human meaning has been sacrificed. Yet there is an undeniable urgency to Bogart's handling; the struggle between power and style that Alfred North Whitehead thought was at the core of civilization seems to end in a draw in Bogart's works, which are at once eminently civilized and uncompromisingly powerful.

—*Donald Kuspit*

Carlos Cruz-Diez

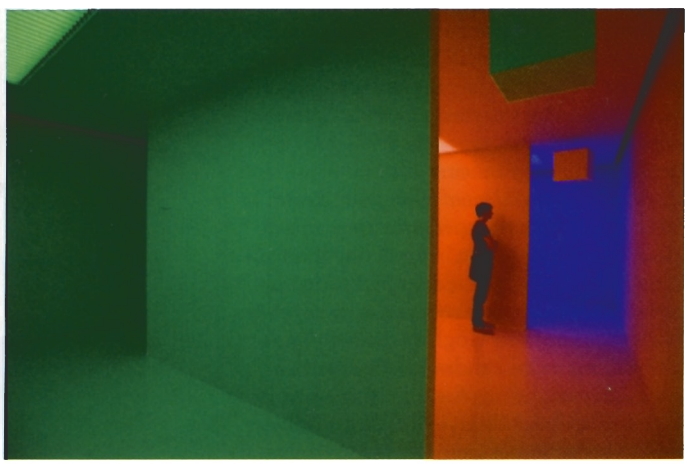
AMERICAS SOCIETY

In his systematic experiments with color—influenced, like much Venezuelan work of the 1950s and '60s, by the practices of geometric abstraction then being reconsidered in postwar Paris—Carlos Cruz-Diez betrays the meticulousness of a scientist or a technician. Cruz-Diez's work from that time was part of a generational break with earlier Venezuelan pictorial models, which favored tradition, craft, and narrative. The young antagonists pitted precision, clarity, and rigor against the expressionism and subjectivity valued by these past representational styles, and against the informalist and Surrealist tendencies popular in Paris, where many of these artists relocated.

Cruz-Diez's rationalistic framework (he once remarked that his aesthetic could be summarized as the "efficacy of evidence") resonated with the country's aspirations toward progress and development. Modernist values, which had eluded artists in Venezuela, were finally, through the aesthetic investigations of Cruz-Diez and others, spreading through the small but dedicated art world of the time. The works that best fit the bill, the large wall panels from Cruz-Diez's series of "*Fisicromías*" (Physical Colors), 1959–70—in which strips of industrial materials like Plexiglas are laid onto striped backgrounds, demonstrating the effects of additive color—are absent from this show apart from *Fisicromía no. 500*, made for the 1970 Venice Biennale. Instead, the curator, Estrella B. Brodsky, selected twenty early, mostly small-scale *Fisicromías*, which, although they also explore chromatic effects, are composed of more humble materials such as painted cardboard and wood. The sleekness of the later works is nowhere to be found here. Instead, these works have ragged and layered surfaces constituted by a fundamental materiality and immediacy, causing the haptic and the optical to compete for the viewer's attention.

Cruz-Diez sought to implicate the viewer's perceptual experience in a dialogue that echoes the avant-garde aspirations of the 1920s. One predecessor is El Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet*, 1927, in which a wall of raised vertical strips made of gray, white, and black metal makes the surface seem to vibrate as the spectator passes by and also serves as a backdrop to Constructivist works by Mondrian and Lissitzky himself. But while Lissitzky was thinking in terms of installation design, Cruz-Diez tends to produce work that clings to the wall, a support he only occasionally abandons in favor of exploring architectural space. An example of this latter tendency is *Cromosaturación*, a large-scale adaptation, made for this show, of an installation conceived in 1965. Consisting of three chambers illuminated by fluorescent lights covered with gels, the immersive environment seems to shift in color depending on where the viewer stands. The effect is ethereal and beautiful, anticipating Olafur Eliasson's gimmicky tendencies and recalling the illusory chromatic effects of Dan Flavin's later installations. This small, well-curated show introduces the Venezuelan artist to New York audiences and, most importantly, shows his work as operating at a crux between avant-garde agency and spectacular consumption.

—*Monica Amor*



Diez, *ción*, wall, fluor- gels, able.

CLEVELAND

Jorge Pardo

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Organized by Bonnie Clearwater of the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, Florida—and here overseen by Margo A. Crutchfield—Jorge Pardo's first museum survey is constructed as a spacious, well-furnished house. The domestic spaces (front garden, kitchen, dining room, office, bedroom, and living room) are filled with their attendant objects—sculptures and installations Pardo made between 1987 and 2007. Dispersed throughout are ten enormous photomurals depicting architectural exteriors and interiors designed by the artist. But while this may be a house, it is certainly not a home: You are not allowed to sit on Pardo's chairs, rest on his bed, or borrow books from his library. This house has been placed in a museum.

View of "Jorge Pardo," 2008

In domestic settings, works of art tend to become decorative objects, blending with the furniture. In "House," however, canvases that seem suited for sofa accessorizing—large ink-jets in the style of Philip Taaffe, say—have been returned to the context of a museum. A few of the objects are puzzling. Why is the small *Pinhole Camera*, 1987, constructed of Styrofoam and textile tape, and why were the seven black-and-white photographs made with it hung in the office? Why, in *Le Corbusier Chair*, 1990, is the modern classic's frame made of copper rather than its usual steel? Mostly, however, these ordinary domestic furnishings don't raise such questions.

Pardo challenges the distinction between works of art and ordinary household goods. Indeed, his installation could be a showroom, for here you find a bedroom set, an espresso machine, a refrigerator, a computer, a ladder. If there is no real difference between works in a museum and merchandise in a store, then why give greater aesthetic and economic value to the former? In a showroom, such things would obviously not be considered "art," so what does placing them in the museum accomplish? Marcel Duchamp posed such questions first, of course, with his readymades; Andy Warhol sharpened them with his