

MUNTREF CENTRO DE ARTE
CONTEMPORÁNEO

GRACIELA SACCO

Questions



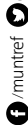
**MARCH 9
TO JUNE 3**

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.

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UNTREF



The preface to an exhibition can have various motivations and objectives.

On certain occasions it can be an attempt to help the audience understand the meaning of the exhibition or provide orientation on the artist's background. In this case, however, we are in the presence of a very different situation: this exhibition is an artistic and human homage to an exceptional woman whom we loved as a person and admired as a sharp, intelligent and committed creator.

We referred to that commitment in the preface to the exhibition that MUNTREF organized in the halls of the Museo del Banco de la República in Bogotá, a text that Graciela truly appreciated: there we spoke about the meaning of her commitment as expressed in the broadest sense of the word.

In her artistic creations, Graciela Sacco revealed the search for a better life for

everyone, regardless of political affiliations or ideologies. By means of her artisan production—in the best sense of the term artisan—, she worked at the highest level of Renaissance humanism as a true artist.

Graciela clearly expressed her agreement or disagreement with what was said about her. I would love to see her reaction to this but it won't be possible.

This show, which was proposed right after we learned about her absence, and conceived and implemented by Diana Wechsler and Fernando Farina from the estrangement of her absence, is not only a homage but also a reminder for everyone of the excellence and commitment of one the greatest Argentine artists of recent times.

Aníbal Y. Jozami
Rector UNTREF



Cover:
 Form the series *M²*:
Any Exit Can Be a Dead End
 2012-2014
 Video installation
 Projection of the sea on
 canvas on a metal structure
 and a combination of mirrors
 Variable dimensions

Opposite page, both images:
 Form the series *Awaiting the
 Barbarians*:
Among Us
 2001
 On-site installation
 Digital print on self-adhesive
 PVC

This page, both images:
 Form the series *Awaiting the
 Barbarians*:
Awaiting the Barbarians
 1995-2015
 Installation on wall.
 Video on digital screens and
 collage of stray wooden
 boards
 Variable dimensions

Photos: Norberto Puzzolo



GRACIELA SACCO AND I ASKING OURSELVES QUESTIONS

We used to share many things, perceptions, intuitions, experiences and projects, all of them under the premise that drives our work: *thinking with images*. This premise prevailed in Graciela's artistic practice: her visual data came from everyday life, frequently working as triggers and referents of works in which reality appeared in a ghostly and provocative manner aiming to produce a reaction, generate a reflection or raise questions.

Who Dunned? Where does Rage Go? – two of the last issues addressed in her work – activated sites within the BIENALSUR territory, during the saga we presented in 2017, in which her question-work challenged remote audiences in Tucumán, Sorocaba, Salta, Guayaquil, Valdivia and La Paz. Also her *Mouthfuls* – in the form of video installations – intended to elicit a response from spectators in Sao Paulo and Lima as they went on traveling as billboards, just like those that invaded the streets in the 1990s, among the *Uprisings* (a curatorial project by Georges Didi-Huberman) that had been exhibited in Paris, Barcelona and Buenos Aires to continue their journey in São Paulo and now in Mexico.

The intensity of her production renders it an essential work, which makes it possible to reflect upon the dialogue it establishes

with projects by other artists, and its forceful action in urban and exhibition spaces.

Among the social realities she looked at and sought to make visible through images, her work primarily addressed transit, migrations and exile. In this regard, her creative passion was kindled by various places: streets, stations, airports and the Hotel de Inmigrantes. It was here, in this old hinged space where the frustration of leaving behind projects in the place of origin coexists with the longing for prosperity in the new destination, that we conceived what would become the site-specific curatorial project that presented her work as a totality to the public first in Buenos Aires (2004) and a year later in Bogotá.

Paradoxical as always, the title of the show was *Nothing Is Where It Seems to Be*. In the course of this exhibition, the old Hotel de Inmigrantes – the venue of the MUNTREF Immigration Museum and Contemporary Art Centre – became both the support of her work and the space her work was to shape from the fence in the atrium that concealed the construction of the elevator, which would later be lined with *Mouthfuls*, to the end of the extensive corridor on the third floor, where the T4 passers-by-shadows restlessly

wandered for several months through the staircases and past the windows from which we were silently watched by interferences and halls, including the passageway and the transept where we established an intensive itinerary. The historic works there were reactivated in the space giving rise to other narratives in the successions of sections and in the encounter with new works such as *They Went North to Get to the South*, that kinetic experiment that she eagerly brought to our team in a mock-up that we promptly took to scale and turned into the work that currently stands – perhaps as a memory of the fragility of the vital experience – on one of the green esplanades in Puerto Madero.

The organization of this show today entails forging the comments she made in the

course of the continuous dialogue we used to enjoy. The 2014 show resulted from the confluence of two ways of *thinking with images* and the pleasure we took in converging in that rich exchange, while pretending to appropriate the place that Graciela had dreamt about so many times. This exhibition in 2018 is based on what her work keeps telling us, and on the questions it still raises.

For all these reasons and as a homage, I would like to try to play a game that I intuitively came up with and that Graciela used to like very much: writing the narrative of the show on the basis of the titles of her works.

