

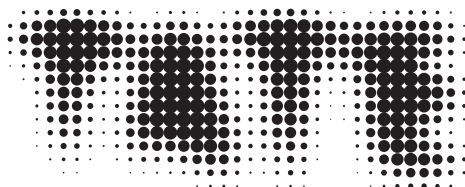
# TAKIS

3 JULY – 27 OCTOBER 2019

## LARGE PRINT GUIDE



Please return to the holder



# CONTENTS

Takis .....	3
Magnetism and Metal.....	12
Poetry, Transmission and Space .....	25
Sound and Silence .....	36
Light and Darkness .....	39
Activism and Experimentation .....	50
Music of Spheres .....	60
Find out more .....	76
Credits.....	78
Floorplan.....	80

TAKIS

## TAKIS

Plato speaks of an artist turning the invisible world into the visible. I hope that someone seeing my sculpture is lifted out of his ordinary state.

Panayiotis Vassilakis – known by the nickname Takis – became one of the most original artistic voices in Europe in the 1960s. He remains a ground-breaking artist today. This exhibition includes work from across his seventy-year career.

Born in 1925 in Athens, the self-taught artist began by studying ancient sculpture before moving in a radically new direction. While living in Paris in the mid-1950s, he started exploring the sculptural possibilities of electromagnetism. For Takis, the 'visual qualities' of his work were irrelevant: 'What I was obsessed with was the concept of energy.' This exhibition is not chronological. Instead it is arranged by themes that shape Takis's creative universe: magnetism and metal, light and darkness, sound and silence. It also highlights his critical involvement with creative and scientific communities across Europe and the United States. This first room features a selection of figures and flowers – forms that Takis explored as a young sculptor in Athens and to which he has returned throughout his career.

## Clockwise from wall text

### **Magnetic Fields**

1969

Metal, magnets, wire

Early in his career, Takis began experimenting with how to use energy and movement in sculpture. 'What interested me was to put into iron sculpture a new, continuous, and live force... The result was in no way a graphic representation of a force but the force itself'. Artist Marcel Duchamp memorably described Takis as the 'happy ploughman of the magnetic fields'. Here a large grouping of flower-like sculptures are brought to life by the magnetic pendulums that swing overhead. This is the first time it has been displayed since the 1970s.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Partial gift, Robert Spitzer, by exchange 1970. 70.1928.

X69605

Visitor Assistants activate this work approximately every 10 minutes.

## **Oedipus and Antigone**

1953

Iron and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15227

## **Bronze Figure**

1954–5, cast 2009

Bronze

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15229

## **Plaster Figure**

1954–5

Plaster, resin and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15228

**Flower of the Desert**

Fleur du désert

1962

Bronze

**Idol**

Idole

1962

Bronze

**Idol Flower**

Idole fleur

1954, cast in 2004

Bronze

**Idol Flower**

Fleur idole

1957

Iron, metal wire, paint

Takis Foundation

X70696, X70695, X70698, X70697



## **Flower**

Fleur

1954, cast in 2004

Bronze

## **Exploded Inner Space**

Espace intérieur explosé

1957

Bronze

## **Electronic Flower**

Fleur Electronique

1957

Bronze and steel

Takis Foundation

X70700

Private collection, France

X73310

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019. T15230

Takis's early work was inspired by ancient Greek, Egyptian and Cycladic art. He began sculpting figures from plaster in 1952, before learning to cast, forge and weld metal. He experimented with contrasting materials and forms throughout the 1950s. His exploration of opposites can be seen in works he called **Flowers** and Idols whose metallic finish contrasts with their organic forms.

## **Standing Woman with Horns**

1954

Bronze, iron, steel

## **locasta**

1954

Iron

## **Sphinx**

1954

Iron

The Menil Collection, Houston, Gift of Alexander Iolas

CA 5835

X69083

Collection of Liliane Lijn

X71503

Collection of Liliane Lijn

X69635

# MAGNETISM AND METAL

## MAGNETISM AND METAL

A simple floating nail could be sufficient to liberate a spectator from his ordinary daily task and worries for a few minutes, or even change totally his attitude towards life.

