

GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT WORKS:

THE LATIN AMERICAN VISION
FROM THE 1950s, 60s AND 70s

HENRIQUE FARIA FINE ART

Notwithstanding the recent Latin American extravaganzas at the Museum of Modern Art and NYU's Grey Art Gallery, it is still remarkably unusual to see Latin American artists enjoy their due recognition. Without a doubt, both *New Perspectives* and *The Geometry of Hope* have made leaps to enhance our understanding of Latin America's contribution to modern art. However, decades of oblivion cannot be recovered in a few years. Much indifference has left its mark on the reception of Latin American art in the United States. To cite but one example, the only Latin American included in the Guggenheim's *Abstraction in the 20th Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline* (1996) was Roberto Matta. This might seem odd given today's tendency in the art world to be more inclusive and to embrace international artists. But histories get buried and when the time is right, they get found. The developments of geometric abstraction in Latin America is one such history. Seeking to counter this, *Geometric Abstract Works: The Latin American Vision From The 1950s, 60s And 70s* offers a rare opportunity to view works created by twenty-one Latin American artists during the seminal decades of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Featuring works from an array of movements that flourished in different countries, the show presents a surprising array of paintings, sculptures and works on paper by some of the most important figures of the post-war era who embraced the legacy of Constructivism in Latin America.

Often times I have been asked why artists from Latin America are not better known. Each instance imparts echoes of my own incomprehension on the lack of international recognition some of the artists in the show have endured. There is no simple answer because fluctuating conditions have had differing consequences at different moments. Nonetheless, I will share my thoughts on this complex subject and will provide a short history of some of the most important developments linked to the artists in *Geometric Abstract Works*.

The region's strong Constructivist tradition has its roots in Joaquín Torres-García's theories on *Constructive Universalism*, a visual language uniting European modernism with pre-Columbian art through an intuitive and spiritual kind of geometry. Torres-García, who had been a co-founder of *Cercle et Carré* in Paris, played a pivotal role in the development of Latin American abstraction by disseminating his ideas after returning to Montevideo in 1934 at the Taller Torres-García. Years later, stemming from the avant-garde magazine "Arturo", three schools of abstract art brewed in Buenos Aires in the 1940s as a response to Torres-García's *Constructive Universalism*. Instead, *Grupo Madi*, *Arte Concreto-Invencion* and *Perceptismo*, adhered and expanded upon the tenets of Concrete art espoused by the Dutch modern masters, De Stijl, Max Bill and the Bauhaus. Another reaction against Torres-García's legacy took place in Montevideo in the 1950s by artists who had been members of Madi and then joined forces with José Pedro Costigliolo and María Freire to create the *Grupo de Arte No-Figurativo*. In 1950, a group of Venezuelan artists living in Paris formed the group *Los Disidentes* and edited a magazine of the same name to communicate their rejection of traditional Venezuelan art genres, associating themselves with the dynamic tendencies of European geometric abstraction. The 1950s were also an exceptionally fertile artistic period in Brazil, which was breaking with tradition and actively embracing modernism. In 1952 *Grupo Frente* was founded in Rio de Janeiro and *Grupo Ruptura* in São Paulo.

The blossoming of so many movements throughout the region had economic, political and cultural foundations. A large number of exhibitions stimulated contact amongst artists from different countries and the quality of the exhibitions fostered a climate of considerable exchanges. *The Venice Biennial*, the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, and particularly the *São Paulo Biennial*, inaugurated in 1951, were very significant. The latter especially brought contemporary international art to Brazil on a large scale and fostered a forum for Latin American artists. Later on the *Bienal Iberoamericana de Arte de Coltejer* in Medellín, Colombia, and the exhibitions held at the Panamerican Union in Washington DC, would also provide fruitful interactions. In Caracas, the Venezuelan architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva invited a number of local and international artists to create public works for the campus of Universidad Central de Venezuela, in an effort to integrate art and architecture. Participating artists were Alexander Calder, Jean Arp, Fernand Leger, Alejandro Otero, Omar Carreño and Victor Valera, amongst others. A decade later in Brazil, Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa would also integrate artists into their planning for the newly founded capital, Brasília.

For artists who chose to devote themselves to geometric abstraction it was not an easy road. The leap forward accomplished by the artists in *Geometric Abstract Works* can only be understood if we take into consideration the context that they were responding to. Until then, most developments in the region had been dominated by the influence of the Mexican muralists who had called attention to the legacy of indigenous peoples, race and economics. Adopting some of modernism's most radical concepts was a huge departure for these artists who defied salons and rejected the conservative criteria that reigned at the time. Even today, six decades later, I have heard countless times people utter that they "just don't get it" when speaking about abstraction. In the Manifesto of *Asociación Arte Concreto-Invención*, Tomas Maldonado stated "We concrete artists come from the most progressive tendencies of European and American art. And because we develop from these tendencies, we are against all forms that imply some sort of regression. As such, we are against the mental cowardice and technique of the neo realists. . . against the lyricists of the withered carnation and of the interior worlds, who pretend to reedit, in our moment of reconstruction and struggle."¹ All movements mentioned above signaled a break with past styles and positioned themselves as forward looking. This was a brave decision for young artists at a time when the hostility from governments made their choice politically oppositional to the type of art sanctioned at the time. Perhaps as a consequence many moved to Paris, where the optimism and desire to promote a modern and technologically advanced art through a reworking of geometric abstraction with socially conscious, collective aspirations, was shared by local artists in light of the specificities dealt with in post-war Paris.

The fact that France was far removed from the United States and the former sites of colonial rule, Spain and Portugal, offered a more promising venue for these artists to develop an art that was uniquely Latin American, yet within an international abstract tradition. The arrival of the Latin Americans in Paris was beneficial for them and for the Parisian art scene. Paris in the 1950's offered many outlets for artists adhering to geometric abstraction. The annual *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, created in 1946 by Frido Sidés, was an important space for non-figurative art, as was the Galerie Denise René; and the journal "Art

d'Aujourd'hui" and the Atelier d'art abstrait founded in Montparnasse in 1950 helped disseminate its ideas. These were the favorable conditions that welcomed Alejandro Otero, Carlos Cruz-Díez, Sergio Camargo, Gregorio Vardanega, and others, in Paris. In seeking a more fruitful milieu, these artists also contributed to the success of the post-war revitalization already under way in Paris by bringing with them a belief in the social commitment of art, a conviction stated in their manifestos and texts.

Yve-Alain Bois has rightfully pointed out that artists who settled in Paris had no specific desire to be cast as "Latinos". They did share though, the condition of transculturalism. Bois claims that Harold Bloom's theory of "creative misreading" can be applied to these artists. In "The Anxiety of Influence", Bloom stated that when an artist is influenced in an interesting way by another, in reality the latecomer is actively misreading the earlier work and that the error of interpretation lies at the root of their greatness, because it liberates them from the "anxiety of influence".² Bois singles out Lygia Clarke's work as a creative misreading of the Bauhaus heritage. The other notion Bois addresses is that of foreignness and how it has been linked to the history of modernism. Foreignness entails freedom, a freedom that grants the foreigner the possibility to grasp what is most vibrant in a given culture without the encumbrance of belonging to it. Both ideas resonate tremendously in today's climate of multiculturalism and can be considered not only with regards to the Latin American artists who settled in Paris or New York, like Carmen Herrera and Fanny Sanín, but also with those who immigrated to Latin America. Examples abound but to name a few, Gego, Gerd Leufert, Mira Schendel and Mathias Goeritz, all share this condition.

Emerging from the posture of presenting an installation generated by the works themselves, without following a chronological or geographical order, *Geometric Abstract Works* embraces each individual's aesthetic through aggregation and visual analogies. This allows for juxtapositions that reveal the innovation and originality achieved by each artist, enabling viewers to witness the transculturalism and international cross-fertilization that gave birth to Latin American modernism. In doing so, the exhibition also challenges the view of Latin American art as a single phenomenon, revealing important differences and tensions emanating from the various artistic proposals articulated around geometric abstraction during the three decades being examined.

The earliest work, Martín Blaszczo's *Pintura Madi* (1947), is a wonderful example of this movement's desire to celebrate asymmetry, use vibrant colors and employ irregularly shaped canvases, literally contributing a new edge to abstraction. Other similarly dynamic works are Antonio Lorrens's *Composición* (1952) and José Pedro Costigliolo's *Forma y Espacio No. 5* (1953). The two works by Raúl Lozza fall within the theoretical framework of Perceptism, the movement he founded. The floating shapes on a flat background are dynamized by their interrelationships and the unique colors he employs. This is also true about Maria Freire's *Composición Vertical* (1956). How they differ though is that Lozza's use of enamel on wood to create polished, pristine surfaces is characteristic of the technical perfection sought by him as a means of suppressing any trace of subjectivity that would otherwise distract the observer from the physical presence of the work. Freire's painting on the other hand reveals quite a sensitive and personal geometry. With a similar interest in chromatic issues to those of Lozza, Fanny Sanín's *Acrylic No. 7* (1970) is a delicately balanced composition of stripes, whose simplicity is matched by the audacity of her nuanced color combinations.

A metal sculpture by Julian Althabe from 1955, presents a white prism that seems to dangle in midair, yet is delicately strung to thin black wires that hold it. While Vardanega's *Sagitario-Ecuacion* (1958) creates the illusion of levitation through a dance of tiny triangles sprinkled on a cerulean background. Metaphors of floating in space make sense at a time when progress, aeronautics and mobility were in the air. Valera's *Factor Petroleo 2* (1956) is an early sculpture with movable metal elements; whereas the dazzling stripes on movable planks in Carreño's *Transformable No. II* (1979), make for a dynamic structure that has a visual resonance beyond the two-dimensional structure of conventional painting. The experiential nature of these works invites viewers to interact with them and in Carreño's case, to recreate the composition at their will. Camargo's *Untitled* (c. 1973) a stunning marble sculpture plays with equilibrium by balancing one column slightly off-kilter above another. It is in dialogue with Lauand's *Untitled* (1959), a small black painting with three interconnected forms that juggle in the space for perspectival attention. Lauand's *Untitled* (1960) depicts blocks of muted color in a spare composition that swaddles geometric abstraction in minimalism. Close by, a tiny relief by Camargo with masses of small wood dowels painted white is a fine example of his reflective autonomy.

Meaningful connections can also be made between the incorporation of everyday life materials in some works. Gego's *Drawing without Paper* (1978) consists of a three-dimensional grid structure made of wire and thread, whose lower half contains a swelling formation that disrupts its fragile harmony. Whilst Otero's *Hoy en TV* (1965) belongs to his series of collages *Papeles Coloreados*, where he painted interlocking planes of color over discarded newspapers to celebrate the randomness and absurdity of life. In Gerd Leufert's work on paper from 1973, the softly torn edges of the paper provide a chance element that is in direct contrast to the calculations revealed by the precision of the shape of its black tempera triangles. A related sensibility is at play in three works on paper by Wyllis de Castro (1957/58), which reveal Castro's interest in musical sequences and Concrete poetry.

Yet other works are linked by their optical and kinetic properties. The identically shaped pyramids placed in rows of six by six on a common base by Rafael Pérez in *Obra No. 9* (1967), generate many small sources of tension to the inherent static nature of the picture. The surface of the objects is painted in an intercepted pattern of complementary colors, which creates the illusion of movement when the viewer passes the picture. One of Gego's earliest works, *Gegofon* (1959), consists of hundreds of painted steel lines placed at equal intervals that make up the periphery of a circle when seen from above. Seen frontally, the line's different angles create overlapping fields that emanate a sense of motion. This work is echoed beautifully in the hard-edge painting by Carmen Herrera, *Horizontal* (1965), whose symmetry is sliced by a sharp horizontal sliver. Carlos Cruz-Diez's *Physichromie No. 380* (1968) and Raúl Pavlotzy's *Proyecto Mural* (1958) also have kinetic resonances, while Rogelio Polesello's acrylic works embody a more subtle form of movement.

The links are engaging and compelling to see firsthand. *Geometric Abstract Works* is proof that Latin American artists offered compelling departures from the legacy of European geometric abstraction. Many artists included went on to create large pieces for public spaces. Vardanega's light experiments and Cruz-

Diez's *Cromosaturacion* (1965), presaged the work of contemporary artists like Olafur Eliasson and David Batchelor. Otero created large-scale wind or water propelled constructions made of stainless steel and aluminum, such as the *Delta Solar* (1977) for the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. However, despite their prominence in the 50s, 60s and to a lesser degree the 70s, these artists still remain considerably unknown. Many factors have contributed to this, including political conditions and markets in Latin America, as well as a lack of scholarship, which only recently has been reignited.

Most important though, is that for a long time Geometric Abstraction, Op and Kinetic art were disregarded as lame, detached and noncommittal. So despite the fact that these artists were working with one of the most radical forms of 20th-century art, abstraction, they were set aside by collectors, curators and critics. In the 1960s and 70s radical art was about bodies, feminism, environmental art and beliefs. To illustrate, it is only necessary to recall how critics tore apart *The Responsive Eye* exhibition held at MoMA in 1965, despite the fact that it drew unprecedented public interest, the highest number of visitors in its thirty-six year history. In the 90s the focus on identity based art further submerged the legacy of these artists. Radicalism is ever changing, though, and in this case the idiosyncrasies of history seem to be turning the tide. Many young artists see identity-defined art as limiting. Thus, a return to the story of earlier artists who struggled and effectively coped with that same view is in order. Abstraction as these artists envisioned it, was about freedom and possibility. The 2009 exhibition *Between Spaces* at PS 1 in New York embodies those same ideals and it seems as though abstraction is gaining ground every day, even in photography.

The moderate scale of the paintings resists the epic gesture and monumentality attained by its American counterparts. This intimacy of scale demands much of the viewer though; to look, to ask yourself, to reconsider and to recognize their forays into the pleasures of geometry as an expansive venture. It seems pertinent to quote Michel Seuphor, who wrote "Premiers Maitres de l'Art Abstrait", to accompany an exhibition at the Galerie Maeght in 1949. For Seuphor, it seemed natural that given the firmly established roots of contemporary geometric abstraction, that the movement would continue to thrive by adapting to changing surroundings and circumstances. Times are proving him right.

Monica Espinel

¹ Quoted in Andrea Giunta, *Avant-garde, internationalism, and politics: Argentine art in the sixties* (Duke University Press, 2007), p. 33

² Yve-Alain Bois, "Some Latin Americans in Paris," in *Geometric Abstraction: Latin American Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection*, (Boston: Harvard University Art Museums, 2001), p.78

Julián Althabe
Untitled, 1955
Metal Construction
21 x 10 x 10 in.



Martín Blaszko
Pintura Madi, 1947
Oil on panel
28 x 15 in.



