adventure," which describes his *aesthetics of negativity*.

Christological references abound both in Klein's works and in his writings:

Like Christ, the painter says Mass by painting and gives the body of his soul as nourishment to others; he brings about, on a miniature scale, the miracle of the Holy Communion in each painting.⁴⁶

In the final analysis, the line can only suggest; whereas color “is.” It is a presence already in itself that can be charged by the artist with a particular life, bringing its presence within reach of the human sensibility. The scenes of the life of Jesus described in the Gospels vividly strike our senses and touch us almost physically; more than a narrative account, more than a representation, they are a presence. Although no color is named and neither face nor landscape described, we are constantly face to face and one on one with them.⁴⁷

In the true sense of the Christian faith, which says: “I believe in the incarnation of the word; I believe in the resurrection of the body,” the body is the true sense of the theater of the word: the word is flesh!⁴⁸

In 1958, Klein even proposed a set of Stations of the Cross for the chapel of the boarding school Saint Martin de France in Pontoise, consisting of six blue monochromes along each side of the nave and two additional blue monochromes to be placed in the-sanctuary.⁴⁹

Klein’s ethics of grace posits the creative act as a “collective yet rigorously individual” effort that opens itself up to others without completely surrendering authorship, similar to the postmodern concept of textual “de-owning.”⁵⁰ Klein propagated a communal art that regards the viewer as a collaborator who partakes in the artist’s experience and plays down notions of individualism and originality, reminiscent of the theories of R. G. Collingwood. His prescient *Principles of Art*, written in 1937, describes the relationship of artist and audience as defined by collaboration rather than communication:

[The artist] undertakes his artistic labour not as a personal effort on his own private behalf, but as a public labour on behalf of the community to which he belongs.... It is a labour to which he invites the community to participate; for their function is not passively to accept his work, but to do it over again for themselves.... Individualism conceives a man as if he were God...but a man, in his art as in everything else, is a finite being. Everything that he does is done in relation to others like himself.⁵¹

The Christological concept of divine grace goes back to the beginnings of Christianity. It defines the relationship between the divine and the human in terms of salvation—the restoration of the original condition of man before the fall from Paradise. From early on, the concept of salvific grace had two differing paths: salvation was accomplished either by *restoration* to a state of perfection—mortality and communion with God (in a three-stage scheme: creation–fall–restoration)—or by *elevation* (in a two-stage scheme: creation–elevation), in the sense of progression, with less emphasis on the original sin.

Both positions were argued equally by the early church fathers Irenaeus and Origen, while later writers such as Cyril and Theodorus tended to lean more decidedly toward one or the other.⁵² The notion of grace as a sharing of divine communion lies at the heart of the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria who, influenced by Neoplatonic ideas, promoted salvation as deification, of humans partaking of the nature of God in order to restore mankind to the paradisiacal state of perfection. Klein’s three-act scheme, in the form of an outline for an unrealized film project, *La Guerre* (which was to illustrate the battle between line and color),⁵³ is suffused with the writings of Delacroix and Van Gogh and illustrated with examples from 16,000 years of art history. The script begins with the creation of color out of

nothingness [*néant*], with the screen shifting from white to yellow, yellow to red, and, finally, red to blue; then the Fall ("Paradise is lost") and its consequences ("Abel and Cain: Murder") are introduced with the invasion of the realm of color by lines and figures, until at the end, the realm of color is restored through the communion of sensibility in the void. Klein's script ends with a quote from John 6:53: "Very, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."⁵⁴ Like Christ, who does not simply bestow grace but *constitutes* the grace that he bestows upon humanity,⁵⁵ Klein does not simply give out his pure sensibility, but constitutes it. His viewers, or *lecteurs*, partake in this dematerialization by "reading" the monochrome and becoming immersed in the void of pure color. Klein *is* pure sensibility, just as he *is* space.

Klein's concept of grace does not stop at the Neoplatonic or soteriological reinterpretation of the creative act; he also asserts that it is a sharing of the original creative act in order to arrive at an ethics that promotes collaboration between artists and the loss of the artistic ego, the renunciation of the self that he may have encountered in the practice of traditional Japanese artists:

In the practical matter of putting down their paintings in ink on paper Zen artists discovered that the principal of *muga* (it is not I that am doing this) opens the gate for the necessary essential truth to flow in. When the self does not control the drawing, meaning must. This principle runs all through Zen teachings especially where action is involved.⁵⁶

A fragmentary note by Klein, jotted down on the outside of an envelope, makes a direct connection between the Christological doctrine of grace and his principle of collaboration, which forms the core of the writings collected by him under the title "Overcoming the Problematics of Art":

My decision to disclose what artists call the night of the studio [*la nuit de l'atelier*] is the result of multiple reflections, among other things, the question that I have ever so often asked, "Am I what we call an artist after all?"

I would like to be one but it would not disturb me in the least not to be one!

And then if I am one then I believe in this Christian principle that says that "Grace" can only live with those who constantly seek to share it.⁵⁷

The note appears to be related to his text "Truth Becomes Reality," in which he describes the "re-veiling" of his creative process—the tearing away the "veil of the temple of the studio [*le temple de l'atelier*]" by inviting models to collaborate with him as "living brushes" in the making of his body prints, the Anthropometries of the "Blue Period" and the Shrouds (polychromatic body prints on unstretched cloth):

I invited models into the studio, not to paint them as models but to be in their company. I was spending too much time in the studio alone; I did not wish to remain by myself in that marvelous blue void.... I wanted to, above all, tear away the veil from the temple of the studio. To keep nothing hidden of my processes and thus perhaps merit the "grace" of receiving new subjects of amazement.... The shreds of this torn veil of the temple of the studio provide me even with miraculous shrouds. All is useful to me.⁵⁸

Another note, partially crossed out, affirms "Overcoming the Problematics of Art" as his "ethics," which is defined by the principle of collaboration:

Regarding my complete ethics, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," on the principle of collaboration in the creative act: by collective operation yet rigorously individual. The essential idea at the outset was to try to show the public what was the authentic state of mind of a whole historical generation, ours.⁵⁹

Klein strove for dematerialization, for the emancipation from matter, in order to overcome the *predicament* of the art of his time. He ultimately abandoned both

pictorial content *and* form, immersing himself instead in the boundlessness of pure color:

In 1946 I was painting or drawing either under the influence of my father, a figurative painter of horses in landscapes or of beachscapes, or under the influence of my mother, an abstract painter of compositions of form and color. At the same time, "COLOR," the sensuous pure space, winked an eye at me irregularly, yet with stubborn persistence. This sense of the complete freedom of sensuous pure space exerted upon me such a power of attraction that I painted monochrome surfaces to see, with my own eyes to SEE, what was visible in the Absolute. I would not consider at the time these attempts as having pictorial potential, until the day, around one year later, when I said to myself, "Why not." The "WHY NOT" in the life of a man is what decides everything, it is destiny. It is the sign that conveys to the inexperienced artist that the archetype of a new state of things is ready, that it has ripened, that it can be brought forth into the world.⁶⁰

This "why not" signifies a qualitative, postmodern leap, a decision to free himself from the nostalgia of modern art that, in the words of Lyotard, "allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; [while] the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure."⁶¹ Klein did not permit himself to be trapped in this modernist sentiment toward form, the *risk-free* abandoning of content that knows no failure. Instead, he denied himself "the solace of good forms"⁶² by constantly rebelling against his own style.

In his book *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno posited that any adequate aesthetic theory must find a comprehensive resolution of the conflict between autonomy and sovereignty that is inherent in modern art—what he called "the antinomy of aesthetic semblance"⁶³—without subordinating one to the other. The autonomy of art (and the aesthetic decision), a mainstay of modernism and its orientation toward the avant-garde, rose out of the crisis of semblance. Modernism claims autonomy by refusing aesthetic semblance and denying that in art "the Absolute is present."⁶⁴

The postmodern artist makes an autonomous choice precisely by *abolishing autonomy*. He does so by deciding after each choice has already been made. Paradoxically, it is a decision *without intentionality*; yet it precludes the possibility of intervention by an outside power or predetermined fate. Thus the extraordinary in art is achieved neither passively (by birth or knowledge) nor actively (by intention), but by an *active-passive* decision to do what is impossible, i.e., to represent the nonrepresentable. It is a decision that, once the calling of the nonrepresentable is heard, cannot be refused, and is made in certain knowledge of failure. Only a decision unto failure is a postmodern decision, as failure is inherent in the definition of the postmodern.⁶⁵ In this regard, Klein was the quintessential postmodern artist.

Klein introduced his solution to the aesthetic antinomy of autonomy and sovereignty—wherein artists are at once unified and apart—in a speech delivered on January 30, 1959 on the occasion of Yves Tinguely's exhibition at Galerie Schmela in Dusseldorf:

I would like to put forth to all those who willingly hear me: COLLABORATION! But pay attention to the etymology of the word. To collaborate means precisely to work together on the same project. The project upon which I propose collaboration is Art itself!...

In an art without problematics we shall attain eternal life and immortality. Immortality is conquered collaboratively. This is one of the laws of man's nature with respect to the universe!...

In collaboration we shall then individually practice "pure imagination."

I propose collaboration to artists who, already, are aware of all I have just pronounced and perhaps of even more...to mock their possessive and egocentric personality, to exasperatedly cast aside the ME in all their representative activities in the theatrical, physical, and ephemeral tangible world in which they well know themselves to play roles.... I propose to them that they each continue to say "my work," separately, in speaking to the living dead who surround us in the daily life of common work that is moreover created in collaboration. I propose to them that they joyously continue to say ME, I, MY, MINE...etc. and not the hypocritical WE, OUR.... But that, only after having solemnly signed the pact of COLLABORATION this evening!

I shall then find quite natural and normal to learn some day that the members of the famous pact have somewhere in the world suddenly and spontaneously signed one of my paintings, without even speaking of me nor even of COLLABORATION. Likewise, any works that please me among the works of other members of the pact, I shall rush to sign without in the least feeling any need to indicate that, in fact, the work is not done by me.⁶⁶

Klein used the Rosicrucian legend of King Solomon and Hiram Abiff who labored together on the construction of Solomon's temple, as told in Max Heindel's book *Freemasonry and Catholicism*, to illustrate his concept of collaboration between the artist Jean Tinguely and himself for the exhibition *Vitesse pure et stabilité monochrome* [Pure Velocity and Monochrome Stability], which opened at Galerie Iris Clert in 1958. The exhibition was made up of rotating metallic discs covered with International Klein Blue:

It was Solomon and Hiram Abiff who labored together on the construction of the temple. The Queen of Sheba, Iris, came to see the result and could only state that the work was beautiful and grandiose, but it was also human by its faults, by its errors. What were these faults and errors? The temptation to materialize pure spirit! It is for this reason that Tinguely and I seek the means to continue after the exhibition of Pure Velocity and Monochrome Stability.⁶⁷

KLEIN'S AESTHETICS OF NEGATIVITY

ART MUST TURN AGAINST ITSELF, IN OPPOSITION TO ITS OWN CONCEPT, AND THUS BECOME UNCERTAIN OF ITSELF RIGHT INTO ITS INNERMOST FIBER. —THEODOR W. ADORNO⁶⁸

Klein's aesthetics is *negative* in the sense that it does not fall into the trap that, as Adorno reminded us, constitutes the antinomy of any "new" art (art with the pretension of newness) that stops short of carrying through its utopian promise:

Art must and wants to be utopia, and the more utopia is blocked by the real functioning order, the more this is true; yet at the same time art may not be utopia in order not to betray it by providing semblance and consolation. If the utopia of art were fulfilled, it would be art's temporal end.⁶⁹

Like the German idealist philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel before him,⁷⁰ Klein understood that the end of art is inherent in art itself. As he declared in his Sorbonne lecture, and repeated throughout his writings: "My paintings are only the ashes of my art."⁷¹

Klein's dissolution of painting into the void was not another form of nonrepresentational abstraction in the spirit of Kasimir Malevich or Ad Reinhardt. A caricature drawn by Klein entitled *Malévitch ou l'espace vue de loin* [Malevich or Space Viewed from a Distance] shows Malevich in front of his easel painting a copy of a Klein monochrome that is hanging on the wall in front of him, while a

Kandinsky painting is collapsing onto the floor beside him. The cartoon not only implies a reversal of the historical order, situating Malevich after Klein, but it illustrates the remark in the “The Monochrome Adventure” that when Malevich finally arrived in space, Klein *had always already been there*:

When MALEVICH burst into space as a tourist, around 1915 or 1916, I was there already to welcome him and he visited me, for I was the proprietor, the inhabitant or, rather, the co-proprietor and co-inhabitant, already and always. The position of MALEVICH in relation to me makes it possible to leave by the static speed of the immeasurable spirit of the phenomenology of time and allows me to say honestly and calmly that MALEVICH painted a still life based on one of my monochrome paintings. In effect, MALEVICH had infinity before him, while I am within it. One does not represent the infinite, nor does one produce it....⁷²

In *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno cautions that the spirit of a work of art exists only to the extent that it embraces both its materiality and its sensuality.⁷³

Klein was careful not to repeat the error of Kandinsky, whose theory and art was compromised by singling out the spiritual at the expense of the material:

I despise the obscurantism of false painters who proclaim themselves mystics and occultists. A painter should understand what he is and what he is doing and should be able to express himself in simple terms, perhaps, but must be able to do this through painting.⁷⁴

—

I do not preach obscurantism but, quite the contrary, the re-conquest of pure sensibility.⁷⁵

—

I renounce occultism and secret societies. Although I know something about it; I quite sensed their lamentable limitation.⁷⁶

Instead, Klein promoted what he called mystical realism [*réalisme mystique*],⁷⁷ which coupled Christian doctrine with a realist philosophy that had no hidden presumptions: “The sensibility of a painter is not encumbered by mysterious nooks and crannies...it is like humidity in the air.”⁷⁸

When Yves Klein was born on April 28, 1928 in Nice, under the Mediterranean sky of the Côte d’Azur, the very landscape of the place seemed already to have left a strong mark upon the man and artist who would subsequently emerge: “As an adolescent, I wrote my name on the back of the sky in a fantastic realistic-imaginary journey, stretched out on a beach one day in Nice.”⁷⁹

Was it because of this early exposure to the boundless blue of the sea and sky that he did not experience the horror vacui that so terrified Blaise Pascal?⁸⁰ According to the teachings of Max Heindel,⁸¹ who fused Christian doctrines with the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Latin *Asclepius*, and the Rosicrucian Christian Kabbalah that first emerged in seventeenth-century Germany,⁸² empty space does not exist:

To the Rosicrucians, as to any occult school, there is no such thing as empty or void space. To them space is Spirit in its attenuated form; while matter is crystallized space or Spirit. Spirit in manifestation is dual, that which we see as Form is the negative manifestation of Spirit—crystallized and inert. The positive pole of Spirit manifests as Life, galvanizing the negative Form into action, but both Life and Form originated in Spirit, Space, Chaos!⁸³

In Christian symbolism, the color white in the form of a blazing, blinding light represents God. The brightness of the light makes God invisible: Paul is blinded by the divine light of negativity in Acts 22:11: “I could not see because of the brightness of that light,” and in 2 Corinthians 4:6, he described it as “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.”⁸⁴

This Christian-hermetical aesthetics of negativity has an equivalent in the Eastern conception of the elimination of color. As Toshihiko Izutsu, the distinguished scholar of Oriental philosophy, writes, "the negative attitude toward color is...characteristic of the Far Eastern aesthetic experience."⁸⁵

The *Tao Te Ching* speaks of the unity of Nothingness and Something: "There is absolutely nothing, and yet there seems to be something."⁸⁶ According to Izutsu "a piece of white, blank paper or silk, untouched by the brush, was regarded as the highest masterpiece of pictorial art."⁸⁷ Some Japanese artists have indeed followed this path by creating what is known as "white-paper inscriptions," leaving the paper blank except for small inscriptions at the top intended to interpret the negative "picture" below.

The celebrated Japanese printmaker Shiko Munakata famously described his creative process as a measuring up to the perfection of the blackness of the ink:

I advise to spread India ink on an uncarved board, lay paper on top of it, and orient it. He will get a black print, but the result is not the blackness of ink; it is the blackness of prints.

