

Teresa Burga's Chronology: Reports, Diagrams, Intervals 29.9.11

September 30, 2011 – January 8, 2012

READER
(English)



Teresa Burga, Invitation card *Autoretrato. Estructura. Informe.* 9.6.72, 1972

An exhibition by
Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Curators
Dorota Biczal, Miguel A. López, and Emilio Tarazona



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Introduction

From September 30, 2011 to January 8, 2012 the Württembergischer Kunstverein is showing the first comprehensive solo exhibition in Europe of Peruvian artist Teresa Burga (born 1935) curated by Dorota Biczal, Miguel A. López, and Emilio Tarazona. The exhibition is based on the artist's retrospective shown with great success in 2010 at the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano in Lima. Teresa Burga will also be represented at the 2011 Istanbul Biennial.

This exhibition is positioned within the context of an extensive reassessment of critical conceptual artistic practices from the nineteen-sixties to eighties in Latin America (among other regions) as already explored by the Kunstverein in its 2009 exhibition *Subversive Practices*.

While Teresa Burga was represented in *Subversive Practices* (Peruvian section; curators: López and Tarazona) by only one installation, the current exhibition sets out to provide insight into the broad spectrum of her creative work, which encompasses drawings, objects, installations, and audio-visual works.

The Artist

After completing her art studies at the Catholic University of Peru in Lima (1962–1964), Burga turned to experimental forms of art. She joined the group *Arte Nuevo* (New Art) during 1966–1967, who paved the way for a radical redefinition of the artistic landscape in Peru. While at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on a Fulbright Scholarship (1968–1970), she concerned herself with ephemeral conceptual approaches and, after returning home, became one of the early representatives of installation art in Peru. In the nineteen-seventies, complex analytical works followed, which explored the nature and modus operandi of language and various forms of information.

Teresa Burga's experiments in the areas of pop art, visual poetry, conceptual art, information art, and audio-visual art revolve around questions of representation and mass culture. They explore the constructions of femininity as well as the processes of mechanization and bureaucratization of labor and everyday life. They comprise conceptions of absurd, dysfunctional apparatuses and toys, extensive instructions and diagrams for unrealized projects, musical scores, experiments like the timed or blindfolded production of drawings, and the multimedia visualizations of interdisciplinary research projects.

The Exhibition

Three installations that count among the artist's key works constitute the focus of the exhibition, in addition to numerous graphic works and objects.

The installation *Autorretrato. Estructura. Informe. 9.6.72* (Self-Portrait. Structure. Report. 9.6.1972), originally created in 1972, revolves around the measurability of the human being. Based upon medical examinations carried out on Burga's own body (her face, blood, and heart) over the course of one day, the work presents photographs, diagrams, and various medical records (blood analysis, electro- and phono-cardiograms) that visualize the results. The sound of the artist's heart accompanies them, its rhythm regulating the pulsation of a light sculpture.

Quatro Mensajes (Four Messages) from 1974 is in turn founded on "four messages" that the artist randomly extracted from Peruvian television. Burga disassembled their linguistic, auditory, and visual elements and subjected them to a radical realignment. Here the third message—a sentence from a discourse on environmental protection—is deconstructed on various levels at once: for instance, by replacing each individual word within the sentence with its respective lexical definition, or by turning individual letters into material for visual poetry.

The installation *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* (Profile of the Peruvian Woman, 1980–1981) was created as part of a comprehensive artistic and sociological research project which dealt with the self-perception of young Peruvian women and with their views on topics such as politics, economics, religion, law, and sexuality.

This solo exhibition by Teresa Burga shows a radical and complex artistic position developed between the nineteen-sixties and eighties, one that long failed to be recognized either in Peru or in an international context. This new reassessment of Burga's work is realized in the context of activities pursued by a broad network of Latin American art theorists and artists, who are presently embarking upon a rereading of the conceptualisms of the South (Southern Conceptualisms Network).

The exhibition is accompanied by a Spanish/English catalogue and a conference, which will take place during the exhibition's opening weekend.

Data

**Teresa Burga's Chronology:
Reports, Diagrams, Intervals 29.9.11**
September 30, 2011 – January 8, 2012

Opening

Thursday, September 29, 2011, 8 p.m.

Artist's tour and Conference

Saturday, October 1, 2011, 2 p.m.

With Teresa Burga, Dorota Biczal, Miguel A. López, Emilio Tarazona
(Spanish–German)

Special tours with Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ

Wednesday, November 2, 2011, 7 pm

Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 7 pm

Sunday, January 8, 2012, 4:30 pm

Catalogue

Teresa Burga

Informes, Esquemas, Intervalos 17.9.10

(Reports, Diagrams, Intervals 17.9.10)

Spanish–English

Publisher: Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano, Lima

With texts by: Miguel A. López, Emilio Tarazona, Marie France Cathelat, Teresa Burga, and a conversation between Juan Acha, Carlos Rodríguez Saavedra, Mirko Lauer

210 pages

Price: 19 Euro (Members: 15 Euro)

An exhibition by

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Curators

Miguel A. López, Emilio Tarazona, Dorota Biczal

Supported by

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst des Landes Baden-Württemberg

Kulturamt der Stadt Stuttgart

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

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Works in the Exhibition (Selection; Courtesy, unless otherwise noted: Teresa Burga)

Untitled, 1967

Left: Latex on wood, 95 x 143 x 5 cm; Right: Coler and linen on wood, 184 x 70 x 5 cm
Below: Installation



Burga's pop works from 1967 unapologetically take up the issue of feminine self-representation in which the woman is self-consciously fashionable, independent, and self-determined. They are also first manifestations of the attempts to eliminate traditionally understood, expressionist artistic subjectivity—believed to reside in the hand and gesture of an artist—as the works' execution is delegated to craftsmen and assistants.

Untitled, 1968

Painted plywood, 7 objects

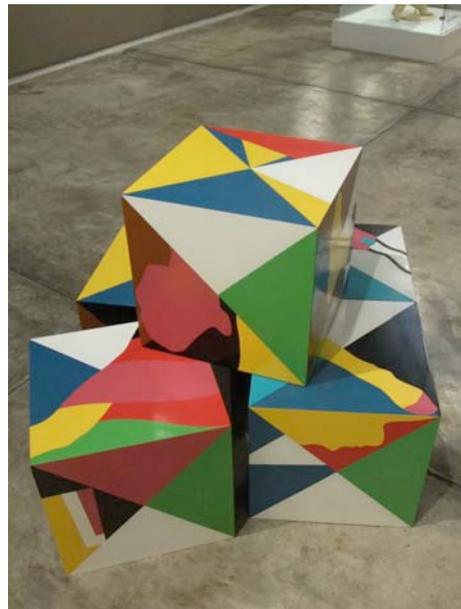
**Prisms I and II, 1968**

Painted plywood, 2 objects

Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection

**Cubes, 1968**

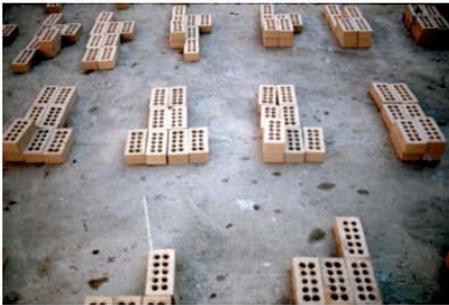
Painted plywood, 6 objects



The modular, geometric objects designed by Burga in the second half of the nineteen-sixties conform to the definition of system elaborated by the Argentine critic Jorge Glusberg, co-founder of CAYC (Centro de Arte y Comunicación / Center of Art and Communication) in Buenos Aires. The system, in the sense of Glusberg, is a grouping of entities which organize and articulate themselves in relation to one another in a dynamic process and that cannot be understood either individually or outside of the framework of the mutual interdependence. In Burga's three-dimensional works the multiplicity of possibilities is enacted by a particular arrangement of visual motifs, forms, and colors, which allow to re-configure the pieces in a variety of ways.

