SANTAMÒNICA

# Cristina Lucas

All about color

22.09-08.11.2015

Cycle:

Shots in the Middle of the Concert From correct distance to proximity







«Art is not political because of the messages and feelings it conveys about the state of the world. Nor is it political owing to the way it represents social structures, conflicts or identities. It is political by virtue of the very distance that it adopts with respect to those functions».

Jacques Rancière

Shots in the Middle of the Concert. From *correct distance*<sup>1</sup> to *proximity*<sup>2</sup> is a series of exhibitions centred on the work of six artists who set out to engender a critical vision of the reality around them, while reducing the distance between themselves and the issues they raise in their respective projects in order to declare themselves and in one way or another adopt a position by means of their involvement.

The title of the cycle paraphrases Stendhal's famous remark that politics in a work of literature is like a pistol shot in the middle of a concert. The stories told in his novels had as their backdrop descriptions and analyses of the French society and politics of his time, but above all they were a pretext, a way of using literature to problematize reality, to assault it, to enclose it and resist it. Shots in the Middle of the Concert, awkward but difficult to ignore, aims to highlight

<sup>1 &#</sup>x27;Critique is a matter of correct distance,' Walter BENJA-MIN, 'One-way Street', in *One-way Street*, London, Penguin, 2008. 2 'If things have become too close for comfort for us, a critique must arise that expresses this discomfort. It is not a matter of proper distance but of proper proximity. The success of the word 'concernedness' (*Betroffenheit*) grows from this soil.' Peter SLOTERDIJK, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, Minneapolis & London, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

the responsibility of artistic and cultural practices to work with the contemporary, not from the critical distance advocated by Adorno but from proximity. To deal with reality and engage with it in the sense that Marina Garcés gives those words: *treatment* and *involvement* in two directions, towards the real in order to speak and towards oneself to let oneself be affected.

For some years now we have witnessed the implementation of a new paradigm of political emergence which aims to confront the complex system of interdependent and invisible powers (financial, political, informational) that hold sway in contemporary society. Precisely because they do not show themselves, these powers appear to us to be immeasurable, uncontrollable and difficult to combat. But 'rule by nobody is not necessarily no-rule,' as Hannah Arendt observed; 'it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its cruellest and most tyrannical versions.' Precisely in reaction to this rule there has been a proliferation of increasingly influential associations, groups and platforms that aim to create a new culture of collective possibilities to protect and manage the natural, social and cultural commons, working in grassroots activism to defend what is common to all and, without belonging to anyone, is the tangible and intangible heritage of each and every one of us. In fact, Rancière situates the beginning of politics at this point - 'when they who have 'no time' to do anything other than their work take that time that they do not have to make themselves visible as sharing in a common world.' In view of this new wave of civic involvement. Shots in the Middle of the Concert considers the nature of artists' commitment to the media which their work places at their disposal. How they treat the reality that concerns them. How they become involved with it. And to what extent their actions go beyond the artistic sphere and expand its limits. • CRISTIAN AÑÓ, CÈLIA DEL DIEGO AND JORDI RIBAS

Cristina Lucas's "All About Color" is a project that focuses on plurality as a political condition and draws a comparison between the alleged objectivity of the official historic and cartographic representations and the unlimited subjective interpretations these two aspects provide.

The exhibit's title, as well as the installation of which it forms part -Pantone -500 + 2007-, alludes to the cartographic code's symbolic use of colour to determine the geopolitical limits of countries. as well as the system of flags which propitiates our collective identity. The exhibition area is inhabited by a series of individuals who, using their bodies and voices, construct narratives which explore the fundamental aspects of state and nation, the borders which delimit them and the flags which set them apart. Each interprets the culture of time and space in their own particular manner, and each, and therefore the spectator, interprets history based of their respective world views. Thus they comprise a fusion of horizons, to quote Hans-Georg Gadamer. which claims that the acquisition and comprehension of knowledge is based on one's cultural, social, economic and historical background.

