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marthabarriga@hotmail.com

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Piet Mondrian, Plastic vision and esthetic emotion

Piet Mondrian, Visión plastic y emoción estética

*Por: Jorge Alexander Barriga
Bunsei University of Art
Departamento de Artes Plasticas
Doctorando en arte
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*Es la fantasía inconsciente del sujeto
lo único que domina en el artista al considerar la belleza.*

Eduard Von Hartman.1889

Abstract

Mondrian expressed that "if color represents meaning and expression it has to be a universal, general meaning formulated in every separated color and specified in the relation unity of image. Unity and relationship are the determinants in the roots of the meaning in color. Yet, he offers no opinion on the question of whether color carries an inner meaning of its own. He needed to make the universal visible; this fact forced him to keep available the possibilities of the pure, saturated color; then, he used it in all of his works.

Key words: plasticism, saturation, pure color

1 Mondrian: the painter

Mondrian was 20 years old when he started studies at the Amsterdam Public Academy. He studied there from 1892 to 1908, under Master August Allebé's direction. For that period, his plastic activity was influenced by naturalism and impressionism. According to critics, he painted images and landscapes following the *Haya* school style, and as Jongkind's successor. I think his art work expresses deep nostalgia and existential emptiness feeling.

Windmills, countryside and rivers were inspiration sources for many of his works. However the most representative works of this period were those where he used harmony, dominating mauve, grey, and dark green

colors. There, pointillism and fauvism influence can be observed. He experimented on vivid colors under Jan Toorop's influence.

There is a lot of graphic documentation about Mondrian's post-impressionist period. Nevertheless, the painting named *Avond* (1908) which represents a countryside at twilight, shows a color palette consisting on almost fully use of red, yellow and blue colors. Although it was not an abstract picture yet, it was the first Mondrian's work that emphasized only the use of primary colors.



Figura 1 Derecha: **Avon** 1908.

Figura 2 Centro: **Albierre** 1908 Oleo sobre tela.

Figura 3 Izquierda: **Passaggio a sera** 1904 Oleo sobre tela.

From 1905 to 1907 period, his paintings showed the first abstraction traits. He painted dark scenes of trees and houses with water gleams that looked like ink stains. For the first time, the idea that an art work had to emphasize more on shapes than on content appeared. Later, this esthetic concept will become the foundation of his plastic expression.

1911 was the year when Mondrian got interested on cubism. He started then a search for simplification. He did two versions of a same work *Stilleven met gemberpot*. The first cubist version was done in 1911; and the second one, where he experimented on basic hidden forms in natural appearance of esthetic text (circles, triangles and rectangles), was done in 1912.



Figura 4. Arriba: **Stilleven met gemberpot.** 1911-1912. Oleo sobre lienzo. 63.5 x 75 cms. Abstract versión.



Figura 5. Abajo: **Stilleven met gemberpot.** 1911-1912. Oleo sobre lienzo. 63.5 x 75 cms. Cubist version.

He studied cubism till 1914. Back to Amsterdam he founded the journal-group **De Stijl** with painter Van Doesburg. They constituted a group of artists with cubism trend, between 1917 and 1926, being Mondrian the most important one.

He returned to Paris in 1919, where he studied the palette based on primary colors, and black and white. In 1930, he joined *Cercle et carre* group and in 1931 he joined to *Abstraction-creation* group. In 1938 he lived in London and traveled into the USA. There he experimented on rhythm and juxtaposition s constitutive elements of pictorial image.

He is known because of his no-figurative paintings to which he called *compositions* they were developed throughout his artistic career.

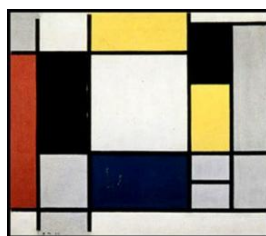
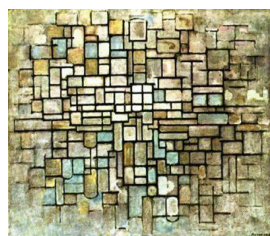
2. *Esthetic thought*

Mondrian's work is closely linked to a spiritual and philosophical interest. His art was linked to the theosophical movement founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. That movement studied reality on the basis of mysticism. From the beginning of the XX century, in Europe, the esthetic-semiotic thinking currents started to be interested in language pictorial representation, by means of symbols and signs, both in abstract and figurative painting, design and architecture. The Prague circle, Russian formalists, German esthetes, and la Bauhaus thinking

school, among others, started to study fine arts as a phenomenon. Although arts are based on communicative elements, they cannot be studied exclusively as esthetic or semiotic cases.

Mondrian (as well as Kandinsky, Picasso, and Dali, among other painters) was interested in German philosophical schools, since they were on the leading edge in esthetic and theoretical thinking of the time. He found, in this way, a theoretical support for the development of his plastic activity. Though Mondrian was not interested in symbology of form (as Kandinsky was), his philosophical studies were based on geometric abstraction looking for the basic structure of universe. The cosmic crosshairs that tries to represent with the absence of color (white) crossed by a lines grid of no color (black, color possessing all the colors) and the maps of primary colors (blue, red, and yellow) were considered by Mondrian as the basic colors of universe.

In this way, he eliminated in general all what was formal in pictorial image (such as textures and their sensorial characteristics, contour lines, etc.). He expressed then, that modern painting did not have to be figurative and it did not have to be implicated in representation of apparently real objects; but that painting had to be a searching of what is absolute, and that is found hidden behind real forms. In summary, his esthetic thought was based on the searching of a **pure art**.



