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**orthogonal16**

international forum for non-objective art

GAUDENZ B. RUF  
AWARD  
FOR  
NEW BULGARIAN ART

prohelvetia



CON  
TEMPO  
RARY  
SPACE



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georgi kostov, georgi dimitrov

catalogue publisher format.bg  
catalogue and poster preprint anton staykov

isbn 978-619-90088-6-7

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printed in bulgaria

www.orthogonal.bg | www.nonsafia.org

## preface

initially scheduled for october 2016, the third edition of orthogonal was opened on 4 may 2017 at the red house centre for culture and debate, sofia. as usual, the event featured a programme of lectures, workshops for children and an exhibition presenting the work of a dozen artists from 7 states. apart from painting, drawing, animation and graphics, the show included poetry, sculpture, wall installations and photography, as well as natural samples from the collection of earth and man national museum, sofia. in late september, that same year, the exposition visited contemporary space, varna.

although too early for a comprehensive retrospective analysis, one may still point out a number of figures related to orthogonal's 3 editions. 5 years since its debut, the forum has presented more than a hundred of artefacts covering all artistic media along the last 70 years of non-objective art history. the works of 35 authors of 14 states have so far been exhibited. sofia, varna and burgas – 3 of bulgaria's most major cities – have hosted a total of 6 shows. serving as a meeting point for institutions, artists and theorists of different nationalities and generations, orthogonal has already led to a series of international collaborations. its highlight, however, remain the workshops for children, as they promise hope for the future and may well spare us from oblivion.

georgi dimitrov

dear colleagues and friends,

this is orthogonal16 – the third consecutive edition of the one and only international forum on non-objective and constructive art in south-eastern europe. as you can see for yourself the speaker standing in front of you is overwhelmed by a huge excitement but also by a great honour to have you all here this evening. in fact, one of the main reasons for i launched orthogonal was to confront my enormous fear of reading opening speeches before high-esteemed international audiences. please allow me, on behalf of nonsafia, to greet you and thank you for coming to help me out on this one.

18 months of preparation have brought together a dozen of remarkable artists from 7 countries and their more than 50 pieces to sofia. apart from painting, drawing and video, we are enjoying for the first time mural installations, photography, poetry and sculpture, both manmade and purely natural. these artefacts are here to test your aesthetic discipline – your sense of rationality; understanding for composition, colour and shape. but they have also been compiled to provoke your decisive emotions and carry you through an essential conversation – an intimate dialogue with your inner self – one that eventually defines your unique human identity. i advise that you spend as much time as possible with these perceptive objects – you will be amazed by their playful functionalities.

it is wonderful to see the many new faces in the crowd. hands up if this is your first orthogonal vernissage? how many of you are second-timers? and who, apart from me and boryana, have attended all three editions? well, one could conclude that the interest is rising. perhaps some, if not most of you, would ask *but why orthogonal16*, if orthogonal12 took place in 2012 and orthogonal14 in 2014? the answer is very simple. the title of the forum itself is a subversive act of condescension towards a particular achievement of our highly progressive civilisation – the western calendar – which, by the way, happens to dictate the events in our lives without a single ounce of remorse.

first of all, i sincerely would like to thank all of the participants who clearly declared their trust and are now part of the artist line-up.

today we all share the exclusive privilege to have prof. eugen gomringer among us. the titan of concrete poetry, the living history of concrete art and founder of ikkp will initiate us all into his visual literary universe after a short while – thank you dr nortrud gomringer and prof. eugen gomringer for visiting sofia once again

after half a century.

another honourable guest this evening is dr ingo glass – one of europe’s most distinguished sculptors whose public work is recognisable all over the continent. thank you dear ursula and ingo for accepting orthogonal’s invitation and for bringing these splendid, i would say, 3+ dimensional axioms all the way from budapest.

two extremely fine ladies from germany, gisela hoffmann and esther hagenmaier, are here with us too. gisela has neatly installed a couple of her astonishing mural lines, and esther’s non-narrative photography is delicately enhancing our vision – it has been a great pleasure communicating with you both over the past months. i am proud with how elegantly you handled that issue we faced earlier today.

