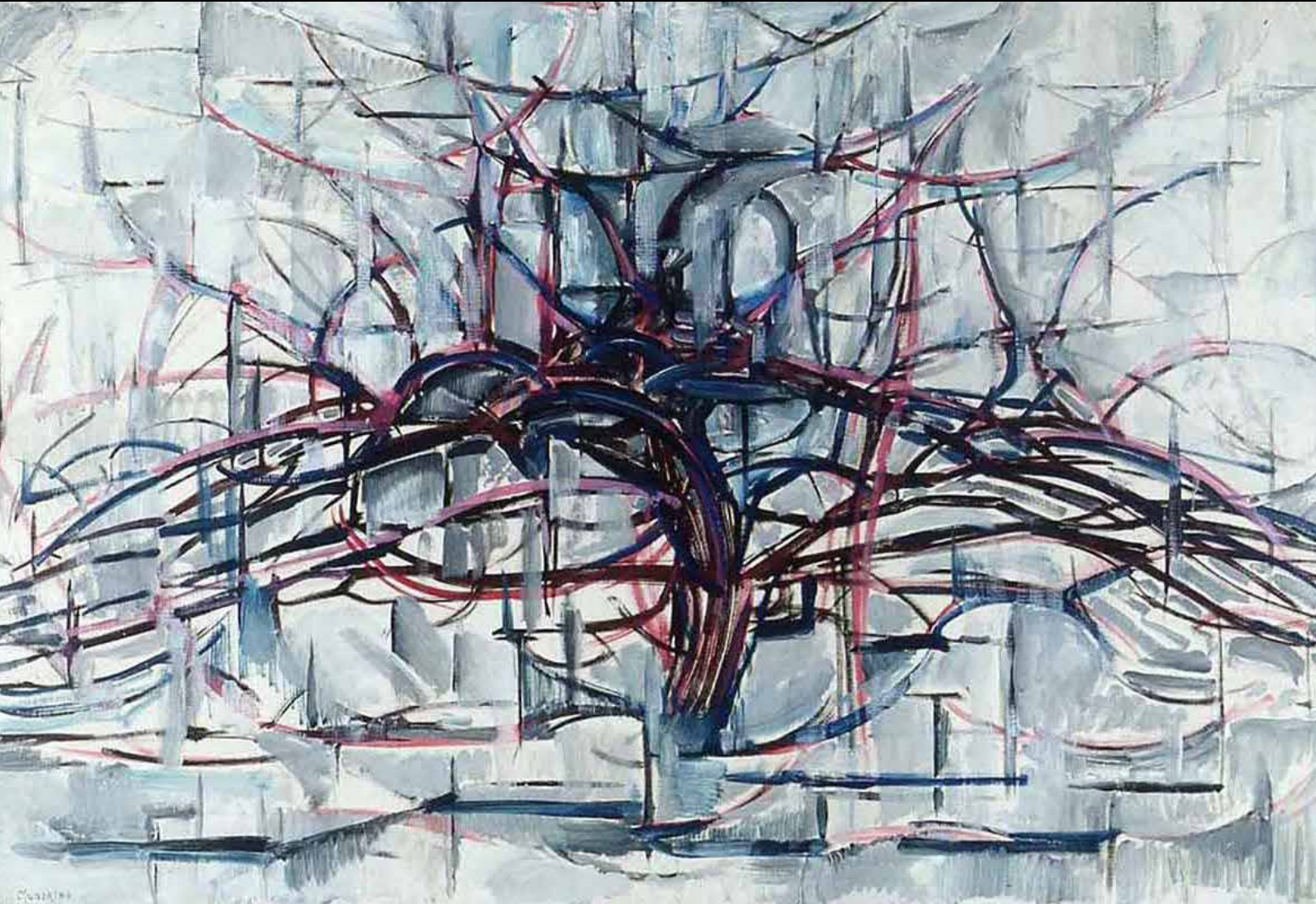




ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA



ISSUE 20

ART
MAGAZINE

ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA Art Magazine / ISSUE 20

ISSN 2783- 6053

Publisher
VSI ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

Curator & Art Director
Zita Vilutyte
iaf.animamundi@gmail.com

Writing by
Jurgis Dieliautas
fenomenon@splius.lt
ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

Mohamed Idir Djauder
Specelst professor of artistic studies

Zuzana Green
Art critic

Interviews by
Zita Vilutyte

OBDK
David Hinojosa Admann

ACN
Mark Walmsley

Proofreader
Silvia Elzberg

Designer
Eva Fursalova

Picture credits:
Zita Vilutyte (9), Vytautas Kaltenis (13), David Hinojosa (19, 21, 23, 25), Fritz Glarner (58)

Copy-writing
ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

Operation & Distribution
ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

Edition
SUMMER, 2026

Location
LITHUANIA

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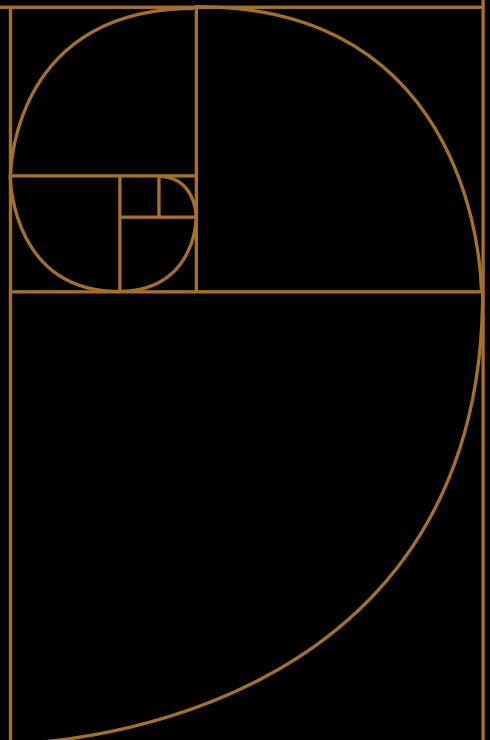
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ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMI

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ART TO REMAIN AUTHENTIC OR INTIMATE?





© **Boguslawa Bryska** (UK), Title: **"Silence speaks loud"**, 61 x 81 cm, oil on canvas, 2025

ESSAY

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ART STORY

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© Zita Vilutyte (Lithuania), Title: "Exosphere", 100 x 100 cm, acrylic, canvas, 2023

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ART TO REMAIN AUTHENTIC OR INTIMATE

In an era when every gesture, utterance, and image can be captured, duplicated, and stored indefinitely, the terms authenticity and intimacy in art demand redefinition. The archive is no longer a passive repository but an infrastructural actor that shapes what can be seen, remembered, and valued. As a cultural researcher and critic, one must attend not only to artworks themselves but to the ecosystems—technological, institutional, and social—that mediate their production and reception. The question is not whether art can remain authentic or intimate, but how those qualities are produced, negotiated, and preserved within a world of ubiquitous recording.

The contemporary archive functions like a medium: it filters, formats, and circulates experience. Digital storage collapses temporal distance and multiplies points of access, turning ephemeral performances into persistent objects and private moments into public data. This transformation alters the ontology of art. Works that once relied on singular presence now exist as networks of traces, versions, and metadata. The archive therefore exerts curatorial power by deciding which instantiations endure and which are forgotten, and in doing so it reshapes the historical narratives that confer authenticity.

Intimacy in art can no longer be equated with secrecy or scarcity. Instead, it emerges through the

choreography of encounter—the conditions under which an audience meets a work and the relational protocols that govern that meeting. Artists create intimacy by designing thresholds: selective access, temporal constraints, participatory rules, or modes of address that invite vulnerability without surrendering agency. Intimacy becomes a practice of framing and consent, a deliberate modulation of exposure that resists the flattening logic of total visibility.

Authenticity ceases to be a property intrinsic to an object and becomes a function of process. It is enacted through procedures, documentation, and community recognition. Provenance expands beyond ownership records to include technical dependencies, platform affordances, and the social practices that sustain a work's meaning. In digital and networked art, authenticity is preserved by documenting the environment of creation, the artist's constraints, and the interactions that constitute the piece. This procedural view acknowledges that a work's truth is bound up with how it is made legible to others.

Recording is never neutral. The impulse to archive collides with questions of consent, labor, and power. Who benefits when intimate moments are preserved? Whose labor is made visible and whose remains invisible? Institutions that accumulate digital traces risk reproducing colonial and extractive logics by valorizing certain narratives while erasing others. Authenticity in this context must include ethical provenance: transparency about methods, acknowledgment of contributors, and attention to the consequences of circulation for vulnerable subjects.

In a culture where attention is commodified, intimacy and authenticity are also economic categories. Visibility can confer value, but it can also commodify and exhaust. Artists must navigate a marketplace that rewards spectacle and virality, often at the expense of depth. To preserve intimacy, creators and institutions might deliberately limit exposure, cultivate slow modes of engagement, or design experiences that resist easy capture. Authenticity, then, becomes a strategy for sustaining attention in ways that prioritize qualitative depth over quantitative reach.

Museums, galleries, and archives must evolve from custodians of objects to stewards of contexts. Conservators need new vocabularies and tools to preserve works that depend on obsolete platforms, ephemeral networks, or participatory protocols. Curators must document not only artifacts but the social and technical conditions that give them meaning. Institutions should adopt ethical frameworks that foreground consent, labor rights, and equitable representation, recognizing that archival choices are also political acts.

Artists are already experimenting with forms that reclaim intimacy within an archival age. Some embrace ephemerality, staging works that resist capture or that self-destruct after a single encounter. Others use constraints—limited editions, time-locked releases, or invitation-only viewings—to create conditions of trust. Participatory practices that center consent and co-authorship can transform exposure into a negotiated exchange rather than an exploitative extraction. These strategies demonstrate that intimacy can be designed rather than merely preserved.

Authenticity in the digital archive is not a static certificate but a living contract among artist, audience, and archive. It requires ongoing maintenance: renewed documentation, community stewardship, and ethical reflection. A living authenticity accepts iteration and translation while insisting on fidelity to the relational and procedural core of a work. It privileges practices that sustain meaning across technological change rather than fetishizing original materiality.

The archival turn forces a reorientation: authenticity and intimacy are no longer safe havens to be defended against technology but capacities to be cultivated within it. They survive when artists, institutions, and audiences attend to the conditions of encounter, to the ethics of preservation, and to the politics of visibility. In that shared labor, art retains its power to move, to disclose, and to hold the fragile interiorities of human life—even when everything can be recorded, shared, and archived.

Zita Vilutyte
Curator & Art Director



ESSAY

VISUAL ARRHYTHMIA

By Jurgis Dieliautas
ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

ISSUE 20





VISUAL ARRHYTHMIA

Summary

Art is rhythmic; artistic expression and development are rhythmic, but all this is always accompanied by a certain visual arrhythmia, which is a complex derivative and an even more complex appeal. Visual arrhythmia is the result of a certain situational mental arrhythmia. At the same time, it is also a more intricate mental intrigue, because it involves expected and unexpected, probable and wholly unforeseen changes. Visual arrhythmia itself is sometimes a result or derivative of the noticeable or imperceptible fatigue of tradition. On the other hand, arrhythmia is also perceived as significant shifts. Sometimes these are crises, truly important signs of visual and mental transformation. Arrhythmia itself is that dual practice of witnessing and being witnessed, accompanying and being accompanied by practice. Arrhythmia is evidenced by changes, metabolic formations, and existing but imperceptible shifts.

