



ARCOMadrid 2023

22.02.23 - 26.02.23
Ifema, Madrid, Spain

BOOTH #7C12 | GENERAL PROGRAM | ROLF ART

Marie Louise Alemann | 1927-2015, Germany/Argentina

Narcisa Hirsch | 1928, Germany/Argentina

Walther Mejiía | 1933, Colombia

Facundo de Zuviría | 1954, Argentina

BOOTH #7C06 | GENERAL PROGRAM | ROLF ART

José Alejandro Restrepo | 1959, Colombia

María Teresa Hincapié | 1956-2008, Colombia

Rolf Art is pleased to announce its participation in **ARCOMadrid 2023** –Madrid Internacional Contemporary Art Fair– that will take place from February 22nd to 26th, 2023 at Ifema, Madrid, Spain.

After being awarded **The Best Booth & Artistic Content by Lexus Spain** in the fair's last edition, Rolf Art returns to Ifema with a **double presence at the General Program** featuring two historical latin american projects:

At **booth #7C12** Rolf Art presents **The persistent gaze**, an exhibition project that offers a review of the earliest artworks of experimental cinema and performance by the group made up of **Marie Louise Alemann** (1927-2015, Germany/Argentina), **Narcisa Hirsch** (1928, Germany/Argentina) and **Walther Mejiía** (1933, Colombia), during the 1960s in Argentina. The selected artworks suggest a range of diverse interests and concerns that seem to have been overlooked within existing art-historical accounts of Argentine art and cinema of the period, especially in relation to artists who not only explored bodily representation, but who were also rethinking the visual experience within the gallery space - and soon afterwards, in the cinema.

In another area of the booth, a project on the urban landscape of Buenos Aires is displayed; featuring the work **Siesta argentina (2001-2003)** [The Argentinian Nap] by **Facundo de Zuviría** (1954, Argentina), joining his solo show, *Estampas porteñas*, curated by Alexis Fabry at **Fundación MAFRE** (Madrid, Spain).

At **booth #7C06**, Rolf Art presents an **Artist Special Project** in tribute to the Colombian artist **María Teresa Hincapié** (1956-2008) –pioneer in performance art in the region– joining the first exhibition dedicated to her work, entitled **María Teresa Hincapié. Si este fuera un principio de infinito**, curated by **Claudia Segura & Emiliano Valdés**, currently on view at the **MACBA** (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain) after its previous presentation at the **MAMM** (Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Colombia).

Rolf Art 's project proposes to revisit **Parquedades: escenas de parque para una actriz, video y música (1987)** [Parquedades: park scenes for an actress, video and music], a video-action conceived by **José Alejandro Restrepo** (1959) –a key figure & forefather of video art and audiovisual installation in Latin America– to be performed by **María Teresa Hincapié**. This is one of the earliest expressions of experimental video performance in Colombia, that revealed the possibilities of interaction and exchanges between the language of visual, technological, performative and graphic arts. *Parquedades* is one of the earliest works in both artists' career, and the work which introduced Hincapié into the universe of visual arts.

We appreciate your interest and dissemination about our exhibition proposal and we look forward to welcoming you at the show!



THE PERSISTENT GAZE

By Federico Windhausen

"All our life is crossed by a very precise law, by which we are all ruled. It's a law that was never formulated or written anywhere, but is archaically embodied in the human condition. And it's about the gaze length. (...) Later I realize that this law on the look is very strict. Very stiff. Now you are not going to lower your eyes, your gaze, because I already told you what it is this about, but always happens, in any normal conversation. One of the two people involved always looks away and you have to interrupt, cause the gaze reveals everything."

Marie Louise Alemann

Marie Louise Marie Louise Alemann was an artist, a writer and a pioneer of experimental cinema in Argentina, whose unique body of work in multiple media was unified by its fascination with the visible body in its various meanings and effects, including the personal, social, political, and affective.

After studying photography in New York, at the beginning of the 1960, Alemann not only shoot and revealed her own earlier photographs, but also experiment and developed her own techniques. Initially through a rare collage procedure, she focused on portraits capable to reveal and transform the human face. Later she used superimposition with the images as a growing interest in movement and time, that began to lead her towards experimental cinema.

