

UPSTREAM
GALLERY

FROM ZERO
TO 2018

14.04-
19.05.2018

GROUP
EXHIBITION

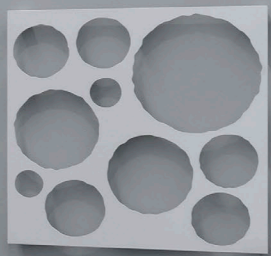
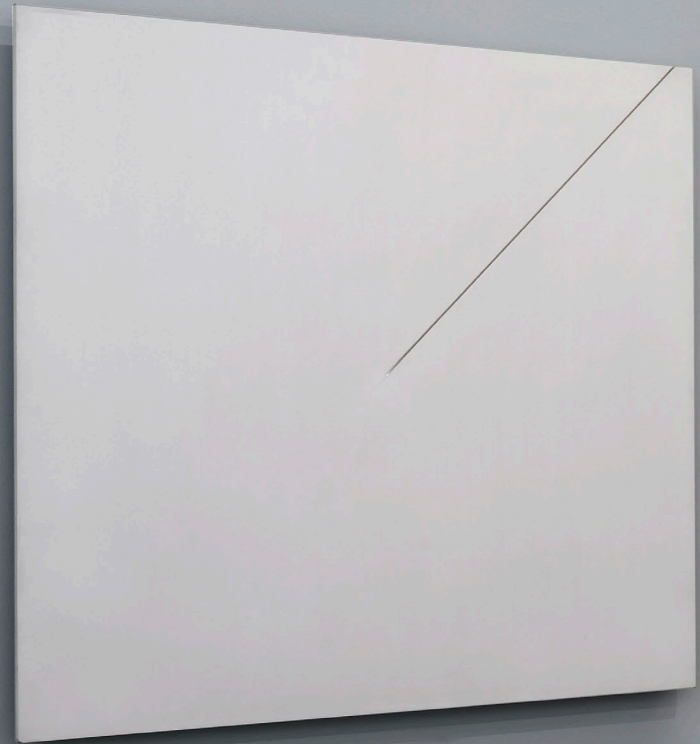
Ad Dekkers, Constant Dullaart,
herman de vries, Jan Robert Leegte,
Jan Schoonhoven, Marc Bijl and
Rafaël Rozendaal

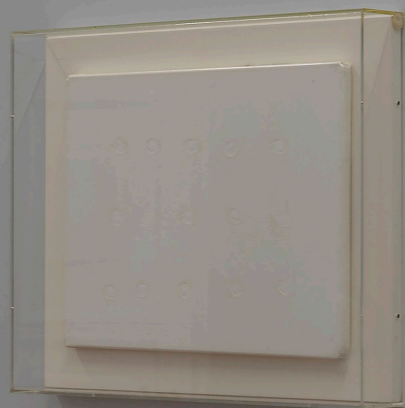


Upstream Gallery proudly presents [*From ZERO to 2018*](#), a group exhibition with work by Ad Dekkers, Constant Dullaart, herman de vries, Jan Robert Leegte, Jan Schoonhoven, Marc Bijl, and Rafaël Rozendaal. The exhibition brings together an extraordinary selection of works by some of the most important Dutch artists of the late 20th century, who stood at the forefront of the international ZERO movement and of geometric abstraction in the 1960s. They are combined with works by four contemporary artists, that not only show stylistic similarities to the distinctively white works from half a century earlier, but also a shared appetite for radical new ways to make art.

ZERO, coined by Heinz Mack and Otto Piene in the late 1950s, marked the start of an international art movement that set out to break free from the previous decade subjugated by war and instead to develop a new, optimistic future for art. The Nul-group, the Dutch equivalent of ZERO, was established not long after by Armando, Jan Hendrikse, Henk Peeters, Jan Schoonhoven and herman de vries. While abstract expressionism was still leading, the artists connected with the ZERO movement sought ways to reduce both their artistic forms and subjective expression, to explore the most essential and objective forms, and to concentrate and repeat. The movement is furthermore characterised by experiments with the most innovative and unconventional materials and media. Although this resulted in a wide range of new art, the movement has become most iconic for the myriad of white monochromatic works.

Constant Dullaart, Jan Robert Leegte, Marc Bijl, and Rafaël Rozendaal have each made essential contributions to the current developments in contemporary art, with a particular focus on the developments in the field of digital art. Their works manifest both online and off, as they continue to investigate the urgency of producing physical objects. The subsequent works are often characterized by a hybrid nature, showing close resemblance to their digital work, or making use of materials that are connected to the digital realm. Each time, they show a reinvention of their artistic practice and continue to push contemporary art to the next level.







Ad Dekkers

In the early 1960s, **Ad Dekkers** (1938-1974) became known for his thorough investigation into the plane, the shape and the line. Dekkers most often started his works with a circle, square or triangle, connecting his work to pre-war artists such as Piet Mondriaan, whose view he shared that the most universal concepts could be expressed with the purest possible visual means. From 1965, he started making reliefs in editions, often cast in polyester, but also made in different materials such as wood and aluminium. By painting his reliefs monochrome, and mostly white, the effect of light could be optimally utilized. Additionally, Dekkers greatly reduced the number of compositional elements and accentuated the specific character of each of the geometric basic forms by a single systematic intervention. The different materials used each offered new visual problems and possibilities, which can be seen in the *Relief with 1/2 line* and the *Square converted on the diagonal*.



