

Losing the Human Form

A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America

25 October 2012 - 11 March 2013



Various artists (post-NN), *España, aparta de mí este cáliz* (Spain, Take This Cup from Me), 1992. Serigraphy on paper currency, 15 x 7.4 cm (recto)
Courtesy of Archivo Adolfo Cornejo, Lima (Peru)

“Losing the human form” evokes an image of the 1980s in Latin America that establishes a counterpoint between the effects of violence on bodies and the radical experiments in freedom and transformation which impugned the repressive order. Stricken bodies / mutant bodies. Between horror and festivity, the materials gathered show not only the consequences of mass disappearances and massacres under dictatorial régimes, states of siege and internal wars, but also various collective urges to devise modes of existing in a permanent state of revolution.

Exhibition organized by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in collaboration with the AECID



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The exhibition points out the multiple and simultaneous appearance of new ways of making art and politics in different parts of Latin America in the 1980s. It presents the results of an ongoing research project, conducted under the auspices of Red Conceptualismos del Sur, whose first phase has concentrated on certain episodes in the Southern Cone, Brazil and Peru, with the inclusion of some individual case studies in Mexico, Colombia and Cuba. The historical period under consideration begins in 1973, the year of Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile, and continues up to 1994, when the Zapatista movement inaugurates a new cycle of protests that relaunches activism at an international level. The period corresponds to the consolidation of neoliberalism as a new hegemony, the demise of the real socialisms and the crisis of the traditional left.

The exhibition renders this panorama complex by retrieving experiments which suggested forms of resistance through fragile supports like serigraphy, performance, video, poetic action, experimental theatre and participative architecture. These practices can be grouped into three main areas. The first is visual politics, driven by social movements like the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and Mujeres por la Vida ('Women for Life') in Chile. The second is acts of sexual disobedience, which include experiences of transvestism and corporalities that defy the traditional construction of genre. The last is the underground scene, which used music, partying and the "do-it-yourself" ethic to construct microcommunities and so make it possible to re-establish the social ties broken by terror.

All these experiments led to a loss of the human form, tensing and warping the humanist concept of the subject, and gave rise to new subjectivities that meant a crisis for familiar modes of existence and a transformation in ways of understanding and engaging in politics.

This exhibition is the result of a research project undertaken by Red Conceptualismos del Sur, a collective initiative founded in 2007 which brings together a set of researchers and artists scattered around various parts of Latin America and Europe, and which proposes to establish itself as a platform for common thought and action dealing with contemporary relations between art and politics.

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Museum hours
Monday to Saturday from
10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Sundays from
10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.*
(*From 2:30 pm
onwards only the
Collection galleries
can be visited)
Closed Tuesdays

Galleries close
15 minutes prior
to Museum closing

Related activities:

Seminar
26 - 27 October, 2012
Nouvel Building,
Auditorium 200
[Losing the Human Form](#)

Film series
9 January -
15 February, 2013
Sabatini Building,
Auditorium
[The Rubbing of Bodies](#)

Performance
27 October, 2012
Nouvel Building,
Auditorium 400
[Traces of El Periférico
de Objetos](#)

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