

Construction and variations of a pictorial space

[Julián Casado](#) applied himself, lucidly and exemplarily, to investigation of pictorial space. Showing in these present times unusual perseverance, when speed rules tyrannically, which inevitably leads to slapdash work and seeks for «the outcry of the Boeotians» -which [Gauss](#) feared so much-, Julián Casado did an intensive and extensive research on the construction of space in painting.

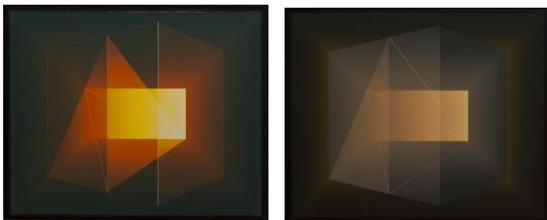
Construction of space, which he carried out in a very personal way, using means of chromatic matter and its qualities. It all began in 1970, when the artist became aware of the supremacy of luminary elements over chromatic ones in the way in which he employed colour as parallel bands not easily distinguishable from each other, owing to the extremely modulated gradation of hues, thus creating transversal lines of light and shadow according to the centrifugal or centripetal configuration from either a brighter or a darker centre.



The diptych «Archontic Sign» is a clear example of both possibilities. This has enabled him to create a spatially structured work, with no harshness at all in the arrangement of its elements and in which space is the essential outcome. It is as well to inform the viewer that Julian Casado had a deep understanding

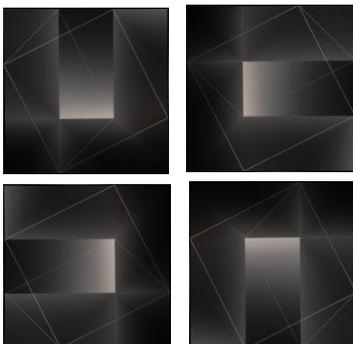
of [Xavier Zubiri](#)'s philosophy, and that he wrote extensive commentaries on it, especially dealing with aesthetics or subjects that can be related to this field. Julian Casado's theoretical groundwork is tinged with the philosophy of Zubiri, particularly with the «respectiveness of reality» concept, which Julian Casado employed in relation to variability of a pictorial space, although this cannot be taken as a case of artistic work illustrating a system of thought but, rather, as a case of a productive dialogue.

Julián Casado adapted successfully Zubirian terminology to his paintings elements, finding on encouragement and conceptual precision.

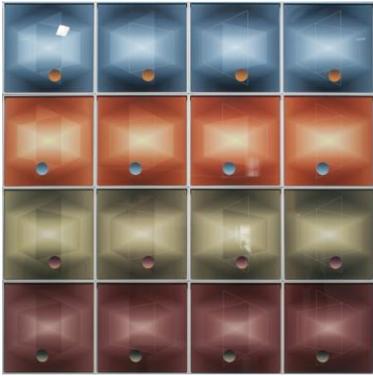


That painter's analytical way of painting resulted in extensive series of paintings in which he normally evolves to all variants that chromatic-structural dynamic afford him. The «Malevich Series» (1979-1983) has thus been appearing, it is composed of forty-two works, to which he was led by his reflections upon

Zubirian «respectiveness» concept, together with [Malevich's](#) theoretical constructive principle, «the image's functional structure creates space». Displayed twice publicly, this serie is still awaiting the person or institution able to exhibit it in its totality.



Or the «Black Series» (1978-1979), eighteen pictures sized 60x60 cm. each, whose square configuration makes possible that if you look at each painting taking any one of its four sides as a basis, the significant function of colour in the total image structure will vary, changing not only the image but, at the same time, the pictorial space and its meaning. These works, at present scattered in different collections like ([Museo de la Universidad de Alicante MUA](#)), are in my opinion the origin of the Series.



«Cosmos Aleatorium: a laudable Quartet for a piece of music by [Claudio Prieto](#)» (1990) [Fundación Torre Pujales](#) with which the painter aimed at making progress towards the variability and respectiveness. It consists of sixteen paintings of 70x70 cm each, and they are able to be changed to four positions, forming four different series of four paintings. In each work the very image structure gives form to the pictorial space, although in each of the four series, both the colour and the internal symmetry of the image change. The sixteen paintings, maintaining the square in which they are arranged, can alter their significant position between each other as it

may please the viewer. The following are the criteria considered for their positional arrangement: arrangement according to the structural shape of the image, arrangement according to the luminosity of it, arrangement according to its chromaticism and, lastly, arrangement «ad libitum». One is easy aware of the high number of all possible permutations, it seems that the actual number, amounts to seventy-two digits. Whoever spoke of the existence of open work and random art?

So both, intrinsic respectiveness of the total pictorial space and extrinsic respectiveness in each of its variations, are thus modified. As [Mircea Eliade](#) has said, when organizing space, gods' exemplary work is done again. That is why I have not at first hesitated to describe Julian Casado's pictorial undertaking as lucid and exemplary. Music inspired him on many occasions – besides that already mentioned- and we shouldn't be surprised at this when looking at his works. They seem to direct us from pictorial space to pictorial time as well, the latter being suggested by the flow of lines, the play of structures, permutations and ambiguities, variations on a central theme, all these reminding us of music, to which all art aspires. In the «Quintet for the beginning of times» he paraphrases, through pictorial counterpoints, [Olivier Messiaen](#) with a quintet of works in which Julian Casado attains amazing, by its over refinement, harmonies by combining difficult effects of chromatics. At the moment I was writing these lines, he was working on «A musical offering» by [Bach](#), another prominent musical example.

The theme chosen by Julián Casado is rather a starting point, a hypothesis for further investigation, for his practice of verifying and delving into the proposed variability of the pictorial space, to which he applied his peculiar and conscientious technique. This allowed him to make space into something changing and tangible, structured in a rigorous and accurate way that, nevertheless, moves towards the enigmatic. His was an art of painting free of foreign elements, in which each successive work or series was a further step in searching deeply into the problems it presented and into the solution or solutions found for them. Beauty, that eternal component of art, reaches culminating and utmost limits in the painting of Julián Casado. About this painting, [Fray Luis de León](#), if you let me indulge in anachronism, might have been thinking when he wrote these lines in his «Ode to Salinas»: «El aire se serena/y viste de hermosura y luz no usada...» («The air calms down/ and is filled with rare beauty and light...»).

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