

# Couleur et Géométrie

ACTUALITÉ DE  
L'ART CONSTRUIT  
EUROPÉEN

FRANCAIS  
DEUTSCH  
ENGLISH

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Ce catalogue accompagne l'exposition *Couleur et Géométrie*. Actualité de l'art construit européen, qui aura lieu successivement à :

Sens, Orangerie des Musées et Bibliothèque Municipale (14 mars - 13 juin 2010)  
Halle, Kunstverein Talstrasse e.V. (3 septembre - 10 octobre 2010)  
Nürnberg, Kunsthaus (28 octobre - 5 décembre 2010)  
Kielce, National Museum (14 janvier - 27 février 2011)  
Marcigny, Centre d'Art Contemporain Frank Popper (été 2011)

sous le patronage de Messieurs les Maires et Maires-adjoints à la culture, ainsi que les responsables de ces différentes villes et institutions, que nous remercions très vivement pour leur collaboration.

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Catalogue :

Sylvie Ballester-Radet, Florence Jackiw.

Nos remerciements s'adressent tout d'abord à tous les artistes qui ont accepté de participer à cette manifestation européenne de l'art construit.

Notre reconnaissance va aussi aux auteurs des différents textes du catalogue, Frank Popper, professeur émérite d'esthétique à l'université Paris-8 Vincennes/Saint-Denis, Bernard Fauchille, conservateur honoraire des Musées de Montbéliard et Michel Bohbot, expert en art contemporain, historien de l'art.

Nous voulons associer à ces remerciements tous ceux qui ont apporté une précieuse contribution à cette manifestation : Rüdiger Behschnitt, Janie Bréger, Gerhard Hotter, Henri Prosi, Georges Silva, Franz Späth, Colette Viot.

Nous remercions par ailleurs nos partenaires qui ont soutenu ce projet :

Le Lions Club Nürnberg Meistersinger, GFK (Nürnberg), Cabinet d'architecture Jürgen Bisch à Nürnberg, La Galerie Konkret Martin Wörn.

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Kunstverein  
"Talstrasse" e.V.  
Halle/Saal

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# Couleur et Géométrie

ACTUALITÉ DE  
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Editions Musées de Sens

A Sens, depuis plusieurs années, le public découvre l'art construit. En juin 2003, *Art construit dans l'Yonne* présentait des artistes régionaux ; en octobre 2004, *50 Quadrat*, en partenariat avec la Galerie Konkret de Sulzburg, imposait aux participants un format rigoureux et identique (50 x 50 cm).

Aujourd'hui, notre ambition s'élargit à l'Europe. Cinquante artistes de treize nationalités différentes ont accepté de collaborer à cette exposition *Couleur et Géométrie - Actualité de l'art construit européen*. Tous travaillent dans l'esprit de cet important mouvement artistique né au début du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, « l'art construit » ou « concret ». Tous ne sont pas sur le devant de la scène, mais prouvent par leurs recherches et leurs créations que ce concept est toujours présent et vivant. Dans des créations nouvelles, à travers des formes, des matières et des techniques différentes et variées, ils nous offrent un panorama très riche de cet art.

A cette vitalité des œuvres et des intervenants s'ajoute la collaboration fructueuse avec plusieurs partenaires institutionnels. Après avoir débuté aux Musées de Sens, cette exposition sera présentée, grâce au concours efficace de Gerhard Hotter, successivement en Allemagne, au Kunstverein Talstrasse de Halle et au Kunsthaus de Nuremberg, puis en Pologne, au National Museum de Kielce, pour revenir en 2011 en France, à Marcigny, au Centre d'Art Contemporain Frank Popper. Nous sommes très fiers de cette participation européenne.

Cette manifestation a été soutenue aussi par un éminent spécialiste, Frank Popper. Théoricien de l'art, critique, commissaire d'expositions et professeur émérite d'esthétique à l'université Paris-8 Vincennes/Saint-Denis, il s'est illustré par ses recherches sur l'art optique et cinétique. D'une inlassable curiosité et d'une grande ouverture, Frank Popper a suivi la naissance de ce projet et propose ici une analyse tout à fait remarquable de cet art géométrique. Bernard Fauchille, conservateur honoraire des Musées de Montbéliard, familier de ces créateurs qu'il a souvent exposés, remet dans une vaste perspective historique cette tendance artistique vers des formes épurées, vers la géométrie. Enfin Michel Bohbot, expert en art contemporain et historien de l'art, apporte une conclusion pertinente à notre catalogue. Nous les remercions vivement tous les trois.

Née sous de tels augures, cette exposition *Couleur et Géométrie - Actualité de l'art construit européen* est promise à un bel avenir auprès de nos différents publics.

**Jean-Pierre VIOT**  
Commissaire de l'exposition

**Lydwine SAULNIER-PERNUIT**  
Conservateur  
Musées de Sens

## KUNSTVEREIN »TALSTRASSE« E.V. — RAUM FÜR BILDENDE KUNST IN HALLE (SAALE)

1994 schuf sich der Kunstverein »Talstrasse« e.V. in Halle (Saale) in einer spätklassizistischen Villa eine Begegnungsstätte, in der regelmäßig Kunstausstellungen, Lesungen, Gesprächskreise über Kunst und Politik stattfinden. In einem Haus, das seit den frühen 1950er Jahren als Atelierhaus und Arbeitsstätte vielen Halleschen Künstlern diente, begann der Verein mit regelmäßigen Ausstellungen.

Mittlerweile ist der Kunstverein »Talstrasse« e.V. mit seinen Aktivitäten nicht mehr aus dem Kulturbetrieb des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt und der Region Mitteldeutschland wegzudenken.

