Eduardo Nery

Abstract.

The artist Eduardo Nery, the range of whose work has broadened to intervention on architecture and urban space (mainly projected in terms of colour), has investigated extensively the problems of pictorial space and visual mobility, the incessant game of representation as a setting for memory and illusion, contradictory images, absurd compositions, the ambiguous interdependence between what is looked at and what is seen.

After an earlier phase devoted almost entirely to the field of drawing – calligraphies, partly gestural, but whose referents were situated between cosmic space, energy and objectification of the heavenly bodies – Eduardo Nery created a harmonious balance between accidental configurations and precise geometrical elements, and opted towards a realm of constructive bi-dimensional exploration of plastic space. This option, associated with ways of seeing, towards the need to re-equate before the spectator invited to participate, allowed him to encounter himself completely in the field of op-art. In this field, he was to develop one of the most important works of Portuguese abstract art ever produced in the sixties. It is a work which is conceptually deep and well justified, with a surprising visual show, based mainly on the modular structure, and which the artist successfully transferred to the field of tapestry (Tapestry Manufacture of Portalegre), and to several mural interventions on architecture, and even to interior and exterior pavements (urban space).

Having researched with great coherence the problems of plastic space, the work of Eduardo Nery has evolved towards a deeper probing of seeing and dual perspectives of representations, contradictory and absurd, through which a series of cubes (and later, whole architectures) appear to drift, or be suspended in space, making their own reality unreal, demonstrating how unsolvable images can appear to be projected out of concrete painting materials, leading memory and fiction back through a path of an imagery of dreams that become multiple with disturbing meanings.

These fields of research also included collage – in a series titled «The Imaginary Museum of a Consumer Society» – and photography – a technique that has been constantly used throughout Eduardo Nery’s work, and through which, in lyrical mixtures or neo-romantic images, the solutions of some problems of painting have been bordered, the same that happened in the «light space» phase. In this phase, in strips of white light or through its spectral composition (painting and photography) the artist created ambiguous dynamics in the obscurity of space, piercing deaf landscapes, and gave place once again to cosmic metamorphosis.

The collage in the Imaginary Museum united many of the contemporary requests (advertising and consuming) with reproductions of antique art: from this confrontation and in a very and in a very broad form, Nery succeeded in re-assessing the significance of different cultural spaces, and put forward, through poetical reflection and irony, a critical undoing of certain established readings.

With an important production in the field of tapestry, ranging from leveled figuration to the geometrical lines of op-art, Nery has been the most dedicated Portuguese plastic artist (with an apprenticeship that is profound and up to date), in the intervention on architecture and urban space. He has works in public buildings, schools, whole, whole urban areas transformed by colour, urban pavements, specific treatment of the interiors of functionally defined spaces; he gave an interior design of an underground station in Lisbon, and in the Integrated Project of Almada he gave aesthetic contributions at various levels.

Eduardo Nery decidedly places the role of the plastic artist and of the designer in a correct position, putting him face to face with the creation of applied forms, giving a balanced interdisciplinary solution to urban space, of its equipment or patrimony, thereby joining the findings of free expression to the rational and poetical conditionings of plastic space.