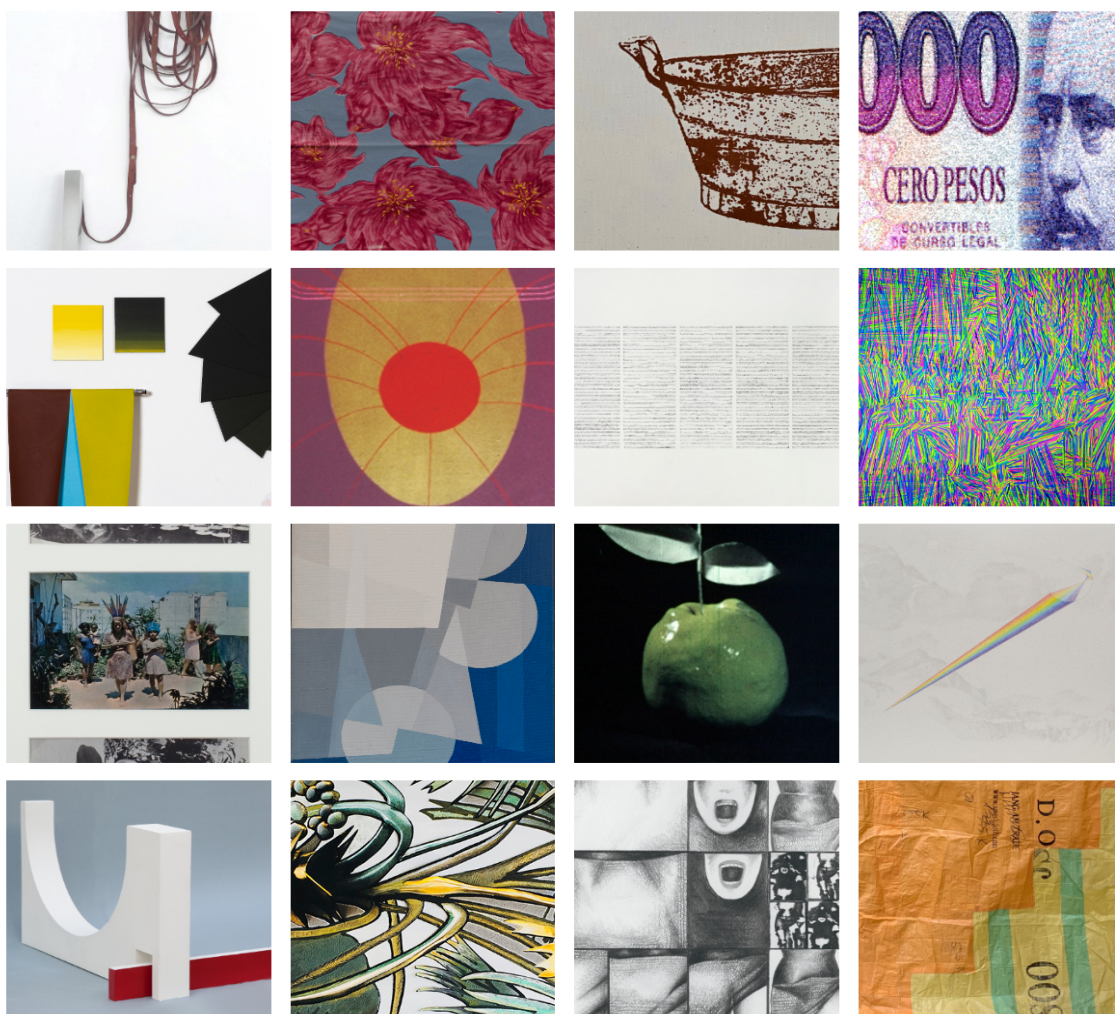


ELLAS

Marcela Astorga | Delia Cancela | Claudia Casarino | Elda Cerrato
Mirtha Dermisache | Noemí Escandell | Anna Bella Geiger | Alicia
Herrero | Narcisa Hirsch | Marta Minujín | Margarita Paksa | Anita
Payró | Karina Peisajovich | Susana Rodríguez | Candelaria Traverso
Dolores Zinny

November 8, 2019 – February, 2020



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Herlitzka + Faria presents the group exhibition ELLAS [*ellas*: Spanish plural of "she"], a selection of works, both historical and contemporary, by the gallery's women artists.

Today, an exhibition by women artists is by no means a novelty. Yet only over the last decade have there been major shows by women, each programmatically stressing their exclusively feminine composition, regardless of -- or in addition to -- their curatorial parameters. The recent exhibition *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985* is a good example of this. As Cecilia Fajardo Hill points out in one of the chapters of the show's catalogue, the need to organize exhibitions based on the artists' gender bespeaks a void in the art system. It is problematic that the same system that judges the quality of works on the basis of an artist's visibility and success often should deny those same two assets to women artists¹. When the Centre Pompidou, in 2009, changed the exhibition of its permanent collection, presenting modern and contemporary works made solely by women, in the show *Elles@centrepompidou.Artistes Femmes* in the Collections du Centre Pompidou, it did so with the explicit aim of granting them a legitimate place in art history. It was the first time something like this occurred in a national art museum. A decade later, we still have to wonder how fruitful that objective was.

The show ELLAS urges reflection on this question, bringing together works that cover a wide range of techniques and mediums, from painting and work on paper to textile, video, or installation.

