

# M O V E M E N T



A JOINT EXHIBITION BETWEEN PUERTA ROJA AND GALERIE DENISE RENÉ



In memory of Denise René  
June 25, 1913 - July 9, 2012

Denise René at Vasarely, Galerie Denise René  
Rue de la Boétie, Paris, 1966  
© D.R (rights reserved)

## FOREWORD

In the spring of 2017, Puerta Roja presented the ground-breaking exhibition *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Mastering Colour*. In 2018, we present once more the works by the Franco-Venezuelan master in a joint exhibition with the iconic Galerie Denise René. The exhibition titled *Movement* (2018) provides historical context through the works of the artist's contemporaries whose careers, alongside Cruz-Diez, were catapulted by Denise René in the 1950s. Historical and recent works by Jesús Rafael Soto, Victor Vasarely and Yaacov Agam, are accompanied by younger artists' works, furthering the legacy of the Op and Kinetic Art movement into the twenty-first century and giving both tribute and future life to the visionary spirit of Denise René and her artists. With the title of the exhibition, Puerta Roja not only captures the spirit of the historic movement, but also pays homage to both the trailblazer gallery and the beginning of Cruz-Diez's career.

Denise René opened her Parisian gallery in 1944 with Victor Vasarely's first solo show and the vision to spearhead exhibitions focused on abstraction and, when critics and curators shun them, support the career of many artists that would become some of the most influential of the century. After the horrors of the war, many artists were fuelled by idealist notions of progress and, inspired by science and mathematics, they looked to change the world through reason and order. European and Latin American artists - who had been working on these ideas uninterrupted by the war - would move to Paris to work alongside each other. Using optical illusions and geometric patterns, the effect to both confuse and stimulate the eye was produced. The incorporation of the viewer's interaction and the straightforward unpretentious representations, made the art inclusive, a common language of optimism that could reach all. Whilst at first sight the works may seem void of political undertones, these artists had a powerful social agenda, seeking ultimately to democratize the art experience. Vasarely, Soto, Agam and Cruz-Diez all strove to create a new shared vision of art that better reflected the times.

Denise and the artists would ascertain their place in modern art history books with the ground-breaking exhibition *Le Mouvement* in 1955. A powerful champion for geometric abstraction and kinetic art, she envisioned putting the spotlight on her young artists by showcasing them alongside established ones such as Alexander Calder and Marcel Duchamp. It was at *Le Mouvement* that Carlos Cruz-Diez was introduced to the gallery and other artists by his fellow Venezuelan Jesús Rafael Soto. Ten years later both artists would participate in the historical MoMA exhibition *The Responsive Eye*, where the term 'Op and Kinetic Art' was first formally recognised. The eye-catching, imaginative and vertigo-inducing works swept the art world and enamoured viewers. Works appeared on the walls of major museums and galleries around the world and heavily influenced architecture, design and fashion.

Cruz-Diez and Soto are prominently featured in the Puerta Roja *Movement* exhibition: Cruz-Diez's *Physicromie series* (1959) and *Chromointerference Spatiale Décembre* (1964) use contrast and harmonisation to generate virtual colours that change depending upon the viewers point of perception. Soto's *El Ovalo Escarlata* (2002) features his iconic linear, kinetic constructions with suspended metal rods in front of detailed patterns on wooden reliefs. The finely balanced, perpetually moving rods create 'vibrations' that extend into the surrounding space, connecting to the environment and breaking free from the fixities of traditional painting.

Following a few years where conceptual art took over the spotlight, it was the strength of the philosophical ideals at the heart of the artists' intent that would ensure the movement's lasting legacy and current revival. A myriad of retrospectives on the artists, the movement and the gallery itself have taken place in the last twenty years. In 2001, the French National Museum of Modern Art paid tribute with the exhibition *The Intrepid Denise René, a Gallery in the Adventure of Abstract Art*, at the Centre Pompidou. The Pompidou would also reinstall its collection along the lines of art theory, including a dedicated section to Op and Kinetic Art. The Tate Modern opened *A View from Zagreb: Op and Kinetic Art* in 2016, a permanent room in its new building which includes works by Cruz-Diez, Soto and Vasarely. In the same year, *The Illusive Eye* reopened at El Museo del Barrio in New York with a celebration of the original MoMA show. These exhibitions attest to the enormous influence of these artists and open the door to re-evaluate the relevance of the movement to contemporary society.

Today Op and Kinetic Art continues to develop with the next generation of artists. With strong roots in South America, the tradition is brought forward by new dynamic artists such as Argentinians Mariano Ferrante, Gladys Nistor and artist collective Ventoso represented by Puerta Roja in Asia. The contemporary furtherance of the movement also travels across borders, with French artist Oliver Ratsi, Dutch Hans Kooi, Swiss Pe Lang and Italian collective Gruppo MID - all having exhibited at Galerie Denise René - employ innovative materials and technology as well as contemporary advancements in computer sciences.

An icon in the art world for her innovative spirit and distinctive programme, Denise René always said that art must invent new paths to exist. With this exhibition, Puerta Roja, entering its eighth year in Hong Kong, continues to open new routes and break boundaries for Op and Kinetic Art, particularly for Asian audiences. As it has been a regular feature in our programme, the exhibition introduces emerging talent alongside the great masters, presenting masterpieces and artists previously unseen in the region.

I am grateful to Carlos Cruz-Diez and Carlos Cruz-Diez Jr. for first nurturing the idea of a collaboration between the two galleries. It has been an enriching experience to work with Denis Killian, under whose leadership, Galerie Denise René continues to support new contemporary production inscribed by the movements' historical reference.

By bringing together both of our stable of artists, we hope to highlight the connection between legacy and new proposals through the deeply universal ideals of the movement. I believe, the essence and profound undercurrent of optimism and democratisation of art is more important than ever. Amidst our present troubled era, experimenting with illusion is not a sign of denial but one of hope for the future, an optimistic stand of resistance against an increasingly unstable socio-political world.

ADRIANA ALVAREZ-NICHOL

Founder of Puerta Roja and Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association



## NOTES FOR A MANIFESTO

Excerpt from *Manifeste Jaune* published in 1955 on the occasion of *Le Mouvement*

“These are the telling facts of the past that we link together and that concern us among many others: the triumph of “plastic art” over the anecdote (Manet) - the first geometrization of the outside world (Cézanne) - the conquest of pure color (Matisse) -the breakdown of figuration (Picasso) - the change from outer to inner vision (Kandinsky) - the dissolution of one branch of painting into a polychromatic architecture (Mondrian) - the birth of great plastic syntheses (Le Corbusier) - new plastic alphabets (Arp, Taeuber, Magnelli, Herbin) - the replacement of volume by **SPACE** (Calder)... In the very recent past, the need for a new knowledge has affirmed itself by the invention of **PURE COMPOSITION** and the choice of **UNITY** (more about this to follow). Parallel to the decline of the old-time techniques of painting experimentation is being conducted with **new materials** (chemical applications) and **new tools** (discoveries in physics) are being adopted... **We are now in the process of totally discarding routine, of integrating sculpture and conquering dimensions superior to the plane.**

Abstraction has always stripped down and expanded its compositional elements. Soon **color-form** invaded the two-dimensional surface while the object-painting lent itself to that metamorphosis which by architectural means raised it up to the spatial universe of polychromy. [...] **COMPOSITION** is still a flat plastic art in which rigorous abstract elements that are both few in number and expressed in few (dull or flat gloss) colors possess the same plastic quality everywhere on the surface: **POSITIVE - NEGATIVE**. Yet through the effect of opposing perspectives these elements in turn produce and dispel a “spacial feeling”, and thereby the illusion of **motion** and **duration**.

[...] **Two color-forms necessarily contrasted determine PLASTIC UNITY and therefore UNITY of creation: this is the eternal duality of all things, at last recognized as inseparable.** This is the coupling of affirmation and negation. Unity measurable and non-measurable, is at the same time both physical and metaphysical, the understanding of the material and mathematical structure of the Universe, as well as of its spiritual superstructure. **UNITY** is the abstract essence of the **BEAUTIFUL**, the first form of sensibility. Conceived with art, it constitutes the **work** as poetic equivalent of the World that it signifies. The simplest example of plastic unit is the square (or rectangle) with its “**contrast**” **complement or the two-dimensional plane with its “sur-rounding space” complement.**

[...] **The art product ranges from the “pleasing and functional object” to “Art for Art’s sake”, from “good taste” to “the transcendent”.** So, the entirety of plastic activities belongs under the heading of one vast diminishing perspective: decorative arts - fashion - visual publicity and promotion - settings for great Industrial, Holiday and Sports events - settings for shows and spectacles - polychrome model factories - signs and city planning - documentary art films - recreational museums - art editions - synthesis of the Plastic Arts - and last but not least, genuine



Cover for *Le Mouvement* publication, designed by Victor Vasarely, Galerie Denise René 1955  
© D.R (rights reserved)



Installation shot: *Le Mouvement*, Galerie Denise René, Rue de la Boétie, Paris, 1955  
© D.R (rights reserved)

In these various areas the personal touch does not necessarily make for authenticity: besides which, we are not qualified, here and now, to decide what are the major and minor features of these various manifestations of the plastic arts. There do exist rear-guard talents, just as there can be inadequacies within the vanguard. But neither work of genuine value—be it timeless or retrograde if it be worthless—nor work deemed “ahead of its time” can count for posterity.

**The effect that the art product has on us is something that, with differences in intensity and quality, ranges from the momentarily appealing to the shock of the Beautiful. These various sensations occur initially within our emotional being and thence give rise either to a sense of well-being or of the dramatic. Thereby the goal of Art is approximately achieved.** Analysis, the understanding of a message depends on our own knowledge and our own cultural equipment. And since only the entities of the art of the past are intelligible, since not everyone can be an authority on contemporary Art, **we advocate its “presence”, rather than its “understanding”.** Since sensibility is a specifically human faculty, our messages cannot fail to reach common mortals via the natural channel of their emotional receptivity. Indeed, we cannot leave the enjoyment of the work of art indefinitely to the sole elite of the cognoscenti. Today's art is tending in the direction of general forms that can readily be created over and over again, and tomorrow's art will either be a common treasure or will cease to exist.

Traditions are breaking down and the ordinary forms of painting are withering - way on untraveled roads. It is painful yet necessary to discard old values to make sure we can take possession of new ones. Our existence has changed and therefore our ethics and our aesthetics must change. And if the idea of the plastic work of art has until now been thought of in terms of a craft and the myth of the “single piece”, today it must give way to **the conception of a possibility of RE-CREATION, MULTIPLICATION AND EXPANSION.** Have literary and musical works been widely distributed to the detriment of their uniqueness and quality?”

