

## Forces of Nature

### Footprints

In an ongoing work began in early 2011, the artist is still involved in the process of collecting “footprints” of various locations around the globe.

In New York City, he spread a blank canvas on a busy street, collecting the tire tracks, footprints, documenting the passage of a typical New York day. These environmental works carry a subtle message that the forces of nature are greater than those of man, and should be respected and preserved at any cost. These methods strive to convey that message, as not only a call for ecological preservation, but a respect for the effects of natural degradation and the continual cycle of transformation that is forever taking place in our universe., *ie., the law of change.*

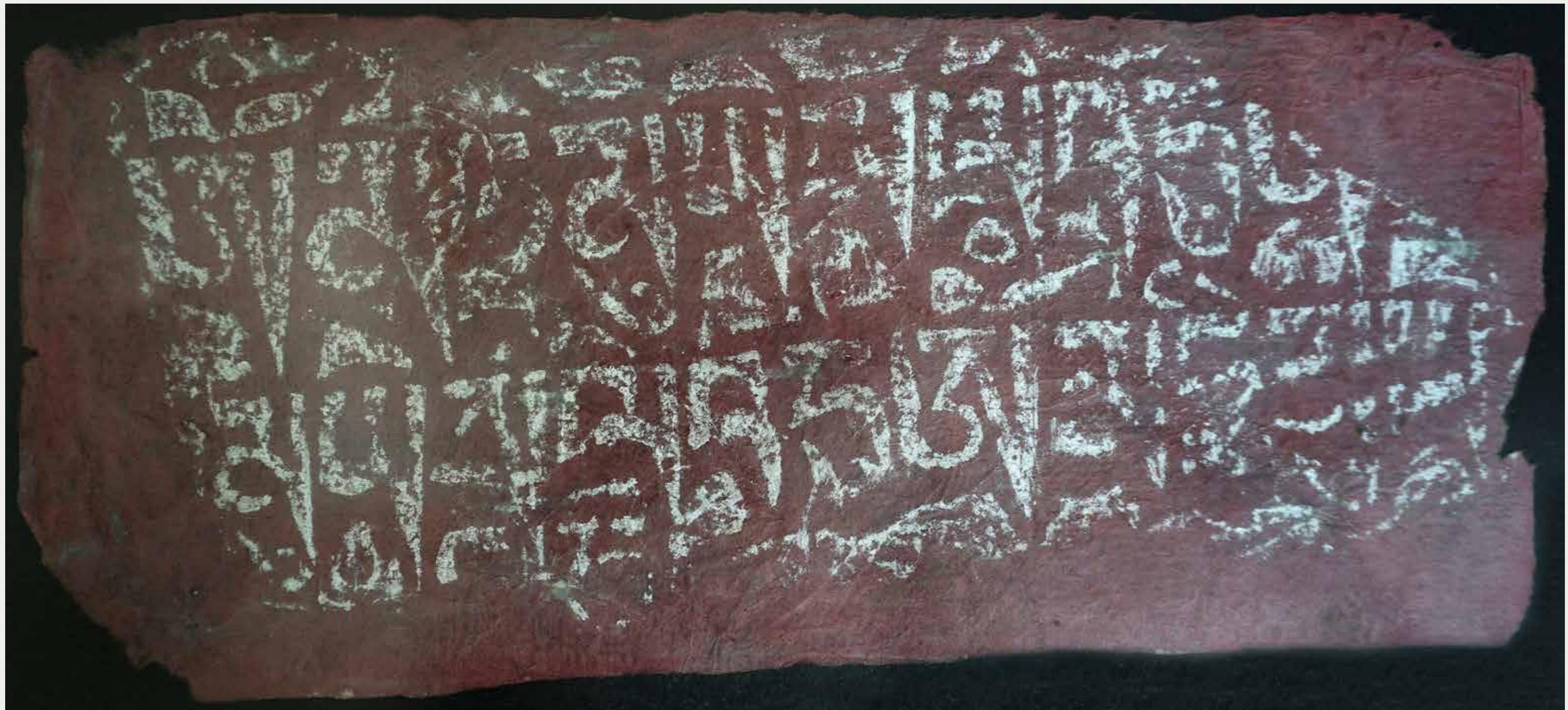
*This Taoist law states that the only unchanging principal in the universe is that everything exists is in a constant state of change.*

