

TRAITS LINES

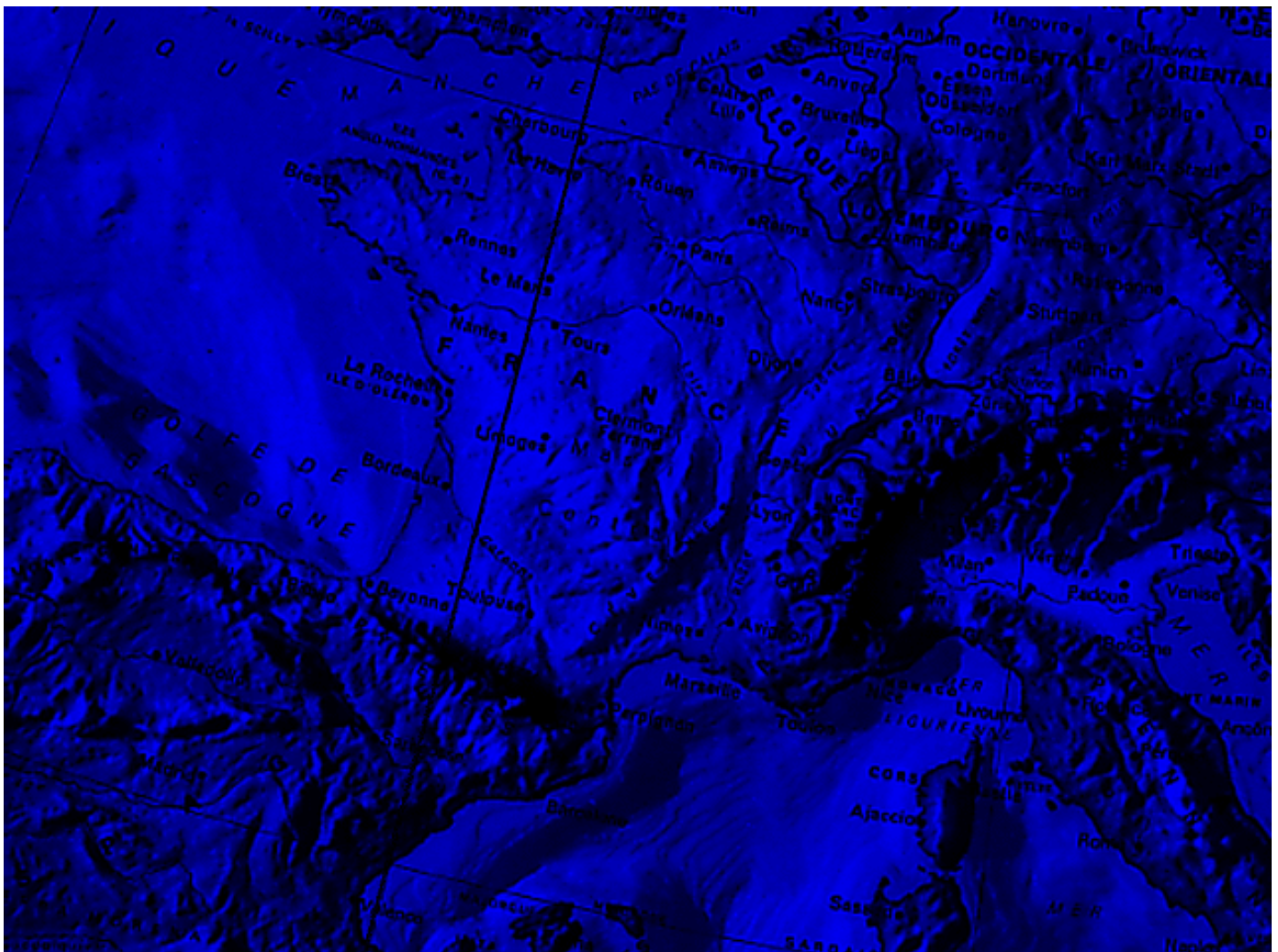
From 7th to 19th september 1989, Stephan Barron and Sylvia Hansmann followed the Greenwich Meridian by car from the English Channel to the Mediterranean Sea and from Villers-sur-Mer to Castillon de la Plana.

