MUSEU D'ART CONTEMPORANI DE BARCELONA

The exhibition presents 250 works, many of them never exhibited before, together with unpublished documentation. In parallel, Yvonne Rainer will give a lecture-performance

MACBA presents the first major retrospective of Rosemarie Castoro

Title: *Rosemarie Castoro. Focus at Infinity* **Opening**: Thursday, 9 November 2017, at 7.30 pm **Dates**: 10 November 2017 to 15 April 2018 **Organisation and production**: MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona **Curator**: Tanya Barson

Rosemarie Castoro (New York, 1939–2015) was a key artist who was constantly experimenting. Castoro developed her work in the Minimalist, post-Minimalist and Conceptual context in the United States and was part of the New York avant-garde circle of the sixties and seventies, alongside Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt and Agnes Martin, among others. Under the title *Focus at Infinity*, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona presents the first major institutional retrospective of the artist worldwide, curated by MACBA's Chief Curator, Tanya Barson. The exhibition shows the exceptional contribution made by Castoro in the areas of painting, language and performance, and demonstrates how some key figures of Minimalism, especially women artists, have not received the attention they deserve. In the words of Lucy Lippard, who included her works in the exhibitions *557,087* at the Seattle Art Museum (1969) and *955,000* at the Vancouver Art Gallery (1970), Castoro 'subverted minimalism on its own turf'.

Rosemarie Castoro. Focus at Infinity brings together 250 works, most of them from New York (from Broadway 1602, Hal Bromm Gallery and MoMA, as well as private lenders), along with a wealth of unpublished documentation, such as her personal journals, exhibited here for the first time. This 'paintersculptor', as Castoro called herself, began her career in the field of graphic art but soon became interested in dance, from which she acquired the conception of space, later turning to painting and then sculpture. She also participated actively in the Art Workers' Coalition and was drawn to feminism, although she refused any deep involvement, considering it too restrictive and a form of 'segregation'. Focusing on the period 1964–79, the exhibition includes abstract painting, Conceptual art, performative actions, poetry, sculpture, installations and land art, thus demonstrating the diversity of her artistic practice.

Rosemarie Castoro

Born in Brooklyn to an Italian-American family, Castoro lived and worked in New York all her life. In the late fifties, she began studying art at Pratt Institute and joined the New Dance Group, where she trained as a dancer and choreographer, subsequently participating in some dance performances by Yvonne Rainer. While still a student, she met experimental film director Hollis Frampton and artist Carl Andre, whom she married in 1963 (they divorced in 1970). Castoro began her career as a graphic designer, hence the importance of drawing in her work. After graduating from Pratt Institute, and given the lack of opportunities for choreographers, painting offered the chance to develop her ideas as an independent artist.



Rosemarie Castoro, *Aluminium Roll, 1969*

Cortesia The Estate of Rosemarie Castoro i BROADWAY 1602. Harlem, Nova York

Early paintings: 'Y' and 'bars'

Her first mature works, dating from 1964–65, are paintings executed on square-format canvases, at first pictorial mosaics constructed in a 'Y' shape and later with the geometric 'Y' forms arranged on a monochrome background: a minimal composition with the potential for infinite repetitions (and the first manifestation of the theme of infinity in the work of Castoro). Here she uses intense colours arranged in chromatic contrasts, with precise pencil under-drawing. This basic 'Y' unit demonstrates that her experience of the world corresponded to that of a dancer, also borne out by the anthropomorphic analogy implicit in titles such as *White Blue Feet*, *Banded Feet* and *Feet of Y*. As Castoro's painting evolved, the artist fractured the 'Y' shapes into wide stripes or bars, an all-over pattern that covered the canvas: either in seemingly chaotic, chance compositions; in discrete though overlapping groupings; or else graphically regimented.

