

nara roesler

philippe decrauzat



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b. 1974, Lausanne, Switzerland

lives and works between Lausanne, Switzerland and Paris, France

Philippe Decrauzat is one of the leading names in the new generation of optical and kinetic art. His varied production, which includes murals, sculptures, installations, site-specifics and audiovisual works, emerges from a critical reflection on the legacy of those processes in the history of art. In his work, the artist revisits notions related to the vanguards of the early twentieth century—addressing Russian constructivism, kinetic art and minimalism. In order to propose situations that aim at establishing a dialogue with the viewer and stimulating the public's gaze, Decrauzat chooses to play with lines, planes, solids and sounds.

Decrauzat presents a review of our modern heritage, mobilizing methods and theories that are present in the context of pop culture and in the fields of architecture, graphic design and experimental cinema or science fiction. However, he does not simply proceed by appropriation, but prefers discreet reference—indeed he extracts themes and shapes that underlie the mediums' visual and spatial qualities. Ultimately, the emphasis of his work lies on a perception of the modern ways of seeing. In addition to the modernist logic of optics, the artist addresses the eye as an instrument, resuming understandings about the mechanics of vision that are excluded from today's artistic discourses.

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selected solo exhibitions

- *Still (Time Stands)*, Le Portique Centre Regional d'Art Contemporain du Havre, Le Havre, France (2021)
- *Replica*, Blueproject Foundation, Barcelona, Spain (2019)
- *Circulation*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2019)
- *Double Exposure*, Praz-Delavallade, Los Angeles, USA (2019)
- *Tenir pendant que le balancement se meurt*, Parra & Romero, Madrid, Spain (2017)
- *Bright Phase*, Dark Phase, Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Germany (2016)

selected group exhibitions

- *Le plaisir du texte*, Musée des Beaux Arts du Locle, Locle, Switzerland (2023)
- *Mouvement et lumière #2*, Fondation Villa Datris, L'isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France (2023)
- *Interstellaire*, Fondation Opale, Lens, Switzerland (2023)
- *Constellations*, Musée d'Art Moderne de Cerét, Cerét, France (2023)
- *Prix Marcel Duchamp*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2022)
- *Concrete Contemporary—Now is Always also a Little of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, Switzerland (2019)
- *The Philosophical Eye*, Arte Invernizzi Gallery, Milan, Italy (2018)
- *Action <-> Reaction. 100 Years of Kinetic Art*, Kunsthall Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2018)
- *Flatland / Abstractions narratives #2*, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (MUDAM), Luxembourg (2017)

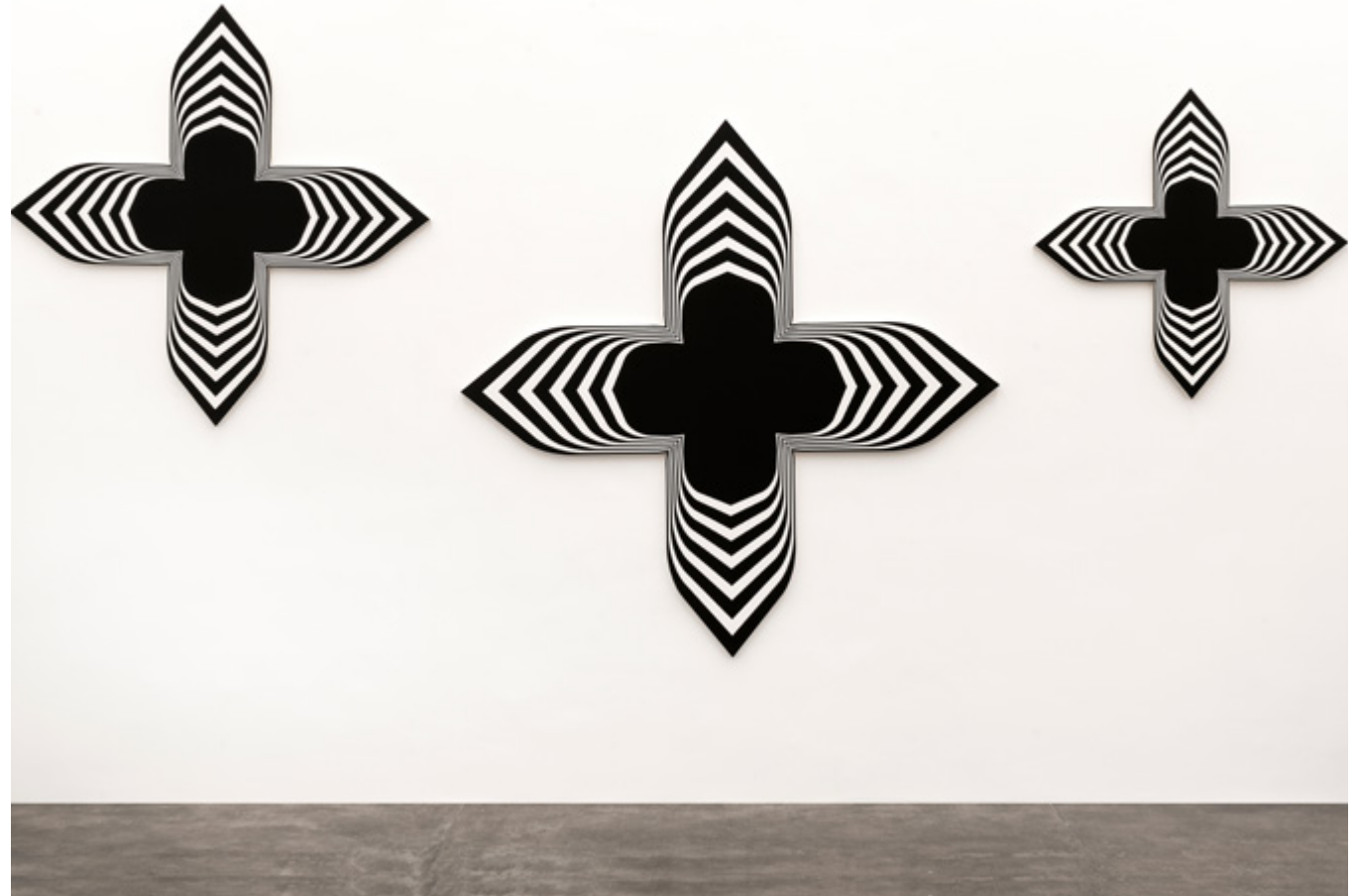
selected collections

- Fondation Louis Vuitton (FLV), Paris, France
- Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires (MACBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

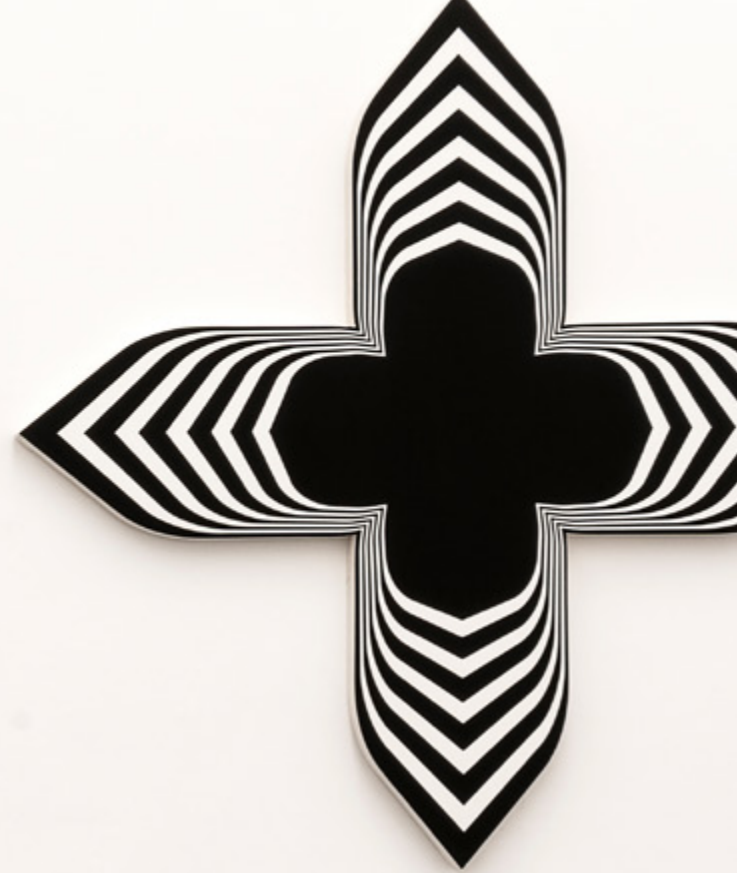
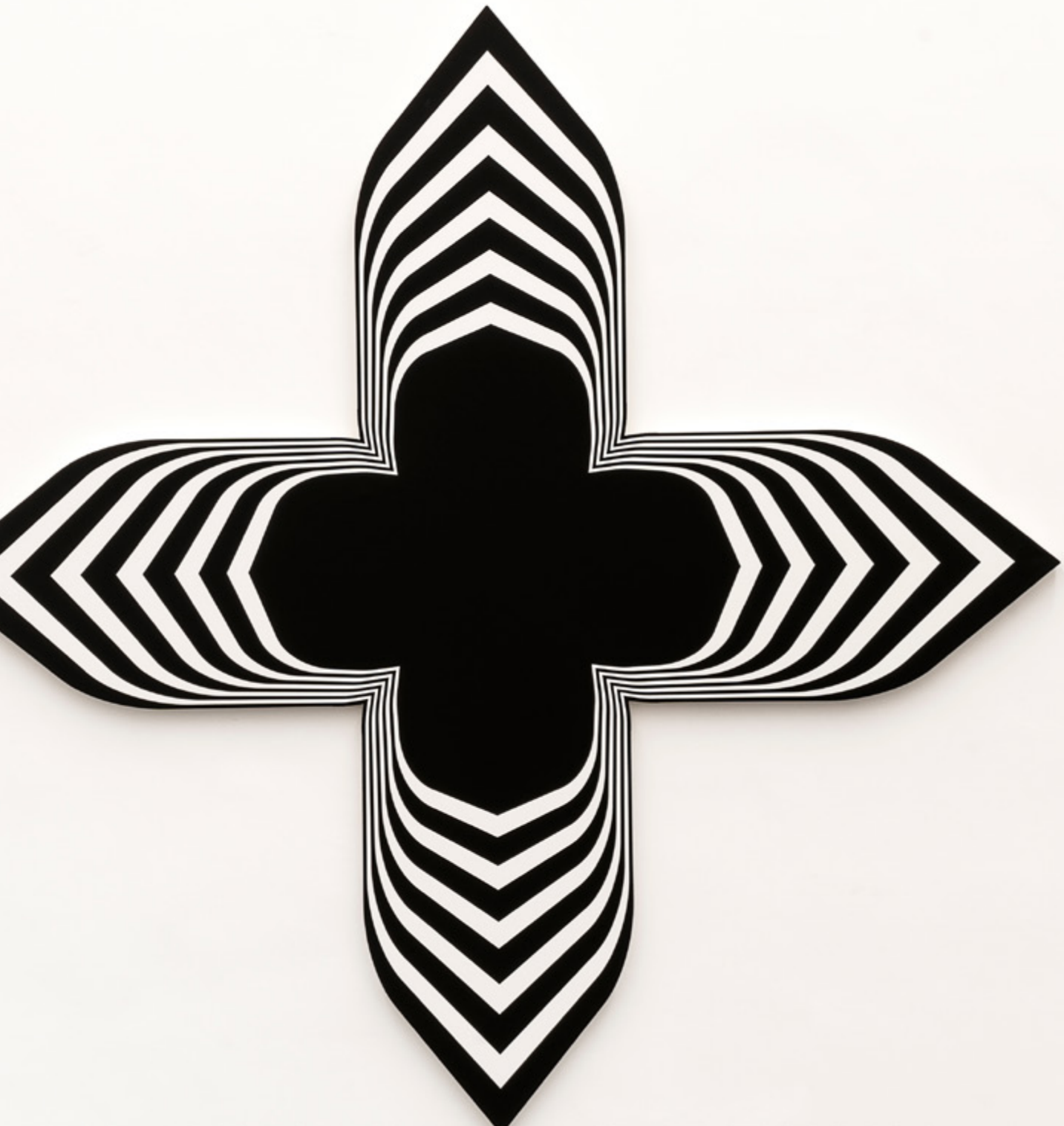
4	paintings
32	instalações e intervensões
38	sculptures