In the outer reaches of the Dolpo area of Nepal, the Artist took rubbings of mantras on local Mani stones, which are stone plates, rocks, inscribed with the six syllabled mantra of Avalokiteshvara *Om mani padme hum*, (hence the name “Mani stone”), as a form of prayer in Tibetan Buddhism. The term Mani stone may also be used in a loose sense to refer to stones on which any mantra or devotional designs are inscribed. Mani stones are intentionally placed along the roadsides and rivers or placed together to form mounds or sometimes long walls, as an offering to spirits of place or creating and carving mani stones as devotional or intentional process art is a traditional act of piety.

The rubbings were done with candle wax on to rice paper, and the stones careful not to leave an imprint or trace upon them, carefully returned to their original positions. The Nepalese hand made rice paper was then dipped in a mud made from the local red earth. This process brought the wax imprints into the foreground, resisting the water based mud slurry.

The result, an impromptu batik, a devotional earth based art, chronicles the Tibetan Buddhist respect for the environment, reminds one of the mantras.

During a stay at a Tibetan Monastery in Nepal, in the late 1990's, Gentile was asked to paint the ubiquitous “Eyes of Buddha” on a high spot of the *Gomba*. *“A symbol of omnipresent compassion, and the unity of all things”* Although Art for Art's sake is seen as a manifestation of the ego, which through meditation the doctrine strives to annihilate, devotional works are highly revered. *“I was glad to do it, and don't claim to adhere to any single doctrine, I just help out where I can”*, Gentile states.



Further projects seek to capture the imprint of weather, wind, the sun, and movements of the desert. This will complete the "Forces of Nature" in the environments of Ice, Tropical Rain Forests, Jungles, Mountains, Deserts, Seaside, and urban capitals around the globe in all climate zones.

*"Im creating a record, trying to capture an atmosphere, not necessarily trying to make a statement about the environment, but hopefully if this aspect of my work raises awareness of the changing environment, in society as well as in nature, so much the better." the artist states.*

In the Autumn of 2015, A work made of buried animal droppings, fallen leaves and molds from the heart of the forest was realized in Yosemite national park over the course of a 4 week period.

A canvas spread in a market place in Marrakesh collected the marks of wooden cartwheels, camel prints, and the barefeet and sandals of the passing inhabitants. The entire work will be complete and ready for presentation sometime around 2020, after his planned excursion to Mongolia.

### **Ice Paintings**

The artist travelled to northern Sweden in the month of February in order to create a series of works, intentionally subjected to the forces of nature. In this case pigments frozen by sub zero temperatures crystalized forming a pattern once again guided by the hand of nature.