VASARELY

1955



"I learned a lot from the exhibition *Le mouvement* presented at the Galerie Denise René, which I saw on a trip to Paris in 1955 while I was living in El Masnou. At that time, I didn't know what other artists were doing in Paris. When I arrived, the first thing I did was to contact my friend Soto, who told me that he was showing some of his work at Denise's gallery in an important exhibition that I should see. The exhibition not only excited me enormously, it gave me a huge boost. I realized that I was not alone in my elucubrations about art. [...]"

I saw very clearly that other artists had also been expressing what I had been thinking about and imagining in terms of the possibilities of an artistic language, but five thousand kilometers away.

For example, though much more elemental, the *Proyectos Para Muros Exteriores* are somewhat evocative of several of the works shown by Agam or Bury at that exhibition, in the sense that they involved the viewer. But their work was much more advanced because it used motion as a way to involve the viewer. It was a revelation to me, because I saw involvement as a social event; in their work, however, the involvement was related to the artistic and aesthetic motivation. The experience of confronting these unprecedented plastic manifestations — such as I had never seen before — convinced me that I had to radically alter the approach of my proposal and look for other painting supports. I realized that the change, whatever it might be, would have to be radical. That was my path, and I could hesitate no longer. From then on, I devoted myself to fully developing my ideas."

## CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ

Interview with Mari Carmen Ramirez  
*Color in Space And Time*, Yale University Press, 2011

*Environnement Chromointerferent 1974/2017*, virtual installation,  
*Carlos Cruz-Diez: Mastering Colour*, Puerta Roja, Hong Kong, 2017  
© Photo: Ali G Studios







Installation shot: *Cruz-Diez: Du Statique au Dynamique*, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 2016  
 © D.R (rights reserved)



Installation shot: *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Mastering Colour*, Puerta Roja, Hong Kong, 2017



## CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ b. 1923, Caracas, Venezuela

Carlos Cruz-Diez has dedicated his life to the research of colour, lines and perception. Considered one of the precursors of the Op and Kinetic Art movement from the 1950s, his work is considered a canon in the contemporary art stage and continues to influence art culture around the world. Cruz-Diez describes his discourse as 'Art of Real Movement and Space'. His research into the additive, reflective, and subtractive effects of colour shows that perception of a chromatic phenomenon does not rely on form. Beyond formal research, for the artist, colour is an experience in itself that can be perceived and enjoyed without interpretation or knowledge. Through interaction, the viewer becomes an accomplice to the artist, an essential participant in the artwork itself.

Due to his significant contributions towards the theory and practice of colour, Cruz-Diez is internationally considered a Master of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Since his first solo exhibition at the Venezuelan-American Institute in Caracas in 1947, his participation in MoMA's polemical 1965 show of *The Responsive Eye* and representing Venezuela at the Venice Biennale, he has participated in hundreds of exhibitions and retrospectives around the world.

Carlos Cruz-Diez' works have become part of the most prominent public collections including, amongst others, MoMA, Tate Modern, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Kunstmuseum, Switzerland; Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Germany; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. The artist has also executed numerous large-scale public projects and architectural interventions around the world, all of which were developed as investigations into visual and perceptual experiences of colour.

The artist's work has been well-appreciated in Asia Pacific since 1988 when *Physichromie Double Face* was installed in the Olympic Park in South Korea. He has held multiple museum exhibitions, most notably the touring exhibition *Circumstance* and *Ambiguity of Colour*, at the Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing; Fudan Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts, Shanghai; Académie of Art, Hangzhou; Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Nanjing; and Henan Art Museum, Zhengzhou. He has also exhibited at Guangdong Museum of Art and the Beijing Art Museum of Imperial City in China; the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery; the National Museum of Contemporary Art Deoksugung, the Jeonbuk Province Art Museum and the Sang Sang Tok Tok Gallery in South Korea; and, The National Art Centre and the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Tokyo, well as museums in the cities of Himeji, Urawa, Okish, Tsukuba, Nagoya and Hyogo.

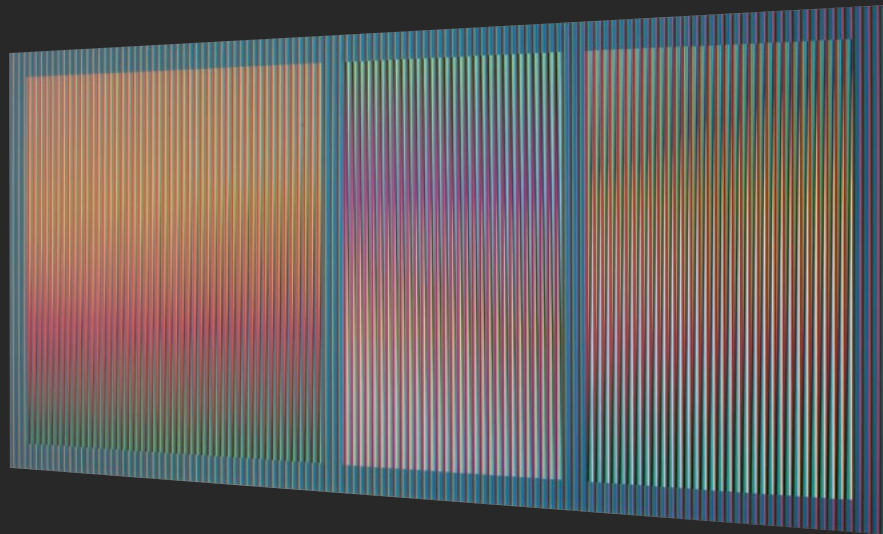
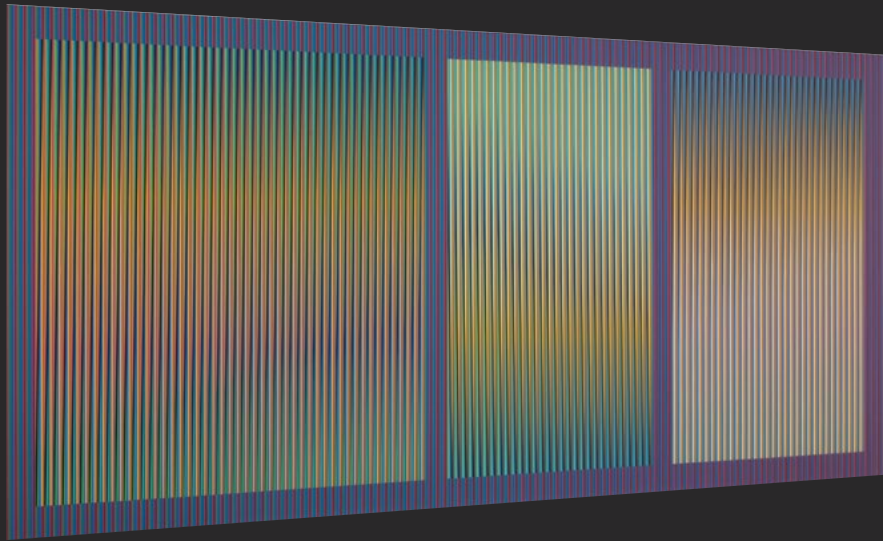
At 94, Cruz-Diez remains a very active artist, tirelessly expanding his research into colour.

Since 2016, Puerta Roja has represented the work of Carlos Cruz-Diez in Asia; in 2017 the gallery presented *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Mastering Colour*, his first gallery solo-exhibition in the region.

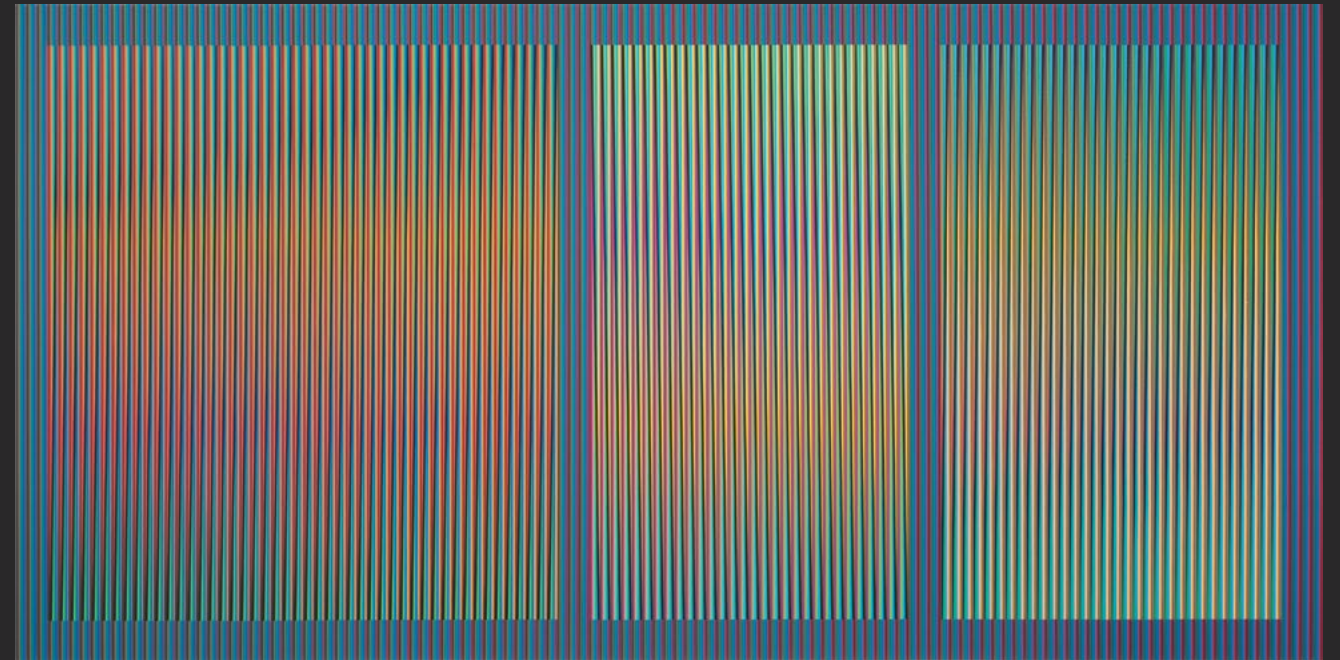


Carlos Cruz-Diez in his workshop, Paris, 2017  
© Photo: Cruz-Diez / Lisa Preud'homme  
© ADAGP, Paris 2018





