



YANNICK VU

CHTHONIAN APOLLONIAN

ARTGENÈVE
JANUARY 25-28TH
BOOTH D54

OLIVIER VARENNE
ART MODERNE & CONTEMPORAIN

X.V. 95

YANNICK VU (b. 1942)

Olivier Varenne is proud to present a group of paintings by Vietnamese-French artist, Yannick Vu.

Works from 1994-1995 will be shown; an exploratory journey on paper of ambiguous elementary forms from combs, to totems, and breast-like forms, in altered dimensions, as well as mysterious landscapes. Through them Vu contrasts and converges dualities such as heaven and earth, the mundane and unique, Chthonian and Apollonian, physical and intellectual.

'they are to do with my Oriental part... somehow these drawings are done in the same way; it's very immediate, it's like calligraphy, you have to breathe, you have to think, and then you jump, and at the same time with your soul, with your brain, with your body.'

Yannick Vu often collaborates on sculptures with her husband Ben Jakober, and earlier in her life she was both the assistant and wife of Domenico Gnoli (1933-1970). In both relationships Vu has been required to be part of a cooperative creative process – a challenge to an artist's ego.

A decisive moment occurred in the 1970s when an early painting by Vu was mistaken as being by Gnoli. On challenging the dealer, her skill was doubted and the affront inspired her to pick up her brush again to prove the dealer wrong: *'Life is like that, sometimes you need some kind of accident to resume working.'* It led to an exhibition in Paris.



YANNICK VU SURROUNDED BY HER DRAWING IN MAJORCA

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

1942 - born in Montfort-L'Amaury, on the outskirts of Paris.

1962 - moves to Paris and participates in the Salon de la Jeune Peinture. Meets Domenico Gnoli (1933-1970) and Ben Jakober.

1963 - moves with Gnoli to Mallorca and works as his assistant.

1965 - marries Gnoli in New York.

1972 - travels in South America and marries Ben Jakober in Mexico.

1973 - starts a collection of C16th-19th portraits of children.

1975 - lives between French Polynesia and Mortix, Mallorca. Resumes painting and exhibits in Paris.

1980 - moves to Sa Bassa Blanca, Mallorca.

1982 - exhibits regularly with Galerie Isy Brachot in Paris and Brussels, and in Hamburg and New York.

1985 - series of charcoal drawings and oils on the theme of the self-portrait, exhibited in Palma.

1993 - invited with Ben Jakober to create and install a monumental work, *Il Cavallo di Leonardo*, at the entrance of the Venice Biennale.

The Fundación Yannick & Ben Jakober is founded.

1995 - *Chthonian-Apollonian* exhibited in modified form, Galerie Montenay, Paris.

1998 - *On the Razor's Edge*, Mucsarnok Palace Kunsthalle, Budapest

2001 - participation in *Altars and shrines of the world*, Kunstpalast Dusseldorf (curated by Jean-Hubert Martin).

2012 - *Flash-Back* retrospective at the Pera Museum, Istanbul.

YANNICK VU CHTHONIAN APOLLONIAN

Her first sculpture *Le Vase De Soissons*, made with Jakober in 1986, prompted Vu to explore the nature of collaboration and common language, and how with art there might be a reconciliation of the sexes. She sought inspiration in Camille Paglia's 1990 book *Sexual Personae* and the Chthonian-Apollonian dichotomy which reflects on the fleeting and random relationship between the feminine and the masculine.

Of this duality she notes *"the aim was not to compress our two forms of expression into one – sort of hybrid or composite language – but to use at the same time a fragile and fortuitous meeting point where sexes happen to distribute symmetrically their energies, and also to say, each one with the other, or at the same time, something which surpasses one and of which one is intimately, obscurely convinced and deeply concerned."*