Ad Dekkers, *Relief met 1/2 lijn*, 1967
painted wood
120 x 120 cm
edition of 3



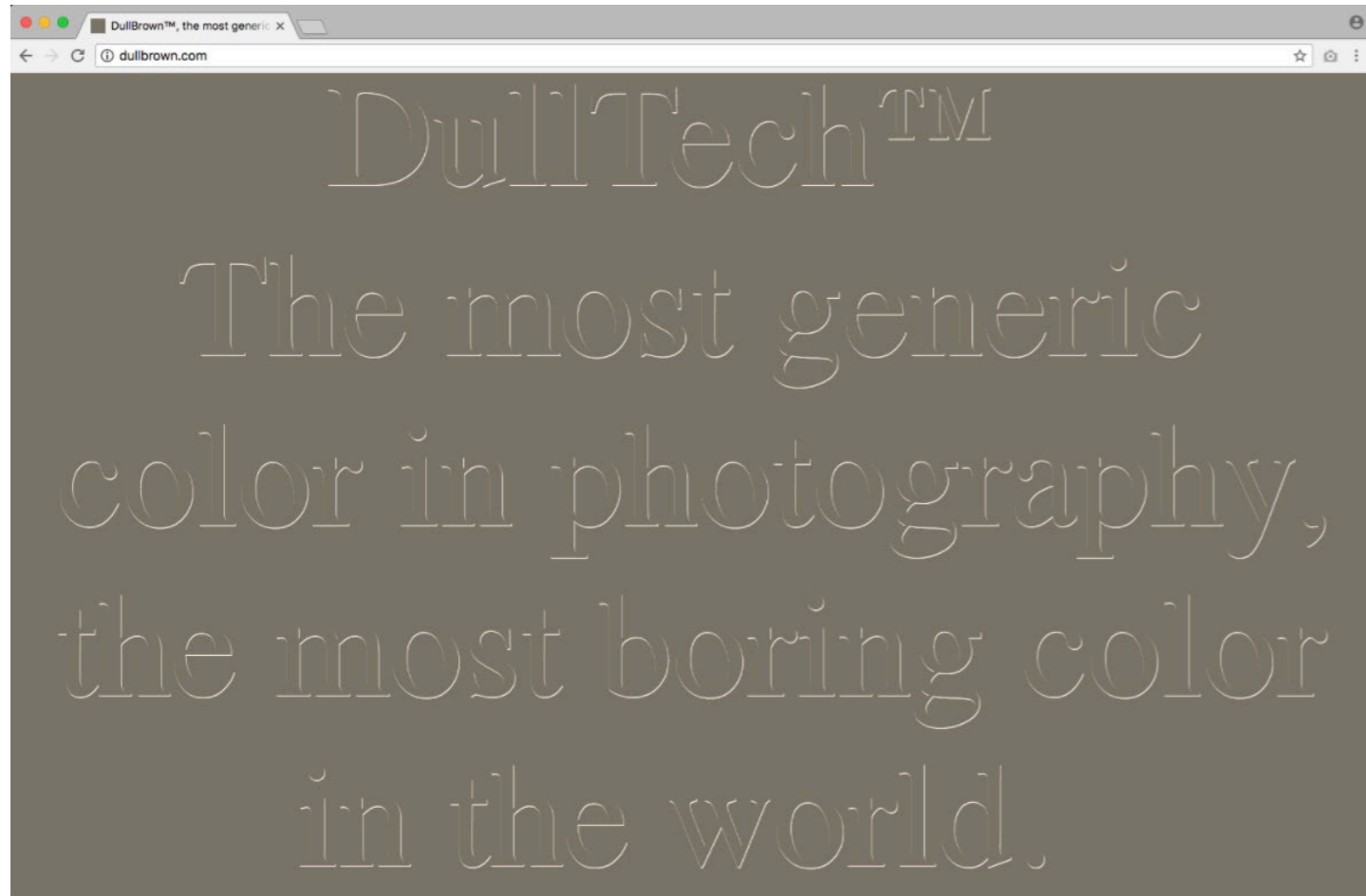
Ad Dekkers, *Vierkant op de diagonaal omgezet*, 1968
anodised aluminium
90 x 90 cm
unique



