

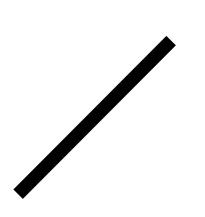
DURBAN SEGNINI GALLERY

THE SIDE INSIDE

RICARDO ALCAIDE

MANOLO VELLOJÍN

EDUARDO RAMÍREZ VILLAMIZAR



THE SIDE INSIDE

"You must first try to see composition, color, and line, and not the representation as representation 1."

The Side Inside features an interaction between a selection of oeuvres of three artists: Ricardo Alcaide (1967), Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar (1922-2004) and Manolo Vellojin (1943-2013). Despite their inherent temporal and geographic distances, and the fact that they develop their works in the context of diverse, overlapping sources and inspirations, and favor disparate artistic investigations and endeavors, they share a highly abstracted idiom that is purified, distilled and refined. Furthermore the artworks presented in this intergenerational exhibition create nonobjective compositions of elemental forms that through oppositions of color and lines generate a dialogue between the two-dimensional plane and three-dimensional space.

Upon entering the gallery the viewer comes across Sudario (1972) an assemblage by Vellojin made out of paper, cloth, wood and glass; where the artist relied on the language of abstraction to highlight the horizontal strip and the vertical axis in order to create the illusion of a wrapped object. The artwork references the popular Catholic icon of the shroud of Turin, believed to be the burial garment of Jesus Christ, so there is an intellectual query into ritual, death and religion. In a prologue the artist wrote for the exhibition where this work was first presented, Vellojin mentioned: "It is obvious that the exhibition deals with the theme of death through a ritualistic, philosophical and fetishistic geometrization, if there is an explanation. It only remains for me to hope that the exhibited works touch the viewer with silence, as a reward for the fatigue that transfiguring a feeling produces2."

Manolo Vellojin belonged to the second generation of abstract artists in Colombia, and in recent decades has begun to be recognized for spearheading geometric painting during the 1970s in his native country. His work is recognized by structures that respond to a very precise order because of a constant linearity and austerity in the composition, and because religious symbology is continuously present in his work.

XX (1975) is another noteworthy artwork by Vellojin featured in the show; it is a small scale collage of irregular shape with a dynamic composition of green, white and gold colored straight and diagonal lines. The elongated hexagon shaped paper is part of the work itself and even though it is hung sideways it maintains at eyesight two perfectly leveled squares. When the artist first exhibited this work, he included a quote from The Egyptian Book of the Dead that speaks of the transcendence of time and that, somehow, manifests the artist's interest in the intangible, what lies beyond death and religion.

Other Vellojin paintings exhibited, like *Beato* (1989), further demonstrate the artist's hermetic language based on geometry, where the Greek cross is the structural axis of the composition, which articulates the double vertical and horizontal symmetry and all its axes and modules of composition. In Vellojin's production there is always an obsession with austerity and precision, accompanied by consideration of religious themes and symbols.

An imposing presence in the exhibition is Ricardo Alcaide's *Horizon II* (2023) an installation of minimalist aesthetic that consists of rigorously pared down MDF cubes finished in turquoise, pale blue, violet, pink, orange, dark and pale yellow.

The artwork extends diagonally throughout the gallery, creating a compelling visual presence and invading the central atmosphere of the room. Each one of the brightly colored boxes measures 70 cm (27 inches) and the space between them is equivalent to the size of each of the blocks. *Horizon II invites* the public to walk around and experience it sequentially, one or two sides at a time; the repeated geometric forms are arranged in a 'situation' that makes the viewer aware of their own body at the same time that they are aware of the physical space occupied by the work, compelling the spectator to confront the arrangement and scale of the forms.

It is worth mentioning that there is much specificity with the sequence of colors used; the chromatic order at the tops of the volumes are meant to have fluidity, and the neutral colors on the sides of the cubes have the intention of contrasting and creating some kind of distortion or disruption in the rhythmic fluidity of the colors on the top. Additionally, the artist believes that if this color arrangement is presented in a different order than the one presented, it no longer functions or works for him. This particular color sequence has been present in Alcaide's production for some time now, and it serves an inner meaning since it provides a spiritual essence that is not only uplifting to him but also provides joy and contentment.

