

The time of César Paternosto, the artist who challenged the eye in art

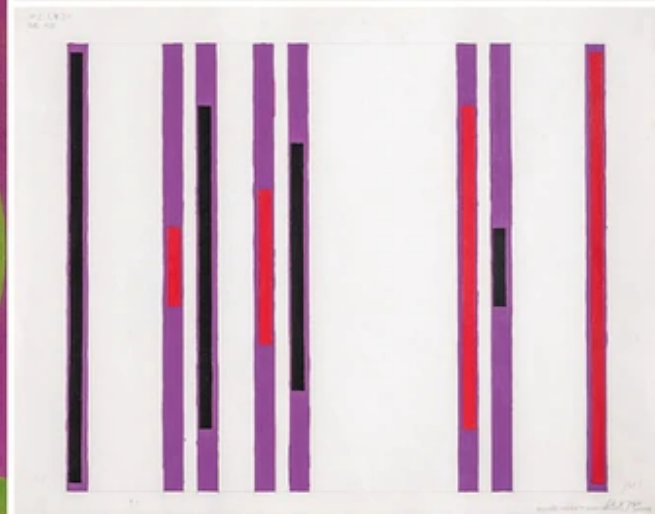
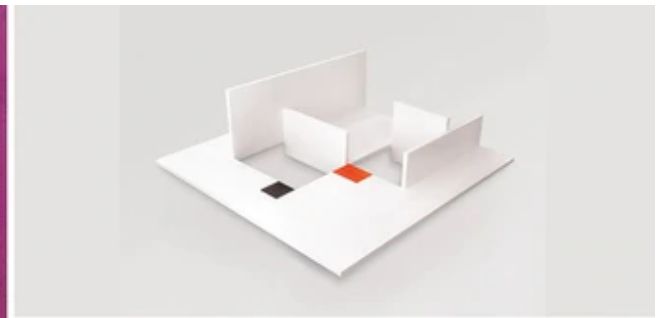
After recovering the work of Julio Le Parc, the National Museum of Fine Arts presents a retrospective with 40 pieces by the artist from Plata, which with his paintings and his concept of “oblique vision” broke the structures on how a work should be approached. “Geometric language is a preliminary step to purely spiritual forms,” he said.



César Paternosto exhibits his work at the National Museum of Fine Arts

A little over a year ago, the Argentine artist César Paternosto toured his entire career and talked about his work with Infobae Cultura. In that meeting, which lasted more than an hour, he confessed: “If there is something I am proud of, it is to be in important public collections in the world. The private collection serves to live, but a public collection gives you contact with people , gives meaning to a working life. Also the institutional samples, something of what I need. ”

Today, that yearning becomes reality, since the National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA) presents César Paternosto: the eccentric gaze , a retrospective with about 40 works from the '60s,' 70s, recent works and a specific unpublished site that It summarizes the work of the 88-year-old Argentine artist, an unavoidable reference of abstract painting, for whom “geometric language is a previous step to purely spiritual forms”. In that sense, the MNBA continues its work to value the work of local artists recognized in the world, but who had to wait decades to be prophets in their land, as was the case of Julio Le Parc .



Three works on display at the MNBA

Many of the works in the exhibition - from the artist's collection, and from public and private collections, such as the Fine Arts, the Emilio Pettoruti Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Eduardo Costantini collection - will be exhibited to the public for the first time . In addition, room 40 of the Museum will present an unpublished specific site installation, entitled **Pictorial Deconstruction** , which is the consummation of the artist's painting object, which in turn is accompanied by a series of paper works made by the author in the last decades.

Born in La Plata in 1931, this member of the Di Tella generation his work is in the main museums of the world: from MoMA, Guggenheim and The Ford Foundation in New York; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland; the Reina Sofía National Museum of Art and the Thyssen of Madrid, Spain: the Patricia Phelps Cisneros and Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection in Venezuela, the National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA), the Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires (MALBA) and the Museum of Modern Art (MAMBA) in Argentina, among many others. Even in the Atocha train station in Madrid.

In his native La Plata, Paternosto joined Grupo Sí , which practiced informal painting, the movement that emerged in Spain during the Franco dictatorship, parallel to American abstract expressionism, and which had an important and influential exhibition in the Museum in the early 1960s National of Fine Arts. By the end of that decade, he had "ended his post-informalist stage" and is based in New York, where he lived until 2004.

