

FRANK SPAAN – ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1961 in the Netherlands, my earliest recollection relating to creating art goes back to about the age of seven, having copied then a drawing that was on the front of a book which I liked very much.

Growing up in a grey town with low skies but in a country with a tradition of world class painters must have been a good growing ground for developing the urge to create art.

Photography was my first medium, and I exhibited in 1986 along with others at the celebration of the Dies Natalis of the University of Utrecht.

But before that, I had already dived into painting, and through these first years of autodidact creation I was able to develop my own style. In intermediate steps, I showed my work to the Ateliers-63 in Haarlem (<https://www.de-ateliers.nl/en/de-ateliers/background/>), to get feedback, and I started to show my work as part of an art tour in Bilthoven in 1991.

1992-1995 I gained training in several disciplines of the arts at the Academy “De Wervel” in Zeist (now part of the University of Applied Sciences Leiden, <https://www.hsleiden.nl/vaktherapie>). It was here that my interest in water-colour painting with plant-based pigments was raised. Before that I had worked with mixed media, primarily oil on canvas.

An exhibition followed in the castle of Zeist (<https://www.slotzeist.nl/>), and in the Anthroposophical Society of the Netherlands in Zeist in 1995. A presentation and discussion of a painting project took place at the Christian Community in Stuttgart in 2001.



During those years I was able to sell to individual people; my paintings have found their way into private collections in the Netherlands, Britain, Switzerland and Canada. Every now and then I looked if a gallery would be interested in representing my work. Some were interested; however, it never came to tight cooperation; looking back I can see that the development of the method and creating the art was at that point more important to me than to focus on sales.

Because of this, odd jobs were part of life – cleaning, curative education, working in bookshops and at universities; but this has kept me free enough to follow the artistic path of my own choice.

And so I produced much art – until something unexpected happened: in 2002 the larger part of my work was stolen from the cellar it was stored in. However, I did not give up, but instead looked for new ways.

Around 2005 I picked up the water-colour technique with plant-based pigments once again, and started developing a method which would take up the next years. In a group exhibition in the Steiner House London in 2008 (

<https://www.rsh.anth.org.uk/>) I was able to

show first results. In 2011 I produced a booklet with some of my art-work. At the same time, around 2010, I made a series

of oil paintings, and applied for awards in the London area, where I was at the time. The last exhibitions in the United Kingdom were again in the Steiner House, including a talk, and shortly after that in the Christian Community in Forest Row, both in 2011.



Spiritual subject matter started to become more and more important. In the writings and art-work of Rudolf Steiner, in the art of Margarita Woloshina and her technique, I found the fundamentals that now support my method of creating art. This method combines inspiration with thorough knowledge and handling of specific materials, bridged by conscious development of the soul; more about this can be found on <https://lanz-span.ch/spiritincolour/> .

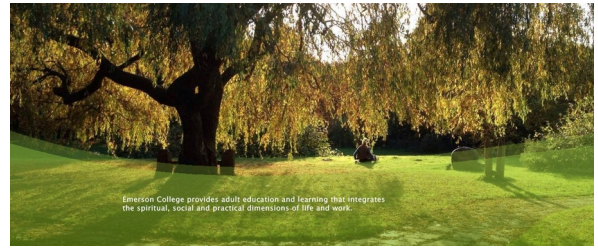


In 2012 I moved to Switzerland, in order to deepen once more my method of painting. Soon this was followed exhibitions: first a group exhibition in the Goetheanum in Dornach (<https://sbk.goetheanum.org/en/>), then an exhibition with two artistic colleagues in the Rudolf Steiner Painting School Institute (<http://www.rudolf-steiner-malschule.ch/the-institute/>), both in 2012, and another one in 2013 in the Schreinerei of the Goetheanum where I could now show larger water-colour work.



In 2016 I showed my work in Kunstraum Rhein (Dornach, <https://kunstraumrhein.ch/>), including many large works (again I had been quite busy) – the largest up to now is 400x300cm (160x120in).

I started to pass on my knowledge on art theory and art history through giving lectures. Furthermore, I have also organised courses based on the method that I have developed. Especially interesting was one for students of a training to become a biographical counsellor at Emerson College (<http://www.emerson.org.uk/pabc-biographical-counselling>): this artistic work could immediately be added to their set of tools for working with biography.



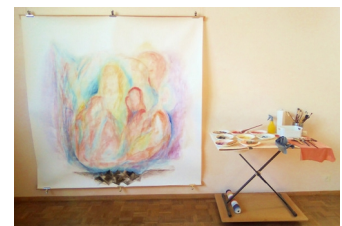
In participating and exhibiting in conferences on questions like “How do the visual arts and inner development strengthen each other?” and “Transforming matter – transforming will” I have been able to extend and deepen my own path.

Eventually, the method is to be documented in a book on which I am working at the moment. I find it important to spread the knowledge about a way of making art which supports the working of the spiritual world into this world.

Although I have also been active in other areas of art, for example in photography (since the 1970s), music (a workshop on singing and Franz Schubert, Emerson College 2009), layout of art books (His beloved St. Ives, on the painter Gerard Wagner, Iris Books 2012), acting and playwright (the main part in The importance of being Earnest, Arlesheim 2015), furniture design (a pentagonal book-case, 2018), writing a novel (Zonderlingen, in Dutch, 2020) – painting remains my main area.



Going on-line with my art-work today is an important step for me, which seems all the more necessary in the current world situation.



Frank

