

1978/2.

**ART
OF THE
SPACE
AGE**

ART OF THE SPACE AGE

A COLLECTION LOANED BY THE PETER STUYVESANT ART FOUNDATION

Since the Second World War mankind has entered into a new phase of its history, the Space Age. Today we move at speeds former generations did not dream of even in their fairy tales; we are taming the frightening power of the atom. With these changes art as we have known it is disappearing. The painter leaves realism to the photographer. Like the scientist, he tries to conquer new worlds.

In contrast to science, which is the rational objective explanation of the world, art could be regarded as an emotional and subjective explanation. Today however the artists introducing optical and kinetic art speak little of their emotions. They regard the personal character of their art as unimportant. Just like the scientists they occasionally work in teams (Equipo 57, Gruppo N, etc) which try to make new discoveries in the realm of seeing and perceiving colour, space and movement.

Instead of giving us harmonious balance of form, the optical artists (e.g., Vasarely) arrest our attention, even create excitement by patterns of suddenly changing density – simple patterns which become dynamic or seem to suggest spatial effects. They like to surprise us by disturbing illusions. Their designs fascinate by their unstable character, their patterns seem to produce scintillating light or darkness; their pictures show experiments in which the same colour appears in very different hues; influenced by neighbouring colour-contrasts.

Disquiet and movement become the major themes of modern art. With their mobiles, sculptors like Calder represent movement. Other kinetic artists (like Malina, Boto and Schoffer) use strikingly new and completely modern means of expression – transparent plastics and electric motors – to create literally moving "pictures" which offer us a drama of continually changing colour and form.

Artists like Agam with his "Polyphonic picture with nine themes" (which he calls "Homage to J. S. Bach") use pure primary colours and create pleasing eye-music – composing complicated fugues of interwoven colour effects.

The idea of speed dominates our age. While the mediaeval painter created his alter-pieces for spectators who would scrutinise them again and again for many years, the artist of our time works for the passers-by. Carried along by his car the modern spectator will see our architectural art just with a fleeting glance, and one quick glance must often satisfy the rushed visitors at giant exhibitions. Continually fed with innumerable pictures in magazines, newspapers and books, today's youth has no wish to spend long hours with intricate works of art. They prefer a short statement of the utmost simplicity.

The experiments of these artists are more than fleeting entertainment. They make us see pure form and pure movement and also teach us to doubt what we are seeing. Their art introduces us to visual thought.

F. L. Alexander.

This collection has been brought into New Zealand by the Rothmans Cultural Foundation (New Zealand) and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand. Arrangements for the exhibition's New Zealand tour have been carried out by the Auckland City Art Gallery.

*Public Art Gallery, Dunedin Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch National Art Gallery, Wellington
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth City Art Gallery, Auckland April-November, 1970*

Yaacov Agam

Israeli-French b1928

1. HOMAGE TO J. S. BACH 1965

Josef Albers

German-American b1888

2 HOMAGE TO THE SQUARE 1964

Richard Allen

British b1933

3 BLACK AND WHITE COMPOSITION 1965

Alviani (Getulio)

Italian b1939

4 25 SQUARES 1964

Vojin Bakic

Yugoslavian b 1915

5 LUMINOUS FORMS 1964

Alberto Biasi

Italian b1937

6 GRANDE CINERETICOLO SPETTRALE 1965

Biasi and Landi

(of Gruppo N, Milan)

7 SILK-SCREEN PRINTS 1964-65

Hartmut Bohn

German b1934

8 HOMOGENEOUS FIELD 1 /65 1965

Davide Boriani

Italian b1936

9 PH SCOPE 1963-64

Martha Boto

Argentine-French b1925

10 INTERCESSIONS LUMINEUSES 1964

Pol Bury

Belgian b1922

11 ERECTILE 1962

Alexander Calder

American b1898

12 PEACOCK 1950

Cosimo Carlucci

Italian b1919

13 PROCESSUALITA GRANDE 1963

Gianni Colombo

Italian b1937

14 CIRCULAR STRUCTURE 1964

Toni Costa

Italian b1935

15 VISUAL DYNAMICS N 25 1964

Carlos Cruz-Diez

Venezuelan b1923

16 PHYSICHROMIE 1965

Gabriele de Vecchi

Italian b1938

17 DYNAMIC 1965

Lucia di Luciano

Italian b1933

18 STRUCTURE No. 155 1965

Juraj Dobrovic

Yugoslavian b1935

19 SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION 1965

Marcel Duchamp

French 1887-1968

20 ROTORELIEF 1934

Equipo 57

(anonymous group of Spanish artists)

21 V 25 B 1964

Karl Gerstner

Swiss b1930

22 LENS PICTURE No 10 1962-64

Gruppo Mid

(anonymous group of artists in Milan)

23 STROBOSCOPE 1965

Auguste Herbin

French 1882-1960

24 SILK-SCREEN PRINTS

Inge Claus Jensen

German b1937

25 MOVEMENT 111 1965

Harry Kramer

German b1925

26 X 1964

Julio le Parc

Argentine-French b1928

27 PERPETUAL MOTION 1964

Wolfgang Ludwig

German b1928

28 CINEMATIC PAINTING IV 1964

29 CINEMATIC PAINTING V 1964

Frank Malina

American b1920

30 SIGNAL 1957

Manfredo Massironi

Italian b1935

31 CIRCLES AND SQUARES 1964

Francois Morellet

French b1926

32 SPHERE 1962-63

Koloman Novak

Yugoslavian b1928

33 TURNING DISCS 1965

Giovanni Pizzo

Italian b1931

34 SIGN 1965

Vjenceslav Richter

Yugoslavian b1917

35 RITMIZIRANA CENTRA 1964

Nicolas Schoffer

Hungarian-French b1912

36 MICROTEMPS No 6 1964

Peter Sedgley

British b1930

37 SOFTLY 1965

Francisco Sobrino

Spanish b1932

38 UNSTABLE TRANSFORMATION 1964

Jesu-Raphael Soto

Venezuelan b1923

39 VIBRATION WITH A BLUE SQUARE 1962

40 SOTOMAGIE 1967

Jeffrey Steele

British b1931

41 POLACCA

42 TOCCATA

Takis

Greek b1930

43 SIGNALS 1963

Jean Tinguely

Swiss-French b1925

44 SUNFLOWER 1965

45 CINEMATIC TOY 1963

Gunther Uecker

German b1930

46 SMALL CLOUD 1963

Gregorio Vardanega

Italian b1923

47 DISINTEGRATION OF RAYS

OF LIGHT 1964

48 TOWER 1966

Grazia Varisco

Italian b1925

49 VARYING LIGHT PATTERNS 1965

Victor Vasarely

Hungarian-French b1908

50 CASSIOPEE K 1964

51 SILK-SCREEN PRINTS

Ludwig Wilding

German b1927

52 KINETIC STRUCTURE 1965

Yvaral (Jean Pierre Vasarely)

French b1934

53 OPTICAL ACCELERATION 1964

Stan Ostojja-Kotkowski

Australian b1927

54 SONIX 1969

