



"la Caixa" Foundation presents the first of three exhibitions in a cycle that proposes a look at contemporary art from the perspective of thought, desire and action

What To Think | What To Desire | What To Do Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection

Is art necessary for living? "la Caixa" Foundation sets out to offer multiple responses to this question with the exhibition cycle entitled *What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do. Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection*. Comprising three consecutive displays at CaixaForum Barcelona, the cycle explores the role art may play in a contemporary economic, social and moral system immersed in a deep crisis. The aim of the exhibitions is to invite the public to reflect upon the reality surrounding them on the basis of works by socially engaged creators, most of which belong to the Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection. The shows will include fundamental pieces of the Collection alongside recent acquisitions, works never before seen in Barcelona or which have been expressly produced for this project, as well as a few that have been loaned with a view to helping complete the discourse proposed by Rosa Martínez. This cycle represents the return to Barcelona and the re-encounter with "la Caixa" Foundation of one of the most significant independent art critics and curators on the international scene today. In *What To Think* the curator invites spectators to become active interpreters of their time and asks to what extent art is an instrument of awareness that expands knowledge and fleeting pleasure from the most complex strata of thought to the simplest things that occur in everyday life. The artists present in this first exhibition in the cycle are Rogelio López Cuenca, Adrian Paci, Carlos Amorales, Cao Guimarães, Mirosław Bałka, Shirin Neshat, Joseph Beuys, Cristina García Rodero, Ángela de la Cruz and Eija-Liisa Ahtila.

What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do. Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection. Dates: *What To Think*: from 9 November 2012 to 20 January 2013. *What To Desire*: from 8 February to 28 April 2013. *What To Do*: from 15 May to 8 September 2013. **Organisation and production:** "la Caixa" Foundation. **Curator:** Rosa Martínez. **Place:** CaixaForum Barcelona (Av. de Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, 6-8).

Barcelona, 8 November 2012. The Assistant Managing Director of the "la Caixa" Foundation, Elisa Durán and the art critic and curator Rosa Martínez will, this afternoon, inaugurate the exhibition *What To Think*. This display is the first of three that make up the cycle entitled *What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do*. *Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection*.

Organised and produced by "la Caixa" Foundation, the exhibition pursues one of the institution's long-standing goals, that of helping to increase the capacity to generate knowledge and awareness of the most recent art while fostering greater understanding of contemporary creativity and breaking down the barriers that often prevent such art from reaching the wider public.

To this end, the Foundation's cultural programme focuses particularly on the most recent artistic manifestations, both in the exhibitions it organises as well as in the acquisition policy followed with regard to the Contemporary Art Collection. The Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection is formed, at present, by more than 900 works by some of the most important artists of the last 30 years. Today, this collection is unquestionably a reference in the art world, as is demonstrated by the fact that its works are regularly requested on loan for exhibitions all over the world. Moreover, the Foundation organises frequent exhibitions at its CaixaForum centres, as well as travelling shows that tour Spain, Europe and the rest of the world.

In recent years and with a view to further intensifying its cultural activities, "la Caixa" Foundation has also established strategic alliances with major museums around the world, such as the Louvre and the Prado. This line of action also includes the agreement between "la Caixa" and the MACBA (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona) Foundation to jointly manage their respective contemporary art collections, establish a coordinated acquisition policy and co-produce exhibitions based on these collections. The fruit of this agreement may currently be seen at CaixaForum Palma in the form of the exhibition *Crossed Gazes: abstraction and realism*.

With the cycle *What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do*. *Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection*, the institution reaffirms its commitment to providing a permanent space open to new interpretations on its contemporary art collection in CaixaForum Barcelona.

Room 2 at "la Caixa" Foundation's cultural and social centre in Barcelona has recently held an exhibition cycle devoted to a monographic presentation of some of the most outstanding artists working with installations and video installations today (with shows featuring Pierre Huyghe, Omer Fast and Bestué&Vives). It will

now and for most of the coming year host this hugely ambitious project focusing on contemporary art: an exhibition, divided into three consecutive parts which will seek answers to a crucial question, “Is art necessary to live?”.

What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do proposes an immersion into the depths of the feeling the works provoke in us, and through this project “la Caixa” Foundation explores the social aspects of contemporary art, a line it opened with the exhibition entitled *Risk Zones*, which was also staged in three successive phases between 2008 and 2009.

