

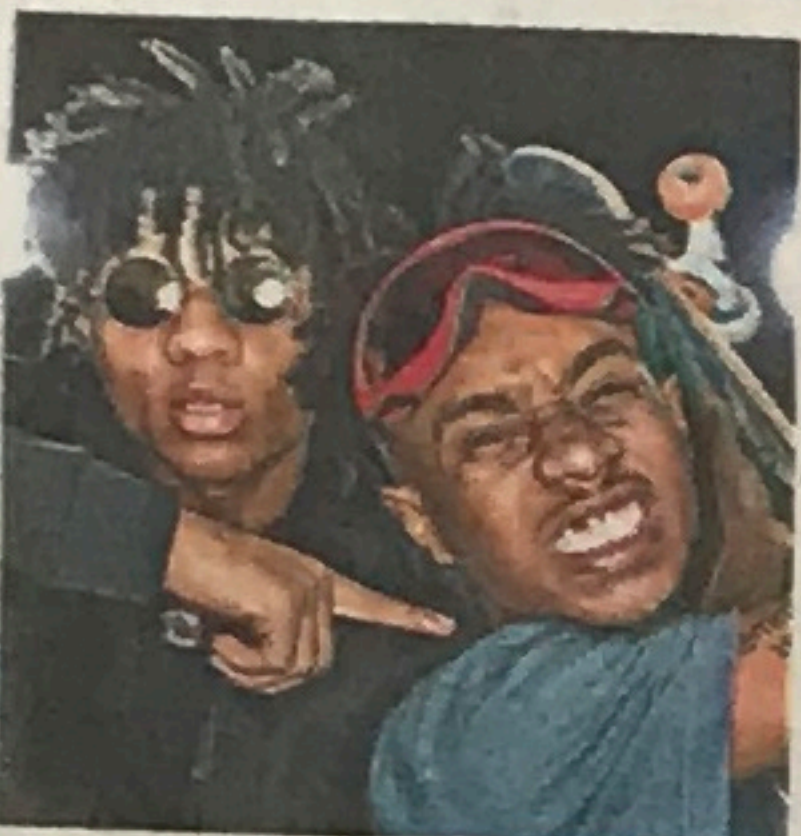
## Riding An Online Craze To the Top

By JOE COSCARELLI

There was no stopping “Black Beatles” once Paul McCartney got involved.

Though this song by the rambunctious young rap duo Rae Sremmurd had been bubbling up steadily, it hit No. 1 on the Billboard singles chart last week in a most unexpected fashion after becoming the de facto soundtrack to the Mannequin Challenge, the online video craze of the moment, in which subjects hold a pose as the camera pans across a comically eerie tableau.

“Love those Black Beatles #MannequinChallenge,” the 74-year-old Mr. McCartney posted to Twitter on Nov. 10, along with a video of him — motionless — at a piano as the



CHAD BATKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES  
Swae Lee, left, and Slim Jxmmi of Rae Sremmurd, in New York in 2014.

song’s spare, ominous intro blooms into a joyous number about partying and “rocking John Lennon lenses.”

He hasn’t been the only catalyst for the track’s spectacular rise: While the New York Giants, Dane Cook, the West Point men’s gymnastics team and Blac Chyna, in a hospital delivery room scene, all starred in Mannequin Challenge clips that went viral, most crucial were the California high school students who, by chance, made “Black Beatles” the score of choice for the rampant trend.

