

The Comares Hall in the Alhambra; *Space that Sees* by James Turrell, the Israel Museum

Two Works, Two Worlds and One Theorem: Perception is the Medium

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Abstract

I propose a comparative study of two architectural works in the light of the contemporary trend of the transcultural knowledge in artistic studies. It precisely concerns two buildings topologically and aesthetically similar but radically distinct by their spatial, temporal and cultural affiliation: the reception hall inside the Comares Tower of the fourteenth-century palace in the Alhambra; and a squared construction erected in 1992 by the Californian artist James Turrell in the garden of sculptures of the Israel Museum, in Jerusalem. Both architectures form a bastion-shaped structure dominating the landscape that shelters a room entirely designed with geometrical patterns and displaying an aesthetic emphasis on the ceiling that models the edifice in a cosmic fiction. Similarly organized on the basis of the earthly and the celestial orders, they impose themselves as two versions of the same architectural scheme dedicated to existential meditation through the concrete path of a high intelligibility of the physical consistency of the world; a perceptual path entirely mapped out in the evidence of artistic geometry. We may even say that Turrell's cube constitutes a contemporary and secular version of the Nasrid square building, somehow a radically minimalist epitome of it. Islamic or secular, medieval or contemporary, in both cases perception is the medium, for geometry addresses perception *per se*, without interference, putting the viewer in the tightest proximity with pure matter and beyond, pure ideality.

This study will illustrate the idea suggested but never developed by Oleg Grabar: "it is possible that the information provided by procedures in the Islamic world would not exhibit significant differences from procedures used elsewhere". More accurately, it will reveal the two constructions through their fundamental character of universality, as opposed to ethnic, national or religious differentiation, e.g. what they share as aesthetic phenomenology, beyond all cultural determinism, in the very sphere of the absolute existence of the being-object that transcends time and space. Therefore, the building necessarily pits itself, in aesthetic terms, against objects of the same type made in other periods and contexts of civilization: "the object in the connection of objects", to borrow Edmund Husserl's phenomenological notion. Hence, by confronting the phenomenology of their respective visual proposition and the aesthetic experience they imply, one eventually penetrates the essential nature of these works, i.e. the nature of the thing itself that, allied or accomplice of all the other similar attempts of expression, is inscribed in the global web of works of the same type.

This project illustrates a new method of understanding Islamic art and architecture that uses the contemporary tools of philosophy, criticism and theory of art, and that therefore may bring a useful contribution to the Seventeenth Annual Middle East History and Theory Conference at the University of Chicago.

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Irrelevant or fanciful as it may seem at first place, to compare a medieval Islamic architecture with a twentieth-century Western work of art illustrates the contemporary trend of transcultural knowledge in the field of artistic studies. The comparison concerns the reception hall inside the Comares Tower of built in 1370 by Yusuf I in the Alhambra, in Granada; and a squared construction erected in 1992 by the contemporary Californian artist James Turrell (born in 1943) in the garden of sculptures of the Israel Museum, in Jerusalem. This type of study must be placed within the epistemological context of what Oleg Grabar calls “the mythology about globalization”ⁱ, a concept that he defines as following. In its positive aspect or “its ideal version” globalization is a “technology of awareness and recognition which would make all cultures and all knowledge accessible with the same intensity to all institutions and individuals”ⁱⁱ. A significant example of this new transcultural approach of art must be cited. In Basel, in September 2001, the exhibition “Ornament and Abstraction” at the Beyeler Foundation purposely displayed side by side pieces of Western art from the twentieth century and so called “decorative works” from other civilizations and timesⁱⁱⁱ. It included sets such as a Pre-Columbian carpet combined with a painting of Jasper Johns and, more relevant for our topic, a wooden door from Morocco sculpted in 1690 shown with a canvas of Mark Rothko painted in 1968, and an Islamic mosaic of ceramic compared with an abstract picture of Piet Mondrian.

