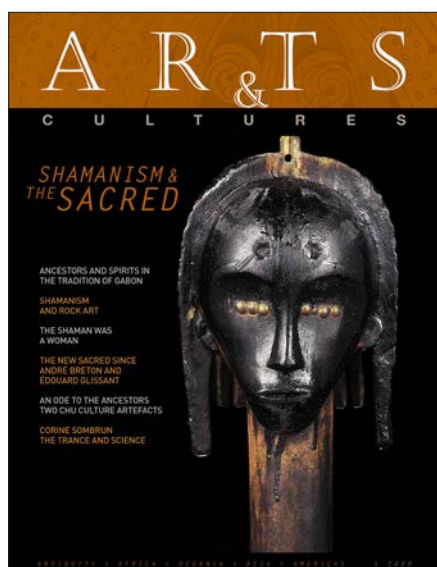


NOUVEAUTÉ REVUE
Communiqué de presse

in fine
ÉDITIONS D'ART

Disponible
le 03/09/2020



Editorial and interviews

Laurence Mattet, directrice Musée Barbier-Mueller, Genève.

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Nigel Barley, Manthia Diawara & Terri Geis, Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, Matteo Campagnolo, Stéphen Rostain, Nimrod Bena, Alain-Michel Boyer, Louis Perrois, Jan Elsen, Bertrand Goy, Régis Gayraud, Estelle Niklès van Osselt & Marie Orsi, Timour Claquin Chambugong, François Pannier, Ok-Kyung Pak, Adrien Viel, Antonio Guerreiro, Jean-Michel Hosatte, Laurence Mattet, Gisèle Fueller.

Prix de vente 30,00 € TTC

296 pages

370 illustrations

23 x 30 cm

Softcover

TVA 5,5 %

English Version 

Disponible le 03/09/2020

Diffusion – Distribution :

CDE-DLM-Madrigall – SODIS



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*The twenty-first century will be mystical
or it will not be / André Malraux*

ARTS & CULTURES 2020 SHAMANISM & THE SACRED

Although the act of sacralization is often considered specific to the "faraway" peoples and to ancient civilizations, references to the sacred are omnipresent in our modern Western society.

Secularization and the advances of science have not led us to abandon this inaccessible object of devotion and fear, probably because it is a common denominator for human beings in all times and all places.

We are now witnessing the development of a growing interest in shamanic cultures and practices and in their spirituality. As you will discover in an article in this issue, researchers in the cognitive sciences are actively exploring shamanism and the phenomenon of trances, in an attempt to discover the physiological mechanisms linked to the trance state and how it influences the functioning of the cerebral hemispheres.

In these turbulent times, there is no need to be a shaman to recognize that the balance between human beings and nature is extremely fragile, and that it is time to reconnect with nature, to re-establish harmony with it, in order to look at the world in a new way.

Laurence Mattet - Editorial



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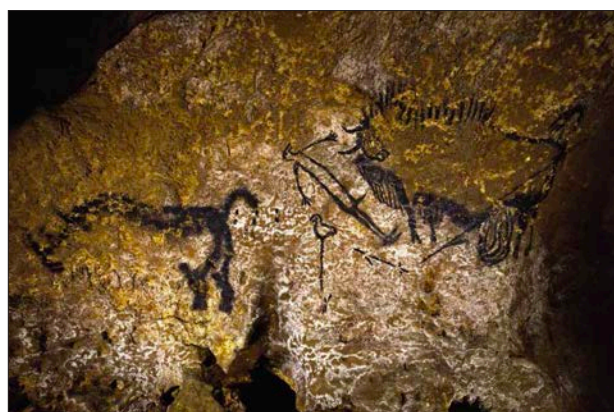




> Shamanism and
Rock Art

> Jean-Loïc Le Quellec

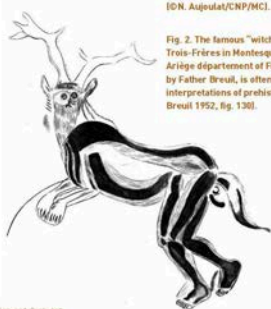
Rock carving from the Tomskaya Pisanitsa Museum (Kemerovo region of Siberia), which Mihály Hoppál interprets as a shaman with his drum (Hoppál 2013, fig. 11-3-4-5). Photo: Dikson.



> Shamanism and
Rock Art

Fig. 1. The meaning of the "Shamanic Scene" in Lascaux Cave at Montignac in the Dordogne, France often linked to a shamanic tradition, is in reality unknown. See Le Quellec 2018 (DN. Augustat/CNP/MC).

