



THE SPANDA MONITOR

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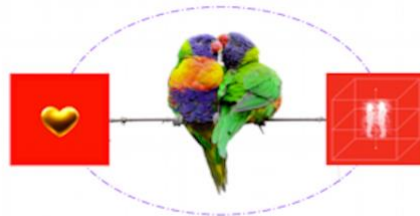
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Dear Friend,

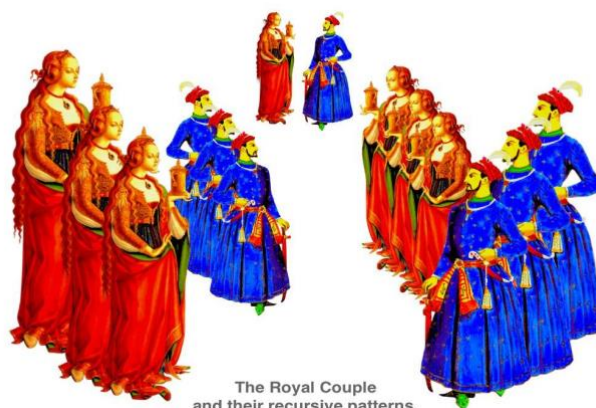
As a continuation to the previous issues, we are pleased to bring you the fourth part of the presentation of our most recent initiative of cultural philanthropy, the torchbearing artwork *Meeting in the Cave. From Polarisation to Inclusion* by the Italian artist Sahlan Momo.



4. *Being and History*

Step upon step, day after day on the ladder of consciousness challenging mindsets, testing social, cultural, political, and economic constructs, it is unhealthy to align with a sick system. Grounded spirituality, systemic intelligence, connectedness, collective awareness, the surge of the feminine, more than resilient, antifragile... moving forward.

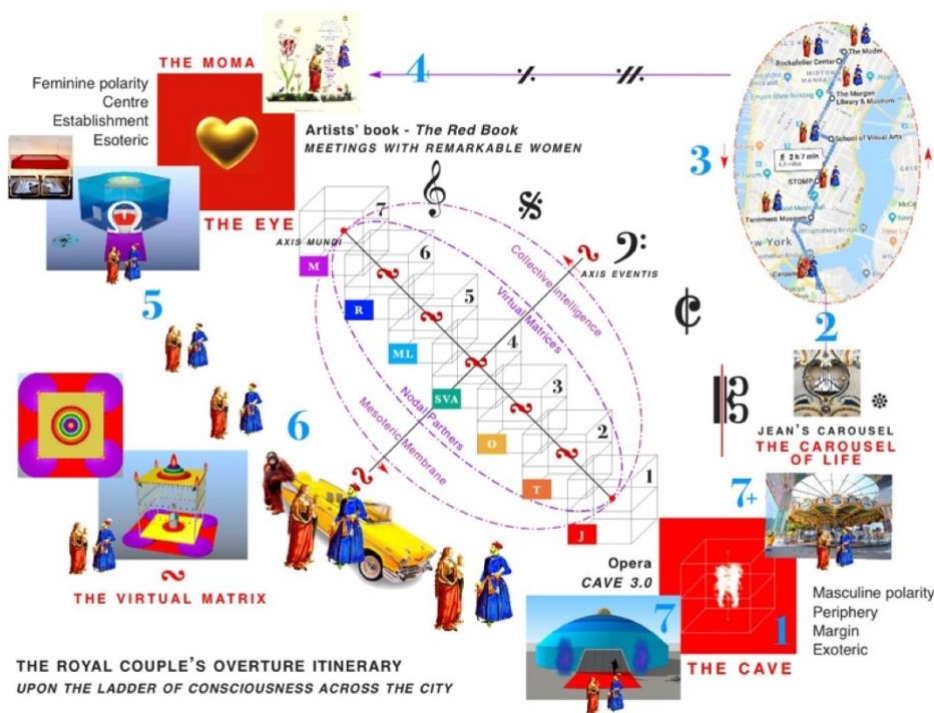
After all, we are nothing but spiritual entities transiting this phenomenal world to experience intimacy with matter, for otherwise as spiritual essences we will not be able to savour and test. A flickering path to further dimensions as sparkling crests in the ever-evolving ocean of consciousness, briefly arising to soon subside. Yet at depth, unsettled by fleeting waves from above, the restful floor shapes ripple-marks of tossed lee on steepening slopes, enriching the ocean-bed with the resonance of the brief human experience within the birth of an illusory death crashing and cherishing the healing void in between. Biographical tokens of unruly souls randomly echoing on the sensory plane strings of creative energies, weaving loose waves in notime.



On the territory, in New York City, the polarised Royal Couple, two actors dressed in the colourful attire of the *Mary Magdalene* and *The Imperial Guard* by the Italian painter Carlo Crivelli (1430-'95) and the German cartographer Heinrich Berghaus (1797-1884) respectively, is performing the *Meeting in the Cave* 21-day site-specific opera installation performance on the selected urban area spanning from Midtown Manhattan to Brooklyn. The two topographic endpoints of the sevenfold paradigm positioned on the ground, with the *Eye* and the *Cave* metaspaces, a Royal Couple's recursive pattern, notably, the Establishment and the Margin, the Feminine and Masculine, the *Eso* and *Exo* respectively at the city centre and the periphery, delineating the vertical *axis mundi*

of the work on the floor. Synchronic, yet spatially displaced, the *Eye* and the *Cave* are exchanging dimensional tokens in the digital realm, connecting and aligning five other *Nodal Partners* on the intervening area, each with its *Virtual Matrix* portal to a farther dimension. Five Virtual Matrices on the vertical axes, and two sited *extra muros* at the endpoints of the horizontal *axis eventis*, linear temporal cyphers of the artist's biographic karmic debris. Virtual Tokens? Virtual History?