unfortunately, erdem küçükköroğlu could not make it to sofia. i would like to distantly assure him that his warm human presence is deeply missed. his physical unavailability is partially compensated by the beautiful *continuities* he has prepared especially for orthogonal16 – looking forward to meeting you soon, erdem!

i am super pleased to introduce to you a couple of rather important figures from the contemporary non-objective art network – patrick morrissey and hanz hancock – founders of the saturation point curatorial platform which is sort of the british nonsafia but way more productive and active on the international level. cheers guys – hope you will enjoy your participation in this event.

i would also like to extend my gratitude to the daughters of petar dochev, totka and desislava, who granted their trust and contributed to our exhibition with two of their father’s finest compositions. thanks to petko genov’s kind mediation the show features a couple of works by another sadly late bulgarian artist, ivan shumanov. dochev and shumanov deserve a much wider recognition and i truly believe orthogonal is a proper step towards increasing their popularity.

judith duquemin, an australian-born uk artist and a very busy world traveller, has made it here from barcelona, before curating a show in oz, with a complex little tondo and a looped animation. she will tell us more about her methodology tomorrow at the lecture module starting at 11 am.

dr nikolay petkov is here with his carefully produced watercolours and oil paintings which seem hyper-gentle at first sight, yet lying on a firm ideological base.

one of orthogonal's main goals is to create social awareness about non-figurative art within the local contemporary context. the consolidation of a bulgarian non-objective scene has been another one of nonsafia’s long-term objectives,

however, i will deceive you all, if i do not admit that our highest priority, and the most important thing on earth in general, is the education of our children. a true social change can only be enforced through a solid cultural doctrine, and not by holding ridiculous elections every 4 years!

i must now express my heartfelt appreciation to all my friends who are being next to me along this longest but righteous journey: georgi kostov, valentin slavov, kamen kalev and nina malcheva. and of course, to all the other ones – you people are so many – thank you guys for every bit of your help! благодаря и на теб, тати, за твоята много специална помощ и че си единственото мое вдъхновение! this forum would not be possible without the support of our partners from the gaudenz b. ruf award, goethe-institut, pro helvetia, earth and man national museum, ikkp, saturation point and finally, our hosts from the red house centre for culture and debate.

orthogonal16 is now officially open – may the celebrations begin!

4 may 2017

the red house

sofia

erdem küçükköroğlu

## **orthogonal – presenting international non-objective art in the balkans**

since 2012, orthogonal carries out a very important mission by showing the works of international contemporary artists and also masters of european art like max bill, nikolay diulgheroff, eugen gomringer, dóra maurer, bob bonies, ingo glass et al.

the inclusion of artists from different countries gives us the opportunity to explore international and local non-objective art in sofia – a natural centre of the balkan region and one of the most important cities on the peninsula. the importance of the event is not only in bringing significant artworks to the area but also to establish a tradition which explores the forms of geometric art in different styles, mediums and generations of artists.

in the orthogonal16 exhibition each artist has their unique style and when all works are displayed together it is clear that they have the idea of purity and simple aesthetics in common. exposed together the artworks detach the viewers from reality and let them enter a whole new world.

for example, ingo glass' aluminum sculptures draw the question of how three-dimensional geometric elements convey a sense of simplicity with primary colours and basic shapes such as the square, the circle and the triangle. the audience can read these sculptures as a relation between space and form by looking at the configuration of these basic shapes which are joined perpendicularly. the subtraction of forms creates an internal space which makes us think of the function of the artwork and the outer space [which can also be seen as an empty form].

human-size or smaller constructions standing on the wall and at the floor easily interact with the viewers and engage their attention – like in petar dochev's works. the painting section consists of distinct artistic languages which show a search for true meaning through the use of geometric forms, lines and colour.

one of the most interesting parts of the exhibition is eugen gomringer's concrete poetry which is perceived both literary and visually at the same time. these concepts can be considered as poetry beyond the textual dimension. by arranging words in nonlinear patterns across the plane prof. gomringer gives the reader a creative role in his intellectual riddles.

orthogonal offers us a chance to view exceptional pieces of art. young artists and especially children can find a huge inspiration in the exhibited artworks. the

educational workshops for children make this respectable event even more meaningful and recognisable.

as one of the participating artists, i am deeply honoured to be invited by georgi dimitrov, the curator and founder of orthogonal.

erdem küçükkoroğlu

1979

turkey

geometrivesanat.com

my works are based on the idea of impossible objects and continuous lines which complete the whole shape from start to finish, without any interruption.

