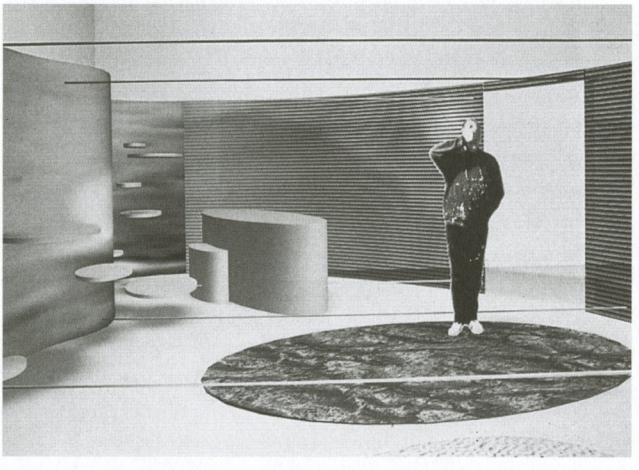
ZUSH

Tecura

15 December 2000 - 4 March 2001

Under the title of *Tecura*, this exhibition is a major retrospective which brings together over two hundred works by Zush, including the first drawings and books from the mid sixties, the outstanding paintings, sculptures and sound works of his career, and the recent works, such as the speaking bronze bells that open the show. The exhibition provides an opportunity to experience some aspects of the artist's creative process at first hand thanks to a workshop-laboratory of ideas at the visitors' disposal and the presence of the artist, who will invite the spectators to create their own digital works, and will be living and working at the Museum. He will be using various dwellings: three architectural projects carried out in Sète, Valencia and Madrid, two of them – *Head House* (1993) and *Plasma House* (2000)– developed in collaboration with the architect Enric Ruiz-Geli.



Plasma House © cloud 9, 2000

The central feature of Zush's work is the construction of a personal mythology of an autobiographical nature. His cartography feeds on an accumulation of images that refer to notions of body –and all its extensions: mind, sex, time– and the creation of a writing, a personal code *–asura–* that aims to express everything that is not subject to a rational explanation. Those elements organise a host of parallel universes which maintain a delicate balance between the apparently chaotic and monstrous and rational composition. His determination to debunk the figure of the artist and the breadth of his interests have led him to use such a wide range of media that he is difficult to catalogue. From

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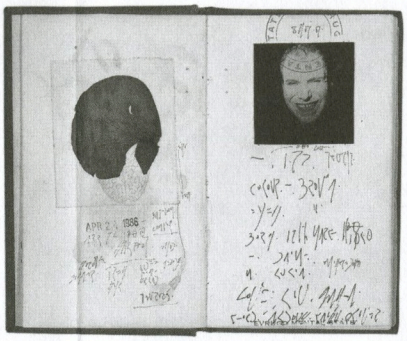
Fingernail, 1968



Evrugi Passport I, 1984-1988



Campana, 2000

painting, drawing and graphic works to *assemblages*, photography or collage, books or sound recording, reusing everything digitally and habitually working with creators from different disciplines such as programmers, architects, writers or musicians.

In 1968 Zush took the place of Albert Porta (Barcelona, 1946) after a series of events while he was interned in a psychiatric home in Barcelona. He was sent there –Zush speaks of aesthetic repression– accused of inability to adapt to his environment. The result of that radical experience was the birth of a new personality, that of Zush –a name given him by another inmate of the centre– through which he managed to channel the chaos and contradictions, the duality of forces, which up till then he had represented symbolically in the characters of his work, Boso and Solomo.

Moreover, with Zush was born an imaginary state, *Evrugo Mental State*, conceived as an autarchic territory with clear aspirations to universality. Evrugo appeared as a need, a utopia of sexual and spiritual liberation, and as a land of freedom in the face of experience and the contrast between Spanish reality and the international political context, where the struggle for civil rights and individual freedom found reference points in the student revolts in France and the demonstrations against the Vietnam war in the United States. Evrugo is populated by the biomorphic characters who appear in his work and has formal attributes parallel to those of government institutions, such as a language and an alphabet of its own *–asura* and *evrugui–*, maps of the territory, a currency *–túcares–*, a passport, national anthem, ambassadors *–omores–*, ministers *–enestirs–* and a flag, represented by a brain with an eye in the centre. It is not for nothing that Zush regards himself as a thinker who expresses himself through a host of languages. That mental territory enables Zush to be still working today on the redefinition of his personality.

With *First book enemy myself* (1968), Zush embarked on the creation of his books, which by now total about one hundred. They are result of radical introspection and he uses them as a mobile study, a research centre where many of his works or autobiographical diary emerge. Thousands of pages construct an endless narration which compiles his personal mythology through his calligraphic writing, photos or collages in a rainbow of compositions that alternate chaos and order and recall cabalistic texts or ancient ideograms. The exhibition includes a room with thirty or so original books from 1968 to 1998 –the pages will be projected continuously– and all kinds of chattels related to Evrugo.

This exhibition, produced jointly with the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, includes a selection of key pieces such as *The Tarot Cards* (1976-1979), *Socjomo. The Girls of my Life I, II, III* (1986), *Usdre Nesod Uts* (1986) or *60 Aheads* (1994-1998). An experimental workshop in another room provides the public with a meeting place and the opportunity to create new works that can be included in the exhibition through the digital programme "Tecura". The use of digital resources in Zush's work dates back to 1975, when he received a grant from MIT; these have brought a greater degree of diversity to his work and supplied him with the mix of languages, such as music, text and image. Their technical complexity obliges him to work in teams with multidisciplinary training, which leads to a shifting of the final responsibility for the work, traditionally linked to the artist's name, towards the work itself, the true protagonist of the process.

