



MEL PATRICK

The author of this site and the book "Egocentricity and spirituality" is not a guru, an enlightened being, a Jivanmukti or a Jnani (a realized person who holds sacred knowledge).

He teaches nothing nor organizes sessions of meditation and Satsang (talks about spirituality and non-duality). He isn't more or less "awakened" than anybody else when he doesn't sleep in the arms of Morpheus. He doesn't claim to be free from anything and doesn't think to have realized the Self. He doesn't live in Nirvana or in a world of non-duality, and even less in a fourth dimension of pure consciousness or in heaven, but on earth as all other human beings.

He's actually a very normal and ordinary human being and not God, the Self, the universal consciousness, stillness or an ocean of bliss.

He writes to share his experience with other seekers of truth and what is according to him good for humanity. As a matter of fact, he is a seeker of truth and that's why he doesn't hesitate to denounce the delirious abuses of spirituality (especially in the non-duality circles) that we can witness today in the West.

His initiation with Swami Girdanandaji from Uttarkashi and study of Advaita Vedanta with Mr. Brahma Chaitanya from Gangotri enable him to have a relatively clear idea of what is meant by the term "non-duality". And it's precisely this subject that he wishes to introduce to the reader, subject based on an experience he has lived and very clearly described in the section "Experience" dated the 4/2/2012.

Having nothing for sell, he does not have to enter in the "star system" so dear to the liberated gurus of today and unveil his private, professional or social life.

The reader can nevertheless interact with him via Internet on topics concerning his website and his book.

<https://sites.google.com/site/advaitaminima/language/advaita-kuti-in-english/2-materials-of-research/advaita-minima>

INTERVIEW

NDM: Can you please tell me about the turquoise painting. How this began?

Mel Patrick: Long story short, it started with a deep admiration for Mondrian and the group “De Stijl”, Kandinsky and the Bauhaus, Malevich and the Suprematism, the Neo-Geo art and at the extreme opposite of geometry, I got one of the most pleasant emotional shock in my life when I discovered in 1982 the works of Jackson Pollock during one of the most important exhibition dedicated to him in Paris. I went to see this exhibition every night during 2 weeks. And I just couldn't believe that paintings could produce such an effect

Before to explain you anything about the turquoise painting, you have to understand that my quest at that time was to get rid of art among many other things, everything to tell you the truth, except a bag and a flight ticket to India. This was before I met my Guru. Years later, I got a better idea. Instead of trying to erase art from my life which makes me thinking even more about it, why not to get rid of the artist? And somehow I succeed with the help of my Guru and master of Tai Chi Chuan . Then art came back years later scratching my mind during practice of meditation. So I realize that the “no artist” concept was only the first step. But I still needed on more step to complete the picture so to say. After reading about cybernetics that I associated to Chaos theory that I like a lot because it's a perfect scientific representation of the concept Karma and its extreme complexity, I understood that I needed a system to produce art by itself in order to definitively replace the artist with a pure spectator or witness, a concept quite important in Vedanta. The point was no artist and absolutely nothing to do or in other words “no being no doing, but the show goes on”.

Broadly speaking that's the context which gave birth to the turquoise painting which, as a fixed image, is only part of a process. The painting itself has no importance whatsoever and that's why it has never been materialized. But it has a reality which can be described and visualized. You will have of course to reconsider the meaning of the word “reality” if you want to understand that this painting is truly a graphic representation as any others in galleries or museum for instance, but this one can only be found in your mind and only when you want to see it. It's quite a peculiar

approach of art itself and not a very good one for the business of it because you only need to know the description of the painting in order to get it. And if you really want to hang it on a wall because you understood that there is at the very least something not ordinary about it despite its simplicity, you will have to make it by yourself. That's another peculiar approach of art too.

