



# **José Miguel G. Cortés**

**DIRECTOR OF THE IVAM**

The exhibition *Tiempos convulsos* (Times of Upheaval) is the fourth thematic reading of the IVAM Collection that we have made in the last few years. In it, more than three hundred works show the most significant changes that have taken place since the Second World War and that have shaken many ideas that seemed to be firmly established and caused them to be questioned, giving rise to the appearance in our daily lives of feelings of precariousness and uncertainty (economic, social and cultural) and sensations of instability (emotional or identitarian). Since the end of decolonisation in the mid 1970s, a twofold process, economic and geopolitical, has contributed to a transformation of the world scene into a multiple open area of generalised exchanges and transactions which is having a very notable effect on all aspects of a sociocultural nature. The exhibition seeks to explain this process, going beyond chronological and geographical boundaries and relating works that belong to different periods and contexts but nevertheless deal with similar matters, arranged in six major areas: Violence and Power, Hidden Worlds, Duchamp and the World of Objects, The Questioning of Images, Dissident Bodies and Urban Peripheries.

If we consider carefully, the transcendental historical changes in the last fifty years (the turmoil of May 1968, the AIDS pandemic, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the legalisation of gay marriage, Islamic terrorist attacks, the various wars in the Middle East, the incursion of religious funda-

mentalism, the world economic crisis which has reduced millions of people to poverty, the migratory explosions in various parts of the world, the re-emergence of a powerful feminist movement ...) reveal the close link that, in my view, exists between so-called macro- and micro-political problems; in fact, it would be hard to understand those of either kind without the others, since they create and condition each other. In some way, all the transformations just mentioned are social realities that left a very deep mark on the end of one century and the beginning of the next one, years full of events that are fundamental for an understanding not only of global geopolitical changes but also of the profound personal affective alterations that we have experienced.

All the works present in *Times of Upheaval* refer to a dimension that is very close and one that is somewhat more distant, to one that is very intimate and one that is more social, to our individual self and to ourselves, to everyday events and the extraordinary things that alter and change our existences. In all these works no dividing lines are established and no boundaries are defined between profoundly related areas. This exhibition, *Times of Upheaval*, is about this way of approaching these themes, this manner of understanding these situations or seeing these contexts. I hope we have succeeded in alerting our consciousness to the histories and microhistories that shape the daily lives of millions of people.

**Gillian Wearing**

*Rock'n'Roll 70*, 2015

Chromogenic print (C-type prints). Ed. 2/6, 130,5 x 191,2 cm

*Rock'n'Roll 70 Wallpaper*, 2015-2016

Painted paper, 555 x 928 cm depending on the installation

Gift of the artist





**Chema López**

*Los años de plomo* (The Years of Lead), 2012

Oil on linen, 180 x 129,5 cm

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# Times of Upheaval

## Stories and microstories in the IVAM Collection

### VIOLENCE AND POWER

Jacques Lipchitz and Julio González used myths from the classical world and the Judaeo-Christian tradition as allegories that explained the ideological impositions and armed conflicts that arose during the early decades of the twentieth century. Lipchitz modelled his *Prométhée* (Prometheus) as a monument to man and his powerful freedom (Phrygian cap), threatened since 1933 by the growing power of Nazi Germany (eagle). During the last two years of his life Julio González adopted an Expressionist



**Martha Rosler**  
*Invasion*, 2008  
From the series *House Beautiful: Bringing The War Home, New Series*, 2004-2008

Inkjet (C-print)  
photomontage on paper.  
Ed. 3/10 + 2 P.A.,  
76.2 x 135.5 cm

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language with which he gave life to parts – hands, face, ... – of a new version of his *Montserrat*, the icon of legitimacy that had provided entry to the Spanish Pavilion in 1937, symbolising the suffering of the people as a result of the disasters of war. Similarly, Robert Rauschenberg took a landmark of medieval literature, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, as a basis for a denunciation of the repressive behaviour of the United States during the years of the cold war. Between 1958 and 1960 he illustrated thirty-four cantos of Dante's *Inferno* with images taken from magazines such as *Life* or *Sports*. Once mounted, these found images were surrounded by new contexts and their appearance was deformed by the juxtaposition of other components, pictorial

manipulation, enlargement and the pressure exercised during the process of transferring them to paper.

