

CRUZ-DIEZ

RGB - THE COLORS OF THE CENTURY

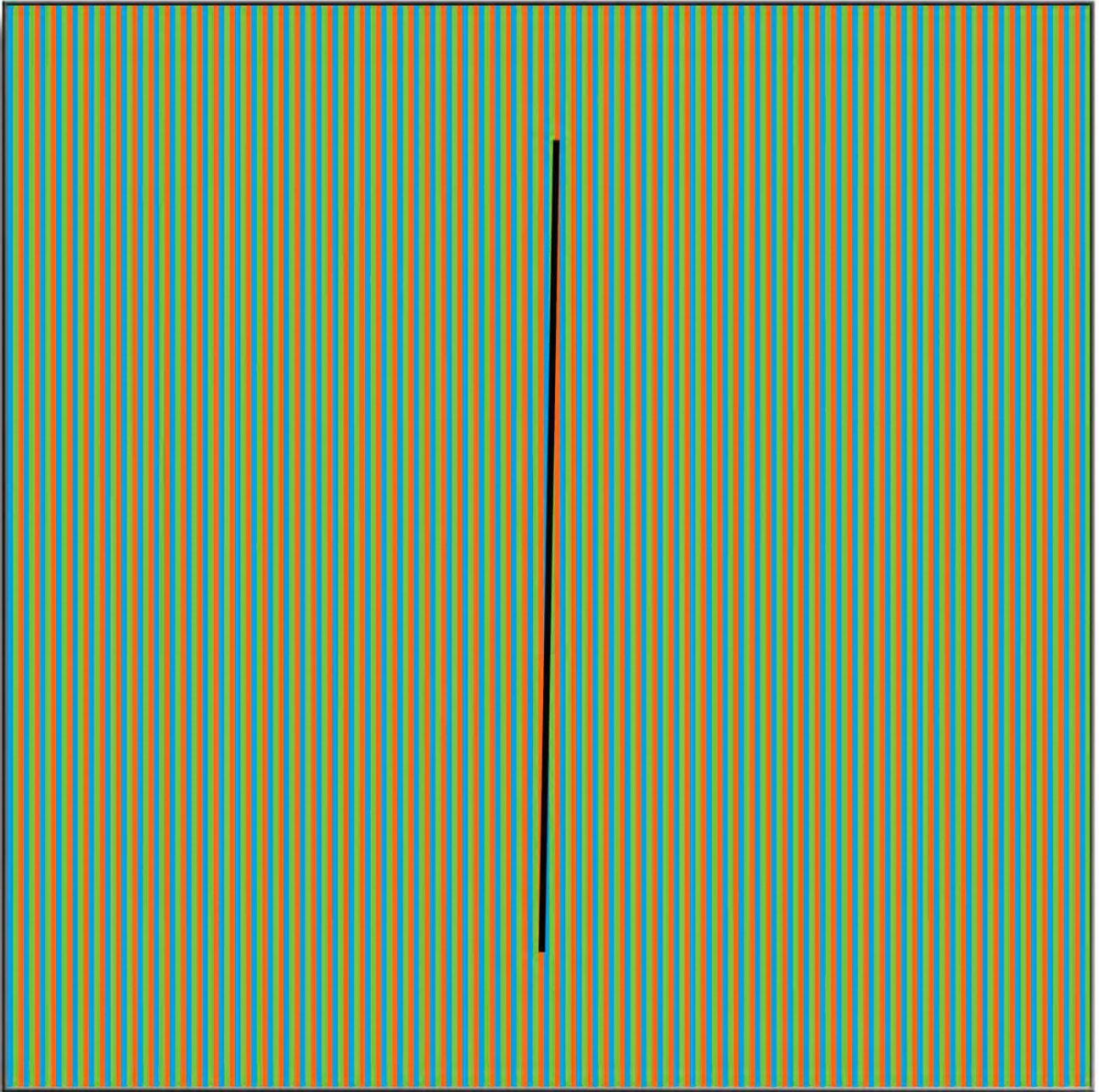
EXHIBITION CONCEPT

CRUZ-DIEZ

Centre
Pompidou

In collaboration with





Couleur à l'espace RVB 1, Paris, 2014
120 x 120 cm

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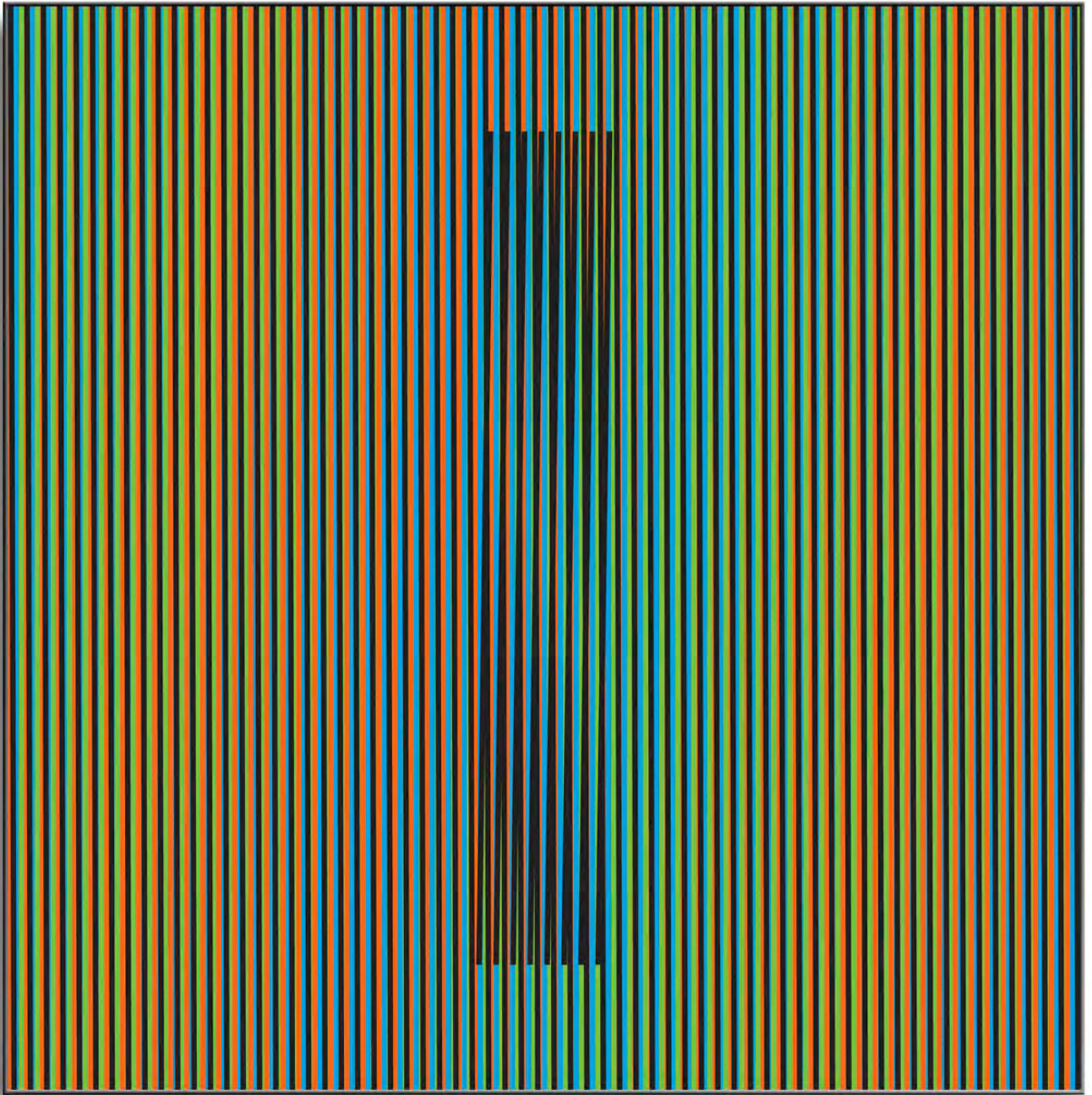
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Induction Chromatique à double fréquence RVB 5, Paris, 2014
100 x 100 cm

PREFACE

Laurent LE BON, President of Centre Pompidou
Xavier REY, Director of Musée national d'art moderne

Paris, 2022

For several reasons, the Centre Pompidou and the Musée national d'art moderne have a special relationship with Carlos Cruz-Diez and his work. First, the artist chose to leave his native Caracas in 1960 to settle permanently in France, believing that Paris was the place where his work would find the best conditions for its development. He will soon become a major figure in the art scene. The second reason lies in the essential role played by Carlos Cruz-Diez in one of the most important artistic adventures of the second half of the twentieth century: the broad international optico-kinetic movement that, thanks to him and a few others, made Paris its most active center. The third reason is the significant number of works in the Centre Pompidou's collection today: fifty-eight, ranging from 1954 to 2016 and covering the entirety of the artist's production and aesthetic stature. This is the largest collection of the artist's work ever assembled by a museum.

A fourth reason, perhaps even more fundamental, links the Centre Pompidou and Carlos Cruz-Diez: as his interactive devices, his urban interventions and his constant concern for education have shown that he nurtures a social vision of art and its necessary democratization, which is also at the heart of the Centre Pompidou's core ambition and activities.

