

Reader (english)

SUBVERSIVE PRACTICES

ART UNDER CONDITIONS OF POLITICAL REPRESSION 60S-80S / SOUTH AMERICA / EUROPE

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Art under Conditions of Political Repression
60s – 80s / South America / Europe
May 30 – August 2, 2009
Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

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Artists

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Idea and Concept

Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ

Cocurators

Ramón Castillo / Paulina Varas (Santiago de Chile / Valparaíso); Fernando Davis (Buenos Aires); Cristina Freire (São Paulo); Sabine Hänsen (Bochum); Miguel Lopez / Emilio Tarazona (Barcelona / Lima); Ileana Pintilie Teleaga (Timisoara); Valentín Roma / Daniel García Andújar (Barcelona); Annamária Szőke / Miklós Peternák (Budapest); Anne Thurmann-Jajes (Bremen)

Content

Introduction	p. 5
Progressive Images. Art in Chile under Dictatorship, 1973-1990 Curators: Ramón Castillo and Paulina Varas	p. 7
Political Bodies, Territories in Conflict Curator: Fernando Davis	p. 11
Alternative Networks Curator: Cristina Freire	p. 19
Collective Actions: Trips Out of Town, 1976 – 2009 Curator: Sabine Hänsngen	p. 23
Crosscurrent Passages Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992 Curators: Miguel López and Emilio Tarazona	p. 25
Between Limits. Escaping into the Concept Curator: Ileana Pintilie Teleaga	p. 35
1969–1979: An Approach to the Confluences between Art, Architecture, and Design in Catalonia Curators: Valentín Roma and Daniel García Andújar	p. 43
Tomorrow is Evidence! Curators: Annamária Szoke und Miklós Peternák	p. 47
Playing with the System Artistic Strategies in the GDR from 1970 to 1990 Curator: Anne Turmann-Jajes	p. 53
Exhibition's Archive: Titles	p. 55
Credits	p. 59
Program Symposium	p. 61

Introduction

Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ

Subversive Practices devotes itself to experimental and conceptual art practices that had established between the nineteen-sixties and eighties in **Europe** and **South America** under the influence of military dictatorships and communist regimes. The exhibition which comprises more than 300 works by around eighty artists has been developed by a team of thirteen international curators in close collaboration with the Kunstverein over a two-year process.

The exhibition's nine sections focus on various contexts and strategies of artistic production along with their positioning vis-à-vis political and cultural repression in the **GDR, Hungary, Romania, the Soviet Union, Spain, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Peru**. Of equal concern here are both the particularities of and the relations between the different temporal and local environments.

The exhibition undertakes the experiment of a shifted cartography and an extended understanding of conceptual art, which has become established well beyond the Anglo-American canon. In this respect, the related interdisciplinary, collaborative, and sociopolitical potentials are particularly emphasized—that is, the paradigm shifts between visual arts, politics, society, sciences, architecture, design, mass media, literature, dance, theater, activism, and so forth, which have been educed by these potentials.

Furthermore, the focus is on artistic practices that not only radically question the conventional concept of art, the institutions, and the relationship between art and public, but that have, at the same time, subversively thwarted structures of censorship and opposed the existing systems of power. Here, body, language, and public space represent the pivotal instruments, of resistance, symbolic and performative in equal measure. The appropriation of media and distribution channels—especially the postal service—has in turn played a distinctive role in the establishment of the widely ramified networks between (Eastern) Europe and Latin America.

In lieu of conceptualizing a comprehensive and homogenized discourse, the exhibition reflects specific questions and problems. The curators each developed individual presentational models for their respective exhibition section. In different ways they approach to the problem in presenting ephemeral, time- and location-specific art forms. Thus, the exhibition can be experienced also on a formal level as a polyphonic parcours, a multidimensional cartography.

The exhibition's network traces back to the research project *Vivid (radical) Memory* (2007), carried out by the University of Barcelona, the Württembergischer Kunstverein and the Center for Culture and Communication in Budapest. *Subversive Practices* again is a project by Württembergischer Kunstverein in collaboration with the Center for Culture and Communication in Budapest and the Arteleku center of culture in San Sebastian. Further events referring to the content of the exhibition will take place in Budapest and San Sebastian.

A publication on *Subversive Practices* will be released in fall 2009.

Progressive Images. Art in Chile under Dictatorship, 1973-1990

Curators

Ramón Castillo and Paulina Varas

Artists

Carlos Altamirano, CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte), Guillermo Deissler, Eugenio Dittborn, Juan Downey, Carlos Leppe, Gonzalo Mezza, Catalina Parra, Lotty Rosenfeld, Cecilia Vincuña

The political, social, and cultural conditions prevailing in Chile during the military dictatorship affected the production of visual art, not only in terms of its signifying capacity but also in its formal construction. As such, in both fixed and moving images we find discontinuities, breaks, divergences, splits, and recompositions, all of which translate into forms of rearticulation of the cognitive and symbolic world. The works in this selection thus reveal a discontinuous sensibility that asks the spectator to recompose the continuity of a narrative that bears witness to suffering, repression, hope, and justice. One of the most recurrent metaphors of this period is that of the body—as in both body/work and body/country—so that what develops in the work is what transpires in the human and geographical territory.

Our aim here is to reconstruct an alphabet of visual memory that addresses the constant tension between memory and forgetting, concealment and revelation, in the Chilean context; but how can this tension be reproduced in the exhibition context?

The context of repression in Chile during the military dictatorship (1973–1990) generated a series of conflicts and excesses that came to be part of the landscape—part of people's everyday lives. The art system made visible these more or less explicit excesses, while the language of art was turned into a silent—silenced—battlefield.

The records of this complex and entropic visual memory—exhibited as fragmented cultural material—do not anticipate any one true temporal or spatial context. The images in progress or visual documents being presented here are awaiting new articulations through which to reconstitute the body of work and, by extension, the body of Chilean history. (Ramón Castillo and Paulina Varas)

WORKS (SELECTION)

All texts by: Ramón Castillo and Paulina Varas

Carlos Altamirano (1954, RCH)

Retratos (Portraits), 1979–2007

Digital print, Courtesy: Carlos Altamirano

Portraits is a work in which the artist composes a collage with a series of colour images taken from the communications media and the collective national imaginary. He then adds to these photographs of missing Chilean prisoners. This is a register or archive in progress that has gone on growing, in the midst of a landscape that traverses the time and space of Chile's fractured recent history.

CADA – Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (1979 – 1985, RCH)

The Colectivo de Acciones de Arte was formed in 1979 by the writer Diamela Eltit, the poet Raúl Zurita, the sociologist Fernando Balcells and the visual artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo. They carried out a series of actions in both public and private spaces, as well as interventions in the press in opposition to the military dictatorship in which they set out to question the idea of the social body as an organism in conflict with its historic memory.

Para no morir de hambre en el arte (In order not to die of hunger in art), 1979

On October 3, 1979, CADA handed out a hundred half-litre bags of milk to the residents of La Granja municipality in Santiago de Chile. As they gave people the milk they asked them to return the bags so that artists could use them as a support for their works, which would be exhibited in the Centro Imagen gallery in Santiago, together with the material documenting this action. The bags were printed with the legend "1/2 litro de leche" (1/2 litre of milk).

Inversión de Escena (Inversion of Scene), 1979

On October 17, 1979, CADA obtained 10 trucks from a national dairy company and drove them in convoy to the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. CADA also covered the façade of the museum with a white cloth to represent the censorship that Chile was living under at the time.

NO+, 1983

The phrase "No+" was used by CADA as the beginning of a series of actions that various people inscribed on walls in different parts of Santiago and in other cities. It was a case of using this slogan to introduce a series of phrases that expressed an anti-dictatorial tendency. The 'NO+' (no more) that originated in this CADA action was extended to the most varied forms of expression and protest at socio-political issues in Chile and other parts of the world.

Guillermo Deisler (1940, RCH–1995, D)

Selection from the Deisler archive

Courtesy: Laura Coll

Together with other Latin American artists, during the 1960s Deisler was actively involved in artistic exchanges, giving rise to a significant body of mail art in the South American continent, which was subsequently extended to the rest of the world. Before living in Europe, Deisler carried out a series of publishing and art projects in Chile, which provided the basis for many of the alternative networks for the circulation of his work and that of other artists in a number of cities.

Eugenio Dittborn (1943, RCH)

Historia de la física o física de la historia (History of physics or physics of history), 1985

Video, color, 18', Courtesy: Eugenio Dittborn

In a video lasting 18 minutes, Eugenio Dittborn alternates popular images with stories of his private life and the action of spilling oil in the desert carried out in 1982. The pouring out and burning of 300 litres of oil in the Atacama Desert was unable to cover more than a small area. The artist does all he can to extend the spill, while the different images that succeed one another in the story, like an audiovisual collage, reconstruct in parallel different situations of supreme bodily effort: in boxing, in swimming, a singer, a woman in childbirth. The video and the fragmentation of the images were structured according to the sequence of Fibonacci numbers.

Juan Downey (1940, RCH–1993, USA)

Moving, 1974

Video, bw, 27', Courtesy: Juan Downey Foundation

From 1973 to 1977 Juan Downey carried out a project entitled *Video Trans America* (VTA), consisting of journeys over the American continent from New York to Tierra del Fuego with a portapak video camera with which he recorded a series of encounters and dérives across the continent. These images were to become the basis for a series of videos, installations and exhibitions in various cities around the world. *Moving* is a highly subjective piece, something like a lived diary of the artist's recognition of the territory he travels over, recording the different collective experiences he had there.

Carlos Leppe (1952, RCH)

El perchero (The clothes rack), 1975

Foto, bw, Courtesy: Carlos Leppe

Carlos Leppe binds his limbs with tape that covers him and denies his corporality. This armour both censors it and protects it from the exterior. His chest is bared in the middle of this protective layer to announce the ambiguity of the eroticized, sodomized and repressed body, in an analogy with the body of Chile.

Gonzalo Mezza (1949, RCH)

El Deshielo de Venus (The Melting of Venus), 1972-1979

Photo and photo copie, Courtesy: Gonzalo Mezza

An exhibition project in which Mezza utilizes the Venus de Milo, turning it into a figure of ice which then melts before the spectators' eyes. This is the melting of a "Tricolour Venus": an allusion to the Chilean flag.

Catalina Parra (RA; 1940, RCH)

Imbunches, 1977

Series of 3 graphic, Courtesy: Pedro Sanchez

Parra produced the series of works entitled *Imbunches* in the late 1970s. Based on a mythological figure from southern Chile, she composes a series of graphic works using newspapers, mechanical photographs (Kodalith) and seams, stitching, etc. Her work sets out to represent altered and reconstructed bodies that reflect the pain of mutation and helplessness.

Lotty Rosenfeld (1943, RCH)

Cautivos (Captives), 1989

Video, color, 12', Courtesy: Lotty Rosenfeld

This video composed on the basis of a series of extracts from different communications media, dealing with social issues relating to the legalities and illegalities of a social process that a democratic government is starting to address. This is a visual reflection on the subjects and the communities that are creating the alternatives for the social to be transformed into a crisis that oscillates between states of alienation, lucidity and hope.

Cecilia Vicuña (USA; 1948, RCH)

Cecilia Vicuña's archive on "Artist for Democracy"

Courtesy: Cecilia Vicuña

From 1973 on Vicuña, who was living in London since 1971, carried out a series of art projects, notably as organizer of the actions by the group "Artist for Democracy", which ran campaigns drawing attention to the atrocities by the military dictatorship in Chile.

Political Bodies, Territories in Conflict

Curator

Fernando Davis

Artists

Carlos Ginzburg, Luis Pazos, Juan Carlos Romero, Edgardo Antonio Vigo, Horacio Zabala

The convulsed scenario that took shape in Argentina in the nineteen-sixties and early seventies was characterized by growing political radicalization and confrontation, the turbulent signs of which sparked and mobilized the realms of visual art. In this context, art and politics seemed to beat at the same (accelerated) pace: in their bid to intervene in the dizzying course of a traversed history, and in its precipitate transition impelled by the imperative of revolution. In March 1976, yet another military coup brutally cancelled that political project. During those years, art had to articulate new critical strategies with which to resist or survive the horror systematically unleashed by state terrorism. Body and territory were the two principal dimensions invoked by the avant-garde in response to this state of affairs. The body—as a space in which to articulate and associate, in a confrontational manner, both individual and collective experience, the private and the public—was interpreted as a *dispositif* of political action that was capable of activating its dissident function in directions that fractured and subverted the precepts of meaning imposed by the repressive apparatus. The practice of “signaling” urban space set out to tactically dismantle its measured order, introducing a poetic *dérive* where the urban economy was naturalizing complex and asymmetrical power relations, establishing hierarchies, and drawing and administering boundaries and itineraries. In this sense, body and territory designed—in their strategic appropriations and interpellations, in the political projections of their trajectories and positions in conflict—a double-faced mobile cartograph that inscribed its critical breadth and depth in the multiplied citing of the violence and its effects on out-of-the-ordinary identities and geographies and in the radical bid to undermine governmental order, by means of semantic dissolution and the disordering of meaning activated by poetic alterity. (Fernando Davis)

WORKS (SELECTION)

All texts, unless otherwise noted: Fernando Davis

Carlos Ginzburg (F; 1946, RA)

Árbol (Tree), 1970

Photos from the exhibition *Escultura, Follaje y Ruidos* (Sculpture, Foliage and Noises), Plaza Rubén Darío, Buenos Aires, each 8 x 24 cm, Courtesy: Carlos Ginzburg

Ginzburg's intervention at *Sculpture, Foliage and Noises* consisted of affixing a sign on Plaza Rubén Darío's trees printed with the word "Árbol" (tree).

Vivienda otoñal (Autumn Housing), 1971

Photo and Text, 18 x 24 cm, Courtesy: Carlos Ginzburg

Ginzburg wrote about this work:

"My very clean and bourgeois house, located at 462 9 Street, was occupied by the wind and autumn leaves. I threw hundreds of dried leaves into every space in my house, taking possession of tables, beds, all parquet and tiled flooring, bathroom (...), wardrobes, TV, radio, bookshelves, refrigerator, record player, paintings and sculptures, boiler, kitchen and other obvious sectors in a house. I also covered myself with autumn leaves. For about an hour I carried out my daily life normally, but invaded by leaves. The experience culminated with the arrival of my family and their insults and desperation caused by my work."

Tierra (Earth), 1971

Photos from the exhibition *Arte de Sistemas* (Systems Art), Museo de Arte Moderno/CAYC, Buenos Aires, 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: Archive Carlos Ginzburg

In July 1971, Ginzburg participated in the exhibition *Systems Art* in the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires. Ginzburg placed two large posters on the wall of a wasteland, located in front the museum displaying the following text: "An unexpected aesthetic experience is being developed inside here. But . . . what does it consist of? In order to get to know the hidden work, you are invited to go up to the ninth floor of the Museo de Arte Moderno, Corrientes 1530 (right in front), and discover, looking through the upper window, what is in fact on the ground." It was the word "Tierra" (earth).

Ginzburg: 10 ideas de arte pobre (Ginzburg: 10 Ideas of Poor Art), 1971

Portfolio with ten projects, Ed. La Flaca Grabada, La Plata, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata

The portfolio *Ginzburg: 10 Ideas of Poor Art* includes a sequence of "ecological art" projects introduced by a selection of texts by the Italian critic Germano Celant about *Arte Povera*. Some of these projects (none of them carried out) suppose violent destructions of nature disturbing its designation as "ecological": like the proposal to melt several Antarctic icebergs with a flamethrower, or to evaporate Nahuel Huapi Lake, located in Argentinean Patagonia.