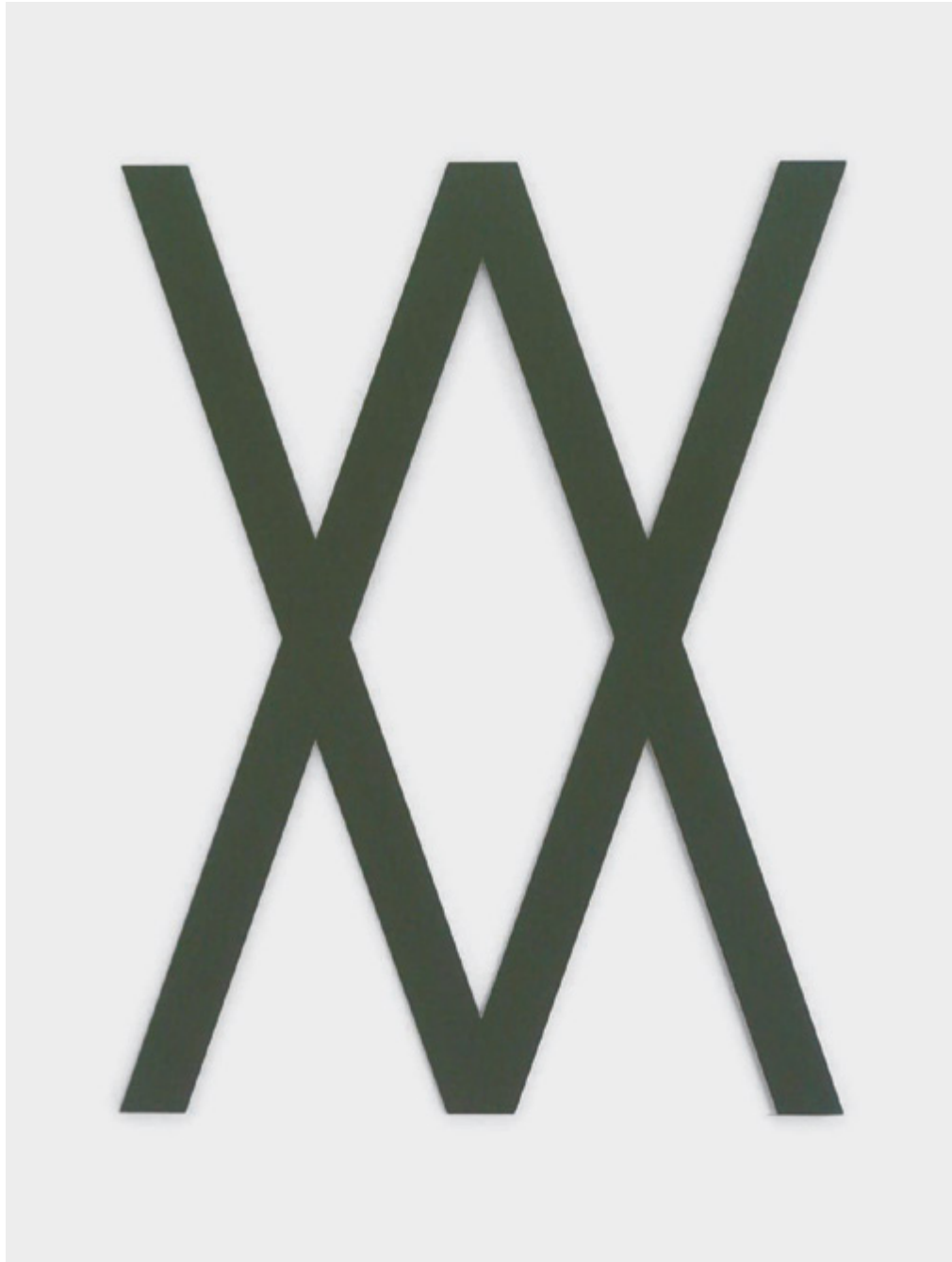
paintings

The main focus of interest in Philippe Decrauzat's artistic practice lies in visual perception. In this sense, concepts and forms established by Op Art, a movement oriented towards creating illusions in abstract compositions structured by graphic elements such as lines, planes and colors, serve as the basis for his visual vocabulary. However, the references to art history don't end there. Also noteworthy are Minimalism and Kinetic Art, offshoots of the aesthetic propositions of Russian Constructivism and Abstract Art.



Black Paintings (triptych), 2008
acrylic paint on canvas
198 x 198 cm, 155 x 155 cm,
113 x 113 cm





An example of this is Decrauzat's dialog with Frank Stella in *Black Paintings* (2008), which borrows the title of one of the most acclaimed sets of works by the American minimalist painter. The triptych consists of three similar paintings in different sizes. "The initial idea was to bring the paradigmatic frontality of these works into a third dimension, restoring them to the perception of a real space. This is not a direct appropriation, as no specific painting by Stella served as a model. Once this formal process has been defined, the reference to Stella fades as the compositional principles within the series develop: variations in geometric shapes, color variations, etc.", says the artist.

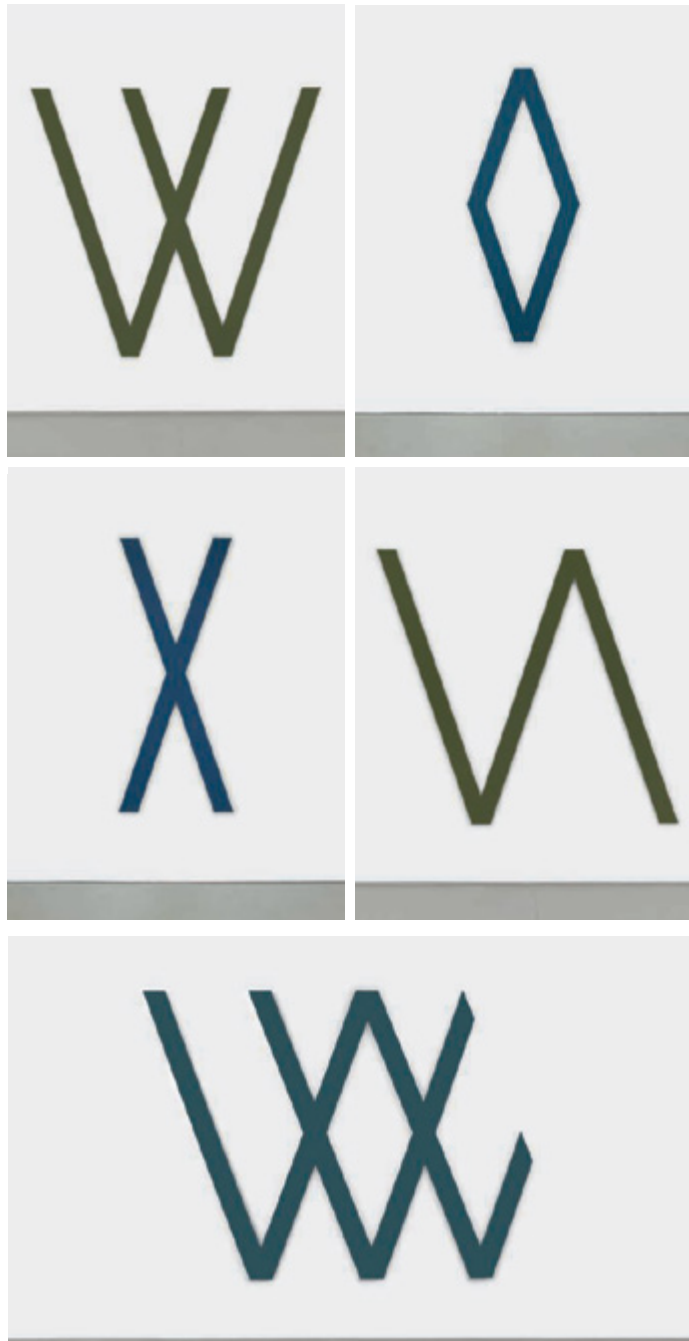
Fragment (Focus of Vision), 2011
acrylic paint on canvas
200 × 151 cm
78,7 × 59,4 in

Decrauzat's references are often not explicit, but elusive, even though they are fundamental to his work. The graphic effect of his *Black Paintings*, as well as the conformity between internal and external form, between the figure and the frame, one of the hallmarks of his paintings, makes the pictures look like marks in space and not mere objects arranged on them. This effect is even more evident in *Fragments* (2011-13), a series of monochrome paintings in acrylic paint with a "simple composition based on diagonals, intersections or simple elements; letters, signs, abstract forms developed according to a formal grammar with a scopic orientation", according to Decrauzat.

While in *Fragments* the surface of the canvas becomes a line due to the graphic effect it creates in space, in the *Process* series, Decrauzat organizes five monochrome surfaces, four rectangular of the same dimensions and a smaller square in the center, causing lines to emerge from the interval between them. Various *Unequal Permutations* (2019), *Positif-Négatif* (2016) and *Multi Exposure* (2016), like other works, have a more defined graphic effect in an attempt to establish a three-dimensional effect through the use of black and white in well-defined areas as a way of highlighting plays of light and shadow on an object.

Fragment of a Moiré, 2011
acrylic paint on canvas
200 x 138 cm
78,7 x 54,3 in





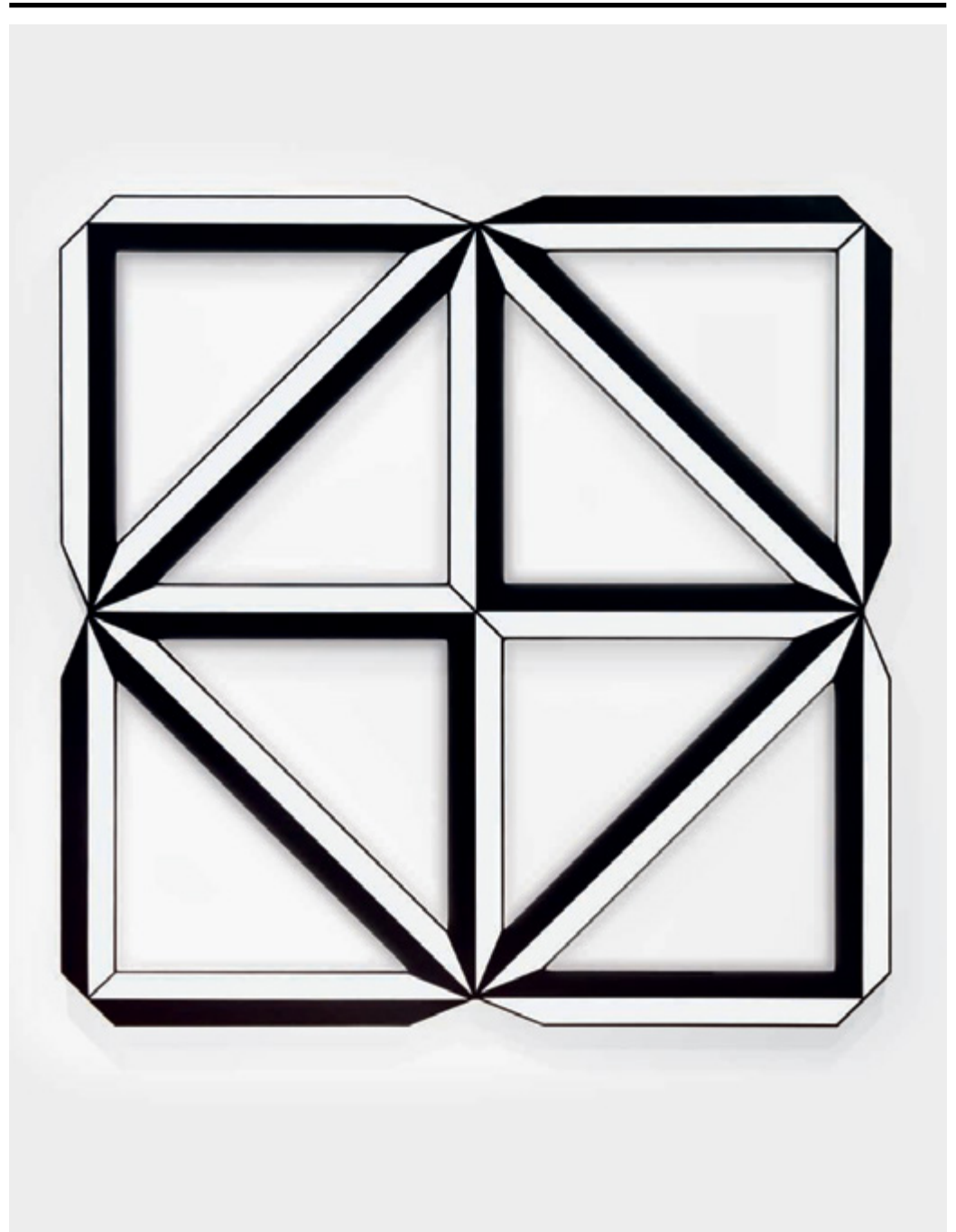
Fragment (W ou les limites de la symétrie), 2011
 acrylic paint on canvas
 200 × 220 cm | 78,7 × 86,6 in
Fragment (Focus of Attention), 2012
 acrylic paint on canvas
 200 × 83 cm | 78,7 × 32,6 in
Fragment (Stationary Pattern) 2012
 acrylic paint on canvas
 200 × 83 cm | 78,7 × 32,6 in
Fragment (Invariant), 2011
 acrylic paint on canvas
 200 × 220 cm | 78,7 × 86,6 in
Fragment (Scopic Movement), 2011
 acrylic paint on canvas
 250 × 342 cm | 98,4 × 134,6 in