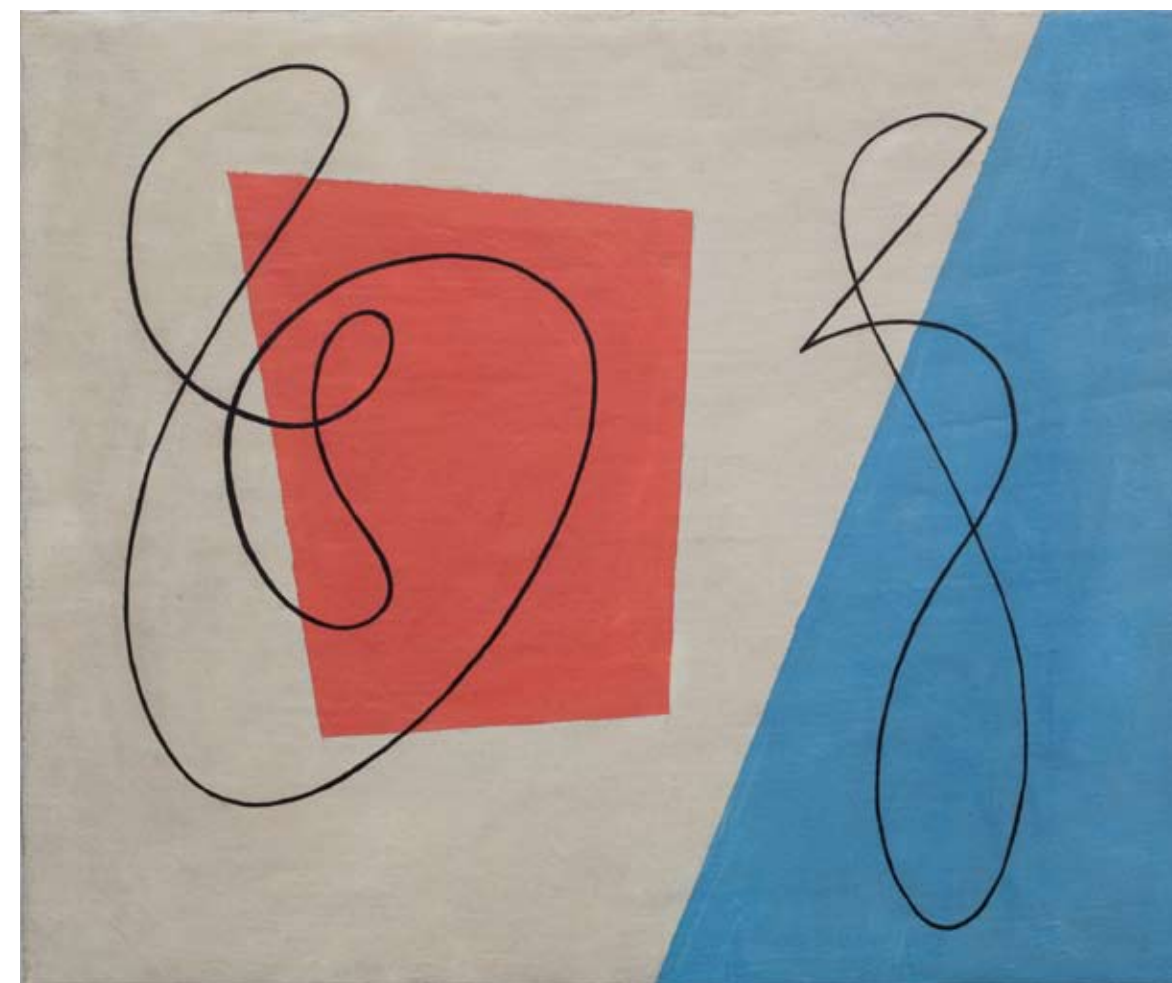
Sergio Camargo
Untitled, 1968
Painted Wood
9 1/4 x 7 1/4 in.



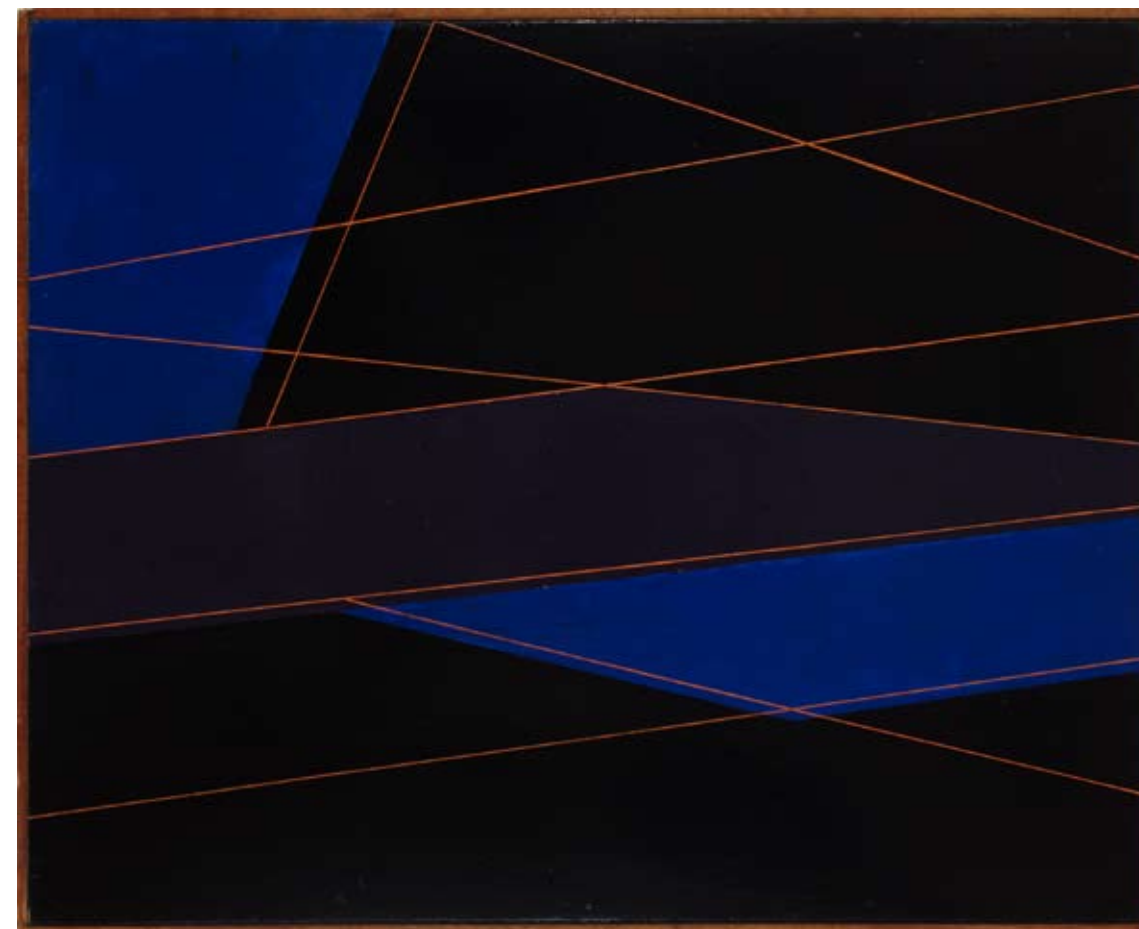
Sergio Camargo
Untitled, c. 1973
Marble
12 x 4 x 4 in.



Omar Carreño
Etude #2, 1951
Acrylic on canvas
18 x 22 in.



Omar Carreño
Dos Azules, 1953
Ripolin on wood
18 x 22 in.



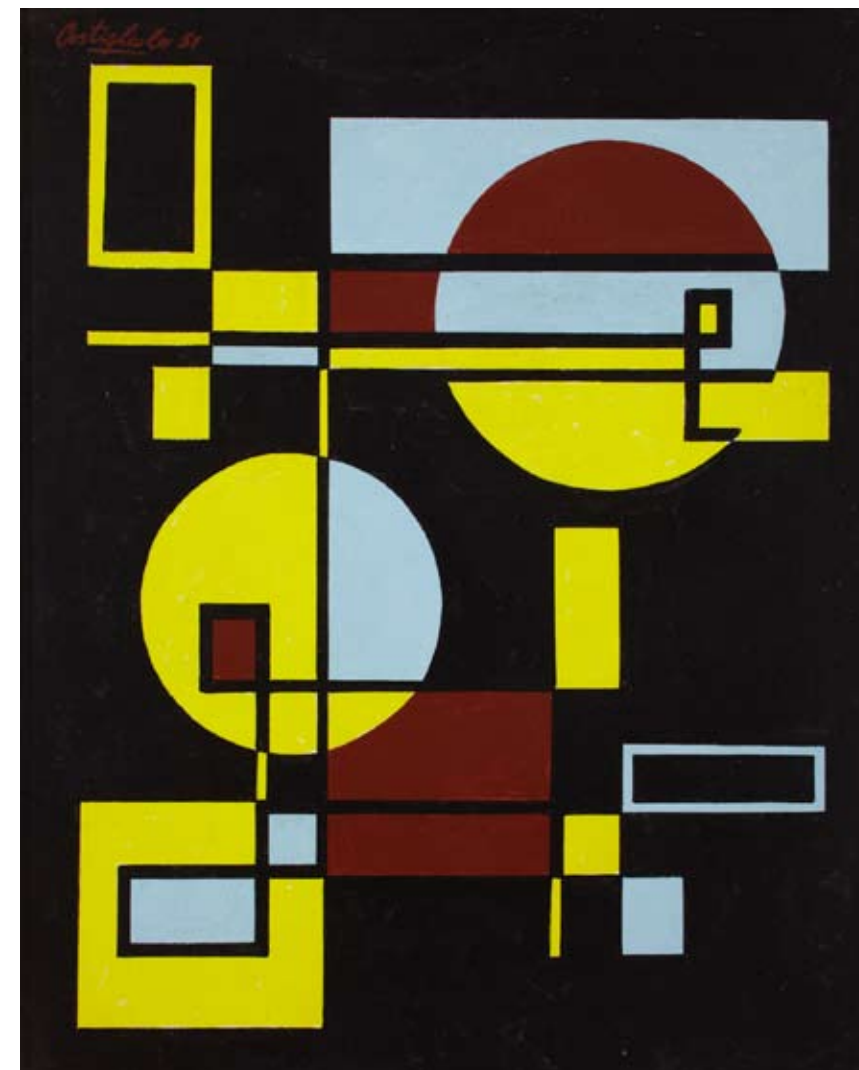
Omar Carreño
Estructura No. 1, 1967
Lacquer on wood
25 x 25 in.



Omar Carreño
Transformable No II SJB, 1979
Lacquer on wood
16 x 16 in.



José Pedro Costigliolo
Estructura, 1951
Acrylic on canvas
18 x 14 in.



José Pedro Costigliolo
Composicion No. 22, 1953
Laca a la piroxilina
18 x 22 in.



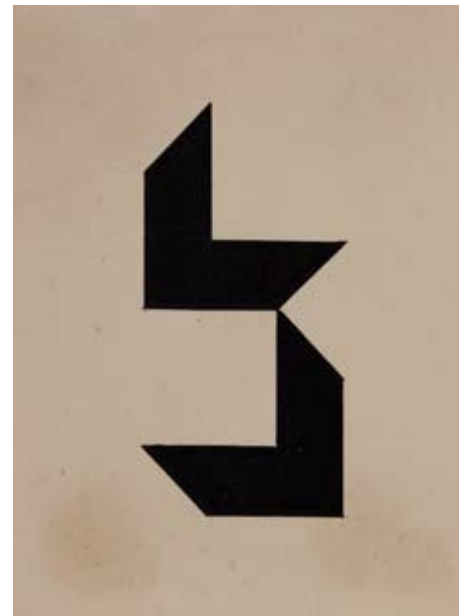
José Pedro Costigliolo
Forma y espacio #5, 1953
Acrylic on canvas
32 x 24 in.



Carlos Cruz-Díez
Physichromie No. 380, 1968
Aluminum, acrylic and PVC on wood
12 x 12 in.



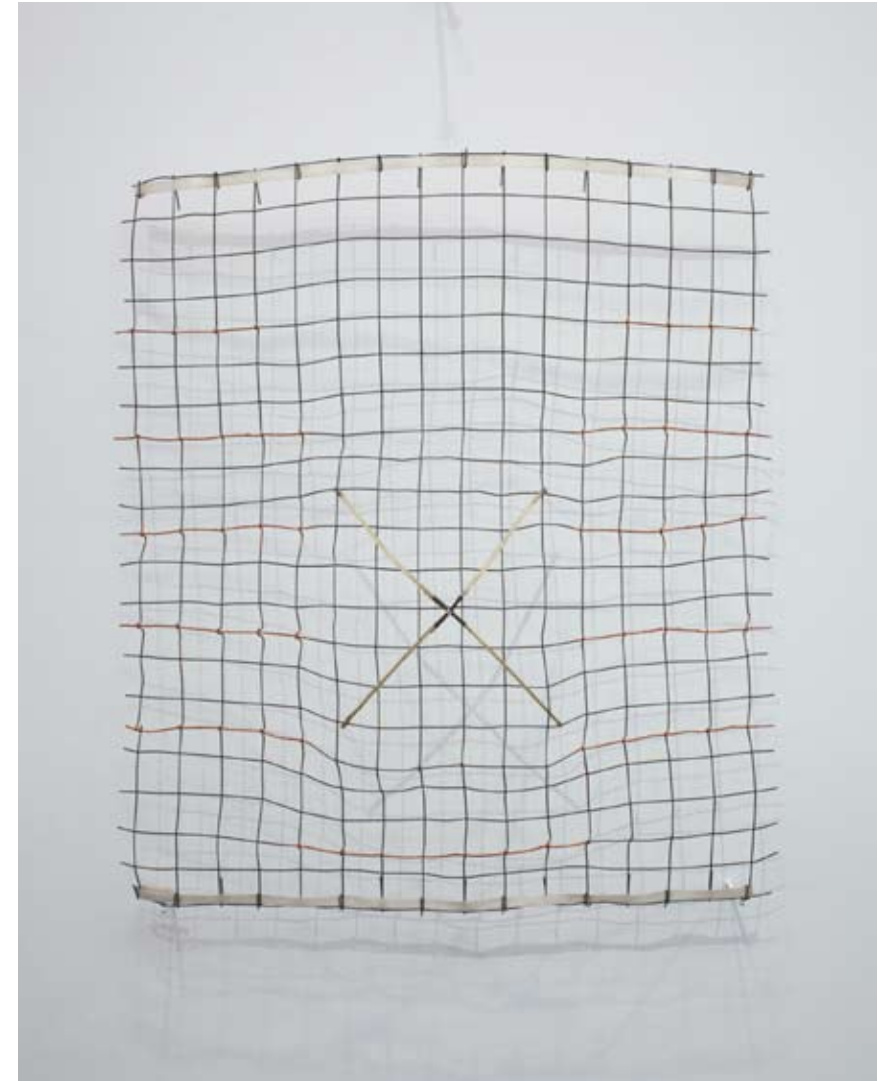
Willys De Castro
Abstratos I, II, III, 1957/58
Gouache on paper
3.5 x 2.75 in. each, 12 x 12 in. framed



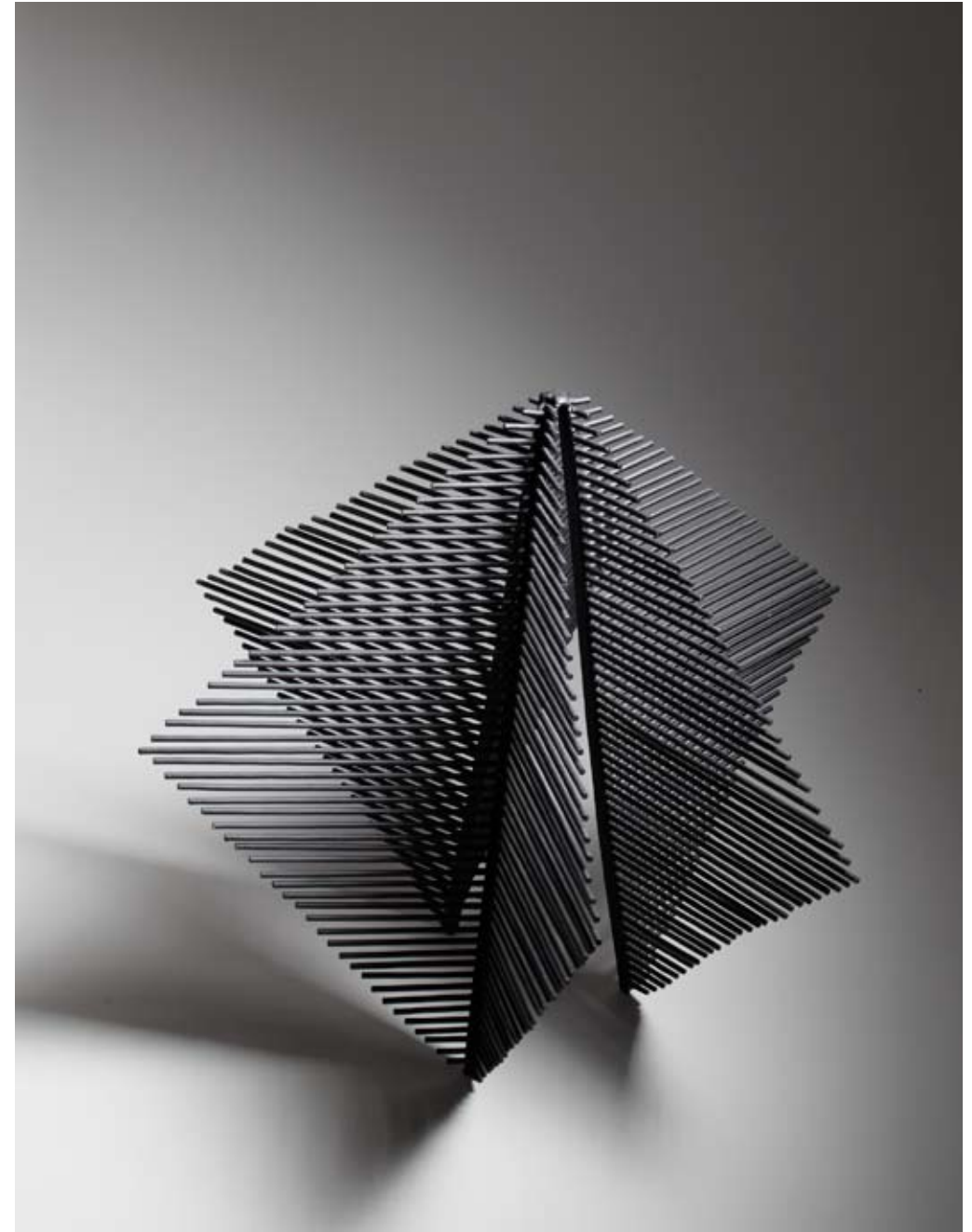
María Freire
Composición vertical, 1956
Oil on masonite
47 x 21 in.



