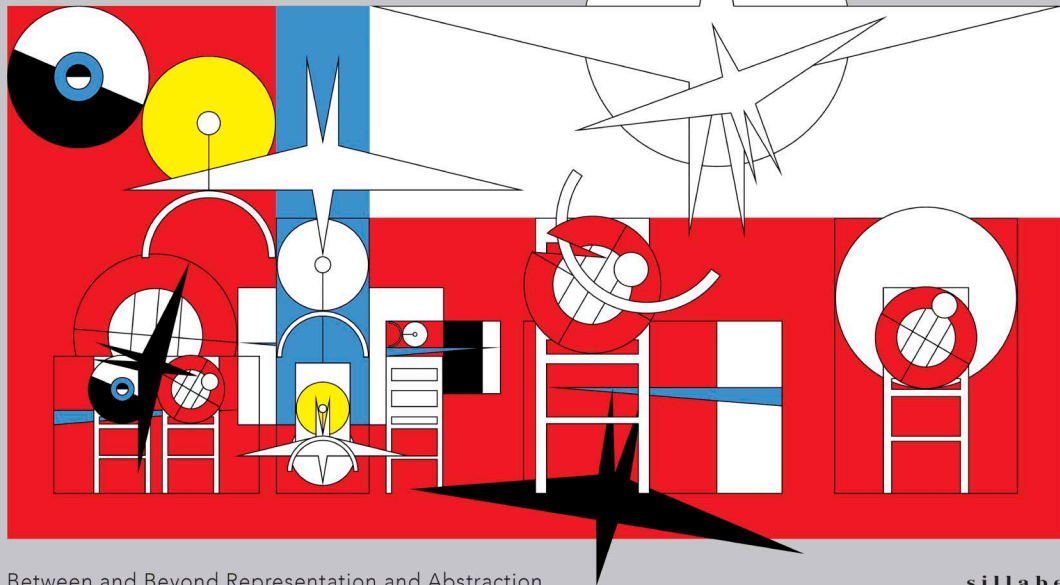


Adi Da Samraj

The Ascent of Orpheus



Between and Beyond Representation and Abstraction

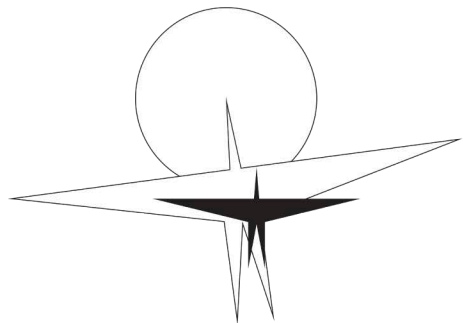
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The exhibition *The Ascent of Orpheus: Between and Beyond Representation and Abstraction* presents works by Adi Da Samraj from his suites *Orpheus One* and *Linead One* (*Eurydice One*). In these digitally composed images, the artist has created an “abstract narrative” that echoes but radically recasts the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

Like the original myth, Adi Da’s suites depict a heroic being from the world of light who descends into the world of darkness in order to bring his beloved back to the light. In the myth, Orpheus makes a fatal error that causes him to lose Eurydice. In Adi Da’s artistic reframing of the myth, Orpheus succeeds in enabling Eurydice’s liberation from darkness. This victorious ascent is the unifying theme of the remarkably diverse body of art found in *Orpheus One* and *Linead One*—art that occupies a mysterious field of meaning “between and beyond representation and abstraction.”

The exhibition catalog offers a visually rich survey of *Orpheus One* and *Linead One*—including the images being shown in the exhibition and numerous additional images from the two suites, as well as essays on the suites and selections from Adi Da’s own writings on art.

It's The Beautiful Itself It's Reality
It's Truth It's Itself



Adi Da Samraj

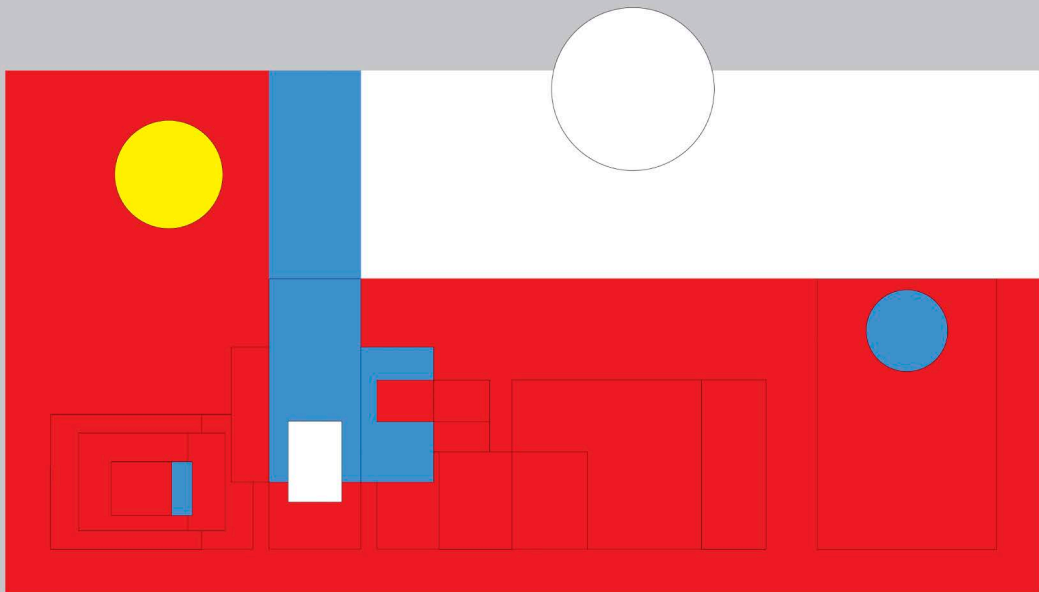
The Ascent of Orpheus

Between and Beyond Representation and Abstraction

BARGELLO NATIONAL MUSEUM
FLORENCE, ITALY

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*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Two – VII, 1
from Orpheus One, 2007*

The Abstract Language of Adi Da Samraj

by Achille Bonito Oliva

The relevance of the abstract images of Adi Da Samraj lies in their demonstration of a balance between the creative process and the formal outcome. Generally, American minimalist and conceptual art, with its emphasis on the dematerialization of the object, has given a privileged place to the concept over its execution. In contrast, Adi Da Samraj has always given equal importance to working simultaneously with the concept and the object emanating from the concept.

Planning certainly plays a key role in Adi Da Samraj's strategic language, acting as a carrier of the concept as it is articulated through particular images. Adi Da creates an initial form from the concept, which he then progressively develops through modular moments that multiply the initial form without merely repeating it.

Thus, the original concept inaugurates a creative process that is not merely prescriptive but also generative. The final form, whether two-dimensional or three-dimensional, offers a visual reality that is both abstract and concrete, pulsing under the analytical and emotional gaze of the viewer. An *asymmetrical logic* sustains Adi Da's work, establishing irregularity as a creative principle. The final realization is not limited by the aesthetic conception, as there is no cold mirroring between concept and execution. Rather, there is an asymmetry implicit in the original concept. Such asymmetry is an integral aspect of the modernist approach, reflecting the nature of the world around us, full of unexpected events.

The elegance of Adi Da Samraj consists in his unabashed acceptance of *intelligent chance* as the principle of life. Art becomes the place where the artist gives form to this principle, incorporating it in his work through a geometry that plays on asymmetry, producing a visual world that is always dynamic and never static.

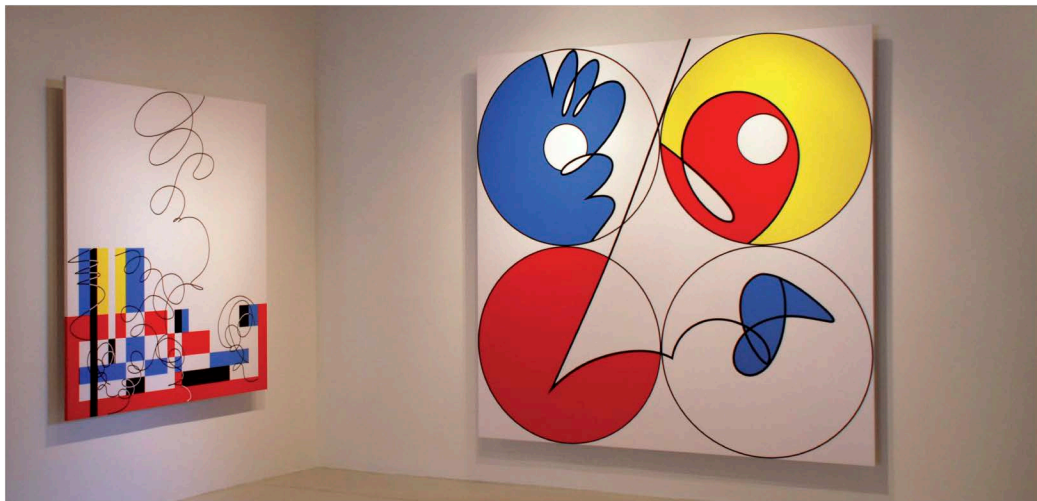
Adi Da always creates *families of works*, derived from visual matrices that are capable of multiplying themselves into different but complementary forms. Thus, the act of conceiving a work of art no longer stands as a singular moment of arrogant precision. Rather, the concept is an open-ended process of exploration,

albeit guided by a method refined through practice and execution. Such a method obviously requires a constantly expanding parameter of reference, anchored to an historical awareness of the modern age as dominated by technology.

In the age of modern technology, the process of production is based upon the principles of standardization, objectivity, and neutrality. Pop art is the iconic confirmation and the visual representation of this materialist philosophy and consumerism. These principles represent a worldview very different from that of Adi Da Samraj. The art of Adi Da is animated by a profound and highly subjective idea of a potentially infinite diversity. That diversity is visually portrayed through the creation of forms utilizing standardization, objectivity, and neutrality; but forms that also simultaneously purify the imagination of references to a mass society pervaded by the primacy of technology and emptied of subjectivity and spirituality.

However, with the images of Adi Da Samraj, that emptying does not manifest as a loss, as it might to a late-humanist or Marxist mind. Rather, it is the carrier of a new anthropology characterized by *modular logic*—a logic founded not on symmetrical repetition but asymmetrical multiplication and the precise application of the rules of *intelligent chance* as opposed to *indistinct chaos*. The principle of intelligent chance makes it possible to accept discontinuity without sinking into the despair of an incapacitated rationality. This acceptance arises when arrogant Western logocentrism is abandoned for the patient analytical approach of the East and a pragmatic disposition to an openness to the world, a globalized world in which influences between East and West are reciprocal.

Adi Da Samraj conveys a fundamental trust in the *ethical nature* of art, a confidence that art is capable of generating a "language" and forms appropriate for its time. He does not embrace the notion of *positive utopia*—an idea present in all the historical avant-gardes of the last century and promulgated by Western artists functioning in twentieth century late-capitalist society. This utopian notion celebrates the power of art and its language, and the ability of art to turn the disorder of the world into art's own order.



Images from *Orpheus One* (left) and *Linead One* (right) at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York, 2010

In the abstract images of Adi Da Samraj, we do not have figures, but rather cubes, squares, rectangles, checkerboards, and curvilinear forms, which constitute the *figurative imagery* of our age—an age defined by a technology promoting the dematerialization and abstraction of the human body. But the art of Adi Da Samraj gives body even to geometry. His two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms are always concrete communications, affirming a disposition that is never suppressive or closed but always germinative and unpredictable. The forms germinate and multiply with sudden angles that articulate the poten-

tial of a new geometric sensuality. These forms always display a *monumentality* that avoids the arrogance of the skyscraper and the rhetoric of sculpture.

The abstraction of Adi Da Samraj is anti-rhetorical and aspires to restore humanity to a state of contemplation and reflection. That is why Adi Da rejects Renaissance perspective, which pop art uses to represent urban reality. With Adi Da the vision is aperspectival. His abstract images look upon the world from beyond any point of view.

This does not mean that Adi Da Samraj has gone to battle against the

world of ordinary perception and its forms. Rather, he has realized a communicative field of analysis and synthesis: analysis produced by investigating the germination of these *families of forms*, and synthesis produced by the delicate force of the whole unfolding before our eyes.

The works of Adi Da Samraj are places of confluence where thinking and acting, concept and execution are profoundly intertwined, so as to create a system yielding sublime forms.

To paraphrase Pierre Klossowski, every "experimental initiative" requires a "delirious interpretation" that is "lucid to the extreme." Art always requires an "experimental initiative" as a starting point for artistic creation—artistic creation capable of transforming the imaginative impulse into an objective result. Experimentation involves not simply technique but continuity of vision void of uncertainty or hesitation. The artist's drive is found in his artistic language, and it is there that the imaginative impulse finds its obvious outlet.

Adi Da Samraj's art is a condensation of a vision into tangible form. Being a visionary does not necessarily require him to alter the innate symmetries of his artistic language, but rather to bring them into correspondence with his own creative imagination.

Adi Da Samraj's strength lies in his ability to construct a landscape of forms that do not compete, in their own variability, with the visual codes of reality. His art communicates no animus toward the "things" of the surrounding world. Armed with a sense of infinite potential, he adopts artistic creation as a means of building a universe that does not depend on things themselves.

Thus, Adi Da Samraj's images are not mere childish transgressions of the canons of harmony, proportion, and symmetry. They do not constitute a purely sentimental landscape of iconographic animus, mirroring the cold landscape that envelopes humanity. In relation to his artistic language, Adi Da is a builder who sets out to construct, with his own means, a world representative of his vision.

Adi Da Samraj uses "lucid delirium" as a creative process founded on the economy of an abstract language. His images possess a plastic tension inscribed on the two-dimensional surface or in three-dimensional space, with the force and necessity of its own internal dynamic. A sense of construction underpins the work, always realized with the awareness that the whole must stand as a self-sufficient form. A vertical force supports the image, since it must defy the laws of gravity. The non-arbitrary system of signs demands rules formulated in accordance with the tensions inherent in the artist's chosen language. Every work requires special care and attention symphonic with the particularities of each new form.

From the moment when he engages in the process of making images, Adi Da Samraj transcends the mere mirroring of things. From that moment, there is no memory of established rules and there are no surprises for him. He enters into an "experimental initiative," free of the merely euphoric or transgressive, where he establishes an iconographic universe absolutely harmonious with his creative imagination.

The images of Adi Da Samraj always gravitate toward a comprehensive totality defined by a symbiosis of feeling and visual form. The work is never fragmentary. It is never a mere detail, separated from the system as a whole.

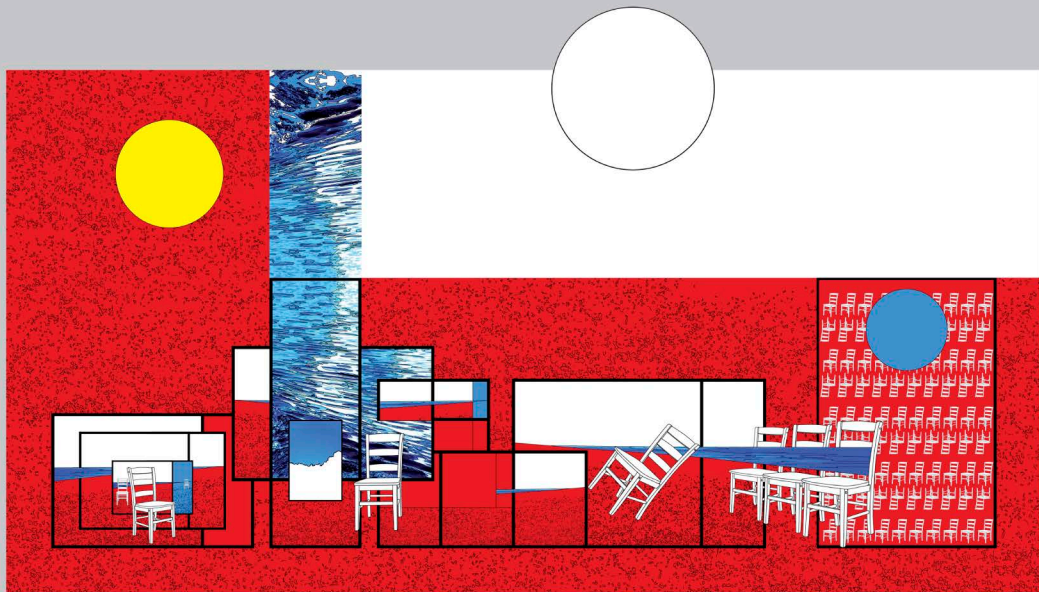
The force of intention that fuels his creativity makes it impossible to consider his work a mere relic of the imagination, a metaphorical detail subtracted from a hypothetical totality. Distance provides a detachment necessary to equip Adi Da's language-system with its potential intensity. Pathos is inherent in the artist's awareness that he must struggle to bring the artistic language he utilizes into a formal state that would have been absolutely inconceivable before his intervention.