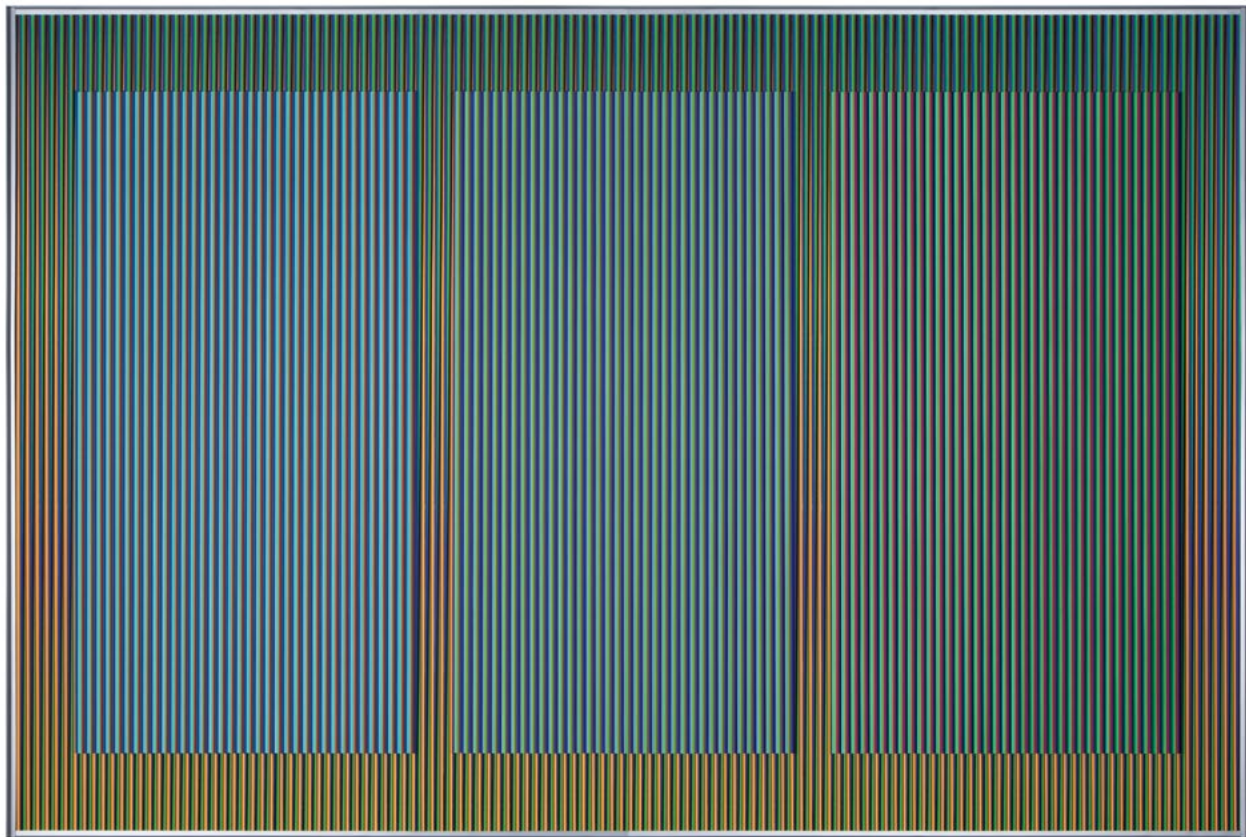
Multiple perspectives of:  
**Physichromie 1941**  
 Carlos Cruz-Diez  
 Chromography on aluminium  
 70 x 140 cm  
 Paris 2014



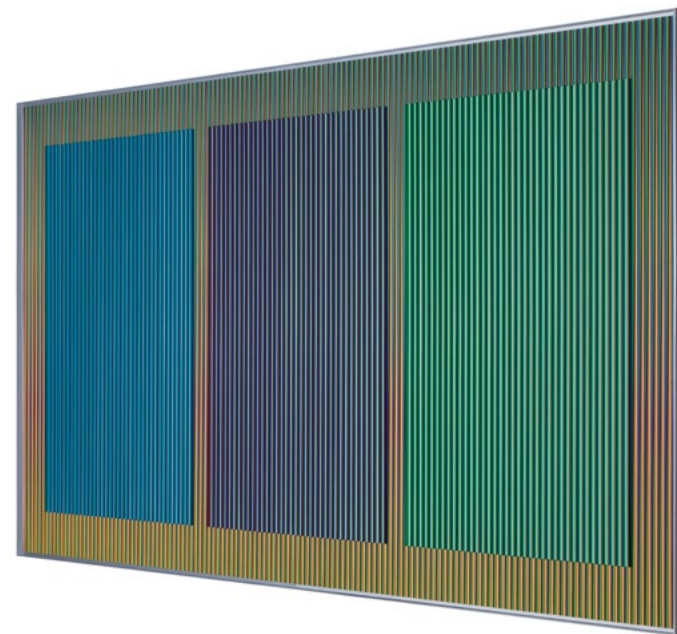
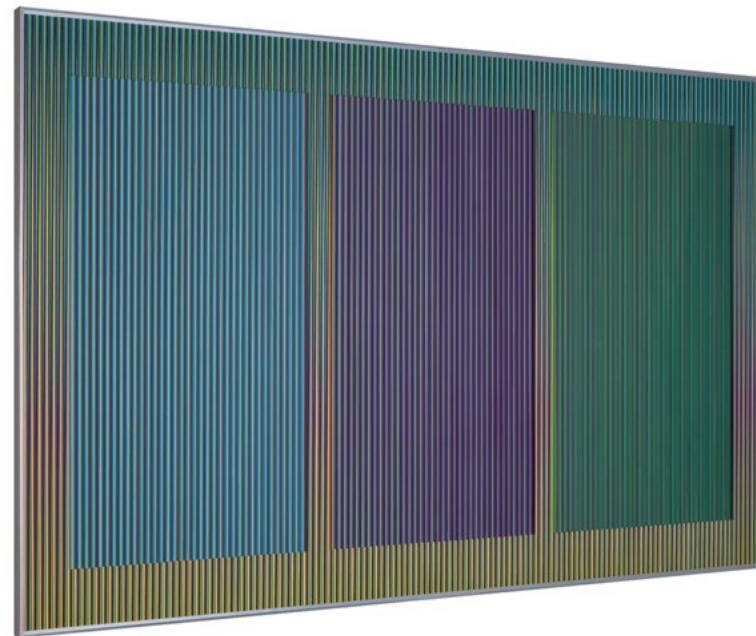
## PHYSICHROMIE (1959)

The *Physichromie* is a structure designed to reveal certain circumstances and conditions related to colour, changing according to the movement of the viewer and the intensity of the light, and thus projecting colour into space to create an evolutionary situation of additive, reflective, and subtractive colour. A *Physichromie* acts as a “light trap” in a space where a series of colour frames interact; frames that transform each other, generating new ranges of colours not present on the support. Thus, the colour fills the space confined between the vertical sheets — light-modulators — that cover the entire work. In addition, due to the effects of the viewer or light source, a series of colour variations are created in them, similar to those observed in the real space of the landscape.

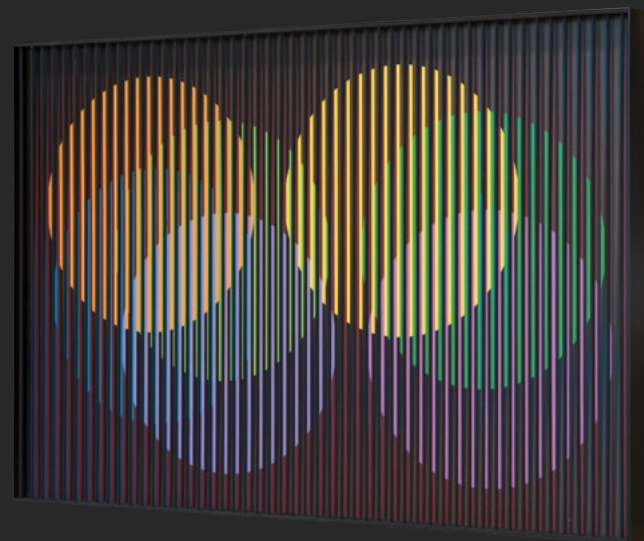
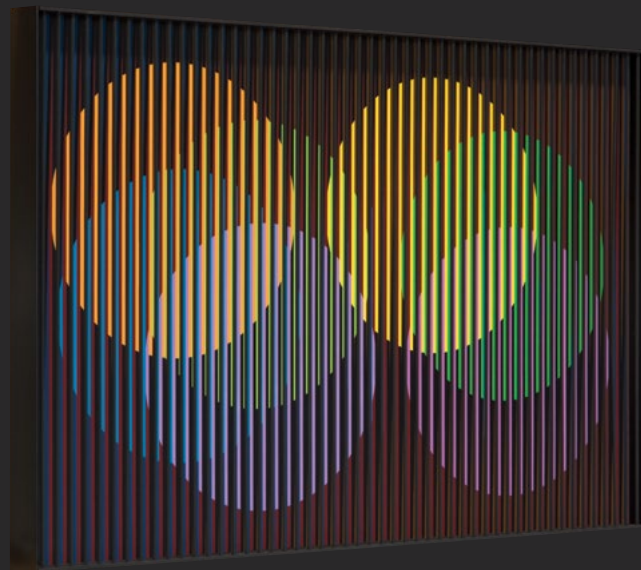
These colour variations that endlessly repeat themselves every day, are not always exactly the same, due to the variations of intensity and nature of the light that showers them. Hence the name *Physichromie*, by calling into play the colour light — the physical colour.



Multiple perspectives of:  
**Physichromie 1922**  
 Carlos Cruz-Diez  
 Chromography on aluminium  
 100 x 150 cm  
 Paris 2014







Multiple perspectives of:  
**Chromointerférence Spatiale Décembre**  
 Carlos Cruz-Diez  
 Chromography on aluminium  
 40 x 60 cm  
 Ed. 8  
 Paris 1964/2017



## CHROMOINTERFÉRENCES SPATIALES (1964)

*Chromointerférences Spatiales* belong to the series of artworks *Chromointerférences* (1964/2018), which are called “false prisms” because they reconstitute the entire spectrum of light on an opaque material support. When a number of mobile modules are superimposed by the movement of the viewer, a second transformation takes place that reveals colours that are not on the plane. Wavelike movements, going against the flow of the actual movement of the modules make the colours brighter than they would appear on their own. Carlos Cruz-Diez created *Chromointerférences Spatiales* in the 1960's but their fabrication required such precision that they could not be made by hand. It is only in 2009 that Carlos Cruz-Diez was finally able to produce the first *Chromointerférence Spatiale* thanks to the use of new technologies.



**JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO** b. 1923, Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela. d. 2005, Paris, France

A leading voice of the Kinetic movement, Jesús Rafael Soto studied and taught art in Venezuela heavily influenced by geometric abstraction. In 1950, intrigued by the works of Malevich and Mondrian, and with the encouragement of Venezuelan painter Alejandro Otero, Soto applied for and was awarded a scholarship to study in Paris. There he associated with Yaacov Agam, Jean Tinguely, Victor Vasarely and his Venezuelan friend Carlos Cruz-Diez.

