

MACBA Collection: Prelude. Poetic Intention



Amalia Pica *Procesión de Ocho*, 2017

What would happen if we were to separate the artwork from the museographic context that surrounds it? How would it help us to perceive the work for itself, its poetic essence? Could museography be considered a kind of aphasia? Is it possible to deconstruct the dramaturgy of the museum, that which tells us how to move through certain spaces, how to view the artistic experiences on offer and take on board the knowledge that emerges? If we were to accept that this different approach is possible, what other meanings would be generated to interpret the work anew? And what would be the implications for the redefinition of the museum as an institution? Having taken this position, would we be able to address the will of the work, its desire, its energy, its poetic intention? In the spirit of the Martinican poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant when he states that a poem must never deny the way of the world, could we create a museum where the artworks and the way they reflect the world are at the centre of everything?



Laia Estruch, *Moat-I*, 2016



Fito Conesa, *Helicón*, 2019

Poetic Intention, a title borrowed from Glissant's eponymous book, is an exercise that allows us to explore the possibilities for breaking free from the institutional framework, offering a space for reflection and critique where the concept and the experience of 'art' are presented as emancipatory principles. This new approach to the Collection features works acquired in recent years that look to create new relationships with existing works from the Collection, but also with works on loan from

artists inside and outside the Collection. Thus, a new storytelling is configured that encompasses absences and enables other discourses as common spaces and possible scenarios. When these stories enter the museum, they displace the unifying discourse of History, opening new ways of questioning and updating the forms of relationship established by artistic practices with the audience. As the works are allowed to speak, they assert their legitimacy, their presence in the world, what they negate and what they affirm, what they exclude and what they want us to embrace. Let us then consider the museum as a place where the works can 'be'.

Bouchra Khalili: Between Circles and Constellations

16 February – 21 May 2023

Curators: Elvira Dyangani Ose and Hiuwai Chu

Exhibition co-produced with the Sharjah Art Foundation

We are all witnesses of our own history, but whose history is consolidated as collective memory? Exploring modes of historiography and drawing on conversations and archival material, the artistic practice of Bouchra Khalili (Casablanca, 1975, lives and works in Berlin) is an exploration of anti-colonial struggles, post-colonial histories of liberation and solidarity. Interweaving historical accounts and real-life stories, her works reinforce the political agency of subjects rendered invisible by the nation-state model of citizen membership.

Language and speech are a central part of Khalili's investigations and are employed as a powerful form of resistance to hegemonic powers. The exhibition's title refers to *Al-Halqa*, literally 'the circle', 'the assembly', a centuries-old tradition of storytelling in public spaces in Morocco, in which the audience participation is an essential part and where stories unfold in multiple layers. With history in constant dialogue with our present, the exhibition is a meditation on civic action and the need for what the artist calls 'radical citizenship'.

Between Circles and Constellations brings together projects from the last ten years of Khalili's oeuvre, including film, video-installations, photography and documentary material. The exhibition will feature the European premiere of *The Circle* (2023), a video installation that examines and reactivates the legacy of the Arab Workers Movement and their theatre groups *Al Assifa* and *Al Halaka* in France in the 1970s.



To mark the end of Khalili's exhibition at MACBA, a publication will be issued featuring a selection of works, plus a new piece, *The Circle*, installed in the Museum's galleries. It will also include essays by Bouchra Khalili, KJ Abudu, Övil Durmusoglu, Olivia Harrison, Rocé and a conversation between the artist and Omar Berrada.

Laura Lima: Balé Literal

30 March – 24 September 2023

Curator: Elvira Dyangani Ose

Laura Lima (Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1971) presented the original version of *Balé Literal* for the first and only time in 2019 at the crossroads outside A Gentil Carioca gallery in Rio de Janeiro. It was a large installation made of objects, machinery, paintings and various artefacts that danced around the public space in a choreographic movement, a peripatetic dance of the absurd orchestrated by a rudimentary mechanism and driven by the energy of various people under the artist's direction. Extremely simple, yet greatly effective, the installation appeared as a kind of living organism composed of all sorts of objects and people endlessly moving around in a perfect image of our changing times.