So how does this painting “looks like”, a question which would suppose that there is original when in fact there is none? The turquoise painting is a 100 cm square divided vertically in two parts or two rectangles: one of 62.5/100 and another of 37.5/100. The ratio is 5:8 and 3:8. The bigger panel on the right side is 2 cm higher than the smaller one on the left side. It should be easy to visualize and even easier to materialize. At present this broken square has to be covered with turquoise blue gloss paint, a blue slightly green which looks like the famous gem stone called turquoise, like the depths of the sea we can see on some beautiful postcards of the Caribbean islands and like a late afternoon sky in august. So you must feel 3 different elements in this blue color: the stone or earth, the water and the air. For those who really want to make it, it would be much better to progress with successive lays of painting starting with pure white and getting progressively blue/green until you get the right color. That's how it has to be done in order to get transparency and depth effect, and if it's very well done, it will look like porcelain. And if one reader makes it, please don't forget to send me a picture because I've never seen it outside my mind.

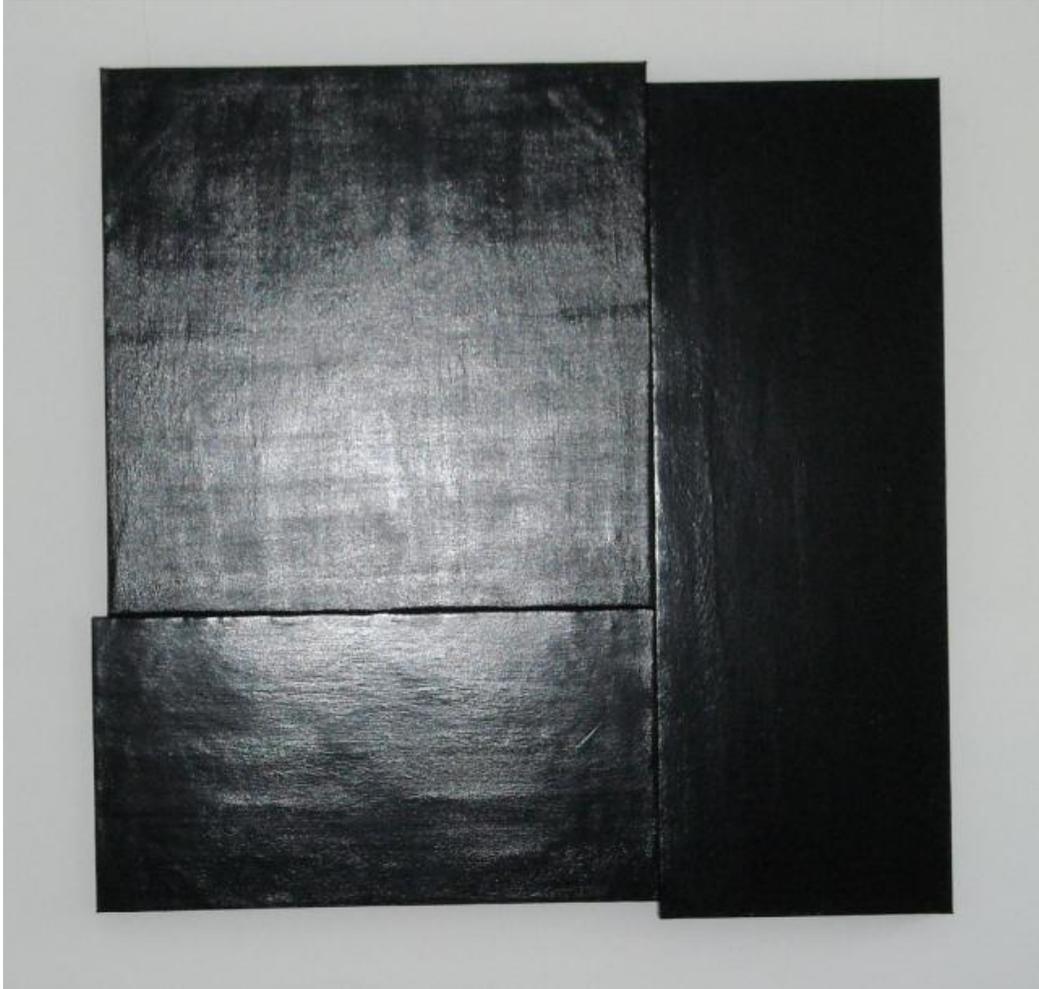
NDM: Do you mind if ask you some more about this part. Since I'm sure people will want to know. It will also give them more of an idea of where you are coming from. How long did it take to art to come back after meeting your guru?