This political dimension, in the noblest sense of the word, inhabits the project « RGB: the colors of the century », an exhibition without physical transport of works, the data allowing the realization of these works by electronic transmission, an exhibition with an interactive dimension, allowing the public to experiment the chromatic phenomena to which Carlos Cruz-Diez has devoted a life of research. In the year 2023, and to celebrate the centenary of the artist's birth, the Centre Pompidou and the Musée national d'art moderne are pleased and proud to bring their full patronage to this exhibition project in the colors of the present.



RGB, THE COLORS OF THE CENTURY

Carlos CRUZ-DIEZ

Paris, 2014

Before the appearance of color television, printed images we perceived were obtained thanks to yellow, blue, red and black. These chemical colours were designed for an opaque medium, like paper. Television and all digital media produce luminous images and, as a result, they make visible physical colours, the colours of a prism: red, green, blue, light and its absence.

In these systematically programmed works, I have used only red, green, blue and black, plus the white that is contribute by the opaque medium. The effect appears contradictory because I obtain, with a non-luminous medium, the colours of a prism, the colours of light.

The unexpected results of this research, which I have been pursuing since 1959, continue to surprise me. I try to convey to the viewer, in each work, joy in the astonishment of discovery.

RGB OR THE POLITICS OF COLOR

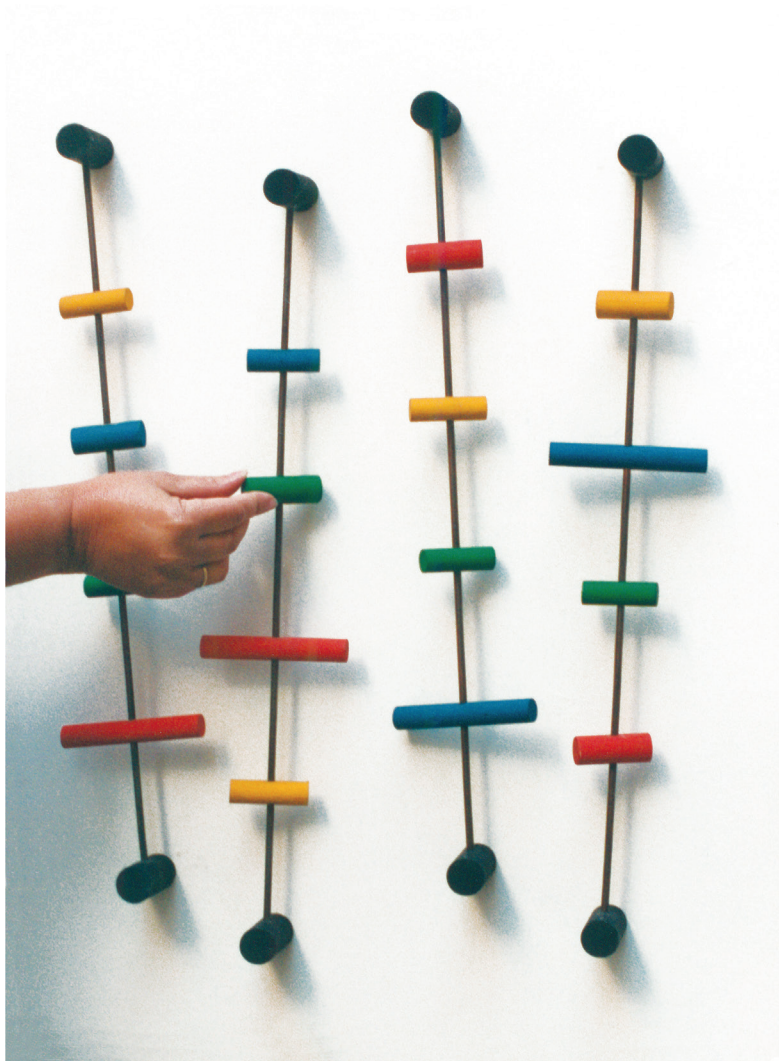
Michel GAUTHIER, Curator at the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou

Paris, 2022

In 2014 Carlos Cruz-Diez conceives the project **RGB: the colors of the century**. «RGB», from the name of the international color coding system developed in 1931, the year in which Auguste Herbin, Georges Vantongerloo and Jean Hélion founded the Abstraction-Creation group. This colorimetric model based on the additive principle of the three primary colors, red, green and blue, is the system used by cathode ray tube or liquid crystal displays, digital cameras and scanners. **RGB: the colors of the century** consists of sixteen prints pasted on a wall and a computer program to be implemented on tactile media made available to the public. No transport of works, by truck, plane, or boat, but a transfer of digital data. A printer, paper, and some screens and keyboards. This project crowns the close relationship between the artist and the digital medium since the first half of the 1990s, which gave rise, in 1995, to the edition of *Expérience chromatique aléatoire interactive* (first on a 3.5" floppy disk and then, in 2001, in the second edition, on compact disc) and, the same year, by the artist's choice to move to computer-assisted design. However, **RGB: the colors of the century** is part of a reflection conducted since the 1950s on the status of art. In 1954, in Caracas, Cruz-Diez designed the *Proyecto para un muro exterior manipulable* [Project for a Manipulable Exterior Wall]. These are works in which, on the one hand,

the colored modules project colored shadows on a wall where they are fixed and which, on the other hand, can be diversely oriented according to the manipulations of the public. It is with this spirit of two-fold remittance of the autonomy of the pictorial object (projection of color in the ambient space and manipulability) that Cruz-Diez goes to Paris in 1955. He saw the exhibition "Le Mouvement" at the Denise René gallery and read the *Yellow Manifesto*, written for the occasion by Victor Vasarely, Pontus Hulten and Roger Bordier. Certain words of Vasarely do not fail to hold his attention: "The slide will be to painting what the record is to music... The era of plastic projections on flat and deep screens, in daylight or in the dark, is beginning... If the idea of the plastic work resided until now in an artisanal approach and in the myth of the «unique piece», it is found today in the conception of a possibility of recreation, multiplication and of expansion."

Another by Bordier seems to apply to the dreams which are those of the young visual artist, in search of "this new art, which is spectacle... playing sometimes with optical processes, sometimes with animation, even also with us". "Le Mouvement" and the *Yellow Manifesto* convinced Cruz-Diez that it was in Paris that his work would find the conditions for its development. He settled there permanently in 1960.



Proyecto para un mural manipulable, 1954
Casein and acrylic on wood, metal
71 x 55 cm



Cromoprisma espacial, Caracas, 1975
Light projections with color filters on antiaircraft defense searchlights
Variable dimensions



Color Aditivo, Caracas, 1975
Ephemeral intervention on 4 crosswalks for the event "El artista y la ciudad"



Chromosaturation, Paris, 1965/2013
France Pavilion, Expo 2020 Dubai

The year 1975 saw Cruz-Diez create two works in Caracas that, twenty years after the *Proyectos murales*, seem to illustrate the two cardinal components of his aesthetics: color frees itself from its traditional support. *Cromoprisma Espacial* consists of projections of colored lights in the sky and on the clouds; the art object becomes participatory. *Color Aditivo* takes the form of crosswalks on several major avenues of the city, whose passers-by, by using, experience its chromatic virtuality. It must be understood that these two components, chromatic and participatory, are intimately linked in the aesthetics of Cruz-Diez. His research on color, strictly scientific, logically led him to value purely luminous effects and, thereby, initiate a way of dematerializing his art. Also the work of art tends to be less a physical object delivered to contemplate than a device to generate a situation that the public experiences. In this sense, the art of Cruz-Diez offers less things than events. Moreover, it is the ambition, strictly political, to make art participatory that led the artist to think of the plastic work in the terms that usually apply to the performance arts (theater, dance or music) and, consequently, to think of his works as scores to be interpreted. In other words, the passion for color and the social preoccupation have weighed together in favor of an artistic production occupying an original position, on the border between autographic and allographic arts.

G rard Genette, in his book *The Work of Art. Immanence and Transcendence*, based on the work of Nelson Goodman, proposes to distinguish two main modes of existence of the work of art. On the one hand, works whose "object of immanence" is physical; this is

particularly the case with painting - the work is the painted canvas or panel. On the other hand, works with an "ideal" object of immanence; this is the case, for example, of written music - the work is not equivalent to such and such of its specific manifestations (its performance by a person differs from that due to another), the work is the score. The productions of the first type, with an object of physical immanence, are designated as autographic and those of the second type, with an object of ideal immanence, as allographic. Most of Cruz-Diez's works are undoubtedly autographic works in the sense that, especially for the public or private collections that preserve them, they consist of physical objects whose integrity must be preserved. However what in them is the work is rather similar to an «ideal» object, which has to be performed. The famous *Psychromies* (the first dates from 1959), painted pictures on which vertical blades are fixed at regular intervals, function like scores that the public will activate, as they wish, by moving in front of them and, in doing so, transform the aspect and the colors. And two people will not perform a *Psychromie* in exactly the same way, because the amplitude, the speed and the number of their movements in front of the painting will not be identical. In this sense, the *Psychromies* also have an allographic dimension.