THE PLACE & THE ENVIRONMENT



The *axis mundi*. The Nodal Partners: the MoMA, the Rockefeller Center, the Morgan Library, the School of Visual Art, the Orpheum Theatre, the Tenement Museum, and Jane's Carousel.

The first endpoint on the *axis mundi* visited by the Royal Couple leaping the ladder of consciousness across the city is the *Eye* metaspace ... the eye, the I, and the third eye... the feminine *eso* polarity at the city centre with its Ω entrance.



As a letter, Ω , the “great O” as opposed to the *o omicron* “little o”, the 24th and last letter of the Greek alphabet, has a value of 80 in gematria. As a sign, it was already widely used in Asia Minor by the late seventh century BC, while variants with edges facing different directions are found in the Aegean islands of Thasos, Paros, and Melos, as well as in Knidos city. It symbolises something great, or the end of a large prolonged development, be it the universe, the planet, a country, an individual, or a self. It became popular across the globe and is in use in various fields and contexts: in eschatology, denotes a time of change and rebirth, the end of something, of a cycle, or the last/final/ultimate limit; in cosmology, it defines the density of the universe; in astrology, the lunar nodes; in chemistry, the natural oxygen-18; in physics, the unit of electrical resistance ohm; in mathematics’ set theory, the first uncountable and transfinite ordinal number; in ethology, the lowest-ranking member in a pack. In *Meeting in the Cave*, it is the human cosmic yoni, the entrance/exit to the feminine *Eye* metaspace in the first Nodal Partner sited by the height of number 11 on West 53 Street, at the Museum of Modern Art, the MoMA, a world reference institution for modern and contemporary art. A museum is the house of the Muses, a feminine entity.



The Eye metaspace and the Royal Couple at the MoMA.

Founded by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, John D. Jr's wife, Lillie P. Bliss, and Mary Quinn Sullivan, the MoMA opened to the public in its original location in the Heckscher Building on Fifth Avenue in 1929. In 1939, following John D. Rockefeller Jr's donation of the site's land, it moved to its current location at West 53rd St.

First among US museums to exclusively be devoted to modern and contemporary art, and first in Manhattan to exhibit works of European Modernism, the museum is committed to sharing the most innovative art. Since its debut in its Goodwin and Durell Stone home (1939), the museum has been physically expanding and approaching Sixth Avenue. Three individual extensions by Philip Johnson (1964), Cesar Pelli (1984), and Yoshio Taniguchi (2005) modernized the museum and kept it competitive, as well as increasing room for its permanent collection and rotating exhibitions.

The latest multi-phased renovation and expansion designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (2019) has added one-third more gallery space. The David Geffen Wing, built on the American Folk Art Museum site, with the construction of Jean Nouvel's 53 West 53 Hines 290 m-tall apartment tower (2019), now houses three levels of gallery space adding some additional 12,000 square meters to the older eastern galleries, all now interconnected and configured in a single loop. The state-of-the-art Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio houses performance, process, and sound works, while the new Crown Creativity Lab displays the museum's educational programming. The new ground-level galleries, as with the lobby itself, are free to the public.

Inside the *Eye* metaspace, binding an illusory shape to a virtual eye, in the *Fountain of Love*, the transparent three-layered exoskeleton Matrix is conveying on its middle plane the artists' book *Meetings with Remarkable Women*, the *Red Book*, a semi-epistolary journey throughout the seven dimensions of the feminine soul gathered by the artist in encounters with real women. A previous artist's artist-book on the theme of light-shade-matter in filigree, the *De Marginis Sophia. Della Sapienza marginale o del margine della Sapienza. Aforismi & Filigrane*, 1986 (De Marginis Sophia. On Marginal Knowledge or the Margin of Knowledge. Aphorisms & filigrees), a collection of shaped-text aphorisms by the author touched in watercolour and four watermarks, is in the MoMA permanent collection. A biographical token.

Within the *Eye*, the split Royal Couple clad in their colourful attires depicted on the *Lectori benevolo* first page of the *Red Book*, are performing the overture of the *Eye* on the *7 Variations on a Theme* solo live-streamed by the fair-ground automaton at the heart of the *Carousel of Life* in the *Cave* metaspace at the periphery. They read the first page portraying their own flat bidimensional presence, sing the first aria of *Death & Rebirth*, and interact with the convened guests. At the end of the vernissage, they leave the *Eye* through the entrance- Ω mega-exit doorway heading to the next Nodal Partner on board of their convertible yellow Bel Air driven by the orangutang. *Orang*, "person", *hutan*, "forest", "person of the forest" in Malay and Indonesian, great apes native to Malaysia and Indonesia survived only in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra. The most solitary and among the most intelligent non-human primates able to figure out some invisible displacement problems with a representational strategy. Their societies consist of resident and transient individuals of both sexes. Resident females live with their offspring in defined home ranges; most social bonds occur between adult females and their dependent offspring; adult males and independent adolescents of both sexes tend to live alone. They are a critically endangered species on a fast track to extinction as their habitat has severely decreased in range and population due to disruptive human activities: logging, forest fires, fragmentation by pathways and roads, conversion of vast areas of tropical forest to palm oil plantations, and so forth. In the work, the Orangutang character stands for a former state of consciousness driving the yellow Bel Air, the physical body, along the *axis mundi* dorsal spine, from note to note, from chakra to chakra, from dimension to dimension, from Nodal Partner to Partner.

