



"la Caixa" Foundation presents the second 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 form part of the organisation's contemporary art collection. The shows will include fundamental pieces from this 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 desire*, the curator takes Duchamp's masterpiece *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (reproduced at full-scale in the exhibition) as her reference point to talk about desire as a space for the projection of fantasies and a driving force for the will. The artists included in this second exhibition in the cycle are Miquel Barceló, Helena Cabello and Ana Carceller, Pepe Espaliú, Dora García, Liu Jianhua, Anish Kapoor, Sherrie Levine and Rivane Neuenschwander.

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***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).

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**Barcelona, 7 February 2013.** The Secretary General of "la Caixa" Foundation, Lluís Reverter, and the art critic and curator Rosa Martínez will, this afternoon, inaugurate the exhibition *What to desire*. This display is the second 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.

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.

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 (Soria, 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 desire: how do we construct desire? How does desire construct our identity?***

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Contrary to what we are usually led to believe, desire is neither an instinct nor a subjective urge, but something learned culturally, a social construction that is regulated through such institutions as the family, school, the State and the media. In androcentric societies, the structures governing the sexual divide, which regulate the distribution of power and knowledge, channel the organisation of desire and establish the guidelines for how to be – how to be a man, how to be a woman – and what to desire.

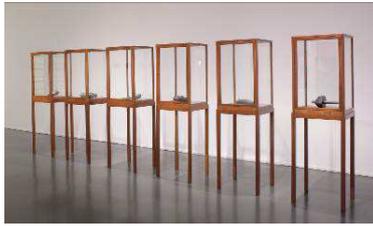
In these present times, global capitalism is what really regulates the economy of pleasure. The market generates and sells desire, it induces the thirst for new things, it promises unknown, supposedly infinite pleasures. Besides creating false desires, commercial manipulation of instinct does not lead to freedom, but increases repression and subjection to the existing order, because it induces a permanent state of dependency and dissatisfaction in the individual.

*What to desire* features eight works, seven of them from the Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection. The eighth is Rivane Neuenschwander's installation, from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary in Vienna, and updated especially for exhibition at CaixaForum Barcelona.

The works presented condense all these ramifications of the concept of *desire* and the different iconological references to a historic moment in which questioning of phallic power, reflections on identities and gender, the phenomenology and the logic of feeling and the poetics that emerge from shared writing explore new ways of acceding to desire.

The works selected for *What to desire*, created over the last thirty years, find a historic reference of the first magnitude in Duchamp's *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*), represented by a full-scale reproduction in the antechamber to the exhibition space. *The Bride Stripped Bare...* revolves around one of the most complex ideographic cartographies on how desire works.

By building bridges between the past and the present and between the physical experience of the works and interpretation, the exhibition shows how the contemporary consciousness of desire is constructed as "active affect". The works act as objects that desire and appeal to the viewer, converting them into the agent, not only of their feeling, but also of their configuration. In this way, they become motors of transfer that bridge the spaces separating them, enabling the creation of new territories for interplay in which form can be given to fantasies and the rhetorics of ecstasy formulated. Through relational writing and the shared gaze, perceptions, concepts and affections are shaped, opening new doors to desire.



**SHERRIE LEVINE**

Hazleton, Pennsylvania, United States, 1947

***The Bachelors (After Marcel Duchamp)***

1990

Iron, glass and wood. 6 iron objects of different sizes.  
6 glass cases, each measuring 175.4 x 51 x 51 cm

*The Bachelors (after Marcel Duchamp)* is a work formed by three-dimensional recreations of the flat figures of the uniformed bachelors in *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, presented individually, in glass cases. Levine turns the bachelors into biomorphic sculptures of a clearly phallic nature. By appropriating these figures and accentuating their sexual character, she usurps the position of the male artist, freeing the selected objects from their original historic location and giving them a new position in the field of art. Levine's art springs from her feminist vision and post-structuralist theories according to which sexual difference is constructed in the act of "reading" the work. The artist herself notes that, due to her condition as a woman, these works, originally made by men become works by women and are conceived as "self-portraits of herself", because they enable her to continue expressing her desire, her homage and her critical irreverence towards modern works and discourses.



**HELENA CABELLO / ANA CARCELLER**

Paris, France, 1963 / Madrid, Spain, 1964

***Sin título (Untitled)***

1998

5 min 11 s, DVD, b/w, without sound. Variable sizes.