Having started out as an illusionistic painter, in 1955 Soto participated in *Le Mouvement* at Galerie Denise René. He was immersed in projects in which he used almost no colour but, instead, explored the vibrations created by line and its dematerialisation, a great example of which is *El Ovalo Escarlata* (2002) featured at Puerta Roja's 2018 exhibition *Movement*. In this kinetic construction with suspended metal rods in front of detailed patterns on wooden reliefs, the finely balanced, perpetually moving rods extend into the surrounding space, connecting to the environment and breaking free from the fixities of traditional painting. Soto also began exploring the idea of haptic art: making works to be touched by the viewer. In 1967 he produced his first *Penetrables*, works composed of metal rods and plastic strands hanging in space. He invited the viewer to enter the work and walk around inside it, to apprehend the 'matter-energy' of the world through 'being' inside the work, in the artist's words: "*Heretofore, the viewer was in the position of an external observer of reality. Today, the notion that there is mankind on one side and the world on the other has been superseded. We are not observers but constituent parts of a reality that we know to be teeming with living forces, many of them invisible. We exist in the world like fish in water: not detached from matter-energy; INSIDE, not IN FRONT OF; no longer viewers, but participants.*"

Jesús Rafael Soto's work is part of important public collections around the world including MoMA, Tate Modern, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Centre Pompidou. The artist was commissioned to create numerous monumental works, most notably in UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, 1969 and in 1987 by Centre Pompidou where he installed *Volume Virtuel* at the entrance of the prestigious museum. In 1973 the Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto opened in his birth city of Ciudad Bolívar. The museum houses some of the artist's major works along with a sizeable collection of abstract, geometric and kinetic works he amassed throughout his life, including works by Jean Arp, Kazimir Malevich, and Man Ray. Soto's work was also included in the Guggenheim's 2014 large scale, historical exhibition, *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–60s*. There have been multiple solo retrospectives of the artists' work around the world both posthumous and during his lifetime. Most notably in 2014 *Soto: The Houston Penetrable, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA* and in 2013 *Soto dans le collection du Musée national d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France*.



Denise René with an artwork by Soto  
Galerie Denise René, Rue de la Boétie, Paris, 1968 © D.R (rights reserved)





### **La Boite**

Jesús Rafael Soto  
Screenprint in colours on plexiglass  
Ed. 100, 35 x 35 x 11 cm  
1967

### **El Ovalo Escarlata**

Jesús Rafael Soto  
Wooden relief, metal rods  
150 x 77 x 20 cm  
2002



## VICTOR VASARELY b. 1908, Pécs, Hungary, d. 1997 Paris, France

Victor Vasarely, regarded as the grandfather of the Op and Kinetic Art movement, began his studies in 1925 as a medical student only to radically take a different direction to pursue an education in Fine Art. He enrolled in the The Bauhaus Muhely Academy, where he was highly influenced by Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and Josef Albers amongst others. Vasarely's early interest in science contributed greatly to his artistic practice: "*The two creative expressions of man - art and science - meet again to form an imaginary construct that is in accord with our sensibility and contemporary knowledge.*"

The artist moved to Paris in 1930, and like many of his contemporaries, worked as a graphic designer before holding his first solo exhibition marking the opening of Galerie Denise René in 1944. Between 1950 and 1965, the artist's Black and White period, Vasarely perfected the depiction of three-dimensional movement on a two-dimensional plane. On the occasion of *Le Mouvement* (1955) the artist published an excerpt of *Manifeste Jaune*. This seminal text laid the foundation of Op and Kinetic Art as a continuation of constructivist research by the Bauhaus school. Using technology, Vasarely spearheaded the accessibility of art, removing the concept of the 'single piece' by opening the possibility of re-creation, multiplication and expansion of art. This concept would evolve with his theory of *Alphabet Plastique*, which described an algorithm for visual construction that resulted in an infinite variety of artworks.

*Movement* (2018) presents the collage *Tridim* (1968), an infrequent medium in the artist's oeuvre. The work is strongly connected to the iconic *Gestalt* series, seen in the large scale acrylic painting *Tridim W, Gestalt* (1969) at MoMA's permanent collection. Although the history of the work is unclear, it is likely that it was an experimental work that helped Vasarely construct the almost impossible *Gestalt* three-dimensional shapes, the word meaning an organised whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts. The paintings are characterised by solid, yet ethereal and seemingly impossible three-dimensional shapes composed of cubes and cellular like structures. Vasarely makes full use of variations in colour to further the illusion of space, light, movement and structure through the artist's fascination with the hexagon. *Gestalt* and the Vega series, where he would warp elements in a grid to create bulging, spherical illusions, are the most iconic examples of the artist work.

Vasarely received many awards including the Guggenheim Prize in New York, 1964; the Grand Prix at the Sao Paulo Biennial, 1965; the Grand Prix de la Gravure in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1965; and the French Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur, 1970. Vasarely's work is in most major museum collections around the world, including MoMA, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Tate Modern, Centre Georges Pompidou, Stedelijk Museum, and many more. Three museums are solely dedicated to the artist: The Vasarely Foundation Museum, Aix-en-Provence, France; the Vasarely Museum in Pécs and The Vasarely Museum, Zichy Palace, Budapest, Hungary.



Victor Vasarely, 1979  
Photo: © Tony Grylla



**Tridim**  
Victor Vasarely  
Collage on paper  
30 x 30 cm  
1968



**YAACOV AGAM** b. 1928, Rishon-Le-Zion, Israel

Yaacov Agam, one of the founding fathers of the Op and Kinetic Art movement, was born in Rishon-le-Zion, Israel (the Palestine), in 1928. Agam's father was a rabbi and Hebrew philosopher and his early experience of Judaism laid the ground for the core concepts of his artistic practice which he has maintained for over 60 years. Agam trained at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, before moving to Zürich, Switzerland in 1949. In 1951 the artist moved to Paris where he still lives and works. His first solo exhibition was at the Galerie Craven in Paris in 1953, entitled *Peintures en Mouvement*. He exhibited, alongside other op and kinetic pioneers including Alexander Calder, Jesús Rafael Soto and Victor Vasarely, at the *Le Mouvement* exhibition by Denise René in 1955.

Although he did not follow the fundamentals of Judaism, he was interested in depicting the form of divinity. In 1964, Agam wrote his artistic credo: *"My intention was to create a work of art which would transcend the visible, which cannot be perceived except in stages, with the understanding that it is a partial revelation and not the perpetuation of the existing. My aim is to show what can be seen within the limits of possibility which exists in the midst of coming into being."* Agam works in a variety of media, including painting in two and three-dimensions, drawing, sculpture, ceramic, stained glass, serigraphy, lithography, etching, and mixed media. He is recognised for a technique called 'Agamograph', a type of lenticular printing that combines radically different images on a corrugated surface that present themselves depending on the perception of the viewer. Agam's *Star of Peace* (1979) was commissioned in commemoration of the peace-making efforts between Anwar el-Sādāt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The work merged the five-pointed star of Islam and the six-pointed Star of David in one kinetic sculpture.

In 1980 the Guggenheim Museum presented the solo exhibition, *Agam: Beyond the Visible*. In 1996, UNESCO awarded him the Jan Amos Comenius Medal for the *Agam Method* for the nonverbal visual education of young children. In Asia, the touring solo-exhibition *Agam* (1989) was presented at the Isetan Museum of Art, Tokyo; Daimaru Museum, Osaka; and Kawasaki City Museum. In 2010 he was commissioned by the Taipei city government for a large public mural titled *The Heart of the Fountainhead*. At the Centre Pompidou there is an entire room dedicated to Agam, including an installation with six translucent plexiglass screens of different colours in front of floor to ceiling kinetic *Agamographs* and a polished steel geometric sculpture in the centre. The installation was originally made for Georges Pompidou for his private apartment at the Elysee Palace, reflected in the title; *Aménagement de l'antichambre des appartements privés du Palais de l'Elysée pour le président Georges Pompidou (Salon Agam)*. In 2017, the Yaacov Agam Museum of Art opened in the artists hometown of Rishon LeZion and is devoted solely to his work.



Yaacov Agam  
© D.R (rights reserved)