In the 1990s, **Delia Cancela** made a series of textile designs for a European company, -- one of her many productions for the world of fashion -- conceived first on paper, in tempera and watercolor. Her titles for this series, *Bon à tirer* [Ready to Pull], refer to a term from the world of printing, describing the first perfect copy used to ensure the quality of all subsequent ones. Also making use of an impression on fabric, **Claudia Casarino** presents *Capiteles*, a series of silkscreens made with colored earth. Her work is the expression of a discourse connected to a political idea of what it means to be a woman in Paraguay. Here we exhibit the images of domestic objects which serve as metonymic references to the activities assigned to the female population in a subsistence economy. **Candelaria Traverso** also devotes herself to producing textile art, taking off from the influence of the regional fairs in the northeast of Argentina. She reuses the synthetic burlap in which garments are shipped, turning it into wall hangings that evoke ancestral designs of the Andes region, the favorite of them being the *chakana* (or Andean cross).

Illegible writing is a hallmark of the oeuvre of **Mirtha Dermisache**. Her graphism experiments with the versatility of language and is structured by the architecture of established writing formats. As the semantic dimension of writing is lost, its sheer visual aspect takes precedence, which the artist develops through rhythmic strokes, summoning up the signification of artistic creation beyond referentiality. Also taking off from the structure of language, **Susana Rodríguez** has worked with the notion of writing

¹ *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*. Los Angeles: Hamer Museum, 2017, p. 21.

throughout her career. If, in the 1970s, the writings pointed to a structure that simulated lines of written words, her *Escrituras sobre el Erotismo* [Writings on Eroticism] from the 1980s present a composition divided up into small squares. Each little box section displays a fragmented scene somewhere between eroticism and violence.

From **Elda Cerrato** we are presenting a piece from the *Ser Beta* [Beta Being] series, launched after the birth of her son. The works in this series present biomorphic abstractions which, as various authors, beginning with Elsa Flores Ballesteros have pointed out², refer to images that might be glimpsed through a microscope, with unintelligible forms that allude to cell diagrams. In a markedly different pictorial project, the works of **Anita Payró** take part in research into the language of abstraction through geometry, accentuating the rhythms of color. **Marta Minujín**, pursuing her distinctive aesthetic of brilliant fluorescent colors, presents works midway between painting and collage, exploring the relations between form, color, and material. In them arise vibrantly, effervescent images created out of overlapping canvases painted in acrylic. Adding to the innovation, the artist's mixes in video, as she projects the image of the painting onto itself, incorporating real movement on the pictorial surface. By way of drawing and photography **Karina Peisajovich** surveys the history of various systems of color, starting from her research into the theories of the behavior of light color and pigment color. The drawings from her series *Teoría del color* [Color Theory] refer to the observations of Descartes, who studied the rainbow through the trajectory of a ray of light in a water drop; her photographs *Whenever I see a rainbow* [Cada vez que veo un arco iris] is a reworking of this theme.

In *Brasil nativo, Brasil alienígena* [Native Brazil, Foreigner's Brazil], **Anna Bella Geiger** combines a series of nine postcards showing scenes of indigenous in the Amazon with nine others in which she recreates the same compositions in an urban setting. In this way the artist points to the exotic gaze cast on the native population, while reflecting on the character of Brazilian identity.

Linked with minimalism, **Noemí Escandell** in the 1960s developed the so-called *Estructuras primarias* [Primary Structures]. Breaking with the traditional categorization of sculpture and painting, these structures are made up of modular geometric elements and colors set in relation to space, in interaction with their surrounding architecture. Also installation pieces, the works of **Marcela Astorga** present a meeting of dissimilar materials. The tactile is put into play as much as the visual, starting with a friction between steel and iron, cold, hard, industrial materials, and soft, organic leather. The choice of materials also denotes her interests: if the industrial appeals to the formal, linked to design, which is part of its formation, the use of organic material relates to her interest, broadly speaking, in "skin," "the flesh."

The duo Zinny & Maidagan produces large installations, usually site specific, that set up a dialogue with their architectural surroundings. *Mauritia*, a work by **Dolores Zinny** made out of cut, drawn-on, and painted-on paper, was part of an installation project for

² *La memoria en los bordes* [Memory on the Edges]. *Archivos de Elda Cerrato*. Buenos Aires: UBA, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2015, p. 29

the Humboldt Forum in Berlin: a large bronze palm tree is laid out horizontally across the building's lobby, so that the palm tree's root merges with the tree-top. Both integrating itself the building's architecture and appropriating it, the palm tree might be said to unite the space by placing viewers in its center.

In her work *Sustancias, ritmos e instrumentos* [Substances, Rhythms, and Instruments], **Alicia Herrero**, recent recipient of the Colección Fortabat's First Painting Prize, takes up the graphic language normally used in mathematics and economics to grapple, from the standpoint of art, with the weight of economics on our existential conditions. Her interest in insufficiently transparent systems such as economics and finance leads her to discover the materiality of their language, thus revealing certain lingering formal features. Also in keeping with the economic theme, **Margarita Paksa**, in 1998, created a series of works linked to Language, Power, and Money [*El lenguaje, el poder y el dinero*]. In these works, she turns to resources as diverse as paper money, words, bar codes, and photographs of objects and places, all of them symbols of money and power, themes which have concerned the artist at least since the period in the 1990s of Menem's neoliberal government.

In Argentina, video art and experimental cinema have found in **Narcisa Hirsch** one of their leading exponents. The artist has defined experimental cinema as enigmatic because its language calls for the viewer's open participation in the face of shifted and 'misplaced' framing, going out of focus, and insinuating images they grow unexpected. On view we have a corpus of six videos she made in the '60s and '70s, representative of the prolific nature of output of this pioneering artist in her field.