The present paper aims at standing up this peculiar approach of artistic creation through its fundamental character of universality, as opposed to ethnic, national or religious differentiation. If one considers the work of art an “effective reality”^{iv} instead of a historical production, one situates it in the very sphere of its absolute existence that transcends time and space^v. Therefore, the work of art necessarily pits itself, in aesthetic terms, against objects of the same type made in other periods and contexts of civilization: “the object in the connection of objects”^{vi}. Hence, by confronting the phenomenology of their respective visual proposition and the aesthetic experience they imply, the objective is to grasp the essential common nature of *Space that Sees* and the Comares Hall.

To begin with, a cluster of constitutive analogies justifies in itself a parallel between the two works. Both of them form a bastion-shaped structure on the top of a heights site dominating the landscape in such fashion it imposes its presence in the surroundings and immediately captures the gaze. This structure shelters a squared room, entirely designed with geometrical patterns and displaying an aesthetic emphasis on the ceiling that molds it in a cosmic fiction such as it puts the visitor in a cosmic situation. To recall briefly the composition of the Comares hall (also called “Hall of the Ambassadors”) in the Alhambra, it is located inside the massive brick tower designated under the same name. One enters, passing by the Court of the Myrtles, the vast chamber

crowned by a wooden dome. The semantic articulation of the visual configuration focused on the starry patterned vault with an epigraphy dedicated to cosmological themes of poetic and Koranic order, transforms the hall in an aesthetic cosmogony.

Analogously, the American artist's construction consists of a place of stargazing and meditation on both the physics and metaphysics of the universe. But less known from the historians of Islamic art, Turrell's work requires a presentation^{vii}.

Space that Sees

Space that Sees consists of a monumental and minimalist half-cube made of stone and concrete masonry with blinds facades, standing in the middle of a graveled ground. Inside, the space appears like a huge hollow geometrical figure formed by the inclined unadorned walls, solely covered at half height with tiles of ocher marble and marked all along the bottom by the strict linearity of a bench. This geometry of the void resulting from skillful effects of pure profiles, impeccable directive lines and uniform surfaces, reaches its aesthetic peak at the level of the open ceiling. In the latter, the aperture draws a sharply outlined square through which the spectator can contemplate the heavens. All natural "pictures" of the firmament shaped by atmospheric phenomena, cloudy or sunny sky, starry night, etc., succeed one another within the limits of this empty square. Hence the puzzling title given by Turrell to his work that actually plays a crucial role in the semantic of the building.

Like in the Comares Hall, the linguistic element takes entirely part of the aesthetic system of the cubic edifice and seemingly uses the particular rhetorical game based on the quasi personification of the artistic object. Likewise the decorative poems provide some of the features of the Moorish architecture with the aesthetic ability of speaking, for instance the "talking" cupolas above the niches, the title provides Turrell's work with the aesthetic ability of seeing. We might say that all as the latter is a "space that sees", the former is a "space that talks", the one playing with the power of sight, the other with the power of the word.

Equally one may observe a certain resembling in the general disposition of each unit within its surroundings. Nearby *Space that Sees*, is to be found a sculpture entitled *Sky Pool*, made in 1987 by the Israeli artist Israel Hadany (born in 1941). This sculpture forms a wide mirror of water whose ground displays a set of huge tiles of black steel, resting upon a basis of piled rocs. The sky reflects on this dark pool that undoubtedly recalls that of the Court of the Myrtles before the Comares Tower, seemingly playing with the mirrored image of the firmament on its ample and black watery surface. As a result, the binary combination of the cubic building and the pool in the garden of the Israel Museum strikingly echoes the configuration of the palace of Yusuf I in the Alhambra. Of course it is not that the arrangement of the two contemporary pieces, purposely juxtaposed, was conceived in order to evoke the Nasrid site. But apart from any intended correlation, this likeness of structure undoubtedly shows that the same intrinsic logic of meaning subtends each artistic set as fictive or imaginative cosmogony.

