



CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ

CHROMA

FEB. 21 - AUG. 20, 2017

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Cover Image: **Carlos Cruz-Diez**, *Chromosaturation*, 1965/2017, site-specific installation

About the Exhibition

SCAD Museum of Art presents *Chroma*, an exhibition by deFINE ART honoree Carlos Cruz-Diez, known for his groundbreaking color theory philosophies developed and refined over seven decades. Cruz-Diez's experimental and multidisciplinary practice is featured in several public, site-specific installations and new work.

"Chroma," from the Latinized form of the Greek "khroma" (referring to the color and quality of skin), evolved to indicate the quality or intensity of a hue by 1889. Like this word, the titular exhibition considers Cruz-Diez's fundamental concerns regarding the transformative possibility that color is diachronic and unstable, dependent on individual perception, space and context. Cruz-Diez's works are — aside from their aesthetic uniqueness — provocations completed by the viewers' movement and engagement in the artist's chromatic environments, where objects become mere vehicles for delivering a profound viewer experience. In the words of Cruz-Diez himself: "The world of color is the world of emotion."

The artist has developed a rich terminology and language of color theory that is as important as the work itself. This language addresses not only his artistic interventions, but also defines chromatic phenomena to unlock an understanding of color as unstable, dynamic, and unique, evolving in and with a space. Terms such as "Couleur Additive," "Physichromie," "Induction Chromatique," "Chromointerférence," "Transchromie," "Chromosaturation," and "Couleur à l'espace" are used to describe the results of Cruz-Diez's exhaustive research into four chromatic conditions: subtractive, additive, inductive and reflected color.

Inside the museum, the artist presents a concise selection of new works, specifically conceived for the SCAD Museum of Art, to provide an overview of his main conceptual concerns. Offering a range of

works and the immersive environment *Environnement Chromointerférent*, the exhibition also includes three new animated documentaries covering the artist's life and work, produced by the Cruz-Diez Art Foundation. The Foundation's educational workshops are directly integrated in an exhibition to accompany each of Cruz-Diez's investigations and to explain the phenomena in the artworks.

A series of outdoor interventions extends the dialogue from the inside of the museum to the outside public space, a strategy common in Cruz-Diez's practice. Through extensive public projects previously realized in universities, stadiums, public parks and more, the artist invites viewers to integrate an experience of color in their daily routines. Additionally, these public gestures encourage the public to reformulate its relationship to the urban landscape as a space that can be inhabited both critically and joyfully. A large, altered shipping container placed in the museum's Alex Townsend Memorial Courtyard holds *Chromosaturation*, a series of connecting color chambers that provides the intangible experience of pure color. A series of crosswalk paintings — a Cruz-Diez trademark — is installed near the museum.

All works for *Chroma* were produced by Artacruz, an atelier for artists dedicated to the production of contemporary art. Based in Panama City, Panama, and founded in 2009, Artacruz offers artists the knowledge and experience gathered by Cruz-Diez and his family over nearly a century. The Cruz-Diez Art Foundation, founded in Houston, Texas, in 2005, is a nonprofit organization committed to preserving, promoting and transmitting the artistic and conceptual legacy of Carlos Cruz-Diez.

The exhibition is organized by Storm Janse van Rensburg, SCAD head curator of exhibitions, and SCAD alumna Raquel Serebrenik Sultan (B.F.A., art history, 2015).



About the Artist

French-Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1923, and has lived and worked in Paris since 1960. Along with Jesús Rafael Soto and Alejandro Otero, Cruz-Diez is considered one of Venezuela's modernist masters, and, moreover, he is a major international protagonist in the field of kinetic and op art, a movement that encourages "an awareness of the instability of reality." His body of work has established him

as one of the key 20th-century thinkers in the realm of color. Cruz-Diez's research has contributed to a new way of understanding color phenomena in art, greatly expanding its perceptual universe. In his works, Cruz-Diez shows that through interaction with the viewer, color becomes an autonomous, evolving reality, devoid of anecdotes, which develops in real time and space.