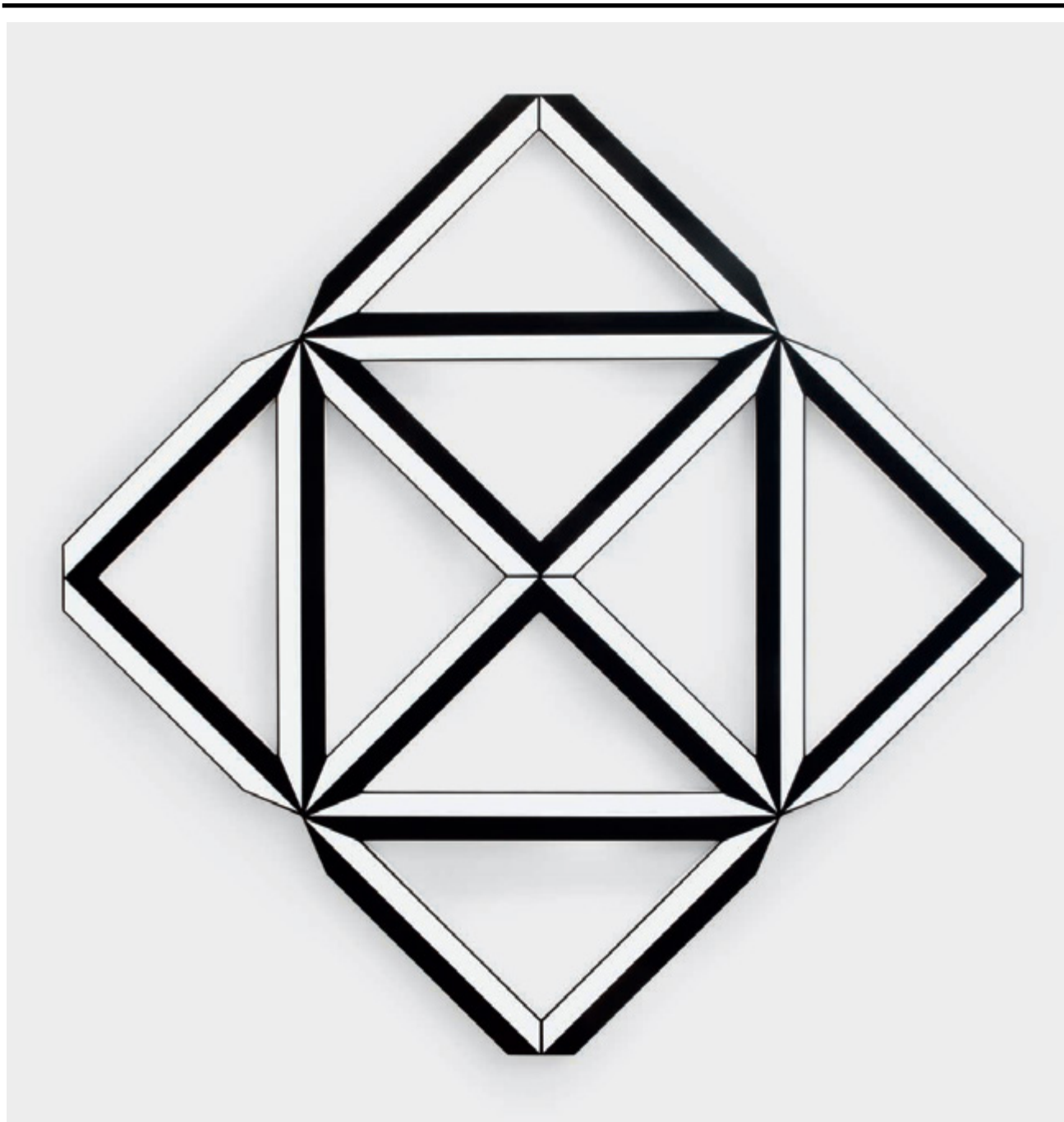
We could think of Decrauzat's paintings as repotentializing the basic elements of visual language, the point, the line and the plane. The point, which is less explicit, is often found as the vanishing point of perspective, a metaphor for the viewer's own gaze. The line, in turn, is one of the main elements of his grammar, present in the stripes of *Slow Motion*, a series of paintings with striped motifs in which the successive layers of paint deposited on the surface create chromatic transitions and hues. As the title suggests, these paintings seem to want to slow down vision. For curator Michel Gauthier, the temporal reference of the title brings another layer to the work, that of presence. "A work whose perception implies duration will become less present when a quotation or reference infuses it with something exogenous that comes from another time." In Decrauzat's painting, there is the slow time of its making, the historical time of its references, the present of its contemplation and its permanence in the viewer's memory.

In *Delay*, another reference to time, the artist creates lines that follow the shape of the painting. Each line has small tonal gradations along its length, creating an illusory effect of volumes and folds, generating a three-dimensional perception of a two-dimensional image. This technique is used in several other works, such as the *Flags* and *Waves* series, in which the undulations of the lines not only introduce rhythms into the paintings, but also build optical relationships of intensity and duration. In the series entitled *Loop*, the artist creates continuous visual structures that establish another rhythm, one that is more organic and cyclical.

Many of Decrauzat's compositions are structured eccentrically, as if developing from the center to the edge. The very lines that Decrauzat uses to create his images seem to reverberate this inner form, also shaping the edges of the painting. The lines seem to become echoes of the form, evoking the very how. There is a subtle musicality beneath Decrauzat's silent figures.

*Various Unequal
Permutations I*, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
151 x 151 cm
59,4 x 59,4 in



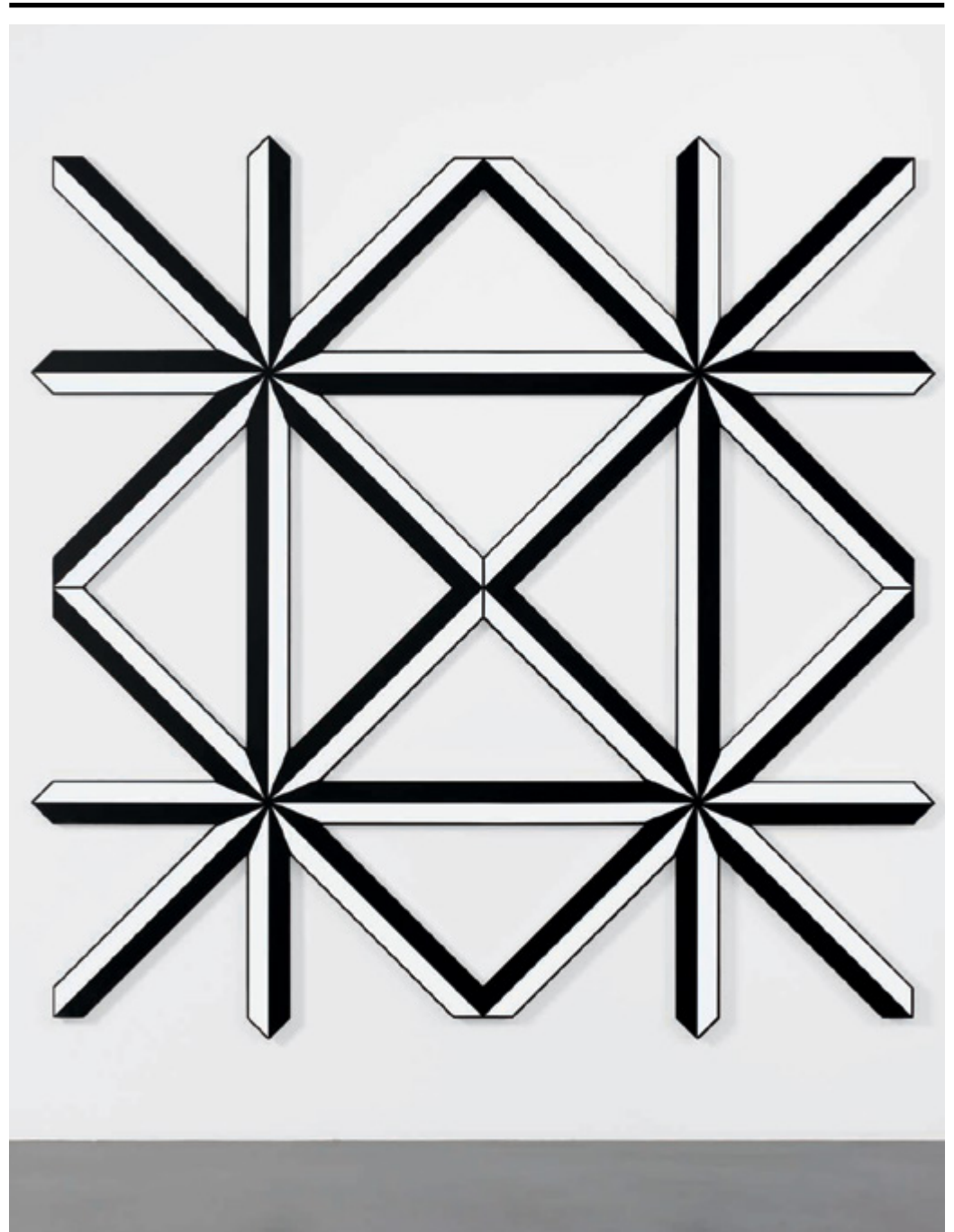


The artist's references include experimental and commercial cinema, architecture, graphic arts and design. His work often begins by defining a repertoire of abstract images from science and art, observing their development and application throughout history. "The serigraph *Pulsar* (2003) attests even more openly to the diversity of references present in Decrauzat's images. The work is based on a graph showing the frequency and intensity of the emissions from the first recording of a pulsar (an astronomical body that emits a regular signal)," says curator Michel Gautier. The image is made up of eighty lines drawn one above the other, visually translating the frequency and intensity of the signal.

*Various Unequal
Permutations II, 2019*
acrylic paint on canvas
199 x 199 cm
78,3 x 78,3 in

It is important to note that Philippe Decrauzat's paintings have a firm relationship with the space in which they are placed. Whether in his mural paintings, directly applied to the walls, or in his paintings on canvas, the shape of the chassis of which usually accompanies the figure arranged there, which alter the perception of the space in which it is inserted, or even by emulating spatial effects in the painting itself, as in *Shadows* (2015), a series of almost identical paintings, structured in a central color zone with two thin borders, top and bottom, of a second color. Decrauzat manipulates tonal gradation, moving from saturated tones to black, incorporating the progression of light, through simulation, into the very material of the image. *24 paintings* (2017) is based on the same principle, however, it is based on the transition from white to black, also evoking the hours of the day and the number of frames sequenced in a second to create the effect of movement in films projected in the cinema.

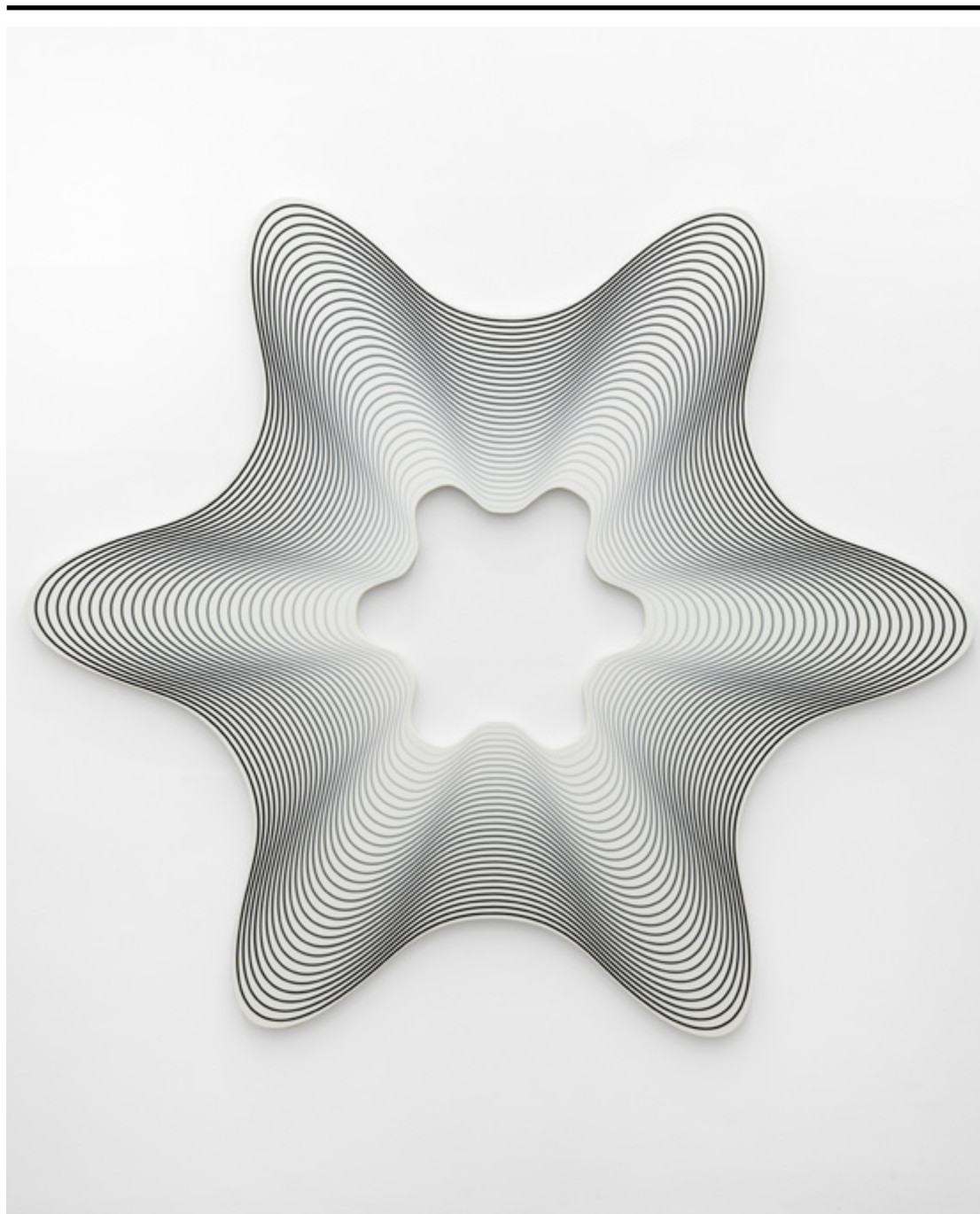
Multi Exposure, 2016
acrylic paint on canvas
245 × 245 cm
96,4 × 96,4 in





