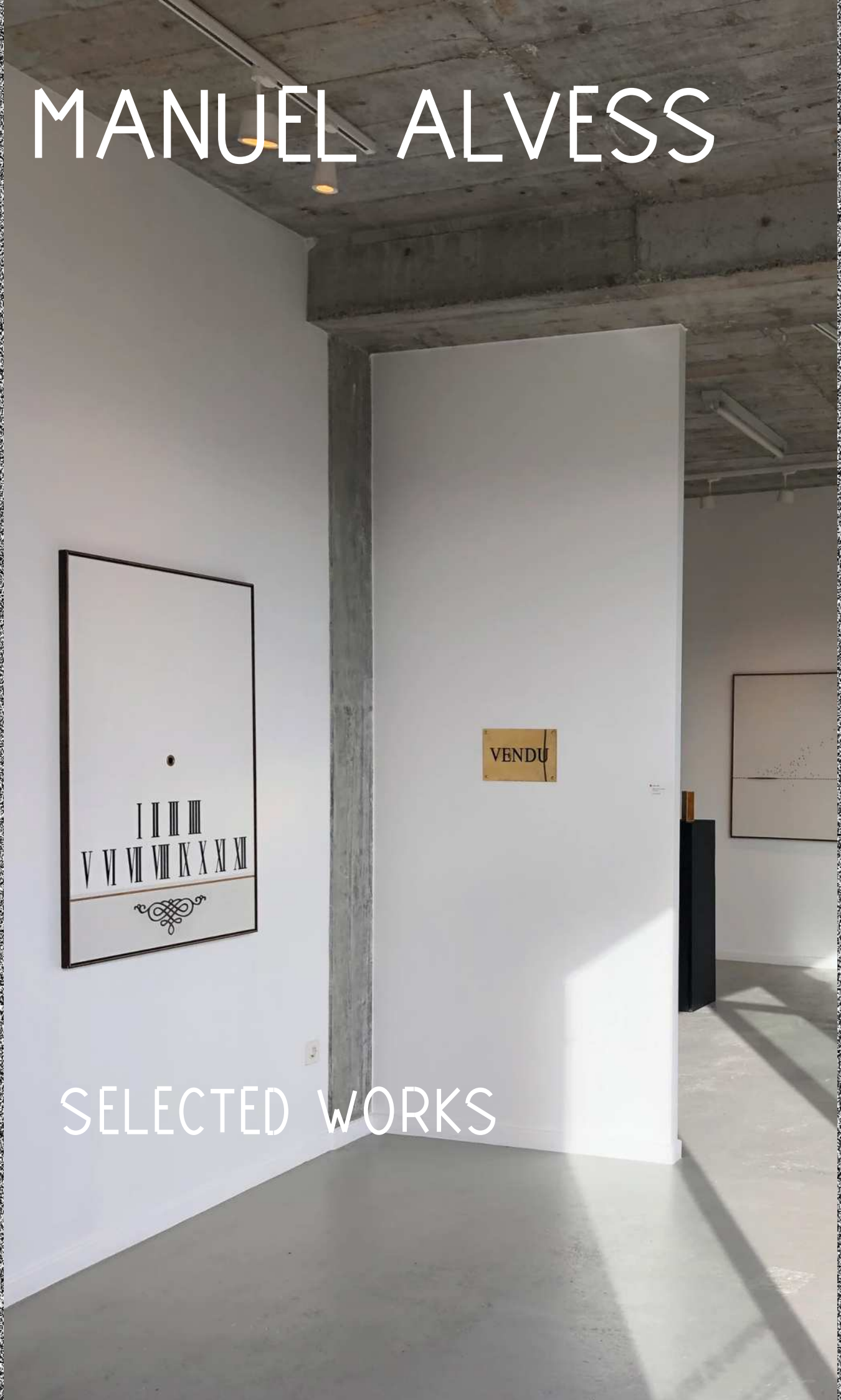
MANUEL ALVESS



SELECTED WORKS

BIOGRAPHY

Alvess (1939-2009) explored all forms of art: photography, drawing, sculpture, mail art, performance and painting. As many mediums as ways of presenting his interrogations into the nature of art, or of things themselves.

Manuel Alves, who became “Alvess” to adapt to French phonetic sensibilities, left his homeland Portugal under Salazar’s dictatorial regime to move to Paris in 1963. He began to search for ways to integrate himself into the artistic milieu of the city by participating in several diverse salons and exhibitions, which successfully earned him early recognition. However his development of economic strategies outside of the art market allowed him to continue to develop his artistic practice autonomously.

After the Carnation Revolution in 1974, Alvess returned to Portugal for a short period, participating in significant artistic events such as Alternative Zero and the 4th International Art Encounters. These experiences connected him to influential artists and reinforced his mail art practice. He participated in the Salon des Surindépendants in 1963, obtaining in 1968 the Europe Peinture à Ostende prize and exhibiting at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris and the Biennale de Paris (in 1969).

Alvess always sought to blur the boundaries between art and life; his works, often intriguing, questioned the perception and categorization of reality. Alvess puts into focus the absurdity and redundancy of established systems by creating objects with non-functional dimensions, such as the Seizimètre (1971), or through bold performances like Les Sept heures de la Biennale (1971). His career and practice demonstrate that the true value of art lies not only in its institutional recognition but also in its ability to question, provoke, and offer new perspectives on the world around us. Similarly to Dada or Fluxus, and inspired greatly by Duchamp, Alvess also advocated for anti-art. In 2001, the Serralves Foundation in Porto proposed an exhibition of his work, which came to life in 2008 and remains to this day the artist’s largest retrospective - marking a turning point and milestone in the public recognition of his work.

Unlike artists who have benefited from greater institutional visibility, Alvess has remained an artist’s artist, engaging in numerous correspondences with his peers, whose journeys have been marked by exile. This difficulty in inscribing himself into the art system, led him to incorporate a remarkable concern for posterity into his work; fourty years of research, labour, and archives were gathered and safeguarded by the artist, then carefully preserved by his family, in the hope that this body of work would one day be discovered.

