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Socrates Sculpture Park presents Hélio Oiticica’s 1971 unrealized proposal Subterranean Tropicália Projects: PN15 1971/2022, on view from May 14 – August 14, 2022

An immersive environment of light and shadow, the project explores ideas of the underground and provides a platform for public participation

Long Island City, NY, May 11, 2022 – For the first time in the United States, Socrates Sculpture Park, in collaboration with Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Americas Society, brings an idea originally conceived by late Brazilian artist, Hélio Oiticica to life in Subterranean Tropicália Projects: PN15, 2017/2022. This large-scale immersive environment is based on Oiticica’s never-before-executed proposal from 1971 for Central Park that he conceived while living in New York City. The presentation and partnering programs are built upon Socrates Sculpture Park’s long-standing collaboration with, and support of artists who expand the boundaries of their practice in nontraditional, public spaces.

The immersive environment of PN15 draws inspiration from the City’s thriving underground culture, encouraging visitors to drift through the circular structure of curving corridors for a multi-sensory experience. The installation features plants and image projections that create a play of light, shadow, changes in opacity, framing, and orientation. PN15 will be a space for collective creativity and leisure, dubbed “creleisure” by the artist.

"We are thrilled that Socrates Sculpture Park has taken the initiative to realize Hélio Oiticica’s PN15 for the first time,” said brothers of the artist, César and Claudio Oiticica. “Hélio knew the work may not be actualized during his lifetime so he left copious notes and a scale model. It feels appropriate that the project will see its first physical iteration in the city in which it was conceived. The spirit of collaboration was always important to Hélio so we are excited that this participatory work will be activated through films and other performers during the exhibition."
Hélio Oiticica (1937 – 1980) is widely regarded as one of Brazil’s leading artists of the twentieth century and a touchstone for much contemporary art made since the 1960s, primarily through his freewheeling, participatory works of art, performative environments, avant-garde films and abstract paintings. Even before the age of 20, Oiticica was a key member of the historic Rio de Janeiro-based Grupo Frente (1954-56), his radical play with geometric form and vibrant colors transcending the minimal lines of European constructivism and imbuing his work with an exuberant rhythm that resonated with the avant-garde music and poetry of his native Brazil. In the late 1950s, Oiticica would go on to become a leading figure of Brazilian Neo-Concretism (1959-61) that included other groundbreaking artists such as Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape and the poet Ferreira Gullar, ultimately giving rise to the artistic movement known as Tropicalismo, named for a work of Oiticica’s from 1967.

“Oiticica was a pioneer and remains one of the most prolific contemporary artists of his time. His ideas gave way to a new social and political movement, rooted in revolutionary artistic expression. Oiticica pushed the public towards acknowledging the realities of life in 1960s Brazil, and the relationship of South American immigrants to their experience in America,” said Tamsin Dillon, who joined Socrates as Executive Director in February. “Fifty-one years after Oiticica lived and worked in New York City’s Lower East Side, the public will finally experience his vision for Central Park brought to life here at Socrates.”

“Presenting an unrealized project from Oiticica’s subterranean series enriches Socrates’ curatorial program in a multitude of ways,” said Jess Wilcox, Curator & Director of Exhibitions for the Park since 2016. “PN15 probes and champions ideas of marginality, engages the public and local community groups, provides a platform for other artists to showcase their work, and allows us to do what we do best–producing what others said was too challenging.”

Socrates presents a series of scheduled performances, discussion, and video projections from community partners and living artists to activate the installation, as Oiticica had always intended, bringing new currency to the artist’s vision. The video projection program, which is partly co-curated by Americas Society, presents both historical and recent video by the artist, his Latinx and queer artist contemporaries, and artists who work in one of the many trajectories of his legacy. The projections include works by Regina Vater, Rubens Gerchman, Leandro Katz, and Andreas Valentim.

‘Creleisure Talk: What’s Hidden in the Subterranean?’ a panel on Saturday, June 18th, with Vivian Crockett, Curator, New Museum; Laura Harris, Assistant Professor of Cinema Studies and Art & Public Policy, New York University; Aimé Iglesias-Lukin, Director and Chief Curator, Americas Society; and Jess Wilcox, Curator and Director of Exhibitions, Socrates Sculpture Park will discuss their reactions to the realization of PN15, which was only previously known through archival research.

Over the course of the exhibition, Brazilian and Queer artists will activate the installation as a stage for interactive performances and workshops. The series kicks off with a performance by multidisciplinary artist MX Oops on Friday, May 20th from 5-7pm, in addition to programs with La Luna and Bell Falleiros. During Socrates’ summer monthly New Agora series, the Parks’ community partners – including Fortune Society, and Jazz Foundation of America, among others – will activate PN15, echoing Oiticica’s engagement with the public.

The project is presented in conjunction with the exhibition This Must Be the Place: Latin America Artists in New York, 1965-1975 on view at Americas Society through May 21, 2022.

Hélio Oiticica Subterranean Tropicália Projects: PN15 1971/2022 is on view from May 14 - August 14, 2022. Viewing hours are Friday 5:00 - 7:30pm, Saturday 11am - 5pm, Sunday 11am - 5pm. Socrates Sculpture Park is open 365 days a year, from 9am to sunset. Admission is free.

For full details and the program schedule, visit www.socratessculpturepark.com/pn15-1971-2022

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Hélio Oiticica (1937 – 1980) is widely regarded as one of Brazil’s leading artists of the twentieth century and a touchstone for much contemporary art made since the 1960s, primarily through his freewheeling, participatory works of art, performative environments, avant-garde films and abstract paintings. He was a countercultural figure and underground hero, foregrounding bodily interaction with spatial and environmental concerns over pure aesthetics. He was a key member of the historic Rio de Janeiro-based Grupo Frente (1954-56) and a leading figure of Brazilian Neo-Concretism (1959-61) which ultimately gave rise to the artistic movement known as Tropicalismo, named for a work of Oiticica’s from 1967. Oiticica’s work has been the subject of exhibitions at several major museums including the Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh), the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Tate Modern (London). His work is included in the collections of numerous international institutions including Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, USA; Inhotim Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, USA; Museo de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
TX, USA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA; Tate Modern, London, UK; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN, USA, among others. The Projeto Hélio Oiticica was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1980 to manage the artist’s estate.

Artist biography and images available for download [here](https://socratessculpturepark.org/Covid19).

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**SUPPORT**


Socrates programs are also supported by public funds from the Queens Borough President Donovan Richards; the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the New York City Council and Julie Won; the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**ABOUT SOCRATES**

For over 35 years, Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. Over 1,000 artists have created and exhibited new works on its five waterfront acres and outdoor studio facilities. Socrates is free and open to the public 365 days a year from 9am to sunset. It is located at 32-01 Vernon Boulevard (at Broadway) in Long Island City, New York. Socrates Sculpture Park is a not-for-profit organization licensed by NYC Parks to manage and program Socrates Sculpture Park, a New York City public park. Covid-19 Updates: Socrates remains open to the public at regular hours, 9am – sunset, with free admission. Park policies and updates regarding health and safety can be found at socratessculpturepark.org/Covid19.

**SOCIAL**

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