

Anders Knutsson

Color and Luminous Painting 1975–1981

Edited by Arden Kahlo

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to Annika, Susanna, Corry and Aaron

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Introduction

By Anders Knutsson

This publication is to be seen as an accompaniment to the exhibition "Matter and Memory," touring Scandinavia in 1982 and featuring Norwegian sculptor Bård Breivik, Swedish painter Jan Håfström and myself. It is also my record of ten years of public showings on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. It is my hope that this volume will reach a wide audience, giving an overview of my recent work with emphasis on the explosive developments of 1981. My intention is also to share the feelings and thoughts of the authors and myself, as an aid, or point of departure, to seeing the paintings.

In selecting the contributors, I approached some writers who have a longstanding interest in writing on art, and who have been familiar with my work for a considerable time. With each one, I have also had numerous opportunities to discuss my work, my influences and my ideas. In addition, I have included a brief essay to explain my own excitement and fascination with the luminous material.

The emphasis here is not one of scholarly investigation, but to present five writers' responses to basically the same body of work. (The only exception is Lars Nittve, who, living in Stockholm, has not yet seen the recent luminous paintings.) The risk here could perhaps be one of repetition, but that, in my opinion, is far outweighed by the benefits for the viewer and reader, who through the different accounts can create and explore his or her own relationship with the paintings.

Your response and experience, at the time of encounter with the paintings, is the only one possible—for you. I want in this book to provide information about the paintings in order to enrich and enhance your inner experience upon seeing the work.

An Introduction to Anders Knutsson's Conceptual World.

By Bo Nilsson

In the beginning of this century it was necessary to reject Newton's mechanical world view and Descartes' fundamental division of mind and matter in favor of a realization of our existence as part of a greater whole. The physicists showed that matter consisted of a series of complex interconnections between parts and the whole. The human being could no longer identify himself with his intellect alone. We are also forced to view the body as a functional unit, and assume an attitude that included our whole organism: the "I" and the world were perceived as sharing the one and same existence. These close interconnections lead us into a world of relativity.

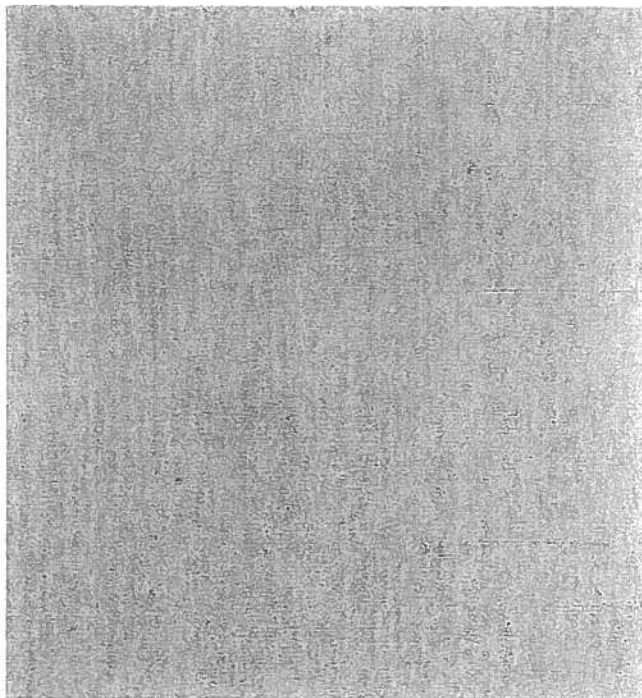
The long materialistic tradition in American painting has emphasized the status of the painting as a factual and unique object, that owes its reality to its materials. In this respect the size of the canvas, its proportions, the thickness of the stretcher, the quality of the linen and its coarseness are of crucial importance, as well as the choice of color, the consistency of the paint and its pigment density. The articulation of the surface of the painting, with brush, palette knife or roller, is important to the artist, who builds his work on color rather than form, either as an even surface layer or with a multitude of incidents on the painting surface. Isolated from the whole, the different parts of the painting have no meaning. It is the totality of it that gives the work its reality, an inherent and inseparably material wholeness.

As individuals, we are not objective in our perceptions of reality. Our consciousness is affected by various manipulations and fragments of experience, rather than whole structures. Our world view is therefore only an abstraction that represents certain parts of reality. It is for that reason only possible to speak about the work of art as a carrier of meaning in relation to the "I". This means that every interaction between the work of art and the "I" is a unique personal experience, as if one could not exist without the other.

