Or Ettlinger

The Abstract, the Pictorial and the Virtual

In Search of a Lucid Terminology

Povzetek

Abstraktno, slikovno in virtualno. V iskanju lucidne terminologije

Ob čedalje večji zapletenosti sodobnih vizualnih medijev so obstoječi pojmi, s katerimi razpravljamo o njih, pogosto raztegnjeni do točke, ko niso več jasni in uporabni kot pomoč pri razumevanju. Namen tega članka je razjasniti pomen izrazov »virtualno« in »abstraktno«, in sicer tako, da ju umesti v odnosu do bolj stabilnega izraza »slikovno«. Z razločevanjem njunih raznovrstnih pomenov in medsebojnih povezav predlaga konsistentno terminologijo za ukvarjanje s širokim razponom fenomenov podobe in subtilnih distinkcij med njimi. V skladu s temi predlaganimi definicijami izraz »slikovno« opisuje ključni atribut fizičnih objektov, skozi katere lahko vidimo neobstoječ vizualni prostor, »virtualno« opisuje naravo vizualnega prostora, ki ga ustvari slikovna podoba, »abstraktno« pa ima različen pomen glede na to, na kateri vidik podobe se nanaša: na sposobnost podobe, da ustvari vizualni prostor, na mogoč obseg takšnega prostora, ali na konkretnost podobe kot fizičnega objekta.

Ključne besede: abstraktno, slikovno, virtualno, podoba, teorija umetnosti

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Abstract

The increasing complexity of contemporary visual media often strains existing terminology to a point where it starts losing its usefulness in assisting understanding. The article seeks to clarify the meaning of the terms "virtual" and "abstract" by discussing them in relation to "pictorial", which is a more stable term. By differentiating their various meanings and interconnections, it proposes a consistent terminology with which to address a broad range of visual phenomena and the fine distinctions between them. According to these proposed definitions, the term "pictorial" describes the key attribute of physical objects through which an inexistent visible space can be seen, "virtual" describes the nature of the visual space that is created by pictorial images, and "abstract" has different meanings depending on which aspect of an image is being discussed. It can refer to the image's ability to generate a visual space, the possible content of such a space or the concreteness of the image as a physical object.

Keywords: abstract, pictorial, virtual, image, art theory

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Introduction

The technological developments in the field of visual media during recent decades are hardly disputable, but to describe their consequences using a clear terminology can be a daunting task. Digital tools – along with the growing culture of using them – have introduced new ways of producing, disseminating, and experiencing images, yet many of these developments have a limited vocabulary for referring to them accurately. Additionally, the speed of such developments makes it even more difficult for language to keep pace with them. As a result, a few key terms have emerged that are both ambiguous enough to address unclear phenomena as well as flexible enough to cover multiple uses simultaneously.

Two such recurring multi-purpose terms in the discussion of the image are "virtual" and "abstract", and this article addresses them with respect to the more stable term "pictorial". The elusive idea of the "virtual" is a topic of a continuous research of mine, the results of which have been consolidated into a proposed theory that I call *The Virtual Space Theory* (Ettlinger, 2008). This article presents some key principles of the theory and expands it to encompass the idea of the "abstract" and the "pictorial" so as to arrive at a coherent definition of all three terms. With these definitions in place, the article proceeds to explore several topics that lie at the meeting point of the three, presented as case studies to further clarify their proposed complementing definitions.

The Multiple Meanings of "Virtual"

What does the term "virtual" actually refer to? The Internet? Computer technology? Social media? The culture around it? Online 3D worlds? All forms of 3D graphics? Imaginary worlds in general? The realm of human imagination? Human perception? Human consciousness? Collective consciousness? Mix together all of the above and you get a rough idea of the problematic common notion of the "virtual", as well as an overview of some of the topics that are confounding contemporary civilization – all strangely expressed in one vague multi-purpose word.

If we observe the matter closely, we find that most of the uses of "virtual" fall under a few specific categories. Furthermore, we discover that most of these categories actually have existing words that convey their respective meanings much more clearly and consistently than the term "virtual" does. As we seek to clearly identify the core meaning of "virtual", noting these alternative terms will help us narrow down the possible meanings of it in search of the essence of what this term might most accurately be used to refer to.

