

## INTRODUCTION

### A New Stereoscope

JON ROFFE

1. In 1958, Yves Klein staged an exhibition at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris with the prolix title 'The Specialisation of Sensibility in the Prime State of Matter as Stabilised Pictorial Sensibility'. Visitors to the exhibition found themselves confronted with an empty room. Klein's earlier work, well known, consisted of monochrome paintings that solely used the famous Yves Klein blue. But in this new stage of his work, Klein aimed to pass beyond materiality itself: for him, the room was not empty at all, but full with the non-material being of the sensation of blue. He writes that he had 'left the visible, physical blue at the door, outside, in the street. The real blue was inside, the blue of the profundity of space [...] the coloured space that can not be seen but which we impregnate ourselves with'.<sup>1</sup> The trajectory of Klein's work is therefore one of rarefaction: the passage towards a presence that remains present despite being immaterial.
2. I invoke Klein here by way of contrast. What Gail Hastings proposes in this fascinating work superficially appears to resemble the movement of rarefaction towards immediacy pursued by Klein. But nothing could be further from the truth. Whereas Klein passes through materiality towards the immaterial, Hastings moves in the other direction, towards the substratum of all visibility—towards space and light as such. There is a shared move beyond the brute given of what Hastings, drawing on the famous analysis of sense perception in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, calls sense-certainty. But where Klein reaches to attain something beyond mundane perception, Hastings looks to the ground of this perception itself.

1. Yves Klein, *Yves Klein, 1928–1962: Selected Writings*, ed. Jacques Caumont and Jennifer Gough-Cooper, trans. Barbara Wright, London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1974, 41.

What then does Hastings' work discover? The primacy of a space-in-general, and a light-in-general, which are subject to distribution.





## SELF-REPULSION

An immediate determination implicit in space empties the block of space, of space. The determination is between the space inside and outside the block's cladding, as already mentioned. The space on one side repulses itself in its attraction to the other space. Outside, it becomes other to itself inside.

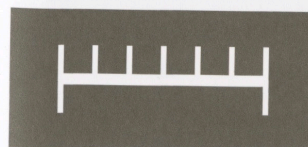
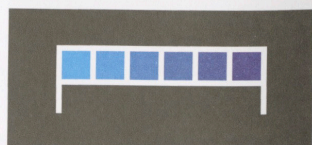


Self-repulsion is not a negation. Perpetually other to itself, homogeneous space does not change in itself but remains continuous. It is here and here simultaneously, even though here and here are not the same place. It is discrete while indiscrete. Self-repulsion connects it to itself, outside itself, as does the space in and out the window.



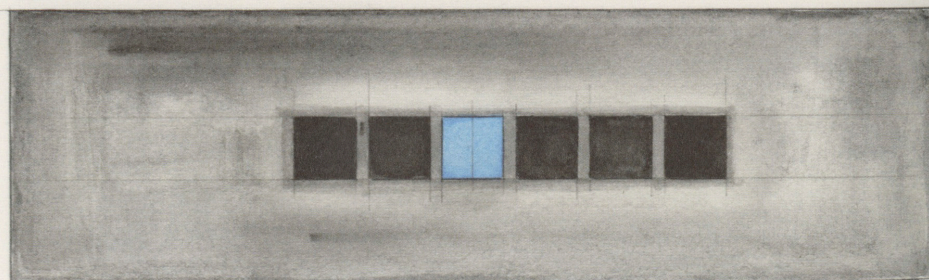
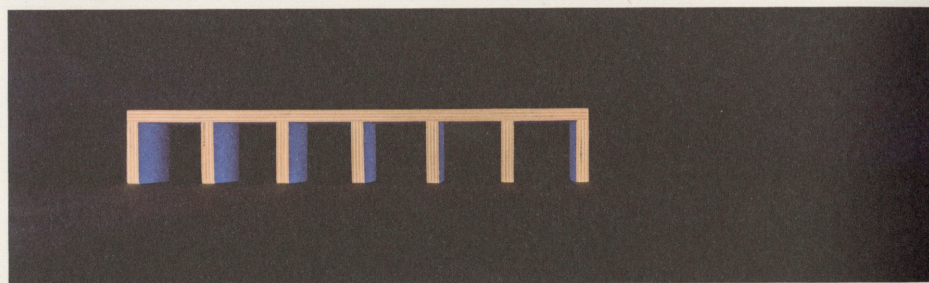
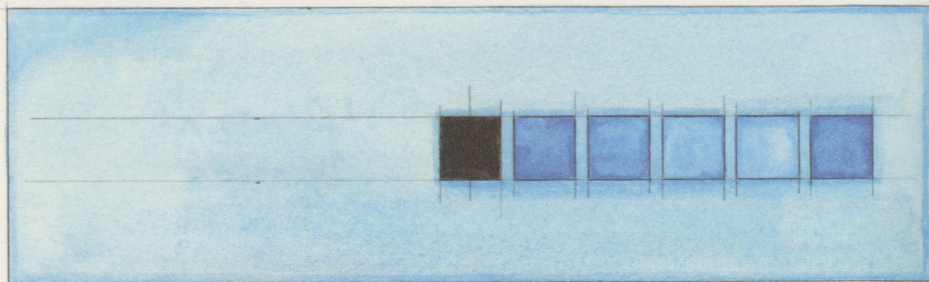