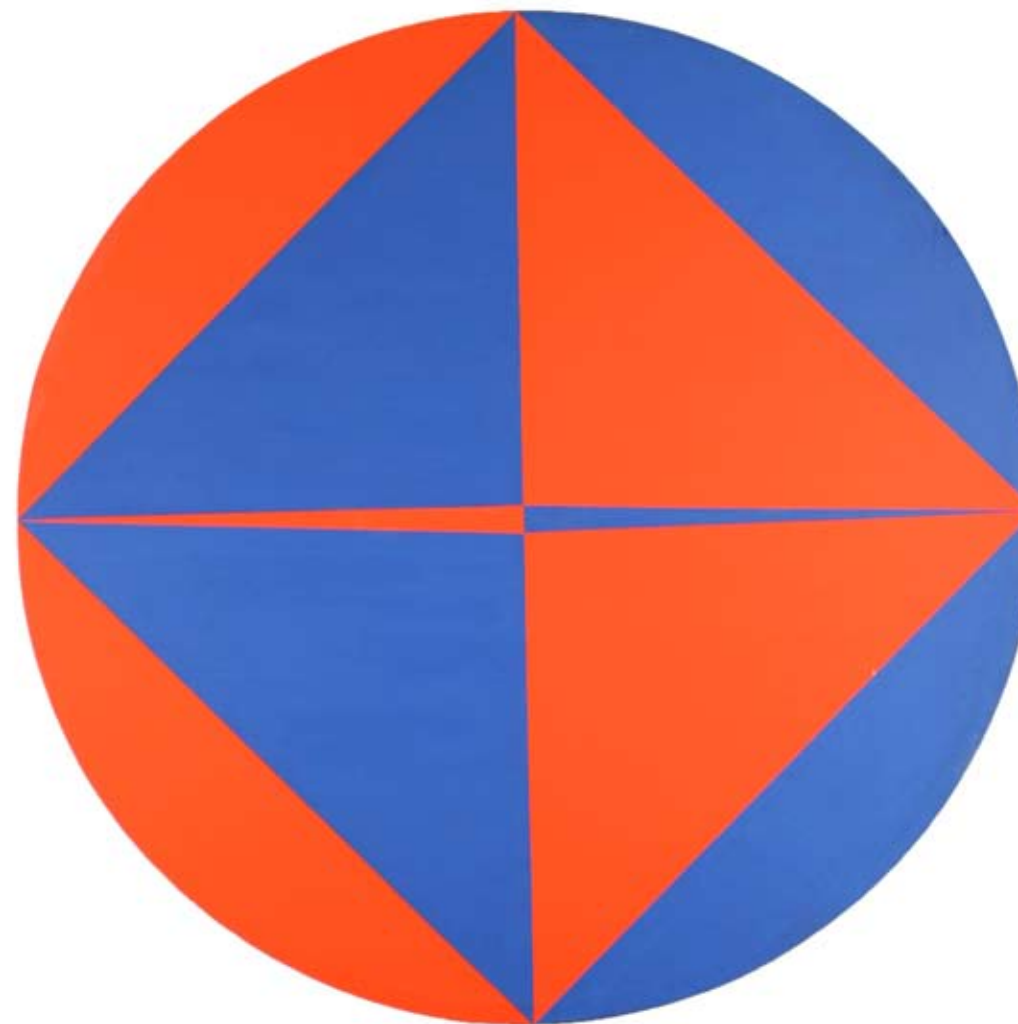
Gego
Dibujo sin Papel 78/15, 1978
Galvanized wire, paint and PVC
20 x 18 x 3 in.



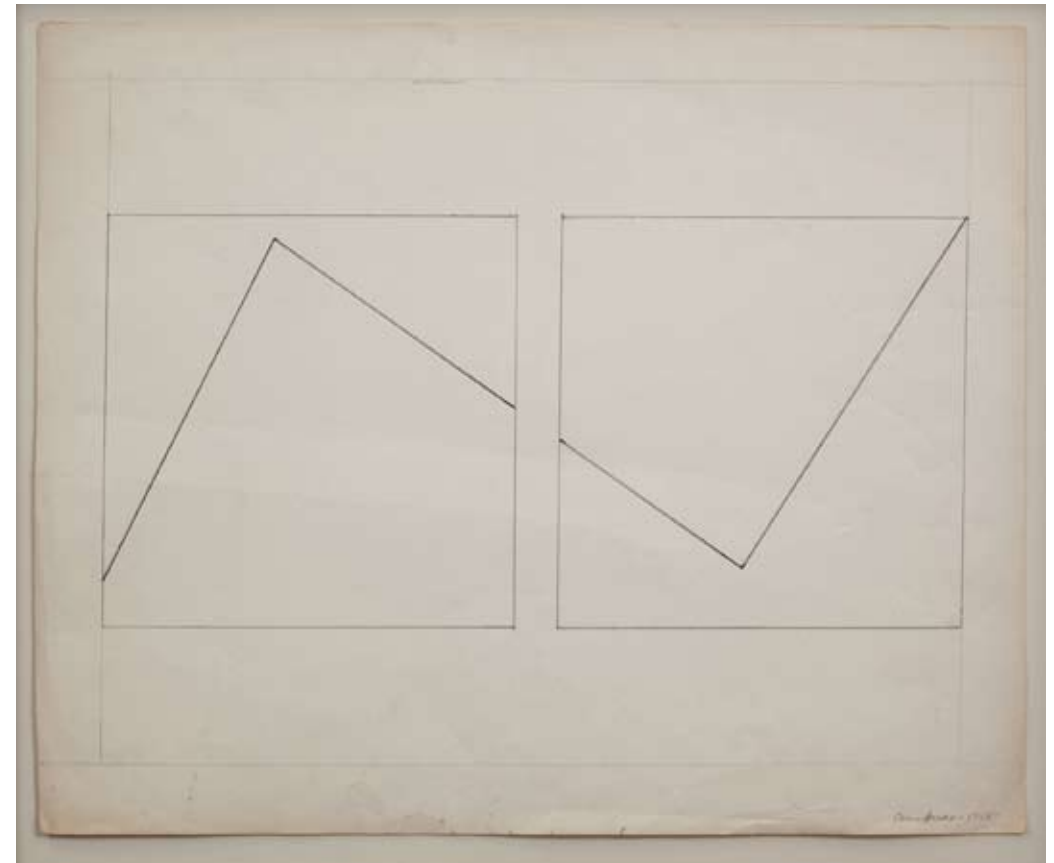
Gego
Gegofon, 1959
Metal sculpture
28 in. diameter



Carmen Herrera
Horizontal, 1965
Acrylic on canvas
40 in. diameter



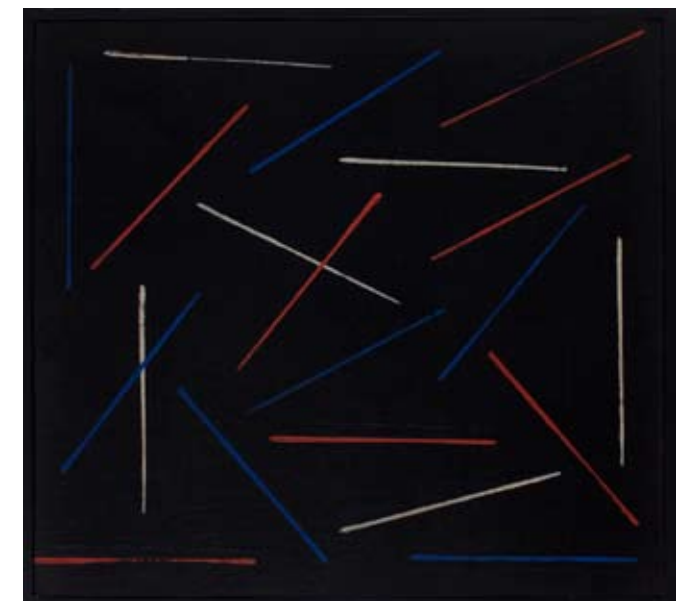
Carmen Herrera
Untitled, 1968
Pen and pencil on paper
18 x 22 in., 21 x 25 in. framed



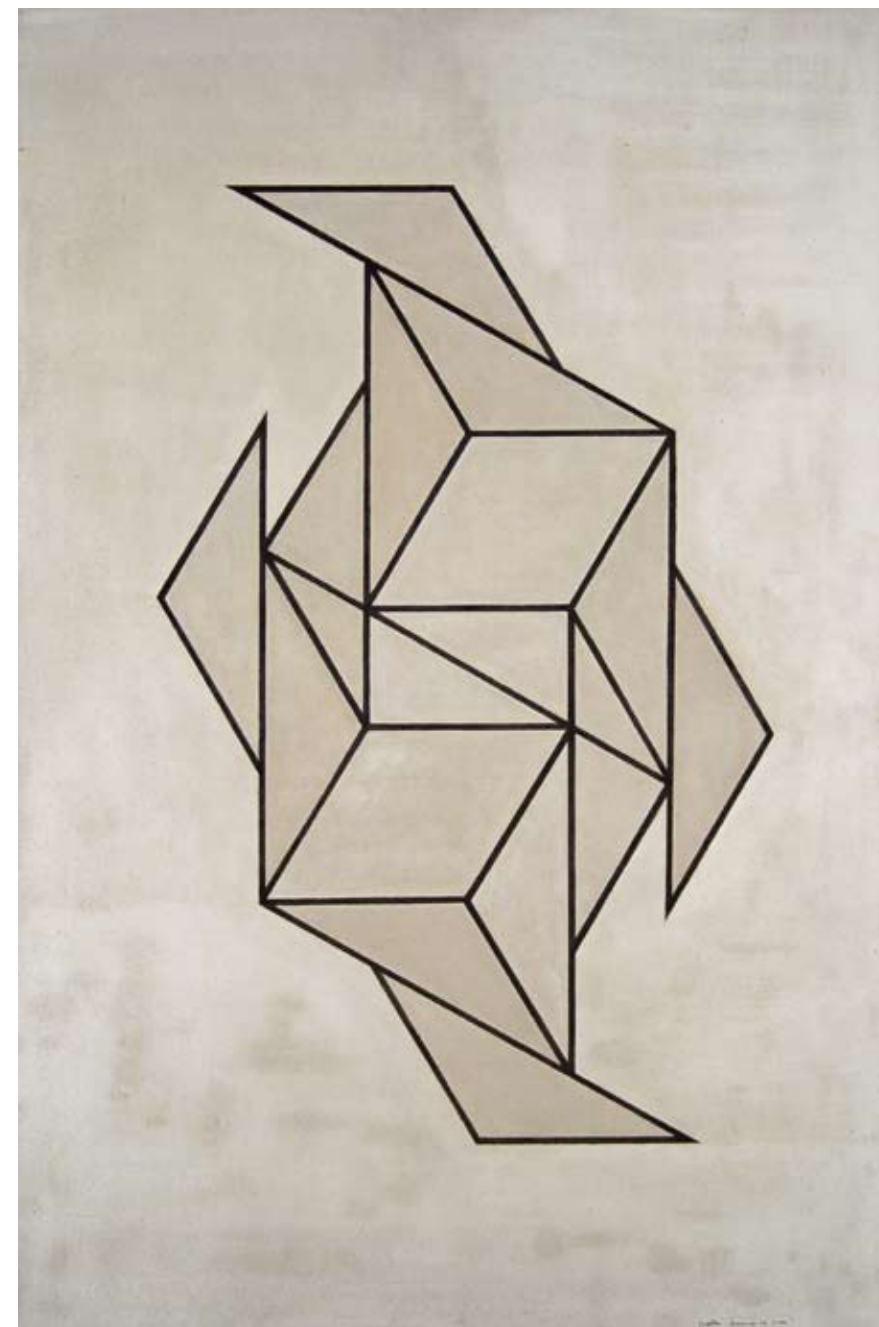
Judith Lauand
Untitled, 1959
Acrylic on canvas
12 x 10 in.



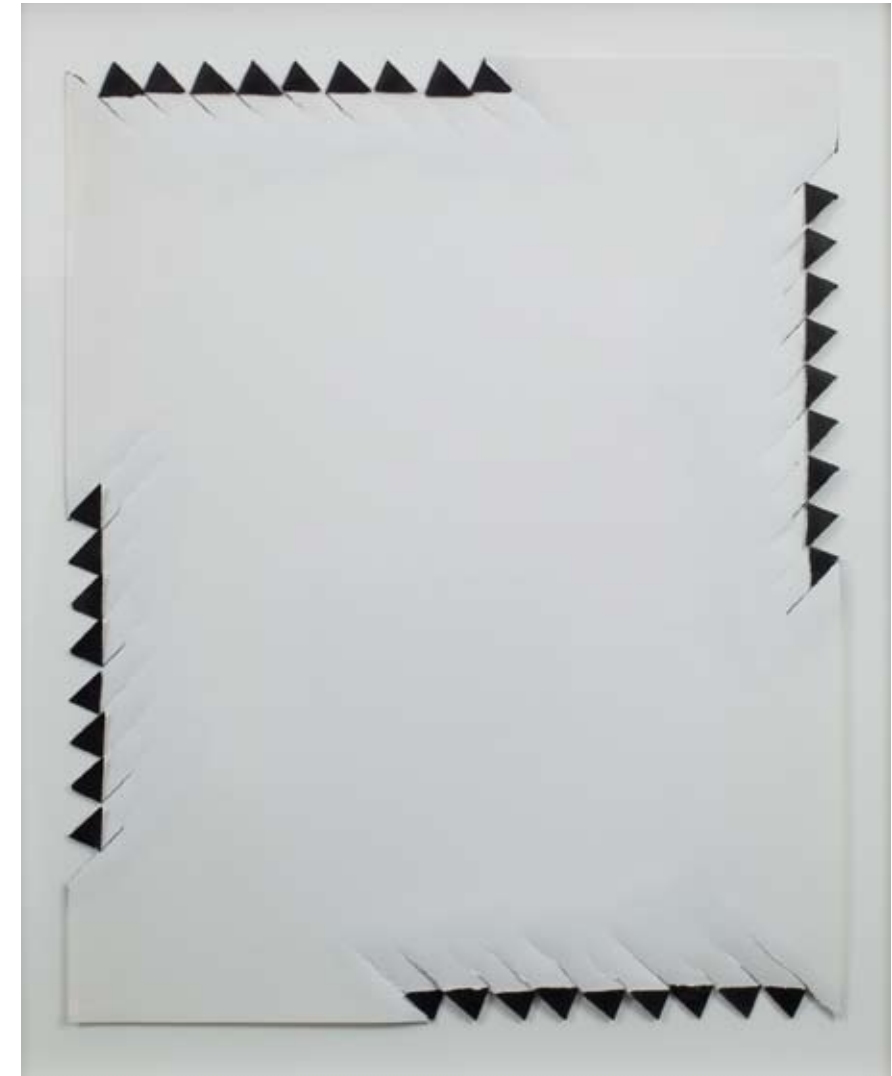
Judith Lauand
Abstrato, 1962
Acrylic on canvas glued to
masonite
12 x 13 in.