A specific visual epoch has its own assigned order with all the obligatory attributes. Often these are attributes of superfluous signs. Because of superfluous signs and increased calmness, the necessary self-renewing play no longer remains. The epoch of superfluous signs is no longer satisfied with its calm, and then the obligatory and irrevocable rhythm is overtaken by misfortune. The usual and obligatory, necessary and irrevocable visual signs are exhausted and diminishing. The obligatory attributes no longer show the required power; there is no longer a necessary, characteristic response. Superfluous signs become obstacles to direct, lively expression. The paradigms of the characteristic order no longer offer alternatives, only repetition for its own sake. Art begins to look for

reverse paths and alternatives. It seeks ways to overcome monotony, inertia, and stagnation. Arrhythmia becomes a search for interruption, intervention, a necessary pause. Mental conflict here turns into artistic detachment, a tactic of ignoring, a search for alternative flows and invisible influences. Collapsed order and uncomfortable confrontations — all this art turns into its own practice. Its practice here is the fallout or abandonment of the universal, monolithic rhythm. Seriousness begins to collapse; obligatory components become part of ironic practice. Ideological conflict, caused by the dominance of excessive seriousness and harsh attitudes, provokes alternative applications. One such application is alternative color. Colors taken out of the obligatory context

are carried along an extreme route to a completely incomprehensible limit. Visual arrhythmia, appealing to the disturbed order and scattered dispersion, seeks new vital forms of refreshment. Art, through a visual mental flow, frees disorganized and exhausted colors from the obligation of artificial expression. Ironic color echoes, in short, are new spontaneous flows of expression to overcome fatigue.

Arrhythmia as a compositional pause creates a situation of disorder by introducing certain disturbances as challenges. But these can be completely artificial challenges. In itself, any rhetorical-visual denial does not create arrhythmia. It creates efforts that get stuck in themselves. Self-claimed visual ambition as self-expression is a neutral act. The big problem is excessive, self-burdening, uncontrollable effort. This becomes self-denial with an uncontrollable incentive. On the other hand, it eventually turns into apathy and indifference to oneself. Visual arrhythmia can be the result of excessive exertion. Visual overload as a form of indulgence or appeasement can, over time, turn into aimless renunciation. A form that exhausts itself, no longer knows itself, and no longer corresponds to itself begins to interfere with direct creation. An endless rhythm that has no finiteness leads to overload. Artificial and eclectic irritability, confusion of attitudes, ornamental leaps into ever-changing situations — this is not merely a confusion of the beginning. The artificial search for a mandatory line by destroying all other creative lines ultimately leads that line to complete exhaustion. In this way, compositional arrhythmia turns into an arrhythmia of creative ideology. The so-called living and fresh line becomes self-denying. The problem here is not unification or the search for a uniform beginning, one initial impulse as an absolute painterly innovation. The line itself becomes obsessive about itself, begins to move away from itself, and begins to avoid itself. In the end, it becomes mere stylization.

Visual arrhythmia is characteristic of a transition era, when declared promises do not materialize immediately and when the desired renunciation does not occur. The problem is not a spontaneous, manifest declaration, because it is only background rhetoric, an endless exercise in visual search. Promise and renunciation, feasible and impossible action have a slightly different meaning here. Prolonged arrhythmia can only turn into artificial urges or convulsions. Neither is the end. A promise is a projection, a rush ahead, a self-promoting, self-establishing, and even self-seeking initiative. A visual promise is a visible reality, but this is not the same as, say, a commissioned reality. A visual promise is a never-ending, inexhaustible encouragement, a visual exhortation in a creative, substantive sense. Shallow or unclear intentions and vague development, combined

with exaggerated initiative, are self-disruptions and artificial obstacles. Visual renunciation is the path to change, initiatives of rotation, combination, and experimentation. At the same time, in the visual and mental sense, it renews inclinations. Renunciation of inertia and former tradition becomes stylistic exercise and variation. Simultaneously, there is a pursuit of risk that leads only to correct performance. Arrhythmia here is lingering in spontaneous unproductivity. Often visual ambition and technical subject skills only hinder, because mental arrhythmia continues.

In a broad sense, visual arrhythmia is a polemic, an endless debate. A work from elsewhere, from another era, as an example of mastery, borrows tendencies. Then arrhythmia is a productive transfer, a creative disturbance, polemicizing with empty innovation and unsuccessful ambition. Another epoch becomes a stylistic mental example, a creative prototype in recreating reality. Even more broadly, arrhythmia is the renewal of visual and mental matter, introducing new forms of certainty and reality, new modes of receptivity and sensitivity. It is not subject mastery itself that is exhausted — that is a task in itself. Here, access to reality is exhausted. Then visual mastery becomes a reproduced escape, a retreat from reality. When creation in the visual and mental sense finds a new relationship with reality, when artificial, empty concepts are not copied, creation becomes an encounter with reality. Then intelligence or fidelity to the material of the work is a productive interaction. Arrhythmia is only a new, often visually threatening turn toward reality. In the mental sense, in renewed certainty, a new artistic receptivity and sensitivity emerge.

Finally, arrhythmia is an endless rehearsal and improvisation, an artistic subject reserve that is often ignored because everything is sacrificed only to productivity. True rehearsal and true improvisation in the conceptual sense are postponed, discarded, forgotten variants. If arrhythmia itself is infinite oblivion, then an appeal to forgotten oblivion is necessary. Variants left behind, variations made, drafts and sketches — here is the beginning of rhythm and here is the rhythmic trail. Reality rehearsed, sketched, and stroked are already mental blanks. After all, sometimes visual and mental harmony is a line of thought, the wisdom of color, a polemic of form. Arrhythmia operates against the background of the universal rhythm, not necessarily on the margins or only in footnotes. Line, form, color, texture, and tone, like a mental melody, are a temporal formation, a situational necklace when the future does not rush back to the present and when the past encroaches on the future. Art in the rhythmic sense is a complex wonder and observer, a formation of disorder and surprise.



© Hilma af Klint (Sweden), Title: **"Primordial Chaos No 24"**,
28 x 41 cm, oil on canvas, 1906 - 1907



CULTURE

ARCHAIC VOICE IN EUROPE: THE
SIGNIFICANCE OF LITHUANIAN FOR
LINGUISTICS AND CULTURE

By Zita Vilutytė

ISSUE 20





© Juozas Zikaras (Lithuania), Title: „Knygnesys“ (The Bookcarrier“), bronze, 1939

ARCHAIC VOICE IN EUROPE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LITHUANIAN FOR LINGUISTICS AND CULTURE

Lithuanian is one of the most archaic Indo-European languages; its preserved ancient forms make it an important source of the world's cultural and linguistic heritage, and its connections with Sanskrit help to understand the features of the Indo-European proto-language.

The Lithuanian language preserves many archaic Indo-European forms, which is why it is valuable for comparative linguistics and proto-Indo-European studies; in the 19th century and later, scholars studied Lithuanian as a means of reconstructing ancient language structures.

Similarities between Lithuanian and Sanskrit are evident in the lexicon, personification, and some grammatical forms; this indicates a common Indo-European origin and explains why Sanskritologists and Indo-European linguists are interested in the Lithuanian language. Sanskrit is a classical Indian language with deep liturgical and literary traditions.

The Lithuanian language has a rich dialect system, traditionally divided into Aukstaite and Samogitian dialects with numerous subdialects; dialects differ in phonetics, lexicon and some morphological features, while some dialects preserve archaic elements of pronunciation and forms. The heritage of dialects is an important part of folklore, songs and regional literature. Antanas Baranauskas wrote the famous poem *"Anyksciu silelis"* (Anyksciai grove), which became a classic of Lithuanian literature; Baranauskas was interested in folk language and dialect. Jonas Basanavičius collected and published folklore and edited the periodical *"Ausra"*, contributing to the language and national revival. Samogitian (Juliija Zymantiene) consciously used Samogitian features and regional lexicon in her short stories and novels to convey the authentic voice of village life. Many authors of the 19th–21st centuries collected and used dialects as a literary means of expression, including Algirdas Vilius, who published his book of poems *"Kas otminciai nesvetima"* (What is not sacred to the memory) in 2016.

Texts written in dialects and dialect transcriptions often appeared in folklore collections, periodicals, and some works of fiction; this allowed the preservation of regional forms of lexicon and pronunciation and gave authenticity to literature. Dialectal editions and translations also helped to record the dialectological heritage.

The phenomenon of bookcarriers was of great importance for the survival of

the Lithuanian language. Lithuanian bookcarriers kept the Lithuanian language alive at the risk of their freedom and lives; their activities are one of the most striking examples of cultural resistance in Europe and have been recognized by UNESCO as a unique heritage.

During the period of the press ban in 1864–1904, Bookcarriers organized the transportation and distribution of the banned Lithuanian press, thus ensuring that the native language and school would survive. This activity was not just smuggling — it was cultural resistance that allowed for the preservation of writing, education, and national identity. UNESCO recognized bookcarriers as a unique phenomenon and declared March 16 as Bookcarriers' Day.

Bookcarriers hid and transported books across state borders, created distribution networks, collaborated with printing houses in Lithuania Minor and abroad, and risked arrest, exile, and violence. It is estimated that during the years of prohibition, about 2,000 booksellers were active, including both men and women, teachers, priests, farmers, and students, who preserved Lithuanian writing through their work.

Among the most famous bookcarriers are Jurgis Bielinis, Vincas Kudirka, Martynas Jankus, Jonas Macys-Kekstas, Juozapas Rugys and many others. In Lithuania, the names of bookcarriers are immortalized in the bookcarriers' Wall in Kaunas, which features the names of one hundred of the most active bookcarriers.

The efforts of bookcarriers allowed the spread of Lithuanian printing, teaching materials and folklore, so writers, poets and teachers of the 19th and early 20th centuries were able to create texts in the common language and with dialectal nuances. Bookcarriers' networks also supported periodicals, which allowed the dissemination of language norms,



Bookcarrier - Vincas Juška (1860 - 1939)



© Isao Tamoda (Japan), Title: "Portrait of Algirdas Vilutis", 47 x 30 cm, pastel, paper, 2020

literature and political ideas, which later shaped modern Lithuanian culture.

The history of bookcarriers is an example of how small communities can preserve language and culture even in the face of repression. This memory encourages the documentation of dialects, the preservation of regional literature and the appreciation of the vitality of the language as a national and global heritage. UNESCO recognition and memorials remind us that language is not just a means of communication — it is a living foundation of culture, defended by real people.

