

Library and Documentation Centre

12 April – 13 September 2016

Nouvel Building, Library, Space D

Colectivo Acciones de Arte (C.A.D.A.) 1979-1985



Bolsa de leche vacía con intervención, 1979, C.A.D.A., Museo Reina Sofía

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In 1973, a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet crushed the project with which Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government had put forward new conditions of collective existence in which culture played a significant role — a project which had attracted a good deal of international interest in the democratic anomaly of the 'Chilean Road to Socialism'. In the wake of the coup, thousands of exiles forged a network of associations with a variety of individuals and institutions working in many different parts of the world, with a view to restoring democracy to Chile. Meanwhile, inside Chile, many others engaged in strategies of resistance to and confrontation with the repressive machinery of the dictatorship.

This was the context in which there emerged an avant-garde scene created by young artists who experimented with the body, the archive, language and the city. A key component of this 'advanced scene', as the cultural theorist Nelly Richard dubbed it, was the Colectivo Acciones de Arte (C.A.D.A.) [Art Actions Collective], formed by the visual artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo, the writers Diamela Eltit and Raúl Zurita and the sociologist Fernando Balcells. C.A.D.A., which was active between 1979 and 1985, set out to challenge with its practices the spurious divisions between art, city, citizenship and poverty, while at the same time questioning the spaces in which artistic creation operated.

One of the instances in which the members of the collective made this intention explicit was the 1981 action *¡Ay Sudamérica!* [Oh South America!], in which they declared that 'The task of extending the usual levels of life is the only valid montage of art / the only exhibition / the only work that is alive'. In this action six planes flew over Santiago and 'bombed' the city's streets with protest leaflets. The use of aircraft — or of trucks, as in the 1979 project *Inversión de escena* [Inversion of scene] — emulated and altered the gesture of military occupation and control of the city under siege, proposing the art intervention as an underground form of citizen occupation. With initiatives such as these, the group made the case that art was the besieged city itself and the everyday experience of those who lived in spaces of

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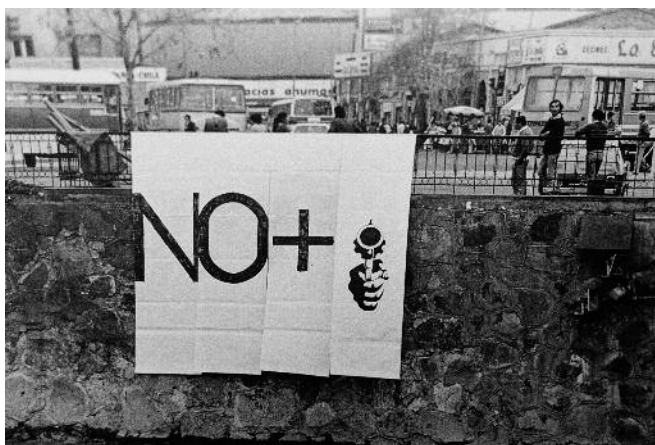
destruction, disaffection or uprootedness. By appealing to the transformation of the strategies of social and public intervention from the poetic, the group operated as an active agent in shaping the subjectivities of citizens repressed by the regime, proposing ‘practices of freedom’ in the sense given them by Michel Foucault, such that ‘this people, this society and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence or political society’.

This exhibition brings together an extensive selection of materials from the C.A.D.A. Archive and Work, recently acquired by the Museum on the basis of the dialogue with the artists who conserve the original material, Lotty Rosenfeld and Diamela Eltit, and of the researches of Paulina Varas, Jaime Vindel, Ana Longoni and Fernanda Carvajal, members of the Red de Conceptualismos del Sur/Southern Conceptualisms Network, and Isabel García Pérez de Arce. Of special interest here is the 1979 project *Para no morir de hambre en el arte* [In order not to starve to death in art], which is the core of the present show. In this project C.A.D.A. engaged with measure number 15 of Allende’s Popular Unity programme, which affirmed the right of every Chilean child to half a litre of milk a day.



iAy Sudamérica!, 1981, C.A.D.A., Museo Reina Sofía
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No +, 1983 - , C.A.D.A., Museo Reina Sofia

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On that basis they staged various actions, such as the handing out of bags of milk in a working-class area of Santiago or a polyglot reading of the text 'No es una aldea'/'It's not a village' outside the headquarters of the United Nations. In this way they embraced the plight of a city and a citizenry denied their fundamental rights and went on to proclaim the people's every day experience as the heart of the production of art as social creation. The materials from this project conserved in the Museum, the authorship of which is in many cases diffuse, are complemented by the documentary record of the actions carried out by Cecilia Vicuña in Bogotá and Eugenio Tález in Toronto, and an audio recording by the artist Luz Donoso of the debates between C.A.D.A. and others in relation to the different phases of the project, evidencing their collective and processual nature.

By way of introduction to the show, the entrance lobby of the Library offers the video *Arte en Chile. Contexto e intervenciones* [Art in Chile. Context and interventions], made in 1986 by Nelly Richard and Juan Enrique Forch, an analysis of the so-called 'advanced scene', and the documentary *C.A.D.A* filmed in 1993 by Lotty Rosendfelf, as well as a special sound file made specifically for this

exhibition, in which the archive researchers Paulina Varas and Isabel García shed light on the complexities of the Archive's constitution, its relationship with the institutions and its potential for thinking the present.

With regard to this last point, and in order to activate and reposition in the present the strategies that document the Archive (in keeping with the 'open source' spirit embraced by C.A.D.A.), one of the group's best-known initiatives has been brought back into circulation in the same entrance space. This is the poster *NO+*, initiated in 1983 and designed to be reused in many contexts of protest, present and future.

For this occasion, André Mesquita's poster designed for the exhibition *Loosing the human form* has been retrieved and five artists have been invited, each in conjunction with a social collective currently active in the Spanish State, to take part in the production of replicas of *NO+*: the collective N.I.E. [Nomadic Objectors from the Ex colonies] in collaboration with the Espacio del Inmigrante Raval [Space of the Immigrant] and the Sindicato Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes [street vendors' union]; Lucia Egaña with the sex workers' association Aproxex; Equipo Palomar with the collective Migrantxs Transgresorxs [Transgressors Migrants]; Firas Shehadeh with the Indignados Refugiados [Outraged Refugees] collective, and Diego del Pozo with the Vallecas PAH [Platform of People Affected by Mortgages]. These five interventions bear witness to the continued relevance of the resources of C.A.D.A. Archive and Work and a project that was designed in order to be reappropriated and to promote an active negativity.

Francisco Godoy Vega

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Library opening times

Monday to Friday
from 10.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.
Except holidays

The exhibition room will
be vacated 15 minutes
before closing time

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