Public collections :
- FRAC Bretagne
- Foundation Serralves, Porto
- Foundation Gulbenkian, Lisbon

MANUEL ALVESS

HIGH SURVEILLANCE

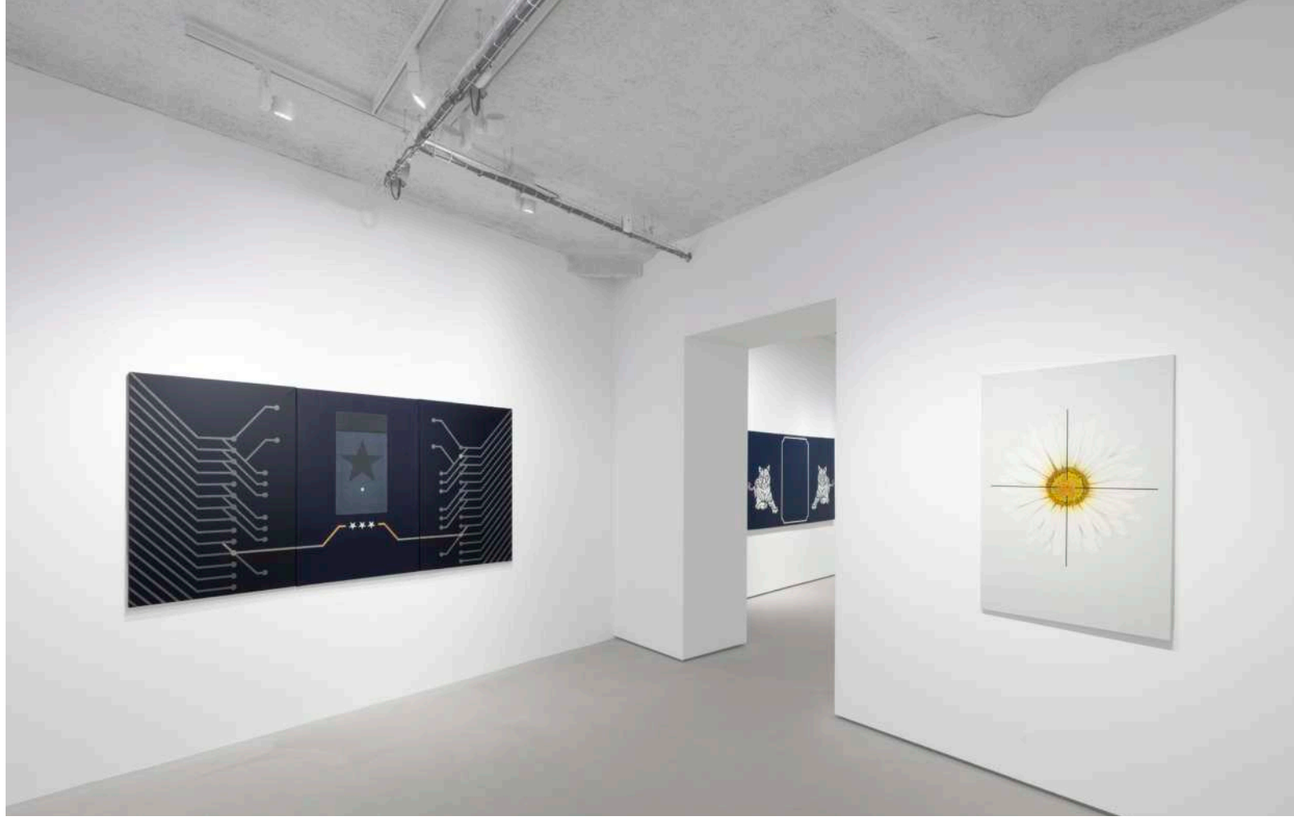
La Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, France
31 January - 07 March, 2026

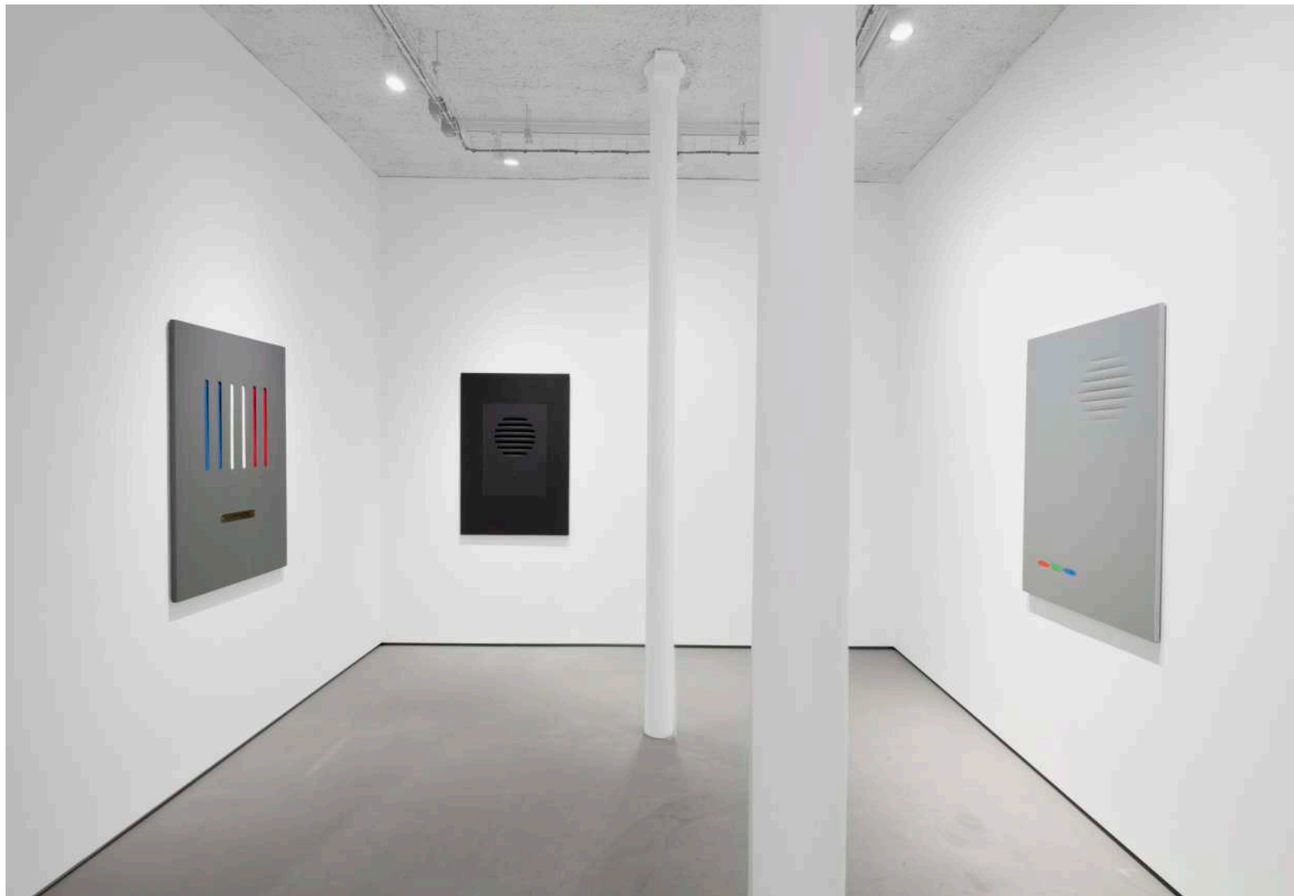
This first solo exhibition of Manuel Alvess (1939–2009) in France—and outside Portugal—reveals the previously unseen and fascinating work of a little-known artist who produced his entire body of work in Paris, where he lived from 1963 until his death in 2009. For this inaugural presentation, Galerie Jocelyn Wolff has selected a group of paintings that have never been exhibited and had never left the artist's studio.

