

ALEXANDRU CHIRA
STEREOPOEMS

June 30 - July 29, 2023

FITZPATRICK GALLERY
123, RUE DE TURENNE
PARIS

F I T Z P A T R I C K

PRESS RELEASE

Alexandru Chira (1947-2011) studied painting in Cluj and Bucharest between 1966 and 1972, during a brief window of cultural acceptance sanctioned by the Romanian Communist regime. Immediately following Nicolae Ceausescu's accession to power in 1965, and shortly after the re-Stalinization following his visits to China and North Korea in 1971, culture and arts flourished with an influx of Western influences. Pop art, abstraction, photorealism, land art, conceptualism, performance art, and environmental art became by-words for innovation and were rapidly assimilated into the local art scene, leaving behind the loathed Socialist Realism.

Like his colleagues, Chira was initially schooled in a realist vein. Yet, like most of the ambitious younger artists of the time, he soon embraced new languages and practices. He faced the same conundrum of making progressive art in an increasingly regressive and repressive milieu. Chira fused together neo-avant-garde means and practices, ranging from abstraction, conceptualism, installations, land art, and film, with contrasting, conservative outlooks, like the cryptic or mystical ritualism placed at the very core of his system.

The resulting, contradictory mixture of apparently research-oriented, complex, and systematic work with evanescent visions of outlandish, uncharted territories of archaic decompensation marks his unique output of crystal-clear forms saturated with foggy, bewildering gist.

His mythological and utopian universe is rooted in tradition but presented with a unique visual idiom: a personal world recurrent with key figures derived from his childhood in the countryside. They echo age-old landmarks of dwelling, laboring, and dreaming: houses, barns, tractors, threshers, seed beds, fountains, windows, mirrors, lamps, and spindles. Brimful lyricism fills the gaps between crisp, rigorous shapes

and fuzzy, nostalgic senses. No wonder that despite their sophisticated symbols and geometries, the works frequently seem to convey abstracted portraits: lips, noses, mouths, and ears are easily discernible.

Chira's idiosyncratic iconography paraphrases farm life, but it also reflects communist propaganda centered on the industrial progress in agriculture: technical machinery substitute the objects of religious life. The village yard as an "autarchic existential cell" functions for Chira as a "gear poem" to conjure "rain and rainbows" for "spiritual germination", and fight against extinction. Self-referenced, his work displays mythological symbols vested as rational schemes. Gem-like, peculiar geometries radiate an oneiric, hermetic appeal, recalling the mandala constructions of Hilma af Klint or Adolf Wölfli, and Joseph Cornell's surrealist montages.

Stereopoems maps the becoming of Chira's work. From the realist and almost narrative, horizontal construction of *Bell of the Riot - Nest-Bell - Mechanical - Poem* (1977), with its utterly recognizable human figures and engineering or laboring instruments reflecting the progressive pageantry of communist propaganda, up until the later, iconic altar-piece-like, rhombus-shaped *Geometer's House - Study for Tele-Poem* (1990), with its synthetic rendering of an exclusively ego-centric ritual focused on the striking, experimental use of polenta as painting medium, one can follow the astounding process of extracting sheer originality and compelling aesthetic quality out of conflicting dogmas and depleted, but transfigured, artistic practices, mirroring Romania's tortuous cultural history.

– Erwin Kessler

PRESS RELEASE

Alexandru Chira (*1947, Tauseni, Romania - +2011, Bucharest, Romania) was an artist and Professor at the Painting Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Bucharest National University of Arts. When his home village Tauseni suffered a yearlong drought during the 1990s Chira started to elaborate sophisticated land-and-weather improving art equipment, a series of symbolic installations of painted metal, wire and concrete for the invocation of rain and rainbows. The ensemble *De-signs towards the sky for the rain and the rainbow* (1994-2004) is located on a hill in the middle of the village, surrounded by other hills and divided into eighteen sub-ensembles.

Chira's works have been presented in the context of various exhibitions, including the Lisbon Architecture Triennale, Palácio Sinel de Cordes, Lisbon; The Sao Paolo Biennial Art Exhibition, Sao Paolo; The Visual Arts Museum, Galati; and The National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC), Bucharest, which presented a retrospective of the artist in 2015.

The first major publication of Chira's work was released in December 2022, and features essays in Romanian, with translations in English, by Ionut Cioana, Diana Marincu, Alexandra Titu, Calin Dan, and Marina Ionescu.

Stereopoems is the first exhibition of Chira's work in France, and the first time the work has been presented by Fitzpatrick Gallery.