In 1959, Takis made a leap from figurative art to a new form of abstraction, based on magnetic energy. He suspended metal objects in space using magnets, giving lightness and movement to what is usually gravity-bound and still. He was fascinated by the waves of invisible energy that he saw as 'a communication' between materials. Art critic Alain Jouffroy described these works as 'telemagnetic'. 'Tele', meaning 'at a distance', suggests their relationship to technologies such as television and the telephone.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Takis incorporated radar, antennae, aerials, dials and gauges into his sculptures. Although he approached these materials with knowledge about engineering and science, he consistently defined himself as an artist geared towards mythological thought. In his hands, technologies of warfare and environmental destruction became monuments of beauty and contemplation. 'My desire as a sculptor was to learn to use this energy, and through it, to attempt to penetrate cosmic mysteries,' he explained.

## **Clockwise from wall text**

### **Telesculpture**

Télesculpture

1960

Electromagnet, nylon thread, paint, steel, wood

Collection Laetitia and Paolo Roversi

X73300

### **Magnetron**

1966

Iron, magnet, nylon thread, steel nail

Takis Foundation

X69514

## **Magnetron**

1964

Acrylic sheet, iron, magnet, nylon thread, steel nail

Takis Foundation

X70689

## Oscillating Parallel Line

Ligne parallele vibrative

1965

Acrylic sheet, electromagnet, magnet, needle, nylon wire and wood

A powerful magnet holds a needle in suspension, highlighting how magnetism can override the laws of gravity. Takis stated: 'electromagnetism is an infinite, invisible thing, that doesn't belong to earth alone. It is cosmic; but it can be channelled. I would like to render it visible so as to communicate its existence and make its importance known; I would like to make visible this invisible, colourless, non-sensual, naked world which cannot irritate our eye, taste or sex. Which is simply pure thought.'

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15238



## **Magnetron**

1968

Iron, magnet, nylon thread, paint, steel needle, wood

Takis Foundation

X69513

## **Defying Gravity**

1965

Acrylic sheet, magnet, needle, nylon wire, steel and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15239

## **Magnetic Wall 9 (Red)**

Mur Magnétique 9 (Rouge)

1961

Acrylic paint on canvas, copper wire, foam, magnets, paint, plastic, steel, synthetic cloth

Takis began his Magnetic Walls series in 1961. Magnets are hidden behind the canvas of these single-colour paintings. Hanging metal objects are attracted to these magnets, hovering just above the canvas surface. The result is an expansion of painting where abstract elements, instead of being painted on the canvas, float in space over it. Takis spoke of his work as creating an 'action in space', rather than the 'illusion of space' that many previous artists had achieved.

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne –  
Centre de création industrielle  
X69090

**Continue clockwise on the opposite wall**

**Magnetic Radar System**

Système de radar magnétique

1959

Copper, iron, magnet, nylon thread, steel

Collection Sylvio Perlstein, Antwerp, Belgium

X69089

**Telepainting**

Télépeinture

1959

Acrylic paint on canvas, magnets, nylon thread, steel

Collection of Liliane Lijn

X69093

## **Telepainting**

Télépeinture

1959–60

Acrylic paint on canvas, magnets, nylon thread, steel

Takis Foundation

X69091

## **Yellow Electron**

1966

Electromagnetic components, needle, paint and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15240

## **The Never Stable Line**

1964

Electrical transformer, metal, paint and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15244

## **Telepainting**

Telepeinture

1964

Ceramic, iron, lamps, magnet, nylon thread, plastic, rheostats, steel spanner, vinyl, wood

