Ag

MACBA Agenda

Summer 2008



Exhibition

Nancy Spero: Dissidances

Music

Musicactions



Nancy Spero, *The First Language*, 1981 (detail from panel XX). Photo courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Nancy Spero, 2008

Lothar Baumgarten, *Imago Mundi* at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2008. Photo by Seber Ugarte. © Lothar Baumgarten, VEGAP, Barcelona, 2008

Change of stage

With the recent change to MACBA's administration, a new stage has been initiated in the museum's development.

To understand the legacy inherited from the previous director, we must acknowledge that the line adopted was the model of an artistic institution faithful to the modern heritage, but in a country where such institutions have not followed the international rhythm and method. It is partly for this reason that they are discredited in the eyes of the public in a State with endemic democratic shortcomings. We should not forget that under the dictatorship that dominated the central period of the twentieth century in Spain, the Spanish State remained on the fringe of the development of modern art institutions that took place internationally. This development was based on the model introduced by MoMA from the 1930s and expanded rapidly throughout Europe after the Second World War. The Spanish State did not join this process of modernization of the artistic institutions until the late 1980s, some years after the restoration of democracy. However, this happened at a time when modern museums had given up their centrality to the new institutions of the cultural industry dominated by the imperatives of tourism and the economy that were symbolic of the model of post-industrial capitalist growth.

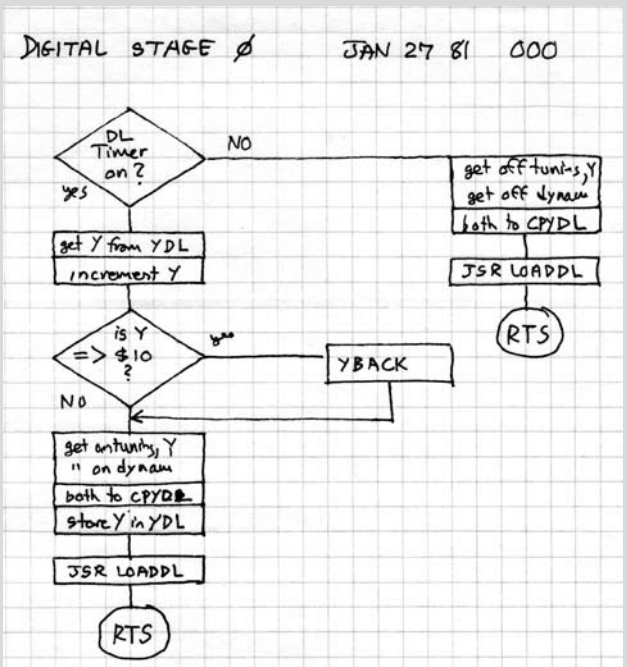
The proliferation of museums in Spain has been determined by the economic paradigm of the culture industries. This condition implies ignoring the museum's essentially educational role and its inherent dimension as a public sphere and, on the contrary, opts for a conception that is spectacularized, instrumentalized, and banal (dominated, nonetheless, by a bland model of participation based on statistics and consumption). This is the type of institution that dominated the profusion of museums in Spain throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and continues to do so to this day. Within this context, during the last decade the MACBA has been a counterpoint that has sought to anchor itself in the tradition of modern art institutions and has chosen to emphasize the museum's primary task of focusing on education, debate, and the public.

What has come to be known as the "MACBA model" constitutes a singular understanding of the museum as a space for debate and conflict, for a critical rereading of the modern tradition that has structured artistic experimentation, social wisdom, and action in the public sphere as a method of reinventing the field of art and giving it new meaning and social legitimacy. Here it is essential to highlight the work done to date, which comprises an essential aspect of the outgoing director's legacy.

Nonetheless, a museum is by definition a permanently unfinished space. The received inheritance cannot therefore be detained or monumentalized but should rather be examined in greater depth and reinvented. The tasks pending include the implementation of an archive policy for the recently inaugurated Documentation and Study Center, internationalization of the Independent Studies Program, the chronological opening up of the collection and extension of the range of interests and vocabularies expressed in the temporary exhibition program, consolidation of the lines of work being followed in primary and secondary education curricula, full integration of the performing arts, and, in the programming area, reinforcement of the on-line museum space.
In short, the aim is to foster the culture of a certain sensitivity towards art and its discourses, which reflects on the museum as a producer and disseminator of knowledge.

We hope that this new stage continues to receive the help and participation of the discerning public, who will always make up the true heart of the museum.

Possibility of Action:
The Life of the Score



From 16/08 to 05/10 2008

Exhibition

Curators: Barbara Held and Pilar Subirà

Production: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)

During the summer months the MACBA Documentation Center will present an exhibition devoted to the exploration of musical notation, loosely understood as a support for both musical and visual transmission. Historical and contemporary scores have been brought together for this exhibition as well as artistic creations not strictly from the field of music. Among the latter are experimental works from the areas of sound art, experimental noise/art/rock, and crossovers among these and other creation media.

The contents of this exhibition maintain a special relationship with the Radio Web MACBA (RWM) series of programs entitled Lines of Sight. It is inspired by other recent projects that investigate written music from different perspectives (psychological, biological, sociological, etc., in addition to the purely musical), as well as the form in which the human mind and intuition translate and transmit music. Both the exhibition and the radio programs were created from a shared interest and both projects have been curated by Barbara Held and Pilar Subirà.

