

PRESS RELEASE

THE STATE OF THINGS. The object in art from 1960 to the present day

Collections of the Regional Funds of Contemporary Art in France

DATES:	8 th October 2004 - 9 th January 2005
WHERE:	Exhibition halls on the ground and first floor
OPENING TIMES:	Tuesdays to Sundays (including holidays), from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
PRODUCED BY:	Co-produced by MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, and ARTIUM, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo de Vitoria-Gasteiz
DIRECTORS OF PROJECT IN MARCO:	Carlota Álvarez Basso Iñaki Martínez Antelo
DIRECTOR OF PROJECT IN ARTIUM:	Javier González de Durana
ORIGINAL IDEA:	Jean-Marc Prévost
ADVISORS:	Catherine Elkar, Hervé Legros, Pascal Neveux
SPONSORSHIP:	AFAA - Association Française d'Action Artistique, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères DAP/Délégation aux Arts Plastiques, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication en France Xacobeo 2004. Galicia
VENUES:	MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo (8 th October 2004 – 9 th January 2005) ARTIUM, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo de Vitoria (2 nd February - 22 nd May 2005)
COORDINATOR IN FRANCE:	Eléonore Jacquiau Chamska
COORDINATOR IN MARCO:	Marta García Viña
COORDINATOR IN ARTIUM:	Yolanda Egoscozábal
CATALOGUE:	MARCO and ARTIUM will publish a trilingual catalogue in Spanish, French and Galician/Basque, containing a text written by Eléonore Jacquiau Chamska, as well as photographs, technical specifications and descriptions of the works on exhibition and information about the FRAC (Regional Funds of Contemporary Art in France).
NUMBER OF WORKS OF ART ON EXHIBITION:	117
	The exhibition is composed of 117 works of art, most of them sculptures, but also paintings, installations, objects, photographs and videoprojections.

ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION: 63

- John M. Armleder (Geneva, Switzerland, 1948)
- Richard Artschwager (Washington, USA, 1924)
- Atelier Van Lieshout (Ravenstein, Netherlands, 1963)
- Richard Baquié (Marseilles, France, 1952-1966)
- Basserode (Nice, France, 1958)
- Ben (Naples, Italy, 1935)
- Christian Boltanski (Paris, 1944)
- Étienne Bossut (Saint-Chamond, France, 1946)
- Céleste Boursier-Mougenot (Nice, France, 1961)
- George Brecht (Halfway, USA, 1925)
- Marcel Broodthaers (Brussels, 1924 - 1976)
- Joan Brossa (Barcelona, 1919 - 1998)
- César (Marseilles, France, 1921 – Paris 1998)
- Claude Closky (Paris, 1963)
- Tony Cragg (Liverpool, United Kingdom, 1949)
- Michael Craig-Martin (Dublin, 1941)
- Bill Culbert (Port Chalmers, New Zealand, 1935)
- Wim Delvoye (Wervick, Belgium, 1965)
- Erik Dietman (Jönköping, Sweden, 1937 – Paris 2002)
- Marcel Duchamp (Blainville-Crevon, France, 1887 – Paris 1968)
- Hubert Duprat (Nérac, France, 1957)
- Eric Duyckaerts (Liège, Belgium, 1953)
- Robert Filliou (Sauve, France, 1926 – Les-Eyzies, France, 1987)
- Daniel Firman (Bron, France, 1966)
- Peter Fischli & David Weiss (Zurich, Switzerland, 1952; 1946)
- Sylvie Fleury (Geneva, Switzerland, 1961)
- Anne Gardiner (Scotland, United Kingdom, 1967)
- Gotscho (Paris, 1945)
- Hans Haacke (Cologne, Germany, 1936)
- Raymond Hains (Saint Brieuc, France, 1926)
- Richard Hamilton (London, 1922)
- Thomas Huber (Zurich, Switzerland, 1955)
- Fabrice Hybert (Luçon, France, 1961)
- Pascal Kern (Paris, 1952)
- Bertrand Lavier (Châtillon-sur-Seine, France, 1949)
- Allan McCollum (Los Angeles, USA, 1944)
- Christian Marclay (San Rafael, USA, 1955)
- Philippe Mayaux (Roubaix, Paris, 1961)
- Jean-Luc Moulène (Reims, France, 1955)
- Juan Muñoz (Madrid, 1953 – Ibiza, Spain, 2001)
- Cady Noland (USA, 1956)
- Gabriel Orozco (Veracruz, Mexico, 1962)
- Panamarenko (Antwerp, Belgium, 1940)
- Philippe Parreno (Oran, Algeria, 1964)
- Bruno Peinado (Montpellier, France, 1970)
- Présence Panchounette (Group created in 1969 in Bordeaux, France, and dissolved in 1990)
- Philippe Ramette (Auxerre, France, 1961)
- Jean-Pierre Raynaud (Colombes, France, 1939)
- Tobias Rehberger (Esslingen, Germany, 1966)
- Mimmo Rotella (Catanzaro, Italy, 1918)
- Jean-Michel Sanejouand (Lyon, France, 1934)
- Patrick Saytour (Nice, France, 1935)
- Thomas Schütte (Oldenburg, Germany, 1954)
- Alain Séchas (Colombes, France, 1955)
- Roman Signer (Appenzel, Switzerland, 1938)
- Patrick Tosani (Boissy-l'Aillier, France, 1954)
- Martin Tupper (lives and works in Nice, France)
- Xavier Veilhan (Lyon, France, 1963)
- Jean-Luc Vilmouth (Creutzwald, France, 1952)
- Andy Warhol (Pittsburgh, USA, 1928 – New York, USA, 1967)
- Franz West (Vienna, 1947)
- Bill Woodrow (London, 1948)
- Erwin Wurm (Bruck an der Mur, Austria, 1954)