*Figura 6 Izquierda: **Composition in Blue, grey and pink**. 1913. Oil painting on canvas.*

*Figura 7. Derecha **Composition with red, black, blue and Yellow and grey**. 1920 Oil painting on canvas.*

3. Natural reality and abstract reality. Critic review

Natural reality and abstract reality is a dialogue among a painting lover, a naturalist painter and an abstract realistic painter. Through the book, it is understood that the artist has been given (by means of abstract esthetics contemplation) the possibility of joining to what is universal, consciously. All contemplation elevates mankind above his natural condition. Through this dialogue, the author clarifies that in the esthetic

instant of contemplation, what is individual disappears and what is universal is born.

The painting hobbyist (y), naturalist painter (x) and abstract realistic painter (z) discuss about realistic painting and abstraction. On one hand, naturalistic painter states that abstraction and reality does not go with each other. On the other hand, abstract realistic painter states that it does; that there is a great relationship between these trends; that they intend the same but with a different procedure. By means of what is natural, one comes to abstraction; the deeper it is perceived, the more the relation is appreciated.

Abstract painter gives great importance to what is rectilinear. In his opinion it transmits more and gives more intensity than form and color. Abstract realistic painter also expresses that through position relations in an art work composition (horizontal and vertical) different sensations and feelings can be transmitted; since visual perception and its communicative function depends on plastic elements organization, such as geometric disposition, tension, rhythm, and juxtaposition among others.

Naturalist painter thinks that in order to represent a landscape, for instance, it is important to use each one of its elements. Although, realistic-abstract painter thinks that abstract representation should get to what is universal. But in what is universal, reality is a means that lets find the essence of represented object, through balance, rest, movement and unit, in a multiplicity relationship. Pure art, as expressed by realistic abstract painter looks for balance in composition as to proportion, dimension and color.

In order to get to rest and abstraction, the author tells us not to look further than nature, but throughout it. He also says that observing in this way, it only remains what is universal, seeing the set; therefore what is individual disappears.

Through abstraction, even useful or daily life objects can result beautiful, and also can get to produce an esthetic excitement (concept that German philosopher Von Hartman would develop)¹, but before this

¹ Edward Von Hartman (2001). *Filosofía de lo bello. Una reflexión sobre lo Inconsciente en el arte*. Editorial Puertes.

happens, we should get a previous knowledge about it, in order to understand it).

As an open question, I would like to think over this point: if it is true that plastics in Mondrian's work in neo-plasticist period produces esthetic excitement (that is to say it is visually perceived as a beautiful art object) as to theoretical conception of his work (that supports the search of a pure art through an abstract vision of nature that represents the essence of universe) it remains under challenge.

In my opinion no one of figurative or abstract pictorial work has the character to represent the essence of universe (or at least in its plastic dimension). Any plastic representation of man is influenced directly by pre-existent languages. From this point of view, even wall paintings (passing through Roman letters, Arabian signs, Chinese characters) or any ideographic representation or drawing possess a sign character and make reference to a specific culture (that is to say, it means or symbolizes something for man)

A clear proof of this is that if Mondrian's work truly represented the essence of universe or the essence of objects, anyone (no matter his/her culture or time) would understand Mondrian's work in the same way. Nevertheless, we know that for a culture, blue color means and symbolizes something completely different from other culture.

Though theoretically Mondrian could support his work on that concept, at plastic level his work does not show it. Although abstract art is not understood culturally as a symbol, this does not mean necessarily that it represent the essence of an object. Aunque teóricamente Mondrian pudo sustentar su obra bajo ese concepto, a nivel plástico su obra no lo refleja. Aunque el arte abstracto no sea entendido culturalmente como un símbolo, esto no significa necesariamente, que represente lo esencial del un objeto.

Von Hartman explains it in the following way²: "esthetic appearance, as we have seen, is purely ideal; that is to say it has nothing to do with reality. *In appearance, it is something absolutely subjective-ideal, pure conscience content, with no reference to a trans-subjective reality that*

² Ibid (2001). *Filosofía de lo bello. Una reflexión sobre lo Inconsciente en el arte*. Editorial Puertes. Pag 139. La apariencia estética y sus componentes.

corresponded to it; but as symbolic expression (of a state of mind or spiritual content) is itself objectively ideal.

4. Post impressionist period, Dutch landscapes. From real to abstract

We have deeply studied Mondrian's iconography of post impressionist period in Sosaku Keninkiu I Semminar, directed by Master Umeda.

In a short time period between 1908 and 1912, Mondrian changed his painting style radically, influenced basically by cubism, Kandinsky and Malévich, and also by philosophical ideas shared with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

Analyzing iconography studied in Umeda Sensei's seminar, we observed that Mondrian's plastic evolution was produced gradually; it was expressed clearly in esthetic features and in plastic configuration elements such as geometric disposition, balance, tension, and the relation treatment shape-depth.

Mondrian's first art works (which represent Amsterdam's surroundings) are daily life scenes, but with a little ambitious academic style. Nevertheless, horizontal lines, landscape reduction (towards a structural form) and the search of tension as fundamental part of composition form are, with no doubt, common factors in his work. He found his inspiration source (to evolve from what was natural to abstract) in the opposition generated between structures manufactured by man, and natural structures (being nature the main element in his first works).

Art works done by Mondrian from 1908 (Landscapes of Doengburg city) are charged of a deep theosophist symbolism (born in the artist's spiritual search, who practiced mystic philosophy). In this way, Mondrian gave a special meaning to colors and forms (horizontal brush strokes meant what was feminine, and vertical ones meant what was masculine) symbology that transferred from naturalism to abstractionism for a long work period.

In 1909, he adopted a luminist style in the way of Jan Troop's. He started to experiment with the painting of architectural structures such as spotlights and churches. Undoubtedly, Paris was the city where cubism and Picasso's, Cezanne's and Mondrian's paintings were decisive

elements to give a jump to abstractionism. Mondrian wanted to represent a perfect abstract world, using only the cubism's elements and not its philosophy. So, he discovered the equivalent relationship between emptiness and form, both closely linked and important in composition. Spaces acquired then not only this new value, but they were also moved according to lines movement, in a material and special density network. This idea was the neoplasticist style origin.

