

PROJECT PRESENTATION
POETRY OF COLOUR



Elisa Muller
Winter Semester 2021 Visual Art School Basel

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From the Input Time

Subjective Colour Presentation

Who am I if I was only colour? Apparently variations of red-orange, pink, warm yellow and some touch of green, or in another word autumn's colour. It is only recently that I discovered that I am attracted to colours that are mainly in what could be called an autumn pallet. When I discovered this I was very surprised as it is the last season I like, how can I like these colours if I dislike the season?

The subjective colour presentation is initially an exercise that Johannes Itten gave to his students at the Bauhaus. How would you present yourself in colour using different proportion for the colour with a simple structure, square or circular diagram. The presentation was accompanied with a black and white photography.

Our task for the photography was to capture one of our peer in its most natural appearance, no posing, no emphasis but just the person in its authenticity. This was something actually not so easy to do but a great exercise to try not to make the reality better.

After doing my subjective colour presentation collage I wondered if these colours were only colours I am simply attracted to and therefore not representing who I am, or if they are really in me, like a part of my personality? I cannot answer but I suppose that they have something to do with me otherwise I would not have picked them!



Subjective Colour Presentation, 100x55cm

The 15 Colour Relationships

We studied the 15 colour relationships. From Goethe colour circle we reduced it to a simple design of 6 colours. This showed up the relationships more clearly especially if drawing some connecting lines (see below). We can categorize the 15 two colour relationships in 3 different families.

The 6 Neighbouring Intervals: red-orange, orange-yellow, yellow-green, green-blue, blue-violet, and violet-red. We can call these relationships the characterless ones as they are a bit boring in the sense that they are not of a great interest as they do not create new tones if mixed together. However if we were to invite the neighbours of the neighbours we will come to a situation of a complementary contrast. For instance orange and red are neighbours and mixed together they create only variation of their tone but if we were to introduce yellow for the orange and violet for the red we will come to the complementary contrast, yellow and violet!



The 6 Characteristic Intervals: there we can distinguish two families, the primary intervals and the secondary intervals. The primary colours are red, yellow and blue, the secondary are orange, green and violet. The characteristic intervals are the two colours that have one in between if we look at the colour circle. For the primary intervals the colour in between is the one we will get if we mix two primaries. If red and yellow are mixed we will get orange, yellow and blue create a green and blue and red make a violet. The secondary intervals are orange-green, green-violet, violet-orange. There we are not looking at what they create as a new tone which will be called a tertiary colour or a broken tone but which is their common tone. For orange and green it is yellow, for green and violet it is blue and for violet and orange it is red.



The 3 Complementary Intervals: this is now the relationships between the complementary colours themselves which are yellow and violet, orange and blue, green and red. If we look again at the colour circle they are the ones that are opposite to one another.



This sounded quite theoretical and Chinese but I remember the joy when understanding the "rule of the game" especially with the following exercise. It was the same feeling as I was in school trying to figure out a mathematical theory and when I finally got the logic, such a nice feeling, a sort of relief too, as I did not enjoy mathematics that much. To understand colour relationships is like holding the key of a treasure, now I was in theory able to analyse a colour composition and feel what would be missing in my composition, what could balance a situation or contrast it.

A Playful Exercise

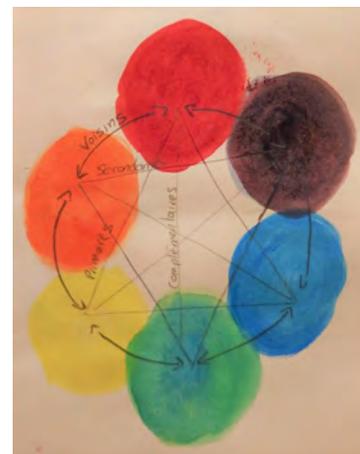
If orange and green meet they would create a greenish tone, a broken one. They both share the yellow.

If the orange warms up it would turn red which will be the complementary to the green.

If the green warms up it would turn blue which will be the complementary to the orange.

And if red and blue mix we will get a violet.

And there we have the whole colour circle starting from one relationship.



The Toolbox of Composition

During this theme and thanks to the inputs

I gather many "tools" in my painting treasure box.

It was a great help to put words on the different expressions we could use as painter, the idea of composition started to make sense.

To categorize some of these tools we will talk about surface expression, line, gesture, structure and accent.

A surface expression could have many different aspects, it could be an active surface in the white or on the contrary be a negative surface to the white, or again it could show an inner space.

The line could show a space or show a movement.

The gesture has the movement of the line but has some more liveliness in it. The structure is a combination of lines that together create a texture, a kind of pattern.

An accent is usually something small but very active and awake, it is the little push to the painting.



A Painting Music Sheet

This exercise was very structured as we had special instructions for every next painting move.

There was no much place for the wondering as I had to place the instruction on the paper and very specific ones.

It helped to get straight into the composition and to play with the different tools.

It was a good exercise to put in practice the composition tools and to see if their understanding were clear in my head. This gave me again a little kick for the painting composition which was very welcomed.



Project Description

This project was about the relationships between poetry, painting and weaving, how could the poetry be a part of a painting and influence a weaving. The poems were more specifically haiku. Haiku are originally from Japan, they are very short and expressing instants of life.

As a daily exercise and as my main resource for the project I wrote almost every day a haiku using different word collage techniques. I allowed myself no more than 20 minutes to collect words and sentences, I then created the haiku but randomly. I selected one haiku out of the different poems and interpreted it into a small sketch in my little notebook and then experimented it again on a A4 sketch.

