

## Hernán Marina: Somos ["We Are"]

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*Cesta con rosas*, 2017. Iron, 60 x 80 cm. Edition of 3

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**Somos ["We Are"]**

The point of departure for Hernán Marina's exhibition was the finding of a set of archival documents, images and texts from the militant experience of Argentina's Homosexual Liberation Front (Frente de Liberación Homosexual, or FLH). The FLH was formed in August of 1971, out of the confluence of the group Nuestro Mundo ("Our World"), made up, since 1967, of workers connected to labor union militancy and a group of intellectuals, writers and university students who were familiar with the experience of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in the U.S., which emerged out of the Stonewall riots in New York City.



*Third World Gay Revolution, 2017. Neon, 90 x 100 cm. Edition of 3*

Once it was formed, the FLH functioned as a coordinator of autonomous cell groups, premised on an anti-vertical, anti-authoritarian structure. The magazine *Somos [We Are]*, whose eight issues the FLH published in clandestine form between December

1973 and January 1976 -shortly before it disbanded after the coup d'état of March 24 of that year -, was the main venue for the Front to make its statements, within a setting of mounting political radicalization, for a revolution of desire united with the transforming of existential conditions and activating of new processes of sexually dissident subjectivization. From the pages of *Somos*, the FLH called for the repeal of police edicts, carried on exchanges with feminists and foreign groups for homosexual liberation, and positioned itself to construct a theory which, at one and the same time, would grapple with the medical and psychiatric pathologization of homosexuality in its articulations of power (to dismantle them) and justify the revolutionary power of homosexual desire within the framework of other struggles then underway.<sup>1</sup>

This is not the first time that Marina is working with documentary or archival materials. In *Buenos Aires by Night* (2001-2002) he used images from the graphic press to refer to the representations of violence mediated through the mechanisms of computer graphics and their inscription in a certain politics of the gaze. In 2007 he created the apocryphal documentary *Le Partenaire*, turning to material from television archives and in 2013, in his installation *Gestos y posturas* [Gestures and Postures], he made neon pieces based on various images and allegorical representations of work and progress, from the first half of the 20th century.



*Somos*, 2017. Neon, 15 x 70 cm. Edition of 3

Marina uses neon in this exhibition too, as a material and medium for a set of sculptures made from the typographical variations of the logo SOMOS, taken from

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<sup>1</sup> The texts and statements published in *Somos* bear, in many cases, the collective signature of the FLH or one of its groups. In other cases they appear unsigned or under a pseudonym, a form of caution in an overwhelmingly homophobic scene. Various testimonies allow us to recognize some of these contributions to the magazine as the work of Zelmar Acevedo, Héctor Anabitarte, Marcelo Manuel Benítez, Alejandro Jockl, Néstor Latrónico, Néstor Perlongher and Eduardo Todesca.

the covers of the FLH magazines. The original publications, among the holdings of the Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas [Documentary and Research Center of the Culture of the Left] (CeDInCI), are presented in a showcase. Two other works make up the exhibition. A sculpture in iron tubing renders in a line drawing a basket of roses that appeared on the cover of the second issue of the magazine *Somos*. The illustration is, in turn, the quotation of an image printed in a sewing accessory, associated with "women's work." Its appropriation and circulation on the cover of *Somos* serves as a gesture of inversion and of camp theatricalization, in 'queer,' displaced use, of an artifact from the predominantly heterosexual culture.



