FREIJO GALLERY

GEOMETRY AND COLOR.

The path that visual arts open by the cultivation of abstraction delves into two kinds of realities: the subjective products of the human psyche—emotions and feelings—and the objective abstractions of scientific concepts, arithmetic, and geometry. This distinction is relevant here because it is through geometry that Amaya O'Neill and Juan Cuenca establish a poetic connection with the world, in which the artistic character of all works of art resides.

Amaya O'Neill seems to start from this axiom: *to perceive is to think*, to enter the paths of thought from its earliest historical formulations, linked to geometry since ancient times. '*Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here'*, read a solemn sign on the frontispiece of Plato's Academy. The Athenian philosopher proclaims the connection between geometric reasoning and the pursuit of philosophical truth, suggesting that geometry is a gateway to understanding the universe.

This is where Amaya O'Neill's artistic task fits in. The author aligns herself with Rudolf Arnheim's thesis on thought and visual communication, based on Gestalt psychology, which defines vision as a form of reasoning. From this platform, Amaya O'Neill explores configurations that are perceived as coherent visual wholes, incorporated as an expressive force within the composition, from which emanates an aura of worship to simplicity.

The work of Juan Cuenca displayed here references the objective abstractions of geometry and topology linked to physics, which are abstract per se, as they do not exist in the realities of the outside world, but are immanent to it and integrated into a genre of materiality that belongs to scientific concepts, without which the world would be unintelligible.

Juan Cuenca seeks to obtain abstract forms that satisfy his subjective aesthetic sensibility, but he does so by allowing the objective laws of geometry and the plasticity of materials to express themselves, so to speak. It seems as if, in his state of creative trance, he is possessed by the material.
This is an introspective method that is not at all strange for an architect, almost literally the Eduardo Torroja's recommendation, according to which the structural designer should feel the structure in his own body in order to understand its balance and operation, as an exercise in order to design more efficient and aesthetic solutions, and more in accordance with the material's elastoplastic characteristics.

But the path followed to produce them is an inquiry into the transition from the plane into three-dimensional space, into shaping three-dimensional space from two-dimensional space. And in this field, there is no shortage of paradoxes and enigmas that the artist can use as the source of the ambiguity and plurality of meanings that underpin poetic forms. These are mysteries that date back to ancient times, already present in the very relationship between the visible world and the abstractions of Euclidean geometry (the dimensionlessness of the point, the intersection of parallel lines at infinity), but which are reactivated and multiplied by the growing references to non-Euclidean geometries, with which the popularisation of relativistic physics - through science fiction literature and cinema - has overwhelmed the Euclidean conception of space. The relativistic idea of a four-dimensional space (or a curved three-dimensional space) escapes our

figurative imagination—unable to fantasize about an object with more than the three dimensions of the space we perceive—but it can be represented by assuming flat subjects (capable of perceiving only two dimensions) moving on the surface of a sphere, where there are no parallel straight lines.

Some of the figures displayed by Juan Cuenca contain references to these disturbing or enigmatic characteristics of space:
On Möebius strips, we observe objects that appear to have two sides but actually only have one. They are obtained topologically, by continuous (and specific) deformation of a flat object with two sides.
In their '*reliefs*,' the simple (unidirectional) curvature of a '*flat*' sheet (ignoring the *thick* dimension), in the context of the transition from two to three dimensions, refers us to the cognitive dissonance between gravity, which until the Theory of Relativity was believed to be a force because it is perceived as such, and its reality, as the curvature of three-dimensional space. The simple cuts break the continuity of space and generate reliefs that emphasise the tension that produces them. They seek a '*positive-negative'* plastic effect, already theorized by Bruno Munari[1], through which Juan Cuenca plays with the ambiguity of the figure (positive) emerging from the background (negative), due to the combined effect of the cut and the tension associated with the curve.
In his works entitled *Rhythm*, the same interplay of curvature and cuts adopts eurythmic sequences that allude to the relationship between space and music, something that Bruno Zevi[2] had already suggested, but which dates back much further, to when the Pythagoreans put their stamp on the discussion initiated by the Milesian physicists, and added to Anaximander's *apeiron* (the unlimited) the concept of *peras* (limit) - as a generator of forms - and of *number*, with which they conceived the universe as an orderly cosmos whose essence was the numbers and proportions revealed in the harmonies of music and which, equally, governed the movements of the celestial spheres.

Juan Cuenca actively immerses himself in this world, not because he disdains the mere contemplation of its infinite forms, but because he cannot access it without extracting the paradigms he considers privileged for that purpose from its infinite multiplicity. With the particularity that the artist does not choose from a given series, but rather does so by constructing the object while choosing it. A workshop project, in which Juan Cuenca devotes himself to the adventure of studying the world of forms while explaining it through the construction of forms.

Guillermo Díaz Vargas, 2025

[1] Bruno Munari: "Diseño y comunicación visual".
[2] Bruno Zevi: "Saber ver la arquitectura".