

off the wall gallery

paintings · sculpture · original prints



TONY SOULIÉ

Tony Soulié (born 1955) is a French artist working in painting, printmaking, sculpture, installation art and photography. Soulié was part of the French "Nouvelle Abstraction" movement in the 1970-1980s. Hundreds of exhibitions of his works have been organized throughout the world and his works are featured in many public and private collections from the Museum of Modern Art, Paris, Utsunomiya Museum of Art and Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts through the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation and the Spiegel foundation.

The materials Soulié uses in his paintings are very constant: varnish, and carborundum powder mixed with acrylic painting are his trademark since 1992 with his first series of painted photographs from Africa. These materials are specific products, not originally intended for fine arts, that he adopted from his immediate surroundings when his studio was located in the Bastille neighborhood of Paris, which was then dominated by furniture crafts businesses.

BACKGROUND Soulié was born and raised in Paris, France. He earned his degrees at the *École des Arts Appliqués*. Although he is generally referred to as a painter, he has also created numerous sculptures and prints as well as installations of land art, especially on volcanoes – even in some cases inside the calderas of active volcanoes.

The use of carborundum in his paintings links back to the volcano installations: the silicon component of the artificial compound is in nature, as pure crystals, only found in volcanic exhalations.

The technique of painted photographs, or "photo-paintings" as he calls them, are based on large scale black and white photographs taken during his travels across the world that he covers with ink, acrylic, varnish and carborundum. The themes explored in these painted photographs include the 'megalopolis' - based on his own photography from the biggest cities around the world - but also flowers and dream catchers.

CAREER His first personal gallery show opened at the Gallery Durgnat, Switzerland in 1977 and he was featured in the 1984 show at the Grand Palais: *"Peintures, l'autre nouvelle generation"*, a showcase that launched a new generation of French Artists. The Grand Palais show was immediately followed by a growing series of regular exhibitions. He became a featured artist at the Françoise

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Palluel Gallery that showed his works starting with the 1985 *Foire internationale d'art contemporain* (FIAC) Art Fair through the mid-nineties where in 1996, the Soulié exhibition launched the Dhalgren Gallery.

He was awarded the grant "*Villa-Medicis hors les murs*" by the French Academy in Rome in 1987. This allowed him to establish himself in Naples where he started working on installations doing land-art on volcanoes, starting with nearby Vesuvius.

In 1992 he was one of the artists representing France at the Universal Exposition of Seville Expo '92 in Spain.

He continued the land-art installations on volcanoes in 1997, with Big Island and Maui in Hawaii. The work was part of a photographic exhibition the same year in The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu.

In 1996 he travelled the coasts of Africa, and he brought back photopaintings from Zanzibar, Benin and other countries. The themes developed in his works in Africa were subject to a parallel work done in Murano, Venice, Italy, the glass-pearl produce of which played such a key role in slave trading off the West African coast. During 1998 and 1999, he worked with Simone Cenedese, *maestro vetraio* of Murano, on a series of glass works based on African fetish sculptures. The project was a response to the slave trade in which captives are bought and paid for in glass-pearls cast in Murano.

He had his first personal show in Japan in 1998 at the MMG Gallery. The first monograph on Tony Soulié was published in 1999. Possibly as a resurgence of his Albi origins, Soulié has investigated the *tauromachia* - 'magic of bullfighting'. This investigation was first presented as the *Faena* series of work in 2000.

The Museum Convent of the Cordeliers in Châteauroux showed the first major retrospective exhibition of his works in 2003 and he was awarded *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture in 2004.

More recently, in 2012 the town of La Rochelle invited Soulié to exhibit in numerous sites.

[Text adapted from Wikipedia](#)