

A (possible) introduction to an exhibition made of *almost* nothing

I Have to Think About It is the first Italian retrospective exhibition devoted to Argentinean artist David Lamelas. Author of one of the most fascinating conceptual researches dating back to the end of the 1960s, Lamelas' practice ranges from installation to sculpture, drawing, photography, film, video, sound and textual works that address the defining contexts and conditions of our perceptions and cognitions. His is an art, more often than not, made of *almost* nothing.

The show develops in space across all floors of the Fondazione, and branches outdoors and back into the exhibition rooms. This facilitates a dialogue between Lamelas' works and those of the artists in the collection. In time, the show reshapes and expands: unlike what happens normally, the exhibition will last a considerably longer time, and will be taking on different configurations. Some of the artist's most important historical works are presented alongside new productions and an unprecedented programme of live events.

Starting from the title – consciously self-ironic, as much as self-reflexive («I have to think about it») – Lamelas questions the very format of the exhibition, and in particular that of the retrospective. This, in order to propose a personal interpretation in which the contexts of the exhibition and the institution, represent elements of a discourse in the making, in which to provoke and accommodate aspects of temporariness and the possibility of different viewpoints – that of the artist but also that of the visitor – that respond to the context in which the exhibition experience unfurls.

Lamelas to approach the exhibition as an exploration of the concepts of «space» and «time» that have characterised his entire research. Going beyond the traditional exhibition space, the installation invites a consumption of the experience over a longer and more fluid time span. Lamelas asks for us to listen and think about time and space as interpretable and therefore variable dimensions: contextual and relative in nature. The concept of the exhibition thus opens up to multiple interpretations and methods of consumption. The author co-participates in the meaning-making process alongside the public that is often formed by artists, and the people Lamelas invites as co-authors in his films and photographic series.

Trained as a sculptor, Lamelas frees the work from its objecthood and material consistency by highlighting, through his installations, the architectural or urban space that the works share with the artist and the spectator. This is why Lamelas favours time-based practices like video-film and performance. Time becomes concretely representable as «situation» (a term that appears for the first time in the title of a work from 1967) and «activity» (the *Time as Activity* series started in 1969), just as the work becomes a tool for «signalling» or «pointing» (the first appearance of the term dates back to the title of a work from 1968) to a space and to what, in that same space, the work relates to. Further, in the 1960s and 1970s, artists began to question the role of institutions (the so-called *institutional critique*), in order to denounce the ideologies that impose and condition the experience and explanation of the work by or towards the public.

To this end, Lamelas identified precisely in the space and time of the exhibition an opportunity to not only show works but to enhance, through the works themselves, the perceptive faculties and awareness of those who observe or listen to them. As such, Lamelas anticipates by decades the so-called *relational aesthetics* that eventually acquired consistency in the 1990s.

The artist's tendency to defy the customs and expectations of the art system takes the form of a radical experiment, in which the distance between art and life thins and turns into a direct experience and historical-critical narrative of the aesthetic, chronological and geographical coordinates in which the artist operates accordingly every time.

Space and time, the real and the mental, figuration and abstraction, biography and history, artist and audience, art and life are no longer distinct categories. Rather, they become experiential and narrative syntheses: ever-changing and interpretable. Lamelas' works consist and coexist... What if we, too, tried not to take up space and time and take our role in them for granted? What if we tried to look and

listen to what we normally see and hear around us, and started thinking about it? After all, just as Lamelas did, one can make and reflect on art with *almost* nothing.

Andrea Viliani with Eva Brioschi

COURTYARD & BLACK BOX

The exhibition begins *in medias res*, in the courtyard on the ground floor. By opening the movable access wall of the ‘black box’ of the Fondazione’s cinema hall, a beam of light will extend outwards, while another will be projected onto the back wall of the hall.

In *Efecto Pantalla* (1968), two empty slide projectors emanate light from their projection mechanism in two opposite directions: while the first beam forms a ‘picture’ of pure light on a wall, the second projects into nothingness, i.e. (according to the set-up instructions) alternately on either a window or a doorway, and thus into a passage where the light simply dissolves into space. At the entrance to the Fondazione on the ground floor, and throughout the exhibition, two films and the two photographic series *Gente di Milano* (1970) and *Time as Activity (Milan)* (2013–14), in which the artist explored the same context years apart, will be presented.



David Lamelas
Efecto Pantalla (Screen effect),
 1968
 Two slide projectors

Efecto Pantalla is part of a series of works dating to the second half of the 1960s, featuring televisions or slide projectors that do not emit any images. The light beam acts a physical object, in which medium and context correspond to the form taken by the work. In *Efecto Pantalla* two projectors are placed back-to-back in the exhibition space. One projects a white frame on the wall, the other a cone of light that is lost in an opening in the space – in this case towards the courtyard of the Fondazione. The lack of information owing to the absence of slides shifts the focus from the subject of the work to the visitor's perception thereof.

