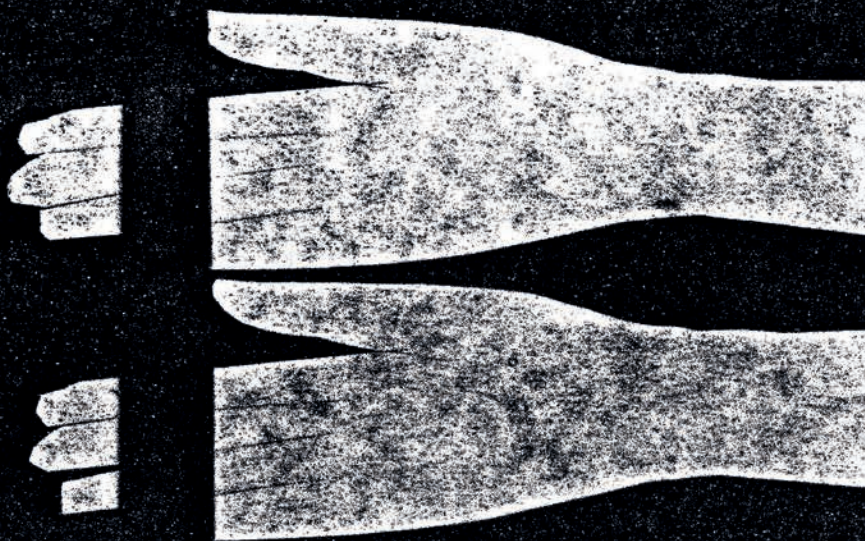


Embodied Absence

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Chilean Art of
the 1970s Now



MAPA DE CHILE

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11 a 18 octubre 2000
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**Carpenter Center
for the Visual Arts**

**Embodied Absence
Chilean Art of
the 1970s Now**

Oct 27, 2016–Jan 8, 2017

Works by Elías Adasme, Carmen Beuchat with Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta, CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte), Francisco Copello, Luz Donoso, Juan Downey, Carlos Leppe, Catalina Parra, Lotty Rosenfeld, UNAC (Unión por la Cultura), Cecilia Vicuña, and Raúl Zurita with Cristóbal Lehyt

Guest curated by Liz Munsell, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art & Special Initiatives, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and visiting curator, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS), Harvard University

This exhibition is co-organized with DRCLAS as part of its research project *Conceptual Stumblings*. Exhibition and program support is also provided by Harvard University Committee on the Arts. The first iteration, *Embodied Absence: Ephemerality and Collectivity in Chilean Art of the 1970s* (September 2015–January 2016), was organized by Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile, with its substantial support in research and production of works, in collaboration with DRCLAS.

Exhibition and program support is also provided by the Harvard University Committee on the Arts.



DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Embodied Absence

Liz Munsell

Following the U.S.-backed coup d'état in 1973,¹ Chilean artists residing in Santiago and abroad created artworks that spoke to their experience of political, social, and geographic marginalization. Inside the country, they adopted the highly coded languages of conceptual art to evade censorship, exhibited work in public space in lieu of institutional support, and formed independently run galleries and artist collectives to protect their individual identities. Artists abroad staged public events and made artwork in solidarity with those at home. Their exhibitions, performances, interventions, and workshops spread awareness among international audiences and broke down isolating conditions within Chile.

Experimental art made during this period often utilized the human body and impermanent materials as primary mediums. Such aesthetic dematerialization echoes the loss of thousands of “disappeared” victims of the military regime

and the absence of many others who lived in exile.² The challenge of transposing such artworks to another time and place is complicated by both their elusive formats and the specificity of the sociopolitical contexts in which they unfolded. *Embodied Absence: Chilean Art of the 1970s Now* forefronts the challenge of historicizing ephemeral art practices through a selection of works that are both relevant to, and remote from, Harvard University in 2016.³ Since the 1970s, national memory in Chile has been territory in dispute, embattled by the victims of widespread human rights abuses and the people who justified or committed them. History is always a living document; it is thwarted by the irreparable loss of life and material, and moderated by political acts of concealing and revealing. Dominant art historical narratives perpetuated during the dictatorship have established the legacies—or lack thereof—of many works in *Embodied Absence*.⁴ While significant research has been carried out by Chilean curators and art historians of generations since, a lack of funding for the arts from the neoliberal government, and an understandable resistance to dwelling on a dark yet still recent past, have curbed efforts to construct alternative art histories.⁵

The historical works included in this exhibition came into being as collective and physical experiences, yet today they are known largely through written accounts and analysis of select voices.⁶ Neither text, nor two-dimensional images, nor video are accurate incarnations of a lived encounter with an artwork. *Embodied Absence* posits that the lack of these artworks' physical presence, both in Chile or abroad, has enabled a series of myths and dominant art historical narratives to persist because the present-day viewer lacks the social and physical encounter that was an essential component of the original work.