Also on view are a selection of recent artworks like that demonstrate once again Alcaide's preference for geometric austerity, synthesizing to the minimum because of his intent on creating a connection beyond the formal. In the artist's own words: "geometrical abstraction is a necessity to express myself, in a very devoted way. A language that comes from inner beliefs and contains hidden information... that translates feelings and experiences into -maximum- abstraction.³⁷

Having been born and raised in Venezuela, and lived in Sao Paulo for long periods of time, left an indelible mark on the artist, whose practice is heavily permeated by the modernist aesthetic, as well as the urban and social concerns of those cultural environments. Alcaide has also been exploring for some time in his work notions of incompleteness, instability, spatial interaction, boundaries, as well as inclusion and exclusion.

In *Grid* (2023) we encounter an 'empty' white flat base where three white shelves have been placed in a vertical position; one can perceive that these shelves were originally in a horizontal position but the artist replaced them in the same order and symmetry but upright, so the surface reveals this stripping process. Alcaide intended this appearance of something repaired in a precarious or wrong way, of a changed direction in a forced or conflictive way.

Another notable artwork by the Venezuelan born artist is Insertions on white relief (2023), a layered wall mounted sculptural work from which three dimensional diagonal strips have been raised and onto which three white bricks have been wedged. This clash of materials generates a play of light and shadow, and a contrast of depths across the surface that explores the rhythmic disposition throughout the work. At the same time, the material roughness of the brick creates a dialogue between the smooth and pristine textures of the relief and the carefully crafted character of the artwork.

Rana precolombina (1986), by Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar is a touchstone of this exhibition and it has a strong dialogue with several of Alcaide's artworks presented. The artwork is a small white relief that demonstrates some of the pivotal characteristics of the renowned colombian master's practice: a visual vocabulary of abstraction and

geometry, his exploration of interlocking and superimposing planes in the pictorial space, and his interest in nature and pre-Columbian cultures. Ramirez Villamizar is acclaimed as a pioneer of abstract sculpture in his native Colombia, and in Latin America. In 1958, the artist created one of his native country's most ambitious works of public art to date: El Dorado, a monumental nonrepresentational large gilded modern mural that was inspired by Colombia's pre-Hispanic past. Alike the now famous mural, Rana precolombina is a direct reference to the Muisca (or Chibcha) material culture-where frogs (iesua, meaning "food from the Sun" in Muysccubun) and toads were important animals in the concept of nature and the relation with the spiritual world - but this apprehension of pre-Columbian source is explored in a purely geometric language where maximum simplicity and equilibrium triumph.

Another potent element of the exhibition by the Colombian pioneer is *Caracol Escalera* (1979), a large free standing metal sculpture made up of seven elements that escalate with precisely crisp lines from the base; creating true internal spaces in its forms. It is a spiral made out of straight line segments, it is a frozen movement inspired by nature; specifically shells which fascinated Ramirez Villamizar, who not only collected but also repeatedly drew and sculpted them.

Although Ramirez Villamizar began his career as a painter, he later on shifted his interest to three-dimensional sculptures -which came to constitute the majority of his production- yet late in his life he returned to two-dimensional work. An outstanding example is *Untitled* (1994) is an acrylic painting that features the artist's traditional sleek aesthetic but once again demonstrates how Ramirez Villamizar is exploring structure, surface, balance, and rhythm.

As the artist declared: "Really the only thing that has interested me always has been the form. Even in painting, the shape was always the most important thing. This is how I come into the monochrome, black-and-white because what worries me above all is the form and there is not much reason to think about color.4"

The artworks featured in *The Side Inside*demonstrate that these three powerful artists share
many connections and similarities: there is the
modernist aesthetic, the spiritual links and the use
of simple geometric shapes and blocks of uniform
colors to reduce reality to its purest and most basic
structures. Alcaide, Vellojin and Ramirez Villamizar
use abstraction as a tool for the scrubbing away of
a complicated and compromised physical world,
creating artworks that invite the consideration of
something – anything – more pure beyond.