For over twenty years, Helena Cabello and Ana Carceller have formed a team devoted to art and social reflection that questions hegemonic forms of representation. They deconstruct architecture and film as contexts in which patterns of behaviour and models of beauty are defined, analysing definitions that shape gender and identity and exploring ways in which masculinity is experienced outside the male body. In *Sin título (Untitled)*, made in early-1998, a fixed frame shows two pairs of hands digging two square holes in the earth. The work is a metaphor of life together, of the dynamics of cooperation and contamination, as

well as of the paradoxes that exist in human relations. We see that identities are constructed through contact and the interferences of desire, uncertainties decisions.



**PEPE ESPALIÚ**

Cordoba, Spain, 1955-1993

***Luisa II***

1993

Iron and paint. 240 x 96 x 34 cm

Trained in fine art and a student of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Pepe Espaliú used a visual vocabulary in his work to explore the definition of the subject and the splitting of the ego. The pain and sense of exclusion that he felt when diagnosed with Aids awoke in him the urge to fight against the social marginalisation imposed by the illness, and turned him into an activist. His aesthetic terminology was condensed in such works as the performance *El nido (The Nest)* and the sculpture *Luisa II*, both produced in 1993. The latter is named after one of the artist's friends, a great activist against Aids and also a victim of the illness. It forms part of a series of iron cages conceived as metaphors for the ostracism imposed on the sick due to the social stigmatisation linked to Aids. *Luisa II* comprises two cages hanging from the wall, their bars stretching towards the ground, forming a rope of interwoven filaments that join them physically and symbolically as containers of solitude, machines from which desire is finally absent.



**DORA GARCÍA**

Valladolid, Spain, 1965

***Bolsa dorada (Gold Bag)***

1995

Polyethylene and gold pigment. 215 x 130 x 30 cm

Dora García first started as a sculptor, broadening her field of activity to embrace performance, video, electronic media and projects involving the social media. The multi-faceted nature of García's production, rooted in her clear conceptual impulse, translates into works in which narrative and communication – or its absence – are crucial themes. Her discourse, which blends disenchantment and provocation, reveals a clear fascination for anti-form, and García has used elements from the body, such as heartbeats, breath, respiration and sweat in her

work, as well as such materials as gold. Gold suggests purification and spiritual elevation, but its dust is highly toxic. *Bolsa dorada (Gold Bag, 1995)*, the first work in which she used gold, comprises an opaque, rigid canvas, completely covered in the material, and which hangs at one end of the exhibition space. The work invites spectators to project their concerns or desires, asking themselves about the emptiness or the hidden content that may be found behind the gold surface.



**MIQUEL BARCELÓ**

Felanitx, Spain, 1957

***L'Amour fou (Crazy Love)***

1984

Mixed technique on canvas. 285 x 403 cm

Miquel Barceló (Felanitx, Spain, 1957) has created a fascinating and ambitious body of work that connects the atavistic and the visceral, what is established and what is marginal, the everyday and the transcendent. *Crazy Love* is an outstanding work, condensing classical genres from traditional painting – the interior scene, the landscape, the self-portrait or the still life – with crucial themes in Barceló's aesthetic and existential cosmogony: exacerbated vitalism, the orgiastic nature of food, literature, sex... The title refers to “amour fou”, that instinctive, random, blind, intense force about which André Breton, the father of surrealism, theorised. The material density of his brushstrokes and the rhythm of his lines convey the hedonistic, attractive energy associated with the *pathos* of the forces of the unconscious.



**LIU JIANHUA**

Ji'an, China, 1962

***Shadows in the Water***

2002-2003

Porcelain. 50 x 1,200 x 10 cm

The dizzying economic development that is turning China into a world power has affected both the country's structures and the way in which its progress is project to the world. This growth has been translated architecturally into an uncontrolled competitiveness that has seen countless skyscrapers in a thousand and one shapes erected in its cities as symbols of power. It is in this context that we should see the work of such artists Liu Jianhua, who use pop aesthetics critically in order

to explore the changes their country is undergoing. *Shadows in the Water*, a mural sculpture made from white porcelain, represents the most iconic skyscrapers in such cities as Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen and Canton in a linear continuum. By contrasting the upper and lower parts, Liu Jianhua alludes to the illusionism born of the cultural and economic contamination that leads China to imitate and attempt to better western models.



