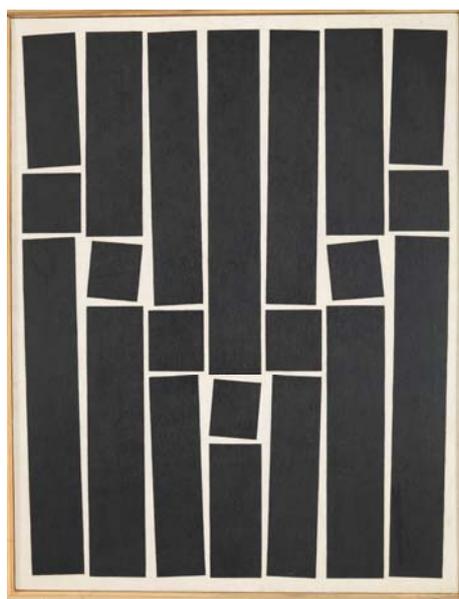


Concrete Invention: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros



HÉLIO OITICICA
Pintura 9, 1959
Óleo sobre lienzo
115.9 x 88.9 cm
Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros

- DATES:** 22th January – 16th September 2013
- PLACE:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid)
Nouvel building. Floor 0
- ORGANISATION:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and
Fundación Cisneros / Colección Patricia Phelps de
Cisneros
- CURATED BY:** Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and Manuel Borja-Villel
- COORDINATED BY:** Belén Díaz de Rábago
- RELATED ACTIVITIES:** International Congress.
*Encuentros Transatlánticos: Discursos vanguardistas
en España y Latinoamérica.*
From 11th until 13th July 2013
- Guided visits.
*A propósito de... Concrete Invention: Colección
Patricia Phelps de Cisneros*
Thursdays from 7th February until 18th April 2013

This is the first exhibition organised in Europe on the important Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) and the most comprehensive to date as well.

The project belongs to the collaboration agreement between Museo Reina Sofía and Fundación Cisneros / Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Its main aim is to enhance interest and knowledge on the importance of Latin America in the history of Modern and Contemporary art, through developing a number of jointly organised cultural initiatives.

Curated by Manuel Borja-Villel, director of Museo Reina Sofía, and Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, director of Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, the show is composed by approximately **two hundred works** —painting, sculpture, installation, *collage* and graphic work— that grows awareness on a key period of Latin American modernism (from the '30s to the '70s), **many previously unseen in Spain**. This thus confirms Museo Reina Sofía's growing interest in Latin America's cultural scene, as well as its vocation of taking an outstanding position as a *museo del sur* ("southern museum"). *Concrete Invention: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* will include masterpieces donated by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros to MoMA.

CONCRETE INVENTION: COLECCIÓN PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS

Concrete Invention: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros is a comprehensive and innovative reading of the development of geometric abstraction in Latin America from the 1930s to the 1970s. During this period, many artists across South America adopted abstraction as a language through which to develop and express multiple, and often contradictory, models for a radical new relationship between art and experience. In the modern cities of Montevideo, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Caracas, abstraction was embraced as a language for a cosmopolitan and progressive future. Although originally developed in Europe, geometric abstraction became for Latin America a powerful and rich tool through which to express the growing ambition of a continent that emerged as a cultural and political generator of new ideas during the mid-twentieth century.

The exhibition is structured around the idea of artistic *intention*. The works are considered to be visual manifestos, declarations of a series of principles about what art can and should be. In common with many modern artists, the creators in *Concrete Invention: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* wrote profusely about art and its role in society through polemical magazines, manifestos and articles in which they laid out the implications of a new artistic language that was supposedly universal, yet charged with different meanings in each context and in each period.

The works in the exhibition are grouped according to affinities in the fundamental artistic beliefs of their authors, regardless of chronology or geography. This model allows us to appreciate the rich diversity of proposals contained within this period, and to understand that the use of a common language does not condemn the artists to a common goal. We will see artists who conceive of abstraction as a system to create interpersonal relationships through manipulable objects, or those for whom stable mathematical proportions are a metaphor for the underlying mathematical structure of the universe. For others, visual rhythm and repetition creates the possibility of dematerializing the object into optical vibrations and luminous effects, while yet others use symbol and language to create a dialogue with past cultures and spiritual systems. All of these intentions are based in fundamentally different perspectives on the role of art in society, and bring a complexity to the history that may not be immediately evident.

