

newSpecial



The art of wellbeing

THRIVING THROUGH CHANGE



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PREGNY-PARC RESIDENCE

WHERE LUXURY MEETS CONVENIENCE



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AN UPSCALE REAL ESTATE COMPLEX FOR AN EXCLUSIVE CLIENTELE,
NEAR THE CENTER OF GENEVA,
THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
THE MAJOR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND EMBASSIES,
BETWEEN THE LAKE AND THE FOREST,

IN TOTAL HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT.



PREGNY-PARC.CH





THE ART OF WELLBEING

As international civil servants, we are entrusted with advancing global well-being amid complex crises. Today's mental health emergency, as described in demands not only policy solutions but also a renewed commitment to empathy and human connection - values at the heart of multilateralism.

In this issue you will find personal narratives illustrating how overcoming addiction through art remind us that creative expression is a powerful tool for healing and resilience. These journeys illustrate how art can bridge divides, foster inclusion, and inspire hope - principles that resonate deeply within Geneva's international community.

Innovation is expanding these possibilities. The article on virtual reality art therapy shares insights into how innovation can democratize access to emotional support, especially for diverse and younger populations. Both traditional and digital art-making foster trust and well-being, aligning with our shared goal of leaving no one behind.

As we shape global agendas, let us champion empathy, support creative initiatives, and embrace technological advances in mental health. By integrating art, technology, and compassion into our work, we can help build a more resilient, connected, and humane world - starting here in Geneva.

The holiday season is upon us, take us with you and dive into reading. There is a lot of that is interesting, please do read all, and most importantly enjoy! //

L'ART DU BIEN-ÊTRE

En tant que fonctionnaires internationaux, nous avons la responsabilité de promouvoir le bien-être mondial dans un contexte de crises complexes. L'urgence actuelle en santé mentale, telle que décrite dans ce numéro, exige non seulement des solutions politiques, mais aussi un engagement renouvelé envers l'empathie et la connexion humaine - des valeurs au cœur du multilatéralisme.

Dans ce numéro, vous trouverez des récits personnels illustrant comment le dépassement de l'addiction par l'art nous rappelle que l'expression créative est un outil puissant de guérison et de résilience. Ces parcours montrent comment l'art peut combler les divisions, favoriser l'inclusion et inspirer l'espoir - des principes qui résonnent profondément au sein de la communauté internationale de Genève.

L'innovation élargit ces possibilités. L'article sur l'art-thérapie en réalité virtuelle partage des perspectives sur la manière dont l'innovation peut démocratiser l'accès au soutien émotionnel, notamment pour des publics divers et plus jeunes. La création artistique, qu'elle soit traditionnelle ou numérique, favorise la confiance et le bien-être, en accord avec notre objectif commun de ne laisser personne de côté.

Alors que nous façonnons les agendas mondiaux, sachons promouvoir l'empathie, soutenir les initiatives créatives et adopter les avancées technologiques en santé mentale. En intégrant l'art, la technologie et la compassion dans notre travail, nous pouvons contribuer à bâtir un monde plus résilient, solidaire et humain - à commencer ici, à Genève.

La période des fêtes approche : emportez ce numéro avec vous et plongez-vous dans la lecture. Il y a beaucoup à découvrir, alors lisez tout, et surtout, profitez-en! //



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December 2025 / January 2026

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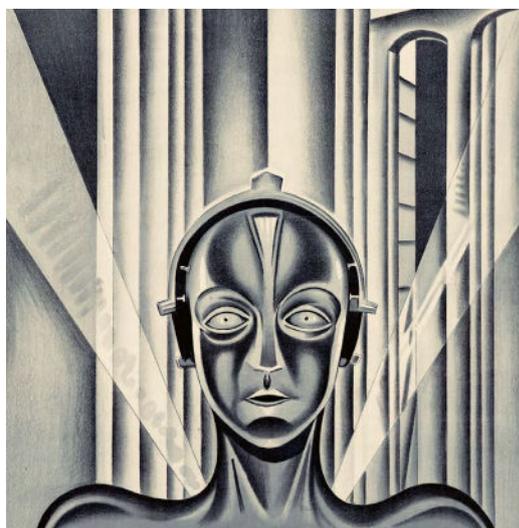
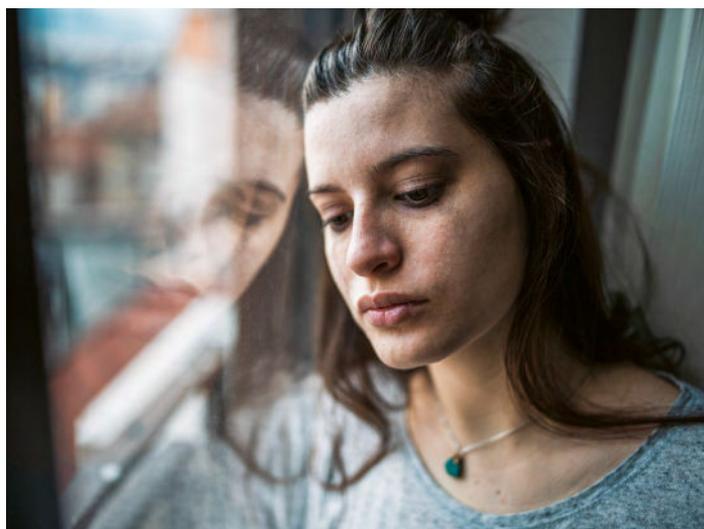
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Making the invisible visible

EXPLORING VIRTUAL REALITY IN ART THERAPY: BRIDGING TECHNOLOGY AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

Art has long been used as a therapeutic tool to help individuals express emotions that may be difficult to verbalize. Through the creative process, people can explore their inner worlds, find emotional relief, and foster psychological resilience.

INTRODUCTION

As digital technologies advance, new modalities are expanding the horizons of art therapy, one of the most promising being virtual reality (VR). Immersive environments can provide users with new ways to create, experience, and interact with art, opening innovative possibilities for emotional exploration.

To better understand how VR could complement or enhance traditional art therapy, we conducted an exploratory study at the ArtGenève 2025 international art fair. The study compared participants' experiences in VR-based and traditional paper-based art-making sessions in a non-clinical, real-world setting. Conducted in an open, walk-in format, the study sought to evaluate feasibility, user preferences, emotional engagement, and perceived challenges in using immersive digital tools for creative self-expression.

FEASIBILITY AND PUBLIC INTEREST

The intervention ran smoothly, with minimal technical disruptions despite being implemented in a dynamic public environment. Visitors of all ages were invited to participate freely, resulting in high voluntary engagement and overwhelmingly positive feedback. The ease with which the activity was integrated into the art fair confirmed its feasibility and sparked lively curiosity among attendees.

This spontaneous interest in VR-based art therapy highlights a growing public openness toward using digital media for emotional and creative exploration. Participants often described the experience as “*liberating*”, “*unconventional*”, and “*soothing*”. The ability to paint or sculpt in a limitless virtual space seemed to capture their imagination suggesting that immersive technology can play a meaningful role in supporting emotional well-being, even outside of clinical environments.

USER PREFERENCES AND ACCEPTABILITY

A total of 67 participants took part in both modalities, offering valuable insights into preferences and perceived comfort. Preferences were nearly evenly split: 29 participants preferred VR, 26 preferred art work on paper and 12 felt equally comfortable with both. Age appeared to influence these preferences; younger participants, particularly adolescents and young adults, showed a clear inclination toward VR. This finding aligns with growing evidence that younger generations, accustomed to digital interaction, may experience greater ease and engagement in immersive environments¹⁻⁴.

Importantly, 82% of participants stated they would be willing to use VR in future art therapy sessions, compared with 16% who were unsure. This strong acceptance rate reflects not only openness to innovation but also the emotional resonance of the experience. As one participant noted, “*I just love both sessions as they gave me ways to express myself;*” capturing the spirit of curiosity and receptivity that characterized the study.

Despite this enthusiasm, certain barriers to adoption remain. Participants and art therapists alike have identified digital literacy, limited tactile feedback, and ethical considerations as ongoing challenges. Recent research emphasizes the need for structured educational programs and supportive infrastructures to prepare therapists for safe and effective implementation of VR-based interventions⁵. As technology becomes more integrated into therapeutic practice, ensuring that professionals feel equipped and confident will be key to its successful translation into clinical settings.

TEXT DR. EVANGELIA BAKA, SENIOR SCIENTIST, HUG VIRTUAL MEDICINE CENTRE
VASILIKI TSIAOUI, ART THERAPIST MSC, CENTRE MÉDICAL DE MEYRIN
PHOTO EVANGELIA BAKA



EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND POST-CREATION REFLECTIONS

To explore how each modality affected emotional experience, participants described their emotional states before and after completing the paper drawing and the VR-based artwork. Initially, emotions were mixed; some participants reported nervousness or curiosity, while others felt excitement. As the sessions unfolded, a clear shift toward positive emotions emerged across both modalities.

Paper-based drawing was most commonly associated with trust, calm, and serenity – words such as “comfortable”, “soothed”, and “relaxed” frequently appeared in participants’ descriptions. VR-based drawing, by contrast, was more often linked to joy, immersion, and curiosity. Interestingly, both modalities shared a common emotional denominator: trust. This sense of emotional safety is a cornerstone of therapeutic success, indicating that both traditional and digital art-making can foster secure, introspective spaces for participants.

Several comments illustrated how VR’s immersive quality shaped the emotional experience. One participant reflected, “*While in VR I wasn’t aware of the environment around me*”. Another described how “*letting go*” felt easier in the virtual space, where they could express themselves without the self-consciousness of being observed. For some, particularly those hesitant to draw in public, VR offered a form of privacy and protection – a digital cocoon for emotional release.

Participants were also asked what they would like to do with their artwork after completing it. Many expressed a desire to display their creations publicly, reinforcing previous findings that seeing one’s work exhibited increases pride, motivation, and a sense of accomplishment⁶. Others preferred to archive their artworks for personal reflection, underscoring their symbolic role as extensions of identity and emotional memory. Notably, thirteen participants expressed interest in interacting with their digital creations – speaking to or animating them – suggesting a fascinating frontier for interactive therapeutic art. Future applications might draw inspiration from narrative or exposure therapy techniques to further explore this potential.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Although most participants encountered no difficulties, a few reported technical or emotional barriers during the VR experience. The most common issues included limited familiarity with the headset, lack of tactile feedback, or discomfort linked to the headset's physical weight. Analysis revealed a subtle age effect: those who reported difficulties were on average older (33 years), while those who reported none were younger (23.8 years). This difference suggests that digital literacy and prior exposure to immersive tools play an important role in shaping the experience.

The absence of physical touch also emerged as a meaningful limitation. As one participant expressed, "I couldn't touch my drawing as in a real one". Another added, "I would have liked to see my VR creation printed". These reflections point toward the potential of 3D printing as a bridge between virtual and tangible art-making – transforming digital expression into a physical artifact that extends the therapeutic process beyond the virtual environment.

Despite these challenges, the enthusiasm and adaptability observed across participants demonstrate that VR art therapy is both feasible and emotionally impactful. Addressing accessibility and usability concerns, particularly for older or less tech-experienced users, will be crucial for broader integration.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory study offers compelling evidence that VR-based art therapy is both feasible and highly acceptable in a non-clinical, real-world setting. The strong voluntary participation at ArtGenève and the positive emotional responses across both modalities underscore the potential of immersive technologies to complement traditional art therapy. While younger participants were more inclined toward VR, paper-based drawing maintained its strength in fostering calm and reflection – highlighting the complementary nature of both approaches.

Overall, the creative process in both modalities led to a noticeable increase in positive emotional valence, reinforcing art-making's inherent therapeutic value. The findings invite further exploration into hybrid models that merge the tactility of traditional materials with the boundless creativity of digital environments. As VR continues to evolve, integrating it into therapeutic contexts offers exciting opportunities to expand emotional expression, enhance accessibility, and redefine how art and technology intersect in healing.

Future research should focus on refining VR tools, establishing standardized therapeutic protocols, and investing in therapist training to ensure safe, ethical, and inclusive practices. With thoughtful implementation, VR-based art therapy could become a transformative medium for emotional expression; one that bridges the virtual and the real, offering new dimensions of creativity, connection, and well-being. //

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WHERE
COMPANIES
BECOME
BRANDS



From Pain to Color

A CONFESSION ABOUT FALLING, SURVIVING,
AND BEING REBORN THROUGH ART.



TEXT PASHA BRIGHT, ABSTRACT ARTIST
TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN BY NINA
CHINGIZ-TARKOVSKY
PHOTO PASHA BRIGHT

I am an abstract artist, Pasha Bright.

I was born and grew up in Russia, in the city of Yekaterinburg, in a family of music teachers. I am 48 years old.

I have a secondary education. I graduated from music school, majoring in the bayan (accordion). I played in the school ensemble — guitar, drums, piano. I took part in school concerts and organized school discos.

From the age of 13, after classes, I worked part-time on construction sites as a laborer and loader. I earned money to help my parents feed my two younger brothers. From 1995 to 1997, I served in the army.

When I came back, I met my friends, who at that time were already smoking marijuana. To celebrate the end of my service, my friends threw a party. We smoked marijuana, not suspecting what would come next.

Later we tried heroin. We did not notice how addiction began. At that time, there was a lot of it everywhere, and at first, drug dealers gave it out for free. We did not understand that they were already getting us hooked on a dose.

I fell into a very strong addiction without even realizing it. I started changing jobs often. I tried to get treatment. It all ended in alcohol. Then the drugs came back — heroin, amphetamines, LSD.

That is how I became a hard addict.

My whole life suddenly collapsed in August 2015. First, I had a stroke.

Just a week later, I suffered an ischemic heart attack and brain swelling. I thought I had died, because I remember those fragments of that state very clearly. I was in darkness and emptiness. I woke up in intensive care. The doctors gave me no chance of survival. My relatives were already preparing for my funeral.

I spent a month in that weightless state. But soon, unexpectedly for everyone, I began to wake up and come back to myself.

I realized that I wanted to live very much. The brain swelling slowly began to subside. My hands still did not work. I could barely speak. I was discharged from the hospital as hopelessly ill, sent home without any chances of survival. They assigned me a lifetime second-degree disability.

For a year and seven months, I stayed at home. Every day, I worked on myself. I wanted very much to live in a new way.

In 2017, I appealed for help to the Roizman Charitable Foundation, personally to Yevgeny Vadimovich Roizman, asking him to help me find work.

Yevgeny Vadimovich Roizman, after listening to my whole story, suggested that I first restore my health. He sent me to specialists. For another year, I was under medical supervision. I recovered. I was already able to do simple work.

I began working in interior finishing and decorative plastering. And I always noticed the colorful paintings in some interiors made in the abstract Fluid Art technique. They inspired me very much and lifted my spirits while I worked.

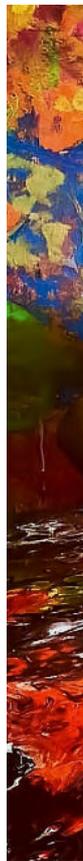
I began to take an interest and to study the technique of creating such works. I found a video of the creative process on YouTube. I bought a canvas, paints, and all the necessary ingredients. I started pouring paint on the canvas. I liked it, but nothing worked out.

For seven months, I poured and poured again, trying to add various materials to the mix. Still, it did not work.

But each time, after pouring paint on another canvas, I began to notice how my inner world started to change. There was a cleansing and a reset inside me. I began to feel life truly — in a positive way, without any substances. I began waking up with joy for the start of a new day — that I am alive!

And this life is the most wonderful thing I have!

And then one day, one of the most beautiful moments of my life happened.





After another pouring session, I looked at the canvas and saw before me a beauty that I had created myself!

And this Fluid Art technique spoke to me from within, gently whispering: “You can do it! I am yours now! And I will always be with you!”

In 2019, I began to create and successfully started selling my paintings.

In 2020, I created a painting called *The Struggle* and gave it as a token of gratitude to Yevgeny Vadimovich Roizman.

“Everything will be fine, Pasha!” said Yevgeny Vadimovich and shook my hand.

