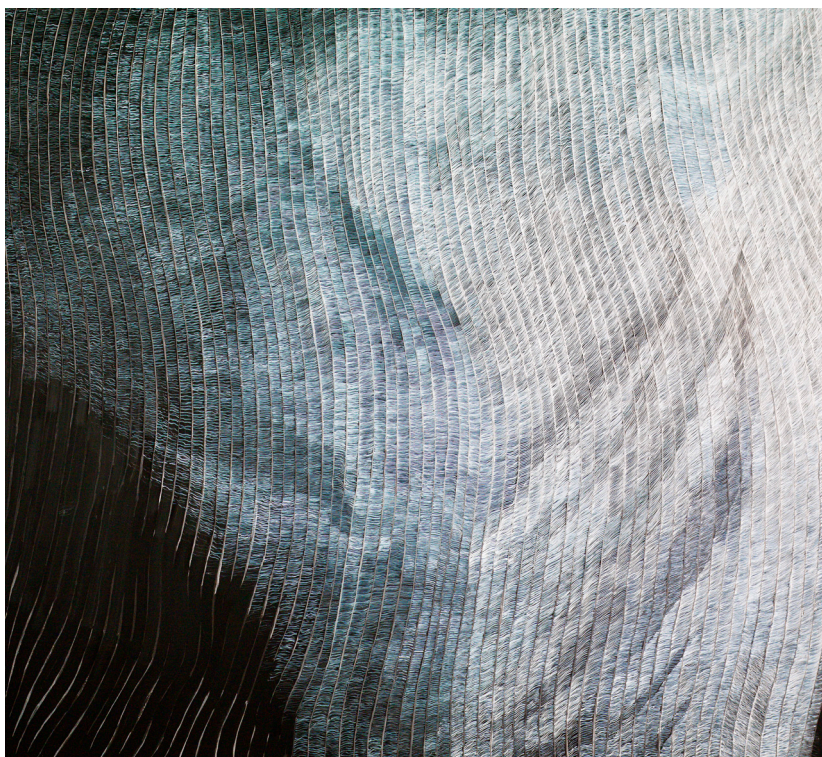


**Exhibition** September 25, 2024 – March 10, 2025

Nouvel Building, Floor 1

# Soledad Sevilla

## Rhythms, Grids, Variables



*Lunas oscuras de cristal* [Dark Moons of Crystal], 1975. Antonio Cobo Collection

**MUSEO NACIONAL  
CENTRO DE ARTE  
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The exhibition *Soledad Sevilla: Rhythms, Grids, Variables* is a chronological survey of the career of Soledad Sevilla (Valencia, 1944), the winner of the 2020 Velázquez Prize for the Visual Arts, paying special attention to certain patterns that are repeated throughout her oeuvre, such as the module, the line, and the grid. Curated by Isabel Tejada, the show brings together a selection of over a hundred works in different formats, including drawings, paintings, and installations, that range from her beginnings at the Universidad de Madrid's Centro de Cálculo (Computing Center) to her current productions, some of them made specially for this exhibition.

Soledad Sevilla was linked from her early days to the heterogeneous group of Spanish artists that subscribed to the aesthetic postulates of geometric abstraction, among them Eusebio Sempere, José María Yturralde, and Elena Asins, with whom she has maintained close ties throughout her life. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, a period of great political significance and profound cultural changes in Spain, geometric abstraction offered an alternative to the formulations marked by new figuration, which was to triumph in the next decade. Although she soon stepped away from the use of the computer as an artistic tool, Sevilla has spent her whole career developing a precise language based on the purity of line and color and on the construction of forms based on geometric modules.

She spent the period from 1980 to 1982 in Boston with an artistic research grant. There she took the step toward the occupation of space in order to achieve a fuller multisensory experience. She was greatly impressed by the intervention carried out in 1980 by the American artist Mary Miss in the neoclassical cloister of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University. Taking this as a referent, she proposed to intervene in the same space with *Seven Days of Solitude* (1980–1982), her first project with performative connotations and her first movement toward an expanded approach to painting.