The *What To Think, What To Desire, What To Do* project also means the return of Rosa Martínez to Barcelona following over two decades of international activity, and her re-encounter with “la Caixa” Foundation, the organisation in which her professional career began in 1978. Among her most notable projects with the Foundation were the two seasons she spent as curator of the Sala Montcada (Barcelona, 1991-92 and 1997).

Rosa Martínez (Sòria, 1955) is among the most significant independent art critics and curators on the international scene today. During her professional career she has organised numerous solo and collective shows in museums, art centres, historic buildings and urban spaces. But her most noteworthy activity has been in the field of international biennials, where she has been co-curator of Manifesta 1 (Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 1996), artistic director of the 5th International Istanbul Biennial (Turkey, 1997) and curator of the Spanish Pavilion at the 50th Venice Biennial, with the 51st Venice Biennial which she directed alongside Maria Corral in 2005 standing out as one of her major achievements.

A cycle to respond to a question: “Is art necessary for living?”

Today’s world is living a time of change at all levels and it often proves difficult to navigate the vast amount of news and discourses presented to us. In this context, art and culture in general can help us find answers.

That is what these three exhibitions set out to do, to invite the public to reflect upon the reality that surrounds us, in the midst of a profound economic, social and moral crisis, on the basis of works by the most socially engaged, incisive creators of our day, creators who cannot conceive artistic creation as something distanced from collective needs. The answers they give are neither indisputable nor exhaustive; rather they explore the paths art can open to finally understand what’s happening (*What To Think*); to define new goals (*What To Desire*); and to act in the face of inequalities and abuse (*What To Do*).

Rosa Martínez has planned the exhibitions from a two-fold, theoretical and plastic perspective, so that it both makes spectators think and invites them to take sides. The shows may be read on an individual basis, diachronically and correlatively, just as they are presented to the public from November 2012 to September 2013. They can also be interpreted synchronically by bringing together the three catalogues that will be published by the "la Caixa" Foundation.

The titles of the three exhibitions, three concise questions, are the conceptual entrance door to the shows and reflect bewilderment with contemporary chaos while at the same time referring to the perplexity brought about by flagrant social inequalities, the harassment of media fantasies or the new maladies of the soul. The cycle takes the artists' freedom to toggle between disciplines for granted and considers hierarchies among video, photography, painting, performance and installations dissolved, thus focussing on the existential and political significance of the works.

The reproduction of a historical artwork in the anteroom to each exhibition establishes a conceptual link between past and present. Then, once inside the show itself, most of the works on display are taken from the Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection (Anish Kapoor, Dora García, Miquel Barceló, Juan Muñoz and Doris Salcedo, among others); there are also a number of recent acquisitions hitherto unseen in Barcelona (Javier Téllez, Cao Guimarães) and new productions (Rogelio López Cuenca). Each of the three displays will also feature works on loan (Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Mirosław Bałka, Rivane Neuenschwander, and Janine Antoni) which will help complete the associations the curator proposes.

What To Think: art as an instrument of awareness

The exhibition *What To Think* will revolve around three fundamental issues: contemporary *hubris*, the "misfortune" of history, and the consolation and awareness that art can contribute.

On the one hand, we recognise the excessive arrogance, willpower and pride that may be found in certain people, companies, nations and empires. On the other, recalling individual confrontations and wars or collective massacres we ask ourselves what kind of thinking justifies oppression, and for the sake of which truth are the vexations and cruelties that abound in universal history committed.

To wonder whether disasters have a moral significance or are due to nothing more than the fickleness of fate and greed is relevant when we revisit history and see

how crimes, deportations, assaults and injustices, on occasions committed in the name of “progress”, continue to occur and how humans seem to have learned nothing from the past.

We are living in times of upheaval, of a need for new hermeneutics which help us understand the sense of our being in this world. It is now more urgent than ever to conduct an analysis of how knowledge is constructed as an instrument of dominion and as a means of emancipation, of how the psychic and political economy that sustains power is structured, and of the institutions and the media which control that knowledge.

Art, which is representation, constitutes an exercise in knowledge and power. Artworks expose the world, they analyse it and reveal it. And the exhibition that temporarily brings them together is a privileged place for a symbolic exchange between work and spectator, an appropriate space for critical discourses and new political dialogues to be generated, in addition to aesthetic pleasure.