Der programmatische Spannungsbogen zwischen Geschichte und Gegenwart charakterisiert im Wesentlichen die Arbeit des Kunstvereins. Dabei legt er Wert auf die Vorstellung zeitgenössischer Kunst in ihrer Vielfalt und verschiedensten Tendenzen.

Regionale Bezüge setzen ebenso Schwerpunkte wie die Vorstellung nationaler und internationaler Kunstentwicklungen. Thematische Expositionen sind für den Verein von besonderer Bedeutung, ebenso wie die Beschäftigung mit speziellen Genres wie Bildteppichen, Architektur, Glas oder Plastik. Auch werden junge Künstler regelmäßig mit in das Programm einbezogen. Dies geschieht oftmals in enger Zusammenarbeit mit Kunsthochschulen.

Neben dem regelmäßigen Ausstellungsprogramm veranstaltet der Kunstverein »Talstrasse« e.V. immer wieder Lesungen, Konzerte, Podiumsgespräche und Feste.

Der romantische Felsengarten hinter der Villa ist über die Sommermonate für alle interessierten Besucher zugänglich.

Eng verbunden mit der Ausstellungstätigkeit ist die publizistische Arbeit des Kunstvereins. Es ist Anliegen zu möglichst vielen Ausstellungen Kataloge herauszugeben, um mit kompetenten Autoren gezielte Themen genauer zu beleuchten. Der Kunstverein »Talstrasse« e.V. ist auch regelmäßig mit einem Stand auf der Leipziger Buchmesse vertreten.

Der Verein steht jedem offen, der sich für Kunst und Kultur interessiert.

**Christin MÜLLER-WENZEL**  
Kunsthistorikerin  
Kunstverein »Talstrasse« e. V.  
Halle

## ZUFALL UND ORDNUNG - KALKÜL UND SINNLICHKEIT

Konkrete Kunst hat in Nürnberg eine besondere Tradition. Sie geht zurück bis in das Jahr 1969, als der damalige Direktor der Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Dietrich Malow, eine Biennale konkreter Kunst ins Leben rief. Diese fand allerdings keine Fortsetzung bis Diet Saylor im Jahr 1980, zu dieser Zeit bereits einer der renommiertesten Vertreter der konkreten Kunst im internationalen Kunstkontext, den Impuls aufgriff und die Ausstellungsreihe »Konkret« begründete.

Nach zehn fulminanten Präsentationen konkret-konstruktiver Kunst ging diese verdienstvolle und viel gelobte Reihe »Konkret« 1990 mit einer ebenso imposanten wie international beachteten Doppelschau in der Kunsthalle und im Kunsthaus Nürnberg nach zehn jähriger Folge zu Ende.

Insgesamt waren an diesem Ausstellungsprojekt 85 international renommierte Künstler beteiligt, darunter Altmeister wie Rupprecht Geiger und Gerhard von Graevenitz, aber auch Dan Flavin, Günter Fruhtrunk und Francois Morelet waren vertreten, ebenso Leon Polk Smith, Garry Woodley und Ellsworth Kelly um nur einige zu nennen.

Seit die Pioniere der strengen Form (wie Piet Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg, Vordemberge-Gildewart, Max Bill und Richard Paul Lohse) dem realistisch-naturalistischen Malen ebenso wie den emotional gesteuerten Bilder-Welten ihren eigenen Kosmos des Klaren, Rationalen und Transparenten entgegengestellt haben, hat es kaum eine Kunstrichtung im turbulenten 20. Jahrhundert gegeben, die sich in den 80<sup>er</sup> Jahren der Moderne derart variantenreich, aufgefächert, auch verästelt dargeboten hätte.

Diesem Kosmos des Klaren und Rationalen begegnet Diet Saylor, indem er als Künstler wie als Kurator für ein neues Verhältnis zwischen Empfinden und Vernunft in der konkreten Kunst plädierte und ein Gleichgewicht zwischen Denken und Empfinden empfahl.

Prägnant markierte Saylor seine künstlerische Position innerhalb der konkreten Kunst dann auch in seinem bemerkenswerten Vortrag, den er 1989 im Centro Cultural de la Villa in Madrid 1989 hielt, wenn er davon sprach, dass die künstlerische Arbeit von »Empfindung und Vernunft, Intuition und Planung, Moment und Prozess, Kraft und Stille, Gleichgewicht und Ausdruck und noch vieles mehr« bestimmt sei, wohl wissend damit die Grundprinzipien der geometrischen Kunst - einer Kunst die ehemals vom kühlen Kalkül und vom Diktat der Form um ihrer selbst willen determiniert war - in Frage gestellt zu haben.

Auf diesem Hintergrund ist Saylor mit der Ausstellungsreihe »Konkret« gelungen zu zeigen, wie sinnlich und spannend konkrete Kunst sein kann, die nicht an »orthodoxe Positionen« (Diet Saylor) gefesselt ist, womit er nicht nur richtungsweisende Maßstäbe setzte, sondern auch Parameter vorgab, in denen konkret-konstruktive Kunst sich äußert - bis heute.

Die Spuren dieser Tradition in die Zukunft zu verlängern ist Anliegen des Kunsthauses, das mit der Ausstellung »Farbe + Geometrie«, rund 50 Künstler aus 13 Ländern vorstellt und einen Überblick über aktuelle Positionen konkreter Malerei und Skulptur gibt.

»Farbe + Geometrie« versteht sich weniger als Versuch einer Bilanzierung noch will sie ein spezifisches Phänomen innerhalb der konkreten Kunst konturieren. Vielmehr schließt sie an jene Konzepte zeitgenössischer Malerei und Skulptur an, die Farbe nicht als Mittel, sondern als Gegenstand thematisieren. »Farbe + Geometrie« bringt dazu aktuelle Bezüge ins Spiel und versucht so die Diskussion zur Tradition der Farbmalerie und ihrer Weiterentwicklung zu bereichern.

