

Rhea Anastas

Notes on *Christine Kozlov*

Arts and Letters

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Christine Kozlov is on view at the American Academy of Arts and Letters from September 26, 2024 to February 9, 2025. The exhibition is organized by Rhea Anastas, independent curator, and Nora Schultz, artist, with exhibition design by Schultz, in cooperation with the Christine Kozlov Estate.

Anastas and Schultz offer the texts and images in this pamphlet as a companion to the exhibition.

Notes on *Christine Kozlov*

Christine Kozlov is a posthumous show made by two people born twenty-four and thirty years after Christine Kozlov, one of the earliest voices of the Conceptual art movement. These notes are meant to address a handful of the core decisions that we made early in the process of working directly with Kozlov's art. From the outset, Nora and I geared our research and exhibition-making techniques toward present-day audiences experiencing works that largely date from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s. We imagined an in-depth presentation of all the works that Kozlov exhibited during her lifetime and committed to presenting them as they are—that is, as contemporary art/ideas and without the mediation of art history or criticism apart from what is evidenced in the work itself. It may be useful to say that we both teach studio art and treat art, no matter when it was made, as occupying the here and now. This present tense affects how we experience our present and future.

Kozlov began thinking in terms of experience, context, and history in the art field as early as 1967

when she established the Lannis Gallery in New York, which became a nexus for the development of Conceptual art in New York and brought Kozlov into contact with networks—what music historian Benjamin Piekut has called “concrete matters of training, distribution, audiences, commerce, personal relationships, and production networks.” By 1969–70, Kozlov was invited to show in most of the groundbreaking exhibitions of Conceptual art in New York and many other cities in the United States, Western Europe, and South America, including the *Number Shows*, a series of exhibitions curated by Lucy Lippard between 1969 and 1974; *Information* (1970), curated by Kynaston McShine at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and *Arte de Sistemas*, organized by Jorge Glusberg at CAYC—Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Buenos Aires (1971). Kozlov and many other artists who participated in these shows introduced novel strategies, as well as uncertainty and changeability, into exhibition making, often transforming the concept and form of the curatorial agenda itself: artist rosters were in flux, works were sometimes physically installed and sometimes sent by mail, and exhibition catalogues were sites for artworks.

Kozlov maintained an archive of her art and related materials throughout her lifetime. She stored her own works of Conceptual art alongside those of others (collected through gifts, trades, and purchases), along with a rich collection of exhibition

cards, posters, photographs, books, manuscripts, clipped or photocopied articles, and letters to and from other Conceptual art practitioners, friends, and family members. Artist Marilyn Thompson, Kozlov’s daughter, generously provided us access to this archive, which she has cared for since Kozlov’s death in 2005.

Early in our work, Nora and I decided to view and learn about Kozlov’s artworks directly rather than consult critics’ descriptions or art-historical interpretations. Even though I know that knowledge is collective, shared, and accumulated, it is important to trust in the artist to determine her position, so we turned our attention to exploring how Kozlov’s own thinking about the relationship of her ideas to art history comes across in her artwork. We organized a study group with undergraduate and graduate students in our respective studio art classes, hoping that the complexity of Kozlov’s Conceptual art would be borne out in conversations over time. We posed such questions as: What if we treated Kozlov’s works as objects contemporaneous with our own time? What kind of experience would this produce? What if we paid close attention to the way that Kozlov, through her art, thought about art history? These groups included Nora Schultz’s class in Sculpture and Installation at Vienna’s Academy of Fine Arts and Rhea Anastas’s Artists as Writers class at the Department of Art, University of California, Irvine.

There is an angry wound that lies in the background of our work, and that is how many women artists and women writers have been written out of history. I will say it: Kozlov was the only book we needed. You could gasp or frown in disagreement upon reading this, but I have my reasons. I simply won't spend any more time than I already have in my adult life in educational institutions thinking in relation to writers who have written women artists and women writers out of history.

