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BIACI - Cartagena Biennial

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AWARDS

Carlos Cruz-Diez**Honoris Causa Doctor**

Caracas, Venezuela

The University Council of the Universidad Central de Venezuela unanimously approved the proposal made by the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning (FAU) to grant Professor Carlos Cruz-Diez the highest recognition of that University: an Honorary Doctorate. There are many reasons for this. On the one hand, it recognizes Cruz-Diez's international projection, which for decades has represented Venezuela well around the world and, on the other, because his art has not only passed the test of time but is continually renewed and capable of offering viewers an unforgettable sensory experience.

One of the motivations that led the FAU to grant this recognition are the large-scale works integrated into the architectural and urban spaces that Cruz-Diez has done in Venezuela and around the world. In those works the artist always keeps the main focus on the exploration of the perceptual dimension of color. He has managed to "energize" the spaces, either through *Fisicromías*, Chromatic Inductions, Additive Colors, *Transcromías* and *Cromointerferencias* (Chromointerferences) integrated into walls, floors and ceilings, in areas that allow the circulation of viewers. In outdoor spaces Cruz-Diez has succeeded in creating a deliberate unstable situation through the dynamic color perception experienced by viewers. Herein is the kinetic and changing nature of his work. Mastering scales is a prerequisite for the true integration of his work into the architecture or urban space. As such,



Carlos Cruz-Diez. Honoris Causa Doctor. Photo Courtesy Atelier Carlos Cruz-Diez, Paris, France.

many of the works by Cruz-Diez also represent an engineering and architectural challenge.

The experience of the artist-designer has allowed him to expand the range of possibilities of his research. In addition to his artistic pieces and those integrated into the architecture, Cruz-Diez has graphically intervened the urban space: He has intervened public pedestrian spaces in the large avenues of Venezuela and the world; he has designed buses (and even planes and boats) and activated the kinetic effects in them through their movement. The surroundings—dynamic in their own right because of pedestrian and vehicular circulation—are enhanced by his chromatic interventions. His goal is to send a wave of sensory and aesthetic experiences through the city as well as to form a sense of citizenship and belonging.

Many are the large-scale works that Cruz-Diez has created since the sixties

to this day. To mention just a few: his several *Cromovelas* that raise vertically with contoured shapes; his *Fisicromías*, like those found in Plaza Venezuela (Caracas, 1982), or in Valencia, in the State of Carabobo (2001); atmospheres composed *Fisicromías* and *Additive Colors* such as those created in hydroelectric plants in Venezuela or the *Ambientación de Color Aditivo* (Additive Color Atmosphere) at the Simon Bolivar International Airport (Maiquetia, 1974). Likewise, there are the interventions in the landscape with his *Laberintos Cromo-Vegetales* (Chrome-Vegetable Labyrinths) made with different color plants that act as constituent elements of the work. In all of them, the movement of the viewer is a crucial element for the perception of the works.

Besides the large-scale urban projects created in his homeland, Cruz-Diez's work can also be found in France, the US, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Colombia, Argentina, the UK, Spain, Germany and South Korea.

Susana Benko

Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and PHotoEspaña

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Madrid, Spain

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