For the final presentation of the project I selected three haiku from which I decided to work more specifically on it. I had to narrow down my haiku collection to be able to concentrate on some specific atmospheres for the painting and the weaving. The final presentation includes few paintings for each of the three haiku and one handwoven wall hanging for each haiku.



La Joie de l'hiver III, 40x60cm Au revoir le Nord III, 40x60cm, Nostalgie du Froid III, 40x60cm

Structure of my Project The Haiku Collection

As I mentioned before the haiku process was my main structure all along the project time, it was something that held myself to get through, a secure base on which I could always come back and felt reassured. The haiku process had something to do with a little meditation for me, it was a moment of peace, a peace with myself, with my inner emotions. It is probably because I had to calm myself to be aware of what was surrounding me and to be more present in these instants of life, to let the memory even the closest to the past and focus on the moment. It was not natural for me and it was not something always easy not to be influenced from the recent past. What made the task definitely easier was when I was outside in the nature or surrounded by some activity.

This collection of haiku happened in many different places like outside in the Waltzwerk, in the school, or in the train, in the waiting room of a doctor, in a supermarket, in my flat, in a garden, at a square, at home by my parents, or again in Strasbourg city.



*Haiku Sketches, A4, watercolours,
pens, oil pastels*



Word Collage Technique 1

During the input time our tutors taught us two word collage techniques to create haiku. At first I thought I will experiment with other word collage techniques but as there was already few concepts going on at the same time I decided to stay put with these two techniques.

The first technique consists on making four columns, one for nouns, one for verbs, one for adjectives, and another one for other word categories. After this collection I randomly selected one word of each column and made a sentence with these words and if needed I added a connecting word. If the sentences could sound very abstract and funny they mostly had still a sense, the words were in a way linked as they were collected in a same space of time and on a typical atmosphere.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Other
interieur- <i>inside</i>	frotter- <i>to rub</i>	sombre- <i>dark</i>	tap tap tap
pluie- <i>rain</i>	traîner- <i>to drag</i>	calme- <i>calm</i>	balancement-
<u>dehors-<i>outside</i></u>	reculer- <i>to step back</i>	blanche- <i>white</i>	<i>balancing</i>
danse- <i>dance</i>	crayonner- <i>pencil in</i>	grand- <i>big</i>	lointain- <i>far away</i>
pas- <i>step</i>	<u>rebondir-<i>bounded</i></u>	étouffé- <i>muffled</i>	rien- <i>nothing</i>
bruitage- <i>sound effect</i>	<i>back</i>	assombri- <i>shadowed</i>	
peinture- <i>painting</i>	effleurer- <i>skimming</i>	intime- <i>intimate</i>	
sol- <i>floor</i>	tapoter- <i>to tap on</i>	concentré- <i>concentrate</i>	
papier- <i>paper</i>	étaier- <i>to spread</i>	sâle- <i>dirty</i>	
atelier- <i>studio</i>	asperger- <i>to spray</i>	coloré- <i>colourful</i>	
morceaux- <i>pieces</i>	éparpiller- <i>to scatter</i>	<u>voilé-<i>hazy</i></u>	
pinceaux- <i>brushes</i>	revenir- <i>to return</i>	calfeultré- <i>sealed</i>	
	s'éloigner- <i>to walk</i>	assourdi- <i>muted</i>	
	<i>away</i>		

IL REBONDIRA LE DEHORS VOILÉ **THE HAZY OUTSIDE WILL BOUNCED BACK**

This collection of words happened in the studio, it was in the afternoon, a raining day, everyone was working and we could only hear the sound of brushes on the paper and the raining on the roof; This haiku evokes hope or at least the certainty that the gloomy weather atmosphere is only temporary. Below you will find some other haiku.

LA PORTE AUTOMATIQUE SE MANGE LE VIDE **THE AUTOMATIC DOOR EATS THE EMPTINESS**

In the entrance of a supermarket

LES YEUX FATIGUÉS CHERCHAIENT À SE RÉCHAUFFER **THE TIRED EYES SOUGHT WARMTH**

In the ophtalmologist's waiting room

Word Collage Technique 2

The second word collage technique that I used the most consists on making two columns, one for collecting sentences with 5 syllables and the second for sentences with 7 syllables. I collected 10 sentences with 5 syllables and 5 sentences with 7 syllables, in that way I could create 5 different haiku each time and again select one from the 5 haiku. Thus I created haiku with the traditional structure, three sentences with 5/7/5 syllables. Sometimes I allowed myself to have one more or one less syllables but I tried to stick to that strict number. A sentence with 5 syllables is quite short so I had to come straight to the point. Again I assembled randomly the sentences.

5 Syllables

- Le chant des oiseaux
The bird's song
- Au loin la rivière
-In the distance the river
- Breitenbach my home
- Trois pétales blanches
Three white petals
- Un liseré vert
A green border
- Là sous le noyer
There under the Walnut
- L'écho de ce chien
The echo of that dog
- Étrange douceur
Strange sweetness
- Sous le poids du bourdon
Under the weight of the bumblebee
- La fleur se courbe
The flower bends

7 Syllables

- Tapis de perce-neige
Swondrop mat
- Comme il est bon ce chez soi
How good this home is
- Quelle douceur surprenante
What a suprising sweetness
- Des arbres comme en hiver
Trees like in winter
- Une nature encore grise
A nature that is still grey

**LÀ SOUS LE NOYER
UNE NATURE ENCORE GRISE
LA FLEUR SE COURBE**

*THERE UNDER THE WALNUT
A NATURE THAT IS STILL GREY
THE FLOWER BENDS*

For this haiku I was at home by my parents, it was during this very springy week just after the freezing one. The contrast of the sweetness of the weather and a nature that was still sleepy was very strange and felt quite weird and unusual.

