

# CANTER § BRIENS

PAINTER, ENGRAVER, VISUAL ARTIST

And Poet

## STYLISTICAL ANALYSIS OF PAINTINGS

This Artist views the world in a distinct way, and in fact restores nature's capacities to "grow and spread in many facets and colours".

By magic, he manages to **render visible** those energies and defining lines of "**the living world**" that underpin shapes.

Nothing seems truer or more evocative of a certain *power* and tangible **presence** than the human figures, landscapes and designs that spring from the artist's hand.

*Ephemerality* is a recurrent theme in such works, whereas elsewhere, everything seems to become permanent, and we willingly identify with his representations, wanting to amplify them and take them away with us.

Reality becomes conceivable: it knocks at our door, and the very real sites, which are most often devoid of impastos, come to constitute *the fabric of our sensations in the present moment*.

In the majority of his works, however, his approach is quite different and reveals curves and structures highlighted with movement and colours. And in these pieces, nothing is static. Everything emerges in tones of purple and burgundy and warm colours, so evocative of *our rediscovered sensuality*.

Sometimes, he demonstrates immense rigour and restraint in his use of water on land masses; and their very breath extends beyond the rigid confines of nostalgia to become part of the collective subconscious.

His painted figures, set in their postures, even suggest the opacity of skin and, if we look closer, broad *inhalations and exhalations* are seen to circulate, and stir in us the vision of a world renewed.

And as though extracted from a mineral vein, we are naturally led, by certain of his pieces, towards the art of transformation, that is to say the evolution of shapes and senses.

In some artworks, there is a certain *fascination*, which at times is vibrant and feverish, to portray impetus, dynamism and drive, and at others harmonising, calling for balance and for a sharing of aesthetic pleasure, each plane offering the reflection of a certain reality, one now transformed by the brightness of his own vision.

His work is also an *invitation* to see what we observe differently, to perceive more with him, particularly light and its effects on bodies and faces.

On the canvas, the very surface of the world in its human representation is exposed to the observer's gaze.

Through his very objective, the Painter appears to allude to a sensitivity of a both earthly and ethereal nature.

And when we decipher what he paints and draws, intricate lines and chromatic nuances form and then disperse, as though to force us to forget the idea of there being an end.

And so this creator develops and attains an artform that is shaped by the "*enchantment*" of matter and figures in motion.

And *the resonances* that emerge from the very arrangement of his splashes of colour invade the senses, and through this magic, every interpretation becomes possible.

Testimony: Mrs L.N (2011)

## **THE ARTIST**

Details: Christian BRIERE

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### ***Portrait of the Man***

He was born in June 1947 in the Château de Clermont-Tonnerre, (which had been transformed into a maternity ward following the war), near the Normandy town of Villers-Bocage (in Calvados).

## *Early Life*

### *Overall Development*

## *Portrait of the Man*

He began painting small hunting scenes and animals on paper at the age of 8, then discovered *oil painting* at the age of 12 (after his mother mistakenly bought him oil paints instead of watercolours) and practiced *on earthenware and sandstone* (tiles and hard surfaces, fibre-cement, etc.).

He spent numerous summers by the seaside, where his parents had a small holiday home (which had no electricity or water for many years) located in the marshy area of Le Hamel in *Asnelles-sur-Mer* (a small village in the Bessin).

He was deeply influenced by the place.

The peat and **clay soil** on the beach, left over from the old forest of Quintefeuille (*which used to extend for 2 to 3 kilometres into the sea*), were the first natural materials he used to make commonplace and imaginary objects.

Every summer holiday was spent living at the rhythm of the tides and the family essentially lived off seafood, which they fished on land, at sea or on the washed-up pontoons (the ruins of the artificial port of Arromanches) that were installed following the Normandy Landings on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944. (*Led by Commander Kieffer, American, Canadian and French troops invaded the Normandy coast at Ouistreham on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 in an operation codenamed Overlord, targeting the following sections of beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword.*)

### *Hobbies and passions*

For several years, he played piano, the accordion (up to the age of 17), and later on, the hurdy-gurdy.

Hobbies and sports included judo, and then yoga, mime, modern jazz dance, kung-fu and tai chi chuan.

*As a student*, he made several trips to England (Devon – London) and Germany (Würzburg, Bonn, etc.) and worked as a graphic designer at the Main Post (Würzburg): periodic newspaper, ad mockups (in summer holidays).

## *Studies and Training*

French baccalaureate (Philosophy stream)

Artistic studies at the **Ecole Municipale des Beaux-Arts de Caen** (drawing – engraving – lithographies – frescoes – oil painting – sculpture. From 1965 to 1970)

- Pupil of: - Henri THOMAS - Winner of the Prix de Rome (and pupil of BRIANCHON)  
Lithography painter, History of Art.
- Mr GAUTHIER - Teacher and stamp engraver.
- Mrs MOUFFE - Sculptor and drawing teacher (nudes, sketches, modelling and plaster studies).