Mel Patrick: It took 5 year after I met my Guru and it happened in a very strange way.

I was living during 3 months in a small hut at 11 200 ft in front of beautiful snow capped mountains and next to an amazing waterfall with a permanent rainbow in it at Gangotri, one the four main sources of the Ganga river in India. Despite the cold, I woke up one night at 3 or 4 am and draw one square with a black square and a black triangle in it, then another square with 4 black triangles in it and many lines connecting different sections of the structure which makes it looking like a kind of Yantra or Mandala. Then I quickly went back to sleep because it was freezing cold.

The next day when I watch these 2 geometric figures, I really wonder what it could be and why to wake up in the middle of the night to draw something which was absolutely not related to the environment and what I was doing there with Mr. Brahma Chaitanya, that is to say studying Advaita Vedanta in order to understand the 5 years of Sahaja Samadhi I just experienced before coming back to India. And still now, I don't know what these 2 very strange designs are and where they really come from because it cannot be from my own imagination.

They look like nothing I ever done before and what I was going to do after. And as far as I tried to understand them, they have no meaning. That's maybe their most important characteristic and teaching. It's the kind of minimal art that you can watch for hours without thinking because for sure, there is nothing to think about, so much so that I really wonder where I could find the inspiration to do something so strange especially in the middle of the night. And after 3 months in Gangotri, I also understood that everything was really strange and magical in this holy place, but that's another story. This is how I started thinking again about art and looking for another line of research in geometry as usual because to me there is nothing more spiritual than the extreme opposite of the apparent chaos of nature.



NDM: What's about the black triptych painting, (above) how long after did you make that? Does it have a title by the way?

Mel Patrick: I call it the 3 panels Black Square because it's a black square made with 3 panels: one square and two rectangles. And as you can understand with some humor, my point is not to complicate anything about art, but pretty much the opposite: to make it the simplest possible without any intellectual concept supporting it as a crutch, but still with a human

touch which makes this Black Square different of a pure geometric square that anybody or even a machine would do without thinking about it. Many works of Olivier Mosset for instance are very interesting and I highly respect his art, but somehow they express a dead end with their formal geometry. And I basically prefer to consider art as an opening than a door slapping the face of the one looking at it. That's why even in geometry, I appreciate the "unexpected", a kind of human factor which cannot really be understood.

The 3 panels Black Square started probably to take shape 10 years after what did happen in Gangotri. In between there have been many kinds of research always about square and rectangle, and hundreds if not thousands of not very conclusive sketches. The 3 panels Black Square is a direct application of what I was really looking for, a "system", and in this case, a system of deconstruction and reconstruction. The point of this research was to find out, as in cybernetics, a comprehensible system able to analyze in this instance an existing shape, a square, then to let it dividing it up and putting again the pieces together of its own accord and finally see what happens – to do no more that enjoying the mental show of this system at work and not to materialize any painting or sculpture or works of any kind.

The purpose of this artistic mind game, if you wish to call it like that, is first to visualize a square and understand the rules of the system, then to only watch in the mind what is happening because without the intention of creating anything, you don't know how it's going to evolve. And that's what this art is all about. Anyway nobody knows how imagination works, how the mind functions, how a thought appears in consciousness, what consciousness is, how an intention results in an action, what means to be, to do and to create... if there is such thing as human creation, who I am, where I come from, where I'm going to and so on. Let's be sincere, we know and understand with all our sciences absolutely nothing about ourselves and the world we live in, even if our self-importance seems always to be far beyond the size of our ignorance. So for once, it was

interesting to use art as a means of exploring the unknown and let the mind working by itself without any self-identity believing in “It’s me who is doing it and knows why is doing it and finally blablabla..., I’m the best” which is more or less what the ego is always thinking as well as in a positive or negative way.