Appropriation, montage and deformation were technical resources that became customary in the 1960s, used by many artists to neutralise the actions of control, surveillance and punishment exercised by those in power, and to offer a reflection on their

consequences, ensuring that they were not forgotten and reviving the memory of them. In *Faces* Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige photographed posters in the streets that announced the deaths of the “martyrs” who disappeared during the war in Lebanon, and through drawing they reconstructed part of their features and their visibility in collective memory. In his series *Miedos y fobias* (Fears and Phobias, 1995–1998), Jesús Martínez Medina addressed the widespread homophobia that arose as a result of the AIDS pandemic and that condemned those who suffered the disease to stigmatisation and solitariness. Between 1977 and 1979, Eduardo Arroyo worked in a somewhat autobiographical manner on themes such as surveillance, punishment and exile. In *José María Blanco*



*White amenazado por sus seguidores en el mismo Londres* (José María Blanco White threatened by his pursuers in London, 1978), he portrayed White – with whom he shared an attitude of ideological belligerence towards Spain and a sense of rootlessness arising from exile – as a ghostly figure watched by thousands of eyes. In his series *Los años de plomo* (The Years of Lead, 2012–2013), Chema López used photography to try to break away from traditional forms of representation and the obsession with classifying people as good or bad, rich or poor, sick or healthy. Equipo Crónica also investigated the forms of representation in art and the mechanisms used to control them. In *Tres nubes sobre el imperio* (Three Clouds over the Empire, 1973) they spoke to us of the glorification of artistic genres and their alliances with power, and in *Heartfield / Lissitzky* (1974) they used a map of the battle of the Ebro to define the various faces of Fascism, appropriating characters from Heartfield’s photomontages.

Decrypting hieroglyphics of this kind required activation of the public’s perception and participation. The basic principle was derived from the influences that Gestalt had on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s philosophy, especially concerning everything

that had to do with the oscillation between the physical and the intelligible, the influence of the contextual and interference between layers of meanings. Juan Genovés made the urban mass the protagonist of his compositions and at the same time he transmitted a dystopic view of the omnipresence of Big Brother in society. Both Equipo Realidad and Rula Halawani investigated the various devices used by the media to manipulate images. Martha Rosler and Josep Renau offered the spectator a view of the opposite kind: in their photomontages they showed the banality that was predominant in everyday life in the United States, contrasting it with the disasters brought about by the country's armed intervention in other parts of the world. Gülsün Karamustafa denounced situations of ideological repression in accordance with a figurative canon derived from the tradition and folklore of her country. In works such as *King Kong Meets the Gem of Egypt* (1972), Robert Smithson combined images from popular culture with others of a more serious nature to speak to us about the process of mutual destruction that was being enacted between mankind and nature. The destruction and traces that wars left in urban areas was the central theme of Robert Frank's *Old City of Beyruth. November 18-28th* (1991) and of the scenes of ruins portrayed by Herbert List in the city of Munich between 1942 and 1945.

(LEFT)

**Robert Rauschenberg**  
*XXXIV Drawings for Dante's Inferno*, 1969  
34 reproductions in individual folders in a box with an explanatory book by Dore Ashton. Ed. 254/300  
Offset on paper, 36.7 x 29 cm  
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(RIGHT)

**Rula Halawani**  
*Untitled XX*, 2002  
From the series *Negative Incursion*  
Photograph (archive copy)  
Ed. 3/5, 90 x 124 cm  
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## HIDDEN WORLDS

In response to the situations of profound dissatisfaction that arise as a result of experiencing traumatic events, the re-composition of the individual involves authorising oneself to speak and restore communication with the world and with the social links that gravitate around one. In 1970, Mušič felt the need to go back to Dachau, the concentration camp where he had been imprisoned from 1943 to 1945. He needed to transfer his feelings and memories to paper and paint. His works became full of sexless, plundered beings with a subjective dimension, because when there is suffering and pain there is reserve and silence. In contrast, in *Der Krieg* (The War) Otto Dix summed up his experiences as a soldier during the First World War in Expressionist images, describing the devastated states of the corporeal with tremendous cruelty.

In *The Rebel* (1951), Albert Camus speaks of rebellion as a creator of closed worlds in search of truth, and of art as a rebellion with similar aesthetic demands. Normally, art takes

over the content of a revolution, forming strange, closed worlds parallel to reality, which are an expression either of a denunciation or of a search for the reason for man's most violent impulses. Other artists, such as Dario Villalba in *Encapsulados* (Encapsulated Figures, 1974), tried to delimit and define the mental states and moods of individuals from marginal categories of society. In *Kopfputz* (Head-dress, c. 1970–1974) Arnulf Rainer partially covered his facial grimace with a dark smear, with the smear concealing and negating the figure on which it was applied. In his series *Aislamientos* (Isolations, 1967–1985) Anzo worked with solemn portraits produced in order to represent a man/office in industrial settings. For Zush (Albert Porta) art was a therapeutic instrument with which to expel negativity and contradiction, and signs were the centre of a world that was in constant transformation. Gordillo eventually created “psychological machines”, a good

example of which is *El hombre vespa* (The Vespa Man, 1965), and Carmen Calvo altered photographs that she found in street markets in order to create her own stories, reassigning their function and signification.



