

Press Release

## Eugenio Espinoza

### *Tre stanze, tre mesi*

Opening reception: Thursday, March 10th, 2022, from 16.00 to 21.00

Duration: until June 3rd, 2022

Exhibition space: Galleria Umberto Di Marino - Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Naples

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 15:30/19:30 – mornings by appointment

Galleria Umberto Di Marino is delighted to present, on March 10th, 2022, the second personal exhibition of the Venezuelan artist Eugenio Espinoza, titled *Tre stanze, tre mesi* (*Three rooms, three months*).

Nurtured in a context of artistic research affected by the mannerism of geometrical abstraction and Kinetic art, during the early 70s Espinoza develops a practice that showcases all the impatience and disillusionment regarding both the modernist ideology and the inconsistency of economic and social politics that were starting to flourish in Latin America. In Venezuela, a country that between the 60s and the 70s was going through a prospering oil boom, the public support of geometrical abstraction was becoming a true political propaganda movement, finalized to christening the country as an example of Western modernity. In response to what's widely considered as the symbol of modern rationalism, the grid, Eugenio Espinoza performs a constant desecration and distortion of the grid's stiffness; he cuts it, lengthens it, folds it. Contaminating it with all the "impurities" that come from the natural world, from raw canvas to found objects, Espinoza bares the grid of its rigorous rigidity by forcing the artwork into a constant process of re-signification.

Through three iconic works of the 70s and through others of more recent creation, *Tra stanze, tre mesi* (*Three rooms, three months*) insists on the grid system, although now with a completely different perspective. His desecrated grid, now left wide open, seems to originate from a careful study of Piet Mondrian's compositions, from which he ignores the search for a formal and spiritual perfect equilibrium. In this case the artist's attention focuses instead on the function of the colors in Mondrian's work and on the inevitable and irrational fascination that they create on the spectator.

Overloading the empty spaces of the grid through color and depriving the artwork from its traditional support, Espinoza moves within the search of not only a different spatiality, but also towards the possibility of attributing other meanings into this immobile geometry.

The works explicitly invite the spectator into doubting its perfect composition, to open it, and to transform it into an apparently limitless monochrome.

Simultaneously, the attempt at instilling a less passive approach to the artwork becomes an excuse to break the "silence of the painting." In some of the intersections of the lines that form the grid, the artist has included a component of text that at first impression is only casual and without a specific order to it. Only a more careful and slow observation will be able to find an arrangement of words, bringing forth a disconnected speech formed by phrases of varying degrees of expression.

Now putting pressure on the stiff grid of language, Espinoza tries to convey into the canvas a new ability to "think" and to produce a sense of something that lives beyond its own strict system.

## Biography

**Eugenio Espinoza** was born in 1950, in San Juan de los Morros, Venezuela. From 1966 to 1974, he studied at the Escuela de Artes Plasticas Cristobal Rojas and the Instituto de Diseno Newmann-Ince in Caracas. From 1977 to 1981, he lived in New York where he studied at Pratt Institute, New York University and the School of Visual Arts. In 1972, Eugenio Espinoza exhibited cut and folded canvas at the Museo de Bellas Artes and his “Impenetrable” at Ateneo de Caracas. His later conceptual works include found objects and photography. In 1985, he represented Venezuela at the Bienal de Sao Paulo and in 1989 participated to the 1st Bienal de Cuenca, Ecuador and in 2021 his work joins the collection of MoMA in New York through a donation of Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC)

His recent exhibitions in public and private spaces include: *Geometrias*, The Cisneros Collection at MALBA, Buenos Aires (2003); *Tequeños*, Museo Cruz-Diez Caracas, Venezuela (2004); *Three Perspectives*, CIFO, Miami, Florida (2007); *Frames and Documents*, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, FL (2011); *Artevida*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, curated by Adriano Pedrosa and Rodrigo Moura (2014); *Unruly Supports: (1970 to 1980)*, Perez Art Museum Miami (2015); *Galleria Eduardo Leme*, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2015); *Retro/retrospectiva 2016-1973*, TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes (2016); *Gonzalez's Memories of Underdevelopment...*, Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2018); *Human Applause*, group show at Bortolami Gallery, NY; *Room for Failure* curated by Omar Lopez-Chanoud, Piero Atchugarray Gallery Miami (2019); *Sur moderno Journeys of Abstraction—The Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Gift*, MOMA, New York (2019); *Broken Line* group show at Colegio Oficial de Arquitectura, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, SP (2020); *Broken Line (chapter 2)* at Lucía Mendoza Gallery, Madrid, SP (2021).

His work is in the permanent collections of Tate Modern, London, U.K.; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the Fine Arts Museum of Houston, TX; the Perez Art Museum Miami, FL; Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA; Galeria de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; and Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Sao Paulo; Museo de Arte Moderna, in Rio de Janeiro; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Bogota; Fundacion Gego, Caracas; The Cisneros Collection, New York; the Cisneros-Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, FL; and several other prestigious private and corporate collections.

In 2017 is the winner of the J.S.Guggenheim Memorial Foundation award, in the same year he realizes the first solo exhibition in Italy at Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Napoli, *Unlocking Something* and in 2021 he is part of the group show *Grandi Gallerie 02|Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Un posto come un altro dove appendere il* organized by Galleria Umberto Di Marino at Museo “O. Licini”, Ascoli Piceno, IT.

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