That same year, 2020, I opened my first solo exhibition at the Ural Poster gallery.

With the help of this magical abstract Fluid Art technique, I gradually began to heal. Through the flow and blending of colorful paints, all my dark past began to flow out of me — the pain, the resentment toward myself, the negative emotions.

Those empty spaces inside me were instantly filled with joy and positive energy!

As a result, bright, lively, colorful paintings filled with positive energy began to emerge!

Now I regularly open exhibitions where I tell people about the joy of healing and the positivity that the Fluid Art technique brings me.

I have started studying other abstract techniques and collaborate with interior designers to fill homes with joy and beauty.

Also, since 2020, I have regularly held Fluid Art masterclasses, sharing this amazing technique for creating beautiful colorful paintings.

During the workshops, everything begins to open up in a positive way. People’s inner blocks, anxieties, and worries are released.

They start to admire themselves, and smiles appear on their faces. After the workshop, everyone leaves calm, joyful, and at peace — and when their canvases dry, they come back with words of gratitude, taking home their finished masterpieces.

Now more and more people are learning about me and my workshops, and they come with pleasure — with children, families, groups, or individually.

To date, I have conducted more than 250 workshops. And now I have a clear life position and goal: to share this wonderful healing and meditative therapeutic technique with everyone!

I have become a completely different person thanks to discovering abstract Fluid Art, and to finding within myself the gift and talent to create beauty and share it with others.

And more and more people begin to change toward goodness, beauty, and harmony after becoming acquainted with this therapeutic and meditative Fluid Art technique.

In each of my paintings, the inner beauty and harmony of this world are reflected.

I feel cleansed and fulfilled — and I share my purity and positivity with the world around me. //

Soul Crusher

A GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AND A CALL FOR EMPATHY

Humanity is currently undergoing a global mental health crisis. Social media are being employed to encourage people's narcissistic tendencies and dull their sense of empathy. World leaders are displaying psychopathic tendencies and engaging in dangerous manipulation, making decisions that put humanity at risk by destroying the sources of life and pushing for the advent of World War III. Nevertheless, the events currently taking place in Palestine have provoked a worldwide reaction of horror and indignation.

The expression of this indignation has been largely repressed, both in America and Europe. The systematic vilification of any form of empathy, deemed a support to terrorism, reaches levels that are stupefying. World leaders in America and Europe are displaying clear signs of psychopathy. These signs are now being described openly by those prominent members of society who have maintained their sanity. Some of these are ex-high-ranking military, economists, philosophers, neurologists, journalists, prominent mental health professionals, and here and there, artists, writers, musicians.

In our society where greed is all, the quasi totality of the arts have been reduced to some form of industry, entertainment. Both those words disgust me. Music cannot be an industry. The artists and musicians are supposed to be providing food for the soul. Lacking this food, the people feel powerless, bewildered, and revert to isolation, caring only for themselves and, at best, their dear ones and very close circle. At first, one is overwhelmed by the horror of this situation. How far can Israel go in Palestine before the world shows a strong resolve to end the massacre? What is going on in the deep recesses of the collective human psyche

that makes such a situation possible? On one hand, there are the primitive instincts of fear and greed, reinforced by past trauma, which unleash the most cruel reactions: survive, kill, dominate, appropriate, call yourself the victim, justify the horrors you are perpetrating, promote a scenario in which you are under attack and fighting for your own survival. This justifies everything. People who have undergone deep trauma, sometimes trans-generational, easily fall back into this default position. This is the mechanism that allows perverse, narcissists, borderlines, and psychopaths to thrive in our world. This is the mechanism that starts them on their path of manipulation, deception, and destruction. It is particularly perverse because it systematically leads to their own destruction, unfolding as a disintegration of the soul in slow motion.

The other force at play is empathy, or the lack thereof. Indifference, complacency, apathy, our tendency to favor one's comfort, to stay safely within the boundaries of what is known, no matter how pathetic and pathological, is a well-known tendency of humans. What will it take to overcome our indifference? Different wise women and men through the ages have noted that letting horrors occur without lifting a finger is even more pathetic and disgusting than the behaviour of those who are carrying out the outright violence. There is no such thing as neutrality. The first sign of spiritual awakening is a sense of responsibility for everything that occurs in the world. Isolation is an illusion. We do not exist as separate beings and entities. All humans are connected in a collective network, both material and spiritual. For that matter, all living beings and the entirety of the cosmos are a vast network of energy exchanges. Our own heart depends on iron, which was brought to Earth by meteorites emanating from foreign galaxies. Let this iron revive our courage, our resilience in the face of madness, and open our hearts to the beauty, the vastness, and the power of the cosmos. It is time that the poets, the composers, the artists use their power to produce their most compelling operas and masterpieces to feed the hungry human souls that are roaming the earth in desperation, committing a collective suicide, which can only be stopped by a quantum leap of awareness. If we let ourselves be guided by our reptilian brain and most primitive tendencies, the human race will fall into oblivion in the most horrific manner possible. //

TEXT
ANTONY HEQUET, MÜND

Nadine Rennert, "Swan", 2017,
ink on China paper, 35 x 70 cm.



EXPLORING NEW TRENDS



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Toil & Trouble: Macbeth in Geneva

NEWSPECIAL HAS A NIGHT OUT AT THE THEATRE TO TAKE IN A PRODUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH BY THEATRE COMPANY HOOPS OF IRON.

TEXT KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO
PHOTOS STEVEN ANTALICS

How better to spend Halloween than hanging out with three demented witches, a homicidal King, and multiple groups of murderers? Shakespeare's Macbeth delivers every shade of macabre, with the body count of a Hollywood action movie, set to the refined language of Elizabethan English.

A new staging of the classic play has been performing during October in St Jean de Gonville and transferred to the Scène Caecilia in central Geneva for three performances on the 15th and 16th November.

LEARN +



The play is a production of the relatively young Hoops of Iron theatre company. Their director Sofie Qwarnström explained that she chose the so-called "Scottish Play" for its continued relevance in an uncertain world of would-be dictators, and to deliver a visceral message as important now as when it was first written. Costume, sound design, and artistic conception were all approached with a view to making this link to the present day and bringing to vivid life Shakespeare's timeless message of the consequences of a naked lust for power.

Featuring an original score by Thomas Bingham, a cast of twenty actors, and with simultaneous French translation projected above the stage, visit the company's website for more details of upcoming productions or to get involved with Hoops of Iron in any capacity. //



Photo 1: The Thane of Ross (Kevin Crampton) discovers the murder of Lady Macduff (Desire Saoncella) and her child (Nia Perry).

Photo 2: "I have no words, my voice is in my sword." Macduff (Tom Miles) kills Macbeth (Chris Hemmens) to free Scotland and avenge the murder of his wife and children.

Photo 3: "The thane of Fife had a wife... where is she now? Oh, will these hands never be clean?" Lady Macbeth (Munday Young) is eaten away by guilt.

Podcasts

THE GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS PODCAST PROVIDES A FORUM FOR DISCUSSING THE MOST IMPORTANT GLOBAL HEALTH TOPICS OF THE DAY



GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION IN GLOBAL HEALTH

with your host,
Garry Aslanyan

FEATURING **FEATURING** **FEATURING**

Catherine Kyobutungi
Executive Director,
African Population and Health Research
Center, Kenya

Paola Abril Campos Rivera
Research Professor in Health Policy,
Tecnologico de Monterrey,
Mexico

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS PODCAST LIVE: BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE DIVIDE

with your host,
Garry Aslanyan

FEATURING **FEATURING** **FEATURING**

Monica Bharel
Clinical Lead Public Sector Health,
Google

Joy Phumaphi
Executive Secretary,
African Leaders Malaria Alliance

This episode was recorded live at the World Health Summit in Berlin 2025!

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

HERE ARE OUR TOP 3 MOST-LISTENED TO EPISODES OF SEASON 4 OF THE PODCAST ON BUZZSPROUT!

1. Can we eliminate malaria? Perspectives from two women leaders

2. Power and responsibility in global health

3. Dialogues: a conversation with Peter Hotez

SEASON 4

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS
the podcast

Trailblazers with Garry

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
YEREVAN, REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

with special guest...
LENA NANUSHYAN

Poïesis

Enchanter la vie

POURQUOI LE MOMENT EST VENU DE REFAIRE PLACE À LA POÉSIE ET À L'ENCHANTEMENT DANS NOS VIES



LE RÔLE DE L'ART - AMNESIS

La nature et la fonction de l'art sont profondément méconnues, y compris par les artistes eux-mêmes. Certains y voient un appendice qui embellit et adoucit la rudesse de la vie ordinaire: brutale, économique. D'autre une distraction esthétique, un « entertainment » plus ou moins commercial.

Dans le meilleur des cas c'est une activité réservée aux âmes pures, aux esprits éthérés qui vivent dans le hautes sphères et n'ont que peu ou pas d'impact sur le reste de leurs congénères; l'art demeure une échappée vers un monde imaginaire, sans emprise sur le « monde réel », le monde de l'entreprise, du développement, du béton, du métal et du verre, des armes et de la guerre.

Apparemment, une amnésie collective sans précédent nous a permis d'oublier plusieurs dizaines de milliers d'histoires humaines.

ABONDANCE - GÉNÉROSITÉ - ART - SACRIFICE

La Nature est abondante, le soleil déverse sur la Terre une quantité sidérante d'énergie, sans retour. Cette énergie alimente une variété merveilleuse de formes de vie: espèces végétales, animales et humaines...

De tous temps, et dans toutes les traditions, les humains ont cherché à s'élever à la hauteur de cette abondance en restituant une partie du surplus de leur production à travers des formes sacrificielles: chants sacrés, pierres levées, chapelles, œuvres d'art sacrées, fresques, danses rituelles, sculptures, cathédrales, orgues, pyramides, totems, œuvres théâtrales, mythes, poésies, incantations, symphonies, ragas, opéras...

LE POUVOIR DU VERBE

Homo sapiens était fort peu différent à l'origine de ses cousins simiesques et des autres hommes qui étaient ses contemporains, comme par exemple Homo neanderthalensis, son concurrent le plus direct. Notre place dans la hiérarchie des espèces resta très modeste pendant longtemps. Mais il y a soixante-dix mille ans, notre destinée a pris un nouveau tournant...

La révolution cognitive qui a eu lieu de 70000 à 30000 AD, a vu l'invention des bateaux, des lampes à huile, des arcs, des aiguilles pour la couture, des peintures rupestres. Durant cette période des sociétés humaines fondées sur des religions complexes ont vu le jour, réunissant de nombreux individus.

Comme le dit si bien Yuval Noah Harari dans son « Histoire de l'Humanité », c'est la création de mythes, de croyances communes, qui permet aux hommes de s'associer en grand nombre...

C'est le développement du langage, plus spécifiquement un langage permettant la communication d'abstractions, qui nous a permis d'évoluer, de survivre et de devenir une espèce dominante.

Depuis cette révolution, l'évolution ne se fait plus par le génome mais par la culture.

POÏESIS - PROMÉTHÉE - EPIMÉTHÉE - LE MYTHE

Au début des temps, les dieux chargèrent les titans jumeaux Epiméthée et Prométhée de créer les espèces animales et les hommes. Epiméthée proposa à son frère jumeau de le laisser se charger de cette tâche. A chaque espèce il donna une qualité pour lui permettre de survivre: aux prédateurs la puissance, les griffes et les crocs, aux proies la vitesse pour s'échapper, aux espèces les plus faibles la capacité de proliférer pour survivre à la prédation. Les jumeaux étaient le reflet l'un de l'autre: Prométhée avisé, prescient, Epiméthée la tête dans l'éther... Il advint donc qu'Epiméthée oublia de garder une qualité spécifique



pour l'homme. Pour éviter que l'homme ne devienne la proie des autres espèces, Prométhée se résolut à un double vol. Au dieu Héphaïstos il subtilisa le feu, à la déesse Athena il déroba la poésie - la créativité - poïesis

Grâce à sa créativité et au pouvoir que le feu lui conférait de matérialiser ses inventions, l'homme développa des outils qui le rendirent puissant et lui permirent de prospérer.

« Quand l'homme fut en possession de son lot divin, d'abord à cause de son affinité avec les dieux, il crut à leur existence, privilège qu'il a seul de tous les animaux, et il se mit à leur dresser des autels et des statues; ensuite il eut bientôt fait, grâce à la science qu'il avait d'articuler sa voix et de former les noms des choses, d'inventer les maisons, les habits, les chaussures, les lits, et de tirer les aliments du sol. »

Ainsi naquit le pouvoir du Verbe.

LA TRADITION PRIMORDIALE

Nos différentes traditions spirituelles et nos cultures apparemment si variées, émanent toutes d'un substrat unique, d'un savoir multimillénaire commun à toute l'humanité: « *la Tradition Primordiale* » ...

Cette tradition a été transmise oralement depuis la nuit des temps par des chants, des incantations, des poèmes, des mythes...

Cette « Tradition Primordiale », nous a non seulement permis de survivre en dépit des nombreux périls que nous avons dû affronter, mais elle nous a de surcroît permis de prospérer, en nous enseignant comment nous pouvons et devons vivre en harmonie avec les forces élémentales.

Elle est l'essence de ce que nous avons cultivé et affiné au cours de millénaires d'exploration et de contemplation: essentiellement, connaître notre place au sein du cosmos - savoir rendre grâce pour la splendeur et l'abondance dans laquelle nous baignons.



Papier mâché « mask »
Nadine Rennert.

Au cours du temps ce savoir s'est appauvri, cette tradition est partiellement tombée dans l'oubli. Les conséquences de cette déchéance sont devenues par trop manifestes et alarmantes ; il est grand temps de la régénérer.

Le moment est venu de retrouver la mémoire de qui nous sommes : « anamnésis » ...

Il est temps de renouer avec les traditions orales de la poésie, de redécouvrir le Pouvoir du Verbe...

LES TRADITIONS ORALES DE LA POÉSIE

Le rôle de l'art a toujours été de nous connecter avec les forces élémentales. La transmission du savoir ancestral se fait par les mythes, les contes, les légendes, les chants. La poésie orale, s'épandant dans le chant, la danse, les costumes, les masques et totems est un codage du savoir culturel transmis à travers les millénaires. L'évolution de la société des humains, se fait non point biologiquement à travers l'adaptation du génome, mais culturellement par l'entremise des traditions orales de la poésie...

La rupture de cette transmission, causée par la globalisation de la culture dans des formes commerciales et vides de contenu, a créé un appauvrissement lourd de conséquences. La jeune génération a perdu ses repères; elle ère dans le vide spirituel du vingt et unième siècle...

REVENIR À L'ENCHANTEMENT

Nous vivons dans l'illusion que nous existons séparément du reste du cosmos, de la terre, de la nature, des autres êtres vivants... Cette illusion nous affaiblit, elle amenuise notre capacité d'empathie, elle nous rend insensibles. La destruction systématique de la terre, la façon honteuse dont nous traitons les autres hommes sont la conséquence directe de cette insensibilité.

Le temps est venu de lever le voile qui nous empêche de voir, d'entendre, de ressentir, de devenir pleinement conscients de nos actions et des pensées qui les motivent.

Pendant des dizaines de milliers d'années, les hommes ont employé la poésie, la musique, la danse, les sculptures, les peintures, les costumes, et surtout les mythes pour renouer leurs liens avec la nature: Dyonisos - Shiva - Odinn...

Le temps est venu de refaire une place à la poésie dans nos vies, à l'enchantement, au sentiment intime de faire un avec le cosmos. //

Initiative ONU80: Bâtir une ONU plus forte et plus efficace

80^E ANNIVERSAIRE DES NATIONS UNIES
24 OCTOBRE 2025

L'Administration postale des Nations Unies émet trois feuilles de timbres le 24 octobre 2025 pour célébrer le 80^e anniversaire des Nations Unies.

Alors que l'ONU célèbre son 80^e anniversaire cette année, le Secrétaire général a lancé l'Initiative ONU80, un projet de réforme à l'échelle du système ONU visant à répondre à une question fondamentale: comment pouvons-nous être plus agiles, coordonnés et efficaces pour les 80 prochaines années?

