

Parasol unit

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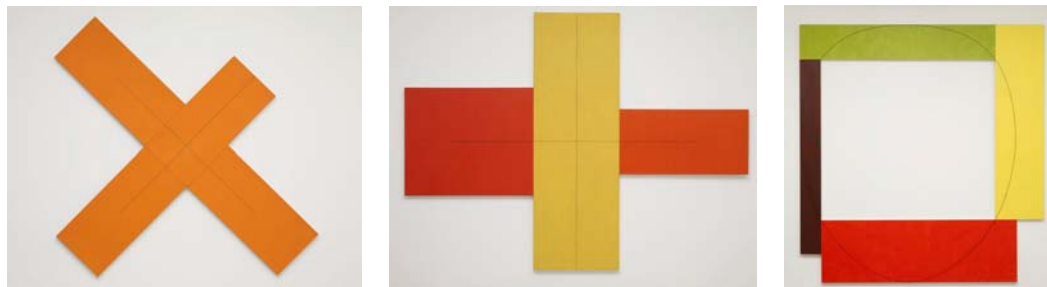
Press release

Robert Mangold

X, Plus and Frame Paintings

Works from the 1980s

24 February – 8 May 2009, preview 23 February, 6.30–8.30pm



Images from left: *X Within X (Orange)*, 1980, Acrylic and black pencil on canvas (four parts), 180 x 222 cm, Private collection, Brussels
+ Within + (Red, Yellow, Orange), 1981, Acrylic and black pencil on canvas, 229.5 x 306 cm, Kunstmuseum Winterthur
Four Colour Frame Painting #5, 1984, Acrylic and black pencil on canvas, 281.9 x 266.7 cm, Courtesy PaceWildenstein, New York and
Galeria Elvira Gonzalez, Madrid. All images © 2009 Robert Mangold / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / DACS, London

Parasol unit is delighted to present a new exhibition of works by the American artist Robert Mangold. The exhibition will concentrate on three dynamic groups of painting that Mangold executed between 1980 and 1986, entitled *x*, *+* and *Frame Paintings* series. These outstanding paintings continue to express Mangold's central concerns in painting, namely the relationship between figure and surface. They play a pivotal role in Mangold's oeuvre and form his first exhibition in a UK institution.

The *x* and *+* series, as their titles suggest, refer to mathematical operations. They are composed of several rectangular and square canvases of varying lengths and widths that are abutted and inscribed over with pencil respectively with a linear figure of an *x* or *+*. The proportions of these elements are derived from precisely defined mathematical relationships, such as the halving of the length or width of a specific area and depending on the manner they are joined, the outline of the whole can be defined as either regular or irregular. The pencil inscribed figure of *x* or *+* on the painted canvas eliminates categorically any illusory effect and keeps the painting to the surface. Mangold uses vivid and intense colour combinations to highlight the interplay of scale and perception.

The concept of intensifying a clearly accentuated pictorial form by creating multi-part structures and using different colours is taken one step further in Mangold's *Frame Paintings*, in which usually four, but in a few cases three, rectangular canvases are arranged to form a frame. An irregularly distorted, hand-drawn ellipse in pencil runs across the surfaces of the painted elements, and touches variably the inner corners of the frame or the inner and outer edges of the rectangles to accentuate the surface of the painting. One of the most significant elements of these works is the relationship between the work and the gallery wall, which is encapsulated by the frame, but also surrounds the work, creating a multi-dimensional space that resonates with the works of some of Mangold's contemporaries, such as Dan Flavin and Sol LeWitt.

A remarkable aspect of the *x*, *+* and *Frame Paintings* is their often imposing size and their architectural quality. Of these three series Mangold has said: *'You always come to a dilemma at the end of a series. The*

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image had become thinner and thinner [in the Xs and +s] and there was more and more wall. The energy was all going out. I wanted to go back circling, getting the image back into a container. So I took these four members and made frames out of them, and then used the line as a way of connecting through it.'

Robert Mangold (b.1937) held his first solo show in 1964 and since then he has exhibited extensively internationally. Solo exhibitions include Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York in 1971; Kunsthalle, Basel in 1977 and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam in 1982. Mangold has exhibited as part of group exhibitions at Museum of Modern Art, New York; Grand Palais, Paris; and Kunsthaus, Zurich. His work has been exhibited at both Documenta (1972, 1977, 1982) and the Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial (1979, 1983, 1985), and at the Venice Biennale in 1993. His work is held in collections worldwide including Tate, London; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a new publication on the artist's work, co-published by Parasol unit and Koenig Books, London.

Visitor information

Gallery opening times: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm and Sunday, 12 – 5pm
Closed Easter Friday and Easter Monday

Admission: Free

From Angel tube, turn left out of the station and onto City Road. Continue down City Road for ten minutes and turn left onto Wharf Road before the Texaco Service station.

From Old Street Tube, leave the station from exit 1 and walk up City Road for five minutes. Turn right onto Wharf Road after the Texaco service Station.

Buses 43, 205 and 214 all travel down City Road.

Notes to editors

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is an independent educational charity devoted to promoting contemporary art for the benefit of the public. The core activity of the foundation is to showcase the work of the contemporary leading and young international artists in various media. In conjunction with each exhibition Parasol unit organises a series of talks and educational events. Each year Parasol unit mounts four exhibitions in various media and each is usually accompanied by a publication. In order to encourage the widest possible access to its exhibition programme, Parasol unit does not charge admission fees to its exhibitions.

2009 Programme

Parades & Processions
28 May – 24 July 2009

Keith Tyson
Cloud Choreography and Other Emergent Systems
16 September – 11 November 2009

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