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The Meta-Phormal Universe of Sherban Epuré

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Abstract:
Sherban Epuré (1940-2018) was a pioneering figure in cybernetic art and post-humanist art. Since the 1970s, he has participated in many international art festivals and won awards. His works are in the collections of museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, and the National Gallery in Bucharest.
In 1980, unable to withstand the conditions of the communist regime in Romania, Epuré relocated to New York, where he continued to generate his artworks. His experimental style emerges from the fusion of engineering, mathematics, and painting. As a computer-based artist, he has a poetic understanding of abstraction. His works fall into three categories, which he names using some language games: S-Bands, Meta-Phorms, and Protruded Sculptures.
In this study, Sherban Epuré's art and the contemporary significance of his works in terms of current cultural paradigms will be defined and discussed in the light of related texts: Cybernetics (1948) by Norbert Wiener; Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture? (1977) by Ihab Hassan; An Artist's Journey in Art and Science: From Behind the Iron Curtain to Present-Day America (2006) by Sherban Epuré.

Keywords: *Sherban Epuré, Intrinsic Art, cybernetic art, post-humanist art, S-Bands, Meta-Phorms.*

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Introduction

"He was the computer…"
Mihai Nadin for Sherban Epuré (2020, p.95).

Sherban Epuré (1940-2018) was a pioneering figure in cybernetic art and post-humanist art. Since the 1970s, he has participated in many international art festivals and won awards at the 7th and 8th Paris Biennale for Young Artists in 1971 and 1973, the 25th Edinburgh Festival, 1971, the 9th Sigma Festival in Bordeaux, France, 1973, the Fine Art Competition, Cyprus, (Award), 1973, and at The New Gallery in Bucharest, Romania, 1974, New York Digital Salon, SIGGRAPH and many other cybernetic art activities in 1980's and 1990's. His works are in the collections of museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, and the National Gallery in Bucharest. He is a distinguished figure in the History of Computer Art and Design along with Georges Charbonnier, Abraham Moles, Herbert Franke, Herve Huitric, Peter Kreiss, Kenneth Knowlton, Vera Molnar, Manfred Mohr, and Georg Nees.

Sherban Epuré studied at the Polytechnic Institute of Bucharest, in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications, from 1956 to 1961. He was expelled from the faculty for cliché political reasons related to communist totalitarianism. The problem is not only his supposed opposition to the communist regime, but also his free and independent personality and creative vision.

His friend Mihai Nadin (2020) who also studied at the Polytechnic Institute of Bucharest between 1955 and 1960, explains the situation as follows: "Our professor of cybernetics was Edmond Nicolau, a histrionic character, who probably envied us for taking the liberty of seeking refuge in aesthetic issues. One of his articles on art and cybernetics (1974) was illustrated with an image by Epuré. (Later, we found out, to our disappointment, that, like many others who we came to believe in, he was also on the payroll of the Secret Services.)" (p.94).

By the way, at that time, Epuré was working in the research laboratory of a semiconductor factory in Bucharest. However, in the face of increasing political repression, Epuré concentrated on painting to find a different existential environment. He said, "By 1961, art, with its superior possibilities of creative freedom, had taken over my life. While continuing to make a living in electronics, I began to invest most of my time and energy in painting and the study of art history, eventually combining natural aptitudes for both art and science." (Epuré, 2006: 403).

In 1964, with some of his friends, he joined an artist initiative called the "New Barbizon of Young Painting in Romania" and settled in Poiana Mărului, in the Carpathian Mountains. Epuré and the other members of New Barbizon, "There, they painted the village in a manner that qualifies, in retrospect, as aesthetic dissidence. Nothing idyllic, as the regime would have had it, but rather taking a subjective perspective, an aesthetic different from the official socialist realism" (Nadin, 2020: 94).

In 1967, he opened his first solo exhibition and was awarded a special mention by the Union of Fine Artists of Romania. As a painter, he created abstract landscapes and launched his understanding of art, which he defined this time as Mathematical Realism; accordingly: "The drawing is the outcome of the life record of the point navigating in space…The object is a pretext, a catalyst in expressing an idea." (Epuré, 1972:34-36 cıted by Nadin, 2020:94).