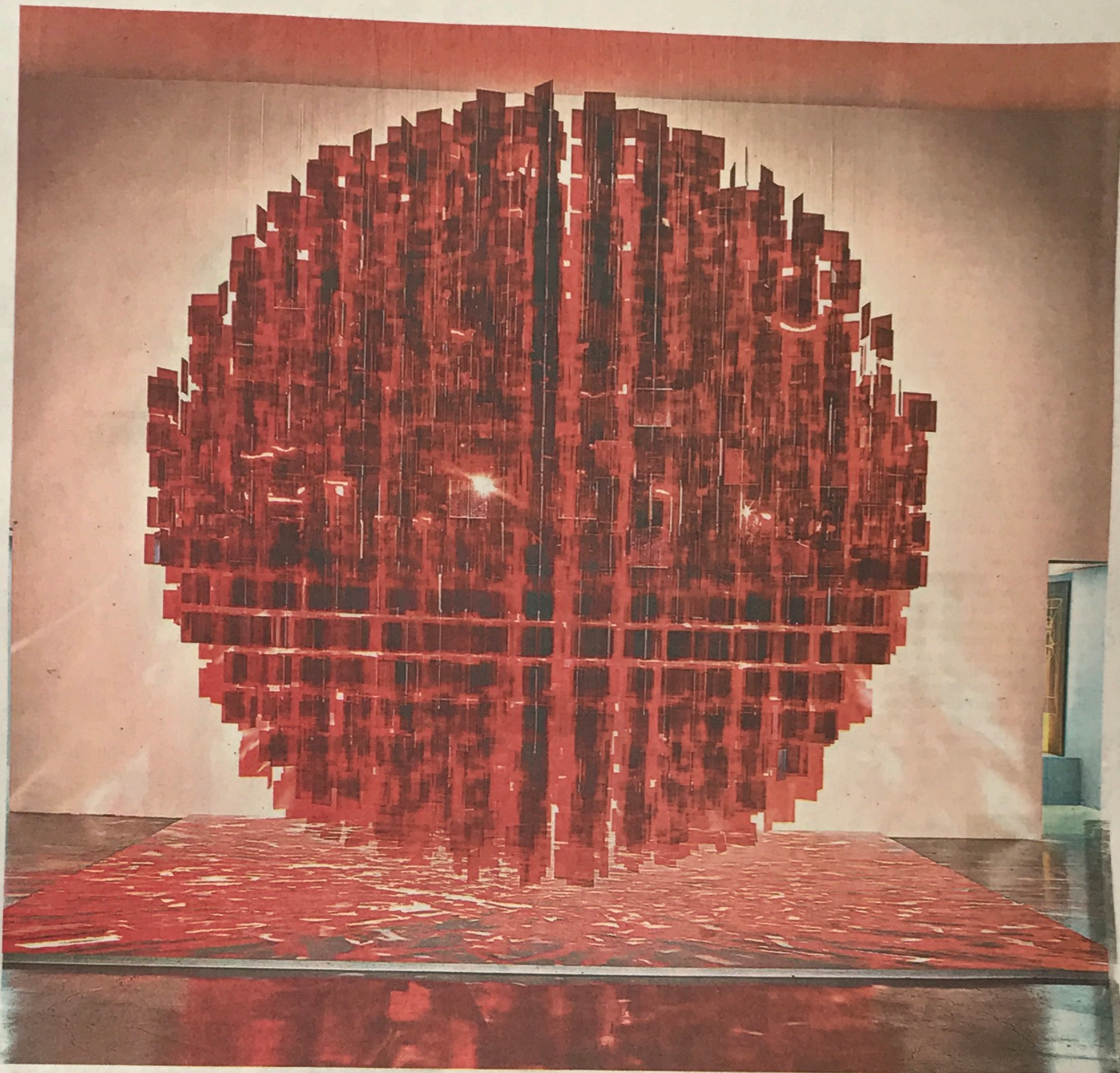
With its jump to No. 1 from No. 9 in one meme-filled week, “Black Beatles” has joined a peculiar lineage of recent hits — including the dance-along “Juju on That Beat (TZ Anthem)”

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A new book looks at the video game heroine’s complex history. PAGE 3.



JULIO LE PARC/2016

## A Vision That Won’t Sit Still

Julio Le Parc, Op and Kinetic Art Pioneer, Gets His First Solo Museum Show in the U.S.

By EMILY NATHAN

PARIS — The suburban home studio of the Argentine artist Julio Le Parc, widely considered a pioneer of Op Art and kinetic art, is a circus of hands-on — sometimes anarchic — delights. In one of a series of rooms surrounding an overgrown courtyard, the artist’s motorized “contortions” come to life when a switch is flipped, and their rotating arms and reflective metal ribbons refract light into patterns on the wall.

Nearby, mirrored sculptures from his “Déplacements” (“Displacements”) series produce disorienting optical illusions as a viewer moves around them, while the projected-light installations in yet another room create disco-ball effects of shifting color.

Julio Le Parc’s “Red Sphere” (1966), made from squares of plastic hung individually from the ceiling, in his show at the Pérez Art Museum Miami.