***Seventh Complex of Movements*), ca. 1969**

35 mm slide projection, 20 images



Enacted and photographed during Burga's graduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1968–70), where she was a Fulbright Scholar, *Seventh Complex of Movements* can be considered an exercise in the purest form of conceptualism. Here, "the idea makes the work." Eight bricks are arranged and rearranged according to a pre-determined system, which generates their subsequent forms. Following Sol LeWitt's prescription, "the process is mechanical and [is] not tampered with." It is allowed to "run its course" until it reaches its inevitable conclusion. In Burga's attempt at such exercise, the most remarkable is the playful, fleeting ephemerality of her proposal. There is no quasi-minimalist, sculptural remainder of her activity, just a photographic documentation of a potentially on-going process.

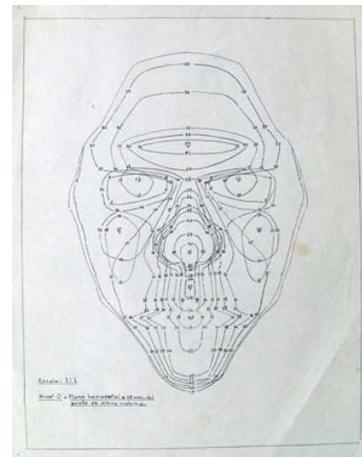
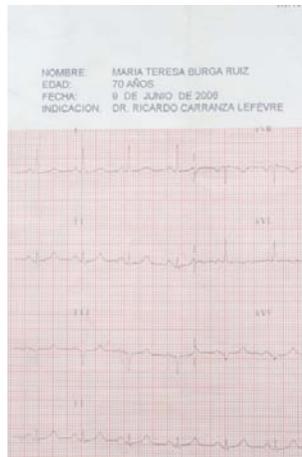
***Work that Disappears When the Spectator Tries to Approach It*, 1970**

Ink on paper

This project can be seen as an ironic commentary on the phenomenological and spiritualist claims of Minimal Art and light works of the nineteen-sixties. Here, the viewer is not granted self-awareness endowed by a bodily encounter with a work of art. Rather, the work is contingent and elusive, its presence dissipated by human proximity.

Autorretrato. Estructura. Informe. 9.6.72 (Self-Portrait. Structure. Information. 9.6.72), 1972 [2011]

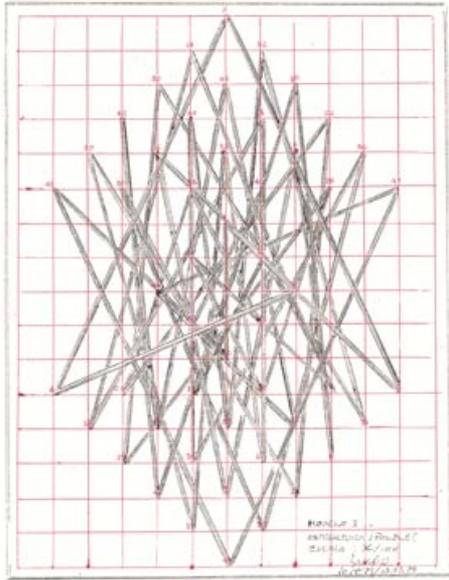
Multimedia installation (photographs, diagrams, medical documentation, light, sound)



Under the familiar concept of “self-portrait,” the installation *Self-Portrait. Structure. Report. 9.6.1972* combines diagrams, documents, images, objects, and a variety of medical records. The artist's own self is deconstructed into a number of scientifically measurable elements: a face, a heart, and blood, whose physical characteristics are accounted for in just one day (June 9, 1972): the facial features are measured, the face topographically mapped out; the heart is registered through electro- and phonocardiograms, and its rhythms regulate the pulsation of the object / light sculpture; the blood analysis is presented as a graph of the series of prisms that account for its chemical makeup.

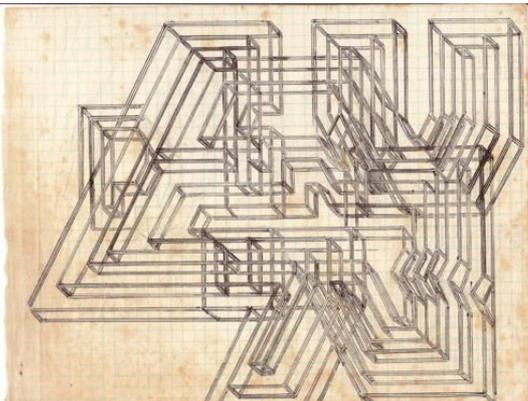
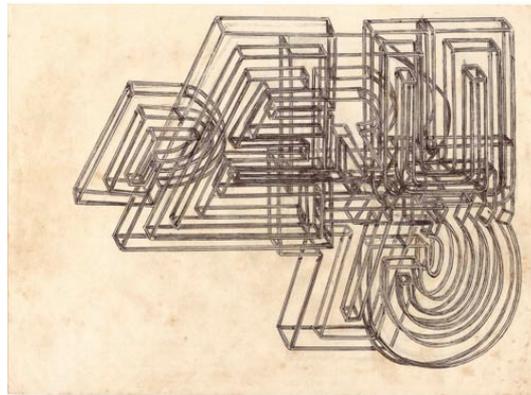
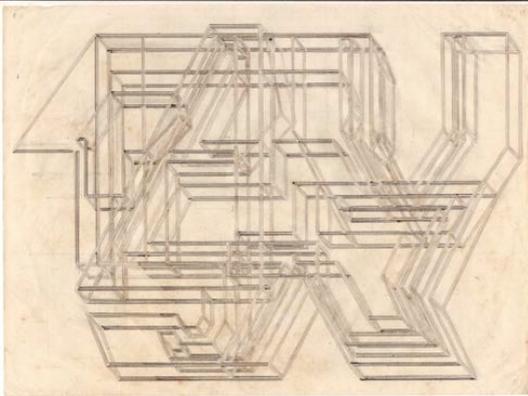
***Estructura imposible* (Impossible Structure), 1974**

