

**otu:** it's hard to believe - it's been a whopping 8 years since we last spoke. we said a year, now it's almost a whole dog's life.

**omi:** what dog are you talking about?

**otu:** any

**omi:** no wonder we didn't talk for a long time, with that level of content.

**otu:** seriously, what happened to stretch our "one year" so much?

**omi:** i suppose more interesting things, we just didn't think about it.

**otu:** well, i'm glad that you again see this extremely reduced pragmatically, and from this energetically fresh occasion i want to immediately - as far as you allow me to - send my entire list of questions ahead...

**omi:** sure, send ahead, racing reporter!

**otu:** in keywords:   how are you?  
                          is the love still so sweet?  
                          and responsibility, do you still describe it as you did 8 years ago?  
                          and why did you say "Beuys, meanwhile also no" at the end of our first  
                          talk? i forgot to ask you that last time. And finally, what does art do?  
                          please tell us about your 2, 3 most exciting projects?

So, how are you? i heard that in the meantime you experienced a very severe challenge in the form of a blood cancer.

**omi:** yes, indeed, this tumor came to visit me out of the blue in 2019. That is, no, actually there were already signs, also always strange thoughts of worry about my health, but i had ignored that - a beautiful spring had just broken out. i wanted to go to the beach, not to the emergency room.

**otu:** so you had listened badly and therefore you could not fulfill your responsibility.

**omi:** right. thank god i've been living under the same roof with Frankie for almost 11 years now and she told me to do it in a very strict way at some point... but i don't want to talk too much about it. you know, i'm currently finishing a book about it, and i'm sorry i can't mention it in this interview as well, i just don't feel like at the moment.. but you can read it when i find a publisher for it.

**otu:** ok, anyway you look good, if i hadn't heard about it i'm sure i wouldn't have noticed.

**omi:** yes, we got along well, the tumor and i. until it disappeared again soon after the stem cell transplant.

**otu:** let's hope forever. but please tell me one sentence that concludes this question - how are you today?

**omi:** fine, thank you. Not sick at all is not healthy either, as Karl Valentin so aptly stated... i am just thinking about prefixing this beautiful quote with two others from Meister Eckhard and Erich Fromm in my book.

**otu:** is it supposed to be a men's book?

**omi:** haha, the three have more feminine than many women i know. no, don't worry, it's supposed to be a universal hug book.

**otu:** with which you have nicely stepped into the next question. is the love still so sweet?

**omi:** if i had stood up with the poetic foot i might say yes, and then describe the sweetness i mean. but i stood up with buddha today - today is an "all in buddha day". [*German Butter sound almost the same as Buddha.. and "alles in Butter" = "no problem, easy going"*].

**otu:** and what does Buddha speak?

**omi:** bread! let there be bread! no, nonsense, but i would say that love is not sweet, but dear. Love loves. and, very importantly, it is completely impossible - this has become impressively clear to me over the last few years - to understand it with the mind. impossible. it comes from far beyond and touches your mind far beyond from all words. That is why we find mystics from all the ladies' countries saying again and again that love finds us, not we her. The mind will never be able to figure it out and in the end will always create disaster.

**otu:** so you're basically saying you've come a good deal closer to the all-important question of love. even to the answer.

**omi:** if we now use words around it to make ourselves understood, and to point out abstractly what we mean, we must never forget that these are only lame crutches.

**otu:** yes well, but how does one understand it then, if one cannot grasp it intellectually?

**omi:** in the classical image: with the heart. with a kind of perception that is a thousand times finer, quieter and deeper, but at the same time is the closest thing of all, so close that nothing distinguishes us.

**otu:** can you give us an example of this loving or being loved, which is the same thing, if i understood you correctly.

**omi:** let's just be still for a serene moment and see if we can feel it.

. . . after about a minute . . .

**otu:** frankly, i feel a little ridiculous now. hearing and feeling love? all the time i was just thinking about how it might sound and feel.

**omi:** you see, the mind is yakking away. that's a huge problem. we don't think, it thinks us...

loud verbal garbage comes to the surface from the conditioned archives, showing us how hard it is to listen. very clearly and directly. that's why monks all over the world invented meditation, praying or whatever you want to call the technique to help us shut up verbally.

**otu:** meanwhile, you sound more like the bright village priest of a hippie community who is never at a loss for an argument, not like an artist. do you meditate, too? yes, you do, don't you?

