

The background of the entire page is a grid of squares in various colors, including shades of green, blue, purple, yellow, and brown. The squares are arranged in a pattern that covers the entire area.

STÉPHANE DAFFLON

AIR DE PARIS

STÉPHANE DAFFLON

Born in 1972 in Neyruz, Switzerland

Lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland

Stéphane Dafflon produces rigorously geometrical canvases which dialogue freely with their ambient space. Initially he works with industrial design software, then transforms the results into acrylic canvases or wallpaintings. From design he takes techniques, tools, models and, most of all, ways of making his forms effective in the real world.

Stéphane Dafflon's pictorial work is always designed with a specific place or architecture in mind. It is incorporated within his work and his actions change the audience's perception of it, visually and physically.

Stéphane Dafflon has also been creating abstract sculptural works, not restricting himself to paint. His titles admit of no superfluous interpretation, bear no hidden meaning: they simply state the medium and a number: AST, acrylique sur toile (acrylic on canvas); PM, peinture murale (wall painting); SAI, sculpture sur acier inoxydable (stainless steel sculpture), etc.

Different materials such as wood, translucent Plexiglas and stainless steel are used to produce these three-dimensional works. Painted or shimmering, these 3D objects echo the shapes of the paintings hung on the walls causing reflections, interacting with the surroundings and opening the space out to unexpected perspectives.

Stephane Dafflon has had solo exhibitions in numerous institutions including Le Plateau – FRAC Ile-de-France, Paris (2018), Galerie Xippas, Genève (2023), Parra&Romero, Madrid (2014). He participated in many group exhibitions including Société des Arts, Palais Athénée, Genève (2023), Centre Pompidou, Bruxelles (2020), Printemps de Septembre, Toulouse(2020), MAMCO, Genève (2020).

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Artothèque de Villeurbanne, France
 Banque nationale Suisse, Suisse
 Banque Cantonale Vaudoise, Lausanne, Suisse
 BSI Banque, Paris, France
 The Sarasin Bank, Suisse
 Centre National des Arts Plastiques - CNAP, Paris, France
 Mercedes-Benz Art Collection, Berlin, Allemagne
 Mercedes-Benz Art Collection, Zürich-Schlieren
 Mercedes-Benz Art Collection, Stuttgart
 FRAC Poitou Charentes, Angoulême, France
 FRAC Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France
 FRAC Île de France, Paris, France
 FRAC Franche Comté, Besançon, France
 FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France
 FRAC Île de France, Paris, France
 Fonds cantonal d'art contemporain, Genève, Suisse

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Pastel Shadow

Air de Paris, Romainville, France

05.11.2023 — 14.01.2024

These new paintings by Stéphane Dafflon combine two realms of science, mathematics and the spectrum, number and color. In them we oscillate between contradictory perspectives: geometry, a stern thing of edges lines and angles, and the chromatic wheel, a diffuse thing of minute gradations. In the paintings both are put to straightforward use, despite engaging in a deliciously uncertain ontology.

The color spectrum, which Newton discovered is a quality of light, a form of electromagnetic radiation, is thoroughly understood by science, while at the same time we read it as a marker of aesthetic feeling and spiritual mystery. With Dafflon's paintings, the color is nonchromatic, it evokes light, tint, tone and shadow rather than pure chroma, it places its color in the world. Yet the ontology of color remains contested. It is not real in the same way as the canvas support, whose existence like mountains and sunlight doesn't depend on a human observer. Our perception of color rather results from the reflection of light rays captured by the eye, it only exists when a viewer sees it, as difficult as it is to imagine the concrete world as effectively achromatic.

Geometry, that is, mathematics, is also a matter of ontological debate. Do the straight-edge and right angle exist a priori, are they natural objects that we discover in the world, or are they a product of human culture, a function of human cognition? Geometry is both immaterial and real, is it objective or a product of anthropoid regard? The spectrum and geometry, color and points and lines, these elements of abstract painting marry intuition and rationality, the ineffable and the hard-headed.

Miró said art could be "confused with elements of nature," and abstract painting like this civilizes what is natural and raw within a rectilinear logic, consummating the union in a space of transformative contemplation. It is a geometry of heaven, transcendent and infinite, hovering in an unearthly space, a limitless field differentiated into uniform emanations of subtle light.

The alchemical act — metamorphosing elements of science into art — is a stab at mystical transcendence, once the goal of progressive abstraction. It has been posited that geometry, planes and angles, are masculine while color, especially soft nonprimaries, are feminine, so we could imagine the fusion of mother and father creates the ideal primary object, a cosmic space filled with constrained luminosity.

— Walter Robinson



Exhibition views

Pastel Shadow

Air de Paris, Romainville, France

2023-2024

Photo : © Marc Damage



Exhibition views

Pastel Shadow

Air de Paris, Romainville, France

2023-2024

Photo : © Marc Damage



Exhibition views

Pastel Shadow

Air de Paris, Romainville, France

2023-2024

Photo : © Marc Domage

U+25A6

Curated by Xavier Franceschi
Frac Île-de-France, Paris, France
01.02 — 15.04.2018

For his first solo exhibition at a Parisian institution, Swiss artist Stéphane Dafflon entirely rethinks the various areas at Le Plateau with an architectural and pictorial dimension, creating a whole new series of artworks encompassing paintings, sculptures and wall stickers. This presentation and these works change our perception of reality through the artist's sphere of abstraction.

Wall stickers boasting a plethora of infinite colours and shades fill the space with the power of vibration like a wave resonating with the surrounding architecture.

Created on a computer to begin with and then transposed to a canvas or wall, Stéphane Dafflon's pictorial work is always designed with a specific place or architecture in mind. It is incorporated within his work and his actions change the audience's perception of it, visually and physically.

The long chromatic variation of shades displayed in Stéphane Dafflon's wall installation brings an impression of movement to the different areas at le plateau and feelings experienced by visitors reflect a certain affinity with the world of music.

Stéphane Dafflon has also been creating abstract sculptural works for several years, not restricting himself to paint. Different materials such as wood, translucent Plexiglas and stainless steel are used to produce these three-dimensional works. Painted or shimmering, these 3D objects echo the shapes of the paintings hung on the walls causing reflections, interacting with the surroundings and opening the space out to unexpected perspectives.

These transformed spaces create uninhibited visual rhythmic (originating in and detached from the pictorial theories of Max Bill in particular), combining objects, paintings and drawings with wall stickers that communicate with each other like multiple perspectives with painstakingly chosen and calibrated colours emphasising a graphic dimension with the architecture.