YANNICK VU AND BEN JAKOBER IN SA BASSA BLANCA, MALLORCA, 2022

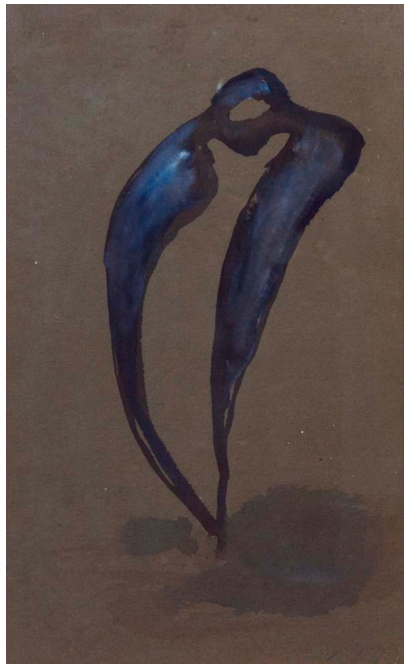
Vu looked back to mythological figures to explore this. She noted *"...we had to rediscover the luminous emergence of Apollo, the sun god of mice and men who, thanks to the Delphi oracle, dominated the life and heart of mortals eager to meet their fates. Pillar by pillar we had to rebuild his silver temple, reflecting itself in the still waters, while the Omphaloi crossed the continents on a dangerous journey which inevitably brought them back to the centre of the world... We had to rebuild the lyre used by Apollo, in order to reveal to simple mortals the ineluctable will of his father Zeus. We also had to follow Apollo on his dazzling pursuit of light, gloriously mounted on his gold Quadriga. It equally gave us the opportunity to set out on a sort of courteous travel, no longer in parallel but convergent, which allowed us to formulate quietly what first of all unites, but also differentiates or separates, man from woman, because simply immanent to the condition of couple, in life as in work."*

YANNICK VU

CHTHONIAN APOLLONIAN

The subject of these works are everyday forms from combs, to totems and breast-like shapes (referring to Melanie Klein's 1946 book *Envy and Gratitude*) and the results are touched by an androgynous, bisexual ambiguity.

Pablo Rico (2001) explores this further: "*Black Goddess II* is the black goddess reinvented in an object for agricultural use (a typically masculine object but one which is built on the basis of the insertion of the rod [penis] into the opening [vagina] of the tool. Totem represents strong, versatile, "masculinised", aggressive femininity – a woman who uses her sex and fertility as a weapon (reminding us of Madonna's bustiers designed by J.P. Gaultier) – and whose volume and image are constructed from ambiguous forms and vague echoes of primitive African totems, of Oriental gongs and pans, the female body prints of Yves Klein, the iconography of Pallas Athene, etc.... *Sea Comb* (a reinvented wind comb) has the teeth and grooves through which the hair passes, and at the same time invokes heroic love stories, like the one Yannick told me of the couple who sold the only thing they had – her beautiful hair, his gold watch – in order to buy a gift for their loved one (an ornamental comb for her, a chain for him) but which would then have been useless as they had each give up their most precious belongings; fatal tales of passionate and melancholic love in which all is lost and nothing gained."



BLACK GODDESS 5, 1994, INDIAN INK AND WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

The resulting works are succinctly described by Achille Bonito Oliva (June 1994): "Each work bears an organic Chthonian moment and an Apollonian and formal one. Each work documents the power of a myth that manages to coexist with its opposite: day and night, domestic and public, agricultural and industrial, each form is forceful enough to turn itself into its double."

YANNICK VU
SELECTED WORKS

For the solo show at **artgenève**, Olivier Varenne will present a series of works on paper all made between 1994 and 1995 with Indian ink and watercolour.



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Black goddess 5, March 1994
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
24,5 x 15,5 cm (unframed)
26,3 x 17,5 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 7



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Snake, March 1994
Indian ink on paper
23,5 x 28 cm (unframed)
25,6 x 29,7 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 14





YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Une traversée calme, April 1994

Indian ink on paper

23,5 x 28 cm (unframed)

25,6 x 29,7 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 58



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Il peigne et il peint, March 1994

Indian ink on paper

46 x 31 cm (unframed)

47,7 x 32,8 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 80



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Omphalo Temple, March 1994
Indian ink on paper
42 x 32,5 cm (unframed)
43,8 x 32,7 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 81



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Stand comb, April 1994
Indian ink on paper
23,5 x 28 cm (unframed)
25,6 x 29,7 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 87



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Tarred and feathered, March 1994
Indian ink on paper
32 x 54 cm (unframed)
339, x 26,8 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 91





YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

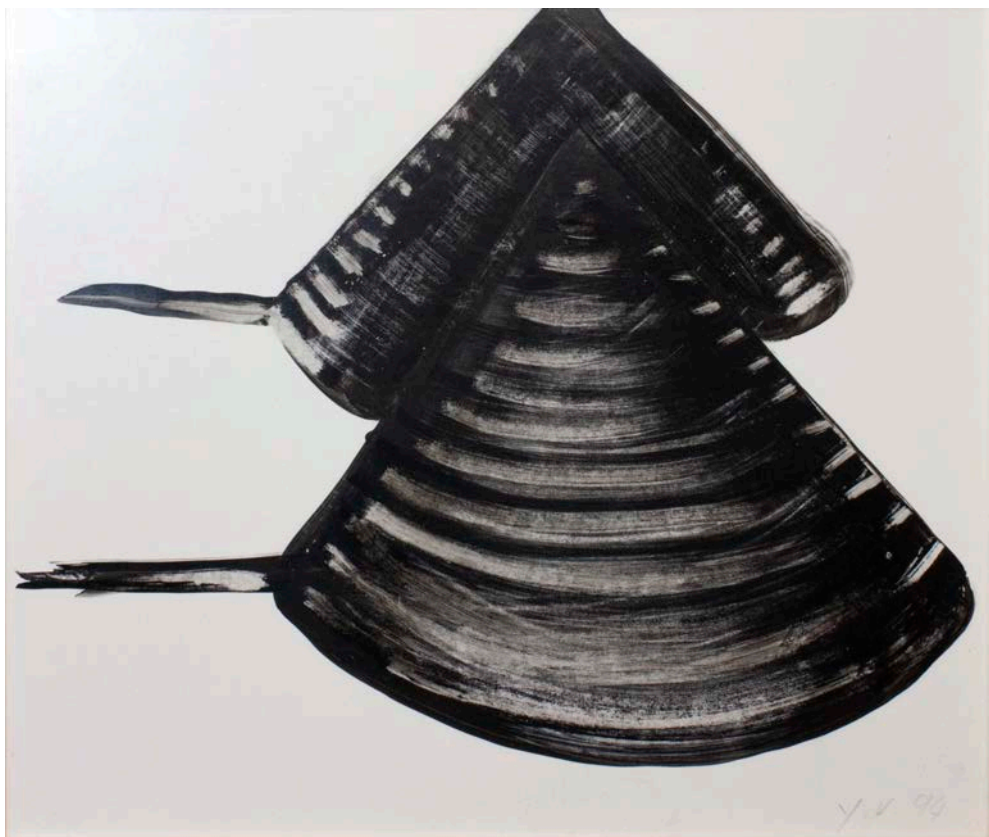
Totem in the desert, March 1994

Indian ink on paper

28 x 23,6 cm (unframed)

25,8 x 29,8 x 3 cm (framed)