Courtesy the artist and Jan Mot,
 Brussels



David Lamelas
Gente di Milano (People of Milano),
 1970
 11 b/w photographs
 16 mm colour film

Upon the invitation of Françoise Lambert, Lamelas shot a short film in the vicinity of the Milan-based gallery in 1970 with the aid of a fixed camera. He documented everything that came into his field of vision between 11.58 and 12.02. He also took eleven black and white photographs at regular intervals. In so doing, Lamelas juxtaposed the contiguous course of time in the film with the fragmented gaze of the camera lens. The absorbed and reserved space of a gallery is confronted with the everyday scenery of the urban context. «As I saw it, the camera took possession of the space in front of it. And since that was my space, I decided to photograph everyone who passed by it, like a surveillance camera».

Photographs courtesy of the
 E. Righi Collection; Film courtesy
 of the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels

COLLECTION I

On the first floor, in the first of the two rooms usually reserved to the permanent collection, the artist establishes a dialogue with a selection of works by artists with whom he has previously co-exhibited or co-published, or by whose research he was inspired. First, the Italian-Argentinian Lucio Fontana (whose original works on paper are included in the exhibition, along with their reinterpretations by Lamelas). Second, Piero Manzoni, whose *Corpo d'aria No. 01* (1959–1960) seems to evoke *Corner Piece* (1965–2023) in which Lamelas imaginatively re-designs a corner of the room by negating its structural function and reshaping its geometry. *Achrome* (1958) by Manzoni, together with the work on paper *Not to Be Sold More Than \$100* (1973) by Sol LeWitt, introduce Lamelas' transformation of a solid wall into a fragile and malleable sheet of paper (*Pared Doblada*, 1994), which takes on three different and interchangeable shapes: one set up as a wall, one unfolded on the floor, and one folded into its container for transport and storage. *Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio* was originally presented at the 1968 Venice Biennale. Dismantled after the exhibition, the work was later reconstructed based on its photographic documentation and was acquired by MoMA–Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2012. The 1968 edition of the Venice Biennale was marked by student protests, but also coincided with the height of the war in Vietnam, a layered context that Lamelas relates to, quoting from the MoMA curators' file

on the work: «This work consisted of an elegant office environment with furniture and ornaments designed by the Italian manufacturer Olivetti and enclosed behind a Plexiglas partition. At intervals, the installation was activated: a well-dressed woman sat in the office and read aloud live broadcasts about the war received via telex from the Italian news agency ANSA. When she was absent, visitors could pick up the telephone handsets outside the office to listen to recordings of the reports in different languages [...] With this performative installation, Lamelas reflects on the changing, sometimes paradoxical nature of time and communication in a burgeoning information society. The immediacy with which information is circulated, recorded and broadcast even as events are unfolding has the potential to over-saturate its audience and diminish its impact. Here the recitation of real-time news reports on the atrocities of war in a sterile, bureaucratic environment reflects the irony inherent in an increasingly connected yet increasingly alienated experience of the world». The work is not presented in the exhibition in its complete and original version, which included the following elements: 'office furniture, Telex machine, tape recorder, microphone, telephone receivers, text, Plexiglas partition, performance'. Instead, the artist decided to evoke the original work as a starting point for its potential reshaping through documentary material – including some photographs by Ugo Mulas that allowed its reconstruction after 1968 – and by selecting only a few elements – including two Olivetti desks and a Telex machine – that, as a synecdoche, reconstruct a whole through (some of) its parts: the memory of a work tackling our ability to remember and react under different circumstances yet always in times of war. The work also facilitates a comparison with another work calling for a direct involvement of the public: the triptych *Esposizione in tempo reale N.4 Biennale di Venezia* (1972) by Franco Vaccari. The diary of the artist's long life – especially its peripatetic and nomadic flowing and unfolding between various cities across the world – is captured in a series of films in which Lamelas connects his biography to the everyday life of the urban contexts where this takes place: in Milan (as shown in the film on the ground floor), but also in New York and Los Angeles, in Antwerp and Brussels, in Berlin and Düsseldorf, in London and Paris. Merging installation, film, photography and a personal practice of social sculpture, Lamelas 'captures' time by adapting it to the memorial and documentary imprint of the contexts in which he has lived and worked: *Time As Activity (Düsseldorf)* (1969), *People and Time (Antwerp – Brussels)* (1969), *18 Paris IV. 70* (a film made by Lamelas in 1970 on the occasion of a homonymous exhibition curated by Michel Claura and Seth Siegel) and *Time as Activity (Naples)* (2014). All of the above