Through this visual assemblage of painting, sculpture, object and architecture, Stéphane Dafflon's work portrays an original and radical vision of abstract painting, painting in the broad sense, conceived beyond media deemed as traditional such as a canvas and its frame to instigate a spatial and colourful conversation positioning the viewer at the heart of a veritable pictorial arrangement.



Exhibition views

U+25A6

Frac Île-de-France, Paris, France

2018

Photo : © Martin Argyroglo



Exhibition views

U+25A6

Frac Île-de-France, Paris, France

2018

Photo : © Martin Argyroglo



Exhibition views

U+25A6

Frac Île-de-France, Paris, France

2018

Photo : © Martin Argyroglo

Swing

Air de Paris, Paris, France

22.02 — 06.04.2013

For almost fifteen years now, Stéphane Dafflon has been building up a body of work of the first rank, marked by an originality that suggests an underlying elusiveness: at no point do his elegant geometrical abstractions defer to an unambiguous compositional principle. Borrowings, optical upsettings, the site specific, the index, the sample – all no sooner evoked than revoked. His titles admit of no superfluous interpretation, bear no hidden meaning: they simply state the medium and a number: AST, acrylique sur toile (acrylic on canvas); PM, peinture murale (wall painting); SAI, sculpture sur acier inoxydable (stainless steel sculpture), etc.

This artist summons his viewer as much to a rediscovery of the venue as to a perceiving of autonomous forms. Just as Airless, his first exhibition at Air de Paris (2000) brought his personal physical touch to bear on the actual exhibition space, this new show will see him applying his range of slender lines to both canvases and walls. Liberated from the streamlined design shapes they may have been borrowed from, these lines sometimes follow the edges of his stretchers, divide up the walls and redraw their corners. Space is no longer just to be traversed, but also to be displaced, vectored, transferred.

This exhibition will be a chance to observe the way Dafflon's practice is rooted in shifts, while, incidentally, embracing all the operations already mentioned – none of which, alone, would exhaust its complexity: shifts of format (stretcher size governed by the size of the passages), of colour (the tones of the canvases and the wall paintings reflecting two contradictory movements) and of placement (according to the transfers effected).

The upshot being that Stéphane Dafflon, rather than bothering about reacting to art theory, seems – in an act of defiance – to have taken literally the taggers who wrote on the gallery facade, «Easy to understand but complicated to do?» Don't bet on it, though.



Exhibition views

Swing

Air de Paris, Paris, France

2007

Photo : © Marc Damage



Exhibition views

Swing

Air de Paris, Paris, France

2007

Photo : © Marc Domage

Stéphane Dafflon
Curated by Corinne Charpentier
Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg, Switzerland
10.09 — 30.10.2011

Stéphane Dafflon's work is defined above all as painting, but his practice extends to the production of objects, environments and murals that the artist simulates and designs by computer. While painting might ordinarily be characterized by its two-dimensionality and stasis, Stéphane Dafflon's work is far from being circumscribed by such a definition. The painted forms optically induce depth, the volume pieces break up as they orchestrate circulation, and the succession of viewpoints is organized in the exhibition space, where rhythm and acceleration can be read. In this way, the works inscribe a particular score in the space they occupy, a score whose perception goes far beyond the purely visual.

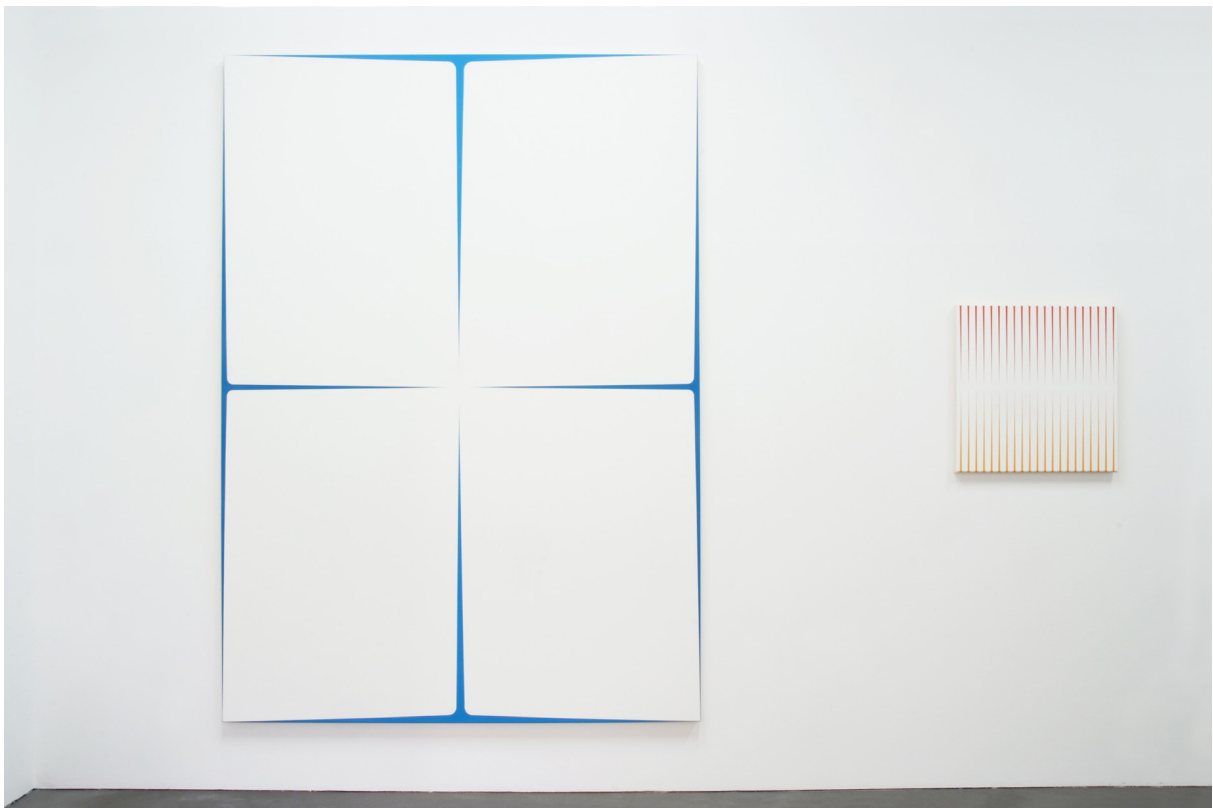
Stéphane Dafflon could be seen as a relaxed poly-legue of art and his time, so numerous and varied are the heritages that intersect and overlap in his work. That of abstract painting probably figures prominently, but in the distance of the end of the century, when the ideals of modernism have been largely eclipsed in favor of a proliferation of the repertoire of abstract forms in everyday consumer objects. This context reinforces Stéphane Dafflon's deliberately anti-heroic stance: the tools at his disposal (computers, industrial materials...) are commonplace. The systematic titles of his works are reminiscent of inventory references.