The burgeoning attention to (and commodification of) performance art documentation—from gallery sales to museum exhibitions—has been rapidly followed by what some have termed “archive fatigue.” As more historical research is completed via both archival materials and the oral testimonies of individuals who pioneered the medium, the deficiencies of documentation in conveying the embodied experience of “the original” are continually unveiled. At the same time, if documentation is a mere specter of a performance artwork, performance reenactments have emerged as spectacles that are paradoxically scripted—a theater of an art form that developed in opposition to many of theater’s traditional tenets.

Perhaps for this reason, artists in this exhibition chose to create new works derived from their footage and memories, either immediately following their performances, happenings, and interventions or years later upon reflection. These include collages, prints, videos, installations, and performances whose materiality and scale prompt a physical relationship with the viewer yet refute the fetishization of the original and the myth of its seamless transference. Many of the works in *Embodied Absence* are on view in the United States for the first time or were commissioned explicitly for this exhibition, enabling the public and future scholars to develop their own embodied experience with the legacies of the work from this period.

Embodied Absence brings works of art that stem from ephemeral artworks into dialogue with new performances and installations. Two newly commissioned works are staged by the artists in collaboration with Chilean artists of a younger generation who have been heir to such weighted histories.

Whether static, time-based, or live, each work prompts questions about the ways in which we inherit and interpret fugitive artworks over time. The new performances and installations take memory and documentation as their points of departure, and give shape to works that we will never behold in their initial form. They reactivate and rearticulate (yet still bear witness to) works past, informing an ongoing conversation on the preservation of dematerialized art. Even while ephemeral artworks can never be experienced as they once were, they merit a place in the global history of conceptual art. The aesthetic commitments, and political circumstances that birth them, are still near to us.

¹Commander in Chief of the Chilean Army Augusto Pinochet overthrew President Salvador Allende's government on September 11, 1973, and remained in power until 1990.

²According to the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation of 1991 and subsequent governmental reports, documented cases alone account for more than 3,500 deaths and disappearances, at least 28,000 tortured, and about 200,000 exiled.

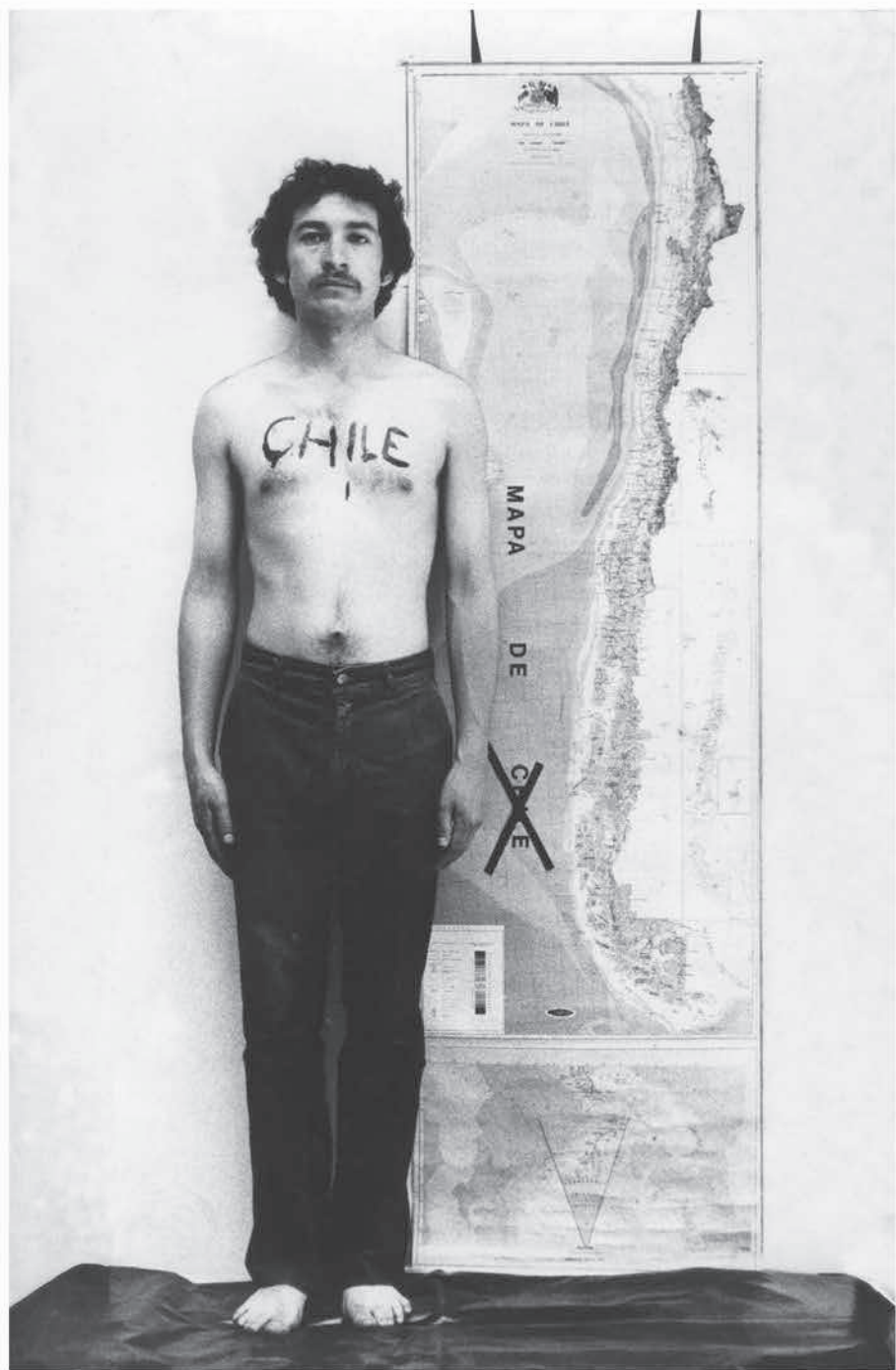
³Approximately 700 CIA documents declassified in 2000 through the Freedom of Information Act point to former Harvard professor of government Henry Kissinger as the policy architect of the coup in Chile. While Kissinger had insisted on Chile's geopolitical insignificance—describing the country as “a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica”—his narrative shifted drastically when Salvador Allende became the first democratically elected socialist president in the world. While serving on the Harvard faculty, Kissinger supervised covert CIA operations attempting to prevent Allende from taking office in 1970. Soon after, he resigned his

