

**VPAS 3340.501 (81942)**

**Writing in the Arts**

**Fall 2020**

**Dr. Charissa N. Terranova**

**University of Texas at Dallas**

**Arts & Humanities**

**Module 6 Thinking Machines**

**Thursday October 1 4 pm**

-Professor Lecture

-Reading: David Bellos, "Georges Perec's Thinking Machines," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38-50.

-Questions and Discussion

## Module 6 Thinking Machines 10/01/2020-10/12/2020

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-Professor Lecture

-Reading: David Bellos, "Georges Perec's Thinking Machines," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38- 50.

-Questions and Discussion

### **Monday October 5 10 am**

-Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

### **Thursday October 8 10 am**

-Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

### **Monday October 12 10 am**

-Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Who was Georges Perec and what is his relationship to machines? ...To writing machines?

Did he use computers?

Georges Perec (1936-1982) never used computers and probably had only an elementary understanding of what they were. On the other hand, the *concept* of a thinking machine played a significant role at a key stage in his development as a writer, and provided him with material and a model for some of his most experimental work...

...he remained steadfast in his insistence that creativity was not a gift from elsewhere, and that imagination could be replaced by more reliable tools.

Perec never got beyond Marxism for beginners, but he stuck to a basically left-wing view of the world: writing was work, and like any other industry, it was the product of the *labor* and *machinery*. Such a cast of mind made him particularly open to the literary possibilities of all kinds of machines, including those electronic devices that were just beginning to emerge from research labs.

-- David Bellos, 38



## Georges Perec [1936-1982]

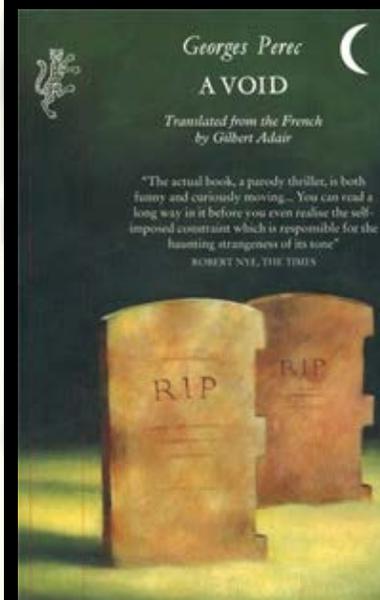
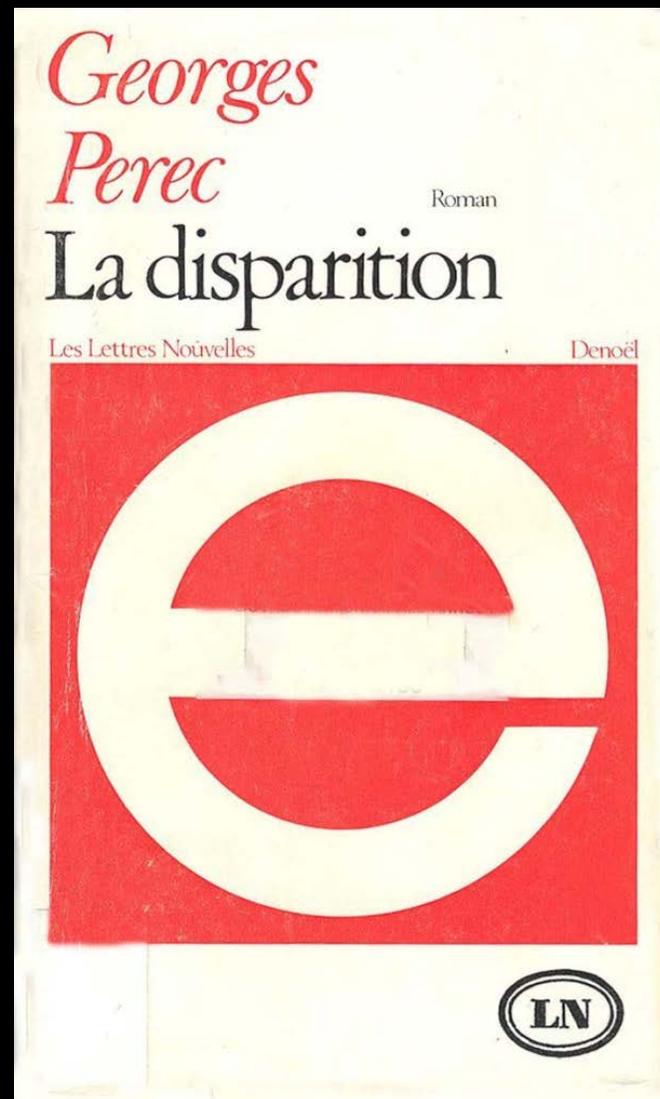
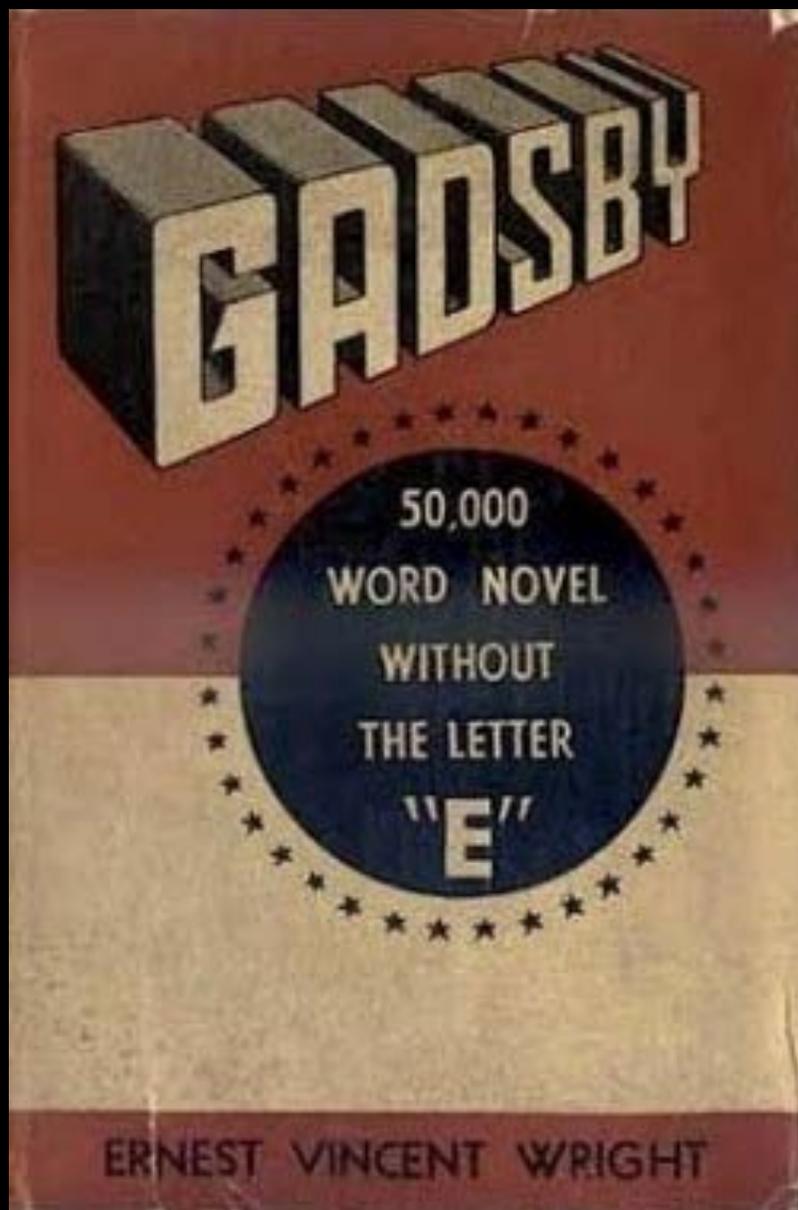
- French novelist, filmmaker, essayist
- Born in working-class neighborhood of Paris to Polish Jewish parents; both parents died in connection to WWII; He was adopted by his uncle.
- Oulipo: *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*; roughly translated: "workshop of potential literature;" founded 1960; French-speaking writers and mathematicians who seek to create works using constrained writing techniques

How do you make a simple machine using constraints?

What are constraints?

- Constraints are used as a means of triggering ideas and inspiration, most notably Percec's "story-making machine;" using lipograms, palindromes, S+7, etc.
- A lipogram (from Ancient Greek, *leipográmmatos*, "leaving out a letter") is a kind of constrained writing or word game consisting of writing paragraphs or longer works in which a particular letter or group of letters is avoided—usually a common vowel, and frequently *E*, the most common letter in the English language
- A palindrome is a word, phrase, number, or other sequence of characters which reads the same backward as forward, such as *madam* or *racecar*.
- **S+7**, sometimes called **N+7** Replace every noun in a text with the seventh noun after it in a dictionary. For example, "Call me Ishmael. Some years ago..." becomes "Call me islander. Some yeggs ago...". Results will vary depending upon the dictionary used. This technique can also be performed on other lexical classes, such as verbs.

How are some of these constraints examples of code or coding? How are they examples of analogue algorithms?



Georges Perec, directly influenced by *Gadsby*, used this lipogrammatic technique for his novel *La Disparition* (1969), avoiding the same letter “e”, which is also the most used letter in French. For its translation into English –*A Void* translated by Gilbert Adair– also the letter “e” was omitted.

It was translated to other languages like Spanish omitting the “a” (the second most used letter in this language), Romanian, Dutch, Swedish, Turkish and Japanese. In this special and playful literature, the merit of writing omitting a certain letter is not only for authors but also for translators who manage to stick to the rules.

Georges Perec

## A VOID

Translated from the French  
by Gilbert Adair



THE HARVILL PRESS  
LONDON

## SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION	<i>In which, as you will soon find out, Damnation has its origin</i>	vii
I ANTON VOWL		
1	<i>Which at first calls to mind a probably familiar story of a drunk man waking up with his brain in a whirl</i>	3
2	<i>In which luck, God's alibi and alibi, plays a callous trick on a suitor cast away on an island</i>	12
3	<i>Concluding with an immoral papacy's abolition and its daimant's contrition</i>	25
4	<i>Which, notwithstanding a kind of McGuffin, has no ambition to rival Hitchcock</i>	37
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7	<i>In which an unknown individual has it in for Moroccan solicitors</i>	57
8	<i>In which you will find a word or two about a burial mound that brought glory to Trajan</i>	69
III DOUGLAS HAIG CLIFFORD		
9	<i>In which an amazing thing occurs to an senary basso profundo</i>	81
10	<i>Which will, I trust, gratify fanatics of Pindaric lyricism</i>	93
11	<i>Which will finish by arousing pity in a big shot</i>	110
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13	<i>On a fantastic charm that a choral work by Anton Dvořák starts to cast on a billiard board</i>	128
14	<i>In which you will find a carp scornfully turning down a halva fit for a king</i>	140
IV OLGA MAVROKHORDATOS		
15	<i>In which, untying a long string of fabrications and falsifications, you will find out at last what sank that imposing Titanic</i>	155
16	<i>Which will furnish a probationary boast to a not always almighty dollar (\$)</i>	163
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## INTRODUCTION

*In which, as you will soon find out, Damnation  
has its origin*

Today, by radio, and also on giant hoardings, a rabbi, an admiral notorious for his links to Masonry, a trio of cardinals, a trio, too, of insignificant politicians (bought and paid for by a rich and corrupt Anglo-Canadian banking corporation), inform us all of how our country now risks dying of starvation. A rumour, that's my initial thought as I switch off my radio, a rumour or possibly a hoax. Propaganda, I murmur anxiously – as though, just by saying so, I might allay my doubts – typical politicians' propaganda. But public opinion gradually absorbs it as a fact. Individuals start strutting around with stout clubs. "Food, glorious food!" is a common cry (occasionally sung to Bart's music), with ordinary hard-working folk harassing officials, both local and national, and cursing capitalists and captains of industry. Cops shrink from going out on night shift. In Mâcon a mob storms a municipal building. In Rocadamour ruffians rob a hangar full of foodstuffs, pillaging tons of tuna fish, milk and cocoa, as also a vast quantity of corn – all of it, alas, totally unfit for human consumption. Without fuss or ado, and naturally without any sort of trial, an indignant crowd hangs 26 solicitors on a hastily built scaffold in front of Nancy's law courts (this Nancy is a town, not a woman) and ransacks a local journal, a disgusting right-wing rag that is siding against it. Up and down this land of ours looting has brought docks, shops and farms to a virtual standstill.

Arabs, blacks and, as you might say, non-goyim fall victim to

What does the act of initiating constraints –  
creating a machine – do to art?

What does it do to the act of making art?

Does it transform the author as we know it, and if  
so how?

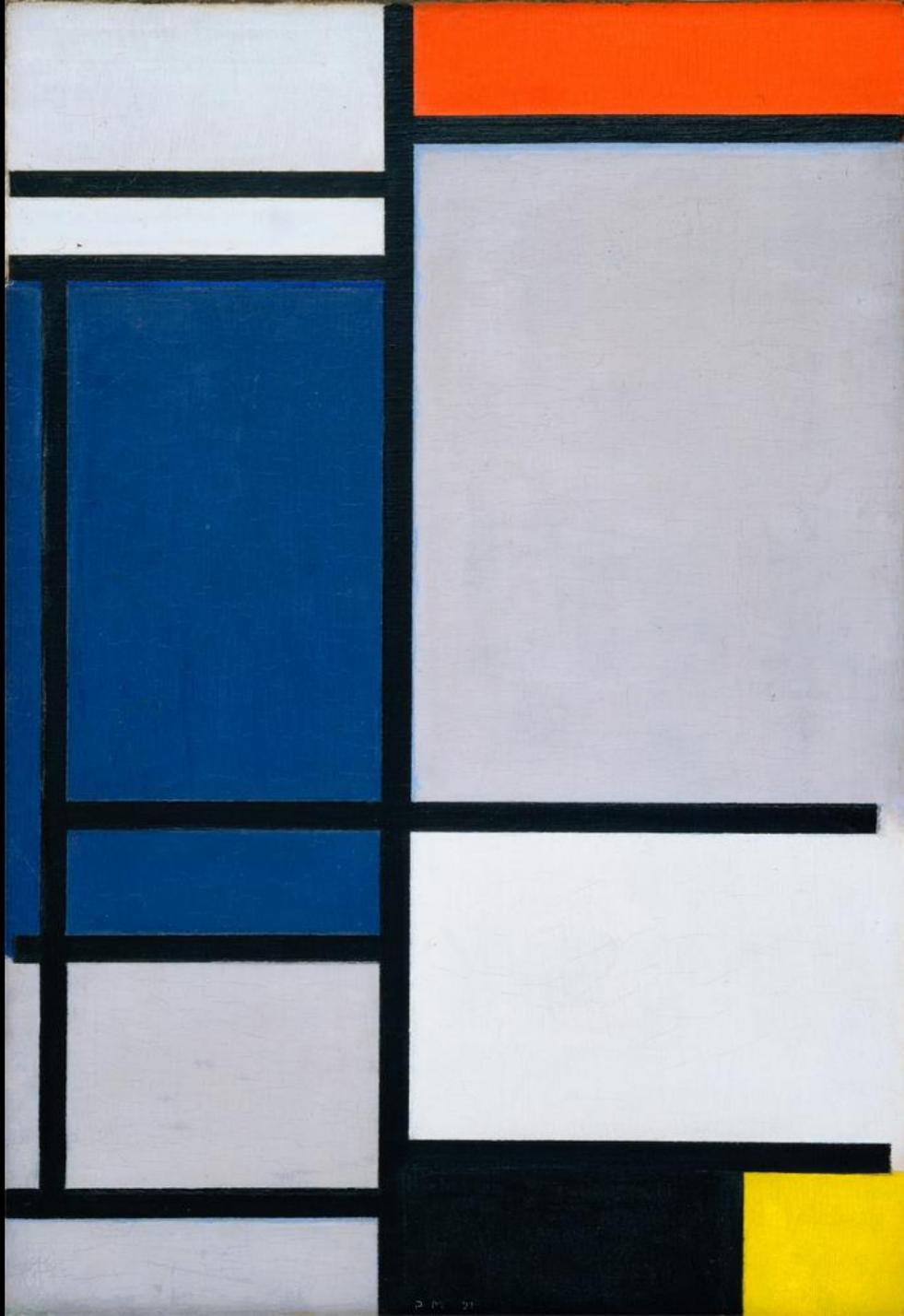
# CONSTRAINTS AND AUTHORSHIP

- Deskillling
- Automation
- Intention-less or Unintentional Art
- Rethinking authorship
- Rethinking self

There appeared to be some artistic rationale, especially in the 1960s in the way *the computer provided a means to distance the maker from the artistic authorship and thus from the perceived excesses of expressionism*, yet this distancing could also operate in too close a proximity to the technocratic drive and bureaucratic numbing of both capitalism and the Eastern Bloc. (Higgins and Kahn, 2)

Other examples of constraints at work in art,  
architecture, and design...

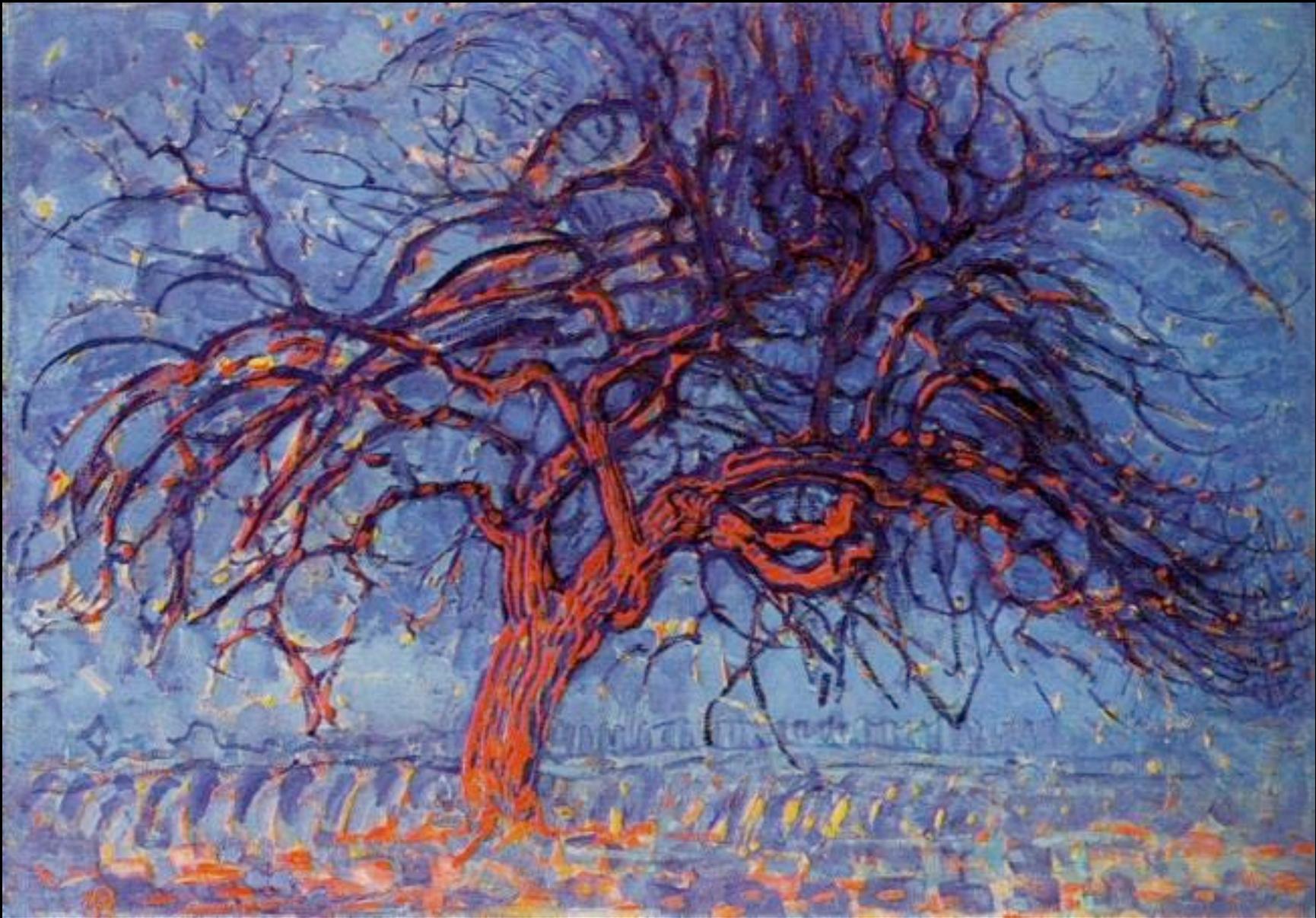
# Constraints and Modernism 1910-1950



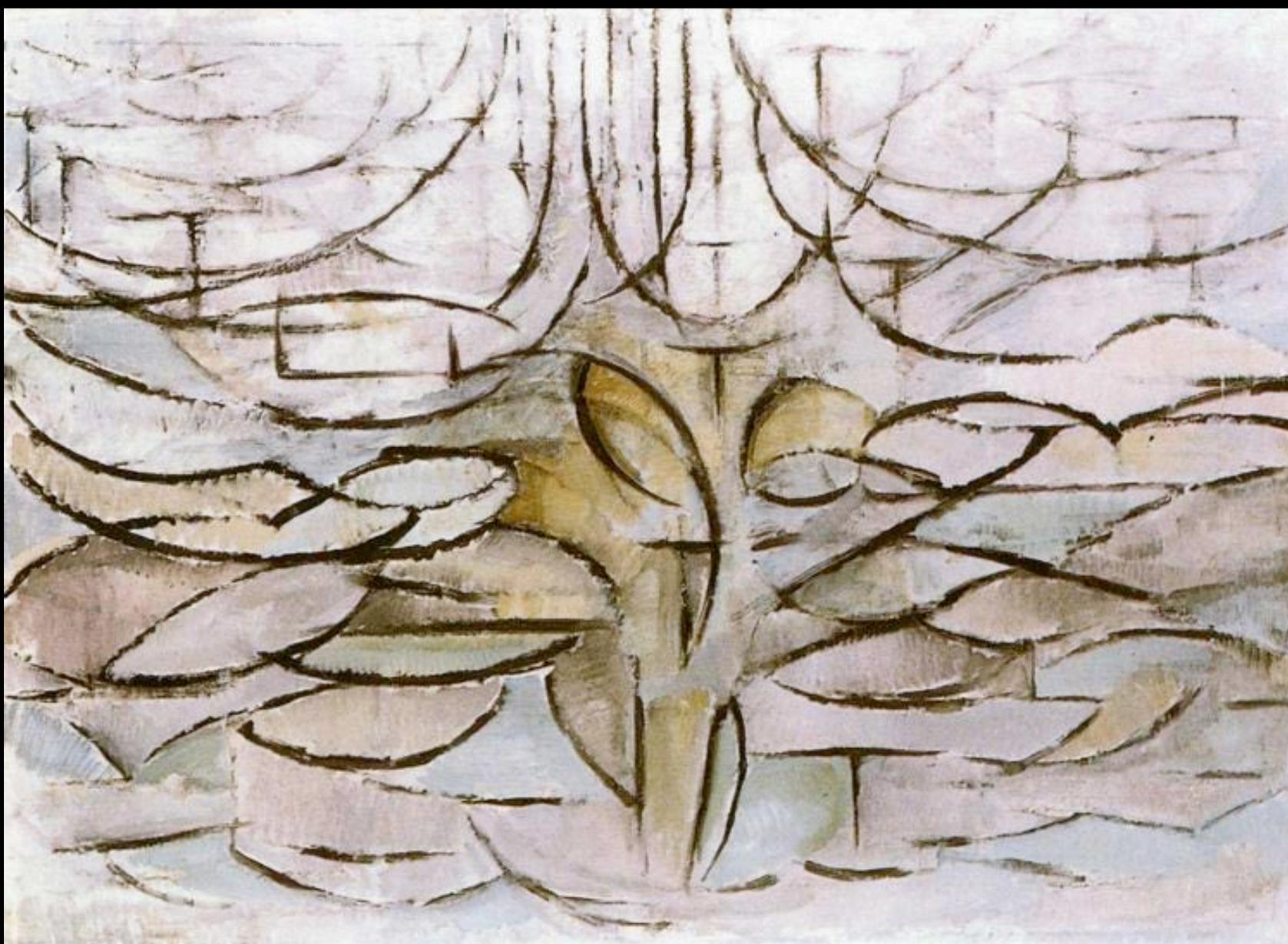
Mondrian became aware that 1.) in plastic art reality can be expressed only through the equilibrium of dynamic movements of form and color and 2.) pure means afford the most effective way of attaining this. He advocated in painting the following: the balance of unequal opposites, achieved through the right angle, and the simplification of color to the primary hues plus black and white.