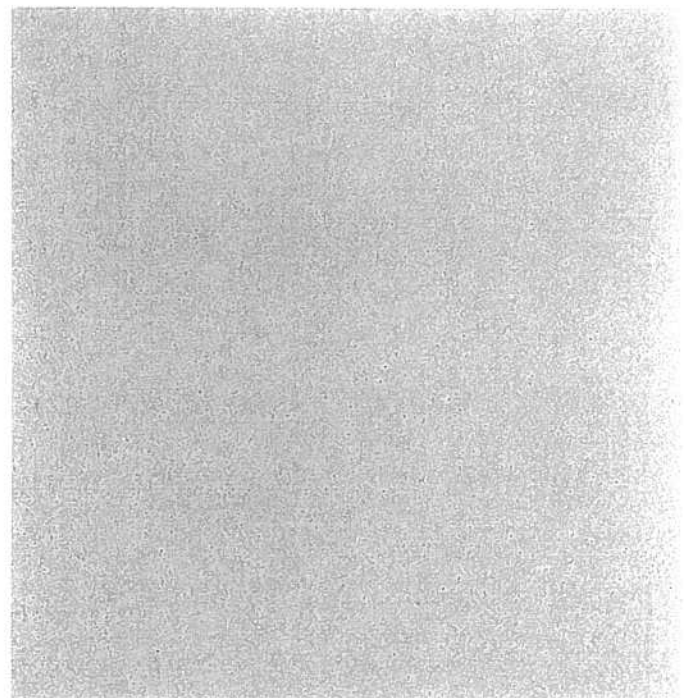
Anders Knutsson's experiment with luminous pigments introduces the presence of a non-material force in the painting. Color is emitted in the form of light from the painting, rather than reflected from the painting's surface. Since the paintings are perceived in the dark, a distracting reference to space—floor, walls, furniture—is eliminated and our experience of the material object is liberated. The painting becomes freed from its material point of departure to a purely sensory experience. Light is a non-material reflection of an inner reality. This is painting where the rational mind has been quieted for the benefit of an intuitive state of mind, which means fundamental changes in our perception. All distractions are reduced to emphasize presence in the moment of experience, to create an experience of

oneness with the work of art. To my mind comes the concept of regression, which means a going back in personal as well as cultural time, a kind of timelessness with an extended or continuous presence. It is a state of mind that reminds me of that particular state of strong, psychic intensity that emerges during long journeys, where our sense of time falters, or at dusk when all contours are erased. Regression in cultural time means that the work of art is freed from its historical framework and its time-related meaning. Art history is then experienced as a whole category liberated from the history of styles. This is to stress the essence of painting, its fundamental nature, which is independent of time and space. It is the absolute goal of painting to liberate itself from history in order to exist in the continuous present.

Bo Nilsson is an independent curator, and critic and is finishing his Ph.D. on Andy Warhol at Lund University, Sweden.



2. "Light Painting" 1975
75" x 69" (190 x 175cm)
Wax/oil on primed cotton



3. "Red Touch" 1977
72" x 69" (183 x 175cm)
Wax/oil on primed cotton

Luminosity: developing a new emotional context

By Laura Cottingham

Anders Knutsson's primary artistic concern has always focused on the experiential: for the artist, the painting experience; for the viewer, the seeing experience. As nonrepresentational art, his early monochromatic paintings forced both the painting and seeing processes to the primary level of visual experience: the experience of color.

The emotional aspect of color has attracted Anders Knutsson throughout his painting career and led him through the creative process. In a brief essay on his monochromatic art for "Art in America" he wrote:

Color theory tends to concentrate on the physics and chemistry of color, excluding the human aspects of it, the emotional response. When we see a green forest, we don't care whether we're looking at a primary or secondary color: instead we feel the life-confirming, fresh, lush calming growth of it. If the field of vibrant orange makes you feel warm all over, let it in, accept it, bask in it. Color is, after all, a sensation, a mental and emotional interpretation of what the eye records. It has spiritual, aesthetic, psychic, and physiological qualities.