Private Collection

X71488

## **Telepainting**

Télépeinture

1966

Acrylic sheet, iron nails, magnets, nylon thread,  
paint, porcelain

## **Telemagnetic Sculpture or Antigravity**

Anti-gravité Télémagnétique

1960–2000

Cardboard, magnets, paint, steel, steel wire, wood

## **Telesculpture**

Télésculpture

1959

Iron, magnet, nylon thread, paint

The Menil Collection, Houston

X69527

Takis Foundation

X75762

Collection Pierre Boudriot

X73308

## **Telesculpture**

Télesculpture

1959

Magnet, nylon thread, paint, steel

## **Telemagnetic Sculpture**

Télé magnétique

1960–2000

Cardboard, magnets, paint, steel, copper wire, wood

Collection Sylvio Perlstein, Antwerp, Belgium

X73316

Centre Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne –  
Centre de création industrielle. Donated by the artist in 2002.

X71609

Takis produced various 'telemagnetic installations' in the early 1960s using plinths, walls and the ceiling of the gallery as anchor points for his art. The installations challenged the traditional conventions of sculpture. Waves of magnetic energy move through these spaces, holding the individual elements in suspension. The works in this area have been brought together to resemble Takis's telemagnetic installation at the Alexandre Iola's gallery in New York in 1960.



POETRY,  
TRANSMISSION  
AND SPACE

## POETRY, TRANSMISSION AND SPACE

I cannot think of my work as entirely my work.  
In a sense, I'm only a transmitter, I simply bathe  
in energy. The artist must preserve this intense  
receptiveness. The real artist you cannot touch.

Takis publicly introduced magnetism into art in 1960 when he staged the performance **The Impossible: A Man in Space**. He suspended the poet Sinclair Beiles in mid-air through a system of magnets. While floating in space, Beiles recited his poem 'Magnetic Manifesto'. At the time, the Soviet Union and the United States were competing to send the first person into orbit. This 'space race' was an extension of an ongoing arms race between the two global superpowers. Takis's event was both a poetic act and a critique of warfare.

Takis had experienced the devastation of war first-hand. During the Second World War he was active in the Resistance in occupied Greece, and faced political persecution during the Greek Civil War that followed. To escape this stifling political climate and pursue his artistic career Takis moved from Athens to Paris in 1954. He travelled regularly to London in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The artist-run gallery Signals London was named as a tribute to Takis's sculpture, and inspired by his approach to art.

## **Clockwise from wall text**

### **Text above vitrine:**

I am a sculpture.... I would like to see all the nuclear bombs on earth turned into sculptures.

– Sinclair Beiles

### **Vitrine left to right**

#### **Signals Newsbulletin of the Centre for Advanced Creative Study**

Vol. 1, Nos. 3 and 4, October–November 1964

Signals London was an experimental artist-run space named after Takis's Signals sculptures. While active, from 1964 to 1966, Signals produced a monthly bulletin. It featured art, poetry, and philosophical and scientific articles. The bulletin circulated ideas among artists in Europe, the United States and Latin America. This network was concerned with breaking boundaries between art and science.

Tate Modern Curatorial Department. Z74603

## **Signals Newsbulletin of the Centre for Advanced Creative Study**

Vol. 1, Nos. 3 and 4, October–November 1964

The October–November 1964 issue of Signals Newsbulletin was mostly dedicated to Takis. It featured 'cut-up' poems by William Burroughs and Brion Gysin made from new and recycled pieces of writing, as well as a visual poem by Alan Ansen shaped like an electromagnet. Sinclair Beiles's 'Magnetic Manifesto' was also included. Beiles had recited this while suspended by magnets in a performance orchestrated by Takis in 1960. The bulletin gives a snapshot of Takis's international network of friends and collaborators during the 1960s.

Tate Library. Z08642

Tate Modern Curatorial Department. Z74881

**Takis**

Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, 1972

Exhibition catalogue

Tate Library

Z74822

## **Takis: Magnetic Sculpture and the White Signals**

Indica Gallery, London, 1966

### Exhibition catalogue

While in Paris in the late 1950s and early 1960s Takis frequently visited writers staying at a run-down boarding house nicknamed the 'Beat Hotel'. Guests included William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg. Takis drew inspiration from their work, as they did from his, dedicating poems and odes to him. In 1962, Ginsberg wrote how discussing the cosmos with Takis helped him to see the magnetic forces holding it together: 'We imagined, if you pulled out any one star the whole thrumming mechanism would slip a cosmic inch like a quavering mobile and all twang together into place at once on lines of unseen magnetic tracks, thunk.'

