

natural and/or abstract reality

by: Maria de Fátima Lambert

Y: Since you already don't paint the natural, I thought nothing inspired you.

Z: Quite the contrary. Nature inspires me profusely. I just try and paint it in another light.¹

The works that Bettina Vaz Guimarães has been producing, following the intervention made for the Quase Galeria [Space T, Porto - Portugal], during her artistic residency in May 2014, have continued her research on the nature and essence of spaces, establishing new aesthetic desires and plastic configurations.

In the case of natural reality and/or abstract reality, a project organized in dialogue with the artist Helen Faganello, resulted, either to one or another, in the concretization of specific productions, showing how a space can be altered in a constitutive, almost ingrained form, transforming it in relation to what, when empty and stripped, it appears to be.

The determinations for site identification, diagnosis and detailed mapping, and also the consequent expansion of gallery's physical space allow the works to transcend the boundaries of the more quiet aspects of a place's architecture. That is, the insertion, after the transcontinental trip, of bi and three-dimensional units / structures, designates and institutes significant changes, altering our experience of the place. Thus, the work showed how the data of visual, tactile, and auditory perception ... convert into aesthetic reasoning transforming and extrapolating the apparent limits for incursion taken as possible.

"Natural Reality or Abstract Reality," paraphrasing the homonymous title of Mondrian's book, is a synthesis of the two-way thinking, still current in contemporary art, attending to the concepts that structure languages that take such consignments as design, in an up-to-date drift.

What is natural reality and what is abstract reality? When does one interfere with the other? And how do we determine and characterize them as such? Is it - somehow ambiguous - nearly equivalent? What percentage of nature is evident in geometric-abstract planning that makes explicit a composition that advances on two-dimensional conventionality, crossing in thickness and volume and shaping itself in the void of space?

During almost a year, following an extended stay in São Paulo, the conversations and work sessions with Bettina Vaz Guimarães resulted in the configuration, proceeding according to a working methodology. From the consignments drafted in Brazil, with a sequence in the dialogues via email, starting the stay in Porto, the project was triggered, confirming the "approach" strategies, finally translated "in loco".

Based on the analysis of previous exhibitions and interventions, following a series of conversations and, above all, an accurate research developed by Bettina Vaz Guimarães. The fundamental concepts, which preside over and subsidize his work, allow for concatenations and the projection of relationalities and confrontations, summed up in the selection of 600 colors of a singularized pantone that filled a course, a project ascending from the floor to the head of the mezzanine. Bettina Vaz Guimarães thought of an interior architecture that would increase the size of the visitors, giving them an unexpected perception of the house where the Quase Gallery is located. The anthropomorphic reason is essential and is also embodied by the sequential polychromic that choreographs systematic chromatic sensations, moving between the instantaneity and the duration of the geometrized vision, regulating the essence of color.

"Nature, which in its deepest being and sense knows nothing of individuality, thanks to the human eye that divides it and the parts constitute particular units, is reorganized to be the respective individuality that we call" landscape. "²

The color is in the open artifice, available to be reinvented. The color in its established plurality that is marketed for a determined artistic practice, under regular and dense morphology.

Nature will be there, impregnated with colors, managed and structured, ready to be looked at with technical astuteness; capable of being touched and wanting to be captivated in images organized by the author's invention and invariably reverberating to each visitor who invented it. Retroceding, we know that Nature exists per se and that the pre-Socratic philosophers found their arguments based on primordial pulsating matters - the four elements - to explain how the world came about this way. Nature invariably summons these four elements, which, in the mid- XX-century, Bachelard organized in priority explanations / matters as the different creators privilege them. The four elements - from the ancestral cosmogonies - were sown in the idea of an architectural landscape, represented either in words or in visible materials. However, landscape has not always existed as a concept and intentional representation. The landscape gradually took over; was decided in poetic terms; determined survival conditions and definitely spread. It persists in rigors and non-organic contours, emerging in its almost crystallographic structures, as defined by polychromic ordination, in the case of Bettina Vaz Guimarães.

"By nature we mean the inflexible nexus of things, the uninterrupted parturition and annihilation of forms, the unit that flows from happening, which is expressed in the continuity of spatial and temporal existence."(...) 3

"A piece of nature" is, strictly speaking, a contradiction in itself; Nature has no fractions; Is the unity of a whole, and at the moment when something departs from it will cease entirely from being nature, because it can exist only within that unity without frontiers, it can only exist as a wave of the torrent together which is "nature". 4

The abstract landscape was arranged in simple, detailed chromatic rhythms. It became a decision, lacking the demarcation of place: it circumscribes.

