

# Madama

(The Netherlands)

*"The task of integration, which is the challenge for the artist of today, is not any more to be contained in 1 single work of art, but in a way as never before only through the unity of life and work within the framework of change". Erich Neumann 1959 If one oversees the versatility of Madama's vast oeuvre then it is necessary to create a context to be able to understand this diversity. The image that comes to my mind is an analogy with the billions of solar systems that each contain a sun and planets and stars that move around that centre. In that sense is every series of Madama's visual art works like a solar system, different in content, colour and images than other solar systems but connected because they all originate from inner strength/necessity.*

*That is the stipulation and result of Madama's research that started some 40 years ago. What is essence and how can I visualize that? In that quest, averse to conventions, she finds that inner, creative, inexhaustible and innovative strength, which characterises the dynamics in her career. This connection with this inner strength is the key in her visual art, poetry and music and creates a new reality in performances etc. In her authentic quest for essence she used transcultural influences in her visual art, inspired by artists from the Orient, Africa, Aborigines. The influence of mysticism became apparent in particular by studying in Egypt where the concepts of inside/outside, content/shape seemed replaceable and she literally wanted to 'step out of the box'.*

*From this she developed the scrolls, or temple hangings, both sides painted unframed canvases, which can hang freely in space like a sculpture. And her latest work the monochromes.*

*Madama's work provides access to an inner world of beauty, values, space, possibilities, the Cosmic Renaissance of the universal human being. Out of this inner direction originates: The New Stream, Art from the Heart, an organic concept of Style and a book with the same title.*

*Madama's main goal is to share her work and invite people to reflect, to create their own associations and stories, to explore depth and space and through this reflection and resonance get new insights in their life: the humanity of art. Every work of her art is the expression of essence, life giving inner strength that everybody has but is not always used to its full potential. It has no fixed identity but only potential space = a core that expresses itself differently again and again*

*Margareth Adama*



*Fresh Air, Structure of Purity*

*Face of Space in the sea, mixed media with stone, 100 x 100 cm, 2014*

An interview with

## Margareth Adama

An interview by and **Dario Rutigliano**, curator  
with the collaboration of **Caroline L. Williams**  
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**Hello Margareth and welcome to *Peripheral ARTeries*. I would start this interview, with some questions about your background: you have a solid formal education and after your studies at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, you took classes in Anthropology and Philosophy. Would you like to tell our readers how did these different experiences influence your development as an artist and how do they impact on the way you currently conceive your works?**

