

CÉSAR PATERNOSTO

Born in La Plata, Argentina, 1931. Lives and works in Segovia, Spain.



César Paternosto in his studio, Segovia, 2015.
Courtesy of the artist and Galería RGR.

A painter and theorist, César Paternosto is an essential figure of abstraction in the Americas. Formed in Grupo Sí in La Plata, he won First Prize at the III Bienal Americana de Arte (Córdoba, 1966) and settled in New York in 1967, his base for 37 years. His entire trajectory turns on a single problem: painting as an object.

In 1969 he took the decisive step: painting only the edges of the stretcher and leaving the frontal plane blank. The canvas, emptied of imagery, asserted itself in space. That *oblique vision* (visión oblicua), presented in New York in 1970, invites viewers to move and fold the motion of their gaze into the experience of the work.

From his Andean travels came the thesis of *Piedra abstracta* (1989) and *The Stone and the Thread* (1996): the roots of abstract art lie in the stone and textiles of the Andes, carved and woven centuries before modernism. That conviction took form in the marble-powder canvases with Quechua titles of the 1980s and 1990s, and in his recent aluminum objects, painting and structure at once.

MoMA acquired *Duino* (1966) in 1967 and keeps it on view in 2026. Invited by Rafael Moneo, he created *La llegada* in Madrid's Atocha station in 2010; in 2026 the Universidad Nacional de La Plata honored him with the retrospective *La imaginación geométrica* and an honorary doctorate. For Paternosto a frontal gaze was never enough: neither before the canvas, nor before the history of art.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

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| 2026 | <i>Piedra Abstracta</i> , Galería RGR, Mexico City, Mexico (cur. Gabriela Rangel)
<i>La imaginación geométrica</i> , Centro de Arte y Museo de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina (cur. Natalia Giglietti) |
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2023	<i>Painting: The Unconventional Support</i> , Durban/Segnini Gallery, Miami, United States (cat.)
2019	<i>César Paternosto: la mirada excéntrica</i> , Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina (cat.)
2017	<i>Hacia una pintura objetual</i> , Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain (cat.)
2012	<i>Painting as Object: The Lateral Expansion</i> , Cecilia de Torres Ltd., New York, United States
2006	<i>Marginalidades, desplazamientos y ritmos</i> , Galería Guillermo de Osma, Madrid, Spain (cat.)
2004	Survey exhibition, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, Segovia, Spain (cat.)
2002	<i>Dis solving: Threads of Water and Light</i> , with Cecilia Vicuña, The Drawing Center, New York, United States
2001	<i>La visión oblicua: exposición en Carmen Waugh, Buenos Aires 1971/2001</i> , Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina (reconstruction of the 1971 exhibition) <i>White/Red, ocho pinturas, 1969–1999</i> , Art in General, New York, United States
1993	Exit Art, The First World Gallery, New York, United States
1989	<i>Formas simbólicas andinas</i> , Galería Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires, Argentina (cat.)
1987	Retrospective, Fundación San Telmo, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Traveled to Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes, La Plata, Argentina (cat.)
1986	<i>Obras en papel, 1961–1986</i> , Foro de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico. Traveled to Museo Rayo, Roldanillo, Colombia
1982	Fuji Television Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (cat.)
1981	<i>Paintings: 1969–1980</i> , Center for Interamerican Relations (today Americas Society), New York, United States (cat.)
1974	Galerie Denise René, Paris, France
1973	Galerie Denise René, New York, United States (cat.)
1972	Galerie Denise René–Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf, Germany
1970	AM Sachs Gallery, New York, United States (presentación de la visión oblicua)
1966	Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, Argentina
1964	Galería Lirolay, Buenos Aires, Argentina