Text by the artist published in the portfolio:

"MELTINGS

The kinetic energy of molecules in motion is a function of temperature, and as both are modified they modify in turn the states of aggregation of matter. In line with this principle, and with a powerful flamethrower, I am going to melt a number of Antarctic ice floes that have broken off the Ice Shelf. In the course of the 'ecological expedition' on an old whaler I am going to project streams of fire (50 m long) against the spectacular icebergs: as the strength of their molecules is weakened they will be converted into liquid water.

EVAPORATIONS

Evaporation is the transformation of a liquid into gases and the diffusion of these in the atmosphere as a result of the application of heat, the fire of a flamethrower in this case. Accordingly, from a boat, I am going to invade with fire the green waters of the lake 'NAHUEL HUAPI'. The degree of evaporation will be very rapid, sending up an immense cloud of water

vapour in continuous ascent. I plan to repeat these vaporizations on the 'lake of Palermo' and on the levels of the 'Atlantic Ocean.'

MOTHER EARTH

An exploration of the intrinsic structure of terrestrial matter in a geopschoanalytical dimension: I am going to dig in the fertile plains of the Pampas a gigantic uterus three kilometres long.

STELLAR SIGNAL ON PLANET EARTH

An exploration of the intrinsic structure of terrestrial matter in a cosmic dimension: I am going to dig in the San Lu s desert a gigantic star with 8 (eight) points (three km. long each point).

MAR

The word MAR floating in the Pacific Ocean. The three letters that constitute it will respectively be 100 metres high. They will be constructed of welded or riveted steel plates, and composed of several watertight compartments so that they won't sink if a boat holes them with its keel. Since they will be subject to violent stresses they will be held in place, thanks to an anchoring system, by enormous iron bolts driven deep into the sand or silt of the seabed. In addition, they will have flashing lights at night (white for all three letters, the number of seconds between two flashes will encrypt the word MAR; these will prevent boats from sweeping MAR away) powered by a battery for electric lighting. Finally, each letter will have a specially adapted audio mechanism, intermittently emitting the phoneme MAR, which will function with the rise and fall of the waves.

FLOWER

I am going to plant in the 'ALMIRANTE BROWN' park four mixed beds of multicoloured flowers, which will be laid out to form the word FLOR. During the growth period I will tend the soil, the plants and the flowers with the operations necessary for them to flourish.

ARIADNE'S THREAD IN THE SUBTROPICAL FOREST OF MISIONES

I am going to set out on an 'ECOLOGICAL SAFARI' into the subtropical forest of Misiones, travelling extensively and at random through the bush for several weeks. In the course of the journey we will progressively unwind a red cord (total length 1000 km) in the most heterogeneous sectors of the jungle; almost impenetrable areas of bush; undergrowth; creepers; huge tree trunks; lianas; darnel; grass; swamps; at ground level, on the gloomy forest floor where few plants can survive, or through the tree tops where birds live; from the waterways to the ruins of the Jesuit Missions and amid orchids, waterfalls and millions of butterflies.

MAN AND PREHISTORY

At Punta Norte in Peninsula Vald s, in the province of Chubut, is the most important colony of elephant seals in the world. The American naturalist William G. Conway, director of the Bronx Zoo in New York, visited the colony in December 1964 and described the time he spent there as 'a day in prehistory.' On the pebble beaches elephant seals rest and sunbathe, untroubled by the proximity of people. Therefore, I am going to walk along the beaches occupied by the colony (3 km), scattering human skulls among the ancient beasts.

BONFIRE TO THE AURORA BOREALIS

One of the most prodigious spectacles nature offers is the aurora borealis: an enormous display of light illuminates the firmament; it rises and falls in great arcs, in constant motion, the rays appear here and there or leap so swiftly that they are called dancers. With the first crackles of electricity that announce 'Eos', I light a giant bonfire made of tree trunks. Then they will be born together as magically influenced [sic], though separated by the ice, the Fire and the Aurora. I intend to repeat this bonfire evoking the Midnight Sun and the evening rainbow.

NOCTURNAL BONFIRES ON THE PATAGONIAN COAST

Over several thousand kilometres of the Patagonian coast, solitary beaches extend in unbroken succession, their waters of an intense blue and high salinity (Atlantic Ocean). The nocturnal bonfires will be set out from 'El C ndor' to 'Rada Tilly', spaced at a distance of 100 m from one to another and with a height of 20 to 30 m each depending on the size of the trunks, with a conical form. When the sun goes down the mythical bonfires will be lit and fire

will take possession of bays, gulfs, isthmuses, caves, cliffs, peninsulas, beaches and infinite horizons." (translated by Graham Thomson)

La pirámide de la muerte (Death Pyramid), Published in *Hexágono '71* cf, 1973

Artist's text

"Death Pyramid. Project presented to the Eighth Paris Biennial

1: For a month I will remove, using a truck, the dead flowers left in the rubbish bins of the Paris cemeteries.

2: I will accumulate a gruesome and foul-smelling pyramid one hundred metres high, in the context of the Biennial.

3: I will throw on the floral pyramid the skeletons of human beings, spiders, bats and scorpions.

4: I will throw on the floral pyramid hundreds of books: on psychological terror, on political terror, on genocides and wars, on the economic and social situation of the Third World, on nihilist philosophies, on vanished cultures, etc." (Carlos Ginzburg, translated by Graham Thomson)

Hexágono '71

Artist publication, Ed. Edgardo Antonio Vigo, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata
Edgardo Vigo edited the experimental journal *Hexágono '71* from 1971 to 1975. Toward 1973 it was launched as a platform of circulation of essays, "projects to be undertaken," "poor" graphic material, mail art, *señalamientos*, and political slogans brought together in loose sheets and diverse formats, without any apparent order, inside an envelope.

Luis Pazos (1940, RA)

Hacia un arte del pueblo (Toward an art of the people), 1972

Text in the catalogue of the exhibition *Arte e Ideología en CAYC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology. CAYC in the Open Air), 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: Juan Carlos Romero

"The art of the people should be: A) CLEAR: That is to say, direct, accessible, comprehensible to everyone. B) ETHICAL: In other words, the content must take precedence over the form, with each work having a clear function of consciousness raising. C) NATIONAL: The subjects should relate to the reality of the country in question. D) COMMITTED: Through her work the artist should constantly question the forms of Power, be it cultural, political, economic, social or religious. E) VIOLENT: Like every expression of peoples struggling for their liberation".
(Luis Pazos)

Monumento al prisionero político desaparecido (Monument to the Disappeared Political Prisoner), 1972

Photo of the exhibition *Arte e Ideología en CAYC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology. CAYC in the Open Air), Plaza Roberto Arlt, Buenos Aires, 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: the artist

In September 1972, Pazos participated in the exhibition *Art and Ideology: CAYC in the Open Air* with three tombstones entitled *Monument to the Disappeared Political Prisoner*. During the exhibition, three anonymous persons lay down in front the tombstones, occupying the place of the absent bodies. Several works from the exhibition referred to the massacre of Trelew, the shooting of sixteen guerrillas imprisoned in a prison in Rawson in retaliation for an escape attempt. The exhibition was closed by police two days after its opening and the works were abducted.

Transformaciones de masas en vivo (Transformations of Living Masses), 1973

Series of 8 photos, 36 x 24 cm, Photos: Carlos Mendiburu Eliçabe, Courtesy: the artist

Transformations of Living Masses is a sequence of photographs of "live sculptures," in which a group of Edgardo Antonio Vigo's students designed with their bodies, in accordance with instructions given by Pazos, an average repertoire of forms. An order to the bodies was not only reflected in the police or military repression, but also in the disciplinary order at the interior of revolutionary armed organizations. Luis Pazos presented the work in the context of the exhibition *Art in Change*, initiated within several days of Héctor Cámpora's assumption of the presidency and the amnesty granted to the political prisoners.

Juan Carlos Romero (1931, RA)

Segmento de línea recta (Segment of Straight Line), 1972 / 2009

6 photographs (with felt tip), each 36 x 24 cm, Courtesy: the artist

Artist's text, September 1972

PROPOSAL: Taking as a point of departure the shortest distance (a segment of a straight line), the linking of places in the city of Buenos Aires that have a direct impact on me and on the spectator by way of objective facts or other events of a subjective nature.

RELATIONS:

(A) A place where I carry out my everyday activities as an expert in electronic communications and obtain some of what I need to live.

(B) A place where I show part of my artistic output.

(C) A place where I show the other part of my artistic output.

(D) The place where they reside, until the courts determine their final destination, arrested on what the police regard as serious charges.

1st CONCLUSION OF THE EMITTER: The possibility of joining by way of the shortest distance places that belong to our reality and which we must acknowledge as integral parts of a structure that should ENGAGE US IN A PERMANENT COMMITMENT.

2nd CONCLUSION OF THE RECEIVER:

(translated by Graham Thomson)

Destrucción y exaltación del cuerpo (Destruction and Exaltation of the Body) I-III, 1972

3 Photocopies on cardboard, each 70 x 80 cm, Courtesy: Private collection

In *Destruction and Exaltation of the Body*, Romero contrasts the picture (taken from graphic media) of an agonized or dead man with an advertisement for a pornographic film, which shows the embracing and naked bodies of a man and a woman next to the word "Prohibido!" (prohibited!).

A third panel displays a quote from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno: "The love-hate relationship with the body colors all more recent culture. The body is scorned and rejected as something inferior, and at the same time desired as something forbidden, objectified, and alienated . . . The love of nature and destiny expressed in totalitarian propaganda is simply a veiled reaction to failed civilization. Men cannot escape from their body and sing its praises when they cannot destroy it. The 'tragic' philosophy of the Fascist is the ideological party which precedes the real blood wedding." (Adorno/Horkheimer)

El juego lúgubre (The Gloomy Play), 1972

Photo; Text in the catalogue of the exhibition *Arte e Ideología en CAYC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology. CAYC in the Open air), 16,4 x 22,5 cm, Courtesy: the artist

„Using a rope in the form of a loop with a sliding knot at the upper end and at the lower part ending in a point. Two players (A) and (B) are needed. How to Play: The two players must be dialectical opposites. Player (A) will be at the upper end of the rope with (B), of whom there are many, at the lower end. In order for (A) to obtain a forfeit on and go in the slipknot he or she has to confront (B), that are many, and have attitudes opposed to his or her interests. After obtaining the forfeit, the person who was (A) may not play again”.

“My conceptual proposals are oriented toward the participation of the spectator-actor in issues related to national reality and therefore includes the verifying of the objective process, taking into account facts or situations of our country. But here is also a process that is, at times, not so easy to confirm, and it is that of violence. Here I would like to warn those able to contribute something with which to verify this situation that it is sometimes so subtle as to become invisible. Violence must be applied in our proposals, as one of the many forms of reducing repressive violence.”

(translated by Graham Thomson)

Violencia (Violence), 1973

Photo of the exhibition *Violencia (Violence)*, CAYC, Courtesy: the artist

In April 1973, Romero occupied the headquarters of the CAYC with an installation entitled *Violencia* (Violence). He covered the walls and floor of the main exhibition room with posters sporting the word

"Violencia"; in a second space, he brought together fragments of texts by various authors, proposed as partial definitions of the terms; finally, in a third sector, the artist displayed front covers of a sensationalist magazine, with photographs of the police repression in Argentina, and the word "violence" reiterated in bold headlines.

Los juegos diabólicos (The Diabolical Games), 1976

6 Photos, Courtesy: Private collection

Los emergentes (The Emergents), 1976

6 Photos, Courtesy: Private collection

In *The Diabolical Games* a group of children are dragging each other through the grass; in *The Emergents* they are coming out of the river at Hudson Beach. In contrast with other projects by the artist in which violence is referred to directly, in these works Romero alludes to it in a more subtle way.

Violencia (Violence), 1977

Artist book, Courtesy: the artist

In 1977 Juan Carlos Romero secretly made an artist book in which he revived several elements presented in his production from the early years of the decade: For example a text taken from Leonardo Da Vinci's *Breviarios* (Breviaries) (1492), which Romero distributed during 1972 in a series of flyers, where violence is characterized as consisting of four elements: weight, force, motion, and impact:

"VIOLENCE IS COMPOSED OF FOUR THINGS:
WEIGHT - FORCE - MOVEMENT - BLOW
THE MOST POWERFUL OF THESE IS THE ONE WITH THE SHORTEST DURATION
1 – EVERY WEIGHT WANTS TO DESCEND BY THE MOST DIRECT ROUTE
2 – WEIGHT WANTS TO ENDURE
3 – WEIGHT IS OVERCOME BY FORCE
4 – FORCE IS VIOLENCE
5 – SLOWNESS INCREASES IT, VELOCITY DIMINISHES IT
6 – ITS POTENCY INCREASES WITH CONSTRAINTS
7 – NOTHING MOVES WITHOUT FORCE
8 – FORCE COMES FROM MOVEMENT – IT HAS THREE FUNCTIONS: TO PULL – TO PUSH – TO IMMOBILIZE
9 – MOVEMENT COMES FROM THE DEATH OF FORCE
10 – THE BLOW COMES FROM THE DEATH OF MOVEMENT
11 – THE BLOW IS THE SON OF MOVEMENT AND THE GRANDSON OF FORCE

LEONARDO DA VINCI - BREVIARIES - 1492

J. C. ROMERO - FOR A STRATEGY OF VIOLENCE - 1972

BS. AS. AUGUST 1972" (translation by Graham Thomson)

Edgardo Antonio Vigo (1928-1997, RA)

Señalamiento I: Manoj de semáforos (A Handful of Traffic Lights), 1968

Photo, 24 x 36 cm, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata

In October 1968, through local media, Vigo made the surprising announcement of his first *señalamiento* entitled *A Handful of Traffic Lights*. The proposal consisted of a precise action: to sign an ordinary urban object (traffic lights) from the point of view of its aesthetic potential. In *Manifiesto: First White Non-Presentation*, he wrote: "The practical-utilitarian functionality of some constructions must be signed and thus produce questions that (...) approach (...) from an aesthetic digression (...).

Manifiesto: Primera No-Presentación Blanca (Manifesto: First White Non-Presentation), 1968

Text by the artist

„With this 'First White Non-Presentation' which will be held on October 25 at 8 p.m. on Avenida 1 corner 60, and is given the title of 'A Handful of Traffic Lights' a series of 'Señalamientos' is set in motion in order to exploit to the full the possibilities of communications media. Making a sum of two negative factors (non-poetic-image plus non-visual-image), Edgardo Antonio Vigo, who is the author of the experience, generated a

positive result under the equality of real image. The skin that is producing in the world today a constant bombardment of images that alienate being to the point of making it lose its individuality and its profound exploration of aesthetically important factors, so demands it. The functionality of the practical-utilitarian character of certain constructions should be signed so as to produce questions that do not arise from mere vertical utilitarian approach but from the 'aesthetic digression'. Faced with a society that is based on form-function, which exploits the 'possession of the thing' as goal and end, and has taken control of the communications media to grow but to advertise itself, the 'Señalamientos' will produce: A halt before the 'gratuitous act of aesthetic digression', an admission of 'community ownership', and the anonymity of the constructors.

IT IS PROPOSED

Not to construct more alienating images but to sign those that without having aesthetic intent as an end make it possible.

