



PARRISH ART MUSEUM

CARMEN HERRERA: ESTRUCTURAS MONUMENTALES

May 23- December 8, 2024

This exhibition features four large-scale sculptures in red, blue, yellow, and green in the Museum's South Meadow. Carmen Herrera (American, b. Cuba, 1915–2022) is known for her hard-edge paintings, prints, and sculptures—often representing geometric shapes with both symmetrical and asymmetrical abstractions. The four works installed in the Meadow, *Angulo Azul* (2017), *Angulo Amarillo* (2017), *Estructura Verde* (1966/2018), and *Gemini (Red)* (1971/2019) are part of Herrera's series *Estructuras*, which she initially envisioned as sketches and paintings in the 1960s. In 1971, Herrera fabricated four *Estructuras* in wood—three wall-based works and one free-standing. However, it was only in the final fifteen years of the artist's life that she was able to realize her vision for these monumental sculptures on a larger scale. The *Estructuras* series at the Parrish provides an opportunity to view the acrylic and aluminum works the way Herrera imagined them—each piece fabricated to her exact color and shape standards.

The *Estructuras* may allude to Herrera's life and identity as a Cuban American coming to terms with the political tensions between her native and adopted countries. Some of the drawings were first drafted in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis when Herrera and her husband, Jesse Lowenthal, helped family and friends to escape the conflict. The original sketches for *Estructura Verde* and *Gemini (Red)* are dated to 1966 and 1971, respectively, while the chevron shape of *Angulo Amarillo* and *Angulo Azul* is a more recent composition from 2017. Like her iconic dichromatic paintings, Herrera's *Estructuras* play on the relationship between positive and negative space. The sharp, wedge-shaped cutouts emphasize the contrast of the sculptures' bold, monochromatic forms against the surrounding environment.

Carmen Herrera: *Estructuras Monumentales* is organized by Corinne Erni, Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Chief Curator of Art and Education, and Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs, with additional support by Kaitlin Halloran, Assistant Curator and Publications Coordinator.

Carmen Herrera: Estructuras Monumentales is made possible, in part, thanks to the generous support of Tony Bechara; The Fuhrman Family Foundation; Agnes Gund; Lisson Gallery; MOVADO; Estrellita and Daniel Brodsky; Jeff Lipsitz, Allison Koffman, and Family; and a donor who wishes to remain Anonymous.

The Parrish Art Museum's programs are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and by the property taxpayers from the Southampton School District and the Tuckahoe Common School District. Public funding provided by Suffolk County.

About the Artist

Carmen Herrera influenced a generation of artists. As an abstract painter, sculptor, and minimalist, Herrera made art for over 70 years. However, she was only recently recognized for her groundbreaking creations.

Carmen Herrera was born on May 30, 1915 in Havana, Cuba. The youngest of seven children, she grew up surrounded by art and literature. At about eight years old, Herrera and her older brother Addison began taking private art lessons from the famous artist Federico Edelmann y Pinto. The siblings learned classical sculpture technique, academic drawing, and artistic discipline for several years. She recalled, "I guess I was born a feminist because I always thought I was superior to my brothers." In addition to her art lessons, Herrera attended a local Catholic school in Havana. However when she was fourteen, she traveled to Paris to attend the Marymount School. Herrera fell in love with Paris as she studied art history, French, and visited cultural centers. In 1931, she returned to Havana to continue her studies at the Lyceum women's club. During the Spanish Civil War in 1936, many outspoken artists retreated to Cuba and often lectured at the Lyceum. Their presentations exposed Herrera to the discrimination the Jewish population faced. Inspired to make "protest work," she created a carved wooden sculpture called Cristo that was featured in the Primera Exposición de Pintura y Escultura al Aire Libre (First Outdoor Exposition of Painting and Sculpture) in Havana.

Links to interviews

101-year-old artist Carmen Herrera seeks "order" in work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-ufCj5iW1w>

Carmen Herrera in an excerpt from The 100 Years Show

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixfMZpCHI7I>

Carmen Herrera Life and Work (chapter 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RMna9YNYFA>

Artist Carmen Herrera unveils a new mural in East Harlem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMqU6HQAMQ>

CARMEN HERRERA Artist in Exile part 3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzQvAAPrsxw>

Carmen Herrera: Estructuras Monumentales installed at the Parrish Art Museum © Estate of Carmen Herrera. Photo by Gary Mamay



