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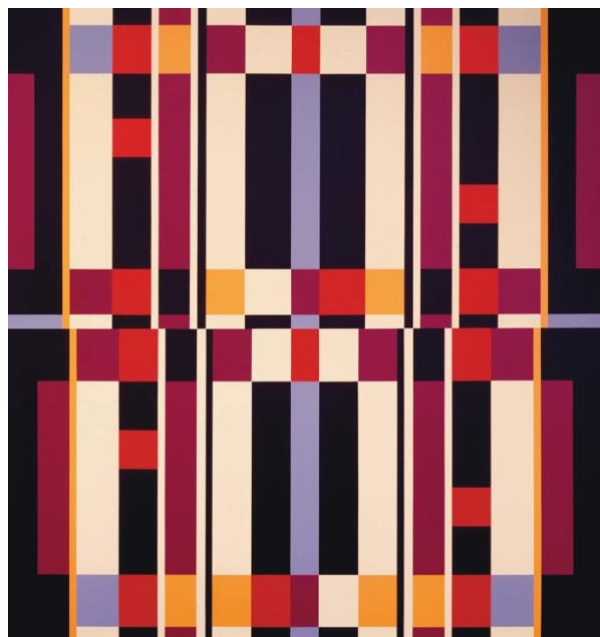
The Mesmerizing, Hard-Edge Paintings of Fanny Sanín

June 27, 2025 | By Jillian Steinhauer, Brian Seibert, Helen Shaw, Sheldon Pearce, Jane Bua, Richard Brody, and Rachel Syme

The Colombia-born artist **Fanny Sanín** has lived and worked in New York since 1971, but she has never had a museum survey in the city. Unfortunately, such neglect isn't unusual for a Latin American woman, but in Sanín's case it may also be a product of her style: geometric abstraction. She makes colorful, hard-edge compositions of lines and shapes. They're the kind of paintings that had their heyday in the nineteen-sixties but haven't been in vogue since (except for the revival of another Latin American woman painter, Carmen Herrera, in the early to mid-two-thousands).

Americas Society's "**Fanny Sanín: Geometric Equations**" (through July 26), curated by the art historian Edward J. Sullivan, is far from a full-on retrospective, but it's a great step toward bringing her mesmerizing paintings into wider view.

Sanín studied art in Bogotá, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and London—and lived in Monterrey, Mexico—before settling in New York. You can trace connections between her work and that of predecessors ranging from Piet Mondrian (Dutch) and Frank Stella (American) to Lygia Clark (Brazilian) and Carlos Rojas (Colombian). But after experimenting briefly with Abstract



"Acrylic No. 3," from 1974. Art work by Fanny Sanín;
Photograph by William H. Titus

Expressionism, Sanín developed a painting language that remains entirely her own. You can observe its hallmarks and evolution in this show.

Sanín's works are all color and form; there's no white space or perspective, no attempt at optical illusions. She initially focussed on vertical stripes of different widths, then complicated things by introducing rectangles and blockier forms—and, eventually, triangles and diagonals. Her compositions are often symmetrical but rarely simple: paintings such as "Acrylic No. 3" (1974) and "Acrylic No. 1" (2024) keep your eye moving around. Sanín's palette, especially, is remarkable: she mixes the hues herself, creating hybrid, in-between shades whose appearances are continually surprising within her rigid format.

All this speaks to Sanín's masterful ability to create harmony out of tension. Her paintings are a delight to look at, with pleasure arising from the complex interplay of colors—say, black against red against orange—or subtle variations in adjoining geometric shapes. It's no wonder that Sanín makes many preparatory studies, some of which are on display: her work is exacting. But the feat is that it's also affective—out of meticulousness she creates an abundance of feeling.—*Jillian Steinhauer*