



**NIKOLAI KASAK:  
SPACE CONSTRUCTIONS, 1940s-1970**

**CECILIA DE TORRES, LTD.**

## **Nikolai Kasak: Space Constructions, 1940s-1970**

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**CECILIA DE TORRES, LTD.**  
**&**  
**SAMMER GALLERY**









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# FOREWORD

Cecilia de Torres, Ltd. in collaboration with Sammer Gallery, Miami, is pleased to present *Space Constructions*, an exhibition of constructivist and geometric abstract paintings, drawings, wood reliefs and constructions by Nikolai Kasak, dating from the 1940s to 1970.

Of Belarusian descent, Nikolai Kasak originally considered joining a monastery and dedicating his life to religion. Instead, he pursued his formal training in art in the 1930s and 40s, receiving his undergraduate degree in Warsaw and pursuing his graduate studies in Vienna and Rome.

While trained in the academic style of late 19th century Realism, Kasak was profoundly influenced by the artists of the De Stijl, Russian Constructivist, and Suprematist movements, shifting from a figure-based aesthetic to pure abstraction.

After living in Rome and Florence from 1945 to 1950, Kasak moved to New York in 1951, where he would spend the remainder of his life.

In the 1950s, after an invitation from Gyula Kosice, the artist became involved with the Argentine Madí movement. Kasak's work was shown in multiple exhibitions as part of the Grupo Madí, including: *International Madí Art*, held at Galería Bonino in Buenos Aires in 1957; *International Madí*, held at Galerie Denise René in Paris in 1960; and *15 years of Madí Art*, held at the Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires in 1961.

Kasak wrote a number of theoretical essays regarding the importance of positive and negative space in his compositions. Two major works entitled *Physical Art - Action of Positive and Negative* (1945-46), and *From Action to Dynamic Silence: The Art of Nikolai Kasak* (1991), deal with his preoccupation with nothingness, and with the concept of the void.

As stated by Kasak, "Physical Art reflects a free and deep human understanding of art and the working laws of the visible and invisible worlds. It is an intellectual and spiritual force... an original creative effort to parallel the fundamental organization of the cosmos with the unitary nature of divine reality."



Nikolai Kasak, Gyula Kosice, Ilya Bolotowski and unknown, 1968

# CONFLUENCES

by M. Cristina Rossi

## KASAK'S PHYSICAL ART WITHIN THE MADI GROUP

In April 1934 Joaquín Torres-García returned to Montevideo with the decision to continue with the Constructive Art project that he had started in Europe and proposed a radical break that would originate in America. He represented his position by devising an inverted drawing of the South American territory, published in the first issue of *Círculo y Cuadrado*, the magazine that combined a desired approach to pre-Hispanic art and his knowledge of modern European art. In the River Plate area, his return captivated the attention of young artists and reactivated their interest in the work of Piet Mondrian, Theo Van Doesburg, Jean Arp, Georges Vantongerloo and many other vanguard artists with whom Torres-García had shared the spirit of *Cercle et Carré*. (1)

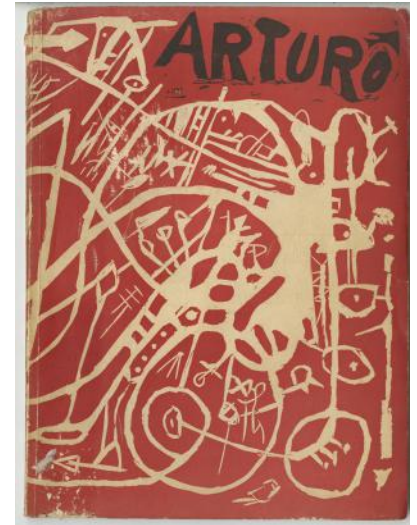


Figure 1 & 2

As far back as 1935, Carmelo Arden Quin had established a first contact with the master by attending the conference "Geometría, creación y proporción" delivered at the Sociedad Teosófica Uruguaya, but it was only in the early 40's that he approached Torres-García to ask him for a collaboration to be included in a vanguard publication that he planned to launch with a group of fellow artists. Subsequently, together with Edgar Maldonado Bayley, he sought the support of the Brazilian poet Murilo Mendes and, finally, he added the contribution of the Chilean Vicente Huidobro. Thus, during the summer of '44, *Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas*, started to be published with contributions by these three renowned artists, texts by young artists Bayley, Arden Quin, Gyula Kosice and Rhod Rothfuss, and, in addition, cover designs by Tomás Maldonado and vignettes by Lidy Prati.

Also during the middle 30's, in Europe, Nikolai Kasak started his studies at the Warsaw School of Fine and Applied Arts, where he received a training in Figurative Art, specializing in mural painting.

1 These vanguard ideas were also spread and discussed upon the return of Emilio Pettoruti, Juan Del Prete and Lucio Fontana -among other artists -, through the presentation of early exhibitions such as the Primera exposición de Dibujos y Grabados Abstractos presented at the Galería Moody in December 1936, or by articles published on that same year by Torres-García in the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación* on Piet Mondrian, Amedée Ozenfant, Theo van Doesburg, Hans Arp, and of his conversation with Léonce Rosenberg.

Figure 1 Mapa invertido publicado en *Círculo y Cuadrado*, n. 1, Montevideo, May 1936.  
Figure 2 Cover *Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas*, Buenos Aires, Summer, 1944.

Later, he travelled to Vienna and Rome for the purpose of completing his studies, where he wrote his first ideas regarding his "physical art", and contacted other artists who were attracted by the Abstract language.

When mapping the artistic production of these young artists, interested in interpreting the post-war years, it would seem that they lived far apart. However, their contacts through exhibitions, publications, correspondence or trips created a tight network that brought together their works and ideas. When analyzing young Russian artist Nikolai Kasak's itinerary during a short period, we note that he started his artistic training in Warsaw, continued his studies in Vienna, inserted himself in the post-war Roman artistic scenario and attained his artistic maturity in New York. Thus, the theoretical and plastic corpus, that originated in Europe and developed in North America, had already reached Buenos Aires at the beginning of the decade of the 50's.

## KASAK AND HIS CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL ART

During the decade of the '40s, while he continued his Figurative training at the Academy in Rome, Kasak made his first Abstract small-format drawings(2), anticipated by some geometric carpet-desings created during 1942-1943. In this environment, he experienced a strong impact vis-à-vis works by Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky currently being exhibited and, at the same time, he came into contact with Giorgio De Chirico, Piero Dorazio, Alberto Moravia and Enrico Prampolini, amongst other artists interested in Modern Art.

Within this setting, Kasak started to formulate the outline for a proposal based on Constructivism. By 1945, while studying in Rome, he wrote: *"bisogna raggiungere l'originalità, la libertà e la purezza con ci vedono e conoscono i bambini o i santi"*(3). Based on this idea he maintained that, in like manner as the world viewed by children and saints helps maintain permanent values and the freedom to think and create, the artist must trust in his own vision and abstain from pleasing the interests of customers or art critics. He therefore strived not only for freedom, but also for an original and universal approach to artistic creation.

Kasak's lyrical philosophy was based on three principles: a) the originality and perfection achieved through the interaction of opposed but complementary elements -which he named negative space energy and positive space energy-; b) the purity achieved by the physical and metaphysical components of the whole constructive system; c) the action exerted by the creative power of beauty which, at the same time, serves as a source of inspiration for both rational and intuitive thought. (4)

This proposal implied the integration of forms and colors within a harmonious creation capable of transmitting the energy of spiritual knowledge.

2 Entitled: *Sky of Leningrad's White Nights; Entropic Visions of Forms and Lines; Through the Microscope and Black and Colored Spots.*

3 That is to say: "it is necessary to achieve originality, freedom and the purity with which children and saints perceive."

4 Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", in John E. Bowlit and "Nikolai Kasak, From Action to Dynamic Silence. The Art of Nikolai Kasak," Salt Lake, Charles Schlacks Jr., 1991, p.9.



Figure 3

This mode of creation, that includes the aesthetic-spiritual dimension, is reminiscent of the ideas of Kandinsky, who conceived art as "the language that speaks directly to the soul", i.e., who assigned to art the power of providing the "daily sustenance" necessary to nurture the human soul. (5)

Towards 1945-46, and pursuing these concepts, Kasak formulated a proposal that defied the tradition of developing a work of art on a rectangular frame. This implied:

- 1- Freedom from the limitations imposed by a traditional definition of a work of art, particularly with respect to the idea of a painting on a rectangular, bidimensional and flat frame.
- 2- Merger of painting and sculpture: rejecting the idea of painting and sculpture as two separate forms in modern Art.
- 3- Using Negative Space Energy together with Positive Space Energy as the structural and final component of a work of art.
- 4- Insisting on the idea that a work of art is an independent and self-active reality, a physical invention, not the description, imitation or deformation of something else. (6)

Art critic Nicoletta Mislser points out that, in the Roman artistic scenario, Kasak's transformations of the Figurative imagery towards the first Abstract artistic developments coincided with his participation at the Modern Art exhibitions,

5 Kandinsky, Wassily, "De lo espiritual en el arte, México," Premia editor, 1989, pp. 103-4.

6 Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", cit., p. 15.

Figure 3 Kasak in his studio with works from the 50's.

held by the Art Club, and especially, by the debated that followed the Terza Mostra Annuale dell'Art Club di Roma presented by the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna of Rome, between March and April 1949.(7)

## THE RIVER PLATE VANGUARD AFTER THE WAR

In the River Plate region, in April 1944, the launching of *Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas*, represented the initial impulse to issue forth an inventionist proposal. Using Marxist dialectics, the magazine proposed to do away with Primitivism, Realism and Symbolism, and supported rationality, scientific contributions and "creative joy", in spite of the reigning destruction and the atmosphere of melancholy caused by the long years of the Second World War. From these latitudes, the young artists formulated a Concrete Art program aimed at structuring a setting in line with the composition of the painting, avoiding any suggestion to continue with the subject beyond the limits that had been set forth. (8)

From the first nucleus of artists who gathered around *Arturo*, a group was formed that organized two presentations, that included poetry, painting and sculpture exhibitions, music and dance. One of these was held in October 1945 at the home of psychoanalysts Enrique Pichón Rivière and Arminda Aberastury and the other, entitled *Movimiento de Arte Concreto Invención (MACI)* took place in December at the home of the German photographer Grete Stern.

Following these first two presentations, two groups were formed: the *Asociación de Arte Concreto Invención -AACI-* (integrated by Tomás Maldonado, Edgar Bayley, Lidy Prati, Alfredo Hlito, Claudio Girola, Manuel Espinosa, Raúl Lozza, Enio Iommi and other artists) and the *MADI* group, formed. Amongst others, by Kosice, Diyí Laañ, Martín Blaszkó, Arden Quin and Rothfuss.

Attracted by the most radical forms of Modern Art, these young artists combined their notions on Suprematism, Constructivism, Neoplasticism and the Bauhaus principles, with their search for a new plastic language capable of anticipating the optimism for post-war reconstruction. Thus, they established an aesthetic, utopian program based on "invention", aimed at repositioning art in daily life. With vanguard initiatives and resorting to manifests, pamphlets, to their own publications and to their participation in aesthetic and public debates they fought to displace the Figurative trend that was currently dominant in the River Plate.

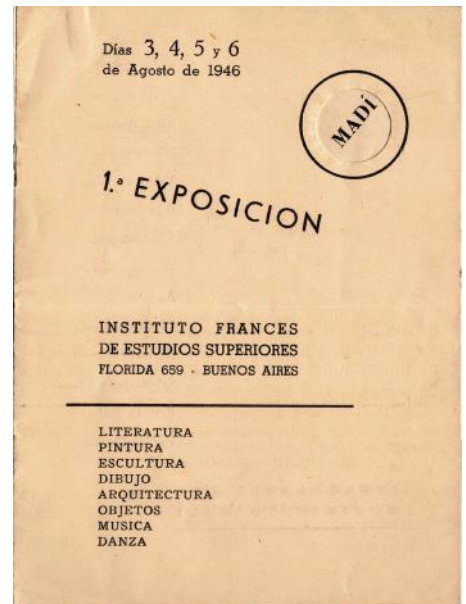


Figure 4

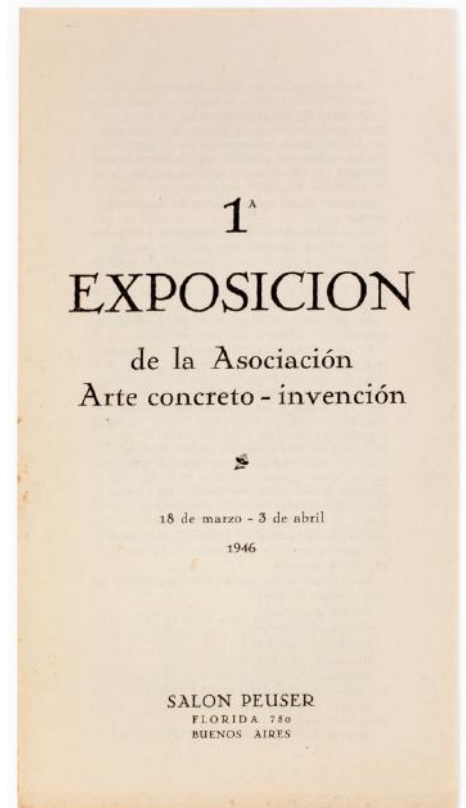


Figure 5

7 Mislér, Nicoletta, "Physical Construction" in John E. Bowlt and "Nikolai Kasak, From Action to Dynamic Silence. The Art of Nikolai Kasak," Salt Lake, Charles Schlacks Jr., 1991, p. 33-6.

8 Rothfuss, Rhod, "El marco: un problema de la plástica actual", *Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas*, n.1, Buenos Aires, summer del 1944, s/p.



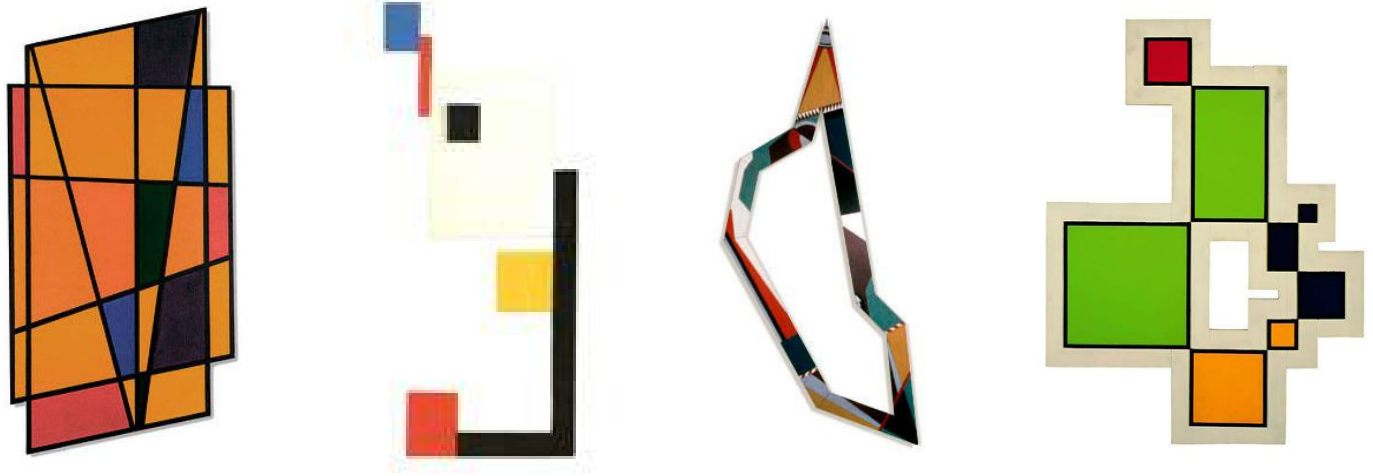


Figure 6, 7, 8, 9

On the other hand, the work of these artists conferred an active role to the borders of their paintings, because they believed that these forms were not placed in an illusory space, but rather that space was a real element capable of entering the picture through the clipped frame. These works painted on an irregular wooden base, had many points in common with the works that Torres-García named *Objetos plásticos*, as well as with his creations on wood, be it in paint or wood with incisions, or with his articulated models (especially employed in the creation of his articulated toys).

The members of these groups (formed by students who disagreed with the academic orientation that guided official artistic education) read with interest *Universalismo Constructivo*, the book that summarized the conferences delivered by Torres-García upon his return, published in Buenos Aires in 1944. However, the Uruguayan master centered their attention for his stringent anti-academic approach and for his rejection of naturalistic, imitative painting rather than for his Constructive Universalism proposal, since it was precisely opposed to the programs followed by the most radical vanguard trends.