In his long essay on the artist, Jeff Rian develops the various heritages and influences, more or less accidental and more or less conscious, that populate and inform Stéphane Dafflon's work. The choice of colors and shapes in his work operates like a synthesis, the result of a metabolization of the visual environments of a world that has been drawn and conveyed on computer for a long time now. Visual efficiency and precision of form are the hallmarks of this familiarity with the world, but it would be difficult to pinpoint the precise filiations that operate in these motifs and colors, so much so do they appear as generic motifs.

In this respect, it's worth noting that Stéphane Dafflon's work resonates differently in 2011 from his first presentations in the late 90s. The context has evolved, and the fascination with smooth, uncluttered forms - omnipresent in the imagery of the time - seems to have given way to other trends, making it easier to read this type of work without the blurring of fleeting obsessions of the moment. Stéphane Dafflon's work is more clearly characterized by its musicality and distinctive use of space. His visual universe seems to originate from, as well as extend into, other registers, notably musical, but also choreographic and gestural, so intimately does the relationship between the works and the possible movements they generate or suggest seem to be based.



Exhibition views
Stéphane Dafflon
Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg, Switzerland
2011
Photo : © Julie Langenegge



Exhibition views
Stéphane Dafflon
Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg, Switzerland
2011
Photo : © Julie Langenegge

Turnaround

MAMCO Genève, Switzerland

24.06 — 27.09.2009

Stéphane Dafflon's work seems to follow in the footsteps of the abstract art bequeathed by radical modernism. In Switzerland, in particular, the pictorial research theorized by Max Bill has had a lasting influence on painters. But if the filiation is important, it is also rebellious. From the 1960s onwards, this influence tugged at the heartstrings of abstraction, turning on its head the position of the modernists who associated spiritual and mystical dimensions with the abstract approach.

When S. Dafflon began her art studies in the early 1990s, abstraction had already undergone its Copernican revolution. The contagion of constructed and non-figurative aesthetics had established the visual culture of abstraction in our environment, fashion and graphic design had seized on it, abstraction was everywhere. «The uncomplicated rereading of modernism and the abandonment of a virtuous moralism cloaked in academic heritage [...]», to quote John M Armleder, allowed a young artist to combine the data of art movements, mental images, musical rhythms, systems of signs and codes, design and popular culture.

(...) In 2002, S. Dafflon created a mural at Mamco (PM017) on the walls surrounding the building's central core on the second floor. Rectangles with rounded corners, of different sizes and colors, were arranged on an axis inclined to the floor. The mural, elusive in its entirety, disrupted architectural orthogonality through its inclination, with the floor appearing to absorb the walls, and disturbed visitors' sense of verticality as they walked along the corridor.

S. Dafflon's work is not confined to the single medium of painting, which nevertheless identifies his work. His sculptural objects are conceived from forms drawn on the screen. The science of design provides him with techniques and materials that enable the form to become an object in the real world. Made of wood, translucent Plexiglas or stainless steel, painted or mirrored, they echo the shapes on the walls, creating reflective effects and visually breaking up space by opening up other perspectives. Some of these large-scale pieces block the viewer's path (Silent Gliss 1056, 2003), while others, on the scale of furniture, seem to "emerge" from a painting whose three-dimensional motifs they reproduce.

S. Dafflon's art is a silent art for the "receptive eye", to quote the title of a major MoMA exhibition in 1965. But the spaces he creates have a visual rhythm and sonority. The paintings echo like a wave from one corner of the rooms to another, the colors meticulously calibrated, the graphic interplay of the painting's lines with the fluidity of the walls and the luminous lines of the neon lights stretching from the ceiling to the walls, Turnaround's journey provokes impressions that raise questions about visual reality.

There is no image in S. Dafflon's work, any more than there is a trace of the historical ideals of modernity. By freely incorporating into his abstract paintings the world in which he lives, its technicality and its knowledge, he gives them the liveliness of the immediacy of the advertising image without breaking with abstraction as a mode of realization.



Exhibition views

Turnaround

MAMCO Genève, Switzerland

2009

Photo : © Ilmari Kalkkinen



Exhibition views
Stéphane Dafflon
Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg, Switzerland
2011
Photo : © Julie Langenegge