GRID

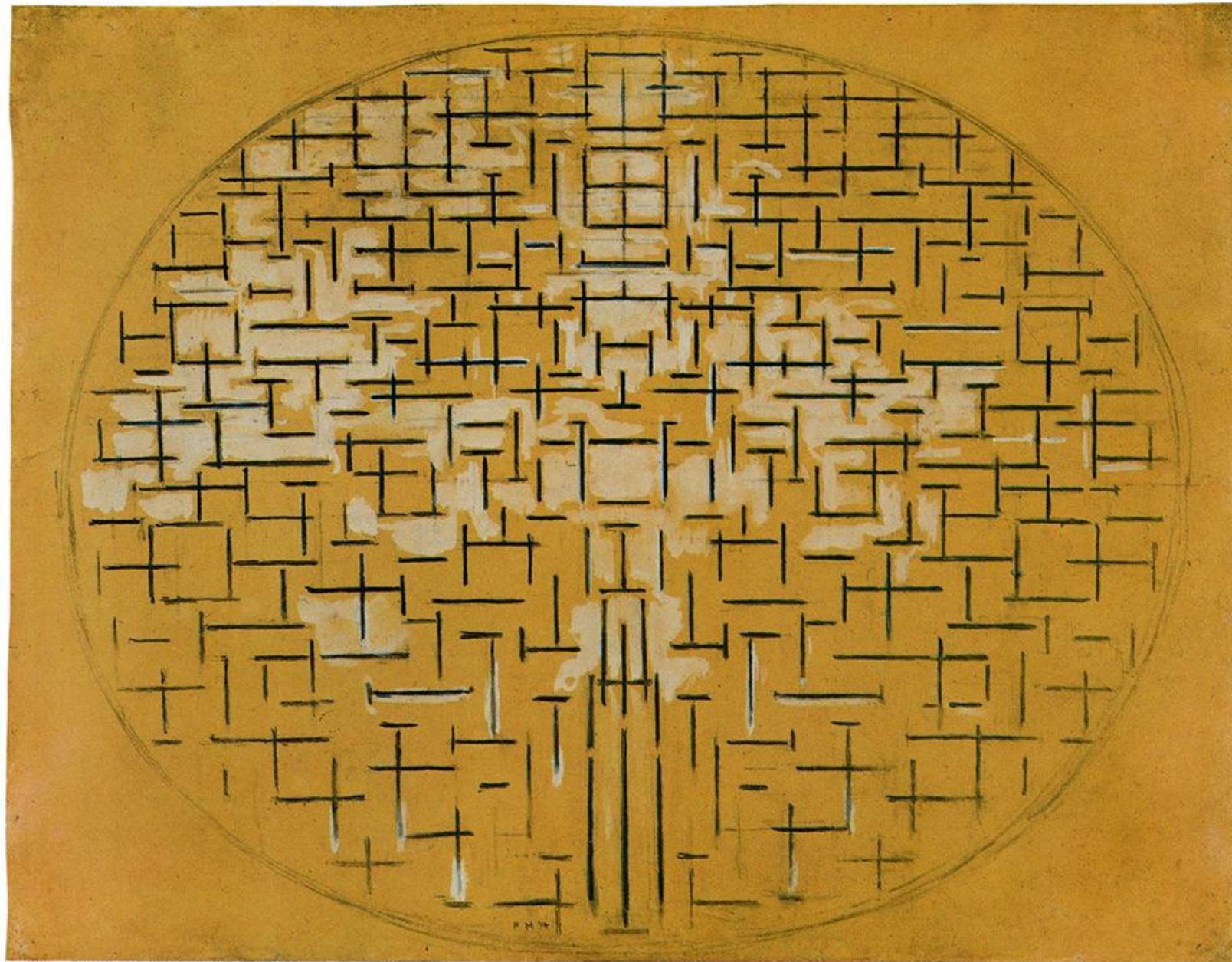
Mondrian, Composition with Red, Blue, Black, Yellow, and Gray, 1921



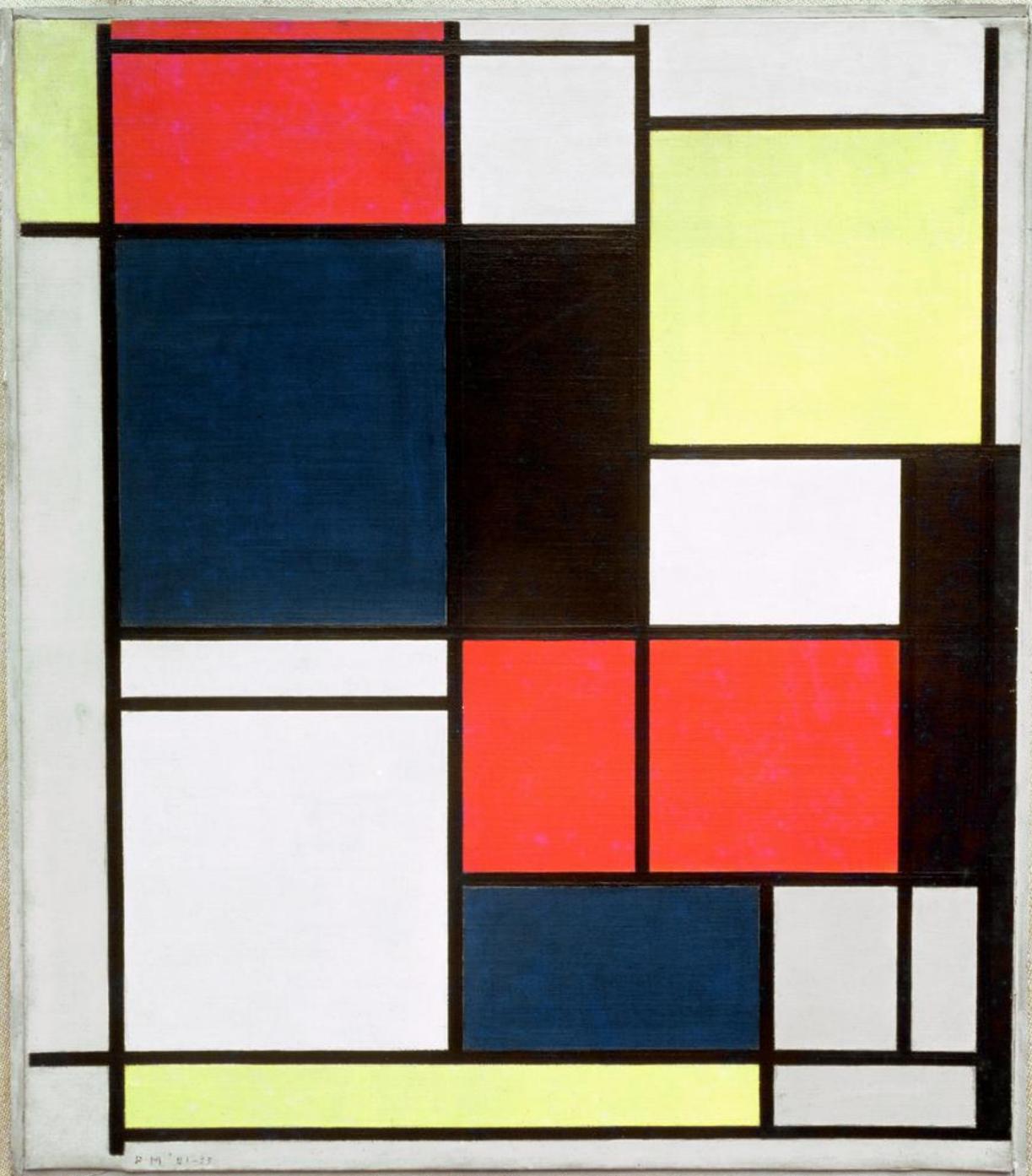
Piet Mondrian, Evening, 1908



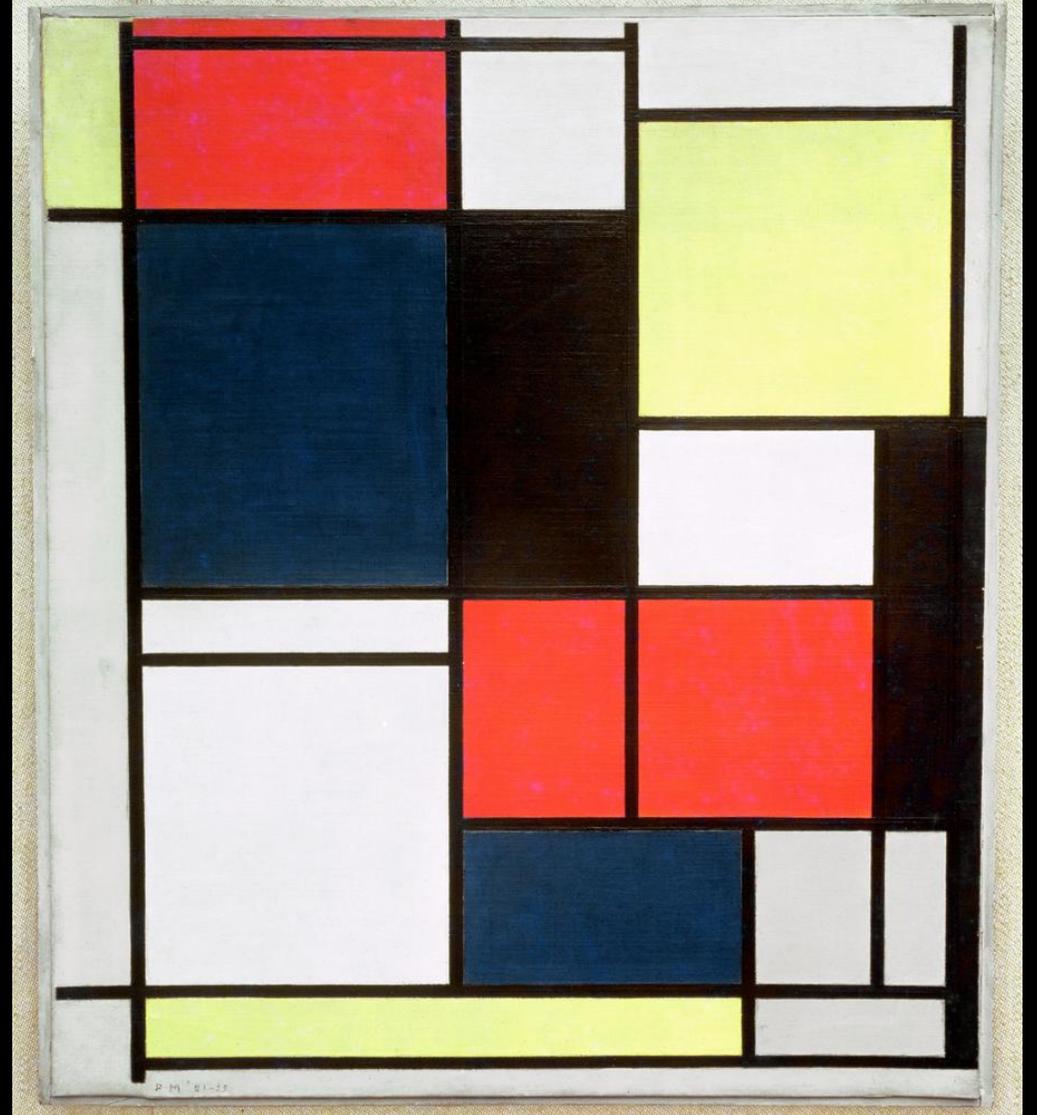
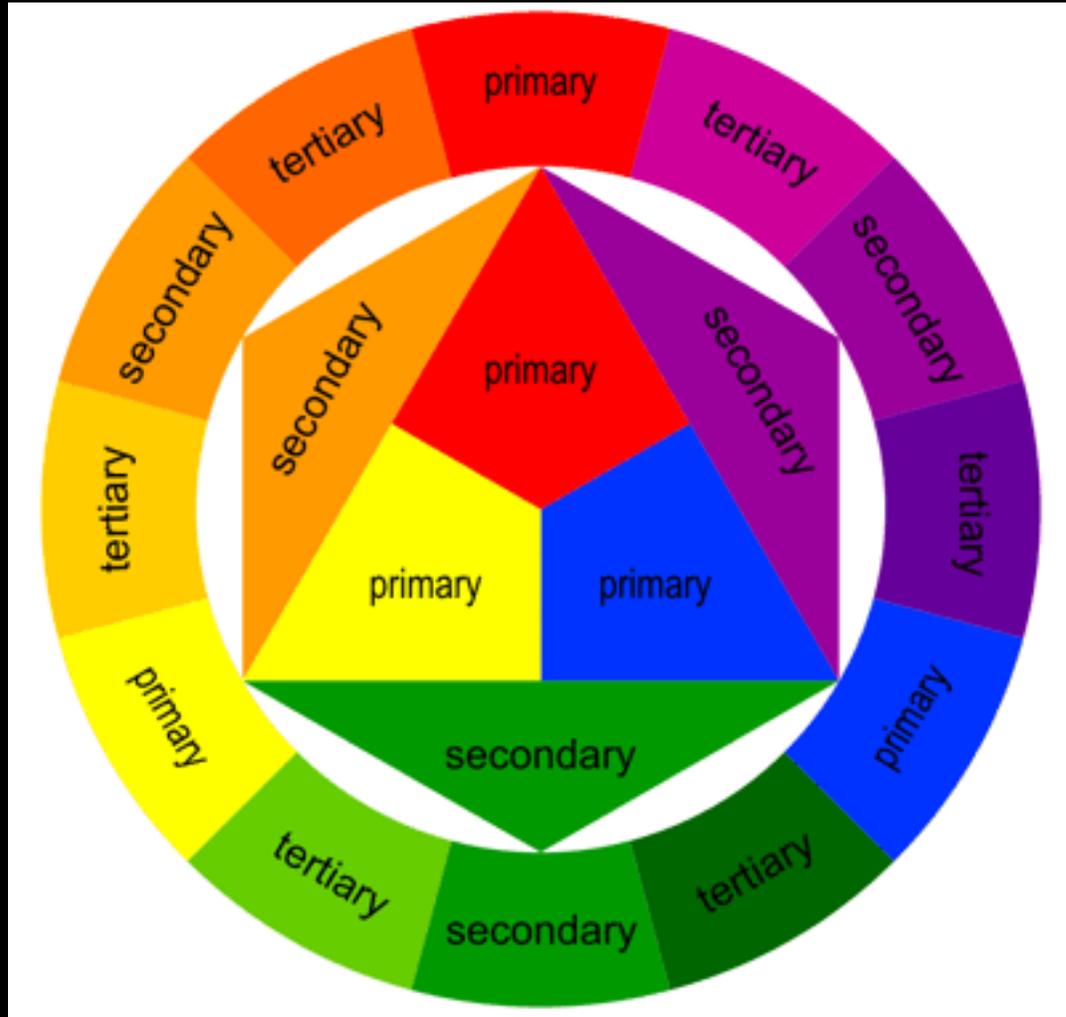
Mondrian, The Blooming Apple Tree, 1912



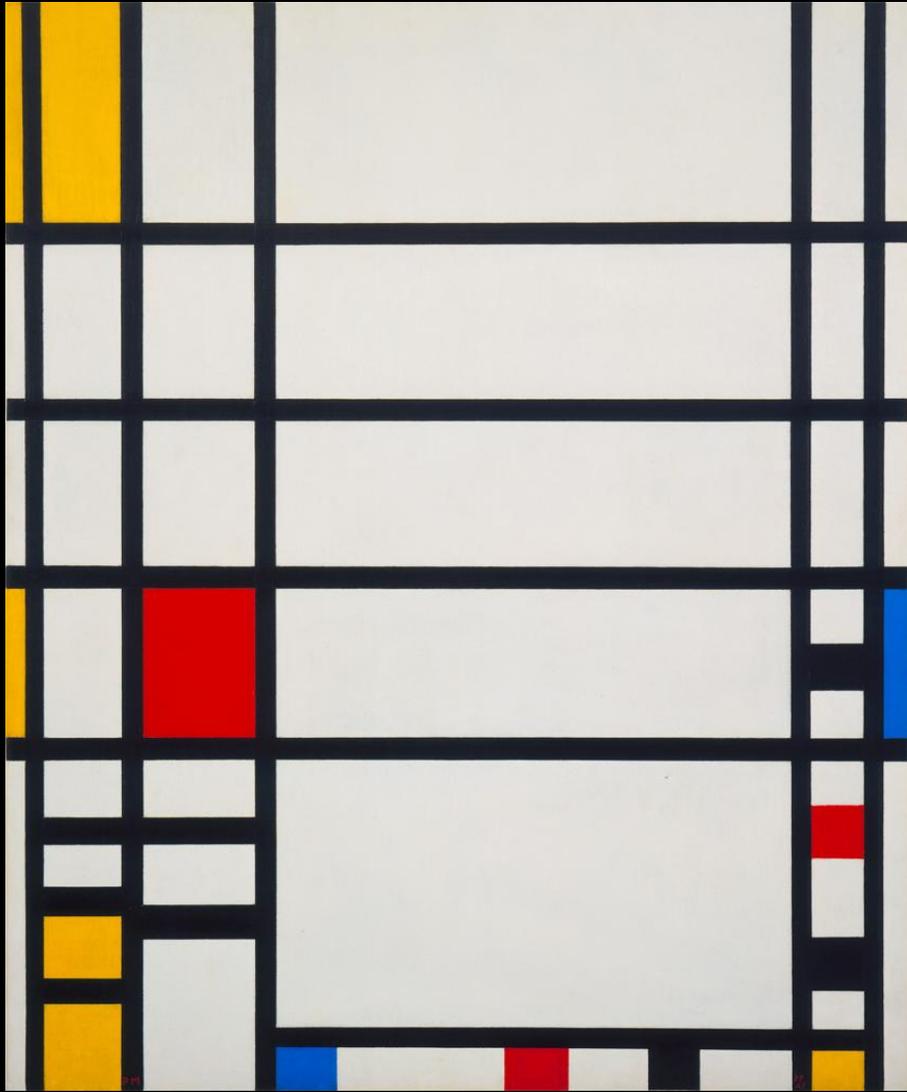
Mondrian, Sea in Starlight, 1914



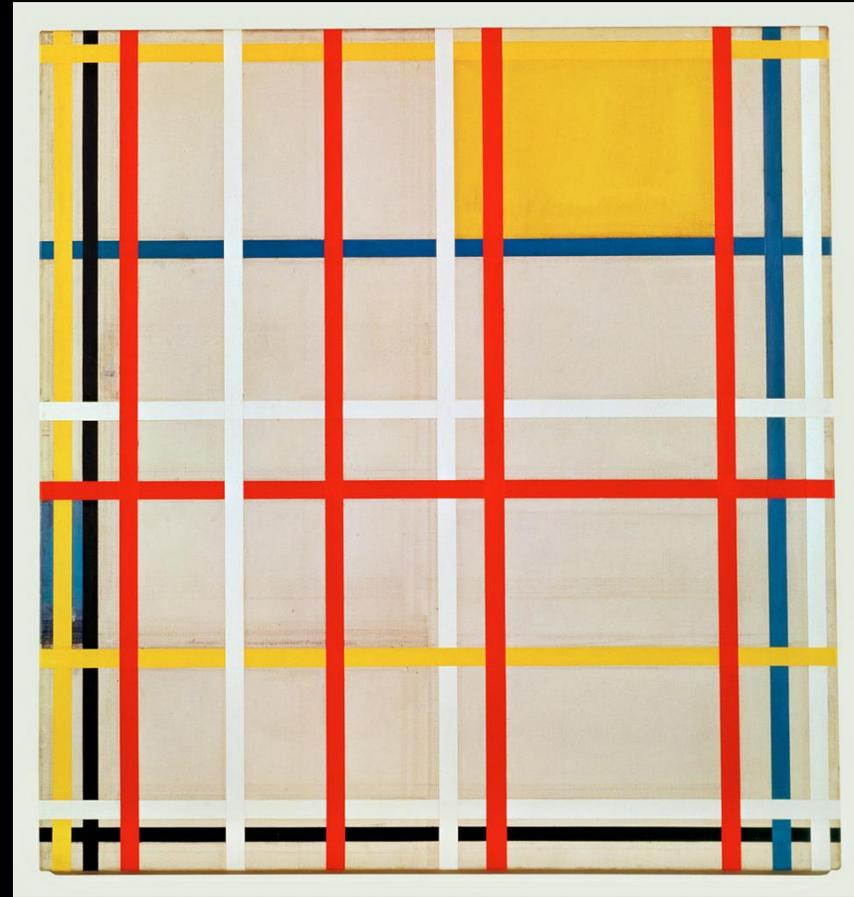
Mondrian, Tableau No. 2 with red, blue, black and gray , 1923



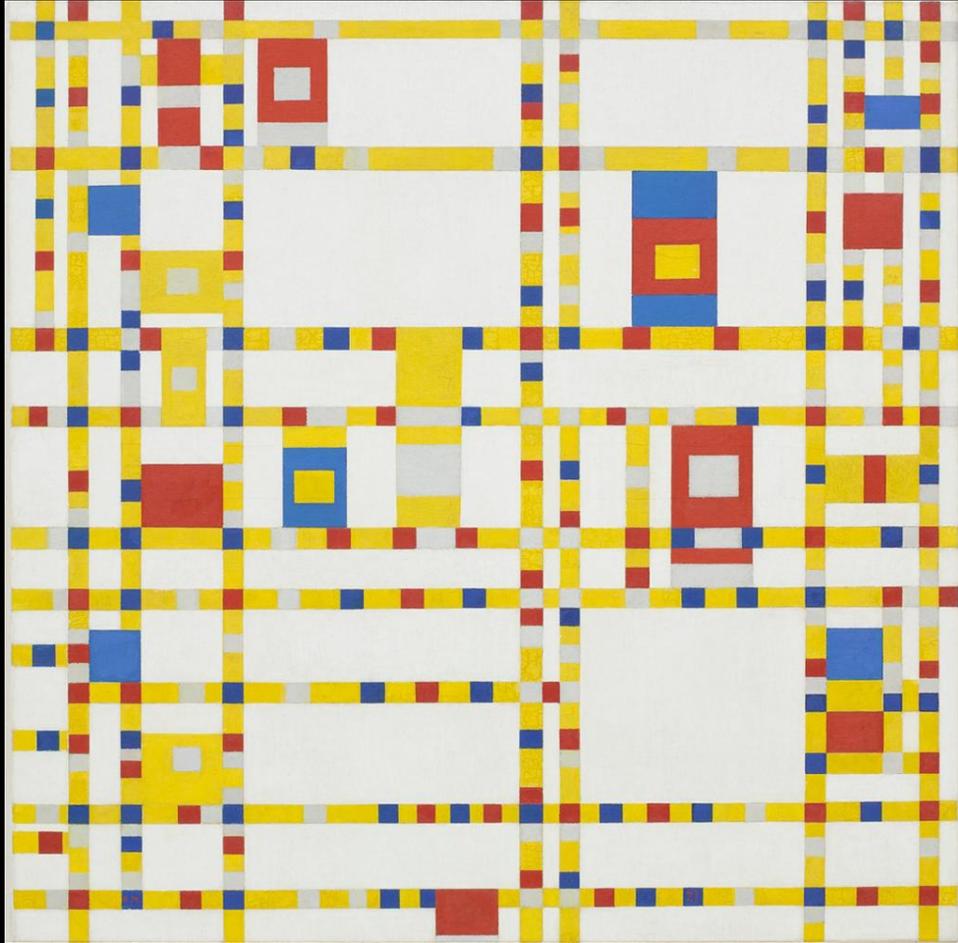
Mondrian, Tableau No. 2 with red, blue, black and gray , 1923



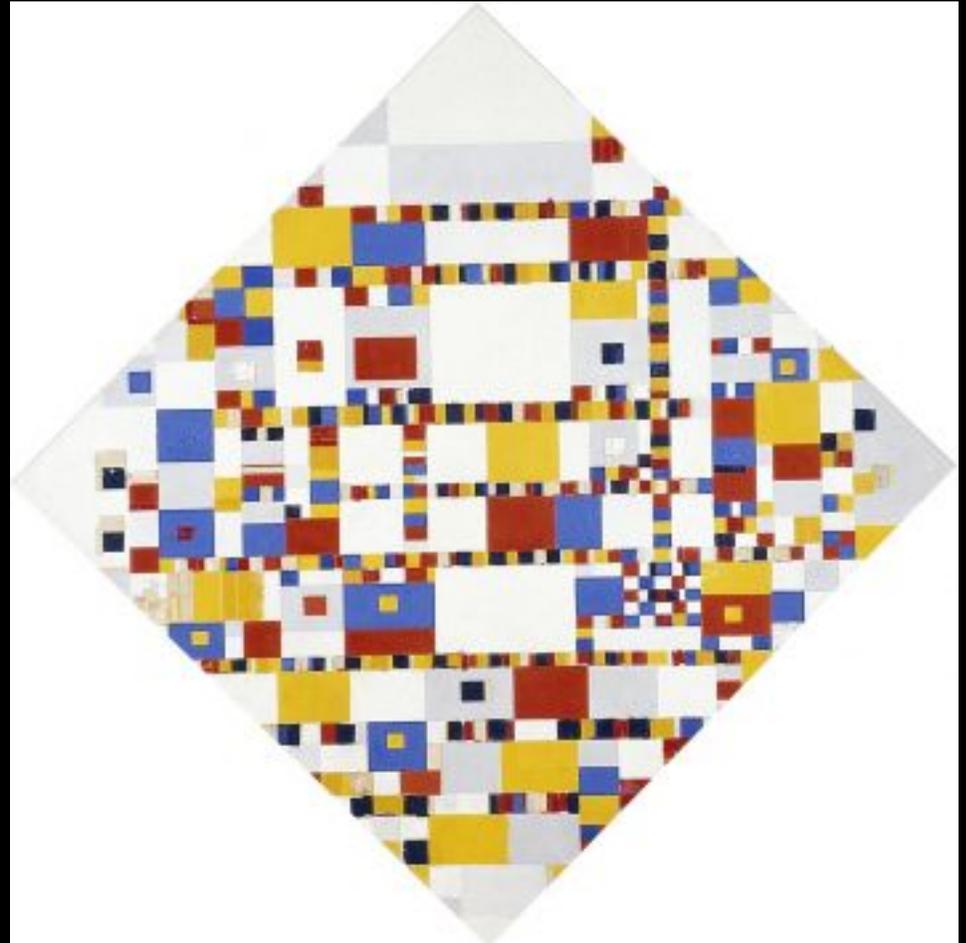
Mondrian, Trafalgar, 1939



Mondrian, New York 1, 1941



Mondrian, Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942



Mondrian, Victory Boogie Woogie, 1944

“The truly modern artist sees the metropolis as abstract life given form: it is closer to him than nature and it will more easily stir aesthetic emotions in him.”



