

DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY  
OF FINE ART

DLA DISSERTATION THESE  
CONKRETE METAPHYSICS

Metaphysical relations of artworks.

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In this dissertation I examined that in what way differs a bare object from an (to the eye) indistinguishable artwork.

What is the 'exceeding activity'<sup>1</sup> through that an object crosses the border of art? Does this crossing have any connection to the light and through it to metaphysics?

As a starting point, I used my own wood boards, since the very substance of these works is the rise through the light.

1.

A fény szerepével foglalkoznak ezek a metszett fatáblák. Teret nyitnak a fekete szín által, mely elnyeli a fényt, ám itt ezeken a fatáblákon a metszés struktúrájából adódóan ennek ellentmondva megjelenítik azt. Az eltérő sűrűségű és mélységű metszsvonalak igazi fénycsapdaként működnek. A fény beesési szögének változása a munkák látványát és jelentésrétegeit folyamatosan változtatják, beengedve ezzel az időt, a néző helyváltoztatásaival pedig a teret is. A néző ezáltal aktív résztvevőjévé válik a mű "előlépésének": mely kinyílik, vagy épp bezárul. A fény és a múltó idő együtthatásából fokozatosan előhívódik a teljes kép.

My concern of light begins with this wood boards.

*In the ancient philosophy, the most complete comprehension of metaphysical existence was connected with the shine of light. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Anony Aschley from the Cambridge platonists redefined the ancient idea that considers art's aim as to present a higher metaphysical existence and with this he puts the problem in the part of the philosophical awareness again. <sup>2</sup>*

Are we able to think about metaphysics, does this domain still exist in our lives and does this domain exist in art? I intend to examine it in my thesis through different works and philosophical aspects.

2.

I examine the light metaphor through a cave ( Plato's cave allegory), since through this worked out Plato the metaphysics of light. The intellectual light is in connection with the perceptible light both logically and ontologically. Man does not only see, but knows.

1 Gáspár Csaba László ilozófus kifejezését használva.

2 Páldi Livia: *A monokróm kaland*, in.: *A szín önálló élete*, Múcsarnok, Budapest, 2002, 15.o.

*The Platonic phrasing of the allegory is an abstract scheme, which do not have to “tell” what the cave and who the prisoner are and what the anthology of light or the shadow on the wall are. The three similes work out a structure (...), that suitable to express any thoughts with similar structure. (...) The formula must be filled in by the interpreter with the current values. The similes do not have sense on their own, but only with their interpretations, adaptations.’<sup>3</sup>*

*“Everything can be an image of everything, if we extend the concept of image sufficiently.” says Wittgenstein in his work *Philosophical Investigation*. Then he talks about the thing that is important when you examine an image, that is: 'Am I really experiencing the picture or just “reading” it?’<sup>4</sup>*

That Plato do not unfold clearly this row of similes agree with the uncertainty of existence, the incomprehensibility of faith and the entity of an artwork as a work. I would like to give a further examination of this.

3.

I present the history of light and than the history of the black colour.

The distinction of the approach based on the Greek vision (and thus on light) and the knowledge based on the Christian hearing take place in the Genesis as well as the confrontation of these two attitudes. In Genesis, the light is a creature, whose lord is God, since He separated light from darkness.

However, the incarnation of the Word created a completely new state: after the Son became visible and was born in a cave (!), the divine light became visible in Christ for the eyes of man.

The frame of the Platonic allegory had remained, but gained new sense: *comprehension becomes brightness, but the comprehension of here comes from the light of there.*<sup>5</sup>

I would demonstrate the reoccurring present changing of the light concept and then the cultural history of the black colour, where it became once as a satanic colour, once as a colour of luxurious, intellectual men (priests, lawyers). Let us have a bite of colour history.

3 [www.Gereby\\_Gyorgy\\_A\\_feny\\_teologiaja](http://www.Gereby_Gyorgy_A_feny_teologiaja), 7.o.

4 Nyíri Kristóf: *Kép és idő*, Magyar Mercutius, Budapest, 2011, 35.o.

5. [www.Gereby\\_Gyorgy\\_a\\_feny\\_teologiaja](http://www.Gereby_Gyorgy_a_feny_teologiaja), 16.o.

4.

