

Márton Nemes

The Armory Show 2023





Look into the Sun With Your Eyes Closed, exhibition view, acb Gallery, Budapest, 2022

Márton Nemes

(b. 1986, Székesfehérvár, Hungary) lives and works in New York.

Crossing boundaries is an important motif in the art of Márton Nemes. His earliest works were inspired by the legacy of the New Leipzig School, depicting abandoned buildings, ruins and urban spaces he called the “ruins of modernism”, thereby describing his own (art historical) place and position with acute accuracy. Not only did his coined phrase mark the Central and Eastern European point of departure for his activity, it also hinted that the foundations of his art lay on the ruins of modernism. He rebuilds the fragmented pieces, the splinters of self-referential, modernist abstraction. However, his purpose is neither to find or reconstruct the now unattainable Whole, nor to engage in some sort of postmodern game, but to push the boundaries of a medium labelled as obsolete in a post-digital age, when not only modernist utopias have become outdated, but also the postmodern scepticism related to them and the set of notions it entailed. Although, in the light of the artist’s statements, the zeitgeist draws primarily on impulses extraneous to painting, it essentially still coincides with a possible interpretation of the spirit of the age in painting: namely, contemporary painters’ positions that analyse the relation of industrialism and the vivid painterly gesture, spatiality and the image plane, expressiveness and the digital, all of which Nemes is particularly familiar with.

In this sense, his recent works not only refer to a human condition, but also exemplify a peculiarly interpreted “painterly escapism” that shows glimmers of materials extraneous to painting: the surfaces of aluminium and reflective vinyl tape, the textures of car paint and acrylic. Nemes juxtaposes different image surfaces and material qualities and returns to the format of multiple panels, which combine different materials and also different painting methods: while the reflective vinyl strips evoke Hard Edge filtered through Neo Geo, the laser-cut metal surfaces bear the sterility of minimal art, and the panel over-painted with intense gestures bears marks on the entire reception history of abstract expressionism. Joined and fixed together, the image panels are propped against the wall like peculiar constructions, almost like theatre props. The image plane is ruptured, broken, torn up. Sometimes the frame, the stretcher becomes directly visible as a kind of skeleton. Often it is not even a stretcher, but a seemingly functional yet aimlessly self-serving construct paradoxically held together by a constant internal tension. Nemes decomposes and then reassembles the image field and exhibits the illusory fracture- or fault lines of his earlier works as physical objects. These fault lines refer at once to the present mode of painting, which eliminates itself while also returning to itself, and to the doubts and dilemmas of an era full of tension.

– Dávid Fehér



Look into the Sun With Your Eyes Closed, exhibition view, acb Gallery, Budapest, 2022



Painted Paint, exhibition view, Art Gallery Paks, Paks, 2014

The layeredness and palimpsest-like character – in both the literal and figurative sense – are important and unique features of Nemes' paintings. Figuratively speaking, it almost seems as if he has sliced open the abstract surfaces of the colour field, similarly to the „affichistes” tearing up posters in the fifties and sixties. The „décollages” of the slit posters create a uniquely abstract, but nevertheless object-like system of forms. And, similarly to the „affichistes”, it is precisely the distinctive web of cracks and fracture-lines which separate abstraction and figuration that Márton Nemes is interested in. [...] Extreme enlargement (blow up) almost renders the basic (sometimes photographic) character of the works forgotten. The visual language of these works could be considered as „new abstraction of a postmodern character”, the features of which can be compared to such artists as Thomas Scheibitz, Katharina Grosse and Tomma Abts. Just as his middle generation parallels, Nemes is also intrigued by the borderlines of abstraction, as well as the possibilities for loosening and rethinking the abstract traditions, which have been preserved by discontinuation. [...] In a broader context, Márton Nemes' painting as it unfolds in his latest series can be situated at the meeting point – or along the fracture-line – of „new figuration”, with its kinship to post-surrealism and post-pop, and the mostly American „new abstraction”, which also reflects on the phenomena of post-medial visual culture.