Le Corbusier

Unité d'habitation, Marseilles, France, 1946-52

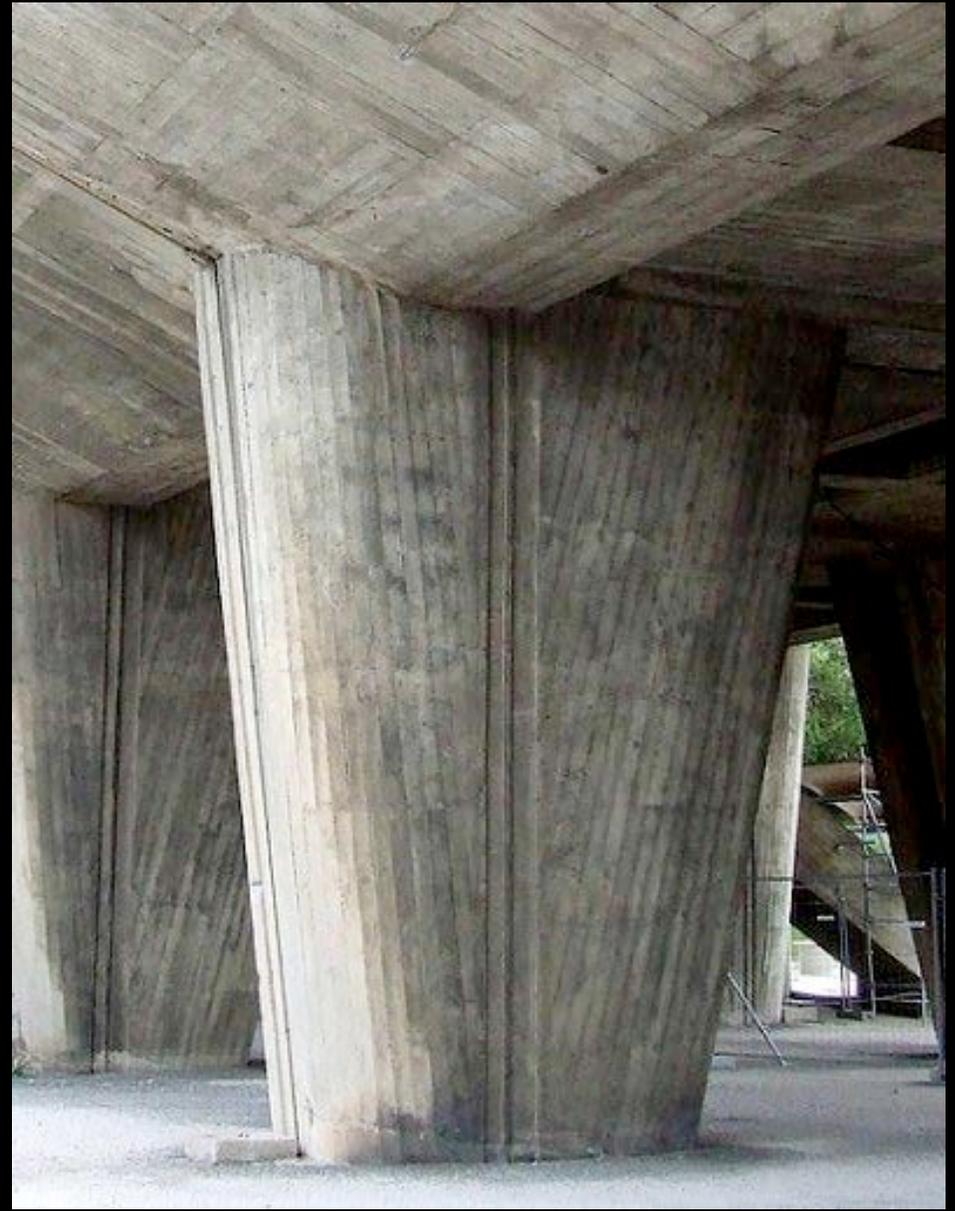
City in the Sky

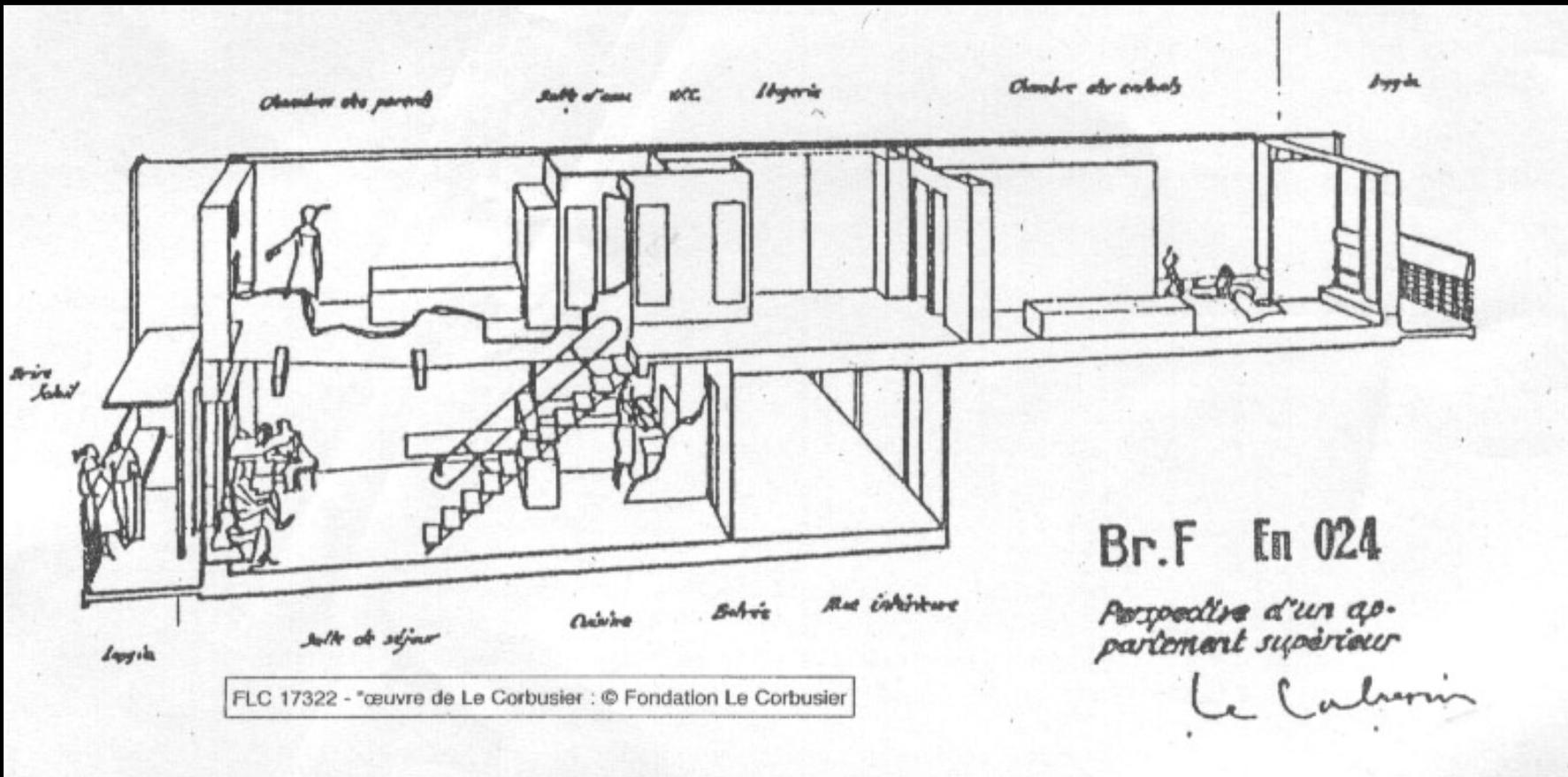
Unité d'Habitation, Nantes-Rezé, 1955

Unité d'Habitation, Berlin, 1958

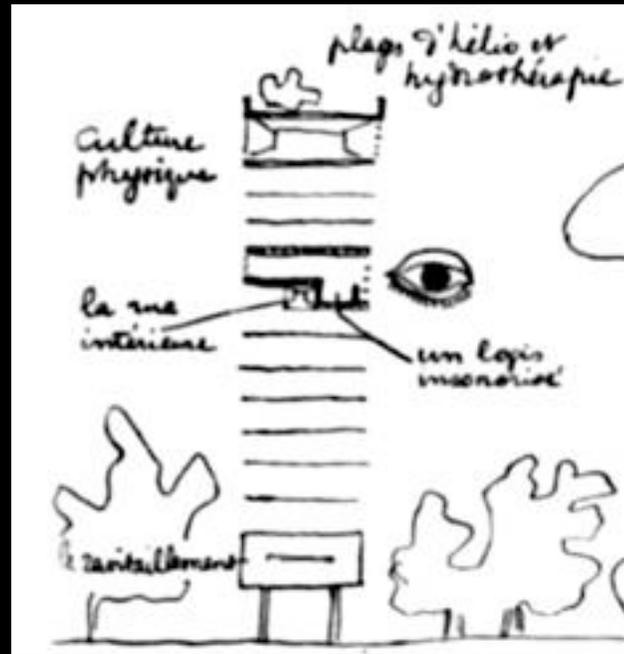
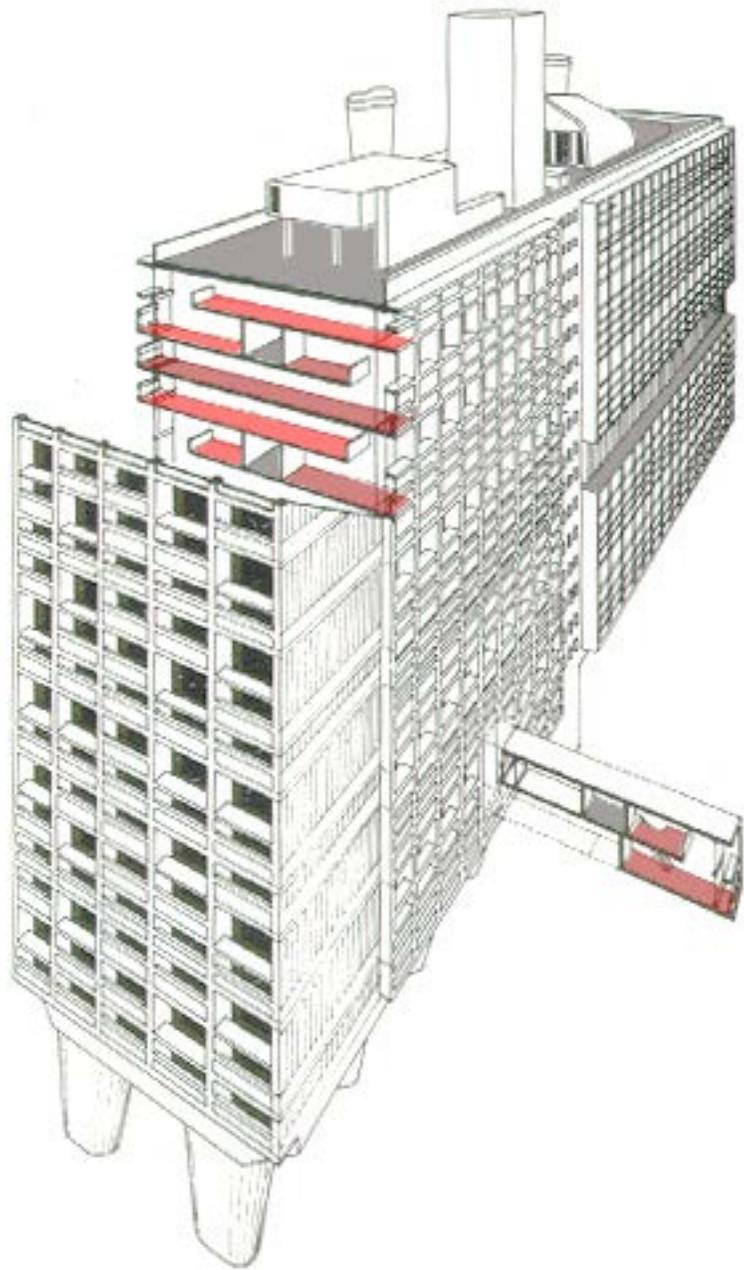
Unité d'Habitation, Briey, 1963

Unité d'Habitation, Ferminy, 1965





FLC 17322 - "œuvre de Le Corbusier : © Fondation Le Corbusier"





Gerrit Rietveld, Red-Blue  
Chair, 1917-18



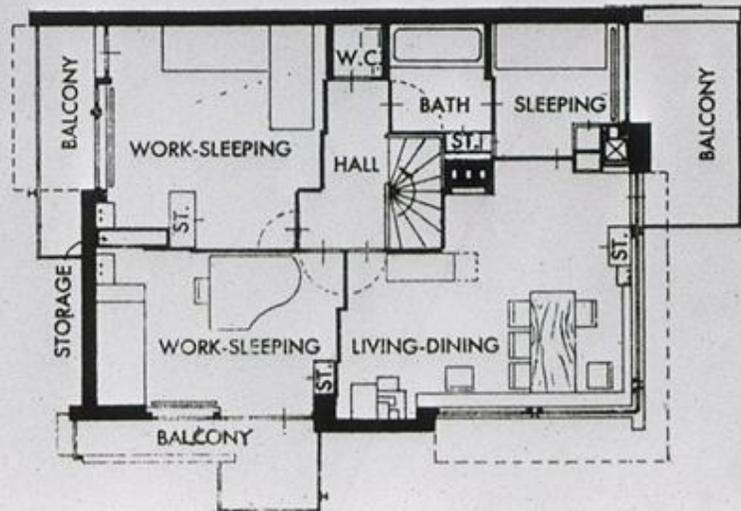
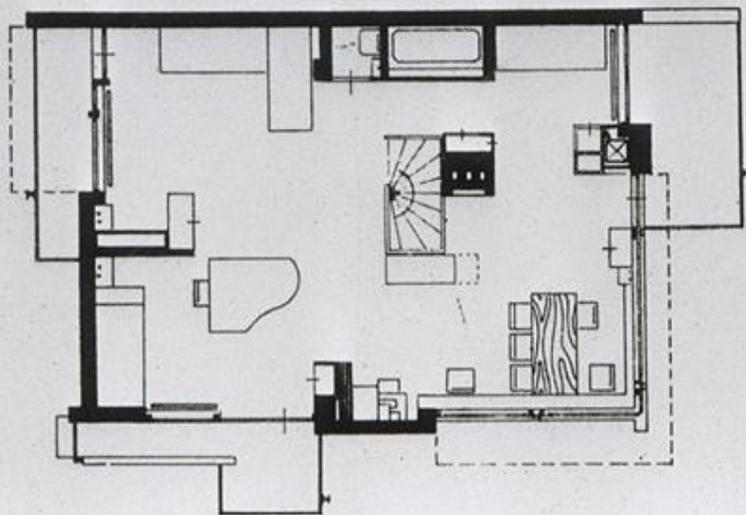
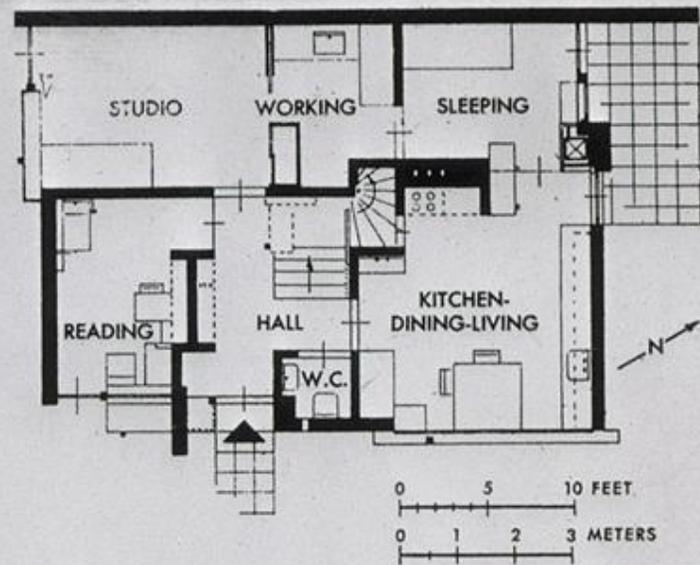
Gerrit Rietvelt, Side Table for Schröder House, 1924

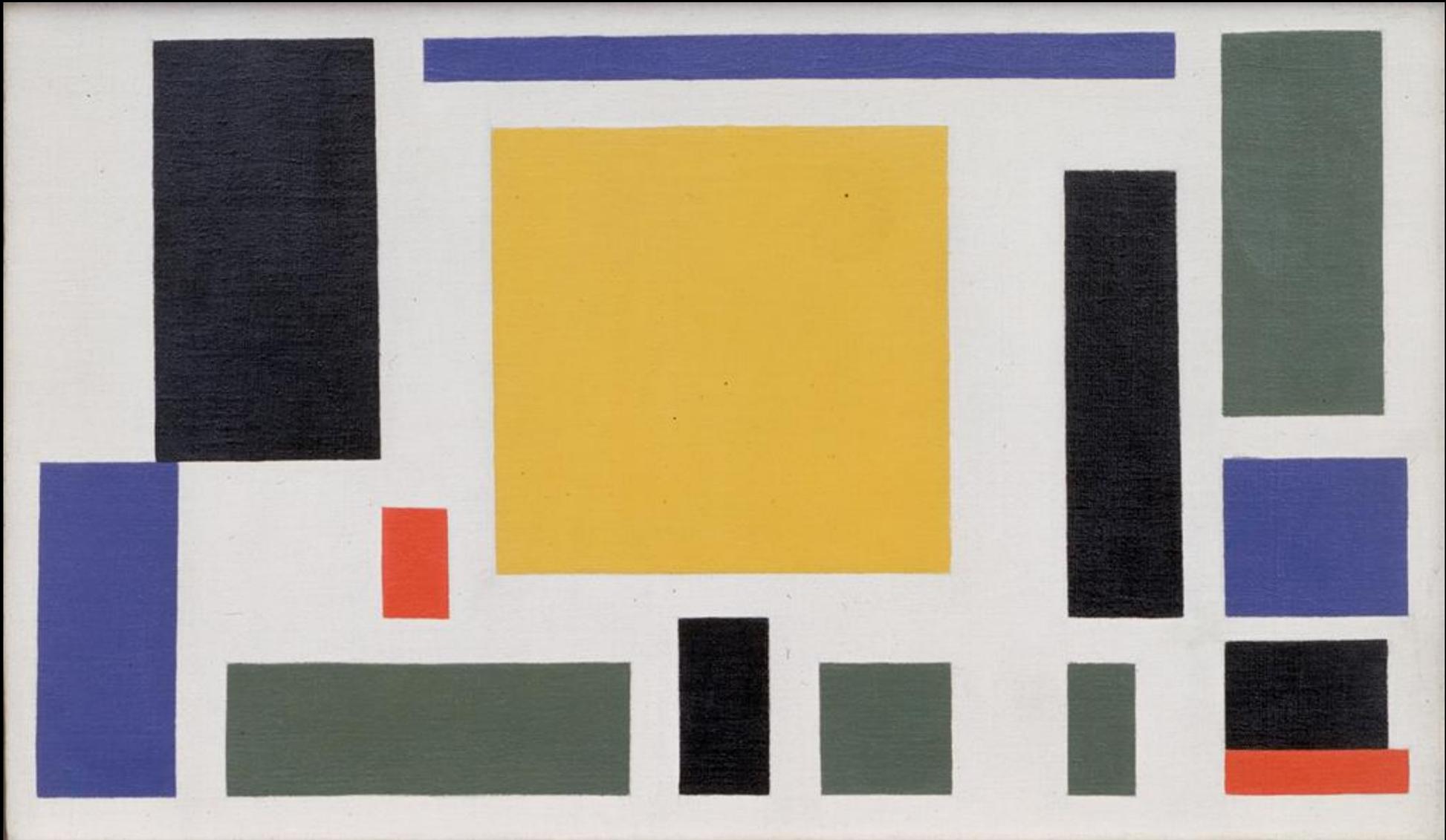


Gerrit Rietveld, Schröder House, Utrecht, 1924

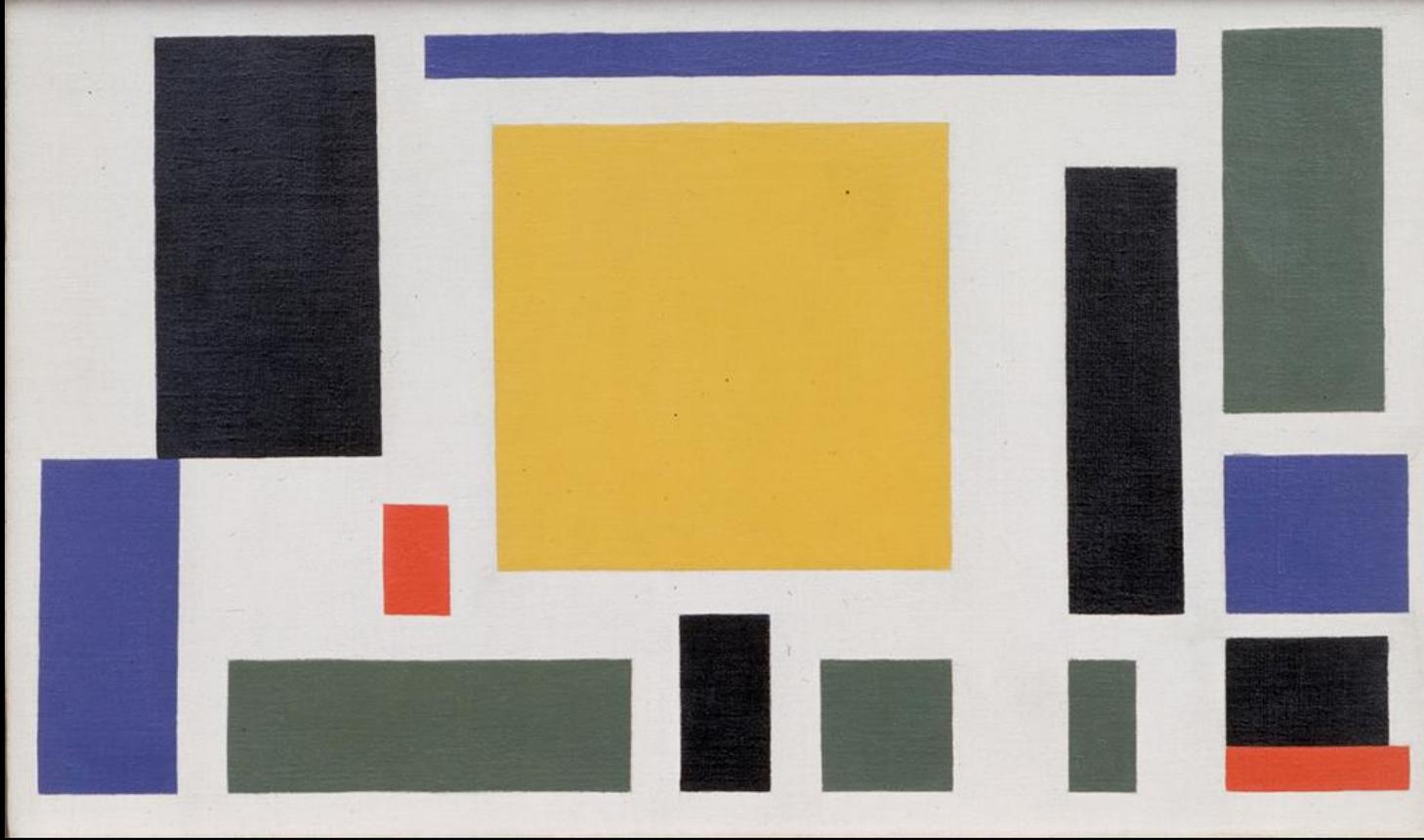
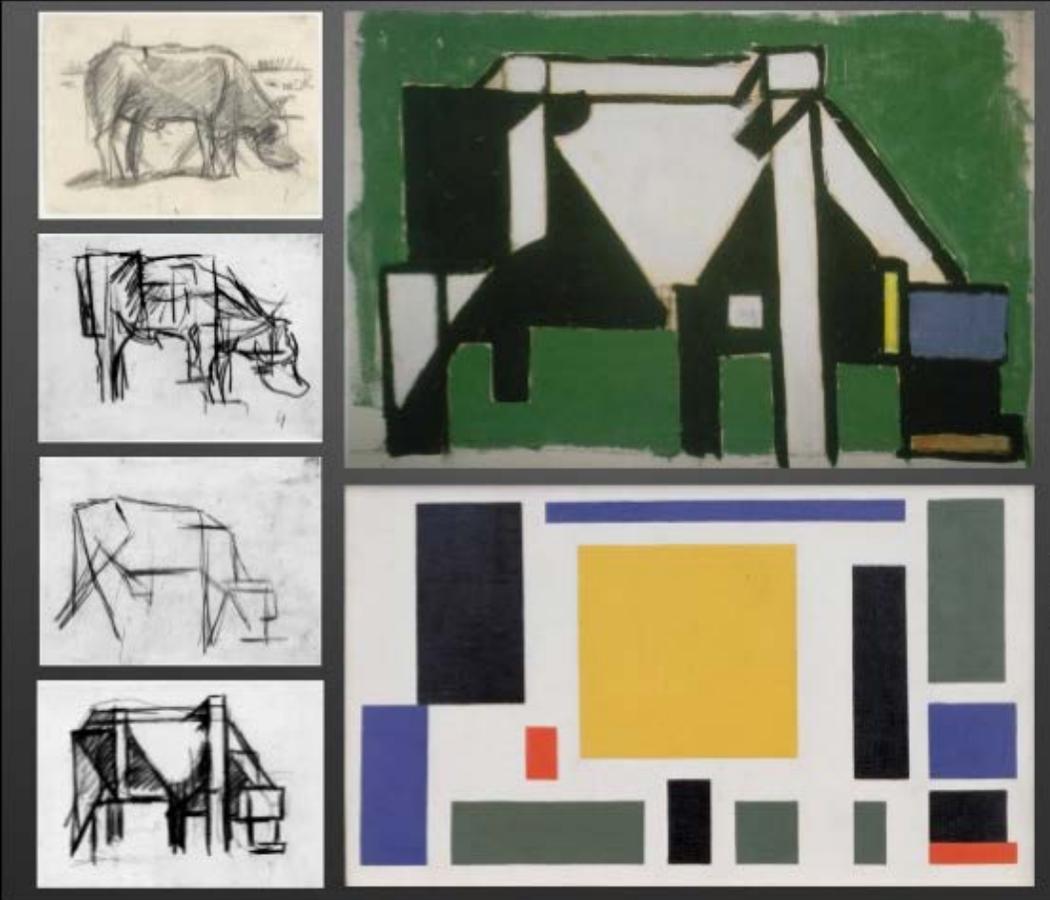


