

## PRESS RELEASE

### LYGIA CLARK: WORK FROM THE 1950S

3 June - 30 July 2016

Private View: Thursday 2 June, 6 – 8 pm

Alison Jacques Gallery is pleased to announce a historical survey exhibition of works from the 1950s by Lygia Clark. This will be the artist's first solo presentation since the critically acclaimed retrospective *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art 1948-1988* curated by Connie Butler and Luis Pérez-Oramas, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014). It also follows the installation of *Fantastic Architecture*, at The Henry Moore Foundation (2014) and *Lygia Clark: Organic Planes* curated by Lisa Le Feuvre, at The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2014-2015).

Born in Brazil, Lygia Clark (1920-1988) is one of the most pioneering artists of the twentieth century. Clark's groundbreaking work radically innovated the relationship between the art object and audience and has become a reference point for generations of artists pushing the limits of sculpture today. Her work has been acquired for major museum collections including Tate, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris and The Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid.

Lygia Clark was part of the neo-concrete movement, a splinter group of the 1950s Brazilian concrete art movement, calling for a greater sensuality, colour and poetic feeling in concrete art. In focusing on her work from the 1950s, we see the influence of her first visit to Paris in 1950 where she studied with key artists including Fernand Léger. The drawing *Escadas (Stairs)*, 1951 is a clear indication of Léger's influence on Clark but also of her interest in movement and a desire to break out from the restrictions of a static plane and strive for work that was more organic. It is this trajectory that we see in the graphite works from the early 1950s that continues into the group of 1957 monochrome gouaches *Planos em Superfície Modulada (Planes in Modulated Surface)*. Throughout the decade, we see Clark's interest in colour via vibrant gouache works and a large turquoise painting *Superfície Modulada (Modulated Surface)* 1955-57 made with industrial paint on board.

From 1955, Clark developed her interest in three dimensional work and architecture through her painted wooden maquettes of interiors: *Maquete para interior nos. 1 and 2 (Maquette for interior no. 1 and no. 2)*. These clearly reveal Clark's desire to expand from a two dimensional surface and fuse painting with architecture. Also on view is Clark's maquette for *Construa você mesmo o seu espaço de viver (Build your own living space)*, 1955 in which Clark shows her dream for an entire building in which the visitor can change the configuration of rooms via a series of sliding walls, demonstrating her vision of audience participation and a living or organic sculpture.

In the late 1950s, Clark made her first study for a *Casulo (Cocoon)* in which a relief starts to lift off the wall, reflecting the idea of movement. All the works in the show lead to a crucial moment in 1959 when Clark made a balsa wood study for what would become her first *Bicho (Critter or Animal)* sculpture called *Caranguejo (Crab)*. The *Bicho* series, which Clark went on to develop throughout the early 1960s, was formed from a series of metal plates joined by hinges. Laid flat, they formed a plane but when manipulated by an observer or participant, the hinges served as a backbone and the form of the *Bicho* changed according to the viewer's manipulation of the work. A *Casulo*, balsa wood study and the unique *Bicho* maquette for *Caranguejo (Crab)*, all made in 1959, are included in this exhibition.

Important solo and group exhibitions during Clark's lifetime include the early São Paulo Biennials (1953-1967); the *Second Pilot Show of Kinetic Work*, curated by Guy Brett at Signals Gallery, London (1962); and a presentation, alongside Mira Schendel, at the Venice Biennale (1968).

The only posthumous solo exhibitions outside Brazil before the MOMA, New York retrospective (2014) were *Lygia Clark*, Fundació Tàpies Major, Barcelona (1997) which travelled to Marseille MAC; Serralves Foundation, Porto; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels and the Imperial Palace, Rio de Janeiro; and *Lygia Clark: Estudos e Maquete*, Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2010). Clark was recently included in *Adventures of the Black Square, Abstract Art and Society 1915-2015*, curated by Iwona Blazwick and Magnus Petersens, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2015) and *Life Itself*, curated by Daniel Birnbaum, Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

Forthcoming museum shows include: *Making and Unmaking*, curated by Duron Olowu, Camden Arts Centre, London (June – September 2016) and a major presentation of work as part of *The Shadow of Color* curated by Rita Kersting (December 2016 – April 2017), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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