Adi Da Samraj's break with established artistic language is a struggle not with the ghosts of the past but with the urgent need to bring into existence, and to the life of form, impulses attuned to the *divine* nature of man.

Ultimately, Adi Da Samraj conjugates the total timespan of life and death, in relation not only to individual destiny but also to the destiny of humankind. In the tension between life and death, between past and present, Adi Da isolates the moment for resurrecting a medium capable of communicating the heroic quality of an image built on its own inner nature. Here there is certainly the essential framework of an artistic language that will endure through time.

Achille Bonito Oliva is an internationally acclaimed art critic, teacher, and historian. He has curated numerous thematic and interdisciplinary exhibitions, including Adi Da Samraj's solo collateral exhibition *Transcendental Realism: The Art of Adi Da Samraj* at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007), and was also the director of the 45th Venice Biennale.

Achille Bonito Oliva is a prolific author and has written numerous books translated into several languages, including *The Italian Trans-avantgarde*, *American Graffiti*, *The Ideology of the Traitor: Art, Manner and Mannerism*, and *Art Tribes*. He has also authored numerous works on artists such as Francis Bacon, Frida Kahlo, Mario Ceroli, Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Tano Festa, Mimmo Paladino, Larry Rivers, Yoko Ono, and Mario Schifano. He is professor of contemporary art at La Sapienza University in Rome.



*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Two – I, 1
from Orpheus One, 2007*

The Unobservable Totality of Light

by Adi Da Samraj

My image-art can be characterized as paradoxical space that undermines "point of view". That undermining allows for a tacit glimpse, or intuitive sense, of the transcendental condition of reality—totally beyond and prior to "point of view".

My process of image-art is always purposed to transcend "point of view"—and, if the resultant images are received seriously and viewed seriously, they are a means for tacitly feeling the perfectly egoless condition of that which is perceived.

By making image-art, I am making "space" for what is beyond and prior to "point of view" and ego—"I".

My process of creating images brings together two principal elements, in a complex approach. One is the comprehensive element of form, and the other is the element of fundamental content, or essential meaning. On the one hand, I constantly exercise the formal element. By means of an always spontaneously free process of improvisation, I strictly control and order the structure of the images I invent. On the other hand, I am intent upon maintaining the characteristic of meaning. Indeed, the meaning-content is always primary. The meaning-context, rather than the formal context in and of itself, is always the "subject" to which I respond by making image-art. Therefore, I insist that the work I do with the formal aspects of an image coincide with the preservation and enlargement of the fundamental context of meaning—no matter how much of an abstraction the image may become in the formal process of improvisational invention. Consequently, the tension between meaning and form is fundamental to all the image-making work I do.

The idea—expressed by Cézanne, and by various other artists and artistic movements since the time of Cézanne—that artistically fashioned visual form is to be based on primary geometric elements has also been fundamental to the artistic training and familiarity I have developed with art, from the time that I was a boy. Indeed, if the deep process whereby the brain makes perception happen is profoundly felt, then it can also be understood that the basis of the natural world's construction as perceptual experience is primary geometry, or elemental shape—curved, linear, and angular. Everything perceived is a structure

that demonstrates the interaction of these three all-patterning forces of shape. The unknowably complex intersection of circles, squares, and triangles—or of curved, linear, and angular geometric, or geometrically-organizing, forces—structures and organizes virtually every perceptible natural shape.

The natural world itself is a self-morphing and self-limiting construction, or a naturally improvised and spontaneously self-organizing art-form, formalized and fabricated by means of a plastic interaction between primary forces and structures. But the natural world is so complex in its combinations of root-forces of shaping energy—and, thus, of primary geometries—that, except in some generalized sense, the primaries are not perceived. However, it is altogether possible to tacitly feel that whatever is being perceived is something structured in the primary geometric manner, and that, consequently, all apparent complexity is based on very simple primary elements. My image-art is, on this basis, a demonstration of the naturally perceived world as multiples of primary geometries.

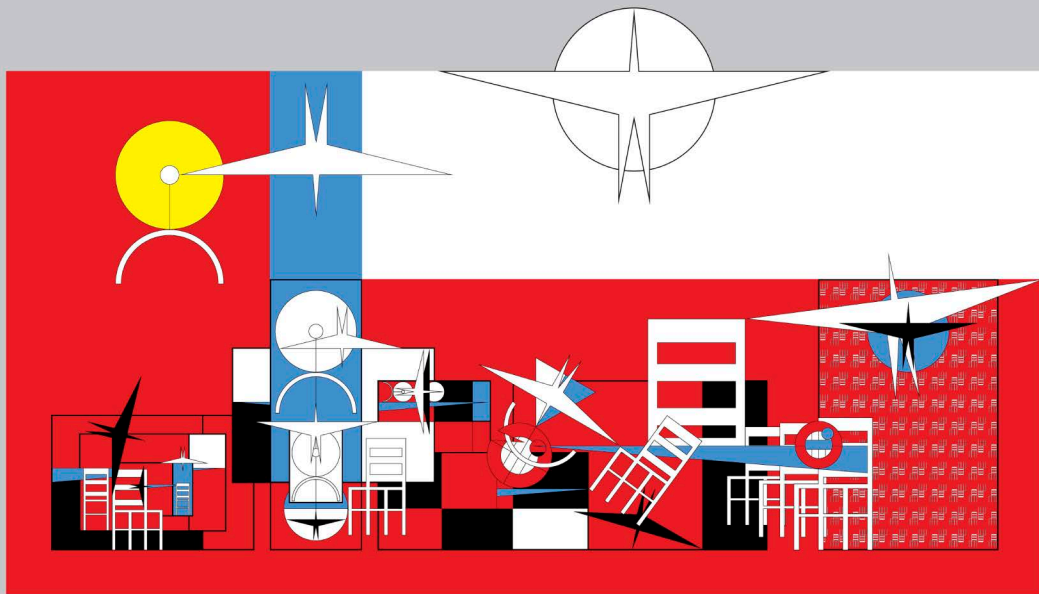
My images are about how reality is—and they are also about how reality appears, in the context of natural perception, as a construction made of primary shaping-forces. My image-art is, therefore, not merely "subjectively" or, otherwise, "objectively" based. Rather, the images I make always utterly coincide with reality as it is. Therefore, I have called the process of the image-art I make and do "Transcendental Realism".

The living body inherently wants to be one with the matrix of life. The living body always wants to allow the light of perfect reality into the "room". Assisting human beings to fulfill that impulse is what I work to do by every act of image-art.

My images are created to be a means for the fully participating viewer to locate fundamental light—the world as light, all relations as light, naturally perceived light as absolute light.

My images, well-met, should bring tears to the eyes, restore laughter to the life, and, altogether, both show and give a perfect equanimity to the total world.

Ultimately, when "point of view" is transcended, there is no longer any separate self at all—but only love-bliss-brightness, limitlessly felt, in vast unpatterned joy.



The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Two – VII, 4 from Orpheus One, 2007

Orpheus (suggested by the imagery both of white "bird" and of "bicycle" wheels and handlebars) first descends into the world of darkness (the "red-and-black space") and then ascends toward the world of light (the "white field" and circle), drawing Eurydice with him (suggested by the black bird on the right side of the image), ultimately (at the top of the image) returning to the "Divine Domain" of "no-difference".

The Ascent of Orpheus

In the suites *Orpheus One* and *Linead One*, Adi Da Samraj has created a visual world and storyline that resonates with the ancient mythical archetypes of Orpheus and Eurydice. Just as the Greek myth has been recast in widely differing forms by Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Rilke, Cocteau, and many other ancient and modern writers and artists, Adi Da radically re-imagines the fundamental shape and import of the story.

Adi Da describes his suites as “abstract narratives.” Thus, the individual images do not tell a story in any conventional sense. Rather, they generate a field of intuitively felt meaning that coincides with the essential meaning of the myth, as re-imagined by Adi Da.

Adi Da acknowledged that it is important for viewers of his *Orpheus One* and *Linead One* suites to have a basic familiarity with the Greek myth:

*Familiarity with the Orpheus myth (or narrative) should be part of what informs people's understanding of what exactly these suites are about, or how the suites can be felt, or how they can be felt to mean. People will bring all kinds of information, personal characteristics, modes of participation, and so forth—and all of that is part of what the images mean, as well as anything that I myself have verbally commented on or visually encoded into the images themselves.*¹

Adi Da summarizes the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice in its most commonly known form, in his own telling of the story:

The fundamental story of the ancient Greek myth portrays Orpheus as a poet, singer, and musician. He marries Eurydice, and immediately she is bitten by a snake and falls into the after-death world, the underworld (or Hades).

Orpheus descends into Hades (or what could also be understood as the dark space of the natural world) to find Eurydice and bring her back to the life-world. Using his musical and poetic powers, Orpheus establishes an agreement whereby Eurydice can follow him back to the life-world. However, Orpheus is told that he must not look back as they move out of Hades—he must simply return to the life-world, and they will be united there.

They leave to return to the life-world, but, just as he is about to reenter that world, Orpheus forgets or disregards the instruction, and looks back to check that Eurydice is behind him. Because he violated this curious instruction, she falls back into the afterlife-world, and he is forced to return to the world of the living without Eurydice.

After that, Orpheus suffers Eurydice's absence, and seeks for her, and goes through all kinds of torment about losing her. He spends the rest of his life in mourning, in a kind of mystical impulse toward union, but without a physical other to relate to. Eventually, in all of his struggling, he is, in effect, sacrificed.

*Orpheus goes to hell to save his beloved, which he ultimately fails to do. He ruins himself, but it is his effort that is laudable.*²

Thus, the original myth is deeply tragic, ending with the failure of Orpheus' valiant efforts to bring Eurydice back from the underworld to the world of the living. However, Adi Da points out that, despite its tragic outcome, the myth defines an archetype of the ascent from darkness to light—and, on this basis, Adi Da refashions the myth to portray Orpheus as a liberator, who enables Eurydice to ascend to the light, or what Adi Da calls the “Divine Domain,” the blissful realm beyond any trace of ego.

*At the core of the myth of Orpheus is a spiritual descent from the world of light into the natural domain, and a subsequent ascent (or escape) from that domain. The red-and-black space in some of the images of Orpheus One is the realm of difficulty and suffering in which human beings live. However, the evidence in the images of Orpheus One, like the evidence in the myth of Orpheus, suggests a possibility other than merely remaining in the realm of suffering—namely, ascent beyond the hell of the natural world, to a domain free of the darkness that is made by egoity. That ascent is a flight provoked (or made possible) by the descent of the spiritual hero, who enables a liberating passage beyond egoity—out of the realm of hell, and (ultimately) into the Divine Domain.*³

Thus, the “story” of Adi Da’s *Orpheus One* and *Linead One*, echoing but reframing the story of the Greek myth, is of a heroic being from the world of light descending into the world of darkness—in order to bring his beloved back to the light (rather than merely to the domain of the living). In this story, the world into which Orpheus descends is the world as we commonly know it—a world which is (even unwittingly) made dark by the human collective of unilluminated beings (or egos), who live and act on the presumption that the ego (or the sense of, and identity with, a separate “I”) is what is of supreme value in life. In Adi Da’s retelling, Orpheus succeeds in bringing his beloved back to the light. Orpheus must still undertake the ordeal portrayed in the classical myth in order to save his beloved, but, altogether, the story revealed in the *Orpheus* and *Linead* suites is one of victorious ascent.

The fundamental significance of this story is expressed in the poetry of the subtitles:

Orpheus One

The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight

Linead One

Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View

Both of these subtitles refer to the “descent” or “fall” of the “bicycle.” And, indeed, both suites are characterized by the figurative imagery of bicycles and bicycle wheels, often represented in abstract form as simple circles and lines. Adi Da uses the wheel/circle and the bird in flight as visual metaphors for the means by which Eurydice (or any being) can be enabled to ascend, from the darkness (or the human world that is characterized by self-caused suffering, mythologically portrayed as the dark underworld of the dead) into the light (or the transcendent domain of Truth and Reality, mythologically portrayed as the sunlit world of the living).

In the subtitle to *Orpheus One*, Adi Da characterizes the descent of the bicycle (a symbol for Orpheus as liberator) as a spiritual event. Thus, Adi Da’s Orpheus is not merely involved in a romantic attempt to resurrect his lost beloved. Rather, Orpheus here succeeds in liberating Eurydice from darkness (or from being trapped in an ego-based life). And this spiritual descent enables “the second-birth of flight”—the “flight” upwards from darkness to light. In other words, the spiritual descent of Orpheus makes it possible for

Eurydice to “fly” out of the darkness into the light, and thus be reborn as a spiritually liberated being.

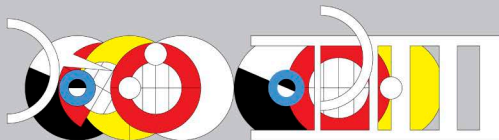
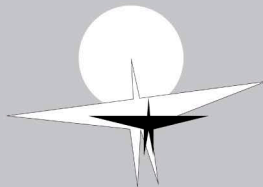
In the subtitle to *Linead One*, Adi Da intriguingly describes the world of darkness (or the world of ordinary human experience) in the visual-artistic terms of “primary color and point of view.” He uses “primary color” (playing on the obvious perceptual differences between red, yellow, and blue) to point to the universal presumption that all beings and things are inherently different from each other—and, in turn, irreducibly separate from one another. Thus, Adi Da is relating to the primary colors as prismatic “slices” of white (or undifferentiated) light. In this subtitle, Adi Da uses “point of view” to indicate the fundamental presumption that “I” exist as a separate “point” of awareness, in the midst of a “world” full of other separate “points” (or separate beings and things).

In this subtitle, Adi Da reveals that the apparent “fall” is “illusory.” Thus, in Adi Da’s radical recasting of the myth, not only is Eurydice liberated, but she is liberated from what is actually an illusory fate—the fate of confinement to the “Hades” of ego-based existence.

1. Adi Da Samraj, June 14, 2007.

2. Adi Da Samraj, August 9, 2007; June 29, 2007; June 14, 2007.

3. Adi Da Samraj, July 23, 2007.



The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eight – II, 12
from Orpheus One, 2007

Leaving all concerns and efforts behind, Orpheus draws Eurydice back to the world of light.

The secret of Orpheus is hidden or encoded in the images—the secret of the flight out of hell and into the Earth-world, and (ultimately) into the Divine Domain of Conscious Light.

—Adi Da Samraj

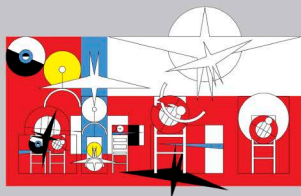
Visions of Ascent

Ascent out of the “point-of-view” world of primary colors into the egoless domain of white light

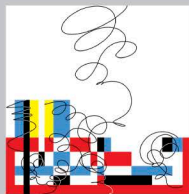
Orpheus One and *Linead One* include distinct bodies of imagery, each with its own unique visual characteristics, but all of which communicate the fundamental theme of the Ascent of Orpheus.

Orpheus One

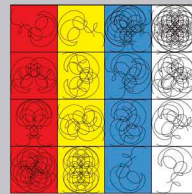
Ascent by flight into the light



White bird ascends into white field



Flowing line ascends into white field



Movement from primary colors into white

Linead One (Eurydice One)

Ascent by means of bicycle/wheel and chair/ladder



Recognizable bicycle and chair forms



Highly abstracted bicycle/wheel and chair/ladder forms

Between and Beyond Representation and Abstraction

For Adi Da Samraj, abstraction is fundamental—not only to art, but to perception itself:

Abstraction is, itself, the root-context and the root-language of all perceptually indicated experience.¹

Adi Da intended all of his art to be appreciated as an abstract perceptual event, even when the content is apparently representational:

It makes no difference whether an image appears to be figurative or abstract—in neither case can you “say what it is” with complete finality.²

Adi Da's entire artistic oeuvre is a decades-long exploration of how to make use of both the figurative (or representational) and the abstract or (non-representational), as means of drawing the viewer into what he called “aesthetic ecstasy.” His intention was to create works of art that allow one to “fall out” of the sense of separate existence and “fall into” the ecstatic mood of non-separate participation in reality.

Adi Da intended his works to be neither “mere abstraction,” which he defined as “pattern only,” nor “mere representation,” or “replication of the conventionally ‘real’ (or merely familiar).” He intended his works to convey meaning, but a meaning that paradoxically lies “between and beyond both representation and abstraction.”

Thus, Adi Da strove to create images that were always meaningful but never merely (in the conventional sense) “recognizable”—whether the images are apparently figurative or abstract.

Adi Da defined the intention underlying his work with representation and abstraction in a series of aphoristic principles, including the following:

The image must not be reduced to mere abstraction—or pattern only.