Pencil and ink on paper, 21,5 x 30 cm



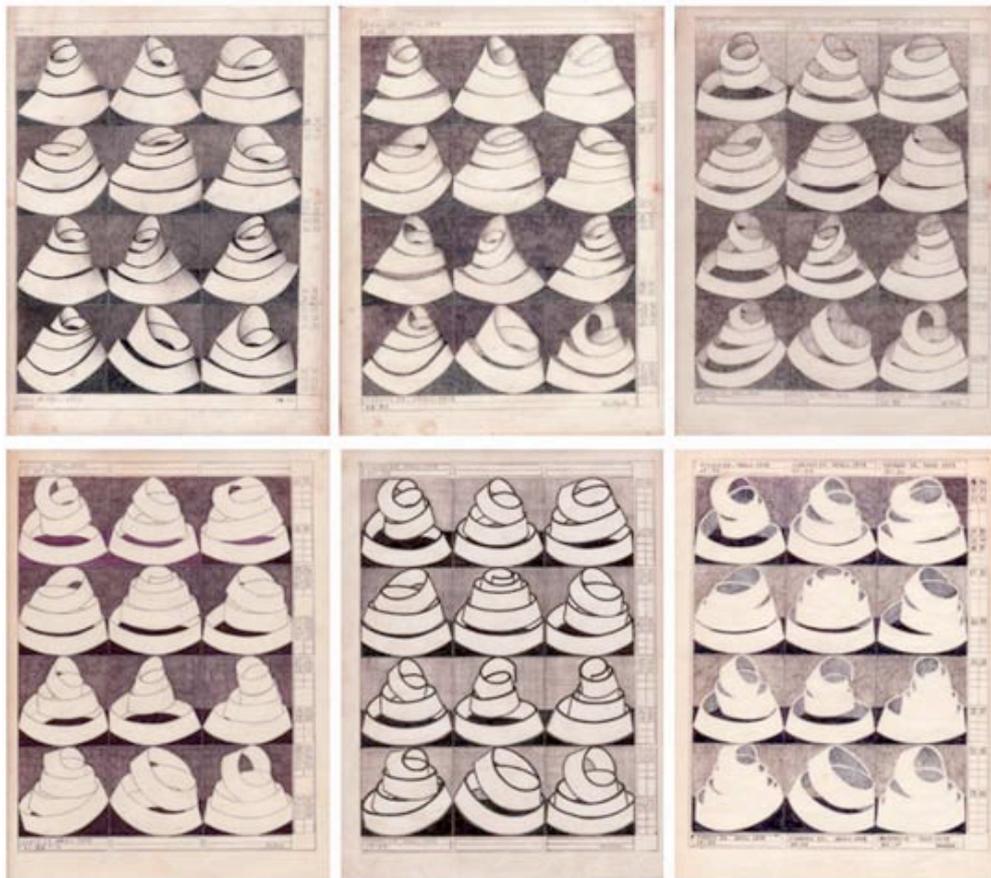
Untitled (Peru), 1973

Series of 3 drawings, ink on paper, 21 x 29 cm, each



Untitled, 1974

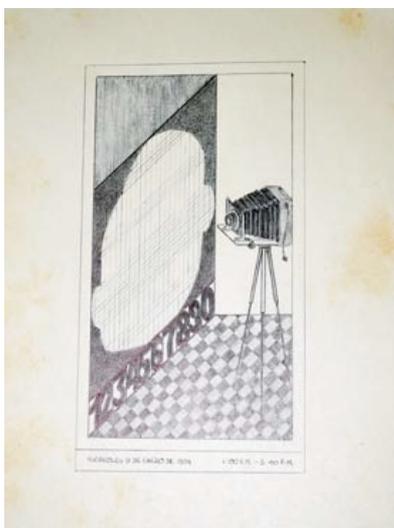
Series of six drawings, ink on paper, 29 x 22.5 cm each



Many of Burga's drawings "with time" involve variations and permutations of a single motif or theme. The object of this study is seemingly banal: a paper serpentine leftover after a birthday party. However, its form also conspicuously evokes Vladimir Tatlin's iconic *Monument to the Third International*.

