

The Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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The Responsive Eye, an exhibition of more than 120 paintings and constructions by 99 artists from some 15 countries, documenting a widespread and powerful new direction in contemporary art, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from February 25 through April 25. Directed by William C. Seitz, Curator of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, the exhibition was announced in 1962 and has been in preparation for more than a year.

As Mr. Seitz points out in the accompanying catalog*, these works exist less as objects to be examined than as generators of perceptual responses in the eye and mind of the viewer. Using only lines, bands and patterns, flat areas of color, white, gray or black or cleanly cut wood, glass, metal and plastic, perceptual artists establish a new relationship between the observer and a work of art.

These new kinds of subjective experiences, which result from the simultaneous contrast of colors, after-images, illusions and other optical devices, are entirely real to the eye even though they do not exist physically in the work itself. Each observer sees and responds somewhat differently.

Certain of the artists shown, such as the Italians of the recently dispersed Gruppo "N" and the Spaniards of Equipo 57, have an impersonal, technological approach. Others, like Morris Louis, Piero Dorazio and Ad Reinhardt, are poetic, musical or mystical in spirit; these two extremes sometimes even exist together. Some, like Agam, depend for their impact on the movement of the spectator. Yet none of them, Mr. Seitz says, merely follows a system or an invariable rule: rather they discover inherent laws through creative experience.

The exhibition is limited to works that represent its theme most purely. Representational images, symbols and free forms which evoke associations, gestural

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*THE RESPONSIVE EYE by William C. Seitz. 56 pages; 43 illustrations (12 in color). Paperbound \$1.95. Published by The Museum of Modern Art.

brush strokes and thick impasto which tend to muffle and weaken the function of colors and shapes, are excluded.

Every relevant tendency within the theme of the exhibition is represented, including those which have been categorized as "Optical," "Retinal" or "Cool" art, "Hard-Edge Painting," "Visual Research," "The New Abstraction," "La Nouvelle Tendence," "Post Painterly Abstraction," "Color Imagery" and "Programmatic Art."

As was the case during the 15th century when artists employed the new method of linear perspective, the means used in these works have reverberations beyond the field of art. They incorporate laws of vision studied by ^{such} 19th century scientists as Helmholtz, Hering and Chevreul, and applied, but only sporadically, by artists since the time of Monet, Cézanne and Seurat. The new perceptual art marks a peak in the history of visual research; it utilizes the graphic demonstrations of experimental psychology and optics (among them the dynamic effects of ambiguous perspective and moire pattern); it transfers experiments begun in design schools to the fine arts; it offers a new and rich source of study to scientists in several fields.

As Mr. Seitz indicates in the catalog of the exhibition, fascinating new possibilities are presented by the new perceptual art.

Can such works, that refer to nothing outside themselves, replace with psychic effectiveness the content that has been abandoned? What are the potentialities of a visual art capable of affecting perception so physically and directly? Can an advanced understanding and application of functional images open a new path from retinal excitation to emotions and ideas?

and not mentioned above

Among the artists shown/are: Josef Albers, Richard Anuszkiewicz, Hannes Beckmann, Paul Brach, Enrico Castellani, Gene Davis, Karl Gerstner, John Goodyear, Robert Irwin, Ellsworth Kelly, Heinz Mack, Agnes Martin, Almir Mavignier, John McLaughlin, Guido Molinari, Kenneth Noland, Gerald Oster, Bridget Riley, Julian Stanczak, Jeffrey Steele, Frank Stella, Peter Anthony Stroud, Tadasky, Luis Tomasello, Victor Vasarely, Ludwig Wilding and Yvaral; the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (France), Gruppo "T" and Gruppo "N" (Italy); Equipo 57 (Spain) and/ ^{Group} Zero (Germany) are represented.

After the New York showing, the exhibition will travel to St. Louis, Seattle, Pasadena and Baltimore.

Photographs, catalog and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Dept. of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.