

Artistic Statement

Beyond Oneness

bridging the seen and the unseen

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BACKGROUND

From my childhood I remember a repetitive dream in which I was an eagle, soaring high in a limitless sky as light as a feather and looking at the world below.

A sense of overview and focus and a deep understanding of all there is and ever will be ...

A state of peace and ultimate freedom, absence of space and time ...

An experience of the indescribable feeling of Oneness, the undivided Wholeness of being ...

It initiated my quest into reality, the mystery of being.

From an early age the boundless beauty of nature gives me a sense of wonder and awe. It lured me again and again to remote places all over the planet, including to my 'Inner Self'. Sometimes when I am out in nature suddenly an intense sense of harmony and coherence with the Universe overwhelms me, the oneness feeling as experienced in my repetitive dream. For instance, when I have eye-to-eye contact with an animal that comes to me out of free will choice, our souls seem to connect and we are one.

My interest into the "mystery of being" guided me into philosophy and science, activating my thinking. I experienced a limitation in my research into the interconnectedness of everything, when I tried to capture this Oneness feeling in words/language, concepts or theories. Along the scientific research, art came into my life. It balances the world of thoughts with the world of intuition, balancing my finite mind with the infinite mind through sensing with my heart. I started to develop nature photography as visual poetry to bridge the seen and the unseen. Capturing feelings creates for me an entry to sense the essence behind the eternal questions of mankind "who am I" and what is "the purpose of life".

The book Beyond Oneness provides a gateway to meditation and dreaming your own dream about the metaphysical aspects of life, the mystical. To provide an open window to enter this endless dimension. Words are kept to a minimum and the title Beyond Oneness is placed on the back of the book, so feelings induced by the cover will guide you further when you leaf through the themes.

Based on engaged questions about the deeper spiritual levels of this book, I decided to create this addendum with selected images from different themes, which serves as an extra layer of information about my consciousness of being, pointing to the a feeling Beyond Oneness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian' followed by a stylized surname. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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COVER

Touching the mystical

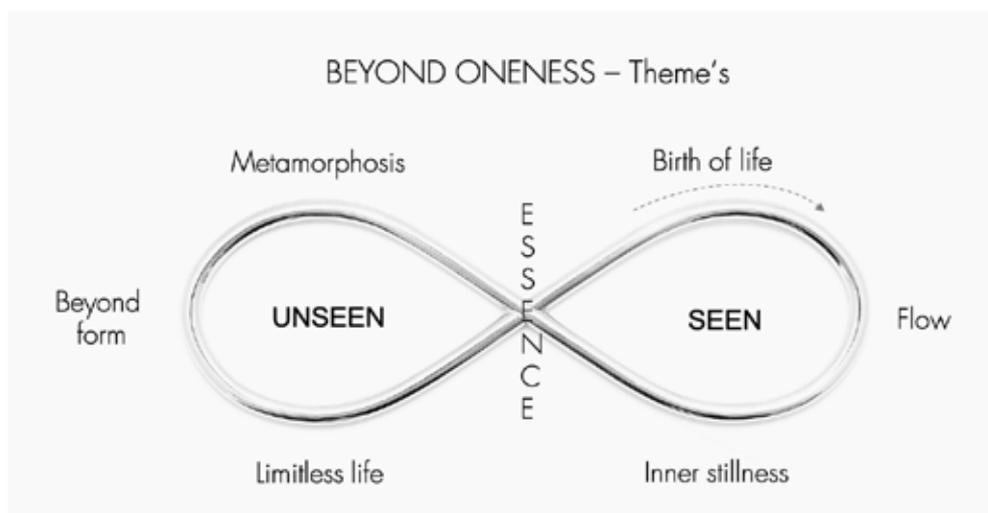
A juvenile herring gull turning into a Norwegian fjord, feels for me as looking into the mystical, luring me into its boundless dimension in which we are omnipresent. A feeling that initiated my quest into the mystery of being.

THEMES

Over time the feeling of Beyond Oneness became synonymous for me with the 'indescribable', the cosmic womb, from which we are born and return. A symbolic and metaphoric description that can be found in various ancient faith traditions, religions and ancient wisdom. In my life I have been attracted to insights in what connects us all, beyond religious boundaries, often coherent with a multitude of perspectives on something that is endlessly bigger than ourselves, the nothingness, the emptiness, the void, Beyond Oneness that encompasses all there is and ever will be.

The themes follow a rhythm often encountered in life. Out of Oneness we come into form, into the world of polarity and duality, space and time. Flow can be experienced, when we are connected with the flow that sustains the whole Universe, Wu Wei in Taoist terms, expressed as effortless creation.

