

VAN BUUREN MUSEUM & GARDENS

TANTRA PAINTINGS

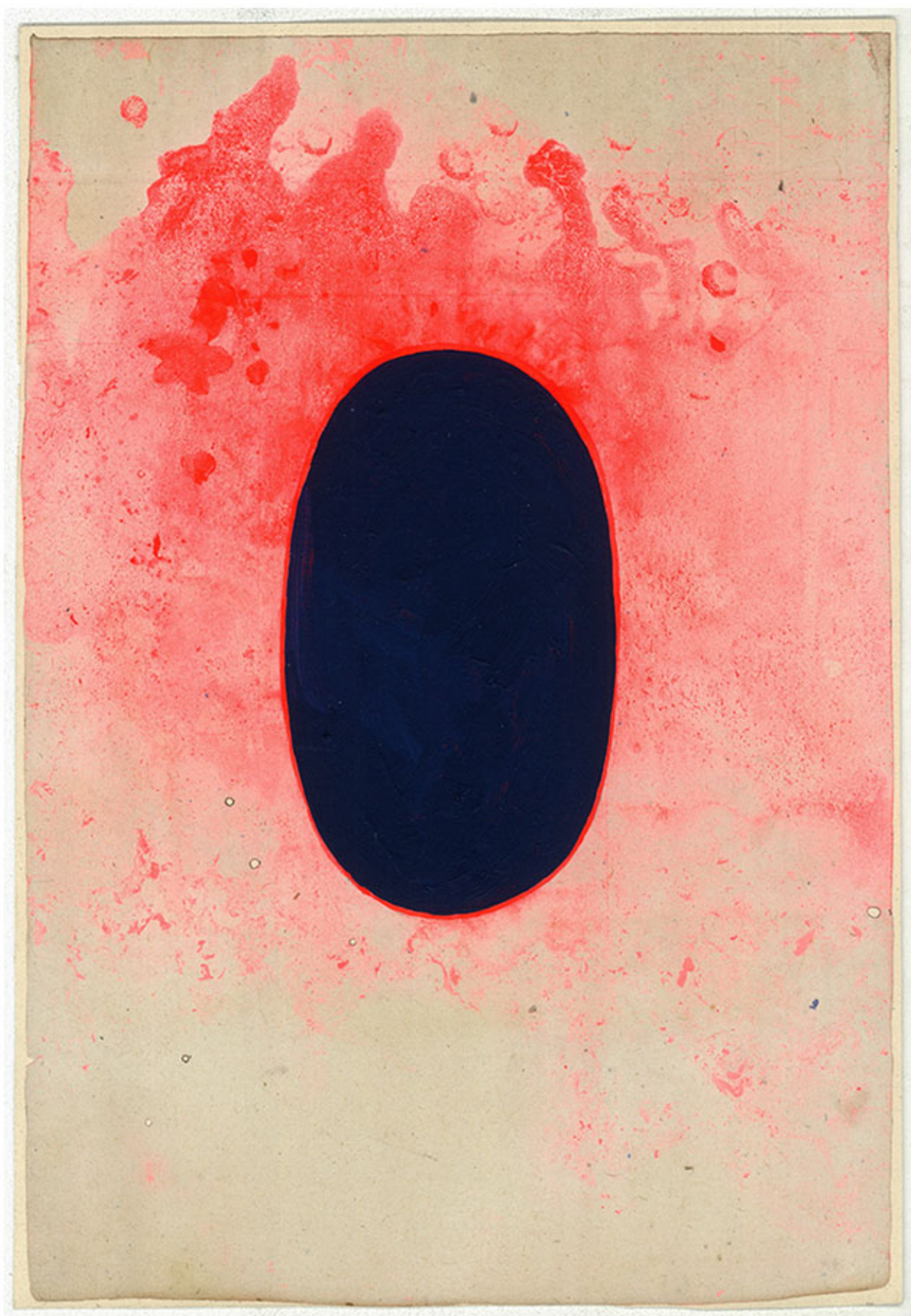
FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 TO JANUARY 18, 2021

CURATOR HERVÉ PERDRIOLLE

ALL THE WORKS PRESENTED (REALIZED BETWEEN 1992 AND 2016) WERE COLLECTED
BY FRANCK ANDRÉ JAMME, AUTHOR OF THE BOOK *TANTRA SONG*.