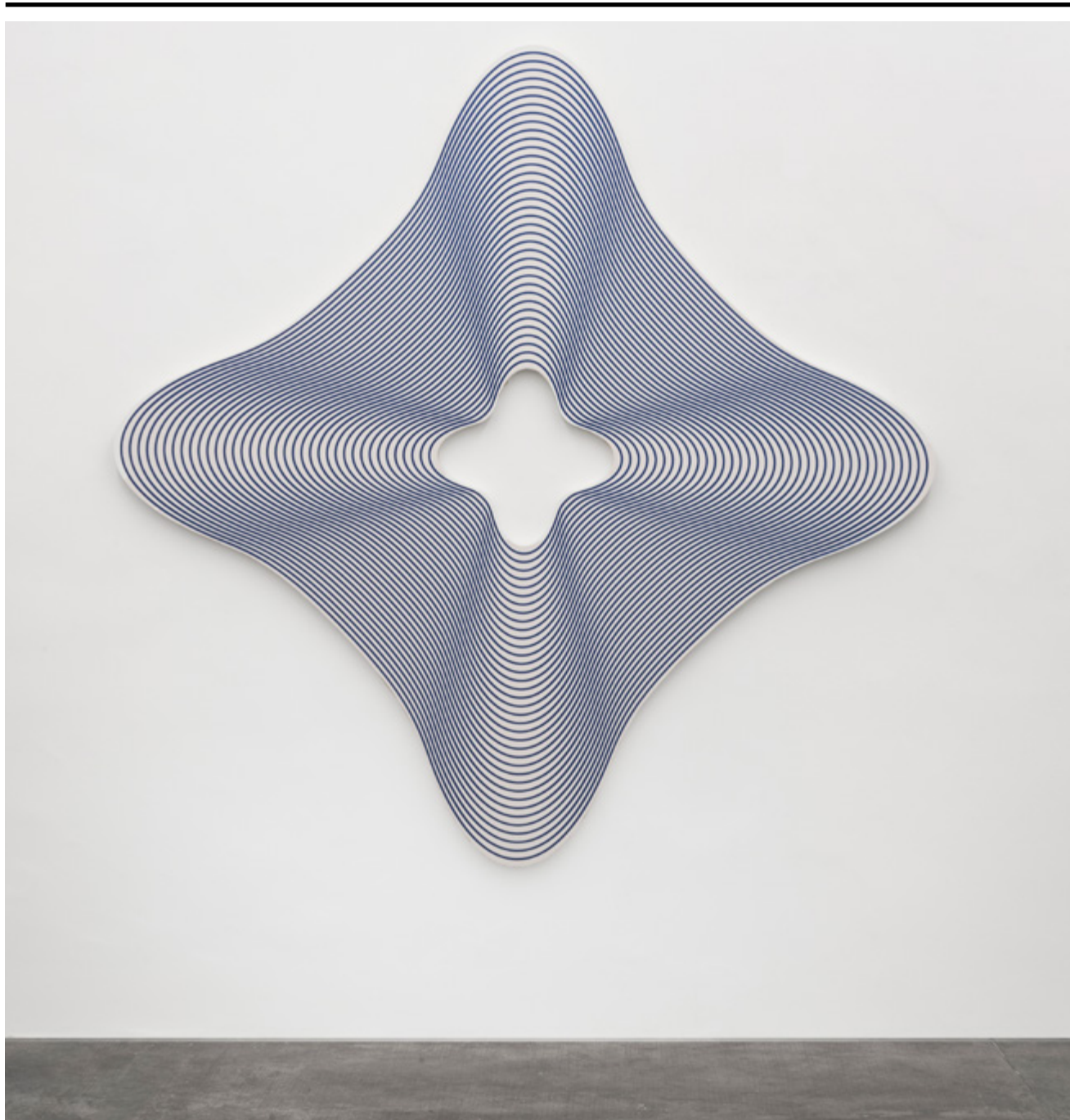
exhibition view
Abstract generation: now in print, 2013,
MoMA, New York, USA.
Photo: Thomas Griesel

*Delay Exa # 4 (Black
to White)*, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
206 × 235 x 3,5 cm
81.1 x 92.5 x 1.4 in

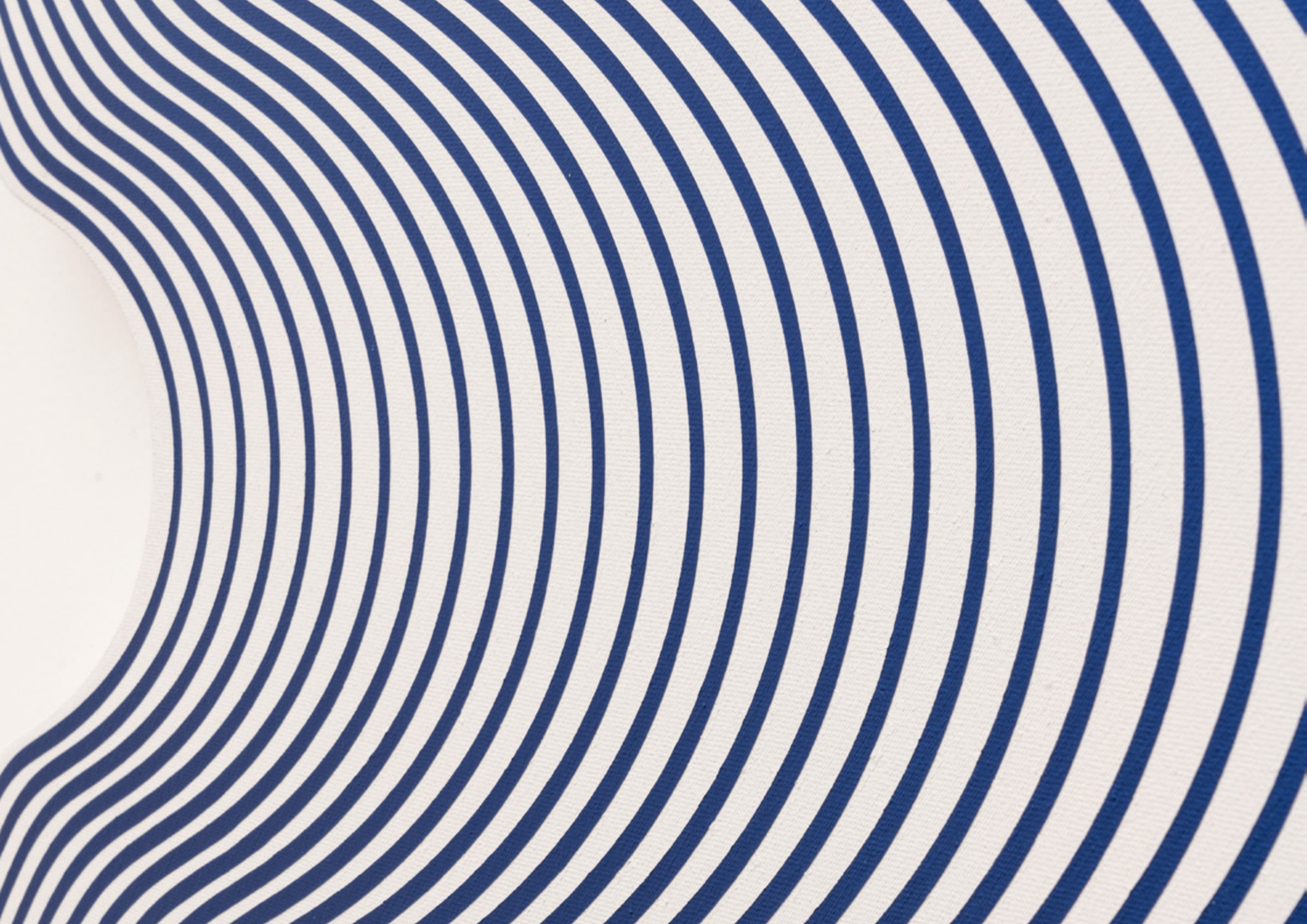


exhibition view *Circulation*, 2019,
galeria Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil.
Photo: Erika Mayumi



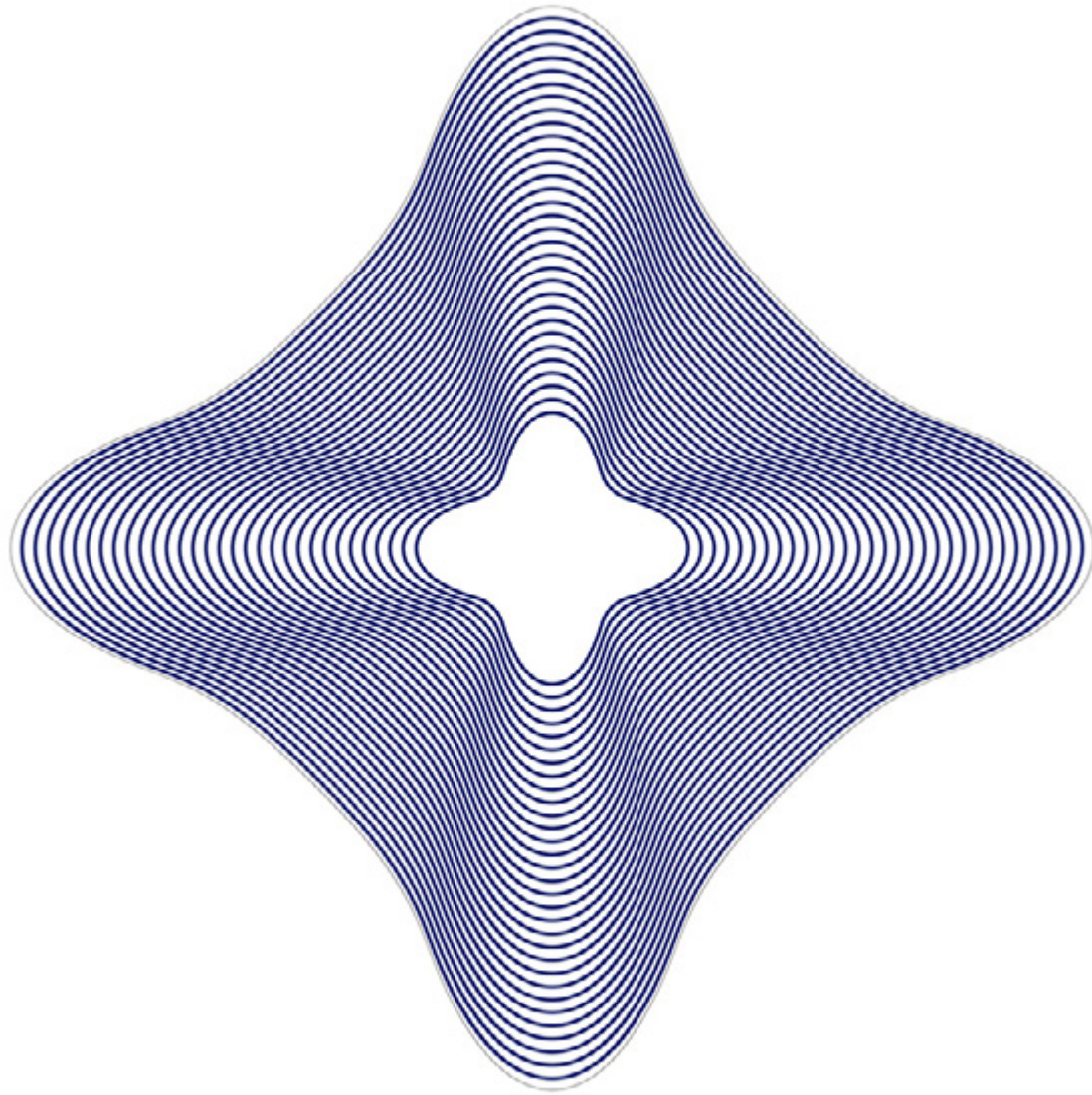


Delay (Blue Iridescent), 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
212 x 212 x 3,5 cm
83.5 x 83.5 x 1.4 in