About the Curriculum Guide

SCAD curriculum guides provide learning opportunities that fulfill the requirements of educational standards and are designed for use within the museum's exhibition spaces and in classrooms. The guides enhance understanding of art and design through investigations that reveal relevant personal, historical and cultural connections while promoting cross-disciplinary links necessary for today's innovative careers.

Recognizing the guides' overall design excellence and ingenuity, the American Alliance of Museums' Museum Publications Design Competition twice awarded SCAD curriculum guides first place in the education category, in 2015 and 2016.

This Carlos Cruz-Diez guide was created in collaboration with the Cruz-Diez Art Foundation. In the guide, students interact with chromatic events generated by the artist's work and explore expressive qualities while observing and deciphering behaviors of light and color. The investigative and analytical approaches applied in these activities mirror Cruz-Diez's commitment to observation and inquiry in service to an expanding appreciation of our world.

SCAD would like to give special thanks to the Hodge Foundation for its support of the SCAD Museum of Art's award-winning curriculum guides.

Left: Portrait of Carlos Cruz-Diez

Educational standards are listed on page 10.

Additional learning resources are located in the Curriculum Connections section on pages 10.

Highlighted glossary terms may be found on page 11.

1 Explore human experience through color



“One of the purposes of my art is to expand the scope of human experience, granting it more complexity and subtleness.”

Carlos Cruz-Diez



Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Chromosaturación*, 1965/2017, site-specific installation

Carlos Cruz-Diez's *Chromosaturación* offers a fundamental encounter with color that communicates directly with the viewer. This environment consists of three chambers, each illuminated with a primary **color of light** — one red, one green, and one blue. Visitors move from one color-infused room to the next, passing through a multitude of **hues** as the color of one chamber interacts with the next. As the eye is overloaded in this unusual **monochromatic** environment it gradually starts to cancel the color out. As you stay inside a room, the color will slowly disappear like mist. When you turn around and examine the other chambers, their colors will appear in **saturated**, vivid contrasts.

Chromosaturación promotes the understanding of color as a light-born event, happening in time and space without past or present. Through these continuously evolving **chromatic** events, viewers become participants in a lived experience, fulfilling a core component of Cruz-Diez's artistic objectives. He distinguishes between “open work,” artwork that requires viewers' participation, and “closed work” in which the viewer plays a contemplative role. *Chromosaturación* is an open work, where viewers investigate complete color immersion.

Revisit the quote at the beginning of this activity. What do you think Cruz-Diez means by “expand the scope of human experience?”

Identify the sensations produced by the Chromosaturation environment. Observe the complexities and **subtleties** of your experience. What **perceptual** and **aesthetic** responses were generated by your immersion in color?

Perceptual responses:

Aesthetic responses:

Consider your perceptual and aesthetic responses and combine your observations into a short essay that describes how Chromosaturation influences perception of color both within its specialized environment and in the outside world.

2 Observe and analyze color events

➤ “I wanted to find a way to use color so that it was not a painted testimony but a reality that expressed its own condition – that is, the reality of light.”

Carlos Cruz-Diez



Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Physichromie SCAD*, 2017, clear coated UV pigment on lacquered aluminum, PVC

Light does not merely reveal our world, it colors it. Objects reflect light of particular wavelengths, which we see as color. As light exists independently of any object, so does color — it is an **ephemeral** experience created by light and fluctuating **ambient** conditions.

Cruz-Diez often tells the story of an **epiphany** he had with color when he was commissioned to design the cover of a symphony program. The interior of the cover was red, and the facing page was white. He detected a faint red tinge on the white page, which increased or diminished as he slowly closed and opened the red cover. Upon witnessing this instance of radiating color, Cruz-Diez envisioned a method for creating color in space. He cut thin strips of cardboard and painted them — one side red, the other side white, another side green. By organizing these strips in parallel vertical sequences he created light traps that radiated colors. He called it a *Physichromie*, or “physical color,” which sparked an evolving series of the same name, continually inspired by the artist’s ongoing research, experiments and changes in both materials and technology. Like their original predecessor, today’s physichromies project light into space, creating dynamic color events that alter according to levels of light, the observer’s angle of view and distance from the work.

