

Tadeusz Myslowski

Notation related to "Towards Organic Geometry" : #4 (April 6, 2001)
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At the turn of the century, New York City's physical growth was constrained by geography. The Island of Manhattan took full advantage of the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, such as the elevator and new building materials, and, in a uniquely New York style, liberated itself and started building skyward.

"Towards Organic Geometry" was inspired by the co-reality of the architectural metaphor for changes that occurred in New York City's modernistic architecture and affected the city's urban structural landscape between 1945 and 1980. By 1970, when I arrived on the Manhattan scene, midtown Manhattan was being transformed into a piece of Corporate America along the Avenue of the Americas, and well on its way to becoming an *a b s t r a c t* city. For me, the city is the formal contemporary remains of a work of abstraction. It is another stage of *U T O P I A*, another search and attempt for the ideal urban structure. In this search, architecture is always basic and universal, as a timeless abstract form, no matter what the historical period.

I witnessed radical synthesis of minimalist urban visual formation. Architects stripped away the inessential in pursuit of the pure. A progressive view towards architectural abstraction and city planning became one of the principal qualities of the new urban aesthetic.

I consciously used the city as an inspirational source and artistic model to reflect upon the creative principle. I made urban transformation the means of an investigation of the abstract forms of the city's changing architecture and the social demands that gave rise to this change.

What interested me at this particular time was New York's rigid geometry. I paid particular attention to elements that were both geometric and geographic, such as the right angle. I felt that I was living through minimalism in both art and life. I watched the looming skyscrapers of 6th Avenue being re-cast along the "Avenue of the Americas" through the purism of American minimalist architectural phenomena. I approached these buildings as one would approach a monolith, transforming the huge three-dimensional edifices into two-dimensional, architectural, graphic, and patterned permutations, paying attention to solids, repetition, volume of line and gradation of light and shadow. I compiled and distilled from the architectural co-reality a lexicon of visual plastic rhythms.

For this investigation, I chose the tools of the camera and photography as a source of new materials and processes that could generate new ways of working and seeing. During this experimental period, my aim was to grow increasingly distant from rigid geometry and hearken back to the opposite end of the spectrum – towards organic matter, letting the work come "full circle," from the rigidity of the square to the curves of the circle. I developed my photographic process through a metamorphosis that appeared after many manipulated steps. In this way, I sort of put square geometry in a liquid state. I finally created a new generation of images: softly contoured, curvilinear shapes; fluid

ovals attributed to traces of an organism created by nature, or inspired forms created by the human hand - instead of those which are mechanical and artificial, influenced by machines and technology.

This represented a turning point in my artistic development. What makes this project unique is the transformation arising from the attempt to re-harmonize and re-structure geometry, creating art based on only simple horizontal and vertical directions.

“Towards Organic Geometry” evolved from an earlier series of photographic works entitled “Avenue of the Americas,” conceived between 1973 and 1994. I was wondering how I could dematerialize the mechanical, rigid, graphic matter from the first portfolio, “Avenue of the Americas.” By photo-process, the artist can discover how to bring a new aspect, the inner life of a new generation of images to the surface. This project is comprised of 163 images from a twenty-two year investigation, which generated ten thousand images

I chose photography as a form of language for inquiry and experiment. Traditional photography’s perfectionist goal of imitating nature (with the constantly unattainable desire to (re)create nature as it already appears) seemed appropriate for contemporary concerns. Photography had always seemed to strive for the highest and clearest qualities of definition, requiring an exacting balance of exposure times, photo materials, and the durability and granularity of the film itself.

While making the work, I discovered how the chemical processes of photography interfere with the structures of graphic materials, causing visual imperfections exaggerated by physical interactions with light and chemicals. Elements such as the shelf life of film started to cause loss of sharpness. Instead of correcting these accidental problems of technique, however, I welcomed them as an opportunity to explore. The resulting “flawed” images did not seem wrong to me, but rather seemed to contain a hidden constructive aspect, as though photography had begun to liberate a new generation of images imprisoned in its old structure.

For Moholy-Nagy the essence of photography is not the camera lens but energy of light and chemical sensitivity of film and paper. I admit that I was only a conduit through which this medium photo processes, whatever it was, flowed. I began “Towards Organic Geometry” in 1980, and I do not feel fully responsible for my photo experimentation working on this body of work. I wanted to reconfigure photography’s traditional “geometric” image-making along organic lines.

For me, these photo-images function as a visual graphic language or alphabet composed of individual characters. These characters are single individual expressions, each with its own unique difference, but the images also grow out of each other so that they form an organic whole. As these forms separate and join in their interplay, their total mass lends additional clarity to each one individually, while each form adds its character to the totality of the whole.

The repetitive linear movement of the book-pages suggests the process of motion from a clear beginning at the cross or square to the destiny of a circle, as in a traditional narrative, yet ending in open, unexplored territory. As Malevich stated, “THE ZERO OF FORM IN GEOMETRY IS THE PLACE AT WHICH SOMETHING BEGINS OR AT WHICH SOMETHING ENDS OR AT WHICH SOMETHING HAPPENS. THE VISUAL

EXPERIENCE OF THIS PURE PLANE GIVES WAY TO PURE THOUGHT, THAT OF THE MAGNITUDE OF SPACE.” I realize my perception of true ethical knowledge and intuitive understanding in art is possible to construct according to the laws of the existence of the organic element.

In art, people follow and understand a certain reality, but that reality is more than just a question of narration or the embellishment of chosen facts. I realize that it is not enough to copy or transform nature, or to copy and transform co-reality, but it is important to find profound approaches towards nature and co-reality that are hidden and in tune with the unique and unusual frequency in which nature and art secretly live intimate lives. In “Towards Organic Geometry” viewing and studying the project reveals the structural process of any work of art through the different steps of elaborate composition which, through observation, puts one in the most intimate relationship to visual orchestration, a symphony of black and white utilizing shape and structure. This gives the work a meaning of larger understanding, and this is the ultimate message from the artist. Instead of writing a story, the artist generously allows one – if one can enter into the relationship - an understanding that provides a vast experience of a new reality for the individual.

I think organicity is wholeness of nature and a new feeling for the contemporary world. Indeed, I consider my findings along the pages of “Towards Organic Geometry” to be a living organism.

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