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

The works in the first gallery are arranged as a metonym or 'index' of the central structure of the exhibition. Five works -or small groups of works- provide examples of the artistic intentions that are expanded in the subsequent galleries. Each of these intentions corresponds to an aesthetic and philosophical belief system developed by the artists, and points to how geometry was charged with different meanings and implications.

Carlos Cruz-Díez's *Psychromie 500* represents those artists for whom art was a reflection of a dynamic and ever-changing universe, in dialogue with the viewer's physical movement. In contrast, **Torres-García's** Constructive Universalism posits a symbolic and formal dialogue between abstraction and ancient cultures. Geraldo de Barros used simple black and white forms to create visually complex effects and illusions connected with visual psychology while **Lygia Clark** and **Hélio Oiticica** were interested in radically questioning the relationship between art and life through interactive objects. The final group represents those artists like **Raúl Lozza** for whom geometry was an inherently pure and meaningful system, connected to a core belief in materialism.

The following gallery is dedicated to the concept of **Dialogue** as an artistic *intention*. The works in this room respond in different ways to a belief that art is a means to interpersonal communication, rather than an end in itself. **Lygia Clark**, **Hélio Oiticica**, **Lygia Pape**, and **Gyula Kosice** at different points in their careers proposed that geometric abstraction contained a great potential for creating structures in which the most important factor was physical communication with another person. In Clark's hinged metal *bichos* or Kosice's articulated sculptures, the original intention was for each viewer to physically handle the work, creating a potentially infinite number of compositions from the interaction with the object. Lygia Pape's *Book of Creation* is a hybrid book-object in which each 'page' narrates a moment in the creation of the world, while Hélio Oiticica's interests were in the marginal cultures of Rio de Janeiro and the relationship of geometric forms to the human body and performance.

Cubo de nylon (1990), by **Jesús Soto**, dominates the next space. After that, the visitor will enter a room dedicated to the *artistic intention* of **Geometry**. One of the central traditions in geometric abstraction is the belief that geometry and mathematics are themselves inherently meaningful. This idea dates from ancient Greece and thinkers like Pythagoras or Plato for whom abstract forms were a higher form of perfection. For the artists in this section, geometry was a representation of the underlying rational order of the universe. For many artists in Latin America, this belief overlapped with an interest in Marxism and dialectical

materialism, charging the works with a social and collective purpose in which geometry had the potential to become a universal, collectivist and revolutionary project. Works by **Piet Mondrian**, **Josef Albers**, **Tomás Maldonado**, **Juan Melé**, **Juan Alberto Molenberg** and **Lygia Clark** are shown here.

Continuing the exhibition tour, a full room dedicated to the geometric works of **Alejandro Otero** leads to a space, where the exhibition presents a visual diagram –a mind map– reflecting the five key themes of the exhibition and the relationship of groups, individuals and ideas surrounding them. Next to this concept map are iPads with a more detailed explanation on the ideas behind the artwork. Each node can be expanded in the iPad app available in this room. Visitors can also read essays, view a section of the exhibition catalogue, watch video and view other related content.

The works in the next section, dedicated to Illusion, present various situations of visual illusions and optical instability. While many abstract artists worked to create entirely flat surfaces, others were interested in how pure geometric forms and the alternation of black and white can create the virtual sensation of depth or movement. Many of the works here appear to move or rotate visually, or create ambiguous relations between foreground and background. Gestalt Theory -a form of visual psychology in which our responses to situations of visual ambiguity can shed light on aspects of our psyche- influenced many of these artists and was especially important for the development of abstraction in Brazil. Artist like **Hélio Oiticica**, **Lygia Clark**, **Lygia Pape**, **Luiz Sacilotto** and **Franz Weismann** are represented in this room. The next one is dedicated to **Gego**.

In the late 1950s a number of artists discovered that the serial repetition of geometric elements could create visual vibrations through which the object appears to physically dissolve or dematerialize. Many of the works in this gallery present optical vibrations that create a visual dialogue with the spectator as he or she moves around the work. For **Jesús Soto** the interplay of tight grids created a visual shimmering effect that appears to be in constant dialogue with the viewer and the surrounding space while for **Carlos Cruz-Díez** color was the central

element to create optical effects through the reflection and refraction of light. In both cases the artwork is a device for creating situations of instability and ambiguity, reflecting the artists' belief that the universe is always in a state of flux.

