

THE PAST AND CURRENT STATE OF GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT ART

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PLAGIARISM

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Osman Selçuk Eroğlu

ABSTRACT

Following an introduction to abstract art this thesis study focuses on the geometric abstract art which emerged with the onset of abstract art in three time periods.

In the first section which encompasses a time frame of approximately fortyfive years between the onset of abstract art in the begining of the 20th century and the end of World War II it is discussed how artists like Kandinsky and Malevich made a difference by breaking off from the convention and thus contributed to the existence of the geometric abstract art.

In the second section which covers a time frame between the emergence of a new world order following World War II and the post modernism in 1980 the development phase of geometric abstract art is reviewed. Art movements such as Op Art, Minimalism and Colour Field Painting and the leading artists who enabled the development of abstract and geometric abstract art as a reaction to the totalitarian regimes of the pre 1945 period is examined. Also Turkish artists associated with geometric abstract art following affinity of Turkish art world with West after 1950 is reviewed.

In the last section between 1980 and present the contemporary international and Turkish artists who do geometric abstract art is examined. It is pointed out that geometric abstract art at present is preserving its existence via internet and similiar technologies and media applications in addition to conventional methods.

Key Words : Abstract, Colour Field Painting ,Geometric, Internet ,Kazimir Malevich, Media Applications, Minimalism, Op Art, Wasily Kandinsky

ÖZET

Soyut sanatın ne olduğu ve nasıl ortaya çıktığı ile ilgili kısa bir girişi takiben bu tez çalışması geometrik soyut sanatın kapsamlı olarak incelenmesine odaklanmıştır. Bu inceleme soyut sanatla ile eş zamanlı olarak başlayan geometrik soyut sanat özelinde üç zaman dilimi şeklindeki üç bölümde yapılmıştır.

İlk bölümde geometrik soyut sanatın başlangıç dönemi olan 20.Yüzyıl başı ile İkinci Dünya savaşı sonu arasındaki kırkbeş yıllık zamanda Wasily Kandinsky, Kazimir Maleviç gibi sanatçılara yer verilerek bunların bilinenden kopma yoluyla nasıl bir fark yaratabildikleri ve dolayısı ile geometrik soyut sanatın var olmasına katkıları üzerinde durulmuştur.

İkinci Dünya savaşı sonrası yeni dünya düzeninin kurulması ile başlayan ve post modernizmin başlangıcı olan 1980 yılına kadar olan ikinci bölüm ise geometrik soyut sanatın gelişim dönemi olarak ele alınmıştır. Özellikle 1945 öncesinin totaliter rejimlerine tepki olarak güçlenen soyut sanat ve özelinde geometrik soyut sanatın kök salarak gelişmesini sağlayan Op Art, Minimalizm ve Renk Alanı Resmi akımları ve bunların lider sanatçılarına yer verilmiştir. Ayrıca 1950 sonrasında Batı ile sanatsal bakış açısı olarak aynı çizgiye gelen Türk sanatçılarından özellikle geometrik soyut sanat yapanlar ele alınmıştır.

Geometrik soyut sanata etki eden akımlardan çok sanatçıların ön plana çıktığı 1980 sonrasında günümüze kadar olan zaman dilimini içeren son bölümde ise ağırlıklı olarak geometrik soyut sanatı uygulayan uluslararası ve Türk çağdaş sanatçılar yer almıştır. Günümüzde geometrik soyut sanatın geleneksel yöntemler dışında internet ve benzeri farklı teknoloji ve medya uygulamaları aracılığı ile varlığını koruduğu gerçeği üzerinde durulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Geometrik, İnternet, Kazimir Maleviç, Medya Uygulamaları, Minimalizm, Op Art, Renk Alanı Resmi, Soyut, Wasily Kandinsky

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout art history, artists in every period have tackled a specific issue. For example, while artists in early 15th century acted on their passion to imitate nature, while up north, the Dutch dominated images through the meticulous observation of external details.

Meanwhile, in the mid-20th century, artists abandoned the external world's painterly domination and ceded their imitation of natural appearance with a common and powerful urge. In this context, the term "abstract" was found fitting to define expressions that are "not objective" and "not figurative". On the other hand, the image of a square is as much an "object" or a "figure" as a face or a landscape painting. Thus, "abstract" as an adjective is confusing, even paradoxical. Because an "abstract" painting is quite positively a concrete painting. It draws the attention to its direct, sensuous, physical surface much more strongly than the painting of a sunset or a portrait. "To abstract", as a verb, means to draw out of or away from. Whereas the noun "abstraction" is something already drawn out of or away from (Harrison & Wood, 2016, p. 468).

Today, abstract art requires no defense. However, it still is not the kind of art that people can enjoy without some examination and sacrifice of prejudice. Because the value of a work of art lies in its composition of colors, lines, light, and shade, while any resemblance to natural objects may not wholly destroy these esthetic values, it may easily defile their purity. Therefore, because resemblance to nature is at best superficial and at worst confusing, it may be excised. This would lead to a large-scale impoverishing of painting – a disappearance of numerous values, such as sensuous, documentary, political, sexual, or religious subjects and their connotations. Ultimately, the pleasure derived from the technical skill involved in the imitation of nature would be eliminated and the artist would become almost impoverished. But the abstract artist, in their art, would choose impoverishment over defilement.

Abstract art has two main traditions. These two trends, or traditions, of the last fifty years towards abstract art have historically emerged from Impressionism. The first of these is organic, or lyric abstraction. The other is known as geometric abstraction. Organic/Lyric abstraction consists of round or curving forms, often encountered in nature. This tradition is intuitional and sentimental rather than

intellectual. Organic or biomorphic in its forms rather than geometrical. Its lines are curved more than linear. It is more decorative than structural and more romantic than classical in its glorification of the mystical and the irrational (Harrison & Wood, 2016, p. 417).

Geometric abstraction, on the other hand, is a type of abstract art that utilizes geometrical forms placed in a non-illusionistic space and combined into non-representational compositions. It finds its sources in Cezanne and Seurat's art and theories. It passes through the wide rivers of Cubism and finds its course in the various geometrical and Constructivist currents which had been developed in Russia and the Netherlands during the war years before spreading to the World. This tradition depends upon austerity and logical calculation. In this aspect, it may be described as intellectual, structural, architectonic, geometrical, linear, and classical (Harrison & Wood, 2016, p. 470).

The two traditions often merge and may appear in a single artist. The geometrical lineage is represented by the painter Mondrian and Constructivists Pevsner and Gabo; while the non-geometrical, curvilinear lineage is represented by the painter Miro and the sculptor Arp.

2. THE DEFINITION OF GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION

From the Renaissance until the mid-19th century, Western visual arts set out to create a three-dimensional illusion through the use of perspective to represent the visible external reality. With the invention of photography and the first cinema film, painters distanced themselves from reality to express their inner worlds, thoughts, and sentiments. Abstract art, which may be defined as an artistic style that makes no attempt to appropriately recreate a known image, demands the viewer to personally interpret the work of art. In this sense, abstract art can be said as an intellectual artistic style to inspire viewers without providing them any explanations.

In Western art, the first attempts at abstraction came in the form of geometrical forms, which served as a source of inspiration and a steppingstone between figuration and abstraction. As Abstraction continued to develop throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries, geometrical shapes became attractive to abstract artists.

The pioneers of geometric abstraction utilized geometrical forms and solid colors and did so for two reasons: First, to transport the viewer through these shapes to the purest form of reality to bring a new viewpoint to the world. Second, to call attention to the medium of painting, its plastic qualities, and its two-dimensionality.

We must also mention other similar but comparatively less-radical movements that accommodate more realism, such as Cubism and Futurism. In this context, Cubism, as seen with the thick lines and angular contours in Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso's paintings, presents a simpler and more geometrical reality, whereas Futurism tackled the concepts of time and space. Geometric abstraction took these ideas further, dispensing with concepts like perspective and physical reality entirely to focus on primary colors and planarity, and to concentrate on line grids and rigid compositions.

It can be said that the geometrical-form-based non-illusionistic and objective visual language of geometric abstraction is the logical result of cubistic distortion and the redefinition of the agreed-upon practices regarding form and space. One distinguishing feature of geometric abstraction is its curvilinear or rectilinear, continuous shapes. Although this is viewed by some as distant and unsentimental, the artistic ardor it can stir can attract even the most indifferent of viewers.

Early geometric abstraction mainly used primary colors like red, yellow, and blue. Later, different colors with more depth and emotion were also utilized. Geometric abstraction differentiates itself within abstract art with its replacement of natural or man-made objects with non-representational and non-figurative forms. From the discovery of abstraction in Western art to the current day, geometric abstraction has been a source of inspiration for painters as a means of distancing themselves from imitative and illusionistic art and as an alternative to traditional figurative painting.

3. EARLY GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: 1900-1945

Going as far back as the 1860s, impressionist painters such as Monet, Renoir, and Sisley withdrew from the traditionalist style of the academy to create looser and gestural works. Post-impressionist painter Cezanne took this a step further in his use of geometrical forms to expose the essential structure of objects. This technique, used by Cezanne in the mid-1880s in his landscape paintings, closed the distance between the Cubists, and the Impressionists before him – carrying abstraction further via the simplification of geometrical forms.

In the early 20th century, Cubist painters, Picasso and Braque being chief among them, contributed to abstraction with their use of intersecting lines and tones of browns, grays, and beiges to create quite geometrical visuals. Angular, geometrical Cubist compositions inspired by African, Polynesian, Micronesian, and American Native art aesthetics showed objects from varying angles. Though they may be radically removed from the aesthetics of paintings past, cubist paintings could not be considered completely abstract as they strove to represent external visual reality. Opposing this mentality, certain artistic movements that emerged in the early 20th century, such as Constructivism, De Stijl, and Suprematism, focused on abstraction through the use of geometrical forms and compositions. Works that combined abstraction and geometrics were created by the Russian painter Kazimir Malevich, a pioneer of the Suprematism movement. Beginning in 1915, the Suprematist movement used simple shapes like squares, rectangles, and circles to reveal, as Malevich put it, “the primacy of pure feeling in creative art”, avoiding figurativism and emphasizing the supremacy of feeling – thus declaring the realistic depiction of external visual world meaningless.

3.1. Movements and Artists That Influenced Geometric Abstraction

3.1.1. Wassily Kandinsky

As the father of Abstract art, Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) freed art from its traditional function of creating copies of the visible world. While there are many

other painters in the early 20th century who concerned themselves with the elimination of the image and putting the color and the form at the forefront, Kandinsky was the most logical and consistent artist of abstract expression. Kandinsky's abstractions evolved in the late 1910s from a romantic expressionistic style to a more abstract geometrical visual language. One of this period's most beautiful examples is his 1919 piece, "In Grey".

Figure 1

In Grey, 176x129 cm



Note : Image taken from Wassily Kandinsky, *In Grey*, 1919
<https://www.wassilykandinsky.net/work-39.php> , Date of Access.09.07.2019

In his 1921 work "*Red Spot II*", images that bear traces of the natural and metaphorical give way to non-objective and unnatural forms, which give the painting a sense of flatness and two-dimensionality. *Red Spot II* is also the first instance of a work where Kandinsky used a circle as a structural element in the composition. In the following period, painterly motifs like dots, circles, and spots would play an increasing role in Kandinsky's work.

The influence of Suprematism on Kandinsky's art is clear, with his increasing use of diagonal and geometrical elements in his paintings, and his increasingly unhierarchic compositions. Nevertheless, there was a fundamental difference between Kandinsky and his Suprematist colleagues: The Suprematists emphasized the structural aspect of painting through the use of radical and precisely designed elements and materials, whereas Kandinsky found the expressionistic, true essence of

painting in its composition – that is to say, the free and widely varied combination of pictorial elements (Becks-Malorny, 2007, p. 126).

Kandinsky's departure from representation in his art and inclination towards geometric abstraction coincides with the architect Walter Gropius (1883-1969) founding Bauhaus in 1919.

In 1923, during his Bauhaus period in Weimar, Kandinsky created two of his most important works: *Composition VIII*, and *Unbroken Line*.

Figure 2

Unbroken Line, 184x127 cm



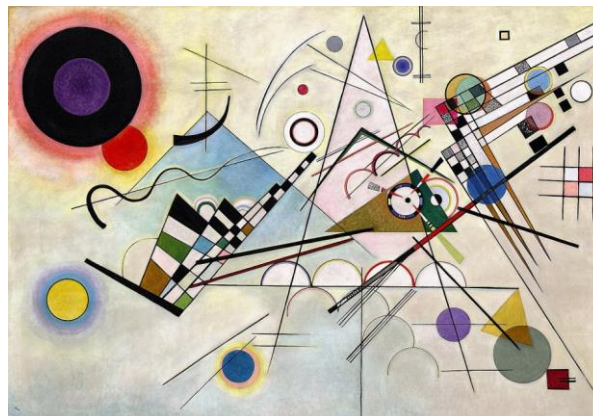
Note. Note : Image taken from Wassily Kandinsky, *Unbroken Line*, 1923

<https://www.soho-art.com/oil-painting/1244173654/Wassily>

Date of Access.09.07.2019

Figure 3

Composition VIII, 79.1x55.1 cm



Note : Image taken from Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VIII*, 1923,

<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/1924>, Date of Access. 09.07.2019

In *Unbroken Line*, all forms are in relation to one another and appear almost in motion. By contrast, *Composition VIII* leaves a more austere and static impression. The sense of intellectuality and austerity is heightened by the matte and limited colors in the background. The circular black form in the upper-left corner appears authoritative, imposing a potent effect on the composition (Becks-Malorny, 2007, p. 141).

In his lectures for Bauhaus, Kandinsky particularly stressed the relationship between color and form. According to him, certain forms cohered with certain colors. Kandinsky's art and his outlook on geometric abstraction could be best summed up in his own words from an interview with a Swedish magazine in 1937:

I have been fortunate enough to be able to extract the forms necessary for a moment (a work of art) from that infinite treasure of form, freely and without restraint. Instead of fretting over the content, I could focus on the correct form. And the correctly chosen form almost expresses its gratitude by forming the content itself. The content of painting is painting. (Becks-Malorny, 2007, p. 191)

3.1.2. Suprematism / Kazimir Malevich

When Kazimir Malevich painted *White on White* in 1918, it was the most revolutionary work of art of its time, transforming the art form as the world knew it. The piece refined the medium in a quite abstract manner hitherto unseen, taking the supremacy of pure feeling or perception in the pictorial arts a step further than its predecessor, the 1915 painting *Black Square*. Today, both pieces are known as the primary works of geometric abstract art, and it is impossible to speak about the movement or its influence without mentioning them (Widewalls, 2018).

Figure 4*Suprematism, 97x66 cm*

Note : Image taken from Kazimir Malevich, Suprematism, 1915, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/kazimir-malevich/suprematism-1915-2>,

Date of Access. 13.07.2019

Malevich's Suprematist pieces from 1915 were the first pictorial examples that were removed from any sort of representation. According to Malevich, these pieces possessed their own reality.

Suprematism is the first art movement wherein painting lost its function as a tool for figuration and became an unknown component of reality. Viewed as a total refinement of art, Suprematism reduced form into its essential qualities – geometric shapes, the simplest of which being the square – and eliminated the distractions of descriptive color. Most Suprematist paintings exhibit numerous geometric forms, meticulously and precisely placed to appear to be floating and overlapping over the white background, giving the canvas an ethereal quality. This was an important detail, as Malevich rejected the Constructivist ideals of Vladimir Tatlin, who viewed art as functional and strictly rooted in the material realm. Instead of the Constructivist idea of artist-as-engineer or scientist, Malevich aimed to free the artist (Fortenberry, 2014, p. 164).

Comparing it to the *Black Square*, Malevich describes the white background in his piece *Suprematism* as a white endlessness. It defines the forms of all Suprematist compositions as an undefined space that contains all pictorial notions. Influenced by

the technological advancements of his period, Malevich found the white emptiness of unpainted canvas surface to create a strong sense of space (Elger, 2019, p. 38). Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist works of art ask the viewer to envisage a world consisting solely of colors and geometrical shapes.

Figure 5

White on White, 79x79 cm



Note : Image taken from Kazimir Malevich, White on White, 1918, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_on_White, Date of Access.14.07.2019

From this perspective, the 1918 painting *White on White* is both the beginning and the end. The white surface is the space. It is both perfect and the end. It is nothingness, equality, independence. It is the happiness in peace. From here, the point zero, anything may arise. This painting is the final phase the abstract can reach.

3.1.3. El Lissitzky / Constructivism

Malevich's clusters of solid-colored geometric forms that float over a white background would go on to influence artists like Popova, Ivan Kliun (1873-1943) and El Lissitzky (1890-1941). However, the revolution needed a kind of art less ethereal than Suprematism to help achieve its goals. Constructivism developed as an answer to the revolution by applying Suprematism's uncomplicated grasp of dynamism onto wider fields such as graphic art, theater, industrial design, and architecture. Hot on the heels of the revolution, the Soviet Union provided an environment where movements

like Constructivism and art like El Lissitzky's propaganda pieces could flourish. With the establishment of the workers' state, the use of quotidian tools and materials in art gained newfound importance. Even non-objective painting could achieve a Constructivist form. Lines, solid color fields and geometric shapes were so emphasized that they assumed an appearance of constructs not of the painter, having been placed onto the canvas.

Figure 6

Proun R.V.N. 2, 61x33.9 cm



Note : Image taken from El Lissitzky, Proun R.V.N. 2, 1923, https://society6.com/product/el-lissitzky-proun-rvn-2_print, Date of Access.14.07.2019

Lissitzky named all his paintings made between 1920 and 1925 “Proun”. The name comes from the Russian phrase “Proekt utverzdenija novogo” (Project for the affirmation of the new). This implied *Proun* to be the result of a change. These works of art, rooted in the influence of Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism on El Lissitzky's work, were the results of the progression from painting into architecture.

3.1.4. De Stijl / Piet Mondrian

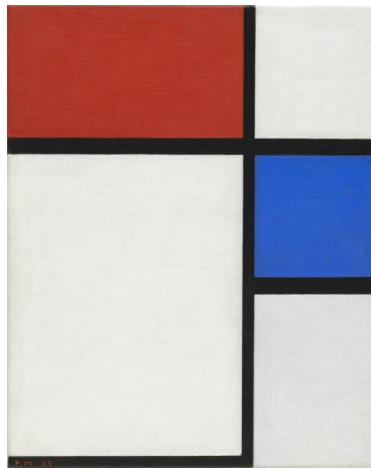
Another prominent artist of the Geometric Abstraction movement was Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), a pioneer of De Stijl and a contemporary of Malevich.

Mondrian's iconic grid paintings consisting of three primary colors and white, divided by horizontal and vertical black lines, formed the foundation of his work, which he called non-representational and neoplasticism. These works represent the purest form of geometric abstraction. Like Malevich, Mondrian also saw geometric abstraction as a means of creating true works of art instead of merely replicating the external world. "I want to come as close as possible to the truth and abstract everything from that," wrote the Dutch painter. His quest for truth and pure abstraction was common among the geometric abstract painters of the period (IdeelArt, 2015).

The group De Stijl emerged following the publication of an eponymous journal in the Netherlands in 1917. The journal voiced the theories of Piet Mondrian and multi-faceted artist and poet Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931), who wished to create a common forum for architects, designers, and painters sharing abstract aesthetic sensibilities. De Stijl also incorporated ideas from contemporary philosophical and non-representational painting trends (Farthing, 2017, p. 406).

Figure 7

Composition No. II, with Red and Blue, 51x51 cm



Note : Image taken from Piet Mondrian, Composition No. II, with Red and Blue, 1919, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/modern-evening-auction-4/composition-no-ii-2>, Date of Access.17.07.2019

This new approach, described by Mondrian in 1919 as a type of abstraction and later christened "Neoplasticism", would ignore pictorial details and find its expression in the abstraction of form and color, and in the straight line and the clearly defined primary colors.

The underlying main idea in Piet Mondrian's grid paintings, which consisted of elements built out of primary colors, was the total rendering of the compositional elements into their most basic form.

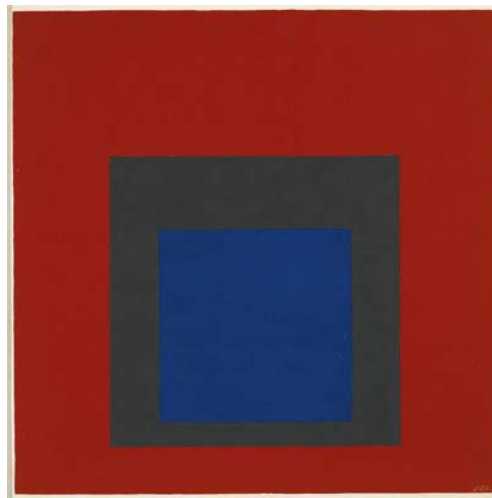
3.1.5. Bauhaus / Josef Albers

Principally a school of art and design, the Bauhaus was founded in 1919 by the architect Walter Gropius in the German city of Weimar. The Bauhaus was the first art school to open its doors to the post-war Weimar Republic and reform. Students here would receive an education as an artist, a draftsman, and a scientist. Instructed by artisan and artist masters instead of the usual professors, the students at the Bauhaus worked as apprentices and could later attained the titles of journeyman and young master. The school was directed by three important architects of the 20th century, and mainly concerned with architecture and industrial aesthetics. Its call for painters as masters was, thus, paradoxical. According to Gropius, "since the beginning of the century, the painting dominated the other arts and had created an aesthetic which provided the principles of a new architecture" (Bonfand, 1994, p. 64).

The school created a fertile environment for interdisciplinary innovation with their courses in many fields ranging from murals to furniture, and textile design to theater. Masters such as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943) worked with their students here in workshops that harkened to Medieval guilds. One student who rose from apprenticeship to young masterhood was Josef Albers (1888-1976). Josef Albers is known for his series from the 1950s and 1960s titled "*Homage to the Square*", which focused on the simplification of form and the interplay between shape and color.

Figure 8

Homage to the Square, 40.6x40.6 cm



Note : Image taken from Josef Albers, Homage to the Square, 1950, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/josef-albers/homage-to-the-square-1950>,

Date of Access. 20.07.2019

His abstract paintings consisted of strict, concrete geometric compositions balanced by his selection of colors. After the Bauhaus, Albers taught design and color theory in the US at the Black Mountain College, Yale, and Harvard. Among his students were prominent artists such as Eva Hesse, Cy Twombly, Richard Anuszkiewicz, and Robert Rauschenberg. He is considered a pioneering figure in Minimalism, Conceptual art and Op art.

Theo van Doesburg, who taught as a guest-instructor in the Bauhaus, criticized the school for its tendency towards craftsmanship over industrial production, which led to changes. Meanwhile, Moholy-Nagy emphasized the technical aspects of material processing and insisted that his students create balanced designs and to focus on color and texture as much as the distribution of weight and space. In time, this natural balance became a fundamental aspect of the Bauhaus style (Farthing, 2017, p. 415)

3.1.6. Sophie Taeuber-Arp

Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889-1943) was a prominent artist who took part in many important pre-World War II art movements. In the later years of her career, she embraced the principles of Constructivism and became one of its most important practitioners outside of Russia.

In 1916, Taeuber-Arp began teaching textile technologies at the college of art in Zurich and developed the abstract geometric style with refined and planar features she used in her heavily textile-based works. Her rigid and static pictorial compositions were both a reaction to Expressionism and simultaneously an attack on her Dadaist contemporaries' non-aesthetic approach.

Figure 9

Vertical-Horizontal Composition, 37x27.5 cm



Note : Image taken from Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Vertical-Horizontal Composition, 1927, <https://www.art-prints-on-demand.com/a/sophie-taeuber-arp/vertikal-horizkomposit.html>, Date of Access.24.07.2019

Although it is commonly thought that Taeuber-Arp's abstract style was influenced by her husband Hans Arp, the truth is almost the opposite. By combining technical limitations with an abstract vocabulary of shapes, she developed a contemporary and radical formal language which her husband also utilized. About her influence, Hans Arp wrote: "Sophie Taeuber's vertical and horizontal compositions

influenced the diagonal, baroque dynamics of my abstract creations” (Elger, 2019, p. 50).

3.1.7. Lyubov Popova

Coming from an artistic lineage, Lyubov Popova’s (1889 – 1924) many travels between Italy and Paris led to an artistic life influenced by French Cubists, Italian Futurists, Vladimir Tatlin, as well as other Russian masters of the 1910s. Popova exhibited her Cubo-Futurist work in the same period when Malevich exhibited his Suprematist compositions and was part of Tatlin’s set. She was later influenced by Malevich’s ideas regarding Suprematism, eventually joining the artist group Supremus between 1916-1917.

Figure 10

Painterly Architectonic, 98x80 cm



Note : Image taken from Lyubov Popova, Painterly Architectonic, 1917, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/78444>, Date of Access.26.07.2019

During this time, Popova created a series of works she titled “Painterly Architectonics”. According to the artist, the series show surfaces’ inner tensions through colorful volumes and lines to create a formal unity. Instead of static and solitary shapes, these cut and slice through one another to create rhythmic tension – almost attempting to express Malevich’s “liberated nothingness”. There are, however, important points that distinguish Popova from Malevich. Malevich's forms float in an

endless void, whereas Popova brings a new perspective to the pictorial space. Her planes are affixed to each other within a limited space. Malevich also surrenders softness/hardness completely where necessary, while Popova brings it to the forefront to underline her volumes. For Malevich, colors primarily carry a symbolic value, whereas Popova sees them as a solution for visualizing an obviously formal harmony (Fotografya, 2019).

3.1.8. Joaquin Torres-Garcia / Cercle et Carre

Joaquin Torres-Garcia (1874-1949) is a painter more commonly known for his contributions to European and Latin American modernism. Torres-Garcia's works bear elements from both Cubism and Constructivism while also possessing their own unique qualities. For Torres-Garcia, the architectural and constructive sense of his painting caused a dissociation between drawing and color.

Torres-Garcia rejected the dichotomous understanding of the figurative and the abstract, expressing that his paintings are constructive, and focused on the construction process in his works. The volume effect and the unstructured geometry featured in his piece *Construction in White and Black* recall the architectonic features of Inca stone work – a subject of interest for Torres-Garcia.

Figure 11

Construction in White and Black, 102x80.7 cm



Note : Image taken from Joaquin Torres-Garcia, Construction in White and Black, 1938, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/91774>, Date of Access. 26.07.2019

Torres-Garcia also developed a personal philosophy of art in which he defined key universal constructivist principles through abstraction, which he named Constructive Universalism (Universalismo Constructivo).

In later years, Torres-Garcia's artistic sensibilities were influenced by the geometric abstract approaches of artists in the Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square), an artist group formed by Torres-Garcia and Michel Seuphor which strongly supported and promoted new developments and mystical tendencies in abstract painting (Bee, Heliczer, & McFadden, 2014, p. 134).

4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT ART: 1945 - 1980

Geometric abstraction began in the 1930s and maintained its formal and conceptual tradition through the 1950s, even though the tradition largely relocated from Europe to the United States in the early-1940s. While many European artists continued to work within the existing principles of the geometric abstract tradition, the tradition itself eventually turned into explicitly American-based content. The Paris-to-New York transition took place as a result of World War II, where the disruption of the flow of life in Europe led to many artists leaving across the Atlantic. Due to this change, artistic developments through the 1940s and 1950s largely took place in America.

For the 1930s generation, geometric abstraction became less a philosophy and more a style. This could be the result of these artists noticing direct contradictions between abstract art and early-period abstract art theorems, or their lack of a need for a deep philosophical basis for their work (Dabrowski, 1985, p. 153).

In the US, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Guggenheim Museum contributed to the development of geometric abstract art. Meanwhile, through artists such as Josef Albers, Glarner, Moholy-Nagy, and Mondrian, who had relocated to America starting in the mid-1930s, there was increasing exposure with the European geometric abstraction traditions. In the 1940s and 1950s, some European painters worked there as instructors. Their work made the transition from the initial stages of geometric abstraction to the mid-century interpretations of abstract style. For example, Albers and Bolotowsky, who taught at the Black Mountain College, contributed to the emergence of the rigidly contoured abstractions of Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella (Dabrowski, 1985, p. 153).

In the period that followed World War II, the dynamic asymmetry of the geometric abstraction of the 1930s and 1940s gave way to symmetry and calmer compositions as seen in the works of Albers and Diller. Fractured forms became a rarer sight, while compositions took on a more holistic form where the complete surface of the canvas appeared as a single piece. This would become noticeable in the

developing works of the younger generation of artists in the late-1950s and through the 1960s.

It is generally possible to define the culture and arts scene in the late 1950s to be austere. Austere meant cold or impersonal instead of passionate, and this was the style of choice for post-abstract expressionists such as Frank Stella, Helen Frankenthaler and Alex Katz. Avoiding being emotional or personal, this art style rejected the expressionistic aspect of abstract expressionism and aimed to abstract for the sake of abstraction while basing that on not the artist but the objectivity of external aestheticism. The representatives of this art style could be grouped in two categories: scientific and formalist.

For the formalistically inclined artists, gestural painting had run its course. Focusing on the medium, these artists rejected the painting or staining of the canvas – a complete rejection of gestural painting. Another group of formalist artists, however, had embraced geometric abstraction with sharp edges. With either group, the abstract expressionist artist's decisive, aggressive touch, their brushstrokes had become near invisible. The main difference was between the homogeneously textured field of the stained canvas and the focus on the interaction between colors through the rectilinear, sharp-edged use of paint and color (Radford University, 2020).

The group of artists who chose an austere, objective style for a different reason were called the “scientific” painters. The reason was that their creative process and works were built around the laws of optics and perception. Known as Op Art, the artists of this movement aimed for the viewers to have an experience based on visual perception.

4.1. Movements and Artists During the Developmental Period of Geometric Abstract Art

4.1.1. Op Art

Emerging in the 1960s, this art movement utilized optical illusions and was thus called Op Art, short for *Optical Art*.

Embracing a non-painterly approach, it was possible to see the traces of Impressionism, De Stijl (neoplasticism), Constructivism, Futurism, and Suprematism

in Op Art despite their emphasis on color, psychology, and psychological and visual perceptive illusion. Op Art was a movement wherein the technique became embedded within the art, where scientific approach was prominently used, and the viewer became whole with the work and was almost forced into discovery (Tuğal, 2018, p. 92).

The artists of this movement primarily aimed to merge graphic art with science to form an art movement that created visual illusions. They utilized geometric forms, lines, homogenously painted surfaces and spots in specific logical and mathematical order and patterns to create effects that made it difficult for the eye to adapt as a non-figurative art movement. Op Art utilizes optical elements that paralyze and scramble normal perception processes.

Although visual arts are built upon optical illusions, Op Art misdirects perception to consciously create perceptual illusions. The basic approach in Op Art works is correctly seeing and interpreting the image. The creations put forward and perceived in Op Art works do not require knowledge, thus leading to tension born out of that which is unknown and perceived differently. Op Art artists aim to create arrangements and compositions that create a motion effect. In other words, the interaction between the positive and negative spaces in Op Art pieces create secondary forms that do not actually exist, with the resulting perceptual impotency leading to a motion effect.

The first thing that catches the eye in Op Art works is the austerity. One of the most notable aspects of these works is that they are reproducible by people other than the originating artist. Op Art works often do not bear the artist's signature on the surface.

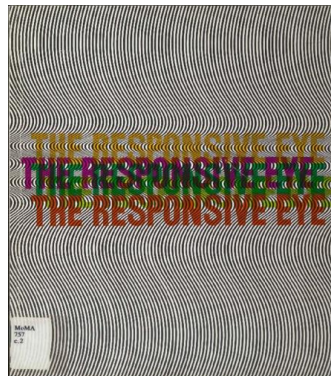
Op Art brought a new perspective to the notion of black and white painting. Here, color is not always necessary to create perceptual illusions. The most interesting and surprising effects can be created in black and white, and grey. The sharp contrast between black and white is generally complementary and create an effect much stronger than colors. The stark contrast between black and white contribute to the optical art piece, while the addition of color brings a different dimension. Although the use of color was not outright avoided, it was used by certain Op Art artists as prospects for association. For these artists, the subject became unimportant – they created works of art that they variegated using a base color and the combinations they produced based on the intensity of the color (Tuğal, 2018, p. 114).

In Op Art works, where often symmetrical compositions are made of dense geometric forms, the divides between the forms manifest as areas of stress that tend to intensify in the center and are specially created to bolster viewer concentration. Another compositional element often used by Op Art artists in their work is the simple shapes used in a pattern, or in other words, repetitively duplicated in a specific order. This is used not only to reinforce the sense of wholeness in the artwork but also to strengthen the illusory effect. It is possible to create illusions of volume, space, and motion through the density and frequency of the repetition.

First exhibited in New York in 1965, Op Art artworks had a sizable impact on aesthetic perception, in culture and arts, fashion, and in marketing. The exhibition titled “The Responsive Eye” and defined by the MoMA curator William C. Seitz as “Perceptual Abstraction”, these pieces strayed from what was traditionally accepted in art to show that any look at the real world of the apparent can only be subjective.

Figure 12

The Responsive Eye Exhibition Catalog Cover



Note : Image taken from The Responsive Eye Exhibition Catalog Cover, New York, 1965, https://www.ubu.com/historical/responsive_eye/index.html, Date of Access.31.07.2019

Arguably the first art movement to break into daily life, Op Art makes the viewer a part of each artwork, as each new spectator perceives a new image, different than what others have perceived. With its scientific-data-based approach, Op Art may be considered an important step towards conceptual art. Despite being an experimental art movement, Op Art’s assertion that “perceptual illusions can be intentionally achieved” is a turning point. The perceptual differences between what is

real, what is seen, and what is shown incontrovertibly prove that visual perception can be influenced through intentionally created illusion (Tuğal, 2018, p. 213).

4.1.1.1. Victor Vasarely

Hungarian-French graphic artist and marketer Victor Vasarely (1906 – 1997) is generally accepted as the starter of the Op Art movement. As one of the most successful and well-known artists of the post-war period, Vasarely's work very uniquely reflect the spirit of the period. At the peak of his popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, Vasarely found inspiration not only in the technological but also the societal developments of the period. The notion of a democratized artistic production where artworks would be repeatedly reproducible instead of unique and one of a kind also manifested clearly in his work. Vasarely greatly valued the public function of art and the artist's contribution to social progress. His aesthetic point-of-view was that art should permeate into daily life and be freely accessible to all. He attempted to create a spontaneous experience of art by focusing on optical effects (Holzhey, 2018, p. 8).

With his work with pattern structures that repeated in a specific order, Vasarely did not attempt to eliminate the third dimension from his work – on the contrary, he often used three dimensional effects. His works frequently displayed artificial motion and a spatial approach, and he utilized compositions that could be reinterpreted differently numerous times through his use of grouping.

Figure 13

Zebra, 60x52 cm



Note : Image taken from Victor Vasarely, *Zebra*, 1940, <https://sites.google.com/site/oparthistory/>, Date of Access. 13.01.2020

In his work, titled *Zebra*, Vasarely exhibits a unique abstraction of a zebra by arranging black and white color areas. The manifestation of a zebra figure in this piece is actually against the “rejection of the figure”, which Op Art aims for.

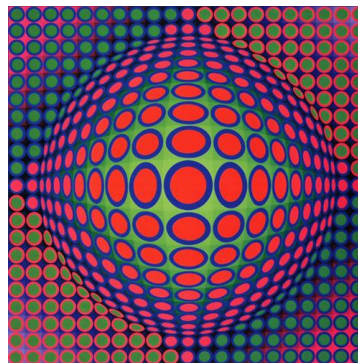
Vasarely’s approach wherein physical participation of the viewer in the artwork became central first distinctively emerged in his “kinetic depth pictures”. In order to correctly perceive these artworks, the viewer must almost move with them and thus perceive a new image with each movement.