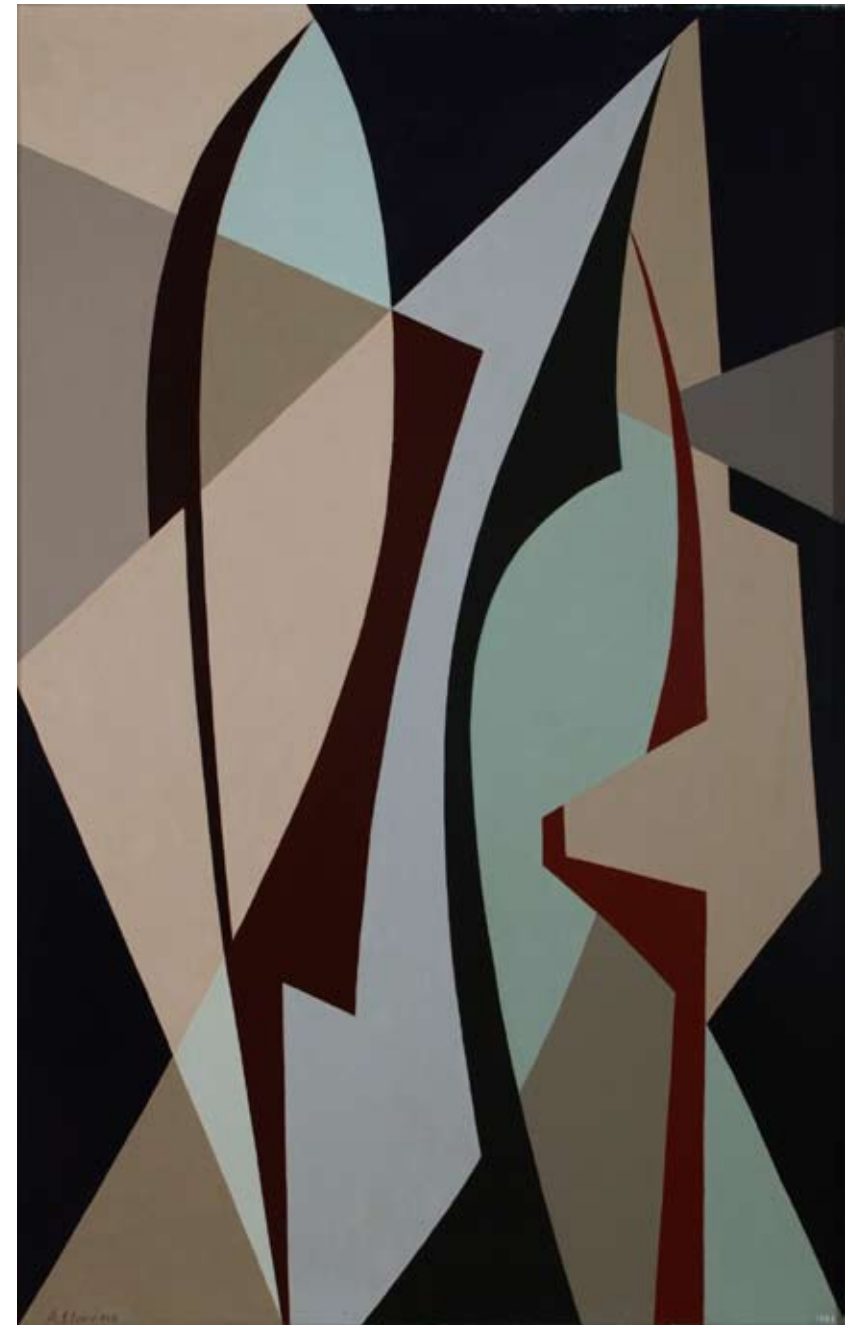
Judith Lauand
Untitled, 1960
Oil on canvas
41 x 28 in.



Gerd Leufert
Untitled, 1973
Tempera on paper
25 x 20 in., 31 x 26 in. framed



Antonio Llorens
Composición, 1952
Oil on board
36 x 22 in.



Raúl Lozza
Untitled, 1961
Acrylic on wood
59 x 44 in.



Raúl Lozza
Untitled No. 706, 1963
Acrylic on wood
12 x 9 in.



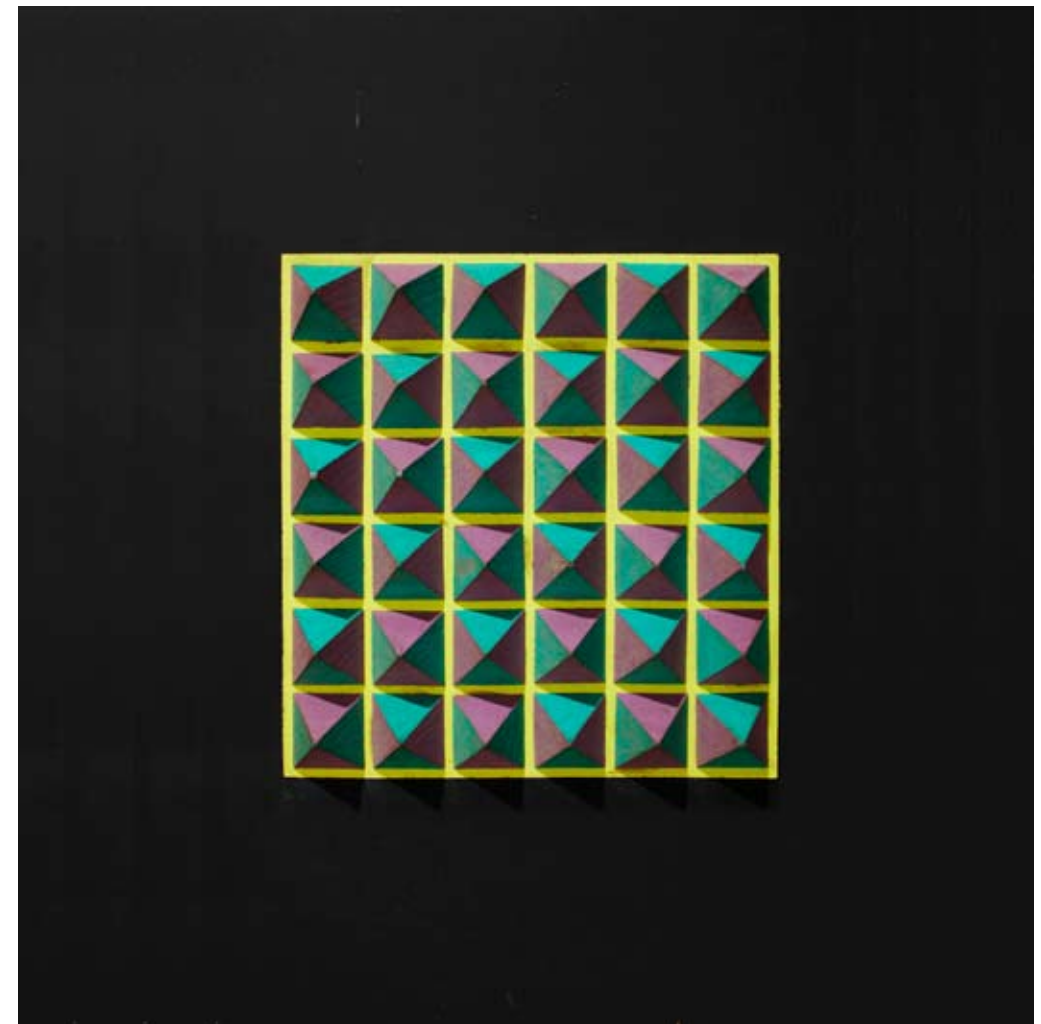
Alejandro Otero
Hoy en TV, 1965
 Newspaper and paint on wood
 25.5 x 21 in.



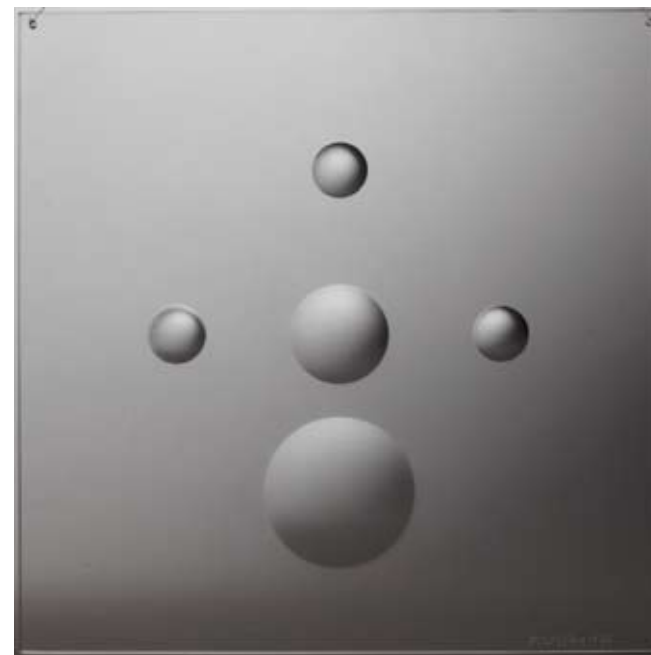
Raúl Pavlotzky
Proyecto Mural, 1956
Enamel paint and wire on board
17 x 9 in.



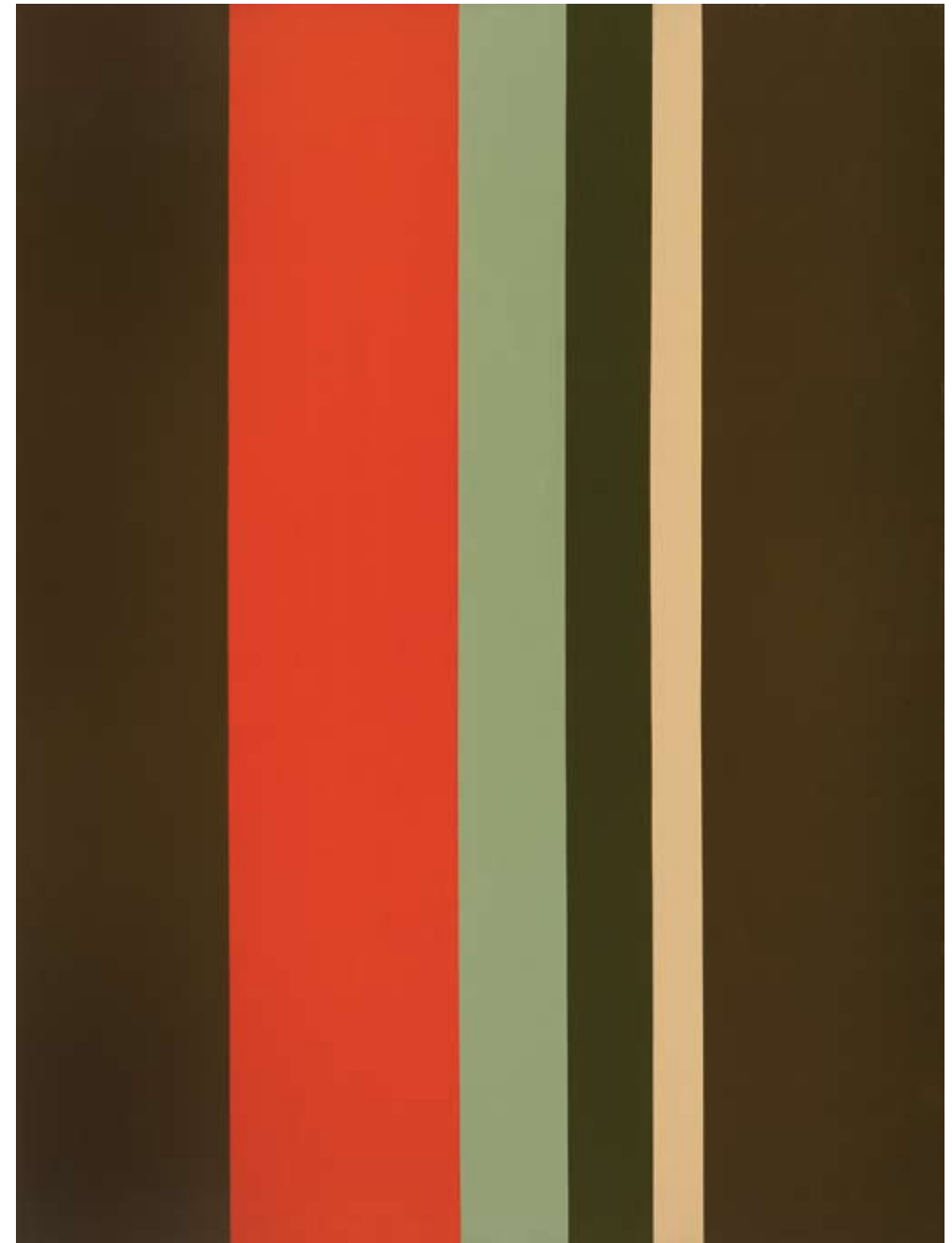
Rafael Pérez
Obra No. 9, 1967
Acrylic on wood
16 x 16 in.



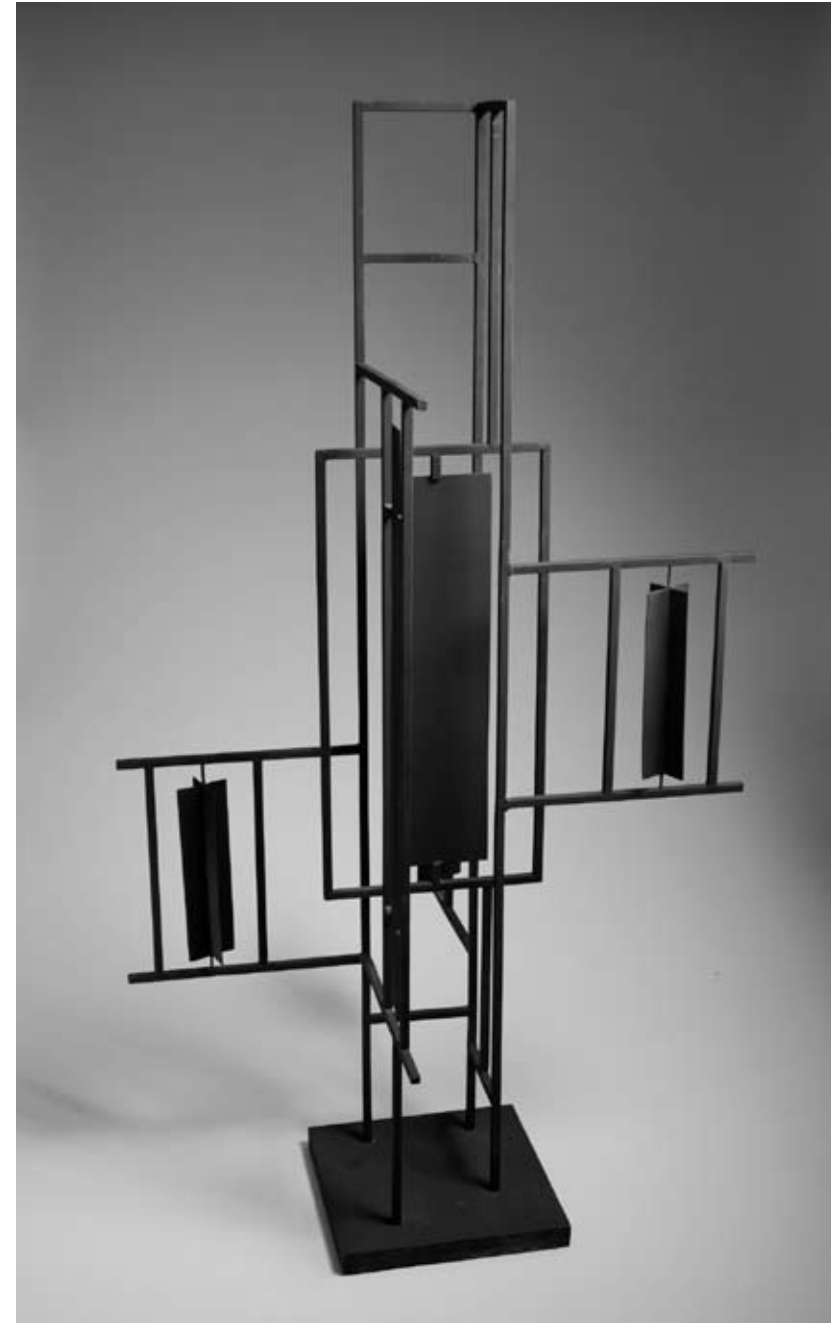
Rogelio Polesello
Sin título I, II, 1976
Acrylic
11 3/4 x 11 3/4 in. each



Fanny Sanín
Acrylic No. 7, 1970
Acrylic on canvas
69 x 53 in.



