

Micheline LO



Photo Pierre RADISIC

**Her artistic itinerary
1982 - 2001**

Strangely enough, Micheline LO
began painting at the age of fifty three.

Most likely, this long wait was necessary for what had to follow.

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author of *THE ARTS OF SPACE* and *PHILOSOPHY OF PHOTOGRAPHY*.

The original 83 pages text is available at :

- http://www.anthropogenie.com/anthropogeny/lo_en.htm

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Foreword



Les chemins des écritures # 41, 200 x 230 cm

The development of Micheline LO as a painter suggests that of a volcano. First, a lengthy accumulation of various matters that interact passively, then actively. Then, suddenly, an outburst of pictorial elements, perfect from the onset.

Initially, and for a long time, she must have experienced a wide variety of interests. As an art teacher, year after year she had to revisit the forms of contemporary art and the seven civilizations of our planet: Japan, China, India, Islam, black Africa, Europe, and Iberian America.

She did not travel extensively, but intensively, in India, Mexico, California, New York, North Africa, and of course the three European peninsulas. She did not travel as a tourist, but rather as a resident, with a morphogenetic point of view, noting how customs everywhere derive from the local geologies.

The plural brain

Eric Kandel, born in Vienna in 1929, in a Jewish family, who experienced the fervor of the first psychoanalytical circle, had decided to find out where, in the brain, the Freudian Ego, Superego and Id might be located.

In the 1950s, he therefore went over from psychoanalysis to neurophysiology, and he soon became convinced that neurons had to be studied, not globally as in an electroencephalogram, but one by one.

One could then talk of billions of instances of the unconscious rather than of the three tiers (Ego, Superego, and Id) of Freud's second topic.

Micheline LO lived in an environment where this type of things were known almost in real time. A copy of *Principles of Neural Science* — in which some fifty professors of Columbia University would, every four year, make a review of the knowledge on neurons — would permanently be lying on the tables. So, one day at breakfast, she would say — as though talking to herself — "I paint the cerebral landscape".

1982 : Some copies and variations

When she started to paint, one day, with no previous practical training, after she had turned fifty-three, Micheline LO began making a few copies of works by Van Eyck, Rubens, and Velasquez. She visited their cerebral landscape, not in an attempt to capture their picturesqueness, but rather to divine the connections and the cleavages in the underlying brains, together with their metamorphoses.

One day, she went down to her kitchen-cellar-scriptorium to get a copy of Flaubert's *Salammbô*. But the book was missing. And instead, she picked up *La Tentation de saint Antoine*.

1984 : The Temptation of Saint Antony (La tentation de Saint Antoine)

In the midst of the incredible mental exaltations of the heresies pullulating in the fourth century, sitting on the doorstep of his cabin hanging on a rock above the Nile, a vantage point on the turmoils of Alexandria, beyond the arid desert, Antony — who was "biographed" and invented by Saint Athanasius - is nothing more than his neurons that accumulate and disperse the mirages of gold, blood, sex, philosophical and theological disputes.



Saint Antoine #16 : Saint-Antoine confronts the heretics. 78 x 84 cm.

And, in the same manner as the Antoine of Flaubert had advanced into the City, knee-deep in blood, the new painter advanced among the floods of heresies and colors, with some sixty drawings and paintings — small, medium, or large.



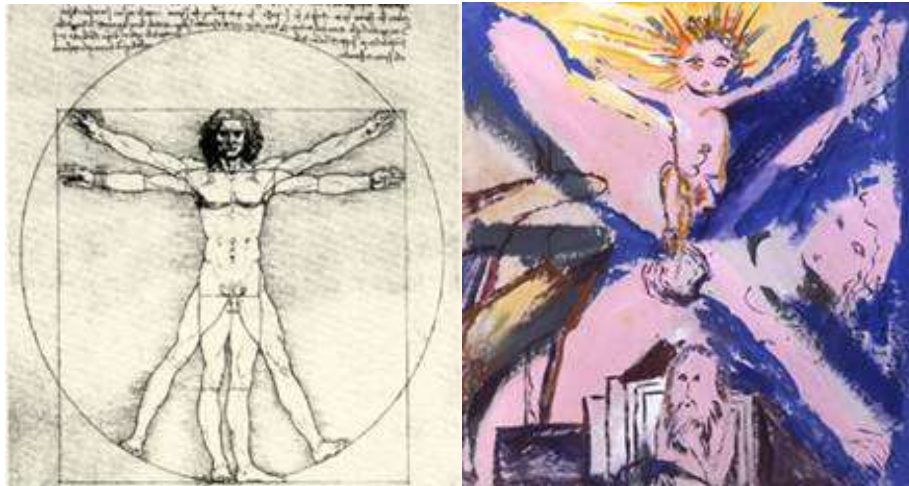
Saint Antoine #2 : After the Temptation, 216 x 268 cm

Thierry Zeno, cinematographer of the sacred, whose *Vase de Noces* (the story of a man and his overly intimate relationship with a pig) had been shown around all the art houses of the world, had just completed a medium-length film for television on *Les Tentations de Saint Antoine*, spanning from Sassetta and Jérôme Bosch to Claude Lorrain and Max Ernst, which was commented on-screen by Claude Louis-Combet, the Burgundy novelist who wrote of the hysterical pregnancies of the Flemish beguines.

Although the film was finished, Zeno re-opened it to include about ten large canvasses of Michelino which, from the rough tissue of *Avant la tentation* to the flashes of light of *Après la tentation*, carried the major hallucinations of Anthony and of the Queen of Sheba.

1985 : The Nativities (Les natiuités)

It behooved an artist of the neuronal formations to be focused also on Birth in general.



Vinci

LO. Les natiuités # 1. 145 x 140 cm

Micheline LO never made any connection between her *Natiuities* and DaVinci's *Anthropos*. The latter - inscribed in a circle, which in turn is inscribed in a square, in the shape of a Roman cross - uses the Vitruvius proportions to erect the angular body of Homo, as origin of all geometry, technique, and semiotics.

While this already meant much, more was needed to attain Homo in full. Alongside this masculine body, the female Homo needed to dilate, expand, enjoy, in a fulfillment that generated the Universe, and spilled beyond all events, and all inscriptions.