**omi:** aha. while i'm just a simple *partist*. yes, i've been meditating for many years. over a few years i lost this daily practice, but it found me again. but you can also see your little provocation the other way around - it's strange how many colleagues don't ask themselves beyond the ego, experiment with it, and thus try to verify very basic insights. that's what i've been wondering all my life. for me, the most important thing of all. also for my art.

**otu:** or to falsify...

**omi:** sure.

**otu:** but the small questions concerning our everyday life, our perception, are also important.

**omi:** indeed, everyone ends up in the one and only Now via his own personal story, which makes this or that more interesting for him. not that all art terms, ways of working, media and topics are not legitimate, but it is a bit strange that i mutate into a crazy village priest in your perception with what i just said, just because i dare to poke the big questions.

**otu:** yes, sorry, that slipped out a bit cockily.... but we are all too used to how easily it turns into raving half-truths, and with time into complete gibberish, dogma and fanaticism. Of course, this has nothing to do with you, but it always resonates with me.

**omi:** ok, well.. about what we can not talk, let us change the subject. just in conclusion, perhaps i would like to say that i am very grateful that the last few years have also given me the courage in this respect to no longer hide my most intimate thoughts in my projects. they have always been the most important thing in my art, these big questions. i hope that i will be able to express them much more clearly, distinctly and impressively.

**otu:** yes, i have also seen it in your new projects on your site that you have expressed it more clearly here and there... but change the subject now we do not really have to - responsibility - do you still describe it the same as 8 years ago?

**omi:** hmm...so...yes, but it has deepened. it has deepened me. my thoughts that are closer to me today are those of relationship, presence and the Many in One.

**otu:** do you believe that we are all One, and the main problem is that we don't understand this fact?

**omi:** you don't have to believe that anymore! across all sciences it is reported, in neurology, cosmology, physics, mathematics, and and and, you can approach it from wherever, the one becomes the only One. the question is, how do we get that independently, from our own drive and from our own insight, into an everyday, self-evident ethical acting. what you don't want done to you, don't do to others... you know. This has to be recognized, not believed or

dribbled after. Giving and receiving are in reality one.

But do you know what?

**otu:** no, what?

**omi:** let's look at the next question, i think in this regard you better read my book, if it ever comes out, and maybe the "art questions" help us to see "the same" again differently.

**otu:** well okay, then, "Beuys meanwhile also no", why?

**omi:** a while back, in response to this, sort of as a visual statement, i made a "daily" ([www.dailyjetzt.com](http://www.dailyjetzt.com)) photo graphic i called BEACH-BEUYS. You have to scroll down quite a bit until you find it. There you'll see a small, fat, pillar-like island standing in the middle of the deep blue Adriatic Sea. And on this strange mushroom island sits an oversized, colorful beach ball with a white, delicate aura around it.

What does this have to do with Beuys? Nothing. But a lot with him and me.

At some point i just had to admit to myself that i didn't like the fact that he always appeared so prophetic, and that he dabbled so much in German mythology i also found increasingly unattractive. some things in his biography i also find unsympathetic. the hero story, how he crashed as a pilot and shamans nursed him back to health. there i felt betrayed. the chosen one chose himself. that's okay, but why didn't he say that openly, why did he keep these secrets, or rather invented stories.

yes. but hats off to his wonderful drawing hand, his courage, his many surprises on his way to declare the big and the whole, which was then at some point much too German for me, too oaky, as already mentioned.

**otu:** that still sounds like a very ambivalent relationship.

**omi:** no, first and foremost, i still very much appreciate his work and his impulses, it's just the branding that i disliked every time more.

**otu:** now let's talk about some of your current projects. what's up at the moment, what keeps you busy the most.

**omi:** well, central is still my book, i hope very much that i can finish this month, at least the textual part. but in parallel i'm working on a series of paintings, on 5, 6. originals, as single paintings, and on a silkscreen edition. And then of course the projects with my African friends and immigrant colleagues. and not to forget of course my central source, my (almost) daily art food that i ingest via my photoblog, the *il Daily Jetzt*.

**otu:** oh, how nice to hear, you are painting and drawing again?

**omi:** yes, to me it feels like drawing painting, or painting drawing , although strictly speaking it's more like drawings - something made of strokes. Thick strokes.

**otu:** and what do these strokes do?

**omi:** omi: During my tumor period, which confined me to bed for many months, i realized for the

first time what an incredibly powerful statement it is to say I AM.

I AM.

Before i am a name, before i tell myself a story about myself, before i have a history, before i have a job, etc., I AM simply. Being.