There is another factor at play in our choice to trace Kozlov's thinking through the presentation of her artworks rather than by compiling arguments and positions drawn from the writing on Conceptual art. Relying on arguments and positions from most existing critical writing on Conceptual art would mean utilizing ambivalent and minoritizing statements untrue to Kozlov's record, as well as to other artists' work. A choice to work from discourse would have meant agreeing with its distortions; that option would have meant saying that Kozlov was the first woman in the male-dominated Conceptual art network in New York that emerged in 1967–68 and that Kozlov and her contemporary Adrian Piper were the only women in that movement. We know better from many events, but one that Kozlov participated in is particularly important: *C. 7,500* (1973–74), curated by Lucy Lippard. The show consisted of only Conceptual works by women artists, notably Hanne Darboven, Bernadette Mayer, Piper, and Kozlov,

and shows the vitality and variety of women's contributions. Yet *C. 7,500* had little effect on critiques and histories of Conceptual art.

With this project, Nora and I vowed to take on Kozlov as an artist and author seriously without concern for canonizing or the qualifying statements, rationalizations, or other fabrications and ambivalences of the written record on the period. We conducted our courses according to a principle: to study Kozlov's work within a broad examination of Conceptual art but without narrating the movement (and continuing such distortions) or teaching other practitioners. Why spend any more time doing our own thinking in relation to views that treat women artists and thinkers as unworthy of comment? It is important in research and exhibition making to trust that an artist's positions are their choices. What we came to observe about Kozlov's work by viewing her work—rather than reading about it—was that Kozlov's art is very actively describing and interpreting through its very ideas and forms: it does all the necessary interpreting and contextualizing on its own. Because Conceptualism newly positioned viewership, interpretation is a natural tendency; we needed to throw away hierarchies that privilege the specialist. One can ask while viewing this show how Kozlov engaged with her immediate forerunners, Ad Reinhardt, Donald Judd, Andy Warhol, and others. And yet, unlike many of her Conceptual art peers, Kozlov didn't put forward long-winded

theorizations in public. Another important clue lies in how Kozlov drew, as writers might, from observations of daily activity in constructing her positions in art, culture, and politics. So Nora and I unlearned the academic and critical art discourse around Conceptual art as it circulated (and strangled) in the 1990s; instead, we committed to listening to the voices of our students and others in our study group.

Nora and I decided to show this work without mediation, free of interpretive and educational conventions like wall labels or wall texts alongside it. With almost no exceptions, each object selected for inclusion is an artwork. Some works are found in publications, as Kozlov sometimes distributed her work through publications. On a few occasions, we decided to include one of Kozlov's handwritten notes or typewritten manuscripts to bring an important idea and context to an artwork on view nearby. As part of our research, we traced exhibitions of Kozlov's work during the late 1980s through the early 2000s and decided against some prior choices of display that tilted the work toward more stable and familiar forms of art objects or made a work appear closer to a document than an artwork per se.

The lists hanging throughout this exhibition are Kozlov's compilations of ideas/works, which she supplied in response to invitations to contribute to publications accompanying exhibitions or anthologies of Conceptual art. In these concise works, without precedent in Conceptual art that I know of,

Kozlov records her activity over time, captured in these ideas/works (not simply titles). She discovers a form that cannot be classified as explanation, narrative, theory, or title; it is not a checklist or index. A new idea among many of Kozlov's new ideas, these lists attest to how art can instantiate an idea without, for example, hanging on a wall as an object.

We also have risked exhibiting work that Kozlov did not show in her lifetime. *Untitled (Stealth Bomber)*, an unfinished series from the early 1990s, for example, is a collection of images of American-made stealth bombers, clipped and enlarged newspaper articles about their use in the first Persian Gulf War, and drawings of them in charcoal and pencil. Another important instance is our inclusion of three drawings that show Kozlov building the coding system for multiple sounds and their overlapping durations of "sounding" (her term) for her series of *Sound Structures* (1965–67).

This is a posthumous show but this quality does not determine an audience's experience of Kozlov's art. It is as alive and relevant as ever.

Rhea Anastas

Christine Kozlov made Conceptual Art. She was one of its first practitioners. Starting in the mid-1960s, her ideas contributed to putting paid to what was left of High Modernism's historic productive and discursive hegemony after being taken literally in minimalism. Its conventions and constraints became fodder for sly takes and retakes.

Nowhere was resetting understandings of art at the time more vital than in Conceptual Art, nor any set of practices to which it was central in quite the same way, or to the same degree. What distinguished Conceptualism from its discursive competitors was the range of relations to philosophy—for logic and truth sake—and to politics for real-world edge—both made evident in Kozlov's objects.