In 1955, the artist organized a group exhibition in Gallery Denise Rene called “Le Mouvement”. A manifesto, published concurrently with the exhibition, contained the expression “plastic unit”, which was defined as Vasarely’s primary design element. This pictorial unit became the centerpiece of his artistic vision. According to Vasarely, two contrasting colors and forms constitute a “plastic unit”, which emphasized the harmony and endurance of his work, and underlined that any kind of duality was indivisible (Holzhey, 2018, p. 57).

Vasarely was of the opinion that the notions of unparalleled genius, unique and inimitable beauty in art were outdated and antiquated. The plastic unit was an element that allowed for the unlimited duplication and dissemination of universally valid aesthetic approaches, and it also provided him the potential to realize his idea of creating mass art through industrial methods. Unlike artists who created artworks that were literally in motion, Vasarely’s notion of kinetic art involved a virtual motion that was created in the viewer’s eyes.

Figure 14

Vega 200, 200x200 cm



Note : Image taken from Victor Vasarely, Vega 200, 1968, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/victor-vasarely/vega-200-1968>,

Date of Access.14.01.2020

Vasarely became prominent in the 1960s as a proponent of reasonably priced print editions of original work. While many artists saw this as a devaluation of art through its mass spread, Vasarely saw it as a development that eliminated the myth of the unique and inimitable work of art – one which took art off the hands of a privileged, elite group with influence over public consciousness and into the hands of the masses. His understanding of art rejected the great, one-of-a-kind artwork. To him, there was no difference between the original and the commercial reproduction. He also belied the notion of universal, singular, and eternally valid values of aesthetics.

Vasarely aimed to democratize his visual creations by adding them into daily life through architectural elements, furniture, ceramic tiling, or films. Despite his goals of democratizing art and rendering it programmable and duplicable, Vasarely never completely surrendered himself, nor did he ever wish to lose his artistic freedom, imagination, or inspiration to the urges of the system.

4.1.1.2. *Bridget Riley*

English artist Bridget Riley (1931) is one of the most important figures of the Op Art movement. Riley found inspiration in the optical and illusionary work of post-impressionist painter George Pierre Seurat (1859-1891) to develop her own unique style in the 1950s. Her black and white geometric work from the early 1960s are reminiscent of Vasarely's work. Riley found herself at the center of the Op Art movement after her 1964 work titled *Current* and composed of geometric forms and color combinations that create a sense of movement was featured on the cover of a New York exhibition catalogue. The human eye's instinctive search for fixed points prevents the viewer from focusing on any specific point of the painting. Riley's desire to research the optical potential of vertical parallel lines developed at a time when she became more interested in hallucinogenic substances of the alternative culture. (Farthing, 2017, p. 527).

Bridget Riley was inclined to not view her paintings as *paintings*, even though most geometric abstract artworks in other different forms, even the most austere black and white ones, did not cause such a reaction. Vasarely's work makes a good example for this situation.

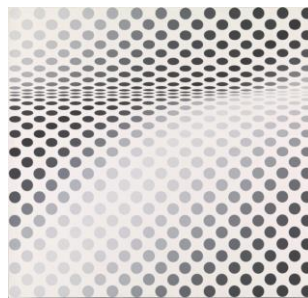
If we were to make a comparison, Vasarely's paintings are like a top-of-the-line automobile with perfect bodywork, whereas Riley only displays the automobile's

engine. For this reason, her artworks have a more concentrated effect instead of featuring incidental, decorative compositions (Riley, et al., 2019, p. 47).

The Optical effect plays a large role on Bridget Riley's methods and the perception her paintings create. The aesthetic aspect of her contribution to the world of Optical Art is Bridger Riley's ability to transform her art's perceptual reaction into something else. This is an expression of emotion, or, in more correct terms, a detailed visual copy of her mood.

Figure 15

Hesitate, 112.4x106.7 cm



Note : Image taken from Bridget Riley, *Hesitate*, 1964, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/riley-hesitate-t04132>,

Date of Access.16.01.2020

Riley's work was created not through a mathematical approach but through intuition. Although they appear as if they could be easily reproduced without losing the impact of their striking visual vibrations, if diminished to below the necessary dimensions, they lose their hypnotic effect.

Beyond her technical perfection and creativity, Riley's paintings convey a surprising kinesthetic effect. The viewer can notice the motion, vibration, and the eerie imbalance that lies within a crystalline perfect structure. The stillness in her paintings creates a stir, an effect that's both familiar and surprising. Riley's geometric abstractions are the direct expression of emotion. The effect these works create is surprisingly sudden and complete. The viewer encounters such an intense and certain visual assault that they can't help but almost surrender to the artist.

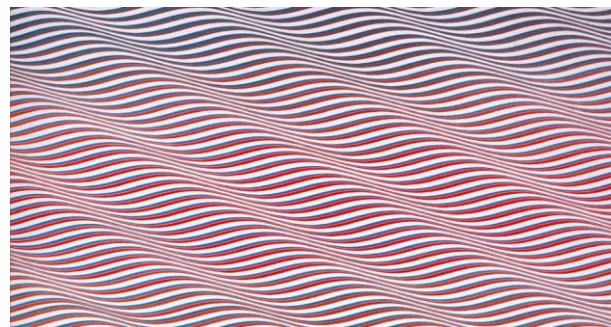
This experience is simultaneously fully of uncertainty and contradictions. The discord is almost ingrained within these paintings, yet they remain consistent and balanced. These artworks have a dark side that shakes our sense of safety and leads us

into doubt – an aspect that creates a vague feeling of anxiety. Still, they are strangely vivid and fresh. They convey emotion at the highest level of intensity, with a force that is almost expressionistic, even though they belong to a completely different school of art. They appear flawless, disciplined, austere to the point of grace, and deceptively impersonal (Riley, et al., 2019, p. 79).

Near the end of the 90s, Riley began working on new paintings where she explored the relationships between diagonal, orthogonal, and curvilinear forms. Exhibiting yellows, oranges, purples, reds, and blues, these were bold and strong paintings in fresh and vivid tones that combined solidity with fluidity and brought the visual momentum to its extremes. Vertical images support the orthogonal forms, while the meandering curves and arcs created zig zags.

Figure 16

Cataract 3, 222.9x221.9 cm



Note :Image taken from. Bridget Riley, Cataract 3, 1967, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/bridget-riley/cataract-3-1967>, Date of Access.17.01.2020

The aesthetic and emotional power of Riley's art is a product of her relentless artistic approach, the findings of which unearth a completely independent sense of motion and life in each artwork. This approach stems from Riley's visual connection to her surroundings and a deep interaction with the works of artists that came before her.

4.1.1.3. Richard Anuskiewicz

Richard Anuskiewicz (1930 - 2020) was a contemporary American painter known for his striking Op Art paintings. One of the founders and most staunch defenders of the Op Art movement, Anuskiewicz's works were adorned with

energetic colors arranged in opposing geometric compositions that formally explore light, color, and their effects on human perception. One of his most well-known works is the *Deep Magenta Square* (1978), a hypnotizing composition that creates a sense of oscillation through complementary colors. Anuskiewicz's interest in Op Art was largely the result of his training in the 1950s at Yale University under the famous colorist painter Josef Albers. In later periods of his career, he worked on geometric sculptures reminiscent of his two-dimensional compositions to explore the physical effects of optical phenomena.

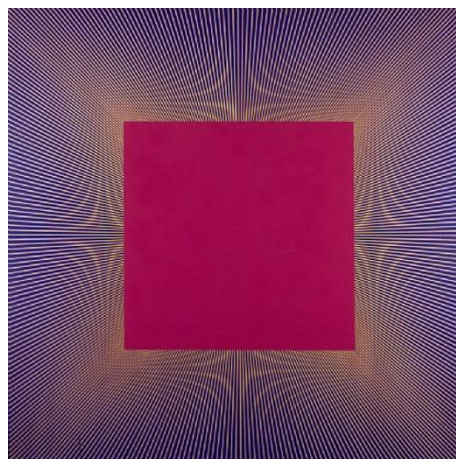
Anuskiewicz was interested in the optical changes that emerged through the application of colors of different intensities in the same geometric composition. A large portion of his works were visual examinations of structural and chromatic effects, featuring forms similar to his instructor Josef Albers' square forms. Albers was the one to convince Anuskiewicz to drop figure painting to make color itself the main subject of his work, which they saw to be the best way to discover the power of color.

Anuskiewicz summarized his conception of painting in 1963 as such:

My work is of an experimental nature and has centered on an investigation into the effects of complementary colors of full intensity when juxtaposed and the optical changes that occur as a result. (Richard Anuskiewicz Wikipedia, 2020).

Figure 17

Deep Magenta Square, 121.9x121.9 cm



Note : Image taken from Richard Anuskiewicz, Deep Magenta Square, 1978, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gandalfsgallery/5997726936>,

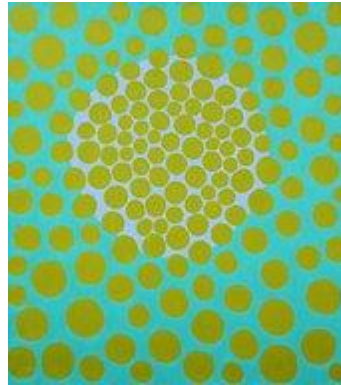
Date of Access, 27.01.2020

Combining his fascination with the nature of perception with his research into the visual and psychological effects of color, Anuskiewicz created paintings where the vivid colors and the geometric forms appear to almost jump off the canvas. His flat, energetic abstractions pushed the viewers' perception of stillness, motion, depth, and color. What separated Anuskiewicz from his contemporaries was not only the perfection of his work but also his serious approach and humility while he created these works.

After his post-graduate education at Yale, Anuskiewicz returned to Ohio and finally freed himself from Josef Albers's influence to create a style of his own. He studied the relationship between colors and shapes to fool the eye and discovered how the mind can see things that don't really exist. For him, this was both an important and a very complementary and contradictory experience.

His piece titled *Fluorescent Complement*, which was displayed at MoMA and led to his renown in the art world was in a sense a sign for him to take a break from the Abstract Expressionism movement.

While what distinguished Vasarely from others was his mastery of light and dark, and for Riley, it was the mastery in her linework, for Anuskiewicz, it was his mastery of color relationships. The power and perfection of Anuskiewicz's work emphasize that color and form can change under different conditions and that this could lead us to doubt the reality of what we're observing. A master of color in modern American art, Richard Anuskiewicz took his instructor Josef Albers's legacy of geometric abstraction and tonal harmony to new heights and worked on unparalleled color contrasts. His work from the 1960s are paintings where the paint almost comes alive, vibrates, and floats over the canvas.

Figure 18*Fluorescent Complement, 91.5x82 cm*

*Note : Image taken from Richard Anuskievich, *Fluorescent Complement*, 1960, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79522>, Date of Access.27.01.2020*

In addition to his mastery of color, Anuskievich's work also display his skill in using lines as a surprisingly multifaceted compositional element. Planar and structural elements, placed tangentially to the canvas through stripes of color in varying widths, lengths, and frequencies create an illusion of approaching or moving away from the viewer.

4.1.1.4. Jesus Rafael Soto

Jesus Rafael Soto (1923 – 2005) was a Venezuelan sculptor and painter. A prominent name in Op Art and Kinetic Art movements, Soto was influenced by the geometric abstraction movement. He used industrial and synthetic materials like nylon and steel to create his sculpture-like reliefs with which he became synonymous. Soto's works that involve abstraction are centered on color theory and the dynamics between the foreground and the background. In the 1950s and 60s, Soto collaborated with Group Zero member artists such as Otto Piene, Heinz Mack, Gunther Uecker, Yves Klein, Lucio Fontana, and Jean Tinguely, who in emphasized intellectual and creative unity

His early period work having been post-impressionistic in style, Soto later became interested in Cubism. After contacting Malevich, Mondrian, and Constructivist painters, he began working on visual phenomena and Op Art, creating non-painting artworks. In the 1950s, Soto turned to Serial Art, which is impersonal

and involves repeating elements in reference to the relativity of sight. Soto emphasized the notion of vibration, aiming to eliminate concepts like composition and balance from his work. In later periods, he used space to add time and motion to his works. According to Soto, an artwork was an independent object where real conditions entered the picture, and which did not occur according to any plan. The viewer also needed to be in motion in front of the artwork to be able to experience the visual vibration effect through time and movement.

Figure 19

Harmonie transformable , 100x80x40 cm



Note : Image taken from Jesus Rafael Soto, Harmonie transformable, 1956,
<https://ocula.com/art-galleries/hauser-wirth/artworks/jesus-rafael-soto/harmonie-transformable--armonia-transformable/>,

Date of Access.08.02.2020

Soto's oeuvre aimed to realize the concept of the impossibility of scaling the world at a human scale. Jesus Rafael Soto's goal was to form the foundations of an art that was to transcend the limits of traditional painting and sculpture. Instead of viewing the piece from afar, the viewer was encouraged to participate in the work of art, making the experience more interesting and alive. Soto's 1990 artwork titled "*Penetrable*" evoked the external stimulating factors and changes in the atmosphere with its graceful and sensitive pieces. For Soto, artistic creativity was a source of power regarding the discovery of infinite realities whose existence we can't truly perceive despite being all around us, like space and the universe.

Jesus Rafael Soto's oeuvre is largely dominated by a constructivist approach and his art is based on "capturing motion". Because the surfaces of his work consist of transparent materials, associations between the background and the foreground are easy to make. Based on the viewers' movement, a dynamism appears and is perceived as motion (Tuğal, 2018, p. 204)

About his works, Jesus Rafael Soto commented:

My work of art is totally abstract. It was born from a reflection about painting and the propositions of our biggest (artists). I don't copy nature, I isolate fundamental properties of the reality. For me, works are, before all, signs, no matter. It would be wrong to see in the work that is in front of you the object of my art, it isn't there if not as a witness, sign of another thing...

Figure 20

Penetrable



Note : Image taken from. Jesus Rafael Soto, Penetrable, 1990, <https://reserveresult.com/2012/05/17/jesus-rafael-soto-penetrable-1990/>,

Date of Access.08.02.2020

4.1.1.5. Carlos Cruz-Diez

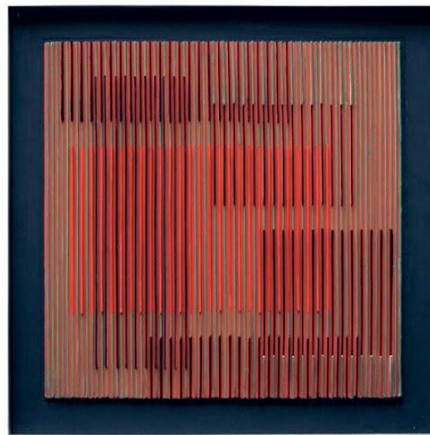
Venezuelan painter Carlos Cruz-Diez (1923 – 2019) was a prominent artist in the Kinetic and Op Art movements who encouraged awareness regarding the changeability of reality. Among the most important thinkers of the 20th century in the

field of color, Cruz-Diez's visual art examines the eternal perception of color as an autonomous reality in space and time.

Closely interested in color relationships, Cruz-Diez found inspiration in George Seurat's gleaming pointillistic compositions and Josef Albers's illusory square paintings. His visual experiments focused on the motion effect created by color and the lines depending on the viewer's position relative to the painting. After 1959, he began using colored lights in his work in lieu of paint.

Figure 21

Physichromie 13, 76x73 cm



Note : Image taken from Carlos Cruz-Diez, Physichromie 13, 1960, <https://www.artnexus.com/en/magazines/article-magazine-artnexus/5d63490390cc21cf7c0a21fe/74/carlos-cruz-diez>, Date of Access. 17.02.2020

As an artist, Carlos Cruz-Diez focused on the kinetic energy of color. His works are built on the moiré effect created by overlapping two periodic patterns at a slight offset to create an illusion of motion. The best example of this aspect of his work is his series titled *Physichromie*. Cruz-Diez's career focused on freeing color from the effects of form and material. In his art, color is an entity that is in constant motion intertwined with light. Color unearths phenomena that interact with human perception and soul, controlled not through shape and line but through time and space.

In addition to his *Physichromie* series, Carlos Cruz-Diez took the free color effect to a different level with his series titled *Couleurs Additives*, where he achieved the effect through placing equally spaced new colors next to one another or intersecting them, and his *Chromosaturations* series, where he washed the viewers in

color in specially designed rooms. With Chromosaturation, Cruz-Diez aimed to apply color onto space.

Cruz-Diez examined the psychological effects of the sense of space created by colors and color light changes and their various effects. Experimenting with the physical effects of color, chromatic interactions, color saturation and transparency values, the artist designed his pieces and their lighting based on the possible vantage points of the viewers. A large portion of Carlos Cruz-Diez's Op Art works depend on individual collaboration with the viewers. This aspect especially comes to the forefront in his works built as a space (Tuğal, 2018, p. 202).

Cruz-Diez's career focused on freeing color from the effects of form and material. In his art, color is an entity that is in constant motion intertwined with light. Color unearths phenomena that interact with human perception and soul, controlled not through shape and line but through time and space. The development of these phenomena was a research-based process consisting of many aesthetic and technological development that would last his whole life.

Figure 22

Chromosaturation pour un lieu public



Note : Image taken from Carlos Cruz-Diez, Chromosaturation pour un lieu public, 1969, <https://twitter.com/cruzdiefound/status/1541810312046845952>, Date of Access.17.02.2020

Carlos Cruz-Diez believed that art was meant to be featured on the streets, not just in museums. To be able to break the notion of the unique and singular work of art and the financial exploitation that upheld it, art had to be reproducible. For this purpose, the artist needed to be prepared for any result, from the public acceptance of

their argument to failure and their work being forgotten over time (Suárez & Carnevali, 2009, p. 50).

4.1.2. Minimalism

The term *Minimalism* is derived from the French “*minimum*”, meaning “*the least or smallest quantity necessary*” or, in mathematics, “*the lowest value assumed by a variable quantity, minimal*”.

In art, Minimalism is also known as Minimal Art, ABC Art, or Literalist Art. Advocating for extreme austerity and an objective approach, the emergence of Minimalism as a movement happened in New York in the late 1960s in the fields of visual arts and music. Minimalism can be defined as emphasizing an idea by reducing it to a minimum number of colors, values, forms, lines and textures. It does not attempt to symbolize or represent any other object or experience but itself. Its point of origin being the notion of a real space and real material, Minimal Art represents a neutral taste that does not care about symbols and tends towards artlessness. In visual arts, it emphasizes the concepts of material and color in the simplification of the ordinary form in parallel to its emphasis on geometric forms. In other words, the point of origin for Minimalism (whose influence we can see in present day in places, furniture, accessories, and which is based on the composition of geometric shapes within basic rhythms) is arguably a search for material, forms and methods that don't overtly display the personality of the creator as a reaction to the “*pretentious abstract expressionism*” (Tasarımseyri, 2020).

According to Minimalist artists, Abstract Expressionism was too personal, affected, and fanciful. They rejected the notion that art had to be the personal expression of its creator. Instead, the artwork had to only concern itself. They aimed to create completely objective works that contained no expressions or connotations.

The question of “What is minimalism?” has yet to be answered even since the 1960s. According to some academics, the answer is an artistic inclination that involves the fewest number of elements and compositional arrangements, whose guiding principles are the right angle, the square and the cube. Others argue that it is a movement which emerged after the second World War in the US, and which expresses itself within the fields of visual arts, music, and literature on a limited (but

not the least) number of resources. Yet another argues that it is the last modernist movement, and thus a transition between the modern and the post-modern periods. Sol Lewitt, a prominent artist of the movement has a more skeptical outlook:

The only reason that I did any writing is [...] the fact that the critics had not understood things very well. They were writing about Minimal Art, but no one defined it. Still to this day no one has written anything. People refer to me as a minimal artist, but no one has ever defined what it means or put any limits to where it begins or ends, what is and what isn't. (Meyer, 2017, p. 3).

From the get-go, most criticism focused on the first two definitions of the term minimalism. According to the first, the word “minimal” was a degrading connotation that this new sculpture art was an act of simple organization. They complained that the overly diminished geometric approach of this new art was far from complex and that it impoverished the visual experience.

The second definition of the word “minimal” can be explained as a production method the artists used. Minimal artworks are generally temporary arrangements that are industrially produced in workshops as per the plans created by the artists and carry the least amount of the artist's trace possible. Minimalist artists' calculated approach and widely comprehensible goals was not embraced by the masses who liked abstract expressionist art and believed that art was a subjective reflection of the artist.

Figure 23*Untitled, 101.6x78.7x22.9 cm*

Note : Image taken from. Donald Judd, Untitled, 1968, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Untitled--1968--DSS-120-/20592DC9DF6919BE>, Date of Access. 21.02.2020

On the other hand, prominent art critics of the period had two criticisms regarding the Minimalist movement. Firstly, the artworks of the movement lacked the aesthetic quality expected in some way from a work of art. Secondly, these works blurred the line between artwork and ordinary objects, thus devaluing works of art.

Toward the late-1960s, minimalism became accepted as an avantgarde movement, and its examples became part of museums and art history. This has led to the acceptance of Minimalism as a prominent art movement at the end of the 20th century.

Minimalist artists give the viewers a sudden and completely visual experience, asking them to feel the color, form, space, and the material in their unadulterated state. The goal was to free art from its mystical trappings and bring its fundamental elements of the medium and the materials to the center stage. This concept of pure aestheticism was quite revolutionary for the period. The ultimate goal of the Minimalists was to bring a true presence to the work of art.

Minimalist paintings generally have sharp and bold edges, with transitions between the color fields. They feature two dimensional spaces and repeating geometric forms. The color fields consist of solid, unchanging single colors. The colors are used directly, without mixing, with a limited palette.

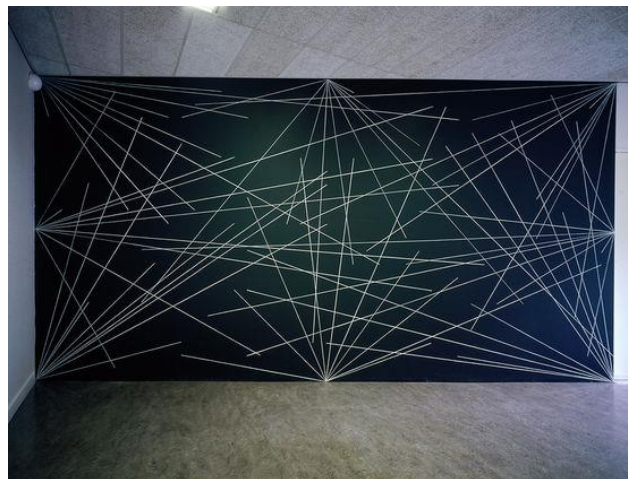
4.1.2.1. Sol LeWitt

The ideas need not be complex. Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. - Sol LeWitt (1967).

Sol LeWitt (1928 – 2007) was a legendary American artist whose works helped bring about the Minimalism and Conceptual Art movements. LeWitt's method was essentially based on his intellectual approach, the knowledge resulting from which his assistants followed to produce his artworks. According to LeWitt, the planning and decision-making process for a conceptual artist should be completed before the production process of the artwork, with the execution of the work being a mere formality.

Figure 24

Wall Drawing #256



Note : Image taken from. Sol LeWitt, Wall Drawing #256, 1975, <https://whitney.org/education/families/kids-art-challenge/sol-lewitt>, Date of Access. 22.02.2020

LeWitt questioned the basic relationship between an idea and the artwork that resulted from that idea, and thus transformed the process of creating art. In the 1960s, many artists questioned modern concepts like uniqueness and artistic talent, while LeWitt denied that movements like Minimalism, Conceptual Art, and Process Art were technical or depictive philosophical concepts. He stated that Conceptual Art had

no aspects that were either mathematical or intellectual, instead stressing that turning an idea into a work of art involved intuition considering the many uncertainties. To him, the idea preceded the resulting artwork. Many of LeWitt's humble works that appear to be instructions on paper were reproducible again and again anywhere in the world without the presence of a painter (Sol LeWitt Wikipedia, 2022).

LeWitt's works reflect the poetry of patterns that repeated along the uninterrupted geometric systems and their coincidental variations. The artist took up the motto of "Objects may be destroyed – ideas, not necessarily," and embraced the idea of transiency unique to conceptualism instead of creating unique artworks to leave behind for the future generations.

LeWitt was also important for the emergence of a new radical aesthetic approach in the 1960s with his revolutionary opposition to the Abstract Expressionism of the 1950s and the New York school of the 1960s. According to him, the artist could evaluate an idea as a work of art even if it had not been visually realized. All phases, sketches, drawings, unsuccessful models, thoughts and dialogues that went into the artwork's production were important. The elements that reveal the thought process of the artist could often be more interesting than the finished piece.

Figure 25

Wall Drawing #462



Note : Image taken from Sol LeWitt, Wall Drawing #462, 1986, <https://massmoca.org/event/walldrawing462/>, Date of Access. 22.02.2020

LeWitt's works were visual elements where conceptual processes transformed into surfaces and volumes in two and three dimensions, built unconsciously through intuition. The closer the execution was to the idea that led to it, which was the

important part of the process, the better the artwork conveyed the message it aimed to convey. In this context, Sol LeWitt's works were visual phenomena built upon the connections between concepts and processes. The idea gave form and meaning to the work, and LeWitt worked on this idea or concept by distancing his personal expression from the material (Cross & Markonish, 2009, p. 27).

According to LeWitt, once an idea had emerged, it had to avoid the influence of any material or subjective condition. The medium, forms and materials used were solid and ordinary tools and in a sense their useless existence could be exterminated for the sake of the concept. Once the idea or concept to be executed was chosen, the realization of the work was simply a formality, which had no effect on the method or the chosen conceptual process.

If music had minimal relation to experimental gain and to daily life, and no relation to what language represented, Sol LeWitt's works could be said to be analogous to music. LeWitt's works were visual elements where conceptual processes transformed into surfaces and volumes in two and three dimensions, built unconsciously through intuition. The closer the execution was to the idea that led to it, which was the important part of the process, the better the artwork conveyed the message it aimed to convey. Because of the link that emerged between the concept and the two or three dimensional symbol, the irregularity in communication reached its ideal state. This ideal state where the visuality manifested as a result of the conceptual process excluded subjective and emphatic commentary – a part of ordinary aesthetic methods –, refining the idea or concept into its purest form as a rational or objective unit. In this concept, Sol LeWitt's works were visual entities built on the connections between concepts and processes. They were conceptual entities that conveyed an idea and used all materials and subjects for the sake of the idea at the same time. The idea gave form and meaning to the work, and LeWitt worked on this idea or concept by distancing his personal expression from the material. In this sense, we could call him the “musician of concepts” in search of that ideal entity. He saw the transition from the idea into the execution as a distortion and expected us to understand the artwork in the structural sense rather than as a visual entity (Cross & Markonish, 2009, p. 27).

Figure 26

The production of Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawing #1171 by his assistants



Note : Image taken from The production of Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawing #1171 by his assistants,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-F9olXj8Oo>,

Date of Access. 26.02.2020

4.1.2.2. Agnes Martin

Born on a farm in Canada, Agnes Martin (1912 – 2004) received an art education in the US where she emigrated in 1932. Marchin moved to New York in 1957. Agnes Martin joined the Lower Manhattan art scene, which featured figures such as Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly and Jack Youngerman, where she combined her geometric abstract work she created in Taos with the view of the harbor in New York, creating blue-grey paintings such as *Harbor Number 1* Outside a few self-portraits and watercolor landscapes, her early-period work largely consists of pastel-colored biomorphic paintings.

In the following decade, Martin created her own style with her two-meter-by-two-meter canvases on which she meticulously drew precise grid patterns and completed with a thin layer of paint. Although she generally took part in group exhibitions with other New York abstract painters, Martin took a new path that went outside the boundaries of both the gestural language of Abstract Expressionism and the systematic repetition of Minimalism. On the contrary, her style was based on spiritualism and influenced by the ideas of Zen Buddhism. According to Agnes Martin, painting was a world without objects, uninterrupted and free of obstacles. It

was realizing the necessity of a visual world that was akin to crossing an empty beach to be able to see the ocean (MoMA, 2020).

Figure 27

Harbor Number 1, 126.3x101.6 cm



Note : Image taken from Agnes Martin, Harbor Number 1, 1957, <https://artvee.com/dl/harbor-number-1/>, 07.03.2020

Known for her geometric abstractions, Martin's paintings feature pale stripes of color drawn with pencils, working off an Abstract Expressionist approach to prevent the sparse density of Minimalism. Although it appears that she has a rigid pictorial approach, Martin did not pursue perfection. On the contrary, she was influenced by Taoism and other Eastern philosophies, viewing art as a reflection of the natural order.

Agnes Martin praised Mark Rothko for having reached zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth. Following that, Martin took up a reductive style to be able to create a perception of perfection and to emphasize the superhuman reality. She became known for her style which featured lines, grids, and very light colors. Although these paintings have a minimalistic form, the small mistakes and the handprints of the artist they displayed distinguished them from other minimalist artworks.

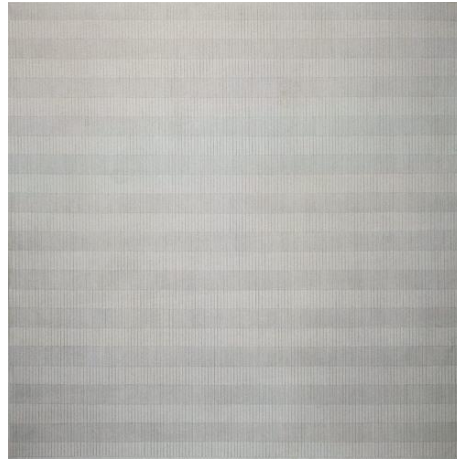
According to Agnes Martin, she first made a difference with an artistic leap in 1964, when she finished her painting titled *Tree*.

Although *Tree* wasn't her first grid painting, Martin viewed it as the piece that legitimized her artistic maturity – even though, in her opinion, others perhaps didn't even see it as a work of art. Still, she offered to give the work to the Museum of

Modern Art, and, to her surprise, the museum bought the piece, making it her first painting to be featured there.

Figure 28

Tree, 182.8x182.8 cm



Note : Image taken from Agnes Martin, Tree, 1964, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/78361>, Date of Access. 07.03.2020

Agnes Martin's approach to grid compositions loosened her early-period attempts at placing her work onto a linear narrative and the influences thereof. Though Martin stated that she did not believe in interaction, she admitted the influence of Abstract Expressionist works and discourse on her work. Still, Abstract Expressionism was not her only influence. Many factors outside art also affected her personal sensibilities. For Martin, painting was not about the colors the painter chose or where those colors were applied on the canvas. The act of painting had to begin at the thought stage, in unity with the feelings of the artist. This way, the sensibilities the painter reflects onto the canvas became her personality and the effect it created on the viewer. Martin was interested in the ancient Greek notion that perfection does not truly exist – it could only exist in the mind. The ancient Greeks could design an ideal circle or line, but these were only idealized images and not real. Yet these ideals gave people a purpose to strive for. To Agnes Martin, her works reflected what took place in the mind instead of what was seen.

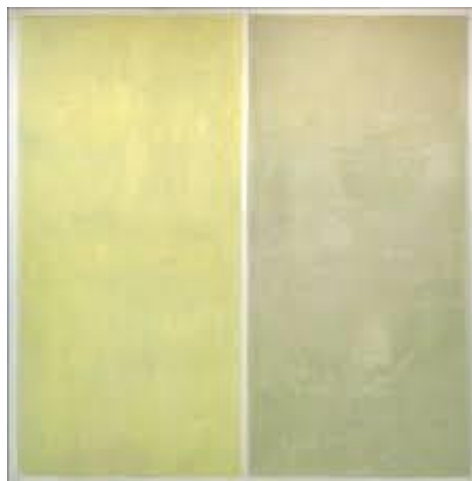
Abstract expressionists depicted the chaos, uncertainty, and violence of the 1940s and 1950s through their monumental works that featured all sorts of gesture and action. These artists aimed to evoke very different emotions through their intense,

forceful, and usually violent works. Martin, on the other hand, wanted her work to create different experiences through quieter, lighter, more limited means. When you put a Marchin next to a Jackson Pollock, Martin's work appeared as a salve compared to the other: like chaos and order, a scream and a whisper (Martin, 2018, p. 140).

Agnes Martin as an artist had a universal influence and played a great role in the 20th century art history. Known partially as an Abstract Expressionist and partially as a Minimalist, her reclusive lifestyle was an inspiration for artists and practitioners of many different fields. Many painters, photographers, writers, and people from fashion, architecture and graphic design all reinterpreted her geometric work with austere lines and pale colors many times.

Figure 29

Heather



Note : Image taken from Agnes Martin, Heather, 1958, <https://robinleverttonart.com/2015/08/13/agnes-martin-at-tate-modern/#jp-carousel-1441>, Date of Access. 10.03.2020

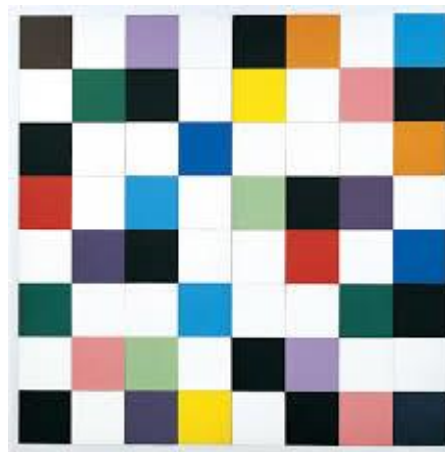
4.1.2.3. Ellsworth Kelly

Ellsworth Kelly (1923 – 2015) was an American painter, sculptor and print artist often associated with hard-edge painting, Color Field painting, and Minimalism. His work demonstrates an unassuming technique that emphasized line, color and form – similar to John McLaughlin and Kenneth Noland's. Kelly often used bright colors.

Kelly's brightly colored works with simple shapes were contributive to 20th century painting. After freeing it from the surface, Ellsworth Kelly worked to interlink shape with the space that surrounded it. As a result, shape would have found its own space through the angles, curves, edges, and masses that comprised it, as well as the colors and tones that supported them.

Figure 30

Colors for a Large Wall, 240x240 cm



Note : Image taken from Ellsworth Kelly, Colors for a Large Wall, 1951, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/80528>, Date of Access. 12.03.2020

With the 20th century, it seems possible to put Ellsworth Kelly in the same category as the modernist masters whose art he admired, such as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Kelly was one of the last of the American painters to move to Paris. His abstract aesthetic approach was influenced not only by 20th century avantgarde movements like Dada and Surrealism but also classical European art and architecture like Byzantine and Roman periods. He is part of an important generation of American painters who emerged in the mid-1950s New York after having stolen the title of Abstract Expressionists from Paris in the process of healing its wounds after the second World War (Paik, 2015, p. 6).

Since the beginning of Ellsworth Kelly's career, his interest in pure forms and colors and his instinct to suppress the marks of the artist to create spatial harmony played an important role in abstract art's emergence in America. Kelly's most well-known works, such as his *Colors for a Large Wall* from 1951, are notable for their hard-edged shapes painted with solid, vibrant colors. His abstract paintings are

inspired by the interactions between light, space, and color in the architectural texture of his surroundings (Ellsworth Kelly Artsy, 2020).

Ellsworth Kelly worked to interlink shape with the space that surrounded it. As a result, shape would have found its own space through the angles, curves, edges, and masses that comprised it, as well as the colors and tones that supported them. In the late-1950s, Kelly's works began to emphasize shapes and generally non-linear, planar masses. He returned to New York in 1954 and began to create Color Field paintings in collaboration with painters like Frank Stella and Al Held, rejecting the gestural brushstrokes of Abstract Expressionism.