This clash of interpretational contexts and the unpredictability and variability of maps, which in the present, nonetheless, seem immovable, are the crux of Pantone -500 + 2007. The video illustrates the diachronic progression of geographical transformations over the past 2,500 years, from the lands once occupied by ancient civilisations to maps as we

know them today. For the first time, the video will be screened alongside a sound installation produced especially for the occasion. In this installation, just like the artist's other video animation performances, the overlapping voices of eight historians translate the incessant coloured mutations into narratives about the historical events causing these successive shifts in borders. Issues such as selecting the events worthy of mention or transporting spectators to other imaginary present-days lend the discourses subjectivity. Consequently, the narrators produce an infinite number of stories which, spawned of multiple organisational foci, make it impossible to define a single, global sense.

Though, for Cristina Lucas, cartography is often a means of challenging the authority of the paradigmatic graphic representations born of Eurocentrism and neoliberalism, she also uses it as a two-dimensional base which enables her to amass large amounts of chronological and geographical data and explore different episodes in the history of humankind, replicating them in all their complexity. In this regard, special mention goes to the projects From the Sky Down (a summary of aerial attacks on civilians from around the world and tribute to the inhabitants of Guernica, where over a hundred civilians died in a brutal aerial attack in 1937) and Light Years (a light box which narrates the civilian struggle for political freedom thanks to the introduction of parliamentary regimes which limited the monarchy's power and gradually extended the right to vote to men, women and, ultimately, with the advent of universal suffrage, the entire adult population regardless of gender, race or social status). While the first installation takes as its starting point the application of the ability to fly to military strategy, the second presents the French revolution and the introduction of democracy as a turning point which rattled the political foundations throughout Europe and raised essential questions about the nature of the state and its relationship with the individual. It was under the influence of the French Revolution's ideals that Ludwig van Beethoven composed his symphonies, a genre which quickly came to be considered an expression of the community voice. The four notes in unison at the beginning of the Fifth Symphony are a distinctive feature that has been seared into the collective memory and are invoked by Gestalt 5. To create this installation, Cristina Lucas called upon five conductors to interpret the first movement. Here again the artist sought to dissociate image from sound, as the video shows the directors' gestures yet omits the audio corresponding to the orchestras' rendition. Though the five channels are synchronised, and subsequently correspond to the same position in the score, the directors give the musicians different indications based on their own personal interpretations of the composition. The silence, nonetheless, does not suggest the composer's encroaching deafness, but, in accordance with the Gestalt theory, prompts spectators to delve into their own musical imagination and, in consonance with the directors' indications, produce their own particular and unique versions based on their perceptions and memory.

Cristina Lucas's projects combine an interest in compiling large amounts of data which paint a more or less global picture of the events with an ontological approach that places individuals and their ability to relate and comprehend at the centre of everything. In Vexilología, she tackles the issue of national flags, which, dissociated from the royal standard, come to stand as a symbol that elevates the collective identity and sense of belonging. To this end, she assembled almost two hundred photographs illustrating ways in which football supporters reinterpret flags: waving them, shrouding themselves in them, displaying their painted bodies. Again the artist uses performance, in this case spontaneous performance, with no previous artistic planning, to establish the other as a point of reference which facilitates close ties with the stories of History and reminds us that the purpose of History is ultimately the individual. • CÈLIA DEL DIEGO

The relationship between artists and maps is both ancient and very recent. It also has political and aesthetic connotations, 20th-century artists, the pioneers of contemporary art, simply rediscovered and restored a field and set of functions which should never have been lost. The inventors of modern Western cartography. Italian Renaissance artists, were at once engineers and artists, inventors and operators. individuals capable of both arousing emotion and fabricating innovative devices. They also developed perspective. Nonetheless, the Western world quickly adopted a rigid system of distribution; for artists. perspective, the aesthetic rendition of a three-dimensional world on a vertical base (windows, paintings, scores); for engineers, explorers, soldiers and policy-makers, the technical representation of the world as seen from on high, geometric cartography on a horizontal plane (tables or sheets of paper).