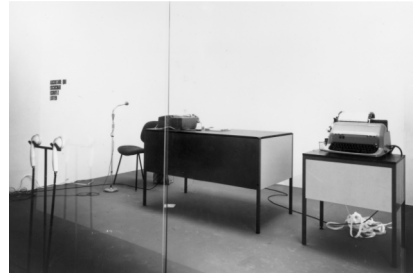
works tie in with those in the permanent collection of the Fondazione, made by artists to whom Lamelas was close at a specific moment in time or in a particular context. Examples include physical representations of the passage of time, such as *Duration Piece #7* (1971) by Douglas Huebler and *8 Jan. 1973* (1973) by On Kawara, or the catalogue edited by Seth Siegelau featuring a work by Robert Barry *Everything in the unconscious perceived by the senses but not noted by the conscious minds during trips to Baltimore, during the summer of 1967 (Psychic series)*, 1969 – which recalls a bookwork by Lamelas. The artist retraces this same biographically-shared time by selecting works by Bernd Lohaus [*Untitled (ZWISCHEN IST EBEN DAS / WAS DU-UND / ODER ICH DA ZWISCHEN B IST)*, 1976-1977] and Blinky Palermo (*Ohne Titel*, 1971).



David Lamelas
Corner Piece, 1965–2023
Glass

First produced in 1966 and presented here in a new version in white opaque glass, *Corner Piece* represents one of Lamelas' most emblematic works. In 1960s Buenos Aires, the artist's practice took on a conceptual turn, especially in its sculptural dimension, which the artist described as follows: «I went from working with painting, to working with objects, to finally working with space». Operating an extreme formal simplification, the artist modifies the pre-existing architecture by inverting a corner of the room, creating a negative space and a positive space. As in many of his later works, Lamelas places the perception process at the centre of his research.

Courtesy of the artist



David Lamelas
Office of Information about the Vietnam War: The Visual Image, Text and Audio, 1968
Olivetti office furniture, Telex machine, text pictures, audio

In 1968, Lamelas was invited to represent Argentina at the Venice Biennale. Separated from the visitors by a glass, his *Office of Information about the Vietnam War* (referred to as *Information Complex on a chosen theme* by the Biennale officials) contained Olivetti office furniture, a telex, a microphone and a tape recorder. The office received news about the war from the ANSA news agency.

The news was read aloud to the public in six languages, simultaneously recorded and then accessed via earphones. The version on display here is a faithful yet partial reconstruction of the work with period objects; the sound was recorded in 2015, on the occasion of the first reinstatement of the work at MoMA in New York.

Detailed courtesy in the exhibition room



David Lamelas
People and Time (Antwerp-Bruxelles),
1969
Ed. of 7
10 b/w photographs mounted on
aluminium

After the film *Time as Activity (Düsseldorf)*, Lamelas continues to use the cities where he is invited to exhibit as a starting point for the creation of films and photo series. With the help of a professional photographer, he also takes photographs of the cities of Antwerp and Brussels, where he held his first solo show at the Wide White Space Gallery directed by Bernd Lohaus and Anny De Decker. In the series on display, the artist adds to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the images also those of their socio-cultural context. The subjects photographed are art operators – gallery owners, collectors, curators, artists – who define and shape the specific environment in which Lamelas operates at the time.

Courtesy of the artist

David Lamelas
Time as Activity (Düsseldorf),
1969
16 mm b/w film, 13'00''

In the series *Time as Activity*, Lamelas analyses the exhibition site together with its urban context and, by revealing the difference between the real time flowing through it and the cinematic time of the work, he starts his research into time as a variable and therefore interpretable dimension. «My idea was to show both the film and the projector. The work acted as a time projector, showing a different time to the real time. It was not just a film, but a whole environment». *Time as Activity (Düsseldorf)* was produced by Lamelas for the exhibition *Prospect '69* at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. Real time and cinematic time coincide in 3 shots of 4 minutes each, in which the camera focuses on 3 different locations in the city centre.

Courtesy the artist and Jan Mot,
Brussels

DAVID LAMELAS

PARIS:

Amsterdam, Paris, Seattle, Buenos Aires, Berlin.

18

These sheets film sound in a 16mm film in
 1970, between 1970, to 1970.

16

These sheets film sound in a 16mm film in
 Paris 1970, between 1970, to 1970.

16

These sheets film sound in a 16mm film in
 Berlin 1970, between 1970, to 1970.

16

These sheets film sound in a 16mm film in
 Buenos Aires 1970, between 1970, to 1970.

16

These sheets film sound in a 16mm film in
 Amsterdam 1970, between 1970, to 1970.



David Lamelas
First Project for 18 Paris IV.70, 1969
 5 sheets of typewritten paper

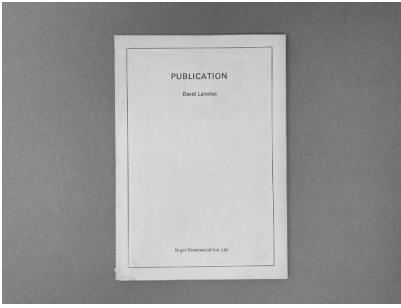
18 PARIS IV.70 was an exhibition organised by curator Michel Claura in Paris in 1970, accompanied by a publication edited by gallery owner and curator Seth Siegelau. Claura invited 18 artists to contribute one work each: “The proposal made to the invited artists was to send me a ‘first project’, then I would send each artist the first project received from all the others and then all the artists were invited to submit their ‘final project’ (which could be the same as the first or different). The artists were also told that the exhibition catalogue would collect both projects (the first and the final one). The five sheets that David sent me at the time constituted his ‘first project’”.