**ANISH KAPOOR**

Bombay, India, 1954

***When I Am Pregnant***

1992

Mixed technique. 31.7 × Ø 127 cm

Anish Kapoor is driven, basically, to create works that give the viewer a glimpse of poetic existence. To note that his art is based on an organic mysticism, that the sensuality of her works combines eschatology and spirituality, is to recognise the point to which Kapoor has been able to articulate physical experience and metaphysical subtlety. He often takes the sexualised body as his reference, in pieces rich in concave and convex forms that suggest irises, vulvas, mountains, cracks... In this way, the artist manifests the conjunctions and disjunctions between form and emptiness, between the density of material and the possibility of its disappearance. *When I am Pregnant* is a work in a state of conversion, a form that is present and not present. The phenomenological experience of walking towards *When I am Pregnant* takes the shape of cinematic shots, directing the attention towards the nature of the surface, towards the tension that this surface personifies. The object enfolds the spectator in its field of intensity, at once kinetic and mimetic, suggesting ideas about origin, the blank page and the creative potential of their own dynamic experience of space.



**RIVANE NEUENSCHWANDER**

Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1967

***Eu desejo o seu desejo (I Wish Your Wish)***

2003-2013

Coloured ribbons on which people's wishes are printed

Variable sizes, 10,000 ribbons

© Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria

Rivane Neuenschwander's work falls into a heterodox category known as *organic minimalism*, because she uses the ideas of repetition and specificity that characterise the minimalist aesthetic, but associates them with natural elements and processes in which chance and impermanence intervene. This process of chance and shared authorship is present in the installation *Eu desejo o seu desejo (I Desire Your Desire)*. The artist asked people to write wishes and then, having made a selection, printed them on coloured ribbons like those sold as souvenirs or amulets at the Church of Nosso Senhor de Bonfim in Salvador de Bahia. The ribbons with their anonymous wishes are used to form an enormous mural in a state of permanent transformation, as wishes are replaced when spectators choose one to take away with them, the wish with which they feel most identified. In this way, alien desire becomes one's own desire in an interplay that evokes the transfer and universalisation of hopes and expectations. By occupying the terrain of human relations, Rivane Neuenschwander's creation takes on a clearly political dimension. Whilst the predominant symbolic order champions an autonomous art and defends identities as something essentialist and stable, Rivane activates a practice of shared writing that awakens and expands the potential of what exists, as it generates new forms of constructing desire.

In order to present this work in *What to desire*, Rivane Neuenschwander personally assisted with updating the installation. "la Caixa" Foundation asked the participants in a video art workshops at CaixaForum Barcelona and CaixaForum Lleida, organised as part of its Art for Social Improvement programme, to anonymously formulate new wishes. Pupils at the following schools also contributed by sending in their wishes:

- CEIP El Polvorí (Barcelona)
- CEIP Perú (Barcelona)
- CEIP Sant Josep – El Pi (L'Hospitalet de Llobregat)
- Col·legi Salesià de Sant Josep (Barcelona)
- Escola Arrels (Barcelona)

- Escola Infant Jesús (Barcelona)
- Escola Joan Pelegrí (Barcelona)
- Escola Nuestra Señora del Rosario (Barcelona)
- Escola Sant Medir (Barcelona)
- Escola Vedruna-Àngels (Barcelona)
- IES Bisbe Berenguer (L'Hospitalet de Llobregat)
- IES Ernest Lluch (Barcelona)
- IES Joan Fuster (Barcelona), IES XXV Olimpíada (Barcelona)

# What to think | **What to desire** | What to do Fundació "la Caixa" Contemporary Art Collection

**From 9 November 2012 to 8 September 2013**

What to desire: from 8 February to 28 April 2013

Què fer: from 15 May to 8 September 2013

## **INAUGURAL LECTURE**

### **What to desire**

Thursday, February 7, at 7 pm

By the exhibition curator, Rosa Martínez

#### **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

#### **CaixaForum Barcelona**

Av. de Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, 6-8  
08038 Barcelona

#### **Information Service**

"la Caixa" Foundation

Tel. 902 223 040

Monday-Sunday, from 9 am to 8 pm  
[www.lacaixa.es/obrasocial](http://www.lacaixa.es/obrasocial)

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

#### **Multimedia Press Room**

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