

## **Abstractness Excessive of painting and the problem of communicating the meaning to the viewer**

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### **Abstract:**

Art appeared exactly one century ago with a watercolor non-figurative Wassily Kandinsky titled aptly about First abstract watercolor. By abandoning any apparent relationship with the reality, Kandinsky wanted the painting to become free expression sensibility, which he then formulated as follows: "to substitute the visible appearance of the outside world the pathetic inner reality and invisible in life.<sup>1</sup> Soon after, without consultation, other painters are turned to abstraction.

Before 1910, there were certainly some abstract achievements with the use of symbols adopted by a whole society at a given moment, the most often geometric signs or schematizations of elements natural. But, it is generally about decorations intended to embellish objects or architectures. Abstract art, created in the 1910s in Germany, Russia and Holland, is of a different nature. It's a real upheaval in the visual arts because until then the artists have always been more or less inspired by the very external reality to represent imaginary visions.

After the many rich and mystical-philosophical experiences of pioneers in the 1910s, abstract art develops between two wars in Paris in the hostile environment of the return to order and traditions. From 1945, became synonymous with freedom, he dominates without sharing the artistic scene as well in Paris as in New York, until the return of the figurative force in the 1960s. reaction, the abstract art is renewed in other forms and fruitful of many contemporary movements.

I will try to trace the eventful history of this art emblematic of the twentieth century whose ambivalences are sources of misinterpretations and misunderstandings. The spiritualistic approach, expression of an inner vision, opposes the formalism that does

not in abstraction that a purely aesthetic combination of lines, shapes and colors. The distinction between lyrical abstraction and geometric abstraction, that is to say between a subjective art and an art universality by its objectivity, is not exempt either ambiguity. Finally, abstract art can be the result of a purification of forms of nature or the use of abstract elements from the outset.

Over time, the term abstraction has had various meanings. At the end of Eighteenth century, it is associated with the ideal beauty, the one that does not exist but that we abstract from nature. This definition of an approach to reach the general by rising above the peculiarities, went through all the nineteenth century. In realism, Charles Blanc, the editor-in-chief of the Gazette des Beaux-Arts, praises the Greek statues that reconcile nature and ideal, that is to say: "Combine the charm of life with the dignity of abstraction<sup>2</sup>. "

With the concept of autonomy of painting, as conceived by Edouard Manet, that is to say an art not enslaved to the probable imitation of the nature, the subject becomes secondary in relation to the use of the means pictorial. Colors are used in a bold way in exploiting, among other things, the discoveries of the chemist Eugène Chevreul<sup>3</sup> on the interaction of complementary colors. With this in mind, Impressionists revolutionize painting by focusing on light vibrations.

### **The development of photography:**

Much more apt to render the reality that drawing or painting accentuates the devaluation of the subject and the discovery of the arts of Eastern civilizations, black, oceanic, shows the relativity of the naturalistic figuration in space and time. At the end of the 19th century, representations of nature were gradually abandoned in favor of subjective works. Abstraction is then discussed in the workshops but this concept is still vague as the writings of the artists show. For Paul Gauguin, it is a distance from nature by the symbol. AT About his Self-portrait says Les Misérables, Gauguin writes to Schuffenecker in 1888: "I believe one of my best things; absolutely incomprehensible so it is abstract. Bandit head at first, a Jean Valjean personifying also a painter impressionist, discredited and still wearing a chain for the world. The drawing is quite special (complete abstraction) ... The color is a color far enough from nature<sup>4</sup>. "

For Vincent van Gogh, the term abstract is used in a sense widespread psychological at the time, that of thoughtful. In July 1880, Vincent writes to his brother: "... at times, we could be a little abstract, a little dreamer ... "5 Abstraction in art is for him the materialization of a meditation or a painted representation of memory.