I would like to mention a few names of bookcarriers with short biographies

Jurgis Bielinis (1846–1918) — one of the most famous bookcarriers, called the “king of bookcarriers”; for more than 30 years he organized the distribution of banned press, created networks in Central and Western Lithuania and supported the national revival with publications. His birthday became Bookcarriers’ Day.

Vincas Kudirka (1858–1899) — doctor, publicist, editor and one of the active distributors of the press; edited the periodical “Varpas” and contributed to the distribution of the Lithuanian press and the spread of national consciousness.

Martynas Jankus (1858–1946) — publisher and supporter of the press, active organizer of the Lithuanian press in Lithuania Minor; his name is associated with publishing and support of bookcarriers’ networks.

Jonas Macys (Macys-Kekstas) — mentioned among the distinguished bookcarriers and organizers; operated in local distribution networks and helped distribute the banned press.

Others are inscribed on the Bookcarriers’ Wall Memorial in Kaunas — the list includes a hundred prominent names, including priests, teachers, and doctors, who distributed the Lithuanian press and organized distribution. This memorial records the names of some of the most active bookcarriers and their contributions. The Lithuanian language is not only a national treasure, but also an international scientific source — its archaic nature helps reconstruct the history of Indo-European languages, and dialects and regional literature preserve a living cultural heritage. Further comparative research and documentation of dialects will preserve this heritage for future generations.



ODBK

DEMOCRATIZING ART: LESSONS FROM ART
UK AND ODBK ACCESS, REPRESENTATION,
AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN
THE ART WORLD

By Nycole da Cunha



ISSUE 20



© Amy Dury (UK), Title: "To Boldly Go", 150 x 100 cm, oil on canvas, 2025
Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery 2025

DEMOCRATIZING ART: LESSONS FROM ART UK AND ODBK ACCESS, REPRESENTATION, AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ART WORLD

Art has always played an important role in human history, allowing people to express themselves and speak out against injustice. Across different contexts and periods, it has served not only as a form of creativity but also as a way of questioning power, documenting experiences,

and making social issues visible. It is therefore not surprising that diversity and democratization have become central topics in discussions about the future of the arts. As cultural institutions face growing pressure to remain socially relevant, issues of access, representation, and participation are no longer secondary but structural challenges. In many cases, access to art is still limited by economic barriers, institutional practices, and social expectations that make certain spaces feel exclusive or unwelcoming. Without addressing these issues, the gap between institutions and the societies they aim to represent continues to grow.

One particularly relevant aspect in this context is the contrast between institutional engagement and digital access. Data related to platforms such as Art UK — a UK-based digital initiative that brings together artworks from public collections across the country and makes them freely accessible online, helping to democratize the arts — suggest that public interest in art remains strong when access is facilitated. By digitising artworks from museums, galleries, and other institutions, the platform has made 795,889 art records freely available, reaching an audience of over 5.6 million people. This shows that large and diverse audiences continue to engage with artworks online, often outside traditional institutional frameworks, raising an important question: if people are willing to engage with art when it is accessible, why do traditional institutions struggle to attract and diversify their audiences?

The answer may lie not in the public but in the structures of the institutions themselves. Museums and art institutions, historically shaped by elitist and exclusionary practices, continue to impose barriers through pricing, limited accessibility, rigid curatorial narratives, and implicit social codes. These mechanisms do not simply limit access — they shape the very conditions under which art can be experienced, understood, and valued. For many, entering these institutions is not only financially difficult but also socially alienating, reinforcing the perception that art is reserved for a narrow and privileged audience. This dynamic also shapes what kinds of art are allowed into these spaces, who gets to produce it, and who it is ultimately for. Representation, in many cases, continues to be dominated by white male artists, limiting the diversity of perspectives that are seen and valued. Rather than asking why audiences are not engaging, it may be more accurate to question how institutions continue to exclude them.



© Amy Dury (UK), Title: "Always Everything", 30 x 15 cm, oil on canvas, 2025
Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery 2025

Furthermore, it is important to note that inequality within the art world extends beyond representation in exhibitions. Decision-making structures, including leadership, curatorial teams, and institutional governance, remain largely homogeneous. This concentration of power reinforces existing hierarchies and limits the range of perspectives that shape cultural production. As a result, even when diversity is addressed at a surface level, deeper structural inequalities persist.

In contrast, the report by Art UK highlights how alternative approaches can expand access and visibility. Through initiatives aimed at broadening participation across different social groups — such as educational programmes that introduce art in more accessible and inclusive ways from an early stage, the FIRE framework's efforts to expand audiences, and various fundraising initiatives — these strategies can help address some of the structural inequalities that exist within the art world.

In this context, participatory approaches emerge as a potential pathway toward more meaningful change. By broadening access to cultural production and encouraging engagement from a wider range of social groups, such approaches help challenge long-standing barriers that have historically limited participation in the art world. This shift contributes to making cultural spaces more inclusive while also fostering a more diverse and representative understanding of artistic value. Furthermore, if institutions are to become more inclusive, they must move beyond representing diversity and begin to actively involve diverse communities in decision-making processes. Participation, when seen not as something symbolic or superficial but as a real sharing of power, can help challenge hierarchies and create more equitable cultural spaces.

In this context, initiatives such as those developed by the ODBK (Organization for the Democratization of the Visual Arts) offer a concrete example of how these challenges might be addressed in practice. The organization's work is grounded in the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion within the art world, not only at the level of representation but also through structural interventions. The Certification of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion for Contemporary Art Museums and Art Collections, for instance, seeks



© Amy Dury (UK), Title: "Always Everythingin", 30 x 15 cm , oil on canvas, 2025
Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery 2025

to develop a comprehensive framework to assess and promote DEI in institutional practices, including the selection of artists and artworks, curatorial processes, and acquisition policies. By establishing clear criteria, evaluation methodologies, and long-term recommendations, the project aims to support more transparent, accountable, and inclusive cultural institutions.

Such approaches resonate strongly with the concerns raised in the art world, particularly regarding the persistence of structural inequality and the limitations of current diversity initiatives. Rather than treating participation as a secondary or optional feature, the ODBK's model positions it as a central mechanism for institutional transformation. In doing so, it offers a practical illustration of how participatory processes may move beyond discourse and contribute to more equitable and inclusive cultural structures.

Taken together, initiatives such as Art UK and the ODBK demonstrate how institutions can adopt different and complementary strategies to address structural inequalities within the art world. These initiatives show that the democratization of art is not a finished project but an ongoing struggle over who gets to see, produce, and define culture. Expanding access, widening participation, and creating more inclusive frameworks are important steps, but they only go so far if the deeper structures that shape value and visibility remain intact. Ultimately, what is at stake is not just inclusion within existing systems but the possibility of transforming those systems so that art can truly belong to everyone, not just in theory but in practice.



© **Amy Dury** (UK), Title: "**Alike**", 20 x 60 cm, oil on canvas, 2025
Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery 2025



ACN

**EKATERINI KOLIAKOU (Greece) -
SENSUAL AND PROVOCATIVE MULTI -
DISCIPLINARY FINE ARTIST**

By Isobel Arden

ISSUE 20





EKATERINI KOLIAKOU - SENSUAL AND PROVOCATIVE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FINE ARTIST

Meet Ekaterini Koliakou

Ekaterini Koliakou is a vibrant force of nature, a whirlwind enlivening the art world with her imagination, creativity and talent. Unique in her combination of sensuality and provocation Ekaterini sees her work as a diary. Working both figuratively, with abstraction and words she gives a sense of intimacy without fear or confession.

In various techniques from using brushes to using her hands, the painted surface shifts between articulated brush strokes to playfully primitive impulsive markings. Her subjects are often naked to allow a sense of honesty and equality. Her work is sensual and sometimes cynical ... provocative, but gentle.

Ekaterini is a maestro of colour, and a cultural connoisseur who sees the world not just as it is, but as it could be ... wrapped in hues, rhythm, and raw emotion. With over three decades of

fine art and visual expression to guide her, Ekaterini has honed a talent so versatile, it's almost as if she was born with a paint brush in one hand and a camera in the other.

Early Days and Artistic Evolution

Ekaterini's artistic odyssey began in the bustling heart of Athens, Greece, where the Mediterranean light and ancient ruins no doubt sparked her creative fire.

Her first dip into art education was at Vakalo Art and Design College in 1987. She then explored the delicate contrasts of black and white photography at Focus Athens. But Athens was just the beginning. In a move that would shape her future, Ekaterini moved to London, where she immersed herself in the world of art and design at Westminster Kingsway College.

Her thirst for knowledge and artistic mastery was unquenchable, leading her to the Aldo Galli Academy of Fine Arts in Como and the prestigious Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. By the time she completed her studies at the Fine Art School of Athens, graduating with distinction, Ekaterini had transformed from a student of art into a creator of worlds.

Her Creative Journey

Ekaterini's work is a living, breathing diary, where each brushstroke and every line of graphite tells a story. Her art is deeply personal, yet it resonates with universal themes. Her use of bold colours and dynamic forms reflects the passionate dialogues she shares with her surroundings, whether she's exploring the serene landscapes of Greece, the bustling streets of London, or the cultural mosaics of the places she's called home.

She's not just about creating art; she's about creating experiences. Ekaterini's canvases are where the figurative meets the abstract, where words become visual poetry, and where her subject - often depicted in their raw, natural form - convey honesty and equality. Her work is sensual yet satirical, provocative yet gentle. It's this duality that makes her art so compelling, drawing viewers

into her world and making them reluctant to leave.

A Global Influence

Ekaterini's work has not just stayed within the four walls of a gallery; it has travelled the world, just like her. From group shows in West Hollywood to solo exhibitions in Athens, her art has been embraced by audiences across Europe, the USA, and beyond. She's been a part of iconic art fairs in Padova, Thessaloniki, and London, and her work has adorned billboards in Los Angeles and Hyde Park Corner in London, leaving a lasting imprint on the global art scene.

Her artistic endeavours go beyond the canvas. Ekaterini has been a passionate advocate for using art to champion human rights, creating works that resonate with the vulnerable, the displaced, and the voiceless. Whether it's painting for refugees or creating message art that speaks to the dignity and respect of all people, Ekaterini uses her talents to build bridges where there are none, and to shine light where there is darkness.

A Life of Artistic Pursuits

Ekaterini is far from done. With multiple patents, publications, and honours to her name, she continues to push the boundaries of what art can be. She's a polyglot, fluent in English, Italian, and French, always eager to learn, to explore, and to meet new people. Her mission? To make art accessible and enjoyable for everyone, to unite people, and to express the youthful spirit that drives her creative soul.

Her philosophy is simple yet profound: to smell the colour of the universe and type it into her paintings, creating works that are not just seen but felt. Ekaterini Koliakou is a woman of many layers - an artist, a traveller, a dreamer, and a storyteller. Her work is a testament to the power of creativity and the endless possibilities that come with an open mind and a passionate heart.

Whether she's in the studio, at an exhibition, Ekaterini is always searching for that next spark of inspiration, ready to turn the ordinary into something extraordinary.

