

# Pure Colours and Forms in the Work of Dana Puchnarová

*I have been working as a painter with pure colours since about 1965. I have been mainly occupied with their psychological effects and their symbolism. I have studied a great deal of the literature and opinions of individual artists. I have succeeded in creating a system which combines the psychological effects of colours with the physical effects of light.*

*I work with simple shapes and curves which become the vehicles of basic pure colour tones. In 1990, in addition to paintings on large canvasses, I began to use various and translucent and transparent materials in works of multi-layered coloured drawings, in which each layer introduces a single creatively elaborated concern. This translucent work in large formats is hung in spaces so that the viewer can discover individual large surfaces and read the drawing, discovering shapes and letting oneself be infused by the effects of individual colours. In this way the cycle **Shrouded Drawings** was created. Curves became an autonomous expressive medium, representing symbols of differing psychological states.*



*After 1996 curves were connected at their endings into simple geometric forms with rounded edges. At first these were triangular forms, then hexagonals, out of which networks began to be formed as symbols of the connectivity of individual human beings into the great oneness. NETWORKS are manifestations of the present collective human consciousness, people's co-operation into a network of spiritual unity and their communal path to peace and harmony. Here each individual form represents one person, one individual consciousness. Forms in the network are vehicles radiating pure colour pigments which were augmented and accented in the installations of my coloured prints (lithographs) on translucent material in plexiglass.*

*The use of plexiglass makes possible the composition of many layers of prints in such a way that the viewer may enjoy the experience of the penetration and diffusion of individual colours in a spatial installation.*

*The basic phenomenon of my large drawings and translucent graphic works on plexiglass is LIGHT. I purposely use materials which allow the luminous radiation of the work from both sides. This is the best way to let the special quality of pure colours influence the spirit and the senses of the viewer.*

*My presentations in recent years have been based on these principles. Installations with the titles CERTAINTIES, DELICATE STYLE and NETWORKS emphasise the effects of pure colours and translucency of the works by natural or artificial light. I work not only with colour symbolism, but also with the modern psychology of colours, for I am interested in the theories of modern physics and works on human consciousness. I study colour theory and in recent times even the therapeutic effects of different colour tones.*



*I often use contrasting colours, for example in the themes Rivals or Duels, where the sharpness and purity of colours symbolises the keenness of antagonists, both in the psyche of the individual and between people or groups and nations. The conflict of emotions and thoughts inside people makes possible and affects warlike psychoses, with terrible results.*



*According to psychologists, opposites and contrasts are an inseparable part of human life and it is up to us as how to balance them.*

*My ideal in artistic endeavours is to compensate for these stressful states in the consciousness and feelings of modern people through the effects of pure colours and shapes in light. My goal is to create an atmosphere of peace and calm, joy and possibly even happiness—both in the area of creative art and in the area of the art of living.*



*Fritjof Capra in his book The Tao of Physics compares the bootstrap model in particle physics to the concept of Indira's net in Buddhism. The story of Indira's net is as follows:*

**Suspended above the palace of Indra, the Buddhist god who symbolises the natural forces that protect and nurture life, is an enormous net. A brilliant jewel is attached to each of the knots of the net. Each jewel contains and reflects the image of all the other jewels in the net, which sparkles in the magnificence of its totality.**

*In this poetic fashion the current theory of matter in modern physics is explained, and has been a huge inspiration for my work.*

*In the catalogue of my exhibition New Certainties in Prague in 1998 (the text is my own):*

*ÒThe strength of colour is also the strength of belief—both support our spirit in its attempts to do good. — The colours are so pure! I touch them with my fingers and palms and spread them carefully across the white surface of the canvas. The painting is illuminated in this way: I apply the paint delicately so that the white base shines through from below. This is in conjunction with research into optics, but at the same time in conjunction with the law of interior necessity as Wassily Kandinsky postulated for the artist in his book*