Recall the famous definition of modern painting by Maurice Denis in 1890: "a flat surface covered with colors in a certain order assembled6. In 1920, the painter specified his words: "[this definition] tended with all its context, to orient the painting in the way of abstraction. "

Even if he puts his easel in front of the motif, Paul Cézanne tries to rise above the peculiarities in order to reach the essence of the landscape observed, an abstraction. In the same spirit, Henri Matisse, who according to his master Gustave Moreau was born to simplify the painting, states: "All art is abstract in itself when it is the essential expression stripped of all anecdotes. "

This distance from nature by symbolism, imagination, sublimation of the pictorial means, the search for simplicity, is early twentieth century the origin of an unprecedented artistic revolution.

The Fauves accentuate the colorful contrasts, the expressionists violate forms to make them more tragic, cubists decompose their motive into several planes and futurists give see the successive moments of the movement to make speed. It sometimes gives representations that are difficult to read. Word abstraction is then used pejoratively by art criticism for disqualify works she finds incomprehensible.

In the context of pictorial research in the early 1910s, Robert Delaunay exalts color and movement in a painting which he calls Simultanism because it refers, as in neoimpressionism, to Chevreul's law on the simultaneous contrast of colors. The vibration of the juxtaposed colors gives the illusion of a movement. Called Orphism by Guillaume Apollinaire, this style touches few painters and lasts only a few years.

Close to Delaunay, Jacques Villon, virtuoso and excellent draftsman engraver, synthesizes forms. His attempts to make the movement lead him to the limits of abstraction but he turns away from it immediately. It was not until the early 1930s that he joined the painters

abstract. In those years before World War I, his influence is great among young painters who are interested in non-figurative forms, which meet in his workshop Puteaux.

There is the Czech František Kupka, settled in Paris since 1895, whose research results in a painting of narrow colored bands and parallel, and a friend of Delaunay, Fernand Léger, great admirer of Cézanne, whose painting, composed of strong contrasts of colors and forms, confines to abstraction. After the war, however, it is in a figurative style that he will impose.

Another painter of this group, Francis Picabia, abandons his style impressionist in 1913 to execute large canvases showing a another reality than that of nature. This is for him "a painting located in pure invention that recreates the world of forms following his own desire and his own imagination. Picabia will blossom then in a dreamlike figuration within the Dada movements and Surrealist.

In Moscow, avant-garde artist Mikhael Larionov, a great admirer of Turner, is interested in the problems of light-color in painting. He founded around 1909, with his companion Natalia Goncharova and a dozen other painters, the first important movement of non paint figurative, Rayonism. The works of Larionov are built with colored beams of lines identical to light rays that intertwine giving an abstract composition. Exhibited in Paris in 1914, Rayonnism then appears as the culmination of the currents the most innovative at the time, Cubism, Futurism and Orphism.

The outbreak of war stops the creative impulse of the time. AT the exception of František Kupka's research, all these experiments purely aesthetic about the use of lines, shapes, and colors, leading to the limits of abstraction, remain without a future.

It is from a completely different approach that abstract art is born, at the same time, in countries of Slavic or Germanic culture. The principle of this creation was analyzed by the German art historian Wilhelm Worringer in his thesis, *Abstraction and Einfühlung*, contribution to the psychology of style. He is "the first to bring out the notion of abstraction as aesthetic data" and it demonstrates that realism or abstraction in art is related to the degree of *Einfühlung*, German word untranslatable meaning broadly the empathy between the human being and what surrounds. For Worringer, realism reflects the domination of outer world and the superiority of

reason over instinct. In contrast: "the thrust of abstraction is the consequence of a great domestic anxiety

There are therefore, according to him, moments when the uncertainty of existence, felt like a threat, causes great anxiety. The sensitivity is then "attracted by what is out of reach" 9. " This is the case of the pioneers of abstraction, the Kandinsky Russians and Malevitch, and the Dutchman Mondrian. They are painter-philosophers that deep spiritualistic, mystical or theosophical, lead to elaborate a new form of art. Born in Moscow in 1866, in the middle of the big bourgeoisie, Wassily Kandinsky will be naturalized German then French. He learns music, studied law and became a law professor. Sensitive to the bright colors of the popular images, it is however in front of a haystack of Monet, exhibited in Moscow in 1895, that he guesses unsuspected possibilities of painting. In his book *Regards the past*, Kandinsky recounts "that he felt deafly that the object was missing in this work. From then on, the object, that is, the subject, and this hesitation in terms is revealing, no longer for him the essential in the table.

