



# Diego Moya

**This light. This space**

From April 21 to May 22  
2023

**Aurora Vigil-Escalera**  
Galería de Arte

# Diego Moya. Light boxes

Santiago Olmo

The first time I saw Diego Moya's light boxes, made in the 1970s, was around 2005, when I visited his studio in central Madrid to see a set of newly completed paintings. These were small cubic pieces made of methacrylate. They had a very dim inner light that, when turned on, opened up to an infinite space: suddenly, visions offered by telescopes, constellations, galaxies, and nebulae appeared.

Until that moment, I was unaware of the existence of such work, and I found it surprising as an initial and foundational stage of an artist who had later developed as a painter. In any case, those pieces, which I saw for the first time, were not an anecdotal episode in his career. In 1972, he had been granted a scholarship by the Juan March Foundation to investigate the possibilities of using new types of plastics, such as methacrylate, in art, and the light boxes were the result of this work. Methacrylate was beginning to replace glass during those years because of its flexibility and resistance, as well as its ability to adopt new and more vibrant colors. It also decisively represented the triumph of industrial modernity—light, hyperactive, joyful—applied to decoration, interior design, and a dream of the future cloer to science fiction than to utopia.

Following those conversations about this creative stage, Diego Moya later organized a visit for a small group of artists and critics to the lobby of the Torres de Colón in Madrid, where two of his methacrylate sculptures could still be seen: a large free-standing piece



Torres de Colón, escultura exenta, 200 x 100 x 40 cm.

that recreated, through the parallel succession of progressively larger or smaller dies, a certain idea of movement, and a light piece embedded in a niche. In both pieces, light was crucial. The building, designed by architect Antonio Lamela, began construction in 1968 and was inaugurated in 1976, marking a milestone in the innovation of construction systems. The first things built were the central elevator structures, and the construction proceeded from top to bottom, giving the impres-

sion that the building was literally hanging from the roof by vertical concrete ribs. The building represented the triumph of modernity. No doubt, this was why Diego Moya's

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sculptures were chosen to enhance that same impression in the lobby.

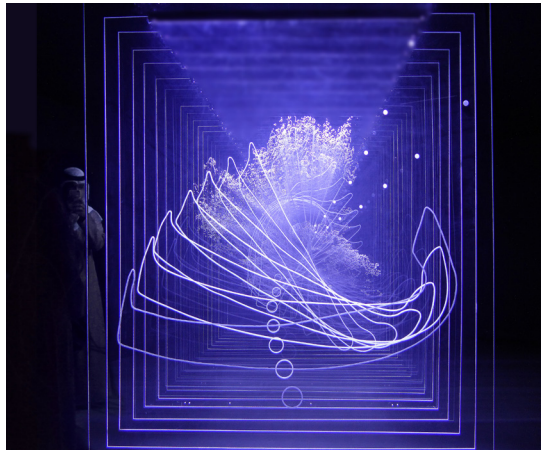
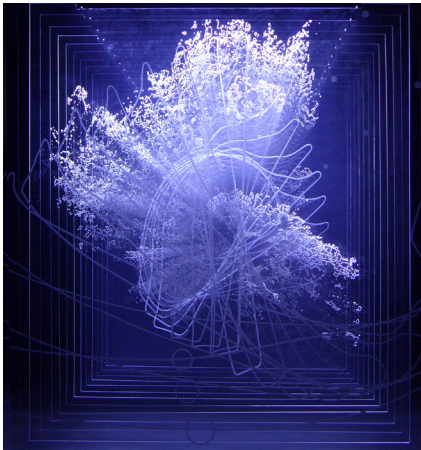
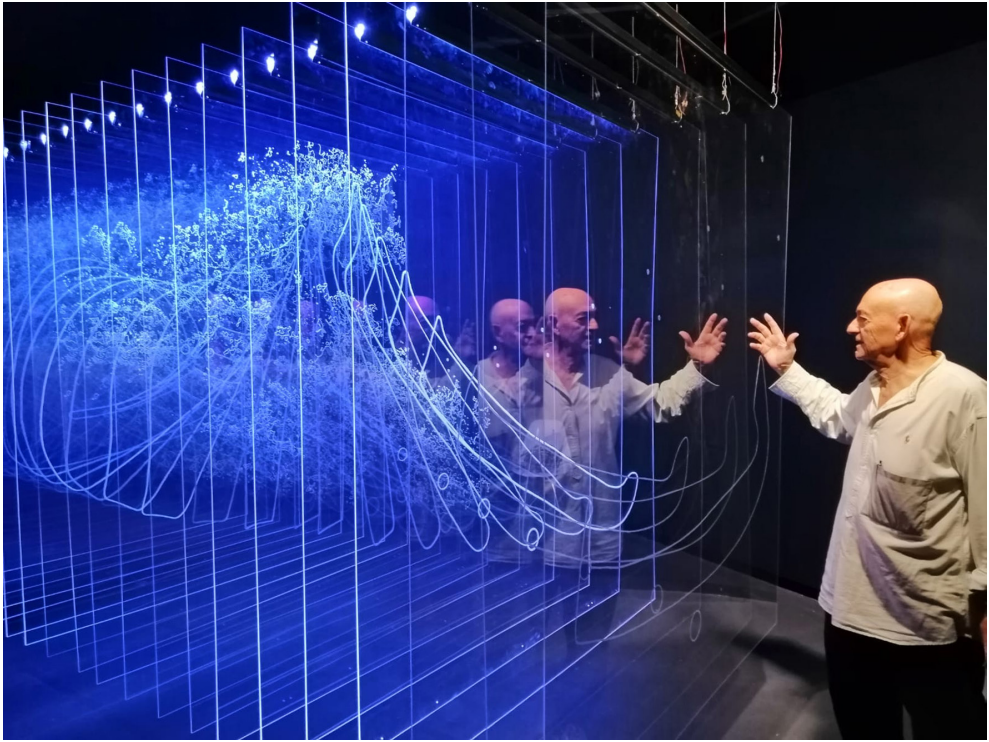
Diego Moya later carried out other public projects, such as the relief mural on a residential building in the Usera neighborhood of Madrid in 1994. It is linked to the painting he was doing at that time, but it is a work where the fusion between the gestural, material aspects of painting and the technological-industrial becomes very clear.

Although this duality has always been present in Diego Moya's work, it may not have been easy to understand it as a central characteristic of his work—or at least it wasn't for the author of these lines—before the recovery of the light boxes with the ambition to turn them into interactive, perceptive, and immersive devices, not just contemplative ones. When Diego Moya participated in the 2019 S.I.A.F in the United Arab Emirates with a "light box" that had been scaled to the dimensions of an immersive installation titled *Mutant Signs / Signos Mutantes*, this jump in dimensions ultimately determined a total transformation of the project, opening up new possibilities and, above all, an update. The installation acts as a device and reinforces the plane of a bodily experience that alters the understanding of a three-dimensional reality and opens up to other considerations.

In this context, it seems essential to me to try to highlight the coherence and continuity that flows between these seemingly contrary or dissonant artistic practices. A more attentive and reflective look might allow us to understand how the light boxes connect with his painting. The key is light, and how it represents time and defines space. The light we speak of is not sunlight; it appears as an abstraction, as an invented, imagined, experimental light that marks opposing planes—interior/exterior, darkness/clarity, or dense luminous climates like vapor or fog. In some works, light plays the role of creating the immaterial with material. Light thus constitutes a guiding thread that, while constructing, dismantles the point of view.

The light boxes as an artistic project retrospectively explain many details of his painting. They appear as references, as a slow and latent force, not always evident, like flashes of other realities, that connect with the spaces and diagrams of experimental science as a utopian or hyper-modern vision, as a counterpoint or complement to the material. His pictorial works from the late 1980s and especially throughout the 1990s concentrate on material atmospheres. In general, they were dominated by an energetic, gestural lyricism that relied on the power of large color stains—dense, intense. In one of his most powerful paintings from that time, *Secreta Fraternidad* (1996), a gestural and material magma advances like a tongue of lava towards an empty, dark, sidereal space, crossed by a flash of icy, spectral light, with the vertical shape of a representation of sound waves. Later, around 2005, the choice of a metallic support for his painting—with strong industrial connotations, accentuated by the presence of very clean and precise incisions that resemble barcodes or the guide lines for placing chips, and which appear as a comple-





*Mutant Sings*, instalación en Sharjah (Emiratos Árabes), 200 x 180 x 400 cm.



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mentary pictorial surface—again focused on the tensions between the material and the technological. It is no coincidence that this extensive cycle was titled *Two Worlds*.

The various series that make up the *Blue River* cycle, between 1997 and 2004, explore the atmosphere created by the cold light of stars or the moon—a blue light that we associate with the mystery of the night and the daydreams of early poetic and pantheistic Romanticism, but also with the desolate and grand visions of the universe brought closer to us by 20th-century astronomy and popularized by aerospace flight simulators, science fiction, and scientific photography.

Returning to the light box project many years later, updating techniques, materials, or dimensions, and also creating immersive installations, is perhaps the result of that constant latency and presence of the ideas that set it in motion, and of the permanence of “sidereal” or “experimental” light in his painting. But the relevance of a historical and techno-scientific moment that allows for many technical possibilities and a precision that was unattainable in the 1970s, when the process was more artisanal than technological, also plays a role.

