



Press Release

THE KINETIC EYE
Optical and Kinetic Art, 1950-1975

13 May – 25 September 2005

Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art

The Museums of Strasbourg
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Opening times :

Daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursdays from 12 noon to 10 p.m.
Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed on Mondays

Closed
Good Friday 25 March
1th May

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From 13 May to 25 September 2005, the Strasbourg Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art will host a major exhibition of optical and kinetic art. Its aim is to contribute, from both the historical and the theoretical point of view, to a better knowledge of this artistic current which emerged in the 1950s with such figureheads as Victor Vasarely, Jesús-Rafael Soto, Nicolas Schöffer or Yaacov Agam. After a long period of neglect, the artists of this movement and their works have enjoyed renewed consideration, though to this day no major exhibition has been devoted to them.

Following on from the "American Hyperrealism 1965-1975" exhibition, the Strasbourg Museums wished to organise a tribute to these artists who developed an original plastic language by exploring new modes of perception.

This exhibition offers a sensory voyage of discovery structured around four aspects: the kinetic eye, the physical eye, the neural eye and the acoustic eye.

The kinetic eye :

This section will focus on perceptual speed, dynamogenesis and the kinetic training of the eye, optical throbbing and the diastole of the breathing surface. These rooms will present three successive themes: retinal dynamics (with a black-and-white room featuring works by Victor Vasarely, Jesús-Rafael Soto, Bridget Riley, Marina Apollonio, Jean-Pierre Yvaral...), optical acceleration (with screen positions, grids, linear networks and moiré effects, as exemplified in works by Giovanni Anceschi, Antonio Asis, Alberto Biasi, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Peter Kubelka, Bridget Riley, Dieter Roth, Jesús-Rafael Soto, Victor Vasarely, Ludwig Wilding...) and visual hypnosis (a room filled with scintillations and stroboscopic effects, conceived by Tony Conrad, Karl Gerstner, Julio Le Parc, Pierre Rovere, Paul Sharits, Gregorio Vardanega...).

The physical eye :

This section will explore manipulative and coercive processes, as well as encouraging viewer participation by opening up the work of art to tactile and kinaesthetic exploration. It will focus more specifically on three themes: transformable reliefs (Yaacov Agam, Carmelo Aden Quin, Pol Bury, Lygia Clark, Gianni Colombo, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Julio Le Parc, Victor Lucena, Joël Stein...), optical confusion achieved by multiplying viewpoints through displacement and/or a system of mirrors (Getulio Alviani, Pol Bury, Raymond Hains, Julio Le Parc, Christian Megert, Nicolas Schöffer...) and physical instability and coercive devices that modify the viewer's behaviour (G.R.A.V., Julio Le Parc, Gianni Colombo...).

The neural eye :

This section explores cybernetic models and information theory, as well as the artificial brain and the mechanical sensorium. It will focus on two topics: programming (pixellisation and digitalisation, with works by Julio Le Parc, Vera Molnar, François Morellet, Victor Vasarely, Jesús-Rafael Soto...) and homeostatic systems (cybernetic constructs by Davide Boriani, Gabriele De Vecchi, Frank J. Malina, Nicolas Schöffer, Tsai Wen-Ying...).

The acoustic eye :

This part of the exhibition will explore the broadening of the gaze and its fusion with the other senses in an attempt to achieve a spectacular total work of art. It will feature mobile and synaesthetic light effects (musical metaphors in painting and photography: Yaacov Agam, Karl Gerstner, Raymond Hains, Frank J. Malina, Nicolas Schöffer, Etienne-Bernard Weill...), with objects, acoustic spaces and sensory messages (immersion in colour and sound: Bernard and François Baschet, Hermann Goepfert, Pierre Schaeffer, Jesús-Rafael Soto, Gregorio Vardanega...).

The exhibition will be complemented by a room dedicated to the **historical forerunners** of optical and kinetic art (Josef Albers, Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder...) and a room devoted to **contemporary creation** (John Tremblay, Hugues Reip, Philippe Decrauzat, Xavier Veilhan...).

The structure of the exhibition will be neither chronological nor monographic; neither will it rest on distinctions such as "virtual movement vs. real movement". It will attempt to maintain a certain coherence between works that play on retinal stimulation, sensory environments and photokinetic works.

The four main aspects of this exhibition will be explored in greater depth in articles by Anna Dezeuze, Marcella Lista, Michel Gauthier, Emmanuel Guigon, Arnaud Pierre and Pascal Rousseau, which will be gathered in the comprehensive catalogue published on this occasion.