Víctor Valera
Factor Petróleo 2, 1956
Painted metal
47 x 21 x 26 in.



Gregorio Vardanega
Sagitario-Ecuación V3, 1958
Oil on canvas
31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in.



Julián Althabe

1911 Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina

1975 Died in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Althabe studied Fine Arts at the Escuela de Artes Decorativas de la Nación, where he graduated in 1938. He continued his studies at the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes “Ernesto de la Cárcova” until 1942. Althabe participated in group exhibitions with the “Grupo de los Siete” in 1941 and beginning in 1952 with the group “20 Pintores y Escultores” in Buenos Aires. As a member of the Asociación Arte Nuevo he participated in numerous exhibitions during the 1950’s in both La Plata and Buenos Aires. Althabe was invited by Romero Brest to participate in the II São Paulo Biennial in 1953 as a representative of Argentina. Other artists included were Martín Blaszko, Alfredo Hlito, Gyula Kosice and Raúl Lozza. Althabe was invited again to the IV and V editions of the São Paulo Biennial, in 1957 and 1959. Most recently his work was included in *Escultura-Objeto* at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires in 2005.

Althabe’s work was included in the book “Artistas Abstractos de la Argentina” edited and published by Cercle International d’Art in 1955. He was not only a pioneering artist of abstract art but also a recognized academic. He was a professor at Escuela de Bellas Artes “Prilidiano Pueyrredón” and “Ernesto de la Cárcova”. He authored “Bases para una escuela de arte actual” and “Programa para el taller de arte espacial”. Between 1956 and 1958 he directed the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. In 1959 he attended the Simposio Latinoamericano de Santiago de Chile as an Argentine delegate and was invited by the Universidad de Chile to lecture about “Arte Espacial”. His work is in the permanent collection of the Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires.

Martín Blaszko

1920 Born in Berlin, Germany, naturalized in Argentina

Lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Originally from Berlin, Blaszko immigrated with his family to Poland in 1933 fleeing from the Nazis, where he studied drawing under Henryk Barczynsky and Jankel Adler. In 1938, he visited Paris and met Marc Chagall. In 1939 he settled in Argentina, where he adopted citizenship in 1959. Beginning in the mid forties Blaszko produced paintings with cutout frames as well as sculptures in wood and bronze. In 1945 he met Carmelo Arden Quin and in 1946 they co-founded Grupo Madi and participated in the first Madi exhibition held at the Galería Van Riel. In addition to the art exhibition and a reading of the manifesto by Arden Quin, there were musical performances by Esteban Eitler and Juan Carlos Paz, and a dance performance by Paulina Ossona. In 1947 the MADI group divided into two groups, one led by Gyula Kosice, the other by Arden Quin and Blaszko.

In 1952 his “Monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner” received an award from the Institute of Contemporary Art, London and was exhibited at the Tate Gallery. He also participated in the 7th edition of the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* held at the Musée d’Art Moderne in Paris. Blaszkó represented Argentina in the II São Paulo Biennial in 1953, alongside Julián Althabe and others. In 1958, he was awarded the Bronze Medal during the Universal Exhibition of Brussels. In 1960 he represented Argentina in the XXX Venice Biennale and he won the Grand Prize of the *Salón Municipal de Artes Plásticas Manuel Belgrano* in Buenos Aires. In 1961 he was invited to exhibit in the *2ème exposition internationale de Sculpture Contemporaine* at the Musée Rodin, Paris and was included in the exhibition *Fifteen Years of Madi art* held at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Buenos Aires.

Active not only as an artist but also as an academic, his following writings deserve mention: “Sculpture and the Bipolarity Principle”, published in Leonardo, Oxford (1968); “A sculpture is born”, published in Sculpture International, Oxford (1970) and “The making of a sculpture” published in Leonardo, Oxford (1971). Blaszkó delivered a lecture entitled “Monumental Sculpture and Society” during the Ninth International Conference on Sculpture held at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1976. The lecture revealed visionary ideas linked to public sculpture and the urban experience. His aluminum sculptures “Júbilo” and “El Canto del Pájaro que Vuela” stand in Parque Centenario in Buenos Aires, and Utsugushi-Ga-Hara, Japan, respectively.

Blaszkó has won important prizes such as Premio Adquisición, Salón Mar del Plata, 1959; Premio Cámara de Representantes de la Nación, 1973; and the Open-Air Museum Award, Hakone, Japan, 1991. Retrospective exhibitions include one held at the Interamerican Development Bank in Washington DC in 1984 and *Martín Blaszkó - Nace una escultura*, at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires in 2001. In 2006 he exhibited at the Madi Museum, Dallas. His work was included in notable group exhibitions such as *Latin American Artists of the XX Century*, MoMA, New York (1990), which traveled to Sevilla, Spain, Centre Pompidou, Paris and Ludwig Museum, Cologne; *Exposición de Arte Madí*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1997); and *Abstract art from Río de la Plata, Buenos Aires and Montevideo 1933/53*, The Americas Society, New York (2001). His work is in the permanent collection of several museums in Argentina including MALBA and Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires and Museo Rosa Galisteo, Santa Fé.

Sérgio Camargo

1930 Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

1991 Died in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Camargo studied at the Academia Altamira in Buenos Aires under Emilio Pettoruti and Lucio Fontana and later studied philosophy at La Sorbonne in Paris. On a protracted trip through Europe in 1948, he met Constantin Brancusi, Jean Arp, Henri Laurens and Georges Vantongerloo and began to work in sculpture. Returning to Brazil in 1950 he came into contact with Brazilian Constructivists. In 1952-53 he returned to Europe and then

went to China in 1954. He exhibited in the III and IV São Paulo Biennials, in 1955 and 1957. Between 1961 and 1974 Camargo lived in Paris and became an active member of the “Groupe de Recherche d’Art Visuel” founded in July 1960. Other members were Julio Le Parc, Vera and Francois Molnar and Francois Morellet, among others. In 1964 Camargo participated in the *First Pilot Show of Kinetic Art* in London and was introduced to Paul Keeler and David Medalla, founders of Signals Gallery, by his friend the art critic, Guy Brett. In 1965 Camargo had a solo show at Signals Gallery that presented a number of his monochrome wooden reliefs. Camargo introduced Signals Gallery to the work of Lygia Clark, Mira Schendel, and Helio Oiticica, who would all hold shows there.

The 1960s marked a period of great recognition internationally in Camargo’s career. His active participation in the Parisian milieu, where he exhibited regularly with Denise René starting in 1965, extended through solo exhibitions in Milan, Rome, Genoa, London, Zurich and New York. This led to his recognition, along with Jesús Rafael Soto, Julio le Parc and Carlos Cruz-Díez, as a leading figure of Latin American Constructivism. In 1963 he won the International Prize for Sculpture at the 3rd Paris Biennale. In 1965 he was the recipient of a Gold Medal for best national sculptor at the São Paulo Biennale. In 1966 he exhibited in the Venice Biennale and in 1968 he participated in Documenta, Kassel. In 1967 he completed “Muro Estrutural”, a rhythmically structured wall measuring 25 meters long, standing in Oscar Niemeyer’s Foreign Ministry building in Brasília.

Camargo’s rigorously non-figurative route led him to carry out a reductive exercise of variations on the same subject. In the long series of wooden reliefs begun in 1963 and in the marble sculptures that he produced after his return to Brazil in 1974, he demonstrated the inexhaustible diversity of solutions arising out of a restricted nucleus of research. In 1968 he finished a vast concrete panel for the interior of the Palácio dos Arcos in Brasília. His work is in numerous public collections, including Museu de Arte Moderno, São Paulo; Tate Britain, London; MoMA, New York; Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt, Germany; Villa Croce Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Genoa, and others.

Omar Carreño

1927 Born in Porlamar, Venezuela

Lives and works in Caracas

Between 1948 and 1950 Carreño studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas in Caracas. He was a member of the Taller Libre de Arte in Caracas, an Institution supported by the Ministry of Education where artists, intellectuals and critics converged to discuss notions of the avant-garde. Taller Libre hosted the first exhibitions of abstract art in Venezuela, including exhibitions of the Argentine group Arte Concreto-Invención and a solo show of Jesus Rafael Soto. In 1950 Carreño moved to Paris where studied printmaking at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and L’École du Louvre and joined the group of Venezuelan artists “Los Disidentes”. Amongst other members were Jesus Rafael Soto, Alejandro Otero, Mateo Manaure, Aimée

Battistini, Nena Palacios, who adhered to the principles of geometric abstraction. “Los Disidentes” edited a journal of the same name, of which five tomes were published, calling for an art that rejected traditional modes of art making and embraced abstraction. In 1951 Carreño began a series of manipulable reliefs that Pierre Descargues called “Polípticos”; they were blocks of wood painted with lacquer held together by a system of hinges that allowed the viewer to alter the composition. After “Los Disidentes” dismantled Carreño founded the Expansionism Movement. In 1953 he published the Expansionism Manifesto, which called for artists to explore the relationship between art and science using behavioral theories and emerging technologies. Carreño sought to expand the ideological influence of art by expanding its confines into space, either by being mobile or by having the viewer interact physically with it. The “Polípticos” may be considered his first expansionist works, they were exhibited at the Galerie Arnaud in Paris in 1952. A “Políptico” was also included and reproduced in the catalogue of the VI *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, held in Paris in 1952. In 1953 he published the book “Idées d’artiste” and began his series of transformable objects “Ojos de buey”. In 1955 he started a black and white series of paintings entitled “Posinega”, whose tension emanates from his use of these binary opposites.

Carreño was invited by the architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva to collaborate on the “Proyecto de Integración de las Artes” at the Universidad Central de Venezuela. Carreño contributed a mural and a polychromatic façade to the School of Dentistry, completed in 1957. The project was designed to integrate architecture with avant-garde art, amongst other participating artists were Alejandro Otero, Alexander Calder, Fernand Léger, Victor Vasarely, Antoine Pevsner, Henri Laurens, Hans Arp. In 1958 Carreño served on the jury of the Grand Prix of the Venice Biennale and he curated the Venezuelan pavilion. In the early 60s he returned to Paris to study art history at La Sorbonne with René Huygue and at L’École du Louvre with Pierre Francastel. In 1972 he won the Premio Nacional de Artes Plásticas and was invited to represent Venezuela in the XXXVI Venice Biennale. He has had retrospective exhibitions at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas in 1974 and 1984, as well as at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid in 1983. He has had multiple solo shows at Galería Durban in Caracas in 1985, 1987, 1989 y 1994. In 1997 he was included in the First Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil. His work can be found at the Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto, Ciudad Bolívar; Ateneo de Valenia, Estado Carabobo; Museo de Arte Moderno, Sofia, Bulgaria and Pinacoteca di Macerata, Italy.

José Pedro Costigliolo

1902 Born in Montevideo, Uruguay

1985 Died in Montevideo, Uruguay

From 1921 to 1925 Costigliolo studied at the Círculo de Bellas Artes, studying under Vicente Puig and Guillermo Laborde, before exploring graphic art and constructivism. Costigliolo is considered one of the most important Modernist artists in Uruguay and one who pioneered interest in constructive tendencies. In 1952 he co-

founded with his wife, Maria Freire, the “Arte No Figurativo” group which revolutionized Uruguayan art. Costigliolo’s work owes a debt both to Russian constructivism, Dutch neoplasticism, and to his Uruguayan predecessor Joaquín Torres-García, the founder of Constructive Universalism. In 1955 he exhibited in 19 *Artistas de hoy* the first official presentation of Uruguayan abstraction, where he exhibited alongside María Freire, Antonio Llorens, Raúl Pavlotzky, Guiscardo Améndola, Germán Cabrera, Rhod Rothfuss and Teresa Vila, amongst others. Between 1952 and 1988 he exhibited regularly in the Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Costigliolo exhibited numerous times in the São Paulo Biennial, in 1951, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1961 and 1977. He was also invited to represent Uruguay in the XXXIII Venice Biennale in 1966. Few of his early works survive, but from them one can witness his desire to simplify compositional elements by adopting a geometric vocabulary to which he would adhere throughout his career. Costigliolo often combined his pictorial style with graphic design to create posters and large signage.

From their participation in the III Salón Bienal de Artes Plásticas in 1957, both Costigliolo and Freire won a travel grant to Europe, which they used to travel in various European nations until 1960, where they met some of the pioneers of abstract art, including Antoine Pevsner and Georges Vantongerloo. In 1959 they exhibited in Brussels at the Galerie Contemporaine. Of Costigliolo’s many solo shows, highlights include a midcareer retrospective at Museo de Arte Moderno, São Paulo (1956); Museo de Arte Moderno de Río de Janeiro (1957); Ateneo Barcelonés, Barcelona (1958); and the Panamerican Union, Washington DC (1966). His most complete retrospective was organized by the Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo in 1983. His work is in collections worldwide, including the Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas y Visuales, Montevideo; Museo Juan Manuel Blanes, Montevideo; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, São Paulo; Museo de Arte Moderno, Rio de Janeiro; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art, Colchester, United Kingdom; and the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami.

Carlos Cruz-Díez

1923 Born in Caracas, Venezuela

Lives and works in Paris, France

Cruz-Díez studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas in Caracas from 1940 to 1945, producing Socialist Realist paintings. He worked from 1946 to 1951 as art director to the McCann Erickson advertising agency in Venezuela, where he became interested in the effect of color in advertising. Between 1955 and 1956 he traveled to Paris and Barcelona, where his interest was sparked by geometric abstraction, scientific color theory and Bauhaus ideas on the integration of the arts and crafts. While in Paris he reconnected with his friend Jesus Rafael Soto who had lived there since 1950. Soto invited him to view the exhibition *Le Mouvement* at the Galerie Denise Rene, which included Soto’s work alongside others who had set historical antecedents for kinetic art, like Marcel Duchamp or Calder, as well as works of Vasarely, Jacobsen, Tinguely, Agam and Pol Bury. The exhibition created a dialogue between generations that provided a framework and justified the research

of young artists who visited it, amongst them Cruz Díez. Upon his return to Caracas in 1957 he opened the Estudio de Artes Visuales, where he began to investigate the role of color in kinetic art and designed publications. Cruz-Díez’s wide experience in advertising, industrial applications of color, cinema and photo-mechanical processes, together with his study of work by Georges Seurat, Josef Albers and of Edwin Land’s scientific ideas on color perception, led him to begin the “Physichromies” series in 1959. The title is a term invented by the artist, derived from the words ‘physical chromatism’. The “Physichromies” explored how color changes according to individual perception and how additive, subtractive and reflective color relationships may be altered by the relative positions of the light source and viewer.