The light boxes connect with a line of aesthetic experimentation that began in the historical avant-gardes of the 20th century when experiments with sound and noise first emerged, and a little later, music and the performative started to be integrated into the context of visual arts. Architects and artists like El Lissitzky or Naum Gabo had used plastics in their models, sculptures, and maquettes. But most decisive were the experiments with light and machine-sculptures equipped with movement through electric motors by Moholy-Nagy. These pieces opened up to the experiences of environments through the reflections of moving light. From there, in the 1960s, artists interested in the “immaterial” as both process and realization began to emerge. In many of these artists (from James Turrell to Walter de Maria or Maria Nordman), light is an essential element.

In Diego Moya’s light boxes, there is an intention to represent light with light, rather than using light as a material. In fact, it could be said that these pieces bring together various representative models, following the pattern of scientific experiments, albeit revisited from the imagination and the alteration of conventional viewpoints.

On the one hand, and perhaps most importantly, there is the capsule or receptacle that corresponds to the space that gathers the right conditions for a specific scientific experiment.

On the other hand, there is the representation of a model as a hypothesis, and finally, the various ways of representing sound or music through waves and oscillations, the frozen representation of wave motion that refers to quantum hypotheses, and ultimately the representation of light itself.

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The boxes, as constructions, also function as objects that activate meditation, and in the randomness of the forms, aspects characteristic of his painting—gesture or emotions—reappear. su pintura, el gesto o las emociones.

# Light is invisible

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**Diego Moya**

Light is invisible; we only see the interruptions in its propagation. Interruptions caused by objects, bodies, atmospheres... But the light itself is invisible; we only see the source from which it originates.

Remember, when you flip the switch in your room, everything suddenly appears, providing the reassurance that you haven't mistaken your house, street, or city. The objects appear friendly, waiting to be revealed.

But you don't see the light. The light sees itself through the objects. If there were no objects, no mountains, no planets in its path, it would remain unknown, continuing its journey into infinity. Light needs us as much as we need it.

Light needs me to make an incision in the methacrylate to be revealed and to position a new object.

In what space?

We don't see space; space is invisible. Space exists because of the objects that inhabit it and the light that reveals them.

We recreate space with our gaze, but it is infinite; its apparent dimensions are not real. Even if we see it confined within a box of thirty or forty centimeters, we can dive into it, floating in a dreamlike state.

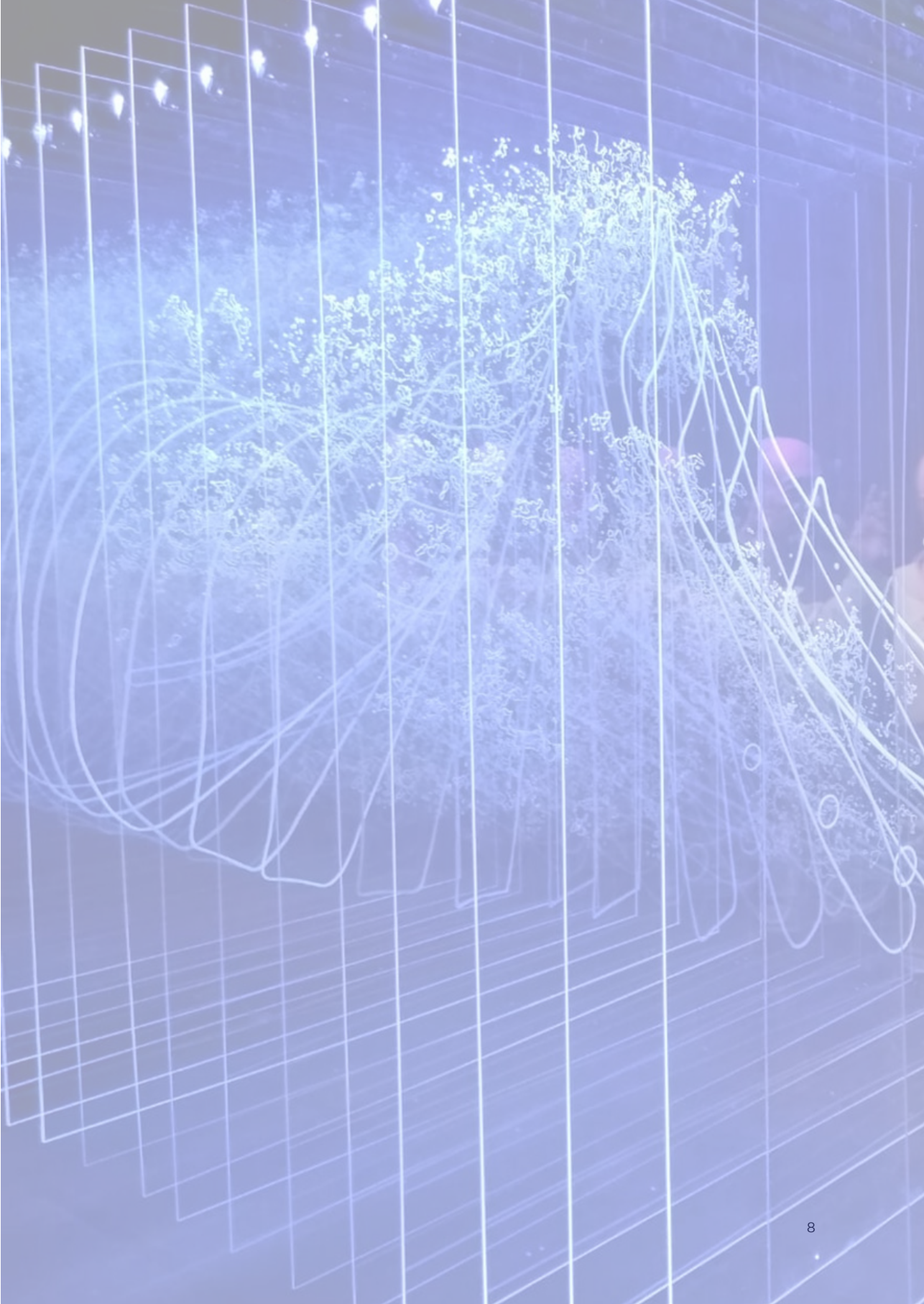
The space of the very, very small is as relative as the very, very large, though it brings a special kind of vertigo.

Remember, matter seems heavy, but if we think about the spaces that exist between atoms, electrons, etc., it is actually more than eighty percent empty. So then?

Join me on this journey, let's become "Quantum Astronauts," and share these encounters.

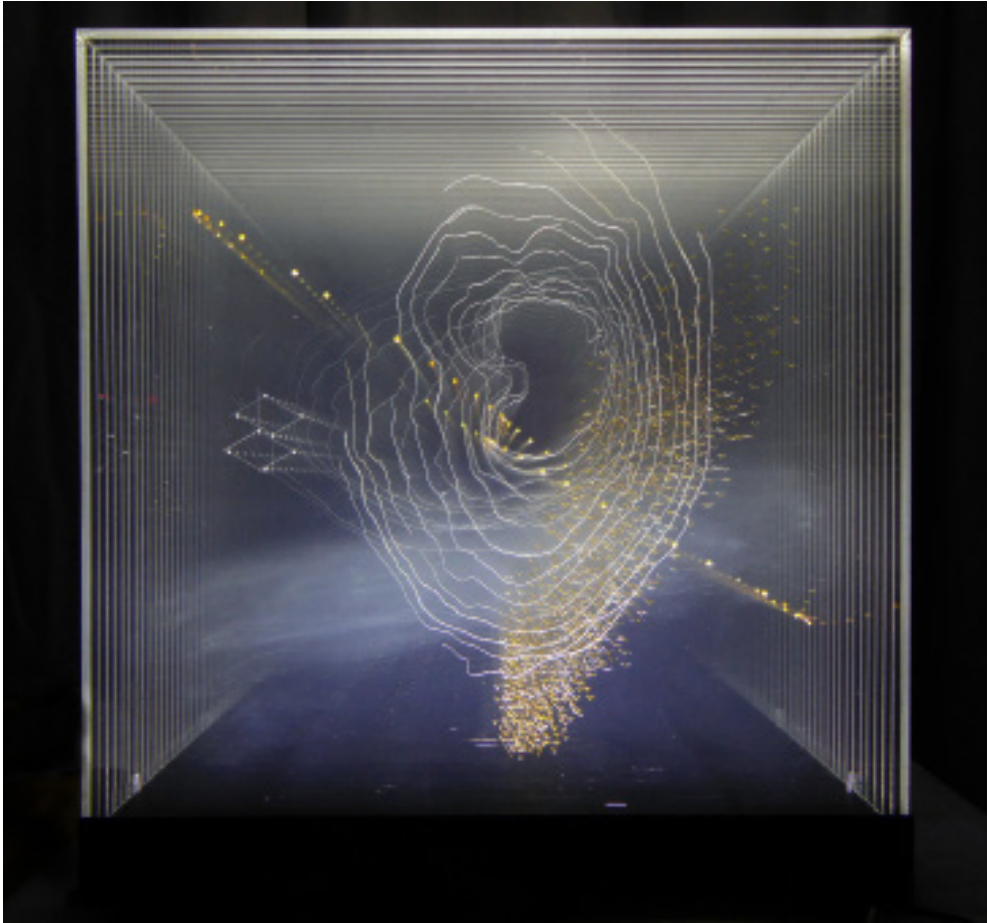
That light... That space.







