

Op Art



Blaze, by Bridget Riley 1962

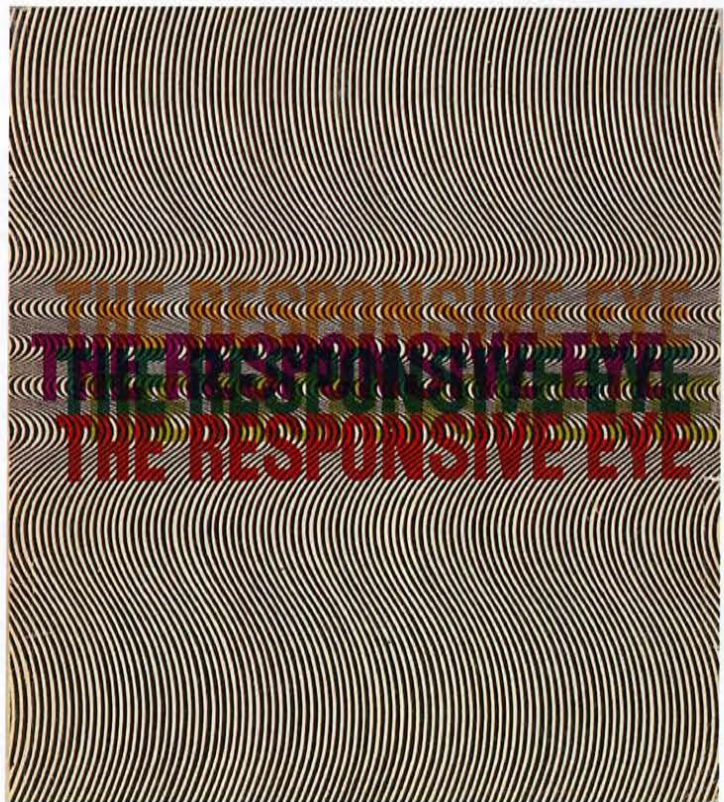
“There was a time when meanings were focused and reality could be fixed; when that sort of belief disappeared, things became uncertain and open to interpretation.”

-- Bridget Riley

Op Art: A modern art movement from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s focused on how the brain and eyes work together to perceive color, light, depth, perspective, size, shape & motion. Op refers to optics, the physical and psychological process of vision. Influenced by geometry and the science

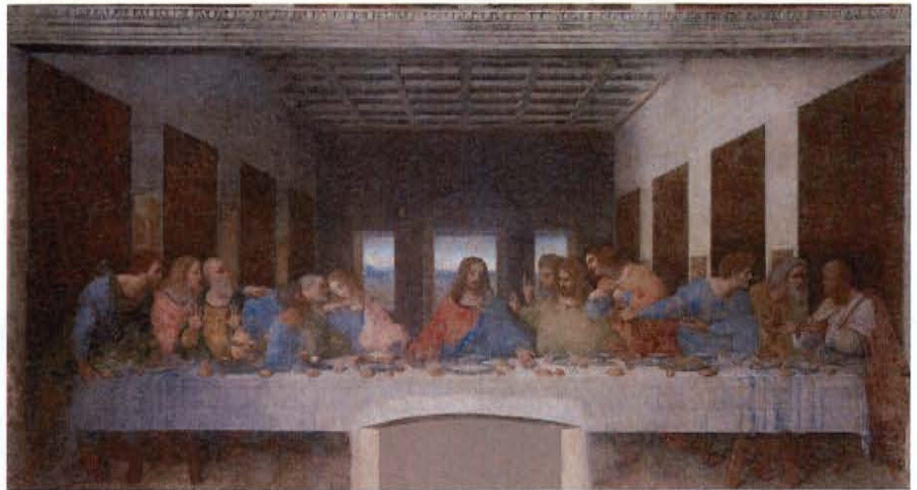
of color theory, Op Art exploited the fallibility of the human eye using optical illusions. Considered gimmicky by mainstream artists, Op Art lost popularity before 1970.

“The Responsive Eye”: A 1965 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) featuring Op Art, including both Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley. This exhibition marked the peak of the Op Art movement.