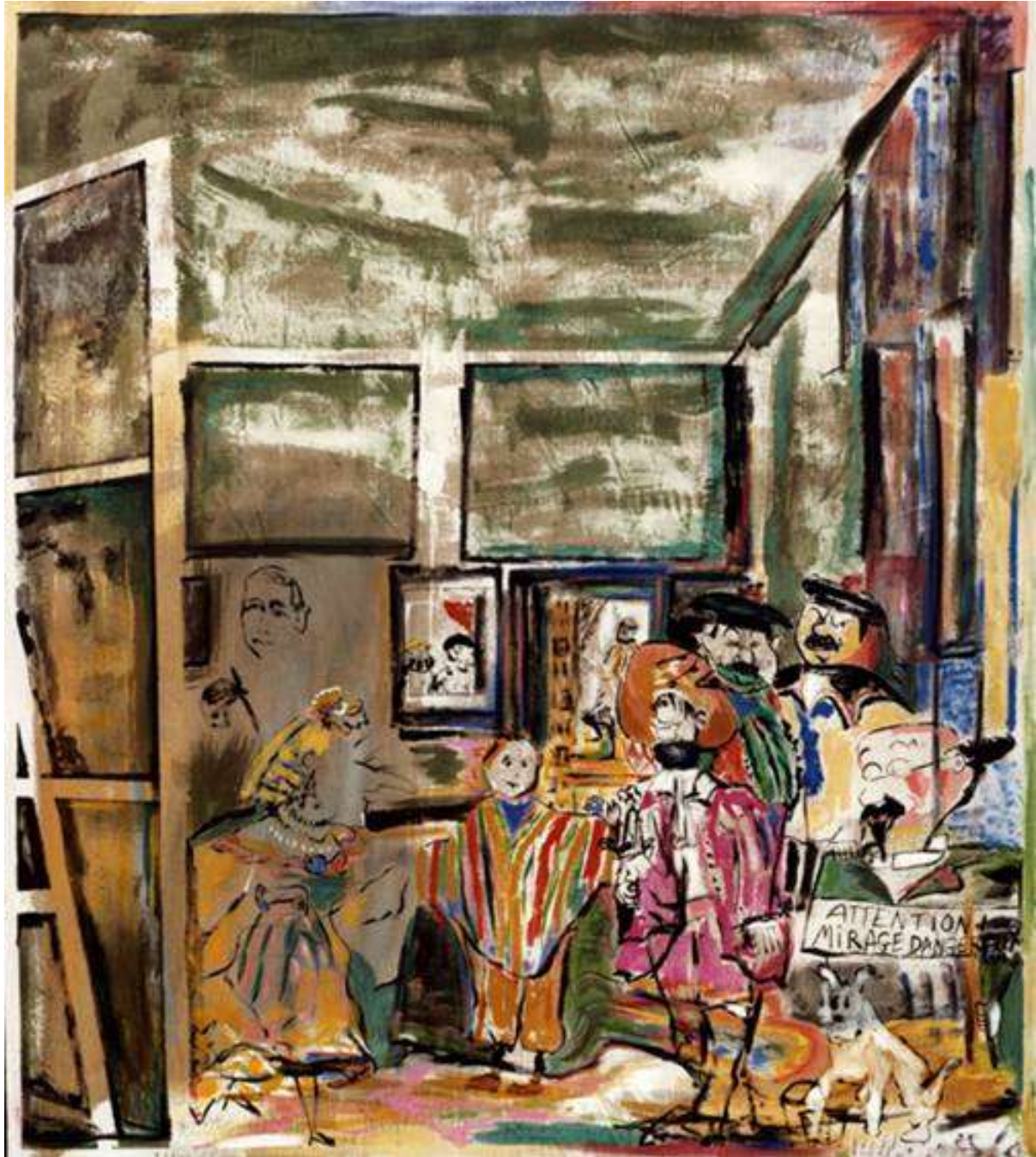
1985 : The Spanish Suite (La suite espagnole)

Nowhere other than in the desert of sand and stones, do the neuronal connections and cleavages move in a more native way. This is the environment where Muhammad, Jesus of Nazareth, Saint Anthony, and Saint-John Perse begin.

As her automobile was entering Death Valley, on the way from Las Vegas, at high noon, Micheline LO experienced a malaise and said to her companion, "Should I die now, I would have no regret. I saw what I wanted to see."

This probably is what the "nada" is, the "nothing", the dry soil resounding under the foot of the Meseta which attached her first to the Spain of *zapateado*, then to North Africa. Ecstasy and blasphemy walking edge to edge.

Spain also meant two fraternal painters: Velasquez and El Greco. Velasquez, whose pictorial touch was — like hers — a writing, presaging that of the comic strip. *The Meninas according to Hergé* announced that relationship, in the full size of the original.



*The Meninas according to Hergé, 261 x 216 cm
Property of the Musée de la Bande dessinée in Angoulême, France*

In Micheline LO's work, too, her four versions (morning, noon, evening, and night) of her *Don Quixote prepares to face thirty windmills*, are the four moments of a Don "Quixote before Toledo", on that path where all distance is abolished between the viewer and the viewed.



Suite espagnole # 1, 2, 3, 4 :

Don Quixote prepares for the massacre of thirty windmills, morning, noon, evening and midnight versions. 216 x 182 cm.

These four lightning strikes of Don Quixotte well define her realism. On that point, Micheline LO was adamant: not imagine anything, "I have no imagination", and just pick up indices. And to do that, look at a canvas: "The canvas is already a physiognomy. When it disappears, fully covered, something has been destroyed. That something is the foreign shapes that appeared on the blank canvas, as in the barks, the stains (DaVinci), or the imprints (Max Ernst). It is the **visionary experience**."

Micheline LO said :

A canvas initially possesses a rhythm. When preserved and served, that rhythm creates an enchantment as do kaleidoscopes, mosaics, stained glasses, carpets, or Persian gardens. The shape does not stand out against the background, but is caught up in it. For me this relationship is the most important thing. What I mainly seek in my painting is that vibration, the elasticity of a pulsating spectacle. This is far more fundamental, more basal than the declared directional moves of the straight lines, of the diagonals, verticals, or the cuts. I expect a global, apparitional effect, almost hallucinatory. The essential resides in that pulse, a motion of waves so to speak, in a sea that would stand upright." (One of her leitmotifs will be: "It has to move forward and move backward at the same time.")



Don Quichotte et le taureau Osborne. 208 x 368 cm.