In 1960 Cruz-Díez moved back to Paris where he introduced organic motifs, and in the mid-sixties began producing large-scale public works. In 1968 he produced his first “Cromosaturación”, an installation of three empty rooms illuminated in red, blue and green. In 1970 he participated in the XXXV Venice Biennale. He exhibited regularly in international exhibitions including *The Responsive Eye* held at MoMA, New York and *Soundings Two* in London, both in 1965. He was awarded the Grand Prize of the Bienal Americana de Arte de Córdoba in 1966 and the International Painting Prize in the São Paulo Biennial of 1967. Interested in the link between Kinetic Art and architecture, Cruz Díez has created works integrating the two, as in “Transchromies” (1967) for the Phelps Tower Gates in Caracas, and a chromatic environment for Guri Dam powerhouse in the 1980s. His work may be found in over forty public collections including Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago de Chile; Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellín; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República - Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt; Neue Pinakothek, Munich; Arithmeum, Bonn; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Daros Latinamerica, Zurich; Tate Modern, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Art Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C., amongst others.

Willys De Castro

1926 Born in Uberlandia, Brazil

1988 Died in São Paulo, Brazil

In 1941 De Castro moved to São Paulo, where he studied chemical engineering and obtained his diploma in 1948. His earliest known works date to the same year but only until 1950 did he begin looking into geometric abstraction in sketches. In 1954 he co-founded the “Estúdio de Projetos Gráficos” with Hercules Barsotti. The studio was active until 1964, but De Castro continued to work in graphic and object design until very late in his life. Throughout the 50s and 60s he was actively involved with stage and costume design for theater, as well as concrete poetry and music. He was a founding member of the musical movement “Ars Nova” and he directed and designed the magazine “Teatro brasileiro”. In 1959 he joined the Neo-Concrete movement with whom he exhibited from 1959-61. The publication of the “Manifesto Neoconcreto” by Brazilian poet Ferreira Gullar,

marked the emergence of the movement and the end of collaborations between the Brazilian Concrete artists from Rio de Janeiro, “Grupo Ruptura”, and São Paulo, “Grupo Frente”. Though Neo-Concrete art espoused a creative freedom that linked it more to the ideals of “Grupo Frente”. Other founding members of the Neo-Concrete movement were Lygia Clark, Amílcar de Castro, Franz Weissmann, Lygia Pape, Hélio Oiticica, Aluísio Carvão, and Hércules Barsotti joined shortly thereafter.

From 1959 until 1962, he worked on his series “Objetos ativos”, concrete paintings that investigated the structural elements of an object using geometric patterns painted on three-dimensional wooden forms that play with the viewer’s expectations depending on what angle they are viewing the work from. De Castro’s “Objetos ativos” are considered to be his most important contribution to Brazilian constructive art. In the 70s he began the series “Pluriobjetos”, which he exhibited in 1983 at Gabinete Raquel Arnaud in São Paulo.

De Castro wrote extensively about his own work, as well as that of Alfredo Volpi and Hercules Barsotti. He participated on numerous occasions in the São Paulo Biennial (1957, 1961, 1973, 1987, 1998), the Paris Biennial in 1961 and the First Mercosur Biennial in 1997. Notable group shows where his work was included are *Konkrete Kunst*, Zurich (1960); *Brazilian Art Today* at the Royal College of Art, London (1965); *The Constructive Project 1950-62*, organized by Lygia Pape, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro and the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (1977); *Modernidade: Arte brasileira do século XX*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1987); *Heterotopias*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2000-2001); and *New Perspectives in Latin American Art, 1930–2006*, MoMA, New York (2007). His work is in various museums including Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo; Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo; Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection and MoMA, New York.

María Freire

1917 Born in Montevideo, Uruguay

Lives and works in Montevideo, Uruguay

Freire is one of the Southern Cone’s most productive and engaged, if also one of the least-known, artists working in the Constructivist tradition. Freire trained at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Montevideo from 1938 to 1943, studying under José Cuneo and Severino Pose and at the Universidad del Trabajo, under Antonio Pose. Her first sculptures indicate the profound influence of African art on her work, something of an anomaly for an artist in South America at that time. In the early 1950s, after meeting her future husband, the artist José Pedro Costigliolo, her art became more influenced by European non-figurative art, like Art Concret group, Georges Vantongerloo and Max Bill. In 1952 she co-founded the “Arte No Figurativo” group with Costigliolo in Montevideo, and she exhibited with them in 1952 and 1953. Freire exhibited regularly in the Salón Nacional from 1953 to 1972. In 1953 Freire and Costigliolo were invited to the II São Paulo Biennial, where they came into contact with Brazil’s enthusiasm for geometric abstraction. In 1957 Freire and Costigliolo won the Gallinal

travel grant, which they used to live and study in Paris and Amsterdam, and to travel through Europe until 1960, meeting historical pioneers of abstract art like Antoine Pevsner and Georges Vantongerloo. In 1959 they exhibited in Brussels at the Galerie Contemporaine. She was invited again to the São Paulo Biennial in 1957 and the XXXIII Venice Biennale in 1966. Freire developed her work within a strict, yet variable formal vocabulary, often switching between periods of greater or lesser degrees of abstraction. Her series *Sudamérica*, worked on from 1958 to 1960, employed cut planes and polygonal forms in a reduced palette. Freire wrote art criticism for the journal “Acción” from 1962 to 1973. Around 1960, she began to experiment with looser forms of abstraction and a more expressive range of colors, resulting in her series *Capricorn and Cordoba* (1965-1975), and later on she created volumetric disturbances by dividing the surface with repeated forms or by creating chromatic modulation sequences in her series *Variantes y Vibrantes* (1975-1985). In 2000 she began to produce large-scale public sculpture in Uruguay.

Her work has been included in noteworthy group shows such as *Pintores Sudamericanos*, New York (1961); *Cuatro Pintores Latinoamericanos*, São Paulo (1980); *From Torres García to Soto*, Washington (1992) and *Arte Latinoamericano*, London (1996). Freire was awarded the Grand Prize during the São Paulo Biennial (1957), the First Prize for Watercolor at the Salón Nacional (1961); the Grand Prize for Painting at the Salón Nacional (1968); and yet again in the VII Salón de Primavera de Salto (1978). In 1996 she was honored with the Premio Figari, a lifetime achievement award given by the Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo. Her work is included in the Museo Nacional and the Museo Municipal de Bellas Artes of Uruguay, Montevideo; Museo de Arte Moderno, São Paulo; Museo de Arte Moderno, Río de Janeiro; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and The University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art, Colchester, United Kingdom.

Gego

1912 Born in Hamburg, Germany, naturalized in Venezuela

1994 Died in Caracas, Venezuela

Gego received a degree in architecture from the Technische Hochschule of Stuttgart in 1938, where she studied under Paul Bonatz. In 1939 she fled Germany and immigrated to Venezuela. Between 1940 and 1944 she worked as a freelance architect and an industrial designer. In 1952 she met her lifelong companion Gerd Leufert, after having ended a marriage to another émigré. That same year Gego adopted Venezuelan nationality and encouraged by Leufert, left architecture to devote herself full time to art. Together they moved to Tarma, on the coast of Venezuela, where she experimented with watercolors, monotypes and wood engravings, until their return to Caracas in 1956. Gego exhibited regularly in the *Salón Oficial Annual de Arte Venezolano* held at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas (1954-55, 1958-61, 1967 and 1968). In 1957 she made her first sculptures and participated in the *Primer Salón de Arte Abstracto*, held at the Galería Don Hatch, along with Cruz-Díez, Otero, Mercedes Pardo and Jesus Rafael Soto, amongst others. Cruz-Díez made a short film about her sculptures entitled, “Movement and Vibration in Space: A Sculpture by Gego”, edited at Iowa State

University where Gego lived for one year. In 1958 she exhibited sculptures at the gallery-bookstore Cruz del Sur in Caracas. The following year MoMA, New York purchased her sculpture “Sphere”, and she exhibited in the Venezuelan Pavilion at the Brussels International Fair. In 1960 during a brief residence in New York she met the constructivist sculptor Naum Gabo and Bauhaus artists, Josef and Annie Albers. She also exhibited in the *New Names* exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery. Starting in the 1960s she taught at the School of Architecture of the Universidad Central de Venezuela and at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas Cristóbal Rojas. Her first individual museum show was held at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas in 1961, where she had subsequent exhibitions in 1963-64, 1968-69, 1984 and a posthumous retrospective in 2000. In 1962 she installed a sculpture at the headquarters of the Banco Industrial de Venezuela in Caracas, made up of a 10 meter tower of interlocking aluminum and steel tubes. It is considered to be a fine example of her integration of art and architecture.

In 1963 Gego made print works at the Pratt Graphic Art Institute, New York and the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Los Angeles. In 1965 “Esfera” was included in *The Responsive Eye* at MoMA, New York, which also included her work in the 1967 show *Recent Latin American Art*. Gego helped found the Instituto de Diseño Neumann in Caracas, where she taught from 1964 to 1977. In 1969, with Leufert, she completed the murals for the headquarters of the Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Educativa. Gego also installed her environmental work “Reticularea” at Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, which was included in the exhibition *Latin America: New Painting and Sculpture* at the Center for Inter-American Relations, New York City that same year. In 1971 she presented her series “Chorros”, during her solo show at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. In 1972 she constructed “Cuerdas”, a sculpture-installation consisting of suspended nylon and stainless-steel strips, for the Parque Central in Caracas. From the 1970s to the 1980s she completed architecturally integrated sculptures for public buildings, using simple materials like industrial scraps and metals, while continuing to experiment with design, printing, and engraving techniques. Her series of suspended sculptures “Dibujos sin papel” and her series “Bichos” date from the late 1970s through the 80s. In 1980 she was awarded the Premio Nacional de Artes Plásticas in Venezuela. In 2002 the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston held her retrospective “Questioning the Line: Gego 1955-1990” which then traveled to the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico. In 2005, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston mounted “GEGO, Between the transparent and the invisible”.

Gego has been included in most major shows that survey Latin American and Women artists, such as *The Latin Spirit: Art and Artists in United States, 1920-1970*, The Bronx Museum of Art, New York (1988); *Latin American Women Artists, 1915-1995*, Milwaukee Museum of Art, Wisconsin (1995); *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, (1999); *Heterotopias: Half-a-Century without a Place, 1916-1968*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2000); *Inverted Utopias, Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2004); and *The Geometry of Hope*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin (2007). She participated in the XXIII São Paulo Biennial, in 1996 and the 50th Venice Biennale

in 2003. Her work is in numerous public collections including Museo de Arte Contemporáneo and Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; MoMA and the New York Public Library, New York; Alte Oper, Frankfurt; Daros Latin America, Zürich; Grunwald Art Center, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Blanton Museum at the University of Texas, Austin, amongst others.

Carmen Herrera

1915 Born Havana, Cuba

Lives and works in New York

One of Cuba’s first artists to develop and sustain a pure, abstract style, Herrera has exhibited regularly since 1933. Between 1925 and 1927 she studied drawing and painting under J.F. Edelman, Director of the Academy of San Alejandro in Havana, Cuba. In 1930 she moved to Paris where she studied painting and art history at Marymount College. In 1937 she studied architecture at the University of Havana and her work was included in the *Primera Exposición de Arte Moderno: Pintura y escultura*, at the Salon del Centro de Dependientes, Havana. In 1939 Herrera moved to New York where she attended the Art Students League. She lived and worked in Paris from 1948 until 1953, where she produced her first hard-edge canvases in 1951 and exhibited yearly in the legendary *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* at the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, from 1949 to 1952. In 1950 she had her first solo show at the Lyceum in Havana, Cuba. In 1951 she participated in *Art Cubain Contemporain* at the Musée National d’Art Moderne, Paris and her work was included in *Peintres de Paris* at the Salon d’Art Moderne in Zurich in 1952. In 1953 she exhibited in *Quelques Femmes Peintres* at the Galerie Olga Bogroff, Paris. In 1954 she moved back to New York where she has lived since. Her second one-woman show was held at the Eglinton Gallery, Toronto (1955) and her first New York solo exhibition took place at Galería Sudamericana (1956). From then on, she had solo shows in New York at Trabia Gallery (1963), Cisneros Gallery (1965), Rastovski Gallery (1986, 1987, 1988), Latincollector (2005, 2007).

Herrera’s work has been included in important group exhibitions including *Latin American ’66*, Cisneros Gallery (1966); *Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York*, The America’s Society (1968); *Women Choose Women*, New York Cultural Center (1973); *Six Cuban Painters Working in New York*, The America’s Society (1975); *Outside Cuba/Fuera de Cuba*, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum (1987), which traveled around the United States until 1989; *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920-1970*, The Bronx Museum, New York (1988); *Paper Visions V: A Biennial Exhibition of Works on Paper*, The Housatonic Museum of Art, Bridgeport (1994); *Crossing Borders: Contemporary Art by Latin American Women*, College of New Rochelle, New York (1996); *New Perspectives in Latin American Art, 1930–2006*, MoMA, New York (2007). Herrera’s first retrospective was held in 1984 at The Alternative Museum in New York. Subsequent ones include *The Black and White Paintings*, El Museo del Barrio, New York (1998); *Five Decades of Painting*, Latincollector, New York (2005) and *The Forms of Silence: Carmen Herrera Abstract Works*, Miami Art Central in Miami (2005). In 2009 Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, presented her most comprehensive retrospective to date,

including paintings, structures and works on paper from the late 1940s through today. The exhibit will travel to the Museum Pfalzgalerie in Kaiserslautern, Germany in 2010.

Herrera was featured in Robert Henkes’s book *Latin American Women Artists of the United States* published by McFarland & Co. (1999). She is the recipient of a Creative Artists Public Service Award (1977) and two fellowships granted by the Cintas Foundation, Institute of International Education, New York (1966, 1968). Herrera’s work is in the permanent collection of the Cintas Foundation, El Museo del Barrio, Colección Cisneros and MoMA, New York; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC; Tate Modern, London; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana and Museo de Santiago de Cuba.

Judith Lauand

1922 Born in Pontal, Brazil

Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil

Lauand studied painting with the renowned modern painters Domenico Lazzarini and Mario Ybarra de Almeida, at the Escola de Belas Artes of Araraquara where she graduated in 1950. In 1952 she moved to São Paulo where she studied engraving with Livio Abramo and exhibited her work for the first time in the Escola’s group exhibition at the Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo. Her early practice was figurative with tinges of expressionism until she saw the abstract work of Geraldo de Barros and Alexandre Wollner during the II São Paulo Biennial in 1954. Thereby she began moving towards Concrete abstraction. Her first solo exhibition was held in 1954 at Galeria Ambiente, São Paulo. In 1955 she was invited by Waldemar Cordeiro to join the “Grupo Ruptura”, she was the only female member.

Lauand received both national and international recognition in the 50’s when she participated in III Biennial of São Paulo (1955). The following year her work was included in the *Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta* held in 1956 at the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo and later at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro. Other artists included were Waldemar Cordeiro, Luiz Sacilotto, Hermelindo Fiaminghi, Lothar Charoux, Maurício Nogueira Lima and Kazmer Féjer. This was the first exhibition to gather concrete artists from both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, providing a forum for exchanges between the two. In 1958 she won the Prêmio Leirner de Arte Contemporânea. In 1960 she participated in the *International Concrete Art Exhibition* curated by Max Bill at the Helmhaus, Zürich. In 1963 Lauand, Fiaminghi and Sacilotto, opened a gallery called NT (Novas Tendências) and she exhibited in the inaugural show. The gallery attempted to correct the lack of opportunities concrete artists had to show their art. Despite the unsuccessful experience of running an art gallery, the group drew attention to a generation of critics including Walter Zanini, José Geraldo Vieira and Sergio Milliet. From the late 60s through the early 70s she experimented with nontraditional materials like pins, tacks and hinges.

