

ANNA BELLA GEIGER

Physical and
Human Geography



**MARCH 9
TO JUNE 3**

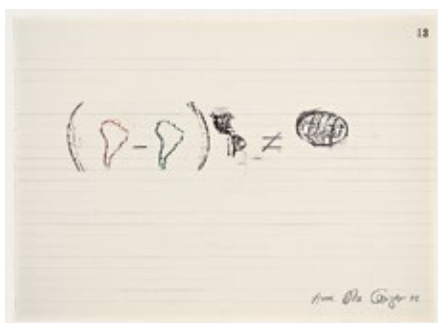
Tuesday to Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Free admission

HOTEL DE INMIGRANTES: Av. Antártida Argentina

(between Dirección Nacional de Migraciones and Buquebus), Puerto Madero.

LA CASA ENCENDIDA
de fundación montemadrid





Fundación Montemadrid's La Casa Encendida, the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (CAAC), and the Museo de la Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (MUNTREF) are proud to present the exhibition *Physical and Human Geography*, curated by Estrella de Diego, which features an exceptional selection of works produced by Anna Bella Geiger between the late 1970s and the present day.

The highly personal style of Geiger's work has earned her a reputation as one of the most committed creators of the Brazilian conceptual art scene. Her delicate drawings and exquisite collages, as well as the videos in which she occasionally plays the lead role, all evidence the poetics of her creations, which originate both from her inner world and daily common life. Captured in the idea of the map, Geiger's reflections on borders and the geographical demarcations of Brazil have given rise to a variety of proposals, rooted in a mind-set that is firmly committed to both art and creation.

The exhibition brings together 75 works by the artist, ranging from videos, photographs and collages to artist's books and installations, all of which explore the idea

of physical and human geography and the representation of maps, a dominant and recurring theme in Geiger's work. The show invites us to question colonial policies, cultural stereotypes and the exclusions and discourses imposed by the hegemonic powers through fragile and delicate pieces in which Geiger turns her political objects into elements of poetry.

The exhibition that MUNTREF Centro de Arte Contemporáneo is presenting was previously shown at the CAAC of Seville and at La Casa Encendida, where it was part of the program of the International Contemporary Art Biennial of South America (BIENALSUR), organized by the UNTREF. The collaboration between these three institutions has been exemplary, proving once again the relevance and appeal of Geiger's work.

We would like to thank Anna Bella Geiger and the curator Estrella de Diego for the enthusiasm, devotion and determination they have brought to this project. Thanks are also due to Gabriela Rangel and Diana B. Wechsler for their contributions to the catalogue, and to everyone else whose efforts have made this project a reality.

Aníbal Y. Jozami
UNTREF Rector

Lucía Casani
Director of La Casa Encendida

Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes
Director of the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo



ANNA BELLA GEIGER: PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

There is great attention to detail, radical reflection and profound decorum in the works of the Brazilian artist Anna Bella Geiger (Rio de Janeiro, 1933), one of the most outstanding creators of her generation. Brilliant from the outset, she soon abandoned her abstract beginnings of the 1950s to explore conceptual proposals, particularly after she travelled to New York in the 1970s, where she met Vito Acconci and Joseph Beuys.

Even during her abstract years Geiger was “contaminated” by the influence of her teacher Fayga Ostrower, also of Jewish-Polish descent, with whom she learned in Rio de Janeiro the art of engraving and, with it, the freedom to create without the pressure of the single piece. The concept of repetition and series associated with this technique left its mark on Geiger’s oeuvre, providing her with a magnificent strategy for questioning the discourse of authority.

It was in the 1970s that she began to develop one of her central themes, geography, at the same time that she explored serialisation, something she has cultivated through the years with subtle changes and parodic strategies that emerge in the numerous techniques that Geiger has practised throughout her career: a pioneering use of video, drawing, photography, three-dimensional works, collage, *avant la lettre* appropriation... Physical and human geography thus became the ideal pretext for pondering issues related to colonial policy, cultural stereotypes, exclusion and the various discourses imposed by the powers that be. More than that, they became ways of questioning these issues in a refined, fragile and delicate manner, turning Geiger’s political objects into poetic objects.

The exhibition presented here — the artist’s first solo show in Europe — highlights the subtlety in Geiger’s work, her political commitment, her peculiar subversion of Chronologies — by devising a repertoire of particular times that come and go — the diversity of the media used, and her fine sense of humour, that parodic streak that enables her to take a distant view of things. Her works are reflections forged out of a physical and human geography in which the story of the world is retold from a different perspective.

Opposite page:
Equations no. 13
1978

Graphite and frottage on
lined exercise book paper
24 x 32 cm

Equations no. 6
1978

Graphite and frottage on
lined exercise book paper 24
x 32 cm

This page:
Our Daily Bread
1978

Six postcards and paper bag
62.2 x 72.4 cm

Untitled (Latin America)
1979

Collage and ink on
parchment
18.9 x 24.9 cm

All images are courtesy of
the artist and Henrique Faria
New York / Buenos Aires.

Physical geography

Geiger's map games constitute a refined parody. They are essential maps for Geiger as they are associated with the colonial policies she likes reflecting upon. Her maps aim to disrupt the place and retell it from an unexpected beginning in search of another beginning, one in which there is no need to surrender merely for being a woman.

Human geography

Geiger exorcises the maps and films herself as she draws them. In the background, local music – a stereotype of Latin America – underscores her parody. If every action is political, Geiger turns her “actions” into a dauntless way of intervention not only of the map but also of reality itself, probably because her work is poetic-political. The nibbled bread that becomes geography, the unexpected situation of Rio as a capital, the vulnerable flag, the autobiographical game that is camouflaged in politics, the knife that cuts reality and shrinks in a sort of visual poem, all conjure up a smile on the visitor that joins her in this disrupted world.

Estrella de Diego

Curator

Native Brazil / Alien Brazil

(fragment)

1976-1977

Eighteen postcards and
coloured photographs
10 x 15 cm each

Cover:

Trouble Spot no. 1

1979

Photogravure on gold leaf

33.5 x 39.5 cm

Photo by Manuel Blanco



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