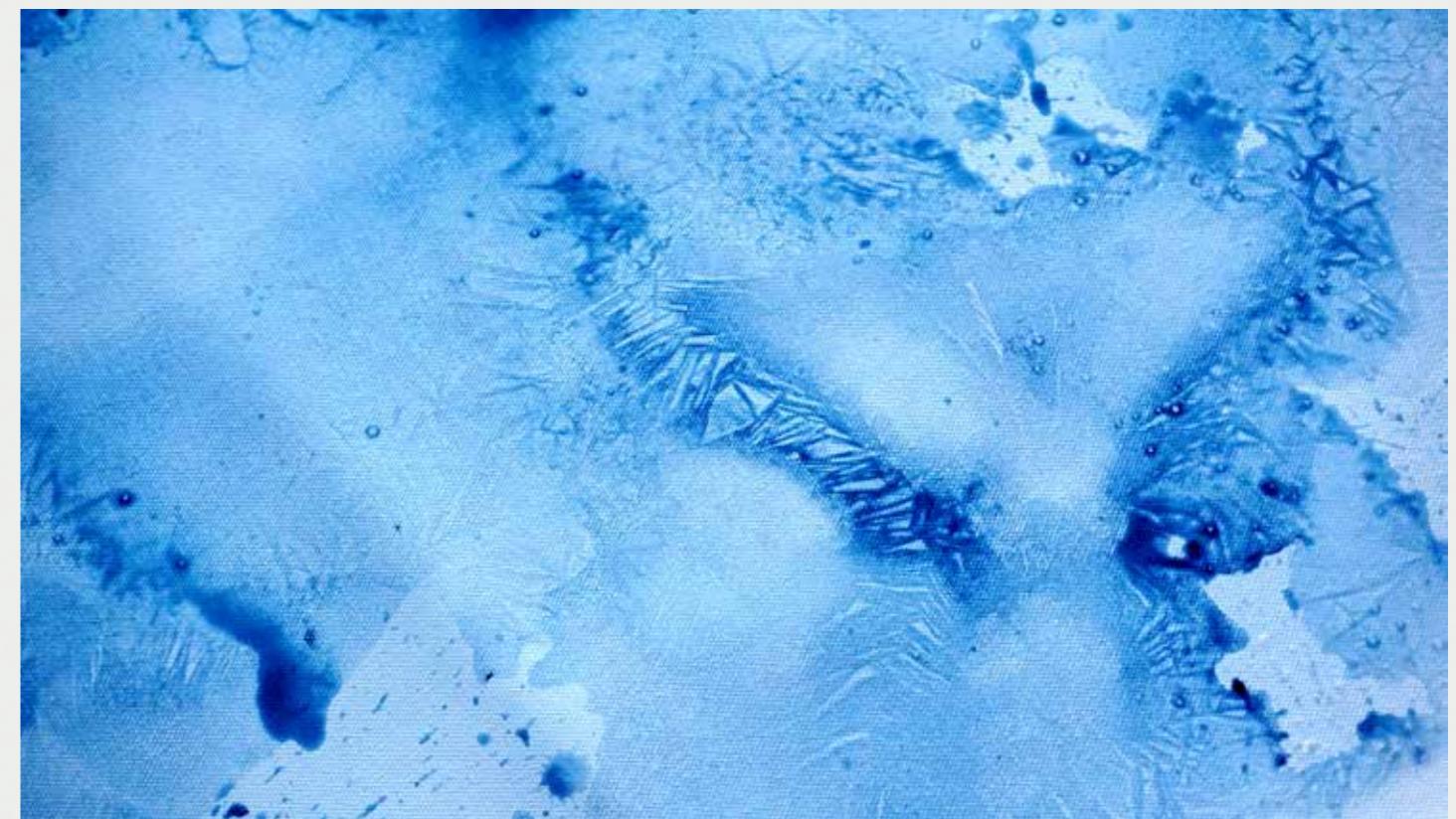


Kopmanholm, Swedish archipelego February 2016





*Left to the frozen arctic temperatures the pigment crystallizes*



*The completed work, a record of the effects. "Ice work II" February 2016*

*The effect of frozen pigment  
on canvas. (Detail) Ice Painting  
Nuroara, Northern Sweden  
winter, 2016*



### Alien

In 2010 Gentile made as he describes it, “a sort of African inspired UFO landed Alien”. The piece, a life sized statue carved in sandstone, something that represented both the primitive and the futuristic, was then left alone in a shaded garden, it became rooted, grew mold and as he put it, “more than being *on* the earth, is in the process of becoming *part of the earth itself*.”

