

Losing the human form. A seismic image of the 1980s in Latin America



LUIZ FERNANDO BORGES DA FONSECA
Ensayo fotográfico Homem de Neanderthal, del LP Água do Céu-Pássaro, de Ney Matogrosso
Figueiras/Restinga da Marambaia, Rio de Janeiro, 1976
Fotografía b/n
Colección Heloísa Orosco Borges da Fonseca (Luhli)

- DATES:** 25 October 2012 – 11 March 2013
- PLACE:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid)
Sabatini Building. 3rd floor
- ORGANISED BY:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía en colaboración with AECID
(Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
- CURATED BY:** Red Conceptualismos del Sur
- COORDINATION
REINA SOFÍA:** Rafael García and Tamara Díaz
- COORDINATING
TEAM
Red Conceptualismos
del Sur:** Ana Longoni (Argentina), Mabel Tapia (Argentina), Miguel A. López (Perú),
Fernanda Nogueira (Brasil), André Mesquita (Brasil), Jaime Vindel (España) y
Fernanda Carvajal (Chile).
- RELATED
ACTIVITIES:** Panel debate *Losing the human form. A seismic image of the 1980s in Latin
America*
26, 27 October. Nouvel Auditorium 200
- Performance *Traces of El Periférico de Objetos.*
27 October. Nouvel Auditorium 400

The exhibition **Losing the human form. A seismic image of the 1980s in Latin America** has been organised by Museo Reina Sofía in collaboration with AECID, and curated by Red Conceptualismos del Sur. This show presents a vision of the tensions between art, politics and activism that took place during the 1980s in several Latin American territories. Through more than **six hundred works** —photographs, videos and sound recordings to graphic and documentary material, as well as installations and drawings—, *Losing the human form* makes out an image that, though not aiming to be panoramic or representative, does invite to rethink a series of micro-narratives and localised case studies, capable of allowing the viewer to approach a thoroughly unknown period.

The show evokes an image of the 1980s in Latin America that establishes a counterpoint between the effects of violence on bodies and the radical experiments in freedom and transformation which impugned the repressive order. Stricken bodies / mutant bodies. Between horror and festivity, the materials gathered show not only the consequences of mass disappearances and massacres under dictatorial régimes, states of siege and internal wars, but also various collective urges to devise modes of existing in a permanent state of revolution.

The exhibition points out the multiple and simultaneous appearance of new ways of making art and politics in different parts of Latin America in the 1980s. It presents the results of an ongoing research project, conducted under the auspices of Red Conceptualismos del Sur, whose first phase has concentrated on certain episodes in the Southern Cone, Brazil and Peru, with the inclusion of some individual case studies in Mexico, Colombia and Cuba. The historical period under consideration begins in 1973, the year of Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile, and continues up to 1994, when the Zapatista movement inaugurates a new cycle of protests that relaunches activism at an international level. The period corresponds to the consolidation of neoliberalism as a new hegemony, the demise of the real socialisms and the crisis of the traditional left.

The exhibition renders this panorama complex by retrieving experiments which suggested forms of resistance through fragile supports like serigraphy, performance, video, poetic

action, experimental theatre and participative architecture. These practices can be grouped into three main areas. The first is visual politics, driven by social movements like the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and Mujeres por la Vida ('Women for Life') in Chile. The second is acts of sexual disobedience, which include experiences of transvestism and corporalities that defy the traditional construction of genre. The last is the underground scene, which used music, partying and the "do-it-yourself" ethic to construct microcommunities and so make it possible to re-establish the social ties broken by terror.

All these experiments led to a loss of the human form, tensing and warping the humanist concept of the subject, and gave rise to new subjectivities that meant a crisis for familiar modes of existence and a transformation in ways of understanding and engaging in politics.

Through the exhibition, the spectator will discover the heterogeneity of cases included in the project. Episodes and experiences that go from the images registered by **critical photojournalism** during the Chilean and Argentinean dictatorships to the survival of the Arete Guasu ritual in an aboriginal community in Paraguay. From the **actions of sexual subversion** and **performances** in underground spaces in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru or Mexico to the creative strategies used by the **human rights movements** in the Southern Cone when it was time to make visible all people who ended up missing due to State terrorism. Also, the **body** is one of the key issues of the exhibition.