But the core element in the search of abstraction in Mondrian's painting was the representation of Paris urban views. There, he discovered that form could be represented without recourse to visual illusion, but to pure and more elemental structural essence. Then, he converted Parisian frontages into essential geometrical strokes. So, a new abstract language was born; not purely decorative or only illustrative art, it was charged of content. Neoplasticism proposed a perfect and future society vision, through art, design and architecture.

5. De Stijl. Theo Van Doesburg y Gerrit Rietveld.

Painters Piet Mondrian, Bart Van der Leek, designer Gerrit Rietveld and architect J.J.P Oud, among others, were joined to painter and architect Theo Van Doesburg. The last one, was the founder and spiritual guide of this artistic movement constituted in Holland, in 1917. They published their ideas in a journal. Their esthetics and philosophy were based on the idea of finding the expression of universe's math structure and the universal harmony of nature. This movement searched for universal laws which governed visible reality; but they are hidden behind external appearance of things.

Mondrian's, Van der Leek's and Van Doesburg's paintings were almost the same for a short period in 1917. However, Mondrian never accepted diagonal strokes in his works, since they generated an opposite idea to universe perfection. On the contrary, Doesburg admitted diagonal stroke. Mondrian left Stijl in 1942, after Van Doesburg developed his elementarism theory which stated the diagonal as a composite principle more dynamic than horizontal and vertical building, expressed in the Mondrian's neoplasticism.

Van Doesburg was also known by his relationship with la Bauhaus, whose theories would modify significantly design production and its relation with machine and industry. In 1942, Mondrian published his ideas about elementarism, where he explained that this is the highest point of pictorial representation (originated in classic symmetrical composition, passing through cubist concentric composition, and from there to peripheral neoplastic composition). Elemental contraposition added a new dimension to former neoplastic conception: diagonal strokes, slanting planes and unharmonious colors which destroyed horizontal and vertical balance, introducing dynamism and tension. These concepts generated the idea of *fourth dimension* in Doesburg's architectonic work.

Figure 6.right: **Cine-dancing Strasbourg.** Teo van Doesbourg 1926-



Figure 7. left: **Contra composition 16** Teo van Doesbourg 1925



Figure 8 top.
Red and blue chair, Gerrit Rietveld 1918.

Gerrit Rietvel was a Holland architect and designer. As Mondrian and Doesburg, he made up active part in the Stijl art movement development.

Product design, today known as industrial design, was born with architect Rietveld's visionary designs. In 1911, Rietveld founded his own furniture factory. He involved then scientific theory, mechanic production, modern city rhythms and Stijl moment's theories, in a conceptual development of form. So in 1918, he designed *the red and blue chair*, considered as a true art work

by generations of designers, and a product design paradigm.

Figure 9 right. Rietveld Schroder House, Gerrit Rietveld 1924

Figure 10 left, Rietveld Schroder house.



In 1919, Gerrit Rietveld started to take part in artistic movement, providing his ideas about neoplastic theory's three-dimensional application and a new vision as to space-time relation and its relationship with design and form development.

Even though this chair design was based on Mondrian's theory, it is not his three-dimensional equivalent. Conversely, this design is an approach between technology and visual form of the time.

Schroder house is an asymmetric composition of horizontal and vertical planes, related with visual balance principles. The main objective is to leave a free houseplant and a formal separation between structure and building enclosure.

Van Doesburg created the 17 neoplastic architecture points in 1927. Next, we will study some of the most important tones:

No1. Form: modern architecture (instead of being originated a priori) states the problem of construction for each new Project. Form is a posteriori (form as result of design).

No5. Report: new architecture does not recognize an a priori schema; a mould where to construct functional spaces. Opposite to all past styles, new architectonic method does not recognize fundamental and immutable types. Division and subdivision of indoor spaces are rigidly determined through planes that do not have an individual form. These planes can be spread ad infinitum, everywhere and without interruption.

The result is a chain system where different points correspond to a same quantity of points in the general space; since there is a relation between different planes and outside space.

No7. *Emptiness:* new architecture does not know any passive element; it has defeated emptiness. The window is not a hole in the wall anymore. The hole or emptiness does not come from anywhere, because everything is determined in a rigid way by its contrast.

No10. *Time:* new architecture does not just count on space as architecture value, but also with time. Time and space unit gives a new aspect (plastically more complete) to architectural image. This is called animated space.

No11. *Plastic aspect:* fourth dimension of space-time

In conclusion, we can observe Piet Mondrian's theory has influenced on all development as to XX century design and architecture, all utilitarian and decorative objects, all architectural structures, and any graphic element related in any way with neoplasticism. Although, in painting this phenomenon has only influenced part of abstractionism in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's decades.

6. Mondrian's series analysis. From the text natural reality and abstract reality.

1 Three series 1909-1912 Scene 1 and 2. Page 303-309.

Mondrian Tree series was painting under the ideas and conceptual frame that we can find in his book "*Natural Reality and abstract Reality*". There are some ideas of Mondrian's plastic expression and esthetic thought.

The emotion of the beautiful is based on an unreal effect of the pictorial image.

Abstract-realistic painting made emphasize on the plastic elements and the plastic relations that express repose and tension.

The proportion of composition elements will be plastically express by the relation of position. For these reason color or form have the same value for the abstract realistic painter.