Other artists explored the world of mythology and cosmogony in order to find a response to the existence of the more contradictory and hidden side of human thought. Almost all of them were associated with Surrealism, and they considered that the universe was unfinished and constantly being created. The way in which civilisations had understood its configuration might be the key to finding a reason for mankind's destructive impulses. The study of myths connected with nature was one of the constant themes in their imagery. After his journey to Martinique and his association with Lévi-Strauss and primitive American cultures, André Masson gave an earthy twist to his work. In *Un grain de mil* (A Grain of Millet, 1942) he used lively colours on dark backgrounds together with biomorphic forms that he associat-



(RIGHT)  
**Zush (Albert Porta)**  
*Umasido*, 1989

Mixed media on cloth,  
 160.5 x 201 cm

Long-term loan from Cal  
 Cego. Contemporary Art  
 Collection

(LEFT)  
**Carmen Calvo**

*Has hecho de mí todo lo  
 que querías* (You Have  
 Made Me Everything You  
 Wanted), 2005

Mixed media, photograph  
 and collage on wood,  
 170 x 105 cm

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ed with the fecundity of the earth. Yves Klein's *Anthropométries* (Anthropometries) were close to prehistoric icons of fecundity. They were paintings made with living brushes, women who daubed their bodies with paint and pressed them on paper, leaving marks made by the more sexual parts of their bodies. In *Le taureau blessé* (The Wounded Bull, 1939), Óscar Domínguez depicted an unreal landscape shaped by lava and shifting geological faults to represent the situation of chaos and death brought about by the Spanish Civil War. Influenced by him, in the 1980s Pérez Contel created gelatinous forms that seemed to undergo transformation.

Cosmogony has been present in the work of many artists who thought it was important to work with natural materials because they formed part of our essence and origin. This is the case with the anthropomorphic heads and masks modelled by André Derain after the first third of the twentieth century when he found a bed of clay on his property. Jean Dubuffet used earth and various natural materials to create primordial slurries in which figures with psychopathic features floated. In the 1960s Antonio Saura made *Acumulaciones* (Accumulations) and *Multitudes*, in which he tried to coordinate groups of anti-forms dynamically to generate a sensation of continuity.

Between 1930 and 1931 Darío Carmona made a series of drawings in which, by a duplication of heads or figures, he attempted to merge two worlds, that of the possible and that of the illusory. At about the same time Benjamin Palencia exhibited his work in Paris and met André Breton, of whom he made a Surrealist-style

portrait. Arshile Gorky dedicated a drawing, *Untitled* (1945) to Breton, in which the references to the past and linearity are reminiscent of Picasso and Miró. This was an anti-mimetic aesthetics, involving oneiric and metaphoric writing, associated with a disintegration of logical connections which linked up with a new way of referring to reality derived from the emergence of big cities and industrialisation. In this playful activity the human eye became



a means of acquiring knowledge, and with the establishment of photography as an avant-garde artistic technique in the 1920s and 1930s the comparison between the lens of the machine and the human eye became inevitable. Photographs such as Manuel Álvarez's *Parábola óptica* (Optical Parable, 1931) define the existence of multiple ways of seeing and at the same time the coexistence of a sharp, bright view contrasting with one that is manipulated, remote-controlled and opaque. Tony Oursler tried to show something similar in *Untitled (Church Pew)* (2009), in which he worked with the concept of the prismatic perception of the brain. Another of the artists who expressed the confluence of divergent ways of seeing is Sigmar Polke, whose *Polkes Peitsche* (Polke's Whip, 1968) refers to the association between the divine artist and the lunatic. Lastly, Joan Cardells's sculptures provide us with a semantic confrontation of opposites in which concepts such as craft work and industrial work or craft means and the means of mass production remind us of a world marked by duality.

## DUCHAMP AND THE WORLD OF OBJECTS

(LEFT)

**Yves Klein**

*Cosmogonie (COS 43)*, 1960  
From the series  
*Anthropométries*

Blue pigment and synthetic resin on paper mounted on a panel,  
74.5 x 107.5 cm

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(RIGHT)