Four years after that experience, *Balé Literal* will be recreated in the Museum galleries in a large, walkable installation functioning non-stop. The objects and paintings hanging from threads in this new device will be produced especially for the occasion, while also acting as reminders of other works by the artist. An unusually choreographed retrospective exhibition in continuous movement.

Born in the rural region of Minas Gerais, as a teenager Lima moved to Rio de Janeiro, where she studied Philosophy and Fine Art, and where she still lives. Interested in social relations and the way in which human behaviour alters our perception of the everyday, her work often incorporates living organisms, whether animal or human, and actions that are performed for long periods of time, such as *Balé Literal*.



Installed for the first time in a museum, Laura Lima's spectacular *Balé Literal* will be accompanied by a publication including essays by philosophers, writers and other artists. The book will be published after the exhibition's opening, so it can incorporate a photographic record of the work installed at MACBA.

Corpus Infinitum

April – 24 September 2023

A project by Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neumann

How can we understand existence other than from the post-Enlightenment notions of *nature* and *world*? How can we approach all that exists without prioritising the subject and its supposed sovereignty over all other species? *Corpus Infinitum* transits in this direction. An exhibition that brings together the collaborative film works of Denise Ferreira da Silva (Rio de Janeiro, 1963) and Arjuna Neuman (born on an airplane, he has two nationalities, 1984). They present a series of films in which the four elements – water, earth, fire and air – inform the artists’ considerations of an entangled existence, in favour of a time and values that reimagine knowledge from a multi-species perspective. The exhibition includes installations of their films to date: *Serpent Rain* (2016), *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy* (2019) and *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* (2020), as well as archives related to the films.

In the films, the composition and decomposition of the world is structured through nature’s four elements. They are fractal compositions, interfacing between the quantic, organic, historic and cosmic, drawing from visual arts, sciences and philosophy. The works edit together footage of both micro and macro landscapes, animation and archival documentation through references that range from quantum mechanics, the blues, diverse philosophies, counter-hegemonic knowledges, classical physics, colonial theory to cartomancy.

Ferreira da Silva and Neuman’s work builds on the combined research of numerous creators, philosophers and artists, and Ferreira da Silva’s planetary view of the world as plenum, a *corpus infinitum*, a complex terrain in which human, geological, bacterial and meteorological environments are not independent forms and phenomena. As experiments in entanglement and ways of ‘the Thinking of the World’, Ferreira da Silva and Neuman’s work proposes alternatives to the destructive consequences of Western knowledge, derived from modernity. What does it mean to disorder Western thinking? What other ways of knowing – across cultures, time, space and form – can we learn, apprehend and relearn? The work critiques the long-lasting effects of the systematic structures of colonialism and capitalism, questioning the way they affect ecology, forms of extraction, territory, slavery – historically and in the present –, sovereignty and migration.



Nancy Holt: Inside Outside

MACBA: 29 June – 29 October 2023

Dates Bildmuseet, Umea, Sweden, 17 June 2022 – 2 April 2023

Co-curated by Katarina Pierre, Director of Bildmuseet, Umea, Sweden, and Lisa Le Feuvre, Executive Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation in collaboration with co-curator Teresa Grandas, Curator of Exhibitions, MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Co-produced by MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona in collaboration with Bildmuseet at Umeå University, Sweden, and Holt/Smithson Foundation, Santa Fe, United States

Nancy Holt (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1938 – New York, 2014) was a central figure in the New York art scene and was an innovator of site-specific installation and the moving image. *Inside Outside* is the most extensive European survey of Holt's practice and the most ambitious presentation ever of her multifaceted artistic oeuvre. Through a selection of works spanning 1966 to 1992, it includes film, video, photography, concrete poetry, sound works, sculpture and room-sized installations, as well as drawings and documentation of her Land art. Two installations from her site-responsive series *System Works* are presented in their first posthumous iterations, including *Ventilation System*, a playful sculpture covering several floors, both indoors and outdoors, in dialogue with the architecture of MACBA.

