

**Press release**  
**Zurich, 12 February 2009**

## **Kunsthau Zürich presents 'Hot Spots: Rio de Janeiro / Milan – Turin / Los Angeles, 1956 – 1969'**

**From 13 February to 3 May 2009, the Kunsthau Zürich presents 'Hot Spots', an exhibition devoted to the artistic avant-garde of the 1950s and 1960s in Rio de Janeiro, Milan and Turin, and Los Angeles. The show features outstanding works of art, photography, architecture and design by such world-renowned figures as Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Mario Merz, David Hockney, Ed Ruscha and James Turrell.**

The postwar period saw Paris and New York, the traditional capitals of the creative world, joined by fresh hot spots on the artistic landscape.

### **RIO DE JANEIRO: NEW CONCRETISM, BOSSA NOVA, CINEMA NOVO**

Rio de Janeiro's all-pervasive creative atmosphere during the 1950s and early 1960s produced a hotbed of culture. The buzzword was *new*, as in neo-concretism in art and architecture, bossa nova (new wave) in music, and cinema novo in the film world. A specifically Brazilian design was created, featuring formal concision and an emphasis on construction. The artistic movement known as neo-concretism was Brazil's first contribution to a universal visual idiom. Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark and other pioneers of the geometrical abstract style reinterpreted the work of Piet Mondrian and Max Bill for a new generation, with an increasing focus on issues of space and spatiality.

### **MILAN/TURIN: FROM THE INFORMALE TO ARTE POVERA**

Milan and Turin, in which the new Italian artistic identity emerged between 1958 and 1968, are emblematic of a decisive moment in Italian art. Milan led the way, as Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni developed the monochrome, minimalism, and a painting style which went beyond the frame to occupy space, and thus broke with Italy's artistic legacy. Turin, a vibrant industrial centre, was next to take up the mantle as Italy's artistic Mecca, as the Informale gave way to Arte Povera. The new movement was characterized by its use of 'poor' materials, whether natural or artificial (as represented by Mario Merz), as well as by its utopian stance on politics and the ecology (as evidenced by Michelangelo Pistoletto).

### **LOS ANGELES: POP, MINIMALISM, ARCHITECTURE**

The postwar art scene in Los Angeles interspersed dreams of felicity with nightmarish visions. The promise of 'sun and surf' and happiness in Hollywood

was juxtaposed with the exploitation of people and their dreams, as artists in L.A. oscillated between utopian projections and sarcastic responses to popular culture. James Turrell and Robert Irwin, for instance, drawing their inspiration from the light and landscape on the Pacific coast and in the deserts of the southwest, celebrated immateriality and physical liberation, while Ed Ruscha and David Hockney, among others, took southern California's cults of the body, the automobile, and the star literally and began to play with the symbolic vocabulary arising from these phenomena. This same interplay was also reflected in contemporary Californian architecture, as represented by 'Case Study Houses', documented by Julius Shulman in iconic architectural photographs.

### META-EXHIBITION DEMONSTRATES AFFINITIES

This exhibition of about 270 works is a collaboration with the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, where Paulo Venancio Filho and Annika Gunnarson (Rio de Janeiro), Luca Massimo Barbero and Cecilia Widenheim (Milan/Turin), and Lars Nittve and Lena Essling (Los Angeles) conceived it as 'Time and Place', a series of three independent presentations. Tobia Bezzola coordinated curatorship of the show – a 'meta-exhibition' – at the Kunsthaus Zürich, which unites three snapshots of as many artistic centres into an impressive triptych.

Our three 'hot spots', after all, were linked by networks of personal contact, multiply interwoven in their aesthetic exchanges as well as by means of a shared theory of production. This is manifest in the joint effort, undertaken in the ostensibly disparate art worlds of Rio de Janeiro, Milan and Turin, and Los Angeles, to overcome the conventional canvas.

### AUDIOGUIDE AND CATALOGUE

Those keen to pursue the subject of the show further may avail themselves of an audioguide (Eng/Ger, included in the price of admission); an exhibition catalogue, *Hot Spots* (320 pages, approx. 170 illustrations), is also available at the Kunsthaus shop at a special price of CHF 49. With an introduction by Tobia Bezzola, it contains essays by Paulo Venancio Filho, Annika Gunnarson and Ferreira Gullar (Rio de Janeiro), Luca Massimo Barbero and Francesca Pola (Milan/Turin), and Lars Nittve and Cécile Whiting (Los Angeles).

Supported by Zurich Insurance Company.

## VISITOR INFORMATION

Kunsthhaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch)

Open Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

Holidays: Easter 9-13 April, 1 May: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Admission including audioguide in English and German: CHF 18.-/12.-  
[concessions]/CHF 14.- per head for groups of 20 or more. Subject to change.

Advance Sales: RailAway/SBB Kombi-Ticket, with reduction on rail travel and entrance to the museum. Available at local stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19 per min.), group rates possible. Magasins Fnac, tel. +33 1 4157 3212, [www.fnac.ch](http://www.fnac.ch)

Guided tours: In German Wed 6.30 p.m. and Sun at 11 a.m. In English Sat 7.3. at 11 a.m. In Italian Sat 28.3. at 11 a.m.

For private guided tours apply on +41 (0)44 253 84 06 (Mon–Fri 9 a.m.–12 noon)

For further information and visual materials, please contact  
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