

24 May – 29 September 2013



Cildo Meireles,
Atlas, 2007, A.P.
Transparency in
light box
175,5 x 127,9 x 9 cm
Courtesy Lofoten
International
Festival

Since the late 1960s, Cildo Meireles (1948, Rio de Janeiro) has been working on new possibilities for the redefinition of conceptual art based on a relationship with the sensory experience of the viewer, the critical use of systems of ideological and economic circulation, and an ethical connection with the world, the foundation of his permanent critical stance. Meireles's work broadens the field of a pioneering revision of modernity which took place in Latin America – and especially in Brazil, with the work of artists like Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark and Lygia Pape – in the second half of the 20th century.

The exhibition concentrates on a set of new works accompanied by some of the artist's other lesser known pieces. The formal and conceptual aspects of Meireles's work are inseparable from his critical attitude. A poetic and ideological attitude toward the world is revealed in the relation to everyday life of the materials used in his works, and in the structural confrontation between forms and signifieds.

Many of the pieces shown in the exhibition are critical commentaries on concepts of territory, questioning History as a narrative of colonial domination. Examples of this include installations like *Abajur*, *Olvido* and *Amerikkka*, which is seen here for the first time. The construction of the singularity of these works on the basis of the quantitative nature of the world is a physical experience. *Olvido*, for instance, presents an Indian teepee made of 6,000 banknotes from all the American countries, erected over three tons of bones and installed in the center of a circle formed by 69,300 candles. In *Amerikkka*, a floor made from 20,050 wooden eggs lies beneath a ceiling of 76,150 bullets. In *Marulho*, more than 17,000 books with photographs of sea water construct a representation of the ocean. To contextualize these pieces, the exhibition also presents some of Cildo Meireles's other historic series that interrogate concepts of territory, value and the art object, such as *Physical Art* or *Insertions in Ideological Circuits*.

The works of Meireles offer the visitor ambiances with especially rich conditions for the perception of time and space, confronting the viewer with the dematerialization of the art object and with a semantic reinvention of linguistic categories and perceptive realities. The redefinition of modern art in Brazil opened up the forms of geometric abstraction to a new interaction with space and the viewer, one which has broadened the opportunities for the constructive context to manifest itself in Brazilian art. Historic series like *Songs: Virtual Spaces* or *Virtual Volumes* are examples of a very personal redefinition of the languages of abstraction. Similarly, *Painting #1* is an example of his visual use of rhetorical figures like oxymoron or chiasmus, here deployed in successive dichotomies of contradictory terms and materials. The series of drawings for projects presented in the exhibition are the expression of a working program that reveals the precision of his creative process.

Another of the constructive figures of Cildo Meireles's universe is synesthesia. The association and coincidence of different sensory perceptions is a motif appearing in several works, from the association of sound properties with the visual plane to that of vision with taste or thermal perception, as occurs in the piece *Entrevendo*. In this way, the possibilities of art as a human experience of the world are amplified.

Co-organized by the Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofía, the Museu Serralves (Oporto, Portugal) and HangarBicocca (Milan, Italy), this exhibition is a unique opportunity to discover new aspects of the work of Cildo Meireles. One of the most celebrated of contemporary artists and the winner of the 2008 Velázquez Prize, he has presented a large number of exhibits at major international shows such as Documenta in Kassel and the Venice and São Paulo biennials.

Museo Nacional
Centro de Arte
Reina Sofía

Palacio de
Velázquez
Parque de El Retiro,
28009 Madrid

Opening Hours

From April
to September
Every day from
10:00 a.m.
to 10:00 p.m.
From October
to March
Every day from
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Galleries close
15 minutes
prior to Museum
closing

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L.D.: M-16086-2013
N.I.P.O.: 036-13-007-8

Exhibition organized
by the Museo Nacional
Centro de Arte Reina
Sofía, Museu de Arte
Contemporânea de
Serralves, Oporto, and
HangarBicocca, Milan

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