

Abstract

"There was in philosophy from the time of the Greeks to the Eighteenth and even the Nineteenth century a tremendous discussion about the origin of mathematical ideas--the idea of the line, the idea of the circle, the idea of the triangle. There were, in the main, two classical theories: one of the mind as a tabula rasa, with nothing in it in the beginning; everything comes to it from experience. It is from seeing a lot of round objects, none of which were perfect round, that we are able nevertheless to abstract the idea of the circle. The second classical theory goes back to Plato, who claimed that such ideas of the circle, of the triangle, of the line, are perfect, innate in the mind, and it is because they are given to the mind that we are able to project them on reality, although reality never offers us a perfect circle of a perfect triangle" (Claude Levy-Strauss in *Myth and Meaning*, pg.7)

In my creative process I intend to search for similarities in the ideas that have guided the musical composition in the Twentieth Century and ideas that have guided the construction of a visual representation. I intend to look at stories trying to extract the essential structure of the narrative, going from the descriptive outer layer of characters, places and situations to a inner layer where just the structure of a narrative is revealed. My sequential images can be read as a musical score, and the opposite will be also true: a score can be interpreted through visual sequence. The temporal characteristic in both sequence-of-images and sequence-of-sounds is one of the main basis in which the parallel between music and animation can be seen, since the investigation about the notion of time as an expressive tool is the basis of the animation art.

The choice of contemporary music is due to its emphasis in the structural aspect of the musical composition, and its close connection with the studies of physics of sound as well as its singular understanding of the graphic translation of sound events. Ideas such as density and non density, sound fields, chromaticism and suble coloration, themes built up from fragmentary and often repeated phrases, uninterrupted flow, textures and polyrythms will be the basis for the composition of my storytelling.

The story "The Tapir" has an unusual narrative: it presents the conflict, develops it into an action-climax situation and surprises the audience with an incredible end. At least for the western 'civilized' ears, the story misses an ending statement. Because the narrative is a myth, there is an underlying notion that the story was always there, complete, and it will be revealed to the audience in its different layers of meanings. Musically, this narrative suggests a traditional harmonic construction ending in suspension instead of repose. There is also the idea of events layered together, since the myth starts with many simultaneous events occurring in different places. Thus I have layers of events that happen in the same environment but are presented in sequential order.

The simultaneity of musical events is also introduced in the abstract level, where each character is constructed of a set of polygons layered together. The emphasis is not in the creation of three dimensional models. Instead, the three dimensionality is explored horizontally, when the camera travels in space from the first scene to the ninth. Each one of these scenes are bidimensional, since just their front side is important to represent the elements of the story. The design is basically made of bidimensional shapes superpositioned in a three dimensional space.

In terms of narrative, the whole story is divided in nine scenes, each one corresponding to a different layer within the same space. The camera goes from the front layer to the last, passing by all the different events. The simultaneity of the events is depicted in the nine layers superposed horizontally, thus from the point of view of the first layer one can see part of each one of the subsequential layers. The sound track has its basis in a musical interpretation of these simple shapes, each polygon representing a different sound. Each polygon has its geometric level represented by sounds, and they all layered together will represent the idea of a character, object or prop. This way the images can be read as a musical score, since in the underlying layer of their design they are still mathematics constructions.

Later in the creative process all these ideas were cleaned, so the structural matter would not overwhelm the importance of the storytelling: sound and images were cleaned out, visual elements were taken off, providing the animation with only the essential elements for the construction of a narrative. The whole set is setup under a half sphere, which is at the same time the sky and the "oca" --a typical Indian's house in Amazon. Here the geometry in the three-dimensional space suggests a reference to the background of the myth, and the people and culture from where it comes from. The societies create their myths as a way to keep and worship their ancestral knowledge. As an artist, what interest me is the de-construction and/or transformations of the myth in musical and visual structures, and its re-construction as a myth, in an artistic type of game where the structure does not destroy the myth, but recreates its quality. The 3D space is the medium for a new interpretation of the myth, but it can never overcome the essential and universal nature of its storytelling.

And, as in a puzzle, "The Tapir" is made out of little shapes, lines, polygons, circles and triangles superposed or contrasted, arranged in patterns and rhythms, texturized fields of sounds and images, continually structuring and de-structuring the storytelling into a new interpretation of the myth.