On numerous occasions Zush has expressed his confidence in the creative potential of all people, as well as in the therapeutic nature of art. For him anyone is potentially an artist, a scientist and a mystic. In some way, as in the work of artists such as Henri Michaux, Odilon Redon, Max Ernst, Antonin Artaud or many others who have worked on the boundaries of reason and madness, Zush's work expresses the multiple personalities that populate our consciousness, other realities that reason is unable to express and which find in artistic creation a liberating territory that allows art a cathartic and, in a way, a therapeutic role.

By living in the exhibition, Zush questions the conventional logic established by museums in the 20th century, using the public space as a private studio and altering the relation between art, artist and spectator with his presence. As with the Russian matrioshka dolls, architectural constructions hide or protect Zush's dwelling places from the interior of the museum, like a symbolic extension of the artist's private space, both his physical space –his studio– and his mental one. With that in mind, the architectures created by Ruiz-Geli for the show cause a fold in the original space and generate landscapes –natural gardens with artificial lighting– which they adapt as the day goes on: twelve hours in twelve minutes. The atmosphere is completed with a "mind aroma" and the sounds created by Víctor Nubla. In those spaces Zush creates an intimate place inside the museum where a dialogue with the spectator can be opened up, unveiling the secrets of the creative process and demystifying the image of the inaccessible artist.

As a character who has accompanied the artist since 1968, Zush will disappear when the exhibition closes. This is, therefore, Zush's last exhibition, the end of an era.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

La campanada. Madrid: Ave del Paraíso, MNCARS-MACBA, 2000.
Lebrero Stals, José. *Zush.* Barcelona. Ediciones Polígrafa, 1997.
Le Milieu du monde. Arles: Actes Sud, 1993.
Els llibres de Zush. Barcelona: Departament de Cultura. Generalitat de Catalunya, 1989.
Magiciens de la terre. Paris: Musée national d'art moderne. Centre Georges Pompidou, 1989.
Zush: Evrugo mental state. Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats, 1987.

DEBATES

Art, madness and cure
Conversations about the exhibitions *Zush Tecura* and *The Prinzhorn Colletion: Traces upon the "Wunderblock"*. Coordinated by Enric Berenguer and Francesc Puntí.

WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY, AT 7:30 PM
Madness as one of the fine arts
With the artist Zush, José Lebrero Stals, organiser of the exhibition *Zush Tecura*, and Teresa Camps, lecturer at UAB.

MONDAY, 29 JANUARY, AT 7:30 PM
The most necessary art
With Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, artist and psychoanalyst, and Alejandro Gómez Franco, psychoanalyst.
With simultaneous interpretation.

WEDNESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, AT 7:30 PM
Poetry and madness in Hölderlin. A style risen from the ashes
With Ana Nuño, director of the magazine *Quimera*, among other participants.

MONDAY, 19 FEBRUARY, AT 7:30 PM
Art that cures
With Suely Rolnik, psychoanalyst, and Guillem Homet, psychiatrist and director of the Comunitat Terapèutica del Maresme.

WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, AT 7:30 PM
Mones com la Becky
Showing of the film *Mones com la Becky* (1999, 97') by Joaquim Jordà, followed by a colloquium with Valentí Agustí, mayor of Palafolls and psychiatrist, and Montserrat Puig, psychoanalyst.
AUDITORIUM, MACBA. ADMISSION FREE

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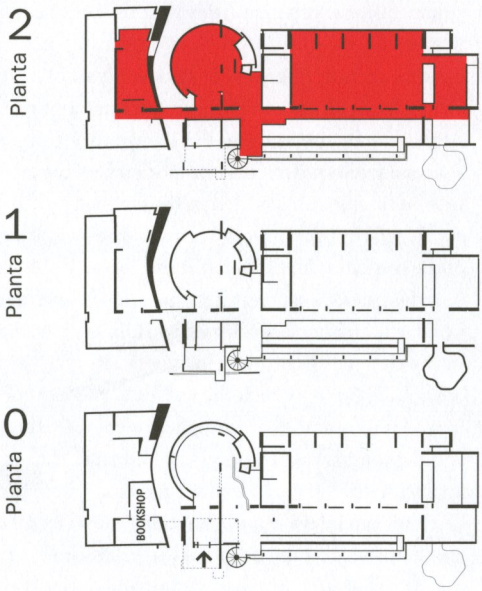
GUIDED VISITS

WEDNESDAY 27 DECEMBER, 6 pm
SATURDAY 6 JANUARY, 12 noon
WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY, 6 pm
SUNDAY 14 JANUARY, 12 noon
SATURDAY 20 JANUARY, 6 pm
WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY, 6 pm
SUNDAY 28 JANUARY, 12 noon
SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY, 6 pm
WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY, 6 pm
SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY, 12 noon
SATURDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 6 pm
WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY, 6 pm
SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY, 12 noon
SUNDAY 4 MARCH, 12 noon



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11 am to 7:30 pm daily
Closed Tuesday (except holidays)
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10 am to 3 pm Sunday and holidays

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