

# ArtNexus

## Venice Biennale

Juana Valdés | Andrey Gûaiana Zignatto | Sonia Gutiérrez | Juana de Aizpuru  
Salons and Biennials | Carolina Caycedo and David Rozas | Raphael Montañez Ortiz  
Alfredo Volpi | Darío Escobar | Pablo Helguera | Displacements in Chilean Arts



\$10 US  
2.4  
Barcode





**Yucef Merhi.** *Compassion*, 2020. 5 CRT televisions, 5 Atari 2600 game consoles, custom Atari cartridges, directional sound system. 80 x 60 x 70 in (203.2 x 152.4 x 177.8 cm). Photo Sid Hoeltzell Photography Inc.

challenges that the curators and the institution had to overcome in order to undertake a project demanding such unconventional reception conditions.

In the first place, there was the challenge of “amplifying” the presence of sound works, which already possess a century-old history that nonetheless has often been “silenced” or subordinated to visuality. In fact, sound

art as a mixed practice continues to float in an undefined limbo between music, the visual arts, and performance. This makes it permeable, voluble, and also difficult to place in a specific taxonomy, at least for the time being.

Secondly, there’s the physical expansiveness of sound, whose vibrations cannot be framed or placed on a pedestal to demarcate

its presence in space. Sound works destabilize the ritual “quietness” of conventional exhibitions, designed to be observed “in silence.”

It is neither common nor easy to turn the rooms of a visual arts museum into a listening venue that lacks a setting or comfortable benches. Here, listening takes place literally on the move. Sounds come from everywhere at the same time and from different sources. It’s up to the viewers to decide whether to follow the order suggested by the curators, or to make their own itinerary.

Thirdly, the objective was to offer the U.S. public a representative selection of Latin American sound artists whose explorations stand out for their conceptual relevance and aesthetic consistency. From this perspective, “Beyond the Sounds of Silence” worked as a compendium of sound documents, carefully “orchestrated” to produce an auditory experience that was rich in cultural nuances and meanings. What happens with sound is what happens with any kind of language in terms of performative capacity and hyper-textual potential. In this sense, the exhibition highlighted the communicative, ethno-social, and political dimensions of sound practices as carriers of submerged and emerging contents that refuse to be silenced.

\* Courtesy of Aluna Curatorial Collective

**FÉLIX SUAZO**

## Mothering. Between the Stockholm Syndrome and Acts of Production

Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo - MUAC, Mexico City

All art is political. From where we stand, we may want to influence or separate art from its inherent nature and elevate it above its reasons, without considering that this stripping or sublimation supposes in itself a political act open to multiple interpretations in the vast cultural, social, and political field of exchanges that defines it at every moment for better or worse and from one place or the next. We would like to think of art as something good that justifies or defines it as beautiful. Beauty transcends all metaphysical premises, along with the evolution of the affections that declare it, discover it, or define it in the world, whether as appearance or as representation. Thus considered, what is arranged and exhibited

in museums follows a series of disjunctions that seek to exhaustively update the scope and outlook of art and its makers based on very specific lines of discussion. Therefore, we have the continuous malaise of culture feeding like a hydra on the simile provided by the vacuum cleaner as cleansing agent: always insufficient, noisy, and working at strange and dissimilar hours.

Curators Helena Chávez Mac Gregor and Alejandra Labastida discovered a specific vein, nurtured by Italian thinkers such as Silvia Federici, which enabled them to formulate a line of discussion and assemble a corresponding corpus of works. This was evident in their group show “Maternar” (Mothering), based on the premise that

compares (re)production with the Stockholm Syndrome. The series of cultural and artistic manifestations in the exhibition aimed to break, expose, revise, or transform the paradoxes between instinct and convention. The underlying premise is that the mother’s unconditional love for her children abducts her, and she becomes their stalwart. There are those who may rise up angrily against this premise, based either on their assumptions, experience, or conditioning. The violence of this statement unnerves these critics because their socioeconomic and political conditioning lead to the believe that it opposes that which is natural—if this word even applies. It remains to be seen, of course, to what extent these detractors are against