Although the first paintings on irregular frames led to coplanar works—that cut and separated the geometrical forms in order to place them directly on the wall, bound by small wooden, metal or acrylic rods—these developments caused differences in the interpretations made by each group. In this regard, the coplanar creations made by AACI members grouped forms painted with solid colors, and once the whole work was conformed, they avoided movement.

Figure 6 Manuel Espinosa, *Pintura*, 1945, oil on hardboard, 88 x 47 cm.

Figure 7 Oscar Nuñez. *Sin título*, 1946, enamel on wood, 68,5 x 30 cm.

Figure 8 Diyi Laañ, *Sin título o marco estructurado Madi*, 1949, lacquered oil on wood, 90 x 38 cm.

Figure 9 Rhod. Rothfuss, *Composición Madi*, 1946, lacquered oil on wood, 79 x 66 cm.

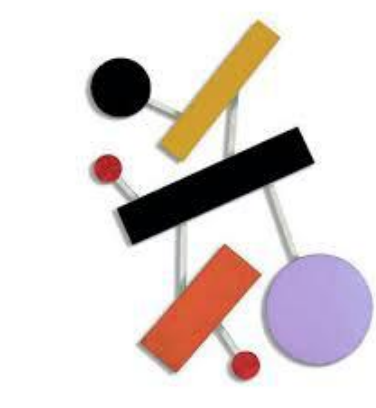
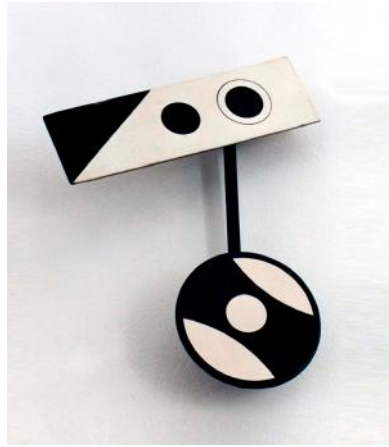
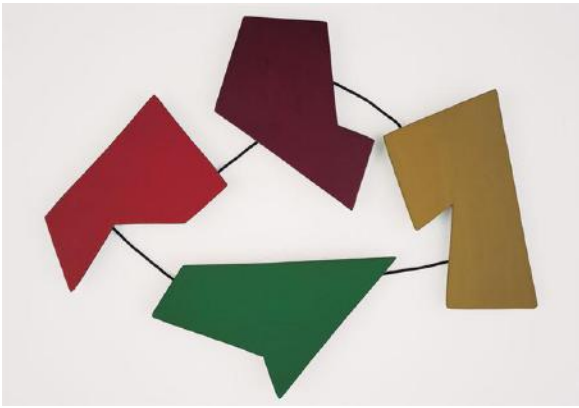


Figure 10, 11, 12

However, the paintings with a clipped frame such as the coplanar creations made by members of the MADI group showed variations at the time of considering their design. On the one hand, the free forms were combined on the wall by means of articulations that allowed for movement and, consequently, they transformed themselves into mobile pictures, ready for the observer's intervention. On the other hand, while the AACI member paintings preferred geometrical forms painted with solid colors, and, towards 1947, they returned to the traditional orthogonal frame, the MADI members continued with their creations on irregular forms and painted their clipped-frame works with areas containing stripes, wedges, spots or varied drawings. Some creations even denote a greater freedom, such as the paintings on irregular, empty and enclosed frames known as "structured frames"; the irregular formats with concave-convex surfaces that Arden Quin named "galbée forms" or Kosice's ragged forms in relief or superposed planes. On the other hand, the MADI group assigned importance to movement and to participation, which is indicative of some degree of lucidity that was present as from the creation of the first articulated and mobile creations, as in the case of *Royi*, an emblematic work by Kosice that admits several positions.

A major issue for the members of the vanguard movement was the achievement of originality, along with a dispute over leadership regarding the novel treatment of shapes. In spite of the importance of this innovative trend, modern artists had to face a major lack of understanding on the part of their contemporaries.



Figure 13

Figure 10 Raul Lozza, *Relieve No. 30*, 1946, oil on wood and painted metal, 41.9 x 53.7 x 2.7 cm.

Figure 11 Carmelo Arden Quin, *Coplanal a geométrico variable*, 1945, lacquered oil on wood, variable dimensions.

Figure 12 Diyi Laañ, *Pintura articulada MADI*, 1946, enamel on wood, variable dimensions.

Figure 13 Gyula Kosice, *Röyi*, 1944, wood, variable dimensions.

An example of this is offered by the first press articles on the MADI exhibition, that, instead of being published under the art critic section, took the form of ironic comments such as that published by newspaper *El Clarín* which, together with a photo of Royi stated: "The photograph shows one of the so-called "articulated sculptures" which, according to group adepts, has originated a transcendental revolution in arts in general...as one can easily imagine!" Another article, under the sarcastic heading "The MADI Reincide" was accompanied by a humorous drawing.



Figure 14

The vanguard artists –particularly the River Plate Concrete Art groups– who had to defend their creations while taking distance from the past, simultaneously devised confrontation and penetration strategies. On the one hand, they wrote and divulged their aesthetic principles, while they organized debates and confronted the dominant aesthetics, especially represented by Berni's "new realism", a trend that held a leading position. On the other hand, with the purpose of advancing on the international scenario, and following Kosice's proposal to Felix Del Marle, General Secretary of the Salon Committee, the MADI group succeeded in participating at the 3<sup>ème</sup> Salon Réalités Nouvelles held in July 1948.(9) Art critic Pierre Descargues commented:

*As regards foreign contributions, the works received from the Argentine MADI Group, bravely led by Kosice and Rothfuss, was received with great interest. ¿How may we define their findings? Art breaks away with four-angle paintings. This is a brutal, barbarous, insolent, totally novel form of art. The other day, while contemplating a panel covered with these new paintings, I heard the following comment: "but this is native art, it smells of the Pampa!" Behind this joke, however, there lies a hidden tribute to the arrogant, yet perceivable strength of these creations, to their still somewhat clumsy, yet congenial power.(10)*



Figure 15

Thus, the River Plate vanguard of the decade of the 40's reviewed the premises set by the "historic vanguards" and proposed irregular formats aimed at avoiding the orthogonal quality of "window" painting, following the same line pursued by other artists such as Kasak. In spite of the logical disputes regarding originality, the Concrete Art vanguard of the River Plate was noted not only for their innovative clipped frames and articulated creations, but also for their disruptive power to consolidate Abstract Art principles in the regional scenario.

9 *Integrated* by Aníbal Biedma, María Bresler, Juan Belmone, Diyi Laan, Kosice, Jacqueline Lorin-Kaldor, Ricardo Pereyra, Raymundo Rasas Pet, Rothfuss and Rodolfo Ian Uricchio.

10 Descargues, Pierre, "Le groupe d'avant-garde Madi", *Arts*, Paris, 23 Juillet-48. It is interesting to note that although a poster was printed informing of the presence of the group Arte Concreto Invencion and some studies indicate that this is a valid source, only the works of the MADI group led by Kosice were submitted, as proved by the photos of the Salon, the art critic articles and the list of participants shown in the catalogue.

Figure 14 "Los madistas reinciden", in *El Clarín*, Buenos Aires, October 1946.

Figure 15 Works displayed at Realitès Nouvelles, Paris, 1948.

## CONFLUENCE AREAS

In general, the artists who tried to break away with the canon not only established their rejection to traditional movements through programs published in manifests and pamphlets, but also formed groups to divulge and consolidate their opposition to the status quo. In this respect, from the sociological point of view, Pierre Bourdieu observed that, in the phase of "initial accumulation of symbolic capital", the vanguard groups were ready to accept the participation of members of varied trends and tendencies.(11) Although in this type of group it is necessary to maintain a certain degree of cohesion in order to develop and defend its postulates, it must be admitted that the inner balance is unstable and, frequently, divisions take place as a result of fights for leadership.

The Concrete Art River Plate vanguard suffered from disputes from the very beginning and was subject to several divisions. However, as a group, they achieved an effective intervention on local traditional circles and, by means of the insertion of its artists or of their works, they were promptly accepted in international circles, as in the case of the participation of the MAD1 group at the 3<sup>ème</sup> Salon de Réalités Nouvelles.(12) Precisely at this Salon, attention had been drawn on the Italian group Forma 1, formed by Piero Dorazio, Achile Perilli, Giulio Turcato, Pietro Consagra and Mino Guerrini, who had proclaimed their vanguard and revolutionary position based on Marxist ideas and Abstraction.

Dorazio, who had seen the works of the MAD1 group at the 3<sup>ème</sup> Salon, also corresponded with Kosice with regard to the organization of the Mostra Internazionale dell Art Club in Rome—a society of international artists—and regarding the circulation of Italian non Figurative works in the publication *Arte Madi Universal*. In this international network of artists interested in promoting Abstraction, and aware of the proximity between Kasak's proposal and the MAD1's premises, Dorazio acted as the link that put them into contact. (13)

Within the general setting of this exchange of ideas, in October 1949 the magazine—conceived as a platform for the diffusion of the movement's aesthetic program and aimed at international collaboration among vanguard artists—inaugurated a special section for the purpose of gathering works by fellow artists who were working in this same line in different parts of the world. On the occasion of its presentation, the magazine called for contributions by those who, in spite of not being part of the MAD1 movement, might be interested in participating in subsequent issues in order to share the vitality of non-Figurative Art. The first page illustrated works by Anton Pevsner, Frank Kupka, Camile Graeser, Max Huber and Nikolai Kasak. (14)

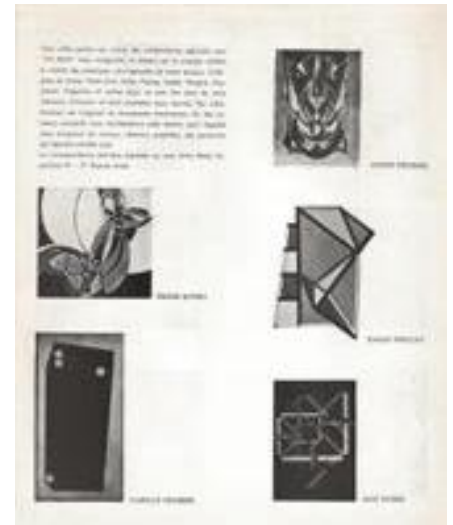


Figure 16

11 Bourdieu, Pierre, *Las reglas del arte. Génesis y estructura del campo literario*, Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona, 1995, p. 396.

12 As from 1948, some of the AACI members made individual trips in Europe: Maldonado, Arden Quin, Melé, Vardanega, Girola and Espinosa visited the workshops of the XX century avant-garde artists and exchanged ideas with the younger artists, such as the Roman groups or the Concrete Art Movement in Milan, among others.

13 It is important to bear in mind that Dorazio acted as an early divulging agent for the River Plate Concrete Art developments, since he mentioned their activities as from the launching of Arturo in his book *La fantasia dell'arte nella vta moderna*, Roma, Polveroni e Quinti Editore, 1955, p 122 and 132-3.

Although Kosice had only received a copy of one of the works by Kasak through Dorazio and had not yet established contact with him, he immediately included his work in the magazine because it was important for him to know that they were both working in the same line, as stated in a letter he sent to Kasak in January 1950 [pp.112]. In this letter, he also asked him whether he was interested in forming part of the MADI group. Kasak's answer (pp.113) not only was affirmative, but was also the starting point of a prolonged epistolary exchange that attests the friendship and projects shared by both artists.

In 1945, the MADI group had adopted an inclusive criterion regarding their movement. Therefore, as from the moment of being accepted, Kasak was present, for a decade, in the exhibitions of the group led by Kosice, and appears among the twenty one members in the portrait of the MADI artists that formed part of the group led by this Slav artist. This expansive and open criterion for incorporation is illustrated by the incorporation of other foreign artists such as the Cuban Sandú Darié, Romanian painter Gina Ionesco, of the Japanese choreographer Masami Kuni (a U.S.A. resident), and of German musician Hans Joachim Koellreutter (living in Brazil), among others. Consequently, the magazines, catalogues and art critic articles acted as the framework for a constant exchange of ideas; a network without borders through which these artists aspired to attain an international diffusion for their movement.

Along these lines, issue no. 4 of the magazine included two works: *Action of Positive and Negative Physical Space* (1945) and the same work included in the previous number, accompanied by a photo of Kasak. (15) However, it was issue no. 5 of *Arte Madi Universal* that carried an article summarizing his work, where Kasak stated:

*The need to study in depth the unresolved problem of Non Figurative Art and of rescuing it from its state of paralysis led me, in 1947, in Europe, to advocate the total destruction of the traditional concept of rectangular painting and to introduce aero-created space. In order to implement the above principle, I therefore adopted two fundamental universal elements, that is, the solid block and the aero-created space. (16)*



Figure 17



Figure 18 & 19

14 This was a version of the work *Active of Positive and Negative 1* (1945-6) or *Action of Positive and Negative Forces 2* (1946-47). It should be noted that the magazine *Arte Madi Universal* was published with the upper border upside down.

15 Section "Aqui MADI", carried the following text: "Nikolai Kasak, a painter residing in Italy, has adhered to our movement (sic). His latest works are oriented to high-quality paintings with an irregular frame.

16 Kasak, Nikolai, "La pintura constructiva con marco irregular...", *Arte Madi Universal*, no. 5, Buenos Aires, Octubre de 1951.

Figure 17 Illustrations published in *Arte Madi Universal*, no. 4, Buenos Aires, 1950.

Figure 18 & 19 "La pintura constructiva con marco irregular...", *Arte Madi Universal*, no.5, Buenos Aires, Octubre 1951.

On the basis of his personal proposal, Kasak considered Rothfuss pictorial structures, Kosice's articulated objects and Biedma's and Laaň creations as convincing constructions in relation with the surrounding reality. Therefore, when reflecting on what should be the art of the present time, he concluded:

*Certainly, and above all, Constructive Art is the choice to satisfy the aspirations of modern man. I cannot think of any other form of art capable of complying, adequately and completely, with these principles other than MADI for which we are fighting. I do not see, either, other premises that are more in line with the needs of positive thought (17).*

In the following number, published in October 1952, Kasak commented on the interest with which his works on physical-constructive art had been received in Italian art circles, where Pietro Consagra was also interested in positive and negative space. Regarding his work the United States, he added:

*My present works in the United States are oriented towards exploring this aspect and represent an advance with respect to the creations of plastic artists that still remain attached to the rectangular frame, overlapping planes, tridimensional illusion and an ideological concept regarding construction that is completely obsolete. (18)*

Undoubtedly, the insertion of an individual proposal intended to break away with the status quo implied great difficulties. The evaluation of Kasak's works in New York showed a lack of understanding by art critics. The artist even commented that, as an American citizen born in Russia, he had suffered from discrimination and from the hypocrisy of institutions and individuals. (19) In contrast, as an international member of the MADI group, his findings were included among the permanent endeavors for expansion by a group of avant-garde artists. The Exchange of correspondence between Kasak and Kosice illustrates the strategies they used to carry out the delivery and return of the works sent to the salons with the limited economic resources of a group of artists who lacked recognition by both institutions and market.

As from June 1954, the magazine edited by Kosice was discontinued, but in its last issue (double number 7/8) it also included a linear composition, accompanied by an article by Ana María Bay "Hacia una plástica pura y universal" and a version of the work *Action of Positive and Negative-Carousel* (1952). (20)

The exchange of correspondence between both artists also shows other shared projects, such as publications and exhibitions. Among the publications, apart from Kasak's presence in the magazine *Arte Madi Universal*, there was a book by Kosice entitled *Geocultura de la Europa de hoy*.

17 Ibidem. In this issue, section "Aquí MADI" reported: "Painter N. Kasak, who now resides in the U.S.A., has sent us news of his activities in this country. His works, freed from the "frame" are being displayed in several cities with great success.

18 Kasak, Nikolai "MADI esta hoy en el frente de batalla...", *Arte Madi Universal*, no. 6, Buenos Aires, October 1952.

19 Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", cit.pp.11-2.