VIEW OF TANTRA PAINTINGS EXHIBITION AT THE VENICE BIENNALE 2013



TANTRA PAINTING, ANONYMOUS, JAIPUR 2016, VARIOUS MEDIA ON SALVAGED PAPER, 37.5X26 CM

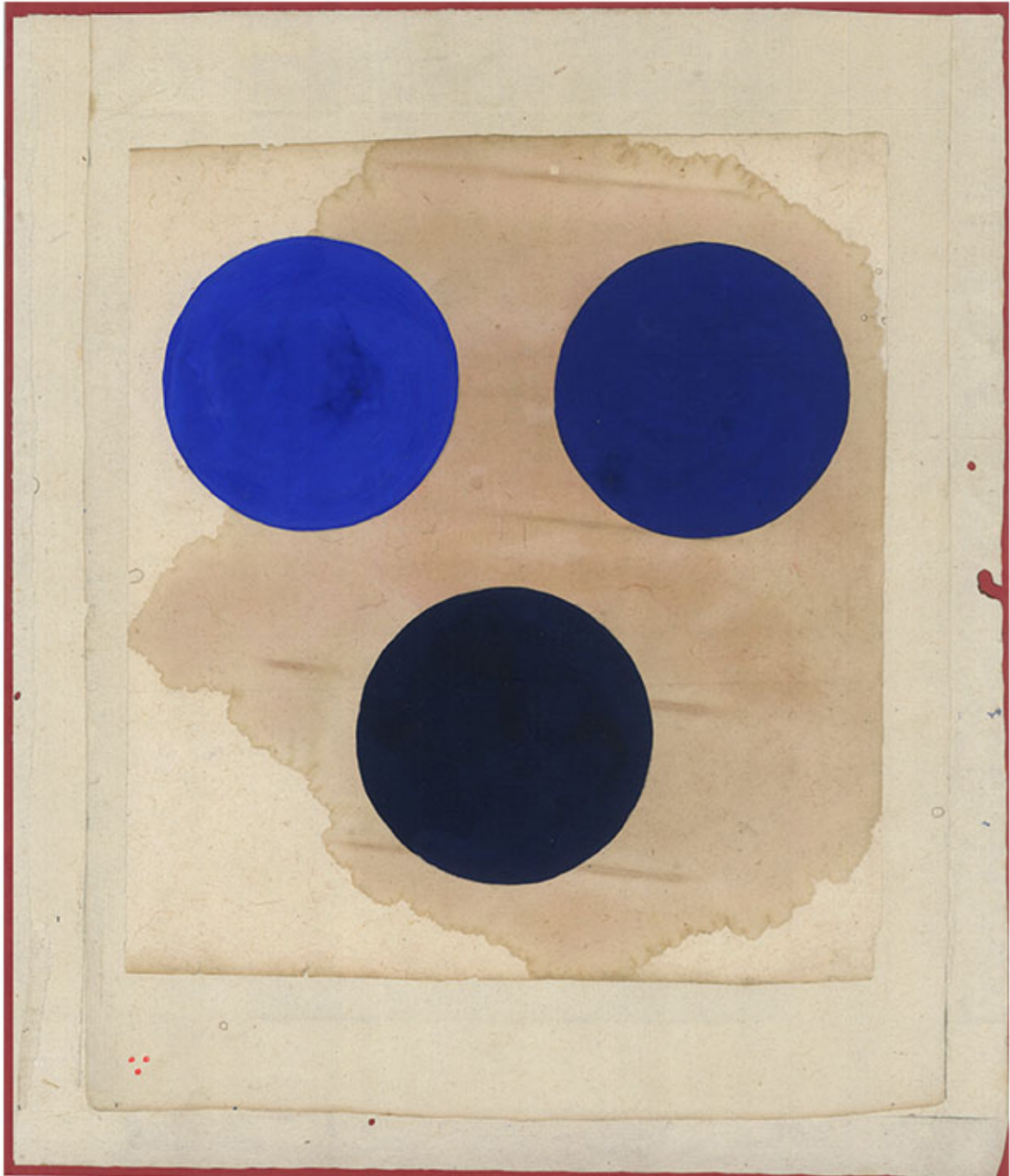
TANTRA PAINTINGS 'THE POETRY OF ABSTRACTION'

This collection of rare, abstract Tantric painting originates in French poet Franck André Jamme's journey to India twenty-five years ago when he first searched in vain for the source of these intensely beautiful and concise works. On the road to Jaipur, he survived a deadly bus accident, returning to Paris with wounds that took two years to heal. Back in India just a few years later, he met a soothsayer who proclaimed that Jamme, in his suffering, had paid sufficient tribute to the goddess Shakti and—so long as he vowed to visit the tantrikas alone or with someone he truly loves—he could enter the very private communities of adepts who make and use these paintings for their spiritual practice.