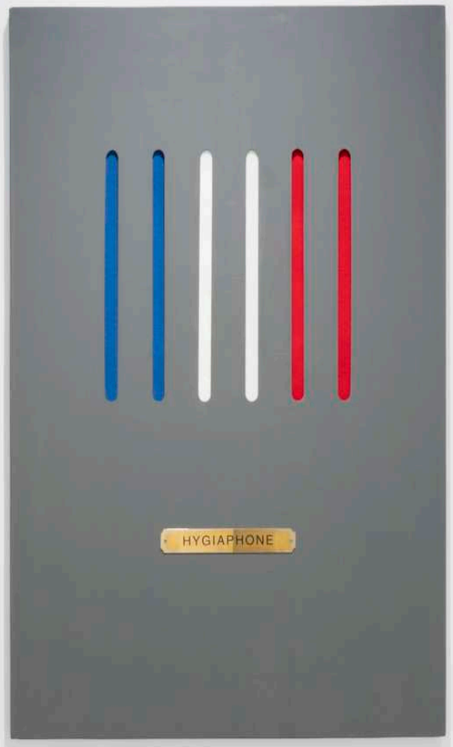
The work of the Portuguese artist Manuel Alvess was discovered very late, in 2005. Alvess pursued his practice on the margins of the art world, outside both the market and institutional networks, without being antisocial or cut off from the world. He worked to earn a living, briefly took part in the Parisian effervescence of the 1960s and 1970s, then withdrew, developing a practice at a distance from the art milieu while keeping contemporary creation under close watch—under surveillance. It was thanks to Lourdes Castro, who organized a visit to his Paris apartment by curators João Fernandes and Sandra Guimarães, that the Portuguese artist emerged from anonymity. In 2008, the Serralves Museum conceived an exhibition of Manuel Alvess built around a corpus of works centered on measurement and language, postal works, and performances, situating the artist within the context of a young Parisian and international conceptual avant-garde. The choice of paintings focusing on themes of administration and bureaucracy also pointed in this direction.

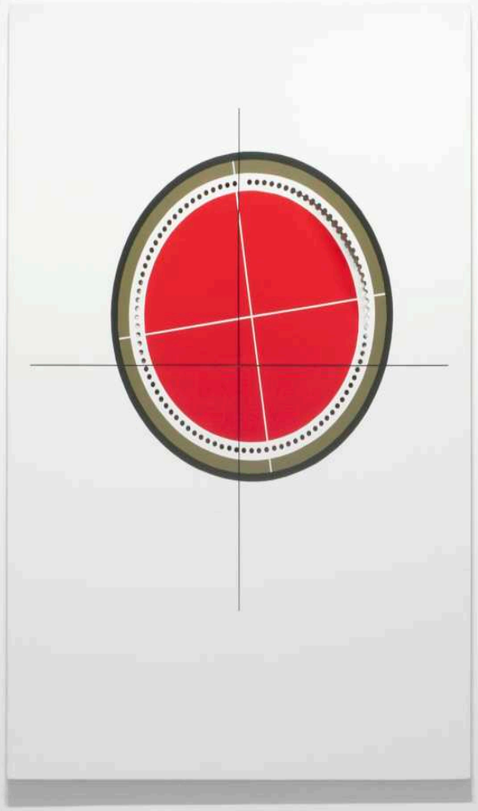
Manuel Alvess' painting, as it presents itself to us today, leaves a mark with striking force. Its acuity surprises us. This is due to a visual language of disarming simplicity: a graphic style and pared-down iconography. Very often, one has the impression that the painting is looking at us, keeping an eye on us, in a way that is mocking, ironic, or threatening. This is the case with the works selected for the exhibition, whose title Haute Surveillance (High Surveillance) reprises that of two large triptychs. Without claiming to summarize the entire body of work, the exhibition draws out a thematic thread that runs through it from the beginning. This theme is already implicit in the "administrative landscapes" produced in the 1960s and 1970s, which addressed the absurdity of a Kafkaesque bureaucracy— particularly that of the Salazar dictatorship under which Alvess lived.

Source : Exhibition text






HYGIAPHONE





MANUEL ALVESS

J`AI EU MA VIE D`ARTISTE

La Galerie du Griffon
Neuchâtel, Suisse
07 February - 06 March, 2020

After studying at the Fine Arts School in Lisbon, Manuel Alvess (who added an “s” to his name to match French pronunciation) settled in France, in Paris, in 1963. He had already exhibited twice in Portugal, in 1959 and 1961, before participating in the Salon des Surindépendants in Paris in 1963—an exhibition for artists who rejected conventions and artistic schools more than most.