The persistent gaze refers to an idea and practice that was, for Alemann, fundamental to her work. According to the artist, in our everyday interactions the human reflex to look away stems from our understanding of the power of looking and, maybe, as an act to protect ourselves to not be totally seen. But for Alemann *persistent gaze* it is possible, through film and photography, to remain on camera, exploiting the gaze of its mechanical eye, with the aim of revealing, transforming, and provoking. This exhibition sheds light on how Alemann's resistance to the averted gaze unifies the diverse subject matter of her work, encompassing personal portraiture and political allegory, fundamental questions of identity and a wide range of bodily experiences.

Marie Louise Alemann was part of the group composed by Narcisa Hirsch y Walther Mejía, dedicated to avant-garde artworks, related to experimental cinema and performance, in the 1960's in Buenos Aires, Argentina. *The persistent gaze* revisits the first historical exhibition by the group at Lirolay gallery, *Concepción, Vida, Muerte y Transfiguración* [Conception, Life, Death and Transfiguration] (1966), and the films & performances *Yo veo conejos* [I see rabbits] (1967) -the first experimental film by Marie Louise Alemann-, *Marabunta* (1967), *Manzanas* [Apples] (1969) -performed by the group and documented by Hirsch-, and *Retrato de una artista como ser humano* [Portrait of an artist as a human being] (ca.1973), Hirsch' film which returns to the objects, actions and films made by the group, to close the collective experience.

The selected artworks suggest a whole range of diverse interests and concerns that our current art-story chronicles from the sixties in Argentina seem to have been overlooked, specially in relation with this artists who explored not only the body representation, but also represented the visual experience inside the gallery space -and soon later, inside the cinema.



MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN | Bio

Marie Louise Alemann (1927-2015) was born in Germany and arrived in Buenos Aires after the Second World War. She had grown up in Germany and as a young woman lived in Czechoslovakia, working for a circus and as a model until the communists took over. Over time, she went on to work as a journalist, film critic, newspaper columnist, commercial photographer and, later, an actress. Her first foray into her artistic practice was in the area of photography, which she studied in New York in the early 1960s. She was also part of a trio, along with Narcisa Hirsch and Walther Mejía, who held events (similar to happenings) in different types of public spaces in downtown Buenos Aires. From 1967 to 1985, she shot at least 35 short films. In 1967 she made *Yo veo conejos* (I See Rabbits), a 16mm short film that launched her career as a filmmaker. In the 1970s she was part of a network of filmmakers who consciously and explicitly associated themselves with experimental cinema - a set of ideas, aesthetic tendencies, and practices that they considered more artistically liberated than other forms of filmmaking. Together with Narcisa Hirsch, Alemann attempted to provide a stable and institutional site for experimental cinema in Buenos Aires at the Goethe Institute on Corrientes Street. In the later years of her film work, Alemann became increasingly interested in the Japanese theatrical dance form called Butoh, and she created several Butoh works during the heyday of the performance space Cemento. Furthermore, throughout her extensive film-making period, Alemann kept an archive of not only her own works and performances, but also the activities of her friends and colleagues. This archive offers an invaluable record of film and performance in Buenos Aires from the 1960s to the 1980s.