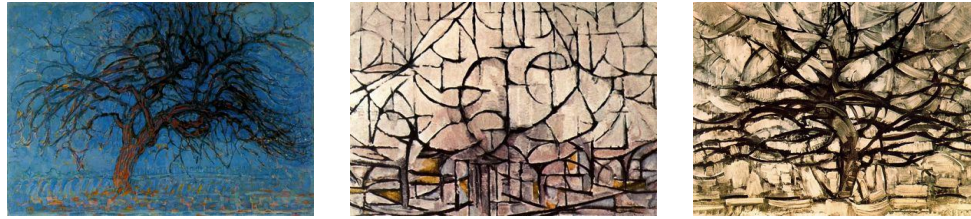


Figure13. Left: **Red tree**. 1911. Oil on canvas. 63.5 x 75 cm Puntillism and Divisionism.

Figure14. Center: **Alberi in fiore**.1912. Oil on canvas. 65 x 75 cm Cubist version.

Figure15. Right: **Albero argentato**. 1911. Oil on canvas. 78.5 x 107,5 cm Cubist

In the art of painting, rhythm of lines and colors has to make us feel the real. The original relation, that is, the right angle, is of course, a living reality in itself, but it becomes a plastic reality only through the relativity, that is the multiplicity, of relations

In abstract- reality esthetic contemplation the individual is pushed to the back ground, and the universal appears. This new painting, braking away from the natural appearance and is characterized by a more Clearly defined representation of the universal.

According to neo-plasticism, everything should be express in flat surfaces and straight lines, the flat surface and the straight line provide the means for saying everything... but is the artist who does the saying.



Figure16. Left : **Tree composition 2**. 1912. Oil on canvas.

Figure17. Center 1: **Melo in fiore**. 1912. Oil on canvas. 78 x 106 cm

Figure18. Center 2: 1912.**Eucaliptus**. Oil on canvas. 51 x 39.5 cm Cubist version.

Figure19. Down: 1912.**Tree II**. Oil on canvas. 56.5 x 84.5 cm Cubist version.



Figure20. Left : **Oval composition**. 1913. Charcoal on paper 85 x 70 cm.

Figure21. Center 1: **Oval composition (alberi)**. 1913. Oil on canvas. 93 x 78 cm

Figure22. Right: 1912.**Composition 1**. Oil on canvas. 96 x 64 cm
Cubist version.

2 Dune series 1908-1910 Scene page 311-322.

About this series of plastic Works, some of the ideas that support the development of Mondrian's expression are:

The green expanse of just a while ago did indeed give us an impression of richness and fullness, but this scarcely nuanced sand expresses a still more profound beauty. What strikes me the most is that the stars now have an extraordinary effect.

Mondrian's point of view about the contemplation is: Contemplation and plastic vision has great importance for the man. The closer contemplation brings us to a conscious vision of the unchangeable and the universal, the more changeable, the individual, and human pettiness in us and around us, will seem futile to us. Man is enabled by means of abstract-aesthetic contemplation to achieve conscious with the universal. But in aesthetic contemplation the individual is pushed to the back ground, and the universal appears. The new painting, which is breaking away from the natural appearance and is characterized by a more clearly defined representation of the universal. Should be seen as a manifestation of the spirit of our age. In a purer way at the realization of the beautiful by welcoming it completely, by forgetting ourselves in contemplation.

For a clear understanding of the evolution of art as it moves from natural reality to abstract reality.

Figure 23. Left: 1909
Duna II. Oil on
canvas. 37,5 x 46,5
cm

Figure 24. Right:
1909 **Duna III.** Oil
on canvas. 29,5 x
39 cm



Providing that this destruction implies reconstruction, as it does in neo-plasticism the equivalence and unity of the expression of the physical and the spiritual. The natural should only be cleared of what is most external, but not demolished: Then the apparent unity will become duality, and this apparent duality can be pure truth. In short, Nature expresses itself, and we for our part are rather inclined to fantasy. It is only in the aesthetic moment of contemplation that we stop fantasizing; then, we are open to the revelation of the true; we see pure beauty.

The world harmony does not the same meaning for each of us: We all think of it differently. In Nature, there is, to be sure, a natural harmony, but in abstraction, the balanced relation yields a quite different notion of the harmonious. This notion is however, relative and is perfected in time, as is proved by the successive forms of art and also, to some extent, by the life of each artist. The beauty of the artist effort lies in this: it tends toward an always purer expression of harmony, Through plastically expressing each new vision of the beautiful, the artists feels ever more strongly that the harmony revealed in al that exists is to power full to be rendered truly by any art based on perception alone. Thus on each contact whit the visual, the artist reworks it, striving for a grater plastic harmony, as you know from your own experience. After ecstasy frustration comes, followed by a new plastic conception. As he

reflects and compares, the artist cannot fully enjoy the harmony he has realized.

It may be that the harmony realized by neo-plasticism will turn out to be more satisfying than any other, but even this will remain far below the idea of harmony we bear within us but which has never yet been brought to full consciousness. But to the living beauty of nature, which acts on all our senses at once, we owe the awareness that harmony of all existing things can become so powerful. It is not just the visual appearance in nature which causes our emotion.



Figure25. Left: 1909 **Duna IV**. Oil on canvas. 33 x 46 cm

Figure26. Right: 1909 **Duna I**. Oil on canvas. 65.5 x 96 cm

Moreover, plastic vision implies action: by plastic vision, we destroy the natural appearance, and reconstruct that appearance abstractly. Our plastic vision corrects our habitual, natural vision; thus, we reduce the individual to the universal, with which we become united. So we see how pure aesthetic vision makes it possible the truth to be expressed by the beauty, though in still veiled fashion. But this beauty cannot be purely external for the very simple reason that pure plastic vision sees through things; thus, to ordinary sight, it has the character of abstract beauty.

One cannot even say that the example I gave is any kind of argument for an abstract plasticism, for in that example we knew what it was all about: the plastic expression given by the violent displacement of elements was due in part to the idea of struggle which was known in advance. But this shows quite clearly that purely abstract signs can be means of expression. An abstract representation gives a more universal impression so the particular disappears and we deal only with the general.