Figure 31

Yellow Piece, 190.5x190.5 cm



Note : Image taken from Ellsworth Kelly, Yellow Piece, 1966, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/169715>, Date of Access. 12.03.2020

In the 1960s, Ellsworth Kelly began using oblique or inclined canvasses. His 1966 piece titled *Yellow Piece* is notable for his refusal to use rectangular supports and as a redefinition of the figure/surface relationship. With its curved corners and single solid color, the canvas itself became the composition, making the wall on which it is displayed the surface itself.

Kelly added curved shapes into his repertory in the 1970s. His 1968 work *Green White* was the first instance of the triangular form in his paintings, which we would repeatedly encounter throughout the rest of his career. In the piece, two large-scale monochromatic canvasses were used to place a green isosceles triangle behind a

smaller white isosceles triangle to create a new geometric composition. For his work after this point, Kelly preferred a palette consisting of purer colors and new forms.

Ellsworth Kelly's works are notable for their instant uniqueness like those of Kenneth Noland, Richard Diebenkorn and Frank Stella. Kelly's art was notable for its wonderful colors and its harmonious blend of color and form. Like Brice Marden, Robert Mangold and David Novros, Kelly also created multi-panel works where each panel is painted a single color. According to Kelly, his paintings featured form composed of its contents. He focused on the panels that made up his paintings rather than the brushstrokes. In 1949, Kelly began creating objects instead of paintings. He stated that he preferred to take an object and use it as it is, as opposed to creating a painting, which is an interpretation of a real or fictional entity. Kelly's outlook summarizes the divide between traditional art and post-war and contemporary art (Garrard, 2007, p. 157).

Figure 32

Green White, 358.2x180.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Ellsworth Kelly, Green White, 1968, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Green-White--on-2-joined-panels-/990F8540E245D679>, Date of Access. 13.03.2020

4.1.2.4. Ad Reinhardt

Adolph Frederick “Ad” Reinhardt (1913 – 1967) was an abstract painter who was active from the 1930s and through the 1960s in New York. He was part of the American Abstract Artists and the movement centered around the Betty Parsons Gallery that became known as abstract expressionism. Additionally, he was a member of *The Club*, which was a meeting venue for the New York school of abstract

expressionists in the 1940s and 1950s. A prolific art writer and instructor, Reinhardt was an influential figure in conceptual art, minimal art and monochromatic painting. Known for his *Black* or *Ultimate* paintings, he claimed to be painting the “last paintings” that anyone could paint. He supported his artistic philosophy, which he named *Art-as-Art*, with articles that praised abstract art, and satirical caricatures. He opposed the notion of *artists-as-artists*, which he deemed disreputable (Ad Reinhardt Wikipedia, 2020).

Ad Reinhardt eliminated brushstrokes and bright colors in his paintings in the early 1950s and later simplified his compositions. Through this process, he began using geometric fields consisting of tones of red, blue, or black, that differed only minimally from one another.

The first exhibited artworks of Reinhardt were far from representative and were disconnected from objects and external references. His work evolved from compositions consisting of geometric shapes in the 1940s to pieces that consisted of the different tones of a single color in the 1950s. Reinhardt’s well-known “black” paintings from the 1960s were at first sight simply canvasses painted black. However, they are actually compositions consisting of black or different tones of black. Open to different interpretations and painted only in black – which is barely considered a color – these pieces questioned the notion of certainty.

Figure 33

Abstract Painting, 95.6x65.1 cm



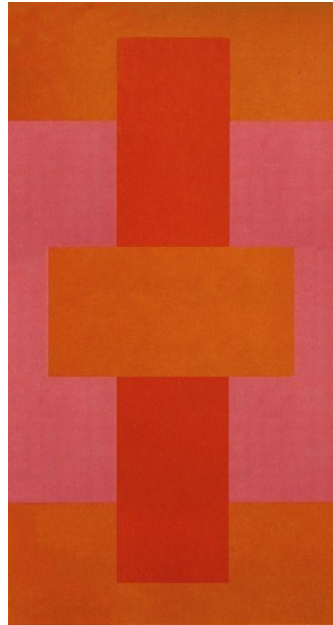
Note : Image taken from Ad Reinhardt, Abstract Painting, 1958, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/ABSTRACT-PAINTING/8E70527309BC8E1C>,

Date of Access. 16.03.2020

Reinhardt's 1958 work titled *Abstract Painting* consists of twenty light colored rectangles placed parallel to the surface over a narrow and tall canvas. Because Reinhardt merged various tones of yellow, blue, and red with pure black, the surfaces appear different from each other. These differing tones of black come together on the painting's surface and appear like overlapping transparent stripes. Because paint was applied to the smooth surface of the canvas in thin layers the rectangles do not display any brush strokes or tones. Additionally, Reinhardt's shading on the matte black surface absorbs the light so well that even the tiniest difference in tone is noticeable. Pushing the visual senses to their limits, these paintings only expose the structure of their compositions only when the viewer is highly willing and intensely focused. In this context, Reinhardt rejected the representative existence of black as a whole in his paintings. For Reinhardt, the non-chromatic black was only an artistic problem. In 1958, when he created *Abstract Painting*, he stated his main outlook regarding art as "art is art and everything else is everything else" (Elger, 2019, p. 78).

Among the artists of his generation, Reinhardt was the only painter to demand the refinement of painting that systematically and willfully eradicated all references to life or biography outside shape elements, as well as any spiritual or metaphysical dimension in a way that left no space for polemic or discussion. He never stopped harshly criticizing abstract expressionist painters and often accused them of being stuck in a complicated spiritual and psychological heap that damaged the so-called visual power of the artwork. For artists like Reinhardt, such as Stella, the artwork only carries value as it is – tightly conscientious, holding dearly to its own existence, devoted to the artwork, and only concerned with studying its own reality (Bonfand, 1994, p. 138).

Ad Reinhardt's aesthetic and conceptual foundation features the austere compositions of Cubism, Constructivism, and de Stijl. While most of his contemporaries were working on figurative studies under the influence of Surrealism, Reinhardt worked in an Abstract style since the start of his career. He aimed for his paintings to not feature any form (but they did), any light (but they did), space (which was impossible), any changes (but they did), and any relation to anything else (but they were in relation with themselves and many other artworks). Reinhardt's works are as emotional as he desired for them to be beyond emotionality.

Figure 34*Abstract Painting Red, 274.4x102 cm*

Note : Image taken from Ad Reinhardt, Abstract Painting Red, 1952, <https://whitney.org/collection/works/11684>, Date of Access. 17.03.2020

Ad Reinhardt's abstract black paintings were not the last paintings made as he stated they were. In his attempts to create imageless, unrelated, timeless art, Reinhardt was destined to fail. Because despite his efforts towards the elimination of material, he was confined within the materiality of painting. His challenge was to evoke a sense of nothingness using physical objects. Because the act of creation inevitably requires a gesture or the marks of a maker, Reinhardt's works couldn't be completely devoid of gestures like other Minimalist works. You could not completely eradicate the human touch. Reinhardt's works which aimed for nothingness could only achieve it conceptually (Garrard, 2007, p. 130).

4.1.2.5. Frank Stella

A legendary figure in the post-war period American art, Frank Stella is one of the most influential artists of a generation of artists transitioning from Abstract Expressionism to Minimalism. He is known for the geometric shapes and forms he featured in his paintings and sculptures. Still an influential working artist, Stella's

works utilize the formal properties of shape, color, and composition to explore non-literary narratives, as seen in his piece titled *Harran II*.

Figure 35

Harran II , 609.6x304.8 cm



Note : Image taken from. Frank Stella, Harran II, 1967, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/4003>, Date of Access. 21.03.2020

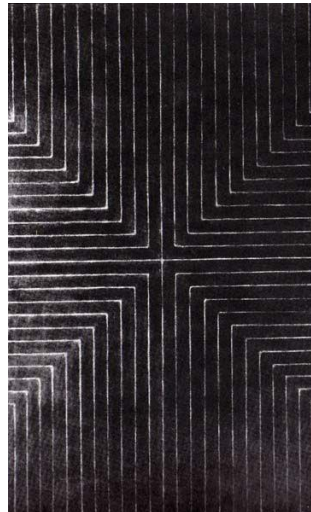
For Stella, abstraction shouldn't be limited with rectilinear or basic curvilinear geometry. Abstraction can involve geometries with narrative effects. In other words, abstract painting makes it possible to tell a story through shapes as a result of the interaction between colors and shapes. In his early period work, Stella excluded any connotative or symbolic surface-level elements to refine his paintings into geometric forms and eliminate the illusory effect. His goal was to create paintings where the visual effect came not from symbolic meaning but from the material. The famous Minimalist quote of "What you see is what you see," came from Frank Stella.

After receiving a history education in Princeton University, Frank Stella moved to New York in 1958, which coincided with a peak period for Abstract Expressionism. Still, his series of works from 1958-1960 known as the Black Paintings were inspired by the works of Barnett Newman and Jasper Johns. Stella's plainly painted and austere works paved the way for Minimalism. These are works where the painting doesn't represent anything belonging to the physical world or the artist's emotional world. They are objects of their own. According to Stella, a painting was a flat surface with paint on it, nothing more. This was a departure from the technique of sketching before painting. A large portion of his work was made using ordinary house paint, directly applying the brush onto the surface. Stella's abstract

works were 20th century paintings, featuring no illusions, or psychological or metaphysical references (Frank Stella Wikipedia, 2022).

Figure 36

Die Fahne hoch!, 308.6x185.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Frank Stella, Die Fahne hoch!, 1959, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Fahne_Hoch!_%28Frank_Stella%29,

Date of Access. 24.03.2020

In this new aesthetic approach Frank Stella discovered in his Black Paintings, neatly painted stripes of black paint were separated by thin lines of the exposed canvas. *Die Fahne hoch!* is one of the first examples of this style. It was named after the first line of the well-known Nazi song, “Horst Wessel”. With a history degree from Princeton, Stella stressed the oppressive atmosphere evoked by these titles, expressing that these were referring to a personal subject of interest and should carry no connotations for the viewers to interpret. Still, his statement carries a contradiction in the context of the terrible period which these titles recall (Elger, 2019, p. 82)

The most important element that set Frank Stella apart was his constant search for the new, never repeating himself. Having used geometric and plain forms in his early work, he grew tired of the rectangular sameness of the canvas and sought out new interpretations, starting to make holes in his canvasses and cutting out the empty

spaces around the lines on the canvas. As a result, Stella created the first examples of the “shaped canvas”.

With the 1960s, Stella began creating linear works arranged rectilinear and curvilinearly with a wide color palette. Later, he created the *Protractor* series, which consisted of nested color circles that compose full or semi-circles arranged in overlapping arcs within adjoined square frames. These works formed the foundation for his later works on shaped canvas.

Through the ten-year period from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Stella’s work transformed into three-dimensional sculpture-like forms consisting of cones, columns, curves, waves, and decorative architectural elements.

When the viewer looks at Frank Stella’s works, the painting almost suddenly and wholly appeals to the eye. This creates an effect almost akin to Zen Buddhism. This relates to the cultural atmosphere of the late-1950s New York, where Stella started his painting career and where Zen philosophy was beginning to become widespread.

Figure 37

Moby Dick, 171x139 cm



Note : Image taken from. Frank Stella, *Moby Dick*, 1989,
<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/frank-stella-moby-dick-from-the-waves-series-1989>,

Date of Access. 25.03.2020

Frank Stella is aware of his place in art history. He aimed to take painterly abstraction into its next phase and attempted to do so with enthusiasm and effort. His natural exuberance reflects upon his works. He believes that abstraction has no limits for its expansion or progression. His late period works show no laxity in transparency or progression. These works increasingly grow and surprise (Pearson, 2013, s.74).

4.1.3. Color Field Painting

The end of the first period of Abstract Expressionism, which is associated with Action painting between 1940 and 1960, is generally accepted as Franz Kline's (1910-1962) death. The second half of Abstract Expressionism is identified as Color Field Painting or Post-Painterly Abstraction. The simplest definition for color field painting is the use of color as the independent and primary means of expression. Lyrical Abstraction, having emerged in the 1940s, was carried over to Europe by artists who went there in 1945 and after World War II, where it was renamed Tachism in Paris. In 1964 and afterwards, the style came back as a reaction to Minimalism, this time taking on the title of Post-Painterly Abstraction (Kavrakoğlu, 2015).

A light, fine use of color, avoidance of textured surfaces, exposing the canvas from underneath the paint layer, a transparent composition that's austere and unpretentious, gesture and personality-free brushstrokes – in contrast to the previous generation – as well as the use of vibrant colors are the commonalities of these works.

Figure 38

Canyon, 198.1x170 cm



Note : Image taken from Helen Frankenthaler, Canyon, 1965, <https://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/canyon-0>, Date of Access. 02.04.2020

The term Color Field Painting was coined in 1962 by Clement Greenberg. According to Greenberg, the movement's artworks' use of color isn't meant to fill an area – the color has gained independence. Using limited palettes, color field painters spread the paint across the canvas without any personalization and in a uniform manner. These works emphasized color, shape, form, and dimensions, and they required up-close viewing. The lightness and vibrance of the colors in color field paintings stopped these works from becoming suffocating for the viewers. The works of color field painters such as Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis were far from suffocating or gloomy – they are cheerful, powerful, optimistic, and happy.

The colors used in color field paintings are among the brightest and most vibrant in art history. Color was a central issue for many post-war era painters such as Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Christopher Le Brun, Gillian Ayres, Howard Hodgkin, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, and Joseph Albers. For example, Helen Frankenthaler is an artist who used color in her work with great exuberance. The 1960s were a period where the physical attributes of artworks began to take center stage. In this context, color was examined in the same manner as the dimensions, shape, texture, weight, and other similar physical attributes of the piece.

Upon close examination, post-painterly abstraction and color field paintings display the canvas in all its nakedness and austerity. The surface of the canvas isn't simply an element used to create an illusion or a surface upon which the painting was displayed – it is the artwork itself. This is linked to the notions of existence and impermanence, which is based on Zen Buddhism and had become common in post-war American art. Many artists entered a trance and a state of inspiration-seeking during their acts of creation. Rothko, Newman, Louis, and Frankenthaler's saturated colors covering large fields involve a similar introspection that harkens to Zen.

Color field painters rejected their colleagues' animated actions, instead adopting the most extensive possible use of less sentimental but purer colors. Artists of the post-painterly abstraction and post-abstract expression such as Brice Marden, Ellsworth Kelly, Jo Baer, Kenneth Noland, Richard Diebenkorn, Morris Louis and Ad Reinhardt are often viewed by some art critics as painters who eliminated emotions in painting. According to these critics, Abstract Expressionistic forms were rendered expressionless by those artists (Fortenberry, 2014, p. 104).

4.1.3.1. *Mark Rothko*

Mark Rothko's (1903 – 1970) art was described as “transcendent” (Dore Ashton, Bryan Robertson), “a sort of spiritual Stonehenge” (Anita Brookner), “lavish self-indulgence” (Max Kozloff), “sensuous and spiritual” (Diane Waldman), “enormous, beautiful, opaque surfaces” (Peter Selz), “enigmatic, gripping presence” (Robert Goldwater), “incandescent color” (Clement Greenberg), “haunting” (David Sylvester), “visionary simplicity” (Irving Sandler) and “tinted hallucinatory cloth” (Willem de Kooning). Greenberg stated: “With dazzling colors, and firm and simple sensuousness, Rothko's large-scale vertical paintings are among the most valuable in abstract expressionism” (Garrard, 2007, p. 38).

The primary influences on Rothko's early period works in the 1920s had been the German Expressionists, Paul Klee's surrealist art, and Georges Rouault's work. According to Rothko, the traditional approach of starting a painting with a sketch could be replaced with color. He used color fields in his watercolor paintings and cityscapes. His work had begun to evolve into the style with which he would become synonymous.

Figure 39

No.18, 141x116.6 cm



Note : Image taken from Mark Rothko, No.18, 1948, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/No--18/EA65A70A6BBE48A3>,

Date of Access. 04.04.2020

In the mid-1940s, Rothko began working on what would be named “Multiforms” by the critics. Two examples of these works are *No.18* and *Untitled*, both from 1948. According to Rothko, these paintings were structurally more organic, exhibiting a more humanistic expression. Their blurred masses of different colors that depicted no landscapes or human figures contained not myths and symbols but their own vital forces. To Rothko, these works were full of possibilities and had a “breath of life” that the figurative works of the period lacked. These “Multiforms” are Rothko’s most well-known, mature period works. He would never completely give up on working on these for the remainder of his artistic life.

Rothko stated that he was influenced by The Red Studio by Henri Matisse in his later period abstract works, creating pieces consisting of antipodal yet complementary and symmetrical, rectangular forms in two or three colors. These rectangles largely appeared to be melded with the surface. In the following years, Rothko created large-scale, vertical paintings. For him, large-scale paintings had a grander effect on the viewer, almost pulling them in. On the other hand, some critics argued that the large size was a cover for a lack of substance. As a response, Rothko stated:

I realize that historically the function of painting large pictures is painting something very grandiose and pompous. The reason I paint them, however ... is precisely because I want to be very intimate and human. To paint a small picture is to place yourself outside your experience, to look upon an experience as a stereopticon view or with a reducing glass. However you paint the larger picture, you are in it. It isn't something you command! (Mark Rothko Wikipedia, 2023).

For Rothko, his “mature” work with which he had become synonymous transcended pure abstraction. Rothko believed that tragic experiences were the sole source of art, and thus aimed for what he deemed were the main elements of experience, tragedy and ecstasy. Throughout his life, his works were meant as an expression of humanity’s universal tragedy (Baal-Teshuva, 2019, p. 17).

Unlike most abstract expressionist painters of his period, Rothko opted for a more spiritual and cerebral approach to the application of paint, rather than one that’s physical and sometimes strict. Mark Rothko’s works didn’t solely consist of color,

they were almost glowing, organic pieces. Their blurry edges with soft transitions reflected the power of life through the emotions they conveyed. These works of genius eliminated the necessity for the figure or landscape in painting, venturing far beyond tradition to strike the viewers right at the heart.

Mark Rothko's art is described by critics with an archetypical approach as brave, grand, spiritual, and dramatic. He was called brave for aiming to achieve something important in a world where existence is pain. He is grand for aiming to break the mold in the art world with regard to content and form. He is spiritual for taking an interest in spiritual matters. The spiritual is always on display in all his work.

Rothko's late period works show an interest in the matters of shape which also puzzled other painters. The relationships between color and size, and scale and shape, as well as hue and brightness, ratio and color, surface texture and the luminance of the painting, etc. His late period works often featured black and gray rectangular forms – the dichotomy of which can be interpreted differently by each viewer: Spirit and matter, spiritualism and physicality, the mind and the body, masculinity and femininity, the past and the present, now and eternity, the internal and the external, life and death, etc. Similar to van Gogh and Turner, these works by Rothko hint at an obsession with reaching a certain point – the desire to reach an endpoint that's as majestic and certain as eternity (Garrard, 2007, p. 42).

Figure 40

Untitled, 173.4x137.8 cm



Note : Image taken from Mark Rothko, Untitled, 1969, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79611>, Date of Access. 04.04.2020

4.1.3.2. *Barnett Newman*

Barnett Newman (1905 – 1970) was a prominent painter in the abstract expressionism and the color field painting movements. Newman's early work in the 1930s were expressionistic. Ultimately, he destroyed all of these paintings. Creating surrealist works in later years, Newman began work in the late 1940s on his “Zip” series, consisting of color fields divided by thin, vertical lines, which brought him renown in the art world and are commonly considered his mature period work. His 1948 painting *Onement I* is the first work for which he used the term “zip” to describe the spatial structure of his paintings. According to Newman, the heterogeneously painted zip unites the two sides of the composition instead of dividing it, ensuring that the viewer experiences the work both emotionally and physically.

Newman's first works in the zip series are, for the lack of a better word, mottled and not homogenous. In later work, the colors grew purer and flatter. Newman believed that he matured as a painter with these paintings. The zips both divide and unite the painting, defining their spatial structure (Barnett Newman Wikipedia, 2022).

A theoretician in addition to his painting work, Barnett Newman was among the most intellectual painters of the New York school. His artistic approach was shaped by his education in the New York City College and his political activism. He believed that art was not only an element of self-realization but also a declaration of political, intellectual, and personal freedom.

Figure 41*Onement I, 69.2x41.2 cm*

Note : Image taken from Barnett Newman, Onement I, 1948, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79601>, Date of Access.06.04.2020

Newman's zips, which divided color fields in austere compositions, led to art critics defining him as a color field painter and became an inspiration for Minimalist painters. Although Barnett Newman embraced abstract expressionists' approach to the subjects of myth and primitive unconscious, the large-scale color fields and the zip form his works featured deviated from the gesture-based abstractionist approach of his contemporaries. Newman's paintings wherein he rejected the brushstrokes often used by the abstract expressionists of his period which emphasized their expressionistic style, and the hard edges he created with fields of solid color became a precursor to the post-painterly abstractionist and minimalist works of artists like Frank Stella and Donald Judd. In an article from 1955, Clement Greenberg wrote that Newman's colossal, serene, and almost illuminated canvasses contained depth and honesty.

Barnett Newman commented that traditional subjects and styles of art had become irrelevant in the modern world after the second World War, which had been mired in shadow of discord, fear, and tragedy. He believed old norms of beauty to have become invalid and that there was only room for what was noble and sublime as an experience of grandeur that could force modern humankind out of its inertia. He believed the essential instinct of humankind to be to create. The same instinct and desire to create that had existed in ancient art was also possible to find in modern art.

In this context, he viewed himself and painters as the creators of the world (Barnett Newman Artstory, 2020).

Figure 42

Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue, 190x122 cm



Note : Image taken from Barnett Newman, Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue, 1966 – 70, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/barnett-newman/whos-afraid-of-red-yellow-and-blue-i-1970>, Date of Access.06.04.2020

One of Newman's most well-known works is his series titled *The Stations of Cross* (1958 – 1966), which consists of fourteen paintings wherein he interprets religion through abstraction. About this series, Newman stated:

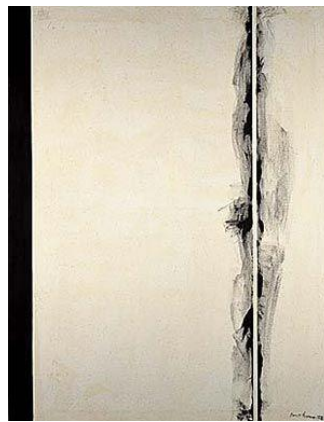
I hope that my painting has the impact of giving someone, as it did me, the feeling of his own totality, of his own separateness, of his own individuality. What is the explanation of the seemingly insane drive of man to be painter and poet if it is not an act of defiance against man's fall and an assertion that he return to the Garden of Eden? For the artists are the first men.

Barnett Newman only found the artistic renown his works deserved near the end of his life. Consisting of four paintings between 1966 and 1970, his series titled

Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue can be defined as the first peak of his artistic career. In the first paintings of the series, the zip form is positioned at the edge of the dominant red field. Thus, the visual force of the red is enhanced, allowing for a more intense effect on the viewer. Here, the artist's personal line style is in opposition to the flawless surfaces of the color fields. Newman defined the zip as a field that gives life to the other fields in the composition, just as the other fields give life to the line (Elger, 2019, p. 94).

Figure 43

The Stations of Cross, 197.8x153.7 cm



Note : Image taken from Barnett Newman, The Stations of Cross, 1958-66, <https://www.carterart.art/article/all-about-the-station-of-the-cross-third-station-by-barnett-newman>, Date of Access.07.04.2020

The two primary figures of the “Abstract Sublime” Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko who shaped Color Field, Hard Edge, systematic and plain painting style of the 1960s. While Clyfford Still denied the power of the traditional, Newman and Rothko almost derived pleasure from it. Both Newman's and Mark Rothko's paintings were about the search for religious belief, for what is subjective, supernatural, intemporal, unknown, and eternal.

As art historian and Kunstmuseum Basel director Christian Geelhaar wrote in a 1981 article, Newman was not a designer in the usual sense. Even in his work on paper he remained a complete painter. This was evident not only in his use of brush and ink after his early work with pastels, but also in his alternating use of paint and line. In summary, he only decided to move onto the canvas once he became sure of

his paintings on paper. Newman generally used the term “drawing” in a larger sense in the context of creating a space instead of form, whether on paper or canvas (Newman, 2016, p. 26).

4.1.3.3. *Helen Frankenthaler*

Helen Frankenthaler (1928 – 2011) was one of the few women artists who had succeeded in becoming accepted in the New York art scene of the 1950s. She trained in multiple art schools in Vermont and New York between 1945 and 1950. In 1951, following a visit to Jackson Pollock’s exhibition at the Betty Parsons art gallery, she developed her own painting technique and painterly language. Adopting Pollock’s technique of placing the canvas on the floor to drip and pour paint onto it, Frankenthaler applied the paint in a fluid manner onto her unprimed canvas. This made it possible for the paint to thoroughly seep into the canvas. Frankenthaler also used a method of rubbing the painted canvas with a sponge. The resulting canvas became less a surface for the painting and more a conveyor for the paint. This, as art critics like Clement Greenberg insistently underlined, allowed for the elimination of visual illusion and three-dimensionality in painting (Elger, 2019, p. 92).

According to Helen Frankenthaler, the lack of depth and flatness were necessary in painting. For her, to cleanse an artwork from influences and associations meant hard edges and the lighting and shading technique known as chiaroscuro had to be abandoned in order to eliminate emotions and nuances.

While Pollock, de Kooning, Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell relied on the physical effects of the paint in their works, the colors in Frankenthaler’s pieces featured a unique, unprecedented sense of motion. The colors appeared to course through the canvas, finding an order on their own. Her early period work from the 1950s featured a lyrical quality in her compositions through their light and transparent colors.

Figure 44*Mountains and Sea*, 297.8x220 cm

Note : Image taken from Helen Frankenthaler, *Mountains and Sea*, 1952,
<https://www.ft.com/content/d8e62eae-8bcb-11e2-8fcf-00144feabdc0>,

Date of Access.09.04.2020

Having started her career with arguably traditional abstractions akin to Picasso's work, Frankenthaler painted *Mountains and Sea* in 1952. The piece was influential for later painters such as Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis in creating paintings that do not use references to the known world and only seek to create visual impact. Frankenthaler borrowed the use of unbounded, poetic and vibrant colors from Kandinsky, combining it with Gorky's more fluid and atmospheric execution style. As many critics stated, the soak-stain method was arguably less of a means to a specific end and more an urge that encouraged her to paint. Her technique was influential for the post-painterly abstraction movement. Although Frankenthaler is the first name that comes to mind regarding the soak-stain method, it did not find widespread acceptance until Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis applied her technique onto their own works (Radford University, 2020).

Frankenthaler's painting titled *Noon*, which features a powerful color composition consisting of green, orange and white tones, is a notable example of her effective use of the unprimed canvas in her paintings in the 1960s.

Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis, for whom she was an influence, evoke a sense of spaciousness and contentment with their large-scale paintings created using the soak-stain method. Size was a crucial factor for these paintings as it rendered them more tangible and impactful. Frankenthaler wanted to avoid the structure of the paint from taking center stage by using as few brushstrokes as possible. For Frankenthaler,

a good painting had to appear spontaneous or as if it was created with a single brushstroke, which was also an important issue for other certain early-period abstract expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock, Adolph Gottlieb (1903 - 1974), and Clyfford Still (1904 – 1980).

Figure 45

Noon



Note : Image taken from. Helen Frankenthaler, Noon, 1966, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mazanto/20484155971>, Date of Access. 11.04.2020

4.1.3.4. Morris Louis

A Color Field painter, Morris Louis (1912 – 1962), passed away due to lung cancer in 1962. During his art studies in Washington, his mentor was Clement Greenberg. In the early years of his career, Louis was influenced by the dense use of colors in the works of Pierre Bonard and Henri Matisse. His later influences were Pollock, Rothko and de Kooning. The influence of Pollock's approach to the canvas is overtly evident in Louis's works. His paintings from between 1946 – 1950 arguably aren't very unique, only later abandoning traditional styles and techniques to employ more experimental work influenced by the spatial uncertainty of cubism and the liberated approach of surrealism.

Another important figure in Louis's career is Helen Frankenthaler. It is commonly believed that Greenberg, who greatly enjoyed Frankenthaler's work,

introduced her to Louis, who began creating works using a similar method. Louis interpreted Frankenthaler's soak-stain method as "a bridge between Pollock and what is possible" (Garrard, 2007, p. 79)

Although Louis was inspired by Frankenthaler's work, there are differences between the two oeuvres. Louis diluted his paints more than Frankenthaler and used acrylics. Although he wanted to avoid creating gestural paintings, he contradictorily used drip painting, a technique that heavily puts the painter's mark on display. His series titled *Veil paintings* feature the first examples of his color field work but contain a new contradiction. Although the background and the colors have melded, the paintings create a sense of depth. Louis thus abandoned the *Veil* paintings and began working first on a series titled *Unfurled*, followed by one named *Striped*, both of which feature stream-like lines of color surrounding a large empty space in the center (Radford University, 2020).

Figure 46

Alpha, 449.6x260.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Morris Louis, *Alpha*, 1960, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/morris-louis/alpha-1960>, Date of Access.13.04.2020

According to John Elderfield, who curated the New York Museum of Modern Art for a time, Louis's works free color from "sculptural modeling". Still, traces of the effect remain as the changes in color in a style so white-infused appear as tonal shifts. The issue here was the disappearance of traditional balance and effect as abstract painting does not use any visual motifs, with a darker effect taking their place.

Morris Louis embraced direct contact with the canvas, which was an attribute of the post-painterly abstraction movement. He poured the paint in folds, layers and swirls to create spirals, stains and color veils that deeply permeated into the canvas. Much like Frankenthaler, Louis also wanted to avoid displaying the painting process and his brushstrokes. Instead, he used a method of folding the canvas to utilize gravity to create stains on it. The purpose of this almost blending of paint with the canvas was the elimination of all illusory effects. According to Clement Greenberg, Louis aimed to apply the paint thinly enough to thoroughly infuse the canvas with it so that the canvas could become paint and color itself (Garrard, 2007, p. 80).

Louis, went beyond Pollock's all-around compositional approach. In *Unfurled*, although almost two-thirds of the canvas were unpainted, the whole of the piece complements and completes the visual structure. Louis finally broke free of the bothersome field-versus-figure dilemma and his gratefulness towards Pollock in the years 1959 and 1960. He achieved a dynamically balanced composition based on a geometric harmony created by dividing a rectangle into three interlocking triangles to create two color fields that opened inwards and outwards.

Figure 47

Twined Columns, 359.7x261.6 cm



Note : Image taken from Morris Louis, Twined Columns, 1960, <https://morrislouis.org/paintings/themes-and-variations/du290>,

Date of Access. 13.04.2020

In Louis's works there exist no external references, only color. Additionally, these twined columns are aesthetic images that create a painterly illusion, much like Stella's black stripes. Morris Louis's paintings aren't simply made of paint casually thrown at the canvas. These are artistic works that reflect the artist's imagination and

each of them contain a personal touch and display his unique style. Although he did not use a brush to create his works, Louis's style is instantly recognizable. According to Frank Stella, Louis's paintings with their large-scale color stains are free of figurative imagery and illusory elements, and thus relaxed, and spacious.

Some art critics viewed Morris Louis's works as the first truly abstract artworks. The reason was the fact that these paintings weren't concerned with any subjects but simply existed as themselves. In this context, Louis arguably went further than Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, or Barnett Newman.

4.1.3.5. *Kenneth Noland*

Kenneth Noland (1924 – 2010) was a close friend of Morris Louis in Washington, D.C. Noland's aesthetic approach were essentially concerned with painting, problems in the process of painting, and color. Noland's precursors were Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Ilya Bolotowsky, and Josef Albers, who taught at Black Mountain College. Much like Morris Louis, Noland was also inspired by Helen Frankenthaler after his visit to her studio with Louis, developing a technique of directly applying the Magna paint onto the canvas (Garrard, 2007, p. 85).

Figure 48

Beginning, 243x229 cm



Note : Image taken from Kenneth Noland, *Beginning*, 1958, <https://en.wahooart.com/@@/AR2H9L-Kenneth-Noland-Beginning>,

Date of Access. 25..04.2020

Starting his career as an Abstract Expressionist, Kenneth Noland then became one of the first practitioners of the Color Field movement and adopted a Minimalist approach that involved vibrant colors and geometric shapes in the 1960s. Noland was also a pioneer of the shaped canvas, using asymmetrical canvases at the center of his works which featured an increasing number of structural elements of equal dimensions. Noland's interest in the images near the edges of the canvas resulted in works like *Beginning*, which consists of nesting circles creating unusual color combinations. In the 1970s and 80s, Noland's canvases were mostly trapezoid and asymmetrical. The result was a series of complex structures that had a unity of color and surface.

Noland applied Joseph Albers's theory of the "interaction of color" on his own compositions. This allowed him to examine the relationships between contrasting and complementary colors applied in opaque layers distinguished by the intensity, saturation, and opacity of each tone. Instead of a brush, Noland used a technique of staining the color into the raw canvas. As a member of the Color Field movement who practiced hard edged abstraction, Noland sought to eliminate texture, traces of the painter, and emotional substance from his paintings. He painted compositions that do not create a sense of depth or the existence of a background on canvases of various shapes.

One of the founders of the Washington Color School, Kenneth Noland's Color Field paintings were linked by Clement Greenberg to the Post-Painterly movement and were reviewed to the most focused and consistent works created in the mid-20th century America. Noland's compositions consisting of striking minimalist shapes and colors have inspired many contemporary abstract painters who experiment with simplified forms and saturated, pure colors.

To preserve the impact of color, Noland preferred simple abstractions in his works. For him, color was the source of painting. One of his most famous pieces is the painting titled *Via Blues*.

Figure 49*Via Blues*, 670.56x228.6 cm

Note :Image taken from. Kenneth Noland, *Via Blues*, 1967, <https://artedeximena.wordpress.com/arte-contemporaneo/expresionismo-abstractopost-painterly-abstraction/l-via-blues-1967-kenneth-noland/>,

Date of Access. 05.05.2020

This approximately six and a half meter wide painting features color strips similar to those of Morris Louis. With a sense of color aestheticism comparable to Josef Albers and Victor Vasarely, Noland utilized colors with close but distinguishable tones next to each other. Like Frank Stella and Ad Reinhardt, Noland also put aside the concerns of traditional aestheticism.

While Josef Albers, who had been Noland's instructor in the Black Mountain College, used the static balance of the square composed of interacting colors to create a sense of motion and depth, Noland used the rotary effect of the circle to underline the sense of flatness. Both artists were concerned with color – Albers's awareness regarding spatial uncertainty brought him closer to the oeuvres of the representatives of European abstract art history, Malevich and Mondrian, while Noland's circles were closer to the formal concerns of American Post-Painterly Abstraction. While color was utilized solely for a visual effect, any ties to European tradition were avoided (Moszynska, 1993, p. 196).

4.1.3.6. Richard Diebenkorn

Richard Diebenkorn (1922 -1993) was an influential 20th-century American painter whose work spanned different aesthetic periods. A Californian in origin, Diebenkorn is best known as one of the founders of the Bay Area Figurative

Movement with David Park and Elmer Bischoff. Diebenkorn, whose early works were associated with the abstract expressionist movement, moved away from figurative painting in the late 1960s and began intensively working on a series of geometric and lyrical abstract works. These pieces, known as the "*Ocean Park*" paintings, brought him worldwide renown.