318. GERRIT RIETVELD.  
*Plans of Three Floors,*  
*Schröder House, Utrecht*

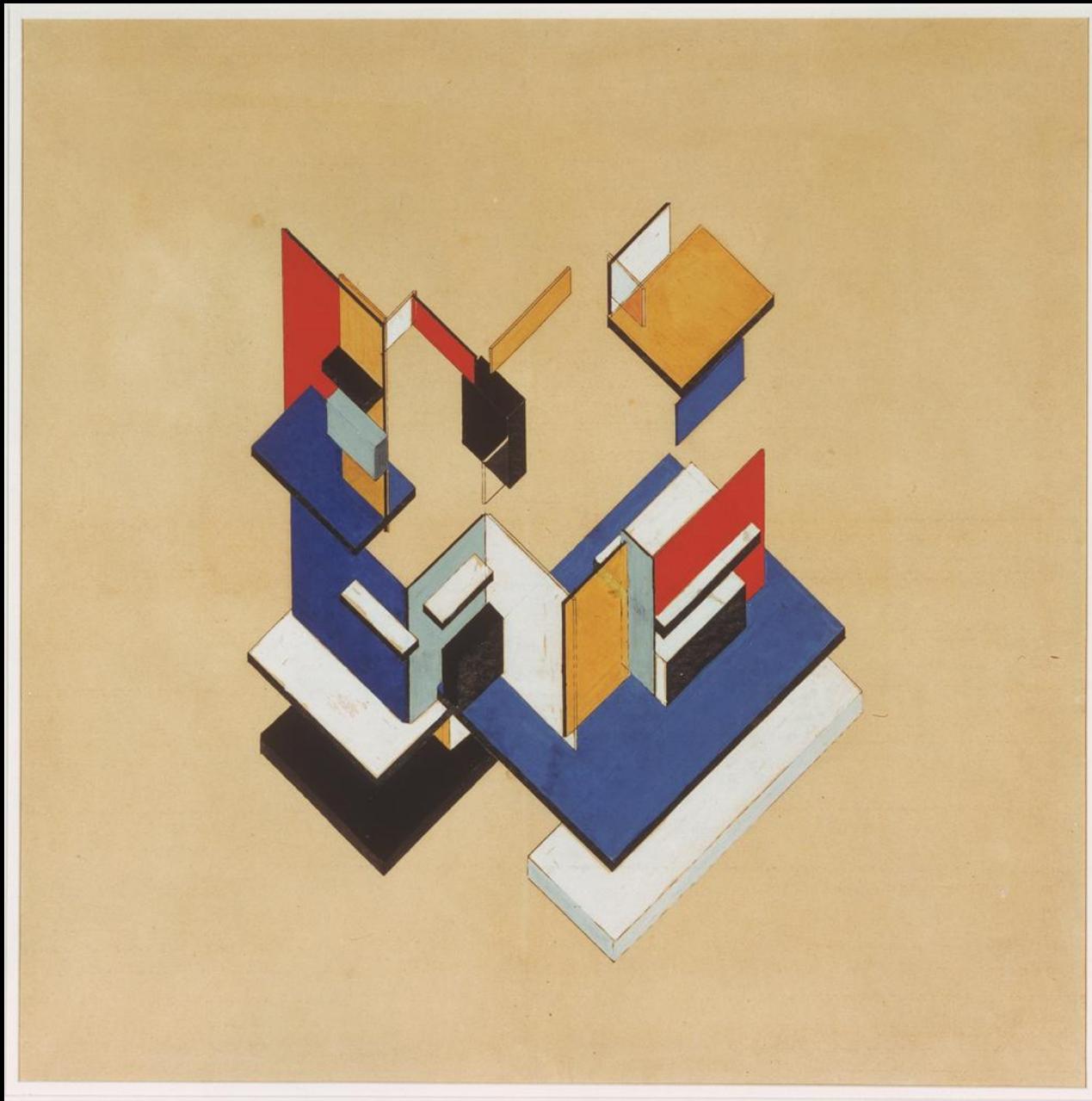




Theo Van Doesburg, Composition VIII (The Cow), 1918



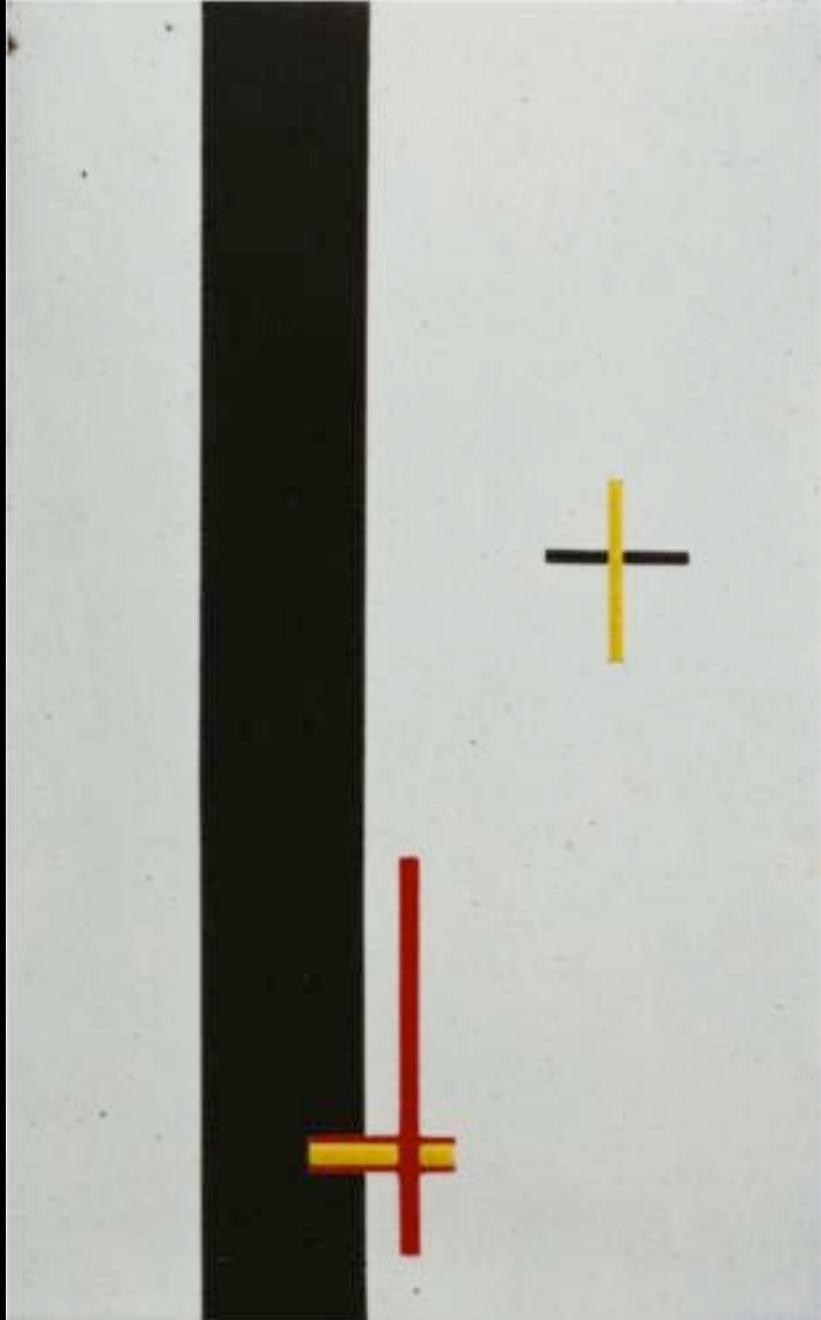
Theo Van Doesburg, Composition VIII (The Cow), 1918



Theo Van Doesburg, Contra-Construction Project  
Axonometric, 1923

Laszlo Moholy-  
Nagy's  
"Telephone  
Paintings"  
1922





Moholy-Nagy, Construction in Enamel 3 (EM 3), 1922 Porcelain enamel on steel



*Art by Telephone*, Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1969

On the LP the Museum's director, Jan van der Marck, interviews, by long-distance telephone, artists Siah Armajani, Richard Artschwager, John Baldessari, Iain Baxter, Mel Bochner, George Brecht, Jack Burnham, James Lee Byars, Robert H. Cumming, Francoise Dallegret, Jan Dibbets, John Giorno, Robert Grosvenor, Hans Haacke, Richard Hamilton, Dick Higgins, Davi Det Hompson, Robert Huot, Alani Jacquet, Ed Kienholz, Joseph Kosuth, Les Levine, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Guenther Uecker, Stan Van Der Beek, Bernar Venet, Frank Lincoln Viner, Wolf Vostell, William Wegman, and William T. Wiley, each discussing with van der Marck how to execute an artwork for inclusion in the show to be fabricated by in Chicago strictly by the artist's verbal instructions.



Installation view, *Art by Telephone*, MCA Chicago, © MCA Chicago.  
Classically-trained cellist Charlotte Moorman

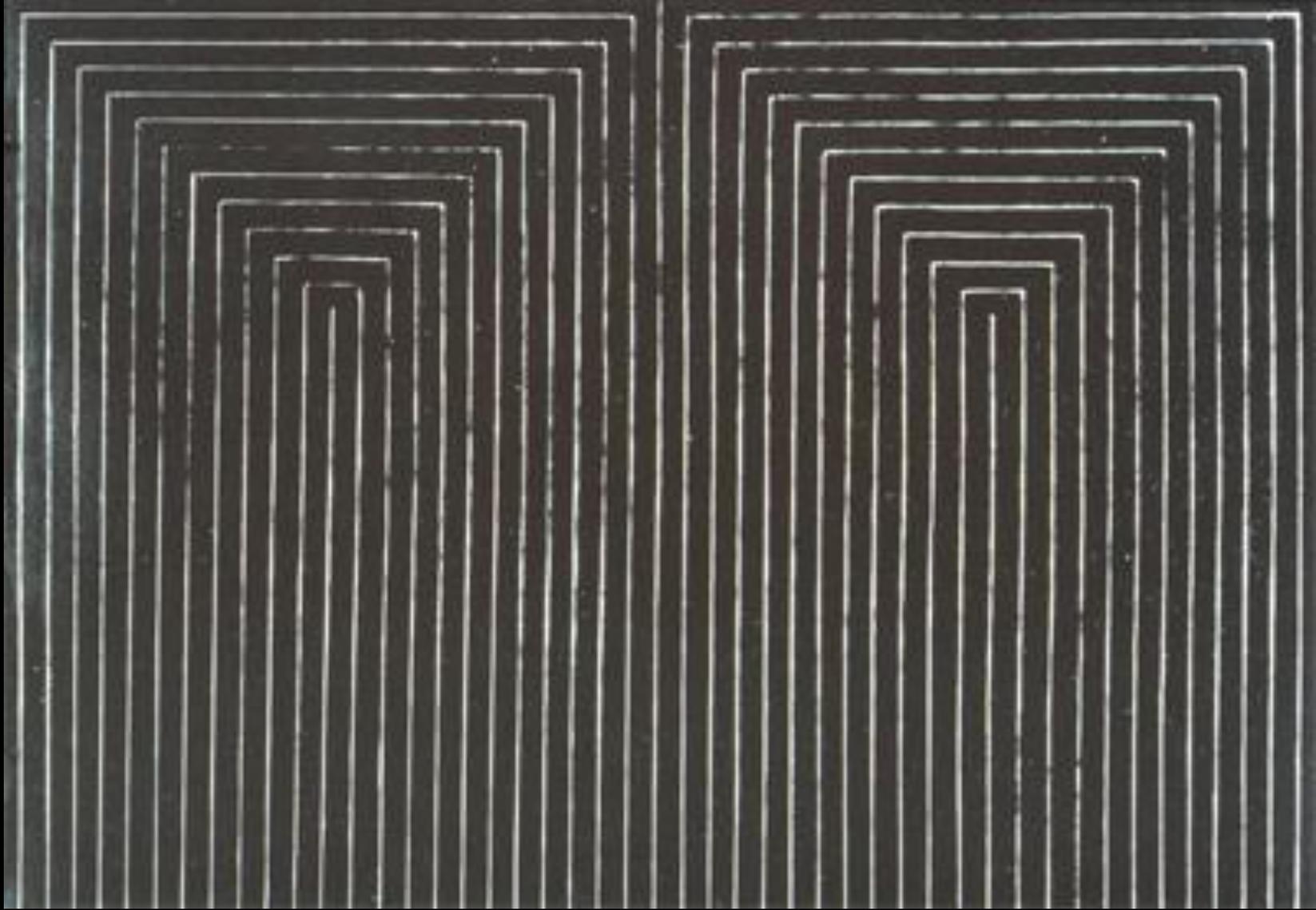
Inspired in part by Moholy-Nagy's "telephone pictures" (for which the artist dictated his design for works over the phone to a fabricator, emphasizing the fact that an intellectual approach to the creation of art was not inferior to an emotional approach), *Art by Telephone* was an extremely influential conceptually driven exhibition in the MCA's early history. Occurring at a time when the art world was moving away from minimalism and in a more conceptual direction, *Art by Telephone* asked artists from the United States and Europe to communicate their ideas for artworks over the telephone to MCA curator David H. Katzive. MCA staff then executed the works based on the artists' oral instructions, avoiding all blueprints and written plans. After six weeks, all of the works exhibited in *Art by Telephone* were either destroyed or disposed of by the museum.

# Constraints and Minimalism 1959-1975

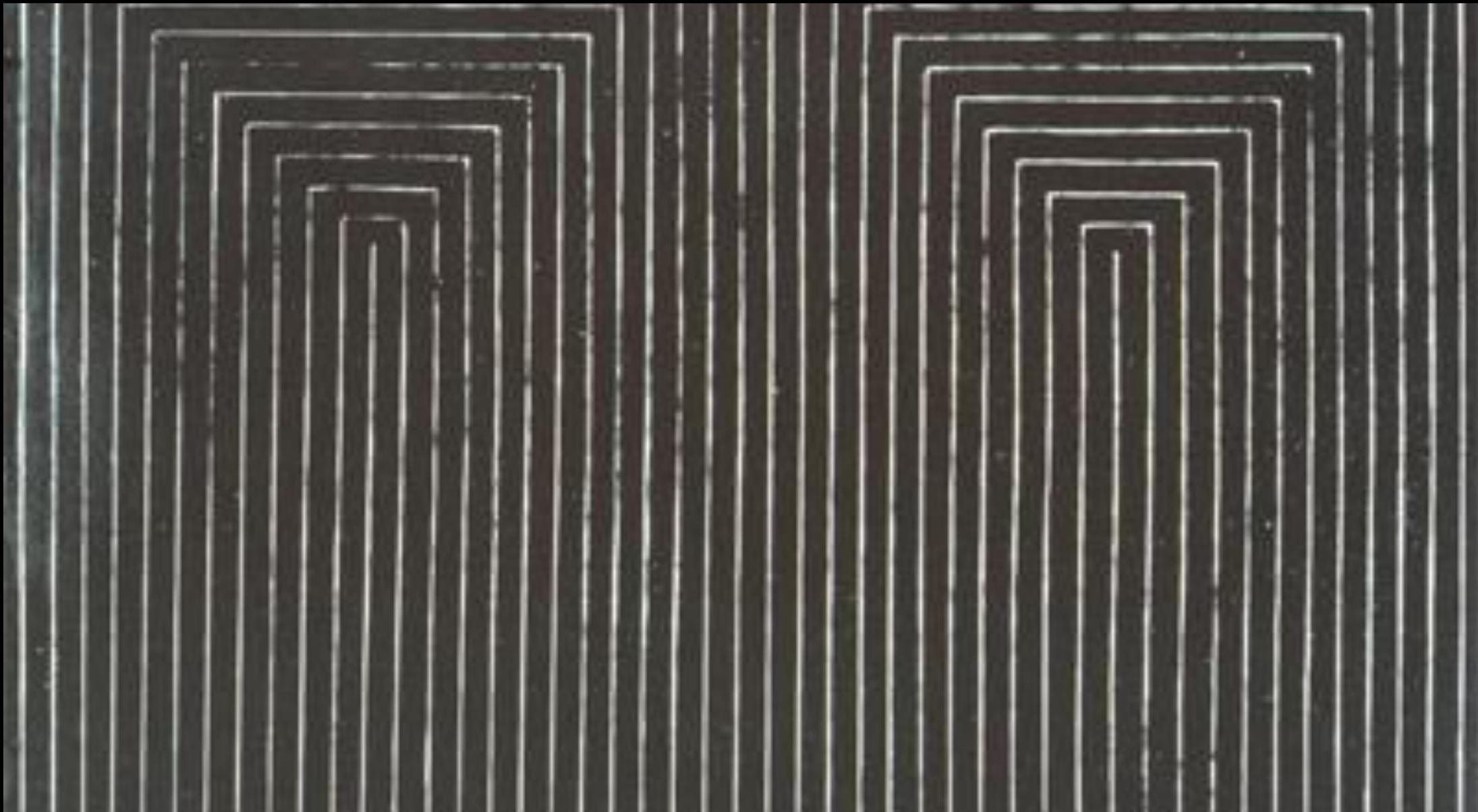


# Painting between Surface and Object

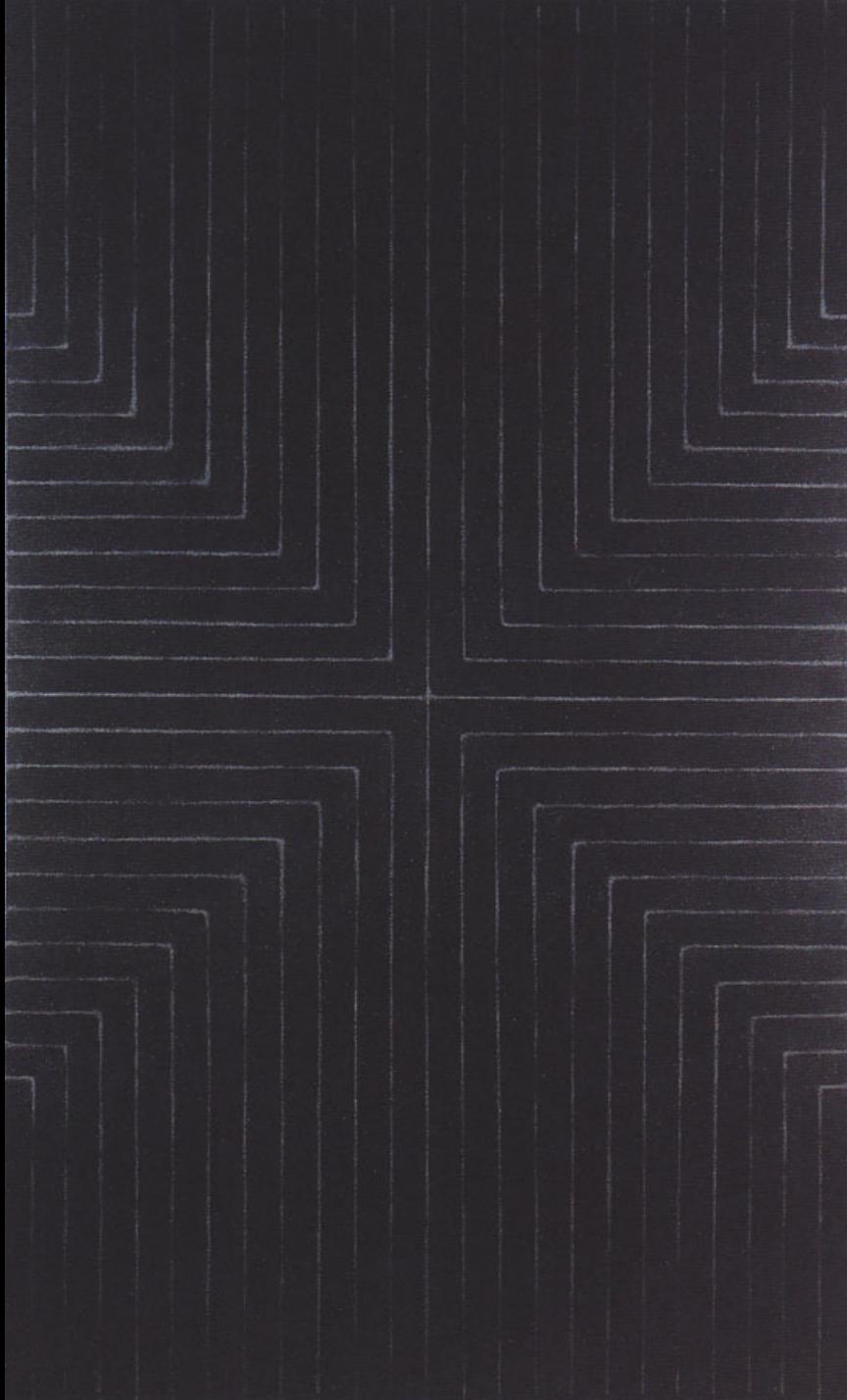
Frank Stella, Green Gate, 1958



Frank Stella, Marriage of Reason and Squalor, 1959



Frank Stella, Marriage of Reason and Squalor, 1959



Frank Stella, Die Fahne Hoch! 1959

121.5 in × 73.0 in

J. DE FEO	ROBERT MALLARY
WALLY HEDRICK	LOUISE NEVELSON
JAMES JARVAISE	ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
JASPER JOHNS	JULIUS SCHMIDT
ELLSWORTH KELLY	RICHARD STANKIEWICZ
ALFRED LESLIE	FRANK STELLA
LANDÉS LEWITIN	ALBERT URBAN
RICHARD LYTLE	JACK YOUNGERMAN

## SIXTEEN AMERICANS

*edited by* DOROTHY C. MILLER *with statements by the artists and others*

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK 1959



*photograph Helio Frangon*

**FRANK STELLA**

**Preface to Stripe Painting**

Art excludes the unnecessary. Frank Stella has found it necessary to paint stripes. There is nothing else in his painting.