1986: The Paradise of Dante: first, second and third suites

However, when it comes to cerebral landscapes, only Dante ventured there where nobody had ventured before, and he even advises against anyone following him: "O you who are within your little bark, eager to listen, turn back to see your shores again, do not attempt to sail the seas I sail, you may, by losing sight of me, be left astray."

What Dante had attained, he could not repeat because in this case, as he explains, the intellect becomes so deep that memory cannot follow.



Le paradis de Dante, serie 2, canto # 32. 57 x 76 cm

The painter, however, has the advantage over the poet of being the poorest artist. At any given moment, all he has at his disposal is the tip of the brush, a drop of color, a dot on the canvas. Because of this, probably, he can cross most tightly time with eternity. Micheline LO took the most narrow-tipped brush, the feather; the poorest color, black, and the emptiest surface, white. Enough to risk the beatific visionary experience.

And it was in front of this second suite of *Paradises*, in black and white, more than in front of the first and third suites, in color, that Marcello Verdenelli, the historian of *La teatralità delle scrittura*, found the decisive title of his introduction to Micheline LO's exhibition in Cingoli (Marche): *La luce senza centro* [the centerless light].



Le paradis de Dante, serie 2, canto # 14. 57 x 76 cm

Verdenelli also perceived how a painter of the beatitudes of the cerebral landscape had to find her only recourse, her "ragione poetica" (we would say: her pictorial subject) in the "salto" and the "scarto" — the leap and the gap — already suggested by Dante:

Commenting on her *Spanish suite*, Micheline LO had previously exalted this leap of the black and of the white, "this intense, immediate and with no becoming relationship, where both [black and white], without distinction, occupy with equal capacity the sites of emptiness and of brilliance".

1988: The Tombs (Les tombeaux)

Saint Antoine, the *Nativities*, Spain, and Dante were all moving within the cerebral landscape in general. There remained to define this landscape in individuals.

So, the **portrait** took hold once again - a pictorial style abandoned by "modern" and even "post-modern" art. The first portrait Micheline LO painted, that of Marilyn Monroe, was too large to be hung on the walls of her summer house in the *Drome provençale*. So, she did it on the ground, and later as she viewed it one morning, she thought she was watching a tombstone. Why would not these portraits be tombs, or *Tombeaux*, in the sense used by Mallarmé for his series of sonnets in which each was to be fixed "such as, in itself, at last eternity changes it"?



The tombs # 1 : Marilyn Monroe. 214 x 189 cm

In those days, the initial tomb had to be that of Marilyn Monroe, since no one had ever been so much an "image as image". So much so that after *The Last Session* (her last photo session with Bern Stern), the physical body called Marilyn Monroe no longer had any reason to exist, and even demanded its disappearance.

1988: Terra nostra

What has happened between Spain and Central America since 1500 remains a deeply troubling phenomenon for those curious about cerebral landscapes. Two civilizations meet, confront and destroy each other, while at the same time they share a community of views on life and death, on the all and the nothing, the imaginary and the real, sufficient to give rise to a new civilization, "Amerindia". Carlos Fuentes took this entanglement as a theme for his monumental *Terra Nostra*, where he weaved a web of bicontinental, transoceanic characters. Micheline LO has retained the cerebral landscapes of the most famous: the King, the Queen, the Queen Mother, Guzman, Barbarica, the Idiot, the Mason.



Terra Nostra # 1 : Guzman. 115 x 105 cm

When offered to choose one among those paintings, Carlos Fuentes selected *Barbarica*, for — as he explained in his letter —he found in it "la tradición Velasquiana con la del esperpento (Ghelderode) y Ensor". The word **Esperpento** [repulsive] was illuminating. For it is true that only a scarecrow is truly apt to gather and compress contradictions. Flaubert used to ritualistically take his visitors at Croisset to a neighboring puppet show. Micheline LO had retained a memory from her adolescence, almost traumatic, of the Greek actors perched on their cothurni, those ancient *esperpentos*, in a staging of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, played by students of the *Sorbonne* directed by Cohen.



Terra Nostra, Barbarica, 115 x 105 cm

1989: The Blue Cow (La vache bleue)

Was there then, somewhere, a figure that would almost all at once sum up the cerebral landscapes that the human neurons project onto the real landscapes? Yet one more portrait, but of the entire Planet?

There was at the time a camembert cheese on the market sold under the brand name of "*La Vache Bleue*", and its label indeed depicted a cow, colored in blue. As Micheline LO saw it lying on her breakfast table, the painter who maintained she imagined nothing, but only read the indices present on the canvas texture, began to recognize in it universal maternities, maps of countries and continents, an atlas of the starry sky, the Dream of the fatfleshed and of the leanfleshed kine.



La vache bleue #31, Bois brûlé (Burned wood), 200 x 200 cm

About sixty drawings and paintings, of all sizes, were made with such names as: the *Space cow*, the *Large Island Cow*, the *Sky Cow*, the *Mediterranean Cow*, the *Night cow*, the *Rainbow Cow*, the *Alpine Cow*, the *Earth Cow*, the *Sow Cow*, the *Burned Wood Cow*, even the *Galla Placidia Cow*, from that tomb near Ravenna, which is the most celestial death chamber in the world with its lapis lazuli mosaic. All visitors, from the committed politician to the botany teacher, were surprised to be able to fully breathe again amidst the apneas of the art of the time, which had gone through the "Support-Surface" current. Not only in India is the Cow the deity of a religion which does not have any unbelievers.



La Vache bleue # 31 : Galla Placidia. 57 x 76 cm

1990: Two more suites of Dante's "Paradise": Astrology of the ten skies

Homo arose as astrologer. Even more: physics began with astrology. At the conclusion of Antiquity, Plotinus conceived the cosmos as a Procession from the luminous One to the shady Multiple, at the same time as a Recession from the Multiple to the One, according to Ten Skies. This is what Dante still saw, a thousand years later, through Dionysius the Aeropagite.

Micheline LO had not emphasized this aspect in her three suites of the thirty-three *Canti of Il Paradiso*, and she had to come back to it.



Paradis de Dante, serie 4, Sky # 10: Empyrean. 213 x 225 cm.

And, after ten skies, in very large and very concrete form (215 x 225), the artist had only to resume those, as ten skies, this time rather small and very abstract (100 x 100). The final square of the Empyrean was the painter's farewell to Dante's *Paradise*.