- *Virtual as meaning "digital"* – Computers. Digital devices. Internet technology. Online services. In such contexts, referring to anything as being "virtual" is usually just a way of saying that it is created and facilitated by

digital means. However, the general term "digital" addresses such cases much more directly, as does the term "online" when discussing matters related to network connectivity.

- *Virtual as meaning "mental"* – The human mind. The imagination. Dreams and visions. We can visualize them, we can experience them, but they are not part of the world "out there". The point is that calling them "virtual" is rather inaccurate – the term "mental" captures their essence far more precisely.
- *Virtual as meaning "intangible"* – Money. State institutions. Political systems. Social Media. These are all examples of indisputable parts of the world we live in, yet which are not as concrete as physical objects are. They obviously involve particular people, objects, or buildings, but what they create together are phenomena that are clearly distinct from them. They might sometimes be referred to as "virtual", but in the sense of meaning "intangible".
- *Virtual as meaning "potential"* – One of the philosophical uses of "virtual" refers to the unrealized potential of something, like an acorn that holds within it the potential to become a fully grown tree. In that somewhat poetic sense, the acorn might be considered to be a "virtual" tree as opposed to an "actual" tree (Sasso and Villani, 2003: 22–29; Zourabichvili, 2001: 88–91). Even so, it is an idea that the term "potential" expresses much more accurately than "virtual" does.
- *Virtual as "what we perceive through* pictorial images" – 3D Worlds. Video games. Film fantasy worlds. 3D graphics creation tools. In that sense, "virtual" describes what we see in images. But more particularly, in addition to presenting pictorial content, such images have specific characteristics that link them to the other prevalent uses of the term "virtual": they are produced and presented digitally, we experience them as presenting things that lie outside of our immediate world, and they are often the product of their creators' imaginations.

And yet, in pictorial images, there is something "virtual" about them that is beyond any of the meanings of "virtual" discussed above: it is not only "digital", it is not just "mental", it is not exactly "intangible", nor is it "potential". Rather, it is the experience that what we see through such an image is not merely a flat pattern of light and colour – but rather a living, existing, and visually accessible *place*.

The interpretation presented in this article proposes that the key to clarifying the term "virtual" is to arrive at an understanding of it as meaning "what we perceive through pictorial images". And to achieve this, the inevitable path goes way beyond digital techniques, and it requires an exploration of the experiences given by older techniques and the traditional theories that support them.

Linking and Distinguishing the Virtual and the Pictorial

For centuries, the European tradition in art has explored the possibility of providing an experience of space through physical devices that do not contain any physical space in them – or what we may more simply call "pictorial images" (the case of non-pictorial images will be discussed later in this article).[1] The Renaissance artist, architect and theorist Leon Battista Alberti described a painting as a window through which we can look at the visible world (Alberti, 1966: 58). Several decades later, Leonardo da Vinci said that "perspective is nothing else than seeing a place behind a sheet of glass, smooth and quite transparent, on the surface of which all the things may be marked that are behind this glass" (da Vinci, 2008: 113). Around the middle of the twentieth century, Ernst Gombrich described the making of a painting as the making of "a possible visible world" (Gombrich, 2002: 246–278).

In this context, the term "pictorial" denotes a *picture*: a particular kind of physical object in the physical world, which can provide a visual experience of something that is not physically there. In order to discuss such objects beyond the particular technique by which they are put together, I refer to them by using the more generic term "devices of illusion". A device of illusion can be a piece of paper with traces of charcoal on it, or a display monitor with an array of coloured pixels, but if the visual pattern of the charcoal or pixels allow us to perceive a space beyond the surface of the paper or the monitor, then they can be said to be "pictorial". That is, the paper with the charcoal, or the monitor with its pixels, can then be referred to as a "pictorial object".

The proposed approach of this article to resolving the inconsistency of the term "virtual" is to emphasize the particular aspect of "virtual" that is linked to the term

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[1]   By using the term "pictorial", I am referring particularly to the type of images that generate an experience of space through them, as opposed to "non-pictorial" images, which do not generate such a space. In art theory, this distinction is often addressed by the terms "representational" vs. "non-representational", or "representational" vs. "abstract". However, in this article, I chose to introduce the relatively unused term "pictorial" in order to avoid the inherent ambiguity of the term "representational", which can have several different meanings:

(a) "Representational" can mean that the surface of an image is arranged so as to provide the illusion of a visible space, rather than only be a flat pattern of paint on canvas. This is what I mean by "pictorial" vs. "non-pictorial".