Diagrammatic representation of natural things

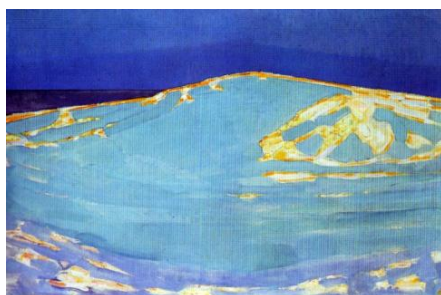


Figure 27.left:
1919 **Duna V.** Oil
on canvas. 65.5 x

3 Ocean series 1912-1917

About the transformation process of the natural in to the abstract, Mondrian's ideas are the following:

Our new vision is different for our optical vision, but the inner vision is not always conscious, and then, no matter how spontaneous this inner vision we cling more or less to the optical vision, especially after the first burst of emotion has subsided. It is thanks to the impact of this first intuitive emotion that the studies and rough sketches of naturalistic painters are stringer and more beautiful than abstract pictures.

Let us never forget that the aesthetic view is different for the habitual one. In general, what just counts in art is to produce an emotion of beauty. Thus to the degree that we feel the purity of color before us more intensely, we should express it more purely. To put the matter better: when we learn to see more aesthetically, our task will be to express our emotion of the beauty in a clean manner, and in terms of precise proportions and measurements. Then we can break completely with optical vision.

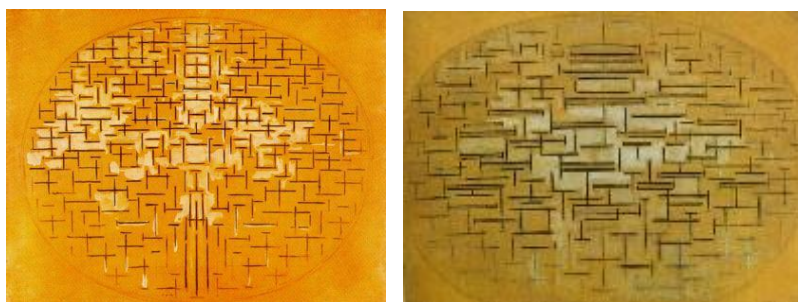


Figure28. Left: 1914 **Sea, starry sky above the sea** . Charcoal on paper 51 x 63 cm.

Figure29. Right: 1915 **Marine 5**. Charcoal and Gouache on paper 87.6 x 120.3 cm.



Figure30. Left: 1909 **Sea after sunsent** . 62.5 x 74.5 cm.
 Figure31. Right: 1909 **Sea after sunsent** . 41 x 76 cm.

Figure32. Left: 1909
Sea after sunsent.
 41 x 76 cm.

Figure33. Right:
 1912. **Sea after
 sunsent** . 82.5 x 92
 cm.

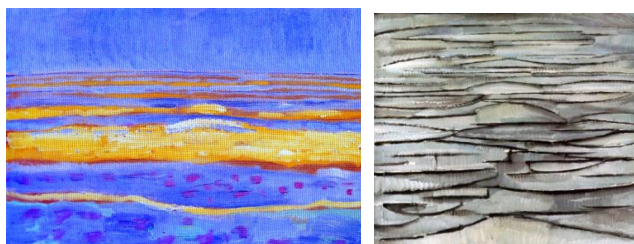
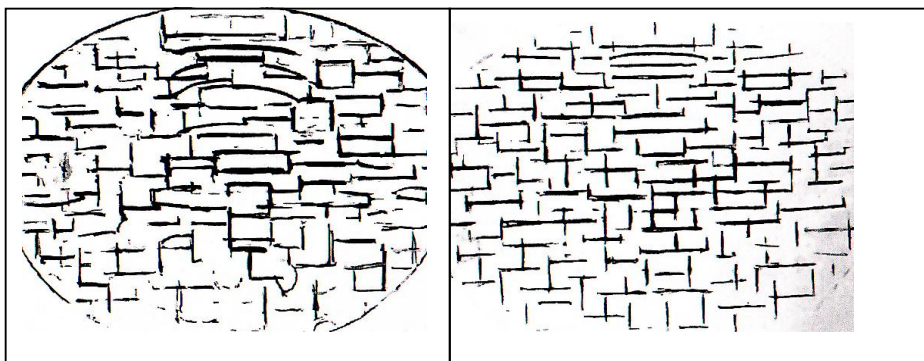


Figure34. Left: 1914 **The sea.**11.4
 x15.8 cm.
 Figure35. Center: 1914 **The sea.** 11.4
 x15.8 cm.
 Figure36. Right: 1914 **The sea.**

Figure37. Left: 1913-14 **The
 sea.**
 Figure38. rRight: 1914 **The
 sea.**



4. Pier and sea series 1914-1915.

That's why it must be said that perfection was only half attained: There can be no questions of real perfection in the real world, What we have here is, in great part no more than generalization of forms, aimed at making the forms stands out, not at eliminating them. So we see here, as everywhere in whimsical nature, equivalence through form, not equivalence as such that is to say, pure equivalence.

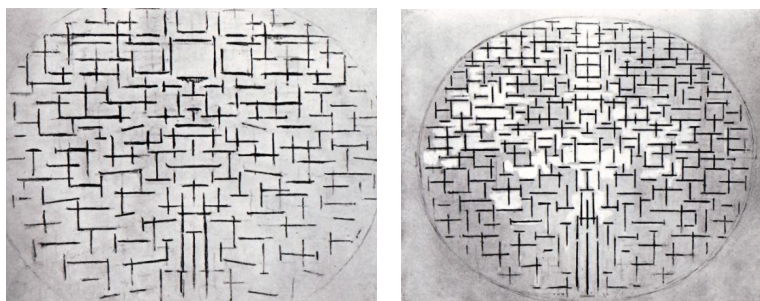


Figure39. Left: 1914 Pier and Ocean. Charcoal and White water color on paper 51 x 83 cm.