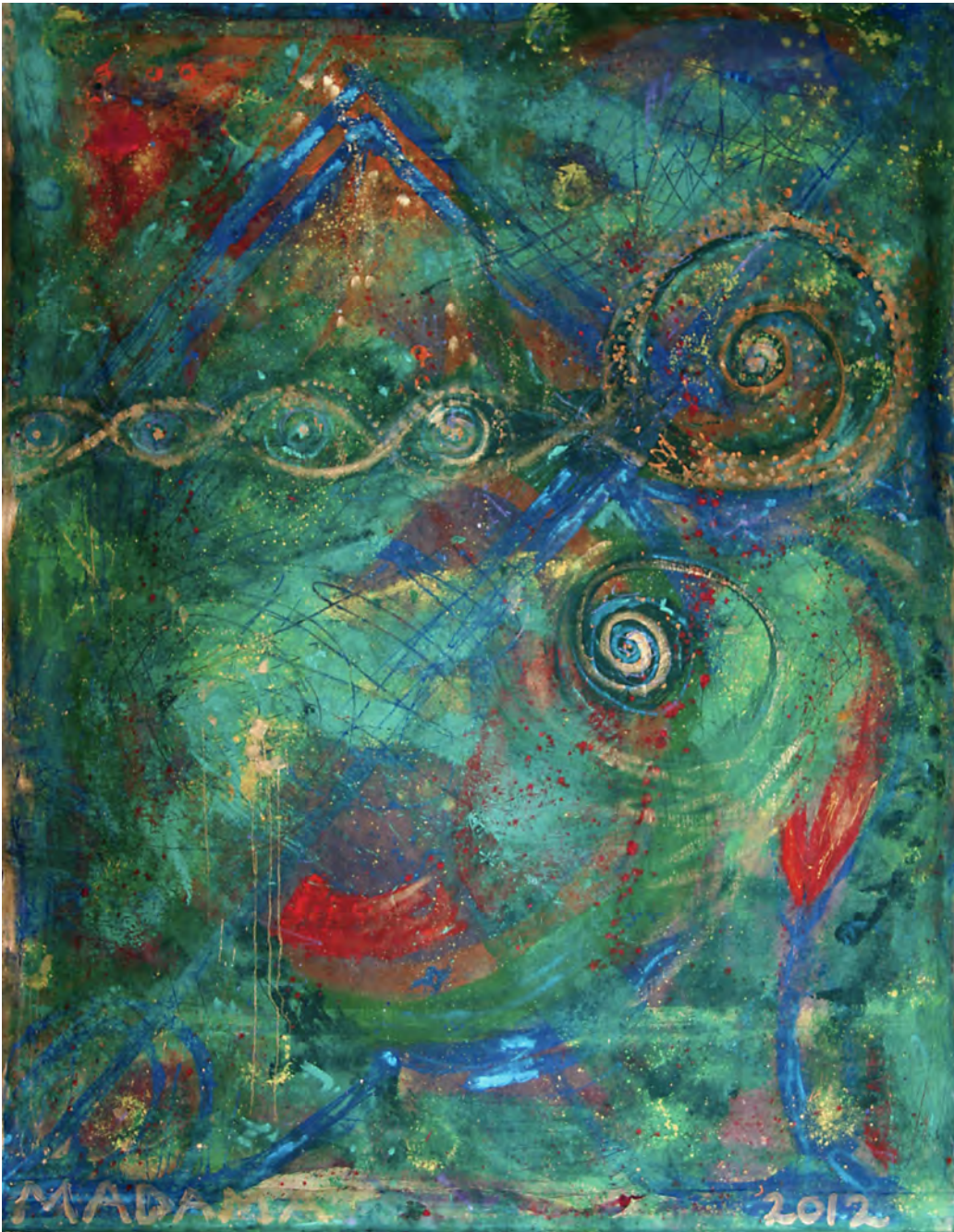
One of the final projects I did at the Rietveld Academy was titled 'I Am Transparent'. At that time I couldn't fully grasp the meaning of this statement. But it set me on a quest for meaning and looking behind the visible material world. My studies Philosophy and Anthropology however didn't satisfy my questions. In Philosophy my major interest was in Ontology but I missed the freedom to go beyond the set linguistic systems and structures that dominated then. In Anthropology I had a similar experience. People were viewed as objects for research but I felt the inner necessity to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western thinking. Particularly because I am born in Indonesia, Djakarta, grew up in the Netherlands from a very early age but still in my thinking, experiences, and particularly my artistic work there is always the strong urge to connect people, cultures, and projects.

At an artistic level I did that by developing three disciplines: visual arts, music and poetry that interrelate.

My music for instance is inspired by my paintings and poetry, that I use as songs. The







***Primordial Vibration***

*acrylic on 2 sides painted unframed canvas*

*209 x 279 cm, 2012*

*Brilliant star, shine bright stay  
close to me.  
To set free  
the indestructible everlasting Light  
liberating Humanity.  
With the primordial vibration  
of our transparent communication.*

idea behind this is to create a flow, from the substance of the paintings in which inspiration has been transferred to matter to the sounds of my improvised piano music: to unleash the inspiration and let it flow over the audience. So my studies spurred me on a further quest to deeper meaning, mystic, gnosis beyond the visible world and one of my latest works Artistic Metaphysics was made by playing my own music and then using the energy of this music to paint.