Untitled, 9.1.1974

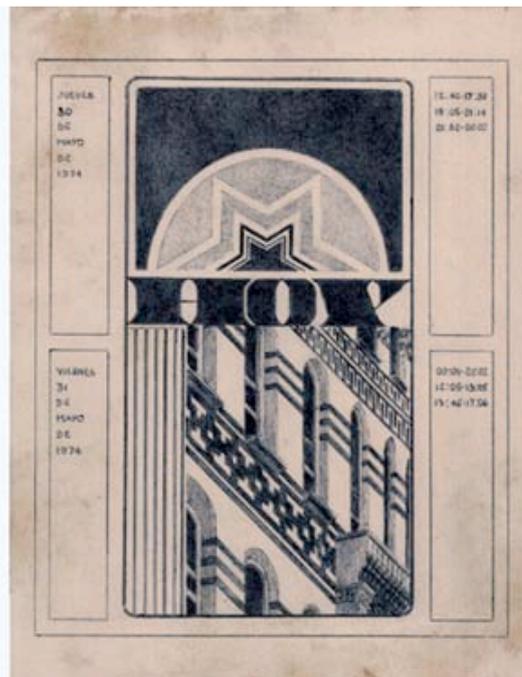
Ink on paper, 21,8 x 16,5 cm



Untitled, 26.2.1974



Untitled (Theater), 1974
 Series of six drawings, ink on paper, 22 x 17 cm each



Dibujos con ojos cerrados (Drawings with Eyes Closed), 1974

Series of five drawings and one text, ink on paper, 28 x 21.5 cm each

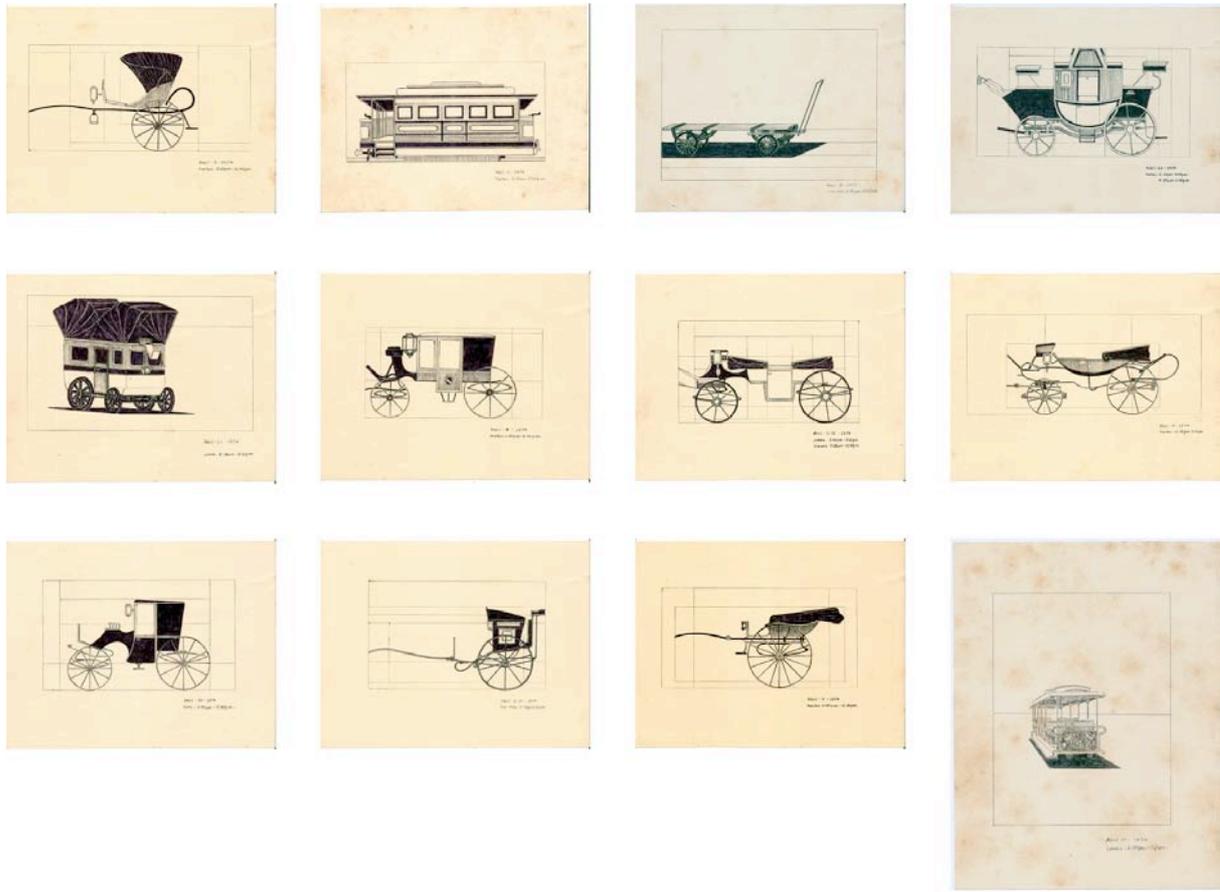
Courtesy: aim-arteimovilización archive (Emilio Tarazona / Miguel A. López)



This series of drawings—part of an extensive body of work executed and stored for years in the privacy of Teresa Burga’s studio—is a manifestation of the artist’s interest in the suppression of vision as a primary tool for perceiving and understanding the world. While a seemingly simple exercise, a series of scenes executed with closed eyes, it places emphasis on imagination—understood as a complex mental process. This is more than just a turn away from observation, traditionally taught in fine arts training (such as Burga received at the French Academy La Grand Chaumière, which she attended during her stay in Paris between 1960 and 1962). It also signifies the radical change in understanding the nature and locus of artistic activity: away from the observant eye and from the hand/gesture (understood as means of expressing a unique subjectivity—“the artist’s essential self”) to a mental, analytical act, which generates concepts and ideas.

Untitled, 1974

Series of 12 drawings, 16,7 x 21.5 cm, each



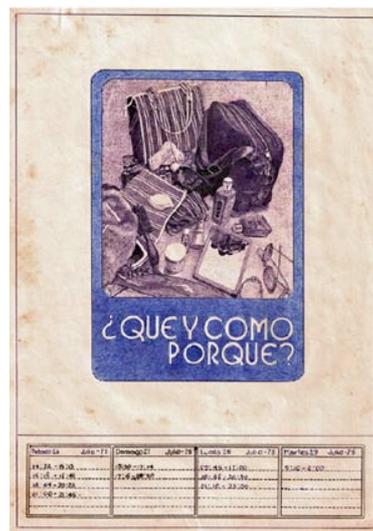
Untitled, 1970s

Ink on paper, 16,7 x 21,5 cm



Untitled, 1975

Ink on paper, 21 x 29,7 cm



Cuatro Mensajes (Four Messages), 1974

Multimedia installation (Carbon on paper, sketches, 16mm on video, slides, etc.)
 Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection



Four Messages (Message 1: Message 2)

This installation takes “four messages,” randomly extracted from Peruvian national television on December 27, 1973, and dismantles them graphically, audiovisually, and audiotively. Each message is broken down through “informative structures” which introduce alternative ways of “reading” the statements. The first message comprises the “fragmented vision” of a device (close-up views of a calculator) through a slide projection on the wall; the second message consists of film footage of a face making three silent gestures; the third message conveys the visual, graphic “translation” of a written text; and the fourth shows the playback of a recording of distorted sounds.

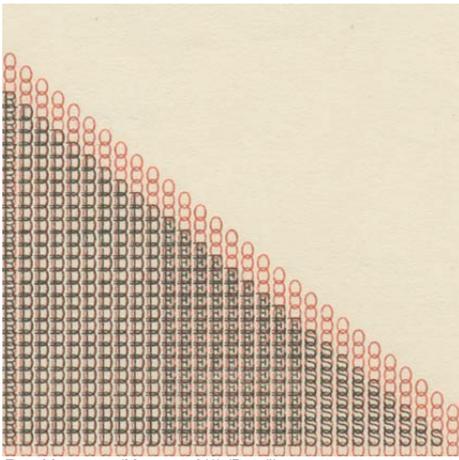
Message 3: Written Text

The third “message” appears in three variations, all derived from the following sentence:

