

Interpenetrations – Computer Between Past and Present in Hungarian Art

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habil DLA

2017

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(Classical) **Avant-garde**
(and Neo Avant-garde)

- Poly-cinema
- Synthetic production of sound
- Sensory technique
- Colorlight music
- Luminodynamic experiments

,etc.



Contemporary Art

- Expanded cinema
- 3d mapping
- Synthetisator (using)
- Interactive art
- Visual music
- Multi-, Intermedia

,etc.

I. **Avant-garde visions** (to the future)

Hungarian-born artists.... Forced to emigration.

Innovative (visual language) experiments. Address the future.

A little romantic image of the future (compare Moholy-Nagy or Kepes)

——> Eg. They hoped a little naively and romantically to change the culture through collaboration alone.

(The role of the Hungarian artists in Constructivism, Bauhaus, Geometrical Abstraction, Op-art, etc.)

The creative process of most artists from an Eastern European background reflects on the cross-disciplinary approach of the Russian constructivists as well as the Bauhaus movement.

László Moholy-Nagy

(1895, Bácsborsód, Hungary – 1946, Chicago, USA)

Painter, sculptor, photographer, typographer,
film-maker, theorist, teacher.



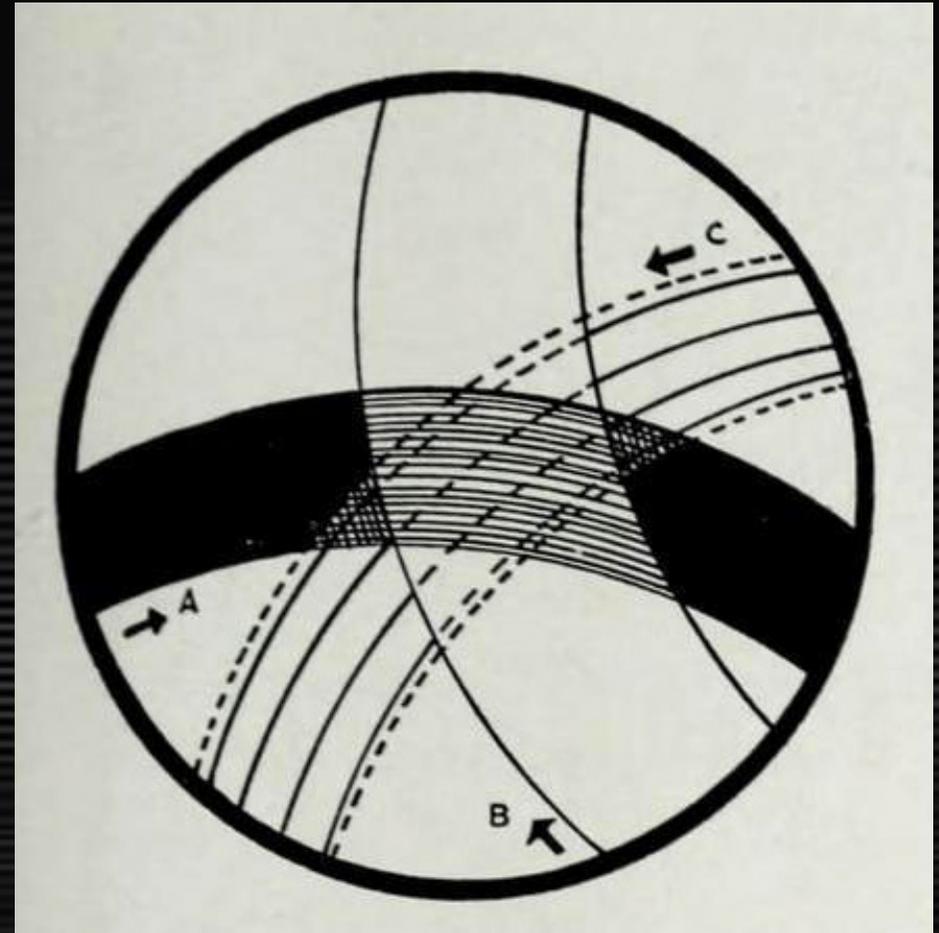
Self-portrait, 1926

(Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Phaidon, 2 p.)

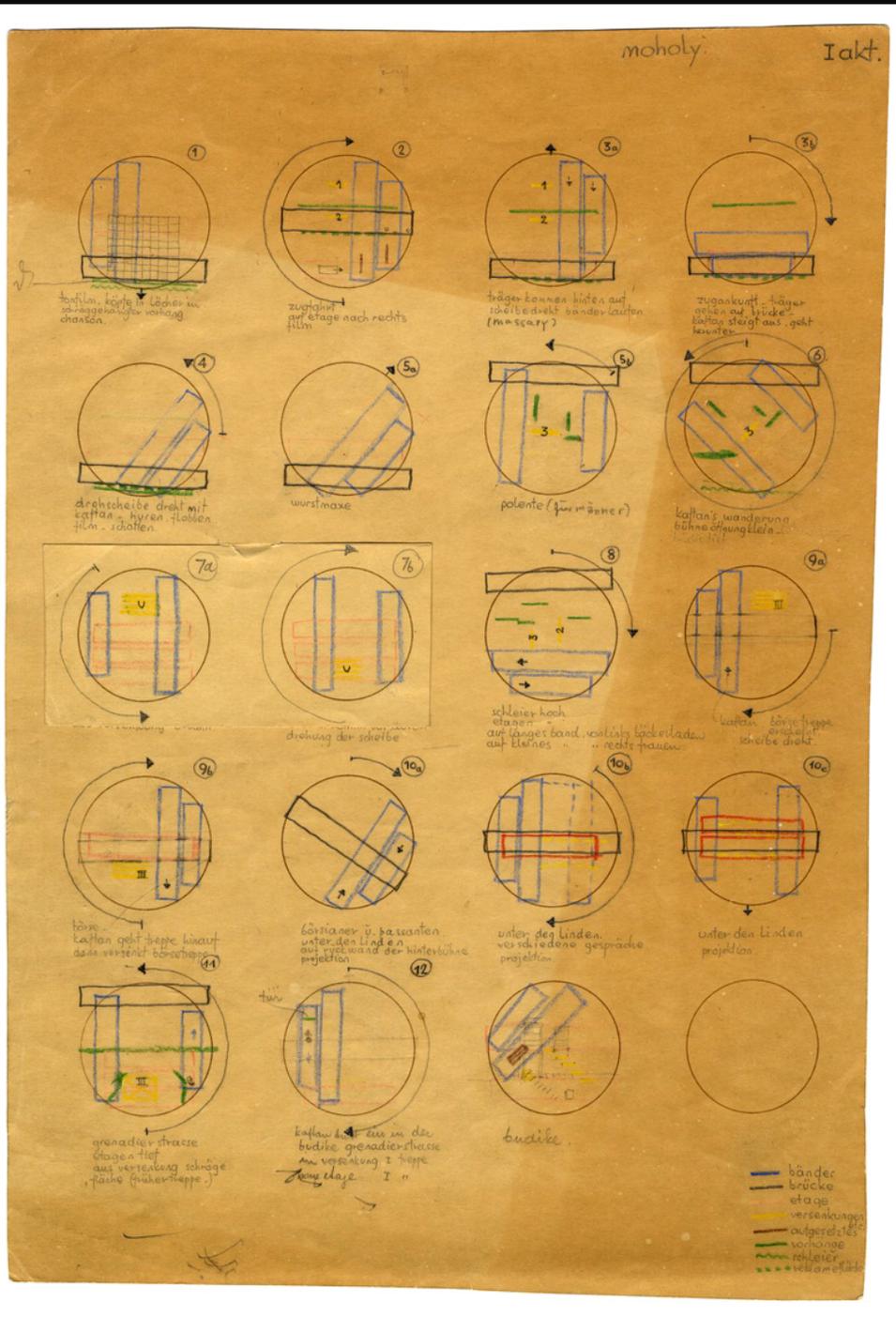
Poly-cinema (1924) —→
Expanded cinema

Different films can be projected simultaneously.

He tried this in the scenic experiments for the play “Kaufmann of Berlin” (The Merchant of Berlin), by Walter Mehring, performed at the Piscator Theatre in 1929.



Poly-cinema, *Vision in Motion*, 283. p.



Schematic diagrams of scenes from Walter Mehring, 1929.

Colored pencil and graphite on paper.
<http://moholy-nagy.org/art-database-gallery/>
 (2017. 06. 06.)

It would already be possible to enrich our spatial experience by projecting light on semitransparent screens, planes, nets, trellis-work, suspended behind each other.

(Moholy-Nagy, 1946, 283 p.)

Expanded cinema:

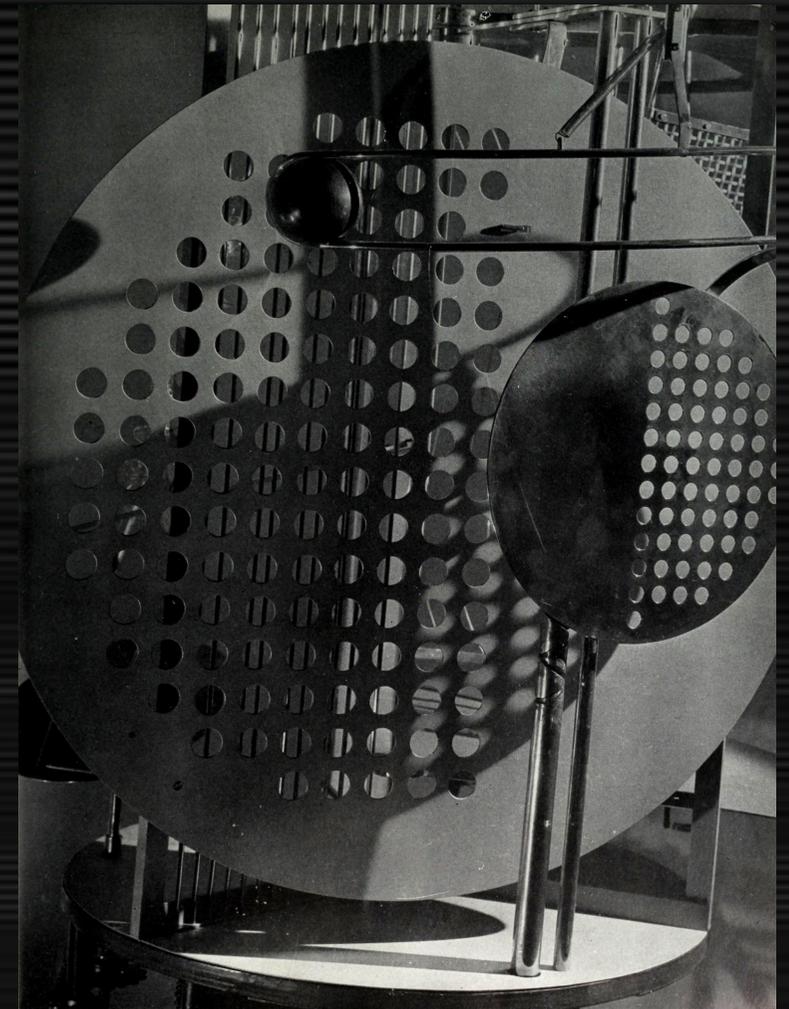
“When we say expanded cinema we actually mean expanded consciousness.”

