

Excerpt from Exhibition Catalogue, *Peter Schuyff: Works on Paper 1981-1991*, Sperone Gallery, Rome, Italy: 1991

I can remember only once that it was truly essential for me to consider the sincerity of my pictures. I had decided to get a tattoo and for a moment I thought about designing it myself. A picture is innocent until proven guilty. So if I were to design my own tattoo I would have to live with what I could possibly recognize as a lie on my arm for the rest of my life. I eventually asked a friend to design the tattoo for me. I'm sure that he tells the truth and lies as well as I do and though it is my arm, it is his drawing and since I took his word as good, it might be his problem.

My friend Neil designed the tattoo for me and we went to Big Joe's tattoo parlor in Mount Vernon N.Y. to have it done. Now there are two big black dots up by my shoulder. These dots are about two and one half inches in diameter and they are next to each other horizontally. If I were to have a vaccination scar it would be in the space between the two dots. I told Neil that if I were ever to tire of him or his dots I would have my tattoo changed into a picture of Mickey Mouse.

I make watercolors mostly when I travel. I usually start by putting down a puddle of water and then I drip little bits of pigment into the water and let it settle and dry wherever it wants to. I've discovered that the water can be very different depending on the place and that the pigment will react accordingly. The tap water in New York is different from the rain water in Tennessee or the rivers of the Amazon or water from a lake in British Columbia. I enjoy taking a step back during this process and I try to encourage Mother Nature to make as many decisions as she's willing to make. Likewise, many of the formal decisions in my pictures are made based on my faith in a convenient template or the length of a piece of string that might be handy or the width of the nearest piece of lumber. I figure that Mother Nature's secrets are more interesting than mine and she probably has more of them. In any case I am less reluctant to reveal her secrets than my own. Maybe she should have designed my tattoo.

*Peter Schuyff*