**Orchestration Visuelle Cercles Carrés**

Yaacov Agam

Paint, paper and mixed media

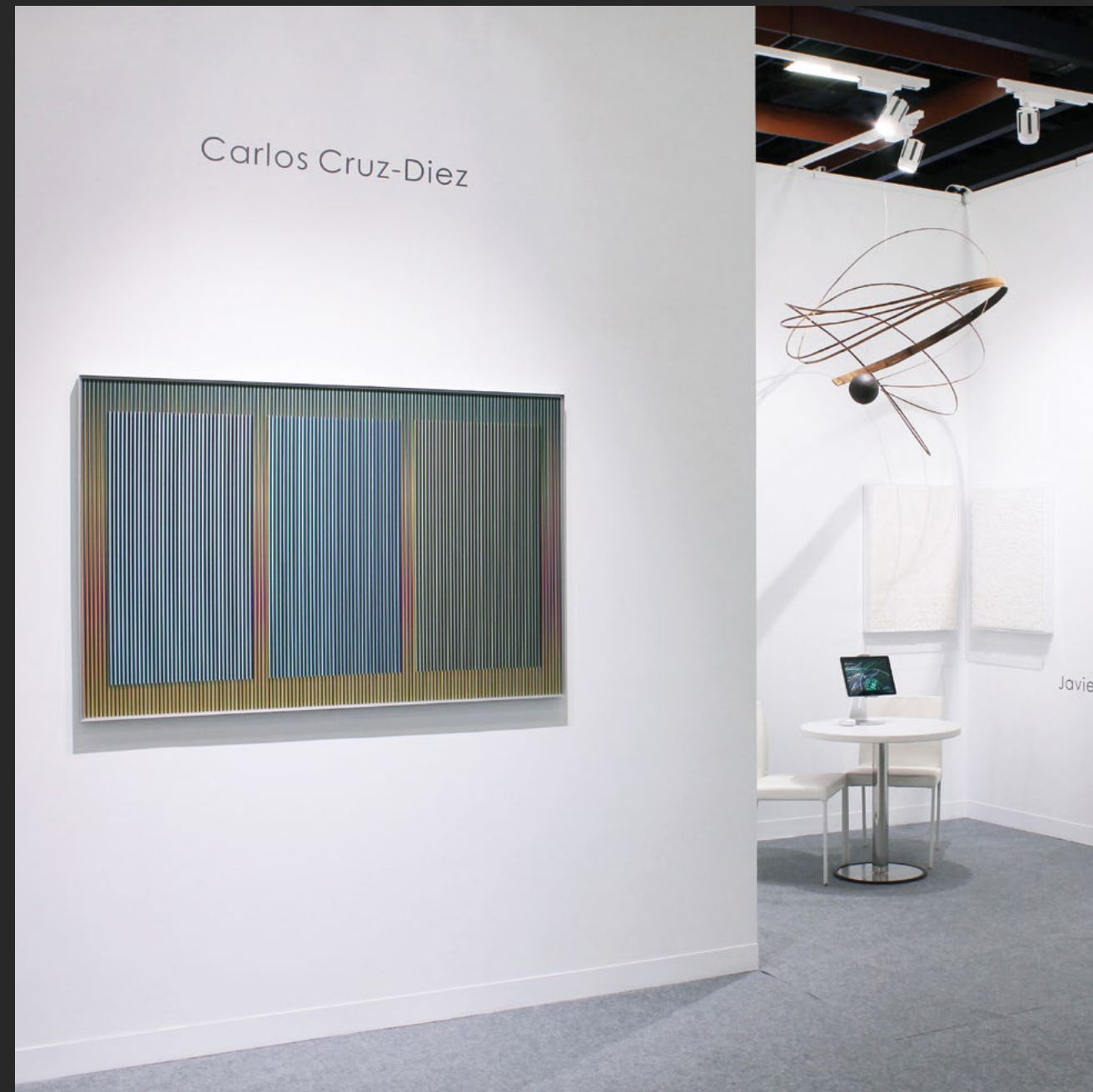
25 x 25 cm

2005





Installation shot: Galerie Denise René, Art Brussels, Belgium, 2016. © D.R (rights reserved)



Installation shot: Puerta Roja, Art Taipei, Taiwan, 2017



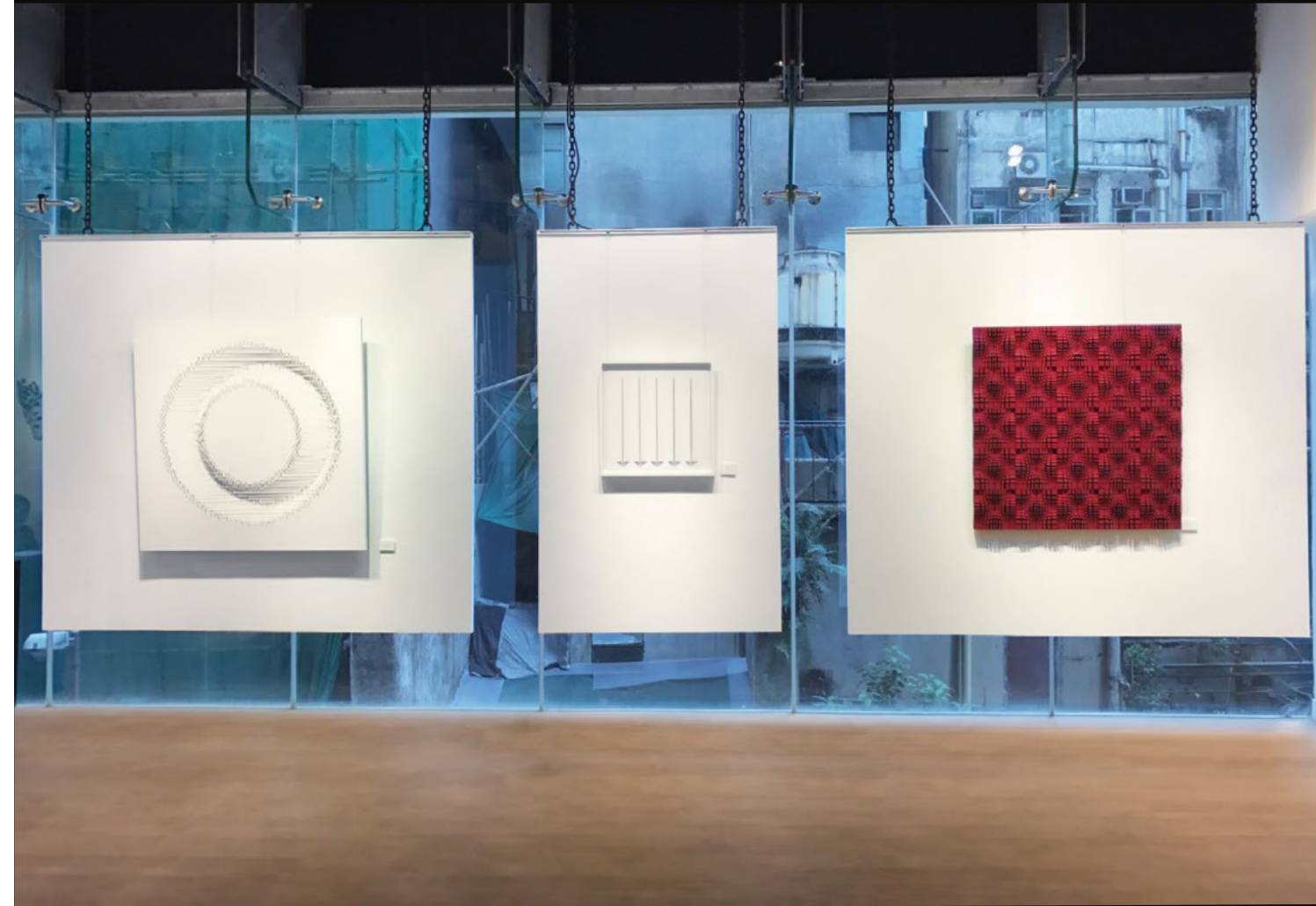
## VENTOSO 2006, Argentina

Ventoso is a family artistic collective formed in 2006. Abel, an architect, along with Héctor and Jorge, engineers by profession, have searched together for a unique mean of artistic expression. The collective's work, based on abstraction, seeks to emphasize the formal aspects of art through an autonomous language manifested in the proposal of visual and tactile experiences. The rigorously programmed geometrical compositions, which are the fundamental constant in the collective's plastic language, generate refined and personal aesthetics of volumetric games.

Rooted in the spirit of geometric abstraction masters of the twentieth century, the works by Ventoso intend to solve visual strategies that deal not only with spatial or assembly concerns, but also with the experience for the viewer that every piece carries within. Fresh, autonomous and experimental, Ventoso's works, including the medium, are reflective of their contemporary environment. The use of high density polymers, an alternative to 'noble' art materials such as wood, is a statement in itself. The thermo-plastic materials are versatile, highly durable, resistant to humidity and degradation in addition to being lightweight. This contemporary 'pragmatism' has also a further relevance, as through the use of polymers, the artists reinforce the concept of abstraction as a purely human invention.

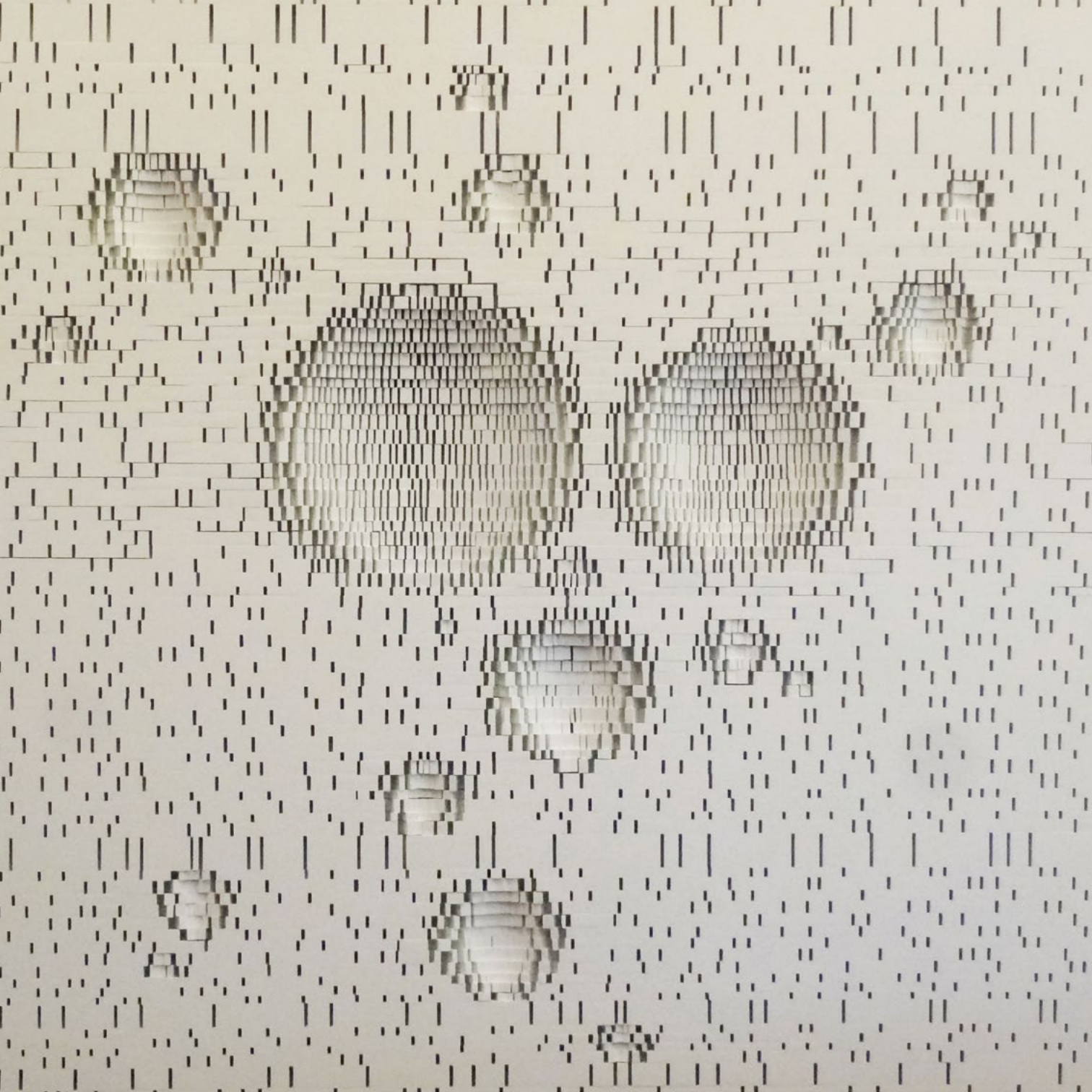
Since 2007, Ventoso started to build an international following, particularly in Latin America and the USA. In 2016, their work joined the permanent collection of Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles. The collective exhibited with Gallery René Denis in Paris, solidifying its place as a worthy progeny of the great Op Art masters from Argentina, and for the first time in Asia with Puerta Roja in Hong Kong.

