



AMALIA PICA

MIT List Visual Arts Center

February 8 – April 7, 2013

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

April 27– August 11, 2013

MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER

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Using materials such as photocopies, light bulbs, drinking glasses, and cardboard, Amalia Pica (b. 1978, Argentina) confronts the failures, gaps, and slippages of communication. The act of delivering and receiving a verbal or nonverbal message, and the various forms that communicative exchange may take, along with the very limits of language, are central to her work. In *Babble, Blabber, Chatter, Gibber, Jabber, Patter, Prattle, Rattle, Yammer, Yada yada yada* (2010) Pica spells out the work's title using semaphore flags. The *Catachresis* sculptures (2011–) are made with objects whose features are referred to metaphorically as parts of the human body, i.e. the tongue of a shoe, the teeth of a saw, the legs of a table, etc. The title of the series is derived from the literary term describing the misapplication of a word or expression to denote something that does not have a name.

The literal and metaphorical figure of the listener, is also at the center of much of Pica's work. In *Acoustic Radar in Cardboard* (2010/2012) she reimagines an acoustic locator, the outmoded precursor to radar, "to make an image about listening, rather than making a functioning device." *Eavesdropper* (2011) suggests the complex relationship between privacy, listening, and consent. Other works in the exhibition reflect fleeting moments of shared experience, often incorporating the signifiers of celebration and communal gatherings with fiesta lights, bunting, and confetti. Throughout the exhibition participants will enact *Strangers* (2008), a performance in which two people who have never met before hold a string of bunting in the exhibition space.

Born during Argentina's dictatorship and so-called "Dirty War"—a seven year campaign in the 1970s against suspected dissidents and subversives—Pica has long been interested in the relationship between form and politics, and between history and representation. In *Venn Diagrams (Under the Spotlight)* (2011) the artist addresses this period in Argentina when modern mathematics was banned from school programs. Filmed in Montevideo, Uruguay, *On Education* (2008) shows Pica wearing the uniform of both schoolteachers and students in Argentina, whitewashing an equestrian monument. A common riddle asks the color of a general's white horse, the name of the general—from Napoleon to San Martín—changing depending on where the riddle is posed. Along with the mythologizing of history, Pica looks to civic participation and the social forms that allow people to speak. *Stage (as seen on Afghan Star)* (2011) alludes to the Afghan television program for aspiring pop stars; for many voting for their favorite, the show offered a rare public forum for the expression of individual opinion. Pica reflects on how speech is a protected right in some regions of the world, while still a privilege in many others. Surveying the artist's sculpture, performance, installation, video, and drawing produced over nearly a decade, the exhibition is itself conceived as a conversation among Pica's works across various mediums.

MAIN GALLERIES

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Amalia Pica received a BA from the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes P.P. in Buenos Aires in 2003 and attended graduate school at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. Pica has had solo exhibitions at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (2012); Marc Foxx Gallery, Los Angeles; Chisenhale Gallery, London (both 2011); and Malmö Konsthall (2010), to name a few. Her work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions such as *The Ungovernables* at the New Museum (2012); *Silence* at the Menil Collection (2012); *Map Marathon* at the Serpentine Gallery (2010); *Word Event* at the Kunsthalle Basel (2008); and *Drawing Typologies* at the Stedelijk Museum (2007). She is a recipient of a CIFO grant from the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, a finalist for the Future Generation Art Prize from the Pinchuk Foundation, and recently completed an artist residency at the prestigious Headlands Center for the Arts outside of San Francisco.

Amalia Pica is curated by João Ribas, Curator at the MIT List Visual Art Center, and Julie Rodrigues Widholm, Pamela Alper Associate Curator at MCA Chicago.

The exhibition opens at the MIT List Visual Arts Center and will be on view at the MCA Chicago April 27- August 11, 2013.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Members of the MIT and local communities perform *Strangers* every Tuesday 12:30-2:30 pm, Thursday 5:30-7:30 pm, and Saturday 1:00-3:00 pm.

Thursday April 4, 6:00pm Bartos Theatre

A talk by Sophia Roosth, Asst. Professor in the History of Science, Harvard University

SUPPORTED BY

Support for the Cambridge presentation of *Amalia Pica* has been generously provided by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation, the Council for the Arts at MIT, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Office of the Associate Provost at MIT, the MIT List Visual Arts Center Advisory Committee, and the Friends of the List.



Image credit: Amalia Pica, *Eavesdropper* (2011)
Courtesy of the artist and Herald St., London

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