**Katharina Fritsch**

*Vase mit Schiff (Vase with Ship)*, 1987-1988

White plastic and screen print in three colours,  
30 x 11,5 x 11,5 cm

Gift of Jablonka Galerie, Cologne



In October 1965, at Galerie Creuze in Paris, Gilles Aillaud, Eduardo Arroyo and Antonio Recalcati presented *Vivre et laisser mourir ou la fin tragique de Marcel Duchamp* (Live and Let Die or The Tragic End of Marcel Duchamp), a collective work with which they wished to show their disagreement with the institutionalisation and commercialisation of the historical avant-gardes, and consequently with the annulment of their ability to rebel against the established order. For this purpose these three artists, members of the French Narrative Figuration movement, staged the death of Marcel Duchamp, a paradoxical figure because, on the one hand, he developed and evolved from the avant-garde movements of the 1920s and 1930s, and, on the other, he became a kind of guru, the vanishing point of most of the discussions about art that took place in the 1960s, the obsessions of which – movement, readymades, multiples, objects, eroticism, irony, fragments, juxtaposition, jokes, the topology of the *inframince*, etc. – served as a basis for opening up new paths of experimentation for the artists emerging from Pop Art and the new realisms. We can divide the works presented in this room into three groups in accordance with their connection with Marcel Duchamp's thinking: those that cite him, those that create assisted readymades, and finally those that place their emphasis on defending the role of the viewer.

Eduardo Arroyo, Jasper Johns and Ricardo Cotanda are three of the artists who cite Duchamp literally. Between 1975 and 1976 Eduardo Arroyo worked on his series *Pintores ciegos* (Blind Painters), which includes *Vestido bajando la escalera* (Dressed Descending the Staircase), an evident quotation from the famous painting that Duchamp made in 1912, which he used to criticise the intellectual elitism that disconnected the artist from social reality, and the retinal art characteristic of the Informalist movements and Abstract Expressionism. Some years earlier, Jasper Johns used the proposition of the *inframince* proximity of male and female made by Duchamp in *L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919) to study the nature of representation in two dimensions in series of themes such as flags, targets and numbers, equivalent to landscapes, still-lives and the human figure, respectively, which he used to explore the passing of time, sensory and perceptual changes, spatial structure and relationships between theme, object and context. Ambiguity and overlapping were the keys to understanding *Llegar a la nieve* (To Arrive at the Snow), a series by Ricardo Cotanda consisting of various objects from the trousseau of a bridegroom which contained hidden meanings and concealed actions connected with sexuality and eroticism.

Richard Hamilton, Joan Brossa, Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, James Rosenquist, Claes Oldenburg and Equipo Realidad also found a starting point for plastic experimentation in Duchamp, although they directed their concepts towards criticism of the flourishing aggressive consumer culture through the creation of readymades. In 1963 Hamilton made *Epiphany*, a work that recorded the optical investigation of colour conducted by Duchamp. Later he produced *Toaster* (1967) and a multiple, *The Critic Laughs* (1971–1972), accompanied by the Hamilton trademark logo, promotional material and packing. These works show the artist's interest in the processes implicit in industrial design and in multiple production. Joan Brossa changed the general message of the logos of some trademarks by altering the verbal and visual expression in order to dislocate and confuse the reader. In *Volkswagner* (1988) he made an ironical reference to the brand and to the favourite composer of the Nazis, and in *Mercedes* he did the same with the commercialisation of Christmas. John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg worked with various printing companies to produce series of graphic work. Cage produced two series of works on edible paper made from seeds collected in the fields of North Carolina, which he called *Wild Edible Drawings* (1990). In *Shades* (1964) Rauschenberg used six Plexiglas plates as a support on which he printed a collage consisting of manually altered images taken from the *New York Times*, which were installed in an aluminium framework provided with rails so that the viewer could change the order in which they appeared and were read. James Rosenquist thought of reality as a jigsaw puzzle of juxtaposed pieces, and this principle served as the basis for *Blue Spark* (1962), a work in which the main feature was a fragment of a hand as a metaphor for the vast range of consumer goods. On other occasions Rosenquist gave a specific meaning to found objects, as in the series *Nails* (1973), considered as a kind of abacus for measuring time. In 1962 Claes Oldenburg began to sew soft materials such as cloth, plastic or latex to make shapes of objects to which he gave a dynamic quality, associating them with meanings that referred either to the body of a woman (round, sensual and constantly changing) or to food (erotically attractive and desirable) in order to construct a witty satire against consumer culture. Along the same lines, in *Hogar, dulce hogar* (Home, Sweet Home, 1972) Equipo Realidad subverted sharply defined images of domestic objects taken from interior design catalogues or advertising leaflets, blurring them in order to criticise the values of bourgeois society and the rich.

Despite their simplicity, Tom Otterness's objects conceal diabolical enigmas. Their heavy chains and hammers cast in bronze adopt rounded, spherical forms that connect them with references to sex, slavery and robots, categories that become indistinct and that make the visitor reflect. Here we find a connection with the "personal art coefficient", a concept that Duchamp introduced in 1957 in a talk titled "The Creative Act", given to the American Federation of the Arts in Houston. In it he spoke about the powerlessness of the artist to control the ultimate meaning of his works, and he distinguished between intention and execution, and between content and interpretation. As a result of the intervention of the viewer the work of art succeeded in rising above the status of a mere object, an assertion that had a notable influence on the work of artists whose career started in the 1980s, such as Victoria Civera, Carlos Pazos, Carmen Calvo, Dora García, Katharina Fritsch, Tony Cragg and Daniel Spoerri, a member of an earlier generation.

