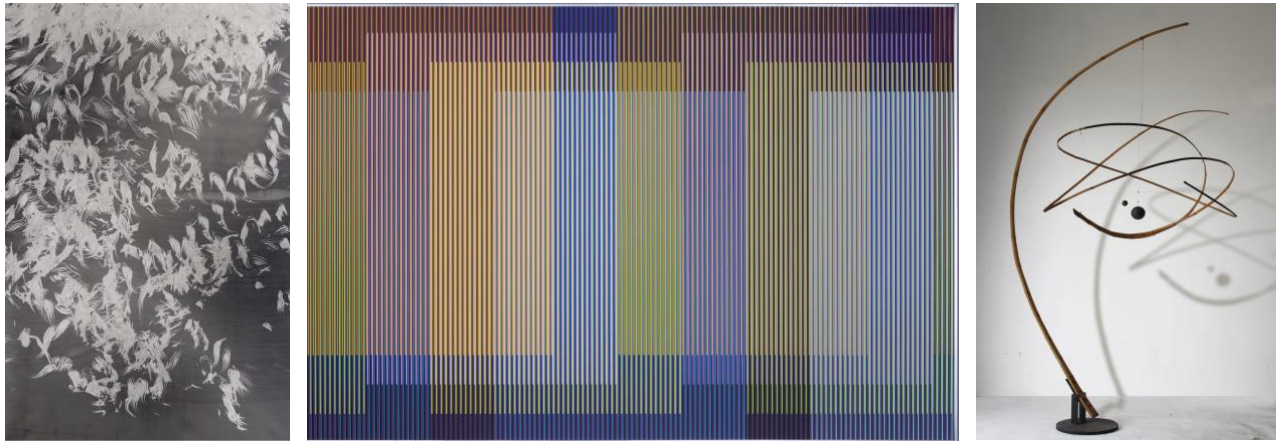




Press Release

Puerta Roja Presents Movement in Abstract Art at KIAF 2018

New works by Op and Kinetic master Carlos Cruz-Diez alongside bamboo mobiles by Laurent Martin 'Lo' and 'nature paintings' by Fernando Prats included in the group exhibition



Left: *Affatus 2*, Fernando Prats, Smoke and bird-wing beat on canvas, 195 x 130 x cm, 2018. Centre: *Psychromie 1865*, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Chromography on Aluminium, 100 x 150 x cm, 2013. Right: *What a Small World*, Laurent Lo Martin, Smoked Bamboo, Taiwanese lacquer, titan braid thread, leads, ceramic balls, steel base, 295 x 165 x 130 cm, 2018

30 AUGUST, 2018 – HONG KONG – Puerta Roja returns to Korea International Art Fair (KIAF) for the fifth time on 4 to 7 October 2018, furthering the gallery's continued commitment to the fair and the Korean art market. Curated by Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, Puerta Roja's Founder and the Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association, the booth reflects the gallery's eight-year vision to introduce top Spanish and Latin American art to the Asia Pacific. This year the selection for the fair focuses on five artists who explore the concept of movement through various forms of abstract art.

The project presents works by 20th century Op and Kinetic Art master Carlos Cruz-Diez and introduces for the first time in Korea the work of Chilean artist Fernando Prats, leading up to the artist's first solo show in Hong Kong opening at Puerta Roja's space in SoHo 189 Art Lane, on 13 November 2018. Accompanying them, the booth will also feature bamboo mobile sculptures by Laurent Martin 'Lo', which have captured the imagination of Asian audiences over the last two years, alongside the rhythmic works on canvas and paper by younger artists María García Ibáñez and Javier León Pérez. The gallery has sold works by all four artists, now returning to the fair, to prominent collections in Korea.

Following the success of the gallery's recent exhibition *Movement (2018)*, a joint exhibition with the Parisian Galerie Denise René, Puerta Roja continues to explore the concept of movement through different approaches to abstract art. *Movement* presented a historical narrative of the socio-political context and personal relationships that generated the Op and Kinetic Art movement in the 20th century alongside its lasting legacy through works by following generations. Puerta Roja's 2018 KIAF booth will further this dialogue by juxtaposing the Op and Kinetic genera with a variety of different artistic approaches, techniques and materials used when investigating the concept of movement.

From Carlos Cruz-Diez, the booth presents new works from the *Psychromie* series developed in 1959. The three-dimensional works feature a flat surface of vertical bands rendered in a contrasting palette and arranged with mathematical regularity into multiple geometric planes. Each structure creates a "light trap" where colours transform when seen from different angles. As the viewer moves, colour dissolves and oscillates from one chromatic range to another, generating virtual colours not present in the support.