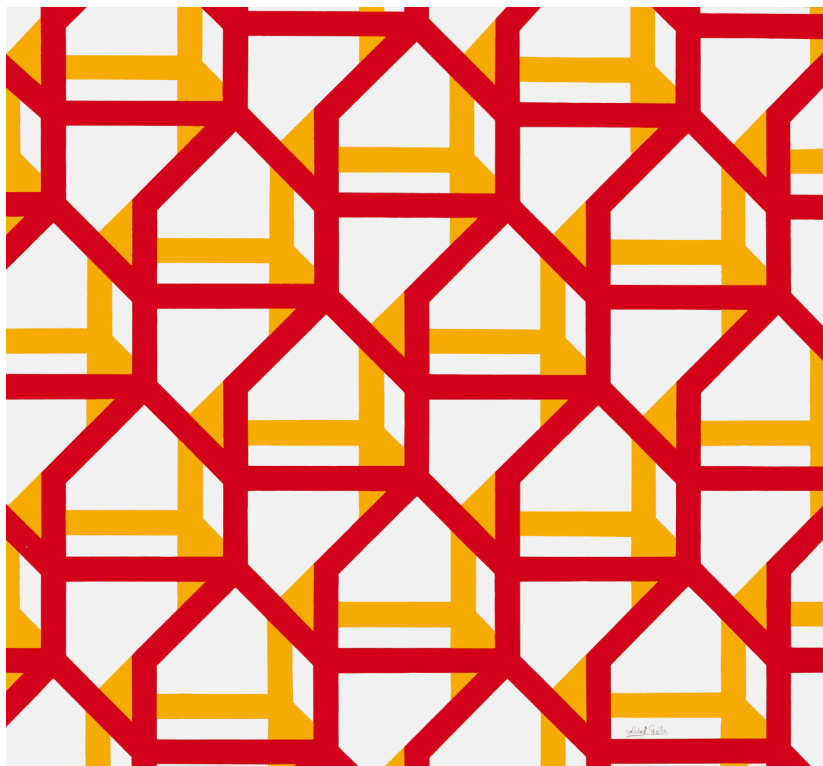


After her years in Boston, her work gradually became more subjective in its search for emotion through the beautiful and the sublime. Examples include her series *Meninas* (1981–1983) and *Alhambbras* (1984–1987), whose referents are two great milestones of Spanish culture, Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* and the Alhambra in Granada. The module, the line, and the grid, with various rhythms and variations, have continued to be the resources she turns to in order to make painting and those who view it vibrate, as she seeks to express the emotions aroused by light and darkness, two of the opposites she has most frequently explored.

In the 1990s, she started to use oils to continue painting large-format works, one of the hallmarks of her production, with which she involves the viewer by provoking what the artist herself calls emotional *sacudidas* or “shakes.” These “shakes” are aroused while strolling through the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra at dusk, visiting the Museo del Prado (Rubens’s *Apostles*, Guido Reni’s *Atalanta and Hippomenes*, etc.), or contemplating the vegetation hanging from a stone wall, ruins in Syria, a tuna net on the sands of Huelva, the landscape seen through agricultural plastic sheets, the timbers of an old tobacco drying shed on the plain of Granada, or a small gouache by her friend Eusebio Sempere. “The sources are not sought out,” says Sevilla. “They nearly always present themselves imperatively.”