(b) "Representational" can mean that the content of an image's visible space looks like something that *could exist* in the physical world, as opposed to spatial content that may appear unclear or unlike something we have seen before. In the article, I refer to such spatial content as "identifiable" vs. "non-identifiable".

(c) "Representational" can also mean that the content of an image's visible space is made to look like particular objects that *do exist* as such in the physical world (e.g., a portrait of your grandmother) as opposed to being objects that do not necessarily stand for something specific in the physical world (e.g., a painting of a purple unicorn). This is a separate matter from either "pictorial" or "identifiable", which I refer to using the term "context" and address it at length in Chapter Four of *The Architecture of Virtual Space* (Ettlinger, 2008: 109–136).

"pictorial". According to this narrowed-down definition, the term "virtual" refers specifically to the nature of what can be seen *through* a pictorial object. Thus, given the example of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Tower of Babel*, the painting hanging on the wall in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna – as a physical object – is *pictorial*, whereas the tower that is seen through it – its visual content – is *virtual*. And since pictorial objects, by their very nature, provide the experience of seeing a space through them, each particular instance of such a type of space would be another "virtual place".

Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Tower of Babel* (1563) hanging at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Photo: Or Ettlinger.

Traditionally, the term "pictorial" may have been equally used for both the device of illusion *and* what is seen through it. This might have even worked fine back in the times when most devices of illusion were indeed paintings or drawings – the distinction between the pictorial and the virtual was simply not yet necessary. With the rise of newer mediums, however, as the physicality of the device of illusion is increasingly reduced to become ever less concrete (presently, down to electrical signals and coloured pixels on a versatile screen), the ability to distinguish between the pictorial and the virtual is becoming ever more crucial. In other words, given the near absence of a "picture object" in the traditional sense of the word – such as a framed canvas with dabs of paint on it – the space that is experienced through it must be understood independently of the object that creates the experience.

Therefore, this article proposes that "pictorial" describes the physical object that provides the visual experience, whereas "virtual" refers to the non-physical visual content of the space that it presents. To continue the previous example, then, a computer monitor or screen projection that shows Bruegel's *Tower of*

Babel is *pictorial*. As such, it is less concrete than a painted canvas or a printed reproduction is (and still more concrete than a futuristic holographic projection). Yet, whatever the pictorial object that provides the experience may be, the tower that is seen through it is not pictorial, but *virtual*.

This distinction between "virtual" and "pictorial" is not limited only to the case of paintings, but equally relevant also to photography and film. At first glance, this might seem to be a surprising proposition. After all, does not a photograph of an apple show the same apple that was in front of the camera? However, as described by Lev Manovich in his book *The Language of New Media*, this impression is only because "…over the course of the last hundred and fifty years, we have come to accept the image of photography and film as reality" (Manovich, 2001: 200). The point is that an apple and a photograph of it are obviously not one and the same – we can eat one of them, and the other we cannot. As physical objects, the printed photograph, or the projected film, are just like a painted canvas, or a fresco on a wall: they are equal in being physical devices through which we can perceive a space that is not physically there. Or in the terms of this article: they are pictorial objects through which we can experience virtual space.

The Multiple Meanings of "Abstract"

The term "abstract" comes up in many contexts; it is a recurring term in art-related discussions, yet tends to have quite a few different meanings. I will differentiate here between four such meanings of "abstract", emphasize alternative terms that can be used for maintaining a distinction between them, and point out how they intersect with the interpretation of the "virtual" as presented above. Paintings by Wassily Kandinsky, the abstract painting pioneer, will provide most of the examples in this discussion.