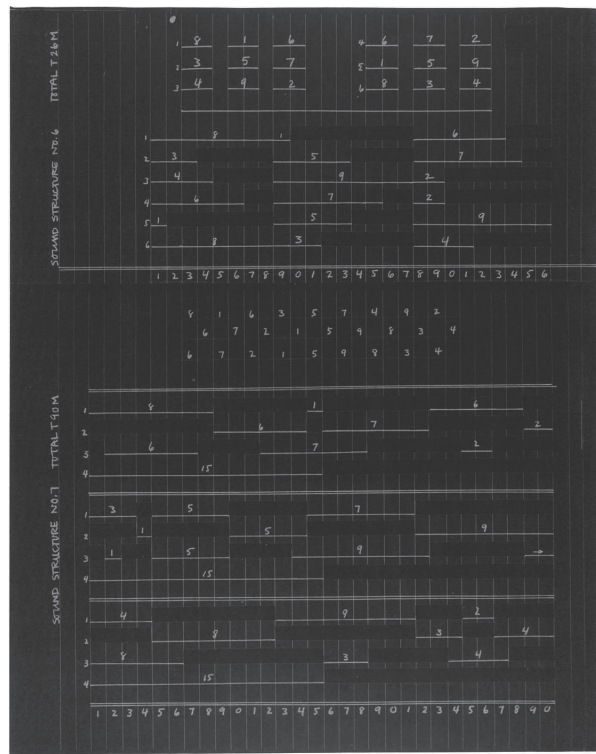
Upon leaving art school, she had abandoned classical forms, along with their givens and orthodoxies, and turned instead to making and presenting objects whose 'artness,' so to say, consisted in part of their being questions as to that identity, to the nature and character of what the object instantiated.

Philosophically and functionally Kozlov understood ART as an open concept—an object being counted a work of art depending on its being represented as such, mentally in the first instance, and, non-trivially, in language when it comes up for the count as a manifestation worth context-dependent appreciation. She was one of the few artists even among Conceptualists who did not think that art was a practice

on a par with philosophy as a practice, nor that a unified theory of art was possible, art lacking an ontology. By the same token however there was plenty of room for speculation in and on terms, historic and or functional, formal or casual, even if there was no objective way of knowing all and only which works represent binding closures on present or future practice in ways anyone aspiring to relevance absolutely must take into account.

In terms of the history of these ideas it seems not inapposite to suggest that Kozlov was alive to a line of truth in and to materials, to relations objectified by Duchamp, and brought up to realistic speed by Warhol—the art world as readymade, and business therein. Kozlov understood the art world as a world of worlds, mind-space, where a urinal can be seen and understood as itself and, via a title and signature, as something else—a fountain— and piss can be paint.

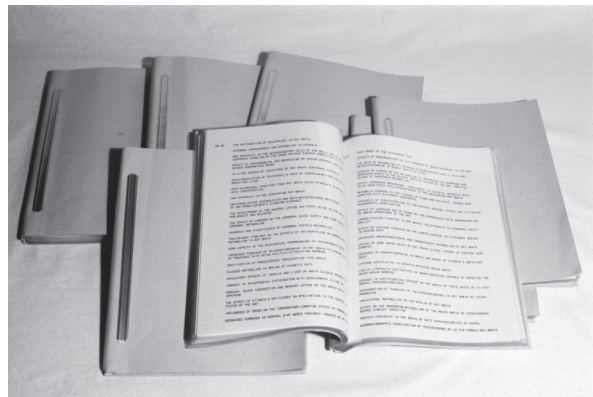
In this exhibition one sees how she deplored preciousness but not pretense, how she made objects, among other things, of dietary records, of developed notation for sound structures with unspecified sources, of notebooks of lists of brain research articles, of stacked foreign newspapers, of the operational limits of a tape machine to illustrate the flow and fate of information in art. She made something of mundane stuff and things. Call it what you will. In any case, you can almost always think you are seeing double.



