

# JANAINA TSCHÄPE'S BAROQUE TURBULENCE SIMILAR TO MONET'S WATER LILIES

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Nothing seems further from the colorful exuberance of Janaina Tschäpe than Claude Monet's soothed Water Lilies. However, the installation of her video 'Blood, sea' adapted to the walls of the Musée de l'Orangerie multiplies the expressive correspondences between these two immersive and organic spaces until February 15, 2021.

## A Dazzling Ascent Of The Rollerblading Champion



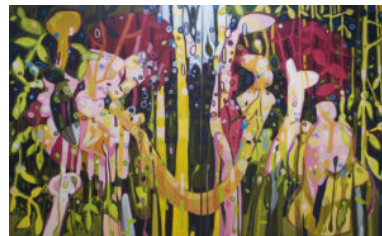
*Janaina-Tschape, Alalao Melantropics at Praia do Arpoador, 2018 ©DR*

No doubt because of her multiple roots, Janaina Tschäpe embraces the art world like few artists. Born in 1973 in Munich, she now lives and works in New York after having been raised in São Paulo (Brazil). The size of the walls on which she takes obvious pleasure in painting dazzling colorful frescoes does not frighten her, like the architectures on which she stretches knitwear, the beaches or carnival balls that she invades with balloons, the immersive video installations that invade museum spaces... Photographs, performances, sculptures complete this protruding work.

## A Story Of Pleasure And Movement, Body And Soul

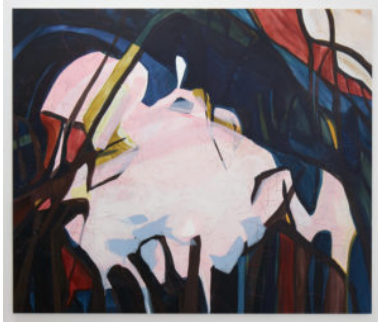
The creation is only a story of pleasure for this beautiful tall woman with a generous smile who never counts her time. Whether in her workshops in New York or on her farm in Minas Gerais (Brazil), her rage for work makes piles of magnificent drawings, collages and paintings accumulate everywhere she goes. She travels the world and the seas to records the images of her movies... Only her dear daughter Mina Rosa can come and disturb this life in daily osmosis with art.

She defends her immersive mode: « For me, painting means to feel something very close, to physically be in the present, body and soul. I could never explain to anyone this intimate dialogue with the canvas. My painting does not derive from images. It arises from my observations, which can be observations of nature as well as those of my imagination, the two go hand in hand in my opinion ».



*Janaina Tschäpe Sleep Walkers, 2009 © David Giancatarina*

## Hybrid States Of Being



*Juju in The Swamp, 2018 © David Giancatarina*

Her artistic universe masterfully integrates elements of aquatic, vegetal and human life. Subliminal forms, generally very colorful, ranging from soft tones to brighter variations, show a fictional figurative world. Her paintings, which appear abstract, are odes to nature in its greatest majesty. In her performative photographic and video works, hybrid creatures from another world appear.

The feminine form, (she also sometimes stages herself), is mainly represented. Incredible, long-shaped appendages, often including balloons, are sometimes enlarged to complete the bodies represented to form a very curious set of fluid space between the human organism and the cellular world.

## A Process Of Transformation

« **Blood, sea** » her immersive work thanks to four video projectors from 2004 was purchased by the Centre Pompidou. Its title is borrowed from **the Italian writer Italo Calvino** (1923-1985) whose neo-realist, allegorical and symbolic philosophical tales oppose reality and illusion. The fabulist believed that absolute truth is a chimera. But Janaina Tschäpe proposes a **'biogeochemical' work**: it is based on the discovery of the **physiologist René Quinton** (1866-1925) who revealed that blood plasma has a chemical substance almost identical to that of sea water, a finding that confirmed the theory on the origin and marine nature of living organisms. The artist blends her own metaphors between the infinity of marine space and the hollow cavities of blood circulation, between inner and outer life. She evokes the permanent recycling of the elements by which the Earth shapes life and life shapes the Earth, how it connects human and animal liquids to planetary ecologies.