In the same essay he noted: "Central to color painting is emotion and feeling, not idea and the mechanics of 'how to' ". Anders Knutsson's most recent works, monochromatic paintings that are luminous, are the natural development of the artist's commitment to experience, color and emotion. The luminous pigment, as material and technique, permits change within a painting as it permits access to two realizations, daylight and nightlight. While the daylight appearance of a luminous painting resembles a nonluminous one, the nightlight appearance of a luminous painting alters with time. In the dark, a luminous painting, unlike traditional paintings, changes. It is imbued with nonmechanical, nonentropic energy. Unlike the static colors of traditional painting, the colors of a luminous painting in the dark change, only to become the same again with a flick of the light switch.

In Anders Knutsson's use of luminosity in monochromes, the new technique conveys the artist's relationship to color in a way no other technique could. With luminosity he can incorporate the primary component of emotion—its persistent ability to change.

Anders Knutsson's earliest work in luminosity began in the autumn of 1980. A few years earlier he became acquainted with the material and process through a friend and fellow artist, Tom Bacher, who was then working in Cincinnati, Ohio. Anders was excited about the introduction of luminosity to painting, but he was hesitant to incorporate it into his own work. "I came back from a trip to Cincinnati," he recalls, "excited about luminosity's potential. But all my New York

friends were against it. They said it wasn't about painting, that there wasn't anything to it, that it was just plain weird."

After balking at the use of the luminous material for almost three years, in the autumn of 1980 he took some luminous pigments with him to his studio in Vermont. While alone and away from the negative responses of New York City, he decided to follow his own intuition and experiment with luminosity. His intent in the earliest luminous works was to make the nightlight appearance as closely resemble the daylight appearance as possible. In the late summer of 1981 he abandoned this effort and began to use luminosity to greater advantage. In the day the paintings reflect delicate light yellow, green, gray and near white. In the night the paintings emit strong yellow, green, blue, red and violet light.

Anders Knutsson works in a wide variety of size and scale on canvas as well as handmade paper. His painting technique of flat, short strokes with a palette knife is even evident in the nightlight appearance, when the paintings exhibit colors. The medium he uses is a mixture of beeswax, oil and resin, into which the pigments are ground.

"The Disciples," 1981 (see pages 44-49), as the title suggests, is a painting with twelve canvases, each one a different kind of linen. The shapes are all straight-edged and angular variations of rectangles, triangles, trapezoids and squares, which together comprise a large rectangle. In normal light they exhibit different hues of off-whites. The viewer can easily distinguish the surface plane of the canvases from the wall surface because of the empty space between the irregular shapes: this creates an evidence of physical depth. In the absence of external light, "The Disciples" is transformed: each of the twelve canvases radiates an individual color. The knife strokes, so evident under normal light, are less evident: the presence of vibrant colors dominates. As time goes on, the colors change, altering and fading. The most vital colors—the reds, oranges and yellows—dim the fastest. The cooler blues, turquoises and greens remain calm and retain their original color the longest. The colors overpower the viewer, who searches for a focal point within them.

In the presence of darkness and color the space that separates each shape no longer serves to distinguish the canvas surface from the wall; instead, it creates a sense of infinite depth. The shapes now seem to move within this enveloping dark space.

In "Painting with Changing Parts" (see pages 40-43), nine squares form a square gridwork. Like "The Disciples" and other works of autumn, 1981, the daylight appearance of the piece is in the white-yellow color range. In the dark the work gives off nine separate colors. Because the nine squares are all the same size, they can be substituted for each other as forms. But seen as a whole they present a color/time relational concept. Each one of the paintings independently changes color and intensity in the dark at different rates of speed.

The discrepancy between what the eye sees under normal light conditions and what one views under the absence of light is the excitement of Anders Knutsson's recent luminous works. A viewer's initial reaction to the paintings in the dark is one of surprise, for expectations of what is known become thwarted. When observing a work of art under normal light conditions, one assumes that what is

seen is the total view of what is possible to see, but works such as "The Disciples" and "Painting with Changing Parts" provide another way to see the same thing, the same painting. At the instant the viewer becomes comfortable with the painting's new life in the dark, s/he realizes that even that appearance is intangible and changing.

Like Anders Knutsson's intent, the response to the work is emotional. The darkness necessary to see luminous paintings forces the viewer into a sense of private space not possible in normal light. The absence of referential forms, pictorial imagery, or complicated color formations forces the viewer both from and into the exhibited color to contemplate him/herself.

Laura Cottingham is a New York writer, whose articles on art have appeared in numerous American art magazines.