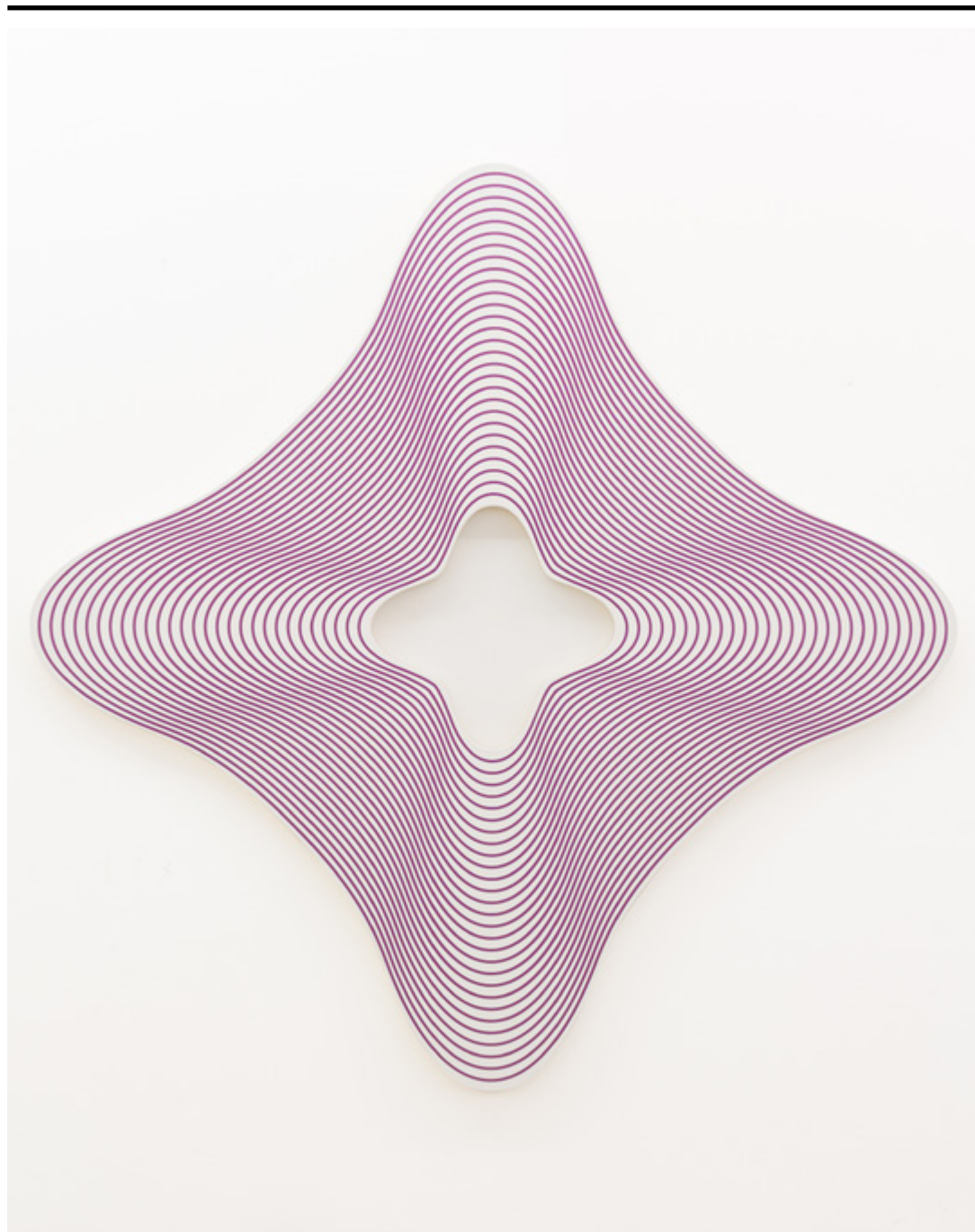


Broadcasting Delay
Center White, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
170 x 170 cm
66.9 x 66.9 in

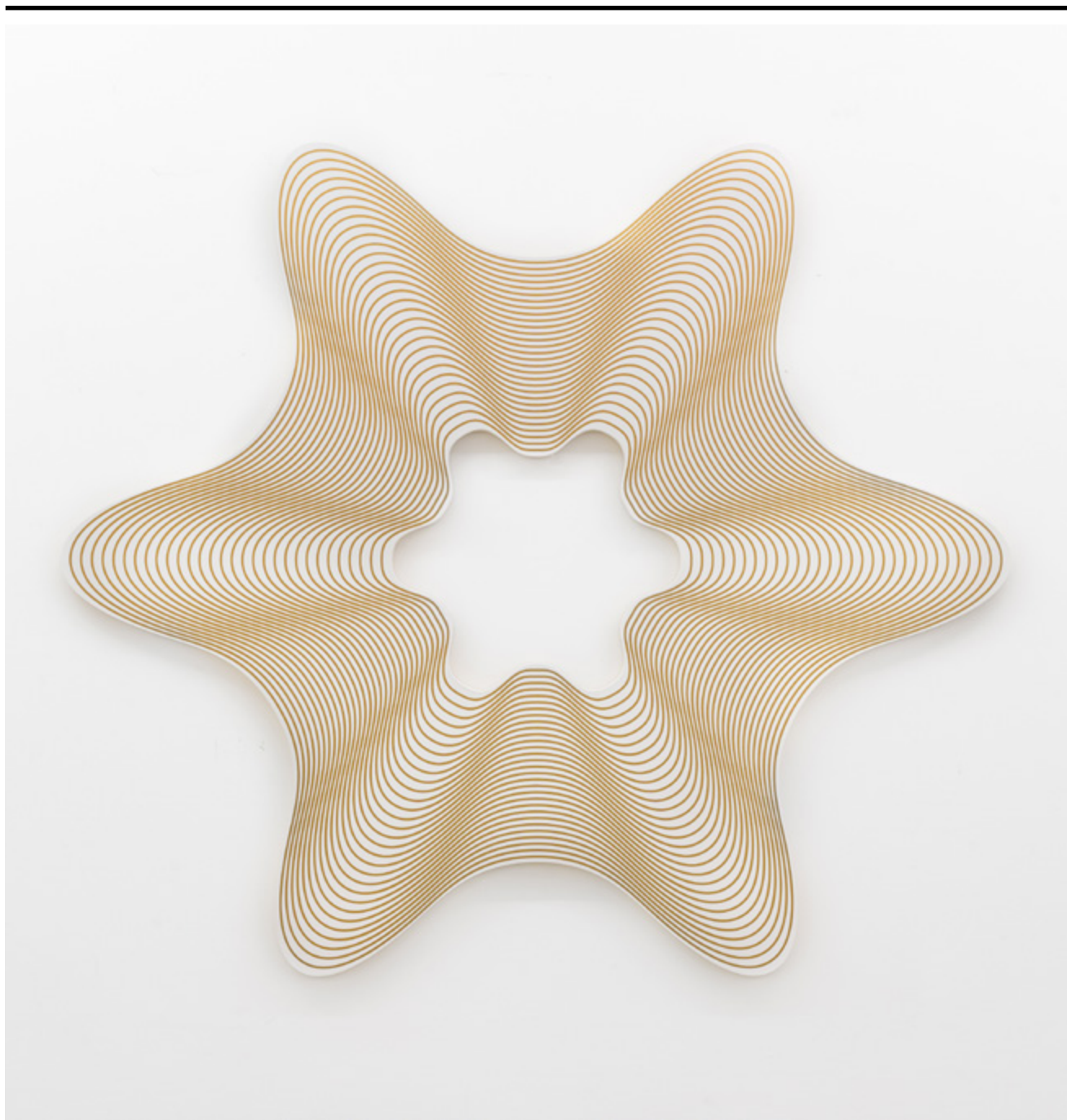




Delay Dark Violet, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 160 cm
63 x 63 in



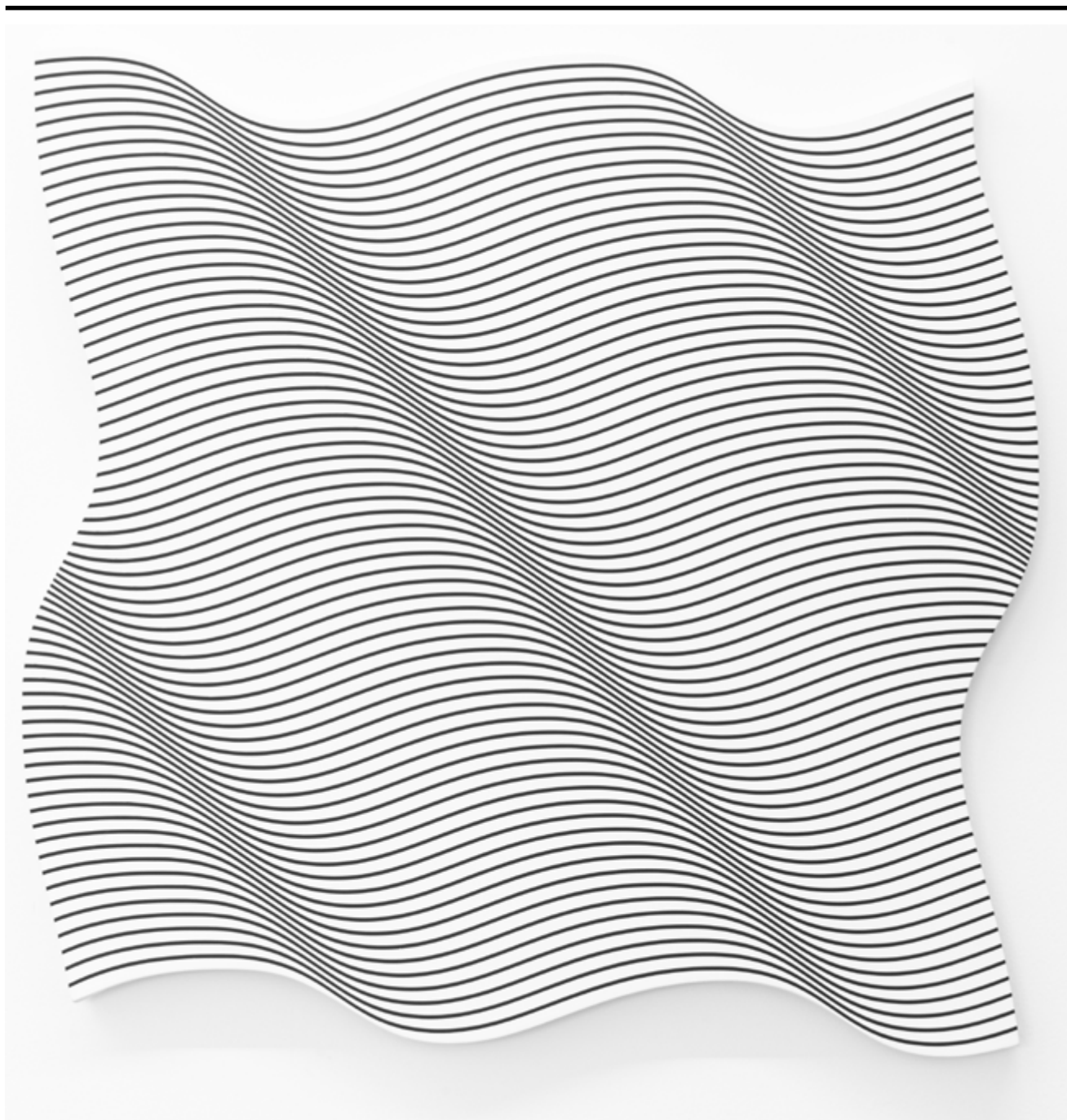
Delay Purple Red, 2021
acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 160 cm
63 x 63 in