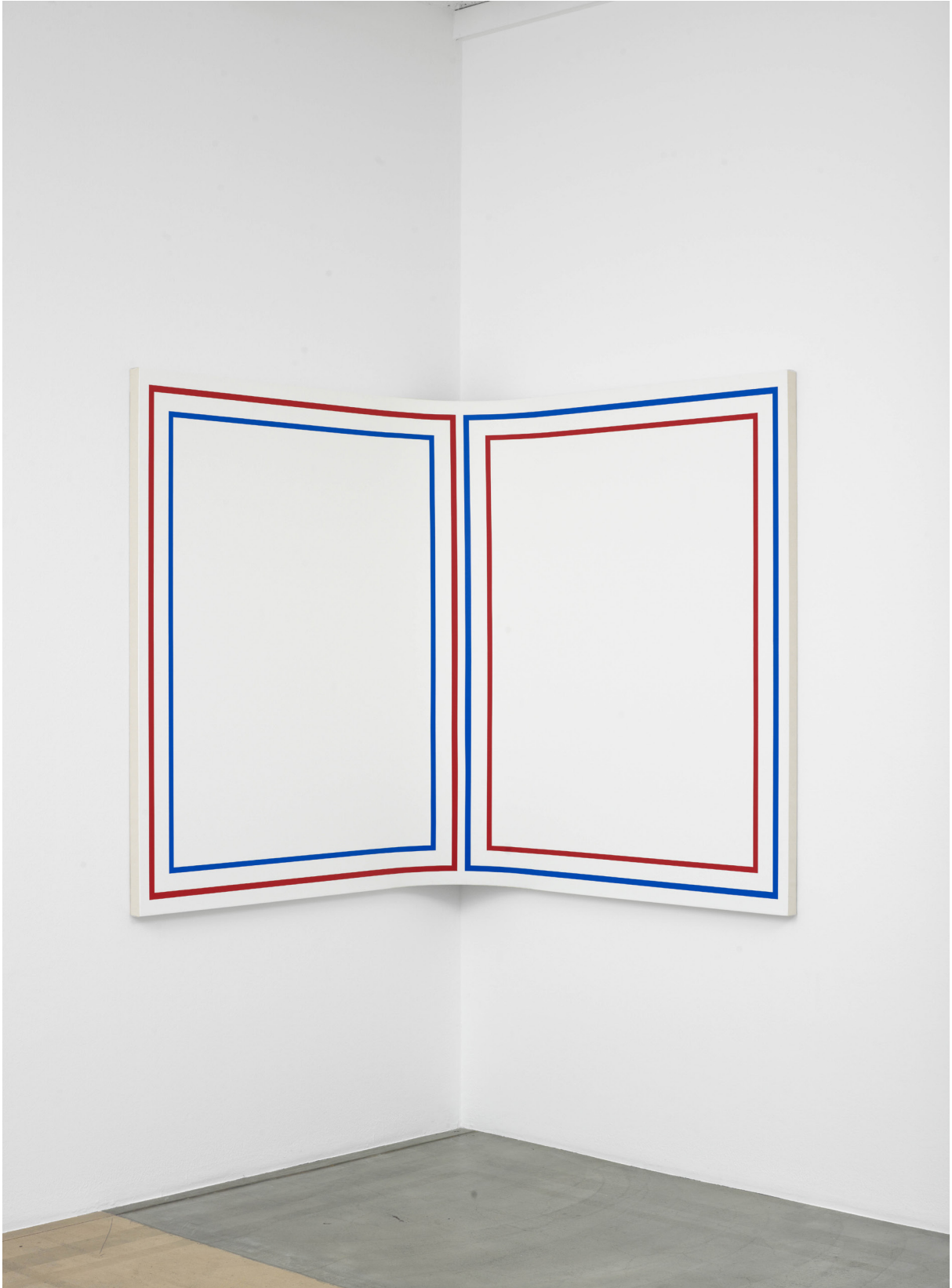


Exhibition views
Stéphane Dafflon
Kunsthalle Friart, Fribourg, Switzerland
2011
Photo : © Julie Langenegge

