

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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JULIO LE PARC

1958 ↻ 2023

23/09/2023 - 14/01/2023

Opening on Saturday 23 September 2023, via del Castello 11, 4-9pm. The gallery is open from Monday to Sunday 10am - 1pm / 2pm - 7pm.

Galleria Continua is pleased to present, for the first time in its exhibition spaces in San Gimignano, a leading figure on the international art scene, Julio Le Parc.

Painter, sculptor and plastic artist, Julio Le Parc was born in Mendoza in Argentina on 23rd September 1928 and settled definitively in France in 1958. Forerunner of kinetic art and Op Art and strongly committed to the defense of human rights, he has been awarded many prizes, among which in 1966 he was awarded the Grand International Painting Prize at the 33rd Venice Biennale. Initially influenced by the Concrete Art and Constructivism movements, from 1959 onwards Le Parc developed an independent approach by applying rigorous organisational principles to

his paintings: the artist eliminated all traces of manual execution and subjective composition, creating his own range of 14 colours, that he considers essential, and forcing himself to exclusively use them, pure and unshaded, in combination with each other to represent all possible chromatic variations. His studies and research on the visual spectrum, movement, light, and on the movement of the spectator and their physical involvement, remain of great relevance for many artists who still base their work on his research.

The exhibition "1958 ↻ 2023" brings together for the first time an important group of drawings made between 1990 and 2023, gouache and preparatory drawings made between 1958 and

1959 and a large body of works from the *Alchimie* series made between 2018 and 2023.

Julio Le Parc starts to develop the *Alchimie* series at the beginning of 1988, starting from small sketches inspired by fortuitous and casual observations which, little by little, materialise. He thus began the process of repetition and comparison that led to the creation of a multitude of drawings, some of which, once perfected, became small paintings. These in turn were the starting point for other ideas and larger works.

The artist highlights the slow gestation process of his works, recognising that some of his works created between 1957 and 1958 in Buenos Aires already contained the beginning of the idea for the *Alchimie* series. These intuitions then matured over the course of almost twenty years before becoming real paintings.

Alchemy is synonymous with transformation, playful experimentation and optical illusion. In this series, the lines undergo a metamorphosis, transforming into coloured dots that chase each other frantically in space. In an act of creative defiance, these particles of colour boldly go beyond the boundaries of the painting, invading the observer's perceptive dimension. It is an extraordinary experience in which colour and form merge in a visual dance capable of challenging any artistic

convention.

The *Alchimie* series constitutes an integral part of Julio Le Parc's personal adventure; it embraces all his work as an experimental artist who has always resisted external pressures, even at the risk of questioning himself and his work.

With *Continuel mobile losange blanc translucide*, the exhibition is enriched with one of the most famous series of Julio Le Parc's oeuvre, *Continuels mobiles*. Made up of hundreds of white translucent plexiglass plates, the work, suspended from the ceiling, creates a play of transparencies, movement and light. The irregularity of the shapes means that each light point gives the sensation of having a life of its own, emanating an extraordinary power.

The first experiments with mobile elements, however, date back to the early 1960s, when the artist managed to bring together, in a single experience, multiple situations linked to the external contingencies of the work and the desire to disavow the latter as a stable and definitive object.

Continuel lumière boîte n°3 was created precisely in that period, when Le Parc had recently moved to Paris and created diaphragms capable of transforming geometric shapes through the modulation of light through changes in the light.

This exhibition reveals an essential constant in Le Parc's practice, namely the desire that the viewer can experience their involvement in perceiving the work of art in a completely new way, thus altering the conception of the role of the artist, of the exhibition space and of the observer himself. Through his practice, Le Parc creates a situation of uncertainty and visual instability, making the viewer and their experience an integral part of the work.

Julio Le Parc was born in 1928 in Mendoza (Argentina). He has lived and worked in Cachan (France) since 1958. A leading figure in kinetic and contemporary art, he was one of the co-founders of the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV) in Paris in 1960, alongside Horacio Garcia Rossi, Francisco Sobrino, Francois Morellet, Joel Stein and Jean-Pierre Vasarely (Yvaral). He has participated in numerous personal exhibitions in important museums and institutions such as the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Perez Art Museum (Miami) and the Serpentine Gallery (London), to name a few. A socially committed artist, Le Parc was expelled from France in May 1968, after having participated in the Atelier Populaire and its demonstrations against large

institutions. An intransigent personality and staunch defender of human rights, he fought against the dictatorship in Latin America. In 1972 he refused a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art of the city of Paris, playing heads or tails.

His works are part of the most important international public collections, including: MET in New York, MOMA in New York, Tate in London, the MNAM and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, LACMA in Los Angeles, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art Humlebaek, Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal, MNBA in Buenos Aires, Walker Art Center Minneapolis, Museum of Fine Arts of Houston, Musée d'art Moderne de la ville de Paris, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia of Madrid, Guggenheim of Abu Dhabi, Museo Boijmans Van Beuningen of Rotterdam, Albright-Knox Art Gallery of Buffalo, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation of Miami, New Orleans Museum of Art, Delgado Museum of New Orleans.

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