

# CAMPCEPTUALISMS OF THE SOUTH— TROPICAMP, PERFORMATIVE POLITICS AND SUBALTERNITY

OPEN PEI SEMINAR  
MACBA 19-20 NOVEMBER 2012



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This seminar challenges the feminist, gay, lesbian and queer historiography of the English-speaking world, its key concepts and its timeframes, and compares them to the micropolitical production of the South and of dictatorial, post-dictatorial and postcolonial contexts – from Latin America to Spain. For our purposes here, the South is not simply a geographic area, but a counter-topia that allows us to deconstruct the capitalist and colonial practices of the North. At the same time, the seminar will try to account for the shift from camp aesthetics and queer politics to the myriad decolonial and post-identitarian sexual guerrilla and gender dissidence practices that challenge the hegemonic techniques for the production of sexual difference and their corresponding institutions of cultural reproduction.

What happens to the dominant historiography when it has to deal with the aesthetic and political practices of Hélio Oiticica, of Yegüas del Apocalipsis, of Ocaña, Camilo, Nazario, Alejandro, Pau Riba, Onliyú, María la Virgen de las Ramblas, Violeta la Burra, Kike, Xefo, when it comes up against the transvestites of Las Cuevas, Carlos Mir, Les 5 QKs, the Farriol brothers, La Bocas, La Weekend, La Torbellino...? Where do the flamenco *maricas* and *boladeras* fit into all of this? How does Spain's national folklore deal with the transvestism of Trinidad La Cuenca? How do the icons of the hegemonic culture of National Catholicism coexist with those of the sexual-political-lumpen? What exactly is the "choteo" practiced by the Cuban-American artist Carmelita Tropicana? What happened to the *locas* and *marimachos* of Marxism? What becomes of Warhol if we read him through the filter of the South? How can we decolonialise free market feminism and neoliberal gay politics?

Sensing the sexual-political heterogeneity of the South, in 1971 Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica coined the term 'Tropicamp' to describe its resistance to the commercialisation of gay aesthetics in the United States. Along similar lines, Andalusian artist Pepe Ocaña countered both the New York drag queens and the '*intelectualas*' or orthodox Marxists by referring to himself as a female 'gypsy and libertarian.' From their critical distance in respect to capitalism and colonisation, the gender-based resistance and subversion practices of the South exceed and displace the historiographic contrapositions between *arte conceptuá* (with an Andalusian accent, as Ocaña called it) and performance, between kitsch and camp, between pop and postmodernity. The idea here is to question and inject complexity into the possible links between the depoliticised notion of 'camp' aesthetics (popularised by Susan Sontag's interpretation of North American gay culture after World War II), so-called 'conceptual practices', and the sexual and gender micropolitics that emerged in dictatorial and post-dictatorial contexts during the same period. This activates not only critiques of gender and sexual domination, but also practices of resistance to the colonial norm, processes of racialisation, and the capture of life in dictatorial regimes.

These seemingly minor, marginal narratives destabilise the neoliberal structure that queer politics is framed within. The performative disobedience practices of the South challenge the supposed depoliticisation of camp and call for an other narrative – on that is anti-capitalist, decolonial, libertarian, anarchist, revolutionary....

In view of all this, we now need to define new languages and map out new genealogies. In short, we have to reclaim a historiography that can account for the processes of political assemblage that are a counterpoint to the colonial epistemology and the hegemonic narrative of gender and sexual liberation that had, until now, dominated visual representation and arts practices in feminist and gender studies.

To this end, the speakers at this seminar will activate the notions of '*campceptualisms of the South*', '*tropicamp*' (with Oiticica), *tablao degenerao* (sexual-politics and transvestism in Flamenco) and *campunk* (think of the dissident *transmaricobollera* sexualisation of macho punk) in an attempt to clear new historiographic ground. It's time for the epistemologies of the South to come out. Let's open the closet!

**BEATRIZ PRECIADO**

# PARTICIPANTS

## BEATRIZ PRECIADO

Beatriz Preciado is a philosopher and queer activist. S/he has a PhD in Philosophy and Architectural Theory from Princeton University and an MA in Philosophy and Gender Studies from The New School for Social Research in New York. S/he is the author of numerous essays, including: *Manifiesto Contra-Sexual* (Anagrama), *Testo Yonqui* (Espasa Calpe) and *Pornotopía* (Anagrama), which was a finalist in the Anagrama Essay Award and won the 2011 Prix Sade in France in 2011. S/he currently teaches political history of the body and queer theory at *Université Paris VIII*. She is Co-Director, along with Marcelo Expósito, of the Independent Studies Programme (PEI) at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA).

## AIMAR ARRIOLA

Aimar Arriola is a curator and researcher. He completed the MACBA Independent Studies Programme (PEI) and the Curatorlab programme at the Konstfack Universtiy, Stockholm. As part the PEI, he participated in the research and archive project "Peligrosidad social. Minorías deseantes, lenguajes y prácticas en los 70-80 en el Estado español" (2010). He has carried out many curatorial, research, and/or educational projects at museums and art centres such as CA2M, Madrid; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; EspaiDos, Terrassa; Hangar, Barcelona; rekalde, Bilbao; and Espacio Abisal, Bilbao, among others, as well as specific production, exhibition and/or editing projects with artists such as Begoña Muñoz, Jeleton, Susana Talayero, Itziar Okariz and Miguel Benlloch. He is a member of several networks, including the Equipo re platform of researchers (<http://equipo-re.org/>), which works around the intersection of memory and identity politics and the archive. In 2012-2013 he is participating in the Museo Reina Sofia Residencies Programme in a joint research project with Nancy Garín on the cultural production that has characterised the politics of AIDS. He has been nominated for the 2012 ICI New York Independent Vision Curatorial Award.