Fig. 2. The famous "witch" in the Cave of the Trois-Frères in Montesquieu-Avantès in the Ariège département of France, as reproduced by Father Breuil, is often invoked in shamanic interpretations of prehistoric art (CAD based on Breuil 1952, fig. 130).



een Khuman of the Dnyzel-priester in de Tungusische Cult.

Fig. 3. Carving published by Nicolaas Wissen in 1785 and reputed to represent a Tungusic shaman – which he himself never saw. It is often erroneously compared to rock images.

Even before we consider the shamanic interpretation of rock art, it must be pointed out that if we confine ourselves to an examination of images – even those done by shamans – we can assume only that some of them might allude to practices of the shamanic type. And then, what shamanism are we talking about? The overvaluation of "altered states of consciousness" in the Western discourse on shamanism continues a trend initiated in the 1950s by Mircea Eliade, who considered shamanism a "technique of ecstasy", even though countless observations contradict that way of seeing, observers in the field having often emphasized the lucidity of shamans. When Eliade, according to the ethnologist M. N. Zangiev, reported a Buryat ritual in which the shaman had to climb a birch tree with a group of young men, he added on his own initiative that, "while climbing, they all fall in ecstasy" (Eliade 1968, p. 109), whereas in reality they had to be careful above all not to fall, because it is an ordeal, and falling would be a bad omen.

Eliade introduced a kind of circular reasoning that has continued to our own time, when he asserted not only the universality of shamanism but also its "archaic" character without a shred of proof, simply by virtue of the primitivist ontology underlying his oeuvre as a whole. Before long, his book was being cited by advocates of a "shamanic" reading of prehistoric art, particularly by Hans Kutschera the year

after its publication, then by Karl Harr and a whole string of authors. In later editions of his book, Eliade would then mention these same essays in support of his theses, thus transforming into external arguments his own groundless assertions, now relied, from the first edition.

It is widely claimed that shamanism dates back to prehistory. Karl Harr thought it first arose during the Upper Palaeolithic Period and that its most ancient form was found in Lascaux, where, supposedly, a tutelary spirit in the form of a bird is perched next to a man "in ecstasy" (Fig. 1). Peter Rur, Ken Hedges, Siegfried Giedion, Ernst Brüggen and Ludwig Luthi, along with many others, also believed they could identify shamanic traits in the cave paintings, repeating the comparisons of their predecessors, especially with respect to the stag-headed anthropomorphs (Figs 2-3). Margaret Stutley was still practising the same type of ethnographic comparison in 2004, writing that "the rock paintings of Lascaux and those of Siberia were part of the magico-religious activities that took place on the sites, being an important aspect of the social life of the people."