- **National Diploma of Fine Art** – (major in Engraving), awarded in Rouen (1970)

Workshops at the **Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts of Paris**

Engraving workshops with Mr CAMI (Drawer and stamp engraver – Winner of the Grand Prix des Beaux-Arts de Paris).

- **Work experience at the Greschny Studio** near Albi (in the 80s) – Family of Russian immigrants, Painters of icons and frescoes since the 16<sup>th</sup> century – egg tempera, reproductions (Memlinc, 15<sup>th</sup> cent.), wax painting, fresco (on wood, cement, plaster, and paper). Creating watercolour paints using pigments from various sources.

- **Workshop** (Tandem in Caen, since 2007) Organiser: J. Tribhou.

Painting, drawing, modelling (clay), nude sketches

### *Other training (from 1966 to 1985)*

In his youth, he attended courses in **drama** (Drama School under the direction of Mr **Malartre** and co-led by JP Dupuy – Caen – Hérouville),

**Dramatic Arts and Mime** (in Paris, Caen, Vivoin, Carcassonne, with Isaac Alvarez and Maximilien Decroux.) - classes and seminars – Creation of expressive masks (Comédia Del Arte) and theatre sets.

Poster design.

Very young, he learnt **jazz dance** and choreography (Jazz workshops, *Nelly Bouchardeau*, - Caen – and the *R.I.D.C*, with *F. and D. Dupuy* - Paris, Vichy – classes and courses).

- He was taught by *Barbara Pearce*, a Canadian dancer and choreographer (*Modern Jazz*) who made numerous trips to France to oversee the choreography of theatre plays, and modern and lyrical ballets, and with Jérôme Savary at the Avignon festival in “L’Histoire d’un soldat” in 1982.

Having enjoyed courses in *rhythm*, he took lessons with the partner of *Jérôme Robbins* from the New York City Ballet, who choreographed the legendary “West Side Story” (*J. Robbins was nominated Deputy Artistic Director of the N.Y.C. Ballet by Russian born George Balanchine*). - *Rencontres de Vichy* (stage design), Mâcon, Marseille and Paris – (J. Andrews, B. Delattre).

(Summer and weekend courses and seminars)

with Susan *Buirge*, American dancer and choreographer who led the “Théâtre - Danse en France” courses, from 1976 to 1985.

**In addition**, he obtained a broad university education:

- Various courses in American-influenced therapies (Paris – from 1968 to 1985)

(Bioenergy, Primal Scream, Co-Counselling, Group Dynamics)

- Master’s degree in Visual Arts from PARIS
- Master’s degree in Humanities (1994-2000)
- Master of Advanced Studies (DEA) in Sociology

These degrees complemented his artistic training by allowing him to develop new analytical capacities.

- To satisfy his growing interest in communication, the visual arts and the world of performing, and also out of curiosity (*his interest in the “human phenomenon”*), he more recently (in the 2000s) acquired other skills:

- Study Group in Transactional Analysis (over 3 years)
- Master’s Level Practitioner in PNL (*Communication techniques*) - I.F.P.N.L. Institute – 15<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement of Paris.
- Course in Hypnotherapy – I.S.H.C. Institute - PARIS – MALAKOFF.

(European Hypnotherapy Practitioner Diploma) Working as a consultant in certain organisations in Normandy.

**Concerning his main career**, he taught Applied Arts in Lycée Professionnel, (BEP qualification – Professional baccalaureate / 1971-2009) and attended various degree courses (*ENNA – Paris – Various courses in pedagogy and organising workshops*).

**Other positions held:**

**He taught Hatha Yoga** for over 10 years in Caen and the surrounding area (evening classes – 1988 – 1999). He was adviser in professional sports environment.

**Yoga instructor** in the French provinces: 2012 – 2016.

**Actor; he performed in several boulevard theatre plays.** (The most recent being **Tapage Nocturne** with the Biez Theatre Company – 2007-2008 – Mondeville and other towns in the Caen region).