Christine Kozlov, *Sound Structure No. 6*, *Sound Structure No. 7*, 1965. Photostat, 11 × 8 ½ inches (27.9 × 21.6 cm). Courtesy of Collection Fabre, Brussels



Christine Kozlov, *No Title (Transparent Film #2)*, 1967. 16mm unexposed film leader tape in canister with title tape, $7\frac{1}{8} \times 1$ inches (18.1 $\times$ 2.5 cm). Courtesy of Christine Kozlov Estate, London. Photo by Jay Cantor



Christine Kozlov, *Neurological Compilation: The Physical Mind Since 1945 (Project 1: The Bibliography)*, 1969. Nine paper folders with individual sheets of paper, $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ inches (29.2 $\times$ 22.9 cm). Courtesy of Christine Kozlov Estate, London. Photo by Jay Cantor

EATING PIECE
(2/20/69 - 6/12/69)

FIGURATIVE WORK NO.1

CHRISTINE KOZLOV

CHRISTINE KOZLOV 1969

ORANGE JUICE, CEREAL WITH MILK, TOAST WITH BUTTER AND JAM,
COFFEE.
ROAST LAMB, PEAS, ROAST POTATOES, MILK, COFFEE.
PEA SOUP, LASAGNE, COLA.

APPLE JUICE, EGG, COFFEE.
CHEESEBURGER, FRIED POTATOES, COLA.
HAM SANDWICH, OVALTINE.

ORANGE JUICE, EGGS, FRIED POTATOES, COFFEE.
FRUIT SALAD, MILK.

ORANGE JUICE, ROAST LAMB, FRENCH BEANS, ROAST POTATOES.
SPAGHETTI WITH MEAT AND TOMATO AND CHEESE SAUCE, COLA.

ORANGE JUICE, EGG, BACON, ROLL WITH BUTTER, COFFEE.
SMOKED FISH, MILK, ROLL, FRUIT, CHEESE.

EGGS, TOMATOES, RAISON ROLL WITH BUTTER, COFFEE.
STEAK, FRIED POTATOES, TOMATOES.

GRAPEFRUIT JUICE, STEAK AND KIDNEY PIE, PEAS, TEA, ECLAIRE.
CHEESE, APPLE, MILK, SALAD GREENS.

ORANGE JUICE, EGG, BREAD WITH BUTTER, COFFEE.
FRIED FISH, FRIED POTATOES, BEER, TEA.

MUSHROOM OMELETTE, FRIED POTATOES, PEAS, GRAPEFRUIT JUICE,
COFFEE.

EGGS, SAUSAGE, ORANGE DRINK, ROLL AND BUTTER, COFFEE.
GRAPEFRUIT JUICE, ROAST LAMB, ROAST POTATOES, CARROTS, PEAS,
APPLE PIE WITH ICE CREAM, COFFEE.

STEAK AND KIDNEY PIE, PEAS, TEA.
STEAK PIE, FRIED POTATOES, PEAS, TEA.

PINEAPPLE JUICE, COFFEE.
ECLAIRE, TEA.
EGGS AND ONIONS, BEANS, BREAD AND BUTTER, TEA.

CEREAL WITH MILK, TEA.
ROAST BEEF SANDWICH, COFFEE.
CHICKEN SOUP.

SHRIMP WITH SNOW PEAS, PORK WITH CHINESE VEGETABLES, WHITE WINE,
GLAZED BANANAS, COFFEE, CHOCOLATE.

CHICKEN, SALAD, COLA.
SPAGHETTI WITH MEAT AND TOMATO AND CHEESE SAUCE, COLA.

LAMB CASSAROLE, FRIED POTATOES, CARROTS, PEAS, ORANGE JUICE,
COFFEE.
CHICKEN SOUP, TEA, CHICKEN WING.

above and opposite Christine Kozlov, *Eating Piece* (2/20/69-6/12/69)
Figurative Work No. 1, 1969. Twelve-page manuscript with title
sheet signed by the artist, 11 5/8 x 8 1/4 inches (29.5 x 21 cm), each.
Courtesy of Collection Fabre, Brussels

Telegramm

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Verzögerungs-
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Datum