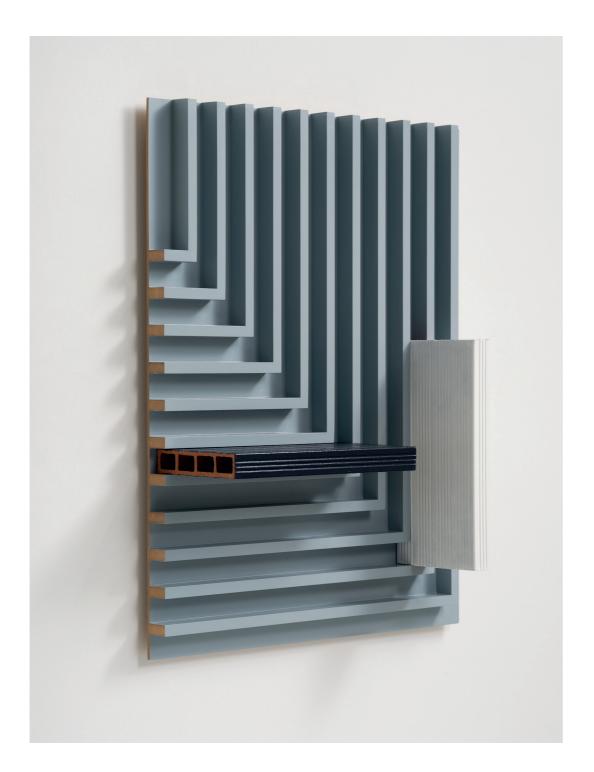
- ¹ Piet Mondrian, 'Dialogue on the New Plastic'
- Manolo Vellojin, "Presentación" in *Dolorosos, estandartes, sudarios y esquelas*, pg. 2. Bogota, Galería Garcés Velásquez, 1978.
- $^{\rm 3}$ Author's conversation with Ricardo Alcaide. May, 2023.
- Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar in an interview with Fausto Panesso in Los intocables: Botero, Grau, Negret, Obregón, Ramírez V, pag. 112. Bogotá: Rentería, 1975.