With their car fax they regularly sent images and texts about their trip to other faxes located in 8 different European locations (among them was Ars Electronica).

The straight line drawn by the two artists was materialised by fax Transmissions in the 8 exhibition spaces and in the spectator's mind by imaginary lines, projections of the original meridian.

Stephan Barron and Sylvia Hansmann thus created a new representation of line, one of the first symbols of humanity, a mental representation that integrated space, time and the human imagination. Pierre Restany talks about the «fractalisation of the meridian».

Ars Electronica - Linz • Institut Français - Cologne • Galerie Alain Oudin - Paris • Centre d'Art Contemporain Espais - Girona • La criée Centre d'Art Contemporain - Rennes • Maison de la Culture d'Amiens • Musée de Céret.



TRAITS LINES

Artist's book

Le concept de ce livre objet d'artiste est d'associer la carte et la fractalisation du méridien telle que Pierre Restany le développe dans un texte magnifique sur TRAITS.

Les images numériques de fond sont disposées au centre du dépliant. Ces images sont des cartes d'état major ou des cartes de différentes échelles numérisées en modifiant le processus de numérisation sur un ordinateur Amiga. Une ou plusieurs cartes sont utilisées pour chaque composante, rouge, vert, bleu de la numérisation, au lieu d'utiliser une seule et même source d'images pour les trois composantes. La superposition hasardeuse de ces trois composantes aboutit à un patchwork numérique qui ressemble aux images satellitaires.

La maquette de cet objet au format 70 par 120 cm a été réalisée par Stéphan Barron en utilisant les techniques de mise en page papier traditionnelles avant l'apparition de la mise en page électronique.

L'objet est imprimé par les énormes rotatives qui imprimaient et façonnaient dans les années 80 les cartes Michelin.

Very few unfolded copies have been also edited.