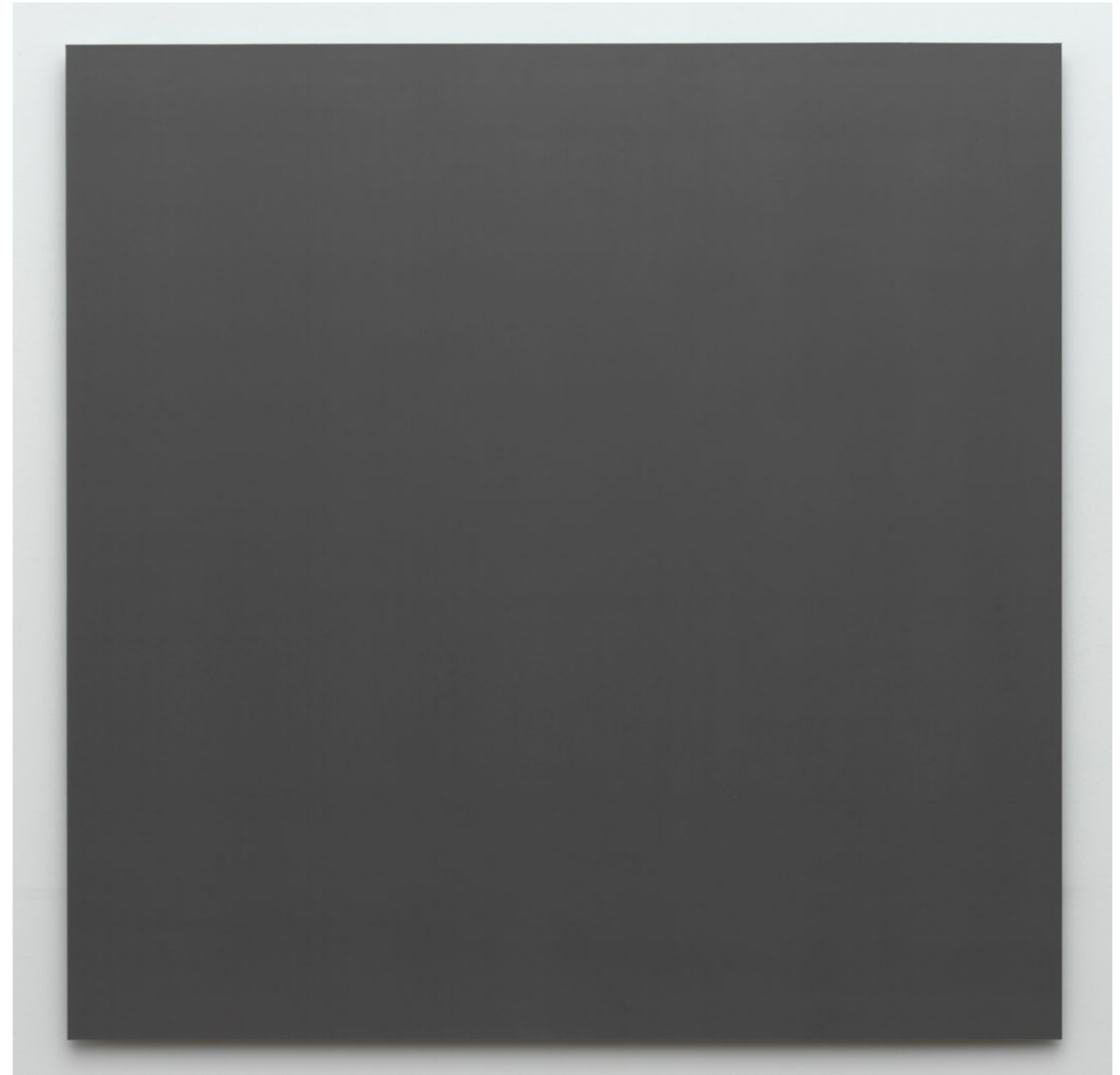
Constant Dullaart

The monochromatic colour of the website *DullBrown™* by **Constant Dullaart** (1979) shows the exact opposite of a blank canvas. *DullBrown™* is the mixing colour of millions of photographs combined, the most generic colour in photography. *DullBrown™* is based on the analysis of the classic benchmarking dataset Imagenet, a large visual database designed for use in visual object recognition software research. Within the machine learning interpretation of images, the most generic colour found in the analysed images is removed to identify unique qualifiers in a single image, and to determine what sets out the image from the rest of the images within the dataset.

The white and gold *PVA Compositions* show a strong visual connection to the serial and repetitive structures of their historical counterparts. The compositions are however based on army formations, and constitute a physical extension of a project in which Dullaart created a 'fake' army to stand up in the war against the current social media revolution and the fake validation systems in journalism based on follower counts. The SIM cards are used by companies offering PVAs (Phone Verified Accounts) as a service to create multiple user accounts for social media profiles, acting as passports to new identities. With this series of works, Dullaart points to the implications of the current attention economy, based on audience as the ultimate commodity.



Constant Dullaart, [DullBrown™](#), 2018
website



Constant Dullaart, [DullBrown™](#), 2018
photo on dibond
100 x 100 cm





Constant Dullaart, PVA Composition (Three Wifi), 2018
forex, aluminium, SIM cards
117 x 182 cm