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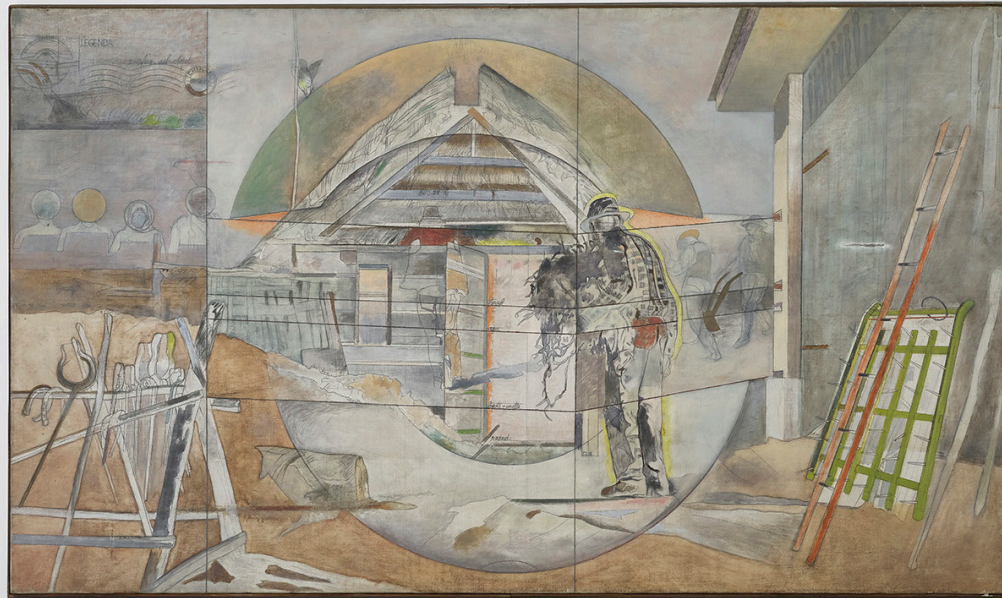
Alexandru Chira
Stereopoems, 2023
Exhibition view
Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris

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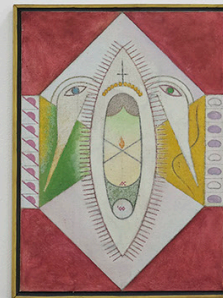
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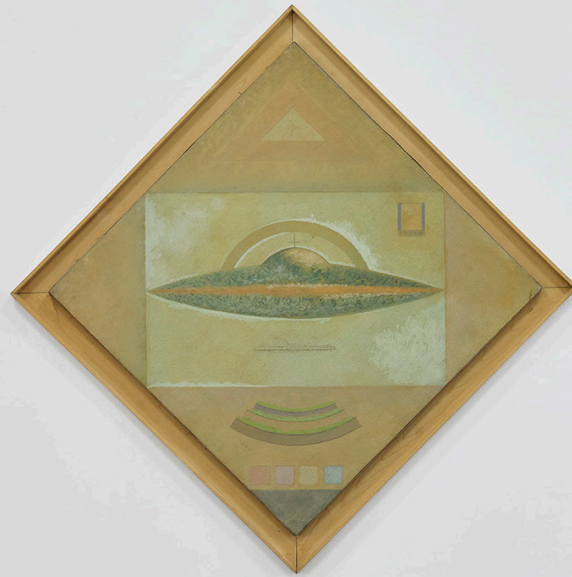