A revulsion in order that the 'depersonalized' man that constructed it observe 'personalized' on that construction being signed.

A return to the everyday urbanistic as activation of society toward the aesthetic process.

IT IS PROCLAIMED

The street hosting the 'signed object' presents to man's constant aesthetic structures the possibility of being present in our daily transit rather than being 'sheltered' or 'hidden' in museums or galleries. The contemporary being leads an urban, not a home-centred 'life'. The collective aspect of living, the demographic, are factors that art must not fail to bear witness to. They are signals that mark an era. But these should not "represent" but "present". Human movement, the boulevards, propaganda, useful objects, which are "outside" and not "inside" the architectonic habitat, are "current issues", but man alienates himself with the souvenir—i.e. picture, sculpture, object, library—and its possessive sense and the physical environment diminished by containing all these things that stifle him. Consequently, man must arrive at "mental communication" by way of the senses. Liberation is in the measure to which man shake off the "heavy baggage of the possessive concept of the thing" so as to be an observer-active participant of a "collective everyday signaled element". (Edgardo Antonio Vigo; translated by Graham Thomson)

Obras (in) completas ([In] Complete Works), 1969

Mail Art, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata

In 1969 Edgardo Vigo started his "projects to realize." One of the first consisted of the distribution by post—to a group of artists and friends—of an envelope with four labels printed with the legend (*In*) *Complete Works*, including instructions for their free use: "You are receiving these four headings of the (*In*) *Complete Works* respecting the theory of an art of participation and a transfer of some percentages of the creation. Place them where you desire."

Señalamiento V: Un paseo visual a la Plaza Rubén Darío (A Visual Walk around Plaza Rubén Darío), 1970

Postcard; 2 photos of the exhibition *Escultura, Follaje y Ruidos* (Sculpture, Foliage and Noises), each 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata

In 1970 Vigo participated in the exhibition *Sculpture, Foliage and Noises*, organized in the Plaza Rubén Darío in Buenos Aires. Vigo distributed among the audience a piece of chalk and a printed card with the "minimum keys" of a "project to be undertaken: "take a piece of chalk, and use it to mark a cross or the limit of one or several paving stones, or chalk up the surface determined by you. Place yourself in the demarked area and turn around 360°, note what you have seen, draw your conclusions. Ultimately you have made *A Visual Walk around Plaza Rubén Darío*."

Señalamiento IX: Enterramiento y desenterramiento de un taco de madera (Burial and Exhumation of a Wooden Piece), 1971-1972

Photos: Juan José Esteves, each 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: Centro de Arte Experimental Vigo, La Plata

Señalamiento IX articulates two sequences of actions having taken place, in each case, before two "eyewitnesses." The first stage of the action was held on December 28, 1971. Vigo marked an area of his studio's patio with a banderole showing an arrow that was pointing toward a specific place. There he dug a hole and buried a wooden piece of cedar. Then he edited a documentation with his signature and that of the two witness who attested that it had happened. Also, Vigo assumed the commitment of exhuming the object the following year, on the same date, at the same hour. Thus, on December 28,

1972 the second stage of *Señalamiento IX* took place: Vigo proceeded to exhume the wooden piece. In the act was written: "I certify presently that Edgardo Antonio Vigo has proceeded in the property located at 1187 15 Street in La Plata City, on December 28, 1972 at 7 p.m., to exhume a wooden piece of cedar whose dimensions are 7 x 14 x 28 centimeters, executing the acquired commitment when it took place on December 28, 1971 at 7 PM its burial, concluding this way the called *Ninth Señalamiento '71-72*." Both acts were later signed by a notary.

Señalamiento IX appropriates the bureaucratic conventions of the judicature exposing its codes and protocols. At the same time, in years of growing political conflict, the two actions seem to have advanced the even more violent years yet to come, where countless people disappeared and people to defense themselves buried books that could endanger their lives or those of their dear and fellow beings.

Horacio Zabala (1943, RA)

Este papel es una cárcel / This Paper Is a Jail, 1972

Photo, 24 x 18 cm, Courtesy: the artist

In 1972 Zabala had a photograph taken of his hand while writing the sentences "Este papel es una cárcel. This paper is a jail" on a piece of paper.

Art Is a Jail, 1972

Paper work, 110 x 35 cm, Courtesy: the artist

Art Is a Jail shows the repeated impressions of a rubber stamp superimposed on tracing paper, replicating the title of the work.

Revisar / Censurar (Checking/Censuring), 1974

Paper work, 5 pieces, each 15,5 x 23 cm, Courtesy: the artist

The works presents a sequence of school maps of South America, being intervened upon by the repeated imprint of two rubber stamps with the words "Revisar" (checking) and "Censurar" (censuring). The last map of the series is covered almost entirely.

300 metros de cinta negra para enlutar una plaza pública (300 Meters of Black Ribbon to Put a Public Square into Mourning), 1972

Photo of the exhibition *Arte e Ideología en CAYC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology. CAYC in the Open Air), 23,6 x 16 cm, Courtesy: the artist

Zabala's intervention in *Art and Ideology: CAYC in the Open Air* consisted of three hundred meters of black plastic ribbon with which he surrounded the perimeter wall of the square at which the exhibition was being held.

Anteproyecto..., 1974

Series, pencil on tracing paper, each 35 x 50 cm, Courtesy: the artist

Anteproyecto de cárcel sobre columna para artistas
Draft of a prison on column for artists

Anteproyecto de cárcel subterránea para artistas
Draft of an underground prison for artists

Anteproyecto de cárcel flotante para artistas
Draft of a floating prison for artists

Alternative Networks

Curator

Cristina Freire

Artists

Ângelo de Aquino, Artur Barrio, Ulises Carrión, Dalibor Chatrny, Attila Csernik, Roberto Evangelista, Fernando França Cocchiarale, Paulo Herkenhoff, Jirí Kocman, Gastão de Magalhães, Clemente Padín, Leticia Parente, Júlio Plaza, Féliks Podsiadly, Petr Stembera, Regina Vater, Krzysztof Wodiczko

Back in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, alternative networks of exchange brought together artists from different countries. In those days, the postal service was the privileged medium of communication in this extended circuit, unaware of the art market and the concerns of the hegemonic art centers. In Brazil, one of the destinations for this flow of artistic exchanges was a public university museum that, despite the military dictatorship ruling the country during that period, became a meeting place for artists and an exhibition space for work from around the world. Of the many European artists who took part in its exhibitions and events, most were from Eastern Europe and, like their Latin American peers, they too were in search of strategies with which to circumvent the censorship imposed by a dictatorial regime. Photography as a record of performances, actions, and situations was a significant presence in that network. Virtually anyone could set up a clandestine darkroom at home, and images of the art experience, often involving the artist's own body, could be sent by post to any place in the world. In this flow of exchanges, the body and the actions of the artists present shared tactics of symbolic resistance, articulate art and life, and reveal, even today, a stimulating utopian potential. (Cristina Freire)

WORKS

Courtesy for all works: Collection: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil

All texts, unless otherwise noted: Cristina Freire

Ângelo de Aquino (1945, BR)

O nadador, aquele que sabe nadar (Swimmer able to swim there), o. J.

Series of four photos, bw, each 24 x 30,1 cm

Artur Barrio (1945, P)

Sit.....City.....y.....Country... (Sit.....City.....and.....Country...), 1970

Series of slides on DVD

Commenced in 1969, the *Situations* were transitory actions, made of perishable, precarious materials and usually performed in a public space.

Sit.....City.....and.....Country... is the record of the *Situation* in which the artist anonymously placed bundles of loaves in very different places around Rio de Janeiro at the height of the political repression. The bound bundles of loaves provoked a sense of strangeness in passersby, and were described by the artist as “an ephemeral medium of condensed energy.”

A constelação da tartaruga (The constellation of the turtle), 1981–82

Series of sixteen photos, bw, variable dimensions

Ulises Carrión (1941, MEX – 1989, NL)

To Be or Not to Be, 1976

Photo, bw, 29,1 x 20,8 cm

The work *To Be or Not to Be* is the photographic record of the performance together with its description. The performance took place in the Kontakt Gallery in Antwerp, and its recording was then sent to Brazil. In this work, the artist read the soliloquy from *Hamlet*, and as each word was uttered a little ball was dropped onto the floor.

Dalibor Chatrny (1925, CS)

Mirror relations at the opposite horizon, ca. 1973

Series of nine photos, each 12,9 x 17,8 cm

Fernando França Cocchiarale (1951, BR)

Sequela (Aftermath), 1974

Photo, 23,5 x 14,5 cm

Attila Csernik (1941, YU)

Experiments, 1974

Series of eight photos, each 29,8 x 21,1 or 21,1 x 29,8 cm

Roberto Evangelista (1946, BR)

Mater Dolorosa, 1979

Color, sound, 11' 48"

In this poetic essay, filmed at Lake Arara on the Rio Negro (Amazon), the artist reflects on the “creation and survival of forms.” The critical content of the video refers to the destruction of the environment and the economic exploitation of the local population. The concepts of “the country drowning” and “the shipwreck of culture,” derived from Hélio Oiticica, are poetically materialized by the calabashes, a species of fruit typical of the region, which float in the river and are molded by the water current.

Paulo Herkenhoff (1949, BR)

Estômago Embrulhado (Sickness), 1975

Jejum (Fasting), Black-and-white, silent, 07' 20"

Sobremesa (Desert), Black-and-white, sound, 02' 41"

In *Fasting* the artist chews a number of newspaper cuttings about censorship until he starts to gag, then swallows them, washed down with saliva and printer's ink, finally absorbing the content of the news reports in his body. *Desert* is a proposition of eating an artwork. The work chosen was one of the "Clandestine Headlines" ("Painter Teaches God to Paint"), by Antônio Manoel printed in the newspaper *O Dia* on May 29, 1973.

Jirí Kocman (1947, CS)

The End, 1973

Series of two photos, each 18 x 13,2 cm

Gastão de Magalhães (1953, BR)

Deslocamento do Gramado do Parque (Displacement of the Lawn from the Park), 1974

Series of eight photos, each 18,2 x 24 cm

The photographs are records of an action performed by the artist during the 6th Young Contemporary Art show (1972) in the University of São Paulo's Museum of Contemporary Art. In the action, which the artist recorded himself, lawn from the garden of the museum was taken inside the exhibition gallery, thus isolating and focusing attention on an everyday activity and critically evoking the tension between the inside and outside of the art system.

Circulação Postal (Postal circuit), 1976

Series of two photos, each 24 x 18 cm

This is Poem, 1975–2008

Series of four photos, each 29,7 x 21,1 cm

Clemente Padín (1939, ROU)

O artista a serviço da comunidade (The Artist in the Service of the Community), 1974

Series of four photos, each 26 x 107 cm

A photographic record of the project was submitted to the exhibition *Visual Poetics* in the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of São Paulo, which consisted in having an artist guide the visitors around the exhibition and comment on the works on show. At the time, Clement Padín had been imprisoned by the military dictatorship in Uruguay, and the piece was carried out by Francisco Iñarra, a Spanish artist living in exile in Brazil. We see here the application of the concept of *Non-objectual Poetry* developed by the artist, an art without an object, a "poem" that is made concrete by action.

Letícia Parente (1930–1991, BR)

Marca Registrada (Trademark), 1975

Black-and-white, sound, 11' 44"

The works of the first Brazilian video artists are characterized by their radicalism in the use of images of a social and political body, in contrast to a self-referential narcissism. Here the artist stitches the inscription "Made in Brazil," focused in close-up, on the sole of her foot with a needle.

Júlio Plaza (1938, E – 2003, BR)

Evolução/Revolução (Evolution/Revolution), 1971

Series of ten photos, each 24 x 18 cm

Feliks Podsiadły (1936, PL)

Metamorphosis, 1977

Series of twelve photos, each, 24 x 18,2 cm

The experience of transculturality, issues raised by anthropology, and the limits of the artist's own identity are all present in this series of photographs by the Polish artist Feliks Podsiadły, in which the European transforms himself into an African, in a metamorphosis that generates an intense, expressive charge. The portraits of the artist have an aura that is made explicit in the accompanying letter, in which he writes: "The inspiration for this work came from living for four years in Africa. The form of the work does not interest me. What I am interested in is the change in a man in the course of his mental development."

Petr Štembera (1945, CS)

Flagellation, 1974

Series of two photos, each, je 24 x 18 cm

About this work, the artist wrote: "Danger and violence are essential elements of the world we live in . . . I want people to understand that these elements are not just negative but also positive, so that only by confronting them it is possible to glimpse the limits and the possibility of overcoming them. I use my own body in dangerous actions because it is always my body that collides head on with the world."

Eating seeds during some days of asceticism, 1973

Series of two photos, each 24,2 x 18,2 cm

Regina Vater (1943, BR)

PlayFEUillage, 1974

Series of twelve photos, each 16,7 x 22,6 cm

This work is a photographic storyboard for a film in black and white. Antonio Pitanga, an actor who appears in a number of films by Glauber Rocha and is a very important figure in Brazilian Cinema Novo, marks out on the pavement of a walk in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris the framework for the filming of a dance of light and shadow, in a clear reference to the precarious and transient nature of art and life.

Krzysztof Wodiczko (1943, PL)

Vehicle, 1973

Series of three photos, variable dimensions

As the artist wrote of this work:

"The vehicle moves in a uniform motion in a straight line and in one direction only. The artist, walking up and down the tilting platform, causes the seesaw movement, the energy thus generated is transmitted by a system of cables and gears to the wheels which, as a consequence, the vehicle moves forward. The vehicle is for the exclusive use of the artist . . . 'On the road of progress,' picking up speed on the 'highway to a better future,' the intelligentsia was to contribute to the rational progress. Progress was guaranteed, on the condition that everyone, including artists and intellectuals, devote themselves to that machine and accept it as a given. Within the machine, it was they who would revive and inspire it . . ."

In: Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles: Writings, Projects, Interviews* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 76.

Collective Actions: Trips out of Town, 1976–2009

Curator

Sabine Hänsen

Artists

Collective Actions (Andrej Monastyrskij, Nikolaj Panitkov, Nikita Alekseev, Elena Elagina, Igor' Makarevič, Georgij Kizeval'ter, Sergej Romaško, Sabine Hänsen)

The performances by the group Collective Actions played a significant role in the development of an alternative space for communication in Russian-Soviet culture during late communism. It facilitated the self-organization of a subcultural art scene apart from the state-controlled cultural sector, access to which was regulated by strict censorship policies. The common objective of the “Trips out of Town,” having taken place since 1976, is the collaborative journey of a group of participants into the rural countryside around Moscow—usually into a wide, empty field, that is, away from the metropolitan sphere imbued with symbols and into an “empty” natural space. Often a field of untouched snow has been the stage for mysterious Minimalist actions that fathom elementary spatiotemporal structures of perception.

For the Collective Actions, the exploration of the Soviet ideological culture of texts, manifestos, and slogans is not, however, reduced to the instantaneous perception of a situation. In fact, the situative gesture of “experience” more closely equates to a new impulse in an endlessly interpretative spiral in which text and situation enhance each other again and again.

The “installation as diagram” enables the exhibition visitors to more thoroughly study the multifaceted documentary materials as an intricate web of interrelationships.