(Youngblood, 1970, 41. p.)

L. Moholy-Nagy: The light display machine
(*Light prop*), 1922-1930.

“This moving sculpture had 140 light bulbs connected with a drum contact. This was arranged so that within a two-minute turning period, various colored and colorless spotlights were switched on, creating a light display on the inside walls of a cube (my motion picture, ‘Light display, black and white and grey’, was made from this mobile...).”

(Moholy-Nagy, 1946, 238 p.)



Moholy-Nagy: Light display, black and white and grey, 1930.

“The film demonstrates the refined values of the black-white-gray gradations... (...) ...it uses all possible means of the film technique such as superimpositions – at places seven times – prisms, mirrorings and moving light.”

(Moholy-Nagy, 1946, 288 p.)

VIDEO:

Moholy-Nagy: **Light display, black and white and grey**, 6 min, 1930. (extract)

Synthetic sound —→ **Synthetisator**

In 1923 Moholy-Nagy asked whether or not a detailed analysis of the relationship between sound and groove might not make it possible to find a general formal logic in the form of an alphabet of sounds.

He imagined a medium that writes the sound directly without having produced it previously; so the instrument was replaced by the synthetic production of its sound.

(Passuth, 1982, 292 p., Schneider, 2011, 189 p.)

Gyorgy Kepes

(Kepes György, 1906, Selyp, Hungary – 2001, Cambridge, USA)

Hungarian-born painter, designer, photographer, educator and art theorist.

In 1967 he founded at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS), dedicated to advance new technologies and creative collaboration between scientists and artists.

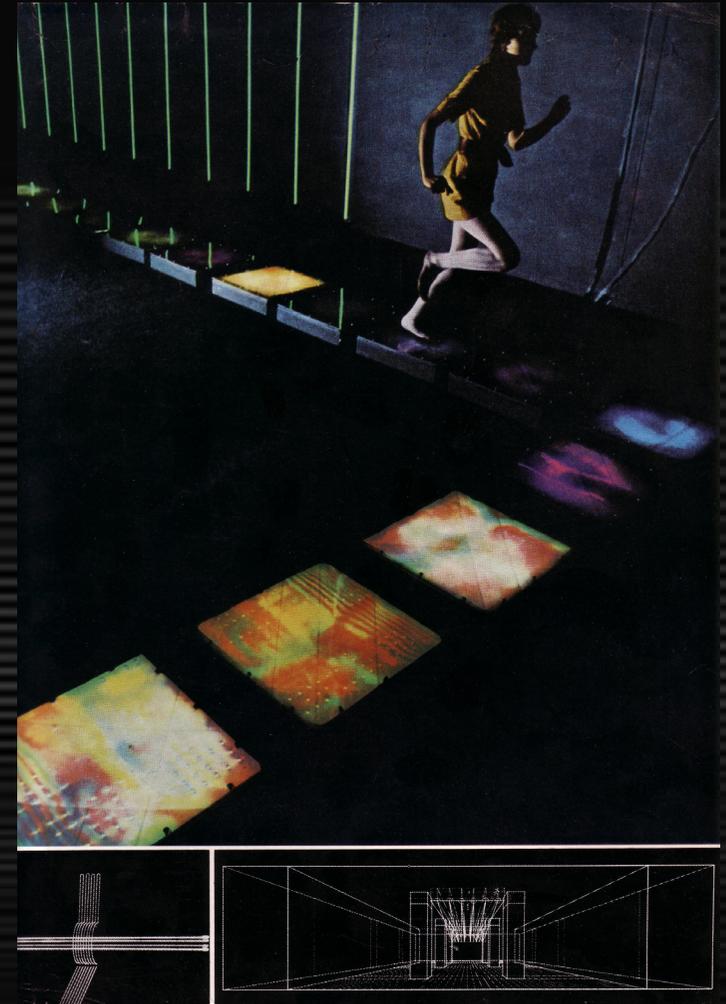
Kepes called his interdisciplinary methods 'interthinking' and 'inter-seeing'.

—> Interactive art

Gyorgy Kepes: *Photoelastic Walk* with William H. Wainwright, 1969, interactive installation, 1,2x7,3 m.

It used plastic sheets and polarising screens to produce a captivating optical illusion. Walking over the piece caused the refractive index of the plastic to change, revealing brightly coloured lines – ‘rainbow colors’ – that evoked the rippling effects of water in sunlight. In reference to this work, Kepes recalled a memory from his childhood in the Hungarian countryside: ‘As a child I loved to wade through water and watch the rhythms my movements made. That has something to do with this floor’.

One of the first example of **sensory technique** in art.



Gyorgy Kepes: *Flame Orchard* with William Walton, Mauricio Bueno,
music by Paul Earls,
kinetic work of art, 1971.

“...a work in collaboration with György Kepes, the Director of CAVS. This came from his reading about the way in which certain experienced opera singers could make the gas lights of opera houses flutter and strobe when singing certain notes - the Eigenfrequencies of the auditorium. Entitled “Flame Orchard”, it consisted of a box filled with propane gas which had a top thin metal plate drilled with a grid of small holes, and with two loudspeakers broadcasting into the sides of the container. The escaping gas from the small holes was lighted, to make a sea of small flames, which then reacted to the music fed into the box. Like the opera singers, I had to learn the particular acoustic properties of the box, and composed electronic music that ‘played’ the flames. Note: I don’t recommend this to anyone, as it is quite dangerous.”

(Paul Earls, 1996)



Alexander László

(László Sándor, 1895, Budapest, Hungary – 1970, Los Angeles, USA)

Pianist, musical composer and inventor of Colorlight music (Farblicht-musik).

Important experimenter in boundary-crossing combination of music, (light)painting and film (collaborating with the painter Matthias Holl).

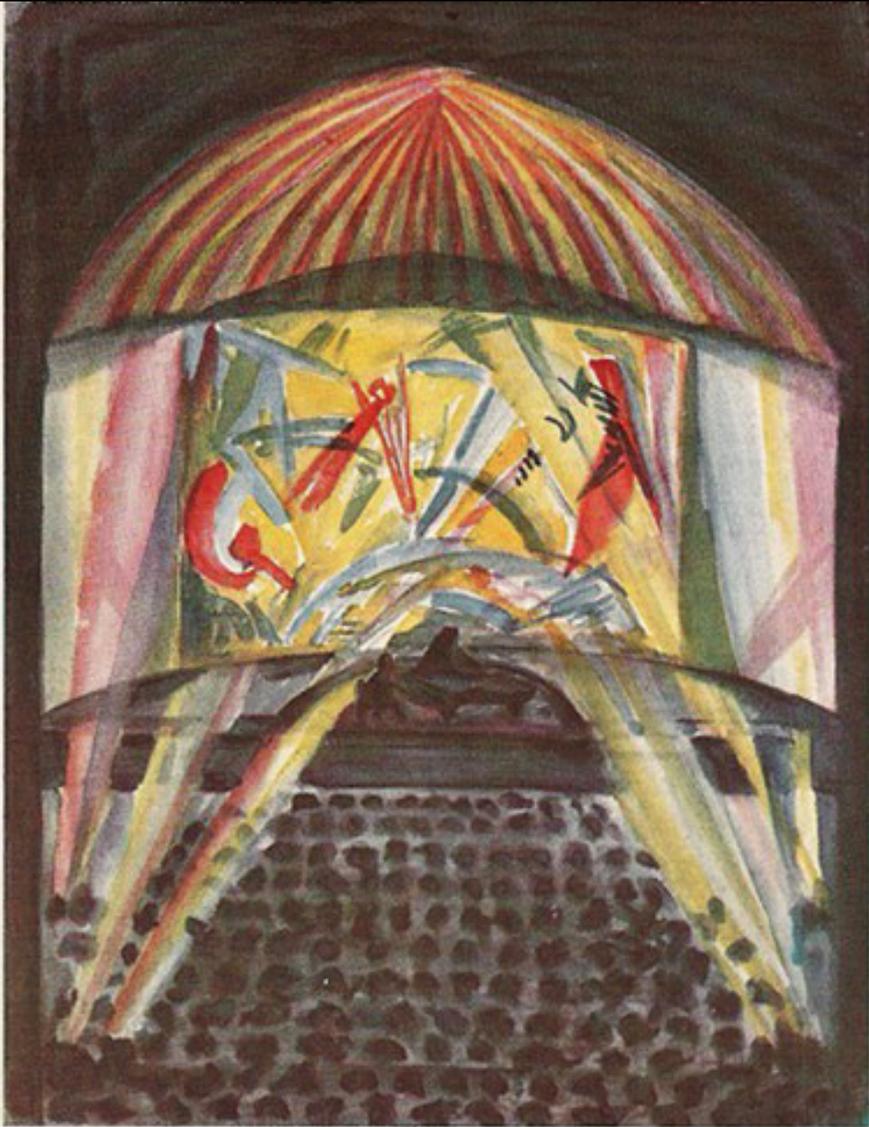
With his new art form he became a pioneer of what we today name Visual Music.

