



Victor Vasarely

30 April – 28 June 2003

As Tate Britain prepared for an exhibition of Britain's most respected Op artist Bridget Riley, Robert Sandelson presented a major commercial gallery exhibition of the father of Op Art, Victor Vasarely.

At the peak of his career in the 1980s, Vasarely was the second most popular artist at auction after Picasso. So it is all the more remarkable that this was the first UK exhibition for Vasarely's work in thirty years and the first commercial gallery show worldwide for fifteen years.

The vogue for geometric design and dynamic patterning made us look again to Optical Art, the movement initiated by artists such as Vasarely and Josef Albers in the 1950s. Their work relies on the illusions created by the eye as it seeks to make sense of a complex visual image.

The exhibition at Robert Sandelson included paintings from the 1940s to the 1970s, examples of the key works that introduced the concepts of optical effect and movement to the public. Vasarely developed tangible, interactive artworks that were at the forefront of the development of kinetic art and took Op Art painting into three dimensions.

Vasarely's work was not confined to painting. As a set designer, architect, film-maker, graphic designer, writer and publisher of books and prints, his name became associated with all aspects of contemporary culture. Constantly experimenting with his media, Vasarely foresaw the importance of technology in the dissemination of art. His aim was to make works that could not only be appreciated but also replicated by anyone, otherwise, he felt, art would lose its power.

The Vasarely Foundation, located in Aix-en-Provence, France, is a strikingly geometric architectural landmark designed by the artist himself and dedicated to his work. A major museum in Vasarely's native country, Hungary, is also devoted exclusively to the artist. His work is highly sought after and included in many major museum and private collections around the world.

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