Numerous experimental composers closely linked to the group of painters known as the New York School formalized their activity during the 1950s and 1960s. This group of musicians, including John Cage, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, and Earle Brown, used musical notation and music scores in order to create a new context for sound. They based the structure of their pieces on rhythm, sounds, and silences. For these musicians, the score was like a canvas or a presentation "framework," and their creative activity was a way of returning liberty to music. In John Cage's words, they were trying to "free sound from music." In his piece 4'33'', Cage went even further by composing a piece that was free of sounds; in other words, a "frame" built around emptiness. Since the radical activity of these composers, music has ceased to be composed as points on a line and has begun to exist in a multidimensional sonic space, breaking down the barriers between art and life, abandoning intentionality, and accepting indetermination.

This change in attitude marked a radical break with the dogma of musical convention on form and content, and brought about important changes in the world of music as well as in the world of art. It was the cause of phenomena such as noise and sound art. Moreover, the opening up of music to the world of sound, which had been excluded by the traditional notation system, served to radically transform the relation between composer, musician, and the public and opened works to a large number of possible "interpretations." "Interpretations" is understood here in its broadest sense, without being limited to the purely musical. At the same time, the fact that these composers' scores had become visual representations of sound contributed to the renewal of the dialogue between eye and ear, and made them especially attractive elements for creators interested in exploring crossovers between the different artistic media. Interpreting this type of score demands a process of creative action (to make sounds or any other effect) and requires the execution of an action whose result is unknown and largely dependent upon the musician. Thus, the life of the score rests on its capacity for generating actions imbued with meaning in a series of cycles that may be "recycled" by evolving through different interpretations and alterations.

Possibility of Action: The Life of a Music Score presents a selection of scores that offer a perspective of a moment of radical change of the form in which music is transmitted and interpreted and juxtaposes contemporary works by artists who link their work in multiple ways to sound, image, language, objects, and light. The disposition has been made following Cage's concept of circles or circus; that is, not in a linear sequence but rather from a multiplicity of centers that depend on the observer's context and perception, focusing one's attention on the here and now but at the same time reinterpreting creations of past moments according to the objects presented. As De Kooning once said, "The past does not influence me. I influence the past." The authors represented in this sample are Robert Ashley, Yasunao Tone, Pauline Oliveros, Lee Ranaldo, Eugènia Balcells, Peter Bosch and Simone Simons, among others.

Activities

Wednesday 18 June at 7.30pm
Radio Action III. Online performance Coincides with the transmission of the program on RWM, Lines of Sight #4: Radio Action III, the American artist collective free103-point9 presents a performance by Tianna Kennedy and other special guests, retransmitted live from New York.

Thursday 10 July at 9pm
Concert by Pauline Oliveros during the Musicactions program.
(see page 7)

Thursday 17 July at 9pm
Concert by Yasunao Tone during the Musicactions program.
(see page 7)

Wednesday 1 October
Conference by Alex Waterman at 7.30pm

Concert by Alex Waterman at 9pm
Alex Waterman is musician living in New York who has also curated recent exhibitions on experimental music, poetry, and musical notation (*Agapê* and *Between Thought and Sound: Graphic Notation in Contemporary Music*).

Wednesdays at 5pm
RWM transmits
Every Wednesday until the end of the exhibition, one of the programs from Radio Web MACBA's programming will be retransmitted. For more information: www.macba.es

David Behrman, *Leapday Night*, 1981. © David Behrman, 2008

Francesc Torres. Da capo

Until 28/09/2008

Exhibition

Curator: Bartomeu Marí

Production: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)

Da capo is a musical notation at the end of a score advising the musician to start again from the beginning. The title of the MACBA retrospective exhibition dedicated to the work of Francesc Torres makes reference to an image of the human condition in relation to history, while questioning the nature of evolution. At the very least, it challenges the idea of improvement so present in the modern conception and investigates the nooks and crannies that in the present allow us to see the animal that civilization has failed to domesticate.

Francesc Torres (Barcelona, 1948) is the author of a vast and varied body of work that fundamentally runs in opposition to the humanist vision of society. His multimedia installations representing speed, competition, and machismo as sources and expressions of violence are well-known. Equally present in his work are war as a sophisticated and cultured expression of this violence and the fragility of historical memory in the face of political manipulation. Torres was in Paris from 1967 to 1969 and lived in the United States between 1972 and 2002, also working in Berlin from 1986 to 1988. It was here that he produced an essential part of his oeuvre, which remains largely unknown to us. Neither the retrospective dedicated to him by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in 1991 nor the specific works he produced in Barcelona and Valencia in 1991 and 1996 respectively were able to present an overall view of the artist's work. The exhibition now dedicated to him at the MACBA consists of a reading of his creations in museum tones, and at the same time contains a "response" from the artist to the museum's reading in the shape of new works created especially for this occasion.

Da capo highlights the figure of the artist as a polemicist of his/her time, as an all-round, active intellectual in the construction of a public sphere that goes beyond purely aesthetic question, while not forgetting the power of sensation and sensitivity in making art relevant.