He used a special keyboard (Sonchromatoscope), which was hooked up to several slide projectors and also could produce forms. László created relationships between mixtures of colors and sounds.

Colorlight music —————> **Visual Music, Expanded Cinema,
Multimedia**

*A Colorlight concert of Alexander László,
around 1925,*

Archive Jörg Jewanski, Münster, Germany



pinxit T. H. Bauer

Ein Farblichtkonzert
von Alexander László.

Engagements durch die Gesellschaft für den Synchronismus,
Abt. Konzertleitung, München, Schillerstraße 20.

“The 4 large projectors fitted with triple condensers are equipped with:

1. revolving cross-frames for moving the slides vertically and horizontally,
2. a tall cylinder between the bellows and lens to move the 8 colour-keys up and down,
3. a dynamic (iris-) diaphragm to regulate the intensity of the light and the light-effects.
4. a delimiting diaphragm (in front of the lens).

The actual pictorial motifs originate in the 4 small projectors which, following existing procedures for showing slides, change and are switched on and off.”

(Moholy-Nagy, 1927, 22 p.) (László, 1925)

Nicolas Schöffer

(Schöffer Miklós, 1912, Kalocsa, Hungary – 1992, Paris, France)

His career touched on painting, kinetic sculpture, architecture, urbanism, film, TV, and music – – > multimedia.

SCHÖFFER

	S1	S3	S5	D3	Di-S1	S4	Di-S3	F1	P1	F2	S1	D3	F1	P1	Di-S3	D2	D3	S1	S5	F2	S3	P2	P1	D3	D4	S6	D4-D1
DAUER D. SEQ. IN mm	3	4	2	4	3	5	4	8	3	6	2	4	2	3	5	8	4	3	10	6	4	6	4	2	5	4	15
SEQUENZEN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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LICHTREKLAMEFFE.																								■	■	■	■
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PUNKTSCHWINN	●	●	●	■	●	●	■	■	○		●	■	○	●	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	○	○	■	■	■
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LASER	●	●			●	■	■	■			●	■			●	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	○	○	■	■	■
STROBOSKOPE	●	●			●	■	■	■			●	■			●	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	○	○	■	■	■
DIA-PROJEKTOR				■		●		○			■	○	○		■	■	■				○	○	■				
FILMPROJEKTOR				■		●		○			■	○	○		■	■	■				○	○	■				
BLITZLATEN	●	●			●	■	■	■			●	■			●	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	○	○	■	■	■
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GLITZERPROSP				■				○	○	○	■	○	○		■	■	■					○	○	■	■	■	■
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SAMTPROSPEKT	●	●			●	■	■	■			●	■			●	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	○	○	■	■	■
KOMMENTATOREN				■																			○	○	■	■	■
CHOR				■																			○	○	■	■	■
BALLET																							○	○	■	■	■
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STRIP-TEASE															■												

A Kyldex programozása
The KYLDEx programming

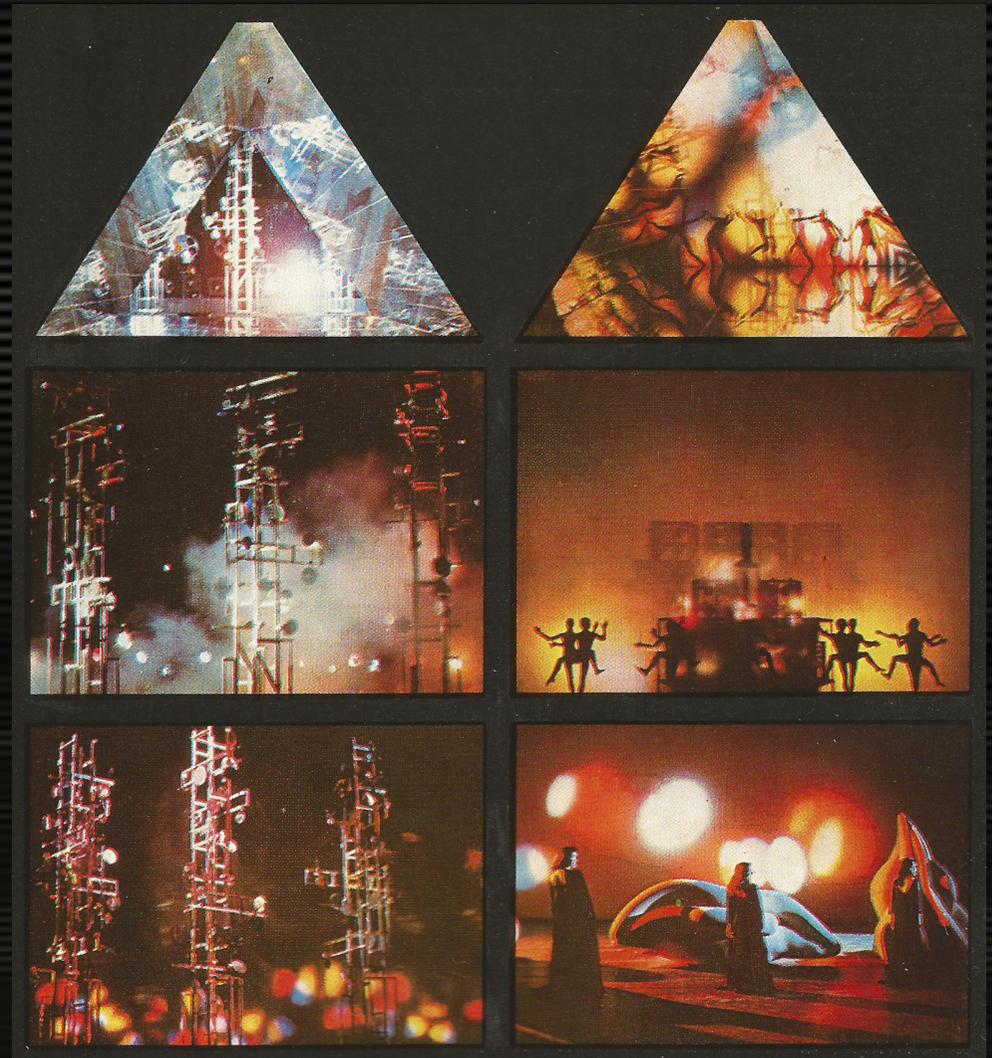
Schöffer: The Kyldex programming
(Múcsarnok, Budapest,
photo: Zs. Gyenes, 2015)

Schöffer, Nicolas: *KYLDEX 1*

– Cybernetic **Luminodynamic Experiment**
1, (with Pierre Henry - music and Alwin Niko-
lais - choreography)

Hamburg Opera, Germany, 1973.

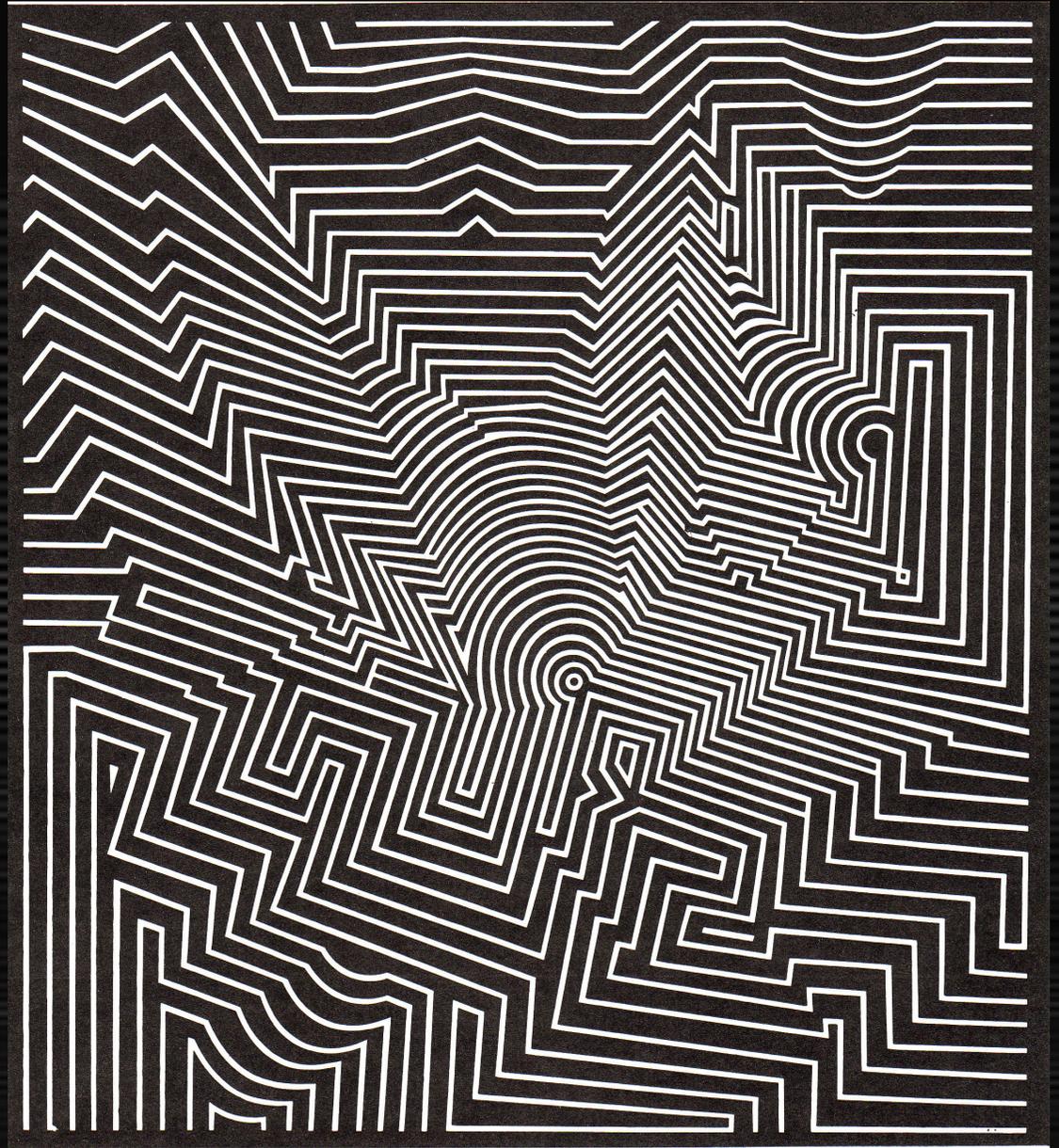
Five cybernetic, autonomous sculptures danced alongside the opera ballet's team and the dancers Carolyn Carlson and Emery Hermans, while light effects changed the performance space in combination with mobile projection surfaces, all which reacted to the music by Pierre Henry.