Now the object is to give the print greater life and power by carving its surface. Whatever I carve I compare it with an uncarved print and ask myself, "Which has more beauty, more strength, more depth, more magnitude, more movement, and more tranquility?"

If there is anything here that is inferior to an uncarved block, then I have not created my print. I have lost it to the board.⁸⁸

Buddhists regard emptiness as a *living void* that gives birth to the phenomenal world. This notion of nothingness as the metaphysical ground of the world is expressed in the following poem by the poet-painter Su Tung P'o:

**Where there is nothing found, there is found everything,
Flowers there are, the moon is there, and the belvedere.**⁸⁹

The Taoist mystics described the creative process in terms of emptiness [*hsü*], and painting as an intermediate between the known and the unknowable, as the expression of unnameable ideas [*miao i*]. According to the sixteenth-century Chinese painter and scholar Li Jih-hua, creative ideas are conceived in a state of emptiness, and the painter's brush "should hold within itself pictorial reality [*shih*] and yet at the same time emptiness [*hsü*], or by being empty, then the idea becomes spiritually alive [*ling*]; by being spiritually alive, there is no trace of obstruction [*chih*]; by being not obstructed, then there is wholeness of spirit [*shên-ch'i hunjan*]; by being *hun jan*, then it is a heavenly creation [*t'ien-kung*]."⁹⁰

Through his brother-in-law, the artist Günther Uecker, Klein became affiliated with the German ZERO group, which was founded in 1958 by the artists Otto Piene and Heinz Mack. According to Piene, ZERO was conceived "not as an expression of nihilism—or a dada-like gag, but as a...zone of silence and of pure possibilities"⁹¹ and was inspired by the works of Yves Klein, such as his *Symphonie Monoton-Silence* [Monotone-Silence Symphony] (page 69), which was to sound what the monochrome was to painting.

Guided by his studies of the Japanese *kata* of judo, Rosicrucian cosmogony, and the phenomenological and psychological philosophies that emerged during his lifetime, Klein dared to take seriously Delacroix's notion that art is about the "undefinable." He staged "this undefinable" as "dematerialized blue" and the "pictorial sensibility in the first material state" in the empty space of Iris Clert's gallery in 1958, combining both his ethics of grace and his aesthetics of negativity into a spectacle of *ethical metaphysics*:

In order to refine the ambiance of this gallery—its pictorial sensibility in the first material state—to an individual, autonomous, and stabilized pictorial climate, I must, on one hand, bleach the gallery to wash away the impregnations

with the numerous preceding exhibitions. In painting the walls white I wish not only to purify the space but, above all, to transform it, through this action and gesture temporarily into my work space, my studio.

I believe I shall reach my goal if I work conscious of my act and filled with enthusiasm over the principle of the demonstration by applying one or several coats of paint to the gallery walls with my usual technique, like a great painting, with the best of myself and all the good intention possible, using pure white lithopone [zinc sulfide] mixed with my special varnish consisting of alcohol, acetone, and vinyl resin (which does not kill the pure pigment when it is fixed onto the supporting surface), and applying enamel lacquer with a roller.... I believe that the pictorial space that I had succeeded to stabilize previously in front of and around my monochrome paintings will henceforth be well established in the space of the gallery. My active presence during the execution in the gallery space will create the climate and the radiating pictorial environment that habitually permeates the studio of the artist endowed with a true power; a sensuous density that is abstract yet real, existing and living, by itself and for itself....

Everything will be painted white to receive the pictorial climate of the sensibility of dematerialized blue....

To make it extremely clear that I have abandoned the material and physical aspects of the color blue, waste and coagulated blood issued from the first matter and sensibility of space, I wish to obtain from the Préfecture of the Seine and from Électricité de France (EDF) the authorization to illuminate the Obelisk at the Place de la Concorde in Blue....

In this way, the tangible and visible blue will be outside, outdoors, in the street, and indoors will be the dematerialization of blue: the colored space, which is not seen, but with which one is impregnated.⁹²

After seeing Klein's *exposition de blanc* at Iris Clert's gallery, the existentialist writer Albert Camus wrote in her guestbook: "*Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs!*" [With the void, full powers!]. Camus' prediction was realized two years later by Arman with his exhibition *Le plein* [Full-Up] by filling up the entire gallery to the rim with junk. Klein's *Le vide* [The Void] and Arman's *Le plein* functioned as two sides of the same strategy and should be considered as a collaborative project between the two friends. Together they represent, as Benjamin Buchloh has remarked, the single most important paradigmatic event in postwar sculpture.⁹³

Klein never relinquished blue for the void. Color for Klein was a living being because it is the "word of light."⁹⁴ Just as glaciers or holes poked into snowbanks appear to be blue,⁹⁵ Klein's *Le vide* was the "immaterial blue,"⁹⁶ "the colored space, which is not seen, but with which one is impregnated."⁹⁷ Klein's staging of the void was followed by his "living brushes," the Anthropometries, which he regarded, not unlike the Buddhist's living void, as incarnations of the "sensibility of pictorial immateriality," otherwise known as "the void"—the theater of the void becoming the theater of the flesh:

Models create a sensual climate inside the studio, just as they do possibly outside, which permits the stabilization of the pictorial matter. In the true sense of the Christian faith, which says: "I believe in the incarnation of the word; I believe in the resurrection of the body," the body is the true sense of the theater of the word: the word is flesh!⁹⁸

Assisted by his knowledge of judo, Klein's theology of the flesh became the void incarnate. Each of his living brushes, their skin saturated with blue paint, held within themselves pictorial reality and emptiness as they partook in the ritual of sacrament, the communion with the white paper, like the judoka imprint made by Klein's body, both physically and spiritually, on the white judo mat:

I had the models hanging out in the studio. They played with the paint. My blue sensibility for blue told me that I should paint them blue. I resisted until I realized that the time of the paintbrush was over and that my knowledge of judo would serve me: my models became my brushes. I made them cover themselves in paint and imprint their bodies onto the paper. This resulted in the anthropometry....⁹⁹

For Klein, white was not an empty color; it embodied the Eucharist. As Jean-Michel Ribettes writes:

[White] is a thoroughly cannibalistic color. It assimilates all chromatic values and joins all the potentialities of the spectrum. It is the color that has not been afraid of red, yellow, blue. White, above all, represents the intangible color that reflects all the radiation and digests wavelengths. Beyond the blue of space, the "infinity beyond infinity itself," white is the color of this cannibalistic silence that has devoured all color.¹⁰⁰

AN AUTONOMOUS THINKER

FOR ME, TODAY THE PROBLEMATICS OF ART...IS CONTINGENT
ON THE ONLY THING THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO US: OUR LIVES!

—YVES KLEIN¹⁰¹

Klein can be positioned with artists such as the German social sculptor Joseph Beuys and the American performance artist and sculptor James Lee Byars: artists whose art and life extended beyond the visible realm, constituting an ethical imperative. Klein shared with these artists a passionate faith in the power of art to affect social change. Despite their national and stylistic differences, these three artists had a similar understanding of the role of art in a democratic society. They were brilliant speakers with an ethical-aesthetical vision far beyond the boundaries of what was traditionally acceptable for an artist. All three were *Lebenskünstler*, artists who lived their art, a German expression that may perhaps be best translated by Oscar Wilde's saying "I put all my genius into my life; I put only my talent into my works."¹⁰² Henry James once noted that "the artist we value most is the artist who tells us most about human life."¹⁰³

In the 1960s and 1970s, artists such as Joseph Beuys and Allan Kaprow shifted the political agenda away from the authorities of power toward critical and creative practices that challenge the incumbent order of society. In Kaprow's words, "Now, as art becomes less art, it takes on philosophy's early role as critique of life."¹⁰⁴ Influenced by the emergence of two major linguistic theories, speech act theory and structuralism, many artists began to realize that all art is political, as all works of art are, to greater or lesser extent, performative speech acts, or, as Jacques Derrida would later say, manifestations of the redefinition of "writing." This enabled artists to shift the nature of propaganda from the political to the personal or even transcendental, from socially and politically explicit content to ideologically or spiritually infused form and process.

Hegel is credited with being the first to articulate the ways in which (life) experience participates in consciousness, thus setting the stage for a *Lebensphilosophie*. For Hegel, as later for Edmund Husserl, whose phenomenology introduced the concept of a life-world [*Lebenswelt*] as the foundation of all human experience, natural (experiential) and philosophical awareness were two modes of the same consciousness. While we move from natural to philosophical consciousness, we never completely abandon the former. Hegel articulated the limits of philosophy, its possibilities and its confines, which led to, in Merleau-Ponty's words, a "philosophical void":¹⁰⁵ a period of "nonphilosophers" who began their philosophical

practice with a denegation of philosophy, notably Friedrich Nietzsche and Søren Kierkegaard, or saw a new philosophy rise from the ashes of the "Crisis of European Sciences," as Husserl did. Merleau-Ponty attempted to refocus the philosophical dialogue onto a strictly philosophical practice in the sense of what it is not. For him, nonphilosophy was the experience of everyday life, that which is representable, expressible, and thus to be excluded from philosophical discussion. These distinctions prepared the way for later postmodern, poststructuralist, and deconstructivist notions of absence, *différance*, and abjection. Philosophy thus became defined within the difference or chasm between philosophy and nonphilosophy.

Klein's philosophical concepts provide a non-normative, immaterial definition of the essence of art that overcomes the predicament of art by refusing to accept the authority of artistic tradition. Klein cut himself off from existing traditions, which resulted in the creation of a non-art use of art (just as nonphilosophers were engaged in a nonphilosophical use of philosophy) in the sense of what his work is not: line, symbolism, materialism.

Unlearned though he was, Klein was an original, autonomous thinker in the sense of Husserl's *Selbstdenker*, which the philosopher described as follows:

For what autonomous thinker [*Selbstdenker*], in his philosophizing life, has "philosophy" ever ceased to be an enigma? Everyone has the sense of philosophy's end, to whose realization his life is devoted; everyone has certain formulae, expressed in definitions; but only secondary thinkers, who in truth should not be called philosophers, are consoled by their definitions, beating to death with their word-concepts the problematic telos of philosophizing.¹⁰⁶

Yves Klein was an agitator of ideas who used his considerable charisma to propagate social change through art. According to Nicolas Bourriaud, Klein was a *philosophe en actes*, a philosopher of action, "a creator of exemplary actions, more so than a manufacturer of objects or images."¹⁰⁷ He was a stray dog among artists, unchained to any aesthetical or metaphysical kennel, to paraphrase the philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen.¹⁰⁸ Yet Klein's nonchalant absorption of ideas from numerous direct or indirect sources made him appear to be merely a lightweight intellectual, a *poseur*, or a conceptual trickster in the tradition of Marcel Duchamp, who embellished his artistic ideas, practice, and work with appropriated thoughts. Rather, Klein should be compared to Hermes, the trickster god of Greek mythology. Hermes was a rule-breaker who could be cunning or foolish, but ultimately brought happiness and riches. Messenger of the gods and interpreter of hidden meanings, Hermes was also a soul carrier, guiding souls into the Underworld. And in another parallel to Klein—Hermes was also one of the inventors of fire.¹⁰⁹

Yet Klein was first—and always—an artist:

I am neither a philosopher nor an economist, nor anything else, and I confine myself to expressing only utopian thoughts.¹¹⁰

Like most artists, Klein was a "conceptual personality." When he theorized about his artistic practice, he did so by speculating out of a general milieu that included philosophical, scientific, and political ideas. With his writings and public talks, as with his art, Klein intended to promote his vision of a future of absolute artistic and social freedom and his belief in "*le grand Art absolu et total*," the great, absolute, and total Art.¹¹¹

NOTES

1
Yves Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein, ed. and trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007), 137 [hereinafter YKW].

2
Yves Klein, Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art et autres écrits, eds. Marie-Anne Siclière and Didier Semin (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2003).

3
Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in YKW, 137.

4
Throughout his writing, Klein refers to the viewer or observer of art as "reader" [*lecteur*], perhaps in allusion to Marcel Duchamp's well-known declaration that "it is the observer who makes the piece of art [*c'est le regardeur qui fait le tableau*]." While for Duchamp the work becomes activated by the observer, the *lecteur* of Klein's paintings absorbs the sensibility of pure color literally like a sponge. The term "reader," of course, also relates to French structuralism, especially Roland Barthes who substituted *littérature* [literature] with *écriture* [the mode or function of writing] and proposed that any artistic product be "read" as a "text." See his Writing Degree Zero, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968).

5
Arthur Symons, writing in 1906, cited in "Editor's Introduction," in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions, eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), xli.

6
For instance, Thomas McEvilley, "Yves Klein: Conquistador of the Void," in Yves Klein, 1928–1962, a Retrospective, exhibition catalogue (Houston and New York: Institute for the Arts, Rice University and

The Arts Publisher, 1982). According to Pierre Restany, Klein once confided that he could only read the beginning of Bachelard's The Dialectic of Duration—certainly one of Bergson's more demanding books. Pierre Restany, Yves Klein: Fire at the Heart of the Void (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2005), 3.

7
In 1946, after failing his *baccalauréat*, which prevented him from attending the École de la Marine marchande, Klein worked briefly at the Librairie des Champs-Élysées bookstore in Paris. In 1948, his aunt Rose set up a room in her radio shop in Nice for him to operate as a bookstore. It was during that time (he only lasted a few months) that he "educated" himself by reading or thumbing through the various books in the store.

8
Published in English as Ideas and Images in World Art: Dialogue with the Visible and Art and the Spirit of Man, respectively.

9
See especially the studies by Thomas McEvilley (on Klein's Rosicrucianism); François Perrin (on the architecture of air); Denys Riout (on the immaterial); Nicolas Charlet (on Klein's writings); and Jean-Michel Ribettes (on Klein's Catholicism).

10
"Bernadette is building three houses in Paris right now, as chief architect! And for sure, starting next year, there will be a 'monochrome' in every house," Yves Klein, letter to Werner Ruhnau, 8 January 1958, in Wie das Gelsenkirchener Blau auf Yves Klein kam: Zur Geschichte der Zusammenarbeit zwischen Yves Klein und Werner Ruhnau, exhibition catalogue (Museum Wiesbaden, 2005), 52.

11
Bernadette Allain, "Propositions monochromes du peintre Yves," Couleurs 18 (December 1956).

12
Like the German artist Joseph Beuys, Klein was engaged in a deliberate re-writing of his biography. He even involved his friends Arman and Claude Pascal to write testimonies supporting his petit ruse. According to Nicholas Charlet, "Yves Klein carefully codified

his history, particularly the years of his artistic origins. For the sake of efficiency, he preferred to retain only two events emblematic of that era: the signing of blue sky on a beach in Nice and the ritual footprints of hands and feet." Les Écrits d'Yves Klein (Paris: Transéditions, 2005), 257. On the inseparable link between cult and myth in the work of Beuys, see Benjamin Buchloh's essay, "Beuys: The Twilights of the Idol. Preliminary Notes for a Critique," in Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 41–64.

13
Claude Pascal, "A l'occasion d'une retrospective du Monochrome: preface à la petite mort de trois adolescences," Yves Klein Archives.

14
Arman, "De la spiritualité à la conquête affective des espaces," Yves Klein Archives.

15
Introduction à l'Histoire Universelle, 1831. Quoted in Roland Barthes, Michelet, trans. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 39.

16
Quoted in Theodore Zeldin, France 1848–1945, Vol. II: Intellect, Taste, and Anxiety (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1977), 7.

17
John Canaday, "I Got the Yves Klein Blues," New York Times, February 5, 1967.

18
Roland Barthes, "That Old Thing, Art..." in The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation, trans. R. Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 201.

19
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 6.41.

20
Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, third ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, n.d.), part I, paragraph 19.

21
Ibid., paragraph 23.

22
Ludwig Wittgenstein,

Denkbewegungen: Tagebücher, 1930–32/1936–1937, ed. Ilse Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon-Verlag, 1997), 1:27.

23
Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Tagebücher 1914–1916," in Verkaufsgabe in 8 Bänden (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984), 1:178 (October 7, 1916).

24
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy III, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 275 [translation modified by the author].

25
Baruch Spinoza, Ethica II, (d3 and 48) in Benedicti de Spinoza Opera quotquot repertasunt, ed. Johannes van Vloten and Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land, 3rd ed., 4 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914).

