

Engraving, she says

Carnelian beads.

Beads from the Harappan civilization, with geometric designs created by applying soda ash, then heated and marked with an indelible white imprint. Pearls encrusted with white alkali and engraved with infinite variations of lines and patterns.

Pearls like countless little jewels from the Bronze Age, like so many adornments and ornaments that play on beauty, seduction and spirituality, blending the material with the immaterial, the tangible with the abstract, the temporal with the spiritual.

And putting into action contemporary issues that are still relevant today.

From the orange pearls of the Indus Valley to modern and contemporary engravings, from this primitive art connected to our modernity: the temporary crossing will have lasted millennia.

Yet long before the Indus Valley, as far back as the Neanderthals, millennia before Homo sapiens, the act of engraving was already at work.

And it was in this act of creation, in this act of digging, scratching, engraving and also using solid colours, that Neanderthal men and women were already intensely involved.

After making their lithic tools, digging and engraving the walls of their caves, after observing the world around them, they took the time to conceive the lines and took the time for thought, questioning and reflecting before the gesture.

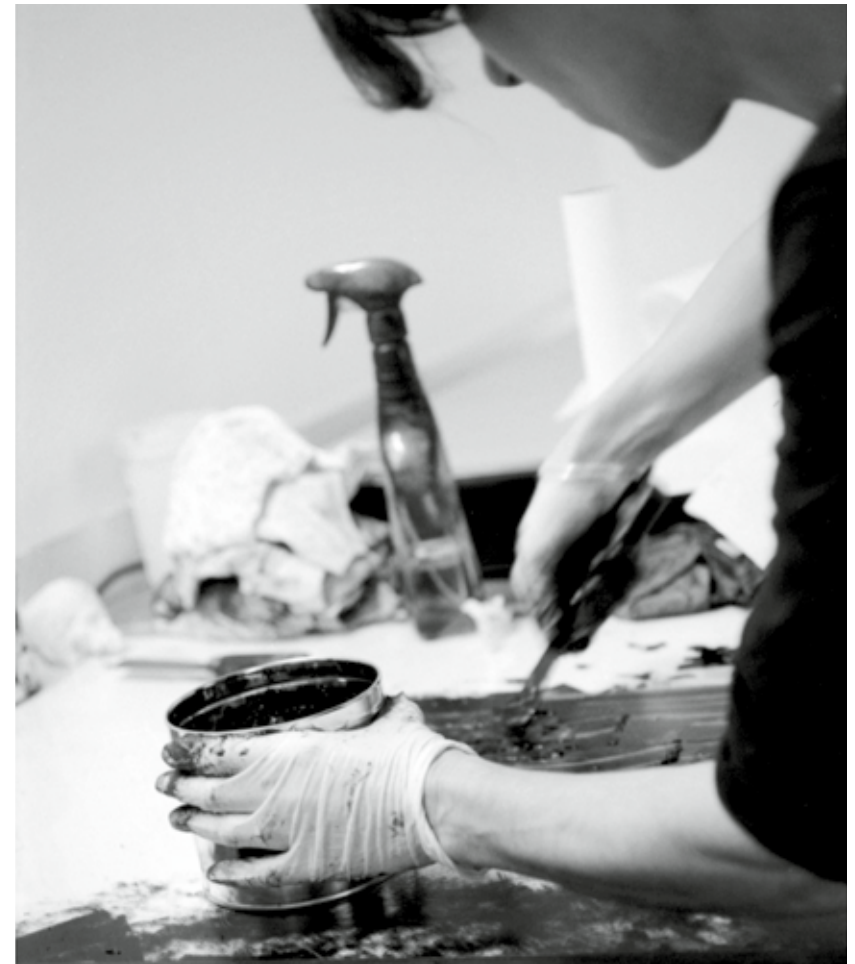
And it was by consciously and willingly combining the time for imagination and abstraction with the time for elaboration, without which nothing is possible, neither content nor form, that they generated their engraved images.

In desire, in awareness and in will: it is in this dynamic, in this gesture and in this creative process that Eva Garcia finds herself.

Engraving, she says

Engraving or tracing, biting, digging, digging with claws, with fangs, digging with tools, cutting, carving: *Intaglio*.