Victor Vasarely

(Vásárhelyi Győző,
1906, Pécs, Hungary – 1997, Paris, F)

Zint, 1952-61.



Viking Eggeling – Swedish painter, film-maker

(1880, Lund, Sweden –1925, Berlin, Germany): *Diagonal Symphony*, 1921-1924.

The first important abstract film. The temporal rhythm of the S. D. is created by the infinitely variable interplay of contrasting abstract forms arranged along vertical and horizontal axes.

These variable sequences —> precursors of “**computer-thinking**” and **Visual Music**.

Nicolas Bandi

(Bándy Miklós, 1904, Marosvásárhely, Hungary –1971, Paris, France)

Hungarian journalist, photographer and film-maker.

His essay in *Schémes* in 1925 was the first film review ever written on Eggeling’s art. In 1927 he shot *Hands* in Berlin. In this abstract film made as an optical study of movement acting is replaced by the rhythmic movement of the hands.

Eggeling and Bandi have known each other.

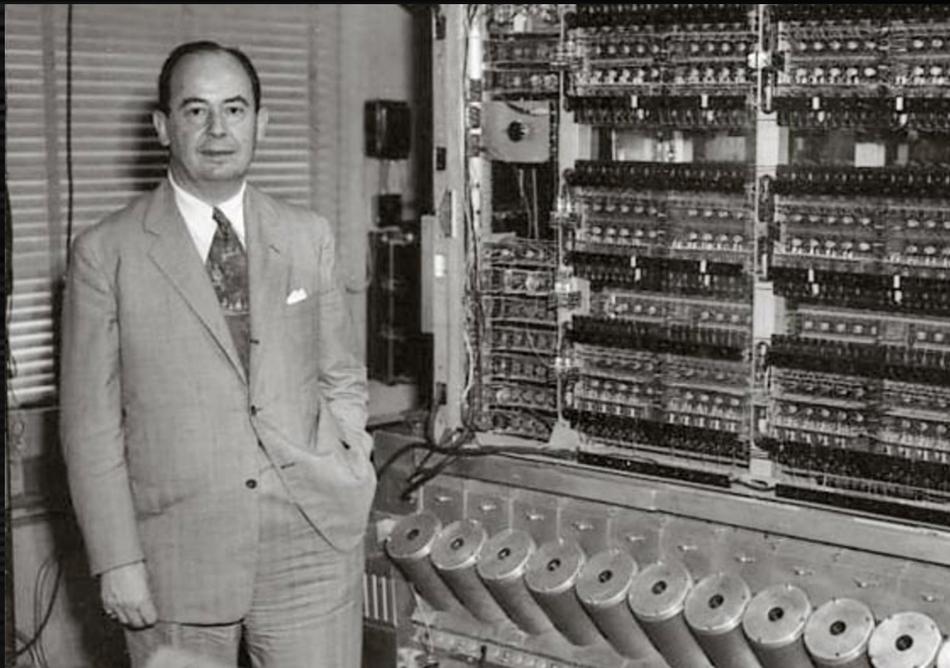
Bandi’s film is regarded as the further consideration of *Diagonal Symphony*.

II. Forerunners, early experiments, inventors

John von Neumann

(Neumann János, 1903, Budapest, Hungary – 1957, Washington, USA)

He is generally considered the logical designer of the first electronic computer (1944-1952).

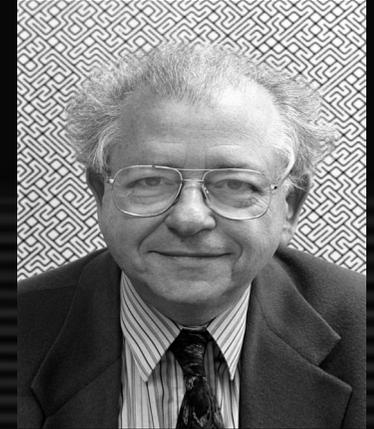


Neumann and his computer, 1952.

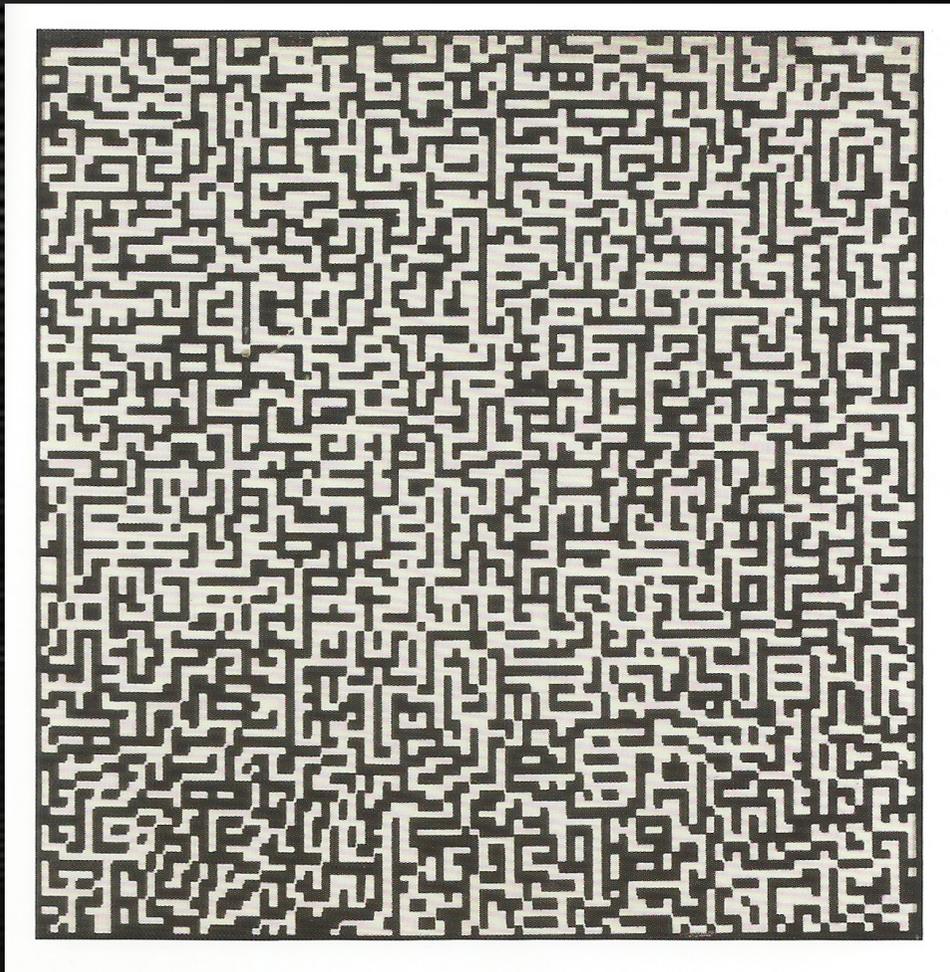
(<http://www.hungarikum.hu/hu/neumann-janos-életműve-az-informatika-és-szám%C3%ADtógépek-világában>)

Bela Julesz

(Julesz Béla, 1928, Budapest, Hungary – 2003, New Jersey, USA)



Generative algorithm-based computer graphics.



Computer Graphic, 1965.

He used random grids.

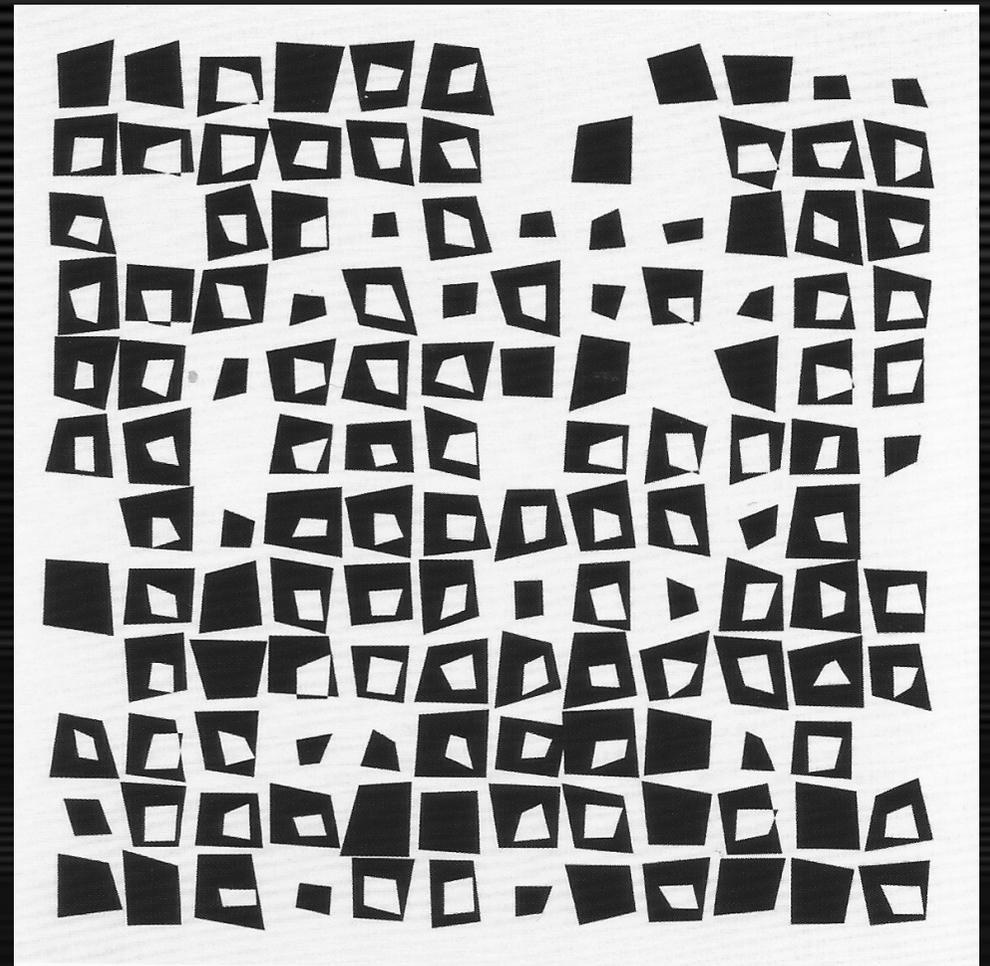
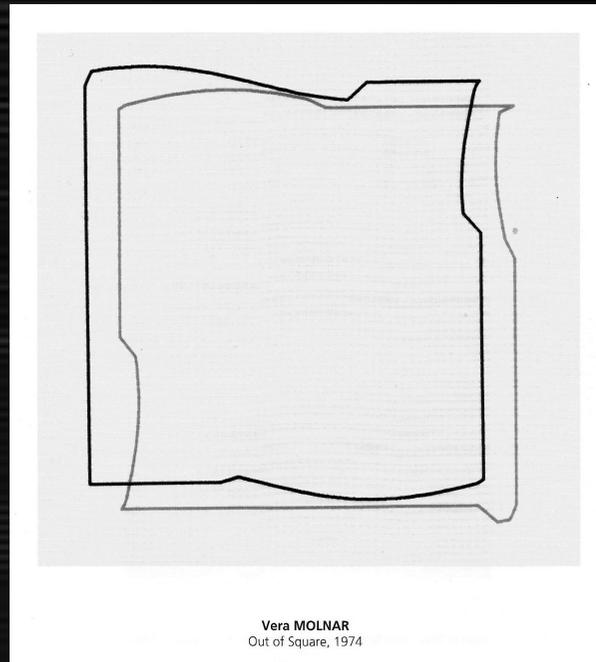
Vera Molnar