The inside space would appear to be equivalent to the row of space blocks as seen here.

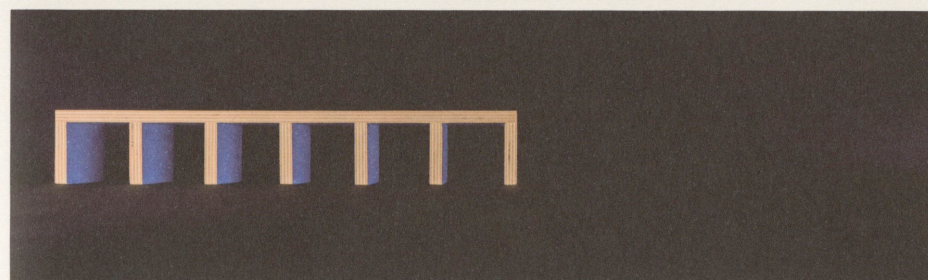
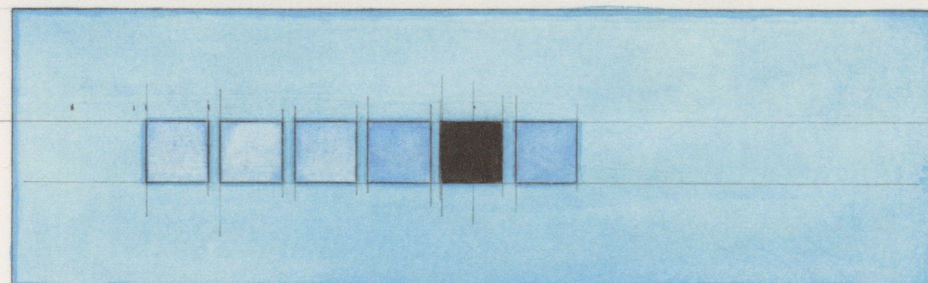
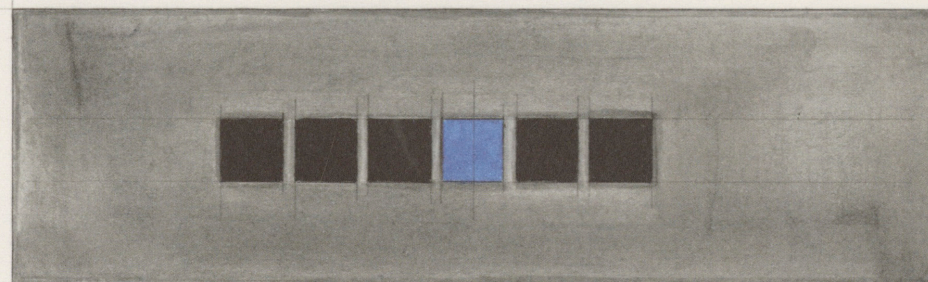


Yet, this would deflate the space blocks of their self-determination and independent existence. They would be depleted by a knowing that treats itself as essential, each here as immediate, not mediated, and the thing known as unessential, as secondary to thought.





The fifth space block is bolted into position by four preceding space blocks and one succeeding space block. It is closed on its right, upper and left sides. It is the least exposed to the continuous space that defines its front and back limits.

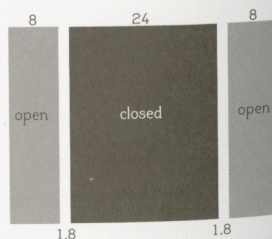


The sixth space block is walled by continuous space in front and behind. Along with fellow space blocks, the brace they all determined holds its right, upper, and left limits. A surface secures its lower limit. It is the last.