While they invoke the highly symbolic cosmology of Hindu Tantra, these contemporary, anonymous drawings from Rajasthan are unlike the more familiar strands of Tantric art. The progeny of hand-written, illustrated religious treatises from the 17th century, copied across many generations, these drawings have evolved into a distinct visual lexicon used to awaken heightened states of consciousness. Like musicians playing ragas of classical Indian music, tantrikas draw in a concentrated state of mental rapture, repeating and subtly reinterpreting melodic structures of line and color. When complete, the drawings—made in tempera, gouache, and watercolor on salvaged paper—are pinned to the wall to use in private meditation.

Possessing an uncanny affinity with a range of 20th century abstract art, the paintings also have a magnetic, vibratory beauty that inspires acute attention even in the uninitiated. Jamme has written brief, luminous texts that further open readers to their subtle magic and enrich the space for boundless contemplation. Drawing on a unique body of knowledge accumulated over two decades, Jamme has assembled a singular and revelatory collection, in which East and West, the spiritual and the aesthetic, the ancient and the modern converge.

'Tantra', an esoteric and complex branch of Hinduism, might be explained in simple terms as a path towards spiritual perfection and magical power.



TANTRA PAINTING, ANONYMOUS, SANGANER 2010, VARIOUS MEDIA ON SALVAGED PAPER, 34.8X30 CM



VIEWS OF TANTRA PAINTINGS EXHIBITION AT THE VAN BUUREN MUSEUM & GARDENS 2020

TANTRA PAINTINGS EXHIBITIONS & CATALOGUES

(All catalogues with writing by Franck André Jamme.)

Magiciens de la terre, Centre Pompidou Paris 1989 (catalogue)

Tantra, Galerie du Jour Agnès B. Paris 1994 (catalogue)

Field of Color: Tantra Drawings from India, Drawing Center, New York 2004 (catalogue)

L'Inde, marges : dessins tantriques, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris 2005 (catalogue)

Santa Monica Museum of Art, SMMoA, Los Angeles 2011 (Book *Tantra Song* published by Siglio Press, Los Angeles, 2011)

Shiva Linga, Features Inc., New York 2012 (New York Times article next page)

Biennale de Venise 2013 (catalogue)

Biennale de Moscou 2013 (catalogue)

Inde, Manoir de Martigny 2018 (catalogue)

TANTRISM RELATED BOOKS & WRITINGS

(Except for the above catalogues, there is little information published on the abstract Tantric paintings exhibited here; however, the following books may be useful for those wishing to learn more about the general background and symbolism of Tantra.)

Evloa, Julius. *The Yoga of Power: Tantra, Shakti and the Secret Way*, Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1992.

Mookerjee, Ajit. *Ritual Art of India*, Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1998.