20 In this case also published with the upper border upside down.

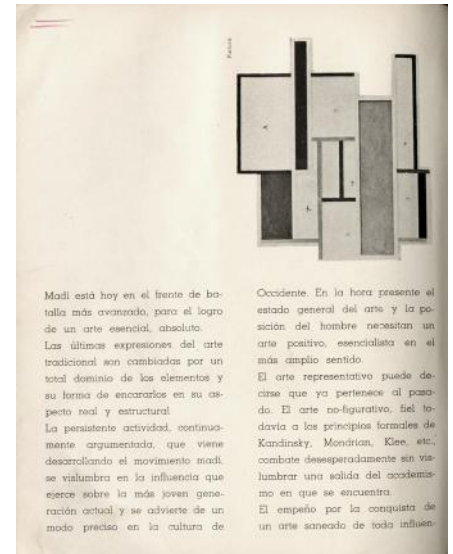


Figure 20

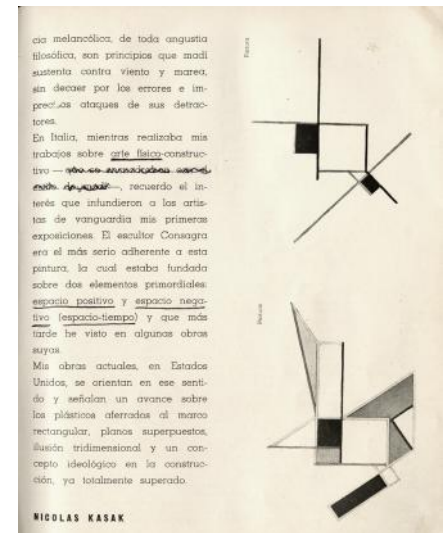


Figure 21

Figure 20 & 21 Kasak's annotations on "MADI esta hoy en el frente de batalla...", *Arte Madi Universal*, no.6, Buenos Aires, October 1952.

Also, as recommended by Kasak, Gyula sent a text for the book on Non Figurative Art edited in the United States (21). This correspondence also reveals the planned publication of another book that they intended to entitle *Artistas constructivos del siglo XX*. For this purpose, Kosice had contacted Michael Seuphor and Denise René, but the project never materialized.

As regards exhibitions, Kasak took part of many of the shows held throughout the decade. Among the first exhibitions held in 1953, he participated in the collective exhibition presented at the Ateneo del Chaco (located at the Argentine city Resistencia, Province of Chaco, in Northern Argentina) and in "Arte MAD I Internacional", organized in 1956 by Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires. In the prologue of the catalogue of the latter, Kosice stated:

*The ramifications and influence of MAD I escape, as foreseen, the unnecessary statistics of the central nucleus in Buenos Aires. We are glad to confirm that there exists a coincidence of style with artists in American and European countries. (22)*

Following this introduction, the artists were grouped according to their country of origin: Brazil (N. Oliveira), Chile (E. Eitler), Cuba (S. Darié), U.S.A. (W. Barnett, I. Blotowsky, N. Kasak and G. L. L. Morris), and Uruguay and Argentina, with a larger group. As seen from the exhibition of works in Galería Bonino, Kasak's works illustrated the theoretical premises of his physical art. Moreover, even if the catalogue does not contain a complete list of all the works exhibited, it is possible to identify one of his tridimensional constructions.

Employing square section rods, both the pieces situated on the plane of the Wall, as well as those located in space, present forms tensed by contraposition. The former articulate empty spaces and solid color surfaces, while the latter are constructed on the basis of a light multidirectional system of angular forms. Though some of the works by Antonio Llorens, Juan Bay, Laan, Rothfuss or Kosice were conceived following a principle of full and empty, the dynamics in Kasak's structure is the result of the balance between angular forms and the strategic placing of colored triangles or squares (pp. 37-39-55-57-59-61-75). In addition, the vector system drawn by the pointed forms in the tridimensional piece (p. 77) seems to establish a dialogue with the oblique direction of the centered and mobile compositions by Sandú Darié, the Romanian artist residing in Cuba, who adhered to MAD I and had ties of friendship with Kasak (p. 114).

The other artist who promptly found an affinity with Kasak was Bay, who had returned to Argentina with the resolution to adhere to the MAD I group and to cooperate in establishing international relations. As from 1954, they exchanged correspondence that reflects their efforts to divulge the MAD I principles in USA and Europe.

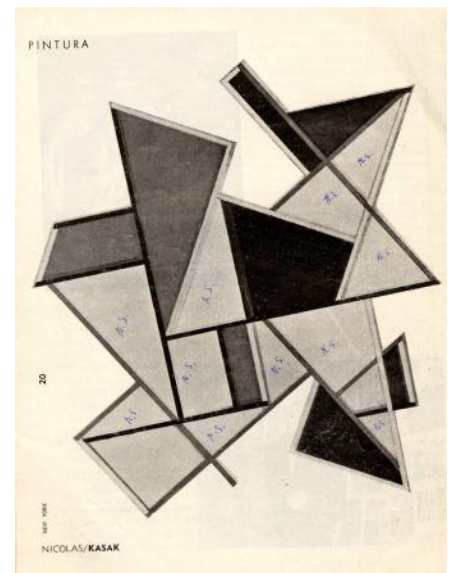


Figure 22



Figure 23

21 The books were: Kosice, G., *Geocultura de la Europa de hoy*, Buenos Aires, Losange, 1959 and *The World of Abstract Art*, New York, Wittenborn Publisher, 1957, which included the article "Non-Figurative Art Trends in Latin America" From Kosice. The Nikolai Kasak Ar-chive retains a manuscript of its publisher, George L.K. Morris, where an error of translation is pointed out in the text of Kosice by which it is expressed that the physical art that Kasak conceived in Italy was incorporated to MAD I, instead of registering that it was anticipated to MAD I.

22 G.K., "Si el pintor, el escultor...", *Arte MAD I Internacional* (cat. exp.), Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1956.

In this respect, Kasak offered his cooperation in New York, and Argentine artists planned to make a trip. However, this project did not prosper.(23) Instead, through contacts with Fiamma Vigo, they succeeded in exhibiting their works in Italy at the show "10 Artisti, disegni, tempere, progetti. Arte MADI", held in January-February 1955 at the Numero Gallery in Florence, that was subsequently an itinerant exhibition. Along with Kosice, Laań, Eitler, Biedma and Rothfuss -the historical members of MADI- Bay, Kasak, Darie, Ionesco and Presta also participated in this exhibition.

In spite of group efforts to participate at the Venice1956 XXVII Biennial, only two works by Kosice were included. By the end of 1957, Kosice received the Patronee scholarship granted by the French Embassy and travelled to Europe to live for some time at the Cite Universitaire de Paris. From there, he organized the exhibition "Groupe argentin. Art MADI international", held on February 18, 1958 at the Galerie Denise René. Contrary to what had happened in Buenos Aires, the Paris exhibition included the twelve artists, emphasizing the multidisciplinary character of their works, and without identifying their country of origin. (24) Precisely, Pierre Gueguen's presentation pointed out that poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture and design were the daily bread distributed by these bold, yet mystic youths who sought to break with established rules.

At the above exhibition, Kasak's works included such creations as *Key-Linear White* (p. 69) and *Negative Square and Linear Expansion* (p. 73) , where right angles are predominant. It is interesting to note that in paintings on canvas from the middle 40's, simple geometrical shapes—squares, rectangles and triangles—formed irregular frameworks, with a certain allusion to the tensions to which the particles in magnetic fields are subject. (pp. 31-33-47-65). In these early abstractions, such as *Action of Vertical Axes*, (p. 49) some works favor the ortogonal direction which Kasak later transferred to his physical art creations. Small quadrangular cells, with color or empty planes, align over the straight line marking a strong ascent, while in other cases that contain forms and lines in expansion, the composition is organized around a central shape, with projecting right angles and oblique lines.

23 Kasak contacted Rose Fried Gallery in New York and Hilla Rebay (director of Solomon Guggenheim in the early 50's), who travelled to Buenos Aires in 1954. As per letters from Kasak to Kosice, dated February 17, 1952 and from Kasak to Bay dated October 15, 1954. 24 Bay, Darié, Eitler, Gutiérrez, Herrera, Kasak, Kosice, Abraham Linenberg, Llorens, Oliveira, Rothfuss and Scopelliti participated in this exhibition.

Figure 24 View of the Exhibition hall at Galeria Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1956.  
Figure 25 Catalogue of Galeria Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1956.

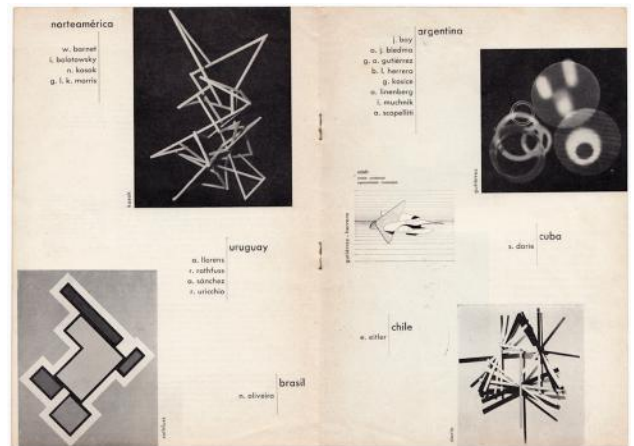


Figure 24 & 25



In November 1961, with the support of Rafael Squirru, Director of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, the exhibition "Los primeros 15 años de arte MADI"(25) was held. Kosice had insisted on the arrival of Kasak's works for this show (p. 117), as he was interested in reflecting the presence of international artists who adhered to the now accepted premises of MADI art. In his presentation, Squirru precisely referred to the sarcasm with which the plastic innovations of these groups had been received. However, they had succeeded in obtaining recognition in spite of the difficulties they had encountered. The catalogue notably included the 1946 Manifest, but also an apparent new formulation by Kosice with which, at the beginning of the decade of the 60's, the group planned to confront "the hoarse voices of informalists" with a renewed proposal, which he synthesized as follows:

*With the incorporation of elements in continuous progression, such as kinetics and all the attributes of movement, of space-time, of matter-energy, of light-distance, MADI faces the next fifteen years with the joy of creation. Up to this point -mutatis mutandis- topological changes in Art. We, the MADI artists, announce another dimension.(26)*

As from the 60's, Kasak's work took a new direction. The constructions that recovered orthogonality and gave way to systems created on the basis of the repetition of one same form, occasionally with a slight variation in order to produce optical effects (pp. 79-93-103-107). At this new stage, simple shapes -such as circles or squares- were sufficient to present opposed pairs, i.e.: light-shade or positive-negative, as well as oppositions by means of color or displacement (pp. 81/91-95/101-105). The work on frames and variations produced by a light source constituted the platform for launching new kinetic investigations that erupted in the 60's art scenario. Kasak also reflected this change in works that -as he pointed out- concentrated the silent sound of essential art. Once again, the avant-garde impulse brought together the creations of these artists who, from different latitudes, continued with their compromise of creating an art of pure invention, capable of participating in the daily life of the man of the new era.



Figure 26 & 27

25 The following artists participated: on behalf of Argentina: Eitler, Gutiérrez, Herrera, Kosice, Laañ, Linenmberg, Eduardo Sabelli, Scopelliti, Oswald Stimm. Uruguay: Rothfuss, Llorens, Uricchio. Brasil: Eros, Oliveira, Vinholes. On behalf of Cuba: Dario. USA: Kasak. England: Batch, B. Elliot, Moucho. Japan: Tanaka.

26 "1961", "Los primeros 15 años de arte MADI" (cat. exp.), Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, November 1961.



N. KASAK 1949



# SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL ART MANIFESTO

by Nikolai Kasak

*Good and bad, black and white are alternating manifestations of a single principle, and these opposites are always and forever inherent in one another. By motion they endure as points of force, generating basic rhythm that sustains the appearance of forms. This is an inevitable part of the functioning of God's creative process.*

L.R.

The basic points of my manifestoes of 1945-46 are:

1. Liberation from the limitation of the traditional definition of the work of art particularly the idea of paintings as a rectangular, two-dimensional flat canvas.
2. Unification of painting and sculpture: rejection of the idea of painting and sculpture as two separate forms of modern art.
3. Use of Negative Space- Energy together with Positive Space- Energy, as the organically structural and ultimate component of the work of art.
4. Insistence that the work of art is an independent and active reality in itself, that is a fully invented physical organism, and not a description, imitation or deformation of anything.

Since the late 1950s, the implications of these principles of my Physical Art have been widely visible in modern art. We see a variety of physical art objects totally different from two-dimensional rectangular flat paintings or more traditional abstract sculpture.

In my art, the concept of "Construction OF Space and Matter," one within the other, is different from the traditional "Construction IN Space" (where everything is simply in space and thus it does not represent a creative, dynamic relation between positive and negative forces). In Physical Art the interaction between these complementary forms of energy is vital, physical and metaphysical. The negative element is structurally and fundamentally vital to the positive element, as well as being naturally vital to their reciprocal perception.

Physical Art is a concrete visual reflection of an original THOUGHT, inspired by a mystical as well as a scientific philosophy of the world and the artist's vision of its working principles. The concept is not an expression limited to a single mood of an artist and is not inspired by fashion, previsions, or machine, but is a logical and independently inevitable creative development of modern art, modern philosophical thinking and scientific knowledge in general. It reflects a free and deeper human understanding of art and the working law of the visible and invisible world. It is an intellectual and spiritual force expressed in a strong

physical force. It is an original creative effort to parallel the fundamental character of cosmic organization, the unitary nature of divine reality. It is an effort to organize an essential and dynamic esthetic existence through the interplay of the basic forms of universal energy in its originality and purity. It is an effort to see, to know and to manifest the invisible; to learn to complete the world until the language and familiarity of it recede and it is seen with a free inner eye in its primal unity and creative immediacy.

The concept of this art controls the organized esthetic system from its own original ground. Its outward appearance is a visual realization of its founding principles. Thus both a scientific mind and an intuitive mind should experience in this art an intellectual and spiritual attraction. The mind should feel a sense of timeless primeval play, the silent sound of essential activity.

The spirit is a divine creative energy, and this energy is the source of all material and non-material manifestations. For this reason, the rational and physical qualities contain spiritual qualities. A work of Physical Art reflects such physical, rational and spiritual qualities expressed in an open and highly organized esthetic unity. As I wrote in 1945-46, they are neither paintings nor sculptures in the traditional sense but rather a unification of both. They are based on the construction of positive and negative forces, one within the other on equal terms, that is, solid matter painted in primary colors, activated three-dimensional negative space, mechanical movement, electric light, shadows, silence, and nothingness.

Finally, my works can be divided into three groups. The first is based on straight lines, angular geometric forms of space and matter, and, in principle, on irregular/multidirectional shapes, and the dynamism of action produced by the sharp polarization of forces. The second is based on geometric circular and/or square forms (of material and non-material elements). These works are of pronounced "cosmic" character, and usually represent the "One," i.e., the Source, or the multiplication of this symbol of essentiality; they are of great simplicity, purity, and monumental timelessness, both in the physical and spiritual sense. In many of these works, a dynamic of inaction has been reached, and a sense of the silence of ultimate reality can be experienced.

The third group encompasses many non-constructive paintings and drawings, and a number of experimental constructions based on the integration of order and disorder, including all forms of positive and negative forces. As already indicated, the "integration of order and disorder" represents an attempt to create an esthetic event by the use of two diametrically different and hostile forces.



# PLATES

*Action of Positive and Negative - Carousel, 1952*  
Wood and Space  
49 x 44 x 2 in. 125 x 112 x 4,5 cm.





*Action of Positive and Negative (Carousel)*, 1951  
Tempera on paper  
22 x 19¼ in. 56 x 46 cm.



*Speed and Tension of Space Matter 2, 1947*  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



*Black, Red and Yellow Angular Forms, 1944-45*  
Oil on canvas  
43 x 43 in. 110 x 110 cm.



*Black, Red and Yellow Angular Forms, 1944-45*  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.





*Star of Positive and Negative Space*, 1949  
Wood and Space  
27½ x 23 in. 70 x 58 cm.



M. KASAK 1949

*Star of Positive and Negative 2, 1947*  
Color pencil on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



*Construction of Positive and Negative - Bird 1, 1945-47*  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.