- *Abstract as meaning "distilled"* – Over a hundred years ago, when painters started to gradually let go of the centuries-old tradition of making paintings that try to look like the physical world, many alternative forms of painting were explored. One of these alternatives was to paint objects that might also exist in the physical world, but without trying to present them in full detail. Rather, such paintings aim at conveying the sense of their painted objects in a simplified or distilled form, trying to capture their characteristic essence rather than their correct visual appearance. Consequently, this distillation often meant that the sense of space created by the painting was lost as well, or at least challenged. An example of this is Kandinsky's painting *Moscow I*.
- *Abstract as meaning "non-identifiable"* – Another direction explored by artists was to make painted objects that are not quite identifiable. Such paintings employed many of the techniques of traditional painting, only that
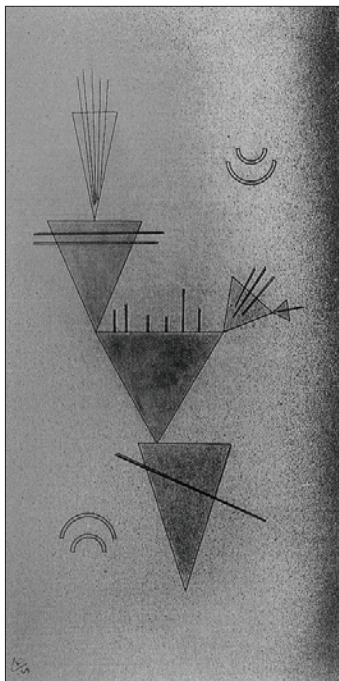
Wassily Kandinsky, *Moscow I*, 1916

Wassily Kandinsky, *White Line*, 1920

they did not do so in order to create objects that stand for ones that also exist in the physical world, but rather what might look like name-less blobs (which may hint at something identifiable, rather than showing it explicitly). And yet, using the terminology pro-posed above, such paintings may still create virtual places in virtual space – except that the visual *contents* that are seen in the image's space are *non-identifiable*. An example of this is Kandinsky's painting *White Line*.

• *Abstract as meaning "non-pictorial"* – Yet another form of painting that artists increasingly engaged in during the twentieth century was to let go of making any kind of objects in space whatsoever – whether they are optically accurate, distilled, or non-identifiable. Instead, the focus was on making the canvas a visual object in itself. From the point of view of this discussion, the designated task or *mode* of such form of painting has shifted: it is no longer the creation of a virtual place to be seen *through* the painting, but rather the production of a flat pattern to be seen *on* the surface of the painting. As seen in Kandinsky's *Little Game*, the result is still an image, but more precisely, it is a *non-pictorial* image.

Wassily Kandinsky, *Little Game*, 1928

James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Black and Gold*, 1874

- *Abstract as meaning "non-concrete"* – This use of the term "abstract", unlike the previously mentioned ones, refers to the image as a physical object rather than to the visual content seen in it. Due to technological developments over the centuries, our ability to see the virtual place of a pictorial image became gradually less bound to the physical object of the canvas on which it was originally painted – that is, less dependent on the concrete physicality of the device of illusion. Ever more sophisticated techniques of mechanical reproduction (Benjamin, 1999) have now reached the point that this physicality has been reduced to bits of data and an array of coloured pixels. They are physical too, just not as concrete as layers of paint on a sheet of canvas are. This is the topic of an elaborate discussion beyond the scope of this article, but the main point here is that as a physical *object*, the image has become much less *concrete*, and much more *abstract*.

In many cases, of course, it is not so easy to determine in which of the above senses a painting may be abstract: distilled, non-identifiable, non-pictorial, and non-concrete forms of abstraction may often overlap, yet it is still useful to be able to tell them apart. For example, James Whistler's painting *Nocturne in Black and Gold* is highly distilled (it tries to capture only the essence of things), its contents are hardly identifiable (it is difficult to say what is painted in it), and it is on the

verge of being non-pictorial (it is nearly just a flat pattern on a surface). And by the way, as you are watching it in a printed journal or on your computer monitor, it is also non-concrete (what you are looking at is not the physical object of the painting).
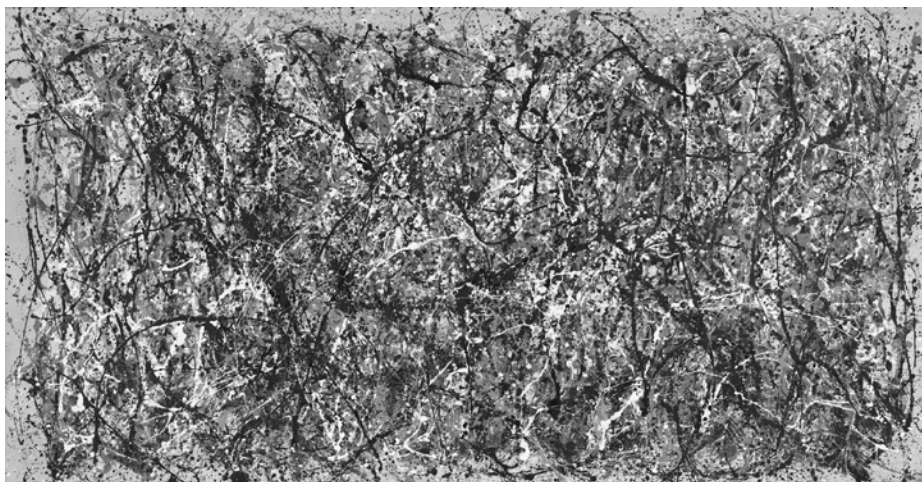
Is Abstract Art Virtual?

