



MoMA to Open Eastern European & Latin American Art Exhibition 'TRANSMISSIONS' This Fall

by

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The Museum of Modern Art presents *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960-1980*, an exhibition on view from September 5, 2015, through January 3, 2016, that focuses on the parallels and connections among international artists working in-and in reference to Latin America and Eastern Europe during the 1960s and 1970s.

The exhibition features nearly 300 works, including critical bodies of work and installations from the Museum's collection, half of which are on view for the first time, and explores the radical experimentation,

expansion, and dissemination of ideas that marked the cultural production of these decades (which flanked the widespread student protests of 1968) and challenged established art-historical narratives in the West. *Transmissions* is organized by Stuart Comer, Chief Curator, Department of Media and Performance Art; Roxana Marcoci, Senior Curator, Department of Photography; and Christian Rattemeyer, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints; with Giampaolo Bianconi and Martha Joseph, Curatorial Assistants, Department of Media and Performance Art.

Within distinct political and cultural contexts, artists from Prague to Bogota developed alternative and ever-expanding networks of distribution and organization, via Paris, Vienna, and Venice, to circumvent the borders established after World War II, local forms of state and military repression, and Western accounts of artistic mastery and individualism. *Transmissions* highlights multiple points of contact, often initiated and sustained through

collective actions and personal exchanges between artists.

The exhibition includes approximately 150 works on view for the first time by influential artists such as Geta Brătescu, Tomislav Gotovac, Jiri Kovanda, Lea Lublin, George Maciunas, Marta Minujín, Ewa Partum, Liliana Porter, and Josip Vaniseta, among others. Major installations on view for the first time include Edward Krasinski's 1972 interventions with blue tape; Milan Knížek's Performance Files (1962-85); David Lamelas's Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio (1968); Marta Minujín's Simultaneidad en Simultaneidad (1966); Oscar Bony's 60 Square Meters and Its Information (1967); Lea Lublin's Dedans le musée/Pénétration d'images (1971-95); and Juan Downey's Video Trans Americas (1976).

The exhibition opens with a reconsideration of an international group of artists, including Willys de Castro (Brazilian, 1926-1988), Julije Knifer (Croatian, 1924-2004), and Julio Le Parc (Argentine, b. 1928), as well as Lucio Fontana (Italian, b. Argentina, 1899-1968), François Morellet (French, b. 1926), Victor Vasarely (French, b. Hungary, 1908-1997), and Ellsworth Kelly (American, b. 1923), among others, who were featured in the influential exhibition *Art Abstrait Constructif International*, which took place at Denise René Gallery in Paris from December 1961 to February 1962. These artists' engagement with practices from geometric abstract paintings to kinetic light installations based on predetermined systems prepared a path from the abstract vocabularies of prewar modernism to an experience of art in constant flux, probing the roles of the artist, the spectator, and the institution.

One major transformation across Latin American and Eastern European art scenes in the 1960s and 1970s was the embrace of anti-institutional gestures. This skepticism toward authority, including that of art itself, emphasized creative production outside a market context. The second section brings together several anti-art groups such as Gorgona (Yugoslavia, 1959-66), Aktual (Czechoslovakia, 1962-64), OHO (Yugoslavia, 1966-71), El techo della ballena (The Roof of the Whale, Venezuela, 1961-68), and Fluxus East (1960-85). These loose-knit collectives of independent-minded artists began operating outside "official" cultural policies by engaging with process-directed exercises, games, gatherings, walks, alternative music, and concrete poetry. This gallery highlights a selection of experimental objects, films, performance scores, and anti-art magazines by Milan Knížek (Czech, b. 1940), George Maciunas (American, b. Lithuania, 1931-1978), Dimitrije Basicević Mangelos (Yugoslav, 1921-1987), Sonia Švecová (Czech, b. 1946), and Josip Vaniseta (Croatian, b. 1924), among others.

The third section centers on a community of artists, including Oscar Bony (Argentine, 1941-2002), David Lamelas (Argentine, b. 1946), Lea Lublin (Argentine, b. Poland, 1929), and Marta Minujín (Argentine, b. 1943), who confronted the aesthetic and political implications of mass media communication -- including film, television, and the telex -- during a vibrant, experimental period of technological innovation and political tension. Clustered around the influential Instituto Torcuato Di Tella (1959-1970), an epicenter for avant-garde art production in Buenos Aires, these artists' political engagement emerged from their experiences of repression under the regime of General Juan Carlos Onganía, as well as news from New York, Paris, and Vietnam. This section presents several immersive

installations such as Bony's *60 Square Meters and Its Information* (1967); Lamelas's *The Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio* (1968); Minuji'n's *Simultaneidad en Simultaneidad* (*Simultaneity in Simultaneity*) (1966); and Lublin's *Dedans le muse?e/Pe?ne?tration d'images* (*Inside the Museum/Penetration of Images*) (1971-95), which deploy performative actions that bridge the gap between the electronic transmission of information and its active intrusions into daily life.

A fourth section is devoted to the conceptual links forged in the late 1960s and 1970s between the work of Edward Krasin?ski (Polish, 1925-2004), Daniel Buren (French, b. 1938), Andre? Cadere (Romanian, b. Poland. 1934-1978), and Henryk Staz?ewski (Polish, 1894-1988), who challenged the definition of art, the ways of looking at it, and even the spaces where one would encounter it. Staging unofficial, itinerant "exhibitions" that ran parallel with licensed programming, all four artists shared an interest in minimalist sculptural gestures and interventionist artistic strategies. Furthering the relationship between geometric form and the social space of the gallery, these artists activated sculpture through performance, as seen in Krasinski's work *Dzida* (*Spear*) (1963-64) and its accompanying photographs. At once teasing perception and perspective, the works in this section mine the critical relationship between art, the institutional structures that frame it, and everyday life.