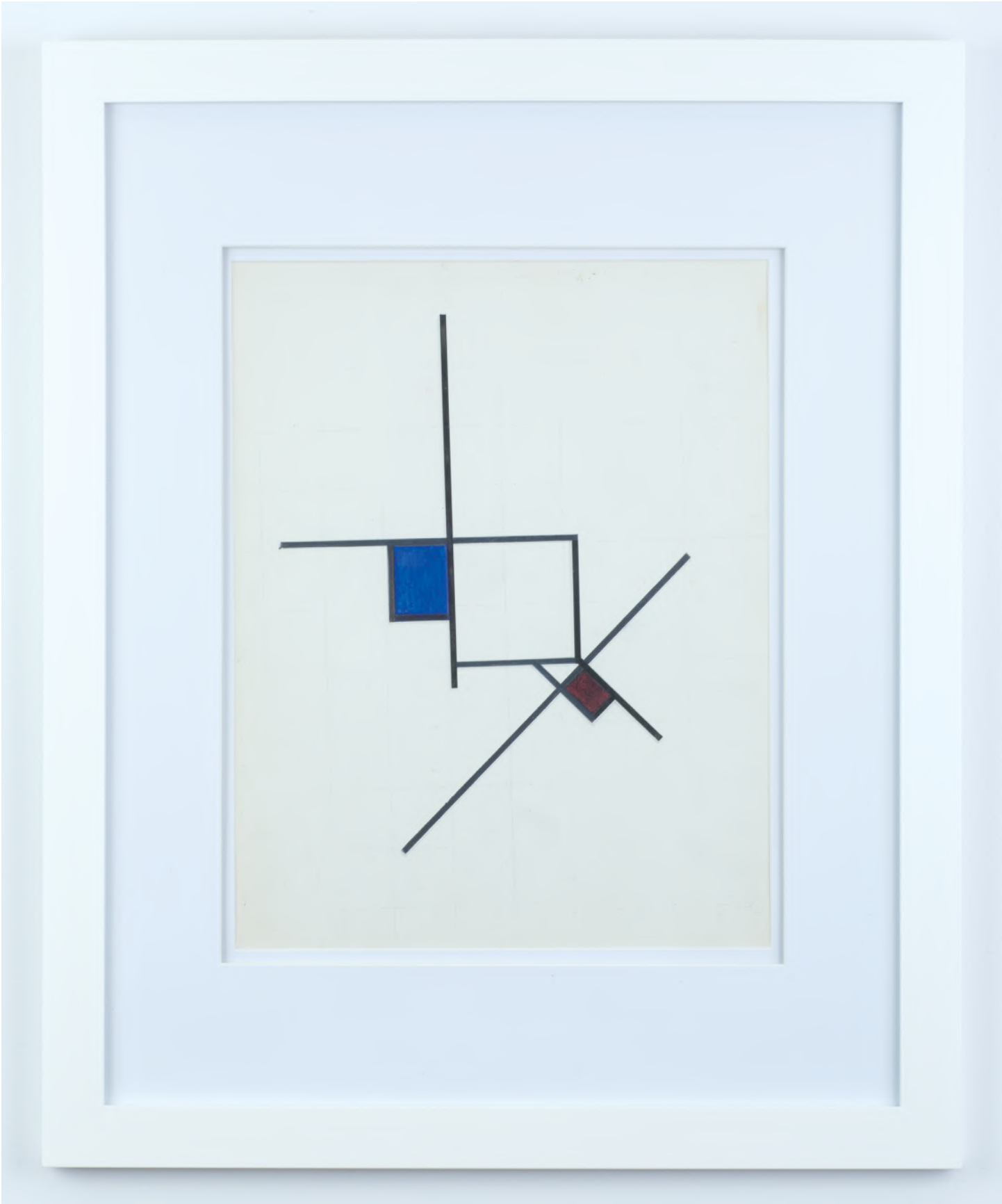


*Action of Positive and Negative - Bird 2, 1949*  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.





*Negative Square and Linear Expansion*, 1949-51  
Ink and tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



*Classic Harmony of Positive and Negative*, 1950  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



*Key - Linear White, 1950*

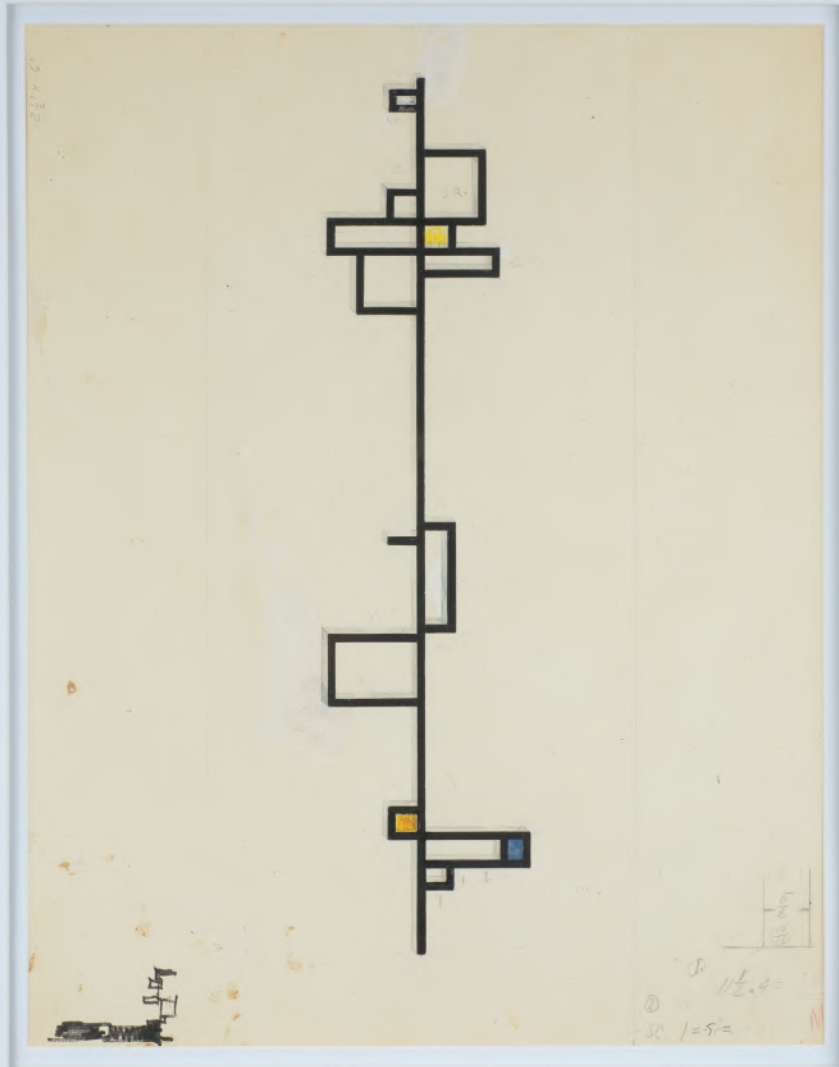
Wood and Space

71 x 32 x 2 in. 180 x 81 x 5 cm.



*Key of Positive and Negative - Black*, 1950  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.





*Space City - Obelisk, 1964*  
Wood and Space  
61 x 7 x 6 in. 155 x 17 x 16 cm.



*The Coil*, 1947  
Ink on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



*Disorder of Linear Energy*, 1951  
Ink on paper  
19¼ x 15¼ in. 49 x 39 cm.



*Explosions*, 1945  
Tempera on paper  
28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. 73 x 57 cm.





*Four Abstract Sketches No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, c. 1942*  
Pencil on paper  
22 x 18 in. 56 x 46 cm.



N. Kapat  
early foetus

*N 19, 1957*

Tempera on paper

10¼ x 13¼ in. 26 x 37 cm.



*Organic Forms 2*, 1943-44  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.



KUROKAWA

N. KASAK

*Sky of Leningrad's White Nights*, 1945  
Tempera on paper  
13¼ x 10¼ in. 37 x 26 cm.





*Blue Hole*, 1961  
Wood and Space  
26 x 32 x 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. 66 x 81 x 12 cm.



*Blue Hole 1*, c. 1961  
Color pencil on paper  
10¼ x 13¼ in. 26 x 37 cm.



*Splitting of the Cosmic Egg*, c. 1961  
Color pencil on paper  
10¼ x 13¼ in. 26 x 37 cm.

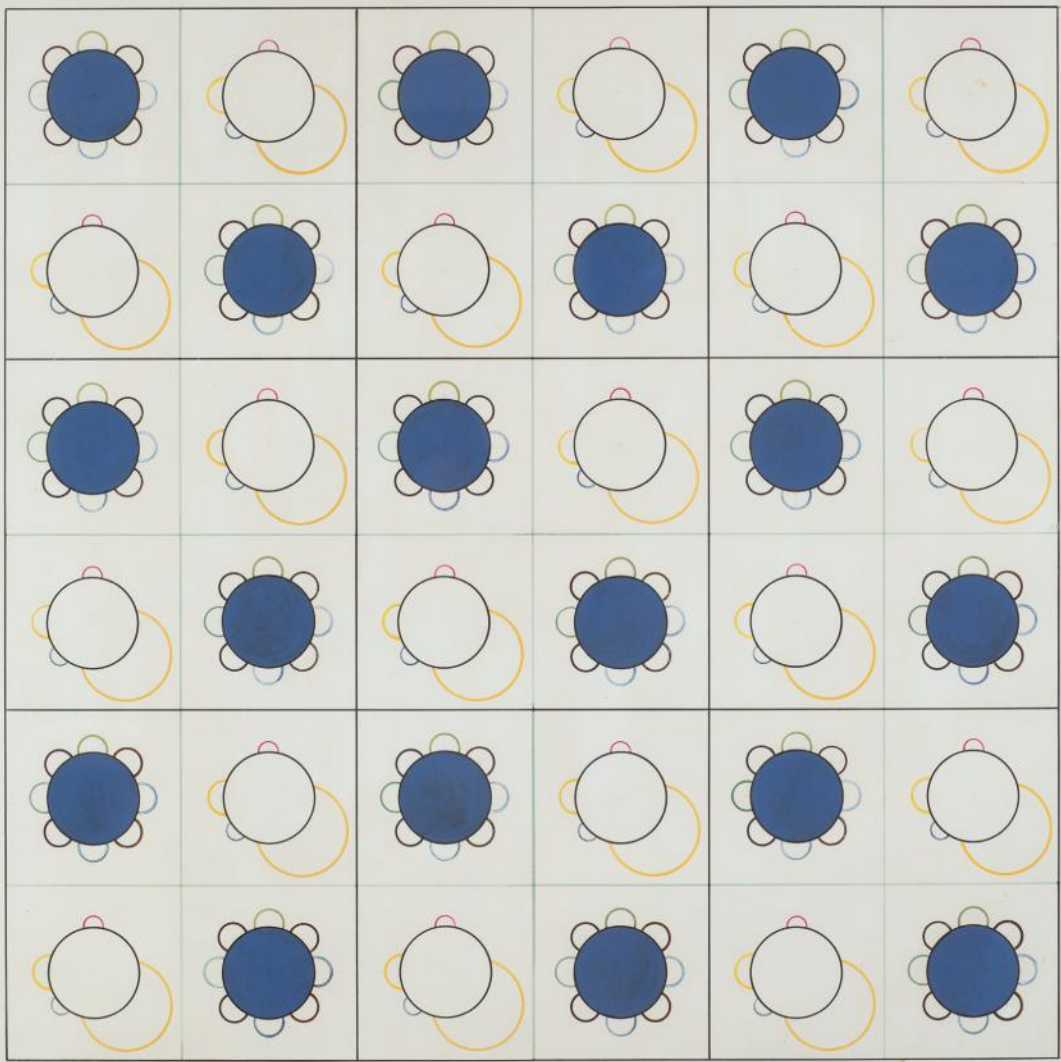


*Untitled*, c. 1958  
Pencil and color pencil on paper  
10¼ x 13¼ in. 26 x 37 cm.





*Multiplication of the Stars*, 1970  
Ink on paper  
22½ x 22½ in. 54 x 54 cm.





# HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

# ARTE MADI

MOVIMIENTO MADINEMSOR

SADI CARNOT 41 - 2.º D.  
BUENOS AIRES

Señor Kasak Nikolai  
Villa degli Angeli  
Fiesole-Firenze

ITALIA

Buenos Aires, 25 de Enero 1950

Amigo Kasak Nikolai:

Recibimos su carta y las fotos que envió para "Arte Madi". Con anticipación recibimos recibido de Piero Dorazio una reproducción suya que incluimos en nuestro tercer número. Pero lo que más nos llenó de júbilo fué que Ud. se sitúa dentro de las realizaciones que viene preconizando nuestra escuela, es decir, por lo que venimos batallando desde hace mucho tiempo: el marco de aduarde a la composición interna de la pintura dejando de lado y para siempre el erróneo concepto de "ventana" que en la pintura de hoy es un contrasentido y un estancamiento. Por lo tanto le invitamos a Ud. amigo Kasak, a enviarnos todo el material posible y si acepta formar parte de nuestro grupo ya que sus trabajos y los que nosotros realizamos nos acercan sin quererlo en la concreción de un estilo que es evidentemente el reflejo de nuestra época. De ser posible nos interesa su formulación y sus puntos de vista con respecto a sus obras que repetimos tienen indudable contacto con los trabajos de madi. Esperamos pues, tenerlo a Ud. como integrante de esta nueva concepción estética dentro del arte no-figurativo en general y le saludamos con nuestra viva adhesión.

Cordialmente

# ARTE MADI

Movimiento Madinemasor  
Sadi Carnot 41-2. D.  
Buenos Aires

Señor Kasak Nikolai  
Villa degli Angeli  
Fiesole-Firenze  
Italia

Buenos Aires, January 25, 1950

Miend Kasak Nikolai:

We received your letter and the photos you sent to "Arte Madi". We had previously received from P. Dorazio a reproduction of yours which we have included in our third number. But the thing that filled us most with joy was that you are situated within the philosophy (realizations) that eulogize our school, that is to say, that for which we have been fighting for a long time: the mark of remembrance to the internal composition of the painting leaving aside for always the erroneous conception of "window" that in today's paintings is contradiction and stagnation.

In the mean-time we invite you, friend Kasak, to send us all possible material and if you would accept to form part of our group now that your works and those we realize bring us closer, without wishing so in the concretization of a style that is evidently the reflection of our epoch,

If it is possible, your formation and your viewpoints in respect to your works which we repeat have indubitable contact with the works of Madi, interests us.

We hope then, to have you as an integrant of this new esthetic concept within the general non-figurative art and we greet you with our living adherence.

Cordially

Kosice (Arte Madi)

Letter 1 & 2

Formal invitation from the MADI group to Kasak.

Dated and signed by Gyula Kosice, Buenos Aires, January 25th, 1950.

Movimiento Madinensor  
Sadi Carnot 41 - 2º D  
BUENOS AIRES

Fiesole, 24 - III - 1950

Caro Kosice,

ringraziando per la Sua cara lettera e per i due numeri di giornale, dove con piacere trovo la mia riproduzione, sono lieto di accettare il vostro gentile invito di far parte del gruppo "Arte Nadi".

\* Da anni sono qui solo, con questo genere di concetto artistico e la produzione, non sapendo nulla del così interessante gruppo che collega dirige e col quale sono d'accordo e lo saluto cordialmente.

Mi permetto di aggiungere, che questa nostra arte costruttiva, non-figurativa, è l'unica e necessaria arte della nostra civiltà; verso di essa conducono oggi tutte le strade più giuste di ogni spirito e intelletto libero, sano e progressivo.

Vi mando alcune riproduzioni disponibili di miei lavori fatti in vario tempo e col pensiero di eseguirli nella costruzione.

Nella copia di un articolo di giornale collega troverete citate il mio principale concetto sulla mia opera.

Col tempo sarò lieto di spedirvi volta per volta altro nuovo materiale.

I miei più vivi auguri per il gruppo e per il suo direttore.

Cordialmente

/Kasak Nikol/  
Villa degli Angeli  
Fiesole - Firenze  
ITALIA

Si annuio più alto con il mio concetto artistico e la mia produzione.

- 1) 2 albumi nero cop. nelle prove usate a N. a
- 2) 1 pubbl. nel Cat. di TRRI
- 3) 1 Croquis con h. di scult.
- 4) 1 donna scult. con testo.
- 5) 1 Croquis, disp. "Haugst"
- 6) 1 Croquis N.º 1
- 7) 1 fot. personale
- 8) 2 Cat. della Per male
- 9) 1 Copia del articolo dal G. della Sera (soli continue)
- 10) 1 album personale
- 11) 2 francob. per a post. in 1950

Movimiento Madinensor  
Sadi Carnot 41-2º D.  
Buenos Aires

Fiesole, 24 Mar., 1950

Caro Kosice,

I thankyou for your dear letter and two copies of the magazine, in which, I was pleased to find a reproduction of my work. I am glad to accept your kind invitation to join the "Arte Nadi" group.

For years I have been the only one here, with this artistic concept and production, without knowing anything about this very interesting group, which you direct; with which I agree and salute cordially.

I take the liberty to add that our constructive, non-figurative art is the only necessary art of our civilization, toward which all roads of the most progressive, free and healthy artistic intuitions and intellects are directed today.

I am sending some reproductions of my work to you, which I now have at my disposal. These projects were made at various times and with the thought to realize them in (2 and 3 dim.) constructions.

