



Radical Geometry

Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection

The Sackler Wing

5 July – 28 September 2014

2009-2016 Season supported by:



Radical Geometry: Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection will span a dynamic period in South American art, charting the emergence of several distinct artistic movements in the cities of Montevideo (Uruguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina), São Paulo (Brazil), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Caracas (Venezuela), from the 1930s to the 1970s. It will explore the development of an innovative abstract visual language that captured the positive spirit of the time and conveyed the radical aspirations of a young generation of artists. Comprising over 80 paintings and sculptures, the exhibition is chiefly drawn from the Collection of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, the foremost collection of geometric abstract art from Latin America in private hands; additional loans are from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, donated by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros. Many of the works on display will have never been seen in the UK before.

The exhibition will first present the early artistic revolutions of the 'Río de la Plata' [River Plate] region, named after the river that divides the cities of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. It will document several key movements, beginning in the 1930s with the return of Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García to Montevideo and his declaration of a new revolutionary art, drawing on indigenous American influences, later called the 'School of the South'. A decade later, a group of artists from across the water in Buenos Aires, including Carmelo Arden Quin, Tomás Maldonado and Gyula Kosice, founded their own artistic movements – 'Arte Madí' and 'Arte Concreto-Invención' – to challenge the customs and confines of traditional painting. With a proclamation by artist Rhod Rothfuss in 1944 to abandon the conventional picture frame, the distinction between painting and sculpture also came to be blurred, as seen in one of the highlights of this section, Juan Melé's, *Irregular Frame No. 2*, 1946.

Boundary-breaking art from Brazil, produced throughout the 1950s-60s, features in the second part of the exhibition, which will reveal new approaches to painting and sculpture in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Inspired in part by Concrete Poetry, monochrome, linear works such as Lygia Pape's *Untitled (from the series Weaving)*, 1959, Geraldo de Barros' *Diagonal Function*, 1952, and Hélio Oiticica's *Painting 9*, 1959, will be displayed alongside playful and interactive sculptures by Lygia Clark including *Machine – Medium*, 1962, from her noted 'Bichos' series. These works reflect the optimistic and outward-looking stance of an internationally ambitious, post-war Brazilian society, with

art at its centre.

The exhibition concludes in Caracas, Venezuela, where works by Jesús Soto and Carlos Cruz-Diez lean towards kinetic art. Jesús Soto's *Psychromie No. 500*, 1970 acts as a 'light trap', using a series of colour frames to create a work that changes colour with the movement of the visitor. Sculptures by Gego (Gertrude Goldschmidt), such as *Trunk*, 1976, and *Sphere*, 1976, will offer a sense of spiritual calmness with their delicate, line-based structure. Whilst utilising modern materials, Gego's sculptures were made by hand, eschewing the technological innovations and machinery of the modern age.

Radical Geometry: Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection will reveal vibrant and distinctive visual cultures, developed independently of each other within a fifty-year period across Latin America.

Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Founder, Fundación Cisneros said: "For over four decades the Fundación Cisneros has been dedicated to increasing awareness of the rich heritage and dynamic cultures of Latin America. The Royal Academy of Arts shares with the Fundación Cisneros a commitment to the support of artists and artistic scholarship. I am delighted that the Royal Academy will be displaying some of the finest works of the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, allowing its audience to discover new artists and advancing knowledge and understanding of Latin American visual culture."

Organisation

Radical Geometry: Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection has been organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. The exhibition has been curated by Dr. Adrian Locke, Exhibitions Curator, Royal Academy of Arts and Gabriel Perez-Barreiro, Director and Chief Curator, Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 192-page fully illustrated catalogue with contributions from Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, Amalia María García, Isobel Whitelegg and Dr. Adrian Locke.

Dates and Opening Hours

Press View: Tuesday 1 July, 10am – 2pm
Open to public: Saturday 5 July – Sunday 28 September 2014
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£10 full price; concessions available; children under 12 and Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets for **Radical Geometry: Modern Art of South America from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection** are available daily at the RA or online at www.royalacademy.org.uk. Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email adultgroups@royalacademy.org.uk.

Images

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Related Exhibition

Gego. Line as Object runs at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds from 24 July – 19 October 2014

www.henry-moore.org.uk

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

About the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection

Founded in the 1970s by Patricia Phelps de Cisneros and Gustavo A. Cisneros, the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) is one of the core cultural and educational initiatives of the Fundación Cisneros. Based in New York City and Caracas, the CPPC's mission is to enhance appreciation of the diversity, sophistication, and range of art from Latin America and to advance scholarship of Latin American art.

For further press information, please contact Charlotte Hogg on 020 7300 5614 or charlotte.hogg@royalacademy.org.uk

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09/04/14