À l'heure où les crises mondiales s'intensifient et où le multilatéralisme est mis à rude épreuve, l'Initiative ONU80 vise à repenser la manière dont l'ONU agit, non pas en faisant moins, mais en faisant mieux.

L'initiative UN80 s'articule autour de trois axes de travail parallèles:

- Renforcer l'efficacité et améliorer notre gestion et notre fonctionnement
- Examiner la manière dont les mandats sont mis en œuvre, et non leur nature
- Étudier la réorganisation structurelle et programmatique au sein du système des Nations Unies

Cet effort vise à rendre l'ONU plus efficace, plus agile et plus réactive. Il s'agit d'optimiser l'utilisation de nos ressources limitées en travaillant plus efficacement, en réduisant la bureaucratie et en soutenant mieux notre personnel et les personnes que nous servons.

LES DESIGNS

Les trois feuilles de timbres, d'une valeur faciale de 1,70 \$, 1,70 CHF et 2,10 €, sont constituées de quatre timbres disposés verticalement. Les dessins reprennent les thèmes des piliers de l'ONU: paix et sécurité, développement et droits de l'homme.



Le premier timbre (en partant du haut) représente la Terre sous forme de végétation, symbolisant la croissance.

Le deuxième timbre est consacré aux droits de l'homme: la colombe de la paix et la main représentent l'humanité unie dans un objectif commun de tolérance, d'acceptation et d'amour.

Le troisième timbre montre un arc-en-ciel architectural qui s'intègre à une colombe de la paix, protégeant la végétation en pleine croissance qui ouvre la voie au progrès et au développement. Sans paix et sans sécurité, les communautés ne peuvent prospérer.

Le dernier timbre, en bas, représente la liberté du papillon, symbole de transformation et d'espoir. //

La crise

UNE OPPORTUNITÉ POUR AMÉLIORER LE FONCTIONNEMENT DE GENÈVE INTERNATIONALE ?



TEXTS
CHRISTIAN DAVID

1945- 2025: Le quatre-vingtième anniversaire de l'ONU est marqué par une crise sans précédent qui remet en perspective tout son fonctionnement à Genève.

Dans les organisations, les ONGs et les associations, la situation actuelle alimente des conversations pessimistes. Chaque acteur de cette Genève Internationale s'interroge, constate que son poste est menacé. Certains ont déjà fait leurs valises et tous vivent avec l'angoisse du lendemain. Certains départs abrupts sont ingérables surtout pour les familles avec enfants.

Les services des ressources humaines de chaque entité tentent de se mobiliser pour trouver des solutions alternatives qui impactent le moins possible le personnel et le fonctionnement des missions en cours et à venir. Les plus anciens sont poussés à la retraite anticipée, les plus fragiles comme les employés temporaires et ceux qui ne disposent pas d'une grande visibilité disparaissent du tissu social et économique genevois en silence.

Dans ce contexte, l'intitulé « Restaurer la confiance » du rapport annuel de l'ONU Genève 2024 pourrait paraître optimiste voire surréaliste.

Il reste cependant un espoir, souligné dans ce rapport, qui consiste à conjuguer les efforts avec l'ensemble de cette entité appelée Genève internationale. Une coordination efficace avec les Etats Membres, la société civile, le monde universitaire, le secteur privé et d'autres partenaires demeure la voie privilégiée qui peut permettre de créer une dynamique.

Fort de ce constat, il convient de souligner l'initiative¹ destinée à venir en aide à ces acteurs fragilisés. Agissant dans le cadre d'un partenariat Public Privé, un plan est proposé pour identifier les plus vulnérables avec ensuite la création d'un HuB humanitaire disposant d'une plateforme et un outil innovant de gestion des RH inter-organisations optimisé par l'I.A.

Une humanitaire propose un plan en deux étapes à une entreprise genevoise de gestion des ressources humaines afin de venir en aide aux acteurs fragilisés de la Genève internationale. D'abord, une réponse immédiate visant les plus vulnérables avec une identification des cas par un mapping en ligne, ensuite la création d'un HuB Humanitaire Solidaire RH pour la Genève internationale proposant une plateforme et un outil innovant de gestion des RH inter-organisations optimisé par l'I.A.

Cette approche constituerait-elle une réponse cohérente, voire une opportunité pour apporter davantage d'agilité à au fonctionnement de la place genevoise ?

La Genève internationale dispose par ses expertises présentes, de toutes les réponses aux problématiques rencontrées par l'humanité. Il s'agit donc de mieux les coordonner entre elles pour les rendre plus efficaces. Il est indispensable, dans ce contexte, que l'Esprit de Genève perdure.

Le pari est certes ambitieux mais il l'était également lorsqu'en avril 1946, au lendemain du Traité de Versailles, la transition entre la SDN et l'ONU fut réalisée à Genève. //

1 <https://cassiny.wixstudio.com/solidairerhgeneve>

SAVOIR +

Conférence de presse Press conférence





Bienvenue !

DE NOMBREUX DOMAINES VOUS ACCUEILLENT
TOUT AU LONG DE L'ANNÉE DANS UN CADRE EXCEPTIONNEL
POUR UN MOMENT UNIQUE D'ÉCHANGES ET DE PARTAGE.



Liste et horaires
des caves sur
geneveterroir.ch

Modern Psychiatry and Depression

MIND THE GAP

As one year closes and another begins, the quiet space between them can magnify both hope and heaviness, making it a particularly resonant time to consider how we experience and understand our feelings, including depression. Here Sebastian looks at the facts of how the prevalence and treatment of depression has changed over the years and asks whether we've become too focused on medical solutions and quick fixes rather than on alleviating the more difficult social and economic causes and on ways to promote happiness.

It's easy to come up with a list of possible causes for our mental state: genetic factors, biological differences, brain chemistry, hormonal changes, stress, medical conditions, abuse and trauma, and isolation and loneliness. But this is only part of the story. For many people, factors like financial stress, family strain, loneliness, and loss of purpose are equally to blame.

The truth is, it's natural to feel depressed from time to time. Whenever I find myself down, I often think back to a scene in Alexander McCall Smith's *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, where Mr. JLB Matekoni says that he is feeling "*depressed*". This phrasing has always put a smile on my face. When I feel low, I'll tell my wife "*I'm feeling depressed*" – as if naming it this way reminds me it's something abstract and temporary. It helps me step back from rigid clinical labels and reflect on my own feelings as experiences passing through me, rather than fixed conditions that define me. And I also try to apply Bob Marley's advice to "*liven up yourself*" – do things I enjoy such as play some tennis or go for a walk, or treat myself with a pizza night.

Over the past 70 years, the landscape of mental health treatment has changed dramatically. In the 1950s, mental health care in the United Kingdom and the United States centred on psychiatric hospitals – the dreaded asylums. At its peak, about 0.4 percent of England's population lived in such institutions. Electroconvulsive therapy was common and often harsh and there was little public discussion about mental health.

From the late 1950s, psychotherapy expanded, and discussion of mental health became more open. The conversation about the rights and individuality of mental health patients was started, led by such unconventional psychiatrists as RD Laing. New psychiatric medications transformed care. Antidepressants became widespread, with long-term hospitalisation replaced by community services. By 2019, around 2.7 million people in England, roughly 4 percent of the population, were using National Health Service mental health services, and fewer than 0.1 percent were hospitalised.

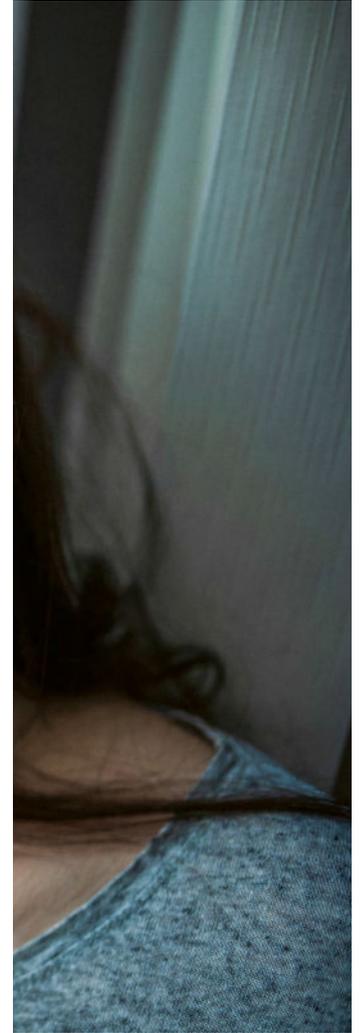
Here I will review some data to try and understand how depression has changed over the years.

PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION

In the UK, the first National Household Psychiatric Morbidity Survey was conducted in 1993. It found that 2.1% of adults aged 16–64 in Great Britain had a depressive episode in the past week (women had higher rates than men, 3.3% vs. 1.0%) and around 12.3% had some kind of neurotic disorder (including depression and anxiety). By 2014, the Survey found levels had risen to 2.6% and 17.0%. Young women (aged 16–24) showed the sharpest increase: 26% had a common mental disorder in 2014, up from 19% in 1993. Meanwhile, the share of people in the United States reporting a lifetime diagnosis of depression rose from 20 percent in 2015 to 29 percent in 2023.

ANTIDEPRESSANT PRESCRIPTIONS

Between 1975 and 1998, antidepressant prescribing more than doubled in England, with GPs issuing about 23.4 million prescriptions in 1998. By 2023/24, this had exploded to about 89 million prescriptions. In the US, in the period 1999–2002, about 7.7 % of Americans aged 12 or older reported taking an antidepressant in the past month. By 2011–2014, this had risen to 12.7 %. Antidepressant sales total billions of dollars every year. The demand is clear, and there may be short-term benefits, but 15 percent of patients experience withdrawal when they stop, and people can be left feeling worse than before treatment.



HAPPINESS SURVEYS

In the 1970s, Bhutan introduced a happiness framework called Gross National Happiness (GNH) – sometimes called Gross Domestic Happiness – using 33 indicators to measure and guide development. This inspired the World Happiness Report in 2005, which uses the “Cantril Ladder” question: *“Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 to 10. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?”*.

Globally, happiness has averaged between only 5 and 6 and this has not changed over the past 20 years. We’re clearly not a very happy world. Rates in the Middle-East and Africa are generally low. The rates in some countries (especially in Eastern Europe and parts of Latin America) have improved as their economies and institutions strengthened. Others (including the US, UK, and some Western European countries) have plateaued or declined slightly. Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland) consistently top the rankings with scores of around 7.5–7.8, showing stable or improving trends.

SUICIDE MORTALITY RATES

Although suicide rates are not a reliable proxy for the prevalence of depression, depression remains one of the strongest individual risk factors for suicide. Between the year 2000 and 2021, the suicide rate globally has declined from around 13 per 100,000 to around 9 per 100,000. The rate is much higher for males: 12.3 vs 5.9 per 100,000 for females. In the United Kingdom, the suicide rate fell from 14 per 100,000 in 1920 to 11.7 in 1950 and remains around 11.4 today.

The reasons vary considerably by country, with some common themes. For example, the territory of Greenland has a rate of 71.3 per 100,000 – an extremely high rate. Young males aged 15–24 in remote areas of Greenland are particularly prone to suicide. In Uruguay, the elderly show high suicide rates, which is attributed to loneliness. In the Republic of Korea, a country with one of highest suicide rates among developed countries, this is blamed on stress among younger people and older adults struggling on a basic pension. In Eswatini and Lesotho, where they have some of the highest suicide rates in the world (with South Africa not far behind), the reasons include poverty, geographic remoteness, substance misuse, and

Feeling “depressed”?
It doesn’t define you.

other factors. The rates are also high in Ukraine and Russia, a result of economic difficulties and a heavy binge drinking rate (particularly of distilled spirits such as Vodka) which is strongly correlated with suicide. The war has only made this worse.

Suicide is also a major problem in the United States, which has a very high rate among developed countries. It increased by 30% between 2000 and 2020, from 10.4 to 13.5 suicides per 100,000 people. As of 2023 this had risen further to 14.7 per 100,000 and there were 49,316 suicide deaths. Only China and India, with vastly larger populations and lower rates, have more deaths.

On the brighter side, the suicide rate is lowest in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with factors such as close-knit families, little social inequality, and fewer financial pressures. Countries in the Middle East are also at the bottom of the table, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic all with less than 1 per 100,000. They also have strong family ties but also have strong religious and cultural prohibitions to suicide.

Where have we seen the biggest declines? China has had a big drop thanks to urbanization and a reduction in the availability of lethal pesticides. Economic growth and better education have also helped, among other factors. We've also seen declines in rates in Nordic countries like Finland and Sweden, which were once among Europe's highest. This has been tied to strong welfare systems, tighter control of lethal weapons, national prevention strategies, and reduced mental health stigma. As we have seen, cultural factors also play a role, with social integration, religious prohibitions, and close-knit families often linked to lower suicide rates. Notwithstanding the benefits of access to mental health care, many of these factors are independent of how many prescriptions are written or how accessible mental health care is.

SUMMARY ON DEPRESSION OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS

Since the 1990s it appears that the prevalence of depression has increased. The prescription of antidepressants has rocketed, particularly since 2000. The results of happiness surveys have largely stayed flat since they were introduced in 2005. And while suicide has decreased globally since 2000, the decrease has not been uniform throughout the world. In short, while modern psychiatry and medicines have saved many lives and reduced stigma, they still cannot offer a comprehensive treatment for depression.

In the American sitcom, *Frasier*, Martin Crane, Frasier's down-to-earth father, once quipped after listening to his sons overanalyze a simple problem, "*You boys could take a simple cup of coffee and turn it into group therapy*". The contrast between Martin's pragmatic outlook and his sons' therapeutic dissection mirrors a broader tension: between psychiatry's tendency to medicalise and analyse, and the everyday common sense that sometimes sees things more plainly.

Have we become too focused on medical solutions, quick fixes, and managing symptoms rather than addressing the more difficult social and economic causes? Perhaps if we focused as much attention on alleviating financial stress, family strain, loneliness, and loss of purpose, as we do to medication, we might foster more lasting well-being. Practices that promote genuine happiness - exercise, meaningful relationships, creative pursuits, and community engagement - could prove as powerful as any prescription in improving mental health over the long term. //

Snapshot of The State of Broadband in Africa

THE LATEST REPORT FROM THE ITU/UNESCO BROADBAND COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERS HOW ICTS CAN EMPOWER AFRICANS.



TEXT PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU
PHOTO ISTOCK

Africa has a vast and varied geography, with countries differing greatly in population size and density, urbanization and access to resources. Like many other countries at the moment, a number of African countries face considerable challenges in economic development, compounded by ongoing conflicts in some countries, a number of countries in debt distress and vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change.

Africa is home to one-third of the global youth population – the “*demographic dividend*”. Although this youth surge generates pressure on governments in terms of education, job creation and housing, it also means that Africa has an energy, hope and aspirations other continents struggle to match. Africa’s many promising and entrepreneurial start-ups are offering – and taking advantage of – opportunities both directly *within* the ICT sector or more remotely, via the Internet.

Many African LDCs have largely agrarian economies, with large, sparsely populated land areas, making the roll-out of terrestrial communication infrastructure to remote areas more challenging. African operators have tended to deploy and upgrade networks in more profitable urban centres, rather than cover more remote or underserved areas, which are nevertheless served by (more expensive) satellite services. Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) lack direct access to the sea, which adds in transit costs in international Internet connectivity, making Internet access considerably more expensive.

Internet uptake differs considerably, between Internet usage rates over 60% in the more developed economies to around 10% in Africa’s least developed economies. Interestingly, South Africa led the world globally for the daily amount of time spent online in 2024. In April 2024, Internet users in South Africa spent a reported 9h32 minutes online each day, nearly three hours more than the global average of 6h35 minutes (WeAreSocial’s 2024 Digital Trends report¹).