Künstlerischen Positionen liegt meist ein wohlgedachtes Konzept zugrunde. Dennoch sind sie nicht immer leicht zu erfassen, denn sie zeigen uns eine Welt, die oft jenseits der bekannten Räume und Objekte unseres Alltags existiert. Umso wichtiger ist es daher einem breiten Publikum den Zugang zu dieser Welt zu öffnen, denn Kunst schafft die Möglichkeit, neue Horizonte für sich zu entdecken.

**Petra WEIGLE**  
Kunsthaus  
Nürnberg

National Museum in Kielce is an institution with over a hundred years long tradition which finds the value of past undeniable. Still, we are aware of challenges of the present. The Museum cannot and does not want to underestimate those for there is always a human being at the end, curious of art and history, whose passion is waiting to be awoken. These are our very guests for whom we want to bridge generations, cultures, eras and nationalities. The Museum owns precious artefacts in fields of painting, artistic craftsmanship, folk art, archaeology and nature. We treat museum education with special care in order to provide also the youngest visitors with sufficient outlook on those reach realms. Quality matters to us, for which reason we have been pioneers in implementing quality managing system coherent with ISO 9001:2008. We want to serve our visitors and partners with highest standards and we are open to cooperation, also international one.

We believe the exhibition *Colour and Geometry* assembling artworks of many world-famous artists to be a prominent cultural event in Poland, Germany and France - countries where works of Belgian, Swiss, Swedish, Japanese, Dutch, Hungarian, English, Venezuelan, Polish, Austrian, German and French artists will be exhibited within this great artistic project.

**Dr Robert KOTOWSKI**  
Director  
National Museum  
Kielce

Le Centre d'art contemporain Frank Popper accueille avec enthousiasme cet exceptionnel ensemble d'œuvres réunies grâce aux Musées de Sens et à Jean-Pierre Viot, commissaire de l'exposition.

Nous sommes un jeune centre d'art contemporain associatif, d'initiative privée, indépendant. Le Professeur Frank Popper, historien d'art et théoricien, nous a légué un fond d'œuvres optiques, cinétiques et lumino-cinétiques des années 60 à aujourd'hui, et nous avons à cœur de perpétuer son travail de recherche, dans un esprit d'ouverture et de curiosité.

Notre but est de faciliter l'accès à l'art contemporain, sous ses formes diverses, sans exclusive, pour des publics éloignés des grandes villes, à travers des expositions, conférences, animations scolaires, formations. Notre démarche est pédagogique : nous portons une attention toute particulière au jeune public et accueillons de très nombreuses classes de tous niveaux (plus de 190 classes depuis 2008). Tous les visiteurs sont accompagnés par des médiateurs culturels (nous les formons) qui présentent les œuvres et les situent dans leurs contextes historique, sociologique et artistique. Nous travaillons ainsi à l'intégration de l'art dans la vie quotidienne.

Après l'exposition inaugurale du Centre en 2008 : *Carlos CRUZ-DIEZ - la couleur dans l'espace* (montrée d'abord à la Maison de l'Amérique Latine à Paris), puis la restauration et la présentation de la donation Frank Popper en 2009 (accompagnée d'une publication) et une exposition d'œuvres de Vasarely en 2010, cette exposition-ci trouve naturellement place dans notre programmation. Or, de nos jours encore, l'art géométrique, concret et minimal, est d'un accès difficile : c'est un art éloigné tant des effets de mode que du divertissement. La venue de cette exposition au Centre d'art contemporain Frank Popper répond à sa vocation : aider, grâce aux œuvres d'art, « à vivre et à comprendre notre présent\* ».

\* Aline Dallier-Popper, in *Œuvres optiques et lumino-cinétiques*, Collection Frank Popper, vol. 1, ouvrage collectif, 2009, p.13.

**Franz SPÄTH, Georges SILVA**  
Fondateurs  
Centre d'art contemporain Frank Popper  
Marcigny



FRANK POPPER

LA COULEUR DANS L'ŒUVRE DE TROIS PROTAGONISTES  
DE L'ABSTRACTION GÉOMÉTRIQUE : HERBIN, ALBERS ET LOHSE

DIE FARBE IN DEN WERKEN DREIER PROTAGONISTEN  
DER GEOMETRISCHEN ABSTRAKTION: HERBIN, ALBERS UND  
LOHSE

COLOUR IN THE WORK OF THREE PROTAGONISTS  
OF GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: HERBIN, ALBERS AND LOHSE

I would like to focus first on colour in the work of **Auguste Herbin** (1882 - 1960). His work provided an essential link between 20<sup>th</sup> century geometric abstraction, as practised by pioneers like Mondrian, Malevitch or Kupka, and today's chromatic geometrisation.

Herbin spent many years developing a theory of colour in relation to literature, philosophy and music. By 1943 he had established what he called his "plastic alphabet", which he used for spelling out esoteric correspondences between colours and geometric forms, or notes of music and letters of the alphabet. His colour theory was not based on physics or mathematics but rather on the ideas of Goethe and Rudolf Steiner.

From religion-based censure of figuration to Steiner's anthroposophy, not forgetting Baudelaire's sound/colour correspondences and Rimbaud's coloured vowels, many sources were combined in Herbin's theories. He developed a whole system - impersonal and therefore, in his view, universal - for converting letters into forms and colours, starting from everyday words such as bread, fruit, no, spring, destiny, clarity.