From the MoMA to the next Nodal Partner, the Rockefeller Center hosting the first Virtual Matrix at 45 Rockefeller Plaza, is about 1.3 km, a seven-minute ride through the city on the yellow Bel Air among the people, the bystanders and curious, spectators and guests.



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Rockefeller Center.

The Rockefeller Center rises on a site once owned by the Columbia University, then sold to John D. Rockefeller Jr in 1928. It is a vast complex of nineteen buildings covering 89,000 square meters commissioned by the Rockefeller family in 1931 and completed in 1939.

The Center has an exclusive cultural-commercial function and is considered one of the greatest works of the Great Depression. It comprises the original compound of fourteen Art Deco buildings and five later International-style dwellings. Above the entrance to 30 Rockefeller Plaza, the iconic 'Wisdom' sculptural insignia by Lee Lawrie (1877-1963) reads "Wisdom and Knowledge shall be the stability of the times" drawn from a work by William Blake. In the lower Plaza, facing the insignia, Paul Manship's (1886-1966) gilded 5.5 m cast bronze *Prometheus* sculpture (1934) rests on a fountain, the ocean, in front of a grey rectangular granite stonewall, the mountains. The Greek Titan has stolen fire from the Chariot of the Sun and is bringing it to humankind between the mountains and the ocean. The ring around the recumbent figure represents the heavens, inscribed with the signs of the zodiac on the inside. The inscription on the wall behind, a paraphrase from the father of tragedy Aeschylus (c. 525/524-c. 456/455 BC), reads: "Prometheus, teacher in every art, brought the fire that proved to mortals a means to mighty ends." Another sculpture by the same artist, the largest in the Center, the 14 m-tall *Atlas* (1937), is in the courtyard of the International Buildings. The Titan is holding on his shoulders an armillary sphere, the heavens. The north-south axis of the sphere points towards the North Star's position relative to the city. The emblematic value of the Rockefeller Center is far beyond any commercial-cultural nature. The lighting of the Christmas Tree above the *Prometheus* bringing fire to humankind in the Plaza marks the official annual ritual incipit of the Christmas season for millions of New Yorkers.

The complex went through a series of acquisitions and changes of ownership in recent years. In 1996, it became the property of a consortium of owners including Gianni Agnelli, Stavros Niarchos, Goldman Sachs, and David Rockefeller. In 2000, the fourteen original buildings were bought by the real estate Tishman Speyer group and, in 2014, the Rockefeller family re-settled its headquarters moving out of the Center's General Electric Building, then renamed Comcast. The architectural complex was declared New York City landmark in 1985, and a National Historic landmark two years later.

Inside the first Virtual Matrix, the Royal Couple performs another page of the *Red Book*, followed by a string of actions mingling historical data of the place with impromptu mnemonic remains from the libretto and prompts the convened people to download an app to fill in an anonymous questionnaire for the micro socio-cultural-driven survey. Then, they exit the Ω doorway and, on board of the Bel Air, resume the journey to the second Virtual Matrix in the third Nodal Partner, the Morgan Library and Museum, at 225 Madison Ave, a short ride, roughly 1.4 km, about seven minutes' drive with the orangutan at the wheel.



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Morgan Library.

The original complex of the Morgan Library was built (1902-'06) to host the private library and art collection of the American financier John Pierpont Morgan Sr. (1837-1913). Designed by Charles McKim in the Italian Renaissance style to render a majestic appearance on an intimate scale, when in 1924 Pierpont's son J.P Morgan Jr realized the great cultural bearing of his father's collection, he opened the Museum to the public.

Over time, the Library went through progressive enlargements that led to the most recent expansion (2006) designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano, which increased the exhibition space; it added 23,000 square meters to the campus, with an additional new performance hall and other facilities for visitors. Today, the Morgan Library is a large complex building of different styles and periods marking the area with a strong cultural impact. In terms of local contribution, the Library offers a variety of services, partly funded by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs: a library and a museum; a K-12 school program promoting the study of Science and Humanities by means of the direct observation of primary sources and artworks in their collection; a concert hall for classical music; workshops, lectures, meetings on art and literature, and free-access family-programs. For the classical nature of its collection, the Library is a cultural hub that contributes to the systematization of knowledge and the consolidation of a specific cultural identity of the American establishment.

Inside the second Virtual Matrix, the Royal Couple, as before, performs another page of the *Red Book*, interacts with people, and offers the app for the survey. Then it's back onboard the yellow Bel Air and on to the third Virtual Matrix at the fourth Nodal Partner, namely, the School of Visual Arts at 209 E 23rd St, barely 1.5 km., a six minute primate-led drive.



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Morgan Library.

The School of Visual Arts (SVA) is in the Gramercy district, where Midtown Manhattan meets the East Village. It was founded by Silas H. Rhodes and Burne Hogarth (1947) as the Cartoonist and Illustrator School. It took its present name in 1956 and moved to its current location in 1960. Twenty years later, the School opened its first International Studies Program in Tangier, Morocco; in 1983, the first Master in Fine Arts in painting, drawing, and sculpture. Since 1969, it parallels its commitment to education with active participation in the New York artistic scene, providing the School's museum as an exhibition space for works that might not find expression elsewhere. In 2009, planned by the graphic designer Milton Glaser (1929-2020), the SVA opened its theatre as a multimedia facility and an open platform to conjugate culture, art, and education. In 2013, the didactic was limited to undergraduate programs in Cartooning, Illustration, Advertising, Animation, and Photography. Today the SVA is a top-ranked design college, with undergraduate and graduate art programs in Computer Arts, Design for Social Innovation, and Digital Photography. As part of its academic commitment, the School organizes public events in its three galleries in the city and offers among others several international programs in China, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, and Turkey.