Inspired by the view of the sea near his home in Berkley, these paintings display Diebenkorn's ability to demonstrate the transitivity of time, space, and light through shifting hues, thick lines, and dull geometric shapes. Diebenkorn once stated this on the subject of painting:

"All pictures start based on a mood, relationships with people or things, and under the influence of a complete visual impression."

After painting in a realistic style in the early 1940s, Richard Diebenkorn adopted the gestural methods of Abstract Expressionism, influenced by Edward Hopper and Willem de Kooning. By the mid-1950s, his work had evolved into paintings based on direct observation with an approach similar to that of Henri Matisse, which the critics called retrogressive. In a sense, these works seem to lie somewhere between the works of Henri Matisse and those of the abstract expressionists. Diebenkorn moved away from figurative painting in the 1960s and turned to abstract geometric forms in his works (Richard Diebenkorn Artnet, 2020).

Figure 50

Ocean Park No:68, 236.22x205.74 cm



Note : Image taken from Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park No:68*, 1974, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/richard-diebenkorn-ocean-park-number-68>,

Date of Access. 15.05.2020

In many pieces from the *Ocean Park* series, a large portion of the canvas is rendered a single color and painted in pale shades of pastel hues. They also convey minimalist influences. The paintings were sometimes divided into rectangular color areas with black lines, and in some paintings these black lines were covered with color but remained visible (Garrard, 2007, p. 155).

Mark Rothko's artistic philosophy had a larger impact on Diebenkorn than the principles of any artistic theory. In Rothko's art, Diebenkorn found a pure pictorial space that was flat, allusive, flexible, and open to improvement, which to him was beneficial. In Rothko he saw the confirmation of Matisse's view that art exists not to represent the world, but to create a parallel world.

Diebenkorn's transition from figurative work to abstraction did not happen suddenly. His earlier paintings, landscapes inspired by Edward Hopper, contained blues, yellows, and whites, and large and flat rectangular color spaces that he would go on to use in his *Ocean Park* paintings. Diebenkorn's works in the mid and late 1960s consisted of solid color fields, light tones, and vertical and horizontal compositions, aesthetic elements that are all on display on his *Ocean Park* series of works, as seen in the paintings *Recollections of a Visit to Leningrad* in 1965, *Window* in 1967 and *Cityscape* in 1963.

Diebenkorn stated that the *Ocean Park* paintings had a radiance effect that he could not achieve in his representational pieces. He also added that the large color fields he had developed over the years allowed for vivid and saturated colors that expanded with this radiance effect. The vertical and horizontal elements in his compositions became a constant part of Diebenkorn's *Ocean Park* series. His frequently used asymmetrically paired colors can also be seen in Mondrian and Matisse's works. Diebenkorn used the same visual effect in his works as these master painters, putting one form or color in front of another to distort the plane of painting. (Nordland, 1993, p. 213).

Figure 51*Cityscape, 153.04x128.27 cm*

Note : Image taken from Richard Diebenkorn, Cityscape, 1963, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/entertainment/richard-diebenkorn-cityscape-no-1/>, Date of Access.20.05.2020

4.2. Turkish Artists in the Developmental Period of Geometric Abstract Art

Turkish painting entered a formation process in parallel with the innovative movements in European painting of the first quarter of the 1900s, trying to create its own unique synthesis. However, for Turkish painting, these interactions with the West did not take place during those innovations, but in the 1950s. This stemmed from the fact that in the 1950s, steps were taken towards a more liberal democracy, with the art world in Turkey exhibiting a mentality that kept up to date with the artistic movements and innovations in the West, and multifaceted artistic tendencies (Kasapoğlu, 2017).

In Turkey, pictorial narratives were always imported as-is from abroad without depending on local progress. The reason for this was that Turkish artists were not paying much attention to artistic styles and movements and did not investigate the root causes or the groundwork for their emergence. While in the West pure abstraction emerged with Kandinsky's lyric non-figurative paintings in the 1910s, it wasn't adopted in Turkey until 1955 with the first abstract examples that were limited to geometric non-figurative formations.

Figure 52*Kompozisyon, 35x28.5 cm*

Note : Image taken from Sabri Berkel, Kompozisyon, 1985, <https://www.artiummodern.com/muzayede/8726/ozel-koleksiyonlar-muzayedesini-27-online-muzayede/sayfa/3>, Date of Access. 07.08.2020

When abstract art became widespread in the West in the post-Second World War period, Turkish artists starting to travel abroad, as well as the increase in exhibitions from other countries and the fact that international broadcasts could be viewed more easily were influential factors in the adoption of abstract art in a short time. The widespread use of abstract compositions based on geometric and floral motifs in Turkish and Islamic art was an important element that fed the visual foundation of Turkish artists. Additionally, the absence of an art market in Turkey during this period also accelerated the development of abstract art.

Abstract painting in Turkey, which began to develop in İstanbul and Ankara, notably emerged in the 1960s. Nuri İyem, Zeki Faik İzer, Sabri Berkel, Ferruh Başağa, Adnan Çoker etc. in Istanbul, and Cemaş Bingöl, Lütfü Günay, Abidin Elderoğlu, etc. in Ankara were prominent figures of the movement (Eroğlu, 2015, p. 118).

Abstract trends in Turkish painting were observed to develop in two discrete directions in terms of technique and form. The first was the geometric abstract, which avoided all brush play and textural effects, while the other was the lyrical abstract,

which exhibited expressionism shaped by energetic brushstrokes, color dynamism and sought dynamism in the space.

After Halil Dikmen, who tried to grasp Western abstract art's intellectual basis, Nuri İyem (1915-2005) and Ferruh Başağa (1914-2010), Sabri Berkel (1907-1993) and Cemal Bingöl (1912-1993) in 1949, Adnan Çoker (b.1928) in 1950 and Lütfü Günay (b.1924) in 1952 started their efforts towards geometric abstract art, desiring to take part in contemporary art. In 1951, Ferruh Başağa opened the first abstract art exhibition in Turkey with his geometric-abstract works and also exhibited his Tachist pieces. Following that was in Hakkı Anlı (1906-1992) who opened in Paris in 1952. Another exhibition by Adnan Çoker and Lütfü Günay in 1953, as well as Cemal Bingöl's exhibition of collages in the same year were the first exhibitions of geometric abstract art (Cemal Bingöl İstanbul Sanat Evi, 2020).

Figure 53

İsimsiz [Untitled], 80x60 cm



Note : Image taken from Cemal Bingöl, İsimsiz [Untitled], <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/275526>, Date of Access.15.08.2020

4.2.1. Fahrelnissa Zeid

Fahrelnissa Zeid (1901 – 1991) was one of the leading artists of Turkish modernism and avant-garde in post-war France in the forties and a world-renowned painter she is especially known for her large-scale abstract paintings and complex, multi-colored patterns. Her paintings of enormous sizes have a dominating effect on the viewer's attention. Her works have been exhibited in many internationally renowned institutions. In 2017, the Tate Modern lauded Zeid as "one of the most

important women artists of the 20th century” in a retrospective dedicated to her work (Fahrelnissa Zeid Wikipedia, 2023).

Known for her exuberant and impactful compositions, Zeid's distinctive painting language is too vivid and rich to be reduced to a single style. Zeid's art practice can be divided into an early period with its figurative compositions that fit miniature art compositions, a maturity period with geometric and free abstraction works reminiscent of stained glass, and a late period consisting mostly of portraits where psychological narrative becomes prominent.

In the late forties, Zeid trended towards abstract work, and is best known for her works from this period. These works are highly monumental and feature luminous colors, displaying an intense lyricism. European critics have looked specifically for traces of the East in Zeid's art. According to some, these works, consisting of geometric and free-abstraction compositions, featured Islamic aesthetics. Controversially, Fahrelnisa Zeid was viewed as Eastern figure by the West, and a Western figure in Turkey (Fahrelnisa Zeid Ensonhaber, 2019).

Zeid embraced working on large canvases and chose to exhibit an infectious enthusiasm by painting small geometric shapes and colors in the most vivid, brightest tones onto her enormous canvases. Her use of contrasting colors was extremely bold and with no concern for harmony. By patiently combining the colors, she was creating a different and unique tableau. Zeid managed to transform her works into networks of bright, scattered little geometric fragments.

Figure 54

Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life, 540x210 cm



Note : Image taken from Fahrelnissa Zeid, *Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life*, 1962, <https://www.artnet.com/artists/fahrelnissa-zeid/break-of-the-atom-and-vegetal-life-RfQVWfQoGmRIHaqDMVbRyq2>, Date of Access. 23.08.2020

Zeid was an artist in constant need to improve herself, especially with regard to painting. Her figurative works and portraits are also of significance. Zeid did portrait studies of people in her vicinity, usually in rather large scales and which featured a use of light and big eyes that define the expression, reminiscent of Sumerian votive sculptures. In terms of their scale, Fahrelnissa Zeid's portraits are large enough to resemble the statues on Mount Nemrut (Eren, 1982, p. 51).

Fahrelnissa Zeid, in her 1962 painting "Break of the Atom and Vegetal Life", brought together the aesthetics of Islamic Calligraphy with the mystical characters of Sufism. Moreover, she blended this combination with the aesthetics of Byzantine and Western art, which had been an influence during her time in Paris. Zeid's approach also featured geometric shapes and writings in her paintings and is considered an extension of Eastern mysticism with its self-repetition, and basis in geometry and linework.

Fahrelnissa Zeid enriched her abstract compositions with spiritual depictions. She painted depictions of heaven and hell on large canvases. Her abstract compositions have become the symbol of her philosophy, her beliefs, and her perception of life. Her kaleidoscopic abstracts were visions of a mystical world of

eternity, which placed her in an important position in the history of world art within the École de Paris of the 1950s (Giray, 2020).

4.2.2. Sabri Berkel

Sabri Fettah Berkel (1907 – 1993) is one of the pioneers and most unique painters of Abstract Art in Turkish Painting.

Born in Skopje, Sabri Berkel attended the preparatory department of the Belgrade School of Fine Arts and later worked at Felice Carena's studio at the Florence Academy of Fine Arts (Regia Accademia di Belle Arti) between 1929 and 1935. While abroad, the artist also analyzed Western painting, art movements and the philosophies behind these movements, becoming a painter who had the opportunity to comprehend both the discipline of painting traditions like that of Eastern Europe and the features of classical painting such as those of Italian art.

Figure 55

Kubbeler I [Domes I], 130x128 cm



Note : Image taken from Sabri Berkel, Kubbeler I [Domes I], 1951, <https://www.bilgipesinde.com/guzelinsanlar/detay/sabri-berkel>, Date of Access. 27.08.2020

Sabri Berkel started Abstract painting in 1951 with his works Kubbeler I-II and Kedi, creating geometric arabesques. In his third solo exhibition in 1953, he exhibited his abstract geometric compositions with post-Cubist still lifes.

As one of the first artists to create examples of abstract painting in Turkey, it is possible to see the same meticulousness in Berkel's work that extended from geometric abstract to calligraphy in his paintings which he painted over and over again. The reason behind his use of stylization, geometric abstraction and calligraphy in his canvas paintings during this maturity period can also be correlated to D Grubu [Group D], whose exhibitions in which he participated, and the art scene of the period.

After Avni Lifj, Sabri Berkel was the second root for the formation of modern contemporary painting in Turkey, as a painter who adopted realism in his early period and later turned to constructivism, acting on geometric logic. Because of his constructivist character, it is natural for an artist like Berkel to be first influenced by Cezanne. At this exact point, immediately after Avni Lifj's fragmentary work which may have been a departure from cubism, and his blending of this style with a little abstraction and a little romantic structure, it should be unsurprising that Berkel goes much further to reach the fragmentary and constructivist spiritual structure that becomes his identifying feature.

If the geometric is to be interpreted as the form, and non-geometric as the inform, it should be noted that Berkel made use of abstraction's potential in these assays. However, since both form and inform serve geometry, it is inevitable that an ever-present richness of elements would stand out in Berkel's oeuvre. Berkel did not obtain his own elements through an overly involved experiments with the material, but approached it through geometry (Eroğlu, 2015, p. 103)

The idea of the geometric classical order has been a dominant idea in Berkel's entire artistic life. He used this fundamental idea as the vital basis for both his traditional, figurative, descriptive paintings and his abstract paintings. Berkel as an artist used mathematical geometric forms and signs in pastel tones and various compositions in his paintings composed of basic plastic elements like lines, colors, tones and stains.

Sabri Berkel, who gave Turkey its first examples of abstract painting, is an important representative of modern art in our country as an artist who pioneered geometric abstract art and used forms reminiscent of calligraphic elements with his unique approach to abstract painting.

4.2.3. Cemal Bingöl

Born in Erzurum, Cemal Bingöl (1912-1993) started his active artistic career in Ankara. In 1948, he went to Paris and worked in Andre Lhote's studio for two years, and then in 1958 he studied in Italy, where he stayed for six months.

In addition to his paintings, Bingöl was an artist who has been influential in Ankara's art world with his art writings and conferences. He also conducted research on art pedagogy and became an art educator who focused on theoretical views regarding children's paintings.

Cemal Bingöl's oeuvre stands out with its plastic aspects. These are simple works that do not expect anything from the audience, which is inherent to every beautiful, sincere and mature artwork. On the other hand, if the audiences withhold their attention from these paintings and do not devote time to them, it may not be possible to reach these paintings' secrets.

Bingöl created his abstract art through impulses coming from within. These have a quality of developing their own laws, assuming an independent identity after a mysterious, mystical journey. Within this supposition, Cemal Bingöl's attitude arguably progresses in the geometric dimension of abstract art.

Figure 56

Composition, 50x35 cm



Note : Image taken from Cemal Bingöl, Composition, 1959, Şener, D.(2008), Exhibition Catalogue, Selvin Art Gallery, Istanbul

Nurullah Berk had this to say about Cemal Bingöl:

Cemal Bingöl has not departed from the genre known as geometric-abstract in a long time. Precise areas appear as if outlined with a ruler are separated from each other with solid boundaries, but often come together in very harmonious color systems that create mature, eye-catching images (Cemal Bingöl Turkishpaintings, 2020).

After the 1950s, Bingöl settled on a geometric, non-figurative trend, dividing the surface of the canvas with large and flat color pieces, largely composed of rectangular and square forms. Lhote cubism opened a door, by which figure-free compositions that resemble no natural beings attached to any forms in nature have advanced together with the possibilities provided by efforts in abstraction. After 1950, Cemal Bingöl began to quit using nature as a reference entirely and never used forms reminiscent of nature. He adopted a pure geometric abstract approach based on the simple and smooth shapes of quadrilaterals intersecting each other.

This approach can be summarized as reducing art to its basic elements, eliminating any detail, and developing a sense of rhythm to find meaning in simplicity. Generally, the effect of flat and geometric surfaces that complement each other with vertical and horizontal lines are prominently featured. Cemal Bingöl's art can also be associated with Mondrian's abstract-geometric compositions or Kazimir Malevich's "suprematist" work. They are the product of a consistent evolution from the figure to the abstract during its formative process (Cemal Bingöl İstanbul Sanat Evi, 2020).

Evidently, Cemal Bingöl made use of the Islamic and Ottoman calligraphy's line rhythms to develop the abstract geometric style he adopted after 1950. His works appeared static, but their elements were rationally purified, the colors extremely limited, and the paint's textural properties completely excluded. Bingöl produced disciplined, mathematical works with few colors and a plain use paint, using geometric forms that are as simple as possible to create motifs that would be considered surprising.

4.2.4. Ferruh Başağa

Ferruh Başağa (1914 – 2010) was an important painter of the founding generation of Turkish painting in the Republican Period. He turned to abstract painting in the 1940s and became one of the pioneers of abstraction in Turkish painting.

Ferruh Başağa was introduced to the concept of abstraction in 1947, becoming the first artist to participate in the State Painting and Sculpture Exhibition, which opened for the first time in Turkey in 1949, with an abstract painting. Başağa continued his work within the concepts of thought and abstraction, and later became interested in geometry in 1980 after various explorations. He attempted to achieve abstraction not by utilizing geometry, but by immersing himself in the thought of geometry. The artist summarized his approach as follows:

Geometry is a problem, I went beyond the problem to seek out the aesthetics of geometry.

Ferruh Başağa seemingly covered his past with a smoke screen with the unique language he personally developed and achieved in the 1970s. However, from the very beginning, he arguably exhibited a subconscious tendency toward abstraction. In this context, Başağa's work "Aşk", which has an important place in the history of Turkish painting, is considered one of its most competent examples of abstraction. The period in which Başağa created this work, as he emphasized in his article chronicling his own life story, is also his second period, which started in 1945 and lasted until 1970 (Gören, 2001, p. 18).

Başağa's so called first period was marked by the artist's academy years and his participation in the Yeniler Group in 1941. This group was established in response to Group D, which had introduced a social realist approach to Turkish painting and tried to keep the art world under its hegemony.

Figure 57*Aşk [Love], 85x60 cm*

Note : Image taken from Ferruh Başağa, Aşk [Love], 1948, <http://kolajart.com/wp/ferruh-basaga-ask-karasevda-t-u-y-b-1948/>, Date of Access.15.09.2020

The artist pointed out that a little before the 1950s, when he first began to trend towards abstraction and then towards fully abstract works, an important interest in the genre began to emerge among Turkish painters. Başağa attributed the main reasons for his turn towards abstraction in this period to the fact that, as Kandinsky had underlined, contemporary painting could not consist solely of appearance and the emulation of nature, and that thought and life had a very important influence on art (Gören, 2001, p. 30)

In Başağa's second period, starting in 1945, his painterly approach became cubistic and approached l'art concret. The artist did not completely depart from representation in his painting. Nature is concretely reflected in his work in a cubist manner. Ferruh Başağa started to move away in a concept change away from nature during this period. As a result, his approach first became abstract lyrical after 1947, then tachist in the 1960s, and finally transformed into geometric abstraction. Basaga was completely free of formal shapes in the 1990s.

After the 1990s, his work took a more geometric approach, with intertwining triangles of different colors and sizes. His works were built upon a harmonious geometric order and a balanced composition consisting of straight and sloping lines,

which was the result of his approach that kept the ties of nature alive within the framework of his abstract leanings.

Başıağ's works of his unique geometric abstract style featured a transparency of color that in a sense constituted his own sfumato technique. Instead of using a single light source, he created a softness through a homogeneous light where the violent shadows are eradicated.

Figure 58

Abstract, 140x95 cm



Note : Image taken from. Ferruh Başağa, Abstract, 2006, <https://www.sancakmuzayede.com/urun/3145795/ferruh-basaga-kompozisyon-imzali-2006-tarihli-tuval-uzeri-yagli-boya-140>, Date of Access.17.09.2020

4.2.5. Nejad Melih Devrim

Born in Istanbul, Nejad Melih Devrim (1923 – 1995) was born to Fahrelnisa Zeid and the writer İzzet Melih Devrim. During his academy years, he became interested in Arabic lettering and abstract Islamic art. In addition, Devrim, who studied and worked with the mosaics in the Hagia Sophia, the majority of which were from the Medieval period, joined the Yeniler Group during his student years. He traveled to and settled in Paris in 1942 with a scholarship and worked on the stained glass windows of the Chartres Cathedral until 1950.

Nejad Melih Devrim's art can be divided into two periods, before and after 1946. The formation of the most prominent form of his art before 1946 happened during this academic period. Although he attended various workshops, he was influenced the most by Leopold Levy, with whom he got along well. Contrary to Levy's darker outlook on painting, however, Devrim preferred a colorful world.

It is difficult to say that Devrim's figurative works influenced by Byzantine painting were very aesthetic. In short, the artist's oeuvre was not concerned with the figure, especially the human figure. He leaned closer to abstraction and abstract painting – specifically during his Parisian period – and took advantage of constructivism's potential by smashing the surfaces of his paintings, thus dividing the canvas into certain sections. His work featured cacophony of lines and planes in these paintings, favoring the idea of such a cosmos. As his constructivism reached a state that occupied the space with a romantic approach, his began to become notable. Nejad Melih Devrim is a painter who went from line to color (Eroğlu, 2015, p. 120)

In later years, Nejad Melih Devrim produced spotted abstract works that completely moved away from hard contours and angular forms. These paintings exhibited eye-catching, vivid colors that appealed to the visual perception. Over time, his hard geometric forms began to dissolve, with rhythmic expressions of color spots replacing the line.

Figure 59

Stravinsky'ye Saygı [Respect to Stravinsky]



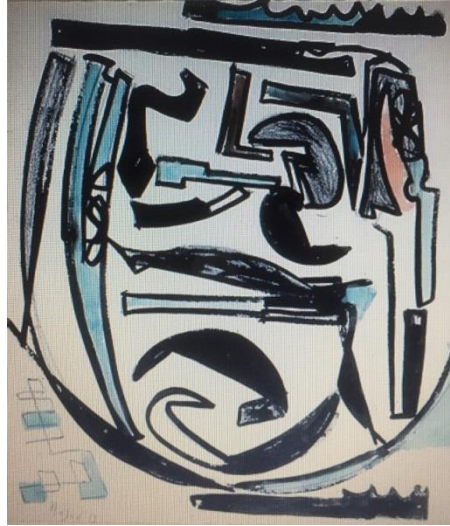
Note : Image taken from Nejad Melih Devrim, *Stravinsky'ye Saygı [Respect to Stravinsky]*, 1952, https://www.art.salon/artwork/nejad-melih-devrim_abstract-composition_AID227768, Date of Access. 28.09.2020

Devrim opened a duo exhibition in London with László Moholy-Nagy, who was influenced by constructivism, in 1949. After this, he became known and attracted interest in the Parisian art scene in the 1950s. Devrim, who also attempted to analyze Picasso's approach to art during these years, created his most important masterpiece that defined this period with his "Homage to Stravinsky" in 1952.

The painting was interpretation of the Rite of Spring ballet and of the life of Stravinsky, who, much like Devrim, had to live a fragmented life across different geographies. It was an interpretation of lives stuck inside geometric sections.

His 1955 painting, "Abstract Composition" is an important example among his last paintings of the Paris period. This work's aesthetic sensitivity, created by the attractive color spots and the ties it establishes with geometric forms, truly stands out. The painting is a composition of color spots that form contrast with each other that simultaneously turn into abstract designs connected via black contours, establishing the sensibilities Nejad Melih Devrim developed in his abstract works in the mid-20th century.

In Nejad Melih Devrim's initial abstract works he produced in Paris, the geometric lines surrounding the canvas begin to turn into diagonal intersections. This linear pattern that later forms colored or black contours was inclined to transform. With the 1950s, Devrim departed from the hard and angular images that resembled lead rods, referring to Ottoman stained glass, and began instead to create the movements of fragile patterns.

Figure 60*Abstract Composition, 60x50 cm*

Note : Image taken from Nejad Melih Devrim, Abstract Composition, 1955, <http://www.artnet.fr/artistes/nejad-melih-devrim/soyut-kompozisyon-5sh9okOOjqY95-bir7mlng2>, Date of Access.03.10.2020

4.2.6. Abdurrahman Öztoprak

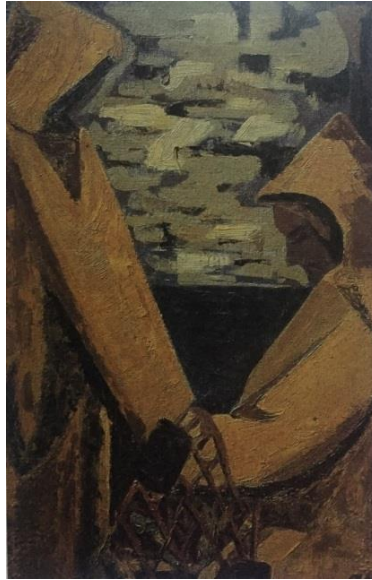
Born in Rumelihisarı, İstanbul, Abdurrahman Öztoprak (1927 – 2011) graduated from Nurullah Berk's workshop at the İstanbul Academy of Fine Arts between 1945 and 1951. Öztoprak went to Germany in 1960 and continued his painting endeavors while working as an architect and designer.

Öztoprak developed an interesting abstract attitude in our modern contemporary painting by combining the romantic aspect of Lifij's work with the constructionist aspects of Berkel. When we look at the artist's drawings from between 1945 and 1960, including his first drawing at the Academy, his academic painting discipline and even his attempts to apply the dynamic dimensionality of Antiquity period sculptures in his drawings becomes evident. The lines in the drawings in question are handled in a simple way that is unpretentious and only implies their purpose, simply focusing on whatever is demanded of it. In his artworks titled "Bebek

Koyunda Lüfer Avlayanlar" and "Balıkçılar", he further pushes towards abstraction and expands his own mystique (Eroğlu, 2015, p. 131).

Figure 61

Balıkçılar [Fishermen], 89.5x59.5 cm



Note :Image taken from Abdurrahman Öztoprak, Balıkçılar [Fishermen], 1954, Özer,B. (1995), Istanbul Stock Exchange Exhibition Catalogue, Istanbul

Öztoprak's paintings between 1945 and 1960 exhibit messages regarding his artistic identity while displaying one of his most interesting aspects: his romanticism. In fact, it may seem contrary to the expected to state that a painter who focused on the geometric side of the abstract, especially in the later periods of his artistic career, is a romantic who begins the creative process influenced by his emotions. Öztoprak has a depth of knowledge about Western Classical music and focuses on Beethoven in particular, and thus has always been inspired by musical dynamism in his abstract compositions.

Öztoprak was an artist who truly believed in nature and strictly adhered to the transformations and movements in nature. Between 1975 and 1999, Öztoprak's art became completely spiritualized and approached maturity, with nature being the biggest factor in putting his sensibilities in motion. At this stage, the important thing Öztoprak, whose approach to nature was clearly not coming from a descriptive

perspective, was the expression of emotions. This extended to Öztoprak's paintings with colors emitting more or less light according to the volume of light in the space the painting was placed.

In addition to his very sensitive approach, Öztoprak's paintings prominently exhibit notions such as light, color, color space, composition, rhythm, balance, gradients and to a certain point, graphism. This graphism also enabled his colors, which combined with geometry, to transform into a color space. These color spaces almost appeared to be in motion due to this overlapping effect.

Apart from compositions in which triangular forms fold on top of each other, Abdurrahman Öztoprak's paintings also feature circular or spherical forms sneak into a hidden organic state of softening that breaks the geometric monotony through ellipsoid conical elongations. These compositions usually give the impression of opening up from the center towards the outside on a black background, creating a pale color environment in which the components of the geometric form become concentrated in intersecting layers and opposite orientations (Tansuğ, 1988, p. 8).

Figure 62

Resim CCXXXIX [Painting CCXXXIX], 105x105 cm



Note : Image taken from Abdurrahman Öztoprak, Resim CCXXXIX [Painting CCXXXIX], 1991, Özer,B. (1995), Istanbul Stock Exchange Exhibition Catalogue, Istanbul

Öztoprak's paintings form depth perception as a result of the transformation of colored surfaces on a black background into geometric forms that emit light through volume. The line transforms into geometric surfaces and masses, nourished by color and light, thus avoiding a sculptural appearance. On the other hand, the composition and therefore the painting begin to change with the changes in lighting in its environment, and this creates a sense of motion for the audience. The changes in daylight provide continuous motion on the painting surface and draws the audience deeper into the picture. As light increases so does the volumetric value of the picture, and new forms emerge. Meanwhile, the color values come to the foreground as light dims.

The basic elements of Abdurrahman Öztoprak's art are harmony, geometry, and motion within the relationship between the surface and the space. The forms emerge from a center point on a black background, opening outwards and turning towards different directions, penetrating each other, in forms that reflect the subconscious spatial concerns in his paintings. In his more recent works, the geometric stiffness of the forms had decreased and been replaced by an organic softening. Perhaps this is the effect of the climate and nature of the Mediterranean region where he lived in during final years (Ersoy, 1995, p. 50).

5. CURRENT DAY GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: 1980 –

Artists who made abstract art starting from the seventies through the current day generally thought about minimalism in art and, in conjunction, what kind of art could be achieved in the aftermath of pop art. Then, all of a sudden, a new generation emerged who did not worry about this in the slightest, and the issues of the 1960s and 1970s became history.

Figure 63

Colortron, 212.09x198.12 cm



Note : Image taken from Peter Halley, Colortron, 1999, <https://sheldonartmuseum.org/work/halley-colortron>, Date of Access. 16.01.2021

Although, in 1913, Kazimir Malevich turned to geometrics, which he saw as a departure point for himself in painting, by the 1980s some artists had become astonished at the geometry's power to control and dictate over art and society. For example, the American painter Peter Halley found his paintings resembling prison cells and pipes to be quite subversive compared to the works of the previous era's artists who used a geometric abstract style.

In his 1999 painting "Colortron", which is composed of vivid and fluorescent colors, he assigned a new meaning to geometry and presented it as the end of ever-developing technology by associating it with isolation.

Sean Scully, another artist who reached maturity in the 1980s like Halley, was influenced by the grid-like urban structure of New York where he lived, also like Halsey. Like many geometric abstract artists who came before him, Scully as an artist was influenced by Mondrian. On the other hand, his work is not as universal as Mondrian's because it involves more emotional and personal depth.

According to the painter, art critic, theorist, and educator Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, contemporary artists such as Mary Boochever, Christian Haub, Rebecca Norton, and Miri Phelps contributed to the rich history of geometric abstract art by creating their own visual language that is sometimes inspired by it and sometimes ignores it. Using many concepts regarding color, form and the perfect order, these artists take geometric abstraction to new limits and secure its indispensability in the twenty-first century (Veneciano, 2012, p. 21).

Figure 64

Sercio Mosca



Note : Image taken from Christian Haub, Sercio Mosca, 2010, <https://twfineart.myshopify.com/collections/artist-christian-haub>,

Date of Access. 18.01.2021

Contemporary proponents of geometric abstract art, such as Christian Haub, have produced works that underline the contrast between ideas and emotions. These works, emphasize the relationship between the ideal and the virtual as well as the

space of geometry and the effects that color evoke in us. Color weakens the ideal space of geometry and puts it in order by interrupting it.

According to Peter Halley, the formalist approach to geometric abstract art today has fallen out of favor. To see form only as form in a geometric context, as the Constructivists and Neo-Plasticists asserted, or to ignore the meaning of geometry as the minimalists suggest no longer appears possible. The formalist ideas of geometric abstraction have been distorted by the bourgeois idealism of generations of classical artists with academic backgrounds. But the crisis in which geometric abstract art finds itself in the last two decades is akin to the crisis seen in all kinds of formalist movements in the post-war period. For example, minimalism associated geometry with the contemporary industrial production by utilizing industrial materials.

In the eighties, a new style and approach emerged in geometric abstract art. This new generation no longer sought an industrial experience in geometry. Instead, this new group of painters and artists came from a post-industrial environment where experience was based on sub-branches rather than factories and consumption rather than production. In this world, the harsh geometry of structures such as hospitals, prisons and factories evolved into the soft geometry of intercity highways, computers, and electronic entertainment.

Moreover, this new generation of artists like Serra did not see art as a privileged experience, repudiating the claim that art would transform society. In other words, the geometric abstract art of the 1980s satirized such artistic reactions of the past. For these artists, only in the form of the cyclical repetition of models (nostalgia) and the reiteration of differences (styles) was an image valid (Veneciano, 2012, p. 66).

Figure 65

After Stuart Davis, 35.4x28 cm



Note : Image taken from Sherrie Levine, After Stuart Davis, 1983, <https://whitney.org/collection/works/40598>, Date of Access. 22.01.2021

In geometric abstract art, one of the most striking examples of a new approach that emerged after 1980 was Sherrie Levine's 1983 watercolor piece, "After Stuart Davis", in which she imitates nostalgia. This and similar works, in which modernist geometry is purged of all content apart from nostalgia for modernist geometry itself, are the finest examples of 20th century modernism. Levine pursued the abstract and the non-figurative, producing geometric works in which geometry did not contain any meaning, fitting the formalist style.

Here, the question becomes one of how abstract art could be so visible in contemporary art and what the contribution of new media practices to art history can be in the context of recurring themes. Current day artists point out examples of abstract and geometric abstract art in styles such as generative art, glitch art, light art, internet art and immersive art, where different technologies and media applications such as computer, internet, etc. are used.

Works produced through new media practices rarely address issues concerned solely with composition. Although there are examinations of color, form and the relationship between the two in these works, like in all past works of abstract art, these pieces put new media art at the forefront. The images used by artists, whether from real life or the internet, reflect their choices with regard to media elements.

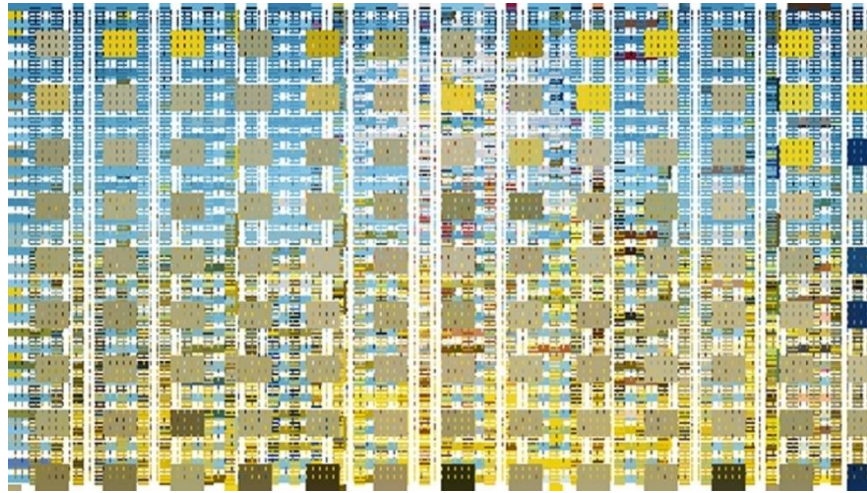
It bears asking to what extent geometric abstract art can maintain its influence in the context of artists of the current day who transfer images they pick out from advertising, television and cinema and use them in their ideologically oriented works. Despite the abundance of media images in the contemporary cultural environment, geometric elements still appear everywhere and maintain their influence.

Another approach that garners attention is the use of computers and pushing their limits. A new language based on the exchange of information between the machine (computer) and the human (artist) has begun to emerge. At this point, it doesn't make much sense to categorize artists, as many artists combine different approaches to create their own unique styles. For example, Manfred Mohr, Casey Reas and Alexander Reben, who create generative art, produce complex images – instead of an image or a printout – by using various standards and playing with the rules. Shohei Fujimoto is an artist who creates lines by projecting data using three-

dimensional shapes and light. Sarah Ludy and Asron Scheer, on the other hand, display a composition-oriented approach by mixing and transforming human and machine aesthetics rather than using mathematical logic (MOCDA, 2023).

Figure 66

%100 Grey Coverage (HD Video)



Note : Image taken from Casey Reas, %100 Grey Coverage (HD Video) ,2013, https://www.seditionart.com/casey_reas/100_gray_coverage, Date of Access. 24.01.2021

5.1. Contemporary Geometric Abstract Artists

This study examines and considers artists who have adopted this style in their works from 1980 to the present day to be contemporary artists who make geometric abstract art. These artists were examined under two categories, international and Turkish artists. Although similar selection criteria have been taken into consideration for the artists in both groups, there are some differences between the groups in these criteria.

When determining foreign artists interested in geometric abstract art, the primary basis was that these people have been actively producing works in this style in the period after 1980 and including the recent years. While evaluating their approaches to geometric abstract art and their works, the sorting of the artists was done based on their production processes' beginning and end dates, which usually corresponds to the death of the artist.