Francesc Torres, *Tan limpia como el alma*, 2008. © Francesc Torres, VEGAP, Barcelona, 2008

Nancy Spero. Dissidances

From 04/07
to 24/09/08

Exhibition

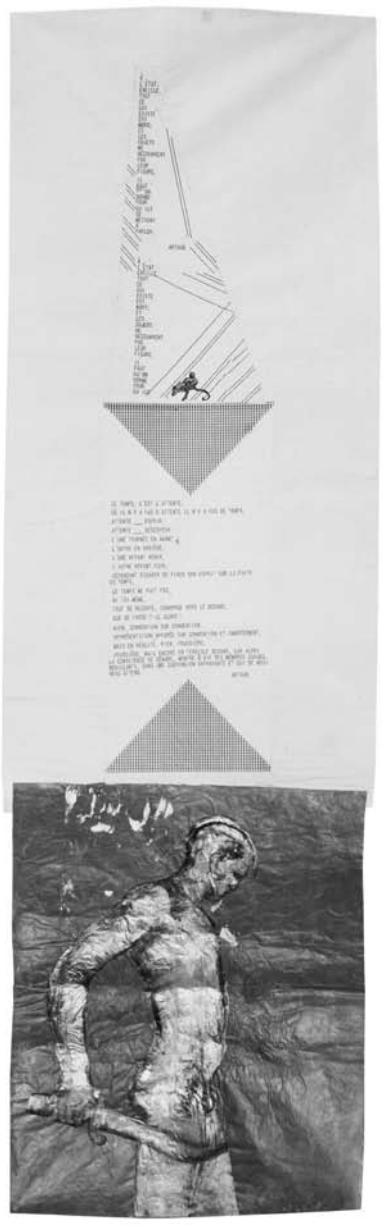
Curators: Manuel J. Borja-Villel and Rosario Peiró

Opening: 03/07/2008

Production: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS)

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1926, Nancy Spero is (along with other artists such as Martha Rosler and Adrian Piper, to whom the MACBA has already devoted retrospective exhibitions) a pioneer of feminist art and a key figure in the New York protest scene of the 1960s and 1970s. Her career as an artist and activist continues today to be an example of engagement in our current political, social, and cultural scene. Evidence of this lies in her response to the violent events in which her country has been involved in recent years and which have had the effect of once again bringing her work to the forefront of opinion.

The *Nancy Spero. Dissidances* exhibition, the title of which is taken directly from the text written for the occasion by Hélène Cixous, sets out to reflect, on the one hand, this critical nature and, on the other, the importance of movement and of the body as vehicles through which to structure her discourse, thus relating her work with the artistic practices and discourses of the 1960s and 1970s. Organized chronologically around her extensive career, the intention is also to present her work as part of a life project in which the individual pieces fit into a whole and continuous temporariness, where present and past are mixed like the ancient fables and narrations that, in many cases, are her inspiration. A significant number of her works have been brought together to attain this: from her earliest creations on paper, made when she was still a student at the Art Institute of Chicago and never before exhibited, to *Maypole. Take No Prisoners* (2007), her recent presentation at the Venice Biennale.



Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud XXI*, 1972. Photo courtesy of the artist and the Galerie Lelong. © Nancy Spero, 2008

Nancy Spero began painting on canvas in the manner of a traditional male painter, but soon realized that this was an eminently masculine medium, and as such marginalized her as an artist. From then on, she devoted all her efforts to creating a specifically feminine pictorial language to provide women with their own space in which to explore their capacity to communicate. This space, in which canvas is discarded in favor of fragile paper, is organized around a lexicon of transhistorical and transcultural figures, both real and mythological, which, reworked time and again, unmask stereotypes and revolutionize categories and hierarchies. In Spero's work, movement, rhythm, and color form a grammar that is applied directly onto the body of the woman who, strengthened and full of energy, "feminizes" and conquers the masculine art space.

Nancy Spero's artistic career encompasses the entire second half of the twentieth century and continues to this day. Following her studies in Chicago (1949) and her time in the École des Beaux-Arts and at the Atelier André Lhote in Paris (1949-50), she began creating loose sketches that received little or no attention from the critics. During her time in Paris (1959-64), the city to which she fled with her husband Leon Golub, escaping the preponderance of abstract painting in her own country, she created the *Black Paintings*, figurative works of lyrical expressionism, centered on such subjects as the night, maternity, lovers, etc., in which the characters parade in front of dark backgrounds meticulously created through the accumulation of layers of paint.

On her return to New York, the artist had to confront the horrors of the Vietnam War, producing one hundred and fifty paintings on paper between 1966 and 1970, which form a vast manifesto against the war and against the activities of the US government in that country. The end of the 1960s also marked the beginning of Spero's involvement in artistic political discourses and feminist groups. She took part in the Art Workers Coalition (AWC), Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), and was one of the founders of the A.I.R. Gallery, created by women for the exhibition of women's art. It was during this time that Spero found in Antonin Artaud the anti-bourgeois radical voice and spirit that expressed her anguish and unease as an artist in a society that practiced exclusion. The *Codex Artaud* was her first collage series, in the form of a long scroll of paper of epic dimensions in which, as in much of her earlier and later work, she combines both texts and visual material.

After working on her existential anguish for years through Artaud and now directly influenced by the feminist movement, Spero began to address real life problems in her works, echoing concern over such issues as the torture and pain of women, while at the same time transmitting their strength and freedom.

Subsequently, in an act that was both conscious and political, the artist decided to concentrate her works exclusively on images of women, thereby inverting the patriarchal society's norm and embarking on a profound study of the forms of female representation throughout history. Her work became exuberant and rhythmical with clear references to dance, music, and film, and developed a pictographic language based on the body in movement, to which she also applies architecture itself. She thus eliminates any obstacle that may exist between the work and the space in which it is displayed, obliging the spectator to participate far more actively by changing both gaze and position.

In 1998 Spero made *Let the Priests Tremble...* an installation for the IKON Gallery in Birmingham, of which we reproduce a central part, a quotation if you will, in the exhibition. The piece shows strong, athletic women dancing to the reading of an essay by Hélène Cixous from her book *The Laugh of the Medusa*: "Let the priest tremble, we are going to show him our sexes; worse for them if they crumble when they discover women are not men, or that the mother doesn't have one."

This quotation sums up perfectly the spirit of the artist's work, which remains intact today – affirmative, explicit work whose object is the female body, the interior space of this body, which becomes confused with the subject and blurs the line between presentation and representation.