**Instructor and Presenter**, from 1970 to 1982 (in weekend and 3 weekday sessions) in Specialised Teacher Training, in France - gestural expression and working with masks – in Le Havre – and Presenting in **Quebec** (various towns) – television (Toronto 1970)

**Advertising designer** for a French company (in Le Havre – in 1977)

**University:** he gave lectures on several occasions at **University** on various themes: - on the **representation of emotions in space** generated by human action (and particularly in painting and contemporary body language; – on the emergence of human creations, and the diversity of signs in the environment, etc.) – From 1990 to 1992

**Designer and Organiser** of several editions of the “**M’festival**” in Asnelles-sur-Mer. (Mini annual festival set up in 2003 and finalised in 2005 and 2006 – one day in early July) on the techniques of vocal and instrumental expression. Artists: Zulu songs (Jorge Venancio Trio), **Isabelle Vauvarin** (Boris Vian), the group **The Howling Fox**, Dédé the accordionist, Yves Lassay (synthesiser and accordion accompaniment)...

**Fuelled by these many rich cultural experiences**, he began to write a few **essays and articles** and gradually developed new means of observation and exploration, whilst continuing to paint and write poems (notebooks) and making documentaries (camera, video club of Verson currently. He is still fascinated by stories and history as experienced by men). Also, he is always willing to encourage others in the hope that they will embark on the road of artistic creation.

In light of his extensive education and outlook, we can understand why the therapeutic domain appears to have become so important for this artist.

*Article by Mr P.M. (2013)*

## *The Method*

*His method is based on a life philosophy and “working hands-on” with the technical means available to him and materials he uses.*

He has often sought to capture what appears essential and vital to him: “Is living not giving shape and meaning to things and encouraging others to bring out the best in themselves?”

In fact, he has never stopped working on “**the body and breathing**”, “**space and design**”, the depths of “**the being**” and the “**roughness**” of **material**.

His training in breathing techniques, relaxation and meditation seems to support this objective and confirm his desire *to avoid separating* “body from soul, and hand from head and heart.”

Let us remember at this point that he was trained in **Yoga** (EFY (European School of Yoga Teachers) Rue Aubriot, Paris. He still goes to places of relaxation and education: - Centre Spirales – Chamarande – Paris and other towns in France).

We note however that his *anchorage* in life comes to light, and tangibly so, through *artworks demonstrating energy, movement and expression*.

His attitude and sensibility are rather akin to the *profile* of an explorer or space adventurer, though he is also very much an aesthete and poet, in his search for the right movement, true feeling, and healing emotion.

***He states***, “all things become anchored through actions,” also meaning that we are “solidly connected”, and according to him, every mastered technique and tool contributes to creating knowledge of oneself and this world.

Yet, as though to prevent us from tripping over an obstacle, he warns, “*being is not something defined once and for all.*”

“*We are on a journey,*” according to him, “and every movement, every *breath*, and every trace we leave incarnates us a little further and/or elevates us higher.”

And there is nothing stopping us from reinventing ourselves “at every second of every day!”

### ***Poet meets man of action:***

*“Through trials and tribulations, every **imprint** we leave and every show of **emotion** finds its justification and effect at the very heart of an **artistic process**. ”*

It is partly to provoke a reaction in us that he urges us to *discover* and explore our world, which is as much interior as exterior. And he draws on many different forms of expression to illustrate this very objective.

Consequently, according to him, each of us can bear witness to *those moments of space-time* that are experienced for and by ourselves, and at best, shared with others.

Once we are “**actor** and **witness**” to our own transformation, we become a co-creator of our future, and therefore accompany the world on its journey.

It is also about self-positioning:

*It is about “wanting to attend the very banquet of existence, and once there, being able to offer concerts and exhibitions, dances, songs and poems, and ideas and personal skills” (This is an individual testimony, and fulfilling one’s personal potential defines what is called **‘the meaning of one’s objective**).*

Let us not be in any doubt, it is also an appeal for others to recognise one’s own vision.

Yet at the same time, as he seems to be listening to this “inner world”, it can be said that **this method** seems to be above all **existential**.

**This famous “alliance with life”** (which we made as soon as we were born into this world and was prepared in the uterine world) **and our inner resonances form**, in fact, the very **echo** of the subtlest of our vibrations, which interact with **those of the world**.

**Bearing witness to** this movement that we feel deep inside should also, according to him, reconcile us with “all that lives and changes.” It is perfectly obvious.

More generally and in a more structural sense,

*If we develop this method a little, we can in fact be tempted to join him in saying that the “**building**” and “**shaping**” of **representations** that each of us does throughout our lives should allow for the human cocktail of emotions, feelings, impulses and intuitions to **emerge more easily** and more calmly. They should also serve as a springboard (thereby constituting an irresistible force) for weaving and **writing one’s own story, bearing witness to it, and so on**.*

*Once **acquired, identity** itself tends to reveal, among other things, “the being in terms of its own consciousness of being a singular entity,” and this is true whatever one’s cultural, ethnic or geographical origins.*

**Promoting** the (moral and willing) person, citizen, artisan, creator, etc., is, logically, what should lead us to **contribute** to the greater movement and great aspiration, because this is the **vital spark** that gives “**meaning to our actions!**” And this is so sorely-needed today!