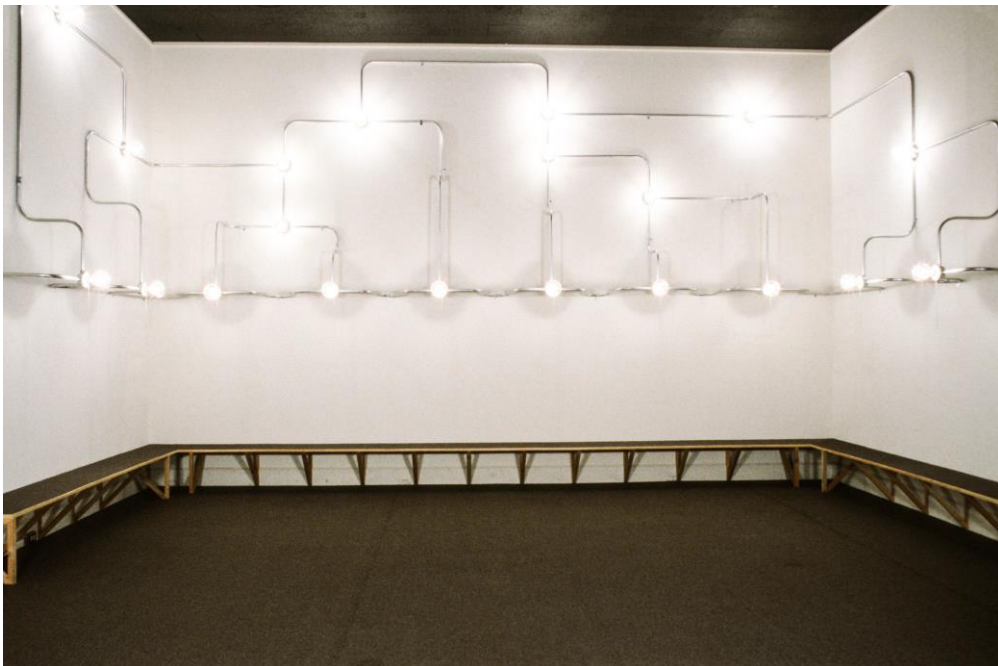


Perceptions and demarcations of being 'inside' and 'outside' guide this survey exhibition. Holt herself was an insider and an outsider: she was a key member of the Earth, Land and Conceptual art movements, yet her work is far less known than that of her male peers – a situation this exhibition seeks to address. Highlighting Holt's commitment to perception, light and space, *Nancy Holt / Inside Outside* presents a number of previously unseen photoworks. Exhibited here for the first time, these form Holt's series *Alaskan Pines* (1986), *Athabaskan/Russian Orthodox Graveyards* (1986) and *Miami Puddles* (1969), and are all placed in the context of audio and moving image works observing travel through the North American landscape.



Systems fascinated Holt. She paid attention to measured and astronomical time, to language and perception, and to economics and energy. In the mid-1960s, she worked as an assistant literary editor at the magazine *Harper's Bazaar*, and in 1966, began creating concrete poetry. Soon after she extended her exploration of language from the page to the landscape, guiding friends through unfamiliar sites with written scores. At the start of the 1970s, Holt created her *Locators*, sculptures made from T-shaped industrial piping to be looked through with one eye: 'seeing devices' as she called them. The *Locators* led to both her landmark earthwork project *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76) and her reflective room-sized installation *Mirrors of Light* (1973–74).

The publication *Nancy Holt / Inside Outside* explores Holt's artistic legacy through a comprehensive selection of works from 1966 to 1992. It includes essays by Karen di Franco and James Nisbet that are a significant contribution to the artist's bibliography, as well as a wide selection of texts by Holt herself, plus an essay by Teresa Grandas, co-curator of the exhibition.