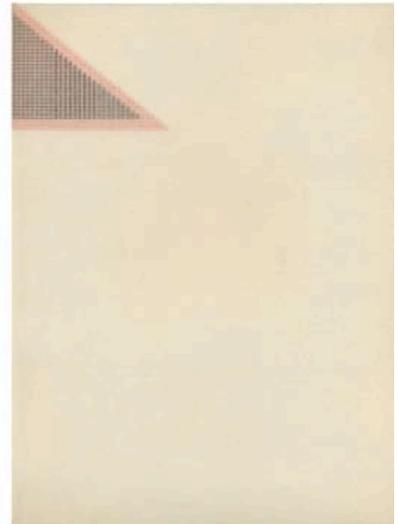
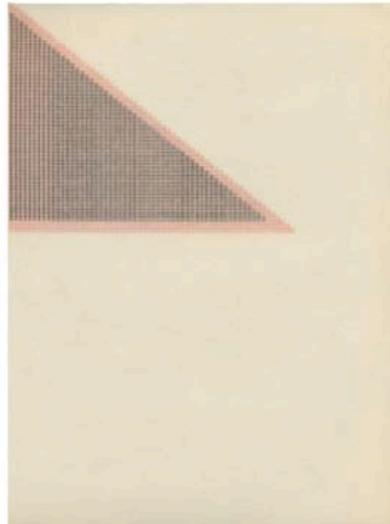
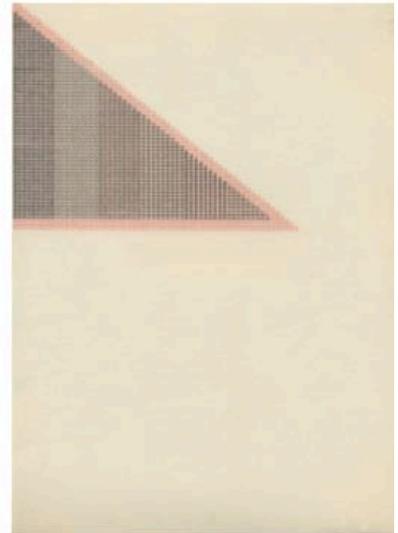
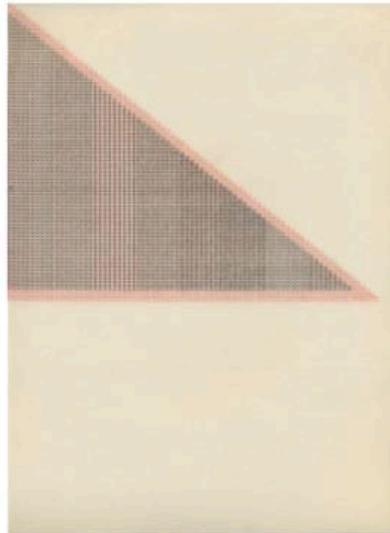
“contra el peligro mortal de la contaminación las áreas verdes son los grandes pulmones que purifican el ambiente en que respiramos combatamos la contaminación haciendo que”

(against the deadly threat of pollution, green areas are the great lungs that purify the environment in which we breathe, let’s fight the pollution by)

The **first variation** of the “third message” converts this sentence into typewritten triangular graphs, where each letter of each word is repeated in succession, creating appropriately larger and smaller triangular shapes, in a visual gradient of text/image.

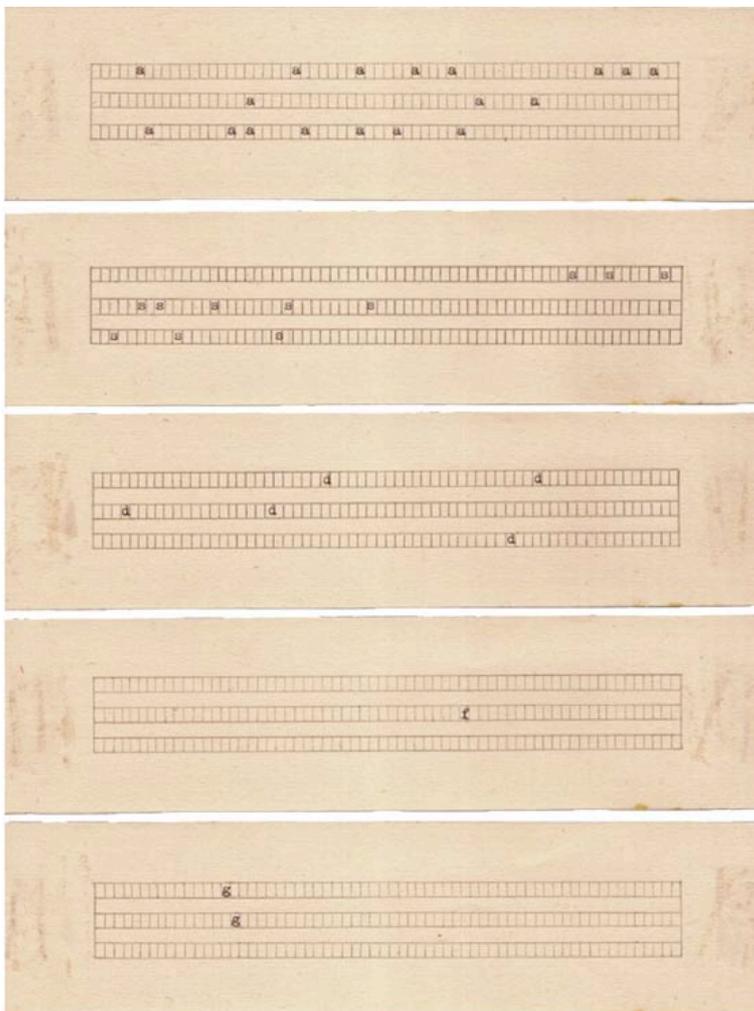


Four Messages (Message 3/1) (Detail)



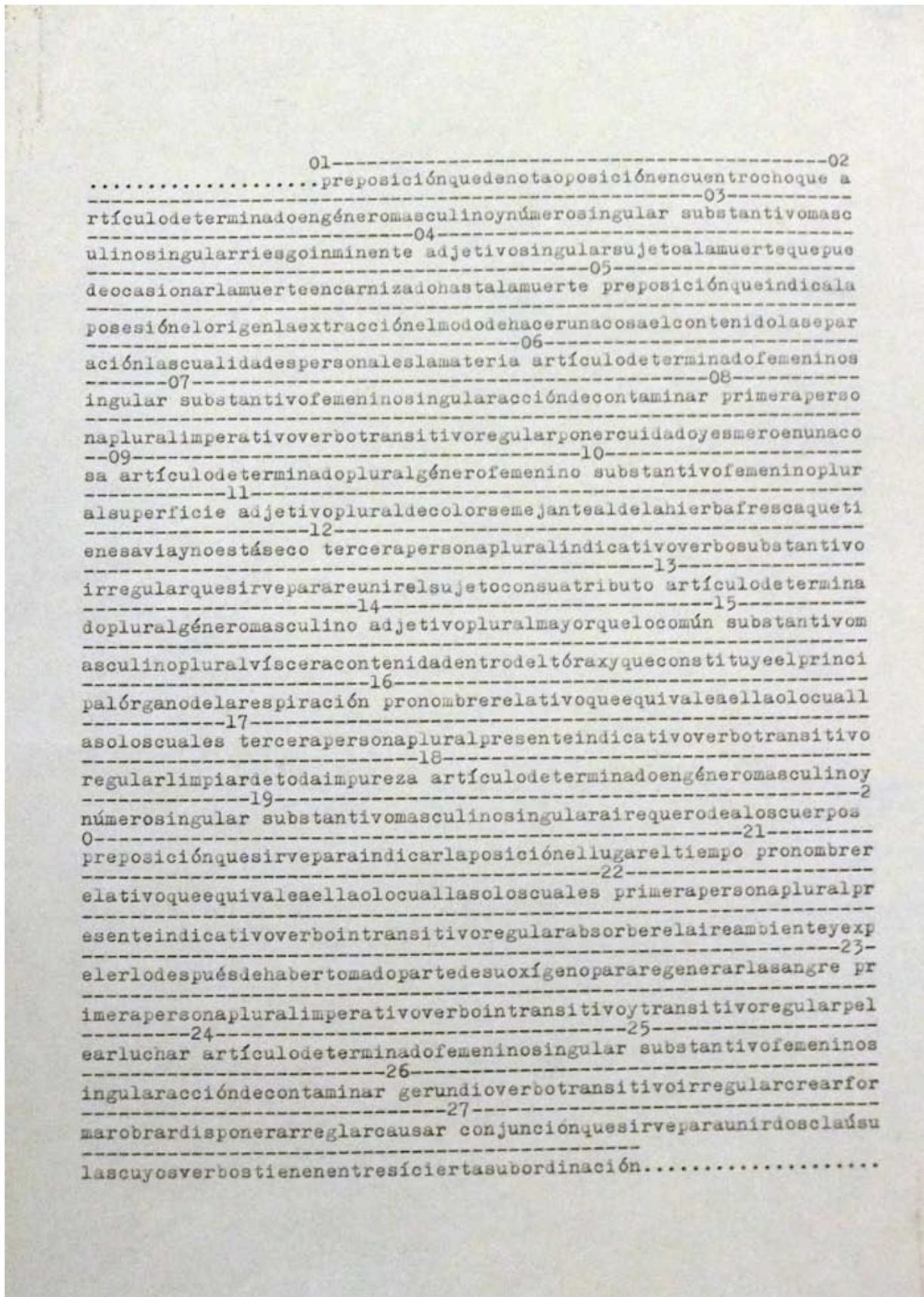
Four Messages (Message 3/1) (Detail)