Figure40. Right: 1914 Pier and Ocean. Black crayon 85.5 x 112cm.

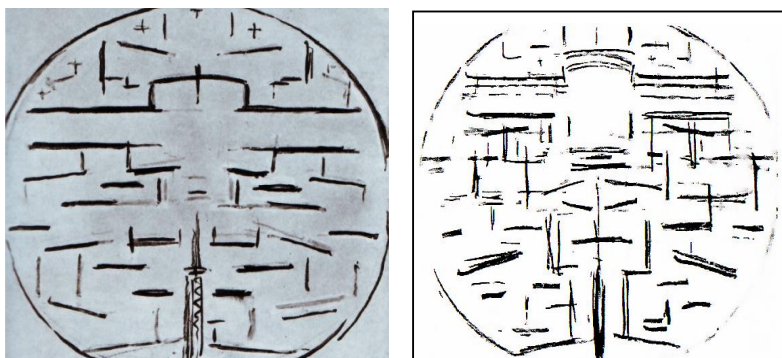


Figure41. Left: 1914 **Pier and Ocean.**

Figure42. Right: 1914 **Pier and Ocean.**

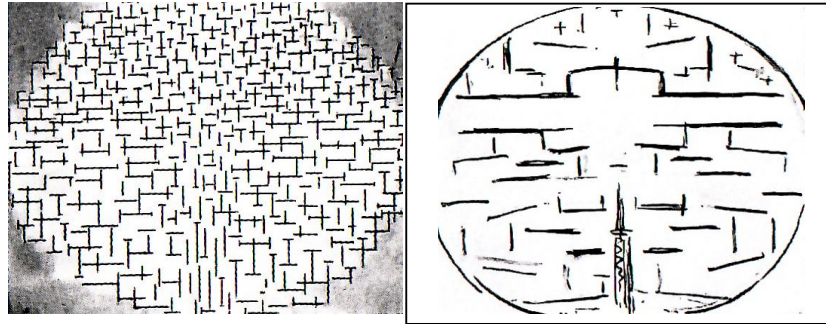


Figure43. Left: 1914 **Pier and Ocean.**

Figure44. Right: 1914 **Pier and Ocean.**

- **5. Church's facades 1914-1915. Scene 5 and 6 325-331.**

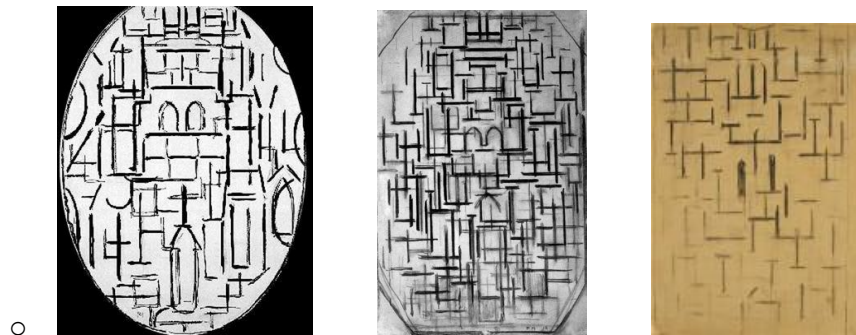


Figure45. Left: 1914 **Church at Domburg .**

Ink on paper 53 x 60 cm.

Figure46. Left: 1914 **Church facade .**

Charcoal on paper 99 x 63.4 cm.

Figure47. Left: 1914 **Church at Domburg.**

About the human made structures and aesthetic perception, Mondrian`s ideas set up in this way:

The lines of human made structures: "that`s why it must be said that the perfection was only half attained; there can be no question of real perfection in the real world. What we have here is, in great part, no more than a generalization of forms, aimed at making the forms to stand out, and not to eliminate them. So we see here, as everywhere in whimsical nature, equivalence through form, not equivalence as such, that it to say. Pure equivalence.

Example: The sculptor must seek the straight line in three dimensions. His plasticism necessarily has bulk. But is possible for him to reduce the round form, which is the essentially naturalistic form, to the prismatic form, Thus again eliminating the particular aspect of the form by means of oppositions and interruptions. This is why it seems to me that, as far as neo-plasticism is concerned, the sculptor must explore the composition of prisms.

The useful as such can indeed be beautiful: Countless objects of everyday use show this. A very simply conceived drinking cup can be beautiful as an automobile or an airplane. The things characteristics of our age, the works of engineers, bridges, factories, iron and concrete construction, all have beauty, Perhaps the great mistake of the architects is that they strive for beauty.

The artists must be nothing more than a man, merely; a human being who expresses himself or, if you like, creates aesthetically, but he should be nothing less than that. And that is not a little that is everything. Such a man is in fact moved a stirred by equilibrium, and the values based on it, but no by some accessory elements. Thus he cannot help having emotions.

And it's the law of equilibrium that causes him to endow his creations with greater equilibrium, to strive for and to create beauty, without thinking on beauty. If the artist were not that, then any body, the ordinary man, without any aesthetic emotion, would be ahead of him, for the later produces, without emotions a certain beauty solely through his emotions and intelligence. The engineer, for instance, devotes his life exclusively to construction and he creates pure relations by sheer necessity, and necessity is truth.

We see pure beauty appear of itself in works of architecture factories, housing developments, stores, and so on constructed out of aesthetic thought.

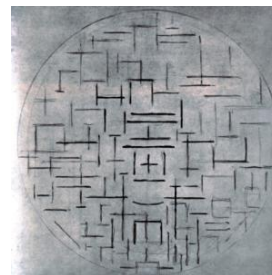


Figure48. Left:
1914 Church
façade.
1913-14 pencil
15 x 24 cm
Figure49.
Right: 1914
Blue
composition
church façade.
1914
Charcoal. 111 x
114.5

On the other hand, when we look at a church, our vision is governed by its form and it's difficult for us to create other with it. In the last analysis, the difference lies in this: when we look at the church, we are determined by another force, when we look at the starry sky; we are determined by our own powers to create.

