

Victor Vasarely (1906–1997)

Works 1930 – 1980

Regional Cultural Center Letterkenny & The Glebe House and Gallery, Churchill (Donegal, Ireland).

‘Art for all.’

Victor Vasarely (1906–1997) is internationally recognised as one of the giants of 20th century art. He is the acknowledged leader of the Op Art movement, and his innovations in colour and optical illusion and in the democratisation of art, have had a profound influence on contemporary art and design.

Vasarely was born in Pécs, Hungary in 1906. He studied at the Műhely Academy (also known as the Budapest Bauhaus), where he became familiar with contemporary research in colour and optics by Albers, Moholy-Nagy and the Constructivists Malevich and Kandinsky. In 1930, he moved to Paris and for the next thirteen years, he devoted himself to graphic studies. In 1944, he held his first Parisian exhibition at the Galerie Denise René (which he helped found) and became the recognised leader of the avant-garde group of artists affiliated with the gallery.

By 1947, Vasarely had discovered his true place in abstract art. Influenced by his experiences at Breton Beach of Belle Isle, he concluded that “internal geometry” could be seen below the surface of the world and that form and colour are inseparable – “Every form is a base for colour, every colour is the attribute of a form.” During the 1950’s, he wrote a series of books on the use of optical phenomena, arguing that visual dynamics (plastique cinétique) relied on the eye of the viewer (who he considered to be the sole creator of the work), playing with optical illusions. In 1955, Vasarely initiated a (now legendary) group exhibition at Galerie Denise René entitled ‘Le Mouvement’ (the motion). In addition to Marcel Duchamp and Alexander Calder, it included works by Yaacov Agam, Pol Bury, Jesús Rafael Soto, Yaakov Agam and Jean Tinguely, which provided a framework and impetus for the artists who were laying the foundations of Kinetic Art.

In 1965, following the inclusion of his art in the Museum of Modern Art’s – ‘The Responsive Eye’ exhibition, Vasarely became an international art superstar and for the next twenty years, the public’s appetite for his dynamic works was insatiable.

He died in Paris, in 1997, just shy of his 91st birthday.

The Regional Cultural Centre and The Glebe House & Gallery are delighted to offer the Irish public an unprecedented opportunity to appreciate and engage with the extraordinary artistic and cultural output of Victor Vasarely and his influence on 20th Century Art and beyond. Accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue.

VICTOR VASARELY (Works 1930 – 1955)

Thursday 10th July – Saturday 30th August

Churchill, The Glebe Gallery

11am – 6.30pm

The Glebe Gallery exhibition examines Vasarely's early career from 1930 – 1955. Focusing on his initial influences and on the development of his original geometric abstract language. These were primarily drawn from his observations of the everyday, be they the white tiled walls of the Rochereau Métro Station (Paris): the ellipsoid pebbles and shells found on the Breton coast at Belle Île (1947): or the cubic houses of Gordes in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (1948). From these, he developed kinematic images to create dynamic and dizzying impressions as depicted in his iconic 'Noir et blanc' and 'Photographimes' series (1951– 1955).

VICTOR VASARELY (Works 1956 – 1980)

Thursday 10th July – Saturday 30th August

Letterkenny, Regional Cultural Centre

11am – 5pm Tuesday – Friday

1pm – 5pm Saturday (Open daily for the duration of the festival)

Vasarely believed in the social function of art in society and in the artist as a contributor and catalyst for social progress. His work was an accessible vision that integrated art into everyday life. Today, in the Digital Age of the Internet, Vasarely's art takes on new relevance and not just in his illusionistic paintings. The exhibition will focus on the creation of his 'Unité Plastique' and 'Planetary Folklore' series of the 50's / 60's, and on his development of the 'Vega' works and his 'veneration of the hexagon' in the 70's.

Le Mouvement 2008

Thursday 10th July – Friday 15th August

Letterkenny, Regional Cultural Centre, Workshop 3

11am – 5pm

A re-creation of the famous kinetic and Op Art exhibition 'Le Mouvement' (Paris 1955), as interpreted by a group of primary students and artist Mhairi Sutherland. Includes a process room. Come and try make your own Vasarely's!

VICTOR VASARELY RETROSPECTIVE

Seminar Sunday 13th

11am - 1pm Gallery Space, Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny

Free

Pierre Vasarely (Foundation Vasarely, France), Dr Józef Sárkány (Vasarely Museum, Hungary) and Adrian Kelly (Glebe Gallery) discuss the life and works of Victor Vasarely.