– Dávid Fehér



Painted Paint, exhibition view, Art Gallery Paks, Paks, 2014



Temporary Images 01-02, 2017, acrylic, cargo strap, Molino canvas, offset print, wood, 127 x 97 cm | 127 x 102 cm

Márton Nemes [...] consider[s] the limits and boundaries of painting. After a short period of creating realistic pictures, Nemes arrived to an expressive form of abstract painting. He created fragmented structures, and de(con)structed the topoi of Colour Field painting. In his [...] series, *Printing Waste* (2016), Nemes paints his abstract structures on wasted molino canvases of posters. Nemes experiments with subtle interactions between different layers of printed and painted surfaces and with modes of remixing everyday, visual fragments. The notion of remix has become more central in Nemes's work since then. The pictures of his new series consist of several independent panels joined with a cargo strap usually used for transportation. The title, *Temporary images* (2017), refers to the transitive character of the pictures. The transit state suggests insecurity, variability, and movement. The polyphonic structure of the pictures may refer to the permanent flow of digital images, to the contemporary inflation of visual impulses, and to the questions of transitive identities in a globalized world. However, Nemes addresses the changing identities of painting as well: he confronts printed images with painted surfaces on the panels. The sources of the printed images vary widely. Nemes reuses fragments of photographs of everyday visions and details of reproductions of his own paintings. His polyphonic structures and compositions reflect how the images are reused and reframed.

– Dávid Fehér



Tomorrow13, 2019, steel, car paint, acrylic, canvas, reflective vinyl, Foamex PVC, laser cut Perspex, mirror plexi, wood, 220 × 330 cm | in the collection of Ludwig Museum Budapest



New Mediations, exhibition view, MODEM Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art, Debrecen, 2022

Márton Nemes

(b. 1986, Székesfehérvár, Hungary) studied painting at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest, then earned his MFA at Chelsea College of Arts, London in 2018. A year later, he received the prestigious Esterházy Art Award for emerging Hungarian artists, after which his large scale work was acquired by Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest. Nemes attended artist residency programs in the USA in Buffalo, NY and in Westport, CT. He had solo shows in a number of galleries (acb Gallery, Budapest; Fold Gallery, London; Annka Kultys Gallery, London; and Erika Deák Gallery, Budapest) and institutions (King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár; Art Gallery Paks; the Institute for Contemporary Art, Dunaújváros). His works has been featured in various international exhibitions, including the Künstlerhaus - Halle for Kunst und Medien, Graz; BWA Warszawa, Warsaw; and the Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest. He is represented by acb Gallery (Budapest) and based in New York.