Epuré is an engineer by professional formation and a painter. Consequently, his poetics are in a constant state of flux, arising from a dialectic between science and art, both in his conventional/analog expressions and in his later digital/algorithmic works. He explains this subject as follows: "Personally, I use a method that regards art as fulfillment for the eye, the heart and the mind, or sense, emotion and spirit (this applies to both analog and digital formats)" (Epuré, 2016:407).

However, Epuré's paintings from the Poiana Mărului period, which are typically classical in genre, such as landscapes or still life, represent an original style. Consequently, his artistic style, characterized by a post-impressionist orientation, with a tendency towards geometric analytic abstraction, finds an almost poetical expression in the depiction of nature and village landscapes. According to Nadin (2020) : " In order to explain what happened, let me recall Mondrian, for whom painting landscapes was a step toward his abstractions" (p.94).

On the other hand, his still-life paintings are characterized by formal purity based on chromatic lyricism. Epuré's artistic style of this period is characterized by the utilization of pastel color tones in his paintings. But this application of transforming the color fields into pastel hues simultaneously generates chromatic vibrations on the surface.

Over time, Epuré's artistic style evolved towards a predominantly cybernetic art; at this juncture, it is necessary to reiterate one more time that cybernetic artists naturally draw inspiration from the spirit of the Renaissance's uomo universale, who possessed a simultaneous scientific and artistic vision. He explains this aesthetic transformation as follows: "In 1966 I entered a period of multidisciplinary studies in many areas apparently unrelated to art: information theory, cybernetics, structuralism, and constructivism as an unfolding mathematical game. I was fascinated by dynamic natural processes. Such processes convey information and involve actions, reactions, changes of state, and behaviors. In short, I had unwittingly stumbled upon cybernetics and felt compelled to make it the driving force of my creative process" (Epuré, 2006:404).

Consequently, within a relatively brief period, new works were realized within this new context, and Epuré transitioned definitely from Mathematical Realism to Intrinsic Art: "By the end of 1967, two directions had emerged; these remain the chief focus of my work to this day: the S-Band and the Meta-Phorm. Both types of work were shown in several venues between 1969 and 1978. At the Sigma 9 Contact II in Bordeaux, France (1973), I would have had an ideal opportunity to meet first hand some of the most influential artists and animators in the field of computer art,such as Georges Charbonnier, Abraham Moles, Herbert Franke, Herve Huitric, Peter Kreiss, Kenneth Knowlton, Vera Molnar, Manfred Mohr and Georg Nees… However, as on all other such occasions, I was denied a passport". (Epuré, 2006:405).

By the way, The Artist explains Intrinsic Art in this way: "I was most interested in all-inclusive, nondogmatic and scientific approaches. The most rewarding answers came from the scientific coincidence between Vedic wisdom, astrophysics, quantum physics and synchronicity; how the universe writ small is but a local manifestation of the universe writ large; how invisible causes turn into visible effects: the universality, power and creativity of the mind. This is Intrinsic Art's area of interest.I have initiated three strands of works since 1969 as parts of Intrinsic Art: Meta-Phorms, S-Bands and Protruded Sculptures. The third reunites the first two in a shared format" (Epuré,2016: 408).

In 1973, the art critic Jacques Lonchampt visited Epuré's studio in Bucharest while creating works for the Sigma 9 Festival in Bordeaux. Then Lonchampt suggests

contacting Leonardo magazine. However, this artistic/professional brief encounter also creates problems, as the Artist himself explains: “He was unaware that, in Romania, any contact whatsoever with the West, unless previously authorized and supervised by the Secret Service, was regarded with great suspicion. The regime was obsessed with cases of “foreign espionage” and “enemies of the people.” (Epuré, 2006:403).

In 1977, facing the growing oppression of the communist regime in Romania, he and his wife, Letiția Bucur, made the decisive choice to immigrate to the USA, and finally, in 1980, they arrived in New York. He began a new phase of his personal and artistic life.” Beginning in 1976, Romania slowly entered one of its darkest periods, a time in which terror, poverty and draconian restrictions obtained. Of course, my experiments ceased even to be tolerated,and I was completely marginalized. As an artist couple, my wife, Letitzia Bucur, and I faced a dilemma: We had either to abandon art or attempt to safeguard our careers. In 1977, we decided to emigrate to the U.S.A.” (Epuré, 2006: 405). Thus began the Artist's Macintosh era.