Ventoso are represented in Asia by Puerta Roja since 2016.



Installation shot: *Sensorial Geometries: from Argentina to the World*, Puerta Roja, Hong Kong, 2016





**Ti3**  
 Ventoso  
 Assemblage high density polymer  
 115 x 115 cm  
 2015



**Sred**  
 Ventoso  
 Assemblage high density polymer  
 117 cm d.  
 2018



## GRUPPO MID 1964 Milan, Italy

The collective Gruppo MID, formed by Antonio Barrese, Alfonso Grassi, Gianfranco Laminarca and Alberto Marangoni, names itself after the acronym for Mutamento, Immagine and Dimensione (Mutation, Image and Dimension). The group focuses on depicting spatial temporality through innovative materials and were an important contributor to the Kinetic and Programmed Art movement that furthered, through the use of technology and science, the initial explorations by the earlier generation of Op and Kinetic pioneers. At the core of Gruppo MID's discourse is the notion of 'Art as Research', a philosophy which originated from the Bauhaus and is shared with Victor Vasarely and Carlos Cruz-Diez amongst others. In 1965 the collective joined the international New Tendency movement and exhibited in *Nova Tendencija 3* at The Museum for Contemporary Art Zagreb.

Gruppo MID developed the *Stroboscopic Structures* which consisted of a surface with circling lights that spun rapidly when the viewer pushed a button in the centre. At the time, however, technical restrictions prevented the artworks from reaching their full potential. The group continued to exhibit internationally until 1972 when they parted ways and pursued successful individual creative careers. In 2000, Barrese and Marangoni re-established the collective, partly driven by the renewed interest in the Op and Kinetic Art movement that continues to date. Advancement in technology allowed the artists to realise their original vision and they commenced the process of restoring their historic works using programed motors, power inverters and LED lights. *Disco Stroboscopico*, presented at *Puerta Roja in Movement* (2018), is a prime example of a work originally conceived in 1968 and reconstructed in 2012.

Gruppo MID has exhibited in countless galleries and museums including a solo show, *Gruppo MID: The origins of multimedia* in 2007 at La Triennale di Milano. The collective has also participated in many historical shows such as *Kinetic and Programmed Art in Italy 1958 – 1968*, an international roaming exhibition that was first shown in 2000 at Galleria Niccoli in Parma, Italy; and would travel to Germany at the Ulmer Museum, Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim and Staatliches Museum Schwerin; Japan's Sompō Japan Museum of Art, Tokyo, Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art, Kofu, the Fukuyama Museum of Art, Hiroshima, and The Museum of Modern Art, Saitama.

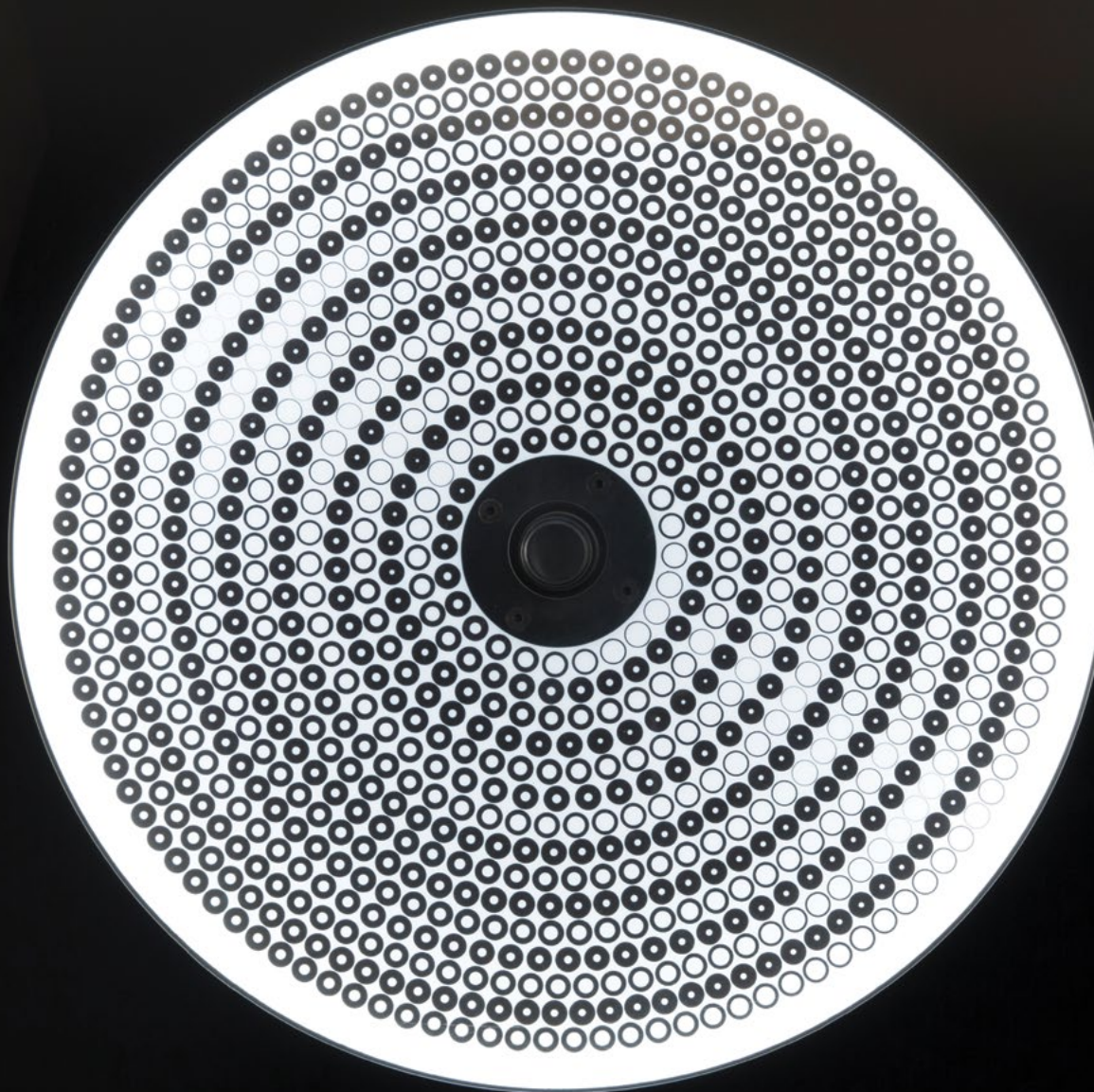


Installation shot: *Gruppo MID*, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 2017. © D.R (rights reserved)





Different shots of:  
**Disco Stroboscopico**  
 Gruppo MID  
 Mixed media,  
 stroboscopic light and spinning mechanism  
 75 x 75 x 7 cm  
 1968 / 2012





## GLADYS NISTOR b. 1960, Rosario, Argentina

Gladys Nistor was born in Argentina, studied Philosophy in Israel and in 1990, she received a scholarship from the French Government in to study fine art at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1994, she received a Master in Fine Arts from the Université de Paris VIII. Experiencing early success in her home country, through the years her work saw a dramatic transformation increasingly focused on a minimal expression and subtraction of matter.

Gladys Nistor state about her practice: *"I try as much as I can to avoid the tedious contact with matter"*. The artist's intent is to conjure forms into existence. Her fast-paced and experimental approach leads her to developing innovative, creative techniques that are constantly evolving. Working largely in site-specific installations, uniquely and intimately tailored to the space, Nistor's work teams not only with vitality but also executed with the maturity of an artist that has gone through a process of deep introspection and reflection. *Movement* (2018) presents *Untitled 1801* from the series *Objets de Lumière* where she constructs geometric forms out of intense contrast directly onto the walls to fully occupy the environment. The bodiless work is playful and paradoxical, floating in space, boldly illuminating an imaginary dimension. With striking simplicity and intriguing illusion, she leaves the viewer bewildered. Eyes and mind are conflicted to question the mechanisms of both the work and our own perception of it.

Nistor's early career culminated in 2000 with her participation in *Painting Zero Degree*. Inspired by Roland Barthes' book *Writing Degree Zero*, curator Carlos Basualdo presented artists who were reducing their artworks through radical means, focusing on pictorial practices that fitted neither the concept of abstract paintings nor that of the ready-made. Established names such as Robert Ryman and Daniel Buren were featured alongside ten emerging artists including Gladys Nistor. Presented by Independent Curators International (ICC) the exhibition toured museums in the USA for two years to great acclaim and where Nistor's works captured the limelight. After a successful trajectory, temporarily disillusioned with the realities of 'life as an artist', Nistor took a step back from her practice to work as a designer in Paris for over a decade. However, the deep and incontestable emotional and spiritual necessity to return to her artistic work, brought her back in full force to produce her most innovative series of works: *Objets de Lumière* first presented in Hong Kong in the exhibition *Weightless Matter* in 2017.

Gladys Nistor is represented in Asia by Puerta Roja since 2017.



*Chair Dance* performance by The Hong Kong Ballet at *Weightless Matter*  
Puerta Roja, Hong Kong, 2017

**Untitled 1801, Puerta Roja**  
Gladys Nistor  
Objets de Lumière Series  
Site-specific installation  
Variable dimensions  
2018





## PE LANG b. 1974, Sursee, Switzerland

Pe Lang is a Swiss artist currently living and working in Berlin and Zurich. After completing his certificate in electrical skills in 1994, he began to experiment with mechanical sound objects presenting them in the form of live performances and installations at various European and North America art spaces and festivals around the world. His handcrafted minimal kinetic sculptures combine simple movements into a cacophony of sounds and patterns. From a background in experimental sound art, he developed a deep interest in the succession of complex movements. He carries on the tradition of constructivist and kinetic art using basic mechanics.

The artist repeats mundane actions such as crumpling paper or evaporating water droplets until an incidental harmony and elegance is achieved. Each action takes place in an abstract grid that still exists within a frame, maintaining a connection to traditional painting. The *Colour* series, exhibited in Puerta Roja's 2018 joint exhibition with Galerie Denise René, *Movement*, uses vertical strips of coloured filters that undulate to create a hypnotic visual symphony. The work produces an optical effect as the eye instinctively follows geometric patterns from the arrangement of contrasting colours. Pe Lang's work represents computational programming using analogue mechanics. Each action is similar to a binary code; a singular component is relatively simple, but when performed in multitude, he achieves a surprising complexity. Simultaneously, Pe Lang does not repeat every action to perfection, slight variations create motions and patterns similar to the underlying structures in nature. Although we often see the digital and natural world as opposing entities, the artist's practice reveals a common ground between the two.