*Experiment with the inside front cover of this guide, replicating Cruz-Diez’s initial discovery. Expand your investigation by seeking color events in Cruz-Diez’s Chroma exhibition, observing the four distinct color conditions that occur throughout his work: **reflective**, **additive**, **subtractive** and **inductive color**. Note color events that arise as you move within or around a work. Record and analyze your observations in the chart on the facing page.*

color event	title	observation	analysis
reflective	<i>Chromosaturation</i>	<i>The white walls of the environment appear colored.</i>	<i>Red, blue or green light radiates to the walls and bounces, or reflects, off them. This light moves through space toward my eyes so that I perceive the wall as colored.</i>
reflective			
additive			
subtractive			
inductive			

In the book, *Color in Space and Time*, Cruz-Diez says, “As I completed each work I asked myself: What new ideas does this piece propose? ... It is the same process that is used in scientific experiments, in which observation and analysis provide the key to understanding what needs to be done next.”

Expand your analysis of one of the color events listed above. Respond to the question Cruz-Diez posits: What new ideas does the work propose? In the space below, sketch and label plans for a work of art that explores the artistic and expressive potential of your chosen color event. Afterward, write a statement that describes your plans and how your idea utilizes color as light.

Statement:

3 Examine the phenomenology of color

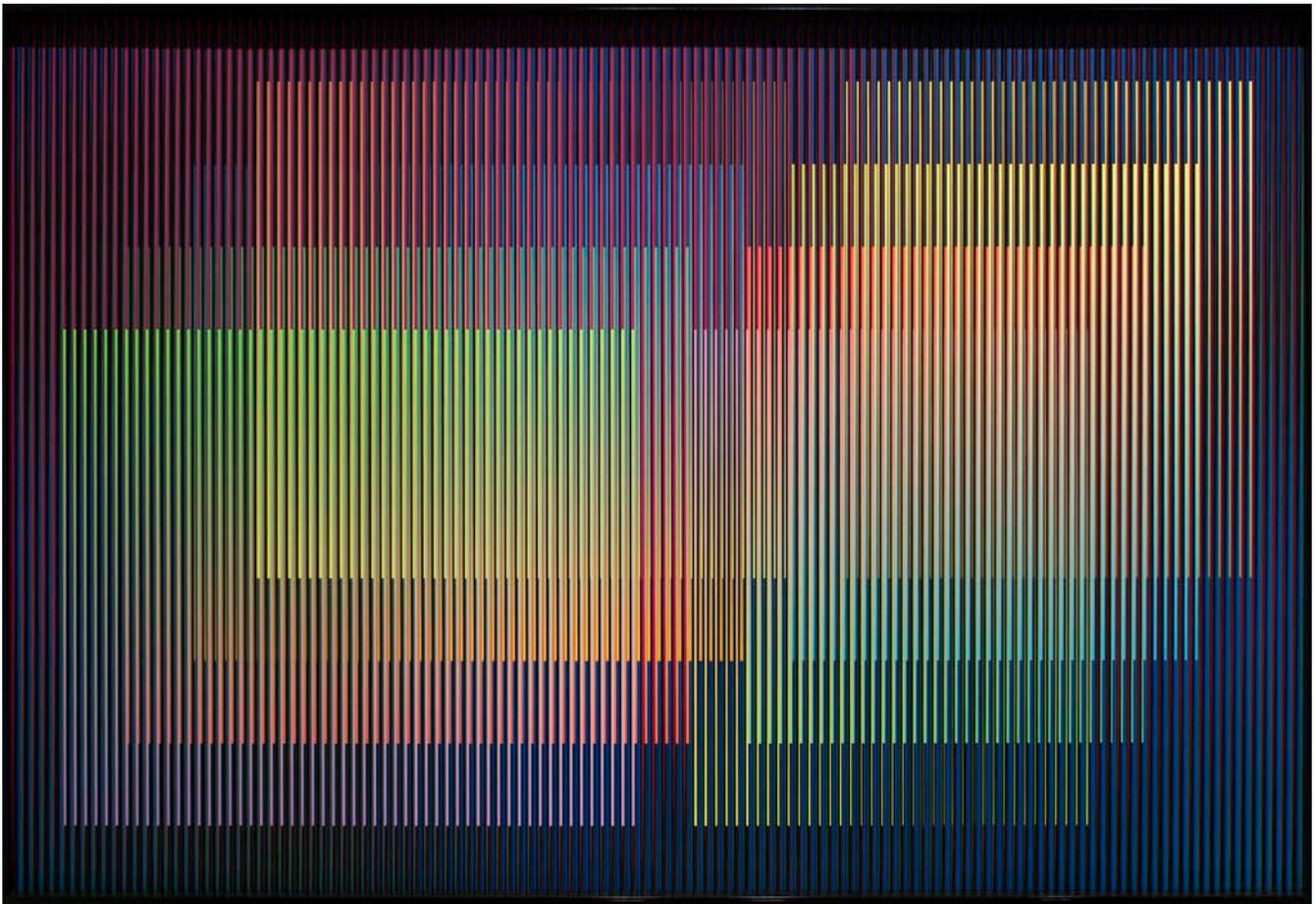


“The perception of color is a phenomenological fact.”

Carlos Cruz-Diez

Phenomenology is a philosophy based on the idea that an observer’s perceptions of phenomena — objects or events - cannot be separated from an individual’s worldview, and are thus experienced and interpreted through **cultural** contexts. By contrast, Cruz-Diez’s art strives to liberate color, to “help it find its own true expression,” free of visual references to personal or historical events. His works are chromatic events, real situations occurring in the present, free from preconceived meanings.

Cruz-Diez allows that “any of these works that create real situations can transmit emotions or **subjective** messages ... As an Artist, one cannot know what feelings one’s work might stir up.” He adds that such “states of mind” are the result of a dialogue, an understanding achieved between the viewer and the chromatic event.



Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Chromointerférence Spatiale SCAD*, 2016, clear-coated UV pigment on lacquered aluminum and elastic cord



EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

National Core Arts Standards – High School

- Creating 2.1** **Anchor:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
HSII: Through experimentation, practice and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.
- Responding 7.1** **Anchor:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.
HSI: Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.
HSII: Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.
- Responding 7.2** **Anchor:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.
HSI: Analyze how one’s understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.
- Connecting 11.1** **Anchor:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.
HSI: Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions and history may influence personal responses to art.



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

All artworks depicted in the guide are presented courtesy of the artist, Artacruz and the Cruz-Diez Art Foundation.

p. 3 About the Artist

Additional Resources **Video** This documentary follows the development of Cruz-Diez’s artistic career from childhood to today. www.vimeo.com/83678882

Website Follow the development of Cruz-Diez’s career through this illustrated, short biography. www.cruzdiezartfoundation.org/carlos-cruz-diez

pp. 4-5 1. Explore human experience through color

Additional Resource **Video** View installations of Cruz-Diez’s work as he speaks about color and our experience of it. www.vimeo.com/157421722

Quote p. 4 Cruz-Diez, Carlos, et al. *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Reflection on Color*. Fundación Juan March, 2009.

pp. 6-7 2. Observe and analyze color events

Additional Resource **Website** Easily explore the variety of Cruz-Diez’s investigations into color through this comprehensive site. www.cruzdiezartfoundation.org/our-collection

Quote p. 6 Ramírez, Mari Carmen, and Héctor Olea. *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Color in Space and Time*. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Cruz-Diez Foundation, 2011.

pp. 8-9 3. Examine the phenomenology of color

Quotes p. 8 Cruz-Diez, Carlos, et al. *Carlos Cruz-Diez: Reflection on Color*. Fundación Juan March, 2009.



