

JAN VAN DER PLOEG
YELLOW GALLERY SEPTEMBER 2025 Leiden

JAN VAN DER PLOEG

“What art offers is space — a certain breathing room for the spirit.” — John Updike

At Yellow Gallery in Leiden, Dutch artist Jan van der Ploeg unveils a new site-specific wall painting in the city’s storied "Kasteeltje"—a historic building once home to scientific salons where figures like Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein gathered as guest lecturers. That this intervention takes place not only in such a historically charged space, but in the town where Van der Ploeg’s spent childhood, adds a subtle charge of return and reconfiguration to the work. The building’s scientific past meets a painterly logic rooted not in representation, but in rhythm.

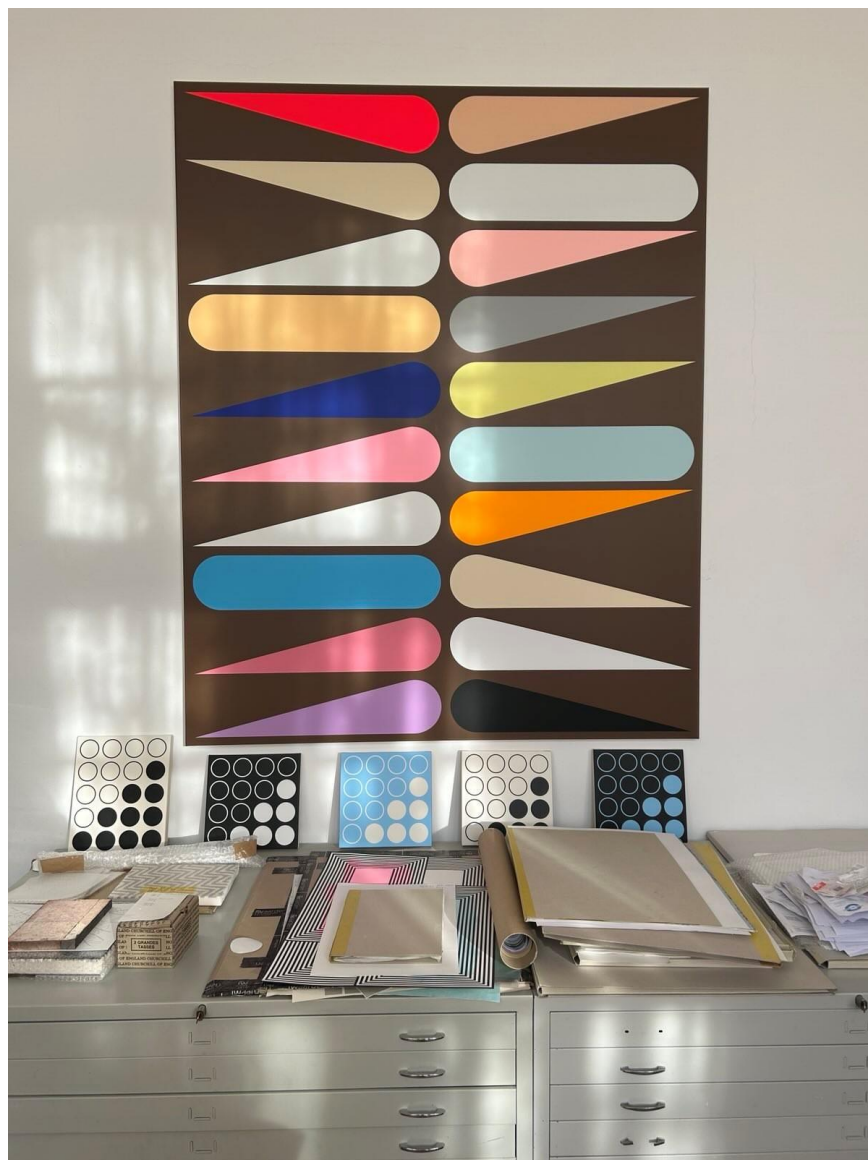
Van der Ploeg is known for large-scale wall paintings that push beyond decoration into something more spatially reflexive. With bright, architectural motifs and repeated graphic forms, he does not so much adorn a space as rewrite it. Here, as elsewhere in his oeuvre, he shows how abstraction can serve as a form of spatial thinking—art not as surface, but as a tool for recalibrating how we understand, occupy, and collectively experience our environment.

Cultural philosopher Thijs Lijster has argued that public space is never a given, but something continually shaped through shared practices, histories, and acts of attention. Van der Ploeg’s work responds directly to this idea. He reclaims transient spaces—stairwells, corridors, façades—not by asserting control, but by drawing attention to what’s already there. His bold, geometric murals don’t impose meaning; they extract it. They bring forth the rhythm of windows, the asymmetry of corners, the structural tempo of the built environment.

Art critic Robert Hughes once wrote that true art “makes the visible more visible,” sharpening our perception of what has always been present. Van der Ploeg is a clear inheritor of that legacy. His visual language—repetitive yet never redundant, systematic yet site-specific—illuminates the spatial DNA of a given site. The recurring motifs in his paintings are not decorative flourishes, but responses to architectural conditions. His work doesn’t embellish; it clarifies.

