

LAXART



Raphael Montañez Ortiz, *De-Struction Ritual: Henny Penny-Piano-Sacrifice-Concert*, 1967, performance.

RAPHAEL MONTAÑEZ ORTIZ

June 9th — July 15, 2017

Opening Reception, June 9th 6—9pm

At 7pm, Ortiz will perform his *Ritual Piano Destruction Concert* and *Humpty Dumpty Performance*

LAXART is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new and historical works by Raphael Montañez Ortiz (b. New York, 1934). The exhibition comprises film, video, sculpture, digital works, archival material, and two performances presented live the night of the opening.

For over fifty years, Ortiz's dynamic practice has engaged with technology, communication, mass media, music, shamanism, mysticism, and politics. A pioneer of the Dada offshoot of Destructivism, Ortiz wrote his first *Destructivist Manifesto* in 1962, theorizing a direct approach toward art making that located a transcendent creativity within the act of literally (and sometimes violently) deconstructing objects. Continuing these performances today, Ortiz often selects objects imbued with colonial histories, such as antique pianos, Hollywood Western movies, and Victorian furniture, to create modern rituals that confront and resist human culture's most aggressive tendencies (war, genocide, exploitation). Not only do these works build upon an avant-garde tradition of art and music—dealing with sound as a physical and sensorial material—but

they also reflect the artist's deep research into indigenous culture, world religion, and his own Yaqui, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Spanish, and European heritage.

In the late 1950s, Ortiz applied his destructivist techniques to experimental filmmaking, pioneering some of the earliest examples of Cut-Up cinema. By the early 1980s, he began scratching laser disc videos in a fashion inspired by hip hop music; the result was wildly erratic film works that upended linear notions of narrative and teased out unconscious and often humorous gestures captured between the frames. Examples of Ortiz's time-based works are featured in this survey alongside socially charged performance scores from the 1960s; sculpture developed out of work around identity politics during the 1970s; immersive digital collages created in the 1990s; and a selection of letters and photos borrowed from the artist's archive, which was recently acquired by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

Raphael Montañez Ortiz is an American artist, educator, and founder of El Museo del Barrio, in New York, New York. He received both his BFA and MFA from the Pratt Institute and a Doctorate in Fine Arts and Fine Arts in Higher Education from Columbia University. Since 1972, Ortiz has taught at the highest professorial rank at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts. His works are in the collection of the Pompidou Centre in Paris; the Ludwig Museum in Cologne; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Smithsonian Museum in D.C.; the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas; and the Vincent Price Art Museum in Los Angeles among others. In June of 2017 he was awarded the University of California Los Angeles Medal, an honor of great distinction.

This exhibition is curated by Catherine Taft.

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