The image must not be reduced to mere representation—or replication of the conventionally “real” (or merely familiar).

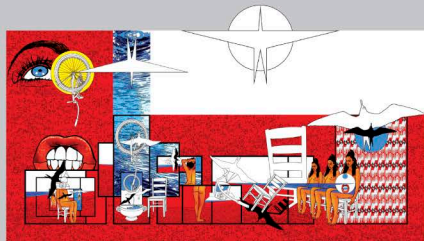


Image from *Orpheus One* (p. 27)

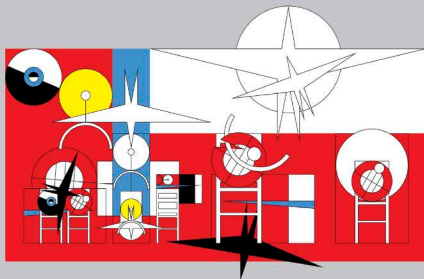


Image from *Orpheus One* (p. 33)

In this example of Adi Da's process of abstraction, photographic elements (eye, bicycle, mouth, bird, water, chair) are transformed into geometric shapes (rectilinear, circular, and triangular), in an entirely free and new visioning that is more abstract but still representational to a significant degree.

The image must exist within the plane of meaning—between and beyond both representation and abstraction.

The meaning of the image is not its degree of reproduction (or representation, or reflection) of the “objective subject.” . . .

The meaning of the image is not the reproduction (or representation, or reflection, or even the expression) of the “self-subject” (or the artistic maker and doer) of the image.

The meaning of the image is the experiential evidence of the degree of coincidence (or mutual participation) of the “objective subject” and the “self-subject” in the same space. . . .

The image must be intrinsically meaningful—but not recognizable (or identifiable merely by reference to a “subject”, or “subject-context”, outside itself).³

In these principles, Adi Da states that the fundamental impulse behind his art is neither to represent the “thing seen” (the “objective subject”) nor to represent the subjectivity of the artist (the “self-subject”). Rather, his artistic impulse is to convey the “mutual participation” of artistic maker and artistic subject “in the same space.”

Beginning in August 2000, Adi Da Samraj created all of his art in suites. Thus, each individual image he created was always part of the larger visual world of a suite of images. A given suite may be entirely figurative or entirely abstract—or a fluid progression from figurative to abstract.

Orpheus One and *Linead One* embrace a full range from figurative to abstract. The works in the exhibition are drawn primarily from the later (abstract) images in both suites. However, the section of plates in this catalog includes many examples of the earlier (figurative) images in the suites.

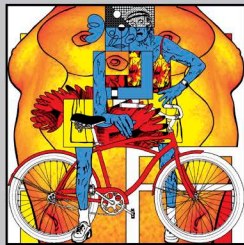


Image from *Linead One* (detail of plate on p. 58)

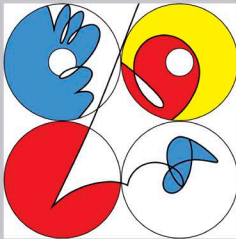


Image from *Linead One* (p. 76)

1. *Transcendental Realism: The Image-Art of egoless Coincidence With Reality Itself*, by Adi Da Samraj (Middletown, CA: The Dawn Horse Press, Second edition, 2010), p. 48.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

In this example, photographic elements are transformed into a radically different image-form. However, the two images still share the primary colors (red, yellow, blue, plus black and white) and the circular and diagonal bicycle forms.

It is necessary to achieve beauty, to manifest beauty, to be coincident with beauty. To bring form into the condition of beauty is fundamental to true art.

—Adi Da Samraj

Geometric and Gestural Abstraction

In the course of his years of work in digital media, Adi Da developed and defined precise working principles of abstraction. In *Orpheus One* and *Linead One*, he made use of two such working principles, which he named "Geome" and "Linead."

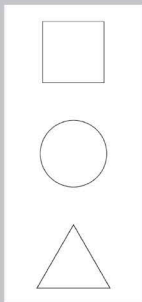
Geomes are the "primary geometries" of square (or rectangle), circle, and triangle. Lineads, in contrast, are gestural lines, freely drawn (or brush painted) by the artist's hand.

Both Geome and Linead are abstract (rather than representational) forms—although they can be composed into aggregate forms that have representational impact.

Adi Da defined Geome and Linead as follows:

The "Geome" is the formal geometric abstract—essentially rectilinear, triangular, and circular—or the forms and structures made of geometric primaries, indicated by line and/or color.

The "Linead" is the free-line abstract, that I [first] draw by hand [on paper] and [then] progressively compose within the specific image-context [of the final, digitally-based work of art].¹



Basic Geomes



A Linead

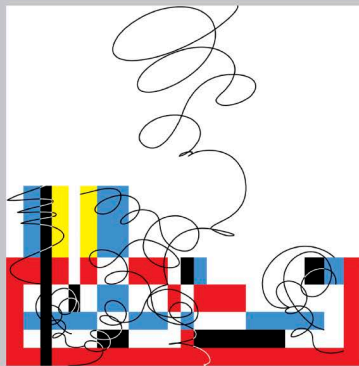


Image from *Orpheus One* (p. 49), composed of Lineads and rectilinear Geomes

In 2006, Adi Da intensively developed his use of Geomes as the core “building blocks” of his abstract oeuvre in the suites *Geome One* through *Geome Five*.²

As he sets forth in his artist’s statement (p. 11), these rectilinear, triangular, and circular geometries are the (largely unperceived) substance of all visual perception—as recognized by Cézanne and others in both West and East.

Cézanne’s famous dictum was couched in terms of three-dimensional (rather than two-dimensional) geometries: “treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone.”³ When “viewed” in two dimensions, the cylinder is equivalent to the square/rectangle, the sphere to the circle, and the cone to the triangle.



Sengai Gibon (1750–1837). *Circle, Triangle, and Square*. Edo period, early 19th century. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 28.4 x 48.1 cm.
Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo

In 2007, Adi Da intensively developed his use of Lineads in the later images of *Orpheus One* (pp.25–55) and in the entire *Linead One* suite (pp. 57–89).

All of the artist’s subsequent work was founded in the interplay between geometric and gestural abstraction.

*Working in the mode of pure abstraction is what I find interesting—not merely the potentials of representation, either of what is outside the eyes or behind them.*⁴

*The image-art I make and do has required profound philosophical and spiritual preparation even to be made—decades of intensive consideration regarding fundamental issues of Truth, of Reality Itself, of the means to go through and beyond all traditional and ego-based modes of thinking and understanding, in order to come to the point where I could make and do image-art on an intrinsically and entirely “point-of-view”-less basis.*⁵

I have been working, image by image, on how to use the natural human mechanism of the bodily-perceiving process in a new (and intrinsically egoless) manner, such that the perceptual mechanism no longer enforces a conventional, or perspectival, or “point-of-view”-referring, or representational, or otherwise egoic mode of image.

*Thus, I am working on a mode of image-making that is becoming more and more profoundly abstract, in the sense of transcending the “point-of-view”-based use of perception—such that the images I make and do are Transcendental Realism in the fullest sense.*⁶

1. *Transcendental Realism*, p. 44.

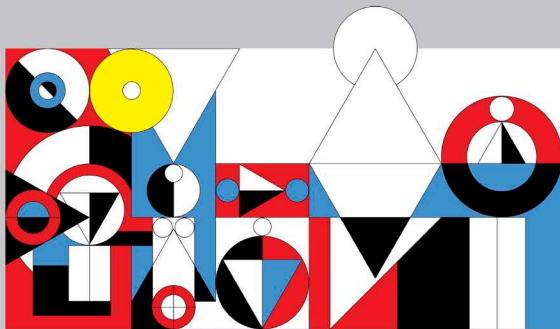
2. *The World As Light: An Introduction to the Art of Adi Da Samraj*, by Mei-Ling Israel (Middletown, CA: Da Plastique, 2007), pp. 98–107.

3. Letter to Émile Bernard, April 15, 1904.

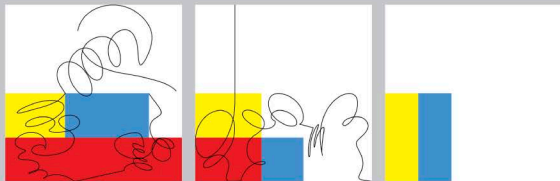
4. Adi Da Samraj, January 31, 2007.

5. *Transcendental Realism*, p. 76.

6. *Transcendental Realism*, p. 53.



*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Four – I*
from *Orpheus One*, 2007
composed entirely of Geomes



*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eleven – III*
from *Orpheus One*, 2007
composed of Geomes and Lineads

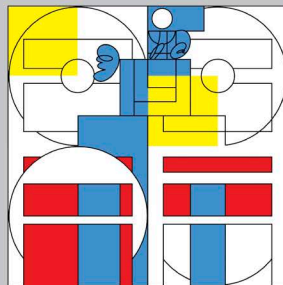


Image from *Linead One* (detail of plate on p. 64)
composed predominantly of Geomes

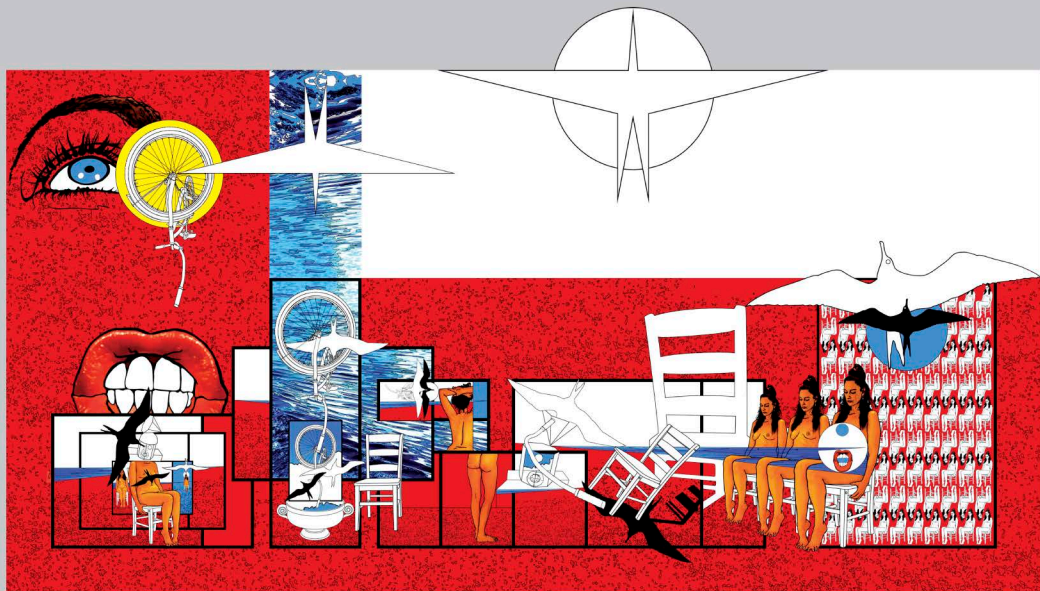


Image from *Linead One* (detail of plate on p. 74)
composed of Geomes and Lineads

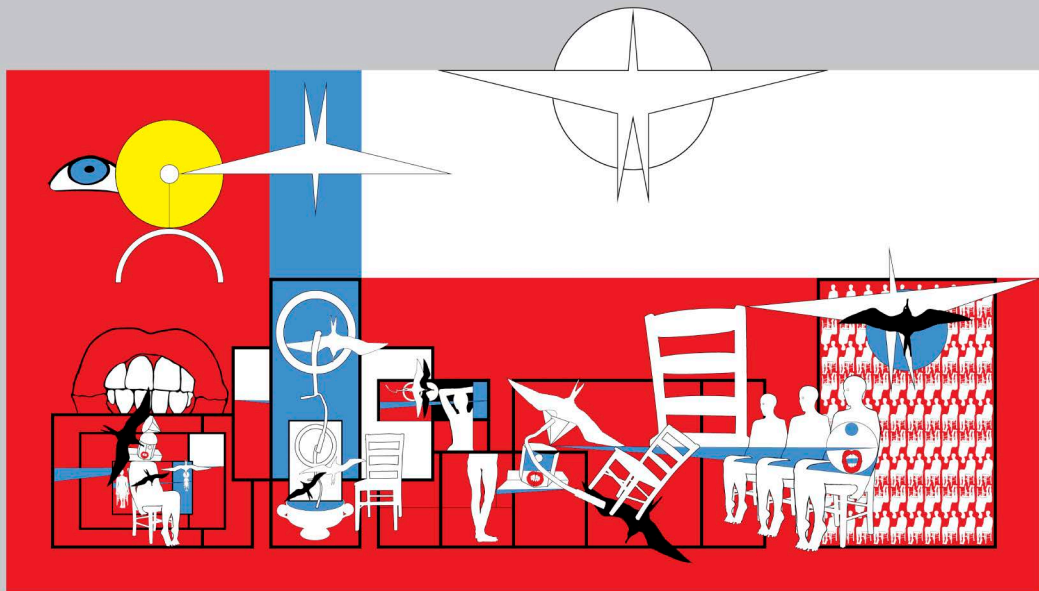
ORPHEUS ONE

The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight

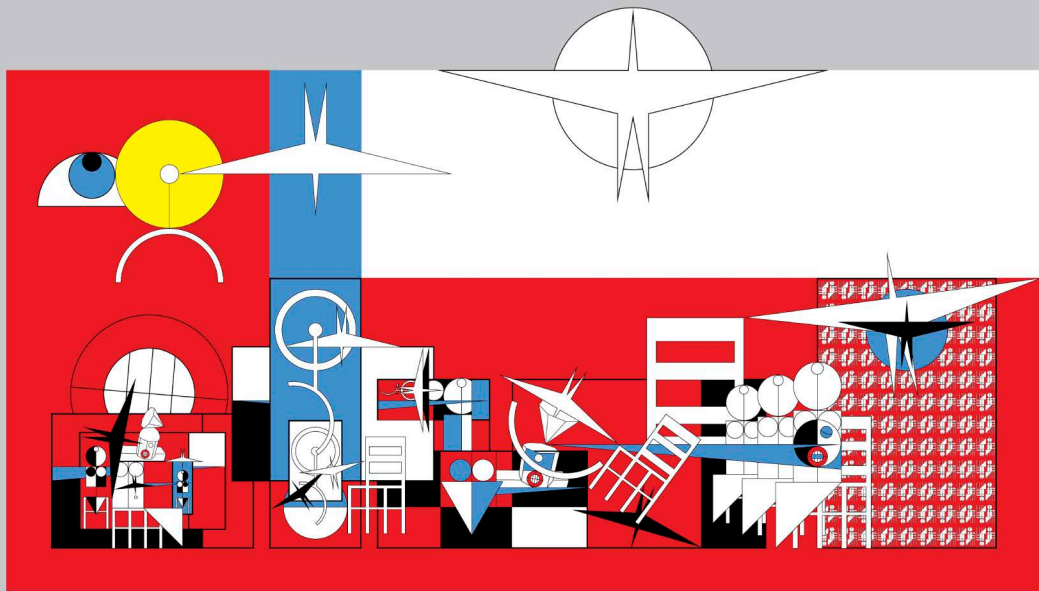
*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part One – I
from Orpheus One, 2007*



*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part One – V
from Orpheus One, 2007*



*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part One – VI
from Orpheus One, 2007*

