

PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

LOTTY ROSENFELD

Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento

THE BOX

12 April - 1 May 2021



Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento, 1979-80
16mm film transferred to video (colour, sound)
Edition of 25, 7/25

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present a special showing of the late Chilean artist and activist Lotty Rosenfeld's 1979-80 video work *Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento* (a mile of crosses on the asphalt). On view in the gallery's microproject space, The Box, the presentation commemorates Rosenfeld's life and work following her death last year.

In 1979, six years after the brutal coup that ushered in the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, Lotty Rosenfeld set out along a deserted street on the outskirts of Santiago de Chile with a roll of fabric bandages. One by one, Rosenfeld stretched out and glued strips of bright white fabric across the lines on the road, transforming these simple road markings into a mile-long series of crosses. With this elegant gesture, Rosenfeld subverted the semiology of traffic signage that is so closely associated with notions of conformity: are those living under dictatorship not expected to 'stay in their lane' or 'toe the line'? In undertaking this 'art action' – *action* rather than 'performance' – Rosenfeld created Chile's most enduring symbol of protest. With the crosses, she turned a minus sign into a plus, a negative into a positive; she symbolically ruptured the dictatorship's channels of power and capital and pinpointed Chile's streets as sites of state murder. In a nation so shaped by Catholicism, the crosses couldn't help but evoke the martyrdom of the crucifixion.

The '+' sign became a reflexive rallying cry against Pinochet's regime. Graffiti appeared across Santiago bearing slogans such as *No + dictadura* (no more dictatorship), *No + torturas* (no more tortures), *No + desaparacidos* (no more 'disappeared' people), *No + porque somos +* (no more because we are more), so that ordinary citizens also became artists and activists through their adoption and adaption of the '+'. It is a phenomenon that continues to this day. During Chile's 2011 student protests, placards bearing the '+' sign were ubiquitous; and, during *El Estallido Social* (The Social Outbreak) of 2019-20, long lines of crosses were spotted amongst the barricades. In an era of steadily eroding public space and increasingly untrammelled flows of capital, the radical potentiality of Rosenfeld's original gesture proliferates.

About the artist

Lotty Rosenfeld (b. 1943, Santiago, Chile) studied at Escuela de Artes Aplicadas, Universidad de Chile, specialising in printmaking. In 1979, dissatisfied with making 'decorative' art under dictatorship, Rosenfeld co-founded the interdisciplinary politico-artistic collective CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte) with fellow artist Juan Castillo, sociologist Fernando Balcells, writer Diamela Balcells, and poet Raúl Zurita. CADA played an instrumental role in reigniting critical reflection on the role of art in society within dictatorial Chile: its *NO +* project laid the groundwork for the 'No' campaign in the 1988 plebiscite that finally overthrew the dictatorship. Rosenfeld has exhibited at major museums including The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and the Brooklyn Museum, New York. Her work was featured in the Chilean Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) and Documenta 12, Kassel (2007). *Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento* is held in the collection of MoMA, in addition to three video works by CADA.

About The Box

The Box is a small white cube suspended in a black passage, its hidden LED lighting causing it to hover at the back of the space. Initiated in 2011, The Box programme to date has commissioned and presented works by Susan Hiller, Paul McCarthy, Shana Moulton, Martha Rosler, Arlene Shechet, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Ai Weiwei, Jane and Louise Wilson, and Alina Szapocznikow to name a few.

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