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2026	<i>Hard Edges, Expanded Fields</i> , sala 415 de la colección, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States
2023	<i>Antes de América: fuentes originarias en la cultura moderna</i> , Fundación Juan March, Madrid, Spain (cat.)
2021	<i>This Must Be the Place: Latin American Artists in New York, 1965–75</i> , Americas Society, New York, United States
2019	<i>Sur moderno: Journeys of Abstraction</i> , The Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States <i>Culture and the People: El Museo del Barrio 1969–2019</i> , El Museo del Barrio, New York, United States
2013	<i>La invención concreta: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros</i> , Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain (cat.) <i>Moving: Norman Foster on Art</i> , Carré d'Art, Nîmes, France

- 2011 *América fría: la abstracción geométrica en Latinoamérica, 1934–1973*, Fundación Juan March, Madrid, Spain (cat.)
- 2010 *Realidad y utopía: Argentinien's künstlerischer Weg in die Gegenwart*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany
- 2006–08 *High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967–1975*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Traveled to National Academy Museum, New York; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; Neue Galerie, Graz; y ZKM, Karlsruhe (cat.)
- 2006 *The Sites of Latin American Abstraction*, CIFO, Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection, Miami, United States
- 2001 *Abstraction: The Amerindian Paradigm*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium. Traveled to IVAM, Valencia, Spain (cur. César Paternosto)
- 1998–99 *Next to Nothing: Minimalist Works from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery*, Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, United States
- 1996 *Argentinien: Ursprünge und Erbe*, traveling por museos de Giessen, Erfurt, Dresden y Berlin-Dahlem, Germany
- 1995 *Premio MARCO*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Monterrey, Mexico
- 1992 *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, Expo '92, Seville, Spain. Traveled to Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; y The Museum of Modern Art, New York (cat.)
América, Novia del Sol, Museo Real de Bellas Artes, Antwerp, Belgium (cat.)
- 1991 *La Escuela del Sur: el Taller Torres-García y su legado*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain. Traveled to la University of Texas, Austin; el Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; y el Bronx Museum, New York (cat.)
- 1990 *The Decade Show*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, United States
- 1988 *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920–1970*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, United States (cat.)
- 1987 *Latin American Artists in New York Since 1970*, Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery (today Blanton Museum of Art), University of Texas, Austin, United States (cat.)
Fifty Years of Collecting: An Anniversary Selection — Paintings since World War II, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, United States
- 1973 *Program-Accident-System*, Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany
- 1968 *Beyond Geometry*, Center for Interamerican Relations, New York, United States
- 1967 *The 1960's: Painting and Sculpture from the Museum Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States
- 1966 *Premio Nacional*, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1965 *Latin American Art Since Independence*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, United States

PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMISSIONS

- 2010 *La llegada*, intervención pictórica, Nuevo Vestíbulo de Llegadas del AVE, Estación de Atocha, Madrid, Spain (por invitación del arquitecto Rafael Moneo)

BIENNIALS

- 1997 Bienal Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

1989	III Bienal de Havana, Havana, Cuba
1984	I Bienal de Havana, Havana, Cuba
1971	I Bienal Americana de Artes Gráficas, Cali, Colombia
1970	II Bienal Coltejer, Medellín, Colombia
1966	III Bienal Americana de Arte, Córdoba, Argentina

AWARDS AND HONOURS

2026	Doctor Honoris Causa, Facultad de Artes, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina
2007	Premio de Pintura «Francisco de Goya», Villa de Madrid, Spain, por la exposición <i>Marginalidades, desplazamientos y ritmos</i>
1999	Académico Correspondiente en los United States, Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
1981	Visiting Scholar, New York University, New York, United States
1966	Primer Premio, III Bienal Americana de Arte, Córdoba, Argentina (jurado: Alfred H. Barr, Jr., presidente; Arnold Bode, Sam Hunter, Aldo Pellegrini, Carlos Villanueva)

RESIDENCIES AND GRANTS

2003	Study and Conference Center, The Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio, Italy
2000	Fundación Valparaíso, Mojácar, Spain
1991	Beca de la Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, New York, United States Study and Conference Center, The Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio, Italy
1990	Beca de la Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York, United States
1972	Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship para pintura, New York, United States