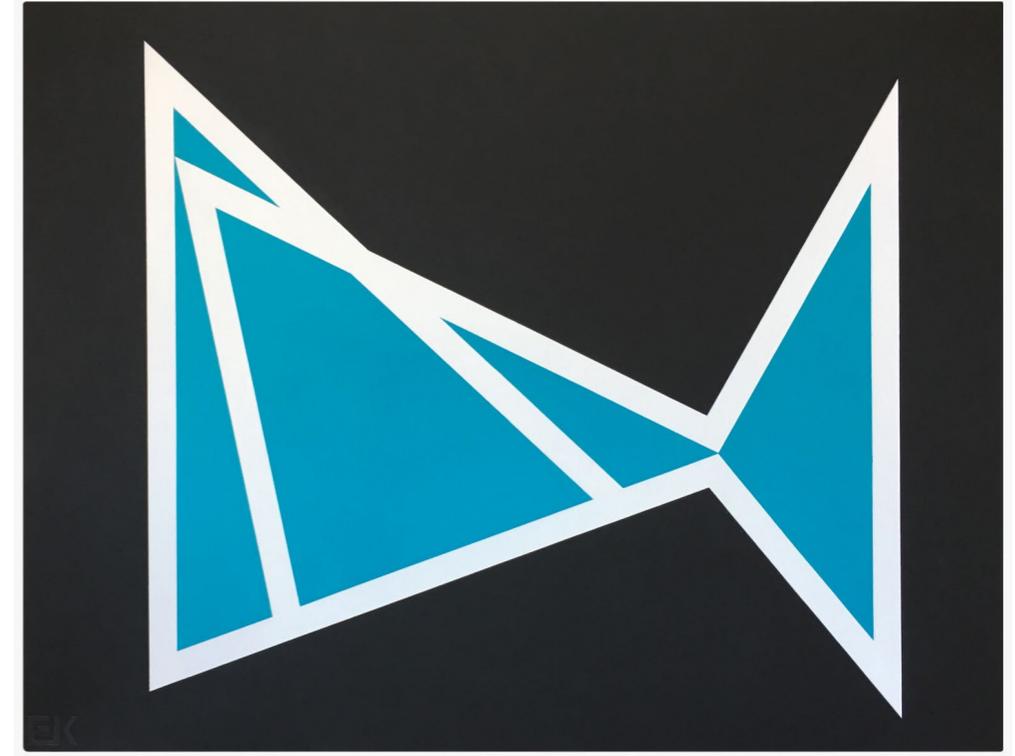
i create my works using visual aesthetics and rhythms of calligraphy.

my works consist of geometric forms dependent on mathematical sequences. i

refer to the golden ratio to define the composition and the geometric shapes.

generally speaking, i emphasise balance, rhythm, positive-negative space by composing geometric relations.

continuity 5  
2017  
acrylic/canvas/panel  
45 x 60 cm



esther hagenmaier

1975

germany

esther-hagenmaier.com

### photographic studies on space and perception

the central theme of my artwork is the visual perception of space and plane, and the representation of space in the picture. photography, as a medium, allows me to create images focusing on the concept of seeing and perceiving.

the initial theme for my 'shaped photographs' is architecture. by cutting i adjust the photographic image according to my perception: removing unimportant parts allows me to condense and emphasise references already existing within the image. this procedure could be perceived as an imitation of the human way of seeing: we focus on the area we find interesting, and block out what is not important. due to the free geometric shape the image extends into the room. the photographic image distances itself from the mere reproductive function and turns into a visual and perceptive field.