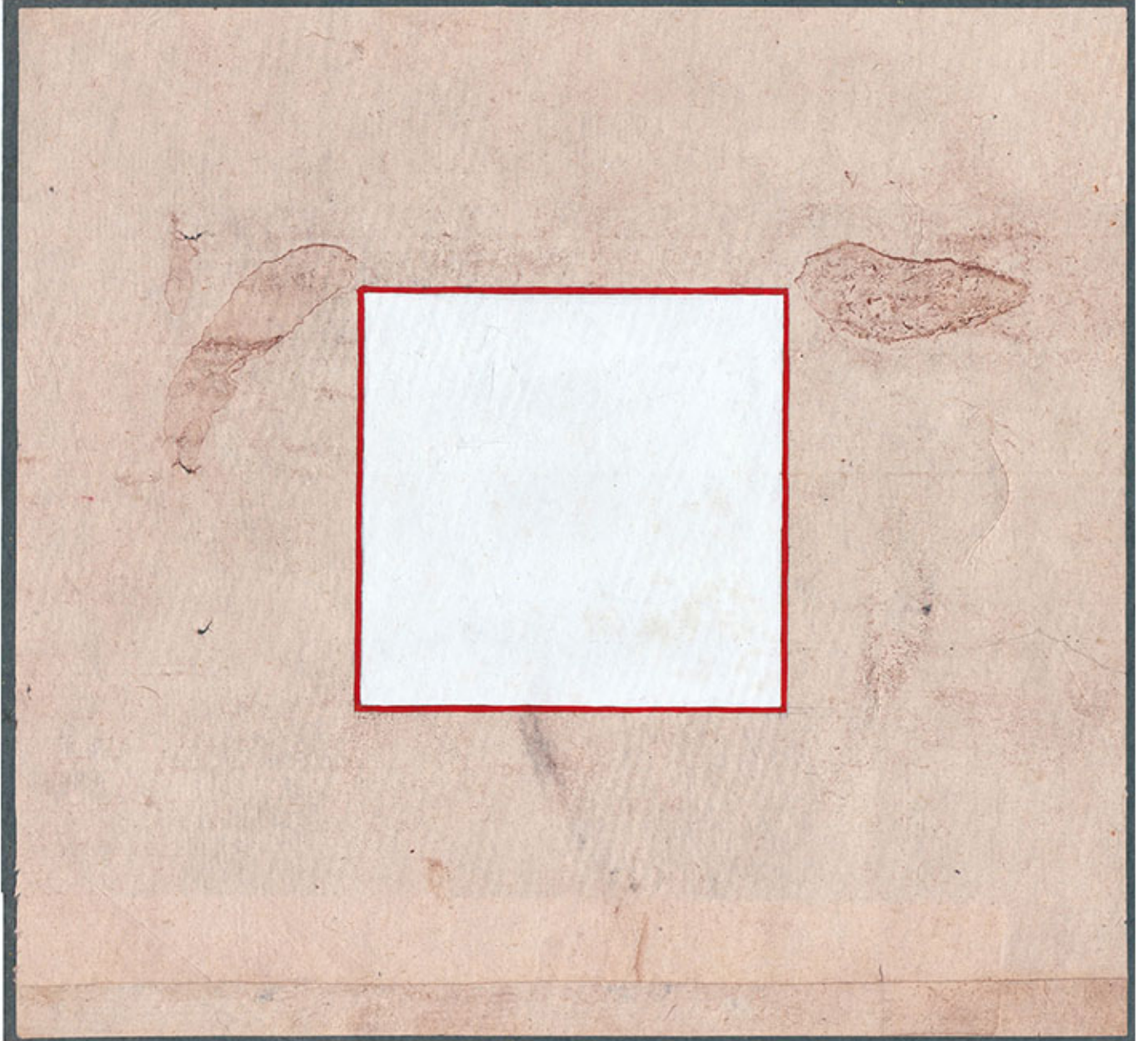
Mookerjee, Ajit, and Madhu Khanna, *The Tantric Way: Art, Science, Ritual*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2003.

Padoux, André. *Vāc: The Concept of the World in Selected Hindu Tantras*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1990.

Padoux, André. What Do We Mean by Tantrism? *The Roots of Tantra*, edited by Katherine Anne Harper and Robert L. Brown, Albany: SUNY Press, 2002: 17-24.

Rawson, Phillip. *The Art of Tantra*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

Rawson, Phillip. *Tantra: The Indian Cult of Ecstasy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.; 1984.



TANTRA PAINTING, ANONYMOUS, UDAIPUR 1995, VARIOUS MEDIA ON SALVAGED PAPER, 25.7X27.5 CM

ART IN REVIEW

'Anonymous Tantra Paintings' at Feature Inc.

