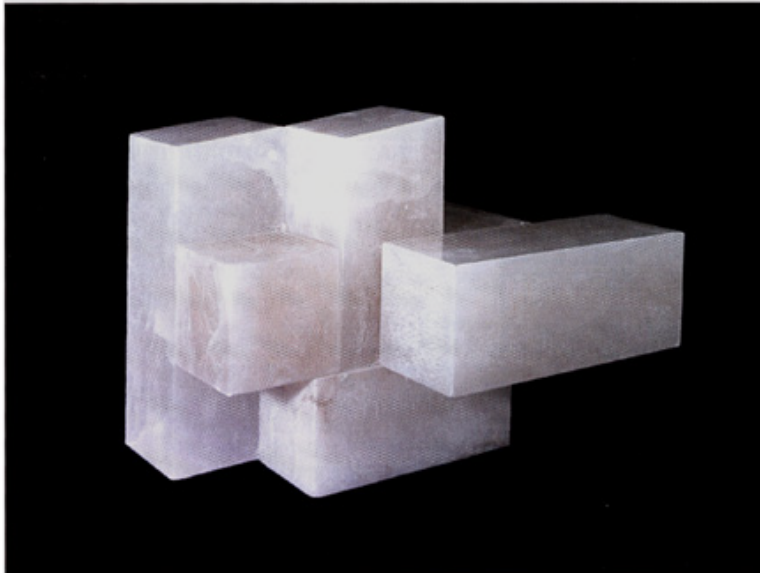




Robert C. Morgan, *New York, Jorge Oteiza, Haim Chanin Fine Arts, Reviews, Sculpture, Vol.23 No. 2, March 2004, p. 70.*



Left: Jorge Oteiza, *Conjunction of two models T*, 1972. Alabaster, 11.75 x 11.75 x 15.5 in.
Below: Jorge Oteiza, *Open Construction A*, 1958. Iron, 34 x 45.5 x 31 cm.

of Oteiza, I become aware of how purposefully he worked—as if he lived a life without doubt (although, like any great artist, he must have doubted). Rarely does one sense a hesitation in his forms. The work appears as if it just happened through a mysterious act of lightness, a suspension somewhere between the earth and the sky. He reveals not only a formal clarity and a decisive mode of variation, but also a direction by which we are led to a sense of wholeness, cradled within space.

Oteiza's sculpture is very much about puzzles and complexities of the mind, which are given a tacit physicality, an operative understanding of the elements, a passage between gravity and flight, as in the Greek legends of Antaeus and Daedalus. Oteiza was a master of his trade. By making sculpture, he showed the world the necessity of thought in relation to physical form. His sculpture continues to signify a contemplative way of life, a means to ensure fulfillment in what one does.

—Robert C. Morgan

New York

Jorge Oteiza

Haim Chanin Fine Arts

Considered by many to be one of the two major sculptors from the Basque region of San Sebastian, Jorge Oteiza died at the age of 93 within one month after his exhibition opened in New York. Having succeeded his younger contemporary Eduardo Chillida, who also died recently, Oteiza has been celebrated as a monumental force in sculpture. Those who knew him in the United States, including Frank Gehry and Richard Serra, recognized a kindred spirit and took note of his importance early on. While lesser known during his lifetime than Chillida, Oteiza had what might be called an "underground" following, a coterie of devotees who understood his work, his forms, and his ideas about space and construction.

Indeed, space and construction were the two major attributes of Oteiza's work. He maintained a constructivist's sensibility and pattern of thought right from the beginning. After several years of exploring the exterior shell of

physical space, as in *Empty Construction B* (1958), he turned to the density of solid forms in the '70s—a theme that he explored over and over again in his series of blocks. *Conjunction of two models* (1972), carved and constructed geometrically from alabaster, is a clear example of his turn toward the inside of space—its density and translucent qualities, its girth and breadth and width—all the formal constituents that give constructivist sculpture its living essence, an ideal physical presence.

What I love about Oteiza is how matter-of-fact his work appears, yet how clear and precise and determined it actually is. One does not sense the formulaic strategies of a Vantongerloo or the obstreperous insistence of a Calder stabile. With Oteiza, the path was always open. His challenge was to enact a process from concept to completion. The language was within the structure of the work itself because the work was always possessed by its own language. When I reflect on the sculpture

