

HUTCHINSON MODERN

UNTITLED, ART

San Francisco

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THE LEGACY OF ABSTRACTION IN THE SOUTHERN CONE AND BEYOND

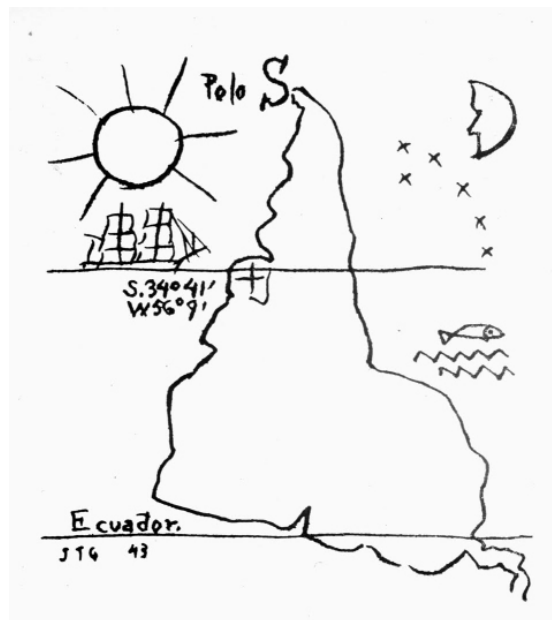
Hutchinson Modern presents “The Legacy of Abstraction in the Southern Cone and Beyond,” a selection of works created by Uruguayan and Argentine artists from the 1930s to the present day, along with works of Dominican-born New York artist, Freddy Rodríguez. Our booth traces the genealogy of Latin American Abstraction on both sides of the River Plate and beyond, by showcasing works that demonstrate the aesthetic legacy of modern masters upon today’s contemporary artists continuing to work in the field of Abstraction.

These artists include, in chronological order: Joaquín Torres-García, Esteban Lisa, Ides Kihlen, Roberto Aizenberg, Freddy Rodríguez, Alejandro Corujeira, Beto de Volder, and Mariano Ferrante—all artists committed to the employment of geometry and, most importantly, to using Abstraction as a formal language. It is through tracing the lineage of Latin American Abstraction from the 1930s to today that the exchange, evolution, and diversity of the various aesthetic techniques and theoretical approaches to this modernist and contemporary movement come to light.

The Uruguayan artist, Joaquín Torres-García (1874-1949, Uruguay), is considered to be the father of Latin American Abstraction. He founded the movement *Universal Constructivism*: a conflation of European Geometric Abstraction and Constructivism with formal elements derived from American indigenous art. Torres-García aimed to create a “universal” aesthetic through his unique employment of the grid with signs and symbols from pre-Columbian cultures. An avid traveler, it was when Torres-García was living in the City of Lights (1926-1932) that he first began experimenting with Constructivism. As a result, this unique work on paper of an urban scene, *Macelleria*, dated 1930, hails from one of the most pivotal years in Torres-García’s

oeuvre. It stands as a prime example of his early explorations with geometric figures and gridded compartments set against an orthogonal-based composition.

After returning to his native Montevideo, Torres-García founded his renowned workshop, the “Taller Torres-García” (TTG) in 1943, where he passed on his legacy to the next generation of artists working within the field of Abstraction. This collective continued to promote their teacher’s aspirations for a universal, constructivist, geometrically abstract art form, rooted in American indigenous cultures, and conflated with the modernist grid.



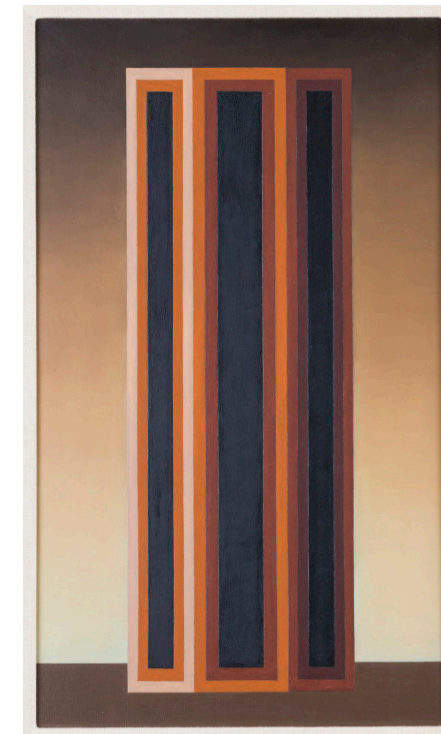
Joaquín Torres-García, *América Invertida*, 1943. Courtesy of the Estate of Joaquín Torres-García

While *Universal Constructivism* prospered in the Uruguayan art world during the 1930s and 40s, across the River Plate, other forms of disseminating the principles of Abstraction were being planted in Argentina, when artists such as Emilio Pettoruti (1892-1971) and Xul Solar (1887-1963) (both of whom—as well as Torres-García—had been living in Europe during the 1910s and 20s), returned to their native Buenos Aires to espouse the formal and philosophical tenets of Geometric Abstraction that they themselves had appropriated while abroad.

By the latter half of the 1940s, two movements devoted to pure abstraction—the Grupo Madí and the Asociación Arte Concreto-Invención (AACI)—emerged in Buenos Aires. Officially inaugurated in 1944, both groups promoted constructivist, geometric, concrete art, and the purist aesthetics of Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931) and Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), both affiliated with Torres-García. These collectives ardently rejected figurative art, and gave rise to another generation of artists working within Abstraction.



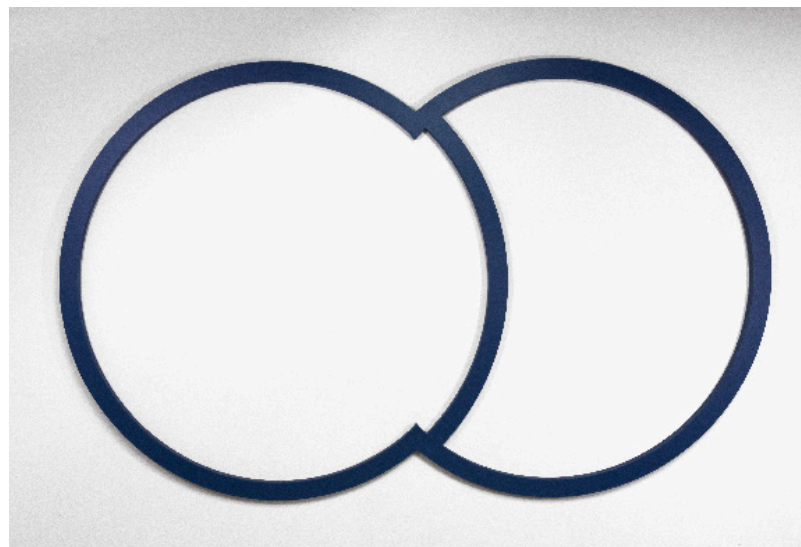
Esteban Lisa, *Composición*, 1943



Roberto Aizenberg, *Sin Título (Torre naranja)*, 1980

Esteban Lisa’s paintings (1895-1983, Argentina), were created in the midst of these radical new movements espousing geometric art. Lisa’s early works flirted with figuration through organic compositions; however, by the 1930s, the artist leaned more towards abstraction and geometry, incorporating animated linear forms and variances on spherical shapes. One of Lisa’s best known series is his *Composiciones*. Rendered in a small format, they are both intimate and highly expressive, hovering in the in-between space of figuration and abstraction.

Differing from his contemporaries, in that Roberto Aizenberg (1928-1996, Argentina) drew from automatism, surrealism, and metaphysical art, he held a strong commitment to structure and order. Aizenberg’s work is replete with forms ranging from polyhedral constructions, to uninhabited buildings, to mysteriously isolated and orderly compositions. These two paintings—*Pintura* from c. 1966-67, and *Torre naranja* from c. 1980—are prime examples of Aizenberg’s most prevalent motifs. They also stand testament to his commitment to retaining a delicate balance between Geometric Abstraction and the unreal.



Beto de Volder, *Untitled*, 2019

Ides Kihlen (b. 1917, Argentina) creates abstract acrylics and collages completely rid of any figurative elements. Many of Kihlen's works contain references to music and lyrical compositions, hence the title of the collage, *Composition 25* (c.1990). Formal arrangements oscillate between exuding a lively, playful energy by incorporating abstract fragments, patternings, and numerical traces, while also presenting windows of negative space that open up into new dimensions where geometric forms float freely across the works' surface.

The 1960s continued to bring further innovations within the rich lineage of Geometric Abstraction already present in Argentina. One of the principal tenets at this time was a radical break with conventional sculptural and pictorial formats. Continuing in the legacy of the Concrete artists and the Grupo Madí, who advocated paintings displayed on irregularly-shaped canvases, and experimentings with three-dimensional sculptural objects, is Beto de Volder (b. 1962, Argentina), one of the three youngest Argentine artists represented in our booth—along with Marcelo Ferrante (b. 1974, Argentina) and Alejandro Corujeira (b. 1961, Argentina).