## ALEX BRAHIM

Alex Brahim is an independent curator. He moves between cultural management, production, programming, communication and activation. He regularly works with several media outlets, collectives and artists in different spheres. He co-directs the arts and communication management platform DIBINa. He has carried out projects at La Casa Encendida, Pavilion Bucharest, CCCB, Matadero Madrid, Fabra i Coats, Espai Cultural Caja Madrid Barcelona, Off Limits, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Sala d'Art Jove and Museu de L'Empordà, among others.

## MAX JORGE HINDERER CRUZ

Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz is a PhD candidate in Philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. He writes essays on the political economy of psychoactive substances, colonial history and aesthetic theory, and has also published cultural criticism and translations in different media and international publications. He is the founder of the research group The Long Memory of Cocaine, on the political history of coca and cocaine from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Along with Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann, he co-curated the exhibition-

publication project *The Potosi Principle*, which was presented at the el Museo Reina Sofía Madrid, Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin and the Museo Nacional de Arte and MUSEF, La Paz 2010-2011. His book *Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida: Block-Experiments in Cosmococa* (Afterall Books / MIT Press), co-written with Sabeth Buchmann, and the collection of essays *Art and the Critique of Ideology after 1989*, co-edited by Hinderer (Koenig Books) are due to be published in 2013.

## MIGUEL A. LÓPEZ

Miguel A. López is a writer, artist and researcher. He has been an active member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Conceptualisms of the South Network, RCS) since it was founded in 2007. He was a scholarship holder in the MACBA Independent Studies Programme (PEI) in 2008-2009. His work procures a political counter-reading of arts practices in so-called Latin America, from the perspective of the intersection of critical and decolonial theory, experimentation and conceptualism, dissident sexualities and new movements. He is co-author of the books *¿Y qué si la democracia ocurre?* (Lima, 2012); *Teresa Burga. Esquemas. Diagramas. Intervalos* (Lima, 2011); and *Post-ilusiones. Nuevas visiones. Arte crítico en Lima 1980-2006* (Lima, 2006); and his texts have been published in journals and magazines such as *Afterall*, *ramona*, *Terceer Texto* and *Manifesta Journal*, among others. He has curated numerous exhibitions, including the most recent –with the RCS– entitled *Losing the Human Form. A seismic image of the 1980s in Latin America* at the Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid (2012-2013). He is currently guest curator-in-residence at Lugar a Dudas, Cali.

## R. MARCOS MOTA

R. Marcos Mota is a transvestite through and through. An artist of the night. Reptilian. She has more clothes than closet space. Her entire life is closet. She can't afford an operation. She doesn't know what bits to get operated. She'd like to operate on herself. She wants to be Internet. She often gets misinterpreted as an anecdote, joke, or stag night. She saves a lot on panties. She prostitutes herself for love. She has prostituted herself at Pavilion (Bucharest), Fabra i Coats (Barcelona), 9The13 (Coruña), La Capella (Barcelona), Hangar (Barcelona), Sala d'Art Jove (Barcelona), Antigua Casa Haiku (Barcelona), Nowwwh (web), FelipaManuela (Madrid), Stuffinablank (web), and Halfhouse (Barcelona), to name a few.

## ALICIA NAVARRO

Alicia Navarro is an art historian, researcher and independent writer. She completed postgraduate studies in Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture at the Universidad Autónoma, Madrid, in 2010 and masters programmes in Contemporary Philosophy and Narrative and Art at the ECH. She is currently immersed in her PhD thesis, *Flamenco pun@tual. Del performance a la cultura visual en una aproximación a Israel Galván*, and coordinates the Marcas de bastardía working group at the Independent Platform for Flamenco Studies.

## FERNANDA NOGUEIRA

Fernanda Nogueira is a researcher, translator and literary critic. She has an MA in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature from the Universidade de São Paulo and is a member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Conceptualisms of the South Network). She was a scholarship holder at the MACBA Independent Studies Programme in 2008 and 2009. She currently investigates collective networked artistic practices and gender issues in Brazilian arts practices.

## MARC SIEGEL

Marc Siegel is Assistant Professor in Film Studies at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt. His research focuses on avant-garde film and queer studies. He is currently working on books about two very different artists: American Underground drag superstar Mario Montez and German artist and filmmaker Ludwig Schönherr. His curatorial projects include *Camp/Anti-Camp: A Queer Guide to Everyday Life* (with Susanne Sachsse, HAU/Berlin, 2012) and *LIVE FILM! JACK SMITH! Five Flaming Days in a Rented World* (with Susanne Sachsse and Stefanie Schulte Strathaus, Arsenal/HAUBerlin, 2009).