

# SATURATION POINT

The online editorial and curatorial project for reductive, geometric and systems artists working in the UK

ABOUT

**Interview with Sinta Tantra by Tim Barnes**

REVIEWS

March 2018

INTERVIEWS

**TB:**

Can colour be considered a basic form of communication? Of course, we are charmed by the vividness and evocative characteristics of colour, but isn't this usually a short and fleeting sensation? Can colour alone conjure a deeper form of experience?

VIEWPOINTS

**ST:**

Sometimes in life, it is the most fleeting sensations that create the deepest forms of memory. For example, our childhood memories are often sensations such as smell, touch, taste: for me, it was spending summer months in Bali, swimming in rivers, riding on the back of a motorbike, the vivid green of padi fields, bright blue skies and the pinks and golds of ceremonial clothes of Balinese women.

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Peter Zumthor, the Swiss architect, writes about memory in terms of architectural spaces. He recalls turning a particular door knob in his grandmother's home as a child. Memory is founded on sensory experience, uniquely individual to all of us. Of course, this means our memories are often romanticised versions of fleeting sensations, but that's also the wonderful thing about them; they allow you the freedom to enrich and embellish the past, while giving you a language to express your sense of self.

Website: Chestnuts Design



Flatland, a romance of many dimensions (Edwin A. Abbott), 2016. 374 x 350 cm. Mixed media (painted mural, 24 ct gold, found print dated 1887, mirror shelf, printed poem by Frank O'Hara 'Why I am not a painter')

**TB:**

The arena you often choose to exhibit in is the inner city where there's often a mass movement of people. Inset into the grey, concrete jungle, these installations leap out like pulsing colour poems, born out of mundane surroundings. Considering things like rhythm and the cyclical nature of day-to-day life, do these artworks offer something exotic or perhaps even something that moves us towards a shared and fundamental understanding?

**ST:**

That's a really nice way of describing my works: "colour poems, born out of mundane surroundings". I do often think about the formal elements of composition, both musical and literary, and how they relate to painting in terms of colour, shape and form.

The nature of public art blurs the boundaries between the disciplines of art, design and architecture. How does our perception of art change when it is presented in an urban environment? How does a wall painted by an artist differ to one that is whitewashed? These are not gallery walls, these are walls that are passed by hundreds of people every day, who might not look twice at them. Injecting artwork in these spaces is not necessarily about injecting an 'exoticism' or an idealism. It's about making people conscious of their shared urban environments, using colour to change spatial perception, questioning the spaces in which they live.



*Flatland, a romance of many dimensions, 2016*

**TB:**

Might these urban interventions allude to some sort of social order or yearn for a community synchronised with its surroundings?

**ST:**

Yes, of course, there's a desire to see how art can improve the urban environment and how we inhabit it. Public art is fundamentally an act of place-making, and much of my work is founded upon research into the community; its site, history and identity. I suppose you could describe my work as an attempt at synchronicity rather than disruption. I want my work to encapsulate something of the familiar, while offering an element of the unexpected.