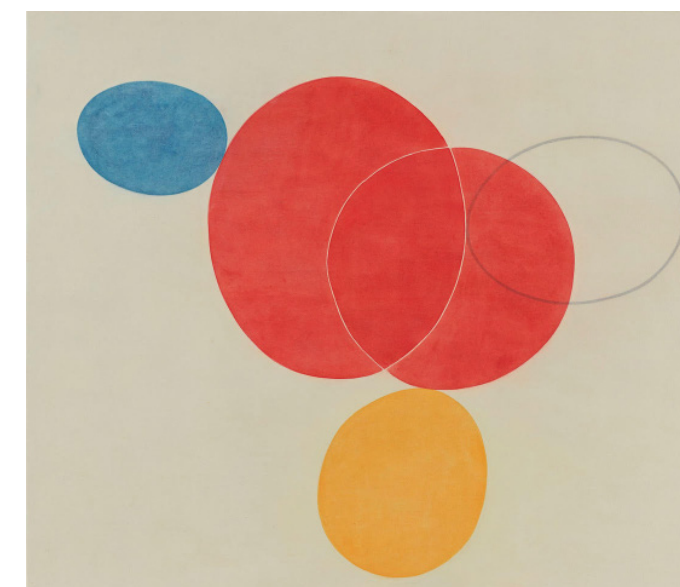
Beto de Volder's early artistic production paid homage to the lineage that came before him through his strong use of color and geometry; yet his practice until the mid-90s was highly figurative. Part of de Volder's most recent work evokes and extends the Grupo Madí's contestation of traditional notions of sculptural formats through his employment of curved linear forms that bisect, unfurl, and overlap each other in a playful use of geometry. Conflated with a bold use of color—many times committing to only one single hue—de Volder's forms unfold into three-dimensional space through either single or intertwining loops that rest in the in-between space of abstract randomization and restraint.

Mariano Ferrante is yet another contemporary artist continuing to practice in the tradition of Latin American Kineticism and Geometric Abstraction, while also displaying an acute awareness of phenomenological experiences. Ferrante's paintings are a perfect example of his attention to a dynamic chromatic palette and the employment of geometry as a visual language, all rendered in a highly meticulous manner. His work appears as if threaded or woven into layered, multidimensional, geometric tapestries that flirt with the eye and entice optical participation on behalf of the viewer.

Alejandro Corujeira's work originated from within a Constructivist background, however, as these two works (2019) from his two most recent series *Latidos* and *Al departar, flotaban*, show his current aesthetic engages with more organic, Minimalist forms which appear to drift and float across the surface of the canvas, sometimes overlapping, other times barely touching.

These spherical shapes are rendered through an ascetic use of color: here, they are comprised of either different tonalities of the same palette—a subtle orange hue—at the very least, or through a restrained use of the three primary colors, at the very most. This chromatic restraint of floating abstract shapes results in a playful depiction of forms that take on a sense of slow, if gradual, movement.

Dominican-born New York artist, Freddy Rodríguez, is a prime example of an artist both working within the field of Abstraction, as well as sharing the same legacy as the other artists represented in this booth. Rodríguez moved to New York City in 1963 fleeing his native Dominican Republic. Over the course of his five-decade career, he had his origins in Minimalism, Abstract Expressionism,



Alejandro Corujeira, *Untitled* (from the series *Latidos*), 2019

and New York School painting, before also engaging with Geometric Abstraction. Works like, *Political Statement* (1999) and *Mulato de tal* (1974), besides presenting transnational issues regarding Dominican culture, stand as a response to critics believing that a Caribbean-born artist would not create either geometric or abstract work. The crisscrossing of hyperchromatic linear forms painted across a gridded structural framework stand as a perfect rebuttal on the part of Rodríguez: a response comprised by the formal language of geometry and Abstraction itself.

Time as such is what divides these contemporary artists working in the field of Abstraction from their legacy originating in the work of Joaquín Torres-García. The main premise of Torres-García's *Universal Constructivism* was just that: a "universal," language of Abstraction, not one just relegated to the two nations bordering the River Plate.

In this way, our booth aims to showcase that pivotal point: that Abstraction, along with its genealogy, is not geographically confined. Artists from Uruguay and Argentina have evolved from a legacy rooted in Abstraction, yet so have artists from other parts of the Americas—"beyond" the Southern Cone.



Freddy Rodríguez, *Mulato de Tal*, 1974

SELECTED WORKS

ROBERTO AIZENBERG

Pintura

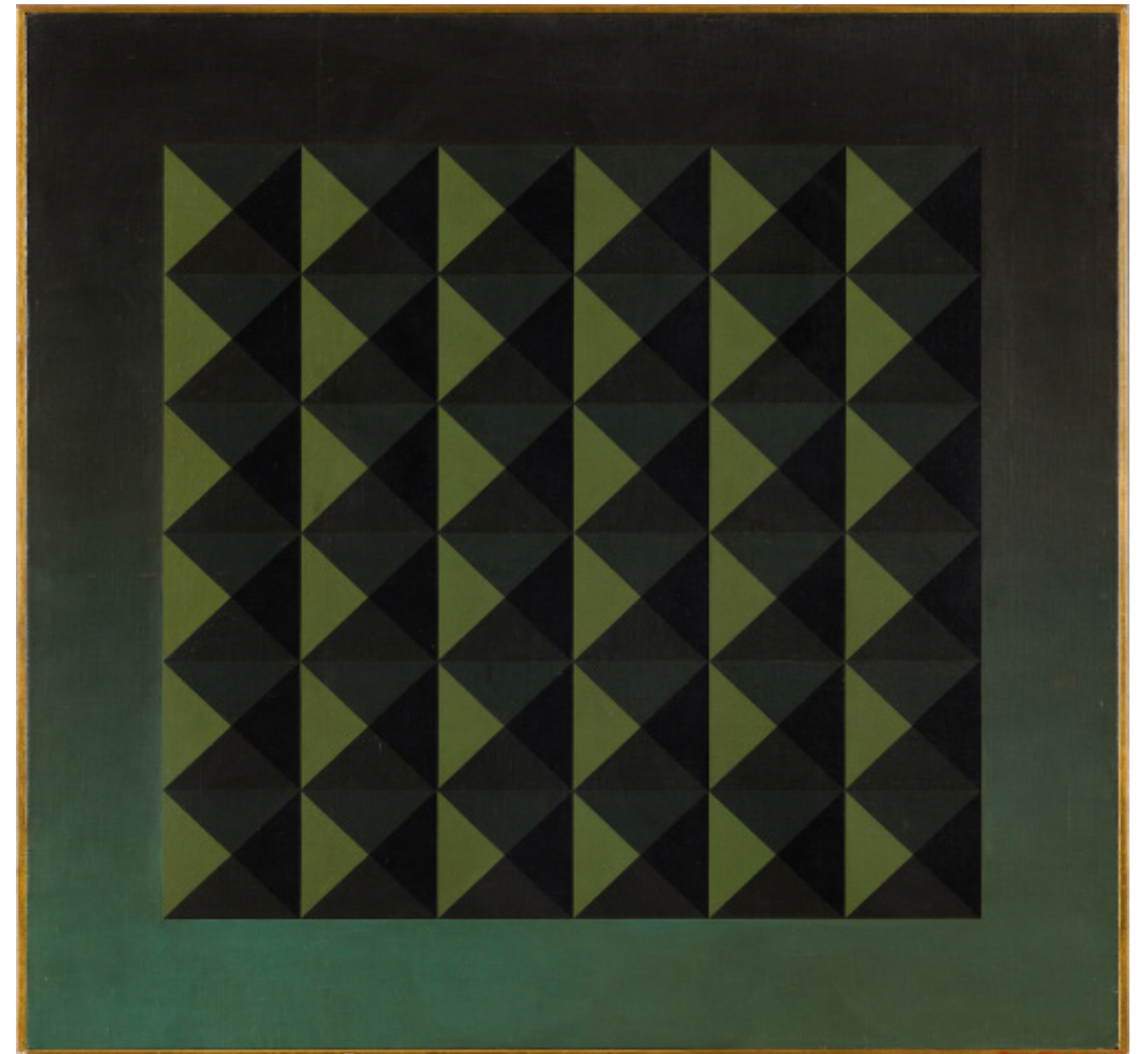
1966-1967

Oil on board

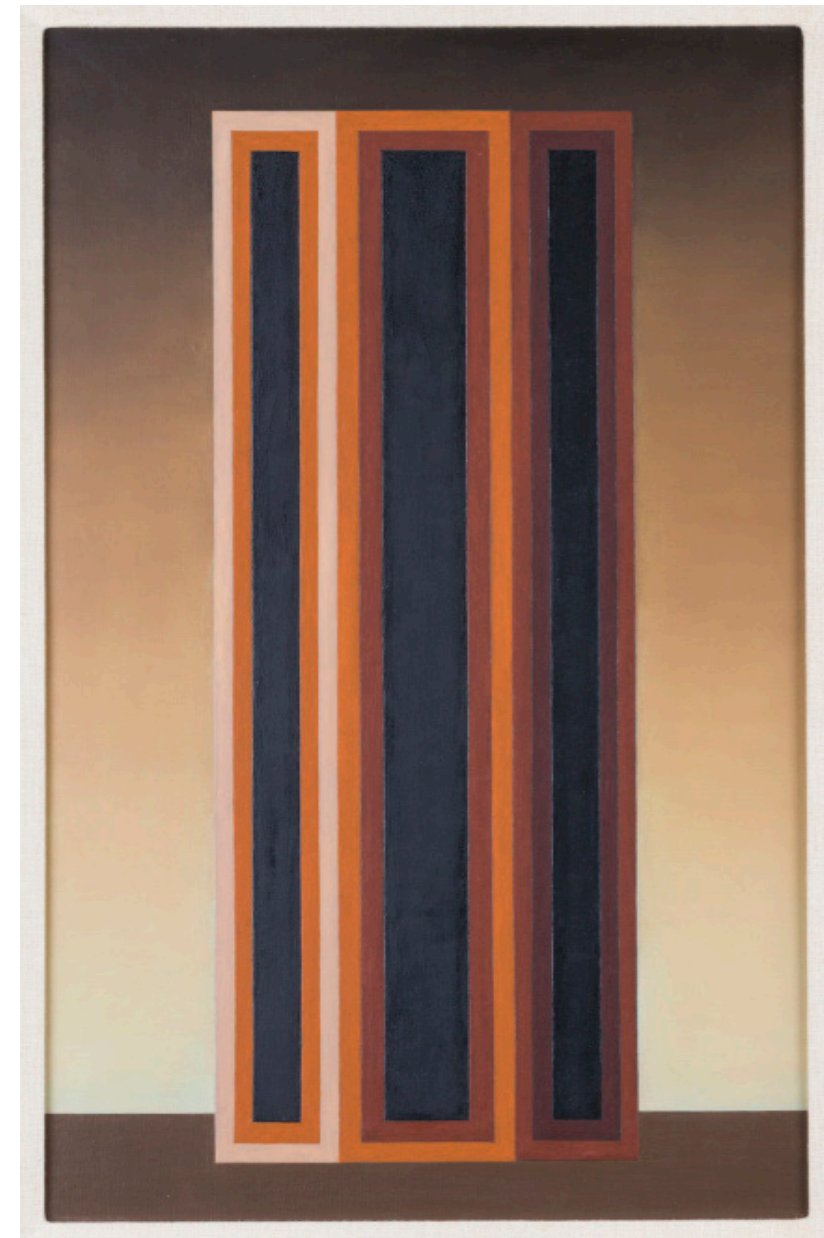
25 1/2 x 25 1/2 in (65 x 65 cm)

