

OF BREAKING AND RIPPING

Cristina Arrazola-Oñate
María Cañas
Eli Cortiñas
Momu & No Es

INTERMITENTS

Of breaking and ripping includes an exhibition and personal presentations of the projects and career paths of four artists—four who are five, since two of them work as one—who use public images or pre-existing codings grabbed from different sources and re-used to extract a third meaning. Who adopt, cite, twist and recontextualise the icons of popular culture and leisure consumption, with an implicit or explicit sense of criticism. This is the first instalment of *Intermitents*, a regular cycle of events that—with an open format—covers the practices of moving images or motion pictures on all supports and media, and in all their manifestations.

29.11.2016 – 11.01.2017

[LA VIRREINA]
CENTRE
DE LA IMATGE

Ajuntament de
Barcelona



Intermittences of breaking and ripping
Eugeni Bonet

The cast of this programme is, in a manner of speaking, the result of an audition and of a hunch about linking four artists based on certain common aspects that I had glimpsed. The first is an appropriationist and furtive passion to work with public images that already exist, which are more sought than found (as expressed somewhat inaccurately by the term: *found footage*), grabbed from different sources and re-used to extract a third meaning. Working with such ready-to-consume images and also on the codes that they emit.

This activity consists of two parts, as a result of an open proposal and from the dialogue with the artists themselves. The first is a continuous display of the artists' pieces, in a loop. The second is a series of presentations, talks and meetings over four consecutive days that will provide a broader insight into their career paths and the approaches and processes involved in their work.

Cristina Arrazola-Oñate presents the five submissions of *Plano contra plano*, which doubly links issues of gender with film genres, the role of women and men and society and their representation in audiovisual fictions. In each instance, the artist works on a recognised specimen of those genres from the factories of dreams and nightmares—including A and B-series films as well as artisan and *auteur* films—and applies different approaches and procedures that also include a piece in the compiling-cumulative tradition of stereotypes to distil the stem cell from it, the archetype of a certain mould.

The latest riotous pieces from María Cañas's recent and forever frenzied production are included. As if in a digital blender, her ripped, punky video collages zap the fleeting traces—spread across the network of vanities—of the profane cult to the smartphone and other forms of artificial intelligence for the inept (*La mano que trina*). Or the constant stream of the crassest television programmes, polluted by the slurry of the faecal matter that it spreads and feeds on, but redeemed and consecrated by the supreme values of bad taste and grossness (*Fuera de serie*). From this, the archive terrorist from Seville concludes that “another kind of television is possible” (which no longer has “to come through our screens” as it can now be distributed via an

unleashed network). And, as one of the best-known compositions by the spoken-word performer Scott-Heron proclaims, “the revolution will not be televised”.

Eli Cortiñas presents her most recent piece, *The most given of givens*, a triptych of projections in which she fine-tunes the procedures—juxtapositions, echoes, counterpoints, image beats—of previous multi-screen composition works. Unlike other videos that she based on a single source, on footage from Hollywood, independent and *auteur* films or simply a small, distinct point in a particular shot or scene, here Cortiñas combines material from various sources—images and sounds (not always in synch due to the sliding of cuts from one screen to another), including adventure and blockbuster films on the one hand and *auteur* films on the other, as well as some documentary images taken by the artist herself. Akin to the concept of experimental ethnography,¹ the piece is about the myth of Tarzan—the ape-man, a “noble” white savage—motivated in part by the artists roots on the Canary Islands and their proximity to Africa.

Momu & No Es’s projects combine elements of performance, outlandish fiction and visual bubblegum. Here, they present *Soft Mud and the Fanboy*, a piece originally created for the exhibition entitled “Pop Politics: Activisms at 33 Revolutions”.² The core component is a narrative dappled with loud and marshmallowy colours, effects galore and borrowed video clips that get mixed up with the staging that envelops them. It all becomes an apotheosis of simulacrum and splitting, which includes the group La Casa Azul and the Mexican singer Silverio as paradoxically real fictitious characters in a moral-less story that becomes a pretext to explore the construction of a relationship between idols and fans, and also emotions, palpitations of desire, the sense of community and the fleeting years of youth.