Victoria Civera  
*The Differences Between*,  
1993-1994

Wood and various materials,  
270 x 190 x 300 cm

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## THE QUESTIONING OF IMAGES

“In the end she will manage to look just like it”, Picasso replied when someone said to him that his portrait of Gertrude Stein did not look like her. He knew that people would eventually see it through his eyes, because in reality the information that we receive is filtered by the producers of images and the rules of cultural contents. As Umberto Eco said, our interest should concentrate on studying the taxonomy of contents in order to discover and understand how signs – words or pictures – can be used to tell us lies. Therefore both ideology and the organisation of society are aspects that he considered basic for the performance of any semiotic study of images, a discipline that acquired great importance in the 1960s in connection with the mass media and that became the central interest for the social sciences with theoreticians such as Abraham Moles, Christian Metz, Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu and Pierre Francastel. The iconic image, the treatment and use of it in systems of socio-economic exchange, the mechanisms of its manipulation and construction, the relation between its content and politico-cultural context and its semantic and constitutive structures are some of the points of investigation that artists such as Alberto Corazón, Antoni Muntadas, Richard Serra, John Baldessari, Richard Prince, Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol, Erró, Equipo Crónica, Equipo Realidad, Jerry Byron Kearns and Öyvind Fahlström introduced into their creative process. They all took Duchamp’s readymade as a point of reference, using images or texts taken not only from art genres but also from the media, manipulating and decontextualising them and giving them new meanings and functions in order to discover whether their meaning was inherent in them or depended on the people who created them, the prevailing agents of power in each period of time, and the context in which the viewer saw them.

In the 1960s it became customary for postmodern artists to include quotations from other artists in their own works, as we saw in Arroyo and in Johns, which can be understood as a kind of collaborative process. Also, there were groups that began working collectively, as in the case of Equipo Crónica (1964–1981) or Equipo Realidad (1966–1976), in whose works references to the historical avant-garde existed in conjunction with a new language that combined images taken from the mass media, film noir, American musical comedies and the world of comics. Most of their characters were antiheroes with their eyes blindfolded, deprived of freedom, but at the same time they were symbols of the illicit abuse inflicted on the weak, a clear reference to the repression of culture during the Franco regime. A similar line was pursued by Öyvind Fahlström, whose *Red See-*



Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat  
*Socialite*, 1984

Acrylic on canvas,  
 192 x 264 cm

Long-term loan from Museo  
 Nacional Centro de Arte  
 Reina Sofía

saw provided a kind of three-dimensional ideological map that described the years after the Second World War in the United States, into which he condensed “all his sardonic vision of the power-freedom conflict, drugs, the cold war, capitalism and the communication media”. Similar subjects, such as the wars in Algeria or Iraq, Mao’s China or Castro’s Cuba, were also treated as an amalgam of images in *God Bless Baghdad* (2003–2004) by Erró, one of the members of the French Narrative Figuration movement. In another case, masks and graffiti, typical elements of protest in urban art and underground comics, became the main features of *Socialite* (1984), a collaborative work made by Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Another of the postmoderns who took up a position on the fine line that separated highbrow and lowbrow culture, art and comics, was Richard Lindner, an artist of Jewish origin in whose works there were grotesque characters – a mixture of Jokers and gangsters – surrounded by scenes in which eroticism and sex were seen as consumer objects, providing a projection of the materialist, fetishist treatment that was applied to women’s bodies during the 1960s and 1970s. This theme was also instrumentalised in various ways in the work of other artists in that period, such as Martial Raysse, Ángela García, Isabel Oliver and John Baldessari.

Richard Prince spent most of his life analysing the rituals of behaviour in various social groups. He believed that certain poses and gestures were cloned generically in the graphic material distributed by the media. Significantly, he spent a good deal of time cataloguing pictures for Time-Life Incorporated. During the 1980s he concentrated his work on various advertising campaigns, appropriating images and producing series with the aim of associating them with ideologically constructed models of behaviour. The various ways of reading an image and of disentangling and blocking the messages and traces of doctrine disseminated by the media are a field of investigation that attracted artists such as Alberto Corazón, Antoni Muntadas, Richard Serra and John Baldessari.