Awake to What Speaks to Me

Our minds focus
and our tongues talk
as we consider the choice
of a household rug.

Into the nubby tweeds
you thrust a fur sample
and it slips across my palms
as I slide through mink darkness
down, under somewhere, to rest,
fingertips reaching the end of a pocket,
there.

Laughter brings
me sleepwalking back.
Yes, it's true:
When you brought out that fur
I never heard another word.

Arden Kahlo

Seeing

By David U. Neuman

What counts here—first and last—is not so-called knowledge of so-called facts, but vision — seeing. Seeing here implies Schauen (as in Weltanschauung) and is coupled with fantasy, with imagination.

Josef Albers

from "Interaction of Color"

To view a painting by Anders Knutsson is to look at a facet, a moment of your life, your being that day. It is the viewer who decides if he will see more than the color, if he will see the mood in the color and the experience behind the color. The viewer's insight of himself will decide what he will see in the color.

My fascination with Anders Knutsson's painting (without touching the obvious aesthetics) is the mental image his paintings give. The meaning behind the color as color.

There is a choice behind every color, and the choice for a mental image might start years, months before the work on the physical painting. The choice will always come from an experience, a feeling. Can a color represent the thought, the feeling—that mood? Can the color red be heat, excitement, aggression or "only" the color on the Coca Cola can? Can the color blue be cold, serenity, light, air, water . . . ? Only the viewer can decide, can answer with his experience, imagination—there is no right or wrong imagination.

The artist has many decisions to make with his feeling. While the color is hammered in his mind, he approaches other, and just as vital decisions. Size, balance—how does this specific moment, impression feel? Is it a graspable moment or is it overwhelming? What would happen if I changed my experience, if I shrank it or made it stretch? Can I stretch the red color, the blue color—how far can I stretch any color? If I would touch my experience, how would it feel? How would the surface of my experience feel?

These thoughts need decisions by the artist. Anders Knutsson deals with these complex questions. Working with fifteen types of linen canvases, from rough to smooth, painting in different sizes, trying his experience and knowledge of life, with color—light.

There are no scars in a color—Anders Knutsson paints with a knife, the palette knife is not scratching the surface, smoothly Anders puts paint on the canvas.

The dialogue is between the viewer's seeing and Anders Knutsson's experience—the color.

David U. Neuman is an art therapist and art dealer living in New York.

Anders Knutsson: Painting from the Source

By Anne Marie Macari

Anders Knutsson has described his recent movement into luminosity as a journey from color to the source of color, which is light. Till now he has been known for his monochromatic works—rich canvases of reds, greens, blues, yellows. All through his career one of his purposes has been to purify his work, to keep it uncluttered so that there is little to engage the mind. The paintings are meant to be felt. With luminosity Anders Knutsson has taken this purpose a step further. The new works are experiences. Their explorations move beyond emotion into energy itself.

A large part of his transformation from monochromatic to luminous paintings, has had to do with his relationship to nature. He has said his paintings are inner explorations. But the paintings also reach out, recapturing the kind of peacefulness and limitlessness of the imagination that we feel when we see light through trees, or light sparkling on an ocean. It is that communion of the inner and outer world I feel Anders Knutsson has been pushing toward in his art. In his use of color and light he has continued moving closer to the vibrancy, the energy of life.

More and more over the last years the artist has experienced and observed nature. When he and his wife, Arden Kahlo, first drove through Manchester, Vermont, they knew it was where they wanted to be.

“Arden and I fell in love with Vermont, with the mountains, the nature, the weather. We spent five days in the wilderness, backpacking and we just wanted to have more of that. It was definitely an intuitive choice. Definitely related to both our needs to be close to nature. We were very citified people at that time.”

Over a period of five years the artist and his wife transformed the barn on their Vermont property into a huge studio and storage place, a place where the artist could watch nature passing and changing through large windows and feel its presence all around him. Anders Knutsson does not consider his home in Vermont to be an escape from city life (they also live in New York City). Instead, the Vermont studio is a place where he reconnects with nature and stays in touch with what he calls his inner source.

“I just love to go up in the mountains, trees, rocks, water falls, brooks. It makes me feel very close to the original source. The more in tune you are with nature, the more there is going on all the time. Even in the hardest part of winter, you go out and in the snow you see all these marks from odd, little creatures hopping around. Isn't that amazing?”

