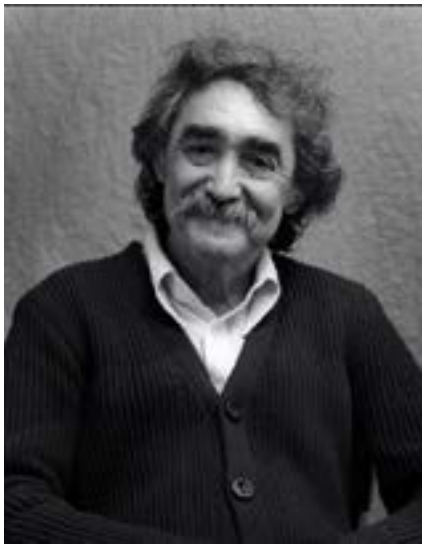
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JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO

(Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela, 1923 - Paris, France, 2005)



Jesús Rafael Soto was one of the central figures of international kinetic art and a key contributor to the redefinition of postwar abstraction. Soto's career began in Venezuela, where he studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas in Caracas before becoming director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Maracaibo. In 1950 he moved to Paris, a decisive transition that placed him in the midst of the European avant-garde and set the stage for his lifelong exploration of movement, vibration, and perceptual instability.

From the outset, Soto sought to dematerialize the art object, challenging the conventions of static form. He became deeply associated with Galerie Denise René, the epicenter of kinetic and optical experimentation in postwar Europe. Soto participated in the landmark exhibition Le Mouvement (1955), alongside artists such as Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Victor Vasarely, and Jean Tinguely. This exhibition cemented his position as a pioneering voice in the emerging discourse on movement and viewer participation.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Soto's work evolved from vibratory paintings and reliefs to more complex, spatial structures that destabilized the viewer's field of perception. His investigations into orthogonal line systems, serial progressions, and optical modulation led him to conceive artworks that existed only through the viewer's movement. This philosophical shift culminated in the creation of the Pénétrables, immersive environments made of suspended filaments that invite the viewer to enter, walk through, and activate the work. These environments would become Soto's most iconic and influential contribution to 20th-century art.

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Soto's practice was profoundly shaped by his interest in physics, music, and phenomenology —particularly the dynamic relationships between matter, energy, and perception. He developed what he termed the "non-object": a dematerialized structure whose identity emerges not from physical substance but from the ephemeral interactions between viewer, space, and vibration. His work thus anticipated—and continues to resonate with—contemporary discourses on embodiment, participation, and the experiential turn in art.

Over the course of his career, Soto achieved significant international recognition. His work has been featured in major exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale (1958, 1964, 1966) and Documenta (1968). He established close dialogues with fellow artists of the era, including Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, François Morellet, and the GRAV group. His influence expanded worldwide, contributing to the prominence of Venezuelan and Latin American modernism within global art history.

Today, Soto's work is held in major museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Tate Modern (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid), Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington, D.C.), Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, and the Jesús Rafael Soto Museum of Modern Art in Ciudad Bolívar, founded in 1973. Large-scale Soto sculptures and environments are present in public spaces across Europe, Latin America, and the United States.

Until his passing in 2005, Soto continued to expand the boundaries of perceptual art, leaving a legacy of rigorous innovation, formal clarity, and conceptual depth. His Pénétrables stand as some of the most visionary works of the 20th century—radical environments that transform the viewer from passive observer into an active participant within a vibrating, constantly shifting perceptual field.



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SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2024 Soto, Galería Cayón Menorca, Menorca, Spain
SOTO, La T, Galería Cayón Madrid, Madrid,Spain
Jesús Soto cosmos en vibración, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela

2023 Inmateriales. Jesús Soto. Un homenaje, Centro cultural B.O.D., Caracas, Venezuela
Jesús Soto, Cor, forma, vibração, Dan Galeria, São Paulo, Brazil
Jesús Rafael Soto: The Instability of the Real, Galería RGR, Mexico City, México
Jesús R. Soto, Galería Elvira González, Madrid, Spain

2022 Soto: Prints and multiples, Marlborough gallery, New York, USA
Invisible: a tale of ethereal lines, León Tovar gallery, New York, USA
Materia y Vibración, Galerie Perrotin, New York, USA

2020 Carrément Soto, Galerie Denise René, Espace Marais, Paris, France
Perception: Works from 1964 – 1992, Sicardi Gallery, Houston, USA