Courtesy of Michel Claura

David Lamelas
18 PARIS IV.70, 1970
 16 mm b/w film, sound
 9’16”

Invited by Michel Claura to participate in the exhibition *18 PARIS IV.70*, Lamelas presented a 9-minute black and white film. He shot three people: artist Daniel Buren, also featuring in the exhibition; Raúl Escari, an Argentinian writer living in Paris; Pierre Grinberg, a French filmmaker. As stated in the catalogue: «The cameraman will follow the instructions of Buren, Escari and Grinberg, who will indicate when the filming should begin. After three minutes, the person filmed will communicate the time to the cameraman. The cameraman will stop filming. The camera must be static, framing these three people wherever they want in the city of Paris».

Courtesy of the artist and Jan Mot, Brussels



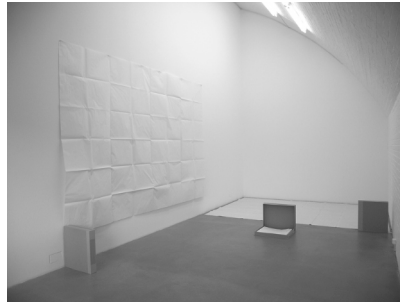
David Lamelas

Publication

Originally published in 1970 by Nigel Greenwood Ltd. in London. Here displayed also in the Spanish and the Galitian translations, 2021.

The exhibition *Publication* at the Nigel Greenwood Gallery in 1970 is based on Lamelas' idea of organising a «round table» in the exhibition space, intended as a platform for discussion on language as an artistic form. The idea is realised in an exhibition in the form of a book, in which *Publication* is both the exhibition itself and the exhibited object – exemplifying the importance of editorial materials in the context of conceptual research. Preliminary discussions with the invited participants in the project produced three statements, to which most of the artists or critics responded in writing. *Publication* is present in the exhibition in English, Spanish and Galician editions.

Courtesy of Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea and the Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



David Lamelas

Pared Doblada (Folded Wall),

1994

Folded paper, cardboard box

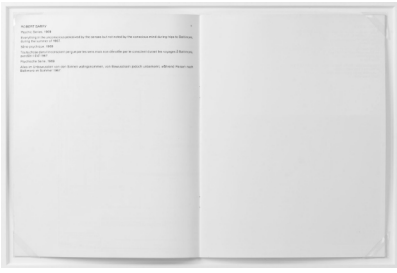
Pared Doblada was first produced in 1994; Lamelas, who lived in New York at the time, used a large sheet of white Japanese paper to recreate a wall in his Manhattan studio. The sheet was then folded and placed inside the container that accompanies the work, and then exhibited in Buenos Aires. The intention was to create an architectural record of the original wall, which could be set up and taken down as need be. The version exhibited here consists of three sheets that – set up on the wall, on the floor and in their own container – recreate as many walls as were present in the New York studio. As does *Corner Piece*, the work elicits a different perception of the exhibition space and the architecture that contains it.

Courtesy of the E. Righi Collection



David Lamelas
Time as Activity (Naples),
Ed. of 5, 2013–2014
Video full Hd 1080/25p and seven
C-Prints on Hahnemühle Bright
White 310 gsm paper mounted on
aluminium frames

The *Time as Activity* series, which Lamelas began in 1969, continues with films of the same name made, among others, in Naples and Milan between 2013 and 2014, both accompanied by colour photographs. While in the film the concept of time is rendered as a continuum, in the suspended dimension of pure duration, in the photographs the artist fixes precise moments and specific places in the city: the sea seen from a terrace, the interior of a church during mass, the San Carlo Opera House or a lunch at the home of gallery owner Lia Rumma. The work realised in Milan in 2014 will be presented on the ground floor in the second part of the exhibition, marking its duration in half.



Robert Barry

Everything in the unconscious perceived by the senses but not noted by the conscious minds during trips to Baltimore, during the summer of 1967 (Psychic series), 1969

Framed catalogue

The work belongs to Barry's *Psychic series*, in which thought participates in the creation of the work itself, in which the viewer is also called upon to collaborate. The exhibition of the work is entrusted to material of a documentary nature, as is the case with the present exhibits – which reconstructs the relationship between conscious and unconscious elements during several trips to Baltimore in the summer of 1967 – the catalogue *July, August, September, 1969*, in which the gallerist and curator Seth Siegelau requested contributions from 11 artists. Like them, Siegelau also aims to shrink the exhibition space to pure mental space: «I have only elided space. My gallery is the world now».