By opening a “planetary” perspective through recent satellite images—upon which the respective localities are marked at which the Collective Actions have taken place over the course of thirty years—the artistic reflection of ideology and power in late communism is extended to comprehend contemporary processes of globalization. (Sabine Hänsen)

Online Archive of the Collective Actions

<http://conceptualism.letov.ru>

Find a selection of texts by the Collective Actions at:

<http://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/programme/2009/exhibitions/subversive/sections/sabine-haensgen>

Crosscurrent Passages

Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992

Curators

Miguel López, Emilio Tarazona

Artists

Hugo Salazar del Alcázar, Lucy Angulo, Luis Arias Vera, Teresa Burga, Jorge Eielson, Rafael Hastings, Taller E.P.S. Huayco, Francisco Mariotti, Alfredo Márquez, Yvonne von Möllendorff, Grupo Paréntesis, Herbert Rodríguez, Jesús Ruiz Durand, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Juan Javier Salazar, Sergio Zevallos and others

Crosscurrent Passages is an attempt to review a series of dissident practices and artistic output that were in conflict with consensual systems of representation and social and political situation, framed between the 1968 military coup and president Alberto Fujimori's self-coup in 1992. The 1968 military coup marked the start of a dictatorship that was singular in many ways: it attempted to accelerate the breakdown of the oligarchy and to support industrial modernisation through radical reformist measures, which at the same time generated a persecutory police climate. In the seventies entailed a splitting of the course of experimentation in the plastic arts in two directions. On one hand, there was a surge of a 'conceptual' institutional criticism of the art system. And on the other there was an emergence of new forms of collective production in dialogue with Andean culture, protected by the military government.

The crisis of the military government and the reinstatement of democracy in 1980 created an atmosphere of critical thought that corresponded to the start of the armed struggle against the government by the subversive group Shining Path culminating in genocide politics against broad sectors of the population, carried out by the seditious group as well as the army. In the eighties, launched by the collaborative activities of various art groups, art became accepted as a space of political denunciation and redefinition based on an 'Andean modernity'. Through performances and interventions other artists allegorised the psychological and physical repercussions of violence.

(Miguel López, Emilio Tarazona)

WORKS

All texts, unless otherwise noted: Miguel López, Emilio Tarazona

All English translations: Nuria Rodríguez

Lucy Angulo, Hugo Salazar del Alcázar, Jesús Ruiz Durand, Mario Pozzi-Escott and Leslie Lee

Por el derecho a la vida (For the right to life), 1985

Video documentation of the collective installation, Translation and subtitles by Janine Soenens

In January 1985 a group of artists presented an installation under the title *For the Right to Life* at the Miraflores public gallery in Lima. This exhibition was one of the first examples of artists within the official art world turning their attention to the attacks on human rights in Peru, committed by the Army and by the clandestine group PCP Shining Path. This documentary video – screened here for the first time – shows images of the set-up and a series of interviews with artists, intellectuals, politicians and activists of the time, who give their opinion on the situation of violence.

Teresa Burga (1940, PE)

Autorretrato. Estructura. Informe. 9-6-72 (Self-Portrait. Structure. Report. 9-6-72), 1972

Installation with graphical work, photos, sound-light unit, among other materials, Courtesy: Teresa Burga and Miguel López/Emilio Tarazona archive

Under the notion of 'self-portrait', Teresa Burga displayed a series of documents and diagrams that provided an approximation of herself. The installation was divided into three areas: *Face Report*, *Heart Report*, *Blood Report*, displaying data collected in the course of a single day (June 9, 1972).

Contacta. Festival de Arte Total (Contacta 71. Total Art Festival), 1971–1979

Initially driven by artists such as Francisco Mariotti and Luis Arias Vera and subsequently supported by the Military Government through SINAMOS (National System for the Support of Social Mobilisation), the Total Art Festivals project was to become one of the most exceptional examples of multidisciplinary arts experimentation in the seventies. The festivals, based on an open call for participation, took place in July 1971 and 1972 over four days – 24 hours, non-stop – in public space, mixing 'official' arts with experimental arts, theatre, poetry, music, cinema and traditional arts and crafts. The success of Contacta 72 led to other festivals being organised in inland Peru, such as the *Inkarri Festivals* (1973). In 1979, a few artists from Colectivo Paréntesis and Francisco Mariotti organised a further Contacta Festival.

Jesús Ruiz Durand (1940, PE)

Cuatro afiches de difusión de la Reforma Agraria (Four propaganda posters for the Agrarian Reform), 1969-1972

4 Offset prints, 100 x 70 cm., Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection, Contemporary Art Acquisitions Committee 2007

Under General Juan Velasco's military government, Jesús Ruiz Durand designed a propaganda strategy to publicise the regime's Agrarian and Industrial reform, which aimed to return land to peasant communities and change Peru's social structure. Unlike other reform processes in Latin America, the implementation of the reform in Peru did not emerge in response to mass actions. Rather, it was the official line promoted by the technical and military leadership, forcing the Government to generate mass diffusion strategies. The posters produced by Durand in collaboration with SINAMOS (a public institution created to channel independent social organisations without links to the government) were heavily distributed among Andean and peasant communities. The artist subverted and resignified North American pop art in order to produce a vernacular, Andean 'pop' with reminiscences of myth.

Jorge Eielson (1924, PE – 2006, I)

During the late 60s, Jorge Eielson conceived a series of sculptures specifically designed to be buried in various cities he had some kind of connection to. *Subterranean Sculptures* brought together ten objects, utopian in their intentional concealment and their impossible manufacture. The project – unfinished in the end – included 'sculptures' thought up for Rome, the Eninger Weide in Reutlingen, Paris, Lima, Antwerp, Bangkok, Sardinia, New York and Tokyo, together with an additional object that Eielson unsuccessfully conceived for the Moon, and even sent to NASA.

Escultura horripilante (Horrifying Sculpture), Plaza de Armas, Lima, June 20, 1967, from the series Subterranean Sculpture, 1966-1969

To César Moro, S. Salazar Bondy and Javier Sologuren

Text of the work, English translation:

Working only 27 minutes per night, over two and a half years – or exactly 915 nights – of the tireless efforts of my closest collaborators were necessary in order to place the following object 17 meters below-ground:

1 Materials:

- a) a compound based on synthetic bone-marrow, used as an electronic (field) and placed within the sculpture to act as vital fluid;
- b) a methane gas pipe from the city;
- c) a complete television circuit between the (eye) of the sculpture and the outside world.
- d) thousands of screws, nuts, hooks, hinges, etcetera;
- e) a Winchester submachine gun.
- f) the head of a talking doll;
- g) two arms of an adult chimpanzee;
- h) faecal matter;
- i) a full radio system;
- j) frozen food;
- k) a megaphone from an RCA phonograph, 1920 model;
- l) 14 litres of human blood;
- m) 15000 metres of tape containing recordings of the most important poetic texts of all time, including the Bible;
- n) toilet paper.

2 Operation:

- a) the sculpture actually has no limits, if you take into account its ultra shortwave radio system;
- b) anyone wanting to make a copy should take into account two factors of prime importance:

- I. the sculpture constantly regenerates at the fixed rate of 75 grams of matter per second;
- II. its waste materials, which are totally irreversible, accumulate at the variable rate of 57 to 65.7 grams of dead matter per second, which translates into a real increase in the object's size of between 18 to 10.3 grams per second, with a total growth volume of 0.10 cubic metres per day;

- c) the sculpture –which will continuously recite the most beautiful poems conceived by humankind, through the doll's mouth– will behave accordingly; that is, it will satisfy its primordial needs, repeating the human gestures of eating, procreation, defecation, etcetera, although in this case such needs are simply an contrivance to improve the recital of the poems. (Rather than being a repulsive simulacrum of a human being, as one could initially think, the sculpture will be the result of thousands and thousands of years of civilisation);
- d) only on very rare occasions, in spite of its inevitable contact with the outside world, will it take up the submachine gun or spill a single drop of its precious human blood in defense of a just cause.
- e) as the possessor of a poetic soul, the creature will often emerge from the bosom of the earth and, with its hairy arms (essential for the art of recital), choose a rose or a lily of the field;
- f) the creature will explode, with disastrous results, on the very day that it finishes reciting all of the poems recorded on the magnetic tape.

(Translated by Nuria Rodríguez)

Skulptur mit komprimierter Stimme (Sculpture with compressed voice), Eninger Weide (Reutlingen), October 7, 1968, from the series *Subterranean Sculpture*, 1966-1969

Text of the work, English translation:

"The object deposited here –which can only be seen on nights of extreme sensitivity– is somewhat like a glittering spiral that reflects thousands of birds in flight. It is actually a cylinder measuring 99 meters in length, with an 11 meter diameter and lined with miroleg¹. The author's voice and Stockhausen's "Song of the Youths" have been hermetically sealed within it, along with a fistful of IBK². The cylinder, with 200 microcomputers functioning in its base, is placed in an oblique position 44 meters below the ground, at an angle of 75 degrees due East. At pre-programmed intervals, the computerised system will transform the recitative voice into blue light, or inner light. Not even the most corrosive infiltrations of the ground beneath it, not coal, not, iron, and not the ashes of the dead in both world wars, should alter its precious contents. Until the day when it flies off towards its distant destination, taking with it the reflection of thousands of earthly birds, the music and the voice of a man who climbed the green hill of Eninger on October 7, 1968". (Translated by Nuria Rodríguez)

Rafael Hastings (1945, PE)

Untitled, 1970

Documentation of the installation, three photos, Courtesy: Miguel López/Emilio Tarazona Archive

A newspaper announced the artist's solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Lima under the headline 'Hastings to judge Peruvian painting', highlighting the fact that he 'renounced' painting. Hastings exhibited two sets of diagrams: one panel related to the evolution of Peruvian painting; the other diagram contained data relating to the life of Peruvian art critic Juan Acha, openly exposing the role of the critic as just one of many elements in the system of social and political relations that permanently constitute the art system.

Projet de non-réalisation (Non executable project), 1971

Print on paper, 114 x 84 cm., Courtesy: Private collection

Non-executable Project is part of a series of projects that the artist carried out around the role of criticism, 'conceptual' art and audiences. It is a work conceived to be sent by post and/or distributed as photocopies, which could be exhibited anywhere, and which Hastings created in response to French critic Jean Marc Poinso's invitation to participate in his Mail Art exhibition organised for the Paris Biennale in 1971. Hastings explicitly addressed this 'conceptual art' work to Poinso – without actually mentioning his name – in order to confront the role of the critic, who he sarcastically challenges to 'resolve' or 'complete' the work.

Taller E.P.S. Huayco (Francisco Mariotti, Maria Luy, Rosario Noriega, Herbert Rodríguez, Juan Javier Salazar, Armando Williams, Mariela Zevallos), 1980–1982

Arte al paso (Art on the way), 1980

Documentation of painting on the surface of 10,000 empty cans of evaporated milk, Courtesy: Francisco Mariotti

Sarita Colonia, 1980

Documentation of Painting of the portrait of unofficial saint Sarita Colonia on the surface of 12,000 empty cans of evaporated milk, Courtesy: Francisco Mariotti

In 1979 a group of young artists began to carry out a series of projects combining experimentation with 'poor' materials with a reworking of the imaginary of urban and popular icons, from the political left. This was the start of the E.P.S Huayco workshop, which would remain active for almost two years. One of its most important projects was *Art on the Way*, presented at Galería Forum in Lima. The artists reproduced images of 'salchipapas', a kind of fast-food, by creating a carpet of painted tins that covered the floor, referring to the dots of color used in Pop art. They also circulated a manifesto with a text by left-wing critic Mirko Lauer that confronted the bourgeois taste of art.

¹ Synthetic reflective material (Artist's note)

² International Blue Klein (Artist's note.)

Not long after this, the artists reproduced the image of a non-official saint, *Sarita Colonia*, who was worshipped by a broad community of migrants to Lima, and by marginalised social groups. The image, again placed on tins, was presented this time at the Panamericana Sur highway: the landscape of a migration route soon becoming a site of pilgrimage for many of the faithful.

Text about Art on the way by Mirko Lauer:

Art on the way. Take One

Art on the way: it doesn't fill you up, you won't need a siesta, in the midst of everyday activity – for an instant – it will help you satisfy an urgent hunger that goes beyond conventional media genres and boldly explores beyond strictly aesthetic realms. At a time when galleries flourish and each new exhibition is more conventional than the last, this combination of screen prints, industrial waste, theoretical formulas, photos and sellers of salchipapa [a kind of sausage and potato fast-food] screams out that the reality of art is more complex than the reality of the 'Fine Arts' or the 'Plastic Arts'. It also tells us that the visual forms of the new sensibility of the people are writ everywhere: in the unsubstantial films that advertising agencies design to stultify us, in the forms and metamorphosis of the already-consumed, in the beset shapes of objects handled by the oppressed. Today the most up-to-date visual forms are those of merchandise, which contains within its colours, its textures, the everyday history of exploitation.

Art on the way: a response, an effort to destroy what has grown old retaining its best aspects. Critical of galleries in an attempt to save them from their status as mere display windows for fleeting commercial transactions, the legendary fifteen days that lie between the artist's workshop and the buyer's gallery: what matters most here cannot be sold. Critical of the famous religious-expressionist 'methods' that show young artists how to 'feel' rather than think: here lies the work of plastic artists who approach their own and society's problems, and try to resolve them politically through the visual. Critical of the role of the plastic artist as a maker of a particular product, proposing instead a kind of work that begins with the visual and projects itself into all areas of culture: the creator is an agitator, unloved by the enemies of the people's freedom. Critical also of the false modernity of the imported. Only the popular is truly modern in Peru today.

Art on the way: an environmental exercise revealing the umbilical cord that connects the waste of the city to the art of the city; in the midst of tins that are empty when they reach the shantytowns and then find their way to the gallery, painted, and will return to the shantytown tomorrow painted, so that for once they will be full when they reach the shantytown. An ecosystem exists among the waste, food and art, and it must be revealed with increasing clarity. Just as the double edge of advertising forms must be revealed: they are the very image of abundance for some, the very image of need for others. Here, art wants to see itself reflected in the double face of the visual, which is often its own double face also. In a medium that had lost the political drive in art since the 50s, Luy, Mariotti, Noriega, Salazar and Zevallos are among the truly new and valuable things in today's plastic arts. And not because we are now dazzled by their forms – fresh and undoubtedly high quality – in a kind of parade of avant-garde novelties, but because they express themselves in relation with the fundamental reality of art in Latin America, poverty.

Art on the way: a collective work effort and a proposal for a new relationship among artists and between artists and their work. Not a group working under any old heading within the fiction of 'the collective', but a true division of labour and a process of debate that even ends up changing individual directions. Today, one of the outstanding characteristics that defines young plastic artists in Peru is their isolation, their neglect at the hands of theorists, their non-existent access to information, their weakness in the face of a plastic arts market that is starting to regain its power as the State begins to be run directly by entrepreneurs. Young plastic artists must come together, they must learn the disciplines of collective work, precisely in order to safeguard their individualities, which will otherwise be gradually flattened by the fashions that update markets or by the stagnation of those doomed to follow these fashions.

Art on the way: is not comfortable, is not likeable, does not dazzle; but for a few days it is the point of convergence for some of plastic arts' biggest hopes in Peru: today it is the work of five people, but its spirit is the spirit of many artists who have talent but not 'success' – equally important – it is the spirit of a growing sense of being fed up with the 'dumb art' that generations of paintbrush specialists try to perpetuate. Art on the way: can be taken away, but there is only one way to do it: put it in your mouth through your eyes, and chew it up as you go. (Translated by Nuria Rodriguez)

Cojudos (Assholes), 1980

Silkscreen on board, 65 x 50 cm., Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection, Gift of Jorge Gruenberg

In 1980, Taller E.P.S. Huayco reused the image of leftist poet César Vallejo to produce a series of screen prints and stickers. The phrase placed over the poet's head – "COJUDOS" ("Assholes") – seems to attempt to reactivate the political aspect of his writing, in contrast with the official image that had involuntarily transformed him into the paradigm of the 'melancholic poet'.