The **second variation** presents a series of small, rectangular papers that represent the phrase as a series of empty squares, from which the position of each letter of the alphabet within the greater structure is extracted. While each piece itself is abstract and nonsensical, their accumulation constitutes a dissected order of the entire “message.”



Four Messages (Message 3/2) (Detail)

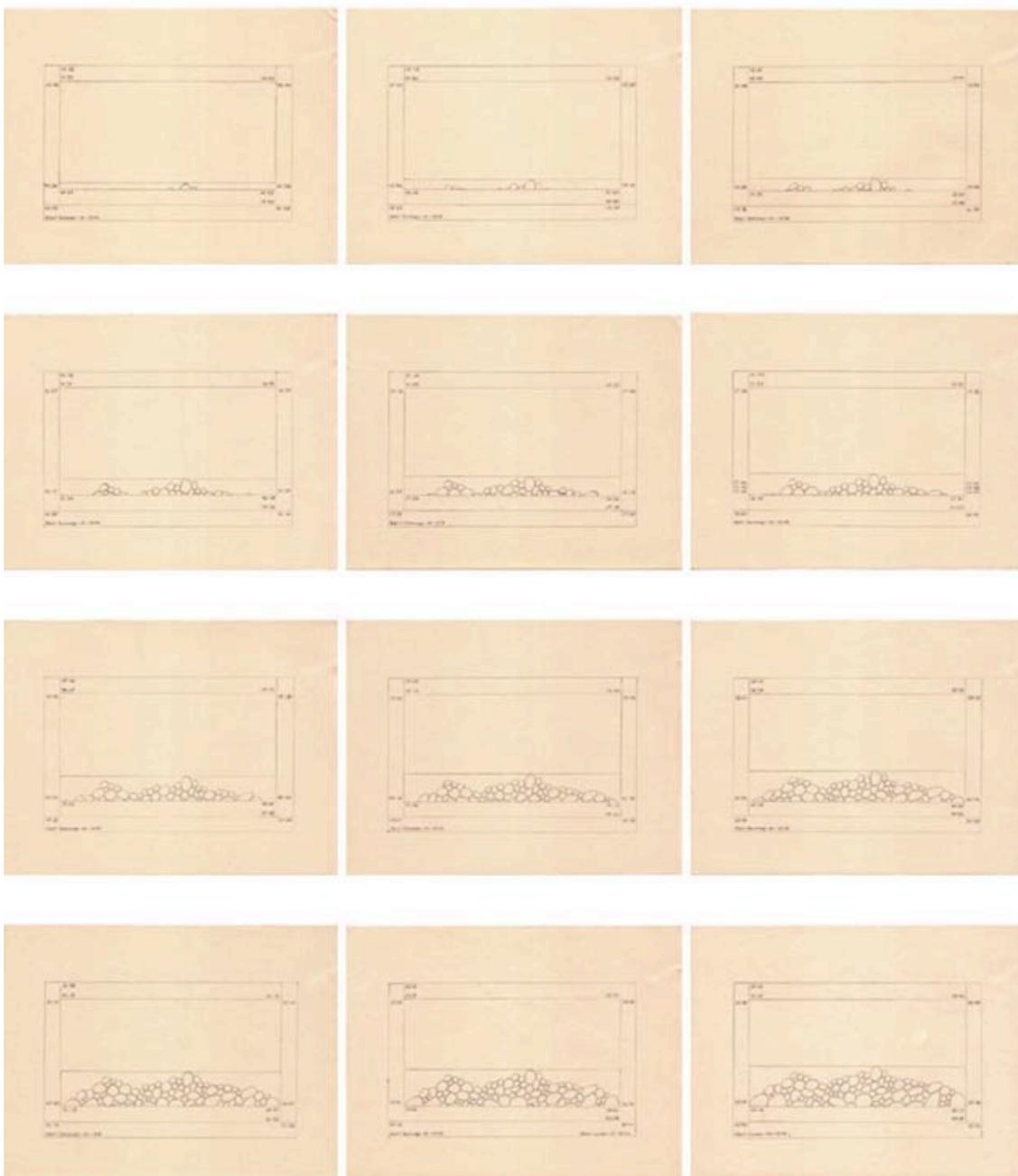
The **third variation** finally consists of a textual structure in which every word of the original sentence ("against," "the," "deadly," "threat" . . .) is replaced by its dictionary definition.



Four Messages (Message 3/3)

Untitled, 14.–15.04.1974

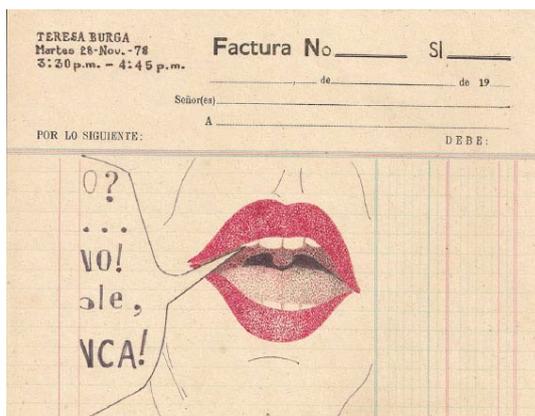
Series of 14 drawings, ink on paper



Burga's life-long preoccupation with time and process manifests itself in two ways in this series. On the one hand, the artist carefully notes the time taken to complete the subsequent stages of each drawing, jotting down the hour and minute needed to sketch each of the framing lines. On the other hand, the fourteen drawings together constitute a kind of a stop-motion animation: they depict an accumulating pile of small pebbles, like grains of sand in an hourglass.