## Light boxes



**Diego Moya**

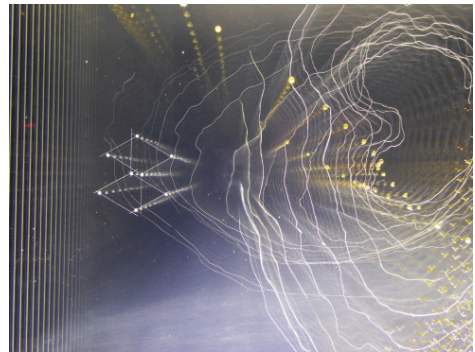
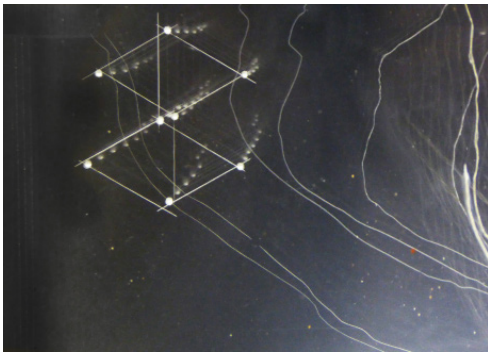
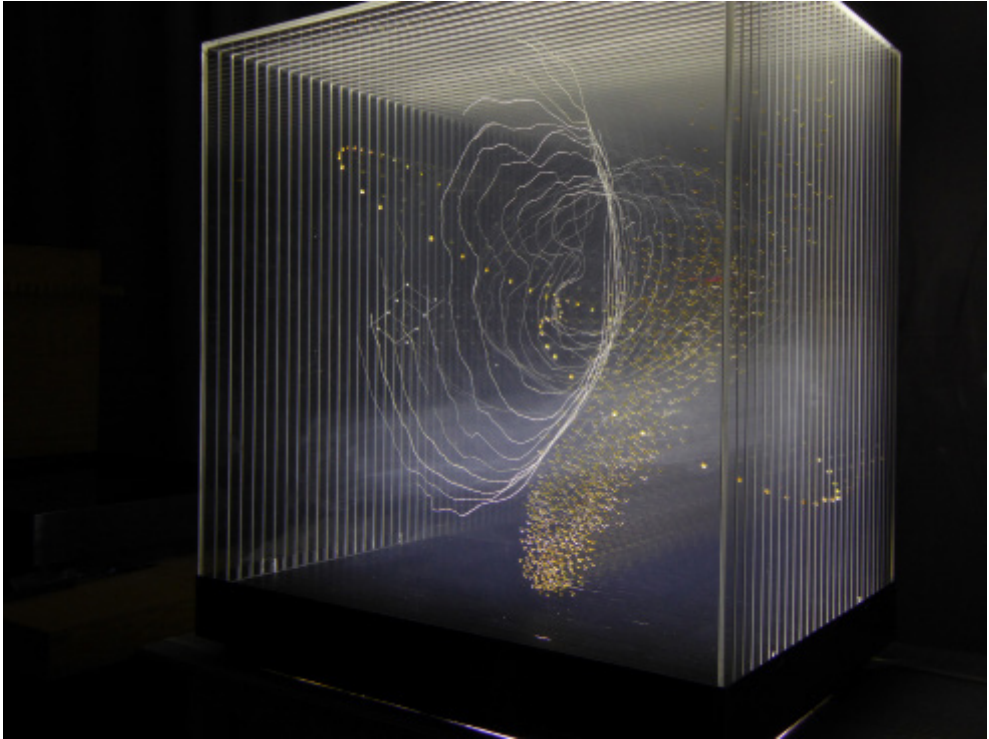
**Pasaje**

60 x 55 x 41 cm

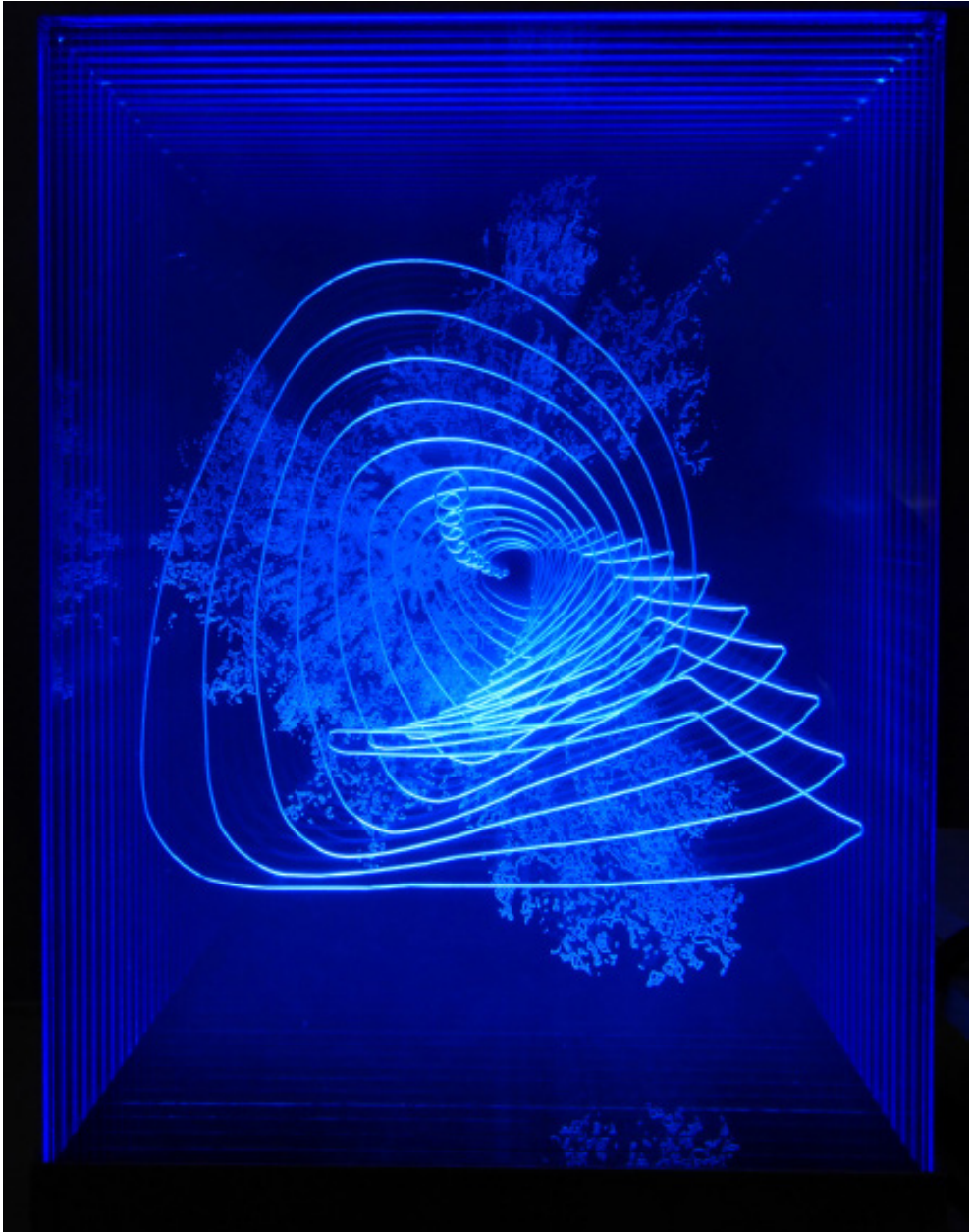
Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023





**Diego Moya**  
**Pasaje (detail)**



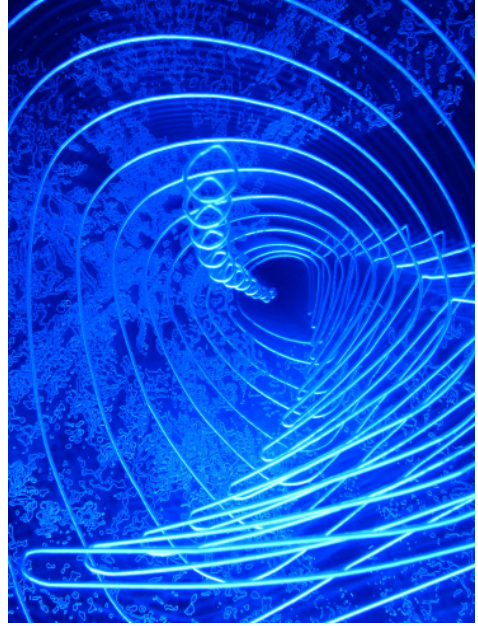
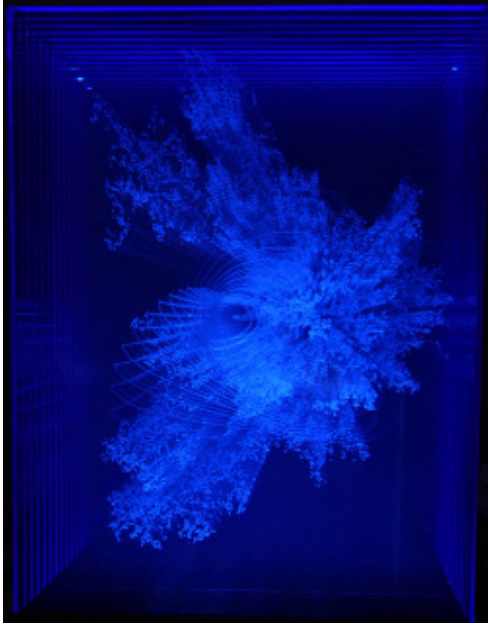
**Diego Moya**

