

## FEDERICO SILVA

Born in Mexico City on September 16, a hundred years ago this year (2023). This event has led to numerous tributes, as he is one of the most outstanding creators of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Currently, the Federico Silva Museum in San Luis Potosí is presenting a retrospective exhibition on the life and work of the artist in various facets titled "Federico Silva: A Combative Creator". Similarly, the National Lottery for Public Assistance has issued a series of lottery tickets, each featuring one of the sculptor's works, bearing the legend "Federico Silva 100 years". The draw took place the 5th of November.

One of his last exhibitions, "Federico Silva, Struggle and Fraternity: The Triumph of Rebellion", was a retrospective display. It opened on November 30, 2022, at the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City to honor and celebrate him in his lifetime. Unfortunately, he passed away the day before. However, on the opening day, the great artist's coffin entered the lobby of the Palace of Fine Arts amid applause from family, friends, officials, painters, and sculptors on the red carpet. Master Silva's grand exhibition thus became the posthumous tribute that the people of Mexico, the artistic community, and the Government of the Republic, through the Ministry of Culture and its National Institute of Fine Arts, paid to the great artist.

He began as a self-taught painter and later became an assistant to David Alfaro Siqueiros, with whom he collaborated in the mural "New Democracy" in the Palace of Fine Arts. By 1945 the young artist exhibited his first easel paintings. Shortly thereafter, he had a solo exhibition at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano, solidifying his reputation as a painter. He created several murals at the National Polytechnic Institute, the Normal Superior, among other places.

In 1967, he decided to abandon his figurative work in front of television cameras. Armed with a bow and arrow, he destroyed his figurative works to make way for abstraction. He began his work and research on kinetic art, traveling to Paris in 1969 to perfect his understanding of kinetics. Upon returning to Mexico, he has two major exhibitions of kinetic art, one of them at the Museum of Modern Art, making him a pioneer of this trend in the country. In his workshop, essentially transformed into an experimental laboratory, he created kinetic works with sound and light that involved all materials and techniques, including laser and natural or artificial sunlight, connecting art not only with aesthetic theory but also with nature, energy, science and technology.

In 1977, along with Mathias Goeritz, Manuel Felguerez, Helen Escobedo, Hersua, and Sebastian, Federico Silva proposed the execution of a large-scale collective sculptural project aimed at creating a connection between nature and public art. This project materialized with the creation of the "Espacio Escultórico" at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

For Federico Silva, art should be linked to society, being part of it and its reflection. This perspective led him to create monumental public art pieces in common spaces, both in Mexico and in various countries across America, Asia and Europe. Much of his sculpture is inspired by deities, astronomy, skulls, snakes, and quadrupeds materialized through geometric abstraction. Clearly rooted in the history and memory of national identity, Silva's work appeals with the roots of pre-Hispanic Mexico, engaging in a dialogue with the present without forgetting the sense of universal belonging.

Towards the end of the 20th century, Federico was invited to create a sculpture at the Luis Donald Colosio and Hydroelectric Power Plant in Huites, near the small town of CHOIX, located in the northern state of Sinaloa. When Silva discovered one of the tunnels in Huites spanning over 5,000 square meters, he decided to create a mural reminiscent of cave paintings. Regarding the Huites paintings, Federico wrote that they are inscribed in the historical continuity: "The perseverance of identity as a condition of existence".

From 1985 onward, Federico Silva established himself in Amaxac de Guerrero, in the state of Tlaxcala, in the former thread factory "La Estrella", transformed by Silva into a multidisciplinary workshop that accommodated all his projects. La Estrella was also a home for Federico Silva and his life partner, María Esther Gonzalez Tovar. In 2003, thanks to his generosity and with the support of Licenciado Fernando Silva Nieto, Governor of the State of San Luis Potosí, the Federico Silva Museum of Contemporary Sculpture was established, being the only one in Mexico and Latin America dedicated exclusively to sculpture.

Ruben Bonifaz Nuño wrote, "Federico Silva's plastic experience is vast; his intellectual curiosity is inexhaustible, leading him to explorations in the fields of art without surrender. From realism to abstraction; from easel painting to urban sculpture; from tiny engravings to mural painting; from the solid gravity of mass to the lightness of kinetic art, his work has unfolded in countless appearances. Also an explorer of materials and tools suitable for his aesthetic intentions, he has experimented with pencil and brush, chisel and burin, rock and cement, oil, watercolor, pastel, encaustic, fresco, wood, and metals".

As we can see, the artwork created by Maestro Silva over a fruitful lifetime, during which he also found time to write and publish several volumes, is extensive. On this occasion, Paramo Gallery presents only a small sample as a tasting of the great artist's work, and we hope it is to your liking.

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