26
Ludwig Wittgenstein, quoted in Manfred Frank, Stil in der Philosophie (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1992), 88.

27
Yves Klein, "Some Excerpts from My Journal of 1957," in YKW, 14–15.

28
Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in YKW, 148.

29
Ibid., 168.

30
His father, Fred Klein, was a figurative painter and his mother, Marie Raymond, was a successful abstract painter.

31
Klein, Letter to Werner Ruhnau, November 5, 1958.

32
James L. Koch and Uri Savir, "Glocalism and Our Networked World," <http://www.scu.edu/sts/nexus/summer2003/KochSavirArticle.cfm> [accessed 5/13/2008].

33
Yves Klein, "The Blue Revolution: Letter to President Eisenhower," in YKW, 26.

34
Yves Klein, "La grande force de ce mouvement....," Yves Klein Archives.

35
Yves Klein, "Comment et pourquoi, en 1957....," Yves Klein Archives.

36
Klein, "La grande force de ce mouvement..."

Ibid.

38
Yves Klein, "Prayers to Saint Rita," manuscript in the archives of Paul and Tomma Wember, Krefeld, Germany.

39
Charles Baudelaire, "The Life and Work of Eugène Delacroix," in Charles Baudelaire: Selected Writings in Art and Literature, trans. P. E. Charvet (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 359–60.

40
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, What Is Philosophy? trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

41
Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. N. K. Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 635 [B833].

42
"Man has the drive to run against the boundary of language.... We...keep running against the boundary of language." Ludwig Wittgenstein and der Wiener Kreis: Gespräche, aufgezeichnet von Friedrich Waismann, ed. B. F. McGuinness (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984), 68–69.

43
Wittgenstein, Tractatus, 6.4312.

44
Psalm 82:6.

45
Paul Wember, Yves Klein (Schauberg: Verlag M. DuMont, 1972), 58.

46
Yves Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche,'" in YKW, 131.

47
Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in YKW, 160.

48
Klein, "'Dimanche,'" in YKW, 113.

49
A drawing for Klein's design is reproduced in Denys Riout, Yves Klein: Manifestes l'immatériel (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), 133 (fig. 58).

50
See Emily Apter, "What is Yours, Ours, and Mine: Authorial Ownership and the Creative Commons," October 126 (2008).

51
R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 315–16. See especially

- his chapter "The Artist and the Community," 52
- See Donald Fairbairn, Grace and Christology in the Early Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53
- Yves Klein, "Esquisse de scenario," Yves Klein Archives. Written in 1954, Klein later incorporated it into Dimanche, see YKW, 117–31.
- 54
- Ibid.
- 55
- Fairbairn, Grace and Christology, 69.
- 56
- Langdon Warner, The Enduring Art of Japan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 100.
- 57
- Yves Klein, "La décision que j'ai prise de divulguer...", Yves Klein Archives.
- 58
- Yves Klein, "Truth Becomes Reality," in YKW, 187. Klein noted on the manuscript that "This text is not to be regarded as a theoretical exposition, but as the poetic description of an ambience of creation, of evolution," Yves Klein Archives.
- 59
- Yves Klein, "Sur mon éthique complète...", Yves Klein Archives. This is an early draft for his text on Pierre Restany's role ("Quel a été le rôle de Pierre Restany?").
- 60
- Yves Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 45–46.
- 61
- "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" trans. Régis Durand, in Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 81.
- 62
- Ibid.
- 63
- Theodor Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, trans. R. Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 103.
- 64
- Ibid.
- 65
- On the postmodern notion of failure, see the author's The Genius Decision: The Extraordinary and the Postmodern Condition (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2004).
- 66
- Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 62–64.
- 67
- Yves Klein, "Pure Velocity and Monochrome Stability," in YKW, 32.
- 68
- Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, 2.
- 69
- Ibid., 32.
- 70
- "Art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Hegel's Introduction to Aesthetics: Being the Introduction to the Berlin Aesthetics Lectures of the 1820s, ed. T. M. Knox, trans. Charles Karelis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 11.
- 71
- Yves Klein, "Lecture at the Sorbonne," in YKW, 83.
- 72
- Klein, "The Monochrome Adventure," in YKW, 170.
- 73
- Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, 87.
- 74
- Yves Klein, "Some Extracts from My Journal," in YKW, 14.
- 75
- Klein, "Comment et pourquoi, en 1957..."
- 76
- Yves Klein, "Je refuse l'occultisme et les sociétés secrètes...", Yves Klein Archives.
- 77
- "La peinture pour moi, c'est une sorte de réalisme mystique." Yves Klein, "Par la couleur...", Yves Klein Archives.
- 78
- Yves Klein, "My Position in the Battle Between Line and Color," in YKW, 19.
- 79
- Yves Klein, "Truth Becomes Reality: Yves the Monochrome 1960," in YKW, 183–92.
- 80
- "The silence of these infinite spaces frightens me." Blaise Pascal, Œuvres Complètes, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 615 [Pensée 187].
- 81
- The Rosicrucian Fellowship was founded in 1909 in Seattle, Washington, by Max Heindel as an International Association of Christian Mystics, moving in 1911 to be based out of Oceanside, California. Klein and Claude Pascal joined Heindel's Rosicrucian Fellowship in 1948, and Klein continued to study
- his teachings for the next four to five years almost daily. He was originally introduced to Rosicrucianism in Nice, together with Arman and Pascal, through Louis Cadeaux, a local astrologer. Klein canceled his affiliation with the Rosicrucian Fellowship in 1953.
- 82
- On the emergence of a Christian Kabbalah, see Gershom Scholem, Alchemy and Kabbalah, trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2006).
- 83
- Max Heindel, The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception, chapter 9. Max Heindel's writings are available to the public on the website of The Rosicrucian Fellowship: www.rosicrucian.com. Cf. Asclepius 33: "On the void that so many consider an important topic now, I hold the following: there is no such thing as a void, nor can there have been, more will there ever be..." Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius, trans. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 88.
- 84
- See Ernst Benz, "Color in Christian Visionary Experience," in Color Symbolism: The Eranos Lectures, ed. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2005).
- 85
- Toshihiko Izutsu, "The Elimination of Color in Far Eastern Art and Philosophy," in Color Symbolism, 250.
- 86
- Ibid., 267.
- 87
- Ibid.
- 88
- Shiko Munakata, ed. Yojuda Yasuda, text by Oliver Statler (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1958), 5.
- 89
- Ibid.
- 90
- George Rowley, Principles of Chinese Painting (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).
- 91
- "The Development of the Group 'ZERO,'" in ZERO (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1973), xx–xxi.
- 92
- Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 51–52.
- 93
- Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Plenty or Nothing: From Yves Klein's Le vide to Arman's Le plein," in Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 257–83.
- 94
- Allain, "Propositions monochromes du peintre Yves," 26.
- 95
- A common phenomenon known to Arctic explorers and mountain climbers: when light passes through ice, the red light is absorbed while the blue is transmitted.
- 96
- Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 52.
- 97
- Ibid., 47.
- 98
- Klein, "'Dimanche,'" in YKW, 113.
- 99
- Pierre Descargues, "Yves Klein: L'Homme qui a vendu du vide," 7–8.
- 100
- Jean-Michel Ribettes, "Yves le catholique," in Yves Klein contre C. G. Jung (Brussels: La Lettre volée, 2003), 19. Ribettes's valuable study is regrettably coupled with another essay, "Contre Jung," which reads too much like a personal vendetta against Jungian psychology by the author who is a Lacanian psychoanalyst.
- 101
- Klein, "Pour moi, la problématique de l'art [...] aujourd'hui est en fonction de la seule chose qui ne nous appartienne pas: notre vie," Yves Klein Archives.
- 102
- The Journals of André Gide, vol. 1, trans. and ed. J. O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 169.
- 103
- Henry James, The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts, ed. by J. L. Sweeney (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), 185.
- 104
- Allan Kaprow, "Manifesto" [1966], in The Discontinuous Universe, eds. Sallie Sears and Georgianna Lord (New York: Basic Books, 1972), 292.
- 105
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Möglichkeit der Philosophie," in Vorlesungen, trans. A. Métraux (Berlin and New York:
- Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 110.
- 106
- Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, trans. D. Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1970), 394–95.
- 107
- Nicolas Bourriaud, Formes de vie: L'art moderne et l'invention de soi (Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1999), 112.
- 108
- See Morris Raphael Cohen, A Dreamer's Journey: The Autobiography of Morris Raphael Cohen (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949), chapter 22: "A Stray Dog Among the Philosophers": "I came to refer myself as philosophically a stray dog unchained to any metaphysical kennel," 174.
- 109
- See Karl Kerényi's masterful study Hermes: Guide of Souls (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2008).
- 110
- Yves Klein, "Some (False) FOUNDATIONS, Principles, etc. and the Condemnation of Evolution," in YKW, 6.
- 111
- Klein, "Comment et pourquoi, en 1957..."

MAN, MYTH, AND MAGIC:
YVES KLEIN
AND PHOTOGRAPHY

ANDRIA HICKEY



CREATING UNTITLED ANTHROPOMETRY [ANT 133] AT HIS APARTMENT,
14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIÈRE, PARIS, 1960



14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIERE, PARIS, c. 1960

In 1956, Yves Klein wrote that it would be "impossible to give you a photograph" that would capture his attempts to create an artwork of immaterial sensibility.¹ The photographic record tells a different story. Ironically, throughout his efforts to reach beyond the material confines of his paintings and sculpture, Klein ensured that his every attempt at reaching that "authentic immaterial reality"² was recorded for the camera. The vast photographic holdings of the Yves Klein Archives reveal the artist's ambiguous relationship to the photographic image—a medium he relied upon, despite his discomfort with its limitations. More than 4,000 photographs trace a near complete chronology of Klein's life, ranging from personal snapshots to performance documentation and photomontage. While these records include intimate images of the artist's private life, they also painstakingly capture his studio work, exhibitions, performances, and events, and authenticate his artistic ambitions, providing an index of the artist's creative intentions and process. Both the abundance and careful choreography of many of the images suggest a tension between the physical circumstance of Klein's artworks and the residue of ephemerality Klein articulated throughout his life.

Few of the photographs, however, are directly attributed to the artist himself. Many of those who took the most iconic images remain anonymous or were hired photographers who shot scenes staged and directed by Klein. Harry Shunk, Jean Michalon, Milton Toscas, Jacques Fleurant, Janos Kender, Louis Frédéric, Maria Eugenia Le Noci, and Charles Wilp were among the more than thirty photographers who worked with the artist throughout his career. Many became Klein's close friends and collaborators and were often invited to public events and even Klein's own apartment to record the making of his work.³

The mythology of Yves Klein—prolific artist, inspired devotee, genius charlatan—is present not only in the art objects Klein created but also in the images which capture and define these very roles.⁴ The album that follows offers a selection of photographs that examine Klein's relationship to photography as art, document, and myth-making medium. Portraits of Klein are inscribed with his charm, humor, and his ability to persuade, direct, play, captivate, and transcend. Images of Klein's actions, exhibitions, and performances amplify the artist's pursuit of the impossible and extraordinary, and, in turn, tilt his hand just a bit, accentuating the aspect of spectacle in action, challenging the limitations of photography and the elusive nature of immaterial sensibility so central to his work.

CAGNES-SUR-MER, 1954



JAPAN, 1953



MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, JUNE 1961





WEDDING OF YVES KLEIN AND ROTRAUT UECKER
AT THE CHURCH OF
SAINT NICOLAS-DES-CHAMPS, PARIS,
JANUARY 21, 1962

IRIS CLERT AND JEAN TINGUELY AT THE
OPENING RECEPTION OF KLEIN'S SOLO
EXHIBITION BAS-RELIEFS DANS UNE
FORÊT D'ÉPONGES [BAS-RELIEFS IN A
FOREST OF SPONGES] AT GALERIE IRIS
CLERT, PARIS, JUNE 15, 1959.



AT LUNCH WITH IRIS CLERT, LUCIO FONTANA, AND ROTRAUT AT
LA COUPOLE, PARIS, NOVEMBER 1961.



RECEPTION AT A PERFORMANCE OF KLEIN'S "LIVING BRUSHES"
AT THE APARTMENT OF ROBERT GODET, 9, RUE LE-REGRATTIER,
ÎLE SAINT-LOUIS, PARIS, JUNE 5, 1958



WITH PIERRE RESTANY (LEFT) AND GUIDO LE NOCI (RIGHT)
AT THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION YVES KLEIN LE MONOCHROME:
IL NUOVO REALISMO DEL COLORE [YVES KLEIN THE MONOCHROME:
THE NEW REALISM OF COLOR] AT GALLERIA APOLLINAIRE,
MILAN, NOVEMBER 20, 1961



WITH HIS AUNT, ROSE-RAYMOND (LEFT), AND HIS MOTHER,
MARIE RAYMOND (RIGHT), AT THE YVES: PEINTURES
[YVES: PAINTINGS] EXHIBITION IN THE PRIVATE SHOWROOMS OF THE
LACOSTÉ PUBLISHING HOUSE, PARIS, OCTOBER 15, 1955



ARMAN, JEAN TINGUELY, ROTRAUT, DANIEL SPOERRI, JACQUES
VILLEGLÉ, AND PIERRE RESTANY GATHER TO SIGN THE MANIFESTO
OF NOUVEAU RÉALISME AT KLEIN'S APARTMENT,
14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIÈRE, PARIS, 27 OCTOBER, 1960



DUSSELDORF, © 1960

A PAINTER MUST PAINT A SINGLE MASTERPIECE: HIMSELF, AND THUS
BECOME A SORT OF ATOMIC BATTERY, A SORT OF CONSTANTLY
RADIATING GENERATOR THAT IMPREGNATES THE ATMOSPHERE WITH
HIS PICTORIAL PRESENCE FIXED IN SPACE AFTER ITS PASSAGE
—YVES KLEIN⁵

The cultivation of Klein's public persona, or "Yves le Monochrome" (a moniker by which he was sometimes known),⁶ was as central to his artistic career as his paintings and sculpture. Similar to American Pop artist Andy Warhol, Klein's attempt to construct his public image was a conceptual project in itself. From his small artist book *Yves Peintures* [Yves Paintings] (published November 18, 1954), which reproduced paintings that did not exist, to the distribution of the fabricated newspaper *Dimanche* (released November 27, 1960), Klein sought opportunities to manipulate his public perception through the media.⁷ While the press often ignored Klein, particularly early in his career, or addressed his antics with a critical tone, casting him as a farcical trickster or the "pseudo-metaphysicist" of Rosicrucianism,⁸ the media also motivated Klein's desire to play the role of showman or conductor.

Klein meticulously catalogued his media presence and the reception of his work. He collected reviews, clippings, and articles that featured his solo and group exhibitions, special events, and performances and pasted them into albums that he filled with his own marginal notes, which often reveal new directions he planned to pursue in response to critiques in the press.⁹ Furthermore, Klein often planned extravagant events for his exhibitions, and acknowledged in his preparatory plans that media presence and coverage would be crucial to the artworks' success.¹⁰

Many of the most iconic photographs of Klein's work and process were the result of the artist's concern that his intentions and their calculated effect were accurately communicated. This self-reflexivity is evident even in Klein's early years as a practicing judoku master. While studying in Japan in 1952 and 1953, Klein collaborated with a fellow student to record several hours of judo practice, carefully capturing each movement for his future adjudicators in Europe. In 1954, he published many of these images in his treatise on judo, *Les Fondements du Judo* [Foundations of Judo].