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Douglas Huebler

Duration Piece #7, 1971

Gelatin silver print, in 14 parts with typed statement on paper

At a time when the artwork tends towards dematerialisation, photography becomes an act not only of documentation but of information. The artist declares the existence of things themselves in terms of their variable duration and place and, considering the world already saturated with objects, affirms his desire not to produce new ones. Huebler implements minimal information programmes through photographs, texts, maps and drawings. *Duration Piece #7* consists of 14 shots at 30-second intervals, documenting the spatio-temporal changes of the framed scene: the Trevi Fountain, in this case, crowded with tourists on a March day in 1971. The text with the artist's programmatic statement forms an integral part of the work.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



On Kawara
8 Jan. 1973, 1973
Liquitex on canvas

8 Jan. 1973 belongs to the artist's most iconic works: the Date Paintings series, collectively entitled *Today Series*, which the artist began on 4 January 1966 and which he continued to develop over five decades, with almost 3,000 examples. The meticulously painted monochrome fields, and the numbers and letters in them, are declarations of existence that obsessively attest to the repetition and daily consumption of the finite time allotted to each of us in life. The specimen on show was produced in less than 24 hours on 8 January 1973 in Stockholm and is the first of seven paintings made in the Swedish capital between 8 January 1973 and 14 January 1973.

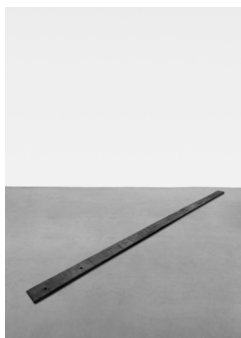
Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Sol LeWitt
Not to Be Sold More Than \$100, 1973
Folded Fabriano paper

Not to Be Sold More Than \$100 is part of a series of small-format works that the artist started producing in the late 1960s with different types of paper: wrapping paper, drawing paper, coffee filters, geography maps or aerial views of Manhattan. The paper is folded, cut or torn and no other intervention is operated. LeWitt wants to produce drawings that can be accessible to a wide audience. He names the series *100 Dollars Drawings*, setting the selling price at around \$100. Folding or cutting paper is a way of intervening on the paper by making lines and shapes without using the usual means of drawing, without actually drawing at all.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Bernd Lohaus
Untitled (ZWISCHEN IST EBEN DAS / WAS DU-UND / ODER ICH DA ZWISCHEN B IST) (BETWEEN IS JUST/WHAT YOU-AND/OR I AM IN BETWEEN THAT), 1976–1977
Carved wood in 9 parts

As director of the Wide White Space Gallery, Lohaus collaborated several times with Lamelas in the early 1970s. In this work, Lohaus focuses on the combination of heavy wooden beams, salvaged from the docks of the Antwerp harbour. These testify to their natural origins, but also evoke associations with human history and its drive towards progress, intersecting the use of geometric shapes and traces of the passage of time. The insertion of prepositions, pronouns or verbs without context adds a reflective component on the multiple role of the work and the artist: the play on words in the title refers to the relationship between ICH and DU, ME and YOU, understood as artist, work and spectator.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Piero Manzoni
Achrome (Colorless), 1958
Caolin on canvas

The artist started the *Achromes* series in 1957. The first works of this type were casts from plaster and kaolin on canvas, with an informal yet minimalistic effect. The series was conceived as «a single uninterrupted surface», where the paint itself is made tangible on square-shaped canvases or folded in wrinkles: «... A white surface that is a white surface, and that is enough (a colourless surface that is a colourless surface) or better still, that is and that is enough: being (and total being is pure becoming)». The absence of colour, combined with techniques that remove the need for any gesture or intervention, allows Manzoni to create a work that lacks content beyond its basic materiality.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Piero Manzoni
Corpo d'aria No. 01
 (Body of Air No. 01), 1959–1960
 Wooden box containing a rubber
 balloon, an inflating tube
 and a pedestal

Between 1959 and 1960, the artist made 45 examples of the *Corpi d'Aria*, and sold them for 30,000 Lire each. Presented as a practical set, the works were sold in a box containing a tripod, a balloon and a small tube to inflate it. The spectator was asked to perform an act of pure intellectual sharing, in the absence of the physical experience of the work. Manzoni places the public in the condition of having to accept the artist's authorship on the level of a simple relationship of trust: it is a work of art because it is made by an artist: it is not so much a question of purchasing a work as it is of coming to own «a Manzoni». Also, the work offers a representation of something that normally escapes our vision: air.

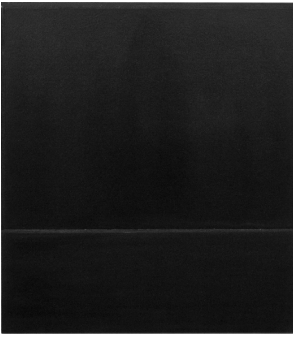
Courtesy of the
 Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Ugo Mulas
*David Lamelas. Office of Information
 about the Vietnam War [...]*,
*XXXIV Esposizione Biennale
 Internazionale d'Arte, Venezia,*
 1968. Gelatin silver prints on
 baryta paper

The 1968 protest affected that year's edition of the Venice Biennale: artists from many countries joined the protests and in a sign of solidarity, covered or turned their works towards the wall. Therefore, the photographic evidence of that edition is particularly significant. Mulas had started his work as a photographer in 1954 at the Biennale: «I photographed everything: I felt that I could not have the attitude of a critic, there was not something in particular to be understood, not something to be done, so much as recorded». And it was Mulas who, in 1968, also recorded Lamelas' work, before this was dismantled, as documented by the two photographs on display.