Isabela Villanueva Miami, May 2023

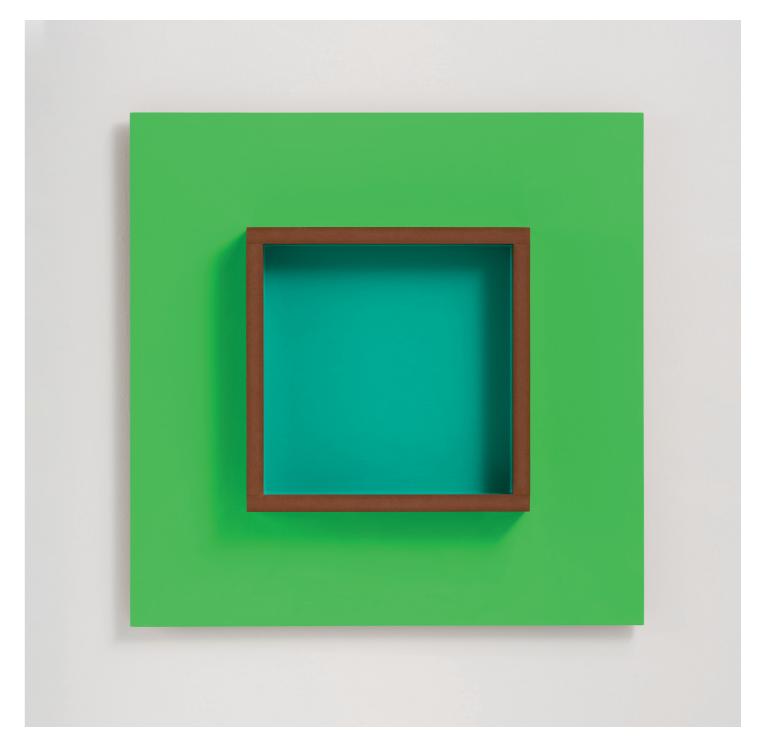
RICARDO ALCAIDE

Ricardo Alcaide (b. 1967 in Caracas, Venezuela / Lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium) examines urban living environments, his minimal aesthetic is influenced by modernist architecture and his site specific works reflect on the social implications of urban planning and exclusion within the Latin-American context. Recent solo and group exhibitions include Sunny Spells, von Bartha Copenhagen (2023); Holding the Horizon, Dimensions Variable, Miami; *Remains*, curated by Gabriel Perez-Barreiro, Galeria Leme, São Paulo (2021); Anthology Of Art And Architecture, Fortes D'aloia & Gabriel gallery, São Paulo; Sunset, von Bartha Basel, S-chanf; Hiato, Simoes de Asis Galeria, São Paulo; Presque Rien, Geukens & De Vil Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2019); Nunca fuimos contemporáneos, XIII Bienal Femsa, Zacatecas; The cave wall was always there, Galeria Pelaires, Palma de Mallorca; Geometria em Síntese, Simoes de Assis Galeria, São Paulo (2018); Ricardo Alcaide, von Bartha Basel, Basel (2017); Down The Line, Johannes Vogt gallery, New York; Informal Order, Projeto Situ, Galeria Leme, São Paulo (2016); Not Much Further, Arroniz Arte Contemporaneo. Mexico DF; Forma critica, Cristinger De Mayo Gallery, Zurich; Displacement, Alejandra Von Hartz Gallery, Miami (2015); Settlements, Baro galeria, São Paulo; Ensaios Sobre Ordem, Kubik Gallery, Porto; Donde Hay Protesta Hay Negocio, Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan de Puerto Rico (2014); Incidental Geometry, Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York; Visão Do Paraiso: Pensamento Selvagem, curated by Julieta González y Pablo León de la Barra, Rio de Janeiro; *Disruption To Abstraction*, New Art Projects Gallery, London; Una Forma De Desorden Invasivo, Galería Lucía de la Puente, Lima (2013); Prototipo Vernacular, Galeria Oficina Nº1, Caracas, Venezuela; Optimismo Radical, Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York (2012).

Ricardo Alcaide (n. 1967 en Caracas, Venezuela / Vive y trabaja en Amberes, Bélgica) examina entornos habitables urbanos, su estética minimalista está influenciada por la arquitectura modernista y sus instalaciones site-specific reflejan las implicaciones sociales en la planificación urbana y la exclusión en el contexto latinoamericano. Las exposiciones individuales y colectivas más recientes incluyen Sunny Spells, von Bartha Copenhagen (2023); Holding the Horizon, Dimensions Variable, Miami; Remains, curada por Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, Galería Leme, São Paulo (2021); Anthology Of Art And Architecture, Fortes D'aloia & Gabriel Galería, São Paulo; *Sunset*, von Bartha Basel, S-chanf; *Hiato*, Simoes de Asis Galería, São Paulo; Presque Rien, Geukens & De Vil Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2019); Nunca fuimos contemporáneos, XIII Bienal Femsa, Zacatecas; The cave wall was always there, Galería Pelaires, Palma de Mallorca; Geometria em Síntese, Simoes de Assis Galería, São Paulo (2018); Ricardo Alcaide, von Bartha Basel, Basel (2017); Down The Line, Johannes Vogt gallery, New York; Informal Order, Projeto Situ, Galeria Leme, São Paulo (2016); Not Much Further, Arroniz Arte Contemporáneo. Mexico DF; Forma crítica, Cristinger De Mayo Gallery, Zurich; Displacement, Alejandra Von Hartz Gallery, Miami (2015); Settlements, Baro galeria, São Paulo; Ensaios Sobre Ordem, Kubik Gallery, Porto; Donde hay protesta, hay negocio, Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan de Puerto Rico (2014); Incidental Geometry, Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York; Visão Do Paraiso: Pensamento Selvagem, curaduría de Julieta González y Pablo León de la Barra, Rio de Janeiro; Disruption To Abstraction, New Art Projects Gallery, London; Una forma de desorden invasivo, Galería Lucía de la Puente, Lima (2013); Prototipo vernacular, Galería Oficina Nº1, Caracas, Venezuela; Optimismo radical, Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York (2012).