Choose the Big Apple over Paris, for the impact that had caused abstract expressionism , pop and minimalism . "It was like a wave that affected a lot of Latin American artists and the city became a magnet for young people," he told Infobae Cultura.

The artist, who has lived in Segovia, Spain for 15 years, discussed his abstract tradition, a language "very close to the musical." "The verb to be in Spanish is very strong. I have the title of lawyer, but I am an artist ", says the creator recognized by the concept of " oblique look ", which consisted of leaving the front of the paintings blank and painting on the edges that surround the frame.



Paternosto next to works in paper of the '60 (JG Battle)

"In the production of Paternosto, abstraction means; abounds in physical connotations and ideals that only a lateral vision allows to decipher. It is a geometry that demands a passage to the hidden order of things," wrote **Andrés Duprat**, director of the MNBA. And I add: "In these works, the very idea of a painting as a support is discussed. Blank fabrics, with their sides painted, propose to move the gaze. What the artist calls 'oblique vision' is an eccentric look that also refers to his will to expand the repertoire of art outside the western canon".

- What does this abstract and geometric art that will be seen in Fine Arts propose?

-When eliminating the need to represent objects, it is closer to purely spiritual forms, forms that are born from an inner need. There is an analogy with the musical, which is not asked for an anecdote, contrary to what happened in the painting for centuries. I use a very basic, simple empirical geometry, I am inventing a small language for each work. As a child I went out to the street in my house in La Plata and there was already an orientation at 90 ° or 45 ° in, maybe that was there and made me an abstract artist, do not forget that there was also Pettoruti. I am convinced that it is a language that enters through the senses but is not verbalizable, like music.



"Untitled", 1966. Oil on chipboard, 60 cm in diameter. Private collection.

- How did that language take hold?

-In the 70s I traveled to Peru and found geometric carved rocks. It was an epiphany: in the middle of the Andes I gave strange sculptures even for the pre-Columbian tradition. I was moved to see an abstract art before that of the West in which I had been raised and of which there were almost no references, because the anthropologist, the archaeologist, confronted with an ancient object, if he does not see the representation of a recognizable figure he does not see art. He lacks the education of an abstract evolution, he believes that art ends in realistic and naturalistic representation. I ended up writing the book **Abstract Stone** that interprets pre-Columbian art incorporating the abstraction model: the stone gave a metaphysical sense to the Andean life and those modifications that made it rescued its sacred matter instead of representing.

- How did you think of this sample?

-There is an axis of the 60s, where the idea was to leave the traditional pictorial support, emphasizing the quality of object of the paintings rather than windows, the important thing was to surprise a spectator, accustomed to seeing landscapes and vaquitas in the field. Then there is the zone of rupture, that of the 70, where I erase the front of the paintings and paint only on the frames to cause an unprecedented reading: we have to move from one side to the other looking at the sides to reconstruct the work mentally.

The installation is what I am most proud of, **pictorial deconstruction** allows us to enter a painting: the journey made by the eye in front of the paintings is now done by the body, transiting a space where the points of perception vary. And the work that will remain as heritage of the MNBA, **Tectonic continuity**, is the last thing I am doing, a form that invites the center but that I empty taking the interest to the periphery.



"Pictorial Deconstruction" (MNBA)

- How did you go from lawyer to abstract artist?

-I studied advocacy for lack of guidance. When I was a kid I used to make portraits, in the catalog there are some very good ones from my parents, the drawing teachers used to put me 10 but none told me 'why don't you study Fine Arts' and I stayed in my life as a teenager, bland, vulgar, without stimuli from that sense because at home there was no artistic background. Dad was a chemistry teacher for example. One day I went into crisis, did an actor test, I was interested in cinema and said 'but I painted', 'I drew', it was like remembering that you had a good voice. I started taking private lessons and when I went to Hector Cartier's classes it changed my life. There I realized that I was born for that. The passage was very arduous but gradually I got more and more into art, not as a profession, because that was unthinkable,

César Paternosto: the eccentric gaze, MNBA, Avenida del Libertador 1437, until February 2, 2020.