

**The Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Doctoral School**

**Pictorial Narrative in the Fine Arts  
Theses of a DLA Dissertation**

**László László Révész**

2010

Supervisor: Zoltán Tölg-Molnár, painter, retired professor emeritus  
Consultant: Bora Gábor, esthetician

## A General Outline of My Dissertation

My dissertation pertains to the cultural and “unconscious” role of the narrative artist.

In the course of my own artistic activity and, for a long time, rather spontaneous research related to it (a study, in my opinion, of the most exciting artistic occurrences of both past and present; a consideration of artistic views and declarations, including my own experiences with the creation of art over the years and to present day), I have become more and more impressed with the need (or, better said, *compulsion*) to take a more analytic look at narrative art.

In other words, my attempt is to distinguish, determine, and describe in greater detail the unconscious phases of creation, especially that of the pictorial narrative. This narrative receives its inspiration from somewhere no matter how everyday its themes. A study of these unconscious phases provide us with a certain kind of information and in no way serve to either cancel out or replace the phases themselves.

Before writing this dissertation, I took the opportunity to apply the themes outlined here to the works I describe therein, and based on the questions that arose, was able to do more pointed research. My topic, then, is not a psychological study of the creative mind and wants nothing to do with such academic debates.

### 1.

I attempt to make a case for the fact that narrative art is a genre in itself by showing works of art which represent certain genres (albeit a limited number of them – ones pertaining to the theme of my study). The visually narrative genres which I do consider to be of particular interest here are those narratives which do not involve the use of montage (a cinematic device) – in other words, those which do not make use of film-like sequences but rather describe everything in “one picture”.

### 2.

The creative process of the narrative artist can be divided into two main phases:

*A.)* The crystallization of the event in the memory of the narrator (something which goes beyond the narrator’s mere desire to communicate a story, and points to a system, a function apart from that).

*B.)* The reductive process (mostly involuntary in nature) involving dimensional changes that goes on in the pictorial narrator’s mind. It is this process that affects the way that the narrator is able to dimensionally redefine what he has seen.

### 3. [the *A.*) phase]

It seems to me that in addition to the consciously recognized techniques and the generally-used intuitive methods known to other artists, the pictorial narrator is privy to another process as well -- an unconscious storing of information which manifests itself throughout the creative process.

This “storage system” works to store up information that will be useful to the artist at some future time and not on a conscious level. In other words, it doesn’t work directly in conjunction with the narrator’s wish to remember something that he will paint immediately but, on the contrary, makes the “judgment” that the storing of such information will become useful at some later date in time.

The memory’s decision to store or dismiss certain information (that is to say, a collection of information based on the artist’s interests) is spurred on by impulses stemming from the artist’s body. These impulses depend on the particular type of work in question – for instance impulses that are triggered by the dance-like movements of the artist’s hand and consequently deposited in that place where the other components of the painting are being formed. A painter’s memory functions similar to that of a mime’s, a dancer’s or an actor’s. This may be the reason why visual artists are often incapable of putting their creative experience into that logical language so common of articles and reviews of the visual arts. I also felt compelled to turn to theater aesthetics for insights and turn around and use these for the visual arts. I’m speaking especially of that aspect of the dramatic discipline that could address many of the fine art world’s problems – something which I (with my background in performance art) am eager to see happen.

#### 4. [the *B.*] phase]

The pictorial narrator’s role is not to interpret the spectacle or picture. A part of his work depends on relaying to the audience the experience, the story that he’s swallowed and digested.

In that area of the visual arts that my dissertation is concerned with, the work of art always brings the spectacle to the spectator: the viewer. We can compare this with that other mechanism found in art in which the *work sucks the viewer into* its own world.

In the first situation, the viewer has the option to relate, to live the event they see in front of them. But they also have the option of turning their backs on the picture without even really rejecting it.

For this 2-fold state to exist, the narrator must come up with a structure that is capable of being both reductive (in other words, to be abstract and conceptual) but also to suggest something.

This 2-fold structure comes only as the result of a very complex process in which, on the one hand, things must be simplified and reduced and, on the other, there are layers of expression. In my dissertation, I describe this process as consisting of a series of pseudo phases, some of which contain the entire process in themselves.

A very significant part of the creative process I describe involves unconscious procedures which use well-defined theories such as game and chaos theories, light and anatomical concepts as their base, and introduce elements and connecting elements into its unconscious levels.