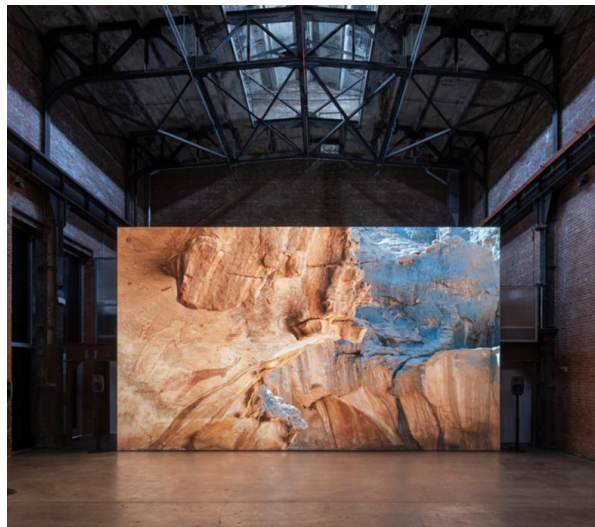
Lydia Ourahmane

October 2023 – February 2024

Many of the projects by Lydia Ourahmane (Saïda, Algeria, 1992) relate to her immediate surroundings and feature objects loaded with social, political and experiential meaning. She is interested in spirituality, contemporary geopolitics, migration and the complex histories of colonialism. Using video, sculpture, installation and sound, her work is expressed in a very distinctive language. Often in a large or even monumental format, it is invariably rooted in personal stories and experiences, whether

individual or collective. Hers is a praxis that says: How can the institutional structures and parameters that define contemporary societies be defied? How can vigilance and the impositions of bureaucracy be rejected? How can the mechanisms of state control be deactivated? How can artworks involve active and effective protests? Ourahmane manages to bring the personal into the political field and the domestic into the field of history.

Lydia Ourahmane was born in Saïda, Algeria, in 1992, and studied at Goldsmiths, University of London. She currently lives between Barcelona and Algeria. While widely recognised in Europe, the U.S. and the Middle East, Ourahmane has had very little exposure in Spain. For this occasion, we have commissioned her to produce a site-specific work for the Tower of the Museum, based on a dialogue with MACBA's immediate social context.



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

26 October 2023 – May 2024

Curators: Hiuwai Chu and João Laia

Exhibition co-produced with Kiasma, Helsinki

This is the first retrospective exhibition in Spain of the work of Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, born in Barcelona in 1977 and resident in Rio de Janeiro for the last fifteen years. A place, according to the artist, where he can always be in direct contact with the world's most pressing needs, whether ecological, political or social, all of them subjects reflected in his work.

Interested in exploring the complex interdependence of the organic world and human action, Steegmann focuses on the Amazonian Forest of Brazil, while also adopting the theoretical framework of the renowned anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who argues against the false dichotomy between humanity and the animal world by putting forward the notion that we are all part of a shared equilibrium and incorporating the paradigm of Amerindian perspectivism.

With a language close to Brazilian Neo-Concretism, Steegmann Mangrané explores the migration and affinities of forms between nature, art and architecture. Both in his fragile sculptures, made of intervened organic material, and in his creations of augmented reality, he experiments with the correspondences between organic and geometric forms and with the complex network of dependencies that exist in the biological order.

The exhibition includes drawings, paintings, photographs, sculptures, films and installations from the late 1990s to the present. It will be accompanied by an artist's book, in which Steegmann Mangrané puts forward a circular visual cycle that begins with the artist's early works and moves toward the present, only to return to the past, with collage interventions on these and other works. The publication has been co-produced with the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, and the publisher of artists' books BOM DIA BOA TARDE BOA NOITE from Berlin.