***I would suggest to visit <http://www.madama.nl> in order to get a wider idea of your artistic production that we are going to discuss in these pages: I would begin from Structures of Purity and Fresh Air, that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. When I first happened to get to know these stimulating works I tried to relate all the visual information to a single meaning. But I soon realized that I had to fit into the visual unity suggested by the conceptual narrative that pervades these pieces, forgetting my need for a univocal understanding of its symbolic content: in your work, rather than a conceptual interiority, I can recognize the desire to enabling us to establish direct relations... Would you say that it's more of an intuitive or a systematic process?***

It is both an intuitive and systematic approach. Systematic in the sense that in Structures of Purity which is part of a series of 7 monochromes, the structure is not only that there is one dominant colour but a very nuanced structure in the materials used, there are many layers in this case of white sand, marble sand in very organic and intuitive approach. One dot of blue paint has been freely floating out, taking days to dry and then I mixed it with marble sand etc.

So this picture has literally and figuratively many layers. One can see the wind blowing like Zephyr the God of the wind, Apollo etc. air and poetic beings.

This picture was made after a trip to Menorca where there are still remains of old civilizations that built the 'navetas', boats of rock stones in the middle of the landscape, In the picture the small antic stone in the middle symbolizes the civilization, brought by people in their sailing boats to unknown shores in unknown waters, but also the earth in the vast space etc.

***I like the way you offer a rigorous but at the same time lively visual translation of immaterial and physical sights that pervade our reality, as in Primordial Vibration: in this sense, your approach intrinsically connected to the chance of creating an area of intense interplay with the viewers, that are invited to evolve from the condition of a passive audience: while conceiving Art could be considered a purely abstract activity, there is always a way of giving it a permanence that goes beyond the ephemeral nature of the concepts you capture. So I would take this occasion to ask you if in your opinion personal experience is an absolutely indispensable part of a creative process... Do you think that a creative process could be disconnected from direct experience?***

Vision is in the eye of the beholder. You see what you have experienced but it can take many shapes and forms. For example an experience of nature can be emotional, physical, mental etc. For me it is about the Humanity of Art, if it has no relation to evolution of consciousness there is no meaning in it. Why? because also in abstract art it was always based on a real need to express or transcend a realistic image of the visible world. Look at Kandinsky and Malevich, Rothko. 'Abstract' means literally condensed experience. L'art pour l'art doesn't interest me, I now call my art Medicine Art, food for the soul, conveying beauty, inner worlds, energetic imprints.

And as I said before I like to involve the viewer, listener, in fact large canvases like Primordial Vibration are wonderful for people to sit in front of, contemplate of what this has to say to them.



***Artistic Metaphysica***

*acrylic on paper, 150 x 230 cm, 2015*

It can be anything, they become co-creators and afterwards if they want they can share their often very surprising insights.

***Another project of yours that has particularly impacted on me and on which I would like to spend some words is your Translucent series. The multilayered experience suggested by these works is capable of bringing a new level of significance to the usual concept of an abstract image: from a pictorial viewpoint, they force the viewer into taking a position from different angles, questioning our perception from a perspective aspect... this***



***Black Mirror***

*mixed media, on board, 80 x 120 cm, 2015*

***challenge the viewers' perception in order to going beyond the common way to perceive not only the outside world, but the way we relate to it... I'm sort of convinced that some informations & ideas are hidden, or even "encrypted" in the environment we live in, so we need -in a way- to decipher them. Maybe that one of the roles of an artist could be to reveal such unexpected sides of Nature, especially of our inner Nature... what's your point about this?***

Yes, of course, the artist has the role to stimulate the inner eye, the inner Self, the I Am for ultimately in my perception we are all



*Matrix*

*acrylic on 2 sides painted unframed canvas, 209 x 279 cm, 2012*







vibrations/frequencies in a greater network of interrelated wave patterns and all the different patterns form a certain configuration of matter. It is interesting to see how these 'spiritual' ideas are based on sound science in physics with the theory of strings and waves and particles that still develops further and further. However, the mental consciousness of people is still very materialistic.