Exploring optical phenomena through illusion was the basis for most Op Art. Illusion is a tool exploited by artists throughout the centuries. Traditionally, illusion was used to create the look of 3 dimensions on a 2 dimensional surface.

Perspective is a method for consistently creating this 3 dimensional illusion and has been used by artists since its discovery in the Renaissance. However, Op Art was also influenced by preceding Modern Art movements, including Impressionism, which abandoned perspective, and Fauvism, which adopted intense, unrealistic color. Op Art was also liberated by Abstraction, eliminating the need for representational depictions.



Use of Perspective in Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper

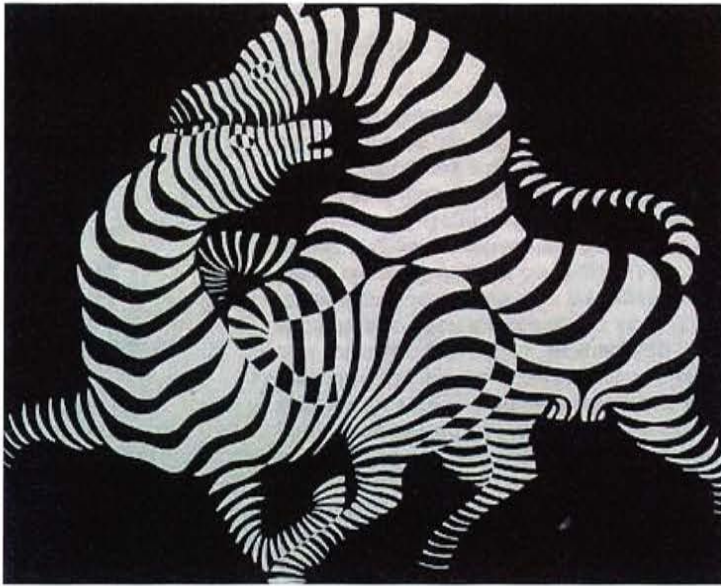
The Kinetic Art movement of the early 20th century led up to the Op Art movement. Kinetic Art

involved 3 dimensional sculptural work that incorporated movement. Sculpture lent itself naturally to movement, but the challenge was to recreate this movement on a 2 dimensional surface, and this challenge was met by Op Art artists.



Virtual movement on the canvas was created by patterns and contrasting colors, used to confuse and excite the eye. Artists exploited visual phenomena in order to achieve their goals, and much of the success of their work was based on visual contrast.

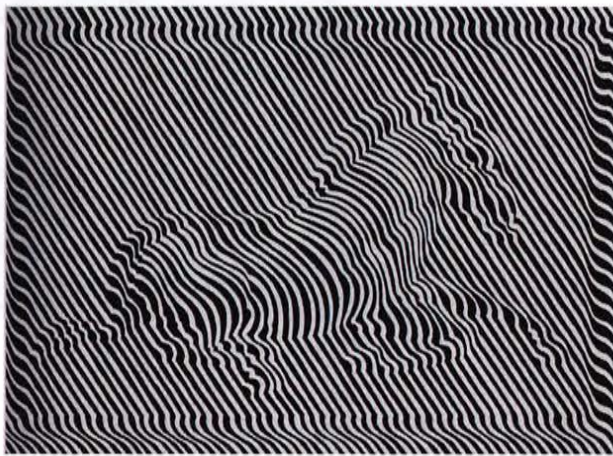
L'empennage, a 1953 kinetic sculpture by Alexander Calder



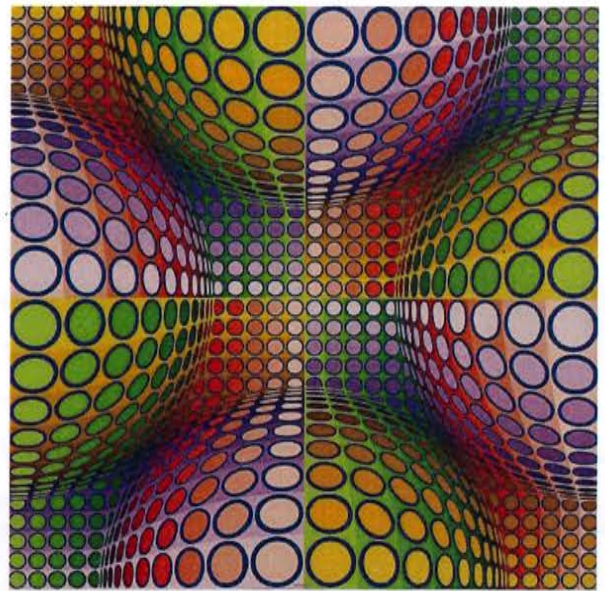
Zebra, by Victor Vasarely 1937

Victor Vasarely: A Hungarian-French artist that lived from 1906-1997.