**WaW**

38,5 x 25,5 x 20 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

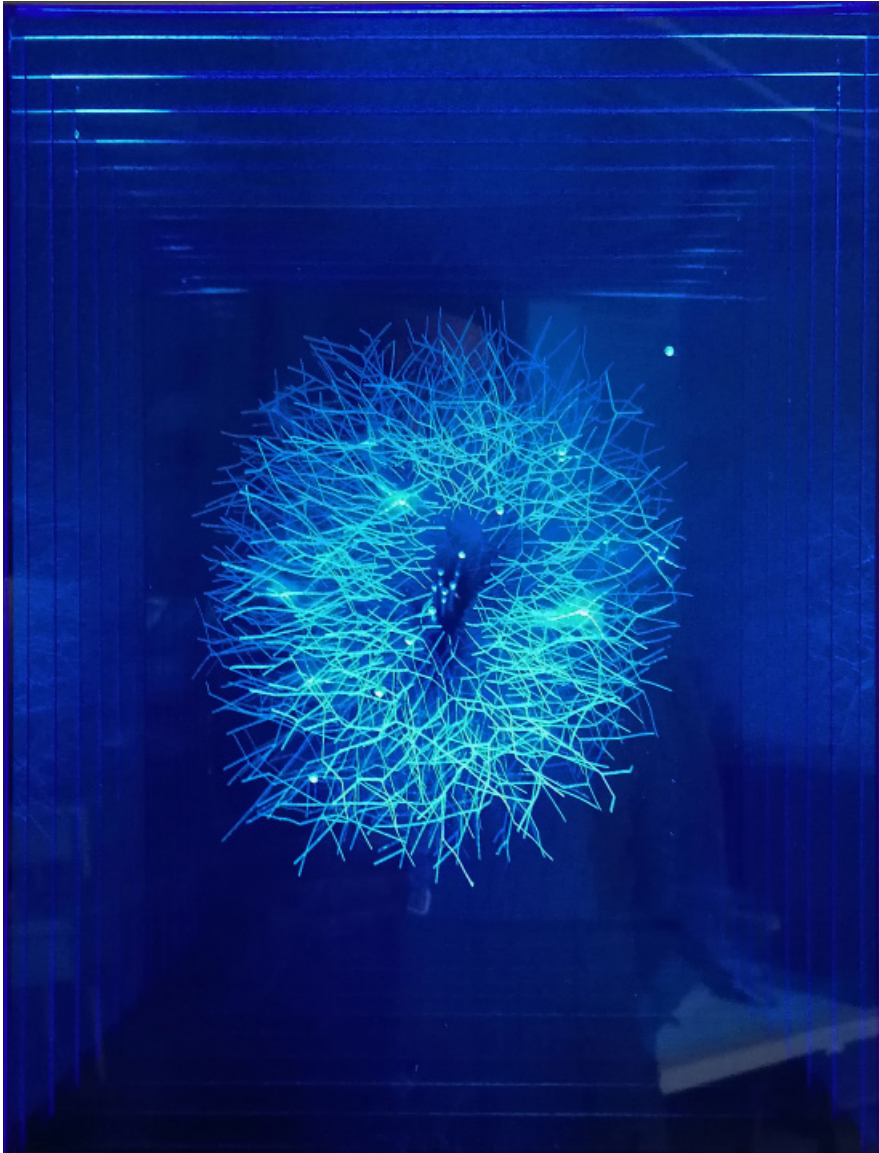
2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**WaW (detail)**





**Diego Moya**

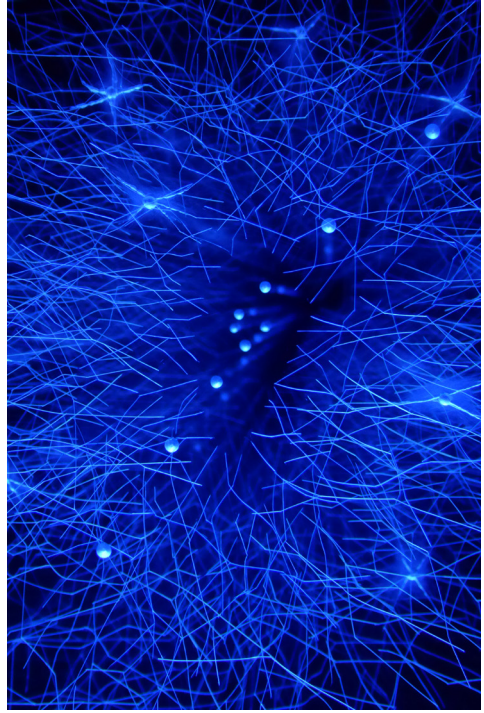
**Synapse**

38,5 x 25,5 x 17 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023

Ed. of 8



**Diego Moya**

**Synapse (details)**



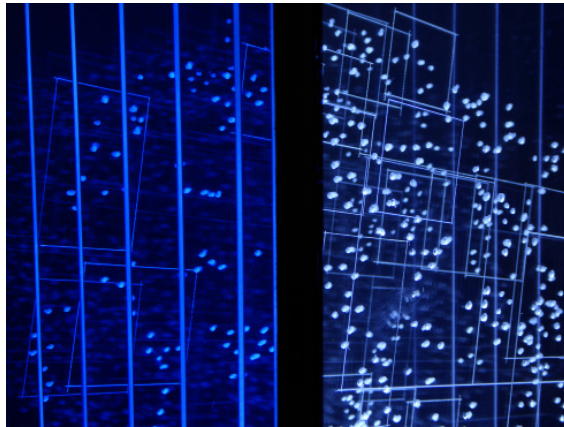
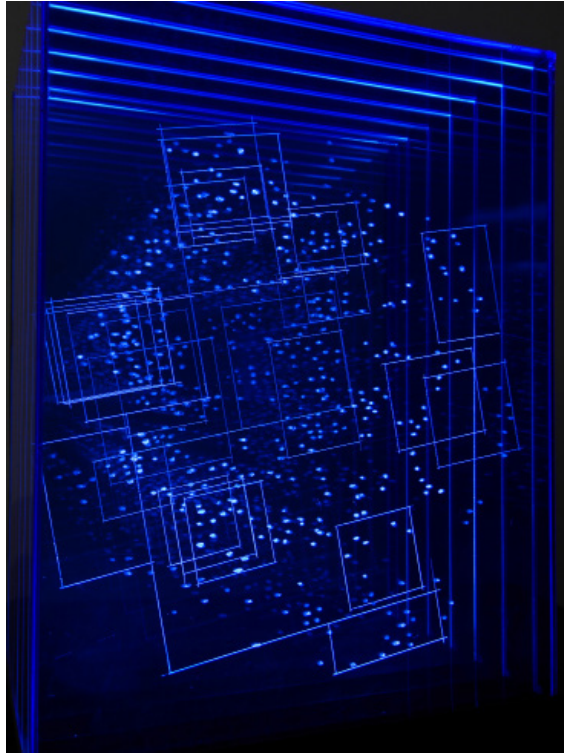
**Diego Moya**

**Refugiados**

38,5 x 26 x 17,5 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

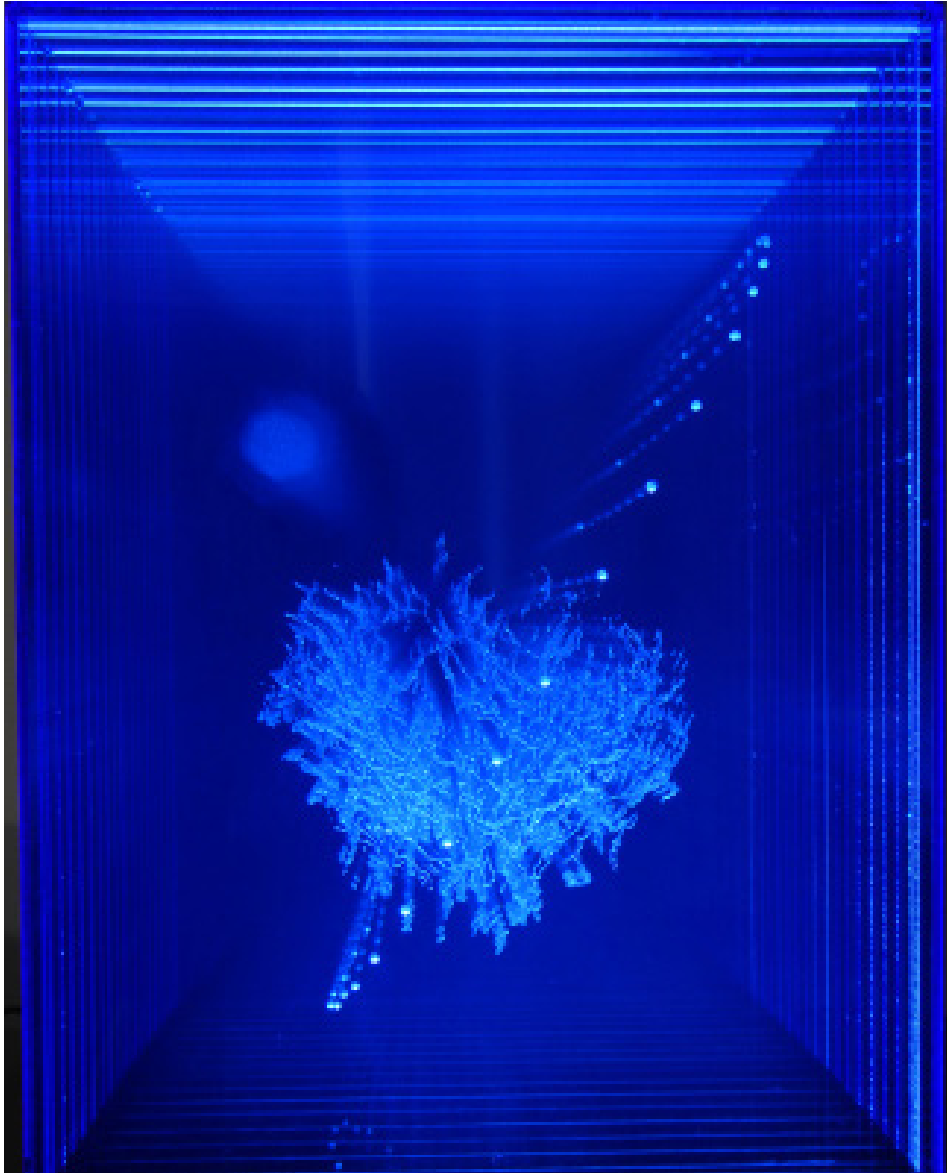
2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**Refugiados (detail)**