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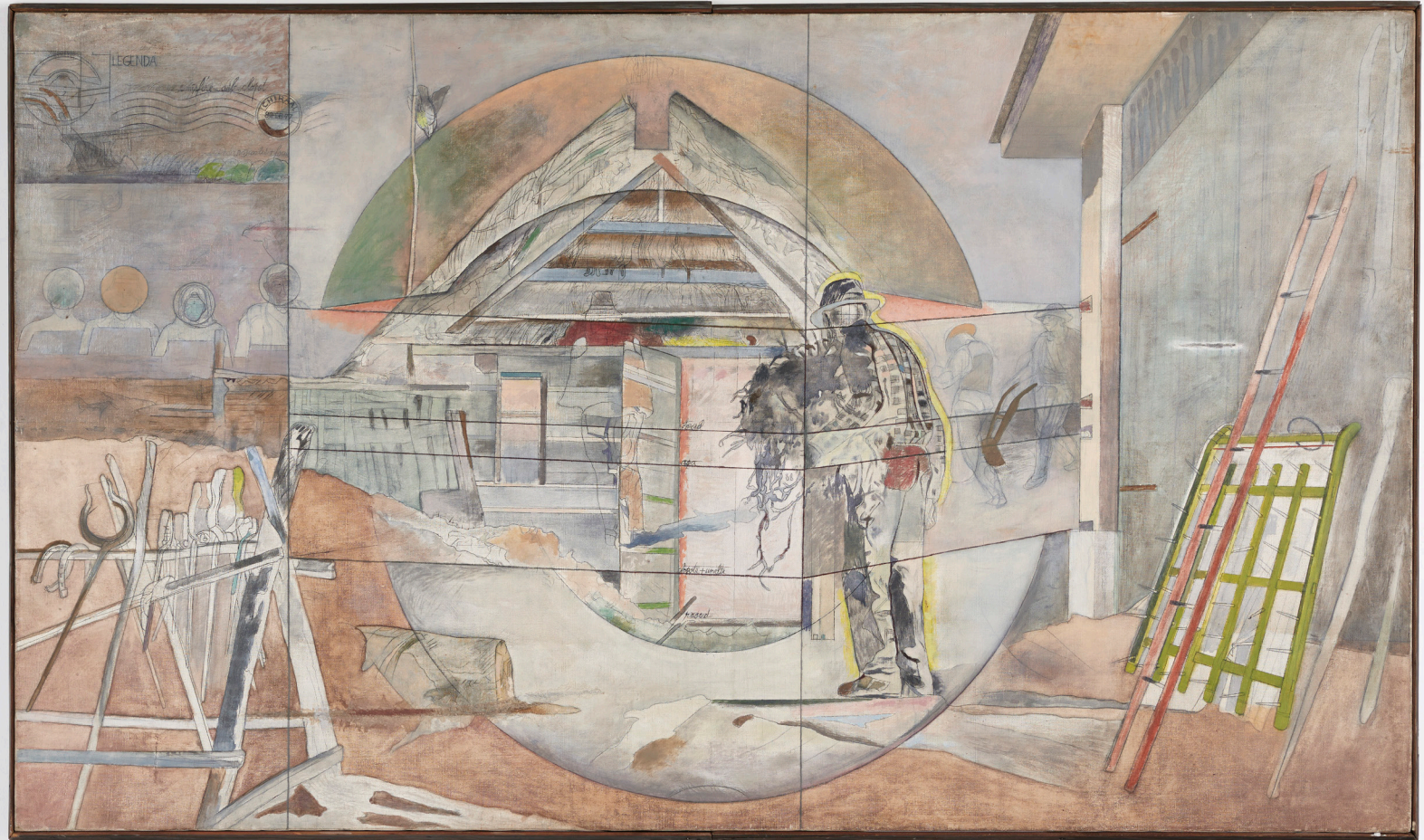
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Alexandru Chira
Bell of the Riot - Nest-Bell - Mechanical - Poem, 1977
Signed and dated
Oil, ink and pencil on canvas
115 x 196 cm
45 1/4 x 77 1/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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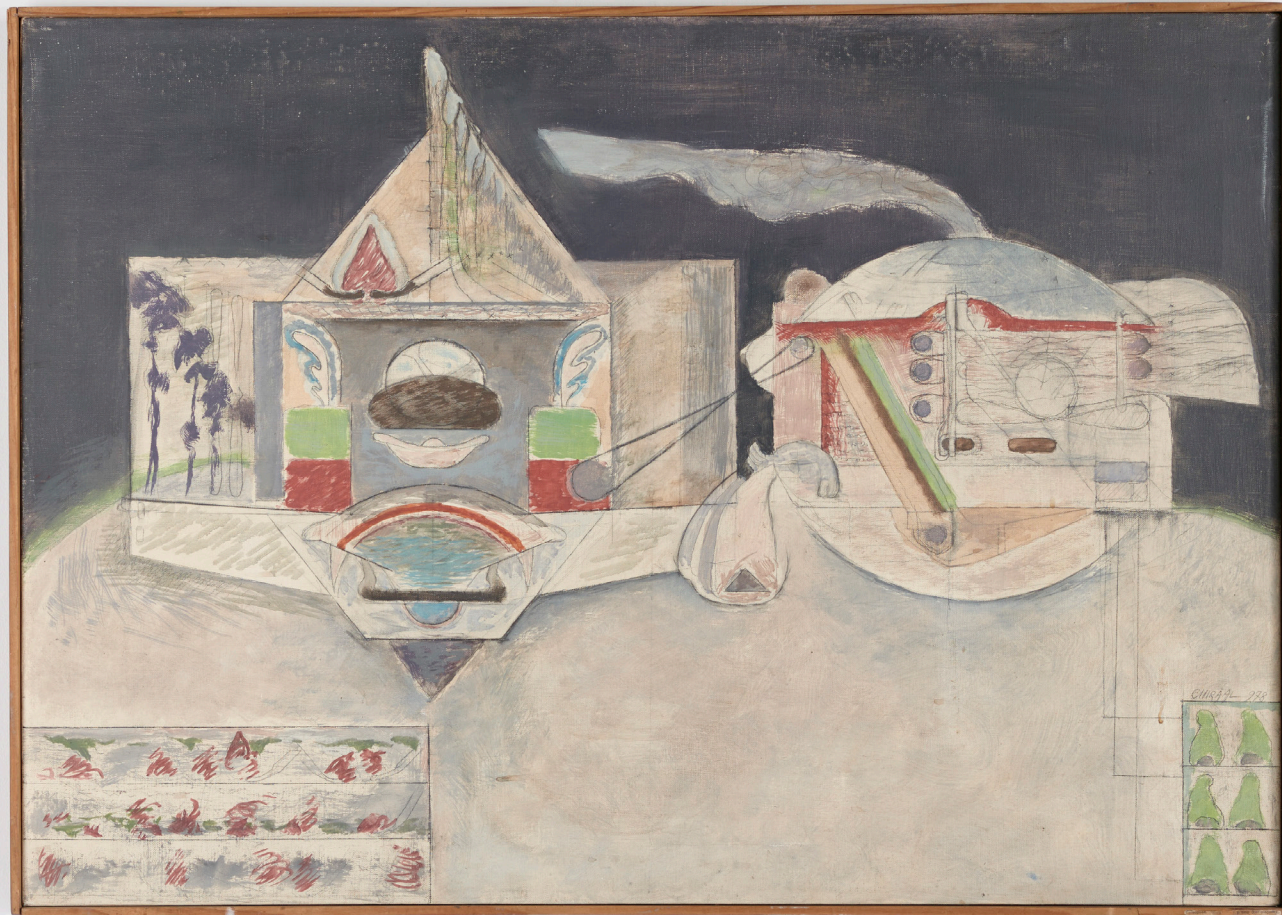
Alexandru Chira
Package-Poem III - Stamps of Memory (Colorful Project), 1974
Signed and dated
Oil, pencil and liner on canvas
114 x 77 cm
44 7/8 x 30 1/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
The Spring (Stereometry for meditation), 1979 - 1980
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas, nails, and wood
138 x 164 cm
54 3/8 x 64 5/8 in

