Contributor: Camila Maroja

**Kosice, Gyula (born Ferdinand Fallik)**

Born: 1924—Košice, present-day Slovakia

Gyula Kosice, a pioneer of hydrokinetic and luminal art, is a poet and one of the main artists and theoreticians of Argentinean avant-garde art. He is best known for his participation in the Madí movement and for incorporating moving water into his artworks. It was as part of the Madí movement that Kosice pioneered in the use of neon gas in artworks, as in *Estructura Lumínica Madí* (*Luminescent Madí Structure*, 1946). Arriving in Buenos Aires before the age of four, the artist was involved in crucial events that stimulated vanguardism in the visual art, including the groundbreaking magazine *Arturo* (1944). In his youth, Kosice was influenced by the writings of Leonardo da Vinci, in particular by the Italian artist’s interest in science and in his media versatility. Decided to pursue an artistic career, Kosice adopted as his artistic name, the name of his native city. The artist studied briefly at the *Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes Manuel Belgrano* (National Fine Arts School Manuel Belgrano) and at the informal *academias libres* (free academies). Nonetheless, like many Latin American intellectuals, Kosice was first associated with literary circles, whose ideas played an important role in his art.

At the Café Rubí, Kosice encountered many important literary figures with whom he discussed both European artistic movements like Surrealism and local movements. Among those was the Chilean poet **Vicente Huidobro**’s ***Creacionismo***, who advocated creation over mimesis. Consequently, an ambiguous relationship to Surrealism, a vigorous defense of invention, as well as Marxist ideals would characterize the editorial of the now mythical magazine ***Arturo. Revista de Arte Abstracto*** (Summer 1944), which Kosice co-edited with the artists **Carmelo Arden Quin**, Edgar Bayley and **Rhod Rothfuss**. The publication advocated for an idea of the artist as an engaged intellectual, concerned with all areas of human creativity. Featuring a drawing of **Tomás Maldonado** on the cover, the single-issue magazine put forth ideas that would agitate the local artistic scene throughout the next decade, namely the promotion of abstract art and of invention in contrast to a mimetic approach to art. These principles were emblematically delineated in Rhod Rothfuss’ article “*El marco: un problema de la plástica atual*” (“The Frame: A Problem in Contemporary Art”), which spurred artists to incorporate the irregular frame into their compositions. The magazine created a transcultural network that included collaborators such as Uruguayan artist **Joaquín Torres-García**, the already mentioned Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, the Portuguese artist then living in Brazil **Maria Vieira da Silva** and Brazilian poet Murilo Mendes. In *Arturo*, Kosice participated with poems and a theoretical text in which he describes art as a pluridimensional activity and prophesizes: “Man is not bound to finish on Earth”.

A year later, in a small booklet titled *Invención* (*Invention*, 1945), Kosice published photos of his artworks, together with poems and theoretical texts. The articulated wooden sculpture *Röyi* figured in the cover. Featuring an invented name, the sculpture represented the artist’s first dynamic artwork to be manipulated by the viewer—aspect that would be further developed in his Madí creations. In the same year, after a rupture with Maldonado who pursued a more orthodox view of **Concrete art**, Kosice co-founded the *Movimiento de* *Arte Concreto-Invención* (Concrete-Invention Art Movement). Exhibiting in private houses, the group had one show at the residence of the psychoanalyst Enrique Picon-Rivière and a second one in the house of the exiled **Bauhaus**-trained German photographer **Grete Stern**. The latter included music and dance in addition to irregular-frame paintings and articulated sculptures.



*Röyi n. 2*, 1944. Collection Eduardo Francisco Constantini, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Details available on: http://www.malba.org.ar/web/coleccion\_obra.php?idobra=58# and at http://www.kosice.com.ar

In 1946 a part of the group exhibited under the name of Madí, further distinguishing themselves from Maldonado’s rival group named *Asociación de Arte Concreto-Invención* (Concrete-Art Invention Association). Animating the Madí pieces were the same qualities propagated in *Arturo*: invention, autonomous colour, use of irregular and structural frames, dynamism and joy. Madí artworks included not only paintings and sculptures, but also architecture, poems, novels, music, theater and dance—as Kosice stated in his “*Manifiesto Madí*” (“Madí Manifesto”, 1946).



*Estructura Lumínica Madí*  (*Luminescent Madí Structure*), 1946. Collection of Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France. Details available on: http://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/ressource.action?param.id=FR\_R-16ab2cf7d48ee771ab501f43ab13951&param.idSource=FR\_O-bec258792d5e2e66a113a7567eeb8c2

In 1947 Kosice married Diyi Lanñ, who was part of Madí and would became famous for her irregular painted frames presented as complete artworks. The movement’s interest in fiction, in invented names and pseudonyms as well as in stressing their own pioneering role makes it difficult to assert its real trajectory. However, *Arte Madí Universal* (1947-1954), the eight-issue magazine that Kosice founded and directed, had a vital role in disseminating the group’s artworks and theories locally and internationally. The magazine started a lively international debate, especially after Madí’s groundbreaking official participation in the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* in Paris (1948). It published texts and artworks by **František Kupka**, **Naum Gabo**, **Antoine Pevsner**, **Max Bill**, **Lucio Fontana**, among many others artists.

In 1957, after being awarded a prize by the French embassy, Kosice settled in Paris. There, through the artist **Victor Vasarely** he was introduced to the **Galerie Denise René**, where he organized a Madí show in 1958 and a solo exhibit in 1960. During this period, Kosice kept using a vast range of materials, including stainless steal and Plexiglas, and exhibited works that incorporated water and movement. The 1959 manifesto “*La arquitectura del agua en la escultura*” (“Water Architecture in Sculpture”) expresses his interest in hydrokineticism. Until 1968 the artist would spend most of his time in the French capital. During this period he also worked as a journalist, interviewing for the newspaper *La Nación* several prominent cultural agents, including **Le Corbusier**, **Tristan Tzara**, **Jean-Paul Sartre**, **Michel Seuphor** and **Jean Cassou**. These interviews were later grouped in the book *Entrevisiones*.

In 1971 Kosice showcased at the *Galería Bonino* in Buenos Aires models for his *Ciudad hidroespacial* (hydrospatial city) and, in the following year, published the “*Manifiesto de la Ciudad Hidroespacial*” (“The Hydrospatial City Manifesto”). Materializing the statement in *Arturo* as well as the definition of Madí architecture: a “mobile and shiftable environment and form”, the hydrospatial city constituted a nomadic and interplanetary form of dwelling. Conceived of as a new urban space to be constructed, it postulates new architectural interactions, as its hydro-citizens would constantly remodel the environment employing holographic projections. Since the 1970s the artist also started to construct monumental public sculptures, like *Homenaje a Punta del Este* (*Tribute to Punta del Este*, 1982), a six-meter tower in Uruguay that integrates moving water. Kosice was rediscovered internationally after exhibitions like *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980* (Hayward Gallery, UK, 1989) and *Inverted Utopias. Avant-Garde in Latin America* (The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, US, 2004) displayed Madí artworks. In 2005, the artist transformed his studio in the neighborhood of Almagro, Buenos Aires into a private museum, which displays artworks as well as historic documents.

**References and further reading:**

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**List of Works:**

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*Estructura Lumínica Madí*  (*Luminescent Madí Structure*), 1946. Collection of Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

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*Persistencia. Gota de agua C* (*Persistence. Water Drop C*), 1970-2004. Collection Eduardo Francisco Constantini, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Homenaje a Punta del Este* (*Tribute to Punta del Este*), 1982. Punta del Leste, Uruguay.