Any Exit Can Be a Dead End, a paradoxical assertion chosen to enter the show, rapidly places the spectator in a space of uncertainty. Making that work possible was one of



Opposite page:
Form the series *M²*:
T4
2008-2014
Video installation
Video projection on the
doors of the building

Left:
Form the series *Shadows
from South and North*:
The Perpetual Combat
2001-2010
Light installation
Photoserigraph on acrylic
fragments and light source
Variable dimensions

Photos: Norberto Puzzolo



Form the series *Body to Body*
1997
Urban interference
Offset print on paper
50 x 70 cm each
1st Mercosur Biennial,
Porto Alegre, Brazil

the experiences that we shared in the 2014 show, and we noticed that the bewilderment she expected increased as it imposed itself as a passage from which we would not leave unchanged. Getting in through *Any exit...* and being received by the image of Graciela shooting us with her camera in three heliographies from *Body to Body* sets the tone immediately: it is not an indulgent experience; hence, her last works, *Where Does Rage Go?* and *Memory Skin* appear before her own image from the 1990s. These two series, which she started in 2016, had not yet been shown in Buenos Aires. *Shadows from South*

and *North* – light and immaterial – allude to the perpetual struggle with her own artistic practice asking herself and us once and again in each of her projects *Who Dunnit?*, underscoring in each intervention the reflection upon our origin and our destination, and contributing to turning the site into a space for thought, the very purpose of every show we present at MUNTREF: here, now, with Graciela Sacco once again, thinking together, beyond and in spite of everything, always.

Diana B. Wechsler
Curator

“Saying that art is political is like saying that men are human”

Augusto Boal (a reading from those old shared times)

I miss Graciela.

I don't know why I still expect her to turn up any time to voice a sharp critical remark, or why, despite the passing of days, I still feel a deep sorrow when I become aware of her inevitable absence.

I heard about her death one early morning in Guayaquil, where Marina Aguerre and I were going to curate a show for BIENALSUR that included her work *Who dunnit?* The exhibition then became an homage to Graciela but I was not in our Rosario to say goodbye to her. I feel awfully sorry about this. Over the next days I decided to remain silent, and just wrote a few words on Facebook. I was moved by the publication of a photograph of a time we shared, and which certainly had a great impact on others, on people close to her and even on those who probably didn't know her so much.

I have to admit that at that time I feared she would be turned into the shining light of the feminist cause or any other cause that reflected some personal interest.

It is hard to explain this, but it might be worth recalling some stories.

We were fellow students at the School of Fine Arts of Rosario. I am not sure I want to repeat the phrase that it was fright rather than love what brought us together, but it is

true that we shared many moments and even discussed who had first started research on *Tucumán Arde* (*Tucumán Is Burning*).

Indeed, I have to acknowledge that the return to democracy and the conversations we then had about art and the avant-garde left a profound mark on us.

It wasn't an easy time but it was necessary to conquer the streets and the institutions. I think we established a sort of complicity and any place was important to develop ideas: a museum, a newspaper, a gallery, a park, a school façade.

Her convictions may have been stronger than mine, and therefore she never ceased to pursue the contamination of spaces, to send out her message everywhere, from art fairs to places without any artistic pretensions.

She was certain that the piece could and should defend itself, a remarkable conviction even for those like me who were sure that art was a path.

I say this because we were among the few from that generation that survived the crippling tide of leftovers of the 1968 avant-garde.

Her wings, which pointed at anything that was in danger of extinction, became one of her essential references. How could we forget the clandestinely signalled schools?



Form the series
Announced Maja:
Triptych of the Annunciation
1991
Heliography on paper
141 x 115 x 6 cm,
open work 141 x 230 x 6 cm
Private collection



From the series *In Danger of Extinction*:
Angelus Novus
1994
Object
Heliography on a book, boxes, pieces of chalks, an eraser, a book of stamps
50 x 50 cm

We lived many things together, at times without any comments, at times with debates, mostly sharing. I remember that in those years the newspaper where I wrote suspended me for two months because I had denounced censorship in a show she organized with Fernando Ercila. I don't think we had time to discuss this because one thing would always lead to another.

The use of heliography set her apart not only for her originality, but also because she would thrust a poisoned dagger into the cenacle of the engravers that set well defined standards for a piece to be part of the discipline.

We shared so much. She was a member of the Board of the Castagnino Museum (later Castagnino+ macro), but long before that we had exchanged ideas and I am sure she subtly helped me make decisions during my brief tenure as a curator of the museum in the early 90's when I organized the first hall of art without disciplines and the memorable

exhibitions in which she participated, like *11x11 Installations*, or *The Object of the 90's*.

Graciela and I opened the exhibition *Art in the Tower* at the YPF Foundation, travelled around Argentina and abroad, did ghost hunting in a London house and laughed at our "secrets" everywhere.

We would drift apart and then get back together, perhaps with the certainty that our bond was stronger than any circumstance.

I cannot understand why I did not realize how ill she was.

I still find it hard to talk about her and tears fill my eyes as I write these words. I guess someone may find this questionable from a professional standpoint at the time of organizing an exhibition, but it might be necessary to think about these things differently. Rather than arguing, she would have agreed with this.

Fernando Farina
Curator

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