In this latest intervention, Van der Ploeg joins a lineage of artists like Sol LeWitt and Donald Judd, whose practices revolved around the interplay of repetition, form, and environment. But unlike their often-objective or neutral aesthetics, Van der Ploeg’s paintings are saturated with intention. They function not as formal exercises, but as active negotiations with place, history, and public presence. While LeWitt sought the universal through systems, Van der Ploeg remains grounded in the local, the specific, and the shared.

In a time when public space is increasingly privatized, branded, and stripped of ambiguity, Van der Ploeg's murals assert the value of slowness, attention, and presence. They do not shout, but they resonate. His newest work at Yellow Gallery is not just a visual event, but a spatial proposition—a claim that space, especially one so steeped in intellectual history, is always open to reinvention. And that reinvention, in his hands, looks like precision, pulse, and a renewed sense of the common.



Studio van der Ploeg 2025

JAN VAN DER PLOEG

Untitled (No. 1616) 2025

Acrylic on canvas

29 x 21 cm | 11,42 x 8,27 in.



JAN VAN DER PLOEG

Untitled (No. 1529) 2025

Acrylic on canvas

71 x 57 cm | 30 x 22,44 in



JAN VAN DER PLOEG

Untitled (No. 1511) 2025

Acrylic on canvas

29 x 29 cm | 11,42 x 11,42 in.