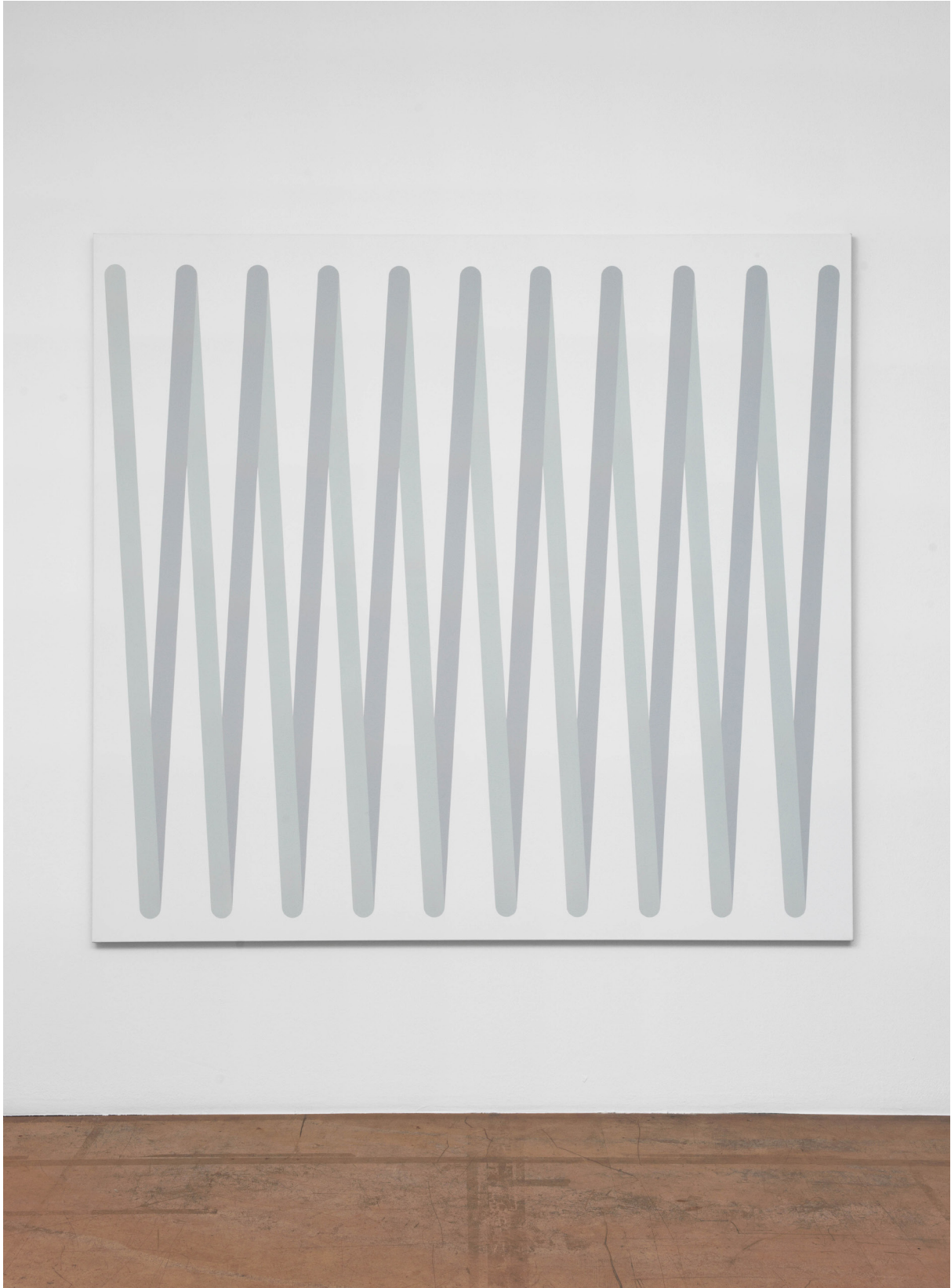
SELECTED ARTWORKS



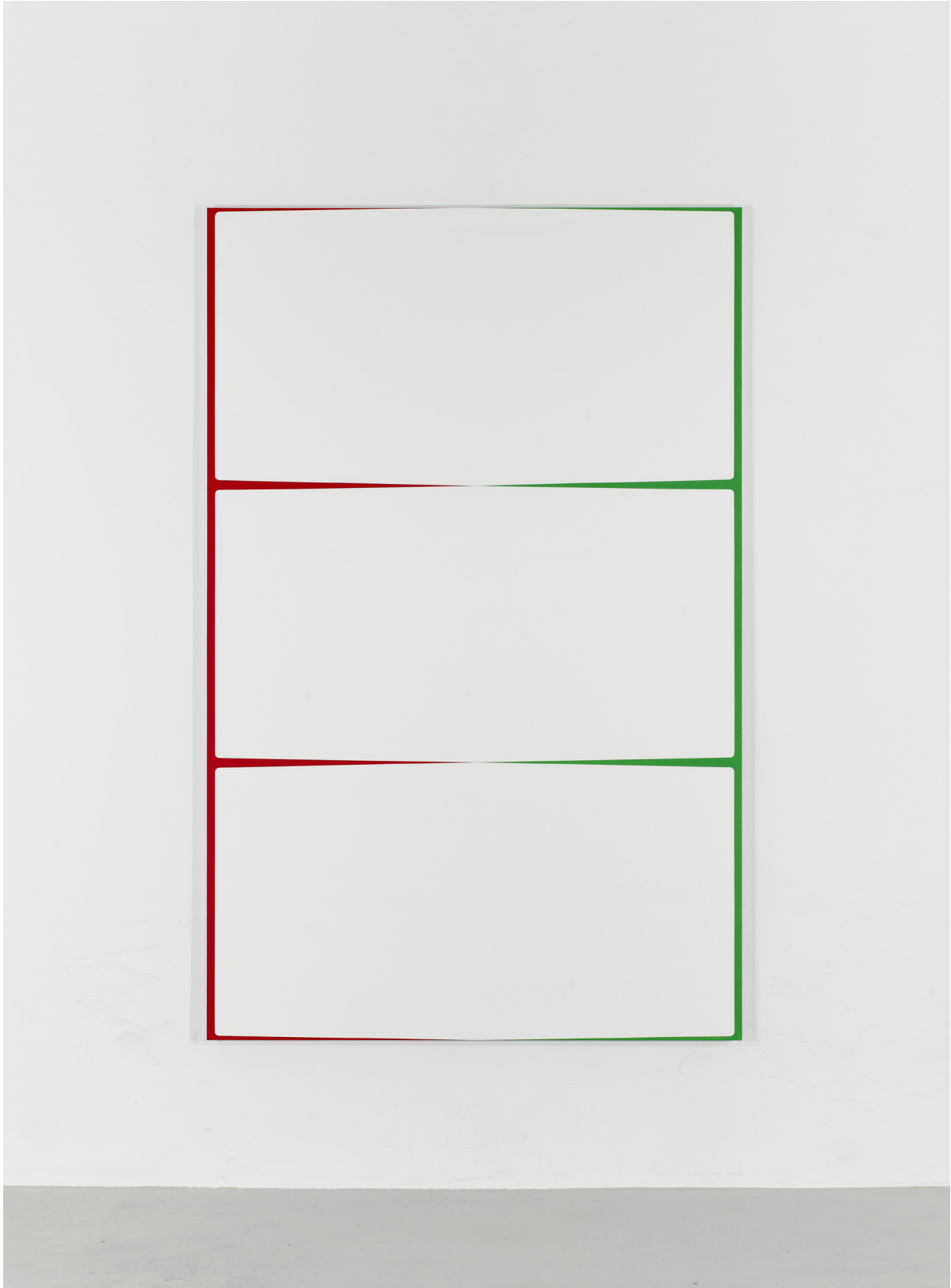
AST036
 2003
 Acrylic on canvas
 250 x 400 cm
 Unique



AST127
2009
Acrylic on canvas
150 x 250 cm
Unique



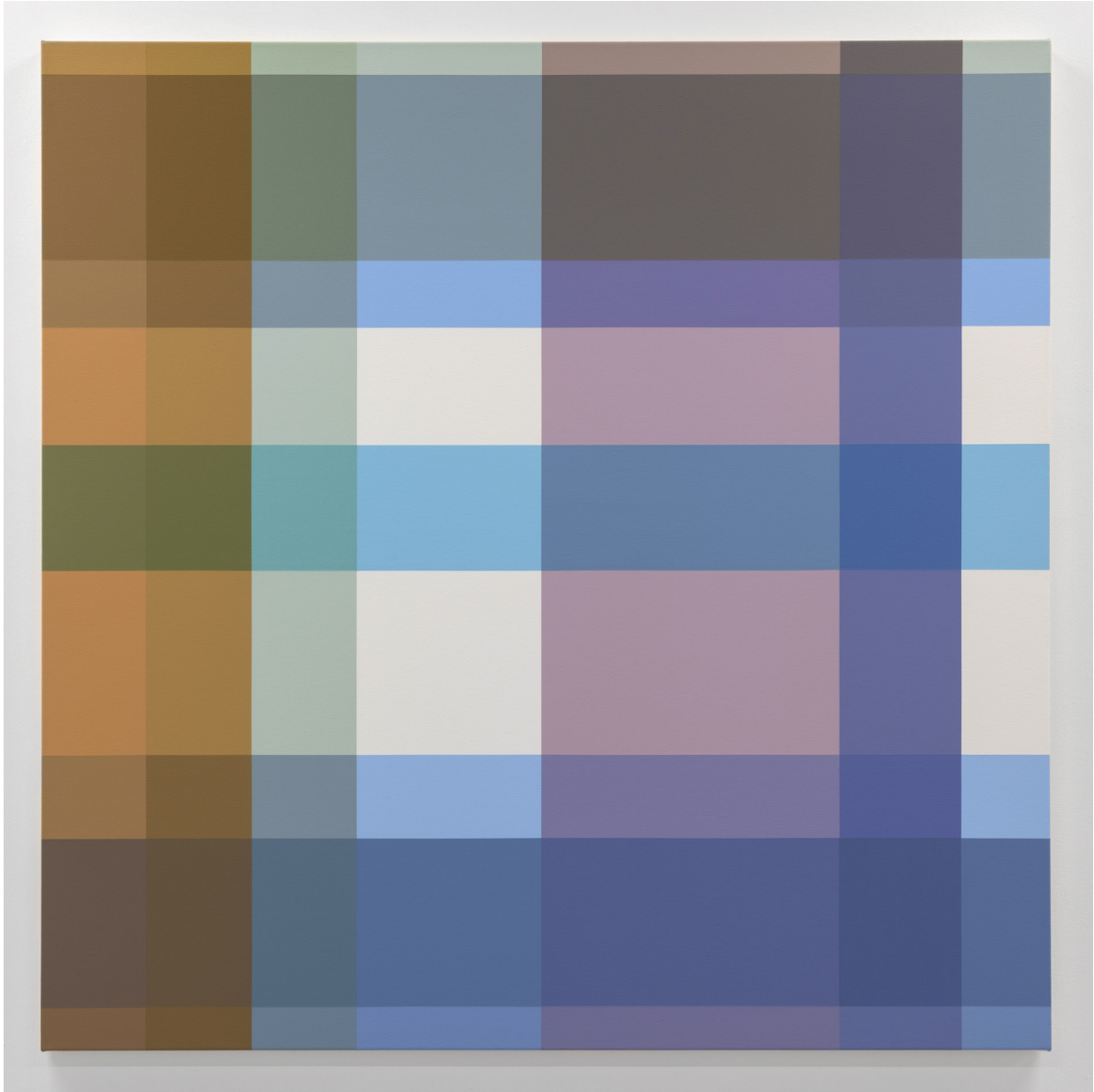
AST136
 2009
 Acrylic on canvas
 200 x 215 cm
 Unique