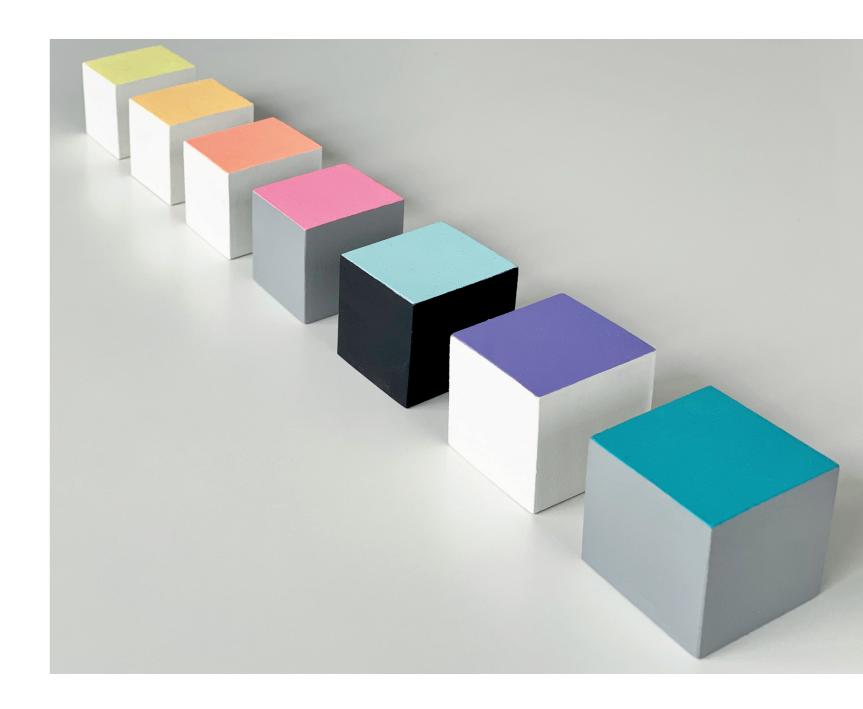
To Wish, 2023 / mdf and industrial lacquer / 31 x 31 x 3 in. (78.74 x 78.74 x 7.62 cm)

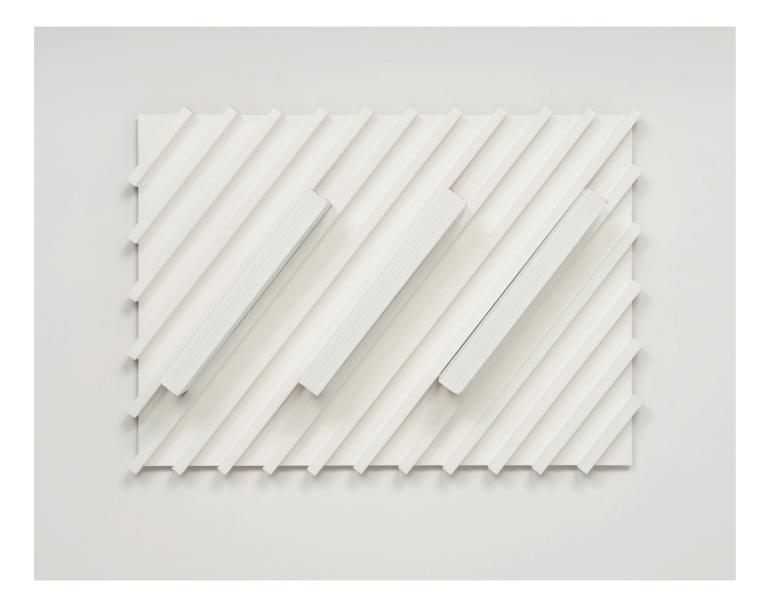




Grid, 2023 / mdf and industrial lacquer / 34 x 34 x 4 in. (86.36 x 86.36 x 10.16 cm)







Space, 2023 / mdf and industrial lacquer / 25 x 25 x 8.6 in. (63.5 x 63.5 x 22 cm)