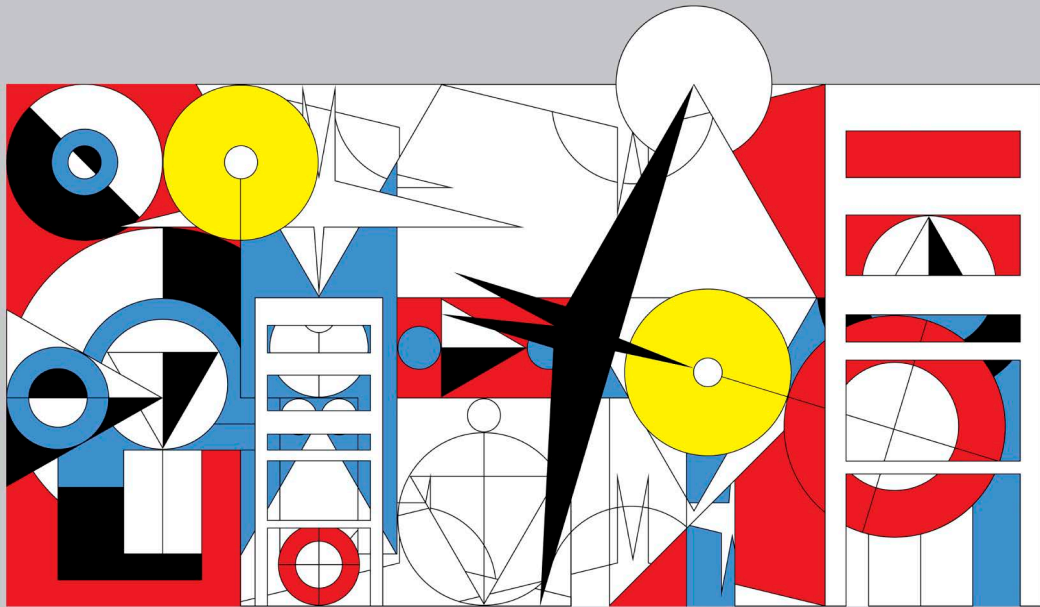




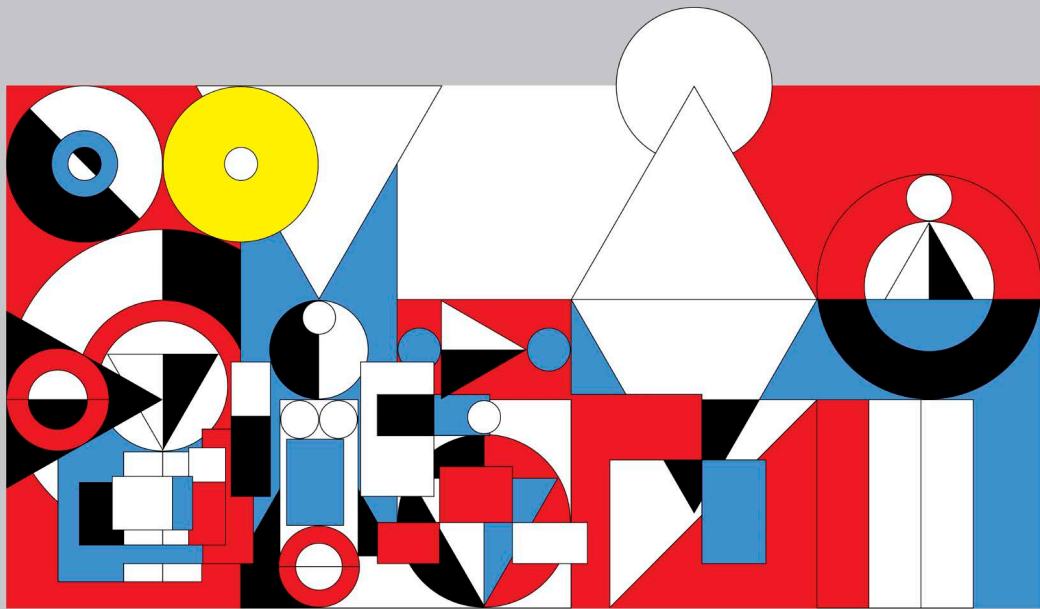
*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Six – VII
from Orpheus One
2007, 2015 – Lacquer on aluminum, 77 x 119 inches / 196 x 302 cm*

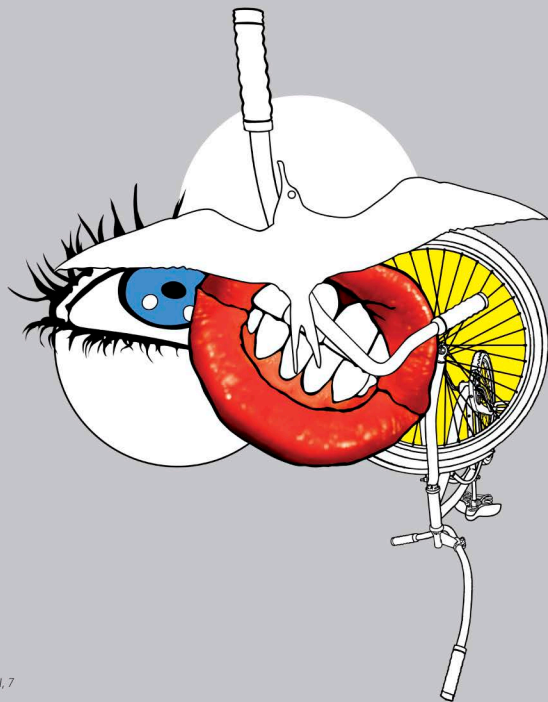
The ascending bird symbol indicates pieces
included in the Bargello National Museum exhibition.

*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Four – III
from Orpheus One, 2007*

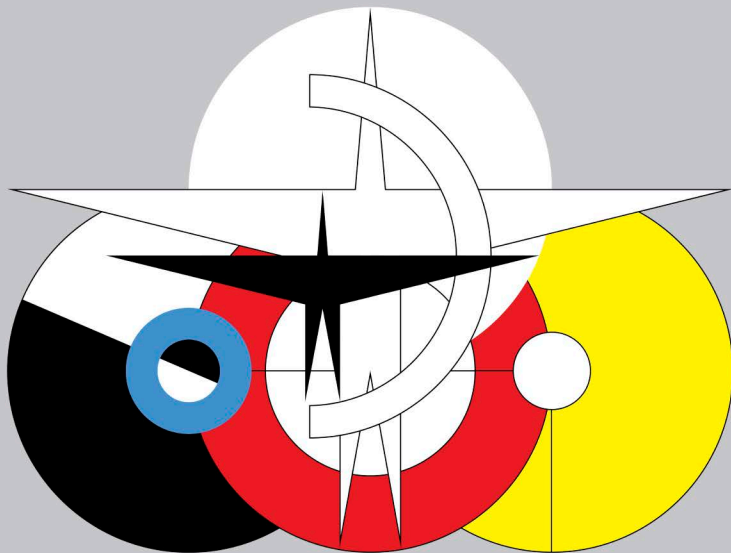


*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Four – VIII
from Orpheus One, 2007*





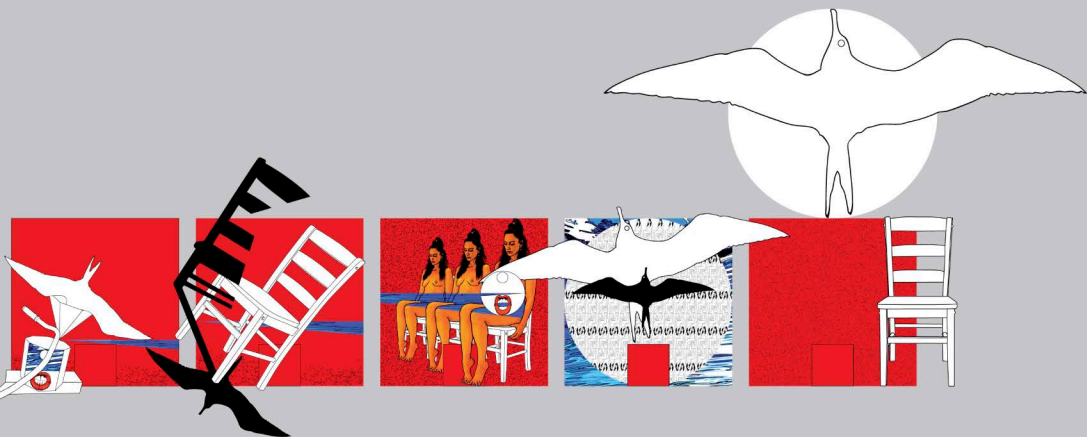
*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eight – I, 7
from Orpheus One, 2007*

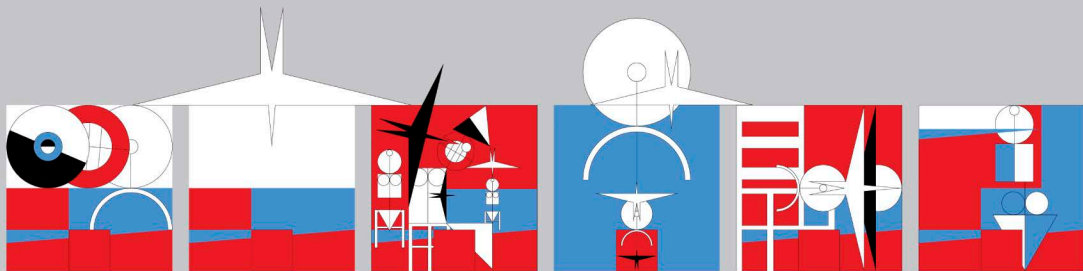


*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eight – II, 7
from Orpheus One, 2007*

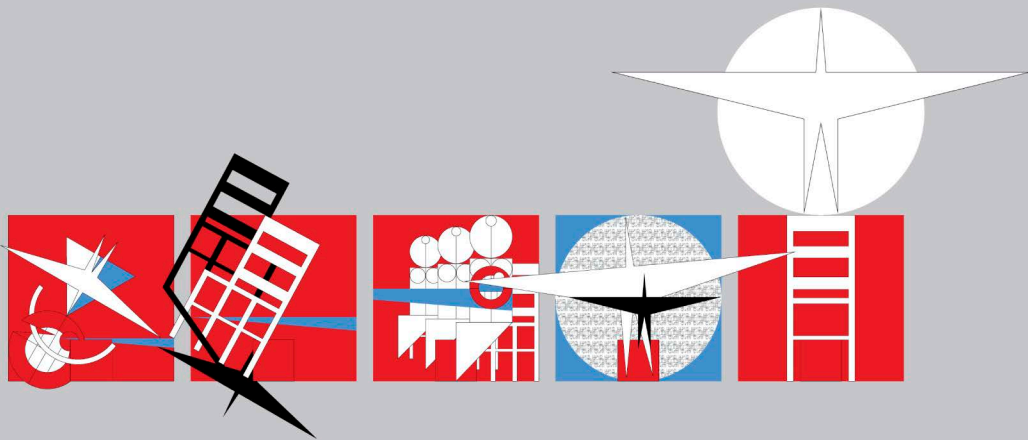


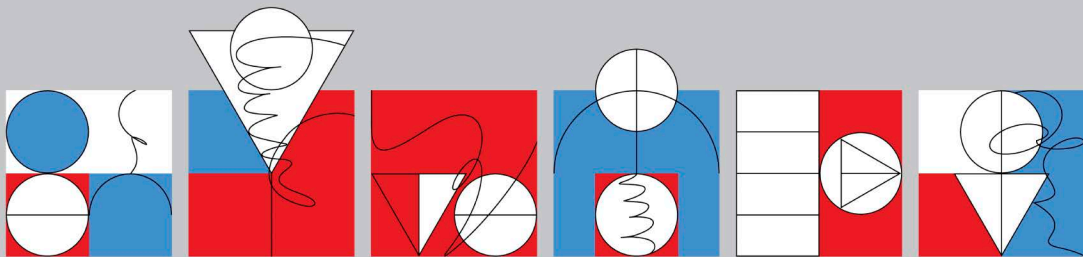
*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Nine – I
from Orpheus One, 2007*



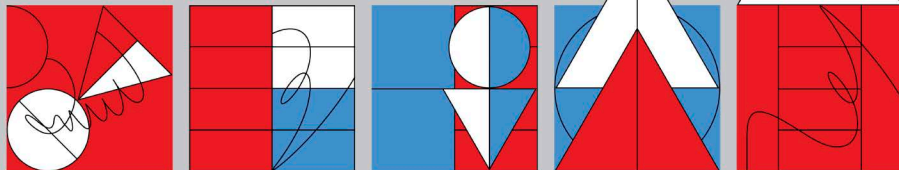


*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
 Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Nine – VII
 from Orpheus One, 2007*

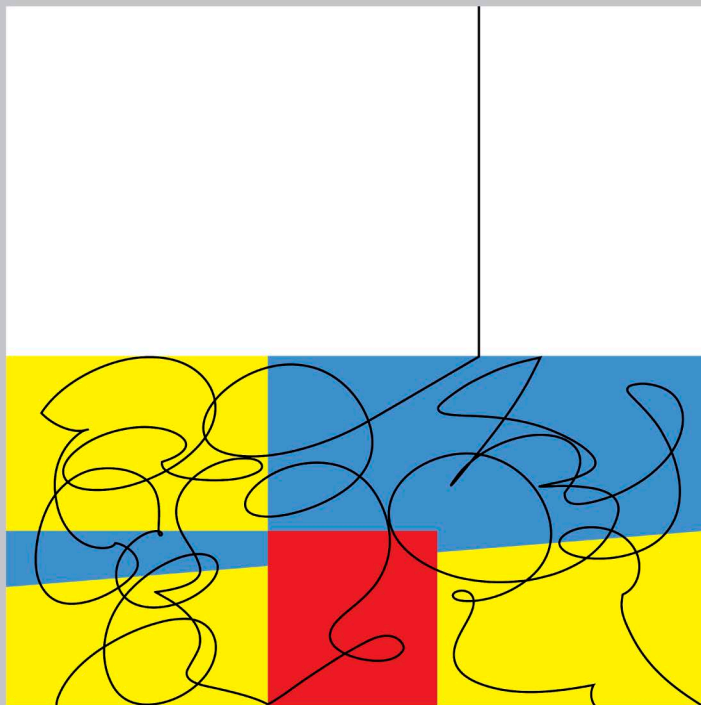




*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eleven – I
from Orpheus One, 2007*

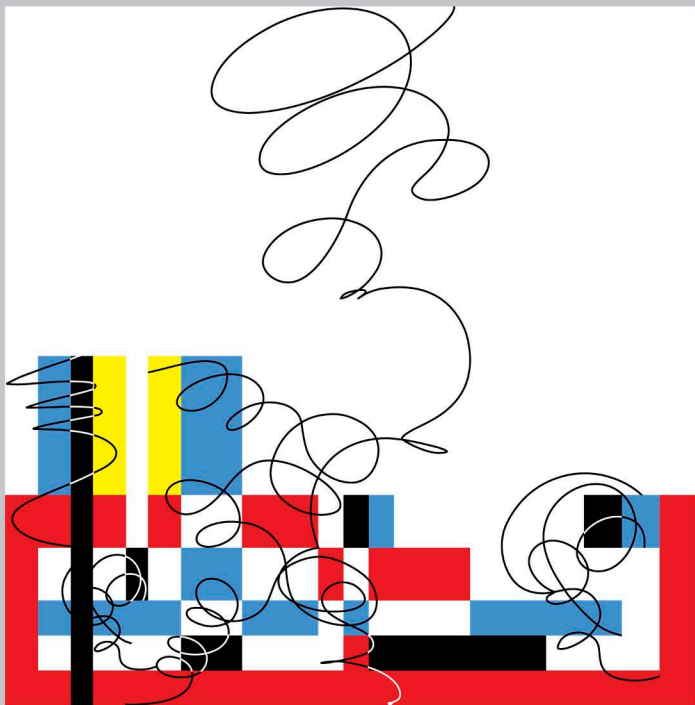


The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eleven – IV
from *Orpheus One*
2007, 2015 – Lacquer on aluminum, 72 x 72 inches / 183 x 183 cm

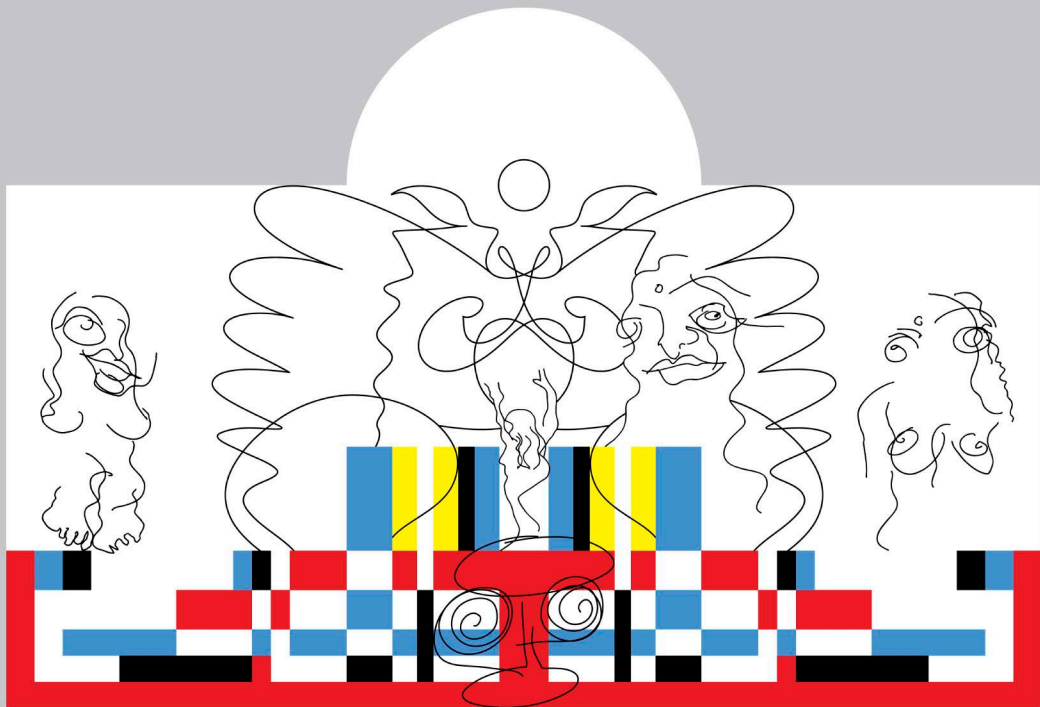




The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eleven – VIII
from Orpheus One
2007, 2008 – Lacquer on aluminum, 72 x 71 inches / 183 x 180 cm