A powerful feature of the show is **collectivity**, not only in its very conception (and the involvement of more than 25 researchers) but also in its representation (most authors worked with or belonged to groups or collectives). One can find political organizations, such as **Madres de Plaza de Mayo** and **Mujeres por la vida** to collectives of artists as **3Nós3**, **Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis**, **Taller NN**, **C.A.Pa.Ta.Co (Colectivo de Arte Participativo – Tarifa Común)**, **Polvo de Gallina Negra**, **Gang**, **CADA**, **Periférico de Objetos** or artists such as **León Ferrari**, **Néstor Perlonger**, **Ney Matogrosso**, **Juan Dávila**, **Gianni Mesticelli**, **Paulo Bruscky**, **Clemente Padín**, **Sergio Zevallos**, **Miguel Ángel Rojas**, etc.

A PROJECT IN COMMON

This exhibition is the result of a research project made by **Red Conceptualismos del Sur**, a collective initiative that emerged in 2007 and gathers a group of researchers and artists dispersed in several Latin American and European areas. It proposes to constitute as a platform for thought and action, stressing on the contemporary relations between art and politics. The investigation developed for this show has focused on the Southern Cone (**Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay**), **Brazil** and **Peru**, including some cases in **Mexico, Colombia** and **Cuba**, as these are part of a similar core of issues and questions.

The researches who participated in the project are **David Gutierrez Castañeda, Sylvia Suárez, William López, Luisa Fernanda Ordóñez, Halim Badawi** (members of “Taller de Historia Crítica del Arte”, Colombia); **Emilio Tarazona, Dorota Biczal** (Peru); **Felipe Rivas, Francisca García, Paulina Varas** (Chile); **Lía Colombino** (Paraguay); **Cora Gamarnik, Daniela Lucena, Ana Vidal, Fernando Davis** (Argentina); **Sol Henaro** (Mexico). **Roberto Amigo** (Argentina) and **Rachel Weiss** (USA) have been interlocutors of the project.

CATALOGUE

On occasion of the exhibition, Museo Reina Sofía is editing a publication that offers a transversal approach on the show. A glossary, working as a toolbox, agglutinates a series of concepts that come from both the lexicon coined in the 1980s and the investigation that originated the exhibition. Also, the catalogue gathers texts by the researchers involved and includes an index that mentions all artists and collectives present in the show.

ACTIVIDADES PARALELAS

Panel debate: *Losing the human form. A seismic image of the 1980s in Latin America*

DATES: 26 and 27 October, 2012

PLACE: Nouvel Auditorium 200

One of the primary aims of this seminar is to facilitate direct discussion with a selection of artists and agents mentioned in different works presented in the exhibition. It is presented as an essential activity to activate the discourse of the show. Besides representative figures of the collectives of the time, critics, activists and researchers involved will intervene, with the aim of provoking dialogue and debate on the affective, aesthetic and political experiences in which many of the speakers took an active part.

Performance: *Traces of El Periférico de Objetos*

DATE: 27 October, 2012

PLACE: Nouvel Auditorium 400

On occasion of the exhibition, Museo Reina Sofía has organised the performance *Traces of El Periférico de Objetos*, referring to fragments of productions by the well-known Argentinean theatre company. Although *El Periférico de Objetos* extinguished in 2007, one of its founders, Ana Alvarado, has decided to present this piece that, besides establishing a dialogue with *Losing the human form*, offers a monologue that grants a main role to the manipulation of objects and explores some of the issues that have worried the company throughout time: the unburied, the unsolved, the massive disappearance of people...

“El Periférico de Objetos” was founded in 1989 by Daniel Veronese, Ana Alvarado and Emilio García Whebi, with the idea of turning classic puppet theatre into a dramaturgy that could agglutinate much of the trauma, the fear and the unconscious collective of dictatorship in Argentina.

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