*Destroy (and reconstruct), she said*¹ Ingrid Guardiola

I see María Cañas, Eli Cortiñas, Momu & No Es and Cristina Arrazola-Oñate in the public square, about to be burnt on account of their resistance to a normative, patriarchal, bourgeois and capitalist order, recycling the ruins of iconic capitalism at a time of audiovisual surplus, controlling the reproductive function of art, shouting the words that María Cañas retrieves from *Simon of the Desert* by Luis Buñuel: “Do not burn at the fire of a vain contemplation!” I look at them and I see them kissing the fire of their visions, often anchored in pop imaginary and mass culture, and reusing the embers thereof. Those embers that, on some occasions, are their own images and, on others, are expropriated images from the history of film and television or the Internet (as vast dumping ground for audiovisual detritus in the case of the latter).

If Harun Farocki² and many other authors invite us to be suspicious about images, then these artists’ way of doing it is to prioritise the imaginary over the image. According to Gaston Bachelard, the value of an image is measured by the extension of its imaginary aureole.³ At a time when the value of things (and works as things) is measured in an extremely one-off way, there is nothing more blessed than the idea of a trajectory, and the artists convened here respond to that idea, making the trajectory an occasion to construct an imaginary, a personal labyrinth with exit doors, a *Wunderkammer* full of nodules, of recurrent themes, that are at once identifiable and genuine. The artists convened here also share interests and visions: they explore the uncanny valley with more or less humour, with more or less sense of the absurd, they re-use existing materials from the history of images, they disassemble film and art genres, and they disarticulate gender perspectives from a feminist point of view of necessity, a consequence of seeing themselves as aliens in relation to the world. Aliens that, like satellites, stay off the planet but are linked to it because of the force of gravity exerted on them.

¹ A concept introduced by Catherine Russell in her book of the same title *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999.

² Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo (CA2M), Móstoles, Madrid, 2012–2013.

¹ Alluding to the novel *Détruire, dit-elle* (1969) by Marguerite Duras.

² FAROCKI, H.; *Desconfiar de las imágenes*, Ed. Caja Negra, 2013, Buenos Aires.

³ BACHELARD, G.; *L’Air et les songes. Essai sur l’imagination du mouvement*, Librairie José Corti, 1943, p. 5.

"I'm a *fanny videns*. Since I was a child, I've needed to be Martian or dirty,"⁴ says María Cañas. In *Homo Videns*,⁵ Giovanni Sartori indicates that "video-trained" man is becoming incapable of comprehending abstractions and understanding concepts. These artists' position will be the opposite. As genuine *fanny videns*, they will use the forceps of their intelligence and sensitivity to give new meaning to existing images, always excessive in a culture of omnipresent screens and interfaces. The artists are gleaners; their gaze is ecological in its approach, in the sense that they recycle images without adding hardly any new detritus of cognitive capitalism, and also in the sense that they study the relationships between beings and the environment in which they live; they understand the medium is the mediasphere, that is, the images themselves.

They are good daughters of the cooks who, with four ingredients, manage to make the best recipes: do it yourself, as we have always known it. All of them use what Hito Steyerl calls "raw material".⁶ This consists of low-definition, basic images and material, and they construct rich allegories with whatever it is they have to hand, like a "handful of [digital] detritus"⁷ from our culture to question its foundations. Cortiñas applies this to her exhibitions, Momu & No Es to their performance experiments, and María Cañas and Cristina Arrazola-Oñate to their video collages and audiovisual pieces. The editing room is a cooking, stomachic, uterine, stitching and re-stitching space.

As horsewomen of art and audiovisual media, they mount (or edit), dismount (or unedit) and remount (or re-edit) the images and conventional places on which culture is built. Like the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, they are visionaries in their works, provocative (*provocare*, call forth, challenge) in their visions.