Investments in digital technologies are growing, and there has been a steady progression in submarine cable connectivity over the last two decades. After the initial SAT3/SAFE cable was activated in 2001, the number of cables put into service exploded around 2009-2012, with another wave of activity from 2016-2020. Many governments have invested in submarine cables, but private consortiums have also got involved, to share and diversify the risks.

Opportunities for Africa,
including African youth.

LEARN +



The South Atlantic Cable System (SACS) was completed in 2018 as the first direct link between Africa and Latin America, with a 6,500 km cable extending between Brazil and Angola. Cables backed with some Chinese investment include the PEACE cable on the west coast and the SAIL cable on the east coast. Google has committed to its cable project Equiano, which will initially link Portugal, Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa, Togo and St. Helena, but could expand in future. The African submarine cable consortium project 2Africa aims to extend 45,000 km and link 33 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, with a range of private sector investors (including China Mobile, MTN, Meta, Orange, STC, Telecom Egypt, Vodafone and WIOCC).

Without doubt, mobile has been the big runaway success story in African telecoms, with mobile cellular coverage estimated to have reached 88.4% in 2024, according to ITU. Around 77% of the population now lives within reach of a 3G signal, and 44.3% is within reach of a long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband signal. By 2024, mobile broadband covered 86% of Africa's population (compared with 25% in rural areas).

Mobile operators are extending coverage, upgrading their networks and beginning to roll out 5G. For example, Vodacom Mozambique launched the first commercial 5G services in Mozambique, and Benin has also introduced some 5G services. However, some African operators wish to exploit their 4G investments fully - in terms of 5G roll-outs, operators worldwide were expected to invest close to US\$1 trillion in 5G networks from 2020-25, but sub-Saharan Africa accounted for just over a quarter (27%) of this, with a relatively low spend of around US\$50 billion dollars, according to the GSMA.

In terms of digital divides, Africa has a relatively pronounced gender digital divide. Women make up just over half (50.05%) of Africa's population, but only 31% of them used the Internet in 2024, compared with 43% of men, one of the largest regional digital gender divides observed by the ITU. The GSMA recommends that mobile operators offer low-cost smartphones and facilitate purchases with microloans or installments. Governments can introduce policies to reduce the costs of phones and data, which would benefit women. Grant programs aimed at disadvantaged women and incorporating basic digital skills could be incorporated into school curriculums.

As we move towards the AI era, new divides are emerging. One of the issues for using AI in Africa is limited training data in online texts and images, which may render results biased and neither fully representative nor accurate for African contexts. This issue is particularly acute with regards to digital translation, where only a limited number of digital texts available online in a limited number of languages means that results may not be accurate or culturally appropriate. For example, concepts may be either absent or imposed from other cultural contexts from outside of Africa, preventing or skewing translation and misleading readers.

In 2013, a number of African languages were added into Google Translate, including the three major Nigerian languages (Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba), as well as Zulu and Somali². Thanks to the PaLM 2 large language model, 110 new languages were added in 2024 to Google Translate, with around a quarter of these originating in Africa (including Afar, Fon, Ga, Kikongo, Luo, Nko, Swati, Venda and Wolof). OER Africa found that Google Translate now supports 25 African languages³.

To address problems of online representation, the Masakhane Natural Language Processing (NLP) network was formed for NLP research in African languages, for Africans, by Africans, so Africans can participate in NLP research, rather than just be observers or data providers. It operates in over 38 African languages with more than 35 contributors on GitHub⁴. Masakhane is collaborating with the African scientific preprint server, AfricArXiv to translate African research papers that AfricArXiv⁵ receives into African languages.

The inclusion of AI tools for these languages is helping extend access to new and different applications, such as storytelling applications, application for preserving ancestral knowledge in agriculture, local language dubbing tools for videos, making content more accessible to speakers of indigenous languages. Bringing more African voices online, with more digital records, could help ensure that AI models are based on African perspectives and cultural contexts, making them more responsive to the needs of Africa's citizens.//

1 Slide 45, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-april-global-statshot>

2 <https://africa.googleblog.com/2013/12/google-translate-now-in-80-languages.html>

3 <https://www.oerafrica.org/content/artificial-intelligence-and-underrepresentation-african-languages>

4 <https://www.masakhane.io/>

5 <https://info.africarxiv.org/>

Second World summit for Social Development

THIS IS PART 3 OF A THREE-PART ESSAY
ON THIS CRITICAL SUMMIT THAT MATTERS TO ALL OF US
4 TO 6 NOVEMBER 2025, DOHA, QATAR



Aerial view of The Pearl Island,
an artificial island in Doha, Qatar.



The Second World Social Development Summit held in Doha, Qatar, 4-6 November 2025 formulated concrete strategies to enhance the importance of international cooperation in order to achieve international peace and social development.

Thirty years after the 1995 Copenhagen World Social Development Summit, world leaders gathered to renew commitment to social progress, equality and inclusion, addressing poverty, decent work, and opportunity for all.

Bringing together Heads of State and Government, international organizations, civil society, youth, and the private sector, the World Summit has proposed concrete solutions to today's most pressing social challenges – from rising inequality and unemployment to the impacts of technology and climate change on communities worldwide. Amid these global shifts, the Summit gave new meaning to the Copenhagen Declaration, and proposed accelerated action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹, and forged partnerships for a fairer, more resilient world.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the Summit a “*booster shot for development*,” urging a “*people's plan*” to reduce inequality, reform global finance and rebuild unity. “*This summit is about hope through collective action... let's deliver the bold people's plan humanity needs and deserves.*”

The Political Declaration² adopted on 4 November 2025 November contains 16 specific paragraphs, reaffirming global pledges to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, building on the values expressed in the 1995 Copenhagen Summit, and committing to follow-up:

We reiterate our commitment to the full implementation of the social development agenda, including through improving and strengthening its framework for international and regional cooperation, as established under the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action and through following up on the Doha political declaration of the “World Social Summit”, under the title “the Second World Summit for Social Development”.

IN THIS REGARD WE COMMIT TO

- Proceeding to a 5 year follow-up process on the Doha Political Declaration and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action starting in 2031 to assess progress, to identify gaps and renew the commitments, and convening a high level plenary meeting under the auspices of the General Assembly. The modalities and outcome of which shall be decided no later than the eighty-fifth session of the General Assembly.
- Requesting the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to prepare a report, in preparation of the follow-up process of the Doha Political Declaration and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action no later than the eighty-fifth session of the General Assembly which assesses progress and identifies gaps in social development.
- Reaffirming that the Commission for Social Development has the primary responsibility for the follow-up and the review of the World Summit for Social Development, the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, of the Doha Summit and intergovernmental social development commitments and to proceeding to the strengthening of its role including in contribution to the follow up process.
- Invite the UN Regional Commissions within their respective mandates to convene preparatory meetings at the regional level in advance of the follow up, with the aim of assessing progress made, gaps and opportunities for action towards the implementation of the Doha Political Declaration and Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The Regional Commissions are invited to utilize existing mechanisms and platforms to conduct the regional preparatory meetings.
- Inviting the Economic and Social Council, funds and programmes of the United Nations Development system and the relevant organizations and specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to further integrate into their work programmes relevant intergovernmental social development commitments and to be actively involved in the follow-up process.
- Strengthen effective multilateralism and international cooperation as well as foster greater inter-agency cooperation and better policy coherence within the UN system. (agreed ad ref)
- Encouraging stronger coordination, each within their respective mandates, between the United Nations and the International Financial institutions through regular and substantive dialogues, including during the Commission on Social Development, on enhancing financing mechanism and assistance to advance social development particularly in developing countries.
- Strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships, including with parliamentarians, civil society, employers’ and workers’ organizations, youth, organizations of persons with disabilities, academia, local and regional authorities, faith-based organisations and the private sector to implement the commitments.
- Supporting developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in, inter alia, strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated social development data.”

The document concludes with a commitment “with united efforts, political will and firm actions to advance concrete, integrated and targeted policies and actions to implement the Doha political declaration and achieve social development for all in line with the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.” //

1 <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

2 <https://www.un.org/en/desa-en/world-leaders-adopt-doha-declaration-boost-efforts-social-development>

The Hidden Giants

WHAT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CAN LEARN FROM COMMODITY TRADERS



TEXT ALEJANDRO KARACSONYI,
SENIOR ADVISOR IN COMMODITY TRADING

In today's UN funding crisis, efficiency matters. And the opaque world of commodity trading offers surprising parallels worth exploring.

The United Nations is facing one of its most severe financial crunches in decades, with several major donors signaling potential funding cuts or delays that could cripple core operations. This crisis translates into a stark reality: doing more with less. The impact is especially severe for international organizations which maintain extensive operations in the field, such as the ICRC. And for people whose lives depend on humanitarian interventions, this crisis is simply catastrophic.

In such conditions, efficiency is not optional. It becomes survival. And when searching for models of resilience and operational excellence, one might not immediately look to Geneva's other quiet powerhouse: the commodity trading industry. Yet this sector, which thrives on complexity and operates in some of the world's toughest environments, offers a wealth of insight into how large organizations can deliver under challenging conditions.

THE QUIET POWERHOUSES OF GLOBAL COMMERCE

Most people could name Nestlé or Roche, Swiss giants with global reputations. But few could identify Glencore or Trafigura, companies that each generate hundreds of billions of dollars in annual revenue by moving oil, metals, and grains across the planet. Their work sustains industries, powers economies, and stabilizes supply chains often in places where few others will or can operate.

Most traders are privately held, headquartered in Geneva, Zug or Singapore. Their low public profile reflects not secrecy, but a merchant culture valuing discretion and results over publicity.

Trading is fundamentally about movement: across regions, currencies, and time. A trader may buy crude oil in Nigeria, sell it in India, hedge the price in London, and finance the transaction in Geneva. Each deal involves a complex choreography of logistics, finance, and law, often tested by events beyond anyone's control.

At the heart of this system sits Switzerland, and especially Geneva, which has become the world's hub for commodity trading. Its neutrality, infrastructure, concentration of financial services, and talent pool have made it the natural home of this high-stakes global business. Geneva's paradox is that it hosts both the headquarters of some of the world's largest private trading houses and those of humanitarian institutions, two worlds that rarely speak yet share surprising similarities.

PARALLEL CHALLENGES: TRADERS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

When you examine the work of field-based International Institutions and Geneva's trading firms, it becomes clear that both operate under intense pressure, managing vast financial flows and physical movements of goods through volatile, high-risk environments. The parallels are remarkable:

- 1. Mastering logistics.** Both sectors depend on precision in transport, warehousing, and timing. A delay in fuel delivery can halt a power grid just as a delay in medicine delivery can endanger lives.
- 2. Maintaining substantial field presence.** Success depends on having people on the ground who understand local realities. Remote control from headquarters rarely works.
- 3. Managing money at scale.** Traders mobilize billions through prepayments, credit lines, and structured deals. UN agencies handle similar sums through donor-funded programs. Both require tight financial discipline and transparency.
- 4. Handling physical stocks.** For traders, these are barrels of crude, metals in storage, or grains in silos. For international institutions, they are vaccines, food parcels, or relief kits. In both cases, the challenge lies in tracking, moving, and safeguarding stock across unstable regions.
- 5. Operating in fragile environments.** Whether in conflict zones, disaster areas, or sanctioned countries, both must make decisions amid uncertainty and shifting politics. What differs is the purpose, not the process.
- 6. Dealing with compromised governments and counterparties.** Both sectors operate in environments where governance is weak and official integrity is uncertain. Traders navigate

opaque processes and informal demands to secure access to resources, while humanitarian agencies face the risk of aid diversion and reputational harm.

In short, both traders and humanitarian organizations must deliver under extreme conditions, where the difference between success and failure often comes down to speed, flexibility, and courage. An illustrative example came during the Arab Spring in 2011, when Vitol took the extraordinary step of supplying fuel to Libyan rebel forces. The operation took place amid total political and logistical chaos, with no functioning government and active conflict across the country. Traditional suppliers would not touch the risk. Vitol did, and was rewarded handsomely when the rebels prevailed.

For humanitarian agencies, this episode would sound familiar. Successfully delivering aid where infrastructure has collapsed or governance has vanished calls for the same skills that enable traders to move cargo through war zones. In both worlds, logistics is not a back-office function – it is the mission itself. The best operators in both fields combine financial acumen, ground control, and political sensitivity. They must understand markets, but also the human and regulatory terrain they move through.

THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

Another parallel is that both sectors face challenging ethical considerations. Traders are often accused of profiteering from instability or engaging with questionable regimes. International Institutions, in turn, must sometimes negotiate access with those same regimes to reach vulnerable populations.

The trading industry has indeed faced scandals, but the past decade has brought real change. Major firms like Glencore and Trafigura have invested heavily in compliance systems, sustainability reporting, and ethical oversight, aligning with frameworks such as the OECD Guidelines and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

International organizations have their own evolving ethics. The tension between neutrality and accountability is constant. Yet both sectors have learned the same lesson: legitimacy is as valuable as performance.

A CASE FOR CROSS-SECTOR LEARNING

In today's UN funding crisis, International Institutions cannot afford to ignore these parallels. Understanding how traders operate could yield practical

benefits. Traders can offer insights into risk management, supply chain efficiency, and financial structuring. International Institutions, in turn, bring ethical frameworks, transparency practices, and a sense of mission that could enrich the private sector.

Of course there are many differences between the sectors, with perhaps the most visible being the ruthless competitive pressure ubiquitous in the commodity-trading world, which is largely absent in the universe of international organizations. For traders, brutal competition translates into an ultra-efficient working culture, with zero tolerance for bureaucracy or complacency. This is a key area where international organizations could benefit from an injection of human capital from the commodity-trading world.

Some tentative collaborations already exist. Trading houses fund humanitarian foundations or environmental projects in countries where they operate. But the potential remains largely untapped. A deeper dialogue could lead to shared platforms, joint training, or crisis-response partnerships where both sides contribute their strengths.

In a world of shrinking budgets and multiplying crises, bridging the gap between trading and humanitarianism is no longer just desirable: it may be essential. Because whether it's fuel to a port, vaccines to a refugee camp, or dialogue to a conflict zone, the mission is ultimately the same: to keep the world moving under the toughest conditions. As one Geneva-based expert observed, *“At the end of the day, traders move food and energy, and the UN moves aid – but both just try to keep things flowing no matter how tough it gets.” //*

Penda Coulibaly – Executive Headhunter

Coming from the commodities world, I've always believed that this industry shapes some of the most resilient and agile professionals. Operating across continents, dealing with uncertainty, volatile markets, and cultural diversity teaches you a lot about adaptability, risk management, and decision-making under pressure. These are skills that translate perfectly into international organizations, especially those working in complex or high-stakes environments.

From a management perspective, leaders in trading learn early on to combine speed with precision to make fast yet informed decisions, to empower small multicultural teams, and to stay composed in the face of volatility. It's a world that demands both analytical sharpness and emotional intelligence.

Snapshot on The State of Satellite Broadband

A REPORT BY THE ITU/UNESCO BROADBAND COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EXAMINES KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN SATELLITE AND BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS



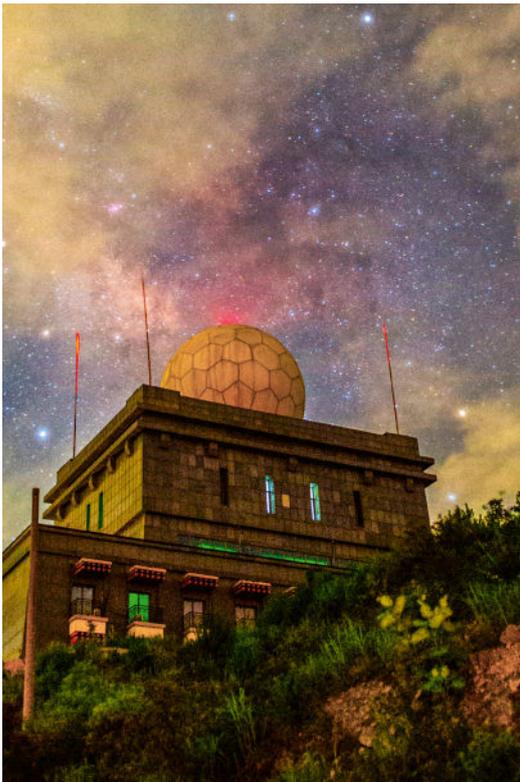
Space technologies are evolving very fast, reflecting significant technological breakthroughs and entrepreneurial spirit. The World Economic Forum estimates that the space industry is growing at 9% per year, to reach US\$1.8 trillion potentially by 2035 (Space Economy 2024 report), contributing to global communications, navigation and positioning, and Earth observation.