Drawing and collage workshop
Around the Nancy Spero exhibition

Taller

From 4 July to 1 August, weekdays (except Tuesdays), at 10am and at 11am

From 04/07/2008 to 01/08/2008

Recommended for 3 to 12 year old

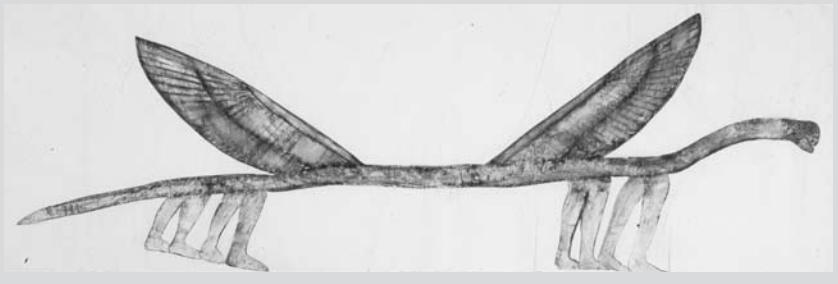
Groups: 37€
Individuals: 4€ per child
(includes accompanying adult)

Halls showing the exhibition and Classroom 0

Places must be reserved in advance
Telephone: (+34) 934.121.413
Email: educacio@macba.es

We have organized a drawing and collage workshop based on the *Nancy Spero. Dissidances* exhibition, which will take place throughout July. After observing and discussing a selection of the works displayed in the halls we will go to the workshop, where the fragility of the paper and the process of mixing texts with image will be the starting point for experimentation with such key elements in the artist's work as movement, color, and collage.

Spero's Touch



Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women*, 1976 (detail from panel XI). Photo courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada. © Nancy Spero, 2008

Lecture as part of the exhibition

By Jon Bird

Monday 7 July at 7.30pm

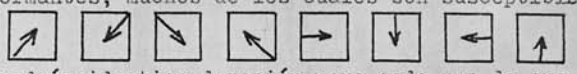
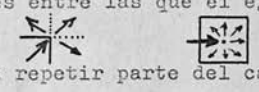
MACBA Auditorium

Limited seating

Servicio de interpretación simultánea.
Más información:
programespublics@macba.es

Jon Bird is professor of Art and Critical Theory at Middlesex University (London, United Kingdom).

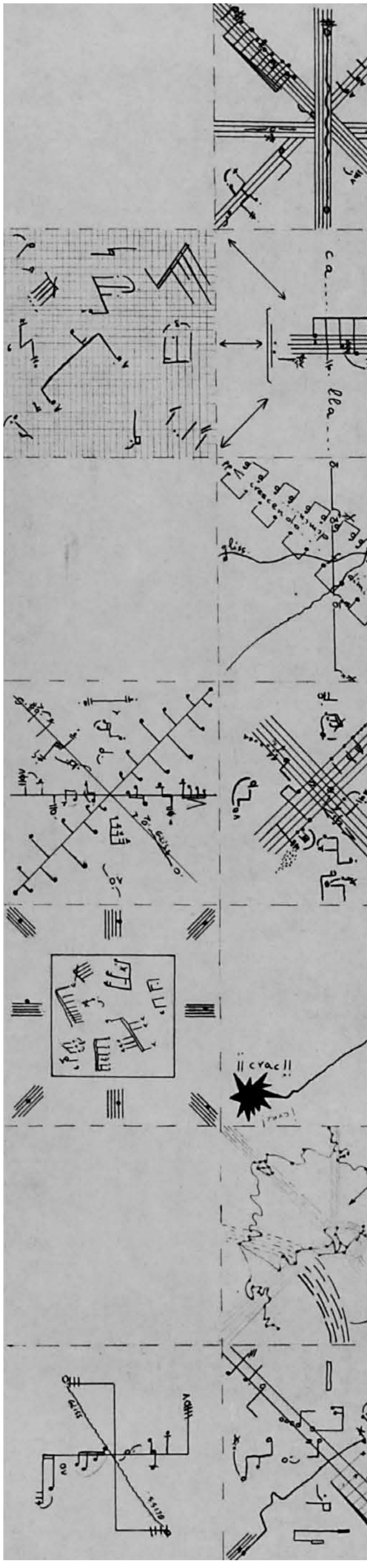
LOVE STORY FOR YU

- consta de 49 formantes, muchos de los cuales son susceptibles de ocho lecturas : 
- los formantes tendrán identica duración para cada una de sus posibles lecturas.
- esta duración será fijada a priori (15"- 20"- 30").
- no habrá interrupción temporal ninguna entre formante y formante.
- cada ejecutante escogerá su "camino" en el momento mismo de la ejecución, empezando por cualquiera de los formantes.
- al acabar un formante, o al centro del mismo, se le pueden abrir varias posibilidades entre las que el ejecutante tendrá que escoger: 
- no se podrá nunca repetir parte del camino andado, ni dar saltos de espacio.
- al llegar a un formante en blanco, se guardará silencio, y se podrá salir (agotado el tiempo) por cualquiera de los posibles caminos que se le ofrezcan.
- la lectura de cada formante vendrá determinada por el gráfico, pero siendo la escritura muchas veces indeterminada, se esforzará el ejecutante en sacar del gráfico la mayor cantidad de sugerencias musicales posibles.
- no habrá determinación previa de la duración de la obra, no se fijará a cada uno de los ejecutantes, ni un máximo ni un mínimo de formantes a leer.
- cada ejecutante acabará sin previo aviso, al llegar a un formante en blanco, y no deseando ya continuar.