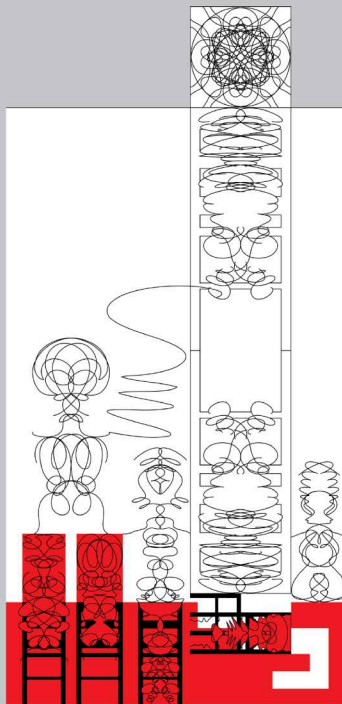
The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Eleven – IX
from *Orpheus One*
2007, 2010 – Lacquer on aluminum, 96 x 143 inches / 244 x 363 cm





*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight:
Part Eleven – X
from Orpheus One
2007, 2008 – Lacquer on aluminum
78 x 44 inches / 198 x 112 cm*

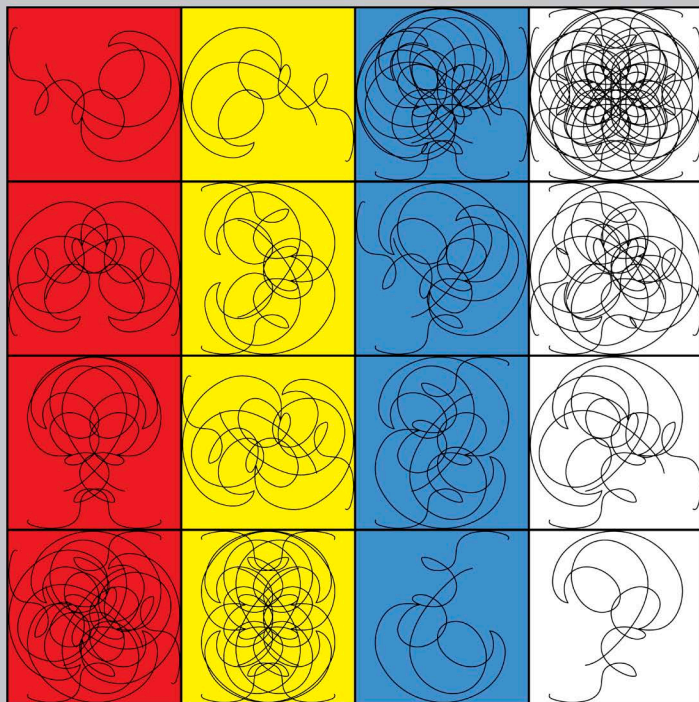




*The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight:
Part Eleven – XI
from Orpheus One
2007, 2010 – Lacquer on aluminum
84 x 41 inches / 213 x 104 cm*



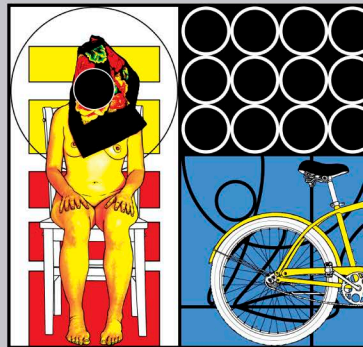
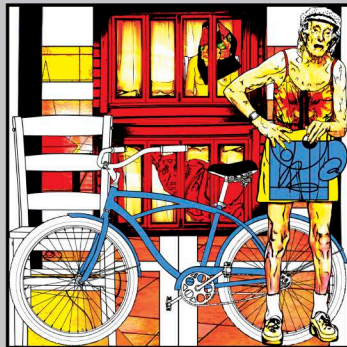
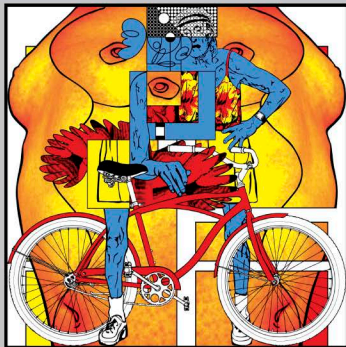
The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle
Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Twelve – II, 5
from Orpheus One
2007, 2011 – Lacquer on aluminum, 60 x 60 inches / 152 x 152 cm



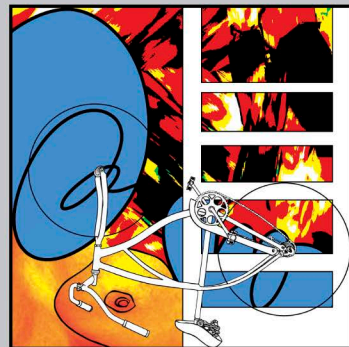
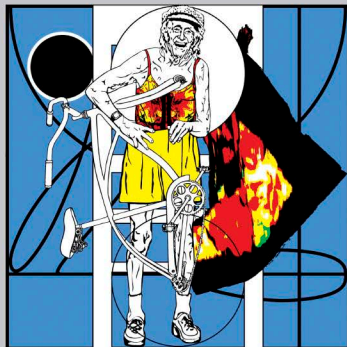
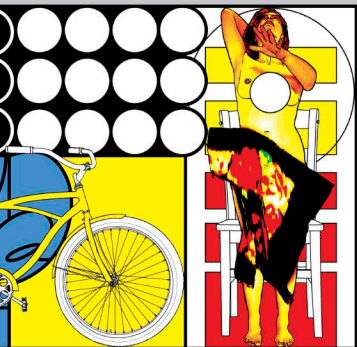
LINEAD ONE

Eurydice One

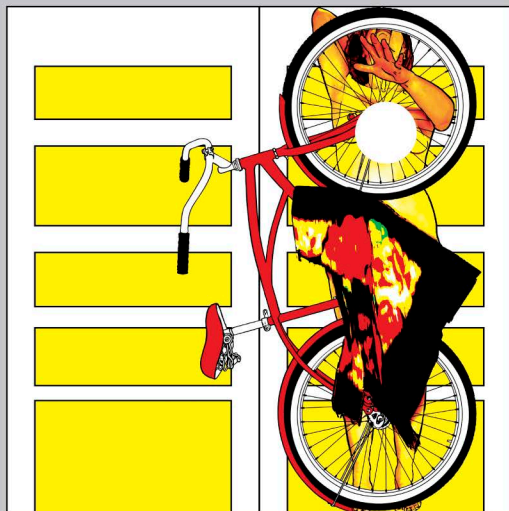
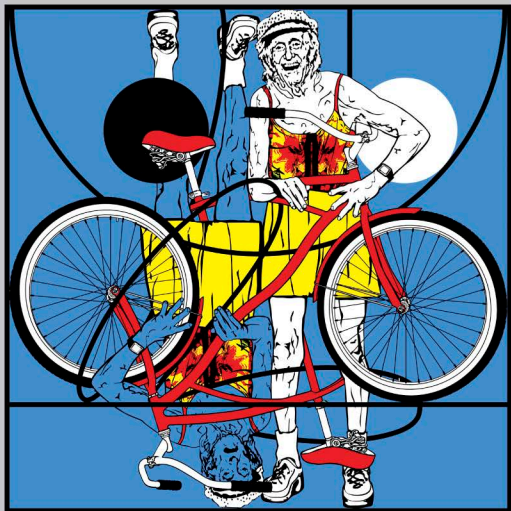
The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds
of Primary Color and Point of View



*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part One: The Abstract Narrative In Geome, Linead, and Natural View – I, 1
from Linead One, 2007*

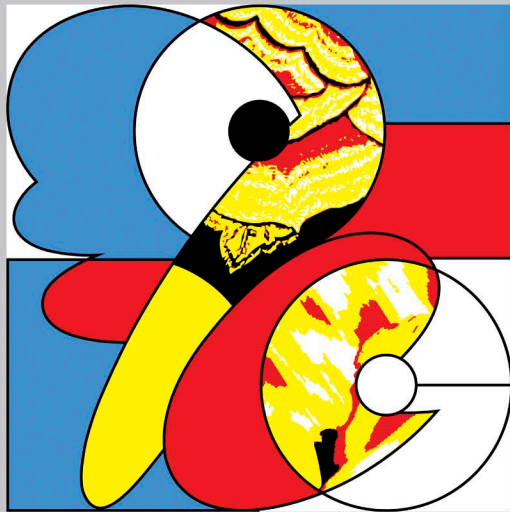
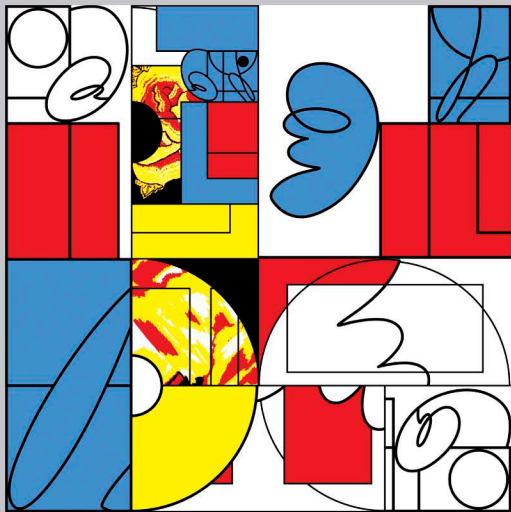




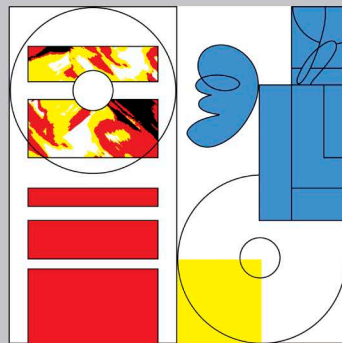
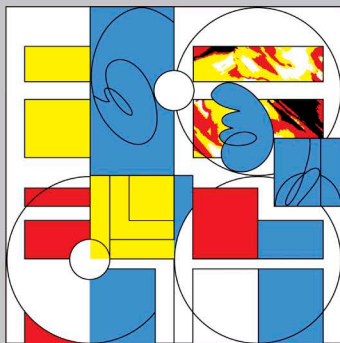
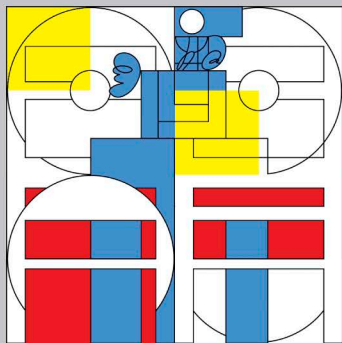


*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part One: The Abstract Narrative In Geome, Linead, and Natural View – II, 3
from Linead One, 2007*

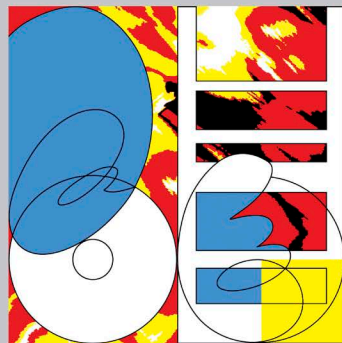
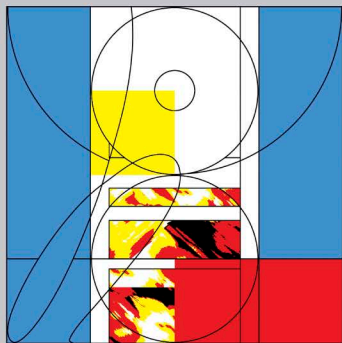
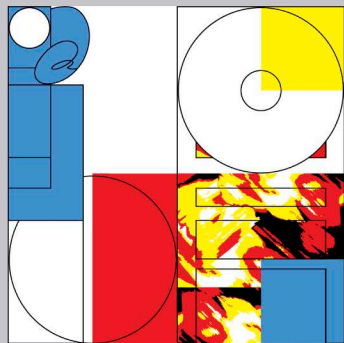


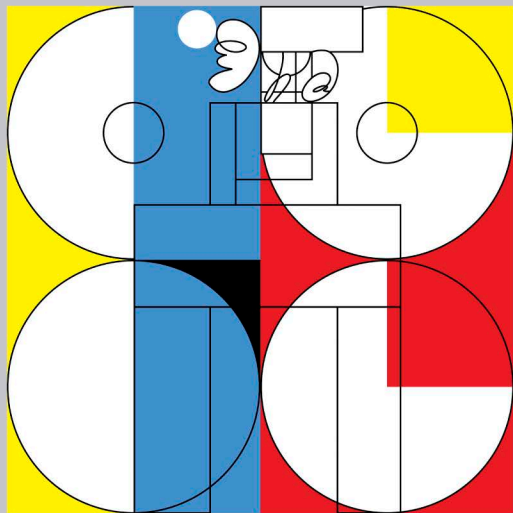


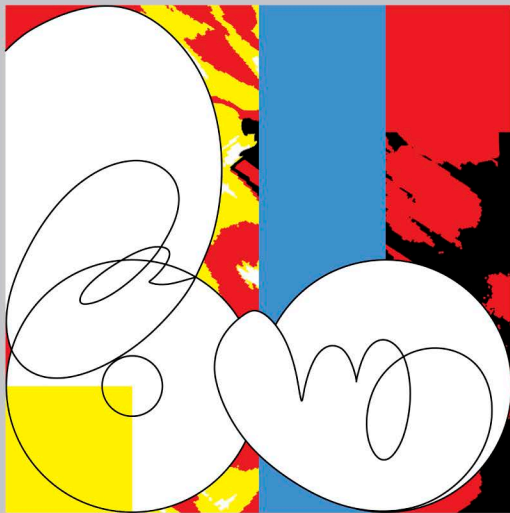
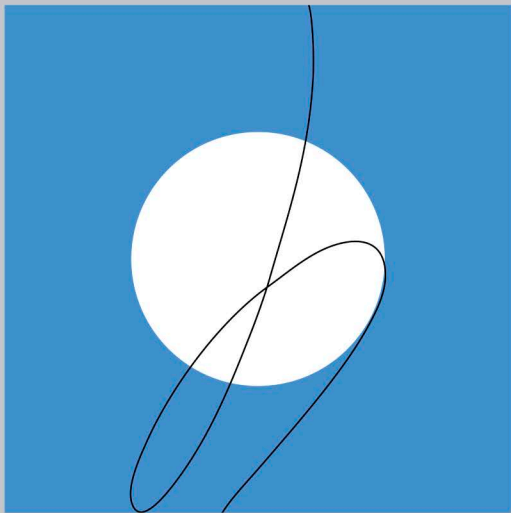
*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part One: The Abstract Narrative In Geome, Linead, and Natural View – II, 5
from Linead One, 2007*



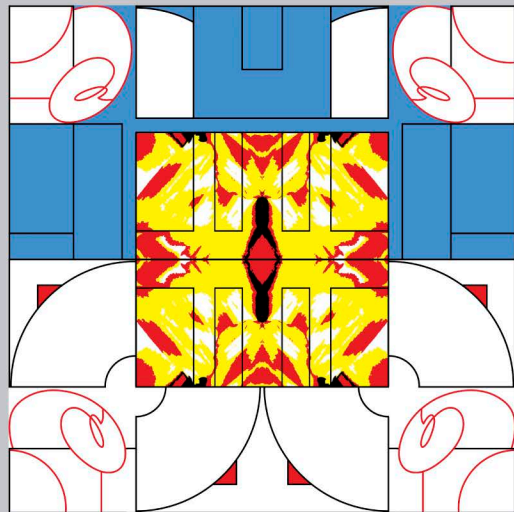
*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Two: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (First Stage) – I, 1
from Linead One, 2007*