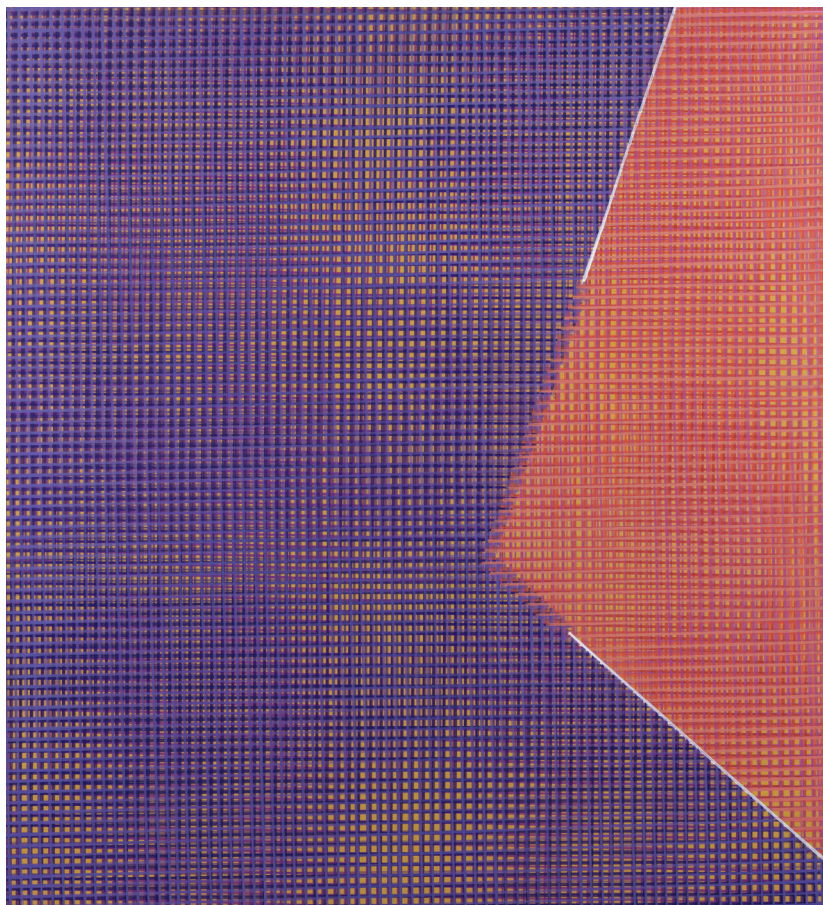
At the start of the 2000s, she produced the *Insomnios* series (2002–2003), pictures that resemble large walls of vegetation swaying in the cool night air. Painting with black, white, red, and gray tones, she does not use these colors naturalistically but in a metaphysical and transcendent sense. With these gestures converted into brushwork, she distributes the paint over the canvas with spaces that range from being covered entirely by paint to the underlying support being empty. In the areas replete with paint, in the foreground, the block of leaves forms a unit and once more marks the threshold, the transition from light to darkness. Soledad Sevilla, who has suffered from





