

New strategies in language: colour and light in contemporary art

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century we are witness to an evolution in the construction of plastic languages that is substantially changing all their strategies. Image-generating elements are emphasised by means of this evolution, so that elements, processes, attitudes and their manipulation undergo several deep transformations by which language is strongly enriched. Nevertheless, and though it may seem to the contrary, this is a common structure to that of the construction of all kinds of images, whether in the world or in art.

Our research is supported on this strategy: image genetic elements to select light strategies and colour sense in contemporary art.

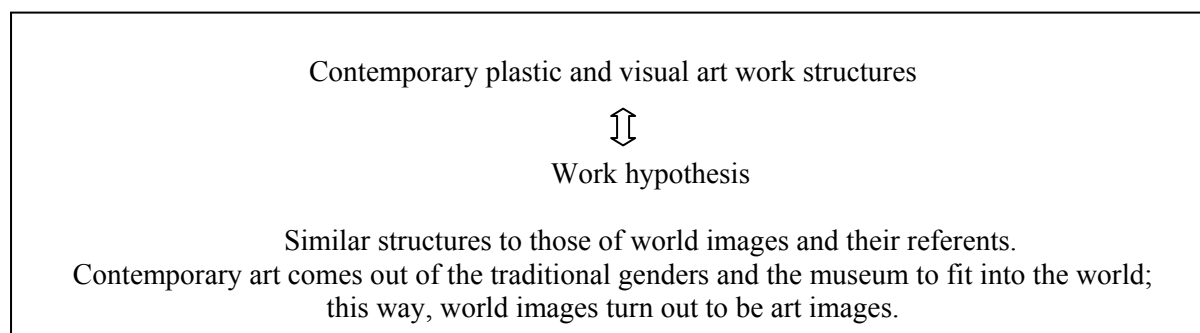


Table 1.

At the start of the research process we reproduced nº 252 from Wittgenstein's *Colour Observation*:

"the question is: what kind of visual image should it be if we have to call it by a coloured or transparent medium? Or rather, how should something be viewed so that it appears coloured or transparent? This is not a question of physics but it is connected to questions of physics."

The system of capturing and producing images is a logical continuation of the physical and psychophysical world, where an awareness of the world and one's experience of its representation are blended. The research shows how systems are inter-dependent and these are evaluated as analogies of the systems of capturing and producing images. Their evolution and development form part of the complex system of visual and plastic language.

2. METHOD

Review of twentieth century artists' work, abstract movements in which the same piece of work is the principal topic. This coincidence between language and topic lay language strategies and linguistic elements used bare, and also give us notice of similar strategies in art work image construction. In those pieces of work we can study colour applications in painting. Other movements such as Minimal Art, Informalism, Arte Povera, Land Art, etc. and a number of specific pieces of work that are studied, emphasise a particular genetic element: light, matter, space, time.

Appearance theory and image representation system relating sketch:

5 PRIMARY APPEARANCE SENSATIONS:

Genetic elements:

LIGHT / MATTER (SURFACE AND INTERNAL STRUCTURE) / SPACE / TIME

Their interaction generates ACTUAL INTERACTION GEOMETRIES AMONG IMAGE CONSTITUTING ELEMENTS, WHENEVER THERE IS A SPECTATOR OF THE PHENOMENA.

PHENOMENA TYPOLOGIES:

Transparency Translucency Matt Opacity Specular Opacity and Darkness

KINDS OF VARIATIONS:

Permeability-Opacity Regularity-Diffusivity Luminosity-Absorption

Physical and allegorical aspects of appearance are indissoluble:

CREATION STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES ARE DIVERSE, FROM REPRESENTING TO PRESENTING, CREATING AND SIGNIFYING NEW IMAGES.

Image as visual world account. Man and his natural/cultural context.

Table 2.

PLASTIC ARTISTS: MARIBEL DOMÉNECH



Fig. 1 Maribel Doménech, *Mirame escúchame*, 1997



Fig. 2 *Para observar al mundo a una cierta distancia*, 1996.