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Empfangen

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TSI Leverkusen 1

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WUI MSG

LT STADT ISCHES MUSEUM

LEVERKUSEN SCHLOSS MORSBROICH

509 LEVERKUSENGERMANY

Leitvermerk

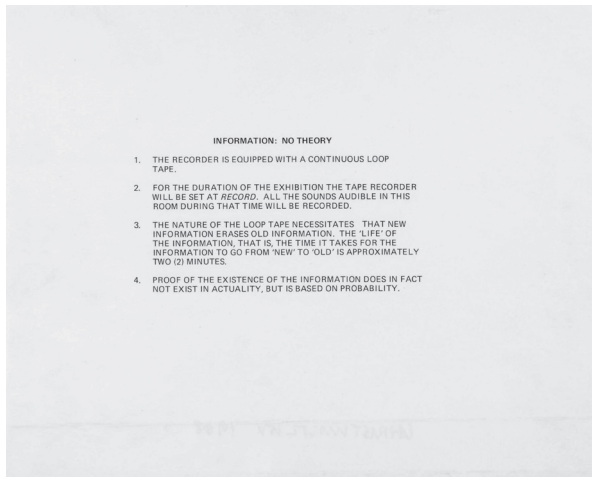
I WILL SEND YOU A SERIES OF CABLES DURING THE EXHIBITION THESE
WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF CONCEPTS
THAT I HAVE REJECTED DURING THAT TIME THIS CABLE AND THE
ONES FOLLOWING WILL CONSTITUTE THE WORK C KOZLOV

Dienstliche Rückfragen

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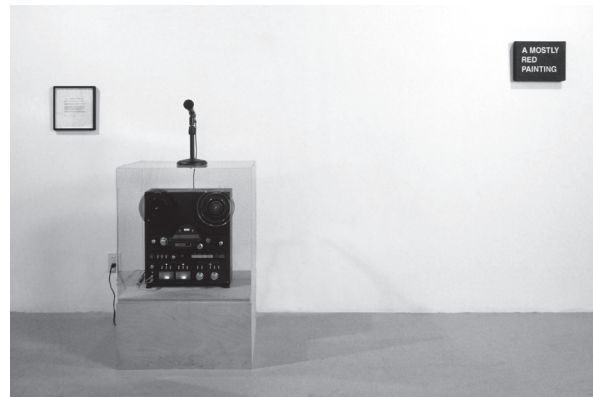
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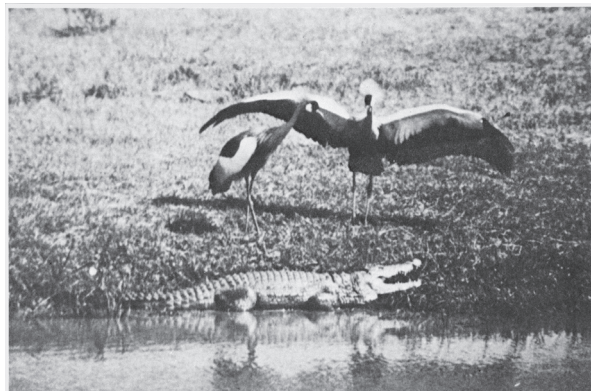


above Christine Kozlov, *Information: No Theory* (detail), 1970. Typewritten sheet of paper, signed in pencil on verso, $8\frac{5}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$ inches (21.9 $\times$ 27 cm). Courtesy of Collection Fabre, Brussels

previous Christine Kozlov, *I will send you a series of cables during the exhibition these will supply you with information about the amount of concepts that I have rejected during that time this cable and the ones following will constitute the work C Kozlov* Städtisches Museum Leverkusen Schloss Morsbroich 509 Leverkusen Germany, 1969. Telegram, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ inches (14.6 $\times$ 21 cm). Courtesy of Collection Fabre, Brussels



Installation view, 1965–1975: *Reconsidering the Object of Art*, Temporary Contemporary, Los Angeles, 1995–1996. From left: Christine Kozlov, *Information: No Theory*, 1970, and *A Mostly Painting (Red)*, 1969. Photo by Fredrik Nilsen. Courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles



above and opposite Christine Kozlov, *Untitled* (front and back), 1973, from the artist's book *C. 7500: an exhibition organized by Lucy Lippard* (Valencia, CA: California Institute of the Arts, 1974). One of thirty loose leaf cards (offset prints on paper), 4 × 6 inches (10.2 × 15.2 cm). Courtesy of California Institute of the Arts Library & Institute Archives