Delay Exa Gold, 2022
acrylic paint on canvas
185 x 211 cm
72.8 x 83.1 in

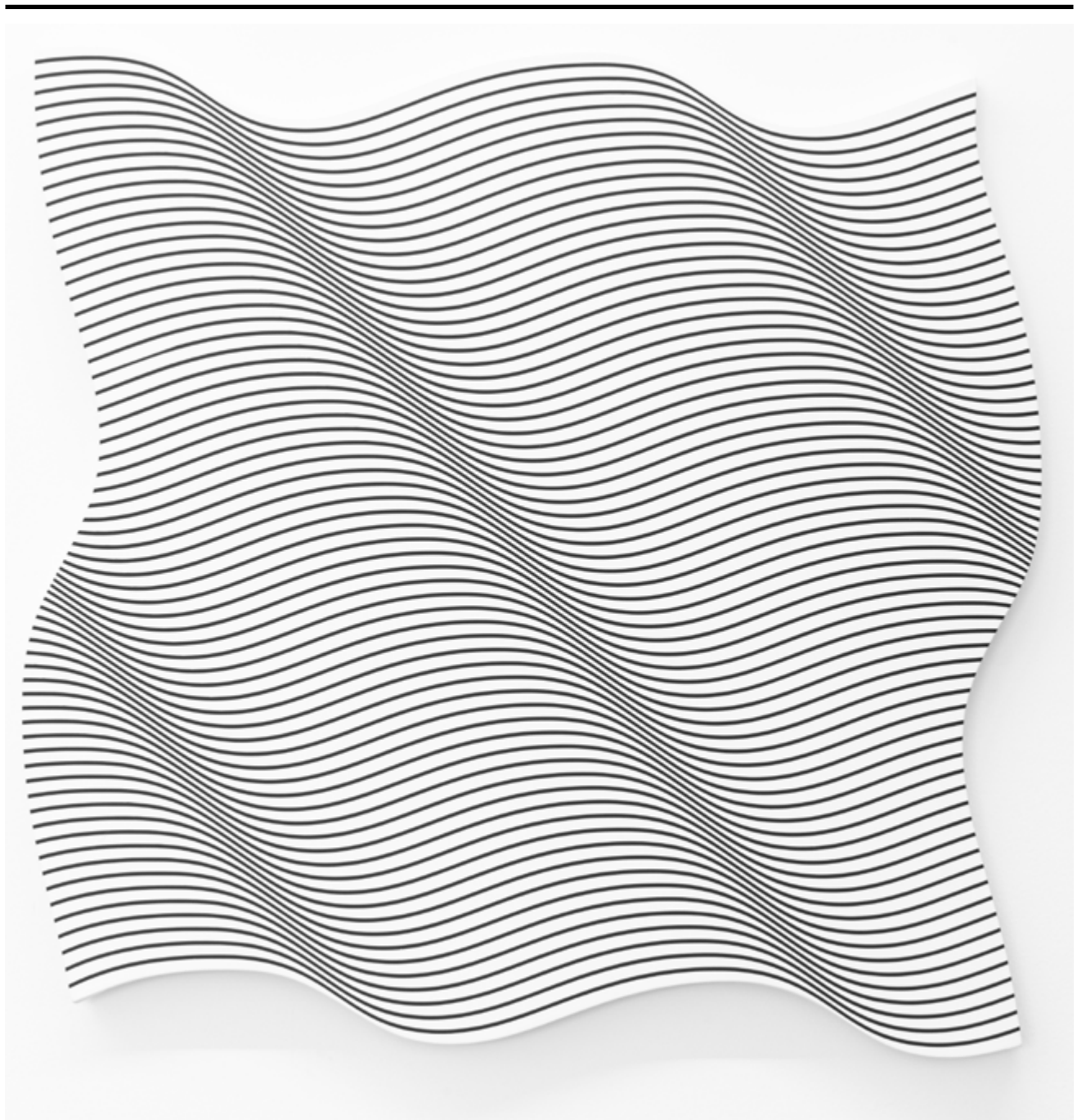
Flag wave, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
119 x 119 cm
46.9 x 46.9 in



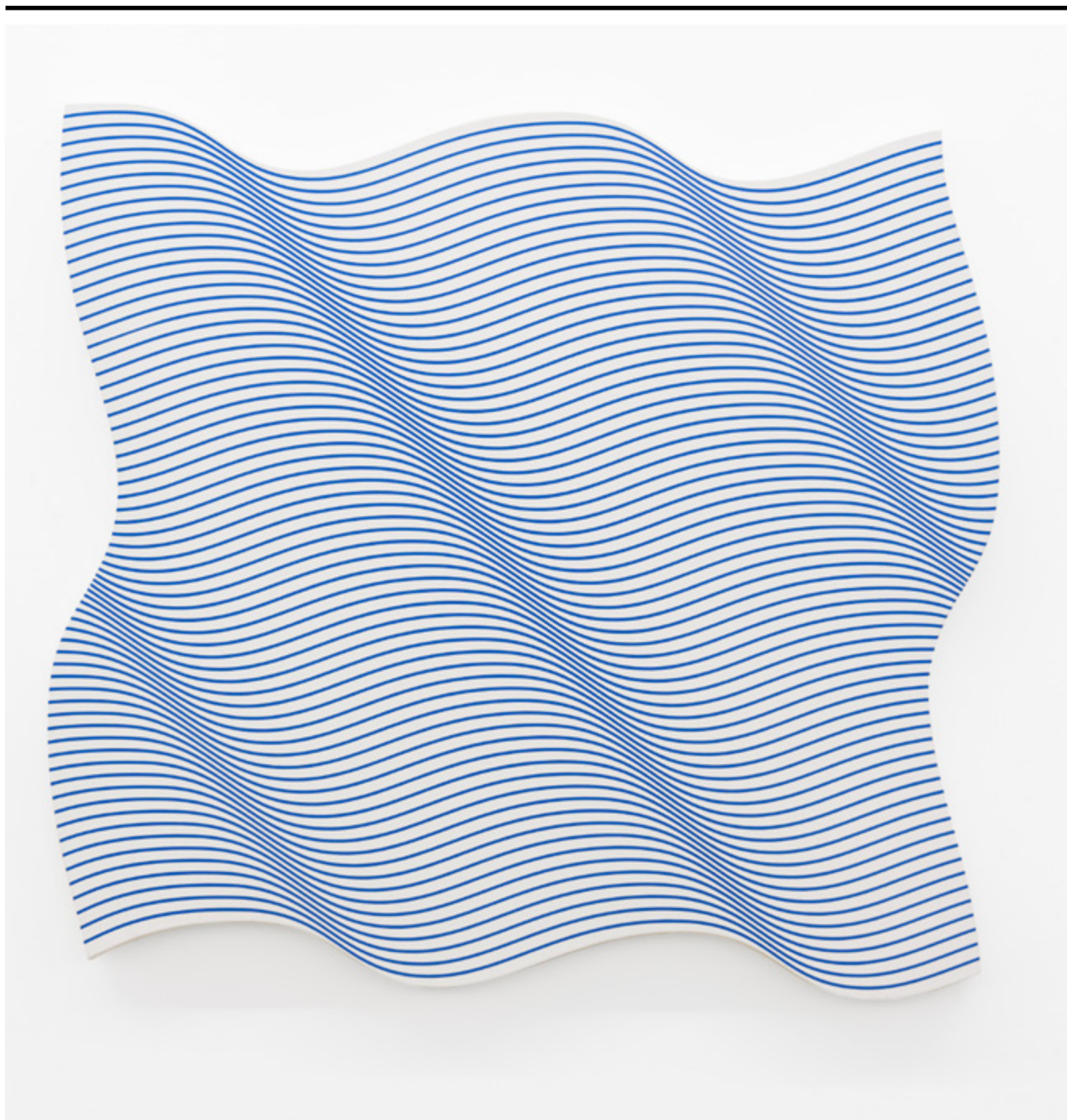


*Flag wave (three interrupted
movements), 2020*
acrylic paint on canvas
95 x 95 cm
37.4 x 37.4 in



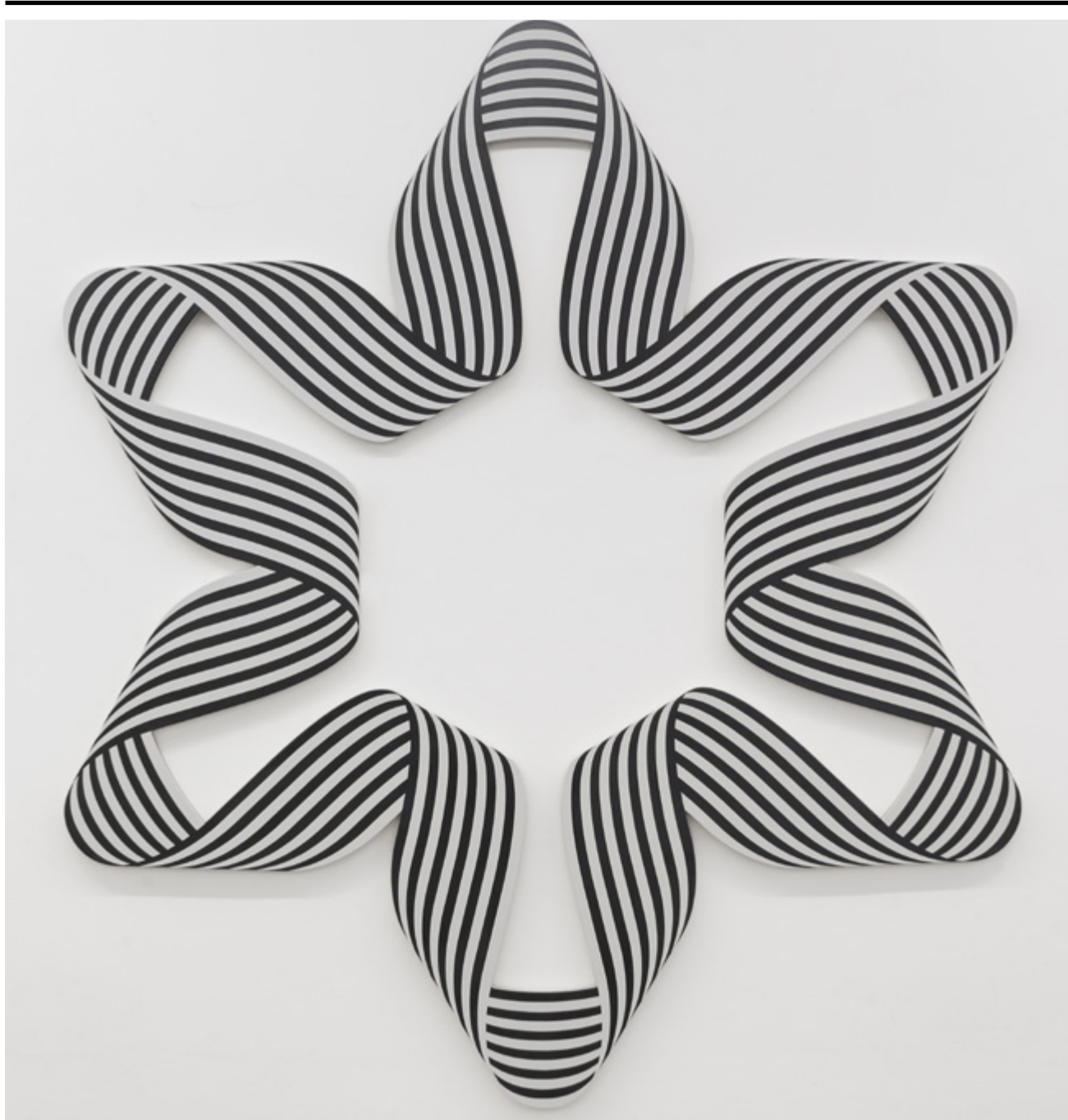


*Flag wave (three interrupted
movements), 2020*
acrylic paint on canvas
95 x 95 cm
39.4 x 37.4 in



Flag Wave Blue Iridescent, 2021
acrylic paint on canvas
100 x 95 cm
39.4 x 37.4 in