(1924, Budapest, Hungary) She lives in France.

Her compositions from 1959 were based on systematic principles, made on the analogy of the operation of computer processors.

Out of Square, 15-08-04, artist-book, 1974.

Congruence aléatoire (Occasional congruence),
acrylic on canvas, 1973.



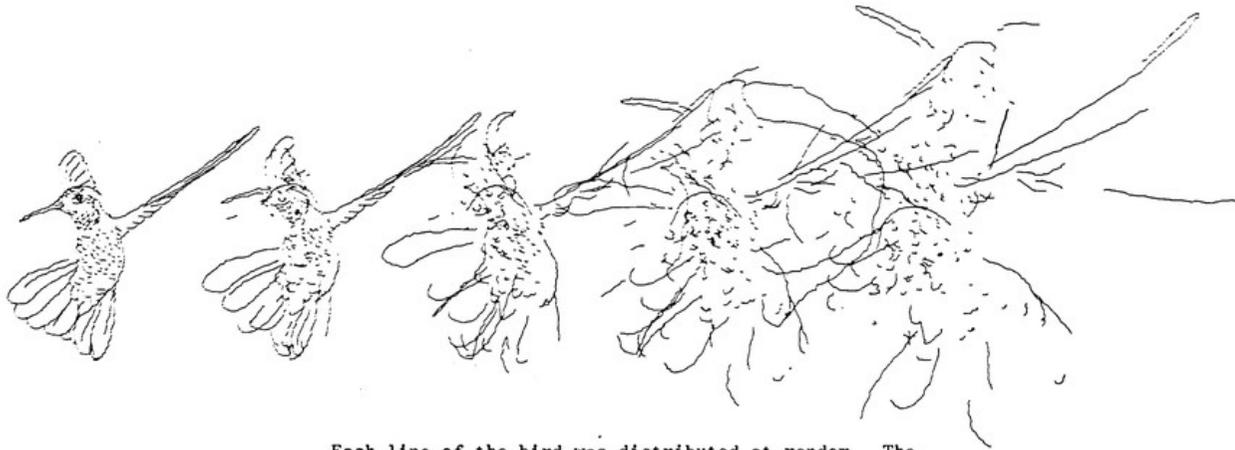
Charles Csuri

(Born in 1922, Hungary) He lives in USA.

The first computer animation to be created with an artistic intention was *Hummingbird* (Kolibri) by Csuri in 1967.



CHAOS TO ORDER



Each line of the bird was distributed at random. The computer drew the chaotic version first, and in progressive stages brought the bird back together.

- Charles Csuri, Professor, School of Art
James Shaffer, Programmer
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awvQp1TdBqc>

<http://charlescsuri.tumblr.com>

<http://charlescsuri.tumblr.com/post/154720282018/charles-csuri-1970-i-was-intrigued-by-the-idea>

Peter Foldes

(Földes Péter, 1924, Budapest, Hungary – 1977, Paris, France)

Director/ animator.

First auteur animation made with **computer**: *Narcissus-Echo* (1971).

<https://vimeo.com/149531320>

Jules Engel

(Engel Gyula, 1909, Budapest, Hungary – 2003, California, USA)

Animation director. He used **computer** from the 1970's years.

John Halas

(Halász János, 1912, Budapest, Hungary – 1995, London, UK)

Animation director, graphic designer.

He had directed an animated music video for Kraftwerk's *Autobahn* (1977-79), which already featured simple computer graphics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IFgcx76RIg>



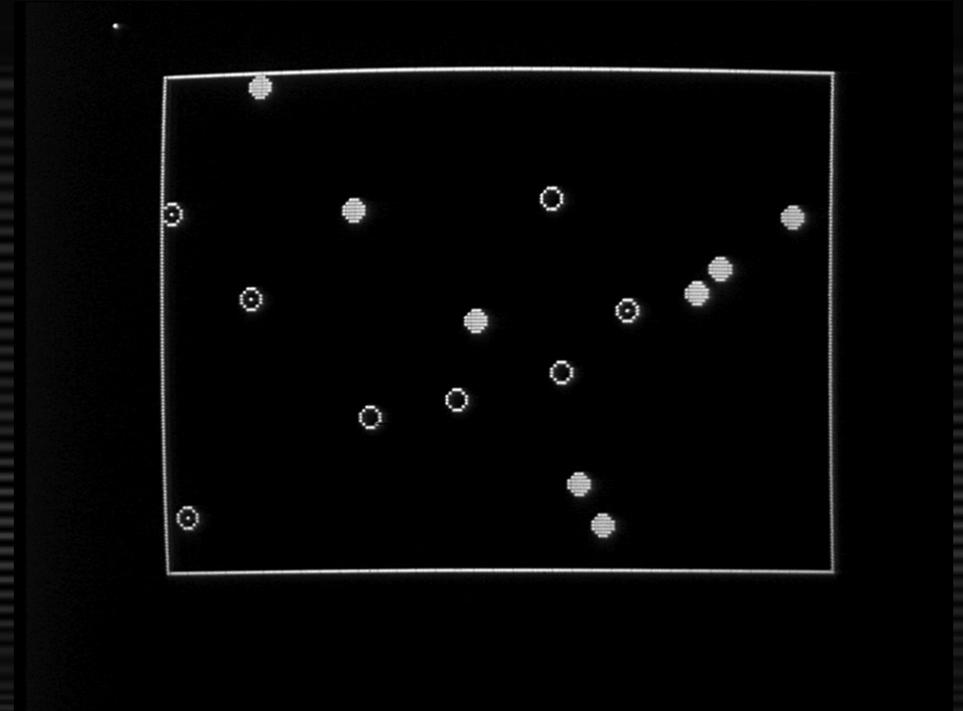
An other work of his art was the *Memory of L. Moholy-Nagy*, with **Tamás Waliczky** (1990). (See later)

In Hungary:

Gábor Bódy (1946–1985)

Film-video director.

Psychocosmos, 1976.



The first Hungarian computer animation.

A study, an experiment; three different kinds of regulations are input; aggressive, defensive, and indifferent. The camera records the story invented by the computer itself.

János Kass (1927–2010)

Graphic artist

Dilemma, 1981
(London, Halas Studio,
computer animation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkRU9QfAg-Q>



Punched-card Head, 1981.

III. Interpenetrations – Hungarian contemporary artists

Tamás Waliczky

(born in 1959, in Budapest, Hungary)

Media artist. He began working with computers in 1983.

He is a connecting link between the forerunners and contemporary arts. – e.g. he worked with John Halas. *A Memory of Moholy-Nagy* is a partly animated documentary on Moholy-Nagy produced by John Halas in 1990.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldvLkU_AqH8

Marionettes, 2006:

„*Marionettes* is a seven minutes long computer animation about collapse. Marionettes are controlled by strings. If there is no string, they collapse. Nobody animates the body. If nobody animates the body, it will be animated by natural forces. Mass. Gravity. Collision. Randomization. In this animation the animator does not animate in the traditional term. Therefore we can say it is an anti-animation. The forces which control the movements of the marionettes calculated by physical simulation algorithms. Therefore these movements are strictly mathematical ones. They are dramatic, too. They visualize collapse in physical and – amazingly enough from puppets animated by machines – psychological meaning.”