On a philosophical level, this artistic process is similar and beyond the search for the “free action” of Existentialism. It starts with a visualization, then the mind is free to create anything it likes according the rules of the system, but of course without any effect in the real world. It’s a kind of art which let no trace anywhere even in the mind of the artist. According the ancient Greek school of Cynicism, it was a perfect application of a principle I really like and apply in my life: “If you aren’t happy, it’s your fault”, or in other more artistic terms “if you don’t like it, let it evolve as it will be”. And on a spiritual level, it’s a very Taoist approach of art using the concept of Wu Wei, “no doing”, which in a way sums up the practice of Tao, if not the Tao itself. And it was also an indirect application of insight and mindfulness that I studied in Thailand with Buddhadasa Bikkhu. So to me, this research was a synthesis of many things done before and happening at that time. And it was done without any pretension because my purpose with this art is to explain to people how it works in order to practice it, but not to show them the result because there is obviously none, except the 3 panels Black Square that I only materialize recently not as a work of art, but just as a demonstration of this artistic process. In more simple terms, the process itself is the art, not what it creates. Or as Alan Watts put it very well about spiritual path of liberation, the beauty of a piece of music doesn’t lie in the last note, but in the piece itself since the very beginning of it.

To the question “What is art?”, Picasso answered “It’s to show”. And what is showing us reality as it is or as we like to perceive it with our imagination and fantasy and quite often unwillingly with our psychodrama too? It’s the mind. So the point of this research was not to create anything, but to

discover a system I could introduce in the mind, a kind of “Inception” for those who knows the movie of Christopher Nolan, and let it deconstruct and reconstruct shapes according factors unknown to me because I have absolutely no idea of what my imagination is able to create when I let it go freely without any personal expectation. As a matter of fact, I don’t know what the mental faculty called imagination really is. So how could I know what it’s able to figure out? And that’s how I elaborate the concept of “no artist doing anything” and “no works of art done”. What was left was only the show of a free creative power called imagination, a very personal display nevertheless because it comes from what I’m used to call “my mind” and not the one of someone else, but without any control of its creative power.

If you want to watch carefully something, you have to stop thinking in order to be fully attentive to what you are watching. And to stop thinking thoughts which are made of words and sounds, you only need to listen to the silence inside yourself. I know it sounds a little bit weird especially for people who practice meditation and seek desperately to stop thinking, but the fact is that you don’t need more than listening very attentively inside yourself in order to be without effort in a state of complete silence. And there you can easily visualize a square because it’s a very simple shape and once you understood how works the system, you just have to watch the transformation of these shapes without personal intervention and any kind of intention. Why a square and not a circle or a triangle which are very basic shapes and very easy to visualize too? Try to deconstruct a circle or a triangle and you will understand immediately the problem. If you cut vertically or horizontally a square into pieces, you only get new squares or rectangles which are easily afterwards combining together. If you do it with a triangle or even worse a circle, you immediately get extremely complex shapes and I doubt that you will be able to follow your imagination playing with them.

And in order to perfect the system and mental process, I introduce another and very simple factor in it: to stop the metamorphosis of these shapes every times they seem to create a good pattern, more balanced and aesthetic than the others, with different intensity and movement, something special which makes the difference that could be called art even without understanding what this concept really means. In other words, the mind is programmed by the system to stop to what it considers itself nice, artistic or interesting for reasons that I can personally understand sometimes, but not always. So to succeed in this kind of “seeing” the evolution of the system and being able to let it stop by itself at any moment, I still had to introduce another factor which is “slow motion”. Useless to say that we can introduce any factors we like as long as we are able to see and follow their evolution because the mind itself is always curious to discover new stuff and it loves exciting factors as long as it is able to follow the evolution of their complexity otherwise it blacks out. And sometimes what imagination is able to show with this kind of new programming is quite extraordinary and somehow totally beyond our own imaginative power.