The kinds of images that abstract art creates are obviously quite difficult to define. Add to that the growing popularity of the elusive term "virtual", and it becomes tempting to use this term to describe also the elusive nature of abstract images. And yet, according to the proposed definitions of this article, most forms of abstract art are actually not virtual at all. This may seem surprising given the popular use of the term, but this is quickly sorted out once the terminology is clearly defined.

In order to address the relation of abstract art and virtuality, we need to first resolve the difference between pictorial and non-pictorial images in that respect. According to the above discussion of the "virtual" and the "pictorial", pictorial images can be interpreted as creating virtual places in virtual space, whereas non-pictorial images cannot. This does not mean that someone viewing a non-pictorial image could not interpret its visual pattern in terms of space – what it does mean is that what they will see in it would only be their personal visual interpretation of that pattern. For example, given a painting of Jackson Pollock, one viewer might see a tower in its pattern of paint, while another might see an elephant (look at it long enough and you will see ones too).

This is opposed to the visual contents of *pictorial* images, which are very similarly interpreted by anyone who has grown up in a civilization that makes common use of images. There can be no serious argument as to what is seen in the visual pattern of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Tower of Babel*. There might still be minor personal differences of visual interpretation, but surely not as many as in the example of the Pollock painting.

In the case of a non-pictorial image, the existence of a tower or an elephant in a viewer's experience of them is confined to their mental space, which is strictly *private*. This is in sharp contrast to the *public* nature of virtual space, as demonstrated by the tower of Bruegel's pictorial image, which we can all see. In other words, pictorial images create virtual places, whereas non-pictorial images do not.

Now we can return to the question of abstraction in art and its relation to virtuality. Some forms of abstract art are concerned with making images whose visual content is distilled. Other forms of abstract art are about making visual content that is non-identifiable. In such cases, to the extent that they still generate a visual experience of space that is publicly shareable, they can be considered as

Jackson Pollock, *One: Number 31*, 1950

pictorial images – and therefore as objects that create virtual places, which can be experienced through them. However, since abstract art is a form of art that is only marginally concerned with creating pictorial images, then, as a general rule, we could say that its contents are *not* in virtual space, and as such, they *cannot* be considered to be virtual. They may be elusive in many other respects, but that doesn't necessarily make them virtual.

There could be exceptions, of course. One of them is the particular area of interest created by the undefined field that lies *between* pictorial and non-pictorial images.
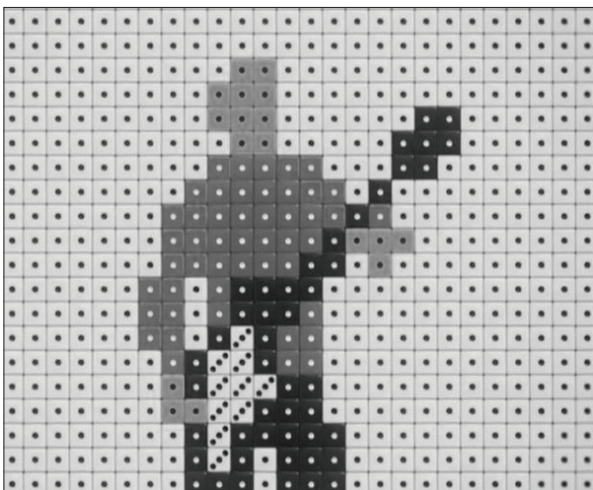
Between Pictorial and Non-Pictorial Images

The terminology elaborated above proves highly useful for elucidating some fascinating issues in the history and theory of art. One of the most dramatic events in the history of art was the transition from the demand that artists make only pictorial images, to the acceptance (and sometimes even the demand!) that they make *non*-pictorial images. Somewhere along the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, paintings were no longer required to look like the physical world, but were rather expected to present nothing more than a flat arrangement of paint on a canvas. Most of the late works of the painter Piet Mondrian – with their black gridlines, white squares, and some squares in basic colours – are extreme examples of this.