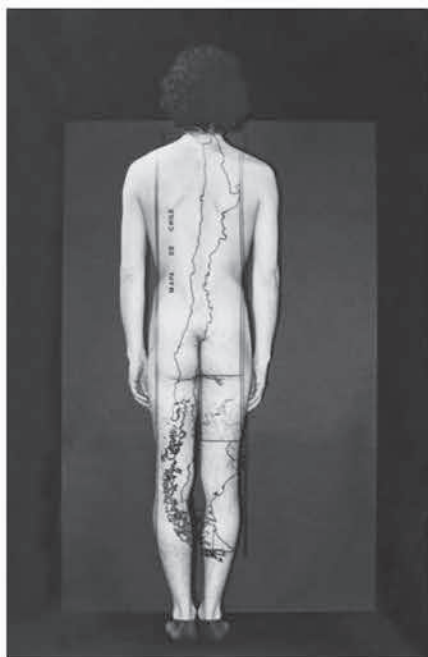
academic position to become the Nixon administration's Secretary of State.

⁴Ideological and psychological tensions between artists who chose to stay in Chile and those who left were not uncommon—some who stayed resented those they saw as abandoning the internal struggle, and some who left saw those inside as supporting or collaborating with the regime. Even while there are documented cases of artistic collaboration between individuals in both camps, artists and art historians from the generation of the '70s have tended to exclude references to collaboration with those abroad during the regime, perpetuating myths of Chilean isolationism.

⁵Significant art historical research and writing to date has been carried out by scholars Paulina Vargas, Soledad García Saavedra, Carla Macchiavello, and Federico Galende, among others, with text largely available only in Spanish to date.

⁶See the work of Nelly Richard, Adriana Valdés, and Justo Pastor Mellado in particular.





To Chile: Art-Actions, 1979–80. Photographic series. Inkjet print on vinyl. 69 x 44 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Elías Adasme

b. Illapel, 1955

To Chile was a series of urban interventions that Adasme staged in public space and/or for a camera. Through these actions, and additional collaborations in public space with artists Luz Donoso and Hernán Parada, Adasme shifted from his earlier work in the graphic arts towards the field of performance. Described as “art-actions”—temporary interventions in everyday life—these gestures momentarily broke codes of conduct in densely transited areas of Santiago and became a fundamental medium for artists of the era. Adasme’s compositions utilized his own body and daily surroundings as primary materials to refer to a latent image that was absent from the Chilean landscape yet pervasive in the minds of many—that of bodies in positions of torture. His photographs chart a visual relationship between the artist’s body and his national identity through the incorporation of a map of Chile, its stretched geography echoing his precariously suspended anatomy. By Adasme’s design, today the photographic documentation is printed and displayed at human scale, allowing spectators to experience it in direct relation to their own bodies in space.



Carmen Beuchat, *Two not One*, 1975, New York. Photo by Susan Rutman. Courtesy Carmen Beuchat Archive.

Carmen Beuchat with Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta

Carmen Beuchat (b. Santiago, 1941), Felipe Mujica, Johanna Unzueta (b. Santiago, 1974)

A foundational figure in postmodern dance, Carmen Beuchat formed her own company in Santiago before moving to New York in the late 1960s, where she became a member of Trisha Brown's original company and collaborated with artists such as Juan Downey and Gordon Matta-Clark. In 1977, Beuchat returned to Chile to present her own choreography. Amidst authoritarian rule, she staged the country's first workshop in contact improvisation, a technique that championed nonhierarchical values such as freedom of movement and the equality of all bodies.