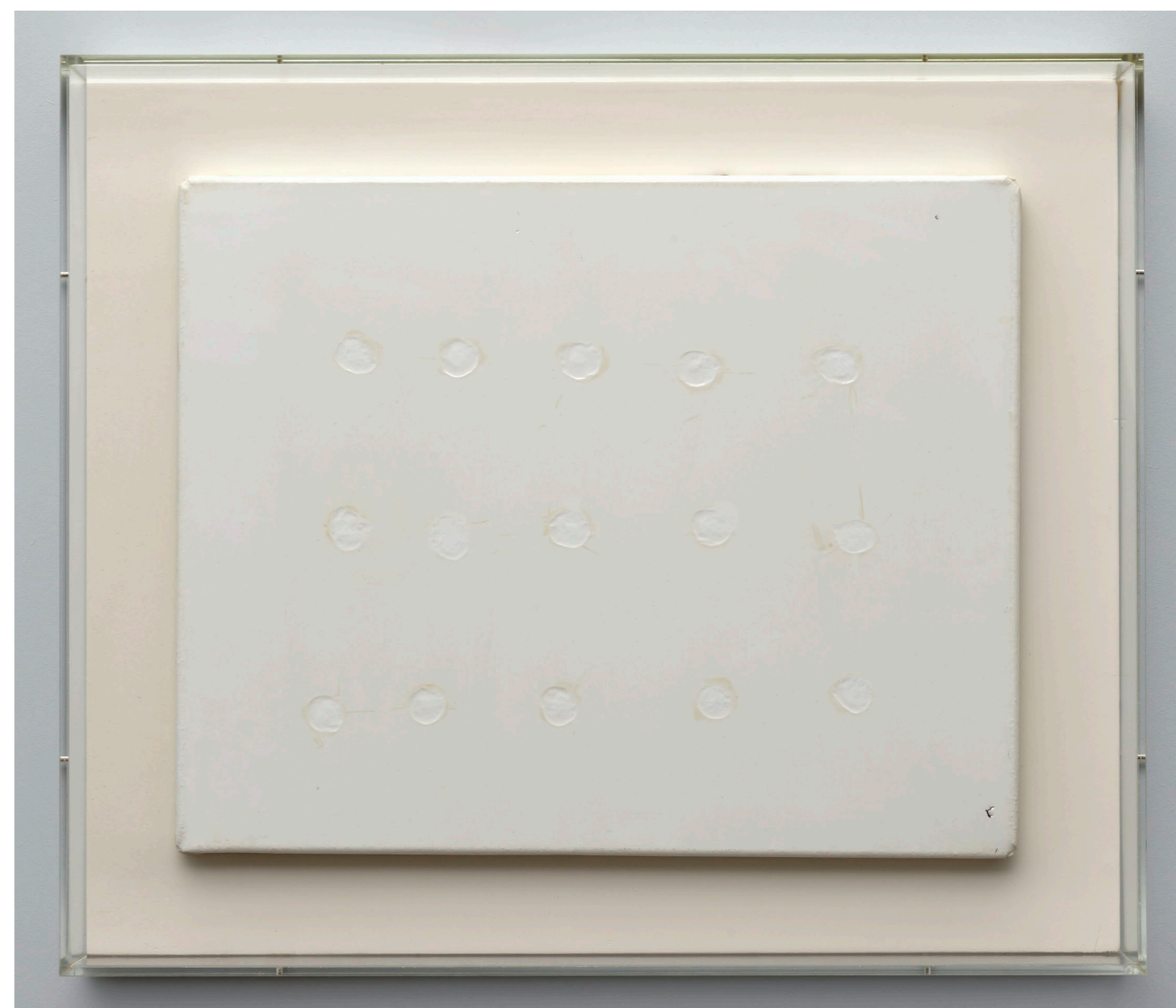
herman de vries

From the end of the 1950s, **herman de vries** (1931) started to make monochrome, mostly white, paintings, collages and beam-shaped structures in which most often either the structure or the texture was the most important factor. For de vries (who spells his name without capitals in order to avoid hierarchy), the white paintings on a white background signify an object that has been stripped of properties, and loaded with possibilities. The works provide a contemplation of emptiness, of uselessness, and of the freedom that everything is possible. In 1961, de vries experimented with works that turn the repetition of an element or an action into a theme, creating what he would call 'homogeneous structures'. Grids, logical orders and serial constellations started to emerge from the blank white. These works would become the foundation of an extensive body of work that was later dubbed 'random objectivations', for which he would set predetermined conditions for each work, for example that all elements must be round or square, or of equal or different size, after which the location of the elements is determined based on tables from the publication by Fisher and Yates 'Statistical Tables for Biological, Agricultural and Medical Research', which had been statistically tested for their actual coincidence.





herman de vries, *untitled (reflection picture)*, 1961
sand, hemp, glass beads on plastic
50 x 60 cm

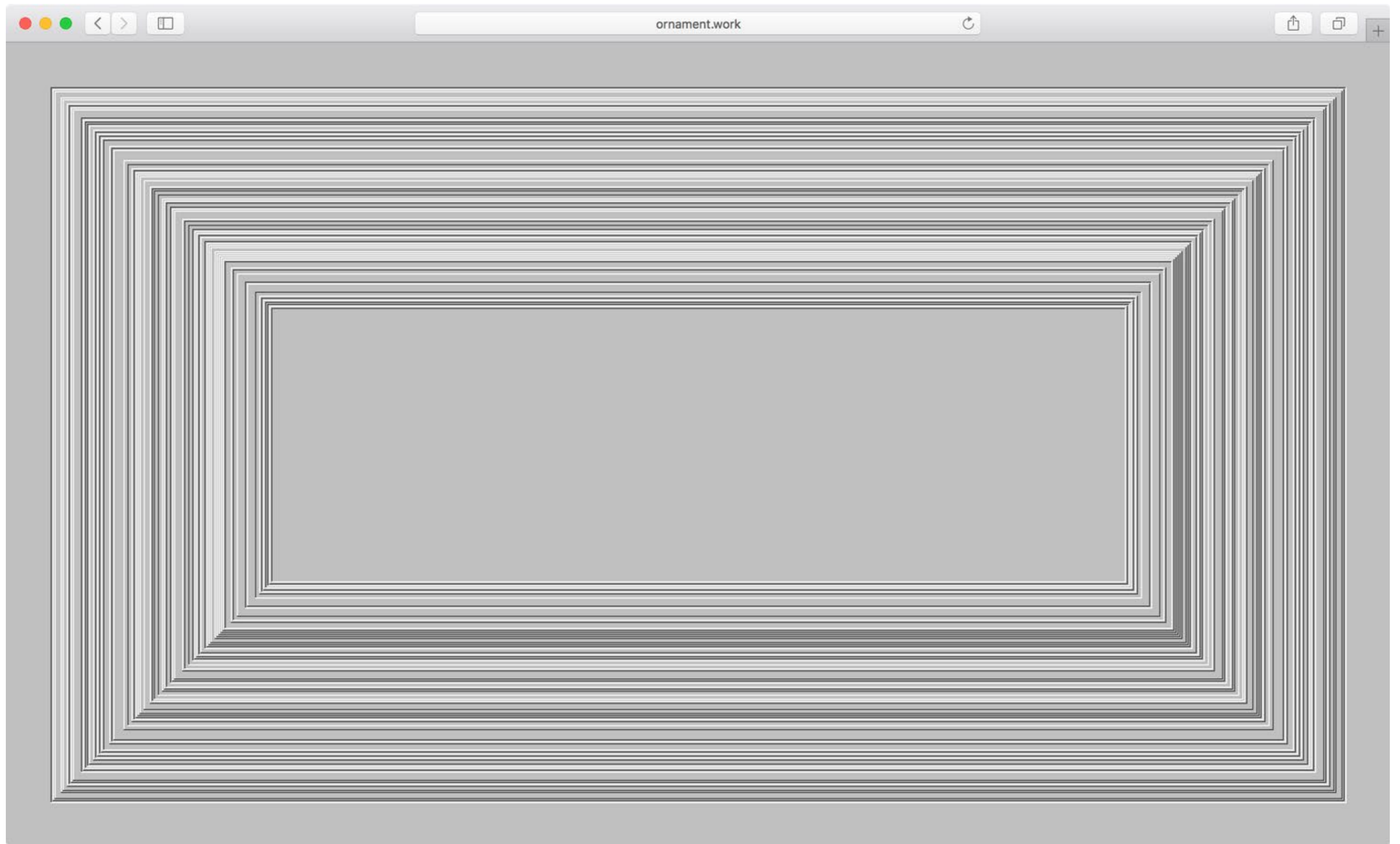


herman de vries, *untitled (contractions)*, 1961
glue, plastic
41 x 51 cm



Jan Robert Leegte

Being among the first artists who were involved in the 90s net art movement, **Jan Robert Leegte** (1973) was challenged from the perspective of a sculptor by the new materiality that was provided by the Internet. By the continual and random alternation of black and white lines, his website *Ornament* displays an ever changing illusion of three-dimensionality, of light and shadow, and of sculptural materiality. A long running theme within his body of work is based on the relationship between the trompe l'oeil effect of interface designs and the (architectural) ornament. In 2006, Leegte wrote the artist statement 'The Silent Ornamental Revolution', set out to explore the frontiers of sculptural experience and to reinstate the ornament as romantic protagonist. Over the years, Leegte developed a network of expressions within the theme that made use of the ornament code, often applied in site-specific projections including one at Upstream Gallery in 2016. With the ornament now operating as website and outside the spatial context, it has been given the autonomy and the elements of the 'sublime' that Leegte envisioned in his manifesto.