Frank Stella is not interested in expression or sensitivity. He is interested in the necessities of painting.

Symbols are counters passed among people. Frank Stella's painting is not symbolic. His stripes are the paths of brush on canvas. These paths lead only into painting. —CARL ANDRÉ

76



Frank Stella: *Die Fahne Hoch!* 1969. Oil. 14' 1 1/2" x 4'. Leo Castelli Gallery

77

## 16 Americans

December 16, 1959–February 17, 1960

The Museum of Modern Art



16 Americans, 1959  
Works by Ellsworth Kelly and Jasper Johns



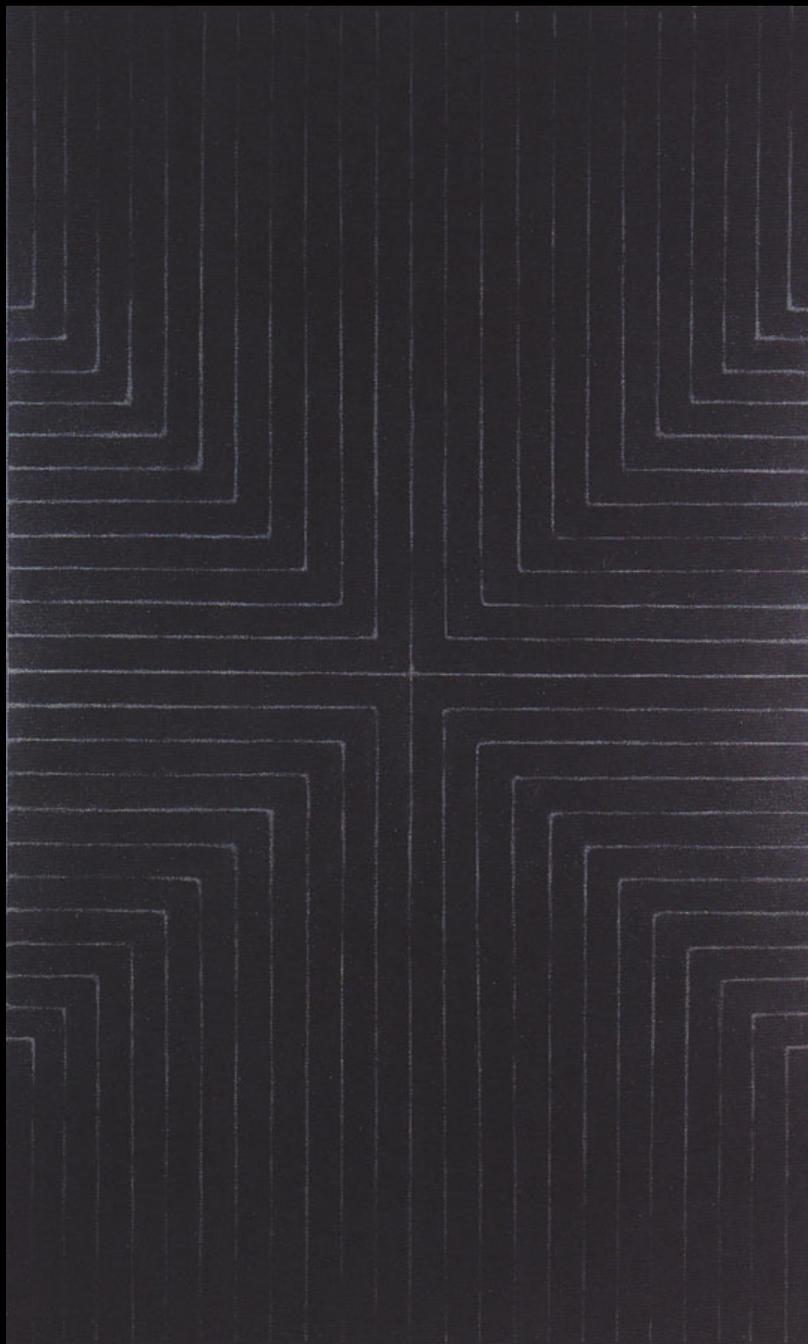
Page spread from the *Sixteen Americans* catalogue, published by MoMA in 1959.



“All I want anyone to get out of my [works] and all I ever get out of them is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion. What you see is what you see.”

--Frank Stella, 1964

Frank Stella at work on the Black Series



Frank Stella, Die Fahne  
Hoch! [The Flag on High!]  
1959

121.5 in × 73.0 in

"To many, Stella remains best known for his precocious appearance in 'Sixteen Americans' at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1959...Only twenty-three years old, he was represented there by four of his 'Black Paintings', a series that eventually comprised about two dozen large-scale canvases, each composed of concentric bands or stripes in black enamel house paint on raw canvas, at once stark, deadpan, rigorous, imposing, velvety – diagrammatic but also tactile...They are at the same time crucial exponents in the history of non-compositional abstraction, by which artists have sought to produce paintings absent of subjective decision-making. Instead, emphasis is placed on the painting itself, on its materials and terms, as well as, during the 1960s in particular, on the viewer: it feels impossible to write about Stella's early paintings without citing, for the umpteenth time, his own notorious line, 'What you see is what you see' – which either sets aside the difficulty of seeing them, or simply accepts the vagaries of seeing them. He offered this statement during a 1964 radio interview, and it has resounded like a Minimalist mantra ever since, treated as a kind of koan (a paradoxical anecdote or riddle without a solution) rather than as mere tautology."

-- Curator Kate Nesin



Frank Stella, *Gezira (Black Series)*, 1960

to roll	to curve
to crease	to left
to fold	to inlay
to store	to impress
to bend	to fire
to shorten	to flood
to twist	to smear
to dapple	to rotate
to crumple	to swirl
to shave	to support
to tear	to hook
to chip	to suspend
to split	to spread
to cut	to hang
to sever	to collect
to drop	of tension
to remove	off gravity
to simplify	of entropy
to differ	of nature
to disarrange	of grouping
to open	of layering
to mix	of felting
to splash	to grasp
to knot	to tighten
to spill	to bundle
to droop	to heap
to flow	to gather

to scatter	to modulate
to arrange	to distill
to repair	of waves
to discard	of electromagnetic
to pair	of inertia
to distribute	of ionization
to surfeit	of polarization
to complement	of refraction
to enclose	of simultaneity
to surround	of tides
to encircle	of reflection
to hide	of equilibrium
to cover	of symmetry
to wrap	of friction
to dig	to stretch
to tilt	to bounce
to bind	to erase
to weave	to spray
to join	to systematize
to match	to refer
to laminate	to force
to bond	of mapping
to hinge	of location
to mark	of context
to expand	of time
to dilute	of carbonization
to light	to continue



Richard Serra, Serra Throwing Lead, 1969



Richard Serra, Sign Board Prop, 1969

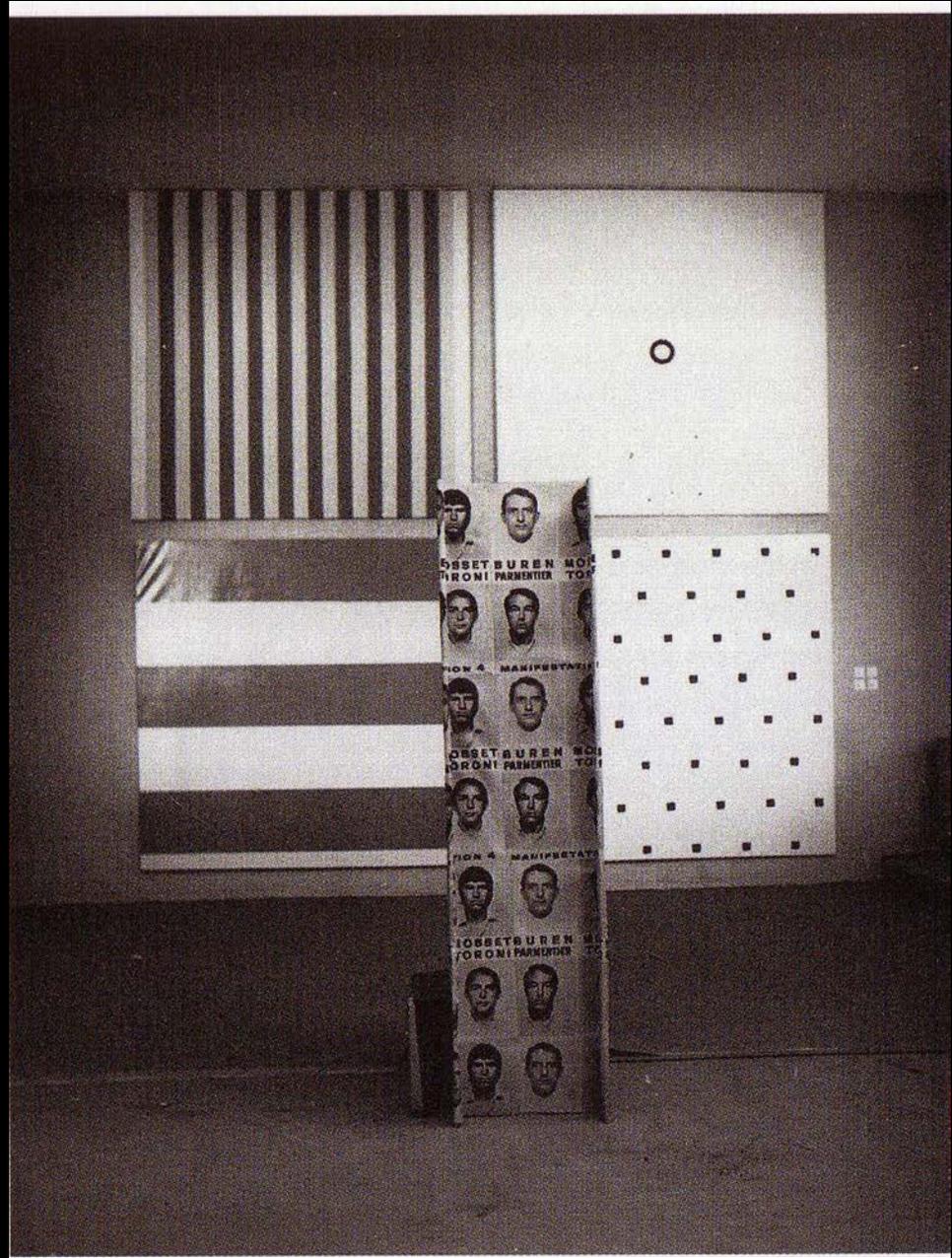


Richard Serra, Corner Prop, 1970

# Constraints and Conceptualism 1965-present



Installation of work by BMPT at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1967  
Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni  
<https://www.collection.pictet/selection/bmpt>



Installation of work by BMPT at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1967

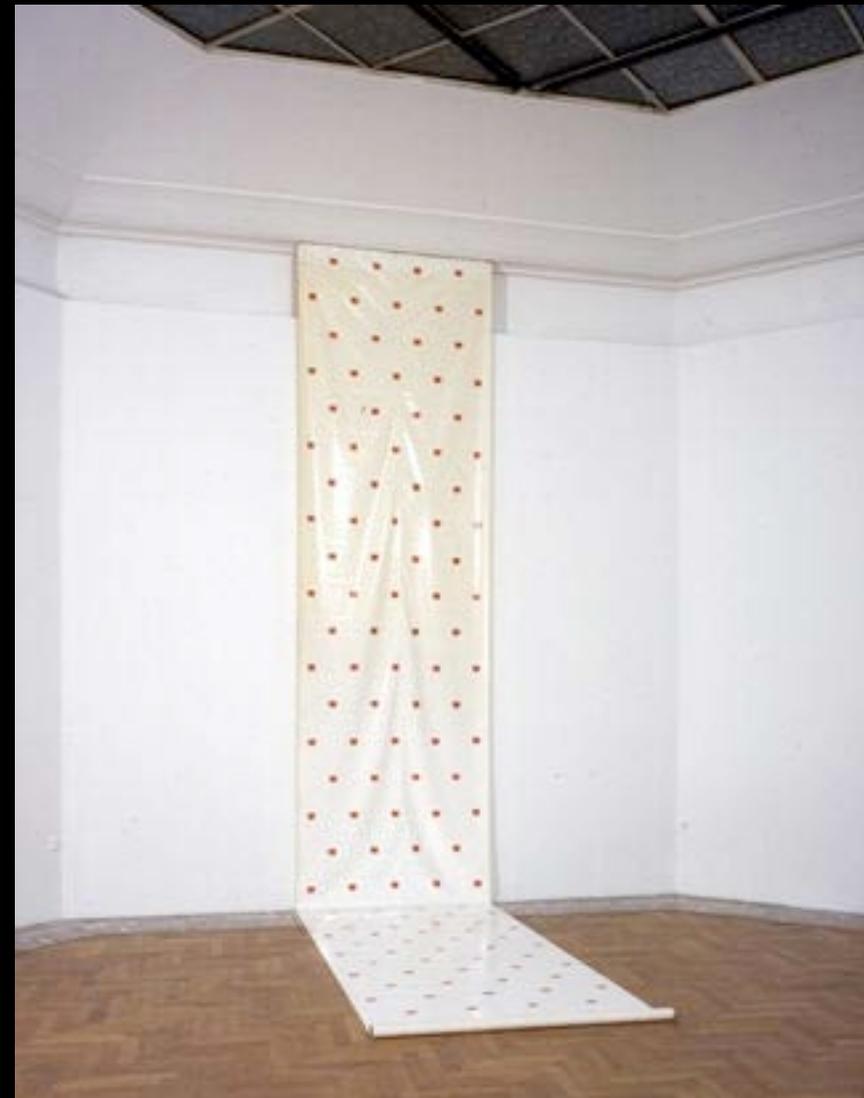


Olivier Mosset, *Zero Degree Painting*, One of over 200 identical paintings, 1966-1974

Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, 1953



Niele Toroni's metric square brush strokes of oil on canvas



Niele Toroni – Imprints of a No. 50  
Paintbrush Repeated at Regular Intervals of  
30 cm., 1968



Michel Parmentier,  
Painting No. 10, 1965



Daniel Buren, Poster, (1 of 200 in Paris), 1968



AR RESTAURANT  
RESTAURANT

snap  
300-40-03

Club 65

CALD  
FUMISTERIE CHARPENTE CENTRAL  
CONVOLUTEUR PLUMBERIE  
58 58 rue de Savoie - Paris 17<sup>e</sup>  
TEL. 227.57.00

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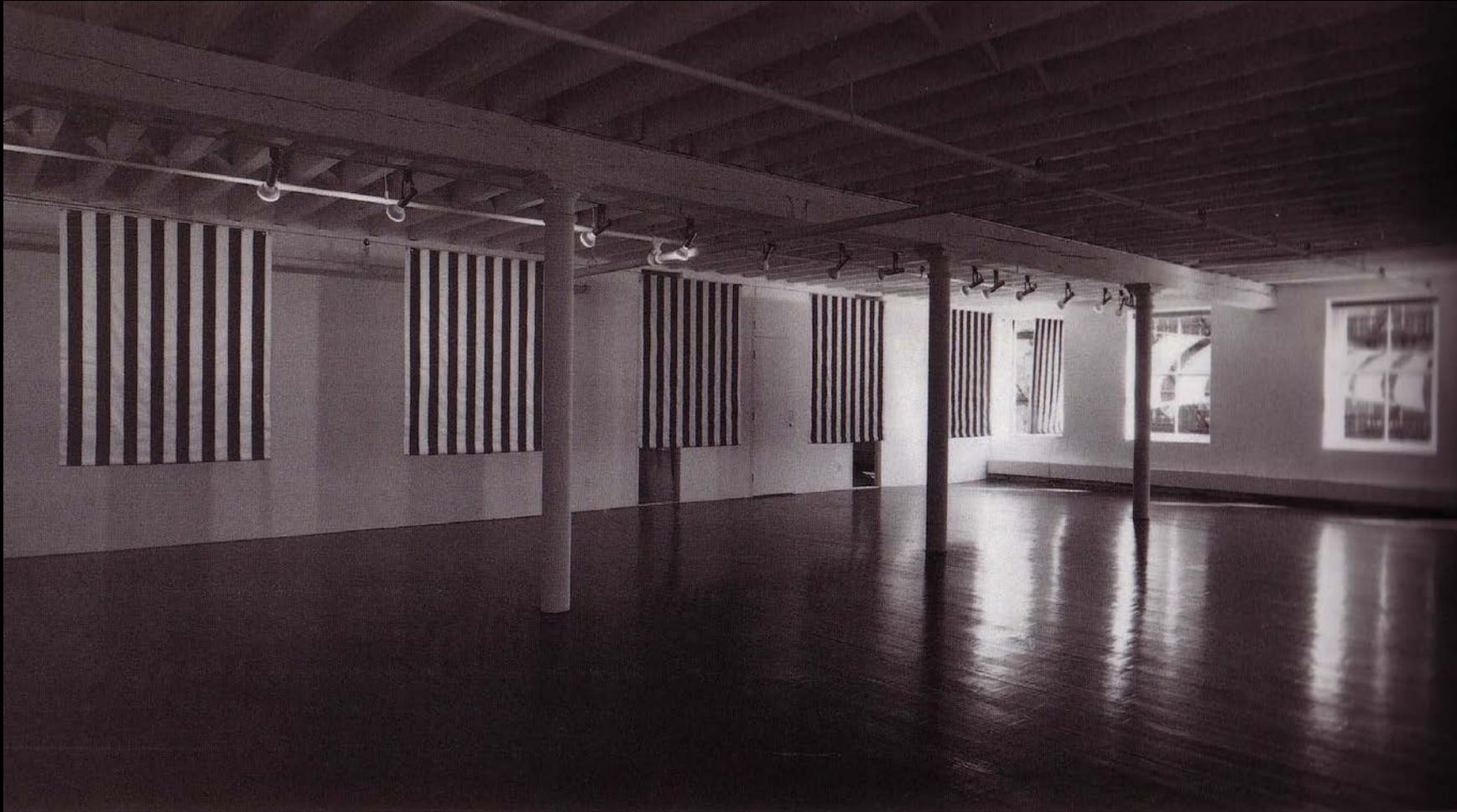
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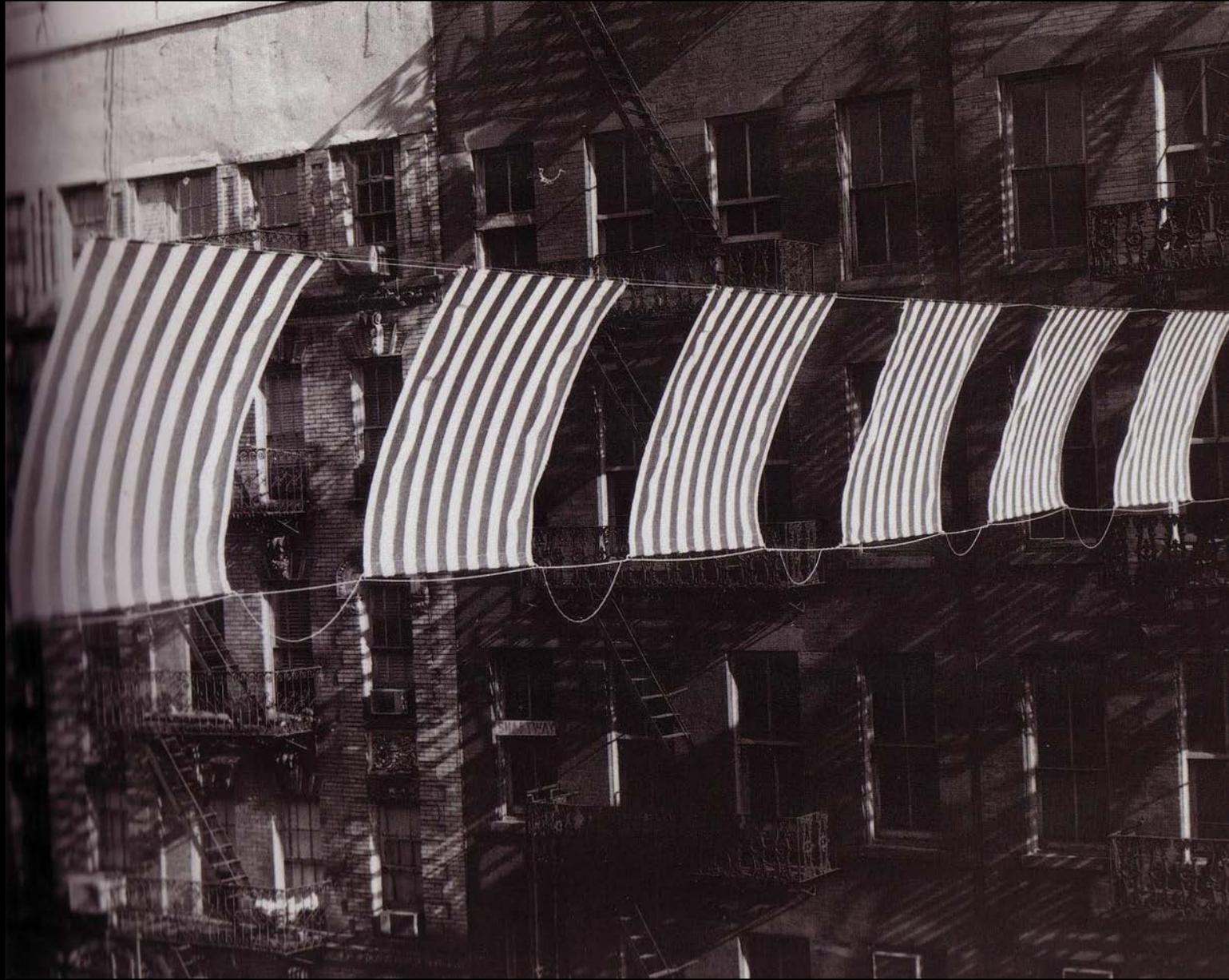




Daniel Buren,  
Sandwich Men,  
1968



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, Within and Beyond the Frame, 1973



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, Within and Beyond the Frame, 1973





Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir, To Transgress, 1976



Daniel Buren, Exhibition of an Exhibition, A Piece in 7 Pictures, 1972



Daniel Buren, Photo-Souvenir of Painting-Sculpture, 1971



Daniel Buren, Eyes of the Storm, 2000-2005



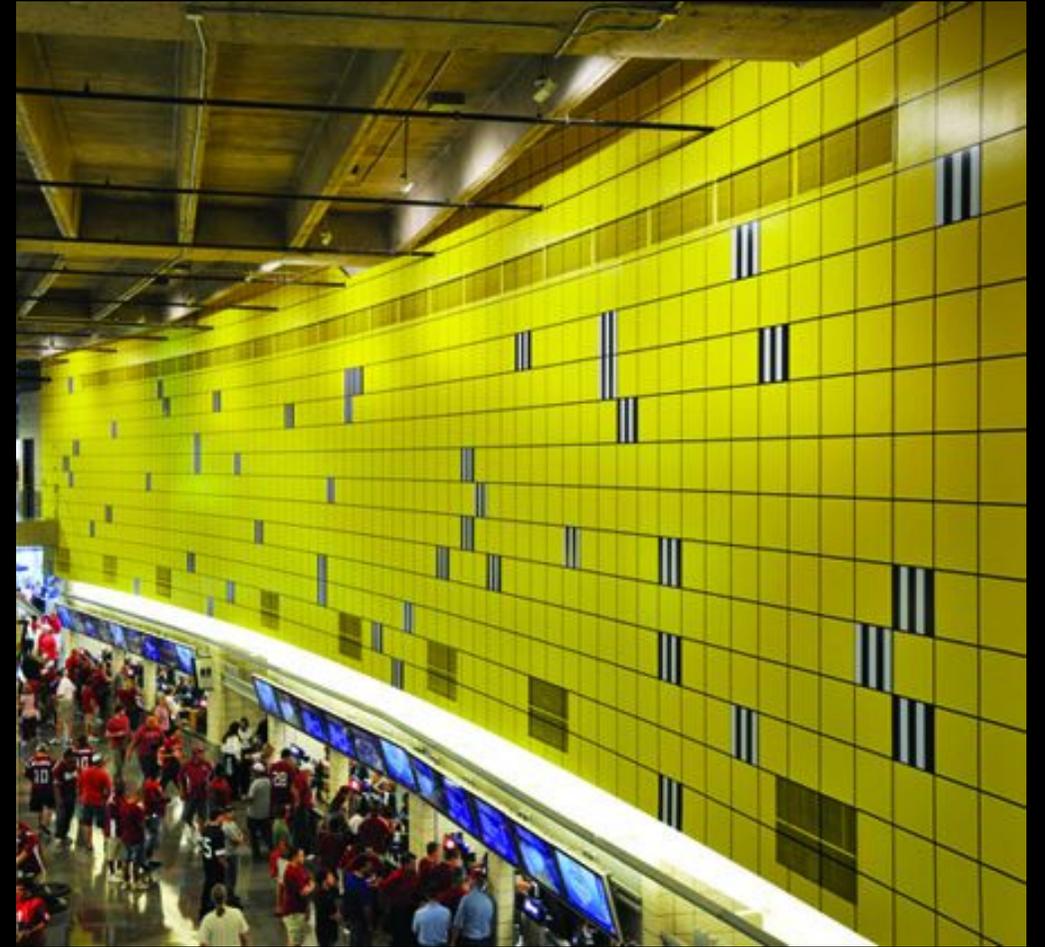


Daniel Buren created in 1986 a sculpture in the courtyard of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Palais Royal, in Paris: "*Les Deux Plateaux*", more commonly referred to as the *Colonnes de Buren* (Buren's Columns). The work catalyzed a fervent debate in Paris about how to integrate contemporary art within the context of historic sites.