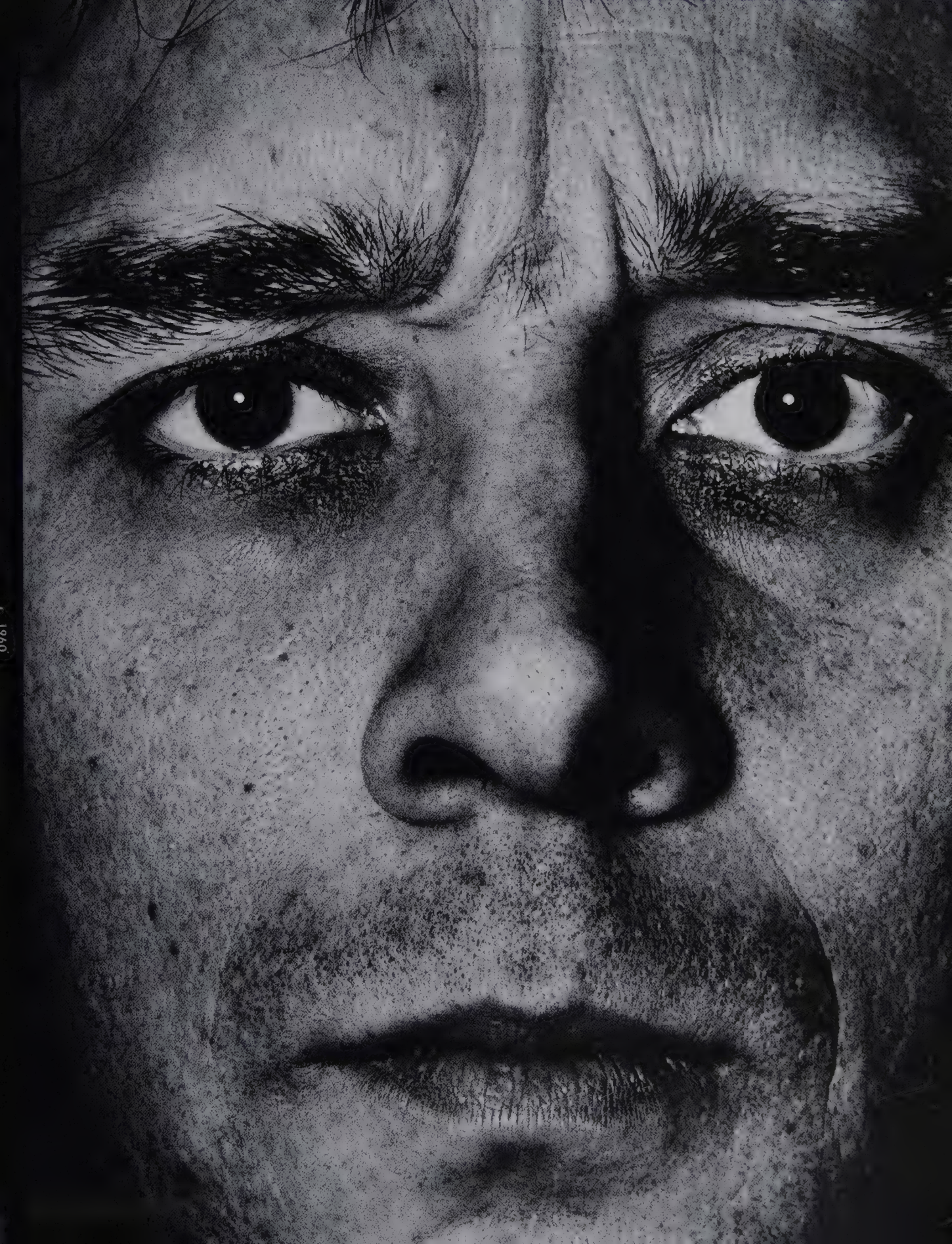
Years later, Klein would painstakingly write a proposed scenario for Paolo Cavara and Gualtiero Jacopetti's 1962 "shockumentary" *Mondo Cane*, which Klein had hoped would favorably show the world the true realization of his Anthropometry paintings.¹¹ As with writing and film, photography was another tool for contemplation and validation, demonstrating the significance of Klein's process and his dedication to constructing an existence that would embody the intentions of his work.

Often dressed in a tuxedo (and, for more formal performances, white gloves), Klein's fashionable clothing cast him as both conductor and player, well before the German artist Joseph Beuys would don his trademark vest and felt hat to indicate his role as both explorer and hunter. Portraits of Klein, like those of Beuys, are inscribed with the significance of his staged persona and the subsequent development of his work in the public eye.

Images of Klein in his studio can also be compared to those taken by Hans Namuth of Jackson Pollock, who, like both Klein and Beuys, became a pivotal public figure in the art world, in part due to the prominence of influential photographs.¹² These carefully constructed images portray Pollock as a worker, busy in his studio and messy with paint, the resulting image capturing a moment of the

artist's genius in action; it is as if the artist was performing a dance staged for the camera. As with those of Pollock, images of Klein at work also establish the honed performative nature of his artistic persona. Art historian Amelia Jones' analysis of Klein's calculated portraits suggests that he consciously drew upon the characters of both Eugène Delacroix (the dandy) and Vincent van Gogh (the worker) as models and "employed their romanticized personae and conceptions of artistic creativity to stake a claim to a distinctly modernist mode of genius."¹³ Yet despite the influence of his predecessors, portraits of Klein often reveal a humorous sensibility that almost mocks the modernist vision of the artist as genius.¹⁴

Like the conductor of an orchestra comprised of art objects and events rather than instruments, images of Klein as he enacted performances, coordinated public happenings, or worked in his studio consistently cast him as the master of ceremonies.¹⁵ Yet, like Beuys and Pollock, Klein remains an elusive character. The photographs depicting his outlandish, "Korny,"¹⁶ and at times audacious charisma reveal more about the showman's guise and diversions—always deflecting attention, hiding any hint of the artist's hand. With each camera-savvy pose, Klein is simultaneously the artist as genius, the dandy as artist, magician as conductor, embracing and manipulating his own mythic persona.





WITH ADRIANO PARISOT, PIERRE RESTANY, ADA PARISOT, LUTKA PINK, AND CLAUDE BELLEGARDE
AT THE EXHIBITION YVES KLEIN: PROPOSTE MONOCROME, EPOCA BLU [YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME
PROPOSITIONS, BLUE EPOCH] AT GALLERIA APOLLINAIRE, MILAN, JANUARY 2, 1957



YVES KLEIN: PROPOSTE MONOCROME, EPOCA BLU
[YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME PROPOSITIONS, BLUE EPOCH]



DRESSED IN THE RECALIA OF A KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF SAINT SEBASTIAN AT HIS APARTMENT, 14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIERE, PARIS, c. 1960



STUDIO PORTRAITS WITH A MONOCHROME PAINTING TAKEN AT STUDIO WILLY MAYWALD,
10, RUE DE LA GRANDE-CHAUMIÈRE, PARIS, 1956





YVES KLEIN: PROPOSTE MONOCROME, EPOCA BLU [YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME PROPOSITIONS, BLUE EPOCH] AT GALLERIA APOLLINAIRE, MILAN, JANUARY 2, 1957



WITH A JUDO PARTNER AT THE AMERICAN STUDENTS AND ARTISTS CENTRE, BD. RASPAILL, PARIS, c. 1955

WITH CLIGIT L'ESPACE [HERE LIES SPACE], 1960, AT THE EXHIBITION YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME UND FEUER [YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME AND FIRE],
MUSEUM HAUS LANGE, KREFELD, JANUARY 1961





DURING THE INSTALLATION OF HIS WORKS IN THE GELSENKIRCHEN
OPERA HOUSE, 1959



IN THE VOID AT MUSEUM HAUS LANGE / KREFELD, JANUARY 1961

Klein's interest in documenting his gallery openings, public performances, and happenings increased as his career progressed.¹⁷ The artist's attention to the record of his work positioned photography not merely as a vehicle for popular dissemination, but also as an integral part of his project as a whole. The images of his first intangible work, La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée [The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility], also known as Le vide [The Void], at Galerie Iris Clert on April 28, 1958, demonstrate a new interdependence between Klein's actions and their documentation. For this exhibition, Klein infamously invited the public to experience "immaterial sensibility" by removing everything from the gallery, veiling the entrance to the space in blue fabric, and serving cocktails infused with methylene blue, which literally turned the audience's urine blue, to spread the "Blue Revolution" throughout all of Paris. Images of Klein removing the paintings from the wall, the *mise-en-scène* of the opening, and, later, of the artist in the empty, white gallery remain the only tangible traces of Klein's first public attempt to overcome the material limitations of the art object and provide viewers with a direct encounter with the invisible "radiance" of "pictorial sensibility."¹⁸ Despite the dematerialized nature of his efforts, Klein's reliance on photography to render these intangible events and phenomenological experiences real for future audiences grounded the conceptual nature of his gestures.

On the occasion of the sale of the Zone de sensibilité picturale immatérielle [Zone of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility] at the Pont au Double in Paris in 1962, photography again played an important role in circulating the ambitions of Klein's fleeting, abstract project. For this ongoing work, Klein invited collectors to purchase a zone of immaterial pictorial sensibility of indeterminate dimension for a sum of gold. In exchange, collectors were given an original receipt, which they were instructed to burn, while Klein threw the gold he received for the work into the Seine. The ritual sale of immaterial sensibility and the subsequent burning of the receipts for these artworks were captured on film. With the exception of a few receipts that were saved by individuals, these images constitute the only record of this work. Yet for Klein, and many conceptual artists after him, the photographs created a new kind of tension between an event, or action, the ephemeral piece it produced, and the photographic record as a distinct object in itself.

This tension is more apparent in the images of Klein's Anthropometry performances. As Kristine Stiles has observed, in this case, the relationship between the photographic historical record, the transience of the actual event, and the residue of performance in the paintings destabilized the hierarchy of objecthood.¹⁹ The most iconic images of Klein's happenings were taken during the March 9, 1960 Anthropometry performance at the Galerie internationale d'art contemporain in Paris. The event itself was highly staged: before an invited audience of art aficionados, the artist, dressed in his signature tuxedo and white gloves, orchestrated the proceedings. At his signal, a string ensemble, seated in front of the audience, played his Symphonie Monoton-Silence [Monotone-Silence Symphony], in which a single note was sustained for twenty minutes, followed by an equal period of silence. Another signal from Klein summoned into the room nude female models carrying pails of International Klein Blue (IKB) paint. The artist directed the models to paint their bodies and then press themselves against large sheets of paper in specified poses or drag one another across sheets laid on the floor.²⁰

Curiously, the event, titled Anthropométries de l'époque bleue [Anthropometries of the Blue Epoch], was closed to the press. The images that remain were taken by professional photographers hired by Klein and the gallery, specifically Harry

Shunk, Charles Wilp, and Agence Dalmás. The photographs emphasize Klein's role as a conductor, capturing his direction of the live orchestra, his instructive gestures to the crowd, and the carefully choreographed actions of the models. The pictures also frame the *mise-en-scène*—the manipulations of the audience, orchestra, artist, models, and the resulting imprints of the Anthropometry paintings.

The relationship between the arranged images taken of the performance and the event itself is one of complex interdependence, especially when, as in the case of Anthropometries, the paintings themselves are objects imprinted with the referents of a transient event. The unfolding performance of the Anthropometries is as much the "real" artwork as the painted canvas that resulted, making the photographs of the event fundamental to our understanding of the final object. In addition, the photographs themselves further destabilize the hegemonic position of the painting by shifting the vehicle of representation from painting to photography,²¹ in Stiles' words, the "photographs materialized (as image) the contiguity between action and its object."²²

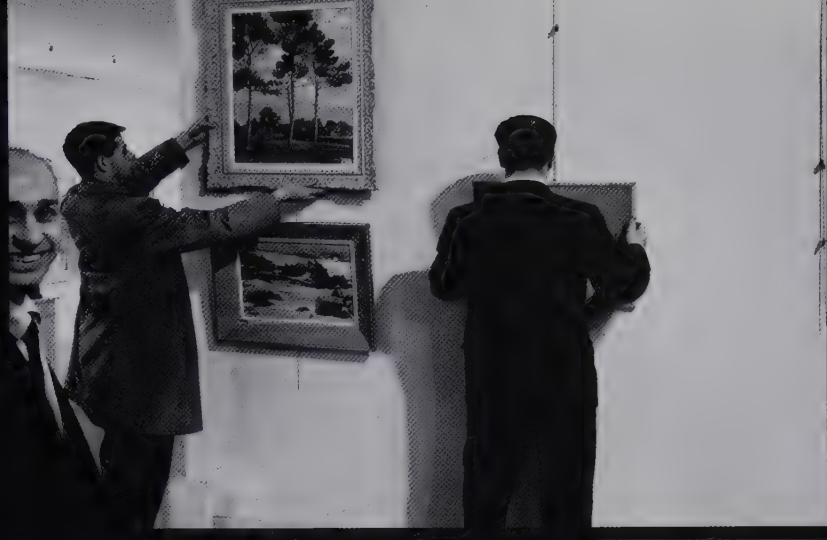
Klein's contribution to this shift in medium utilized photography's ability to document the artist's intentions as well as the lived experience of the actual event. In his text "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," Klein described his position as one of a conductor, removed from the work of applying paint to canvas, his hands clean:

It was the flesh itself that applied the color to the canvas, under my direction, with a perfect precision, allowing me to remain constantly at an exact distance "x" from my canvas and thus continue to dominate my creation during the entire executions.

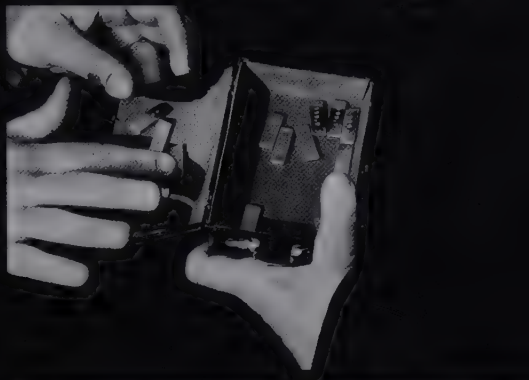
That way my hands stayed clean, and I no longer dirtied myself with paint, not even the tips of my fingers.... And I was in a position to show myself worthy of it by welcoming the work into the tangible world in a fitting manner wearing a tuxedo.²³

However, as Alexander Müller has observed, these photographs reveal an important discrepancy.²⁴ In one series of images, the action is calculated: Klein poses as the supervisor of a highly ritualized action, clad in his formal gloves, not touching the model. The final image of the artist is taken from a distance, presenting him at a significant remove from the creation of the art object. However, in a second series of photographs, which feature the same painting, Klein and the model are engrossed in the process of printing, the artist with his sleeves rolled up, smearing paint on the model and physically positioning her body on the canvas.