for the photograms i generate every single element in the darkroom: i use individual stencils for every triangle. different exposure times deliver a range of shades between black and white. this technique allows me to create geometric compositions with a strong three-dimensional effect and a slight optical illusion. the sculptural effect is constantly shifting without evoking a clearly perceptible figure.

bildkörper 03  
2015  
shaped photography  
lambda-print/alu-dibond  
53 x 34 cm



eugen gomringer

1925

switzerland

gomringer.de

w w  
d i  
n n n  
i d i d  
w w

wind  
1953

**georgi dimitrov**

1980

bulgaria

larypsed.com

art is a political, a strategic means. its most important function is to form the way we think, to predetermine our decisions and actions. art is the substance of culture which creates the values of our society. it explains both the similarities and the differences between us. it can build bridges but it may also provoke conflict. therefore, the people involved in art production and distribution hold a unique social responsibility. the seeds that we plant today are essential for tomorrow's harvest of social tendencies.

orthogonal composition [tondo a]  
2015 - 2016  
oil/canvas  
60 cm



**gisela hoffmann**

1963

germany

hoffmann-gisela.com

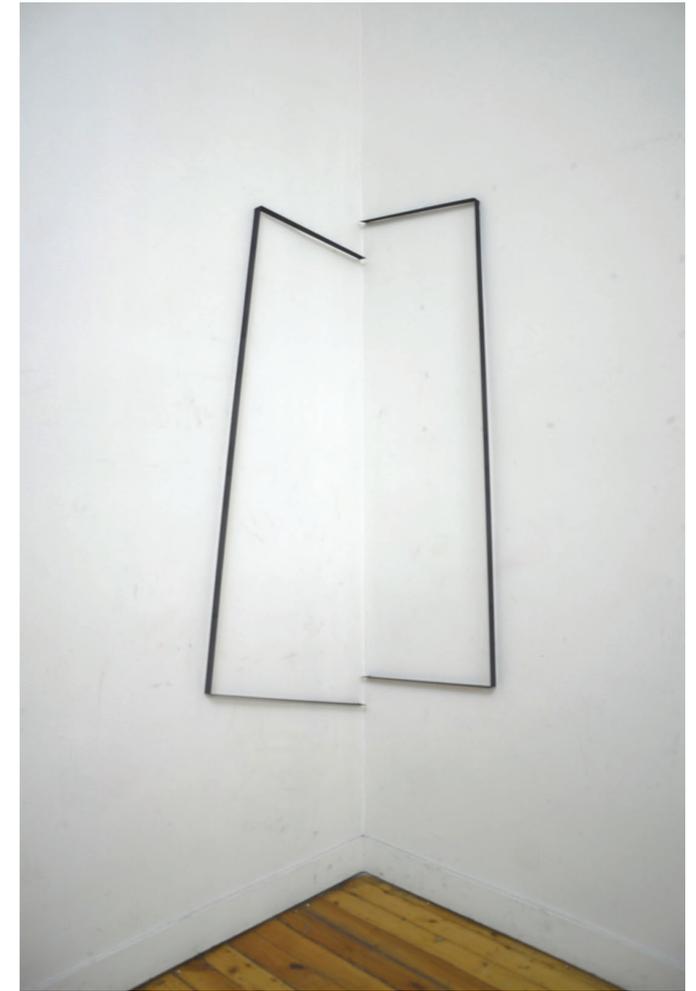
*fixed or flexible*

*line or outline*

*emptiness or fullness*

- architecture is a determining factor in my work;
- the work interacts with the surrounding space;
- line defines and adds space;
- emptiness is intangible, however, comprehensible;
- rhythmic sequences allow to experience the value of the in-between space;
- an open system that can be thought further.

raumlinien 26 [black]  
2013  
coloured fabric/steel pins  
144 x 58 x 42 cm



**hanz hancock**

1958

united kingdom

[patrickmorrissetyhanz.co.uk](http://patrickmorrissetyhanz.co.uk)

hancock's work is derived from the use of numerical sequences that create a rudimentary code and which ultimately create variable, mandala-like imagery. the picture plane is galvanised into alternating depths, or grounds, depending on the proximity of the viewer. it is febrile in nature, but never typically 'kinetic'. structures that form in the close mesh of drawn lines coalesce and dissipate, and are metaphors for the transient nature of geometric form found in the natural and built environment.