Space-based and satellite technologies have far-reaching applications. They provide critical information and connectivity in support of the SDGs, from underpinning disaster relief to tracking climate change and hurricanes or enabling better access to many other services (including education and health). Satellite communications can reach people in remote or rural areas difficult to reach by mobile coverage, opening up new economic opportunities.

Space has all the features of a public good belonging to humanity, and this despite new, private players shaking up the satellite industry and despite the fact that, historically, relatively few countries could afford to master the advanced science, expertise and resources needed to access space.

Today, more countries are engaging in space and space activities, as shown by the long and growing list of space agencies¹. Some 104 countries have now joined the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (Djibouti and Latvia are among the more recent members of the Committee)², while over 80 nations have initiated space programmes. For example, in 2024, the Rep. of Korea established its national space agency, the Korea Aerospace Administration. The current 'race to space' puts existing regulatory systems under pressure, as they seek to ensure equitable access to space orbital/spectrum resources by all nations.

Space communications are evolving very rapidly.



TEXT PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU
PHOTO ISTOCK

LEARN +



The number of satellite launches is increasing rapidly – from 1,200 space objects launched in 2020 to nearly 2,600 in 2023 (UNOOSA Annual Report, 2023). Communication satellites account for the majority of this increase. Key to the increase in launches is the reduction in launch costs, which may have fallen to as little as a tenth of what they were, over the last 20 years³ (depending on whether you consider discrete costs or cost per kg body mass sent into space – it’s complicated!).

Enter the new constellations and the mega constellations. 2025 is slated to see the launch of Amazon’s Project Kuiper, BAE Systems’ Azalea, AST SpaceMobile’s BlueBird Block 2 satellites and China’s Thousands Sails 648 satellite Constellation. SpaceX will continue to add to its 7,000 Starlink satellites already in orbit. McKinsey’s baseline scenario foresees 27,000 active satellites in orbit by 2030⁴, but Satellite Today suggests this number could reach as high as 50,000⁵.

Mega technological disruption is also on the way. Satellite and space-based technologies can connect users directly, or via other technologies. Direct-to-Cell (D2C) or Direct-to-Device (D2D) services – not entirely the same thing, but again, it’s complicated – offer the prospect of merging satellite services with mobile handsets. Innovation and plenty of investment mean that satellite connectivity can work in combination with terrestrial broadband technologies to connect remote areas, via all sorts of devices (smartphones, IoT sensors and dongles) that can work in both satellite and cellular modes.

One approach to D2C explores the development of separate direct-to-phone constellations running over mobile satellite spectrum⁶ (companies such as Iridium, GlobalStar, Ligado and Omnispace are pursuing this approach). The use of spectrum already authorized for mobile satellite use can reduce the time to launch, as regulatory permissions may already have been granted, and few extra authorizations may be needed. This approach relies on consumers using modern mobile phones, equipped with next-generation chips.

The Low Earth Orbit (LEO) environment has become increasingly crowded, so the space industry has been exploring the possibility of using lower orbits (such as the Very Low Earth Orbit operating between altitudes of 250-350 km). This is effectively a ‘self-cleaning orbit’ (equipment in VLEO ‘deorbits’ and burns up quickly in the Earth’s atmosphere), but such practices raise potential environmental concerns around chemicals left in the Earth’s upper atmosphere, with unknown side effects. Also, collision risks still persist, with over-saturation of those orbits.

Space organizations and operators are also leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to process the large volume of data collected from space. Currently, AI is used most often in support of data processing and management. However, the industry is moving towards using AI for autonomous operations, as well as in edge-compute applications.

How does regulation keep up with all of this? In terms of standards, satellite and cellular industries have historically been regulated relatively separately in terms of hardware, connectivity protocols and regulation, although both use valuable radiofrequency as a common resource with harmonized management and access. D2D/D2C will be discussed by ITU Member States at the next World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27) in Shanghai, China, which will consider possible new allocations to the mobile-satellite service for connectivity between space stations and mobile equipment. ITU is due to finalize its work on the satellite component of IMT-2020 (5G) shortly.

Satellite and space-based technologies are evolving very fast, and we would love to have you along for the ride – carry on watching this space! //

- 1 <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/space-agencies.html>
- 2 <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/members/evolution.html>
- 3 WEF Space Economy Report 2024, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Space_2024.pdf
- 4 <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/aerospace-and-defense/our-insights/space-launch-are-we-heading-for-oversupply-or-a-shortfall>
- 5 <https://interactive.satellitetoday.com/via/december-2024/10-tech-trends-that-will-impact-the-satellite-industry-in-2025>
- 6 <https://satcube.com/news/current-satcom-trends-shaping-the-future-of-connectivity>

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L'image de la ville vue par le cinéma

VILLE ET CINÉMA ONT TOUJOURS DIALOGUÉ ENTRE EUX, L'UN NOURRISSANT L'AUTRE, DONNANT AINSI UNE PERCEPTION AFFINÉE ET/OU CRITIQUE DE CHACUN.



TEXT
GRÉGORIE BAUBIET

Le cinéma est un fait urbain relativement récent. Inventé en ville dans le contexte de la Recherche Appliquée, il est né pour mettre en mouvement par succession une série d'images fixes. Plus que de parler de l'image de la ville vue par le cinéma, on pourrait encore plus précisément parler de l'image du cinéma vue par la ville, car elle est bien plus vieille et possède bien plus d'étapes dans son évolution.

Mais la ville, autant que le cinéma racontent une histoire. Une ville est un film, quelle qu'elle soit en ce sens qu'elle est une succession de séquences spatiales et narratives. Le plan est l'unité minimale du film, il faut plusieurs plans pour former une scène, d'autres encore pour former une séquence. Le mimétisme de vocabulaire va plus loin avec la notion d'échelle: au cinéma, l'échelle des plans est la manière de cadrer un personnage (plan moyen, plan américain, gros plan, etc.) ou un décor (plan général, grand ensemble, plan d'ensemble, etc.). Ces similitudes de langage peuvent et doivent influencer des similitudes dans la manière de traiter la ville, à savoir subjectivement. Prenons le parti d'un discours engagé!

Dans le genre du Western, la ville est avant tout un décor, une succession de façades alignées afin de mettre en valeur la tension entre personnages. La perspective est filmée pour asseoir les liens entre protagonistes. Certains équipements publics s'octroient une place incontournable: la rue devient le terrain d'accueil du duel, le bar est le lieu des combats autant que du repos, la gare est aussi désormais l'espace de toutes les autres directions. L'instance du pouvoir est celle de la prison contrôlée par le shérif... La codification des scènes influence directement le rôle joué par la ville. Les activités de la vie urbaine sont donc directement traduites dans le monde du western.

La ville qui se montrait très en mouvement dans les films muets devient petit à petit plus lente et plus tendue. Le Western spaghetti qui renouvelle le genre dans les années 60 amène aussi plus de complexité aux personnages qui ne sont plus uniquement bon ou mauvais, Il s'émancipe des stéréotypes de la ville. Son extension est désormais montrée, filmée et renforcée.

Arrêtons-nous maintenant sur les rapports de projection. Un personnage projette parfois sa personnalité directement sur la ville dans laquelle il évolue, modifiant irrémédiablement cette dernière. Le spectateur regarde donc à travers deux regards superposés: celui de la caméra et celui du protagoniste. Mais parfois, c'est la ville qui est personnifiée et qui nous montre un visage en rapport direct à l'humain: Fritz Lang imagine une *Métropolis* qui vit, respire et semble se nourrir des êtres humains devenus rouages de la machine infernale... La critique est forte et fortement ancrée dans son époque. Chaque ville a son histoire. Chaque ville du cinéma a son histoire exacerbée. Le fonctionnement de nos sociétés y est transcendé. Le cinéma apparaît aussi comme un vecteur de *Peur sur la ville* (film d'Henry Verneuil, 1975). Cet autre exemple pour dire aussi combien la culture avec laquelle on regarde la ville au cinéma nous influence. La subjectivité se retrouve donc du côté du cinéaste et du spectateur, en même temps que du côté de l'architecte et du maître d'ouvrage.

L'IMAGE FUTURISTE DE LA VILLE

Allons plus loin avec les films de science-fiction. Quel autre genre cinématographique autant que littéraire est rempli de symboles et donne une image futuriste de la ville? Elle y est lointaine et fantastique mais la trame et ses composants nous paraissent très proches, retrouvant les tensions, les peurs et les désirs que nous éprouvons dans le monde urbain réel. On y trouve aussi un paradoxe: la ville est perçue et montrée comme ordonnée et sauvage à la fois. De plus, elle devient soit un décor important, soit un personnage à part entière.



Ce film de 1927 dépeint une société organisée en 2 strates, dépendant du niveau de la ville dans laquelle les habitants vivent.

Dans *Star Wars*, la ville planète de Coruscant reflète l'étalement urbain. La ville gratte-ciel du *Cinquième élément* exploite et accentue son élévation. Toutes les scènes de *Blade Runner* ont lieu en fin de journée, la nuit, ou sous la pluie. La ville est le lieu sombre par excellence, éclairée de la main de l'homme. La couleur donne une vision de Los-Angeles devenue mégapole industrielle. L'espace intérieur se confond avec son environnement extérieur, il est tout aussi sombre et vaste. *Dark City* d'Alex Proyas est un bon exemple de film où la perte de mémoire est symbolisée par l'urbain. La ville est perpétuellement modifiée par des « étrangers », aussi bien dans sa forme que dans l'esprit des citoyens. Tous sont en fait le fruit d'expériences visant à comprendre l'âme humaine. Ainsi, un individu peut complètement changer de statut social après une transformation. Seul un homme ne subit pas ses changements, et il ne peut au départ qu'être le témoin de l'évolution des relations humaines et des codes sociaux qui sont bouleversés autour de lui. Il n'a donc plus de repères, sauf la territorialité à laquelle il se confronte au cours du film, il en expérimente alors les limites et ce n'est que le seul élément qui lui prouve qu'il existe réellement.

UNE VISION BIAISÉE

Le cinéma donne une vision subjective de la ville, c'est un instantané. Adapter la ville au cinéma, c'est la focaliser, la faire passer à travers l'œil de la caméra. C'est donc en donner une vision biaisée, toujours orientée dans le sens d'une histoire et d'une atmosphère, et finalement la vision de l'architecte ou de l'urbaniste doit être de la même valeur. Quelle chance d'avoir un tel outil à portée qui amplifie les constituants de l'urbain et qui prend parti. Quelle chance de pouvoir observer un des contextes d'exercice de l'architecture avec autant de recul ! Admirons la subjectivité du film, affirmons nos choix et nos points de vue. Soyons de ces acteurs engagés qui donnent plus qu'une simple lecture plate de la ville. Quelle chance de voir se questionner la ville sur son propre fonctionnement, de la même manière que le projet de l'architecte progresse par aller-retour ! Architecte, sois le réalisateur de ton bâtiment, va sans te retourner et regarde le fruit de tes pensées à travers le regard d'un autre ! Fais de ton bâtiment un film, qu'il appartienne aux autres car c'est son rôle, donne-lui vie et laisse-le vivre. Usager, sois aussi fin observateur devant l'architecture que tu peux l'être devant un film, mire le décor qui t'entoure, sois l'acteur de ta ville. //

L'île d'Ufenau

À LA DÉCOUVERTE D'UFENAU, LA PLUS GRANDE ÎLE DE SUISSE

TEXTE & PHOTOS
CARLA EDELENBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Même si la Suisse est connue comme un pays enclavé dans les montagnes, sans littoral, elle compte quand-même plus de 300 îles fluviales ou lacustres! La plupart de ces îles sont très petites et inhabitées. Il en a d'autres qui sont tellement intégrées dans leurs alentours qu'on ne les perçoit plus vraiment comme une île, par exemple l'île Rousseau baignée dans le Rhône entre la rive gauche et la rive droite de Genève. Ou il y en a qui sont devenues une presqu'île, comme l'île de Saint-Pierre au lac de Bienne.

En septembre dernier j'ai eu le plaisir de découvrir l'île d'Ufenau (aussi appelée Ufnau) dans le lac de Zurich, la plus grande île de Suisse : elle a une superficie de 11 hectares, mesure 470 mètres de long et 220 mètres de large. Des recherches en archéologie ont découvert que l'île était déjà habitée dans la préhistoire. Pendant l'époque romaine, il y avait un temple gallo-romain dont les fondations furent découvertes entre 1958 et 1968. Avec l'arrivée du christianisme au huitième siècle, une première église fut construite sur l'île, dédiée à

St. Martin. Au 10^e siècle, l'île devint le domicile de la duchesse de Souabe Reginlinde; selon la légende c'était son fils Adalrich qui y avait installé un ermitage. Elle avait fait rénover la chapelle et commencé la construction de l'église St. Pierre et Paul. Après sa mort en 958, elle fut enterrée dans l'abbaye d'Einsiedeln, qu'elle avait soutenue pendant sa vie avec des grandes donations. En 965, l'île fut donnée par l'empereur Otton 1er à l'abbaye d'Einsiedeln qui la détient toujours dans ses possessions.

En approchant l'île en bateau de ligne depuis Rapperswil, nous admirons au loin le clocher de l'église St. Pierre et Paul. En débarquant sur l'île nous suivons les autres touristes et arrivons rapidement à l'église. Nous sommes les seuls à nous y arrêter, tous les autres se précipitent vers le restaurant qui offre une jolie terrasse avec vue sur le lac. L'église a été terminée en 1141, et se trouve sur l'emplacement du temple gallo-romain. Le clocher date du 17^e siècle. À l'intérieur se trouvent des peintures murales qui datent d'entre le 12^e et le 17^e siècle et qui montrent St. Christophe, la duchesse Reginlinde et saint Adalrich.



Le vignoble d'Ufenau et l'église St. Pierre et Paul.



Exposition d'art devant
la chapelle St. Martin.

En face de l'église se trouve la chapelle St. Martin. À l'intérieur de cette chapelle il y a le sarcophage (créé en 1663) de St. Adalrich, qui fut révééré sur l'île à partir du 14^e siècle. Le sarcophage fut transféré de l'église à la chapelle en 2009. Il est vide, les ossements se trouvent à l'abbaye d'Einsiedeln depuis 1959. Les peintures murales, mieux préservées que dans l'église, datent d'entre le 14^e et le 17^e siècle. J'ai bien aimé la série de vierges sages et folles sur l'arche du chœur au milieu de la chapelle.

L'abbaye d'Einsiedeln organise chaque été une exposition d'art sur l'île, et en 2025 elle était dédiée à la paix. À l'extérieur des bâtiments, l'artiste Sybille Schlinder exposait ses sculptures de métal avec pour thème « Sur la piste de la parole ». La chapelle hébergeait l'exposition « Panorama de l'écriture » dans laquelle le Père Jean-Sébastien Charrière, moine dans le monastère d'Einsiedeln, montre le développement du système d'écriture latin en 37 tableaux puissants. D'ailleurs, en avril 2024, l'émission « Passe-moi les jumelles » a dédié un épisode à l'expression artistique et spirituelle du moine.

Il est vrai que la sérénité de l'île invite à la réflexion, à l'aventure de l'imagination historique. Nous sommes loin de la vie quotidienne trépidante. Même si le tour de l'île à pied ne prend pas plus de trente minutes, cela permet de profiter pleinement de la tranquillité. Déjà en 1927 l'île a été déclarée réserve naturelle pour ses rivages intacts. C'est pour cela que la baignade y est interdite. Une quarantaine d'espèces d'oiseaux nicheurs ont été dénombrés sur l'île et 4 espèces de chauves-souris. D'ailleurs, la navigation dans les eaux qui entourent l'île est aussi strictement réglementée et interdite dans les zones à l'est et au sud de l'île.

