

Press Release

Announcing worldwide representation of the Estate of Hélio Oiticica

Lisson Gallery is pleased to announce exclusive worldwide representation of the estate of acclaimed Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica. The gallery's first collaboration with the Estate will be the unveiling of one of the last works conceived by the artist, *Penetrável Macaléia* (1978) at Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2019. A presentation of Oiticica's seminal works will take place in Fall 2020 at Lisson Gallery's New York spaces.

Hélio Oiticica (1937 – 1980) is widely regarded as one of Brazil's leading artists of the twentieth century and a touchstone for much contemporary art made since the 1960s, primarily through his freewheeling, participatory works of art, performative environments, avant-garde films and abstract paintings. Even before the age of 20, Oiticica was a key member of the historic Rio de Janeiro-based Grupo Frente (1954-56), his radical play with geometric form and vibrant colors transcending the minimal lines of European constructivism and imbuing his work with an exuberant rhythm that resonated with the avant-garde music and poetry of his native Brazil. In the late 1950s, Oiticica would go on to become a leading figure of Brazilian Neo-Concretism (1959-61) that included other ground breaking artists such as Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape and the poet Ferreira Gullar, ultimately giving rise to the artistic movement known as *Tropicalismo*, named for a work of Oiticica's from 1967.

Increasingly, Oiticica became a countercultural figure and underground hero, foregrounding bodily interaction with spatial and environmental concerns over pure aesthetics. "Ambient art," he wrote, "is the overthrow of the traditional concept of painting-frame and sculpture – that belongs to the past. It gives way to the creation of 'ambiences': from there arises what I call 'anti-art,'" which he later defined as "the era of the popular participation in the creative field." This generous and generative practice would become highly influential for subsequent generations of artists, especially his *Parangolés* or 'habitable paintings' and all-encompassing series of installations, known variously as *Núcleos* (ceiling-hung geometric panels forming gradual chromatic experiences) and *Propositions* or *Penetrables* (labyrinth-like architectural environments made of sand and semi-permeable cabins). This supra-sensorial approach continued until his untimely death in 1980 at the age of 42.

The centerpiece of Lisson Gallery's Art Basel Miami Beach presentation will be *Penetrável Macaléia* (1978), a large-scale work which culminates his series of ground breaking colorful, inhabitable sculptures known as *Penetrables*. The title of *Penetrável Macaléia* pays homage to legendary Brazilian composer Jards Macalé, who was a close friend of Oiticica's and a key figure of *Tropicalismo*. Viewers, or participators, as Oiticica preferred to call them, are intended to enter and navigate the seven-foot metal cube framed with brightly colored mesh panels surrounded by brick, rocks, sand and tropical plants. Created shortly after his return to Brazil following seven significant years in New York, *Penetrável Macaléia* references Oiticica's numerous earlier bodies of works — the experimental filmic series he created while living in the U.S., the dazzling capes known as *Parangolés*, which he frequently incorporated into his performances in urban environments around the world, as well as references to Brazil's favelas, or shanty towns, whose aesthetic, architecture and culture provided endless inspiration.

Oiticica's work has been the subject of major recent museum exhibitions, including the critically acclaimed retrospective *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium*, which debuted at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Philadelphia in 2016 and traveled to the Art Institute of Chicago and the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2017. *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* was exhibited at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2006-2007 and in London at the Tate Modern in 2007. His work is included in the collections of numerous international institutions including Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, USA; Inhotim Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Museo de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Tate Modern, London, UK; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA, among others. The Projeto Hélio Oiticica was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1980 to manage the artist's estate.

Alex Logsdail, Executive Director of Lisson Gallery states, "The gallery is honored to work alongside the Projeto Oiticica to champion the work of one of the most innovative artists of the twentieth century. Oiticica's influence on the development of contemporary art both in Brazil and on the international stage is unrivalled. His vanguard practice presents a clear dialogue with the experimental artists and exhibitions Lisson has supported throughout its history. This is also a particularly special reunion for Lisson. After founding the gallery in 1967 with a programme that included Brazilian contemporaries such as Mira Schendel, my father, Nicholas, first encountered and admired Oiticica's work at his legendary 1969 exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery. Now, fifty years later we look forward to continuing Oiticica's boundary-breaking legacy."

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York as well as a space in Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as other artists of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Ted Stamm and Roy Colmer. In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

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