Daily Life- The Crocodile- A Film/ Social Structure of Bees- A Film/ Neuro-logical Compilation- Bibliography- Research on the physical mind. Neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuropathology, neurosurgery, neuropsychiatry/ Telegram with statement containing no information/ Information-No Theory. A recorder equipped with a loop tape so that as new sounds are recorded the previous recorded sounds are erased. Proof of the existence of the information does in fact not exist in actuality but, is based on probability/ A series of cables sent during an exhibition supplying facts about the amount of concepts rejected/ Figurative work. A list of everything eaten during six months/ 271 blank sheets of paper corresponding to 271 days of concepts rejected/ Device for arbitrary autobiography(temporal)/ Recorded time(actual). Duration 24 hours/ Information Drift-recorded broadcasts/ Film no.2-white leader -16mm-100feet/ Film no.1- black(exposed) 8mm - 100 feet/ Practice Project. System Structure: context of learning how to type/ Compositions for Audio Structures- a coding system for sound/ 'Simple' Phenomenology(sense cancellations and categories).

Christine Kozlov / Born: December 6, 1945 / Lives in New York City

following spread Christine Kozlov, *Archeozoic, Proterozoic, Precambrian, Poleozoic*, 1971. Graphite on paper with black-and-white photograph, 21 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 28 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches (54.9 × 72.7 cm). Courtesy of Collection Fabre, Brussels

A black and white photograph showing a rocky shoreline. In the foreground, several large, dark, irregularly shaped rocks are scattered in the shallow water. The water appears calm with some ripples. In the background, a dense line of trees and foliage forms a dark silhouette against a lighter sky. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat desolate landscape.

[illegible]

The feet are also used for scratching and for cleaning the eyes and nasal orifices. They can sink into the water, walk on mud, and climb trees. The body is covered with leathery scales, rounded on the flanks and oblong on the belly. Head skin is tightly attached to the bone. The head is small, pointed forward, with a large mouth. The snout is short. There are no teeth in the Nile and softwater crocodiles, and draw out into a narrow, pointed muzzle in the more exclusively fish-eating crocodiles, *Inia*, and are suitable for grasping, holding and tearing. The base of the tooth has the form of a conical process. Muscles opening the jaw are weak. The vertebral column consists of 9 cervical, 12 to 15 dorsal, 2 to 4 lumbar, 2 sacral and 10 to 12 caudal vertebrae. The ribs are not unlike the type found in birds. The pelvic girdle and forelimbs and two completely separated ventrals. The two nostrils are connected by a minute aperture. The gullet can be turned over so that it may serve as a windpipe. In the Nile crocodile the young are able to swim from birth. In many other species during their first year of life they all acquire them before reaching maturity; the relative weights at birth are:

ARCHEOZOIC: PROTEROZOIC: PRECAMBRIAN: PALEOZOIC: Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Pennsylvanian/Mississippian, Permian; MESOZOIC: Triassic

Laminiflorae
 Angiosperms
 Sauriales
 (Phaeoglossales)
 Thalassiales
 Actinoptera
 Sauriales
 Ornithoptera
 Pteridoptera
 Phylloptera
 Phylloptera
 Phylloptera
 Erythroptera
 Melichoptera
 Coccoidea
 Melichoptera
 Melichoptera
 Melichoptera

Cretaceous:

CAENOZOIC: Eocene, Miocene.





Mayo Thompson, Paula Ramsden, Kathryn Bigelow, Christine Kozlov, and Jesse Chamberlain of Provisional Art & Language on set in New York City filming Zoran Popović's *Struggle in New York—Борба у Њујорку*, 1976. Photo by Zoran Popović. Black-and-white photograph. Courtesy of Zoran Popović and Handel Street Projects, London



Paula Ramsden, Kathryn Bigelow, and Christine Kozlov of Provisional Art & Language on set in New York City filming Zoran Popović's *Struggle in New York—Борба у Њујорку*, 1976. Photo by Zoran Popović. Black-and-white photograph. Courtesy of Zoran Popović and Handel Street Projects, London

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Rhea Anastas and Nora Schultz

Rhea Anastas is an art historian and independent curator. She is one of the founders of Orchard (2005–08), a cooperative artist-run gallery on New York's Lower East Side.

Nora Schultz is an artist. She is a professor of sculpture and installation at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, and her expansive sculptures were recently exhibited in the solo-exhibition *Major Rivers Running Underground* (Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, 2024).

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“A statement from the Christine Kozlov Estate
on the occasion of the exhibition *Christine Kozlov*”
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