<https://www.ekaterinikoliakou.com/>



© **Ekaterini Koliakou** (Greece), Title **"De Mensen"**, 30 x 40 cm, paper, dry pastels, 2003



CREATOR

INTERVIEW WITH STEFANIE
EHRENFRIED (Germany)

By Zita Vilutyte

ISSUE 20





© Stefanie Ehrenfried (Germany), Title: "Portrait with heads", 75 x 85 x 110 cm (each), sheep wool needle felted, 2008-2018

INTERVIEW WITH STEFANIE EHRENFRIED

ZITA V.: Dear Stefanie, introduce yourself to you readers.

S.E.: I was born in 1967 in southern Germany and grew up in a rural area, with a deep connection to nature, music, and the visual arts. In 1986, I began studying fine art painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart. In 1992, I took a new direction: I became a member of a dance theater group and a collective of female artists that focused primarily on process-oriented, social art. In the following phase, as a mother of three, I had little energy or time left for active artistic creation, and yet the experiences and the maturity that this time gave me became formative for my current "valid" sculptural work.

In 2005, I finally had my own studio, and in 2007 I began creating sculptures from sheep's wool.

ZITA V.: I am glad to talk about interesting things. The archaic connection is very important in your work. Your works often seem to come from an older, ritualistic past – how do you consciously foster an archaic or primordial presence in your figures and what cultural or personal elements shape this sensitivity?

S.E.: Your question is very interesting to me now, too, because I remember that in the early 1990s, we women were deeply engaged with early human history, with the pre-patriarchal era.



© **Stefanie Ehrenfried** (Germany), Title: **"Flight studie"**, 180 x 65 x 22 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2022

Suddenly, there was feminist archaeology, and its interpretation of prehistoric finds brought the Great Goddess back into our consciousness (Marija Gimbutas's book **The Language of the Goddess** was a groundbreaking read for us, and I'm just discovering that she was born in Lithuania!!!).

This transformed our sense of self in that it gave us a new feeling of sovereignty, a deep rootedness in a feminine primal source, which is shaped by the eternal law of becoming, blossoming, and passing away.

In my artistic practice, I have now turned to materials that radiate vitality, warmth, and prosperity, and I have ultimately settled on sheep's wool. This material possesses such a powerful, primal aura that I find it downright healing and nourishing.

ZITA V.: Wool is a very specific material, it is the basis of your creative practice – can you describe the technical and tactile properties

you rely on (fiber type, density, color, surface treatment), and how these choices shape the final expression of the work?

S.E.: I source sturdy sheep's wool (with a high proportion of guard hairs) directly from the shepherd, clean it, and sew it into a firm core using long upholstery needles and string. Then I lay down layers of combed wool and bond them to the base by repeatedly piercing the fabric with a felting needle, gradually bringing the forms into sharper relief. In the final step, I "needle" thin layers of carded wool onto the surface like a skin. Here, the color of the wool (different types of wool in their respective natural hues) also plays an important role in intensifying the sculptural impression. In some works, I have added a surface pattern ("companion animal") that alludes to the flow of forces within the body. Rarely do I leave the wool visible on the object in its original wild form; instead, I work it in a strictly sculptural manner. The needle punctures leave a texture reminiscent of skin pores.



© Stefanie Ehrenfried (Germany), Title: **"Companion animal"**, 100 x 55 x 170 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2025

ZITA V.: You call wool a "plastic element". How do you understand its plasticity and sculptural potential compared to the traditions of clay, stone or textiles, and what unique possibilities it opens up for form and gesture?

S.E.: Wool (unlike clay) is so interesting precisely because of the elasticity of its fibers—it wants to expand, and even when I compress it through needle felting, a certain tension remains. The organic, dynamically fluid form language that I value so much comes naturally to me with wool; with clay, I would have to impose it. In that respect, stone is actually closer to my sensibility—I "peel" it away until I arrive at my form, but then I have a clear boundary between the figure and the surrounding space, whereas wool, with its fine hairs protruding into the space, retains an open, breathing surface. Wool also allows me to create large, expansive works and gives me the opportunity to continue developing them at any time—which is helpful, because I always work on

several pieces simultaneously, and what I discover anew in one piece also broadens my perspective on the others...

ZITA V.: Your sculptures are connected by mystical and invisible connections. Many of your figures have projections and self-views that suggest a connection with the inexpressible – how do you translate mystical experience or inner knowing into formal solutions (proportion, posture, surface, projections)?

S.E.: The sculptures are, so to speak, their own entities rather than representations of something or someone—I've often heard this feedback, and indeed it's hard to describe how this comes about; it goes beyond the concept of a formal solution. While working, there comes a point where I feel that a presence has taken hold and is guiding me through the process. So I remain receptive—the mind can often lead one in the wrong direction



© **Stefanie Ehrenfried** (Germany), Title: **"O.T.(delimity)"**, 175 x 105 x 75 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2021-2025

© **Stefanie Ehrenfried** (Germany), Title: **"O.T.(entgrenzen)"**, 175 x 105 x 75 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2021 -2025



or rely only on the familiar. If what I'm searching for doesn't appear, I have to let go, turn away, close my eyes, and make inner space available for the "new" so that it can reveal itself to my inner eye. In this inner state, I sense and "see" which forms can embody my perception (on which the work is based).

ZITA V.: Wool is like a repository of memory and material origin, it carries stories – of shepherds, of housekeeping, of rituals. How do you see your work connected to past practices or ancestral crafts, and do you see your sculptures continuing, revising or resisting these lines?

S.E.: For me, mastery lies in the combination of technical skill and a receptiveness to inspiration. By now, I trust my hands to bring ideas into the material world. It is also very satisfying to shape a beautiful, raw natural material into an (aesthetic) form, and as I work, I can feel connected to all those who have done this before me. I consider it a great privilege that I do not have to produce utilitarian objects for economic reasons, but can work with great freedom of expression (I earn most of my income from teaching piano).

I have the entire cultural heritage of the past as a potential foundation, and on this basis I am now, so to speak, carrying out my personal "mission" in the present. I seek the timeless, or rather: the unity of past, present, and future.

ZITA V.: You moved from painting to felt sculpture – what specific limitations of painting pushed you towards volumetric work and what new questions or freedoms did the third dimension bring to your visual language?

S.E.: I painted figuratively, dynamically, and narratively, and during my emotionally turbulent years of youth, I increasingly found the limitations of the canvas unbearable. I was seized by a longing to depict the very essence of what I felt, rather than merely capturing an illusion of it on the surface.

Through the medium of dance performance (deepened experiences of body and space), I eventually arrived at sculpture, where I was able to create a counterpart with whom I could enter into dialogue and gain self-knowledge.

ZITA V.: You describe your works as grown, not created – beyond the physical volume, what other dimensions (temporal, psychological, spiritual, tactile memory) do you experience in the finished work and how do you pay attention to those invisible layers during creation?

S.E.: A work begins with a tentative idea, and if all goes well, something develops that I couldn't have conceived or imagined beforehand. I experience this as a great gift—something comes into being because I am open to it and "lend" my hands to it (the ego, which wants to create something truly amazing, is usually a poor advisor).

The process of felting—this countless, patient piercing with the needle tool—puts me in an almost meditative state; vast spaces of thought and sensation open up. Here, experiences can be processed psychologically; new connections and insights emerge. Sometimes, however, it is also simply a soothing sense of contentment when vague, chaotic forms can be transformed into clarity and beauty, when a small part of the world can be brought into order by me.

ZITA V.: Let's talk about dance and body language – how has movement influenced your creative process? How do you choreograph gestures into armature or felt rhythm? Can you give an example of a time when body practice directly changed the outcome of a work?

S.E.: Through dance, I have learned to perceive the body and movement in space in a much more sensitive way—what physical and energetic presence means, what space I can fill with my tension, and how far a gesture extends into the space beyond the physical body. The constant alternation



© Stefanie Ehrenfried (Germany), Title: "O.T.(organ)",
166 x 26 x 26 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2025



© **Stefanie Ehrenfried** (Germany), Title: **"Inner landscape"**, 270 x 270 x 80 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2023 - 2025

between intentional impulses and surrender to the flow of movement in dance, the vivid experience of tension and relaxation, and how this manifests in the body's form has become the foundation of my search for form. This is directly evident in many works: the fluttering and flowing of the forms in "Flight figure" and "Flight study," the five serpentine arms of the "Mover"—as if they were creating something out of nothing, while the rest of the body stands upright, calmly rooted, the intense overstretching in "Backhand", while she, with her left arm sweeping back, brings forth a yet-undefined potential—freshly grown vitality—powerfully forward, into life.

ZITA V.: Your sculptures sometimes touch on crisis, commitment and healing – how do you explore difficult or uncomfortable topics without aestheticizing trauma and what ethical responsibility do you feel as an artist working with such topics?

S.E.: Tragedy is part of our earthly existence, but the wheel of life keeps turning; all the experiences we go through are merely phases (that push us toward growth and, at best, make us stronger). In my view, solace and healing are available if one is willing to engage with the great game of constant change. My works may embody the entire spectrum of life, but my greatest concern is the connection to wise and prospering forces.

ZITA V.: You aim to engage viewers in a quiet internal dialogue – what installation strategies, lighting, scale or spatial relationships do you use to encourage that encounter, and how do you assess whether the work has succeeded in opening up that inner space?

S.E.: A certain intimacy in the spatial setting is certainly beneficial.

Some of my works are "louder," embodying powerful forces and holding their own more easily



© **Stefanie Ehrenfried** (Germany), Title: **"O.T.(aware)"**, 45 x 60 x 25 cm, sheep wool needle felted, 2012 - 2025

even in more chaotic surroundings.

I have to empathize with the works as if I were standing in their place in the room; then it quickly becomes clear whether the location is right, whether there is enough space, headroom, concentration, and suitable lighting (I've had very bad experiences with so-called daylight LEDs—it's an artificial, harsh light—everything seems to be reduced to the purely material level).

ZITA V.: What would you like to say to those who will be living here in a hundred years, what would you like to wish them?

S.E.: We are now in a phase in which information—which constantly rains down on us in a chaotic and overwhelming flood—has become a commodity whose truthfulness is hardly relevant anymore. We are sometimes manipulated in a shrill, sometimes in a subversive way. Our abilities seem to be entirely replaceable and far surpassed by artificial

intelligence. We have already done so much harm to one another and to the Earth that there will be much to forgive in order to make healing possible. So I wish for humans that these many trials will set them on the path to cultivating their inner sense of truth, humanity, and warmth, as well as wisdom (which always has something to do with overcoming boundaries), and thus, becoming more and more secure within themselves, to find peace, so as no longer to have to be a pawn of political agitation.

Also, that the interconnectedness of all beings in this world may be experienced as reality, and that a global common good (beyond power and greed) may become the foundation for decisions and actions....

ZITA V.: Thank you for the interview.

S.E.: Thank you very much for your insightful questions.



