

Arylide Yellow and Copper Phthalocyanine to Reprocess Grey Scale Images

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Abstract

Art is an experiment. The demystification of the artistic process occurs all around us. By integrating the process into the art work, it becomes part of the art work. With this series “Imaginary Science” I am illustrating that the integration of science, scientific observation and research, into the art world shouldn’t only focus on the rationalisation of art, but that this scientific component can also add a meta-aspect of meaning and aesthetics to an art work.

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Introduction

Art is an experiment. My previous series of seven oil paintings and seven photo booklets aimed at showing the result of the artistic experiment - the painting - and part of the process. In showing macro-photos of each painting, the spectator could assess much easier which strokes - each with each own contribution to depth, colour and texture - added up to that part of the painting.

This demystification of the artistic process occurs all around us. I don’t know if it is justified to call this a new trend - and my uncertainty stretches out to both the adjective “new” and the noun “trend” - but I definitely believe that art is approached much more analytically these days than before.

By integrating the process into the art work, it becomes part of the art work and as such, it cannot be analysed anymore since the analysis has already been done. You could argue that the internalization of the analysed process into the womb of the art work itself defends it against any form of demystification: a necessary defence in a rationalizing world, but a paradox at the same time. By creating the impossibility to analyse the work only a meta-analysis remains possible, which, because of its

transcendental character, shouldn’t pose a real threat. This article gives a rendering of how the series “Imaginary Science” came about and it decomposes every step of the process.

Material and Methods

Digital photos were made of the experimental setup, as illustrated in Fig. 1. A Nikon D300 digital photcamera fitted with a Tamron 90mm, f1:2.8, 1:1, M-lens was used to create 12 MP macro photos of a Wild microscope (Wild, Switzerland, model n°27772). A smear of respectively arylide yellow, copper phthalocyanine or a colour mix of both oil paints was applied onto a clear plastic slide and illuminated under the microscope using Köhler illumination.

The subject matter of the photographs can be classified into two categories: either showing the oil paint smear in relation to the experimental setup, or showing only the light that penetrated through the thin oil paint layer. For this first category the macro photos were converted to greyscale images using Adobe Lightroom v3 and scaled to 60x80cm images with a 300 dpi resolution.