Two not One II is a dance performance by Beuchat staged in collaboration with visual artists Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta. The work is a contemporary variation on Beuchat's experimental choreography *Two not One*, 1975 and is the first "reconstruction" of one of Beuchat's early works. The new choreography is based on fragmented memories and photographs of the original piece and draws from principles of dance from the 1970s, including improvisation, responsiveness, straight lines, and circular shapes that Beuchat termed "spatial corridors."

The live work is performed by two Chilean dancers, Carolina Escobillana and Paula Sacur, and staged amidst the installation *La tierra pone en equilibrio los extremos* (The Earth Balances the Extremes), 2016, which consists of a new series of fabric curtains by Mujica, designed and fabricated in collaboration with Unzueta, and recreations of two mobile structures that were part of the original dance piece in 1975.



Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta, *Arquitectura y amistad* (Architecture and friendship), installation view. Exhibition at Die Ecke Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, 2013. Courtesy of the artists.

The various components of the work—daners, sculptures, and fabric panels—function as temporary and fragile architecture that symbolically connects the dancers' organic movements with the more rectilinear, Le Corbusier–designed building. Through Mujica and Unzueta's installation, *Two not One II* consciously asserts its distance from the original work's context, reassembling and reframing a past work for a new time, space, and public.

This project is informed by ongoing research on Beuchat's archive headed by Chilean dancer and dance theorist Jennifer McColl.

Other works in the exhibition:

Carmen Beuchat, *Two not One II*, 2016. Dance performance with metal and fabric structures, originally designed by Michael Moneagle. Music by Miguel Jauregui. 30 min.

Designed and staged in collaboration with:

Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta, *La tierra pone en equilibrio los extremos*, 2016. Fabric curtains, metal rods, and metal and fabric structures. Courtesy of the artists.



Para No Morir de Hambre en el Arte (So as Not to Die of Hunger in Art) (still), 1979. Video (black and white, sound). 20 min. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artists. © 2016 CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte).

CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte)

Raúl Zurita (b. Santiago, 1950), Fernando Balcells (b. Santiago, 1950), Diamela Eltit (b. Santiago, 1949), Lotty Rosenfeld (b. Santiago, 1943), Juan Castillo (b. Santiago, 1952)

CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte) was formed in 1979 by sociologist Fernando Balcells, writer Diamela Eltit, poet and conceptual artist Raúl Zurita, and visual artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo. Committed to the practice of art-actions, they collectively developed artistic gestures that broke down the confines of their respective mediums to reach broad audiences in public space.

An iconic work in the history of urban art interventions in Latin America, *Para no morir del hambre en el arte* (So as Not to Die of Hunger in Art) was an elaborate yet subversive homage to the overthrown socialist government, and a coded protest of military rule in Chile. The work was part of a daylong event conceptualized by CADA to take place in three cities—Santiago, Bogotá, and Toronto—where Chilean artists staged public performances related to the topic of milk. CADA's contribution directly referenced over-thrown president Salvador Allende's "Half a Liter of Milk" campaign, which provided a daily ration of milk to nearly every child in Chile. Echoing the program, and marking its absence, the artists distributed milk in a marginal neighborhood of Santiago, infusing a conceptual artwork with a practical function. The milk trucks that later paraded through the city from the milk factory to the National Museum of Fine Arts served as a symbol of the Chilean population's systematic deprivation of basic human needs under Pinochet's military government, and questioned the role of the artist in the face of such circumstances.



Untitled, 1990. Collage: photographs, cardboard, wood board, tulle, organza, paint, paper, metallic paper, printed paper, glitter. 17 15/16 x 19 1/8 x 1 3/16 in. (framed). Courtesy of Juan Yarur Torres, Fundación AMA, Santiago, Chile.

Francisco Copello

b. Santiago, 1938–2006

Copello had lived outside of Chile for 12 years when he returned in 1973 to experience socialism and experiment with his newly found medium of performance art, having recently participated in several works by Robert Wilson in New York. Working in collaboration with local performers, Copello planned a performance artwork to be carried out at the National Museum of Fine Arts on September 12, 1973, which was cancelled following the events of the coup on September 11th. While his stay was short-lived, his flamboyant, camp aesthetic became influential for artists of later generations, such as Carlos Leppe. In the mid to late '70s, he lived primarily in Italy, where he developed performances in reaction to the social and political turmoil in his home country and presented at festivals and other public forums. Also a painter and renowned graphic artist, Copello made numerous collages in the 1990s by combining photographic documentation of his performances with the lush materiality of paper and fabric, recalling the dramatic costuming of his live works.

Other works in the exhibition:

Il Gioco dell'Ambiguita (The Ambiguity Game), 1977. Silver gelatin print. 23 1/16 x 19 1/8 x 1 3/16 in. (framed). Photography Maurizio Buscarino. Courtesy of Colección Juan Yarur Torres, Fundación AMA, Santiago, Chile.

Untitled, 1990. Collage: photographs, cardboard, wood board, tulle, organza, paint, paper, metallic paper, printed paper, glitter. 17 15/16 x 19 1/8 x 1 3/16 in. (framed). Courtesy of Juan Yarur Torres, Fundación AMA, Santiago, Chile.



