



מוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים
the israel museum, jerusalem
متحف إسرائيل، أورشليم القدس

**Distinct Visions of Four Abstract Artists
Otto Freundlich, Len Lye, Lygia Clark, and Blinky Palermo
Examined in Rare Presentation at Israel Museum**

Jerusalem (July 27, 2016)— Highlighting the unique contributions of four abstract artists—Otto Freundlich, Len Lye, Lygia Clark, and Blinky Palermo—a major exhibition opening in December at the Israel Museum celebrates their enduring legacy in the field of abstraction throughout the 20th century. While each represents a different generation and regional perspective, these artists are united by their distinct and autonomous approaches toward abstraction, and together they offer an alternative interpretation of its origins and influences. Surveying these artists' paintings, sculptures, films, and works on paper, the exhibition highlights their shared interest in spatial and social relationships. *The Shadow of Color: Otto Freundlich, Len Lye, Lygia Clark, and Blinky Palermo* is on view from December 20, 2016 through April 22, 2017.

“Although from different parts of the world, these four artists each emerged from the Constructivist movement to create abstract works that would bridge the relationship between object and viewer,” said James S. Snyder, Anne and Jerome Fisher Director of the Israel Museum. “The notable autonomy that each exercised within the field of abstract art, is deserving of closer examination, and we are proud to bring their names to the fore, based on the insightful research of our contemporary art curator Rita Kersting. Her original work adds to the canon of art historical research and also extends our own commitment to drawing connections across time and place in the continuing narrative of the history of visual culture.”

“With the emerging recognition of these artists' importance within the modernist canon—and their growing influence among younger generations of artists today—this exhibition provides a timely platform for re-examining their accomplishments together,” said Rita Kersting, Landeau Family Curator of Contemporary Art of the Israel Museum. “I am eager to introduce audiences to the innovative perspectives of these four artists, whose work collectively took an important step forward in the progression of modern to contemporary art history and yet has never been shown together and will also be presented now for the first time in Israel.”

Featuring nearly 60 works across a variety of mediums, *The Shadow of Color* is organized by artist in order to offer visitors an in-depth view of each artist's individual practice:

- German Jewish painter and sculptor Otto Freundlich (1878-1943) worked in a Constructivist style comprised of individual swaths of color placed in pulsating, rhythmic patterns. He was influenced by his close friend Wassily Kandinsky, although Freundlich's stylistic repetition was more geometric in its abstraction. The Nazis considered Freundlich's art “degenerate” and destroyed many of his works. He eventually died in a concentration camp in Lublin in 1943.

The exhibition features selected examples of his paintings, gouaches, and sculptures, including his 1929 monumental bronze *The Ascension* from the Israel Museum's collection.

- Len Lye (1901-1980) was an experimental filmmaker and kinetic sculptor, whose work was dominated by his aim to capture motion. Born in New Zealand, Lye took inspiration from the visual traditions of the indigenous peoples of Australia, Africa, and Oceania with whom he lived before moving to London (1926) and New York City (1944). In his early drawings and paintings, Lye documented the process of motion and later expanded on this practice by painting directly onto film itself to create moving pictures.

On view in the exhibition will be Lye's landmark film *The Colour Box* (1935), which showcases this innovative technique with vibrant abstractions that appear synchronized to dance music by Don Baretto and his Cuban Orchestra. Also on view is Lye's black and white film *Free Radicals* (1958), for which Lye scratched designs into the emulsion of black film stock to create dramatic flashes of lines.

- Brazilian born Lygia Clark (1920-1988) explored abstract perspective, dimension, and depth in painting as well as in sculpture. A leader of the Neo-Concretist movement in Brazil, Clark became interested in engaging viewers as participants in her work. She is best known for her foldable metal sculptures, known as "Bichos" (critters or small animals), which viewers could reconfigure into endless variations.

A selection of Clark's monochromatic paintings and moveable sculptures will be on view, illustrating the artist's shift from two dimensions toward participatory artworks.

- German artist Blinky Palermo (1943-1977) studied under Joseph Beuys at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the 1960s. Interested in the spatial relationships between color and form, Palermo worked with textiles, creating fabric paintings and paintings on metal, canvas, and wood. He eventually moved away from traditional rectangular canvases to other geometric shapes and remained dedicated to painting despite the emergence in his time of performance, Fluxus, and conceptual art as the new avant-garde. Palermo died unexpectedly at the age of 33.

Shadow of Color will explore the many facets of Palermo's oeuvre, from fabric and metal paintings and silk screens to sculptural canvases.

Exhibition Organization

The Shadow of Color: Otto Freundlich, Len Lye, Lygia Clark, and Blinky Palermo is curated by Rita Kersting, the Israel Museum's Landeau Family Curator of Contemporary Art and assistant curator Orly Rabi.

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

The Israel Museum is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel and is ranked among the leading art and archaeology museums in the world. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections ranging from prehistory through contemporary art and includes the most extensive holdings of Biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world, among them the Dead Sea Scrolls. Over its first 50 years, the Museum has built a far-ranging collection of more than 500,000 objects through an unparalleled legacy of gifts and support from its circle of patrons worldwide.

The Museum's 20-acre campus, which underwent a comprehensive renewal in 2010 designed by James Carpenter Design Associates and Efrat-Kowalsky Architects, features the Billy Rose Art Garden, the

Shrine of the Book, and more than 225,000 square feet of collection, gallery, and temporary exhibition space. The Museum also organizes programming at its off-site locations in Jerusalem at the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, where it presents archaeological artifacts from the ancient Land of Israel; and at its historic Ticho House, a venue for exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art.

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