

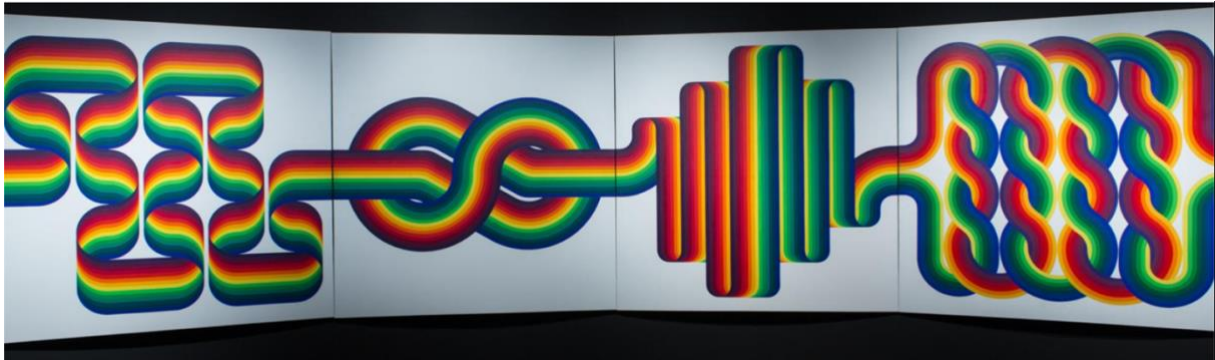


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Julio Le Parc

Instituto Tomie Ohtake and Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo

BY TOBI MAIER IN REVIEWS | 19 JAN 18



Paris-based, Argentinean artist Julio Le Parc is a familiar name in Brazil, where he participated in the fourth and ninth editions of the São Paulo Biennial, in 1957 and 1967, and boycotted the 1969 edition over intensifying political repression. Still, a large-scale Brazilian retrospective did not come until 2013, at the now-defunct Casa Daros in Rio de Janeiro. It has now been followed by 'Form into Action' at Instituto Tomie Ohtake, which presents works Le Parc produced between 1958 and 2013, ranging from his early geometric studies to light-infused labyrinthine installations.

The exhibition opens with ink and gouache paintings on cardboard: experiments with circles and squares, which create the illusion of a three-dimensional rhythmic movement across a flat surface. The shapes in *No.9, Development of Circles and Squares* (1959), for example, toy with states of perceptual transition and confers on the viewer a kind of hallucinatory semi-authorship by appearing to shift in ways that vary from eye to eye.



Exhibition view, Julio Le Parc, 2017, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo.
Courtesy: Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo; photograph: Ricardo Miyada

In a dark, chapel-like gallery, Le Parc's 1974 magnum opus, *Long March*, comprises 10 canvases painted with 14 colours in meandering stripes that allow for the widest possible chromatic variation. The stripes seem to float on their supports, hung in an illuminated curve, to transcendental effect. The following galleries affirm Le Parc's status as a pioneer of kinetic art, with works such as *Projected Circle* (1968) and *Continuous Light on Ceiling* (1963): a constellation of mirror fragments suspended from the ceiling, reflecting light in endlessly shifting patterns.

In the exhibition's final gallery – a so-called 'game room' – visitors are invited to engage with three interactive sculptures, and create a distorted self-portrait by activating a vibrating mirror (*Mirror in Vibration*, 1965), press buttons to flip ping pong balls in horizontal and wall-mounted cases ('Set of Games with Ping Pong Balls', 1965–2016), or switch on a fan with white ribbons flying in its breeze (*Ribbons in the Wind*, 1988). These works are paired with *Investigation Game: Twelve Glasses for Another Vision* (1966): coloured plastic eyewear with mounted mirrors that entrance their wearer with abstract, geometrical projections, recalling

Lygia Clark's later *Diálogo: Óculos* (Dialogue: Goggles, 1968). While Clark's work was meant to be experienced in pairs, Le Parc's spectacles are a solitary pleasure. This distinction hints at a curatorial impasse. The exhibition's curator, Estrellita B. Brodsky, has framed Le Parc's legacy as the forerunner of relational aesthetics; but, while the artist's sculptures rightfully dismantle the static, autonomous status of the art object by requiring audience interaction, that interaction is prescribed by the simple interface of a push-button. The political, collectivist implications of Le Parc's work remain veiled here, given the absence of his important writing on the realities of artistic practice and political upheaval in Latin America between 1960 and 1980 – though several texts have been reproduced in an accompanying catalogue.



Exhibition view, Julio Le Parc, 2017, Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil. Courtesy: Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo; photograph; Everton Ballardin

In parallel to 'Form into Action', Galeria Nara Roesler has mounted '9+3+RV', an exhibition of nine recent paintings, three sculptures and a virtual-reality environment produced by the artist in collaboration with his son, Juan Le Parc. The paintings recall the preparatory drawings for Le Parc's 'Alchemy' series (begun in 1988), some of which appear at Instituto

Tomie Ohtake. In these later paintings, completed between 2016 and 2017, the colourful magazines of a paint gun – released in spirals, circles and triangles on canvases primed with black – create pointillist Platonic shapes that appear to float in outer space. The juxtaposition of bright hues with a dark background creates a sense of dissolution that climaxes in the VR animation, *Virtual Alchemy* (2016). Geometric forms – cubes, disks and columns – composed of differently sized ‘tropical snowballs’ in the artist’s hallmark 14 colours, fly towards your immersed eyeballs, inducing vertigo. With his VR work, *Le Parc* – an instigator of the light and kinetic experiments of the 1960s – succeeds at transmitting his paintings into simulated space.

*Julio Park, ‘Form in Action’ runs at the **Instituto Tomie Ohtake** until 25 February and ‘9+3+RV’ runs at **Galeria Nara Roesler** until 3 February.*

Main image: Installation view, Julio Le Parc, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil. Courtesy: Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo



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