*Fantastic / Chromatic, 2016*

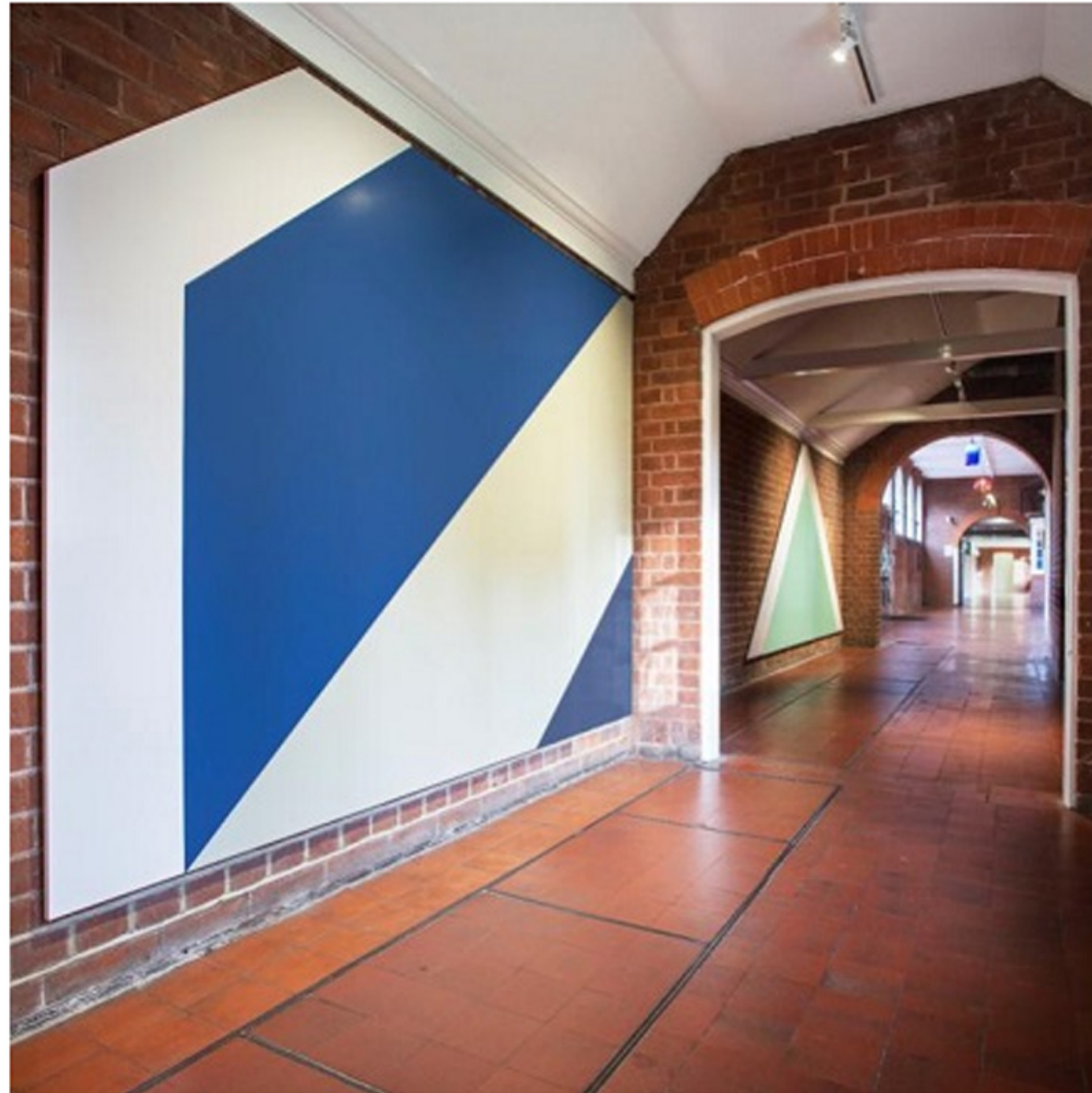
**TB:**

When creating work in public spaces, it seems you are actively meeting the viewer on their own terms, in their space, catching commuters off guard. It must feel refreshing, to break out of the gallery format? Also, there must be an enormous amount of organisation, planning and preparation invested into such big and ambitious projects in public spaces. Is *this* an aspect of your work which you find interesting as well?

**ST:**

I like the idea of catching commuters and viewers off guard. I think my work has always been concerned with trying to turn the white cube space inside out. Even as a student at art school, I was always painting on walls and floors, and was looking to develop a practice that was independent of the traditional gallery-artist relationship. With the rise of globalisation and internet culture, I saw that the role of the artist was changing: artists had to become both more entrepreneurial and socially responsible.

Of course, working on projects of an ambitious scale is challenging, but it's also very exciting. I actually started out my career as a curator and educator, so it's been great to be able to bring these skills into my practice. Working in the public realm means I encounter people from all walks of life. It's not for every artist, but I find it keeps me grounded, and makes me reflect critically on what I do and why I do it.



**TB:**

For the 2012 commission, *A Beautiful Sunset Mistaken for a Dawn*, where you've painted the Canary Wharf DLR bridge, what were the main challenges of working on a project of this size?

**ST:**

At 300 metres long, Canary Wharf bridge is still one of the largest paintings I've done. It was among the first handful of commissions, and very daunting due to the architectural scale of it all: how do I create a dynamic painting on this long, thin stretch of canvas, amongst the surrounding skyscrapers? How do commuters walk around it? How do trains ride above it? How do cars travel beneath it? At only 2 metres high and panoramic in format, the angles and shapes that could be designed were extremely limited.

To overcome all of this, I focused on colour, and how colour can heighten our awareness of the world outside the office space. I recorded a 24hour time-lapse film studying the sunrise and sunset, and aimed to embed the concept of nature within the man-made environment. It was important for me to make an artwork that somehow responds to different seasons and the changing light throughout the day: blues, greys and greens for daytime, pinks and purples for night.

**TB:**

Thank you, Sinta.



*A beautiful sunset mistaken for a dawn*, 2012. Paint on steel, 3 x 300m approx