"Destroy!", they said, and immediately afterwards "Reconstruct!", return the fire to the ashes and to the embers in the hyperpopulated solitude of visions; make possible worlds grow and give potential meanings to a world that is practically impossible to name, to see, to transit.

⁴ María Cañas, in the special *Metrópolis* programme (broadcast on La2, 27 September 2015) dedicated to the artist.

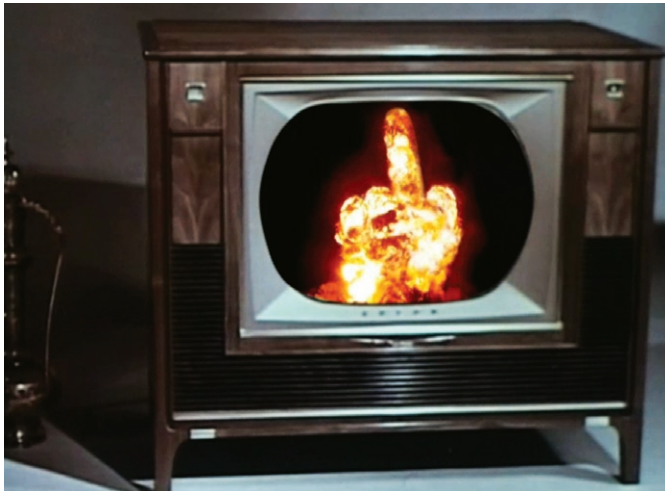
⁵ SARTORI, G.; *Homo videns*, Ed. Taurus, 1998, Buenos Aires, p. 17.

⁶ STEYERL, H.; *Los condenados de la pantalla*, Caja Negra Editora, 2014.

⁷ Adaptation—and translation into English—of the Spanish title that María Cañas gave to her latest audiovisual workshop: "Con un puñado de detritus".



Cristina Arrazola-Oñate
Shot Counter Shot. Disassembly of gender
in film genres, 2013-2014



María Cañas
La mano que trina, 2015
Fuera de serie, 2012

Eli Cortiñas
The most given of givens, 2016



Momu & No Es
Soft Mud and the Fanboy, 2012

Cristina Arrazola-Oñate

Shot Counter Shot.
Disassembly of gender in film genres
 2013-2014

The aim of this project is to perform a series of “repairs” on certain established film models and to begin an investigation into film genres from a gender perspective and an experimental aspect. In order to do that, tools of appropriation, disassembly, reassembly, intervention, repair, reconstruction and rearticulation were used in a kind of crossing of styles and practices, the intention of which is to flee from the categorisations and registers on which audiovisual media are based.

It is not about “subversion” or “transgression”, but about repairing some of the quirks of the film genres with which several generations of men and women have been brought up.

No 1. Melodrama (4 min 20 s)

Based on the film *All that Heaven Allows* (1955), directed by Douglas Sirk

No 2. Film noir (13 min 44 s)

Based on the film *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), directed by John Huston

No 3. Musical (14 min 13 s)

Based on the film *West Side Story* (1961), directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins

No 4. Horror (3 min 6 s)

Based on the films *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Scary Movie* (2000, 2001, 2003, 2006), *Braindead* (1992), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *Bride of Frankenstein* (1931), *Night of the Creeps* (1986), *Friday the 13th II* (1981), *The Return of the Living Dead* (1985), *Dracula* (1931), *Basket Case* (1982), *Frankenstein* (1931), *M. Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder* (1931), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1987), *The Shining* (1980), *Friday the 13th* (2009), *Alien* (1979), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *Scream 1, 2, 3, 4* (1996, 1997, 2000, 2011) and *Hellraiser* (1987)

No 5. Science fiction (7 min 52 s)

Based on the film *X: The Man with the X-Ray Eyes* (1963), directed by Roger Corman

María Cañas

La mano que trina
2015

Video, 11 min 27 s, installation using electronic junk and variable measures
Work produced by Animalario TV Producciones with the help of the
Andalusian Centre of Contemporary Art (CAAC)

