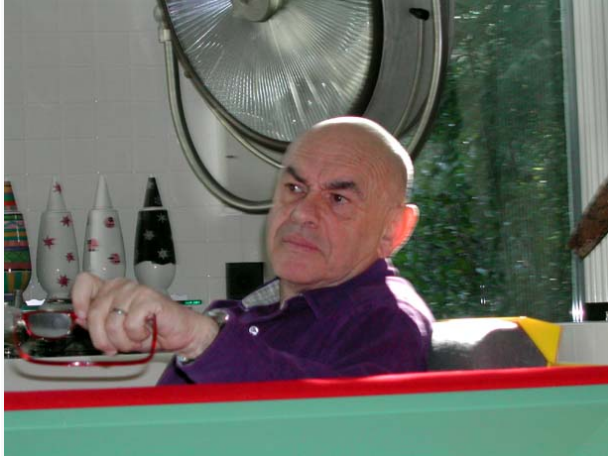


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## ARTIST PORTRAIT



## JEAN-CLAUDE FARHI LOVES PLASTIC ART

by Florence CANARELLI

Jean-Claude Farhi was born in Paris in 1940 to a Turkish father and a Spanish mother. After the war, her family moved to Bogota, Colombia, where her father opened a shoe store. At the age of 17, he landed in Nice, where he first worked as a courier at the Kuoni travel agency and then as a tourist guide, while taking drawing lessons at the “Beaux-Arts” school. from Nice. Two years later, he made his first personal exhibition at the café Le Relax, rue Pastorelli in Nice, where he met César and Arman.



After his military service in Algeria, he continued to paint while running the shoe business taken over by his mother on the death of his father.

1966 is the year when Jean-Claude Farhi presents his new works, the “Motorcolors”, which will be noticed by the influential art critic Pierre Restany.

This is the beginning of success: he begins to combine plastic and metal, before only working with polymethyl methacrylate (scientific name for Plexiglas).



In 1968, he became assistant to the sculptor César, traveling with him across Europe. For sixteen years, he made frequent trips to Rome, where the Polivar factory produced its famous "columns" in colored Plexiglas.

It was in 1972 that he discovered New York, where he would often return later, even settling in Soho for a time. Welcomed and encouraged by Arman, who recommended that he "think big", he soon began to sign large pieces, columns, stelae and discs.

In 1984, he participated in the inauguration of the Palais des Congrès in Nice with "Colorful Island", the last of his large columns.



Then, he will realize his monumental works in plexiglass without moving from his studio in Tourrettes sur Loup, exhibiting them in New Canaan in Connecticut, at Guy Pieters in Knokke-le-Zoute, at the International Art Fair in Chicago (1989) ...

Without forgetting the hanging, in 1990, of "Dissemination" on the facade of a building in the Arena, opposite Nice airport: 34 meters high, 21 tons, 9 meters of cantilever, it is the largest sculpture ever made in "perspex" (family of plastics).

From 1991, having "explored the possibilities of the Plexiglas material", he moved towards the treatment of raw steel for large sculptures intended for the open air, such as those which were exhibited last summer on the United States wharf.

Now the father of two children (David, 19 and Victoria, 14), Jean-Claude Farhi continues his work of "colonization" of plastic arts.