COLLECTOR

**PEGGY GUGGENHEIM: THE
COLLECTOR AS CULTURAL AUTHOR**
By Silvia Elzberg

ART BASEL UNLIMITED
By Joas Nebe



ISSUE 20



PEGGY GUGGENHEIM: THE COLLECTOR AS CULTURAL AUTHOR

Peggy Guggenheim was a decisive cultural agent whose collecting practice—rooted in urgency, intimacy, and theatrical display—rescued key modernist works, reframed transatlantic modernism, and established a model of the collector as public author.

Marguerite “Peggy” Guggenheim (born 26 August 1898, New York) emerged from the Guggenheim–Seligman milieu but repudiated its corporate orientation for the bohemian networks of Paris and London. Her inheritance gave her the material freedom to act; her friendships with figures such as Marcel Duchamp and Constantin Brâncuși supplied the critical vocabulary and social capital that would shape her eye. The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation+1

Peggy’s practice is best understood as a set of deliberate strategies rather than accidental taste. She famously adopted a “buy a picture a day” ethic on the eve of World War II, acquiring works rapidly as markets destabilized and artists faced exile or poverty. She



Peggy Guggenheim at Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, early 1960s.

On the wall: Fernand Léger "Men in the City", 1919

preferred direct purchase from artists, kept works in domestic settings, and conceived exhibition spaces—most notably *Art of This Century* in New York—as theatrical environments that choreographed the viewer's encounter.

To read Peggy's collection is to read a life. Her marriages and intimate alliances with artists (including Max Ernst) blurred private and public spheres and made acquisition an autobiographical

act. The collection's emphases—Surrealism, Cubism, and later Abstract Expressionism—reflect not only aesthetic preference but a psychological orientation toward rupture, the unconscious, and the uncanny. Her collecting was performative: it staged identity as much as it assembled objects.

Peggy performed three interlocking cultural interventions. Rescue: by purchasing and exporting works from Europe she preserved



Peggy Guggenheim in the dining room of Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, mid 1960s.

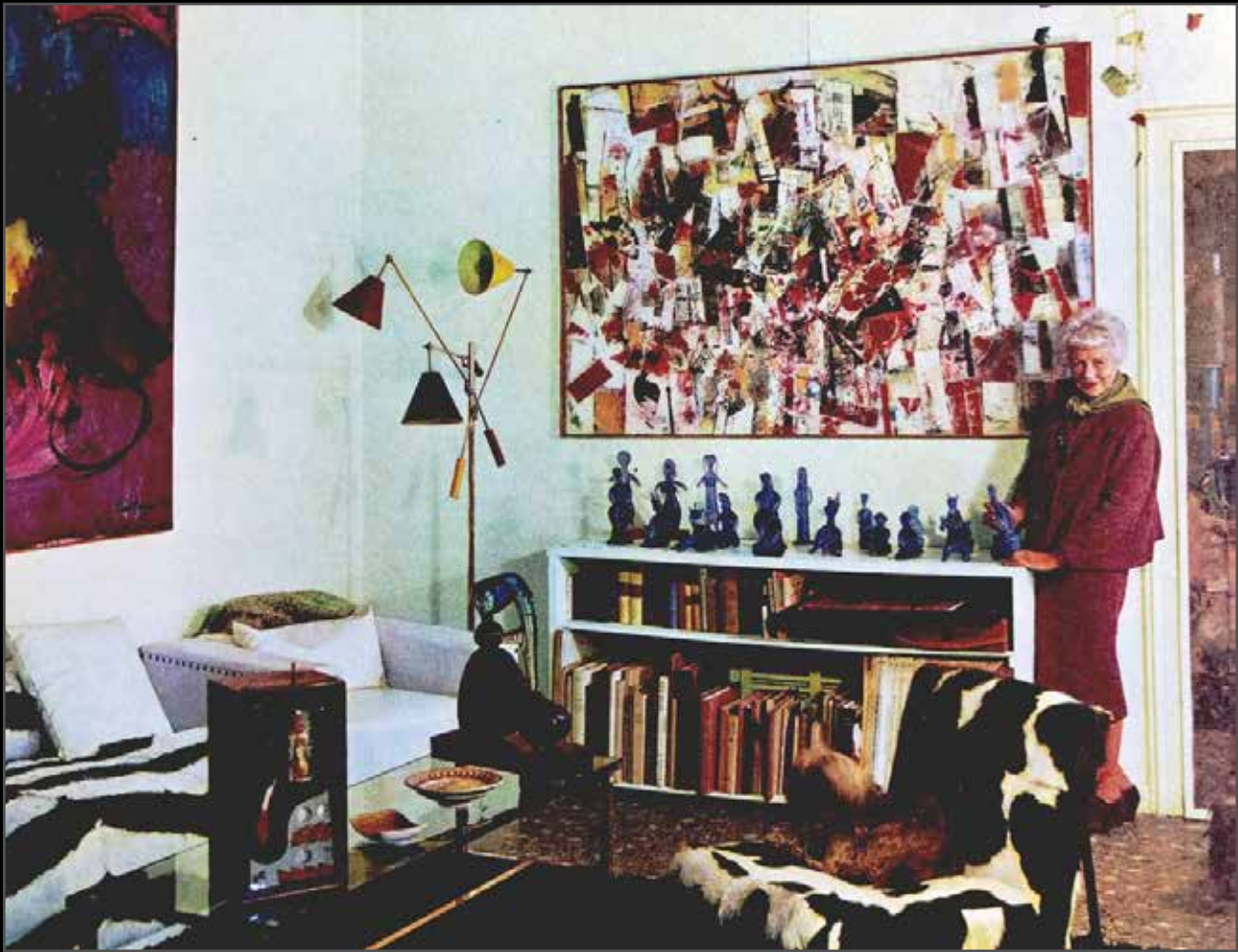
On the left wall: Vasily Kandinsky, "Landscape with Red Spots No. 2", 1913

On the back wall, at center, Umberto Boccioni, Dynamism of a Speeding Horse + Houses, 1915.

material that might otherwise have been lost or dispersed. Translation: her galleries and exhibitions created a sustained dialogue between European avant-garde practices and emergent American tendencies, helping to legitimate Abstract Expressionism within a broader modernist genealogy. Institutionalization: by settling in Venice and bequeathing her collection to public display at the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, she converted a

private sensibility into a lasting museum presence.

From the vantage of contemporary art history, Peggy Guggenheim should be read as a cultural author whose interventions shaped both market trajectories and scholarly canons. Her curatorial choices—what to save, what to exhibit, whom to promote—functioned as acts of narrative construction that continue to influence how



Peggy Guggenheim in her sitting room
 On the wall: Tancredi Parmeggiani, "Composition", 1955

twentieth-century modernism is periodized. Yet this singular authorship has limits: a canon shaped by one personality risks occluding other practices and geographies. Her model demands institutional reflexivity—museums that inherit collector-led holdings must balance passionate coherence with pluralistic scholarship.

Peggy Guggenheim's enduring significance lies less in any single masterpiece than in the method she exemplified: collecting as rescue, exhibition as dramaturgy, and taste as public argument. The Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice remains both archive and manifesto—a reminder that individual conviction, when allied to resources and theatrical intelligence, can reconfigure cultural memory.



Peggy Guggenheim (seated in the center, wearing a dark shawl) hosting a lively cocktail party in the library of her Venice residence, the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, in 1965



© Art Basel, Ai Wei Wei, Iron Grass, Magician Space

ART BASEL UNLIMITED

By Joas Nebe

This year's Unlimited section predominantly showcases politically charged works alongside pieces originating from the 1960s through the 1990s, the former category casting a long shadow over the fair's atmosphere. Among politically inflected pieces, Chris Burdens *L.A.P.D. Uniforms* (1993, Gagosian) commands attention: a row of oversized police uniforms hangs from hangers, arms outstretched, forming the first encounter for visitors at the entrance; the garments' exaggerated scale evokes the intimidating presence of a law-and-order apparatus that claims monopoly on violence while simultaneously gesturing toward its capacity for abuse, a theme whose urgency escalates under contemporary political leadership. Consider, for example, the killings of

citizens in Minneapolis who demonstrated against police violence, carried out by ICE.

Ai Weiwei's *Iron Grass* (2014, Magician Space) likewise indicts state-administered force through material transmutation: delicate grass roots are cast in cast iron and laid across a significant portion of exhibition space, whereby a normally vulnerable organism acquires an unpleasant hardness reminiscent of nail-studded restraints employed by police during security operations; an innocuous natural form thereby becomes emblematic of institutional harassment.

Thomas Ruffs *jpgs: The September 11th Photographs, 2004-2007* (David Zwirner) operate



© Art Basel, Thomas Ruff, The September 11th Photographs, 2004-2007, David Zwirner

on two registers simultaneously: documentation of the attacks on the World Trade Center and a form of digital archaeology. Present in New York when the events occurred, Ruff lost original photographs and subsequently sought access to the global event via online image streams, selecting a handful of jpegs from the infinite flow of the internet and enlarging them to wall scale; the result comprises more or less pixelated, chromatically variegated squares which, by virtue of their enlargement, exaggerate a documentary tenor that the source images circulating online did not themselves possess.

Tuan Andrew Nguyens *Repercussions* (2026, James Cohan/Esther Schipper) reconfigures instruments

of destruction into objects of ritual resonance: bomb casings from the Quang Tri region hang as clappers from a Calder sculpture sited before the United Nations in New York; within Vietnamese cultural imaginaries, bell sounds signify return to oneself and hence healing, and the Quang Tri area one of the most heavily bombarded during the Vietnam War becomes the origin of shells emptied and repurposed into elements of a meditation-dedicated bell, a radical redefinition of terror whereby ploughshares heavier are fashioned into deactivated bomb casings serving as bell hammers.

By contrast, Tracy Emins *Knowing My Enemy* (2002, White Cube) eschews collective trauma in

favor of an intimate reckoning: a ready-made composed from a storm-destroyed beach hut, here reconstructed in shattered fragments, functions simultaneously as memorial, mnemonic device, and symbol of the artists fragile relationship with a father figure.

Isa Genzken's *Untitled* (2018, Buchholz, David Zwirner, Hauser+Wirth) presents a ready-made assembled from aircraft fuselage sections: rows of seats aligned one behind another, interior claddings of portholes applied to both lateral walls, sunshades lowered unevenly; conspicuously absent are airline insignia or any provenance markers for the disparate components, a lacuna that prompts questions about uniform origination: parts derive from a single gutted airframe or from a miscellany of planes operated by diverse carriers? The work stages interchangeability, both of conveyances and of the travel experience itself.

Finally, Vanessa Beecroft's *Untitled* (Izumi) (2025, Lia Rumma) warrants mention: known for probing corporeality and gender, the artist here fashions a parallel universe largely devoid of overt political references. The installation comprises a roughly fifty-minute video accompanied by an assemblage of a bed, a medical examination chair, and numerous plaster casts of torsos arranged upon the floor through which a narrative of a European woman's acculturation to Japanese geisha practices unfolds. All women appear nearly identically attired, wearing the same white wigs and translucent garments that barely reach hip level, garments through which genitals and breasts remain unmistakably visible; female bodies engage one another in a pool, enter Maybach luxury limousines, traverse interminable halls a celebration of eroticism juxtaposed against the stark presence of a hospital bed, an examination chair and the scattered torsos.



