

Heriberto Nieves: abstract concurrences

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Caracas, Venezuela

June 2010

The analytic discourse of an artist who does sculpture using diverse expressive means, both material and plastic, is generally formulated in statements of significantly conceptual content which, necessarily, derive from the elements of expression and representation of the work of art. This is the case of Heriberto Nieves, who responds in this way to questions which the universal history of art itself has asked since the multiple conditionings written by the historic avant-garde to the synchronic and diacronic discourse of the development of what is qualified as Art, with a capital letter. This Latin American artist has been analyzed as heir to the practice of geometric abstraction in view of the aesthetic interests which permeate his formative stages in various important capitals and centers of the fine arts, Puerto Rico, Paris, México, in addition to his work with important Venezuelan creators such as Carlos Cruz-Diez, prestigious teacher of chromatic “cinetismo” and Asdrubal Colmenares, a multifaceted man whose sculpture of large formats has opened new frontiers to the visual and spatial investigation of the image in three dimensions.

In his work, Heriberto Nieves doesn't remove the possibility of generating a significant objective when he mixes the elements, sometimes very dissimilar, which result in a sort of visual parables. The photography, plexiglass, enamels, sculpture, organic material such as tar and others, have constituted a fundamental part of his experimental searches to create a work which occurs in a tangible presence and, whose universe is transformed into a cosmic mystery which reaches the spectator, as was raised by Cezanne, touching a point of his sensibility which he possibly ignores. His is a work that expresses the continuity of the history of forms, he makes his own diverse mechanisms and formal codes developed by other creators in order to elaborate his own personal language which locates him among the major personalities.

His concerns and achievements regarding the theme of the play of light and shadow on the surface of the sculpture, are characteristic of artists of the XIX century, while his raising the question of possible geometrics can relate him with the minimalist and geometric proposals of those who were interested in the constructivism and the total abstraction of the XX century.

This is the case of the present exposition which Nieves has titled *Concurrences*. It is precisely about the concurrence of circular forms, or not, which “penetrate” a field recreated over the spatial reality of a hard geometric format, and which adjust themselves to this level surface to form themselves, in a presence both real and virtual, over a dark color, generally in blends of ocher or brilliant browns to be revealed in their trajectory according to the effect of light, natural or artificial, in the day or the night and also the very disposition and displacement of the spectator.

In this way, the nuances of the surfaces generate movements in different directions. So it is about a new way of kinetic concept based on proposals which are more virtual-optic than real; for example in works such as *Geometric Foundations*, *Likeness or Geometric Foundations*,

Tangency of Circles, the artist reduces the unique circular form to one that is non form, deprived of meaning in itself, but whose repetition charges (moves) it from an abstract notion in continuous movement.

Oxidized black steel, stainless steel, gold leaf, enamel paint, colored pencil and the very poetic yellow colored wax with the almond fragrance, give the artist the opportunity to realize a work with symbolic projection, which, by a logic far from all naturalistic connotation, expresses in its deepest meaning a relation with the earth, with terrestrial movements, with planetary rotation and its relation to life and the human morphology.

It is an existential geometry. The artist offers the work of art, strong and obsessively geometric, as a sensory experience of the occult in art, in other words, as a possibility of generating a plastic (visual) action out of nothing but not out of a vacuum. Thanks to the circulation, enigmatic and unsettling, of light on the surface of the sculpture, geometric forms are unveiled and completed, some becoming immaterial as they mingle with the strictly visual stand that lodges them.

In this exposition Nieves assumes the history of perception as his own. Transported to the level of semi visual (plastic) the relation between forms, circular or triangular, and the space to which they are joined, or over which they settle; from there his visual discourse is not posed only in a flat metrical direction, but rather contemplates fundamental visual variations in accord with the convergences that, subliminally, are expressed by the surfaces of those supports over which the forms, finite and non finite, cling, in relief or painted form. As a formal visual (plastic) proposal, it is important here a repetitive rigor capable of granting the work a certain character of austerity and elegance.

In each of his works, Heriberto Nieves defines a particular identity based on an internal logic which they convey through the use of materials and technique. Working with the same elements, he poses, to the extreme, a super modern character defined by certain visual mutations, perceptible or not to the spectator, which elevate him to supersensorial and at the same time ideological levels. In his work he assumes extreme positions of similar creations (and pardon the daring) of Piet Mondrian when he suggested that art is an experience related to knowledge of the absolute, with knowledge of the Being.