The following year, he decides to devote himself to painting and for that he moved to Munich to acquire a good technical training. Disappointed by the conservatism of Munich's artistic milieu, from 1903 on trip to Europe, which leads him to Moscow several times, in various cities including Paris where he stays a year before settling in 1908 in Murnau near Munich. Sensitive to the graphic lyricism of Art New and Impressionist, Kandinsky paints landscapes in which the color is gradually organized into distinct ranges.

It is in Murnau that lies what he called his jump into abstraction. Looking one evening at one of his paintings, which he does not recognize because it is placed on the side in his studio, he discovers with amazement: "a painting of indescribable beauty "on which he sees" only shapes and colors, and whose subject [is] incomprehensible<sup>10</sup>. "

Kandinsky thus has the revelation that the object, already felt as secondary in Monet's haystack, is useless in painting. In 1910, he painted his first abstract work in watercolor, a technique that gives it total freedom and allows a high speed of execution.

With the oil painting, it will take him a few more years for his expressive representations of nature give way to forms and imaginary colors.

In 1911, Kandinsky began writing *Spiritual in Art*, 11 which will appear the following year, and with the painter Franz Marc, he founds Munich the Expressionist group *The Blue Horseman*. Heir of symbolist movement, this group rejects academic conventions and Realism to celebrate the strength of instinct. There is the Swiss Paul Klee, the Germans Franz Marc and August Macke, the Russian Alexis Jawlensky.

All are interested in the expressive power of colors and affinities between painting and music. The composer Arnold Schoenberg is invited to exhibitions organized in 1911 and 1912.

Music, whose impact on the senses and the mind does not depend on a representation of the outside world, is for Kandinsky a reference.

After attending a performance of *Lohengrin*, he writes, "... I I thought I would see all my colors, I had them under my eyes<sup>12</sup>. "

To imagine an art of lines, shapes and colors, taken to themselves and not used as descriptive means, it is also inspired by of the intrinsic expressive and emotional force of words in the poetic language.

The Murnau anecdote, widely spread by Kandinsky himself, has overshadowed the original spiritual dimension of an artist's approach inhabited by a great inner anxiety. She comforted the big public in the idea that there is nothing to understand in abstraction, and leads many critics and art historians to a vision formalist of abstract art (that is, an art based on simple aesthetic arrangements of lines, shapes and colors).

Yet this anecdote shows that Kandinsky's abstraction proceeds an apparition and an ecstasy. The gradual creation of the form in his painting is the representation of a vision and not the result a purity of forms of nature.

The approach:

The artist has explained his approach in his book *Spiritual in art*: "I had the feeling of growing stronger, more and more clear, that in art things do not depend on the formal but on a desire inside-the content-which delimits the formal domain ... It was a big not

forward that to fully solve the problem of art on the basis of the inner necessity that had the distressing force. " Replacing the object that has become useless, spirituality, becomes in his eyes the real subject art.