GLOSSARY

additive color *n.* A color event created by mixing different colors of light

aesthetic *adj.* Concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty

ambient *adj.* Relating to conditions of the surrounding environment

chromatic *adj.* Relating to phenomena or sensations produced by color

colors of light *n.* The primary colors of light are red, green and blue, and are known by the acronym RGB. When mixed together they produce white light. Secondary colors of light are cyan (green + blue), yellow (red + green), magenta (red + blue), and black (red + green + blue). Secondary colors are known by the acronym CYMK. Prisms and rainbows reveal how white light is composed of RGB and CYMK colors. The display screens of televisions, computers and mobile phones use tiny dots of RGB light to create a complete spectrum for their visual effects.

cultural *adj.* Relating to the ideas, customs, values and social behaviors that characterize a society

ephemeral *adj.* Lasting for a brief time; fleeting, short-lived

epiphany *n.* A sudden, revealing discovery or realization

hue *n.* A pure color, without added black or white

inductive color *n.* A color event related to the phenomenon of “after image.” For example, after gazing at a red colored plane for a certain length of time, the eye retains, even after it looks away, an image of the plane in green, which is the induced color or complementary color.

monochromatic *adj.* Consisting of one color or hue

perceptual *adj.* Relating to awareness of something through the senses

reflective color *n.* A color event created when rays of light strike a surface and bounce back, resulting in direct or diffuse light depending upon levels of light, the observer’s angle of view and distance from the event

saturated *adj.* With reference to color, the intensity or purity of a hue

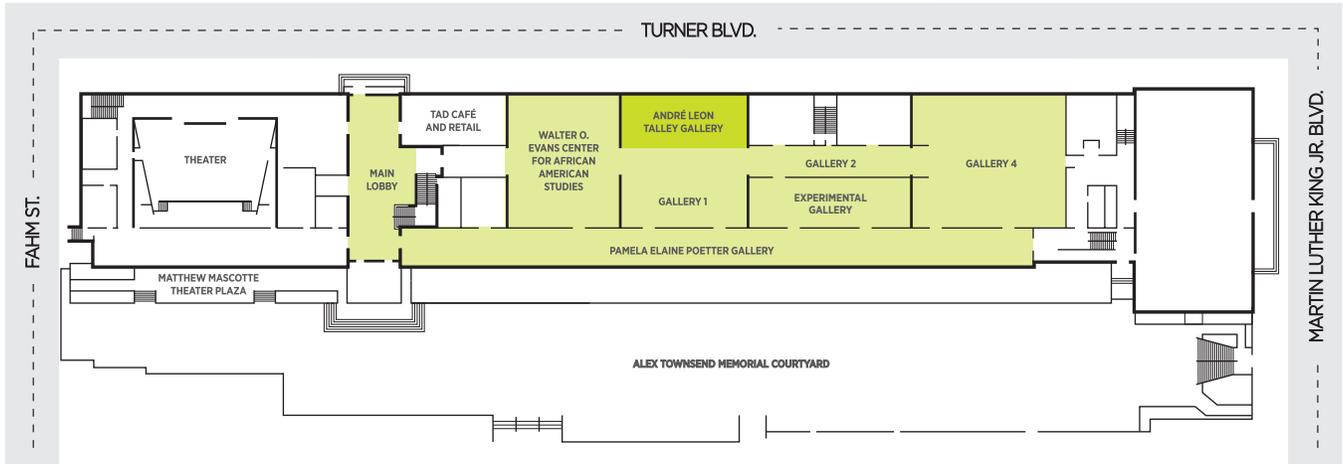
subjective *adj.* Based on or influenced by personal feelings, opinions or beliefs

subtlety *n.* A thing lacking obviousness; understated; difficult to detect

subtractive color *n.* The process through which surfaces of objects absorb certain colored light rays and reflect or transmit others, thus determining the shades we perceive. For example, red substances, either opaque or transparent, reflect or transmit red light only.