**Diego Moya**

**Orbital**

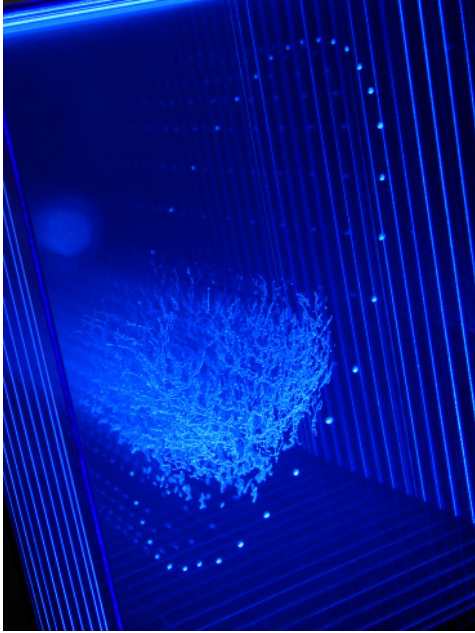
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38,5 x 26 x 17 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

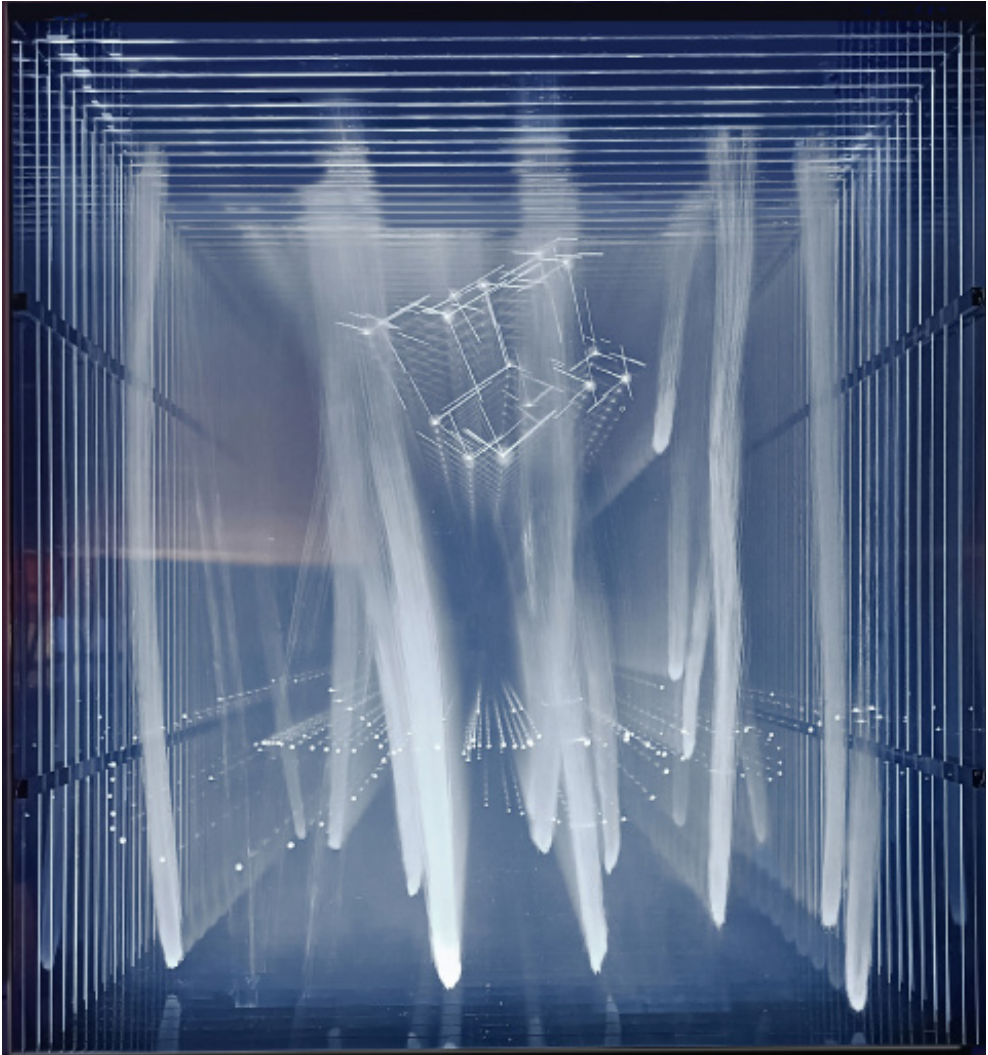
2017-2023

Ed. of 8



**Diego Moya**  
**Orbital (detail)**

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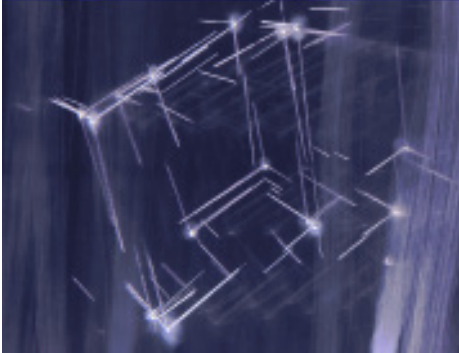
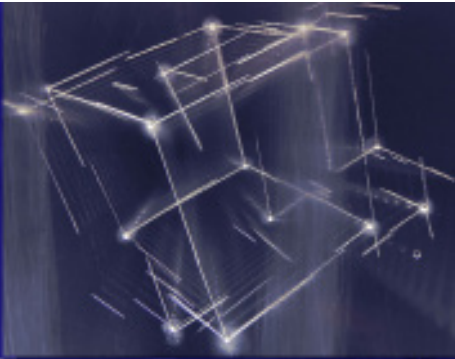
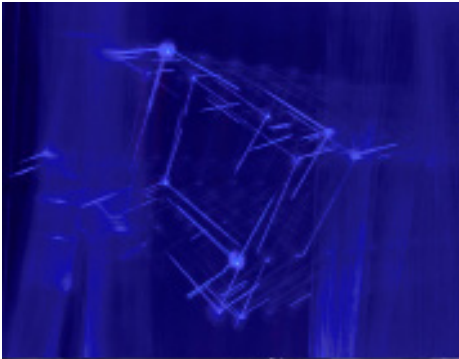
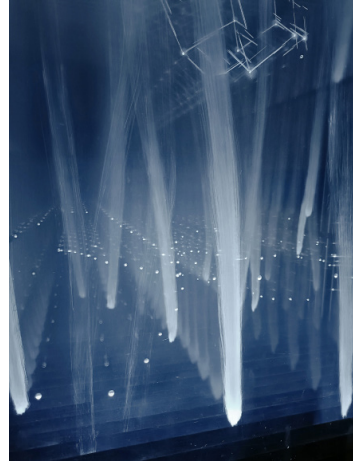
**Diego Moya**

**Hipercub**

67,5 x 56,5 x 43 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**Hipercub (detail)**





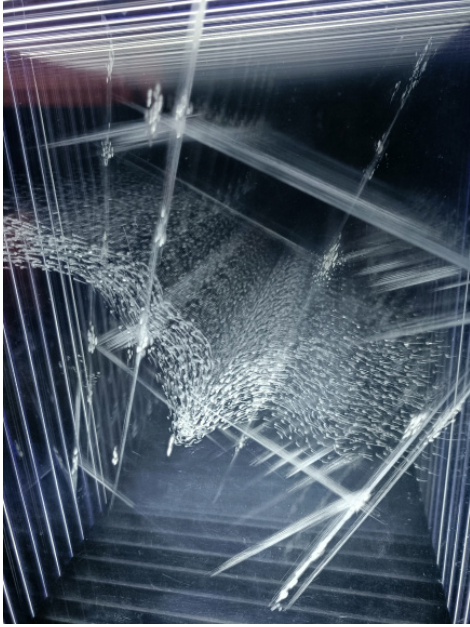
**Diego Moya**

**Hipercub 2**

38,5 x 26 x 17 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**Hipercub 2 (detail)**