Paradis de Dante, serie 5, Sky # 10: Abstract Empyrean. 100 x 100 cm

1992: The Enfer of Jean Genet (L'enfer de Jean Genet)

In the pilgrimage of cerebral landscapes, an *Enfer* was bound to follow a *Paradis*. Not the *Inferno* of Dante, too anecdotal and moralizing, too political, but the real *Enfer* — that of Jean Genet. The one of Crime as Glory, and of crime's glory.

As a painter, after she had been Dante and Beatrice, Micheline LO became Genet's bandits, the more so as Genet did not describe his criminals from the outside, but precisely from the proliferation of their strange neuron colonies. Had he not shared their destiny as a thief, and as a prisoner? A painter, wrote Luc Delisse, is a thief and a murderer.

Pictorially, each "hero" needed to be there, and so obviously in his individual quality of heroism that he would be recognizable at first sight. A friend who had dropped by one day was able to name each one without any hesitation. But this remained trivial.

It was important to attain the *Tenebra* that made those nights incandescent. The first to attain its glory was Harcamone, with his nose-sex erect as a central Roman pillar, with his aura of miracles, as on that day when his chains were transubstantiated into garlands of roses before Genet's enamored eyes. Then the others, beatified one after the other, made the contemporary system of criminal glory.



L'enfer de Jean Genet, Sub-serie Portraits # 9 et #7 : Père crépin et Botchako. 76 x 56 cm.

Micheline LO was particularly fond of Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*. *The dead of Harcamone* became her passion according to *Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr*, to quote the bold title which Sartre gave to his lengthy essay on the novelist, both bandit and theater man. Micheline LO copied the meanders of the text, both as a sequence of words and as a sequence of phantasms.



L'enfer de Jean Genet, Sub-serie Descent to hell : The dead of Harcamone # 7 et # 14. 27 x 21 cm.

1994: Salammbô

The reader will recall that, when Micheline LO chanced upon *The temptation of Saint Antoine*, it was in fact Salammbô that she had been looking for.

Her Salammbô had been latent. This was the only time that she went on an initiation journey. She was staying at La Marsa, and on her way to Tunis she would daily go through Carthage, or rather through its remaining shadows.

Naturally, she spent some time in the Taphet, known for its child sacrifices. She was able to read, on columns, accounts of those sacrifices, kept in Phoenician writing, a system that shared the purely accounting cursiveness of Aramean and ancient Hebraic writings. She saw the *Cap Bon*, from the vantage point of what is supposed to have been the port used by Hamilcar and the young Hannibal. One night, she had tea, seated perhaps on the very same chair where Flaubert had taken his.



Salammbô, Serie warriors # 2 : Hamilcar. 50 x 65 cm.

The cerebral landscapes of Flaubert's *Salammbô* have a special quality: they are absolutely frontal and compact. Only the Etruscan sculptors of that same epoch appear to have viewed certain faces in this manner.

With the painter, this produced faces-substances, those of Hamilcar, of Shahabarim, of Spendius, and of the young Hannibal. And lastly, the puffed face of Mâtho, filling the whole frame, which advances toward the discomposing face of Salammbô, who faints. "Figures", in the most epic of senses.

So solid are those faces that the artist finally resorted to the pure pigments of pastel, and thus created six "*esperpentos*", of an almost mineral substance. We know how Heinrich Schliemann must have felt when, as he was excavating the site of Troy, he suddenly faced the mask of Agamemnon. The painter seems to have gone through the same stupefaction as she faced the Carthaginian masks encased in Flaubert's consonants and vowels.



Salammbô, Serie The battle of Makar # 3. 72 x 86 cm.

Flaubert's narration is as compacifying as do the figures. Mâtho advances in an aqueduct whose ground slopes upward while its roof slants downwards as he walks on.

Micheline LO retained the strangulation, the maximal orgasm of the narrative, that moment when the Barbarians, lured by the Cathaginians in the Thermopylae, end up being crushed there in a lake of stones and blood which is in continuation of the one where *Saint Antoine* had walked. The *Battle of Makar* are mineral and visual crushes in pure state.



Variation on Bellini # 5, watercolor on paper, 50 x 65 cm.

In the hall where the works were first shown, this Flaubertian suffocation strangely adjoined a dozen variations of Giovanni Bellini's *Young Woman at Her Toilet*, the most tenderly irradiating painting of Western art.

A self-portrait furtively hung there? Or was it to indicate that the truth in the cerebral landscape demands us to go to the two extremities at the same time? And to all that is in between. From Flaubert to Bellini. The Carthaginian, and the Venetian ends.

1994: Cien años de soledad. The system of portraits

Finally, among the cerebral landscapes, the absolute *convexity* of Flaubert found a counterpart in the absolute *concavity* of Gabriel García Márquez. This time, no "characters" would effect any action *inside* a landscape or release any imaginary *into* the real. Only the immensity of the Amazonia and the Cordillera, causing action and country, imaginary and real, to be confused into the Colombian *mamagallos* (feminine-masculine, uterus-clitoris). Proper names no longer designate men and

women, but human bodies, made up of trees, rocks, animals, streams, rough gestures, delusions.



Cien años de soledad # 14.; The colonel Aureliano Buendía. 50 x 65 cm.

Each word then becomes an oracle, so that the suite of twenty-six portraits open and close on Melquiades, the magus who owns the people's manuscripts, their *Poppo/Vuh*, but refuses to translate them because no one is to apprehend their meaning until a hundred years of the non-time of the *Continente Eterno* have elapsed - about which his Colombian friend, Heriberto López Pérez, had written his *Sueños Epifanías y Porros*.



Cien años de soledad # 8: José Arcadio el mayor, Mixed techniques on paper, 50 x 65 cm

Those portraits were the last which Micheline LO painted as an explorer of cerebral landscapes. They open a new area of faces. Picasso made a last self-portrait in 1972, in which he fulgurates by the explosion of his look. But in this, he does not depart from the traditional Western vision of an Ego, of a "someone", of a "certain". He concludes a world. Micheline LO's portraits inaugurate a radically different vision: that of the biochemical brains, inexhaustibly plural, both exogenous and endogenous.