From 1966, Castoro's painting began to emphasise the seemingly random and irregular geometric forms created from the superimpositions or 'interferences' of one 'bar' over another. Two series from the late sixties indicate the artist's increasing use of systems and her move toward Conceptual art. Close to monochrome abstractions, the *Inventory* paintings use diagonal lines to record spatial measurements. From 1968, and despite still painting, Castoro ventured out of the studio, 'moved ceilings', 'cracked rooms' and created conceptual pieces in the form of texts. During this period, she became interested in the concept of 'intermedia', as can be seen in the installation with slides and audio of the concrete poem *A Day in the Life of a Conscientious Objector* (1968–69), or in *Stopwatch*, a series of timed works showing an obsession with temporal duration. Between 1969 and 1970, she participated in three exhibitions curated by Lucy Lippard and in a series of street actions titled *Street Works*. These actions included: tying a can of paint to her bicycle and riding through the streets leaving a trail of paint; marking the outline of a city block with adhesive tape; and deploying a large roll of aluminium in Soho for a performance that she titled *Gates of Troy*.

Having abandoned colour, Castoro began to include a new spatial element in her work. As she writes in her diary: 'Do all my problems center around space? At one time – time was my problem. Now, space. I want to carve space. I am carving space.'



In 1970, Castoro developed free-standing panels that occupied the space of the viewer. The surfaces were created from gesso applied with a broom, which were then covered in graphite hatching so that the works combine painting, sculpture and drawing on an almost architectural scale and character that brought Castoro's work closer to Minimalist sculpture. In the mid-seventies, the artist began to produce land art and large scale public sculptures that address perception through perspective, another example of the theme of infinity in her work. At the end of the decade she began a series of sculptures called *Flashers*, totemic pieces of steel or concrete that exuded a corporeal presence.

Her diaries (1969–78)

The central element that articulates all of Castoro's works is a highly developed sense of self-awareness, backed-up by the habit of keeping a diary in which she wrote almost every day. Most of these writings are exhibited for the first time at MACBA, and reveal the reciprocity between her personal and artistic research. It was here that she left evidence of her daily life, engaging with existential issues, concrete poetry, drawings consisting of graphics, diagrams, instructions, lists... They also contain Polaroids in which she photographed herself with her work. The ordinary and the poetic, the statistical and the irrational are combined.

The studio

Castoro lived and worked more than fifty years in a Soho loft where Carl Andre, her husband, also lived until they separated in 1969. The exhibition concludes with an evocation of the studio that was her stage, an extension of her body, her refuge and, in short, a protagonist of her art. In fact, Castoro's sculpture reveals the space of the studio in which she lived, since she adapted herself to it.

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Guided tours
Included in the admission ticket. Consult schedules and languages at www.macba.cat.

Let's Talk About...
Rosemarie Castoro. Conducted by Tanya Barson and Mariana Cánepa. Saturdays 11 November and 9 December, 6.30 pm. Museum galleries. 5 €. Ticket sales at www.macba.cat

Lecture-performance Yvonne Rainer: The Concept of Dust. Given by Yvonne Rainer. Tuesday 19 December, 7 pm. Meier Auditorium. 5 €. Combined lecture and dance ticket: 17 €. Ticket sales at www.macba.cat.

Dance
The Concept of Dust: Continuous Project – Altered Annually (2014)
Choreography and interpretation by Yvonne Rainer *et al*. Wednesday 20 December, 8 pm. CCCB Theatre. 15 €. Combined lecture and dance ticket: 17 €. Ticket sales at www.macba.cat.

PUBLICATION

Rosemarie Castoro. Focus at Infinity. With essays by Tanya Barson, Anna Lovatt, Melissa Feldman and Lucy Lippard, and a wide selection of works and documentation by the artist. Approximately 179 images. Barcelona: MACBA, 2017. 164 pp. Editions in Spanish and English.

■ ADMISSION TICKET VALID FOR ONE MONTH - MACBA: Plaça dels Àngels, 1, 08001 Barcelona, www.macba.cat

■ MORE INFORMATION AT www.macba.cat and @MACBA_Barcelona Síguenos en: #RosemarieCastoro

■ OPENING HOURS: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 11 am to 7.30 pm; Saturdays 10 am to 8 pm. Sundays and holidays 10 am to 3 pm; Tuesdays closed, except holidays

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