**Diego Moya**

**Elvaq 7**

30 x 39,5 x 7 cm

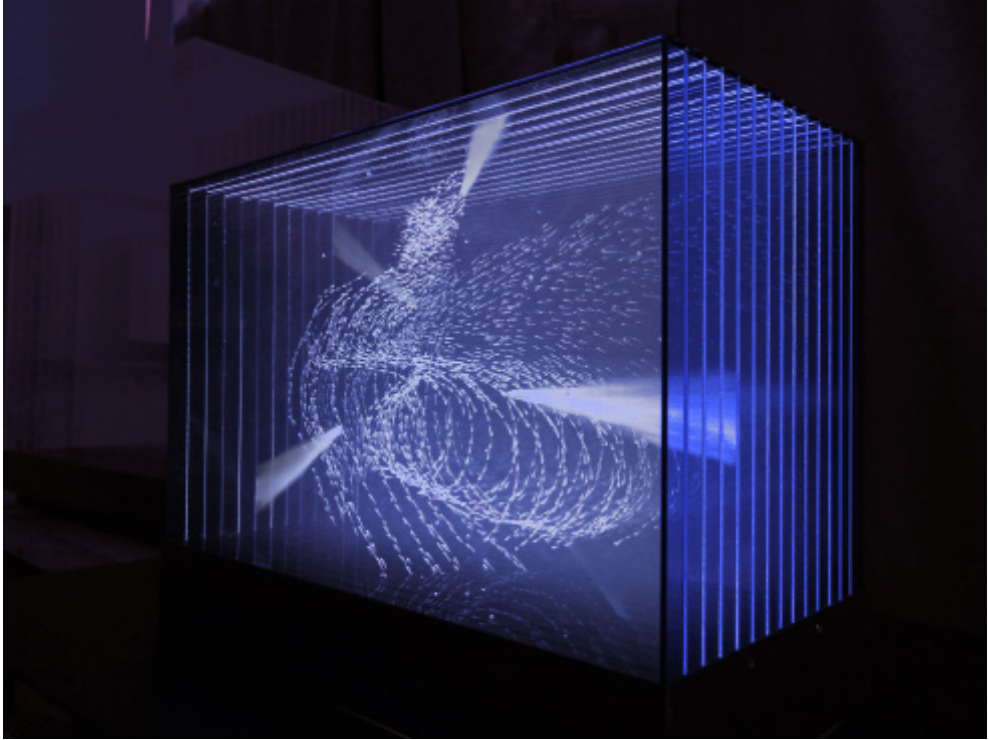
Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



**Diego Moya**  
**Elvaq 7 (detail)**





**Diego Moya**

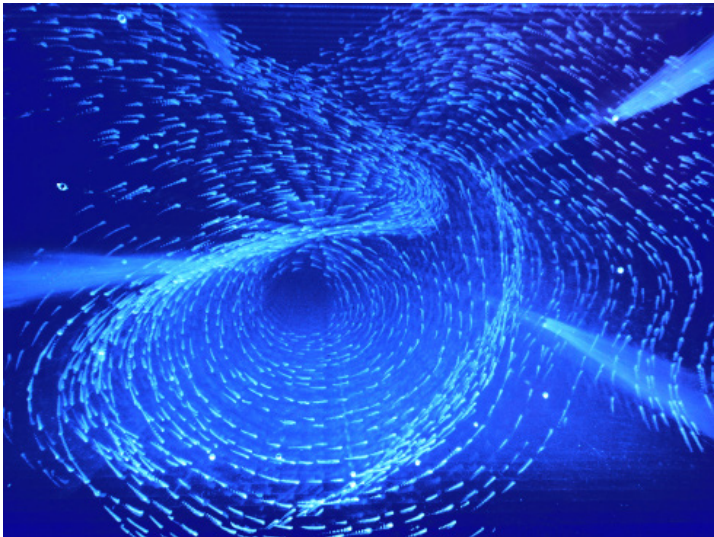
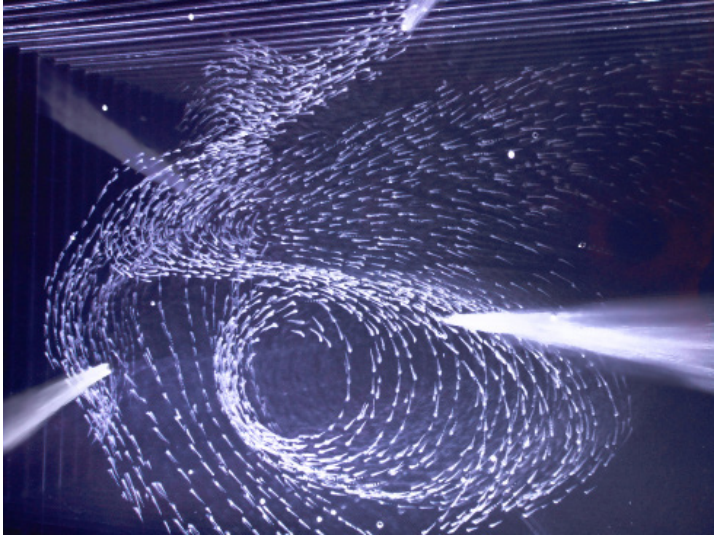
**Incontable**

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30 x 39,5 x 20,5 cm

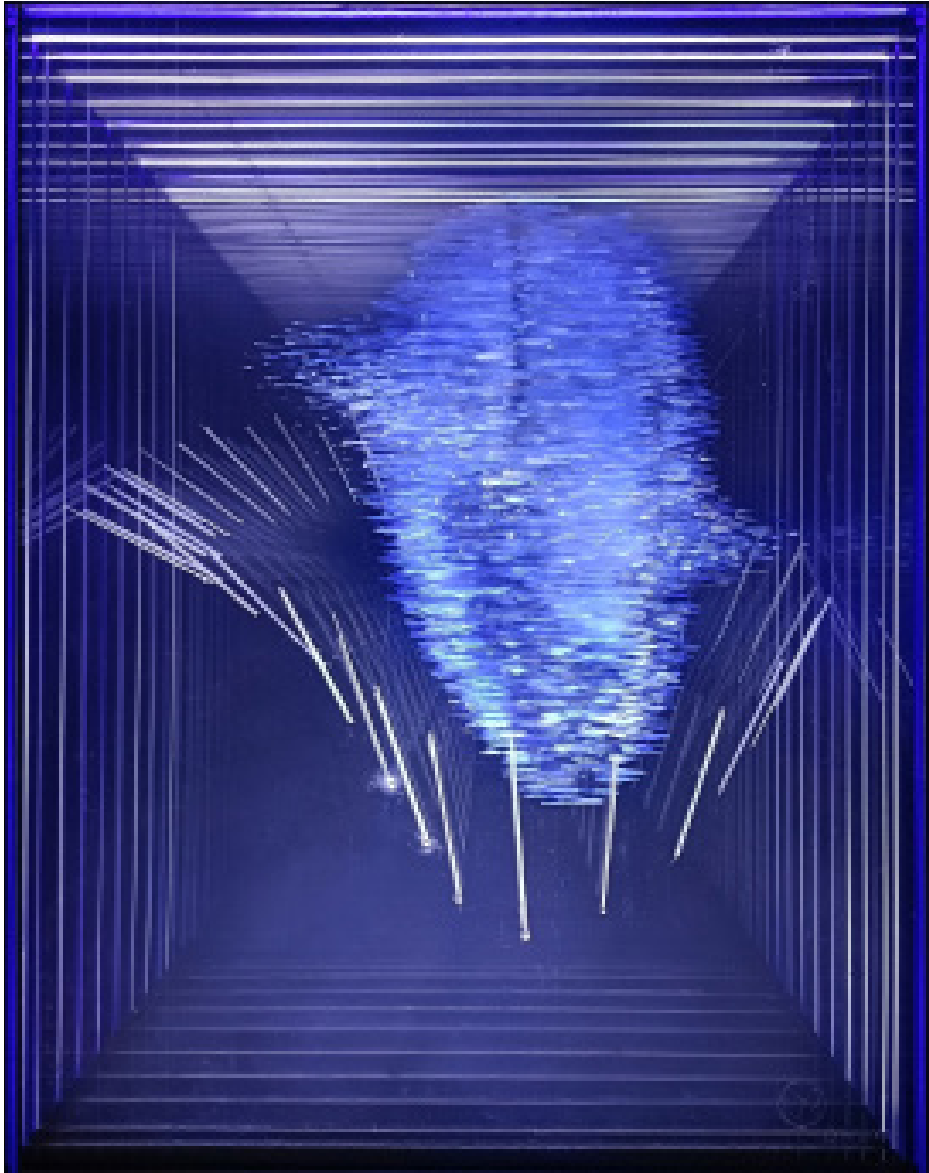
Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**Incontable (detail)**



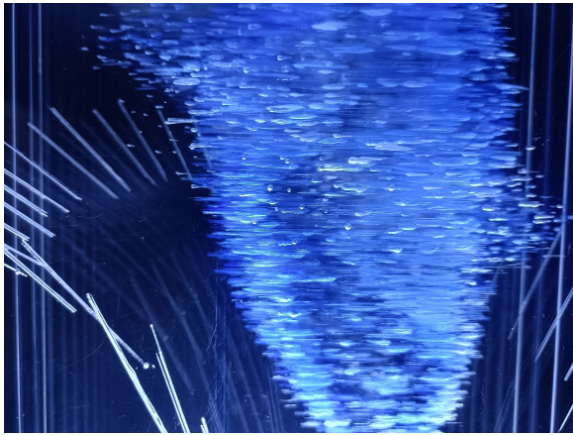
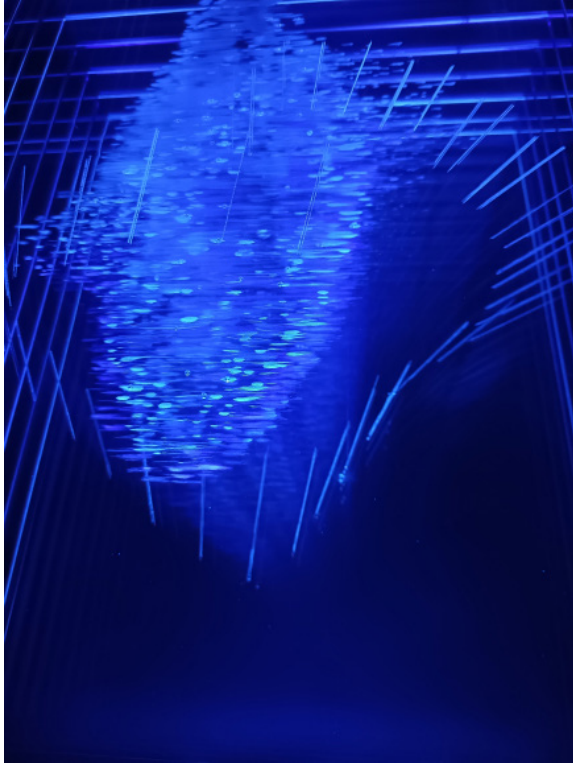
**Diego Moya**