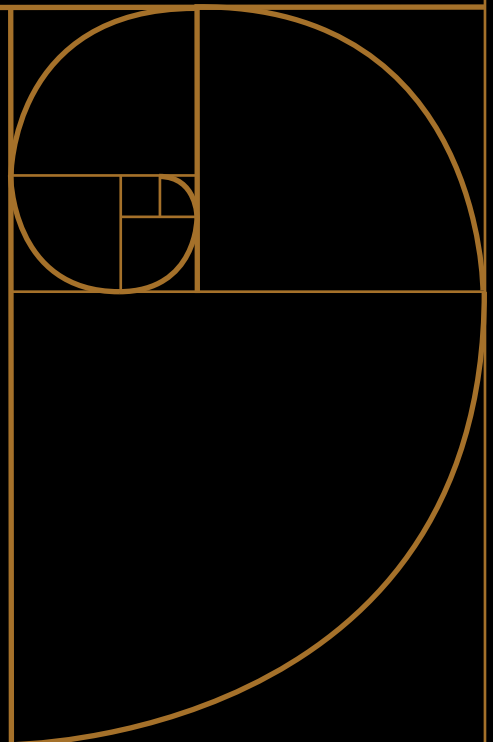


BOOK

THE BODY THAT PAINTS
BEFORE IT BREAKS

By Siddhant Khattri, Vedica Art Studios and Gallery

ISSUE 19





© Illuminated Series, exhibited - In Search of Habitable Futures, Vedica Art Studios and Gallery, Mumbai (2026)

THE BODY THAT PAINTS BEFORE IT BREAKS

The Body That Paints Before It Breaks is a significant new publication dedicated to the artworks and philosophical inquiry of Dutch multidisciplinary artist Arie Otten. Examining painting, sculpture, masks, and mixed-media assemblages, the volume presents Otten as an artist whose practice transforms fragility into an enduring language of resilience and human continuity.

"There are artists who work from imagination. Others work from observation. And then there are those rare individuals whose work emerges from the fragile border between life and non-life—between what the body

can endure and what the spirit refuses to abandon," writes Mika (Jaeyun) Noh. Through this critical framework, the book positions Otten's oeuvre not as an aestheticization of suffering, but as evidence of survival forged through persistence, vulnerability, and emotional clarity. The publication reveals how the artist's visual language emerges within "lower pain periods," transforming limited moments of physical possibility into acts of profound creative resistance.

The book further examines how Otten's long struggle with Lyme disease fundamentally reshaped his conception of artistic production.

Rather than treating the studio as a neutral environment, Otten approaches creation as an existential negotiation with time, bodily limitation, and endurance. His surfaces—scraped, layered, torn, and rebuilt—become temporal archives of interrupted movement and renewed effort, embodying a dual rhythm of urgency and prolonged reflection. In this context, gesture is not merely expressive form; it becomes a material trace of survival itself. A central focus of the publication lies in Otten's relationship with materiality and archetype. Antique frames, medieval pigments, ash, blood powder, found industrial fragments, and historical binders are treated not as nostalgic artifacts but as living collaborators in an emotional archaeology of memory and fragility. The book devotes particular attention to the artist's Blue works and mask series, wherein spectral faces emerge from chromatic depths as metaphysical states rather than portraits. These works interrogate identity, endurance, and the persistence of consciousness, positioning Otten within a lineage extending from COBRA and art informel to contemporary explorations of collective trauma and resilience.

Arie Otten (b. 1954, Apeldoorn, Netherlands) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Apeldoorn whose practice encompasses acrylic on canvas, mixed media on paper, sculpture, and installation. Working with unconventional materials including textiles, wood, aluminum, ash, acrylic paste, and blood powder, Otten constructs layered visual topographies informed by Abstract Expressionism, art informel, and the COBRA movement. His materially incisive approach is distinguished by gestural intensity, chromatic experimentation, and a profound sensitivity to the ontological resonance of matter.

At the core of Otten's artistic inquiry lies an engagement with Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, articulated through totemic archetypes, fractured figuration, and symbolic structures oscillating between the primordial and the intuitive. He is best known for his Blue series, mask works, and Your Red Lips project,

the latter drawing from his professional engagement with emergency medical services and incorporating desiccated blood powder as material testimony to human vulnerability. Characterized by forceful yet fragile surfaces, Otten's works dissolve the distinction between figure and ground, constructing emotional and psychological terrains where beauty and rupture coexist.

Arie Otten's work has been exhibited internationally in exhibitions including *In Search of Habitable Futures* (Mumbai, 2026), *The Warrior Empath* (Paris, 2025), *Parasité* (Mumbai, 2025), *La Rupture du Désir* (Paris, 2025), *Faces* (solo exhibition, 2025), and *The Power of Blue* (Mumbai, 2024). His works have also been presented at the NOISE Media Art Fair in Vienna and are held in institutional and private collections, including the Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Mumbai. Widely regarded within Vedica Art Studios and Gallery as "the Donatello of Vedica Gallery," Otten has emerged as a significant voice in contemporary European abstraction and material-based figuration.

Readers are invited to explore the remarkable collection of works presented in *The Body That Paints Before It Breaks*, a volume that offers profound insight into the intersections of endurance, material memory, archetype, and artistic survival. Through paintings, sculptural works, masks, and mixed-media assemblages, the book illuminates how vulnerability may function not as limitation, but as a generative condition capable of producing new forms of human and artistic consciousness.

Engaging, reflective, and deeply conversational in character, the publication establishes an intimate dialogue between text and image, allowing Otten's works to unfold as emotional, philosophical, and material testimonies. Rather than imposing fixed interpretation, the book invites readers into a sustained encounter with the artist's visual language, encouraging contemplation of resilience, identity, and the enduring capacity of art to articulate the fragile dignity of human existence.



The Body that paints
before it breaks

Arie Otten

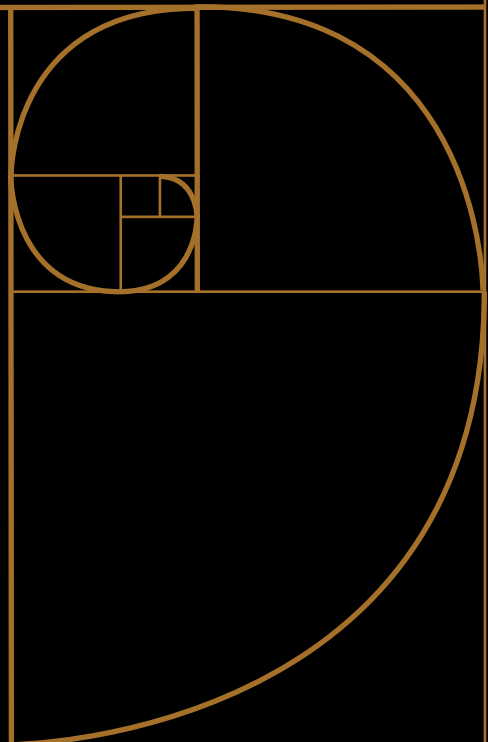


ART STORY

PIET MONDRIAN: ABSTRACTION AS A GRID

By Jurgis Dieliautas
ANIMA MUNDI ACADEMIA

ISSUE 19





PIET MONDRIAN: ABSTRACTION AS A GRID

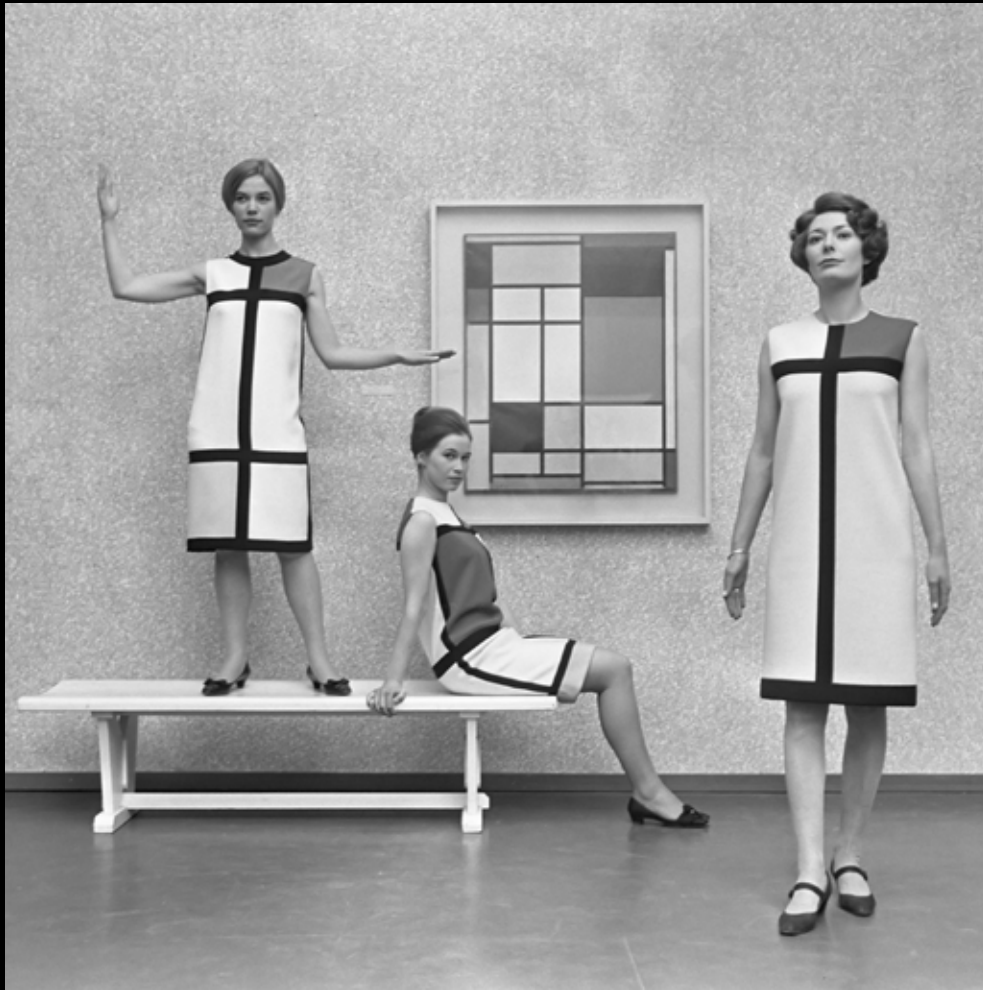
Summary

Piet Mondrian's proposed pictorial case for abstraction is complex, because we are immediately drawn into an intricate and not readily apparent visual rhythm. Such a rhythm inclines us to look for unusual visual connections and derivative effects elsewhere, beyond this suggestive and at the same time viscous texture. Perhaps it is appropriate to dwell in the texture itself, where the lines of color mysteriously slide, a checkered emptiness spreads, and the appeal to other connections fades. Gradually, such abstraction introduces and involves us in a very slow capture. It remains appropriate to search the intersections formed here. In a slow and enigmatic view, a hint of a grid becomes apparent — the eyes of a complex lattice. Abstraction is arranged like a grid before us, before our dismissed and forgotten intentions.