Inside the third Virtual Matrix, the Royal Couple performs another page of the *Red Book*, interacts with the people, and suggests the audience download the app for the survey. Then, to the fifth Nodal Partner, the Orpheum Theatre at 126 2nd Ave which is but a 1.4 km, four minute safe drive on Bel Air...



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Orpheum Theatre.

The site on which the Orpheum stands is alleged to have been a concert garden as early as the 1880's and, as such, to be one of the oldest continuously operating places of gathering for entertainment events in New York City. Built in 1904, it is associated with the massive immigration in the area which took place during the 19th-20th century, where artists from Austria and Hungary used to

perform. Converted into a cinema theatre in the Twenties, part of the Yiddish Rialto theatre district, it was re-converted to a theatre in 1958, housing significant musical productions such as *Little Mary Sunshine* (1959) and *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982).

From the Sixties, the East Village, originally a multi-ethnic district, emerged as an area of protests and reaction to the establishment, the destination of artists and musicians who forged New York's counterculture. This small 299-seats theatre is considered the birthplace of the punk-rock genre. In 1966, it hosted Andy Warhol and the *Velvet Underground*; from 1967 to 1971, the *Grateful Dead* and *The Allman Brothers* performed in what it was the Electric Circus. In 1968, the rock producer Bill Graham opened the Fillmore East venue, *The Church of Rock n' Roll*, where major rock bands such as *The Jimi Hendrix Experience*, *Cream*, *Led Zeppelin*, *Pink Floyd*, and *The Who* performed. The Orpheum Theatre is today home to *Stomp*, a New York production on stage since 1994.

Inside the third 'orphic' Virtual Matrix, the Royal Couple performs a new page of the *Red Book*, another aria of *Death & Rebirth*, interacts with the guests, and, as before, offers the app for the survey. Then, to the sixth Nodal Partner, the Tenement Museum in the Lower East Side it is just a 1.3 km outing, seven minutes of smooth driving among the communities, the architectures, the stories, the histories, and the irony of the city, as the last thirty years of gentrification has been a wormhole in human vulnerability. Social tokens for undisciplined souls.



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Tenement Museum.

The Tenement Museum of Urban Immigration History at 103 Orchard St, founded (1988) by Ruth J. Abram and Anita Jacobson, is housed in two historical buildings initially residences for immigrants from more than twenty countries. The complementary structure at 97 Orchard Street, built by the German immigrant Lukas Glockner, went through a series of modifications until 1935, when the landlord evicted all residents and closed the apartments, leaving accessible only the storefronts at the stoop level. No further changes were made until the Museum took over the administration of the building, recognising the historical relevance of the migrant's challenging reality in crowded tenements with precarious living conditions, with some rooms still untouched, and recreated the apartments and business facilities of the ex-inhabitants. The history of people who faced harsh working and living conditions was revealed, of even more relevance today when rights and responsibilities of newcomers are still pressing issues on the US cultural, political, and social agenda.

The Museum fulfils its mission through a variety of services and activities. It promotes tolerance by offering a historical perspective on the many diverse migrant and immigrant experiences between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries along the Lower East Side, when the area experienced mass immigration from Russia, and Eastern and Southern Europe. It proposes programs designed at raising awareness on immigration social issues, such as the Professional Development program for teachers, with workshops focused on commerce, industrialisation, cultural adaptation, and discrimination, offering an innovative way to initiate young people to these areas of studies. Additionally, the Shared Journeys program offers engagement in civic issues through guided tours of the 97 Orchard dwelling; as well as English workshops for adult speakers of other languages, combining English teaching with a critical approach on the issues, helping students to contextualise their immigrant experience within a broader historical setting. By promoting civic engagement in people traditionally perceived at the margins of society, sharing knowledge, experience, and learning rights-duties issues from each other while promoting development and change, these programs turn the Museum into a democracy-factory of civic awareness. We are all immigrants aligned with nature's purpose migrating to a new era.

Inside the third Virtual Matrix, the Royal Couple performs a new section of the *Red Book*, a new aria of *Death & Rebirth*, interacts with the people and, as before and later, reminds them to fill in the survey. Then, they exit the Museum ready to hit the high migrant road on their longest stint of 4.3 km, a good seventeen minute drive on the Manhattan Bridge over the East River, bridging two dimensions in *pontifex* fashion on board the convertible yellow Bel Air. The bridge was designed by Leon Moisseiff (1872-1943), built by The Phoenix Bridge Company, and opened to traffic on December 31, 1909. With a total length of 2,089 m, the main span of 451 m with cables of 983 m long, it is considered the forerunner of modern suspension bridges, connecting Lower Manhattan with Downtown Brooklyn, where the developer David Walentas had a key role in the creation of what became the DUMBO neighbourhood, wherein, at the Brooklyn Bridge Park, the *Cave* metaspace with the *Cave* venue is located next to Jane's Carousel, the seventh Nodal Partner.

