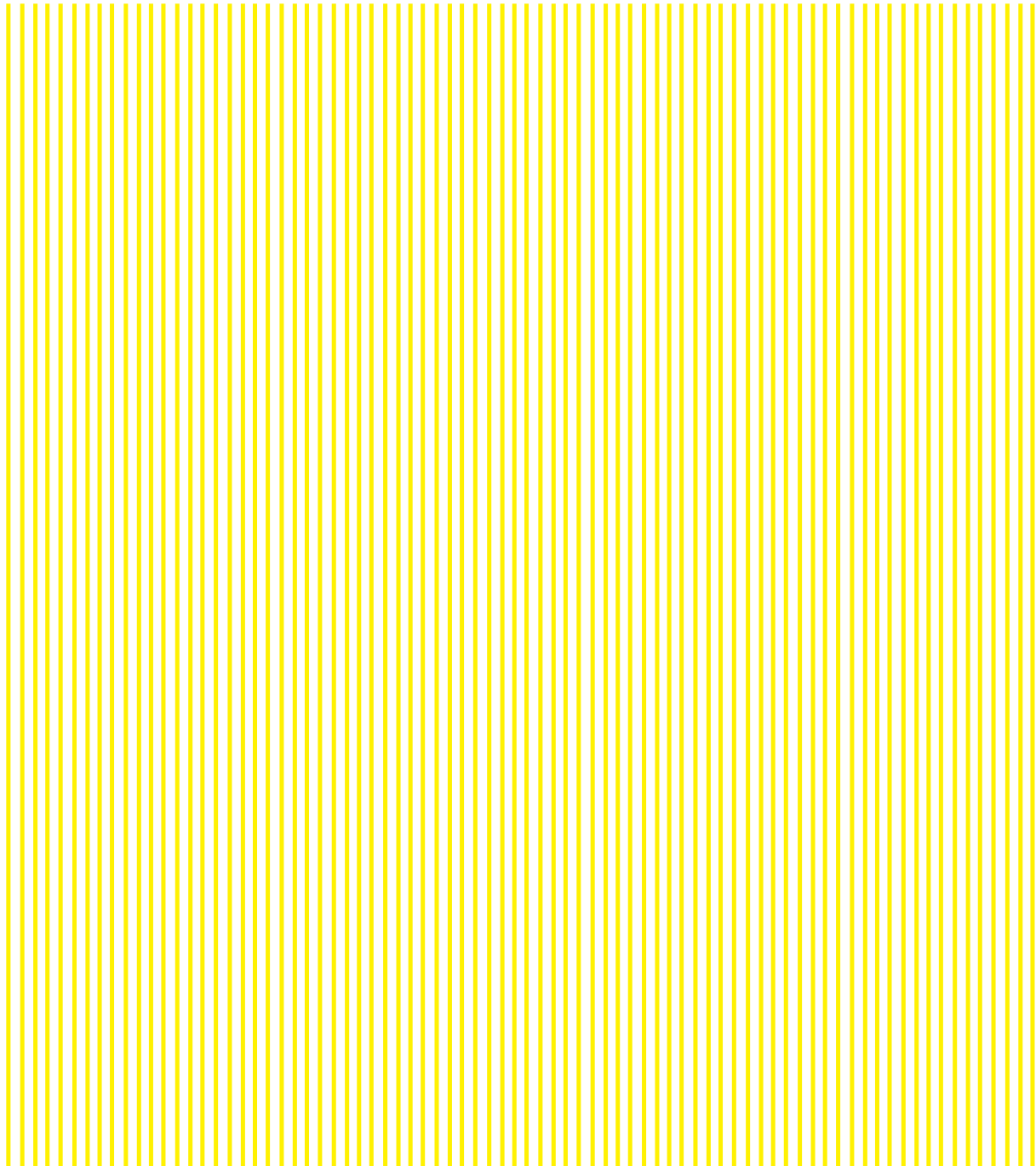


# GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Press release



SOTO. THE FOURTH DIMENSION

10 - 18 - 2019 / 2 - 9 - 2020

## *Soto. The Fourth Dimension*

- Dates: October 18, 2019–February 9, 2020
  - Curator: Manuel Cirauqui, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
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- The idea of a “fourth dimension” is materialized in Soto’s dynamic and abstract works, especially in his large-scale participatory sculptures, the iconic *Penetrables*.
  - In addition to a large number of mural pieces, the exhibition includes characteristic examples from other series, such as *Virtual Volumes*, *Extensions*, and *Progressions*.
  - According to the artist, “In the *Penetrables*, the spectator walks through vertical threads or bars that fill the entire available space and make up the work. From that moment on, spectator and artwork are physically and inextricably entwined.”
  - The exhibition includes Soto’s celebrated *Sphère Lutétia* (1996), installed by the Museum’s pond for the four months of the exhibition.