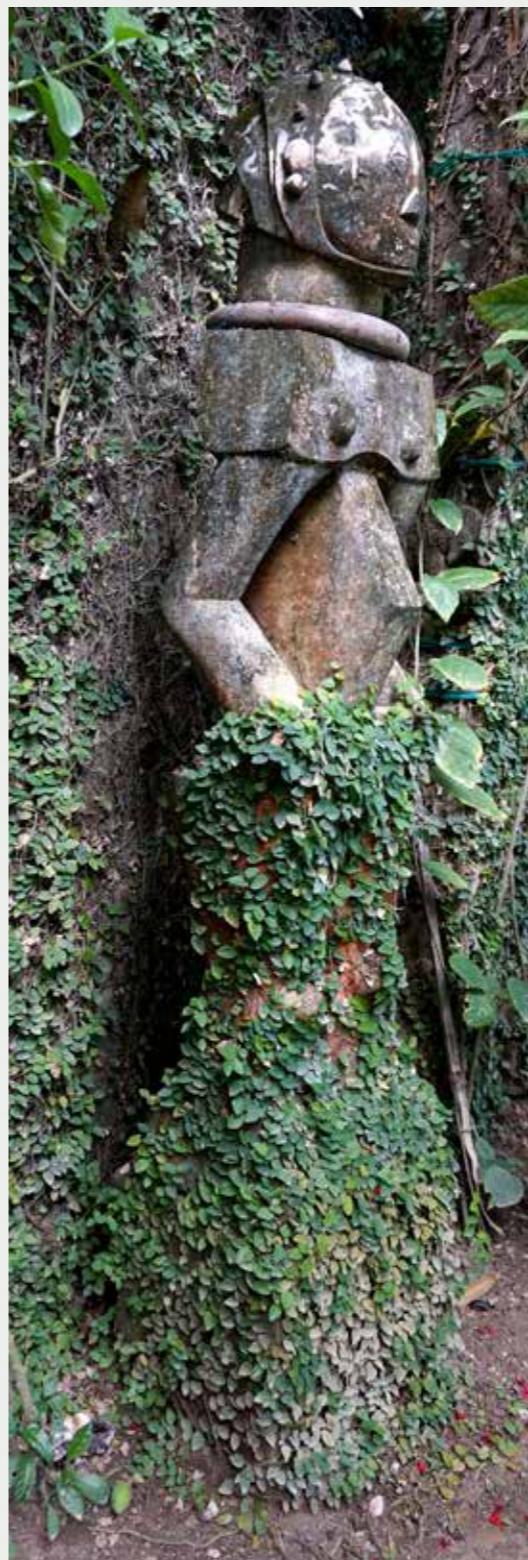
The forces of nature are leaving their mark; the current step in the ongoing evolution of the work is that is no longer guided by the artist's hand, but by nature herself.

This reference, a continuing theme in the artist's most recent work.