Courtesy Archivio Ugo Mulas,
 Milano – Galleria Lia Rumma,
 Milano | Napoli



Blinky Palermo
Ohne Titel (Untitled), 1971
Formica, plastic foil and glue on panel

Fascinated by Suprematism and the Russian avant-garde, the artist aligned himself with contemporary conceptual experiments without abandoning painting, but making pictorial reduction and abstraction a stylistic choice.

This led to the *Stoffbilder*, monochrome compositions of sewn cotton, as well as to objects, such as pieces of salvaged wood painted roughly, wall paintings made with regular geometries that include architectural space in the composition, and the metal series, created in the last years of his life with monochrome colours. The work *Untitled* exemplifies this liberating expansion of painting, reached by means of minimal reduction, in this case incorporating everyday materials into black.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Franco Vaccari
Esposizione in tempo reale N.4 Biennale di Venezia (Exhibition in Real Time N. 4 Venice Biennale), 1972
Vintage prints, photostrip, triptych

In 1972, four years after Lamelas' work *Office of Information about the Vietnam War*, Vaccari presented also at the Venice Biennale *Esposizione in tempo reale N.4*, another work implying the interactive use of technology activated through the direct involvement of the public. In a room of the Biennale, the artist installed a Photomatic booth for printing passport photos. By paying 200 Lire, each visitor could take a strip of passport photos and place this on the wall next to the machine. Anticipating technological developments and the abuse of the self-portrait in the present age, this work – asking the visitor to leave a trace of his or her own passage – speaks of the overlapping between the time the work is exhibited and the real time in which this comes into being and to fruition.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection

COLLECTION II

The dialogue between Lamelas and a selection of works from the collection continues in the second room on the first floor usually reserved to the permanent collection. Here, Lamelas sets up only one of his works. Made of twenty marble slabs arranged in a circle on the floor, *Segnalamento* (2014) merely signals an object (variable, according to the set-up instructions) placed inside it. The object signalled by the artist is in this case Luciano Fabro's work *Impronta* (1964), a circular glass slab placed on the floor that bears, silk-screen-printed on the glass, an imprint of the artist's body: like Lamelas' work, Fabro's also elaborates the observer's perception, furthering «his own body in all things in the world», to quote Fabro himself. Almost as a further propagation of the two circles and the two artists, four works by four other Arte Povera artists, Giovanni Anselmo (*Documentazione di interferenza umana nella gravitazione universale*, 1969–1971), Alighiero Boetti (*Immagine Somiglianza*, 1975), Giulio Paolini (*La Doublure*, 1972–1973) and Emilio Prini [*Conferma partecipazione esposizione (nato vecchio)*, 1970] are hanging on the walls of the room. The initial selection of works from the collection will vary over the course of the exhibition.



David Lamelas
Segnalamento (Signaling), 2014
20 marble slabs (object can be replaced by any object)

Segnalamento is a reinterpretation with different materials of *Señalamiento de tres objetos* created in 1966 in a park in Buenos Aires and then presented in London's Hyde Park two years later. Some rectangular panels are arranged in a circle around an object that turns into a signalling instrument. What lies inside the enclosed area – a seated person, a tree and a lamppost, as in Hyde Park, or a work by the artist Luciano Fabro, as in this case – itself becomes a part of Lamelas' work. As such, it is isolated from other life events and from the real space and time that flow around it. The panels of the work are made of marble, a possible homage to the old masters of Italian sculpture (and a material also often used by Fabro).

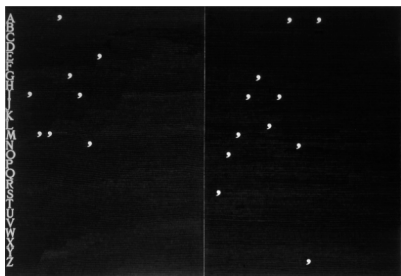
Courtesy Galleria Lia Rumma
Milano | Napoli



Giovanni Anselmo
Documentazione di interferenza umana nella gravitazione universale (Documentation of Human Interference in Universal Gravitation), 1969–1971
20 b/w photographs

The work consists of 20 small-format photographs, taken in succession. The artist describes them as follows: «It was an afternoon in 1969 and I was walking in the countryside towards the setting sun. I had a camera with me; every twenty steps I took a photograph towards the setting horizon. There was a double motive in all this: on the one hand, by walking West, I was extending the presence of the sun; on the other, I was moving like a small moon, like so many objects moving through the cosmos». The human being's step towards the light on the horizon becomes the measure of a physical and ideal tension to merge with the rest of the world, and the artist's gesture tries to capture the mystical scope of this impossible encounter.