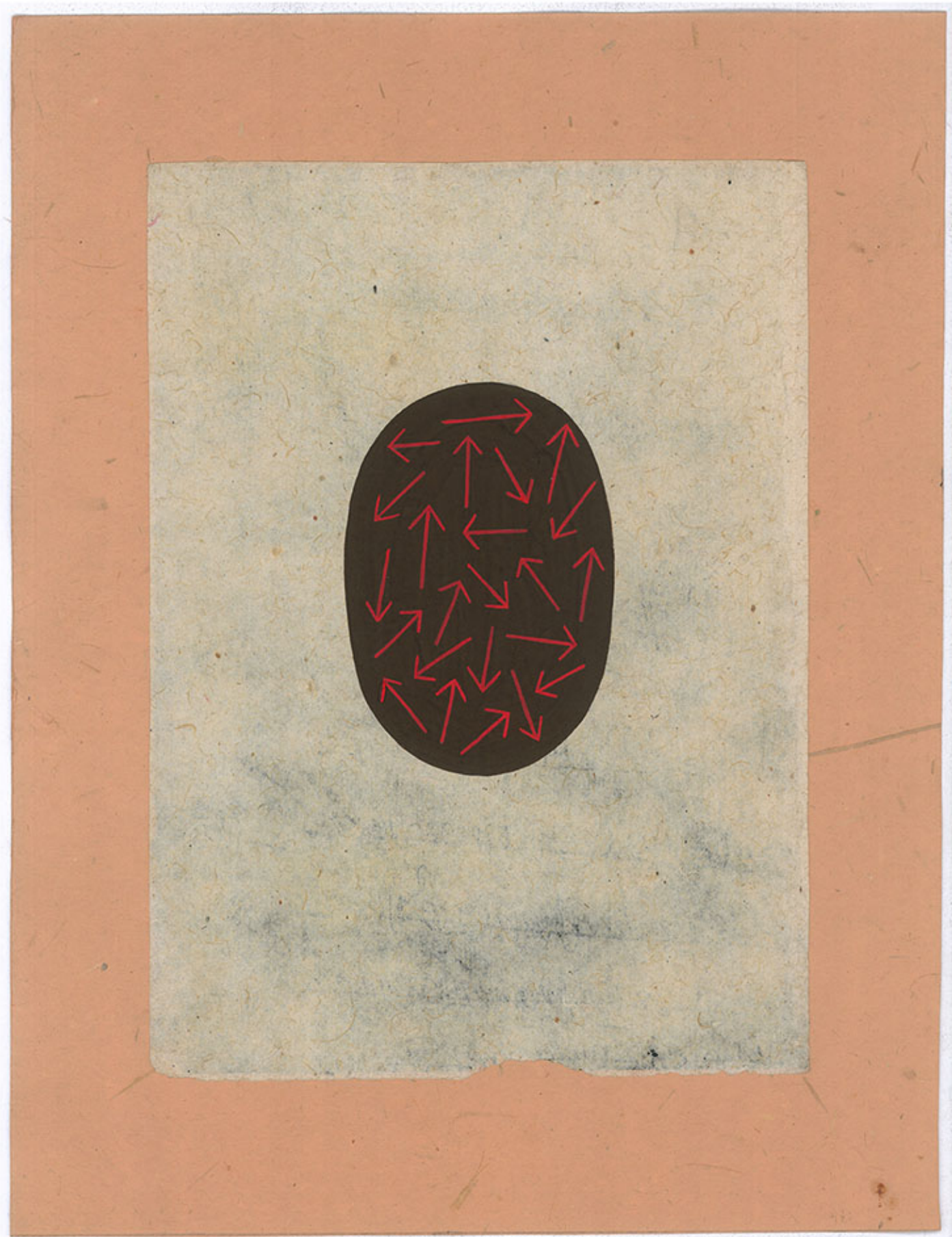
By Roberta Smith

Feb. 2, 2012

With their simple geometric shapes and quirky details (spirals, dots, arrows) these works invite analogies with Western painting. (Malevich and Klee come immediately to mind.) But they are not intended foremost as art and may or may not be made by artists; they are created as aids to meditation rituals, tools for the pursuit of enlightenment offered to followers of Tantrism, in this context a subcategory of Hinduism. That these rituals involve aspects of heightened awareness, visualization and resonance circles back to something like art.

The forms are fairly set. A fat oval is an image of Shiva. A circle with a row of smaller circles inside like toes is the Paw of Time. Three horizontal bars, stacked or in a row, represent the three gunas: matter, energy and essence. A whitish square edged in a thin red line signifies the purity of consciousness. The effect of individual works stems from many subtle variables: their handmade quality; their flat, saturated colors; and the way those colors cleave to the rough paper, smoothly coating it. Most important is the obvious role that the random stains and imperfections of the paper play in the placement of the shapes; what Westerners might call the figure-ground relationship is, to use another art term, highly, even exquisitely site specific, and charged with philosophical implications. With focused viewing, each piece of paper becomes a complex universe unto itself, within which each shape reigns as a kind of geometric deity. Tantrist or not, a mind can be quietly blown.