*Concerning the Spiritual in Art. Pure colours thus acquire their own inner glow, to which I am led to the inner necessity of the work itself, even spraypainting across the picture a translucent veil of white paint, which opalesces areas more brightly, so that the images dive into*

*the common areas of our infinite consciousness. It is an attempt to catch the infinite into the network, similar to how several modern physicists understand the*

*spiritual structure of matter—in the form of Buddha's network. Ó*

## MY WORK WITH COLOUR SINCE THE 1960s

My early work with material structures and colour (Informel—A Czech abstract period in the 1960s) absorbed me and helped me to develop abstract thought. It has been teaching me to live in the picture. My interest in philosophy has grown since then:



Plotinos, Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, G.W.F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Jacques Maritain, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Henri Bergson, then existentialism, and oriental philosophy (yoga as daily training, Buddhism, New Age. . . . **I was studying the psychology and technology of colours, their physiological laws and symbolic functions in the history of mankind, and their cultural diversities.**

My M.F.A. at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 1964 was a cycle of colour etchings based on the books of FRANZ KAFKA—he was really the typical hero in this dark and difficult political, social and spiritual atmosphere.

The communistic totality very strongly limited the field of art, including all of the fine arts programs at universities. Therefore our generation was living in a deep depression, because the attainment of inner satisfaction and certainty involved doubt and discovered contradiction in all areas of social life.

Then I was creating a large structural cycle of paintings, drawings and graphics entitled "GEOMETRIA SPIRITUALIS" (1963-1964) awarded with the Prize "Folkwang-Pressé-Preis" at the exhibition of Czech Art at Folkwang Museum ESSEN (1966). As a young artist I demonstrated in my first presentation abroad really the inner situation of my generation, of our people.

From 1965 I began to work with pure colour and lines on canvas, drawings and colour etching. I have studied the theories of many masters about colour (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Vasari, Ucello, Titian, Rembrandt, Delacroix, Runge, Cézanne, Signac, Daumier, Manet, Monet, Renoir, Bernard, Van Gogh, Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Chagall, Mondrian, Malevitch, Klee, Franz Kupka and many others).

**I have studied also scientific theories of optics and colour, because I became a teacher of painting and drawing and had to prepare my lectures on these topics for students at the University at Olomouc, Czech Republic (1991-2004).**



I was very interested in the theories of colours by Johannes Itten and have applied methods from Albers (Interaction of Colours) at my teaching in the Department of Art at the university. **I**

**organised many workshops of painting and drawing and taught a special technique of multiplied colour drawing.** Every semester

I gave courses for students. Others of my lectures at symposiums and conferences were published (for instance at the memorial volumes of INSEA =

**Society for through Art**). These leading two students' the first is on the **in architecture, the use of colours as subjective humanistic ideas**—

be realised via a

multiplied colour drawings. Since the 1970s I have studied the science of colour of Rudolf Steiner, founder of anthroposophy, the principles of which Franz Kupka and Wassily Kandinsky explored in their books.



**International Education**

days I am master's theses: **use of colours** the second on **a medium of expression of** the latter would series of great

**The basic idea of the "interior necessity" of painting inspired me to use the primary force of colour to explode through concrete symbolic forms. My method was developed as a rhythmical**



**system of forms in a gradual scale of colours, or as a composition of contradictory contrasts, sometimes strong and powerful, sometimes weak and subtle as though the colour were going to disappear. There is a very important principle of play in my work, according to modern psychology and the sociology of art.**

Since 1972, for some time now I have been collaborating with some psychologists on workshops of experimental art-therapy, where I have demonstrated my own specific methods of play with colours. There is a very simple process to awake individual creative energy and power in anybody—young or old, male or female. This is the question of simple play with pure pigments, play with lines and simple forms, play of

fantasy—to develop a deeper understanding of imagination. This creative method can help to make an insight into the world of hundreds of nuances of colours and to develop our expression of subjective visions.

