



GALLERIES

Shamanistic Paintings as Metaphors for Connectedness

In his first solo show, Franck Lundangi uses mystical imagery to portray links between humans and nature.



Joseph Nechvatal

10 hours ago



PARIS — Painter and poet [Franck Lundangi](#) aims to adjust our mindfulness with [Dialogues](#), his first solo show at Galerie Anne de Villepoix in Paris. Lungangi, who was a participant in the benchmark show [Africa Remix: A Continent's Contemporary Art](#) in 2005–06, seeks to express the harmonious unity typical of human spirituality with jovial paintings like "L'Homme spiritual" (2016). As he told me, he strives to portray connections (dialogues) between humans and nature, joining things together in mystical, magical worlds. This goal is [often the case](#) within indigenous [African magical traditions](#), but in speaking with Lundangi I learned that his delicate shamanistic-looking art is not Africa-specific. His focus is on universal humanism as a magical discourse full of imaginary and visionary transactions, as seen in his rather refined aquarelle "Dialogues I" (2017).

As evident in the hydra-headed "Homme racine" (2014), Lundangi's paintings often stress transformation and hybridization, reminding me of Ovid's classical poem [Metamorphosis](#). Like Ovid, Lundangi's aquarelle "Métamorphose" (2016) is in fact a horse-headed provocation to think beyond static form, to imagine and dream across boundaries.

Born in 1958 in



Franck Lundangi, "L'Homme spiritual" (2016), acrylic, gouache, and ink on paper, 70x8 cm

Maquela Do Zombo, Lungangi's family fled Angola to escape the civil war when he was three. He arrived in France in 1990, and in 2001 he settled in Briare in north-central France, which is where he nurtured his talent for symbolist saturated drawing and painting.

In pieces like "We Know Very Little" (2016), Lungangi's imaginary frontal figures have smaller figures embedded into them. This

multiplicity is, I believe, meant to suggest special states of inner consciousness that, in most magical theories, is needed for working magic. His figures also possess multiple eyes, something often encountered throughout fantastic,

mystical, and visionary art. So his forms, though enticing, are not grand departures from older concepts of magic, which also suggest the interdependence of inner and outer energies, or spirits or symbolic acts, as the source of magical powers. This embedded magical dialogue was popularized in Western occultism by Aleister Crowley and further explored in art by chaos magician [Austin Osman Spare](#).

Much of Lungangi's art traffics in exquisite ornamentation, like "L'Homme Cosmique" (2015), where a gravity-free figure floats in a super-fluid pointillist field that suggests the flickering formative forces of emergence, which is central to both theories of integrative levels and complex systems, as well as to magic. The ornamental "We Know Very Little" likewise demanded my aesthetic contemplation of emergence, suggesting a vegetal generative force-field of reverberations that resonate like a web of interconnected intensities, something that resonates with my interest in Classical Greek poetry, where things often become other things.