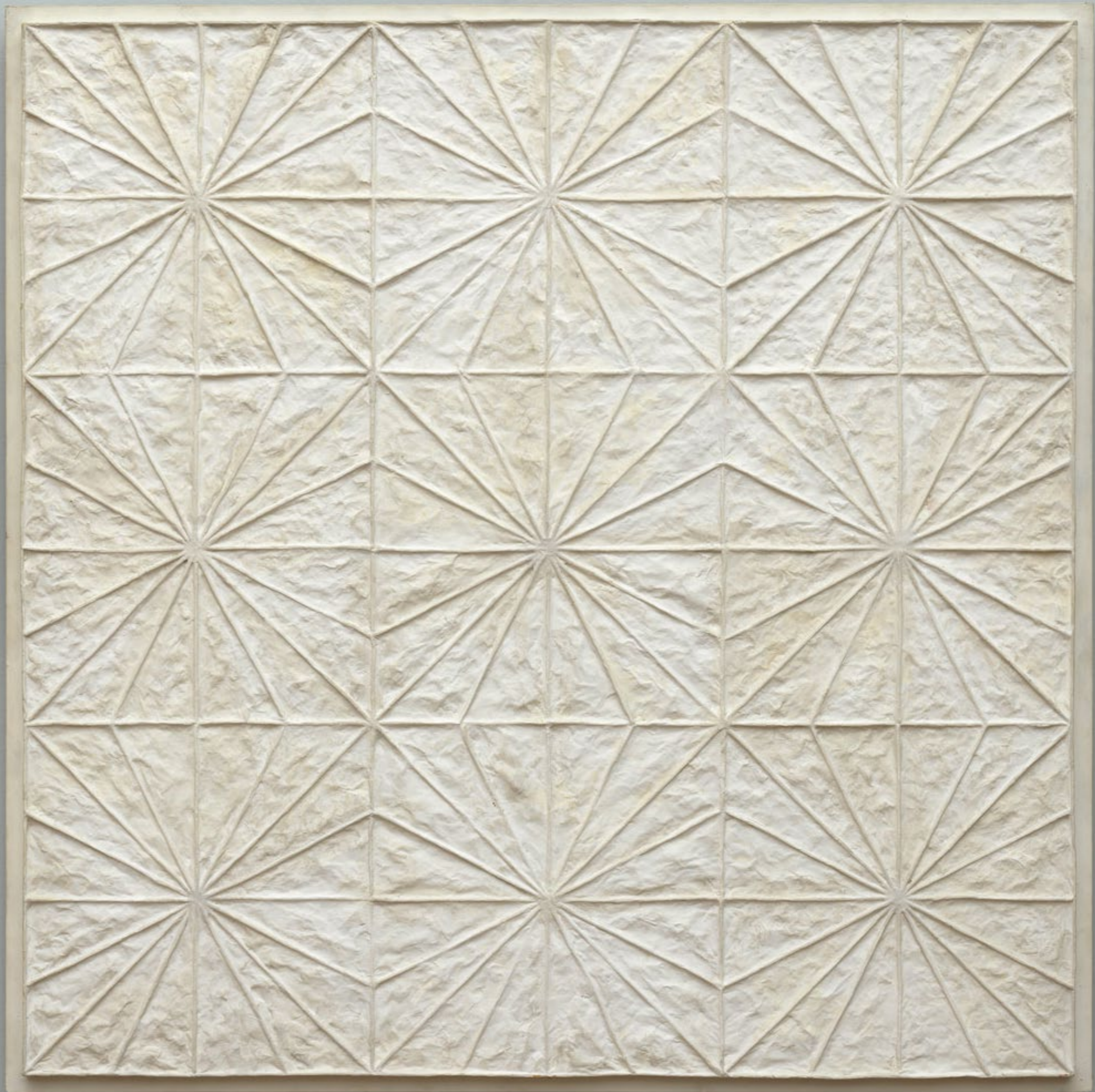


Jan Robert Leegte, [Ornament.work](#), 2018
website

Jan Schoonhoven

Jan Schoonhoven (1914-1994) is widely known for his extensive and systematic investigations into light, form, and volume through both his sculptural wall reliefs and works on paper. While the ZERO movement was no longer active in the second half of the 1960s, Schoonhoven persisted in making his distinctive monochromatic reliefs. From 1966 on, Schoonhoven supplemented the prototypical quadratic shape, as seen in the relief *R72-5*, with new motifs such as sloping inner surfaces, diagonal lines and star shapes, of which the large wall relief shows a beautiful example. For his works on paper from the 1960s and 1970s, Schoonhoven often aimed for a detailed design of composition similar to his reliefs. During the 1970s, however, his works on paper developed much more freely, as can be seen in the variety of expressive strokes, lines and shadings.