What is remarkable in Cruz-Diez's art, and what gives it all its strength, is the synergy between the participative logic and the logic of his chromatic experiments. Thus *Chromosaturations*, initiated in 1965, can only provide the public with an absolute monochromatic experience by existing in the form of a room in which the visitor 11

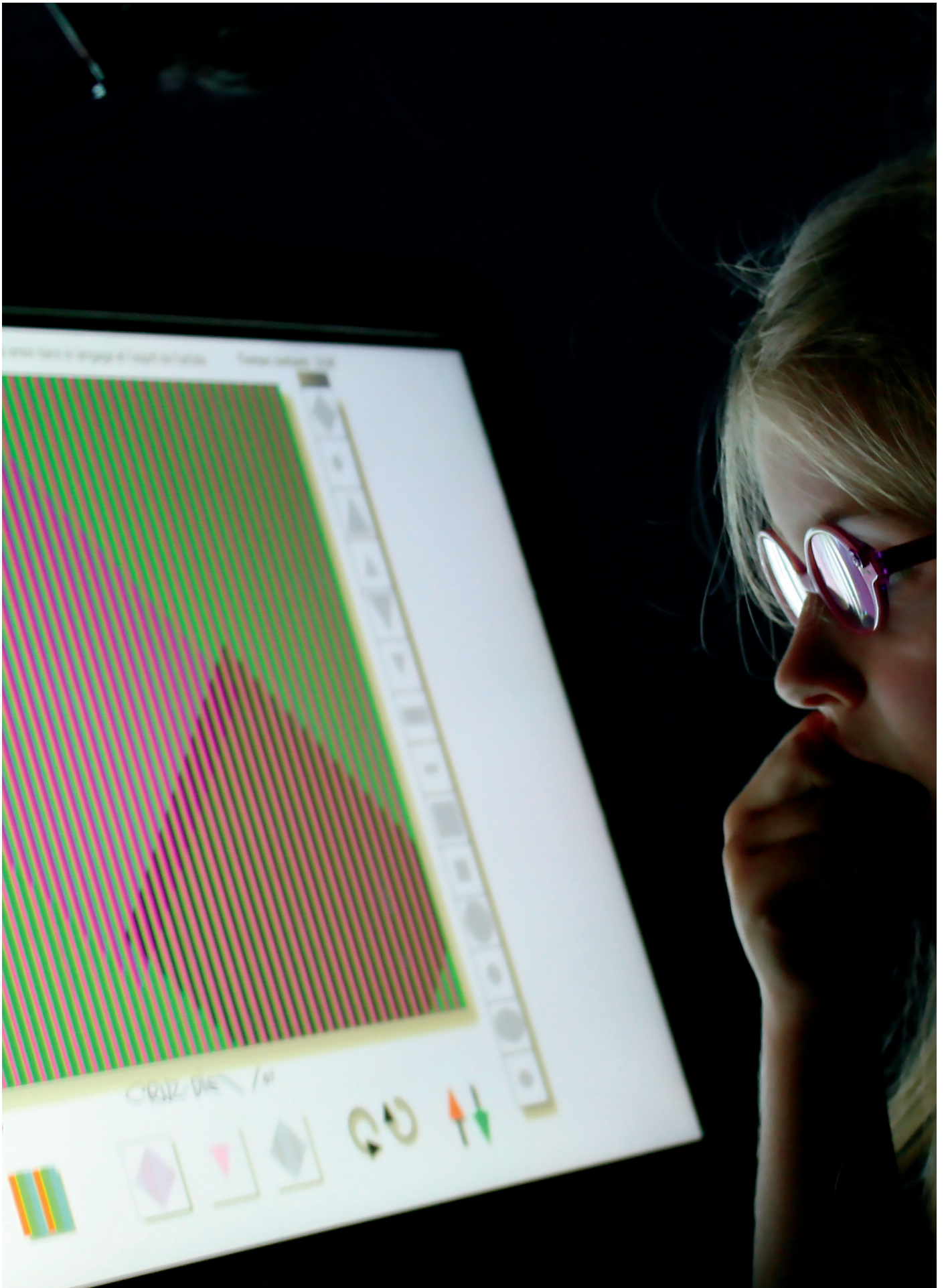
will enter and evolve for a period, whose duration he will ultimately choose. Color only reveals its fundamental, relative, and unstable nature through the participatory device. And the participation finds in the chromatic phenomena the privileged vector of its exercise.