VIDEO: Tamás Waliczky: *Marionettes* (extract)

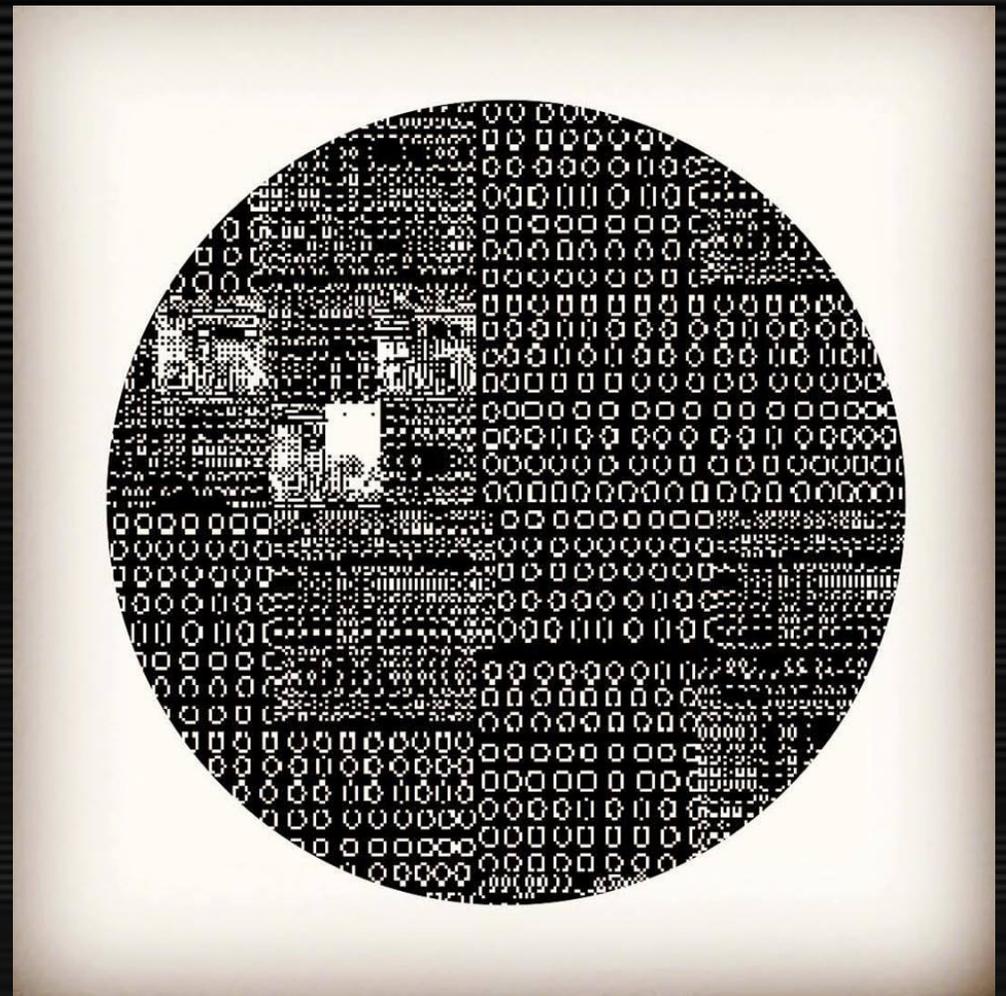
Online: <http://www.waliczky.net/>

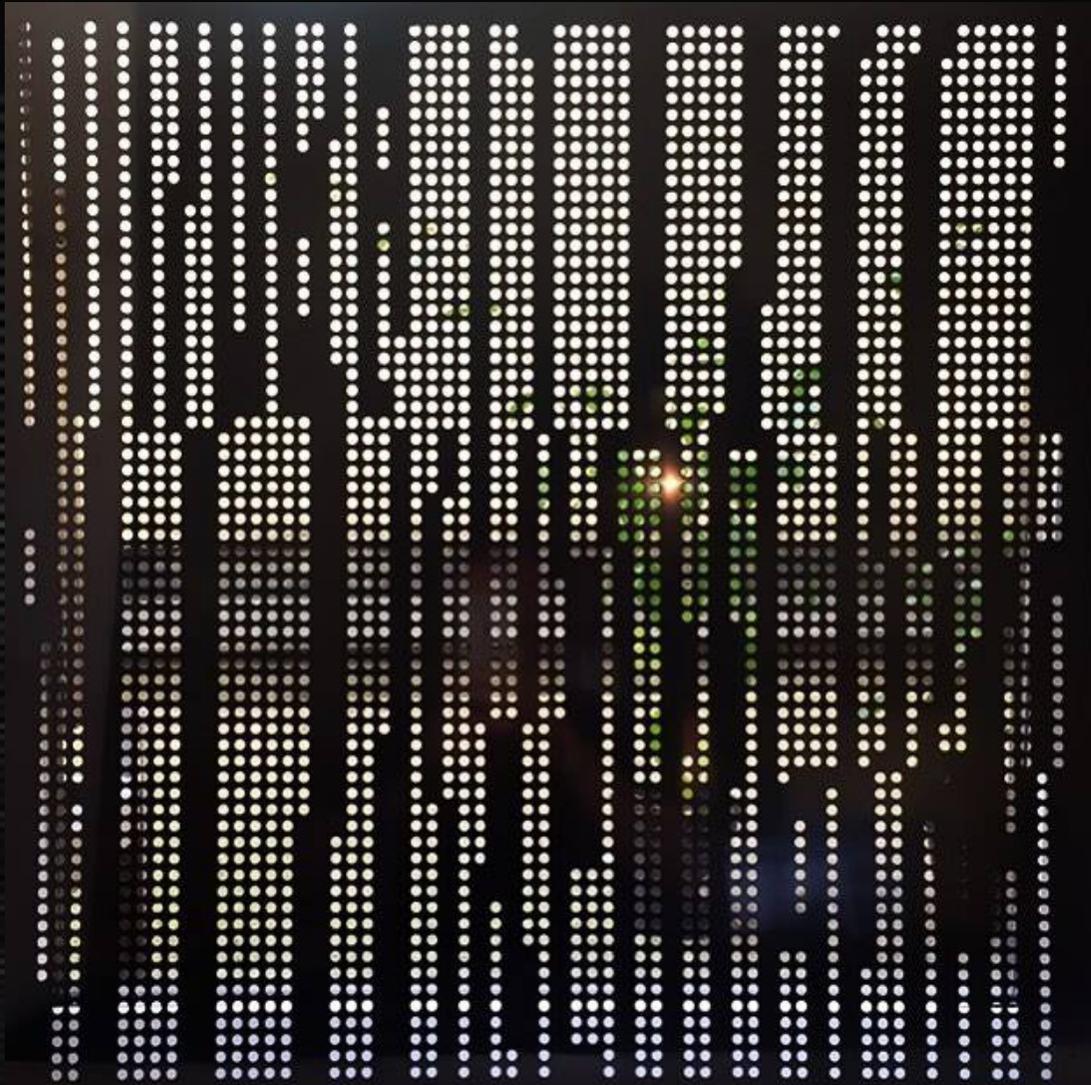
Gábor Palotai

(Hungarian born, 1956)

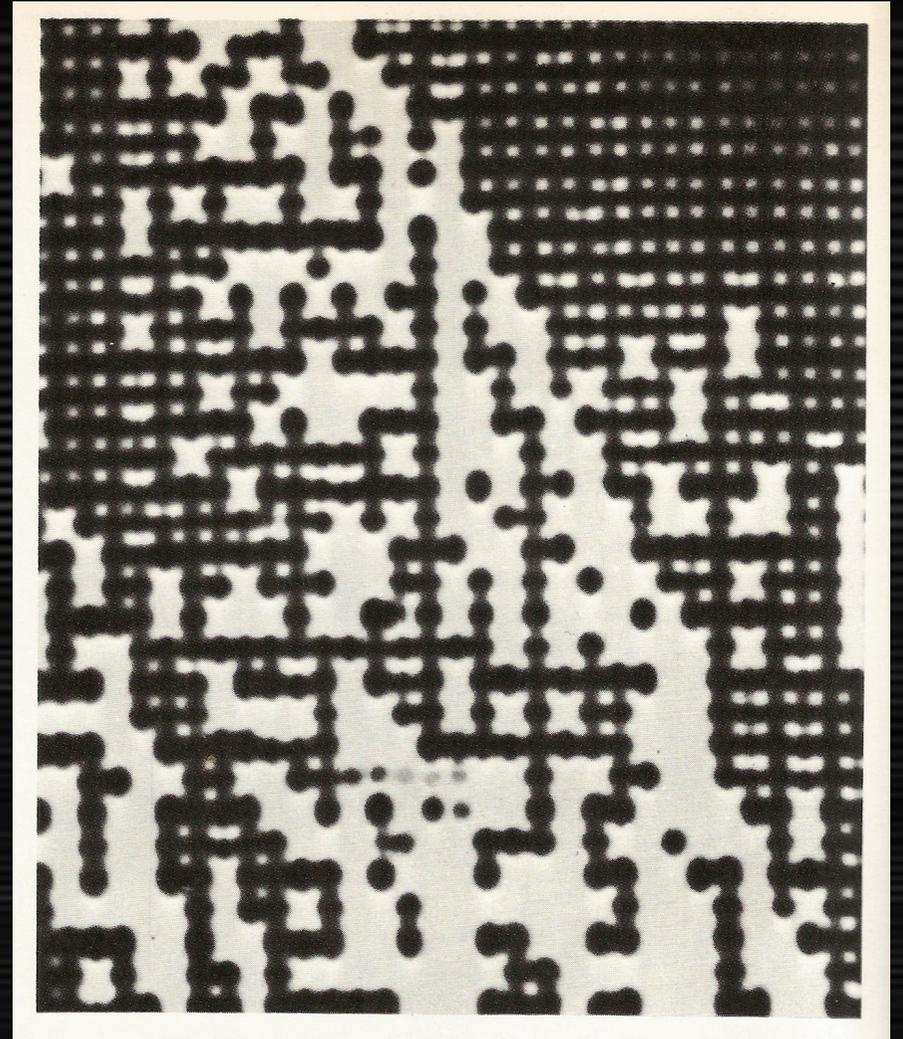
Swedish-Hungarian graphic designer/typographer.

– *Macrocosmos*, 2016.





Gábor Palotai: **Perforated pattern**, 2016.