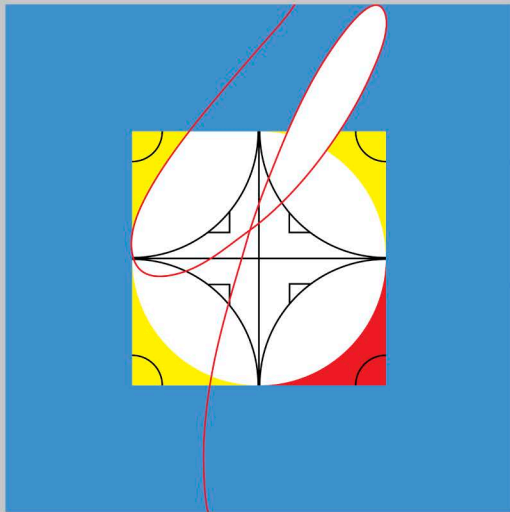
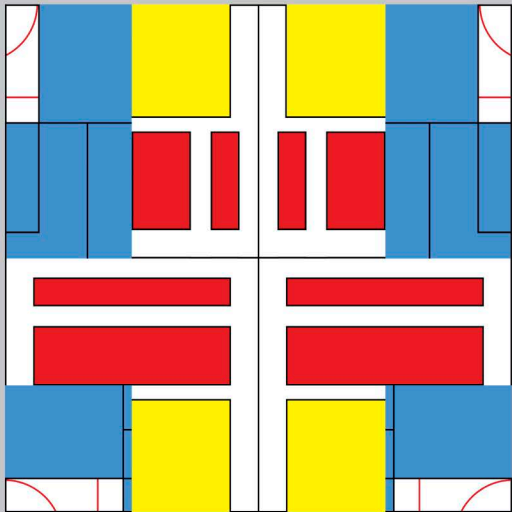






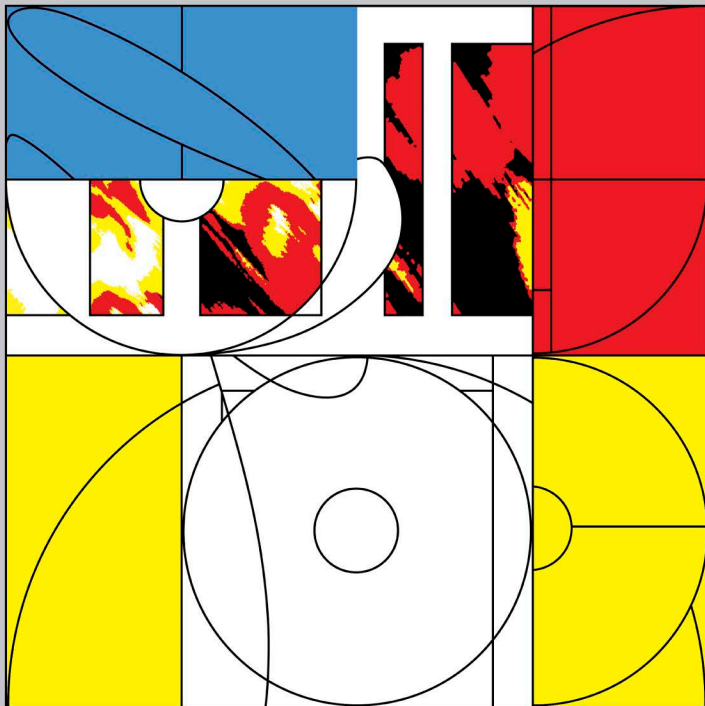
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Part Two: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (First Stage) – II, 1
from Linead One, 2007*

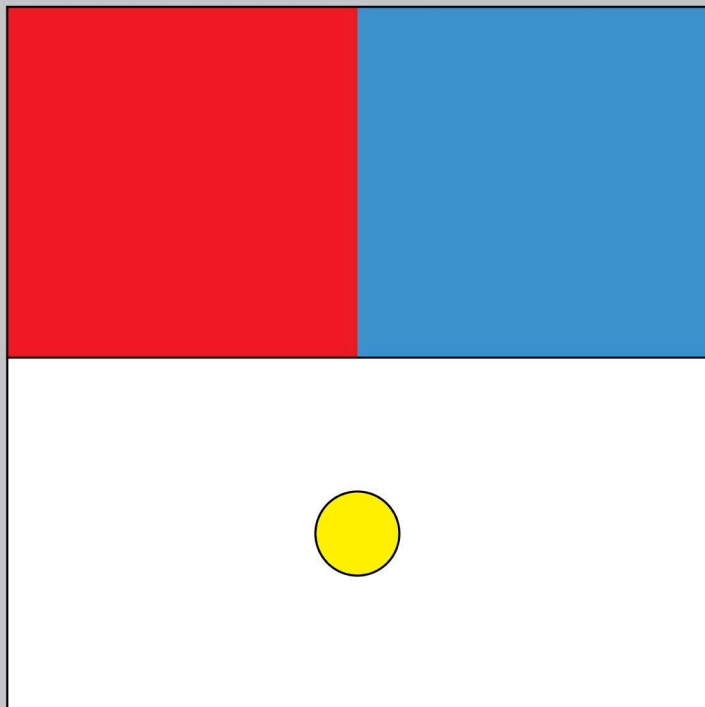


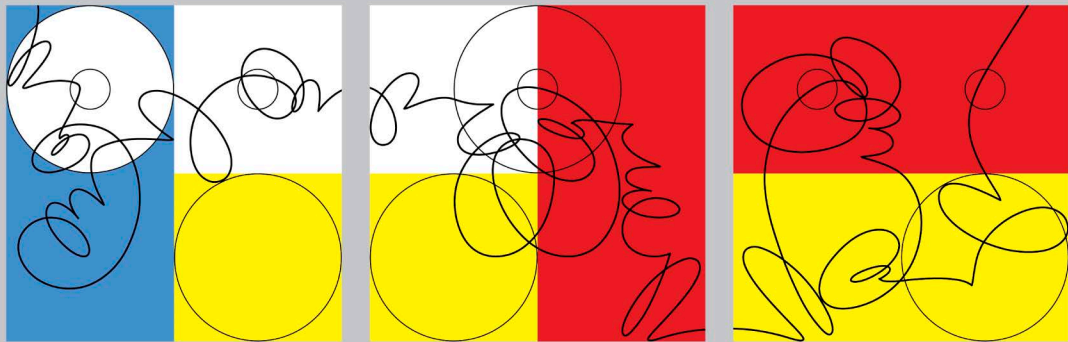


*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Two: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (First Stage) – II, 10
from Linead One, 2007*

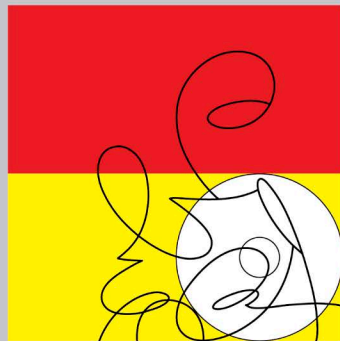
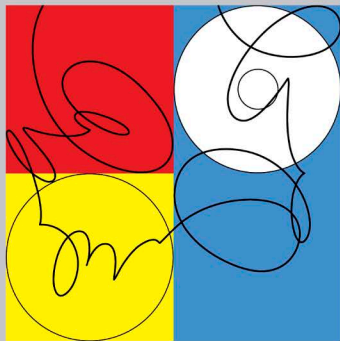
*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds
of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Two: The Abstract Narrative
In Geome and Linead (First Stage) – III, 2
from Linead One, 2007*

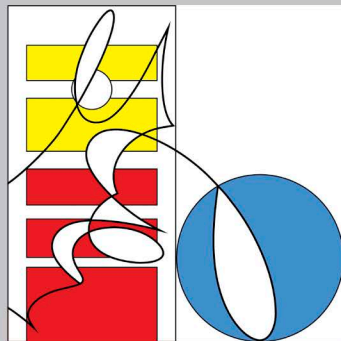
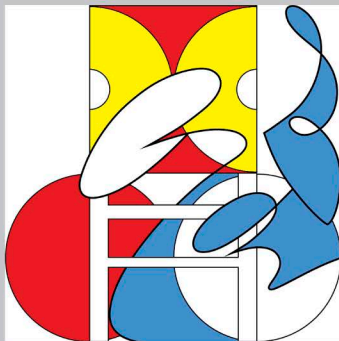
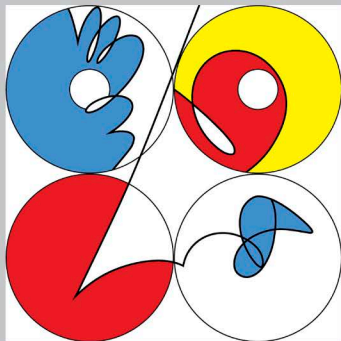




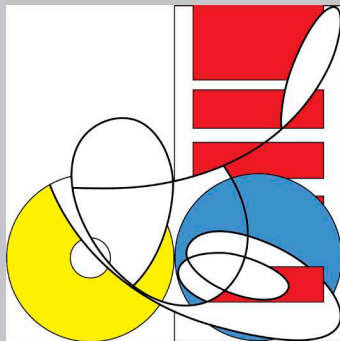
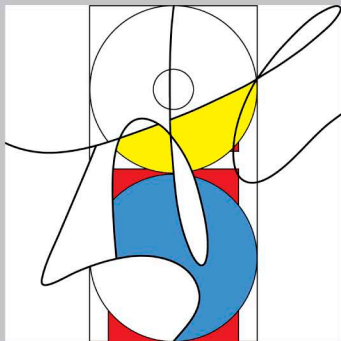
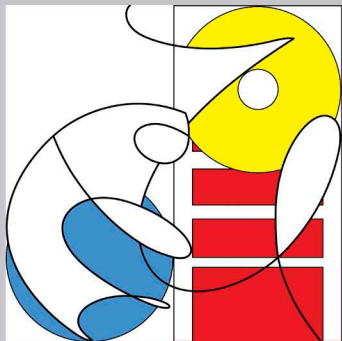


*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – I, 1
from Linead One, 2007*



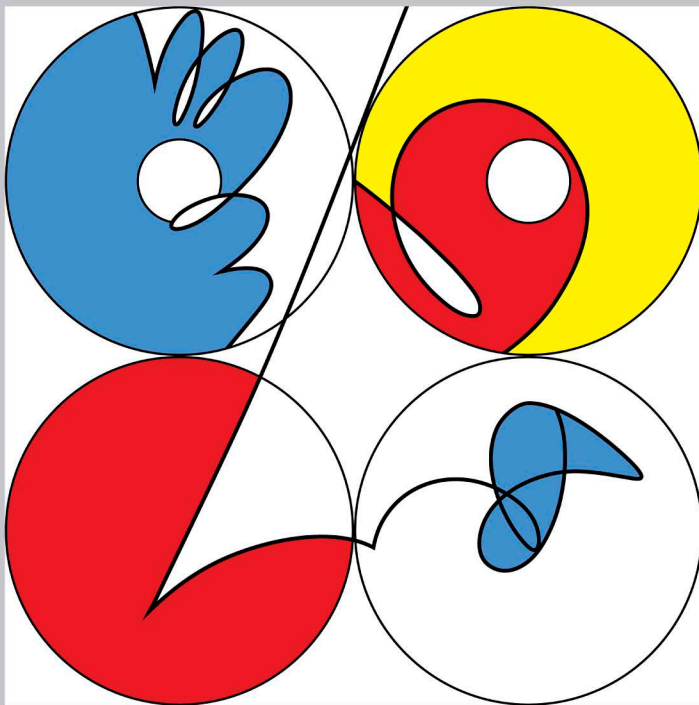


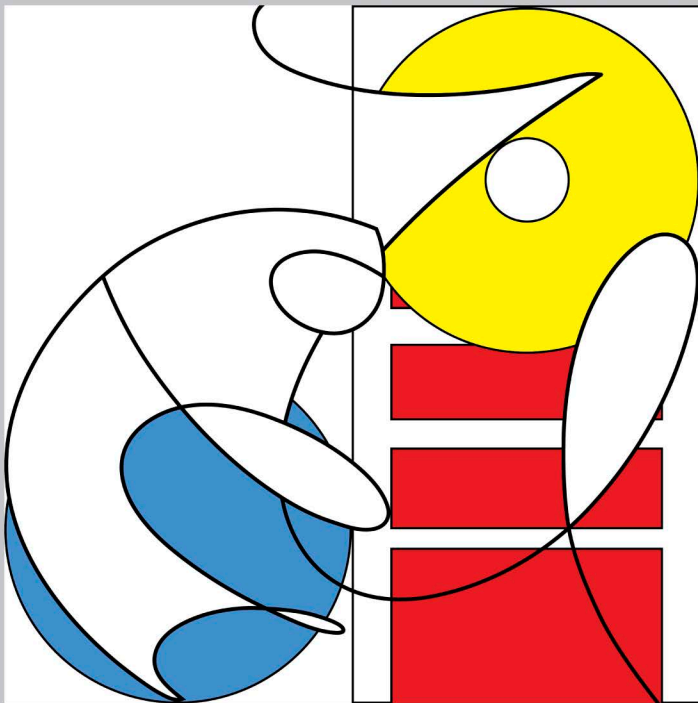
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Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – 1, 2
from Linead One, 2007*



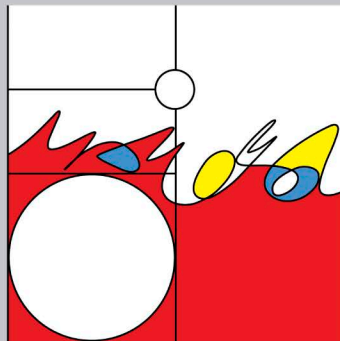
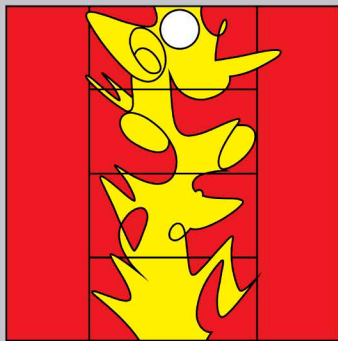
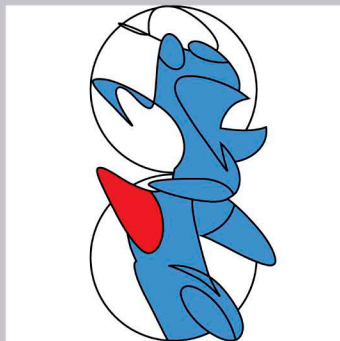


*Eurydice One:
 The Illusory Fall
 of The Bicycle
 Into The Sub-Atomic
 Parallel Worlds
 of Primary Color
 and Point of View—
 Part Three:
 The Abstract Narrative
 In Geome and Linead
 (Second Stage) – I, 2
 (first panel)
 from Linead One
 2007, 2010
 Lacquer on aluminum
 96 x 96 in / 244 x 244 cm*

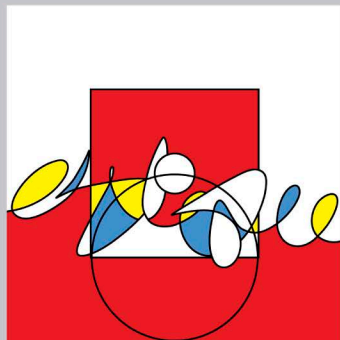
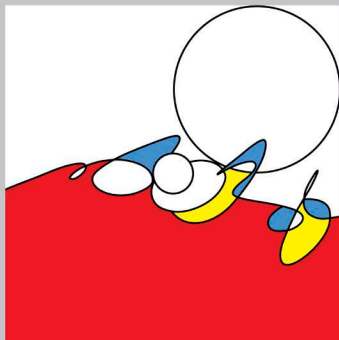
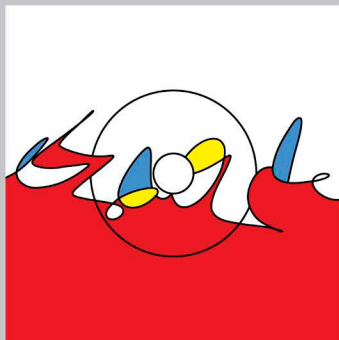




Eurydice One:
 The Illusory Fall
 of The Bicycle
 Into The Sub-Atomic
 Parallel Worlds
 of Primary Color
 and Point of View—
 Part Three:
 The Abstract Narrative
 In Geome and Linead
 (Second Stage) – I, 2
 (fourth panel)
 from *Linead One*
 2007, 2010
 Lacquer on aluminum
 96 x 96 in / 244 x 244 cm



*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – I, 4
from Linead One, 2007*