If the chromatic phenomenon asks for interactive devices to manifest itself better and if consequently the manifestation of color as such and the socialization of the art can make common cause, it is more fundamentally still because political progressivism and exaltation of the optic nerve go hand in hand. As Alexander Alberro quite rightly pointed out in his book *Abstraction in Reverse. The Reconfigured Spectator in Mid-Twentieth-Century Latin American Art*, the artists of the op movement are driven by the conviction that "the more the artworks involve the nervous system of the spectator, the more egalitarian they are", that art in which "visual perception is dissociated from traditional cultural interpretation allows a greater number of viewers (regardless of their intellectual background, social origin or economic situation) to be true receivers of art." It is in the non-mediation of optical retinal effects, and through knowledge and culture that would therefore reside, in profundity, the reason for the wide public success met by op art.

It is important to consider the project **RGB: the colors of the century** in this double perspective. As Vasarely called for in the *Yellow Manifesto*, the prints glued to the wall broke with the myth of the unique work. Destroyed at the end of the exhibition, they can be printed again for another occasion.

Eight of them belong to the series of *Couleur Additive*, initiated in 1959 and based on the irradiation of color. Seven belong to the *Inductions Chromatiques*, which began in 1963, that is linked to the phenomenon of retinal persistence. The sixteenth is a *Couleur à l'espace*, a work that first appeared in 1993 and reveals how a line running slightly obliquely across a background of vertical lines of different colors, generates colors that do not exist on the support. As for the software *Expérience Chromatique Aléatoire Interactive* [Interactive Chromatic Random Experience], it allows the user to play with chromatic and formal alterations from a given composition. It offers the possibility to animate it, to use the term of the *Yellow Manifesto*. Vasarely had dreamed in the mid-1950s that his future exhibitions would take the form of slide projections on the walls. Since then, the slides have disappeared, but the computers and the printers are there to help to the demythification of the *Bel Art* and to that wide social diffusion to which, without dismay, have aspired those modernists of which Cruz-Diez is the heir.

Colors of the century and secularization of the colored work. While it optically exalts the colors, which for nearly a century, diffuse the screens of all kinds that populate, more and more, the spaces of our lives, the exhibition project RGB participates in a radical intention of secularizing art, thanks to the desacralization recourse to reproduction and interactivity. In Cruz-Diez, the two dimensions manage, in the digital age, to remain inextricably linked.



Interactive Chromatic Random Experience, 1995

WHY AN EXHIBITION OF EPHEMERAL WORKS?

Carlos CRUZ-DIEZ

Paris, 1999

On the participation of the artist in the era of global communication.

Every art exhibition is in principle an ephemeral manifestation. My kinetic proposals have changed the dialectic between the viewer and the work, highlighting notions of time, space, instability, mutation, and the impermanence of our relationship with the universe and the simplest things around us. For this reason, I have structured a selection of ephemeral works, with the aim of highlighting the temporary fact that making an exhibition means. At the end, as in a concert, what remains is the memory of the dialectical experiences lived and perhaps an evocative catalog. [...]

I have always thought that the work of art is not detached from society nor from the generational circumstances that surround the artist at the moment of creation. [...]

The use of manipulable objects, the aleatory, the ephemeral, the constantly changing "situations" that I use in my works, have led me to create circumstances capable of bringing to light different results, sometimes unseen, of the chromatic world.

COMPACT EXHIBITION DESIGN

RGB: the colors of the century is a thematic, educational and touring exhibition, conceived by Carlos Cruz-Diez in Paris in 2014.

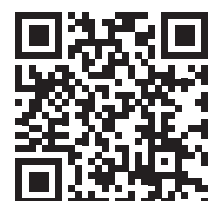
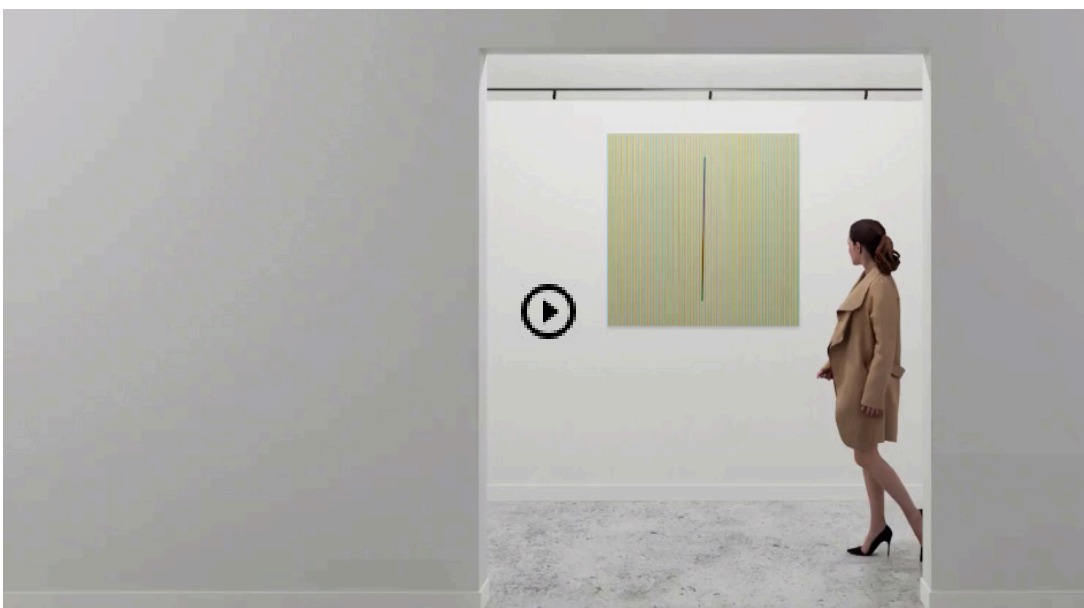
Its itinerary is composed of three parts:

