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MATERIAL, TEXTURE AND PATTERN CONSTRUCTION IN A CONTEMPORARY ART OF FILTER: FACTUAL AND ACTUAL PLASTIC

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ABSTRACT

Researcher artist, I have been working on relations between making art object and phenomenons characterizing ways of appearing. I have chosen to consider the question of showing art construction multiplicity modes, art production complexity (concrete and visual object at the same time).

This study looks at the artist's point of view and namely his or her artistic choice to make the work visible using the effects of colour expression. How does the artist use colour expression as a material and subject of the work? What is the thinking?

The artist experiments with the raw material, working on it in order to induce visual responses, observing and classifying the expressions of colour in line with what is being done to it. The idea behind this study is to correlate colour phenomena with work done on the raw material.

Keywords : factual plastic - actual plastic - appearance mode - existence mode - pattern construction - colouring material - radiance principle - primordial phenomenon - throwing colours.

1. INTRODUCTION

Is it not through the coming together of raw materials and through developing knowledge of the visual effects produced by his or her work on these raw materials, that the artist can master his or her own creative process? Are raw materials not the work's true materials due to their visual responses?

If, as Malevitch stated, optical perception is the painter's real material, then colour expression is the raw material of the work. The artist seeks sensitive, technical and experimental knowledge of the raw material in light of its organization and in line with its visual qualities. The artist carries out

research in the aesthetic sphere: linking physical properties to properties which can be seen by the eye. He considers "actual plastic" as characterized by Joseph Albers (the visual state): what can be seen in the coming together of the types and qualities of raw materials used (including colorants), the tensions produced in the layout of these raw materials and the quality and direction of the light source. The artist tackles phenomena resulting from this coming together of raw material and light in an empirical and sensitive way. He considers the work based on how it lends itself to being seen in a certain way. But this "actual plastic" is closely linked to the use of the raw material, to the "factual plastic" as characterized by Joseph Albers (artistic reality): what the object actually is.

The study was based on considering the raw material experimentation phase: it was a question of observing and identifying different expressions of colour depending on the type of work done on the raw material or the layouts. The study was based on an uncommon artistic practice in the field of filter art, on my own creation. Familiar with mural art (as tapestry and stained-glass window), they are made from a composite material of my own: a mix of resin, textile and dynamic colour. Flexible and translucent pieces vertically positioned, they filter the light from the outside to the inside. Fixed or in move, their colours are adjusting themselves in the living space according to the nature of light and the hygrometry level surrounding.

2. COLOUR EXPRESSION AND PATTERN CONSTRUCTION

2.1 Work done on the raw material and visual responses.

2.1.1 A practice

My experience of working with raw materials led me to produce filters. However, I had to carry out numerous experiments, comparisons, measurements and work before being able to set out real pattern construction. Indeed, it was only by developing my knowledge of the materials that I was able to master the effects produced by their interaction. It was the raw materials themselves, which, becoming the filter's components, provided me with visual responses. The creation of a composite fabric is the result of sensitive, technical and experimental knowledge of the materials in use, as well as the definition of the visual constraints.

By way of a frontal, flexible *substrat* (substrate), a fine transparent fabric with wide mesh was used. The colorant, metal salt, was chosen for its physical properties: it has a light shine and a light coating capacity. It therefore frees the artist up to work on transparency.

The binder which enabled the composite fabric to be created, the links between the textile fibres and the colorant, is a plastic resin. It is produced using polycondensation. The binder was chosen due its specific state at the "finished product" stage: transparent and elastic thus enabling the colorant to express the colours.

2.1.2 Experiments and visual events

My experiments focused on bringing different resins into contact with the substrate in order to analyse the visual responses obtained.

The resins received the colorant in two ways: either through mixing (resin and colour blended together manually) or through inclusion (the colour is spread on the surface, absorbed and then immobilised in an uneven way by the resin.) During the work the colorant particles were coated by the resin and then set when polycondensation took place.

Some factors led to irregular distribution of the coloured particles. This was the case for the technique of spreading in the resin: localised or wider sprinkling of grains of different sizes, or dilution in the resin itself, caused these coloured particles to be

spread out in stains, in a scattered fashion or in very highly concentrated areas (see figure 1), namely in groups of particles of varying densities of indeterminate shapes and which visually produce vibrations (shining.)



Figure 1

My actions during the reticulation process, which were carried out with the aim of shaking it up, also contributed to producing the current colours. They may appear as air bubbles, cuts, crawling or folds in the resin.

Pigment concentration gradations, visual irregularities and therefore variations in the transparency, tones, colour intensity and shine all result from the spread of the colorant in the suspension space (namely its even or uneven distribution in the binder) as well as the type of volume drying.

The pattern construction resulting from these experiments will constitute the hazy colour effect, which will make the colour dynamic visually palpable. The real nature ("factual plastic") of the raw material gives off a coloured vibration. But how can this mess of particles be organized?

2.2 Interior design and « actual » colours.

2.2.1 Pattern construction

As a tribute to clouds, which are by definition natural filters, I proceeded to bring the troposphere cloud mass distribution model into the heart of my work. If the scientific model of this distribution enables unstable atmospheric phenomena to be rationalized, in the same way the reuse of this model within the pictorial sphere rationalizes the spatial distribution of different pictorial stratum and therefore the distribution of the work's materials. Therefore, "interior design" must be understood to be the *sketching* of the work's visual space in line with a visual structuring requirement.