Revista Visual

November 2023 – April 2024

Curator: Juan Bufill

In June 1977, during a year of political transition, a group of experimental film and video makers, photographers, poets and artists who used alternative media founded the collective Film Vídeo

Informació (FVI) in Barcelona. Their aim was to open debates and reflect on the audiovisual field at a time when it was regarded as foundational, given its socio-political and cultural context: in the midst of political transition, liberation, and mental and sensory openness. The members of FVI wanted to explore and publicise the new possibilities of experimental cinema and video, viewed from an interdisciplinary context and according to a broad and progressive notion of the arts.

Among other actions, FVI published two issues of the magazine *VISUAL. Publication of FILM VIDEO INFORMACIÓ* (1977–78). Coordinated by Eugènia Balcells, Eugeni Bonet, Juan Bufill, Carles Hac Mor, Manuel Huerga, Ignacio Julià and Luis Serra, it did not aim to be a ‘cinema’ magazine but, as stated in the prologue of the second issue of the publication (1978), ‘a collection of information and study notebooks on the audiovisual world; obviously not from the perspective of the industry’.

The exhibition is part of a new series of small-format shows that explore periodical publications as a space for critical thought. It will unfold in three chapters – three temporalities – bringing together the contents, authors and tendencies of the ‘visual’ world manifested in the first two issues and the third and last one that was never published.



Collective Creation

Curators: Elvira Dyangani Ose and María Berrios

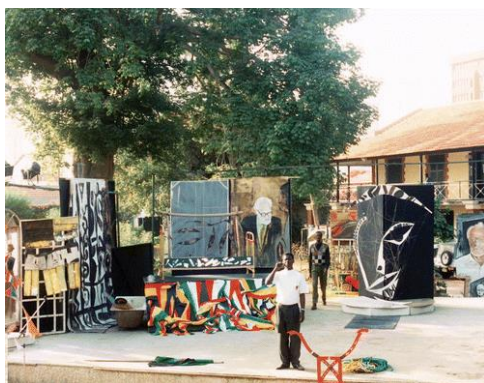
A project of open research curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose and María Berrios

Collective Creation is a research and exhibition project curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose and María Berrios, new Director of Research and Conservation at MACBA, in collaboration with other agents, artists and researchers, as well as national and international institutions. Embedded in the new transversality that will from now on articulate all the Museum's proposals and internal dynamics, the

project will focus on processes of agency and co-responsibility, in order to reflect on the types of collectivity and activism that have generated, historically and in the present, the cultural and social policies that have ultimately created the institution. It will configure a space for reflection based on those methodologies of collective imagination, not only artistic but also socio-political, and other everyday gestures that generate communal practices. Through historical, official and alternative examples, we aim to create a genealogy of the different working processes and networks that occurred in parallel in different geographies and traditions, diversifying ways of reading and thinking, according to processes informed by a variety of social paradigms and perspectives. The aim is to maintain the real tensions and differences that emerged in the past, together with the hypothetical and imaginary relationships that might materialise in this universe of floating islands.

In some cases, the project will recuperate old case studies such as Laboratoire Agit'Art, a revolutionary artistic collective founded in Dakar, Senegal, in 1974, by a group of artists, writers and philosophers who took onboard a real, active critique of their country's institutions. It will be developed in collaboration with the artist El Hadji Sy, one of the founding members of the collective. Another case study will be Vidéo-Nou, a collective created in Barcelona in 1977 by professionals from different fields, who promoted the use of video as a means of communication and as a social, cultural, educational and informative tool of communal life. The presentation of these and other current cases at MACBA bears witness to the tasks of archive, digitalisation and study carried out by our colleagues in the Collection Department and the Study Centre who, since 2007, have been collaborating with members of those collectives. Another participant in the project is the cultural worker Daniel Gasol, first winner of the Berta Casas Grant, whose research on Vidéo-Nou will soon be published.

In all of them, we will notice how some group strategies and communal practices rooted in the everyday can themselves become an institution. What social imaginaries do they generate? What working methods do they offer so we can begin to think from a different institutional framework? What counter-hegemonies do they propose? *Collective Creation* will help us revise real processes of collective enunciation and shared governability.



