

“German Artist Honors Operation Prato With His Art“

The interview with **Frank J. Schäpel [FJS]** was conducted by **Marcelino Melo [MM]** and has been published in Portuguese language as “Artista alemão homenageia a Operação Prato com sua arte” at Ovni Hoje’s website on 8.8.2020.

<https://www.ovnihoje.com/2020/08/08/artista-alemao-homenageia-a-operacao-prato-com-sua-arte/>

MM: How did your interest in Operation Prato begin?

FJS: In 2010 I seriously started to study UFO literature and found discussions of Operation Prato in books of Illobrand von Ludwiger and Jacques Vallee. These references awakened my curiosity. I read Bob Pratt's 'UFO Danger Zone' and the handful English articles available – especially the FSR texts by B. Pratt and Daniel Rebisso Giese, the interview transcripts with Coronel Uyrangê Hollanda and Wellaide Cecim.

MM: How did the idea of making an artistic exhibition with paintings based on the documents of Operation Prato come about? In 2016?

FJS: In 2016 I was asked by a curator of the Goethe Institute to show work in Belem and Fortaleza. I suggested to create a new serial of drawings and paintings on Operation Prato. I wanted to pay tribute to the importance of the 1977/78 UFO wave in Northern Brazil and to invite the Brazilian audience to revisit 'their history' and to communicate their views on a questionnaire. Gladly the invitation was widely accepted. Dozens of questionnaire were filled out (200+) and Fortaleza's 'Museu de Arte Contemporânea' staff organized a podium discussion on Operation Prato.

Note 1: Interested in the perspective of the viewers I provided them with a questionnaire (form attached). There were more than 200 forms returned in Belem (119) and Fortaleza (117) – though many of these questionnaires haven't been filled out properly and dozens sound totally nonsensical. I unfortunately haven't found time to evaluate these forms to date but want to make up for it this year. Could I ask you for the translation/ or transcription of some few sentences?

Note 2: To my disappointment I couldn't travel to Belem in person. There was no budget for the flight costs.

MM: Do you have any new paintings besides Colonel Hollanda's portrait? Do you intend to make an artistic exhibition?

FJS: In 2019 I started a new series of paintings that focuses on ignored or tabooed but significant incidents and developments of our present time. The main subject is the UFO phenomenon with portraits of researchers and witnesses as well as the depiction of possible UFO related phenomena like cattle mutilations. An additional topic is the accumulative phenomenon of Marian apparitions. Various underreported social and political realities are also dealt with. With this wide array of topics I desire to develop an alternative history of our time – with an emphasis on commonly rejected narratives.

And yes, I definitely intend to exhibit these works.

Note 1: If plans for an exhibition become more concrete I will let you know. Because of the distance between Germany – Brazil transport costs might be a hurdle/issue for an exhibition in Brazil (- same goes for sells.) But I am open for both!

Note 2: Some of these new works – like portraits of Jacques Vallee or Allen Hynek - can be found on my website. e.g. http://frankschaepel.de/malerei_12.html

MM: How do you understand the importance of Operation Prato's historical value to the field of studies on anomalous aerial phenomena?

FJS: I think Operation Prato is of highest importance. There are several intriguing aspects to Operation Prato and the wave:

1. the aggressive nature of the crafts' appearances/attacks
2. the severe injuries of several witnesses and animals resulting therefrom
3. the disproportional large number of 'high strangeness' cases (according to Hollanda)
4. the timely official governmental exploration of the phenomena by the Brazilian Air Force – not *after* but *during* the UFO wave

Cases of high strangeness or intense forms of 'contact' might teach us a lot about the UFO phenomenon and its boundaries.

Beside the 1977/78 wave in North Brazil hot spots like the 'Skinwalker' Ranch in Utah, the 'Rocky Mountain' Ranch in Colorado or the Hoia Bacu Forest in Romania display a wide array of anomalous phenomena and might help us to verify or disprove our present theories of origin, meaning and workings of UFOs.