Untitled, 1975–1978

Ink on paper, 3 drawings



This drawing, which shows a personal invoice, undermines both the artist's productive social role and words as effective or transparent means of communication. The decipherable scream can be read as: "I? No! Never! [(Y)O?... (N)O!... (NU)NCA!]" in Spanish, or "I? Am! A tired word!" [(I)O?... (SO)NO!...(una par)ole...(STA)NCA!] in Italian.

Untitled, 1978

Ink and pencil on paper, 13 x 15 cm



The systematic notation of time prevalent in Burga's work is curiously subverted in this piece. A bureaucratic date stamp is obsessively repeated and the work is sealed with the official institutional stamp of the Secretaría de la Dirección General de Aduanas (the Secretariat of the General Directorate of Customs), where the artist was employed at that time. Hence, the time dedicated to the making of this piece alludes to the counter-production rather than a productive moment of daily labor: it is an act of erasure of daily salaried work performed so that another, radically distinct kind of productivity could be pursued.

Untitled, 1978

Series of 2 drawings, pencil on paper, 29 x 21 cm, each



Untitled, 1979

Ink and pencil on paper, 17 x 22,3 cm



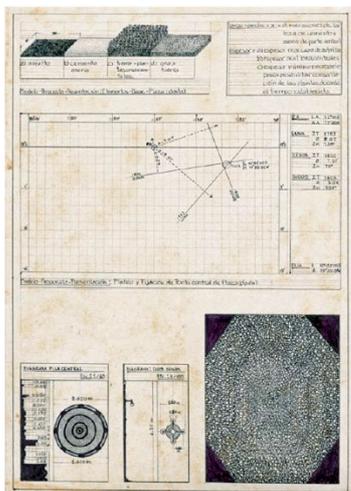
Untitled, 1979

Ink and pencil on paper, 17,1 x 22 cm



Paisaje Urbano 19... (Urban Landscape 19...), 1978–1979

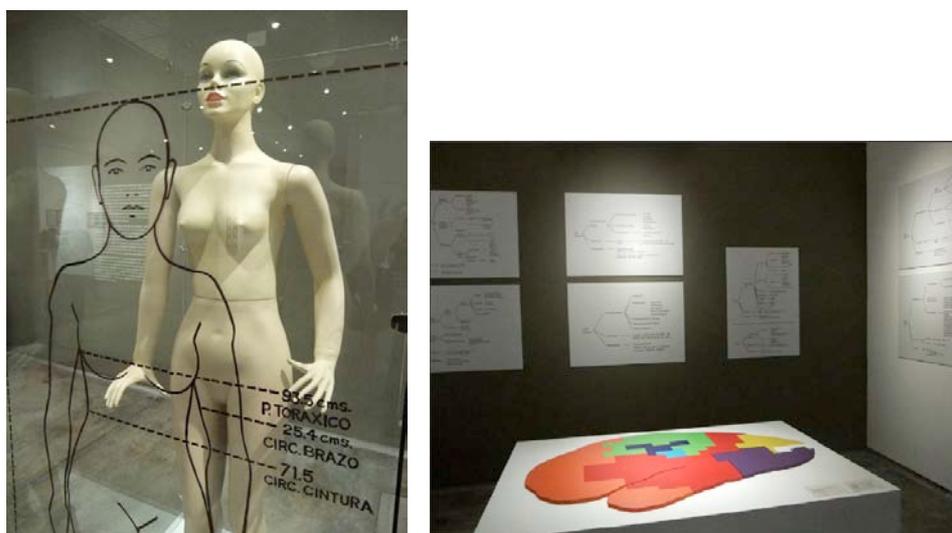
Unrealized project (drawings, diagrams, instructions)



This project was created in the late nineteen-seventies with the aim of presenting a utopically comprehensive representation of a specific section of the city. The artist proposed to undertake her analysis in the Main Square of Lima. The work would account for all elements of the site, with information being gathered over the course of a week. A variety of data and records on each aspect of the location—not only physical objects in space but also such ephemeral phenomena as lighting, meteorological forecast, star position, and sound ambience—would result in written documents, noting measurements and materials, drawings, as well as films, slides, models, and audio recordings. The work proposes the analysis of the square—starting with its planar map and from there extending vertically upward, creating an “imaginary volume” spanning the distance that separates the Earth from the Moon.

Teresa Burga and Marie-France Cathelat, *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana (Profile of the Peruvian Woman)*, 1980–1981

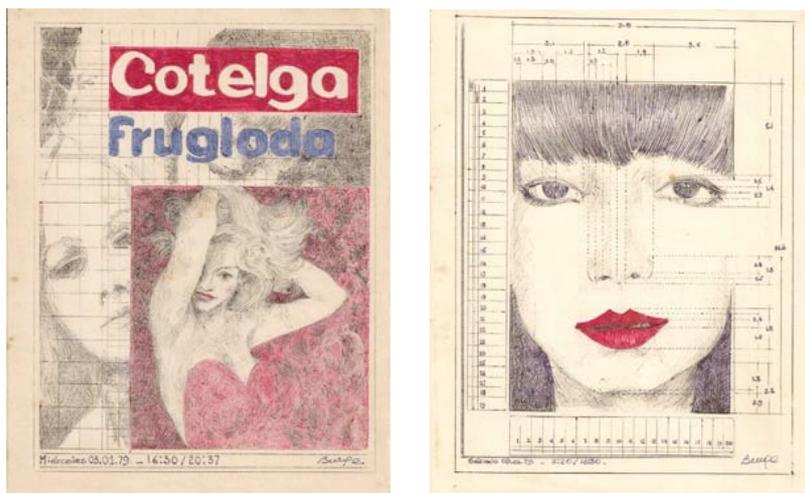
Multimedia installation and publication



In 1980 Teresa Burga and the psychologist Marie-France Cathelat co-founded the association Investigaciones Sociales y Artísticas (ISA) (Social and Artistic Research). In order to realize the *Profile of a Peruvian Woman*, they sought support from private and public institutions and enlisted professional help of academics and specialists, to assure that their research would be undertaken in a scientifically rigorous way. The resulting exhibition (a series of information graphics and installations that visualized the obtained data) and the subsequent publication intended to present self-perceptions of middle-class Peruvian women aged 25–29. Conceptually, the project kept in line with the emergence of second-wave feminism in Peru and Juan Acha's postulate that art should investigate “social beings” in order to advance “social conscience.” The study was developed in a series of twelve profiles—anthropometric, political, judicial and legal, economic, cultural, educational, psychological etc.—whose data were gathered through extensive surveys and medical examinations conducted between November 7 and December 20, 1980. While, on the one hand, the questionnaires accounted for a number of easily qualifiable data, such as physical built, economic status, or education level, on the other hand, they also asked pertinent questions regarding opinions on such crucial issues as abortion, bases for divorce, division of marital property, or the use of the female body in advertising campaigns—expressing a covert activist agenda. The first presentation of the project took place at the *First Colloquium of Nonobject Art and Urban Art* in May 1981, in Medellin, directed by Acha. Later, a large exhibition was presented in the gallery of the Banco Continental in Lima. The book was published at the end of the year.

