

Gray Paintings

Hideki Nakazawa

Color is the essence of painting, and it is perceived by three types of retinal cone cells. In this series, Nakazawa used the same quantity of cyan, magenta and yellow which was sent from the retina to the brain (Mental Color Mixture) to make the total perceptive information gray. The physiological effects, a color theory called retinal color mixture by the Impressionists, color printing, and digital graphics technology are all utilized in these works through a mathematical method called ternary notation.

Hitoshi Takaoka, a critic introduced them as follows:

“In these works called Gray Paintings, the whole sensory information (equal amount of cyan, magenta, yellow) sent to the brain from the retina is set to become gray and a mathematical method called ternary notation is used as a load control method. Because a set of six squares is established as a unit component, ternary notations ("000000" to "222222") 0 to 728 are used to assign cyan, magenta and yellow to each digits 0, 1 and 2. By arranging the unit components (set of six squares) by different methods, the gray paintings perceived through the whole sensory information do not get perceived as gray by the retina but are perceived as various patterns. In another words, the colors do not get mixed to become gray in the retina as in the Impressionist paintings, but because we know that equal amount of the three colors would get perceived as gray, we can logically perceive that these paintings will look gray in our minds and therefore the patterns that are actually received on the retina can also be logically perceived as a *matière*, a French word referring to painting texture, materiality or texture in general. Therefore, the ten works presented here can be said to be logical gray paintings with ten different types of logical *matière* according to the mental color mixture theory.”

-- Hitoshi Takaoka “*Absolute Color Painting by Mental Color Mixture*” 2006 --

(English supervised by Harutaka Oribe)

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