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

The educational programme at MARCO during the next three months (from October to December 2004) will focus on the analysis of the object in contemporary art. These complementary activities intend to facilitate the understanding and enjoyment of the works of art displayed at the exhibition. The tools to achieve this goal will be the programme dedicated to schoolchildren (guided tours and workshops) and the *Advanced course on contemporary art for adults*. The first series of this course, entitled after the exhibition, will be focused on the analysis of the object in contemporary art.

SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT:

The exhibition *The State of Things. The object in art from 1960 to the present day* was presented in its first version at the Museum of Fine Art in Nantes from the 28th June to the 12th October 2003. It marked the cultural event called “Public Treasures, 20 years of creation in the Regional Funds of Contemporary Art in France”, organized by the French Ministry of Culture and curated by Jean Marc Prévost.

One year later, the museums of MARCO in Vigo and ARTIUM in Vitoria are hosting this exhibition. As for MARCO, this is the first time a temporary exhibition occupies both floors in the museum, due to the high number of works of art exhibited and their large size.

The exhibition is composed by 117 works of art from the collections of 17 FRAC (Fonds Régionaux d’Art Contemporain, i.e. Regional Funds of Contemporary Art in France), created in 1983 by the French Ministry of Culture and the regional governments. The FRAC are a network of 24 centres focused on the dissemination and support of contemporary creation, following a policy of cultural decentralization that has proved high success in the acquisition of works of art.

This exhibition presents a selection of these collections that leads us along the evolution of international contemporary art from the beginning of the sixties —when everyday objects were integrated into art discourse— to the present day. Thus, the status of the “object” in art is introduced and analyzed in all its forms and states throughout different artistic movements.

The original project is enriched in MARCO’s and ARTIUM’s version by the addition of Juan Muñoz and Joan Brossa, two recently deceased Spanish artists, whose works abound in the FRAC collections. On this occasion, their brilliant career will be commemorated in two halls showing diametrically opposed approaches to the object.

Following this method of analysis —a sort of cross section—, objects gradually turn into reflections of contemporary vision right in front of us. They sometimes tell us about the experience of the immediate environment; claim for their individuality and that of their creators; make us think about their role and effect on consumer society; raise questions such as the uselessness of the work of art or the borders between art and design; or become metaphors, symbols or traces of their immediate past and their origins. In short, they operate as a channel for the better understanding of contemporary art.

The exhibition opens with Duchamp’s *Boîte en Valise* (1966), and it obviously could not be otherwise. This work reproduces 83 miniatures of the creator of the readymade, who turned a urinal into a “work of art” when he entitled it *Fountain* (1917) and presented it at an exhibition. The artist decided to decontextualize and put on a base this everyday object, which became then an artistic object. The result went beyond provocation and laid the foundations of a new concept of artist and work of art, still valid today, claiming that the idea is more important than the product itself.

It has been forty years of piled up, crammed, invented, recycled, manufactured and decomposed objects, manipulated by artists in all the imaginable ways: everyday objects deflected from their roles by Fluxus or provided with a memory by Christian Boltanski; objects rejected after having been used by consumer society and reinvented by the “New Sculpture” in Britain; objects deflected from their roles by Bertrand Lavier or John Armleder; objects inventoried by Claude Closky; objects displayed by Christian Marclay; objects piled up by Daniel Firman; objects magnified by Patrick Tosani; objects coming from ephemeral encounters orchestrated by Gabriel Orozco; and all the other machine-objects, showcase-objects, cynical objects, bandaged objects, etc. This provides an insight of what has been created in art through exhibitions taking place since the birth of contemporary art. In these exhibitions, things swiftly become objects and objects become products, oscillating relentlessly from one to the other, between irony and cynicism, criticism and demonstration, protest and aesthetic fascination.