Tate Modern Curatorial Department

Z74819

## Takis's studio, King's Road, London

c.1965

Prints on paper (exhibition copies)

Photographer: Guy Brett

In the 1960s, Takis worked between Paris and the UK. He rented a studio apartment in London along King's Road in Chelsea. The neighbourhood was at the heart of 'Swinging London's' antiestablishment scene. At the centre of Takis's artistic life was his workbench. As seen in these photographs, a range of tools and electrical instruments were neatly arranged on the bench. It was little more than arm's length from Takis's tiny bed tucked in the studio's corner. His **Electro-Magnetic Musical** 1966 is visible above the bed.

Courtesy of the Archive of Guy Brett, London

Z74827-9

View of the performance  
**The Impossible: A Man in Space**  
1960

Photographer: André Morain

Courtesy of André Morain  
Z74830



## **Magnetic Wall (Flying Fields)**

1963

Cork, cloth, magnets, metal, metal wire, polyvinyl acetate paint on canvas and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15232

## **Magnetic Disc**

1960

Aluminium, iron nails, magnet, nylon thread

Francesca Martelli, Lugano

X69510

## Radar

1960

Aluminium, magnet, nylon thread

Takis's exploration of radar and magnetism were bound up with a desire to understand the cosmos. He explains in his 1961 autobiography *Estafilades* [Slashes]: 'I was always enchanted by aerodromes and their great radars, which turned slowly searching for metallic objects hovering in space. It is as if they were gigantic instruments recording cosmic events...If only with an instrument like radar I could capture the music of the beyond...If this object could capture and transmit sounds as it turned, my imagination would be victorious.'

Takis Foundation

X69522

## **Electro-Magnetic Music**

1966

Amplifier, electromagnet, magnet, metal wire, needle, paint, spark plugs and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15241

# SOUND AND SILENCE

## SOUND AND SILENCE

My intention was to make nature's phenomena emerge from my work...in nature everything is sound: the wind, the sea, the humming of insects.

Takis's sculptures produce sounds ranging from single notes to thunderous ensembles. His Signals sculptures were his first experiments with sound. They were formed with thin metal poles and coiling piano wires. They respond to surrounding air currents, generating delicate noises.

By the mid-1960s Takis had begun to use electromagnets to deliberately create sound. These works included Gongs and Musicals, in which magnets pull metal rods against instrument strings to produce what he called 'space sounds'.

These artworks have a life of their own and their sounds cannot be fully controlled. Takis allowed the physical properties of the materials to determine the musical score: 'When I have made the instrument, I become detached from it. I become merely a listener.'

## **Clockwise from wall text**

### **Musicals**

Musicales

1985–2004

Electromagnets, iron, metal string, nylon thread, paint, steel needles, wood

Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris

X70949–52, X70958, X70960–63

# LIGHT AND DARKNESS

## LIGHT AND DARKNESS

We have chased the sacred symbols into the desert and replaced them with electronic eyes.

Takis began to use electrical lights in his work in the early 1960s. His inspiration came after waiting hours at a train station en route to Paris from London. Takis described the station as a forest of signals: 'monster-eyes' flashed on and off in a 'jungle of iron'.

The artist remembers growing up in Athens when the city's main square had only one traffic light. The environment in Paris and London was strikingly different. While the dazzling station lights offered inspiration, they also made Takis uneasy: 'It was technology everywhere. I lost a little of the earth of Greece.'

Throughout the 1960s Takis frequented military surplus stores, discount electronics shops and flea markets. There he sourced parts from aeroplanes, cars, industrial machines and traffic signals. Using these objects helped him to process his new environment, while continuing to explore themes of communication and energy. The resulting work reflects both the potential and the threat offered by technology.