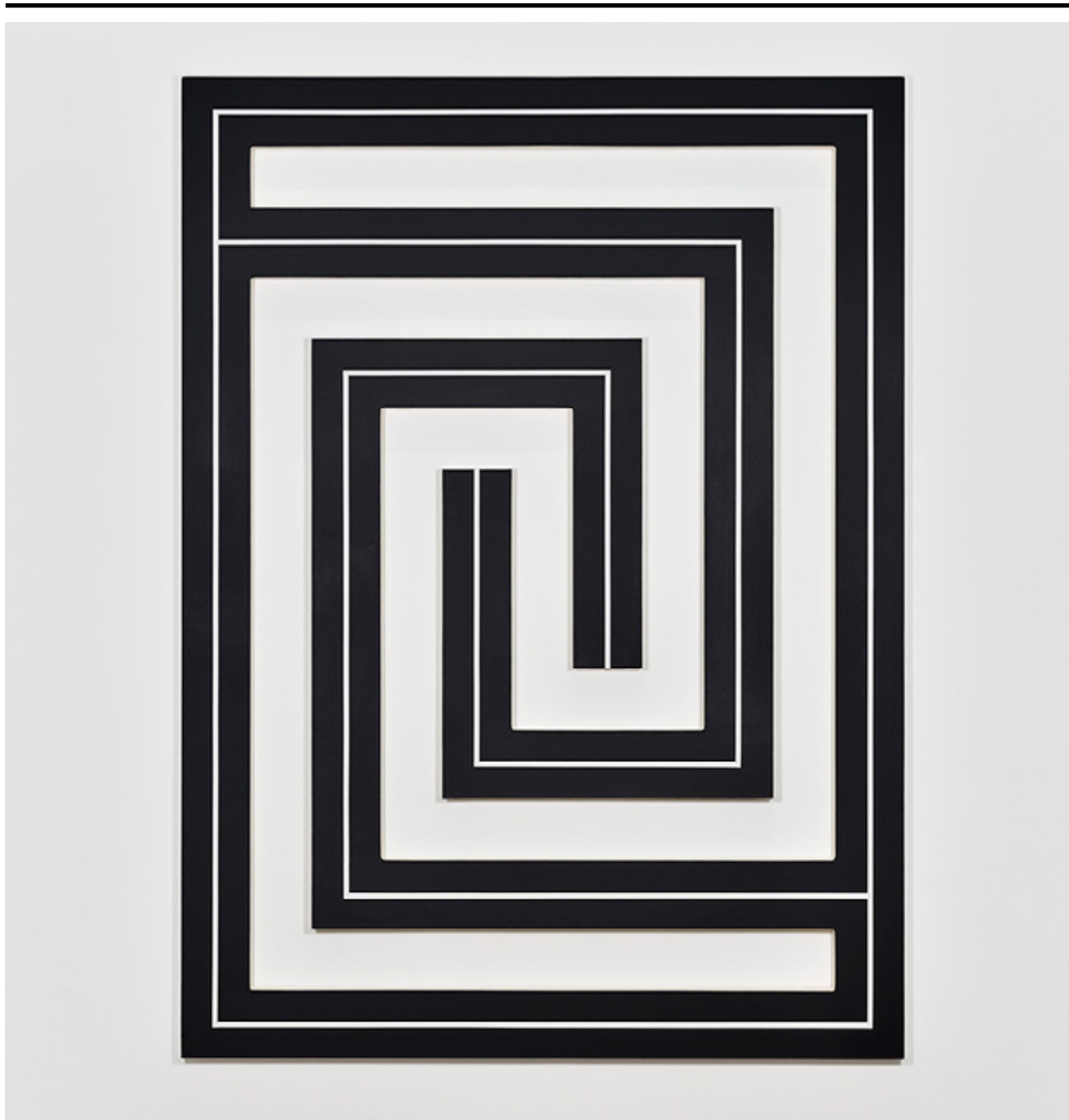


Loop 12 lines on the edge, 2022
acrylic paint on canvas
214 x 243 cm
84.3 x 95.7 in





exhibition view
Bright phase, dark phase, 2016,
gallery Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Germany.
Photo: © Galerie Mehdi Chouakri



*Feedback Loop, a blind
surface of experience, 2022*
acrylic paint on canvas
176 x 128 cm
69.3 x 50.4 in



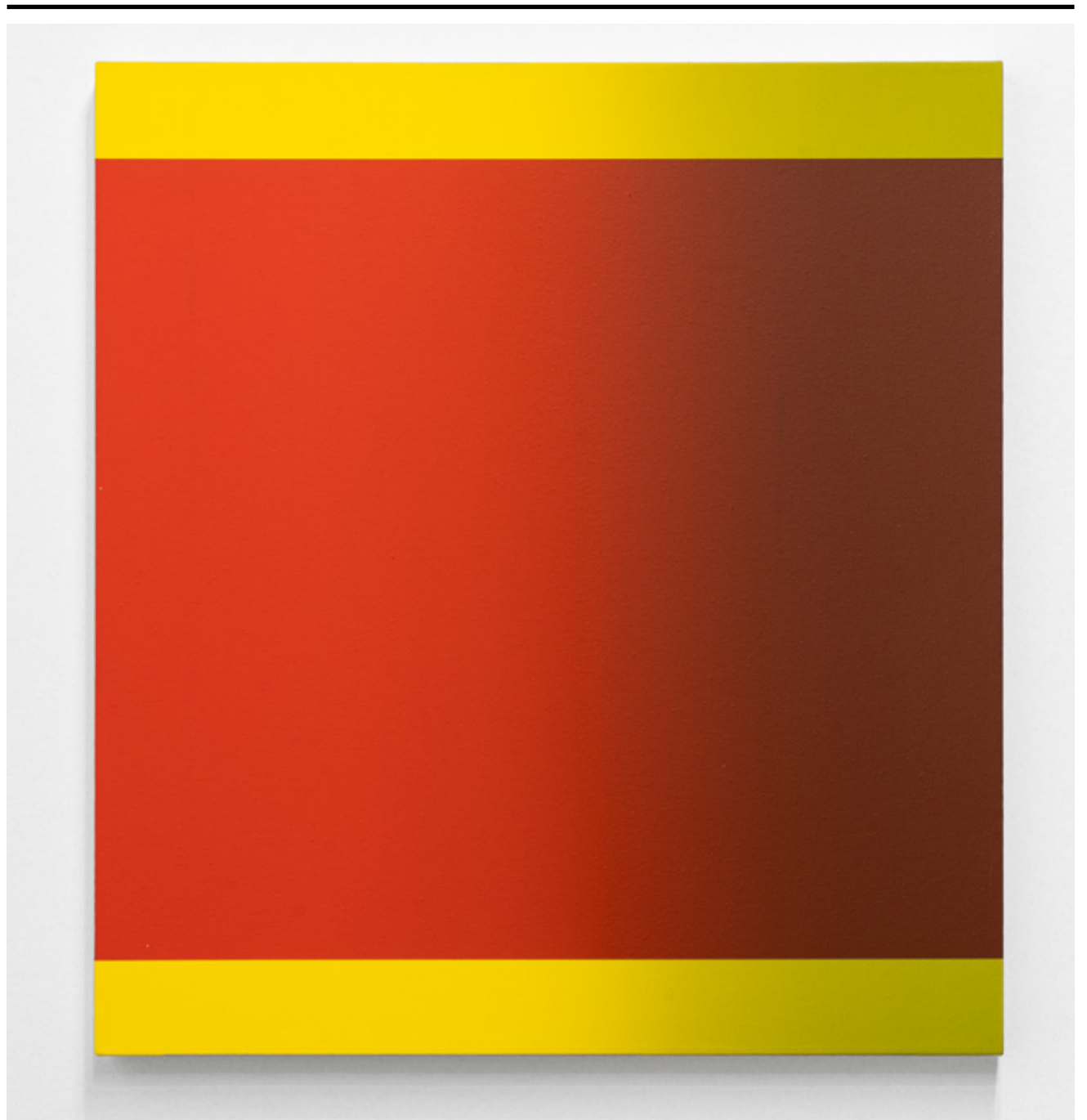
*Feedback Loop, a space that is
showing up somewhere else, 2022*
acrylic paint on canvas
221 x 176 cm
87 x 69.3 in



exhibition view

Philippe Decrauzat: *Tenir Pendant*
Que Le Balancement Se Meurt, 2017,
Galeria Parra & Romero, Madrid, Spain
Photo: © Parra & Romero

Shadow day 2, 2015
acrylic paint on canvas
52 x 56,8 cm
20.5 x 22.4 in



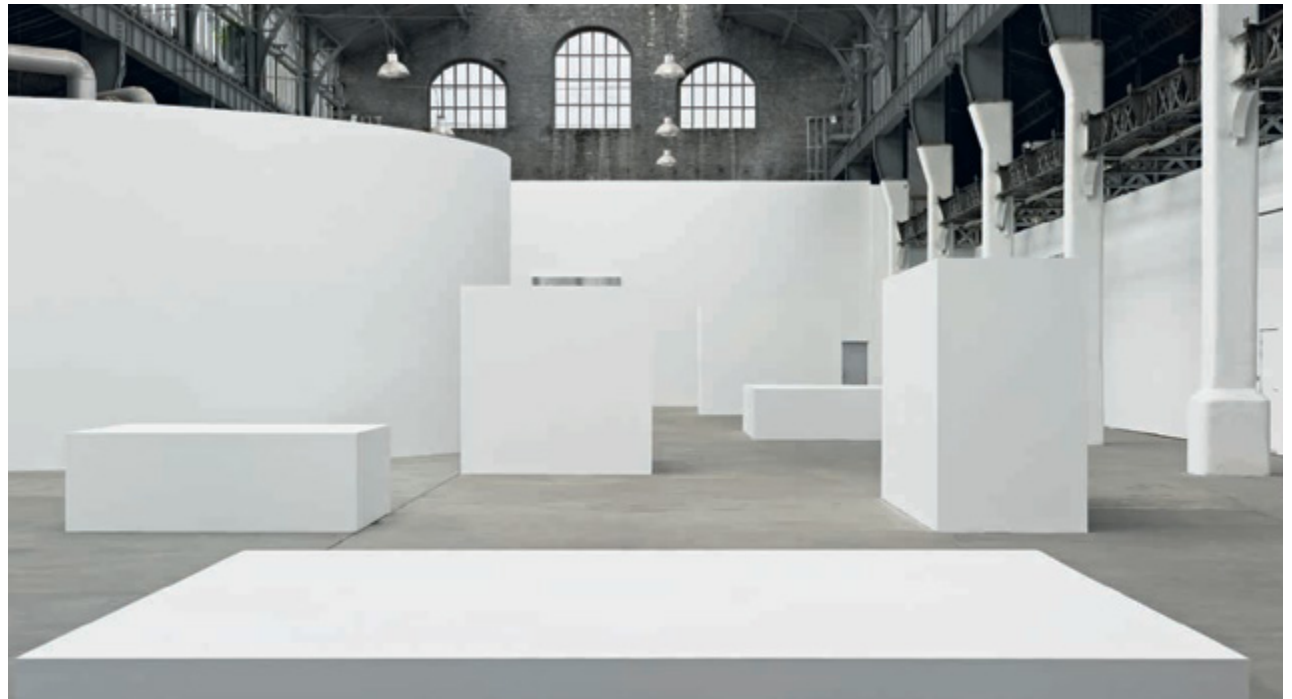




Shadow from time to time I, 2018
acrylic paint on canvas
56 x 52 x 2,5 cm
22.3 x 20.5 x 1 in

installation works and interventions

According to Michel Gautier, “Decrauzat’s works could be understood as recordings or translations of various cultural objects and their transmissions. The mural *To be Continued* (2001) is based on the design of the carpet in the corridors of the Overlook Hotel in Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980); while the plastic disks placed on the floor under another mural, together forming *Flight Disc* (2002), are modeled on the weapons of the cybernetic warriors in Steven Lisberger’s *Tron* (1982). The metal bars in *Black Metal* (2006), an abstract choreography in space, recall Kenneth Snelson’s sculptures freed from the laws of tensional integrity, but are nevertheless based on the batons used by the security forces in George Lucas’s *THX 138* (1971). The sound sculpture *Leslie* (2007-2008), on the other hand, evokes a dramatic episode of 1960s popular culture narrated in the documentary *Gimme Shelter* (1970).[...] The grid of the mural *DK* (2006) is inspired less by François Morellet and Sol LeWitt than by the logo of the Dead Kennedys, a hardcore band founded in the late 1970s in California. And if the black stripes of a painting like *Black Hole* (2000) recall Frank Stella’s *Black Paintings* (1958-1960), they do so through Ian Whittaker’s set design for Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1979).”





For Gautier, it is important to understand that the references present in Philippe Decrauzat's work are not what differentiates his production, but indicators that his practice seeks a foundation in sources outside of himself. Still according to the curator, abstraction, "as promulgated by late modernism, was understood as a means of guaranteeing the pure self-telism of the work of art. In order to affirm its essence, it was necessary that the work - whether pictorial, sculptural or filmic - no longer sought its meaning outside of itself. Decrauzat's abstractions thus break with the modernist paradigm. His paintings, sculptures and films henceforth derive from an exogenous source and, as such, are not shy about asserting a form of narrativity through the play of references, which invariably constitutes, in all its coherence, the database of his work."

After the Screen
(Concrete Fragment), 2013

For the exhibition A mental Mandala, at the MUAC in Mexico City, Decrauzat created *After the Screen (Concrete Fragment)* (2013), a set of eight rectangular pieces of concrete, whose different thicknesses create the visual effect of lines and planes which, placed on the walls of the Museum's outdoor area, create rhythms on the surface of its architecture. Simultaneously, the artist integrates work and space, while transforming the latter.