Engraving with tools, sumptuous extensions of the hand, with burins, castors, agates, burnishers, scrapers, needles and the press.



Engraving with ink, solvents and mordants, with acid, pigments, binders and etching.

Engraving on countless media such as stone, wood, copper, zinc, glass, metal and also paper, all kinds of paper.

Engraving bodies with scalpels, scissors, needles and knives: *Scarification*.

Engraving bodies by tattooing, yesterday with bone needles or quills, with animal teeth, metal awls or stone blades, with ink and pigments.



Engraving the earth with pruning shears, pickaxes, spades, hoes, harrows, claws and fangs, grelinettes and scrapers.

So many surfaces worked or decorated with marks, hollows, striations, lines and grooves, wrinkles and grooves.

All of these practices echo those of modern and contemporary engravers, and are directly linked to the work of Éva Garcia, whose path has taken many twists and turns.

From her native Dordogne, she retains the freedom and violent beauty of shapes and colours. At the age of 17, she left for the United States, returned, found herself in hypokhâgne, arrived in Paris at the age of 20 and enrolled at the Sorbonne.

Initially self-taught, it was drawing and reading that captivated her. She then moved on to textiles, furniture and lighting, and it was while working with brass, glass and mirrors that she began to explore the question of how to create light from opacity. Initiated by Mireille Baltar and Bo Halbirk, the answer was obvious: engraving.

And it is now in an intense *corps à corps*, the body of the artist, the body of the etching, that she sets into motion a choreography that plays with the weight of her large-format metal plates.

Éva Garcia is an engraver who handles her tools with dexterity and reflection: drypoint, burin, coloured pencils, graphite and the heaviness of the press.

And who, with method and spontaneity, juggles her media and materials: tinted paper, Japanese paper or cotton paper, zinc, and always typographic ink and again ink in washes and sometimes gouache and charcoal.

Not forgetting carborundum, the black of black, an almost living material whose grain creates depths of tone, nuances, gradations, half-tones and tremors of colour.

Radical and determined, Garcia plays with a chromatic range of greys, blacks and whites, punctuated by a blue that resonates in infinite variations, syncopations and jerky rhythms, as if echoing Brahms and his *Variations on a Theme* of Paganini.

And to the graduated half-tones of Tony Cragg's *First Era* or the blacks, whites and greys of the zips engraved on copper plates in *Notes*, and Barnett Newman's *Untitled #1* and *Untitled #2* series.

Engraving, then, is the main focus, but also, in resonance and dialogue, stone.

Criss-crossing the Dordogne, a land as raw as it is gentle, made up of rocks and forests, ravines, valleys and limestone cliffs where Lascaux meets Bara Bahau, Éva Garcia discovers



raw blocks or blocks that have had a function, like old door lintels, remnants, fragments of stories and narratives that have gone before us and that are still here in other ways.

Recovered block-sculptures that bring into play almost the same processes as the act of engraving. From directly carving onto limestone blocks, to the engravings *Temps du ver-tige*, *Corps lourds*, *Pierres angulaires*, *No Lasting Forms* and *Enjambées*, not forgetting the *Présence* series, Éva Garcia develops sequences, plays on and with the principle of repetition, and creates series that she unfolds like so many musical movements.

In her two practices: weight, density and texture.

In her two visions of the world: the presence of the cut-up, fragmented, disjointed body, and always the presence of stone.

As in Giovanni Anselmo's granite *Untitled*, Richard Long's *Cornish Stone Circle*, Ulrich Rückriem's *Menhirs* or Andy Goldsworthy's *Nettle Stalks Wall*.

From engraving to sculpture, from solid colours to volume, there is always a relationship to the body, to gesture, to the hand, all at the same time. And at the same time, Garcia sets in motion a relationship with the cerebral, with questioning and analysis.

Moving from one to the other, she moves from spontaneity to reflective thought, from the impulsive and improvised to the precise and focused gesture. It is in these constituent movements of her production and in these shifts from one state to another, from one reality to another, that Garcia situates herself. As much as in her relationship with the written word and literature.

And in this in-betweenness, she finds a point of balance, a point of convergence in which the craftsman and the artist merge to form a single body, a single mind: a single being.

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