A room in which *Fio* (1990-1995) and *Malhas da Liberdade* (1979), by **Cildo Meireles**, are shown, precedes the **Universalism** section. For many modern artists abstraction was a denial of the past in favor of a brave new world, a *tabula rasa*, but for a small number it was the opposite: an opportunity to create a formal and symbolic dialogue with history, tradition and spirituality. **Joaquín Torres-García** developed a complete aesthetic and philosophical system -Constructive Universalism- in which the use of symbols and proportions created a connection between the ancient and the modern. For **Mira Schendel**, language and words were connected to a strong interest in spirituality and religion. Works by **Willys de Castro** are shown following this section.

The last work of this exhibition tour is *Citrus 6906 (originalmente Amarillo Sol K7YV68)* (1973-2013), by **Héctor Fuenmayor**.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

The new technologies and the use of social networks are very much present in this exhibition through a multimedia program designed specially for the occasion, including interactive experiences in the exhibition halls, a mobile application and the event's own website: www.lainvencionconcreta.org, available from the 22th January.

There are many ways to explore the artworks in this exhibition. The show incorporates two technologic platforms with very different objectives: a **playful, interactive website**, with a social network approach, accessible and easy to surf through, both on a computer and on a smartphone; and an **iPad app**, with a more educational mission, allowing the user to explore and learn through broad access to videos, documents, audio and other digital materials.

ARTIST LISTING

JOSEF ALBERS

Bottrop, Alemania, 1888 - New Haven, Estados Unidos, 1976

GERALDO DE BARROS

Chavantes, Brasil, 1923 – São Paulo, Brasil, 1998

MAX BILL

Winterthur, Suiza, 1908 – Berlín, Alemania, 1994

POL BURY

Haine-Saint-Pierre, Bélgica, 1922 – París, Francia, 2005

LYGIA CLARK

Belo Horizonte, Brasil, 1920 – Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 1988

WALDEMAR CORDEIRO

Roma, Italia, 1925 – São Paulo, Brasil, 1973

CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ

Caracas, Venezuela, 1923

WILLYS DE CASTRO

Uberlandia, Minas Gerais, Brasil, 1926 - Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brasil, 1988

HERMELINDO FIAMINGHI

São Paulo, Brasil, 1920-2004

HÉCTOR FUENMAYOR

Caracas, Venezuela, 1949

GEGO [Gertrud Goldschmidt]

Hamburgo, Alemania, 1912 – Caracas, Venezuela, 1994

ALFREDO HLITO

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1923-1993

GYULA KOSICE

Kőszice, Eslovaquia, 1924

JUDITH LAUAND

Pontal, Brasil, 1922

RAÚL LOZZA

Alberti, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1911 – Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2008

TOMÁS MALDONADO
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1922

MATEO MANAURE
Uracoa, Monagas, Venezuela, 1926

CILDO MEIRELES
Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 1948

JUAN MELÉ
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1923-2012

JUAN ALBERTO MOLENBERG
Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1921

PIET MONDRIAN
Amersfoort, Países Bajos, 1872 – Nueva York, Estados Unidos, 1944

HÉLIO OITICICA
Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 1937-1980

ALEJANDRO OTERO
El Manteco, Estado Bolívar, Venezuela, 1921 – Caracas, Venezuela, 1990

LYGIA PAPE
Nova Friburgo, Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 1927 – Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 2004

CÉSAR PATERNOSTO
La Plata, Argentina, 1931

RHOD ROTHFUSS
Montevideo, Uruguay, 1920-1969

LUIZ SACILOTTO
Santo André, Estado de São Paulo, Brasil, 1924 – São Bernardo do Campo,
Estado de São Paulo, Brasil, 2003

MIRA SCHENDEL
Zúrich, Suiza, 1919 – São Paulo, Brasil, 1988

JESÚS SOTO
Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela, 1923 – París, Francia, 2005

JOAQUÍN TORRES-GARCÍA
Montevideo, Uruguay, 1874-1949

FRANZ WEISSMANN
Knittelfeld, Austria, 1911 – Río de Janeiro, Brasil, 2005

**FTP ACCESS DETAILS
CONCRETE INVENTION: COLECCIÓN PATRICIA PHELPS DE CISNEROS:**

FTP: <ftp://77.226.250.242>

Login: CisnerosExpo

Password: 742QSD648

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