The indiscernibility between the physical limits of the gallery and the work is the keynote of several of the artist's proposals, such as *Folding* (2013), a sculpture adjacent to the wall that creates descending levels, like a staircase or grandstand; or *White Stage* (2016), a wooden structure that creates a kind of stage, an elevation in the gallery that gives access to the works. Decrauzat, by painting these volumes white, in the same tone as the gallery walls, seems to be offering a commentary on the idea of the *White Cube*, revealing to us how neutral its supposed neutrality is.

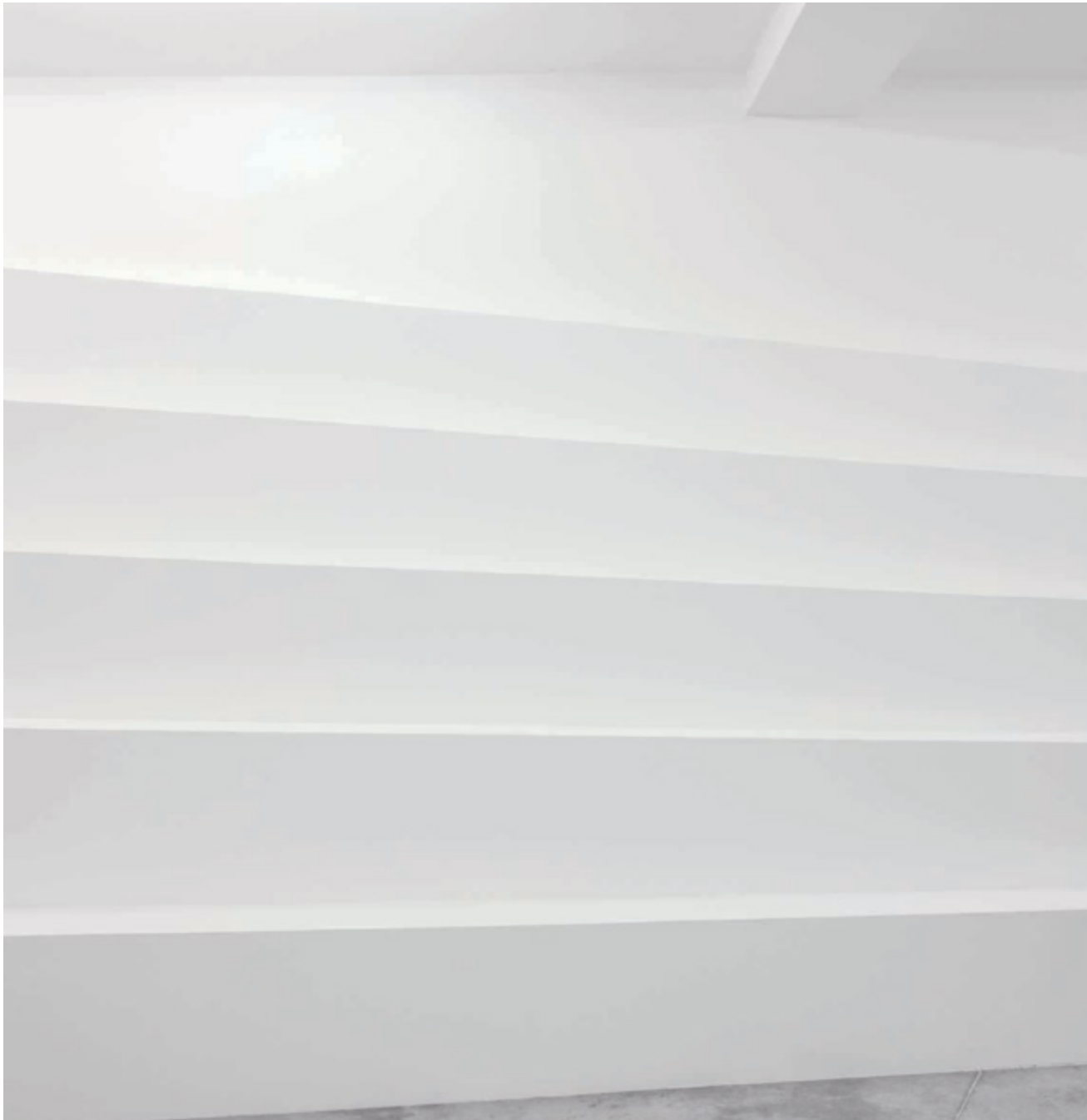


After the Screen
(*Concrete Fragment*), 2013

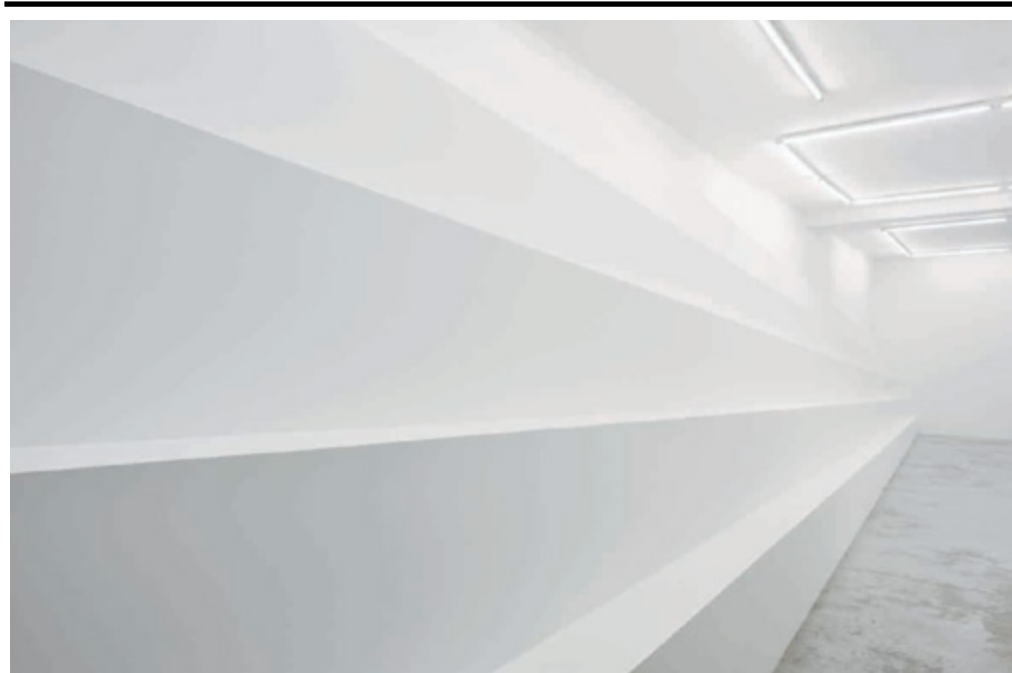


Rhythmus, presented in *Notes, Tones, Stone* (2014), at the Magasin, Centre national d'art contemporain, in Grenoble, consists of ten structures of white geometric solids which, arranged on the floor, alter the topography of the space and, consequently, the way it is perceived.

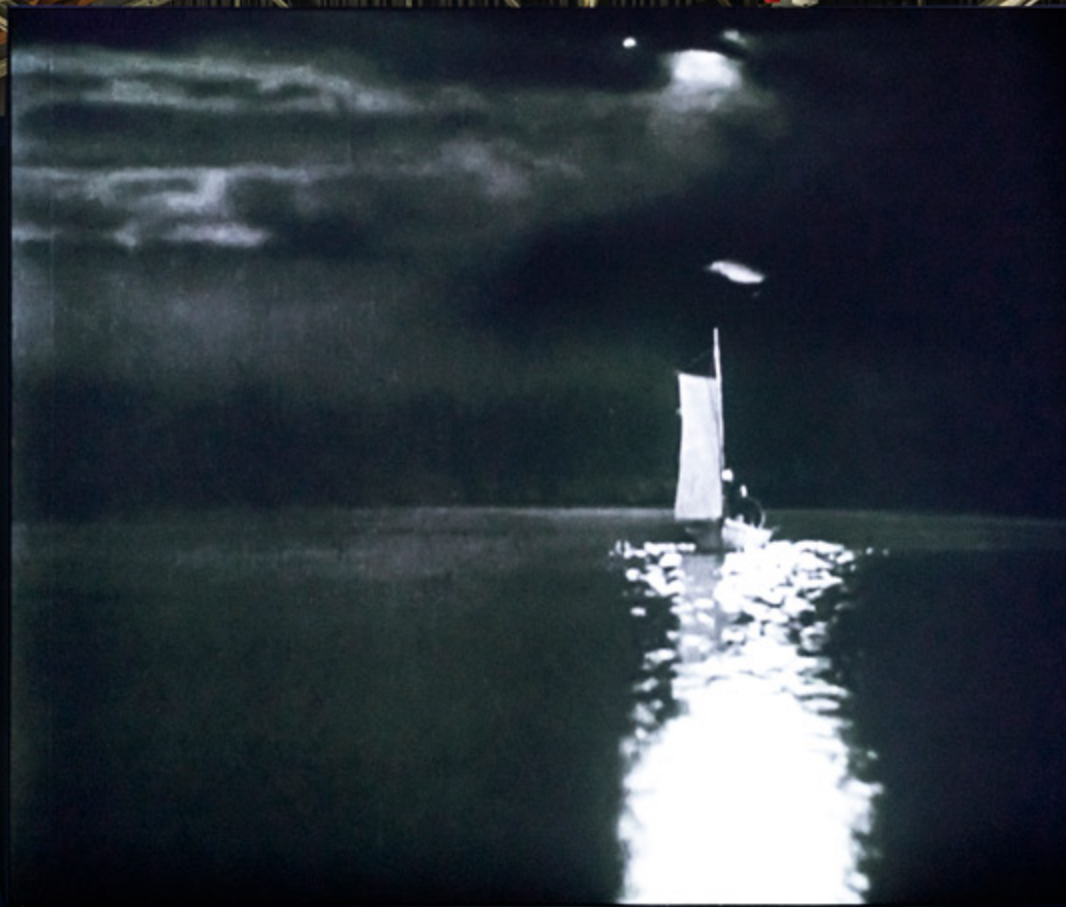
After the Screen
(Concrete Fragment), 2013



Folding, 2013
mixed-media wall sculpture



Folding, 2013
mixed-media wall sculpture



film exhibition *Gradient*, 2021
Kanal, Brussels, Belgium

sculptures

So Plain to See (Les Perspectiveurs) is a set of three square-based pyramids, based on the engraving by Abraham Bosses for the treatise on perspective by Girard Desargues (1591-1661), a mathematician and architect considered to be the founder of projective geometry. LD affirms “instead of a discursive illustration, the experience of perspective is retranslated as a situation that can be confused with the space of the white cube itself.[...] The passage from drawing to sculpture transposes the graphic representation of the point of view into three closed white solids. This translational operation exposes the geometric principle of the focal point by materializing the rays of light and, what’s more, emptying the scene by eliminating all the other elements shown in perspective. The sculpture reveals not what the perspective system portrays, but the system itself. Perspective is also not presented as a tool for representation, but as a language that allows the formulation of reality.”

Les Perspectiveurs, 2019
steel and white paint
265 x 81 x 86 cm
104.3 x 31.9 x 33.9 in





Decrauzat's three-dimensional practice, both in the field of installation and sculpture, usually begins with two-dimensional works and images. This highlights the apparently contradictory nature of his work, which revisits historical forms, tensing them as it moves from one language or medium to another. In this sense, he often works from two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional space, present in drawings, illustrations and paintings, making them concrete in the real world. One example is *M* (2006), a reproduction of the model created by Gustav Klucis in 1925, while *Man the Square III* (2008) has its motif taken from a photograph by Edward Muybridge in which an individual jumps, grabbing the wires used to create a grid that measures movement.

Les Perspectiveurs, 2019
steel and white paint
163 x 192 x 104 cm
64.2 x 75.6 x 40.9 in

“Light Space *Modulator* (2002) is the most high-tech piece I’ve ever done,” Decrauzat once said. The work borrows a phrase from a work by Lazlo Moholy-Nagy for its title. It is also based on the hypnosis machine used in John Boorman’s *The Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977). The artist says: “I faithfully reproduced the very slow sequence of light pulsations that can be seen in this movie. Naturally, the effect produced on the viewer is below the expected result, below this moment when the definition of the image, the meaning it may contain, is yet to be revealed.”

Les Perspectiveurs, 2019
steel and white paint
130 x 136 x 98 cm
51.2 x 53.5 x 38.6 in





Les Perspectiveurs, 2019
steel and white paint
163 x 192 x 104 cm
64.2 x 75.6 x 40.9 in



exhibition view *Circulation*, 2019,
galeria Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil.
Photo: Erika Mayumi

On Cover C, 2013
acrylic paint on canvas
200 × 180 cm
78,7 × 10,8 in





On Cover C, 2013
acrylic paint on canvas
200 × 180 cm
78,7 × 10,8 in

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