Anders Knutsson describes his color paintings as “emotional interpretations of nature.” These paintings are blocks of color painted in layers. The color is built

up so that together the textures, the intensities, the tones, create the emotional expression. In viewing the color paintings we feel and remember our reactions to nature, the infinite change, beauty, surprise, of a forest, an ocean, of sunlight, of moonlight. There is a physicalness in the color painting that comes in part from the earthlike, natural qualities I've spoken of. The physicalness also comes from seeing an emotional response, some unseen part of ourselves, caught on canvas as if each painting is a surge of passion, a celebration, sensual and joyful.

"I want to feel positive energy when I paint. Then I can take risks, make experiments, be more expansive in my whole being. And that's what I want painting to be about – the exploring, the going further, the trying to see beyond what you have already seen and move the borders, the expectations and the limitations we all have due to our perceptions of reality."

Anders Knutsson's journey into luminosity clearly has been about moving beyond limitations. Luminosity is a technique created by his good friend the painter, Tom Bacher, who has opened the way for unlimited growth and change visually and conceptually in the art world. In a luminous painting, light is absorbed by the pigments so that in a dark room light emerges from the painting. Anders Knutsson admits that his initiation into luminosity was hesitant. It began with paintings which in the light had his signature, his monochromatic look, but which also were luminous in the dark. This was an enormous step into unknown territory.

Nine months after this beginning he was driving from Cincinnati to New York when he had what he calls "an experience with nature."

"I was just driving, driving, driving and seeing thunderstorms, clouds, and going through the whole cycle of day and night and feeling, you know, the sleepiness of the night, then perking up and seeing the sunrise. All those things are profoundly moving experiences and I really regained a lot of my own belief, and strength, and connection with nature. When I came back from that, that's when I really got into luminosity without any hesitation whatsoever."

Anders Knutsson's newest paintings are breakthrough works which point the way toward unlimited future development. The recent luminous paintings are bold expressions of light. In these works he explores not only our infinite reactions to nature and to our own existence, but also explores the infiniteness of creation itself. In journeying from color to light the artist moves the viewer out of emotion, out of the human, and into the universal, into the spiritual. The luminous paintings are nothing less than explorations of energy, explorations of the life-giving force.

His most powerful and moving work to date, "The Disciples" (see pages 44-49), is created out of twelve canvases of varied shapes which fit together, with spaces between them, into a rectangle. In the light they are twelve peaceful and quite solid looking canvases. When the lights are turned off the transformation is instant and stunning. Suddenly light of different colors seems to be coming out of nowhere. This is emphasized by the black spaces between the paintings. As if a hand could pass through the colors, the work no longer appears to be solid; it appears instead to be energy. The colors fade, the reds going first and the cooler colors lingering till they have all lost their intensity and distinction and give off a silvery light. This process creates the appearance of movement. More than any of his other works, "The Disciples", seems to belong to space, to the unknown.

The colors, the shapes, the feeling of being in darkness without being in darkness, the appearance of light moving—all this is exhilarating.

When the lights go off on the luminous paintings, it would seem that the artist has put light where there is no light; he has created light out of darkness. Anders Knutsson's paintings have a formlessness that defies the materials they're made of because the viewer is witnessing continual change from the moment the lights are turned off.

He talks of his movement into luminosity as "a tremendous opening up of channels of creativity."

"From the beginning, of course, it had to do with light. Light is the source; light is the source of life, of vision. It doesn't have an image. It's a presence. It represents energy from the very original source. Color is a function of light, of course. The colors are revealed by light. Turn off the light and there is no color. So I wanted to go to that closer source and explore that and I felt very good about being able to make color a secondary area of interest. The major focus is light and energy. Even in my own experience as a human being, I can realize a deeper connection, a more original connection to my own being."

In dropping color as his major focus, Anders Knutsson has let go of the physicalness of his art. The former emotional presence and intensity of his work now seems like a passageway to a more spiritual connection with the world around him, to the place where the limitations of form don't exist. All along his drive for purity in his art has taken him closer and closer to this wordless, formless place—what he calls the source, this place of light coming out of darkness, this place of transformation.

Anne Marie Macari is a novelist and freelance writer. She lives in New York.

“Long Painting” – Painting as Transubstantiation

By Lars Nittve

Standing in front of “Long Painting,” this can be said: Rhythm. Color.