**Invitro**

38,5 x 26 x 17 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



**Diego Moya**

**Invitro (detail)**

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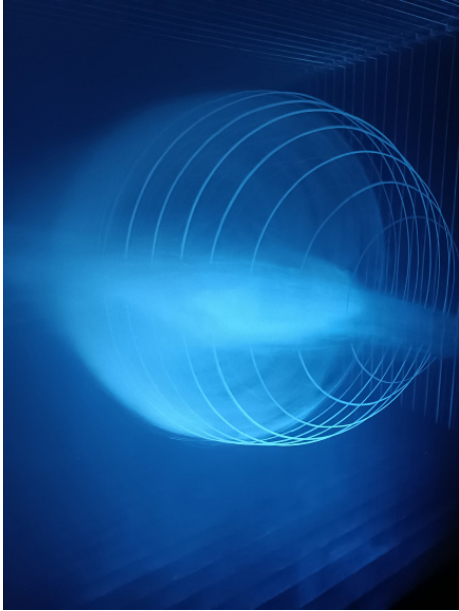
**Diego Moya**

**Nebulosa 1**

55,5 x 51,6 x 46 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

1974



**Diego Moya**

**Nebulosa 1 (detail)**



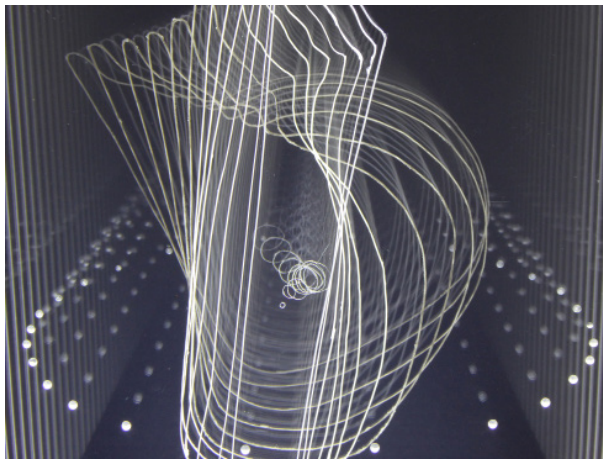
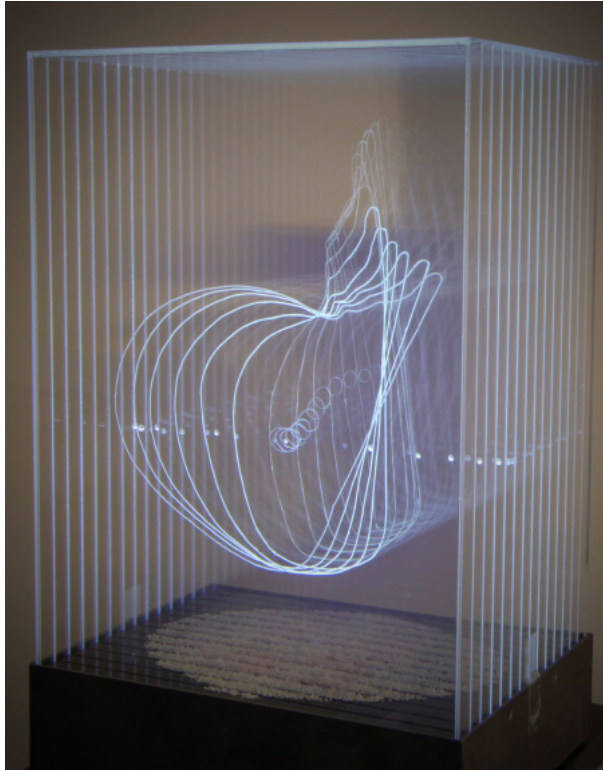
**Diego Moya**

**Mutante 1**

38,5 x 25,5 x 20,5 cm

Methacrylate box with an iron sheet base and internal lighting

2017-2023



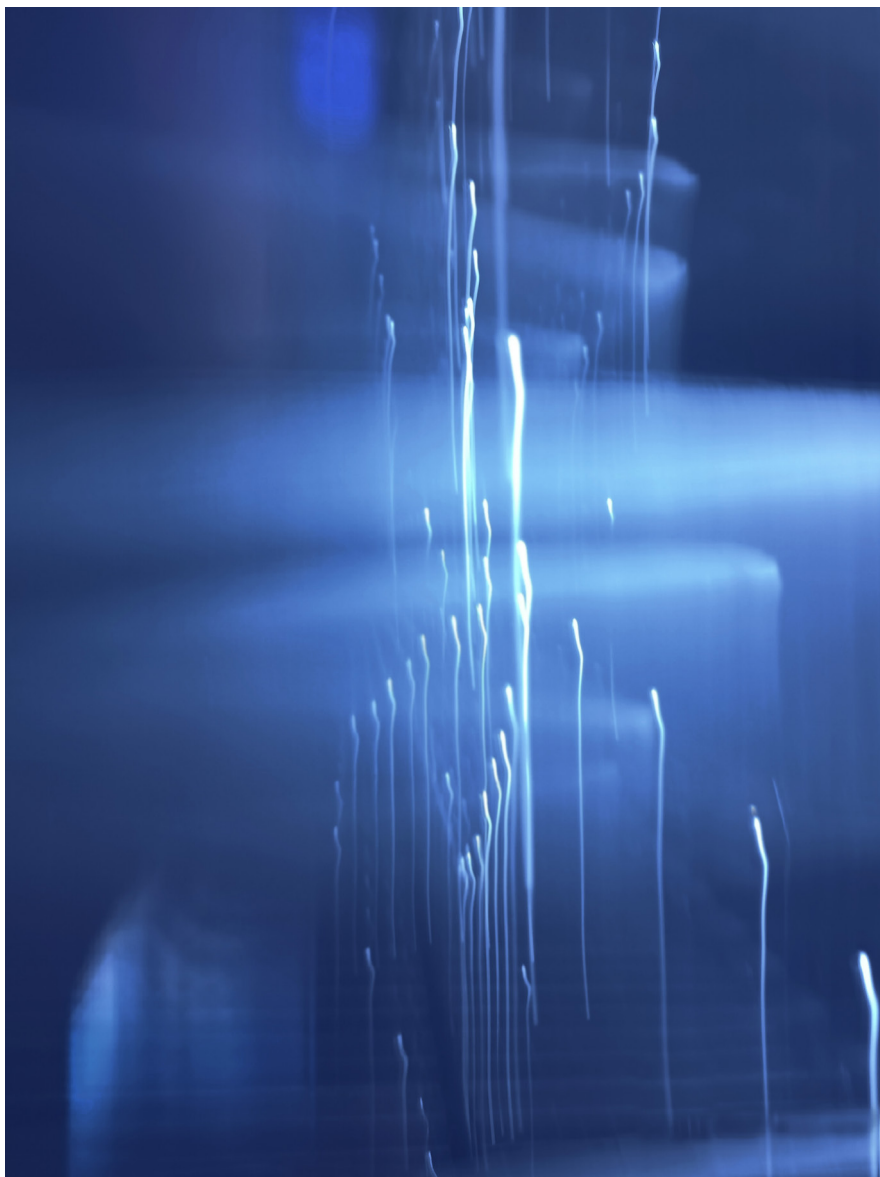
**Diego Moya**

**Mutante 1 (detail)**





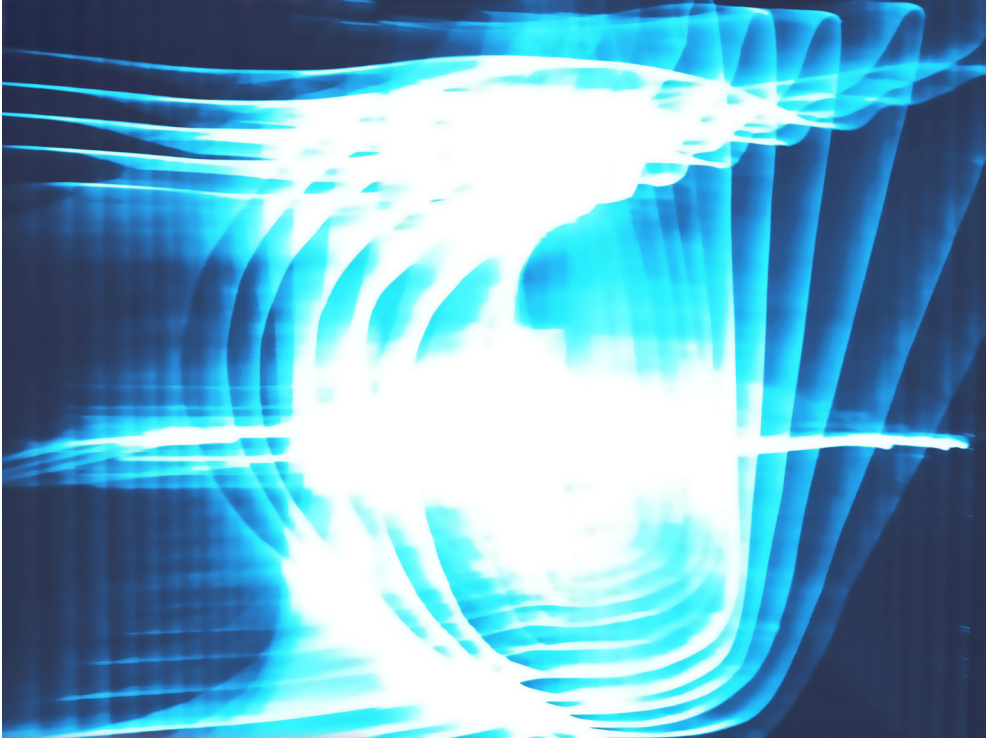
**Photography**



**Diego Moya**

**Elvaq**

100 x 75 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed. of 5



**Diego Moya**

**Mutante**

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75 x 100 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed.of 5