Amplifier, exhibition view, Elijah Wheat Showroom, New York, 2022

Márton Nemes

Venice Biennale 2024



Márton Nemes and Róna Kopeczky

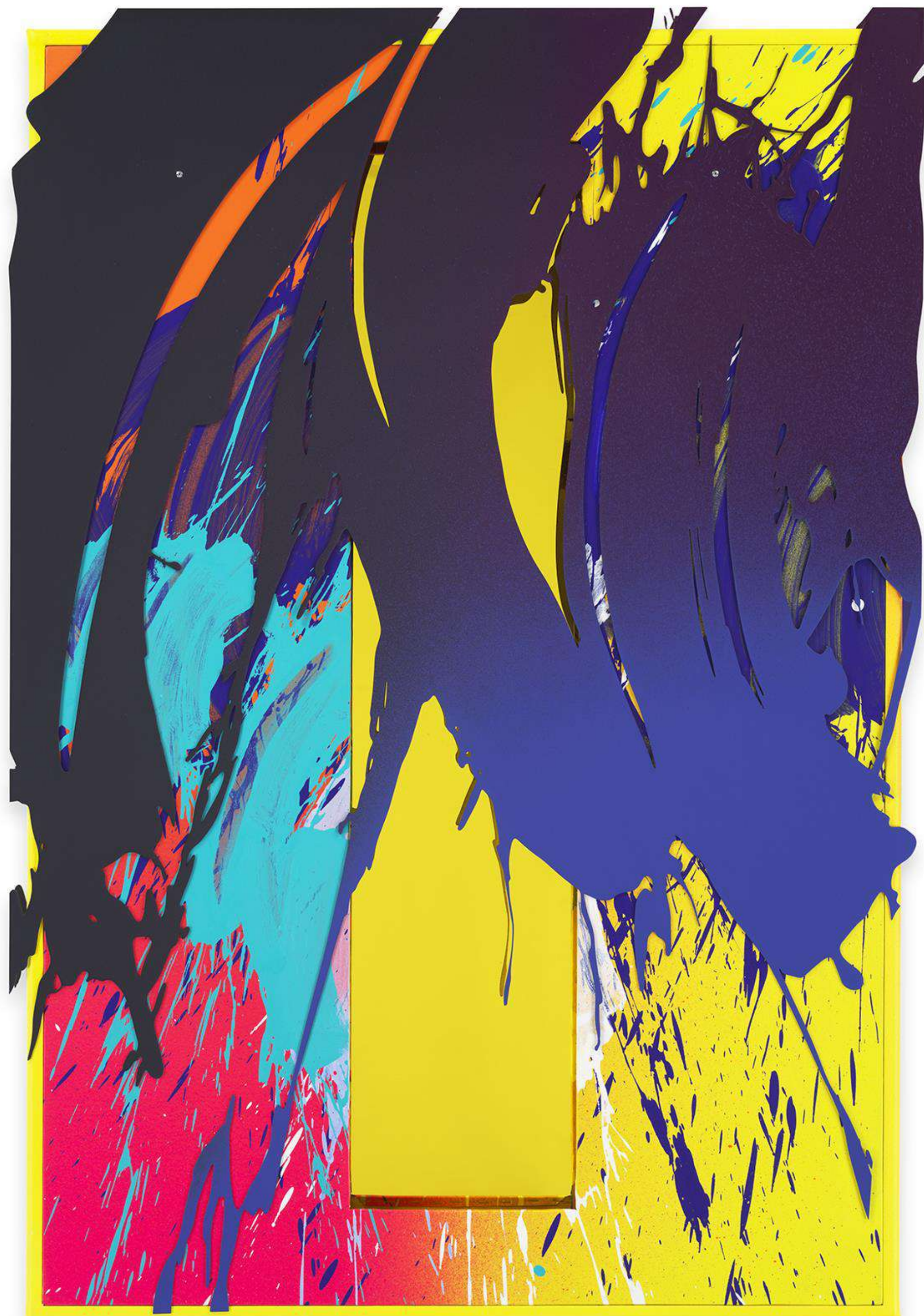
Venice Biennale 2024

The project entitled *Techno Zen* was conceived by Márton Nemes as an immersive environment, a Gesamtkunstwerk rooted in expanded painting. The installation occupying the whole building is multisensory: its optical, acoustic and haptic contents unfold in the combined effects of light and colour, movement of objects and light, sound and light frequency, as well as air movement. However, their synergy only becomes total when one reaches the geometric mean of the building, i.e. a middle point from where one can perceive every component. The project articulates around three theoretical and sensual realms: inner and outer comprehension of space, perceptive contradiction and balance, as well as to be in the middle. The exhibition experience develops from low light and sound frequencies until high ones, in a way that its general harmony unfolds in the center of the space. In an era characterized by extremely polarized societal phenomena and discourses lacking or excluding nuances, the project approaches the idea of being in the middle from an ontological, societal and psychological angle: it opens space to rethink and nuance our own position through the expansion of the painterly medium.





Exhibited works at The Armory Show



Meta Paintings 26, 2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, wood, mirror plexi
128 × 88 cm

Meta Paintings

In the *Meta Paintings* series, Nemes combines different material qualities, the surface of steel, mirror steel and canvas, the texture of car paint and acrylic. Layers of laser-cut and painted brushstrokes create a dynamic visual experience and allow the viewer to see the internal structure of the expressive, vibrantly painted artworks.