This brings us to the Inner Stillness, a place where our finite mind cannot enter, allowing us to touch the essence of non-duality. From there a transformation can take place, a growth in consciousness to go beyond form, entering the experience of limitless life, the reunion with Beyond Oneness. It invites us to think and feel interconnectedness, undivided wholeness, hope, trust and love. This often in contrast to the elements of separateness, competition and fear in society as we observe widely at this point in time. Both perspectives are apparently needed and underline the evolution of human consciousness toward wholeness, reuniting with the 'indescribable'.





Bridging the seen and the unseen

The subtitle of the book is symbolized with a capture of the dynamics of flight from a Monarch butterfly. The butterfly bridges the left side (black) with the right side (black), a transformation in our life to discover that 'seen' and 'unseen' are just two perspectives of the same. A feeling that embraced me, when I was suddenly surrounded by millions of Monarch butterflies fluttering around me at the start of their migration in Mexico.



The Vision

An encounter in the sacred valley of the Inca's in Peru, while looking for endemic hummingbirds, felt like a gift of nature to remind me of the deeper message.

The bearded mountaineer hummingbird sips nectar from a torch Lilly and creates a perfect living cross, when it is exactly behind the flower. The horizontal bar of the cross symbolizes for me the connection of all living creatures in our biosphere and the vertical bar the connection between heaven and earth. They meet in the heart of every living creature; we are one with nature and all interconnected. A symbol that fills me with hope and trust.