In the 'Translucent' series I tried to evoke a spirit of translucence, like X ray pictures which allow you to look beyond the material outside into the inside. The bottom line is: if you encounter something or experience something what do you do to transform that experience. It is your personal response to a situation and in my perspective it is the artist's role to integrate this individual and at the same time universal perspective in daily life and work. That is a multi interpretable world. In 'Fragrance of Splendour' I refer to the impermanence of things, lost civilizations, ruins that you can reconstruct in your own way like the wind forms clouds every minute in a new form.

It is in this interplay of experiences that evolves a kind of trust that you take part and participate in creation as co creator. And this is more than in relation to paintings, it can also be a good conversation, there are so many ways to be a co-creator, you don't have to be an artist per se.

*This ancient paradox  
is dissolved away  
in the 5th dimension  
bridging Being upon earth  
and divine at the same time.*

***The Fragrance of Splendour,***

*acrylic on 2 sides painted unframed canvas,*

*175 x 135 cm, 1999*





***Intergalactic Field I***

*mixed media on 3D canvas*

*100 x 70 cm, 2011*



**Great Central Sun, Structure of Delight**  
*mixed media with gold-leaf 100 x 100 cm, 2014*

*I am the Victorious One  
Success is the seed of my soul  
the stars are the stuff we are made of*

***You often combine an inspiration from reality with a suggestive abstract approach: it seems that one of your goals is to represent what's really there, translating it through a painterly approach: Philippe Dagen once established in his *Le Silence des peintres*, the coming of a straight realism has caused a progressive retrenchment of painting from the role of representing reality. With exception of Hyperrealism movement, Painting is nowadays more and more marked out with a symbolic feature. Do you think that the dichotomy between Representation and Painting is by now irremediable? Moreover, how much do you explicitly think of a narrative for your works?***

There is a creation story behind all my work but it is not so literally expressed. If you want to hear it, fine, but you don't have to. It all has to do with intention, that is the start of my creative work: what do I want to express. The narrative is not exclusive or obligatory. It is a perception of reality in which to me the energy of a work plays a key role.

***The nuance of light colors that I have admired in *Structures of Purity, Fresh Air* and the reference to basic geometric patterns have suggested me a sense of dramatic luminosity, that seems to flow out of the canvas and which communicates such a tactile sensation: any comments on your choice of "palette" and how it has changed over time?***

In my art work there is often a very severe geometrical pattern underneath, particularly in the large canvases. You can sometime still have glimpses of that. Also these large canvases can be the backdrop of my concerts. You can touch them, they are like sculptural paintings, since they are painted on 2 sides and hang freely in space, you can walk around, feel them. Over the last year I have been using more substance in my paintings, sand, lava, rocks, little objects. Everything is energy. I used that too in small 'relics' but in the monochromes they all have different substances. This also

accounts for the many different 'views' they offer under any different light. If the sun shines, or it is a grey day how does the sun move over the canvas. All of a sudden the gold or silver pigments starts to shine like in *Black Mirror* or *Great Central Sun*. *Black Mirror* is a homage to the earth and creation.

***I have highly appreciated the way you explore the boundary between Imagination and Experience in your interesting *Matrix* and I would say that imagination play a role in the fulfillment process of the viewers that reminds me what German artist Thomas Demand once stated: "nowadays art can no longer rely much on symbolic strategies and has to probe psychological narrative elements within the medium instead": what's your point about this? And in particular, how much do you explicitly think of a narrative for your works?***

What I want to express is the idea of beauty in which not the representation is important but capturing the essence of for instance a flower. What is your relationship with the flower, when have you seen it etc. This experience is then transferred to an essential level. The viewer can reshape this experience in a concept of beauty.