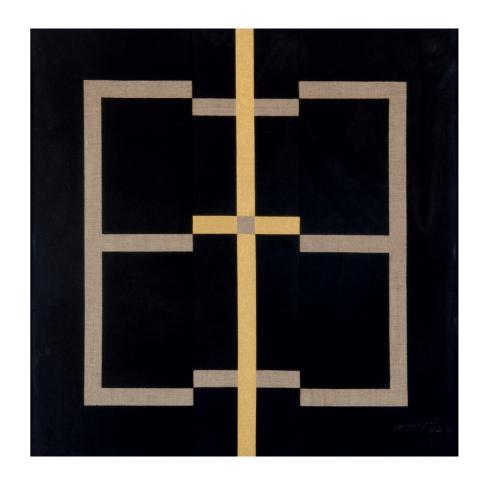
Painter. Self-taught, Vellojín advanced in the mid-60s on the abstractionist poetics inspired by the ideas of Frank Stella and the minimal art. In 1961 he received the Honorable Mention at the Salón de Artistas de la Costa, Biblioteca Departamental in Barranquilla. The symbolic capital of much of his work, as his persistent and repetitive linearity, composition and color, are steeped in heraldic and religious ornamentation. In 1969 he participated at the XX Salón de Artistas Nacionales with his artwork *Caribe*. In 1971 he was awarded the Andi Jorge Tadeo Lozano (Bogotá); one year later he won First Prize at Salón de Artistas de la Costa (Banco de la República, Barranquilla). From 1973-1974 he traveled to Panama, Luxembourg, Paris and Barcelona, where he frequented García Márquez. Among his most important solo exhibitions are: Galería Estrella (Madrid, 1969); Instituto Panameño de Arte (Panamá, 1973); Galería Garcés Velásquez (Bogotá, 1981); *Manolo Vellojín: dos décadas*, Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, 1987); Galería Imago -Gran Teatro de La Habana (La Habana, 1996); *Vanitas*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (Bogotá, 1997); Museo de Arte Moderno de Barranquilla (Barranquilla, 2001). His works are in museums and collections including, among others: Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, Colombia); Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá, Colombia); Museo de Arte Moderno (Cartagena, Colombia) and Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection (Miami, USA).

Pintor. De formación autodidacta, a mediados de la década de los 60 avanza sobre la poética abstraccionista inspirado en las ideas de Frank Stella y el arte minimal. En 1961 recibe la Mención de Honor en el Salón de Artistas de la Costa, Biblioteca Departamental de Barranquilla. Los capitales simbólicos de buena parte de sus obras —como su pertinaz y repetitiva linealidad, la composición y el color— están destilados de heráldicas y ornamentaciones religiosas. En 1969 participa en el XX Salón de Artistas Nacionales con la obra Caribe. En 1971 se le otorga el Premio Andi en el Salón de Artistas, Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano (Bogotá), y un año más tarde recibe el Primer Premio Salón de Artistas de la Costa (Banco de la República, Barranquilla). De 1973 a 1974 viaja a Panamá, Luxemburgo, París y Barcelona, donde frecuenta a García Márquez. Entre sus exposiciones individuales más importantes destacan: Galería Estrella (Madrid, 1969); Instituto Panameño de Arte (Panamá, 1973); Galería Garcés Velásquez (Bogotá, 1981); Manolo Vellojín: dos décadas, Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, 1987); Galería Imago-Gran Teatro de La Habana (La Habana, 1996); Vanitas, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (Bogotá, 1997); Museo de Arte Moderno de Barranquilla (Barranquilla, 2001). Sus obras están presentes en museos y colecciones como: Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, Colombia); Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá, Colombia); Museo de Arte Moderno (Cartagena, Colombia); y Colección Ella Fontanals-Cisneros (Miami, USA).