Sensation is very complex, by the way, we ought to take into account ourselves, as well as the thing perceived. And I am expressly using the word perceive and not the word see. For all our senses work together automatically. The true is expressed in each thing in a distinct way, and it is present to each man in a different way, and that is why it is good that there are so many kinds of things and so many kinds of men.

Once our first aesthetic impression has passed, our feeling is defined and situated much better if we think of the past: we certainly see forms of a style that is not our own. These forms always contain something more or less descriptive.

Pure plastic beauty is diminished by descriptive element. The descriptive belongs to time and continually changes.



Figure50. Left: 1914 **Church facade** . Charcoal on paper 80 x 47.5 cm.

Figure51. Center 1: 1914 **Church facade**. Charcoal on paper 97.5 x 62 cm.

Figure52 Center 2. Left: 1910-11 **Church at Domburg**. Oil on canvas 114 x 75 cm

Figure53. Right: 1914 **Blue façade**. Oil on canvas 95.5 x 67.5cm

Deep behind all change is the unchangeable, which is of all ages, and which reveals itself as pure creative beauty. It is the beauty alone, veiled in these buildings by all sorts of forms, which is our living reality, it is universal beauty. The object of neo plasticism is to make this clear.

The old art is and art for children. Neo- plasticism wants to be an art for adults. And just as the adult is a stranger to the child. The new man for who sake neo plasticism exist is a stranger to the old art.

6. Compositions with color. 1917 Mondrian artwororks. Based on scene 7. Page 332-351

What is the aesthetic thought of the natural realistic painter?

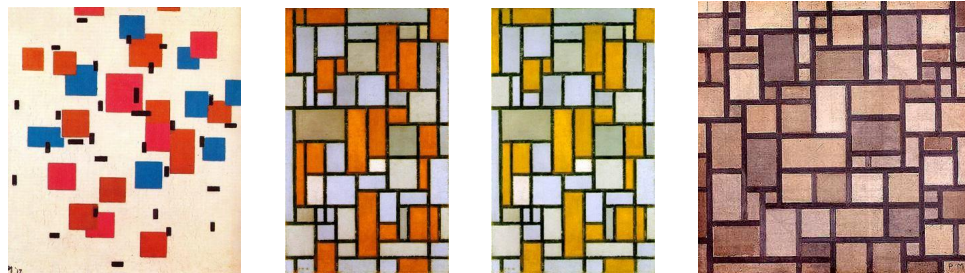


Figure54. Left : 1917 **A color composition.** .

Figure55. Center 1: 1918 **Ochre and gray composition.** Oil on canvas. 80.5 x 49.5 cm

Figure56. Center 2: 1917.**Composition With gray and Light brown 1.** Oil on canvas. 80.2 x 49.9 cm

Figure57. Right: 1919 **.Composition. Light colors planes With gray contours** Oil on canvas. 49 x 49 cm

The abstract-realistic painter, finally, also forms fixed images of visible reality: he permits the latter to act on him, and achieves in his compositions and abstract expression of relations. Thus we see the image o beauty developing in the artist and detaching itself in some way from things. And in this process of detaching itself from things, it slowly grows out of individual beauty and achieves universal beauty. The abstract image of simple relations is liberated from any limitation or attachment, and hence is also liberated from the tragic content of material and individual things; thus it becomes the purest expression of the universal. We cannot attain the universal if we remain attached to individual things: first these must be overcome within ourselves. Likewise, in art the universal cannot be exactly expressed within the naturalistic form, those who today teach faith in universalism ought to think of that.

In so doing we shall have gradually to leave the different concepts of beauty behind until we have obtained the final concept, wholly purified and interiorized. The evolution of art exhibits a succession of stages

from the natural to the abstract. Each of these stages resulted solely from the destruction of prior creations. I speak before of the naturalistic, cubist, and abstract- realistic conceptions, in their relations to nature. But in the end, the artist can express the beautiful without referring to nature. When he becomes conscious of the universal. In other words, when the individuality has lost its preponderant influence, the artist can, now that he has achieved greater consciousness, directly express plastic beauty, perfect harmony, in short that which is the good of art. He has gather the external word into himself, by this token the latter is always present in him and is always capable of stirring his emotions.

The abstract-realistic painter knows a different kind of beauty: one that he creates himself, and that in nature appears only under a veil. To create happiness, harmony is necessary in the inner and the outer.

7. Compositions series 1917-1940. Neo-plasticism

What does the mean Neo-plasticism painting trend?

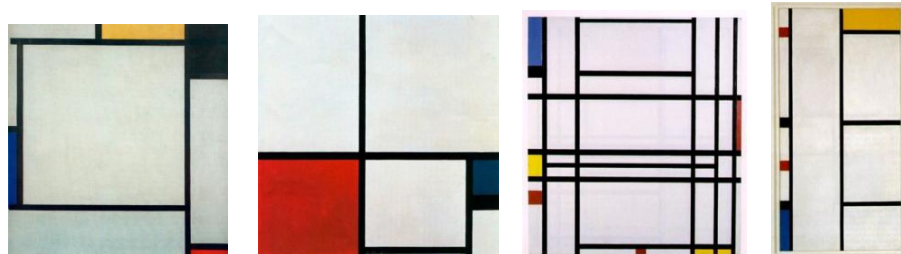


Figure58. Left: 1922. **Composition 2**. Oil on canvas. 55 x 53cm

Figure59. Center 1: 1919. **Composition 1**. Oil on canvas. 50 x 50 cm

Figure60. Center 2: 1939. **Composition 10**. Oil on canvas. 80 x 73 cm

Figure61. Right: 1935. **Composition 3**. Oil on canvas. 101 x 51 cm

Neo- plasticism wants to emphasize the art phenomenon as such: It's indeed the universal that we want to express, but the phenomenon, or the appearance, is the balanced relation of two opposed elements. In this days when the absolutely new is emerging, it is first of all necessary to emphasize the appearance because the appearance, the art phenomenon, that will tell us whether a work actually expresses a pure plasticism of the universal. Execution is to art what action is to life. On the phenomenal level in neo plasticism appearance, the most external means of expression form and natural color are interiorized; and thus rendered equivalent to the pure plastic means of inwardness. These rectangular color planes are pure respect to each other thus it is that in

neo. Plasticism, we speak of balanced relations, in contrast to former painting, which express harmony.