Courtesy of the
Antonio Dalle Nogare Collection



Alighiero Boetti
Immagine somiglianza
 (Image Likeness), 1975
 Bic pen on paper
 2 elements

Boetti started the «negative» ball pen series (in white reserve on a dotted background – black, blue, red or green) in 1972. The structure of all works, ‘written’ with white commas, stipulates that each comma takes on the value of a letter when deciphered according to the Cartesian axis, in which one variable is the reading from left to right, the other the alphabet arranged on the border. The pen-drawn background is entrusted to the hands of someone else; the anonymity and diversity of the ‘hand’ contribute to building the work’s concept. Inspired by *Immagine somiglianza* are the artist’s early reproductions from the covers of news magazines, which herald the extensive series of gravure images from the 1980s.

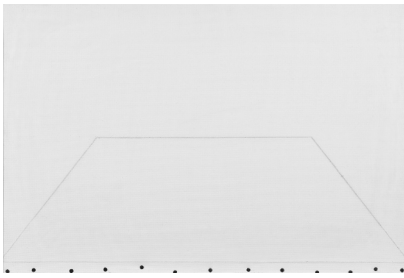
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Luciano Fabro
Impronta (Imprint), 1964
 Silkscreen on glass

The artist’s first solo exhibition took place at the Galleria Vismara in Milan in 1965: he exhibited glass and tubular metal works. He aimed at establishing open relationships with visitors. For this exhibition he also created two versions of *Impronta*: a transparent one with the sandblasted imprint of his hand in the centre – the work in the collection exhibited here – and another version, with an opaque disc bearing a transparent imprint in the centre. «To extend one’s body into all things in the world», Fabro asserted, so that this anthropic and personal measure – such as the imprint of his hand or the length of his huddled body – becomes a reference not only for his works, but also for the relationship they establish with space and the observer.

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Giulio Paolini

La Doublure (un'immagine preesistente, anonima e neutra) [The Double (A Pre-existing, Anonymous and Neutral Image)], 1972–1973

Engraving, pencil and nails on prepared canvas

There are 28 examples of *Doublure* with the same pencil drawing: a canvas seen in perspective. However, each version has different inscription on the verso and different arrangement of nails along the bottom edge, depending on the frame. The title is taken from Raymond Roussel's 1897 novel *La Doublure*, as the artist wrote: «*La Doublure* recalls in its title the illusory appearances described by Raymond Roussel... Each canvas reproduces the perspective fiction of itself and proposes a virtual, emblematic space... On the back of each canvas, I have transcribed fragments of interviews or descriptions of my other works as if no painting has ever been translated, for ever, into an object, beyond its pure intention».

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Emilio Prini

Conferma partecipazione esposizione (nato vecchio) [Confirmation participation exhibition (born old)], 1970

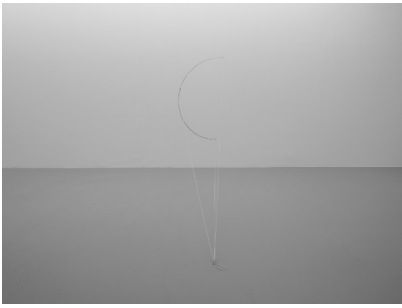
Print on paper

After taking part in some of the most important exhibitions in the history of the Arte Povera and Conceptual Art, such as *When Attitudes Become Form* curated by Harald Szeemann at the Bern Kunsthalle in 1969, Prini started exhibiting ever less frequently. In some cases, the artist replied to the invitation but did nothing else; this was the case of the telegram «I confirm my participation in the exhibition», which he sent to the Kunstmuseum Lucerne in 1970. Sometimes he published his participation in catalogues, as was the case for the *P'ersona* exhibition catalogue in Belgrade in 1971. He eventually disappeared completely from the pages of catalogues dedicated to him, leaving these blank.

Courtesy of the
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VAULT

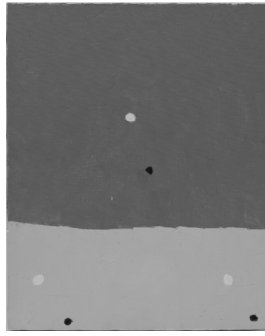
The architecture of the Vault room on the second floor – characterised by the presence of a curved wall that, in front of a straight wall, follows the course of the hill above it – is completed by the two works *Conexión entre un semicírculo y un punto* (1987) and *Situación de un círculo* (2018), which in turn connect to the characteristics of the room, amplifying the perception of a form that is both curved and straight. On the straight wall, the artist sets up an unprecedented series of oil paintings on canvas, dating to the 1980s: despite the apparently linear sequence of its arrangement, Lamelas' picture gallery contradicts any hypothesis of a closed and controlled, regular and static form, as the sequence itself is composed of both rectangular and oval paintings, furrowed by geometric shapes and colour patterns that seem to improvise, as if in an extemporaneous jam session, the ongoing search for their possible compositional patterns.