Mais l'île est aussi utilisée pour l'exploitation agricole : un petit mais très beau vignoble où le monastère cultive du pinot noir. Il y a même des vaches qui pâturent paisiblement. Au restaurant, on peut déguster le vin d'Ufenau, ainsi que d'autres vins des vignobles de l'abbaye d'Einsiedeln. En 2003 on a voulu démolir le restaurant existant pour le remplacer par un nouveau bâtiment dessiné par l'architecte bâlois Peter Zumthor. Mais l'autorisation a été refusée à cause du statut protégé de l'île qui ne permet pas de nouvelles constructions. L'auberge, qui date de 1681, a donc été rénovée et continue la tradition d'accueil en harmonie avec la nature et la spiritualité de l'île. Elle n'offre pas de chambres, mais si jamais, il y a des hôtels dans la belle ville de Rapperswil, d'où part le bateau de ligne pour Ufenau. //

SAVOIR +

Exposition
« art ufnau »



Ile d'Ufenau



L'esprit
de la lettre



Skeuomorphs

THE OLD IN THE NEW

TEXT
KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

Why does copying someone in on an email use “CC” or “BCC”, what does that stand for? Why does the “Settings” icon on a computer typically look like a cog wheel? Read on for the strange design features that persist long after the thing that they represent and a phenomenon for which there’s even a name.

Do you know the anecdote about the father who showed his son a 3¼ inch floppy disk and the millennial said, “Cool Dad, you’ve 3D printed the ‘save’ icon!”?

The floppy disk you see in computer applications today, referring to a storage media that hasn’t been in common use since the 1990’s, is in the same category as grabbing the waiter’s attention by miming the signing of a cheque at a restaurant; when was the last time you paid for a meal with a paper cheque? And yet you and the waiter understand one another perfectly, much better in fact than if you tried to mime the swiping of your credit card which is far more accurate today.

These are examples of skeuomorphs, when something arguably antiquated persists into the modern day, or the latest version of something, either because it feels familiar or it is deliberately copying patterns from before. Like the father and son above, these references can often long outlive their original time and place and hang around and pop up in the most amusing places.

Have you ever considered why the instrument panel on your car is called a “dashboard”, it traces back to the first horse drawn vehicles when a horizontal wooden board protected the driver from the mud thrown up when dashing along. The fact that the first motor-powered vehicles were built by former carriage makers meant that all sorts of horse-drawn features persisted as they carried their knowledge over to the new technology. Consider even the common use of the word “horsepower”!

And the practice is not new and didn’t need to wait for the digital age to become a recognised phenomenon. If you study the facade of Greek temples, you will see ornamental features called triglyphs, mutules, guttae, and modillions and all of these are mimicking, in stone, what these buildings looked like when they were built out of wood – copying the carved ends of beams and even the wooden pegs that would have held the joints in place.

Skeuomorphs often arise to maintain a sense of familiarity and continuity, consider that fact that you click on “CC” in your email program when copying someone into the message. This actually stands for “carbon copy” back from the days of inserting a sheet between two pieces of paper to trace through your writing on to a second sheet! A reference that is completely redundant in the digital age! “BCC” is blind carbon copy.

The origin of Skeuomorphs can be down to a whole range of reasons, however. In the 18th century when paper was handmade it used to feature a rough edge from the manufacturing process. As industrial techniques were developed and nice clean edges were possible, many manufacturers chose to deliberately set up their machines to create a jagged edge as that was associated with the higher quality hand-making process and could therefore be sold for a greater price! That particular skeuomorph did not survive into the 20th century but there are examples today of mass-produced items trying to look or behave like their hand-produced ancestors. How about modern linoleum that mimics wooden or stone floors?

The shutter click noise when you take a photo with a mobile phone, or the miniature tourist trains that are designed to look like steam trains, skeuomorphs are everywhere when you begin to look for them. Have you seen those modern bulbs that are designed to look like little candle flames? They are all little pieces of yesteryear that hang around to comfort us, trigger a response to something familiar, or charge more money! And like 3D printing the save icon or clicking on “CC” without any idea what it stands for, they can persist long after almost everyone has forgotten their meaning. //

Skeuomorphs: where the patterns of yesteryear persevere.
Click the “envelope” icon in your email box but when was the last time you licked an actual paper envelope?



The amazing australian outback

“BEING LOST IN AUSTRALIA GIVES YOU A LOVELY SENSE OF SECURITY.”
BRUCE CHATWIN, THE SONGLINES (1987)



TEXT & PHOTOS
ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

My wife and I are just back from 4 weeks in Australia, where we had been twice before, visiting different parts of the huge island continent (7,682,300 km sq. as compared to the US with its 9,145,593 Km sq. including Alaska and Hawaii). This time we went to the Opera in Sydney - twice - took the ferries, walked the 1.6 km Harbour Bridge, strolled in Kirribilli and Killara. We then flew to Western Australia, admired the vibrant and prosperous capital of Perth, its daring architecture, discovered the surrealistic pink lake at Port Gregory, the yellow desert known as the Pinnacles in the Nambung National Park, explored the Kalbarri National Park, the Murchison River Valley, the turquoise coast of Coral Bay, the UNESCO World heritage Ningaloo Reef near Exmouth¹, where we swam with whale sharks and turtles², etc. We also saw real hunchback whales, and when they did not surface, at least we saw them spout.

We hiked in the legendary outback in South Australia, Adelaide, Port Augusta, tasted the wine from Gawler, Barossa and Clare Valley, visited the Aboriginal sites around Wilpena Pound and the Flinders Range, flew over the now full Lake Eyre, Australia's largest lake (a salt lake that is mostly dry, but once every 15 or 20 years it fills up when torrential rains flood from the Northern Territories). We saw plenty of wildlife - not only kangaroos and wallabies, but also emus and an amazing number of weird birds - the iconic kookaburra, rainbow lorikeets, honeyeaters, ibis, galahs, cockatoos, bush turkeys, black swans, and the more common magpies, cormorants and seagulls. This time we did not see any snakes (in prior trips we had encountered venomous brown snakes in the Grampian National Park in Victoria). Now that it is winter in Australia, most snakes and other reptiles are under the ground hibernating. Neither did we see Koalas, who prefer to hang in the gum trees of Victoria and New South Wales, nor the fearsome 6-meter long salt water crocodiles (crocodile Dundee monsters) common in Darwin, Kakadu and Queensland, or the nightmarish “*fly-ing foxes*” (fruit bats), who prefer the weather in the warmer forests and the billabongs.



Flinders Ranges in Southern
Australia.



Pinnacles in the Nambung
National Park in Western Australia

Food in the outback is a mixed bag. They have “*bush tucker*” and other specialties. Do not try the paddy melons (*Citrullus colocynthis*), which are pretty for decoration, but bitter – not even the kangaroos like them. Australian avocados are splendid, and you get them in salads, sandwiches and sushi. Sweet potato is excellent, and accompanies well succulent Australian lamb. The Reuben sandwich (invented in Omaha, Nebraska) is quite popular in the outback. I tried three different kinds, but still prefer the New York Carnegie-deli variety. The Australian version is not Kosher, mixes corned meat with cheese, sauerkraut, Russian dressing etc. I find Kangaroo and Emu particularly delectable, and these fine meats are prepared in multiple ways, even served as pâté. Camel meat is cheaper – as there are approximately a million dromedaries (also known as feral camels) running in the wild, the greatest population of camels and dromedaries in the world. Live camels are exported to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Brunei, and Malaysia, where wild camels are prized as a delicacy. Australia’s camels are also exported as breeding stock for Arab camel racing stables. Saudi Arabians actually come to Australia to “*repatriate*” these noble animals that were imported into Australia in the 19th century and served the settlers and traders for transporting merchandise, until a wide railroad network was built, as well as highways criss-crossing the country, so popular with the “*road trains*”³ – trucks with two, three or even four trailers, making it very difficult to pass them on the road. At least they travel at the official maximum speed, so not too much temptation to pass them.

An absolute must for any visitor of the outback is a visit to the many aboriginal sites, caves and rocks with paintings and carvings by the First Nations of the continent. Let’s not forget that the first inhabitants of Australia – 60,000 years ago – were peoples who came from the Pacific islands, primarily Indonesia. Their heritage is visible all over and they have given names to so many places, including Uluru and Kata Tjuta⁴. The Adelaide Museum and the Sydney National Gallery also have remarkable collections of Aboriginal art, sculptures, paintings, weavings, shields, utensils. Lots to learn. The Aborigenes also have their own music, very rhythmic, and special musical instruments⁵, including the famed didgeridoo. Aboriginal musicians can be found in many unexpected places playing this intriguing wind instrument.

Particularly impressive for my wife and me were the Botanical Gardens of Adelaide and Sydney, with an incredible array of enormous trees, eucalyptus trees (called Gum trees in Australia), as well as unusual *Ficus macrophylla* and all sorts of fir trees native to Australia. If I were a young man, I would seriously consider migrating to Australia – an exuberant, lively, easy-going place. It’s pioneer country with a young spirit and lots of opportunities. The most typical Australian expression: “*no worries, mate!*” //

1 <https://misstourist.com/swimming-with-whale-sharks-ningaloo-reef-western-australia/>

2 <https://www.ningaloo-whalesharks.com/>

3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBKtTTQmvFs>

4 <https://uluru.gov.au/discover/highlights/uluru/>

5 <https://hellomusictheory.com/learn/australian-instruments/>

Cambodge

ANGKOR 3/3

TEXT & PHOTO
CLAUDE MAILLARD

Le drapeau cambodgien est facilement reconnaissable: unique en son genre, c'est le seul dans le monde qui comporte en son centre le dessin d'un édifice historique, le célèbre temple d'Angkor Wat qui fut autrefois la capitale de l'Empire khmer. Sa présence sur le drapeau national rappelle le riche patrimoine culturel du Cambodge et symbolise la fierté que ses habitants ont de leur histoire et de leur héritage.

Rarement un empire aura laissé à la postérité des vestiges aussi spectaculaires que les temples d'Angkor. Situés à 7 km au nord de Siem Reap, au cœur d'une forêt luxuriante, proches du lac Tonlé Sap, ils sont de vibrants témoins de la grandeur de l'Empire khmer qui dominait l'Asie du Sud-Est médiéval. A son apogée, la ville comptait 750 000 habitants; c'était alors l'une des plus grandes et belles cités sur terre. Depuis 1992, le site qui constitue la principale attraction touristique au Cambodge est classé au patrimoine mondial par l'UNESCO.

Dédié à la divinité Vishnou, Angkor Wat est sans aucun doute le plus emblématique des temples du lieu. Mais il ne représente qu'une infime partie des 200 autres qu'en quatre siècles de gloire les souverains khmers ont dispersés sur plus de 400 km². S'en détachent une vingtaine de sanctuaires majeurs, tous très différents les uns des autres. Énigmatiques, romantiques, imposants, tous célèbrent à leur manière le culte des dieux hindous et de Bouddha. Plus ou moins engoutis par la végétation, dont les arbres fromagers qui se lovent sur les pierres anciennes, ils donnent l'impression aux visiteurs de découvrir les lieux tels qu'ils ont été laissés des siècles plus tôt. L'alliance entre l'architecture khmère et la jungle sauvage apporte une atmosphère unique, magique et fascinante.

LAC TONLÉ SAP, SOURCE DE VIE

Tonlé Sap se traduit littéralement par « la grande rivière d'eau douce » ou « le grand lac » et ce système hydrologique est vital au Cambodge (voir le précédent numéro du *newSpecial*). C'est en effet un site d'une grande importance écologique, économique, sociale et culturelle. L'écosystème du Tonlé Sap est composé par de nombreuses espèces aquatiques et tout un éventail de biodiversité, abritant notamment de nombreuses colo-

nies d'oiseaux. La mangrove, forêt alluviale qui borde le lac, constitue aussi un endroit idéal pour l'élevage de poissons dont 300 espèces ont été répertoriées. Le Tonlé Sap est considéré comme la zone de pêche la plus productive du monde, fournissant la moitié du poisson consommé au Cambodge. Tel un cœur gigantesque, le lac se gonfle et se vide au rythme des saisons, laissant des dépôts de sédiments favorables pour l'agriculture et irriguant les campagnes alentour qui se couvrent plusieurs fois par an d'un vert tapis de rizières. 90% des habitants de la région gagnent ainsi leur vie de la pêche et du travail de la terre.

Mais la grande particularité du lac Tonlé Sap - plus grande étendue d'eau douce d'Asie du Sud-Est - est qu'il est habité. En effet, plusieurs communautés, principalement vietnamiennes, s'y sont formées et vivent soit dans des maisons sur pilotis, soit dans des villages flottants. Les commerces et les habitations de ces villages hors du commun se déplacent sur le lac selon son niveau. Il existe deux localités proches de Siem Reap dont celle de Prek Toal où, accueillis chez l'habitant, nous pourrions vivre son quotidien sur l'eau. Comme tous les villageois, il ne peut compter que sur le bateau pour subsister et le lac, telle une fourmilière géante, grouille d'embarcations en tous genres.

L'APOGÉE DE L'ART KHMER

Retour à Siem Reap, petite ville attractive et accueillante, l'occasion de pouvoir assister à un festival de danse Apsara autrefois réservée aux rois khmers et à leur cour. L'opportunité également de pouvoir nous initier à la préparation de plats typiques aux côtés d'un chef cambodgien avant la visite du Musée national d'Angkor qui nous permettra de mieux situer les principaux temples dans leurs contextes historique et culturel.

Oubliés des hommes, les temples d'Angkor étaient enfouis depuis des siècles sous une végétation luxuriante jusqu'à ce qu'un explorateur français, Henri Mouhot, les redécouvre fin 1859 et les fasse connaître au monde entier.

Angkor ne s'est pas faite en un jour. Du IX^e au XV^e siècle, chaque souverain fit construire son propre temple d'État, symbole de son règne et de son pouvoir. La société khmère se transforme en profond, au rythme de la construction des villes-sanctuaires et de la montée en puissance du royaume.





Niché au cœur du lac Tonlé Sap, le village flottant de Prek Toal s'adapte au rythme des saisons.

Hindouiste à l'origine, Angkor a embrassé le bouddhisme mahayana sous le règne de Jayavarman VII, le fondateur d'Angkor Thom. Après un bref retour à l'hindouisme, la cité se convertit plus tard au bouddhisme theravada. Il ne reste rien des demeures et des palais construits en bois de la grande cité. Celles des dieux, édifiées en pierre, sont les seules à être parvenues jusqu'à nous. Parmi les plus remarquables, au cœur de la cité royale d'Angkor Thom, les temples de Bayon - à la décoration d'une exceptionnelle richesse - et de Baphuon - à l'architecture monumentale en forme de pyramide - font partie des monuments les plus emblématiques du Cambodge. Temple mystérieux, envahi par la jungle, Ta Prohm est unique avec les racines massives des arbres géants - âgés de plus de 600 ans - qui s'entrelacent avec les murs de pierre. Premiers temples érigés par les dirigeants de l'Empire khmer, Bakong et Phnom Bakheng se distinguent par leurs imposants édifices de forme pyramidale à plusieurs niveaux. Construit en 961, l'imposant temple Prè Rup marque le retour de la capitale khmère à Angkor et symbolise la renaissance architecturale et la grandeur de la région. Avec ses murs recouverts de racines, à l'atmosphère mystérieuse, moins fréquenté, le temple

de Preah Khan offre une visite paisible, loin de la foule. Au charme délicat et à l'architecture raffinée, le temple de Banteay Srei est réputé pour être l'un des joyaux de l'art khmer du X^e siècle pour ses décors finement sculptés en grès rose. Enfin, Angkor Wat, le chef-d'œuvre de la civilisation khmère.