History of the Haiku

Haiku are coming from Japan and emerged there at the end of the XVIIe century. The word haiku comes from two words. The first is haikai a popular style of writing consisting on poems with 5/7/5 syllables and then 7/7 syllables. The second is hokku, which was the name of the first verse of the haikai poems. It is the poet Masaoka Shiki in the end of the XIXe century who put the two words together hai-ku.



Each sentence has a particular meaning. The first sentences is called a kigo, the kigo is for the poet the moment to concentrate on the present and on what is surrounding him, it illustrates a moment of the year like:

"The first cold shower
Even the monkey seems to want
A little coat of straw"

Then comes the kireji, it is something that separates, a cutting word. As the haiku is constructed with the collage of different images the kireji is that little sideways step, suggesting a parallel to the previous or following image, or it might end the haiku with some kind of highlighting or conclusion. In Japanese there is typical word for that purpose but the westerners poets use punctuation such as dash, exclamation mark. The japanese Kireji are for example: ya, kana, keru...

Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu misu no oto
Old pond-
Frog leaps in
Water's sound

Furuike means old pond and the ya emphasis the sense of the word, it make it more than a pond, there is something about the time, its stillness where something is going to happen, the "frog leaps in". This haiku is one of the most well known and written by the famous Bashó.

Matsuo Bashó (1644-1694) was a great haiku poet. He got acquainted to the practice of writing poems when he used to work for a noble family and wrote with the lord haikai, poems that were created in groups. At the age of 28 he gave to the Temple of the Gods of the Literati his notebook collecting poems from some poet of his region with his comments. This showed his willingness to become a professional haikai, a profession that still today one can hope to live from it. He will be followed by some students and will live for a while in a place called the banana tree hermitage. It is from this place name's he would take his writer's name, bashó meaning banana tree. He will travel a lot and work often in groups. Bashó's work forged the spirit of the haiku, its spontaneity, lightness, its link between what is permanent and ephemeral.



Painting of Koga Iijima

Why my Haiku are in French?

When we first did these haiku exercises I saw the opportunity for me to develop my vocabulary, to nuance it and to get reconnected to words. I did all the haiku in French as it is my mother tongue and therefore I have a larger vocabulary. Often as a child and even older my parents were curling their eyes when I said words that were not actually French but some weird construction of the word I wanted to say, or because I used a word but did not have the right meaning. I feel unsecured when I hear a French word of which I am unaware of the meaning. While I was in Ireland I had the sensation that I was losing my French and always looking for words. Still today I wonder why some words just do not come or if they do I have them in the wrong language, in English if I talk French or in French if I talk English, and sometimes few words of Germans just appear too. And thus I thought that a word meditation could do me good that it would be a great way to get reacquainted to French vocabulary. After all these weeks I am not saying that my vocabulary got way wider but the intellectual play of looking for words was quite enjoyable. After a while I realised that some words were coming to my mind more often than others, it is as if I have my own specific vocabulary.

The Writing Research

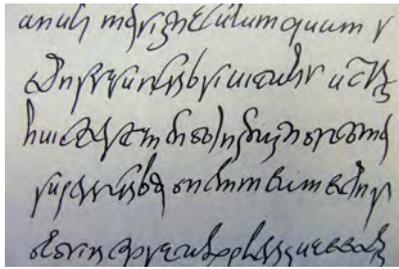
How to include the writing in a composition, which place it takes? When we first did exercise to dis-construct the writing during the input time I felt that this was going to be a great help for the line composition with which I felt unsure.

Looking back at all my haiku sketches it is not something I really used, the writing became more like a part of the composition but not necessarily a line structure. Although the discover of the wax resist line was a direction I attempted to develop.

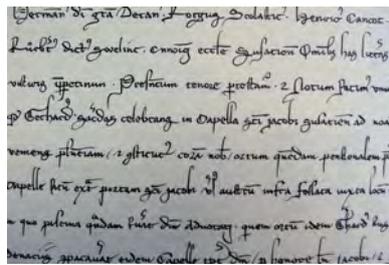


Details A5 Haiku Sketches

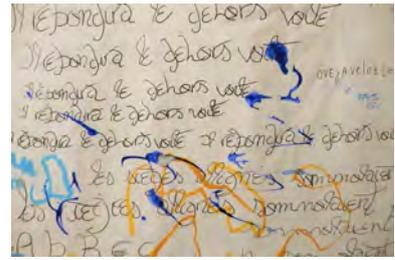
Writing and reading are connected even though I think I was able to write before reading. I remember that the reading was something almost unachievable, that only others could do, it was like an impossible task, something powerful that I might never reach, and there you go! The writing is maybe something closer, more instinctive, as children we draw lines and no one had to show us how to do it.



