

LUXEMBOURG + CO.

# SUE FULLER

## Into the Composition

Luxembourg + Co., London

10 October–9 December 2022



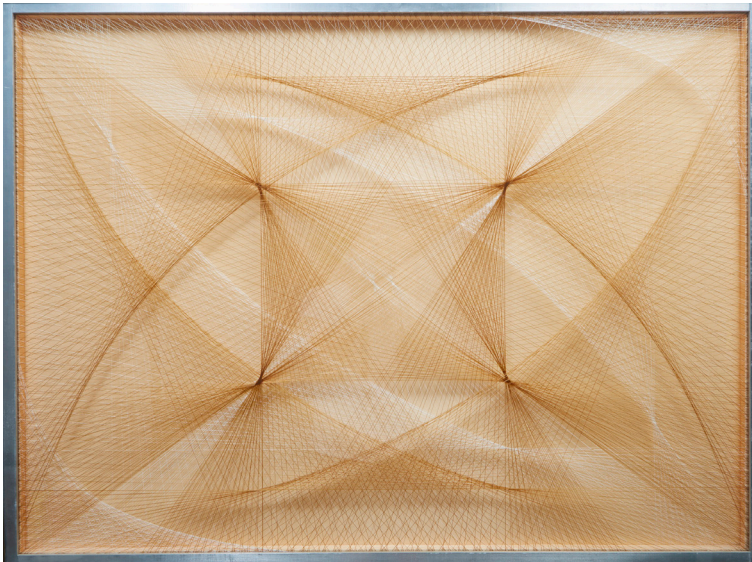
**Sue Fuller**  
Detail from *Composition #12*, 1948

**Luxembourg + Co.**, London, announces the opening of *Sue Fuller: Into the Composition*, an exhibition dedicated to one of the most innovative artists in the field of geometric abstraction in the United States during the postwar era. The exhibition constitutes the first major monographic survey of Fuller's work in string since her death in 2006 and the largest since the 1970s, including rare loans from collections in Europe and the United States. Opening simultaneously across the gallery's space on 2 Savile Row and its Frieze Masters booth on 10 and 12 October 2022, respectively, the exhibition *Sue Fuller: Into the Composition* is designed by Jacques Grange. The project will be accompanied by a new book, co-published with Ridinghouse, including contributions by art historians Alex Taylor and Christina Weyl.

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‘Balance, motion, suspension’ and ‘tension’ form the guiding principles of Fuller’s work, linking her experimental path to a distinct group of pioneering practitioners such as Anni Albers, Sophie Tauber-Arp, Lygia Clark and Ruth Asawa, whose interest in the connection between art and craft, as well as geometric grids and their creative potentials, underlined their unique artistic careers, often against the prevailing tendencies of their times.

Yet Fuller’s influential work differs from that of her predecessors and contemporaries thanks to its profound reliance on the disciplines of engineering and material science. Initially known as a prominent figure in Stanley William Hayter’s famous print workshop, Atelier 17, during the early 1940s in New York, Fuller developed an interest in geometric abstraction, which led her to adopt string as a tool that enabled her to create grids and lines in her printed work. By 1948 she had produced her first series of three-dimensional compositions stretching string in a range of colours and varying densities across a delicate, almost invisible framing structure.



**Sue Fuller**  
*Composition #82, 1957*

The discovery of this new medium gave Fuller the confidence to detach herself from the dominant tendencies of postwar American art, where improvisation and intuitive abstract expression were the rule. An original artist and a technical innovator, she was soon rewarded for her achievements with several fellowships in support of her artistic research, including one from the Guggenheim Foundation and another from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. From 1951 onwards her work also became the subject of significant institutional attention following her inclusion in survey exhibitions such as *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America* and *The Responsive Eye* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1951 and 1963), *Modern Art in the United States* (Tate Gallery, London, 1956) and *Geometric Abstraction in America* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1962).

But Fuller’s contribution to the history of postwar art extends beyond the scope of formal innovation. As major museums began to acquire her work from the 1950s onwards (MoMA, 1949; Whitney Museum, 1954; Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1955; Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1960; Tate, 1965; Smithsonian Museum, 1968; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978), she became conscious of the responsibility she had to conserve and protect her work. Thus she set out to explore new display mechanisms that would not only preserve the tension and vibrant colours so

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essential to her practice but also contribute to her efforts to undermine the traditional distinction between different media. Borrowing unconventional materials from various industrial sectors, including fishing lines and synthetic surfaces such as Lucite, Fuller developed original methods of framing and encasing her string works that maintain the materials in mint condition to this day and contribute to the works' sculptural characteristics.