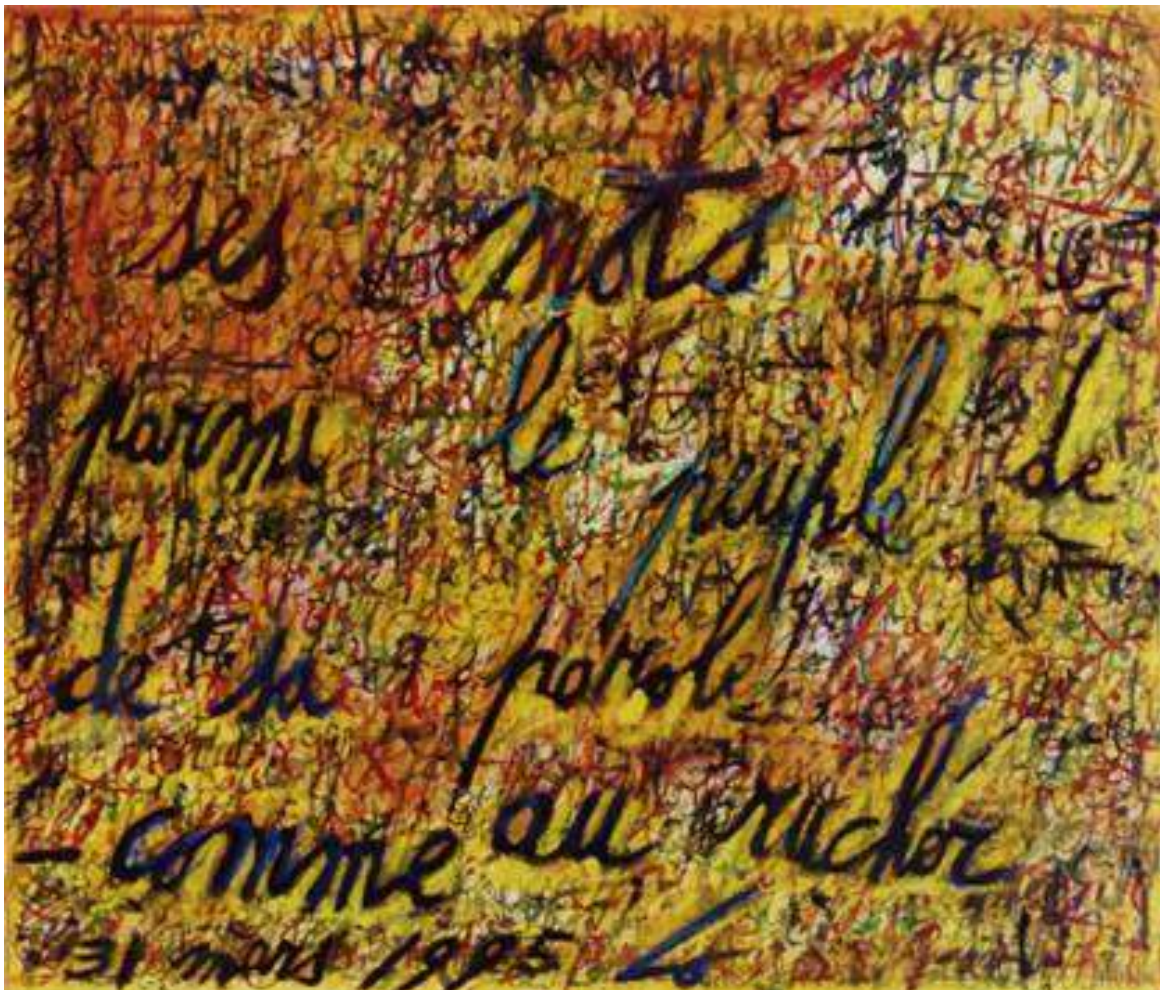
Micheline LO had, thus, successively explored

- (1) The ecstatic portraits of Saint Antoine
- (2) The beatific portraits of the elects of the Paradise
- (3) The essentializing (Mallarmean) portraits of the Tombeaux (Tombs)
- (4) The scarecrow (esperpentos) portraits of Terra Nostra
- (5) The infernal portraits of the Enfer of Genet
- (6) The archeological (Schliemannian) portraits of Salammbô
- (7) The mutational portraits of Cien años de soledad, in which the organisms are relays of Evolution and Universe.

1995: The transition: Vents of Saint John Perse (Winds)

Already, the narration of *The dead of Harcamone*, both copied and figured, had shown LO willingness of crossing the written and the image. But not to such a point that the pictorial line would be at the same time the scriptive line, and vice versa. There remained a final step to take.

Naturally, she needed a writer whose work would lend itself to this. She chose Saint-John Perse. Born in the French Antilles, those Amerindian islands, French ambassador and poet, Perse precisely had made as his central theme the generation and regeneration of animals, humans, ideas, images, political and commercial institutions, of fervent brains. "Se hâter, se hâter, paroles de vivants". Micheline LO liked to repeat the last stanza of *Vents*, which adequately expressed her own violence



Vents, Homage to Saint-John Perse #11. 73 x 85 cm.

As discipline is the condition of liberty, the painter imposed on herself a strict protocol. She obliged herself to copy each stanza from bottom to top, starting again from the bottom when she had reached the top. She used her colors according to an arbitrary code: a given color for a given alternation of stanzas. Yet, her brush, loaded

with acrylic paint, caused insinuations, ruminations of syllables, letters, or lines. In this manner, snags, faults, or slips resequenced differently the sequences. Yet another way of using the canvas as a field of indices, of making it the privileged site of neuronal connections and cleavages.

1996 : The Pathways of Writings (Les chemins des écritures)

With the serie *Les Chemins des écritures*, we have to go beyond the field of brains, and to introduce a new cosmological interlude, this time about "living formations" in general. The word "formation" must be taken here in its active sense. It is not about the forms resulting of an act of forming, according to one of the meanings of "formation" in French ("des formations rocheuses"), but rather the process through which forms are obtained. The German language is clearer in this respect, as it makes a distinction between **Gestalt** (form) and **Gestaltung** (formation, the act of forming). It is *Gestaltung*, and not *Gestalt*, that properly translates here the word formation(s).



Les chemins des écritures # 42, 200 x 230 cm

Until recently, traditional painting attempted to produce forms, more precisely, perfect forms, exemplary and archetypal, so much so that Michelangelo destroyed almost all of his sketches. And when Picasso deforms, it is to produce new forms. Now, what interested Micheline LO - as other contemporary cosmogonists, who like her had become radically evolutionists - was to offer a perception and an experience of the *formation processes*, of the *morphogeneses*, those movements and logics of our contemporary Universe.

