

Colour and the primordial pixel

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Abstract

During the latter part of 2000, I began to look at the pixel within the context of Abstractionism and Minimalism. I used my self-portrait as a testing ground to begin to equate the pixel with the works of non-objective artists like Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, and others. These painters generated works to establish an abstract visual language of the sublime, pure color, geometric form, deep contemplation and metaphysical pursuit of the truth. The pixels or "Pixelscapes" – as I call them – conform with many of these non-objective artists' works.

My work with the pixel(s) - "Pixelscapes" - is an attempt at equating this picture element with Color Field, Hard-edge, Geometric Abstraction, Minimalism art movements, not to mention reaching back as far as Kazimir Malevich's Suprematism.

Various images of nature were utilized to magnify and isolate the pixel(s). In GIMP (Photoshop equivalent), the images were viewed at 1600%, scanned for pixel configurations and their color field renditions, and then cropped/isolated. The final product was then magnified again for presentation.

This visual poetry contains the ironic connection between Modernist philosophy which moved visual art from figurative representational pictures of the physical world into an expressive and emotional world of abstraction; and, the digital realm in which the purely abstract unit of one pixel off - one pixel on, has been utilized to reproduce once again the physical world.

I have shown a path by which this tool (pixel), which so often serves hyper-reality, is forced to reveal the abstract soul at its very core. Was Malevich thinking in pixels without knowledge of the term and even many decades before the fact of the technology, which utilizes this basic component? His association with Futurism might account for this sort of metaphysical connection.

These "Pixelscapes" straddle a whole century of art, from the earliest beginnings of Modern art to the latest developments in the tools by which the newest works are being made. The ground that is covered is immense.

These "Pixelscapes" also conform with Color Field painting, a style of abstract painting that emerged in New York City during the 1940s and 1950s. In color field painting, color is freed from objective context and becomes the subject in itself.

These pixel configurations with their color field renditions are also freed from objective context. They move towards similar considerations taken by Malevich and other early Suprematists (Minimalists). They reveal their most fundamental character, their reality, exposing their "materials and processes". They attempt to engage the viewer in an immediate, direct and unmediated experience. There is no attempt to represent an outside reality with the viewer responding to only what is in front of him/her.

The emotions that are conjured up in these 1940s and 1950s Color Field art works are omnipresent in my "Pixelscapes". They conform with many of these non-objective artists'

paintings. This is a revelation for me when they are compared to those works generated many years before the pixel and Digital Revolution. It seems that I have managed to do what those non-objective artists have done through the simple process of magnification and isolation of the pixel(s).

Keywords: *colour, suprematism, minimalism, geometric form, pixel*