

Mihai Olos (1940–2015, born in Arinis, RO, died in Endingen-Amoltern, DE) was a conceptual artist who worked in almost every available medium, including poetry and performance, alongside the sculpture and painting for which he became internationally recognised. Blain|Southern represents the Estate within the UK.

Olos' work was present at every major juncture of late Modernism. He rose to prominence with paintings that were labelled as Constructivist and his happenings were an integral part of the Neo-avant-garde movement in Romania during the seventies. A defining feature of Olos' work is his consistent reference to the folk history of Maramures, his native region in Romania.

He worked often with traditional wood and employed medieval carving techniques. Recurring motifs include a knot of six self-supporting elements that was often found in the homes of Romanian peasants. Jumping off from early mystic Constructivism, the infinite combinations and self-supporting elements of the knot were representative of Olos' utopian, philosophical strategy that he believed could unite East and West.

As part of the same spiritually-based philosophy, Olos appropriated the spindle headed form of the spires on traditional wooden churches in his native region. With these carved wooden sculptures, Olos took Brancusi's earlier amalgam of traditional and contemporary art into a conceptual realm where he imagined an alternative space and way of living that utilised these constructions in various contexts. This was entirely radical at this time and place, and for decades Olos was under close scrutiny by the Securitate of The Socialist Republic of Romania.

His internationalist outlook and disruptive happenings also brought him worldwide attention and praise. He had his first solo show in Rome in 1969 and he presented his concept of the 'Universal City' at Joseph Beuys' *Free International University (FIU)*, Documenta 6 (1977). Beuys became an outspoken admirer of Olos' work and went on to include the board with the Mihai Olos' presentation of the 'Universal City' in his environment work *Das Kapital Raum 1970 – 77* exhibited in the main pavilion of the 1980 Venice Biennial and is now part of the Erich Marx collection exhibited at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin.

Selected exhibitions include: Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR (2018); The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, RO (2016); Galerie Plan B, Berlin, DE (2016); National Museum Bruckenthal, Sibiu, RO (2010); Galeriile de Artă, Baia Mare, RO (2000); Tragor Ignác Múzeum, Görög Templom, Vác, HU (1993); Nijmeegs Museum Commanderie van Sint-Jan, Nijmegen, NL (1989); Burgmannenhaus (Oberhessisches Museum), Gießen, DE (1980); Maramures Museum, Sighetu Marmăției, RO (1976); Galleria La Feluca, Roma, IT (1969); Galeria Simeza, București, RO (1968).