Señalamientos con cuerpo estrecho (Signage with Narrow Body), c. 1979. Documentation of silk-screen poster in Calle Libertad, Santiago. Private collection.

Luz Donoso

b. Santiago, 1921–2008

Donoso was a graphic artist, muralist, political activist, and teacher. Beginning in the mid 1960s, she was one of the most prominent participants in the widespread muralist movement in support of Allende's presidential campaign. In the first months of the dictatorship, she was dismissed from her teaching position at the Universidad de Chile, like many of her leftist colleagues, and shortly after cofounded an artist-run workspace and forum, TAV (Taller de Artes Visuales).

In 1976, as part of a solo exhibition held at the Chilean-French Institute, Donoso displayed a series of silkscreened images of disjointed bodies that she thought of as subversive logotypes. Based on the insular experience of exhibiting in a gallery setting, she began to display her posters in urban space, taking considerable risks in order to make her work accessible to a wider public.

In the spirit of the artist's democratic approach, Donoso's work is exhibited in poster form as part of *Embodied Absence*, and is also the subject of a workshop on wheat-pasting, a technique commonly used by artists and activists to install printed material in public locations. Participants are invited to question and consider how political actions are enacted in public space today, both in contrast and relation to Chile's history. This mode of presenting Donoso's work was developed by the curator in collaboration with the artist's family. Rather than exhibiting Donoso's work inside the white-cube environment she renounced long ago, this format aims to perpetuate the artist's political and pedagogic aspirations for her work.

A second portion of this installation is on view outside the Carpenter Center on Green Street in Central Square, Cambridge, in conjunction with the city's Public Art Council.



In the Beginning (still), 1976. Video (black and white, sound). 4:3, 17:20 min.

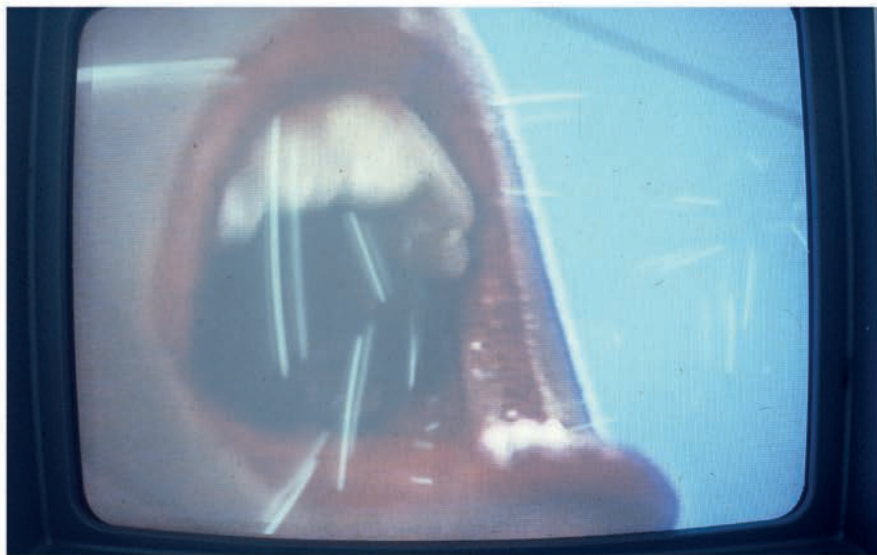
Courtesy of the Estate of Juan Downey and Marilyns B. Downey

Juan Downey

b. Santiago, 1940–93

A founding figure in video and performance art based in New York, Downey collaborated with artists such as Carmen Beuchat and Francisco Copello. From 1973 to 1976, he traveled throughout the Americas capturing footage that blends autobiography and ethnography, arriving as far south as his home country.

In the Beginning is one of the first works by a Chilean artist to bridge experimental theater and video art. The work is a product of a collaboration between the artist and the theater group Aleph, which included two members with family that had been detained by the military regime. Downey's video features select scenes from Aleph's 1974 play, *In the Beginning, There Was Life*, which were reinterpreted and filmed in Downey's home when he visited Chile in 1976. The play criticizes the roles of the media and the Chilean upper class in perpetuating cultural norms that ignored or openly accepted the crimes of the dictatorship that were largely waged on the poor and the left, including artists and intellectuals. In 1976, Downey released this video with English subtitles and circulated it internationally, creating access to voices that could not be heard within Chile.



Las Cantatrices (The Female Singers) (still), 1979. Four-channel video of performance. 10 min.
Courtesy of D21 Proyectos de Arte.

Carlos Leppe

b. Santiago, 1952–2015

Las Cantatrices (The Female Singers) is a performance staged for video in which the artist poses as an opera singer while his mother recites a text on the artist's birth and her relationship to the men in her life. The pressure-laden performance of grotesque femininity is emphasized through the artist's application of plaster and makeup to his body and face—materials that are employed to restrict and mask the human figure. While the metal facial apparatus and violent treatment that Leppe subjects his own body to may reference the practice of torture but about by the military regime beginning in 1973, the device also serves as a nod to modern medical treatment, an aspect revealed through his mother's reflections on the artist's difficult birth. Leppe embodies the violence and suffering experienced around him during the dictatorship and throughout his familial history, crystallizing uncontainable emotions into a material form and image.