What precipitated these two records? While the actual production of the artwork was documented, Klein re-staged the event to produce an idealized representation of his creative process. Photography allowed Klein to create a new space between the actual and what he believed was the essence of the work.²⁵ In allowing the photographers to document both the actual and the ideal, the discrepancy between the rehearsal images and the final production became part of Klein's overall project. As with other photo-based works, specifically *Le Saut dans le vide* [Leap into the Void], 1960, Klein's desire to reveal his showmanship represents a unification of his thinking, creating tangible connections between concept, action, and the representation of an immaterial artwork.²⁶



PREPARING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF LE VIDE [THE VOID] AT SALON "VIOLET" ON JANUARY 26, 1962.
MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS



TRANSFERS OF A ZONE DE SENSIBILITÉ
PICTORALE IMMATÉRIELLE
 [ZONE OF IMMATERIAL PICTORIAL
 SENSIBILITY] TO DINO BUZZATI
 AND MICHAEL BLANKFORT,
 PONT AU DOUBLE, PARIS, JANUARY 26 AND
 FEBRUARY 10, 1962



SCULPTURE AÉROSTATIQUE [AEROSTATIC SCULPTURE], ALSO KNOWN AS VERNISSAGE ÉPOQUE BLEUE [OPENING OF THE BLUE EPOCH], FOR WHICH KLEIN RELEASED 1,001 WHITE BALLOONS, OR "AIR SCULPTURES," IN FRONT OF GALERIE IRIS CLERT, PARIS, MAY 10, 1957



CONDUCTING THE ORCHESTRA AND "LIVING BRUSHES" (TOP) AND SPECTATORS (BOTTOM) AT THE PERFORMANCE OF ANTHROPOMÉTRIES DE L'ÉPOQUE BLEUE [ANTHROPOMETRIES OF THE BLUE EPOCH] AT GALÉRIE INTERNATIONALE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, PARIS, MARCH 9, 1960



DIRECTING MODELS AT THE PERFORMANCE ANTHROPOMÉTRIES DE L'ÉPOQUE BLEUE [ANTHROPOMETRIES OF THE BLUE EPOCH]
AT GALERIE INTERNATIONALE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, PARIS, MARCH 9, 1960



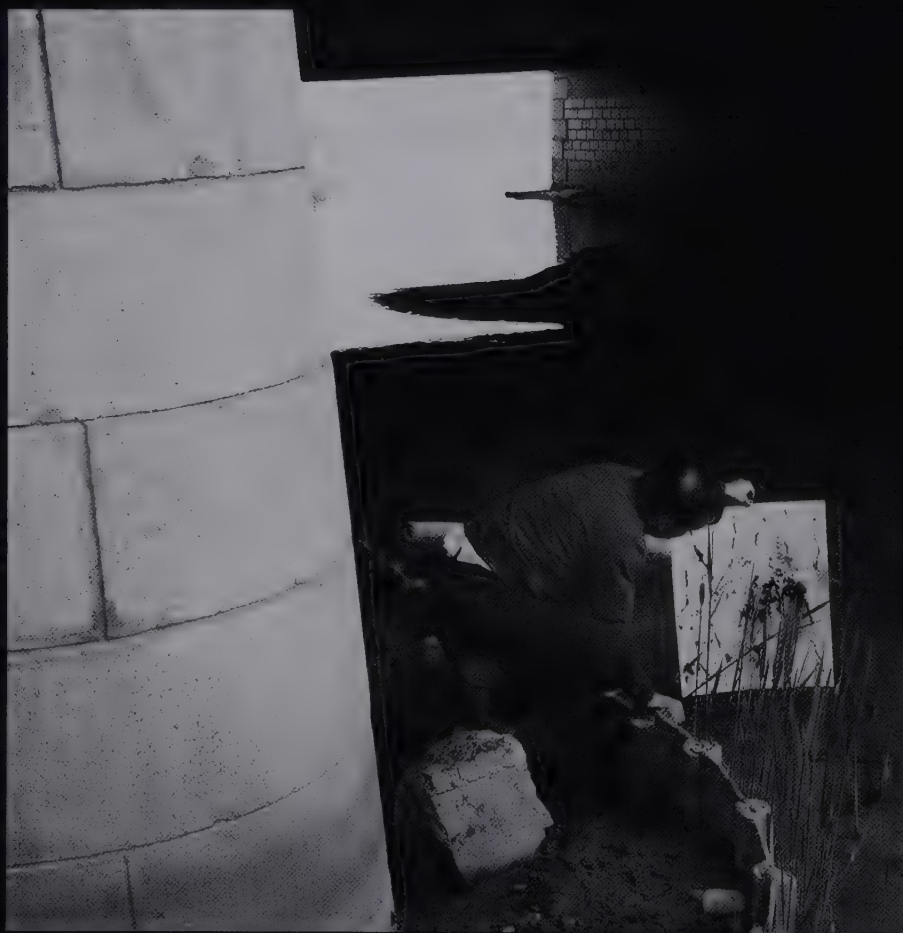
CREATING UNTITLED ANTHROPOMETRY [ANT 133] WITH MODEL ELENA PALUMBO AT HIS APARTMENT,
14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIÈRE, PARIS, 1960



MAKING A FIRE PAINTING AT THE CENTRE D'ESSAIS DU GAZ DE FRANCE, SAINT-DENIS, FEBRUARY 1961







MAKING A COSMOGONY ON THE BANKS OF THE LOUP, CAGNES-SUR-MER, JUNE 23, 1960





CI-GÎT L'ESPACE [HERE LIES SPACE] [RP 3], 1960, IN KLEIN'S APARTMENT, 14, RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIÈRE, PARIS, c. 1960

IMAGINATION IS THE VEHICLE OF SENSIBILITY! TRANSPORTED BY (EFFECTIVE) IMAGINATION WE ATTAIN LIFE, THAT VERY LIFE WHICH IS ABSOLUTE ART ITSELF. —YVES KLEIN²⁷

CONCEPTUAL ARTISTS ARE MYSTICS RATHER THAN RATIONALISTS. THEY LEAP TO CONCLUSIONS THAT LOGIC CANNOT REACH... SINCE NO FORM IS INTRINSICALLY SUPERIOR TO ANOTHER, THE ARTIST MAY USE ANY FORM, FROM AN EXPRESSION OF WORDS (WRITTEN OR SPOKEN) TO PHYSICAL REALITY, EQUALLY. —SOL LEWITT²⁸

Collaborating with photographers like Charles Wilp, Harry Shunk, and Milton Toscas, Klein staged a number of pictures that transformed photography from pragmatic documentation into conceptual art. The photographers who worked with Klein used rudimentary photographic manipulation techniques or theatrical deception to produce images that could “document” impossible or improbable feats of aesthetic experience and transcend the materiality of the object. In one series of photographs, Klein stares at his blue globe sculpture and appears, simply through the intensity of his gaze, to cause it to levitate. In another, the artist seems to be cupping a large blue flame in the palm of his hand. While these images “document” specific performative gestures, the obvious technical manipulation suggests that these photographs exist independently of the action. An actual documentary photograph of the performance would reveal the impossibility of the action supposedly captured in real life. Where both the pose and the film have been manipulated, the performance is no longer the referent. Instead, the image refers only to itself. For Klein, years before conceptual artist Robert Barry would take a picture of an invisible gas released into a landscape, photography would substantiate the authenticity of his conceptual project by revealing what he believed to be the essence of his creative process and its fundamental relationship to the intangible aesthetic experience.²⁹

The image of Klein’s famous *Le Saut dans le vide* is perhaps the most well-known representation of Klein’s photographic endeavors. For this work, the artist documented his “practical demonstration of levitation” by leaping from the roof ledge of a pavilion at 3, rue Gentil Bernard, in the Paris suburb of Fontenay-aux-Roses. One of the most iconic images to expand the boundaries between performance, documentation, and art object, Klein’s leap “disrupted the standard circuits of the reception of both photography as art and the traditional object of sculpture by surreptitiously inserting itself into the flow of consumer print culture.”³⁰

Klein published this image on the front page of his faux newspaper, *Dimanche*, which included, among other things, an article titled “A Man in Space!”³¹ In this text, Klein stated that the painter of space “must go there on his strength, using an autonomous individual force; in short, he must be capable of levitation.”³² Thus, the artist sought to represent a reality that was, to him, *essentially* true, even though it was not *actually* true; for example, the safety net and team of judo students Klein organized to protect himself when landing is not visible in this image. However, by publishing two versions of the image, one with a bicycle in the background, Klein provided his audience with a clue to the illusory qualities of the image itself.³³ Klein never acknowledged the manipulation of the picture. According to accounts from his champion, the French art critic Pierre Restany, his collaborator, Bernadette Allain, and his wife, Rotraut, the artist had, a year earlier, successfully accomplished this feat, incurring only a mild injury to his shoulder. However, Allain was the only eyewitness to this event. Thomas McEvilley recounts

interviews with Rotraut, Restany, Claude Parent, and Jean Tinguely, all of whom describe Klein's dedication, or, more accurately, his "fixation" and "obsession" with proving that he was capable of making such a leap unassisted.³⁴ For his achievement to be recognized by the art world and the broader public, Klein was forced to restage the leap; he worked with a team of photographers and performed his jump several times in order to achieve "the desired transcendent expression on his face."³⁵

The images of Klein's leap into thin air manifest the artist most as magician, arms spread, commanding both metaphysical and natural worlds. As Sidra Stich has noted:

It is a photograph that suggests superhuman aeronautic power, though it also conveys the image of someone who has put his life at risk to prove the irrepressible idea that humans can fly. Thus, as typical of most of Klein's art, it's not only an image with a mystical, awesome component but also an endeavor that is hyperbolic and precocious.³⁶

As with his paintings and sculpture, the photographs of Klein's encounters with the immaterial testify to the expansive possibilities and synergy between the environment and the immaterial aesthetic experience. Yet unlike his paintings and sculptural works, the implicit fakery of the "documentation" of his leap and other feats invites imagination. By constructing images that depict something as if it were real, Klein's visionary ideas did indeed become a reality, simply by demonstrating the *possibility* of their reality. The charismatic, idyllic vision of photography's ability to capture the invisible and impossible lay at the heart of Klein's highest intention for his art—to make the imaginable possible.





WITH HIS PARENTS, MARIE RAYMOND AND FRED KLEIN, BERNADETTE ALLAIN, AND OTHER GUESTS AT THE EXHIBITION
YVES KLEIN: PROPOSITIONS MONOCHROMES [YVES KLEIN: MONOCHROME PROPOSITIONS], GALERIE COLETTE ALLENDY, MAY 1957



WITH MURDE FEU [WALL OF FIRE], 1961, AT MUSEUM HAUS LANGE, KREFELD, 1961







WITH DIMANCHE AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AT GALERIE RIVE DROITE, PARIS, NOVEMBER 27, 1960



DISTRIBUTION OF DIMANCHE AT NEWSSTANDS THROUGHOUT PARIS, NOVEMBER 27, 1960



LE SAUT DANS LE VIDE [LEAP INTO THE VOID] AT 5, RUE GENTIL-BERNARD, FONTENAY-AUX-ROSES, OCTOBER 1960



LE SAUT DANS LE VIDE [LEAP INTO THE VOID] AT 5, RUE GENTIL-BERNARD, FONTENAY-AUX-ROSES, OCTOBER 1960

NOTES

See page 51 of this book for an image of this handwritten note.

Yves Klein, "The Evolution of Art Towards the Immaterial: Lecture at the Sorbonne, 3 June 1959," in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, ed. and trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007) [hereinafter YKW].

Several of the photographers, such as Harry Shunk and Janos Kender, became well known for documenting the work of many artists. Others became recognized artists in their own right, including Charles Wilp, who was later known for his eccentric interest in aerospace and was often referred to as "the man in space." Wilp's interest, likely spurred on by his work with Klein, inspired his provocative and controversial 1968 Paris advertising campaign for the soft drink Afri-Cola.

Kaira Cabañas' recent article on Klein's photographic self-representation explores Klein's interest in "playing a role" and identifies Klein's ability to "multiply" into many roles, from judoka to Knight, magician to conductor, among others. "Effets d'identité," in *Le demi-siècle de Pierre Restany* (2009).

Yves Klein, "Some Excerpts from My Journal," in YKW, 14.

In the press, Klein was often referred to by this phrase; see, for example, *Art International* (September/October 1958).

See Rita Cusimano, "Les albums de presse d'Yves Klein, la rumeur publique sur l'artiste," in *Yves Klein: Corps, couleur, immatériel*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2006).

See Thomas McEvilley, "Yves Klein: Conquistador of the Void," in *Yves Klein, 1928–1962, a Retrospective*,

exhibition catalogue (Houston and New York: Institute for the Arts, Rice University and The Arts Publisher, 1982), 55; and Cusimano, "Les albums de presse d'Yves Klein."

Rita Cusimano suggests that Klein used the negative criticism of his early work to his advantage, carefully analyzing the press response to his work, which was often ironic and full of doubt, to create his own ambivalent mythology, continuing to act as both genius and charlatan throughout his career. Cusimano, "Les albums de presse d'Yves Klein."

Some of the most spectacular photographs of these audacious stunts include those of the opening of *Sculpture Aerostatique* at Galerie Iris Clert on May 10, 1957 that depict Klein's 1,001 white balloons, which the artist called air sculptures, released on the streets of Paris. Klein's writings about the proposal for another project reveal the importance he placed on the creation of spectacle at these events; he described the necessity of publicity ("two large posters are planned"), the presence of Republican Guards ("in formal presidential dress...to bestow upon the exhibition the official character I aspire"), private guards ("trained in riot control"), and the illumination of the Obelisk at the Place de la Concorde in Blue ("in a monumental movement of affective imagination"). See Yves Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 48–56.

See page 166 of this book for a translation of the first page of Klein's screenplay for *Mondo Cane*.

See, for example, Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, "Jackson Pollock, and the Myth of Photography," *Art History* 6, no. 1 (March 1983): 117.

Amelia Jones, "Clothes Make the Man: The Male Artist as a Performative Function," *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 25. Klein also discussed his thoughts on Delacroix and Van Gogh in speeches and various essays.

In his essay "Conquistador of the Void," Thomas McEvilley discusses Klein's discovery in 1956 of Delacroix's journals, which remained the artist's bedside book for the rest of his life; Klein wrote in his journal that Delacroix sought the total expression of himself in and by color (45). McEvilley suggests that Klein saw Delacroix and Van Gogh as precursors to himself (46), and Klein's other writing on Delacroix and Van Gogh suggests that his interest in them centered on what he perceived to be their human yet spiritual commitment to color and the alchemy of painting (25). See also Yves Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche: The War,'" in YKW, 117–134.

Paul Schimmel notes that "Klein repositioned the artist as a conductor whose role was to orchestrate and compose the individuals who would make his paintings for him." Schimmel, "Leap into the Void: Performance and the Object," in *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object 1949–1979*, exhibition catalogue (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 33.

In his text "Le Mauvais-Gout," Klein defends the idea of "korny" and "kitsch" and explores its association with bad taste. See page 208 of this book for a translation of this text.

Klein's friends and colleagues, among them Bernadette Alain, Claude Pascal, and Jean Tinguely, have all noted his fervent production towards the end of his life and his increasing concern with his own renown in the avant-garde community. See McEvilley, "Conquistador of the Void," 64–65.

Klein, "Overcoming the Problematics of Art," in YKW, 48.

See Kristine Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy," 290.

Thomas McEvilley, "Yves Klein: Messenger of the Age of Space," *Artforum* XX, no. 5 (January 1982): 45. In his article "Paris Letter: Nouveaux," Alexander Watt asserts that Klein's

technique for making the Anthropometries "was inspired by the imprint made on powdery white floors by sweaty, fallen judo wrestlers." *Art in America* 49 (1961): 108.

Stiles, "Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions," 290.

ibid.,

Yves Klein, "Truth Becomes Reality," in YKW, 186–87.

The author is indebted to Alexander Müller for this observation in "Yves Klein et la photographie," in *Yves Klein: Corps, couleur, immatériel*.

See Nan Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein," in *Yves Klein, 1928–1962, a Retrospective*.

Müller, "Yves Klein et la photographie," 253.

Yves Klein, "Chelsea Hotel Manifesto," in YKW, 199.

Sol LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," in 0–9 (1969) and *Art-Language* (May 1969).

In her essay on conceptual photography, Darsie Alexander suggests that "when performance and conceptual artists of the 1960s picked up the camera and used it as a pragmatic tool to document their works for posterity, they highlighted aspects of the medium that simultaneously reasserted its complexity and altered its history." See Alexander, "Reluctant Witness: Photography and the Documentation of 1960's and 1970's Art," in *Work Ethic*, eds. Helen Molesworth, Darsie Alexander, and Chris Gilbert, exhibition catalogue (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 53.

Douglas Fogle, "The Last Picture Show," in *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography 1960–1982*, exhibition catalogue (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003), 10.

Klein, "Selections from 'Dimanche,'" in YKW, 106.

ibid.

Just six weeks after distributing *Dimanche*, Klein reproduced the photograph of his leap again in *Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer*, the catalogue of his retrospective exhibition at Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, which opened on January 14, 1961. This image is virtually the same as the one published in *Dimanche*, except that in the Krefeld photograph, the man riding a bicycle, visible in the background, has been removed, revealing that the photograph is, in fact, a photomontage. See Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation," 127.

McEvilley, "Conquistador of the Void," 64–65.

Amelia Jones, "Displaying the Phallus: Male Artists Perform Their Masculinities," *Art History* 17, no. 4 (1994): 554.

Yves Klein, ed. Sidra Stich, exhibition catalogue (London: Hayward Gallery, 1995), 220.



1960

CHRONOLOGY

1928

Yves Klein was born on April 28 in Nice, France, to Fred Klein, a Dutch-Indonesian figurative painter and art dealer, and Marie Raymond, a successful abstract painter who had studied at the École de Paris. His parents moved to Paris when Klein was several months old, leaving him in the care of his aunt, Rose Raymond, with whom he maintained a close relationship throughout his life. Klein's childhood was divided between living with his grandparents in Nice and his parents in Paris.

1939–43

After the outbreak of World War II, Klein's parents became leading figures in a tight-knit artistic community in Cagnes-sur-Mer, situated in the non-occupied zone, which included painters such as Hans Hartung and Nicolas de Staël.