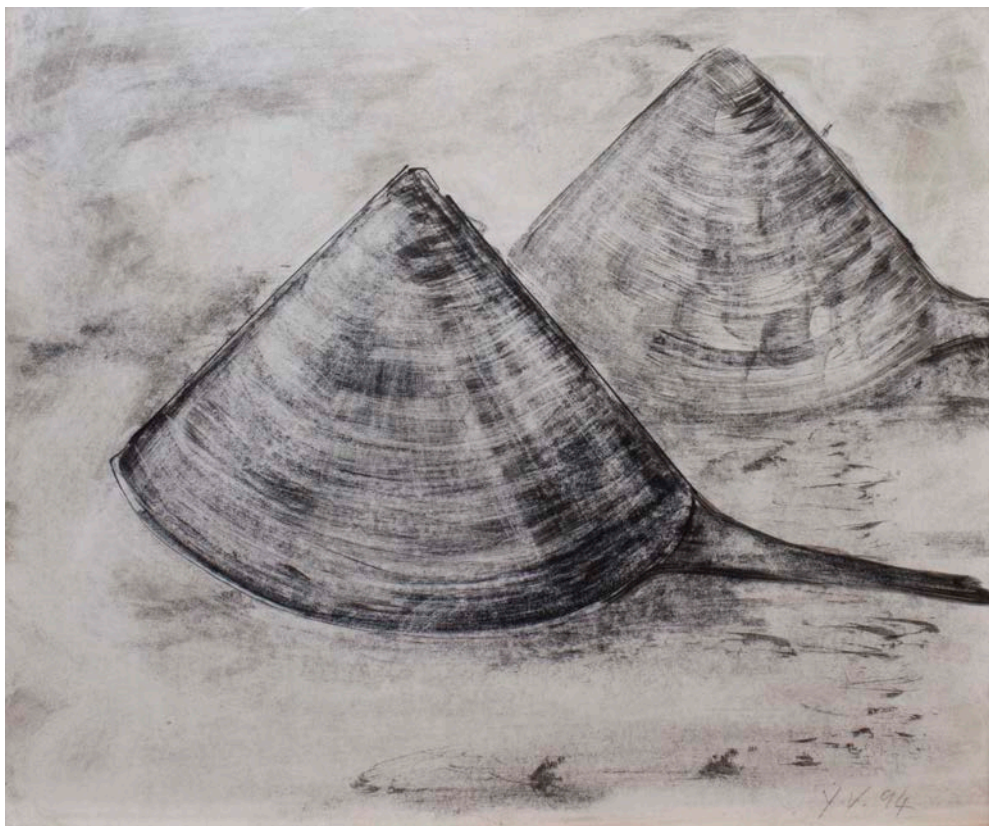
Inv. N° YV 102



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

In the desert, March 1994
Indian ink on paper
23,6 x 28 cm (unframed)
25,6 x 29,7 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 105



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

A quiet afternoon, 1995
Indian ink on paper
22 x 26 cm (unframed)
43 x 47 x 1,3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1825





YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Flying totem No. 9, 9 March 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm (unframed)
40 x 40 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1827



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Dans le courant, 9 March 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm (unframed)
40 x 40 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1828



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Le Débarquement des Omphaloi, 1995
Indian ink on paper
24,5 x 32 cm (unframed)
45 x 52,9 x 1,2 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1828



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

White Goddess No. 10, 3 July 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
24,4 x 32,4 cm (unframed)
45 x 52,7 x 1,3 cm (framed)

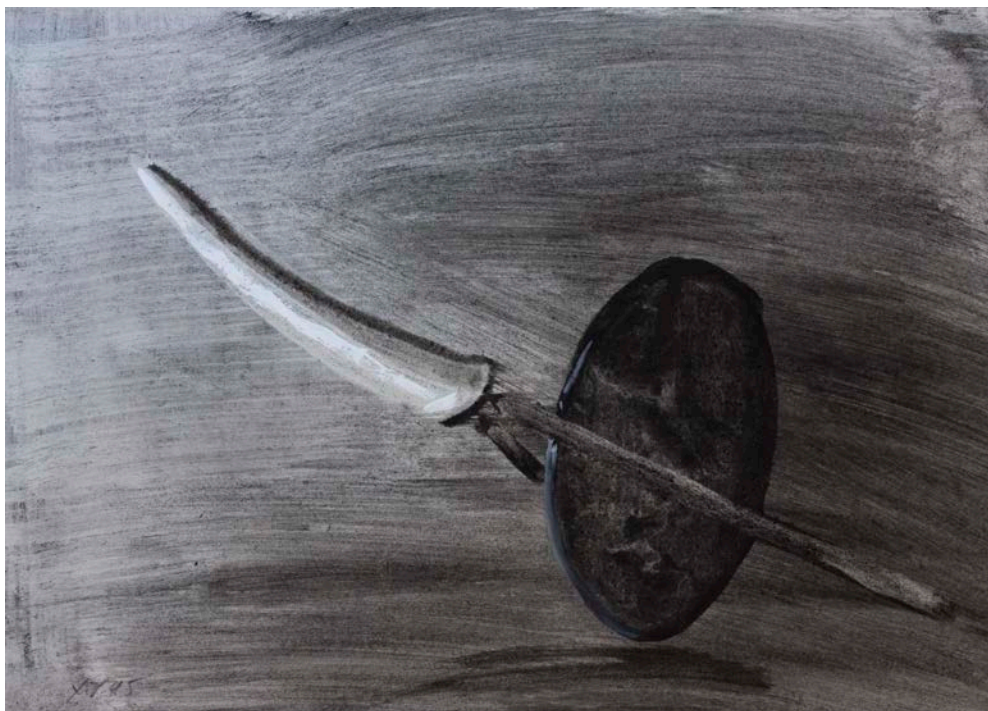
Inv. N° YV 1848



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

SRY, 23 February 1995
Indian ink, pigment, acrylic adhesive, and gouache on paper
25 x 35 cm (unframed)
46 x 56 x 1.3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1849



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

L'arrivée à Brindisi, 11 March 1995

Watercolour on paper

24 x 32 cm (unframed)