Enclosed is a magazine article in which you will find the basic concept of my work explained. I will be happy to send you any new material as soon as possible.

My most sincere wishes for the group and for its director,

Cordially,

Nikolai Kasak  
Villa degli Angeli  
Fiesole- Firenze  
Italia.

Enclosures.

Letter 3 & 4  
Formal acceptance letter from Kasak to Kosice.  
Dated and signed by Nikolai Kasak, Fiesole, March 24th, 1950.



SANDU DARIE

CALLE "B" No. 555. VEDADO - HABANA, CUBA.

MARCO ANTONIO DE VEDADO DARIE

Abril 21, 1959.

SANDU DARIE nació el 4 de Abril de 1908 en Llanos, provincia de Sancti Spiritus en la Provincia de Sancti Spiritus.

1926 - Estudiante en la Facultad de Derecho de París.

1935 - Abogado inscripto en el Foro de Nueva York.

Escribe sobre el arte en revistas y periódicos franceses y en otros como colaborador honorístico en la France France y México.

Sr. Nicolás Kasak  
5650 Netherland Ave.  
Riverdale N.Y. 71, N.Y.

1940 - Vol. 1 - Exposición de pinturas abstractas y comerciales.

1941 - Cuarta Exposición Nacional de Arte en el Iyema, Habana.

1949 - Primera Exposición Nacional de Arte en el Iyema, Habana.

1949 - Estimado amigo: Carlsbach Gallery. Votó en la Colección del Museo de Arte Moderno de New York.

1950 - Me permito enviarle un giro postal a su nombre conforme con lo convenido con el amigo Kosice.

1950 - 1951 - Exposición en la Biennale de Venecia, Rio de Janeiro, Ja. de (Osaka), Galesia.

1951 - Exposición en la Biennale de Venecia, Rio de Janeiro, Ja. de (Osaka), Galesia.

1951 - Exposición en la Biennale de Venecia, Rio de Janeiro, Ja. de (Osaka), Galesia.

1952 - Usted en New York y yo aquí somos como vecinos. Quizás hasta podemos confiar en vernos uno de estos días y hablar de nuestro arte, de nuestros proyectos y del mismo en general.

Exposiciones en Nueva York, Galesia, etc.

Cómo va su pintura, trabaja mucho? Me gustaría conocer sus últimos obras.

En cuanto a mis trabajos el dinámico Kosice se empeña en divulgarlos en sus publicaciones. D'aujourd'hui, París; la revista Cimero.

Le deseo éxito y le ruego confirmarle a Kosice el recibo de su giro.

Ha expuesto en la Galería Sud Americana en New York como también en la Galería Holland.

Un abrazo de su amigo,

A través de la Federación de Artes Americanas la exposición de sus obras fue circulada entre los museos de los Estados Unidos.

DARIE

Diversas conferencias sobre la vanguardia del arte, dictadas en La Habana, Casagüey, etc.

Co-editor de Noticias de Arte, Habana.

Miembro fundador de la Asociación de Caricaturistas de Cuba.

1957 - Biennale de San Pablo, Brasil.

1957 - Invitado a la Exposición Internacional del arte abstracto, expone en la Galgria de Raymond Crouse, de París.

1958 - Exposición en el Washington Federal Park, Washington, D.C.

Letter 14  
Darie's letter to Kasak confirming his contribution to the MADI movement. Dated and signed Habana, April 21st, 1959.

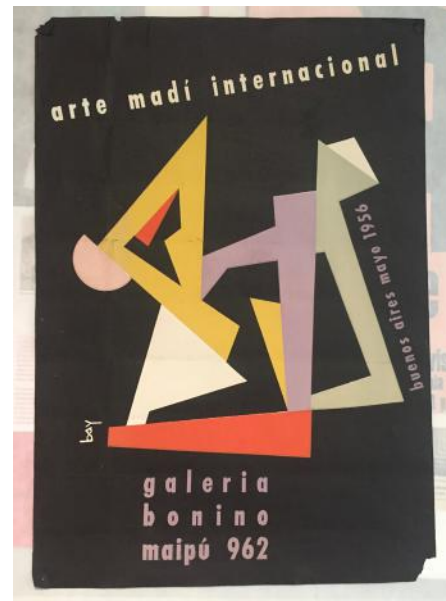
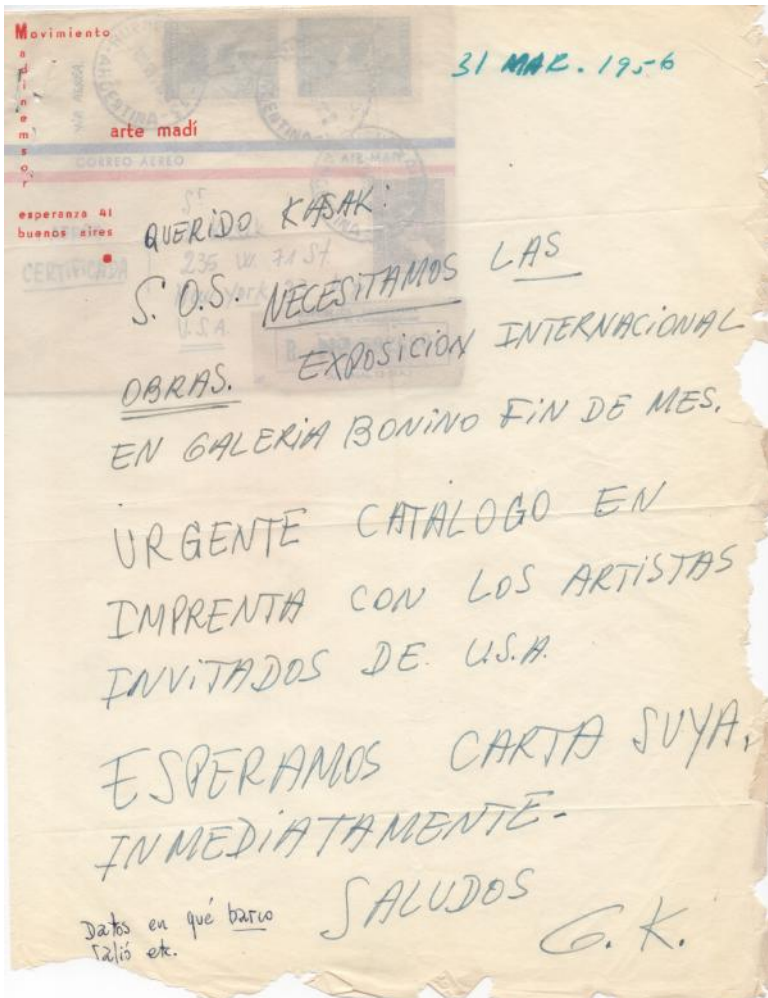




Figure 6  
Kasak profile in the Boletín de Arte MADI, Buenos Aires, 1955.



Figure 7  
Catalogue cover for Serie I Boletín de Arte MADI, Buenos Aires, 1955.



Letter 8  
Kosice's urgent letter to Kasak requesting works for catalogue and for the exhibition. Dated and signed by Gyula Kosice, Buenos Aires, March 31st, 1956.

Figure 3  
Original poster for Arte MADI internacional at galeria Bonino. Buenos Aires, 1956.

Figure 4  
Installation photo, Arte MADI internacional, galeria Bonino, Buenos Aires, May, 1956.

**madí**  
UNIVERSAL

PARIS

Sr. Nikolai Kasak  
5690 Netherland Ave.  
New York 71, N.Y.

Buenos Aires, 15 de mayo de 1961

Querido amigo Kasak:

Hace mucho tiempo que no recibimos noticias suyas. Mi estada en Paris ha sido muy valiosa y pienso retornar muy pronto. Ahora aquí, el Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, con el apoyo de su director Dr. R. Squirru, nos ha invitado a realizar la exposición "15 años de arte madí" que se realizará en el mes de octubre de 1961. Para ello necesitamos mostrar nuestra trayectoria de tantos años y las últimas realizaciones sobre nuestras iniciales teorías sobre la estructura madí, la integración de las artes en la arquitectura, y nuestro concepto de la cinética madí.

Esperamos pues su colaboración con dos pinturas suyas si es posible enviadas por una agencia de transporte para no tener problema de Aduana. Sus construcciones darán alto valor a esta exposición que tendrá una gran trascendencia por tratarse de la reunión de todos los artistas madí que batallaron y lo hacen aún, por un arte esencial.

Quisiera saber además como anda esa publicación sobre arte moderno de la que Ud. me habló y que sería editada en Nuew York.

Aquí todos esperamos su colaboración con dos obras, cartones y dibujos. Se nos ocurre que lo más acertado es hacerlo llegar por algún transporte para ahorrarnos los transtornos del paso por Aduana.

Saludos a Ud. y su señora; mi fiel y permanente amistad.

*Kosice*

Por mi parte, sigo sin descanso con mis trabajos en la escultura hidráulica.

Nueva dirección:

Salguero 725 - 7º piso  
Buenos Aires  
Argentina

**Letter 11**

Kosice's letter to Kasak requesting works for the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires.

Dated and signed by Gyula Kosice, Buenos Aires, May 15th, 1961.

**Figure 5**

Catalogue cover for exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires, 15 años arte MADÍ, November, 1961.



# UNIVERSAL

## madi

PARIS, 13/3/58.

Querido Kasak: La exposición madi en París fue todo un éxito, tanto de crítica como de público. Se hizo en una de las mejores galerías que existen en París, Denise René. Las críticas (recortes de diarios, se las enviaré en otra carta, también le envío los afiches, por vía ordinaria). Ahora bien, todavía no hemos podido sacar el catálogo, pues aquí todo es muy, muy caro. Para todos nosotros es importante sacarlo con fotos, papel ilustración, y clichés bien nitidos. De manera que todos los gastos de Adreana, invitaciones, ~~los~~ afiches, galería, etc. son en Europa extraordinariamente caros. Yo le pido, querido Kasak, que haga un esfuerzo para poder sacar el catálogo, y colabore por lo menos con 70 a 80 dólares, ó su traducción en francos franceses a esta dirección:  
- F. Fallik-Kosice - cité universitaire, pavillon Argentin, Paris -  
Perdóne esta insistencia, pero Vd. no se imagina cómo está la vida aquí - Todo el grupo está ayudando, pero nuestro cambio de la moneda, no alcanza para nada. He sido a ver a muchos artistas de aquí, y incluso

Letter 5

Kosice comments about the exhibition at the Denise Rene gallery in Paris.  
Dated and signed by Gyula Kosice, Paris, March 13th, 1958.

Figure 1

Denise Rene gallery opening invitation for Arte MADi International Paris, February 18th, 1958.

Figure 2

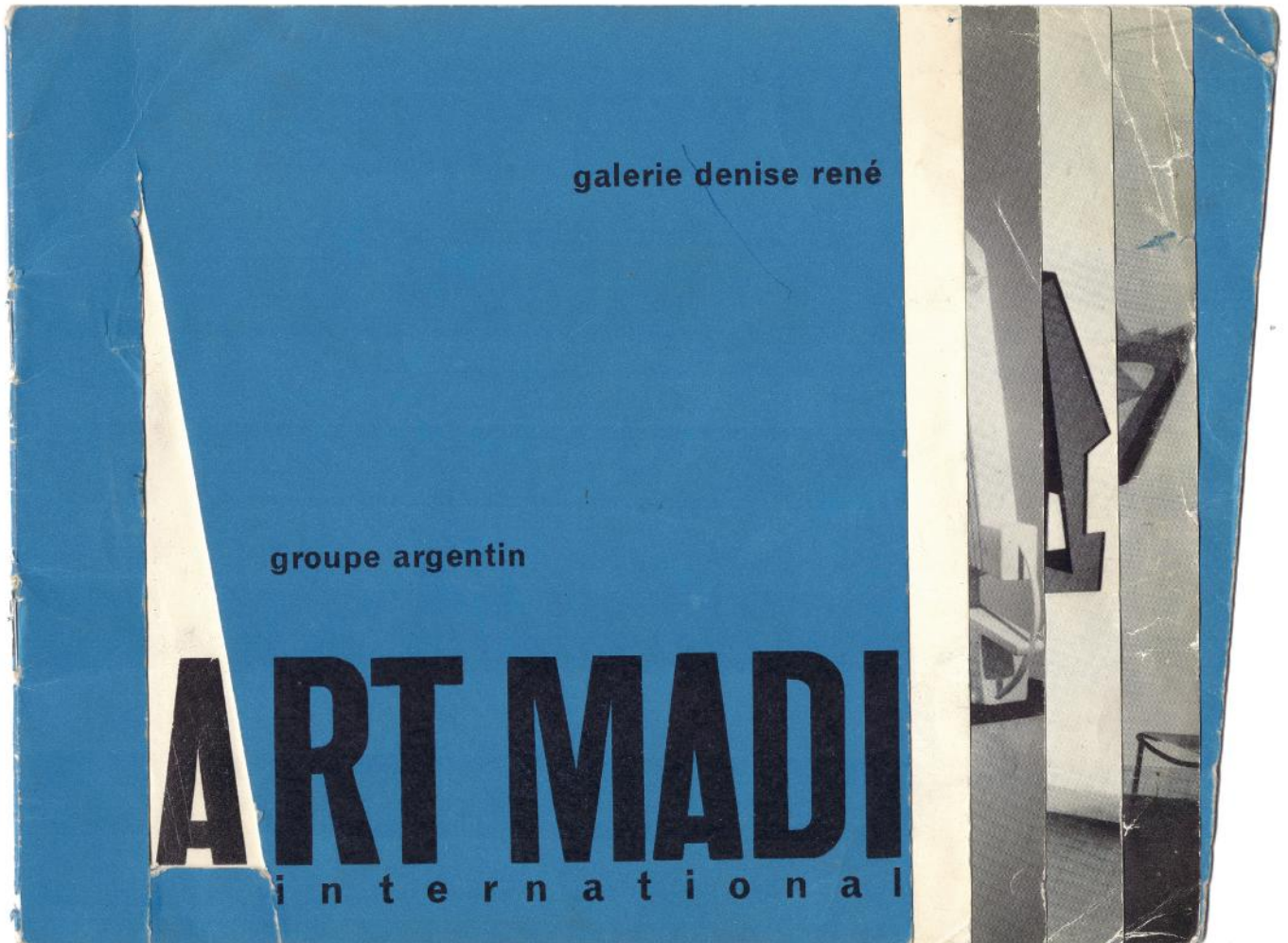
Denise Rene gallery catalogue for Arte MADi International exhibition.

art-madi-international  
 dessin peinture sculpture architecture  
 bay llorenç oliveira  
 darie oliveira  
 eitler rothfuss  
 guttiérez scope liti  
 herrera  
 kosice  
 kasak  
 linenberg

Quendo Kasak :  
 Dar catalòfos  
 a C.K. Morris,  
 Barnett, Bolofousky-etc.  
 retrospective  
 bay  
 linenberg  
 kosice  
 rothfuss

Un  
 fuente  
 a hazo -  
 Adelante con MADI - G.K.

Febrer 1955  
 lea N°16  
 "Aujorord'hui"





## ABOUT THE ARTIST

# CHRONOLOGY

**1917**

Nikolai Kasak was born on September 24 in Lyuscha, Belarus.

**1929**

Kasak's family settled in the western part of the Polesie region of Pinsk in Belarus. As a teenager he considered entering a monastery and dedicating his life to religion.

**1935**

Kasak received a scholarship to study figurative art in Warsaw at the School of Fine and Applied Art, majoring in Mural Painting. He went on to complete his graduate studies in Vienna and Rome. He holds BFA, MFA, and ASD degrees.

**1939**

Kasak taught painting and drawing at the Kulisiewicz School of Fine Art in Warsaw.

**1941**

In the spring, while visiting relatives in Leningrad, Kasak was unable to return home due to the German invasion of the Soviet Union. He was finally able to board the Leningrad-Odessa Express, reaching Luniniec, a city near Pinsk, about thirty-five miles from his home. On the day of his arrival, Kasak was miraculously saved from execution in the space of a few short hours, once at the railroad station, and then again on a country road.

After crossing the border, when Kasak reached his home, he learned that his parents, a brother, and a teenage sister, Sophia, had been deported to the Altai region of the KSSR (Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic). He stayed in the war zone, further experiencing its horrors, witnessing the German soldiers' execution of his sister Maria, her husband, and their baby.

**1942-43**

Moved to Baranowicze, Belarus, where he taught painting and drawing at the City Art School, and participated in local exhibitions.

**1944**

His youngest brother, Ivan, was killed by Soviet soldiers.  
Kasak moved to Vienna.