In *Danseuse* (1942) his alphabet was not yet completely utilized, but two years later he made full use of it in *Air Feu* (Air Fire). Between 1949 and 1951 he painted a series based on the seven days of the week and wrote the following detailed description of his painting entitled *Vendredi* (Friday):

- V. Black. Reflection of the spiritual, of what dies - inverted triangle form - first dominant letter in the word - at once opposition and intimacy with the N in VEN -in the sound VEN, the letters V and N are the most important: V black and N white,
- E. Red. Colour flash of the living -in VEN the letter E is secondary, though indispensable for defining the sound,
- N. White. Reflection of the mind in the soul,
- D. Light red. In DRE the letter E becomes the strongest - D and R have only a formal importance - E is more important in DRE than in VEN,
- R. Light blue. Colour flash of the soul,
- E. Red. Here red must dominate,
- D. Light red. D's role is merely formal,
- I. Orangish. Revelation of divine love - in DI the letter I is just as important as the letter E in DRE.

In his article on Herbin's Week (catalogue for the exposition *Les années 1950*, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1988), Serge Fauchereau commented, "Do we need to know all this in order to appreciate *Vendredi*, or any other painting by Herbin ? Fortunately, no. The word serves only as a pretext, a justification for the painter." And Herbin himself told Raymond Bayer, "Ultimately, the letter doesn't exist. What matters is the form it gives me, and the colour."

Colour was also the principal theme in the teaching of **Josef Albers** (1888 - 1976). A Bauhaus professor, Albers moved to the United States in 1933 and taught at Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina, where his students included young artists destined for fame like De Kooning, Motherwell and Rauschenberg.

His work after 1949, under the general heading "Homage to the Square", established Albers as the initiator of the geometric abstraction movement in America. He had a decisive influence on many American artists of the generation working in the 1960's. Thus, given his intense and continuous experience with colour on plane surfaces, Josef Albers

may be viewed as an artist who had a profound impact on geometric and chromatic art. But he also created a series of black and white pieces entitled *Structural Constellations*, which offer double interpretations. So I would place him at the intersection of the Bauhaus - source of experimentation with the interaction of colour - and the American school, with its interest in series. Albers' *Homages to the Square* present both formal optical effects and coloured combinations which are calculable and multipliable. In his work, the square becomes an inexhaustible field of research. This square, always rigorously precise, is placed inside the body of two or three other squares, also rigorously precise. As Michel Seuphor has said, this is where we see the full importance of colours, the effect they can have on the retina, and thus on the mind. Indeed colours, in the presence of certain other colours, can become "heroic" stimulants. The repetition of the square ad infinitum makes this process somehow epic, with phases unfolding before our eyes through the endless number of hypostases made possible by harmonizing or contrasting colours, the osmosis or opposition of tonalities.

The square is in fact overwhelmed by colour. Though expressed in the strictest possible terms, it is nonetheless immersed. Colour overrides form, and Albers' *Homages to the Square* become homages to colour, triumphant.

Basically, Albers presented a certain number of "colour quantities", easily measurable and quantifiable, in interaction, as he wrote in his didactic essay entitled *Interaction of Colour* (published in 1963). This book dealt particularly with psychological issues linked to colour, notably the Bezold effect, which Albers used creatively in his *Homages to the Square* series. But there is more at work here than just interaction, or a mutual enhancement or modulation of colours: there is also the painter's determination to maintain, insofar as possible, each colour's own identity or, as he put it, the colours' "faces".

For his part, **Richard Paul Lohse** (1902 - 1988) worked in depth on the systematization of colour, and his attempts to mathematize chromatic phenomena have been pursued still further in the recent work of cybernetic and computer artists.

According to Lohse, image and method are synonymous, and a logical sequence of structures falls into place simultaneously with the predetermined - but limitless - succession of colours.

The artist's programmed works are founded on the study of the relationship between a given structure and the virtual combinations which it contains. Such works may be considered as an application of the laws of physics and mathematics in aesthetic terms.

To understand Lohse's approach to colour it is important to know that he was trying to situate each colour within a network of relationships. From the early 1940's he worked on horizontal progressions unfolding in cadence with the established order of colours, and, as the years went by, colour came to dominate the image more and more. Lohse may be seen as the creator of a world of intensely vivid colours, radiant with liberating joy. Thus, following laws and proportions extended into the tight relationships between pictorial elements and the limits of the image, the artist generated balanced syntheses of colours and forms.

Lohse described the aesthetic aim of his approach in the analysis of one of his thematic series: "The construction of the image takes place within a square structure in 180 parts of six horizontal lines, each with eighteen identical and continuous degrees of yellow, orange, red, violet, blue, green and yellow-green. The formal and chromatic order is determined by a complex principle of organisation: repetitions of values in all the lines, equal distribution in quantities of all the colours within the lines and on all the surfaces. The change of one colour within a line leads to a change in all the lines and a change in the overall structure."

For Lohse, mathematics was the basis for colour theory, while Herbin analysed colour in connection with linguistics and musicology, and Albers founded his theories on principles of physiological interactivity. In conclusion, I think it may be said that many artists currently working in geometric abstraction have a similar rapport with colour theory and analysis.

**Frank POPPER**  
Professor Emeritus of the University of Paris



BERNARD FAUCHILLE

PERSPECTIVES HISTORIQUES

HISTORISCHE ÜBERLEGUNGEN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chaque titre de séquence est accompagné d'un extrait du texte de Bernard Fauchille.

Non-figurative geometric painting was not born in the winter of 1906, when one Pablo Picasso painted *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J. version O). Cubism and its many offspring (of whom this exhibition offers a fine contemporary overview) descend from a long line of ancestors who cannot be ignored....