Sherban Epuré's works have been recognized as a significant contribution to the field of computer art since the 1960s, and they also have the potential to clarify ongoing discussions about contemporary post-humanist art. In fact, at a relatively early date, as a pioneer, he defined creativity as an art/science collaboration in the context of human-machine coexistence

In this context, two of Epuré's essays, which we often cite in this text - sometimes by methodologically challenging the citation/quotation criteria - are particularly noteworthy. These texts can be regarded as a gateway to the cosmos of cybernetic existence: An Artist's Journey in Art and Science: From behind the Iron Curtain to Present-Day America (LEONARDO, Vol. 39, No. 5, pp. 402-409, 2006) and Intrinsic Art A Cultural Capsule (LEONARDO, Vol. 49, No. 5, pp. 406-411, 2016). This study would not have been possible without the quotations from Epuré. Eventually, the quotation technique is also a Walter Benjaminian mode of existence; for this reason, these quotations enabled our dialogue with Epuré.

Sherban Epuré, as a sophisticated representative of the rationalist mind, scientific enthusiasm, artistic creativity, and design mind, overcame all totalitarian pressures and grievances caused by the communist regime as a cyber-steersman; He preserved his artist identity under all circumstances, and became one of those Prometheuses who always defined new art in futuristic coordinates.

From an art historical perspective, Epuré is one of the pioneers of Cybernetic Art and a highly successful representative of the New Avant-Garde in the contemporary art environment. He is the inventor and developer of two original creative strategies, Mathematical Realism and Intrinsic Art. However, there are relatively few studies about him, and we hope that more comprehensive studies and research will be conducted about him in the future.

This study aims to draw attention, albeit modestly, to Sherban Epuré and his poetics and to emphasize the contemporary significance of his exceptional performance.

In this study, Epuré's Intrinsic Art, its components, and intertextual combinations were mapped and discussed using the descriptive method.

Intrinsic Art

Epuré launched Intrinsic Art in 1968, inspired by a book on mathematics by Martin Gardner and Romanian folk art to produce “something tangible” from “something invisible” (Epuré, 2016:407).

Intrinsic Art consists of three categories:

- S-Band,
- Meta-Phorms
- Protruded Sculptures.

S-Band

The S-Band means Sherban's Band (Nadine, 2020: 95). S-Band is shaped with parallelograms- twelve visual variables, nine colored stripes, and three random geometrical parameters-. Moreover, this work is represented in three alternative forms: hand-printed paper, computer-generated inkjet print, and sculpture.

They derive from interactivity between the artist and geometry and are principally suited to environmental aesthetics: wall art, paintings, indoor/outdoor installations, site-specific sculptures, design, animations, projections, etc. S-Bands are rooted in Romanian folk art, using some of its traditional modalities as inspiration for contemporary practice (Epuré, 2016: 408).

Beyond the production of intrinsic works of art, Epuré also addressed the problem of kitsch in a technophilic environment such as cybernetic art. Therefore, the formal repetitions in S-Band are not only reproductions, but variable formal multiplications: "The analogue S-Band is composed of two parts: a material component called the "carrier" that stands for hardware and incorporates the "software" and a "carried" visual message affixed to its sides. To avoid kitsch, the carried visuals must derive from the band's geometry" (p.409).

Meta-Phorms

The term "Meta-Phorm" is a neologism, a word game that combines the words "meta," "metaphor," and "form" in Duchampian style.

According to Epuré (2006): "A Meta-Phorm (meta + metaphor + form) is intended to be the visual appearance of an abstract creative proposition by setting geometrical forms into a game relationship that emulates a cybernetics model (a situation where various structures or systems are interconnected by input, output, and feedback events)" (p.406).