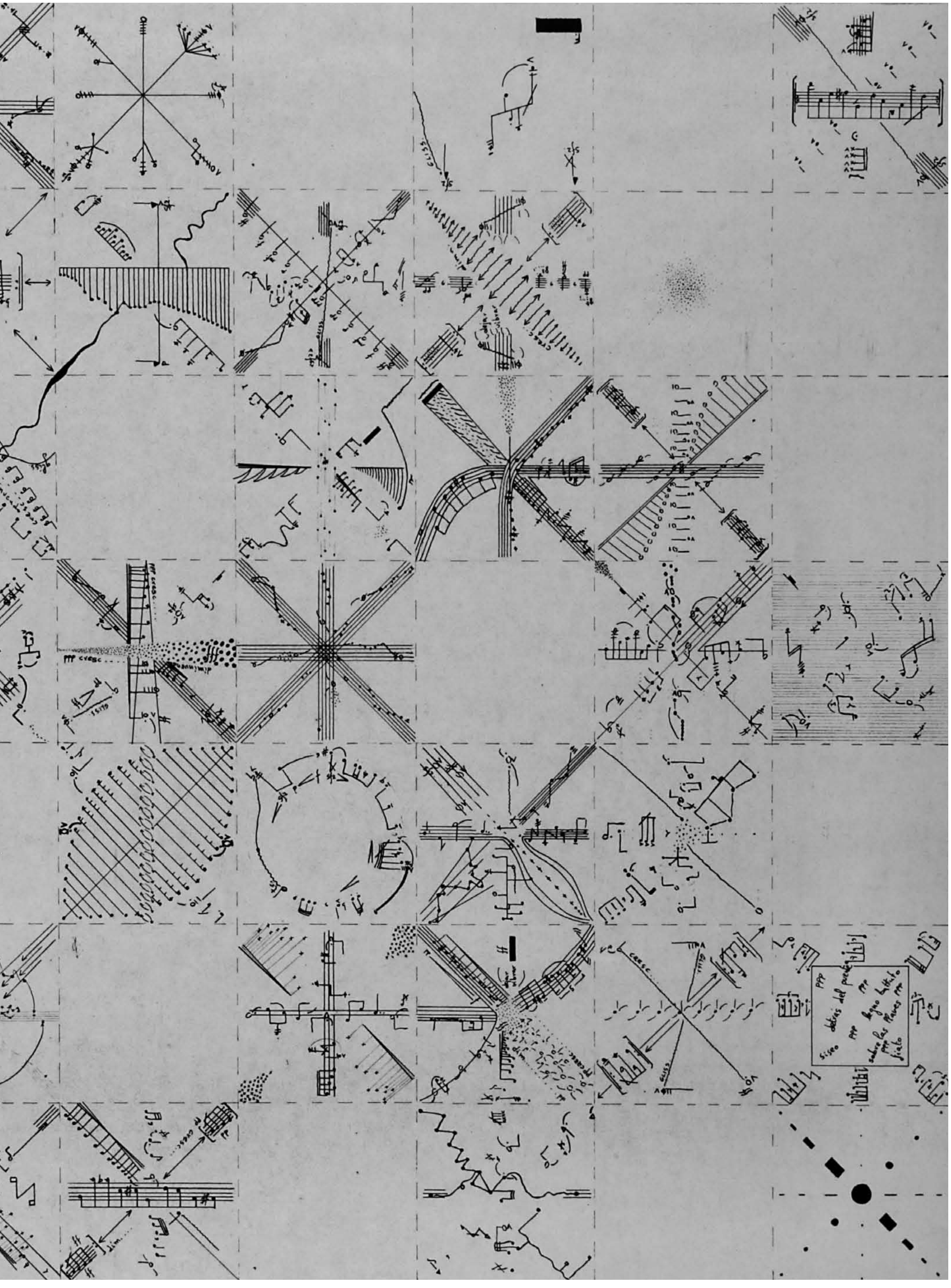
- la obra admite cierto montaje escénico optativo :
  - los ejecutantes escogerán "a priori" una melodía pegadiza y fácilmente reconocible, e
  - interpretarán la obra como antes se explicó, pero al llegar cada ejecutante a una estructura en blanco, optará por:
    a/ guardar silencio, o
    b/ tocar o canturrear la tal melodía escogida.
- si al tocar la tal melodia, coincide con otro(s) ejecutante(s), todos ellos dejarán de tocar, se buscarán, y dándose evidentes muestras de afecto, abandonarán la sala.
- la obra acabará al "encontrarse" todos los ejecutantes.
- si uno de ellos quedase solo, continuará tocando hasta que el público cante con él la melodía, dando así fin a la obra.

madrid, abril de 1975

Mª ESCRIBANO Y LLORENÇ BARBER



***Love Story for Yu*, 1975. Score-proposal by Llorenç Barber and María Escribano, written for an unknown instrumental band. Photo by Luis Ros. © Llorenç Barber and Maria Escribano, 2008**


ppp detrás del puente
sobre las llaves
sobre el puente

Keywords

A vocabulary for contemporary artistic culture
Course in contemporary art and culture

From 06/10 to 01/12/08

Course – lecture series

Mondays from 6 October to 1 December 2008, at 7pm

From 8 September in the Museum reception hall (except Tuesdays)
Telephone: (+34) 934.121.413 (mornings)
Web: www.macba.es

Enrolment price: 50€
Students and the unemployed: 25€
Friends of the MACBA: free
Price of the individual sessions: 6€
Students and the unemployed: 3€
Friends of the MACBA: free

Inscriptions in the ICE: Accredited actively employed professors who sign up through the UB's ICE, from 6 to 26 September.
Telephone: (+34) 934.021.024
Web: www.ub.es/ice
Price of enrolment: 25€

MACBA Auditorium

Limited places

Program subject to last minute alterations
Simultaneous interpretation service

With the participation of the Institute of Educational Sciences (ICE) of the University of Barcelona (UB).
All students who attend a minimum of 6 sessions will be entitled to a certificate of attendance issued by the ICE of the University of Barcelona.
Further information:
Telephone: (+34) 934.814.681
Email: programespublics@macba.es



Each fall, the Museum offers a course-lecture series that sets out to give participants the conceptual tools necessary to debate the contemporary artistic practices encompassed in the Museum's collection and covering the latter half of the twentieth century.