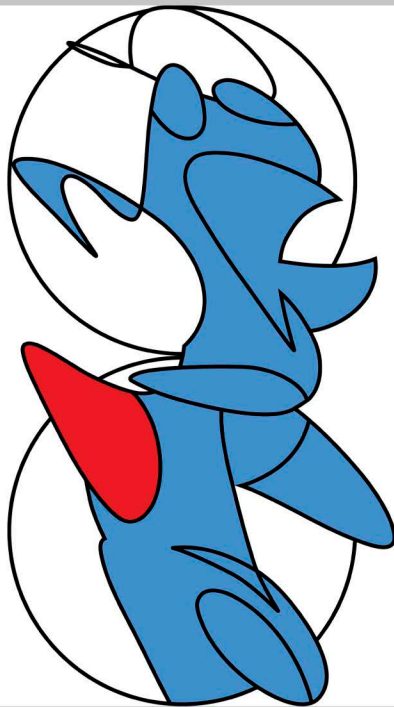


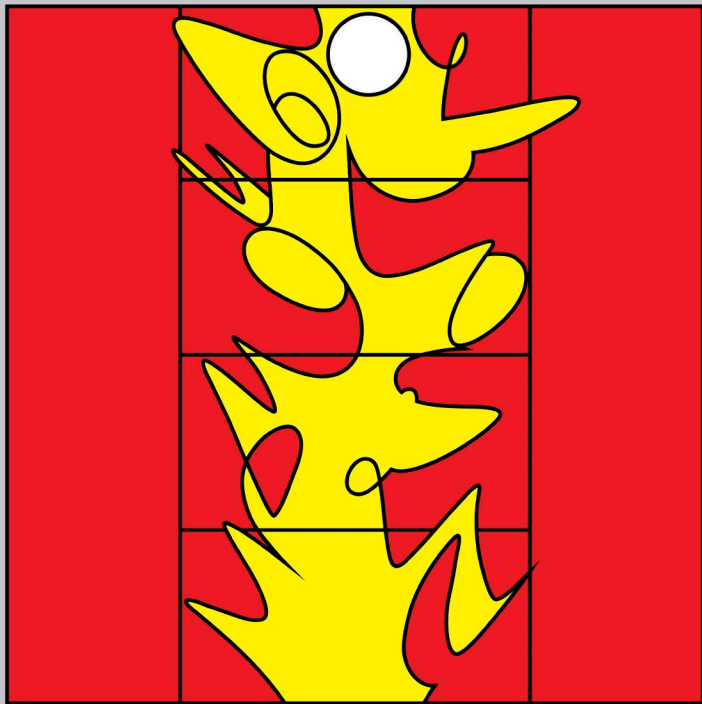
"Orpheus and Eurydice"

*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds
of Primary Color and Point of View—*

*Part Three: The Abstract Narrative
In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – I, 4
(diptych), from Linead One*

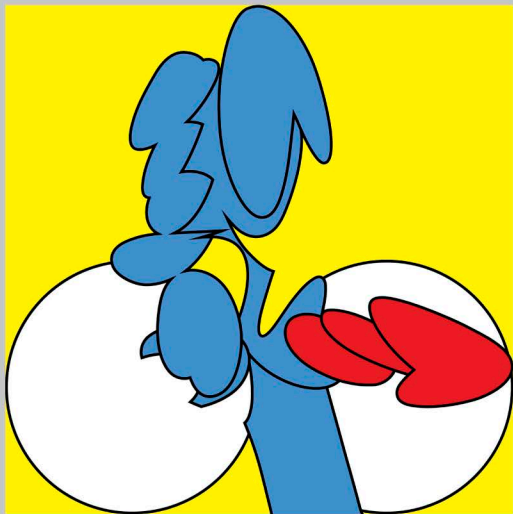
*2007, 2009 – Lacquer on aluminum
96 x 200 in / 244 x 508 cm*

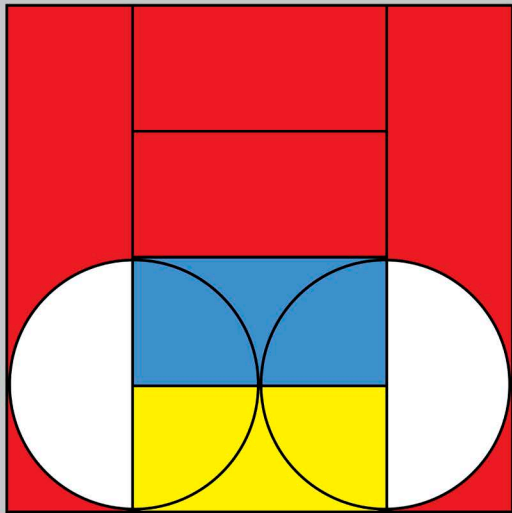
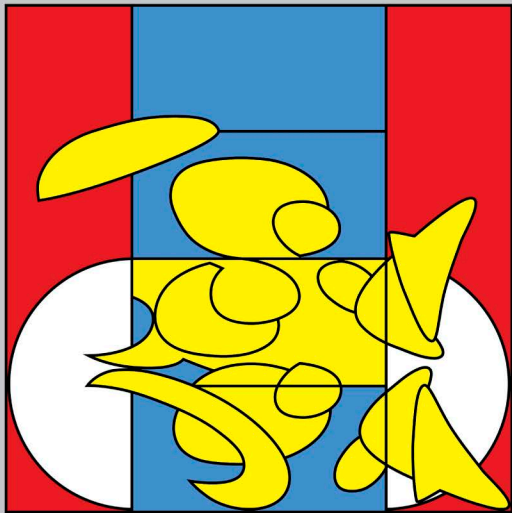


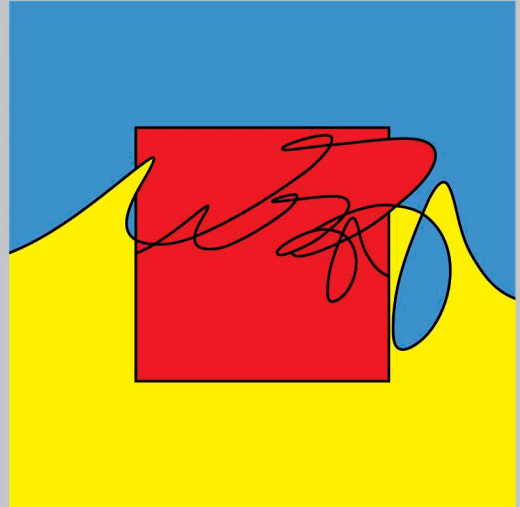


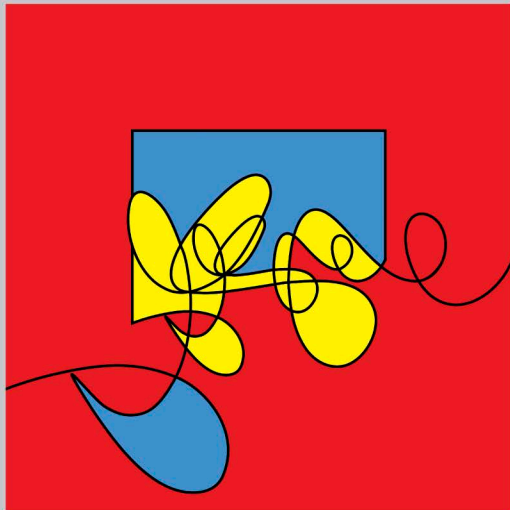
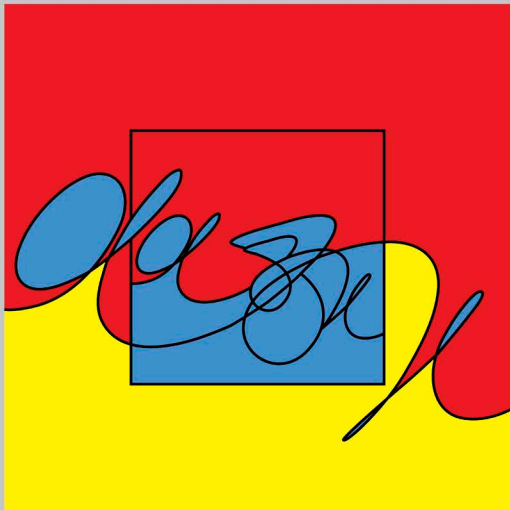


*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – III, 1
(triptych), from Linead One
2007, 2010 – Lacquer on aluminum, 60 x 190 inches / 152 x 483 cm*

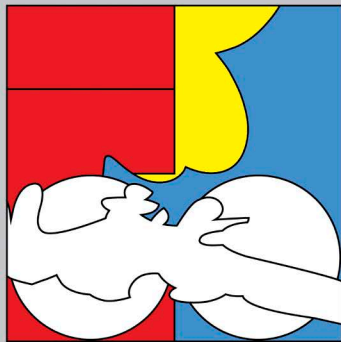
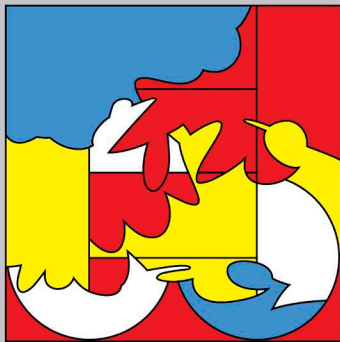
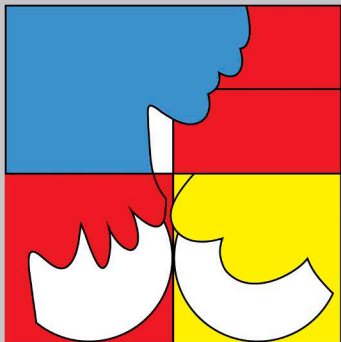




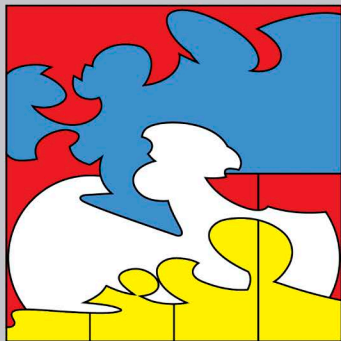
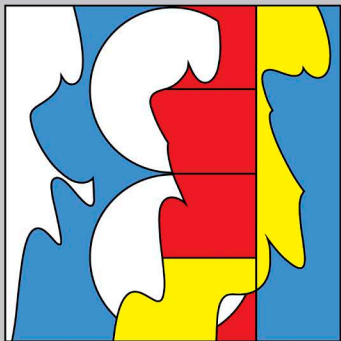
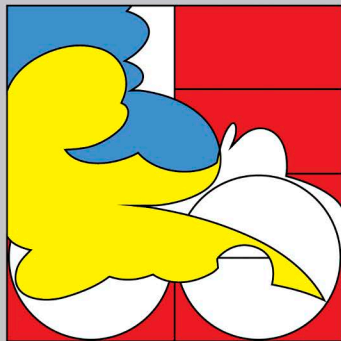




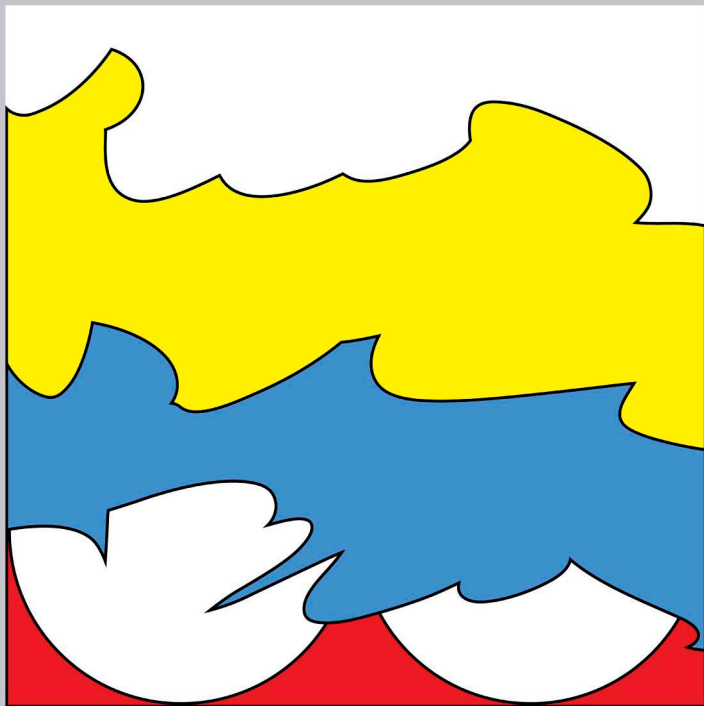
*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
 Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
 Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – III, 2
 from Linead One, 2007*



*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
 Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
 Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – I, 5
 from Linead One, 2007*



*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle
Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – V, 2
from Linead One
2007, 2010 – Lacquer on aluminum, 72 x 72 inches / 183 x 183 cm*



In this summary essay, Adi Da Samraj frames the cultural “projects” of certain key movements of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art, and contrasts these movements with his own art. He identifies the crux of each movement in terms of (1) the mode of reality that is taken to be the necessary subject of that movement’s art and (2) the method used to convey the artist’s “message” about reality. In the essay, Adi Da places “reality” in quotation marks to indicate his contention, developed in great detail elsewhere, that all such conceptualizations of reality are ego-based, and thus inevitably partial and limited.

Adi Da identifies two fundamental modes of “reality” that are variously presumed to be the necessary subject of art: non-material reality and material reality. He defines non-material reality as “spiritual,” or “Platonic,” and material reality as “gross” (meaning “bodily,” or “physical”).

Adi Da then identifies what he views as the three fundamental artistic approaches to depicting reality that characterize various modern and post-modern artistic movements: (1) pictographically symbolizing non-material reality; (2) de-constructing and re-constructing (perceptual) material reality; and (3) reducing everything to nothing but pictorially rendered material (or gross) reality. In delineating these three approaches, Adi Da is also indicating what he identifies as the implicit philosophical orientation underlying each movement.

Adi Da defines his art as a “realism” depicting “Reality Itself,” in contrast to the partial depictions of reality he identifies as characteristic of the modernists and post-modernists. As he concisely defines it, Reality Itself is “that which is always already the case,”¹ as opposed to anything (whether material or non-

material) that is the case only under certain (space-time) conditions. And Adi Da defines his artistic method neither as a Platonic effort to symbolize reality nor as a realist effort to de-construct reality or reduce it to gross materiality. Rather, he describes his artistic method as one of “coinciding” with “Reality Itself.”

Adi Da characterizes the artistic process of “coinciding with Reality Itself” in terms of three fundamental characteristics: aperspectival, aniconic, and anegoic. By “aperspectival” (or “non-perspectival”) he means that the images are not created from a point of view in space-time, by means of the methods of linear geometric perspective. By “aniconic” (or “non-iconic”) he means that the images contain no visual references to any apparently separate “icon,” or “objectified subject matter,” as it might be seen from a separate point of view. By the term “anegoic” (or “non-egoic”) he proposes that his images are not ego-based or “ego-useful,” because they are created by means of a systematic process of abstraction that “intrinsically transcends the ‘point-of-view-orientation of the perceiving body.’”²

Because Adi Da’s art is purposed to “coincide” with “Reality Itself”—in a manner that would transcend the limitations and misconceptions of the perceiving ego—he describes his art as being in the transcendental mode of realism, or Transcendental Realism.

1. This definition appears many times in Adi Da’s writings; for example, *The Aletheon*, by Adi Da Samraj (Middletown, CA: The Dawn Horse Press, 2009), p. 220.

2. *Transcendental Realism*, p. 59.

The Varietal Characteristic of "Reality" In Modernism, Post-Modernism, and Transcendental Realism

by Adi Da Samraj

"Modernists"—such as Malevich, Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Rothko—proposed a kind of pictographically symbolized "Platonic" (or "spiritual", meaning essentially non-material) "reality" as an alternative to the otherwise perceived gross "reality" of bodily and material awareness.

Other "modernists"—beginning with the "cubists" (including Braque, Picasso, Gris, and others), and, then, on to the "surrealists" (such as Dalí, Miró, de Chirico, Magritte, and even Bacon) and the "abstract expressionists" (such as Pollock and de Kooning)—engaged in pictorial efforts to analyze, de-construct, and re-construct gross (and grossly psychologized) perceptual "reality", and (thus and thereby) demonstrated a fundamental "spiritual" (or "subjectively" conflicted) anxiety about the human condition.

In contrast to the "modernists", the post-"modernists"—even beginning with Duchamp, and on to the "pop" artists (such as Warhol and Lichtenstein) and such anti-"modernist" artists as Stella, Newman, Rauschenberg, and Johns—

engaged in gross pictorial "realism" (or "gross reductionism" and "gross objectivism") to the point of exhausting its "charm" absolutely.

The Transcendental Realist image-art I make and do is neither a "Platonic" (or "alternative-reality") exercise nor an exercise in "gross realism" (whether in the manner of "analytical deconstruction" or in the manner of "gross reductionism").

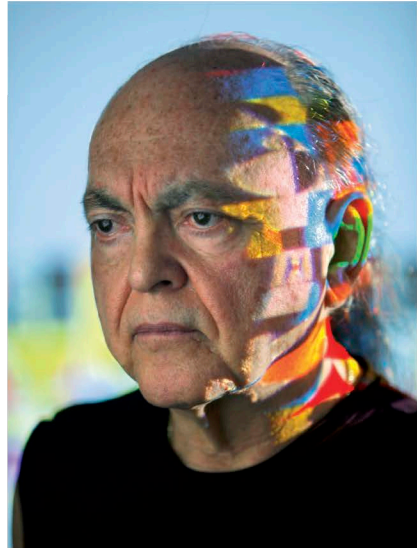
Rather, the Transcendental Realist image-art I make and do is a process based on direct apprehension (or root-apperception) of the Intrinsically egoless and Irreducibly Indivisible Self-Nature, Self-Condition, and Self-State of Reality Itself—and, thus, the image-art I make and do is a process, in aesthetic and perceptible artistic terms, of intrinsically egoless (or "point-of-view"-less, or anegoic, and aperspectival, and aniconic) coincidence with the intrinsic Reality-characteristic of all perceptual experience and, indeed, of all possible human experience.