1945–46

Klein attended the École du Génie Civil in Paris for a year, but after failing the first baccalaureate exam, which rendered him ineligible for the Merchant Marine Academy, he never again formally enrolled in an academic institution. He worked for a time at a bookstore, and during this period he made his first attempts at painting.

1947

Klein enrolled in judo classes at the police headquarters in Nice, where he met his lifelong friends Claude Pascal and Armand Fernandez, later known as Arman. Judo's attention to the balance between body and mind had a lasting influence on Klein.

The artist made his first monotype imprints showing his fellow judokas' hands on wrestling mats. At Klein's suggestion, he, Pascal, and Arman painted the Fernandezes' basement with blue handprints.

He composed the *Symphonie Monoton-Silence* [Monotone-Silence Symphony], which consisted of a single tone sustained for twenty minutes, followed by twenty minutes of silence.

That summer, on the beach in Nice, Klein, Pascal, and Arman decided to "divide the world" among themselves. Klein chose the sky and its infinity.

At the end of this year, the artist discovered Max Heindl's *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*.

1948

On June 18, Klein and Pascal became long-distance members of the Rosicrucian Fellowship in Oceanside, California, as the artist was attracted to the fundamental ideas of this philosophy, such as the notion that space equals spirit and life.

In the fall, Klein hitchhiked through Italy before beginning military service at a French camp near Lake Constance, Germany, in November.

1949–50

After being discharged from the army in October 1949, Klein moved with Pascal to London, where he worked with gilder and frame-maker Robert Savage. The artist exhibited small, rectangular monochrome pastels on paper and cardboard in his apartment for a group of friends.

Klein and Pascal spent the summer working at Jockey Hall, an equestrian club in Ireland, and the artist took horseback riding lessons with the intention of riding in Japan. Pascal mentioned in his journal that Klein was drawing and painting in watercolors during this time.

1951

Klein studied Spanish in Nice and traveled throughout Italy and Spain.

1952–53

The artist traveled to Japan, where he lived for fifteen months. During his stay, he earned a black belt in judo from the Kôdôkan Institute in Tokyo, the country's most prestigious judo center. He also wrote a book on judo, hoping to introduce Europe to the mindset and techniques of the practice. He gave French lessons to American and Japanese students.

Klein invited friends to see a series of his small monochrome paintings on paper or cardboard installed in his Tokyo apartment. The artist also organized an exhibition of his parents' work, *Marie Raymond/Fred Klein*, at the Institute Franco-Japonais, Kamakura Museum of Modern Art, and Bridgestone Gallery in Tokyo.

In 1953, Klein canceled his affiliation with the Rosicrucian Society in Oceanside.

1954

Klein returned to Paris, where he was disappointed to find that his Japanese judo diploma was not recognized by the French Federation of Judo. He and Pascal moved to Madrid, where Klein worked as the technical supervisor and teacher at the Spanish Federation of Judo.

In November, Klein published two booklets, *Yves Peintures* [Yves Paintings] and *Haguenault Peintures*, containing "plates" of his monochromes. His book *Les Fondements du Judo* [The Foundations of Judo] was released in November.

Klein created a storyboard for a film titled *La Guerre (de la ligne et de la couleur) ou (vers la proposition monochrome)* [The War (of line and color) or (toward a monochrome proposition)], which was to explore the conflict between line and

color throughout the history of art. The film was never realized. The artist also created two small watercolors depicting a stage on which the curtains are drawn to reveal a monochrome.

1955

Klein moved back to Paris and opened a judo school, which he also used as a gallery and studio. His first exhibition of monochromes in a variety of colors, Yves: Peintures [Yves: Paintings], was held in October at the Club des Solitaires in the private showrooms of the Lacoste publishing house. It was here that the artist met critic Pierre Restany for the first time.

1956

Yves Klein: Propositions Monochromes [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions] was on view at Galerie Colette Allendy in Paris from February 21 to March 7. Pierre Restany wrote a provocative introductory text, "La Minute de Vérité" [The Minute of Truth], for the invitation card. At the gallery, the artist met Marcel Barillon de Murat, a Knight of Saint Sebastian, who invited him to join the order; Klein was inducted on March 11.

That summer, Klein closed his judo studio because of financial difficulties and destroyed the monochromes that had hung there. While in Nice for a holiday, he decided to utilize a single color in his work; over the course of the year, he established the formula for an ultramarine hue he called International Klein Blue (IKB).

In August, Klein participated in his first group exhibition, alongside such artists as Sam Francis, Hans Hartung, and Jean Tinguely, at the Festival d'Art d'Avant-Garde in Marseilles.

1957

Klein exhibited eleven identical blue monochromes in one room and several monochromes of different colors in another for Yves Klein: Proposte Monocrome, Epoca Blu [Yves Klein: Monochrome Propositions, Blue Epoch] at the Galleria Apollinaire in Milan, on view from January 2 to 12. Artists Piero Manzoni and Lucio Fontana attended the exhibition. Fontana purchased a blue monochrome and Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo bought a red one.

In March, Klein met architect Werner Ruhnau, who was impressed with the artist's monochromes. Ruhnau encouraged him to enter a competition to decorate the Gelsenkirchen Opera House in Ruhr, Germany.

Klein presented a double solo exhibition in Paris: Yves le monochrome [Yves the Monochrome] at the Galerie Iris Clert from May 10 to 25; and Pigments purs [Pure Pigments] at Galerie Colette Allendy from May 14 to 23. The invitation to the two shows included a text by Pierre Restany and a blue stamp made by the artist. At the Iris Clert opening, he released 1,001 blue balloons, which he called *sculpture aérostatique* [aerostatic sculpture], and a version of Symphonie Monoton-Silence recorded by Pierre Henry was played.

Klein exhibited Yves: Propositions monochromes [Yves: Monochrome Propositions] at Galerie Schmela, Dusseldorf, from May 31 to June 23. For Monochrome Propositions of Yves Klein at Gallery One in London, on view from June 24 to July 13, he displayed a sponge sculpture alongside the monochromes, creating an uproar in the press. Later that month, the artist participated in a public discussion with Restany at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London.

While spending the summer in Nice, Klein met Rotraut Uecker, a young German woman who would become his studio assistant the following year and, later, his wife.

In September, Klein signed the "Manifesto contro lo stile" [Manifesto Against Style] with Restany and Arman, shortly before his inclusion in the group exhibition Arte Nucleare [Nuclear Art] at Galleria San Fedele in Milan, on view from October 12 to 30.

"Nel blu dipinto di blu" [In the Blue Painted Blue], a song by Italian singer Domenico Modugno inspired by Klein's monochromes, became a hit.

1958

Klein's Gelsenkirchen proposal was approved in January, and he spent the winter developing a method to decorate the immense space with a series of four monumental IKB sponge reliefs and two massive IKB monochromes.

In April, he conceived of the levitating tubes project and practiced different methods for illuminating the obelisk on Place de la Concorde with blue light.

The opening of his show La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée [The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility], often referred to as Le vide [The Void], at Galerie Iris Clert on April 28 was swarmed by some 2,500 guests; police and firemen were called to disperse the crowd.

In May, Klein wrote his "Blue Revolution" manifestos and other texts included in Mon Livre [My Book], including a letter to President Eisenhower.

On the evening of June 5, Klein first experimented with "living brushes" at the home of Robert Codet. (The term Anthropometry was coined by Pierre Restany in 1960.)

That summer, the artist moved to 14 rue Campagne-Première in Montparnasse, where he would live for the rest of his life.

In September, Klein made his first pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Rita in Cascia, Italy, with his aunt, where he made a votive offering of an IKB monochrome.

On November 17, the artist's joint exhibition with Jean Tinguely, Vitesse pure et stabilisé monochrome [Pure Velocity and Monochrome Stability], opened at Galerie Iris Clert.

ZERO group was founded in Dusseldorf by Otto Piene and Heinz Mack.

1959

Klein and Walter Ruhnau devised the notion of Architecture de l'air [Air Architecture] and discussed establishing a School for Sensibility.

For the group show Vision in Motion, which opened on March 17 at the Hessenhuis in Antwerp, Klein stood in his designated gallery space and announced a statement he borrowed from Gaston Bachelard: "First there is nothing, then there is a deep nothing; then there is a blue depth." He offered to sell a zone of immaterial pictorial sensibility for one kilo of gold.

On April 14, he applied for patents for his air roof and levitating tubes.

On June 3, Klein delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne titled "L'évolution de l'art vers l'immatériel" [The Evolution of Art Toward the Immaterial].

Galerie Iris Clert exhibited Yves Klein: Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges [Yves Klein: Bas-Reliefs in a Forest of Sponges] from June 15 to 30. Klein was also involved with several group exhibitions, such as Works in Three Dimensions at Leo Castelli Gallery in New York from October 20 to November 7, which also included artists John Chamberlain, Jasper Johns, Louise Nevelson, and Robert Rauschenberg, and Dynamo 1 at Galerie Renate Boukes in Wiesbaden, Germany, from October 16 to November 22. Klein made his first sale of a zone of immaterial pictorial sensibility on November 18, to Peppino Palazzoli, on the banks of the Seine.

On December 15, Klein attended the opening of the Gelsenkirchen Opera House. His book Le dépassement de la problématique de l'art [Overcoming the Problematics of Art] was published the same month.

Klein also stopped teaching judo.

1960

From January 4 to February 1, Klein's work was featured in the exhibition La nouvelle conception artistique [The New Artistic Concept], along with that of Kilian Breier, Enrico Castellani, Oskar Holweck, Heinz Mack, and Piero Manzoni, at Azimuth Gallery in Milan. He participated in the group show Antagonisme [Antagonism] at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, in February. He exhibited two zones of immaterial pictorial sensibility and showed a monogold frémissant [quivering monogold] for the first time.

Klein patented his "living brushes" technique. At the March 9 opening of Anthropométries de l'époque bleue [Anthropometries of the Blue Epoch] at Galerie internationale d'art contemporain in Paris, the Symphonie Monoton-Silence was performed and the "living brushes" performance was followed by a public discussion that included Pierre Restany and French Abstract Expressionist painter Georges Mathieu.

That summer, Klein executed his first Cosmogony at Cagnes-sur-Mer. Klein's work, along with that of Arman, Raymond Hains, François

Dufrène, Jacques Villeglé, and Jean Tinguely, was included in the group show Les Nouveaux Réalistes [The New Realists] at Galleria Apollinaire in April, for which Restany wrote the catalogue preface. Klein would have preferred that this art movement be called Le réalisme d'aujourd'hui [The Realism of Today].

IKB was patented on May 19.

Klein first showed his trinity of colors—blue, gold, and pink—in the solo exhibition Yves Klein le monochrome [Yves Klein the monochrome] at Galerie Rive Droite in Paris from October 11 to November 13.

Klein's Le Saut dans le vide [Leap into the Void] was photographed on October 19 at number 3 rue Gentil-Bernard at Fontenay-aux-Roses.

Arman, Dufrène, Hains, Tinguely, Villeglé, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, and Klein signed the founding manifesto of their artistic group, Nouveaux Réalistes, on October 27 in Klein's apartment in Paris. On October 28, Arman, Hains, Restany, Tinguely, and Klein created a collective Anthropométrie suaire [Anthropometric Shroud].

Klein's work was included in a group show for the second Festival d'art d'avant-garde at the Palais des expositions de la Porte de Versailles in Paris from November 18 to December 15; he exhibited the Anthropométrie suaire as well as Ci-gît l'Espace [Here Lies Space], although both works were vandalized. Klein's faux newspaper, Dimanche (le journal d'un seul jour) [Sunday (The Newspaper of a Single Day)], was issued on November 27 in conjunction with the festival. The cover was a photomontage by Harry Shunk and Janos Kender of Klein's leap into the void. The publication was sold at newsstands throughout Paris, and a press conference was held at Galerie Rive Droite.

1961

Klein worked closely with Paul Wember, the director of Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany, to organize the retrospective Yves Klein: Monochrome und Feuer [Yves Klein: Monochrome and Fire], on view from January 14 to February 26.

In March, he held his first Fire Painting session at the Centre d'Essais du Gaz de France testing center in Paris.

Klein and Rotraut traveled to New York in late March for the exhibition Yves Klein le Monochrome [Yves Klein the Monochrome] at Leo Castelli Gallery from April 11 to 29. Klein wrote the "Manifeste de l'hôtel Chelsea" [Chelsea Hotel Manifesto] during his stay there.

The group exhibition A 40° au dessus de Dada [40 Degrees Above Dada], organized by Pierre Restany, was exhibited at Galerie J in Paris from May 17 to June 10. Restany drafted a second manifesto, equating the Nouveaux Réalistes with the legacy of Dada; Klein vehemently objected to this correlation, and, on October 8, Klein, Martial Raysse, and Raymond Hains declared the group defunct.

Yves Klein le Monochrome [Yves Klein the Monochrome], on view at Dwan Gallery in Los

Angeles from May 29 to June 24, was the first public exhibition of a monogold sponge relief. In late June, Rotraut and Klein returned to France. His work was featured in several group shows, including, in July, Le Nouveau Réalisme à Paris et à New York [The New Realism of Paris and New York], at Galerie Rivè Droite in Paris, which also included Arman, Lee Bontecou, César, John Chamberlain, Chrysta, Raymond Hains, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint-Phalle, Richard Stankieqicz, and Jean Tinguely.

On July 12, Klein signed a contract to be featured in Gualtiero Jacopetti's film Mondo Cane; the Anthropometry sequences were shot July 17 and 18.

Klein conducted his last Fire Painting session at Gaz de France on July 19 because, upon learning that Klein was using naked models, the center's director withdrew permission for future experiments.

The artist spent the rest of the summer vacationing in Nice with Rotraut. Together, they made a third pilgrimage to Cascia, leaving a votive offering in a clear plastic box containing blue and pink pigment, gold leaf, small gold ingots, and a handwritten prayer to Saint Rita.

The retrospective Yves Klein le Monochrome: il Nuovo Realismo del Colore [Yves Klein the Monochrome: The New Realism of Color], which included the first public viewing of Klein's planetary reliefs, including Mars and Moon, opened at Galleria Apollinaire in Milan on November 21.

1962

Klein and Rotraut were married January 21 at the church of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs in Paris, with the Knights of the Order of Saint Sebastian participating in full regalia.

Klein made plaster casts of Arman, Martial Raysse, and Claude Pascal in February, with the intention of doing relief portraits of the *Nouveaux Réalistes*; only the sculpture of Arman was ever completed.

On March 1, Klein executed Store poème [Scroll Poem] at his home with Arman, Pascal, and Pierre Restany; the piece combined Klein's Anthropometries, Arman's Object Traces, a prose poem by Pascal, and a text by Restany. He exhibited the piece a week later in Antagonismes II: L'Objet [Antagonisms II: Object] at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, along with a scale model of Rocket pneumatique [Pneumatic Rocket] and two panels describing Architecture de l'air [Air Architecture], accompanied by a text by Restany.

Klein attended the premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in France on May 12 of Mondo Cane, which he had not been permitted to view prior to the public screening. He was horrified to discover the way the film presented him. Later that evening, Klein suffered a heart attack.

The artist attended the opening of the group exhibition Donner à voir [To Show] at Galerie Creuze

in Paris on May 15, for which Restany had organized a hall of the works by the *Nouveaux Réalistes*, including Klein's portrait relief of Arman. Here, Klein had another heart attack.

Late in the afternoon on June 6, Klein died of a third heart attack. He was buried in the small cemetery at La Colle-sur-Loup, beside his mother and aunt, Marie and Rose Raymond, respectively.

His son, Yves, was born in Nice exactly two months later, on August 6.

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EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Titles in quotation marks drawn from Klein's document notations.