2.2.2 Factual plastic distribution

I have called the linking of the raw materials in a distribution over the substrate a *strate nébuleuse* (nebulous stratum), on the understanding that this stratum can be superimposed over one another and can contribute to the depth of the pictorial volume in accordance with different artistic choices (for example selecting a specific form of opacity for the work). The *strate nébuleuse* is made up of the combination of the colorant with the resin, with the resin being the suspension space. The nature of the drying equipment used for the *strate nébuleuse* (film, plastic sheet etc.) modifies the state of the stratum's surface (prints caused by the resin.)

I called the frontal distribution of the colorant in the suspension space the *domaine nébuleux* (nebulous domain). It enters into the geographical area occupied in the plan (vertically and horizontally) by superimposing of the *strate nébuleuse*.

Therefore colour is a "factual motif" (real motif). Both reticular and territorial, it is geographically modulated and ordered in three dimensions: colour masses enter the areas of the pictorial space in a juxtaposition of coloured stains (*domaine nébuleux*) and superimposing the coloured stains (*strate nébuleuse*.) In other words colour is the motif in the spatial juxtaposition of *domaines nébuleux* which are interlinked in a spatial stratification.

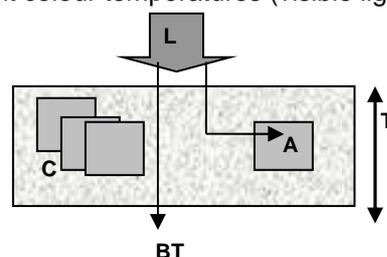
2.2.3 Actual colours

Three actual colours types have been distinguished and analysed depending on the work carried out and how they "update", which means their ability to change over time in line with variable conditions (natural or artificial light, drop or increase in luminosity.) These colours are produced by light passing through artistic reality.

The first is generated by the *radiance principle* as characterized by Viollet Le Duc (the principle has since been updated by Jean-Claude Merlin's research work.)

Radiance changes depending on the quality of light, the type of colour suspension material, as well as the physical arrangement of colour molecules in the

suspension space. But it also adjusts according to a certain *strength* which is linked to a principle, namely that of optical density. If we consider the radiance phenomenon as a colour production by transparent bodies parameter, optical density is the link between the nature of the light crossing the transparent material (L), the thickness of the transparent material (T), the concentration of coloured particle molecules in suspension (C), the nature of the particle upon which hinges the absorption (A) and the quantity of beams transmitted (BT). If T, C or A are raised, BT is weak. In that case we can talk about a high optical density. If T, C or A are weak, BT is strong. In that case we can talk about a low optical density. Furthermore, L must be taken into account because it too modifies the parameters, as light can be natural but filtered (clouds and trees etc.) or artificial and, in this scenario, can have different colour temperatures (visible light.)



Surfaces do not only *show* light due to colour, but depths also select light due to it. The transparent raw material simultaneously reveals the colour that it rejects and the colour that it traps. The strength of radiance therefore adapts depending on the combination between the quality of light and its direction, the depth and irregularities which are on the colour suspension material, the topographical layout of the colour particles in the material and the chemical and mechanical characteristics of these particles.

The result of the light's journey through the pictorial space is the creation of a colour intensity which is even more marked than the pictorial space, as a whole, and is also made up of surface irregularities. In figure 2 we give examples of different radiances linked to different intensities of light.



Figure 2

The second colour is generated by the major principle defined by Goethe.

In his "Theory of Colours", Goethe analysed the phenomenon of colour production when light crosses a transparent or translucent body (gaseous, liquid or solid) but unlike Viollet Le Duc, Goethe only dealt with *colourless* bodies: direct sunlight seen through different degrees of blurring (from perfect transparency, to the first degree of blurring, up to white, total blurring, and the first degree of opacity) becomes increasingly redder due to the increase in opacity. Indirectly observed light becomes pale blue through dense blurring. He called this colour production a *primordial phenomenon*. Due to the fact that the nebulous system is a translucent space which is made up of angles which filter the light (whether or not there are colour particles present), this constrains the light to appear in line with this phenomenon. Figure 3 is a shot of the same pictorial space lit from the left by an indirect light and from the right by a direct light. It is notable that a bluish colour dominates the left-hand indirect light view and that an orangey colour dominates the right-hand direct light transparent view.



Figure 3

The last of the colours is projected. It is a *secondary image* (or cast shadow.) It results from a modulation of the light caused by the pictorial space playing the role of a

filter. It appears outside the object on the neighbouring space depending on the strength of the radiance from the encounter between light and filter, on the proximity of the filter to that neighbouring space and in line with the absorptive and reflective qualities of the materials which make up the space (figure 4.) For a white projection space equipped with a certain sort of surface and for a given strength of radiance, the closer the filter is to that space, the more faithful the projected colour is to the filter colours. In this way, the projected colour can be called a *secondary image*. The further away the filter is, the less precise the colour is, and in this scenario it becomes a *cast shadow*. The projected colour is the combination of the light and the shadow emanating from the filter object.



Figure 4

The object's visual space can now be constructed using knowledge of the colour's visual space.

3. CONCLUSION

Within the framework of art, this study provides planning criteria for the creative act: it enables education practices to be directed (knowing that Maurice Fréchet defined the education practice as "...an action through which an efficient cause acts on a raw material and causes a determined form to appear.") This study demonstrates that, within the framework of certain artistic practices, the object's visual space can be built using knowledge of the visual space of colours, with colour itself becoming the work's material and subject. This practice is in no way an exception to the common rule. Pierre Soulages worked in this way on the Abbaye de Conques in order to bring its stained glass windows alive. The radiance principle, the primordial phenomenon and the projected colours were the result of his quest: the expression of light through raw materials.

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