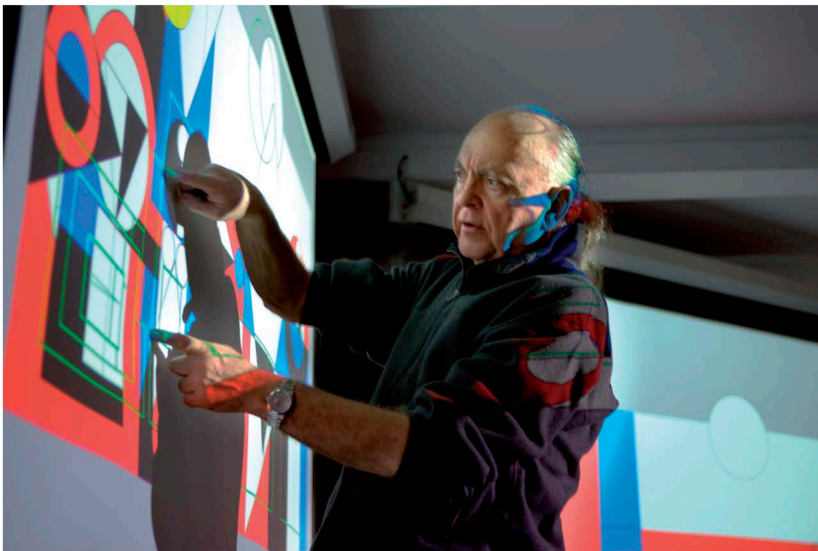
The true (and traditional) purpose of art is to draw the human being into the sphere of the aesthetic experience—in which the entire brain and nervous system, and (indeed) the entire body-mind and active life, is profoundly “tuned” to Reality, and Truth, and the Beautiful.

—Adi Da Samraj

About the Artist

Adi Da Samraj (1939–2008) created visual, literary, and performance art for more than forty years with a single intention: the communication of truth through artistic means. As he described it, his purpose was to create works of art that would draw the viewer beyond the feeling of egoic separateness into the feeling of “prior unity.” He graduated from Columbia University in 1961 with a BA in philosophy, and from Stanford University in 1966 with an MA in English literature. His master’s thesis—a study of Gertrude Stein and modernist painters of the same period—engaged core issues in modernism, including the limits of formal innovation in representation and abstraction in both the literary and the visual arts. In addition to being a prolific artist, Adi Da Samraj is a widely recognized spiritual teacher who produced many volumes of literary, poetic, practical, philosophical, and spiritual writings.



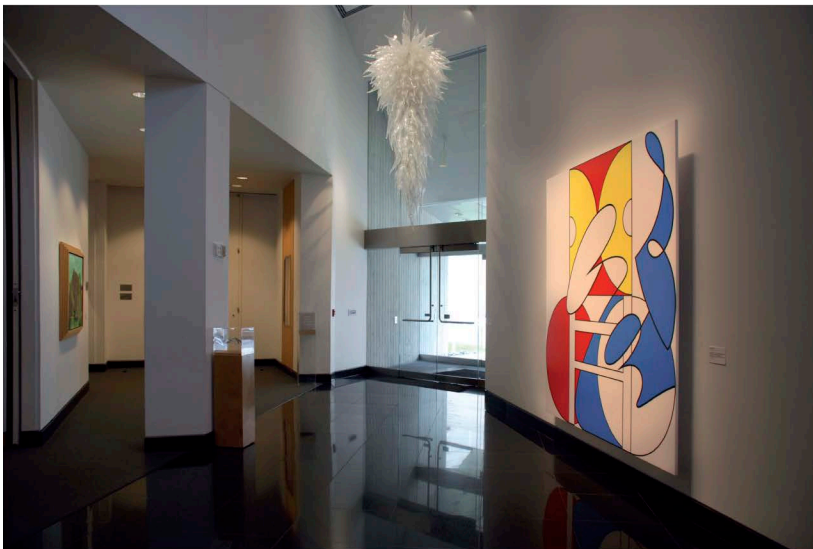


Artistic Process

Adi Da began his first serious photographic work in the early 1960s. From the mid '60s to '90s, he produced a diverse body of drawings, paintings, and sculptural forms. In 1998, he began an intensive six-year period of photographic and videographic work, moving from black and white to highly saturated color, often featuring remarkable multiple exposures composed in-camera. His works from this period use the female nude and other archetypal forms to address the deepest issues of human existence and the potential for transcendence.

In 2006, the artist moved to digital technology, incorporating hand-drawn and painted forms, as well as photographs, into his

compositions. In November 2007, Adi Da Samraj realized what he described as the "final resolution" of his entire artistic process. This turning point enabled him to create entirely non-representational art by using a unique method he named "Orphic Font," or abstractions constructed from "collages of pictographs." The Orphic Font method was the basis for the creation of his final visual magnum opus, *The Struwwelpeter Suite*, in seven parts (2007–2008). Adi Da considered this work to be the culmination of his artistic work and philosophy, the fully realized expression of what he termed *Transcendental Realism*.



*Eurydice One: The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—
Part Three: The Abstract Narrative In Geome and Linead (Second Stage) – I, 2 (second panel), from Linead One
2007, 2008 – Lacquer on aluminum, 96 x 96 inches / 244 x 244 cm
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri, 2009–2010*

Exhibitions and Reviews

Adi Da Samraj's images have been fabricated in many media—from photographic and videographic works, to large works of pigmented inks on paper or canvas, to monumentally sized works of paint on aluminum, sculptural light boxes, plasma-screen installations, and screen-projected performance events.

Adi Da's art was featured as an official solo collateral exhibition at the 2007 Venice Biennale. Adi Da was also the first contemporary artist invited by the city of Florence to mount a solo exhibition (in the historic Cenacolo di Ognissanti). Adi Da's work is in numerous private collections and has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. In response to the work of Adi Da, curator and historian Achille Bonito Oliva has said, "Adi Da's image-work constitutes an epiphany in the sense that it presents itself neither in objective nor in subjective terms. It doesn't

belong either to the universe of the artistic search of the 20th century, the whole canon of optical-perceptual experimentation that was developed in the 1950s and '60s, nor on the other hand to an expressionist creation that tends to represent identity and subjectivity."

Peter Weibel, Chairman of ZKM Center for Art and Media (Karlsruhe), further notes that "[Adi Da's] pursuit of the spiritual paths found in early abstraction, from Kandinsky to Mondrian, and [his] translation of that pursuit into the digital age, restore a transcendental spirituality to the materialism of the machine aesthetic." And art critic Donald Kuspit has written, "Protean and unified at once, Adi Da's ever-changing images become all-pervasive 'big screen' experiences, perceptually riveting, indeed, sometimes excruciatingly intense, but always balanced and even sublime sensory experiences."



The Florence Dance Company performing *Divina.com* in the courtyard of the Bargello National Museum, July 2010.
Projected imagery from *Linead One* by Adi Da Samraj.

Performance Art

Adi Da intended his images not only to be exhibited as works of art but also to be incorporated into all kinds of theatrical events or happenings:

I intend that the images I make and do should be used as a principal element in the creation of innovative forms of theatre. Such theatrical events would combine all the arts, with the purpose of producing profound and very positive happenings. Therefore, whenever possible, exhibition openings should be associated with such theatrical events. The motion of dance, for instance, can happen against the background of a static artwork. Alternatively, dance can be done against a moving environment, using projected artworks.¹

In 2008, a seminal artistic collaboration was initiated between Da Plastique (the organization representing the art of Adi Da Samraj) and the Florence Dance Company. In the intervening years, the

Bargello Museum has, on a number of occasions, invited the Florence Dance Company and Da Plastique to stage dance performances—utilizing illuminated panels and projected images of Adi Da's art—in the museum's courtyard. Perhaps the most ambitious of these collaborative works to date is *Divina.com*, a multi-media exploration of the world of *The Divine Comedy*, Dante's poetic journey through the underworld and beyond, in which his search to be reunited with his beloved is finally fulfilled in paradise. In *Divina.com*, monumental projected images from Adi Da's suite *Linead One* illuminate the stage and move on screen in dynamic interaction with the dancers and musicians.

In keeping with Adi Da's expressed intention, the opening of the exhibition *The Ascent of Orpheus* at the Bargello Museum is celebrated (in the 750th anniversary year of Dante's birth) by performances of *Divina.com*.

1. Adi Da Samraj, July 30, 2008.

Catalog of Works

Adi Da's complete catalog of works includes a large body of drawings and ink paintings (1967–2008), a series of miniature self-portraits in enamel paint (1984–1985), a series of paintings in mixed media (1994), and an extensive body of individual photographs in both black-and-white and color (1961–2000). See *The World As Light* for a discussion and examples of these bodies of work.

Beginning in August 2000, all of Adi Da's work (both camera-based and digitally based) was created in suites. These suites (from the years 2000–2008) are listed here.

Camera-Based Work (2000–2004)

Black-and-White Suites
August 2000–June 2001

Through the Gate—52 Images.

City Light—51 Images.

Tat Sundaram (This Is That Which Is Beautiful)—236 Images.

The First Yosemite Suite—348 Images.

Sisters—11 Images.

Four Women—59 Images.

The Burden of Two—7 Images.

The Cult of Pairs—27 Images.

Two Many—49 Images.

The Seat of The Passions—31 Images.

Mother and Daughter—45 Images.

Brahma, Vishnu, and Forsythe—16 Images.

The Aaarghh Suite—27 Images.

Tripura's Seat—45 Images.

Five Men—20 Images.

The Re-Assertion of Perfume in the Instant of Time (Images in Solo and Duo—A Pair Each)—114 Images.

She Overhead (The Small Sequence)—8 Images.

Repeatedly New—26 Images.

The Wedding Album—21 Images.

The Virgin Suite (An Inexhaustible Supply of Virgins): To Accompany the Iconic Procession of Mother, Daughter, and Male Other in the Room of Mind—144 Images.

The Mere Event (Of Mir and Daily News)—54 Images.

Metrix (The Binary Thaw)—42 Images.

The Eternal Vigil of Monumental Art—38 Images.

The Analog of Flora Mata (Two Roses Touched by the First Visible Idea of Reality)—168 Images.

The Re-Birth of the Idea of Oranges—45 Images.

21 (Exactly)—36 Images.

Fun House (The Spherical Skirt): An Indefinitely Unfolding Procession of Iconic Imagery—for He, She, and the Only Horse In The Wild—658 Images.

Open Water—104 Images.

Love's Point Renewed—297 Images.

Videographic Suites
March–October 2001

The Acrylic Block

Spherical Geometry

Ordinary Buddhas

The Revelation Analog: A Binary Intensification of the Original Idea of the Rose

The Accident of Beauty

Already Silent Without Thinking

The Balloon Theory of Everything: After the Spherical Rose Has Fallen from the Ceiling into the Body's Room of Mind

How She Looks. A Still Video Suite of 2,338 Images.

Happenine Flora

"Epic" Suites

July 2001–March 2002

Happenine—1,497 Images. Black-and-white.

Odalisque: The Myth of The Reclining Woman—A Suite of 1,845 Images

Regarding the Heart's Illusion of Captivity in the Waiting Room of Body and Mind. Black-and-white.

9 Mary: The Superconductivity of Celibate Women Under the Midnight

Sun—2,313 Images. Black-and-white.

She Is Mind: The Iconography of Eve—2,223 Images. Black-and-white and color.

"Underwater" Suites

September 2002–May 2003

Plastic Camera #1—268 Images. Color.

Plastic Camera #2—770 Images. Color.

Quandra Loka Mille Camera I–IV—4,026 Images. Black-and-white.

Quandra Loka Mille Camera V—1,106 Images. Color.

Suites of Complex Image-Configurations

May 2003–February 2004

The Breather—2,662 Image-Configurations. Color.

Kaleidoscope: Eleven Visions of Countless Points of View—6,211

Image-Configurations. Color.

The Spherical Tower—3,912 Image-Configurations. Color.

Three—2,787 Image-Configurations. Color.

Images 2004—8,061 Image-Configurations. Color.

Digitally Based Work

(2006–2008)

Spectra Suites

April–July 2006

Spectra One: The Pastimes of Narcissus—103 Images.

Spectra Two: A Horse Appears In The Wild Is Always Already The Case—475 Images.

Spectra Three: Quandra Contemplating the Fruits of Perfect Knowledge—107 Images.

Spectra Four: The Room Itself Is The Only Witness To The Three Common States—189 Images.

Spectra Five: Not-Two Is Peace—48 Images.

Spectra Six: Not-Two Is Not Two—24 Images.

Spectra Seven: The Self-Portrait—24 Images.

Spectra Eight: Life Is The Perfect Reflection Of Its Source—37 Images.

Spectra Nine: The Autobiography Of Everybody—75 Images.

Spectra Ten: The "First Room" Trilogy—126 Images.

Perfect Mirror Suites

July–August 2006

The Perfect Mirror One: The Voyage—87 Images.

The Perfect Mirror Two: This Is Not-An-Object—69 Images.

The Perfect Mirror Three: Portrait Of The Artist As Not-An-Object—11 Images.

Geome Suites

August–October 2006

Geome One: Alberti's Window—1,416 Images.

Geome Two: 2001—1,101 Images.

Geome Three: The Scale Of Perfection—5,454 Images.

Geome Four: The Subject In Question—354 Images.

Geome Five: Ciqomi (Acception)—833 Images.

Oculus Suites

July 2006–May 2007

Oculus One: The Reduction Of The Beloved To Love Alone—2,644 Images.

Oculus Two: Alberti's Room—160 Images.

"Geome and Linead" Suites

May–October 2007

Orpheus One: The Spiritual Descent Of The Bicycle Becomes The Second-Birth Of Flight—188 Images.

Linead One: Eurydice One—The Illusory Fall of The Bicycle Into The Sub-Atomic Parallel Worlds of Primary Color and Point of View—37 Images.

The Goddess of New York—633 Images.

"Geome, Linead, and Orphic Font" Suites

November 2007–November 2008

The Orphic Font—27 Images.

The Struwwelpeter Suite (The ego-"I" and The Straightener): Contemplating The Mind/Body Problem and The Bodily Illusion Of Being a Separate "self"

- *Part One: Gross Boy Peter (The ego-"I")*—361 Images.
- *Part Two: Good Dog Tray and The Cruel Frederick ("self" vs. "not-self")*—152 Images.
- *Part Three: The Self-Illumination Of Harriet (The Insufficiency Of A Merely Mental Enlightenment)*—224 Images.
- *Part Four: Saint Nick's Equalizer (The Straightener Is Not-Two)*—399 Images.
- *Part Five: The Near-Sighted Huntsman and The Far-Sighted Hare, or, The Hunter-Hero At Your Back Vs. The Edible Rabbit In Your Face (Whereas Mind and Body Is Not-Two)*—460 Images.
- *Part Six: Childish Conrad and The Evil Thumb-Tailor, or, The Boogeyman Always Bobs Both (It Is Your Fear What Takes The Life Out Of You, Because The Mind Always Deceives The Body)*—209 Images.
- *Part Seven: Helvetica and The Shocking Five-Day Count, or, Life Is Death Or So By Number Soup The Body Thinks (It Is The Mind What Kills The Body, Because The Body Always Deceives The Mind)*—787 Images.

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Cover: *The Spiritual Descent of The Bicycle Becomes The Second-Birth of Flight: Part Six – VII*, from *Orpheus One* 2007, 2015 – Lacquer on aluminum, 77 x 119 inches / 196 x 302 cm

The circular motto appearing on the first page of *The Ascent of Orpheus* was composed and handwritten by Adi Da Samraj.

The small ascending bird symbol in the Plates section indicates pieces included in the Bargello National Museum exhibition.

Acknowledgements

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For more information about the art of Adi Da Samraj:
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Adi Da Samraj (1939–2008) created visual, literary, and performance art for more than forty years with a single intention: to produce works of art that would draw people beyond the feeling of egoic separateness into the feeling of the inherent unity of existence.

Adi Da's artistic output includes drawings, paintings, sculptures, and a large body of groundbreaking photographic, videographic, and digitally composed work. Adi Da's art was featured as an official solo collateral exhibition at the 2007 Venice Biennale. He was also the first contemporary artist invited by the city of Florence to mount a solo exhibition (in the historic Cenacolo di Ognissanti). His work is in numerous private collections and has been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world.



You should dance.
You should sing.
You should become ecstatic.
You should go beyond yourself.
Participate in art—do not just look at it.
Do not just know that it is there.
It should change you.
That is the whole purpose of art.

—Adi Da Samraj

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