"To see as landscape a parcel of ground with what it entails then means, in turn, to consider an excerpt of nature as unity - which departs entirely from the concept of nature."5

To be and to designate a long excerpt of abstract landscape in the house, implies that the readjust of materialized drawings in time-space. It implies, therefore, a conscious act, the deliberation of someone in relation to a territory that is dispossessed, yet susceptible of being chosen. In view of the "panoramic", this view that is perceived by us, we are questioning whether we are facing nature, facing the landscape or whether both are contaminated, conceiving a third and conjoint unity of aesthetic and anthropological-cultural (symbolic) fabulation.

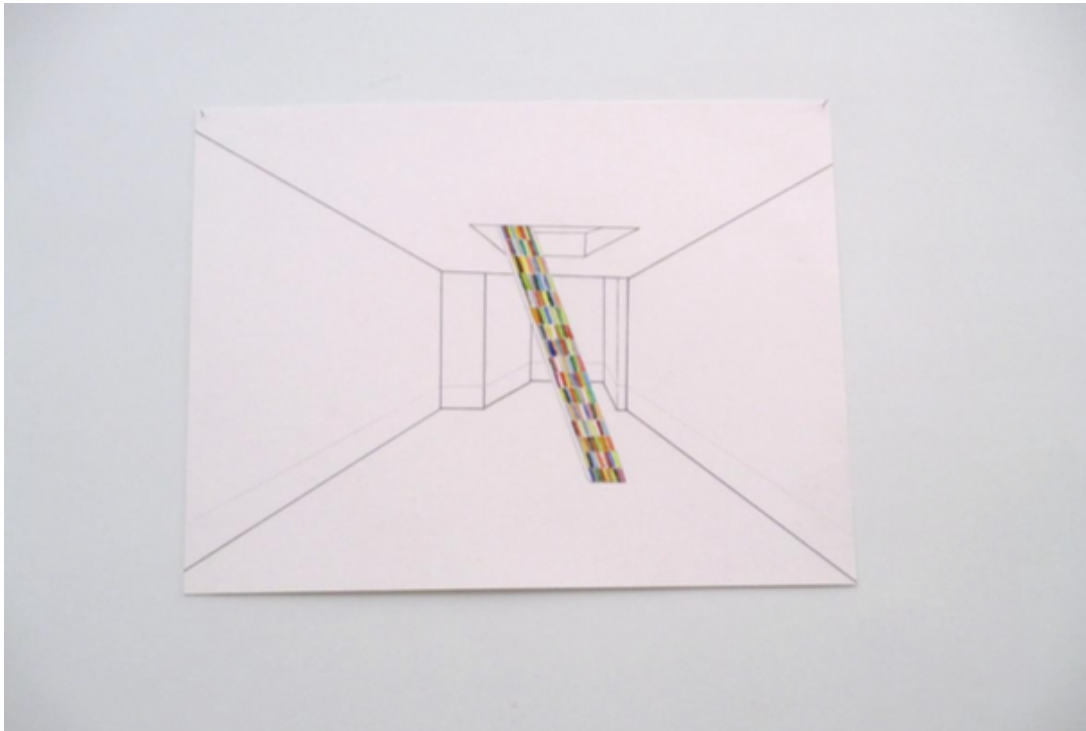
Bettina Vaz-Guimarães stipulated a color study map to climb through the mezzanine leaking and into the skylight. The constitutive units of a house / dwelling are symbolic and effective: they are drawn from infancy, they break up, deconstruct, restrict, and become irreverent. The walls are disorganized, depending on the design that presides and directs the action.

"The house is a concept of synthesis that conciliates (at times) the levels of the individual and the gregarious; It is oriented (almost always) by the integration between the interior and the exterior; Directs (with a strong reason for success) the reconciliation between thoughts, memories and dreams; Defeat (oh! Utopia!) The Judeo-Christian Manichaeism - body and soul.

The houses are attached to a specific site, although there are houses that have been moved to more auspicious territories. They were taken by the superhuman force of people and communities. I consider them: houses-travel-survival. But most houses prefer a good hieratic and quiet decision; As stability is recognized, in detailed maps and other topographies.

The house is shelter or (only) tolerates man / microcosm. It should be the personalized and nontransferable ecosystem of each one, before being private property (in sociological consecration). "

The house is inhabited by the colors that occupy an exploratory thought, undertaken by Bettina Vaz Guimarães, and materializing in successive studies destined to chosen spaces. These color drawings systematize an inquiry as well as a recognition of the target location for intervention. The sites worked by the artist allow for a progressive listening, unrolled from the theorizing and philosophical approach of color, especially founded on Josef Albers.



