

MoMA

EXHIBITIONS

Information into Action: Oscar Bony, David Lamelas, and Marta Minujín, 1966–1968

July 11–November 29, 2015

Special Exhibitions Gallery, second floor

Information into Action: Oscar Bony, David Lamelas, and Marta Minujín, 1966–1968 presents four major works by Argentinian artists, recently acquired by the departments of Media and Performance Art and Photography, which utilize mass communication networks—including film, television, and the telex—and performance as artistic mediums. These landmark artworks deployed performance to bridge the gap between the electronic transmission of information and its active intrusions into daily life. Oscar Bony, David Lamelas, and Marta Minujín were part of a community of artists—clustered around the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella—who recognized the aesthetic and political implications of mass media during a vibrant, experimental period of technological innovation and political tension. Active from 1959 until 1970, the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella was an epicenter for avant-garde art production in Buenos Aires, with a constellation of artists whose political engagement emerged from their experiences of repression under the regime of General Juan Carlos Onganía, as well as news from New York, Paris, and Vietnam.

Oscar Bony's *La Familia obrera (The Working Class Family)* (1968) is a photograph of a controversial performance in which a working class family was paid to sit on a plinth in the gallery for eight hours a day. The performance drew attention to questions of class and inequality not discussed in the mainstream Argentinean press. Focusing on different concerns, Bony's installation *60 Square Meters and Its Information* (1967) comprises chain-link fence laid on the gallery floor, with a film projector screening a detail of the fencing. The spectator's experience of walking on this surface is contrasted with the projected image, calling attention to the mediation of live experience through recording technologies while emphasizing an experience of oppression and restraint.

During its original presentation at the 1968 Venice Biennale, David Lamelas's *The Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio* (1968) showed a live feed of reports from the Vietnam War. This action brought the increasingly immediate flow of information—facilitated at the time by a network of teleprinters—into a gallery space traditionally insulated from contemporaneous international political developments.

Growing out of a trans-continental collaboration with artists Allan Kapow and Wolf Vostell, Marta Minujín's *Simultaneidad en Simultaneidad (Simultaneity in Simultaneity)* (1966) was a multipart happening using broadcast and recording technologies. The event manipulated the increasing entanglement of spectatorship and production engendered by electronic mass media, indicated by the message Minujín sent 500 people in their homes: "You are a creator."

Themes and works in this exhibition are discussed in detail in *Listen, Here, Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, an anthology edited by Inés Katzenstein for The Museum of Modern Art's Primary Documents series.

Organized by Stuart Comer, Chief Curator, with Giampaolo Bianconi, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance Art.

The exhibition is supported by the MoMA Annual Exhibition Fund.



David Lamelas. *Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio*. 1968. Office furniture, telex, tape recorder, microphone, telephone receivers, text, and glass partition. Installation view, 34th Venice Biennale, 1968. Gift of the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels. © 2015 David Lamelas

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