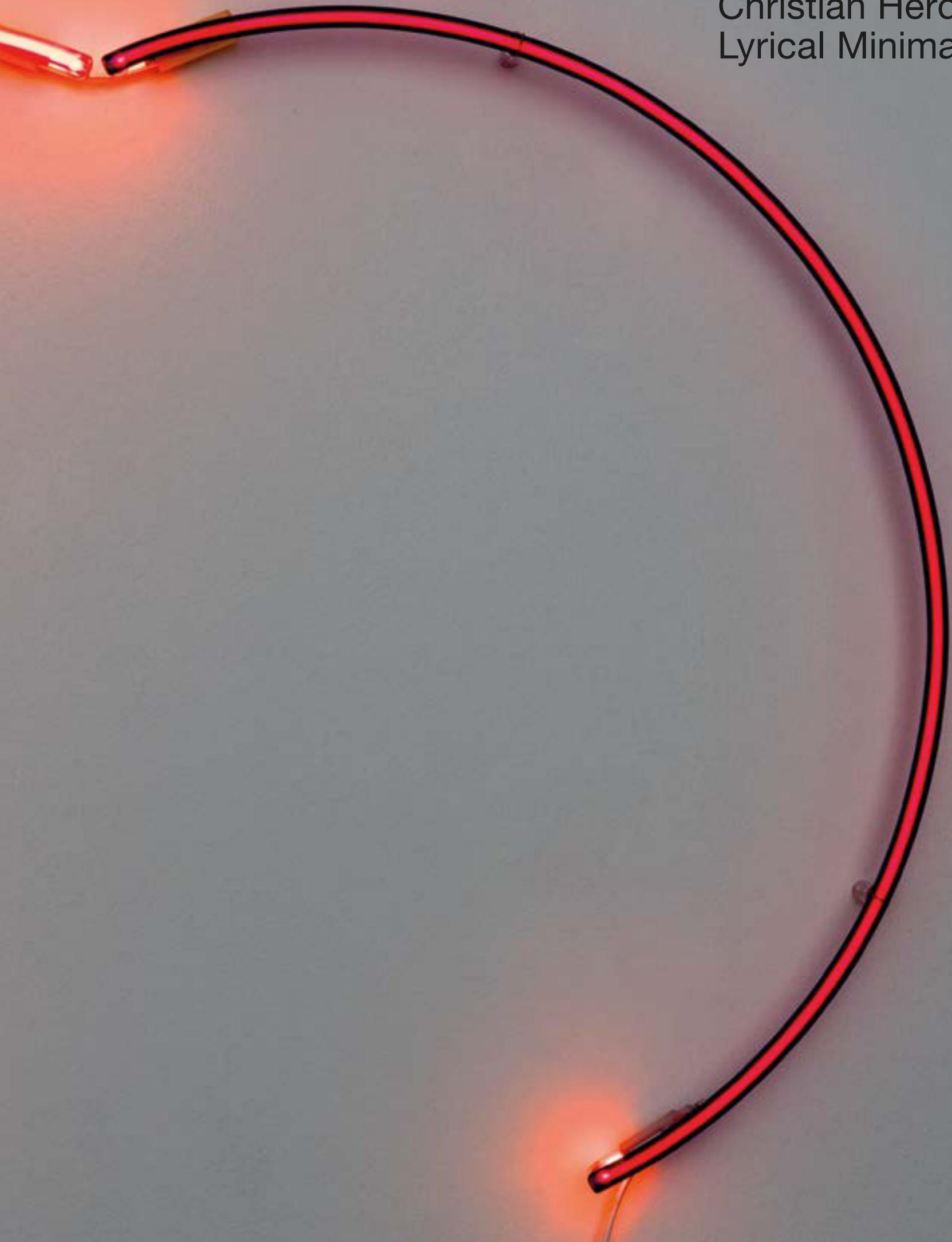


Christian Herdeg
Lyrical Minimalism



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Lyrical Minimalism



Wienand

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Highlighting Christian Herdeg's oeuvre:
Sculptural narrations.
Early material experiments.
Radical reduction. Opulent light

Yvonne Ziegler



Christian Herdeg has now been working with electric light for over forty years. He has devoted himself to a medium that changes according to the time of year and time of day. It is materially incomprehensible, and its technical boundaries and emotional effect have to be tamed repeatedly. Neon tubes¹ were integrated into acrylic glass figures for the first time in 1936 by Czech artist Zdeněk Pešánek. In the 1940s, they were then used graphically in front of a background by Gyula Kosice in Argentina. It was not until the start of the 1960s that artists began to make more use of neon tubes as a malleable medium. Christian Herdeg was one of those pioneers. In Switzerland, based on a few works seen in the USA and Canada, he developed a unique oeuvre comprising neon tube sculptures and wall pieces with different forms, colors and material combinations. In this essay, I shall examine the decisive moments in his artistic development.

Sculptural narrations

Already as a child, Herdeg felt drawn to light. He experimented with small light bulbs and june beetles on a little home-made stage, tried to photograph fireflies, and eventually, as a photographer, lighting technician and cameraman, learned how to use the properties and characteristics of light in a professional and creative way.² His decision to become an artist was triggered by the radiance of blue neon letters that magically allured him in 1969.³ He was living in Montreal at the time, taking photographs for various clients, traveling the continent and following current art movements. Thus, at *Expo 67*, he came across the latest Pop Art by James Rosenquist, Claes Oldenburg and Roy Lichtenstein, saw brand-new works by West Coast Minimalists and Hard-Edge artists in New York and Los Angeles, and discovered the first of what Herdeg calls the “New Sculpture” works of Post-Minimalist