A reproduction of the piece *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1562) by **Pieter Bruegel the Elder** introduces visitors to the exhibition entitled *What To Think*. It acts as an element of connection between the past and the present and becomes a point of reference, not only for the works of some of today’s artists which can be seen in the display, but also for the background of arrogance that exists behind the disproportionate ambitions of contemporary capitalism.

	<p>ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA (Nerja, Spain, 1959) <i>Landscape with the Fall of Icarus</i> 1996-2012 3 service signs and 3 metal plaques with text inscription Production: "la Caixa" Foundation</p>
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For Rogelio López Cuenca, the analysis and ironic subversion of signs, notices and messages is a critical strategy, an emancipating proposal and entertaining poetic game. This work appropriates the title of Bruegel’s painting and transfers it to the language of traffic signs. The three plaques installed on the CaixaForum terrace transform the open space into a mythical setting, inviting spectators to follow the flight of today’s Icaruses and to have their photo taken in such a significant spot.



ADRIAN PACI

Shkoder, Albania, 1969

Centro di Permanenza Temporanea

2007

Video projection

5' 30". Colour, sound

Adrian Paci uses video, sculpture, painting and installations to reflect the dramatic situation of the Balkans region and to give shape to the feeling of loss associated with exile and emigration. This work, whose title is taken from the name given to the camps set up for illegal immigrants in Italy, is a powerful metaphor for displacement, the transitory state and the absence of destiny when journey is synonymous with survival and escape from misery, but with no guarantee of access to welfare.



CARLOS AMORALES

Mexico City, Mexico, 1970

Useless Wonder

2006

Two-channel video projection over floating screen

8' 36" Colour, sound

7' 51" Black and white, silent

From his multidisciplinary studio Carlos Amorales creates digital animated films that reflect crepuscular fantasies. The silhouettes he uses are classified in a huge database and form a copious vocabulary of hybrid signs which multiply and fragment. In *Useless Wonder*, the two sides of a screen show the fragmentation and recomposition of a world map, and haunting landscapes with phantasmagorical characters which give shape to recurring fears and the worrying decomposition of the contemporary world.



CAO GUIMARÃES

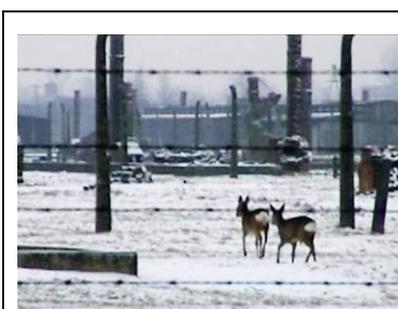
Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1965

***Gambiarra* 59, 17, 28, 103, 29, 105, 03 and 106**

2002-2007

Colour photography

In Portuguese, the word *gambiarra* means ‘make-do’ or the non-conventional arrangements that solve small, everyday needs. Cao Guimarães sees living entities in these precarious solutions, samples of spontaneous sculpture that structure the need and intelligence to confer on objects a use different from that which was originally intended for them. These popular *ready-mades* update the inaugural gesture of 1917 when Marcel Duchamp turned a urinal upside down and called it *Fountain*, and demonstrate the unfolding of creativity in everyday life.



MIROŚLAW BAŁKA

Warsaw, Poland, 1954

Winter Journey (Bambi, Bambi, The Pond)

2003

Video projection. Triptych.

Courtesy of the Gladstone Gallery, New York and
Brussels

Bałka’s production is based on his own memory, his Catholic upbringing and the tragic history of his country. The images in *Winter Journey* (Wintereisse) originate in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. In the work, Bałka associates the innocence of the young deer with memories of horror and connects two contemporary events: Disney’s *Bambi* premiered in 1942, and the Wannsee conference in which senior officials of the Nazi Party established the “Final Solution of the Jewish question” was held that same year. The central screen shows the pond into which ashes from the cremations were thrown.



SHIRIN NESHAT

Qazvin, Iran, 1957

Turbulent

1998

Two-screen video projection

LaserDisc transferred to DVD

10' Black and white, sound

Shirin Neshat explores how patriarchal ideology determines the living experience of the female body; his work questions the rules that segregate men and women in Islamic societies. Through an interplay of oppositions, *Turbulent* depicts a musical duel in which the correspondence with man/woman, word/scream, rational/emotive contrasts may be found in the opposites formed by black/white and full/empty, as well as in the linear/circular movement of the camera. In this way he analyses the differences between genders and the ways of representing parallel times and simultaneous spaces.