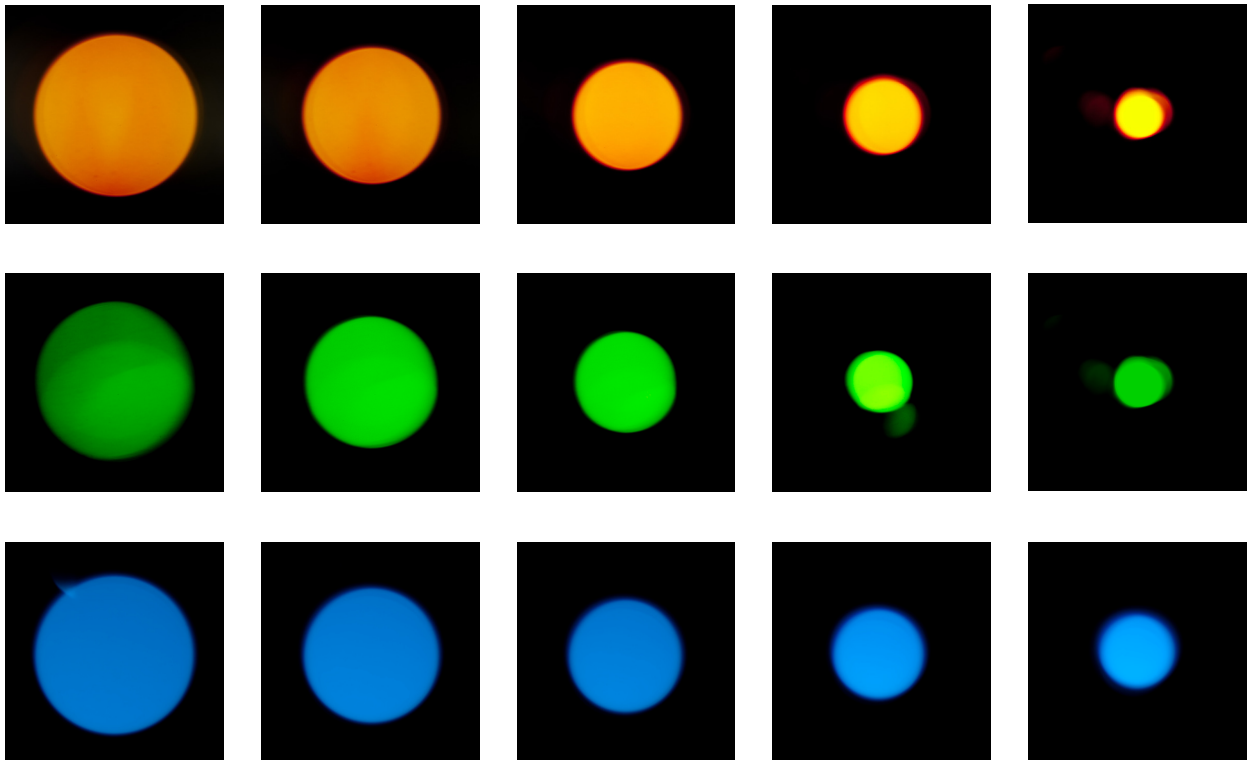


Figure 2A. 15 unprocessed colour photographs 60x60cm

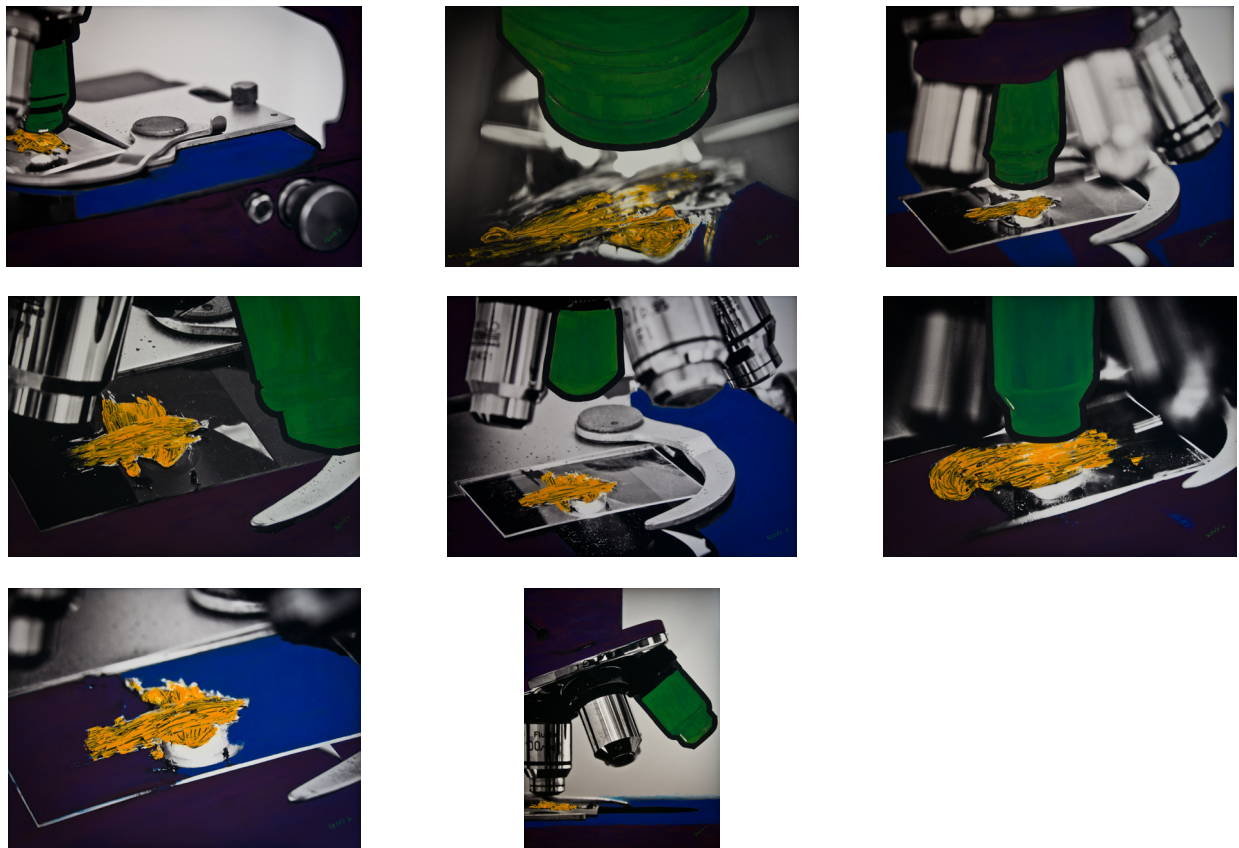


Figure 2B. 9 repainted B/W photographs 60x80cm

For photographs in the second category the camera was focused between 0.4m and infinity resulting in a photo series of differently sized coloured dots. The photos were only cropped and scaled to colour photographs of 60x60 cm at 300 dpi.