The eruptive force of 1968, followed by social unrest flaring across the globe and the second-wave feminist movement, led to the expansion of art into political life and praxis. This fifth section presents a new generation of activist, performance, and video pioneers, including Marina Abramovic? (Serbian, b. 1946), VALIE EXPORT (Austrian, b. 1940), Sanja Ivekovic? (Croatian, b. 1949), Ana Mendieta (American, b. Cuba. 1948-1985), and Ewa Partum (Polish, b. 1945), who produced works of cross-cultural reference with a critical eye to the visual depictions of women in official culture. Questions of media representation and its identity-forging potential proved critical to VALIE EXPORT's self-proclaimed "feminist actionism" and "expanded cinema" works, such as *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (*Action Pants: Genital Panic*) (1969), *Tapp- und Taskino* (*Tap and Touch Cinema*) (1969); Ivekovic?'s picture-story series *Dvostruki z?ivot* (*Double Life*) (1975-76), which paired magazine ads with personal snapshots to reveal the fabrications on each side of public and private narratives; and Mendieta's research into distortion and anatomic manipulation in *Glass on Body Imprints* (1972). Also presented is the work of structuralist filmmaker and firebrand Tomislav Gotovac (Croatian, 1937-2010), who looked not to politics but to art as a vehicle for change. Marching naked in public spaces, he asserted his difference amid hardline social conformity.

In the 1970s artists began increasingly to relocate their work to public spaces, aiming to further test the boundaries between art and life and challenge the prescribed positions of artist and spectator. This section presents the work of Braco Dimitrijevic? (Bosnian, b. 1948), whose multiyear project *Casual Passersby I Met At* consisted of oversized photographic portraits of anonymous people that he displayed on billboards around the city of Zagreb and in public squares previously reserved for images of Marshal Tito and high-ranking party officials. Similarly, in the radicalized climate of Prague after the 1968 Soviet reoccupation of Czechoslovakia, during a period of forced "normalization" by the Soviet military, Jir?i? Kovanda (Czech, b. 1953) found meaning in barely perceptible yet politically disruptive gestures that were illegal under Soviet rule, such as in *Contact* (1979), when the artist walked around Prague casually and gently touching passersby. Also included in this section are the

street actions of the Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (CADA, founded 1979), a Chilean activist group of artists, sociologists, and poets who used strategies of theatricality and performance to challenge the Pinochet dictatorship; and Miguel Ángel Rojas's (Colombian, b. 1946) pictures, *Serie Faenza: Antropofagia*, taken with a hidden camera in the Faenza Theater, a Bogota cinema from the 1920s, of illicit sexual acts among the gay community.

In a time of intense political disquietude, conceptual art practices—and their ability to expand the boundaries of medium specificity and connect information to praxis—came of age. This seventh section includes the parallel developments and individual achievements of artists working collaboratively such as Luis Camnitzer (Uruguayan, b. Germany, 1937) and Liliana Porter (Argentine, b. 1946), Geta Brătescu (Romanian, b. 1926) and Ion Gigorescu (Romanian, b. 1945), Beřla Kolařova? (Czech, 1923-2010) and Jiři? Kolař? (Czech, 1914-2002), as well as Waltercio Caldas (Brazilian, b. 1946), Leandro Katz (Argentine, b. 1938), and Dořa Maurer (Hungarian, b. 1937). While clearly connected to a system of global debates, these Conceptual artists employed diverse strategies grounded in the newfound agency of photography and film, in the sway of countercultural activities, and in direct response to events of political significance. While artists found rigor and formal clarity in their often-concise conceptual conceits, their agenda extended beyond the narrow confines of art to an allegorical understanding of political commentary.

In reaction to the increasing dominance of American Pop art and the realities of expansive media culture around the world, the next section considers aspects of popular art in Latin America that critiqued images associated with state representation. The inflated proportions of Fernando Botero's (Colombian, b. 1932) figures in the *Presidential Family* (1967) suggest an element of political satire, and Marisol's (Marisol Escobar, Venezuelan, b. France, 1930) iconic sculpture *Love* (1962), instills a sense of deadpan humor and devastating critique in the form of a Coca-Cola bottle thrust deep into a woman's mouth. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Beatriz Gonzalez (Colombian, b. 1938) explored subject matters specific to her native Colombia's history and vernacular culture. In her "furniture as painting" works, such as *Lullaby* (1970), Gonzalez employed garish Pop art colors on pieces of furniture picked up in Bogota's open-air markets. Espousing a rough, anti-academic painting style, she made direct allusions to kitsch aesthetics and persistently referred to her country's sociopolitical reality. Her drawings of newspaper images of president Turbay offer a coda to Botero's satirical image, as she notes the newly elected president's daily appearances and thus places herself, in her words, into the role of a "court painter." A parallel section highlights the exceptional production in Eastern Europe and Latin America of posters made for cultural events in film, theater, music, art festivals, and political events, as well as in commercial design and advertising, that mixed different stylistic elements of vanguard art.

The exhibition concludes with a section centered on the video installation *Video Trans Americas* (1976), by Juan Downey (Chilean, 1940-1993), which is a rich intertextual investigation of the self through the lens of historical Western art and culture and the rituals of Downey's native Latin America. Mining autobiography and anthropology in what Downey calls an attempt to "recuperate my culture," *Trans Americas* is an odyssey of Downey's life among indigenous peoples of South America. The artist's encounters with otherness function as a metaphor for understanding his own cultural identity, which is central to the exhibition's thesis of possible counter-geographies, realignments, alternative models of solidarity, and ways of

rethinking the historical narratives of postwar art.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, MoMA.org.

Hours: Saturday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Free admission during Uniqlo Free Friday Nights: Fridays, 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

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