

JULIO LE PARC

b. 1928, Mendoza, Argentina  
Lives in Paris, France

“Movement was the ideal solution ... and when I saw that light could offer me a solution and at the same time enable me to continue with my investigations, I concentrated on that theme.”

Julio Le Parc was born in 1928 to a working-class family in Mendoza, Argentina. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires before moving to Paris in 1958. In 1960, along with François Morellet, Francisco Sobrino, Yvaral and others, Le Parc formed GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d' Art Visuel. The artists of GRAV added the element of movement to their work, to alter time and space, and to engage viewers in both a visual and physical way.

While Le Parc is known for creating work that relies heavily upon theory and abstraction, throughout his career he has been concerned with the breakdown of structures that uphold the divisions between art and society. He routinely used questionnaires to solicit information from the public about their thoughts on modern and avant-garde art. On April 19, 1966 GRAV created Une Journée dans la rue (Day in the Street) in Paris. The public project invited passersby to walk and balance on large, uneven blocks of wood, to look through a giant kaleidoscope, and to interact with various projects. In one of the several manifestos produced by GRAV, Le Parc writes of “a transformation role of the artist, from an individual creator into a sort of activator to bring people out their dependence and passivity.”

After GRAV disbanded in 1968, each of the participating artists continued to create work on their own. Le Parc's production ranges from intense color studies to large sculptures and interactive installations, all focused upon the intimate relationship between viewer and object. His paintings and sculptures blur the lines between modernity and the natural world, creating structures that combine both industrial precision and organic forms—plant-like structures that recall stems and growth.

Le Parc's most widely exhibited work deals with light: using reflection, refraction, and shadows to create dazzling arrangements, to produce a “dynamic viewer.” His light installations are made from materials such as wire, mirrors, lenses and boxes. In these works rotating parts complicate the location of the light source, creating a sense of wonder and awe.