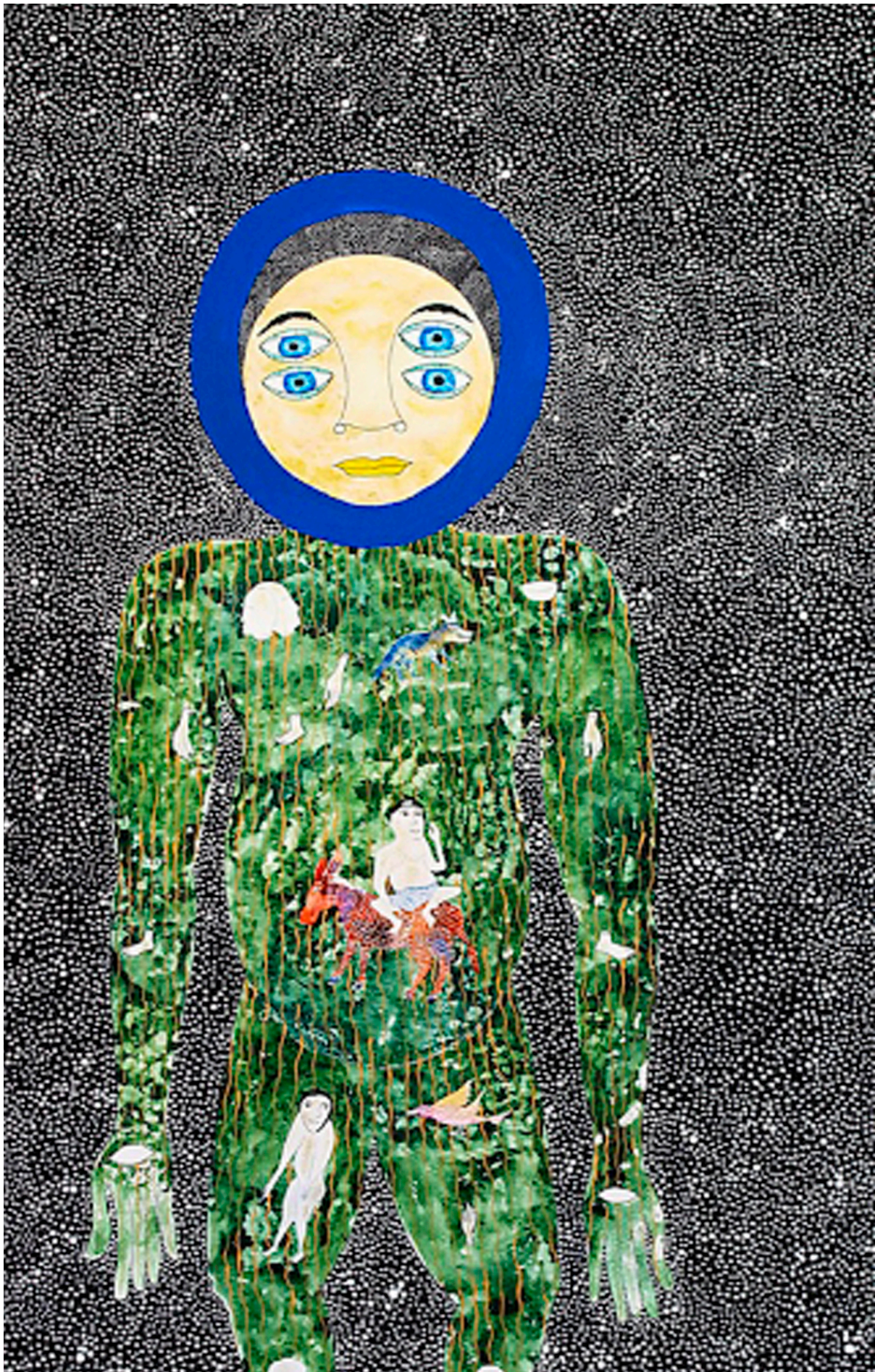
[Antonin Artaud](#) said that life is the imitation of a transcendent principle with which art can put us back in communication. Lungangi's transformation paintings, like "Je me pose des questions" (2017), are transcendent poetic metaphors useful in realizing a greater human potential to connect. All of his



