

Slow motion scream

Early video art from the Southern Cone

An exhibition of video art works from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay between 1981 and 2001

Curator: Angela López Ruiz

Artists: [Fernando Álvarez Cozzi](#), [Sybil Brintrup](#) & [Magali Meneses](#), [Gloria Camiruaga](#), [Juan Downey](#), [Rubén Guzmán](#), [Narcisa Hirsch](#), [Los Estómagos](#), [Clemente Padín](#), [Javier Sobrino](#) & [Guillermo Faivovich](#), [Carlos Trilnick](#)



PERFORMANCE FOR 2 ACTORS, VIDEO AND MECHANICAL TOY [PERFORMANCE PARA DOS ACTORES, VIDEO Y JUGUETE MECÁNICO] (1983-1984)

Fernando Álvarez Cozzi and Grupo Teatro-Danza de Montevideo (Uruguay)

Fernando Álvarez Cozzi is one of the pioneers of video-performance in Latin America. He had already worked in that field using small format film (16mm and 8mm) prior to the arrival of video technology. This work is collectively done together with two dancers in the space of a small garage. The chosen location greatly limits the performers' possibilities to expand and evolve their movements, thus representing the atmosphere of enclosure and isolation in which the people of the country were living during those years. The ominous text read while a toy tank moves around and over the naked bodies is composed by fragments of a "Manual of Moral and Civic Education", a fascist textbook that every Uruguayan high school student was supposed to know by heart.



POPSICLES (1983-1984)

Gloria Camiruaga (Chile)

The artist produces this work between U.S. and Chile, and states that information down at the end of the video. In doing so, she is surreptitiously showing the connections between the U.S. intelligence services and the Chilean military dictatorship, as well as the submissiveness and complicity of the Chilean Catholic church in that context.



THE FOOD I and II [LA COMIDA I y II] (1983)

Sybil Brintrup and Magali Meneses (Chile)

The political crisis and the life conditions imposed by military dictatorship in Chile are addressed in this work through the ritual of preparing and eating food. Misery, scarcity, torture, blood are shown, and an ominous silence coming from behind the sounds of cracking and cutting and the ill-fated soundtrack of Mahler's *3rd Symphony*.

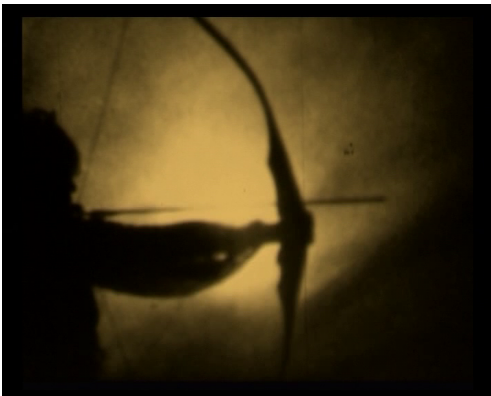


FOR LIFE AND FOR PEACE [POR LA VIDA Y POR LA PAZ] (1987-1988)

Clemente Padín (Uruguay)

The dictatorship in Uruguay finished in 1985 with democratic elections and a series of alliances between different political parties and the army itself. The pressures for carrying out a referendum in order to repeal the law preventing the military from being judged for crimes committed during the regime began in 1987.

In this performance, Clemente Padín aims to give visibility to the issue of the *desaparecidos*, a large group of intellectuals, artists, members of the resistance and the opposition who were illegally detained and disappeared. Padín (who was himself imprisoned by the military) counts the number of people (at that time not yet known with precision) considered to be missing while hammering a body (plaster sculpture or piece of meat) while another performer notes the number down on a flip chart. Through this action, Padín tries to raise an awareness on the fact that the issue of human rights is something that concerns everybody, and that is why pieces of numbered paper are distributed between the assistants. The action takes place in a street of Montevideo's center (1987) and at the "Arte en la lona" festival (1988).



AMA-ZONA (1979-2001)

Narcisa Hirsch (Argentina)

Ama-Zona is one of the most emblematic films of experimental Argentine cinema. It is part of this genealogy because its aesthetics and narrative strategies are very close to video art in its pioneering years: out of focus, slow motion, extreme close-up shot, and more. The displayed version was digitized from the original.



TO SCREAM [GRITAR] (1985)

Los Estómagos (Uruguay)

Close to the end of the Uruguayan dictatorship, the punk movement from both sides of the Rio de la Plata started to come together thanks to the *discotecas* [discotheques], both performance and meeting places. Even if state censorship was still active, the punk community managed to work in collective performances in which video was another piece of the puzzle. It is likely that these encounters have contaminated the videoclip

with the aesthetics of video art, especially through radical high contrast usage and shutter-adjusted saturation. I consider this video a genuine work of Latin American video art that transcended the limits of the art field to express what we all wanted back then: TO SCREAM!



FIVE SECONDS (1982)

Carlos Trilnick (Argentina)

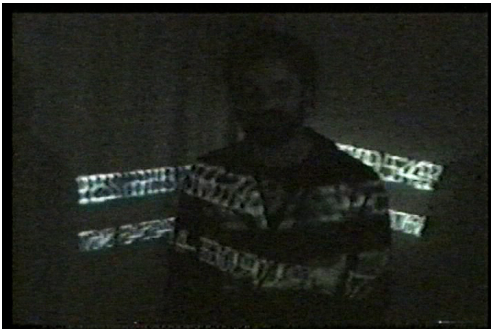
This is one of the pioneering works of Argentine video art relying on the use of electromagnetic medium to unfold its poetic discourse. It was done with the participation of Fabián Hofman (Mexico) and Phillip Schultz (U.S.A.)



AVAILABLE LIGHT (1990)

Rubén Guzmán (Argentina)

Rubén Guzmán defines himself as a “peripheral documentalist”, considering this definition a protocol to liberate himself from the image as document of the real. The title of the work refers to a term used in professional cinema when talking about light calibration: , *Available light* means the natural light, when it is enough to “bathe” the scene without modifying its subject.



QB (2001)

Javier Sobrino and Guillermo Faivovich (Argentina)

URDE - a thesis on tongues. This is how it is called the research project developed by Javier Sobrino between 1992 and 2001. It includes a series of videos and performances in which he addresses the topic of interlanguage. **Qb** is one of the last works of this series and was made together with Guillermo Faivovich, who produces the projection of the visual poem overlaying the space of the action.



THE LOOKING GLASS (Fragment, 1981)

Juan Downey (Chile)

This fragment of *The looking glass* can be considered the vertex of this genealogy of video art works. It embodies the conceptual node of the electromagnetic medium with all its specific qualities; expansion, reflection, reverberation, capture, flux. For Electronic Arte Remix, *“The Looking Glass is a multilayered essay whose visual complexity parallels its subject: the meaning of reflections, illusions and mirrors in Western art, culture*

and life”. The study of these issues was also present in Downey’s early works like *Invisible Energy Dictates Dance Concerts*, an investigation on energy fluxes traversing magnetic devices and a body (the dancer Graciela Figueroa). This is maybe why it is said about Doney that he was a video artist before he made video art: the discursive power of the language was present in his work even without recorded images.