***In your investigation about the liminal space between representation and abstraction, the references to a universal imagery suggested by natural elements are quite recurrent and seem to remove any historic gaze from the context you refer to. This invites the viewers the chance to perceive in a more atemporal form. In this sense, I daresay that the semantic juxtaposition between sign and matter that marks out your art, allows you to go beyond any dichotomy between Tradition and Contemporariness, establishing a stimulating osmosis between materials from an absolute dimension and a personal, lively approach to Art... By the way, do you think that there's such an irremediable fracture between Tradition and Contemporariness?***

Song of Consolation 5D nr 108

Als de ziel haar stede  
in het Al hervindt  
het licht  
van verdriet

verbindt  
het gezicht

wuivend

gezwind  
zacht als  
de klank  
van  
riet.

When the  
her  
swiftly Spirit  
the face  
soft as the  
of flowing

soul recovers  
cosmic stead  
bandages  
of sorrow  
rustle  
reeds.

Madama 1992



In my opinion we are nowadays allowed to be unorthodox but we / I still stand in a tradition. The Renaissance with its search for dignity, values, the rise of the humaniora looking for life and love has been very influential in my development. Although there is a freedom of style, medium and form there is always underlying the human need to express in its search for truth and beauty.

Since, as I said before, we now see that everything is energy I can easily integrate mystic and ancient traditions in a modern even abstract way.

***As you have remarked once, Art has always been a means to communication and self-realisation, not just for yourself but also other people can benefit from these insights: I think it's important to mention that besides producing your stimulating works, you also co-founded the Sophia Amor Academy. I think that teaching and especially the occasion of sharing ideas with young and emerging artists could be an important occasion for an artist's evolution: what have you received during these experiences? Do you think that teaching could have in a certain sense informed your approach?***

People often forget to look for and find their source, their inner Self. My teaching has evolved over the years from giving workshops to men of industry or housewives in which again the self-expression of what they want to say/share has been essential. I am also able to give a reading of their work that goes beyond the factual drawing or painting but can tell something about the direction/perspective for that person. I do that only if people give me permission to do so.

In teaching I also have to find new ways how I can involve people in such a way that they get the insights as if by chance. I also do a great deal of coaching individuals who are in transition, on a crossroad in their life and work or relation.

To me it is important that I don't teach a technique but a way that people can learn about themselves and eventually are able to develop this perspective independent of me. I very much missed this approach in my formal education.

***During these years your works have been exhibited in several occasions, so, before taking leave from this interesting conversation I would like to pose a question about the nature of the relation with your audience: in particular, do you consider the issue of audience reception as being a crucial component of your decision-making process in terms of what type of language for a particular context?***

No, I have always been very fortunate that I could work as an independent artist, so I didn't tailor my work to existing trends or style. When abstract was 'in' I painted more figuratively and vice versa.

However as you can understand from what I have said so far, Art=Communication and I do certainly take into account the audience that will view my pictures.

So if I have an exhibition I will choose art work that is appropriate for that space and purpose of the exhibition, does it fit into the space, what do I want to express in combining different works of art etc.

My latest book *The New Stream, Medicine Art from the Heart* gives a selection of my work over the 40 years: 366 paintings and poems both in Dutch and English and I have translated the energy of poem and painting in 366 piano music pieces. The book is also available as e-book.

***Thanks a lot for your time and for sharing your thoughts, Margareth. Finally, would you like to tell us readers something about your future projects? How do you see your work evolving?***



My immediate future project is MAMMSA 2 (Madama Movement Modern Sacred Art)

Together with my partner Ida Guinée, Ph.D we organised the first MAMMSA in April 2014 with the theme 'Sculptures with Meaning' and invited 15 artists (sculptors) to exhibit their work in our large garden and house.

<https://vimeo.com/126007177>

Next year April 2015 we have the theme Sacred or Scared, the same letters but total different meaning. How do you live your life? An actual theme given the situation in the world. Are you living a scared life or a sacred life in the sense of being whole.

We invite artists from different disciplines and from all over the world that are interested in this theme to contact us and get further details.

My long term aim is to enlarge the movement and establish a kind of retreat or museum of Medicine Art = Modern SacredArt in which inner and outer beauty come together, where lectures, concerts workshops are given. Physical and spiritual wellness in one and preferably in a warm climate near the sea. A Cosmic Renaissance. People who are interested to connect may contact us.

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