A version of this article appears in print on Feb. 3, 2012, Section C, Page 30 of the New York edition with the headline: 'Anonymous Tantra Paintings'. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)



TANTRA PAINTING, ANONYMOUS, JAIPUR 1992, VARIOUS MEDIA ON SALVAGED PAPER, 36.8X28 CM

WORKS EXHIBITED - HIGH DEFINITION VISUALS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

TANTRA PAINTINGS MEANING

ALL WORKS ARE ANONYMOUS. THE TANTRIKAS USE VARIOUS MEDIA (WATERCOLOR, TEMPERA, GOUACHE, INK, HAND-MADE COLORS) ON SALVAGED PAPER



JODHPUR 2008 34X22.5 CM
BLACK TRIANGLE AND BURGUNDY CIRCLE. RACE OF THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE (BLACK TRIANGLE) TOWARDS ITS MASCULINE LOVER. SHAKTI PURSUING SHIVA



CHOMU 2018 39X27.3 CM
SIMPLY THE KING. THE SHIVA LINGA, THE ORIGINAL REPRESENTATION OF THE DEITY. SING AMONG THE SIGNS (IN SANSKRIT *LINGA* MEANS "SIGN").



JAIPUR 1992 30.5X24.5 CM
ONE OF VISHNU'S TEN INCARNATIONS DESCENDING INTO THE NIGHT OF OUR DARK WORLD, YET UNDER THE SEAL OF ENERGY (THE MULTICOLORED SPIRAL, THUS HAVING THE POWER TO SPORT ALL ASPECTS OF MANFESTATION, ALL TASTE, ALL COLOR).



JAIPUR 2013 35.5X30.6 CM
BURGUNDY CIRCLE WITH A GOLDEN POINT, WHICH IS A BINDU, THE DROP OF CONCENTRATED ENERGY CONTAINING THE ENTIRE WORLD



JAIPUR 2016 37.5X26 CM
SHIVA LINGA WITH RED HAIR. A FLAME BURNS ETERNALLY WITHIN IT



CHOMU 2012 43.7X36.8 CM
HAVING CIRCLED THE SKY OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THE GODDESS SUDDENTLY ARRIVES AT HER SOURCE, HER CENTER: HER SEX.
THE TIP OF ENERGY'S ARROW, POINTED TOWARD THE CENTER.



JAIPUR 2017 36X29.2 CM
LIGHT PINK AND GREEN. THE TWO ETERNAL POLES OF THE WORLD.
DAY AND NIGHT. STILLNESS AND MOVEMENT. SHIVA AND SHAKTI
(THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE : ENERGY)



UDAIPUR 1995 25.7X27.5 CM
PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE SCHEME OF THE ENTIRE TANTRA VOCABULARY.
MEANING THE (POSSIBLE) PURITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS.
THE CLEAREST, THE PUREST.



SANGANER 2010 23.2X45.2 CM
ENERGY (BROWN-RED) CROSSING, GOING THROUGH THE WORLD



NEAR JODHPUR 2015 35.7X29.2 CM
BLACK ON BLACK. KALI, "THE BLACK ONE", SHINY BLACK TRIANGLE WALKING
ON THE MATT BLACK OF OUR WORLD



SANGANER 2010 34.8X30 CM
ONE OF THE RARE SCHEME WITHOUT ACTUALLY ANY SPIRITUAL
MEANING. IT'S JUST A MNEMONIC PIECE FOR APPRENTICES, FOR
SHARPENING THEIR VISION AND RECOGNIZING ONE COLOUR
AMONGST THREE VERY CLOSE COLOURS



JAIPUR 2000 25.2X32 CM
EGG OR ALMOND OR LARGE EYE. OR A MASK WITH A ROGUSH STARE.
ALMOST CHEERFUL. AS IF THE MEDITATION SUDDENLY ASSUMED
A CERTAIN INSOLENCIE AND LOOKED ENERGY



JAIPUR 1992 36.8X28 CM
THE ENDLESS DANCE OF ENERGY. TIME AND SPACE. A MEDITATION ON
THE ACTIVE PRINCIPLE OF ALL MANIFESTATION, OF MOVMENT, OF LIFE

ALL TEXTS FRANCK ANDRE JAMME
ALL PHOTOS @GALERIE HERVE PERDRIOLLE BRUSSELS