Maribel Domenech's works are to be read on the basis of their multiple construction: woven with black and red threads of light respectively expressing the colour symbolism specific to our culture. The fabric is slightly translucent in that it allows light to shine through the gaps created by the warp itself, the light being a medium of spatial expression, its leading thread, when articulated, becomes an opaque garment which protects and shrouds the absent body. The presentation of the pieces needs exterior and interior light which both symbolize anima and ritual space in the poetics described: woman's own space in the current world. To synthesize, matter, space and light come together in spatial colour sensations of quasi-architectural constructions.

MARÍA ZÁRRAGA



Fig. 3 and 4. María Zárraga. *workshop*, 2001

In this images by the Valencian artist María Zárraga, the symbolic and perceptual aspects of colour in her work will be considered. The perception of works in contemporary art is not only understood as a purely visual observation, but also as intrinsically offering a series of symbolic interpretations through the use of colour, space, etc. An example of this is M. Zárraga's photographic piece below: *Workshop*, 2001, in which can be appreciated the contrast of warm colours next to greys and colder blues, which blend with the space, showing us multiple scenes of people and objects in the world of work, achieving a plastic transformation through the use of light and colour.

NARELLE JUBELIN

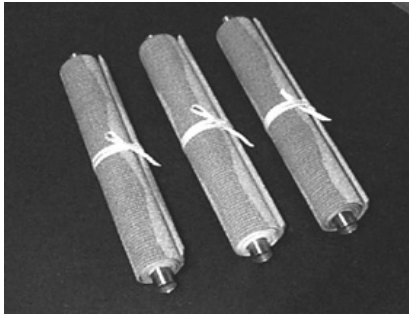


Fig. 5 and 6. N. Jubelin, *Unwritten*, 1999.

In these apparently simple works, presented as opened and closed in the illustrations, the striped coloured surfaces of the parchments contain aspects which are far from being simplistic. Narelle Jubelin seeks to question the relations between internationalism and localism, localisation, identity and social integration, as well as between colonialism and its inhabitants, who over the centuries have formed the framework of a complex society which, in our case, has resulted in the rich cultural and ethnic fabric that comprises Granada. Her works are created in and connected to the place of exhibition and to the people who have constructed it. The physical aspects of these works vary according to the perception and the culture of the observer and become oscillating spaces in ethics and the ecology of seeing.

DANIEL CANOGAR



Fig. 7: D.Canogar, *Dermal Thresholds*, 2000.Fiber optic cables, zoom attachments, 24 slides, dimensions variable.



Fig. 8: *Leap of Faith*, 2002. Fiber optic cables, zoom attachments, 32 slides, structure and screen, 700 x 700 x 350 cm.

In these works by the artist Daniel Canogar, we find how the material which comprises them is light itself: multiple images surround the spectator and develop across his or her own body, converting him or her into an integral part of the installation. The artist promotes an active viewer in works which occupy all the exhibition space, which cannot be touched but which can be altered by the observer passing through.

We are dealing thus with works which deal with the genetic elements of the image in a consciously dynamic way. In one, the colour of the images changes according to which surface it is located on and its transparency, which appears opaque on the wall, invades the space. In another, the bright colours create confusion in terms of spatial perception and the phenomena of the appearance of images.

3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research accomplished has led us to a reorganisation of languages from a general perspective in image construction, according to the referent used for their construction:

1. To indicate common elements and their strategies which are absolutely necessary for their existence. Light, matter, space and time feed each other by means of superimposition, juxtaposition, analogy, similarity, metaphor, irony, etc.
2. To reveal sources in all developing fields on strategies which are introduced in several kinds of art and world development strategies in endless materialisations.
3. To show their application in different work processes.
4. To illustrate with the Research Group HUM-480 pieces of work, fieldwork with teaching and research experience in theory and workshops, with the co-operation of different plastic artists and art theoreticians.

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Note

Translated by Ana García López and Corinne Stewart.