At the declaration of war, Kandinsky returns to Moscow. After the revolution of 1917, it is associated with the artistic development of the country but in front of "all the cultural enthusiasm that is gradually crumbling,"<sup>13</sup> he returns to Germany. In 1921 he was appointed professor at the Bauhaus, a School of Architecture and Applied Arts quite new founded in Weimar by the architect Walter Gropius in order to bring down, according to he, "the proud wall between artists and artisans. Gropius makes appeal to avant-garde painters because: "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. "

Kandinsky teaches his students "to observe and represent not the exterior appearances of an object but its constructive elements, its laws of tension<sup>14</sup> ... "In his work, Point, Line, Plan, he shows by example that the point loses in painting the function that he has in the writing to reveal its essence, its load of presence. While a isolated point shows no movement tendency, pushed into a direction he creates a line. This line, result of a tension on the point, exists by itself and no longer serves to define an objective form. As on the plan, it is the support, the blank canvas which becomes the place of a cosmogony with the use of pictorial elements. In this painting, then described as lyrical geometry, each form, each color, and their organization in space, have a precise function.

The Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1925 and was closed by the Nazis in 1933. Kandinsky then settled in France in Neuilly sur Seine where he started the third period of his work. The dwindling forms and the compartmentalization of the canvas are reminiscent of ideograms. In his essay on the painter, the philosopher Michel Henry pointed out the coincidence between abstraction, anxiety and contemplation: "We look petrified, motionless too, or moving slowly on the bottom of a night firmament, the hieroglyphs of the invisible<sup>15</sup>. " Kandinsky died in Neuilly in 1944. Despite his great prestige with of the artistic community, the importance of his work will not be really recognized after the war, in the Parisian context of lyrical abstraction.

Everything opposes the aristocratic intellectual Kandinsky to Malevich born near Kiev, circa 1878, in a peasant environment. Kazimir Malevich undertakes studies at the age of twenty, then began painting in Kursk where his parents have been established. His first paintings hesitate between style impressionist and art nouveau and then evolve in a close way German Expressionists. In 1905 he moved to Moscow and from 1910 he participated in Russian avant-garde exhibitions with Larionov and Tatline. In 1912 he was invited by Kandinsky to the second exhibition of the Blue Rider in Munich.

Cubist fragmentation of volumes in his painting shows a knowledge of the paintings of Braque and Picasso that he undoubtedly saw in the big private collections Muscovites. Themes and color make reference to the works of the futurists who have deeply marked the life Russian culture.

Then, Malevich turns away from Larionov because he blames Rayonism to keep the memory of reality too16 and, seeking to achieve Kandinsky the essence of form, he also moves away from Tatline. Between 1913 and in 1915, in his protean and experimental painting, the arrangements colorful geometric abstract figures allow it to move away of reality and notions of gravity.



Malevich calls supreme this painting rid of the object, and he published in December 1915 a Suprematist Manifesto in which he says: "Sensitivity is the only thing that matters and it's through this way that art, so suprematism, reaches the pure expression without representation. "

Asserting that the object no longer has a place in painting, and that it must respect the space of the easel board, Malevitch opposes the materialism and collectivism. It follows a definitive break with Tatlin and a violent conflict with the Constructivists.

That same year, Malevitch exhibited his first paintings scoring the advent of pure painting including Black Square on a white background. This painting, painted two years earlier, representing a kind of portrait without face, is hung in the upper part of a corner of the wall as are the central icons in the Orthodox houses.

Anxiety releases Malevich from the contemplation of nature and its obsessive search for purity just like his rejection of aesthetics, lead him to represent only sensitivity. The square black symbolizes the sensitivity of the absence of object and the white background the nothing,

#### Methodology:

All that is not this sensibility. In contrast to Kandinsky's spiritualism, the question of God is ubiquitous at Malevich. He rejects the anthropomorphic God of religions and looks for a new figure of the one he calls the actor of the world, the one who hides in absolute darkness not to show his face. The artist will write later: "When in 1913, in my effort desperate to free art from the unnecessary weight of objectivity, I took refuge to the shape of the square and exposed an icon that represented only one square black on white field, the critic sighed and with her the company:

All we loved died: we are in a desert ... No more replicas of reality, no ideal representations, nothing than a desert. But the desert is filled with the spirit of sensibility inobjective that penetrates everything. 17 " At the 1918 State Salon in Moscow, Malevich exhibits a White Square on White background. This is not an absolute monochrome because the square stands out from the bottom by a small inflection of the key and a slight shade. The white, at the origin of all colors, as shown in decomposition of light, is here magnified. The shape and the space around come together to express nothing, absolute purity. This work is no more than an allusion to painting, the supreme state of painting, alimit difficult to overcome.