Generally speaking, this abstract grid is primarily a framework for analyzing the work, a set of assumptions and visual-mental statements. The analytical grid tempts with its porous emptiness, a closed interweaving of vacant cells. It is an empty field of the analytical matrix, a field of vision drawn by a colored line. Otherwise, it is an abstract infusion of color, an intricate filling of mental matter. The deceptively simple but geometrically distinct cells sway with differing volumes. The color of the abstract cells is an abstraction of references, hints of things and events, actions and situations. The work's abstract grid existence — a proportionally aligned confrontation — is a manifesto of obviousness. Without the difference of color, it seems that nothing exists and nothing can exist. Before us is only a colorfully checkered existence that has abandoned attributes. Yet the grid itself remains a conceptual support or catch. The color graphs are references to that semantic, visible-imaginary reverse image, references to a distant, exhausted, form-forgotten reality. We look at the even emptiness subordinate to color, but we cannot cling to it; we cannot sink into this void. Another view is needed, a view of different intensity. The eyes of the grid, the porous cavity, are the frame of the gaze. Color occupies the entire limited, porous, checkered area. Very quickly, the gaze acquires a different attitude and introduces a new direction that it requires.

The limited, checkered perimeter of color is not a self-contained expansion, manifestation, or rhetorical duration. The eyes of the grid are a viewing attitude through which it is appropriate to consider the reality of the work — not only as a grid, the color of a single window, or all the windows of the picture taken together. One must dare to look through the color of the windows into an abstract distance. Such a grid format, existing at the meeting of understanding, is a mode of looking through something. The eyes of the grid as a frame are the frame of the rhythm of vision. Within the porous plane and the boundaries of color, many different attitudes must flow, fit, and connect.

An empty window that appeals only to color, a window that does not suggest an object or action — a square window of color — meanders away and turns its gaze toward forgotten tones. An empty window that has filled and framed itself with color becomes a window of the visual process. In hasty reasoning, the hole — the visual gap — is often forgotten. Sometimes the concept offered by abstraction is only a gap, only a hole of visual direction. The multidirectional action of a gridded, square color is a combination. On the one hand, the abstract intention given by the cell or grid itself introduces abstract color intentions; on the other hand, it is an activity that has occurred, fulfilled, and filled itself with color, silencing itself with the content of hue. From real action



© Mondrian dresses by Yves St Laurent (1966)

to potential activity, there is a long route of abstraction. Many transitions and overlaps occur along such a route. The boxes reveal distant, receding differences. The color that has moved from an event or object finds its own capacity — a window-capacity. The box of abstraction suddenly becomes an endless process of purification of different interactions and situations.

We perceive a certain network capacity in the picture, a checkered rhythm of sequence and visual juxtaposition. Much can be accommodated here because it is the capacity offered by abstraction. The visual, geometric, analytical capacity takes, borrows, and arranges square formations into cells;

later all this deviates into the endless projective inclinations and shifts of the colors themselves. Color here no longer carries a necessary semantic code. The checkered matrix gradually becomes a whole of spreading expression, an abstract totality that cannot be summed up. Piet Mondrian does not provide comprehensive, unified abstract attributes that yield a coherent response. The color he provides is the matter of abstractions, the matter of mental content — matter that has purposefully divided itself in interaction. The cells in this matter are an infinite rhythmic cavity and, at the same time, a proportional fiber. The cells of abstraction are segments and components of this infinite fiber.

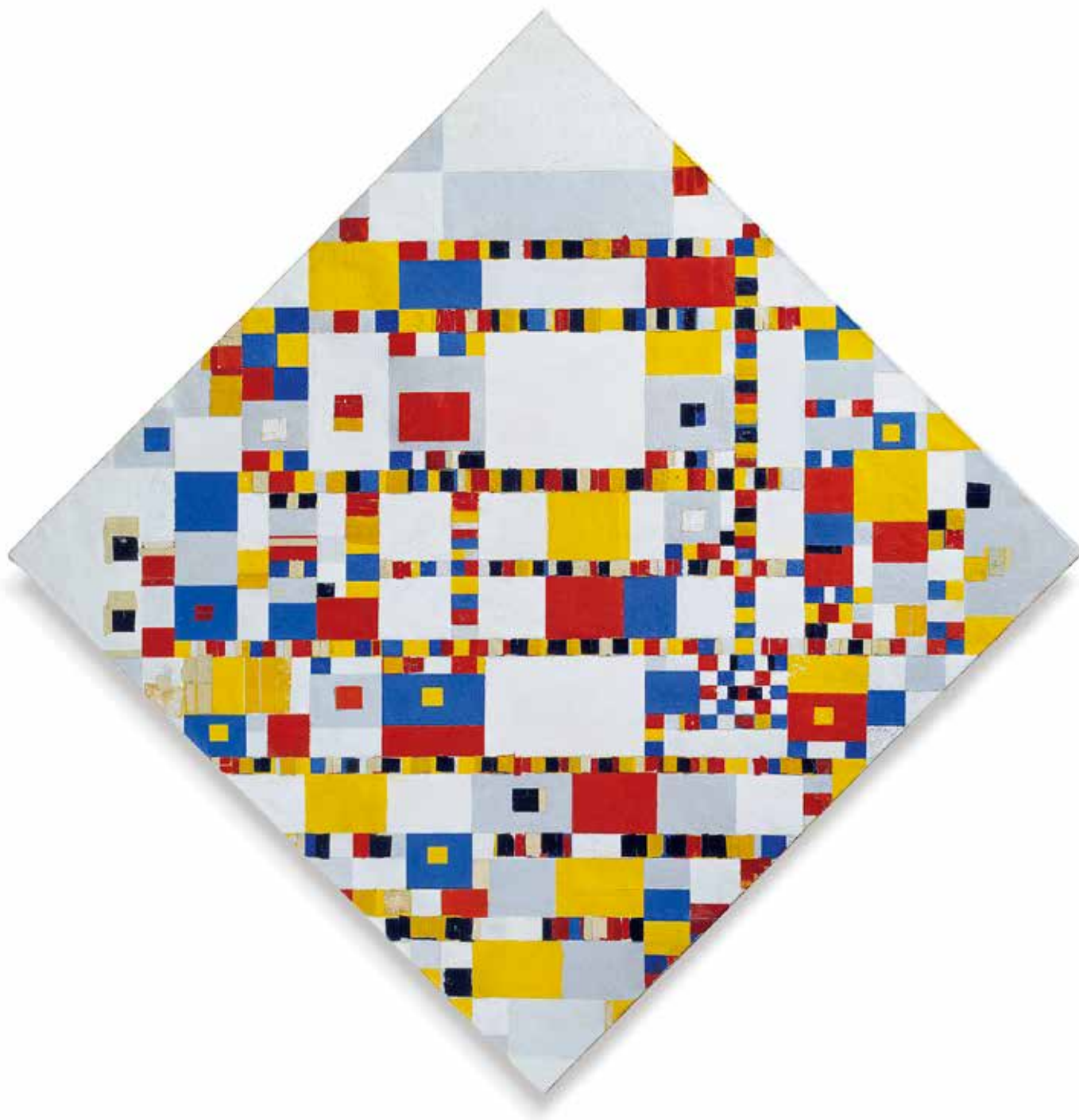


© Piet Mondrian in his studio (1942)

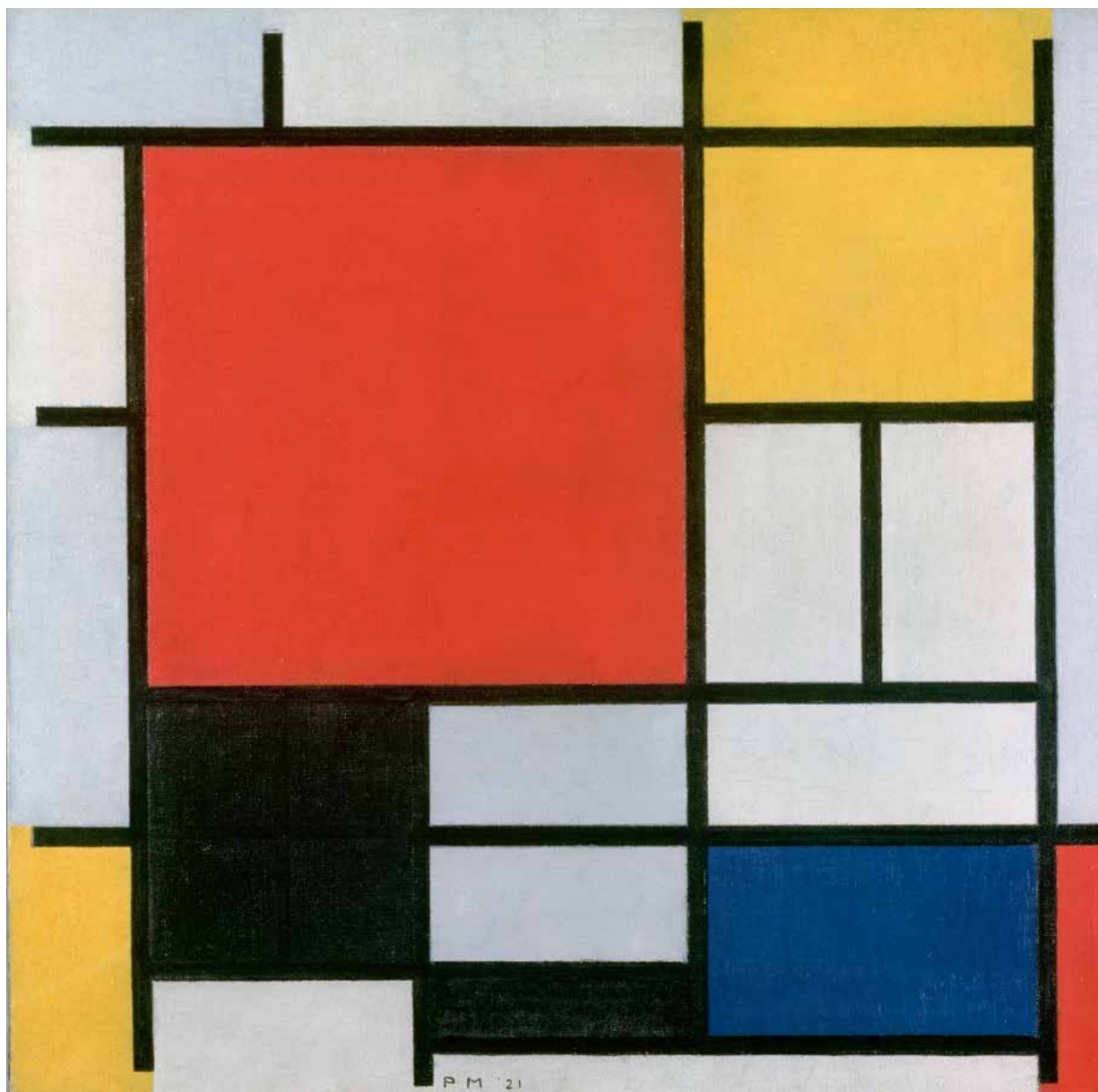
The segments that have become subtracted samples of color — segments of infinite divisibility — are segments of division, segments of difference, different volumes of abstraction. The components are the networked appeals of color, those endless coherent contrast appeals.