- **a selection of exhibition copies** that refer to 3 of the 8 investigations developed by the artist (*Couleur Additive*, *Induction Chromatique*, *Couleur à l'Espace*). Each print is in itself a variation of compositions using only 3 colors: Red, Green and Blue (i.e. pigment colors), enabling the viewer to visually experience colors that appear and disappear from the support (i.e. light colors).

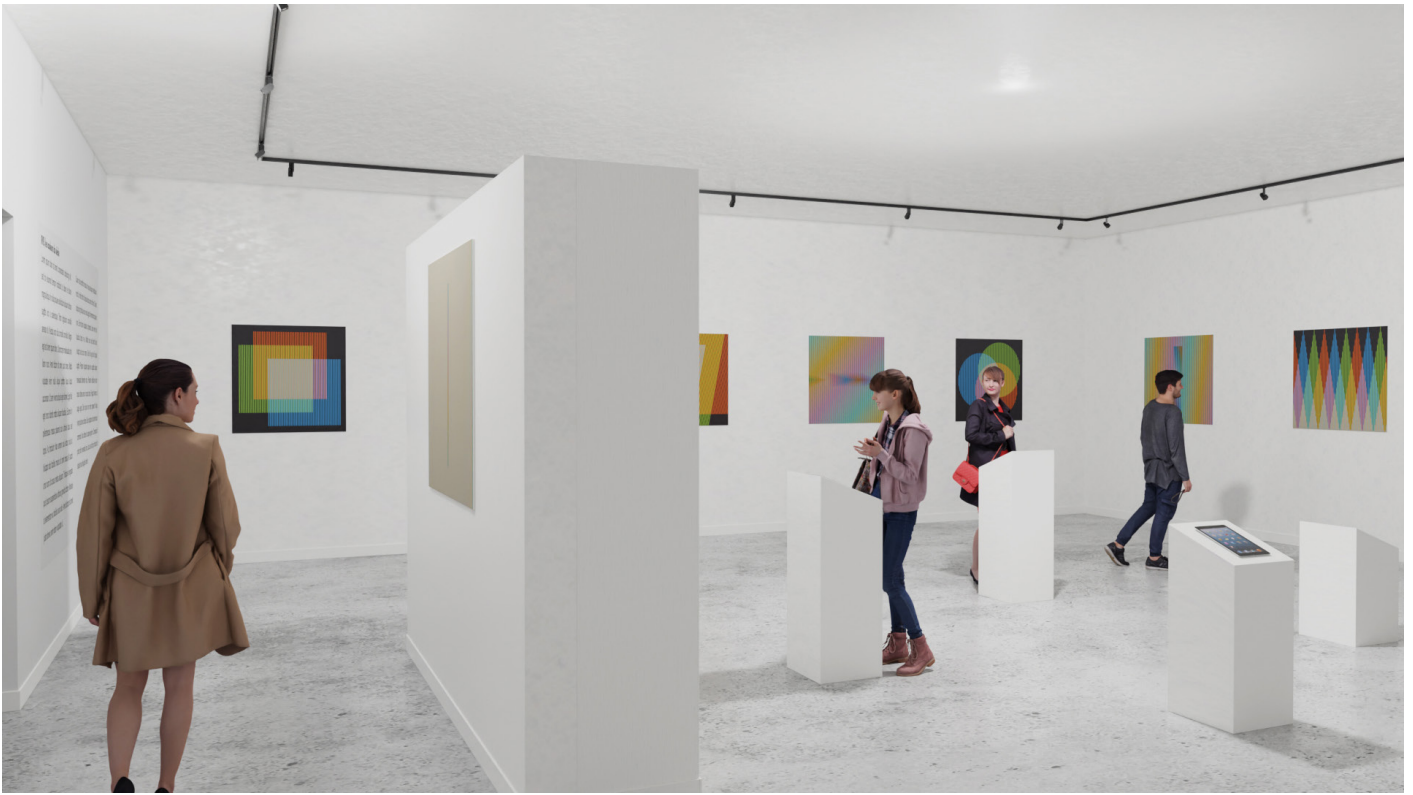
- **a digital participatory space** where the viewer interacts with the work *Interactive Chromatic Random Experience*. It is a software, digital work, whose interface is tightly linked to the colors Red, Green and Blue.