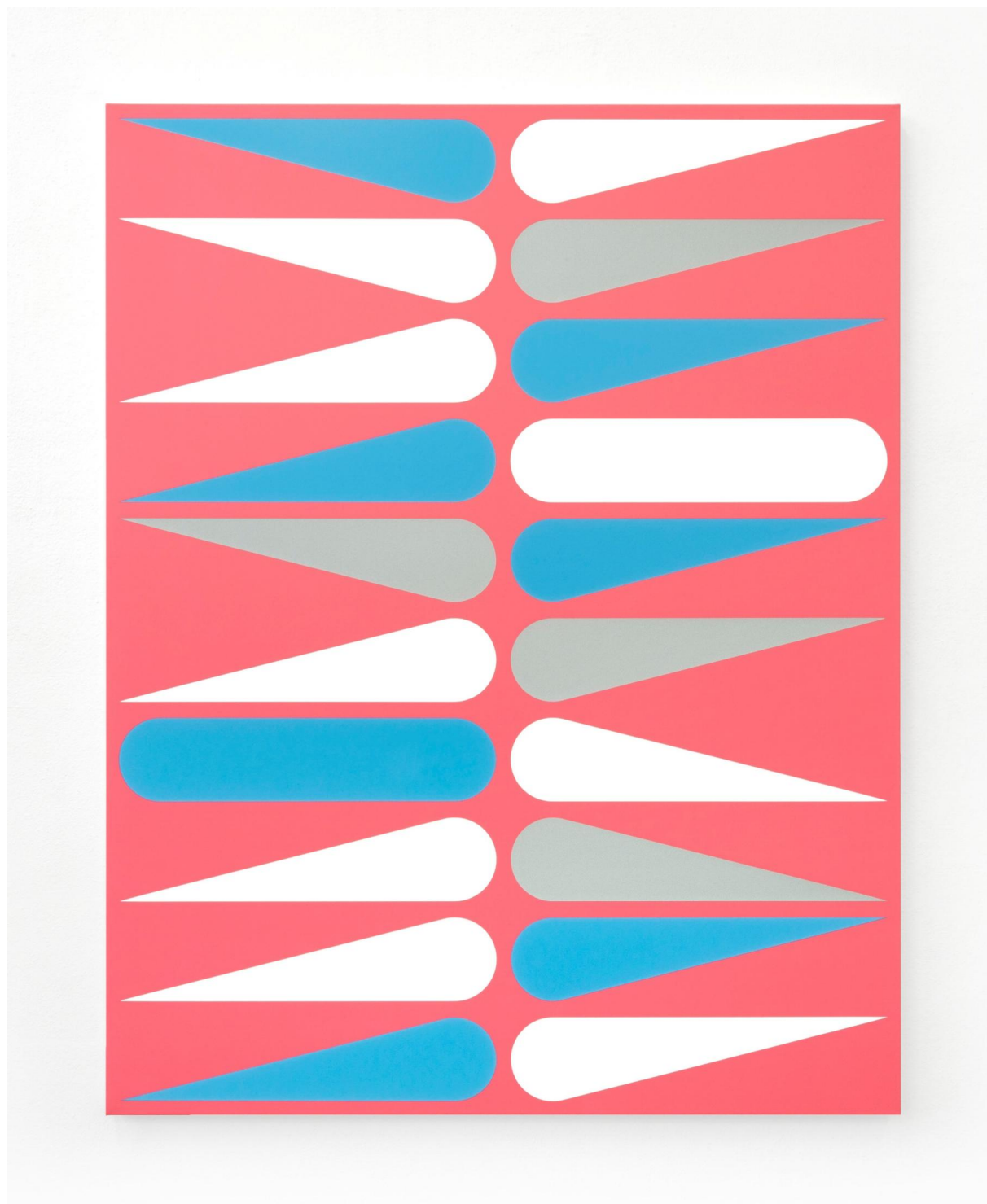


JAN VAN DER PLOEG

Untitled (No. 1627) 2025

Acrylic on canvas

140 x 110 cm | 55,12 x 43,31 in

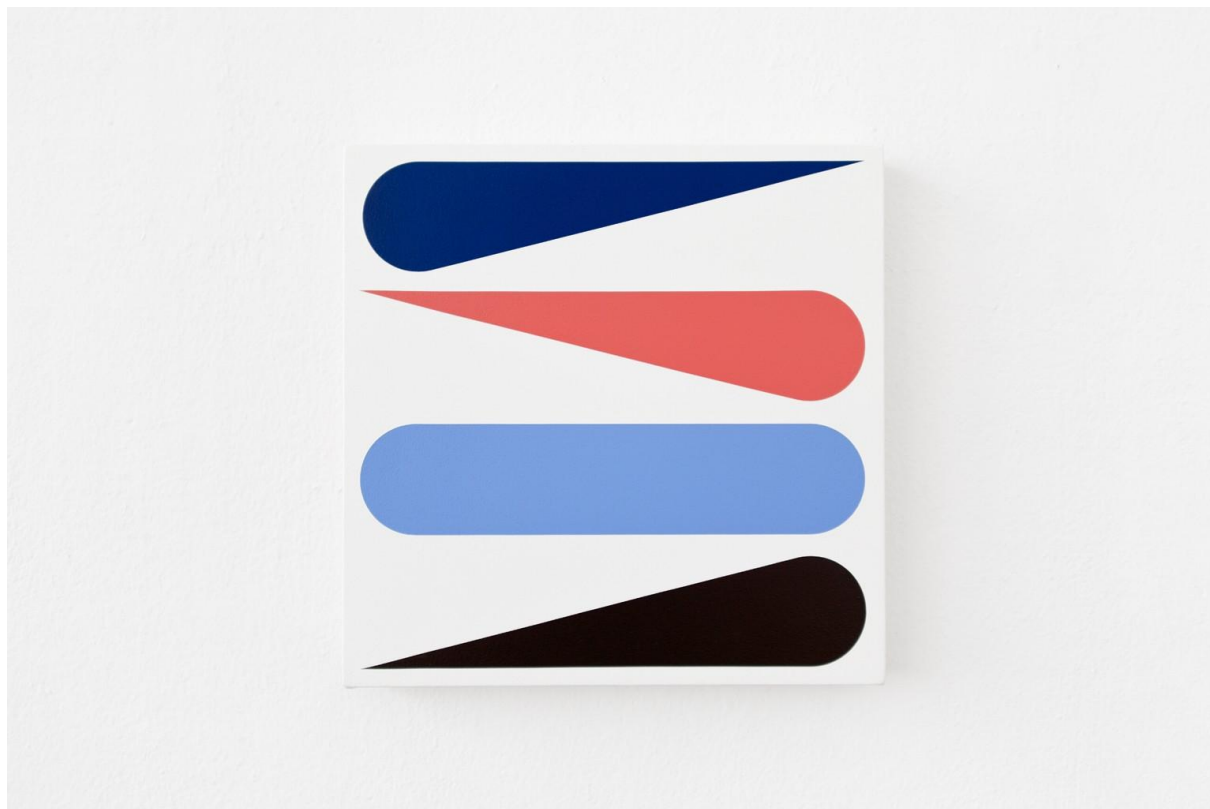


JAN VAN DER PLOEG

Untitled (No. 1512) 2025

Acrylic on canvas

29 x 29 cm | 11,42 x 11,42 in.



JAN VAN DER PLOEG

BIOGRAPHY

Jan van der Ploeg (b. 1959, Amsterdam) is a Dutch visual artist known for his bold, abstract wall paintings that transform architectural spaces. Educated at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and Rijksakademie, he gained international recognition with his iconic *Grip* motif and large-scale, site-specific installations.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Blurred Lines* (Berlin, 2025), *GRID* (Shibukawa, 2025), *Surface Matters* (Frankfurt, 2024), and *Homage to the Circle* (Auckland, 2023).

His work is held in major collections, including the **National Gallery of Victoria**, **Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen**, **Christchurch Art Gallery**, and **Mercedes Benz Art Collection**, as well as numerous Dutch ministries and banks. Van der Ploeg's paintings often reshape spatial perception, blending geometric rigor with a cartoonesque, figurative quality. As Rein Wolfs observed, his work has evolved from restraint to expressive clarity—transforming not just walls, but how we see and move through space.



GALLERY INFORMATION

LEIDEN

't kasteeltje, Leiden
Jan van Goyenkade 44
2311 BC Leiden
+31 6 24 27 49 58
+31 6 54 30 07 06

Opening times:

By appointment

Artworks © Jan van der Ploeg. All rights reserved.
All sales of artworks are subject to YELLOW
GALLERY standard invoice terms and ARR if
applicable.

YELLOWGALLERY.COM