On one hand, *Homo erectus*, vertical, endowed with a horizontal vision that replicates the earth on a vertical plane. On the other, an ethereal (divine) vision which descends vertically from the heavens, and represents the world, populations, territories and land, on a horizontal surface. While the former was rooted in aesthetics, the latter had a strange relationship with supposed technical operations. The

greater the artists' command of perspective, the lower their legitimacy as cartographers.

During the classic age of Western cartography (16th-20th C.), maps served as a tool for power and domination (coloniser, male, geometric...). As a cultural form, cartographic representations became, under Carl Schmitt (*Le Nomos de la Terre*, 1950), justification for colonisation: the ability to portray the other and his lands was, to Schmitt, a basis for legitimate economic, military and political domination.

It was not until the late-20th C. that such aesthetic and political domination was called into question. The moment the avant-garde realised that perspective was not the only valid way to depict the world, they were inevitably reunited with cartography: Dadaism, Surrealism, Situationism and, later on, Land Art; a reunion that, from the beginning, was politically charged. Soon after its rediscovery, cartography became a weapon for resistance and struggle, as personified by J. B. Harley and *Radical Cartography*. Henceforth, cartographic knowledge was used to combat, condemn, deter and disclose.

This movement is, first and foremost, the reappropriation of an art form confiscated by technicians. In any case, it has also raised awareness of the power of these representations and helped develop its power of deterrence and construct a critical discourse.

Cristina Lucas is at the centre of this movement. Using classic references, she employs cartography to manifest its limits, arbitrariness and ineffectiveness. For a long time, maps dictated the world and made it seem obvious. In contract, the use of video and the emergence of an historical and dynamic form of cartography underscore the arbitrary nature of historic creations: the borders could have been different, situated elsewhere, earlier or later; the colours representing the countries on the maps can be easily changed. Our world is not the only or best one possible. Its construction is not lineal, as evidenced by *Light Years* (2009), which retraces the chaotic implementation of universal suffrage around the world.

Mundo masculino / Mundo femenino (2010) portrays the vernacular linguistic groupings or divisions relating to sexual vocabulary: this map is not the product of political power or some grand providential account descended from on high, but, in a way, is separated by everyday language. Maps have become more a form of culture, not a trend, which makes it possible to redistribute reality and its uncontrollable manifestations.

In her cartographic exploration, Cristina Lucas churns up, at times without realising, aspects relating to the story of cartographic domination. Here, the interplay between the concepts of male and female revives the Western tradition of the two spheres: the earthly sphere is usually accompanied by a heavenly sphere, the connection between man and the gods. While the earthly sphere 'was seen from on high', the heavenly sphere was depicted from within: from a human perspective. Thus the artist takes a story of domination and transforms it into a tool for liberation; henceforth, the male/female dichotomy will replace the profane/sacred dichotomy. The traditional sacred vertical is eliminated to better. construct (through pain?) a horizontal that is vet to be defined; one of equality between the sexes.

Like many other artists, Cristina Lucas does not want cartography to be indisputable fact. Maps are neither true nor false, and never 'lie'. In this sense, the artist emphasises the temporary nature of cartographic forms and codes. *Pantone* is a visual work that prompts heated debates, and in *Mundo masculino / Mundo femenino*, Lucas defends imprecision as a means to engage visitors and spur a form of participatory cartography.