Younger Roman Cursive



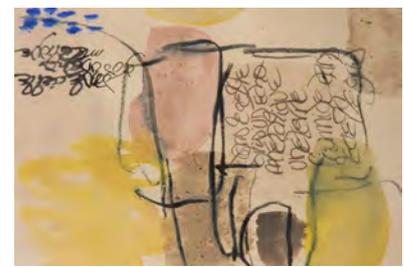
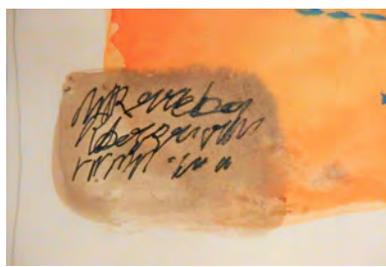
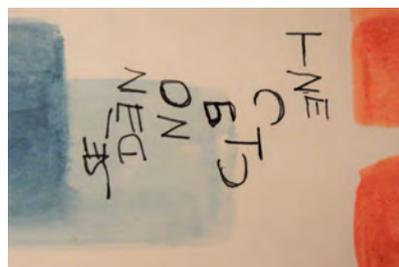
Chancel Lettering



Writing research

For the painting composition I was pushed to look for a writing that would have a certain quality and thus I did few attempts, and tested different writings. At some point I asked myself if I was not faking my writing as it was not my natural one. But I remembered that my writing evolved a lot if I look back. Of course when I first learn how to write it was very clumsy and big but even after it changed a lot, I do not have the same writing as I was a teenager and I would say that even few years ago it was slightly different. I remember that sometimes I tried in purpose to change it but it is not only that. So where would be now the problem to look for another type of writing? There is none, and there I started to experiment and got inspiration from certain calligraphy. It was a search of the right tool and how and when to use it in the painting process.

In the painting I sometimes only used a sentence of the haiku or even just a word. I did not try to make it readable and maybe even on the contrary. The writing part was a very enjoyable part of the composition.



Details of the writing research, A4

The Sketching Process

Through the daily sketching of each haiku I tried to experiment different ways to compose and play with the different tools I started to gather, surface language, gesture, line, accent, structure... I mainly composed in the white and sometimes in the grey. The colour pallet was influence from the haiku atmosphere. I liked to have the complementary in head to contrast my composition. The little sketches are very playful and there is endless variations possible for just one situation.



Art History

I am presenting three artists, one painter Julius Bissier which I found inspiring for the surface language and its general way of composing, and two weavers. One of the weaver is Gunta Stölzl a student and craft master at the Bauhaus, and Meghan Spielman, a young New-yorker weaver. They did not directly inspired my work but they are general inspirations.

Julius Bissier (1893-1965)

Julius Bissier was a German artist who briefly studied art history at the same time as he was doing his military service. Between 1922 and 1929 he does mainly still life sketches, landscapes and portraits, he treats them with the New Objectivity style, a movement that was against the expressionism.

One can say that it is thanks to his meet with Brancusi and the sinologist Ernst Grosse that his artist work as we know it emerged. It is while living in Paris that he met Brancusi, the great sculptor artist. It is with him that he discovered the meditative part of the art practice. With Ernst Grosse and his knowledge of the Chinese culture he developed the abstract calligraphy with elementary forms and went for black and white ink compositions. His work was influenced from the Taoism and became more spiritual. His ink compositions were all about a careful choices of the right brushes, the right paper, the right ink and this in the intention to reach instants of liberty. Bissier shared the thoughts of the existentialism philosophy and his paintings could be taken as an artist representation of these beliefs.

Even if his pieces were knowing a great success at the time he never felt any satisfaction out of it and probably because he was almost all his life in depression. At his worst time he even destroyed his work with an axe. It is his wife, Lisbeth Hofschneider who provided for the family needs with her activity of hand weaving.



The 30's where tough years for Bissier. In 1934 in the university of Freiburg where he taught and had two studios a fire destroyed most of his work from the past few years. In the same year his second child died, a son. And it is around this same time that the Nazism emerged too. He started to paint only at night and played cello during the day time. The 14th of February 1944 he wrote in his diary:

"What have I done with my life? Just trying to make an ideal secret of peace come true, in paintings and miniatures, on drawing paper, that does not attack anyone. The greatness of the object, the greatness of silence, of non-aggressiveness, of non-dramatics, it is all there. Some are more tormented by a touch of wash, a stroke of wash, a painted form, than by the bombing of Hamburg. What a world! But the calm is greater than the storm."

His paintings are often done on one or two light grounds where comes after his carefully construction of surfaces compositions. One can read many symbols in his paintings, they are usually humanity symbols of the past cultures, they are sometimes linked to his son's death and to the Spanish Civil War. He used the writing too which became a representative tool and developed his own language:

The circle symbolize nature forces that take in life and death, it encloses the two poles between which creation moves.

The square is the field receiving the seed.

The wheel is the symbol of speed and circular forces.

The house/room is the earthy matter in its motherhood, the place of procreation.

He went back to colour but after many years of preparation and with a reduced colour pallet. It is thanks to the discover of the tempera technique that the colour emerged. One could categorize his work like a gestural painting with a contemplative character like Mark Rothko and Mark Tobey who were his friend at the end of his life.





Gunta Stölzl (1897-1983)

Gunta Stölzl was a German textile designer and weaver. In 1914 she went to the school of Applied Art where she studied glass painting, decorative arts and ceramic. She interrupted her studies during the war as she volunteered as a nurse with the Red Cross. In 1919 she returned to university but the school was going through a reform and it was at that time she heard about the Bauhaus manifesto. In 1920 she joined the Bauhaus, there she was going to play a fundamental role in the development of the Bauhaus weaving workshop.

When she arrived at the Bauhaus she did not know in which workshop to go and started with stained glass, attempted to attend Litten's classes for the preliminary course as well as Paul Klee classes.



It is after a Christmas market where the Bauhaus had a great success selling handcrafted objects that Gunta Stölzl and two other girls opened the girl's class, a first contact to the textile world. Gropius, the director of the school advised them to ask some old ladies for leftover fabrics, yarns, laces and veils, pearls, furs, leathers. They made wall hangings, blankets, dolls, animals.

Gunta Stölzl's first contact with weaving was after borrowing a high loom to the women's class over the summer. The first tapestry was very successful and because she was encouraged by the women she asked Gropius to give them the opportunity to work on these looms. The class was until then private because the room did not belong to the Bauhaus.