Geometry (which in Greek meant "to measure the earth", for determining land taxation) harks back to time immemorial. Its first traces may be seen in certain prehistoric caves like those at El Castillo in Spain (c. - 12,000 years), where we find squares and circles of crosses, probably religious or magical inscriptions. As in many European prehistoric sites, the rock paintings also portray animals with amazingly accurate draftsmanship: rhinoceros, mammoths, ruminants.... The strange dichotomy of abstraction and realism was already evident - and we have still not fully emerged from it. Its traces may be seen today in the present religious graphic works of the Australian aborigines of Arnhem Land, and in the work of other allegedly "primitive" peoples.

On another continent, in Africa, painting and sculpture were explicitly fused with a religious vision of the world. The Mossi people of Upper Volta, the Ibibio of Nigeria and the Bwa of Burkina Faso created masks using a strangely stylized geometry (checkerboard patterns, circles, squares, extremely simplified and expressive), very striking for our European minds. Unfortunately, their meanings remain largely alien and incomprehensible for us, and even after more than a century (these "primitive" arts were discovered, or rather "re-read", by artists first in Dresden, then in Paris in 1906), we retain only a plastic impression, which in fact had a certain effect on the first Cubism, and on many 20th century artists.

This tendency, this taste for pure and symmetric form is found again and repeated in the pottery of Samarra (Mesopotamia, fifth millennium B.C.) and Transcaucasia (second millennium B.C.), while on the other side of the Mediterranean, in Egypt, the perfection of the pyramids (28th century B.C.) seems to link the World of the Dead to the World of the gods.

There was also a geometric period in Greek culture: the funerary urns of Dipylon (c. 770 B.C.) in Athens, with their tight network of lines and right angles, show a sort of abhorrence of the void, perhaps in empathy with the anguish of departed souls. A bit later, architects calculated the proportions of each architectonic element in their temples. Pythagoras (sixth century B.C.) and Plato (429-347 B.C.) wrote at length about the geometric structure of the universe and its Harmony, based on rhythm and proportion. For his part, the sculptor Polyclitus sought absolute beauty in the proportions of his *Spear Bearer* (c. 445 B.C.), an approach once again taken up during the European Renaissance. In Alexandria (third century B.C.), Euclid perfected the system we know today.

Of course the Romans also used geometry, but in a more decorative register, in mosaics. Only much later did a new direction emerge, in the 8th century manuscripts of the Irish monks (with their dizzying interlacements) and the Arabic art of the 14th and 15th centuries (in certain illuminated volumes of the Koran or in ceramic murals such as the azulejos of Granada and Seville, for example). In these works the developments of star hexagons and octagons lead the eye and mind through an endless labyrinth, far from our familiar, measurable world, towards a superhuman infinity.

Western Europe also sought the formula for measurable beauty. In the first half of the 13th century, the architect Villard de Honnecourt filled notebooks with designs for churches and sculptures based on the star pentagon, the triangle or the cross.... Around the same time Leonardo of Pisa (Fibonacci) perfected his famous Series of proportions, which led to the Golden Number, destined for great things in the late 19th century.

Later, the Renaissance offered a new exploration of the world, not only in terms of routes to the Indies but also in an original view of humanity -rational, if not scientific. From the late 1400's to the late 1500's, the Ancients were much translated and edited, while the Moderns analysed, published, sometimes polemicized, in an on-going dialogue. P. Uccello, P. Della Francesca, A. Dürer, L. da Vinci, F. Di Giorgio, L. B. Alberti, L. Pacioli and many others sought to transcend superficial appearances and discover the proportions of the ideal body, the secrets of eternal beauty, even though Dürer's *Melencolia* (1514) invites us - with compass in hand -to measure the vanity of this endeavour....

In his Discourse on Method in 1637, R. Descartes seemed to reveal the supremacy of strict geometry (as did Spinoza), but this Discourse (idealized, perhaps wrongly, as the paragon of French thought...) failed to close the debate. In Spain, Italy, Germany and then in the Americas, baroque design, the "Jesuit" style and rococo rebelled against geometry and reason in favour of movement, with exuberant feeling and effect.

Geometry, during this period, never got beyond the domain of Mimesis, occupied throughout the Renaissance (non-figurative art was unconceivable). The 18th century saw an emerging rivalry between the partisans of Line and those of Colour (Apollo and Dionysus, to caricature a little). This quarrel went on through the late 19th century, with a brief truce during the French Revolution and the cult of the goddess Reason, soon contradicted by pompous dogmatism and impassioned diatribe. A little earlier, in the architecture of one Etienne Louis Boullé and his *Design for Newton's Cenotaph* (1784), geometry reappeared, with overblown rhetoric and weighty symbolism.

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Cezanne, too, sought timeless structures for his landscapes, garden produce and still life paintings. As we know, he centred his approach around the cone, the cylinder and the sphere, all of them in perspective.... Whether valid or not, this approach, combined with the discovery of archaic or "primitive" cultures (Hispano-celtic, African...), became the source for Cubism, in its attempt to penetrate the veneer of things - already eroded by Impressionism. Rediscovering what is changeless, permanent, and rhythm and proportions... in opposition to the sense of fleetingness which animates Japanese thought, for example.

But deviance is possible. Pure form, rigid, schizophrenic, detached from all pleasure and feeling, can be turned into a fatal and morbid caricature of geometry, at once empty of meaning and stifling, in its cold inhumanity, as it was by German and Italian fascism and by stalinism, particularly in architecture and in the staging of depraved political spectacles....