Buren, PILE UP: High relief, Lisson Gallery, London 2017



Buren, Untitled permanent installation, Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, TX 2012

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creating a machine – do to art?

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Does it transform the author as we know it, and if  
so how?

P.A.L.F. [automatic production of French literature] is of interest as the first explicitly mechanical device entertained by Perec for the production of literary texts, and also as a symptom of the '60's fascination with the potential of the signifier to subvert, overturn, and generally wreak havoc with meaning and authorial intention.

-- Bellos, 40

# Constraints and the Reshaping of Authorship

# FLUX

**flux** (flŭks), *n.* [OF., fr. L. *flurus*, fr. *fluere*, *fluxum*, to flow. See FLUENT; cf. FLUSH, *n.* (of cards).] 1. *Med.*  
**a** A flowing or fluid discharge from the bowels or other part: esp., an excessive and morbid discharge; as, the bloody *flux*, or dysentery. **b** The matter thus discharged.  
**2.** Act of flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.



3. A stream; copious flow; flood; outflow.
4. The setting in of the tide toward the shore. Cf. REFLUX.
5. State of being liquid through heat; fusion. *Rare.*
6. A fusible glass used as a base for enamels; also, an easily fusible enamel used as a ground for enamel painting.
7. *Chem. & Metal.* **a** Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals. Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and limestone (basic), and fluorite (neutral). **b** Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as rosin.
8. *Math.* The integral over a surface of the normal component of a vector field. Cf. STOKES' THEOREM.
9. *Photom.* = 1st LIGHT, 18 **b**.
10. *Physics.* **a** The rate of flow or transfer of fluid or of energy across a surface. **b** By analogy, the surface integral of a vector distributed over a surface. Cf. ELECTROSTATIC FLUX, MAGNETIC FLUX.
11. *Plant Pathol.* A slime flux.

**flux**, *v.*; FLUXED (flŭkst); FLUX'ING. *Transitive:* 1. To cause to become fluid; to fuse; to treat with a flux.  
2. To affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux. "*Fluxed* into another world." *South.*  
3. *Med.* To cause a discharge from, as in purging.  
— *Intransitive:* 1. To flow freely. *Archaic.*  
2. To become fluid; to melt.  
3. To undergo a flux; specif., to bleed copiously. *Obs.*  
**flux** (flŭks), *adj.* [L. *flurus*, fr. *fluere*. See FLUX, *n.*]

## EVENT SCORES

Event Scores involve simple actions, ideas, and objects from everyday life recontextualized as performance. Event Scores are texts that can be seen as proposal pieces or instructions for actions. The idea of the score suggests musicality. Like a musical score, Event Scores can be realized by artists other than the original creator and are open to variation and interpretation.

### THREE TELEPHONE EVENTS

- When the telephone rings, it is allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
- When the telephone rings, the receiver is lifted, then replaced.
- When the telephone rings, it is answered.

Performance note: Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration.

Spring, 1961

Left: George Maciunas, Fluxus Preview Review, 1963

Right: George Brecht, Three Telephone Events from Water Yam, 1963

Retinal Art  
versus  
Anti-Retinal Art



Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)



Duchamp, Portrait of chess player, 1911



## Readymade

Duchamp wanted, he said, "to put art back in the service of the mind."

Duchamp, Bicycle Wheel, 1913



INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION  
OF MODERN ART  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN  
PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS  
69<sup>th</sup> INF<sup>Y</sup> REG<sup>T</sup> ARMORY, NEW YORK CITY  
FEBRUARY 15<sup>th</sup> TO MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> 1913  
AMERICAN & FOREIGN ART.

AMONG THE GUESTS WILL BE — INGRES, DELACROIX, DEGAS,  
CÉZANNE, REDON, RENOIR, MONET, SEURAT, VAN GOGH,  
HÖDLER, SLEVOGT, JOHN, PRYDE, SICKERT, MAILLOL,  
BRANCUSI, LEHMBRICK, BERNARD, MATISSE, MANET, SIGNAC,  
LAUREC, CONDER, DENIS, RUSSELL, DUFY, BRAQUE, HERBIN,  
GLEIZES, SOUZA-CARDOZO, ZAK, DU CHAMP-VILLON,  
GAUGUIN, ARCHIPENKO, BOURDELLE, C. DE SEGONZAC.

LEXINGTON AVE.—25th ST.

Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912

SEEING NEW YORK WITH A CUBIST



The Rude Descending a Staircase  
(Rush Hour at the Subway)

32  
USA

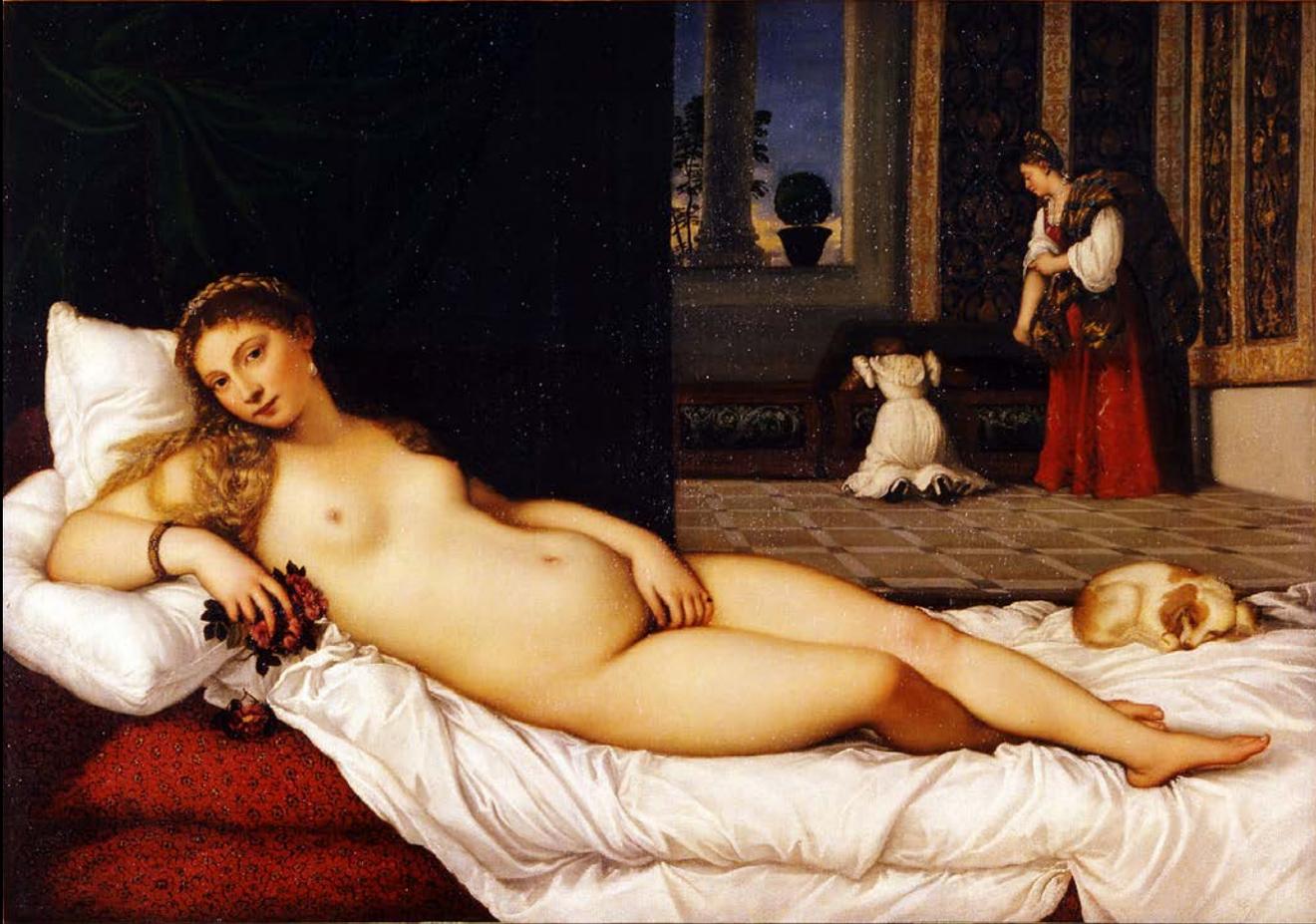
Armory Show 1913

1998



© USPS 1998





Titian, Venus of Urbino, 1534



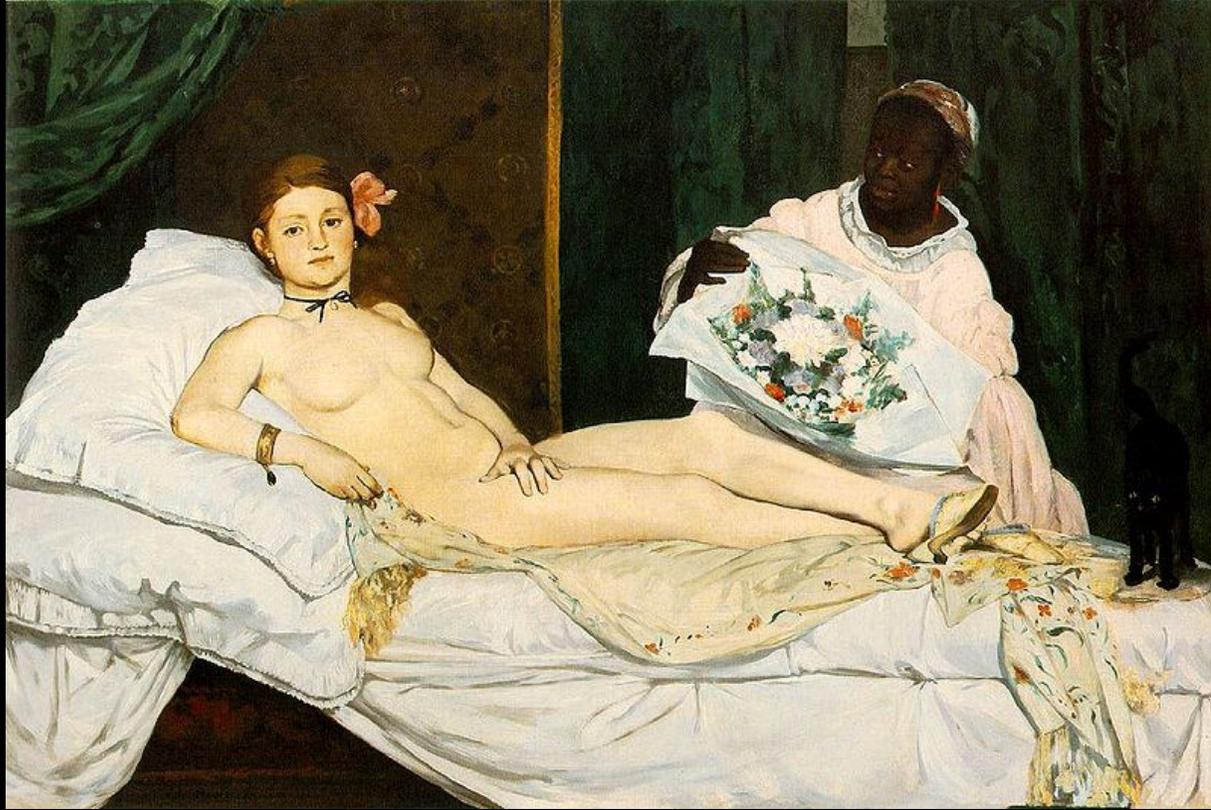
Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912



Alexandre Cabanel, The Birth of Venus, 1863



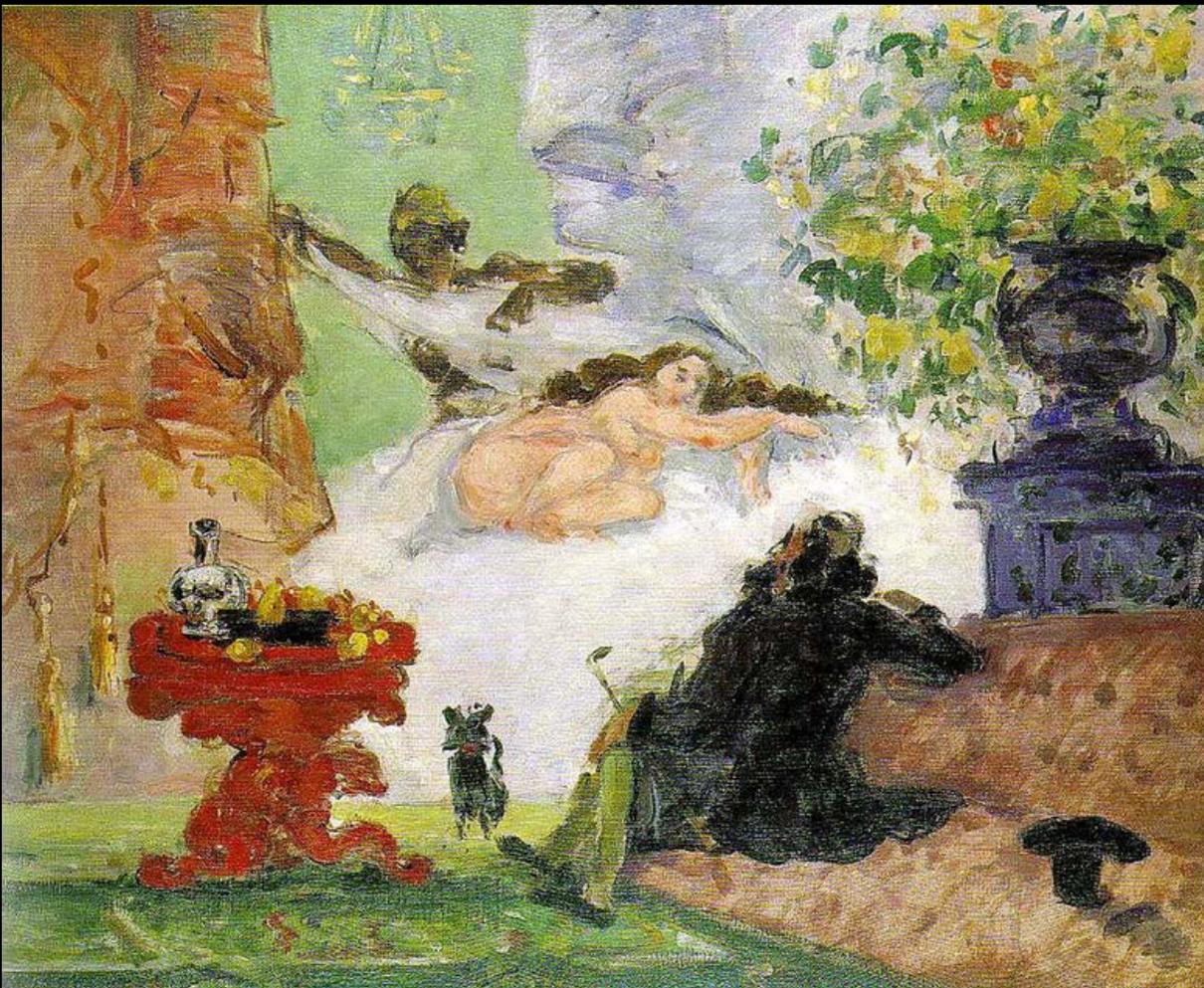
Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912



Edouard Manet, Olympia, 1863



Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912



Paul Cezanne, A Modern Olympia, 1873-1874



Marcel Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2, 1912



Eliot Elisofon, Marcel Duchamp Walking down Stairs mimicking Nude Descending a Staircase, 1952



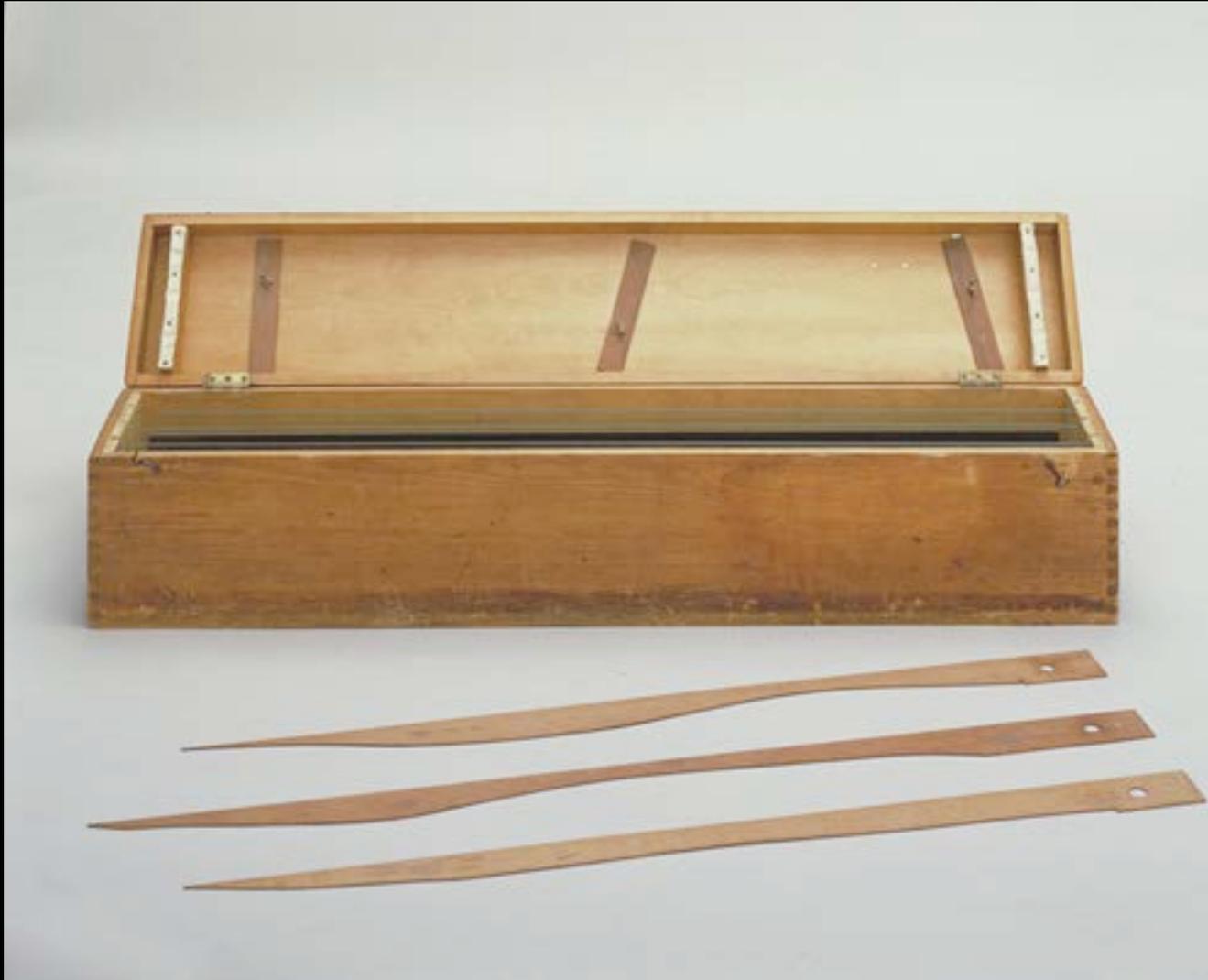
Gerhard Richter, Ema (Nude Descending a Staircase), 1992



## Readymade

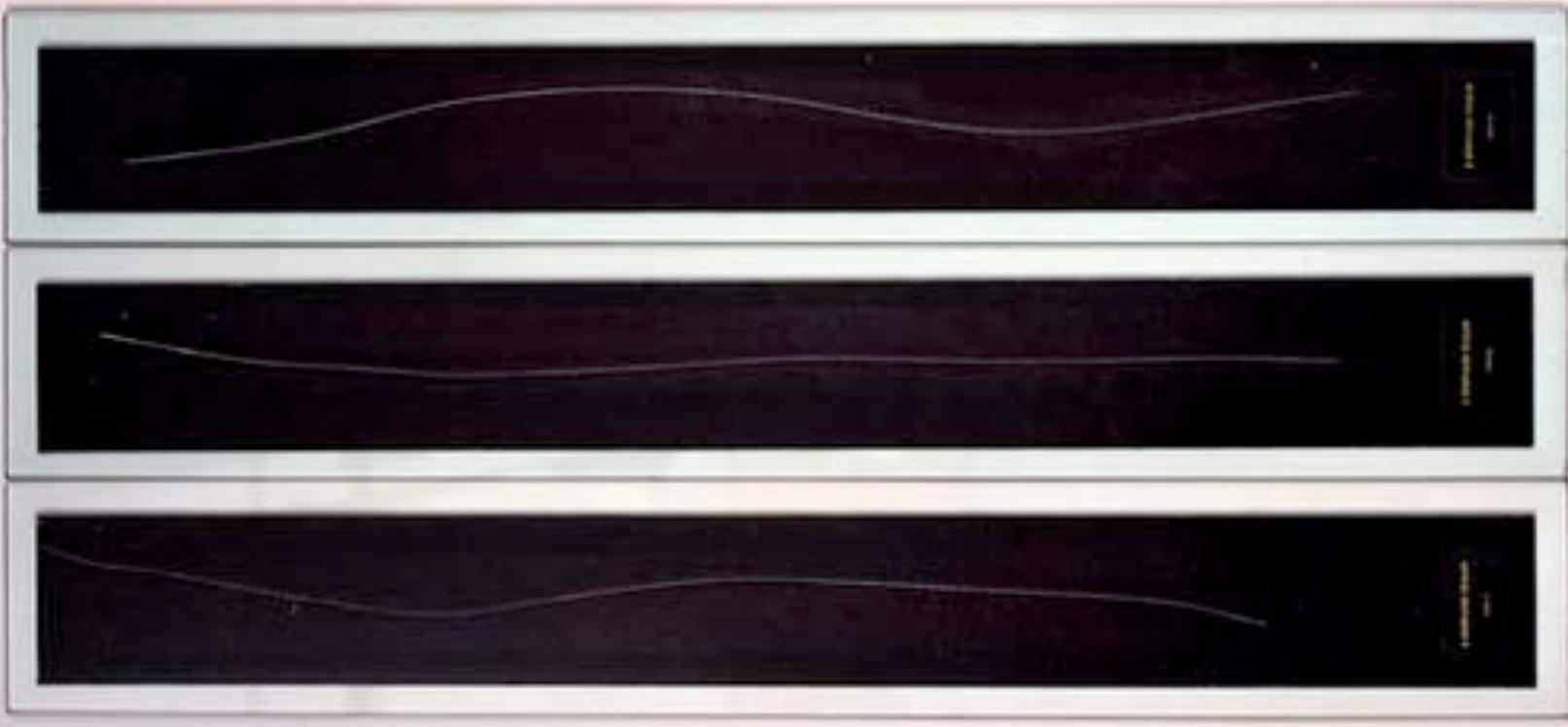
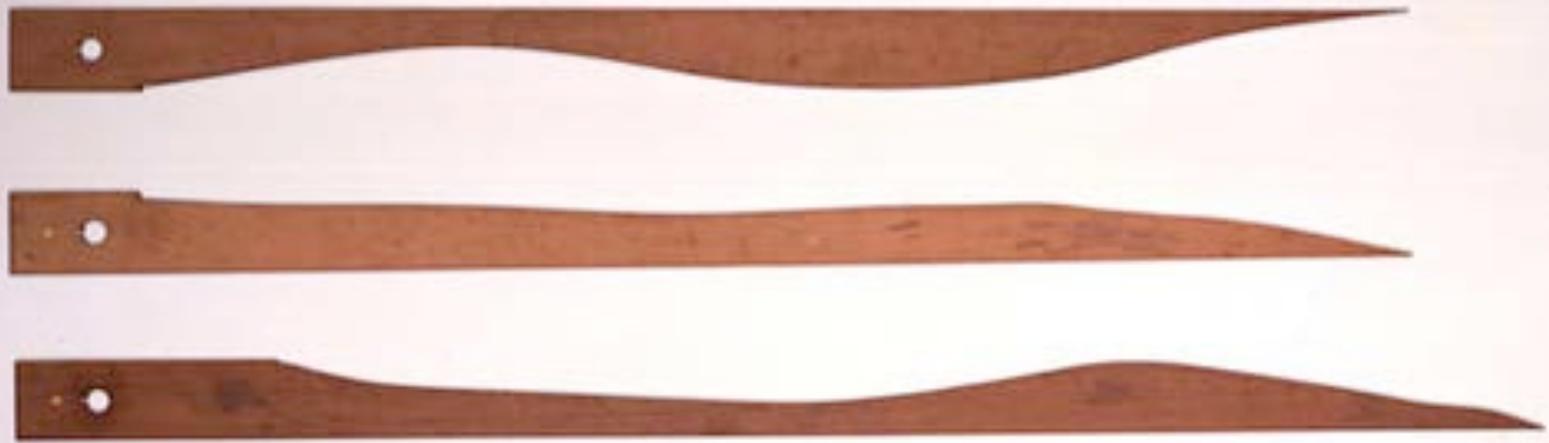
Duchamp wanted, he said, "to put art back in the service of the mind."