From 1917, he taught at the Petrograd Academy, then at Moscow and Vitebsk, which does not leave him much time to paint. Opposed to new cultural orientations

after the death of Lenin, he falls out of favor. Malevich then writes many texts on Suprematism and to live, he makes landscapes and portraits. Since it is impossible for him to go beyond the black or white squares, become iconic, he painted faceless characters.

When he died in Leningrad in 1935, his coffin, decorated in style supremacist, is transported on a truck whose hood is adorned with a big black square.

All his life, Malevich remained attached to the easel board, which became the metaphysical place of a resistance to the liquidation of the painting desired by the Constructivism of which Tatline is one of the forerunners.

Vladimir Tatline, after studying painting in the provinces, moved to Moscow in 1911. The discovery of Braque's synthetic cubism and Picasso, during a stay in Berlin in 1913, is decisive. He created then a non-figurative art with relief paintings that are no longer painted but composed of various materials. The painting is then submitted cause with counter-reliefs, in which the composition takes place in a space in front of the surface or between two planes perpendicular.

Tatline plays an important role in the development of the new system of Soviet education, which includes artistic and industrial knowledge in order to abolish, as at the Bauhaus, the frontier between pure art and applied art. He becomes famous with his ambitious project from Monument to the Third International, a spiral structure on an oblique axis of 400m high, supposed to support glass volumes at geometric shapes. Although considered perfectly feasible by a committee of experts, the monument will not be built.

The materialist conception of art, based on the nature of materials and their constructive properties, is at the origin of Constructivism which appeared in Moscow in 1922. The constructivists proclaimed the abandonment of easel painting, individual expression in a bourgeois context and merchant, in favor of a collective art accessible to the greatest number. In the manifesto Constructivists address the world, the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky proclaims: "Our streets are brushes, our places are pallets. "

One of the founders of constructivism, Alexander Rodchenko, painted in 1918 many compositions in black including a painting called Black on black, in order to show by this knell of color the stalemate of Suprematism. In 1921, he presents three

monochromes painted each evenly in a primary color. The art historian Nikolai Taraboukine<sup>18</sup> named this triptych the last painting because he sees the term of the long path of representativeness. If the black or white square of Malevich contained, despite the poverty of its aesthetic sense, a certain pictorial idea, the smooth monochromes of Rodchenko, devoid of all content, proclaim the end of abstraction in the easel painting. The way is now free for a painting

figurative in the service of Soviet propaganda, socialist realism. Born in Holland in 1872, in a Calvinist milieu, Mondrian, after having considered studies of theology, prepares the professorship of drawing. His graduated, he gives up teaching and enrolls in the Academy of Amsterdam Fine Arts. To make a living, he does portraits and paints mostly outdoor landscapes. From 1908, he turns away from the naturalistic representation and begins to simplify forms. In 1909, Mondrian became a member of the Theosophical Society Dutch. It is difficult to establish a close link between the abstraction he begins to approach two years later and theosophy aimed at knowledge of God through the deepening of the inner life. The power of his work, his coherence and conciseness, are more than one personal mystical quest as the influence of a confused doctrine. In 1912, Mondrian settles in Paris where he discovers the cubism of Braque and Picasso. Pursuing variations on the tree motif, he schematizes even more and refuses the depth. He tries to eliminate any trace of subjectivity by simplifying natural forms and colors, like cubist painters.