## **Left from wall text**

### **Top row left to right:**

#### **Signal**

1964–5

Lamp, paint and steel

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15237

#### **Signal**

1964

Iron, lamp, paint

Axel Vervoordt Gallery

X74451

## **Signal**

1975

Iron, lamp, paint

Collection Maria Demetriades (Medusa Art Gallery  
Athens Greece)

X69692

## **White Signal**

1968

Car headlight, paint, steel

Collection of Liliane Lijn

X69646

## **Signal**

1964

Iron, lamp, paint

Takis Foundation

X69521

## **Bottom row left to right:**

### **Light Signal**

1998

Bicycle lamp, iron and paint

Collection Maria Demetriades (Medusa Art Gallery  
Athens Greece)

X71589

## **Signal Stop**

1974

Lamp, metal, paint

Takis Foundation

X69088

## **Light Signal**

1999

Bicycle lamp, iron, paint

Collection Maria Demetriades (Medusa Art Gallery

Athens Greece)

X75269

## **Signal**

2000

Bicycle light, paint and steel

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15242

## **Signal**

1965

Paint, steel and vehicle indicator light

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15243

## **Clockwise from wall text**

### **Télélumière Relief No. 5**

1963–5

Electrical components, light bulbs and wood

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15236

## **Télélumière No. 4**

1963–4

Brass, electromagnet, iron machine parts, light bulbs, paint, string, steel and wood

Takis became expert at manipulating electronic parts. Around 1962, he began to incorporate mercury-arc rectifiers into his work. These glowing blue valves use magnetism to convert alternating electrical current (AC) into direct current (DC). They were commonly used in electric railways, power substations and radios before the 1970s. For Takis, these valves had a visual importance beyond their original functions. He used them to make viewers aware of the energy fields surrounding them.

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15235

## **Black Panel Dials**

1968

Dials, lightbulbs, metal, paint, wood

In the 1960s and 1970s Takis found many of his materials in military surplus stores selling supplies left over from the Second World War. He created a series of wall reliefs from salvaged aeroplane gauges and instrument panels. These panels showed pilots the invisible forces affecting their flights, such as wind speed. Through Takis's intervention, the rhythms of the panels verge toward visual music. At the time he made them, he was calling for political revolutionaries and scientists to develop what he called 'anti-tech' to disrupt the technologies of ruling governments and mass media.

Collection Sylvio Perlstein, Antwerp, Belgium

X73312



## **Magnetic Ballet**

Ballet Magnétique

1961

Cork, electromagnet, paint, steel, wire and wood

An electromagnet sits at the centre of this work. The suspended ball and cork have metal bases which make them leap and dance in response to the electromagnetic charge. Takis has observed that 'real movement, not illusion, invites spectator participation. It's no longer a trick but a physical fact in which you are involved.'

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15233

# ACTIVISM AND EXPERIMENTATION

## ACTIVISM AND EXPERIMENTATION

We try to achieve spiritual collaboration between artist and scientist. Otherwise, the technology is just a gadget.

Social and political activism hold a central place in Takis's life and practice. In 1968, he was one of the first visiting fellows at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States. There he continued to produce works using electromagnetism. He also developed work harnessing renewable energies in conjunction with scientists and engineers. Takis described these collaborators as 'poets' and 'creators'. His residency resulted in a patented device for transforming water currents into electricity. In an effort to democratise art, he also collaborated with engineers in London to produce affordable, mass-produced editions of his sculptures.

In 1969, while living in New York, Takis physically removed his work from an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. It had been exhibited against his wishes. This action led to the formation of the Art Workers' Coalition. It included artists, filmmakers, writers, critics and museum staff. The coalition advocated for museum reform including a less exclusionary exhibition policy in relation to women artists and artists of colour.