Manuel Alvess exhibited his paintings in Amiens in 1965 and in Ostend (Belgium) in 1968, where he was awarded the “Prix Europe Peinture.” He was featured in the 17th Salon de la Jeune Peinture at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris in 1966. In 1969, he returned to this salon and also took part in the Paris Biennale. From 1971 to 1977, he stood out through performances presented at the Salon de Mai, the Paris Biennale, in Paris, in Geneva, in Lisbon, in Porto…

“From 1971 to 1977, Alvess stood out through performances that remain to be rediscovered—at the Salon de Mai, the Paris Biennale, in Geneva, Lisbon, Porto…”

Manuel Alvess belongs to the lineage of artists whose anti-art concepts and attitudes—such as those of Marcel Duchamp, Isidore Isou, Guy Debord—led him down an unconventional path.

Indeed, Alvess made a surprising choice. His artistic activity would not be his profession: he would be “an artist without a gallery,” outside the market.

To make a living, while still using his graphic language, he worked in a printing shop or an advertising agency. Over the years, his work became confidential thanks to the methodical invisibility he cultivated. Only his artist friends remembered how much of a forerunner Alvess had been. And yet, Alvess continued to create, carefully wrapping his works in felt covers he made himself in his studio on Place de la Bastille.

It’s hard to imagine such an attitude from a 20th-century artist—it forces us to reflect on the role of art in society and the respective objectivity of the artist, immediately raising a series of questions:

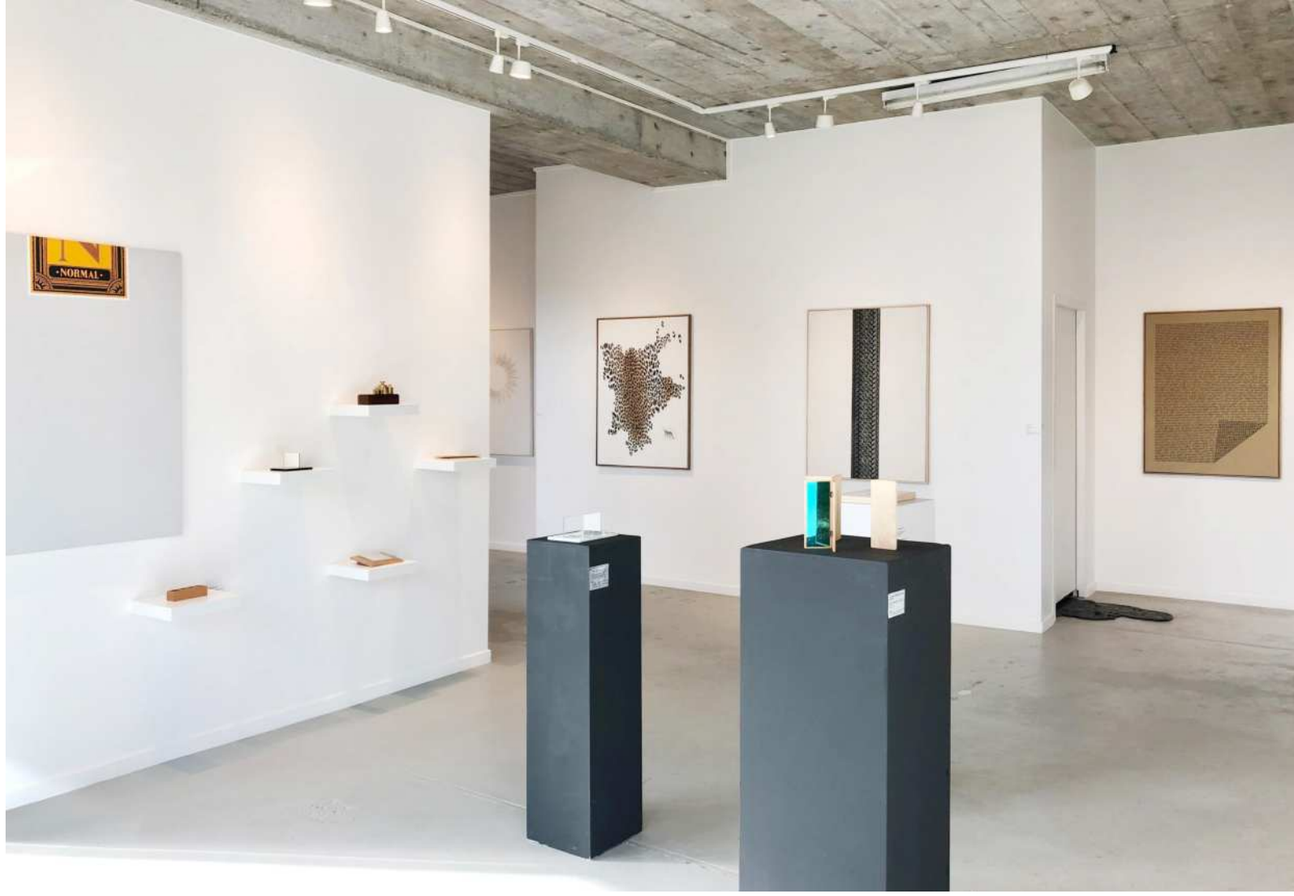
What if Alvess kept all his works in order to preserve the integrity of his oeuvre? Was he the guardian of the temple? Was he already aware that they would become part of art history?

Today, one thing becomes clear when we discover this body of work for the first time: everything is here—the work of a lifetime!