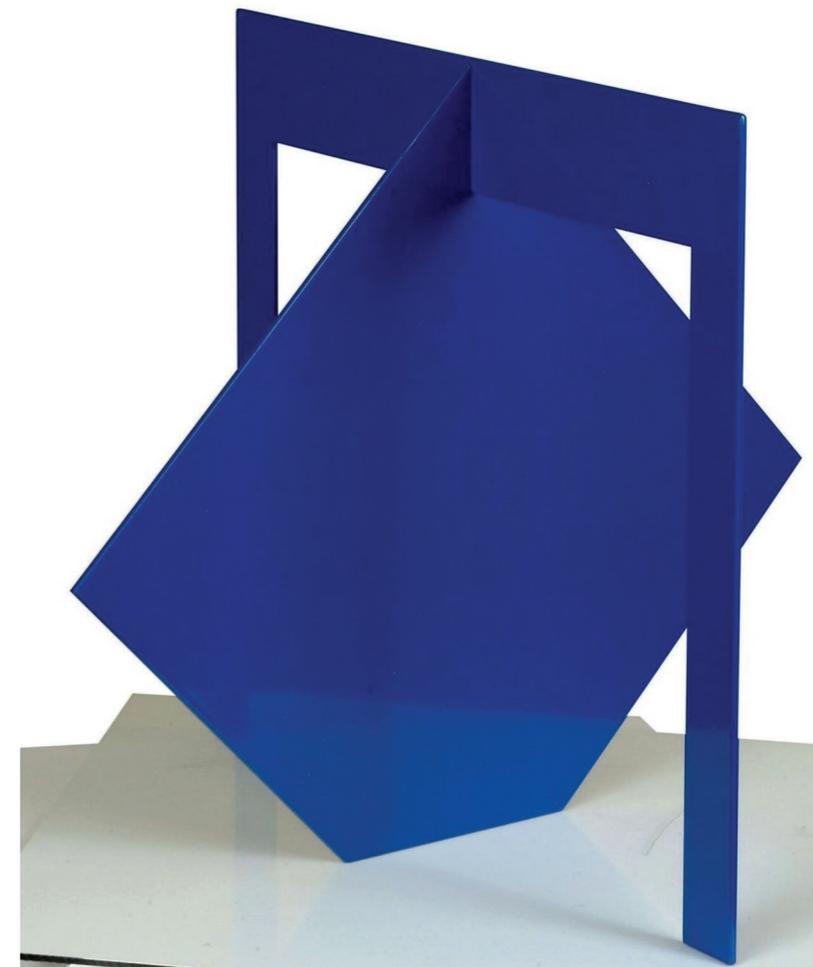
imperfect reverse 4  
2017  
acrylic/panel  
51 x 102 cm



ingo glass

1941

romania/germany



transformation of a square  
2010  
6 mm aluminum  
60 x 60 x 63.5 cm

ivan shumanov

1961 – 1993

bulgaria

untitled  
undated [ca. 1992]  
oil/canvas  
120 x 120 cm



**judith duquemin**

1953

australia/united kingdom

judithduquemin.com

the use of geometric code in painting can manifest in a variety of ways. mondrian for space travellers [2017] – one of the two works i presented at orthogonal16 – is a round, multi-dimensional, tessellation that appropriates a mondrian palette of red, blue, yellow, white and black. unlike mondrian's flat grid paintings it employs a mathematically coded, irregular grid that eliminates the notion of horizon [horizontal] and its human gravitational counterpart [vertical].

the work is an example of my non-stylised, experimental approach to contemporary abstract painting and supports a self-organising, non-objective approach to asymmetric pictorial composition through the use of creatively researched geometric code.