The rhythm: totally self-evident, and still does not in a real sense exist. Rhythm has of course a high degree of redundancy; a sequence that forewarns and invisibly expresses what is to come. In rhythm, the next move is always predictable. Yet in “Long Painting” there is nothing predictable. Every stroke with the palette knife is unexpected; the degree of pressure against the surface, its length, its deviation from the plumbline. Still they arrange themselves in a completely obvious rhythm.

The color: one with the rhythm, manifesting its essence. A deep red-violet hue extends and expands out as an extremely pleasurable field, where at the edges, yellow, and not literally but visually, hints of blue resonate. That yellow, as a direct result of the hand’s pressure with the palette knife, is only possible to perceive with sharpened senses, and is seen as hints of underlying paint layers and the canvas texture. That blue hue, like an immaterial sound of the distant sea, floats a fraction of a millimeter over the paint’s wave crests. It moves in front of the viewer’s eyes towards the lower edge of the painting as a swell, unexplained by the markings of the palette knife.

Red, blue and yellow—the colors of the flame of fire. I’m drawn towards an interpretation colored by esoteric mysticism and Christian speculative theology. I see a Trinity:

The absolute dominating: red is Golgotha, the love and the flesh. The Son.

The barely perceivable: yellow is the “law.” God the Father.

And the wave crests: blue is the ever present consciousness, the immaterial.
The Holy Ghost.

This hypothetical and unfounded color symbolism (except in the painting’s suggestive powers) attracts me through its mysteriousness. It becomes an interpretation that daringly balances back to back with the painting’s own mysteriousness: the paradoxical non-existing rhythm. The deep red-violet color. The material, yellow resonance. The blue immaterial vibration. And that intensely physical surface, that in its lust-filled materiality is etched a record of love-making to the paint.

“Long Painting”—the love and the flesh. My idea of color symbolism, perhaps a bit hastily presented, was coming from a profound experience of the painting. The experience of oneness. Of oneness—wholeness—in the painting. And between

me and the painting. I cannot possibly see myself as an observer—rather I am immersed in the perception of the painting: “Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing . . . the world is made of the same stuff as the body. . . . It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings,” wrote Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In his philosophy, with its stress on the immediate, on the roots of consciousness in the body (and not on an artificial, operational thinking), painting is transubstantiation. That I was drawn towards an interpretation of “Long Painting” colored by Christian theology indeed surprised and overpowered me. The world and “I” are one—a painting can never be a copy of something—rather, it has its own life, a living body. Roland Barthes saw this: “. . . in the work of the artist it is the body that is bought in an exchange in which we are obligated to recognize the relationship of prostitution.” By pushing this question to its breaking point, he also made it impossible to equal his literary and visual creativity—painting remained a strictly private act to Barthes.

Are we here sensing, in front of an almost monochrome painting, the answer to the riddle of art: how does a painted surface become art, how does a dead picture become alive?

From “Long Painting’s” pulsating surface/depth, the color appears as the key to the transubstantiation, to the impression of the painting as one with me and other things. “The return to colour has the merit of getting somewhat nearer to ‘the heart of things,’ ” wrote Merleau-Ponty and quoted Cezanne: “Colour is the place where our brain and the universe meet.”

Post Scriptum

I had read through my text, and gone to another room, where “Long Painting” was hanging in the pale winter light. I spent an hour in front of, or maybe more correctly, in the painting. My ability to perceive became more and more sensitive to every nuance. Every stroke with the palette knife became individualized with personal character and posture. At the same time they paradoxically remained a completely natural part of the whole. Except, a bit to the right of the center, approximately two-thirds up on the canvas: a totally different kind of stroke, without any kind of feeling for the whole, without any kind of feeling for convention or seriousness. It made me think of Zen, and its Satori experience. It made me think of the Zen priest who, stopped in the middle of a ceremony, took off one of his sandals, put it on his head and left the room. Is it this crucial stroke with the palette knife that makes the painting “take off”? Next day I searched for that place on the canvas again, but never found it. To my eyes, there was no such totally different kind of track of the palette knife’s march over the canvas. But the painting is formidable.

Lars Nittve lectures at Stockholm University, has contributed to numerous publications on art and writes on art for Svenska Dagbladet, Stockholm.

Luminous Painting

By Anders Knutsson

The following revised essay was first published in Swedish in "Kalejdoskop," a leading Scandinavian art magazine, December 1981.