> Stéphen Rostain

> The Shaman Was
a Woman

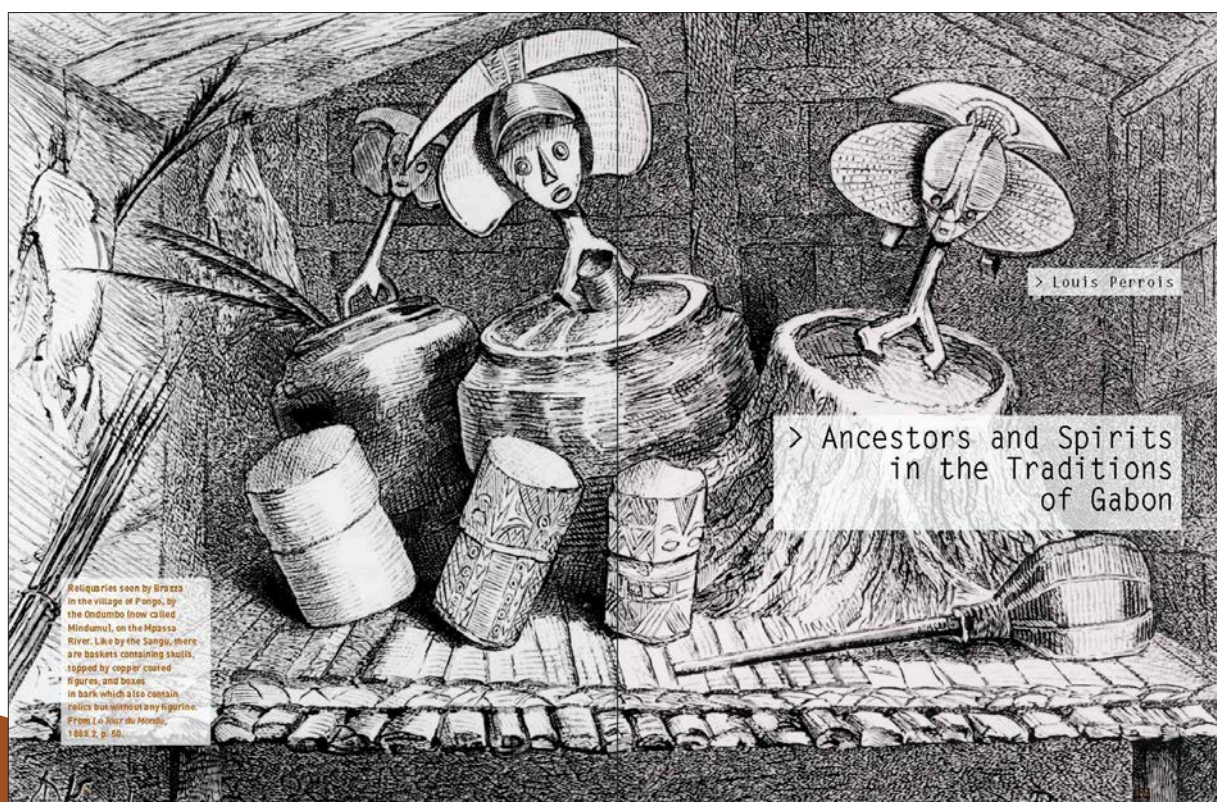
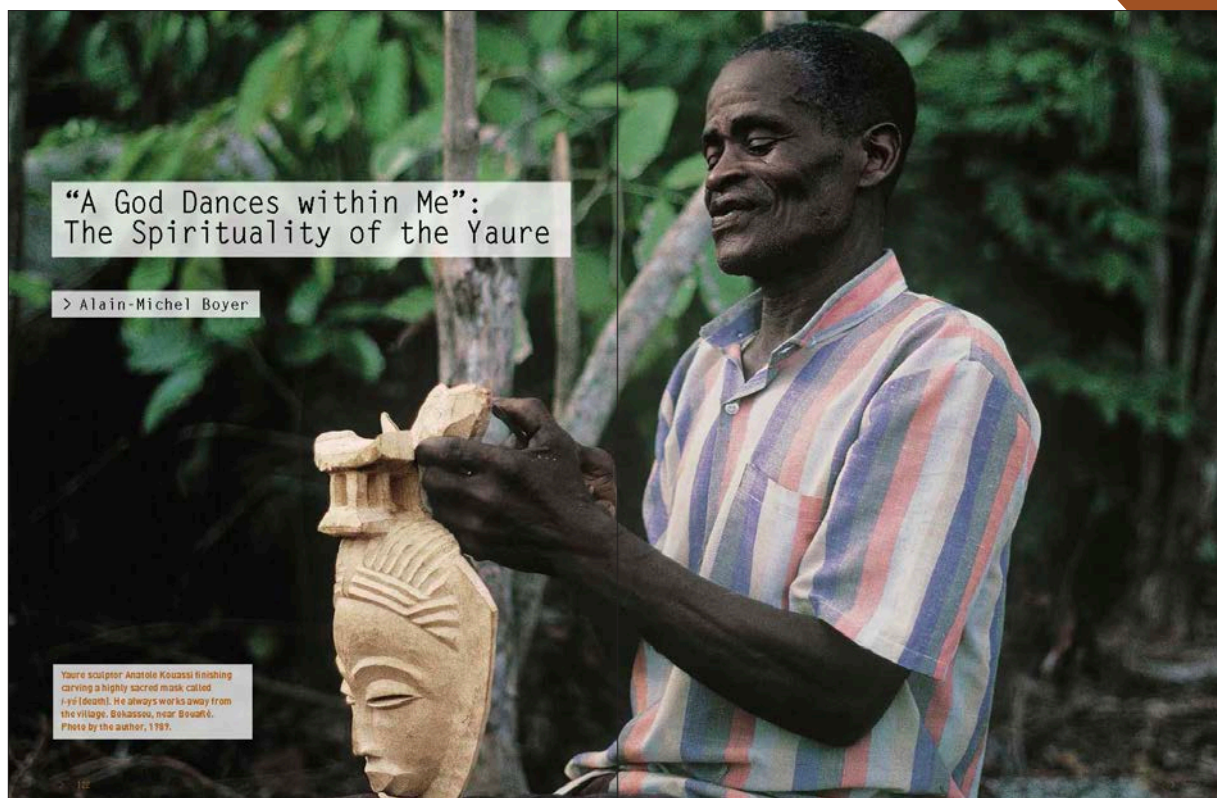
Young Kichwa potter from
Ecuadoran Amazonia, who may
one day become a master potter.
Photo by the author.



