

Jose Margulis: Perception as Practice



Jose Margulis works at the intersection of kinetic geometry, optical abstraction, and conceptual language — building a practice that is as philosophically rigorous as it is visually immediate. Based in Miami and represented internationally, Margulis has spent over a decade developing a body of work that refuses to separate intellectual inquiry from sensory experience. His pieces do not illustrate ideas about perception; they are perception, made structural and inhabitable.

At the core of Margulis's practice is a proposition: that depth is not a physical measurement but an internal distance. His works — layered constructions of acrylic, aluminum, and precisely applied paint — generate optical vibrations that shift with the viewer's position, never resolving into a fixed image. This instability is not a formal trick. It is the point. Like the quantum principle of complementarity, which holds that certain realities can only be understood as interdependent opposites, Margulis's forms exist in productive tension — solid and void, presence and absence, precision and flux — each completing the other in the relational space between them.

The Portholes series exemplifies this approach. Through concentric geometries and saturated color fields, each piece functions as a portal into dynamic color-space, producing optical phenomena that evolve continuously as the viewer moves. The work is always in the process of becoming — never static, never finished, activated anew by each encounter. What appears at first as decorative vibrancy reveals itself, on sustained looking, as a carefully constructed argument about the nature of seeing itself.

Margulis's text-based kinetic works extend this argument into the territory of language. Phrases repeated and layered across geometric structures — the darker the shadow, the brighter the light; perfection begins where it ends — dissolve into pure visual rhythm as the viewer approaches. The meaning does not disappear; it enters a state of suspension, oscillating between legibility and form. The viewer becomes aware, often for the first time, of the act of reading itself — that moment of metacognition where

perception turns back on itself and becomes its own subject. This is among the most sophisticated moves in Margulis's practice, and the one that most clearly distinguishes him from peers working in optical or kinetic abstraction alone.

His sculptural works — twisted towers of stacked geometric forms, ranging from intimate table-scale pieces to monumental outdoor installations — translate this same logic into three dimensions. Form is never singular here; it is always completed by its counterpart. The concave implies the convex. The void defines the solid. Meaning emerges not from any single shape but from the charged space between opposing forces.

What holds all three bodies of work together is not a shared aesthetic but a shared philosophy. Margulis operates from the conviction that structured form can feel alive — that geometry, far from being cold or closed, is a fluid language capable of carrying emotional weight, psychological resonance, and genuine presence. His work does not ask to be decoded. It asks to be inhabited. The experience it offers is not one of understanding but of awakening — a moment where the viewer feels, as Margulis himself has put it, more present, more curious, more awake.

Exhibited at Art Basel Week, SP-Arte, Abu Dhabi Art, and Moderne Art Fair Paris, and held in collections across four continents, Margulis's work has earned sustained international attention. His solo exhibition *Speaking Volumes*, presented at a museum in St. Petersburg, Russia — marking his first museum presentation and acquisition — and his ongoing representation through galleries in New York, Paris, Montreal, São Paulo, Seoul, and Philadelphia confirm a practice operating at the highest levels of the contemporary art world.

In an era increasingly mediated by data and digital spectacle, Margulis's work offers something rare: an encounter with perception itself, slowed down, made visible, and returned to the viewer as experience rather than information.