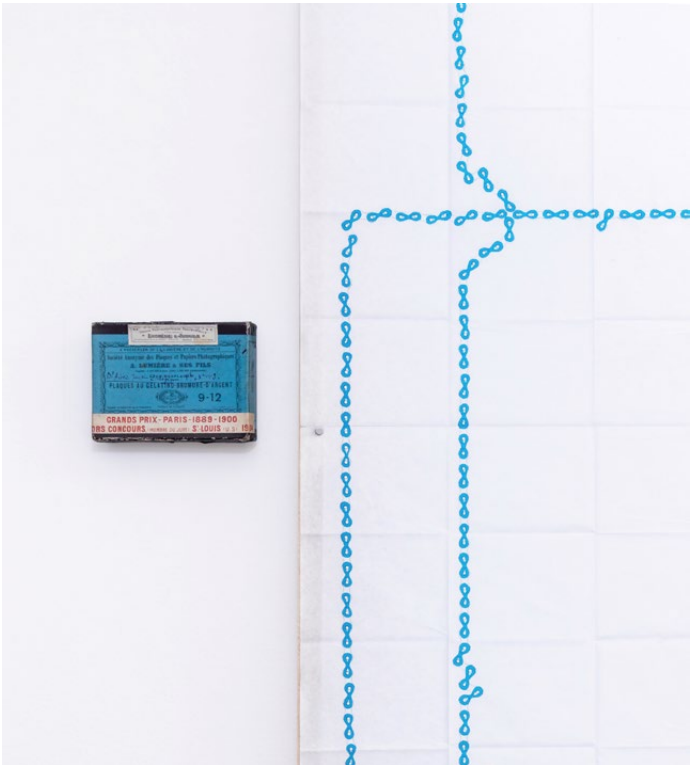
Press Release

Juan Gugger, Cyclo, November 8 - December 22, 2023.
Espacio 34_35_ is pleased to present *Cyclo*, a solo presentation by Juan Gugger, curated by Fabian Carrere. For the occasion of this show, Gugger presents seven artworks. They travelled from Paris to Buenos Aires in the luggage of seven artists. The foldable pieces fit perfectly into the dimensions of early 20th-century photographic boxes. They are the same model that Duchamp used to store all his notes. Elegant and of a highly formal economy, these works rehearse different connections and disconnections with history and contemporaneity.
Espacio 34_35_ is located in Palacio Barolo, a building constructed by the Italian architect Mario Palanti between 1919 and 1923.



Artist Text

Some months ago, we began proposing ideas around that sort of magnetic field the palace has. We understand it as a physical, temporal, historical, and mythological construction. In short, linguistic. Centennial. We went backward in time until the vacant land. The palace became the *chronotope*, the spatiotemporal entity at the center of the aesthetic event to develop. In the beginning, I was careful that there was nothing excessively contemporary in the process. No display of new materials or ultra-contemporaneity images. No reference to new technologies, to imaginary futures, neither terrible nor utopian. The materials I worked with can be framed in the century contained in that framework. That is, from the beginning of the XX century to us. However, the inevitable always slips everywhere, all that cannot be avoided to be extremely contemporary in any production. The biographical and geopolitical conditions, the media, and communications fall inside the work. Even so, the air baggage checks are the only physical thing that unequivocally links the pieces to the here and now.
The first regular international passenger air service landed in Paris in 1919. The same year, the construction of the Palacio Barolo began, and Marcel Duchamp left the neighborhood of Congreso, in Buenos Aires, to embark back to France. After the end of the war. In a letter of 1918, sent from Alsina Street, Duchamp mentions the vacant lot on which this art gallery stands today. I am pointing this out because the chronotope that circumscribes the exhibition encloses a series of fundamental transformations in art. Or at least it covers the part of history that matters most for contemporary art.
This project also hides the intention of making a "work" that slides along the edges of the way of making artworks that predominate in Western production today. To move away from the hegemonic co-intelligibility of the "contemporary art" discourse.
I am interested in presenting an exhibition that fantasizes about looking from outside of time. That confronts us with history as a connection of nodes of limited and arbitrary dimensions that could be stretched, cut, and reconfigured into interchangeable fragments. A history inscribed in a circle of a hundred years in diameter. I want to generate new fugues, diagonal stories, and spatiotemporal holes. The edge of this territory or historical area of experimentation is the year in which the space on Avenida de Mayo is cleared to start building the Barolo Palace. I called it *Chronotope-Barolo.* At that precise moment, Marcel Duchamp arrived in Buenos Aires (1918, one year after the attempt of showing the urinal at the Society of Independent Artists show). On the other hand, the limits of the physical territory of speculation begin with the 400-meter radius of the palace, where Duchamp set up his studio (Sarmiento 1507) and his home (Alsina 1743) and extend along the postal bridge between Buenos Aires and Paris. We could say it's chance ("except that there is no chance; what we call chance is our ignorance of the complex machinery of causality").
The circumstances surrounding the project also become indisputable material of the exhibition. It is a situation-specific work. I cannot travel to Buenos Aires because administrative delays for my residence permit. (1) The project is a speculative drift between my being "trapped in Paris" and M. Duchamp's "being trapped in Buenos Aires" in 1918/1919. It's a sort of spatio-temporal circle.
The works had to be able to be sent in suitcases (curiously, Duchamp also played with this idea of *boite-en-valise*, in completely different circumstances). (2) The pieces are light and foldable because of practical, extra-aesthetic conditions. The sheets of paper are an architecture. Not only because of their limits but also because their folds, born from functional requirements, guide the movement of the gaze of the one who draws and the one who observes.
It is also a new experience as an artist. Doing a solo exhibition without the body present. The handwork in the drawings somehow operates as compensation. I use the indexical condition of drawing, painting, and manuscript to send my ghost, my physical presence/absence. Despite being the result of that limitation, I am excited to introduce a new element to the sequence of exhibitions. These off-center moments, in some cases, are capable of redefining practices.
This building was erected as an enigma. In his documentary, Sebastian Schindel found external evidence that allowed him to interpret that the building responds to a complex design of relationships with the text of the Divine Comedy. However, this representation, encrypted in the very materiality of the building, is not accessible to those who ignore the code. Several experts on the palace and Dante Alighieri have assured that there is nothing in the palace to support the theory of its relationship with the Divine Comedy or its author. It is only after its relation to other "texts" (other Palanti buildings, notes, articles, some testimonies of the time) that this intention can be demonstrated. But it is not possible to read it in the building itself, without external sources. The pieces in this exhibition want to be "art-work-documents" or "art-document-works". They also may appear as enigmas. But when put in relation with each other and read in their inter-textuality, can exhibit internal logicalities. That also happens with Barolo's architecture, its inscription in the atmosphere of the Masonic secret, and Duchamp's enigmatic biography, particularly in his passage through Buenos Aires. In some aspects of this proposition, it is perhaps possible to imagine new drifts among what in the 1990s José Luis Brea pointed out as "new allegorical strategies" in contemporary art. Those strategies find their roots in the Duchampian "creative act", and now are (re)presented in a container of the "great literary allegory of all times": the Divine Comedy.