Other works in exhibition:

Las Cantatrices (The Female Singers), 1979. Silver gelatin prints. Variable sizes. Courtesy of D21 Proyectos de Arte.

Las Cantatrices (The Female Singers), 1979. Polaroid photo documentation. 3 1/2 x 4 in. Courtesy of D21 Proyectos de Arte.



Imbunche gigante (Giant Imbunche), 2016. Cotton cloth, stuffed with cloth, burlap cord, string, nylon, and metal bar. 71 x 43 x 7 1/2 in. Photo by Isabel Soler Parra. Courtesy of private collection.

Catalina Parra

b. Santiago, 1940

Following her return from Germany to Chile in 1973, Parra's work drew from her participation in the Fluxus movement and also began to reference Chilean folklore in response to local conditions. In 1977, she exhibited the first version of her sculpture *Imbunche gigante* (Giant Imbunche) together with eight other works that made reference to the mutilation and disintegration of the human body. Parra's *Imbunche* was named for a mythological character from a remote island in southern Chile: a deformed figure whose bodily orifices were sewn shut to prevent evil forces from escaping it. Pointing to state-sanctioned censorship, torture, and the forced disappearances of those deemed to be enemies of the military regime, the work has served as a haunting and visceral emblem of the decade.

Intentionally utilizing materials that are light-sensitive and prone to rot, Parra introduced the notion of deterioration as a performative element of the physical artwork. Her embrace of the work's inevitable degeneration and disappearance was posed from the onset as both the death and potential rebirth of the object, referencing the life cycle of the human body that returns to the fertile earth. Today, manifested in new materials, the *Imbunche* is exhibited here for the first time in nearly 40 years, completing its own life cycle as envisioned by the artist.



Palacio de la Moneda (The Moneda Palace), 1988. Gelatin silver print. 20 x 27 in. (framed). Harvard Art Museums/ Fogg Museum, Transfer from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University, Estrellita Bograd Brodsky Fund for Latin American Art and Culture and Gustavo E. Brillembourg Memorial Fund.

Lotty Rosenfeld

b. Santiago, 1943

In 1979, Rosenfeld, a visual artist and founding member of the artist collective CADA, used video and photography to document her art-actions, tools of extremely limited access in Chile. As a feminist artist, Rosenfeld's solo interventions questioned the uncontested legitimacy of sign systems in urban spaces, developing her critique of authoritarian rule through visual discourse in outdoors.

In her series of works *A Mile of Crosses on the Pavement* (1979–present), she intersects commonly encountered road-divide markings with panels of white fabric of the same thickness and length. Forming a cross that visually interrupts normal circulation, these works put “the sign in doubt and its legibility in crisis by combining its lines—vertical and horizontal—under a feminine mode of dissidence.”¹ By marking the pavement with the letter X, Rosenfeld exposes the autocratic base of social norms. Her action reveals a two-fold exclusion—the “invisible” mechanisms that govern movement in urban environments, and the suppression of voices that are not compliant.

¹Richard, Nelly. *Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile since 1973*. (Melbourne: Art and Text, 1986), 139.



Photo documentation of a collective intervention on March 11, 1981, Mapocho River, Chile. Vintage photograph. 10 3/5 x 9 2/5 in. framed. Courtesy of Virginia Errázuriz (Taller de Artes Visuales).

UNAC (Unión por la Cultura)

Santiago, active from 1977 to 1981

In the late 1970s, several artists living in Santiago formed UNAC (Unión por la Cultura). The diverse group represented several arms of the anti-dictatorial struggle and different cultural allegiances of the period, including members of the graphic arts workshop TAV (Taller de Artes Visuales). For their most well-known collective action, the UNAC artists dumped red dye into the waters of the Mapocho River, which runs through the center of Santiago. The bold stains served as a temporary reminder of those who had disappeared in the previous decade at the hands of state-sponsored violence. In the words of Virginia Errázuriz, an artist who participated in both UNAC and TAV, dyeing parts of the most public body of water was a “political gesture with visual language.” Very few images attest to the highly risky action, one of the most legendary urban art interventions to give temporary presence to still-missing bodies.

This photograph was displayed for the first time in 2015 as part of the earlier iteration of this exhibition in Santiago, in part because there is no consensus regarding the date and participants of the action. The most cited date is March 11, 1980, referring to Pinochet’s assumption of the Presidency of the Republic according to the new constitution promulgated in 1980, despite Pinochet taking control on March 11, 1981.



Sol y Dar y Dad, una palabra bailada, a danced word (still), 1980. From the series *Palabrarmas*, Bogotá. Filmed in 16 mm, transferred to digital video (color, silent). 4:3, 4 min. Courtesy of the artist.