2019 Soto. The Fourth Dimension. The Guggenheim Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain
Soto: Vibrations, 1950-1960, Hauser & Wirth, New York, USA

2015 Jesús Rafael Soto, Une Rétrospective, Musée Soulages, Rodez, France

2014 Jesús Rafael Soto: Houston Penetrable, Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH), Texas, USA

2013 Soto dans le collection du Museé national d'art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

2006 Soto virtual, Trasnocho Cultural, Caracas, Venezuela
Virtualidad vibrante, Centro de Arte La Estancia, Caracas, Venezuela
Visión en movimiento, Fundación PROA, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Visione en movimiento, Galleria d'Arte Moderna é Contemporaneo, Bergamo, Italy

2005 Visión en movimiento, Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico
Soto. A gran escala, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas Sofía Ímber, Caracas, Venezuela

2003 Soto. A gran escala, Centro Cultural Metropolitano, Quito, Ecuador
Soto. Le mouvement, Galerie Denise René, Paris, France

2001 Jesús Soto, Retrospectiva, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Bogotá, Colombia

2000 Jesús Rafael Soto, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
Jesús Rafael Soto, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MARCO), Monterrey, Mexico

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1998 Jesús Rafael Soto, Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia, Salvador, Brazil

Jesús Rafael Soto, Museo Nacional de Artes Visuales, Montevideo, Uruguay

Jesús Soto, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina

1997 Jesús Rafael Soto, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Universidad de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Jesús Rafael Soto, Hyundai Gallery, Seoul, South Korea

1993 Re-pensar lo visible, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Maracay Mario Abreu, Maracay, Venezuela

Jesús Soto, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Pau, France

1992 Soto actual, Altamira Fine Art; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela

1990 Jesús Rafael Soto, Museo de Arte Moderno, Kamakura, Japan

Jesús Rafael Soto, Museo de Arte Moderno, Saitama, Japan

Jesús Rafael Soto, Iwaki City Art Museum, Iwaki, Japan

Jesús Rafael Soto, Itami City Museum of Art, Itami, Japan

1982 Jesús Rafael Soto: Obres recents, Fundación Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain

1979 Soto, Oeuvres actuelles, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

1977 Soto, Centre International de Création Artistique, Sénanque, France

1974 Soto, Retrospectiva, Musée Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Soto, Retrospectiva, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., USA

1971 Jesús Rafael Soto, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA

Penetrable de Bogotá, Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá, Colombia

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GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2025 Good Vibrations, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Carlos Raúl Villanueva. Arquitectura moderna y síntesis de las artes, Centre Compidou Málaga, Málaga, Spain

Electric Op, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo, USA

Une brève histoire de fils, Maison de l'Amérique latine, Paris, France

2024 Imaging the Third Dimension. Holograms and Optical Illusions in the Würth Collection, Kunsthalle Würth, Schwäbisch Hall, Germany

Festival Ar(t)chile, Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans, Orléans, France

In the Making : Contemporary Art at SBMA, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, USA

2023 Optical and Movement, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Beijing, China

Geometrismos. Jesús Soto y su tiempo, Espacio Arte al Cubo del Cubo Negro, Caracas, Venezuela

The Dynamic Eye: Op and Kinetic Art from the Tate Collection, Museum of Art Pudong (MAP), Pudong, China

Masters that changed the city, Coral Gables Museum, Florida, USA

Mouvement et Lumiére, Fondation Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France

Kinetic art past and present, Galeria Raquel Arnaud, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2022 Wave, Marlborough gallery, New York, USA

Zero, pop und minimal – Die 1960er und 1970er jahre, Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, Germany

Cinétique! La sculpture en movement, Fondation Villa Datris, Paris, France

Révolutions Xenakis, La Cité de la Musique, Paris, France

Homagge to Ulrich Schumacher, Emil Schumacher Museum, Hagen, Germany

Hängepartie. Kunst mit offenem ende, Museum für Konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt, Germany

2021 Color and Motion, Ideas and Dreams, The Neuberger Museum of Art, New York, EUA

La forma elusiva. Insurgencia y ruptura en el arte venezolano, Espacio Mercantil Altamira, Caracas, Venezuela

2020 Multiplied, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Missouri, USA

Sur Moderno. Journeys of Abstraction, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, EUA