Beato, 1989 / Acrylic on raw linen / 35.5 x 35.5 in. (90 x 90 cm)



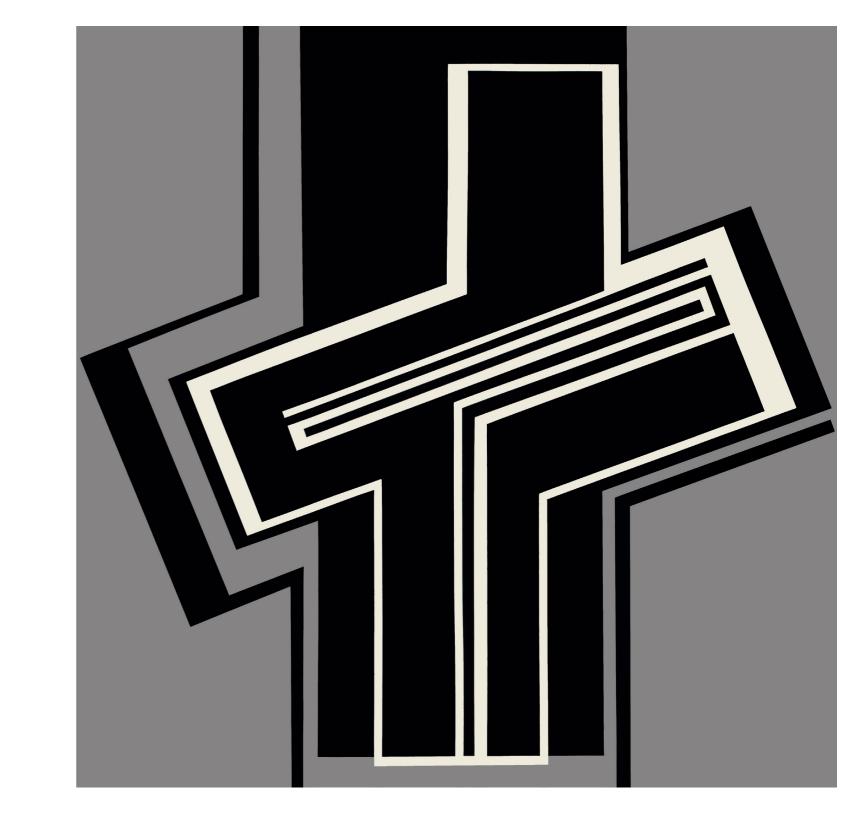
EDUARDO RAMÍREZ VILLAMIZAR Colombia 1923-2004

Painter and sculptor. He studied architecture for four years, acareer he gave up for painting. He started as an expressionist painter, a tendency that he left behind in 1950 in Paris, when he discovered geometric abstraction. In 1955 he made the first non-objective mural in Colombia. In 1959 he won first prize in painting at the XII Salón Nacional de Artistas with his artwork Horizontal en blanco y negro, and that same year he carries out in Bogotá the mural *Relieve dorado*, a large format and clear allusions to the pre-Columbian design. A creative combination of flat shapes related through straight lines or curves and organically articulated, characterized the visualization of his geometric abstract poetic. Ramírez Villamizar lived and worked in New York from 1967 to 1974. In 1973 he performed other public sculptures in the United States: Hexagon in New York and De Colombia to John Kennedy in Washington. In 1976 Ramírez Villamizar is invited to the XXXVI Venice Biennale. Among his most important solo exhibitions are: Eduardo Ramírez, Sculptor, David Herbert Gallery (New York, 1960); Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar: exposición retrospectiva, 1958-1972, Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, 1972); El espacio en forma: Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, exposición retrospectiva 1945-1985, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá, 1985-86); Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, esculturas: homenaje a los artífices precolombinos, Museo Rufino Tamayo (Mexico, D.F., 1990); Galerie Denise René (Paris, 1998); Ramírez Villamizar: Geometry, Abstraction, Connotation: Sculptures, Durban Segnini Gallery (Miami, 2007). His works are represented in major museums and collections including, among others: Museum of Modern Art (New York, USA); Banco de la República (Bogotá, Colombia); Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (Bogotá, Colombia); Museu de Arte Moderna de Rio de Janeiro (Río de Janeiro, Brasil); Banco de la República (Bogotá, Colombia) and South Window Collection (Glendale, California, USA).