Through P. Picasso, G. Braque, W. Kandinsky, K. Malevitch, P. Mondrian and many others, and through the 20th century schools and movements ("Cubo-futurism", "Suprematism", "Productivism", "Circle and Square", "Abstraction-Creation", "Concrete Art", "Kineticism", "G.R.A.V.", "Minimal Art", etc., in the field of painting alone), geometry has lived on (even in more individualistic forms) and diversified (in a wide variety of techniques, works, countries of origin, from Venezuela to Japan and from Sweden to Spain...). Geometric art determinedly applies its own systems (light, lines, colour, primary forms, symmetries, proportions, displacements, progressions, rotations...) to an interrogation of reality, where it sifts out the fundamental, permanent structural elements. Artists working in this field build on the rhythm and mathematical harmonies of the universe. Their work requires an attentive mind, silence and meditation. At some distance from lyrical abstraction, which favours immediate intuition, and from numerous other approaches, sometimes too concerned with passing fashions, geometric abstraction seems to open a door to an infinite pleasure and a certain eternity, as each artist present here today has shown.

**Bernard FAUCHILLE**

Honorary Director of Museums, Montbéliard

TRAITS, LIGNES  
ET RYTHMES

A. Wiederkehr  
O. Bertrand  
N. Thomas  
H. Herpich  
H. Prosi  
J. Carter  
C. Bézie  
P. Boillot

« ...retrouver l'immuable,  
le permanent,  
le rythme,  
les proportions... »

## ESPACES ET VOLUMES

I. Tyson  
R. Demyttenaere  
J.-P. Viot  
I. Glass  
J. Blum-Kwiatkowski  
H. Vergouwen  
A. van Lier  
E. Delbrassine

« ...Cézanne veut lui aussi découvrir les  
structures intemporelles d'un paysage,  
d'un jardinier, d'une nature morte.  
On le sait, il voulait recourir au cône,  
au cylindre, à la sphère, le tout mis en  
perspective... »

## CODES ET MATHÉMATIQUES

J. Linschinger  
W. Kloppers  
J. Niemeyer  
J. Pamula  
A. Dubreuil  
K. Navrot  
G. Hotter  
P. Van Zon  
W. Luczaj  
J. Gil  
A. Rubens  
Y. Popet  
A. Kunen

« ...l'artiste de la tendance  
géométrique construit une œuvre qui épouse le  
rythme, les harmonies  
mathématiques de l'univers... »

## LUMIÈRES ET CINÉTISME

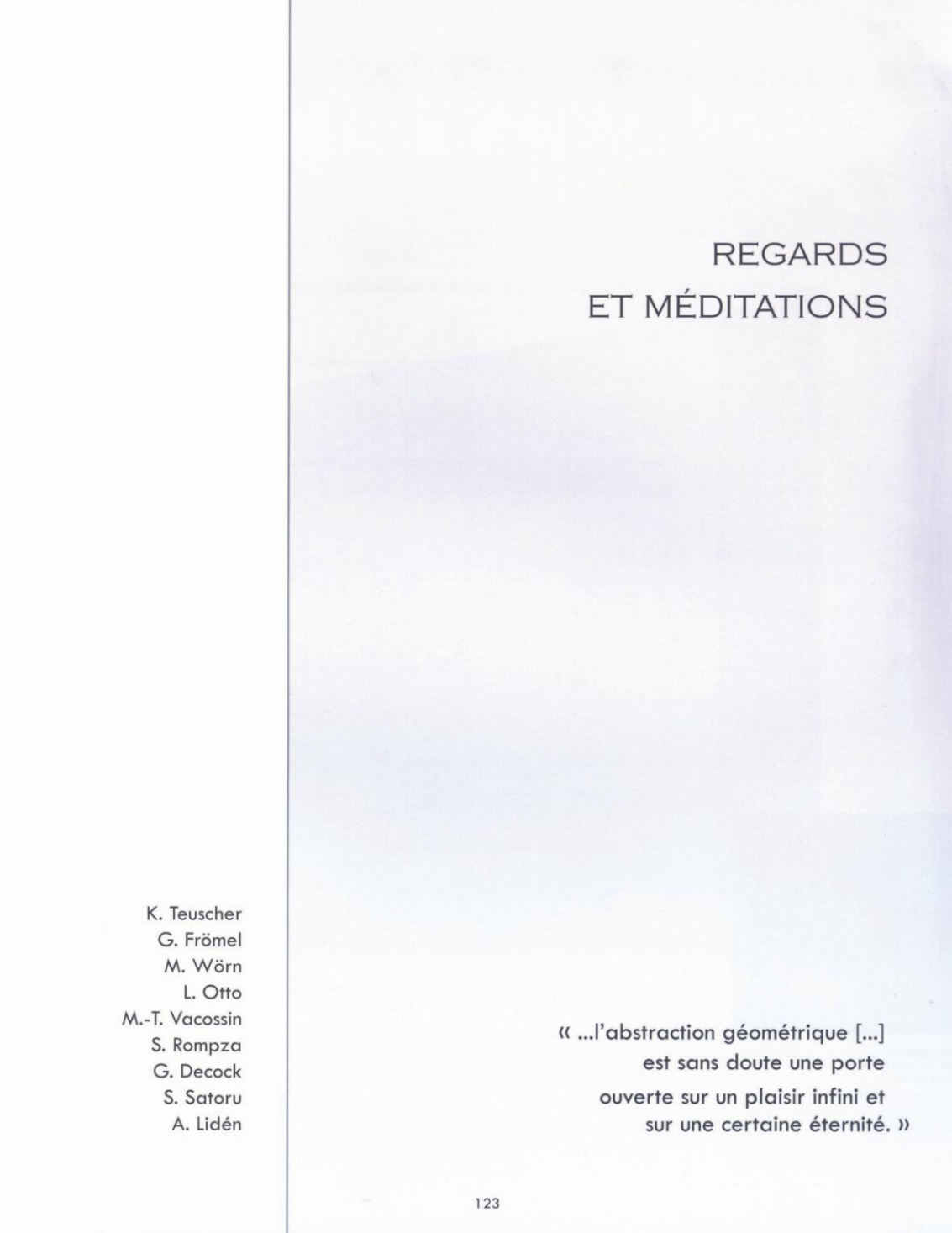
C. Cruz-Diez  
M. Mori  
H. Bruch  
M. Prantl  
M. Arvelaiz-Gordon  
J. Kuhn