The similarity of morphology and typology between these arrangements brings another formal evidence allowing to back up the idea that they are correlated creations, analogous scenic frames for the occurrence of analogous aesthetic events. As this

descriptive presentation clearly shows, the configuration of both buildings is conceived in order to set the spectator in an intimate relationship with the universe in all the dimension of its mystery and fascinating beauty. To quote an expression of Gaston Bachelard particularly appropriate to these works, they constitute “an instrument with which to confront the cosmos”^{viii}, but not in the way of an observatory whose purpose consists in an objective and logic comprehension of the physical world. Instead, they compose an absolute fiction that generates a subliming and projective perception of the universe by means of the amazement of the senses: an amazement of the senses that positively occurs while entering the two concerned architectures.

In axiomatic terms, to retake the subtitle of an essay on James Turrell by the French critic Jacques Meuris, “perception is the medium”^{ix} in the aesthetic system of the two constructions. This means that this aesthetic theorem concerning the American artist’s works equally applies to the Comares Hall that in a comparable way yields to imagine and to think the world through the artistic path of visual suggestion^x.

Perception is the medium

The expression “perceptual architectures” used by art critics to define James Turrell’s monumental installations^{xi} perfectly suits the Comares Hall. Indeed, the phenomenology of perception, naturally engaged in all aesthetic objects, constitutes in these particular cases the very motor of the signifying system of the work. That is to say that this amazement of the senses one undoubtedly feels within the sites of Granada and Jerusalem, constitutes the catalyser of the work’s meaning.

In theory, perception as medium means that the body constitutes the designated receptacle of the multiple cognitions of the art piece, the space of inscription of the artistic project it carries out. Not of course that the concerned perceptual constructions are entertaining frames designed for the plain sensorial pleasure. But their cognitive system makes no separation between body and spirit, between perception and comprehension, insofar as it does not address exclusively the mind as independent or primordial receiver of the architecture’s significances. Instead it addresses the body in its wholeness in the phenomenological sense, namely the body that is the original place of awakening of the consciousness in which the being-relationship to the world originally builds itself upon the ground of perceptive knowledge. This pre-logic knowledge^{xii} does not result solely from the grasp of things by the senses, but from the resonance and repercussions it produces in all the fields of subjectivity, emotional, psychic, intuitive and so on. It is within this space of subjectivity inhabited by the dreaming, symbolic and imaginative consciousness associated to the soul^{xiii}, “the wild region” (“*la région sauvage*”) where “fantasy is possible”^{xiv}, place of projection, interpretation and transformation of the real, that the cognitions of the two buildings gather and operate.

Thus, to pose perception, and not the mobilization of the intellectual forces, in the very heart of the relationship between the object and the user constitutes the principle that guided the initial conceptualization of the two constructions and the theorem that determines their aesthetic language. Then, what renders this theorem operational in the concrete reality of the work is the so called by Husserl “mode of appearing” of the

object^{xv}. In visual arts, there exist basically two distinct modes of appearing or presentation: representation and suggestion that correspond to the formal terms of figuration^{xvi} and abstraction. But of the two modes only one, suggestion, enlivens the relationship between the work and the spectator with the optimal power of the perceptual dynamic.

In aesthetics whose mode of appearing is representation, creation and perception are two distinct and distanced acts, realized by two distinct agents, the conceiver(s) and the receptor. Borrowing Ludwig Wittgenstein's postulate in his *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, "The picture is a fact"^{xvii}, e.g. any kind of picture or representation is a fact that one has to grasp. As a result, the viewer does not truly participate to the aesthetic functioning of the representational work of art; he has firstly to be aware of it and then to enjoy it. Inasmuch the various perceptive operations do not mediate in the elaboration of the work's significances, perception is the path but not the medium. Unlike suggestion that shapes an aesthetics of subjectivist orientation considering the experience of the work of art as an individual state or attitude and so involving the overlapping of both the creative and perceptive processes in a relationship of reciprocal determination. As Turrell confirms himself, "the work has the reality given to it by the person looking at it"^{xviii}.