45 x 53 x 1 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1850





YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

La Danse du Feu, 30 January 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
34.5 x 25.5 cm (unframed)
54 x 45 x 1.1 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1851



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Black Omphalos, March 1994

Indian ink on paper

25 x 32 cm (unframed)

26,8 x 34 x 3 cm (framed)

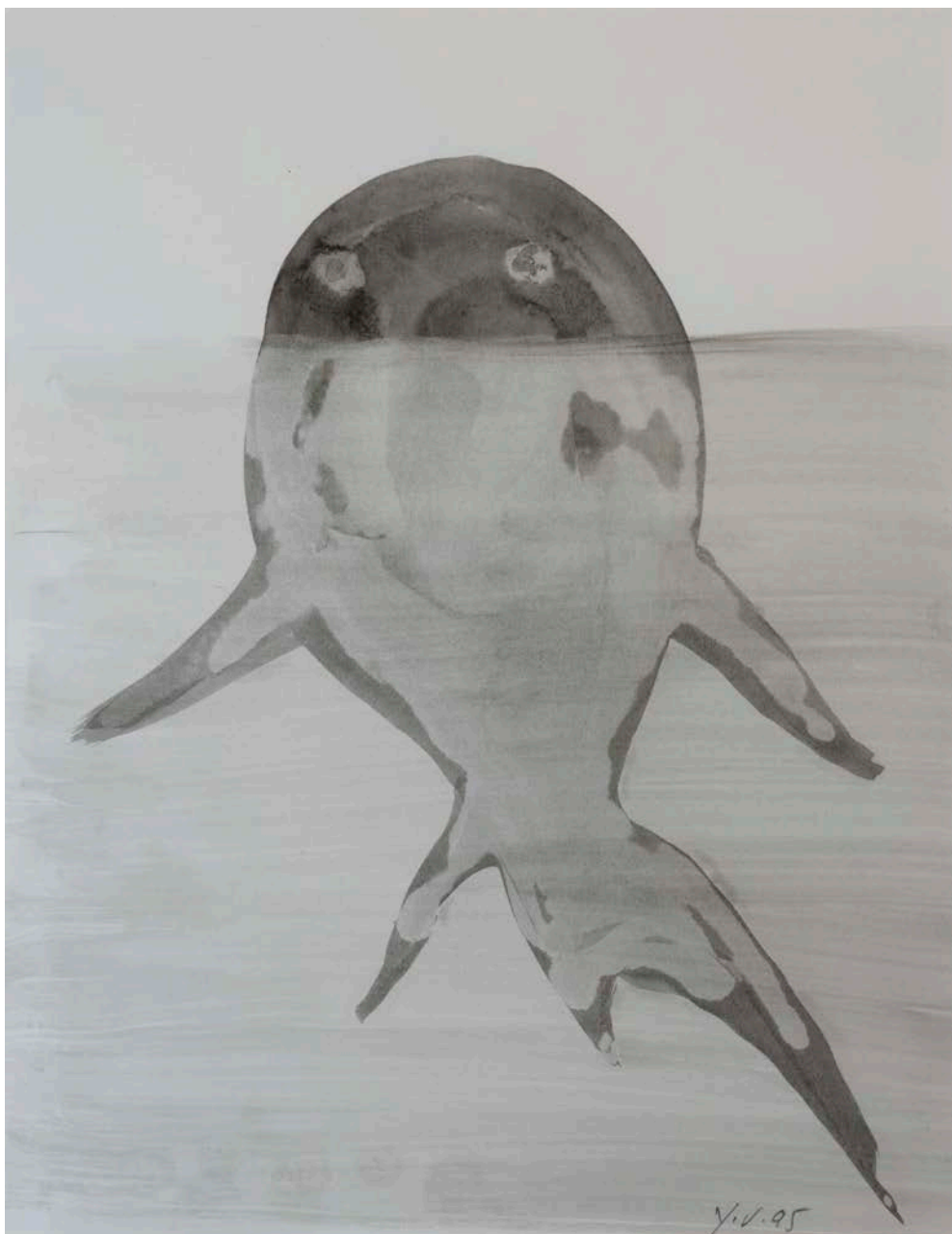
Inv. N° YV 1852



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Requin Farceur, 1995
Indian ink on paper
32 x 25 cm (unframed)
53,4 x 46 x 1 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1856



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Temple, March 1994
Indian ink on paper
44 x 32,5 cm (unframed)
45,6 x 34,1 x 2,5 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1858