TRAITS

**STEPHAN
BARRON**

**SYLVIA
HANSMANN**

LINES



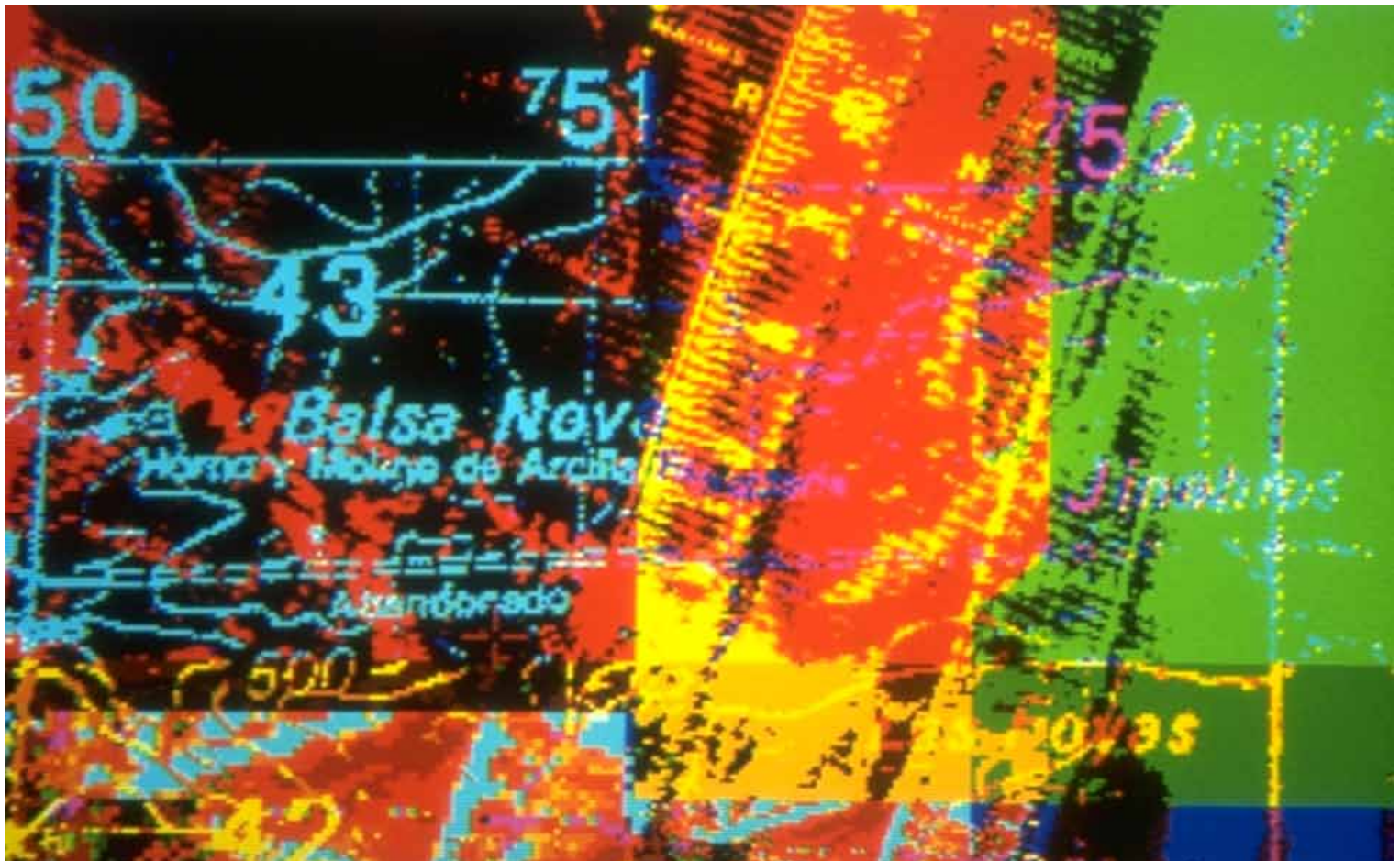


The critical texts published in the TRAITS LINES Artist's book in 1990 by Rien de Spécial® :

The meridian or the fractalized line by Pierre Restany,

Traits-Linien by Markus Müller,

Il viaggio di Stephan e Sylvia by Mario Costa.



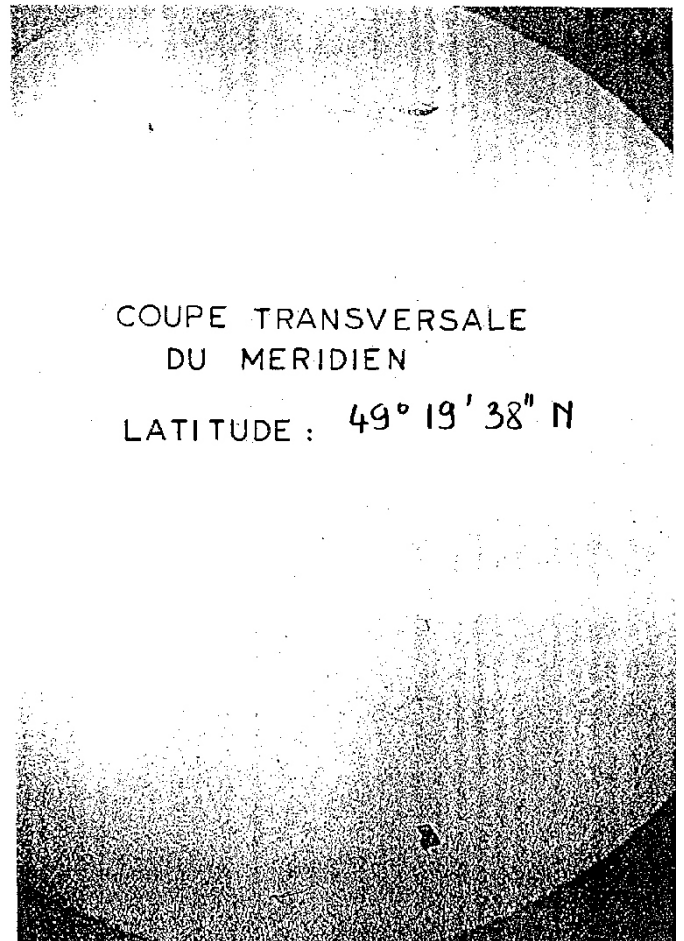


106 faxes have been sent to each of the eight reception points of LINES. That is a total of 848 faxes. The faxes were not cut, that means that each point received a 30 meters roll of telefaxes. Here in Alain Oudin's Gallery in Paris.