In formal terms, an art of suggestion that places the cognitive relationship between the work and the viewer at the primal sensitive level results in the loss of the theme, the subject (*le sujet de l'art*) to the benefit of the principle of pure form and space. This plastic expression by pure forms that links the spectator to the very matter of the world and its lucid order is obviously geometrical abstraction that indeed constitutes the mode of appearing of both *Space that Sees* and the Comares Hall. For only geometry, regulating force of the realm of forms, this corporeal truth that Paul Cézanne was trying to reveal in his paintings, enables to convoke pure perception and to makes sense through it, e.g., following Turrell's enterprise, "Sensing the Sensual/Sensing Sensual"^{xix}. Such is the aesthetic purpose of the theorem "perception is the medium and geometrical abstraction supplies the mode of its realization in the materiality of the two buildings.

Geometrical Abstraction as mode of appearing

In their geometrical mode of appearing, similarly founded on the universal binary structure of the two opposed orders, the earthly and the celestial, the Comares Hall and *Space that Sees* impose themselves as two symmetrical constructions. More precisely, they are two versions of the same architectural scheme dedicated to existential meditation through the concrete path of a high intelligibility of the physical consistency of the world; a clear, firm and free path entirely mapped out in the evidence of geometry. We may even say that Turrell's cube constitutes a contemporary and secular version of the Nasrid building, somehow a minimalist epitome of it. Composing a perfect duality, both constructions are radical objects characterized by a radical geometry which nevertheless relies on two antithetic schemes regarding their interior: the one displays "maximalist" geometrical forms (the Alhambra), the other minimalist geometrical forms (the American work). A constructive distinction that does not dislocate the tiny aesthetic articulation that joins them together, but that in return enhances, by a complementary contrast, their

conceptual similitude. Islamic or contemporary, in both architectures, geometry addresses perception *per se*, without any other visual interference

At first place, seen from the outdoors, the two constructions present the same founding architectural characters. Due to the plain appearance of a monochromatic quadrangular volume exempt from all decorative emphasis, they display the tangible reality of a strong geometrical object, firmly anchored upon the ground. Therefore they emanate the very rational solidity of a physical body in perfect adhesion with the earth that confers on them all the qualities of pure concreteness. Thanks to this aspect of elementary materiality, in each site the edifice fully matches the external surroundings as integral part of it. The building constitutes almost an extension of the landscape, bound to it by this organic link of geometry that organizes things in their connection with other things beyond their chaotic appearance. The whole composition landscape/architecture forms what Cezanne demonstrated in his art, namely a quasi-mathematical composition of masses, lines, cubes, spheres and cones under the envelope of disordered external shapes. In this sense, it offers a view that one might describe with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's words while evoking the French artist's paintings: "pure forms having the solidity of what could be defined by an internal law of construction, forms which taken together, as traces or cross-sections of the thing, let it appear between them like a face in the reeds."^{xx}

The references to elements of nature that complete the sites of Granada and Jerusalem (vegetation, stones, watery plans, etc.) reinforce this character of earthly space that makes each concerned building more than an architecture in the classical sense, a true "work-place" (*une oeuvre-lieu*) in the physical/geographical sense, a fixed and stable *locus* inscribed in the geometrical harmony of worldly things.

Then, to the sill of the doorway that lets the visitor catch a sight inward, the forces of extraversion of the construction's outdoors come into interplay with the opposed forces of introversion of the room's space that open unto the perspective of the contrary experience of the inside. The external aspect of fortress given off by the heavy geometrical mass reinforces and even emphasizes this double physics of extraversion and introversion and open and close, naturally involved in any architecture. Thereby the geometric envelope provides the ultimate stage of the experience inwards with all the dramatic dimension of a *dénouement* and the revealing dynamic of an epiphany.

The experience of this double physics and double phenomenology of the outside and the inside naturally rests upon the crucial act of entering the architecture that constitutes the very releasing element of the dialectic articulation between the outer and inner spaces with all their power of ontological determination. In the Nasrid palace as well as in the Israel Museum, the access to the room goes through intermediary features that transform the crossing of the doorway into a soft and progressive break between the exterior and the interior. As a result, the room these buildings enclose becomes a disconnected world, a place of isolation and introversion like a secret chamber, almost a sanctuary. This disposition in a sense "ritualizes" the determining act of entering.