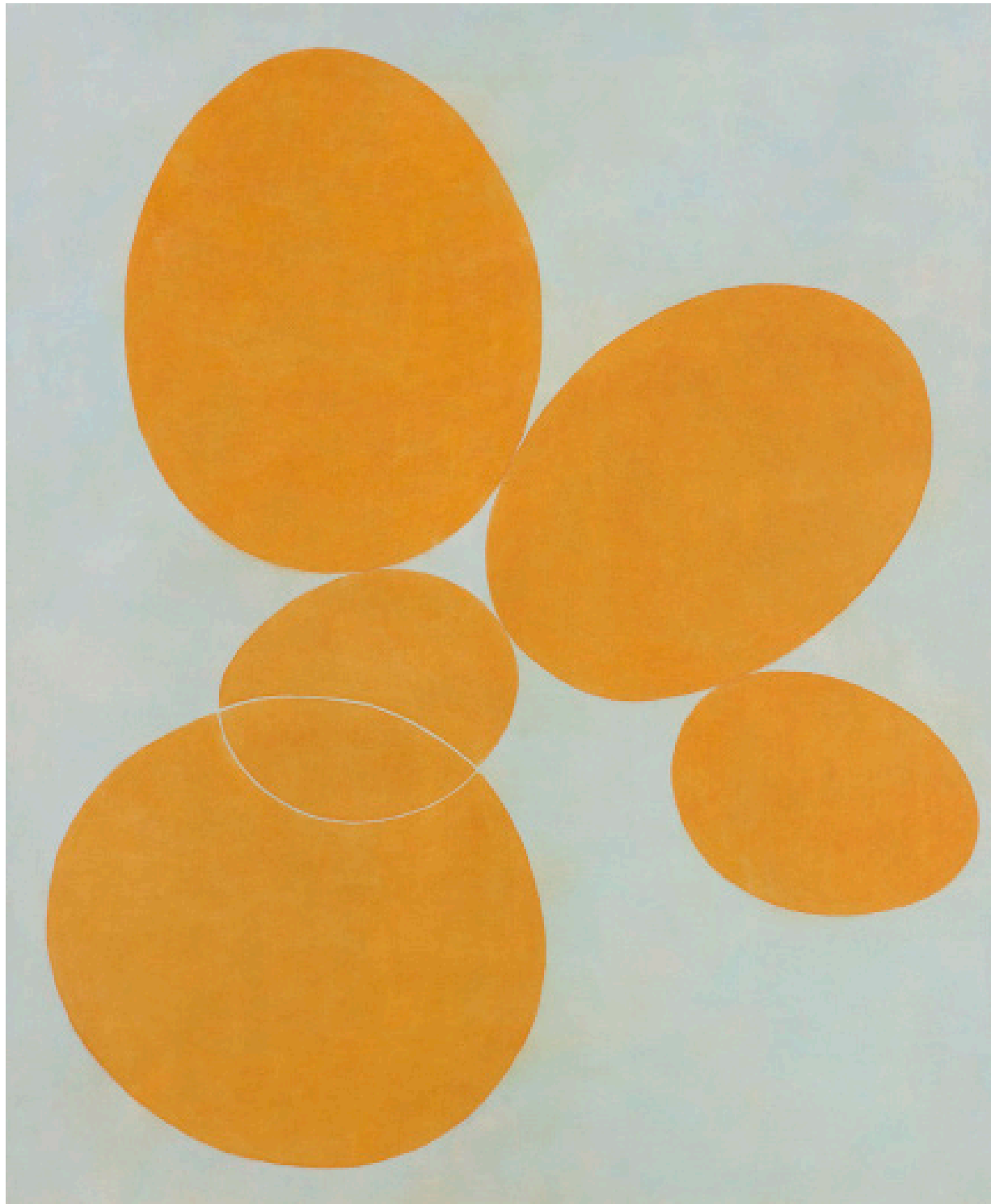
Exhibited

"Aizenberg Obras 1947/1968," Centro de Artes Visuales del Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, June 3-29, 1969, plate 51

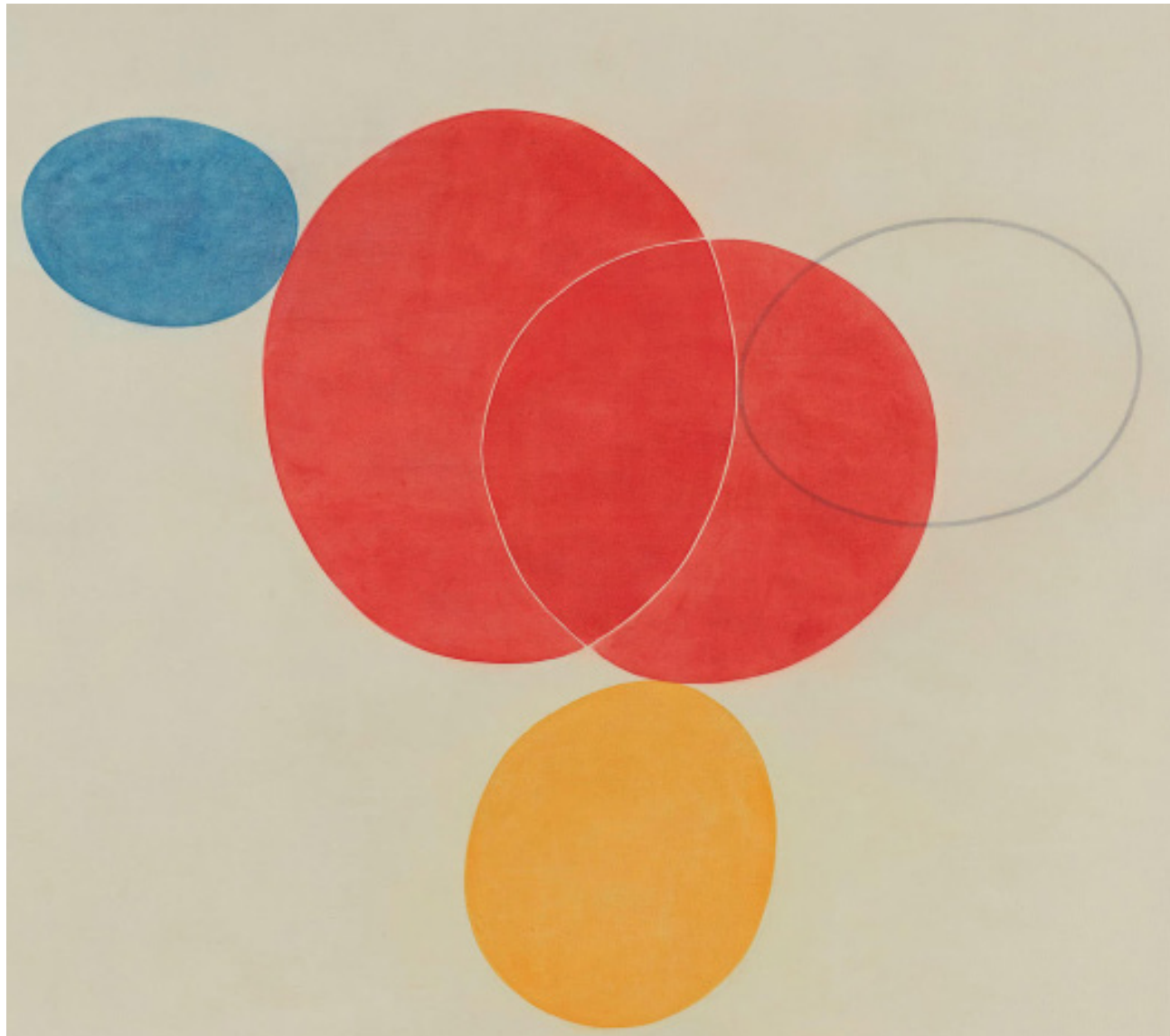


ROBERTO AIZENBERG
Sin Título (Torre naranja)
c. 1980
Oil on board
23 1/8 x 13 in (59 x 33 cm)