Jan Schoonhoven, *F69-47*, 1969
painted papier mâché on wood
104 x 104 cm



Jan Schoonhoven, *R72-5*, 1972
painted papier mâché on wood
18 x 18 cm



Jan Schoonhoven, *T62-136*, 1962
ink on paper
65,5 x 50,5 cm (framed)



Jan Schoonhoven, *T79-54*, 1979
ink on paper
65,5 x 50,5 cm (framed)



Jan Schoonhoven, *T82-18*, 1982
ink on paper
65,5 x 50,5 cm (framed)



Jan Schoonhoven, *T82-38*, 1982
ink on paper
65,5 x 50,5 cm (framed)



Jan Schoonhoven, *T85-117*, 1985
ink on paper
65,5 x 50,5 cm (framed)



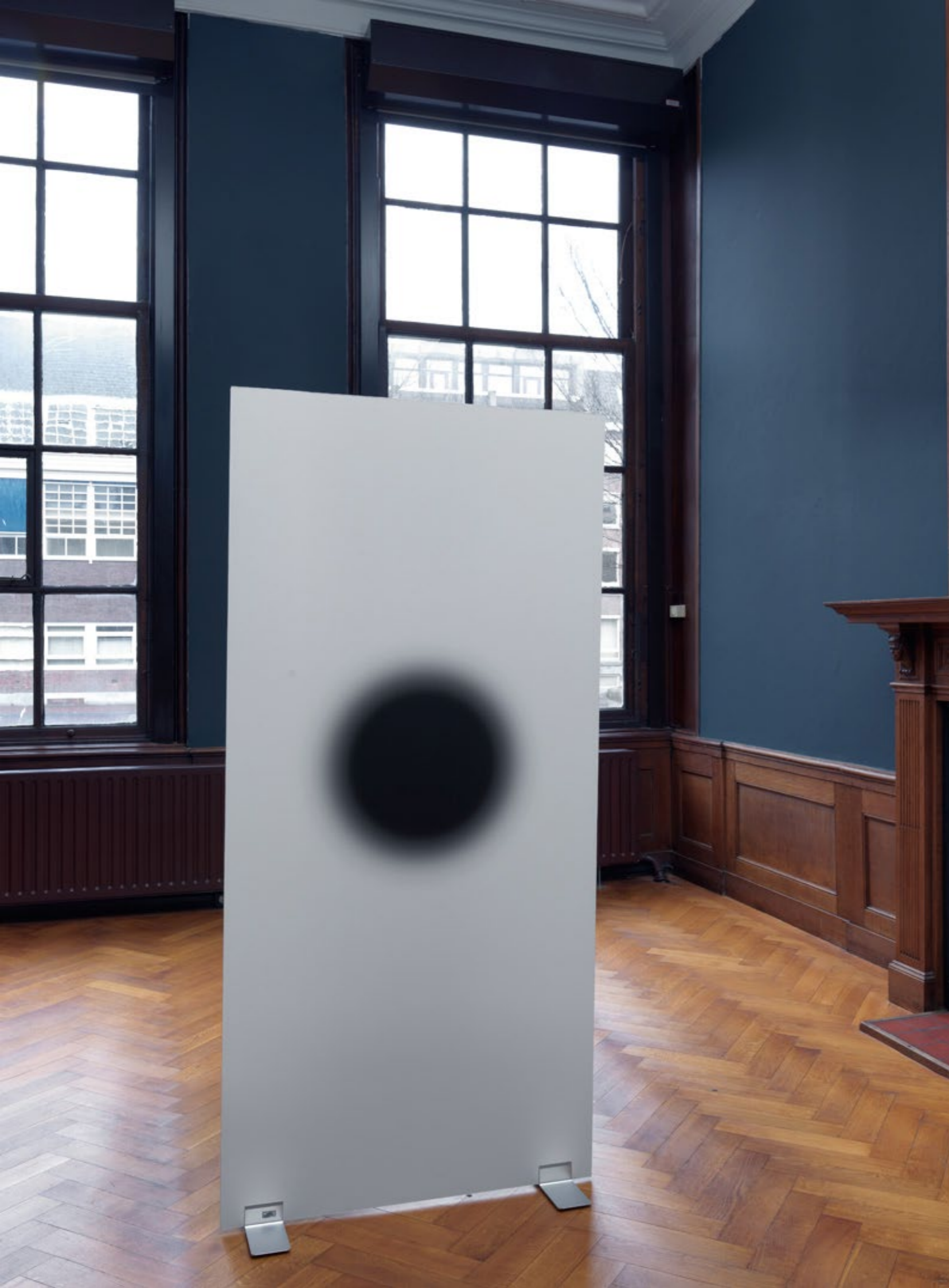




Jan Schoonhoven, *T75-135*, 1975
ink on paper
75,5 x 60,5 cm (framed)