Another criterion is that they are renowned and a known quantity in the international art scene. Although the fact that they are now known worldwide does not mean that they will necessarily be remembered in the following decades or centuries, there are at least numerous textual or visual sources about these artists that can be consulted compared to other lesser-known artists who make geometric abstract art.

Although it is not a criterion in the selection of artists, one common feature of these artists who have created geometric abstract art in the recent years is that the majority of them are citizens of the United States. Although there are artists from many countries who make geometric abstract art today, they have not yet gained as much recognition as their American counterparts. Although these circumstances have changed in the recent years with the prominence of the art scene in art capitals other than New York, the United States still leads.

While the biggest common determinant aspect of the contemporary artists evaluated here is that they make geometric abstract art, there are also differences between their artistic approaches. One of them is that artists such as Dan Flavin and Ron Davis use ready-made materials such as fluorescent bulbs or fiberglass instead of canvas and paint paintings. Or, like Francois Morellet, they prefer water surfaces or building walls in some of their works instead of a canvas as the painting surface. Another difference is that in contrast to the formalist approach of the geometric abstraction artists, later generation artists such as Mary Boockever, Peter Halley, Philip Taaffe and Byron Kim have incorporated conceptuality into their works.

Similar criteria to international artists were taken into consideration in determining Turkish artists working in geometric abstract art. First of all, the fact that they have recently gained recognition for their works in a geometric abstract style has been decisive. The important consideration to be here is the recognition in the Turkish art scene, not the international one. This is the difference between the determination of international contemporary artists who create geometric abstract art and the criteria for determining Turkish contemporary artists.

5.1.1. Dan Flavin

Dan Flavin (1933 – 1996) was an American artist who produced minimalist sculptures using retail fluorescent bulbs. Flavin, who was interested in art from an early age, attended Columbia University after his education at the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts. Flavin's early drawings and paintings employed an abstract expressionist style.

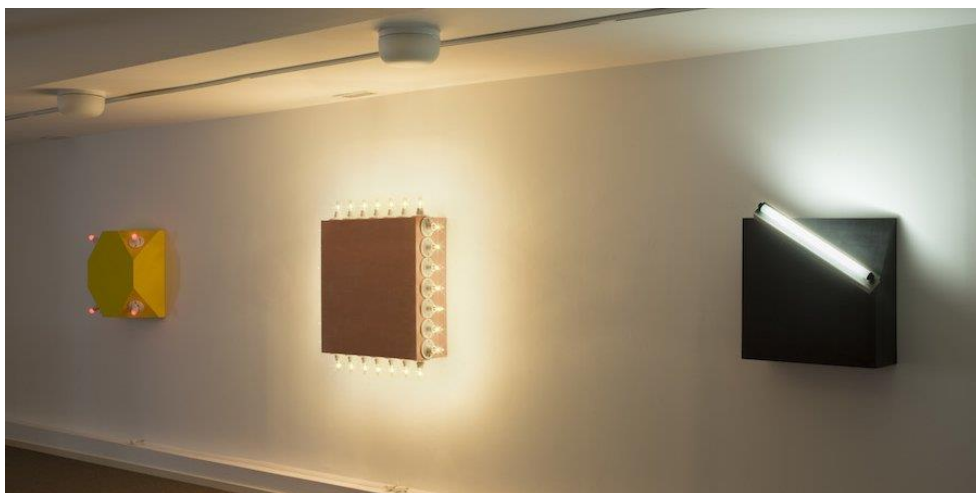
His illuminated sculptures, where he found his own unique style, reflect a meticulous formal and conceptual observation of space and light. These works were created by arranging retail, store-bought fluorescent lamps into different geometric compositions. Flavin underlined not only the visual but also the conceptual side of art, stating:

I don't like art as work, but rather as an idea. It's not that I don't want to get my hands dirty or that I'm lazy. This is a statement: art is a thought.

Flavin's use of ready-made materials and his interest in symbolism brought him closer to Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt.

Figure 67

Icons



Note : Image taken from Dan Flavin, Icons, 1961-1964, https://www.artspace.com/magazine/news_events/close_look/dan-flavin-icons-53040, Date of Access. 15.02.2021

Flavin's first use of electric bulbs were in his "Icons" series of works that he created between 1961 and 1964. These consisted of eight works with fluorescent bulbs of different colors placed in various ways on square-shaped boxes made of wood, Formica, and Masonite.

Although Flavin's works contain elements of both sculpture and painting, they are not associated with any one of them entirely. For example, when they take the form of manufactured objects, they benefit from the visual structure of color and light like in painting. In contrast, by presenting light in an extraordinary form different from its usual state, they go far beyond the physical limits of the picture and cover a part or the whole of their environment. With works like "Corner", "Corridor", and "Barrier", Flavin spread his art across new styles or forms, taking the physical boundaries and dynamics of installation art to unique levels and reaching out to unexplored areas of space.

Dan Flavin's lights transformed into a third medium that surpassed painting and sculpture and were conceptually influenced by the creations of the previous generation. As Flavin pointed out, the most prominent example of this was the works of Barnett Newman. After Newman's death in 1970, Flavin produced a series of columns that he not only dedicated to Newman, but also identified with the painter's work. Newman's large, flatly painted works, divided by thin strips, or zips as he called them, abandoned pictorial painting, and created a new painting style that demanded the use of space as a whole. This new approach reemerged in the works of the following generation and, of course, Flavin's use of fluorescent tubes and walls as space, as a tribute to Newman (Govan & Bell, 2004, p. 10).

Figure 68

Untitled (to Tracy, to celebrate the love of a lifetime)



*Note : Image taken from. Dan Flavin, *Untitled (to Tracy, to celebrate the love of a lifetime)* -1992, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/dan-flavin/untitled-to-tracy-to-celebrate-the-love-of-a-lifetime-1992>, Date of Access. 17.02.2021*

Newman's metaphysical abstractions in the late fifties and early sixties, the almost mystical purity of Reinhardt's forms, and Stella's abandonment of the visual illusion for the sake of realistic representation of material on the painting's surface constitute clues regarding Flavin's attitude towards the simplification of form in his work. Unlike painters, however, he preferred to work with non-artistic materials – store-bought light fixtures.

Flavin realized that the medium he used provided unlimited variability. He systematically composed light in his works “The Nominal Three” and the series of 39 “Monuments” to V. Tatlin using white light. In this way, he aimed to discover the pictorial potential of color. He also arranged the colors in the form of three-dimensional sculptural or architectonic installations. Flavin's work has always remained in interaction with the architectural features of the spaces in which they are placed.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Flavin's art was the effect of surprising art critics of the period with their formalistic approach to the use of pure light.

In the 1970s and 80s, Dan Flavin began to make more complex compositions from fluorescent tubes with a series of “barred corridors” and corner installations. His

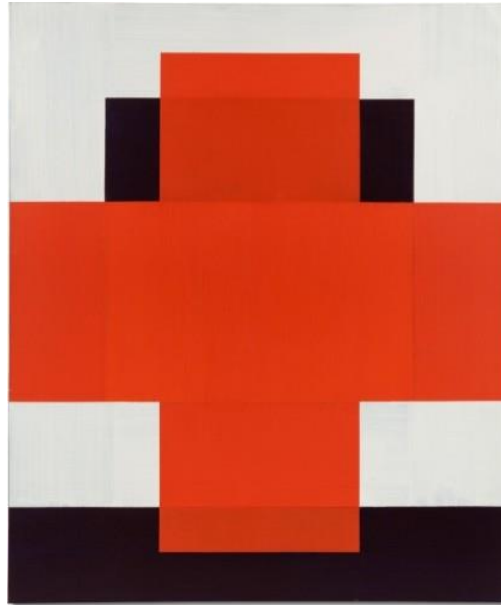
works increasingly focused on the relationship between sculptures and the places where these sculptures are located. By the 1990s, light installations had taken on an increasingly grandiose form as art galleries began to devote larger spaces to Flavin. In 1992, he filled the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum with multi-colored lights, taking advantage of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural design. Flavin expanded and reorganized his twenty-year-old piece, placing it from top to bottom on a ramp in the museum (Dan Flavin - Guggenheim, 2021).

Throughout his artistic life, Flavin brilliantly moved between the disciplines of painting, sculpture, and architecture, emphasizing the short-lived yet unique aspect of light art that it can be reproduced by anyone. Avoiding traditional labels or even the phrase "work", he preferred a more situational language in his luminous works and made human references when naming them.

5.1.2. Harvey Quaytman

Harvey Quaytman (1937 - 2002) was a painter known for his large-scale and dominantly monochromatic geometric abstractions, including layered and hard-edged compositions inspired by Malevich and Mondrian.

In the context of the development of art movements, Harvey Quaytman stands out as a chronological or historical deviation. Throughout his career, i.e., from the late sixties until the end of the nineties, he continuously produced works that were associated with Geometric Abstraction and Modernism, which were seen as movements which had completed their artistic creative phase in the late 1950s and 1960s. Quaytman, who was persistent in his approach, was able to become more courageous, creative, confident, and more successful in each passing decade according to critics. Even in the final years of his career, he had become an artist known for producing dynamic and new forms of abstraction (Harvey Quaytman Wikipedia, 2022).

Figure 69*Marienburg , 91.4x61.1 cm*

Note : Image taken from Harvey Quaytman, Marienburg, 1984, <https://whitney.org/collection/works/33552>, Date of Access. 23.02.2021

Harvey Quaytman began working with shaped canvases beginning in the mid-sixties. At that time, the term “objecthood” was seeing increasing use in the art world. As artists such as Stella and Kelly began to question the phenomenon of painterly illusion, a new term was needed for their method of painting, and “objecthood” suited it just fine. As Quaytman stated about the subject in the 1970s:

"These forms are my way of making space for color to be in. An outrigger on a canoe isn't there for decoration. It is there because the water is rough."

Quaytman was very interested in patterns from Islamic art and used a flat-tipped calligraphy pen in his writing as a reflection of his ancient geometric observations and his deep curiosity about the permanent interactions of geometry in space (Ashton, 2014, p. 16).

The shaped canvases of Harvey Quaytman, who produced them to bring a more personal approach to abstraction as a reaction to the Abstract Expressionist movement, were large-sized, mostly curvilinear and covered the whole surface of the wall. His style of painting shifted from abstract expressionism to geometric abstraction and then to purely geometric abstraction. With the eighties, he began to use canvases in the form of rectangles, squares, and finally in the nineties, often in the form of crosses. In the nineties, he abandoned the curvilinear shapes and stuck with

the cross shape, creating different textures on the canvas surface by mixing rust powder with acrylic paint and glass fragments. Although his later works, which consisted of geometric compositions in a constructivist style where he used dull tones of black, white, red, rusty iron and metallic gold, differed quite a lot from his previous work, Quaytman continued to create a motion effect through symmetrical and asymmetrical interactions.

Figure 70

The Miller's Delight, 152.72x152.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Harvey Quaytman, The Miller's Delight, 1992,
[https://bampfa.org/program/harvey-quaytman-against-static,](https://bampfa.org/program/harvey-quaytman-against-static)

Date of Access. 27.02.2021

As his works developed in shape and form, Harvey Quaytman began to experiment meticulously with color pigments. Thanks to an interest in the history of color, its chemical properties and chromatic effects, he researched into tones and gained expertise in color and texture. In order to understand Quaytman's compositions, the mediums he used and the colors he chose, it is necessary to look at his works in detail. When this is done, the sensory nuances that the diversity and richness of color in the texture of the surface bring to its hard-edged shapes become noticeable.

According to Quaytman, before using any colors, a color had to leave a positive impression on him. For example, he stated that he knew twenty different shades of yellow but used only two or three of them in his work. These are mostly deep yellows. In this context, the painter Henri Matisse and the diversity of color in his paintings had been the biggest influence. According to Quaytman, it was possible to see some of Matisse's blues, yellows, reds, and blacks in his works (Ashton, 2014, p. 21).

5.1.3. Al Held

Al Held (1928–2005) was an abstract expressionist painter known for his large-scale hard-edge paintings. Held's artistic approach varied throughout his career. While his abstract expressionist style in the 1950s evolved into geometric abstraction in the 1960s, it later came to include a geometric space with three-dimensional depth and vivid, warm colors.

Held's early period abstract expressionist style works could also paintings could also be classified as action paintings, and he made them by irregularly applying brown tones to the surface of the canvas in short brushstrokes. Towards the end of the fifties, these short brushstrokes began to lengthen into geometric shapes. One of the reasons for this change was the issue that, as Al Held as well as artists like Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland had noticed, an increasing number of mediocre painters had begun to use this gestural expressionist style. By the 1960s, he had transitions into a style known as hard-edge painting, late pictorial abstraction or the new abstraction. These paintings had geometric forms with vivid colors and resembled a mural. These non-objective works could not be associated with any person, place, or thing.

Between 1961 and 1966, Al Held produced the Alphabet series, which consisted of large-sized abstract images of letters in the English alphabet, and which he gave names like "Big N", "Big X", etc., These works, in which Held played with the perception of the audience by making the background and figure seem to be switch places, followed a subtle method for the placement of the letters. The letters cover the canvas, and the colors create the impression that they are leaning forward and backward at the same time. This emphasizes the importance of form and dimension while making the audience think about space (Al Held Wikipedia, 2022).

Figure 71*Big X, 457.2x365.8 cm*

Note : Image taken from Al Held, Big X, 1965, <https://arthur.io/art/al-held/the-big-yellow-x>, Date of Access. 03.03.2021

By the end of the sixties, Held thought that the flatness in the hard edge abstractions limited him, and turned to producing geometric abstract works that created a depth effect on the canvas. Although these paintings, which consisted of black and white colors, resembled scaffoldings and appeared three-dimensional, they did not have a specific perspective vanishing point. In this context, they extensively contributed to Held's recognition as an increasingly minimalist painter. These works, which Held called the “Phoenicia” series, consisted of cubes and parallel edged quadrangles placed on canvas frequently. The images seemed to hang in the air on a horizon line on the canvas surface.

It was important for Al Held to create a spatial effect. Like his contemporaries Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella, he aimed to achieve greater spatial influence on the two-dimensional canvas surface. Through composition and pictorial tactility, he wanted to give the audience a physical experience that evoked the feeling that the canvas was expanding towards them. The basic elements of Renaissance art such as volumetrics, light, symmetry and glossy surfaces in general were constantly present in Held's art and became more prominent in the monumental, complex and luminous appearance of his late period works.

In the years when they first appeared, Held's paintings were on a different route than mainstream contemporary art. Today, his oeuvre is even more subversive.

Held's quest to take abstraction to a different level was a quality that his contemporaries also exhibited, but his uncompromising geometric language intended to create illusions made him unique. The smoothness of the final layer of paint and the ever-increasing clarity of his images took his work a different level. Although they are works that emphasize social communication, they differ from pop art's appropriative attempts or the poetic abstractions of color field painters. These works are free from satire\ feeding off the strong roots of abstract expression. However, they replace the revelation of the self in the works of abstract expressionists with illusory space, composition, and perception (Armstrong, 1991, p. 5).

In the late 1970s, Al Held reintroduced the element of color into his paintings. In his “Phoenicia” and “Inversion” series consisting of black and white colors, different meanings were created by preserving the composition and adding other colors. Held used as many different and numerous tones as possible in these multi-colored works.

Held's post-1980 and arguably recent period works were quite large-scale works featuring architectural elements. Some of these were huge murals, such as in the 1983 painting "Mantegna's Edge".

Measuring approximately four meters by sixteen meters, this painting is a response to the 1982 piece “Rome II” with its weightless appearance.

Figure 72

Mantegna's Edge, 1600x4400 cm



Note : Image taken from Al Held, Mantegna's Edge, 1983, Armstrong, R. (1991). Al Held. Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafa

To give a general review of Al Held's work, it is worth noting that his artworks occupy an intellectual place in modern culture. With his opposition against the formalist insistence on flatness, Held was an artist passionately devoted abstraction. With its complex and idiosyncratic nature, Al Held's oeuvre is unlike any of his contemporaries.

5.1.4. Frederick Hammersley

Frederick Hammersley (1919 – 2009) was a painter known for his easel paintings in which he explored the interaction between color and geometric shapes. Hammersley divided his work into three main categories: "hunches, geometries and organics".

Hammersley's series of hunches, produced between 1953 and 1959 and considered his early works, are paintings in which he intuitively added new shapes without a plan, starting with a single shape on the canvas. As Hammersley explained it:

My painting begins with a hunch, no plan, no theory, just a feeling to make a shape. That shape dictates what and where the next will go, and so on...

Figure 73

Four Abstract Classicists, The LA Institute of Contemporary Art



Note : Image taken from Four Abstract Classicists, The LA Institute of Contemporary Art, 1975, <https://unframed.lacma.org/2013/12/23/whats-in-a-name-the-story-behind-four-abstract-classicists>, Date of Access. 08.03.2021

His “geometries” series of works produced from 1959 to 1964 and later from 1965 to the mid-1990s featured hard-edged geometric forms. Although they consisted

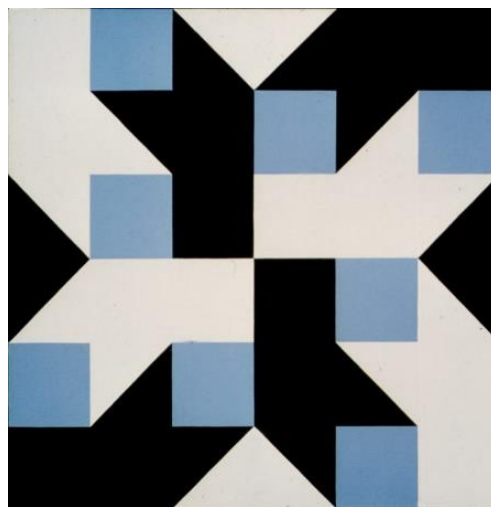
of more rigid forms than his hunches, they still featured a certain amount of motion. Triangles, rectangles, and other geometric shapes placed on canvas in the form of a grid create a rhythmic composition consisting of positive and negative space in relation to each other.

In Hammersley's "organics" series of paintings saw him abandon the rules. The artist painted curvilinear lines with colors that he mixed directly on the canvas. These paintings, made in 1964 and then from 1982 to 2000, featured interconnected shapes, with elements that encompassed, probed, and intertwined with one another. These works especially exhibit sharp distinctions between colors from one shape to another and the tonal transitions within each given shape were particularly striking (Frederick Hammersley Wikipedia, 2022).

In Los Angeles in the 1950s, Hammersley, John McLaughlin, Lorser Feitelson, and Karl Benjamin created a style they christened "hard edge painting". It was first presented to the public in San Francisco and Los Angeles at an exhibition called "Four Abstract Classicists". This name, chosen by the exhibition curator Jules Langsner, was found to be a bit ostentatious by the artists. They created a hard-edged painting language whose influence remains eternal, producing works whose sub-meanings are pride, diligence and kindness, and which demanded attention from the audience instead of pity.

Figure 74

Out of the Blue, 114.3x114.3 cm



Note : Image taken from Frederick Hammersley, Out of the Blue, 1994, https://lalouver.com/artist.cfm?tArtist_id=38, Date of Access. 13.03.2021

These painters, including Hammersley, were significantly modernist artists who represented the influence and presence of the New York school of painting in a way that left less space for personality and appealed to the eye rather than the hand, focused on the medium more than the message, and placed emphasis on subtlety over showiness (Hickey, 2007, p. 6).

In contrast to the reign of abstract expressionism in the 1950s and 1960s in New York, Hammersley and his West Coast contemporaries focused on clear lines, carefully constructed geometries, and aesthetic considerations. Hammersley's paintings ranged from precise geometric designs to shapes in different tones. Despite their precise linework and structures, these artworks exhibit Hammersley's touch. Hammersley also reinforced this personal touch by placing his paintings in wooden frames he personally made. With their intimate and warm appearance, these frames balanced the sharp effect of the paintings they housed.

Hammersley's attention to detail and avant-garde approach continues to impress younger generations of artists, and the interest in his work has only grown over the past two decades.

5.1.5. Ron Davis

Ronald "Ron" Davis (1937) is a versatile American painter. Davis has produced works in many fields including geometric abstraction, lyrical abstraction, hard edge painting, shaped canvas painting, color field painting and 3D computer graphics. Despite these different styles, Davis has become most commonly known for his contemporary abstract expressionist approach from his early career. Following his first solo exhibition in Los Angeles in 1965, he developed a painting technique using geometric shaped canvases with colored polyester resin and fiberglass. Also known as the Dodecagon series, these works are identified with Ron Davis and are his best-known works.

Figure 75*Ring, 340.36x153.67 cm*

Note : Image taken from Ron Davis, Ring, 1968, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Davis, Date of Access. 21.03.2021

A work from this series, “Ring”, can be summarized as a plastic painting and is one of the first examples of his break from canvas painting. Davis produced the piece by combining translucent polyester resin, fiberglass, and color pigments in a mold in layers like a fiberglass boat or a car body. While the machine-polished surface of the work is reminiscent of the surfboards of 1960s Los Angeles, the brushstrokes on the surface and the illusion of deepening space resemble traditional painting practices, making it a mixture of painting, sculpture and an industrial product (MoMA, 2021).

In addition to his works consisting of two- and three-dimensional planes and digital space, which he created using daring colors, his works have oscillated between hard edge painting and the more pictorial one over the years, as he himself stated. After the mid-1960s, his works trended more towards abstraction, and concerned the human relationship with digital space and the history of painting.

Ron Davis is known for not applying colors onto just any surface. Working with acrylic or polyester resin, he applies this into a surface that the compound produces after hardening. In Davis' own words, they are “colored plastic”. This not only evokes an innovative variety of colors, but also emphasizes that color, surface, and the support structure are used as a whole. Later, he further advanced this technique, making fiberglass, of which there is actually a very thick layer, look much

thinner, as seen in his work “Sawtooth Plane”. Although these paintings consist of literally only a surface, the forms they create have a very striking three-dimensionality. The result is a well-balanced contrast between the glossy flat surface of the fiberglass and the image that looks like it is coming out of the wall created by the three-point perspective.

Figure 76

Sawtooth, 355.6x145.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Ron Davis, Sawtooth, 1970, <https://www.bonhams.com/auction/21438/lot/78/ronald-davis-born-1937-sawtooth-1970-57-14-x-140in-1454-x-3556cm-unframed/>, Date of Access. 22.03.2021

Davis' works exhibit this at the most extreme level, which, rather than creating disappointment in the viewers' perception, allows them to comprehend the artist's imagination and his aesthetic value. These works aim to heighten the experience of color, form, and surface for the audience by creating awareness about these factors and make a distinction between real and perceived space in today's plastic world (Wood, 1971, p. 13).

One of the key elements in Ron Davis' successful abstract works is that although they are three-dimensional pieces, they feel as if they are floating in the air with almost no weight. In his recent work, Davis has also started using digital painting techniques.

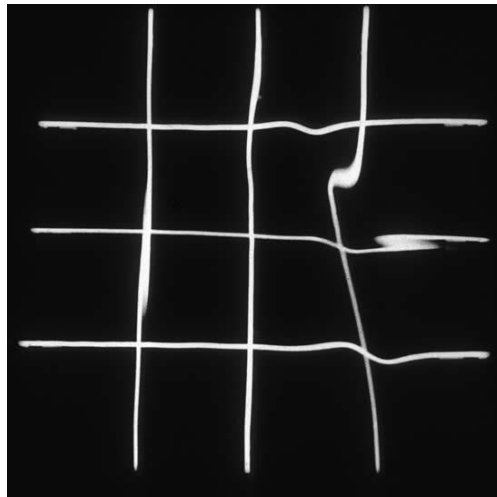
5.1.6. Francois Morellet

François Morellet (1926 – 2016) was a French contemporary painter, sculptor and light artist. whose early work was associated with minimalism and conceptual art. He played an important role in the development of geometric abstract art.

Morellet made figurative paintings early in his career, and later moved to abstraction in the fifties and produced work that included two-dimensional geometric forms, lines, squares, and rectangles. Morellet did not only paint but was an artist who in the sixties used many different mediums, materials, and surfaces such as fabric, tape, neon lights and walls.

Figure 77

Reflections in water deformed by the spectator



Note : Image taken from Francois Morellet, *Reflections in water deformed by the spectator*, 1964, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/francois-morellet/reflections-in-water-deformed-by-the-spectator-1964>, DAte of Access. 25.03.2021

François Morellet joined Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) [the Visual Arts Research Group] in 1961 and became an active member of this group of people working with unusual materials. Morellet and the other members of the group agreed that the era of canvas painting and sculpture had come to an end. In their own words, they wanted to work with modern materials that had not yet been polluted by traditional art. In this context, neon, which could also create a motion effect through line, light and blinking, was a very suitable material for them.

Like Dan Flavin, another artist who used neon and fluorescent lights in his work, Morellet created geometric forms in his art through neon tubes, as seen in his 1964 work “Reflections in water deformed by the spectator”.

As François Morellet first wrote to the director of the Pompidou Museum and later repeat publicly, he especially likened his early geometric abstract works to “berets, there is no right side.” These autonomous systems offered nothing but a geometric structure, making these works whose physical aspects had no significance.

This rare state of physical indeterminacy found a historical precedent of which Morellet was most likely aware, in Kazimir Malevich's deliberate subversion of the presumed necessary and often hierarchical orientation toward a designated top versus bottom, and a left side versus a right side. Beyond the spectacular aspect of oriental motility, there was a deeper form of versatility in Morellet's art. This was the animation of a systemic approach by conceptual frivolity. As the artist stated, this phenomenon of frivolity had gone from discretion in the 1950s and 1960s to its establishment in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally to its current triumphant state. Morellet, who obviously inclined towards the provocative, brought new and radical changes to geometric abstraction through his obvious, simple, rigorous and yet absurd systems.

Figure 78

2 Trames de tirets 0°, 14°, 80x80 cm



Note : Image taken from Francois Morellet, 2 Trames de tirets 0°, 14°, 1956, <https://krollermuller.nl/en/francois-morellet-2-trames-de-tirets-o-14-no-56008>,

Date of Access. 29.03.2021

When asked about the influence of Russian avant-garde painters on his art, Morellet described himself as an irreverent child of suprematism and constructivism. While he generally expressed admiration for their groundbreaking approaches, he rejected relational painting and, more generally, any lyricism and transcendentalism, as seen in the equilibrated contrasts in Piet Mondrian's work, for example (Gross & Hoban, 2019, p. 48)

For Morellet, a work of art needed be about itself. The names he chose for his works were often sophisticated and included the limitations or rules he applied in producing them. Like many contemporary artists who use limitations and the luck factor in their work, Morellet used rules and limitations to help create his works. His rigorous use of geometric forms helped him create works with neutral content and brought him closer to Minimalism and Conceptual art. His works are particularly similar to those of American artists such as Ellsworth Kelly, Frank Stella and Sol LeWitt.

François Morellet's works had similarities with the works of minimalist artists, but also differences. According to the art critic Yve-Alain Bois, Morellet was able to produce works that looked very complex and achieved this using very simple methods. The 1956 work “2 Trames de tirets 0°, 14°” is an example in repetition and simplicity, created by placing two grid forms side by side. This was quite different from the American approach, e.g., what Sol LeWitt did.

Compared again to Frank Stella's work and system, for example, Morellet's works, the ratios of blue to red and yellow to blue on his strips appear to vary. It is clear that there was calculation during the production stage, and although at first glance it may seem like there is a similarity to Stella's works, they are actually different.

Figure 79*Grid 3,83,93,183*

Note : Image taken from Francois Morellet, Grid 3,83,93,183, 1971/2017, <https://www.oniris.art/en/news/14-francois-morellet-dia-foundation-ny-dia-chelsea-new-york-usa/> Date of Access. 02.04.2021

François Morellet's visit to the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain, in 1952 had a lasting influence on his art. The typologies in which the juxtapositions, the superimpositions, the interferences, and the fragmentations all lie side by side with the lines, the grids, and the angles, which recall the endless geometric motifs of Islamic art at the Alhambra (Gross & Hoban, 2019, p. 48).

Throughout his life, Morellet was an artist who questioned the principles of modern art and sought to renew himself. He animated his systematic approach in his work with a luck factor. For example, while creating his works in the "Random Lines" series, he divided the circumference of the quadrangular or circle-shaped canvas into 100 equal parts and numbered them, and then connected dots corresponding to numbers he randomly picked out of a phonebook with lines. Morellet did not limit this approach to the canvas and used similar methods on different mediums and surfaces, such as the side of a building.

5.1.7. Carmen Herrera

Carmen Herrera (1915) was a Cuban American artist who adopted the abstract and minimalist movements. Herrera was an artist who became famous with her abstract works late in her life, selling her first painting at the age of 89.

Towards the end of the forties, Herrera settled in Paris, where she came into contact with intellectuals and philosophers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as painters such as Theo Van Doesburg. While Herrera developed her unobjectivistic style of hard-edge painting during her five years in Paris, Whitney curator Dana Miller points out, her work still contained a great deal of vitality and transcendental elements. In this context, upon later reexamination, her style exhibits similarities to that of Ellsworth Kelly, who was in Paris at the same time as Herrera. While Kelly achieved much more recognition, this was not the case for Herrera.

According to Miller, this was because Herrera was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Or, as Carmen Herrera herself said, a Latino woman who painted in her style had no chance in the art scene. Although her art was in an internationally valid geometric style, Herrera was trapped between different cultures: a mixed practitioner of Cuban, French, and American origins who was not embraced by any one of those countries' art communities. Moreover, as Edward J. Sullivan, an expert in Latin American art history, has asserted, art breakthroughs in North America have always had more privilege over any developments in South American art. Despite all this, Herrera stated that she wanted to be seen only as a painter, not as a Latin American painter or a woman painter or an old painter (Miller, 2016, p. 6).

When Herrera first began to use preparatory drawings and tape as a masking tool, as well as the arrival of acrylic paint in Paris, which has more viscosity than oils, enabled her to create more prominent geometric compositions and hone the precision of her lines. As a result, her work began to feature surfaces with a sense of unity. Similar to Mondrian's Neoplasticism, there is a strong diagonal motion in her 1952 work "Untitled". The zigzag that dominates the work is not a depiction of a line, but an optical illusion created by the inversion of color bands. Herrera often used this technique in her works of this period with tapes of different widths.

Figure 80*Untitled, 152.4x63.5 cm*

Note : Image taken from Carmen Herrera, Untitled, 1952, <https://whitney.org/media/1399>, Date of Access. 08.04.2021

It is impossible to separate color from form in Herrera's work. In any of her compositions, one encompasses or foregrounds the other.

Throughout her career, preparatory drawings became an important step for Herrera. Having also had studied architecture in her youth, she once said about the line:

There is nothing I love more than to make a straight line. How can I explain it?
It's the beginning of all structures really.

The meticulous patterns, right angles, and intertwined forms in her early art career later softened over time to become more asymmetrical and intuitively arranged forms. She generally preferred to work with her instincts, ignoring Kandinsky and Malevich's color symbolism. In some cases, she gave finalized her completed paintings by hanging them horizontally or vertically.

Herrera reduced brushstrokes and texture to an extent where the trace of her hand became almost indistinguishable. The interaction of form with unmixed color, squeezed directly out of the tube, was the main subject of her work. During the same period that the art critic Jules Lansger coined the term "Hard-Edge Abstraction" in the art world, Herrera painted "Green and Orange", in which cascading layers of color

appear in an interlocking composition. At this point, the distinction between figure and ground had disappeared, while the difference between color and form had also disappeared (Miller, 2016, p. 13).

Figure 81

Green and Orange, 182.9x152.4 cm



Note : Image taken from Carmen Herrera, Green and Orange, 1958, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/dec/31/carmen-herrera-men-controlled-everything-art>, Date of Access. 08.04.2021

Behind Herrera's visual and minimalist approach was her architectural education and her efforts to simplify the form. This could also be explained as her desire to create artworks with a sense of order in a chaotic world. Herrera believed that "less is more", choosing to paint with her mind rather than her emotions. For example, when applying a color onto the canvas, she focused on the harmony of that color with others rather than whether she liked it or not. Herrera's rational approach developed in the years following her return from Paris to New York. She was more interested in the physical structure of the painting and the fact that the painting itself became an object. In this context, her works include similarities to those of the post-war abstract artists Leon Polk Smith, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Throughout her artistic life, Herrera tried to remove from his canvas what she thought was unnecessary or unimportant.

An unknown and underappreciated artist for many years, Herrera's exhibition in the UK in 2009 made her known as the discovery of the decade. In 2016, the

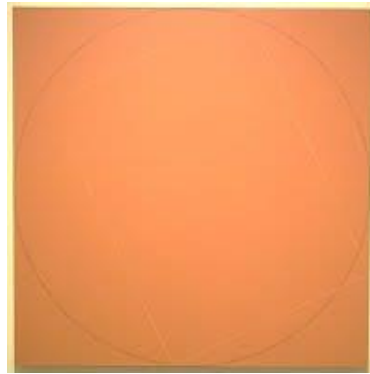
Whitney Museum New York held a solo exhibition entitled "Lines of Sight" for Herrera, which included her works between 1948 and 1978.

5.1.8. Robert Mangold

The artworks of Robert Mangold (1937), an American minimalist painter, consists of the arrangement of simple symbols in the form of complex compositions. His works create the sense that they are inspired by architectural structures or bear the mark of an architect's hand, looking more like objects than visual images.

Since the beginning of his career in the mid-1960s, Mangold has produced abstract works with architectural elements, combining classical elements of composition, form, line, and color and applying thick and thin pencil lines onto large color surfaces.

Mangold's early work consisted largely of monochromatic free-standing constructions displayed against the wall, such as his 1964 work "Grey Window Wall". In 1968, Mangold started to use acrylic instead of oil paint and adopted the method of applying paint onto plywood or Masonite surfaces. In the same year, Mangold switched from these industrially oriented supports to canvas and has used shaped canvases since 1970. By the mid-1970s, his work had advanced to overlapping shapes whose contours are formed by combinations of canvas edges and both drawn and implied lines. His 1975 work "A Rectangle and a Circle within a Square" is an example of this graceful geometric relationship (Robert Mangold Wikipedia, 2022).

Figure 82*A Rectangle and a Circle within a Square*

Note : Image taken from Robert Mangold, A Rectangle and a Circle within a Square, 1975, <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/77785>, Date of Access.

12.04.2021

Mangold's shaped canvas paintings feature vague color changes and clear lines that create a challenging yet thought-provoking effect on the audience. Mangold once stated:

My belief about painting is that it's the most difficult art to grasp. And abstract painting makes it even more difficult, because the person walking in off the street doesn't have a place to grab hold of...if you come into a room where there's an installation or a sculpture, you know to walk around it, it exists in your space with you; there's no way to kill time in front of a painting.

Figure 83*Column Structure IX*

Note : Image taken from Robert Mangold, Column Structure IX, 2006, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/robert-mangold/column-structure-ix-2006>,

Date of Access. 13.04.2021

Robert Mangold is one of the most distinguished painters of his generation. He has developed a pictorial language based on geometry and asymmetry in shape and form. His sophisticated colors and curvilinear forms evoke Ancient Greek pottery and Renaissance frescoes. For example, in his series “Column Structure” between 2005 and 2006, Mangold evolved his well-known asymmetrical canvases in the vertical axis, producing Tachist works that evoked classical architectural elements and contrasted with the sharpness of its geometric forms.

Mangold opposed the narrative approach and consequently his art can be construed as materialistic. It consists of repeated arrangements of concrete elements without the influence of supreme principles or a force and is based on empirical experience and on what the moment brings. It looks to the future without reaching a limit or making inferences.