Lauand participated in several editions of the São Paulo Biennial, (1955, 1963, 1965, 1967 and 1969), and her work was a highlight of the commemorative show *Brasil Século XX*, held during the XXII São Paulo Biennial in 1994. She has had retrospective exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, São Paulo (1977), curated by the renowned art critic Walter Zanini, and Escritório de Arte Sylvio Nery da Fonseca, São Paulo (1996). In the last decade she has exhibited in the First Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil (1997); *Geometric Abstraction Latin American Art from The Patrícia Phelps de Cisneros Collection*, Cambridge, USA (2001); *Concreta 56: A Raiz da Forma*, Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (2006); *Desenho Construtivista Brasileiro*, Museu de Arte Moderna Rio de Janeiro, (2007) and *Dimensions of Constructive Art in Brazil: The Adolpho Leirner Collection*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2007). Her work is in various public collections including Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami.

Gerd Leufert

1914 Born in Memel, Lithuania, naturalized in Venezuela

1998 Died in Caracas, Venezuela

Leufert innovated graphic design in Venezuela, turning it into a dynamic medium using new typography and innovative layout design. He studied in Germany at the Hanover School of Art, where Klee and Kandinsky had been notable alumni. He also studied graphic trade design at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich. In 1936 he was conscripted to military service and during the war years was wounded. After the war he worked as a graphic designer for German publishing houses. In 1951 Leufert settled in Caracas and became a citizen in 1954. In 1952 he met Gego, who was to become his lifelong companion. Together they moved to Tarma, a small town on the Venezuelan coast. Their practices were stimulated and questioned by each other. Their collaborations included large scale public projects that integrated sculpture in architectural settings, some examples are Edificio Cediaz and Edificio Ince, both in Caracas.

In 1954 Leufert had his first solo show in Caracas at Galería 4 Vientos. That year he also traveled to Germany with Gego, the first trip back to her birthplace after her forced exile in 1939. They participated in *Venezolanische Impressionen* at the Wolfgang Gurlitt Gallery in Munich, where Leufert showed monotypes and collages. Also in 1954 Leufert had solo exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Landau Gallery in Los Angeles. In 1959, Leufert and Gego visited the United States to attend print workshops at the University of Iowa & the Pratt Institute in New York on a scholarship from the U.S. Department of State. From 1958 to 1967 he taught art and graphic design in Caracas at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, the Escuela de Artes Plásticas Cristóbal Rojas and Instituto de Diseño Neumann.

Leufert’s first retrospective was held at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas in 1962. That same year also at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Leufert curated *Gráfica Uno*, an important exhibition about graphic arts in Venezuela

and in 1966 he started *Sobre papel*, an ongoing series of exhibitions of works on paper. Leufert was named curator of Drawings and Graphic design in 1968, a post he held until 1973. These five years were a period marked by intense activity and significant projects. Under his charge the museum published numerous catalogs which earned international design prizes, many designed by Leufert. In 1966 his show *Visibilia* presented a book and exhibition that were lessons in integral design. In 1985, Leufert painted “Nenias”, large biomorphic murals on the museum’s walls. After retiring from the Museo de Bellas Artes, Leufert traveled extensively in Europe, United States, Mexico and Central America. Upon his return to Caracas, he started to make sculpture in bronze, wood and stone, and resumed his work as an independent designer. In 1989 Leufert was awarded the Venezuelan National Fine Arts Prize. Leufert published two photography books, “Penthouse B, Gerd Leufert’s Photography” (1990) and “Crónica Apócrifa”, a book of photomontages (1992).

Group shows in the United States include *The Emergent Decade*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1965); *Art of Latin America Since Independence*, Yale University, New Haven (1966); *New Perspectives in Latin American Art, 1930–2006*, MoMA, New York (2007). His work is in the collections of Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Fundación Neumann, Caracas; The Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, New York Public Library, Pratt Graphic Arts Center and MoMA, New York; The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; and Kunstmuseum, Basel, amongst others.

Antonio Llorens

1920 Born in Argentina, naturalized in Uruguay

1995 Died in Montevideo, Uruguay

Llorens studied at the Escuela Industrial and attended the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Montevideo. He exhibited with the Madí group during the late 1940s. Since his allegiance to the Madí Group his work has remained within abstraction, at times with tinges of Op Art. In 1952 he co-founded the “Arte No Figurativo” group in Uruguay, with Costigliolo and Freire, and took part in their exhibition held at the Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes in Montevideo. In 1955 he exhibited in *19 Artistas de hoy*, the first official presentation of Uruguayan abstraction, where he showed alongside Freire, Costigliolo, Raúl Pavlotzky, Guiscardo Améndola, Germán Cabrera, Oscar García Reino and Teresa Vila, amongst others. In 1958 he exhibited at the *Salón de Arte Panamericano*, in Porto Alegre, Brazil and also at the Galerie Denise René in Paris. He participated in the II and III São Paulo Biennial, 1953 and 1955.

In 1960 he was included in the exhibition *Grupo 8*, at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires and in the *Werthin Prize for Painting*, at the Galería Van Riel, also in Buenos Aires. Between 1962 and 1972 he was a professor and the director of the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes in Montevideo. He has exhibited in all major surveys of abstract art in Argentina. Highlights include *Los primeros 15 años de Arte Madí*, organized by the Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires (1961); *Vanguardia de la Década del 40. Arte Concreto-Invención. Arte*

Madí. Perceptismo, Museo Sivori (1980); the itinerant exhibition *Art from Argentina 1920/1994*, which opened at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1994) and traveled to the Royal Academy of Art Galleries, London, the Centro Cultural de Bellem, Lisbon and the Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires (1995); *Abstract Art from Rio de la Plata. Buenos Aires and Montevideo 1933/1953*, The Americas Society, New York (2001); and *Arte Abstracto Argentino*, Fundación PROA, Buenos Aires (2003). Llorens was included in the First Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1997.

Raúl Lozza

1911 Born in Alberti, Argentina

2008 Died in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Lozza was born into a family of artists and exhibited for the first time at the age of 17 in 1928. In 1930 he moved to Buenos Aires where he illustrated and published works with social content, as well as theoretical writings and poems in newspapers and magazines. In 1943, he co-published and directed the visual arts section of “Contrapunto”, a literary magazine. Two years later he co-founded the “Asociación Arte Concreto Invención”, along with Tomás Maldonado and Alfredo Hlito, amongst others. Though he subscribed to their Manifesto and took part in the early exhibitions, in 1947 he broke away from the group to create “Perceptismo”, along with his brother, the theoretician Rembrandt Lozza and the art critic, Abraham Haber. Perceptismo aimed towards an experience oriented art that sought to eliminate all illusionist representation. Its manifesto and first exhibition happened in 1949 at the Galería Van Riel, and it promoted Constructivism in Argentina through a magazine titled “Perceptismo: Teórico y polémico”, published and edited by Lozza from 1950 to 1953.

In 1953 Lozza was invited to the II São Paulo Biennial. In 1960 he organized and hosted, together with Paulina Berlatzky, Bernardo Gravier, A. Haber and Rafael Squirru, an impressive exhibition of Non-Figurative art that included 103 artists. Lozza has had numerous group exhibitions, including *From Concrete Art to New Tendencies*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires (1963); *1940s Avant-garde in Argentina: Arte Concreto-Invención. Arte Madí. Perceptismo*, Museo Sívori (1980); *Concrete Art*, Ludwig Museum, Cologne (1994); and *Abstract art from Rio de la Plata: Buenos Aires and Montevideo 1933/1953*, The Americas Society, New York (2001). Lozza was invited to participate in the First Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1997.

In 1985 the Fundación San Telmo of Buenos Aires organized a retrospective of his work titled *60 years of Art*. A second one was held at the Museo de Arte Moderno of Buenos Aires in 1997 and most recently the Centro Cultural Borges held a retrospective titled *Raul Lozza. Un museo por sesenta días* in 2001. Lozza donated over thirty works to the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Raúl Lozza in Alberti, which opened in 2003. He is the recipient of many awards including a Gold Medal offered by the House of Representatives (1971); a Life Achievement Award from the Asociación Argentina de Críticos de Arte (1986); the Palanza Prize granted to

him by the National Academy of Fine Arts (1991); the Fundación Fortabat Grand Prix d’honneur (1997); and the Leonardo Trajectory Prize from the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (1998). His work is in many public collections such as Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Museo Sívori and Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires; Museo Provincial de Santa Fe, Argentina; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata, Argentina; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; and Museo de Confrontaciones, Dresden, Germany, amongst others.

Alejandro Otero

1921 Born in El Manteco, Venezuela

1990 Died in Caracas, Venezuela

Otero studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas in Caracas between 1939 and 1945, where he studied under Antonio Edmundo Monsanto. During this period he met the art critic, historian and collector, Alfredo Boulton, a patron and lifelong friend who purchased some of his early works. In 1940 Otero won a prize in the First Salón Oficial Anual de Arte Venezolano. In 1945 he traveled to New York and Washington D.C., where he exhibited figurative works at the Panamerican Union. That same year the French government and the Ministry of Education of Venezuela awarded him a scholarship to study in Paris, where he resided between 1945 and 1952 intermittently. There he became interested in geometric abstraction, concerned with the optical effects of squares and grids. In 1948 he exhibited in the Galerie Maeght’s annual show *Les mains éblouies*. In 1949 and he had shows at Museo de Bellas Artes, Taller Libre de Arte and Instituto Pedagógico in Caracas. In 1950 he was a founding member of “Los Disidentes”, a group of Venezuelan artists living in Paris who edited a magazine of the same name that rejected traditional Venezuelan art. Fellow members were Pascual Navarro, Matthew Manaure, Carlos González Bogen, Perán Erminy, Ruben Nunez, Narciso Debourg, Dora Hersen, Aimée J. Battistini and the philosopher R. Guillent Perez.

In 1951 Otero participated in the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* in Paris, which also included the work of Carmen Herrera and Edgar Négre. Otero visited Holland, where he studied the work of Piet Mondrian and De Stijl, which would have a great influence on the rest of his career. As a tribute to Mondrian, he began his series “Collages Ortogonales”. In 1952 he exhibited these works in the exhibition *Espace Lumière* at the Galerie Suzanne Michel in Paris before returning to Venezuela. He was invited by the architect Carlos Raul Villanueva to participate in his “Síntesis de las Artes Mayores” for the campus of the Universidad Central de Venezuela in Caracas, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Other artists who collaborated were Alexander Calder, Wifredo Lam, Victor Vasarely, and more. Between 1953 and 1957 Otero completed four murals and a stained glass window for the Faculty of Engineering, a “Policromía” for the School of Pharmacy and a second one for the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. From the mid 50s onwards he carried out many monumental public art commissions throughout North and South America. Amongst these, are five mosaic and aluminum panels for the Amphitheater Jose Angel Lamas, Caracas (1953); “Reflective mast” (1954), a tower of corrugated

aluminum and concrete for the Estación de Servicio Las Mercedes; and a mural for the headquarters of the Banco Mercantil y Agrícola (1954).

In 1955 Otero began the series “Coloritmos”, of which MoMA, New York acquired “Coloritmo No. 1” in 1956. In 1957 Otero represented Venezuela in the XXVIII Venice Biennale and exhibited in the First *Salón de Arte Abstracto*, held at the Galería Don Hatch, which also included works by Gego, Soto, and Cruz-Díez. In the sixties movements like Art Informel, Pop art and Nouveau Réalisme were instrumental in the emergence of a new body of work, his collages and assemblages of objets trouvés. In 1964 he began working on the series “Papeles Coloreados”, which synthesized the geometric rigor and informal elements of his prior works, in newspaper clippings which were painted over and glued in compositions of simple lines and colored planes, as in “Noticias de hoy” (1965). Otero was also involved with theater design and created stage sets for “El dios invisible”, by Arturo Uslar Pietri (1957); “Calígula”, by Albert Camus (1958) and “Fuenteovejuna” by Lope de Vega (1966).

In 1958 he was awarded the National Prize for Painting in the XIX Salón Anual de Arte Venezolano. In 1959 Otero received an honorable mention in the São Paulo Biennial. He represented Venezuela six times at the São Paulo Biennial in 1955, 1957, 1959, 1963, 1975 and 1991, when the Biennial included over seventy of his works and awarded him a post-mortem Honorary Award. In 1963 Otero was named vice-president of the National Institute of Culture and Fine Arts, INCIBA, a position he held until 1966. In 1966 he exhibited again at the XXXIII Venice Biennale, with Jesus Rafael Soto and Victor Valera. In 1971 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to study at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. In 1977 his public sculpture “Delta Solar” was installed in front of the Air and Space Museum in Washington DC and Estructura Solar, commissioned by the Olivetti Corporation, was erected in the courtyard of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. In 1982 participated in the XL Venice Biennale. There he presented different works and two structures, Abra Solar and Aguja Solar, which were installed at the entrance of the Biennale and in Lido. In 1985 his most complete retrospective takes place at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Caracas, including over 700 works culled from all stages of his career. In 1989, Otero edited “Saludo al Siglo XXI”, a publication of his computer-generated drawings of sculptures. In 1990 the Venezuelan government created the Fundación Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas. His work may be found at Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República - Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogota; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt; Neue Pinakothek, Munich; Arithmeum, Bonn; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Daros Latinamerica, Zurich; Tate Modern, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Art Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C.,

Raúl Pavlotzky

1918 Born in Palestine, naturalized in Uruguay

1998 Died in Montevideo, Uruguay

At the age of 12 Pavlotzky arrived in Uruguay and soon adopted citizenship. He studied at the Círculo de Bellas Artes under Guillermo Laborde and José Cúneo. As of 1942 he participated in the Salón Nacional regularly and bginning in 1943 in Municipal Salons. In 1942 he won the Prize for Foreign Artists at the Salón Nacional. In the 1950s he was linked to the “Arte No Figurativo” group from Uruguay, co-founded by Costigliolo and Freire. In 1955 he exhibited in *19 Artistas de hoy*, the first official presentation of Uruguayan abstraction, alongside Freire, Llorens, Costigliolo, Cabrera, Rothfuss and Teresa Vila, amongst others. In 1958 he co-founded “Grupo 8,” with fellow artists Oscar García Reino, Carlos Páez, Pareja, Lincoln Presno, Spósito, Alfredo Testoni and Julio Verdié. “Grupo 8” was a reference point for the avant-garde of Uruguay. They exhibited together for four years beginning in 1960 at the Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires and later in Punta del Este, Santiago de Chile and Prague. In 1959 he was awarded First Prize at the National Salon, and that same year was also distinguished at the international art exhibition in Punta del Este. In 1960 he received the Warthein First Prize in Buenos Aires. In 1962 Pavlotzky was invited to represent Uruguay at the I Bienal Americana de Arte de Córdoba. In 1963 he had an individual exhibition at the Centro de Artes y Letras de El Pais. In 1969 he won First Prize in the FUNSA Competition. In the 1970s he produced screenprints at New York’s Pratt Institute and at the studio of Liliana Porter and Luis Camnitzer.

Pavlotzky’s influence on younger artists has been great. He was a professor of printmaking at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes and in 1950 founded the Estudio Serigráfico Pavlotzky, a printmaking studio that had a great impact on the national art scene. Today it is run by his son, Daniel Pavlotzky. His works are in the permanent collection of the Blanes Museum and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Montevideo; Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro and Pinacoteca Municipal de Porto Alegre, amongst others.