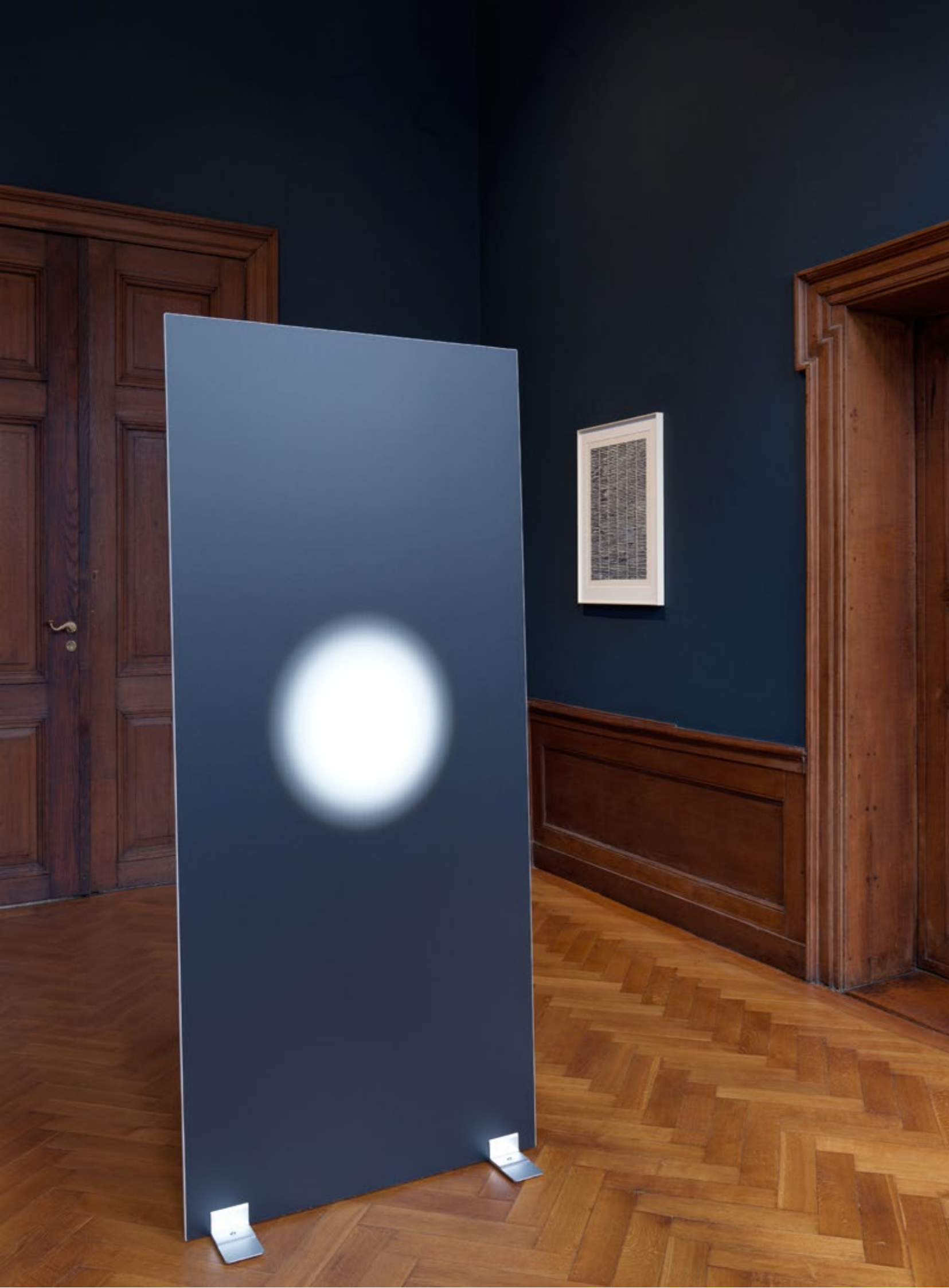


Jan Schoonhoven, *T79-63*, 1979
ink on paper
75,5 x 60,5 cm (framed)



Marc Bijl

Over the past years, **Marc Bijl's** (1970) distinctive gloomy style has given way to bright colours and an often sleek, and industrial finish. His most recent work is more abstract and minimalistic, exemplifying a shift in approach, by which he pares down different perspectives and methodologies to a new essence. His sculpture *Digital Shadow* is based on the image he personally uses as his social media profile picture: a black dot on a white background, printed on an advertising board. Like the artists connected with ZERO who materialised the invisible, Bijl addresses the shadow of actions left behind through IP-addresses and clickstreams. Independent of any artificial image put forward in real life, traces of any dissident behaviour are most often ignorantly left behind.



Marc Bijl, *Digital Shadow*, 2018
print on forex, aluminium base
185 x 85 cm

Rafaël Rozendaal

Rafaël Rozendaal (1980) has created websites as artworks since 2001. These domain based works reach more than 50 million visitors per year. While these works exist primarily online, his artistic practice also comprises a range of physical works that explore the area between the moving image and the still. This has for instance resulted in a large body of work that makes use of the lenticular technique, providing a way to create a moving image without the use of electricity. In close collaboration with the TextielMuseum Tilburg, Rozendaal has now developed a new weaving structure that is based on this same principle. Although the tapestry consists of only two opposing colours, the physical irregularity of the material creates a very lively and organic image.

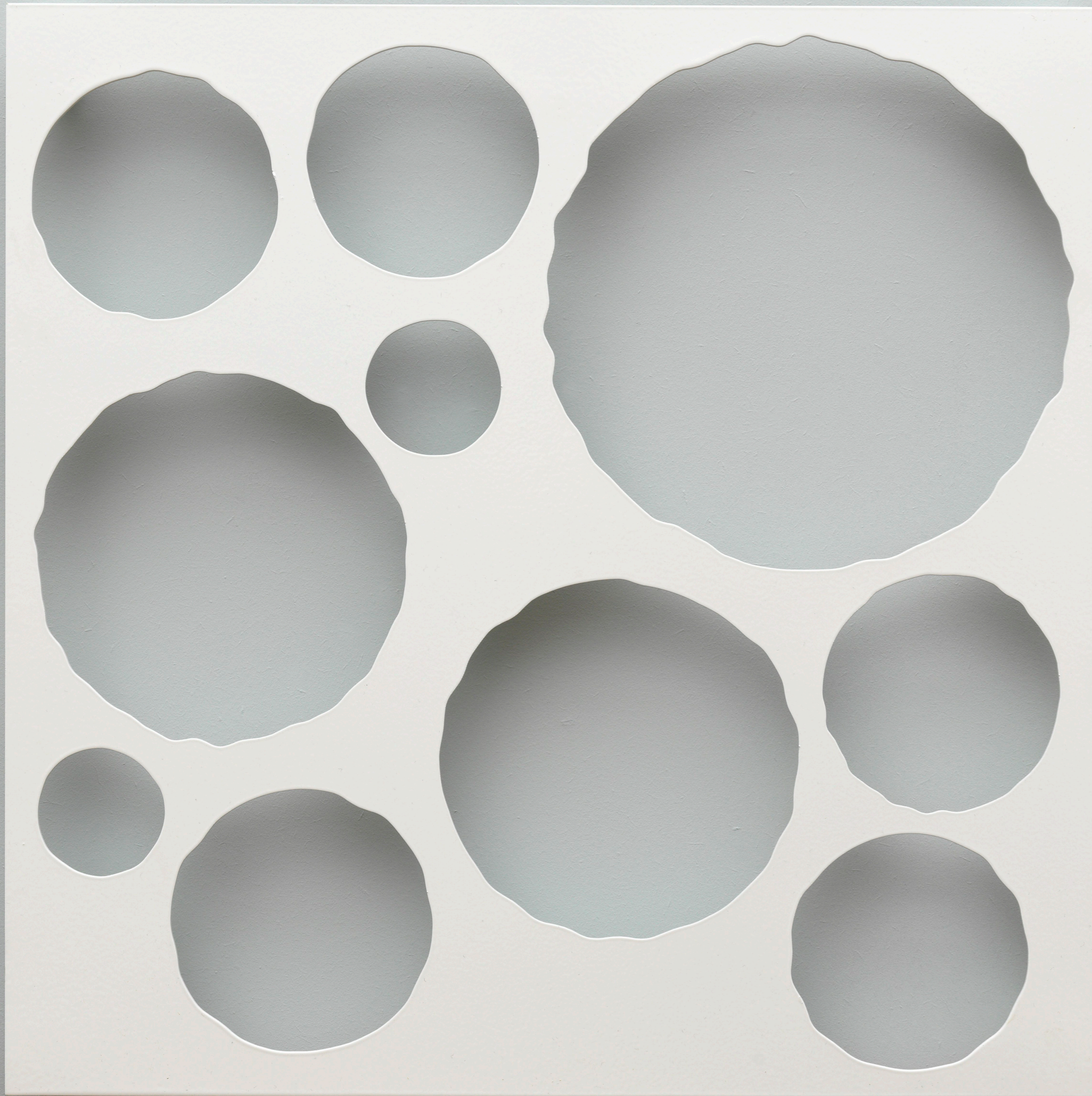
The series of *Shadow Objects* consists of stainless steel plate with laser cut geometric shapes. For these works, an industrial algorithm is used to calculate the composition that delivers the most efficient use of materials. Like the works based on the lenticular technique, the composition is further influenced by its illumination and the point of view. With an emphasis on the dynamic potential of shading, the series bears a close resemblance to the traditions of ZERO, translated into the twenty-first century.