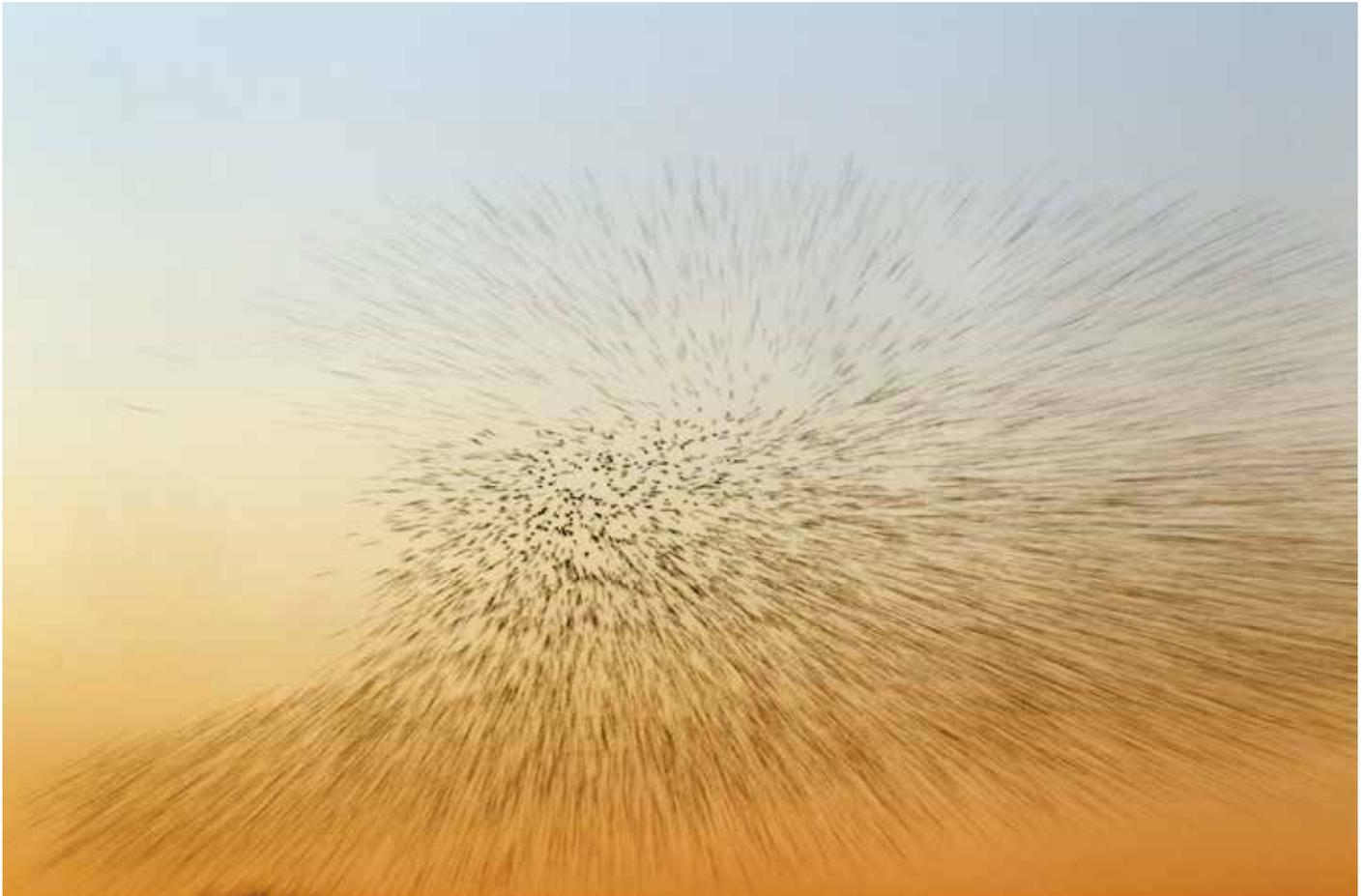


Circle of Life

In South Africa I noticed a tree after a bush fire comprised of two entangled parts, one part that was burned and the other that was still alive. I captured the scene in an impressionistic style creating a merger of the two parts, expressing that death and life are different perspectives of the same flow. From a duality perspective both give meaning to each other. From a non-duality perspective, we are not born and we do not die, but our form (physical body) is born and dies, our awareness and consciousness are timeless.

THEME: BIRTH OF LIFE

A visual story of the creation of the Universe and all interconnected life inspired by science, modern cosmology and metaphysics, guided by Taoist symbolism. When from Oneness the Universe burst into being 'polarity', time and space were formed. A Universe characterized by living light, effortless creation and rhythms of energy. Out of the Oneness, 'One' was formed, that gave birth to 'Two'. Two formed Three, relationships expressed in synergy and coherence. Three yields all things (symbolically referred to as the 10.000 things in Taoism), the web of life. All are connected.



The burst

From Oneness the Universe burst into being. Movement as the essence of life. A turning of a large starling flock expresses this burst not experienced as a big bang, but the Universe coming into being as a peaceful and soft breath of unconditional love and freedom.



Life energy, Qi

An arctic skua flying upwards in front of me while in a boat in a Norwegian fjord, illustrates the dynamic cosmic energy that pervades our Universe and provides effortless creation. This image closely resembles my perception of Qi, the cosmic life force as written in Chinese in the Cao Shu period, Song dynasty 960 – 1276 BC.



One in Oneness

A giraffe in the savannah of Africa representing 'one' coming into form, reflecting the deeper interconnectedness with the origin. A feeling of being One or Oneness or both at the same time, Beyond Oneness. For me an essential question that presents itself in life every now and then. I seem to live in two worlds that are One. In the epilogue of the book a robin in our back garden teaches me that 'being' is what matters.



All things

A large group of migrating barn swallows in South Africa. When zoomed-in, the image shows the individual movements as each individual catches insects on their way, others move in the main direction of the group showing connectivity at work. The image reflects humanity as part of the natural world, at a reductionistic level we behave as individuals, from a holistic perspective we are just one organism.

THEME: FLOW

During my first visit to the Norwegian fjords to photograph white-tailed eagles. I experienced the beauty of gulls. My preconceived notion that gulls were not attractive objects to study disappeared in a split of a second, when I saw them in beautiful light. A moment of becoming aware that innocence is very valuable, a gateway to see the world with an open mind. It fueled my creativity.

In this theme the feeling of flow, absence of self-consciousness, is reflected in images of herring gulls and ospreys embracing and integrating the elements of water – symbol for emotion and wisdom – and air, symbol for a new beginning and creativity.

When flow is experienced, we are connected with the deeper flow that sustains the whole Universe, a state of being expressed as Wu Wei in Taoist terms.

“Bend with the wind and flow with the water” (Tao Te Ching)

Flowing turn of life



THEME: INNER STILLNESS

“Be still..... stillness reveals the secrets of eternity” (Tao Te Ching)

Simplicity, silence and stillness is reflected in the beauty and elegance of nature, a mystical peace found in Inner Stillness. Ever since my first visit to Japan some 35 years ago, I found all these aspects back in culture and nature. Stillness experienced from various perspectives is reflected in this visual series made in Hokkaido in winter.

I experienced intimate moments to enjoy solitude, being alone without being lonely as the selected image reflects. A whooper swan in a small hot spring in a frozen lake, becoming slowly visible when the fog disappeared, a feeling of balance within and being connected with all there is.