Each of the 13 days of the project, 2 or 3 points were selected with the help of ordnance survey maps precisely on the meridian. Before sending faxes concerning one point we sent a fax indicating the latitude.



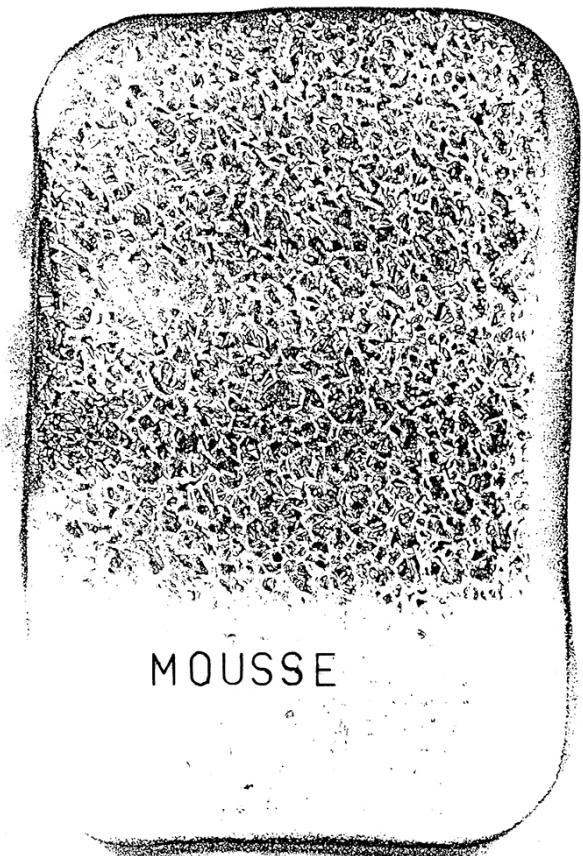
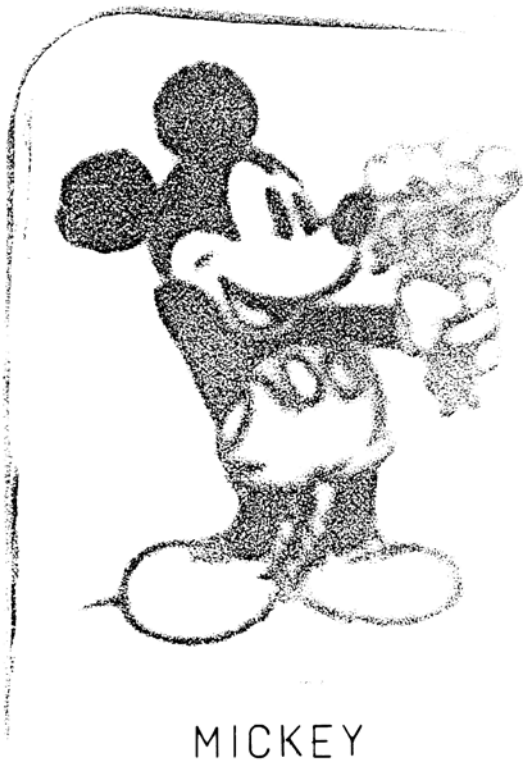
One of the most impressive points on the meridian was on the 12th day in a 2,5 long abandoned tunnel. 41st parallel. 0° Longitude.