Duchamp, Bicycle Wheel, 1913



It is "a joke about the meter (3.2 ft)," Duchamp glibly noted about this piece, but his premise for it reads like a theorem: "If a straight horizontal thread one meter long falls from a height of one meter onto a horizontal plane twisting as *it pleases*[it] creates a new image of the unit of length."

Duchamp, Three Standard Stoppages, 1913-14





Readymade

How is Duchamp's  
readymade a  
constraint?

Duchamp, Fountain, 1917



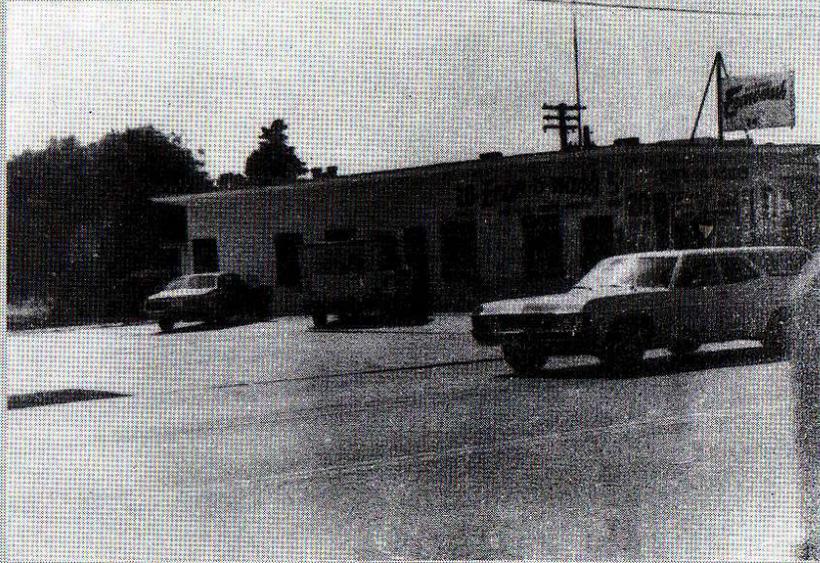
Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917



Bruce Nauman, Self Portrait as a Fountain, 1966-70



John Baldessari, The Back of All the Trucks While Driving from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, 1963



ECON - O - WASH  
14 TH AND HIGHLAND  
NATIONAL CITY CALIF.



LOOKING EAST ON 4TH AND C  
CHULA VISTA, CALIF.

QUALITY MATERIAL ---

CAREFUL INSPECTION --

GOOD WORKMANSHIP.

ALL COMBINED IN AN EFFORT TO  
GIVE YOU A PERFECT PAINTING.

John Baldessari, Quality  
Material, 1966-68

TERMS MOST USEFUL IN DESCRIBING CREATIVE WORKS OF ART:

GIVE VISION	ENJOY	DISCIPLINE
DIRECTION	CHARM	DELICATE
FLAVOR	INFLUENCE	COMMAND ATTENTION
A NEW SLANT	INTEREST	EXALT
FORCE	DELIGHT	DEVELOP
UNIQUENESS	AROUSE	SATISFY
PERMANENCE	COMMUNICATE	BEAUTIFY
INSPIRATION	CULTIVATE	IDENTIFY
A GLOW	NURTURE	INSPIRE
MOTIVATION	PLAN INTELLIGENTLY	ORIGINATE
ENCHANTMENT	DETACH	CREATE
BLEND	TRANSFER	ASSOCIATE
ENLIGHTEN	CHALLENGE	CHERISH
INVIGORATE	ELEVATE	ALTER
ENTHRALL	SATIATE	REVISE
TAKE SERIOUSLY	IMPROVE	CRITICIZE
PRECISE CARE	VALUE	IMPRESS
OUT OF THE ORDINARY	FLAGRANCE	IMPART

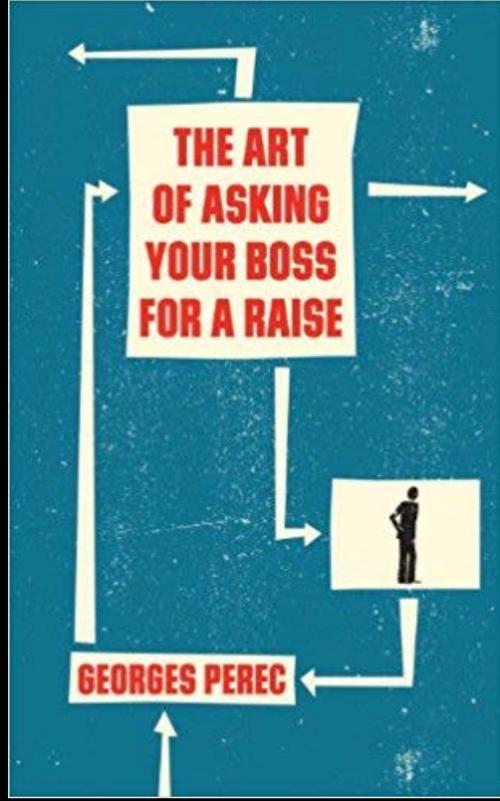
John Baldessari, Terms  
Most Useful in  
Describing Creative  
Works of Art, 1966-68

What role do algorithms play in Georges Perec's practice? ...In his unique take on writing machines?

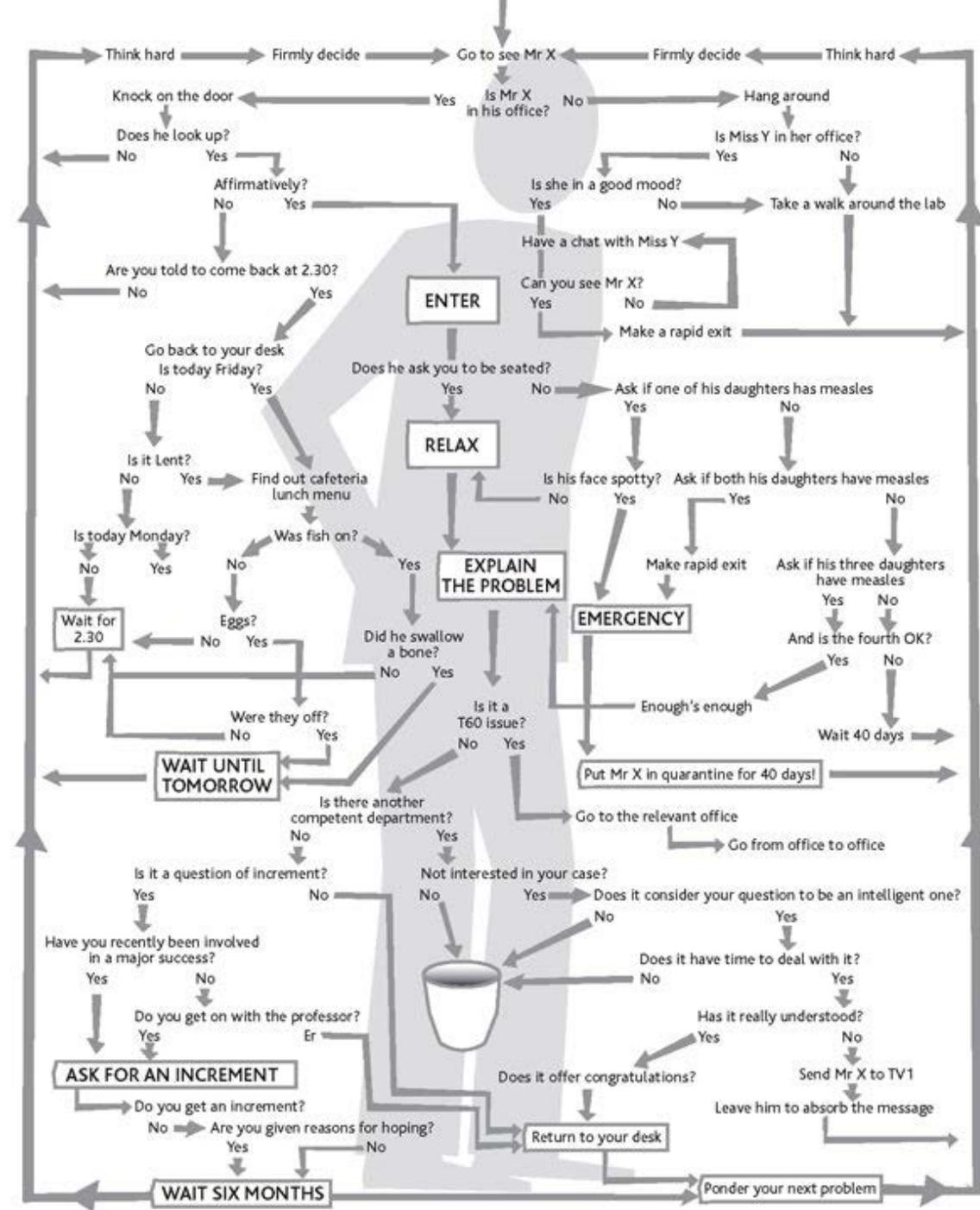
...Perec was approached by the Humanities Computing Center of the French National Research Council, which wanted a writer to experiment with an algorithm as a writing device – presumably as part of a broader program to bring computing and the arts into more fruitful cooperation. To judge by the tone of the letter he wrote about the project to his German translator Eugen Helmle, Perec seems to have learned from this commission what an algorithm and flowchart was [Bellos, 42]:

It consists of a certain number of propositions that can take either a yes or no for an answer, each answer having certain consequences. The concatenation of causes and effects and the choice of answers are represented by arrows that are the only syntactic connectors between the propositions. In brief it is a tree structure, a network, a labyrinth, and the “reader” chooses one route among all the possible routes, the totality of possible routes being presented SIMULTANEOUSLY on the flow-chart. [Perec, 43]

What then became of Percec's algorithm?

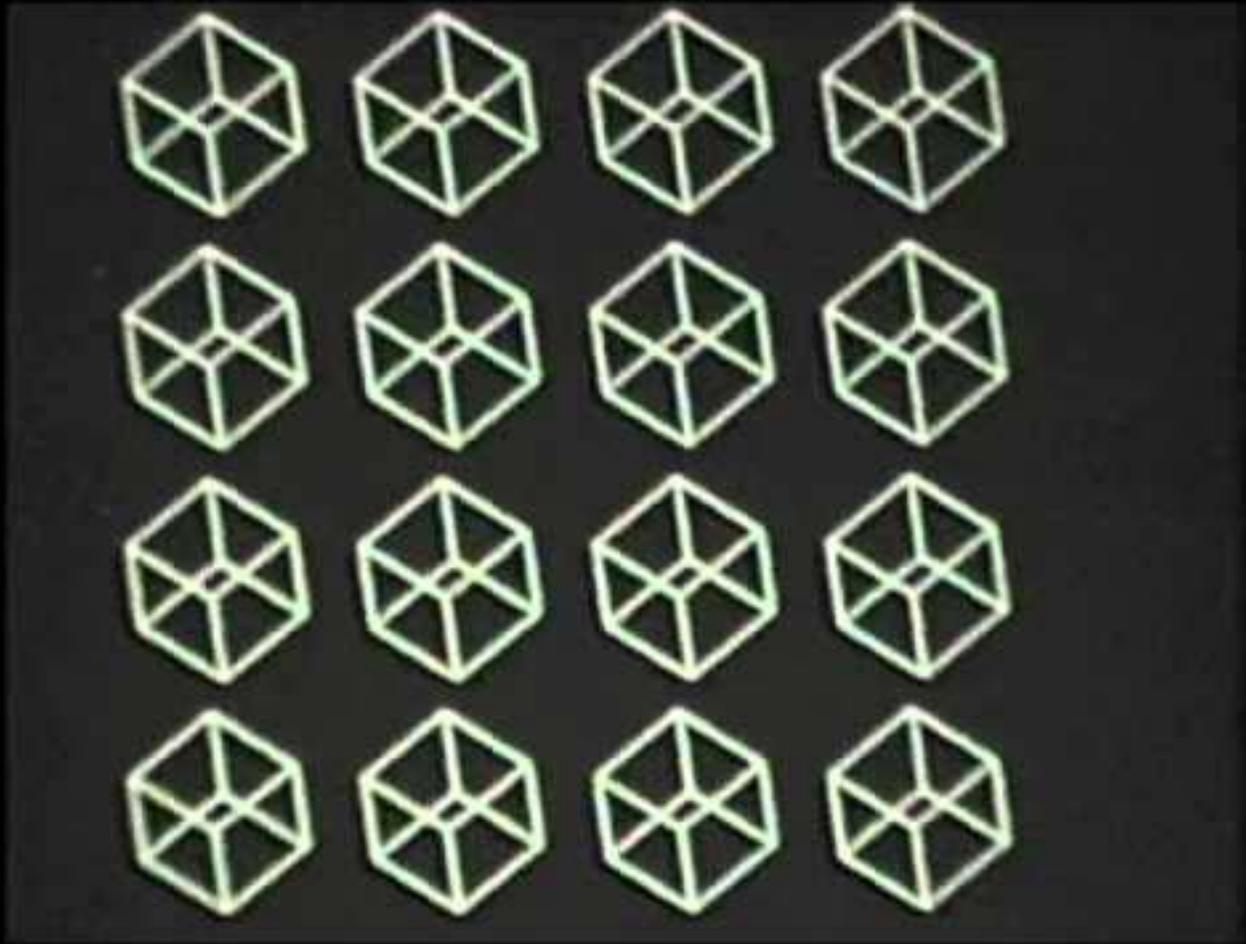


having carefully weighed the pros and cons you gird up your loins and make up your mind to go and see your head of department to ask for a raise so you go to see your head of department let us assume to keep things simple—for we must do our best to keep things simple—that his name is mr xavier that's to say mister or rather mr x so you go to see mr x it's one or t'other either mr x is at his desk or mr x is not at his desk so all you can do is stand in the corridor waiting for him to come back or come in but let us suppose not that he never comes in that case there would be but one solution to go back to your own desk and wait for the afternoon or the morrow to launch your campaign afresh but as is often the case that he takes his time in which case all you can really do instead of walking up and down in the corridor is to go and see your colleague ms y whom we shall henceforth call ms wye to give a touch of human warmth to our schematic demonstration<sup>10</sup>



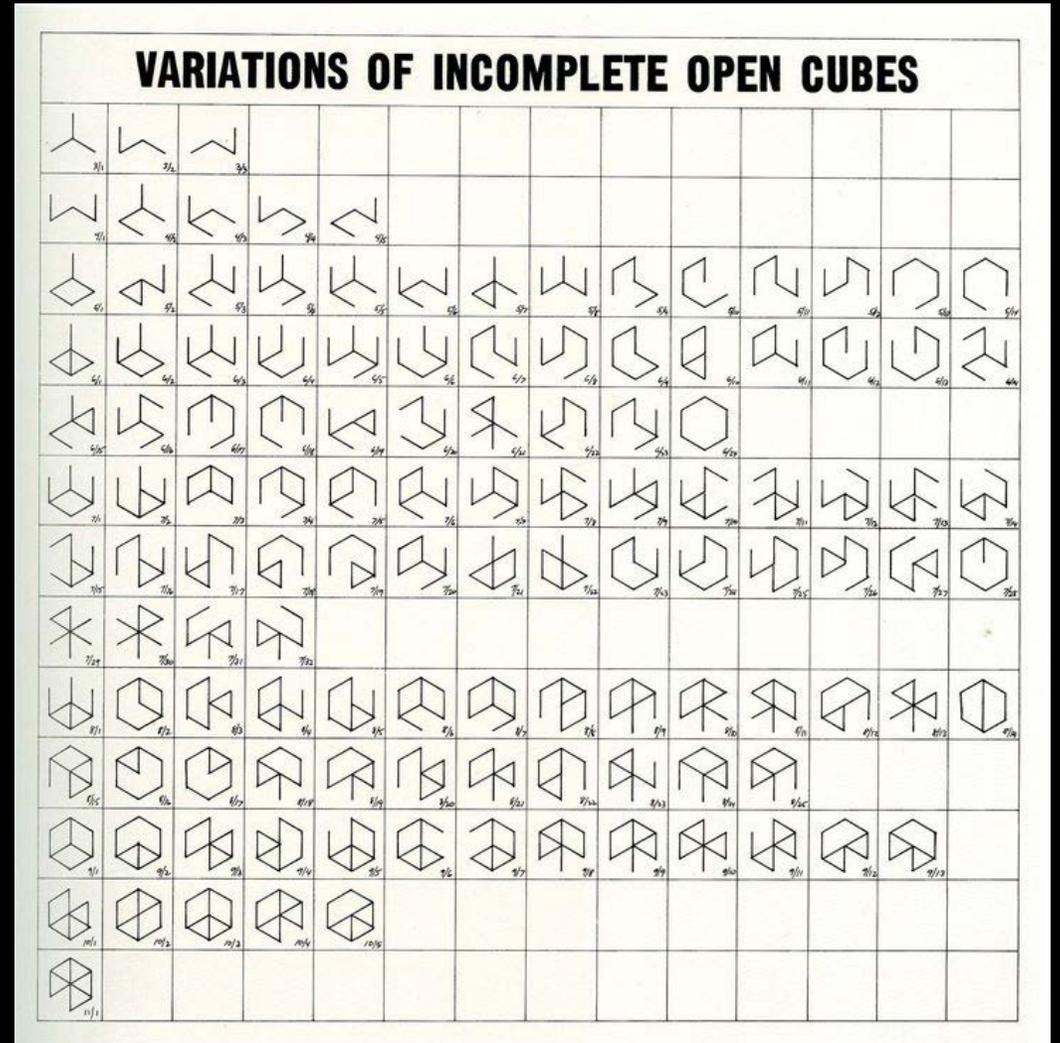
What aesthetic does the algorithm yield in Perec's work?

Could we envision an algorithmic aesthetics?



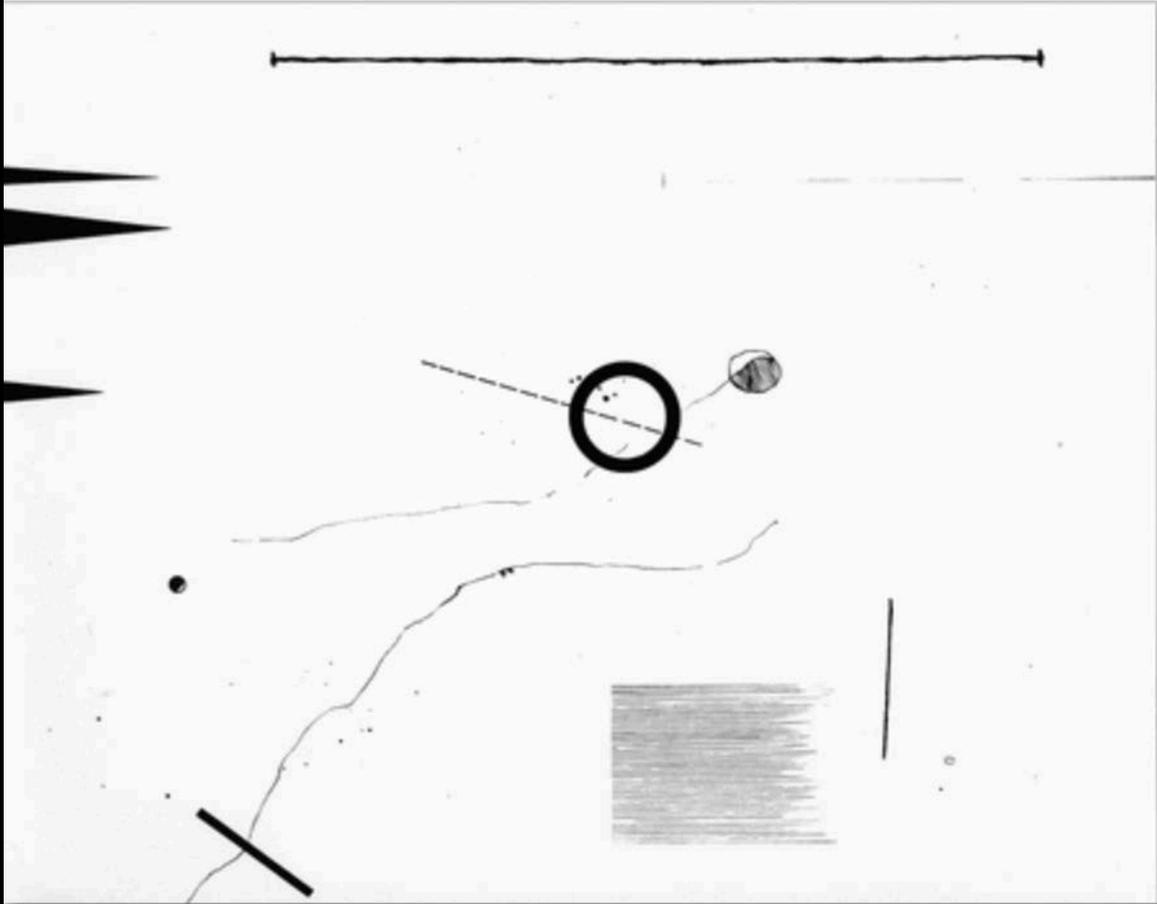
Manfred Mohr, Cubic Limit, film, 1974  
[https://www.emohr.com/two\\_1972.html](https://www.emohr.com/two_1972.html)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4M28FEJFF8>