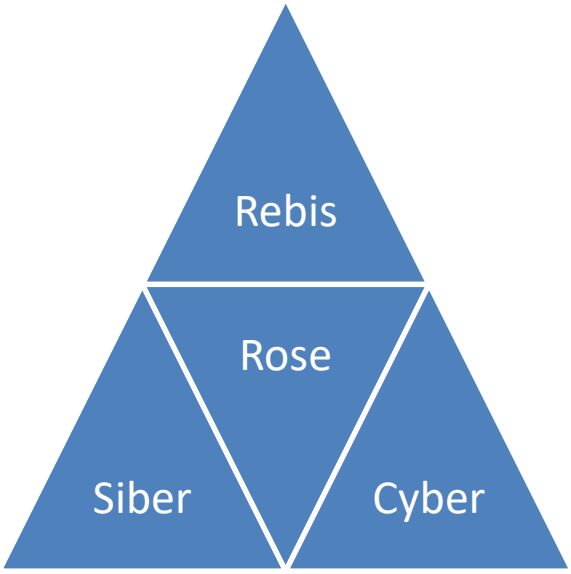
Etymologically, meta- means after, behind; among, between, changed, altered, higher, beyond, higher than, transcending, overarching, dealing with the most fundamental matters of…; Metaphor consists of the words meta "over" + pherein "to carry"; Form means morphe/outward appearance, semblance, image, likeness," from Old French forme, fourme, "physical form, appearance; pleasing looks, shape, image; way, manner, model, pattern, design; sort…(https://www.etymonline.com/)

It can be said that there is a dissociation and fusion between words in Epuré's wordplay, according to this formula - Meta-Phorm (meta + metaphor + form) - the metaphor decomposes on the one hand, approaches the meta and changes dimension, and on the other hand, approaches the form and condenses homophonically. Meta-Phorm is a meta-art form, but it is also a phenomenon of continuous regeneration.

Epuré generates images in a new dimension/meta-art environment; as an artist, his performance and each of his works are existential metaphors, and in this context, form turns into phorm, and reality and metaphor, which are equivalent to each other, finally become identical."The point of the metaphor is that the impressed form is not partially but wholly present in all the impressions" (Gadamer, 2006:.504).

In this context, Marcel Duchamp is an artist who has esoteric research and fantasies, as well as multiple identities. Consequently, he has designated these identities by employing anagrams, word games, and homophony. “The three pseudonyms Duchamp chose for himself appeared in rapid succession: Rose Sélavy in 1920, Belle Haleine in 1921, and Marchand du Sel in 1922.” (Schwarz, n.d.:33).
If we map Arturo Schwarz's analysis of Rose Sélavy, focusing on the first identity:
Rose Sélavy/ Rose/ Rosa Mistica/ Philosopher's stone/ Rebis/ Adept in the closed garden of the Hesperides/Bride/The emblem of Venus.
Rose Sélavy/ Sélavy/ c'est la vie
Rrose Sélavy / Eros c'est la vie /Bride is life/ The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (1915–1923)
After Rose Sélavy became Rrose Sélavy:
Rrose/ (The Bride) is life (Eros) / Rr/ The creative and regenerative powers of the stone (Schwarz, n.d.:30)
At this point, let us create an anagraphic surprise and thus concretize the link that connects Duchamp to Epuré: Rose/Rebis/Siber/Cyber.

Table 1. From Duchamp to Epuré, Rebis=Cyber



According to the artist's statement on his website (n.d.):“The aim of Meta-Phorms is to create a body of unforeseen images. To this end, a game relationship is established among geometric shapes. Any geometric form on a sheet of paper symbolizes an entity endowed with life, able to inspect, collect information and react to the environment. It is able to carry out a behavior and is ready to participate in a graphic game through behavior, combination or interaction. A point symbolizes the position in space of such entity. While it is in process, the shapes interact with each other through various emulations of a cybernetics model (a situation in which structures or systems are interconnected by input, output, and feedback events). In this context, behavioral capabilities are ascribed to the geometric elements (forms and shapes), which are more

complex than those of conventional geometry and are therefore identified as Meta-Points and Meta-Phorms".

Protruded Sculptures

Protruded Sculptures are sometimes three-dimensional artefacts created using S-Band elements to exhibit as an installation or a public space sculpture.

Intertextual combinations of Sherban Epuré's Intrinsic art

Sherban Epuré's intrinsic art features numerous intertextual combinations, serving as both personal inspiration sources and theoretical foundations that aid in understanding his works.

Epuré and Kant

Sherban Epuré's art is a Kantian sublime performance. As an artist with an electrical and electronics engineering background, he navigates rationally through mathematical immensity, and he achieves a poetic abstraction through rhythmic, variable, and sometimes colorful combinations of geometric elements. Because "Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense" (Kant, 1987: 106, "250").