« ...la géométrie continue à vivre  
(même sous des formes plus individualistes),  
à se diversifier... »

## DUALITÉS

D. Saylor  
A. Klein Kranenborg  
F. Späth  
C. Pasquer  
T. Ridell  
J. Berdyszack

« ...percer la pellicule  
des choses... »



REGARDS  
ET MÉDITATIONS

K. Teuscher  
G. Frömel  
M. Wörn  
L. Otto  
M.-T. Vacossin  
S. Rompza  
G. Decock  
S. Satoru  
A. Lidén

« ...l'abstraction géométrique [...] est sans doute une porte ouverte sur un plaisir infini et sur une certaine éternité. »



MICHEL BOHBOT

UN ART CONJUGUÉ AU PRÉSENT ET AU FUTUR

EINE KUNST IN GEGENWART UND ZUKUNFT

AN ART IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE TENSES

We all respond to things, people and places in relation to our own origins, our education, tastes and past experience. We approach each object, event or encounter with our whole being, and the full weight of what is commonly called our "baggage". What attracts us to a painting, a sculpture, a mask or an exposition? There seem to be many reasons, whether objective or unconscious or subjective, all of them hard to pin down and analyse; these are our mysterious elective affinities.

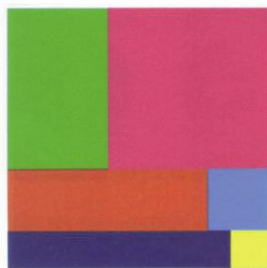
To speak of an object, a painting or an event is always to speak of oneself, in an often enigmatic relationship of seduction, involving one's own intellectual pleasure and sensitivity. We are at once players, audience and recipients, and I am no exception. Everything in this beautiful exposition, in its concept and in the works exhibited, speaks to me and resonates in me. Geometry, sobriety and rigourousness are also attractive to me in fields outside contemporary art: in cathedral paving stones, Tibetan mandalas, American Indian sand paintings, the labyrinths of the Australian Aborigines, African masks, Polynesian tapas.... This exposition contains all that could be asked of painting and sculpture: density, meaning, rigourousness and inventiveness, diversity of materials, mastery of space, purity, tensions, opportunities for a flight of the mind and for poetry. Its theme is interesting, but also its wide selection of international participants and the exhibitors' decision to include paintings and interior sculptures along with outdoor sculptures -less frequently shown because more complicated to exhibit. But above all, this exposition stands out in its presentation of the living, contemporary immediacy of a historic movement which is sometimes wrongly thought to be over and finished.

Legend has it that when Jean Hélion dared to bring a curve into the flawless octagonality of lines and surfaces, Mondrian retorted, horrified: "Are you becoming a naturalist?" Fortunately, times have changed. The few intolerant and rigid censors of the movement's early years are gone, and, as this exposition shows, a new generation of intelligent and innovative artists has replaced them beautifully. From Poland to Germany, from Switzerland to Japan, from England to France, not forgetting South America, they have given new meaning and new directions to this area of art, proving that bonds with dogma may be breached without betrayal, and new paths may be opened. This brings us back to Mondrian and the pictorial upheaval he went through in the last three years of his life, when his research led to nothing less than intense joy, and he brought delight into seeing. The very last of his works, left unfinished, is entitled *Victory Boogie Woogie* and evokes joy, rhythm, a rapid tempo, and a breach....

In fifty well chosen and well presented works, the artists invited to exhibit here offer proof that concrete art is more alive than ever, at once beyond time and at home in all times, hence in our own time....

Certain museum pediments in France bear the inscription of Paul Valéry's wonderful lines: "Tomb or treasure, I am what you make of me... Friend, do not enter here without desire." I hope that the great poet's wish will be fulfilled by those who come to see this exposition, and that they will enjoy their discovery or rediscovery of this discreet but essential movement of 20th century art.

**Michel BOHBOT**  
Expert in contemporary art  
Art historian



P.A.C. 6-09A, 2009  
Acrílico / Tela, 100 x 100 cm  
(photo Lola Gil)

Julián Gil sait ménager l'attente, se fixer des objectifs, choisir les moyens... Ses systèmes résultent du fait qu'il observe, ordonne et structure un univers de connaissances et d'expériences personnelles. Par ses observations, il crée un ensemble cohérent de choix ; il se concentre sur des choses concrètes ; il crée des limites.

En organisant, il détermine avec précision les méthodes qui s'accorderont avec son système. Quelles démarches entreprend-il pour construire les structures nécessaires à son système et quelles directives doit-il suivre pour déterminer chacune des étapes qu'une œuvre doit suivre pour aller vers un résultat satisfaisant ?