At the declaration of war, the painter returns to Holland. He treats so his compositions with plus and minus signs then comes back gradually to the color. From 1917, he began to paint on a white or gray background of sorts of colored mosaics made up of rectangular elements of variable dimensions.

Mondrian founded the magazine *De Stijl*<sup>19</sup> with Theo van Doesburg art publication proposing to define the style of the time. He expresses his ideas and, in the 1920s, several artists and architects, attracted by its geometric style, form a group that adopts the name of this review.

While participating in *De Stijl*, Mondrian returned to Paris in 1919. He accentuates the orthogonality of shapes in various formats and uses the more often the pure primary colors rigorously delineated by black vertical and horizontal lines that will soon thicken. The picture appears as a fragment of a larger whole in which the

third dimension is definitely absent. No color does not have to dominate the others and the red for example, which for Goethe and Kandinsky sinks into the eye, must be neutralized by black, gray or white so as not to disturb the balance of the composition. This painting geometric abstract called Neoplasticism, bad translation of the Dutch term Nieuwe beelding meaning Reconstruction of the world, shows in a checkerboard structure the opposition of the colors primary and non-color, vertical / horizontal opposition, and the opposition of the dimensions.

Hostile to the introduction of the oblique line by van Doesburg, Mondrian leaves the De Stijl movement in 1924, judging that the dynamism of this line destroys the plastic balance! Whereas at Kandinsky the line is movement, at Mondrian it is motionless. While at Kandinsky the limits of the canvas are respected, at Mondrian horizontal and vertical look to exceed the surface of the support. The artist sees through a grid, so well that abstraction is in his eyes, before being concretized on the canvas.

By subjecting this grid to the objects of the moving world, he imposes a unique point of view that ensures total immobility.

All of balance and silence, his painting is a reconstruction in which subjectivity, emotion, worry, fear, are contained. For the artist-theosophist, the abstract form found by the deepening of his inner life is the materialization of the absolute. World out of time, without life or death, his work will evolve more up to his American exile.

In 1940, Mondrian takes refuge in New York where he is warmly welcomed. This absolutely straight city impresses so much that his style changes, first of all by the introduction of lines of color replace the black grid, and then by new combinations of plastic elements used until then. In *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*, started in 1942, the lines are composed of rhythmic sequences, red, blue, yellow and gray compartments. The density of the elements colored increases in his last unfinished work of 1944, *Victory Boogie Woogie*.

These ultimate paintings show that Mondrian expresses what he tried to master all his life, sensitivity. Moreover, without realizing it, he represents something, what the American painter Robert Motherwell has seen very well: "... a subject is

there, not by virtue of his absence, but really there, even if we are far from the outward appearance of things and if only the structure is exposed. The precise modern city, rectangular and as well as plumbs seen from above or from below or from the side;

Bright lights and sterilized life ... Mondrian left his white paradise to join the world. " Abstraction, encouraged by De Stijl and developed in Paris by Mondrian, will spark, in the late 1920s, a rhetoric of art abstract that will develop within several groups in reaction to the omnipresence of figurative painting.

In 1929, Michel Seuphor and the Uruguayan painter Torres-Garcia founded in Vanves, in the Parisian suburbs, Cercle et Carré, an association ephemeral group of artists opposed to surrealism and naturalistic academism. Only one exhibition will take place in 1930 with painters claiming geometric abstraction some of which are supporters of a humanization of geometry. Geometric abstract art shows an ambivalence between objectivity and subjectivity, that is to say between a rigorous art, hiding the emotion of the artist for the sake of universality, and a more personal art revealing traces of this emotion.

Dissent leads to the creation of a new group named Concrete art. The concrete term has been made famous by the definition of Jean Arp: "Man calls abstract what is concrete". Considering "That a square, a circle, a color, are concrete elements such a cow or tree 20 ", Van Doesburg lays the theoretical foundation for an art calculated, logical, excluding any subjective expression.