A portico and an antichamber, called La Sala de la Barca (the Room of the Blessing), separate the Court of the Myrtles from the Comares Hall whose precious

decoration of the axial portal, in a scenic effect of sequential unveiling the succession of spaces, underlines both the functional and rhetorical importance of this part of the edifice^{xxi}. Under the enfilade of arches worked in stucco as hanging fine draperies, the progression inward takes the tone of solemnity of a sacramental act, that of going through from a graspable world to an unimaginable one.

In *Space that Sees*, this process of “ritualization” is realized by, not of course a dazzling decoration since it concerns minimalist aesthetics, but a sharply profiled perspective of a tiny corridor with no door that discloses the room’s background as bare, blind and neutral as the façade. Somewhat like in the disquieting architectures of Lewis Carroll in *Alice’s Adventures in the Wonderland*, this puzzling corridor appears as a tunnel that is a strong visual appeal to go towards the unknown, a mute, irresistible and almost threatening invitation to quit the rational and clear order of the outdoors for an uncanny inner adventure. In the silence of this implacable geometry made of a balance between a quasi-oppressive solidness and a quasi-disturbing emptiness, the mystery of the construction remains well kept. To be revealed, it requires the daring move inward, through the odd corridor.

Once the visitor dares to enter the Comares hall and *Space that Sees*, the dénouement occurs, namely the astonishing vision of the inside. The chamber forms quite another physics, another geometry of strictly utopian order that, disconnected from the outer site as particular geographical locus, determines an ontology of pure fiction dealing with the universal. From mere form inscribed in a configuration designed by the contingent geometry of the real world and following its natural order, indoors the architecture becomes a pure utopia born from geometrical imagination, conceptualized by geometrical reason and exclusively shaped by geometrical materiality.

Whether it plays with the impact of the cumulative (Alhambra) or, at the opposite, the impact of the reductive (Turrell’s work), in both buildings the room constitutes a creation of geometry at the highest degree of sophistication, displaying all the perfection, excellence and rigorousness of what A. Chevrillon called “the ethics of crystal”^{xxii} regarding the impeccability of geometrical forms. Solidity of the square, sharp edges and strict linear divisions draw the limits of a perfect finiteness, without the less defect or accident. Conceived according to the principle of the more, geometrical filling and richness of textures and colors, or the principle of the less, geometrical hollowing out and expurgating through sober materials and tones, the one like the other are absolute spaces that embody mathematical idealities. Spectacle and receptacle of the corporeal-theoretical truth of geometry, these constructions are places of transcendence that Michel Serres would thus describe: “this virginal space, already homogeneous and isotropic, so measurable, becomes abstract for all was subtracted or removed from it, all was snatch or eradicated from it, yes, extracted. No more obstacle, all goes through it.”^{xxiii} Accordingly, we are no longer in Granada or Jerusalem but in the construction of a universal, a space like our world, microcosmic^{xxiv}.

This double change of dimension from the particular to the universal and from the real to the imaginary rests upon a physics of centrality whose spatial properties enable to cosmize, e.g. to render visible in the clearest architectural terms the metaphysical postulate of the microcosm correlative to the macrocosm. Indeed, folding up on its

nucleus contained in the concentrating figure of the square, the room poses the two constructions as center. By enacting the ontological determination of a world by its center, the architectural structure duplicates the universal topology defined by the *omphalos*. For “every universe- Bachelard says- is concentrated in a nucleus, a spore, in a dynamized center”^{xxv}. This peculiar centered configuration generates a dynamic of spatial and directional tensions that models the building into a cosmic morphology for the constitution of an imaginary cosmogony in which the constitutive dualities of the architecture embody those of the worldly physics.

Thus, contained and retained within the heavy cube formed by thick imposing walls, the powerful centrality of the two buildings necessarily appeals to elevation in an upright tension. In this way, it creates a polarity from the bottom to the top that points at the celestial horizon and stretches toward the infinite skies. This polarity forms an aerial axis of verticality that crosses that of the horizontality marked on the ground by the solid foundation of the cube, strikingly opposing the weight of the earth to the lightness of the airs. The crossing of these two axis of fundamental ontology, verticality and horizontality, that founds the directional lines of both construction’s geometry, mirrors in the architecture the basic organization of the universe in the two complementary spheres of the earth and the heavens. Accordingly, the binary architectural structure of the floor and the ceiling and the lower and upper sections of the walls becomes the metaphorical place of the natural topology of the earthly and celestial plans whose metaphorical embodiment is of course the highly qualitative space of the ceiling.