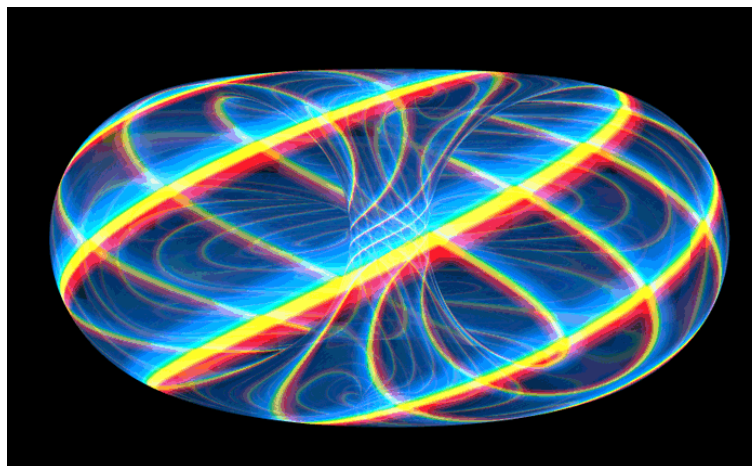


The Cave venue, the Roval Couple, and the Automaton at the Jane's Carousel.

A major example of popular art, manufactured by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company in 1922, the carousel spins forty eight carved horses, thirty jumpers and eighteen standers, attributed to the architects Frank Carretta and John Zalar, and two chariots, with at the heart, the startling 1918 Gebrüder Bruder, "Brothers Brother", Model 107 book-operated mechanical organ by the German Waldkirch firm in production from before World War I through to the end of the Twenties. A fifty-two keyless musical *automaton* performing five bass notes with flutes and low trumpets; ten accompaniment and twenty-two melody notes of flutes, violins, and principals, and a countermelody by fourteen trumpets. The sections are controlled automatically by the music roll and played individually at either piano or forte, giving great dynamics to the instrument. Moreover, it features percussive effects including bass drum, cymbal, snare-drum, crash-cymbal, castanets, triangle, and xylophone, with 179 pipes. An outstanding historical instrument well suited under the Spanda's *Musiké* project for the conservation of the ethnomusicological heritage, and a superb automaton well fitted to perform the solo theme of the *7 Variation on a Theme* musical score of the work.

Bought at auction by Jane and David Walentas (1984), then the Idora wooden merry-go-round of the amusement Idora Park in Youngstown, Ohio, it was brought to New York to be placed in the Empire Fulton Ferry State Park in Brooklyn Bridge Park, designed by David. After a complete restoration that lasted twenty-two years, mastery carried out in New York by Ms. Jane herself, a former art director for Estee Lauder with a background in advertising, art, and restoration, the Idora merry-go-round was renamed *Jane's Carousel* (2006) and displayed in a storefront on Water Street. As the place was too small to allow visitors, it was moved to its current location at 65 West Street, housed in the eight metre-high acrylic conservation pavilions commissioned by the Walentas to the French architect Jean Nouvel, and opened to the public in 2011. In 2022, it will celebrate its centenary.

And it is precisely at the endpoint of the *axis mundi* at the Brooklyn Bridge Park, in the *Cave* venue where the *Cave 3.0. A laic initiation* charting the itinerary of the Royal Couple through the seven dimensions of consciousness with the Finale outside of the *Cave* on the *Carousel of Life*, namely, on the nearby Jane's Carousel. Sadly, Ms. Jane passed away in January 2021, yet the *Carousel of Life* of the narrative is dedicated to her.



The vertical *axis mundi* of the work is a dynamic, energetic system with a polar vortex at both ends and a surrounding coherent field outlining a meta-toroidal organism on the territory. The energy flows through the *Fountain of Love* in the *Eye* metaspace at the city centre, throughout each Virtual Matrix in the Nodal Partners, and farther to the *Cave* metaspace at the periphery within and outside the *Cave* venue where it wraps around itself on the *Carousel of Life* and returns to the first incoming node, revisiting each Nodal Partner in reverse order, while bringing the SD card of the premiere in the *Red Book* in the *Fountain of Love* in the *Eye* metaspace as a delicacy mnemonic legacy.

A two-way itinerary to and from popular art and *arte colta*, from the centre to the periphery, the establishment and the margin, migrating the visual fabric of an Orphic dream beyond the ethos of a rocky muse, and returns, endlessly. Top-down and bottom-up in a simultaneous bi-directional journey activating seven cultural entities, dimensions, on the selected area, seven demos, social, economic, cultural stories, thoughts, aspirations, visions and pains, and more, much more, sparking and integrating the highest human cognitive and soulful resonances between an inward and outward gaze raised to the occasion in the middle of nowhere.

THE *AXIS EVENTIS* BIOGRAPHIC TRACES

At the orthogonal intersection of the vertical *axis mundi* in the NYC area, the horizontal *axis eventis* of the work stages a medley of the artist's biographic tokens scattered *extra muros* beyond the selected area in NYC, at the very endpoints of the *axis eventis*. Histories, memories, remembered and not, time capsules, orderly linear events shaping restful ripples across the ocean floor. Consciousness topography. Cultures, languages, rhythms, and seeds charting the *Sacred* and the *Justice* metaspaces endpoints in old Europe.

The *Sacred* metaspaces

The *Sacred* metaspaces with its Virtual Matrix is in Italy, Rome, where the artist grew up and mainly lived and worked up to the year 2004, is located at the Largo di Torre Argentina where, at Via di Torre Argentina 47, bordering the Teatro Argentina, his residence-studio was sited (1983-2000), facing the ancient Roman *Sacred Area of Torre Argentina* wherein Julius Caesar was stabbed to death.



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Sacred Metaspaces.

