

Carlos Cruz-Diez: Color and Line in Motion

The experience of Carlos Cruz-Diez's Op and Kinetic art can be described as autonomous color functioning as an affecting and alternative reality. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1923, Cruz-Diez received his training in art education and the manual arts at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas, working subsequently as an art director for an advertising agency and as a commercial illustrator. In 1955, the artist moved to Barcelona, Spain. During a trip to Paris the same year, he was exposed to geometric abstraction—a movement that ultimately influenced his later work. Throughout Cruz-Diez's career, the products of his vision have constantly evolved through his persistent research on how to create a dynamic art that stands independently from preceding referential tools. Cruz-Diez passed away in Paris in 2019 leaving a legacy deeply rooted in the art of Venezuela and France, the countries that fed his creative spirit.

The exhibition at Galería RGR presents several works created in the artist's studio in Panama City, Panama, between 2010 and 2018. The *Fisicromías* were the culmination of color experiments that began early in his career. The first *Fisicromía* was created in 1959 and continued for over six decades. Cruz-Diez's initial use of multicolored cardboard and later acrylic or PVC set on top of flat painted planes forming geometric configurations evolved over time, adapting to new technologies and materials. They represent the maturation of his investigations of color. They also were instrumental in generating a lexicon specific to his creations and led to new optical formulations in subsequent series.

In *Color Aditivo*, the proximity of two vertical color lines produces the optical effect of a darker line separating them. While working on a *Color Aditivo* work, Cruz-Diez overlaid a sheet of plastic with a similar line pattern on top of it. This unexpected intrusion generated a completely independent new color resulting in the so-called *Cromointerferencia*. Cruz-Diez's overall reductive process unlocked the possibility of infinite compositions, which he endlessly mined during his long and productive career. In the process, the viewer-object relationship, so important in Kinetic art, became inextricably linked to the understanding and enjoyment of his art. We do not stand still in front of a Cruz-Diez work. To fully experience it, we must walk from one end to the other. The linear motion activates shifts in colors and shapes, making us indispensable participants in its creation.

Alma Ruiz
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