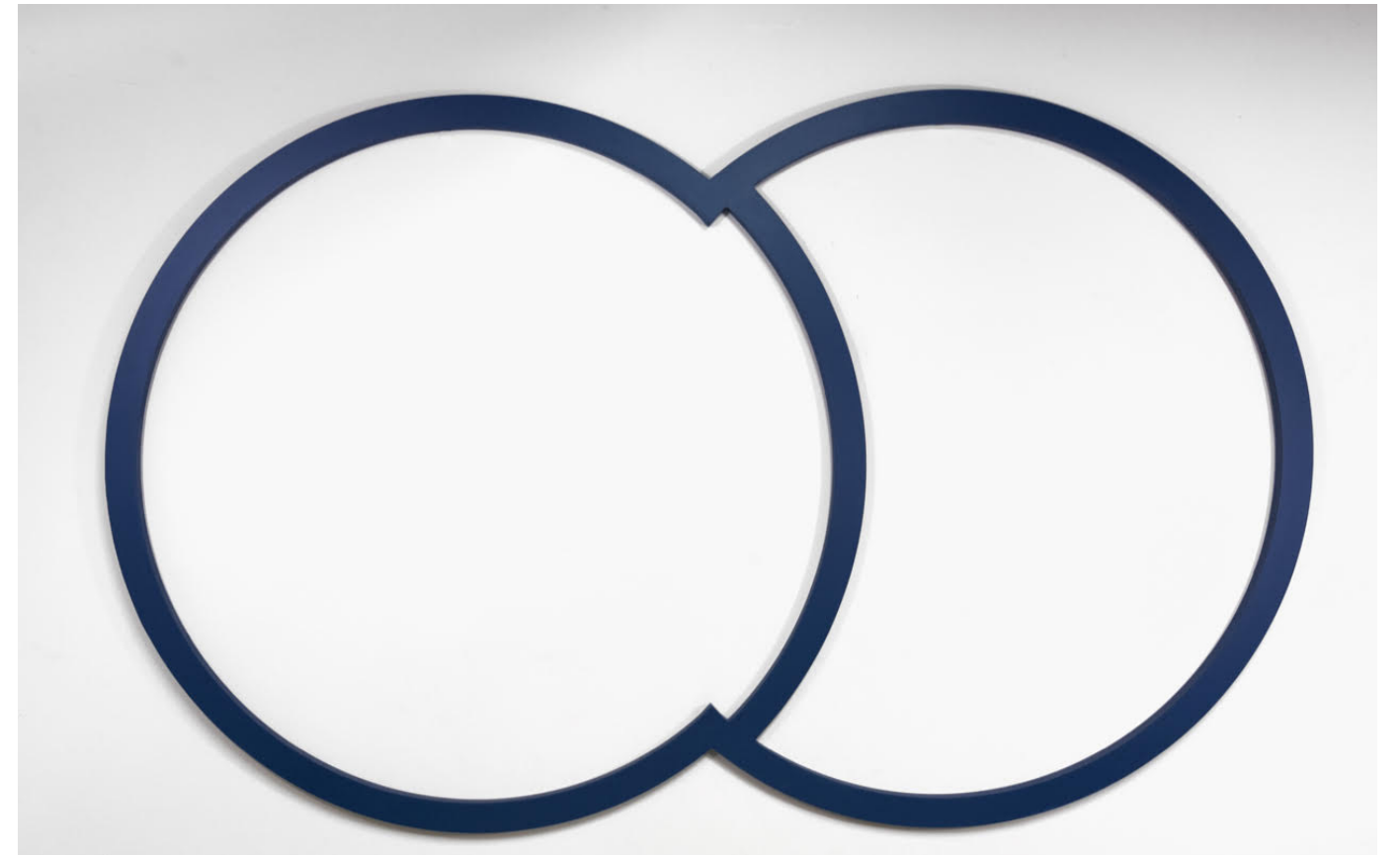


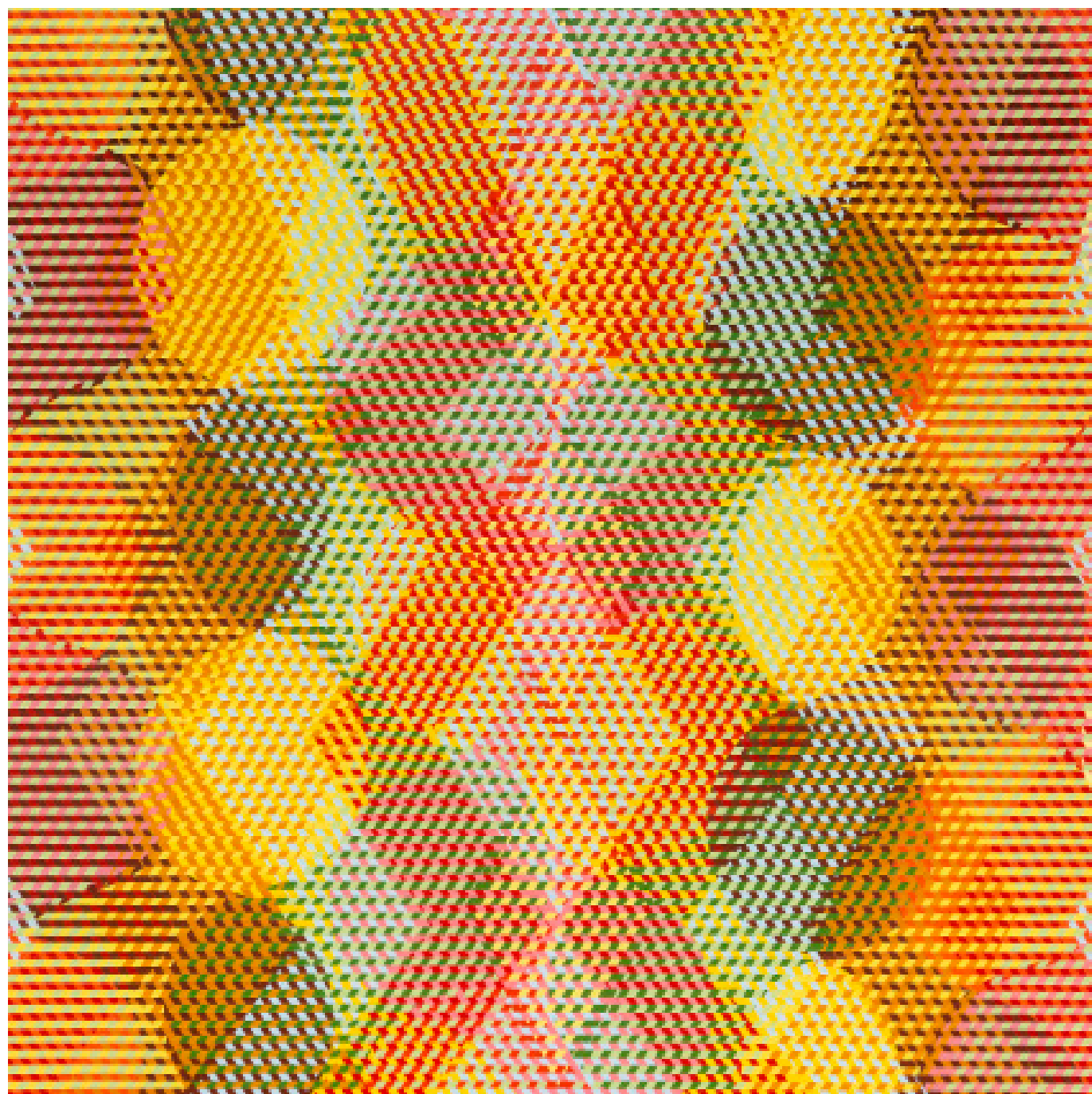
ALEJANDRO CORUJEIRA
Untitled
(From the series *Al despertar, flotaban*)
2019
Acrylic and watercolor on canvas
63 x 55 1/8 in (160 x 140 cm)