Life is what happens while we're staring at our mobiles. Soon, we won't even need to read or speak languages; knowing how to howl will suffice. *La mano que trina* (The Trilling Hand) is a showcase devoted to the dark side of technology, the feeling of "technoparanoia", the religion of the selfie, "technopathies", digital dementia, programmed obsolescence, e-waste, post-humanism, etc. It is a satire about how smartphones, tablets and computers are eradicating what little critical mass (not to mention what little grey matter) our increasingly banal, infantilised society has left, largely owing to the curse of our smartphone addiction.

While in the mid-19th century Karl Marx predicted the personal and labour-related alienation of workers (crushed under the boot of capitalism), the sad and falsely hedonistic alienation of the public in our times can only be attributed to the tyranny of the aptly named smartphones (I say aptly named because their smartness is derived from the neurons they suck out of their happily unsuspecting owners day and night—in fact, we might accurately call them "neuronal cyber-vampires").

Fuera de serie
2012

Video, 35 min 39 s
Work produced by Animalario TV Producciones and Legal Music, S.L.
as part of the FICCIONES EN SERIE project for SOS 4.8 Zona Arte
curated by Jordi Costa

Fuera de serie (One of a Serial Kind) is a "serial killer" show, a fight against distraction where poetic justice sweeps fiction off its feet, a feverish interactive channel surfing session through events in real life and on TV. This implacable, apocalyptic machinery mutates and redeems the stereotypes and icons of TV series, where the broadcast kitsch, camp, grotesque, soft-core, reality and fiction moistly merge on screen, as if in one of the down-trodden Benny Hill's drunken dreams.

This piece is a flamethrower levelled at big corporations, bankers and governments run by psychopaths, crooks, arse lickers and incompetent idiots who have brought us to the edge of the abyss. It is a spit in the eye, a chainsaw hacking away at our illusory, unrepresentative democracy.

It is a polyhedral serial patchwork of subversive content, committed to the politically incorrect and the angry minority, who know that the revolution will not be televised.

Eli Cortiñas

The most given of givens
2016

Video installation, 3 channels, Full HD, stereo, 30 min (loop)

If Tarzan succeeds in merging two myths of origin, such as the ruin and wildness, and projects a future where the urbane can be naturalised and the savage civilised, what is left for undomesticated nature, what remains for animals, plants, and non-Western "tribal" cultures? If we take a close look at *Tarzan* films, we can see that their place is the canvas on which their projection is reflected. It is the ornamental background for the imposed white narration. Behind Jane and the white lights illuminating her are projections of ethnological testimony to African communities, and also of animals running free on the African savannah. These scenes are not so much something happening as an accurate staging of the point of view of white ethnocentricity. Neither the animals nor the indigenous tribes have any influence on the narrative; their role is that of a mute landscape. A narrative is not simply told. It is also about having technical media available to produce it. In this case film, be it cinematographic or documentary-ethnological. They both converge in *Tarzan*, making it difficult to establish the point at which they differ. A similar phenomenon can be observed in chronicles of European travellers moving overseas into a new world. As Michel de Certeau explains, between "us" and "them" there exists a difference of possessing writing, which immediately raises the question of a relation of power. Here writing, like film, is understood as a technical medium, which makes narrative and point of view possible. The countless hours of ethnological films about indigenous communities or herds of animals on some plain somewhere, now stored in archives, do not merely provide "documents"; they are also "monuments" of construction of this point of view.

By re-using such material and diffracting the outlines where the ideas of document and monument, of narration and technical media, overlap, Eli Cortiñas's montage in *The most given of givens* blurs the point(s) of view(s) in modern Western myths of origin. Our future is still negotiated on that basis today, which results in the reconstruction of palaces reminiscent of the Greco-Roman world, or in protection of the environment against the advancement of industrialised civilisation to the point of returning it to a state of pure nature.