NARCISA HIRSCH | Bio

A seminal figure in Latin American experimental cinema, Narcisa Hirsch devoted herself to artistic practice, concentrating first on painting, then moving on to performances in public spaces, and finally taking a crucial step towards experimental cinema. Reflecting, in part, the influence of 1960s art and film on her practice, Hirsch's films depict the body and corporeal experience in a variety of ways, some of which directly reflect her gendered perspective. Her films combine her own treatment of existential and spiritual questions with lyrical imagery; many of them were shot in the interior spaces of Hirsch's domestic life, the rural landscapes of Patagonia, and the urban sites of Buenos Aires. Born in 1928 in Germany and a resident of Argentina since childhood, Hirsch exemplifies a type of cosmopolitan emigrant found throughout the history of her adopted country. Her personal journey intersects in intriguing ways with pivotal moments in art and film, such as the happenings at the Instituto di Tella in Buenos Aires and the early years of the Anthology Film Archives in New York. But within the wide range of her travels and encounters, she has sought to follow her own path, primarily avoiding strong institutional affiliations and often seeking to engage with artists and thinkers on her own terms. However, Hirsch's strong and determined individualism did not prevent her from seeing cinema as a social and collaborative practice, even as she made more intimate films based on her personal life. Since the days when she worked alongside an informal network of filmmakers that included filmmakers such as Alemann, Claudio Caldini, and Horacio Vallereggió, among others, she has contributed extensively to the formation and sustained development of the communities of experimental cinema in Argentina.

WALTHER MEJÍA | Bio

Walther Mejía Suárez was born in Colombia in 1933 and described himself as an artist, although little is known about his independent artistic output. In Buenos Aires he worked mainly as a yoga instructor. In the second half of the sixties, he collaborated with Narcisa Hirsch and Marie Louise Alemann in a series of performances carried out mainly in public spaces. After breaking with Hirsch, he later resided in Spain for many years.



THE ARGENTINEAN NAP (2001-2013)

By Lucas Fragasso

Facundo de Zuviría's images greet the eye in a peculiar way. One first notices an air of "familiarity" with bars, hairdressers, dry cleaners and other businesses that are undoubtedly part of the intricate urban landscape and the collective memory of our city. These places also carry the innumerable imprints and markings time has engraved upon them; some indecipherable, others very recognizable. The remains of posters, billboards, unfinished graffiti contrast against clear surfaces, all framed from a precise frontal viewpoint.

But suddenly, something catches the eye and makes it return, leaving behind the security conveyed by recognition of the familiar. It realizes that most of these images reflect stores that have been locked up in broad daylight. They seem to be permanently boarded up, as if the photographic instant had captured their natural state. These images do not evoke the peace of a Sunday, nor do they bring the word rest to mind. They're about something else entirely. Indeed image captures the silent tensions, aspirations and miseries that were present in Argentine society during 2001 and 2003, during which one of the most violent and devastating social and economic crises.

The other stores, the ones that are open, seem to be on the verge of closing or communicate the idea that they managed to survive absent events. Some are riddled by decay, in its myriad of expressions; even though the well kept ones exude a sense of pride, it isn't enough to hide an intense feeling of sadness. The threat that has beaten many and oppressed others emerges gradually from the images of *Siesta Argentina* like a huge shadow. It is the same immense shadow that forced them to close their shutters, that keeps a watchful eye, besieging them; and the same immense shadow that transformed the face of the city. The series brings up something that is invisible to sight. A half dormant city emerges from these photographs, which gradually becomes a shared experience, our own set of experiences. A crisis, never explicit within the images, but that could ever be silenced.

Siesta Argentina, as a documentary piece, eschews a typical media images of upheaval, which focused on multitude mobs. Its apparent homogeneity and silence are contrasted with the photographs circulating in the newspapers, obsessed with capturing "decisive moments" from hectic political scenes. Like a detective, Zuviría collects small footprints that are spread around the urban landscape. Using a prefixed shot, always with an identical scale and viewpoint, he composes a soft litany dedicated to a city immersed, as --the title says, in the still waiting of a dream.

FACUNDO DE ZUVIRÍA | Bio

Facundo de Zuviría (Buenos Aires, 1954) is, without a doubt, one of the most recognized Argentine visual artists, with a prominent position on the visual arts scene internationally. Disciple of Horacio Coppola, as a photographer he has represented Argentina in several international biennials including Buenos Aires (2000-2002), Mercosur (2000), and San Pablo (1991). He has been awarded with distinctions and received many accolades, such as the First award in the National Salon from Visual Arts, Buenos Aires (2012), The Konex Award (1992-2012), and a Leonardo Career Achievement Award at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires. He has published numerous books and photo books such as *Paraná ra'angá* (2013), *Buenos Aires: Coppola + Zuviría* (2006), *Siesta Argentina* (2003), *Estampas Porteñas* (1996). His work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Argentina, England, Germany, France, Switzerland, United States, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, among others. Nowadays, his work is part of important national and international collections such as: MNBA – National Museum of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires, Argentina; MALBA – Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, France; Cartier Pour les Art Contemporain Foundation, Paris, France; Hermes Foundation, Paris, France; A.Stichting Foundation, Belgium; HALLE Collection aRIZONA; The MET – Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC; MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, NYC, USA, among others.