The Teatro Argentina is an eighteenth-century opera house and theatre which premiered with *Berenice* by Domenico Sarro in 1732. Among others, it further premiered Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in 1816, and Verdi's *I due Foscari* in 1844, and *La battaglia di Legnano* in 1849. From 1919 to 1944 it mainly proposed dramatic theatre, premiering works by Pirandello, Ibsen, and Gorky, and a short series of operas during the winter of 1944-'45 in honour of the American and British troops. The venue was used for classical-music recordings by the Rome-based Santa Cecilia orchestra in the Fifties. In 1994, the theatre became the home of the resident Rome Teatro Stabile; it currently offers a variety of programs, large-scale productions, more plays than music or opera.

Facing the Theatre in the middle of the public square, the *Sacred Area of Torre Argentina* is a seminal archaeological site dating back to the Roman Republic (509-27BC). The name of the site borrows from the *Torre Argentina*, a tower that, in turn, takes its name from the city of Strasbourg, a Roman military outpost whose Latin name was *Argentoratum*. In 1503, the master of ceremonies of Pope Sixtus IV (1414-'84), Johan Burchard, Italianized in Giovanni Burcardo, who came from Strasbourg and was known as Argentinus, built a palace in via del Sudario, now at number 44, called Casa del Burcardo, to which the tower was annexed. The tower was cut off in the nineteenth century and is now unrecognizable. The only other tower still in the square is the medieval *Torre del Papito*, "Little Pope's Tower", attributed by tradition to the *antipope* Anacletus II Pierleoni who ruled (1130-'38) in opposition to Pope Innocent II (1130-'43).

After Italian unification (1871), it was decided to reconstruct some parts of Rome (1909). The ensuing demolition works (1927) in the Torre Argentina area of the city revealed a colossal marble head, arms, and legs of an acrolithic statue. The additional archaeological investigation brought to light a *sacred area* dating back to the latter part of the Republican era, with four temples and the remains of a theatre structure, the Theatre of Pompey, built by Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Pompey the Great (106-48 BC). The theatre was inspired by Pompey's visit in 62 BC to the Greek theatre of Mytilene on the western hillside of the town of Lesbos. According to Plutarch, Pompey, raptured by the vision, decided to build a similar theatre in Rome. The construction began around 61 BC and was dedicated in 55 BC with the premiere of *Clytemnestra* by Accius, and *Equos Troianus*, either by Livius Andronicus or Gnaeus Naevius.

Structurally, Roman theatres are similar to the earlier Greek edifices on which they are based but differ by being built upon their foundations instead of on earthen works or in a hillside, and for being completely enclosed on all sides. Before the Theatre of Pompey, amphitheatres and theatres were temporary wooden structures that could be assembled and disassembled quickly; permanent stone theatres were forbidden. To avoid censure for building his theatre on foundations, Pompey erected in the Campus Martius — a publicly owned area about two square kilometres in extent outside of the sacred boundary of the city — a

temple dedicated to his favourite goddess, Venus Victrix, “Venus Victorious”, right atop the central part of the theatre enclosure sitting section, the *cavea*. If observed bottom-up from a reversed perspective – Piero, Piero! – the rows of seats looked like the steps leading up to the temple, and indeed Pompey dedicated the structure as a temple, not as a theatre. It was the first permanent theatre ever to be built in Rome, a model for nearly all future Roman theatres throughout the empire. The diameter was 150-160 metres, the length of the *scaena* about 95 metres, the *cavea* seated 12,000 spectators. The vaults from the original theatre can still be seen in the structure of the hotel Albergo Sole al Biscione as well as in the cellars of restaurants in the nearby *Campo de Fiori*, the “Field of Flowers” square, where the Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician, poet, cosmological theorist, and Hermetic esotericist Giordano Bruno was burnt alive for heresy by the Inquisition (1600), on that same spot, nowadays, a statue by Ettore Ferrari (1889) recalls the event. Yet, the largest intact sections of the theatre are found in the Palazzo della Cancelleria, “Palace of the Chancery”, referring to the former Apostolic Chancery of the Pope, a Renaissance palace located between the Campo de’ Fiori and the present Corso Vittorio Emanuele II. Built (1489-1513) by Baccio Pontelli and Antonio da Sangallo the Elder for Cardinal Raffaele Riario, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church, it is the earliest Renaissance palace in Rome. Nowadays, it houses the Papal Chancery, an extraterritorial property of the Holy See, and is a designated World Heritage Site. The travertine slabs of the Palazzo were *spolia* from the ruins of the Pompey’s Theatre, alike the Egyptian granite columns of the inner courtyard drawn from the portico’s upper covered seating area. A private small theatre was installed in the Palazzo by Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni and, in the later seventeenth century, it became a centre of musical performance. And in the courtyard of the Palazzo another biographical trace is found. It was the acoustic focal point of the artist’s work *Eco, for 47 church-bells and ringers* (1987), a ‘sonic’ installation for tuned percussions on the territory casting into a musical tensorial membrane the whole of old Rome centre.

