

# María Teresa Hincapié

## If This Were a Beginning of Infinity

Exhibition from 20 October 2022 to 10 April 2023

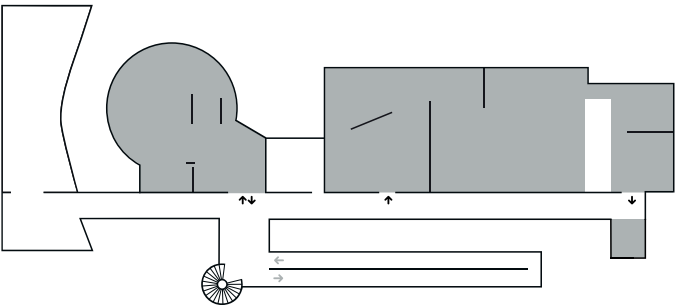


*Punto de fuga* (Vanishing Point, detail). 1996. Museo de Arte Moderno de Pereira, Risaralda. Single-channel video, colour, sound, 13 min 43 sec. Camera: Francoise Limouzin. Courtesy of Museo de Arte Moderno de Pereira, Colombia.

Recommended itinerary

Meier Building

Level 2



“I’m not interested in dead art. I believe that life is art, and my body is my living art. It is my body that has to move, that is looking, that is tired, that is exhausted. This is what I propose.”<sup>1</sup>

María Teresa Hincapié

With her extensive theatrical training, and unwavering rigor and discipline, María Teresa Hincapié (Armenia, Colombia, 1954–Bogotá, 2008) combined her experience in the theatre with concerns that were visionary for her time: questioning the hyperproductivity of late capitalism, our unbalanced relationship with the planet and the lack of meaning in a society dominated by consumerism. Hincapié’s career —cut short by an illness that ended her life too soon— laid the foundations for a solid discourse about the performative as a field of artistic creation in Colombia, and for the inclusion of themes that continue to be urgent in the repertoire of aesthetic production of the American continent. It also coincided with the practices in other parts of the world of women artists who were using their bodies as the basis for their creative development.

We could talk of Hincapié’s practice as a performative approach to the *poetics of the domestic*, with performances in which she transformed routine actions into symbolic acts to create a methodology of her own. The domestic, in this sense, was not limited to the realm of private life; it extended to the relationship of care of the planet, seeing the universe as one’s home. She had her own particular definition of the performative, which she called “training”, and her practice resisted categorization; rather it oscillated between life, creation in motion and the search for the sacred. She devised her own language with which to exist in the world, understanding space and time through her body.

Hincapié's career clearly reflects the concerns of a woman who, in the late twentieth century, self-taught and with a tremendous intuition and sense of commitment, changed the course of history of Colombian art. Although situated at the juncture of several disciplines, she is an essential figure and a pioneer in the development of durational performance, until then non-existent in Colombia, which was to change the parameters of what was considered art in the local context and pave the way for essential practices today on the local and world scene. *María Teresa Hincapié: If This Were a Beginning of Infinity* is an initial attempt to organize the physical and intangible legacy of this artist, so vital to understanding present-day practices. Envisaged as the beginning of a continuum of imagination and doing, the exhibition takes shape through records of the practice of an artist who believed in the transmission of knowledge as a mechanism for living together. These records consist not only of items from the archive (photographic material, videos, original texts, postcards, letters and clippings), but also future materials that are created in the exhibition as a result of the commissions.

“This age calls on us to turn our lives into a work of art... And to speak of a 'work of art' nowadays is highly debatable. My desire is to speak with you.”<sup>2</sup>

The exhibition is structured along thematic lines that condense some of the most important concerns and moments of her career: a *Preamble* that describes the transition from the theatre to the visual arts; *If This Were A Beginning of Infinity*, charting the development of *Una cosa es una cosa* (One thing is one thing), one of her most emblematic works, first prize at the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Salon of Artists in 1990, awarded for the first time to an ephemeral work; a series of works that reflect on femininity in the world and, with the title *I Am a Woman Who Is No Longer a Woman*, call for a mutant being who is constantly changing; her major project *Hacia lo sagrado* (Towards the Sacred), which includes her spiritual searches; the long-term *School-Village* project, in which she applied her pedagogical work; *Feet That Lick*, bringing together works in which walking and slowness are tools of resistance and thought, and *This Earth Is My Body*, which includes a series of environmental projects.

Using the potential of affect as a mechanism of connection with the late artist, the exhibition calls for collective interaction as a producer of knowledge. It therefore includes works by four guest artists: José Alejandro Restrepo (with whom Hincapié collaborated on several works), Coco Fusco, María José Arjona and Mapa Teatro, who present a piece specially created for this show. These new works not only swell a vital debate on movement, they also highlight the importance of the cognitive legacy of a practice that set out to transform. In a way, the images presented here of María Teresa Hincapié are in temporary suspension: drawn out from a remote moment that traps them in a body which is no longer there, but invested in a present that puts them to use, sending them towards a future in the mouths of others.