As a result regarding both works, the invisible schemes and tensions that compose the geometrical order of the Great Nature find some form of translation in these two cosmogonies of fiction where a sort of mysterious path, of Jacob’s ladder puts the earth and the skies in communication. Strongly earthly being rooted in the ground, the cosmographic room virtually or really registers the appeals of an aerial world, that of the heavens. “Here, as elsewhere, life is energetic at its summit”^{xxvi} and on it depends the whole perceptual experience of the inside. To conclude we will add that the two works redefine the function of living the architecture through the body, absorbed in its activity of seeing, under the sign of ascension: “a phenomenology of the sacred” for a place that undoubtedly has something of a sanctuary.

ⁱ I am referring to the paper entitled “What Should One Know About Islamic Art” that Oleg Grabar gave in the symposium “Exploring the Frontiers of Islamic Art and Architecture”, May 19-20 2001, organized by The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT.

ⁱⁱ I thank Oleg Grabar for having kindly provided me with the text of his paper from which I quote his own words. For the proceedings of the symposium are not yet published while I am writing this article.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the catalogue of the exhibition, *Ornament and Abstraction, The Dialogue between non-Western, Modern and Contemporary Art*, Fondation Beyeler, Edited by Markus Brudnerlin, Dumont, 2001. See also the article written about this event by Harry Bellet, “Les noces crapuleuses entre l’abstraction et l’ornement”, in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, Sunday 2 – Monday 3 September 2001, p. 21. A passage of the article says: “Au fond, et toutes proportions gardées, cette exposition est aussi importante que celle de William Rubin consacra autrefois aux rapports entre primitivisme et art moderne. Elle aussi établit des ponts. Parfois la portée en est trop longue, et le tablier en devient branlant. Qu’importe, elle était nécessaire.”

^{iv} Phenomenological concept developed by Edmund Husserl in “Phénoménologie de la conscience esthétique”, text extracted from the *Husserliana*, XXIII, 15, p. 386-392, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, translated from German into French by Marc Richir, in *Revue d’esthétique, Esthétique et Phénoménologie*, Editions Jean-Michel Place, Paris, 36, 1999, p. 9-13. In particular, Husserl defines this concept in p. 10.

^v The phenomenologist Roman Ingarden was practicing a “historical reduction” that he considered one of the conditions enabling to reach the “things themselves”. Cited by Leszek Brogowski, “La détermination, l’indéterminé, une surdétermination, Réflexions sur une ontologie de l’œuvre d’art à partir de Roman Ingarden”, in *Esthétique et Phénoménologie*, p. 59.

^{vi} Edmund Husserl in *Revue d’esthétique*, p. 11. See also Roman Ingarden’s conception of the “things themselves”, cited above.

^{vii} Here are few references about the artist: Craig Adcock, *James Turrell. The Art of Light and Space*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1990; Oliver Wick, Jost Kippendorf, James Turrell, James Turrell/Long Green, Turske & Turske, Zurich, 1990; Peter Blum, *Mapping Spaces*, New York, 1987; Jacques Meuris, *James Turrell, La perception est le médium*, Editions La Lettre Volée, Brussels, 1995; *James Turrell, BeauxArts Magazine*, Paris Musées, Paris, numéro hors-série, 1999.

^{viii} Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p.46.

^{ix} Jacques Meuris, *James Turrell, La perception est le médium*, La Lettre volée, Brussels, 1995.

^x See again my analysis in *Beauty and Islam*, Chapter 3.

^{xi} See Guy Tortosa, “Une architecture de la perception”, in *James Turrell, BeauxArts Magazine*, p. 7-19.