Perhaps Mangold's art has been influenced by the classical interpretive problems of abstract art, or its lack of a distinct visual representation. Perhaps he had to uncover something that had been hidden, or to relate his art to the historical solutions of aesthetic problems. However, his recent abstractions have been able to express the artist without difficulty. He achieved this by clarifying his references, presenting clear signs, or referring to similar imagery from the past, such as the Russian Constructivists, Piet Mondrian and de Stijl, Josef Albers, and Bauhaus (Shiff, Storr, & Danto, 2000, p. 14).

Mangold's works should not be confused with the modernist declaration regarding the specificity of the medium. While modernist critics such as Clement Greenberg associate the flatness of painting with the visual effect of the medium, Mangold is a painter who reveled in the physicality of the two-dimensional surface. A good example for this is the perception of the vertical connection point between two panels as a line or a gap depending on the viewer's point of view.

Figure 84

Brown/Gray Zone Painting, 503.6x228.6 cm



Note : Image taken from Robert Mangold, Brown/Gray Zone Painting, 1996, <https://maruanimercier.com/artists/62-robert-mangold/works/2556-robert-mangold-brown-gray-zone-painting-v-1996/>, Date of Access. 13.04.2021

Robert Mangold's works are like a piece extracted from a whole. Images in the form of a pie slice can be perceived as part of an invisible circle, or a complete form or an object in itself, like the relationship between formal equilibrium and formal abnormality.

Like many of his contemporaries, Robert Mangold had a creative and pragmatic approach and performed his art with intellectual rigor and a humble aesthetic based on pictorial instincts. At the heart of his work is sensitivity rather than systematism. His creations are the result of meticulous work in his workshop rather than pre-determined ready-made instructions. Mangold's art is lasting. It is an art that expresses to its current day viewers what it expressed forty years ago during the artist's developmental years when he had not yet found himself (Shiff, Storr, & Danto, 2000, p. 14).

5.1.9. Sean Scully

Sean Scully (born 1945) is an Irish American painter, printmaker, sculptor, and photographer who was a pioneer during the transition from Minimalism to

Emotional Abstraction in painting. In his later works, Scully abandoned the reduced vocabulary of Minimalism and brought metaphor and spirituality back into his works.

In the early eighties, Sean Scully influenced by Pablo Picasso. During this time, he focused on Cubism by dividing the surface of the canvas into sections and further dividing these minimal areas. The direct effect of this was seen in his astonishing 1981 work "Backs and Fronts", which started as an homage to Picasso. This was followed by the 1982 work "Adoration", which consists of nine interconnected canvases of monumental sizes and feature the pinks and browns of Cubism.

Figure 85

Backs and Fronts, 609.6x243.8 cm



Note : Image taken from Sean Scully, Backs and Fronts, 1981, <https://fineartbiblio.com/artworks/sean-scully/3469/backs-and-fronts>,

Date of Access.18.04.2021

During this period, Sean Scully abandoned the hard-edged strips and started using the more fluid oils instead of acrylics. He expanded the size of both his works and the strips and began to use a more varied color palette. Finally, he brought multiple canvases together into a single work and gave them a literary name. Throughout the eighties, Scully's works became even more materialistic, with thick canvases and striking protrusions. These works' compositions, structures and use of paint foregrounded their masterful appearances, which signaled Scully's transformation into a master of color (Rub & Sroka, 2020, p. 8)

Scully was influenced by Mark Rothko's simple structured but color-complex abstractions. According to him, Rothko's works were no different than his own works in terms of geometric structure, emotion, and the individual narratives they featured.

Scully's art, like Rothko's, included elements of the legacy of American abstract painting, while also hinting at the European painting tradition through Henri Matisse and Piet Mondrian.

Sean Scully's trip to Morocco had a great influence on the development of his early work. The brightly colored textiles he saw almost everywhere while traveling around the country ignited his artistic passion. As a result, he began to focus on compositions in which he brought thought to the fore and experimented more passionately with colors and form. The horizontal stripes and deep earth colors seen in his maturity period works are a result of this interaction. Scully was also influenced by the geometrical structure of Jesus Rafael Soto's recurring but seemingly unordered works, which he saw at an exhibition in Paris while returning from Morocco. This was a geometric structure or order that existed within the chaotic environment that he had observed in Morocco, and in this respect, it appealed to him.

Scully desired to make abstract painting more grounded by adding metaphor and narrative interpretation to abstract painting, which he viewed as a source of freedom in expressing his memories and feelings, or his deep well of experiences. This formed the basis of his idea that Minimalism had lost its direction and energy due to its difficult to understand and self-referential approach. At this point, Sean Scully stood at a crossroads. Would abstraction follow the idealistic desires of Malevich and Mondrian, or would it lead to a conceptually pure but self-referential cul-de-sac like minimalism? Unlike minimalists, Scully adopted a style that is far from pure. For him, powerful new ideas emerged as a result of the difficult and complex intersection of art and life, which re-energized abstraction.

Towards the end of the eighties, Sean Scully embarked on new formal pursuits. Instead of focusing on a single topic or its derivatives, he focused on many topics at once. In later years, he turned to new compositions on which he would center his work. The most notable among these are the insets, which consist of one or two panels painted on separate canvases placed within a larger painting surface, which was common element of his works throughout the nineties and until the beginning of the two-thousands. These compositional structures kept Scully's mind busy and made him very productive (Rub & Sroka, 2020, p. 54).

Figure 86*Precious,*

Note : Image taken from Sean Scully, Precious, 1987,
<https://fineartbiblio.com/artworks/sean-scully/3309/precious>,

Date of Access. 18.04.2021

Again in the 1990s, Scully turned to checkerboard motifs with varying square or rectangular patterns in contrasting colors and shades. Scully used this form of composition not only in his paintings, but also in his pastels, prints and watercolor works. In retrospect, it seems that Sean Scully's choices in the late 1980s and early 1990s were conscious and he made them so by evaluating the potential offered by different visual forms through trial and error in the context of the action painting. During this period, Scully arranged the canvas surface into small groups of strips that were as different as they were similar in tone, color, and size.

Sean Scully exhibited two different approaches throughout his career. At times he preferred complex structures that went to the point of disorder, and sometimes he sought to be as simple as possible.

According to art critic Donald Kuspit, Sean Scully introduced poetics to geometric abstraction. His works are surprisingly romantic. What is meant by romanticism here is a longing for sincerity, spirituality, color, and eternity.

Scully purposefully creates impressive spaces. His art is characterized with a firm focus and rigor that involves constant exchange between the monumental and the intimate. On the one hand, he carefully approaches the choice of materials, while his art advances through the idea of the goodness of humanity. At the center of each of his meticulously produced works lie many touching, emotional fluctuations (Sean Scully Wikipedia, 2023).

Figure 87

Raval Rojo, 102x92 cm



Note : Image taken from Sean Scully, Raval Rojo, 2004, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/sean-scully/raval-rojo-2004>, Date of Access. 19.04.2021

5.1.10. Helen Miranda Wilson

Helen Miranda Wilson (1948) is an American painter who attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1970 following her studies at the New York Studio School in 1969. Wilson's best-known works are her paintings where she featured abstract and geometric forms from the previous period.

Figure 88*Corridor, 35.56x27.94 cm*

Note : Image taken from Helen Miranda Wilson, Corridor, 2007, <https://www.painters-table.com/category/tags/helen-miranda-wilson>,

Date of Access.19.04.2021

In addition to the paintings and drawings she made through direct observation over the years, it is possible to see traces of the influence of the art and design elements of the Bauhaus school in her early career artworks. Although she has abandoned the concept of representative painting in her more recent work, she continues to produce her usual works of small sizes with using techniques and materials she used to use. The surfaces of her paintings, onto which she paints directly with oils without primers or additives, have a seamless and smooth appearance.

Wilson's works evolved into abstraction from a representative style throughout her artistic career. They seem to have been aesthetically influenced by the works of Paul Klee, Ellsworth Kelly and various unnamed carpet and bedding manufacturers. Wilson's early work consisted of landscapes, still-lives, and interiors. After 2000, Wilson adopted a geometric abstract style and was influenced by folk arts like textile and carpet weaving. One of her best-known works is the “Stripes” series, each piece of which consists of tape forms that she paints in a different unique color (Helen Miranda Wilson Artsy, 2021).

Helen Miranda Wilson made her first stripe painting with gouaches in 2006. In the preceding five years, she produced what she called “calendar paintings”, which

consisted of color rectangles arranged in a grid. These are quite distinct from her earlier works, and Wilson's enjoyment in painting is evident from her uniquely elegant application of color.

Wilson's stripes are always positioned horizontally, giving these works the appearance of a landscape painting. She does not use the same color a second time. Her colors are vivid and the light in her paintings appears natural. The contrast between the interspersed light and dark areas adds motility to the surfaces, forcing the eye into motion. The stripe paintings were produced in three different forms. In the simplest of these, the color bands extend from one edge to the other along the surface of the painting. The second form is somewhat more complex, with stripes of different lengths divided into two columns. Each stripe comes from one side of the canvas up to a certain section, and then meets another stripe from the opposite edge. The colored stripes are arranged in groups of five or six of the same length each. Vertical lines on either side divide these groups to create energetic color interactions with back-and-forth transitions. The stripes sometimes create the impression of crashing into each other, while sometimes they evoke a light touch. Colors almost seem to extend beyond the canvas (Herrera, 2008, p. 3).

Figure 89

Russian, 50.8x40.64 cm



Note : Image taken from Helen Miranda Wilson, Russian, 2008, Herrera,H.(2008), Exhibition Catalogue, DC Moore Gallery, New York

When we look at her recent output in particular, Helen Miranda Wilson's passion for color is clearly visible. The weight of the color, its depth, the vibration it creates affect her. Although Wilson's color choices are spontaneous and driven by innate impulses, the colors are surprisingly correctly placed.

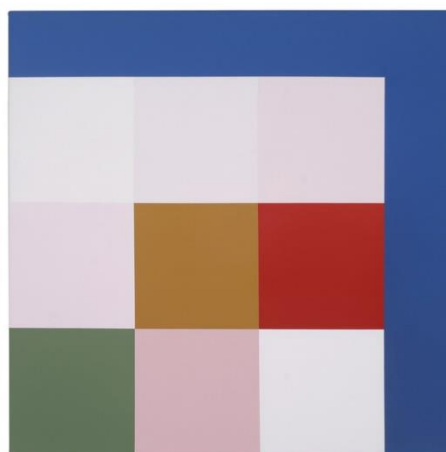
According to Wilson, her latest works are those in which she increasingly eliminates things and attaches more importance to the elements that remain. As she reduces her colors, the weight and effect these colors carry on the canvas seems to increase. According to her, it is more accurate to define these as works without a known subject rather than non-objective works.

5.1.11. Mary Boochever

Mary Boochever (1954) received her art training in Munich, Germany, at the Akademie Bildenden Künste, from Mac Zimmerman, Günther Fröhtrunk and Paul Meyer-Speer. After returning to New York, she taught at the School of Visual Arts, and at Yale University as a guest instructor. As she developed her own language of painting and color, Mary Boochever studied various sources like the Kabbalah and Goethe's color theory. Boochever's paintings, sculptures and installations draw the viewer into the immediacy of the color experience (Maryboochever,02.05.2021).

Figure 90

Khar, 50.17x42.55 cm



Note : Image taken from Mary Boochever, Khar, 2006, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mary-boochever-khar>, Date of Access.22.04.2021

At the heart of Mary Boochever's work is a desire to create a world beyond the physical and historical existence of humankind by causing the audience to think. Those who view her work become aware of infinite possibilities and the notion of eternity. Boochever's master articulations that enhance spatial experience are mainly achieved through barely noticeable and almost unidentifiable color transitions. The element of ambiguity in the comprehension and reading of a picture without representation is a constant presence in Boochever's work.

The clarity foregrounded in Boochever's compositions built on triangle or pentagonal systems within squares and rectangles seems to ultimately determine the final boundaries of its geometry. In other words, there are countless elements of brightness, surface density, tone and space that are undefined within the relative equilibrium of these shapes. Through visually expanding and contracting color spaces, the traces of thinly painted layers give form to spaces that exist between clarity and ambiguity, and dissolution, completeness, and possibilities (Stoops, Vanderhyden, Shapiro, & Gilbert-Rolfe, 2013, p. 7).

Focusing on color theory during her art education in Germany, Boochever's artistic art in later periods reflects her awareness of the traditions of subversion in abstract painting, including the variations in geometric abstraction developed by artists such as Mondrian, Albers, Marchin, Ryman and Gilbert-Rolfe. The forms that Mary Boochever places onto her canvas convey her approach to spatial possibilities offered by color. The vertically positioned rectangles, which appear geometrically divided into areas of color within themselves, emphasize the connection with the above and below. This element of verticality also creates an effect of the colors sometimes popping and fading.

The perception incompleteness in Mary Boochever's work in a way reflects their element of possibility. Together with their geometric clarity, they present an element of doubt.

Figure 91*L.A.W., 149.86x87.63 cm*

Note : Image taken from Mary Boochever, L.A.W., 2006, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mary-boochever-law>, Date of Access.22.04.2021

The abstraction that emerged between the New York school and the minimalism movement had more to do with naturalism than technology. This approach, concerned itself more with the body than with technology, was historically unprecedented outside of Mondrian. Mary Boochever demanded the audience's reaction by using geometric abstraction to overtly deal with the body and create works concerning it.

Mary Boochever's L.A.W. got its name from the artist's question of which color should be where. In this work, which is the abbreviation of "Left Above White", Boochever asks the questions "What is above white" and "What is above the law?" This is an example of Boochever's use of humor in her work. Boochever states that humor is an element of her work that often stems from the confusion that comes out of different points of view. According to her, in L.A.W., visual participation in the painting's surface is provoked through the blue tone transitions in the lower right corner, creating this effect (Veneciano, 2012, p. 109).

Boochever's works are only transitively definable. The term transitive is a description attributed to the element of diversity inherent to the painter's work. These

works are not temporary, but Boochever's paintings, sculptures and installations exhibit a grounded and integrated character.

With the wide variety of forms it has assumed over the past three decades, Mary Boochever's art communicates with the viewer by presenting its potential regarding metaphysical effects and possibilities for decision-making with a quiet attitude.

5.1.12. Peter Halley

Peter Halley (1953) is an American painter and an important representative of the Neo-Conceptualist movement. Particularly known for his works involving geometric forms with neon colors, Halley has often used barred windows, prison cells, communication lines and grids that evoke streets in his works. The grid-like structure, dimensions, and density of New York, where Halley first stepped foot in 1980, left a deep impression on him. This allowed him to develop his distinctive geometric abstract style. As a result, Halley transformed his geometric abstractionist approach into architectural symbols he called “Prisons” and “Cells”, wherein he combines Malevich and Albers’s square with straight lines. In other respects, Halley's pictorial language was not only influenced by the structure of the city, but also by the networks that spread across all areas of our world under media control. The lines that combined the many cells and geometric forms seen in Halley's oeuvre represent the informational and structural components of the current day society.

Figure 92

Two Cells with Circulating Conduit, 258x160 cm



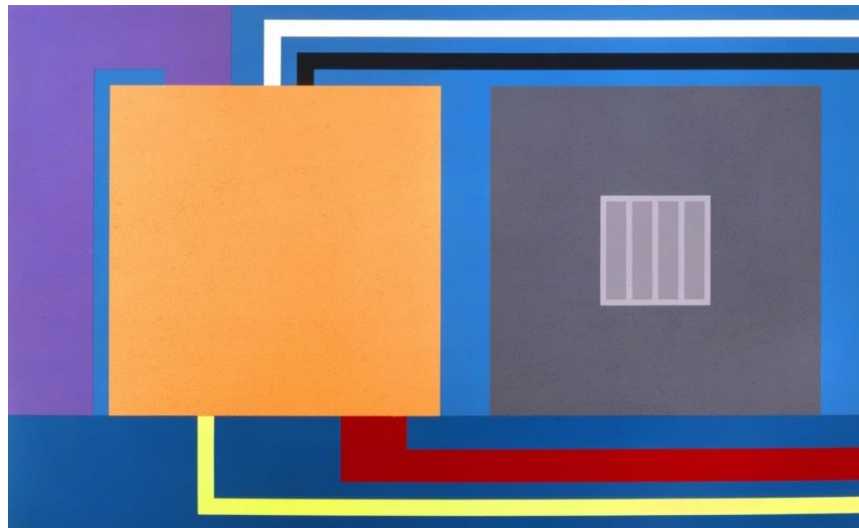
Note : Image taken from Peter Halley, Two Cells with Circulating Conduit, 1985, <https://artvee.com/dl/two-cells-with-circulating-conduit/>, Date of Access.25.04.2021

Halley often used Roll-a-Text, a textured decoration material, and fluorescent Day-Glo decorative paints in his brightly colored geometric abstract works. Although Halley's solid color surfaces, unitary shapes and non-hierarchical compositions exhibit a minimalist approach, he questions the neutral nature of minimalism by turning the minimalist square into a prison cell (Peter Halley - Artsy, 2021)

Influenced by painters like Barnett Newman and Ellsworth Kelly, Halley's paintings focus on exploring the physical and psychological structure of the social space. His work combines the difficult language of geometric abstraction with the city's space and the realities of a digital environment. Halley was inspired by modern buildings and urban facilities such as the subway, as well as pop culture elements like new wave music. Taking modernist abstract painting's grid forms as seen in Frank Stella's oeuvre, Halley reconfigured them in color and impact that fit the postmodern period.

In many ways, Halley's work can be viewed as a reaction to the art of the preceding period and to the cultural climate of the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, many minimalist artists took mathematical and logical approaches to reconcile art with the objective reality of experience. On the other hand, a group of artists who began to emerge in the eighties saw painting as an instrument of self-expression and subjectivity. Halley's subjective works, with their systematical structures, were influenced by both these approaches.

By the mid-eighties, Halley's work had gained international recognition as part of a movement called the Neo-Geo, or Neo-Geometric Conceptualism. Despite their success, the group, which featured artists such as Sherrie Levine, Ross Bleckner, Ashley Bickerton and Philip Taaffe, was viewed to be problematic by critics. In 1996, Hal Foster stated that he saw Neo-Geo's traditional approach which reduced complex historical practices to images that appeared independent of time, as an early harbinger of a crisis in art. Adding to the attitude of the art market of the period towards the Neo-Geo movement and the fact that this was a project movement, was Foster's main problem, which was the movement's insufficiency in representing the abstract processes regarding hyperreality. According to Foster, Halley could not adequately express the complex nature of the late capitalist world order.

Figure 93*A Perfect World, 373.86x228.6 cm*

Note : Image taken from Peter Halley, A Perfect World, 1993, <https://www.thebroad.org/art/peter-halley/perfect-world>, Date of Access. 25.04.2021

Halley, by contrast, stated that he saw his works as schematics. While traditional schematics exhibited an illustrative reality, Halley's paintings lacked a static unity. Instead, they had emerged from his subconscious. They lacked a specific language. Halley noted that this schematic approach to his work was very simple, and that the imagery is quite direct and obvious. This appearance of simplicity and subjectivity was misleading, however, as Halley's paintings consisted of imagery that was free of emotions and could not feature elements of human influence (Jordan, 2018, p. 8).

Peter Halley adapted his visual language to the digital revolution in the world of communication and media in the 1990s. As the communication lines, which are the main element of his paintings, began to increase in number and become more complex, he added pearlescent and metallic paints to his palette of Day-Glo colors of the 1980s. His 1993 work “A Perfect World” resembles a flowchart, while the contrast between the warm yellows and reds it contains with paler colors gives the painting a subtle vibratory effect.

5.1.13. Philip Taaffe

Philip Taaffe (1955) is an American painter who blended his oeuvre with visual elements from different cultures. A fan of Matisse's cut-outs, and synthetic cubism, Taaffe produces abstractions that require extensive processes.

Widely known for his works that are variations of the works of his predecessors like Bridget Riley and Barnett Newman, Taaffe constantly expanded the origin point of his paintings, reaching a historical and cross-cultural traditional approach from modernism and its ambiguous place in the present day. Therefore, his paintings can be viewed as contemporary as well as ancient. These paintings seem to have come out of an imaginary place where the cities of New York, Mumbai, Naples and Tangier are merged. In this context, Philip Taaffe is not interested in reflecting visual reality as it appears but aims to transform it into something else. This sets him apart from his contemporaries, who, as Frank Stella famously summed up with “what you see is what you see”, had positioned themselves on the side of aesthetic reality. Taaffe is dedicated to doing something outside of what has already been done. In his works, he transforms the visual reality of the image by using a wide variety of mechanical methods of reproduction and visual transfer (Yau, 2018, p. 7)

Taaffe belongs to a generation of artists who emerged in the 1980s and had two different tendencies and directions. One of these orientation groups was the Neo-Expressionists, and the other was the Pictures Generation. While the neo-expressionists adhered strictly to the traditions of painting, the other group adopted a method of making small changes to existing images and motifs. What makes Taaffe stand out from his contemporaries in his use of existing images is that he never had a satirical attitude. He chose to use those images to leave a strong effect on the viewer's visual experience. Therefore, he does not think what he is doing constitutes artistic appropriation. Taaffe approaches an image in the context of the process of separating and isolating it from its original content. For example, in his works that reference Bridget Riley's art, the aim was not to copy but to transform from the get-go. Instead of taking an image and using it elsewhere, as many of his contemporaries did, he, in a sense, preferred to honor the image.

Taaffe's works consist of technically and historically complex layers. Combining icons, design, motifs from art history and his personal experiences, he produces works with intense, weaving patterns. Each painting consists of a different technique and medium, including practices of oil painting, acrylics, linoleum, engraving, scrubbing, photo-based screen printing and collages.

Philip Taaffe views abstraction to involve satire His densely layered images, however, are not reducible to mere responses to established programs of art. As many have observed, Taaffe's practice, through the reinvention and reworking of the history of art, not only has critical depth, but also a power to entrance. The paintings have heavily worked, studiously unpolished surfaces and the ability to conjure historical resonance without feeling contrived. (Philip Taaffe The Broad, 2021).

Figure 94

Undercurrent, 223.5x223.5 cm



Note : Image taken from Philip Taaffe, Undercurrent, 1983, <https://philiptaaffe.info/paintings-2/paintings-1980-1989/paintings-1983/undercurrent-1984-2/>, Date of Access.11.05.2021

With his visually exuberant, intricate works, Taaffe appeals to mankind's drive to create images as inspired by indigenous masks, Islamic ornamentation, and perforated Japanese billboards. They are based on Taaffe's idea that art and painting are more a synthesis of visual forces than breaks from modernism.

Between 1986 and 1991, Taaffe made three major changes to his approach to art. First, he diversified his language of painting and featured many motifs from ancient civilizations in his works. He also added new forms to his paintings based on

the anonymous images and graffiti he saw during his travels to India and Egypt. Secondly, the colors he used became richer and began to vary between translucent colors and saturated colors. Finally, as his understanding of space became more complex and layered, he focused on the relationship between the figure and background.

Like Sol LeWitt, Taaffe has also been very detailed and attentive in his practice. But he chose to do so using a completely different and distinct group of mediums and methods. While Lewitt and others denied the importance of craft, Taaffe demands manual effort in his art. Otherwise, he might not have been able to restructure Bridget Riley's "Tremor" or turn Barnett Newman's zips into an illusionary work, as he did in "We Are Not Afraid". The wide variety of methods he used gave him ideas about what could be done in painting with new choices in the context of copying and preserving (Yau, 2018, p. 44).

Figure 95

We Are Not Afraid, 305x259 cm



Note : Image taken from Philip Taaffe, We Are Not Afraid, 1985, <https://philiptaaffe.info/paintings-2/paintings-1980-1989/paintings-1985/we-are-not-afraid-1985/> Date of Access.12.05.2021

5.1.14. Byron Kim

Byron Kim (1961) is an American artist who produces works in the minimalist style. He is mostly known for his work on ethnic identity. Kim's works in the early 1990s were monochrome paintings which reflected the skin hues of his friends and family members. These paintings, named “Synecdoche”, consisted of 400 small monochrome paintings and are Kim's best-known works. These paintings appear minimalist at first glance but contain political and ethnic elements. The reason being that Kim had previously made portraits of these people whose skin hues he depicted on his canvas during the production of these paintings. In this respect, these works are conceptual as well as abstract.

Endeavors to place “Synecdoche” in a specific category have become an enigma. At first glance, this artwork, which consists of rectangulars arranged in grid of different colors, looks like a monochromatic abstract painting. But since it actually represents people, it can be classified as representative and even figurative. Yet it cannot be called completely representative as it uses the visual language of abstraction. It is clear that although it fits each category to some extent, this painting does not actually belong to a single category. Instead, Byron stands in a unique spot between the two categories which describes as a “threshold”. Kim has consciously adopted this “threshold” approach throughout his career, but had not named it until recently (Faruqee, Tsai, & Consey, 2004, p. 15).

Figure 96

Synecdoche, each panel (installed dimensions variable) 25.4x20.32 cm



Note : Image taken from Byron Kim, *Synecdoche*, 1991, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/byron-kim-synecdoche>, Date of Access.15.05.2021

Kim had concluded that abstraction in the modernist sense was the inevitable consequence of an artistic past in which context became increasingly unimportant. In this sense, the process which had started with the Renaissance depictions of the external visual world and led to the conquest of nature and from there to the presentation of abstract art as sublime and absolute was instrumental in Byron Kim's adoption of an approach that he called the abstract sublime. Kim's abstract sublime works in essence seem to stand somewhere between the representative and the abstract as well as the conceptual and the purely pictorial. These works, which appear as pure abstractions at first glance, reveal the influence of cultural elements in their creation upon close inspection.

Although he has produced works that could be considered extreme examples of abstraction, Kim argues that the tradition of abstract painting has two fundamental problems. One of them is the so-called universal effect that abstract painting, or, more broadly, art, creates on the audience. As an example, Kim cites the transcendental effect created by Mark Rothko's blurred colorful rectangular paintings, noting that he is not sure whether these works have this effect through pure visual stimulation or as a result of a learned response. According to him, the other problem of abstract painting is abstract painters' attitudes that separates them from colorist artists.

Although Byron Kim can be described as a painter who produces abstract works in general and geometric abstract works in particular, his works are not entirely formalistic and devoid of content. Kim used the phrase "spots of time" from the poem "The Prelude" by the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth to name his paintings which refers to how childhood memories and experiences shape one's adult life. These works are Kim's most intimate abstract paintings and reflect a longing for a past that can only be revived in memories (Faruquee, Tsai, & Consey, 2004, p. 20).

Figure 97*1984 Dodge Wagon, 228.6x111.76 cm*

Note : Image taken from Byron Kim, 1984 Dodge Wagon, 1994, <https://www.joanmitchellfoundation.org/byron-kim>, Date of Access.15.05.2021

At the same time as his paintings “Spots of Time”, Kim started to also produce his Celadon series of works. Celadons are a type of glazed ceramic with gray and green tones and tied into Kim’s Korean roots. These paintings revealed subtle changes in the ceramics’ glaze with their continuous gray-green surfaces. Similar to the transcendental effect that works of abstract artists of the New York school such as Rothko, Newman, and Reinhardt had on their audiences, the celadons created interactions for Korean viewers through their cultural heritage.

5.2. Contemporary Turkish Artists Creating Geometric Abstract Art

5.2.1. Utku Dervent

Utku Dervent (1967) completed his undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies at the Mimar Sinan University, Faculty of Fine Arts. Dervent has been constructing his paintings through the relationships between form-space and light-color for many years and questions the possibilities of basic concepts such as integrity-harmony-balance in his geometric abstract works. He aims to eliminate narratives from the relationship between forms. In the symmetrical layout approach featured in his works, Dervent, the influences of whose past studies in the field of interior design and decoration and his architectural education stand out, uses his

architectural training to reconstruct abstract painting from within the framework of geometric possibilities within a structure extending from plurality to uniqueness (Utku Dervent Tiyatrolar, 2021).

Figure 98

Untitled, 145x145 cm



Note : Image taken from Utku Dervent, Untitled, 1998, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Isimsiz/ABD6CF283CDAE17D42EA0B747242E1E1>, Date of Access.11.07.2021

Dervent explains his reason for choosing abstract geometric composition as his language of expression as a preference for an expression that is independent of imaginary associations and therefore of verbal language. Dervent's abstract geometric paintings, which seek visibility in simple geometric forms, first met audiences in 1998. Dervent states that the geometric compositions he creates based on the relationships between color and form are, in a sense, the most direct way of discovering himself.

The first effect that Utku Dervent's works leave on the viewers is akin to massless architectural spaces and the projections of a motion that creates a visual impact. This can be due to Dervent's architectural past. Dervent mostly improvises his paintings and tends to use linear geometry to make the effect born out of the relationship between forms comprehensible.

Dervent builds his compositions on the relationship between form, color and space, and has an experimental approach. So much so that he even includes the use of real light in his abstract works. Dervent's recent paintings appear as if the forms that integrate with color are moving away freely from the architectural structure. A

detailed examination of the compositions shows that these geometric forms deform in relation to color. In this context, Dervent also began to use monochromatic closed compositions, which he first introduced in a painting in 2005, in his works in 2014 and on as well. His geometric abstract works shows Dervent's attempts to achieve equilibrium between the line, light-dark balance, and symmetrical forms. These images then become increasingly indistinguishable on the canvas surface. Dervent's efforts to render the forms that make up the infrastructure of works invisible, or in other words, to abstract them could be construed as acts of improvisation.

Figure 99

Untitled, 100x100 cm



Note : Image taken from. Utku Dervent, Untitled, 2005, Dervent, U., Haşlakoğlu, O., İnatçı, Ü. (2016), Utku Dervent Exhibition Catalogue, Bozlu Art Project

The names given to the Utku Dervent's works from the last decade create a sense of conceptualism and cause the audience to look for relevant expressions on the surface by concretizing them. This arguably damages the plastic narrative of the work.

Dervent's paintings can be viewed as works wherein the individual expression acquires a universal meaning. As soon as we realize that these paintings, made in an abstract approach, convey a serene compositional approach that proceeds from finished forms, their message lead us not to a literary narrative, but directly into the ever-beating heart of painterly act. There we find Utku Dervent as a painter in the absolute act: In his painterly act, the painter becomes fully identified with his painting.

On the other hand, although the existence of motility in question in the flow of shapes in formation, which dominates all of his paintings, evokes "Kinetic Art" in not an objective but perceptual way. Utku Dervent's leanings are clearly not optical but mental and spiritual. In this context, the use of color in particular comes off increasingly more powerful in these works, creating powerful interactions that establish the color based pictorial space in a depth within a formality that is constantly in formation. As a result, rich plastic values emerge in the pure pictoriality that is acquired through the multidimensionality of the pictorial space, form and color (Dervent, Haşlakoğlu, & İnatçı, 2016, s. 18).

Utku Dervent's works come from a tradition of painting as a geometry of emptiness and fullness or as a rational arrangement. Nevertheless, going beyond solid horizontal and vertical line overlaps with pure color spaces, these paintings manifest themselves in the form of an expressionist articulation of transparent and textural areas. Thus, in a sense, Dervent's paintings are distant from the rational geometry of neoplasticism. These are works in which light and dark areas exist intertwined. The transfer of light and color to the geometric plane as transparency and intensity and the transformation of the space in an atmospheric unity into a motion effect constitute the systematics of Utku Dervent's painting.

Figure 100

Sarızaman [Yellowtime], 64x64 cm



Note : Image taken from Utku Dervent, Sarızaman [Yellowtime], 2014, Dervent, U., Haşlakoğlu, O., İnatçı, Ü. (2016), Utku Dervent Exhibition Catalogue,

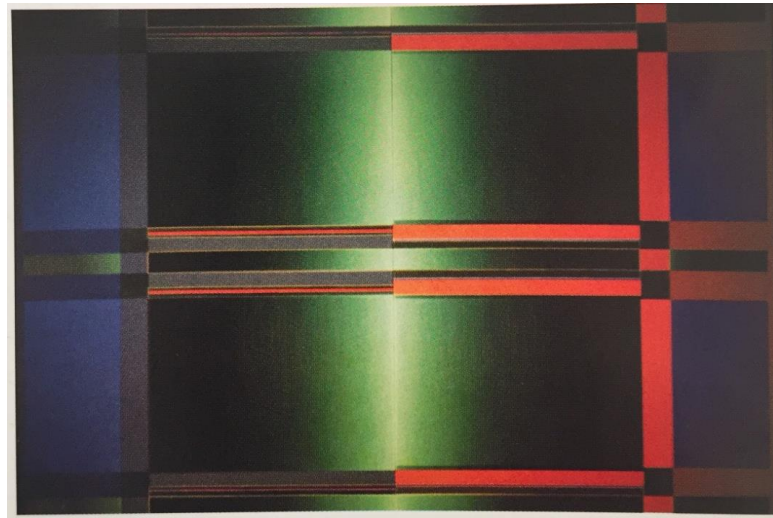
Bozlu Art Project

5.2.2. İsmail Ateş

İsmail Ateş (1960) graduated from the Gazi University, Department of Painting and completed his master's degree at the Hacettepe University, Department of Fine Arts. Afterwards, he completed his PhD in Philosophy at the same university with a thesis on “The Relation Between Form, Texture and Geometric Surfaces as an Element in Painting”.

In Ateş's works, geometric elements acquire an organic feature through the soft gradation of colors in the context of space. Color acquires a geometric meaning and functions as a transcendental element at a high level. So much so that it is as if these paintings turn Kandinsky's paintings into spiritual symbols. In his paintings, İsmail Ateş attempts to reflect life through light and color transitions based on geometric forms and delicate balances. His geometric patterns and abstract images go beyond time and space.

İsmail Ateş is among the original figures of abstract art. As an artist, he stands out with his observational skills, artistic reasoning and his style that utilizes mathematics, all brought together on the same surface. The principles of purism that appear in the Ateş's work can be expressed in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's (1762 – 1814) definition of “the transformation of knowledge into a work ”. The artist exhibits diversity in that he brings a different language to the audience with his plastic narrative style and has a wide range of topics that he cultivates from. His universe designs open the doors into other worlds with their fractal structures and motifs inspired by nature. In addition to their flawless, smooth, and balanced structure posited by geometry, İsmail Ateş projects the images in his mind onto his canvas through the phenomena, imagery and nuances that recall their aesthetic level. The aesthetic and geometric point of view that stands out in his works can be experienced through the method of induction. Ateş completely abandoned the figurative approach seen in his early works. By using linearity together with chiaroscuro, a surface style with a depth style, and light with darkness, Ateş brings to life the dialectical approach at the origin of the universe (Özsu, 2019, p. 7).

Figure 101*Mevsimler, 240x150 cm*

Note : Image taken from İsmail Ateş, Mevsimler, 1992, <http://www.ismailates.com/pPages/pArtist.aspx?paID=34§ion=130&lang=TR&periodID=131&pageNo=0&exhID=0&bhcp=1>, Date of Access. 28.07.2021

Ateş's compositions up until the end of the 1980s were asymmetrical. In these paintings, geometric forms float in dark-toned fields that cover the entire canvas as if it were space. In the first half of the 1990s, the artist made symmetrical compositions for a while. In terms of both form and color, the right and left half of the picture are exactly symmetrical to each other. However, whether his compositions are symmetrical or asymmetrical, or whether they conclude with more or fewer forms and colors, when we look at his oeuvre over the years as a whole, no radical changes are noticeable in Ateş's paintings (Baraz, Özsezgin, & Yılmaz, 2003, p. 14)

İsmail Ateş's large-sized works, dominated by straight and horizontal lines, geometric forms and pure color spaces, feature a style that gradually turns into a minimal aesthetic, while building upon on equilibrium and proportion. With his avoidance of three-dimensionality even in cases where color gradients are used, Ateş has adopted a geometric compositional approach based on surface aesthetics. The squares, triangles and quadrilaterals in his work, which are the product of meticulous workmanship, geometrically reflect an equilibrium and proportion between the whole and the part. This creates the sense that İsmail Ateş was under the influence of architecture. There is a certainty in his paintings, which aim to foreground geometric

plasticity. Surface colors, based on the balance and, in some cases, symmetry of smooth and fixed-looking forms, do not create a connotation specific to natural reality and refer only to the purely abstract.

