

FRANCISCO SOBRINO

[1932, Spain - 2014, France]

Born into a working-class family in Guadalajara, Spain, Francisco Sobrino began his studies of painting and sculpture at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Madrid from 1946 to 1948. He moved to Argentina in 1949 and studied at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires from 1950 to 1957. During this period, he met many of the artists and writers involved with the Asociación Arte Concreto-Invención (AACI), and he began working in geometric abstraction. At the Escuela de Bellas Artes, he also met Hugo Demarco, Julio Le Parc, and Horacio Garcia Rossi. In 1959, Sobrino moved to Paris with Le Parc, where they co-founded the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV). In 1960, Sobrino began making reliefs and then three-dimensional constructions from transparent, tinted acrylic plastic, Plexiglas®. These works were the first of his explorations of juxtaposition and superimposition between the viewer and the work of art. In 1965, his work was included in the exhibition *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA.

Light and movement were of special interest to the artists of GRAV, but they were careful to avoid using these as ends in themselves. Instead, light and movement were ways of modifying a particular environment and creating an unexpected situation, to which audience members could respond. The group hoped that such interactive works might lead to a social movement based on collective experience and viewer participation. After numerous group exhibitions throughout Europe, GRAV disbanded in 1968.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Sobrino continued his research into light, using solar energy with the help of solar panels. He also developed his work with modular units, which allowed the viewer to change the sculpture's form. Plexiglas® continued to be a preferred material for him. In 1971, he worked on sets and costumes for the ballet *Requiem*, by György Ligeti, performed at the Theatre contemporain de Grenoble. In 1979, he completed his architectural designs for Banco Exterior de España in Guadalajara, Spain. "The first kinetic architecture in the world," the *Kinetic Bank* was designed in black and white, with projections on the floors, staircases, and walls; it was later demolished.

Until his death in 2014, Sobrino continued his consistent creative exploration of the relationships between science and art through kinetic, optical, and geometric projects. In 2008, work on the Museo Francisco Sobrino was begun in Guadalajara, Spain. Sobrino's work has been shown extensively in international museums and collections, and he has completed important architectural commissions in Europe and in Latin America.

Sobrino's work was shown in innumerable exhibitions, among them: *Francisco Sobrino*, Espace de l'Art Concret (EAC), Centre d'art contemporain, Mouans-Sartoux, France (2019); *Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel*, Galerie Denise René, Paris, France (1961);

Dynamo: Un siècle de lumière et de mouvement dans l'art 1913-2013, Grand Palais, Paris (2013); *GRAV, Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel 1960-1968: stratégies de participation*, MAGASIN - Centre National d'Art Contemporain (CNAC), Grenoble, France (1998); *La Biennale Paris*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (1963); *Abstraction/figuration, oeuvres du Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap)*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, France (2014); *Luz y movimiento. La vanguardia cinética en París 1950-1975*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Alicante (MACA), Spain (2019); *Intercambio global. Abstracción geométrica desde 1950*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Buenos Aires (MACBA), Argentina (2012); *La Inestabilidad*, GRAV, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina (1963); *North Looks South: Building the Latin American Art Collection*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2009); *Color into Light, Connecting Currents: Contemporary Art at the Fine Arts Museum Houston in the inaugural installation of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2020); *The Responsive Eye*, MoMA, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA (1965); and *Experiments in Visual Kineticism*, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2006).

Sobrinó's works are represented in several major collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, USA; Beacon Collection, Boston, Massachusetts, USA; Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap), Paris, France; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, USA; Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Cholet, France; Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Bilbao, Spain; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Alicante (MACA), Spain; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid, Spain; El Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre de La Castellana, Madrid, Spain; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico; Museu d'Art Contemporani, Vicente Aguilera Cerni (MACVAC), Vilafamés, Spain; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), Massachusetts, USA; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA; Muzeon Tel Aviv Leomanut, Israel; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy; Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Tate Modern, London, England, UK.