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Needlework No. 2, March 1994
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
45 x 32,5 cm (unframed)
46,5 x 34,5 x 3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1859

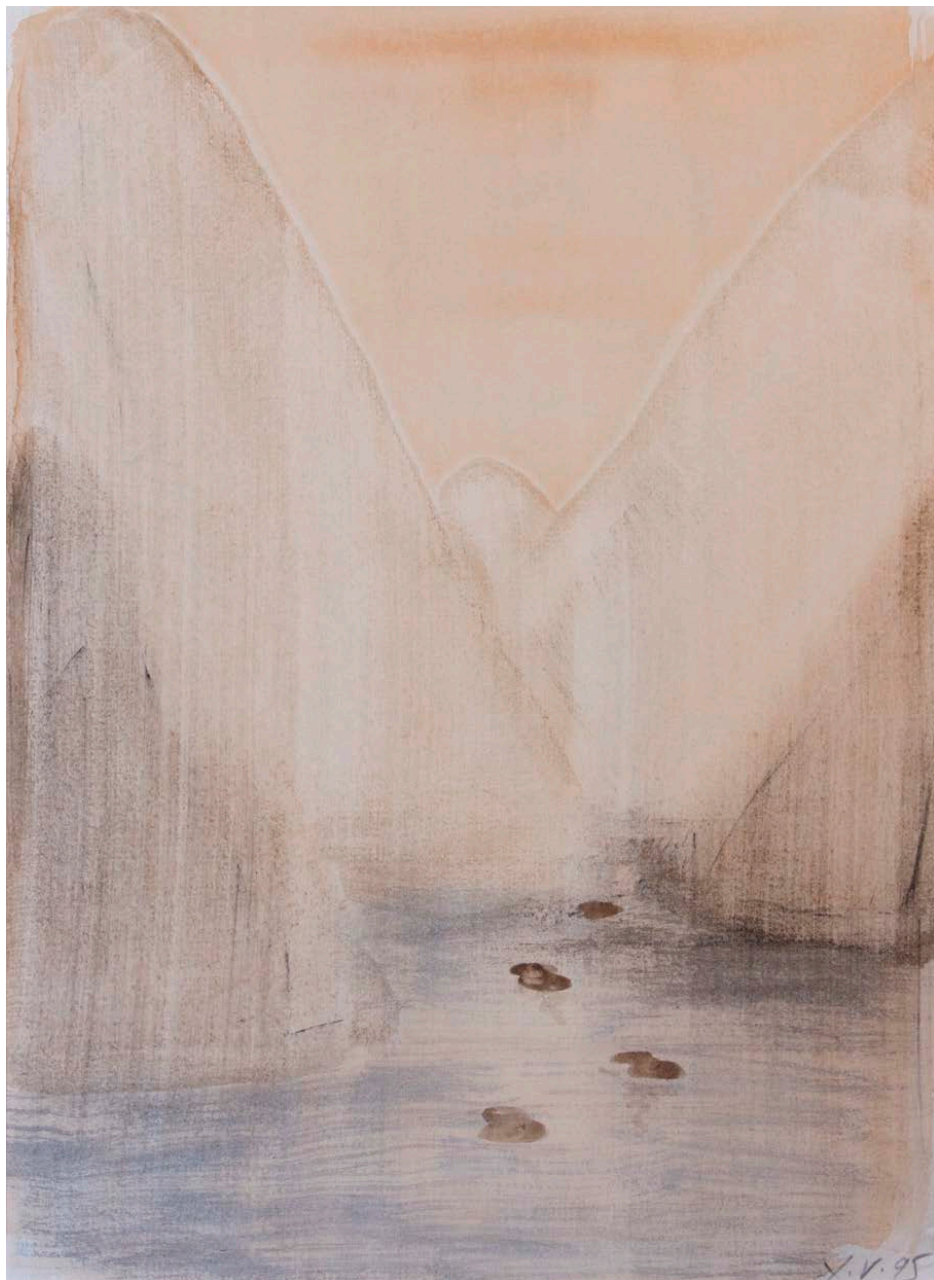




YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Dans les Gorges du Yang Tse Kiang, 23 February 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
23,5 x 20 cm (unframed)
48 x 43 x 1,4 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1863



YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

SRY No. 4, 11 March 1995
Indian ink on paper
28 x 23,5 cm (unframed)
49 x 44 x 1,5 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1864