How the Theatre of Pompey would have been in the eighteenth century if later constructions were removed from the site is rendered by the Italian Classical archaeologist, architect, and artist, Gian Battista Piranesi (1720-’78), renowned for his *Le Carceri d’Invenzione*, the ‘fictitious prisons’. Originally from Venice, a close friend of Tiepolo (1696-1770), he opened his workshop in Via del Corso in Rome (1768), and until 1774 he created a series of *vedute*, “views”, of the city which established his fame. Two original copper matrices of his etchings depicting the Theatre of Pompey, the *Dimonstrazione del Odierno Avanzo del Teatro di Pompeo*, “A Demonstration of the Current Remains of the Theatre of Pompey”, showing a view of the ruins from both a top-down and a cross-section perspective, and *I resti del Teatro di Pompeo*, “The Remains of the Theatre of Pompey”, with a more detailed view of the overall structural plan, are preserved at the Fondo Piranesi at the Central Institute for Graphic Art, the Calcografia Nazionale, an Italian Institute for the preservation, protection, and promotion of works providing documentary evidence of all types of graphic art, prints, drawings, and photographs. The institute, managed by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, is housed in the monumental Trevi Fountain complex comprising Palazzo Poli and Palazzo Della Calcografia, built in 1837 by the Italian architect, urban planner, and archaeologist Giuseppe Valadier (1762-1839) for the headquarters of his *Chamber Intaglio*. And at the Calcografia, another biographical token, the artist produced (1976) the suite of six mixed-media etchings and engravings *Il Tempo dell’Evidenza*, “The Time of Evidence”, part and particle of his artist-book *Arte come pre-testo*, “Art as a pre-text”, comprising also a collection of his theoretical writings (1973-’76), and entrusted one of the etched plates to the Calcografia granting permission of reproduction. A numbered copy of the *Arte come pre-testo* work is in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art (GNAM) in Rome.

However, the foundations of the Theatre of Pompey, as well as part of the first level and the *cavea* remain but are overbuilt by later structures. Yet, Pompey’s plan for his theatre complex included four nearby pre-existing temples, sacred spaces plotted ritually to recharge energies on the path later designated in the *sacred area* by the letters A, B, C, and D.



Temple A, the first shrine on the northern side of the square, is probably the Temple of Juturna, erected by Gaius Lutatius Catulus in 241 BC. It suffered several transformations throughout the centuries until it was incorporated into the Church of San Nicola de’ Calcarario, named after the presence in the surroundings of several ovens to produce lime (*calce*). The church was consecrated in 1611 to San Nicola de’ Cesarini, its Cosmatesque floor, the apse decorated with a series of saints, and an altar are still visible. In the Middle Ages, it was probably a monastery formerly founded by the philosopher Severinus Boethius (c. 477-524). The small apse on the left side of the church dates back to the fourteenth century.

Temple B is a circular temple, a *tholos*, with six columns remaining. Built by Quintus Lutatius Catulus in 101 BC in fulfilment of his vow at the Battle of Vercellae (101 BC) in Gallia Cisalpina, modern-day Piedmont, in Northern Italy. The temple was devoted to *Fortuna Huiusce Diei*, “Fortune of this Day”, of today. The colossal acrolithic statue found during the initial excavations of the site was the statue of the goddess herself. Between the eighth and the ninth centuries, the area was most probably occupied by private residences of noble families.

Temple C, the third one on the northern side, the most ancient of the four, was built by Curius Dentatus after his victory over the Sabines (290 BC) and possibly devoted to Feronia, the ancient Italic goddess of fertility worshipped in Sabina. It was destroyed by a vast fire (AD 80) which took down also the original Roman Pantheon, in the same year when Emperor Titus inaugurated the Colosseum amphitheatre. The white and black mosaic of the inner temple dates to twelfth-century restoration.

Temple D, the largest of the four, dates back to the second century BC with Late Republican restorations. It was vowed by the pretor Lucius Aemilius Regillus (190 BC) and dedicated (179 BC) by M. Aemilius Lepidus to the *Lares Permarini*, the guardian deities protecting sailors in the ancient Roman religion. On the doors of the temple, there was a dedicatory inscription in Saturnian metre, an old Latin and Italic poetic form. The area suffered deep transformations at the beginning of the sixth century; the buildings were later abandoned and, from the Middle Ages, only the Medieval Torre del Papito in front of temple D survived.

Behind temples B and C, a large tuff base is what remains of the Curia of Pompey, once at the entrance to the Theatre, where sessions of the Senate of the Republican Rome were held, and where, on the Ides of March 44 BC, Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by Brutus. A stirring event for a variety of later cultural elaborations, notably, among others, Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, premiered at the Globe Theatre in 1599, whose Mark Antony icon of funeral rhetoric oration “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears” (Act III, 2, 73-108) is preceded in scene I,77 by the “*Et tu, Brute?*”, “And you, Brutus?”, i.e., “You too, Brutus?”, an informal fallacy spoken by Cesar to his friend and protégé Marcus Junius Brutus upon recognizing him as one of the killers. There is no evidence that the historical Caesar spoke these words, Suetonius (69-122), a century and a half after the incident, claims Caesar said nothing as he was dying, but that others reported that his last words to Brutus were the Greek phrase *Και συ τέκνον*, *Kai su, teknon*, “You too, child” or “You too, young man”. Another commonly quoted variant in Latin of the Greek phrase is *Tu quoque, Brute*, still nowadays referenced in local popular code-switching macaronic language as *Tu quoque Bruto fili ... e prima de di’ gnotta, mori*, “You too Bruto son... and before saying ‘of a bitch’, died he”, a general colloquial term of disdain or abuse.

In February 2019 the Mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, and Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO of the Italian fashion Maison Bulgari, announced that thanks to the Maison cultural maecenatism, by 2021 a system of vertical and horizontal pathways will be installed in the *sacred area*, illuminated at night with LED lights, allowing the public to tour the ruins for the first time, with a ticket from the booth housed in the inspirational antipope Little Pope’s Tower, the *Torre del Papito* ;-) Another world, another dimension. Temples of love, of peace and devotion, rambling bones of foremothers and fathers mating ritually on a path drained and dried by an impossible truth.