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents *Soto. The Fourth Dimension*, a retrospective exhibition of the works of Jesús Rafael Soto (b. 1923, Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela; d. 2005, Paris). Organized by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in collaboration with the Atelier Soto in Paris, the show brings together over 60 works, including several of Soto’s large-scale participatory sculptures called *Penetrables*, some of his most iconic and important contributions to the recent history of art. In addition, the show includes a large number of historic paintings and mural works, which help to understand the fundamental role Soto played in the development of Kinetic Art from the early 1950s to the end of the 1960s, and to appreciate the development of his artistic practice up to the first decade of the 21st century.

*Soto. The Fourth Dimension* also presents characteristic examples from his most important series, such as *Virtual Volumes*, vertical works that suggest large geometric forms suspended in the air; *Extensions*, floor-bound pieces where a chromatic mass, sometimes opaque, and other times as light as a halo, emerge from the ground; and *Progressions*, works in which aerial forms protrude from the floor or ceiling to meet in what seems like a kinetic sequence or an unbroken play of tensions.

In addition to all of the pieces exhibited inside the Museum galleries, Soto’s spectacular *Sphère Lutétia* (1996) can be viewed in the Museum’s exterior, next to the reflecting pool, for almost the four full months of the exhibition.

Over the five decades of his career, Jesús Soto played a fundamental role in the redefinition of the scope and social function of art. Breaking with the conventional separation of painting and sculpture in the 1950s, Soto’s practice evolved progressively beyond the visual realm to take on an emblematic role in the radical shift that affected the art object in the following years. From the optical explorations of his early period,

Soto went on to participate in the first group of kinetic artists in Paris—together with such figures as Jean Tinguely, Iacov Agam, and Victor Vasarely. He also became associated with important international groups such as Zero and the circle around the Signals gallery in London.

In 1967, Soto began to develop his series of *Penetrables*, large cubic structures made of hanging plastic or metal cords, which he would continue to work on for the rest of his career. Meanwhile, he also worked on architectural and pictorial series whose participatory potential is realized without immersing the spectator into the work, but still requiring them to move or participate in some fashion. Soto continued to work on large-scale commissions for public or institutional spaces up to his death in 2005. Museums such as the Stedelijk in Amsterdam in 1967, the Solomon R. Guggenheim in New York in 1974, the Palacio de Velázquez in Madrid in 1982, or the Jeu de Paume in Paris in 1997 have all devoted important survey exhibitions to his work.

Underscoring the idea of experience in terms of temporality, intensity, and spectator participation, *Soto. The Fourth Dimension* offers a rare opportunity to reexamine this artist's visionary and transforming career. The idea of a "fourth dimension" evokes the merging of space and time, and of form and experience in time, and is one of the fundamental concepts that artists of the mid-20th century inherited from the quasi-utopian spiritual period of the avant-gardes. To Soto, the artist must work in an area of shared inquiry with science and philosophy.

As an aesthetic experience, the fourth dimension opens up the way to all of Soto's abstract and dynamic works, and is supremely expressed in his iconic *Penetrables*. In these works, Soto foreshadows the new contextual and relational directions contemporary art will follow from the 1960s onwards. According to the artist, "In the *Penetrables*, the spectator traverses vertical cords or bars that fill the entire available space and make up the work. From that moment on, spectator and work are physically and inextricably entwined."

In addition to the works by Soto in the exhibition, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents an important selection of archival material that helps to contextualize the output of the France-based Venezuelan artist, whose work became increasingly celebrated in Europe over the five decades of his career.

*Soto. The Fourth Dimension* has been organized by the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in collaboration with the Atelier Soto in Paris, and features important loans from public and private collections in Europe and the United States.

## Catalogue

To accompany the exhibition, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is publishing an illustrated catalogue featuring new scholarship on Soto's legacy and impact on recent art history, alongside reproductions of unpublished archival material and historical documents.