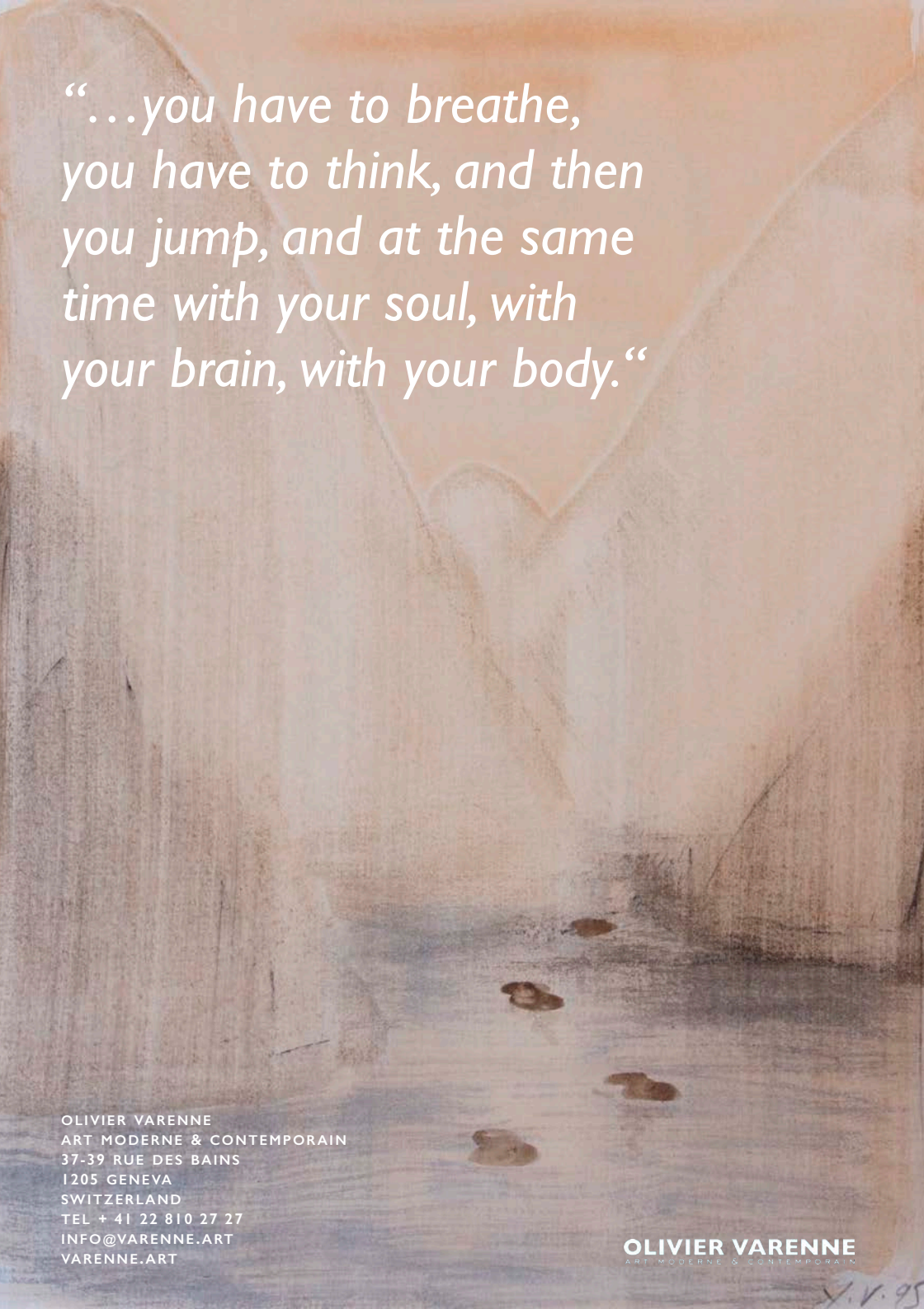


YANNICK VU
(b.1942)

Quadriga au Clair de Lune No. 2, 07 March 1995
Indian ink and watercolour on paper
25,4 x 35,56 cm (unframed)
46 x 56 x 1,3 cm (framed)

Inv. N° YV 1864





*“...you have to breathe,
you have to think, and then
you jump, and at the same
time with your soul, with
your brain, with your body.”*

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