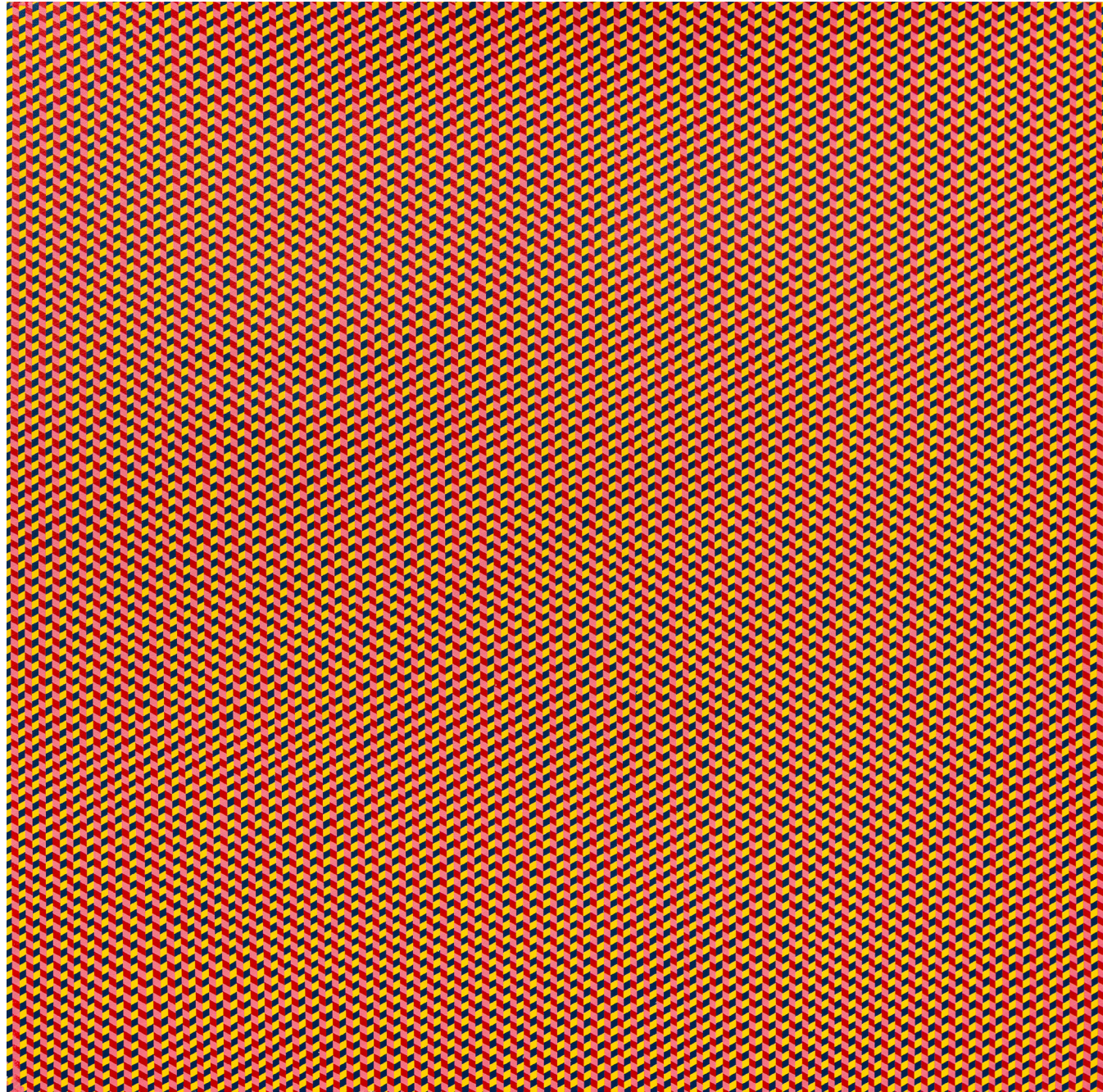
ALEJANDRO CORUJEIRA
Untitled
(From the series *Latidos*)
2019
Acrylic, watercolor and graphite on canvas
51 1/8 x 59 in (130 x 150 cm)

BETO DE VOLDER
Untitled
2019
Acrylic on MDF
38 x 60 in (96.5 x 152 cm)





MARIANO FERRANTE
Pintura N106
2019
Acrylic on canvas
35 x 35 in (88.9 x 88.9 cm)



MARIANO FERRANTE
Monocromo N33
2019
Acrylic on canvas
35 x 35 in (88.9 x 88.9 cm)

IDES KIHLEN

Composition 25

c. 1990

Collage and oil on board

19 3/4 x 27 1/2 in (50.2 x 69.8 cm)





ESTEBAN LISA
Composición
c. 1943
Oil on board
11 3/4 x 9 in (30 x 23 cm)



ESTEBAN LISA
Composición
c.1943
Oil on board
11 1/2 x 8 3/4 (29.2 x 22.2 cm)



ESTEBAN LISA
Juego con líneas y colores, 2-11-1955
Oil on paper
11 1/2 x 8 5/8 (28 x 22 cm)



ESTEBAN LISA
Juego con líneas y colores, 4-11-1955
Oil on thin card
11 3/8 x 9 (28.9 x 22.9 cm)

FREDDY RODRÍGUEZ

Mulato de Tal

1974

Acrylic on canvas

80 x 40 in (203.2 x 101.6 cm)

Exhibited

Galeria Latinoamericana, La Habana, Cuba. "Encuentro De Plastica Latinoamericana Puerto Rico, Republica Dominicana y Cuba," May 20, 1976

Museo Del Hombre Dominicano, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic "Freddy Rodriguez Primera Exposicion Individual En Santo Domingo," October 30 - November 15, 1974; Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Santiago, Dominican Republic

Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Bronx, New York. "Freddy Rodriguez: My Geometries 1970-2002," June 3 - August 5, 2015, No. 41



FREDDY RODRÍGUEZ

Political Statement #3

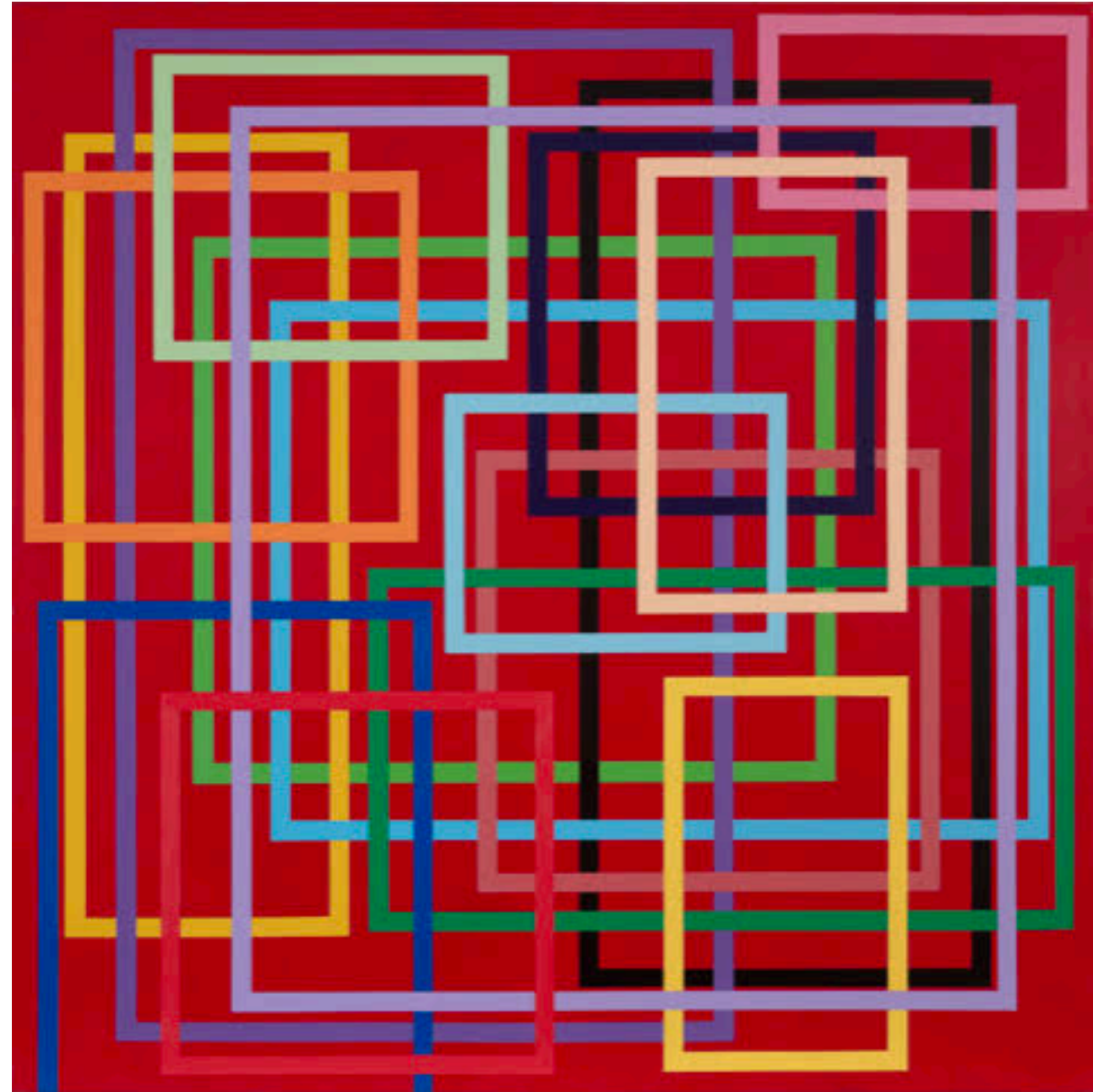
1999

Acrylic on canvas

42 x 42 in (106.7 x 106.7 cm)

Exhibited

Longwood Art Gallery at Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Bronx, New York. "Freddy Rodriguez: My Geometries 1970-2002," June 3 - August 5, 2015, No. 36





JOAQUÍN TORRES-GARCÍA
Macelleria
1930
Graphite on paper
8 1/2 x 12 in (21.6 x 30.5 cm)

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

ROBERTO AIZENBERG

(b. 1928, Federal, Entre Ríos, Argentina – d. Buenos Aires, Argentina 1996)

Roberto “Bobby” Aizenberg was the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants who settled in the province of Entre Ríos, Argentina, before moving to the country’s capital when the artist was eight years old. A painter, draughtsman, sculptor, and collagist, Aizenberg began his career as an architect, but left the field to study painting. He first, studied with Antonio Berni, and from 1950 to 1953, with Juan Batlle Planas, an artist with a heavy emphasis on surrealist theory and psychoanalysis.