In İsmail Ateş's paintings, symbolization is achieved both through the geometric formational elements that enable the painting's construction, as with the predecessors of Ateş's Western counterparts like Mondrian, van Doesburg, Malevich, etc., and through objectless paintings (Suprematism, neoplasticism, etc.), as well as through color, which has a primary meaning-generating quality and weight. The pictorial objects that form the geometric structure create a dominant pattern while inadvertently revealing the aforementioned contradictory condition: the dilemma of the East-West axis.

Ateş's works underline and refer to certain concepts and situations other than their own representations through color and form. If we examine Ateş's colors carefully, we can see that he uses warm colors and intermediate values consisting of colors compatible with this warm structure. Above all, the artist is very frugal about his colors and quantity, and his pictorial intensity.

Figure 102

Designs of Universe – Red 1, 162x130 cm



Note : image taken from İsmail Ateş, Designs of Universe – Red 1, 2008, <http://www.ismailates.com/pPages/pArtist.aspx?paID=34§ion=130&lang=TR&periodID=129&pageNo=0&exhID=0>, Date of Access. 14.08.2021

The patterns of Islamic architecture and the environment permeate İsmail Ateş's pictorial system in various forms. While color is a narrative element in itself, the many elements that make up the form undertake a function similar to the symbolic effect of color. In Ateş's paintings, sometimes symmetrical and sometimes asymmetrical compositions on applications of color examine their own internal calculations. This structure allows large surfaces to radiate their energy outwards. Posited side-by-side and in successive order, small elements find their place in the compositional plane like stars in the universe. His asymmetrical compositions maintain the symmetrical color stripes and squares' their integrity (Ateş, 2021)

The first thing that is perceived in İsmail Ateş's paintings is color integrity. There are color surfaces that expand in all directions: up, down, right and left. This creates a perception of infinity. While the colorful color-transition planes in Ateş's artworks try to come forward as the focal point, geometric forms make us dream about other realms. At this point, the work, which seems to be static, gains motion and the effect of color contrast comes to the forefront. The geometric transitional planes in the paintings create an atmosphere that has a void effect with color transitions from yellow to green, from orange to blue, from yellow to purple. In a sense, these works are "atmosphere" paintings that draw the audience into the canvas. The series of paintings Ateş has produced in recent years and which he named "Designs of Universe" seems to have reached extremes in the asymmetrical compositional order of creating emptiness and a "sense of atmosphere".

The relationship of form and the harmony of color in Ateş's compositions exhibit the characteristics of Eastern art. In this context, geometric and architectural elements have an important place in his paintings. Although he states that he does not consciously use architectural elements in his works, these are the expression of the subconscious reflection of the cultural world he inhabits. As İsmail Ateş creates a language of expression through the geometric forms he symbolizes, this language enables him to establish mathematical intuition and a dialogue with the world. With a minimalist reflection, it expresses his artistic approach through both the formal counterpart of shapes and the warmth and coldness of colors.

Although İsmail Ateş's paintings contain spiritual spatial constructions, geometric forms, color gradients, and colored surfaces that reflect shadows, these spaces express infinities, continuities and openings that refuse to be defined by

borders and objects. In his works, the geometries that serve to describe the space gain an organic quality with the smooth movements of colors, while the continuous color and tone transformations emphasize the unity of time and space.

Michel Foucault argued that geometric patterns of form corresponded with values that reflect the limiting and secretly supervisory properties of industrial societies. The industrial landscapes of the Neo-Geo movement emerged at this stage as a new view of art. The essence of İsmail Ateş's abstract paintings is also sensitive to the industrial landscape. It contains values parallel to the Neo-Geo artists' approaches to art. While the unlimited, spatial spaces that dominate the painting areas are seen as views of nature, these sections exhibit the basic values of industrial landscape paintings. The deep landscape sensibilities that appear within the horizontal planes are resolved by the planar structuralism of the layers that absorb the nature. The geometric spaces that divide the spotted areas created by the planes create mechanical surfaces, and the symmetrical constructions of the equilateral spaces are broken down by rectangular areas. While rectangles meet triangles, triangles meet conical extensions, conical extensions meet lines, scale lines, pennants and conical extensions turn into İsmail Ateş's symbols (Ateş, 2021).

Figure 103

Designs of Universe – Red 6, 195x145 cm



Note : Image taken from İsmail Ateş, Designs of Universe – Red 6, 2016, <http://www.ismailates.com/pPages/pArtist.aspx?paID=34§ion=130&lang=TR&periodID=129&pageNo=0&exhID=0>, Date of Access. 19.08.2021

5.2.3. Ahmet Özel

Ahmet Özel (1960) graduated from the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1982 and conducted art research in Rome and Florence, where he went with an Italian Art Scholarship in 1987. During this period, he was trained in painting restoration and expertise. Özel completed his PhD study at Marmara University in 1995.

The axis of the individuality in his artworks is maintained as long as the inner dynamic exists. In Ahmet Özel's works since the 1980s, his compliance with the basic principles whose boundaries he realized from the beginning without losing sight of the triangulation point can be evaluated within this framework. The axis of personality is an abstractionist line that applies to his painting. But this abstraction is not mechanical. Always maintaining its connection with life, it does not want to distance itself from the transitoriness that finds its source there. His work seeks to capture the details that seep from the concreteness of life into the abstract texture of the painting and there finds visual meaning. As the first indicator of the formation of existence, the cosmos reveals itself in the form of color indicators in Özel's paintings on cardboard and canvas. The intense textural quality created by overlapping fibrous color bands form a color magma that finds its meaning in Ahmet Özel's paintings. It can be said that the dominant concept of his magma-based works is reality-based abstraction (Özsezgin, 2008, p. 3).

Figure 104

Chaos, 100x70 cm



Note : Image taken from Ahmet Özel, Chaos, 1994, Human (İnsan) Exhibition (2003), Atatürk Cultural Center, Istanbul

As a departure point in Ahmet Özel's art, we see the plastic elements in his works as predominant, and the mythological side of the universe design, which forms the infrastructure and plane of his paintings. In this context, while the meaning of the plastic elements in Özel's paintings is reinforced, it constitutes an understanding aimed at abstracting his creative approach. The layers formed by the positioning of different colored forms on top of each other and side by side, and sometimes vertically and diagonally, determine the composition of the picture. The space which Özel composes increases the expressive side of the painting by creating dynamic effects on the surface with intertwined, textured, illuminated or non-illuminated color belts and visually contrasting color interactions. The connections and interactions established between different visual elements create undefinable effects on the perception of the audience.

Figure 105

The Embrace, 80x60 cm



Note : Image taken from Ahmet Özel, The Embrace, 2006, Özsezgin,K.,(2009) Magma Exhibition Catalogue, Kare Art Gallery, Istanbul

Spaces in Özel's works are an illusion and a product of his abstract approach. The images in his paintings are elements that do not have logical content, and sometimes they depict the sky, sometimes the elements of nature, or nothingness. In a

sense, this is an energy that Özel reflects outwardly through his subjective depth, and does not have descriptive elements, but appears in different environments through darkness and semi-light. Ahmet Özel has an approach that transcends thought and conceptual indicators in the creation process based on his own reality and is in a purely intuitive action.

Ahmet Özel's paintings feature a set of very meaningful phenomena that mark and question the existence of man in the context of the cosmic universe. The artist has abstracted the creation of the universe and of humans from time and space, which he examined with an intuitive dialectic, and reflected them with mystical meaning systems in the dimension of a mythological discourse. If an artist is the totality of his works, this integrity is also the dialectic of the processes that his artistic walks carry out in different dimensions. In this sense, it would not be wrong to state that Özel is looking for himself in the fictional space he has created (Yılmaz, 2010, p.8).

The pictorial reality of Özel's work is the contrast between the visual image in the external universe and the image in the internal universe. Through the images in his compositions, he created a synthesis between structural and contextual connections and created a rhythm-based union. This is also an intuition-based unity. The painting created by Ahmet Özel based on aesthetic values includes processes that break rules. Thanks to his free and unique approach in the creation phase, he creates his own intuitive rules. This intuitive aesthetic approach leans towards a pictorial action familiar to the hand and therefore to the brush. The resulting works are completely original and have sensory and spiritual characteristics.

The unworn, bright and pure colors on the surface of the painting emphasize Ahmet Özel's improvisatory approach. Vague scratches on the thin layers of paint contribute to the heightened emotion of the painting. Brushstrokes create effects of light and depth. Horizontal and vertical transitions on the forms increase the depth on the color surfaces, contributing aesthetically to the overall effect of the painting. Accordingly, even in most minimal areas, the richness of color and form of the painting is evident. Ahmet Özel's abstract paintings emerge with a clever construction of forms on the canvas surface. This is a phenomenon established and structured by the creative power of the painter.

Özel deals with the concept of 'healing', which he has attached to his own painting work in recent years, through amorphous bodies he calls shamans, healers and angels. By transforming the "Inner Sun", which represents real life energy, into a

plastic form, he identifies himself with this symbolic being. In particular, he focuses on the discourse of Caucasian mythology that grasps him at the depths of his being and aims to reach the elixir of life of the shamans he created, and the miraculous atmosphere created by him in his paintings. Their encounters with plasma figures that exist in timeless spaces, their vague shadows and reflections in non-plane spaces emphasize the importance of the "manifestations of the artist's own inner existence" (Ahmet Özel Dadakitap, 2019).

Figure 106

İlk Şehir [First City], 81x57 cm



Note : Image taken from Ahmet Özel, İlk Şehir, 2010, Yılmaz,R.E.,Berdic,M. (2011) Windows (Pencereler) Exhibition Catalogue, RH+Art Gallery, Istanbul

Özel's works exhibit the influences of his Caucasian origin and culture. A notable quality of the painter is that he can present his emotions and inner voices as a whole.

5.2.4. Mesut Karakış

Mesut Karakış (1976) graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting, from Hüsamettin Koçan's workshop in 1999. The artist continues to work in İstanbul.

Karakış's comments as part of my questions to him about his art and his view of today's art as a contemporary artist, from February 2022, are as follows:

In the process of producing his works, with regard to the movements or artists that influence or inspire him, Mesut Karakış states that the painting itself is more important than who made it. Whether the painting is abstract or figurative, he is attracted to its forms, colors and technique rather than its subject and narrative. In painting, composition, forms, colors and the construction technique are very important elements for him. As a result, all the paintings that interest him in this sense inspire Karakış. Anselm Kiefer, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko are the names that influenced him the most with his paintings.

Figure 107

Untitled, 110x80 cm



Note : Image taken from Mesut Karakış, Untitled, 2019, <https://sanatokur.com/portfolyo-mesut-karakis/> Date of Access.17.02.2022

The formalist style comes to the fore as the style or movement that is the closest to Mesut Karakış's works or with which he can relate the most. He focuses on the inner structure of the composition and the painting, aiming for maximum aesthetic and visual impact. Stating that his paintings do not have any narrative or story,

Karakış adds that he is an artist who seeks to make original and psycho-visually powerful paintings.

Karakış can evaluate his early period paintings characteristically as natural patterns, organic distortions, and lyrical expressions. Later, he produced geometric shapes and paintings based on dynamic line matrices intersecting each other and in which the grid dominates.

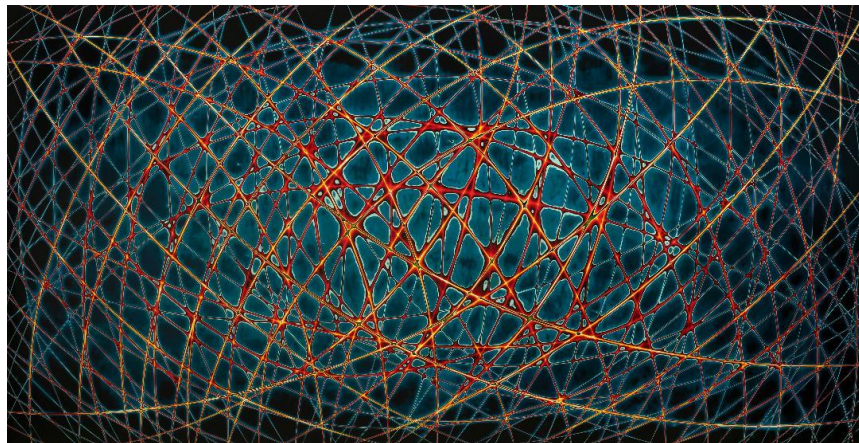
In Mesut Karakış's recent works, paintings in which the pictorial style predominates and the psycho-visual effect focuses on color have come to the forefront. While organic shapes and geometric grids also featured in his early compositions, he states that he brought color to his current works.

Karakış defines his painting technique as unique and outside traditions. Accordingly, Mesut Karakış divides his painting process into two stages:

1. Saturating the surface
2. Opening the surface

Figure 108

Untitled, 200x100 cm



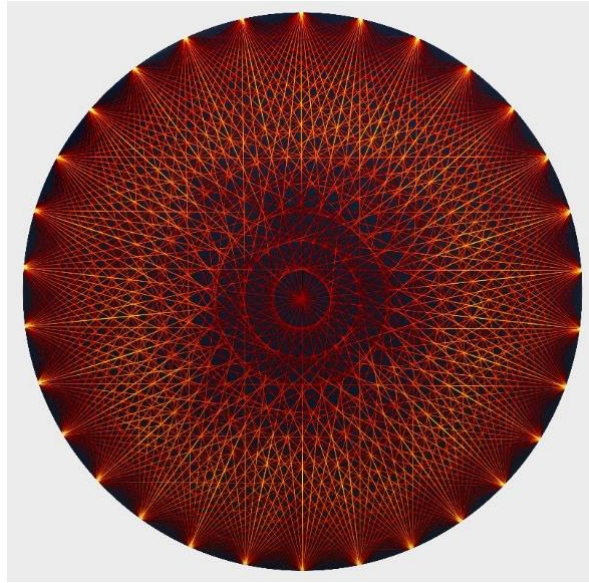
Note : Image taken from Mesut Karakış, Untitled, 2021, <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mesut-karakis-untitled-11>, Date of Access. 24.02.2022

Mesut Karakış states that, in this process, he started his painting by throwing acrylic paint onto the canvas surface every day according to the composition and color palette he had determined beforehand. Stating that these acrylic paint layers number in the 80s or 100s in his current paintings, Karakış waits for two to three days for them to dry after throwing each of the color layers at the surface. This way, the

first stage of the painting is completed. In the second stage of the production process, Mesut Karakış opens the canvas surface with the help of water and sandpaper, revealing the colors in the lower layer. As a result, the completion of a painting takes an average of three to four months.

Figure 109

Untitled 2, 100 cm



Note : Image taken from Mesut Karakış, Untitled 2, 2021, <https://www.kolekta.com.tr/yapit/isimsiz-1033/>, Date of Access. 05.03.2022

Mesut Karakış states that he prepares the canvas surface completely by himself, saturates the untreated canvas with the gesso he prepares until it produces a smooth surface.

Afterwards, Karakış, after having applied his color layers using Winsor-Newton acrylic paint, which he believes to give the best result in terms of binding to the surface and pigment quality for his painting technique, finally states that his production process is completed by applying a UV resistant transparent varnish in order to obtain a homogeneous surface.

5.2.5. Seçil Erel

Seçil Erel (1980) completed her undergraduate and graduate education at the Mimar Sinan University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting. The artist has been living in London since 2017 and continues her work there.

Below are Erel's evaluations of her art and her view on art as an international contemporary artist during my meeting with the artist on 22nd February 2022:

The fact that she studied classical Western European art was important for Seçil Erel. The idea of an invisible world outside the world we live in is a phenomenon that has influenced and interested her. Despite having a very classical and figuratively based education, Seçil Erel is an artist who focuses on the point where abstract painting meets conceptuality. Therefore, as an artist who tries to understand the period we live in and is inspired by nature and life with her own experience and identity, she has been influenced by very different sources instead of only certain artists and movements.

Figure 110

Mirror, 150x70 cm



Note : Image taken from Seçil Erel, Mirror, 2009, <https://secilartstudio.com/portfolio/mirror/>, Date of Access. 18.04.2022

Erel, who was influenced by abstract expressionist and abstract constructivist artists in her early works, was also inspired by masters such as Michelangelo and Monet.

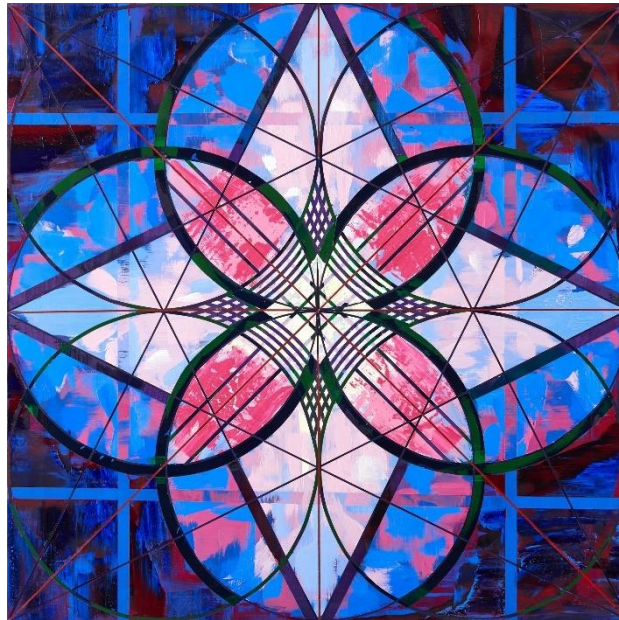
The fact that she is currently pursuing an art career in one of the world's centers of art like London contributes to her understanding of the developments in the art world and seeing the big picture. This is reflected in her works. In this context, artists with very different styles such as Tracy Emin, Yinka Shonibare and Bridget Riley influenced her. For example, Bridget Riley has been a very important artist for Erel, whose main focus is conceptual art, because Riley's form and colors and her way of perceiving are very suitable for her.

The meaning behind Riley's images, whose subject is to encode nature in some way, and how and why they are created are the primary subjects that influence Erel.

There is always reason behind all the works of Seçil Erel, who tries to convey her experiences and the state of being in her life in her paintings through a number of mathematical structures. For example, in her paintings from 2008 and 2009, everything was based on a system, and while this was a more defined phenomenon for her at the time, it now has a broader meaning.

Figure 111

Flower of Life 1, 100x100 cm



Note : Image taken from Seçil Erel, Flower of Life 1, 2019, <https://secilartstudio.com/portfolio/flower-of-life-1/>, Date of Access. 22.04.2022

Motherhood has been a huge change for Erel and has changed her definition of existence. This is because the basic phenomenon behind her paintings is existence. The idea of how to reach the ideal in the changing world and places has been an important factor affecting Erel's work. While time and space were important in her paintings, this later became replaced with something else. At the moment, Seçil Erel's relationship with her own existence and her effort to reflect her life force come to the forefront. This is an effort to create an "Imaginary Space" for herself.

The environment in which Erel grew up, the coexistence created by being exposed to Eastern and Western cultures at the same time, and a sense of confusion brought about by the education she received on very different movements in academia came together with the changes in his life and were reflected in her paintings. She then left everything behind and moved to England, where she took responsibility for herself and chose to step outside of her comfort zone. Although this great change was difficult for her, she continued to create thanks to his focus on the main issue without personalizing her problems.

Seçil Erel's solo exhibition, titled "Another Reality", which she opened at Milli Reasürans two years after she settled in London, is different from her previous works. This exhibition reflects the world of an artist who is completely cut off from her roots, who is not connected to anything, who is trying to adapt to a new life as a person whose identity is shattered. With this change, Erel tried to find a new balance by leaving behind the elements she thought were blocking her from the chaos she was in. This is a process in which she gets out of the negativity and begins to include the relationships she has established with herself in her paintings.

Erel, as a person, an artist, a woman and a mother, reflected her own self in her recent period works and has started to carry her works that were previously in geometric abstract style to a different place by freeing her thoughts.

While her old paintings used to include forms divided into small grids on large-sized canvases, she now gets out of those grids and produces works that she thinks express herself better. Therefore, those boxes in the previous works have turned into something else, that is, each of them is a painting in themselves. Erel thinks that color is formed more easily in her recent works and that she has started to

reflect the emotionality and the relationship she has established with herself and the universe in her paintings.

According to Seçil Erel, her works can be interpreted as abstract, evocative of music, harmony and even containing political elements. These paintings are actually works that point to her as a human being. Instead of trying to own things and be permanent in a world where everything is constantly changing, Erel focuses on how to better reflect this phenomenon of change in her works. In this context, each of Erel's grid works consisting of small modules are dynamic works that represent a different moment and subject and vary according to time and situation. Ultimately, this process becomes one of experience and memory reflection.

Erel states that although she is an artist who currently creates using various techniques on a two-dimensional surface, she has a three-dimensional perception of herself. Although Erel, who used paint plainly without mixing it with other things in her canvas paintings, used many different techniques and materials in her works, she then focused on classical oil painting because she could not get satisfactory answers to the questions "Do I use these different materials because I cannot express myself adequately with oil painting or do these different materials and techniques really contribute to my art?" In addition, Seçil Erel continues to develop digital works while working with techniques such as collage, oil painting, drawing, mural painting (application to spaces such as graffiti) and watercolor in the two-dimensional plane. Erel creates a color memory, or in other words, a color code, by combining the colors she mixes in her palette on a surface during the production phase of her recent works in series.

Seçil Erel's "Universal Fragments" series, which she made in 2021 and was selected for the summer exhibition at the Royal Academy, are paintings that have turned into "Imaginary Spaces" in her words, and these are the reflections of the places or situations that affect the artist in her works. With the "Universal Fragments" series, the artist entered a process that departed from the geometric abstract style of the previous period and evolved into an organic abstract style.

Figure 112*Universal Fragments, 45x30 cm*

Note : Image taken from Seçil Erel, Universal Fragments, 2020,
<https://secilartstudio.com/portfolio/universal-fragments-10/>,

Date of Access. 27.04.2022

5.2.6. Nejat Satı

Nejat Satı (1982) graduated from Dokuz September University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting in 2004. In addition to the many group exhibitions he has participated in so far, Satı has also opened solo exhibitions and continues to live and work in İstanbul.

Satı's comments as part of my questions from March 2022 about his art and his view of today's art as a contemporary artist are as follows:

Figure 113*Illness, 150x150 cm*

Note : Image taken from Nejat Sati, Illness, 2010, <https://www.piartworks.com/exhibitions/84-nejat-sati-hypoglottis/>, Date of Access. 01.05.2022

As a contemporary artist, Sati states that he is interested in human cell structures, wounds and erosions of biology. Nejat Sati, who produced works in which he dealt with color in a minimal way in his series titled “Structure” in previous periods, turned to the abstraction of cell organism images and bodily wounds in his recent works.

In this context, Anselm Kiefer is an artist whom he admires and who influenced him. According to Sati, Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer were the artists who made great strides in the post-World War II period, but it’s Kiefer’s darkness that affects him much more.

To Sati, who does not associate his works with a particular movement or style, his works have a much more personal effect. Social events and the developments around him trigger Nejat Sati’s work and are reflect on his work. Stating that the aesthetic aspects of his works are especially strong, Sati says that he often experiences ebbs and flows regarding making these aspects repulsive. In his own words, he loves the Joker, not Batman.

Figure 114*Melancholy, 180x150 cm*

Note : Image taken from Nejat Satı, Melancholy, 2012, <https://www.piartworks.com/exhibitions/63-nejat-sat-state-of-mind/>,

Date of Access.02.05.2022

While Nejat Satı was an artist who produced many different styles of works especially between 2010 and 2012, culminating in his series called “Nefs” that he started during the Gezi incident. These works are paintings that focus on bruises and wounds caused by an element of violence on the human body. Nejat Satı, who is currently working on this series, states that his series of works called “Catharsis” is a more embodied version of them. Stating that he likes to make wound and bruise paintings, many serial works of Satı continue within.

Satı states that while producing his works, he leaves the act of creating to its own flow without following a certain process and acts on his feelings and emotions at that moment. On the other hand, since he is a contemporary artist, he adds that he prefers plastic and contemporary elements as materials and mediums. In this context, Nejat Satı belongs to the generation of contemporary artists who transform the traditional art of painting by using technological innovations.

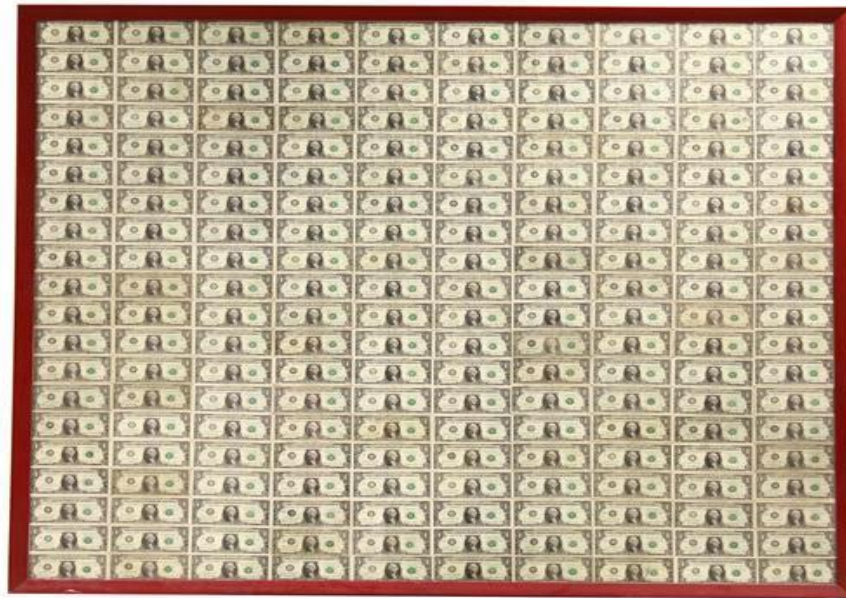
5.2.7. Bahar Artan Oskay

Bahar Artan Oskay (1984) received her bachelor's degree from Yeditepe University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Plastic Arts in 2006 and her master's degree from the same department in 2011. Oskay, who completed the Proficiency in Art program at Yıldız Technical University Art and Design Department in 2017, is currently working as the Vice Chief of the Department of Plastic Arts at Yeditepe University Faculty of Fine Arts.

Below are the comments Oskay made in March 2022 as part of my questions about art and her view of contemporary art as a contemporary artist:

Figure 115

Respect to A.Warhol 200 One Dollar Bills



Note : Image taken from Bahar Artan Oskay, Respect to A.Warhol 200 One Dollar Bills, 2012, Oskay,B.A. BAHAR ARTAN OSKAY'IN RESİMLERİNİN TARİHSEL SÜRECİ VE ÖRNEKLERİ

The works Oskay created between 2009 and 2013 establish a correlation between bringing an explanatory vision to the works of art and deforming them, applied at any point in the historical process. It is based on how artists have copied

nature in their works throughout history. For example, "Respect to Andy Warhol, 200 One Dollar Bills" is a conceptual reinterpretation of Andy Warhol's "200 One Dollar Bills", a screen-printed artwork. The material used is actual US Dollars. The work serves as a reference to the value of the work of art as it has two hundred American dollars on it. In short, it is announced to everyone that two hundred dollars were spent on the work. The message the work wants to send to the viewer is related to the issue of whether or not the value of this work is two hundred dollars.

Bahar Artan Oskay interpreted the works of the great masters of modern art while examining popular culture in her early works. From Mondrian to Matisse, from Picasso to Gauguin, she interpreted and appropriated the works of artists in a wide range of subjects and brought popular art into the discourse from an original point of view. In her later periods, the interpretation of popular works of art produced a series of works on the issue of how popular images create awareness in contemporary life and how they turn into works of art through in-person interaction.

Figure 116

Destruction of Figurative Abstraction



Note : Image taken from Bahar Artan Oskay, Destruction of Figurative Abstraction, 2015, Oskay, B.A. *BAHAR ARTAN OSKAY'IN RESİMLERİNİN TARİHSEL SÜRECİ VE ÖRNEKLERİ*

Between 2014 and 2015, the artist produced many works she called Figurative Abstraction. During this period, she made various experiments to advance to a farther point with the works she produced. However, these experiments always referred to the preceding ones and brought about a need to develop more. Influenced by Picasso's quote "Every act of creation is first an act of destruction," the artist entered a long process of research and effort in order for her figurative abstraction series to reach a different point. This effort has been in the form of minimizing and reproducing emotions, inspirations, and personal signs.

As a result, Oskay is now in the process of interpreting her own art and, under the influence of the inevitability of artistic change, cutting, destroying, and recomposing her old paintings in ways whose outcomes are unforeseeable. Oskay's dissection and reconstruction of her work "In the Lab of Gods" is an example of this. This change in Bahar Artan Oskay's paintings is based on the uncontrolled" association of "controlled" creation. The artist cut her works she produced for the figurative abstraction series, divided them into squares and started to create new compositions. Oskay explained it this way:

Destruction is necessary in order to create. The process of destruction is as chronic as it is painful. But if there's a point that you're thinking about reaching, destruction is, at the same time, a step...

Figure 117

3-D



Note : Image taken from Bahar Artan Oskay, 3-D, 2019, Oskay,B.A. *BAHAR ARTAN OSKAY'IN RESİMLERİNİN TARİHSEL SÜRECİ VE ÖRNEKLERİ*

In the process of destruction, the coincidental close-up images Oskay procures reach abstract art through figurative abstraction. Consequently, in Bahar Artan Oskay's paintings, the abstract itself becomes part of the abstraction.

6. THE GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT ARTWORKS OF O. SELÇUK EROĞLU

Osman Selçuk Eroğlu has shown interest in painting from a young age, which he has pursued since. Following a long administrative career, he attended Burhan Yıldırım's painting workshop between 2008-2010. During this period, Eroğlu received awards and exhibitions in various painting competitions he participated.

This is the summary of the beginning of Eroğlu's painting process, which has developed in two parallel styles: after 2008, when he left his corporate work life to paint seriously, and before. One is figurative, and the other is an geometric abstract style, which is also the subject of his doctoral thesis in art.

Eroğlu's geometric abstract works are entirely improvised without any designs or plans. As they do not contain a message or a narrative, they are therefore formalistic and abstract. Though his works previously generally featured two prominent colors or were black and white, though his use of warm colors has since increased. Eroğlu states that although his shapes and his color selection, which evoke a sense of three-dimensionality in his geometric abstract paintings, seem pre-planned, they are actually the result of his creative process where the artist experiences a sensation of losing control and the paintings almost emerge on their own.

Below is a detailed assessment of Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's geometric abstract works in terms of their philosophical explication, sources of inspiration, and similarities to other contemporary artists' works, as well as their composition, color structure, and the medium in use.

6.1. O. Selçuk Eroğlu's Philosophy of Painting / Sources of Inspiration:

As stated in the introduction, Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's geometric abstract artworks are formalist and abstract. Although these paintings are improvised without being adhering to any design, a general examination shows that they often feature similar imagery. These paintings often exhibit three-dimensional geometric forms with a perspective that creates a sense of depth.

It is not clear whether Eroğlu, who received his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, turned to geometric abstraction as a result of his engineering education or whether he chose mechanical engineering because of his interest in

geometric forms. It would not be wrong to state that these paintings, which frequently feature geometric imagery, have the precise lines and clarity of machinery and machine components. When he gets an opportunity to draw – for example, when he finds a blank paper or a cardboard surface – Eroğlu relays these forms and images, which could be defined as rectilinear and architectonic, onto his working surface. In fact, Eroğlu's approach is quite pronounced across his studies in different mediums like sculpture and ceramics, in addition to painting. The sculpture he made in 2014, when he was sent as one of the five student representatives for Yeditepe University in a work group to the European Exchange Academy in Berlin, Germany, is a good example of this. The sculpture, which consisted of the limited materials at hand, contained geometric abstract elements and because it was made in the allotted time of one hour, it was naturally produced without much of a planning or design process. This is a good example of the method in which Eroğlu conveys his interior world onto his artworks through improvisation.

Figure 118

Abstract Sculpture, 150x60 cm



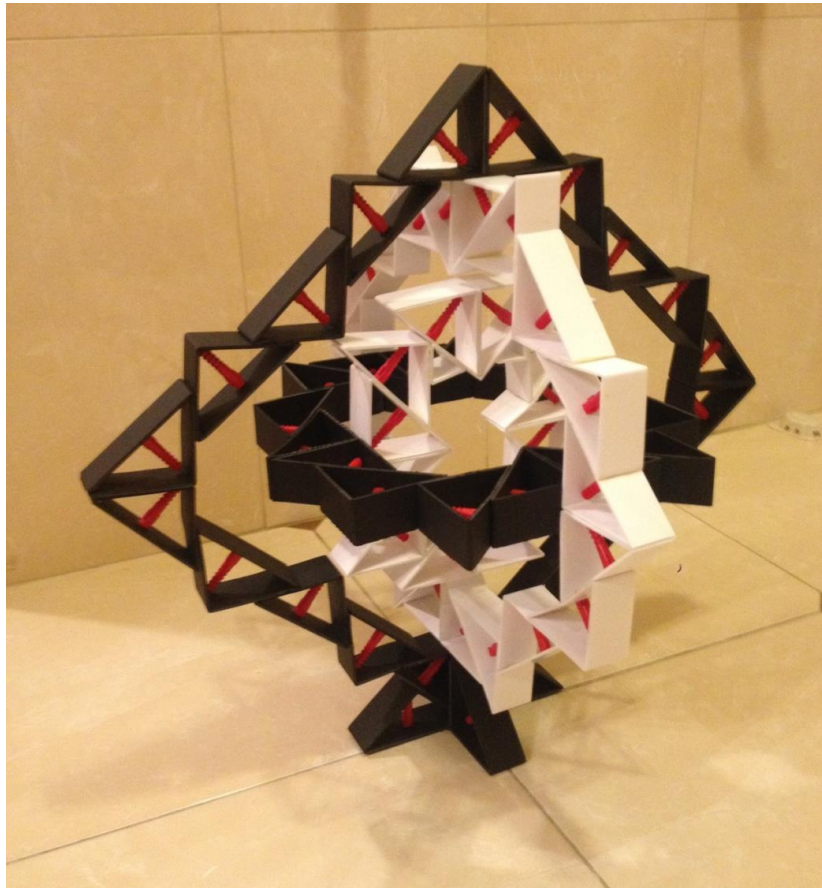
Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract Sculpture, 2014

Contrary to most of his works, and although it was produced through a design and planning process, the Eroğlu's three-dimensional structure from 2014, when he was a scientific preparatory student at Yeditepe University, also exhibits a geometric style. This work, as with the previous example, features rectilinear forms and consists of a small number of predominantly black and white colored elements, as was often seen in his early geometric abstract paintings.

A similar case is evident in Eroğlu's two-dimensional ceramic works. Circular forms and repeating images that move away towards a point to create a sense of perspective are etched onto ceramic clay.

Figure 119

Structure, 60x50x40 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Structure, 2014

Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's inclination towards a geometric abstract style, regardless of whether it is a painting, sculpture or any other medium, is closely related to his personality. Eroğlu's personal approach and his stance in his corporate career before his academic painting education were always based on a certain order and principles. He has a logical and systematic approach to events and facts. He doesn't like chaos and uncertainty. Eroğlu's pragmatic personality prefers to reach the conclusion in the simplest, clearest, and most direct way possible. He doesn't want to waste time on details he considers unimportant. On the other hand, because he prefers to work within certain disciplines or an order, he attaches great importance to rituals. This is likely to contradict his pragmatic approach in certain cases.

