

# Down Looking Up: Connie Rubsamen, Pioneer of Optical Art

In the vibrant and experimental art scene of the mid-20th century, Connie Rubsamen emerged as a visionary artist whose groundbreaking work challenged the boundaries of optical art and kinetic art. Her distinctive downward-looking compositions, characterized by intricate geometric patterns and vibrant color schemes, captivated audiences and revolutionized the way we perceive art.

Born in New York City in 1927, Rubsamen's passion for art manifested from an early age. She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and later at the Art Institute of Chicago, where she honed her skills in painting and printmaking. In the 1950s, she encountered the emerging field of optical art, which explored the effects of color, light, and motion on the viewer's perception.



## Down, Looking Up by Connie Rubsamen

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 6362 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 387 pages
Lending	: Enabled

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## Downward-Looking Compositions

Rubsamen's unique contribution to optical art lies in her distinctive downward-looking compositions. By placing the viewer in an elevated position, looking down onto a geometric expanse, she created a sense of depth and movement that was both visually captivating and intellectually engaging.



In works such as "Connie's Eye View" (1964), Rubsamen depicts the dynamic flow of urban life from a bird's-eye view. The composition is a symphony of geometric shapes and vibrant colors, creating a mesmerizing optical experience that invites the viewer to explore the interplay of perspective and illusion.

## Kinetic Art and Movement

Rubsamen's exploration of optical effects extended beyond static compositions. She also experimented with kinetic art, which involved utilizing physical movement to create dynamic and interactive experiences for the viewer.



Connie Rubsamen, "Construction in Blue," 1966, Acrylic on Wood and Metal

In works such as "Construction in Blue" (1966), Rubsamen created a kinetic sculpture consisting of rotating discs painted with concentric circles. As the discs spin, they create optical illusions and a sense of movement that engages the viewer on a physical and sensory level.

## Color Theory and Perception

Color theory played a central role in Rubsamen's artistic practice. She meticulously selected and arranged colors to create dynamic and harmonious compositions that manipulate the viewer's perception of depth, space, and movement.



In works such as "Stardust" (1968), Rubsamen uses overlapping transparent layers of acrylic paint to create a shimmering, ethereal effect. The shifting colors and forms produce optical illusions that challenge the viewer's sense of perception and stimulate their imagination.

### **Abstract Expressionism and Geometric Abstraction**

While Rubsamen is primarily known for her contributions to optical art, her work also draws influences from abstract expressionism and geometric abstraction. Her earlier compositions exhibit the bold and gestural brushstrokes characteristic of abstract expressionism, while her later works focus on geometric forms and precise compositions.



Connie Rubsamen, "Green Poem," 1957, Oil on Canvas

In works such as "Green Poem" (1957), Rubsamen's transition from abstract expressionism to geometric abstraction is evident. The canvas is

filled with organic shapes and flowing lines, but there is a sense of order and composition that foreshadows her later optical works.

## **Legacy and Impact**

Connie Rubsamen's pioneering work had a profound impact on the development of optical art and kinetic art. Her ability to manipulate perception and create dynamic visual experiences challenged conventional notions of art and opened up new possibilities for artistic expression.

Rubsamen's work has been exhibited in numerous museums and galleries around the world and is included in prestigious public and private collections. She received critical acclaim and recognition for her innovative contributions to the art world.

Connie Rubsamen passed away in 2021, leaving behind a legacy of groundbreaking work that continues to inspire and captivate audiences. Her art remains a testament to her exceptional talent, her unwavering dedication to her craft, and her pioneering spirit that pushed the boundaries of artistic innovation.

Connie Rubsamen's visionary creations transformed the landscape of optical art and kinetic art. Her downward-looking compositions, innovative use of color theory, and exploration of movement revolutionized the way we perceive and experience art.

Rubsamen's legacy extends beyond her own artistic achievements. She paved the way for future generations of artists to embrace new technologies and artistic approaches, challenging conventional notions and expanding the possibilities of artistic expression.

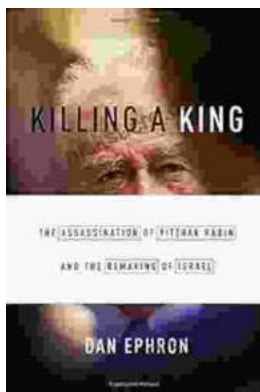
Through her groundbreaking work, Connie Rubsamen continues to inspire and engage audiences worldwide, leaving an indelible mark on the art world and the broader cultural landscape.



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