**1945-1949**

Settled in Rome. While pursuing figurative art at the Academy of Rome, Kasak worked independently on his own abstract art and on furthering his Physical Art manifesto. Built his 3-D constructions of Space and Matter titled Action of Positive and Negative Space.

**1946**

Created his first small experimental models of Physical Construction—Positive Space, Negative Space.



**1947-49**

First major exhibitions of Physical Art constructions at the Galleria di Roma; Rome's Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna; and at the Palazzo Carignano in Turin. Kasak met Giorgio de Chirico, Piero Dorazio, Marcello Gallian, Alberto Moravia, Enrico Prampolini, Mimmo Rotella, and Silvia Conforto.

**1950**

Kasak became involved with the Argentine Madí movement through the Czechoslovakian-born Argentine artist, Gyula Kosice. Kosice formally invited Kasak to join the movement. Thereafter, he showed his work as part of the Madí group, including at: International Madí Art, Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1957; International Madí, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1960; and 15 years of Madí Art, Modern Art Museum of Buenos Aires, 1961.

**1951**

Moved to the United States (Dallas, Texas). His first exhibition of Physical Art in the U.S. was held at Art and Artists, Theater '51, in Dallas.

That same year, he moved to New York. Kasak's first exhibition of Physical Art in New York was in a group show at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

**1952**

Exhibited at several New York galleries and museums including the Riverside Museum and the Betty Parsons Gallery.

**1953**

Began creating his 3-D Cosmic Circular Constructions, out of drawings and paintings dating from the early 1940s, such as *The Sky of Leningrad's White Nights*, *The Stars*, and *Constellation*, some incorporating electric light and mechanical movement.

**1954**

Kasak married Janina Maria Poranski.

**1955**

He joined the American Abstract Artists in New York, and thereafter participated in their exhibitions and publications. During these early American years, he met Josef Albers, Alexander Archipenko, and Alexander Calder.

His son Alexander Nikolas was born.

**1958**

Moved to Riverdale, New York City, where he subsequently designed his own home in 1973, and lived there for the remainder of his life.

**1959**

His daughter Christina Maria was born.

**1977**

Published "On Art and Related Matters."

**1977, 1982, and 1985**

Papers and photographs acquired by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. All material has been microfilmed by the Smithsonian and Museum of Modern Art.

**1979-81**

Construction included in the Selection from the McCrory Corporation Collection's traveling exhibition, Constructivism and the Geometric Tradition.

**1980**

Kasak met John E. Bowlt, art historian and specialist in Russian avant-garde art, who, in 1991 published *From Action to Dynamic Silence: the Art of Nikolai Kasak*, co-authored with the artist.

**1983-84**

Three of his constructions were included in the exhibition, *Beyond the Plane: American Constructions 1930-1965*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton.

**1988-92**

Kasak's two relief-constructions included in the exhibition, *A Living Tradition: Selection from the American Abstract Artists*, at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York.

**1994**

Died in Riverdale, New York City.

movimiento

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arte madí

esperanza 41-2º.  
buenos aires

• Estimado amigo Kasak:

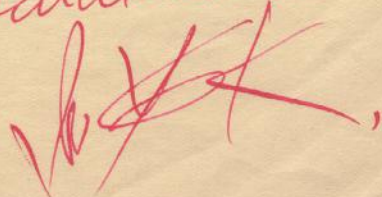
Después de mucho atraso le enviamos  
el 4º número de arte madí -

Esperamos en lo sucesivo su  
colaboración, especialmente en la  
pintura con marco estructurado,  
textos etc.

Tiene algún trabajo que pueda  
mandarnos?

Saludos de todos nosotros

cordialmente



## MAIN EXHIBITIONS

- 1942 BARANOWICZE, Museum of Fine Art, "Younger Artists" August.  
BARANOWICZE, Bruj Photography Studio, September.
- 1943 BARANOWICZE, City Hall, "Annual Exhibition," May.
- 1944 VIENNA, Wien Kunsthalle, September.
- 1946 ROME, "Mostra di Artisti Stranieri," Associazione Artistica Internazionale, March 12–26.  
ROME, "Mostra dell'Autoritratto" Galleria S. Bernardo, October 7–21.
- 1947 ROME, "14 Painters," Galleria S. Bernardo, opening January 12.  
ROME, "Mostra Personale di Nicola Kasak," Galleria S. Bernardo, opening February 2.  
ROME, "L'Europa d'Oggi (10 Artisti)," Galleria PO, February.  
ROME, Galleria Concordia, "Prima Rassegna d'Arte Contemporanea," opening March 21  
ROME, Mostra dell'Art Club "10 Artisti," Galleria Via Margutta, March–June.  
ROME, "Cenacolo" –Rivista di Arte e Lettere, Galleria S. Bernardo, September 2–17.  
ROME, "5 Pittori," Galleria S. Bernardo, October.  
ROME, Mostra del Sindacato Provinciale, Palazzo Venezia, opening November 3.  
ROME, "Seconda Mostra Annuale dell'Art Club," Galleria Roma, opening December 7.
- 1948 ROME, "Ante Astratta di Roma," Galleria Tazza d'Oro, March 9-16.  
ROME, "Mostra Personale di Nicola Kasak," Art Club Gallery, Via Margutta, April 2–16.  
ROME, "Mostra d'Arte Contemporanea," Fronte Democratico, April 7–15.  
VIENNA, "Neue Italienische Kunst," Neue Galerie, May 22–June 19.  
ROME, "Rassegna Nazionale di Arti Figurative," Galleria d'Arte Moderna, March–May.  
ROME, "Mostra Internazionale di Pittura e Scultura," Galleria di Roma, December 11–17.
- 1949 ROME, "Terza Mostra dell'Art Club" Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, February 27–March 27.  
TURIN, "Prima Mostra Internazionale dell'Art Club," Palazzo Carignano, April–May.
- 1950 FLORENCE, "Ante di Firenze," outdoor exhibition.
- 1951 DALLAS, "Art and Artists" (five constructions), Theatre '51, Gallery Spring.  
"The Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of Texas Painting and Sculpture 1951–1952." Presented at four below-listed Art Museums.  
HOUSTON, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, October 28–November 11.  
DALLAS, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, November 25–December 16.  
SAN ANTONIO, Witte Memorial Museum, December 30–January 20.  
NEW YORK, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Loan Exhibition, opening November 27.
- 1955 FLORENCE, "10 Artisti," Arte Madi. Galleria Numero, January 20–February 2.  
NEW YORK, "American Abstract Artists 19 Annual Exhibition." New School for Social Research, February 22–March 21.  
FLORENCE, "Collezione di Numero," Galleria Numero, December 22–January.

- 1956 NEW YORK, "American Abstract Artists (AAA) 20 Annual with Painters of Canada." Riverside Museum, April 8–May 20.  
BUENOS AIRES, "Arte Madi International," Galleria Bonino, May 2–15.
- 1957 NEW YORK, "American Abstract Artists 21 Annual Exhibition," The Contemporaries Gallery, April 22–May 11.  
"The World of Abstract Art," anthology, published.
- 1958 PARIS, "Arte Madi Internationale," Galerie Denis Rene, February 18–28.  
NEW YORK, AAA 22 Annual Exhibition, Riverside Museum, March 2–30.
- 1959 NEW YORK, AAA 23 Annual Exhibition, Betty Parsons Gallery, June 1–13.
- 1960 NEW YORK, AAA 24 Annual Exhibition, Riverside Museum, February 28–March 27, 1961.  
NEW YORK, AAA 25 Annual Exhibition, Lever House, April 3–21.  
BUENOS AIRES, "15 Anos de Arte Madi," Museum of Modern Art Buenos Aires, November.
- 1962 NEW YORK, AAA 26 Annual Exhibition, IBM Gallery, February 5–24.
- 1963 NEW YORK, AAA 27 Annual Exhibition, East Hampton Gallery, May 7–June 1.
- 1964 NEW YORK, AAA 28 Annual Exhibition, L.S.C. South Gallery, New York University, January 8–23.
- 1965 NEW YORK, AAA 29 Annual Exhibition, Riverside Museum, March 14–April 25.
- 1966 NEW YORK, AAA 30 Anniversary Exhibition, "Yesterday and Today" 1936-1966. Riverside Museum, September 25–November 27. "American Abstract Artists 1936-1966" (anniversary publication).
- 1967 NEW YORK, AAA, Loeb Student Center, New York University, July 10–August 7.
- 1969 RALEIGH, AAA, North Carolina Museum of Art, February 9–March 9.  
NEW YORK, The Bronx Council on the Arts, County Building, November 9–23.
- 1970 NEW YORK, New York University, February 27–April 16. AAA Exhibition.
- 1972 NEW YORK, AAA 36 Annual Exhibition, Contemporary Art Gallery, New York University, October 31–November 22.  
MADISON, NJ, AAA Exhibition, Fairleigh Dickinson University, November.
- 1973 WASHINGTON, DC., National Community Arts Program–HUD. Competition.
- 1974 NEW YORK, AAA Betty Parsons Gallery, July–August.
- 1976 NEW YORK, AAA Exhibition in honor of J. Albers, G. Morris, R. Pereira, C. Shaw, Westbeth, October 2–28.
- 1977 ALBUQUERQUE. AAA, Art Museum, University of New Mexico, February 27–April 3.

- 1979 NEW YORK, AAA: Language of Abstraction, Betty Parsons Gallery and Marilyn Pearl Gallery, June 19–August 3. AAA: Works on Paper, Betty Parsons Gallery, August.  
NEW YORK, "20th Century Art," Sid Deutsch Gallery.
- 1979-1981 "CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE GEOMETRIC TRADITION," Selection From the McCrory Corp. Collection. Traveling exhibition USA. Presented at nine below-listed Art Museums:  
BUFFALO, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, October 14–November 25, 1979.  
DALLAS, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, January 16–February 24, 1980.  
SAN FRANCISCO, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, March 14–April 27, 1980.  
LA JOLLA, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, May 23–July 8, 1980.  
SEATTLE, Seattle Art Museum, July 30–September 14, 1980.  
PITTSBURGH, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, October 50, 1980–January 4, 1981.  
KANSAS CITY, W. Rock-hill Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, January 23–March 15, 1981.  
DETROIT, The Detroit Institute of Arts, April 22–June 1, 1981.  
MILWAUKEE, Milwaukee Art Center, July 14–August 26, 1981.
- 1981 SUMMIT, "Transition," Summit Art Gallery, New Jersey, March 6–31.
- 1982 NEW YORK, AAA "Abstraction in Action," video by Irene Rousseau, City Gallery, January 6–31.
- 1983 GREENSBORO and ALABAMA, AAA., University of North Carolina, January 16–February 20, Moody Gallery Art, University of Alabama, March 6–April 6.
- 1983-4 TRENTON, "Beyond the Plane: American Constructions 1930-1965," New Jersey State Museum, October 29–December 31, 1983. The Art Gallery, University of Maryland, January 26–March 18, 1984. (Selection of 25 artists).  
NEW YORK, "American Abstract Artists: 50th Anniversary Celebration," Bronx Museum of the Arts, February 6–April 20.  
TEL AVIV, "Trends in Geometric Abstract Art," Tel Aviv Museum Collection, opening October 9.
- 1988-92 WESTERN–EASTERN EUROPE, "A Living Tradition: Selection From the American Abstract Artists" Bronx Museum of the Arts. A cultural Presentation of the United States of America. Traveling exhibition of 25 artists, presented in ten below-listed countries and twenty-one cities.
- 1988 HELSINKI-VOAASA, Tikanoja Art Residence, September 1–October 10.
- 1988 ROVANIENNI, The Rovanienni Art Museum, October 20–November 20.  
JOENSUU, The Joensuu Art Museum, December 1–51.
- 1989 PRAGUE, Ktere Se Rona, January 26–April 10.  
BRATISLAVA, Gallery of Capital of SSR, March 2–April 2.  
BUCHAREST, National Museum, May 16–June 50.  
TEL AVIV, Haife Museum, September 16–October 50.
- 1990 BELGRADE, Museum of Modern Art, December 1989–January 29, 1990.  
ZAGREB, Contemporary Art Gallery, February 8–March 4.  
BERLIN, Altes Museum, Neue Berliner Galleries, May 25–July 1.  
FRANKFURT, American House, July 6–August 7.  
BONN, Gustav-Beinemann House, September 5–50.  
WARSAW, Art Center Studio, October 15–December 50.  
KRAKOW, Pałac Sztuki (Palace of Arts), December 7–28.

- 1991 LENINGRAD, February 1–May 50.  
 YEREVAN, American Painting Gallery, February–March.  
 TBILISI, Art Museum of Georgia, April–May.  
 YALTA-VALLETTA, October 1–November 10.
- 1992 CANADA, COBOURG/ONTARIO, Art Gallery of North- umberland, December 20, 1991–January 19, 1992.  
 STRATFORD/ONTARIO, Gallery of Stratford, January 5–March 1.  
 SUDBURY/ONTARIO, Laurentian University Museum and Art Centre, March 11–April 5.
- 1996 WASHINGTON D.C., Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Exhibition of works by Nikolai Kasak, May 29–June 7.
- 2005 NEW YORK, Krasdale Gallery, White Plains, New York, Nikolai Kasak one man show, November 6, 2004–  
 February 20.  
 MASSACHUSETTS, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts - gift of Disorder of Linear  
 Energy, 1951.
- 2006 NEW YORK, Forum Gallery, Structure, December 8, 2005–January 14.
- 2016 MIAMI, Sammer Gallery, Nikolai Kasak: Confluentia, Physical Art & MADI, December 5, 2016–March 31, 2017
- 2017 MADRID, ARCO Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, February 27–March 3.  
 SAO PAULO, SpArte Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, April 5–April 9.  
 BRUSELLS , Art Brussels, Nikolai Kasak Solo, April 21–April 23.  
 MIAMI, Pinta Art Miami, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, Dec 7–Dec 10.
- 2018 MADRID, ARCO Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, February 27–March 3.  
 SAO PAULO, SpArte Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, April 11–April 15.  
 BRUSELLS, Art Brussels, Nikolai Kasak Solo, April 25–April 28.  
 MIAMI, Pinta Art Miami, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, Dec 4–Dec 8.
- 2019 MADRID, ARCO Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, February 27–March 3.  
 SAO PAULO, SpArte Art Fair, Nikolai Kasak Group Exhibition, April 3–April 7.
- 2022 NEW YORK, Cecilia de Torres, Ltd., Nikolai Kasak: Space Constructions, 1940s-1970, March 18–June 30.





# TRANSLATION

# CONFLUENCIAS

## EL ARTE FÍSICO DE KASAK EN EL GRUPO MADI

En abril de 1934 Joaquín Torres García retornó a Montevideo decidido a continuar el proyecto de arte constructivo que había comenzado en Europa y propuso un quiebre radical desde América. Representó esta posición a través del dibujo invertido del territorio sudamericano, publicado en el primer número de la *Círculo y Cuadrado*, la revista que entrecruzó el deseo de acercamiento al arte prehispánico y su conocimiento sobre el arte moderno europeo. En el área rioplatense, este regreso captó la atención de los jóvenes y también reactivó el interés por la obra de Piet Mondrian, Theo Van Doesburg, Jean Arp, Georges Vantongerloo y muchos otros vanguardistas con los que Torres García había compartido el entorno de *Cercle et Carré*.<sup>(1)</sup>

Ya en 1935 Carmelo Arden Quin había establecido contacto con el maestro al asistir a la conferencia "Geometría, creación y proporción" dictada en la Sociedad Teosófica Uruguaya, pero fue en los primeros 40 cuando se acercó para solicitarle una colaboración que deseaba incluir en una nueva revista de vanguardia que proyectaba lanzar con un grupo de amigos. Luego, junto a Edgar Maldonado Bayley, buscó el apoyo del poeta brasileño Murilo Mendes y, finalmente, sumó la contribución del chileno Vicente Huidobro. Así, en el verano del 44 comenzó a circular *Arturo*. Revista de artes abstractas, con los aportes de estos tres reconocidos artistas, los textos de los jóvenes Bayley, Arden Quin, Gyula Kosice y Rhod Rothfuss, además del diseño de portada de Tomás Maldonado y las viñetas de Lidy Prati.

También promediando los años 30, pero en suelo europeo, Nikolai Kasak había comenzado sus estudios en la Escuela de Bellas Artes y Artes Aplicadas de Varsovia, donde recibió una formación de base figurativa, con especialización en pintura mural. Más tarde viajó a Viena y Roma para completar sus estudios, donde escribió sus primeras ideas sobre su "arte físico" y se vinculó con los artistas interesados en el lenguaje de la abstracción.