In some cases, however, paintings cannot quite clearly be defined as either pictorial or non-pictorial. These are paintings that – depending on how we look at them – can either reveal a visible world that seems to lie behind their surface

Lyonel Feininger, *Bridge I*, 1913

Still image from Fujiya & Miyagi's *Ankle Injuries*, music video, directed by Wade Shotter, 2007

(i.e., a "pictorial image"), or instead, they can appear to be nothing more than a pleasant arrangement of paint on a flat surface (i.e., a "non-pictorial image"). In other words, whereas fully pictorial images pull the viewer's gaze *into* their space and the details it contains, such "semi-pictorial" images make it possible for the viewer to let their gaze go only as far as the surface of the image and just enjoy the overall visual experience of it as a flat colourful object – as if it actually were a non-pictorial image.

When the making of such ambiguous or "dual-mode" images is successful, it can result in fascinating works of art. An example of this is Claude Monet's painting *Impression: Sunrise* (which later came to also stand for a whole new approach to the making of paintings, but that is another topic). During the twentieth century, such tension between pictorialism and non-pictorialism within the same image was the driving force behind the work of many painters, who searched for ever new ways to achieve it. A beautiful example of this is Lyonel Feininger's painting *Bridge I*.

This search for the ambiguity between the surface of an image and the space seen through it is not limited only to the medium of painting. As newer mediums developed – and ever more so from the last decades of the twentieth century – other forms of image-making have dealt with the same issues. For example, in the music video of Fujiya & Miyagi's song *Ankle Injuries*, the visual content is basically

nothing more than an arrangement of game dice on a surface. All that is actually seen is a pattern of dice in one of eight colours, where each shows a face with up to six dots on it. Regardless of the question of its technique of production (physical dice or computer-generated) it presents a clearly flat arrangement. And yet it is also carefully made so as to provide the impression that what we are seeing through this arrangement of dice is the band performing their song, along with other spatial visual content.

Where, then, is the visual content of such paintings and videos? Is it inside the virtual place that is seen through them, or is it on the surface of an image in physical space? Well, what makes such images so special is precisely that they can be seen either way.

One Pictorial Image, Two Virtual Places

An inherent characteristic in the making of pictorial images is that their visual pattern can sometimes be interpreted in more ways than one. Unlike in the discussion of the previous section, however, the two interpretations I am referring to here are not the pattern on a surface vs. the space that can be seen through it, but rather two different spatial contents altogether. This is most familiar in the many

A visually ambiguous image

optical illusions found in images that seem to have different visual contents depending on how one looks at them, such as the famous example of "old woman or young woman". In other words, such images are "ambiguous".
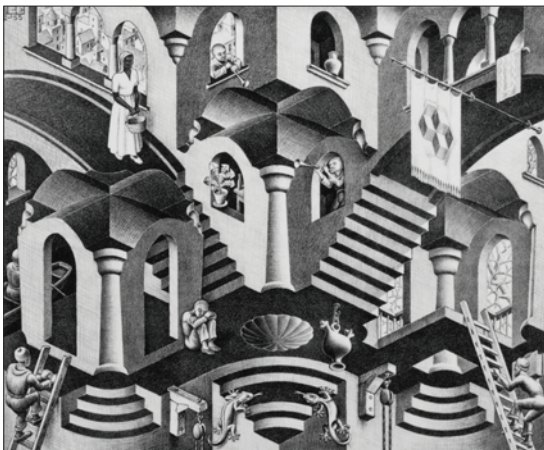
Normally, this ambiguity is actually a limitation of the art of image-making as it attempts to handle the limitations of visual perception. As a result, a whole range of conventions and techniques have been developed over the centuries precisely in order to overcome it and produce images that would have only one consistent visual interpretation. Yet a newer, alternative approach to the issue of ambiguity was to actually embrace this limitation and incorporate it into a part of making art (Gombrich, 2002: 204–244). An example of this is some of the work of Salvador Dalí: his painting *Raphaelesque Head Exploding* simultaneously shows a human head as well as the interior of a dome.

