

## NIKOLAI KASAK: CHRONOLOGY

### 1917

Nikolai Kasak was born on September 24 in Lyuscha, Belarus.

### 1929

Kasak's family settled in the western part of the Polesie region of Pinsk in Belarus. As a teenager he considered entering a monastery and dedicating his life to religion.

### 1935

Kasak received a scholarship to study figurative art in Warsaw at the School of Fine and Applied Art, majoring in Mural Painting. He went on to complete his graduate studies in Vienna and Rome. He holds BFA, MFA, and ASD degrees.

### 1939

Kasak taught painting and drawing at the Kulisiewicz School of Fine Art in Warsaw.

### 1941

In the spring, while visiting relatives in Leningrad, Kasak was unable to return home due to the German invasion of the Soviet Union. He was finally able to board the *Leningrad-Odessa Express*, reaching Luniniec, a city near Pinsk, about thirty-five miles from his home. On the day of his arrival, Kasak was miraculously saved from execution in the space of a few short hours, once at the railroad station, and then again on a country road.

After crossing the border, when Kasak reached his home, he learned that his parents, a brother, and a teenage sister, Sophia, had been deported to the Altai region of the KSSR (Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic). He stayed in the war zone, further experiencing its horrors, witnessing the German soldiers' execution of his sister Maria, her husband, and their baby.

**1942-43**

Moved to Baranowicze, Belarus, where he taught painting and drawing at the City Art School, and participated in local exhibitions.

**1944**

His youngest brother, Ivan, was killed by Soviet soldiers.

Kasak moved to Vienna.

**1945-1949**

Settled in Rome. While pursuing figurative art at the Academy of Rome, Kasak worked independently on his own abstract art and on furthering his Physical Art manifesto. Built his 3-D constructions of Space and Matter titled Action of Positive and Negative Space.

**1946**

Created his first small experimental models of Physical Construction—Positive Space, Negative Space.

**1947-49**

First major exhibitions of Physical Art constructions at the Galleria di Roma; Rome's Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna; and at the Palazzo Carignano in Turin. Kasak met Giorgio de Chirico, Piero Dorazio, Marcello Gallian, Alberto Moravia, Enrico Prampolini, Mimmo Rotella, and Silvia Conforto.

**1950**

Kasak became involved with the Argentine Madí movement through the Czechoslovakian-born Argentine artist, Gyula Kosice. Kosice formally invited Kasak to join the movement. Thereafter, he showed his work as part of the Madí group, including at: *International Madí Art*, Galería Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1957; *International Madí*, Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1960; and *15 years of Madí Art*, Modern Art Museum of Buenos Aires, 1961.

**1951**

Moved to the United States (Dallas, Texas). His first exhibition of Physical Art in the U.S. was held at Art and Artists, Theater '51, in Dallas.

That same year, he moved to New York. Kasak's first exhibition of Physical Art in New York was in a group show at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

**1952**

Exhibited at several New York galleries and museums including the Riverside Museum and the Betty Parsons Gallery.

**1953**

Began creating his 3-D Cosmic Circular Constructions, out of drawings and paintings dating from the early 1940s, such as *The Sky of Leningrad's White Nights*, *The Stars*, and *Constellation*, some incorporating electric light and mechanical movement.

**1954**

Kasak married Janina Maria Poranski.

**1955**

He joined the American Abstract Artists in New York, and thereafter participated in their exhibitions and publications. During these early American years, he met Josef Albers, Alexander Archipenko, and Alexander Calder.

His son Alexander Nikolas was born.

**1958**

Moved to Riverdale, New York City, where he subsequently designed his own home in 1973, and lived there for the remainder of his life.

**1959**

His daughter Christina Maria was born.

**1977**

Published "On Art and Related Matters."

**1977, 1982, and 1985**

Papers and photographs acquired by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. All material has been microfilmed by the Smithsonian and Museum of Modern Art.

**1979-81**

Construction included in the Selection from the McCrory Corporation Collection's traveling exhibition, *Constructivism and the Geometric Tradition*.

**1980**

Kasak met John E. Bowlt, art historian and specialist in Russian *avant-garde* art, who, in 1991 published *From Action to Dynamic Silence: the Art of Nikolai Kasak*, co-authored with the artist.

**1983-84**

Three of his constructions were included in the exhibition, *Beyond the Plane: American Constructions 1930-1965*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton.

**1988-92**

Kasak's two relief-constructions included in the exhibition, *A Living Tradition: Selection from the American Abstract Artists*, at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York.

**1994**

Died in Riverdale, New York City.