Tomás Bartoletti (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Buenos Aires University)
—"Myths as Monuments, Nature as Ruins"

Momu & No Es

Soft Mud and the Fanboy
Madrid, 2012
Video, Full HD, stereo, 15 min

Vladimir Hologram
Madrid, 2012
Video, Full HD, without sound, 5 min (loop)

A video installation that explores the construction of fictions and the reception of myths by spectators, taking as its leitmotiv a musical story and the experience of certain “fanatic-affective” occurrences.

Vladimir, a young man of 29, is a fan of Silverio, the pseudonym of the Mexican composer Julian Lede. At the same time, he maintains a relationship characterised by a love for musical idols with his neighbour Casio, to whom every day he gives a portrait of the singer Madonna painted in black. As Vladimir himself remarks to Casio, “everybody needs someone to follow”. The plot follows the connections established between Vladimir, Casio and Silverio, the moments of adoration, annoyance and affection between them, and all of this symbolised by the objects that Vladimir produces, fragments of songs, and video clips.

Through the different technologies and methods of relation particular to music and the emotions, activism and ideologies that arise, the emotional and physical components, the notion of what is a family or a community, and the spaces desired as places of confrontation and affection are questioned.

Monographic presentations

Cristina Arrazola-Oñate
(*About*) *Shot Counter Shot*.
Disassembling gender in film genres

Tuesday 29 November, 7 pm
Virreina LAB

The experimental route, art research, is a territory where it is possible to make certain displacements of meaning and certain alterations to the images, to the aesthetics and to the policies of women's visibility that ultimately lead to a questioning of rigid models like that of film genres, on which audiovisual production from both visual and conceptual perspectives is based.

María Cañas
Con un puñao de detritus. Audiovisual recycling among connected hordes

Wednesday 30 November, 7 pm
Virreina LAB

An experimental encounter inspired and activated by videoguerrilla, appropriationism, everything fake, “videomachy” and post-gender, dirty, Martian video re-mix from the hands (or tail) of the Archivist of Seville. At this encounter, we invite the attendees to enjoy an audiovisual journey created by Cañas. We will shake images up and become suspicious of them, so that we can develop into beings that are more critical, savage and creative. It will also be a time to learn more about the processes of appropriationist audiovisual creation and to address countless topics associated with new film narratives since the advance of the Internet.

Eli Cortiñas
PLAYBACK_Eli Cortiñas

Thursday 1 December, 7 pm
Virreina LAB

Questioning images, conversing with them, listening to them, taming them, freeing them, recontextualising them; disassociating the image from the sound, the sound from the word, the word from the meaning; understanding life itself as a stage, fostering the dialectic between authenticity and interpretation in an attempt to create identity. These are some of the critical tools that Cortiñas examines throughout the journey of her career. In addition, the artist will give us an insight into her archive of unfinished works, of mistaken paths and of dead-end streets in search of what is often indomitable in found footage.

Momu & No Es
Environmental Benefits of Video Conferencing

Friday 2 December, 7 pm
Virreina LAB

A journey through the works of artists who are our contemporaries, who incorporate technology as a form of language in their art productions and processes. This session will allow us to provide a certain backdrop for our work.

Free entry
Limited places

Intermittent movement is one of the mechanisms that has allowed us to create the illusion of something that we conventionally and somewhat aporetically call *moving images* or *motion pictures*. However, such motion occurs between the images (frames) or image particles (pixels) that come one after the other in quick succession. Motion is established in the intervals between them.

Intermitents is a series of events taking place regularly in street-level spaces at La Virreina Centre de la Imatge.

The link between all these events is the dynamic art of moving images on all supports and media, and in all of their manifestations (past and present); the events take an open format of screenings, installations, presentations, meetings, micro-exhibitions and other activities.

With a range of solo, group and thematic exhibitions and programmes, this open format also applies to what is presented in them.

La Virreina Centre de la Imatge
Palau de la Virreina
La Rambla, 99. 08002 Barcelona

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday
and public holidays, noon to 8 pm
Free entry

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