Solitude



THEME ESSENCE

Traveling to Africa induced a shift in my focus from birds to mammals, as they are so strongly represented in that continent. African energy is a strong portal to sense our connection with all living creatures in the Universe. 'Stand your ground' and 'See yourself reflected in the natural world around you,' was intensified in my life. The strong earth energy in the continent made me feel at home close to the source of all life.

Meeting a baboon one day became a memorable event, when he crossed his hands and watched me closely in the eye. A feeling of wisdom and compassion overwhelmed me; compassion is born out of the essence of Oneness.

"The master has compassion because he understands the whole" - Tao Te Ching

Compassion



THEME: METAMORPHOSIS

Transformation from egg-caterpillar-chrysalis into a butterfly is a metaphor for awakening of our soul. It guides us into the dimension where thoughts, words, concepts and theories are superfluous and the voice of judgement becomes silent and fear disappears: an entry into the mystical, beyond space and time.

The migration of the monarch butterfly is a true natural wonder. When the wintering monarchs leave Mexico in early March, eggs are laid in the south of the United States, after which this generation dies. The next generation flies further north, lays eggs, dies also. They travel further until the fourth generation is born. This is called the 'Methuselah' generation, because they live the longest. This generation migrates from Canada and the north of the United States to the exact same area in Mexico, where their great-great-grandparents have wintered. They arrive in November, hibernate until the beginning of March and complete the annual cycle. The arrival moment coincides with the celebration of the 'Día de los Muertos', the day of the dead. This day is celebrated annually in Mexico from October 31 to November 2. A long time ago, before the Spanish era, the Purepecha, an Indian people from Michoacán, saw long strings of butterflies arriving at the same time every year. It was believed that the human soul could not die, and returned to earth as a spirit every year at the same time, as a butterfly.

This feeling of the endless cycle of life resonates with the butterflies as symbol for transformation. Their movement sometimes seems chaotic to us, but it is not. Everything is connected, and from the perspective of the whole, chance and chaos have no meaning. As I became absorbed in all those wonderful butterfly movements, an intense feeling of freedom filled me and my soul fluttered with the butterflies on their endless journey in complete freedom.

Spirits of the forest



THEME: BEYOND FORM

Ultimate freedom and interconnectedness, a state of being beyond borders. Millions of starlings dancing in perfect harmony high in the sky forming continuous changing shapes and forms, are mesmerizing and inviting us to join and fly away as luminous beings, beyond the horizon.

It all happened in Rome that evening that we found approximately 2 million starlings dancing in the sky, while various peregrine falcons were attacking. It created the most spectacular view of dancing forms and shapes I have ever seen. When gulls passed the immense flock of starlings, it felt like I glimpsed into Heaven.

As it is in Heaven



THEME: LIMITLESS LIFE

Timeless, spaceless and omnipresence are transcending our understanding into 'Beyond Oneness'

One afternoon I saw the sun flickering in between the trees as we passed a small forested area by car. Without thinking I experimented with long shutter speeds and intuitive movement of my camera. It seemed as if I entered a new dimension and abstract images appeared that provide a glimpse of eternity. One of them reminded me of a person in meditation sitting in the full lotus position in a cross-legged fashion and looking away from me into the future. The past is gone and the future is not there, the presence is all there is.

Meditation



The process of meditation by turning inwards, reaching out to the Inner Self, was reflected when an Inca tern in Peru turned its head backwards. Only its two whiskers could be seen and the black surrounding its head, symbolizes the connection with all there is via the Inner Self.



Touching the Inner Self



A black stork catching a fish in Hungary photographed from the back, its two legs still visible. It illustrates for me a singular point in time and space when its bill finds the water. The moment in meditation when we touch non-duality.

Singular point in time and space



A great white egret flies over the Caño Negro in Costa Rica towards the unseen. Its reflection symbolizing the unseen and it slowly blends into omnipresence.

Omnipresence



EPILOQUE

The first rays of the sun shine on my notebook, while a dunnoek sings exuberantly from the top of a small bush in our garden. I leaf through my book *Beyond Oneness* and pause at the image of a giraffe in the African landscape.

What passes through my mind is that in 'One and Oneness' all the mysticism of life is expressed. The Oneness is, was and always will be. Who am I if 'One' does not exist, but is a reflection of the 'Oneness'? Or am I both at the same time? *Beyond Oneness* perhaps?

A familiar robin is now turning over soil in our garden. When I woke up this morning it was his song that brought me into the here and now. With a curious and penetrating look he connects with me, a compassionate feeling permeates me and the robin seems to tell me: 'Trust life, you are fine just as you are'. I am filled with a mixture of tears and joy.

My thinking disappears and I float away into the indescribable ...

