

The background features a dark, almost black, space filled with vibrant green and blue light. A prominent, glowing blue wave-like shape curves across the center, intersected by a sharp, bright green diagonal line. Numerous small, glowing blue and green dots are scattered throughout, some appearing to be part of a larger, faint grid or pattern. The overall effect is ethereal and futuristic, suggesting a connection between light and sound.

COLOUR
MUSIC



John Aslanidis studied musical theory and jazz fundamentals at the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney before deciding to specialise as a painter. He continues to play saxophone and guitar and these experiences have contributed to the development of compositional sound structures that propel his artwork into vibration. Transposing a set of mathematical intervals (derived from an early figurative painting) into algorithmic anchor points, Aslanidis develops improvised sonic compositions over time.

Aslanidis states that his “paintings occupy a space which exists between vision and sound, a perceptual approach to abstraction with conceptual underpinnings.”¹⁰⁴ This echoes František Kupka’s quest for a synaesthetic union, when he said: “I believe I can find something between sight and hearing and I can produce a fugue in colours.”¹⁰⁵ Aslanidis’ recent series of *Sonic Network* paintings embodies a sense of spirited movement such as Kupka developed in his cycle of fugue paintings of 1912.

There is a structural similarity between the intervals in Aslanidis’ placement of sonic rings, particularly in *Sonic Network no. 13* [plate 16 & 23], and the radial movements of Kupka’s seminal abstractions *Amorpha: Fugue in two colours* and *Disks of Newton (study for “Fugue in two colours”)* 1912. These paintings radiate dynamic excitement: implied motion unfurls in layers from the back right of the composition; spinning motifs eddy from set points and overlap, establishing a moiré of simultaneous perception. The throbbing layers of Aslanidis’ *Sonic Network no. 13* create entangled cross-rhythms and multiply their arching forms – as in Kupka’s *Amorpha* and *Disks of Newton*.

Movement was a principal concern of Kupka’s and it plays an analogous role in Aslanidis’ visualisation of sound. Aslanidis’ colouration is bold and pure, with oscillations caused by optical blending, generating pulses and a feeling of gyration. These dynamic colour clashes evoke distortions of frequency: the perception of colour, form and depth is destabilised when zones of convergence seem to phase and moiré. As with Kupka (who wrote “colour must speak as forcibly as form – that is, if colour does not itself determine the whole construction of the painting”)¹⁰⁶ colour delineates the compositional structure of Aslanidis’ *Sonic Network* series and directs its internal movement.

Aslanidis’ visualisations of sound reflect his musical influences. When he became involved with the visual-and-sound based collective, Clan Analogue in Sydney during the 1990s, his work was influenced by contemporary electronic music. He began creating visual projections to accompany musical performances by the group. The current *Sonic Network* series remains distinctly electronic, exacerbating the optic nerve through a repartition of colour pattern that reverberates like the sub-bass in dub music. The series has grown in scale to replicate the immersive nature of such soundscapes: *Sonic Network no. 14* 2014 [plate 2] is 4.88 metres in length. It acknowledges the sonic dominance of electronica, pictorializing the physical qualities of sound waves that sweep across audiences, reflect off walls, reverberate and envelop.

Like de Maistre and Nixon, Aslanidis’ paintings can be treated as musical scores and could actually be played as such. *Sonic Network no. 14* is accompanied by a sound composition by the Berlin-based sound artist Brian May, who manipulates and improvises from the same interval-based algorithm that Aslanidis uses as the foundation of his painting. Presented in unison, the parallel fields of oscillation are mutually magnifying. They bear out Jean d'Udine's aphorism: “To live is to vibrate”.