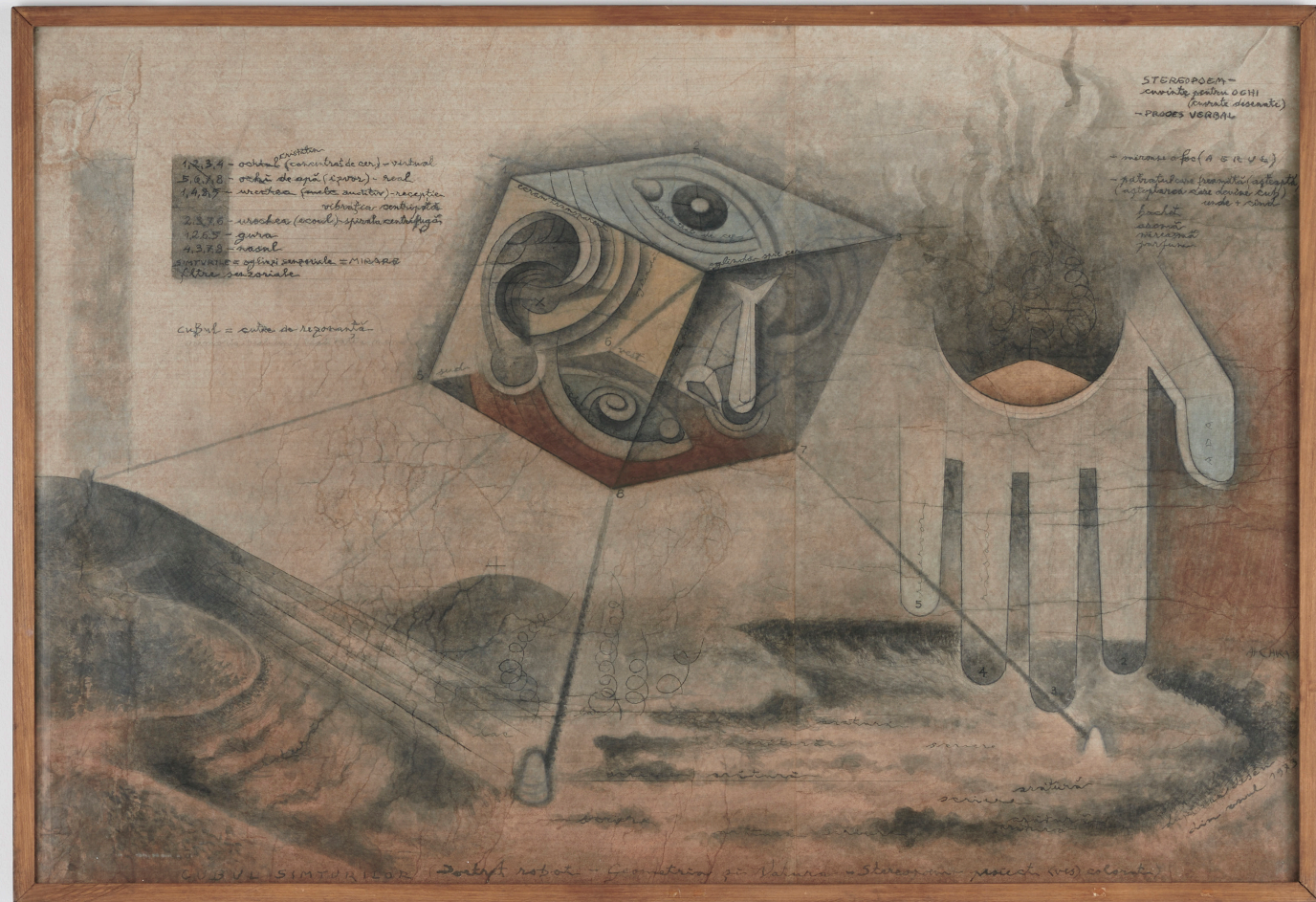
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Alexandru Chira
Stereopoem for Space and Time (Allegorical Chariot), 1978
Signed and dated
Oil, pencil and colored pencil on canvas
65 x 92 cm
25 5/8 x 36 1/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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ALEXANDRU CHIRA: STEREOPOEMS