When we look at the history of Cybernetic Art, we see that artists explore digital technologies just as they did with photography, cinema, or video before this. New technology, new vision, new paradigm..."Yet enthusiasm is sublime aesthetically, because it is a straining of our forces by ideas that impart to the mind a momentum whose effects are mightier and more permanent than are those of an impulse produced by presentations of sense" (Kant, 1987: 132, "272").

Epuré and Klee

On Epuré's website (http://sherban-epure.com/Meta-Phorms-A/About_the_artist.html) under the heading "About the artist," the following statement appears: "In 1978, after an in-depth reading of Paul Klee's collected essays on art (La Pensée Créatrice and Histoire Naturelle Infinie), he came to regard Klee as his mentor. Klee's cosmo-genetic vision represented a push toward the exploration of universal laws and pointed toward science as a creative tool" (n.a., n.d., Paragraph 7).

Paul Klee, as an avant-garde artist and member of the Bauhaus, was not only an exceptional representative of modern art but also a writer of contemporary art theory and pedagogy. As an artist and theorist, Klee created a continuously metamorphic composition of a chronotopia, starting always from purely basic design elements. Hence, in this individual and universal eternal design process, colors, lines, dots, and the other basic design elements became agents of transcendence.

According to Grohmann (1967), "The artist has knowledge of everything, and with Klee the link between the inner self and the outer world is more complete than with any of his contemporaries. He has been called the greatest realist of our time, and that describes him well, although his realism is concerned with the essence of things, rather than with their surface appearance. Group his themes together and they encompass the universe, not only the plenitude of things but the secrets of their birth and growth, the mystery of their innumerable sublunar and cosmic linkages" (p. 12).

Klee's vision points the way not only for analog creativity but also for cybernetic art and design."Art does not reproduce the visible but makes visible. The very nature of graphic art lures us to abstraction, readily and with reason. It gives the schematic fairy-

tale quality of the imaginary and expresses it with great precision. The purer the graphic work, that is, the more emphasis it puts on the basic formal elements, the less well-suited it will be to the realistic representation of visible things. Formal elements of graphic art are: points, and linear, plane, and spatial energies" (Klee, 1973:76).

Eventually, Klee's vision is also philosophically inspired and has a profound influence on some philosophers themselves. In this context, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1994): "There are indeed technical problems in art, and science may contribute toward their solution, but they are posed only as a function of aesthetic problems of composition that concern compounds of sensation and the plane to which they and their materials are necessarily linked" (p.196).

Therefore, the composition plane is the environment of the art dynamic; it is almost a metaverse, and Deleuze and Guattari give examples of Paul Klee's works titled "monument at the edge of the fertile country" and "monument in fertile country" to define the subject at this point: "In fact, universes, from one art to another as much as in one and the same art, may derive from one another, or enter into relations of capture and form constellations of universes, independently of any derivation, but also scattering themselves into nebulae or different stellar systems, in accordance with qualitative distances that are no longer those of space and time" (1994: 196).

Epuré and Wiener

Sherban Epuré is an artist of cybernetic art. He eventually works in a continuous, interactive position between the algorithmic systems' given possibilities for each user and his subjective design stages, recognizing randomness as a creative impetus between the input and output processes.

Cybernetics is one of the most powerful paradigms of the 21st century, just as it was in the 20th century. It features a constantly growing and changing system, from the creative potential of digital technologies to individuals' options and performances in parallel universes, encompassing random adventures and encounters.

Norbert Wiener developed Cybernetics from the work of Josiah Willard Gibbs (1839 – 1903), who combined statistics and physics: "The functional part of physics, in other words, cannot escape considering uncertainty and the contingency of events. It was the merit of Gibbs to show for the first time a clean-cut scientific method for taking this contingency into consideration" (Wiener, 1989: 8). Thus, the preface of Norbert Wiener's book, The Human Use Of Human Beings/Cybernetics And Society, first published in 1950, begins with the following expression: "THE IDEA OF A CONTINGENT UNIVERSE" (Wiener, 1989:7). Wiener strongly emphasizes Gibbs's role in the history of cybernetics: "Many men have had intuitions well ahead of their time; and this is not least true in mathematical physics. Gibbs' introduction of probability into physics occurred well before there was an adequate theory of the sort of probability he needed. But for all these gaps it is, I am convinced, Gibbs rather than Einstein or Heisenberg or Planck to whom we must attribute the first great revolution of twentieth century physics" (Wiener, 1989:10).