Sometimes, also an image that presents a seemingly continuous space can still include within it parts that are made in an ambiguous way. When seen as a whole, then, the result simultaneously seems correct and incorrect, and provi-

Salvador Dalí, *Raphaelesque Head Exploding*, 1951

M. C. Escher, *Convex and Concave*, 1955

des a visual experience that is quite different from either the physical world or most pictorial images. This is the principle behind some of M.C. Escher's work. In *Convex and Concave*, the two spaces on the left and the right are visually consistent each in itself, as well as compositionally symmetrical, yet they are incompatible with each other. However, by drawing ambiguous elements along the part of the image where the two spaces connect, they appear as if they create one continuous visual space, even though such a space would be physically impossible.

Similar principles have also been applied to moving images, such as TV commercials and music videos. For example, a recurrent theme in car commercials is to present the abilities of the advertised car to handle challenging road conditions. Accordingly, in one such commercial for Audi, this was done by showing a car driving through an urban environment that can be visually interpreted in several ways simultaneously – a moving image realization of popular optical illusions, resulting in a visually ambiguous environment for the car to drive through.

Still image from *Audi "Illusions"*, TV commercial, directed by Anthony Atanasio, 2004
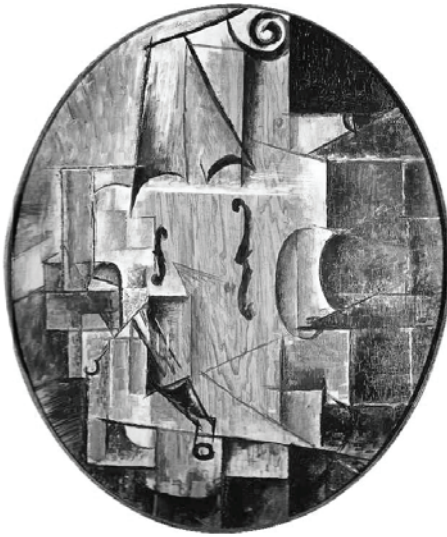
Another interesting example of visual ambiguity in a moving image is the music video of The Chemical Brothers' song *Let Forever Be*. It combines the ambiguity of the optical illusions discussed above together with the issue of pictorial and non-pictorial images discussed in the previous section.

This video explores, in a moving image, the same kind of concerns that have preoccupied painters and art theorists for generations. First, it employs rudimentary film editing techniques (such as various forms of image duplication) in a way that seems to echo some of the approaches of modernist painting as discussed in this article. That is – as seen in Pablo Picasso's *Violin*, for example – it uses multiple pictorial fragments as mere elements from which to construct a flat arrangement of paint (or in this case, pixels) on a surface.

Second, the video reinterprets the resulting image pattern as if it were itself a pictorial description of another kind of visible world, one which actually *looks* just like the resulting image of the fragmentation process of image-making. Throughout the video, the view repeatedly moves back and forth from an optically-familiar visual interpretation of the world, to a fragmented flat pattern of the resulting image

Still image from The Chemical Brother's *Let Forever Be*, music video, directed by Michel Gondry, 1999

Pablo Picasso, *Violin*, 1912

of it, and then to a non-realistic visual interpretation of the world as if it actually looked like that fragmented image – and back again, dozens of times. Thus, this video demonstrates the whole issue of the ambiguity of pictorial images in an ingenious and playful way. And, from the point of view of this discussion, this video uses the added dimension of movement in time to suggest that what might appear like an ambiguous visual pattern is actually *one* single window to *two* distinct virtual places.

Conclusion

The terminology proposed in this article allows a systematic and internally consistent approach to some of the contemporary concerns with respect to images. According to this proposed definition, the term "pictorial" describes the key attribute of physical objects through which an inexistent visible space can be seen, and "virtual" describes the nature of the visual space that pictorial images create.

The term "abstract" has different meanings depending on which aspect of an image it refers to. If it refers to the image's ability to generate a visual space, it serves to draw a distinction as to whether the image is *pictorial* or *non-pictorial* (or in some cases, *semi-pictorial*). If it refers to the content of the image, it rather describes the visual objects that are located *inside* of the *virtual place* that the image presents. Finally – and in a manner that best complements the above definitions of "pictorial" and "virtual" – the term "abstract" can refer to the image as an object in itself, in which case it describes that object as having a reduced physicality due to historical processes by which the devices we call "images" have gradually become ever less concrete.

These proposed definitions do not make the other prevalent uses of these terms invalid, and such uses will likely still remain as well – at least as metaphors. And yet, these definitions provide a stable basis for discussing issues related to the image, and a toolset with which to shed light on some of the most fascinating phenomena of experiencing images.

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