**Diego Moya**

**Hipercubo 1C**

75 x 100 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed. of 5



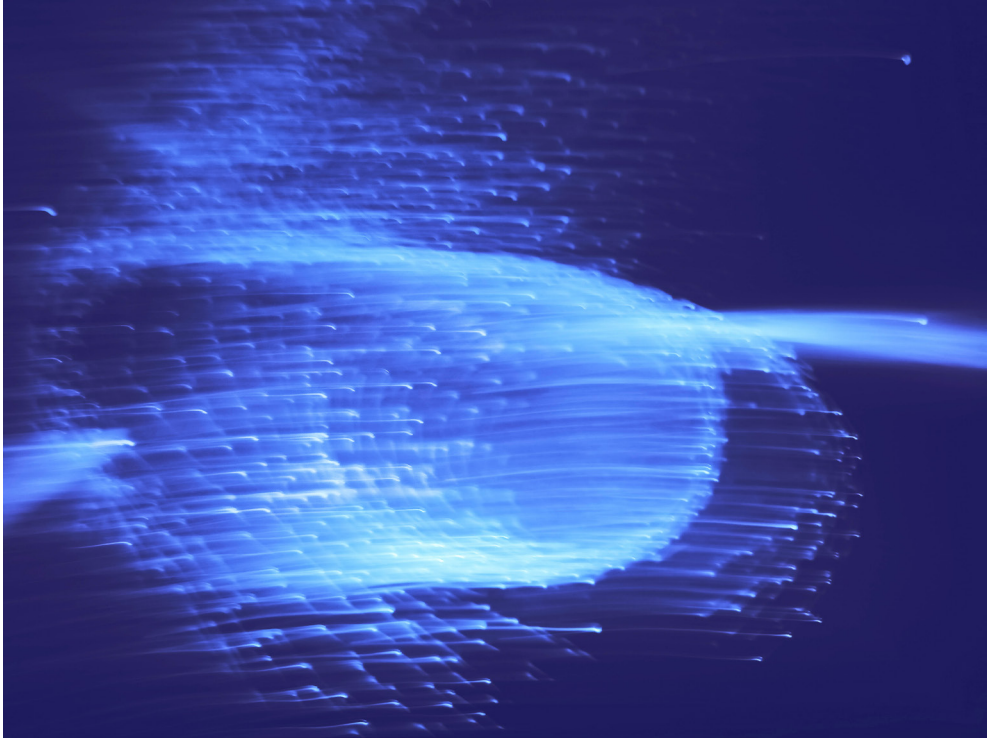


**Diego Moya**

**Hipercubos**

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75 x 100 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed.of 5

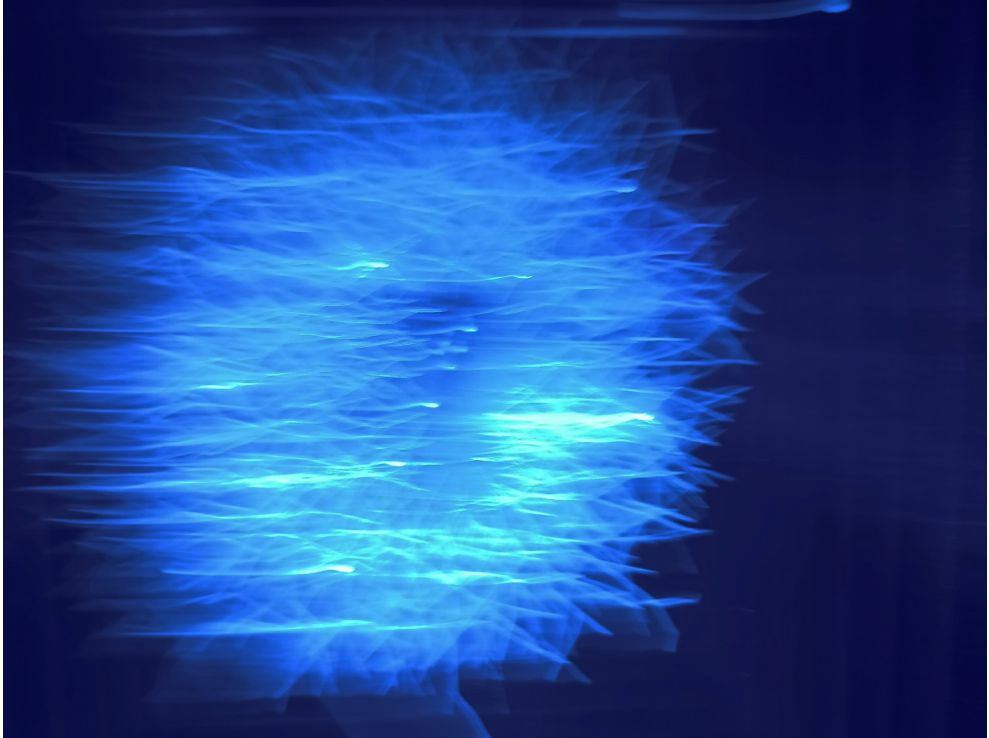


**Diego Moya**

**Innumerales**

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75 x 100 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed. of 5



**Diego Moya**

**Synapse**

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52 x 70 cm  
Printing on Dibond  
2022-2023  
Ed. of 5

Born in Jaén in 1943.

He pursued studies simultaneously at the School of Fine Arts and the School of Architecture in Madrid.

In the 1970s, he worked on sculpture using new materials and light. During this period, he began the “Luminous Boxes” series, which was exhibited in various galleries and international exhibitions. In 1976, he received the Polémica Prize from Madrid galleries.

In the following decade, his work alternated between sculpture, architecture, and painting, influenced by abstract expressionism. He won the Santa Lucía Painting Prize and the Navarra International Painting Prize.

He traveled to the United States.

From 1991, he spent long periods working in his studio in Asilah (Morocco), where he researched the symbolic aspects of abstraction. He traveled frequently throughout North Africa.

He carried out multiple architectural interventions and installations, among which the Installation-Mural in Usera, Madrid, in 1994 stands out, for which he received the First Prize for Public Space Interventions.

In 1999, he founded the MEDOCC association, of which he has been an active member ever since. Through MEDOCC, he has organized cultural exchange programs with the Mediterranean in the field of contemporary art.

Since 2009, he has been developing the generic project “Gigabytes of Stone,” with successive variations such as “Terabytes of Stone” and “The Skin of the Earth,” centered on reflections on cosmic time in nature and humanity. He has exhibited the different phases of this project in Marrakech, Rabat, Segovia, and Alcalá de Henares.

Recently, he has revived the “Luminous Boxes” project, focusing on quantum worlds, which has been exhibited in Madrid at the José de la Mano gallery and at the SIAF International in



Sharjah (United Arab Emirates).

His exhibition activity has spanned Europe and the Mediterranean since the 1970s, showcasing his work in significant galleries such as Laurens A. Daane in Amsterdam, Diálogo in Brussels, and LINEART in Antwerp. In Spain, he has regularly exhibited at galleries like Jorge Kreisler, May Moré, Esquina, Luis Burgos, and in numerous group shows. He now presents his creations at Aurora Vigil-Escalera Art Gallery. He has also exhibited in Casablanca and Marrakech in galleries like Shart or the Museum of La Palmeraie, and at the Cervantes Institutes in Rabat, Tetouan, Tangier, among others.

## COLLECCIONS Y MUSEUMS

His work is featured in various public and private collections, including:

RNC Foundation, Marugame (Japan)

Royal Palace of Rabat (Morocco)

AENA Foundation (Spain)

National Engraving Center of Madrid

Laurens A. Daane, (Netherlands)

Antonio Pérez Foundation, Cuenca

Unión Fenosa Museum, La Coruña

Museum of Contemporary Art of Navarra, Pamplona

Colegio del Rey Foundation, Alcalá de Henares,



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Madrid

Nova Caixa Galicia Foundation, Vigo

### **CURATORIAL WORK**

Between 2000 and 2007, he organized the traveling exhibitions “Re.encuentro-Tawassul” and “Afinidades” between Morocco and Spain, featuring prominent artists from both countries. These exhibitions included colloquiums and roundtable discussions held in major cities such as Casablanca, Rabat, Seville, Madrid, and others.

From 2008 to 2011, he directed the project “ILHAM-INSPIRATION,” involving six Spanish artists who drew inspiration from Arab culture to create works that toured various countries in the region, starting with the legendary Damascus at its National Museum. The title of this project, ILHAM, also inspired a series of

works of the same name in his oeuvre.

Since then, he has co-directed, along with Zara Fernández de Moya, the exhibitions “Yusur-Puentes” focusing on Architecture, and “Miradas Paralelas” featuring Spanish and Iranian women photographers.

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CATÁLOGO

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TEXTOS

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Diego Moya

DISEÑO Y MAQUETACIÓN

Aurora Vigil-Escalera

MONTAJE EXPOSICIÓN

Equipo Aurora Vigil-Escalera Galería de Arte



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