Using cartographic research as an aesthetic and political weapon, Cristina Lucas has inherited a tradition and, at the same time, finds herself at the heart of a contemporary movement which goes beyond supposed cartographic 'trends'. • GUILLAUME MONSAINGEON, CURATOR, FOUNDER OF OUCARPO (OUVROIR DE CARTOGRAPHIE POTENTIELLE)

Cristina Lucas, Jaén (Spain), 1973, Holder of a degree in Fine Arts from the Complutense University of Madrid (1998), she completed a Master's degree at the University of California, Irvine and furthered her studies at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in New York (2003) and Amsterdam's Riiksakademie (2006-2007). She lives and works in Madrid. A multidisciplinary artist: photography, video. drawings and installations, which reflect upon the structures of power. Her solo exhibitions include "Es Capital" (Matadero Madrid, 2014), "On Air" (Caja de Burgos Art Centre, 2013), "Caín v las hijas de Eva" (Juana de Aizpuru Gallery, Madrid, 2008), "Talk" (Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam, Netherlands, 2008) and "Light Years" (Dos de Mayo Art Centre, Madrid, 2009 and Carrillo Gil Art Museum, Mexico City, 2010). She also took part in the 28th Sao Paulo Biennial (2008) and the Liverpool Biennial 10 (2010). As of 2013, her work also features in the Andalusian Contemporary Art Centre (Seville), Pompidou Centre (Paris) and Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki).

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Pantone -500 + 2007, 2007 View of the performance at the 8th Mercosur Biennial, 2011.

















Pantone -500 + 2007, 2007 2D Video animation and sound installation with eight synchronised channels.





Production of *Sense títol 1*, 2015 Photographs: Marcel Botella.



Light Years, 2009
Light box (computer,
LED lights and PMMA).
View of the installation at CA2M
from the exhibit "Light Years", 2009.



Gestalt 5, 2015
Video installation with five
synchronised channels.
View od the installation at Bohusläns
Museum, Uddevalla, Sweden from
the exhibit "Revolutionary micro
gestures", 2015.





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**AUTHORISE** 



AUSTRANIA.



Vexilología (detalle), 2015 212 colour impressions found online.



From the Sky Down, 2013 Three-channel video installation (in process). View of the installation at CAB Burgos from the exhibit "On Air", 2013.





Mundo masculino / Mundo femenino, 2010 Mobile sculpture: fibreglass sphere, steel stand and engine.

> Europa Económica Popular (detail), 2010.



The premise of microRavals\* revolves around some of the ideas and themes present in the exhibition "All About Color" by Cristina Lucas. As noted in the text by Cèlia del Diego in this publication, the artist's work focuses on the idea of plurality as a political condition against the supposedly objective forms of representation. The management of diversity, both between individuals and between individuals and society, is the basic relational framework around which the society's political organisation is structured. Yet is also where the strongest power relations work to deactivate such diversity. They do so to eradicate difference, to remain dominant and, as they remain dominant, to have the power to banish from sight anything they do not recognise, preventing it from interfering with public and, therefore, political life. The historical consolidation of individual identity linked to the concept of nation and the idea of a common identity based on the intangible aspects of national culture has recently taken the form of entertainment and identity consumption. Such is the case of football, which, despite encircling the globe with hegemonic aspirations, has not translated its community potential into any sort of political expression. All hegemonies naturally tend towards totalitarianism upon realising their full potential. Ever since the French Revolution, Western societies have sought to ensure the balance the power between the individual and community through legal systems and a series of international bodies which define and recognise people's rights.

At microRavals, as regards the exhibit, we take as a starting point the Fribourg Declaration on cultural rights. This text was submitted in 2007 by the Observatory of Diversity and Cultural Rights, in partnership with the International Organisation of La Francophonie and UNESCO, and was backed by over fifty human rights experts and an NGO platform. Based on several articles from the Fribourg Declaration, microRavals works with various cultural communities in the area around Arts Santa Monica; communities with no visibility or representation in the traditional dominant channels. In this regard, mention must be made of two issues raised by this document: the right to be a producer of culture and not simply a consumer; and that it equates popular culture to the culture of excellence.