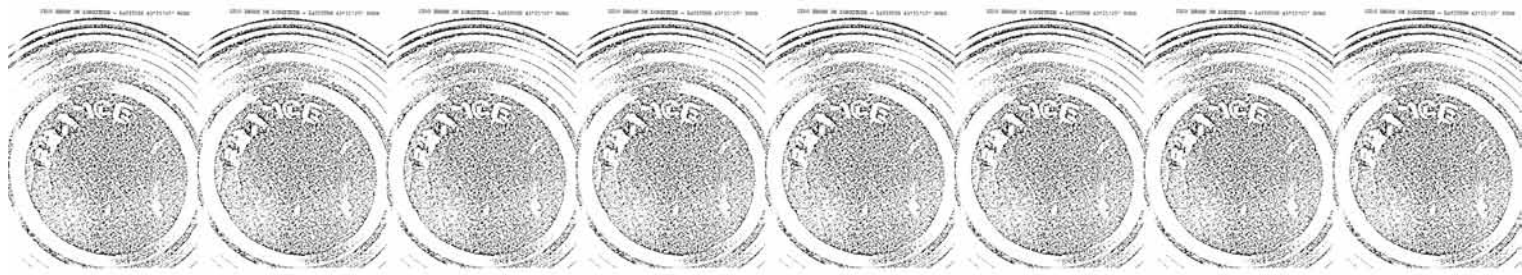


All these sources were mixed up and cut up with a photocopier. Here Stéphan Barron preparing the M.E.R.I.D.I.E.N serial.

Supermarché «Le Méridien»
Latitude 43°15'28 0° Longi-
tude. Tarbes.



Stéphan Barron made these faxes in the factory «Plasticentre» by the Loire. He found this sponge in the scraps of the factory. 47°17'58 latitude, 0° longitude.



M E R I D I E N

Format : 11 x 34 cm, déplié 70 x 100 cm

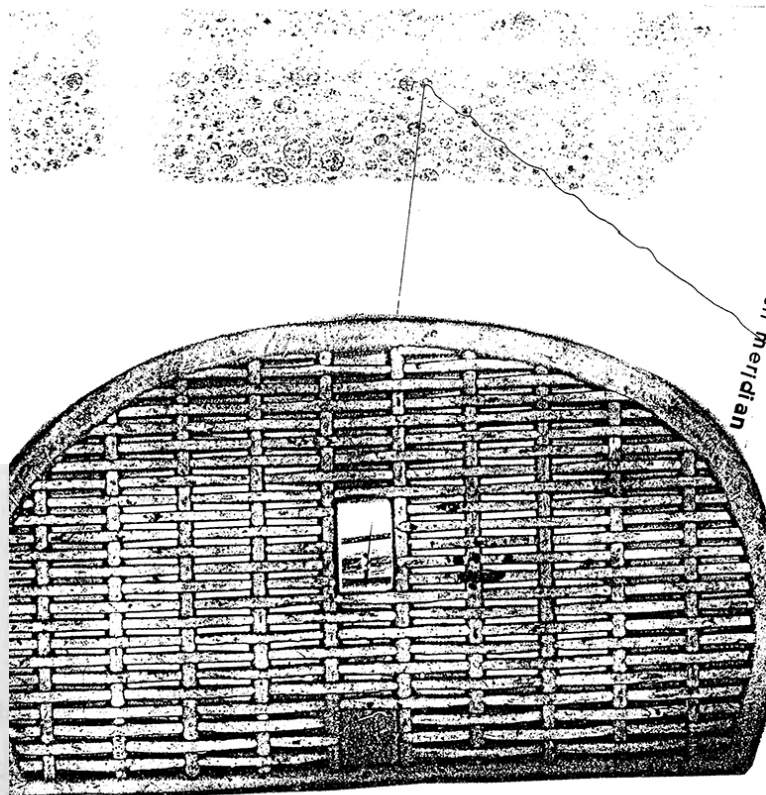
Design graphique de Stéphan Barron

Prix : 10 euros

ISBN : 2-95141175-0-0

EAN : 9782951417502

Fishermen photographed with polaroid camera.
Fax created by using the polaroidphoto, a basket for
crabs, and soap foam. Sylvia Hansmann



Pierre RESTANY, *The meridian or the fractalized line.*

To ask Stephan Barron why he chose the Greenwich meridian, or rather a fragment of the meridian, to perform his Lines Project is like asking Benoît Mandelbrot why he chose Brittany's coast to achieve his fractal measuring process.