In addition to the forms and shapes Eroğlu frequently features in his geometric abstract works, his production method for these works also ties into his personality. In other words, his creative process generally begins with a straight or slightly curvilinear line on an empty surface with a single, uninterrupted hand movement and develops rapidly with successive lines in the opposite direction added without hesitation to create new geometric forms and shapes.

Figure 120

Abstract ceramic, 30x20 cm



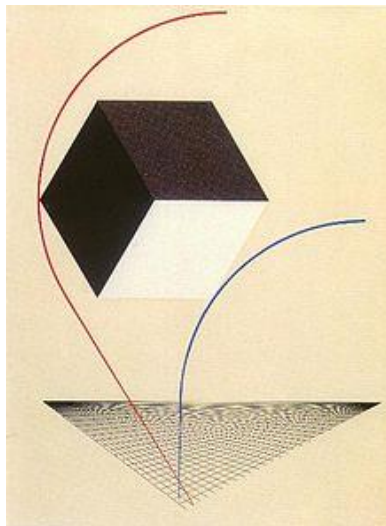
Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract ceramic, 2014

Although they are formalist in style, which is to say, they do not convey a narrative or message, it would be incorrect to say that Eroğlu's geometric abstract works lack emotion. They ultimately reflect his inner world, his emotions. In this context, not only are they geometric abstracts but in a sense abstract expressionist works. Their difference from traditional abstract expressionism is their use of geometric elements instead of organic/lyrical imagery. In addition, these works are produced relatively quickly and without planning, akin to action paintings, and usually done in one sitting, or so to speak.

Although Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's works seem to exhibit constructivist features at first glance due to their precise lines and forms resembling mechanical elements, they are more similar to suprematism, the first movement in which the painting ceased to be a descriptive tool and turned into an independent component of reality. On the other hand, unlike suprematist works, which are mostly composed of two-dimensional forms, they are also reminiscent of the works of El Lissitzky, one of the leading artists of the Constructivist movement, as his works usually feature a three-dimensional space. In this context, Eroğlu's work could be said to have features from these two pioneering abstract art movements (Fortenberry, 2014, p. 164).

Figure 121

A Proun



Note : Image taken from El Lissitzky, *A Proun*, 1925, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Prounen_by_El_Lissitzky_c.1925.jpg, Date of Access. 12.09.2022

On the other hand, it would not be wrong to state that Eroğlu's works have minimalist features as they exhibit few colors and generally have untextured and flat paint surfaces. These works are particularly precise and sharp-edged, with similarities to the works of Minimalists that feature flat, two-dimensional spaces and repetitive geometric forms. Eroğlu's work is also compatible with minimalist thought, which aims to make an artwork objective, referring only to itself, without any expressions or implications. On the other hand, his works contradict the minimalist view that the artist's personal expression, that is, his handprint, should not be present in their work. Because when examined as a whole, it is clearly evident that Eroğlu's works are created by him as they resemble each other in terms of their compositional structure, the forms they feature, and his choice of colors.

The works of the prominent minimalist Sol LeWitt's works were two- and three-dimensional pieces in which conceptual processes turned into surface and volume and contained visual elements that could be said to have been created intuitively and unconsciously. This intuitive and unconscious approach is also found in Eroğlu's work. On the other hand, Eroğlu's works differ from LeWitt's in that they lack any conceptual elements. One point where Eroğlu differs from Sol LeWitt is related to the production process of the artwork. According to LeWitt, all the stages in creating the work; the sketches, the patterns, the drawings, the failed models, the thoughts, the dialogues, were important. The elements that revealed the artist's way of thinking were sometimes more interesting than the finished work (Cross & Markonish, 2009, p. 27).

Figure 122*Wall Drawing #1171*

Note : Image taken from Sol LeWitt, Wall Drawing #1171, 2005, <https://www.facebook.com/massmoca/posts/sol-lewitt-wall-drawing-1171five-degrees-of-scribbles-a-cube-without-a-cube-a-cu/10157779956641490/>,

Date of Access.12.09.2022

For Eroğlu, the important factor is not the production stages or process of the work or even the creative ideas that go into it, but the resulting work. For example, many years ago, a work in Contemporary Istanbul, where the visage of Michelangelo's David was cast as a shadow on a plain white wall with lighting from below, has no artistic value for Eroğlu. This could have been only an imitation created with a creative approach rather than an artistic work. Because what on exhibit was merely a projection of a masterpiece from the Renaissance period.

Eroğlu's simple approach, which he's more frequently used especially in his more recent work, is manifested in two-dimensional forms through the use of a small number of lines and colors. This approach has similarities with the works of the American painter Ellsworth Kelly, who is known for hard-edge paintings, Color Field paintings and Minimalism.

When we look at the minimalism movement in particular or at art history in general, the works of Frank Stella, one of the most influential artists of the minimalism movement, are arguably the examples that are the closest to Eroğlu's geometric abstract works. Stella's works have reduced painting to geometric forms by excluding any element of surface-level meaning or symbolism. They are works in which painting is an object in itself, absent of any representation. Stella's famous quote, "What you see is what you see", is very appropriate to Eroğlu's geometric abstract works.

Figure 123

Metropolitan Museum “M “, 208.3x208.3x9.5 cm



Note :Image taken from Frank Stella, Metropolitan Museum “M “, 1970,
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/frank-stella/metropolitan-museum-m-1970>,
Date of Access.13.09.2022

Figure 124

Abstract, 100x70 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2014

Like Stella, who abandoned the practice of sketching before painting, Eroğlu’s approach involves creating his geometric abstract paintings directly, without sketches.

When we look at the early Turkish artists who produced works in a geometric abstract style, Eroğlu’s work appears close to the works of Fahrelnissa Zeid with his approach that includes contrasting colors, especially in his recent works. In addition to

Zeid, Sabri Berkel, with his approach that puts the geometric classical order at the center of his oeuvre, and Cemal Bingöl, with his approach that lacks any textural properties of paint with an extremely limited palette, are artists who have produced works which Eroğlu's works resemble in some respects.

Figure 125

Composition, 80x56 cm

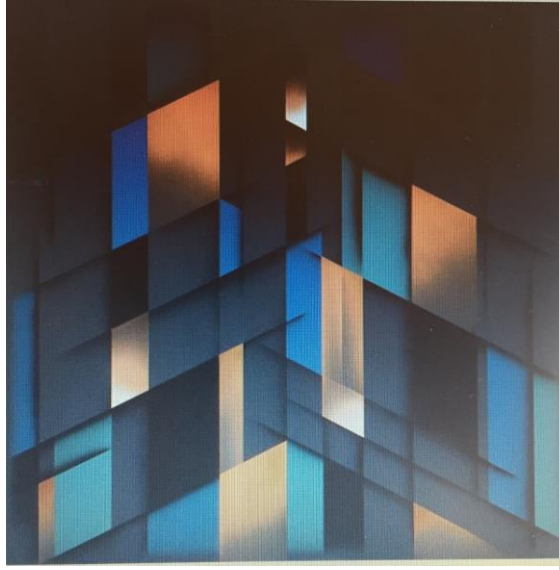


Note : Image taken from Cemal Bingöl, Composition, 1957, <https://gaziresimissanalsergi.gazi.edu.tr/eser-detay/136/kompozisyon>, Date of Access. 21.09.2022

In addition to his geometric abstract style, Eroğlu's works are most similar to the works of the early-period Turkish artist Abdurrahman Öztoprak, which mostly feature a three-dimensional space. In Öztoprak's paintings feature colorful triangular, circular and spherical forms on a black background gaining volume and transitioning into a subtle organic softening state that breaks the geometric monotony. These features, which manifest as geometry and motion in the surface-space relationship, are the central element of Abdurrahman Öztoprak's art. These are also evident in Eroğlu's works. While Öztoprak places his images mostly on a black background, Eroğlu prefers different colors, including plain white.

Figure 126

Resim 354 [Painting 354], 130x130 cm



Note : Image taken from Abdurrahman Öztoprak, Resim 354 [Painting 354], 2001, <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Resim-354/9AFA87097C151FD0716211B6C494CDA8>, Date of Access. 09.10.2022

6.2. O. Selçuk Eroğlu's Geometric Abstract Paintings in Terms of Composition:

In terms of composition, a work of art is a combination of artistic elements that comprise it in the context of its aesthetic or general visual characteristics.

The first of these elements is the line. This may seem simple. But rather than whether the composition is made up of lines, elements such as the length, direction, thickness, brightness, and texture of the lines can change the appearance of an artwork significantly. The other element or factor is the shape. Similarly, to define the shapes in a composition, it is necessary to determine, for example, whether they are two- or three-dimensional. The third element is the actual or perceptual volume or mass of the shapes or images. Color can be considered as the fourth factor in a pictorial or visual composition. The weight of the colors in the composition, and whether they are warm or cold, are determining factors. Another factor is the texture. It is important whether

we are viewing a composition with a soft, hard, rough, or flat texture or a combination of all of them (Study, 03.11.2022).

In a work of art with visual content, lines come together to form shapes and forms. These are geometric or organic shapes. Some abstract works contain a combination of the two. Geometric shapes and forms like squares, triangles, circles, etc., often make a composition look more structural when simplifying it. Organic shapes and forms give the composition a more uncontrolled or wild look.

20th century abstract art, which emerged at the beginning of the century as a result of significant changes in technology, science and philosophy, is a creative discipline in which shapes, lines, colors and forms are combined to create a visual impact. Abstract artworks move away from the depiction of the real visual world and feature interesting effects within their composition. However, they may not make sense to the average viewer looking for a narrative or message in the artwork.

The reason is that especially abstract and abstract expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock pushed aside the classical compositional approach in painting and adopted an all-around compositional approach. This is a method puts aside the traditional process of taking the top, bottom and center parts of the surface into account and views the surface of the canvas as a whole (Riseart, 03.11.2022).

Figure 127

Abstract, 70x55 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2007

The compositional structure of Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's geometric abstract works feature lines, which are the starting point of the shapes and forms they comprise, that are both rectilinear and curvilinear. This strays from geometric abstract works, which are usually in a rectilinear structure. On the other hand, although they have curvilinear features, the shapes created by these lines are geometric because they are triangular, rectangular, or elliptical.

Rectilinear and curvilinear geometric shapes and forms feature in Eroğlu's compositions in a repetitive manner both in each artwork and across different works. While these are only two-dimensional in some of Eroğlu's works or only three-dimensional to create depth perception, some of his works exhibit them in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional fashion in the same painting. The most common shapes are triangles and quadrilaterals, but circles and pentagons also appear in Eroğlu's works. These geometric forms often have different edge lengths and usually slightly curved edges.

Especially in his early works, Eroğlu focused on creating a three-dimensional depth perception through geometric form. Whether these are triangles, quadrangles or circles, these forms are depicted with interior walls, so to speak, in such a way as to create an effect of entering the surface of the painting. These interior walls, which form a second form parallel to the outlines that comprise the form, are often darker in color to increase the depth effect and create a sense of perspective.

Figure 128

Abstract (Detail)



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract (Detail), 2018

Another remarkable feature of Eroğlu's geometric abstract compositions is the perspective effect emphasized through the forms. This usually happens in two ways. One is within the primary form, which is usually a form with a three-dimensional appearance that contains geometric shapes which gradually shrink towards a vanishing point and are often evenly spaced. The other takes the form of grid structures consisting of hollow or two-colored shapes with a two- or three-dimensional form, shrinking towards a vanishing point. These grids are usually tiles that are quadrangular or triangular and appear two-dimensional. Subsequently, Eroğlu uses them in some of his works or in the same painting as the other form to create a three-dimensional effect.

Figure 129

Abstract (Detail)



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract (Detail), 2014

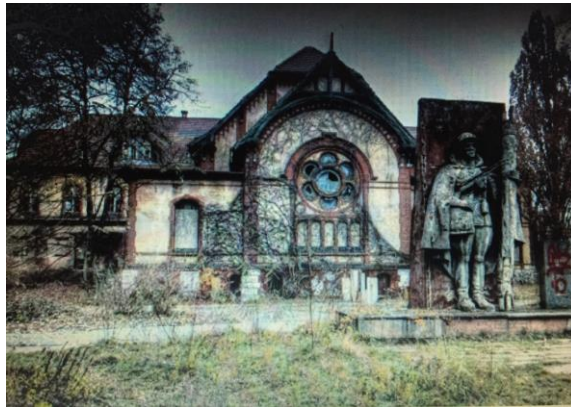
As previously stated, Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's geometric abstract works do not contain a message or a narrative, nor do the forms that comprise them feature or refer to any religious, cultural, regional, or ideological symbols and icons. On the other hand, due to their geometric structure, they naturally contain familiar imagery and shapes that are found in the environment we inhabit.

There is only one example in which Eroğlu makes an exception to his attitude avoiding symbols belonging to a particular culture or region in his work. This is the mural he made for the exhibition at the European Exchange Academy in 2014. In his

geometric abstract mural, painted on a wall in an unused part of the historical Beelitz-Heilstaaten Sanatorium building complex near Berlin, which became operational again after its partial modernization, Eroğlu featured decorative forms and ornaments from the historical building. For example, the circular ornaments and the wavy shapes on the interior and exterior walls of the sanatorium building are featured in the painting together with other geometric forms encountered in Eroğlu's works.

Figure 130

The Beelitz-Heilstaaten Sanatorium



Note : Image taken from *The Beelitz-Heilstaaten Sanatorium*, <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/emlak/dunyanin-en-korkutucu-yerlerinden-biri-beelitz-heilstatten-64253>, Date of Access. 16.10.2022

Figure 131

European Exchange Academy, Morning Class



Note : Beelitz-Heilst., European Exchange Academy, Morning Class, 2014

Another point where this mural strays from Eroğlu's geometric abstract approach is that it had a pre-production design phase. Naturally, this was necessary to incorporate the various decorative elements and ornaments in the sanatorium building into the murals harmoniously with the other geometric forms.

Figure 132

Mural, 500x350 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Mural, 2014

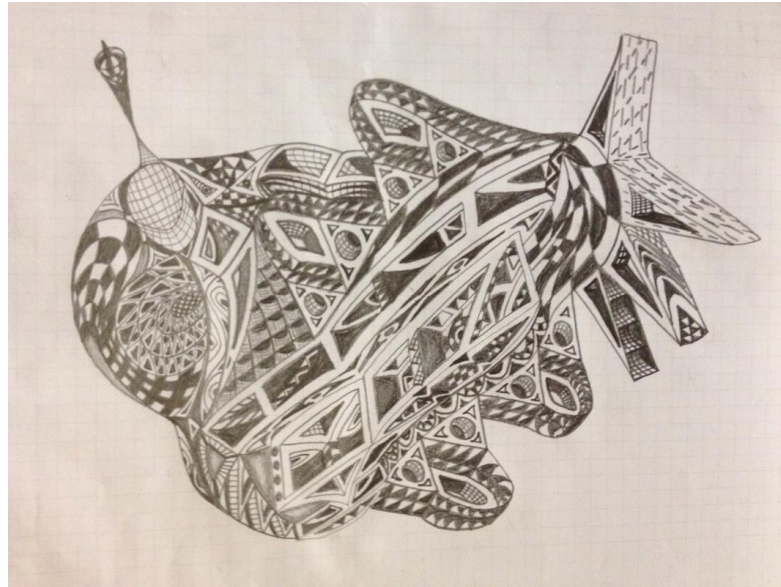
The biggest change in the compositional structure of Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's geometric abstract works over the years is that in his early paintings, the forms were positioned in a way that they remained inside the canvas or painting surface, whereas after 2014, they began to spill over from boundaries of the painting's surface.

The forms that remain within the surface, as frequently seen in Eroğlu's early period paintings, look like objects placed on the painting surface or canvas. As a result, these early geometric abstract paintings had a sculptural appearance, especially with the formal effect that created a three-dimensional appearance. This is evident in

Figure 133 below. On the other hand, his recent works, which consist mostly of forms and shapes that spill out of the canvas surface, have a more pictorial effect.

Figure 133

Abstract, 50x35 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2004

In terms of spacing, which can be defined as the meaningful gaps left between the elements that make up the composition in the painting, Eroğlu's geometric abstract works display changes over time. Eroğlu used almost all of his painting surface in his early paintings with little or no space between images and shapes. He later began to include larger empty spaces in his works. This change is visible in Figure 134.

Osman Selçuk Eroğlu often used three-dimensional forms that create a sense of depth in his early geometric abstract compositions but later started to create works in a more two-dimensional appearance when he transitioned to working digitally in 2019. A feature often encountered in these paintings in a digital technique is that they contain relatively few geometric forms and are simpler than his traditionally produced works.

On the other hand, the advantage of the digital technique is that it allows for a faster process than traditional painting. A more efficient operation can be achieved by creating various color and form combinations quickly as they can be undone at any time.

Figure 134*Abstract, 45x35 cm**Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2014*

An element that does not change in Eroğlu's early or late geometric abstract works and continues to appear is the compositional symmetry.

In a work of art, symmetry is achieved by placing visual elements with equal weight on both sides of an imaginary line that divides the painting surface in half. This way, a sense of harmony and an aesthetic appearance automatically emerge in the composition. Symmetry is also an important factor in that it means integrity, order, clarity and consistency in a work of art. As a result, it creates a sense of power, balance, solidity and formality in the work itself and on the viewers, which facilitates focus (Yourartpath, 2022).

Symmetrical compositions coincide with Eroğlu's logical and systematic approach and constitute the extremes in his geometric abstract works. Eroğlu does not like disorder and uncertainty and assigns importance to order.

While Eroğlu used to produce compositions with symmetrical content in black and white, he has started to feature different colors with the use of digital techniques.

Figure 135*Abstract**Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2021*

6.3. The Use of Line and Color in O. Selçuk Eroğlu's Geometric Abstract Paintings:

In the visual arts, the line most commonly serves to create outlines or the boundaries of an object. Painters often start by drawing the outlines, or rather, the contours of an object.

Art historian, writer and educator Heinrich Wölfflin formulated the linear and painterly precepts in the art of painting. According to Wölfflin, light and shadow dominate in the painterly style, while the contours supersede in the linear style. With this observation, Wölfflin stated that the linear style concerns the lines and the painterly style, the masses.

Wölfflin argued that the linear style depicts objects as they are, and the painterly style depicts them as they appear. If we are to elaborate, the objects are depicted on a basis of a three-dimensional certainty in the linear style, whereas in the painterly style, the shadows are in complete harmony with the objects, giving an illusion of reality as if they are tactile. Patterns created by lines do not harmonize with the models and are perceived as independent spots. Wölfflin said of linearity that it is the art of the corporeal, and the other is the art of the really seen (Bulak, 2018).

In the linear style, the lines surround the shapes and move uninterruptedly. Paintings in the painterly style, feature lines, which create the shapes, in fragmented form. Long continuous lines are replaced by dashes that have no meaning on their own.

From the point of view of linear and painterly approaches, geometric abstract painting arguably has linear features. The difference between geometric abstract painting, which consists of continuous lines that determine the contours of objects, and classical Renaissance or traditional figurative painting, which are also based on a linear approach, is that it reveals abstract images and not what is seen in nature.

Eroğlu's geometric abstract works also have a linear approach with contours that consist of precise and continuous lines. In Eroğlu's works, however, shaky or unstable lines give way to clear forms and shapes that are consistent in terms of their weight and uninterrupted lines. This decisively linear approach is featured not only in Eroğlu's geometric abstract works but also in his figurative paintings. His charcoal drawings, where it is easier to control the line, and his oil pastel paintings, where clear and precise lines are more difficult to apply, have similar styles (Figure 138).

Figure 136

Abstract, 100x70 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2015

Figure 137*Still Life*, 42x29.7 cm*Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Still Life, 2019***Figure 138***On the Way to Viktor Levi*, 42x29.7 cm*Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, On the Way to Viktor Levi, 2021*

In painting, color is one of the elements that exert the strongest influence on viewers' emotions. In other words, color is a factor that establishes the tone of a work of art along with the line.

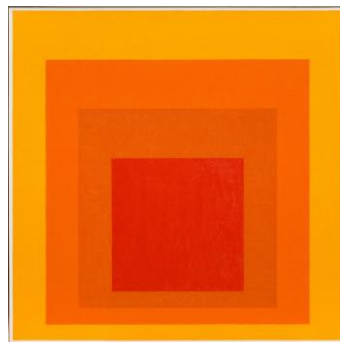
As abstract art broke its ties to nature, its color and lighting have also become disconnected from nature. Colors become the subject with their unique features and their relationships with other colors. Thus, as the necessity of expressing color and the light produced by color in a naturalistic manner came to an end with abstract painting, the function of color and light in a work to reveal the form of objects was also eliminated. In other words, in abstract painting, color and light exist for the sake of their own values. Similarly, color and line in abstract painting exist on their own as independent pictorial elements (Çetin, 2011).

Although this does not apply to all types of abstract painting, the linear arrangement of the surface is among the first thoughts in the formation process, especially in geometric abstraction. The line is followed by color. Infinite colors and their infinite variations are a mental exercise at every stage of the process.

Color as an element can only become a visible when it contains a form, shape or contour. Josef Albers used the square as a form to make it subordinate to color in a sense. This work, which he called "Homage to the Square", allowed him to focus on color alone. Thus, he made color the primary element instead of secondary or a mere factor of the painting. He stated that when the right amount is used, a color can be combined with any other color independently of the rules of harmony (José Heerkens, 2022).

Figure 139

Homage to the Square, 60.64x60.64 cm



Note : Image taken from Josef Albers, Homage to the Square, 1972, https://www.si.edu/object/homage-square-glow%3Ahmsg_72.3,

Date of Access. 28.10.2022

Especially in his early geometric abstracts, Osman Selçuk Eroğlu seemingly had a timid attitude in terms of his use of color. Although he made exceptions to this in some works, this was a period in which he created paintings that were usually black and white or only used two colors. Figure 140 is an example of his early work that is generous with color. Eroğlu's approach is rooted in the fact that he wants to focus on the forms and shapes, which he views as the backbone of the painting, by keeping a bypassing compositional variables or issues such as color.

Figure 140

Abstract, 30x15 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2000

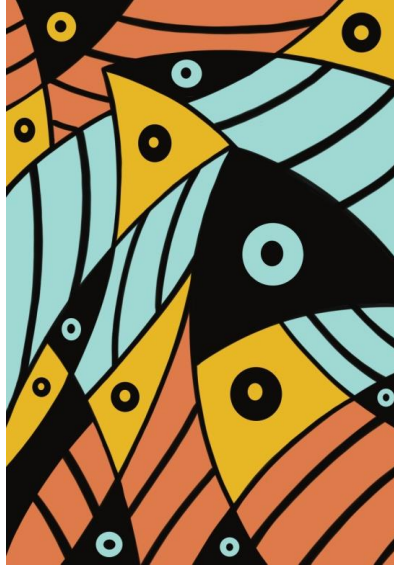
Eroğlu took care to keep the number of colors limited in his later period works even as he started to include a greater number of colors than black and white. While these few are mostly warm tertiary color combinations such as red and orange, he notably also included in his works cold complementary colors such as blue and green, as well as analogous tones that run contrary to traditional color harmony, all in one place.

Generally, Eroğlu's geometric abstract works feature solid colors that do not vary in value, that is, without a brightness difference, within the same form. The colors are homogeneous and are applied flatly onto the surface without texture. In Eroğlu's digital work, this untextured approach is more pronounced. Again, the speed provided by digital technology and the ability to easily change the composition gave Eroğlu the opportunity to make variations with different colors and tones on a certain linear composition and pattern (Figures 141 and 142). From this point of view, it

would not be wrong to state that Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's improvised early period geometric abstract works featured some amount of design elements.

Figure 141

Abstract 1



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract 1, 2021

Figure 142

Abstract 2



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract 2, 2021

6.4. O. Selçuk Eroğlu's Geometric Abstract Paintings in Terms of the Use of Medium:

From visual arts the point of view or from an artistic one in general, the material or medium used in the creation of a work of art can be defined as an element that serves the purpose of the artist's self-expression. These materials or the medium, which are naturally utilized in the artistic production process, should fit the artist's style and the result they want to achieve. In other words, the medium in use is a decisive factor in the structure of the resulting work of art.

As mentioned in the previous sections, geometric abstract works and especially Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's works in this style allow the use of only certain materials depending on their forms and shapes which consist of precise and clear lines and uninterrupted contours.

Figure 143

Alien, 15x10 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Alien, 2014

In Eroğlu's early geometric abstract works, he included a small number of colors, mostly only using charcoal or ballpoint pen on paper. An example of this is the painting "Yaratık", made using a ballpoint pen for the exhibition brochure at the European Exchange Academy, although it is not an early-period work (Figure 143).

While it is possible to make corrections with pencils as they allow erasing, this is not possible with a ballpoint pen. On the other hand, Eroğlu, with his improvisational approach, has chosen to transform the parts he wants to change by adding to them instead of removing them from his ballpoint pen artworks. As mentioned earlier, Eroğlu's works produced with either charcoal or ballpoint are done very quickly and usually finished in a single session. The fact that the painting surface, which is as much a material as the medium, is often small in size is also a factor.

In the later periods, when he started to feature more color in his geometric abstractions, Eroğlu began to use acrylics as a medium. These paintings brought canvas and cardboard to the fore as surface materials. These paintings on canvas and cardboard pieces of varying sizes were done in acrylics with colored ballpoint pens or permanent markers at the same time. These works frequently feature the color element and acrylics are used to color the empty spaces in and around the shapes and forms, while the colored ballpoint or marker serves to create the contours of the forms (Figure 144).

Figure 144

Abstract, 100x70 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2014

Eroğlu limits the number of colors he uses in his geometric abstractions on canvas or cardboard to three or four and usually some of them are different shades of the same color. Especially in his paintings on cardboard, he leaves some areas unpainted and uses the cardboard's own color as a spatial element (Figure 145).

Figure 145

Abstract, 54x54 cm



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2022

Osman Selçuk Eroğlu has been using digital technology since 2019 for his geometric abstract paintings. Over time, Eroğlu has become more productive not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of composition and color variety as he became more competent with digital painting technology.

A commonality among Eroğlu's geometric abstract paintings that utilize digital technology is their untextured, solid color areas and forms outlined through uninterrupted and clear contours, much like his previous, traditional works. This technology also contributes to Eroğlu's creativity by allowing the creation of countless, almost unlimited color combinations on the same linear composition. Digitally created patterns and forms allow colors to be changed or corrected quickly at the artist's discretion. This also allows Eroğlu to produce a completely different painting by making a duplicate of a painting he made before and trying different colors on it, or by adding new forms and removing some.

Figure 146

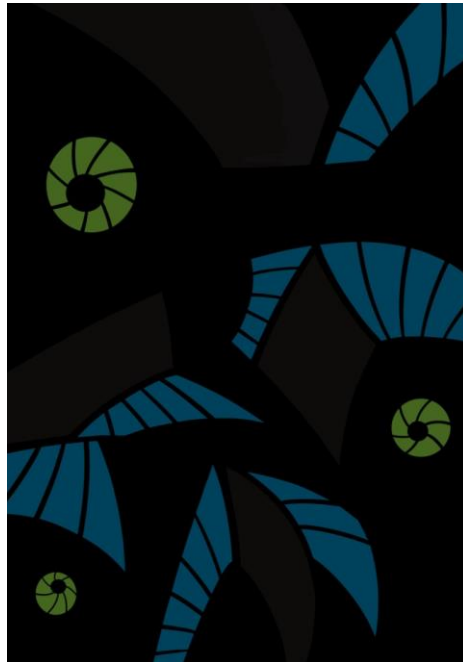
Abstract



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2020

Figure 147

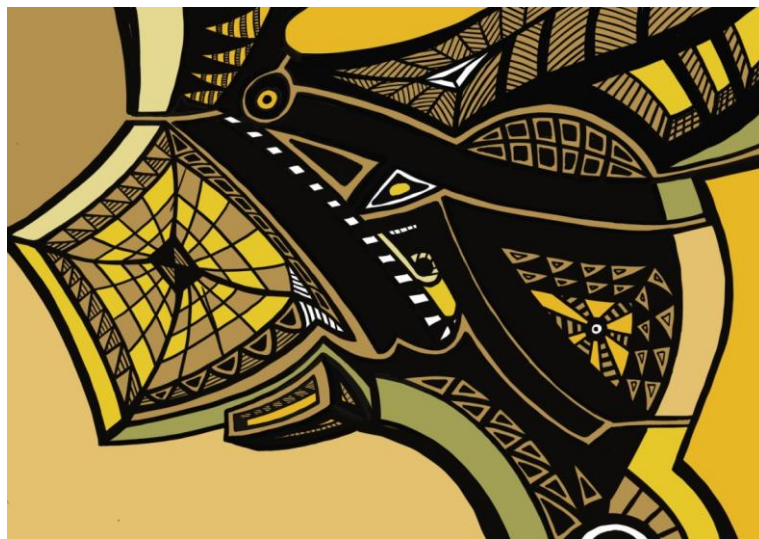
Abstract



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2020

Figure 148*Abstract*

Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2020

Figure 149*Abstract*

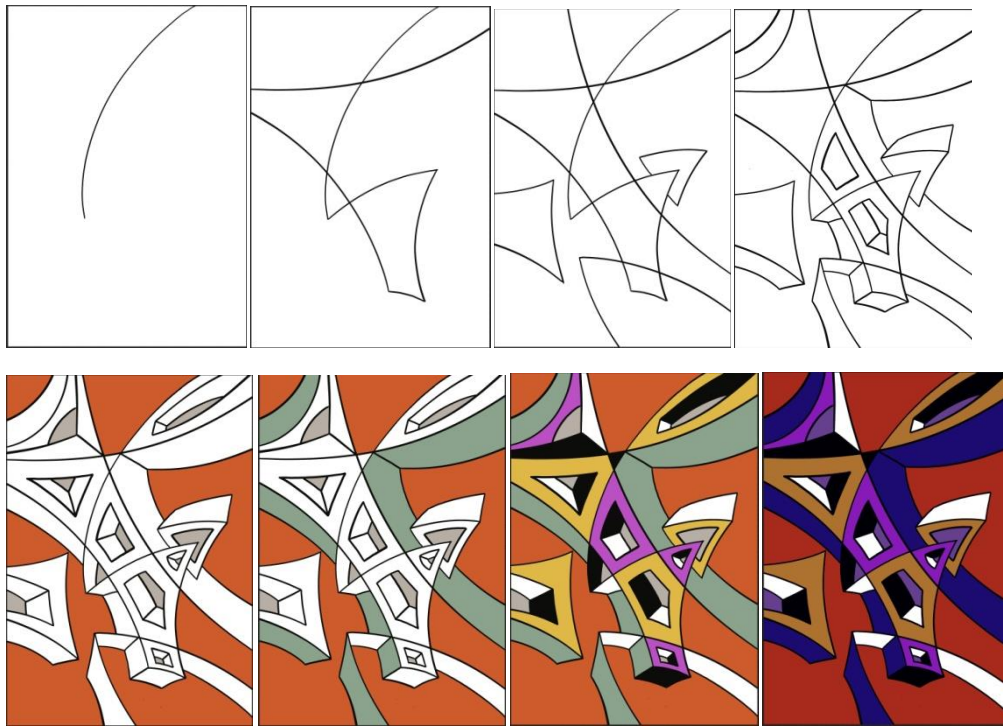
Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2020

The variety of patterns and colors in Eroğlu's geometric abstractions (Figures 146 – 149) that use digital painting technology reveals the benefits of this new technology for creativity and productivity.

In the painting series below, you can see the production stages of a geometric abstract painting Eroğlu made using digital technology. This is the same production method that Eroğlu usually applies regardless of medium or technology. However, as mentioned earlier, digital technology offers a wide range of possibilities, especially in the context of color. The last two frames of the series below are the finished images of two paintings containing the same pattern created with different color combinations.

Figure 150

Creative Process



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Creative Process, 2022

At first glance, Osman Selçuk Eroğlu's paintings, which cannot be defined as figurative, can be linked to geometric abstraction, a sub-branch of abstract art – which has been a part of art history for more than a century – that has been described as intellectual, structural, architectonic, geometric, rectilinear, and classical. On the other hand, these works are created mostly through improvisation and reflect Eroğlu's inner

world. They contain not only rectilinear but also curvilinear lines and contours, and thus also fall within the scope of organic abstract art. Another point where Eroğlu's abstract works diverge from geometric abstract art is that, according to Eroğlu, these works are not classical. This is similar to the characterization of organic or lyrical abstract paintings, which also cannot be described as classical.

Figure 151

Abstract



Note : Osman Selçuk Eroğlu, Abstract, 2020

Although they feature a mixture of geometric and organic/lyrical abstraction and even if they have abstract expressionist aspects in some respects, the uniqueness of Eroğlu's abstract works is undeniable. These paintings cannot be associated with symbols or images of any culture and are different from the works of past or contemporary artists. These are sincere and earnest works that reflect Osman Selçuk Eroğlu.

7. CONCLUSION

Abstract art has been a type of art that has continued to entrance abstract art audiences since its inception more than a century ago and has maintained its visibility in exhibitions, galleries, art fairs, and biennials.

The art movement has two main branches: geometric and organic/lyric, both of which continue to develop.

At the beginning of the 20th century, many contemporary artists continued to produce works in the field of geometric abstract art, which was pioneered by movements such as Cubism and Futurism. These works were of different disciplines such as sculpture and installation art as well as the field of painting. Today, the movement produces works created by combining homogeneous colors in a style supported with geometric forms. The differences of today's artists is that they move towards a more minimalist style and use different materials and technologies to do so. Looking at all these, it is obvious that abstract art and geometric abstract art as a major branch of it will continue to have an impact in the future years.

The fact that geometric abstract art is still a present trend in today's art world is evident in exhibitions held in many institutions, museums, and galleries around the world. We should not overlook the exhibition titled *Adventures of the Black Square* at London's *Whitechapel Gallery* in 2015, and the Kazimir Malevich revival at Tate Modern in 2014. There was also an exhibition at Pace London featuring three big names of the abstract: John Hoyland, Anthony Caro, and Kenneth Noland. In this milieu, we see artists such as Ellsworth Kelly, Sean Scully, Agnes Marchin or Ad Reinhardt featured in exhibition programs in many places. These legendary names inspire a new generation of talented artists working in the same field as them. Examples of this new generation of artists are Sarah Morris and Mai Braun with their vibrant graphic paintings, the Italian Matteo Nasini, known for his sculptures, as well as Helen Miranda Wilson, Ricardo Mazal, Norman Zammitt, Marley Dawson, and many more. Examples of geometric abstract art are also found in street and urban art. With this wide variety of styles and approaches, the trend continues to evolve and clearly will not disappear in a while yet (Widewalls, 2018)

As with gestural and expressionist painting, geometric abstract art remains an important element of the visual language. Geometric abstract art, which represents the representational and non-objective and the highly psychological and spiritual,

dominated the 20th century. In the field of contemporary art, the search for purity in geometry and colors reflects its historical heritage. The fascination with geometric art is manifested not only in the visual arts, but also in the fields of graphic design, and crafts.

As a result, just as abstract art based on organic or lyrical imagery continues to exist strongly in the contemporary art scene and continues to be produced by painters and artists who use various contemporary mediums, geometry based on geometric images will continue to exist in the art world through various forms and different mediums as long as geometry exists as part of human nature in our lives. This is an undeniable fact in today's art world which encompasses a wide variety of artworks from Classical figurative paint painting to digital three-dimensional visuals

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