The artist's first solo exhibition with Galerie Denise René was in 2015. He has exhibited in museums and institutions including the Lentos Art Museum, Austria; The Netherlands Media Art Institute; the Museum of Fine Arts, Switzerland; the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart in Germany; the Utah Museum for Science, Technology and Art, USA; the Centro de Arte Santa Mónica, Barcelona; Kunsthalle, Bern; Växjö Art Hall, Sweden; and Inter Communication Center [ICC], Tokyo. In 2014 he participated in *Thingworld: International Triennial of New Media Art* at the National Art Museum of China. He has been involved in several projects with culturally diverse organizations and individuals working with art, science and technology. These included a collaboration with ISEA, a non-profit organization that encourages interdisciplinary academic discourses, participating in their 2016 exhibition in Hong Kong with Connecting Spaces. Pe Lang was awarded the coveted Swiss Art Award in 2009 and 2010 as well as artist residency programs at the Cornell University in New York and the Technorama in Winthertur, Switzerland. His work has been acquired by private and public collections including the Espoo Museum of Modern Art and the Saastamoinen Foundation Collection, Finland; the Boghossian Foundation, Brussels; the Artphilein Foundation, Liechtenstein; Borusan Contemporary Museum, Istanbul; Exploratorium, Museum of Science, Art, and Human Perception, San Francisco and the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation for Art, Michigan.



Installation shot: Pe Lang, Galerie Denise René: Espace Marais, Paris, 2015. © D.R (rights reserved)



**Color n°18**

Pe Lang

Motor, aluminium, colour filters, mechanic parts

80 x 50 cm

1+1AP

2017



**HANS KOOI** b. 1948, Nieuw Lekkerland, The Netherlands

Hans Kooi was born and raised in the Netherlands, nearby the Krimpenerwaard rivers. From a young age he was captivated by the continual movements in nature, especially that of water and the rhythmic tidal cycles. In 1966 he studied at the Rotterdam Academy of Visual Arts and Technical Science and graduated in 1974 with a desire to develop an artistic practice that incorporated his scientific knowledge with a visual language. Heavily influenced by artists such as George Rickey and Alexander Calder, Kooi embarked on his journey to recreate the movement observed in nature.

At first, Kooi was obsessed with motors and magnetism leading him to an over-complicated, robotic outcome. In time, Kooi simplified his method, relying only on magnetic fields to procure smooth, tranquil motion. Through his work, Kooi explores the boundaries between science and nature with the ultimate goal of achieving a balance between the two. Upon his choice of kinetic sculpting the artist states: *"Without a doubt the reason lies in nature. I was born and raised in a neighbourhood surrounded by rivers. Water is movement, rivers full of action and mobility. What really fascinated me were the tides. The infinity and movement in nature are the elements that have been captured in my sculptures"*. Kooi's kinetic sculpture, *ST n° 6/2016*, presented in *Movement* (2018) follows the artist's distinctive style of minimal organic forms that move slowly and repetitively around one another. The movement is created from two opposing magnets placed inside the delicate objects.

Kooi's work has been acquired by public and private collections in the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Sweden and the USA. Galerie Denise René showed his work for the first time in 1986 and has represented him ever since. He has been exhibited in several museums: the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo in the Netherlands; The Musée d'Ixelles and the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Belgium; and the Kouvala Art Museum in Finland.



Installation shot: *Hans Kooi*, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 2017. © D.R (rights reserved)

**ST n° 6/2016**

Hans Kooi

Concrete, wood, and acrylic sculpture with magnets

148 cm h. x 56 cm d.

2016





**MARIANO FERRANTE** b. 1974, Bahía Blanca, Argentina

A self-taught artist since he was 10 years old, Mariano Ferrante studied mathematics, science, architecture and design in Mar del Plata, Argentina. In 2001, he would commit himself to his artistic production and start exhibiting his works after one year of studies in Spain. Ferrante is one of the most dynamic and innovative young successors of a long tradition of geometric abstract masters from South America.

His practice exudes energy and optimism as his post-war predecessors did. Under the beautifully constructed surfaces underlies a current of irregularities, controlled accidents that make the composition alive, personal, human. He creates mathematical structures with rules, only to break them in the smallest corners of his multichromatic canvases and installations. He creates the illusion of repetition, when in reality every line and every stroke is different from the previous one. He invites us to face an optimistic whilst imperfect future. A future where science continues to bring progress, but where human sensibility and imperfection make it vibrant. *Movement* (2018) presents a brand-new series of works titled *Monocromo* that create the illusion of a single colour plane whilst consisting of intricate chromatic constructions.

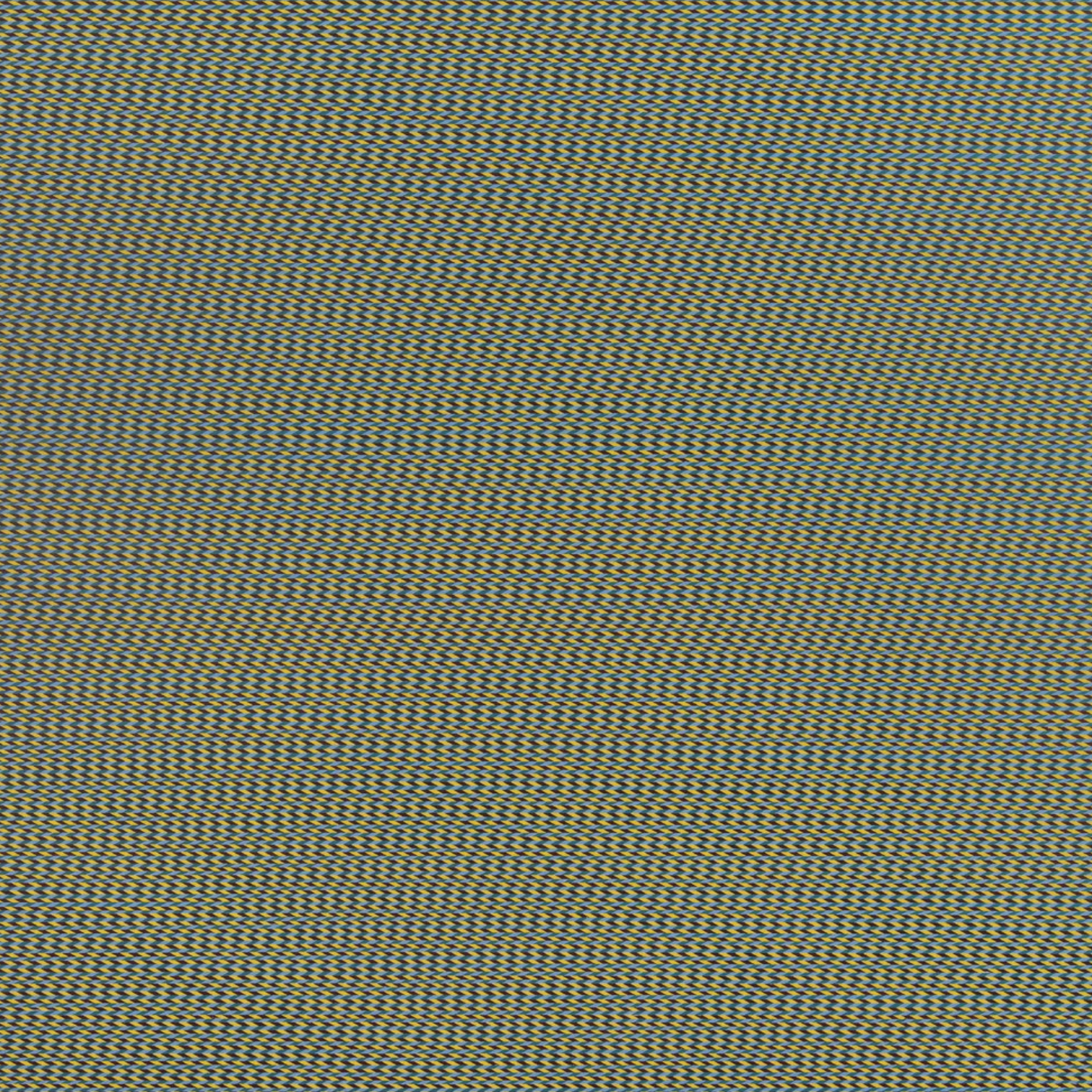
By 2009 and with several individual and collective shows -including the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires- he was awarded a creators grant by the Metropolitan Foundation for Culture, Arts and Science in Argentina. In 2010, he created several public installations for landmark buildings in Argentina. The British Council invited him to represent Argentina in the international education project *Rivers of the World*.

Mariano Ferrante is represented by Puerta Roja in Asia, since his first solo exhibition in Hong Kong, *Geometric Abstraction* in 2015.