^{xii} The pre-logic or pre-objective is a Husserlian pattern that Maurice Merleau-Ponty applied in the field of art in *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris, Gallimard, 1945, then in *Le Visible et l’Invisible, suivi de notes de travail*, Edition Claude Lefort, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, and in his last book, with the example of Cézanne’s paintings, *L’œil et l’Esprit*, Paris, Gallimard, 1964. Merleau-Ponty analyses in these works the phenomenon of primal knowledge through the corporeal contact with the world that he calls “*le flux concret*”, “the concrete flow”. On this subject, see the article of Daniel Payot, “Un fond de nature inhumaine, De l’origine des images”, in *Esthétique et phénoménologie*, p. 95-106.

^{xiii} The consciousness associated to the soul opposes the consciousness associated to the spirit or the mind, the one being active for example in the phenomena of dreaming or so called by Husserl “*phantasia*”, the other being active in those of pure thinking: see Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Introduction, p. xvi; Marc Richir, “Commentaire de *Phénoménologie de la conscience esthétique*” in *Esthétique et phénoménologie*, p. 15-23; J. H. Van Den Berg, *The Phenomenological Approach in Psychology. An Introduction to Recent Phenomenological Psycho-pathology*, Charles C. Thomas Edition, Springfield, Illinois, 1955.

^{xiv} See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l’Invisible, suivi de notes de travail*. This author is also cited by Sebastien Pluot who comments Turrell’s work *Hi-Test*, in *James Turrell, BeauxArts Magazine*, p. 40.

^{xv} See Edmund Husserl, « Phénoménologie de la conscience esthétique », in *Revue d’esthétique*, p. 9-11. He says for instance: “The aesthetic reckoning is essentially in connection with the difference between consciousness of an object in general and mode of appearing of the object. Any object, as it is conscious, is conscious in a mode of appearing and it is only the mode of appearing that determines an aesthetic relationship”, p. 10. « The appearing is appearing of the object, the object is object in the appearing.” p. 11. See also in *The Essential Husserl, Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*, edited by Donn Welton, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1999, “V. The Question of Evidence”, p.113-117.

^{xvi} This term must be understood here in its generic sense and so includes symbols and signs as representational images or figures.

^{xvii} Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, English translation by C.K. Ogden, Dover Publications, New York, 1999, 2. 141, p.33.

^{xviii} Excerpt from an interview of the artist by Suzanne Pagé at the Musée d’art moderne in Paris, in 1983, in *James Turrell, BeauxArts Magazine*, p. 44.

^{xix} Turrell quoted by Jacques Meuris in *La perception est le médium*, p. 19.

^{xx} M. Merleau-Ponty analysing Cézanne’s painted landscapes in, *L’œil et l’Esprit*, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p. 66 : «Des formes pures qui ont la solidité de ce qui peut être défini par une loi de construction interne, et qui, toutes ensemble, traces ou coupes de la chose, la laissent apparaître entre elles comme un visage entre

les roseaux. » English translation by Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Philosophy and Painting, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1993, “eye and Mind”, p.140.

^{xxi} Here we must recall that the antichamber and the reception hall were separately built by two different Nasrid sultans so that the existing set was not initially conceptualized as a whole. The Comares Tower and the Sala de la Barca were erected at different periods during the Nasrid reign. The former was built in 1310 by Yusuf I, whereas the latter was built later in the fourteenth century by Muhammad V who, in other respects, completed the reception room. Nevertheless, certainly the original arrangement was also stressing upon the fundamental rhetorical role of the portal by some peculiar spatial feature, given the essential use of the architectural unit as throne hall. Moreover, we must imagine another important pattern in the entrance’s configuration, not of architectural order but of human order: the Nasrid royal habits required dressed up soldiers of the sultan’s guard standing at each side of the entrance that rhetorically were as magnifying as the ornamentation and architectural arrangement themselves.

^{xxii} A. Chevrillon, *Pensée de Ruskin*, Paris, 1922, p.130.

^{xxiii} Michel Serres, *Les origines de la géométrie*, p. 52.

^{xxiv} Of course this universal is religiously conceived in the Alhambra and secularly conceived in *Space that Sees*, but what matters here is the cosmological principle of correlation between macrocosm and microcosm.

^{xxv} Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 157.

^{xxvi} Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 109.