

UP NOW

'Suprasensorial'

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Washington, D.C.
Through August 12

This is a meaty exhibition of five large-scale works, dating from 1951 to 1999, by five artists born in Latin America, plus an introductory gallery featuring several wall pieces by two of them. Over the course of their careers, most drifted away from abstract painting or sculpture to make installations aimed at enveloping the

viewer in immersive realms of the senses, works you walk into rather than walk up to. Carlos Cruz-Diez and Julio Le Parc, the only two still alive, delved into the dynamic possibilities of light and space in ways that anticipated or paralleled Dan Flavin or James Turrell. In Cruz-Diez's *Chromosaturation* (1965, refabricated 2010), viewers enter washes of red, blue, and green light that make for a giddy, slightly disorienting experience, like being in a sauna that emits not heat but color. Argentine-born Le Parc often relies on motors in his installations, but here, in *Light in Movement* (1962, refabricated 2010), he used mirrors strung on nylon threads, spotlights, and passing air currents in a pitch-black room. The mirrors cast reflections that shift and twinkle on the walls, a technique known to disco and cabaret operators everywhere, and which here creates a mysterious, ethereal air. Jesús Rafael Soto's installation is a room-size forest of hanging nylon cords that offer a rustling, tactile experience as viewers walked through the work, *Blue Penetrable BBL* (1969, refabricated

1999), one of a series that the artist called "Penetrables." The most cinematic and arguably most dated piece here is *Cosmococa—Program in Progress, CCI Trashiscapes* (1973, refabricated 2012), a mash of images from two slide carousels set to rock music and Brazilian folk tunes, by the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica in collaboration with filmmaker Neville D'Almeida. Viewers are invited to watch on mattresses sprawled on the floor, which, combined with the images of cocaine lines and Jimi Hendrix

songs, create an atmosphere of early 1970s counterculture, an "immersion" based more on content than on light. A refabricated Lucio Fontana neon-light sculpture that he originally made for the 1951 Milan Triennial hangs from the ceiling, a delicate, captivating set of loops that resembles a scribble. Cruz-Diez and Soto were close friends in Paris, and *Le Parc* was Fontana's student in Buenos Aires in the 1940s, as the show's organizer, Alma Ruiz, explains in the excellent, bilingual catalogue. Yet to her credit, Ruiz does not try to present these five as a movement or "circle." They were too diverse in their goals and materials, and there were many more figures who could easily have been included. Though worthy, this show barely scratches the surface of a very rich vein.

—Roger Atwood



Urs Fischer, *Untitled (Soft Bed)*, 2011, cast aluminum, epoxy primer, polyester filler, one-component acrylic putty, urethane primer, polyester paint, acrylic polyurethane matte clearcoat, 64" x 101" x 74". Gagosian.



Carlos Cruz-Diez, *Chromosaturation*, 1965 (exhibition copy refabricated 2010), drywall, paint, fluorescent lights, and colored plastic, 13' x 50' x 24', installation view. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

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