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17th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20006

AUDIO/VISUAL PROGRAM

Set No. 150

The Kinetic Art of Jesus Soto

Born in Ciudad Bolivar (Venezuela) in 1923, Jesus Soto is considered one of the major forerunners of the universal kinetic movement.

His work tranverses various stages, which begin with the marked influence exerted by Cubism. Throughout this period, that coincides with his appointment as Director of the Fine Arts School of Maracaibo, the artist worked in search of the geometry and simplification of the figure. He later went to Paris, where he learned and studied not only Cubist trends, but also earlier painters such as Malevich and Mondrian. Since then he had incorporated into his work the temporal and movement relationships which involves the viewer as an active agent and participant of his work.

Soto perceives of modern abstract art as an evolution of the universal art history, in which the artist is responsible for the exploration and systematic study of the unknown.

Inside this concept of his work, Soto continues his production. He begins to incorporate the spectator more and more in a process that goes from the superposition of transparent surfaces, a principal characteristic of his work during the 60's, up to what he calls "Penetrables," a concept which makes it possible for the public to literally get into his work.

Soto has exhibited his works in major galleries and museums the world over. Among them are included the Modern Art Museum of Paris, Fine Art Museum of Belgium, the Guggenheim Museum of New York, the Hirshhorn Museum of Washington, Pompidou Center of Paris, and in cities ranging from the Hamburg and Caracas. At present, he conducts workshops in Paris and Caracas, from where, with his exploration of plastic arts, he continues to work on what he considers the main responsibility of all artists.

Text: Lully Delgado

Translation: Mary Noll

Photographs: Angel Hurtado





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- A. Jesus Soto inside of the "Penetrable" constructed for the exhibition in the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington.
- B. A camera man is shown inside the "Penetrable" as in the preceding photo. The same is constructed with translucent nylon fibers. The light is reflected and refracted in playful perpetual movement.
- C. A lateral view of the other models of the "Penetrable," constructed with metallic spindles that move with the wind and strike each other, producing a pleasing sound.
- D. The same "Penetrable," constructed for an office building in Caracas, seen from the ground.
- E. "The Little Box," the first kinetic work of Soto. It constitutes 3 planes of plexiglass, an inch apart. The point of view changes with the movement of the spectator, producing an optic effect in its form. The squares seem to move and change place. Notice the figure that shows through the background is that of the artist.
- F. One of the first kinetic murals accomplished by Soto. It consists of a plane with black lines over white, serving as background. A rigid metallic structure separated only by a few inches is over-imposed. The combination of both elements produces a movement with the displacement of the viewer. It belongs to the Institute of Scientific Investigations of Pipe, Venezuela.
- G. "Hurtado Writing," a work contained in the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America in Washington, D.C. The artist calls "Writing" a series of graffities made of steel wire, which hang by invisible nylon threads, separated from the background plane. The graffities wave and mix with the background, creating a vibrating poetic effect.
- H. Lateral view of the same work demonstrating the "Writing" or steel wires that form the frontal part of the piece.

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- I. Another plastic search of Soto: a similar process to the "Penetrables," but inverted. The metallic structure instead of hanging from the ceiling it rests on the floor, creating an effect of movement. It provides a combination of the various metals with the displacement of the spectator.
- J. One of the most important works involving the integration of plastic art and architecture, carried out by Soto for Regie Renault in Paris. In the back, a "Scripture" of full size, and to the right, a structure that utilizes squares separated from the back plane. Seen from the front, it produces an optic vibration that gives the squares the sensation of floating in space.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: Angel Hurtado