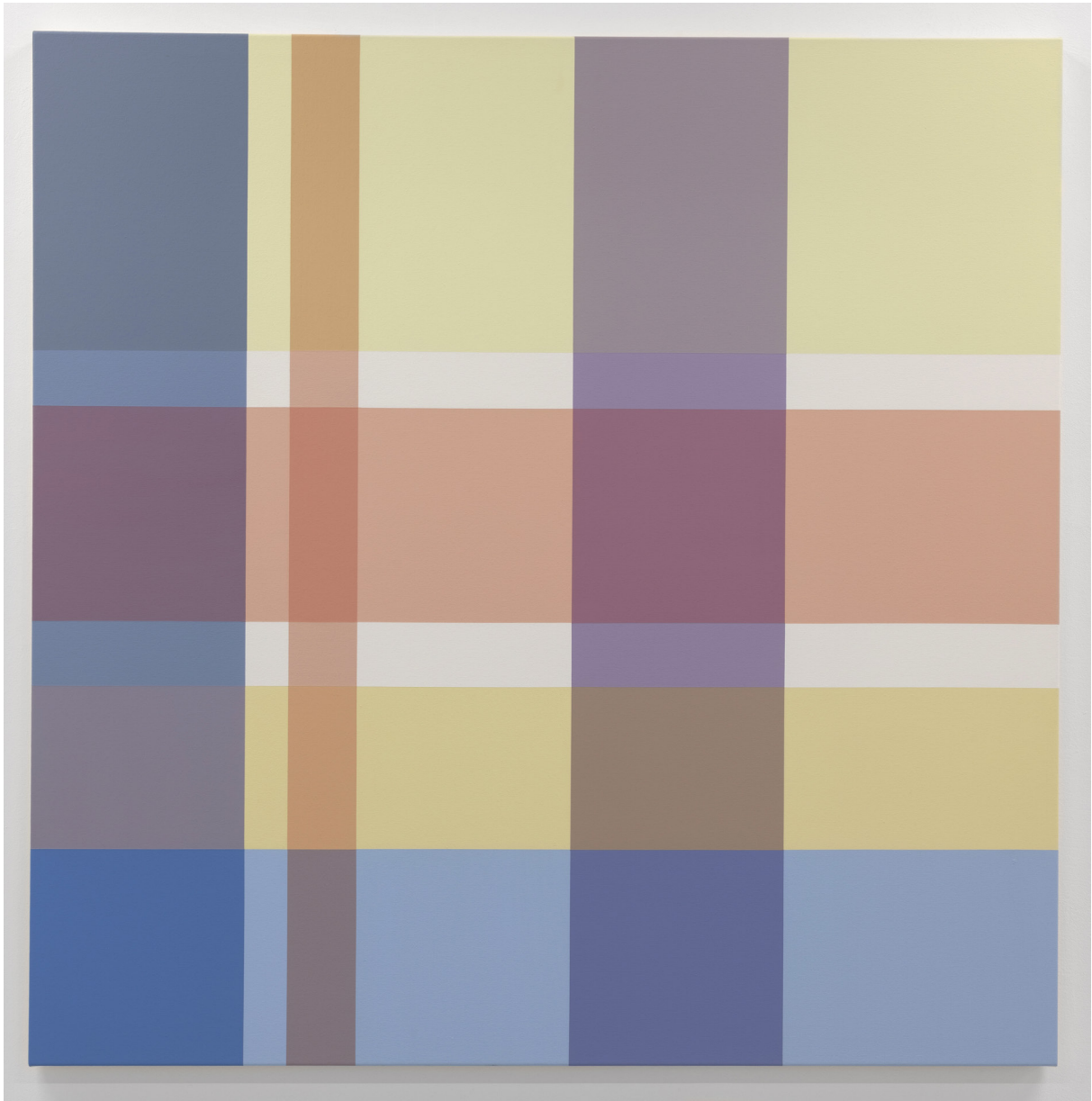
AST194
2012
Acrylic on canvas
198 x 126 cm
Unique