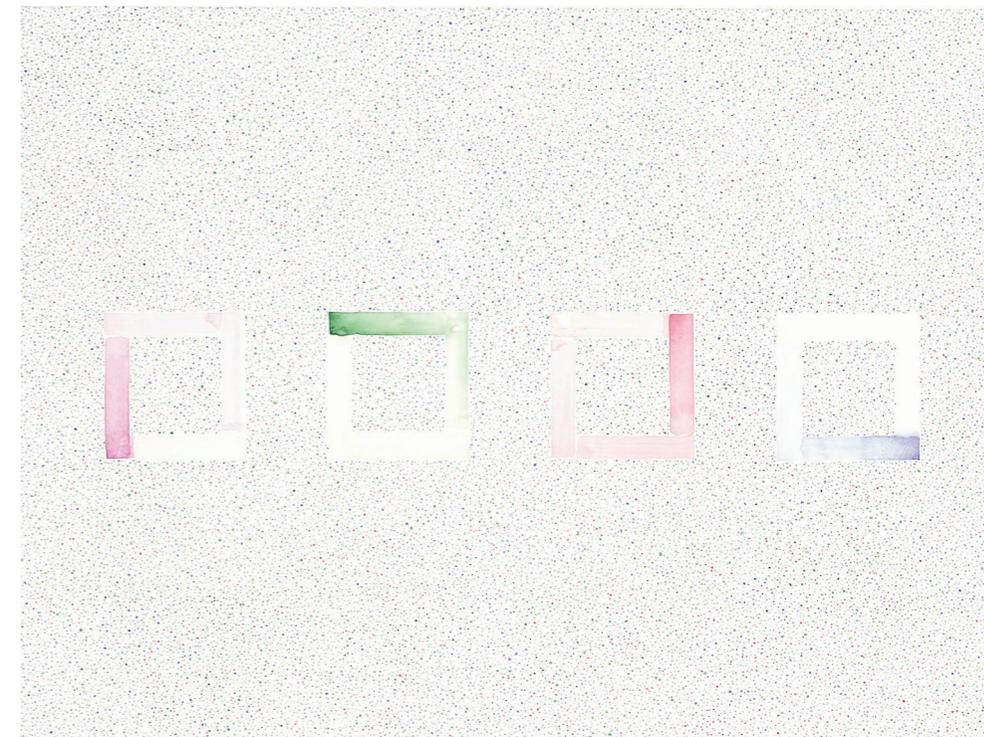
mondrian for space travellers  
2017  
acrylic/canvas  
40 cm



nikolay petkov

1967

bulgaria



four squares  
2015  
watercolour/paper  
40 x 50 cm

**patrick morrissey**

1957

united kingdom

patrickmorrisseyhantz.co.uk

morrissey's ontology builds on the late 20th century international modernist tradition, embracing the grammar of geometry, mathematical systems and methodologies. this results in an ongoing process-led, formal rule-based investigation into the infinite possibilities afforded by compositional logic, as witnessed by recent digital projects. he co-founded saturation point, the online editorial and curatorial project, with hantz hancock in 2014. this has re-invigorated interest in reductive, geometric and systems-based work in the UK, with activities including recent collaboration on symposia, with galleries such as flowers east and anglia ruskin college, cambridge.

untitled  
2017  
acrylic/panel  
40 x 40 cm



petar dochev

1934 – 2005

bulgaria



untitled  
2005  
mixed media/plywood  
100 x 100 cm











orthogonal.bg  
orthogonal.bg

erdem küçükköroğlu esther hagenmaier eugen gomringer  
georgi dimitrov gisela hofmann hanz hancock ingo glass  
ivan shumanov judith duquemin nikolay petkov petar dochev  
patrick morrissey

opening 18.00 h. 4 may 2017  
red house centre for culture and debate  
15, lyuben karavelov st., sofia

international forum  
for non-objective art



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патрик мориси петър дочев ханз ханкок

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откриване: 18 часа, 4 май, 2017 г.  
център за култура и дебат 'червената къща'  
ул. 'любен каравелов' 15, софия

performance-lecture  
prof. eugen gomringer:  
introduction to concrete poetry

orthogonal for children

лекция-пърформанс  
проф. ойген гомрингер:  
въведение в конкретната поезия

ортогонал за деца



pr:helvetia



georgi dimitrov  
orthogonal16 poster  
2017