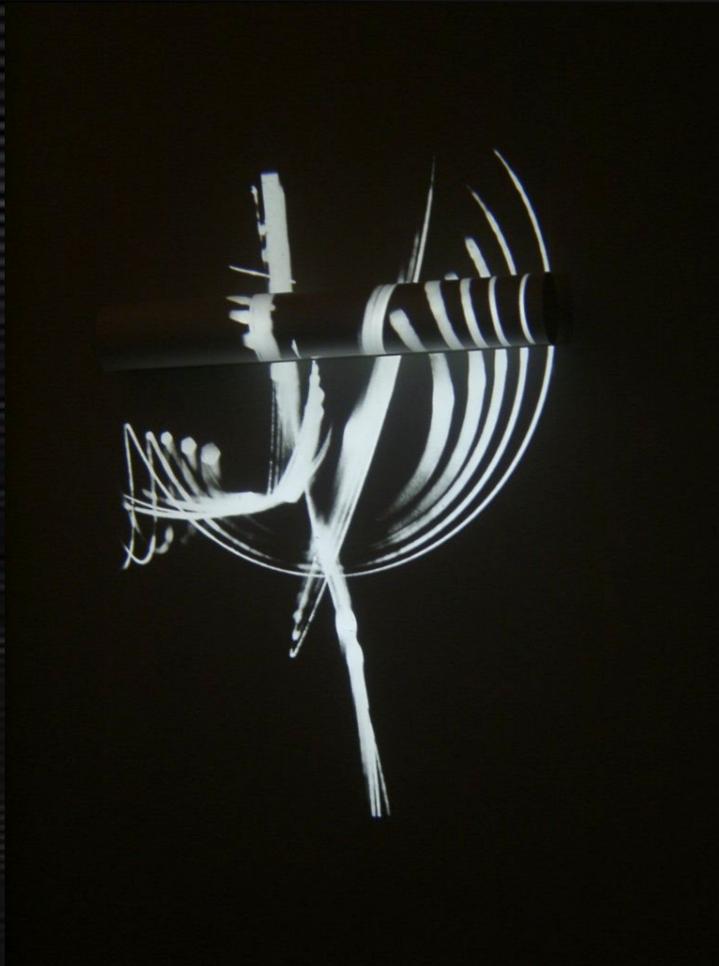


Gyorgy Kepes: **Light-rhythm** (in *A látás nyelve*, 1944, 1979, 162. p.)

Éva T. Bortnyik (b. 1945, Kolozsvár, Rumania, former Hungary) – **Csaba Tubák** (b. 1943, Rumania)

Media/light artists. The married couple lives in Austria.

Bortnyik–Tubák: **Homage á Kepes**, 2003.
Interactive work.



Gyorgy Kepes: **Deformations**, 1969.



Expanded cinema of *Bortnyik–Tubák* (1996–)

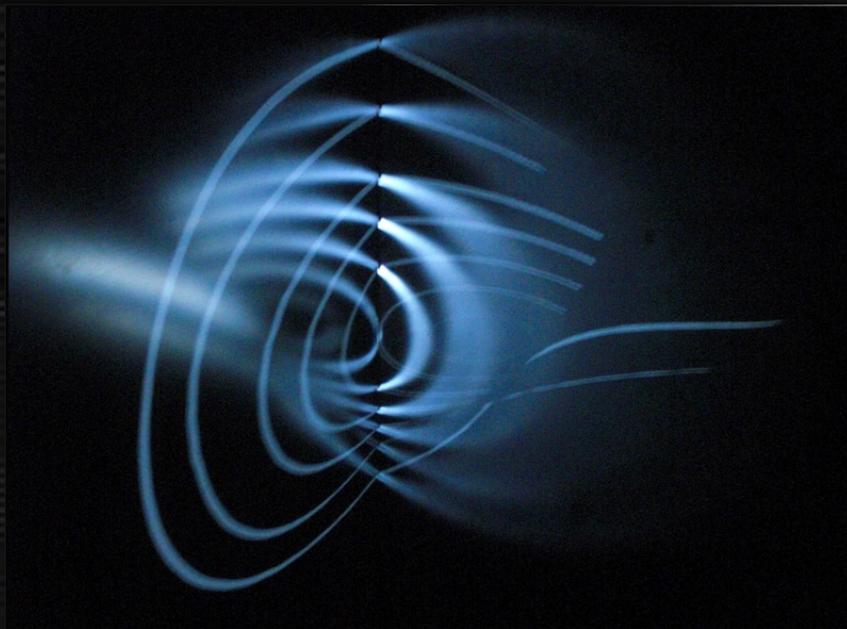
Film projected on

- transparent cube
- 25 white rods and black background
- moving rolled surface (projecting photographs) – eg. *Homage á Kepes*
- two black surfaces at a right angle (*N-Dimension*)

Éva T. Bortnyik – Csaba Tubák: *N-Dimension*, 2009.
Contributing with Ádám Tubák.

In their light installation entitled *N-Dimension*, they project computer animated light structures on two glossy, black, square-shaped surfaces positioned at a perpendicular angle to one another. The light compositions, which move according to shifting rhythms, reflect from the two surfaces back onto one another, producing a multi-dimensional visual effect.

<http://kepes.society.bme.hu/Tagok/Bortnyik/bortnyik.html>



VIDEO (extract)

András Mengyán

(b. 1945 in Hungary)

Lives in Hungary and Norway.

Painter, designer, light-artist.

András Mengyán: 3D Programmable Laser Animation, 2010.

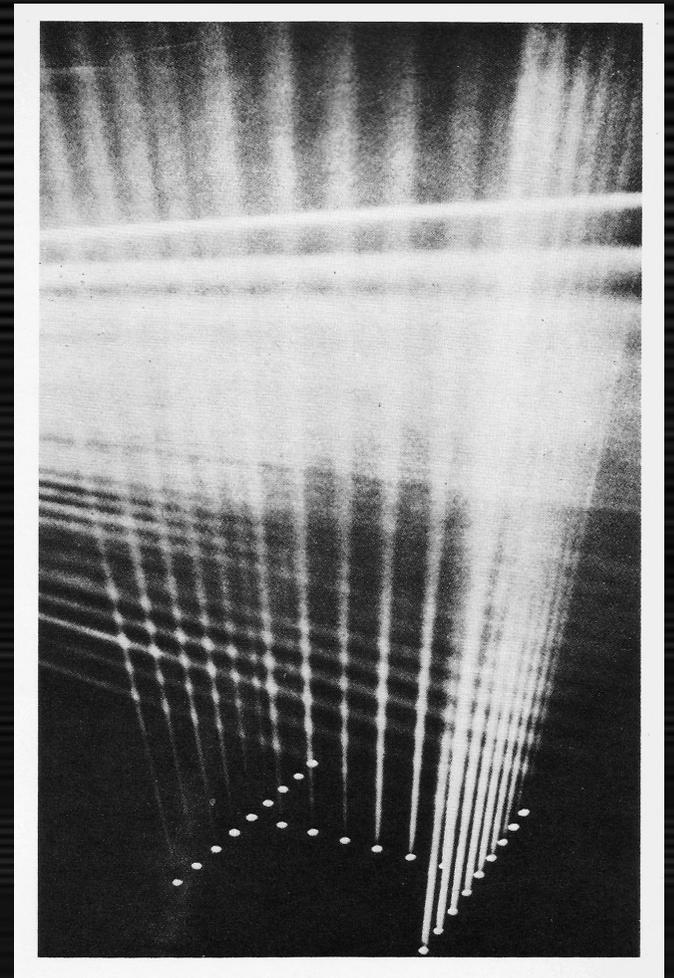
This is a hardware capable of transforming two-dimensional images generated by computer (in a limited way) into real three dimensions, and capable of making physically real three-dimensional (3D) animation with sound visible in 360 degrees.

There is no limit in size and form for the underlying technology.



András Mengyán: **3D Programmable Laser Animation**, Laser, glass, liquid, 2010.

György Kepes:
Controlled light-beams
(In: *A látás nyelve*, 79. p.)



Zsolt Czakó (b. 1965, Hungary)

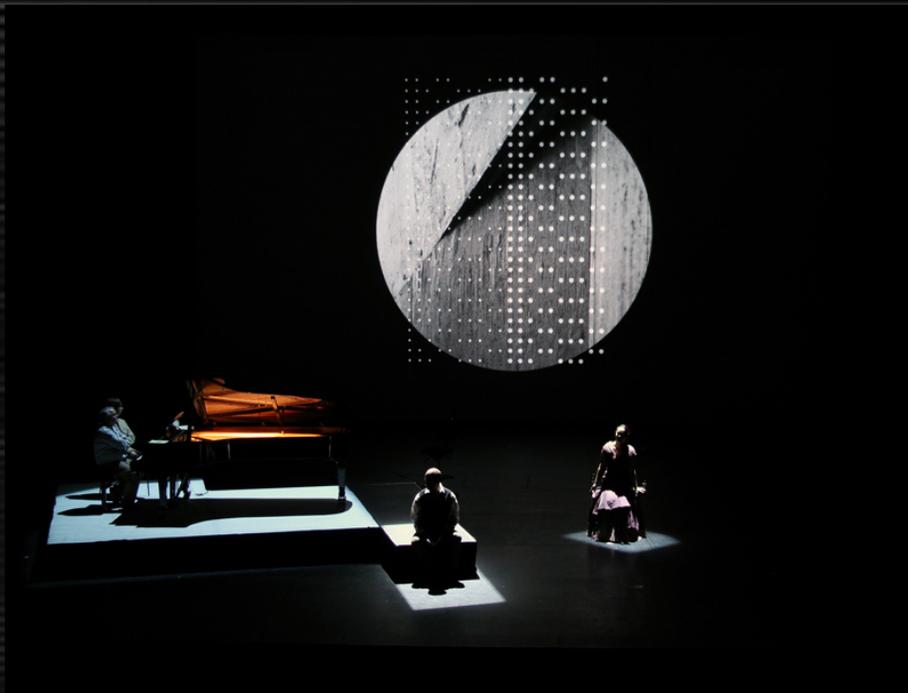
Typographer, photographer, media-artist

The Life of Debussy in Six Movements (Series of Zoltán Kocsis), 2012-13.

Motion design to scene (Palace of Arts – Budapest) with Balázs Balogh.

<http://zsoltczako.hu>

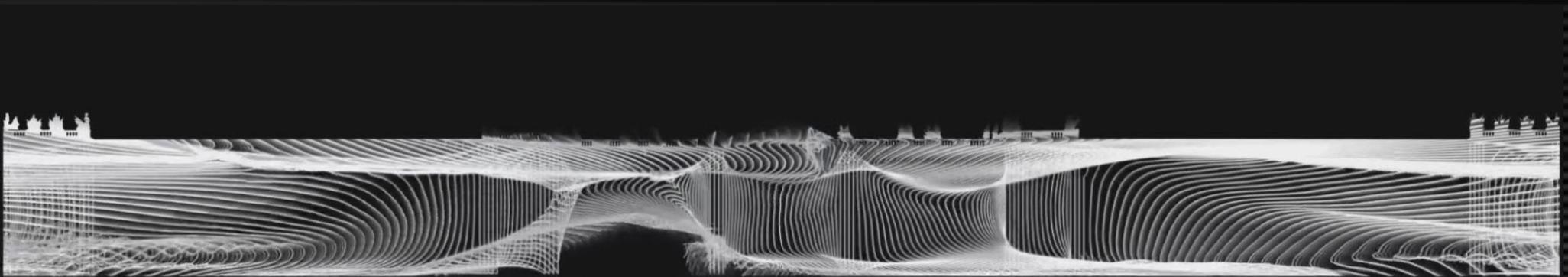
VIDEO (extract)



László Zsolt Bordos (b. 1977) /alias: Bordos.ArtWorks/ – 3d mapping artist.

