

*Alfred J. Noll*

## Interpretation of space

Sequenzes from the opening-speech January 31st, 2023, zs art galerie (Vienna):

What constitutes spatial comprehension, how does this understanding come about?

What are the pictorial and formal elements that determine it?

Is it the depicted or represented object itself?

The shapes and localized color on a specific background?

The source of light as direction and quality of light?

The perspective from which the observer views the object, etc.?

Where are the intersections and nodes of these "effects" that can be perceived or understood as a spatial quality? How do disparate elements come together and interact with each other? How are we to grasp this spatial circumstance?

Ultimately, the following aesthetic central question arises:

Can individual objects (elements) that do not stand in any necessary spatial relation to each other in the real world be brought together into a mutually dependent (conceptual) context?

Or to put it differently, how and on what basis does the wholeness of a work of art manifest itself in the work?

The works of Gerhard Frömel, Alex Klein, Duks Koschitz, and Jesse Willems, all different from one another, can now be discussed with these questions in mind:

**Gerhard Frömel** is a master of the incomplete - we have to position ourselves correctly in order to recognize the work. Frömel teaches us perception via changing our local position and appropriate positioning. Although we do not construct reality by being in a certain position, we create a new reality for ourselves via appropriate positioning. As viewers, we complete what Frömel has made possible for us. He presents us with an organizational problem of seeing that only we can solve for ourselves.

**Alex Klein** provides us with something completely different from Frömel; no clear contour, no obvious three-dimensionality, rather surfaces with subtle color-changes. The resulting spatial quality arises from our imagination and experience - bright colors usually seem closer to us, while dark colors appear further away, angles are almost automatically perceived as a perspective.

A careful exploration of the paintings by traveling across the surface provokes a 'visual pseudo-haptic urge' to move deeper into the work of art.

**Duks Koschitz's** folded objects clearly stand out from Alex Klein's. They are three-dimensional objects, and we do not have to reconstruct or imagine spatiality - it is present in front of our eyes. However, the particular uniqueness of these shapes, while generated with highly demanding techniques, is not yet evidence of their artistic quality. The bent folds themselves - and this can be perceived in these art objects - have the potential to create a completely new design category. The relationship between mathematics and physics is clearly demonstrated when viewing these objects: the real model shows us an equilibrium between a non-stretchable surface with folded, plastically deformed creases that provide seemingly elastically bent areas. These shapes pose a very specific challenge: they can simply be perceived as 'beautiful' on one hand, on the other hand one can also try to understand their mode of creation.

Finally, **Jesse Willems**: here we are faced with pure two-dimensionality - which however appears to constantly exceed the dimensions of two-dimensionality. The compositions can appear old-fashioned, which is partly due to the very use of old paper.

Willems' skills of combination enable him to interlock, shift, break, and yet again to fit individual image elements together. The front and the back tie seemingly free shapes into a coherent totality - within which it is impossible to perceive individual elements in isolation. The wholeness of the image is created by the fact that each element is connected to every other and the uniqueness of each piece of art is experienced through this connection.

We are confronted with different interpretations of space - and we can question these art objects and paintings according to their spatial quality.