

Dallas Museum of Art's 'Movement' Explores the Evolution of Kineticism

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By Kimberly Richard



Valeska Soares, *Vagalume*, 2010. Mixed media. Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Marguerite Steed Hoffman, 2011.2. Image credit: © 2022 Valeska Soares Studio, All rights reserved. Photo by Eduardo Ortega

Experiencing kinetic art is as easy as turning on a lightbulb at the Dallas Museum of Art's immersive exhibition, *Movement: The Legacy of Kineticism*, now on view through July 16. Patrons enter the exhibition by walking through Brazilian artist Valeska Soares' 2006 installation of *Vagalume* (Firefly), a series of overhead lightbulbs patrons can turn on and off by pulling on one of the hundreds of pull chains.

"It is an amazing experiential artwork that captures a childlike imagination. She was really inspired by the simple act of turning the light on and off when she was a kid and the flickering that it created like a firefly. But she was also playing with art historical legacy within Brazil," said Dr. Anna Katherine Brodbeck, the museum's Hoffman Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art and organizer of this exhibition.

The installation is one of 80 works from the Dallas Museum of Art's collection that uses optical effects of mechanical or manipulable parts to engage the viewer physically or perceptually. By combining two-dimensional paintings, three-dimensional sculptures, projections and interactive objects, the exhibition features artwork from three historical periods spanning a century.



Valeska Soares' *Vagalume* (Firefly)

"This exhibition demonstrates how artists working today have been influenced by the long legacy of dynamic abstraction," Brodbeck said. "What was so exciting about this exhibition is it is actually an opportunity for us to premiere works that have been in the collection for many years that we haven't been able to showcase." A gallery establishes the historical precedents rooted in the early 20th-century avant-garde movements of Suprematism, Constructivism and DeStijl when artists were using geometric abstraction to modify the relationship between the art and the viewer. Works by Piet Mondrian and El Lissitzky demonstrate the innovative thinking of this era that would inspire artists for decades to come.

"We were really interested in going back to the teens and 20s when artists were really interested in the revolutionary potential of geometry and abstraction. And they were also very interested in the influence of technology," Brodbeck said. "They saw art almost dissolving into everyday life."