

**GREGORIO VARDANEGA**

[1923, Italy - 2007, France]

Born in Possagno, Italy, Gregorio Vardanega's family relocated to Buenos Aires, Argentina when he was three years old. As a young man, he studied in the Escuela de Bellas Artes (1939-1946) in Buenos Aires and graduated as a professor of drawing. In 1946, he participated in the exhibitions organized by the Asociación Arte Concreto-Inventiva (AACI), and two years later, he traveled with Uruguayan artist Carmelo Arden Quin to Europe. The trip was an important moment in the artist's formation; a year later, he showed work at the Salon d'Amérique Latine in Paris, and this exhibition put him in contact with prominent figures involved in Paris's growing kinetic movement, including Denise René, Georges Vantongerloo, Nicolas Pevsner, Sonia Delaunay, Max Bill, and Constantin Brancusi. When he returned to Buenos Aires, he began making his earliest kinetic works, using metal bands and celluloid.

At the center of many of Argentina's avant-garde artistic circles, Vardanega was a founding member of the Asociación Arte Nuevo in 1955 and, the following year, of Agrupación de "Arte no Figurativo Argentino." In 1957, he was included in the group exhibition *14 Pintores abstractos* at the Galería Galatea in Buenos Aires. He received the gold medal in the Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Bruxelles in Brussels, Belgium in 1958 and was included in the IV Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil.

In 1959, Vardanega moved to Paris with Martha Boto and began experimenting with Plexiglas spheres illuminated with moving projections of colored lights. All his subsequent work explored the aesthetic of light, movement, color, and electronic programs. He was especially drawn to the cultural phenomenon of machines that "think." As did many kinetic artists, Vardanega thought of his work as being in dialogue with architecture and urban planning. He hoped his towers and light works would be accompanied by music and other modes of performative work; he considered many of the sculptures to be prototypes for large-scale public projects. His first major exhibition in Paris, *Chromocinétisme* (1964), was a two-person show with Boto at La Maison des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His work has subsequently been included in numerous important surveys of kinetic art.

Vardanega died in Paris in 2007.

Vardanega's works have been shown in numerous important exhibitions, including *Dynamo: A Century of Light and Motion in Art, 1913-2013*, Grand Palais, Paris, France (2013); *An Open Mind*, Maddox Arts, London, England, UK (2017); *Electra*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (1983); *Escultura, Objeto*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (MAMBA), Argentina (2005); *Lo[s] Cinético[s]*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid, Spain (2007); *Constructed Dialogues: Concrete, Geometric and Kinetic Art from the Latin American Collection*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2012); *Line into Space, 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); *Lumière, Mouvement et Optique*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium (1964); and *Kinesthesia: Latin American Kinetic Art, 1954–1969*, Palm Springs Art Museum, California, USA (2017).

Vardanega's works are represented in numerous collections around the world, including Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, Australia; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri, USA; Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin, USA; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris (MAM Paris), France; Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Argentina; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Brazil; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA; and Muzeon Tel Aviv Leomanut, Tel-Aviv, Israel.