“I have never really been viewed as an artist,” said Mr. Le Parc, 88, who communicates exclusively in French and Spanish. “I create different experiences and I do research, about form and space and light. What I do is very different from an artist who wants to create his artworks as unique objects.”

Based in France since 1958, Mr. Le Parc is one of Latin America’s foremost proponents of kinetic art, which he discovered while a student at the Escuela de Bellas

Artes in Buenos Aires, through the work of the Hungarian-French artist Victor Vasarely.

Although Mr. Le Parc won the Golden Lion award in painting at the 1966 Venice Biennale and has had exhibitions in major institutions around the world, including the Serpentine Gallery in London and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, he is little known to American audiences.

That is changing with New York gallery exhibitions at Nara Roesler (running through Dec. 17) and Galerie Perrotin, where a show closed last weekend. Then there is his first solo museum exhibition in the United States, a retrospective that opened last week at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. That show, “Form Into Action,” was orga-

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IMAGES FROM WALT DISNEY PICTURES

## Hoping the Screen Becomes a Mirror

By MONICA CASTILLO

I’m not part of Disney’s target audience for its latest princess movie, “Moana,” but I don’t care. I’ve been excited about this film since Dwayne Johnson previewed it last year at the D23 Expo for all things Disney. As much as the new Lin-Manuel Miranda music sounds promising, what’s really exciting is the chance to see a Disney princess who doesn’t look like those we have already.

I was already aging out of the children’s movie demographic when my mom took us to see Robert Rodriguez’s “Spy Kids” in 2001. Yes, it was a silly story: Children turn into spies to save their ex-secret agent parents. But my sister and I became ob-

Above, from left, Esmeralda in “The Hunchback of Notre Dame” (1996), and the title characters of the Disney animated movies “Mulan” (1998) and “Pocahontas” (1995).

sessed. The suave action-hero father was played by Antonio Banderas with a pronounced Spanish accent. The children were named Carmen and Juni (Alexa Vega and Daryl Sabara), and the implication was that they were first- or second-generation Americans.

As a daughter of Cuban immigrants who once struggled with her accent, I had never seen characters who looked or sounded like us as the heroes of

their own story. “Spy Kids” is still one of the few positive examples I hold onto, 15 years later.

I’m not alone. There are many nonwhite women and girls who don’t see movie characters who look the way they do, and the omission can affect their self-esteem. That’s why the issue of diversity in movies for young people is just as important as pushing for inclusion across Hollywood, both behind, and in front of, the camera.

So much of nonwhite representation in cinema is trivial at best, stereotypical at worst — the wisecracking sidekick or the background player stuck there as a token. I remembered feeling that some-

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## Remember The ‘Figaro’ À la Trump?

By MICHAEL COOPER

The scenario sounds eerily familiar: A plutocrat on a high floor in Trump Tower wields enormous political power, while a woman in his employ worries that he believes that his wealth and position entitle him to do anything he wants with her.

No, it is not the synopsis of a new book about the 2016 presidential campaign. It was rather one of the most influential opera productions of the last 50 years: Peter Sellars’s 1988 staging of Mozart’s “Le Nozze di Figaro,” which he happened to set on the 52nd floor of Trump Tower, a symbol of wealth and excess and power in an opera about inequality.

These days, of course, Trump Tower has taken on a very different meaning. It is where Donald J. Trump descended an escalator in June 2015 and began his improbable but ultimately successful presidential campaign. It is where demonstrators gathered to protest after his victory. And these days, C-Span has a live feed of its lobby, as politicians arrive there seeking office.

In a recent telephone conversation, Mr. Sellars spoke about setting Mozart in Trump Tower, a decision that now seems oddly prescient. The plot of “Figaro,” based on the play by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, turns in part on whether the master of the house, Count Almaviva, will claim his feudal privilege — the droit du seigneur — to compel a servant to have sex with him.

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JULIO LE PARC/ATELIER LE PARC; 2016 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS

Right, Julio Le Parc in his studio outside Paris. Above, "A Day in the Street," from 1966, in which Mr. Le Parc and other members of the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel solicited various forms of public participation in their activities in Paris.

## His Vision Won't Sit Still

From First Arts Page

nized to coincide with the Art Basel Miami fair and includes over 100 artworks spanning 60 years.