Ernesto Maguiña, Leonor Chocano, Consuelo Rabanal, and others

Sin título, 1970

Documentation of graffiti on the facades of commercial galleries, photographs, Courtesy: Ernesto Maguiña

1970 a group of artists got together to secretly graffiti the tag "Arte=\$" on public streets – including the facades of art galleries.

Francesco Mariotti (1943, CH)

Lavatorio artificial para uso especial (Artificial wash basin for special use), 1975/2009

Intervention in the public restrooms, Courtesy: Francesco Mariotti

Artificial Wash Basin for Special Use was originally produced for inclusion in an exhibition at the Banco Continental gallery in Lima in 1975, but the installation was never exhibited, and like several other works from the same period, it was subsequently destroyed. The work offers a critical comment on the context of repression and the economic, social and political crisis that the country was going through. The updated version of this never-exhibited work is now presented as an intervention in the two public restrooms at the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart.

CARLOS MARX canta y baila para usted LA INTERNACIONAL (KARL MARX sings and dances THE INTERNATIONALE for you), 1984

with Gerardo Zanetti

Assemblage with mechanism and video (Video: Ulrike Buck), Courtesy: Francesco Mariotti

In 1984, Francisco Mariotti and journalist Gerardo Zanetti manufactured an amusing mechanical object which presents the figure of Karl Marx. The piece is a critical allegory of the iconic and discursive uses of communism's most influential theorist, here symbolically transformed into a mere toy.

Alfredo Márquez (1963, PE)

CHINACHOLA, 2006

Silkscreen on paper, 74 x 55 cm., Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection, Contemporary Art Acquisitions Committee 2007, with donations from Manuel Velarde and Carlos Marsano

In 1989, Taller NN (a name taken from the initials used to label the corpses of unidentified persons) was invited to the 3rd Art and Architecture Biennial of Havana, where the group produced a screen print showing the face of Mao Zedong superimposed with a photograph of prisoners of the subversive group the Shining path caught by the army, and with the slogan: "Viva el Maoismo" (Long live to Maoism!). In 1994, one of the Taller NN artists, who had authored this print (Alfredo Márquez), was kidnapped, arrested and tried by faceless judges during the dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori. Accused of 'defence of terrorism', virtually the whole series of the edition was destroyed.

Yvonne von Möllendorff (PE)

Sin título [Ballet verbal] (Verbal Ballet), 1970

Documentation of performance executed in Institute of Contemporary Art in Lima (August 6h)

Choreographer Yvonne von Möllendorff presented a dance "performance" at the Institute of Contemporary Art (IAC) in Lima. The artist remained immobile before the audience, while a recorded voice described the steps involved in the dance pieces that had been previously announced as part of the event. Möllendorff handed out a manifesto in which she declared: "It is necessary to bring about a cultural revolution, because there can be no social revolution without one." In this way, she openly spoke against the reformist restrictions and rhetoric of the so-called Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces.

Grupo Paréntesis (Lucy Angulo, Fernando Bedoya, Emei [Mecedes Idoyaga], José Antonio Morales, Rosario Noriega, Juan Javier Salazar, Raúl Villavicencio), founded and disbanded in 1979.

Proyecto mecenas (Patron Project), 1979 [10-03-79 / 18-03-79 / 25-03-79]

Three newspapers adverts, 58 x 37 cm. each one, Courtesy: Museo de Arte de Lima Collection, Contemporary Art Acquisitions Committee 2008

Grupo Paréntesis made its first appearance in Lima with the publication of three advertisements inserted into the cultural section of *El Comercio* – a newspaper with a large circulation among the middle and upper classes – containing the phrase: “Plastic artists seek patron”. The phrase includes an ironic play on words ('me'-cenas', roughly 'you dine me'), aimed at the plastic arts market in Lima.

Herbert Rodríguez (1959, PE)

Perú, 1984

Assemblage, 62 x 96 x 46 cm., Courtesy: Herbert Rodríguez

Tenga esa figura que siempre soñó (Get the figure you ever dream of), 1983-1984 ca.

Photomontage, 36 x 25 cm., Courtesy: Herbert Rodríguez

Taller y Proyecto Arte-Vida (Workshop and Project Art-Life), 1986-1991

Documentation of the workshop and intervention in public space, Courtesy: Herbert Rodríguez

From the mid-80s Herbert Rodríguez, an ex-member of Taller E.P.S Huayco, carried out a series of precarious works in response to the internal violence in Peru, which combined images of sex, politics and religion. In 1986, he began the project *Art-Life* at the Carpa Teatro in Puente Santa Rosa (Lima), through an experimental materials workshop to create precarious objects and photomontages in different public spaces, with an aesthetic influenced by punk and dada. Since 1988, he moved his workspace to the University of San Marcos and then to the Catholic University and other exterior spaces, from which he produced mural newspapers and paintings as a space of resistance and struggle against discouragement and death.

LUZCA BELLA CADÁVERES (LOOK BEAUTIFUL CORPSES), 1984-2000

Book made of photocopies, 42,5 x 30 cm., Courtesy: Herbert Rodríguez

Since 1984, Herbert Rodríguez created a series of photocopied notebooks consisting of dozens of collages and photomontages made from photographs, phrases and fragments of text from the press, conceived as a kind of chronicle of death. *LOOK BEAUTIFUL CORPSES* is a compilation of several of his early notebooks and can be read as an alternative, subversive and politically incorrect story of the internal violence between 1980 and 1992. Its rough aesthetic is antithetical to recent attempts by the official Peruvian cultural powers-that-be to review war crimes.

TO THE PUBLIC OPINION, ca. 1988

Manifesto; English translation:

Violence continues to increase...
... as does passivity, indifference !!!

SEX AND VIOLENCE the most profitable trade, selling hypocrisy
innocent consumer goods: detergents, fashionable clothes, an exclusive restaurant...
all of it like an obscene illusory world in the face of the
CORPSES-DISEASES-POVERTY of our everyday lives.

(disconnected discourses, avalanche of images)

why this swindle? why try to translate into words and images the rage, the impotence,
the anguish caused by the lack of harmony in people and in the world?...,
an idiotic exercise in this pretentious discourse!

VISUAL PROMISCUITY... such pleasure! to strip back reality,
strip back the putrid authoritarian-dogmatic-paternalistic discourses that
insist on dictating the norms of good and bad, of what we should think, of what we should
desire, of what we should be...
we assert ourselves in our intuitions,

that this landslide of disjointed images – a tribute to interruptus –,
of insolence and exasperation, is part of a search for authenticity,
for a space in which to unleash all of our creative potentiality...

INSTALLATION: a series of collages, posters and photomontages in which we experiment
with fragments from the daily news and consumer advertising and poke fun at the narrow
limits of artistic "good taste".

To regain our capacity for outrage and express our
DISGUST FOR THE BLOOD THAT SPLATTERS US FROM ALL AROUND

all in order to conclude, given the cruelty and horror of our day-to-day tragedy,
that we cannot dispense with screaming,
that we cannot take any more, that we do not want to be able to take more,
that we will not put up with EVERYTHING: EVERYTHING IS BAD, EVERYTHING IS DEAD...

we get mixed up, we lose our way, we despair...
OF FINDING THE PATH OF OUR AUTONOMY.
(Herbert Rodríguez, Lima, ca. 1988, Translated by Nuria Rodríguez)

Emilio Hernández Saavedra (1940, PE)

Galería de arte (Gallery of Art), 1970

Photographies printed in the catalogue (reprinted 2007), 124 x 124 cm., Courtesy: Emilio Hernández Saavedra and Miguel López/Emilio Tarazona Archive

For his exhibition *Art Gallery* Emilio Hernández Saavedra used photographs, diagrams and descriptions to visually dismantle Galería Cultura y Libertad, a place that was known for having hosted several of the most daring exhibitions of the time. The artist exposed the institution's mechanisms of production, circulation and exhibition. At the same time, he circulated a publication showing conceptual art projects. *Erased Museum of Art* for example presented an overhead view of the Historic Centre of Lima from which he symbolically deleted the Lima Museum of Art, one of the decisive authorities of art and the official historic tradition.

Juan Javier Salazar (1955, PE)

Náufragos (Shipwrecked), 1985-2006

Installation, Courtesy: Juan Javier Salazar

Ñoba Ritual (Ritual Wash), 1986

Silkscreen on board in both sides, 60,5 x 46,5 cm., Courtesy: Private collection

Juan Javier Salazar, a member of E.P.S. Huayco, developed highly ironic work that was critical of the art system and the circulation and commercial nature of art objects. In 1985, he put together the exhibition *Ritual Wash*, which made reference to the shipwreck of a city and a country (Lima, Peru) due to an absence of rain, in spite of excessive ambient humidity. Applying the idea of rain as an act of purification as well as press footage of floods and overflowing rivers in the North of the country a few years earlier, the artist used the wood from a rundown small boat to give shape to these images.

Luis Arias Vera / Sub-dirección de Recreación Socio Cultural del INRED, Instituto Nacional Recreación, Educación Física y Deporte (Sub-direction of Socio-Cultural Recreation, of National Institute of Recreation, Physical Education and Sports)

Carrera de Chasquis (Chasquis Race), 1974 and 1976

Documentation of relay Race in different provinces of Peru, Courtesy: Luis Arias Vera

The *Chasquis Races* were a cultural and sporting event organised by the artist Luis Arias Vera in 1974 and 1976 for the National Institute of Recreation, Physical Education and Sport (INRED) of the Military Government. Arias Vera divided the event into different stages, which aimed to connect more than 250 rural settlements in the North and the South of Peru. The project consisted of a relay race in which every settlement that participated was transformed into a space for sharing multidisciplinary artistic forms of expression. The word 'chasqui' is a Quechuan word that means 'recipient' or 'messenger'. These 'races' were thus a reference to the messengers of the Incan Empire who transmitted messages on foot using a system of relays passed through sections spread through the entire territory.

Sergio Zevallos (D, 1962, PE)De la serie *Rosa Cordis* (from the series *Rose of my Heart*), 1986

Fine art Print on Hahnemühle paper, 11 photos of 50 x 37 cm.

Courtesy: Sergio Zevallos

As part of a collective work project that had been developing on the outskirts of Lima (in the Chaclacayo district) since 1983, Sergio Zevallos began using the body as a critical vehicle in response to violence. Although the group's work was ignored on the local scene, their visual output became one of the most important reference points of art-based political production – and one of the most repressed. The series *Rose of my Heart* shows a semi-nude figure wearing make up, a black tunic and a crown of thorns, in direct reference to Santa Rosa de Lima, America's first Saint.

*Artist's text on this work*The Ecstasy and Martyrdom of Santa Rosa of Lima, Chaclacayo, 1986

"Santa Rosa of Lima died in 1617 aged 31, obsessed with conquering concupiscence, all her efforts focused on attaining maximum purity of soul by way of the destruction of her body. In the midst of an era obsessed with the destruction of bodies in order to conquer the individual, I imagined my Rosa. You are the androgen in your Garden of Delights flanked by hell. Self-absorbed in your pleasure. You deny death but so close, that you are not permitted innocence. In your cynical narcissism you transfigure the crime into an Ascension fantasy. Suddenly the irrevocable fall and your world regresses to an adolescent state. Your state of dementia. Shifting from a fixation on yourself to a fixation on the other, domination. Banality is your new fanaticism. Once the body of the crime has disappeared the angel of redemption hides behind the curtain. Could it be that it is ashamed?"

(Sergio Zevallos, 2009; Translated by Nuria Rodríguez)

Between Limits. Escaping into the Concept

Curator

Ileana Pintilie Teleaga

Artists

Horia Bernea, Constantin Flondor, Ion Grigorescu, Pavel Ilie, Iosif Kiraly, Paul Neagu, Dan Perjovschi, Grupul Sigma

The period 1965-1989 coincided, in Romania's case, with the ascension to power of Nicolae Ceaușescu's Communist Party and the slow but predictable process of the installation of a personal dictatorship. Ceaușescu's election in 1965 gave the impression of a desirable domestic change, of a liberation from Stalin's influence and the beginning of a dialogue with the western world. Claiming autonomy from the eastern neighbour was manifest in Romania's dissociation from the members of the Warsaw Pact, which invaded Prague in the summer of 1968, putting an end, under military pressure, to the Czech government's reforms. Yet, in 1971, after a visit to China and North Korea, Ceaușescu was seduced by the Asian totalitarian communism and by the „cultural revolution” and, as a result, he strengthened the role of censorship and ideological control in all fields, from education, culture, and the public sphere to a project to increase birth-rate. In parallel with the official art, promoted by the political power, several artists tried to make up „survival” techniques. The development of experimental practices was basically targeted at ephemeral forms, at irony and social criticism. Even if they worked in relative isolation, the Romanian artists managed to exhibit in alternative spaces sometimes – in cultural clubs, the hall of the Architecture Institute in Bucharest, or even in their own studios or flats. Others tried to communicate with each other freely and unconventionally, mail art offering an independent, ironic and subversive medium, as well as a way to defy censorship. (Ileana Pintilie)

WORKS (SELECTION)

All texts if not otherwise noted: Ileana Pintilie

All english translations: Dana Chetrescu Percec

Horia Bernea (1938, RO; 2000, F)

Bernea's works from 1968 to 1972 are regarded by the artist as "a personal artistic ideology," an individualistic act of detachment and protest against the communist ideology that all artists had to display during official exhibitions. The exhibited objects and the paintings seem to be remains of some experimental action—highly conceptual and abstract, which he called "an iconography after knowledge"—posited in conceptual expressionism.

Untitled, 1972

Mixed technique on canvas, 112.5 x 63 cm, inv. 308

Object, 1970–1971

Metal, painted plaster, 44 x 42 x 4 cm

Shroud, 1970–1971

Metal structure, painted canvas, 196 x 196 x 17 cm

Two photos

b/w, 20 x 30 cm each, 1972

Horia Bernea in his studio among the works dating from this period.

Constantin Flondor (RO; 1936, UA)

A member of the most important experimental groups in Romania during the nineteen-sixties and seventies (The Group 111 and The Sigma Group), Flondor is a multimedia artist with an interest in various visual experiments, ranging from constructivism and op art to land art. The photos taken during those years are the result of complex visual research, sometimes with a performative character, which is even more conspicuous in certain films (*Bolting* and *Modelling*), while in other films the artist tries to analyze visual perception.

Andplevision, 1979

DVD recording of a two-channel film projection, S8mm, color, 7' 24"

The film is based on a collage of experimental images shot on various occasions. It offers a survey of the artist's visual research done during the constructivist period and also of natural structures turned into objects of study and employed in future works.

I – You – Witness (The Visual Consciousness), 1979

DVD recording of a three-channel film projection, S8mm, color, 13' 6"

An experimental film about the visual perception regarded as "Triontcity" (after the theory of perception elaborated by the Romanian psychiatrist Eduard Pamfil), postulating the existence of several visual "consciousnesses."