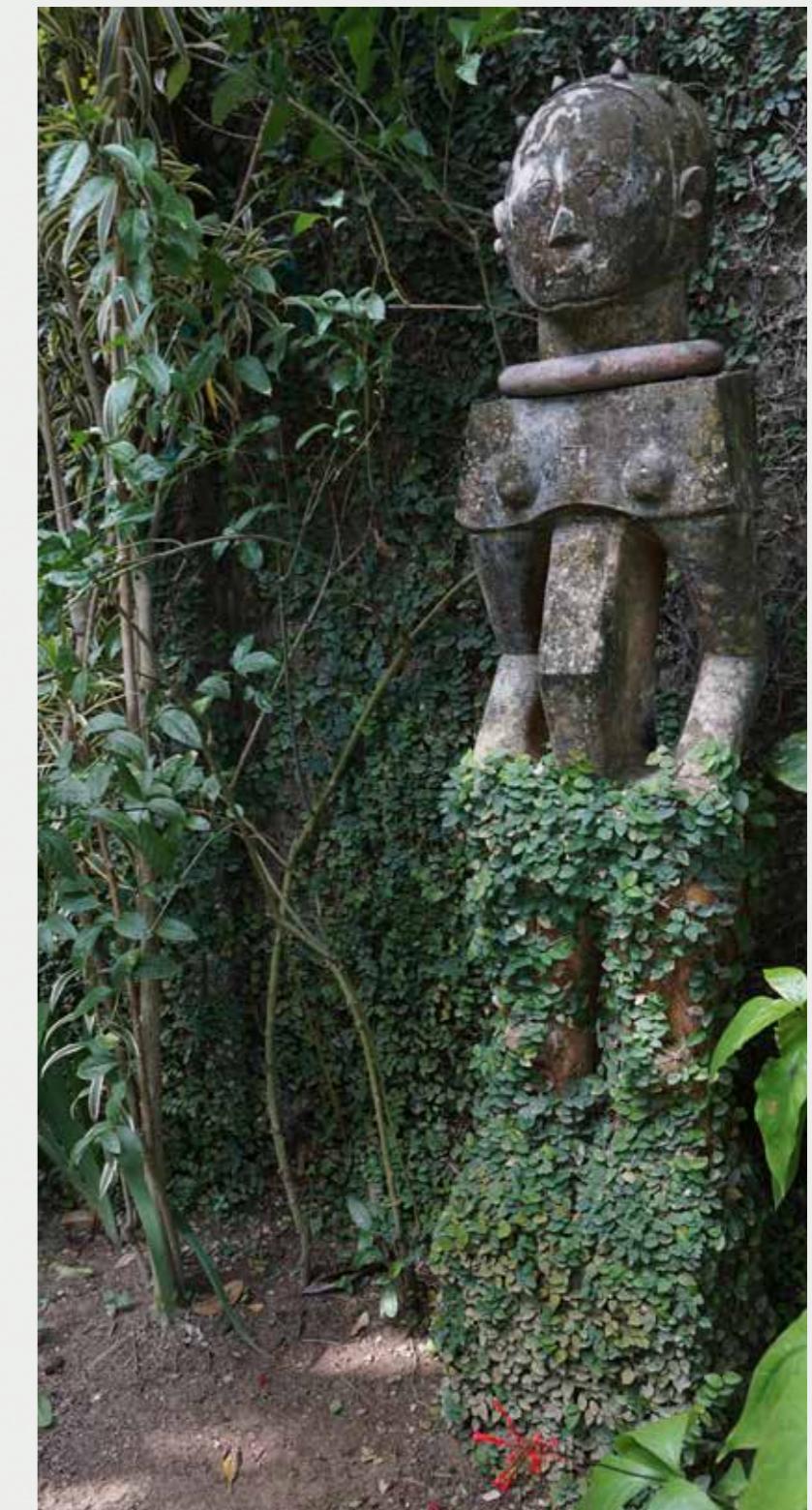
*The original work as started in 2010*



*“Alien” after 5 years on planet Earth; left to the forces of nature after being in the jungle for 5 years.*



*“Alien”, an ongoing work in its current incarnation, as of December, 2016.*



The artist continues to explore the effects of the forces of environmental degradation and encourages the growth of mold, insect inhabitation, rust, rot and weather in an attempt to form a symbiotic relationship between the work and nature, perhaps leading to the final step of complete demolishing of the work, returning it to fertil soil and to feed the growth of new vegetation or spawning of new life itself.

In this way the works signify the transience of life itself, the circle of life, and on to reincarnate and continue the cycle of birth and rebirth.



Plate 14 "Fly" mixed media on canvas 5 x 2.5m (196 x 98 inches) Bali 1998



Uncovering a buried canvas Bali Indonesia



A first look at a section of the rotted canvas, exhumed after 3 weeks under the jungle floor.

#### Unearthed:

In this installment of the "Forces of Nature" series, Gentile buried canvases and wooden objects in the jungle of Indonesia and left them to be rotted and stained, by the soil and insects, and what may come about after (in the above case) 3 weeks underground.

In this case some of the actual soil remains stuck to the canvas. In previous attempts canvases unearthed after 6 weeks the canvas was rotted beyond salvation but for a few scraps the artist mounted and saved.

In many Eastern cultures there is a belief that a certain magnetic field or energy exists under the ground and is the source and influence of what happens above it. In this case Gentile wanted to capture the effects of such energy and embody it in this chronicle.

## Buried Treasures. Environmental Degradation

Further investigations into this principal of birth, death, and rebirth are evident in these wooden pieces. Here the process is interrupted in its transition, documenting the stages of degradation/transition, along the journey.

The affects of rot on wooden surfaces and sun baked, faded and cracked painted bits of old wooden boats, produced affects previously used in his works reappear in various contexts, and are appreciated for their random patterns and textures, guided by the hand of nature.

A statue purchased in a handicraft shop was buried for a year cleaned, and sun dried, leaving behind the ghost like essence of the form, once again attesting to the effects of rot and degradation and chronicling the passage of time..

These works can be seen as a metaphor attesting to the superficial degradation of the human form while simultaneously exposing its true substance, over the passage of time.