Micheline LO's *Les chemins des écritures* (1996-1999) is a suite of some fifty wide-shaped canvasses, each approximately one square meter in surface. On first impression, the eye catches fragments of figures, letters, geometric and topological forms, body members and organs, efflorescences and rhizomes. They could be said to be "plastic cells" as understood by Weidlé, i.e. portions of a work where the destinies-choices of the work as a whole can be found.

1. The trait



Les chemins des écritures # 20, 100 x 120 cm.

Yet, the eye cannot rest on anything. None of the elements perceived is there for itself. It has no contour and no part. It is not an event placed next to another event. It is not even a segment before or after another segment, as in the polymeric cells of Dubuffet's *Cycle de l'Hourloupe*.

To the contrary, everything happens as if the eye were caught in each portion of surface and there read — or at least there suspected — some underlying elements, so that, as it catches that particular portion, it also catches the one that comes next, or before, or above, or below. It is not a question of givens, but of sequences in the strong sense of the word.

What is to be seen are not the Generated, but the Generation. And less the generation of the one by the other than a Self-generation which enables to apprehend the one and the other, the other and the same. There are therefore no specimens, nor even species, but the generating principles of the species and specimens.

Structures and textures, while not negated, are thus never accomplished, nor even discernable, hardly namable. Their outcropping, decided but transitory, is there only to create a perception of the work of those ultrastructures of which they are the transient, metastable emergences. Hence, no **forms**, only **formations**. In sum, each painting in its own way achieves the same theme: **the generalized biological, technical and semiotic Generation**.



Les chemins des écritures # 39, 83 x 100 cm

To fulfill this, the drawing leans on the properties of writing in that the emerging elements [fragments of figures, letters, geometric forms], instead of lending themselves to a one-by-one identification, are rather like characters [of texts] disposed in sequences that would make perceptible the *strokes* from which they follow, with the result that the sequences at once come out as (re)sequentiating.

The singularities thus produced are uncountably multiple and diverse, by reason of the fecundity of the process from which they originate, i.e. the dynamic (re)sequenciations. But they are so, too, because they continue to remain elementary, staying on the level of the digit, the stroke.

As a result, they carry everything that is primary in the anatomy and physiology of the living, as well as in geometry, algebra, the written character, the element, the object and the technical process, the technical gesture.

By reason of this elementarity, each painting often seems to comprise as many actual or virtual signs as did the whole history of images, or even more.

In as much that, as the stroke or the spot stay under the formation, the slightest digitalizable deviation suggests a new form of analogy, while all analogy keeps inducing a new digitalization. With, however, — as in any phenomenon that is akin to writing — a certain **predominance of the digital over the analogic**.

For, while it is true that in this case there are never any departure or arrival but only relays between anterior and posterior potentialities, such relays could not be distinctly analogic, or they would give rise to narrations and descriptions, which are not to the point.

Therefore, it is the digital that initiates the first groupings, whose still abstract dynamism suggests more concrete analogies, that are soon again disseminated.

This is indeed what this painted writing, or rather scriptural painting makes us share. Its articulation is no longer made of punctuation of a totality or of integrant parts, but rather made of emergences in **ubiquitory** overlappings, where we can no longer continuously point to an instant-point where A generates B, or where B is distinct from A.

2. The color

With this in mind, color must be just as revolutionary as the drawing, since it can no longer work in contrasting layers — as in the Flemish primitives, or Piero della Francesca, or even David Hockney — nor be simply valorizing, as in De Koninck or Jasper Johns.



Les chemins des écritures # 35, 96 x 140 cm

Color, too, must be triggering and overlapping, working by rerouting, sequence, sequenciation, resequenciation, positive and negative reactions, feedback and feedforward. And yet, unpredictable.

The expletive, "What a color !", often elicited by the first contact with this form of painting is not caused by the surprise of broad differences seized at once, but by the partial surprises, in leaps, in formative singularities. When someone details his/her impression, we usually hear "And then", "Oh, and then", "Ah, and now", and the like. Tracing and bifurcating color, down to its science values. **Released** or, on the contrary, **flattened** to be, in turn, generative, ultrastructural.

[Comment added to Henri VAN LIER's text:

Black, the absence of color, plays an essential role in LO's painting. It has both the capacity to "move backward" like emptiness, dark nights and abysses, and the capacity to "move forward" like the full, the writings, the traits emerging against a background. For Micheline LO, who never ceased to say "it must everywhere move forward and backward at the same time", black was certainly as important as color.]

3. The superimposing distribution

The more so as, in such a system, **composition** gives way to **superimposition**. All forms of arts, at least since Çatalhöyük, had com-posed, i.e. put together (ponere, cum) elements previously defined in a space-time, that was itself defined, or predefined. This derived from that structure that, par *excellence*, is the *frame*, the *framing*. Even Dubuffet, in his metamerizations of *L'Hourloupe*, knows that at one moment he will reach four edges where he will have to stop, bearing in mind that edges attract and repel, and that therefore they are the ultimate referential of the perceptivo-motor and logic-semiotic field effects of a painting.

But this time, the edges are no longer lines that stop the expansion, but **lines of reflux**. They are the ensemble of the space-time points from which the previously produced graphic and colored (re)sequenciations continue themselves, by reverting to themselves (this is what began as the copies of Saint-John Perse's *Vent* went along).

For, whenever we caught them, Micheline LO's brush strokes, were just as leaping at a distance and in all directions as those, impressionists, of Bonnard, or Chagal.

With this, **superimposition** itself changed its nature. In earlier composed paintings, superimposition usually betrays changes in design, global or local. Our x-rays reveal subjects initially on the left who have moved to the right. The first layer being then used as a substrate for the new.

Now, in the *Les chemins des écritures*, the superimposition (right/left, top/bottom, above/ below) is the continuation of the same choice, but in return, or retreat. It is the generalized dynamic (re)sequenciation that goes on, flowing back to its previous states. The return then multiplies within the whole the graphic and colored irruptions (suddenness, emergence), with a global prevalence of singularities over generalities, and — let us insist — of the digital over the analogic.



Les chemins des écritures # 3, 100 x 120 cm

For those reasons, ultimately, the energy of the project finds its origin mainly in the dimension of depth.

Painters are people of few words, but one thing Micheline LO kept repeating was that "**it has everywhere to move forward and move backward at the same time**". The pictorial cell is first circumscribed here by this pulsing.

Acrylic paint was indispensable here. It dries fast enough to allow a distinction of the layers while not excluding their compenetrations and crossings. For a new emphasis on the ultrastructures.