Operation Prato provokes many questions. Here I just want to emphasize two of these questions:

1. In general the UFO phenomenon seems to be global in its nature. But special phenomena like cattle mutilation or the ray attacks on citizens in Para and Maranhão seem to be distributed totally irregular. Why do we have a high concentration of extremely aggressive UFO confrontations in Brazil and South America (with a peak in the 1977/78 UFO flap) that we don't see elsewhere?
2. Is there a connection between the ray attacks in northern Brazil and the cattle mutilation phenomenon in the Americas and the United Kingdoms?

MM: Do you believe that Operation Prato is well publicized in Europe and the USA? Or is it still an event unknown to the vast majority of people interested in UFOS in your opinion?

FJS: In Europe Operation Prato is quite well known – if not to say infamous - among well studied UFO researchers. Though if you talk about 'UFO enthusiasts' the picture differs: There are a lot of Europeans who have absolutely no clue about what happened at the Amazon delta in 1977/78. Beside short notes and summaries of Operation Prato the available literature for non Portuguese speaking researchers is extremely limited. Bob Pratt's book and FSR articles seem to provide the most detailed information available in English.

Therefore Illobrand von Ludwiger asked me to summarize my findings on Operatio Prato at the IGAAP conference in 2017. It is planned to publish this summary in the 4th IGAAP report (in German. IGAAP website: <https://www.igaap-de.org/english/>).

Note 1: There is a tendency in Europe to focus on the national and the USA situation/cases. Therefore Brazilian as well as Asian or even eastern European cases are often not very well known. If there is a language barrier – as there is between Germany and Poland for example – information of cases that took place only a few km away in neighboring countries often remain more or less unknown.

Note 2: For me it was a rather frustrating experience to find several interviews by Hollanda and various witnesses as well as the published and leaked official Air Force documents in Portuguese and to know that I couldn't really access them.

MM: What is your opinion about the nature of the phenomena observed by the Brazilian military on the island of Colares PA in 1977 and 1978 during Operation Prato?

FJS: Based on the sources available to me - I think the observations of the military are authentic and the documented objects and effects are real.

Furthermore I think that the objects were intelligently controlled – probably from the entities that were described by the witnesses in relation to UFO attacks and sightings.

Do the actions and behavior of crafts and intelligence imply an aggressive or hostile agenda?

I think this is at least a possibility. Total ignorance or indifference to human values and feelings would be another possible explanation for all the terror.

The great interest that Hal Puthoff, TTSA and others have shown in Operation Prato confirms my assessment: Operation Prato is not to be neglected.

In my opinion we shouldn't see the wave as a singular occurrence – despite all its 'specialness' – but rather as a highly concentrated form of phenomena that we witness also elsewhere on this planet – though less massive in concentration, number, strangeness and intensity.

Note 1: I refer to Hal Puthoff's remark in his June 2018 address at the SSE/IRVA Conference in Las Vegas: "Well, that helped us to understand. We as part of this program looked at some cases that were really good from Brazil. In 1977, 78, it was like Close Encounters of the Third Kind. A thousand pages of documents all done by the Brazilian Air Force investigative team, 500 photographs, 15 hours of motion film, a lot of medical injuries. This is a list of the different kinds of medical injuries that occurred when people encountered these craft at close range, and it has some overlap with cases that we've investigated during the program, of injuries occurring." (full address at <https://paradigmresearchgroup.org/2018/06/12/dr-hal-puthoff-presentation-at-the-sse-irva-conference-las-vegas-nv-15-june-2018/>)

MM: What message would you like to send to Brazilian researchers who are dedicated to studying Operation Prato and trying to unravel the mysteries surrounding UFOs in Colares?

FJS: My message to the Brazilian researcher is a loud: Kudos!

You are doing an important work that should be continued. Though many witness' memories have already transformed or weakened; though some important sites and documents may already be lost or changed or hidden away – this research is now more important than ever – because the time window for witness interviews will be closed soon.

I know of the frustration that lays in the research of decade old cases. But all data that isn't generated now - will be lost forever. Therefore I would suggest to collect and document also seeming 'side effects', 'anecdotes' and 'unrelated events' in the direct vicinity of UFO sites and the life of UFO witnesses.

MM: Are the paintings that honor Operation Dish for sale?

FJS: Yes, they are.