microRavals is proposing the idea of collaborating with some of the Raval's choirs. These popular groups have been recognised as being part of social and musical heritage, and they have a significant historical link to the Raval neighbourhood's common past.\*\* The choirs that are active today are representative of a present that is committed to protecting the local inhabitants' right to participate in music, whether that be simply to enjoy it or to become an active and creative part of it. The inhabitants that form this group are actively exercising their right to be producers of our culture, to be involved in the creation of our cultural universe. At microRavals we aim to highlight the importance of these practices, which so often remain on a secondary level, overshadowed by the attention that art institutions focus on other talented artists. Through this collaboration, we suggested that participating choirs present their own version of a sung interpretation of the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights. The proposal helps give a broader understanding on aspects concerning cultural rights and connects these with the social and collective significance of choir singing. Using Arts Santa Mònica as a base for this collaboration opens up a form of critical dialogue with the exhibition project itself, and gives it greater symbolic significance as an institutional unit, while it encourages greater recognition of the value and diversity of cultural productions that are created in the Raval neighbourhood. • CRISTIAN AÑÓ (SINAPSIS)

\*microRavals is the mediation project for the exhibition cycle
"Shots in the Middle of the Concert". It sets out to generate significant involvement between the work of the artists, Arts Santa
Mònica and the close relationships that this facility can establish
with the context in which it is located: namely the Raval district.

The project takes as its starting point the development of cultural and artistic work processes and is implemented in partnership with other organisations, institutions, collectives and communities that are rooted in the Raval neighbourhood. It fosters and/or shares in collective work processes that are already and up and running, each of which is placed in dialogue with one of the exhibitions in the cycle, and also posits a relationship between the day-to-day realities of the participants, the work of the artists in the show and the idea of involvement and construction of the common good.

microRayals suggests two levels of reflection on the concept. of *involvement* and its representation. On one level, that of the production of culture and the sphere of cultural policy, it addresses the question of how to fit together the cultural logic of a large facility and the micropolitics with which the project interacts; micropolitics that are, in most cases, cultural and artistic projects spearheaded by relatively small-scale agents and projects with limited resources. In this respect, the mediation project is a test of the possible forms of involvement that can be generated between a cycle and an arts centre and other artistic projects that are ongoing in the neighbourhood, with a view to undertaking a joint project from the perspective of cultural ecology and sustainability, between the desire to constitute a resource and the opportunity to act as a potential catalyst for the reflections and actions that are located. even inscribed, within each specific collaboration.

At the same time, **microRavals** acts as a showcase for the richness of cultural production in the Raval and invites dialogue between the art project on show and the work processes it makes visible. This is a relationship in which the power of representation of the artistic project comes into direct contact with work processes that are deeply involved in the community.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Corals Raval. Tradició Centenària. Barcelona, Raval Cultural, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2015.

# Shots in the Middle of the Concert

From correct distance to proximity

| <b>Daniela Ortiz</b> 20.01-22.02.2015 | <b>Núria Güell</b><br>12.05-05.07.2015 | <b>Cristina Lucas</b> 22.09-08.11.2015 |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Democracia                            | Frederic Perers                        | María Ruido                            |

17.11.2015-10.01.2016

15.07-13.09.2015

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# Implic/Accions

03.03-19.04.2015

This action programme is open to everyone and includes opportunities related to the reflections fuelled by Cristina Lucas's art.

*Monday, 21 September, 8-10am.* **Presentation of Cristina Lucas's work to students from the Performance Studies class,** marking the start of a laboratory to prepare a performance for the exhibit. Faculty of Fine Arts, UB (C/ Adolf Florensa, 8. Barcelona).

Wednesday, 23 September, 7pm. Conversation between Montse Badia, critic and exhibition curator, and Cristina Lucas. The discussion will take place at SCI Catalonia (C/ del Carme, 95, baixos. Barcelona). Free admission. Places are limited.

Saturday, 3 October, 1pm. An approach to the exhibition with journalist and historian Sílvia Marimon. Organised as a guided tour, this activity seeks to provide alternate interpretations of the artist's work. Arts Santa Mònica exhibition space. Free admission. Places are limited.