Cecilia Vicuña

b. Santiago, 1948

During her stay in London from 1972 to 1975, Vicuña cofounded Artists for Democracy, an organization formed in solidarity with the numerous anti-dictatorial struggles that were transpiring throughout the world. After settling in Bogotá in the late 1970s, she continued to organize live performance-lectures, poetry readings, and workshops in relation to the political situation in Chile as part of her work in situ.

In her series *Palabrarmas* (Word-weapons), Vicuña unites the act of writing and speaking words with the power to enact the ideas they pose. Filmed in Bogotá, Vicuña's video documents the performative exercises she organized with friends to give material form and social connection to phrases she wrote, such as "Words are spades with wings/words are better than bullets/words are weapons/to open reality." In the final shot of the film, the group appears perched on the northernmost area of the Andes Mountains, which stretch about 4,000 miles south to Chile. Staged in solidarity with the Santiago-based artist collective CADA, with whom Vicuña collaborated from afar in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the image's colorful composition contrasts with the often black-and-white documentation that has become emblematic of the same period in Santiago. The video highlights critical connections between the artists operating abroad and in Chile—connections that superseded great distances and whose legacy outlasts the dematerialized art-actions they created.



Cecilia Vicuña, *Vaso de Leche, Bogotá* (Glass of Milk, Bogotá) (detail), 1979. Installation of 8 photographs and a letterpress poster on paper. Variable dimensions. Private collection. Courtesy of England & Co. Gallery.

Vaso de Leche, Bogotá (Glass of Milk, Bogotá) contrasts socialist president Salvador Allende's "Half a Liter of Milk" campaign begun in 1971, and the notorious "Milkman Crime" in Colombia in which more than a thousand children died from drinking milk that had been intentionally contaminated as a corporate cost-cutting measure. Vicuña created this performative intervention in public space in response to an invitation from members of CADA to produce an action in Bogotá the same day they staged their iconic art-action *Para No Morir de Hambre en el Arte* (So as Not to Die of Hunger in Art).

For her contribution to this transnationally organized action, Vicuña inscribed a poem on the pavement and poured a glass of white paint on the ground by tugging it with a thread to refer to the precarious access to basic nutrients in Latin America. Displayed here as a configuration of photographs and a poster that she designed and posted in the city to promote the event, the installation highlights the temporal and physical distance between the immediacy of her gesture and our current experience of the action. Vicuña's poster can be seen wheat-pasted on a city wall in Bogotá in her video *Sol y Dar y Dad, a danced word*.



Cristóbal Lehyt, *Sin título* (Untitled), 2016. From the series *Drama Projections*, 2003–ongoing. Ink on wall. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Raúl Zurita with Cristóbal Lehyt

Raúl Zurita (b. Santiago, 1973), Cristóbal Lehyt (b. Santiago, 1973)

A central figure in Chilean poetry and conceptual art, Raúl Zurita cofounded the artist collective CADA in 1979 and used performance as an act of political resistance in both his collective and solo work. His poetry often references bodies that are both absent and omnipresent, sometimes in relation to the early years of the dictatorship. *Purgatory*, his influential book of poetry published in 1979, featured a photograph of the artist's self-mutilated face on its cover as an expression incarnate of the pain that was collectively experienced in Chile throughout the decade.

For *Embodied Absence*, Zurita collaborated with Cristóbal Lehyt, a visual artist of a later generation, to create a performance-lecture presented at the start of the exhibition. The performance transposes Zurita's texts, *El Sermón de la montaña* (The Sermon from the Mountain) 1969 and *Bruno se dobla, cae* (Bruno bends over, falls) 2001 onto the present tense through a live reading and the creation of a new wall drawing Lehyt made in response to them. While Zurita recites two poems—one from before the dictatorship, one from after—a live-stream projection depicts a performer tracing Lehyt's drawings onto the gallery wall. These simultaneous yet distanced actions raise questions about the interpretation of artistic legacy over time, and emphasize the difficulty of expressing the specific context of 1970s Chile to an audience that did not experience it firsthand. Through its multiple tracings of the same figure, the drawing echoes Zurita's artistic gesture—distorted by trauma from its inception—and embraces an inevitable distancing from this era as time passes.

Public Programs

Talk + Wheat-pasting Workshop

Luz Donoso: Urban Art Interventions

Wed, Oct 19, 5:30 pm

Level 1

Performance

Carmen Beuchat

with Felipe Mujica and Johanna Unzueta

Two not One II, 2016

Thu, Oct 27, 6 pm + Sat, Oct 29, 6 pm

Level 1

Both performances have limited seating.
First come, first served.