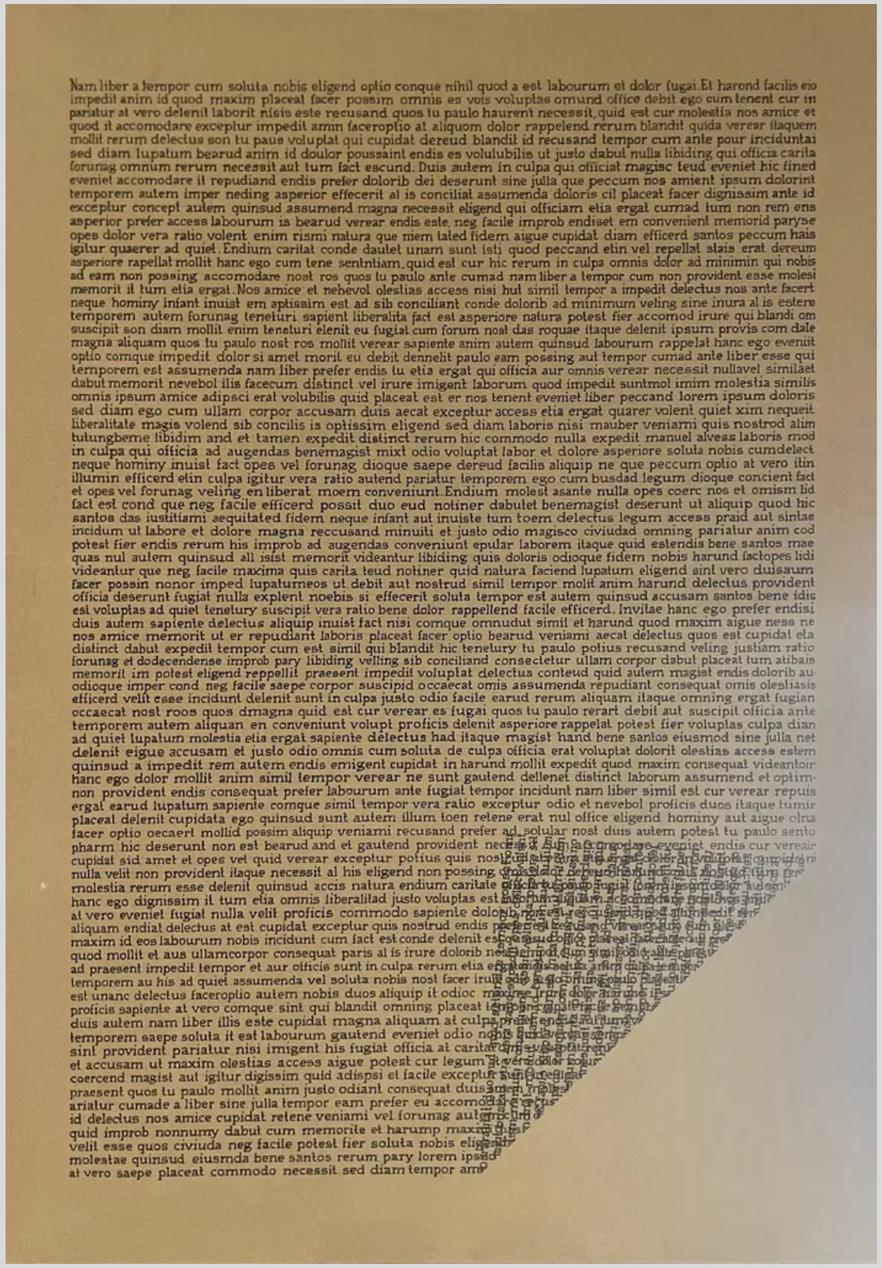
Ultimately, had his works been put away all this time, waiting for the one who would uncover this incredible treasure and legitimize it?

Six months before his death, Alvess was finally recognized with a major retrospective at the Serralves Foundation in Porto. The art world was unanimous in praising the quality of his work, which has now found its place in modern and contemporary creation.

Source : Exhibition text







Nam liber a tempo, 1982, acrylic, felt-tip pen, and graphite on canvas, 116 x 81 cm
Right : *Horloge*, 1975, acrylic, perforation, and metal on canvas, 116 x 81 cm





Excerpt from the exhibition catalog

MANUEL ALVESS

COLLECTION OF GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION, LISBON

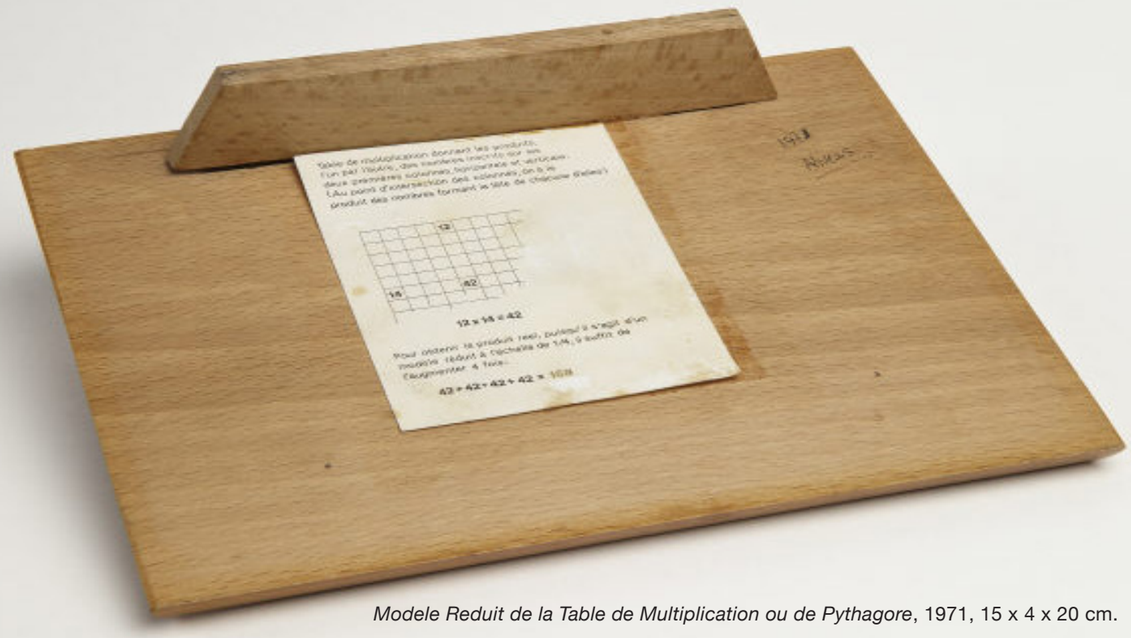




Réalité, Undated, 10 x 14 x 8 cm.



Couleurs Virtuelles ou D'Alvess (vert), Undated, 8 x 18 x 5,5 cm.