PARQUEDADES: PARK SCENES FOR AN ACTRESS, VIDEO AND MUSIC (1987)

Parquedades: park scenes for an actress, video and music, presented for the first time in 1987 at the La Candelaria Theater in Colombia, was a video-action conceived by José Alejandro Restrepo (1959) -a key figure & forefather of video art and audiovisual installation in Latin America- to be performed by María Teresa Hincapié (1956-2008) -pioneer in performance art in Colombia and the region-. This is one of the earliest expressions of experimental video performance in Colombia, that revealed the possibilities of interaction and exchanges between the language of visual, technological & performative arts. Indeed, this is a decisive work for both artists, as it's one of the earliest works in Restrepo's career, and the work which introduces Hincapié into the universe of visual arts.

Parquedades was a video-action composed of 5 TV monitors that reproduced, lacking of linearity narrative, images of situations in the context of a park: benches, pigeons, the lips of a woman, among other elements, while Hincapié, in real time, improvised on stage with slow movements and gestures between the monitors in a long lasting performance.

Conceived by the concepts of non-representation and the idea of expanded time as a complete presence, inspired by Joseph Beuys' performances imbued with spirituality and by the ideas of the polish theater director Jerzy Grotowsky's proposal about the "holy actor" -an actor who dedicates and sacrifices the most intimate part of his being, who is able to manifest even his slightest impulses, to achieve total nakedness-, the work is completed through Hincapié body itself and her sustained actions of surrendering to her manifest daily life impulses. María Teresa Hincapié focused in what we might call "the poetics of everyday life" in performance, transforming routine actions into symbolic acts in a permanent "search for the sacred". Her practice oscillated between life, creation in motion and a search for mysticism.

Durations, repetition, slowness, purely temporary experiences are remarked constantly. "The senses are also cultured - there is a conception about time and space: / 'MOVE, DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME' / but time is not movement / time is not lost / time is always there / time it is permanence / stillness - slowness - repetition / stillness - slowness - repetition / MAKING TIME SENSITIVE / VIDEO TO KILL TIME / Leaving the metaphor and its representation / Not re-presenting anything (only the proper own absence)"

Parquedades is recovered gathering together its legacy: (I) the original 5-channel video installation display in vintage monitors; (II) the video record of a work rehearsal; (III) the vintage photographs that portrays the performance; (IV) the photo-performance composed by 12 photographs from the original negatives by José Alejandro Restrepo never printed before (contemporary prints printed today by Clemencia Poveda); (V) its corresponding original vintage documentation: posters, invitation and hand program; and finally (VI) the original music by José Alejandro Restrepo.

* Text taken from the original hand program, *Parquedades*, 1987.