Ohne Titel, Juli 1975, Juli 1976, Januar 1979

Series of 3 drawings, pencil and ink on paper



Lima Imaginada (Lima Imagined), 1965 [2004]

Series of 6 linocuts



Lima Imagined is an early indication of the crucial shift in Burga's work and an important prelude to her mature activity. The emphasis on imagination is more than just a turn away from observation. Like *Drawings with the Eyes Closed*, it is also as a sign of the change in the understanding of the nature of artistic activity: away from the observant eye and from the hand / gesture (understood as means of expressing a unique subjectivity—"the artist's essential self") to a mental, analytical act, which constructs concepts and ideas. It is also an important look at the city as a concrete phenomenon of external reality, which will return a decade later, in the project *Urban Landscape*. This series was exhibited in the Gallery Cultura y Libertad (Lima, 1965) and Gallery Siglo XXI (Buenos Aires, 1966). Its reprints were also shown in the group exhibition *Lima Inhabitada* (Lima, 2005).

Biography



Teresa Burga

Born 1935 in Iquitos, Peru, lives and works in Lima

1962–1964

Art studies at the Catholic University of Peru in Lima

1966–1967

Member of the group *Arte Nuevo*

1968–1970

Fulbright Scholarship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Solo Exhibitions

1965

Lima imaginada, Galería Cultura y Libertad, Lima

Galería Solisol, Lima

1966

Taller 406, Lima

ICPNA, Lima

Lima imaginada, Galería Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires, 1966

1967

Galería Cultura y Libertad, Lima

1972

Autorretrato. Estructura-Informe 9.6.72, ICPNA, Lima

1974

Cuatro mensajes, ICPNA, Lima

1981

Perfil de la mujer peruana, Banco Continental, Lima

2010

Informes. Esquemas. Intervalos. 17.9.10, ICPNA, Lima (exh. cat.)

2011

Die Chronologie der Teresa Burga. Berichte, Diagramme, Intervalle. 29.9.11, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart

Group Exhibitions (selection)

1957

Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo, Lima

1958

Asociación Nacional de Escritores y Artistas, Lima

1959

Instituto Cultural Peruano-Británico, Lima

1960

Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo, Lima

1963

Instituto Cultural Peruano-Británico, Lima

1964

Galería Candido Portinari, Lima

1966

II Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Museo de Arte, Lima

II Salón de Grabado, ICPNA, Lima

Arte Nuevo, Galería El Ombligo de Adán, Lima

Arte Nuevo, Museo de Arte, Lima (exh. cat.)

Primer Salón de Pintura, Museo de Arte, Lima (exh. cat.)

Exposición de Pintura y Escultura del Perú Contemporáneo, Galería Solisol, Lima
 1967
Arte Nuevo, Galería Lirolay, Buenos Aires (exh. cat.)
Veintinueve años de pintura en el Perú (1983-1967), ICPNA, Lima (exh. cat.)
III Salón de Grabado, ICPNA, Lima
 Galería para las Artes, Lima
 1968
18 artistas de vanguardia, Galería Quartier Latin, Lima (exh. cat.)
Nuevas Tendencias en la Plástica Peruana, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and Fundación
 para las Artes, Lima (exh. cat.)
Colección Paul Grinsten de Pintura Peruana Contemporánea, Museo de Arte, Lima (exh. cat.)
Festival Americano de Pintura, II Bienal de Lima, Lima (exh. cat.)
IV Salón de Grabado, ICPNA, Lima
 1969
V Salón de Grabado, ICPNA, Lima 1969
Annual Exhibition, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago
 1970
Annual Exhibition, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago
 1978
 Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima
 1981
1er Coloquio de Arte No-Objetual y Arte Urbano, Medellín (Organisation: Juan Acha)
 1984
Las vanguardias de los años 60', Sala de la Municipalidad de Miraflores, Lima (Curator: Gustavo Buntinx).
 2005
Lima inhabitada, Galería John Harriman, Lima
 Asociación Cultural Peruano Británica, Lima (exh. cat.) (Curator: Manuel Munive)
 2007
La persistencia de lo efímero, Centro Cultural de España, Lima (exh. cat.) (Curators: Miguel A. López,
 Emilio Tarazona)
Arte Nuevo y el fulgor de la Vanguardia, Sala Luis Miró Quesada Garland and Sala Raúl Porras
 Barrenechea, Lima (exh. cat.) (Curators: Miguel A. López, Emilio Tarazona)
 2009
Subversive Practices, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (exh. cat.) (Co-curators: Miguel A. López,
 Emilio Tarazona).
 2011
Untitled, 12th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul (Curators: Jens Hoffman, Adriano Pedrosa)

ANNEX

.....
Identificación (Identification), 1978

Ink and graphite on paper, 2 documents; Courtesy: Teresa Burga; English translation
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BASIC PROPOSAL

BASIC THEME : Identification

Specifications: Account and recompilation of identity data
of a GIVEN SUBJECT.

BASIC FORM: Identity Card

Size: Width – Height of the SUBJECT
Length – Twice the width.

BASIC DEVELOPMENT:

Definition SUBJECT to be identified.

Unknown Data: Name
Address.....

Known Data: Direct evidence Fingerprints
Palm prints
Footprints
Voice
Figure

Indirect evidence description:

Face
Build
Height
Skin color
Hair color
Eye color
Age
Race
Sex
Clothing
Voice

ACQUISITION

SOURCE: Precinct
Witness

PLACE :

DATE :

PRESENTATION

PROPONENTTeresa Burga.....

DATE

PLACE

STRUCTURE REPORT : IDENTIFICATION : BASIC DEVELOPMENT

KNOWN DATA

DIRECT EVIDENCE: (Left by the subject in the precinct)

Fingerprints - Right hand 5 fingers
Left hand 5 fingers

Palm prints - Right hand
Left hand

Footprints - Footwear Size
Pattern
Sole
Heel
Type
Approximate height
Approximate weight

Voice - Characteristics Intensity: Strong
Soft
Pitch: Sharp
Low
Timbre
Inflection or expression
Accent
Vocalization
Gender
Approximate age

Figure - Height
Build
Approximate weight
Approximate age
Gender

INDIRECT EVIDENCE: (Based on the testimony of the witness)

Visual Perception - Face Shape Hair Color
Forehead Type
Eyebrows Length
Eyes Hairstyle
Cheekbones Head Covered
Nose Uncovered
Chin
Mouth
Expression
Approximate age
Build
Approximate height.....
Gender
Race
Particular marks
Clothing

Auditory Perception Voice Characteristics Intensity
Pitch
Timbre
Accent
Expression
Inflection
Pronunciation
Approximate age
Gender
Nationality

Cuatro Mensajes (Four Meassages), 1974
Structure / Diagram