Alexandru Chira
The Cube of the Senses - Project for Stereo-poem, 1991
Signed and dated
Pencil, ink, colored ink, and watercolor on paper mounted on
cardboard
66 x 97 cm
26 x 38 1/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
*Functional Stereo-poem palpable in the Dark - Study
for Stereo-poem, 1988*
Signed and dated
Ink, colored ink, pencil, tempera and pastel, paper glued on paper
95 x 48 cm
37 3/8 x 18 7/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
The Senses Rose (Study for Stereo-Poem), 1982
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
170 x 180 cm
66 7/8 x 70 7/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris

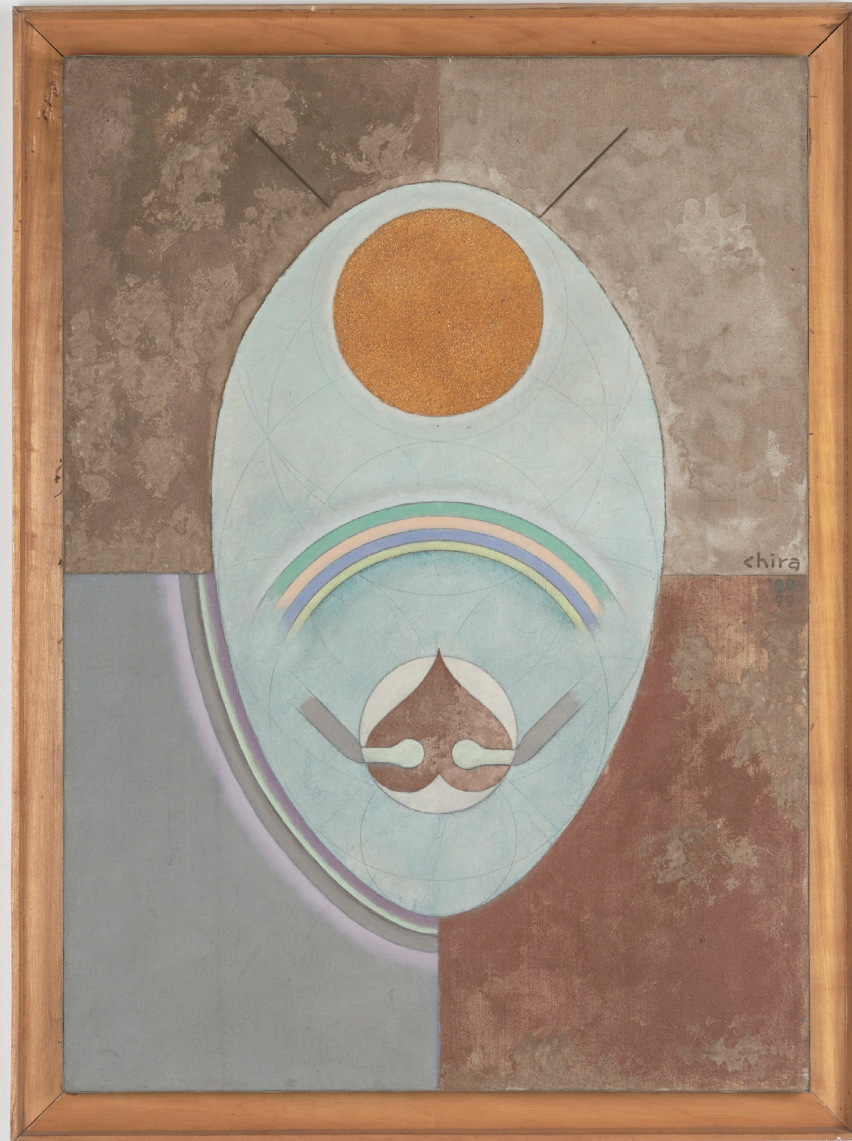


Alexandru Chira
Study XVI, 1984
Signed and dated
Oil on canvas
87 x 56 cm
34 1/4 x 22 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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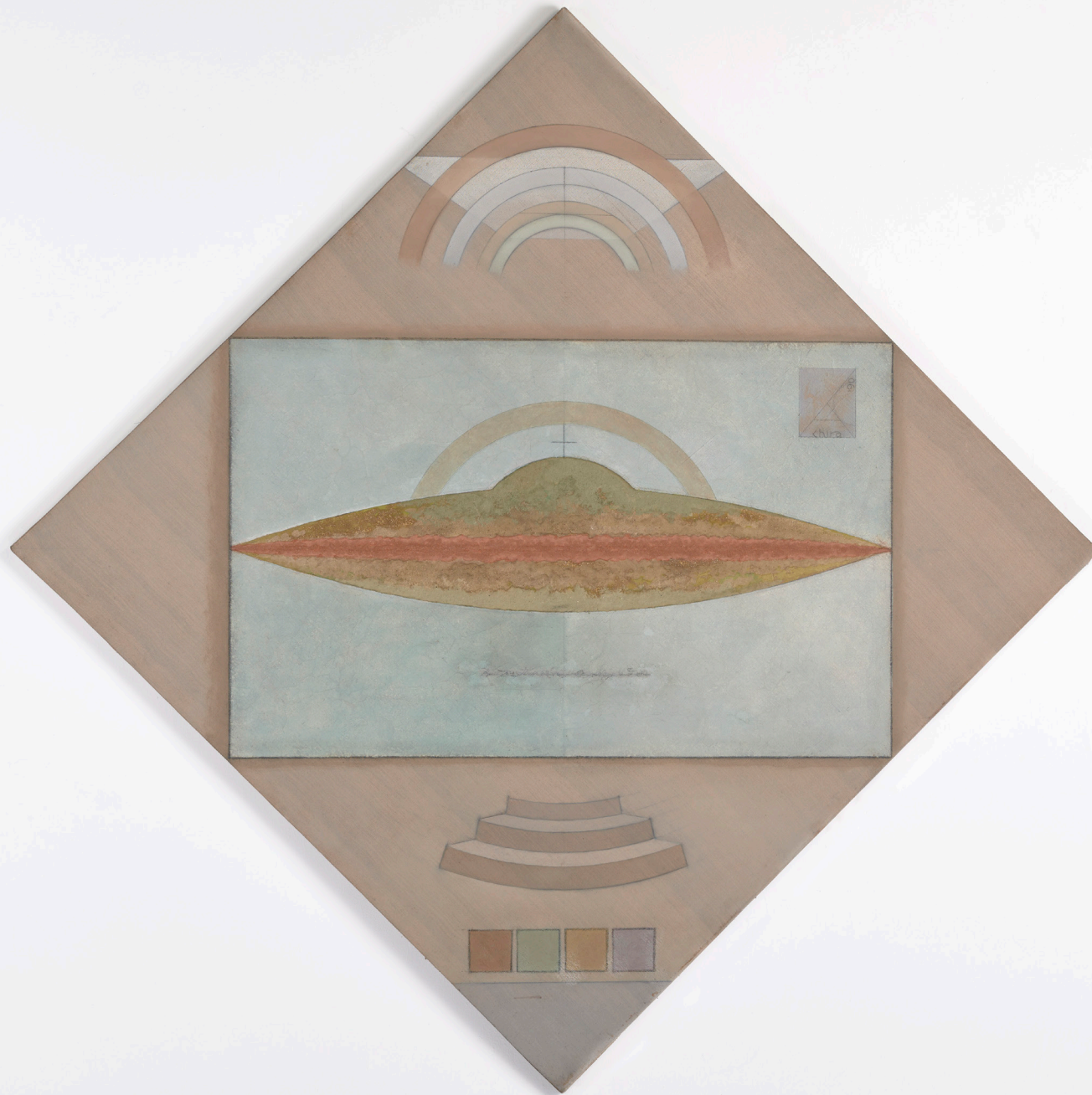


Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 2000
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
196 x 122 cm
77 1/8 x 48 in



Alexandru Chira
The Egg - Study for Stereo-poem, 1989 - 1999
Signed and dated
Oil, pencil, earth and cornflour on paper mounted on canvas
100 x 80 cm
39 3/8 x 31 1/2 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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Alexandru Chira
The Suspended Village – De-sign for Stereo-poem, 1990
Oil, pencil and paste of various colors on paper mounted on
canvas
180 x 180 cm
70 7/8 x 70 7/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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Alexandru Chira
House of the Geometer – Study for Tele-poem, 1989 - 1996
Oil and paste of various colours on paper mounted on canvas
180 x 110 cm
70 7/8 x 43 1/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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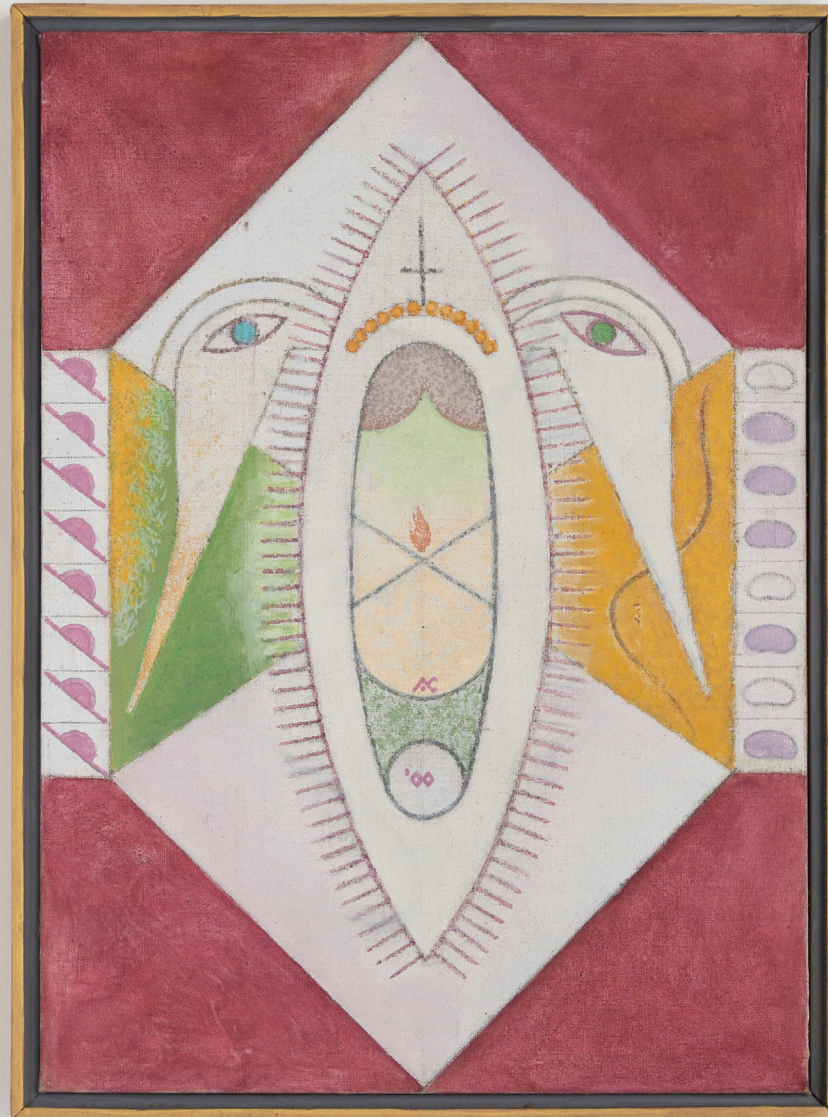
Alexandru Chira
The Geometer's House – Study for *Tele-Poem*, 1990
Signed and dated
188 x 116 cm
74 x 45 5/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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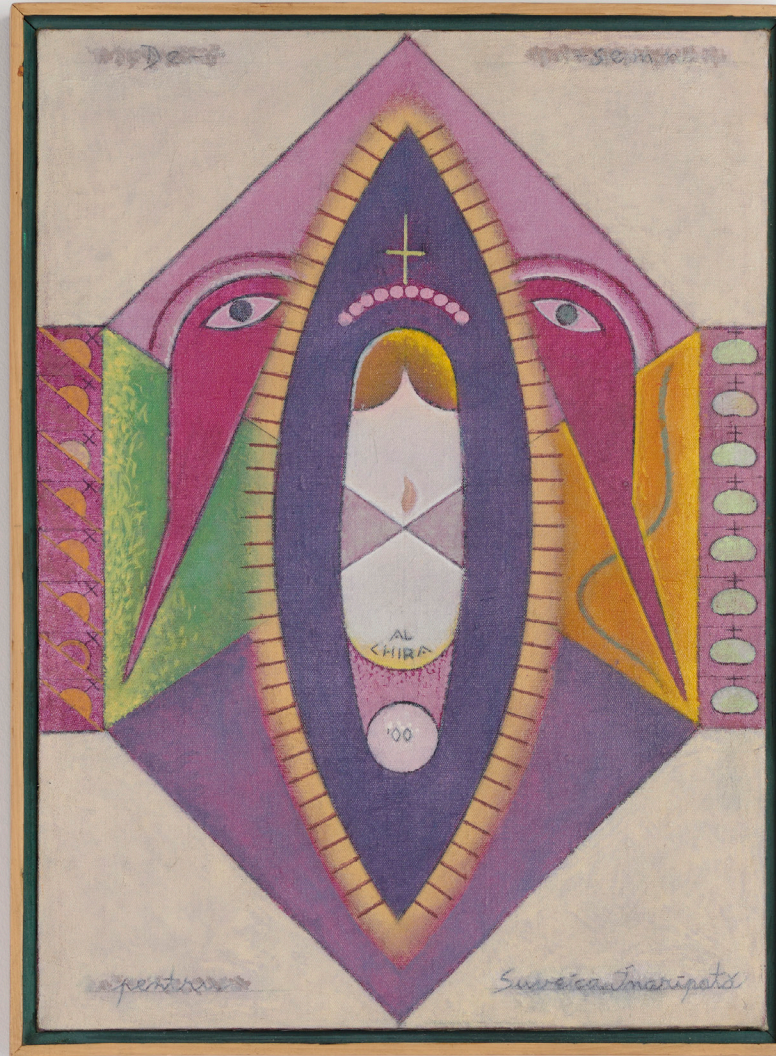
Alexandru Chira
House of the Geometer with Shuttle and Cloud, 1991
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
137 x 108 cm
54 x 42 1/2 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
Winged Shuttle, 2000
Signed and dated
Pencil, oil on canvas
55 x 40 cm
21 5/8 x 15 3/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
Winged Shuttle (Drawing for Tele-Poem), 2000
Signed and dated
Oil on canvas
55 x 40 cm
21 5/8 x 15 3/4 in



Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 2000 - 2011
Signed and dated
Pencil and oil on canvas
65 x 50 cm
25 5/8 x 19 3/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 2002
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
65 x 50 cm
25 5/8 x 19 3/4 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 2000
Signed and dated
Oil on canvas
91 x 55 cm
35 7/8 x 21 5/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
and Fitzpatrick Gallery, Paris



Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 1993
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
80.5 x 79 cm
31 1/2 x 31 1/8 in

Courtesy of The Estate of Alexandru Chira
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Alexandru Chira
Untitled, 1986
Signed and dated
Oil and pencil on canvas
106 x 106 cm
41 3/4 x 41 3/4 in