



The desire to paint may surface at any time: while watching a movie (which is going to generate or bring back certain emotions), while walking through the streets of my neighborhood, or when seeing a face or an alley which suggests something special. When it happens, I cannot actually say it is a desire, it is rather like a need to paint. I have to start quickly so the feeling I want to replicate onto the canvas does not fade away. What really matters is the instant. I want to lay down images of the souls that touch me—or have touched me. To that end, with the use of paint, I project onto a face the effects it has upon me.

In spite of appearances, my goal is not to create an atmosphere that is depressing to the potential viewers. Although the origin of some paintings might be dark, their intended goal is not. I do like to tickle my characters in order to reveal their flaws ; I distort their faces with hatred and their features with pain, but I make sure I always leave traces of hope, or even happiness.

I choose to use strong colors (those that bear heavy signification, such as red, black, or earth brown), but I enjoy hijacking their meanings and lead them away from their symbolic representations. Green at the bottom of a painting does not necessarily represent grass. Conversely, I do not need red to reproduce blood. All these symbols are fun to toy with.

Technically, I like to discover—therefore try—new ways of painting and preparing the canvas. For instance, I soak the honeycomb paper sheet in lukewarm water, beforehand. Or, before the oil paint has totally dried, I apply a coating of varnish, or I dip the canvas into cold water, then I continue to paint. Again, because I like to experiment, I sometimes mix the paint with Indian ink.

I also enjoy painting with a knife. This technique, when elaborating a portrait for instance, consists in applying uneven tinges onto the canvas. In the end, it looks like a sculpture—the face seems to have been carved into tinted wood. In addition to that, I also allow myself to use other methods, such as throwing paint to obtain a different aspect. In any case, I like to create relief because it brings the observer closer to the portraits, by making them palpable, therefore « alive »— the catchword in my works.

Thierry ESTHER is preparing the new series « White Travel through Japan », which he will have the honor to present to you from 2020 and 2021.