## Anti-clockwise from wall text

### Vitrine:

#### **Documents 1: A.W.C.**

1969

On 3 January 1969, Takis removed his work from the exhibition **The Museum as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age** at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. It was being exhibited there without his consent. This protest led to the formation of the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC). **Documents 1** is a collection of correspondence, press and other items related to the foundation and rise of the AWC. It was first published at the height of the group's activity in mid-1969. It begins with a statement from Takis.

Copyright 1969 by Artworkers Coalition – Courtesy of Primary Information.

Tate Library. Z74884

## **Magnetic Ballet**

Ballet Magnétique

1963

Cork, electromagnet, paint, steel and wire

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15234

**Vitrine left to right:**

**Takis, Evidence of the Unseen**

Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1972

Exhibition catalogue

Takis was invited to undertake a fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1969. He worked with the scientist Ain Sonin to create a machine which transformed wave energy into electricity. They used a bicycle wheel in their design. This was a tribute to the artist Marcel Duchamp who presented everyday objects as 'readymade' artworks, specifically to his sculpture **Bicycle Wheel** 1913.

Tate Modern Curatorial Department

Z74826, Z74885

## **Takis**

Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, 1972

Exhibition catalogue

Tate Modern Curatorial Department

Z74823

## **Excerpts from Takis Unlimited**

1968

Produced by Anthony Williams and Mahmoud Khosrowshahi

Takis worked with the London-based inventor and arts patron Jeremy Fry to mass-produce an unlimited edition of his Signal sculpture. Takis aimed to challenge the exclusivity of the art market by offering more affordable artworks.

The prices of his unlimited Signals ranged from £10 to £20 (equivalent to about £150 to £300 today).

Footage courtesy of Anthony Williams

X78009

## **Takis Unlimited transcript**

**NARRATOR:** He doesn't want to cultivate a small garden in his back yard as most artists do, but to create an entire irrigation system.

**MALE VOICE 1:** Art is something people are willing to pay for. Want to have and are willing to pay for, that's one way of talking about art, isn't that the case?

**MALE VOICE 2:** Takis, the prices seem to be quite steep for the ordinary...

**TAKIS:** Steep? What do you mean steep?

**MALE VOICE 2:** Quite high for...

**TAKIS:** High? What do you mean?

**MALE VOICE 2:** For someone like me. Are these the lowest prices that...

**TAKIS:** Well the lowest price is six dollars you don't buy even an ashtray today with six dollars. What you mean? That's it. If we produce a hundred thousands it's going to be a dollar. Like a book. Like a pocket book. And art actually should be a pocket book. You can take it in your pocket and



put it in a coffee place or you just, you know, throw it away when you're fed up with it. Art should be taken in your palm and put it on your table and have some coffee with it that's it and live with it and then when you are fed up just throw it away. Art should be eaten, you can place in a coffee place and play with it and break it and like it or throw it away when you fed up. Art should not be just look. Then you are like in the position of a tourist. They should not be the spectators and it's ridiculous the idea of being a spectator of art.

**NARRATOR:** For a radical revision in social attitudes to art, Jeremy Fry has set up a programme to mass produce the works of Takis in numbers without end. Mr Fry, had a few years ago purchased a set of handmade Takis signals for fifteen hundred pounds. Now you can buy the new mass produced signals for prices between ten and twenty pounds.

**JEREMY FRY:** See I came into this really as a professional engineer, and so I already had all the knowledge, not by any means all, but some of the knowledge and abilities of an engineer, so when I look at the work I have to consider it as something which can easily, or not so easily, be manufactured. Now, he uses objects that he finds that fascinates him and he complies those in a certain way to make something that is satisfactory to him and obviously it must be satisfactory to many people in the world because

he's a well-known sculptor, and I personally very much enjoy, love, the objects that he makes. Takis is very tactile. He does everything with his hands and his eyes. He doesn't draw anything at all.

The most fascinating part of this whole project for me was the new experience of working with Takis to find out what was, what were, the essential qualities and needs and possibilities that he got from all these individual objects why did he choose those objects in the first place, why did he make this particular set of combinations, and what is it that he wants out of each object.