Rafael Pérez

1938 Born in Montalban, Venezuela

Lives and works in Venezuela and Switzerland

Perez studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas Arturo Michelena in Valencia, Venezuela. His early work in the landscape tradition earned him numerous awards granted by the Salón Arturo Michelena, including an honorable mention in the XIV Salón in 1956 and yet again in 1958 and 1961, when he was honored with the Premio Club de Leones. In 1958 he founded and directed the Escuela de Artes Plásticas Rafael Monasterios in Maracay until 1962. He was a delegate of the artistic committee of the Universidad Central de Venezuela and taught at the Universidad de los Andes of Merida. Beginning in 1965 Perez began transitioning into abstraction

and worked on large scale gestural paintings. That same year he had a show at the Ateneo de Valencia and the Instituto Italo–Venezolano in Caracas.

In 1966 Pérez was awarded an Arturo Michelena scholarship to study in Spain. He settled in Madrid and visited the XXXIII Venice Biennale. The visit to Venice was noteworthy because the exhibition spaces of the Giardini were dominated with installations by the Argentinian artist Julio Le Parc, who was awarded the prize for painting [sic], and the work of the Venezuelan artist Jesus Raphael Soto. He then settled in Zurich in 1967, where his work was influenced by the constructive principles that now characterize his work. In 1967 he participated in the exhibition *Artistes latino-américains* at the Maison de l’Amérique Latine in Paris and in 1968 he participated in the XXIX Salón Oficial Anual de Arte Venezolano at Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. In 1970 he met Richard Paul Lohse, who took an interest in his work and Johannes Itten, a color theorist with whom he studied. That year he was included in the *1ère Exposition de l’estampe en Suisse* held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Lausanne. Pérez had multiple solo exhibitions at the Galerie Suzanne Bollag, Zurich (1969, 1971, 1972), a gallery that was pivotal to the development of international geometric abstraction. Other notable solo exhibitions include Instituto Ibero-Americano, Madrid (1967); Galeria Stampa, Basel (1970); Galleria Sincron, Rimini (1971); Galerie Ubu, Karlsruhe (1972); Galería Bonino, Rio de Janeiro (1974); Museo de Arte Moderno, Mérida (1978); Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen (1982); Galerie Kunst & Design, Zürich (1986); Museo de Arte de Maracay (1989); Museo de Arte Alejandro Otero, Caracas (1990). Pérez participated four times in the *Salon Grands et Jeunes d’aujourd’hui* (1969-71, 1976) and in the *Salon Comparaisons* (1969, 1970) both held in Paris. He was included in the Biennial of Graphic Art in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia in 1975, 1977 and 1979. In 1976 he participated in the Biennial of Graphic Art in Norway, Oslo and was included in *Las Artes Plásticas en Venezuela* at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. In 1981 and 1983 he exhibited in the Bienal de Artes Visuales, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. Also in 1983 he participated in the Biennial of Graphic Art in San Juan, Puerto Rico. His work was exhibited in *Contemporary Constructive Art in Europe*, Osaka University of Arts, Japan (1981); *Zeichnung und Druckgraphik*, Kunsthau Zürich (1986) and *Konstruktivismus 88*, Kunsthau Zürich (1988).

Pérez has created public murals and sculptures in Montalban, Bejuma and Valencia. In 1999, a large retrospective of his work opened in Medellín, Colombia. The show traveled to Bogotá and Buenos Aires. His work is included in many public collections in Switzerland including Progressives Museum, Basel; Centre Universitaire, Geneva; UBS Collection, Zurich; Gemeindehaus, Dielsdorf and Berufsschule, Winterthur. In Venezuela his work can be seen at Instituto Nacional de Cultura y Bellas Artes, Caracas; Biblioteca Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Arte Alejandro Otero, Caracas; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mérida; Museo de Ciudad Bolivar; Pinacoteca Seguros Carabobo, Valencia and Casa de la Cultura, Maracay.

Rogelio Polesello

1939 Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Polesello studied at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes Manuel Belgrano and Escuela de Bellas Artes Prilidiano Pueyrredón, where he completed his training in printmaking, drawing and illustration in 1958 in Buenos Aires. He demonstrated a precocious talent and held his first one-man exhibition at Galería Peuser in Buenos Aires in 1959, followed by a one-man exhibition in 1961 at the Panamerican Union in Washington D. C., that presaged his considerable international success. His concern with the problems of visual dynamics suggest a sympathy with Constructivism and Kinetic art, although he never employed actual movement. In 1976 he settled for a brief period in Caracas, where he worked in the workshop of the Venezuelan printmaker Luisa Palacios. Amongst his important solo shows are Bonino Gallery, Buenos Aires (1966); Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas (1966); La Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango del Banco de la República, Bogotá (1967); Centro de Artes Visuales del Instituto Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires (1969); Museo de Arte Moderno, Cali (1969); Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico D. F. (1974); Instituto de Cultura de Hispania, Madrid (1977); and Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellín (1983). He has held solo shows at the Galería Ruth Benzacar in Buenos Aires in 1987, 1990, 1997 and 2003. In 2000 the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires held a large retrospective of his work.

Notable group shows include *Grupo Phases*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires (1963); *III Biennale de Paris* (1963); *VIII São Paulo Biennial* (1965); *The Emergent Decade, Latin American Painters and Painting in the 60’s*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1966); *The Art of Ancient and Modern Latin America*, New Orleans Museum of Art (1968); *II Bienal de San Juan del Grabado Latinoamericano*, San Juan, Puerto Rico (1972); *Creadores Latinoamericanos contemporáneos 1950-1976, pinturas y relieves*, Museo de Arte Moderno de México, México D.F. (1976); *III Havana Biennial*, Centro Wifredo Lam (1989); *From Torres García to Soto*, Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C. (1995); *Fuera del Centro. Arte Argentino en las Colecciones Venezolanas*, Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, (1995). Most recently he was included in *Twister - Moving through Color, 1965-1977*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin (2004); *Geometry and Gesture*, Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C. (2006); and *Soltanto Azzurro*, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires (2009).

Throughout his career he has won numerous awards, amongst them the Primer Premio in the *Salón de Artistas Jóvenes de América Latina*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires (1965); Primer Premio George Braque, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires (1968); Visual Arts Award granted by the Fundación Konex, Buenos Aires (1982); an honorable mention from the *VI Bienal de San Juan de Grabado Latinoamericano*, Instituto de Cultura, San Juan (1983); Gran Premio de Honor *Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas*, Buenos Aires (1988); Gran Premio de Honor, Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Buenos Aires (2003); and Premio a la trayectoria, Cultura de la Nación, Buenos Aires (2007), amongst others.

His work is in many international public collections including the Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York; The Bronx Museum of Arts, New York; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República - Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogota; Museo Rufino Tamayo, México D.F.; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofía Imber, Caracas; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Rosario.

Fanny Sanín

1938 Born in Bogotá, Colombia

Lives and works in New York

Sanín’s career has spanned across many regions including Colombia, Mexico, England and the United States. She studied at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, where she received a Fine Arts degree in 1960. She continued her graduate studies in art history and printmaking at the University of Illinois between 1962 and 1963. In 1962 she participated for the first time in the *XIV Salón de Artistas Nacionales* in Bogotá, where she exhibited again in 1963-65, 1967, 1970, 1972 and 1974. In 1963 she moved to Monterrey, Mexico where her work was awarded a prize at the *VIII Salón de Noviembre*. In 1964 she had her first solo exhibition at the Galería de Arte Moderno, Monterrey. She also participated in the *First Salon Intercol de Artistas Jóvenes* held at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá. In 1965 her first museum solo show was held at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, curated by Marta Traba. In 1966 Sanín moved from Mexico to London, where she continued her printmaking studies at the Chelsea School of Art and at the Central School of Art. In 1967 she had an individual exhibition curated by Miguel Arroyo at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, and she exhibited in the *First Open Edinburgh 100* in Scotland. In 1968 she participated in the first *Bienal Iberoamericana de Arte de Coltejer*, Medellín. In 1969 she moved back to Monterrey where important changes took place in her work. She began doing hard edge canvases and eliminated all trace of modeling and modulation, adopting geometry as the structural key to the color variations that have characterized her work since. These works were exhibited that year at the Panamerican Union in Washington DC.

In 1970 she participated again in the *II Bienal Iberoamericana de Arte de Coltejer*, Medellín and won the Jury Medellin award. In 1971 Sanín moved to New York, where she has lived since. In 1975 she exhibited in *Works on Paper - Women Artists* at the Brooklyn Museum, New York and in 1983 in *Arte del Taller – Arte de la Calle*, at the École des Beaux Arts, Paris. This was followed in 1984 by the exhibition *Premio Cristobal Colon* in Madrid; *From Torres Garcia to Soto* at the Art Museum of the Americas, Washington (1992); and *Latin-American Artists in Washington Collections* at the Interamerican Development Bank, Washington DC (1994). Her work was included in the landmark exhibition *Latin American Women Artists 1915-1995*, which opened at the Milwaukee Art Museum (1996) and traveled widely throughout the United States. Sanín represented Colombia at the *XV International São Paulo Biennial* (1979) and the *II Havana Biennial* (1986).

Since the mid 60s Sanín has had numerous solo shows, highlights include Galería Turok-Wasserman and Casa del Lago, México (1965); AIA Gallery, London (1968); Casa de la Cultura, Monterrey (1970); Instituto de Cultura y Bellas Artes, Caracas (1972); Phoenix Gallery, New York (1977, 1980, 1982); Museum of Modern Art, Mexico D.F. (1979); Galería Garcés Velásquez, Bogotá, (1979, 1982, 1986, 1994); Rayo Museum, Roldanillo (1984), Greater Lafayette Museum of Art, Indiana (1990); Museo de Antioquia, Medellín (1996); National Arts Club, New York (2003); and Latincollector, New York (2004, 2008). Sanin’s first retrospective exhibition was held in 1987 at the Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá. It was followed by *Color and Symmetry*: 1987-1999, Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá, (2000), Gomez Gallery, Baltimore (2003), and *La Struttura Cromatica*, which took place at the Instituto Italo-Latino Americano, Rome (2007). She is the recipient of numerous awards such as the Premio Colombia, Miami, (1993), Canadian Club Award (1985); and an Honorable Mention granted by the National Arts Club, New York (2007). Her work is included in many public collections including Museo de Arte del Banco de la República - Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogota; Museo de Arte Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota; Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum of the Americas, Washington D.C.; New Orleans Museum Art; Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, France; Museum of Art of Warsaw, Poland and the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art, Colchester, United Kingdom; Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguerez, Zacatecas; Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Caracas.

Víctor Valera

1927 Born in Maracaibo, Venezuela

Lives and works in Caracas, Venezuela

In 1941 Valera began his fine art studies in Maracaibo. In 1945 he moved to Caracas where he studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas between 1948 and 1950. Afterwards he joined the Taller Libre de Arte. In 1952, with the aid of a small grant he traveled to Paris where he attended workshops in the studios of Jean Dewasne and Victor Vasarely. While in Paris he worked for Fernand Léger, where he met Robert Jacobsen who encouraged him to do sculptures in metal. He returned to Caracas in 1956, where he was one of the first sculptors to work with welded iron. The results of his delving into volumetric experiments with metal sheets that he cut and reconfigured, earned him the Sculpture Prize in 1958 at the Salón Oficial Anual de Arte Venezolano. Valera was invited by the architect Carlos Villanueva to collaborate on the “Proyecto de Integración de las Artes” at the Universidad Central de Venezuela. The project was designed to integrate architecture and avant-garde art, principles that would remain a constant line of inquiry throughout Valera’s career. Between 1955 and 1956 he contributed four ceramic murals located in the Faculty of Humanities and Education and two murals for the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. In 1964 he worked with the British sculptor Kenneth Armitage and a group of seven other Venezuelan sculptors Harry Abend, Max Pedemonte, Fernando Irazábal, Carlos Prada, Gilberto Manrique, Edgar Guinand and Alejandro Henriquez,

in a workshop that lasted three months. Their work was presented in the exhibition *Kenneth Armitage and eight Venezuelan sculptors*, held at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. In 1966 he was invited to represent Venezuela at the XXXIII Venice Biennale, along with Alejandro Otero and Jesús Rafael Soto. After the Biennale ended the show traveled in the United States. In 1967 he won an Honorary Award granted by the IV Bienal Armando Reverón, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas. In 1983 he won First prize in the First Bienal Nacional de Escultura Francisco Narváez, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Porlamar. In 1997 he participated in the First Mercosur Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Important solo exhibitions include a paintings retrospective at Ateneo de Caracas (1965); Sala Mendoza, Caracas, (1963, 1966); Estudio Actual, Caracas (1969, 1973-75, 1980-82); Centro de Bellas Artes de Maracaibo, Zulia (1973); Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogota, (1974); a retrospective exhibition, *Esculturas 1954-1984*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas (1984); *Víctor Valera y el cometa Halley*, Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas (1985); Galería Durban, Caracas (1987, 1993, 1996); *Formas para Tocar*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber (1992); and *Papeles perforados*, Galería de Arte Nacional (2001). His work is in the permanent collection of various museums, including Ateneo de Valencia, Valencia; Fundación Galería de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Imber, Caracas; Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto, Ciudad Bolívar; Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República - Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá; and Museum of the Americas, Washington DC. His large scale sculptures and murals may be seen throughout Venezuela in places such as Parque de la Nacionalidad and Teatro de Bellas Artes in Maracaibo, and Parque Rómulo Betancourt in Caracas, amongst others.

Gregorio Vardanega

1923 Born in Possagno, Italy

2007 Died in Paris, France

Vardanega’s family immigrated to Buenos Aires when he was a child in 1926. He joined the “Asociación Arte Concreto Invención” in 1946 and took part in the group’s exhibitions held at the Peuser and Kraft galleries in Buenos Aires. Two years later he traveled to Europe with Carmelo Arden Quin. In 1948 he participated in the *II Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* in Paris along with Hlito, Iommi, and Kosice, amongst others from Latin America. In 1949 he exhibited at the *Salon de Amérique Latine* in Paris, where he came in contact with Michel Seuphor, Denise René, Georges Vantongerloo, Antoine Pevsner, Sonia Delaunay, Max Bill and other important figures of the Parisian vanguard. In 1950, back in Argentina he showed his works in the exhibition *Joven Pintura* at the Galería Peuser. Vardanega was a founding member of the “Asociación Arte Nuevo” in 1955 and “Artistas no Figurativos Argentinos” in 1956 and showed with Madi artists often. In 1957 he was included in the IV São Paulo Biennial and in 1958 he participated in the *Exposition universelle et internationale* in Brussels, where

he won a Gold Medal. In 1959 he moved to Paris with his wife and fellow artist, Martha Boto. He exhibited regularly at the Galerie Denise René from 1961 onwards, including a solo show in 1969.

Among his most important group exhibitions are *Salón de France-Amérique* (1959); *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* (1961); *Treinte Argentins de la Nouvelle Génération*, Galerie Creuze (1962); *Art d’Amérique Latine*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1962); *Esquisse d’un Salon*, Galerie Denise René, Paris (1963); *Mouvement 2*, Galerie Denise René, Paris (1964); *Art Argentin Actuel*, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1964); *Lumière, Mouvement et Optique*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium (1964); *Kinetik II*, Dusseldorf (1964); Instituto Di Tella, Buenos Aires (1966), *Lumière et Mouvement, Art cinétique a Paris*, Musée d’art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1967); *Grands et Jeunes d’aujourd’hui*, Grand Palais, Paris (1978-82); *Argentina: Arte Concreto Invención 1945 & Grupo Madí 1946*, Rachel Adler Gallery, New York (1990), *L’Art en mouvement*, Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence (1992); *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, MoMA, New York (1993) and *Abstract art from the Río de la Plata. Buenos Aires and Montevideo 1933/53*, New York, The Americas Society (2001); *Denise René: L’Intrépide*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, (2001); *Moving Parts, Forms of the Kinetic*, Museum Tinguely, Basel (2005); *Refract, Reflect, Project*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC (2007).

His work is well represented in museums, including Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires; Instituto Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata; Recklinghausen Museum, Germany; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tel-Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; Rembrandt van Rijn Foundation, The Cape, South Africa; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D. C. and Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin.

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