Bolting and Modelling, 1985

S8mm on DVD, color, 5' 24"

Anno-Aversion, January 26, 1982

S8mm on DVD, b/w, 2' 30"

Anno-Aversion was occasioned by dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu's birthday. The communist leader used to be celebrated on a national scale, with the involvement of all of the media. The national TV channel in particular, which had only two hours of daily broadcasting, was consumed entirely by this event. The title is a pun—on a genuine anniversary and "a stomachache." The artist is seated in front of the black screen of the national TV channel at a table full of dairy products which were unavailable in those times. When the broadcast begins, the food suddenly vanishes . . .

Ion Grigorescu (1945, RO)

Grigorescu is one of the very few multimedia artists in Romania who during the communist regime conducted visual research on the body: a taboo topic at the time. The artist's body became work "material"—perceived as a "medium" and surface—onto which mental images are reflected. His body performances are to be seen as "post-happenings," with the emphasis no longer on the temporal dimension but rather on the photographic snapshot that, however, preserves a performative character. These works, like many others from the nineteen-seventies and eighties, would go public only much later.

Văcărești, 1975

Series of 4 photograms, b/w, 20 x 30 cm each

The photograms show the spaces of a vast complex of sacral buildings (at the Văcărești monastery), which was turned into a currently disused prison. The various stages in the buildings' history are overlapped with graffiti, the subcultural insignia of a marginal world. Secluded and then vanished, these relics are the only remaining traces of its existence.

Election meeting, 1975

6 photograms (from a series of 28), b/w, 20 x 30 cm each

Snapshots taken during a rally in Bucharest, with a camera hidden on the artist's hip, catching Securitate agents supervising the crowd and contrasting this view with that of with the ordinary participants, who were relaxed, tired, or bored.

Trăisteni, 1976

Series of 5 photograms, b/w, 20 x 30 cm each

Photos: Andrei Gheorghiu.

Photographs taken near the village of Trăisteni

Pyjamas, 1978

Series of 4 photograms, b/w, 20 x 30 cm each

The photographs are the outcome of an ambiguous performance, apparently an invigorating domestic ritual of breakfast taken by the artist still wearing his pyjamas. The situation can also be regarded as the "ritual" in a prison, given the stripes on the artist's outfit, the circular lens (similar to a surveillance "eye"), and the state of closure and alienation suggested by the entire context.

Party, 1960s

Series of photos, readymade, b/w

The photos show an open-air party with live music attended by somewhat familiar faces. They express an almost ecstatic state of happiness caused by the dance—in more general terms, a state of highly intense "joie de vivre."

Snagov, 1971

Series of 4 photograms, b/w, 20 x 30 cm each

Snapshots of a trip to Snagov, a popular leisure place for the inhabitants of Bucharest.

Masculine – Feminine, 1976

N8mm film on DVD, 11' 21"

English translation of the texts used in the film:

„Penis as Pinsel (paintbrush) and masculine as mask

On the one hand, it occupies a large part of my person, but no one ought to occupy this place overly much: as regards status you have a sensibility that is almost feminine, hysterical, sickly and feverish, with veritable disturbances of language.

It is my interlocutor in the masculine, although it goes by a feminine name. It gives me a conception of myself and of my status in the world, it corrects my behaviour, which tends towards the feminine. Our dialogue is not limited to the organic. I have to recognise its intelligence, its capacity to create, compose and imagine, to impose a diversity of trouser-

forms greater than that of skirts and even cleavages, detaching themselves from the rest of the body.

The more its demands on my personality, the more I tell it: I give you everything, which is to say, independence and authority, but not space, there are also others in the body." (Ion Grigorescu; translated by Dana Chetrescu Percec)

Mimicry, 1976

N8mm film on DVD, 1'

Boxing, 1977

N8mm film on DVD, 2' 44"

Boxing dwells on the theme of the double. The artist is boxing, knocking out his alter ego shrunk to the size of a mere shadow.

In Our Beloved Bucharest, 1977

N8mm film on DVD, 14'

Grigorescu uses a hidden camera to make a documentary film of life in the capital, seen from tram no. 26. The film was made in 1977, after the earthquake that had struck the city and engendered a series of systematic demolitions for the dictator's megalomaniac project of erecting a new town on the ruins of the historical center.

Dialogue with Ceaușescu, 1978

N8mm film on DVD, 7' 11"

In *Dialogue with Ceaușescu* the artist plays two opposing roles, in one of which he is wearing a mask with the face of Ceaușescu.

English translation of the texts used in the film:

„If the people cannot rule they should at least criticize!

I: In the last days you were speaking about the people's content.

Ceausescu : Yes, there is a content created by the stimulated consumption, sometimes by the lack. We are creating needs where the man is easiest to be scared – at food. However the country is hierarchized so that those who live in villages should be the most starved, but are accustomed to endure; their civilization, is it still existing, is not based on food, nor on other needs from today services. It's simply a handicap with which we are fighting and will not be set on the progress way by equalizing the level of the country and the town. It is a matter of economic objective laws.

I: These 'objective laws' result from too simple speculation: who is exploited in the newest relations – the proletariat, would be destined to defeat exploitation and to be the future leader, but now reality changes: the proletariat is too bound to the bourgeoisie to invent something else than exploitation.

Ceausescu: We are those who suppressed property of the means of production.

I: You did anything but pushed by your bourgeois materialist side; exploitation is more complex: on 2nd March 1978 at 8 o'clock a.m. I saw two women pushing a full tomberon with mud – and juxtaposed the two or three visits at the presidential palace in the same day, where militians pulled the begging children's ears. Woman delinquency is very high – we can speak about pauperization. Of course there is no legal property but 'Carpati' trust with buildings, workshops and technical equipment, there are tenths of orders that submit all the enterprises to the trust's needs, a lot of people are employees in this trust in slave conditions, not in the sense they don't have access to this fortune, but these people are bought and sold for life. What I mean by owning their lives is the party's own 'jurisdiction' outside the law, trials without public or defenders, and to the fact that the debts accumulated like that hide a capital punishment. Too many people passed through prison.

Ceausescu: Only few men resist transformations!

I: The only statements about people are: 'one cannot perform miracles over night' (Brasov, 1978) and 'in comparison with 1938...' But the poets are singing only miracles made over night. Our dialogue, the dialogue is necessary because nevertheless there is a truth and a science with which one analyses the social reality.

Ceausescu: Romania is fastened in the girth of the international economic relations, and dependent of the pressure of the very developed countries, on their credits or crisis.

I: If a revolution would take place here would we go on the path the other countries are? That is 'progress', 'ware', 'accumulation', 'investment'.

Ceausescu: We make an original experience in original conditions, where the anarchy itself co-operates in planning. 'Progress' doesn't mean the capitalist one! Maybe the revolution doesn't exist because the town was crushed by our most agrarian economy. Your proposals of anti-capitalism (no to accumulation, no to the progress) not only will lead to misery and general decay, inasmuch would be in economic isolation, but it NEGLECTS even which is SOCIALISM: the GUARANTEE OF THE STABILITY (which could be your dream about the lack of progress) on the path of collective responsibility on the enterprise and its proportion.

I: At least would seem to the people that you wish a capitalism for all: you encourage the property of the apartments, autos, furniture, household apparatus, you are trimming the town with stores. What stupefies those who follow you and strive to understand why you sustain the system's superiority is your behavior of great capitalist – you are always speaking about economy, inspecting business, asking discipline, you are a great employer thirsty of speculations in a stock exchange to whom you are the only investor, you only see men as unhappy meanwhile you throw them in the circuit labor-buying power, proletarians-consumers.

Ceausescu: I don't understand why you don't observe the qualitative difference between our today society and the one in the very developed countries when they were in the situation you are speaking about. Poor peasantry and industrial proletariat from the outskirts and often the middle of the town, the broad masses of men ruined by exploitation, war and economic crisis ARE TODAY RAISED UP TO THE LESS TWO STEPS, they live in a block of flats with reasonable cleanliness and minimum house comfort. To attain this end we had to give them some work, in other words to offer a source of honest and continuous income featuring to climb up the social hierarchy. Which is the aim of these salubritization and moral economy? We really are a society based on economy, whose values are at first material ones.

I: You are the exponent of a minority – the suburb one and will remain as such because the services will always constitute in the stipulated system a majority beside the working class. You overlooked the people's yearnings, disinterested in economic efforts, they are rich people in spite of your vision. A richness you don't know and what is worst, you are destroying it unconsciously. There was material richness and today the food is a kind of rubbish. There was a social richness. Today the people's unity is only a slogan. Social classes are deeply disunited, working is repulsive (in fact the conditions; there is a confusion between labor and its conditions). In services there is corruption, so that the general atmosphere is antisocial. The intellectuals who were about to rebirth in 1968-70 and were a social richness, are now deviated – they are people who repeat texts by heart. Our real phenomena became non understandable, the intellectuals have no connection with the workers, they don't defend them, they aren't solidary not even between them. Romania has no intellectuals yet – strange preconsciousness of the party – 'the new man will come' the party said. This is why one demolishes so much around us." (Ion Grigorescu; translated by Dana Chetrescu Percec)

Pavel Ilie (1927, RO; 1995, CDN)

Pavel Ilie is an artist with a peculiar presence in Romanian art of the early nineteen-seventies. His artistic endeavor capitalized on the *concept* and placed it above its forms of visual manifestation, be it in drawing and photography or in object and environment. The successive forms the objects can take are only "work hypotheses"—transitory moments of an intuitive process, subject to creation. Ilie also emphasized the fact that these open visual forms can be altered according to various conceptual and artistic desiderata.

Iosif Kiraly (1957, RO)

Kiraly's debut, in the early nineteen-eighties, is linked to photography as an art form that can express the performative character of his visual experiments. Familiar with the visual research of The Sigma Group members, in whose company he reached artistic maturity, Kiraly later moved to photography as a means of communication. This was an important aspect in the eighties when the isolation of the Romanian cultural and artistic elite had become oppressive. Joining an international mail art group, Kiraly found a strategy of artistic survival in these conceptual works—photos or small-sized collages—addressed to other artists in the mail art network. Among these counted the Japanese artist Shozo Shimamoto, a member of the Gutai group, who even paid Kiraly a visit in Romania.

Paul Neagu (1938, RO – 2004, UK)

Collector, 1971

Drawing, Courtesy: Paul Neagu

The artist's debut took place in Romania, with a series of ironic works entitled *Neagu's Boxes*, ephemeral objects, made of trivial materials and bearing a neo-dada imprint, as a form of protest against the closed regime of official art in the country at that time. The drawing *Collector* is a repetition of the image of some of the "boxes."

Merit Collector, 1968–1972

Series of drawings and objects, Courtesy: Paul Neagu

In 1968 Neagu started his series *Merit Collector*, consisting of drawings and objects. Intrigued by the way in which merit could be "measured" in the bestowal of titles, honours and "merit"-medals in communist Romania, Neagu imagined some ironic machinery which would be able to collect and apply the merit selection criteria as well as conferring the honours on randomly selected people passing by. This series culminated in the first street action presented in Romania. In 1968, on a busy main road in Bucharest, the artist placed his "merit-collectors" right in the middle of the traffic.

Anthropocosmos series, 1968–1974

Series of objects, paintings, drawings and performances, Courtesy: Paul Neagu

Gradually the artist built an entire system of mental organization, matching simple geometrical forms – the square, the triangle and the circle, then the spiral – with various levels – individual, social, and cosmic. With the help of this system, he began to include all his visual creations in a coherent pattern. Devoted to the individual level the *Anthropocosmos* series consisted of objects, paintings, drawings and performances taking the shape of a human figure, which also reminded of a coffin. The body was de-constructed into its component elements in the form of "honeycombs".

Cake man event, 1971

Performance documentation, film on DVD, 8', Courtesy: Paul Neagu

The *Cake man* performance-rituals, first presented in 1970 in Bucharest, at the home of an artist before an invited audience, were related to the *Anthropocosmos* series. In the performance, made later in UK, a human figure was filled with waffles with some notes attached to them. They were then "devoured" by the participants, receivers of those messages.

Ramp, 1976

Performance documentation, film on DVD, 10', Courtesy: Paul Neagu

In the performance *Ramp* the artist jumped on a wall, while his partner, blind-folded, tried to assess and put down in figures the height of the jump.

Ritual-Performances (1970-1978)

16 photo documentations of the ritual-performances *Horizontal Rain*, *Cake-man*, *Going Tornado*, *Ramp*, and *Blinde Bite*, Courtesy: Paul Neagu

For his ritual-performance the artist made himself a costume with many small transparent pockets in which he habitually put messages for the public. These messages suggested "the level of human communication" and their development within society. In the performance series *Gradually Going Tornado* – combining performances, drawings and other art forms –, the artist like a dervish brought together all disparate parts in a circular movement.

GAG – Generative Art Group (UK, 1970-1975)

In his British exile Neagu invented the Generative Art Group (GAG). The artist publicly declared that he had founded a group of five artists, going as far as to give the names of his four partners. For a few years, he supported this fictitious group, exhibiting and publishing works in various "styles", all of them signed by the members of the GAG.

Dan Perjovschi (1961, RO)

Confessional, 1986–1994

Rolls of black plastic

Courtesy: Lombard Fried Gallery, New York

Confessional is an installation from the nineteen-eighties in which the artist uses long strips of drawn paper for his drawings of caricature-like, schematic figures, the strips of paper being arranged in the form of an enclosed space.

Red Apples, 1988

Series of 7 photos, b/w, 17 x 12 cm each

Photo: Dorel Gaina; Courtesy: Lombard Fried Gallery, New York

Red Apples was an intervention in the artist's apartment in Oradea, Romania, where he lived with his wife Lia, consisting of a "wrapping up" in white paper of their dwelling. On the paper support he drew and wrote texts about the couple. The bed, the bedside table, the windows, and the TV set were covered in large sheets of paper. On the TV set he drew a new screen and two twin figures contemplating the room. The couple lived in this space for two weeks. Taking up the subject of intimacy, the action also indirectly referred to the artist's desire to isolate himself from the social and political context.

Romania, 1993, Timișoara

Removing Romania, 2003, Kassel

Wall installation with video (b/w, color) and letter

Courtesy: Gregor Podnar Gallery, Ljubljana.

The feeling of fear and frustration in Perjovschi's earlier work reached a climax in the years following 1990, when in Romania everything that had been silenced for such a long time came to surface. Under this impression he carried out in 1993 at the Zone Performance Festival in Timișoara his "anti-performance" (Perjovschi) *Romania*, in which he tattooed the country's name on his shoulder. Ten years later in the context of René Block's show *In den Schluchten des Balkans (In the Gorges of the Balkan)*, he decided to remove the tattoo. The surgical procedure of the new work entitled *Removing Romania* consisted of laser bombardment of the tattoo, each black dot splitting into millions of pieces and each of the pieces carried away through his skin by molecules. Perjovschi's idea was that the tattoo would not be erased but instead spread throughout his whole body.

The Sigma Group (Constantin Flondor, Ștefan Bertalan, Doru Tulcan), 1970–1978

Initiated in 1970, Sigma was the only experimental group in Romania to conduct research targeted at the Bauhaus model, geared toward the visual language based on form. Although it had more numerous membership in the beginning, in 1974 the group was reduced to its three senior members, with Bertalan and Flondor having been, in fact, the founders and also followers of the Group 111 spirit.