The artist's work has been well-received across the Asia Pacific since 1988 when *Physichromie Double Face* was installed in the Olympic Park in South Korea. The artist, now aged 95 and who continues actively working, has been widely honoured around the world. Puerta Roja has been representing the work of Cruz-Diez in Asia since 2016. In 2017 to great acclaim, the gallery presented *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Mastering Colour*, his first gallery solo exhibition in the region. Puerta Roja also prides itself in having placed the artist's works in important Hong Kong, Indonesian and Korean collections during various Asia Pacific art fairs, including the private collection of Higgin Kim at KIAF 2017.

In contrast to the works of Cruz-Diez, the booth presents monochrome *Bird Paintings* by Fernando Prats, never-before exhibited in Korea. The works record a bird's flight on smoked canvas. Uncontrolled wingbeats mark the surface, depicting the bird's movement through a process in between abstraction and sequence photography. Prats is internationally renowned for devising unique pictorial systems, far removed from the instruments of a painter, in order to generate images that record fleeting natural actions, exposing not only the beauty of nature but also the violent and destructive reality of our fluctuating environment. Prats represented Chile at the 54th Venice Biennale and was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Scholarship in 2006, among other achievements. Puerta Roja began representing Prats earlier this year and will open his first solo-exhibition titled *Nature Paintings* in Hong Kong on 13 November, 2018.

After the incredible success of Laurent Martin 'Lo's bamboo mobiles in KIAF last year, with prominent private Korean collections, including the Koo House Museum, acquiring seven works during the fair, the artist returns with new works, including the outstanding large-scale piece *What a Small World*. His sculptures rely on perfect gravitational balance to rotate gracefully, drawing curves of harmony like the gracious strokes of Chinese calligraphy to immerse the viewer in the physical and sensorial virtues of the organic material. The artist's practice has developed around Eastern philosophical and spiritual beliefs he has encountered during his travels across Asia, which inspired his first solo-exhibition in Asia, *Zhu Qi [竹氣]*, held by Puerta Roja in 2018. Concurrently the gallery highlighted his works in Art Central, presenting *Floating Tea House (2017)*, a large dome-like bamboo installation originally produced for the Wu Yuan Arts and Culture Centre in Taiwan. The artist will be present at KIAF 2018 and available for interviews.

Two younger artists explore the movement of the hand in relation to patterns in nature: Javier León Pérez's discourse creates oscillating abstract landscapes through the process of detailed repetition, invoking the philosophical idea of Li (理), referring to the underlying geometry in the natural world. María García Ibáñez also explores organic geometry through drawing, which lies at the core of her very experimental practice. Most recently, her painstakingly detailed drawings are then laser cut to generate movement through the play of shadows. In a span of a few years, both artists' work has become part of collections in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea.

Adriana Alvarez Nichol, Founder of Puerta Roja and Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association says: "We are honored to be invited back to KIAF to participate in the fair for the fifth time this year, given the quality of the Korean contemporary art scene. We find collectors to be very knowledgeable and demand the highest standards, particularly when it comes to conceptual integrity and technical execution. We believe our carefully curated selection of works advocate for the diversity and universalism in Spanish and Latin American art while relating to the sophistication of the Korean audience."

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About Puerta Roja

Puerta Roja, founded in 2010 by Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, pioneers the promotion of established and emerging contemporary Latin American and Spanish artists in the Asia-Pacific region. Puerta Roja's programme focuses on expanding the understanding of Latin American artists' contribution to the development of global art movements, selecting artists whose discourse remains relevant to the Asia Pacific.

Its exhibitions have introduced masters' works from South American Geometric Abstraction, Op and Kinetic Art to Mexican Modernism such as Soto, Tomasello, Siqueiros and Carrington. In 2017, the gallery presented the first commercial exhibition of Carlos Cruz-Diez in Asia. Puerta Roja also supports the internationalisation of emerging artists as well as presenting experimental mediums including, amongst others, the ground-breaking new media monumental installations by world renowned digital pioneer Miguel Chevalier, "nature made" paintings and installations by Fernando Pratts, and Asia inspired bamboo mobile sculptures by Laurent Martin 'Lo'.

Firmly rooted in Hong Kong, Puerta Roja prides itself in developing cross-cultural bridges furthering the regional and local ecosystems. Focused on the Asia Pacific, the gallery has developed deep relationships with established collectors across the region and brings top international standards to art fairs in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea and Australia.

Puerta Roja fosters collaboration partnering with galleries and art organisations locally and internationally. Its community engagement and educational programme nurtures the next generation of art enthusiasts and the local public. Puerta Roja proudly supports Para Site, Neptune, the WMA Awards, the Sovereign Art Foundation and regularly contributes to other social and environmental charities.

Alvarez-Nichol is a founder and current Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association, represents Hong Kong at the Asia Pacific Art Gallery Alliance and is a stranding judge in the Masters of the Art WOI Awards.

About Carlos Cruz-Diez

Franco-Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez (b. 1923, Caracas, Venezuela) has dedicated his life to the research of colour, lines and perception and is hailed as one of the precursors of the Optical and Kinetic art movement from the 1950s. Since Cruz-Diez's first solo exhibition in Caracas in 1947, his participation in MoMA's polemical 1965 show of then-new Op Art movement and his 1970 representation of Venezuela at the Venice Biennale, Cruz-Diez has had hundreds of exhibitions and retrospectives around the world.