In the aftermath of the war, on both sides of the Atlantic, abstraction appears as the artistic expression of the free world in the face of the official art

Soviet.

In France, the military and political liberation is followed by other liberations, material, intellectual and artistic. A new conception of the world and of man arouses creative initiatives in all fields and Paris believes it can once again become the home of art modern.

Kandinsky is recognized as the pioneer and leader of a spontaneous and direct abstraction, now called lyrical, opposed to dogmatism of geometric abstraction,

rigorous and austere. Of many artists grouped under the dummy name but Convenient New or Second School of Paris, then manifest a interest in the gesture they place on their canvases in the form of energetic graphic traces. Except to give this presentation a look of catalog, it is impossible to name all the creative artists who have participated in this lyrical flight of abstraction, to use the title from a recent exhibition. I will limit myself to the most important ones.

Hans Hartung, German-born French, pursues experiments successfully attempted before the war making it a precursor to Pollock in the USA. His gestural art imbued with a deep lyricism is essential by the freedom of his subjective dynamism. His painting presented to public in 1947 arouses many vocations.

In a similar approach, Pierre Soulages expresses himself almost exclusively by black, in large traces, aligned or entangled, made by a quick gesture, or large flat areas whose thick material and irregular radiates light.

Georges Mathieu develops a spontaneous painting influenced by the Far Eastern calligraphy. Gifted with speed of execution astonishingly, from the 1950s he made a series of compositions. In the decorative arts, he creates tapestries, posters advertising, illustrations.

Jean Degottex takes over the automatism of the surrealists then, under the influence of Zen thought and Chinese calligraphy, he tries, according to his words, to "distinguish in Western writing a meaning lost graph<sup>22</sup>. "

Gerard Schneider paints with bright or dark colors using also black. Despite the appearance of a vehement improvisation, the arrangement of the elements and their reports show a composition perfectly mastered. In his painting, he says, he says, "to release this which is in him, but has no name. "

Jean-Michel Atlan, dreading a dogmatism of lyrical abstraction, finds an original style to evoke a primitive nature, plants, forms that he describes as erotic, magical or mystical<sup>24</sup>. His medium-sized works, fruit of a powerful imagination, are structured by thick dark circles.

Olivier Debré, after painting blackboards inspired by horrors of the war, approaches the abstraction in large paintings almost monochromes punctuated with

strong colored impastments. This ample style finds fulfillment in dreamlike representations of landscapes of Touraine and theater curtain orders.

Some lyrical abstractions come from surrealism. This is the case of Camille Bryen and de Wols who propose a mysterious painting often called informal. The expression informal art, invented by the art critic Michel Tapié<sup>25</sup> in 1951, brings together various forms of lyrical abstraction, calligraphy, tachism, cloud, art brut.

This art does not exclude the allusion to the forms of reality as the series of hostages by Jean Fautrier in which vague forms to deaf colors, treated in a thick material, are the evocation of the sacrifice.

Another way is opened by a painter of Russian origin, Serge Poliakoff, who participated in pre-war research and to which Kandinsky promised a bright future. His paintings appear at first sight geometrious but a work of matter breaks the flatness and the interpenetration of the colored planes removes any opposition between the background and form. Overlaying the color layers gives a high chromatic, sensory and plastic density, similar to that icons.

This taste of the material also guides another painter of Russian origin<sup>2</sup>, Nicolas de Staël, towards an abstraction dominated by the quality of colorful harmonies. In 1952, he returned to a sublimated figuration whose color ranges and skillfully used material, confer a poetic quality to his paintings. Abstraction is present since this are the pictorial elements, shapes, colors, materials, which are essential to first, well before what is meant.

Let us quote some painters who affirmed under the Occupation their will to practice an art considered degenerate, Alfred Manessier, Jean Bazaine, Maurice Esteve. The relationship of their painting with reality justifies the frequently used qualification of abstract landscaping.