That is the fundamental difference between HAVING and BEING. Most people in our terribly superficial, market-driven consumer world are HAVING. they have a life for instance.

To HAVE, because you can only HAVE what is also passing away, decaying, rotting, it's a death cult. to be is life. in reality, we are only BEING. a being that we share with all and ultimately can only be understood as one. again, not intellectually, of course.

when this dawned on me, i felt great gratitude and invented a kind of tumor-Logo, which simply consists of three superimposed letters. Above I, in the middle A and below M. I AM.

**otu:** and you vary this insight, or what do you do with something as simple as three letters?

**omi:** after the tumor logo that i gave away, centrally printed on t-shirts, to many friends because i wanted to share my joy - my joy of being alive and my joy of having them as friends - i began to consider all the languages i speak. German, English, Spanish and Italian. I AM not only, ICH BIN also, and likewise YO SOY and IO SONO.

One language or another, its grammar, its sound, all its etymological depth, makes in our minds each a different character melody, a different like flowing pattern. when i speak English, i have a different spontaneity than when i speak Italian, not only because i may know one or the other language a little better, but above all because of their different cultural roots and beats.

**otu:** yes but then we are back to HAVING, when all languages HAVE this otherness, these different qualities..

**omi:** ..yes, but only on the surface. language, thinking or speaking are something we have, as we have hands, which are another tool. sure, it is also correct to say, we ARE language, or we are our thinking, but if we mean to describe our innermost identity, as our being, then we are mistaken. we are Being, consciousness, and out of that everything else takes place.

**otu:** that's hard to grasp what you're talking about, and then also as if you were sure.

**omi:** i don't want to seem presumptuous, but when i say it like that, it comes closest to what i experienced. namely, when i was lying in bed around my stem cell transplant, like a heap of life, with over 20kg less, meanwhile without muscles, without any strength, it struck me that completely regardless of that, there was something there that was completely untouched by it. BEING, or consciousness. i understood for the first time that being, that we are, is untouched by time and its processes of decay. in other words, we need consciousness to be able to think, but we don't need thinking to be conscious. do you follow me?

we don't have a life, we are it. and what we don't have, we can't lose.

**otu:** i have to sleep on it...

**omi:** ..good idea, then observe your thinking. is that possible, to observe your thinking?

**otu:** i'll see. but now back to the multilingual BEING-images. what is there to see?

**omi:** oh, actually quite simple things, spontaneous ones, deep-breathed typographies, which want to emphasize their statement, i.e. the written I AM, with other lines, shapes and few colors. thus, mentioned cultural beat visually. these images look perhaps also therefore - as Francesca named it a few days ago - quite tribal-arty.

**otu:** i see, i'm curious how it looks, can we at least see it already on your site?

**omi:** no, not yet today (10/15/2023), but in two or three weeks for sure. i still need to take a closer look at it, whether i'll do more on it or not. in parallel with this hand-drawn series, i'm also working on a silkscreen edition, but in that one the final material, i.e. the data for the screens is digitally generated, with the source material also bringing in handwork.

**otu:** screens? are there several series involved?

**omi:** no, but four screens of about A4 size and colors - once again CMYK, that is cyan, magenta, yellow and black.

**otu:** by the way, why do these 4 basic colors of the subtractive color mixture appear in your work again and again? even in the daily now you overlay it or weave into photographs..

**omi:** i think at first because i was fascinated by these two basic types of color mixing, additive and subtractive, when i was studying optics as a photography student. i was blown away by the insight into these interrelationships of light, its colors and dyes. the longer i visualized how this simple code - CMYK - contained all the color nuances, at least all those that our eye can perceive, the more it seemed to me to be the basic code of everything material. no matter what it is, you can filter out CMYK.

**otu:** i understand. actually i could have guessed, now that i hear you describe this simple connection.

**omi:** yes, if you have been paying attention in physics...

**otu:** does it seem like that only to me, or do you want to take a break? you make a tired impression and i don't want to strain you.

**omi:** yes you are right, more than tired my feet and legs hurt and tell me to move. i have a great desire for a long and slow walk..

**otu:** sure, let's close here... but then we'll finish our conversation in an upcoming 4th and last meeting, okay?

**omi:** yes ok, just get in touch a few days before, and thanks you for your curiosity.

**otu:** thank you for your open ear.

**omi:** that sounds like open air..

**otu:** ..in this sense, get out into the open air!