4. The cerebral landscape in motion

David Hubel tells us that he was amazed to discover, in the 1960s, that the colors, forms, and movements of the objects of our vision are carried by nervous pathways that are **distinct and nowhere totalized**.

In 1982, David Marr, in his work *Vision*, offered a first computational program of the stages through which retinal data, first blurred, incomplete or too complete, had to go through to finally result in a 3-dimensional "perceived", after a stage which, he said, was "2.5-dimensional".



Les chemins des écritures # 1, 100 x 120 cm

These stages of vision pertain to the eternal painter whose vision, since the cave age, goes back to those moments of an object when it has not yet been fully defined but is still under cerebral construction. It may even be assumed that for any major painter Marr's computational stages have specific particularities, for example that of being slower or faster, more hesitating, more accentuated, in any case more exploratory and explorable than in the ordinary man.

However, for the rational Occident, such stages were taken as preliminaries, which were more or less blurred or erased in the final result. Or they might be maintained, but in states that were at least stabilized by contours that negated perspective, as with Joan Miró, or by modulation of luminance, as with Cézanne.

In *Les chemins de écritures*, on the other end, the aim is to remain as long as possible among those preliminary perceptive stages, insofar as it is generation (self-generation) as such that is aimed for.

Here, the neuronal landscape is part of the pictorial theme, as much as the landscape of the living. The painting is then **genetic on two counts**: in the perceived, i.e. the living formations; and in the perception, i.e. the neuronc reticulations.



Les chemins des écritures # 32, 100 x 120 cm

5. From contemplation to perceptive effervescence

In art, the ancient chiefly tried to be contemplative, to hold many things together, as in the view or the unifying pathway of a temple (contemplare, templum, cum). In the West, it was a matter of going from parts to wholes, with the hope of a consented rest, of a Spinozian "acquiescence", in the Whole of the wholes.

This was so until Renoir and Cézanne, and even Mondrian. The perceiver stood *in front of* the work, dominating and integrating it.



Les chemins des écritures # 51, 83 x 100 cm

But the look that meets *Les chemins des écritures* is no longer in front of anything. It is **among**, physically and cerebrally. With no attempt, as with DaVinci, to attain the embracing gaze of God, but to identify oneself as far as can be with the Universe of which he/she is a state-moment.

Contemplation has given way to mental, or more precisely to neuronc, **effervescence**, introducing another form of the **sacred**. The ancient sacred - exemplaristic – held to the stability and the dazzle of the Eternal and the Expected. Here, apart from mechanical and hydrodynamic invariants, the sacred responds to infinite "singularities", to "inexhaustible otherness", to the "once and never again", to the "explicable only after the fact".

So, a *Les chemin des écritures* — in that it assembles metastable states, and is wrought by its ultrastructures, its (re)sequenciation reflux, its secret graphs, and its

interfaces of perceiving and perceived — is the most intense and the most "Universal" brain activator that one can conceive.

Micheline LO was very much aware of this, and on a loose sheet she noted, "*Chemins des écritures*. multiple signs in interactions launched into space-time: diverse cultures, signs of all categories stored in order or disorder, embarked not on a Ship of Fools but on a voyage across the Universe where perhaps they will be deciphered and reconditioned under a new logic of which we have no premonition."



Les chemins des écritures # 52, 200 x 230 cm

As the subject of her work had led to a phenomenon as fundamental as the paradigms of living formations, the painter was bound to never depart from it.

But what came after the *Chemins des écritures* were no mere "Variations" or even "Developments", but rather "Transformations" as understood by the older Beethoven, the one who composed the 33 *Transformationen* on a theme by Diabelli.

1997: The Astronomer (L'astronome)



L'Astronome # 2, 100 x 120 cm

Even before the living formations came the stars and galaxies.

Micheline LO still had to try, if only for a moment, to grasp this origin of origins, which is the sky. Not to recount the stories of gods, as did the Ancient mythologists and astrologers. Nor even to savor the harmony which, as Kant saw it, confirmed the connivance between the World and the Spirit. But sufficiently to alarm oneself at the preformations before any formation.

And, on condition that the perceiving cerebral landscape matters more than the perceived landscape, paintings on that subject could not be titled "The Sky", nor even "Astronomy", but simply and exactly L'Astronome (The Astronomer).

1998: The Peace Treaties (Les traités de paix)



Traité de paix # 2, 100 x 140 cm

On the other hand, we can't touch the self-generation of the livings, and then that of the Universe, without realizing that any generation means the existence of Conflict, that War which Heraclitus called "the father of all things". Or without recalling that conflicts are resolved through transient compromises that are the metastable moments (Simondon) of the compatibilizing Evolution of rocks, plants, animals, tools, and signs. So, in the beginning of the beginnings there are The Conflict and The Pact.

The *Traités de paix* were probably the most liberated productions of Micheline LO, who no longer needed to be concerned with any particular circumstance. She was then open to pure contrasts, unifications, numerations, topologies, i.e. the pleasure of painting almost without any program, and an acquiescence to the basal movement of things.

1998: The Bestiary (Le bestiaire)

Micheline LO's *Bestiaire* is amazement and admiration before the existential singularities of animal species. It is a collection of objective interfaces that activate our subjective interfaces, produces a brain effervescence, admittedly less general than with *Les chemin des écritures*, though it is perhaps more intimately mutational.



Bestiaire #28, Upside-down monkey, 83 x 100 cm

1999: Mousiqqa

Arabic music, among the array of traditional musics, clearly heralds contemporary music of the living formations. Its sequence is ostensible, because of its restricted scale. It is highly resequentiating, by impatience or by encounter, to the point of reaching paraorgasmic stridencies, giving rise not only to variations but transformations (Oum Kalsoum has up to thirty in one single evening).



Mousiqqa # 5, 100 x 120 cm

Here, too, analogies are generated by redirections of the digitality (for which nomadic people have a propensity, according to some). The musical phrase is not first and foremost a general purpose that would generate parts, but rather random events - chance events in the rigorous sense - where the goals, should they surge, are transitory. Moreover, Arabic music is noted with dots, lines, and ties, a good fortune for the painter of *Les chemins des écritures*.

