

## **Jesús Rafael Soto**

### The Instability of the Real

The plastic investigations initiated by Jesús Rafael Soto (Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela 1923 – Paris, 2005) in the early fifties and developed over more than five decades focused on integrating three basic principles: movement, time, and the dematerialization of volume. This multidimensional notion, initially based on painting, eventually merged with sculpture and was nourished by the problems related to abstraction and purity of form explored decades ago by cubism, constructivism, and suprematism. At the same time, his experiments are framed in a moment of shared interests with his contemporaries to transgress the static legacies of figuration to establish a new relationship between art and society.

In 1955, Soto participated in the exhibition *Le Mouvement*, presented at the Galerie Denise René (Paris), along with Yaacov Agam, Paul Bury, Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Robert Jacobsen, Jean Tinguely, and Victor Vasarely. This showcase brought together the pioneers who explored op art with those who introduced the collective reflection that kineticism meant. It traced the path from a distant and focused perception by the viewer to their active participation as a detonating corporeal agent of what the art historian, Jean Clay, referred to as an awareness of *the instability of the real*.

Soto developed a structured language based on the superimposition of elements to compose his works. He gradually integrated processes of instability, vibration, and dematerialization of shapes and volumes, until he transferred the two-dimensional surface to three-dimensional space, making it habitable. This new perceptual experience of the artistic object incorporates time as an essential factor, demanding a return to the here and now and an awareness of the vortex with which we inhabit and perceive our environment.

To commemorate the centenary of his birth, in collaboration with the Atelier Soto in Paris, this show brings together a selection of historical works from 1955 to 1998 that show the experience of the artist's searches developed throughout his career. The placement of the pieces emulates how various of them coexisted in the exhibitions carried out during the sixties and seventies to promote Soto's immersive principle, which placed the viewer in a new aesthetic territory.

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Curators