

Phoenix Art Museum presents rare overview of Argentine artist Horacio Zabala's work



Horacio Zabala, *Hacha (Axe)*, 1972-1998. Iron ax, printed map, wood base. Courtesy of the artist and Henrique Faria, New York and Buenos Aires, and Estudio Giménez-Duhau.

PHOENIX, AZ.- Phoenix Art Museum presents the exhibition *Horacio Zabala: Mapping the Monochrome*, the first expansive overview of this artist's work at a major U.S. museum. Featuring original scholarship by Lampe Curator of Latin American Art, Dr. Vanessa Davidson, the exhibition includes nearly 40 artworks from the 1970s to today. Horacio Zabala was one of the most important conceptual artists to emerge in Buenos Aires during the latter part of the 20th century, and is still a revolutionary today.

"With its strong Latin American art collection, Phoenix Art Museum has become a center for the presentation of art from the southern hemisphere. With this exhibition, we continue to present to our audiences contemporary international art that reflects many of the issues surrounding social justice that ripple throughout our global community," said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director. "We are particularly excited to have the artist with us during the opening of the show."

Although Zabala's works are internationally acclaimed and featured in many of the most important global collections of Latin American art, he has long been under-recognized in the U.S. His last exhibition here was *Horacio Zabala/Eduardo Kac: Spaces of Repression and Liberation* at Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York, in 2014, though he recently had a major retrospective at the Buenos Aires Museo Colección Fortabat. Born in Buenos Aires in 1943, Zabala was educated as an architect, but has been active as an artist since the late 1960s. He has long been fascinated by the ways in which space is defined, be it architectural, cartographic, or the spatial relationships between viewers and artworks. In the 1970s, he graphically modified maps of Latin America to reflect Argentina's socio-political turmoil under repressive dictatorships—oppression also in force in neighboring countries like Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile, covering the continent like a black cloud. In addition to maps obscured by monochromatic rectangles of paint, he stamped the word "CENSORED" across their surfaces, burned gaping holes through the paper, and made drawings of the continent crumbling into the sea.

To escape persecution, Zabala went into self-imposed exile in Europe in 1976. He would not return to Argentina for 22 years. Upon returning to Buenos Aires in 1998, he continued to explore the idea of mapping space, this time adopting a completely new visual language: monochromatic paintings structured in sequences by ready-made mathematical or punctuation marks. Now untethered from geography, his recent monochromes are entitled *Hypotheses*. They invite us to visualize art as linked to other systems of thought, even beyond math, language, and logic. These works, along with examples from his early period, will