

Press release:

Art that Heals

Curated by:

Jean-Hubert Martin

March 6 - April 6, 2002

Opening reception: Wednesday, March 6, 6-8 pm

Joe Ben
Cai Guo-Qiang
Gedewon
Gera
Daniel Spoerri

The dominance of present art theory tends to make forget old functions that are sometimes still very much alive in non-western cultures and that may be revived in western contemporary art.

Beauty was in the past often connected with religious activity. People honor and worship gods with the most beautiful things they have. But also healing rituals involve an aesthetic dimension. The Platonic idea of the connection between goodness and beauty seems irrelevant for post-modern art, especially because the meaning is more important than the formal expression or, better, the formal expression has to be determined by the idea and the meaning.



Joe Ben Installation from *Galerie des Cinq Continents*, Musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris, 1995

Nevertheless the question of this connection of beauty with good health, the wealth of the body, is coming back to us through artists from other cultures. Illness and suffering are present in the works of Beuys and Tapes for instance to a point where it is not clear whether the fetishist aspect is just external or has played a curative role. The anthropological point of view seems to become ever growing in art. It allows a certain communication between works of different cultures, even if it is a sort of delayed communication, corresponding to the specificity of art.

Art that Heals will include an on-site sandpainting by Joe Ben, a Navajo Indian living in New Mexico, who learned from his father, a medicine man, the traditional curing rituals of sandpainting; a sculpture of two human figures by Cai Guo-Qiang, a Chinese artist living in New York, which reflects traditional Chinese medicines by using moxa sticks with therapeutic herbs to heal individuals; drawings by Gera and Gedewon, two Ethiopian scholars who make talismanic paintings to cure their patients; and Daniel Spoerri's *La pharmacie bretonne*, a traveling pharmacy packed with the healing waters of Brittany.

A color brochure containing an essay by Jean-Hubert Martin will be available free of charge. Please contact apexart for further information.

Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11-6.

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