

# No Beginning

# No End<sup>1</sup>



Beat Zoderer  
Schablonenaquarell auf Glas 1/13, 2013  
Transluzide Folie auf 6 Fenster /  
Translucent foil on 6 windows

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Beat Zoderer's and Davide Cascio's Geometric Worlds Meet in Buenos Aires.

The abstraction as an element in contemporary art has been characterized as an artistic and intellectual technique with multiple expressions beyond the visual arts. Not only an early twentieth century aesthetic avant-garde category, it is also intimately connected to social and political utopias, material as well as transcendental. In the 1930s Theo van Doesburg coined the term *Concrete Art* to describe abstract art based on mathematic and scientific principles, the visual expression of which was an emphasis on planes and colour. The idea of geometry would rule under preciseness and at the same time it also conveyed a sense of hope and a ludic spirit, as for instance in colourful and playful kinetic sculptures, or experimental objects designed as catalysts for community building, and in outright manifestos calling for joy. In Latin America this European tradition was developed further with iterations like *Arte Concreto-Invención*, *Arte Madí* and the *Grupo Neoconcreto*.<sup>2</sup>

Works that are created with the movement of the viewer's eye naturally require active participation to exist and to work. This is also crucial to the works exhibited in "Geometría; Desvíos y Desmesuras" at the private foundation OSDE in Buenos Aires.

The exhibition, curated by Danielle Perret, celebrates a hundred years of abstract geometry, by bringing together various Argentinian and Swiss artists through the generations, and exploring the element of geometry in contemporary art. Regarding the latter it's hard not to relate to the traditions in 'Arte Concreto Madí', and 'Perceptismo' that was dominant in Argentina in the mid forties.<sup>3</sup>

Beat Zoderer uses every day materials in his art, in a tradition that could be denoted from the Swiss Bauhaus.<sup>4</sup> He deconstructs the expected, altering our perception and challenging the exploration of pure form and universal principles of his predecessors. Zoderer seems somehow closer to the practices of the Brazilian *Grupo Frente* and *Neo Concretism Movement* that went beyond the conventions of strictly repeated structures based on mathematical systems, suggesting a geometric language as a field of experience and exploration, rather than to rational geometry.

There is a strong sense of autonomy in Zoderer's work in the way he organizes shapes and lets them coexist, it's all about how we perceive the colours and how we move in his work. Even though looking more like something that could have been machine made, the element of spontaneity in the hand-made is present, revealed by small imperfections, making the material aspect of his work even more evident. In the 'Geometría'-exhibition, Zoderer uses the classical architecture of the gallery to create a site-specific modernistic transparent intervention on the glass panes of the balustrade made of circular cut outs from transparent colour

vinyl. As to the result of the tricky work in applying these sheets on the large glass panels, there is the element of the absence and presence by the cut outs; in one panel the result of all these over-lapping circles enables new vibrant colours to appear on our retina as we move around it.

Lugano born artist Davide Cascio presents the earlier piece "Be-building", from 2009, consisting of hexagon shaped modules composed by various wooden sticks and plexi-hexagons in primary colours attached to the grid constructions. Depending on the light the sculptural pieces leave grid-shades and a spectrum of colours on the floor. Reminiscent of the utopian proposals for mobile house structures of the pre-oil crisis 1970s, obsessed with hopes and dreams of social progress and movability. But now the dimensions are slightly too small to give them an actual function, thereby making them more of strange displaced objects sparking our imagination as to its existence.

Beat Zoderer works with genuine passion believing in the potential of an idea and always keeps it at the forefront of his work. In both Cascio's and Zoderer's works there is a generous gesture of letting the audience interfere with their own bodies and experiences, creating a flow that doesn't need an end or a beginning; we are allowed to decide for ourselves how the story should be told.

• Marianna Garin

<sup>1</sup> The title "No Beginning No End" is borrowed from Max Bill's major retrospective exhibition in 2008 at the Museum MARTa Herford in Germany.

<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian Neoconcretism movement originated in "Grupo Frente" founded by Ivan Serpa in Rio de Janeiro, which included Hélio Oiticica, Aluísio Carvão, João José da Costa and Lygia Pape. Another strong influence comes from Venezuela with Carlos Cruz Diez (b 1923 in Caracas), in whose works the colour becomes an experience with light and the movement of the viewer. Jesús-Rafael Soto and Alejandro Otero were other key figures of the Venezuelan kinetic art movement.

<sup>3</sup> The abstract movement in Argentina was divided in the "Arte Madí" and "Asociación Arte Concreto-Invención", the latter led by artist Tomás Maldonado who promoted a "scientific aesthetics". Arte Madí was led by Gyula Kosice and emphasized movement and spectator participation.

<sup>4</sup> There is a prevalent influence from a range of young artists taught by Swiss designer, architect, artist and theoretician Max Bill. Among them are Tomás Maldonado, Otl Aicher, Joseph Albers, and Johannes Itten.