

THESES

1.

Reality *as it is seen* is different from reality *as it is*.

Our vision – the way we visually percept the world around us – is determined by objective and subjective factors, like the evolution-biological and physiological construction of our body, our psychological and mental conditions, knowledge, historical and philosophical identity.

Space *as it is depicted* is different from space *as it is seen* or from space *as it is*.

Like thoughts can be verbally interpreted only through its articulation and compression into a grammatical structure, reality too, can be represented only through within a reduction and a certain modus of depiction by a picture.

Like different languages express the same thoughts in different ways, different representational systems depict the space in altering modes.

2.

Various representational modes in art history show diverse comprehensions of space and altering worldviews. An image always reveals the space-awareness and the worldview of the individual, community and culture that has created it. Each civilization develops and applies appropriate mode(s) in depicting reality, according to its actual worldview.

Our awareness of space – the way we consider (comprehend) space – is determined by our general knowledge and worldview. Comprehension of space may alter in different cultural eras (epochs) and periods of time, and that can be traced (tracked) within depictions in art history. Picture is a manifestation of comprehensive space.

The history of painting is the narration of the conflict between real space and the planar surface of the picture.

3.

Perspective is neither universal nor perfect.

It is just one of several representational methods, a modus typical of the tradition of the new age (since 15. Century) European and from Europe globally exported western culture, manifesting its worldview and the development of its worldview.

Perspective nevertheless, is still dominant as a mode of depicting – in spite of the offensives of modern art movements resulting from the changing worldview paradigm of the 20th century – due to its photographic, motion picture, movie and digital computer applications.

4.

There is no perfect mode of representation.

Each representational mode and geometrical method is suitable for certain purposes, therefore they are not suitable for others. Representational systems are rarely applied in a pure homogenous and regular way, and they are often mixed (heterogeneously) together in imaging.

5.

The conventional forms of perspective are often used in a conservative and stereotype manner of automatism, and their obvious contradictions are compensated through practical tricks in the professional and educational practice. These contradictions could be resolved by application of alternative perspective systems.

Insufficiencies of rectilinear perspectives can be resolved through employment of curvilinear perspectives, which are more suitable for representing a wider angle of view, a more complex vision. The reason of their failing to gain extensive development and general use is possibly the practicum of everyday use, storing, production, technology etc. Today, in a new paradigmatic age, the increasing need for imaging may reach for new solutions, new types of alternative perspective systems, perhaps providing us with a wider and deeper insight into more extensive spaces.

SYNOPSIS

Pondering in front of the canvas stretched upon the wall¹ of my studio or behind my students' drawing bank at MoME² I can daily face the problems of visualizing and depicting imaginary or seen spaces, sceneries and thoughts. Representation (depiction), the problems of visual communication belong to the basic questions of „retinal art”, still the way professional and educational practice (even on a higher level) deals with them is rather like a conservative and stereotype automatism. Everyday use compromises with ready-made methods taking them as evidences, ignoring their obvious contradictions and disguising their insufficiencies behind false tricks.

Still, the real solutions of these deficiencies and the explanations of contradictions must be there hidden beneath the appearances, and the only way they can be uncovered is exploring their essential inherencies.

A painter, i.e. someone creating pictures (striving to discover/understand the world around him by painting and drawing) and a drawing teacher, (i.e. someone striving to help students discover/understand the world around them by painting and drawing) finds himself from time to time facing to known questions:

What, again, is the miracle of our seeing?

What is our vision like, and why is it like that?

How can we represent what we visually percept?

What determines our vision and the way we represent?

What kind of correlations are between vision and depiction, between picture and reality?

What is actually the picture, what makes its fascination, what are we painting and drawing for all the time, and why have people been painting and drawing for thousands of years now?

How does the art of our times (perhaps our art) correlates with the art created earlier, and with what should still be created later?

There are questions inevitably arising from the unsettling era of a changing paradigm easily recognizable in recent progresses of art and art philosophy: What is painting's and picture's role in general? What is the reason of their drifting aside, of its loosing significance in the fields of art? Why is picture loosing quality?

The question seems to be topical since visual (imaging) communication is gaining more and more importance in the everyday, and vision is gaining more and more duty in perception compared to other senses.

Central perspective is an extraordinary practical, effective and impressive way to image space (the world) showing it from a single individual point of view. However, it is far not the only way. It is just the expression of the „enlightened” egocentric worldview of the modern age. No wonder about its incredibly successful career during the past six centuries in Europe and in the global western culture emigrated from European culture.