The weaving department was very weak before Gunta Stölzl set foot in it. George Muche was the form master but he considered the class as no real interest because he classified it as a "women work" department. Helene Böner was the craft master, but had very little knowledge on the matter. Therefore they were both not much help technically wise, and Gunta Stölzl became a great help for the other students. She reopened the dyeing studio which added a notion to the weaving, like painted fabric concepts, she improved the workshop with its technical side and introduced mathematical lessons.

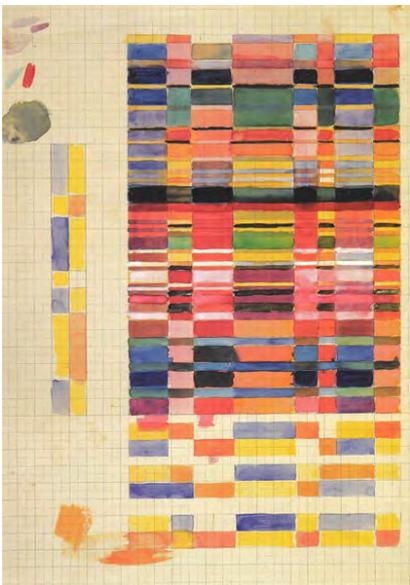


In 1921 she collaborated with Marcel Breuer on the African chair. It is a chair with painted wood and a colourful weave. She threaded and tightened the warp directly through the holes in the frame and wove the texture onto the chair itself.



The Bauhaus in 1927 moved to Dessau and there she became the craft master and had to work with George Muche, a team that neither of them enjoyed. It is only because the weaving department became the main source of the school funding that Muche was interested in it. And it is for this particular reason he introduced a jacquard loom for more production. The department was both a training and a production workshop, and therefore Gunta Stölzl had to set up the studio to be suitable for beginners as well for the production side. It was a stimulating place for experimentation because of larger orders. They had orders such as curtain fabric, upholstery fabric, wall coverings, and everything about interior designing. When Muche left in 1928 she became the first and only female form master. She was then assisted by many other students like Anni Albers.

Together they tried to move the weaving away from its "women's work" meaning and for that they used modern art vocabulary to talk about it, had an industrial design approach.



Anni Albers and her were very interested in the properties of fabric and synthetic fibres. They tested colours, texture structure, resistance to wear, flexibility, light refraction, sound absorption.

Gunta Stölzl was dismissed for political reason in 1931. After the Bauhaus she had created few textile business and worked for interior designing. At the end of her life she did mainly free form tapestry.



Meghan Spielman

Meghan Spielman is a new-yorker textile designer and weaver. She is working with a 32 harness and computerized jacquard loom. It is now since 8 years she weaves, so quite a young artist. She weaves with silk, mohair, cotton and dyes some of her fibres too. She discovered the weaving through an internship at La Maison Malhia Kent in Paris, it is a textile design mill for high fashion and ready to wear. After this experience she went to the Royal College of Art in London.

This first experience of weaving was more about connecting with people through materiality rather than language as she did not speak much of French.

Her planning starts and stops with the warp structure as the rest will come as she weaves and reveals to her, she lets the work transform as there is things she could not have imagined. They are "results of intuition and reaction to colour and materials, she found this process very similar to abstract, modernist painting". She has always been drawn to painting and the ability of paint to create gorgeous complex colour. Her recent work is asking the question of what are the boundaries between a painting and a textile?

Her main subject is about the notion of sentimentality and the relationship with precious objects, the relationship between the beholder and the beloved object. "I am to both preserve and meld the memory into something new." She takes her inspiration out of sentimental items that previously belonged to her mother, her grand-mother and to her great-grand-mother.

Meghan Spielman manipulates and deviates the boundaries that loom and warp dictate through layering, distorting and weaving together.



Red and Blue Study in Weaving

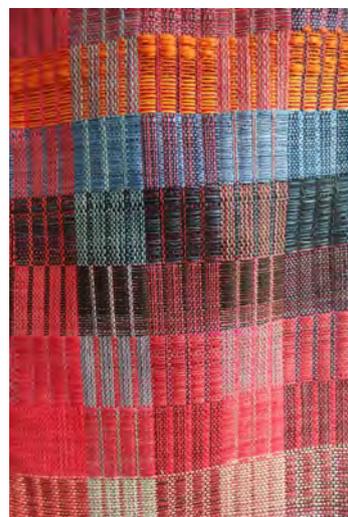
To get me started with the weaving I decided to make a study of red and blue with the notion of the vertical variation of each tone and with the notion of the connecting colour, violet. For this study I had a Paul Klee colour composition in mind, see below, and therefore, I picked pattern that will show up a square block composition. To make that structure very clear I designed the warp in a strict order of colour. I did few wrapping tests and decided myself for the last version. It was an enjoyable thing to play with colour combination as there could be infinite possibilities. For the accent I introduced the orange and unfortunately the green too which I wish I did not weave.

This piece was a way to get me started into my theme but it was also a way to get acquainted to my floor loom. It is a rough loom, not well designed and so slightly frustrating but still I was able to weave and that was the main point.

Wrappings



Paul Klee paintings



The Three Haiku Selection

After some weeks of a haiku accumulation I looked back and selected three haiku with which I liked to work deeper. Surprisingly enough I selected not the ones I picked to interpret into sketches but another versions of the day. For instance I selected a haiku of the 11th February but the one I sketched was: Amas de neige/ comme figé sous la glace/ sculpture en tous genres. And the one I decided to develop was: Arbre auréolé/ lente descente blanche/ la joie de l'hiver. For some reason my appreciation of which haiku version would be the best for that particular day transformed, it simply felt more harmonious.