Franck Lundangi, "Homme racine" (2014), acrylic and ink on paper, 78×147 cm

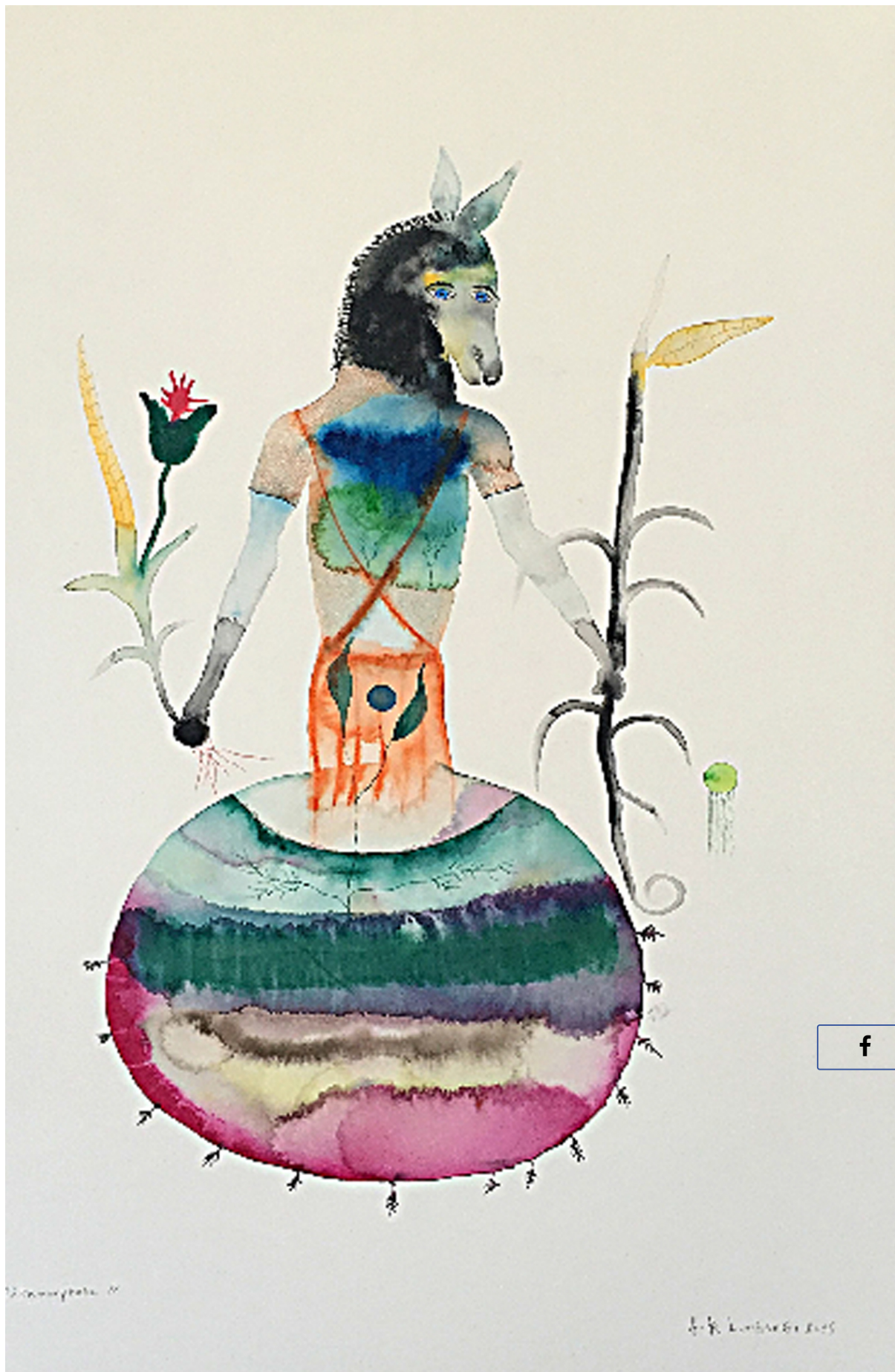
images suggest a movement of consciousness toward the union of subject and object. Becoming and apperception seem to be his true magical subjects, the nature of his vibrant figures delineating a metamorphosis that binds together human to human as well as human to natural environment. His scintillating fairy-tale pictures depict nonmaterial, mysterious interchanges that jostle in and around the figures,

vying to get upon the stage of the real.





Franck Lundangi, “L’Homme Cosmique” (2015), acrylic, gouache, and ink on paper, 182x102cm



Franck Lundangi, “Métamorphose” (2016), aquarelle on paper, 82×61 cm



Franck Lundangi next to his painting “To starve” (2008)

[Franck Lundangi : Dialogues continues at Galerie Anne de Villepoix](#) (43 rue Montmorency, Paris) through June 24.

 **comments (0)**