MONOCHROMES

Untitled Double-Sided Orange and Blue Monochrome

(D 8), 1951
Pastel on cardboard
22 1/4 x 31 1/2 in.
(56.5 x 80 cm)
Private Collection
Page 82

Untitled Purple Monochrome

1952
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard
5 3/4 x 8 1/2 in.
(14.6 x 21.6 cm)
Private Collection
Page 83

Untitled Yellow Monochrome

c. 1952
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard
3 5/16 x 7 1/2 in. (9 x 19.1 cm)
Private Collection
Page 83

Untitled Green Monochrome

c. 1952
Dry pigment and fixative on paper
4 5/16 x 7 1/16 in. (11 x 17.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 83

Untitled Green Monochrome

(M 5), c. 1954
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas
22 7/16 x 15 3/4 in.
(57 x 40 cm)
Private Collection

Page 88

Untitled Yellow and Pink Monochrome

(M 36), 1955
Dry pigment and fixative on canvas
22 1/16 x 13 3/8 in.
(56 x 34 cm)
Private Collection
Page 93

Untitled Red Monochrome

(M 38), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
19 11/16 x 19 11/16 in.
(50 x 50 cm)
Private Collection
Page 88

"Expression de l'univers de la couleur Mine orange"

(M 60), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on cardboard on panel
37 3/4 x 89 in.
(94.9 x 226.1 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 90–91

Untitled Yellow Monochrome

(M 84), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
49 3/16 x 49 3/16 x 3 3/4 in.
(125 x 125 x 8.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 89

Untitled Orange Monochrome

(M 6), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas on panel
22 7/16 x 14 1/2 in.
(57 x 36.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 93

Untitled Yellow Monochrome

(M 19), 1956
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on panel
8 11/16 x 6 5/16 in.
(22 x 16 cm)
Private Collection
Page 93

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(M 49), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
19 11/16 x 1 x 1 in.
(50 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 97

Untitled Green Monochrome

(M 50), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
19 11/16 x 1 x 1 in.
(50 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 97

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(M 113), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
19 11/16 x 1 x 1 in.
(50 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 97

Untitled Green Monochrome

(M 35), 1957
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
23 5/8 x 15 3/4 in.
(60 x 40 cm)
Private Collection
Page 94

Untitled Black Monochrome

(M 78), 1957
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
12 x 23 1/2 in.
(30.5 x 59.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 94

Untitled Red Monochrome

(M 82), 1957
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard
13 x 23 3/8 in. (33 x 60 cm)
Private Collection
Page 98

Untitled White Monochrome

(M 15), c. 1957
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas
16 15/16 x 25 5/16 in.
(43 x 65 cm)
Private Collection
Page 101

Untitled Monochrome

(M 52), c. 1957
Aluminum
13 1/16 x 11 5/8 in.
(33.2 x 29.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 100

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(D 27), c. 1959
Crepe paper and paint
7 7/8 x 6 5/16 in. (20 x 16 cm)
Private Collection
Page 99

MONOPINKS

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 30), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panel
39 7/16 x 25 5/16 in.
(100.2 x 64.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 92

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 8), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
39 3/8 x 9 13/16 in.
(100 x 25 cm)
Private Collection
Page 92

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 27), c. 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on fabric on panel
15 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.
(40 x 35 cm)
Private Collection
Page 95

Untitled Pink Monochrome

(MP 19), c. 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
36 1/4 x 28 3/8 x 1 in.
(92 x 72 x 2.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 95

IKB MONOCHROMES AND SCULPTURE

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 44), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
15 3/4 x 53 1/2 in.
(40 x 135.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 88

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 46), 1955
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
26 x 18 1/8 x 13/16 in.
(66 x 46 x 2 cm)
Private Collection
Page 125

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 104), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on canvas on panel
30 11/16 x 22 1/16 x 1 in.
(78 x 56 x 2.5 cm)
Adolf-Luther-Stiftung, Krefeld
Page 124

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 108), 1956
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas
19 11/16 x 19 11/16 in.
(50 x 50 cm)
Courtesy of The Armand P. Arman Revocable Trust, New York
Page 124

Paravent

(IKB 62), 1957
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on panels
59 1/16 x 137 13/16 x 7/8 in.
(150 x 350 x 2.2 cm)
Private Collection
Page 127

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 179), 1957
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on cardboard
11 1/16 x 25 3/16 in.
(28.1 x 64 cm)
Private Collection
Page 98

Untitled Sculpture

(S 1, 3, 4, 5), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on cubes on plexiglass
Each: $7\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(19.5 × 12.1 × 9.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 123

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 74), 1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
 $78 \times 54\frac{5}{8}$ in.
(198.1 × 138.7 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Phyllis Wattis
Page 129

IKB Codet

1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
 $59\frac{1}{16} \times 77\frac{15}{16}$ in.
(150 × 198 cm)
Private Collection
Page 134

"Excavatrice de l'espace" (collaboration Tinguely-Klein)

(S 13), 1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on metal disk on electric motor with metal feet
 $8\frac{9}{16} \times 6\frac{11}{16}$ in.
(21.7 × 17 cm)
Private Collection
Page 136

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 67), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
 $36\frac{1}{4} \times 28\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(92.1 × 73 cm)
Private Collection
Page 125

Untitled Blue Monochrome

(IKB 42), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
 $78\frac{3}{8} \times 60\frac{1}{4} \times 1$ in.
(199 × 153 × 2.5 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston
Page 128

Untitled

(S 18), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on metal stem on stone
 $28\frac{15}{16} \times 13\frac{3}{4} \times 14\frac{9}{16}$ in.
(73.5 × 35 × 37 cm)
Private Collection
Page 132

California

(IKB 66), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze on panel
 $76\frac{3}{4} \times 165\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ in.
(195 × 420 × 6 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 130–31

Pluie bleue

(S 36), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on wood dowels
 $82\frac{1}{4} \times 12 \times 7\frac{7}{16}$ in.
(208.9 × 30.5 × 18.9 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Daniel and Rotraut Moquay
Page 133

ZERO 3 (maquette pour la revue ZERO)

(IKB 13), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on cardboard
 $8 \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in. (20.3 × 21.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 135

Pigment pur bleu

(PIC 1), 2010 (re-creation of 1957 and 1961 piece)

Wood tray with dry pigment
Dimensions variable
Private Collection
Page 126

**Do-Do-Do**

(RE 16), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel
 $78\frac{3}{8} \times 64\frac{15}{16} \times 7\frac{1}{16}$ in.
(199.1 × 164.9 × 17.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 139

Untitled Blue Sponge Relief

(RE 21), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel
 $78\frac{1}{4} \times 64\frac{3}{4} \times 6$ in. (198.8 × 164.5 × 15.2 cm)
Glenstone
Page 137

Le Rose du Bleu

(RE 22), 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges and pebbles on panel
 $78\frac{3}{8} \times 60\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{5}{16}$ in.
(199.1 × 153 × 16 cm)
Private Collection
Page 141

Untitled Gold Sponge Relief

(RE 47 II), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponges, gold leaf, and pebbles on panel
 $17\frac{15}{16} \times 31\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{15}{16}$ in.
(45.6 × 80 × 7.5 cm)
Private Collection, Switzerland
Page 140

**Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture**

(SE 180), 1957

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $44\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(112.1 × 40 × 40 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Bequest of Phyllis Wattis
Page 145

Untitled Coral Sculpture

(SE 288), 1958

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural coral
 $12\frac{1}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$ in. (31.1 × 31.1 × 14.3 cm)
HAP Collection
Page 150

Lecteur IKB elegant

(SE 173), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $16\frac{5}{16} \times 12\frac{13}{16} \times 7\frac{1}{16}$ in.
(41.5 × 32.5 × 18 cm)
Collection Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Page 146

Le veilleur

(SE 174), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem
 $12\frac{5}{8} \times 12\frac{3}{16} \times 9\frac{7}{16}$ in.
(32.1 × 31 × 24 cm)
Collection Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Page 146

Untitled Pink Sponge Sculpture

(SE 206), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $9\frac{13}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(24.9 × 20 × 12.1 cm)
Private Collection, Paris
Page 147

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 212), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem
 $24\frac{7}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ in.
(62.1 × 13 cm)
Private Collection
Page 145

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 284), 1959

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural coral on metal stem on stone
 $25 \times 15 \times 8$ in.
(63.5 × 38.1 × 20.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 148

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 21), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge
 $13\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{13}{16} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in.
(34.9 × 30 × 12.1 cm)
Private Collection
Page 142

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 89), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $16\frac{9}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{15}{16}$ in.
(42 × 20 × 10 cm)
Private Collection
Page 147

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 165), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on metal
 $7\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ in.
(20 × 13 × 13 cm)
Courtesy of The Armand P. Arman Revocable Trust, New York
Page 146

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 218), c. 1960

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $13\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$ in.
(34.9 × 22.5 × 6.7 cm)
Courtesy L&M Arts, New York
Page 147

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 33), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on plaster
 $16\frac{9}{16} \times 14\frac{9}{16} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$ in.
(42.1 × 37 × 20 cm)
Private Collection
Page 151

Untitled Blue Sponge Sculpture

(SE 251), 1961

Dry pigment and synthetic resin on natural sponge on metal stem on stone
 $29\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ in.
(74.9 × 28.1 × 13.3 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Bequest of Phyllis Wattis
Page 149

ANTHROPOMETRIES

Untitled Anthropometry
(ANT 100), 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas
57 × 117 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(144.8 × 299.4 cm)
Collection Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, Holenia Purchase Fund, in memory of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1998
Pages 162–63

"Jonathan Swift"
(ANT 125), c. 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas
70 ⁷/₁₆ × 106 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(180 × 270 cm)
Courtesy Galerie Gmurzynska
Page 164

People Begin to Fly
(ANT 96), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas
98 ¹/₂ × 156 ¹/₂ in.
(250.2 × 397.5 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston
Pages 170–71

Architecture de l'air
(ANT 102), 1961
Dry pigment, synthetic resin, and charcoal on paper on canvas
102 ³/₄ × 83 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(261 × 213 cm)
Collection Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
Page 264

Untitled Anthropometry
(ANT 154), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas
102 × 70 ¹/₁₆ in.
(259.1 × 178.1 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Bequest of Phyllis Wattis
Page 165

Suaire de Mondo Cane
(ANT SU 8i), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on gauze
92 ¹/₈ × 116 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.
(234 × 297 cm)
Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of Alexander Bing, T. B. Walker Foundation, Art Center Acquisition Fund, Professional Art Group I and II, Mrs. Helen Haseltine Plowden, Dr. Alfred Pasternak, and Dr. Maelyn C. Wade by exchange, with additional funds from the T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 2004
Page 167

Hiroshima
(ANT 79), c. 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas
55 × 119 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(139.7 × 303.3 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston
Pages 168–69

Store poème (with Arman, Claude Pascal, and Pierre Restany)
(ANT SU 15), 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on fabric
582 ¹¹/₁₆ × 30 ¹¹/₁₆ in.
(1480 × 77.9 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 218–21

MONOGOLDS

Le Silence est d'or
(MG 10), 1960
Gold leaf on panel
58 ¹/₄ × 44 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(148 × 114 cm)
Private Collection
Page 212

Untitled Gold Monochrome
(MG 7), c. 1960
Gold leaf on panel
78 ³/₈ × 60 ¹/₄ × ³/₄ in.
(199 × 153 × 2 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston
Page 213

Untitled Gold Monochrome
(MG 8), 1962
Gold leaf on panel
32 ¹/₁₆ × 28 ³/₄ in.
(81.4 × 73 cm)
Private Collection
Page 214

FIRE PAINTINGS

Untitled Fire Painting
(F 27 I), 1961
Scorched cardboard on panel
98 ⁷/₁₆ × 51 ³/₁₆ in.
(250 × 130 cm)
Private Collection
Page 206

Untitled Fire Painting
(F 82), 1961
Scorched cardboard on panel
55 ⁷/₈ × 119 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(141.9 × 303.8 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 202–03

Untitled Fire Painting
(F 125), 1961
Scorched cardboard on panel
22 ⁷/₁₆ × 78 ³/₄ in.
(57 × 200 cm)
Courtesy Galerie Gmurzynska
Page 198

Untitled Fire Painting
(F 11), c. 1961
Scorched cardboard on panel
24 × 19 ¹¹/₁₆ in. (61 × 50 cm)
Private Collection
Page 199

Untitled Fire Painting
(F 81), c. 1961
Scorched paper on fiberboard on panel
51 ¹/₄ × 98 ¹/₂ in.
(130.2 × 250.2 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston
Pages 204–05

FIRE-COLOR PAINTINGS

Untitled Fire-Color Painting
(FC 1), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on scorched cardboard on panel
55 ¹/₂ × 117 ¹⁵/₁₆ × 1 ³/₁₆ in.
(141 × 299.5 × 3 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 200–01

Untitled Fire-Color Painting
(FC 3), c. 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on scorched cardboard on panel
53 ¹⁵/₁₆ × 29 ¹/₁₆ in.
(137 × 74 cm)
Private Collection
Page 207

COSMOGONIES

Untitled Cosmogony
(COS 8), 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paperboard on canvas
25 ³/₁₆ × 19 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(64 × 49.1 cm)
Private Collection
Page 154

Untitled Cosmogony
(COS 18), 1960
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on paper on canvas
25 ¹³/₁₆ × 19 ¹/₂ in.
(65.6 × 49.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 154

Untitled Cosmogony
(COS 12), 1961
Dry pigment and fixative on paper
41 ⁵/₁₆ × 29 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.
(104.9 × 76 cm)
Private Collection
Page 153

Untitled Cosmogony
(COS 25), c. 1961
Dry pigment and fixative on paper on canvas
40 ³/₈ × 23 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(102.6 × 60 cm)
Private Collection
Page 155

Le Vent du voyage
(COS 27), c. 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on canvas
36 ⁵/₈ × 29 ¹/₈ in.
(93 × 74 cm)
Private Collection
Page 155

PLANETARY RELIEFS

Ci-gît l'Espace
(RP 3), 1960
Dry pigment, synthetic resin, natural sponges, and artificial flowers on gold leaf on panel
49 ³/₁₆ × 39 ³/₈ × 3 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.
(124.9 × 100 × 10 cm)
Collection Musée national d'art moderne, Paris
Page 209

Globe terrestre bleu
(RP 5), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on polyester globe on metal base
14 ³/₄ × 9 ⁵/₈ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(37.5 × 24.4 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 158

Terre
(RP 19), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on plaster
21 ⁵/₈ × 17 ⁵/₁₆ × 3 ¹/₈ in.
(54.9 × 44 × 7.9 cm)
Private Collection, Rueil-Malmaison, France
Page 157

Lune II
(RP 21), 1961
Dry pigment and fixative on plaster
37 ³/₈ × 25 ⁹/₁₆ × 2 ³/₄ in.
(95 × 65 × 7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 156

Untitled Blue Planetary Relief
(RP 23), 1961
Dry pigment and synthetic resin on hollow metal ball
9 ¹³/₁₆ × 8 ¹¹/₁₆ × 8 ¹¹/₁₆ in.
(24.9 × 22.1 × 22.1 cm)
Private Collection, London
Page 159

Untitled Planetary Relief
(RP 12), c. 1961
Dry pigment and fixative on
plaster on panel
37 ¹³/₁₆ × 27 ³/₁₆ × 2 ¹/₄ in.
(96 × 69.1 × 5.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 156

OTHER SCULPTURE

**"Assemblage de rouleaux
à peindre usagés"**
(S 7), 1956–62
Paint rollers on metal
10 ¹/₄ × 8 ¹/₄ × 7 ¹/₁₆ in.
(26 × 21 × 17.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 245

Sculpture tactile
(S 22), c. 1957
Wood and paint
56 ⁵/₁₆ × 19 ¹/₁₆ × 19 ¹/₁₆ in.
(143 × 50 × 50 cm)
Private Collection
Page 121

Arman Portrait-Relief
(PR 1), 1962
Dry pigment and synthetic
resin on bronze on gold leaf
on panel
69 ⁵/₁₆ × 37 ¹/₁₆ × 10 ¹/₄ in.
(176.1 × 94.1 × 26 cm)
Private Collection
Page 215

IMMATERIAL SENSIBILITY

**Maquette de carnet à
souches pour les cessions
de volumes de Zones
de sensibilité picturale
immatérielle transférable**
1959
Ink, gold paint, and
gouache on paper
3 ¹⁵/₁₆ × 13 in. (10 × 33 cm)
Collection Musée national
d'art moderne, Paris
Page 119

**Receipt to Mr. Paride
Accetti for transfer of
a Zone of Immaterial
Pictorial Sensibility
(series 1, no. 3) against
twenty grams of fine gold**
1959
Ink on paper
3 ¹⁵/₁₆ × 13 in. (10 × 33 cm)
Courtesy of The Armand
P. Arman Revocable Trust,
New York
Page 119