Saturday, 24 October, 12pm. Performance Pantone -500 + 2007, by the students from the Performance Studies class at the Faculty of Fine Arts. Arts Santa Mònica exhibition space. Free admission. Places are limited.

Montse Badia. Art critic and exhibition and project curator. Her work has appeared in numerous specialised publications, such as Transversal, arts.zin, Untitled (London), Nu: The Nordic Art Review (Stockholm), Tema Celeste (Milan) and Bonart (Barcelona). She has curated numerous exhibitions, including: Plan B (De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam, 2000); Revolving Doors (Apex Art, New York, 2001 and Telefónica Foundation, Madrid, 2004); Depicting Love (Philip Morris International Curatorial Stipend at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Reina Sofia Art Centre. Madrid, and Párraga Centre, Múrcia, 2004); Paisatges mediàtics (alongside Andreas M. Kaufmann; "la Caixa" Foundation, Lleida, Tarragona and Girona, 2004-2005), Sessió contínua (Barcelona Regional Council, 2005-2008), Iceberg (Godia Foundation, Barcelona, 2013) and La realitat invocable (MACBA, Barcelona, 2014). She has worked as an assistant curator at the Miró Foundation's Espai 13 and Sant Mònica Art Centre (2006-2008), where she organised projects by David Shrigley, Peter Liversidge, Dora García, Jill Magid and Alicia Framis. At Arts Santa Mònica, she also curated *Boarding Time* (2001). She is currently co-director at A\*DESK, artistic director of the Cal Cego contemporary art collection and member of the advisory commission at the Yaxs Foundation.

Sílvia Marimon. Journalist specialising in history for the culture section of the newspaper Ara. She has published numerous feature articles in this newspaper about aerial attacks on Barcelona, the Second Spanish Republic, the First and Second World Wars, post-Civil War exile, etc. She has worked for the newspaper El País, the history magazine Sàpiens and Time Out. She collaborated with Arcadi Oliveres on his books Let's Stop the Crisis and My Path to Utopia, as well as publications on Catalan history by Grup 62. She has taken part in several documentaries, such as The Legend of Time by Isaki Lacuesta.

SCI Catalonia is one of the 43 branches of SCI's international network, an organisation which actively works to promote the culture of peace, global justice and the empowerment of civil society through international volunteering (volunteer camps and long-term volunteering), local activist groups and peace education with local and global impact. It envisions a world of peace, free of violence and the structures that legitimise it; a world based on global justice, equality, mutual support and the rights of all people; one inclusive of diversity, with a participatory and associative social fabric.

(sci-cat.org)

Shots in the Middle of the Concert. From correct distance to proximity is a series of exhibitions curated by Cèlia del Diego.

microRavals is a mediation project that works with local residents, associations, institutions and schools. It is curated by Cristian Añó (Sinapsis).

Implic/Accions is a cycle of activities organised by Jordi Ribas.

**Text**, Cristian Añó, Cèlia del Diego, Guillaume Monsaingeon y Jordi Ribas. **Graphic design**, Bildi Grafiks. **Space design**, Xavier Torrent.

Sound installation production for *Pantone -500 + 2007, 2007* Rapporteurs: Zone 1. North America, Jose Javier Guidi, Zone 2. South America, Xavier Garcia Puerto, Zone 3. Europe and Russia, Luis Omar Bravo, Zone 4. Mediterranean, Anna Rodríguez Cruz, Zone 5. South Africa, Jordi Barra, Zone 6. Middle East, Guiomar Sánchez, Zone 7. Asia. Gemma Meca. Zone 8. Oceania. Xavier Blava.

**Production:** Xavier Torrent. **Sound technician:** Miquel Giner.

Studio: BCNtracks.

Coordination: Cèlia del Diego.

In cooperation withj, Dos de Mayo Art Centre, Department of Art History, University of Barcelona and Tot Raval.

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### Arts Santa Mònica

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