This year the course has one difference. Instead of presenting a program revolving around a monographic theme, it will make a first-time contribution towards an update of the cultural-artistic lexicon of the twentieth century. The program hopes to propose new definitions of central concepts, as well as to offer a historical reading of the trajectory of such concepts throughout the twentieth century, and provide a prospective support that may help lay the groundwork for the emerging culture.

In 1976, Raymond Williams published his book *Keywords*, an attempt to propose a vocabulary adapted to the culture and society that arose in the second half of the twentieth century, following the interruption produced by the Second World War and the collapse of distinctions between academic and popular culture. In Williams's opinion, the book was a response to the need to update a worn-out language that was no longer able to make reality comprehensible. It was necessary to find a new common vocabulary, to reach a mutual agreement about the meaning and relevance of certain fundamental terms. But it was also necessary to formulate a far-reaching cultural project for the age through this lexicon, which would eliminate the categorical differences between the artistic and the social: it would be built precisely on overcoming them. In other words, it would set out from the intersection of the fields of the arts and the social sciences. This seemed the only possible way to structure a cultural project aimed at social transformation. The hypotheses put forward by Raymond Williams still seem fully valid today, and his work has been a source of inspiration for this course.

The program is presented as a new chapter in a long-term series. The sessions are intended as attempts to define key words, though the way each group approaches such definition may vary. Each session will consist of a presentation and rebuttal made by different guest speakers.

Advance program

6 October
Conceptualism
Lucy Lippard

13 October
Postfordism
Sergio Bologna

20 October
Film, the camera...
Arlindo Machado

27 October
The cultural industry
Angela McRobbie

3 November
Relation
Édouard Glissant

10 November
Formalism
Yves-Alain Bois

17 November
Theatricality, the opposite of modern art?
Alain Badiou

24 November
Museum
Tony Bennett

1 December
Subjectivity
Rosi Braidotti

MACBA Nights

From 04/07 to 19/09/08

From 4 July to 19 September, Thursdays and Fridays, from 8pm to midnight

Admission: 3.5€



As in every summer, on Thursdays and Fridays the MACBA opens until midnight. Likewise, the bar located on the Museum's First Floor terrace will remain open until 24 September.

The admission price includes guided tours of the exhibitions, at 8.30pm and 10pm.

Cities, territories, frontiers: Aspects of cinema by Amos Gitai

Film series

Wednesday, 9 July

Last session

Price: 2€
Friends of the MACBA: free

MACBA Auditorium

Limited seating

Further information:
Telephone: (+34) 934.121.413
Web: programespublics@macba.es

To close the series dedicated to Amos Gitai, two forerunners to his films will be screened that present similarities to aspects of Gitai's filmmaking.

9 July
7.30 pm Film presentation by
Amos Gitai

8 pm Films screening
Description of a Struggle, Chris Marker, 1960, 60'
Seeking Locations in Palestine (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*), Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964, 52'

Recent publications

Further information:
www.macba.es and www.lacentral.com

We present some of the new MACBA publications:

The catalogue for the Asier Mendizabal exhibition gathers together texts about the work of one of the new generation of Basque artists who pays close attention to the relations between form, discourse, and ideology. The book includes texts by Bartomeu Marí, Peio Aguirre, Diedrich Diederichsen, Asier Mendizabal himself and Ian Svenonious, as well as graphic documentation of the installations made especially for the MACBA.

The *Nomeda & Gediminas Urbonas: Devices for Action* catalogue is a guided tour explained by the Lithuanian artists themselves through five projects that have been carried out during the last eight years and in which civic involvement has been especially decisive. The texts analyze the evolution of these installations – some of which are still works in progress – with the idea of understanding how the sudden passage from a Soviet political system to a liberal regime has transformed the life of the country in both its public and private spheres. The publication includes texts by the exhibition's curator, Bartomeu Marí, as well as by Lars Bang Larsen.

The publication *Francesc Torres: Da capo* is a monograph that brings together a selection of texts written and published by Francesc Torres, from the 1970s up to the present day. Selected by Iria Candela, these texts highlight Torres's committed, combative spirit with regard to the "collective memory," to the black holes in the political transition to democracy and to a world of destructured art, as well as addressing the role of the artist in relation to society, political discourses, and the institutions. The publication also includes texts by Bartomeu Marí, the exhibition curator, Iria Candela, and Antonio Monegal.



Musicactions

From 10/07
to 24/07/08

Concert program

Coordinators: David Albet and Oriol Rosell

Thursday 10, 17 and 24 July at 9pm

Entrance: 5€
Friends of MACBA: free

MACBA Auditorium

Limited seating

These concerts form a part of the schedule of Barcelona's GREC'08 Festival. For more information: (+34) 934 814 681; programes-publics@macba.es and www.bcn.cat/grec



Pauline Oliveros.
Foto de Pieter Kers

During the 1960's, music mixed with other emerging art forms like performance and the new poetic technologies. It was also imbued with new socio-political and genre meanings that were in sync with the revolutionary spirit of the era. During this decade sound events (as also happened with the dramatic and plastic arts) would grow into a context of experimentation rather than finished works.