In Rome, where also the first Cast & Creative Meeting of the works took place in 2019, the audience inside the Virtual Matrix of the *Sacred* metaspaces can follow the 21-day long performance live-streamed from across the ocean. Meanwhile, narrowing the boundaries between fact and fiction in the Matrix, two Royal Couple’s avatars clad in their colourful attire, invite the bystander to download an app and share their experience on a cloud-based repository, and interact with the audience in the *Justice* metaspaces at the other endpoints of the horizontal *axis eventis*.

The *Justice* metaspaces

The *Justice* metaspaces is located on the western coast of the North Sea, in The Netherlands, in The Hague, where the artist currently lives and works and when, in 2005, he established the Spanda Foundation and launched the Jubio Project of intercultural and interfaith dialogue for conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the seat of the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Peace Place (2006).



The Virtual Matrix and the Royal Couple at the Justice Metaspaces.

The Peace Palace is an international law administrative building housing the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), The Hague Academy of International Law, and the Peace Palace Library.

The idea of the Palace developed during a discussion over providing a home for the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which unfolded during a series of international treaties and declarations negotiated at the Hague Conventions (1899-1907) international peace conferences. The conversation took place between the Russian diplomat and jurist Friedrich Martens (1845-1909) and the American diplomat, historian, and educator Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), cofounder of the Cornell University, whose

following efforts were instrumental to secure the construction funds from the Scottish-American steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919). The Neo-Renaissance architectural plan of the building was designed by the French architect Louis M. Cordonnier (1854-1940). The foundation stone was set during the Second Hague Conference (1907), the inauguration ceremony performed in 1913 with Andrew Carnegie, among others, attending.

A new section connected to the original Palace was planned and realized (2007) by the British and the Dutch architects Michael Wilford and Manuel Schupp to host the Peace Palace Library of International Law, the Academy Hall, and a new reading room. A Visitors Centre, also designed by Wilford, was added in 2012. In 2014, The European Heritage Label was awarded to the Peace Palace.

The International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, is the principal judicial body of the United Nations, one of its six major organs and the only not located in New York City. Established in 1945 by the UN Charter, the ICJ began work in 1946 as the successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) established in 1920 by the League of Nations. After World War II, both the League and the PCIJ were replaced respectively by the United Nations and the ICJ. The Statute of the World Court, its main constitutional regulatory document, is drawn from its predecessor. All UN member states are party to the Statute and may initiate contentious cases. Yet, advisory proceedings may be submitted only by certain UN organs and agencies. The Court consists of a panel of fifteen judges elected to nine-year terms by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the Security Council from a list of people nominated by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration. No more than one nationality can be represented at the same time on the Court, and judges must collectively reflect the principal civilizations and legal systems of the world. The ICJ's workload covers a wide range of judicial activity, it settles disputes between states under international law and gives advisory opinions on international legal issues, and is the only international court that adjudicates general disputes between countries, with its rulings and opinions serving as primary sources of international law.

In the Peace Palace area is located the *Justice* metaspaces' Virtual Matrix, wherein the audience, as in the *Sacred* metaspaces in Rome, can follow the 21-day long performance streamed across the ocean, while avatars of the Royal Couple clad in their colourful attire invite the local audience to interact with the other metaspaces and upload their experience on a digital cloud.

Cultural philanthropy, Maecenas, and elitism. What else? All the cultural sites hosted in the work throughout centuries, geo-cultural areas, temples, ruins, institutions, theatres, plays, operas, concerts, and all sorts of art have all been, and still are, financed by the establishment. Artists, comedians, jesters, and musicians, the creative villains of love in the depth of the ocean seeding the bed-soil with their numinous dreams sunk from above, are marginal, at the margin. Virtual and tangible tokens embedded out of the *Cave*; karma-free ripples lost on the path to inclusion in a super-spreading immersive event of joy. The ontology of art is ethics, not the aesthetics of an unregulated art market. History, pseudo-history, or hiero-history, who will tell? Who will sing the harbinger collective aria still in progress between a captured and a give kiss in full void? Who?

[*To be continued*].

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Source. Excerpted from Sahlan Momo, *Meeting in the Cave. From Polarisation to Inclusion - An Outline*. (Semar: The Hague, 2020); project's website, *et varia*. References & Glossary omitted. The *Eye* and the *Virtual Matrix* visualisation are by Kristian Cardiello; the *Cave* by Shay Baron.

Planned *Spanda Monitor* issues on the *Meeting in the Cave* project: 0. *Shifting the Paradigm* - Introduction - The Royal Couple. The Polarities. 1. *Leaping out of Retreat* - The *Eye* metaspaces. The feminine polarity - The artists' book *Meetings with Remarkable Women - The Red Book*. 2. *Humans are Multidimensional Beings* - The *Cave* metaspaces. The masculine polarity - The opera *Cave 3.0. A Laic Initiation - The Cave Quantum Company & The Eye Cyber Ensemble*. 3. *Unveiling the Cup* - The *Nodal Partners* and the *Virtual Matrix* metaspaces - Structural Layout - Overture - The *Cave 3.0's* seven scenes, Entr'acte, Epilogue, and Grand Finale. 4. *Being & History* - The Place & the Environment. 5. *Unmapping the Territory* - The Flow - The Survey & the Research study - *The White Book* findings. 6. *Streaming Consciousness* in the virtual realm. A virtual action. 7. The *Lila's Game*. 8. *Awareness, Culture & Development in the Digital Age*, the UNGA side-event. 9. *The Black Book*. Documentation of the process, of which this *Monitor* is a particle. — **Back issues**.

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