The cover of this magazine shows one painting; the front is a photo taken in daylight and the back is a photo taken, without a flash, in total darkness. The daylight appearance of the painting is independent of the night appearance and vice versa. Yet they are physically the same painting. These two entities complement and contain each other like the Yin and the Yang, still they are not to be perceived as two sides of the same coin. This metaphor of two separates that are yet one (for example, day and night make a 24-hour period) has never before been possible to express with painterly means.

In this paper, I am examining a new paint material and its possibilities to further the development of art. I call the new material luminous pigments and see it as a substance that will necessitate a change in the paradigm of painting, as for example the introduction of collage or "found objects" did in the early part of this century.

The inclusion of luminous pigments in the vocabulary of painting permits an expansion of its expression, and can, of course, be used in many creative ways, just as Braque, Ernst and Schwitters used collage for their own different purposes.

Tom Bacher's luminous work is, for example, literal and tangible, and at this point involves enormous, dazzling cityscapes that depict the lights of the city as seen from a high vantage point or even from an airplane window. George Vihos' use of luminous pigments focuses on metaphor and transformation. Like the butterfly that changes from earthbound larvae to the beautiful flyer defying gravity, George's watercolors want to "leave the earth".

When I paint in daylight, my interest focuses on a holistic experience of painted color, its emotional content and affect on the viewer. By day, the luminous pigments provide an opportunity to explore a different chromatic range with their off-whites, light greens and yellows, and near-grays. They evoke a delicate, airy translucency and bring more pure reflected light into the painting.

Yet the most spectacular and exciting issue to me is to see, by night, colored light radiate out from the paint itself. This opens up a whole new interpretation and expression of light in painting, for it deals with emitted light from paint, rather than reflected light from the paint surface. Painters have been fascinated by light for centuries. It defines and reveals the world of things and materials around us through our visual system. Furthermore, light has been used in painting to suggest the existence of another force, a non-material world, an inner reality we all know exists and whose presence is of vital importance to painting as art,

regardless of style and time. Something particular was meant to be conveyed by those halos and auras around a saint, the beaming lights from heaven or an angel's hands, De LaTour's candlelight reflections, Vermeer's daylight tonalities, Rembrandt's dramatic lighting, the transparent skies of the Hudson River School, the form-dissolving sunlight of the Impressionists and Mark Rothko's vibrating colorfields. I see luminous painting as a powerful and direct manifestation of this universal force of light and energy. The pigments soak up light, store it, and emit it, all at the same time. To a keen eye the luminous glow even can be seen in daylight or artificial light, but its full force and magic are best seen in total darkness.

Another fascinating and important aspect of luminous pigments for me is that they provide a very observable relationship with time. As the absorbed light radiates out into the room, its intensity as well as its color changes. Different colors have a different rate of light emission; after 10-20 minutes the intensity of the color has disappeared and a cool, dim light remains as a presence for many hours. The passage of time in the painting is real and direct, a unique occurrence having no parallel in traditional painting. For me it provides an opportunity to experience my own visual perception in a time-continuum. Color can be understood as an emotional interpretation of nature, therefore these transitions of color and light can also be experienced as emotional transitions. To experience emotional transitions and visual perceptions in this way is to observe one's consciousness.

Related to this is the third characteristic. When the light is turned off, both the rods and the cones of the eyes' light-sensitive cells are in full function. As the intensity of light in painting fades, the cones, which are only sensitive to strong light, cease to function and the nightseeing rods, which are not sensitive to color at all, take over. However, the rods, due to their placement on the retina, cannot focus sharply, and so instead we experience indirect vision only. Darkness blanks out, erases everything that otherwise interferes with the viewing.

There are also psychological ramifications to seeing the painting while in a darkened room. Some people are excited by the dark, some are frightened, some are surprised. This is related to painting because it affects our perception and vision. To me it is relaxing, soothing, there is a different orientation of space and body awareness, a heightened sense of self.

Art is an amalgam of conquering new territory, breaking down the fences, the old rules, while incorporating the historical foundation. Contemporary art is studded with such examples: Kandinsky's first abstractions, Duchamp's urinal, Jackson Pollock's all-over paintings, each one changing the paradigm of art. Luminous painting is part of this tradition of questioning established definitions in order to expand our visual world and to experience our physical and spiritual selves.