**TAKIS:** Jeremy Fry sees it and says yes this is possible to do it. And Jeremy Fry just does it.

**JEREMY FRY:** If we can adopt better techniques, better manufacturing methods, and therefore keep the price going down, we hope, and down, all the way through.

**ART FABRICATOR 1:** It's very enjoyable work. It's nice to think that you are creating things. You are creating an art form which is in keeping with the modern way of life today, and you actually finish up with the finished article which is very pleasing and comforting to know that you have actually made something. The end product was designed by a famous artist. We are merely making productions,

reproductions, mass reproductions!

**ART FABRICATOR 2:** I thought that if the originals cost eight hundred pounds and somebody was buying these for twenty pounds, they had a real bargain.

**ART FABRICATOR 3:** Well I should say they're alright for those that want them. For that and these art lovers.

**ART FABRICATOR 2:** If they want to buy that sort of thing, well, we're in the market to make them and to sell them.

**ART FABRICATOR 3:** I can't see actually any art in them, myself.

**ART FABRICATOR 2:** If you want to want to make a sales talk about it. Is this for Mr Fry's benefit?

**JEREMY FRY:** What I would love to see is that if you go to the Tate and you like what you see as a Takis then on the way out, in the same way as you can buy a lithograph, or print, or even a postcard, that if you happen to have, for instance, ten quid in your pocket that you can take a Takis home in a box with you and put it up and plug it in that night and there you are, you've got it.

# MUSIC OF SPHERES

## MUSIC OF SPHERES

This is an entirely spiritual search, an attempt at liberation from the material and materialistic world.

In Athens in the mid-1980s, Takis began building his Research Center for the Art and the Sciences, known today as the Takis Foundation. Opened in 1993, it houses the artist's studio, archive and library, as well as an exhibition space. The centre hosts artists and scientists, and is visited regularly by school groups and researchers. At the heart of the Takis Foundation is an open-air theatre space featuring a collection of Takis's works organised around a central Gong. A group of those sculptures is presented here.

For Takis sound has a spiritual component relating to the idea of cosmic harmony. The sounds produced by his work also relate to ancient philosophies about the universe, particularly the idea of the 'music of the spheres'. Early astronomers and mathematicians used this concept as a theoretical framework for understanding how stars and planets interact with one another in space. Philosophers, composers and poets used the phrase more literally in imagining the sounds of the heavens themselves.

Takis's engagement with energy and natural forces continues to be shaped by observations from science, art, poetry,

history, politics, mythology and religion. In turn, his work has long inspired creative responses from his viewers. Through the sounds and sculpture in this room, the artist aims to prompt contemplation about ourselves, our world and the universe.

## Clockwise from wall text

### **Signal**

1969

Iron, paint

Takis Foundation

X76309

### **Signal**

1978

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

Takis Foundation

X70794

## **Signal**

1978

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

Takis Foundation

X70795

## **Inner Space**

Espace Intérieur

1957

Bronze

Takis Foundation

X70693



**Inner Space**

Espace Intérieur

1957

Bronze

Takis Foundation

X70692

**Signal 'Insect-Animal of Space'**

Signal 'insecte-animal de l'espace'

1956

Bronze, iron and steel

Tate. Presented by Mrs Peggy Guggenheim through the  
Contemporary Art Society 1965

T00731

## **Signal**

1974

Bronze, iron, paint

Takis Foundation

X70796

## **Insect**

1956

Acrylic sheet, bronze, paint, steel

The Menil Collection, Houston. X 0038

X69529

**Signal**

1957

Bronze and paint

Tate. Purchased with assistance from Tate International Council, Tate Members, Tate Patrons and with Art Fund support 2019

T15231

**Signal**

1974–9

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

Collection of Irene Panagopoulos

X71487

## **Triple Signal**

1976

Bronze, found objects, iron

Stavros Mihalarias Collection, Athens

X71610

## **Signal**

1976

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

D.Daskalopoulos Collection

X76351

## **Signal**

1974

Iron, steel

Private collection

X69670

**Signal**

1978

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

Takis Foundation

X70797

**Signal**

1955

Bronze, paint, steel

The Menil Collection, Houston. Y 322

X69531

## Triple Signal

1976

Bronze, found objects, iron

Takis's Signals sculptures from the 1970s include bomb fragments from the Greek Civil War. They were gathered from the hillside around his Athens studio. The use of these materials transforms the remnants of war into monuments of beauty and contemplation. Formed by an explosion, the bomb fragments also relate to Takis's fascination with all manifestations of energy, from the subtle to the dramatic. 'Sometimes I explode materials in order to increase the flow of energy and observe the effect.'