Fluxus artists (Robert Filliou, Ben) drew inspiration from the Dadaist and Duchampian heritage, decontextualizing everyday objects to produce “poetic and political” images and puns. Later, Pop artists (Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol) and New Realists (César, Raymond Hains) took an interest in mass consumer goods and incorporated them as integral part of their work of art. By doing so, they intended to establish a direct relationship between reality and the changes taking place in the contemporary world.

After the sixties, Christian Boltanski followed the trail of Conceptual Art and conceived a series of intimate objects full of memories. During the eighties, the “New Sculpture” in Britain (Tony Cragg, Bill Woodrow) picked up the forms of Minimal Art and Conceptual Art to reveal an interest in the extent of consumer society. Richard Artschwager’s decontextualizations, or later Bertrand Lavier’s, John Armleder’s or Sylvie Fleury’s are a way to critically trace the history of contemporary sculpture and painting.

During the nineties, Claude Closky worked with language and object, taking and staging anodyne “things”, while Fabrice Hybert’s POFs (*Prototypes d’objets en fonctionnement*, i.e. prototypes of working objects) question the systems of art production and spreading. Objects can also take part in a more narrative field —as in Xavier Veilhan’s works— or become a product, as Jean-Luc Moulène shows in his creations. Gabriel Orozco, for his part, questions the concepts of “crafts” and “industrial product”, while L’Atelier Van Lieshout, among others, reflects on the status of a work of art, its role and its representation, so as to raise again the question of the economy of object and its desires.

The addition of objects to the work of art, the artistic object and its role, art and consumer society... These issues and many more are raised by ***The State of Things***, an exhibition of the peculiar voyage of objects and their creators through the history of contemporary art.

TEXT BY THE DIRECTORS:

"The exhibition *THE STATE OF THINGS. The object in art from 1960 to the present day. Collections of the Regional Funds of Contemporary Art in France*, presented now at MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Vigo, and ARTIUM, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo de Vitoria-Gasteiz, is an exhibition that will mark us, filling us with renewed energy and the best of intentions towards contemporary art. This was at least the spellbinding sensation we all got when we visited in the summer of 2003 its first version presented at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes. On that occasion, the exhibition was curated by Jean Marc Prévost and was part of the many events organized by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication to commemorate the twenty years of the creation of the FRAC, Fonds Régionaux d'Art Contemporain (Regional Funds of Contemporary Art).

This commemoration was one of the reasons for our satisfaction. It is not everyday that one has the opportunity to assist to the coming-out of so emblematic a cultural event at national level, helping us to become reconciled with our profession and with cultural management. These 24 FRAC were launched in 1983 thanks to the joint effort of the French Ministry of Culture and the regional governments, and in our opinion this was one of the most original and best focused European cultural proposals.

The targets of their foundation were mainly two: the establishment of a network of centres to disseminate and support contemporary creation, by means of the acquisition and protection of works of art, and the strengthening of a real policy of cultural decentralization. The results are clear: not only has it resulted in the creation of many collections with more than 15,000 works of international artists —some of them specialized in art and its relationship with architecture, cinema or design—, but these collections have a high artistic and economic value as well —due to the good criteria of acquisition. And it cannot be forgotten that artists from different generations and countries have been wholeheartedly supported by the FRAC, which have also undertaken the invaluable and hard task to raise public awareness of contemporary art through exhibitions and educational activities. All in all, they set the perfect example of how to successfully approach political projects in the cultural field at national level.

One of the other reasons for our enthusiasm for this event was the high quality of the works of art exhibited —a small selection of works of art from the collections of the FRAC— which, in an excellent installation, narrated the history of the representation of the object in contemporary art from the sixties to the present day. Sculptures, installations, videos, paintings and photographs, from the pioneer Marcel Duchamp, through Fluxus, Pop and Conceptual artists to New Sculpture in Britain or New Realists, showed us how everyday objects have settled forever into contemporary art discourse. And we say "narrate" because we could feel objects talking to us.

We were finally captivated by the freshness of the exhibition and its undeniable sense of humour. The decontextualization of an everyday object from its role and environment raises inevitably misinterpretations and paradoxes that may get a smile out of us. This, together with the addition of the said object to a work of art and its later exhibition in a museum, will most probably turn the misinterpretation into discourse and the paradox into metaphor. That is the power of art."

Carlota Álvarez Basso, Director of MARCO, and Javier González de Durana, Director of ARTIUM

REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

“THE STATE OF THINGS”

GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS:

CD including texts and photographs of the exhibition in different formats.

IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR MAIL POST TO:

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

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