Panel + Performance

Conceptual Stumblings and Performance

with Raúl Zurita and Cristóbal Lehyt

Fri, Oct 28, 4 pm

DRCLAS

Center for Government and International
Studies South

1730 Cambridge St,

Room S-250

Curatorial Walkthrough

Liz Munsell

Thu, Nov 17, 5:30 pm

Level 1 + 3

On Curating: Displacement

Mary Schneider Enríquez
and Liz Munsell

Tue, Dec 13, 1-2:30pm

Harvard Art Museums

32 Quincy St, Cambridge

All programs are located at Carpenter
Center for the Visual Arts, 24 Quincy
St, unless noted. All programs
are free and open to the public.
Check website for further details.
ccva.fas.harvard.edu/embodied-absence



**Carpenter Center
for the Visual Arts**

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24 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
carpenter.center
ccva@fas.harvard.edu

Gallery Hours Thu-Sun, 12-6 pm
Free and open to the public

Mission

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is dedicated to the synthesis of art, design, and education through the exhibition of existing works and production of new commissions. It strives to bring people, ideas, and objects together in generative ways that provide unparalleled experiences with contemporary art, ultimately enriching the creative and intellectual lives of our audiences.

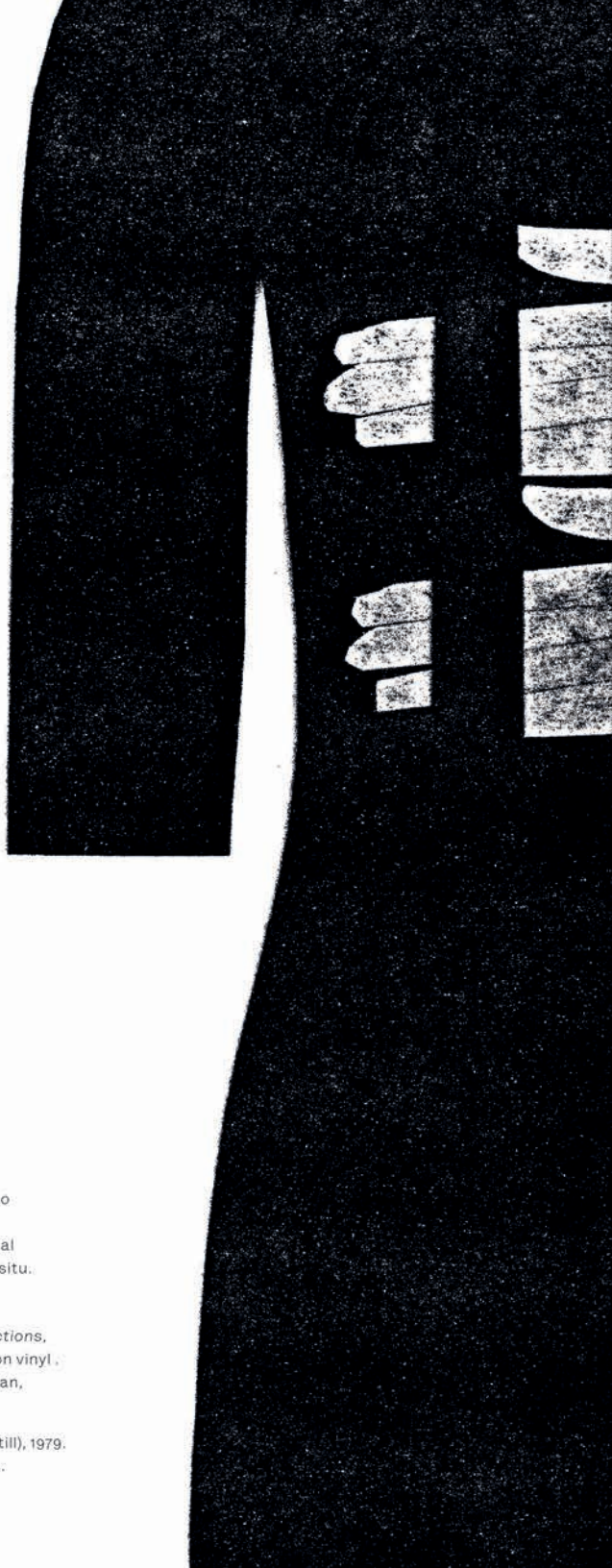
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
James Voorhies, former *John R. and
Barbara Robinson Family Director*
Dina Deitsch, *Interim Director*
Daisy Nam, *Assistant Director*
Anna Kovacs, *Exhibitions Manager*
Daisy Wong, *Exhibition Production
Assistant*

Program

The Carpenter Center program fosters meaningful engagement among artists, art, and our audiences. Exhibitions, lectures, residencies, publications, performances, screenings, and informal gatherings are choreographed to create a place where visual literacy, knowledge production, contemporary art, and critical inquiry seamlessly meet.

Siena Scarff, *Design*
John Ewing, *Copy Editor*
Linco, *Printing*

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Cover: *Señalamientos con cuerpo estrecho* (Signage with Narrow Body), c. 1979. Digital reproduction of a silkscreen print and digital reproduction of photograph of the work in situ. Courtesy of private collection, Santiago.

Inside cover: Elías Adasme. *To Chile: Art-Actions*, 1979–80. Photographic series. Inkjet print on vinyl. 69 x 44 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Page 6, 7: Carlos Leppe, *Las Cantatrices* (still), 1979. Four-channel video of performance. 10 min. Courtesy of D21 Proyectos de Arte.