Matta (Roberto Matta Echaurren) was born in 1911 in Santiago, Chile. After earning a degree in architecture, he travelled to Paris where for two years he worked in Le Corbusier's studio. During this time, he met and befriended the Surrealist poet Paul Eluard, who invited him to join the Surrealist group, which led to his participation in the 1939 International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris. Influenced by his association with the Surrealist movement, Matta developed his unique style that combined elements of Surrealism with architecture. He was particularly inspired by the work of Le Corbusier, whom he later described as a 'poet of architecture'.

In 1939, Matta was caught up in the outbreak of war and went into exile in New York, which became his base for the rest of his life. During the 1940s and 1950s, he worked on several projects, including the renovation of a bomb-damaged building in Paris, which led to his interest in the concept of the 'resistor'. This concept of 'resistance' became a central theme in his work, influencing his later projects in urban planning and architecture.

Matta's work is characterized by its use of dynamic, flowing forms that seem to be in constant motion. His art often explores themes of creation and destruction, as well as the interplay between the organic and the geometric. In 1948, he created a series of poems titled 'Psychological Morphologies', which he used as a means to explore the relationship between his artistic practice and his personal experiences. These poems were later published as a book titled 'A Resistor', which became a major influence on later generations of artists.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Matta continued to produce a large number of works, including paintings, drawings, and sculptures. His work was widely exhibited, and he held solo exhibitions at museums around the world, including MoMA in New York and the Hayward Gallery in London. His works can be found in many of the world's most important art collections, including the Tate in London.

In addition to his artistic work, Matta was also involved in political activism and social reform. He advocated for the rights of the working class and was a vocal critic of the Pinochet regime in Chile. He created a series of works in response to the Pinochet affair, which he called 'Pinochets'. These works were an emotional response to the political situation in Chile and were a way for him to comment on the state of affairs.

Matta's work has had a profound influence on a number of artists, including Le Corbusier and Man Ray. He was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of the Lion of Chile in 1985 and was made an honorary citizen of Santiago in 1990. Matta passed away in 2002, but his work continues to be celebrated for its innovative use of form and its exploration of the relationship between art and the social and political world.