The series we present is focused precisely on this heritage from the avant-garde scene of the 1960's and on its validity for current creative processes. Therefore, two great figures from this scene will be present: Pauline Oliveros and Yasunao Tone, artists whose works have also been presented on Radio Web MACBA (RWM) and which form a part of the exhibition *Possibility of Action: The Life of the Score*.

Program

10 July
Pauline Oliveros (Houston, 1932)
Pioneer in the digital processing of acoustical instruments and in the study of new forms of listening.

17 July
Yasunao Tone (Tokyo, 1935)
Crossover between digital technology and the historical avant-garde. His musical production is focused primarily on the technical and "poetic" possibilities of CD players and discs.

24 July
Fluxdelux
Homage to the heritage of the Fluxus collective. Fluxdelux's actuation will consist of a performance-anthology where a selection of Fluxus's actions will be staged using the directions written by their original creators.

Art workshops during the Mercè Festivities

From 20/09
to 24/09/08

September 20: from 10am to 2pm, and from 4pm to 7pm
September 21 and 24: from 10am to 2pm

Free activity

Plaça dels Àngels

Family activity for children from 2 to 10 years of age

Every year the Museum takes part in the Mercè festivities program with an open-air art workshop to which all the family are welcome. First, a monitor from the Museum guides the group on a tour around the MACBA Collection, pointing out special works in terms of the use of certain materials and methods. Later, in the Plaça dels Àngels, participants can gain practical experience of techniques using different supports and materials that are made available to them on a huge, self-service counter.



Educational programs, 2008–09 academic year

From October 2008 to June 2009

Further information:
Telephone: (+34) 934.121.413
Web: www.macba.es/educacio
Email: educacio@macba.es

These programs form part of the Translate. Beyond Culture: The Politics of Translation project and have been financed with the support of the European Commission.

The educational content this year consolidates the projects started up in the previous academic year: *Expressart: Portable Museum,* addressed to the infant and primary levels; and the *Lectures on a collection*, aimed at secondary school students.
The two projects form part of the MACBA Collection and offer proposals for work to be carried out in the classroom prior to visiting the Museum. We also continue to offer the usual tours of the temporary exhibitions that make up our program.



Expressart: Portable Museum
This project is conceived as a set of teaching initiatives to be carried out in the classroom with the help of accompanying materials (3D objects, images, and text), that are presented in an Expressart box. The main objective is that students as well as teachers enjoy the artworks and can establish a dialogue based on their own experience, stimulating respect and interest in art as a means of expression, play, representation, and experimentation. Later, in the Museum, participants contemplate the originals first-hand and apply the reflections and knowledge they developed as a result of their work in class with the Expressart box.

Lectures on a collection
In this case, the project also includes two parts: the first takes place in the school, with the help of a CD, which the MACBA provides to the center and which is conceived as a tool to help teachers prepare the visit to the Museum. The second part takes place in the Museum itself and enables participants to visit the MACBA Collection with a specialized monitor. The aim of the project is to encourage the students to develop an interest in art and the society of their time and, through this work, to develop their critical, expressive, and dialogue skills.

For this course, the lecture that we propose is entitled Between the Documentary and the Poetic Gesture.

The lecture analyses the changes produced in artistic practices as since the end of the Second World War. Whether moved by the need to bear witness to what is happening or to escape or distance itself from reality, art will always seek possible ways out and responses to the anguish that characterizes this period.





Nancy Spero in her studio, 71st Street, New York, 1973. Photo by Susan Weliley

Excerpt of the interview made by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh with Nancy Spero, published in *Nancy Spero. Dissidances*. Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2008, pp. 95-111

Benjamin H.D. Buchloh: I would like to ask a few questions that focus ultimately on the historical context of the two Artaud series; the first paintings as they are called (*Artaud Paintings,* 1969-70) and the second one, the *Codex Artaud* (1971-72). The specific question that interests me is whether you think it makes any sense to discuss them in the context of Conceptual art in the late 1960s. Were you looking at Conceptual art at all at that time? What do you remember thinking about it? What were the specific language usages in Conceptual art in the late 1960s that made you counteract or respond – I presume it was partially on your mind – with the *Artaud* series?

Nancy Spero: I think those are good questions. I was looking at Conceptual art. I like to think of my work as open-ended. It does reflect my time, you see, our time. I was greatly intrigued by the rebellion against the materiality of painting in Conceptual art. My works on paper, first the *War* series (1966-70) and then the *Artaud* series, were also a rebellion in another way. I rejected painting on canvas in 1966 when I started the *War* series, but I don't think that I was really seriously looking at Conceptual art at that time. I was looking more in the past, to Dada and art like that, that kind of threw away the very important artifacts of civilization and did these bits and pieces. It was a rebellious and subversive sort of art. I felt that I wanted to make a subversive art. And that I didn't want to do anything important, I wanted to make manifestoes. That was the *War* series.

BB: What about the language that Conceptual art used? Let us think of Lawrence Weiner or perhaps even of Joseph Kosuth. There must have been something in their definition of language that was so explicitly distant from poetics and poetry that I suppose you would have wanted to criticize on that level as well.

NS: Exactly. I was irritated at that as well, and without even beginning to critique things gender-wise. But in a way the Conceptual language of Weiner and Kosuth was much more definitive even in its ambiguity. It was more structured in another way than mine was. It was a kind of hierarchy of language. And I was rebelling against anything, whether a man or a woman.