We return to the networked outcome of capture, to the variety of checkered displays of a single painting. Quite imperceptibly, the outcome and display in the network of abstractions turn into a reverse confrontation. Through these windows, through these square gaps, the checkered light of color glances at us and addresses us — the light of activity distant from events and actions. As if the reserved potential of color abstraction turns into a return route. This is no longer merely action or activity in the binary of statics and dynamics. Networked, square, checkered color becomes action: square color and the color of square volume. This is the color of an abstract gap. Yellow air, red pulse, black with borders, green freshness — these are already gaps within their own boxes. At the same time, all of these are thematic boxes filled with abstractions of the theme itself. Color turned into a gap needs a viewing window; vision needs an extension window; the capture expects a frame of coverage. Square color here is both the beginning and the full

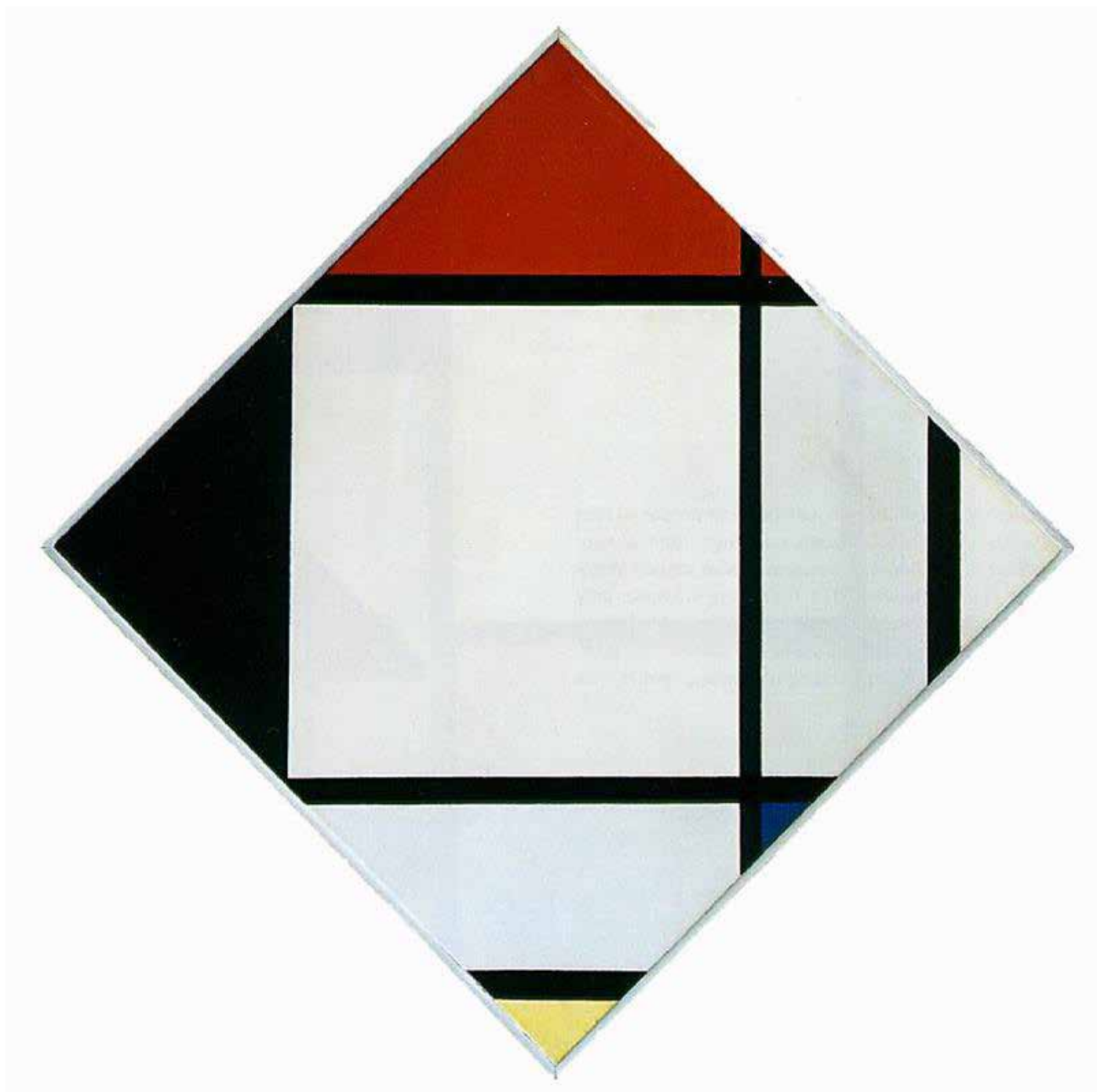
moon, the colorful circulation of components and exponents, outputs and statements. One must see the rhythm, the density of color filled by abstraction through the box of rhythm. A great deal of fresh and endless diffusion spreads from these windows — diffusion that returns from the windows to our concepts. The diffusion of color itself as a format is not one-way. Much cannot be returned from this change of abstractions. The window turns into a calculating box. The box in its usual diffusion becomes a container of color, a synthetic vessel. Square diffusion here is a changing color structure because it is a competition of color reflections and visible echoes. Through color connections and appeals, an exchange of views takes place. Diffusion gradually turns into a change of moods and influences. Piet Mondrian leads us to complex inquiries with his grid abstractions. We are presented with questions about color communion and color partnership. These paintings are, on the one hand, grids of vision or visibility; on the other hand, they are a networked expression of new, endless changes. The networked expression of color is reciprocal — an expression returning from untying, from abstract response to the rhythm of search. At the same time, this networked expression creates a renewed network, a new eye of color abstraction, leading to a new quadrature of color.



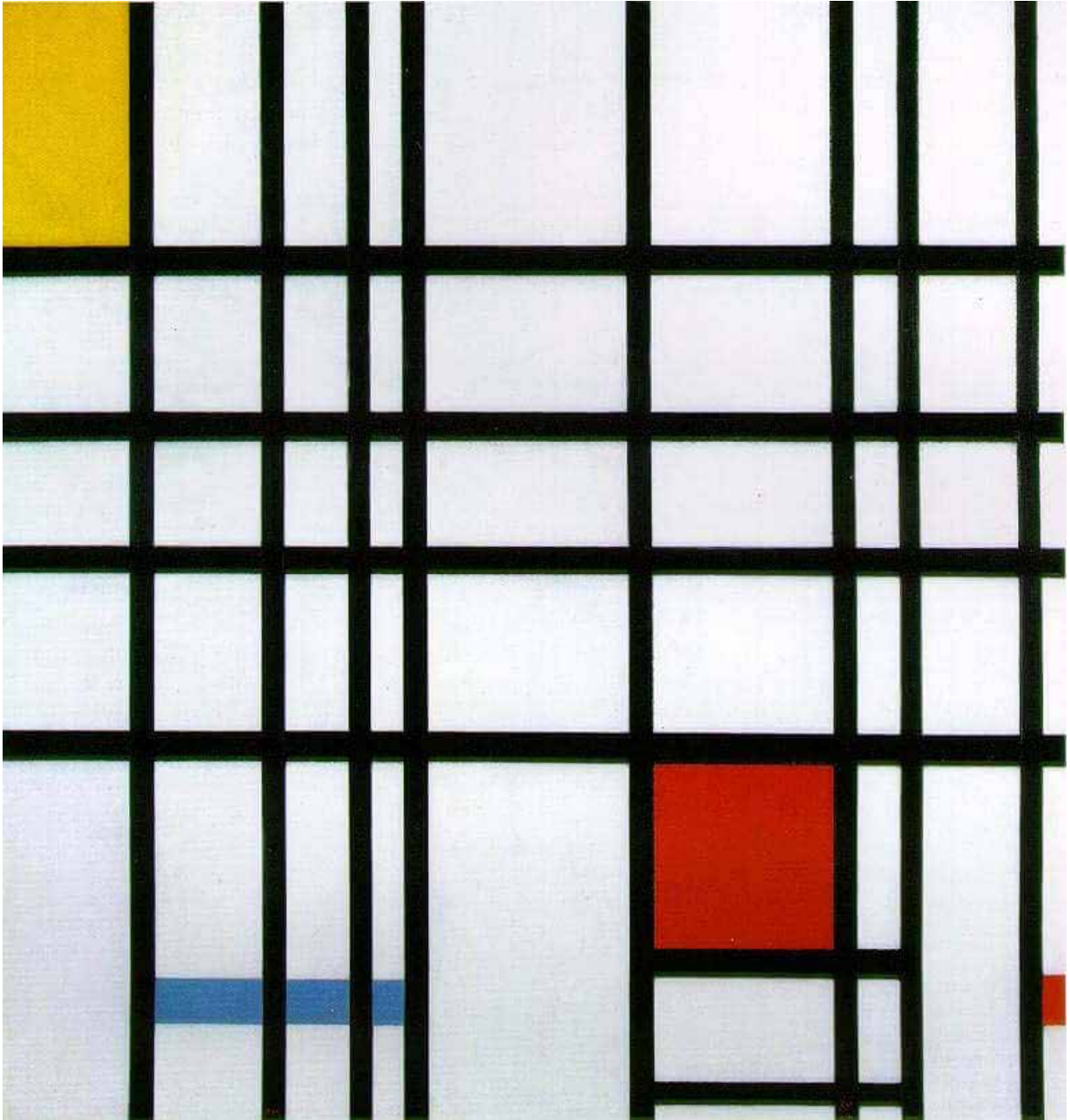
© **Piet Mondrian** (Dutch), Title: **"Victory Boogie Woogie"**, 127 x 127 cm, oil on canvas, 1942–1944



© **Piet Mondrian** (Dutch), Title: **"Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Grey and Blue"**,
59,5 x 59,5 cm, oil on canvas, 1921



© **Piet Mondrian** (Dutch), Title: **"Lozenge Composition with Red, Black, Blue and Yellow"**,
77 x 77 cm, oil on canvas, 1925



© **Piet Mondrian** (Dutch), Title: **"Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue"**,
72,5 x 69 cm, oil on canvas, 1937 - 1942

A golden spiral graphic, a mathematical concept often associated with the Golden Ratio, is drawn in a light blue line. It starts from the bottom left and spirals outwards, passing through the top right corner of the frame. The spiral is composed of a series of quarter-circles, each inscribed within a square. The squares decrease in size as the spiral moves towards the top right, creating a sense of depth and movement. The entire graphic is set against a solid black background.

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ISSUE 20, SUMMER 2026