View of the exhibition *Hernán Marina: Somos*

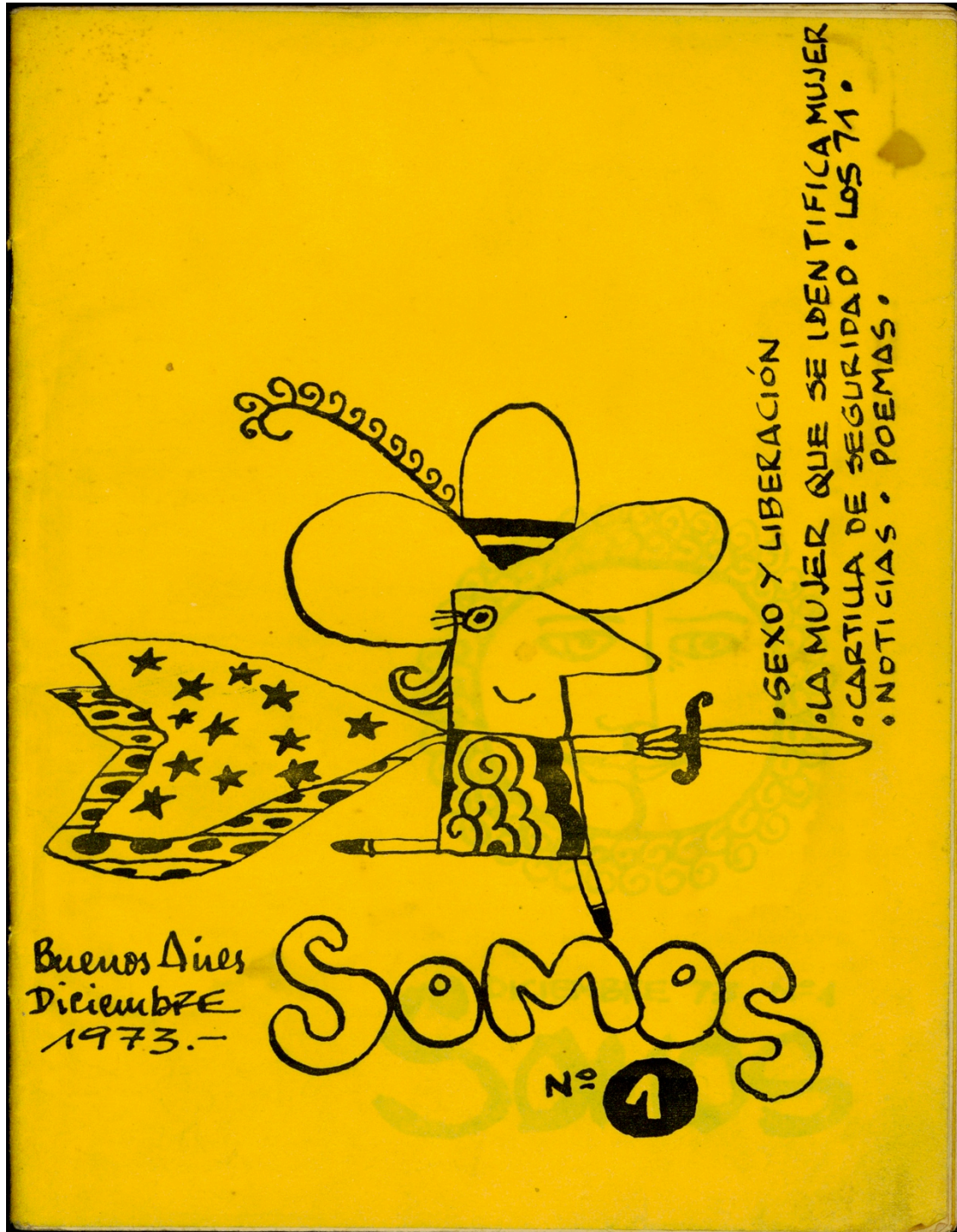
A final work in neon takes up an image printed from Third World Gay Revolution (TWGR), a group with which the FLH had contact, formed in 1970 by black and Latino gays and lesbians who had seceded from the GLF. The image of the two

black militants with rifles mixes reference to the homosexual and antiracist struggles with the revolutionary guerrilla.

How does this set of images operate in Marina's installation? The artist brings in to the present a set of registers of homosexual activism from the first years of the 1970s, through a sequence of transfer operations: from printing by photo duplication to sculpture in neon or iron, from the opaque medium to the lighting device and the glass transparency, from records in black and white to color, from a documentation center to an art gallery, from accessibility of the multiple document to the distance of the auratic work. In its intermediation of this distance, Marina's installation sets in motion the question of how these images address us in the present. His work with the archive does not aim to compose a narrative or to reinstate some fixed meaning for the materials used. For Marina, it is a matter, on the contrary, of freeing up a few images and exposing them to the gaze, in a bid to open them up to new pulsations of desire and politics.

Fernando Davis

Fernando Davis is a professor and researcher at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata and the Universidad Nacional de las Artes in Buenos Aires, and a freelance curator. He is a member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur [Southern Conceptualisms Network].



Cover of *Somos* magazine N° 1, Buenos Aires, December 1973. Mimeography on paper, 22 x 17 cm. Image: CeDinCi Archive

**Hernán Marina** (Buenos Aires, 1967) is a visual artist and sociologist. He works in many different formats, such as performance, intervention and sculpture. He took part in *BP.17*, this year's *Performance Biennial* (Buenos Aires, 2017), *Naturaleza: recurso y refugio del hombre* [Nature: Resource and Refuge of Mankind] (CCK, Buenos Aires, 2017), *Evento agua* [Water Event] (in the framework of *Yoko Ono. Dream Come True*, MALBA, 2016), *Marina / Rosales / Stoppani* (Prisma Kunsthalle, Buenos Aires, 2015), *Perceptus Mutantis* (Museo da Imagen e Som, São Paulo, 2011), *Remap 02* (Athens, 2009), *Cine y Casi Cine* [Cinema and Almost Cinema] (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2007), among other exhibitions. Among his solo presentations and shows were: *Hermes* (Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires, 2014), *Gestos, diagramas y posturas* (Museo Castagnino, Rosario, 2014), *Gestures and Postures* (Ivo Kamm Zürich y Mirta Demare, Rotterdam, 2013), *Helenismo* (Mirta Demare, Rotterdam, 2009), *Silencio* (Galería Nueveochenta, Bogotá, 2007), *Le Partenaire* (Teorética, San José de Costa Rica, 2007), *Coloso* (MALBA, 2004-2005), *Men's Health* (MAMBA, 2003). He received the First Acquisition Prize in Argentina's *104th National Visual Arts Salon* (in the sector Installations and Alternative Media, 2015), the MAMBA Fundación Telefónica Prize (2009), the Creative Fellowship of the National Arts Fund (2007), the Konex Prize, Diploma for Merit (2002), the Leonardo Prize (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2002), among other distinctions. His work is found in the collections of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, MALBA (Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires), Fundación Telefónica de Argentina, Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo de Costa Rica, Fundación Ars Teorética (San José de Costa Rica), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León [Spain], Museo Castagnino+macro (Rosario) and Museo de Bellas Artes Dr. Juan R. Vidal (Corrientes).