



Tantra Song: Tantric Painting from Rajasthan

Franck André Jamme, André Padoux

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This collection of rare, abstract Tantra drawings was conceived when the French poet Franck André Jamme stumbled on a small catalogue of Tantric art at a Paris bookseller's stall. The volume included writings by Octavio Paz and Henri Michaux, and Jamme became fascinated by the images' affinity with modern art and poetry. He read voraciously and even journeyed to India, searching in vain for Tantric practitioners, until a bus accident on the road to Jaipur sent him home to France with serious injuries. When he returned a few years later, he met a soothsayer who proclaimed that Jamme had now paid sufficient tribute to the goddess Shakti and required him to take a vow: he must visit the *tantrikas* alone or only in the company of a loved one. Since then, Jamme has gained extraordinary access to very private communities of adepts and their intensely beautiful works. These contemporary, anonymous drawings from Rajasthan are unlike the more familiar strands of Tantric art--the geometric yantras, or erotic illustrations of the *Kama Sutra*. The progeny of seventeenth-century illustrated religious treatises, these drawings have evolved into a distinct visual lexicon designed to awaken heightened states of consciousness and are imbued with specific spiritual meanings (e.g. spirals and arrows for energy, an inverted triangle for Shakti). A revelatory volume on this occluded genre of Indian art, *Tantra Song* is a convergence of east and west, the spiritual and the aesthetic, the ancient and the modern.

Franck André Jamme is the author of more than a dozen volumes of poetry. His translated workds (by John Ashbery, Charles Borkuis, David Kelley and others) include *New Exercises*, *Another Silent Attack*, *The Recitation of Forgetting* and *Extracts of the Life of a Beetle*. He has collaborated on books with a number of artists including Philippe Favier, Suzan Frecon, Acharya Vyakul and Hanns Schimansk. A specialist in Art Brut, Tantric and tribal art of India, he has participated in exhibitions at Centre Pompidou, Beaux-Art de Paris and The Drawing Center, among others.

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