

JOURDAN ARPELLE

About the Drawings

ABSTRACT SYMBOLS DRAWING SERIES

1996

SIZE:

Series: 108 Drawings

Dimensions:

Image: 4.75 in. square or 12 cm. square

Unframed, matted 20 in. H x 16 in. W or 50 cm. H x 40 cm. W

Framed 21 in. H x 17 in. W x 1.5 in. D

53.3 cm. H x 43 cm. W x 3.8 cm. D

Material: Graphite on paper.

DESCRIPTION/Form:

The three images from the Gayatri Mantra Series, the circle, the cross and the square, are abstracted in various ways: by cropping the image, by extending the image, or by floating the image. The artist worked with each symbol to push it to its most abstract form, while maintaining the integrity of the whole. The series began with three crosses, then proceeded to 36, half of which are black on white; the other half, white on black. As the series progressed, the process of handling the graphite morphed. The artist began incising more precise lines within the heavy layers of pure graphic to form directional lines to further define the shapes of these symbols.

MEANING/CONTENT:

For an artist, the formulation of a personal nomenclature is an important foundation upon which to build. Jourdan Arpelle has formulated such an alphabet in the symbols of the circle, cross, and square. These overlaid geometric symbols appeared in the "Gayatri Mantra" painting series, 1992-1997. This drawing series, dated 1996, established these symbols, through Arpelle's exploration into their abstract meaning, as pre-verbal, and thus, a universal language. The psychologist, Carl Jung, refers to these three symbols, plus the spiral and the triangle, as 'organs of pre-rational psyche'. They contain a memory encoded within each symbol. For example, the square is a symbol of stability, solidity and the foundation of life itself. Our year is broken into four seasons which can be conceived as four sides of the square, like the cardinal directions: north, south, east, and west. The equilateral cross, while burdened with religious connotations, is actually a prehistoric, pre-Christian symbol. It is related to the abstraction of the human body, is a symbol of balance in relationships, and joins together the horizontal, material earth plane, with the esoteric, vertical spiritual plane forming a powerful vortex of intuitive and creative energy.