

Round - Rounded Off
Oval (between oval and round)
About notation

Round, becoming rounder from lower left towards upper right, even forming the segment of a circle at one section. The round becomes rounder and rounder, if one concentrates solely on its shape whilst blinking at it. Looking at the round shape normally, we discover that its contour isn't evenly smooth and sharp, like we are accustomed to, for example, with the letter 'O'. There is no section of the round with a perfectly sharp outline. The contour is far from being so well-defined, it is blunt, roughened, enlarged and coarsened. Sometimes there is more than one contour: they overlap in certain places, and can change from black into a dark, lightly washed-out greyish colour, which is made possible and is emphasized by the dominant black of the inner shape.

Even the inner shape itself is not uniformly black, which is what one might expect from a printed form. So it dawns on us that, as with the contours, monotony has been avoided on purpose: through the slightest changes in colour, diversity and joy permeate the black, which, in turn, determinates the shape.

I have to mention the size of the shape. If the round covers the paper half way and then almost completely (and so on), the viewer's perception and also the medium itself could undergo emotional changes. The reading of the shape will change according to the direction of the round – sometimes the round might be slightly shifted, sometimes tending towards oval.

I am using the word "reading" on purpose, because a printed round, like the one I previously described, usually fits into the context of fine art, and is perceived as a work of abstract, or more precisely, concrete art. Perhaps one may perceive the round in a completely neutral way, which I would personally prefer.

But for once, let's put the traditional ways of observation aside, and let's see/imagine these round shapes as variable signs, which can be decoded and read: not like words of a known language, but rather like signs of a foreign alphabet, or an unfamiliar musical notation, which is specialized in discovering a shape's boundary, translating variations of colour and deviations from a given standard into a language and transforming them afterwards into sounds/music, which, again, equals translating them into a musical language. – This language needs to be learned anew.

While studying this language, one will discover that its rules, its grammar, even its vocabulary can't be interpreted precisely. We might find a remote similarity to Japanese, a language that – unlike German – offers different options of understanding. To quote a metaphor from that culture: this language resembles a full moon, which forms a round, foggy, blurred halo around itself, when a typhoon approaches.

To return to the shapes. I imagine, for example, sixty 30x40 cm framed prints fixed, in random order, on a neutral white wall, all on Korean paper, depicting round oval black shapes with only slight differences in colour intensity. Some shapes show certain similarities, some prints are identical, they are the same but for slight shifts upwards or sideways. Then there are exceptions, shapes not fitting into any pattern and, therefore, attracting attention. They determine the structure of the score (which is the term I am now using for the rows of prints), they are simply strong words and, speaking in terms of music notation, they are something like the second voice of a musical text. Transferred to the piano keyboard, they are the loud, but all the more sensitive low-pitched sounds.

The score leaves a great deal of freedom of interpretation, which involves even more responsibility in keeping to the text during the musical transposition. Thus, each performance acquires a new and fresh execution, which does not deny its origin in a score not fixed by conventional means.

A round, which is almost black, and which moves slightly from the left towards the right,

and which, in addition, like the Japanese moon, has a slightly foggy contour, just sounds different from – concert-pitch.

Julius, March 2005 (translated by Valentina Maffucci)