Aunque en un mapeo territorial, las producciones de estos jóvenes interesados en interpretar el tiempo de posguerra se localizan en posiciones muy distantes, los contactos establecidos a través de exposiciones, revistas, correspondencia o viajes dibujan una apretada red que aproxima sus obras y pensamientos. Esos itinerarios muestran que en un breve lapso el joven de origen ruso Nikolai Kasak no solo comenzó su formación en Varsovia, se desplazó para continuar en Viena, se insertó en la escena artística romana de posguerra y maduró su obra en Nueva York, sino que el corpus teórico y plástico iniciado en Europa y desarrollado en América del Norte, a comienzos de los años 50 ya había llegado a Buenos Aires.

## KASAK Y LA NOCIÓN DE ARTE FÍSICO

En los años 40 y mientras continuaba su práctica figurativa en la Academia de Roma, Kasak realizó los primeros dibujos abstractos de pequeño formato <sup>(2)</sup>, anticipados por algunos diseños geométricos para alfombras realizados entre 1942-43. En ese ambiente, experimentó un fuerte impacto frente a las obras de Mondrian y Wassily Kandinsky que se exhibían en esos días y, al mismo tiempo, se relacionó con Giorgio De Chirico, Piero Dorazio, Alberto Moravia y Enrico Prampolini, entre otros artistas interesados por el arte moderno.

En este marco de ideas, Kasak comenzó a formular la orientación de una propuesta de base constructiva. Hacia 1945, mientras estudiaba en Roma escribió: "bisogna raggiungere l'originalità, la libertà la e la purezza con cui vedono e conoscono i bambini o i santi".<sup>(3)</sup> A partir de este enfoque sostenía que así como la mirada de los niños y de los santos mantiene los valores permanentes y la libertad para pensar y crear, el artista debía confiar en su realidad y no dejarse complacer por los intereses de compradores o críticos de arte. Su formulación apostaba, entonces, por la independencia pero también por la originalidad y la universalidad.

Fundaba la filosofía de su poética en tres aspectos: a) la originalidad y perfección logradas por la acción de elementos opuestos pero complementarios -a los que llamó espacio energía negativa y espacio energía positiva-; b) la pureza alcanzada por los componentes tanto físicos como metafísicos de todo el sistema constructivo; c) la acción de una belleza que posee potencia creativa y, a la vez, es fuente de inspiración para el pensamiento racional e intuitivo.<sup>(4)</sup>

La propuesta suponía la integración de formas y colores dentro de una armonía capaz de transmitir la energía del conocimiento espiritual. En esta modalidad de creación que involucra a la dimensión estético-espiritual resuenan las ideas de Kandinsky que concebían al arte como “un lenguaje que habla al alma”, es decir, que le asignaban al arte la capacidad de proporcionar el “alimento cotidiano” necesario para el alma de los hombres.(5)

En este marco de ideas, hacia 1945-46 Kasak formuló una propuesta que desafiaba a la tradición desarrollada sobre el plano del bastidor rectangular, fundada sobre la base de los siguientes aspectos:

1. Liberación de las limitaciones de la definición tradicional de la obra de arte, particularmente con respecto a la idea de pintura con un marco rectangular, bidimensional y plano.
2. Unificación de pintura y escultura: el rechazo de la idea de pintura y escultura como dos formas separadas en el arte moderno.
3. Empleo de la Energía espacial Negativa juntos con la Energía espacial Positiva, como el componente estructural y último de la obra de arte.
4. Insistencia en que la obra de arte es una realidad independiente y activa en sí misma, una invención física y no la descripción, imitación o deformación de alguna otra cosa.(6)

En el ambiente romano, las transformaciones de su imagen figurativa hacia los primeros desarrollos abstractos fueron coincidentes -según señala Nicoletta Misler- con su participación en las exposiciones de arte moderno impulsadas por el Art Club y, en especial, por el debate que siguió a la Terza Mostra Annuale dell'Art Club di Roma presentada en la Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna de esa ciudad, entre marzo y abril de 1949.(7)

## LA VANGUARDIA RIOPLATENSE DE LA POSGUERRA

En el área rioplatense la aparición de Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas en abril de 1944 dio el puntapié inicial para el surgimiento de una propuesta de carácter invencionista. Desde la dialéctica marxista, los enunciados de esta publicación planteaban arrasar con el primitivismo, el realismo y el simbolismo, apostaban a la racionalidad, a los aportes científicos y al “jubilo creador”, a pesar de la destrucción y la melancolía que había provocado el largo período de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Desde estas latitudes, entonces, los jóvenes formularon un programa de arte concreto que propuso estructurar el marco de acuerdo a la composición de la pintura, para evitar la sugerencia de continuidad del tema más allá de los límites de ese encuadre.(8)

Del primer núcleo formado alrededor de Arturo surgió un grupo que organizó dos presentaciones que incluyeron tanto poesía, exhibición de pinturas y esculturas, como música y danza: una se realizó en la residencia de los psicoanalistas Enrique Pichón Riviére y Arminda Aberastury en el mes de octubre de 1945 y, la otra, bajo el nombre Movimiento de Arte Concreto Invención (MACI) tuvo lugar en diciembre en la casa que la fotógrafa alemana Grete Stern.

Después de estas primeras presentaciones se formaron dos agrupaciones: la Asociación de Arte Concreto Invención -AACI- (integrada por Tomás Maldonado, Edgar Bayley, Lidya Prati, Alfredo Hlito, Claudio Girola, Manuel Espinosa, Raúl Lozza, Enio Iommi y algunos otros artistas) y el grupo MADI (formado por Kosice, Dily Laañ, Martín Blaszkó, Arden Quin y Rothfuss, entre otros).

Volcados hacia las formas más radicales del arte moderno, estos jóvenes conjugaron sus re-lecturas del suprematismo, constructivismo, neoplasticismo o los postulados bauhausianos, con la búsqueda de un nuevo lenguaje plástico que fuera capaz de anticipar el optimismo del período de la reconstrucción de posguerra. Formularon entonces un programa estético “invencionista” en clave utópica, que aspiraba reposicionar el arte en la vida cotidiana del hombre, desde una iniciativa vanguardista que batalló para desplazar a la estética figurativa dominante en la escena rioplatense a través de sus manifiestos, panfletos, sus propias revistas y su participación en todos los debates estéticos y públicos.

Por otra parte, la obra de estos artistas conferían a los borde de las pinturas un rol activo, porque entendían que esas formas no se disponían en un espacio ilusorio, sino que el espacio era un elemento real que también podía penetrar a través del marco recortado.

Realizadas sobre maderas que tomaban formatos irregulares mantenían puntos en común con las obras que Torres García llamó Objetos plásticos, así como con las experiencias que había realizado sobre madera, sea en pinturas y maderas con incisiones o en los modelos con articulaciones (especialmente para la creación de sus juguetes articulados).en pinturas y maderas con incisiones o en los modelos con articulaciones (especialmente para la creación de sus juguetes articulados).

Los integrantes de estos grupos (muchos estudiantes disconformes con la orientación académica que guiaba la educación artística en las escuelas oficiales) leyeron con interés Universalismo Constructivo, el libro que reunió las conferencias dictadas por Torres García desde su regreso y que fueron publicadas en Buenos Aires en 1944. Sin embargo, el maestro uruguayo atrajo su atención más por su férreo enfoque antiacadémico y rechazo a la pintura naturalista y de carácter imitativo, que por la propuesta de su universalismo constructivo ya que, precisamente, se oponía a los programas de las vanguardias más radicales que ellos continuaron.

Si bien desde las primeras pinturas de marco irregular se derivaron las obras coplanares -que recortaron y separaron las formas geométricas para colocarlas directamente sobre el muro unidas entre sí por varillas de madera, metal o acrílico- al desarrollar aquella idea surgieron diferencias en las interpretaciones de cada agrupación. En este sentido, los coplanares creados por los integrantes de la AACI reunieron formas pintadas con colores planos y, una vez conformado el conjunto, evitaron el movimiento.

En cambio, tanto las pinturas de marco recortado como los coplanares realizados por los integrantes del grupo MADI presentan variantes a la hora de pensar en sus diseños. Por un lado, las formas liberadas se reunían sobre la pared por medio de articulaciones que permitían el movimiento y, en consecuencia, se transformaban en cuadros-móviles disponibles para la intervención del espectador. Por otro lado, mientras las pinturas de los integrantes de la AACI prefirieron las formas geométricas pintadas con colores planos y, hacia 1947, retornaron a la ortogonalidad del marco tradicional, los MADI continuaron la creación sobre formatos irregulares y pintaron sus obras de marco recortado con áreas rayadas, con cuñas, punteadas o con dibujos diversos. Incluso algunas interpretaciones denotan mayor libertad aun, como las pinturas sobre un marco irregular vacío y cerrado a las que llamaron "marcos estructurados", los formatos irregulares con superficies cóncavo-convexas que Arden Quin llamó "formas galbée" o las formas recortadas con relieve o superposición de planos de Kosice. Asimismo, MADI otorgó importancia al movimiento y a la participación, lo cual suponer una cuota de lucididad que estuvo presente desde las primeras obras articuladas y móviles, como en el caso de Royi, pieza emblemática creada por Kosice que admite diversas posiciones.

La cuestión de la originalidad fue central para quienes integraron los movimientos de vanguardia, así como la disputa por la primacía en el tratamiento novedoso de las formas. No obstante la relevancia de esa matriz innovadora, los artistas modernos debieron enfrentar la ausencia de comprensión de sus contemporáneos. Basta tomar como referencia las primeras repercusiones en la prensa de MADI que, en lugar de ubicarse en la sección de crítica de arte, lograban comentarios irónicos como el artículo de Clarín que junto a una fotografía de Royi aclaraba: "La fotografía muestra una de las obras que llaman "escultura articulada y que según los adeptos de este grupo, ha producido una 'revolución trascendente' en las artes en general...¡poco cuesta imaginar!", o la nota en tono burlón "Los Madistas reinciden" acompañado por un dibujo humorístico.

De todos modos, el potencial de la vanguardia, que debía defender sus producciones mientras tomaba distancia del pasado, en el caso de los grupos de arte concreto rioplatense motivó la articulación simultánea de estrategias de confrontación y de penetración. Por una parte, escribieron y difundieron sus programas estéticos, mientras abrían debates y polemizaban con la estética dominante, enfrentándose especialmente con al "nuevo realismo" de Berni que detentaba una posición dominante. Por otra parte, con el fin de avanzar sobre la escena internacional el grupo MADI logró participar en el 3éme Salon Réalités Nouvelles reunido en julio de 1948,(9) a partir de la propuesta que Kosice le envió a Felix Del Marle -Secretario General de la Comisión de ese Salón-, donde la crítica de Pierre Descargues observó:

La curiosidad extranjera ha sido el envío del grupo argentino MADI, que conducen Kosice y Rothfuss a tambor batiente.¿Cómo definir sus hallazgos? El arte rompe los cuadros de cuatro ángulos rectos. Es brutal, bárbaro, insolente, totalmente nuevo. El otro día, ante un panel cubierto con estas nuevas pinturas, escuché: "pero, es el arte indio, huele a la Pampa!" Detrás de la broma se esconde un homenaje a una fuerza arrogante pero presente, torpe aún, pero simpática.

(10)

En definitiva, la vanguardia rioplatense de los años 40 reelaboró los postulados de las "vanguardias históricas" y se propuso formatos irregulares para superar la ortogonalidad de cuadro "ventana", en la misma línea que experimentaban otros artistas, como en este caso Kasak. No obstante, más allá de las lógicas disputas por la originalidad, la vanguardia del arte concreto rioplatense no solo trascendió por la novedad de sus marcos recortados y obras articuladas, sino por su efectivo poder de intervención sobre la tradición local dominante, poder disruptivo a partir del cual se consolidó el paradigma del arte abstracto en la escena regional.

## ÁREAS DE CONFLUENCIAS

En general, los artistas que intentaron quebrar el canon no solo se definieron negativamente con respecto a la tradición mediante la escritura de sus programas en manifiestos y panfletos, sino que se agruparon para difundir y consolidar su oposición al status quo. En este sentido, desde el punto de vista sociológico, Pierre Bourdieu ha observado que, en su fase de "acumulación inicial de capital simbólico", los grupos de vanguardia tendieron a mostrarse abiertos a la participación de integrantes de procedencias y disposiciones muy diversas.(11) Si bien este tipo de agrupaciones requieren mantener la cohesión para permitir el crecimiento y la defensa de sus postulados, también es cierto que el equilibrio interno es inestable y, con frecuencia, se producen divisiones derivadas de las luchas por el liderazgo.

La vanguardia del arte concreto rioplatense estuvo atravesada por estas disputas desde sus primeros días y sufrió varias divisiones; no obstante, agrupados lograron una efectiva intervención sobre la tradición local y, a través de la inserción de los artistas o sus obras, tempranamente accedieron al circuito internacional, como en el caso de la mencionada participación del grupo MADI en el 3éme Salon de Réalités Nouvelles. Precisamente, en este encuentro parisino también se había destacado el grupo italiano Forma 1, integrado por Piero Dorazio, Achille Perilli, Giulio Turcato, Pietro Consagra y Mino Guerrini, que había proclamado su posición vanguardista y revolucionaria desde un arte que relacionaba el pensamiento marxista y la abstracción.

Dorazio no sólo había conocido las obras MADI en el 3éme Salon, sino que mantenía correspondencia con Kosice con referencia a la organización de la Mostra Internazionale dell Art Club en Roma -sociedad de artistas internacionales- así como con respecto a la circulación de las obras no-figurativas de los italianos en la revista Arte Madi Universal. Precisamente en esta trama internacional de los artistas interesados en difundir el paradigma de la abstracción, al observar la proximidad entre la propuesta de Kasak y MADI, Dorazio se convirtió en el eslabón que los puso en contacto. (13)

En el marco general de estos intercambios, la revista -concebida como una plataforma de difusión del programa estético y de colaboración internacional entre artistas de vanguardia- en octubre de 1949 inauguró una sección especial interesada en reunir obras de colegas que estuvieran trabajando en la misma línea desde distintas partes del mundo. En la presentación hizo un llamado a quienes -aún sin ser integrantes del movimiento madinemSOR- quisieran participar en los números siguientes con el fin de hacerse eco de la vitalidad que mantenía el arte no-figurativo. Compartieron la primera página las obras de: Anton Pevsner, Frank Kupka, Camile Graeser, Max Huber y Nikolai Kasak.(14)

Si bien Kosice sólo había recibido la reproducción de una obra de este último artista a través de Dorazio y aun no había entablado contacto, inmediatamente incluyó su obra en la revista porque para él era significativo saber que ambos estaban trabajando en la misma línea, tal como le expresó en una carta que le envió en enero de 1950 (p. 112), en la que también le preguntó si estaba interesado en formar parte del grupo MADI. La respuesta de Kasak (p. 113), no solo fue afirmativa sino que dio comienzo a un prolongado epistolario que testimonia la amistad y los proyectos compartidos por estos artistas.

El grupo MADI había adoptado en 1945 la matriz inclusiva de un movimiento, razón por la cual desde su aceptación Kasak estuvo presente a lo largo de la década en las exposiciones del colectivo liderado por Kosice y se encuentra entre los veintinueve integrantes del retrato de conjunto del grupo MADI reunidos por este artista de origen eslavo. Este perfil expansivo y abierto a incorporación de miembros se observa también en los casos de Sandú Darié de Cuba, de la pintora rumana Gina Ionesco, del coreógrafo japonés residente en los Estados Unidos Masami Kuni y del musicólogo alemán Hans Joachim Koellreutter, radicado en Brasil, entre otros integrantes internacionales.

En consecuencia, las páginas de las revistas, los catálogos y las críticas constituyen el soporte de un intercambio sostenido que trazó una red sin fronteras a través de la cual estos artistas aspiraban alcanzar una difusión internacional de las ideas que compartían.