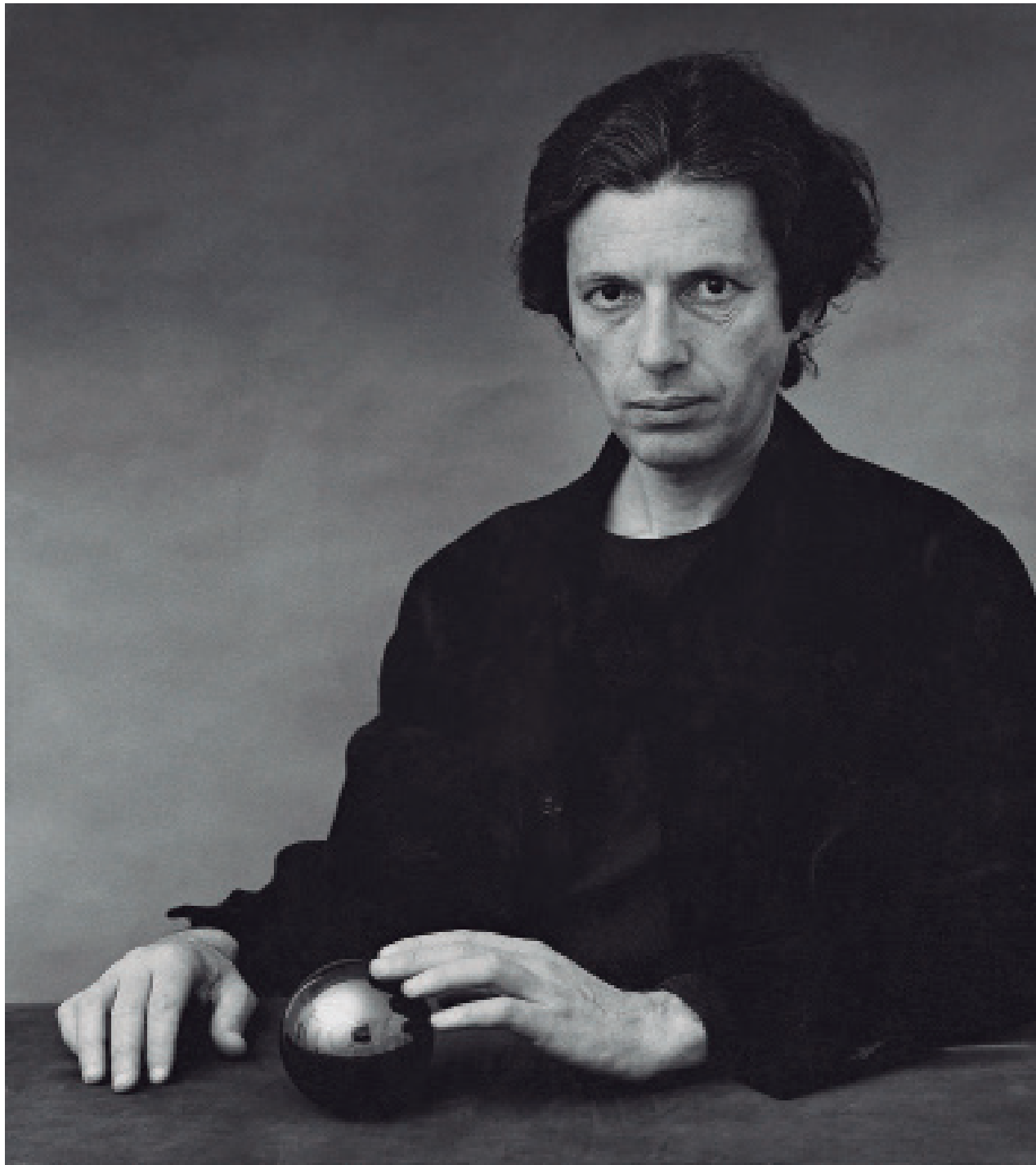
Drawing from automatism, surrealism, and metaphysical art, Aizenberg was highly influenced by the work of Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, and Pablo Picasso, while developing his own visual vocabulary across a variety of media. The artist’s work has always retained an attention to construction, space, light, and mostly, to his architectural background. Aizenberg was drawn to architecture for its commitment to structure and order; at the same time, he strove to retain a delicate balance between geometric abstraction and symbolism within his practice. As a result, the artist’s work is replete with forms ranging from polyhedral constructions to uninhabited buildings; from distorted harlequins to deformed headless figures; and from empty landscapes to mysteriously isolated constructions.

The most prevalent motif in Aizenberg’s body of work, is that of a geometrically abstract composition, mostly rendered in the form of a building or a tower punctured by rows of vacant windows. The artist’s work does not align itself with the surrealist aim of synthesizing wakefulness with dream states; instead, it acquires its meaning through the conflation of the orderly and the unreal.

Aizenberg’s first solo exhibition was held at the Galería Galatea in Buenos Aires in 1958, followed by six other solo exhibitions within a ten-year period. In 1969, the renowned Instituto Torcuato Di Tella (ITDT) (The Torcuato di Tella Institute) held a major retrospective of the artist’s work which included fifty paintings, two hundred drawings, and a number of sculptures and collages. Following this, Aizenberg’s work has been included in a number of solo and group exhibitions across Europe, the United States, and Latin America.

Due to the military coup in Argentina in 1976 and 1977, Aizenberg was forced into exile, moving to Paris in 1977, Tarquinia in 1981, and Milan in 1983. A year later, he returned to Argentina to teach at various schools of Fine Art and deliver seminars on painting.

Aizenberg’s work is found in a number of prestigious public and private collections, including: the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA) Colección Costantini; Museo Fortabat, Buenos Aires; Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; The Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, amongst others.



Roberto Aizenberg photographed by Humberto Rivas

ALEJANDRO CORUJEIRA

(b. 1961, Buenos Aires, Argentina – lives and works in Madrid, Spain)

In 1991, five years after graduating from the Escuela de Bellas Artes (School of Fine Arts) in his native Buenos Aires, Alejandro Corujeira travelled to Madrid where he continues to reside and work to this day. Corujeira's earliest introduction to the artistic circuit began in the Spanish capital, where he gained increasing recognition as a unique artist working within the field of postmodern abstraction. A little over a decade after arriving in Madrid, the artist had a number of important solo exhibitions including at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid in 2002, and at the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno (IVAM), Valencia in 2006. Other Spanish venues exhibiting works by Corujeira include the Museo Municipal de Madrid, and the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de España, Madrid, amongst others.

Working with a diverse range of media, Corujeira's earliest pieces incorporate organic forms in a minimalist style under the greater framework of abstraction. The artist has consistently exhibited a commitment to wavering lines, oblong shapes, and undulating forms, all the while depicting these across a wide spectrum of chromatic palettes. The use of the words "vibrant," "energetic," "rhythmic," and "palpitating," have all been employed by critics to describe Corujeira's work, and they all do successfully capture a common element—a sense of movement—that remains a constant in the aesthetic trajectory of the artist's various series throughout his oeuvre.

Corujeira's most recent work, incorporates acrylic, watercolor, and graphite circular and elliptical shapes rendered in a limited-ranged palette. These spherical-based shapes of various forms and sizes appear to drift and float across the surface of the canvas, sometimes overlapping, other times barely touching. These molecular, even cellular-seeming orbs are rendered through an ascetic use of color: they are comprised of either different tonalities or hues of the same palette at the very least, or through a restrained use of the three primary colors at the very most. Combined with Corujeira's use of barely discernible traces of white and black outlines, as well as his unique employment of negative space, this chromatic restraint results in a playful depiction of forms that appear to take on a sense of slow, if gradual, movement. These works entice the viewer's eye and almost beg to be gazed at over a duration of time.

The artist was a recipient of the Josef and Annie Albers Foundation Residency in 2004, and his work has been exhibited in numerous galleries, including: various venues of Marlborough Gallery; Alejandra von Hartz Gallery, Miami; Van Riel Gallery, Buenos Aires; Juan Martín Gallery, Mexico City; and Elite Fine Art Gallery, Miami, amongst others.

Alejandro Corujeira's work can be found in a number of prestigious public and private collections, including: the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, New York; the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Ímber; the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and the Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno (IVAM), Valencia.



Alejandro Corujeira photographed by Francisco Fernández



Beto de Volder photographed by Luciano Jaureguy

BETO DE VOLDER

(b. 1962, Buenos Aires, Argentina – lives and works in New York)

An Argentine painter and sculptor, Beto De Volder studied at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes Manuel Belgrano in his native Buenos Aires from 1986 to 1989. Four years later, in 1993, de Volder was awarded the first prize in painting at the Biennial of Young Artists in Buenos Aires. The following year, the artist received a scholarship from the Fundación Antorchas which enabled him to work for two years—from 1994 to 1996—in the *Taller de Barracas* (The Barracas Workshop) under the mentorship of Luis Fernando Bénédict, Pablo Suárez, and Ricardo Longhini.

De Volder's artistic production developed during the 1990s upon joining a group of artists working with the Rojas Cultural Center in Buenos Aires. In 1991, the artist held his first solo exhibition of paintings at the Rojas Gallery. At this point in his practice, de Volder's formal language—as well as those of his peers at the Rojas Gallery—all paid homage to the lineage that came before them: one spear-headed by the Argentine Concrete art movement of the 1940s, most notably, by the *Grupo Madí* (the Madí Group). This aesthetic was conveyed through works that engaged with a strong use of color and geometry. De Volder's practice until the mid-90s was both figurative and geometric, as well as highly reminiscent of the cartoon-style street art. At this time, De Volder's art was replete with sexual motifs that oscillated between the use of wit and irony, humor and satire.

In 1996, the artist took a four-year hiatus from the local cultural art scene to pursue a career in business. He re-emerged in 2000 with a retrospective presenting his work across a variety of media, including photographs, drawings, and objects.