## DIDAKTIKA

The didactic space of this exhibition presents a selection of excerpts from the documentary *Una nueva visión del arte* (Soto, A New Vision of the Art) directed by the filmmaker Ángel Hurtado, as well as a music recording of the band Los Yares, which Soto created in Paris. These didactic audiovisual materials, along with an educational text, provide context for the life and practice of Jesús Rafael Soto.

### Activities

#### Conversation on Soto with Paco Ibáñez (October 19)

As a young man in Paris, the singer-songwriter Paco Ibáñez met the artist Jesús Rafael Soto, who played the guitar masterfully, and they became fast friends. This talk will examine aspects of their close relationship with the participation of Cristóbal Soto, the artist's son, and Manuel Cirauqui, the exhibition curator.

#### Shared reflections

Unique tours conducted by Museum professionals.

- Curatorial vision with Manuel Cirauqui, Museum Curator (October 23)
- Key concepts with Luz Maguregui, Education Coordinator of the Museum (November 6).

\*Sponsor: Fundación Vizcaína Aguirre.

### For more information:

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All the information on the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is available at [www.guggenheim-bilbao.es](http://www.guggenheim-bilbao.es) (Press Room).

Pictures for press use  
***Soto. The Fourth dimension***  
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

**Online press picture service**

You may register in the Press Room on the Museum's website ([prensa.guggenheim-bilbao.es](http://prensa.guggenheim-bilbao.es)) to download high-resolution photographs and videos of both the exhibitions and the building. If you do not yet have an account, you can register and download the materials you need. If you are already a user, enter your username and password to download the photographs directly.

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For more information, you may get in touch with the Press Room of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao by calling +34 944 35 90 08 or by emailing [media@guggenheim-bilbao.es](mailto:media@guggenheim-bilbao.es).

Jesús Rafael Soto

*White and Yellow Penetrable (Penetrable blanco y amarillo)*, 1968

Plastic tube, wood, metal, and silkscreen ink

250 x 300 x 300 cm

Private collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Dome with Red Center (Duomo centro rosso)*, 1997

Paint on metal

75 x 250 x 250 cm

Private collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Pure Vibration (Vibration pure)*, 1968

Acrylic paint on wood and metal, and nylon thread

102 x 172 cm

Private collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Black Wall Writing (Escritura muro negro)*, 1977  
Acrylic paint on wood and metal, and nylon thread  
206 x 402 x 30 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Untitled*, 1996  
Acrylic paint on wood and metal  
203 x 405 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Untitled*, 1962  
Paint on wood and metal  
32 x 67 x 27 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Black Vibration (Vibration noire)*, 1960  
Paint on canvas and metal, alabastine  
82 x 66 x 10 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Three Speeds (Trois vitesses)*, 1966  
Wood, paint, and metal  
48 x 17 x 12 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto  
*Untitled (Dynamic Composition) [Sans titre (Composition dynamique)]*, 1950  
Oil on canvas  
75 x 95 x 3 cm  
Private collection  
© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Model for "Optic Wall" (Maquette de "Mur optique")*, 1951

Paint on wood

19 x 58 x 1 cm

Private collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Displacement of a Transparent Square (Desplazamiento de un cuadrado transparente)*, 1953–54

Paint on wood

100 x 100 x 5 cm

Private collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Spiral, Sotomagie Series (Spirale, Série Sotomagie)*, 1955 / Ed. 1967

Color silkscreen on Plexiglas

34 x 34 x 18 cm

Private Collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Log (Leño)*, 1961

Wood, metal, paint, and nails

75 x 18 x 25 cm

Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

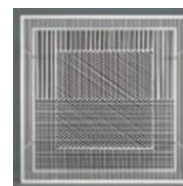
*Untitled*, 1958

Painted iron and paint on wood

100 x 100 x 38 cm

Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto

*Sonorous penetrable (Penetrabile sonoro)*, 1970

Metal, vulcanised fibre, and paint

250 x 180 x 180 cm

Private collection

Installation view: *12 ans d'Art Contemporain en France*,  
Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 1972



© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019 Jesús Rafael Soto

Jesús Rafael Soto

*Penetrable*, 1982

Painted wood and silicone rubber thread

485 x 787 x 867 cm

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Photo Archive Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

© Jesús Rafael Soto, ADAGP, Paris / VEGAP, Bilbao, 2019



Jesús Rafael Soto in the group exhibition *Vision in motion - Motion in vision*,

Hessenhuis, Antwerp, Belgium, March 21– May 3, 1959.

Photo: Charles Wilp

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