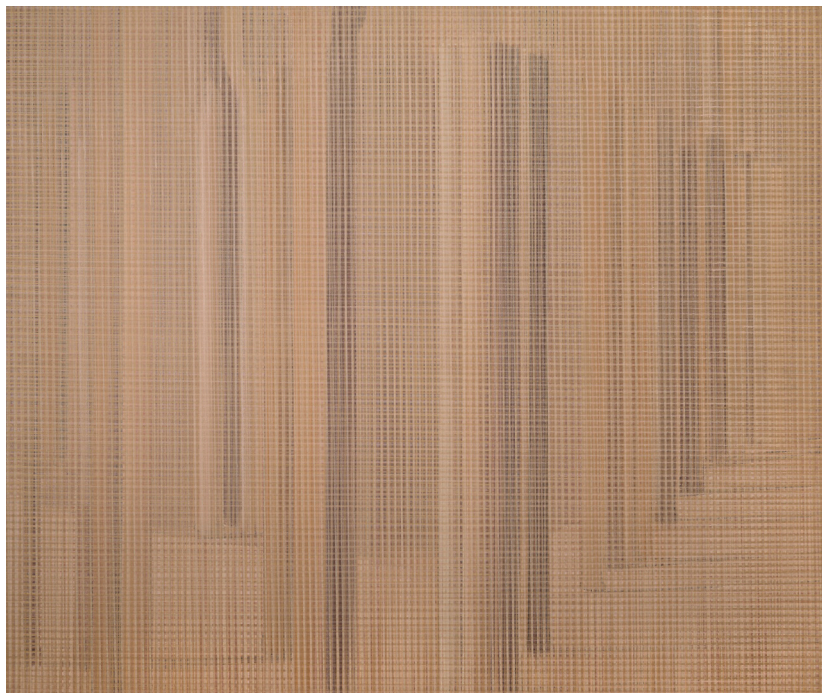
*Mondrian, 1973. Artist's collection*





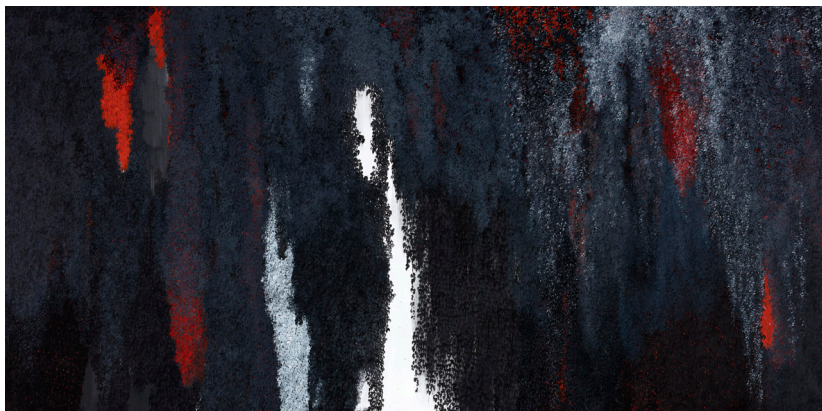
*Meninas IX, Meninas Series, 1982. "la Caixa" Foundation Contemporary Art Collection.*  
Photo: Javier Algarra





*Patio de los leones (diurno)* [Court of the Lions (by Day)], 1986. Diputación de Granada Collection.  
Photo: Javier Algarra





*Insomnio madrugada* [Insomnia in the Small Hours], 2000. "la Caixa" Foundation Contemporary Art Collection.  
Photo: Joaquín Cortés



*Insomnio al alba* [Insomnia at Dawn], 2000. Artist's collection



insomnia all her life, affirms that paradoxically, it is at night that everything is seen more clearly. Following in the wake of *Meninas* or *Alhambbras*, the *Insomnios*, and especially *Insomnio de paz y de conflicto* (Insomnia of Peace and of Conflict, 2002), should be understood as installation pictures, designed either for walking along them or viewing them frontally.

The hanging vegetations, the nights of insomnia, and the agricultural architectures lead the spectator to view the world through the grid: grids of leaves, of flowers, and even of plastic meshes inspired by the tobacco drying sheds of the plain of the Vega de Granada. The artist has stated on countless occasions that she has been painting the same picture all throughout her career. While the module came first, to be followed by the line, Soledad Sevilla has reiterated the same brushwork in her pieces ever since the series *En ruinas* (*In Ruins*, 1993–1994), creating again and again what is effectively line and module at the same time. Although these elements are visually distinct, they partake in the same poetics and share identical resources: the paint dies materially at the edges established by the stretcher, but that element reiterated as a unit potentially continues in successive layers whose superimposition points to the idea of the infinite.

The creation of installations, with which Soledad Sevilla expands her aesthetic concerns to embrace the use of space, has been another of the lines of force in her work since the 1980s. Many of her pictorial series have their parallel in an installation, with one born from the other and vice versa. In these three-dimensional works, the artist concentrates even more on the threshold that leads from the material to the commotion of the senses. This exhibition documents some of her historic interventions, such as *Vélez Blanco*, carried out at the Vélez Blanco Castle in Almería within the framework of the Plus Ultra project for Expo '92, where Sevilla used only light to intervene in a space with strong symbolic connotations, or *El tiempo vuela* (*Time Flies*), a sort of *vanitas* that was first



shown at the Galería Soledad Lorenzo in 1998. At the same time, the artist presents *Donde estaba la línea (Where the Line Was*, 2024), a new site-specific installation in which she uses cotton thread to intervene in the space of the Museum.