De Volder's most recent oeuvre took a radical turn from his more figural work of the 1990s. It is mainly characterized by his employment of curved linear forms that bisect, unfurl, and overlap each other through a playful use of geometry as a formal language. Conflated with an ascetic yet also bold use of color (many times committing to only one single hue), De Volder's forms unfold into three-dimensional space through either single or intertwining loops that appear to rest in the between space of randomization and restraint. De Volder creates works whose lines are static in color, size, and weight; yet their dynamic loops and overlappings imply a sense of energetic, swirling motion.

De Volder has participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the United States, France, Argentina, Uruguay and Peru. His artwork can be found in numerous internationally-recognized cultural institutions and private collections, as well as in the public collections of the Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires (MALBA); Museum of Contemporary Art of Buenos Aires (MACBA); the Museum Castagnino of Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina.

MARIANO FERRANTE

(b. 1974, Bahía Blanca, Argentina – lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Mariano Ferrante's dynamic, immersive oeuvre evokes histories of geometric abstraction, while proffering contemporary phenomenological experiences. Ferrante's paintings, drawings, and murals, incorporate permutations on themes of symmetry, repetition, form, and color, which evidence his studies in architecture and industrial design. To create these works, Ferrante employs a range of carefully-considered media, including oil, acrylic, pastel, pencil, and chalk. His sensitivity to the defining qualities of these media enhances the effects of his compositions, especially when they are rendered upon non-traditional supports such as concrete, tiled sidewalks, or drywall. Indeed, beyond his work on canvas, Ferrante has carried out numerous site-specific commissions: in transit hubs, landmark buildings, and private residences. In each setting, his characteristically vibrant palette and abstract, geometric visual language encourage multisensorial participation. By granting viewers a role in determining color, scale, and orientation, Ferrante embeds his work within our current information age, which relies on the perceptions and actions of its inhabitants.

Ferrante's body of work can be located within Argentina's rich lineage of geometric abstraction; yet his philosophical concerns and stylistic expressions are unique. While his work conveys rigorous construction – comprising meticulously-rendered lines and forms – his bold colors transmit warmth and playfulness. And while his compositions incorporate simple geometries, they can also involve intricate, layered shapes that suggest multidimensionality. When created on walls, ceilings, or floors, Ferrante's compositions blend non-illusionistic and three-dimensional space – both reverberating throughout and activating the architectures they occupy. In these settings, his work inspires us to reconsider our interactions with the built world.

In fact, the creation of an engaging phenomenological experience for viewers is a constant in Ferrante's work. His *Composiciones* (*Compositions*, begun in 2007), for example – which explore the interplay between graceful curves and straight edges, transparency and opacity – emit mesmerizing visual vibrations that seem to change the frequency of the environments they inhabit. Ferrante's *Monocromos* (*Monochromes*, begun in 2017) give viewers agency over their optical experience by provoking bodily movement. These paintings contain four separate colors organized within vertical, horizontal, and diagonal stripes; however, from a distance of two meters, the canvases appear to be painted one, uniform color. Thus, viewers can create or deconstruct color by moving away from or closer to a *Monocromo* painting. In yet another activation of human perception, Ferrante's *Construcciones dinámicas* (*Dynamic Constructions*, begun in 2010), play with ideas of balance, orientation, and space. These large wall drawings comprise multicolored concentric ovals or lozenges – some of which tilt diagonally – that overlap one another. Together, the forms appear to dance across their surfaces. Or perhaps we are the dancers, moving through an environment that is simultaneously shrinking and growing – carefully measured by the artist, but somehow unmeasurable in our own experience.



Mariano Ferrante photographed by Gustavo Lowry

IDES KIHLEN

(b. 1917, Santa Fe, Argentina – lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Ides Kihlen's childhood was spent on the banks of the Paraná River in the Argentine provinces of Corrientes and el Chaco. Painting has always been a constant in Kihlen's life, as has her passion for music. It was after moving to Buenos Aires that she enrolled at the Escuela de Artes Decorativas (The National School of Decorative Arts), giving rein to a vocation that she still actively and enthusiastically continues to practice to this day at the age of one hundred and two.

For over a decade, Kihlen was Professor Vicente Puig's favorite student at the School of Decorative Arts. She later continued her studies by visiting other artists' studios (including Emilio Pettoruti's, Batlle Planes', and André Lhote's in Paris); pursuing a degree in Art History; and actively frequenting museums around the world. Nothing, however, could interrupt her own deliberate rhythm, and her work developed independently of the artistic trends that were taking place back in Buenos Aires at the time.

Kihlen's artistic process has been an eloquent expression of her personality. She decided, before anything else, to be true to her own internal pace. For long stretches of time, she was more interested in the production of art than in obtaining results. She did not consider herself to be a professional artist, and therefore never attempted to forge a career as an artist. She simply was an artist, and that was enough for her. Furthermore, Kihlen is known to have destroyed much of her work and, for the most part, has neither titled nor dated her paintings.

As a result, Kihlen did not emerge onto the Buenos Aires art scene until shortly after turning sixty years old. While her acrylics and collages are mostly abstract and non-figurative, many of the artist's works contain references to music and lyrical compositions, such as the inclusion of hovering keyboard-like forms, clefs, and staves. Her choice of color palette is at the same time both reserved but also vibrant, and her formal compositions oscillate between exuding a lively, playful energy through incorporating geometric fragments, patterning, and numerical traces, while also presenting windows of negative space that open up into new dimensions where forms float freely across the works' surface.

Mercedes Casanegra has commented on the fact that art and everyday activities are intertwined in inseparable ways throughout Kihlen's life; that painting and drawing are languages that connect the artist to life in a poetic manner. In a way, Kihlen's practice is what comprises her spiritual backbone to the point that, to this very day, the artist's ascetic lifestyle flows in tandem with her work.



Ides Kihlen photographed by Richard Shultz



Esteban Lisa (right) with Isaac Zylberberg (left) in 1955. Courtesy of the Esteban Lisa Foundation

ESTEBAN LISA

(b.1895, Toledo, Spain – d. 1983 Buenos Aires, Argentina)

At the age of fifteen, Esteban Lisa left his parents in Toledo, Spain to live with an aunt and uncle who ran a tavern in Buenos Aires. Lisa worked at the tavern for ten years before joining the Argentine Postal Service. In his spare time, he studied at the Escuela Nacional de Artes (The National School of Arts) in Buenos Aires, from which he graduated as a Professor of Drawing and Painting in 1925. Lisa then began offering painting and drawing classes in his own home. Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, he taught art classes at the Escuela de Adultos (School of Adults) in Buenos Aires. Lisa retired from both the Postal Service and the Escuela de Adultos at the age of sixty, and founded his own art school in Buenos Aires, the Escuela de Arte Moderno “Las Cuatro Dimensiones” (“The Four Dimensions” School of Modern Art) in 1955.

While working in civil service and education, Lisa established a significant artistic career. He painted from the 1930s through the late 1970s, yet he avoided public recognition and was nearly absent from the Buenos Aires art scene. Lisa never exhibited in public; however, he interacted avidly with writers and fellow artists. He was mostly drawn to the art of Paul Klee, Joan Miró, and Pablo Picasso, and also to theories pertaining to the cosmos and the occult.

Scholars have partitioned Lisa’s oeuvre into distinct phases. His early works contain muted, earthy tones that flirt with figuration through organic compositions suggesting flowers or even landscapes. By 1940, however, his palette becomes richer and livelier, and his works lean more towards abstraction. While the artist’s earlier compositions do include orthogonal lines and geometric elements, his later work incorporates more animated renditions of linear forms and dashes, as well as variances on spherical shapes such as spirals, dots, and circles. Some of Lisa’s best known series are his: *Composiciones (Compositions)* which he began circa 1935; *Actos espaciales (Spatial Acts)*, created between 1954 and 1957; and *Juegos con líneas y colores (Playing with Lines and Colors)*, created between 1951 and the 1970s.

While Lisa worked across various media—creating collages, pencil drawings, and pastels—the majority of his works are rendered in oil on cardboard or paper, in a small format. As a result, these paintings are both intimate and highly expressive. They demonstrate a deep engagement with line and color, often hovering in the in-between space of figuration and abstraction. In 1977, Lisa abandoned painting and continued teaching it only to close family and friends.

Beyond his significant contributions to the visual arts, Lisa was also an avid writer. He authored more than twelve books, many of which were dedicated to his interest in “cosmovision,” a theory the artist derived based upon Einsteinian-Kantian principles concerned with space-time communication.

Lisa’s work can be found in a number of private and public collections including: the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; Jack S. Blanton Museum, Austin; Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, CA; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami; Fundación Ortega y Gasset, Madrid; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fundación Juan March, Madrid; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, amongst others.

FREDDY RODRÍGUEZ

(b.1945, Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic – lives and works in New York)

Freddy Rodríguez was born in 1945 in Santiago de los Treinta Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Feeling his life was in danger due to the local political climate, he moved to New York City in 1963. Rodríguez proceeded to study painting under artists such as Carmen Cicero (b. 1926) and John Dobbs (1931-2011) at the Art Students League and at the New School for Social Research. He also studied textile design at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

While Rodríguez's early artistic experiments engaged with minimalism and geometric abstraction, by the 1980s he had become more interested in realism and abstract expressionism. Eventually, the artist began fusing conceptual and stylistic elements from New York School painting with Dominican history, Caribbean culture, and transnational issues – using geometry and color to reference subjects generally considered at odds with pure formalism. Themes addressed within Rodríguez's work include the conquest and colonization of native people by Europeans, the figure of the "cimarrón," Catholicism, the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, and baseball. His work often takes the form of serial projects.

