

*An imperious desire of space.*

*An authoritarian desire of place. A desire of nothing, of air, of emptiness.*

*A desire that imposes itself and to which one must obey: « there is in human consciousness an imperious desire of space and the will to escape the Earth[1].».*

The space to which Malevich refers might be the pictorial space. Released from gravity under Malevich's brush, weightless, abstract forms float freely in a blank, ethereal plane. Perhaps this new pictorial space alludes to the possibility of exploring new spatial dimensions like the fourth dimension (understood as a physical but impalpable and invisible entity, perceived only fragmentarily, as through a flickering effect), but also to an infinite space of creation, closer to a spiritual or metaphysical realm.

Today, a dimension that is at once intangible and actual is the internet: the site of virtual reality, of the digital, of hyperspace, where mathematical formulas incarnate different shapes.

If a scanner transforms an image, an object, into digital data, the scanner becomes a point of access, a door opening on to this virtual world, where the image is mobile, modifiable, and reproducible at will: an image that is, in theory, limitless. But the imperious desire to which Malevich refers can also, more justifiably perhaps, be understood as a quest for the essence of things, once the material outer envelope is evacuated: an «immaterial pictorial sensibility» with which the «painter of space» invites us to imbue ourselves.

Or perhaps, in the early twentieth century context, as designs took shape for the first machines that would reach the stratosphere, this quotation can be read as one of the first times that man became aware that the conquest of outer space was not far off. And this fantasy, that was already feeding the plots of countless novels, gave birth to a visual universe that we have now come to know as the landscape of science fiction.

Lastly, this yearning for the beyond, this will to escaping Earth, can also be understood today simply as the desire to escape, to embrace the liberatory exhilaration of speed, to feel completely free—far from any constraint, and yet, paradoxically, attached to the earth: « the expansion of power and the pursuit of speed, that's what lessens distances and which takes you to the unknown[2].»

[1] Malevich in Gerry Souter, *Journey to Infinity*, ed. Parkstone Press International, 2008, 255p.

[2] «Le développement de la puissance et la poursuite de la vitesse, c'est ce qui réduit les distances et vous emmène vers ce que vous ne connaissez pas.» Olivier Mosset in *Aux Anges*, ed. Presses du Réel, Dijon, 2010, 64p.