Vive La Révolution! Vive La Liberté!

Therefore, in the context of cybernetic culture and art, concepts such as contingency, probability, randomness, chance, surprise, and serendipity have become effective functions both literally and metaphorically, not only in the field of science but also in the field of art, particularly in experimental art, artistic performances, and improvisations. Epuré (2016) explains the basic logic of his Meta-Phorms as follows:

"The randomness accumulates at each executed step and is inherited by the next one. "Behaviors" (inputs/outputs) are developed by algorithms of one's choosing. The algorithms execute themselves by automation in steps and layers. Most often, cybernetic mechanisms are emulated. Each incremental result must comply with the artist's aesthetic expectation, message, philosophy, and emotional level" (p.408).

For avant-garde artists, randomness has been considered a creative strategy, paradoxically. Furthermore, for cybernetic artists representing the New Avant-garde, randomness is the core of creativity.

On the other hand, Wiener(1989) with this constatation: "No school has a monopoly on beauty. Beauty, like order, occurs in many places in this world" (p.134), criticizes academic art education, conventional art, and even avant-gardists, and defines a new category of artist: "I speak here with a feeling which is more intense as far as concerns the scientific artist than the conventional artist, because it is in science that I have first chosen to say something" (p. 135).

Epuré is this mentioned new artist, a scientific artist because he was one of the first artists to discover the aesthetic potential of digital technologies and generated many works using the experimental nature of algorithmic art.

In this context, Epuré (2001) wrote the following artist statement for the exhibition of his work titled PERSONA 2, part of the Meta-phorm series, at The Ninth New York Digital Salon: "Most of my work originates in one simple idea: to create forms as the outcome of a cybernetic interaction. If a structure (system) gets an input from another one, it reacts and moves to a new state, the output. If there is a feedback between the input and the output, they adjust each other and establish a certain level of stability in their interactions, as in real life situations. My concept is to establish these interactions and interplays between geometrical shapes. Most of the images I create are visual descriptions of these interplays. However, I take great care to encapsulate my painting experience in the aesthetics of the symbols I use".

Cyber mind is a free mind; In this context, let's listen to Wiener (1989) once more: "One interesting change that has taken place is that in a probabilistic world we no longer deal with quantities and statements which concern a specific, real universe as a whole but ask instead questions which may find their answers in a large number of similar universes. Thus chance has been admitted, not merely as a mathematical tool for physics, but as part of its warp and weft" (p.11).

The cyber mind is also endowed with the capacity for historical and political criticism. According to the second law of thermodynamics, closed systems inevitably succumb to collapse due to the inherent increase in entropy (Wiener, 1982:25). In this context, when focusing on the totalitarian regimes and, in this case, particularly on communism, according to Heng-Fu Zou (2025), "The regime can appear stable for long periods while entropy accumulates slowly and invisibly. But once a threshold is passed, collapse accelerates nonlinearly. The model predicts that variables such as dissent, disorder, and economic fragility interact to create a runaway entropy effect. This means that conventional indicators of state strength—military control, media propaganda, or GDP—may obscure the system's true condition. By the time entropy becomes observable, collapse is already imminent. This matches the empirical experience of 1989–1991, when most Western analysts failed to foresee the sudden collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union"(p.9).

Moreover Heng-Fu Zou (2025) proposed and developed a mathematical model describing systemic entropy based on the book Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy

(1956) by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski : “We may now state the structural law of totalitarian collapse: Any regime that continuously increases ideological saturation, suppresses dissent, and centralizes coercion beyond its adaptive and energetic capacity will generate entropy faster than it can dissipate it. Once systemic entropy crosses a critical threshold, collapse is inevitable, nonlinear, and irreversible” (p.16).

However, Epuré and numerous other artists have been and continue to be victims of totalitarian regimes for generations. Despite the inherent entropy of the totalitarian communist system, he has defined cybernetic art in the intertwined worlds of art and mathematics, thus making exceptional contributions to the construction of new contemporary art.

Consequently, not only as a desire but also mathematically, politics always needs alternative poetics for regeneration.