NDM: Would you say that an aspect of doing this is like creating an artistic "thought form" of some kind? Like a tulpa?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulpa>

Mel Patrick: The initial visualization of a square is the creation of a “thought form”, but it’s not related with a Tulpa and the purpose of it which is nothing else than a quest for magical powers called Siddhies in Sanskrit.

The point to visualize a “thought form” and let the mind free to do what it feels like to do with it doesn't have any other objective than watching and discovering the power of the mind itself. Everybody has an idea about what art and beauty are. But nobody has ever been able to give a clear definition of them. This idea, even if everybody hasn't exactly the same, comes from the mind. So the question now is to find out if it comes from what we’re

used to call our “personal mind” or from a “universal mind” or maybe a connection between both. How human beings determine what is artistic and why do they agree more or less on what they think to be beautiful independently of their culture and civilization? That’s the kind of question I explore with the practice of this art and I’d like to precise that it will never go beyond an exploration because I obviously don’t expect to find any answer to such metaphysical questions.

Life is a mystery and we try to enjoy it as much as we can. And I think the best way is to have a spiritual life that I cannot personally separate from Dharma, the art of living and art itself. When I hear people saying than life is just a dream or an illusion, implying that we don’t have to really care about anything and especially other people, I tell them that it can very quickly become without Dharma just a nightmare too. And when it will happen, they will never consider their suffering as a dream or an illusion. So maybe they should study better Advaita Vedanta in order to understand what really means the concept Maya which makes them thinking that everything is an illusion and somehow a projection of their own mind. It’s very easy to divert the meaning of the most sacred teachings to serve one’s own selfish purposes. But this hypocritical use of spirituality has nothing to do with Dharma and Satya, truthfulness, which is one if not the most important tenet of a spiritual quest which can only be a quest for truth.

Whatever the spirituality or art we practice, it’s quite clear that we don’t practice it in order to suffer or delude ourselves even more than usual, but pretty much the opposite. As far as I’m concerned, true sacred art is not what I can find in a museum, hang on a wall or listen to with my computer, but it’s how I celebrate life itself. And for that purpose, there are many traditional paths which still teach today how to make our life worth to be lived whoever we are and whatever we do. When the notion of sacred has revealed its true meaning, everything happening is a spiritual opportunity. And who cares if this perception of the sacred does or doesn't produce any works of art?

NDM: What do you think the art world is going to think about this sort of sacred art if there is no money in it, if it can't be sold at auction in the future?

Mel Patrick: " The art world", what a nice expression and good idea!

Don't worry, soon or late a great artist will take the credit for the concept "No Artist Doing Anything No Works Of Art Done", make an adaptation of it, put a copyright, sell it very expensive and everybody will be happy in the so-called art world. As many buyers of art are used to think: "The one who dies with the most toys wins." I guess my toy of art will be perfect for them; it can be carried anywhere and go through any border without being declared. It's only in the mind and the copyright can be send by mail. And if someone needs the exact measurements of the Black Square in order to reproduce it anywhere in the world and as many times as needed, I can give them for free too. Anyhow there is no artist, no original and no copy too. If you understood the purpose of creating a system which philosophically speaking is the only concept and real purpose of art itself, you will realize that it's only the mind playing with itself according rules that you have personally determined according other rules already existing in the mind and so on. So when you are comfortably sitting and visualizing the metamorphosis of geometrical shapes, you are truly sitting in a dream within a dream within a dream ad infinitum. I guess we can call that "Art".

As you know, this trend towards signing works of art is pretty recent and it will be obsolete as soon as people will rediscover that things which are of great worth, as true spiritual teaching or love for instance, cannot be bought, but only given for free. The gratuitous nature of the sacred is the only guarantee of authenticity we have since the invention of business or in other words, since the beginning of civilization. Once this is clearly understood, it becomes very easy to find true spiritual teachings and true

spiritual masters. One just needs to eliminate all the rubbish stained with money which means 99% of new Western spirituality starting with every Neo Satsang guru without exception. And it's not really better in the domain of art which really needs to move forward too if it does want to degenerate with a so-called "art world" which is more interested in money and glamour than art itself. It's quite clear that we are experiencing the end of a civilization and the beginning of a new one. Something has to die in order to be reborn.