**Carnet de reçus pour
les Zones de sensibilité
picturale immatérielle
(series 0)**
1961
Printed paper and ink
3 ⁷/₁₆ × 11 ³/₄ in.
(8.7 × 29.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 119

Boîte à lingots d'or
c. 1959
Case, blue pigment, and
gold ingots
2 ³/₁₆ × 4 ⁵/₁₆ × 1 ³/₁₆ in.
(5.6 × 11 × 3.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 117

**Au nom du bleu, de l'or,
de l'immatériel...**
1960
Dry pigment, gold leaf, and
ink on paper
3 ³/₄ × 11 ¹³/₁₆ in.
(9.5 × 30 cm each)
Private Collection
Page 216

**Ex-voto dédié à sainte Rita
de Cascia par Yves Klein**
1961
Dry pigment, gold leaf, gold
ingots, and ink on plexiglass
5 ¹/₂ × 8 ¹/₄ × 1 ¹/₄ in.
(14 × 21 × 3.2 cm)
Courtesy the Monastery of
Saint Rita, Cascia, Italy
Page 217

**Zone de sensibilité
picturale immatérielle,
Séries 5, Zone 1, from
exhibition catalogue
Comparaison**
1962
Printed paper
8 ¹/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ in.
(20.5 × 20.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 113

**When Attitudes Become
Form, exhibition**
catalogue, Kunsthalle,
Berne, Switzerland
1969
Printed paper
12 ³/₁₆ × 9 ¹/₁₆ in.
(31 × 23 cm)
Private Collection
Page 196

AIR ARCHITECTURE

"...projections d'air..."
1955
Ink on paper
11 ¹/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(28.1 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 225

**Fontaines d'eau et de feu
"Le choc permanent"**
1958
Graphite and ink on paper
11 ⁵/₁₆ × 14 ³/₁₆ in.
(29.5 × 36.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 234

**"Tube gonflé à
l'hydrogène ou à
l'hélium..."**
1958
Ink on paper
6 ¹/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(15.5 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 252

**Projet pour un tube en
aluminium lévitant**
1958
Ink on paper
8 ⁷/₁₆ × 11 ¹/₁₆ in.
(21.5 × 29.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 253

**"Solution Tinguely Klein
pour la Lévitiation du
tube..."**
1958
Ink on paper
6 ¹/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(15.4 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 253

"Rocket pneumatique..."
1958
Charcoal on paper
12 ⁵/₁₆ × 16 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(32 × 41.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 260

**"Architecture de l'air.
1958...Climatisation de
l'espace..."**
1958–62
Ballpoint pen ink and
graphite on paper
20 ⁷/₁₆ × 6 ¹¹/₁₆ in.
(53 × 17 cm)
Private Collection
Page 237

**"Sculpture aéro-
magnétique..."**
1959
Ink on paper
8 ¹/₄ × 10 ⁵/₁₆ in. (21 × 27 cm)
Private Collection
Page 258

**Sculpture aéro-
magnétique (Cascia)**
1959
Ink on paper
12 ³/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(31 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 256

**Sculpture aéro-
magnétique**
1959
Ink on paper
12 ³/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(31 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 257

**Mod. n° 58973 (Création
d'un toit d'air) 1**
Preparatory Drawing
1959
Ballpoint pen ink and
graphite on tracing paper
5 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ in.
(13.5 × 20.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 226

**Mod. n° 58973 (Création
d'un toit d'air) 2**
Preparatory Drawing
1959
Ballpoint pen ink on tracing
paper
5 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ in.
(13.5 × 20.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 226

**Mod. n° 58973 (Maison
atrium toit d'air)**
1959
Ballpoint pen ink on tracing
paper
4 ⁷/₈ × 7 ¹³/₁₆ in.
(12.4 × 19.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 227

**Mod. n° 58973 (Stade
protégé d'un toit d'air)**
1959
Ballpoint pen ink on tracing
paper
4 ¹/₄ × 7 ³/₄ in.
(10.8 × 19.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 227

**"Machine qui part et ne
revient jamais"
(projet Rocket)**
c. 1959
Ink on paper
10 ¹³/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₁₆ in.
(27.5 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 259

**"Fontaines d'eau et toit
de feu"**
c. 1959
Ink and watercolor on
paper
18 ¹/₁₆ × 16 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.
(46 × 43 cm)
Private Collection
Page 230

**"Fontaines d'eau et toit
de feu"**
c. 1959
Ink and watercolor on
paper on canvas
14 ³/₁₆ × 17 ¹/₁₆ in.
(36 × 43.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 230

**"Tableau de Feu/Mur de
Feu"**
c. 1959
Grease pencil on paper
14 ⁹/₁₆ × 21 ¹/₄ in.
(37 × 54 cm)
Private Collection
Page 229

**Fontaine de feu pour une
place publique**
c. 1959
Grease pencil on paper
14 ⁹/₁₆ × 21 ¹/₄ in.
(37 × 54 cm)
Private Collection
Page 235

**"Mur d'eau traversé de
flammes"**
c. 1959
Grease pencil on paper
14 ⁹/₁₆ × 21 ¹/₄ in.
(37 × 54 cm)
Private Collection
Page 229

"Projet pour une place publique..."

c. 1959
Ink on tracing paper on canvas
9 ¹/₁₆ × 12 ³/₁₆ in.
(23 × 31 cm)
Private Collection
Page 235

Sous-sol d'une cité climatisée (Climatisation de l'espace)

c. 1959
Ink and graphite on tracing paper
28 ³/₄ × 18 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(73 × 48 cm)
Private Collection
Page 236

"L'Eau et le Feu"

c. 1959
Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper
Each: 5 ⁷/₈ × 14 ³/₁₆ in.
(14.9 × 36 cm)
Private Collection
Page 231

"Bruit machine et sifflement"

c. 1959
Ink on paper
8 ¹/₄ × 10 ⁵/₁₆ in. (21 × 27 cm)
Private Collection
Page 258

"Matières dans le sol"

c. 1959
Ballpoint pen ink on paper
8 ⁷/₁₆ × 13 ³/₁₆ in.
(21.4 × 34 cm)
Private Collection
Page 228

"Machine pour s'entraîner à léviter"

c. 1959
Ink on paper
8 ⁷/₁₆ × 13 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(21.4 × 33.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 254

Untitled Drawing

c. 1959
Ink on paper
8 ⁷/₁₆ × 13 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(21.4 × 33.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 255

"...air conditionné..."

c. 1959
Ink on paper
8 ⁷/₁₆ × 10 ¹³/₁₆ in.
(21.4 × 27.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 239

"Plan"

c. 1959
Graphite on paper
6 ¹/₈ × 9 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(15.6 × 24 cm)
Private Collection
Page 224

"Le but final de l'architecture de l'air..."

c. 1959
Ink on paper
11 ¹/₁₆ × 9 ¹/₁₆ in.
(28.1 × 23 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 222–23

Fontaines d'eau et de feu

c. 1960
Watercolor, gouache, and ink on paper on canvas
20 ¹¹/₁₆ × 29 ¹/₂ in.
(52.5 × 74.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 241

"Institut mécanique du fluide..."

c. 1960
Ink on paper
6 × 14 ¹/₈ in.
(15.2 × 37.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 228

Cité climatisée (toit d'air, murs de feu, lit d'air) (with Claude Parent)

1961
Ink and graphite on paper
19 ¹¹/₁₆ × 26 ³/₄ in.
(50 × 67.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 243

Cité climatisée—"Accès à l'eden technique" (with Claude Parent and Sargologo)

1961
Ink and graphite on paper
10 ¹/₄ × 14 ³/₁₆ in.
(26 × 36 cm)
Private Collection
Page 243

Projet pour les Fontaines de Varsovie

1961
Pastel on paper
29 ¹/₂ × 42 ¹/₂ in.
(74.9 × 108 cm)
Private Collection
Page 242

Projet pour les Fontaines de Varsovie

c. 1961
Ink on tracing paper on canvas
26 ³/₈ × 35 ¹/₁₆ in.
(67 × 89.1 cm)
Private Collection
Page 240

"Climatisation de l'espace 1951," from exhibition catalogue Antagonismes II

1962
Printed paper
8 ⁷/₈ × 6 ¹/₈ in.
(22.5 × 15.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 238

"Architecture de l'air...Climatisation de l'espace..., " from exhibition catalogue Antagonismes II

1962
Printed paper
8 ⁷/₈ × 6 ¹/₈ in.
(22.5 × 15.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 238

Rocket pneumatique (maquette Tallon-Technès)

1962
Chrome and rubber
32 ⁵/₁₆ × 25 ⁹/₁₆ × 30 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(82.1 × 64.9 × 77 cm)
Private Collection
Page 261

**OTHER WORKS
ON PAPER, PLANS,
AND MODELS**

Monochromes jaune, rouge, et vert (scène de théâtre)

1954
Watercolor and graphite on paper in spiral-bound notebook
5 ¹/₄ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(13.3 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 72

Monochrome rouge (scène de théâtre)

1954
Watercolor and graphite on paper in spiral-bound notebook
5 ¹/₄ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(13.3 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 73

"Humilité Humilité Humilité"

1957
Ink on paper in spiral-bound notebook
8 ¹¹/₁₆ × 6 ¹¹/₁₆ (22 × 17 cm)
Private Collection
Page 64

"Solution de 1958 au problème du socle... Obélisque illuminé en bleu..."

1958
Ink on paper
8 ¹/₄ × 5 ⁷/₈ in. (21 × 15 cm)
Private Collection
Page 135

"Avec le vide, les pleins pouvoirs."—Albert Camus

1958
Ink on paper
5 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(13.5 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 1

"Malévitch ou l'espace vu de loin"

c. 1958
Ink and graphite on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 105

"Malévitch ou l'espace vu de loin"

c. 1958
Ink on paper
12 ¹/₂ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(31.8 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 104

Le dormeur—l'inverse—dessins

c. 1958
Graphite on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 75

Plan pour l'accrochage de Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges

1959
Ink on paper
12 ¹³/₁₆ × 9 ¹³/₁₆ in.
(32.5 × 24.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 144

Plan pour l'accrochage de Bas-Reliefs dans une forêt d'éponges

1959
Ink on paper
12 ¹³/₁₆ × 9 ¹³/₁₆ in.
(32.5 × 24.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 144

"Position de Malévitch par rapport à moi"

c. 1959
Ink on paper on paper
7 ¹¹/₁₆ × 7 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(19.5 × 19.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 103

"Evolution de l'art vers l'immatériel"

c. 1959
Charcoal on paper
56 ¹¹/₁₆ × 43 ¹¹/₁₆ in.
(144 × 111 cm)
Private Collection
Page 107

"IKB Essentiel, Potentiel, Spatial..."

c. 1959
Graphite on paper
7 ¹/₈ × 4 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(20 × 11.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 106

Courses de cafards retrouver l'enfance à Cagnes

c. 1959
Ink on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 42–44

Bôite à course de cafards

c. 1959
Paint on wood
31 ¹/₈ × 12 ¹⁵/₁₆ × 1 ¹/₂ in.
(79.1 × 32.9 × 3.8 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 42–44

Exhibition Floor Plan for Krefeld Museum
1960
Ink on tracing paper on canvas
13 ⁹/₁₆ × 19 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(34.4 × 49.8 cm)
Private Collection
Page 233

Exhibition Floor Plan for Krefeld Museum
1960
Ink and colored pencil on tracing paper on canvas
22 ⁵/₈ × 29 ¹/₂ in.
(57.5 × 74.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 233

Projet pour la fin d'une civilisation
1960
Ink on paper
7 ¹/₁₆ × 12 ³/₁₆ in.
(17.9 × 31 cm)
Private Collection
Page 262

Projet d'une machine à saisir
1960
Ink on paper
5 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(13.5 × 21.1 cm)
Private Collection
Page 263

Concept for the Fire Fountains at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld
1961
Paper cut-out and ink on black-and-white photograph
9 ¹/₈ × 6 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(23.2 × 17.4 cm)
Collection Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Page 232

Concept for the Fire Fountains at Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld
1961
Paper cut-out and ink on black-and-white photograph
9 ¹/₈ × 6 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(23.2 × 17.4 cm)
Collection Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Page 232

"Quand à ma tentative de l'immatériel..."
Date unknown
Ink on paper
10 ¹³/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(27.5 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 51

PUBLISHED
AND UNPUBLISHED
PROJECTS

Partition de la Symphonie Monoton-Silence
1947–61
Ink and graphite on paper
16 ⁷/₁₆ × 11 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(41.8 × 29.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 69

Esquisse de scénario La Guerre (de la ligne et de la couleur) ou (vers la proposition monochrome)
1954 (1957)
Typescript and ink on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 76

Yves Peintures
1954
Printed paper
9 ⁵/₈ × 7 ¹/₂ in.
(24.4 × 19.1 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 84–87

Yves Klein as orchestra conductor, Gelsenkirchen (front view)
1959
Black-and-white photograph
6 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(16 × 22.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 70

Yves Klein as orchestra conductor, Gelsenkirchen (back view)
1959
Black-and-white photograph
6 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(16 × 22.5 cm)
Private Collection
Page 71

"Obsession de la levitation" (Le Saut dans le vide)
1960
Black-and-white photograph
Private Collection
Page 194

Le Saut dans le vide
1960
Black-and-white photograph
Private Collection
Page 195

Dimanche (Le journal d'un seul jour)
November 27, 1960
Newsprint
21 ⁷/₈ × 14 ¹⁵/₁₆ in.
(55.6 × 37.9 cm)
Private Collection
Pages 78–81

Projet de ballet
c. 1960
Ink on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 74

ZERO 3 (revue Zero)
1961
Printed paper
7 ⁷/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (20 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 135

Scénarios du film Mondo Cane
1961
Typescript on paper
10 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 166

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Yves Klein to Fidel Castro
1958
Ink on paper
10 ³/₄ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(27.3 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 61

Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson
April 10, 1959
Typescript on paper
10 ³/₄ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(27.3 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 246

Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson
October 12, 1959
Typescript on paper
10 ⁵/₁₆ × 8 ¹/₄ in.
(26.8 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 247

Letter from Philip Johnson to Yves Klein
October 29, 1959
Typescript and ink on paper
10 ³/₄ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(27.3 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 248

Draft of Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson
August 17, 1961
Typescript on paper
10 ⁵/₈ × 8 ¹/₄ in. (27 × 21 cm)
Private Collection
Page 249

Letter from Yves Klein to Philip Johnson
October 2, 1961
Typescript on paper
10 ³/₄ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(27.3 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 250

Letter from Philip Johnson to Yves Klein
October 17, 1961
Typescript and ink on paper
10 ³/₄ × 8 ⁷/₁₆ in.
(27.3 × 21.4 cm)
Private Collection
Page 251

OTHER EPHEMERA

Yves Klein's calling card (judo)
c. 1955
Printed paper
3 ¹/₈ × 4 ⁵/₁₆ in.
(7.9 × 11.7 cm)
Private Collection
Page 352

Envelope addressed by Yves Klein to himself
April 22, 1958
Envelope and blue stamp
3 ³/₈ × 7 ¹/₁₆ in.
(8.6 × 17.9 cm)
Private Collection
Page 135

Envelope and invitation addressed by Yves Klein to Rotraut Uecker
May 25, 1959
Envelope, blue stamp, and invitation card
4 ⁵/₁₆ × 6 ¹¹/₁₆ in.
(11 × 17 cm)
Private Collection
Page 135

Rotraut and Yves Klein's tickets to Disneyland, Anaheim, CA
1961
Printed paper
2 ¹/₂ × 5 ¹/₄ in.
(6.4 × 13.3 cm)
Private Collection
Page 62

FILMS

"Surfaces et blocs de sensibilité picturale intentions picturales" installation at Galerie Colette Allendy, Paris,
May 1957
Film
Private Collection

La Spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état de matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée
1958
Film
Private Collection

"Anthropométries de l'époque bleue." Galerie internationale d'art contemporain, 253, rue Saint Honoré, Paris, France
March 9, 1960
Film
Private Collection

Yves Klein réalisant des peintures de feu. Centre d'Essais du Gaz de France, Saint-Denis, France
1961
Film
Private Collection

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