

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY PARIS

PROJECT SPACE

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Tue – Sat 11:00am – 7:00pm



BRAZIL: Reinvention of the Modern

Wednesday, 28 September – Saturday, 5 November 2011

Opening reception: Tuesday, September 27th, from 6 to 8 pm

We use the term "neo-concrete" to differentiate ourselves from those committed to non-figurative "geometric" art ...and particularly the kind of concrete art that is influenced by a dangerously acute rationalism.

-- Ferreira Gullar

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of Brazilian art from the late modern period, featuring works by Sergio Camargo, Lygia Clark, Amilcar de Castro, Helio Oiticica, Lygia Pape, and Mira Schendel.

In the late 1950s, a group of young Brazilian artists reacted against the dogma of the Concrete Art movement of the 1930s that was predicated on non-representational geometric shapes, mathematical formulas, and grids. Breaking away from the grip of European artistic traditions, they sought to challenge and reinterpret pervading definitions of the modern.

The exhibition takes as its point of departure the NeoConcrete Manifesto written by Ferreira Gullar in 1959, which was based on the phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Artists working in Brazil in the 1960s and 70s embraced and developed the initial ideas put forward in the manifesto, exploring the production of meaning via the sensations produced by bodily engagement with art works.

Although still opposed to veritable representation, the so-called "NeoConcretists" advocated the use of abstracted corporeal forms, sensuality, subjectivity, and color. Intent on undermining the implicit separation of artwork and viewer, they sought to expand art's formal, emphatic and social dimensions. NeoConcretists saw works of art as living organisms, and thus encouraged fabrication without the use of a frame or artificial support to bring art into real space and direct contact with viewers. Herein lies the radical nature of NeoConcrete art.

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In the 1960s, Lygia Clark created a series of folding metal sculptures called *Bichos* (little animals) that were conceived to be handled and manipulated by the viewer. Here the object of art is the very process of the viewer's doing. Amilcar de Castro's untitled wooden sculpture, (1952) has sensual contours that recall the natural world. An un-mounted, moveable object, it can be interacted with and carried to different locations, as for Mira Schendel's *Caderno Selos* (1971), a loosely bound book of milky acrylic squares to be rifled through and re-arranged at will.

Sergio Camargo's *Orée* (1964) and *Untitled* (1960) contain references to organic form in clustered wooden reliefs painted in monochrome white. The inherent dynamics of the piece shift according to the viewer's vantage point, light and shadow. Lygia Pape's *Tetia*, a gauze-like weave of fine golden filaments stretched taut between floor and ceiling, articulates the surrounding space with the play of light upon its immaterial planes, while the slightly irregular geometric forms of Helio Oiticica's luminous gouache *Metaesquema* jostle with energy within the confines of the two-dimensional support.

Exhibition design is by Paris-based architect and designer India Mahdavi. A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Brazilian curator Paulo Venancio Filho will accompany the exhibition.

Press Enquiries

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