Cruz-Diez's work is included in more than 60 museum collections worldwide including, amongst others, MoMA (USA); Tate Modern and the Victoria and Albert Museum (UK); Centre Georges Pompidou and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (France); Kunstmuseum (Switzerland); Wallraf-Richartz Museum (Germany); The Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney) and the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (Taiwan). Recent touring shows include *Circumstance and Ambiguity of Colour* which was presented in major museums across China between 2013 and 2014, as well as the ground-breaking exhibition *An Imagined Museum: works from the Centre Pompidou*, Tate and Museum fur Moderne Kunst, which can be seen at Centre Pompidou-Metz through 27 March 2017. In 2018, the UBS Lounge at Art Basel Switzerland, dedicated an entire exhibition to works by Cruz-Diez in celebration of UBS's 25 years as lead partner with Art Basel. The presentation focused on the 1979 architectural interventions at the former Union Bank of Switzerland building.

Cruz-Diez's work has been well appreciated in Asia Pacific since 1988 when *Psychromie 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*. Over the course of his career, Cruz-Diez has received many prestigious awards including the International Prize for Painting at the IX Sao Paulo Biennial. He was bestowed as Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters and Officer of the National Order of the Legion of Honour in France. He also received an honorary Doctorate by the Universidad Central of Venezuela. In 2014 he was guest of honour at the Royal Academy of Arts and the following year he was awarded the Turner Medal in London. In 2016 he received the International Trebbia Award in Prague, and he is the SCAD DEFINE ART 2017 Honouree.

About Fernando Prats

Representing Chile at the 54th Venice Biennale, Fernando Prats presented three projects: *Gran Sur* (2011), *03:34:17* (2010) and *Acción Chaitén* (2009). *Gran Sur* documented his expedition to Elephant Island in the Antarctic where he installed a neon-sign with the words: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success". In the two accompanying works, Prats ventures to areas recently effected by natural disasters. In the piece *03:34:17* he collected traces in the aftermath of earthquake in Chile. Similarly, in *Acción Chaitén* he focused on the impact of the 2008 volcanic eruption. Puerta Roja has represented Fernando Prats in Asia since 2018.



Fernando Prats trained at the Escola Massana Barcelona, the University of Chile, and the University of Barcelona. Prats rose to prominence through his documented expeditions (such as *Gran Sur*), undertaken largely in Chile. Prats' artistic career has been furthered by multiple scholarships and distinctions, among them the John Simon Guggenheim Scholarship (2006-2007), the Kunst-Station Sankt Peter Köln residency in Cologne, an honor scholarship from the President of the Republic of Chile (1997-2000 and 2002-2003), and various other visual art prizes. Prats has also been involved in international exhibitions such as the Poland Mediations Biennale (2012), the Triennial of Chile (2009) and the Universal Water Exhibition in Zaragoza, Spain (2008). Currently the Barcelona City Council has commissioned Prats to carry out a monumental project in the Pablo Neruda Square to memorialize the poet's leading of 2000 Spanish political refugees from France to Chile in the late 1930s.

Puerta Roja is proud to represent Fernando Prats in Asia since 2018.

About Laurent Martin 'Lo'

Born in France, 'Lo' was trained as a visual artist but for many years worked as a creative director in advertising and fashion. 'Lo's first encounter with bamboo was completely circumstantial, but as he recalls: "It was love at first sight." Bamboo became his obsession, a passion so strong that drove him to become a full-time artist and begin a journey of discovery that he refers to as his *Bamboo Routes*.

In 2004 he set out for Southeast Asia, travelling to remote areas in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, learning old techniques from the communities for whom bamboo is an essential resource. Beyond craftsmanship, 'Lo' learned the strong spiritual and emotional charge within bamboo. In 2011, with the support of the World Bamboo Organisation, he began his second journey to Central America to study the spatial properties of the medium, and the use of contemporary techniques to build bamboo structures. He then travelled to Indonesia, Korea and Taiwan, where in 2017 he was invited to participate as the most prominent contemporary artist in *Bamboo Traces: Contemporary International Bamboo Art and Craft Exhibition*, a museum exhibition at the National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute.

'Lo's exquisite bamboo creations are well appreciated internationally as well as in the Asia Pacific region. His works have been acquired by prominent collectors around the world, including Hong Kong renowned architect William Lim; fine jewellery designer and board member of M+ Museum Hong Kong Ms. Kai-Yin Lo; and Vicky Lung, the President of Sun Jet Construction Taiwan. Most recently, 'Lo's work was acquired and installed at the Koo House Museum of Art and Design, a private museum in South Korea. Laurent Martin 'Lo' is a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and currently lives and works in Spain. He has been represented by Puerta Roja in Asia Pacific since 2015.