Pintor y escultor. Estudia Arquitectura durante cuatro años, carrera que abandona por la pintura. Se inicia como pintor expresionista, tendencia que deja atrás en 1950 durante su estancia en París, cuando descubre el abstraccionismo geométrico. En 1955 realiza el primer mural no objetivo en Colombia. En 1959 gana el Primer Premio de Pintura en el XII Salón Nacional de Artistas con la obra Horizontal en blanco y negro, y ese mismo año lleva a cabo en la capital colombiana el mural *Relieve dorado*, de gran tamaño y claras alusiones al diseño precolombino. Una combinación creativa de formas planas relacionadas a través de líneas rectas o curvas que se articulan orgánicamente entre sí van a caracterizar la visualidad de su poética abstracta geométrica. Entre 1967 y 1974 reside y trabaja en Nueva York. En 1973 realiza otras esculturas públicas en Estados Unidos: *Hexágono* en Nueva York y *De Colombia a John Kennedy* en Washington D.C. En 1976 Ramírez Villamizar es invitado a la XXXVI Bienal de Venecia. Entre sus exposiciones personales más importantes están: Eduardo Ramírez, Sculptor, David Herbert Gallery (Nueva York, USA,1960); Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar: exposición retrospectiva, 1958-1972, Museo de Arte Moderno (Bogotá, Colombia, 1972); El espacio en forma: Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, exposición retrospectiva 1945-1985, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá, Colombia, 1985-86); Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, esculturas: homenaje a los artífices precolombinos, Museo Rufino Tamayo (México, D.F., 1990); Galerie Denise René (París, 1998); Ramírez Villamizar: Geometry, Abstraction, Connotation: Sculptures, Durban Segnini Gallery (Miami, 2007). Sus obras están presentes en importantes colecciones y museos: Museum of Modern Art (Nueva York, USA); Banco de la República y Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (Bogotá, Colombia); Museu de Arte Moderna de Río de Janeiro (Río de Janeiro, Brasil); Banco de la República (Bogotá, Colombia); y Window South Collection (Glendale, California, USA).











Insertions on gray relief, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 35 x 28 x 2.5 in. (88.9 x 71.12 x 6.35 cm)



To Wish, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 31 x 31 x 3 in. (78.74 x 78.74 x 7.62 cm)



Connection, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 24 x 13 x 3 in. (60.96 x 33.02 x 7.62 cm)



Grid, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 34 x 34 x 4 in. (86.36 x 86.36 x 10.16 cm)

MANOLO VELLOJÍN

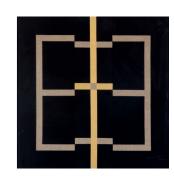
XX, 1975 Collage and paint on paper 19.29 x 11.6 in. (49 x 29.5 cm)



Sudario, 1972 Mixed media on wood 21.6 x 27.5 in. (55 x 70 cm)



Beato, 1989 Acrylic on raw linen 35.5 x 35.5 in. (90 x 90 cm)



Dúo negro, 1984 Acrylic on canvas 23.6 x 23.6 in. (60 x 60 cm)

EDUARDO RAMÍREZ VILLAMIZAR

Horizon II, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 7 elements of 27 x 27 x 27 in. (68.58 x 68.58 x 68.58 cm)



Insertions on white relief, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 24 x 35 x 2.5 in. (60.96 x 88.9 x 6.35 cm)



Space, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 25 x 25 x 8.6 in. (63.5 x 63.5 x 22 cm)



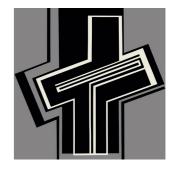
To Hope, 2023 mdf and industrial lacquer 22 x 22 x 2.5 in. (50.8 x 50.8 x 6.35 cm)



Rana precolombina, 1986 Painted wood 13.78 x 13.78 x 1.18 in. (35 x 35 x 3 cm)



Relieve negro y blanco, 1978 Painted metal and wood 2/3 29.84 x 15.75 x 3.15 in. (25 x 40 x 8 cm)



Untitled, 1994 Acrylic on canvas 66.93 x 66.93 in. (170 x 170 cm)



Caracol escalera,1979
Painted meta
90.6 x 23.6 x 18.9 in.
(230 x 60 x 48 cm)



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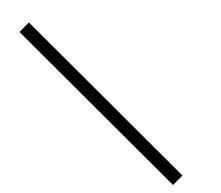
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