Notes:

1. A year ago, I found by chance many boxes of photographic plates. They were full of glass negatives brought from Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century. A French family traveled to Buenos Aires in 1914, where they took about 230 photos, and returned to Paris after the end of World War I. The boxes turned out to be the same brand and period as the ones Duchamp used to store his notes (such as La boîte de 1914, now at the Pompidou Center). I decided to return these boxes to Buenos Aires, this time loaded with the works for the exhibition.

2. Afterward, a whole series of circumstantial events got into the aesthetic mesh of the proposal and became part of the work. For example, it is not minor the fact that the passengers who transported the pieces were mostly Argentine female artists who came to Paris for reasons related to their professional careers. This exhibition takes place in a moment in which Marina de Caro is invited to do a major retrospective at In Situ Gallery, Delia Cancela a solo show at Gaudel de Stampa, Liv Schulman comes and goes from Buenos Aires for projects at Piedras Gallery, and Fondation Fiminco, Lihuel Gonzalez is invited to take a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Estrella Estévez travels to work at Palais de Tokyo, etc.

Curatorial text by Fabian Carrere

Thinking about temporality in the contemporary context, not only to question it but also to legitimize it, implies recognizing that diverse temporalities cohabit in the present. This reading can generate a dissonance concerning historical processes, epochs, and styles. The concept of time is always linked to the idea of change.
However, the point of view that proposes that phenomena and cultural products coexisting in an era do not always correspond to the same temporalities, allows us to think about the construction of dismembered and superimposed times. From this sort of "historical unconscious", Juan Gugger bursts into the rhythm of representations generating temporal links that leave traces and set new limits. We are in front of a different way of thinking and exposing time.
The artworks make sense with the journey; the flights trace a line between two cities- two temporalities- two aesthetic dimensions- two artists; a century connects them. Paper tracings and folds draw a grid of 144 modules that will finally find their travel suitcase in seven A. Lumiere & Ses Fils boxes, from the beginning of the last century. The boxes originally contained standard gelatine-bromide plates.
The human flow becomes the raw material and subject of the works. It generates a form that is inventing possible encounters. It is creating the conditions for a collective exchange of meaning. Each work also has the correlate of the artist who brings it. The small boxes build, in each encounter, the meaning of the exhibition. Bicycle chains, conveyor belts, and suitcase boxes establish a temporary cartography. Art generates states of encounter.
"Art shows that form only exists in the encounter and in the dynamic relationship enjoyed by an artistic proposition with other formations, artistic or not." Nicolas Bourriaud
In a certain way, each work has the intention of installing the transporters in imagined new possibilities for the trip between two cities. It seeks to generate an evolutionary Cyclo from all this interlocution between the artists and the cities between the suitcases and the boxes. They establish a performative dialogue in which the works are and will be building the "open" body of the exhibition. It is a scenario of constant movement.
"Contemporary spectators are spectators on the move; primarily, they are travelers. Contemporary vita contemplativa coincides with permanent active circulation." Boris Groys
When the artist situates the year 1919 as the beginning of the "historical territory of experimentation," where Duchamp's Parisian flânerie in Buenos Aires encounters the first movements in the empty lot that would be the basis for the construction of the Barolo Palace, he speculates in a certain way on the time that exists as a condition of possibility of our perception and also before it. As Kant maintains, time is "only a subjective condition of our human intuition, which is always sensitive, and in itself, outside the subject, it is nothing." The timeline proposed by the works recreates representations of the artist's own internal states.
While situating ourselves in the contemporary implies being immersed in the present time as a way of being able to capture and express that presentity, Juan Gugger interprets better the reading of contemporaneity, not only by being in time itself (con-tempus) but by studying the phenomena with the distance of a century.

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