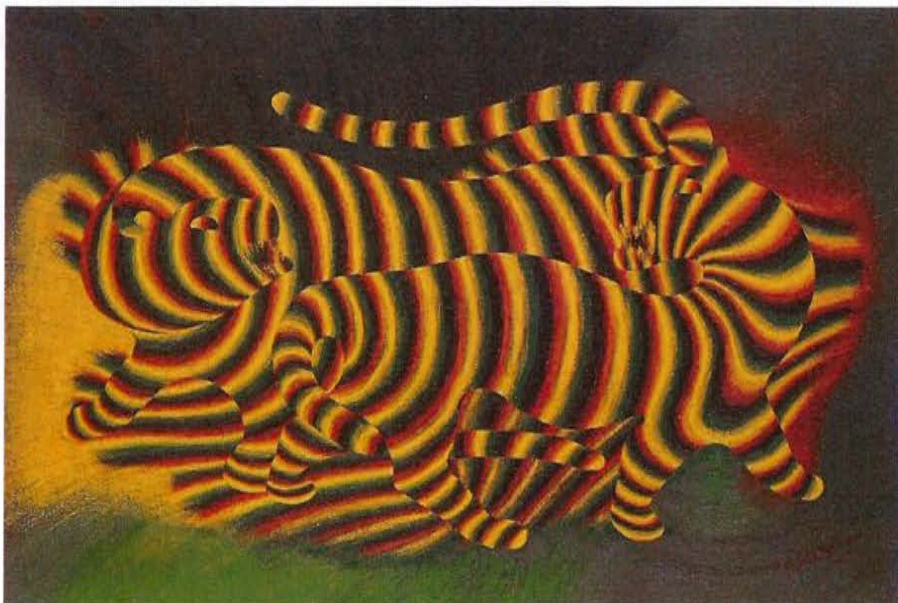
Vasarely founded the Op Art movement. His work, *Zebra*, created in the 1930s, is considered the first Op Art painting.



Zebra, by Victor Vasarely 1950



Vega-Lep, by Victor Vasarely 1970



Every form is a base
for colour, every
colour is the attribute
of a form.

-- Victor Vasarely

Tigres, by Victor Vasarely
1938

Bridget Riley: An English artist that was a major part of the Op Art movement during her early career.

“My work has developed on the basis of empirical analyses and syntheses, and I have always believed that perception is the medium through which states of being are directly experienced.”

-- Bridget Riley



Fragment 1, by Bridget Riley 1965



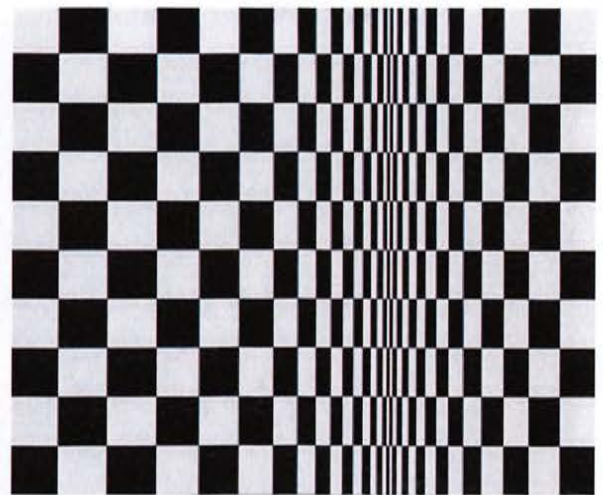
Fragment 5, by Bridget Riley 1965



Fragment 3, by Bridget Riley 1965



Fragment 2, by Bridget Riley 1965



Movement in Squares, by Bridget Riley 1961

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