Epuré and Flüsser

Epuré is a Flüsserian Homo Ludens figure. He plays in a hardware-software environment, using organized or random collections of geometric elements like points, lines, polygons, and curves, and sometimes with an avant-garde calligram approach, transforms all these entities into an original artistic image.

Epuré is a Flüsserian Homo Ludens figure. The artist's medium/apparatus/system is a hardware-software environment, with which he creates original artistic images. These images are composed of organized or random collections of geometric elements, including points, lines, polygons, and curves. In this point, the artist's approach is sometimes characterized by calligram, an avant-garde technique that involves new artistic expression using these entities.

In his book Towards a Philosophy of Photography, first published in 1983, Vilém Flusser compares photographers to chess players: “Chess players too pursue new possibilities in the program of chess, new moves. Just as they play with chess-pieces, photographers play with the camera. The camera is not a tool but a plaything, and a photographer is not a worker but a player: not Homo faber but Homo ludens” (Flüsser, 2006:27).

Epuré, as a cybernetic artist/homo ludens, is a variation of Flüsser's photographer/homo ludens. This phenomenon is described by Nadin (2020) as follows: “In his mind, there are two players: the artist and the artwork. They exchange information such that each new visual rendition returns new insights to the artist. The final judge was an intuition-driven process. In this ascertainment, we become privy to the secret of his art: Automated mathematics is the source of a large number of variations. This allows the artist to investigate a large aesthetic space” (p.95).

Epuré has always been interested in the evolution of digital technology. He has explored the expressive potential of hardware and software. Initially, he used an Apple Macintosh.Then:“Of course I ventured into programming, especially Lingo and Action Script. However, weighing the time required for learning and becoming fluent in the codes against my expectations and the results obtained, I decided to stick with the method I had already developed, relying on code-memorized thinking, which had already proven to be conveniently fast and efficient, albeit highly personal” (Epuré, 2006:405).

Figure 1. A Family Portrait (Duchamp, Wiener, Nadin, Nicolau, Malevich, Klee, Gardner, Da Vinci, Hassan, Bucur, Epuré, Flüsser), 2025, © Mustafa Yusuf Sezer& Simber Atay

Epilogue

Sherban Epuré developed the Persona/Personae series within Meta-Phorms. In this context, the fundamental essence of "Persona, master" is that it is also a mathematical design. Epuré (2006) explains this work analytically: “Persona, master (Sigg06-C4). (© Sherban Epuré) (a) The constant frequency of a flux of stimuli is randomized in (c) by the frequency converter in (b). A generic human shape seen as a particular case of a general geometric domain in (f) results when a one-stimulus input system (d) interacts with a polygon (e).In (g) the random flux of stimuli in (c) interacts with the shape in(f) and produces the Persona in (h). Each of these interactions proceeds from specific algorithms” (p.407).

This statement is, in a way, the definition of Epuré's entire Intrinsic Art poetics. In addition, the "generic human shape" mentioned above is sometimes an element of a male-female composition in its dual and plural forms, but ultimately it is a post-gender phenomenon like a cyborg, and Intrinsic Art evolves from Cybernetic Art to Post-humanist Art. Epuré, with his scientific formation, avant-garde sensibility, and algorithmic art performance, has contributed to the global development and proliferation of digital art language in general. Moreover, he challenged totalitarianism as an artist; He is a Promethean hero. According to Kozak (2025): “In posthumanist thought, the Promethean act signifies humanity’s transcendence of its own limits and its transformation on biological, cognitive, and technological levels. This act symbolizes the human endeavor to determine one’s own fate and self-realization, the desire for knowledge, the aspiration to transform through technology, and, most importantly, the challenge to authority” (p.186).

The 21st century is the age of parameters defined by the suffixes post and meta: postmodernism, post-truth, post-humanism, meta-language, meta-philosophy, meta-art… Metamorphosis and transformation are ever faster and ever more intense.
Okay? Then? What Is to Be Done?

But this time, the answer to this question will come not from Nikolay Chernyshevsky, but from Ihab Hassan. Focusing specifically on post humanism and drawing on Promethean symbolism, Hassan (1977) makes the following prediction: "The cosmos is performance, posthumanist culture is a performance in progress, and their symbolic nexus is Prometheus" (p.838).

Figure 2. Prometeo Glorioso Hommage to Sherban Epuré (Galleria Simberiana No. 21),
2025 © Simber Atay

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