Carried out in collaboration between the Museum of Modern Art of Medellín (MAMM) and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA), *If This Were a Beginning of Infinity* takes its title from Hincapié's first strictly performative work: an action in which she took all of her belongings to the Teatro Cuba in Bogotá and lived in the space for five days, rediscovering the meaning of everyday life as a place of communion with herself and with the sacredness of existence. Like that performance, this exhibition is presented as just the beginning of a path that we hope will lead us through the incisive work of Hincapié and, eventually, to the infinity of her ideas and actions. Seeing the exhibition as a possible future offers an understanding of its future forms and proclaims its openness to a plurality of voices in constant mutation.

1. María Teresa Hincapié, cited in Julián Serna: "Hacia lo sagrado", Grupo de Investigación En un Lugar de la Plástica (Julián Serna, Nicolás Gómez, Felipe González): *Elemental. Vida y obra de María Teresa Hincapié*. Bogotá: Laguna Libros, 2010, p. 97.

2. María Teresa Hincapié, cited in Juan Monsalve: "Mi deseo es hablar contigo", Grupo de Investigación En un Lugar de la Plástica (Julián Serna, Nicolás Gómez, Felipe González): *Elemental. Vida y obra de María Teresa Hincapié*. Bogotá: Laguna Libros, 2010, p. 166.

---

## Publication

Coedited with the MAMM, the publication includes a wide selection of works by the Colombian artist, as well as reflecting the influence of her legacy on three contemporary artists: María José Arjona, Coco Fusco and Mapa Teatro. The book includes articles by the curator, critic and art historian Carolina Ponce de León; the lecturer and researcher José Antonio Sánchez; the curator, historian and researcher Carmen Maria Jaramillo; the researcher Paula Bossa, and the exhibition curators, Claudia Segura (MACBA) and Emiliano Valdés (MAMM). Bilingual Spanish-English edition.

---

---

**Exhibition curated by:** Claudia Segura and Emiliano Valdés.

**Coproduced with:**



**With the support of the  
Colombian Embassy in Spain:**



MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES  
EXTERIORES

**With the collaboration of:**



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE CULTURA  
Y DEPORTE



Barcelona  
Cultural and Scientific  
Capital

---

***En silencio pero juntos (Together but silent)***, performance by María José Arjona in collaboration with other performers happening in the galleries and around the MACBA while the exhibition runs (Fridays and Saturdays from 11 am to 7 pm and Sundays from 10 am to 2 pm).

---

### Visits

Sundays at 12 pm with pli-é collective.

### Talking about... *María Teresa Hincapié: If This Were a Beginning of Infinity*

Conversations 6.30 pm

**Thurs. 19/1** Carlos Bunga, artist.

**Thurs. 26/1** Alba Sanmartí, actress and dancer.

**Thurs. 2/2** d'Alexandra Llaudo, curator and researcher.

### *My desire is to speak with you.*

Seminar

**Thurs. 20/10** 6.30 pm  
Reflections on the practice of María Teresa Hincapié. With the participation of José Antonio Sánchez, Coco Fusco, María José Arjona, José Alejandro Restrepo, Santiago Zuluaga, Emiliano Valdés and Claudia Segura.

### Friends of the MACBA visit

**10/11** 6 pm

With the curator Claudia Segura.

### *Vitrina (1989).*

Screening on the Meier façade

**9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18/11**

From 8 to 11 pm

As part of Loop

### **P2P. How to travel in the classroom**

Activity for teachers

**10 and 24/10** 6 pm

Facilitated by María José Arjona.

### ***Speculative fictions and other absurdities in the gestures of MAPA TEATRO***

Performative presentation

**Thurs. 9/2** 7 pm

By Mapa Teatro.

Free activities. Advance reservation and more information at **macba.cat**.

---

### MACBA app

Enjoy the additional information and audio descriptions of a selection of works from the exhibition with the MACBA app. It also gives you detailed information about other exhibitions and activities, as well as videos, curious facts and all the practical information you need to visit the museum.

---

### Opening hours

Mondays, Wednesdays,  
Thursdays and Fridays,  
11 am to 7.30 pm  
(from 25 June to 24  
September, 10 am to 8 pm)  
Tuesdays, except public  
holidays, closed  
Sundays and public holidays,  
10 am to 3 pm

Saturdays, from 4 to 8 pm, free admission thanks to Uniqlo

The entrance ticket to the museum is valid for one month. Activate it at reception and come back as often as you like.

### Become a MACBA Friend from €18 a year.

### MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Plaça dels Àngels, 1  
08001 Barcelona  
macba.cat

### Follow us



#mariateresahincapie