- **an audiovisual space** where the spectator can discover the life and work of Cruz-Diez through the projection of films and documentaries.

Click on the image or scan the QR code below to discover the virtual video tour of the exhibition:







Virtual exhibition views

DOCUMENTARIES AND FILMS

FREE COLOR

The fascinating story of a color genius



"Exquisite... a treasure."
Helen Hunt.

"A serious and delightful
documentary."
The Hollywood Reporter.

"Free Color is art,
a pure form of it."
Cinema Sentries.

"A film that will stay with
you when you leave the
cinema, changing what
you see in the world."
Eye for film (UK).

"A visually stunning
documentary."
Screen Fish.

FREE COLOR (2020)

DIRECTOR: ALBERTO ARVELO / LENGTH: 80'

FREE COLOR is based on the life and artistic legacy of Carlos Cruz-Diez. Directed by Alberto Arvelo, the documentary explores the artist's history and creative process, and documents what became his life's quest: to free color from form. The film chronicles the last great crusade of one of the greatest artists of our time along with a group of scientists from the California Institute of Technology, provoking a fascinating dialogue between art and science. A restless and inspiring dream for everyone, especially for the young generation.

[Link to trailer](#)



DISCOVERIES IN COLOR: THE ART OF CRUZ-DIEZ (2017)

DIRECTOR: MARIS CURRAN / LENGTH: 5'23"

Produced by Adobe Create Magazine, this short documentary follows Cruz-Diez in his studio in Paris to explore how his art restlessly pushed the boundaries of perception.

[Link to video](#)



THE PATH OF COLOR (2017)

DIRECTORS: LAURENCE SERFATY AND FAUSTO ALEMAN / LENGTH: 9'56"

Produced by the Cruz-Diez Foundation and narrated by Carlos Cruz-Diez, this documentary explores the decisions and lifelong commitment that led him to be an artist.

[Link to video](#)

FACTS

Exhibits

Thematic, pedagogical and itinerant exhibition, composed of 16 exhibition copies to be printed and a digital participatory space. The temporary loan of a *Chromosaturation* or a work in the public space can be considered depending on the context and the resources available.

Curators

Exhibition conceived by Carlos Cruz-Diez in 2014. This project is presented in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou - Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Exhibition Tour

RGB, the colors of the century will be available to international venues from Spring 2023 onwards. The exhibition can take place simultaneously in different places.

The exhibition period is intended for a presentation between 2 and 9 weeks. This can be adjusted, depending on the requirements of the partnering venue and exhibition availability.

Exhibition Floor Space

200 m2 / 2150 sq ft

Exhibition Set Up

All partnering venues will print their exhibition copies. The loan will be formalized by a reproduction license with the partnering venue. The Cruz-Diez studios provide the technical specifications for the printing and installation of the works, as well as the computer program of the digital work. The partnering venue will provide the digital supports.

Fees and Services

The exhibition fee is of **10 000 USD*** and includes the following services by the Cruz-Diez studios:

- Reproduction license by Bridgeman images.
- A comprehensive package, including curatorial texts, contextual films and images, and a digital catalogue.
- Tour management and organisational guidance.
- Exhibitions texts and corresponding design templates.
- Detailed installation manual.
- Promotion tools and Press kit.
- Promotion on Cruz-Diez's official channels, as part of the Cruz-Diez 100 Years celebration.

*Any adaptation of the original design concept and modification of the layout plan for the exhibition venue (up to 500 m2) will result in a reassessment of the initial fee.

Insurance

No insurance or shipping required.

Publications

A Digital Catalogue and Cruz-Diez's reference book *Reflection on Color* will be provided for sale and/or public consultation.

By-Products upon request.

Conferences and Talks

A side-programmation of talks (visio or on site) can be jointly organised.

Contact

Angelica Giraldo - Project manager
angelica@cruz-diez.com

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CRUZ-DIEZ

RGB, the Colors of the Century is presented as part of the celebration of the centenary of Carlos Cruz-Diez's birth, in collaboration with

**Centre
Pompidou**



Cover Image

Couleur Additive RVB 3, 2014

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www.cruz-diez.com