Multivision, 1972–1978

Video of a studio reconstruction of the original shooting place, sound, 15' 45''

First presented in 1978 at the exhibition *Study I* in Timișoara, the work consists of experimental recordings of natural phenomena (waterdrops, soap bubbles, etc.) on 8mm, edited with a sound track and texts read by the three members of the group in turn, as well as by Eduard Pamfil, a psychiatrist and the head of a bionic society. The film was presented with two projectors on ten semitransparent screens, in an environment created by the artists. Due to its performative character, there were only three projections under the original conditions (Timișoara, Cluj, 1979 and Bucharest, 1980).

1969–1979: An Approach to the Confluences between Art, Architecture, and Design in Catalonia

Curators

Valentín Roma, Daniel García Andújar

Artists

Ricardo Bofill/Taller de Arquitectura, Eugeni Bonet (Archive), COAC Archiv, Enric Franch (Archive), Antoni Muntadas, Pere Portabella, Grup de Treball, Sala Vinçon (Archive)

This project sets out to reconstruct the aesthetic and political dimension acquired by conceptual practices in Catalonia during the nineteen-seventies. With this in view, the analysis has been oriented toward a set of proposals developed in a variety of areas—art, architecture, design, film, and education—which nevertheless all shared the same circuits of visibility, closely related language and attitudes, and certain ideological positions that were characterized by their spirit of protest and antagonism. The core of the project consists of five pieces by the Grup de Treball that in some sense point to the disciplines mentioned above. In order to contextualize these, a heterogeneous archive has been put together, drawn from the documentary holdings of (amongst others) the COAC (Association of Architects of Catalonia), the Sala Vinçon gallery, the FAD decorative arts association, and the Elisava and Eina design schools, along with a number of art projects—the film *Esquizo* (Schizo) by the Taller de Arquitectura and *Reflexões sobre a morte* (Reflections on Death) by Antoni Muntadas, among others—and also a selection of visual and bibliographical documents from those years.

(Valentín Roma, Daniel García Andújar)

WORKS (SELECTION)

All texts unless otherwise noted: Valentín Roma

Ricardo Bofill/ Taller de Arquitectura

Esquizo (Schizo), 1970

Film on DVD, 80'

A study of the relationship between art and madness. An experimental documentary on the structure of a brain, the disquiet of an artist and his distorted vision of the world. The film describes the horror of the human condition, a mere instant between nothingness and nothingness.

COAC Space, Barcelona

The exhibition hall of the COAC (Association of Architects of Catalonia) was during the 1970s a space which held numerous performances, workshops and lectures that discussed the role of the new artistic languages in Barcelona.

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán

Report about information, 1965

In 1965, during his imprisonment in Lerida, Vázquez Montalbán wrote the *Report about information*, perhaps the first book that analyzes the political and economic role of the media in Spain. This study was strongly perceived by some conceptual artists who, at that time, began to critically question the role of the media.

Antoni Muntadas (USA; 1942, E)

Reflexões sobre a morte (Reflections on Death), 1973

Slide projection with 80 slides

Courtesy: Muntadas/Collection: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil

Pere Portabella

Miró, l'altre (Miró, the other), 1969

Script: Pere Portabella, Photography: Manuel Esteban, Music: Carles Santos, Editing: Teresa Alcocer, Production: José Pedro Villanueva / Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Barcelona (COAC) / Films 59

One of the most significant projects at COAC was the film *Miró, the other* (1969) by Pere Portabella, who recorded the action paintings of Joan Miró at the front glass of the building – and the removal of the same, carried out by the artist himself.

„This short film not only records this polemic, artistic performance by Miró, it also sets forth a conceptual axis, a combative, ideological intervention at the intersection of two views, which Pere Portabella also articulates in another of his clandestine films against the Franco regime (the editing por retroceso and the repetition of shots does not allow it to be understood as a realistic record of an event or as a simple document). By confiding in the setting and the expressive materials of the cinema, Pere Portabella eliminates any kind of verbal discourse in order to stick to the images and the music as the only way to elaborate his small political manifesto. In this manner, the black & white/color dichotomy functions like a surrealistic mechanism in the fight against the dictatorship (this dichotomy is found in several short films and in a feature length by Pere Portabella during this period but disappears from his films after the death of Franco). The initial images in this film, shot in the interior of the building are in black and white, while there is color during the creation of this urban work, on the windows of the Architects Association in primary colors, when Miró superimposes messy strokes and splatters of a deep black. On the street, in front of a crowd of curious onlookers, Miró darkens the chromatic joy of the building's images, forming a graffiti of denouncement, a black protest gesture that is almost expressionist, while at the same time he creates a break with the projected well-being and the public norms of urban behavior during the dictatorship. This breaking-away gesture self-annihilates (again now in black & white) as Miró himself erases his strokes, in order to reveal how the survival of such impertinence is impossible in this context. The short film ends in black & white images of Miró inside the building, again enclosed in a grey space, ostracized in his own country, a metaphor of the impossibility of prolonging the subversion of the social order ruled by totalitarianism. By propagating the ritual until the present, Pere Portabella transcended that limit: a film that combats a time of censorship.“

(Diego Trerotola, in: http://www.pereportabella.com/eng/laltre_esp.html)

Grup de Treball

Francesc Abad, Jordi Benito, Jaume Carbó, Alícia Fingerhut, Xavier Franquesa, Carles Hac Mor, Imma Julián, Antoni Mercader, Antoni Munné, Muntadas, Josep Parera, Santi Pau, Pere Portabella, Àngels Ribé, Manuel Rovira, Enric Sales, Carles Santos, Dorothee Seiz and Francesc Torres

The appearance of Grup de Treball marked a turning point in Catalan culture. First, for their work as a collective and, second, for their interest in moving away from conventional artistic practices and joining a critical current where art had to fulfil a social function. Their brief contribution was made in a setting characterised by an unstable political climate, which coincided with the hardening of repression that marked the last years of the Franco dictatorship.

Grup de Treball set out to distance itself from the usual distribution channels of works of art.

Whenever possible they used the press to publish their communiqués and set up information centres at their exhibitions.

Champ d'attraction. Document. Travail d'information sur la presse illégale des Pays Catalans. 9è Biennale de Paris (Field of Attraction. Information work on the illegal press in Catalonia. 9th Paris Biennial), 1975

Photography, sticker of colours, 11 copies, each 143,5 x 92,5 cm

Courtesy: MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Shown for the first time at the IX Paris Biennial (1975) and later at the 1976 Venice Biennale and the exhibition *Venice Biennale. Art avantgarde and social reality in Spain 1936-1976* (1976-1977), this work contains an analysis of the situation of the Catalan illegal press through images, graphic elements, texts and a wide selection of copies of underground publications.

The passing of the terrorism law in 1975 and the declaration of the state of emergency meant that the work had to be presented unsigned, which, once the Paris Biennial had finished, brought about the end of the activities of Grup de Treball. Owing to the Spanish political situation and the dangerously political character of the work, the text that was designed to appear in the Paris catalogue was not published; two pages were left blank for fear of repression.

Treball col·lectiu que consisteix a verificar la distribució de 44 professions entre 113 persones segons una nota apareguda últimament a la premsa (Collective work consisting of checking the distribution of 44 professions among 113 people according to a report which had appeared recently in the press), 1973

Paper work, 7 pages, each 29,7 x 19,3 cm

Courtesy: MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

This work is a distribution of the professions of the 113 members of the Catalan Assembly—two of whom belonged to Grup de Treball—who were arrested in the church of Santa Maria Mitjancera in Barcelona in August 1973 and was included in the catalogue-dossier for the exhibition *Terrassa, Art Information*. It is therefore a proposal in which specific condemnation is approached from procedures related in some way to visual poetry.

Homenatge a l'arquitectura (Homage to Architecture), 1975

Paper work, variables dimensions

Courtesy: MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

This intervention was done using the official poster for the exhibition *Homage to Architecture* as support. From a kind of conceptual diagram, Grup de Treball analyses its participation and makes a frontal attack on the exhibition organization structures and their mechanisms for controlling the artists.

Cartell del col·lectiu "Solidaritat amb el moviment obrer" (Poster by the "Solidarity with the Workers Movement" collective), 1973

Paper work, 50 x 80 cm

Courtesy: MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Published by the Solidarity with the Workers' Movement collective to raise funds, this poster was distributed clandestinely on the occasion of the anniversary of the Second Spanish Republic of 1934. The work, which includes the entries *repressió* ('repression'), *repressiu-iva* ('repressive') and *repressor-a* ('repressor'), taken from the Pompeu Fabra Catalan Dictionary, recalls works that reflect on the relation between language and art.

Sala Vinçon, Barcelona

Postcard collection, 1973-83

Courtesy: Eugeni Bonet

Between 1973 and 1983, the La Sala Vinçon in Barcelona was a place that held many exhibitions, workshops and conferences related to conceptual art. From Wolf Vostell to Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, from Alessandro Mendini to Muntadas, from Bigas Luna to Àngel Jové were many who participated in the planning of this meeting point around which gathered several generations of artists and designers.

Tomorrow is Evidence!

Curators

Annamária Szőke, Miklós Peternák

Artists

**Gábor Altorjay, László Beke (Archiv), CAYC Hungary, Miklós Erdély, Indigo Group, IPUT
(superintendent: Tamas St. Auby), Gyula Pauer**

The centrally administered institutional system of the art world between the 1960s and 1980s in Hungary were determined by the ideology of the state party, which was exercised not only through the cultural officials, juries, and the press, but also with the help of informers and agents enlisted into the political deterrence. Albeit beginning in the 1960s a gradual “liberalization” was discernible in all areas of culture, the principal method of György Aczél (the influential cultural politician) remained in force up until the collapse of socialism. In the second half of the 1960’s, in opposition to the official “first” public sphere of artists, another “second public sphere” began to take shape including samizdat publications as well as exhibitions, educational lectures, actions, art courses, film screenings and concerts that were organized in private homes, cellars, studios, cultural houses, clubs, and various institutions connected with universities. Furthermore the artists of the “second” public sphere established manifold networks towards foreign art scenes: through personal connections and information that was spread by word of mouth or correspondence. The works selected for this section were in their one-time circumstances subversive in many senses. We are curious, however, to see whether they could be considered subversive today. Here, the partially destroyed (Pauer), vanished (Erdély), ephemeral (Indigo) or simply never realized (Altorjay) works of art figure together with works that were presented in Hungary or abroad. They are presented in their original, recreated, or reenacted versions, the latter being undertaken by the artists themselves, referring to events of present-day time. (Annamária Szőke, Miklós Peternák; Title: Gyula Pauer: Protest-Sign Forest, 49)

WORKS (SELECTION)

All texts unless otherwise noted: Annamária Szőke, Miklós Peternák

Gábor Altorjay (D; 1946, HU)

15 Actions for Marta Minujin, 1967

Gábor Altorjay began his career as a poet in the first half of the 1960's. From 1966 till 1967, he wrote numerous scripts for happenings, actions, as well as for a fluxus-concert. He escaped to Germany in 1967, lived for a short time in Stuttgart and worked later together with Wolf Vostell in Cologne. The figure of the Argentinean artist, Marta Minujin, which he saw on a photograph and which for him symbolized freedom, independence and beauty, prompted him to offer his *15 actions* to Minujin in the summer of 1967. The premiere of *15 Actions for Marta Minujin* was held on October 12, 2007 in the aula and screening room of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Budapest, as part of the event series entitled *The Time of an Artwork/The Artwork through Time*. Altorjay met Marta Minujin for the first time in 2009 in Stuttgart.

Script, English translation

- 1) Let's put on a crash-helmet. Let's tie our feet together with a rope flung over a pulley that's at least 3 meters tall while we pull ourselves under the pulley with the other end of the rope and lift our bodies up by our feet, then lower ourselves back, then up again, as long as we can endure it. Meanwhile we should look around and say to ourselves: I SHOULD SINK UPWARDS!
 - 2) Let's strive to fulfill someone's wish.
 - 3) Let's cover our faces with band-aids. Let's fix portraits of ourselves above our hearts and ask someone to pull the band-aids off our faces carefully.
 - 4) Let's ask someone about the colors of the rainbow and after every color light up a new cigarette.
 - 5) Let's close our eyes and screech.
 - 6) Let's blow up balloons with a vacuum cleaner. Paste newspapers, postcards and maps all over the balloons. Pop the balloons.
 - 7) Let's wash someone's feet.
 - 8) Let's go to the movies. In the dark, let's put on rubber gloves and think of MARTA MINUJIN. (Let's throw an inflatable doll into the audience and yell: MARTA MINUJIN!)
 - 9) Let's weigh ourselves and write the figure on our foreheads with charcoal. Let's spread newspapers on the ground and lie down on them, cover ourselves with newspapers and shave (or trim our nails).
 - 10) Let's plunge our heads under water and leave them there until we can no longer endure it. Let's then whisper to someone standing next to us what went through our minds when we were under water and ask him/her to repeat it in a loud voice.
 - 11) Let's stick tape on our television screens. Let's paint them silver. Let's pull off the tape.
 - 12) Let's lick our knee three times and spit to get rid of the unpleasant, salty taste.
 - 13) Let's readjust our watches by 4 minutes and then attempt to answer the question in 4 minutes: IS NUCLEAR WAR BETTER THAN HAPPENING?
 - 14) Let's listen to the first acts of two operas simultaneously.
 - 15) Look out the window and think of me; look into the refrigerator and think of me; look at your fist and think of me; look at the calendar and think of me, look into the mirror and think of me.
- Anyone, anytime, anywhere, in any order.
- (1967, Gabor Altorjay, Translated by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)

Miklós Erdély

Solidarity Action, 1972

Script of a concept realized in photo-montage and statistical tables

English translation

1. It is generally known that war is institutionalized murder or rather, institutions become murderous in war.
2. Institutions are established for the purpose of serving people, but in our days they have become the masters, determinants, and often the murderers of people.

3. Along with retaining the useful role of institutions, people should be given the opportunity to express their superiority to institutions.
 4. When each person makes the same gesture at the same time, a form of human solidarity manifests itself which reaches beyond leaders and the led, conflicting states or groups, or guards and the guarded, a solidarity which shows that, for instance, the similarity between the prisoner and the warder is greater than between the warder and the prison, or between the prisoner and captivity.
 5. According to the logic of massacre, if everybody kills two persons, all of humankind can be exterminated in thirty-two moves, considering that a person cannot be killed twice.
 6. If each soldier kills two persons on the average, at least half of the victims will be people who have not killed anybody – irrespective of the number of those involved in the battle. (The number of innocent victims will be the same in the case as well, if each killer kills always a killer and an innocent person – which proves the absurdity of revenge.) And the weapons of mass destruction distort this proportion to an incredible extent.
 7. The diagram of massacre is like a reversed genealogical tree. The last killer alive could not have been the cause of the chain reaction of massacre, as the whole process is over by the time he appears on the scene. It looks rather as if the numerous innocent victims (in the last row of the diagram) are those who start and cause the murderous process. This is the reverse of the genealogical tree, where the ancestral progenitor is obviously the cause of all the descendants.
 8. The way of defence is the following: each man is to warn two other persons in case of emergency. According to the principle that a man cannot be killed twice, they have to be individually marked (as Göring recommends in the case of the pacifists). In this way it is avoidable that a person is informed twice while others are kept in the dark.
 9. If everybody marks only two persons without using any institutional and communicational means, all people in the world can be warned in a very short time and they will be able to defend themselves collectively. At a given moment, the siren-test of solidarity runs around the world.
 10. Let us fill the dead numbers of statistics with life!
- (Translated by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)

The Indigo Group

(Bálint Bori, Zoltán Lábás, János Sugár)

Temporary Sculpture Made of Styropor. The reconstruction of the 1981 "Temporary Sculpture Made of Cotton Wool". Budapest – Berlin, 2009

Site-specific installation, styropor, wood, carbon paper used to cover the ceiling, 350 x 350 x 400 cm. The original work was done for the exhibition entitled *Hard and Soft (Post-conceptual Tendencies)* which was part of the exhibition series *Tendencies*, organized by László Beke, Óbuda Gallery, Budapest, April 14–30, 1981

"INDIGO" is the abbreviation of the Hungarian phrase "interdisciplinary thinking" ("INterDiszciplináris GONDolkodás"). This was the name of one of the artistic courses lead by Miklós Erdély from 1975 until his death. The Indigo course transformed into a group at the beginning of the 1980's, which still exists today. The group focused on topics that went beyond the scope of the individual tasks of art and raised the question of the responsibility of the individual in society. The two texts distributed by Indigo in the first half of the 1980's, the *Indigo Call for Peace* and the *Deed of Foundation of the Voluntary Legislative Assembly* refer to this interest. In a broader or narrower sense they were linked to the contemporary international peace movement and its ideas. The 1981 installation of the Indigo Group, *Temporary Sculpture Made of Cotton Wool*, was its first work related to the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Indigo Peace Call, ca. 1983

In: Documents on the Peace Movement in Hungary. Edited by Hugh Baldwin. London: European Nuclear Disarmament Hungary Working Group, 1986. pp. 12–13.: Section II: Artists & Peace – The Indigo Group.