Stavros Mihalarias Collection, Athens

X71587

## **Animal Elements (Insects)**

Eléments animaux (Insectes)

1956

Bronze, iron, paint, steel

Since 1955 Takis has produced thin, flexible sculptures called Signals. Early Signals, like this one, resemble radio receivers. Takis has reflected on how they relate to communication and connection. For him they are 'like electronic antenna, like lightning rods... They constituted a modern hieroglyphic language....' The bases are made from forged metal, or in some cases springy radio antennae typically found on American military Jeeps during the Second World War. The elements at their heads, simply by being raised in the air, become an indicator of cosmic space and distance.

The Menil Collection, Houston. 1978–168 E

X69526

## **Triple Signal**

1976

Bronze, found objects, iron

Stavros Mihalarias Collection, Athens

X71586

## **Plant**

1976–8

Bronze, iron

Stavros Mihalarias Collection, Athens

X71611



## **Signal**

1978

Lamp, metal, paint

## **Signal**

1978

Lamp, metal, paint

## **Electromagnetic Sphere**

1979

Iron, magnet, plastic, paint, electromagnet, magnet, metal wire, paint, plastic, paper, steel, wood

Takis Foundation

X70799, X69523, X70701

## **Gong**

1978

Iron, polytetrafluoroethylene, metal wire

## **Musical Sphere**

1985

Aluminium, iron, metal string, metal wire, paint, polyester

Takis Foundation

X69095, X69658

Within the Takis Foundation is an openair theatre space featuring an ensemble of Takis's works arranged around a central Gong. This giant musical instrument is made from the rusted wall of an oil tank. In a shift in energy, this container for fossil fuels is now an instrument for producing meditative and resonant sounds. Inspired by Zen Buddhism, Takis's work often relates to his contemplation of the individual's connection with the universe. 'In the greatest solitude I feel the greatest happiness,' he has said.

Visitor Assistants activate this work approximately every 10 minutes.

FIND OUT MORE

## **PANEL DISCUSSIONS:**

### **POETRY IN THE ELECTROMAGNETIC UNIVERSE**

Thursday 4 July, 18.30 – 20.00

## **SIGNALS, NOISE, VIBRATIONS:**

### **EXPERIMENTS IN SOUND**

Monday 23 Sept, 18.30 – 20.00

## **CURATOR'S TOUR**

Monday 22 July, 18.30 – 20.30

For more information about our exhibition events and to book visit [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk) or call 020 7887 8888.

These events are provided by Tate Gallery on behalf of Tate Enterprises LTD.

An illustrated exhibition catalogue is available from Tate shops or at [tate.org.uk/shop](http://tate.org.uk/shop)

## **TATE MEMBERS**

Enjoy unlimited free entry to all Tate exhibitions, plus access to exclusive Members Rooms and viewing hours.

Join today from £76.

# CREDITS

# TAKIS

3 JUL – 27 OCT 2019

Exhibition curated by Guy Brett and Michael Wellen, Curator, International Art, with Helen O'Malley, Assistant Curator, Tate Modern.

The exhibition is organised by Tate Modern in collaboration with MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona and the Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens.

Supported by Tate International Council.

This exhibition has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the Government Indemnity Scheme. Tate would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.

Photography is allowed for personal, non-commercial use only, unless otherwise indicated. Please do not use flash, camera supports, or selfie sticks.

Let us know your thoughts

#TakisSculpture

