

TERRA SUBPEDE (The Earth underfoot)

For more than five years I painted with the canvas on the floor, dropping paint like rain. From nearly six feet out in space, I developed an eye to be able to judge forms, shapes and compositions from that peculiar perspective; I had to, for things look so much different hanging from the wall.

I became ground-conscious. Walking through streets, parks and gardens, my eyes on the ground, I began to look for structures and formations that related to my work. Sand, stones, grass, leaves and all things small and plentiful, amassed in natural formations by wind and weather took my interest. But, wherever I went, town or country, the lonliest beach or the deepest forest, I always found something else. It was colourful, from the brightest hues to the subtlest tones, infinite in its variations of shapes and structures, arranged by wind and weather in ever new and exciting constellations. I started to study it, collect it and take it home to my studio.

I had found an ever-present, never-ending treasure, there underneath my feet, just for the taking. A ceaseless supply of colours, forms and compositions that seemed to mirror all of man's art, from Malevich to the Japanese masters, from Arp to Aboriginal rock art.

Depending on the things I found or selected, I could now recreate within a frame (dry-box or watertank) using the same proportions as the intended canvas, any kind of pictorial vision. Whatever arranged itself within those confinements was a perfect composition. It was always "right"---right in its relation to the edge, the frame of the picture. It could not be otherwise, because every element that moved within was also positioned by bouncing off the sides and off each other. I had only to select and paint what I saw before me in a myriad of variations.

It was only a matter of choice now, and choose I did. Some of what I chose to paint is in this exhibition. I hope there is some you like, for you to enjoy, as I have enjoyed finding, seeing and painting a reality not only under my feet, but under everybody's.

Viva, TERRA SUBPEDE!

gunter christmann, 1980.