

Sublime Simplicity, White as a Medium of Expression
Curatorial Statement

Leon Tovar Gallery is proud to present an essential group exhibition featuring the works of key conceptual minimalist artists Francisco Salazar, Alejandro Otero, Julio le Parc, and Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar. "Sublime Simplicity, White as a Medium of Expression" invites you to immerse yourself in a captivating journey through the artists' unique expressions, where form and materiality intertwine to create striking visual narratives.

At the heart of this exhibition are Francisco Salazar's works on corrugated cardboard and wood, showcasing his distinctive style and medium. Each piece carries its own story, inviting us to delve into a world where abstract shapes and vibrant colors dance across the surfaces. *Un trou, Number 825* mesmerizes with its dynamic composition, while *Deux vide et un plein, No 832 / 1987* beckons us to explore the delicate balance between negative and positive spaces, emptiness and fullness.

Salazar's artistic practice, rooted in a profound understanding of materials, allowed him to breathe life into his works. Through his meticulous technique, he transformed humble mediums into works of art that strategically exude both strength and fragility. The rhythmic textures and tactile surfaces of *No. 805* and *Number 830* invite the viewer to sense the artist's energy and passion emanating from within.

In addition to Salazar's remarkable pieces, we are delighted to showcase Alejandro Otero's *Coloritmo* a testament to his revolutionary approach to abstraction. Otero's mastery of color and form is on full display in this vibrant composition, where geometric shapes intertwine and collide, creating a harmonious symphony of hues.

Julio Le Parc's *Mobile Blanc* from 1960, a pivotal work in the realm of kinetic and Op art, also features in the exhibit. Le Parc, a highly influential *mínimo conceptual* (conceptual minimalist) figure, challenges our perception and engages our senses through his immersive installations. *Mobile Blanc* captivates viewers with its delicate balance of form and movement, as its suspended elements create alluringly hypnotic patterns and shadows that seem to dance before our eyes.

This group of artists long advocated for an art that defied passive observation, and this resonates throughout the exhibition. Their explorations of light, motion, and optical illusions inspire a new way of engaging with artworks. In their relentless pursuit of viewer participation, the artists' works invite us to question our surroundings and actively engage with the ever-changing nature of perception.

It is worth noting that another connection among these artists was their presence in Europe when the German post-war art movement, ZERO was in full effect. The ZERO movement, also known as ZERO Group or ZERO International, was a post-war art movement that emerged in Germany in the late 1950s. It aimed to redefine artistic practices and challenge traditional notions of art by focusing on light, motion, and spatial concepts. The movement sought to return to a "zero point" where art could be reinvented and begin anew, free from the weight of the past. Moreover, ZERO artists explored the use of light as an artistic medium, incorporating kinetic elements and creating installations that interacted with the viewer, challenging their perception, and engaging the senses. The movement also embraced monochromatic and minimalist aesthetics, often utilizing simple forms, repetitive patterns, and reduced color palettes to emphasize purity and visual harmony.

Notable artists associated with the ZERO movement in Germany included the likes of Heinz Mack, Otto Piene, Günther Uecker, Yves Klein (associated with the French Nouveau Réalisme movement, but who also had connections to ZERO artists). These artists, through their innovative approaches and collective spirit, made significant contributions to the development of post-war German art and the broader international art scene.

While Francisco Salazar, Alejandro Otero, Julio Le Parc, and Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar were not directly associated with the ZERO movement, their artistic explorations in form, materiality, and immersive experiences during a similar timeframe create resonances and evident connections to what (we propose) could have been the *CERO* movement. Spanish for Zero, this movement would have been inclusive of the group's Latin American diasporic contemporaries and their oeuvres.

Join us in celebrating their vision and technique and in recognizing the revised enduring legacy of Francisco Salazar, Alejandro Otero, Julio le Parc, and Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar.

Leon Tovar Gallery invites you to join us for the Collector's Preview on Saturday, June 10th, from 11am – 5pm.

Leon Tovar Gallery is located at 26 East 64th street (64th Street off of Madison Avenue), 2nd floor. The gallery is open Monday – Friday from 10am – 6pm and on Saturdays from 11am – 5pm.