My choice for the three haiku was influenced by the link they could make all together. They are all from different days but still close in the time line. I found they were great images of atmospheres that changed so quickly according to the time of the year. The first one is about the chance we had to have a winter atmosphere again, the second is about a great sunrise but announcing a thaw, and the third one is about the definite end of that winter time and the nostalgia that comes with. Ideally I wanted to interpret a fourth haiku which would have been the contrast to the first three haiku but still an atmosphere feeling which describe an unusual sweetness for the season. All together they are the image of a contrasted winter going from an extreme to another.

**ARBRE AURÉOLÉ
LENTE DESCENTE BLANCHE
LA JOIE DE L'HIVER**

*HALOED TREE
SLOW WHITE DESCENT
THE JOY OF WINTER*

**BOUCHON DE LUMIÈRE
UN LEVÉ ROUGE INTENSE
AU REVOIR LE NORD**

*LIGHT CAP
A DEEP RED SUNRISE
GOOD BYE THE NORTH*

**DOUCEMENT IL FOND
CE GRIS QUI SE RÉCHAUFFE
NOSTALGIE DU FROID**

*SLOWLY IT MELTS
THIS GREY THAT WARMS UP
NOSTALGIA OF THE COLD*

**LÀ SOUS LE NOYER
UNE NATURE ENCORE GRISE
LA FLEUR SE COURBE**

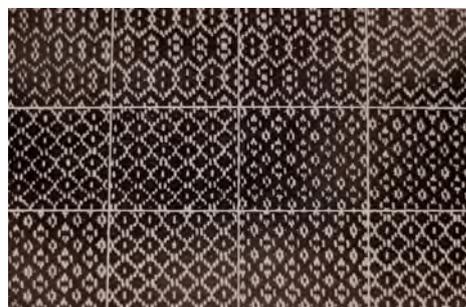
*THERE UNDER THE WALNUT
A NATURE THAT IS STILL GREY
THE FLOWER BENDS*

The Weaving Structure

The handwoven wall hangings are the link between each haiku and for one particular and technical reason they all have the same warp structure. This mean that they have the same colour pallet base and the same pattern potential and rhythm. I selected mostly light or neutral colour like white to compose my warp. I wanted an atmosphere that could remain suitable for each haiku situation. I wanted to avoid a maximum a block colour composition and tried my best to make smooth colour transitions, but not enough in my opinion. I designed the warp with 6 threads per centimetre meaning I have 510 threads to get a width of 85cm approximately, and the length of each wall hanging is about 160cm. The pattern is a repetition of little blocks that look alike but have a slight variation every time.



Wrappings



Pattern I selected

La Joie de l'Hiver

For this haiku I have a collection of five paintings, some are more concentrated on one particular sentence and some are more like a general sensation of the haiku. As I struggled quite a bit for the bigger paintings it helped to separate the different lines and to concentrate on one particular meaning. The big format got me lost in structure, I was loosing the playfulness that I expressed in small sketches. What really helped me was to stay in a middle size format, to take the time to let it dry, to take it off the wall and paint horizontally and to play with structure details with pens. When I managed to introduce that aspect (structures details), which I actually already did on the small sketches, it somehow felt to be the right thing to do. It is like it was the missing link in my work, between the paintings and the weaving. And it is with this haiku development I suddenly felt satisfied at least for a bit.

For the first sentence: Arbre auréolé, I approached it with a surface expression, concentrating on the word auréolé-haloed for the surface itself and on the word arbre-tree for the colour pallet. I decided to pick one letter that translated the strength or the main character of that first sentence, which was for me the letter A.

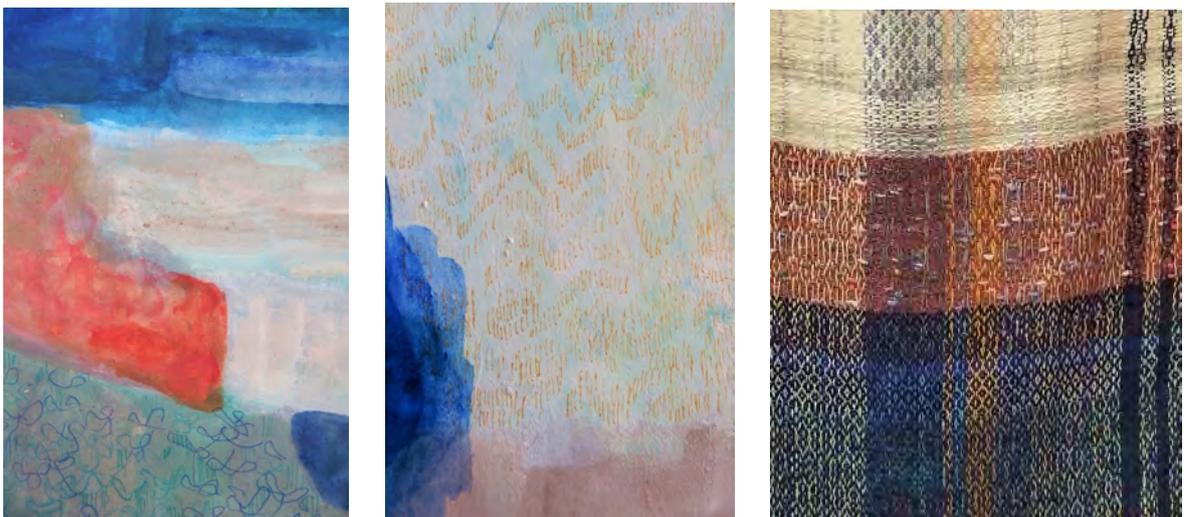
The second sentence: *Lente descente blanche*, was about the tone expression, the sensation it evokes, something delicate and light.