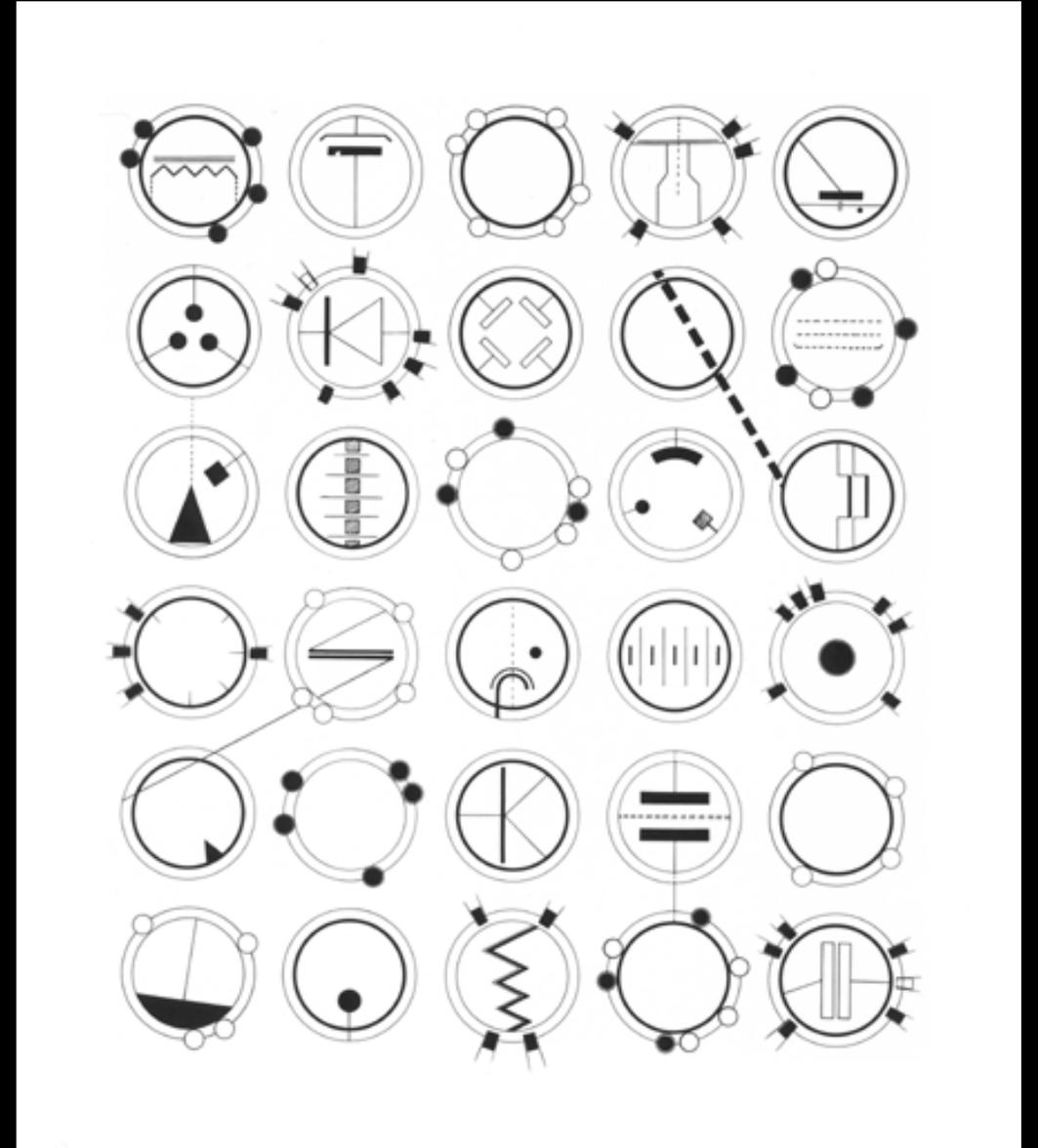


Sol LeWitt, Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes, 1974

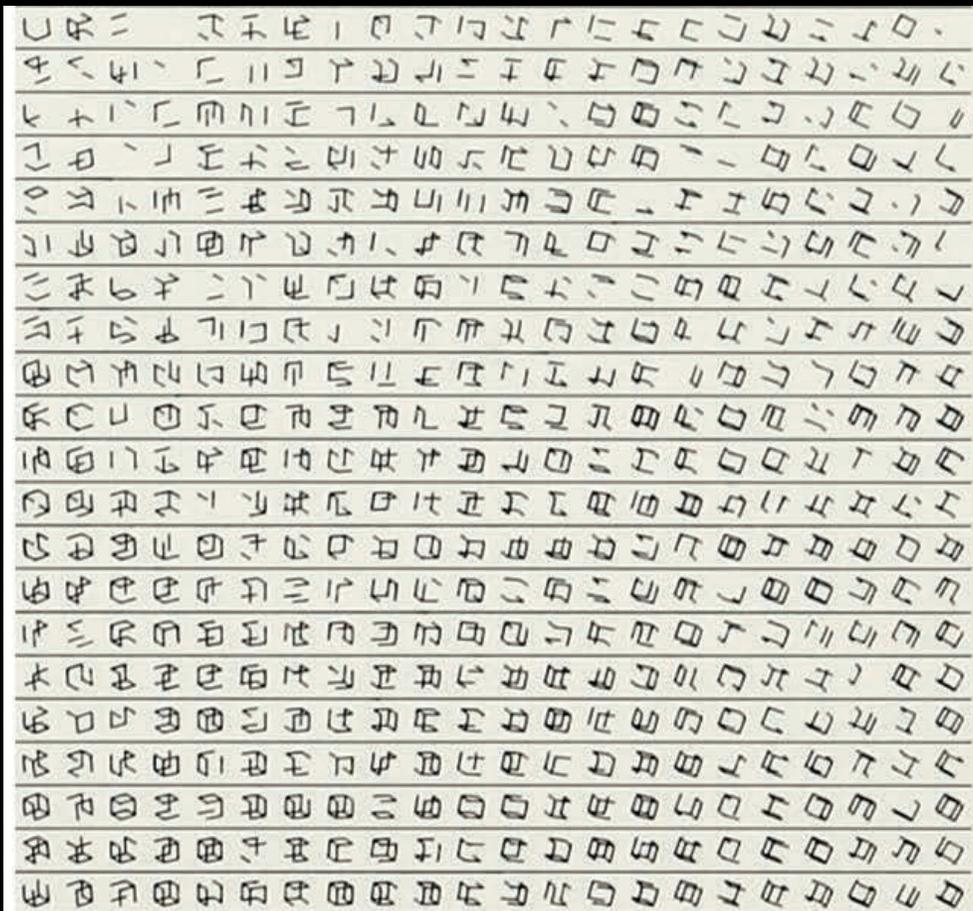
Born in Germany in 1938, NY-based artist Manfred Mohr began his career as an action painter influenced by jazz and Abstract Expressionism.



Manfred Mohr, Bild 12/366, Tempera/Leinwand, 1966

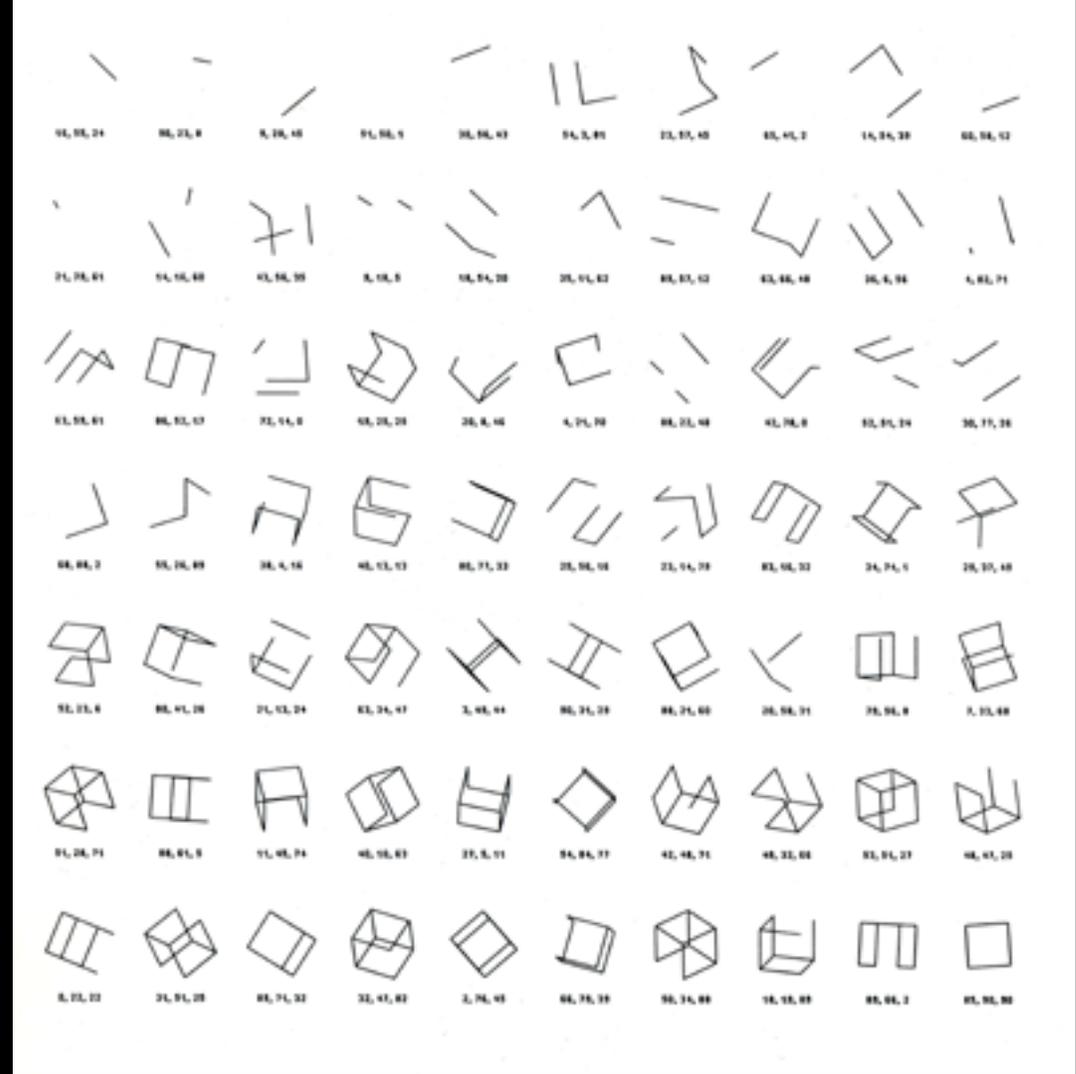


Manfred Mohr, Zeichnung A, Ink and paper, 1967

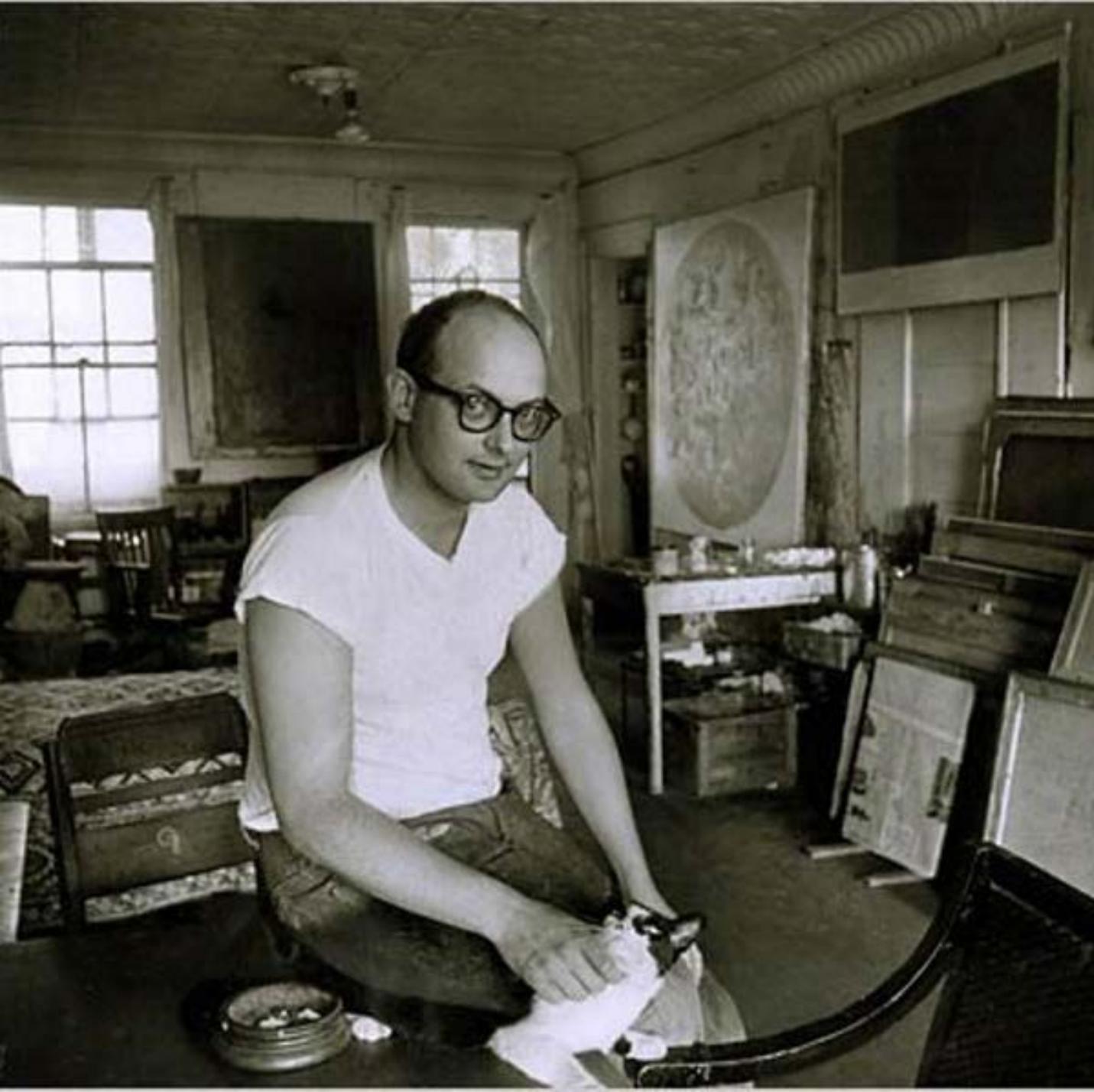


Manfred Mohr, *P-155-bb*, 1974

Using the combinatorics of the elements of a cube which have been broken down into minute particles of lines, Mohr accomplishes a type of storyboard for an abstract animation. As a two-dimensional surface, however, it plots a gradual intensification of the lines in the center. The reduction of the title to character combinations reflects Mohr's interest in aesthetic and semiotic questions and results, as opposed to the production of art-works in the traditional sense. What counts for Mohr is not the single graph, or line, but the complete ensemble of statistical relationships that manifest themselves in a series of aesthetic constructions and structures. (Media Art Net)



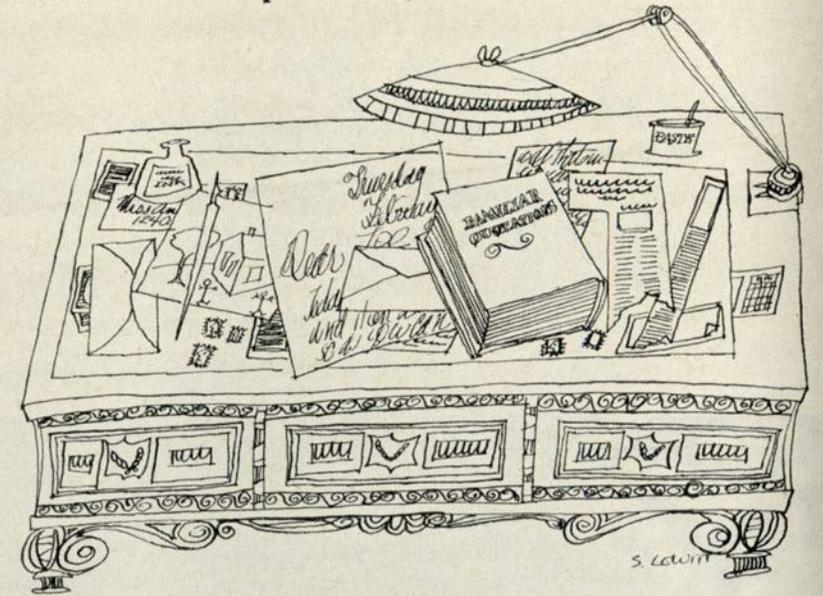
In *Cubic Limit*, Manfred Mohr introduced the cube into his work as a "fixed system with which signs are generated. In the first part of this work phase (1972-76), an alphabet of signs is created from the twelve lines of a cube. In some works, statistics and rotation are used in the algorithm to generate signs. In others, combinatorial, logical and additive operators generate the global and local structures of the images." (Ed Shanken)



In 1953, Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) moved to New York City, where he studied at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School (now SVA/School of Visual Arts) and worked for Seventeen Magazine, making paste-ups, mechanicals and Photostats. He was then hired as a graphic designer in IM Pei's architecture firm.

## Letter to a Boy

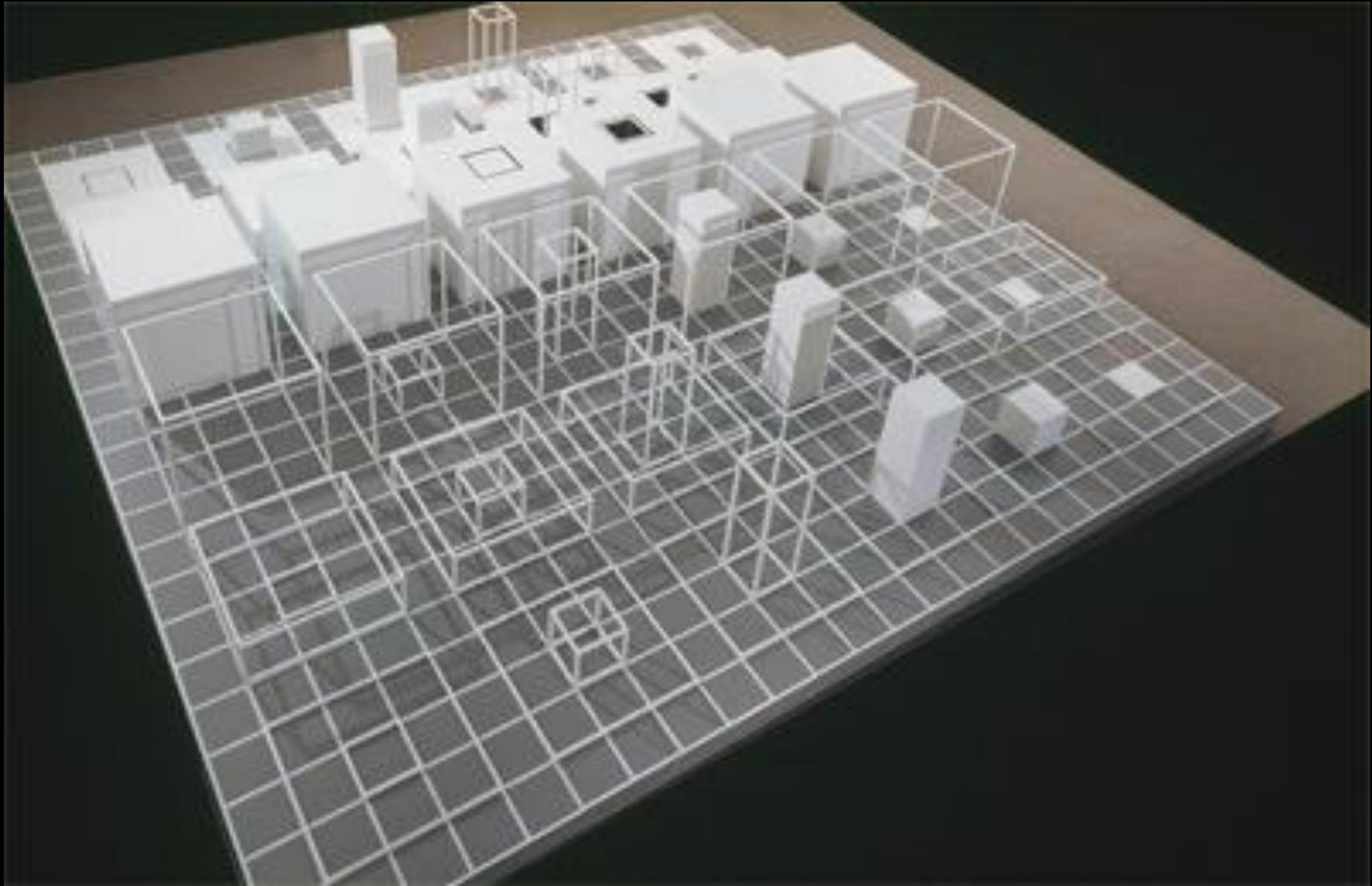
*If you find it difficult to write letters  
that will keep the boys writing read on*



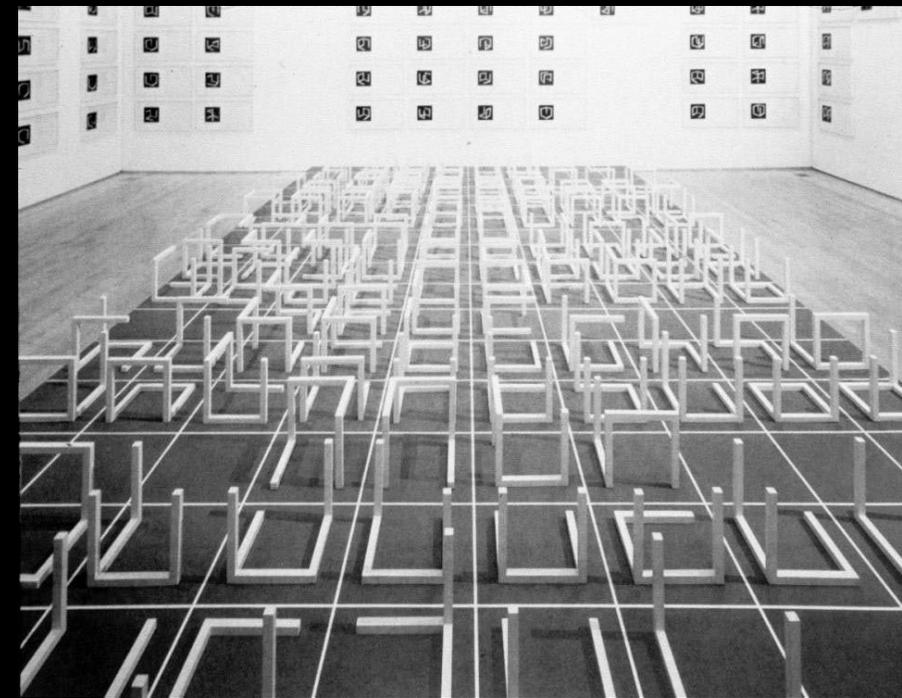
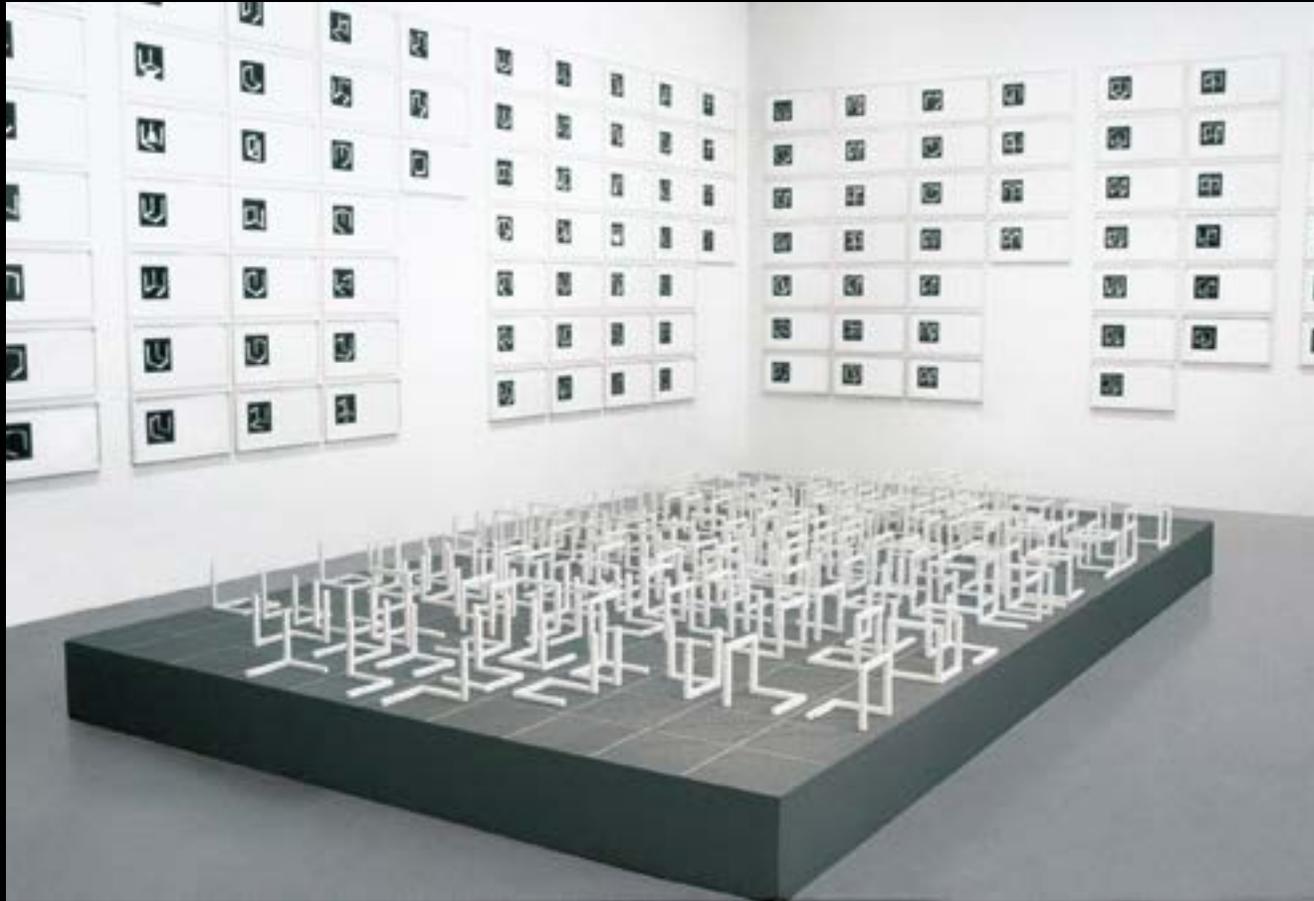
Sol LeWitt, Seventeen magazine illustration,  
February 1955



Sol LeWitt, Untitled, 1966



Sol LeWitt, Serial Project No. 1 ABCD, 1966



Sol Lewitt, Variations of Incomplete Open  
Cubes , 1974

Wood sculptures with white paint (122 pieces)  
Each piece: 20.3 cm square 8" square  
Framed photographs and drawings (131 pieces),  
Each piece: 66 x 35.6 cm 26 x 14" Base: 30.5 x  
304.8 x 548.6 cm 12 x 120 x 216"

Each of the 122 sculptural forms is derived by subtracting one or more of the lines or edges from the cube's basic unitary form. An idea is systematically translated and deployed into a variety of media and scales to become, in LeWitt's words, "a machine that makes the art."  
(Ed Shanken)

# Aesthetics of Algorithms and Aesthetics of Tedium

How do ideas of tedium, technocracy, and bureaucracy relate back to Georges Perec's work as a writer?



Jonathan Schipper, *The Slow Inevitable Death of Muscle*, 2009



Jonathan Schipper

# Cubicle

6 October - 4 December 2016

Rice Gallery