JOSEPH BEUYS

Krefeld, Germany, 1921 – Düsseldorf, Germany, 1986

Hinter dem Knochen wird gezählt – Schmerzraum (Behind the Bone is Counted – Pain Space)

1983

Sheet lead, iron, silver rings and light bulb

Joseph Beuys was an artist and social activist for whom the modification of awareness was, in itself, a sculptural project. In the installation entitled *Pain Space* (Schmerzraum) he used lead sheets to create a hermetic room, and hung two silver rings the size of human skulls from the ceiling, together with a light bulb. The rings allude to the flow of life in the isolation of the earthly lead camp, tenuously illuminated by the light of reason. The artist was speaking of the “pain of knowledge” as something inseparable from the conquest of freedom.



CRISTINA GARCÍA RODERO

Puertollano, Spain, 1949

El niño del ataúd. Ribarteme
(*The Coffin Kid. Ribarteme*)

1982

El dedo de san Juan. Belinchón

(*The Finger of St Jean. Belinchón*)

1982

Gelatin silver print

Between 1975 and 1988, García Rodero produced a body of work she called *Hidden Spain*, which documents the traditions and ancestral rituals that continued well into the 20th century. *The Coffin Kid* was taken in the Saint Marta de Ribarteme pilgrimage, in Galicia, during which penitents place themselves in coffins to ask or express gratitude for a miracle cure. In *The Finger of St. Jean*, the child traces a diagonal movement with the saint's arm and thus establishes a parallelism with the connection between the human and the divine represented in the Sixteen Chapel.



ÁNGELA DE LA CRUZ

La Coruña, Spain, 1965

Clutter VII (Yellow) [Abarrotat VII (Groc)]

2004

Oil and acrylic on canvas

Ángela de la Cruz deconstructs the orthodoxies of minimalist tradition and transforms her paintings into “person-objects”, taking her own body, experiences and feelings as references. *Clutter VII (Yellow)* belongs to the series in which the artist recycles rejected fragments of her own paintings and places them in boxes or attaches them to pieces of metal. The work becomes a metaphor for vulnerability and the possibility of repair, and the anthropomorphic projection extends from the personal to the collective.



EIJA-LIISA AHTILA

Hameenlinna, Finland, 1959

Vaakasuora (Horizontal)

2011

Six-channel projected installation based on
synchronised high-definition images

Dolby Digital 5.1, no dialogue. 6'

© 2011, Crystal Eye, Helsinki. Courtesy of the
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris

Eija-Liisa Ahtila's installations conjugate the renewal of filmic language with the exploration of relationships between people and their surroundings. In *Vaakasuora*, six screens reproduce the image of a spruce tree; at its base, a young girl acts as a reference of scale. The work presents a serene nature, distanced from visions of romanticism. In addition to highlighting the limitations of visual representation, the piece refers to the need to change perspective, to "horizontalise" thinking and to align ourselves with the rest of living beings.

ACTIVITIES PARALLEL TO THE EXHIBITION

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Thursday 8 November, at 7 pm

What To Think

Given by the exhibition curator, **Rosa Martínez**

GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION

Guided tours for the general public

Wednesdays, at 7 pm

Saturdays, at 8 pm

Reservations for guided tours: tel. 934 768 630.

Places limited.

Guided tours for groups

Groups of minimum 10 people, maximum 30.

Advance registration required on tel. 934 768 630.

A charge is made for this activity.

Groups with their own guide must also reserve day and time.

Guided tours for groups of people with visual impairment

Groups of minimum 10 people.

Advance registration required on tel. 934 768 630.

Tours with sign language (SL) and visits adapted for oral communication

Groups of minimum 10 people.

Advance registration required by fax on 934 768 635 or by email to

seducatiu.caixaforum@fundaciolacaixa.es.

TOURS FOR SCHOOL GROUPS

Tours adapted to the different academic levels.

Advance registration required on tel. 93 476 86 30.

Times by arrangement.

What To Think | What To Desire | What To Do

Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection

From 9 November 2012 to 8 September 2013

Times:

Monday-Friday, from 10 am to 8 pm

Saturdays, Sundays and holidays,
from 10 am to 9 pm

Last Friday of the month, from 10
am to 11 pm

Christmas: closed on 25 December,
1 and 6 January

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Monday-Sunday, from 9 am to 8 pm

www.lacaixa.es/obrasocial

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<http://www.lacaixa.es/obrasocial>

Multimedia Press Room

<http://press.lacaixa.es/socialprojects/>