In the third part, the undisclosed block of space in the middle is triple the depth of the two disclosed blocks of space on either end.

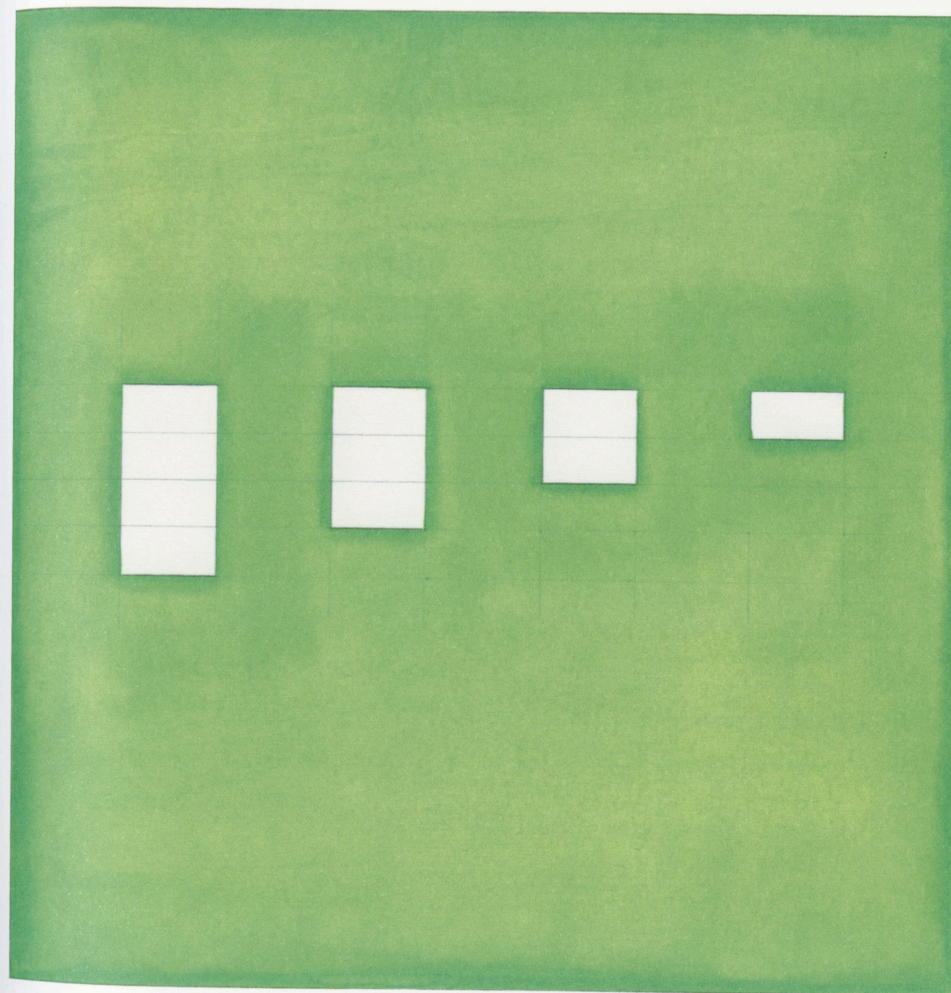
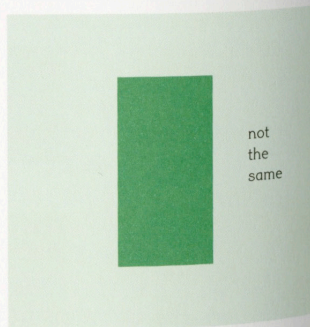


Whether the unlit block of space can or cannot be known is not of concern in space practising tool number four. Rather, it is the polarity this question creates between a space block we cannot know for sure compared to the open and accessible space blocks that we can. Each is indebted to the other. Each defines the other.

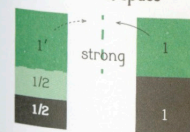




When the space block has non-space below and surrounding space above, it will tend not to build enough power to withstand continuous space. Alternatively, when the space block has non-space above, a movement of negation with non-space will reinforce the space block's grasp to ensure it can withstand the surrounding space.



quarter block of space



spatial density



Light's absorption or reflection also affects spatial self-determination. In this instance, light is absorbed into the quarter block of space, now twice as deep as it is high. This additional density emboldens its grip on heterogeneous space to withstand negation from non-space below and surrounding space above.