*To summarise, we can say this: everything should be done to foster both “the development of personal and emotional expression,” and therefore to foster the exploration of one’s “inner” and “outer” worlds.*

Now that all supports are conceivable in order to **celebrate “the will to live”** and “**better living**” in these very diverse and complex times, we can only be in tune with them.

A deep desire for transformation and regeneration inhabits this man, and we can see it at work.

His realism and enthusiasm, which we could describe as “*flamboyant*”, fuel this change, which is something that *concerns us all* and we are invited to follow him.

### ***Portrait of the Man***

Suffice it to say that what this man expresses through his actions, courses and artworks describes a reality, one revealed by a confirmed *temperament*, and by a world that is itself *given to live* and *breathe*.

And it is by appealing to this positive and necessary force, and to his imagination, that the artist organises *his vision and acts, which are themselves conducive to revealing the two worlds.*

***It is up to us to shape them*** and finally ***to amplify them.***

**A great adventure** in other words

*Article by Mr P.M on the Man and the Artist* (2012 - Art Professionnal)

## EXHIBITIONS, SHOWS

### And PROJECTS

- June 2016** Exhibition of paintings (watercolours and acrylics) on Normandy landscapes in **YELETS** (town of about 100,000 inhabitants) in **RUSSIA** (400 km south of Moscow)
- Three paintings were selected for one of the *private museums of local history*.
- At the inauguration, the artist met with Mr **KRIKOUNOV**, history expert and enthusiastic collector and owner of several museums.
- 2016 - 2020** Renewal: - Exhibitions and cultural shows in France, Europe, Russia and other continents (in preparation).
- 2010 –2016** *Theatre sets, poems, essays.*
- Various articles and video reports (film and DVD editing)
- Paintings and drawings (nudes, portraits, abstract compositions and sketches)
- 2006 – 2010** Aesthetic research and various artworks (nudes and compositions)
- 2006** International Salon of *Contemporary Art* in HEROUVILLE-ST-CLAIR
- Large-scale paintings (triptychs).
- 1998 – 2006** Visual arts research: contemporary art, presentations, theatre
- 1997** 41<sup>st</sup> International Salon of visual arts in BEZIERS
- Large-scale painting.
- 1996** Salon d’Hiver in PARIS
- Oil painting on canvas
- 1994 –** Art Mail exhibitions (groups) – TAHITI museum of Oceania
- PARIS
  - IUFM Caen
  - MUSEE de la Poste in Caen
- Compositions and personal research
- 1994** Galerie des Associations – PARIS
- Paintings

- 1993** Salon d'Automne – Grand Palais – PARIS  
Oil on canvas
- 1992** ART + ART – Forum des Halles – PARIS (group)  
Paintings
- 1991** Salon d'Hiver – Galerie de Nesle – PARIS  
Oil on canvas
- 1990** Casino in TROUVILLE (group)  
Oils on canvas and acrylics
- 1989** ST JACUT DE LA MER – Exhibitions  
Water-based paintings and watercolours
- 1988** DEAUVILLE – Exhibition  
Oil paintings and drawings  
Presentation for Belgian television  
Performances, design research, oil paintings and sketches on canvas and paper
- 1987** BEAUMONT-EN- AUGE – Exhibitions of oil paintings, water-based paintings and lithographies

## *Personal Writings by the Artist*

On canvas or any support, I like to create realistic renderings of light on skin or objects, particularly when I have the possibility of “*capturing*” the unusual quality of that light.

But it is in the action of painting itself that I develop a desire to leave traces and marks, emotions and feelings, as to free them from space and time.

Every day, when I can, I let water wash over the surface in broad sweeps like a wave crashing against a rock or a tide rising on a beach.

*Being open to the surprise* of a random brush mark, shade or splash brings me closer to the elements and original energy of the “living world”, which is a natural and life-giving force.

This is the link that I am striving to rediscover and keep.

It is more difficult, however, to capture the character of a face, body or smile occupying the space of my field of vision.

*Eyes* themselves are in fact a little like a landscape awaiting discovery, and the more we look at them, the more they reveal.

As for objects, they may appear still, but it requires a great deal of observation and patience to make them say something.

Concerning *the adventure into abstraction*, it offers countless possibilities for exploring the rhythms and melodies of our subconscious, the moods and liberties of our dreams, the constructions and certainties of our reasoning, and the hymns and songs of the world.

And in this respect, every horizon now seems open to us.

*Laughing*, on the other hand, is perhaps what is most difficult to express in a realist portrait, whereas it can serve as a pretext for a great many variations in abstract improvisations.