PEI INDEPENDENT STUDIES PROGRAMME

9TH Edition. 1 March 2023 – 30 June 2024

Where Are the Oases?

Since its foundation in 2006, the Independent Studies Programme (PEI) has acted as **a tool for learning and institutional critique**, offering **a platform that encourages the production of critical and collective thought**, based on the interrelation between artistic practices, social sciences and political intervention. Run independently but from within the Museum, the PEI is positioned as an interdependent programme committed to the temporal and socio-political realities and contexts that surround it. Over 16 years, more than 250 students from 30 different countries have participated, building bridges and weaving networks between communities of artists, local initiatives and international activists that go through MACBA and beyond as a physical and institutional space.

In this sense, the PEI understands **artistic research and political activism as related methodologies** in which different forms of knowledge and systems of representation and social codification converge, such as anti-racist struggles, queer studies and feminisms, a critique of the discourse, anticolonial, decolonial and postcolonial theory, the history of social movements, the demands for social justice and the right to a city. More than a history of art, the PEI offers a history of institutions, understood as a history of the human, the social and the political that we collectively institute.

In this new 2023–24 edition, ***Where Are the Oases?***, the PEI will become a platform for knowledge proposing, from a position of relevance and utility, open policies and production strategies committed to **collective creation, communal ecologies, institutional critique and the decolonisation of the structures** that organise and normalise our bodies, affections and thoughts.

Where Are the Oases? is directed by **Kader Attia, Elvira Dyangani Ose** and **Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz**, with the participation of:

Bandung of the North, Franco Berardi (Bifo), Houria Bouteldja, La Colonie nomade, Susana Pilar Delahante, Elvira Espejo Ayca, Grupo Etcétera, Malcom Ferdinand, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Verónica Gago, María Galindo, Nancy Garín, Cristina Goberna Pesudo, Paz Guevara, Bouchra Khalili, Rachida Madani, Achille Mbembe, Arjuna Neuman, Sara Nutall, PCP – Programa Cultura Política, Rolando Vázquez, Françoise Vergés and Octavio Zaya.

The programme also aims to work with collectives such as Archivo Ovni, Equipo Palomar, Kas Kultural Arts Society (Awa Konaté), Diversorium (Antonio Centeno & María Oliver), Living Commons, Cooperativa Periferia Cimarronas, Radio Cavaret, Radio Web MACBA and members of Red Pluridiversidad Nómada, among others.

Where Are the Oases?

Asking *Where Are the Oases?* means recognising that we are experiencing a process of climate, social and political desertification. We live in an environment that incessantly develops characteristics adverse to life. Neoliberal capitalism and its logic of accumulation through the maximum possible exploitation of natural and human resources is a system that manages death in order to monetise life. The collapse of the environment, the profound public health crisis, the culture of hate and the permanent state of war that define the geopolitics of the present threaten what remains of the promise of a free world and a good life.

Where Are the Oases? means looking for spaces and processes that can resist this process of desertification and drainage of life. It means asking ourselves a series of questions: Where and how do we want to resist? What are the spaces we want to identify as ours? What are the times of the commons? How can we live together as if the society we want already existed?

The ninth edition of the PEI, *Where Are the Oases?*, is based on an exercise of appreciation and critical review of previous editions and formats, and uses this reflection to articulate a conceptual proposal that ensures continuity while also updating it.

Recovering the large archive of the PEI, those projects and people from the city and around the world who have taken part in the PEI and shared the network of alliances and affections that make up its history, will allow us to become not only transdisciplinary, but anti-disciplinarian. We understand the PEI as a formula for generating our own disciplines and intervene in the official space. An opportunity to transform, rethink and collectively rearticulate that which is usually taken for granted. With this exercise, the PEI will create the first oasis, a place in which to stop and initiate a new institutional imaginary.