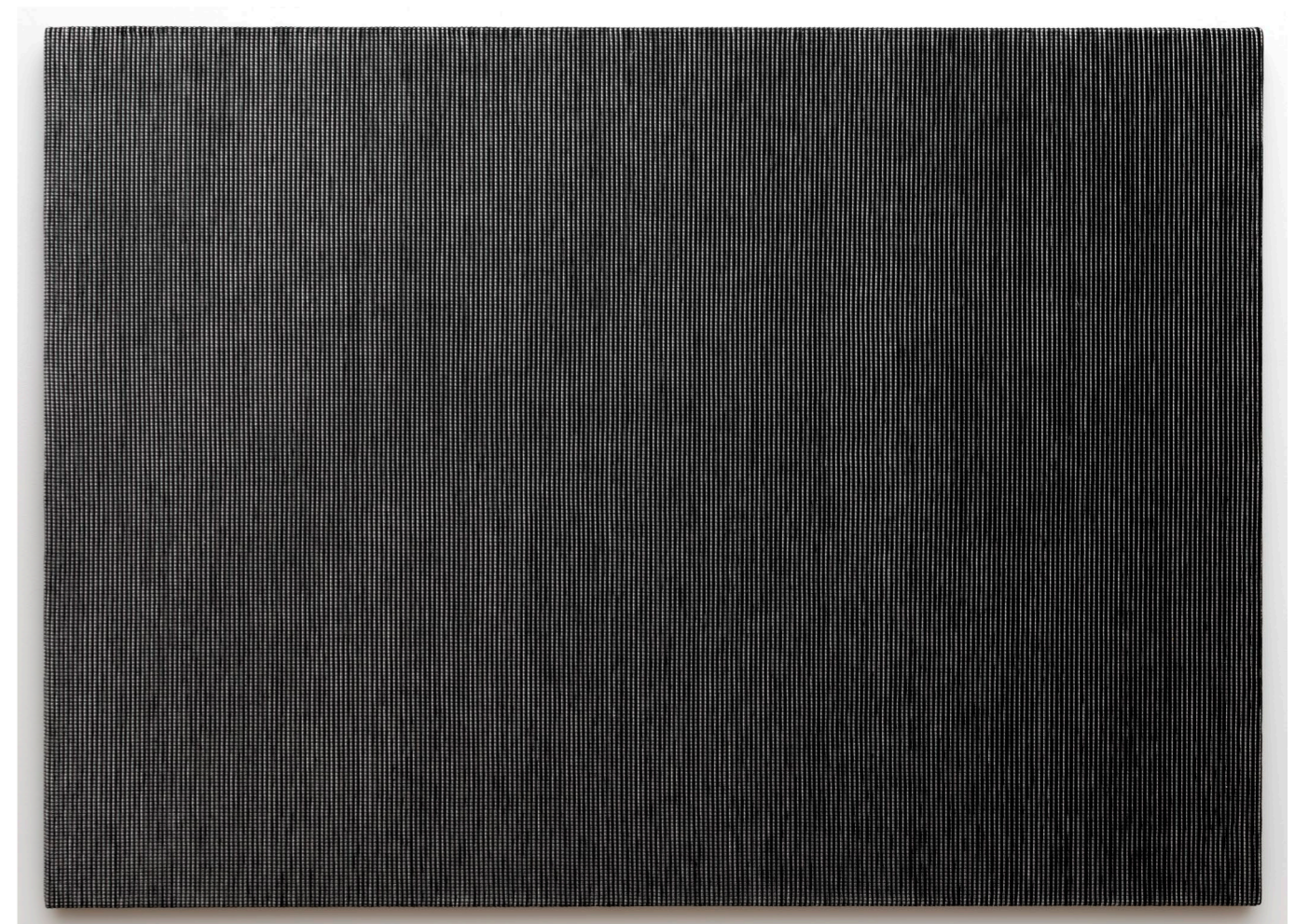




Rafaël Rozendaal, [Mechanical Water .com](http://MechanicalWater.com), 2012
website



Rafaël Rozendaal, *Shadow Object 16 07 02*, 2016
stainless steel
50 x 50 cm



Rafaël Rozendaal, *Near Next 18 01 01*, 2018
linen
144 x 200 cm

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