**Öyvind Fahlström**

*Red Seesaw, 1968-1969*

Wood, metal, cardboard and  
paint, 115 x 233.7 x 18.5 cm

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## DISSIDENT BODIES

Over the ages the representation of the body has been associated with social, political, economic and religious norms and values. Activists and artists have brought the body into play and placed their bodies on the line in their demands for civil rights and in the art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, converting its vulnerability into a criticism, threat and weapon; not asking pardon or permission; reversing course and breaking boundaries; clinging to life without losing sight of death. Bringing the body into play involves resisting and asking questions, deconstructing what has been naturalised by a system of domination, and engaging in a battle to maintain a way of living and understanding life. Underlying the works of the artists exhibited

in rooms 7 and 8 is the idea of portrayal in a very broad sense, with a complex rhetoric full of features such as ellipsis, personification, synecdoche, simile, metaphor, hyperbaton, metonymy, and so on. In many of these works we see a physical and symbolic construction of a kaleidoscopic identity and body in which the predominant features are photographic and audio-visual media, repetition, fragmentation and series.

In *Eros/Ion* and *Tattoo*, Valie Export offers a reading of pain in connection with the exposure and objectification of a naked woman and the fetishistic elements of men's erotic fantasies. And in *Actions Corporelles* (Body Actions) Esther Ferrer exposes the body in order to gain awareness of it and transgress the social norms that regulate it, reflecting on the bodily canons



Michel Journiac  
*Homage à Freud* (Homage to Freud), 1972

Gelatine silver on paper,  
65 x 50 cm

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established on women and on their limitations for occupying space. In *Rock'n'Roll 70* (2015), Gillian Wearing portrays herself in an auto-fiction of her own old age, while John Coplans shows us his sexagenarian anatomy in *Body Language I-V & Body Language Variant* (1985–1986). In Spain in the 1980s, when a male backside embodied fear of AIDS, the stigmatisation was openly confronted by Pepe Espaliú when he manifested his seropositive condition in works such as *Carrying VII* (1992) or in the preparatory drawings for *Sin título. Muletas* (Untitled. Crutches, 1993), works in which he conceptualised his sick body in the process of its disappearance. Through the activism and joint resistance of underground and avant-garde art presented by feminist and

LGBTIQ+ activists, the battle for the rights and freedoms of these collectives continued during the Franco regime, the transition and the early 1980s, giving rise to individuals such as Violeta la Burra, a transvestite and drag artist in Barcelona, whose construction/deconstruction is portrayed by Humberto Rivas; the cabaret artistes and transgression in sleazy venues such as El Molino, the 1970s activity of which was immortalised by Ximo Berenguer (a fake identity of Joan Fontcuberta); Anarcoma (1977), the transvestite detective heroine of Nazario's comics; or Rodrigo's hairy emotional story about *Manuel*, one of the first icons of the awakening of freedom in the "Madrid Scene".

The idea of making a photographic inventory in order to understand/interpret/reveal the identity and/or personality of a collective is not new. We can trace it back, in a castrating sense, to the absurd systems and measurements of the physiognomists in the nineteenth century. However,



the idea of an identitarian photographic inventory – in a very different sense – has been the objective of the work of various artists, questioning and disrupting the normalising wake of that tradition. For example, *La pluma* (Camp), the personal gay archive put together by Jesús Martínez Oliva from a collection of fragments of feminine body language of cis men, compares with the equally fragmentary classificatory grid of over a hundred advertising photographs

that Carmen Navarrete arranges critically in *Museo del hombre* (Museum of Man). In the area of gender constructivism, Cindy Sherman began to use her own body in the late 1970s to create a repertoire full of countless characters and identities, a good example of which is her series *Untitled Film Stills* (1977–1980). Another artist who employs the logic of a contemporary photographic inventory is Rineke Dijkstra, whose portraits such as *Julie* (1994) present a dignification of the abjection of the corporality of mothers in the moments after giving birth. Annette Messager's *Papier peint Utérus* (Uterus Wallpaper, 2017) reflects on maternity and the ability to decide. And bewigged Michel Journiac's photo action *24 heures dans la vie d'une femme ordinaire* (24 Hours in the Life of an Ordinary Woman, 1974) operates on social roles and rituals to reflect how women are trapped by a heteropatriarchal society. Transvestism is also an instrument that is used by one of his contemporaries, Pierre Molinier, for hedonistic and autoerotic purposes, to embody his fetishistic fascination with lesbian but masculinised femininity (*Je suis les-*

*bien* and not *lesbienne*). Pursuing the same impulse of visibility, in *Eastern LGBT* (2004) the Palestinian artist Ahlam Shibli shows LGBTIQ+ people from western countries who had to abandon their homes because in their societies they could not live freely in accordance with their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The gender performance of masculinity has also revealed its constructive nature in works such as the photos taken by Del LaGrace Volcano, an artist who portrayed the incipient drag king scene in the mid 1990s on an international scale. All these issues are not new battles but old ones, as demonstrated by the work of Claude Cahun, who, almost a century ago, presented the first modern visual propositions about the categories of non-binary gender (genderqueer), neutral gender (gender neutrality) and non-gendered (genderless) in her self-portraits and photomontages.