They are joined after the Liberation by Jean Le Moal, Raoul Ubac, Roger Bissière, Maria Elena Vieira da Silva, Gustave Singier. The works of this group of artists are called non-figurative, an expression that takes on a particular meaning to designate within the second school of Paris an abstraction not entirely detached from the forms of nature.

In the 1950s became dominant figures of abstraction lyrical, some of them participate in the renewal of religious art in realizing abstract stained glass windows, under the energetic action of R.P. Couturier.

All these artists fully express a subjectivity that moves them away of the formalism towards which the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles 1947. Designed to promote an art of geometric tradition, this Salon, chaired by Auguste Herbin, wants to be the heir of Abstraction-Creation dissolved in 1936. With the exception of a few key figures, most participants are unable to renew models pre-war geometric. The invitation of lyrical abstracts, such Hartung, Atlan or Mathieu, to raise the general level, leads a strong reaction from Herbin, causing the departure of many painters. After the resignation of Herbin in 1956, the organizers modify the statutes to take into account the different currents of abstract art.

In this chaotic context, Yves Klein's monochromes, exhibited in 1956, are wrongly seen as the ultimate experience of abstract painting.

However, monochrome is not new, contrary to what those who deliberately ignore past experiences, those who of Alphonse Allais during his exhibition of the arts inconsistent in 1884, and especially those of Rodchenko in Russia in 1921 in the controversial context of the affirmation of Constructivism against

### **CONCLOSUN:**

It is true that in abstract art, it is the decorative aspect that is offered from the outset to the viewer. When seduced, this one tends to nothing ask more than what is offered. And yet, there is often much more to see and feel. As Alain wrote: "All the arts are like mirrors where the human being knows and recognizes something he himself did not know. "

Unlike the performing arts, a piece of plastic art does not never before. Ordained or spontaneous gesture, applied or vehement, the choice of materials, supports, the environment, the use of a symbolic color, of forms and signs foreign to perceived reality, are both the result of difficult decisions of the artist to solve plastic problems, and traces of his anxiety, his empathy with what surrounds it, the Worringer Einfühlung, of its necessity interior according to Kandinsky's formula.

The lack of knowledge of the artist's motivations and the circumstances of the genesis of his work, the limited time given to reflection and contemplation of works in our zapping society, make us forget that there is most often a spiritual, mystical and philosophical at the source of artistic creation.

Exploitation for advertising or decorative purposes of the work of Mondrian, for example, hides the fact that she is the fruit of a jobaustere intellectual and relentless to purify forms and colors, subtended, as we have seen, by a great metaphysical anxiety. This art of clarity and discipline is the reflection of the laws of the universe, the realities immutable hidden behind the changing forms of appearance subjective.

### **Conclusion:**

Beyond the minimalist use of pictorial means and gigantism formats, the works of Barnett Newman testify to a deep spiritualism. This artist, who has written a lot and reflected on art, seeks to express the mystery rather than the beautiful, to evoke the unknown like Malevich in 1913. In the paintings of Newman, the color suggests the sublime, and the vertical line the unknown, a cry in the empty, a question without answer.

Even Ad Reinhardt's works are not as neutral as he says in his polemical writings against the spiritualism of the Colorfield painters. Attracted by Islam and the East, Ad Reinhardt created a painting intimate values very close, almost your tone. These works asceticism, "the last paintings that can be painted," he said, are imbued with a mystery that he has failed to conceal. I could cite many more examples as well as others contemporary movements that are abstract art. I think however, have shown, in the time allotted to me, that the ambivalences spiritualism / formalism, lyrical abstraction / abstraction geometric, have been for a century at the very heart of abstract art. They its essence, its ambiguities and the keys to its understanding. Let's not forget that art is not only seen with the eyes. He is look at the lighting of cultural assets and, as for any field of human activity, explanations are necessary in order tokeep alert mind and welcome the present with the wisdom of the past.

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