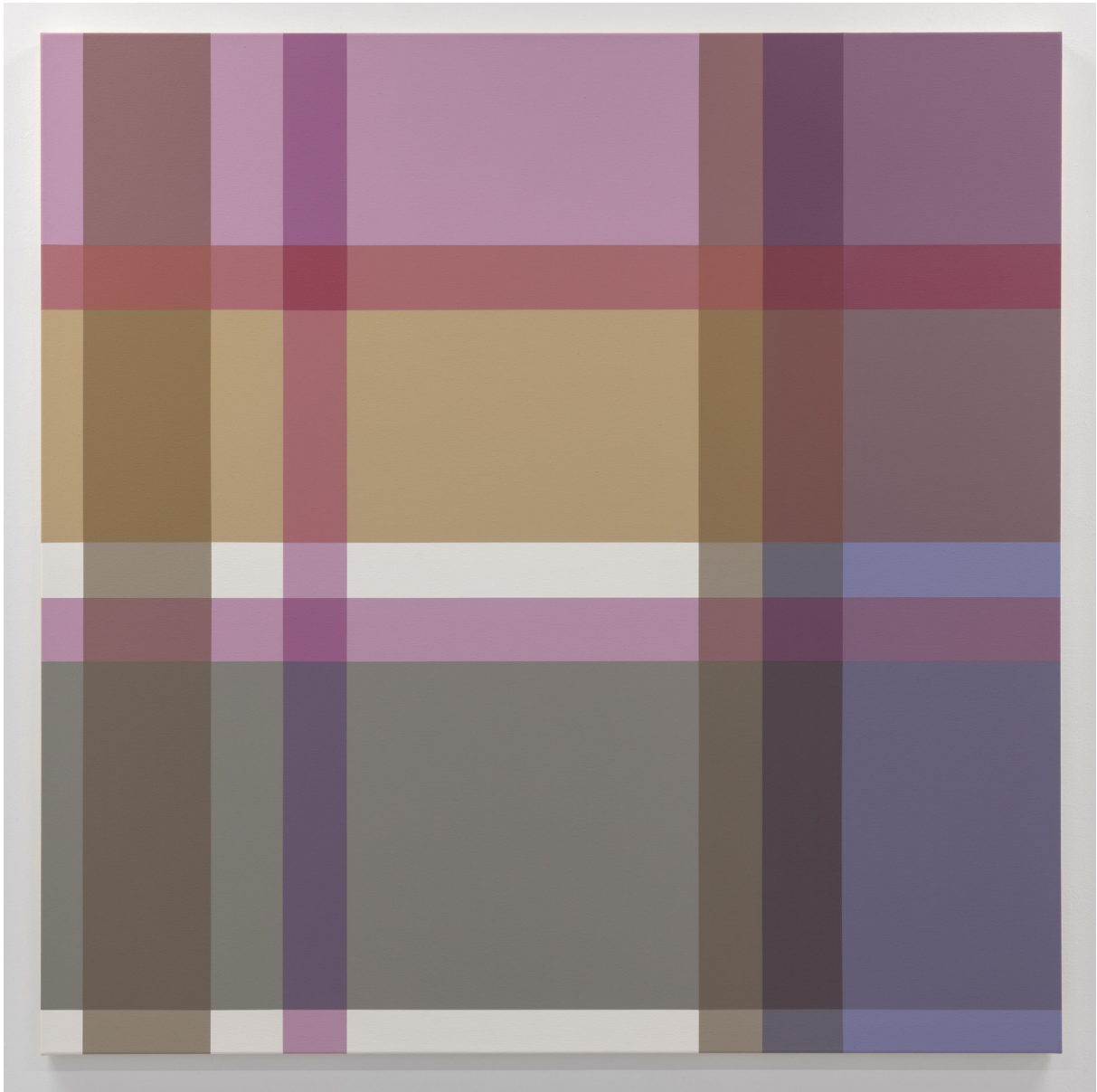
AST117
 2008
 Acrylic on canvas
 155 x 95,5 cm
 Unique



AST467
2023
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 120
Unique



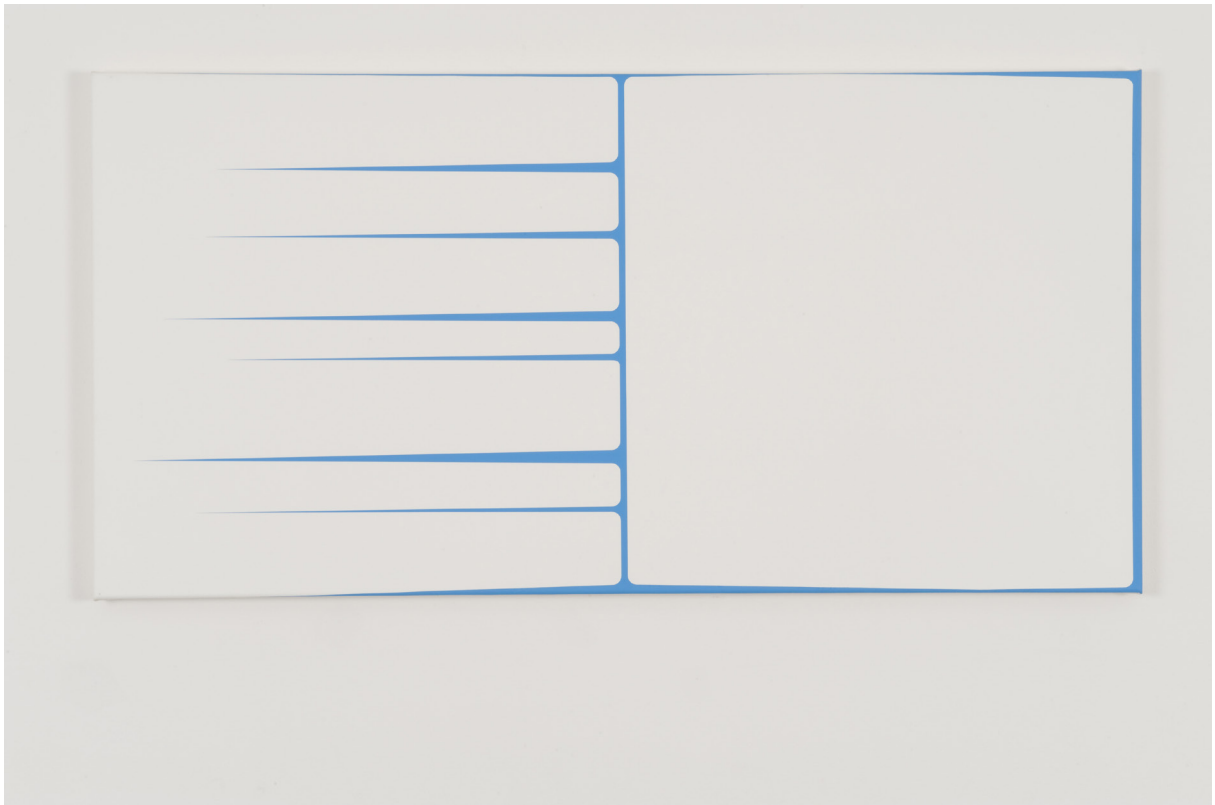
AST465
2023
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 120
Unique