English translation

[1] Appeals and statements about the nuclear threat to humanity are little more than hackneyed phrases. Their form and rhetoric are ineffectual. Instead of making the endangered populations realize the character and the dimensions of the impending catastrophe, they dull

their attention. And so, since they do not understand the essence of the new situation, they are unable to feel their responsibility for their own future; they are isolated from their own destiny by degrees, and sink down into uneasy indifference. In these circumstances they cannot find the right forms either for prevention or for protest.

[2] From the situation into which humanity has fallen with the stockpiling of nuclear weapons one must draw radical conclusions, so as to break away from false and conditioned ways of thinking. We must find the new, mobilizing and concise forms of expression, which are now necessary.

[3] The phrase nuclear 'weapon' is itself misleading: it assigns to military policy and considerations mad-made forces, which, in terms of their effects, have far outgrown it. ('God created the world in six days, mankind is able to destroy it in six hours.')

[4] The nuclear threat is not a part of the questions of strategy and of world politics: it is the other way round. The production of devices of mass destruction, whose use threatens everyone and offers advantage to no one, cannot be justified by the interests of any nation, class or group. It follows that those who administer those portions of the earth divided by state boundaries or by spheres of interest have no right to make any decisions as to the production of such devices. Such a decision is, in itself, according to the Nürnberg Convention, 'a crime committed against humanity'.

[5] We are facing an ontological question that is not only beyond nations, but which is of cosmic relevance, and which cannot even be approached with the concepts of humanism – the making of a decision which brings the threat of total annihilation is forbidden in the fullest sense of the word.

The responsibility for making such a decision is immense in proportion to all that we know and have already achieved, but it is infinite in relation to all that we don't know and have not yet achieved. The damage which this stored-up destructive power may cause is infinite, since it can rob any future from the many-million-year process, the unique result of which is human intellect. It follows that the degree of responsibility is in inverse ratio to the infinitely small probability of the evolution of life and of human intellect. And it also follows that every single act, however small it may be, which is aimed at the prevention of this infinite loss has, in an ideal sense, an infinitely high value.

[6] If the question is analyzed in this way, then the disproportionate relation between cause and consequence becomes appallingly transparent. The present situation, which brings extreme peril to everyone – and to those who exercise power as well – proves that the exercise of power is itself an illusion: the institutions, like automata, move along their own inertial course.

It is in vain that politicians admit and declare that to store nuclear warheads cannot be justified, either theoretically or in terms of the defence of interests: still they can do nothing about it. Nor can the so-called 'peace campaign' act with effect; the danger goes beyond the alternatives of war or peace. A nuclear missile 'overshoots the mark' in any case.

[7] There can be no doubt that the present imperiled situation was prepared by the process that we call history. We have to accept, however, that the 'nuclear weapon' was made at the lowest point in history. The purpose of its invention was to stop fascism and prevent systematic genocide.

[8] The fact that the existence of fascism brought into being a device of mass destruction which humanity could not get rid of until now, and that the destructive capacity of this has increased to an extent that exceeds imagination, can be seen, as an after-triumph of fascism.

[9] At the moment there is no significant power in the world that is planning systematic genocide. Neither are we aware of either 'side' making preparations to use the stored-up destructive force at their disposal. It would be unpardonable folly if so much went into the production of totally useless, but harmless, things. But the devices under discussion here are totally harmful and totally useless.

[10] Some people speak about 'unnecessary panic' concerning the total annihilation of humanity, since not everybody would be destroyed in the event of an accidental nuclear 'war'. Yet what we should fear the least now is that if there will be a few – or a few million – survivors and these vegetating beings will reproach us: 'It was all a false alarm! Look, we are still alive!' (Translation by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)

Deed of Foundation of the Voluntary Legislative Assembly, Paris, September 1982

On behalf of the Indigo group of Budapest: Zoltán Lábas, Tivadar Nemesi, János Sugár

English translation:

1. The Assembly's power of disposal is unlimited.
2. The effect of the provisions of the Assembly extends to everything and everyone, person, object and institutions alike; its validity is binding and cannot be forfeited.
3. The competence of the Assembly concerns any and all phenomena, including those that are alterable and those that are unalterable.
4. Its executive power is inversely proportional; therefore it is zero.
5. It is an experiential fact that the above mentioned proportionality is true of all the existing institutes of the world.* The Assembly derived its authority from the recognition of this inevitability. (It naturally retains the right to modify or permanently annul this inevitability by decree.)
6. In case of non-observance of its legally binding provisions the Assembly may not use nor does it wish to use retaliation, but reserves the right to condemn the infringement of the law with further denunciatory resolutions.
7. In a given case it may subsequently sanction disregard or arbitrarily modified adoption of the decree.
8. The Assembly will consider any draft resolution from anywhere and anyone and in case of consensus will make it law.
9. The Assembly can co-opt anyone it deems as suitable into its membership.
10. As the Assembly does not represent group interests, it recognizes neither the precept of majority nor the right of veto. Members of the Assembly compose the drafts of decrees together and approve them unanimously.
11. The Assembly makes its provisions public in every way, and expects them to be promulgated with tools over which it has no command.
12. Members of the Assembly declare that they feel a sense of responsibility towards themselves in the most profound sense, and as such carry out their work as representatives of universal interests.

* see the unwarrantedly accumulated supply of nuclear materials capable of destroying humanity.

(Translation by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)

Gyula Pauer

Protest Sign Forest, 1978 (2009)

Site-specific adaptation of the open-air installation that was destroyed in 1978.

127 plastic boards with inscriptions, their size corresponding to the size of the originals.

Courtesy: Gyula Pauer

Gyula Pauer began his career in the 1960's as a sculptor and arrived at the anti-sculpture of his *Pseudo art* in 1970. *Protest Sign Forest*, an intervention in public space, was conceptualized as a street protest transferred to a natural setting. The legibility of the "slogans" on the signs was determined by the alterations of time of the day, the angle of incidence of the sun's rays. The protest-signs formed a plastically and topographically structured order. The work finally stood covering an area of about 400 m² for a single day, after which it was demolished by the authorities. Only the photographs made by Pauer before he fled the site preserve an overall picture of the work, which no one was able to perambulate and take in as the artist himself had imagined.

Marx-Lenin, 1971

Published by C³ on the occasion of the exhibition *Subversive Practices*, 2009. Din A/4, 2 pages, printed in a printing house, 2000 copies, © 1971, 2009, Gyula Pauer

The press photo used in this work was published in April 6, 1971 in *Tükör* (Mirror), referring to a large-scale statue of Karl Marx that was planned to be built for Karl-Marx-Stadt.

The First PSEUDO Manifesto, October, 1970

English translation:

The English equivalents for the expression PSEUDO are: false, deceptive, unreal, and seemingly real. In the field of sculpture it was used in connection with the works made by Gyula Pauer in 1970. It refers to one of the striking features of sculpture, and thereby one of the new aspects of sculpting. The PSEUDO sculpture does not seem to be what its genuine form actually is. The PSEUDO sculpture is not about the medium of sculpture itself, but rather the circumstances of the medium of sculpture.

One of the historical antecedents of PSEUDO sculpture is MINIMAL ART. MINIMAL sculpture is a kind of plastic art that has been reduced to a few simple geometric forms the shocking effect of which lies in their pure, almost puritanical appearance and their deliberate avoidance of ornament and sentimentality. Its other antecedent was the illusionist technique of OP ART. The pure form in OP ART is dissolved in the endless possibilities of motion. However, OP ART has remained a two-dimensional art of decorative illusionism.

PSEUDO misleadingly creates the impression of the surface of another sculpture over the puritan forms of MINIMAL sculpture, giving the image of two sculptures simultaneously. This effect is achieved by projecting the picture of a more complex object onto the surface of simple geometrical forms. This is done by means of a photographic process. On the surface of the sculpture there appears the surface of another sculpture. The PSEUDO sculpture thus portrays reality and illusion, the material and the immaterial on the same object at the same time. The exact forms are discernible, but perception is always hampered by the illusionist image. Essentially, PSEUDO includes the following questions:

1. the existence of sculpture
2. the absence of sculpture
3. the PSEUDO-like attitude, the manipulated nature of the object

These themes move beyond the material space of sculpture and demand functional interpretation. We consider the following interpretation correct:

The PSEUDO quality depicts the manipulated nature of the sculpture as a work of plastic art. This manipulated nature can characterize the existence of art in general. The manipulated nature of the PSEUDO sculpture, both in its form and in its technique, is only a symbol of the existential manipulated nature of plastic art (and the arts in general).

In the last third of the 20th century modern art entered into the maelstrom of social manipulation by following the path of consumer goods. Of course, PSEUDO cannot tell us about the manipulated nature of the price, commerce, advertising strategies and functions of art objects, because PSEUDO sculpture is not a historical treatise or sociological essay, nor is it an illustrated popular lecture. The PSEUDO sculpture is a sculpture representing itself as a manipulated sculpture, thus proving the existence of the state of manipulation. PSEUDO reveals itself as a false image, or at least as a complex object that also gives a false image. But PSEUDO does not commit itself merely to the act of exposure. PSEUDO sculpture carefully sets new surfaces on the surfaces of simple and concrete objects, and these visual elements, settling gently on the surface of the object, present the forms from a new perspective. Consequently PSEUDO not only negates the manipulated existence, but affirms it as well, exposing its complexity and structural richness. Finally, PSEUDO cannot be interpreted as an unambiguous stance. With the dialectical unity of affirmation and negation it gestures towards the world beyond it, but it also reverts into itself.

PSEUDO remains neither philosophy nor history, but what it was at the very moment of its birth – sculpture. PSEUDO will exist as long as appearance is a real factor, and vice versa. (Translation by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)

Playing with the System. Artistic Strategies in the GDR from 1970 to 1990

Curator

Anne Thurmann-Jajes

Artists

Auto-Perforations-Artisten, Carlfriedrich Claus, Lutz Dammbeck, Guillermo Deisler, Die Gehirne, Claus Hänsel, Joseph W. Huber, Kanal X, Oskar Manigk, Olaf Nicolai, César Olhagaray, Robert Rehfeldt, Valeri Scherstjanoi, Cornelia Schleime, Gabriele Stötzer, Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt

Reflection on art in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) cannot be undertaken without considering the related political and social situation—censorship and socialist-realist dogma as well as control exerted by cultural officials, or the espionage activities on the part of the Ministry for State Security. This section focuses on the reprisals to which artists were subjected, but also to the ingenuity they employed to nevertheless always be able to continue their artistic activities, indeed with very enigmatic, astute, and ironic allusions to the system. The postcards camouflaged as Kleingrafik (small-format graphic art) and stamps by the mail artists offensively targeted the situation in the GDR, but also that of the whole of Eastern Europe and of Latin America. The artists attempted to take advantage of even the smallest opportunities for free expression, such as the Kriechgalerie (“creep-gallery”) in Robert Rehfeldt’s basement during the nineteen-seventies or the “living-room galleries” that came into being in the eighties. This way, on the one hand, materials could be smuggled in with the aid of the system, for instance through customs officers; on the other hand, “original-graphic” newspapers from the so-called underground were indirectly produced for interested parties in West Germany. The ideological liberalization of the nineteen-seventies made it possible for artists to take part in the international Mail Art Network and to participate in the graphic arts biennials held in Ljubljana, Cracow, and Fredrikstad. Thus, over the years alternative art forms developed. While for artists like Guillermo Deisler and César Olhagaray from Chile or Valeri Scherstjanoi from Russia the GDR basically represented more freedom than their homelands, the reprisals tactics practiced by the Ministry for State Security led many artists to abandon the country, either temporarily or permanently. (Anne Thurmann-Jajes)

Exhibition's Archive

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THIS READER IS PUBLISHED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXHIBITION

Subversive Practices

Art under Conditions of Political Repression

60s–80s / South America / Europe

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

May 30 – August 2, 2009

Ed: Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV)

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(unless otherwise noted): Graham Thomson

Translations from German to English

(unless otherwise noted): Dawn Michelle D'Atri

Quotations from this reader

... in: Württembergischer Kunstverein (Ed.), Subversive Practices, Reader, Stuttgart 2009

EXHIBITION**Idea and Concept**

Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ

Co-curators

Ramón Castillo / Paulina Varas, Santiago de Chile / Valparaíso

Fernando Davis, Buenos Aires

Cristina Freire, São Paulo

Sabine Hänsen, Bochum

Miguel Lopez / Emilio Tarazona, Barcelona / Lima

Ileana Pintilie Teleaga, Timisoara

Valentín Roma / Daniel García Andújar, Barcelona

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HOURS

Tue, Thu–Sun: 11 am–6 pm; Wed: 11 am–8 pm

PROGRAM SYMPOSIUM

May 30 + 31, 2009

Saturday, May 30, 2009

1 p.m.

Exhibition tour with the artists and curators

4 p.m.

The Strategy of Anonymity: Some Remarks on Artistic Practices in Peru

Lecture by Juan Javier Salazar (video recording)

Subsequent conversation with Miguel López and Emilio Tarazona

5 p.m.

Critical Rereading of So-Called Catalan Conceptualism

Conversation with Valentín Roma, Daniel García Andújar, Antoni Muntadas, Fernando Marzá and Jesús Carrilo

6 p.m.

Traces of the Hungarian Exhibition(s) at the C AYC (Center for Art and Communication), Buenos Aires, 1973–74

Lecture by Mercedes Kutasy

19:30 Uhr

Performance

Marta Minujin, Gabor Altorjay

Sunday, May 31, 2009

1 p.m.

Around 1970 Art Was a Prison

Lecture by Horacio Zabala

2 p.m.

Artistic Strategies in the GDR, 1970–1990

DVD presentation by Lutz Dammbeck about the first "Leipziger Herbstsalon"; Presentation of the alternative TV-channel *Kanal X* by Norbert Meissner

3:30 p.m.

Moscow Conceptual Art Online

Lecture by Sergey Letov

<http://conceptualism.letov.ru>

4:30 p.m.

Subversive Art as Viewed in Eastern European Romania

Lecture by Ion Grigorescu