

# THE PHANTOM HAND

First online exhibition by JULIEN SERVE

For Julien Serve, the hand is essential. Not only because it is his basic tool he uses to draw, his every life moment exoskeleton, but also because it is his very special tool to find his way in the darkness of the world. Whenever he feels blinded by the darkness of the world, the hand becomes the instrument that allows him to understand where he stands. Julien Serve's hand reveals unseen, unforeseen things from the world and brings back the stories of the past.

Although right handed, Julien Serve often uses both hands to draw: when he is stuck with his right hand, the left hand offers other opportunities often rescues the drawing. "When I am drawing, my hands come and go, but whenever I loose control over the act of drawing they bring my gestures back in a more secure space. In the end my hands disappear completely to leave the revealed subject alone by itself, a newly created subject for the viewer to savor."

The photographs of the artist's hand drawing Jeanne d'Arc (by Dreyer) or his own grand father, result from psychic sessions of ghost recalling, the photograph becoming that flashlight that catches the ghost before it disappears. Drawn with as many traits as the ghosts human life had days, in a similar way as the inmates draw and the walls of their jails, the faces get reanimated by the artist, by his hand and on his hand...

The artistic inspirations of Julien Serve are not as much artists who depict hands as he does – for Serve it is an obsession – as artists of whom he can feel the gesture : On Kawara's hand drawing his Thanatophanies, Ron Arad's hand drawing his buildings, Janet Biggs' hands holding her camera... and the hands of musicians. For Serve, music is the hand that speaks to the ear. "When you watch a musician playing you look at his hands – when you listen to recorded music the hands have again disappeared. It's a similar process as in drawing" states the artist.