Fuller's meticulous geometric constructions in string represent at once the delicate precision of a seamstress and the force and stability of an industrial manufacturer. Shown for the first time in decades as a large ensemble at Luxembourg + Co., London, the exhibition *Sue Fuller: Into the Composition* invites viewers to explore a universe hanging by threads.



**Sue Fuller**  
*String Composition #552, 1966*

### About Luxembourg + Co.

Luxembourg + Co. presents curated, museum-quality exhibitions of works by modern masters and contemporary artists in its spaces in New York and London. Since its opening, the gallery has presented a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, ranging from individual presentations of artists such as Paul Cezanne, René Magritte, Alberto Burri, Richard Prince and Derrick Adams to thematic survey exhibitions such as *Grisaille*, *Unpainted Paintings*, *The Shaped Canvas*, *Revisited* and *The Ends of Collage*.

Luxembourg + Co. is open Tuesday to Friday, 10am–5pm, and Saturday, 12pm–4pm (or by appointment).

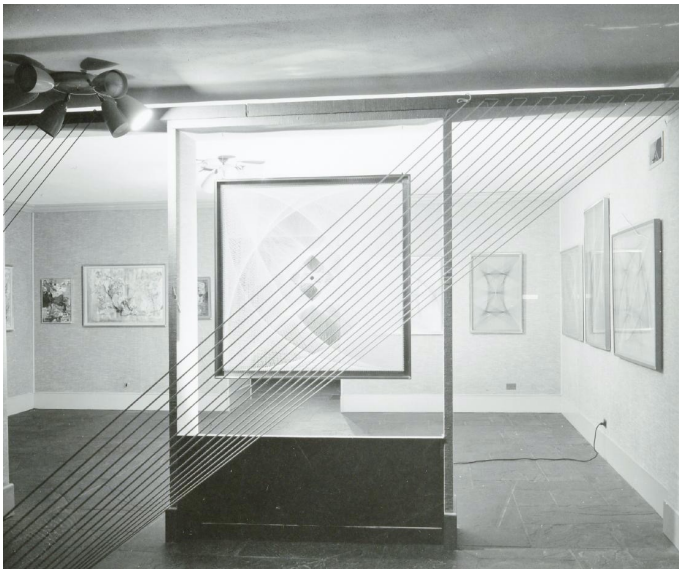
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**About Sue Fuller (1914–2006)**

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1914, Sue Fuller followed a highly competitive academic path at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Columbia University and Stanley William Hayter's New School for Social Research, before joining Hayter's famous printmaking studio, Atelier 17. Her progression as an artist was underlined by parallel trajectories as a researcher and teacher, which she pursued across several institutions with the support of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1948, having gained a reputation in the New York art world for her experiments in printmaking and collage, Fuller made her first three-dimensional string compositions, which paved the way for a series of exhibitions and acquisitions across the United States as well as in the UK.

Throughout the 1950s Fuller expanded her technical arsenal, attending workshops in glass-blowing, calligraphy and lace-making in England, Japan and the United States, methods that would inform her work in string as well as her teachings. During this period Fuller also began exhibiting regularly at the Bertha Schaefer Gallery, New York, and to hold solo institutional shows at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas; and Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, NY. Major institutional survey exhibitions during this period include *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1951); *Modern Art in the United States* (Tate Gallery, London, 1956); *Geometric Abstraction in America* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1962); *The Responsive Eye* (MoMA, New York, 1963); and *American Sculpture* (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1978).

In 1969 Fuller Registered a US patent for the process by which she produced her string compositions, and in 1974 she was awarded the Alumni Merit Award by Carnegie Mellon University. In 1979 she was commissioned to produce a large chancel hanging for the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City, followed by a second major commission in 1984 to produce a hanging sculpture for the inauguration of the Tobin Theatre Arts Gallery at the Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute in Texas. In 1986, Sue Fuller was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Women's Caucus for Art, New York City.



Installation view of Sue Fuller's exhibition at the Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, New York, 1966