## From Brush To Video, A Creative Gesture In Motion

« Film is a composition reminiscent of my drawings, » she confides to Singulars. The colors, strings and balloons of the costumes work like pencil and watercolor strokes...the active swirl of water reveals the movement of the models in their sprawling costumes to produce an unexpected result, both organic and choreographed. In a way, this situation in a natural space echoes with the gestures of the brushes, both situations being in a way beyond my control, witnessing the influence of the emotional state and the subconscious on my drawings. ».



*Janaina Tschape, Raft of The Medusa, 2019 © DR*

## Immemorial Memories From Before The Appearance Of Mankind



« Blood, sea » had integrated the Brazilian exhibition **Elles@Pompidou at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil** (2013). It was on this occasion that she captivated the curator Cécile Debray. Once at the head of the Musée de l'Orangerie, the new director scheduled her in her « Counterpoints », invitations from contemporary artists brought face to face with the Walter Guillaume et al. collection. Displayed on three of the four original large screens (the video installation had to be adapted to the spaces of the Musée de l'Orangerie), unusual and dreamlike forms float in the space,

transforming it into an aquarium where the spectator is immersed. Are we at the creation of the world? Does she invite us to dig into our unconscious to find immemorial memories of before the appearance of man on earth?

## A State Of Non-Being Close To Ecstasy

As an answer, let's not forget Janaina's Brazilian roots and her long stays in her farm in Minas Gerais. This acculturation mingles both a native baroque, dynamic, narrative, ornamental, dramatic, cultivating contrasts and seductive plasticity, as well as the Afro-Brazilian cult of Candomblé. On the one hand, the avatars of a dominant colonial style embodied by **the artist Aleijadinho (1738-1814)**, on the other, the transitional pantheism of practitioners who believe in an almighty God Oludumaré served by different deities, the orixás. The latter protect, but can also possess you in the trance. 'Blood, sea' carries baroque naiads, followers of Yemanjá, the deity of the sea, often represented as a mermaid. Janaina invites us to a baptismal ceremony. Water (sea? amniotic fluid?) is the main element that guides the movements of her suspended characters.

## Tschäpé/Monet, Elusiveness And Metamorphoses Of Nature

The polysemous and sensual force of Janaina Tschäpe's work is actually multiplied by her connection with the aquatic immersion imagined by Claude Monet (1840-1926). The painter of the Water Lilies wrote in 1909: « I have no other wish than to mingle more intimately with nature and I covet no other destiny than to have, according to Goethe's precept, worked and lived in harmony with its laws ».

She sheds light on the scope of Monet's ambition, so misunderstood in his time: « I am intrigued by his drawings, for they represent the raw forms of these gestural marks,

revealing the underlying composition and emotional drive without being obscured by the overall composition. **Interestingly, Monet made an active effort to disguise the fact that he was working from sketches so as not to damage his reputation as a master of outdoor painting...** It was this story that prompted me to make drawings on canvas that attest to the drawing as the final work while making reference to the raw gestures behind my paintings. »



## Un Prolongement Lumineux De Monet Et Les Expressionnistes Abstraites



Around the multiple correspondences of the two immersive works, the show includes a series of her Stream of Thoughts drawings, created for the exhibition **The Sea** (2019) placed close to Monet's sketchbooks. It also continues the links begun in the exhibition **Monet and the Abstract Expressionists** (2018). Cécile Debray brings together the Counterpoint N°5

offered to Janaina Tschäpe with The Good-bye Door, a painting by Joan Mitchell (1925-1992) and the Matrices Chromatiques, functional sculptures designed by the Franco-Swiss artist **Agnès Thurnauer** (born 1962). From this protected and calm cocoon, very « maieutic », Cécile Debray brilliantly rejuvenates the institution through a dynamic dialogue between aesthetics. So much so that artists are now asking to exhibit there, most recently David Hockney (1937). But this will be another beautiful story!