What is metaphysics?

There are several definitions of metaphysics: it is said to be the science of the ultimate reality, the science of the reality as a whole, the science of being, etc. What do we mean by metaphysics and what by the word being?

*We live in the age of post-metaphysics, metaphysics approaches its end, perhaps it has been already come to an end. The subject of metaphysics is also an elusive and perpetually changing concept. Is there any common subject of this thinking dealing with the "first things"?*

*The uncertainty of metaphysics are even more unusual, since, in addition, we certainly know what do we mean by it: we think of the different statements of Plato and Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza, Kant and Hegel.*

*There are topics which are certainly shared within this domain, the question here is if metaphysics has any constant essence. From this point of view, each definition of metaphysics seem to be arbitrary – the question can be answered only with the conceptualization of its history.<sup>6</sup>*

After a piece of metaphysics history and the review of some philosophers, I would examine the problems and questions of metaphysics. These issues deal with natural laws, identity, time, free will or just the problems of necessity and possibility. Then I continue these thoughts with works that can be connected to these problems. I do not intend to prove that these are metaphysical works, I rather play with the association. These works do not illustrate the questions of metaphysics at all. They touch them, and thus with this touch they bring the questions into being.

5.

What occupies me is the being of art, the border, where a simple object becomes a work of art. That is why I work in other genre as well: it can be an installation or just a pencil drawing, because the moment of the transubstantiation-conversion is that I am interested in. In this part I write about my works, that put this border-line in the centre.

<sup>6</sup> Márkus György: *Metafizika: Mi végre?*. Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 1998, 130-131.o.

6.

What does distinguish a bare object from its (to the eye) indistinguishable artwork companion piece? How does an object become art? How does the imitation differ from the original?

I would examine these questions on the basis of two books: Radnóti Sándor: *Hamisítés* and Arthur C Danto: *A közhely színeváltozása*. I hope that I can get closer to the being of artwork.

Every artwork has a sort of individual connection with reality and thus it identifies itself. The tension that exists between reality and the artwork gives the work its being as an artwork.

According to Danto, the difference lies in only in the creation of the two objects, and this is exposed by a metaphor. In this way can we interpret the work.

*'The chance of a correct reading of the image'- writes Gombrich - 'is governed by three variables: the code, the caption, and the context...'*<sup>7</sup>

Gombrich in his book *Art and Illusion* writes the following:  
*'All artistic discoveries are discoveries not of likenesses but of equivalences which enable us to see reality in terms of an image and an image in terms of reality. And this equivalence never rests on the likeness of elements so much as on the identity of responses to certain relationships.'*<sup>8</sup>

What does it depend on to 'read' an artwork as an artwork? To conceive the metaphor in it? Or does the composition, the guidance of the artist to reality lead us to the recognition of the work turning into an artwork?

Thereafter I analyze artworks of different ages, and through this I can claim that it does not depend on the topic, the historical age or on the technique.

With the presentation of my masterwork, I turn back to the rising through light and it incarnates with the help of a special 'magic mirror'; light becomes a concrete caption.

<sup>7</sup> Nyíri Kristóf: *Kép és idő*, Magyar Mercurius, Budapest, 2011, 69.o.

<sup>8</sup> I.m.:66.o.

7.

With becoming an artwork, it shows its own nature. It is a kind of 'shining mist', that must be filled with some content by the spectator.

There are some signs, 'frames' with reference to the art being, that help this 'unwrapping'.

The artwork is about itself, and also about the way it represents. The work shows to the world one of its reality piece in a way as the creator sees this piece of reality.

The work of art is thus not other than one device of the interpretation of being. Existence has connection with metaphysics. This is *concrete metaphysics* in the way I call an artwork relation with itself, realised in a concrete object. It means that open existence, that let in its 'visitors', so thus and by it he can step out and see the existence of one piece of reality.

Therefore, the artwork has such an individual metaphysics – every real artwork! - that I call concrete metaphysics, since through the work's being (its metaphysics) it shows something else, something new from reality. This conversion is realised with the work's own composition. Since:

*'The light that is in us must become visible.'*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Plótinosz: *A szépről és jóról. Istenről és a hozzá vezető utakról.*, Farkas Lőrinc Imre Kiadó, 1998, 178.o.