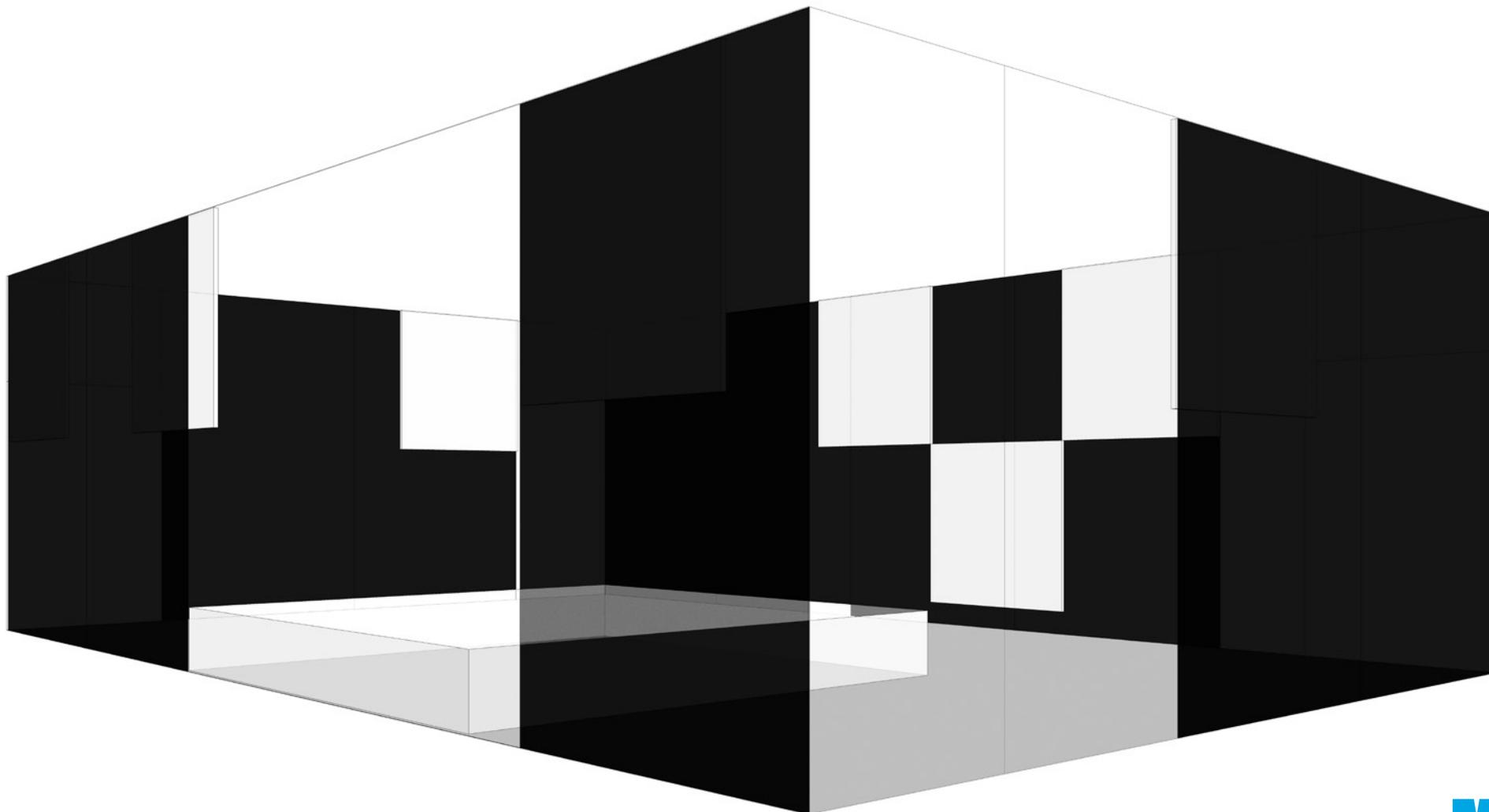


MIT List Visual Arts Center
20 Ames Street, Building E15
Cambridge, MA 02139

listart.mit.edu

Heimo Zobernig: chess painting

October 27 – December 31, 2017



Digital rendering of Reference Gallery installation, MIT List Visual Arts Center, 2017.
Courtesy the artist.