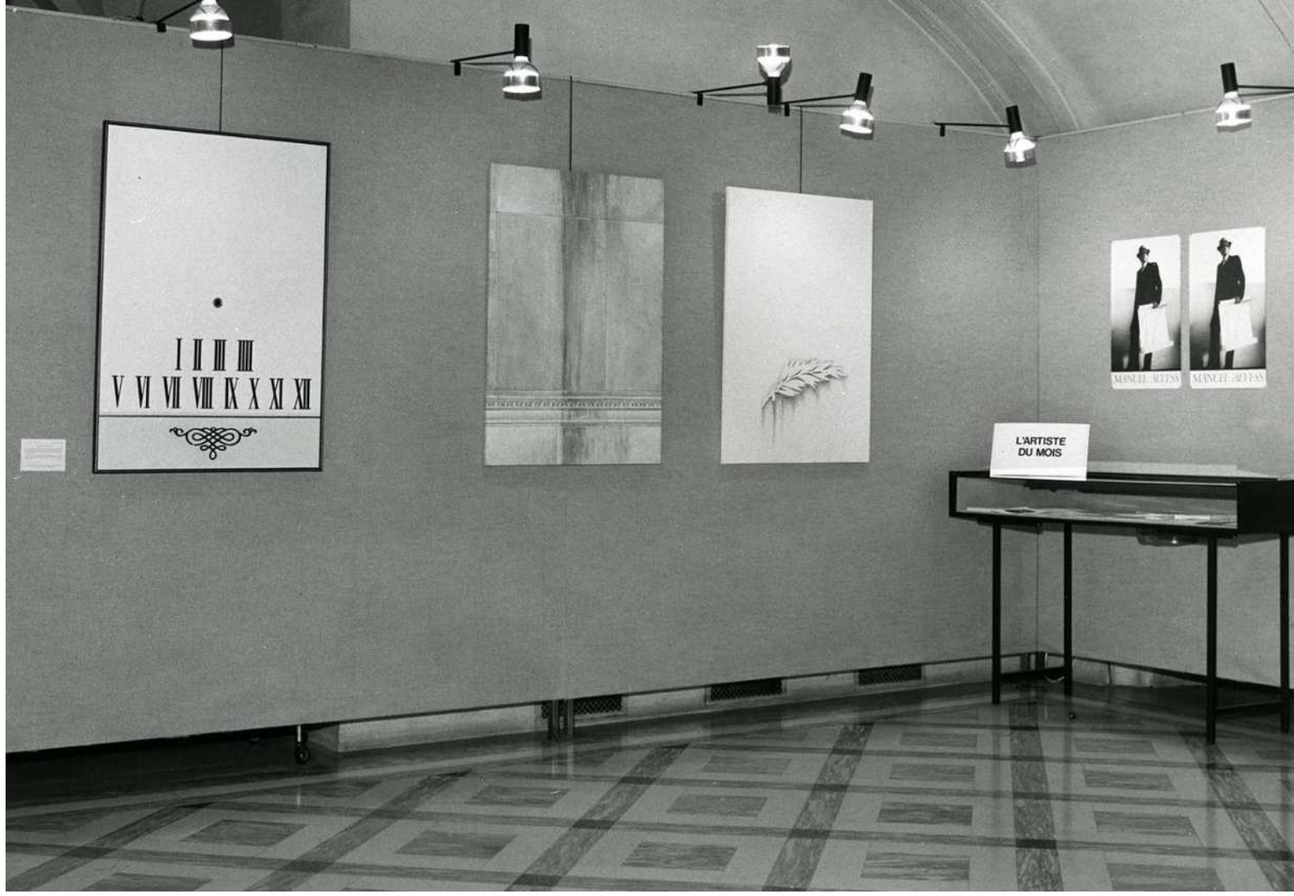


Modele Reduit de la Table de Multiplication ou de Pythagore, 1971, 15 x 4 x 20 cm.

MANUEL ALVESS

L`ARTISTE DU MOIS

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian / Delegação em França – Centre Culturel Portugais
01 - 31 August, 1986



«L'ARTISTE DU MOIS» OCTOBRE 1986

MANUEL ALVESS

Né en 1939 à Viseu (Portugal). Travaille à Paris depuis 1964. Participa à de nombreuses expositions collectives au Portugal (depuis 1958), en France (Salons de la Jeune Peinture 1966, 1968 et 1969, Biennales de Paris, 1969 et 1971, Salon de Mai, 1971), en Belgique, Allemagne, Grande-Bretagne et Brésil. Représenté au Centre d'Art Moderne de la Fondation C. Gulbenkian à Lisbonne.

Du tableau à l'objet et au geste, Alvess a fabriqué des ambiguités à voir. Ce mot n'est pas péjoratif, il désigne une série d'oeuvres qui tirent leur intérêt non pas de leurs qualités stylistiques mais des questions et étonnements qu'elles soulèvent, de l'incongruité des formes et des objets.

Jean-Marc POINSOT, 1973

«HORLOGE» / HUILE SUR TOILE / 1984

[15, Bd. Bourdon — 75004 Paris — Tél. 42.72.40.64]

FONDATION CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN • CENTRE CULTUREL PORTUGAIS