Axis of Horizon, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea

2019 SYN KRONOS, Galería RGR, Mexico City, Mexico

Outlines, Leon Tovar Gallery, Nueva York, EUA

Le parti de la peinture, Fondation Louis Vuitton, París, Francia

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2018 Kinesthesia: Latin American Kinetic Art, 1954-1969, Palm Springs Art Museum, California, USA

Todo es movimiento: op art y arte cinético en la colección Würth, Museo Würth, La Rioja, Spain

The other transatlantic Kinetic & Op Art in Central & Eastern Europe and Latin America, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland

The other transatlantic Kinetic & Op Art in Central & Eastern Europe and Latin America 1950s-1970s, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia

2016 Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960-1980, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

Pan American Modernism Avant-Garde Art Latin America and the United States, Weatherspoon Art Museum, North Carolina, USA

The illusive eye, El Museo del Barrio, New York, USA

Eye attack, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark

Un musée imaginé. Trois collections européennes: Centre Pompidou, Tate, MMK, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France

2015 Superposiciones: Arte latinoamericano en colecciones mexicanas, Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico

La línea continua, Blanton Museum of Art, Universidad de Texas, Texas, USA

Libertad de expresión: The Art Museum of the Americas and Cold War Politics, Art Museum of the Americas, Organization of American States, Washington, D.C, USA

2013 Schwarz-Weiss, Kleines Museum, Kultur auf der Peunt, Weissenstadt, Germany

La invención concreta: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain

Myth and Materiality: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection, 1930-1990, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California, USA

Intersections: MoLAA's Permanent Collection, Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA), California, USA

2011 Ejercicios ópticos, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela

Suprasensorial: Experimetos en luz, color y espacio, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, USA

Museé national d' art moderne Collections contemporaines (des années 1960 à nos jours, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Francia

2010 Embracing Modernity: Venezuelan Geometric, Abstraction, The Patricia & Philip Frost Art Museum, Florida, USA

2009 North Looks South. Building the Latin American Art Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA

2008 Revolución Cinética, Museo de Arte Nacional de Chiado (MNAC), Lisbon, Portugal

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2007 The Geometry of Hope, Latin American Abstract Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection, Blanton Museum of Art, Texas, USA

L' CEil Moteur. Art Optique et Cinétique. 1950.1975, Musée d' Art Moderne et Contemporaine, Strasbourg, France

2006 Zero, Internationale Künstler Avantgarde des 50er/60er Jahre, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany

2004 Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, USA

Beyond Geometry: Experiments in Form 1940s-70s, Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, California, USA

2002 Paris: Capital of the Arts, 1990-1968, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

2000 Heterotopías. Medio siglo sin-lugar 1918-1968, Museo Nacional, Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain

1998 Zero Internacional, Musée d' Art Moderne et d' Art Contemporain de la Ville de Nice, Nice, France

1967 Lumière et Mouvement, Musée d' Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France

1963 Venezuela del paisaje a la expresión plástica. 10 artistas contemporáneos, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid, Spain

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COLLECTIONS

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de la Universidad de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago de Chile, Chile

Museo de Arte Moderno La Tertulia, Cali, Colombia

Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Nantes, France

Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Ulmer Museum, Ulm, Germany

Sammlung Lenz Schönberg, Munich, Germany

Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop, Germany

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, Germany

Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hannover, Germany

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany

Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany

Museum Wurth, Künzelsau, Germany

Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin, Italy

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna Contemporanea di Roma, Rome, Italy

Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan

Museum of Modern Art, Hokkaido, Japan

Museum of Modern Art, Saitama, Japan

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Itami City Art Museum, Itami, Japan

Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, Mexico

Museo de Arte Latino Americano Contemporáneo de Managua, Managua, Nicaragua

Reflex Miniature Museum of Contemporary Art, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Muezul de Arta Universala Burcuresti, Bucarest, Romania

National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea

Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul, South Korea

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain

Fundación ARCO, Madrid, Spain

Museo de La Asegurada, Alicante, Spain

Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden

Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland

Tate Modern, London, UK

Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

Oklahoma City Art Museum, Oklahoma City, USA

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., USA

Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela

Museo de Arte Moderno - Fundación Jesús Soto, Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela

Museo de Arte Moderno de Mérida Juan Astorga Anta, Mérida, Venezuela

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