Au XV^e siècle, la cité khmère est en déclin, principalement dû à des guerres avec le royaume d'Ayutthaya - l'actuelle Thaïlande -, mais aussi suite à des conditions climatiques difficiles. Plusieurs théories avancent l'idée que le royaume aurait perdu le contrôle de l'eau, ressource vitale lors d'une grande période de sécheresse. Angkor est délaissée au profit de la ville de Phnom Penh où le pouvoir est transféré à partir du XVI^e siècle.

ANGKOR WAT, UN MONUMENT D'EXCEPTION

Angkor Wat, le joyau du Cambodge et l'un des sites les plus importants du patrimoine mondial, est un lieu qui ne cesse d'émerveiller. Temple le mieux préservé d'Angkor, il est un témoignage éblouissant de l'ingéniosité khmère et de son importance historique. Initialement construit comme temple hindouiste, il est devenu un symbole national du Cambodge. Unique, irréel, fascinant, le plus impressionnant des temples du parc archéologique fut le temple d'État du roi Suryavarman II (1113-1150). Sa construction, au début du XII^e siècle, prit 30 ans.

Angkor Wat est remarquable pour son design incomparable. Le complexe, édifié sur trois niveaux séparés par des cours intérieures pavées, est entouré de douves larges de 200m qui le ceignent, dessinant un rectangle de 1300m sur 1500m de côté. Elles symbolisent l'océan cosmique sur lequel s'étend le continent mythique Jambudvipa, endroit où se situe notre terre dans la cosmographie de l'hindouisme, du bouddhisme et du jaïnisme. Son plan au sol est conçu avec une précision impressionnante, reflétant les principes de l'astronomie et de la géométrie sacrée. Les cinq tours centrales du temple, représentant les cinq sommets du Mont Meru - la montagne sacrée où séjournent les dieux - dominent le paysage et offrent une vue spectaculaire sur les environs. Les bas-reliefs qui ornent les murs racontent des histoires épiques tirées du Mahabharata et du Ramayana, deux textes sacrés de l'hindouisme.

Angkor Wat est le plus grand des temples et le plus grand monument religieux du monde. La majesté de l'ensemble, l'harmonie des proportions, la finesse des détails, la richesse de l'ornementation historiée : tout concourt à en faire un monument d'exception. //

Monaco

UNE PRINCIPAUTÉ TOURNÉE VERS LA MER 2/2

Enclave dans le département français des Alpes-Maritimes, limitrophe sur 5469 m des communes de Beausoleil, Cap-d'Ail, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin et La Turbie, la Principauté de Monaco possède également près de 4 kilomètres de côtes sur le rivage méditerranéen qui ont été pendant très longtemps l'accès le plus utilisé pour la desservir jusqu'à l'arrivée du chemin de fer en 1867.

En effet, le relief escarpé qui surplombe l'espace monégasque rend très difficile l'ouverture de routes. La voie romaine Julia Augusta, tracée sur la ligne de crête et matérialisée à La Turbie par le Trophée qui commémorait la victoire d'Auguste sur les peuplades celto-ligures, demeura longtemps la seule voie carrossable parmi les chemins muletiers rejoignant Monaco. C'est donc par la mer que les garnisons génoises ont débarqué en 1215 (voir le numéro précédent du *newSpecial*) pour édifier des fortifications sur le rocher avant d'occuper les lieux.

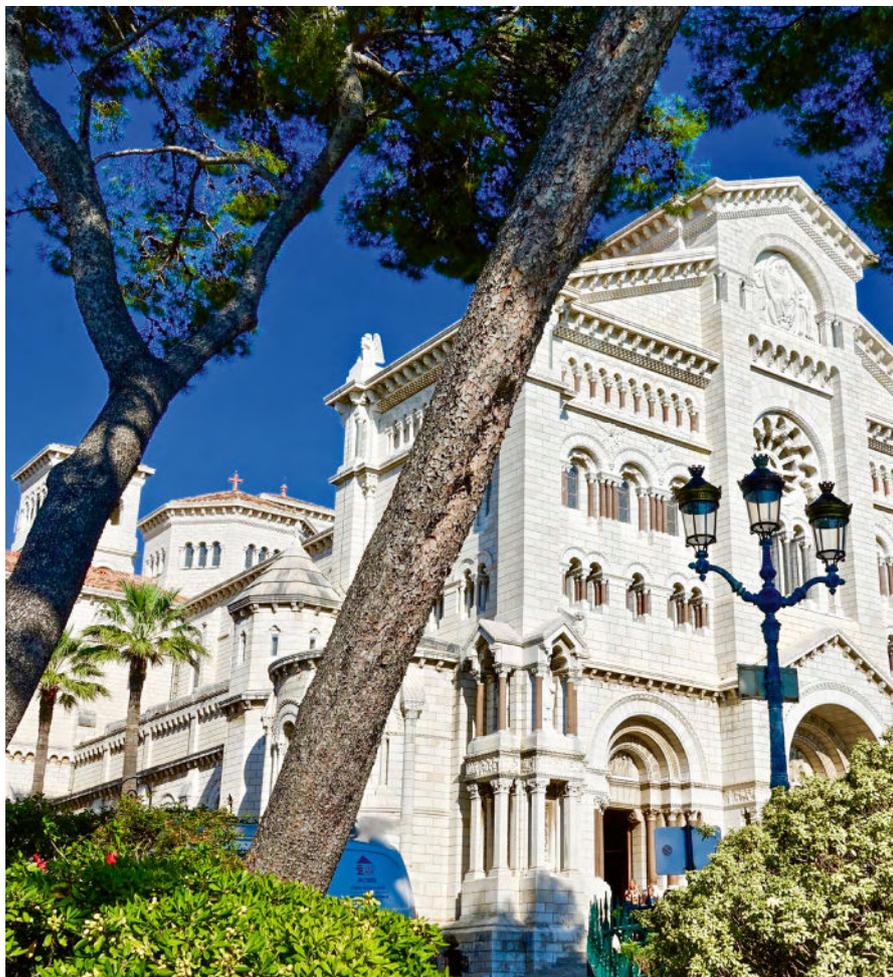
La révolution des transports au début du XX^e siècle - développement du réseau ferroviaire et construction des premières routes - va permettre à Monaco de mettre en valeur la douceur remarquable de son climat et de favoriser la venue d'une clientèle étrangère. Pour la petite histoire, l'amélioration du réseau routier de Monaco est en grande partie due à un citoyen Suisse. En 1902, alors qu'il officiait en tant que médecin sur le rocher, Ernest Guglielminetti a été informé qu'Albert Ier ne supportait plus de respirer la poussière des routes de sa ville. Pour cela, le Valaisan lui proposa d'utiliser le goudron résiduel de la production de l'usine à gaz locale pour recouvrir les voies empierrées de la Principauté, exauçant ainsi les souhaits du Prince.

Tout l'espace que la nature proposait a été rapidement occupé par une urbanisation galopante : palaces, magasins de luxe, villas de rêve et casino sortent de terre. Et comme aucune possibilité d'agrandissement ne se présentait côté continent, c'est vers la mer qu'il a fallu obligatoirement se tourner. C'est ainsi que plus d'un quart du territoire monégasque actuel a été gagné sur la Méditerranée au prix de travaux pharaoniques.

L'urbanisme et Monaco, une belle histoire d'amour. La Principauté de Monaco, réputée pour son luxe et son cadre exceptionnel, est composée de quartiers aux identités diverses, allant du glamour de Monte-Carlo - célèbre pour son Casino et son Opéra, centre de vie mondaine, ses restaurants étoilés et qui accueille le Grand Prix de Formule 1 - à l'authenticité de La Condamine, endroit historique de Monaco situé entre le Port Hercule et le rocher, très animé avec son marché typique de la Place d'Armes où les Monégasques aiment à se retrouver. Chacun de ses quartiers, comme Fontvieille avec son port moderne qui jouxte le stade Louis II, ou Monaco-Ville, cœur historique aux ruelles pittoresques perché sur le rocher qui abrite le Palais princier, la cathédrale et le Musée océanographique, contribue à la richesse et à l'unicité de ce territoire prestigieux.

Réputé pour ses plages et son front de mer bordé de restaurants et de cafés, là où se situe le Grimaldi Forum - centre de conférences et d'expositions renommé -, Le Larvotto combine détente et culture, dans une atmosphère de vacances tout au long de l'année. Pour les amoureux de la nature, situé sur les hauteurs de Monaco à proximité du Musée d'anthropologie préhistorique, le quartier du Jardin Exotique regroupe une grande variété de plantes succulentes et cactées venues des quatre coins du monde. Il offre un cadre de vie agréable et tranquille, tout comme Les Moneghetti, quartier résidentiel situé loin de l'effervescence des autres zones de Monaco avec en prime une vue panoramique sur la mer. Malgré sa petite taille, le Ravin de Sainte-Dévote et son église incarnent une part importante de l'histoire religieuse et des traditions monégasques. Par tradition, le jour de leur mariage, la Princesse de Monaco Grace Kelly, épouse du Prince Rainier III, puis la Princesse Charlène Wittstock, épouse du Prince Albert II, ont déposé leur bouquet de mariage dans la chapelle Sainte-Dévote pour remercier la sainte patronne de la Principauté. Quartier prisé pour ses tours résidentielles modernes, dont la célèbre Tour Odéon, l'une des plus hautes et prestigieuses d'Europe, La Rousse Saint-Roman offre un cadre de vie urbain tout en restant proche des plages et des espaces verts. Enfin Mareterra-Anse du Portier est le dernier-né des quartiers construits sur des terres gagnées sur la Méditerranée. Modèle de durabilité environnementale, avec des espaces verts, des résidences de luxe et des infrastructures modernes respectant des normes écologiques strictes, il symbolise l'avenir de Monaco.

Implantée sur le rocher, la cathédrale au style roman-byzantin a été construite entre 1875 et 1903 sur les ruines de l'église Saint-Nicolas.



Au pied du rocher, le quartier de Fontvieille avec le stade Louis II, berceau des matchs de l'AS Monaco pouvant accueillir 20 000 spectateurs.



Les carabiniers de la Garde du Palais qui veillent à la sécurité de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince souverain sont relevés chaque jour à 11h55.

CAPITALE MONDIALE DU SPORT 2025

Sportive, Monaco l'est autant par nature que par vocation. Adossée à la montagne, tournée vers la Méditerranée, la Principauté s'est construite dans un décor qui, au-delà de la contemplation, invite au dépassement. Ce relief spectaculaire, entre ciel et mer, inspire, stimule, invite à se hisser toujours plus haut. A Monaco, l'effort est une seconde nature et la performance, un plaisir cultivé au quotidien. Cette passion sportive, cette culture de l'engagement, la famille princière en est la première garante. Du Prince Rainier III, féru de sport automobile, à son fils le Prince Albert II, ancien olympien en bobsleigh, en passant par la Princesse Charlene, nageuse de haut niveau aux JO d'Atlanta, la fibre sportive est omniprésente sur le rocher. Un héritage qui remonte jusqu'à Jack Kelly, grand-père maternel du Prince, champion olympique d'aviron en 1920 et 1924.

Monaco, désignée en début d'année « Capitale mondiale du sport 2025 » organise chaque année un tournoi de tennis professionnel qui attire depuis 1928 les meilleurs tennismen à travers le monde. Le club de football historique fondé en 1924 qui évolue en Ligue 1 et qui a notamment eu dans son équipe Kylian Mbappé – l'un des meilleurs joueurs de sa génération – célèbre cette année les 40 ans de son stade Louis II. Le nautisme est également à l'honneur, tout comme le sport automobile qu'il serait inimaginable de ne pas citer : que serait Monaco sans la F1, ou plutôt que serait la F1 sans Monaco ? Pour les aficionados de Formule 1, le légendaire circuit de Monaco installé au cœur de la ville est le plus époustouflant qu'il puisse exister. La compétition est suivie par plus de 1 milliard de téléspectateurs dans 170 pays. Une audience exceptionnelle pour une course mythique. Depuis 1929, les bolides avalent les 3,34 km du circuit tracé dans les rues étroites de la Principauté avec une vitesse dépassant aujourd'hui par endroits les 285 km/h. Inscrite au premier championnat du monde de Formule 1 en 1950, l'épreuve monégasque verra Juan Manuel Fangio décrocher la victoire sur Alfa Romeo. Et en juin dernier, Lando Norris au volant de sa McLaren-Mercedes a pulvérisé le record du temps au tour le plus rapide avec un chrono de 1'09"954.

L'Automobile-Club de Monaco qui incarne l'excellence du sport automobile et l'élégance monégasque organise aussi d'autres compétitions de renommée mondiale. Au calendrier, le Rallye de Monte-Carlo – moderne, historique et électrique – ainsi que le Grand Prix de Formule 1 historique et électrique.

Monaco est également réputée pour ses voitures de luxe qui sillonnent les rues de la Principauté. La place du Casino et de l'Hôtel de Paris, lieu emblématique où les propriétaires de ces supercars adorent venir exhiber leurs bolides, attire foule de curieux et de photographes venus juste pour le plaisir des yeux. Autre endroit pour découvrir des autos rares et prestigieuses, le Musée implanté dans le quartier de Fontvieille qui réunit la collection de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Albert II, musée fondé en 1993 par son père, le Prince Rainier III.

Bénéficiant d'un ensoleillement exceptionnel, Monaco connaît des hivers doux et des étés sans excès de chaleur. Ce climat, méditerranéen par excellence, fait de la Principauté un site de prestige où la vie est agréable tout au long des saisons. //

Poems from WHO Poetry Garden



TEXTS MS RENUKA MUNIANDI
WHO, KUALA LUMPUR
PHOTO ISTOCK

UNSPOKEN WORDS

My mother never told me
That I could fly with no wings
That the floor will hold me back
If I don't reach for the sky.

I fear the lake will swallow me whole
If I kiss my reflection in the water.
A silky breeze caressed the trees,
A symphony sparked,
Melodies of Mozart they start.

The fallen leaves danced in circles
Forming words as they twirled
"Freedom is in the mind" they said
Now wasn't that music to my ears...

A strange lady appeared
She locked her focus to my eyes
No movement of the lips
Yet a distinct voice I hear.

She spoke in tongues
She disappeared
I froze for a while
Those words became clear.

*"Give me your fears my child
Leave your burdens, be free.
I may not be here in real life
I will watch over you from the sky".*

My phone rang very loud
"Come home now" I'm told
My mother had said her goodbye
She is now free in the sky.

Unwritten words etch into stone
Unspoken words echo into time
Delivered from deep inside
I keep them safe in my soul.

Seasons come and go
Winds change its course
Unspoken words shall not fade
This I carry always.

I sometimes call upon the sky
I speak, I laugh, I cry,
Whom with, remains unknown
My immortal confidante: in you I trust.

TWO TINY TOTS

Inez and Izen, the neighbour's twins,
The two 6-year-olds,
She has curly-wurly hair,
And he a skinny little lad.

Chocolates and sweets keep them happy,
Don't all kids?
The bliss, the joy,
When I give them treats.

Not all mornings shine bright,
Some days, slow and sleepy.
Others, an excited wave bye-bye,
Off to kindly they go.

The curiosity, the observations,
The complaints, the questions,
"What are you doing, are you working?"
"Do you have sweets?"
"Inez broke my pencil!"

Hop, run and climb all day,
That's how they play.
One minute they laugh, next they fight
So the crying starts.

It's a joy to see the twins,
Tiny hands, tiny feet,
The smile they bring,
Immeasurably big.

A sweet dessert they made with mummy,
And brought some for my tummy.
The proud kiddos, the sweet jello,
Each day, a new story they bring.

Can they stay six forever?

TIME BALLOON (TO MY SISTER BILJANA)

Travel is one of the best medicines for many diseases. The art of living is to embrace the entire planet, love and care for your loved ones, and uncover the treasures of the world hidden behind seven mountains and seven oceans. This poem is dedicated to my sister as a birthday present and is an idea for all who want to offer something special to their loved ones.

On the eve of your birthday
I open the vault
of colorful remembrances,
I watch through the window
of silk memories,
I pull the rabbit out of the hat
to make you laugh
and sow the flower of joy.