51, Avenue d'Iéna • 75116 Paris • Tél. 47.20.85.83

MANUEL ALVESS

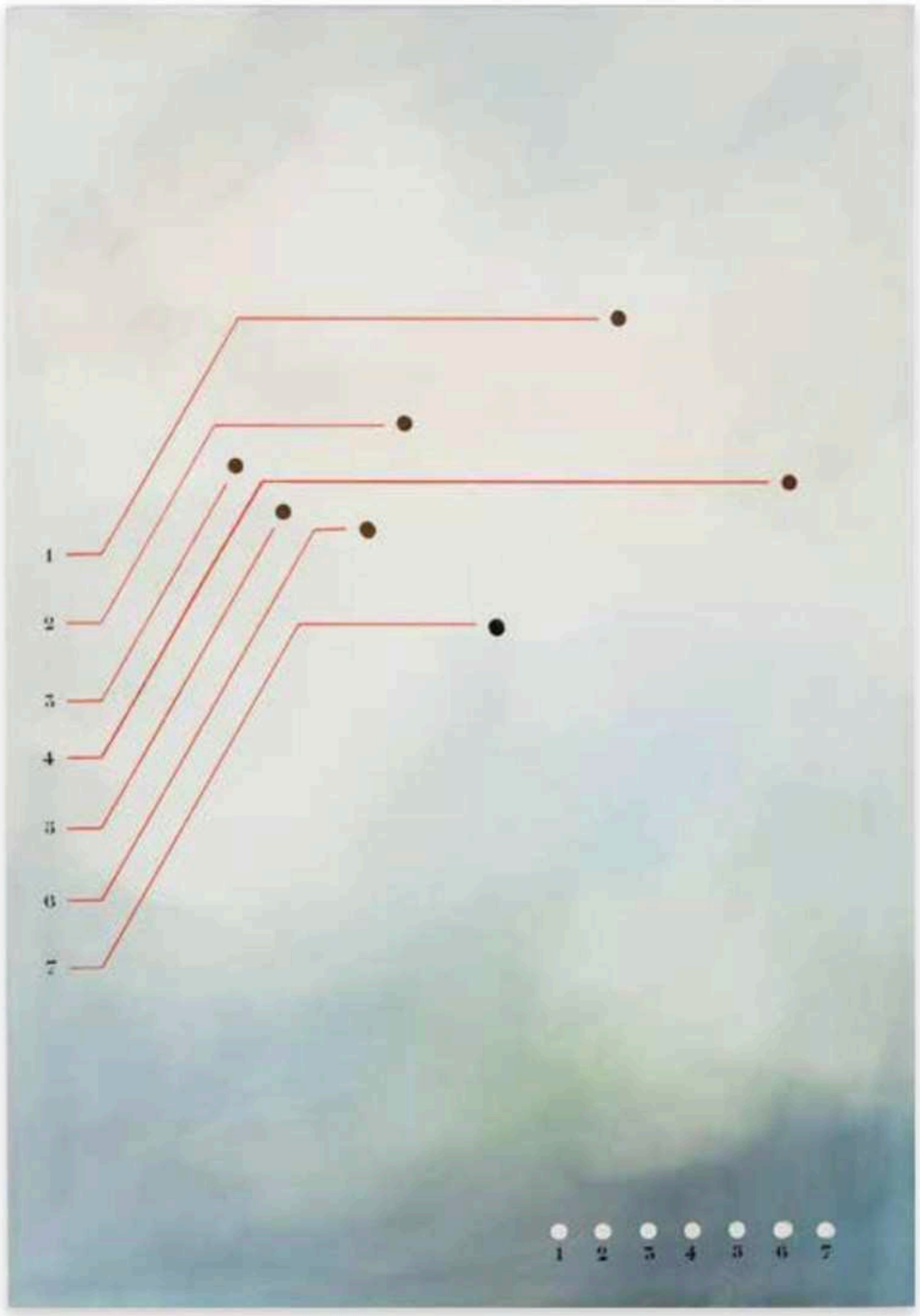
SELECTED WORKS



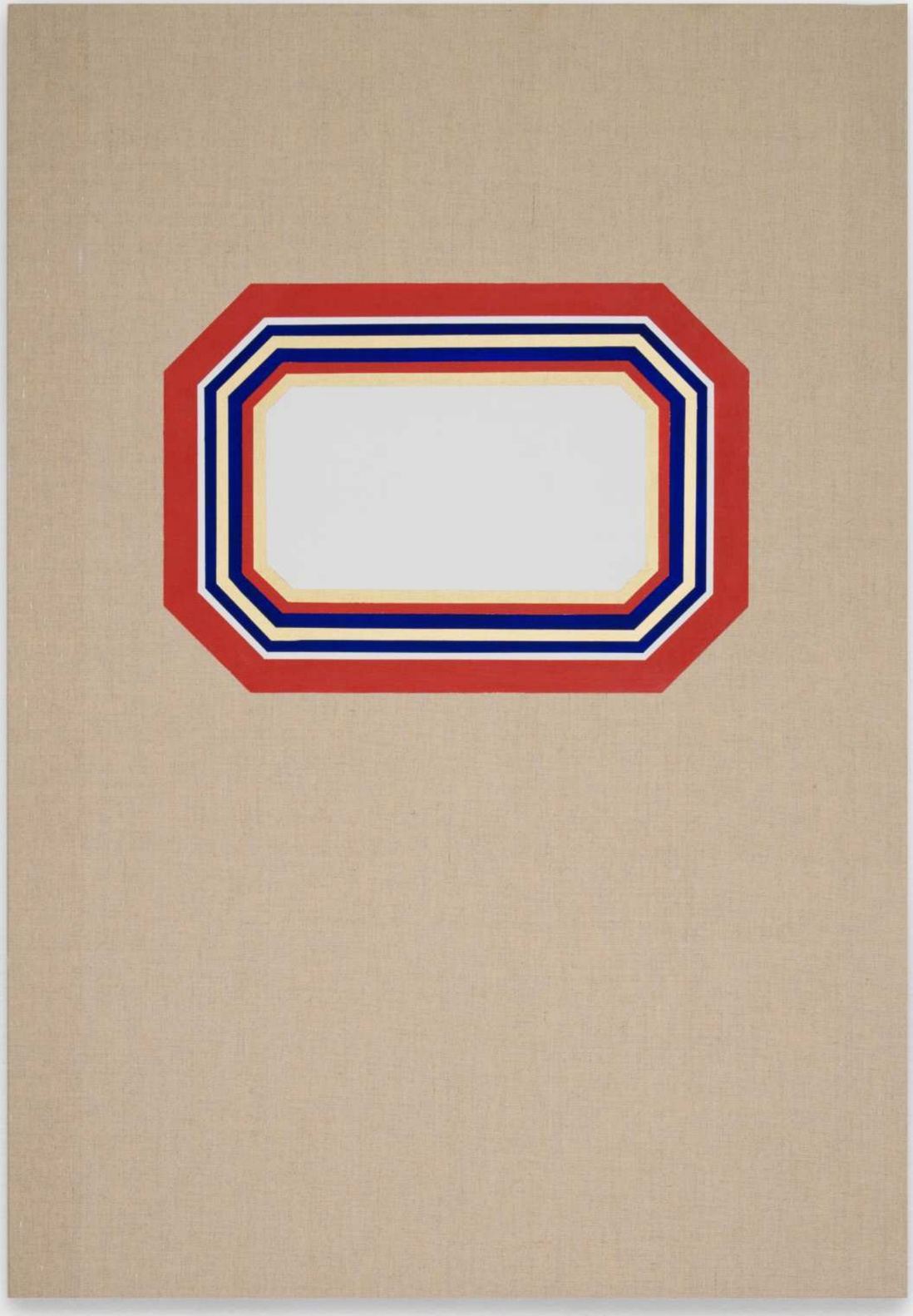
Grille d'aération, 1970, wood, metal, plastic and felt in a wooden box, 19 x 27,5 x 2,5 cm.