How could perspective gain such a fantastic development?

How can perspective still rule the picture today? How could it be engraved into our minds so deeply that it has survived the offensives launched by modernism, avantgarde, postavantgarde postmodern and attacks of today's „post-histoire”, and it still dominates most of the images today?

¹ What a luck that painting against the hard wall is easier for me than ont the soft canvas upon the sterchers – so I can't be labeled as easel-painter.

² Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest

How could this convention of space illusion and depicting representation survive several decades of neglect resulting from the shock of 20th century's art movements – a new world concept on the stage.

Today, space illusion seems to revive and keep on developing in refined methods creating new modes and image types, perhaps forced by our time's changing way of seeing or, perhaps encouraged by the revolutionary innovations of digitalized imaging and filming technologies. Growing demand on new imaging methods and alternative depicting systems can induce new solutions that might be offering a wider view and deeper insight into the more spacious dimensions of the age of changing paradigm.

My dissertation is going to focus on the questions of the visible and depictable reality, on the correlation between space and man and, on the problems of perception and representation of space – all that from art philosophical, culture historical, geometrical and evolution biological point of view.

My thesis explores, as a central issue, the central perspective, the system considered to be perfect and obviously the most suitable and adequate one for pictorial representation. It points on perspective's deficiencies against the real nature of human vision and, discusses several modes of perspective and other conventional or archaic systems (e.g. axonometric and Monge-system).

My thesis then describes possible alternative modes of special curvilinear perspective systems (e.g. cylindrical and spherical perspective) different from conventional planar and rectilinear perspective systems. After comparing perspective and other representational systems from an (art- and culture-) historical as well as geometrical point of view, it makes attempts at philosophical reasoning and drawing world conceptual conclusions from their representational methods, their "ways of seeing".

The title of my dissertation:

WORLD-VIEW

Image and Reality

Dissertation on Perception and Representation of Space, on Conventional and Alternative Perspectives

The chapters of my thesis strive to answer the following questions – or at least to outline these problems with appropriate questions:

ON VISION

What is our vision like? What determines our vision and way of seeing? What is different between seen and real world? What kind of influence can our vision make on our worldview?

ON SPACE

How can we perceive and how can we consider space? What determines the way we perceive and consider space? How can the space concept be influenced by knowledge about space and other knowledge? How is/was space considered in other cultures and other ages? How has all that been imaged in pictures?

ON PERCEPTION AND REPRESENTATION OF SPACE

What is different between seeing and depicting? How is (if at all) adequate pictorial representation of space as we see it? What is different in representational conventions of diverse cultures and, how can we trace these differences back to the cultures' diverse space concepts and worldviews?

ON GEOMETRIC REPRESENTATION

How does descriptive/projective geometry represent? What traditional geometrical methods are capable for delineation of space and form? What is similar and what is different in those methods? What is beneficial and what is deficient in those diverse methods? How did/do various cultures and ages use and put those methods into practice in different fields of application?

ON PERSPECTIVE (rectilinear perspective)

What is rectilinear perspective? How has perspective evolved and, what kind of archaic representational modes led to its birth? Why is Perspective such a glorious “symbolic form”? What kinds of modus have taken shape during its narrative development? Which modus was preferred in different epochs and, what kind of conclusions can be drawn from that? What is advantageous and what is deficient in the different modes? Why is perspective magnificent and why is it still imperfect method?

ON CURVILINEAR PERSPECTIVE

How can insufficiencies of rectilinear perspective be helped? What is curvilinear perspective and, how can it be adopted as an exact geometrical application? What is curvilinear perspective for? What are its distinguished sorts of modus and, how do they delineate space and form? What is beneficial and what is deficient in curvilinear perspective? What does curvilinear perspective manifest?

ON PICTURE

What is picture? What is picture’s and painting’s role today? What is the correlation between image and reality? What is the contradiction between the spaciousness of reality and the planar surface of the picture? How can picture resolve this problem? What is the development of that conflict traced back in ways of representation in art history? How are all the pictures in art history linked together in one story?

EPILOGUE (on my pictures)

How do my works image the problems described in my dissertation?

How (in a way) can the contradiction of real space and picture-plane be resolved?

How (in a way) can the contradiction of representation/figuration and abstraction be resolved?

How can I reconcile vivid experiences of real space with the abstract order of the pictorial composition restricted to its planar rectangle?

Why do I paint?