(LEFT)

**Sue Williams**

*Flooby Fellowship #12*, 2003

Ink on paper, 48,2 x 61 cm

Gift of the artist

(RIGHT)

**VALIE EXPORT**

*Tattoo II*, 1972-1996

Gelatine silver on paper

Printed in 1996. Ed. 27/30 +

3 P.A., 30,3 x 23,9 cm

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## URBAN PERIPHERIES

“All power to the imagination!” was one of the slogans that appeared on the main façade of the Sorbonne in Paris in May 1968. For the first time, the championing of language and the exercise of expression were strongly represented in a social revolution. Rather than resorting to manifestoes and pamphlets, the walls of Paris were plastered with anonymous posters bearing slogans and images that were approved by popular vote. As Jean Baudrillard said, the street became an alternative subversive



medium for transmitting messages, because in it everything was “an immediate inscription, given and returned, spoken and answered, mobile in the same space and time, reciprocal and antagonistic”. In contrast, on the media’s “Platonic screen” everything was institutionalised or reduced to a spectacle, without any possibility for the receiver to answer back. Josep Renau may have been referring ironically to this idea in some of his photo collages of the 1970s, in which the predominant features

were slogans on banners carried by groups of protesters bearing remarks such as “Thinking Prohibited”. In other cases, as we can see in the documentary photographs taken by Xiaoyun Luo and Peng Wu, during the Chinese Cultural Revolution great public demonstrations became weapons that were used for ideological indoctrination and the persecution of political enemies.

The Situationist International was a movement founded in 1957 that disseminated some of the ideology that stimulated the urban conflicts in Paris in 1968. Its basic concepts included the indissoluble relationship between art and life, a principle inherited from the early avant-gardes, and one of its aims was the radical transformation of a society tyrannised by the spectacle of the media and by the social relationships that they generated. To achieve their aim they developed cultural and ideological strategies derived, on the one hand, from Surrealism, such as “shifting” and “*détournement*” (rerouting), and, on the other, from Marxism, such as theories about everyday life taken from Henri Lefebvre.

In the case of shifting, the Situationists moved around the city observing the behaviour of its inhabitants and they applied their concept of “psychogeography”, with which they tried to detect the emotions emanating from contact with different

places, seeking to overcome the boredom of the repetitive practices performed in the home, at work and in leisure. Lefebvre spoke of polysemic meanings, of identitarian differences and the coexistence in urban space of our personal experiences with our symbols and the general mesh of history. Artists such as Collado, Apóstol, Kuitca or López Cuenca worked with many of these ideas.

Collado and López Cuenca appropriated the idea of shifting: the former did so by going back to his origins, the Baudelairean sense of *flânerie*, whereas the latter used it as a method of sociological investigation to draw up a new cartography of the uses and abuses of urban space by political power. On the other hand, Kuitca turned to symbols and the study of the fine balance that Lefebvre found between the poverty and richness of everyday life, and Apóstol immersed himself in a critique of modernist urban development applied in third-world countries such as Venezuela, considering it yet another form of colonisation, a mechanism of social control and a way of intervening in people's lifestyles.

The works of Yto Barrada, Rogelio López Cuenca and Elo Vega, Rosell Meseguer, Zineb Sedira, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, Mona Hatoum, Francesc Ruiz and Nadia Benchallal advance along these lines, focusing on areas on the south and east coasts of the Mediterranean that suffered European interference from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards and that now, decades after achieving independence, are still subjected to political pressure exerted by Western powers. In

(LEFT)

**Ursula Schulz-Dornburg**  
*Hoktemberjan-Bagramjam*  
 From the series *Transitorte*  
 (*Transitsites*), Armenia,  
 1997-2001

Gelatine silver on paper. A.P.,  
 printed in 2001, 40 x 50 cm

Donación de la artista

(RIGHT)

**Josep Renau**  
*Denken verboten?* (*Thinking*  
*Prohibited?*), 1966

Photocollage on cardboard,  
 31,5 x 39,9 cm  
 (Folder: 50 x 60 cm)

IVAM Library. Long-term loan  
 from Fundació Renau



their works we can find references not only to the denunciation of urgent issues such as emigration, repression and extermination campaigns but also to the possibility of opening up new ways of strengthening the autochthonous identity of communities and individuals.

Since ancestral times the Mediterranean has operated as a huge natural frontier and as a witness of the sociocultural division between the north, in Europe, and the south, in Africa, between the Muslim east and the Christian west, although, paradoxically, the differences and confrontations on its shores and borders have become diluted. The idea of transit and exchange between one shore and another has been shown to be a utopia that is impossible to achieve, but one hoped for by some thinkers and artists who, like Rosell Meseguer and Zineb Sedira, devote part of their work to speaking to us of that possibility, of the constant two-way movement between the two cultures.