JOSÉ ALEJANDRO RESTREPO | Bio

José Alejandro Restrepo (1959) is a renowned Colombian video-artist and a central figure in Latin American contemporary art with more than thirty years of production that forms part of the history panorama of the electronic arts in our continent. His training and interests are varied and range from visual and scenic arts, installation, photography, performance and editorial production, constituting as a model of contemporary artist that operates from hybridity. Also, his work dialogues with the documentary image through a work exhibited under diverse formats and devices, focused on the critique of the relationships between art, history, media, religion and politics. The work of the Colombian artist is based on serious research on the accounts of the dominant power and popular beliefs that derive in a critical vision and whose interpretations dismantle the ideology of the system. In this sense, Restrepo attributes to the video the function of disarticulating the discourses of power and in several of his works he does so from the re-appropriation of television images and their manipulation, reconstructing the messages of the mass media, to make a signal on the value that is given to the images. On the other hand, the uses that Restrepo makes of video technology and electronic image imply a deviation from the speeches of the spectacle and the mainstream of contemporary art. His work is regularly exhibited in Europe, Latin America and the United States. Among his individual exhibitions we can mention *Teofanías* (2008, Museo de Antioquia, Medellín); *Transhistory: myth and memory in the work of José Alejandro Restrepo* (2001, Luis Ángel Arango Library, Bogotá), *Musa paradisiaca* (1997, Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá), *Anaconda* (1993, Aphone in Geneva, Switzerland) and *Terebra* (1988, Museum of the National University of Bogotá). He also made group exhibitions such as *BotániCa política* (2004, Fundación la Caixa, Barcelona) and *Cantos / cuentos colombianos* (2004, Contemporary Colombian Art in the Daros- Latinoamérica, Zurich), *Tempo* (2002, MoMA, New York), *Art and Violence in Colombia* (1999, Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá), *The Sense of Place* (1998, Reina Sofía Art Center, Madrid). He participated, among others, in the 52nd Venice Biennial (2007), Mercosul Biennial (Porto Alegre, 2011), Lyon Biennial (2011), Quai Branly Museum (2013) and The Museum of Fine Arts (Houston, 2015).

MARÍA TERESA HINCAPIÉ | Bio

María Teresa Hincapié (1956-2008) was a Colombian pioneer of performance in her country and, without a doubt, one of the most influential in Latin America. She began her artistic career involved with theater and was part of the group "Acto Latino" from which she developed her own dance-theater-ritual inspired by oriental techniques. After traveling through Mexico, Europe and Asia, Hincapié returned to Colombia and began a search for alternative spaces for her artistic expressions. At that time, she was linked with artists such as Doris Salcedo, José Alejandro Restrepo, and Álvaro Restrepo. Her version of *Desde la huerta de los mudos* (1986), a tribute to Federico García Lorca that she made in collaboration with Álvaro Restrepo, marked the beginning of the fusion between theater and visual arts that the artist developed throughout her work. A year later, a work by the artist José Alejandro Restrepo was introduced in the field of performance based on *Parquedades* (1987), which completely removed it from the theatrical forms and from the conventional notion of 'spectacle'. Hincapié has addressed issues related to the feminine condition, domestic daily life and motherhood in her work. From a rigorous handling of the body and a great sense of space intervened, time is one of the crucial aspects of her work. The detained and tense rhythms of her presentations create an atmosphere that is in many cases oppressive and openly critical of certain circumstances of social and sexual alienation. Hincapié performed actions that took physical effort to limits that revealed pain as an intimate and universal expression. The Colombian artist won the first prize at the XXXIII National Salon of Artists of Colombia in 1990 with the work *Una cosa es una cosa*, a plastic action that took her 12 hours and which placed her in the annals of Colombian art. And for the second time in 1996 for the work *Divine proportion*. She has also participated in international exhibitions and fairs such as I Bienal de Valencia – The Body of Art Biennial of Valencia (2001), 51 International Art Exhibition – Always a little further, La Biennale di Venecia (2005), and 27th Bienal de São Paulo (2006), among others.

ABOUT ROLF ART

Rolf Art, located in Buenos Aires and founded in 2009 by Florencia Giordana Braun, is the only art gallery specialized in technical image in Argentina. Focused on contemporary Latin American visual arts, the gallery represents and promotes a selected group of artists & Estates that explores the limits of the image in its several expressions. The curatorial profile challenges the given conjuncture considering the social, political & economical background of artistic production as a determining factor for art's interpretation.

In order to promote the production and appreciation of contemporary art, Rolf Art develops a solid global program comprising research and archive work, exhibitions, sustained participation in leading international art & photo fairs, editorial and audiovisual projects, educational and training courses, institutional collaborations, and public & private acquisitions management; positioning the work of Latin American artists internationally and contributing to the legitimation of the visual expressions from the Latin American region worldwide.

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