

GEGO (Gertrud Louise Goldschmidt)

[1912, Germany - 1994, Venezuela]

As a young woman, Gego (Gertrud Goldschmidt) worked as a draftswoman in several architecture firms, painting workshops, and carpentry shops in her native Germany while completing a degree in architecture from the Universität Stuttgart in 1938. To escape the increasing anti-Semitism in her home country, she emigrated to Venezuela in 1939, where she worked as a freelance architect and industrial designer until the mid-1940s. In 1953, she moved to the coastal town of Tarma and began her artistic work, producing drawings, watercolors, monotypes, and xylographs; most of these early works were figurative and expressionist. She returned to Caracas in 1956, and there, using pure abstraction as her starting point, she began to address problems of sculptural space in her work. In 1957, along with artists Carlos Cruz-Diez, Alejandro Otero, and Jesús Rafael Soto, Gego participated in the exhibition *Arte abstracto en Venezuela* at Galería Don Hatch, Caracas, Venezuela. By 1959, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City had begun to acquire her work; she moved to New York in 1960 and remained in the United States until 1967.

Gego taught at the School of Architecture of the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV) and at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas Cristóbal Rojas. Her first individual show was held at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas in 1961; in 1962 she installed a sculpture at the headquarters of the Banco Industrial de Venezuela. She helped found the Instituto de Diseño Neumann in Caracas where she taught from 1964 to 1977. In 1969, with Gerd Leufert, she completed murals for the headquarters of the Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Educativa (INCE). From the 1970s to the 1980s she completed important, architecturally integrated sculpture for public buildings, residences, and shopping malls. In 1972, for example, she constructed *Cuerdas* (Cords), a sculpture-installation consisting of suspended nylon and stainless-steel strips, for the Parque Central architectonic complex in Caracas.

Gego eventually began to use random procedures and “poor” materials such as industrial scraps and metals. Her series of suspended sculptures *Dibujos sin papel* (Drawings without Paper) and her series *Bichos* (Creatures) also date from the 1980s, as does her *Reticulárea ambiental*. Her last, extremely significant work was *Tejeduras* (Weavings), in which small fields of orthogonal lines were interwoven with strips of paper.

Gego's works have been shown in numerous important solo exhibitions, including *Gego: Origin and Encounter, Mastering the Space*, Americas Society (AS), New York City, New York, USA (2012); *Between the lines: Gego as Printmaker*, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, USA (2017); *Gego: Sculpture and Drawing*, Betty Parsons Gallery, New York City, New York, USA (1971); *Gego: Sculptures, 1957-1967*, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia (1967); *Gego, Drawings, Engravings, Weavings*, Centro Cultural Consolidado, Caracas, Venezuela (1996); *Gego: La poetique de la Ligne*, Colección Mercantil, Maison de l'Amérique Latine, Paris, France (2014);

Gego: Autobiography of a Line, Dominique Lévy Gallery, London, England, UK (2016); *Gego: Between Transparency and the Invisible*, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia, The Drawing Center, New York City, New York, USA, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Argentina, and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2005); *Acuarelas de Gego*, Galería de Arte Nacional (GAN), Caracas, Venezuela (1982); *Weavings*, Galería Sotavento, Caracas, Venezuela (1990); *Gego: Line as Object*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2013), Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, England, UK, and Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany (2014); *Gego. Die Architektur einer Künstlerin*, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany (2022); *Gego: Sculptures and Gouaches*, Librería Cruz del Sur, Caracas, Venezuela (1958); *Questioning the Line: Gego, A Selection, 1955-1990*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico, and The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2002); *Lines and Inter-lines: Engravings and Drawings by Gego*, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela (1964); *Reticulárea (ambientación)*, Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela (1969); *Gego: Defying Structures*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Spain and Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2006); and *Gego: a la linha emancipada*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), Brazil (2019), among others.

Gego's works are represented in several major collections including Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC), Caracas, Venezuela and New York City, New York, USA; Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich, Switzerland; Fundación Banco Mercantil, Caracas, Venezuela; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas (MACC), Venezuela; Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto, Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA; New York Public Library (NYPL), New York City, New York, USA; Pratt Graphic Art Center, New York City, New York, USA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, New York, USA; and Taller de Artistas Gráficos Asociados (TAGA), Caracas, Venezuela.