

# PAINT IT RGB

## Painting and video in Nadjana Mohr's early works

In «Powers of Ten», Charles and Ray Eames zoom out from a square of lawn in Chicago to the farthest depths of the universe, before they zoom back in until the sight reaches the smallest particles of matter scientists distinguished in living organisms.

Beyond any educational consideration, the film can be seen as a major step in the exploration of the point of view shot - yet, instead of closing up inside the image itself, only the body is at stake in the brothers Eames' video.

But what if we could have (or be) a subjective camera into the very nature of video image itself?

Such a trip seems to be one of the first concerns in Nadjana Mohr's work.

A few years ago, while in Paris for her 6 months residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, the artist covered in colours the floor, the ceiling and the walls of her studio (see «bug\_II»). Visitors were hence projected inside a global environment aiming at enlarging the nature and scale of painting, so that it become possible to be part of its texture.

In some of her early works, the same process is at play : Mohr exercised painting to invite viewers to enter in a great connection with colours - especially red, green and blue, which are used in video- and computer systems to encode real colours - far beyond their surface. This latter is thus presented by the artist as composition of layers of equal compactness, uniting room, space and bodies (hers first, then the viewers'). Many Sci-Fi compelling fantasies evoke the possibility for human beings to shrink themselves in order to be injected into a living body among cells and germs, through ears, noses or needles. The process in «bug\_II» or «Untitled (Gasoline Monitor)» is somehow reversed, as Mohr enlarges a whole micro environment instead of narrowing its explorers.

This kind of gesture might remind us of works such as Lynda Benglis, Katharine Grosse or, more recently, Flora Moscovici's.

Yet, what Mohr questions overwhelms the articulation between vertical and horizontal axes, space of art and space of life, frames and rooms : it would rather constitute a study of the process of vision and its qualifications according to contexts.

In the video «Space to Ground», the camera captures a full loop of image, from the pavement to the sky and back, meeting halfway a composition of vivid colours : the painting combines with an urban context, their juxtaposition suggesting a continuum between them, induced by the point of view shot.

In her 2017 video La Défense, the continuum gives place to an actual merge, the pompous glass architecture becoming fully associated and finally merged to a painted surface. In that sense, the 2 videos «The End» #1 and #2, in which different images of the same paintings («The End» first in colours and then in black and white) are filmed and assembled to form a movement borrowing from the cinema vocabulary, which we would bring closer to «TO», could be understood as a turning point in Nadjana Mohr's exploration of the nature of painting in its bond to video.

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