BB: Did you perceive it as a specifically masculine form of language usage? That it was analytical philosophy?

NS: I wouldn't have analyzed it as masculine until after I had been in certain groups like the Ad Hoc Committee, and WAR[1] for example, where we discussed how male language was so pervasive in attuning to the way society had us think. Some women artists and women critics, like Lucy Lippard, as well as Arlene Raven on the West Coast, were trying to analyze what did constitute women's art, a female expression, and whether this was possible.

BB: But Lucy was the first to organize the Conceptual movement for example.

NS: Yes she was.

BB: And if I don't misremember she did not include you in her *Six Years: The Dematerialization of Art*, her documentation of the development of Conceptual art.

NS: That's true.

BB: So she must have undergone a pretty interesting sea change at that time, recognizing the limitations of her definition of what language uses in art were?

NS: Right. I became included in the next wave, later in the early 1970s. I think I was out of phase with the way she was thinking, because she underwent as you said a sea change, and jumped from that kind of formalist art. She kept shifting and changing and she did not recognize what I was doing until she made another step or two. But she had to do it in her way. I understand that.

BB: You just dropped the inevitable word, "formalist" art that I thought we would get to later. Because the interesting concept is that the insertion of language into visual practices in the mid- to late 1960s understood itself to be anti-formalist. At first sight one could imagine that you would have shared numerous points of departure with Conceptual artists like LeWitt and Andre and Graham and Weiner, with the radicality of their anti-object and anti-visuality approach, and their proposal of common accessibility, inherent in the very usage of language itself. It is a very egalitarian, democratic approach to the art object. You were anti-object, you were against traditional forms of representation, and you were against hierarchies just as much as they were and yet it seems like Conceptual art for you embodied numerous restrictions, exclusions, and renewed hierarchies that you wanted to oppose in works such as the *Artaud* series and the *Codex Artaud*. So I am interested in finding out how your differences were perceived already at that time. Somebody like Lucy Lippard, for example, thought Conceptual art was a very radical, political, egalitarian movement, which in certain ways it was.

NS: It was. It was within the context of the art milieu. Somehow their brand of Conceptual art was embraced at a certain level and looked at with a certain tolerance in galleries that were considered avant-garde and still highly touted. I did not feel that my art was included and I did not think my art was associated with them.

BB: Can you concretize a little more how you thought they were different?

NS: Well, I would be peripheral to that kind of Conceptual art because it was another offshoot of mainstream or Minimalist art.

BB: So when Carl Andre for example said that Lawrence Weiner was not an artist but a poet, you would have disagreed with that as well because for you the dimension of poetic language was different.

NS: Than it was for them. Theirs was more mechanistic for me, almost like a reiteration of the machine age in a way. And Carl's concrete poetry too, which harked back to poetry that had been done. I do repetitions.

BB: You used the concept or the term Minimalist a few times. Can we concretize that a little bit, what it did for you, what it meant for you? What was the problem or remains the problem with a Minimalist approach? If you look back.

NS: And it does remain the problem.

BB: Is it because it excluded the poetical dimension or the existential dimension, or the historical dimension or the sexual dimension?

NS: It does. It excludes. It is exclusionary. It is like a covering. It is like an impenetrable barrier to me of what I think should be.

BB: Why do you think American Minimalism in the early 1960s repressed references to the historical past of any kind, apart from repressing references to the historical present? Why do you think it was so crucial for Modernist art to prohibit references to historical memory altogether?

NS: I think it was carrying the idea from the Russian Revolution, but making it more stringent. No more of this messy, horrible stuff, like the history of the twentieth century. And maybe even saying that it was so unspeakable that we couldn't speak about these things. That is true in a certain way, but it is also true that if we don't speak nothing is left. There is no memory. So this to me erases not only images but memory. And I think that in using images from the past there is memory. It has to do with time and space and memory. In my case I like to think of the simultaneity of it, but also of the movement. And the spacing. Minimalism blocks this, blocks anything that I might be interested in. It puts a very handsome cover onto it.

[1] WAR: Women Artists in Revolution and Ad Hoc Committee of Women Artists were founded in the early seventies.

Forthcoming exhibitions

Universal archive. The Condition of the Document and the Modern Photographic Utopia
October 2008–January 2009

Copyright registration: GI-799-2008

MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Plaça dels Àngels 1
08001 Barcelona
Tel. 93 412 08 10
Fax. 93 412 46 02
www.macba.es

MACBA Auditorium
Access via Plaça de Joan Coromines

MACBA Chapel
Carrer dels Àngels, 7

Further information about the exhibitions
Tel. 93 481 33 59
exposicions@macba.es

Further information about activities
Tel. 93 481 46 81
programespublics@macba.es

Opening times
Weekdays, 11.00am–8.00pm
Wednesday and Friday, 11.00am–12.00am
Saturdays, 10.00am–8.00pm
Sundays and public holidays, 10.00am–3.00pm
Open Monday. Closed Tuesday (apart from public holidays)

Library and Videothèque
Weekdays, 10.00am–7.00pm. Closed from 1st to 24th August.

La Central del MACBA (bookshop)
Weekdays, 10.00am–8.00pm
Saturdays, 10.00am–8.30pm
Sundays and public holidays, 10.00am–3.00pm
Closed Tuesday. Tel. 93 412 59 08

Group visits
Information: tel. 93 412 14 13

Guided visits to the exhibitions are included in the price of entry.
Weekdays and Saturdays at 6.00 pm, and Sundays and public holidays at 12.00 am. Available in Catalan, Spanish and English.