(LEFT)

**Yto Barrada**

*Rue de la Liberté - Tangier,*  
2000

From the series *Le Projet du*  
*Détroit* (The Strait Project),  
1998-2004

Chromogenic print on  
aluminium.

A.P. 1/2, 125 x 125 cm

(RIGHT)

**Joaquín Collado**

*Luciendo sus encantos,*  
*Valencia* (Showing Off Her  
Charms, Valencia), 1972

From the series *Barrio Chino*  
*de Valencia* (Valencia's Red  
Light District)

Gelatine silver on Agfa  
baryta paper, print made by  
the author in 1981,  
30 x 20 cm

IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art  
Modern, Generalitat



# Matter and memory in Aub, Hervás and Chirbes

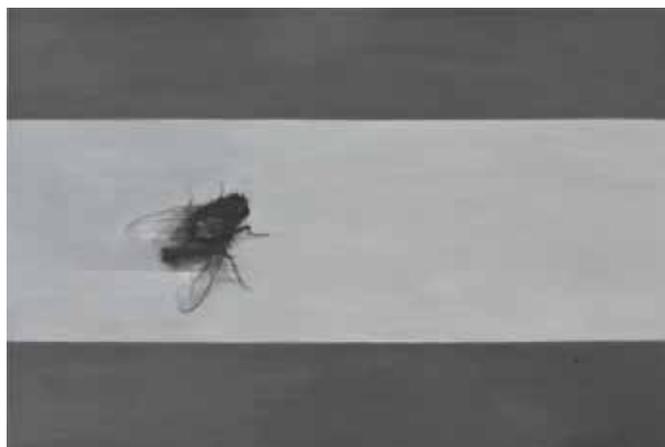
**A project created by Chema López**  
February 13 - June 9 2019

*History exercises a passionate cruelty.*

*Those who were unable to die*

*demand their death*

**Intervalo, Eduardo Hervás**



*(Spanish theatre drawn into the light from the darkness of our time)* “published” by the writer Max Aub in exile in Mexico in 1956, is the title of his inaugural address to the Real Academia Española. This parodic pamphlet, which usurps the official format and typography and rewrites historical events with ironic melancholy, serves as a paradigm of the aims of this exhibition, in which document and representation, objectivity and subjectivity, history, painting and literature mingle and merge.

*Matter and memory in Aub, Hervás and Chirbes* originated as an artistic intervention made especially by the artist Chema López for the exhibition area in the IVAM Library in response to a proposal made by the director of the museum to link the work of Max Aub (1903–1972), Eduardo Hervás (1950–1972) and Rafael Chirbes (1949–2015).

(LEFT)

**Chema López**

*La zona gris* (The Grey Area), 2018

Oil on linen, 94 x 63 cm

The artist's collection

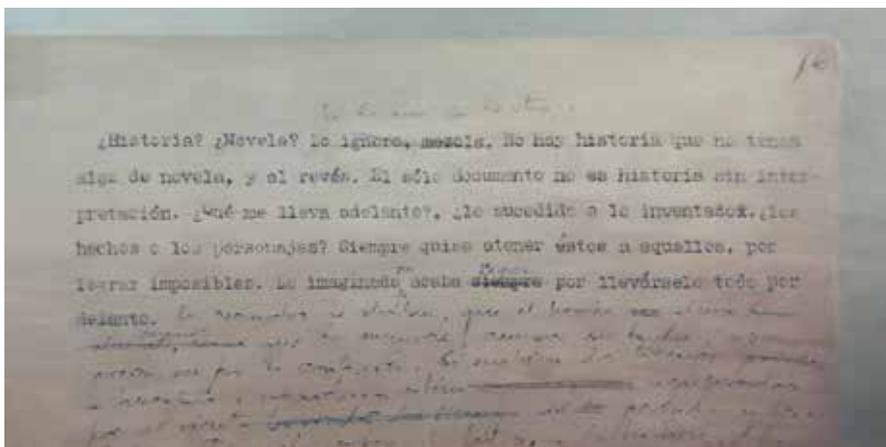
(RIGHT)

**Chema López**

*Historia y novela* (History and Novel), 2018

Oil on linen, 200 x 100 cm

The artist's collection



The semi-historical fictional time line established by Max Aub in his series of novels known as “Los Campos” (*The Fields*, set in the years 1936–1940) was taken up and extended to the present day by Rafael Chirbes in a subjectivation of the monolithic account of history.

In this context, the almost ghostly figure of the poet Eduardo Hervás acts as an *interval*, a utopian hinge between the tragic past that was never overcome – conveyed by the characters created by Max Aub – and the promise of a healing future that never came, set down in black and white by Rafael Chirbes in his work.



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