The third sentence: *La joie de l'hiver*, was illustrated with a strong graphic expression. Although I wrote the whole haiku it is the word joy that I replicated in the graphic. The graphic is a link to the woven pattern and the colour pallet is the synthesis of the previous colour situations.

Then comes a fourth painting with which I tried to study a Kenzo Okada way to treat an atmosphere. It was an interesting way to approach the surface composition, something more one next to another. I would say that this painting is a general sensation of the haiku, especially considering the colour pallet. The graphic structure are then little links to some particular part of the haiku.

The fifth painting is a pure writing expression of the whole haiku.

This wall hanging is a general approach of the whole haiku and has a vertical lecture. "The joy of winter" is taking the most attention and it is like a ground, something coming from below but we are in it. The "haloed tree" (orange section) is the transition with the "slow white descent" coming from the top. I did the weaving after the paintings and the colour pallet of the paintings definitely influenced my weaving colours as I had different ones in mind before starting it. I wanted the pattern to be a structure expression for some words of the haiku but unfortunately that did not work as planned.



Details of the paintings and the weaving



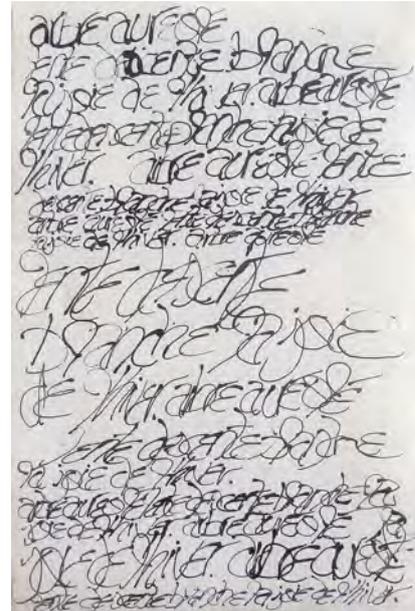
La joie de l'hiver I, 40x60cm



La joie de l'hiver IV, 40x60cm



La joie de l'hiver II, 40x60cm



La joie de l'hiver V, 40x60cm



La joie de l'hiver III, 40x60cm



Tissage de la joie de l'hiver,
80x160cm

Au revoir le Nord

I was in the train on my way to school, the train was just after leaving Strasbourg, the sun was rising in a very intense red pallet, snow was still on the roof tops and on the ground, it was cold and beautiful. But this sunrise announced the thaw and the end of the real winter atmosphere. Au revoir le nord-Good bye the North has two meanings, literally it says that I was leaving the north, Strasbourg and heading to the south, Basel and allegorically it is a way to say that the cold snow winter was behind us.

For the paintings I have six different interpretations of the haiku, and again some are focused on one sentence and others on the general feeling of the poem.

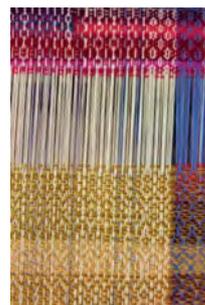
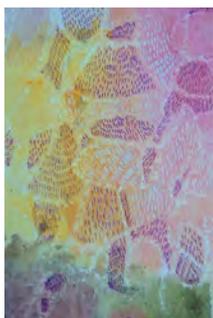
It is after some weeks of attempts to interpret different haiku that I came to paint the only big format of the whole series. It is with this one I started to hold something but I was still not quite there. As I painted it I had the whole haiku in mind but this was maybe the reason why I always got a bit lost and therefore started from then on to first concentrate on specific moment of the haiku.

In general the interpretation of this haiku was a fight and made of many steps and variations under each final compositions. This maybe happened because I deal with yellow and red compositions which could be tricky. The yellow tends to get dirty, and the red tends to take too much place and I came to an undecided situations where the red was both active and passive at the same time. Again I came to my little trick and pleasure to add some little details with pen, it felt like "wearing" the paintings with a last little jewellery. one can probably guess which paintings is for the "bouchon de lumière" and the "levé rouge intense."

The all over graphic painting is concentrated on the last sentence, "au revoir le Nord." There is at least three different attempts for the graphic composition. The colour pallet was not satisfying and the pattern to even and boring. Here I have a pattern made of two letters that translate the power of the sentence, A and O. The writing is both pattern and calligraphy. I tried to combine a wax resist effect which is not entirely satisfying but still add a little something.

I have a fifth situation that is a general interpretation and with which I had a peaceful relationship. I have a last one which is once more a pure writing expression.

With the weaving I started to have an experimental approach by mixing weaving and tapestry technique, see the arrow. I should admit that I do not have so much patience for the tapestry but I reckon it adds something to the weaving. I started to play with transparency effects by letting the warp visible. The main pallet is red and yellow but I wanted to include the winter pallet to insert the idea of the cold weather I was leaving behind with the sentence "au revoir le Nord." This last part of the weaving contrasts maybe a little too much as I should have included it a bit earlier in the weaving.





