

Line, Shape, Colour and Rhythm: Channa Horwitz at Raven Row London

By [Ian Caldwell](#) on 14/04/2016

How many children at school have been caught idling away their time in a mathematics filling in the squares of their graph paper to create patterns, only to feel the wrath of the teacher when caught, squashing this moment of creativity.

The Los Angeles artist Channa Horwitz (1932-2013) made an artform out of exploring colour, geometry and pattern, often within the rigid framework grid of graph paper and using the number eight as a basis for the progressions in her rhythmic sequences. Was she influenced by the electrical engineering background of her father? During her career she used interior design in

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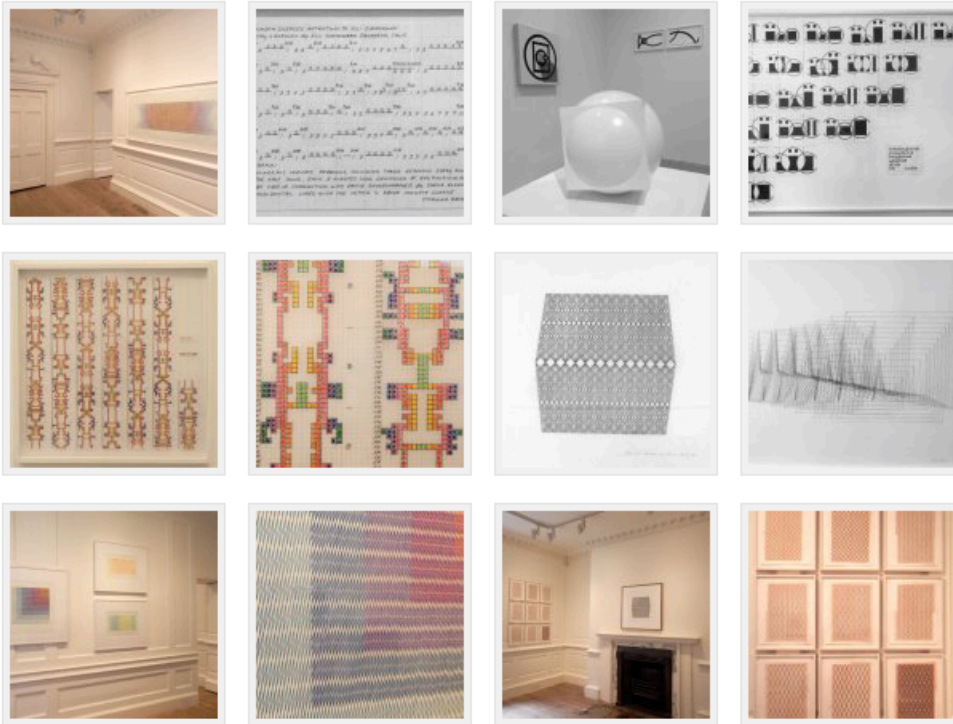
her *"Window Shades"* (1964) and science and lighting engineering in her proposals, never executed, for the 1971 Art and Technology exhibition in Los Angeles where eight plexi-glass beams would have floated in space and moved rhythmically within magnetic fields accompanied by changing beams of light.

In the elegant 18th century rooms of Raven Row, built twenty seven years before the city of Los Angeles was officially founded, is the first major exhibition of this relatively unknown artist in London, following on from a major exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin last year, accompanied by an essay by Ellen Blumenstein, Chief Curator at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, and including her sketches for the Art and Technology proposal *"Suspension of Vertical Beams Moving in Space"* (1968) and also instructions for a musical and performance work *"Sounds and Silences: Instructions to Elli Zimmerman"* (1969).

The exhibition shows works from throughout Horwitz's career. Her early work *"Language Series" I and II* (1964-2004) explores interconnections of the simple forms of circle, square, line and rectangle, also seen in her sculptural works. From there, colours and patterns dance within the structure of eight columns and the grid of the paper in her *"Sonakinatography"* compositions. New dynamics are created as the grid becomes coordination points and angular coloured lines in *"¼ Noisy"* (1998) move across the page connected to points on the grid as they dance, perfectly controlled and overlapping, within the eight columns. In *"8 Expanded, Variation 1 and 2"* (1981) the columns become three dimensional black lines creating structures hanging in space while *"Patterns"* (1982) explores variations of a simple diagonal progression and in *"Flag No 2"* she uses eight colours to create her own rainbow within the rectangular framework.

Drawings, sculpture, video, performance, linked to her exploration of line, shape and colour to create rhythm in space blending creativity and logic. An interesting contrast with the eighteenth century architecture which at the time was itself designed to a logical set of proportions.

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