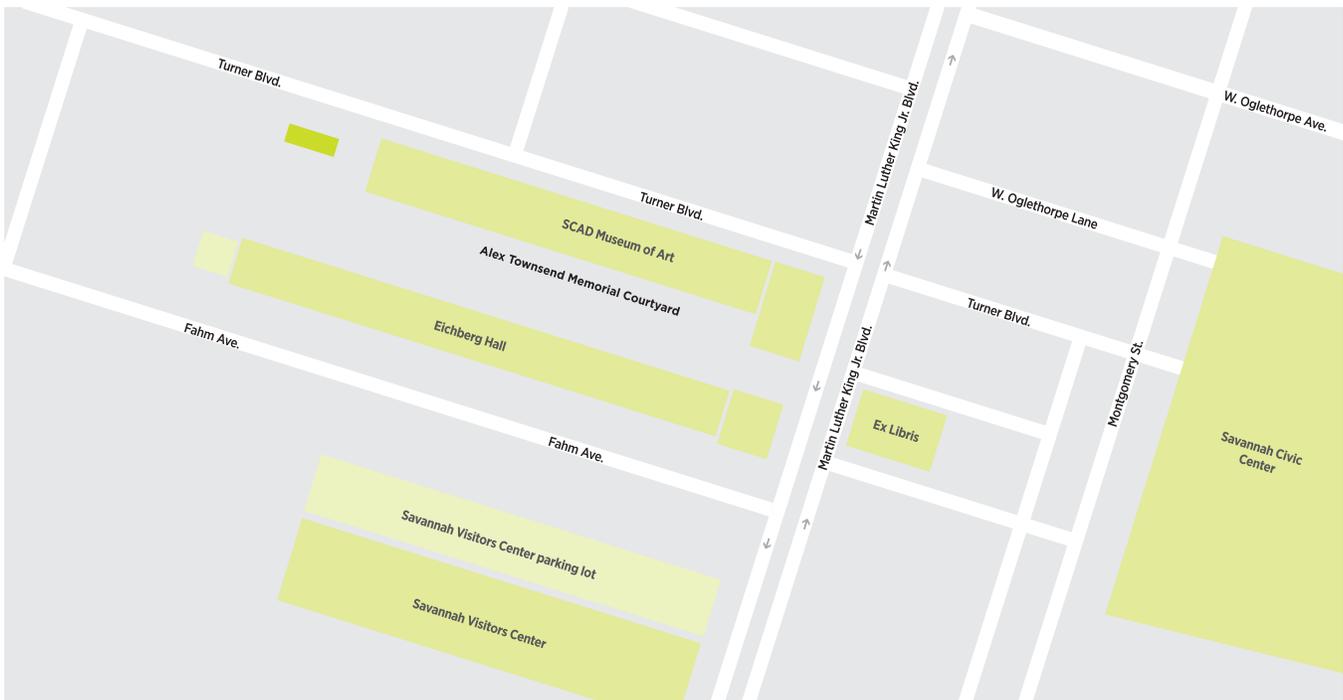
Museum Maps

SCAD Museum of Art



Main Level

- Galleries and main lobby
- Featured exhibition



- Featured exhibition extension

SCAD de:FINEART 2017 EXHIBITIONS

SAVANNAH EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Museum of Art // 601 Turner Blvd.

From the Depths Above • William Singer

Jan. 31 – April 30

Lineages • Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian

Jan. 31 – Aug. 6

Roots • José Parlá

Feb. 7 – July 16

Florida Living • Hernan Bas

Feb. 14 – Aug. 20

With You... Us • Glen Fogel

Feb. 21 – May 28

Infinity Lines • Chiharu Shiota

Feb. 21 – Aug. 6

Chroma • Carlos Cruz-Diez

Feb. 21 – Aug. 20

Blind Memory • Hank Willis Thomas

Feb. 21 – Aug. 20

Freedom Isn't Always Beautiful • Hank Willis Thomas

Feb. 21 – Aug. 20

SAVANNAH GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Oversaturated

Jan. 24 – Feb. 26

➤ Alexander Hall Gallery // 668 Indian St.

Take Note

Feb. 7 – April 17

➤ Gutstein Gallery // 201 E. Broughton St.

ATLANTA EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Atlanta // 1600 Peachtree St. NW

Catalyst: Master Prints by Pace Prints • Group Exhibition

Jan. 23 – April 21

➤ Gallery 1600

Noble Metal • Summer Wheat

Feb. 2 – April 7

➤ Trois Gallery

Project Diaspora • Omar Victor Diop

Feb. 17 – Aug. 20

➤ SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film



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