This suite of paintings is a good opportunity to mention Micheline LO's relationship to music. She played classical music on sight, but rarely, except for Scarlatti. She never listened to music while painting, but she almost always was reading against a sequential music background, as the *Chansons à penser africaines*, or Lightning's country music. She liked listening to music in loop. Her piano improvisations were comparable to the neuronomic experimentation.

1999: The Chameleons (Les Caméléons)



Caméléons # 13, 83 x 100 cm

As much as *Mousiqa* is the beyond of all painting, the *Caméléons* are the natural object of this type of painting. They **are** transformation, (re)sequenciation, ultrastructures, encounter between an external and an internal environment, interfaces of inside/outside as focal points of individuation, confusion between perceived and perceiver, perception not from the outside, as a mere cutout, but from the inside.

The viewer-contemplator intending to remain *in front of* the painting, is in advance *inside*. Those familiar with the work often said that if one had to capsulize this type of painting in an image, it would be that of the chameleon.

2000 : The Hands (Les Mains)



Mains # 2, 83 x 100 cm cm

The hands are perceiving and perceived, subjects and objects. They are sources of analogies inasmuch they are modeling, smoothing, planishing palms and they are sources of digitality as fingers, this first abacus. They are panoplies of index fingers (Zeigefinger) designating, by contact or from a distance, equally well the edible prey (here, now) and the contemplable power and justice (elsewhere, some day).

Micheline LO's *Les Mains* (the hands) were those that painted-and-wrote *Les chemins des écritures*. More abstract than concrete, and more distancing than bringing closer. These hands digitality foment analogy, more often than the reverse. Their impatience creates the goal more than the goal obeys them.

2001: The Migrations (Les migrations)

We have seen that, in this approach, the frame is a line of reflux, from which (re)sequenciations flow back onto the whole surface in superimpositions. Yet, with this in mind, something is missing from those living formations. That is, the movement that causes one generation to give way to the one that follows, just as it drove out the one that came before.

So, the painter Micheline LO was bound to use the frame, even if only in a few of her paintings, as a relay signaling the beyond as much as the within. This is something the frame cannot indicate on its own, and that supposes that the events it contains should present themselves as *Migrations*. We are still dealing with living formations, but this time they are characterized by their availability to be erased.



Migrations # 1, 100 x 100 cm

2001: Quetzalcoatl



Quetzalcoatl # 1, 100 x 100 cm

The Mexican god Quetzalcoatl, both his name and his image, attest to the meeting of the Serpent and the Eagle, in an embrace, but also devouring each other, at least potentially, while the Owl looks on

Quetzalcoatl was all the more available for to this painting as his figure, being Amerindian, is both written and writing. Sequenced with squares, rhombuses, rings, and feathers, punctuated with pulsating tropical colors, his figure makes both forms and substance to palpitate, so that "it moves forward and backwards at the same time."

2001: The Spirits of Wine (Les esprits du vin)



Esprits du vin # 5, 83 x 100 cm

The moment of the final departure was approaching, and wine — with its minds — lends itself to a farewell. Its hundreds of chemical compounds, its ostensible maturation, its palpable merging of the four elements of Empedocles: Earth (terroir), Water (liquid), Air (oxygen), and Fire (alcohol) make wine a popular cosmogony, blending the physical, the technical and the symbolic, offering a daily opportunity to activate, soak, and glimpse the cerebral landscape.

This was an ultimate manner of causing the analogic and the digital to trigger each other. And above all of weaving together conscience and unconscience. To someone who found the project exciting but impossible, she replied, "I paint only that which is impossible".

She painted twelve *Esprits du vin* (six "reds", and six "whites") during the grape harvest near the *Route des Vins* which in Provence goes from her own town, Nyons, to the city of Orange. Among the innumerable wine qualifiers, those she chose almost suggest some self-portrait.

The reds conjured up aromas of fruit, coffee, black currant, cocoa, hyacinth, clove, cinnamon, prune, iris, fig, banana, violet, plum, peach, resin, or linden blossom. They were tender, full-bodied, robust, spicy, heady, deep, complete, seductive, elegant, thick. The whites had flavors suggestive of flowers, vanilla, honey, spices, curry, almond, green apple; they were aromatic, exotic, intimate, crisp, cool, tart, vigorous, sprightly, slightly astringent, tempered, enhanced, mellow, charming, scented, youthful.

Micheline LO's complexion



Micheline LO's signature

When she spoke about artists, Micheline LO always has been so insistent on the role of nervous systems in their productions, that we cannot speak about her without a few words about her own complexion [her constitution]. She was left-handed [she wrote and painted with her left hand], but culturally educated in a right-handed environment, which — it is now believed — sometimes favors intense perceptions of

hidden dimensions of space, and even perhaps of space-time, as witnessed by DaVinci and many sculptors.

Our perceptive systems have two regimes. In one, the objects in our environment are apprehended on a median definition, with tempered field effects, affording them to be grasped smoothly as wholes. In the other, perceptions are fixative-fixed, which means the objects are perceived with such a resurgence of their field effects that they function both as viewed and viewing.

Micheline LO strangely combined those two regimes of perception. She almost always lived in the perception that was the most reasonable and balanced, the most objectivating and veridical, the most direct. Yet, at times, this was crossed by exogenous, fulgurous, or disruptive perceptions. In both cases, in a straight manner and obvious manner.

Her painting probably required this mixture of objectivity and violence, both almost absolute. A crossing of the two which, in everyday life, dispensed her from any deliberation, making her decisions immediately pertinent. And which, when she walked into her workshop, combined extreme relaxation and concentration, the possible and the impossible.

This is not enough to explain the immensity of the "figures" in *Salammbô*, in the bandits of Jean Genet, in the conquistadors of the *Terra Nostra*, in the men born Cordillera and Amazonia in *Cien años de soledad*. Nor the generative densities in *Les Chemins des Ecritures* and in the *Bestaire*. Even less in *L'Astronome*, which was placed at the head of her coffin before her cremation. But this perhaps will help understand that nothing comes from nowhere, even here.

Some have sometimes wondered about the clearness, even the ostentation, of Micheline LO's signature and dating on her paintings. This is because the painter's brain is of the same nature as what he/she paints. He/she paints states-moments of the Universe, once and never again. Each of the pictorial action is therefore also a state-moment of the Universe, once and never again. Each action is radically dated and situated. For humility, and for admiration.

Excerpts from a text by Henri VAN LIER, 2007

Full text address:

https://www.anthropogenie.com/anthropogenie_locale/sujets_d_oeuvre/lo.htm