En este sentido, el número 4 de la revista también incluyó dos obras: *Action of Positive and Negative Physical Space* (1945) y la misma obra reproducida en el número anterior) acompañadas por una foto de Kasak,(15) pero fue en el número 5 de *Arte Madi Universal* en el que apareció un artículo que recorría el camino de sus realizaciones y donde Kasak explicaba:

La necesidad de estudiar a fondo el problema no resuelto aun por el arte no-figurativo y de sacarlo de su paralización, me ha llevado en 1947, en Europa, a seguir la destrucción completa del concepto tradicional del cuadro rectangular y de introducir el espacio aéreo-creado. A fin de realizar el susodicho principio, he adoptado por ende dos fundamentales elementos universales, o sea el bloque sólido y el espacio aéreo creado.(16)

Desde esta propuesta personal, Kasak consideraba las estructuras pictóricas de Rothfuss, los objetos articulares de Kosice y las composiciones de Biedma y Laañ como construcciones convincentes en relación con la realidad circundante. En consecuencia, al preguntarse cuál tendría que ser el arte de ese tiempo, se respondía:

Cierto que sobre todo, el arte que construye debe ser el elegido para satisfacer las aspiraciones del hombre moderno. En este caso, no veo otro arte que cumpla mejor ni más cabalmente con estos principios que aquel por el que combatimos en común, con madí, ni vislumbro otros postulados que estén más de acuerdo con las necesidades de todo pensamiento positivo.(17)

En el número siguiente, de octubre de 1952, amplió expresando el interés que habían concitado sus trabajos sobre arte físico-constructivo en el ambiente italiano, donde Pietro Consagra también estaba interesado en el espacio positivo y negativo. Sobre su labor en Norteamérica, agregó:

Mis obras actuales, en Estados Unidos, se orientan en ese sentido y señalan un avance sobre los plásticos aferrados al marco rectangular, planos superpuestos, ilusión tridimensional y un concepto ideológico en la construcción, ya totalmente superado.(18)

Sin duda encarar la inserción de una propuesta que intenta romper el status quo desde la lucha individual ofrece mayores dificultades y las evaluaciones de Kasak sobre su trabajo en Nueva York han destacado la incompreensión de la crítica de esa escena; aspecto sobre el que incluso manifestó que como artista norteamericano nacido en Rusia había experimentado la discriminación e hipocresía de muchas instituciones e individuos.(19) En cambio, como miembro internacional de MADI sus hallazgos se inscribieron en el marco de las permanentes tácticas de expansión de un grupo de vanguardia. Inclusive, la correspondencia Kasak-Kosice testimonia las estrategias que emplearon para concretar los envíos y devoluciones de obras, dentro de las acotadas posibilidades económicas que tenían quienes creaban un tipo de arte que aún no estaba reconocido por la institución y el mercado.

Desde junio de 1954 la revista que editaba Kosice se discontinuó, pero esa última aparición (el número doble 7/8) también incluyó una composición lineal, que acompañó al artículo de Ana María Bay "Hacia una plástica pura y universal" y una versión de la obra *Action of Positive and Negative-Carousel* (1952).(20)

El intercambio epistolar también testimonia otros proyectos compartidos, como las publicaciones y exposiciones. Entre las publicaciones no solo se contaba la presencia de Kasak en la revista *Arte Madi Universal*, sino en el libro de Kosice *Geocultura de la Europa de hoy*, mientras que a través de la gestión de Kasak, Gyula envió un texto para el libro sobre arte no figurativo editado en los Estados Unidos.(21) La correspondencia también da cuenta del proyecto de otro libro que pensaban titular *Artistas constructivos del siglo XX* y para el cual Kosice estaba en tratativas con Michael Seuphor y Denise René, aunque no llegó a concretarse.

En cuanto a las exhibiciones, Kasak estuvo representado en muchas de las muestras que se sucedieron a lo largo de la década. Entre las primeras, en 1953 participó en la exposición colectiva presentada en el Ateneo del Chaco (ubicado

en la ciudad de Resistencia de la Provincia del Chaco, en el norte del territorio argentino) y en "Arte MAD I Internacional", organizada en 1956 por la Galería Bonino de Buenos Aires. En esta última, Kosice expresó en el prólogo:

Las ramificaciones e influencia de MAD I ya escapan, previsiblemente, a la innecesaria estadística de su núcleo central en Buenos Aires. Comprobamos con júbilo, coincidencia de estilo en artistas de países de América y Europa. (22)

Tras esta introducción, los artistas fueron agrupados según los países de donde provenían: Brasil (N. Oliveira), Chile (E. Eitler), Cuba (S. Darié), Norteamérica (W. Barnet, I. Bolotowsky, N. Kasak y G. L. L. Morris), además de Uruguay y Argentina con un grupo más numeroso. Tal como se observa en el montaje de las salas de la galería Bonino, en la muestra se presentaron obras de Kasak que daban cuenta de los principios teóricos de su arte físico. Además, si bien el catálogo no contiene un listado de todas las obras exhibidas, entre las ilustraciones se puede identificar una de sus construcciones tridimensionales.

Realizadas con varillas de sección cuadrada, tanto las piezas situadas en el plano del muro como en el espacio presentan formas tensadas por contraposición. Las primeras articulan espacios vacíos y superficies de colores planos, mientras que las segundas están construidas a partir de un leve sistema multidireccional de formas angulares. Si bien algunas obras de Antonio Llorens, Juan Bay, Laań, Rothfuss o Kosice estaban concebidas a partir de un principio de llenos y vacíos, la estructura propuesta por Kasak lograba dinamizar la composición mediante el contrapeso de las formas angulares y la ubicación estratégica de los triángulos o cuadrados coloreados (pp. 37-39-55-57-59-61-75). Además, el sistema de vectores que trazan las formas apuntadas de la pieza tridimensional de Kasak (p. 77) también lograba establecer un particular diálogo con las direcciones oblicuas de las composiciones centradas y móviles de Sandú Darié, el artista de origen rumano radicado en Cuba que adhirió a MAD I y mantuvo vinculaciones con Kasak (p. 114).

El otro artista que pronto encontró afinidades con Kasak fue Bay, que había regresado a la Argentina dispuesto a integrarse a MAD I y a sumar su cooperación para fortalecer las relaciones internacionales. Desde 1954, intercambiaron correspondencia en la que se reflejan los esfuerzos para difundir la propuesta MAD I en los Estados Unidos y Europa. Al respecto, Kasak ofreció la colaboración en Nueva York, mientras que los argentinos estaban dispuestos a emprender un viaje; sin embargo, esas gestiones no prosperaron.(23) En cambio, a través del contacto con Fiamma Vigo lograron la llegada a Italia con la muestra "10 Artisti, disegni, tempere, progetti. Arte MAD I", presentada entre enero y febrero de 1955 en la galería Número de Florencia que, además, luego itineró. Junto a Kosice, Laań, Eitler, Biedma y Rothfuss -integrantes históricos de MAD I- en esta ocasión se sumaron Bay, Kasak, Darié, Ionesco y Presta.

A pesar de las gestiones grupales para llegar a Venezia, en la XXVII Bienal de 1956 solo se incluyeron dos obras de Kosice, quien a finales de 1957 recibió la beca Patroneé administrada por la Embajada de Francia y viajó a Europa para instalarse un tiempo en la Cité Universitaire de París. Desde allí organizó la exposición "Groupe argentin. Art MAD I international", inaugurada el 18 de febrero 1958 en la Galerie Denise René. A diferencia de la muestra de Buenos Aires, en París los doce artistas fueron presentados haciendo hincapié el perfil multidisciplinario de sus obras y sin identificar su país de procedencia.(24) Precisamente, la presentación de Pierre Guéguen señalaba que la poesía, pintura, escultura, arquitectura y diseño eran el pan cotidiano que distribuía esta juventud aventurera y a la vez mística que buscaba quebrar todas las normas.

En este caso, entre las obras de Kasak se expusieron algunas piezas como Key-Linear White [Clave-Lineal blanca] (p. 69) y Negative Square and Linear Expansion [Cuadrado negativo y expansión lineal] (p.73) en las que primaban los ángulos rectos. Es interesante tener en cuenta que en las pinturas sobre tela de mediados de los 40, las figuras geométricas simples -cuadrados, rectángulos y triángulos- habían formado entramados irregulares, con cierta alusión a las tensiones a las que están sometidas las partículas en los campos magnéticos (pp. 31-33-47-65). También en estas abstracciones tempranas, como Action of Vertical Axes [Acción de ejes verticales], (p. 49) se observan composiciones que privilegian la dirección ortogonal que, más tarde, Kasak llevó a sus obras de arte físico. Las pequeñas celdas cuadrangulares, con planos de color o vacíos, se alinean sobre la recta que marca una fuerte dirección ascensional, mientras que en otros casos de formas y líneas en expansión, la obra se organiza en torno a una figura central y se proyectan los ángulos rectos y las líneas oblicuas.

Con el impulso de Rafael Squirru, Director del Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, en noviembre de 1961 se concretó la muestra "Los primeros 15 años de arte MADI"(25) , para la cual Kosice había gestionado con insistencia la llegada de obras de Kasak (p. 117), ya que estaba interesado en reflejar la presencia de los artistas internacionales que adherían a los principios -para ese momento consagrados- del arte MADI. Precisamente en la presentación Squirru recordó las sonrisas que habían despertado las investigaciones plásticas de estos grupos que; sin embargo, lograron afirmar esta nueva sensibilidad a pesar de las dificultades. El catálogo no solo incluyó el Manifiesto de 1946, sino que Kosice escribió la que podría entenderse como una nueva formulación en la que, al comenzar la década del 60, el grupo se disponía a enfrentar a las afónicas "fieras" del informalismo con una renovada propuesta, y al final del texto sintetizó:

MADI, con la incorporación de elementos en continua progresión: la cinética y todos los atributos del movimiento, del espacio-tiempo, de la materia-energía, de la distancia-luz, enfrenta los próximos quince años con el júbilo de la creación. Hasta aquí -mutatis mutantis- cambios topológicos en el arte. Nosotros, artistas madí, enunciamos otra dimensión.(26)

Desde mediados de los años 50 la obra de Kasak también se había ido reorientando. Las construcciones que recuperaban la ortogonalidad, dieron paso a sistemas realizados sobre la base de la repetición de una misma forma, en ocasiones con alguna leve variación para provocar efectos ópticos (pp. 79-93-103-107). Se trata de una etapa en la que figuras simples -como círculos o cuadrados- fueron suficientes para presentar pares de opuestos: luz-sombra o positivo-negativo, así como oposiciones por color o por desplazamientos (pp. 81/91-95/101-105). El trabajo sobre las tramas y las variaciones provocadas por una fuente lumínica constituyó la plataforma de lanzamiento para las investigaciones cinéticas que irrumpieron en la escena de los años 60, y Kasak también reflejó este cambio en un tipo de obra que - como él mismo ha señalado- concentraba el sonido silencioso de su arte esencial. Una vez más, el impulso vanguardista acercaba las producciones de estos artistas que, desde distintas latitudes, continuaban comprometidos con un arte de pura invención que lograra intervenir en la vida cotidiana del hombre de ese nuevo tiempo.

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1. Vanguardias también difundidas y debatidas con el regreso de Emilio Pettoruti, Juan Del Prete o Lucio Fontana, entre otros, con la presentación de algunas exposiciones tempranas como la Primera exposición de Dibujos y Grabados Abstractos presentada en la Galería Moody en diciembre de 1936 o los artículos que ese mismo año publicó Torres García en el diario La Nación de Buenos Aires sobre Piet Mondrian, Amedée Ozenfant, Theo van Doesburg, Hans Arp, además de la conversación con Léonce Rosenberg.
2. Titulados: *Sky of Leningrad's White Nights* [Cielo de noches blancas de Leningrado]; *Entropic Visions of Forms and Lines* [Visiones entropicas de formas y líneas]; *Through the Microscope* [A través del microscopio] y *Black and Colored Spots* [Manchas negras y de colores].
3. Es decir: "es necesario alcanzar la originalidad, la libertad y la pureza con la que ven y conocen los niños o los santos".
4. Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", en John E. Bowlt y "Nikolai Kasak, From Action to Dynamic Silence. The Art of Nikolai Kasak," Salt Lake, Charles Schlacks Jr., 1991, p. 9.
5. Kandinsky, Wassily, *De lo espiritual en el arte*, México, Premia editora, 1989, pp. 103-4.
6. Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", cit, p. 15.
7. Misler, Nicoletta, "Physical Construction", en John E. Bowlt y "Nikolai Kasak, From Action to Dynamic Silence. The Art of Nikolai Kasak," Salt Lake, Charles Schlacks Jr., 1991, p. 33-6.
8. Rothfuss, Rhod, "El marco: un problema de la plástica actual", *Arturo. Revista de artes abstractas*, n. 1, Buenos Aires, verano del 1944, s/p.
9. Integrado por Aníbal Biedma, María Bresler, Juan Belmonte, Diyi Laañ, Kosice, Jacqueline Lorin-Kaldor, Ricardo Pereyra, Raymundo Rasas Pet, Rothfuss y Rodolfo Ian Uricchio.
10. Descargues, Pierre, "Le groupe d'avant-garde Madi", *Arts*, Paris, 23-Juillet-48. Es interesante tener en cuenta que aunque se imprimió un afiche que daba cuenta de la presencia del grupo de Arte Concreto Invención y algunos estudios sobre este salón consideraron esa fuente como fidedigna, sólo se presentaron las obras MADI del grupo liderado por Kosice, tal como testimonian las fotos de sala, críticas y listado de participantes del catálogo.
11. Bourdieu, Pierre, "Las reglas del arte. Génesis y estructura del campo literario," Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona, 1995, p. 396.
12. Desde 1948, algunos integrantes de la AACI realizaron viajes individuales a Europa: Maldonado, Arden Quin, Melé, Vardanega, Girola y Espinosa, donde visitaron talleres de los artistas de las vanguardias de comienzos del siglo XX e intercambiaron con los más jóvenes, como los grupos romanos o el Movimiento de Arte Concreta de Milán, entre otros.
13. Es importante considerar que Dorazio fue un temprano difusor de los desarrollos del arte concreto rioplatense, dado que mencionó sus actividades desde la aparición de Arturo en su libro *La fantasia dell'arte nella vita moderna*, Roma, Polveroni e Quinti Editore, 1955, p. 122 y 132-3.
14. Se trataba de una versión de la obra *Action of Positive and Negative 1* (1945-6) o *Action of Positive and Negative Forces 2* (1946-47). Nótese que en la revista *Arte Madi Universal* fue publicada con el borde superior hacia abajo.
15. En la sección "Aquí MADI" se leía: "Tenemos la adhesión a nuestro movimiento de Nikol Kasak (sic), pintor que reside en Italia. Se orienta en su última producción a realizaciones pictóricas con marco irregular de gran calidad.
16. Kasak, Nikolai, "La pintura constructiva con marco irregular...", *Arte Madi Universal*, n° 5, Buenos Aires, octubre de 1951.
17. *Ibidem*. En este número la sección "Aquí MADI" también informó: "El pintor N, Kasak, que ahora reside en U.S.A. nos envía noticias de sus actividades en el país del norte. Su pintura, ya liberada del "cuadro" es expuesta en varias ciudades con todo éxito".
18. Kasak, Nikolai, "MADI está hoy en el frente de batalla...", *Arte Madi Universal*, n° 6, Buenos Aires, octubre de 1952.
19. Kasak, Nikolai, "On Art and Related Matters", cit, pp. 11-2.
20. En este caso también publicada con el borde superior hacia abajo.
21. Los libros fueron: Kosice, G., *Geocultura de la Europa de hoy*, Buenos Aires, Losange, 1959 y *The world of abstract art*, New York, Wittenborn Publisher, 1957, que incluyó el artículo "Non-Figurative Art Trends in Latin America" de Kosice. El Archivo Nikolai Kasak conserva un manuscrito de su editor, George L.K. Morris, donde se señala un error de traducción en el texto de Kosice por el cual se expresa que el arte físico que Kasak concibió en Italia se incorporó a MADI, en lugar de consignar que se anticipó a MADI.
22. G.K., "Si el pintor, el escultor...", *Arte MADI Internacional* (cat. exp.), Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1956.
23. Los contactos de Kasak fueron con la neoyorkina Rose Fried Gallery y con Hilla Rebay (directora del Museo Solomon Guggenheim en los primeros 50), quien viajó a Buenos Aires en 1954. Según cartas de Kasak a Kosice, 17 de febrero de 1952 y de Kasak a Bay del 15 de octubre de 1954.
24. Participaron: Bay, Darie, Eitler, Gutiérrez, Herrera, Kasak, Kosice, Abraham Linenberg, Llorens, Oliveira, Rothfuss y Scopelliti.
25. Participaron: por Argentina: Eitler, Gutiérrez, Herrera, Kosice, Laañ, Linenberg, Eduardo Sabelli, Scopelliti, Oswald Stimm. Uruguay: Rothfuss, Llorens, Uricchio; por Brasil: Eros, Oliveira, Vinholes. Cuba: Dario; por USA: Kasak; por Inglaterra: Batch, B. Elliot, M. Elliot, Moucho y por Japón: Tanaka.
26. "1961", "Los primeros 15 años de arte MADI" (cat. exp.), *Museo de Arte Moderno*, Buenos Aires, Noviembre de 1961.

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