"Spirit II 50cm X 10cm. 2014-2015"

In earlier works, (*Topeng*, *Heavens Gate*, *Lo Tek, Construction III*, et al.) the artist arranged and composed works using the effects of time and weather, to speak of the passage of time and the aging process. These assemblages, tho a vital part of his ongoing practice are related to this body of work, but a different result is sought after here.

In these works the Artist encourages the weathering, process, and supplies the initial form for the sake of a recognizable ground, identifiable in its stages of decay. An awareness that there are only steps to this endless transmogrification and that for most of us there is no final stop in this physical and spiritual cycle of birth, death and rebirth. While something is "dying," it is actually in the process of "becoming" something else.

Once again we find the Artist referencing these principals in his work; the principals in Buddhism pertaining to this endless cycle referred to as *Samsara*, indeed, The entire universal process of beings being reborn again and again is called "wandering about" is *Samsara* .

Reincarnation is the philosophical or religious concept that an aspect of a living being starts a new life in a different physical body or form after each physical death. It is also called rebirth or transmigration, and is a part of the *Samsara* doctrine of cyclic existence. It is a central tenet of all major Indian religions, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

The idea of reincarnation is found in many ancient cultures, and a belief in rebirth/metempsychosis was held by Greek historic figures, such as Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato. It is also a common belief of various ancient and modern religions that the Artist has encountered in his studies and extensive travels, such as Spiritism, Theosophy, and is found as well in many tribal societies around the worldn places such as Australia, East Asia, Siberia, and South America.



## Footprints:

### Working with Komodo Dragons

In 2010 Gentile was commissioned by the Komodo Putri Naga foundation of Indonesia, to create a piece that would raise awareness of the plight of the endangered Komodo dragon. These carnivorous throwbacks to the dinosaur ages are highly poisonous can grow up to 8 meters long and have been known to kill and eat human beings!

The Artist travelled with a team of assistants, to the remote Island of Komodo in the Indonesian archipelago, the sanctuary of these endangered and hostile creatures. There they set cement and and using a dead chicken on a rope attempted to lure the hungry dragons into the cement, in order to capture their footprints, which he then made into a silicon mold to be cast in bronze.

This dangerous undertaking was done with the assistance of a team of 40 professional “Dragon handlers” supplied by the Komodo Putri Naga Foundation.

See the film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOjcNbq67qc>



The 4 meter Komodo Dragon was lured into the cement for the molds



Gentile preparing the cement for the silicon to be poured



The molds being lifted from the dried cement.



Department of Aboriginal Affairs Queensland Australia.

This piece of Earth art constitutes a clear reference to American Land art – a movement originated in the late 1960s and that employs landscape as means of creation – and as from ancient times, Australian aboriginal culture also produced a genre of aerial landscape art, often titled simply “country”.

It is a kind of maplike, bird’s-eye view of the desert landscape, and it is often meant to tell a traditional Dreaming story. In the distant past, the common media for such artwork were rock, sand or body painting, but the tradition continues today in the form of coloured drawings with liquid based colour on canvas. In 1971–1972, art teacher Geoffrey Bardon encouraged Aboriginal people in Papunya, north west of Alice Springs to put their Dreamings onto canvas. These stories had previously been drawn on the desert sand, and were now given a more permanent form. The dots were used to cover secret-sacred ceremonies, some of these are secret designs restricted to a ritual context and were not considered for this project.

The artist was approached by a group of legal representatives of aboriginal affairs, conceived as collaboration between Gentile and local Aborigine artists of the Australian outback. Part of the concept was to raise awareness and to bring attention to the impoverished tribes of the area, and indeed to create jobs in the actual execution and ongoing maintenance of the work.

The work gentile conceived was to be on a scale large enough to attract attention from the air, indeed the best vantage point to take it all in, while at the same time on the ground, create an environment of a park visitors can enjoy and interact with each “dot” of the traditional Aborigonal design, as created by the Aborigonal artist.

To view the virtual concept outline in animation. Please follow the link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoNhmp7nabU&index=5&list=FLe0aReRY8tHdVcq8TNrufsg>



Ariel view proposed landwork Queensland Australia