In her latest series, she pays tribute to one of her key referents, Eusebio Sempere. Those series are *Horizontes (Horizons)*, with pictures that explore the kinetic possibilities of color against a black ground on the basis of horizontal lines, in some cases metallized; *Horizontes blancos (White Horizons)*, where she makes pencil marks before going over the drawing freehand to produce a random tremor; and the recent series *Esperando a Sempere (Waiting for Sempere)*, presented for the first time in this exhibition. As in some of her 1977 sketches, the drawing in these works transmits a vibration that produces a keen sensation of moiré, admitting the small errors that relay to the canvas the instant of strength or weakness in which it has been painted, as well as *pentimenti*, uncertainties, and even excessive inking, which is not hidden but makes the artist's hand and the moment of production visible.

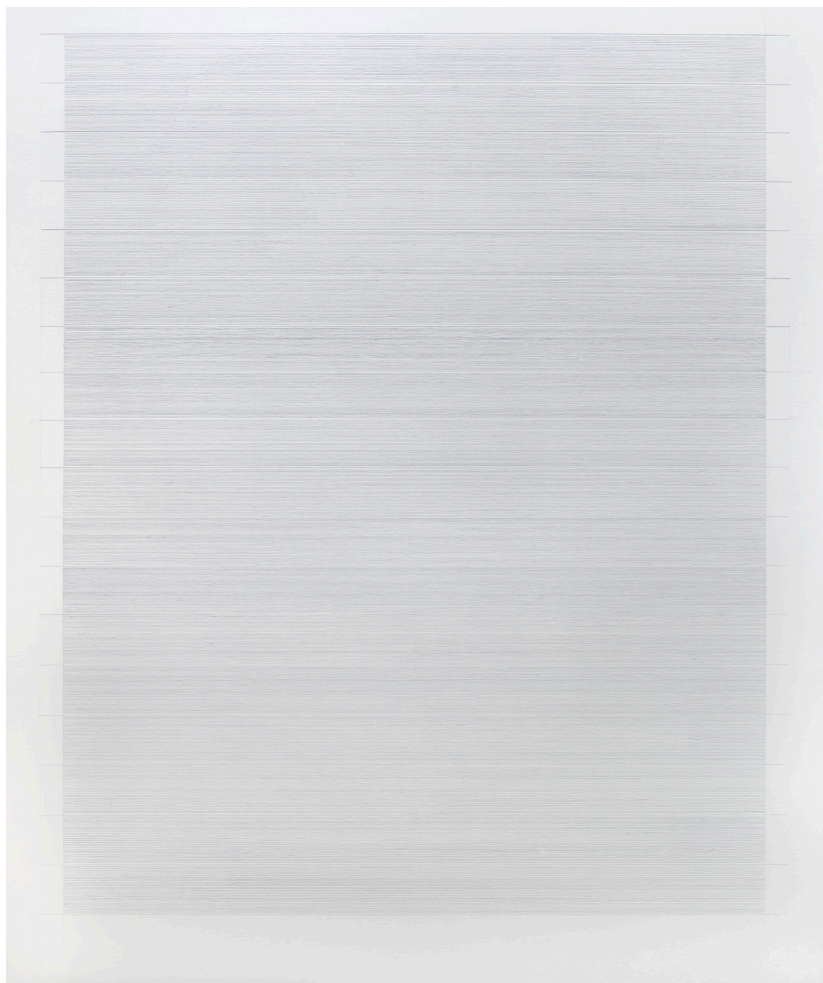
Soledad Sevilla seeks to transcend the tangible in order to capture all that surrounds her, such as air and memory, aspects that she translates into images. Sixty years after her first steps in the art world, the artist continues in this pursuit.





*En ruinas II* [In Ruins II], 1993. "la Caixa" Foundation Contemporary Art Collection





*Horizonte blanco horizontal* [Horizontal White Horizon], 2024. Artist's collection.  
Photo: Roberto Ruiz



# Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

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**Opening hours**

Monday to Saturday and  
public holidays from  
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Sundays  
from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Closed on Tuesdays

Exhibition rooms in all venues  
will be cleared 15 minutes  
before closing time

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