David Lamelas
Conexión entre un semicírculo y un punto (Connection between a Semicircle and a Point), 1987
Charcoal and string

This work was made in 1987 in Los Angeles, at the same time and in the same city where Lamelas also made the paintings on show here. By relying on a performative gesture, the artist draws an arch on the wall of the room corresponding to the maximum extension of his arm, from the lowest to the highest point. The arch, drawn in charcoal, is projected into three-dimensional space by the three strings that connect as many points – beginning, end and centre – to a precise coordinate on the floor. The work affirms its specificity according to the place in which it is set up: if the extension of the arch is linked to the proportions of the artist's body, that of the strings depends on the dimensions of the exhibition space.

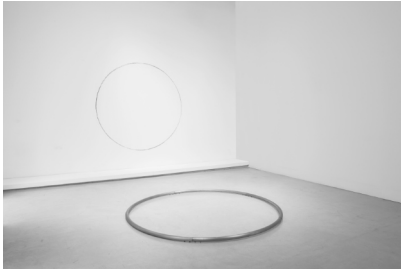
Courtesy the artist



David Lamelas
Paintings, *L.A.* and *Surf-Face* series, 1987
Oil on canvas

Lamelas spent the 1980s in the community of painters that animated the Venice neighbourhood in Los Angeles, pursuing the idea of giving the cinematic experimentation he had already pursued in Europe the breadth of vision that would have allowed him the city of cinema par excellence. Although he failed to realise this dream – perhaps the most significant such case in his career – in the tension between art and cinema, underground and mainstream – Lamelas nevertheless found his place in the Venice community, where artists spend their days between the beach, surfing, and their studio. The artist again distanced himself from painting when he moved to New York in 1990 and never exhibited these paintings, presented to the public for the first time in the context of this retrospective.

Courtesy the artist



David Lamelas
Situación de un círculo
(Placement of a Circle), 2018–2023
Iron and soft pastel

As in *Conexión entre un semicírculo y un punto*, here too the artist proposes a work that is ephemeral in its own way, but capable of relating to the exhibition space by projecting the same geometric form (a circle) from the wall of the room (where a two-dimensional circle is drawn in crayon) directly into the three-dimensional space (where the circle takes on the physicality of an iron sculpture). This materialises the artist's desire to situate himself performatively in space, and in time, highlighting all its interpretative potential and sharing his experience and narrative.

Courtesy the artist

David Lamelas was born in Buenos Aires in 1946. He lives and works between Buenos Aires, Los Angeles and Paris.

After studying at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, the artist became one of the representatives and key players of the avant-garde movement formed at the Torcuato di Tella Institute. In 1967 he was awarded the sculpture prize at the IX Bienal de São Paulo, with the work *Dos Espacios Modificados*, while in 1968 he represented Argentina at the 34. International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, where he presented the work *Office of Information about the Vietnam War at Three Levels: The Visual Image, Text and Audio*. After moving to London, where he studied at St. Martin's School of the Arts, he produced installations that investigated the architecture of the exhibition space and film, and photographic series in which – starting with the film work *Time as Experimental Activity* presented in 1969 at the *Prospect '69* exhibition, Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf – he revealed the possibility of redefining the notions of space and time that were to characterise his entire research. In 1972, he participated in Documenta 5, Kassel (under the artistic direction of Harald Szeemann). In 2017, he took part in Documenta 14, Athens and Kassel (under the artistic direction of Adam Szymczyk).

Solo exhibitions dedicated to the artist in recent decades have included: MSU Broad Art Museum, East Lansing and MALBA-Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires (2018); Pacific Standard Time-University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach and Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (2017); Tate Modern, London (2016); Kunsthalle Basel, Basel and Frac Lorraine, Metz (2014); Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (2013); Bloomberg Space, London (2011); Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2008); Kunst Halle, St Gallen (2007); Wiener Secession, Vienna, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel and Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City (2006); ICA-Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia and Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2004); MAMBA-Museo de Arte Moderno de la Ciudad, Buenos Aires (2002); FRI-Art Freiburg, Freiburg (2001); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Museum Folkwang, Essen and Institute of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth (2000); Künstlerhaus, Stuttgart (1998); Kunstverein München, Munich and Witte de With-Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (1997); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (1992). In 1993 Lamelas received a Guggenheim Fellowship, while in 2018 the monograph *David Lamelas. A Life of Their Own* was published.

David Lamelas
I Have to Think About It
7.5.2023 – 24.2.2024

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Exhibited artists / Ausgestellte Künstler / Artisti in mostra
David Lamelas, *with / mit / con*
Giovanni Anselmo, Robert Barry, Alighiero Boetti,
Luciano Fabro, Lucio Fontana, Douglas Huebler,
On Kawara, Sol LeWitt, Bernd Lohaus, Piero Manzoni,

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