I gave you handfuls of trinkets
as gifts,
candies, booklets,
scarves, gloves,
spectacle of virtuoso ice skaters,
surprises of every kind
the most delicious cakes
but never before
have I given you
big time balloon
in which you will find everything
you have ever dreamed of,
the trip around the world,
across Timisoara and Bremen,
Beijing and Yemen,
Bremgarten and Iceland,
all the way to New Zealand,
the United States and Canada,
London and Granada,
African Horn,
Tanzania and Togo,
with smiling faces,
warm,
and then in a blink of an eye,
to the North Pole
and Golf stream
where birthday song is heard.

So I am sending you the ticket
Come as soon as possible
to visit your elder sister
let's hop to Java and Sumatra,
and then in the balloon with no time,
let's go where fragrance of coffee takes us
and artistic inclinations,
at the squares full of flowers,
where fountains play
quadrilles to good mornings
and lanterns sing
lullabies to travellers,
dreamers and seekers,
those who search for cheerful times
in busy streets,
overflowing with
New Year's cards
and magic little boxes
which glitter under Chinese lanterns
of first snowflakes.

So come as soon as possible
to trek
on the path of youth
from Florence to Nice,
across City of Light
to most distant river of fancy,
in the balloon with no time,
we will fly,
laugh without care
to everything
that the years
full of obligations
tried to take away from us.

LE BALLON DU TEMPS (À MA SŒUR BILJANA)

Le voyage est l'un des meilleurs remèdes contre de nombreuses maladies. L'art de vivre consiste à embrasser la planète entière, à aimer et à prendre soin de ses proches, et à découvrir les trésors du monde cachés derrière sept montagnes et sept océans. Ce poème est dédié à ma sœur en guise de cadeau d'anniversaire et s'adresse à tous ceux qui souhaitent offrir quelque chose de spécial à leurs proches.

A la veille de ton anniversaire
des mémoires colorées
j'ouvre le coffre
je regarde par la fenêtre
des souvenirs soyeux que je t'offre,
Je sors un lapin d'un chapeau
pour te faire rire aux éclats
et pour semer la fleur de la joie.

Je t'ai fait cadeau
d'innombrables babioles,
bonbons, livrets,
écharpes, gants, fioles
spectacle de virtuoses patineuses,
toutes les surprises qui soient
et des gâteaux à s'en lécher les doigts
mais jamais encore
un gros ballon du temps
dans lequel tu trouveras, heureuse
tout ce dont tu as rêvé,
un voyage autour du monde
en partant d'Etoy
et de Veysonnaz
via Genève et Lausanne,
Pékin, Tokyo et Taïwan,
Bremgarten et l'Islande
jusqu'en Nouvelle-Zélande,
en Amérique, à Bagdad,
à Londres et à Grenade,
dans la Corne de l'Afrique,
en Tanzanie, au Mozambique,
dans le monde entier souriant,
chaleureux,
puis dans un instant
jusqu'au Pôle nord
et en Antarctique
où l'on entend
de ta fête le chant.

C'est pourquoi je t'envoie un ticket
Viens dès que possible
chez ta sœur aînée
nous irons faire un tour de là
jusqu'à Java et Sumatra
dans un ballon en-dehors du temps
où nous emmènera l'arôme du café
et des aspirations artistiques rêvées
sur les places les plus fleuries
où les fontaines jouent
aux bons matins des quadrilles
et où les lanternes chantent
des berceuses aux voyageurs,
les rêveurs et les chercheurs
des temps joviaux,
de rues animées
submergées
de cartes de vœux de Nouvelle Année
et de cassettes magiques
qui brillent sous les lampions
des premiers flocons.

Et donc viens dès que possible
empruntons
les chemins de notre jeunesse entière
jusqu'à Florence et Nice
en passant par la Ville Lumière
jusqu'aux fleuves de la folie
les plus éloignés
dans un ballon en-dehors du temps
nous allons voler
en riant insoucieusement
de tout dont nous avons pu
être privées
par les années des
« j'ai dû », « je dois » et « je devrai ».

CINEMA - A PERSPECTIVE CHANGER

Film festival*, changed my perspective of life,
How miserable it was to wait
for one's own death,
One yearned to be with near one at the end,
And she died in her own way
in the "Room Next Door".

Two professors were attracted to their students,
Young blood made them smile and be wild,
They returned home, were accepted by own,
It felt they were like a "Freshly Cut Grass".

The country was subdued,
and people oppressed,
A Matured man took the mantle
to train young blood,
He fought against opposition
and loved a foreigner,
She rescued the kids and became
their "Teacher".

A widow narrated of her first love of youth,
Her married life with kid was blank and dull,
She felt the manly touch in her twilight years,
And fulfilled "Memories of her burning body".

Corona hit the world with a big surprise,
People lost jobs, sanity, with mundane scrolls,
Some changed lifestyles while others didn't,
Yet love blossomed in "The Suspended Time".

Women are veiled and covered like jewels,
Some revolted to live on their own terms,
Men disliked questions, for fear of losing power,
Yet women prevailed as freedom's "Witness".

Equity and equality are mere words we hear,
Girls and children are abducted
for men's pleasure,
Authorities spin tales to protect
their thick skins,
Yet some truthful officials won at "Algiers".

Jeonim painted by the quiet streams,
Her uncle joined to direct the theatrical,
Her uncle and boss clicked as a couple,
To her dismay, love blossomed "By the Stream".

Young blood outpoured manliness in full,
His honey-coated words preyed pretty to fall,
Thought he is invincible and strong,
Until tamed by a girl in 'Cupid saw the Star'.

Nobody knows what goes inside your mind,
Nobody can help beat the murmurs inside,
Traditions and customs were meant to protect,
Not to exploit or be heartless to the "Other Side".
Name is your identity, what
about your surname?

Can you change or disassociate from its claim?
History is a story, often skewed and untrue,
Revelation brings truth be it Kalhor or "Shahid"!

A devout judge had an adorable family,
They were caught in the political unrest,
Questioning lead to revolt against the alpha,
Stood on her own in 'The seed of the sacred fig'.

A passionate actress, a mother so grand,
Dwelt in her past, in a nostalgic world,
Three generations struggled intertwined,
Their tumultuous bond survived in "Malu".

A lonely worker waited for her husband,
Found solace in one, who couldn't accept her,
Wanted to abort the unwanted "with a needle",
Saw heartless deaths of many newborns.

A reputed man was arrested then disappeared,
His wife took control and raised five kids,
Her determination led
government to accept his death,
At 85 with Alzheimer's,
she smiled 'I am still here'.

A mother caught between love and nightmares,
Her son returned from war, with a veiled wife,
Darkness and death followed the veiled woman,
Politics kills life, and questions
"Who do I belong to?".

* International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK)

RED MELODY

Keech keech screeched the tiny instrument,
Strings and bow fought despising each other,
Chin wouldn't rest, nor fingers found rest,
I wondered, why is it queen of instruments?

The six-stringed fret caught my fascination,
Strumming was fancy,
strings danced in cacophony,
Tears ran through as my fingers were wobbly,
Without any option, half-heartedly I learnt.

Practice transformed screeching into melody,
Fingers sensed, ears followed the harmony,
Hands coordinated, feet tapped in cadence,
It turned out to be a quiet friend in sadness.

Years later, the owner took it back,
Felt lonely, missed hearty humming track,
Days later, the owner brought a red instrument,
Wondered, who will tap it musically in delight.

Shadowed the master as he assembled it,
He signaled me to play my favorite song,
Hesitatingly I touched the red beauty,
Melody grooved life was back in exuberance.



DEEP INSIGHT OF MY "ANGRY FRIEND"

He is a spoiled child, He is a stubborn child,
Though the world may think as one,
He is a king to me

Oh! Yes, even a small word of affection,
Is like elixir to my life
In a person who is as hard as stone,
Only I can explore the God within him

Like you see a spark turning into a flame,
But I can only see him as soft as cotton flower,

In the red eyes, you may feel his anger,
But only I perceive the tears he hides
in those eyes

You may know the wrath,
he expresses with his beard,
But I know the smile, that is hidden
beneath his Mustache

Like a tiger in the forest,
you may know the roaring power,
But only I know the peace,
that he finds after the war.

CHILDREN: A HEAVENLY BLESSING IN OUR LIVES

Children, like gods, are pure and kind,
Their hearts untouched by malice, undefined.

In their innocence, they teach us to forgive,
Their love is where the divine begins to live.

Forgiveness is God's virtue, they say,
The wisdom of the ages, guiding our way.

To forgive is divine, to heal with grace,
A lesson found in every child's face.

When we're born, our hearts are wide and
bright,
Untainted by the world's harsh light.

Within us all, there's a spark of the divine,
A gift so pure, it cannot decline.

But as we grow, and pride begins to rise,
The light of the soul fades, obscured by lies.

Yet in the child, that spark remains,
Unshaken by the world's harsh strains.

The sun shines bright, yet clouds may veil,
Our wisdom, like the sun, may fail.

But as the winds blow, the clouds part away,
So too, does anger give way to a brighter day.

As they grow, they learn, they rise,
But in their hearts, no deceit lies.

The elders may quarrel and falter,
But in the child, there's no altar.

They are the blessed ones, free from deceit,
The purest souls, in whom divinity meets.

To forgive, to love, to always see,
The divine light in you and me.

Children, like gods, are pure and kind,
A reflection of the divine, eternally entwined.

TEXTS DR SHYAM ADAPA KUMAR,
WHO SEARO

SONGS OF BENGAL: LOST FOREVER

The essence of the music from Bengal is powerful and emotional - provoking thoughts of freedom, mystic, emotions, and so much more. Corners cannot be turned pages cannot go unread and the beats cannot remain unreflected in the tapping of your sandals or boots when the music fills the air. A cursory understanding of the poems or songs will not do if one doesn't quite catch the reality or the background of the music or the lyrics and though I have forever remained entrenched in songs from various genre and world music, songs crafted from Bengali language is the most engaging in sentiments, wisdom, fun and every emotion one can ever think of. Boat men's songs or those reflecting seasonal flings or the folk music that keeps on rattling through my subconscious is kept alive when I delve into my inner soul and craftily fish out the one or two liners befitting the best handiworks and paintings put up by some of my school friends across the social media. And it felt really good when few of the other childhood mates called me up and told they felt wonderful that the songs I provided were so appropriate and they could literally be back on those lyrics and rhythm of those yester years beauties.

Lyrics and beats are these days not well done. The language has been sidelined and convoluted with news readers and social media displaying wrong spellings mixed up with other alphabets for seemingly no reason has harmed the present generation who perhaps have been forced to develop a penchant towards fashion shows and bowling alleys instead of growing an avid interest towards Bengali singing contests or elocution hours. Several poets and scholars have come from various walks of life contributing towards the soulful bouquet of music Schools don't hold the Bengali language classes any longer because it seems jobs are hard to come by if one goes for learning the language!

And so, when I hear some deviant lyrics spellings or musical beats or a floundering voice trying to create the same magic I resist in my own small ways to keep the sanctity of the beautifully told songs the articulate rhythm which reaches a crescendo only when it is done perfectly. No amount or remakes or remixes gets on with the same golden voices that once echoed across the festivities and events. The musicians the music the wordings and the tepid parts of the songs flew into one another like

when the small streams flow into the rushing of a stream and then onto a gushing of waterfalls through the mountainous tracks filling the oceans with the vast expanse of ever growing ever filling choppy waters.

None of the music channels now care to explain about the songs or the background of the music any longer! There is no mention of the artists or the history of the lyric's writer or the music composer at all anywhere - so it does feel empty and seems there is an urgent need to revive restore revamp and regale these unique pieces of Bengali moods, music, thoughts, perceptions and bridging the yawning chasm of art culture context and leisure.

There is something for everyone every mood and every thought that one can ever think of articulating in simple lyrics and poems, rhythm and beats, collating different syllables and coming up with such enchanting music from Bengal.

Hope to catch up sometime at some event somewhere out there - where many may be thirsting for such a melting pot of absolute bliss.

A RARE REFLECTION OF JOY

Art Culture Craft and Leisure are all
a bundle of joy always for me
It has been for I me myself
Having tried for so long to get others see and
feel and touch inside in the same way
I learnt that very few may be around to get the
same emotional vibes or that raw satisfaction
That we touch the same chords in us around us
Inexplicably intertwined in moments within
Creating a vision and an indomitable spiritual
escape into the flight to fantasy
That helps us survive, feel the strength soar,
keep hopes alive and a very strong will
That seeks mutual respect understanding
dignity and an uncanny grace
that delivers the best

The Joy is felt inside
That joy is profound and deep
The emotions run true and within the veins
Economizing the best interests
Loving own self
With a deep respect understanding and yes,
a fine strategy

Like a hopeful bird in a cage - laughing with the
pink and blue and golden mystical butterflies

LA SÉRÉNITÉ

C'est un poème qui nous invite, simplement, à respirer et à trouver un peu de calme au cœur des épreuves. Par l'attention à soi, aux petits instants et aux gestes de la vie, il offre un moment de réconfort et de paix intérieure, rappelant que, même après des moments difficiles, la sérénité demeure l'art de dominer ses inquiétudes.

Respirez profondément,
laissez vos épaules se détendre,
Le monde peut attendre, juste un instant,
pour vous comprendre.
Chaque souffle chasse un peu de fatigue,
Chaque battement du cœur murmure :
« Tu es ici, tu existes ».

Les jours ont été lourds, les nuits parfois froides,
Mais vos mains tiennent encore
la chaleur de la vie.
Regardez autour : le ciel, la lumière, un sourire,
Même petit, il peut rallumer
la flamme de l'espoir.

Fermez les yeux, écoutez votre souffle,
Il raconte l'histoire de votre courage,
de vos efforts.
Chaque respiration est un pas vers la paix,
Chaque soupir emporte un peu
de ce poids qui vous oppresse.

Souvenez-vous des rires partagés,
Des gestes tendres, des mains
qui se sont tendues vers vous.
Ces instants fragiles sont des trésors cachés
Que le temps n'efface pas,
même dans la tempête.

Inspirez la sérénité, laissez le calme vous remplir,
Comme l'eau douce d'un ruisseau,
comme le vent sur les feuilles.
Votre cœur peut ralentir, vos yeux se poser,
Et dans ce moment,
tout devient un peu plus léger.

Vous êtes humain, fragile et fort à la fois,
Capable de pleurer, de rire, de recommencer.
Chaque fin d'année est une chance
de déposer vos fardeaux,
De retrouver votre souffle, votre courage,
votre sourire.

Respirez encore, doucement, profondément,
Et laissez la lumière entrer,
même si elle est petite.
Car dans votre souffle,
dans vos yeux, dans votre cœur,
Réside la sérénité, simple, silencieuse, infinie.

SERENITY

This poem gently invites us to breathe and find a moment of calm at the heart of life's challenges. By paying attention to ourselves, to small moments, and to the simple gestures of life, it offers comfort and inner peace, reminding us that even after difficult times, serenity remains the art of mastering one's worries.

Breathe deeply, let your shoulders relax,
The world can wait, just a moment,
to understand you.
Each breath chases away a little fatigue,
Each heartbeat whispers:
"You are here, you exist".

The days have been heavy,
the nights sometimes cold,
But your hands still hold the warmth of life.
Look around: the sky, the light, a smile,
Even a small one can rekindle the flame of hope.

Close your eyes, listen to your breath,
It tells the story of your courage, of your efforts.
Each breath is a step toward peace,
Each sigh carries away a bit of the weight
that oppresses you.

Remember the shared laughter,
The tender gestures, the hands that reached
out to you.
These fragile moments are hidden treasures
That time does not erase, even in the storm.

Inhale serenity, let calm fill you,
Like the gentle water of a stream,
like the wind on the leaves.
Your heart can slow, your eyes can rest,
And in this moment,
everything becomes a little lighter.

You are human, fragile and strong at once,
Capable of crying, of laughing, of starting again.
Each year's end is a chance
to lay down your burdens,
To reclaim your breath, your courage,
your smile.

Breathe again, gently, deeply,
And let the light enter, even if it is small.
For in your breath, in your eyes, in your heart,
Resides serenity, simple, silent, infinite.

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