„Nemes makes carefully designed works clashing distinctly different materials and surfaces, combining a wide array of methods from abstract painterly brushstrokes to spray paint, foil, and welding. His neon-toned, vibrant colours simultaneously draw inspiration from internet aesthetics, advertising, and techno clubs. Nemes’ works go beyond classical paintings or wall objects: they are rather installations that extend beyond their frames. He leaves scratches on the surfaces of the works that reveal their deeper layers or uses mirrors to create an image within an image that forces the viewer to place themselves within his objects. [...] When he moved to London in 2017 to further pursue his studies, [...] he quickly became absorbed in the city’s techno and rave scene, sparking his interest in the aesthetics of this escapist culture. The reflective tiles are made of the same materials as disco balls in clubs. The composition of these shifting, mirroring surfaces, hatches and bends held together by a square grid, mimic the experience of being in a state of delirium in a club.”

– Krisztián Gábor Török



Meta Paintings 27, 2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, wood, mirror plexi
128 × 88 cm



Meta Paintings 28, 2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, wood, mirror plexi
128 × 88 cm

Heartbreak Paintings

The *Heartbreak Paintings* are created out of three vertical gradient panels. Two are made with a special shrinking canvas, that by cutting on the edges creates curvy holes after being painted. Through these holes and the laser cutted metal sheet parts the works give us a see through into the inside, and to the mirror sheet behind.

„Highly intense emotional states play an important role in Nemes’ subject matter; in addition to the feeling of being dazed, he has recently begun a draw inspiration from less joyous experiences. The theme of this new series *Heartbreak Painting* is evident already in the title. The neon-coloured canvases of the triptych depart from the edge of the frame, just as the soul and heart shrink from distress. The third element of the installation is a laser-cut metal frame in the shape of Nemes’ recognisable intense brushstrokes, behind which a mirror sits, creating an enclosed image space. There is a strong duality within and between each section that makes for a highly charged composition with a sense both of joy and sorrow.”

– Krisztián Gábor Török



Heartbreak Paintings 06,
2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, steel, wood, mirror plexi, 144 × 108 cm



Heartbreak Paintings 07,
2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, steel, wood, mirror plexi, 144 × 108 cm