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Hayden and Reference Galleries October 27 – December 31, 2017

With Modernism came self-awareness. In the arts, poets and painters, dancers and filmmakers, designers and architects insisted on taking a step into the twentieth century unencumbered by the past. Carving their own new path with experimentation and a radical rethinking of the status quo, artists that fed the emergence of the movement recognized the conventions of the previous generation didn't fit an industrialized world and no longer applied to modern life in the 1900s. They understood that artmaking could move beyond depictions of an idealized world, serving as more than decor for a wealthier class or as an altarpiece. Modernism wasn't only a shift in aesthetic, it was a reconsideration of what art is and what it can be.

Heimo Zobernig has worked in and against the Modernist tradition since the 1980s. His output includes a wide-range of media—sculpture, painting, installation, architecture, print and interior design, performance, and video—never beholden to a singular technique or material. He makes monochrome paintings, grid paintings, and expressive abstract paintings; figurative sculpture, found object installations, and abstract forms; he makes performative video pieces, books and posters, and instigates expansive architectural interventions. Zobernig produces in a cumulative progression as each new artwork or exhibition is in direct conversation with the previous. His work considers his place as an artist within the broader cultural context, reflects on the legacy of Modernism and the trajectory of art history, and questions the systems that facilitate the exhibition of art.

In *chess painting*, his first solo exhibition at a US institution since 1996, Zobernig returns to the grid as a conceptual and formal device. Functioning as a basic structure underlying visual art and a recurring emblem of Modernism, Zobernig unpacks the grid and its multiple connotations in and beyond the history of art. By way of the exhibition's title, he frames a black-and-white checkered pattern as a chessboard, animating the static logic of the grid by implying gameplay, narrative, and strategy. Hosting the exhibition at MIT, an institution known for its research in science and engineering, further emphasizes the social and cultural associations the game suggests.

Spanning both List Center main galleries, Zobernig creates an environment that amplifies the elements that make visiting an art exhibition a unique constructed experience. Juxtaposing the domestic comforts of a plush blanket against the hard right angles of a bare Hayden Gallery, Zobernig heightens a visitor's attention to the architecture of the white cube setting. The presence of the window takes on greater influence. Walls from the List Center's previous exhibition are laid flat, reconstituting basic art museum infrastructure as a set of curious platforms. Methods of display are exaggerated and upended, architecture and its purpose is flipped and rearranged. Zobernig seamlessly moves between installation and intervention, blurring the line between what constitutes a wall versus a stage, a painting versus a sculpture, and in doing so, what constitutes an artwork. He pushes against the physical and philosophical limitations of the museum, reorienting the elements of an exhibition, shifting the viewers' expectations and experience. Zobernig plays a game he has devised for himself: the unending, multilayered exploration of how art functions in relation to design, architecture, history, institution, and the broader public sphere.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Heimo Zobernig (b 1958, Mauthen, Austria) lives and works in Vienna.

Heimo Zobernig: chess painting is curated by Yuri Stone, Assistant Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center with Diana Baldon, independent curator.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Public Reception

Thursday, October 26, 6–8 PM

Lecture

Thursday, November 2, 6 PM

Joe Scanlan, *Chest Painting: A Talk in the Form of a Misunderstanding*

Graduate Student Talks

Thursday, November 30, 6 PM

Perna Sekhri, Integrated Design and Management and MIT Sloan School

Thursday, December 7, 6 PM

Nicolás Consuegra, MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT)

All programs are free and open to the general public. RSVPs are required.

For more information about these events and to RSVP, visit: listart.mit.edu/events-programs.

   #MITListArts #HeimoZobernig

SUPPORT

Exhibitions at the List Center are made possible with the support of Fotene Demoulas & Tom Coté, Audrey & James Foster, Jane & Neil Pappalardo, Cynthia & John Reed, and Terry & Rick Stone. Additional funding for *Heimo Zobernig: chess painting* was generously provided by Petzel Gallery and Modica Carr Art Advisory.

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SPONSORS

The List Center is pleased to offer special programming for museum supporters including exclusive access to exhibitions, private tours, and collection visits. For more information, or to join, please visit: listart.mit.edu/support.