Indeed, the meridian project by Stephan Barron and his friend Sylvia Hansmann is based on both active and passive concepts as well as mental and practical measurements. The Greenwich meridian is taken as it enters Europe, i.e. at Villers-sur-Mer, and the process ends in Spain, at Castellon de la Plaña, the line having gone across France from sea to sea. It is punctuated by samplings of landscape, so to speak, or by shots of landscape at different locations, and by transmitting them by fax to eight museums that are, as it were, the fractalizing projectors of the process, the process aims, as Stephan Barron says, to induce a mental image of this line, i.e. a measured fragment of the meridian. To ensure the measuring will achieve its purpose, it needs to transcend its practical aspect.

The measuring is only actual measurement insofar as it is perceived as a tangible phenomenon of the line by the transmitters of the messages/markers as much as by those who receive the faxes. The fact that a fragment of the line is transmitted thus means a part is considered to be a whole in itself by those receiving the messages.

This process also has the characteristics of a sentimental journey, of discovery, of a route with all the unforeseen and intense moments that come into play on an existential level. Barron is extremely aware of the composite aspect of the project's basic references, but I think that the problem of reference multiplicity is a relatively minor one. More important is the phenomenon of perception, and beyond it, the sensitivity which can encompass a planetary scale and the sense of the world as an object to be measured, this through the proper extension of its inner strengths.

I think the young artists of Barron's generation are by force of circumstance destined to a synthesis of reference that allows them to verify norms of language. Barron and Hansmann's experience seems to me typical of a moment as well as of a need.

The moment is one of change from the industrial age to the post-industrial society, and the need one of insertion into a sensibility capable of transcending the statements of modernity and satisfying post-modern conditions. What seems most important and determinant to me in this kind of project is that it is recording the unique nature of our time, and a will to assume it through perceptions that endlessly echo a given situation in time, that create this kind of fate of the identical which involves the normality of our differences, both big and small.

Barron and Hansmann have their whole life ahead of them, but I think that this operation, which they will realize serves as the initial step in a more involved process, occurs at a very precise moment in a time of wavering values, as Lyotard has put it, and broaches in essential, fundamental, and structural terms, the subject of measurement, i.e. measurement of space and time, of man in relation to his environment, of man in

relation to his ability to communicate, which involves the use of certain instantaneous communication technologies, which moreover make obvious that measurement alone is not an end in itself but rather an adventure of human perception. It is this sense of the human adventure that makes Barron and Hansmann's project a performance unlike others, one unrelated to an ironic sense of relativity. It is really measurement with a double meaning: on the one hand there's the extroverted meaning of objective realization along with the communication of this realization, and there's the introverted meaning of the operation's perception on the other.

I think that we will be led in future years to consider this phenomenon as a sort of efficient morality of perception as opposed to a gratuitous hotchpotch. It is absolutely essential that we learn to globalize our concepts, our feelings and our actions. Measurement is itself the yardstick for this global perception and I think that with the passing of time, Barron and Hansmann's processes will appear logical and illuminating in regards to the present trend of omnidirectional research that has become so typical of our collective consciousness.

Because of the entire project's logical simplicity, there may be a tendency towards a certain ordinariness, but this ordinariness is an intelligent and valuable one. In a way, Stephan Barron and Sylvia Hansmann may have reinvented the wheel, however, the return to this kind of essential and basic fact tallies with the necessities of the present and helps us forge the instruments of our new knowledge.

The faxes that have been gathered at the different reception points—museums that have punctuated the mental stretch of the line—constitute the fractalization of this very line and the beginning of a similar, infinite process that can repeat the image of this part of the whole: this is the way we must think of the simple acts that renew our perception and give it a human and emotional quality that is eternally renewed and renewable.

Pierre Restany

Paris, 13 March, 1990