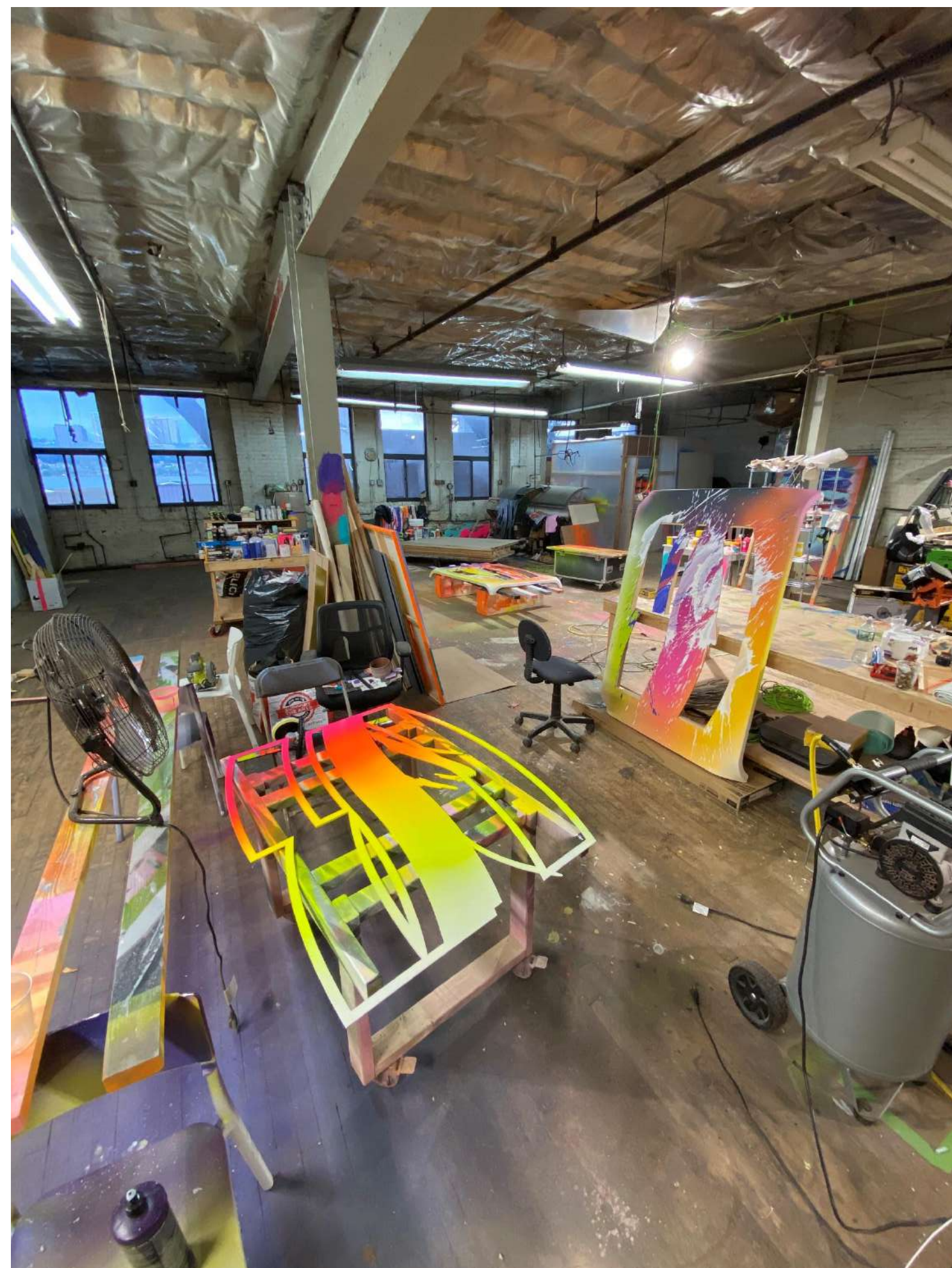
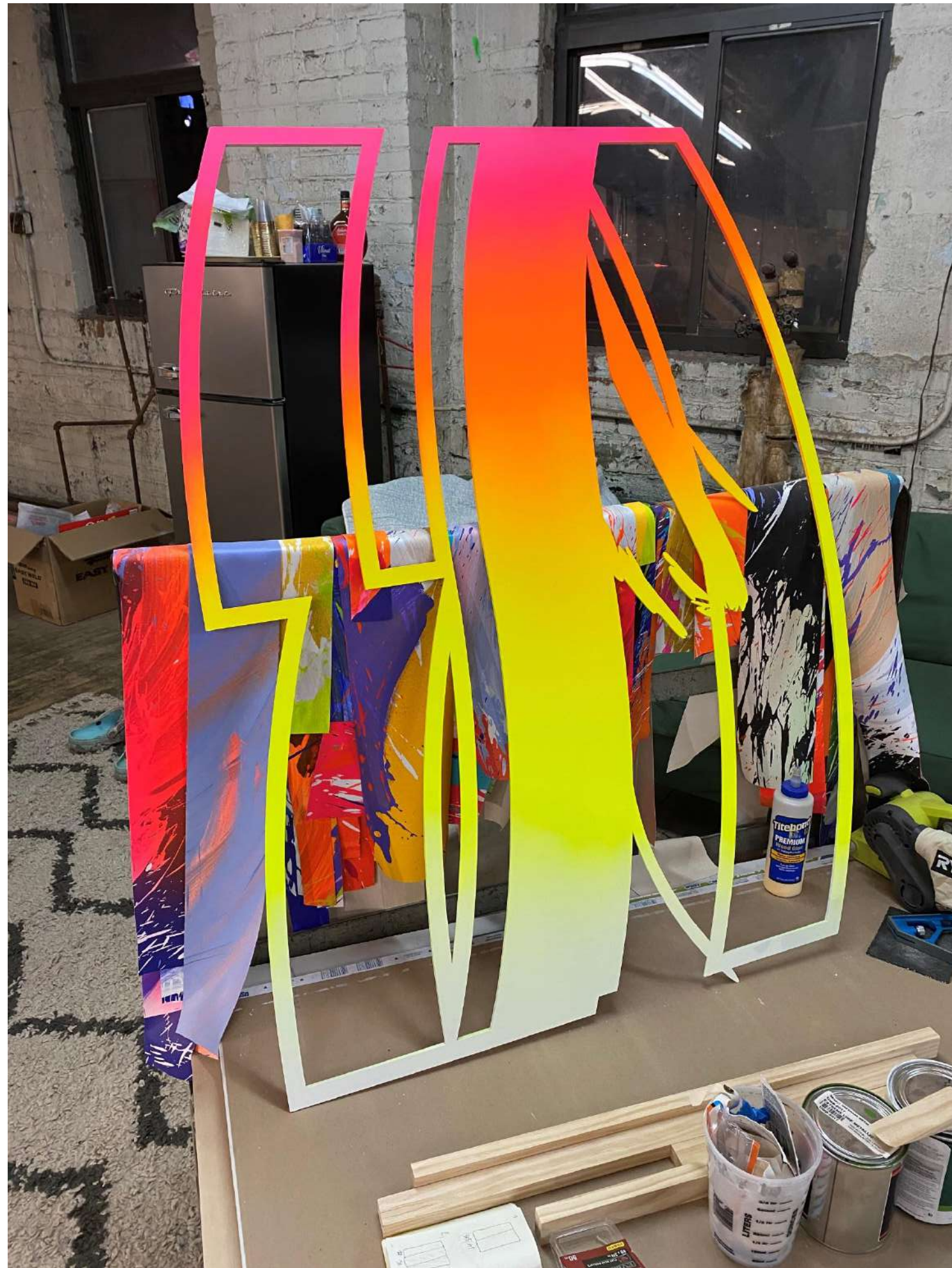
Superposed Paintings 01, 2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, wood, mirror plexi
165 × 121 cm