ZKM Globale, 2015: <https://vimeo.com/144342174>

Curator: Peter Weibel



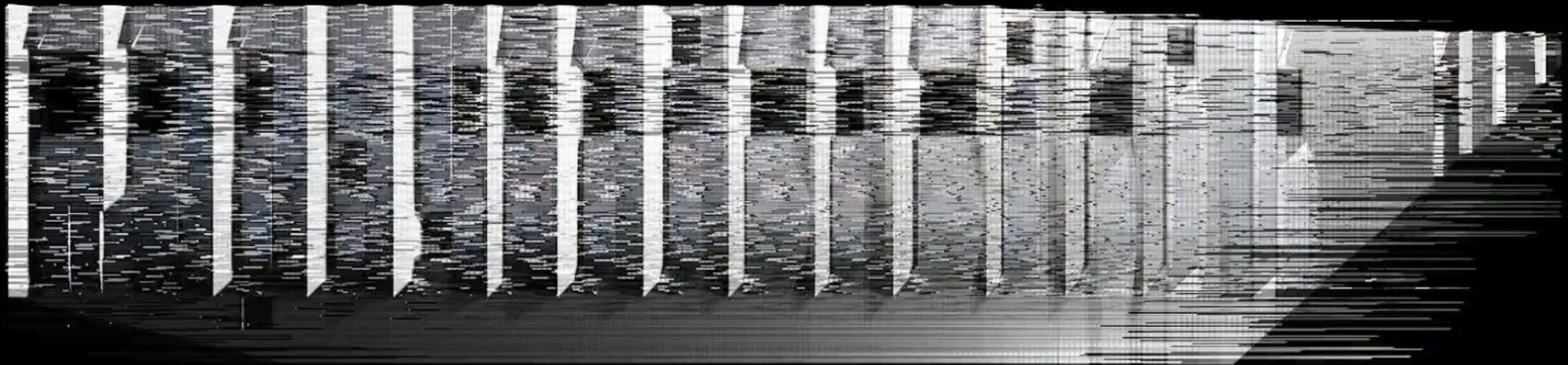
HEXALAB, 2016: <https://vimeo.com/196638494>, Curators: Pierre Emmanuel Reviron and Pierre Vasarely

The *object mapping* and the *architectural projection* is a new visual language.
Forerunners: Moholy-Nagy, Kepes, etc.

The controlled light (and shadow) can modulate the space (Moholy-Nagy).

VIDEO (extract)

BORDOS.ARTWORKS: io / FACADE DU CONSERVATOIRE - AIX EN PROVENCE DEC.09.2016
visuals: László Zsolt Bordos / sound: Roza0z / curated by: Pierre Emmanuel Reviron 18:30 - 22:30



PRÉSENTÉ PAR: **HEXALAB** / www.hexalab.org



une production



BORDOS ArtWorks
www.bordos.eu



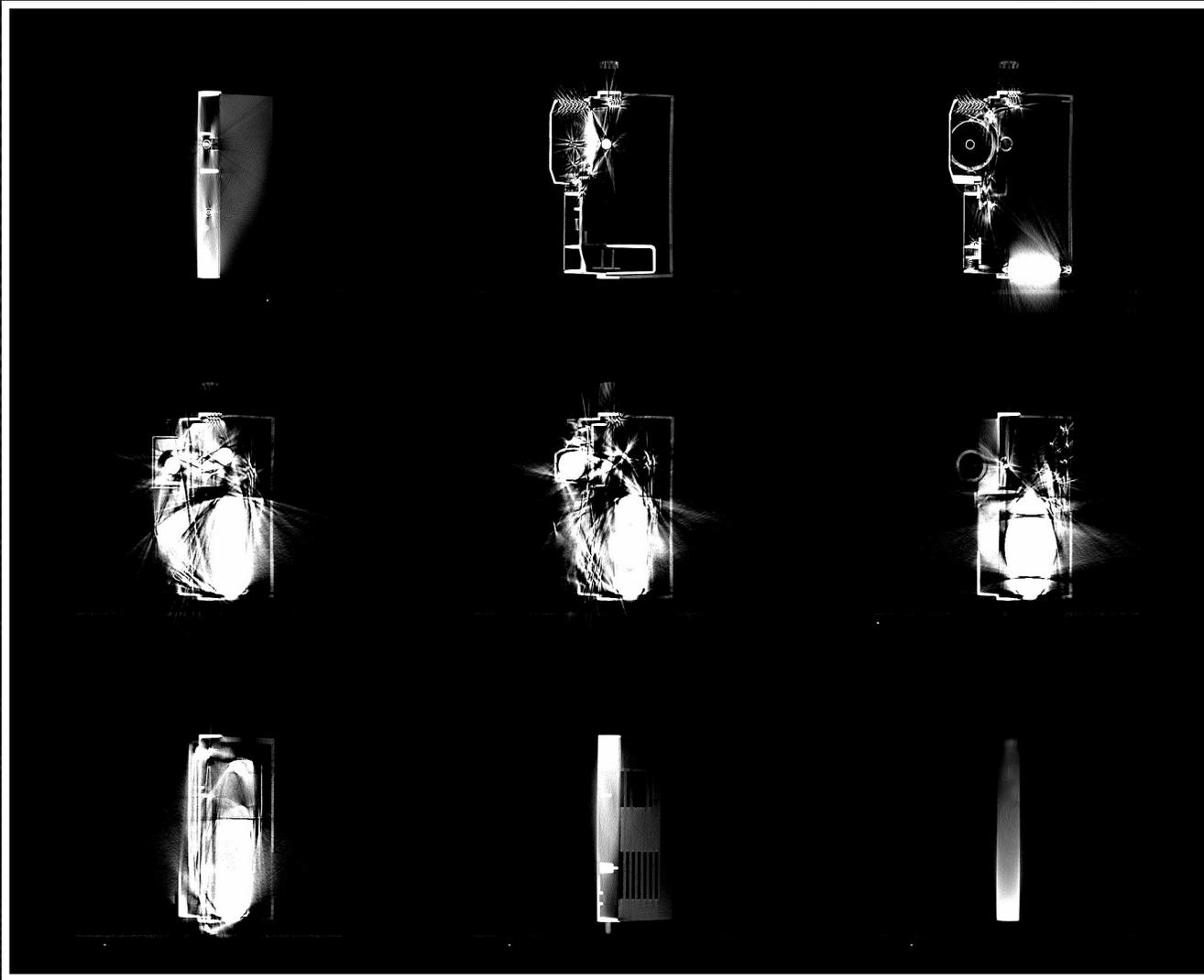
Zsolt Gyenes

Computed Tomography works of art, different media, 2010–2017.

The CT scans were taken at the Health Center of Kaposvar University in Hungary.



CT-projection, audio-video, installation, 03:25 min., loop, 2017.



VIDEO (extract)

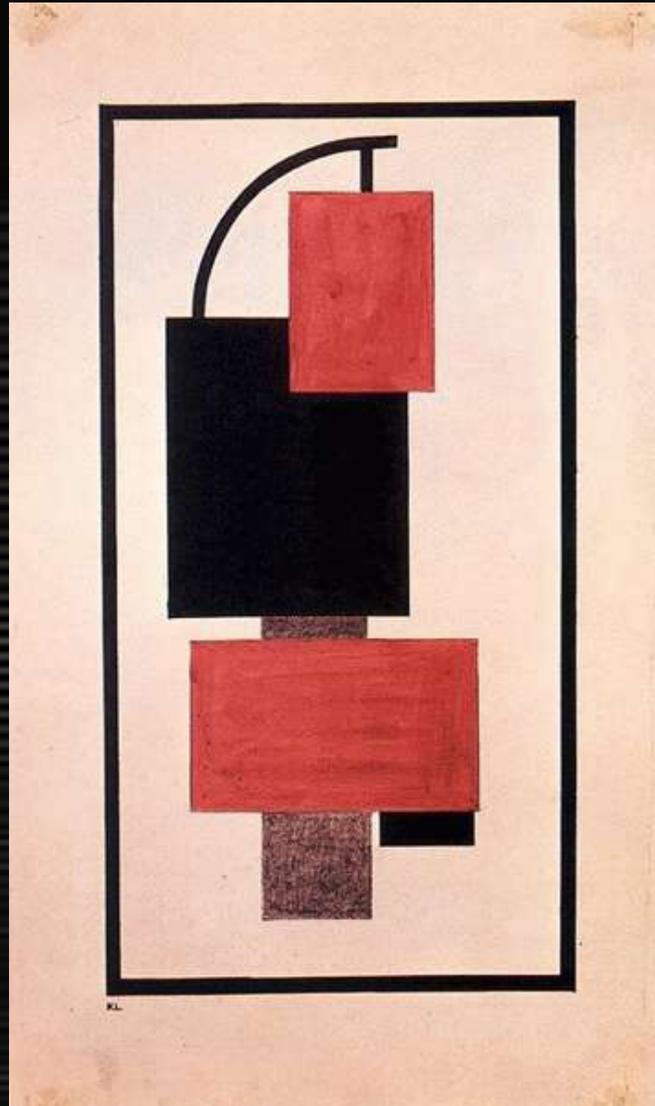
Lajos Kassák

(Hungarian artist,
1887-1967):

Pict-architect

(Képarchitektúra) V. 1922-
1923.

[http://mek.oszk.hu/01900/01906/
html/index818.html](http://mek.oszk.hu/01900/01906/html/index818.html)



László Moholy-Nagy:
Untitled, photogram,
1925-8.



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