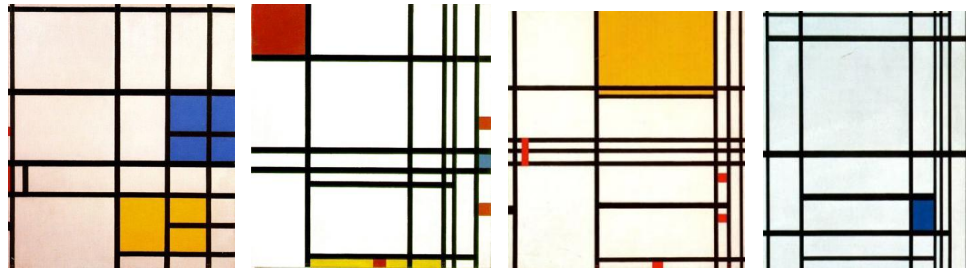


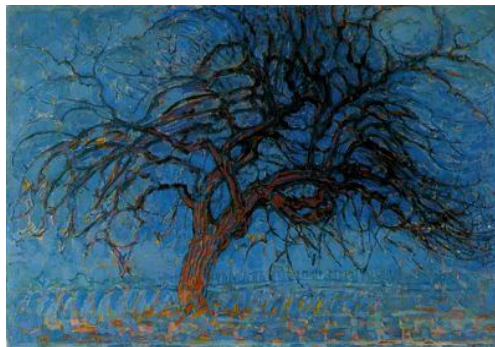
Figure62. Left: 1940.**Composition London**. Oil on canvas. 82.5 x71.1cm

Figure63. Center 1: 1939 .**Composition 8**. Oil on canvas.

Figure64. Center 2: 1939 .**Composition with black yellow and red**. Oil on canvas.

Figure65. Right: 1937 .**Composition in Blue** . Oil on canvas.

8. Red tree personal explanation:



Red tree 1908 is also a portrait. In the red tree the motive of the old fruit tree with its interlocking criss-cross of branches is placed in a sketchy, shallow landscape. The manner of painting distracts attention from the source is whit the use of high contrast between the shadow and the lights. At the Bottom of the image the blue is openly structured and depicted in loose brushstrokes over a thin red and blue wash. The top spreads into short lines that continually change direction; meandering through the surrounding independent deep blue spots. In the intensely red, linear depiction of the bark, scarlet accents, added late in the painting process, are bundled loosely together.

Before this addition the tree was presented as a mass composed of dark blues and blacks, the addition of the red changes the status of the light in the painting. The pointillism is loose, expressive, follows the motif, and is never given up in favor of another method.

The use of color is highly expressive; the dramatic contrast between the juxtaposed, saturated, blue and red lending an extra tension to the tree, as a metaphor for autonomous growth and, by implication the individual. The deep blue and fierce red used by Mondrian takes a psychological dimension. It describes astral manifestations.

Shadows and lights

The exact meaning of the light, primary color of red tree, and the dark, saturated hues of tree continue to concern Mondrian plastic expression for several years. The opposition seemed to have something to do with the contradiction between inwardness and outwardness, with object and subject, body and mind, between materiality and more subtle areas. But which color corresponded to which state, and the best policy to adopt remained unclear.

For it was certain that the issue was about strategy about apriority planning of possibilities of meaning in color. Before embarking on the adventure of cubism Mondrian dwelt on the shadow, dense colors using in big, close planes. This was probably because he associated the lighter tones with individual exaggeration and easy impressionism while, as he pointed out later, he link the intensity of saturated colors to calmness, in mutability, pureness and the inner self.

Mondrian expressed that "if color represents meaning and expression it has to be a universal, general meaning formulated in every separated color and specified in the relation unity of image. Unity and relationship are the determinants in the roots of the meaning in color. Yet perhaps not wishing to burn his boats, he offers no opinion on the question of whether color carries and inner meaning of its own. He needed to make the universal visible; this fact forced him to keep available the possibilities of the pure, saturated color; then, he used it in all of his works.

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Jorge Alexander Barriga Monroy

darkmei7@yahoo.com

Mi lugar de nacimiento fue Santa Fe de Bogotá Colombia. Aunque desde niño sentí una fuerte inclinación hacia la música, pasión que cultivé hasta finales de mi adolescencia, serían el diseño industrial y la pintura al óleo las áreas en las que posteriormente desarrollaría mi actividad profesional e investigativa. Desde los primeros años de universidad me interesé por la estética, la semiótica y la metodología de investigación en diseño. Soy egresado de la *Pontificia universidad Javeriana*, Bogotá, donde además trabajé como docente. Realicé mis estudios de post-grado en ilustración con énfasis en medios digitales en la escuela *Tokyo design Senmon Gako*. Posteriormente cursé la Maestría en arte y diseño en la Universidad de *Bunsei Geijutsu Daigaku*, donde actualmente desarrollo mis estudios de Doctorado en arte plásticas con énfasis en la estética-simbólica aplicada al proceso creativo en arte y diseño.