

*What was accomplished in music before the end of the eighteenth century has hardly been begun in the pictorial field.*

Paul Klee, *Exact Experiments in the Realm of Art*, 1928

Since Aristotle, who asserted that colour groups are ruled by the same proportions as in musical consonances, artists - even scientists - have investigated the connections between sound and colour; music and painting. Music worked for painters Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky as a model of formal visualization in the space. In their own way, each artist reached a highly developed theory of colour, rhythm and composition that was as direct a translation of music theory as can be.

It was a matter of time that Stefanie Schulte, who plays piano and admits that music is always present in her studio, looked into the associations between Baroque music and her harmonious approach to colour and composition on the canvas.

Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* concert (1725) gave her the clue. Stefanie understood the connection between the music and her own work and, inspired by the musical innovations of the Venetian composer, she has created her own equivalences as a painter.

Starting with the surface, the precise partition of the canvas emulates the musical rhythms (time). Surface and time, stated Kandinsky, must be measured with exactness. The brushstrokes of colour achieve this exactitude. Not using tape nor previous drawing, every field of colour is a sequence of layers meticulously applied, barely revealing the artist's gesture.

Following the partition of the canvas, the transparencies also disclose a quest for the precise colour that, in her case, is equivalent to musical notes. Subjective perception of colour is very hard - if not impossible - to measure. How, then, get the desired colour that is in the painter's mind? And, once she gets it, how to lay it in a way that it doesn't disturb the optical proportion, the exact partition of the surface? "Colour - as sound - must be limited, as these limits are the basis of composition", continues Kandinsky. "These limits are the artist's intuition", adds Stefanie Schulte. "My colour experiments", she explains, "grow organically, without a plan, they are pure intuition". Then, she replicates them to the canvas sometimes literally sometimes with variations, as her intuition keeps working.

An added challenge in this series of paintings is one of Vivaldi's biggest innovations in instrumental music: the narrative, a key element in *Four Seasons* concerto, where the composer brilliantly immerses the listener either in the crushing heat of Summer or in the bountifulness of Autumn harvests with no visual references, just sounds. Stefanie embraces the challenge of translating each movement of the *concerto*, with its extensive storytelling, on pictorial means and not recurring to representation. Here, again, colour and brushstroke have a lot to say. Layer after layer, tirelessly, sometimes on one only colour, until her intuition tells her she has reached the depth of the green leafy branches and the blue of the murmuring streams in Springtime.

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