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin, United States	MACLA, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata, Argentina
Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, United States	Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente, Segovia, Spain
Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville, Spain	Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofía Imber, Caracas, Venezuela
Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, Cuba	Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Argentina
CIFO, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, United States	Museo de Arte Moderno Fundación Soto, Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela
Circa XX – Colección Pilar Citoler, Gobierno de Aragón, Spain	Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela
Colección FEMSA, Monterrey, Mexico	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
El Museo del Barrio, New York, United States	Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA), Colchester, United Kingdom	Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Neuquén, Argentina
Ford Foundation, New York, United States	Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Caraffa, Córdoba, Argentina
Fundación Alberto Jiménez-Arellano Alonso, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain	Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Emilio Pettoruti, La Plata, Argentina
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., United States	Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes Franklin Rawson, San Juan, Argentina
Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA), New York, United States	Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, United States
Instituto Cervantes, Alcalá de Henares, Spain	Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, colección Etzold, Mönchengladbach, Germany
Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland	The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, United States
LACMA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, United States	The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, United States
MACBA, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires, Argentina	The Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books by the Artist

2020	<i>La irrupción del otro: la abstracción en la modernidad tardía</i> . Cantabria: Ediciones La Bahía (Archivo Lafuente), 2020. Obrist, Hans Ulrich y César Paternosto. <i>Interview</i> . Introducción de Lucy R. Lippard. Paris: Manuella Editions, 2020.
2007	<i>PATERNOSTO por César Paternosto: apunte autobiográfico</i> . Madrid: Tf Editores, 2007.
1996	<i>The Stone and the Thread: Andean Roots of Abstract Art</i> . Traducción de Esther Allen. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996, 272 pp.
1989	<i>Piedra abstracta, la escultura inca: una visión contemporánea</i> . Mexico–Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989, 206 pp.

Monographs and Catalogues

2023	Hakel, Laura. «César Paternosto», en <i>Artistas latinoamericanos desde 1785 hasta hoy</i> . New York: Phaidon, 2023.
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- 2019 Duprat, Andrés; Herrera, María José y Guillermo Solana. *César Paternosto: la mirada excéntrica*. Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2019.
- 1993 Braun, Barbara. *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World: Ancient American Sources of Modern Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993.
- 1991 Ramírez, Mari Carmen. «Re-Positioning the South», en *The School of the South: The Taller Torres-García and its Legacy*. Austin: The University of Texas, 1991.
- 1983 Lippard, Lucy R. *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.
- 1981 Lippard, Lucy R. y Ricardo Martín-Crosa. *Cesar Paternosto: Paintings 1969–1980*. New York: Center for Interamerican Relations, 1981.
- 1977 Barr, Alfred H., Jr. *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, 1929–1967*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977.

Writings by the Artist

- 2023 «El arte de Amerindia, entre la antropología y la historia», en *Antes de América: fuentes originarias en la cultura moderna*. Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2023.
- 2018 «Symétries constructivistes», en *Géométries Sud, du Mexique à la Terre de feu*. Paris: Fondation Cartier, 2018.
- 2001 Ensayo principal y compilación del catálogo de *Abstraction: The Amerindian Paradigm*, exposición comisariada por el artista. Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 2001.
- 1973 «Notes, 1969-1972», en el catálogo *Cesar Paternosto*. New York: Galerie Denise René, 1973.

Press and Periodicals

- 2023 Candela, Iria y Joanne Pillsbury. «Embracing the Grid». *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 81, n.º 2, otoño de 2023.
- 1999 Cotter, Holland. «North and South Connected: An Abstraction of the Americas», *Art in Review*. *The New York Times*, 22 de enero de 1999.
- 1967 Hunter, Sam. «The Cordoba Biennial». *Art in America*, marzo-abril de 1967.

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Document updated in August 2026.
Courtesy of the artist and Galería RGR.