

COLOUR AND TEXTURE IN ANTONIO CARREÑO

ONE IS INSTANTLY DRAWN TO ANTONIO CARREÑO'S PAINTINGS. THE COLOURS WERE THE FIRST TO ATTRACT ME, BUT THEN I BECAME LOST IN THE OTHER-WORLDFULNESS OF THE PAINTING. A DUALITY EXISTED UPON THE CANVAS: IT WAS A PAINTING, YET HAD SCULPTURAL ELEMENTS. THERE WERE CONSTRUCTED DIMENSIONS, RELIEFS AND CREVICES, WHICH GRABBED AND HELD MY ATTENTION AND THEN TRANSPORTED ME INTO ANOTHER SPHERE. THE PAINTING WAS MYSTICAL, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME COMPLETELY FAMILIAR.

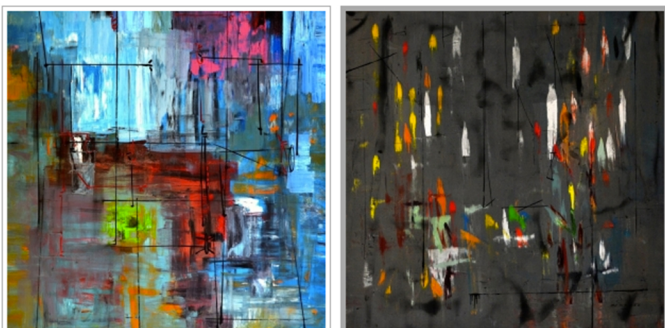
Interviews
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by Donna M.E. Banks



Antonio Carreño, Holy Night, 2012

Since first being exposed to his work, Carreño's style has changed, but the essence of his work remains. Inspired by the universe, many of his early works are texturally complex. He frequently uses natural and man-made materials such as sand, sawdust and ground paper as a foundation for the paintings' tactility.

"In a universal way, we sometimes talk about the air as separate from the universe, but for me I look at the earth as part of the universe and most of the things in the universe are related to the earth. If we want to know the answers to the universe, we can look to the earth – its right in front of us," the artist famously explains.



Carreño has mastered the technique of creating atmosphere. He works in layers and manipulates geometric patterns and colours to construct new, hyper-real planes of existence. One quickly becomes captivated by the paintings' visual dialogue. Unable to focus one's eyes on a particular area, the energy, movement, progression and harmony within the work hold the viewer's attention. He paints without constraints or limits; painting becomes a spontaneous and experimental journey, yet it is also controlled and deeply profound.

"I mix my colours and I start to work," he says. "I have a general understanding as to how I want to structure the different density of the colours. Most of the time I try to use more heavy colours on the bottom as it grounds the painting and then as I move up I use lighter colours. It's just a psychological way of how we are ourselves. Your thoughts are coming through your head and you are grounded by the floor. The quality of things is much lighter on the top and heavier on the ground."

"In some of my latest work, I might have a different spectrum, where the finalities are harmonious around the paintings themselves. I always use a touch of primary colours, red and yellow. Yellow is light to me, it's an important colour and I use it as light. If I'm using secondary colours they would always be the appearance of the primary colours, to reflect the energy of the painting itself. A lot of the information in the colour is presented within the soul of a thing. Sometimes a painting as a whole will reflect feelings and emotions that can't be captured. Colours can capture the emotion. It can be the end of the afternoon, the space of the ocean."



Growing up in the Caribbean, the influence of sun and light is clear in his work. "Yellow is light to me," he says. "Light... comes very naturally. No one in the Caribbean is separated from interaction with the sun. In painting, there's energy between the art and artists in general. The energy of a painting has the energy of the artists."

Carreño's interest in humanity inspire his most recent body of work, *Gravitation*. This series follows the trajectory of his fascination with the universe, and humanity's place within it. Scientists acknowledge that the universe is expanding, yet they are unaware of how this is occurring. The driving forces of the universe remain a mystery in many respects, and it is this mystery Antonio seeks to explore. As he states, "gravitation creates everything". Gravitation is an unseen fundamental aspect of our daily existence in both a physical and social way. Just as our bodies are attracted to the earth through gravitation, there is also the magnetism that exists between individuals. This applies to strangers whom we physically gravitate towards for unknown reasons, as well as mental gravitation: thinking of a person at a certain time and having an unexplained, yet urgent need to make contact.

Carreño's art, like the universe, expands with no end in sight. He continuously pushes himself and his art to express the holistic nature of the universe and the universal elements that connect us all.