

# A Still Life of Space Time

*Interview with Thomas Canto*

For the French artist Thomas Canto, architecture and art are not distinct concepts. Canto is inspired by the sensations of experiencing a space. On the eve of a new exhibition of the artist's work 'Still life of Space Time' at the Wunderkammern in Rome, I asked Canto more about his inspiration and his methods.

By Polly Brock - © Artactualite - Photo © Blind Eye Factory

## **How do you characterise your art?**

As a self-trained artist, I have spent some 20 years researching different artistic areas. These days I focus on the creation of abstract works. My research deals with the relationship between architecture and humans. To better illustrate that, I have developed works that are halfway between sculpture and paintings, as well as being installations. In my works you find the influence of the dynamism of graffiti, which I used to do when I was younger, and also the influence of certain elements of Optical art, Constructivism, and more recently I also made a digitally inspired work with the use of videomapping.

## **Why do optical illusions interest you?**

The appearance of optical illusions within my works occurs organically. I always try to best express the impressions that I feel when I am in architectural

spaces that affect me. This reveals itself in my work through the multiple levels of interpretation. To recreate this in my art I use superimpositions of materials, notably thread, which create optical illusions and recall the play of light and shadows in the architectural landscapes that inspire me.

## **Can you describe the influence of technology and the digital age on your work?**

Today, the digital is omnipresent in our lives. It influences us every day, and each day this influence becomes more intense. From an artistic point of view, this allows me to envisage new forms of expression and new possibilities, such as in my latest installation 'Still Life of Space Time' for which I collaborated with Jeremie Bellot. However, when it comes to my work as a painter, it's an element I'd rather not use, I appreciate too dearly the meditative aspect of the process of creation of each of my paintings to imagine the addition of a digital aspect

to this part of my work. I think it would destroy the sense of them.

## **How does the urban space influence you?**

Urban space is the basis of my work. My art is about the relationship that a human has with his environment. The way in which he builds it, what these spaces tell us about the evolution of man, and finally how he sees the future. Architecture is intimately tied to the history of man. Today we visit architectural sites from the past to better understand these periods. I think that it will be the same for our contemporary architecture seen in the future.

## **Your art is not limited to two dimensions. Could you describe how and why you experiment with space?**

I developed my art in three dimensions, in my installations and then in my workshop. This spatial development came to me naturally and

progressively over the course of many years. To represent the emotions that I feel when I cross the great cities of the world, to express the sensations of speed and the loss of bearings. This is what 3-D work allows me to do: to create a sensation of deeper immersion for the spectator in my works, particularly in my installations.

## **Who are the artists who influence you?**

I am more influenced by artistic currents which I have come across in the course of my research. It is clear that movements such as Optical art, Constructivism and Futurism left an impression on me and played a role in my artistic evolution. However, architecture, which is not recognised as an art in itself, is one of the most important elements in my creation. I think that each image, each landscape, inspires me.

<http://thomascanto.com>