Both set of photographs were printed on Fine-art paper FS601 with a silk gloss finish. FS601 paper is a naturally white cotton based paper with an ultrafine surface texture

and a silk gloss coating. Printing was done by fotoposter.be.

The B/W photos were subsequently permanently attached on acid-free cardboard. Finally, certain parts of the photographs were re-painted using only arylide yellow, copper phthalocyanine and titanium dioxide or zinc oxide based oil paints.

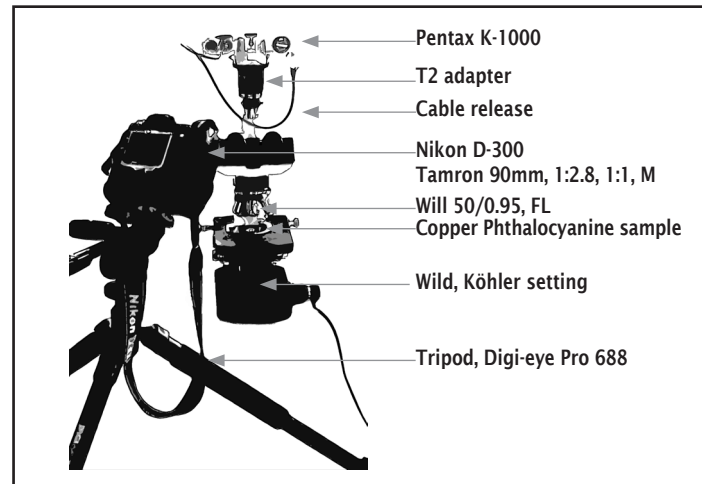


Figure 1. Setup of the experiment: a Pentax K-1000 was mounted using a T2 adapter on the top ocular of a Wild microscope, fitted with a Will 50/0.95, FL objective lens. The copper phthalocyanine sample was dry-mounted on a polyethylene carrier strip, illuminated through Köhler illumination. A Nikon D-300, fitted with a Tamron 90mm, 1:2.8, 1:1 lens was mounted on a Digi-eye Pro 688 tripod for macro photography.

Results

The creative process resulted in two sets of photographs: 15 unprocessed 60x60cm colour photographs showing three reference colours; and 9 processed, repainted 60x80cm B/W photographs in which only the same three reference colours were used.

The two sets of images are shown in Fig. 2.

Discussion

[A] The oil paint smear in relation to the microscope

This setup transforms paint from its role as a working material for art into the subject of this experimental research and into the subject of the art work; for me, art and experimental research can be considered synonyms: art *is* experimental research.

But at the same time, by overpainting the photo with oil paint, an interesting paradox arises where the oil paint, again, becomes a mere material that creates art.

It is important to mention that this paradox, more and more, is becoming part of current art exhibitions that seem to focus just as much on the paint as material and scientific research related to the paint; as on the painting.

[B] The light penetration through the oil paint

Continuing on the same reasoning as in [A] but on a higher level of abstraction results in merely capturing the light that penetrated the oil paint smear. The colour of the used oil paint directly determines the colour of the light blob. To focus only on the light, the camera was focused between 0.4m and infinity resulting in a photo series of differently sized coloured dots.

The larger the focussing distance the bigger the diameter

of the dot, the higher the degree of abstraction. The coloured dots actually reduce the setup of [A] to its minimalistic essence, that of the interaction of light with oil paint: the *conditio sine qua non* for observation of the art work and one of the few common elements alike amongst all oil paintings.

Conclusion

With this series “Imaginary Science” I am illustrating that the integration of science, scientific observation and research, into the art world shouldn’t only focus on the rationalisation of art, but that this scientific component can also add a meta-aspect of meaning and aesthetics to an art work.

References

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