"For me, the Miami show is a set of experiences that follow one another," Mr. Le Parc said in an interview at his three-story residence, wearing a blue lab coat and scrub pants. "It's an ensemble of discoveries, sensations and experimentations for the visitor to live."

The curator of the show in Miami, Estrellita Brodsky, has written extensively on Mr. Le Parc, emphasizing the importance of his often-overlooked contributions to art history. Other experts

**Art that speaks metaphorically 'to a turbulent world.'**

echo her perspective, and say that the new attention in North America to his work reflects a growing openness to global cultures.

Melissa Chiu, the director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, which has several of his works in its collection, wrote in an email: "Le Parc is having a real moment."

"It's part of the current re-evaluation of 20th-century art history to include voices other than the two or three we find in historical accounts," she said.

The son of a train engineer, Mr. Le Parc was born in the Argentine city of Mendoza. As a child, he recalled, he was fascinated by the way things worked, breaking open his toy cars to inspect their gears and fashioning toys from fabric, strips of iron and olive oil

cans.

While at art school in the 1950s, he was intrigued by the participatory possibilities of Op Art and kinetic art, then nascent movements in France, and a 1958 grant from the French Cultural Service took him to Paris, where he immediately made connections with other Latin American artists, including Jesús Rafael Soto and Carlos Cruz-Diez.

Along with fellow members of a collective he founded there in 1961, the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (Visual Arts Research Group), Mr. Le Parc took to the streets with public "interventions," subversive games and politically charged questionnaires and fliers, all intended to engage spectators. His Op and kinetic sculptures, which he began to develop in the mid-1960s, took on a similarly political dimension by appealing to viewers to interact with them, thus calling the individual to action.

"Julio was working-class, along with many of the other Latin American kinetic artists in Paris at that time, and he believed in art for the people and for the public sphere," Ms. Brodsky said in a telephone interview. "He wanted to make work that encouraged people to pay attention to their immediate environment, and then, in turn, to pay attention to the larger social and political world around them."

Despite the playfulness and material simplicity of Mr. Le Parc's work, she added, he has always had a sociopolitical agenda, seeking ultimately to "democratize the artistic experience."

Indeed, rather than define his practice by a single style or medium, Mr. Le Parc describes it as a series of continuing "quests" or "research inquiries" that frame art as a social laboratory, playing down the notion of the individual



YAMIL LE PARC

creator.

Today, Mr. Le Parc's influence can be seen in the socially engaged work of artists as diverse as Olafur Eliasson, Tauba Auerbach and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

Amira Gad of the Serpentine Gallery in London, who organized a show of Mr. Le Parc's work there in 2014 and wrote the accompanying catalog, said by email that the artist's work was "increasingly relevant today" because it "speaks to a turbulent world."

"The lights of his installations become a metaphor for the fireworks of resistance, activism and unstable sociopolitical contexts of

our current time," she said.

Still active in his studio, Mr. Le Parc regularly revisits his works and occasionally remasters or enlarges certain pieces. Although he does not use computers, preferring to make sketches and then experiment with three-dimensional models, he is a perfectionist, Ms. Brodsky said.

"He balked at showing work in Miami that is not at its highest level of reflectivity, so every mirror piece has to be just as reflective as it was in 1962," she said, explaining that Mr. Le Parc insists on replacing any materials that have dulled with time.

The show at the Pérez Art Museum Miami is organized by series, beginning with two-dimensional geometric and color studies from 1958. It will also include more recent works, like the gargantuan "Red Sphere" (2001-12), a glistening ball made of red plastic squares hung individually from the ceiling. One room will be devoted to the interactive games Mr. Le Parc began developing around 1964, many of which evoke arcade or carnival amusements.

Strolling around his studio, Mr. Le Parc pointed to one of his works, "Ensemble of 11 Movements — Surprise," from 1965. Re-

sembling a modular credenza, spanned the length of the wall with 11 compartments, each featuring a different arrangement of motors and materials.

"Go ahead and play with it," he said, indicating a console with numerous buttons. Each button activated the contents of a single compartment, which spun, vibrated or rotated in place to create an improvised score of sound and movement. "They all make different drawings," Mr. Le Parc said of the compartments. "I might see one thing in them, but every person has permission to see whatever they see."