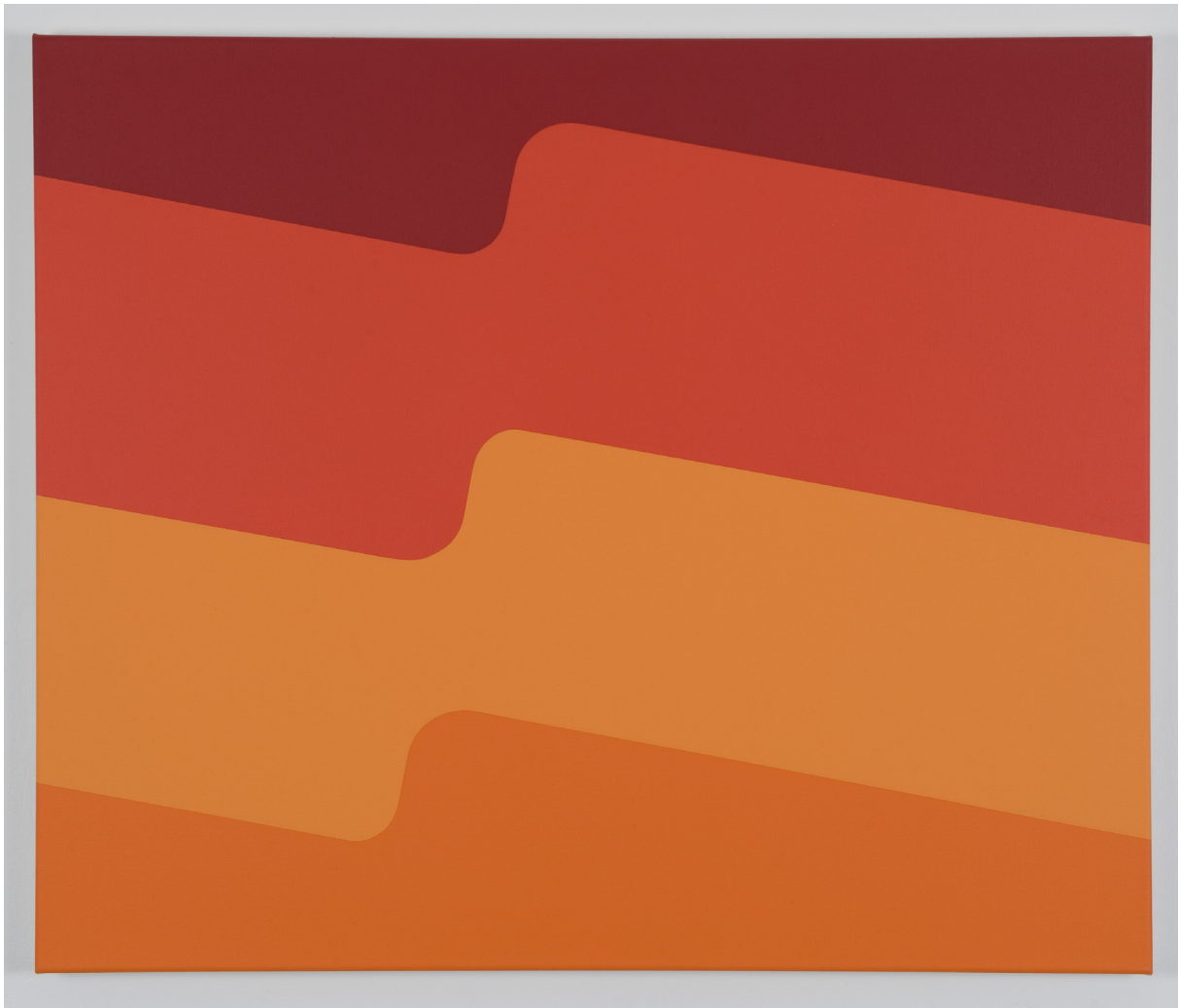
AST464
2023
Acrylic on canvas
120 x 120
Unique



AST180
2011
Acrylic on canvas
ø 100 cm
Unique



AST114
2008
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 120 cm
Unique



AST094
 2007
 Acrylic on canvas
 88 x 105 cm
 Unique

SELECTED SITE-SPECIFIC COMMISSIONS

Blue in Green

COVIVIO Building, Toulouse, France

07.06 — 21.10.2018

Stéphane Dafflon was invited to conceive a work for COVIVIO's building on the edge of the Canal du Midi. He chose to place it on the ceiling of the forecourt that is the access to the building while remaining visible to the passers-by on the Boulevard de la Marquette. His intervention thus remains public whilst addressing itself specifically to the building's users. The artist's second choice was to base his composition on the structure presented by the metal tiles that cover the ceiling. They offered a grid design that allowed him to concentrate his work on the ceiling's colouring.

Green and blue appeared essential to Stéphane Dafflon because of the terrace's roof garden and the trees on the dock that clearly suggested natural green whereas the idea of the canal's water and the southern sky summon blue. Hence this shaded composition, from lightest to darkest, moving inwards, following a diagonal line that frees itself from the structure's right-angled characteristic, seemingly an invitation to climb the steps to the platform. The work's title is also that of a famous jazz piece played by Miles Davis. This musical reference underlines the melodic nature of this painting whose tone goes from the brightest to the darkest, that is to say the melancholy of the blues; united with the vitality of yellow, the freshness of green emerges.

Initially created on-screen and then transposed to a canvas or a wall, the seemingly simple, smooth and perfectly controlled works of Stéphane Dafflon take on their meaning once they become part of their environment; they change the way the viewer perceives it as much visually as physically, whether they are paintings on canvas, murals or objects. His artistic process is part of the trend of historical movements of modernity, whose formalism he replays by giving his paintings a vibratory power like the sound and music that inspires him.



Blue in Green
Car bodywork painting on aluminium panels
2018

PM070**Musée des Beaux Arts Le Locle, Switzerland****03.11.2018 — 27.01.2019**

With the fresco by Swiss painter Stéphane Dafflon, MBAL is kicking off a new series of semi-permanent exhibitions created in situ. Dafflon is one of a number of Swiss artists commissioned by MBAL to create a unique work of art tailored to the museum's architecture. PM070 is therefore the first of a series to be featured on the walls of MBAL café, which, visible from outside the building, create a visual link with the public. Dafflon's work – a clear and precise geometric grid – was designed on a computer and then transposed from the virtual to the physical world. He alternates broad lines of cold and warm hues, in keeping with the minimalist, abstract approach and bold use of color he is known for. The result is a subtle palette of color that changes with the sunlight, creating a sense of depth.



PM058

Vaudoise Head Office, Lausanne, Switzerland

The Vaudoise head office in Lausanne is all his doing. He is the Swiss architect whose aura extends beyond Switzerland's borders. But to attribute to Jean Tschumi only the work done on the building would be to borrow a shortcut that Nathalie Bender, operational manager of the Vaudoise Assurances art commission, certainly doesn't want to see made: "Jean Tschumi didn't just design the building, he created an entire artistic project around it (colorimetry, furniture designed by himself, wall coverings with works of art, etc.), giving concrete life to the concept of corporate architecture (which envisages the design of a company's own identity), giving concrete expression to the concept of corporate architecture (which sees architectural design and everything connected with it as a showcase, a support, at the service of the company's image)".

A notion that might have remained relatively confidential were it not for the ambition of La Vaudoise, supported by Jean Tschumi, to make it visible, but also to bring it to life through support for other artists. Hence the creation of the Artistic Commission.

After a successful period in the 1950s and 1960s, the Vaudoise art commission was given a new lease of life in 2009, with the appointment of an art history consultant, Catherine Othenin-Girard.

The major commissions, as Nathalie Bender calls them, are made-to-measure: photographs, XXL-size murals, such as the one by artist Stéphane Dafflon displayed along the staircase.