Tout en structurant, il cherche à mettre un ordre dans son travail. Il découvre les lois structurelles et chromatiques qui régissent ses œuvres. Il construit des réseaux complexes qui lui offrent un vaste répertoire, dans lequel il peut choisir les lignes structurelles les plus appropriées et qui l'aideront à créer son œuvre. Les lignes structurelles choisies reflètent un ordre et permettent une division logique et formelle de la surface. Dans certains cas, l'ordre qu'elles contiennent devient palpable parce qu'il existe une grande similitude entre le format du tableau et les lignes structurelles choisies. Dans d'autres cas, c'est la superposition de ce système de lignes sur la surface du tableau qui assure l'harmonisation de toutes ses parties. Dans tous les cas, il s'agit de trouver un ordre non-hiérarchique qui assure qu'aucune zone créée ne soit préférée ou prioritaire sur les autres.

Maria Cuevas, extrait de : Julián Gil, *Pensamiento sistémico-Sistemas dinámicos*

Julián Gil geht mit Erwartungen um, setzt sich Ziele, wählt die Mittel... Seine Systeme ergeben sich daraus, dass er beobachtet, ordnet und eine Welt von Wissen und persönlichen Erfahrungen strukturiert. Während des Beobachtens schafft er ein zusammenhängendes Ensemble von Auswahlmöglichkeiten; er konzentriert sich auf konkrete Dinge; er zieht Grenzen.

Beim Ordnen bestimmt er exakt die Methoden, die mit seinem System übereinstimmen.

Welche Arbeitsschritte geht er, um die notwendigen Strukturen im Innern des Systems zu schaffen, welche Vorgaben muß er befolgen, um jede einzelne Etappe zu bestimmen, die ein Werk auf dem Weg zu einem befriedigenden Ergebnis durchlaufen muss?

Während des Strukturierens sucht er eine Ordnung in seiner Arbeit. Er entdeckt die strukturellen und chromatischen Gesetze, die seine Arbeit regieren. Er konstruiert komplexe Netzsysteme, die ihm ein großes Repertoire bieten, aus dem er jene günstigsten Strukturlinien auswählen kann, die ihm sein Werk erschaffen helfen. Diese gewählten Linien spiegeln eine Ordnung wider und erlauben eine logische und formale Aufteilung der Fläche. In manchen Fällen wird die darin enthaltene Ordnung wie greifbar dank der großen Ähnlichkeit zwischen dem Bildformat und den gewählten strukturellen Linien. In anderen Fällen wird das Netzsystem über die Bildfläche gelegt und garantiert so die Harmonisierung aller Bildelemente. Immer jedenfalls geht es darum, eine nicht-hierarchische Ordnung zu finden, wo keine der geschaffenen Zonen bevorzugt wird oder prioritär über die anderen ist.

Maria Cuevas, Auszug aus: Julián Gil, *Pensamiento sistémico-Sistemas dinámicos*

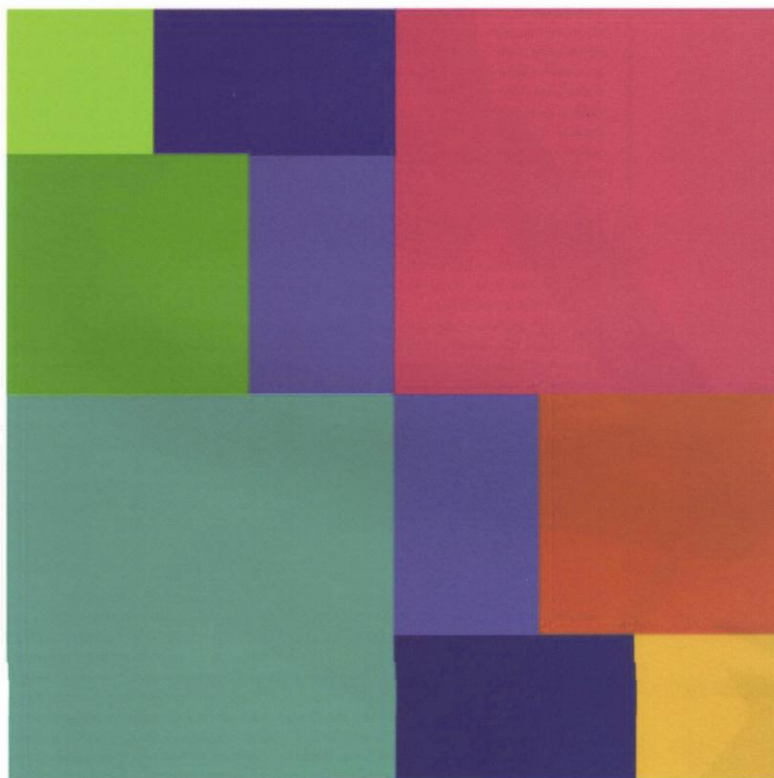
Julian Gil manipulates waiting, sets goals for himself, selects his means.... His systems derive from his observation, organisation and structuration of a world of learning and personal experiences. Through observation, he creates a coherent ensemble of choices; he concentrates on concrete things; he creates limits. Through organisation, he determines precisely which methods will fit the system.

What processes will be used to construct the necessary structures within the system, and what rules will be followed to determine each phase that his work must go through, to achieve a satisfactory result?

In structuration, he seeks an order in his work. He discovers the structural and chromatic laws which govern what he creates. He constructs complex networks, offering a large repertoire from which to choose the structural lines most appropriate for his work. The selected structural lines reflect an order and allow a logical and formal division of the surface. In certain cases, the order they contain becomes tangible because there is a great similarity between the format of the image and the selected structural lines. In other cases, the superposition of the line network on the surface of the image ensures the harmonisation of all of its parts. In each case, the aim is a non-hierarchical order, ensuring that no single area is favoured over the others.

Maria Cuevas, excerpt from Julián Gil, *Pensamiento sistémico-Sistemas dinámicos*

JULIÁN GIL



**P.A.C. 10-01A, 2009**  
Acrílico / Tela, 100 x 100 cm  
(photo Lola Gil)