Over the course of his career, Rodríguez has received numerous grants and fellowships, such as: the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (SARF), 2016; the Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship, 2007 and 1995; the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation Grant, 2000; and the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, 1990.

The artist's work can be found in various prestigious public and private collections, including: the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; El Museo del Barrio, New York; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; The Newark Museum; Jersey City Museum; Queens Museum of Art; Bronx Museum of the Arts; and the Museo de Las Casas Reales, Santo Domingo, amongst others.

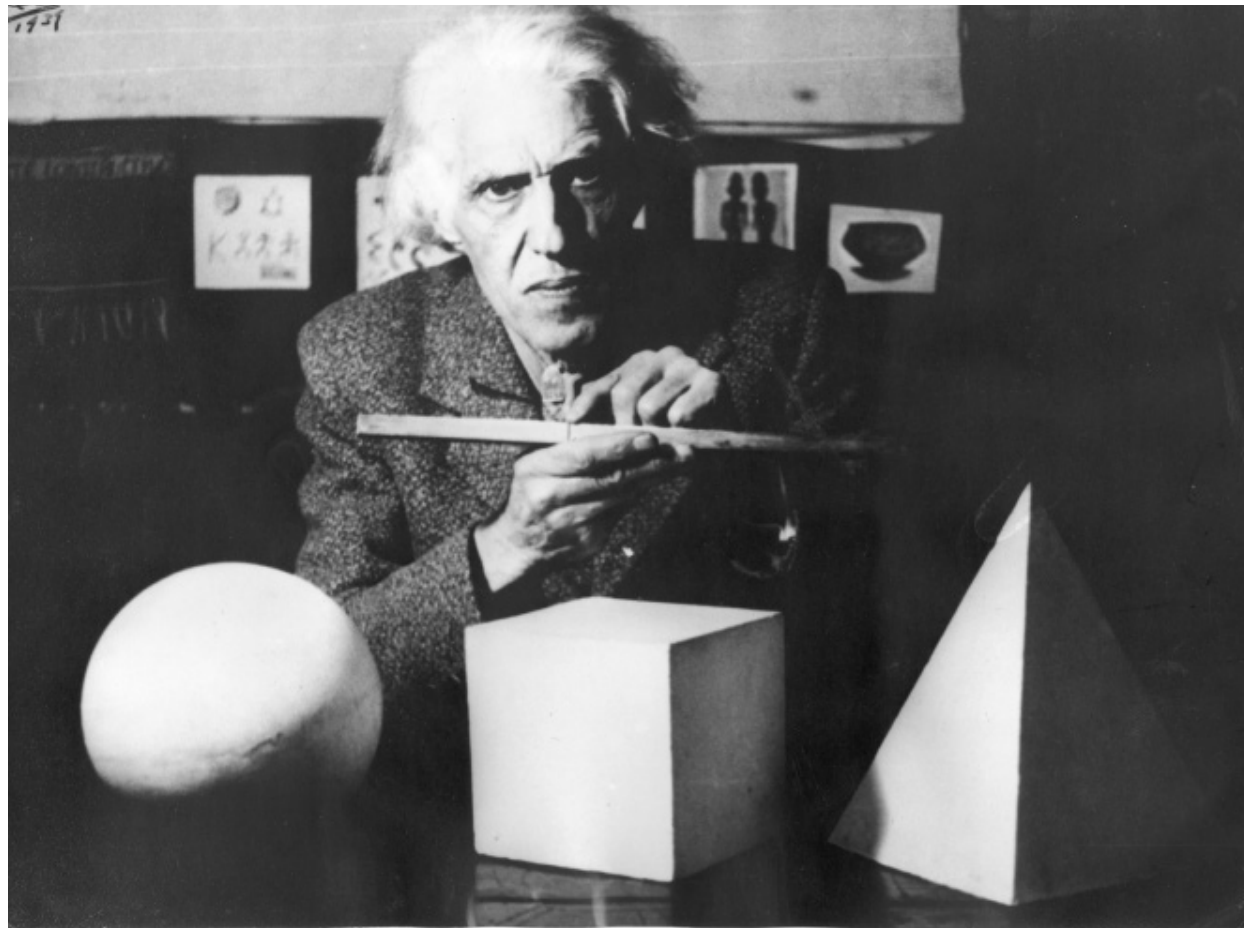
Rodríguez's work has been shown in numerous group and individual exhibitions, including: The Illusive Eye, Museo del Barrio, New York (2016); Caribbean Art at the Crossroads of the World, Pérez Art Museum, Miami (2014); Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. (2013); Unpredictable, Instituto Cervantes, Tokyo (2013); ¡Merengue! Visual Rhythms, Museo del Barrio, New York (2006); This Skin I'm in: Contemporary Dominican Art from El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection, Museo del Barrio, New York (2006); America's Pastime: Portraits of the Dominican Dream, Works by Freddy Rodríguez," The Newark Museum (2005); Lfactor, Exit Art, New York (2003); and En Esta Casa Trujillo es el Jefe, Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo (2000).

Most recently, Rodríguez has pursued a series of paintings that explore the history, value, and symbolic nature of gold in art and society which culminated in the exhibition "La Fiebre del Oro" held at the Museo Ralli in Santiago, Chile in 2019.

The artist is featured in a chapter written by Stephanie Lewthwaite in Dirk Gottsche's Memory and Postcolonial Studies: Synergies and New Directions: Volume 9 of Cultural Memories (2019). He will be included in Mariel Brown and Melanie Archer's upcoming survey A to Z of Caribbean Art. Rodríguez is also the subject of a forthcoming monograph by E. Carmen Ramos which is part of the A Ver: Revisioning Art History book series published by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.



Freddy Rodríguez photographed by Bric TV



Joaquín Torres-García photographed in his studio. Courtesy of the Estate of Joaquín Torres-García

JOAQUÍN TORRES-GARCÍA

(b.1874, Montevideo, Uruguay – d. 1949 Montevideo, Uruguay)

The internationally renowned Uruguayan painter, muralist, sculptor, teacher, writer, and theoretician, Joaquín Torres-García, is widely considered to be the father of Latin American modernism. Born in Montevideo to a Catalan father and a Uruguayan mother, when Torres-García was seventeen years old, his family left Uruguay to return to his father's homeland in Catalonia, Spain. Torres-García would not return to Montevideo for another forty-three years (in 1934), living abroad and traveling avidly within Spain, France, New York, and Italy.

Extremely prolific in his artwork, his writings, and his teachings, when Torres-García returned to his native Uruguay, he founded his art school and magazine of the same name, *La Escuela del Sur (The School of the South)* in 1935, publishing his renowned manifesto accompanied by the first version of his seminal Inverted Map drawing. Through both reversing geographic cartography and re-positioning a single and autonomous Latin America, by itself, at the top of the map, Torres-García's statement was: "Nuestro norte es el sur" ("Our North is the South"): an ardent message veiled in a sociopolitical statement to invert the traditional artistic hierarchy which at the time was dominated by European art. In 1943, he founded his renowned workshop, the "Taller Torres-García" (TTG), where he imparted his teachings onto the next generation of Southern Cone artists working in the field of Abstraction, and passing on the profound legacy of his theories on Universal Constructivism, one of the most impactful movements of abstraction in twentieth-century Latin American art.

Before his return to Uruguay from abroad, Torres-García's oeuvre underwent a trajectory where he experimented, evolved, conflated, and consolidated various artistic movements before arriving at his concept of *Universal Constructivism*. His earliest artistic style began when his family moved to Barcelona in 1892, where, inspired by the ancient Mediterranean culture, Torres-García created his own Mediterranean-inspired Classical style, working on murals and decorating churches. It was in Barcelona, at the dawn of the twentieth century, that Torres-García began meeting other artists, writers, and creative intellectuals, amongst them, Pablo Picasso, Antoni Gaudí, and Joan Miró.

After moving to New York in 1920, Torres-García was committed to designing manipulable, didactic, wooden toys that were briefly manufactured for sale. This was followed by another two-year stay in Italy, and then a brief stay in Villefranche-sur-Mer. By this point, Torres-García had experimented with other movements of the time such as Cubism and Fauvism. However, it was when the artist moved to Paris in 1926, while the Surrealist movement was at its peak in the City of Lights, that Torres-García first began experimenting with Constructivism.

Fundamental to this moment in Torres-García's life was his meeting Theo van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian, Georges Vantongerloo, and Michel Seuphor. It was with Seuphor that he founded the group and journal, *Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square)* in 1930, whose principal intention was to promote Constructivist and Abstract art.

By the time Torres-García arrived back to his hometown of Montevideo in 1934, he had already devised his concept of *Universal Constructivism*. At its core, the movement was comprised of elements derived from, amongst others: Classicism, Symbolism, Constructivism, Cubism, Neo-Platonism, and Surrealism. In search of a "universal" art form, Torres-García incorporated formal elements from pre-Columbian cultures. In this way, he conflated an aesthetic of European Abstraction with signs and symbols derived from American indigenous art, along with his unique employment of the grid.

One year after arriving in Montevideo, in 1935, Torres-García founded the "Asociación de Arte Constructivo" (AAC) ("The Association of Constructivist Art") with the aim of exploring the relationship between pre-Columbian and modern art. He also founded his renowned workshop, the "Taller Torres-García" in 1943, where he passed on his legacy to the future generation of Southern Cone artists working within the field of Abstraction. Even after his death, Torres-García's students continued to promote their teacher's aspirations: the creation of an avant-garde, American, constructivist, geometrically abstract art form, rooted in indigenous cultures and civilizations, and conflated with the geometry of the modernist grid.

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