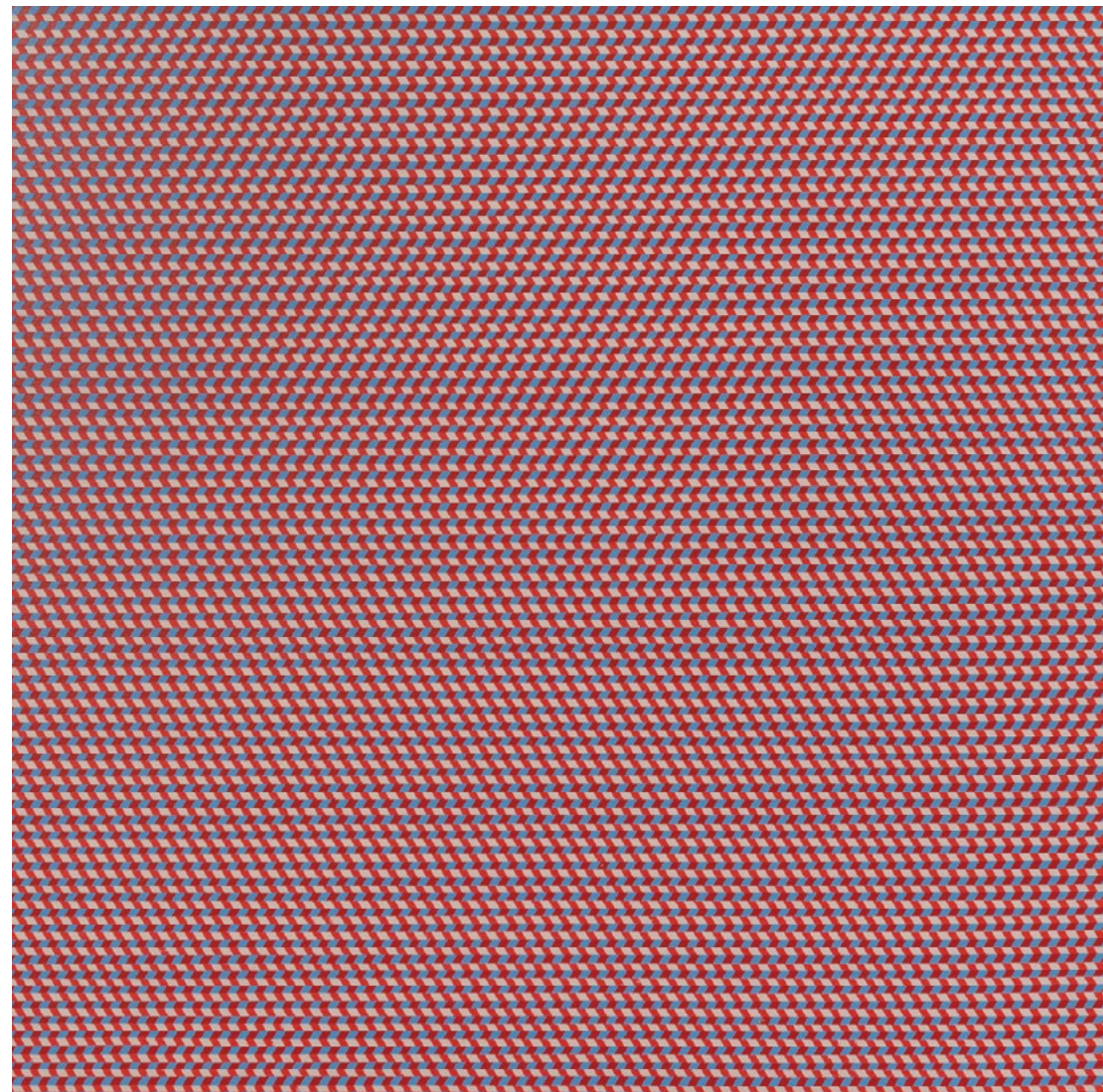


Mariano Ferrante, Mural  
Carlos Pellegrini Building, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2010





**N8 Monocromo**  
Mariano Ferrante  
Acrylic on canvas  
180 x 180 cm  
2017



**N7 Monocromo**  
Mariano Ferrante  
Acrylic on canvas  
86 x 86 cm  
2017



## OLIVIER RATSI b. 1972, France

French artist, Olivier Ratsi, is interested in different perceptions of space, time and matter. From his early photographic series, he echoes cubist concepts, as he digitally collages architectural photos taken from different times and perspectives. His interpretation of space is carried forward in large-scale installation using light, sculptures and projection mapping.

In the series *Perspicere*, Latin for 'looking closely', Ratsi used a technique to warp perception using light and optics. He made three variations of sculptures in different materials; first in polycarbonate then painted wood and finally a combination of both. The structure of the sculptures exploits Euclid's Optics, a mathematical theory that deals with the geometry of vision. An alignment is created between certain angles of the sculptures and natural vantage points, confusing the viewer with contradicting information as visible in *Perspicere, square 1.1* exhibited in *Movement* (2018).

Ratsi was always fascinated with the vanishing point and the role of optical perspective in the history of art. From his meticulous studies of spatial representation, combined with technical and scientific knowledge, Ratsi is able to understand and distort the perception of space: "*I override perspective conventions in order to break with the 'normality' in front of us — that which seems obvious at first glance. Challenging perspective allows me to ask questions on many different levels about our own perceptions.*"

Olivier Ratsi has gained recognition for his live video performances and installations, and musical collaborations with the collective AntiVJ. Since 2008 he has participated in music festivals around the world, expressing his practice in an accessible and experiential way. Ratsi has had solo-exhibitions in France, Japan and the United States. In Asia his works have been exhibited in several museums including China's, The Power Station of Art in Shanghai, and the K11 Art Village in Wuhan, Korea's D-Museum in Seoul, and the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. In 2015 Ratsi exhibited for the first time with Galerie Denise René in *Cinétique Numérique Aujourd'hui*.



*Echolyse (Pelure 1p1)*, Olivier Ratsi, 2018 , 2 projectors, white cyma, 100 x 250 cm each  
© D.R (rights reserved)

**Perspicere, square 1.1**

Olivier Ratsi  
Polycarbonate  
20 x 20 x 20 cm  
2016





## ABOUT PUERTA ROJA

Since its foundation in 2010 by Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, Puerta Roja has pioneered the promotion of established and emerging contemporary artists from Latin American and Spain in the Asia-Pacific region. Puerta Roja prides itself as being at the forefront of the development of the local contemporary art scene as well as having a growing impact on the regional art ecosystem. Under the leadership of Alvarez-Nichol, who is also Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association (HKAGA), Puerta Roja collaborates with a wide network of renowned dealers from Latin America, Asia and Europe, and participates in the top international art fairs in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Sydney and Korea. The gallery invests in the primary market, arranges for commissions, sources specific mandates and intermediates in the secondary market, primarily between Asian and Latin American private collectors.

## ABOUT GALERIE DENISE RENÉ

Denise René, a pioneering gallery known since its creation for the absolute coherence of its aesthetic choices, is a Parisian gallery that is inseparable from the history of modern art. Established in the 1944 effervescence of the Liberation of Paris with Victor Vasarely's first solo exhibition. The gallery presented the ground-breaking *Le Mouvement* in 1955, revealing and supporting artists in the currents of geometric abstraction and kineticism. A new generation of artists like Yaacov Agam, Jesús Rafael Soto, Pol Bury, Jean Tinguely and Robert Jacobsen met Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder and Victor Vasarely who launched his *Manifeste Jaune* (Yellow Manifesto) on the occasion of the exhibition, marking the official birth of Op Art and Kineticism.

Since Denise René's passing in 2012, the gallery continues its specific work to inscribe the presence of contemporary creation with a historical reference curriculum under the leadership of Denis Kilian. Highlighting the relationship between the legacy of abstraction and kineticism, with the most recent productions of emerging artists on the international scene, the gallery presents works which continue to celebrate the genre of Op and Kinetic Art.



Adriana Alvarez-Nichol and Carlos Cruz-Diez, Paris, 2017  
© Photo: Carlos Alvarez Alvarez



Yvaral, Le Parc, Denise René and Soto, Galerie Denise René, Krefeld, 1967  
© D.R (rights reserved)



This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Movement* in collaboration with Galerie Denise René at Puerta Roja, Hong Kong, 2018.

Credits:

Texts: © Puerta Roja (unless otherwise stated)

Photographs: © Carlos Cruz-Diez / ADAGP, Paris 2017, © D.R (rights reserved)

Editor: Laura Zhang | Designer: Lorenza Brancadoro

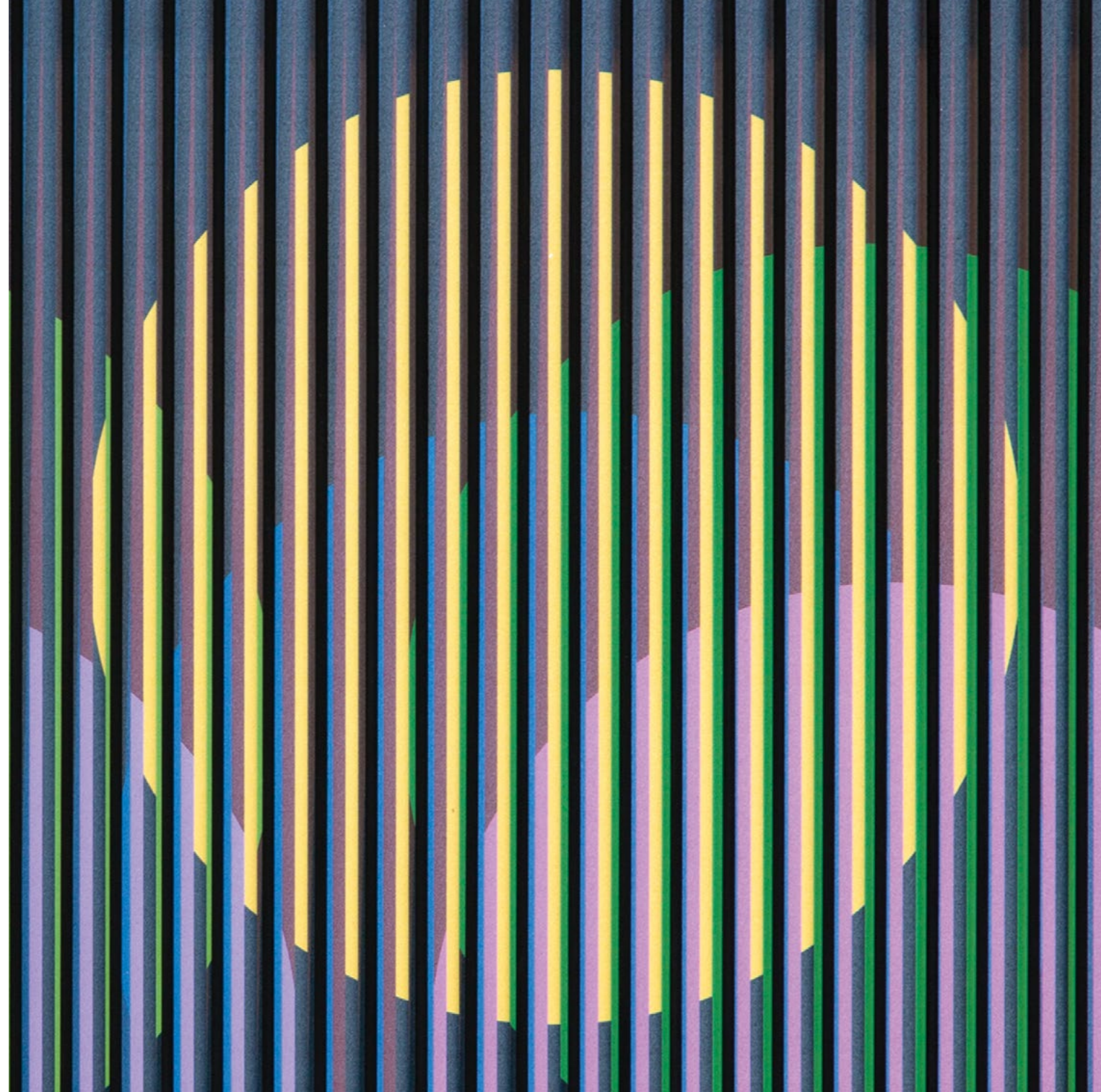
Cover:

**Chromointerférence Spatiale Décembre**

Carlos Cruz-Diez

Chromography on aluminium, 40 x 60 cm, Ed. 8, Paris 1964/2017

(detail of the work in opposite page)







PUERTA  
ROJA 紅門



Puerta Roja | 1F SOHO 189 Art Lane, 189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong  
[www.puerta-roja.com](http://www.puerta-roja.com) | [info@puerta-roja.com](mailto:info@puerta-roja.com) | +852 2803 0332



[FRENCHMAY.COM](http://FRENCHMAY.COM)