Superposed Paintings

These works are bending the surface into a circular shape on two corners on the top and the bottom of the pieces. The window cuts on the canvases are also curved and created from one circular gesture that is cut into half and quarter and mirrored into a dynamic composition. The works are presented on cnc cut wood board panels placed on a timber frame.

„The most characteristic examples of new abstract painting are the works of Márton Nemes [...]. [They] reflect on the legacy of painting in a post-digital world and can be situated in a broader context of Hungarian painting. They are [...] successors of an industrial type of abstract painting, represented by such artists as Imre Bak and Tamás Hencze. [...] Nevertheless, [his] primary reference and source of inspiration are not local, but international. The context of [his] experiments is defined by the works of such artists as Wade Guyton, Katharina Grosse, Thomas Scheibitz, Sterling Ruby, David Ostrowski, Michael Krebber, Sarah Morris, Peter Halley, Christopher Wool, Imi Knoebel, Jeff Elrod, Avery Singer, and others.”

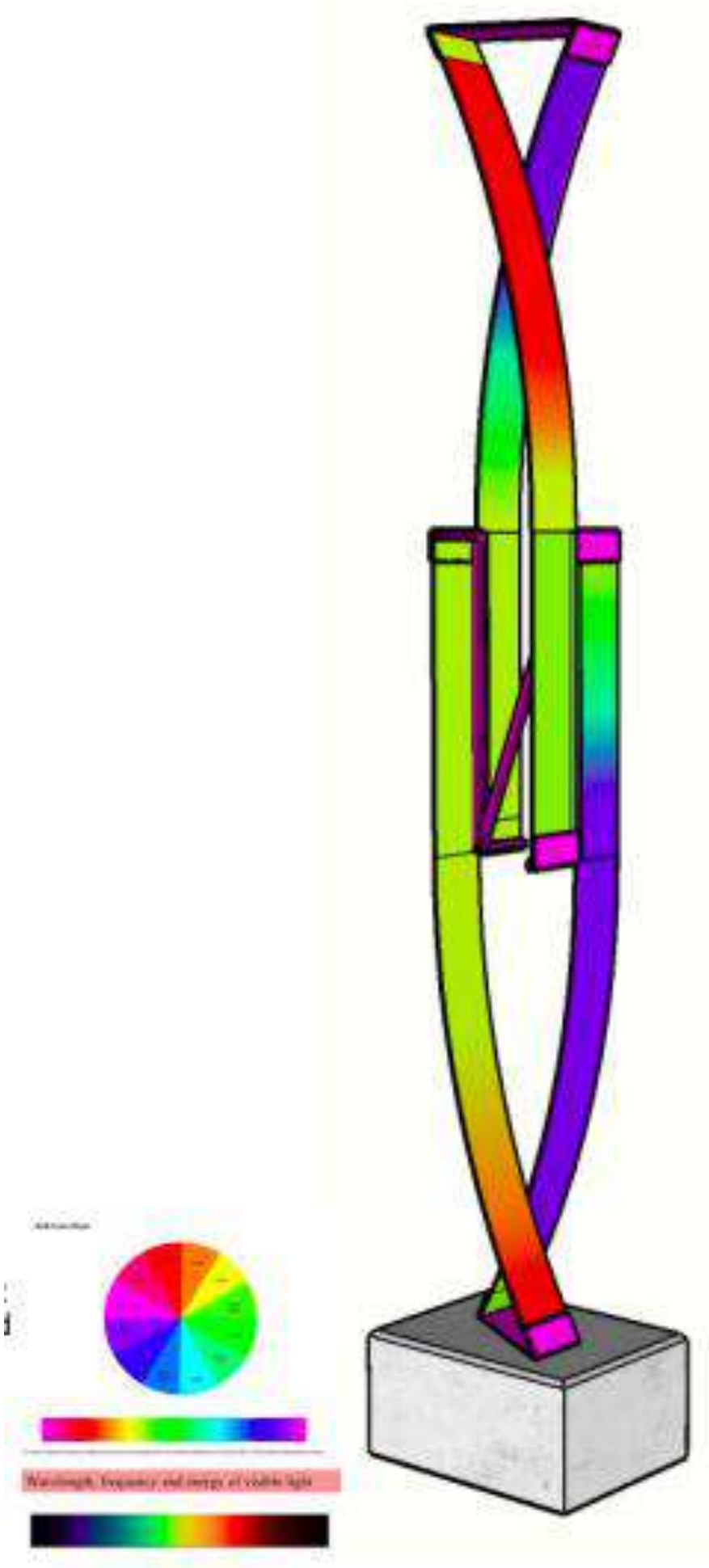
– Dávid Fehér



Superposed Painting 02, 2023, acrylic, canvas, laser cut steel, wood, mirror plexi
165 × 121 cm

Light of God

This sculpture is a continuation of a recent piece called *Bipolar*. In Celtic culture pink colour was considered as the colour of god. In the physical light spectrum the pink light doesn't exist. It is a mixed colour that we place between the red and violet connecting the linear colour spectrum to a circular continuous unity. Similarly the work uses pink metal elements to connect the linear gradient metal sheets into a curved continuation.



Bipolar 01, 2022, steel, powder coat, limestone, 202 × 33 × 44 cm



Razzle Dazzle 02, 2022, powder coated steel, car paint, 252 × 146 × 132 cm



acb Gallery

acbinfo@acbgaleria.hu
acbgaleria.hu
facebook.com/acbgaleria
instagram.com/acbgallery

+36 1 413 7608
H-1068, Budapest, Király utca 76.

acb

Contact

Róna Kopeczky

rkopeczky@acbgaleria.hu
+36 30 622 1502

Luca Adamik

adamik@acbgaleria.hu
+36 20 318 1588