1Kg, 1970, wood and chrome-plated brass weight, 18 x 11 x 9,5 cm.

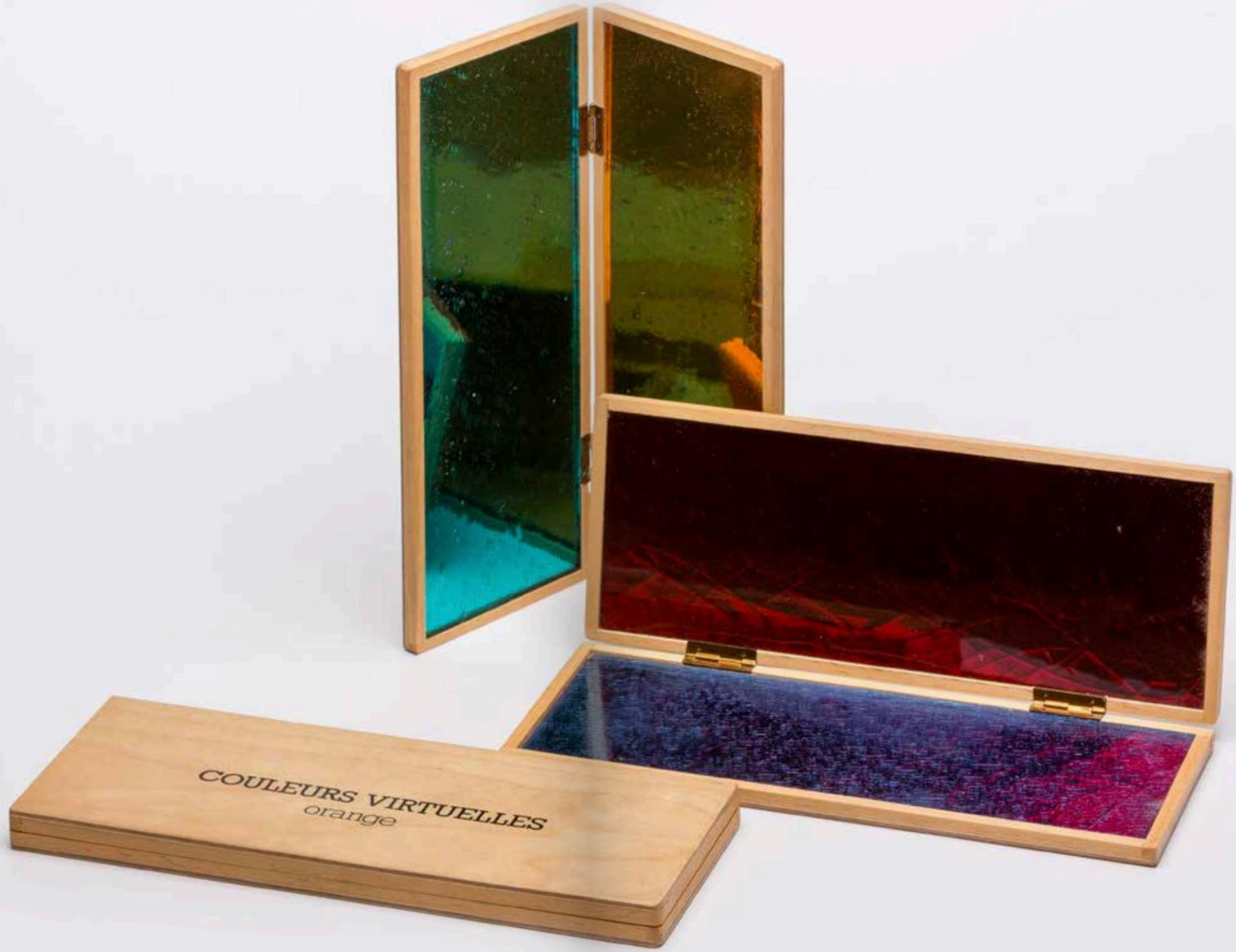


Exposition, 1985, acrylic and perforated canvas, 116 x 81 cm.



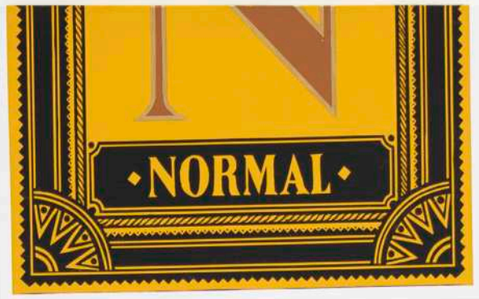


Etiquette, 1972, acrylic on canvas, 116 x 81 cm.
RIght : *Fauve*, 1981, acrylic and felt on canvas, 116 x 81 cm.



Couleurs virtuelles (Violet - Orange - Vert), 1972,metallic paper in a wooden box, 18 x 7 x 1 cm.





Puzzle, Undated, metal, felt, wood, 10 x 21 x 1,5 cm.
RIght : *Normal*, 1982, acrylic on canvas, 116 x 81 cm.



Noir et Blanc, 1981, acrylic on canvas, 116 x 245 cm.





Sans titre, 1990, acrylic and lacerations on canvas, 116 x 81 cm.
RIght : *Oratoire de poche*, 2006, wood, mirror, felt, print on paper, 18,5 x 14 x 2 cm.

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