NDM: How do you feel it could move forward, and towards what exactly?

Mel Patrick: How? By any means and especially new electronic techniques. Towards what exactly? In fulfilling as usual desires, dreams and needs. In other words, the function of art will be as it always has been since someone print his bloody hands on the wall of a cave, that is to say to create and adapt to new circumstances. Having say that, I think art and a big part of the avant-garde will move towards the sacred and Internet for very practical reasons.

Today we are witnessing a rebirth of spirituality, a kind of middle class spirituality in most of the cases, by the means of business because that's what westerners have learned and are able to understand in a consumer society: the power of money which means buying to be served..., even if the servant is supposed to be a spiritual guide or a master. Let's be sincere; why are there so many Neo Satsang gurus today with a pseudo intellectual speech which is most of the time completely absurd. Is it because these false gurus are so enlightened that they suddenly became smart and philosopher with an incredibly attractive intelligence? Or is it because the middle class which still has money, but doesn't know for how long, wishes to buy as usual a "new entertainment in town tonight", something which could make people feel good and positive in their vision of the future and also be pleasant to listen to. And what could be more

exciting and funny than listening to a buffoon telling good jokes such as we all are liberated, pure bliss, eternal, beautiful and forever in the paradise when these very same people are truly freaking out and on the brink of a nervous breakdown?

Between Prozac and Satsang, which brand would you choose? Satsang which is not a registered trademark yet is certainly much more exciting and cheaper. But when it won't be any more fashionable to listen to these clowns who think to be real spiritual guides and when people will realize that this spirituality was nothing more than a bad joke only created to get their money by any means, is it going to be the end of spirituality itself or the beginning and return of a true Dharma with sacred knowledge and true spiritual practices? Let's ask the question in a different way. What could stop the human mind to dream and hope for something beyond itself? Till now, nothing! Communism never succeeded to eradicate spirituality and the religious sentiment, capitalism with its consumer society neither, and it's the same with materialism and modern science which somehow is getting more and more metaphysical and spiritual. Do you know that the most popular books in the West during the XX century have always been about cooking and spirituality? To feed first the stomach, then the mind. That's the most basic human condition. Is it going to change in the future? And for what good reason would it change?

In order to be a good citizen in a free society or a perfect slave in a barbarian world, people anyhow need food, physical and spiritual food. So what could be the problem with a true spirituality which teaches first a Dharma of good thinking and good behavior, that is to say the true foundation of every traditional path of liberation and of a civilized world? Since when is it unbearable to be correct with others and cultivate an ethic? Strangely enough, this is what we could think in our culture today.

Everybody already understood that selfishness, greed and hypocrisy don't make people happy. So what truly is the problem with decency and morality since we are not anymore bothered with hypocritical religions? The definitions of life are now so insane that we can really speak of the "crazy wisdom" of modern culture. But when it will be understood that enough is enough simply because it's impossible to go on, art itself will be a means to transmit a spiritual message and to open doors on the spiritual dimension of being. It's already happening for quite a while with some artists. But when it will be understood that the free and gratuitous character of spirituality is the sine qua non condition of the sacred and Internet is the way to communicate not with someone, but with humanity all over the world, art and the sacred are going to take such importance that we even cannot think about. When consumerism and its spectacular advertising will not be any more an option, what would be left? For those who don't know it yet, this crazy game is almost over.

Today in our stupid and mercenary culture of shopkeeper, if spirituality and art are free, it's only because they cannot be sold and consequently have no value. Tomorrow only because they are free, they will be precious. It's already quite clear for a minority of people and some of the avant-garde who really love art and spirituality and who are absolutely fed up of the business made out of them. As a matter of fact, what could be sincerely more dirty than the business of God, love and beauty? Just think about!

END OF INTERVIEW

For any questions concerning the writings of the website "Advaita Minima", please contact the author Mel Patrick at:

saraswati.kuti@gmail.com