Since childhood I have always loved music—having studied piano, harmony, chords, scales and singing—I have used this experience in my colour compositions on the pictures, drawings and colour prints (silkscreen, etching and lithography). My great picture "Fugue of J.S. Bach" was purchased by the Czech National Gallery. Some names of the other works : Scale of Colours , Sunrise, Air and Water, Plays, Contrasts, Curves, Harmony, Variations. Some examples are in my photo-documentation.



I have found great inspiration for my artistic and educational methods in the ancient folk art of Indians in the USA, Mayan and Aztec cultures, the art of ancient China, Japan, India, Africa, Celtic cultures, Greece, Crete (and more). They too have manifest symbolic significance of colours, and of geometrical forms.

I prefer abstract art, because it can better express the states of the human soul, as declared W. Worringer in ABSTRACTION AND EMPATHY:

*"The original artistic impulse has nothing to do with the reproducing of nature. It aims at pure abstraction."*

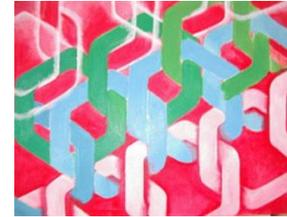
**I am convinced that nature and exterior forms represented an obstacle in the path of the elevation of the human spirit. I have eliminated some basic forms and colours to allow the spirit to reach complete liberty. I wish to feed the imagination only with colours and so to fully evoke emotions and sensations. I think this can be the right and good compensation of all fears and the stressful situations of our restless time. I feel the great joy of strong, pure, fiery colours. In the analogy of music and physics I see my colours and forms sounding and vibrating.**



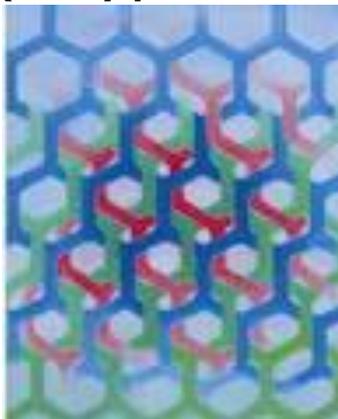
**This vibrant field of colour is formed by contrasts between warm and cold, light and dark colours. According to modern science, I am trying to substantiate a secret, inner relationship between the stimulus of colour and its psychological-spiritual effect on the viewer. The canvas of my pictures and drawings is relative large, they have the height of a person or more , in order to make a bigger influence on the viewer. Colours and forms may to show us the free interplay of elements.**

**An increasing tendency toward making elements more geometrical led me to the international movement of concrete art. I took part in the Czech group of the International Club of Concretists, founded at Prague in 1966.**

**In my last works I invite you to lose yourselves in the magma of colour, to let be transported by a net of sensations. The cycle **SUBTLE COLORS NETWORK** I might describe as a "controlled improvisation and variation" of forms and colours. I hope that they are charged with inner energy and are going out of intuition, the greatest power in us.**



**My pieces were installed at Gallery Caesar in January of 2004. (In my photo-documentation there are some examples and**



**catalogues **NETWORKS OF DANA PUCHNAROVÁ.**) It was the first time when I was able to present my transparent lithograph-prints as a spatial installation, all pellucid, influenced by artificial light. The colours were affected more translucent, delicate and soft as good perfume or cosmic music. One critic wrote that they formed a symphony of beauty, light and colours. On the vernissage there was organised concert of live music and my speech about **THE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF MODERN ART .****

I prepare a new **project TEMPLE OF SOUL :**

My great pictures , translucent drawings and lithographies with plexiglass should be installed at a dark spaces of one monastery .Colours could shine from dark, because I plane to use a new programme with artificial light and with performance of musicians .At the center of installation there will be great projection 3 Dimension PC programme.composed from my shapes and colours.

This installation should take a part of the **FESTIVAL ARS MAGNA at ČESKÝ KRUMLOV 8.- 12.9. 2004 ,which will be organised as a Internationale Symposium of scientist,philosophers and artists .** Action became a grant from the Conuncil of Town.