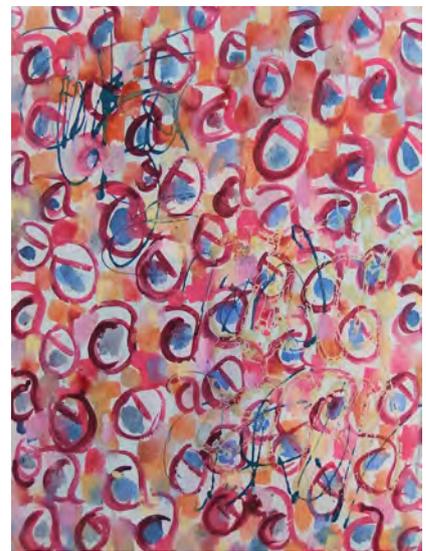
Au revoir le nord I, 130x40cm



Au revoir le nord II, 40x60cm



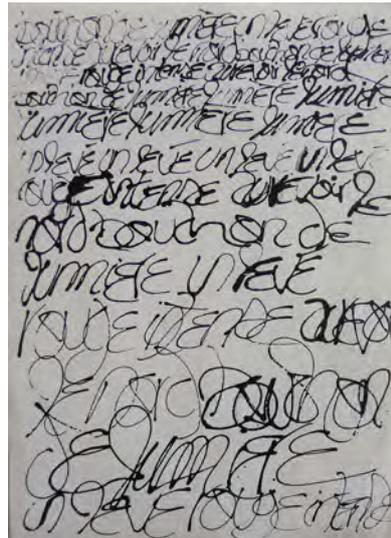
Au revoir le nord III, 40x60cm



Au revoir le nord IV, 40x60cm



Au revoir le nord V, 40x60cm



Au revoir le nord VI, 40x60cm



Nostalgie du Froid

The thaw did happen but winter was still not quite finished with us for my greatest delight. And so we had a freezing cold week with snow and ice. As a child I was always delighted when the temperature was going way under zero degree. In the car I was checking the thermometer every now and then, the excitement grew as the temperature dropped and -20 was the greatest joy. I probably enjoyed and still enjoy it because it is something unusual, rare and very extreme sensations.

This haiku comes just at the end of this atmosphere, the snow was melting, everything turned grey and the temperature was warming up. I dislike that particular time when snow is melting, it is something sad and necessarily the nostalgia comes along.

I have five paintings to illustrate this haiku ambiance.

For the first sentence, "doucement il fond" slowly it melts, I tried my best to give that impression of things melting and based on the construction of widening the white pallet and balance it with based tones.

"Ce gris qui se réchauffe", this grey that warms up painting was another try to play with wax resist effects but was still not completely satisfying.

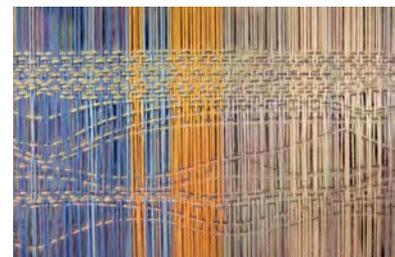
For the graphic composition I concentrated on the last sentence, "Nostalgie du froid", nostalgia of the cold, I based my pattern on the letter N. I tried to find a pallet that could show that turn over weather from the white-blue cold atmosphere to the springy pallet with the pink.

I did one last painting before the pure expression one which is a general sensation of the haiku based on one of my scrap pallet paper.

This wall hanging weaving became very experimental! I picked my threads pallet based on my paintings, it helped to create a connection between the painting and the weaving. The experimentation came at the right time and for the right haiku as I played more with light and transparency effects and this served the impression of things melting. While weaving I was trying to get the grey to warm up but I somehow struggle to do it almost afraid to come to a too big contrast. Even if I would change things if I had to do this piece again I am still happy with its effects.



Threads pallet



Details of the weaving



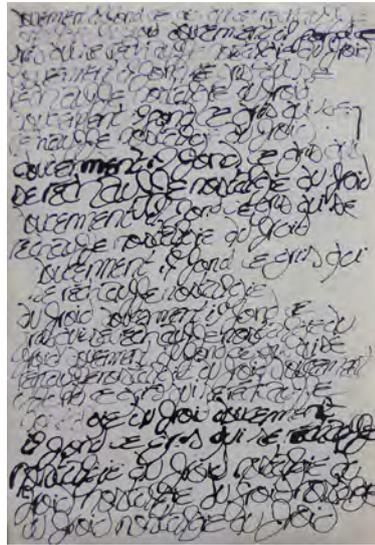
Nostalgie du froid I, 40x60cm



Nostalgie du froid II, 40x60cm



Nostalgie du froid III, 40x60cm



Nostalgie du froid IV, 40x60cm



Nostalgie du froid V, 40x60cm



Tissage de la Nostalgie du froid, 80x160cm

La Fleur qui se Courbe

As I said before the ideal haiku series was meant to be made of four atmospheres but time decided differently. But as a quick glance of what it could have been like I did a graphic composition for the fourth haiku I had selected. The pattern is based on a snow drop flower. This haiku was about this strange sweetness of the weather after the cold weeks. It felt really nice to have this little glance of spring although weird.



La fleur qui se courbe I, 40x60cm

Reflection on the Project

The poetry of colour was both an instructive and a difficult theme. I feel very grateful for all the tools I gather in my "painting box", some of the composition concepts are way clearer in my head as for the previous theme. I feel better equipped even if there is still concepts that I am not sure about especially for the active and passive language. But it is as if I know now my tools better. It was a difficult theme because it took me a great time to come to a painting composition with which I felt happy, especially for the bigger formats. I was lost in structure, nothing concrete was holding me. My goal and intentions were first too blurry and it helped to give me a clear direction like by choosing some particular haiku with which I would work deeper. The real push was maybe the time pressure but in purely practical terms it was to separate the lines of the haiku and to find a way to connect the paintings with the weaving by adding the notion of pattern with pen details. The weaving is very promising and it is only at its early stages.

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