

One Month Gallery (OMG) curators:

"Tom R. Chambers is a Texan with a 'Russian, Suprematist soul'. He has repeatedly introduced the modern trend of new media art to the masses. He has brought Minimalism to the pixel. In 2000, Chambers began to look at the pixel in the context of Abstraction and Minimalism. And he is currently working with interpretations of Kazimir Malevich's 'Black Square' and other Suprematist forms. His work calls our attention to visual singularity, which is all that we see in the digital universe. Since the pixel corresponds to what we call 'subatomic particles' in our physical universe, Chambers' work connects us directly with the feeling of Russian Suprematism, described as the spirit that pervades everything, and pays tribute to the faith in the ability of abstraction to convey net feeling in the work."

Interview with Tom R. Chambers (TRC):

OMG: How did you get involved with Suprematism?

TRC: I have always liked Minimalist works and as a digital artist, I began to explore the pixel as an art form in 2000. As I did research, and experimented with this picture element, I also began to read about Kazimir Malevich and his extreme Minimalist approach with "Black Square". The more I contemplated his "Black Square", the deeper I moved into the pixel and consequently the creation of the "My Dear Malevich" project, which revealed similar to identical Suprematist forms that he created. I have focused on the pixel and his "Black Square" ever since.

OMG: How has a guy from Texas developed a love for Suprematism? Territorially and culturally, you seem far removed. And it has been a hundred years since the beginning of this art movement. What can explain such a phenomenon?

TRC: This guy from Texas has lived not only in his home state, but also in other parts of the United States while growing up. And I have lived in Zimbabwe (Africa), South Korea, China with excursions to Europe and India. Maybe this constant flux/change ... it seems ... with varying exposures and experiences has moved me far away from the typical "country mentality" you refer to. There might be a couple of reasons for a youngster from a small country town to eventually move towards Suprematism: north Texas and particularly the Panhandle area are flat, which creates an interesting line at the horizon and a very intense one at sunset and sunrise ... Minimalist art if you will; and I had an encounter with a conceptual artist when I was in my 20s who worked with "Displacement of Volume" via the circle and square.

OMG: You have been a professor of digital art. Did you retire for the sake of art, or have you managed to combine the two?

TRC: When I was a visiting lecturer in digital/new media art at Zhaoqing University (China), it was only for a two-year contract period, so I had to move on, which I did back in the States as a teacher of the same at a college prep academy here in Houston. Even though I enjoyed working with young people to expand their horizons in the Arts, I decided to retire in 2013 to work full-time on my personal art.

OMG: Teaching brought you to China for two years. Did the culture of this country influence you? Are there any traces of this influence captured in your work?

TRC: I don't believe the culture of China has influenced my work, particularly with the pixel and "Black Square". I do have some specific art projects about China, but again, this is due to my physical presence there and for that moment or time period. Long-term influence ... no.

OMG: Tom, have you ever been in Russia? If not, would you like to visit? Is this a dream you have?

TRC: I have never been in Russia. Of course, I would like to visit, and yes, I consider this a dream. To spend some time in your country would be fitting to the kind of work I am currently doing with Suprematism. And as a documentarian, I would also like to explore, photographically, its culture and people. In terms of a dream, I suppose it might be the fact that I would like to travel to Saint Petersburg (Petrograd/Leningrad), and retrace the steps of Kazimir Malevich. I even have an art proposal based on this dream to do such.

OMG: Your works have been published repeatedly in specialized Russian publications dedicated to Malevich. It might be considered as a recognition in his homeland. What would be the next step?

TRC: As I hinted in my answer to the last question, I suppose the next step would be to physically come to Russia ... Saint Petersburg ... where the Suprematist movement began. And I would walk the streets, and follow up my art proposal I have put together to document and create a project based on Malevich's movement in the same environment in which he worked and lived.

OMG: What will you show in the exhibition, "Post Scriptum +8 100"?

TRC: I am showing composites of my work from the exhibition, “Black Square Interpretations and Other Suprematist Explorations”, which was shown along with the work of Max Semakov at the CaviArt Gallery, Russian Cultural Center, Houston, Texas (March 6 – April 7, 2015). Specific titles: “My Dear Malevich” (print), “Black Square Unmasked” (print), “Black Square Merge” (print), “Beyond Black Square” (print), “Red Sweep Black Square” (print), “Bourgeois Black Square” (video), and “Black Square Trailers” (video).

OMG: Since the creation of Suprematism, many events have happened. A lot of fundamentally new artistic trends and styles have been established. To which artist of this new era would you like to be considered a student of and why?

TRC: If you are talking about influence, I would have to mention Harvey J. Bott. I mentioned him in an answer to a previous question when I indicated that I had an encounter with a conceptual artist. I worked closely with Bott back in the mid-70s, and I currently have a rapport with him here in Houston. He is now in his 80s, and continues to do amazing work based on “Displacement of Volume” via the circle and square. His work with geometric forms has certainly enlightened me as an artist who works with the pixel and Suprematist forms.

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