> Nimrod

> The Utensil
Possesses Me

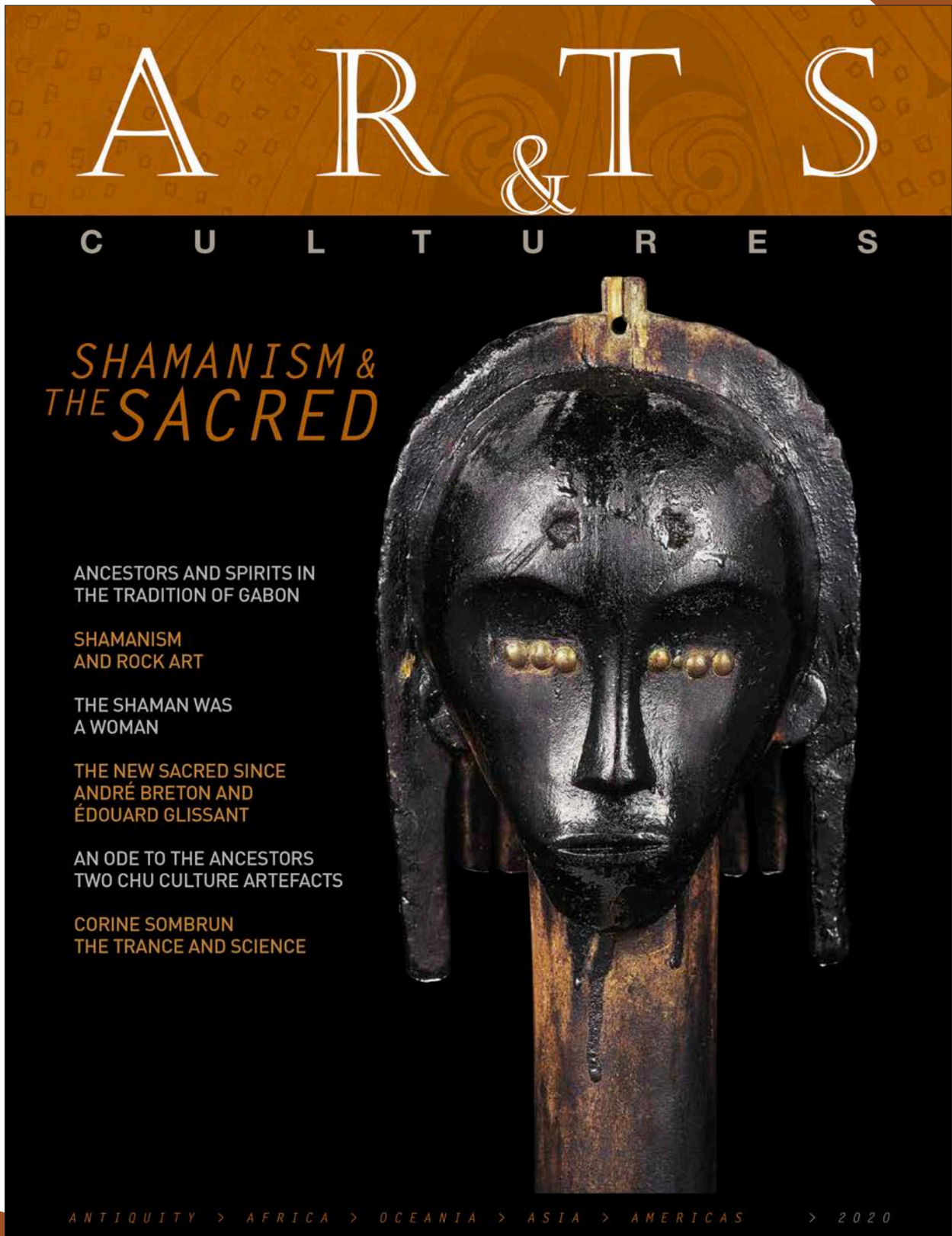
Chadian potter. Photo Jake
Lyell / Alamy stock images.



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ANDRÉ BRETON AND
ÉDOUARD GLISSANT

AN ODE TO THE ANCESTORS
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