In Bettina Vaz Guimarães the houses are the continent to shelter the colors. The colors are chosen, conceived from sequentialities made possible by combinatorial stipulating ars, reviewing and predicting, situation the situation. Among the studies for the different architectural topics there is a kind of passage of testimony. The colors cross the places, converting them into simulacra of personal inquiry expressed by their dynamics, in the planes of color rational and intuitively vivified. The emptiness is in the inside of the house, not necessarily, outside the cabin. The house can also be assumed as the space for the allocation of artistic works, being everyone's home - Espaço T.

Ramp of color that gives continuity to light and color, emanating from the room; An illusion of a time that is polychrome and polychrome (Edward T. Hall): time consisting of many things happening and situations existing, as many as the times that overlap with each other. They are the mixtures of time.

"If we say" red "(the name of a color) and there are fifty people listening to us, it is to be expected that there are fifty reds in their minds. And we can be sure that all those reds will be different. "6

Here are some topics developed by Josef Albers in his reflections on the interactions of colors that potentiate the analysis of the work of Bettina Vaz Guimarães:

Optical blends> perception and color matters: none of the pinto card boards have the same hue; As imperceptible as it may seem: all 600 plates have different colors; It is up to the

spectator to distinguish the slight difference of tone that is higher or lower than that which resembles it;

Transparency and illusion of space> the colors are thick and captive; The air becomes dense, for a narrow, long wall has been created, where the colors deceive the curvature and the points of equilibrium almost stumble;

Frontiers of color and plastic action> their details and concatenated tonal details enclosed within the standardized format that unifies possession in space, in the air. The colors are affirmed in the air, guaranteeing the seduction of the flat and decided volume;



Relativity of Color and its subtleties> Despite this firmness and irrevocable decision that its presence marks in space, it does so with the greatest subtlety, combining individualized perceptions and oscillatory movements. This game of perception takes the lead on relativity and establishes a definable and joyful playful game.

This way reinforcing this idea of how much color flows and reflows, constituting a secular focus of enjoyment, research, game that still love is enhanced when it acquires consistency in physical space that lodges people and propitiates the movement to see.

From inside the Gallery room, focusing on the door that opens to the Atrium of the first floor, announces a ramp to the infinity, verifying that the way is dominated. The ramp of color rectangles that concentrate and distend - systole, diastole - converts the rigid line into a sinuous curve that shapes the world.

They point out the capacity to act on the unknown space, assimilating the artistic knowledge and finding strategies to communicate between cultures that are complicit and rich of meanings, expanding proposals to be more and more explored, therefore generating new assumptions. The creation / artistic conception lives on these revisitations of a unique memory of the artist about himself, manifesting his convictions and assuring them the genuineness that reaches the others, being gregarious, in the unity available to all.

By analogy, I recall what I wrote in 1989, about the painting of the Portuguese Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, a text that regimented the conference given at the House of Serralves in 1988. "Color and movement converge to the scenographic identity of the canvases. Wave movement, luminous

phenomena, in which intense Light, diluted or refracted through imaginary lenses, is reflected and manifested.

Color would be a natural and elementary phenomenon for the visual sense, manifesting itself as all others, by separation and contrasts, by mixing and gathering, by intensification and neutralization, by communication and distribution ...7

The world is made up of layers in the work of Bettina Vaz-Guimarães, perhaps recalling the memorialized lucidity of Sol Lewitt's polychromic Walldrawings - this fullness of the unique assumption of colors.

Concatenated, they move away to a high infinity that reaches the light, the colors dazzle the conjunctures of the visitors; Visions of the world are presented, in regular portions of variegated colors that act in complementarity and knowledge.

The invention makes visible the idea that to repeat must be repeated until it is dangerously celebrated in a clamor expanded towards the light - in this case of this house, the skylight.

Maria de Fátima Lambert

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1 Mondrian, *Realidad Natural y Realidad Abstracta*, BCN, Barral Editores, 1973, p.96

2 Georg Simmel, *A Filosofia da Paisagem*, Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, 2009, p.7

3 Gaston Bachelard, *Terra : La terre et les rêveries du repos* (1946); *La terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (1948). *Água: L'eau et les rêves* (1942); *Ar: L'air et les songes* (1943); *Fogo: La flamme d'une chandelle* (1961).

4 Georg Simmel, *A Filosofia da Paisagem*, Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, 2009, p.5

5 Idem, *ibidem*, p.6

6 Josef Albers, *La interacción del Color*, Madrid, Alianza Forma, p.10

7 J.W. Goethe, *Traité des Couleurs*, Paris, Triades, 1980