

## EXHIBITION

### SWITCH ON THE POWER! Noise and policies on music

June 9<sup>th</sup> – September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 **EXHIBITION HALLS ON THE FIRST FLOOR**



#### DATES

June 9<sup>th</sup>- September 17<sup>th</sup> 2006

#### PLACE

Exhibition halls on the first floor

#### OPEN

Tuesday to Saturday, from 11.00 to 21.00

Sundays, from 11.00 to 15.00

#### PRODUCTION

MARCO, Contemporary Art Museum of Vigo  
CAAM, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas  
Montehermoso Cultural Centre, Vitoria.  
With the special collaboration of TVE, S.A.

#### CURATOR

Xabier Arakistain

#### Director MARCO

Iñaki Martínez Antelo

#### Head of the Exhibitions Department

Agar Ledo Arias

#### Coordination

Marta García Viña

Left: CHICKS ON SPEED

#### ARTISTS: 27

- **Alaska & Nacho Canut** (Mexico, 1963; Valencia, Spain, 1957)
- **Laurie Anderson** (Chicago, USA, 1947)
- **Anat Ben-David** (Jerusalem, Israel, 1971)
- **Tobias Bernstrup** (New York, USA, 1970)
- **Leigh Bowery** (Junshine, Australia, 1961 - London, UK, 1994)
- **Carles Congost** (Olot, Girona, Spain, 1970)
- **Chicks on Speed** (Melissa Logan, USA; Alex Murray-Leslie, Australia; Kiki Moorse, Germany)
- **Chico y Chica** (José Luis Rebollo, Bilbao, Spain, 1966; Alicia San Juan, Bilbao, Spain, 1967)
- **DAF** (Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft)
- **Jon Mikel Euba** (Amorebieta, Bilbao, Spain, 1967)
- **Iain Forsyth & Jane 1972** (UK, 1973; UK, 1972)
- **Dan Graham** (Urbana, Illinois, USA, 1942)
- **Nina Hagen** (Berlin, Germany, 1955)
- **Pam Hogg** (Scotland)
- **Killer Barbies** (Vigo, Pontevedra, Spain)
- **Chris Korda**
- **Kraftwerk** (group founded in Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1970)
- **Ladypat** (Arbroath, Scotland, 1970)
- **Lene Lovich** (Detroit, USA, 1949)
- **Begoña Muñoz** (Pamplona, Navarra, Spain, 1971)
- **Yoko Ono** (Tokyo, Japan, 1933; lives and works in New York)
- **Genesis P-Orridge** (Manchester, UK, 1950)
- **Peaches** (Toronto, Canada)
- **Planningtorock** (Janine Rostron, Bolton, UK; lives and works in Berlin)
- **Siouxsie Sioux** (London, UK, 1957)
- **Jean-Luc Verna** (Niza, France, 1966)
- **Andy Warhol** (Forest City, Pennsylvania, USA, 1928 – New York, USA, 1967)

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

**SWITCH ON THE POWER!** *Noise and policies of music* brings together artistic works and/or videographic documents by a series of artists from the world of art and music in the same exhibition space.

## OPENING CONCERT

**Pam Hogg, Anat Ben-David, Chicks on Speed and Alaska & Nacho Canut**

- Friday June 9<sup>th</sup>
- MARCO, pedestrian square behind (C/ Progreso)

Coinciding with the opening session, a concert open to all will be held with special performances of artists in the exhibition, as well as the participation of RNST from Vigo as guest DJ.

## PERFORMANCE

**CHICKS ON SPEED: *Musical Illustrations***

- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> of June
- Exhibition rooms on the first floor

The exhibition will be complemented with a presentation of the performance *Musical Illustrations*, by the group Chicks on Speed, comprising Melissa Logan (USA), Alex Murray-Leslie (Australia) and Kathrin Glas. The experience will be recorded and edited in a video to be shown in the halls on the first floor as an integral part of the exhibition.

*Musical Illustrations* is a laboratory-workshop in which the three artists experiment with new ways of creating collages under the influence of the music, digital or analogue resources and manual techniques. Each image arising from this process can be related to others or remain independent, to create a sequence or to exist as a single work. A work in progress offered live—where the artists do not stop singing, dancing, cutting and pasting, creating animations, drawing, projecting images— which results in an hour of “musical illustrations”.

## GUIDED TOURS

- Every day at 18:00
- Visits “à la carte” for groups by appointment, calling tel. 986 113900/11 (ext. 307 or 314)
- Visits for associations – Thursdays and Fridays at 17:00, by appointment calling tel. 986 113900/11 (ext. 307 or 314)
- Guided tour offered by the curator, exclusively for Friends of MARCO, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of June at 19:00

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## ABOUT THE CURATOR

Xabier Arakistain is an independent curator. He was responsible for programming the Exhibition Hall in the Bilbao Arte Fundazioa Foundation, in 2001 and 2003, where he organised exhibitions such as *Doble filo* (Shirin Neshat and Ghada Amer), *Royal Blood* (Erwin Olaf), *Guerrilla Girls 1985-200* and *Leigh Bowery*, as well as a series of specific projects by Manu Arregui (*On my own*), Itziar Okariz (*Trepar edificios*), Eulàlia Valldosera (*Konstellazioak*) and Carles Congost (*Un Mystique determinado*). In 1999 he presented the exhibition *Trans Sexual Express* in Bilbao Arte. En 2001, with Rosa Martínez (co-director of the latest Venice Biennale), he organised a travelling exhibition adapted to each of the venues of the exhibition: *Trans Sexual Express* Barcelona 2001 (Centre d'Art Santa Mónica, Barcelona), *Trans Sexual Express* Budapest 2001 (Mücsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest) and *Trans Sexual Express* A Coruña 2002 (Kiosko Alfonso, A Coruña). In 2002, he presented the project *Anunciando un Nuevo presente, Tracey Emin and Gaüeca* in the Gran Bilbao magazine and in 2004 the retrospective exhibition dedicated to Leigh Bowery in the Textile Museum of Barcelona. In recent years he has chaired the round tables "Feminisms, sexualities and arts" in the ARCO Fair in Madrid. Xabier Arakistain is also curator of the exhibition *Para todos los públicos/For all audiences*, opened last March in the Sala Rekalde in Bilbao. He is currently preparing the exhibition *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, 45 años de arte y feminismo (Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, 45 years or art and feminism)* for the Fine Arts Museum of Bilbao.

## VENUES

- MARCO, Contemporary Art Museum of Vigo (9<sup>th</sup> June– 17<sup>th</sup> September 2006)
- CAAM, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno (Atlantic Modern Art Centre), Las Palmas (17<sup>th</sup> October 2006 – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2007)
- Montehermoso Cultural Centre, Vitoria (February – April 2007)

## CATALOGUE

A catalogue will be published for the exhibition containing a text by the curator, Xabier Arakistain, among others. The publication will also include pictures of the works being exhibited.

## SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

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**SWITCH ON THE POWER! Noise and policies of music** brings together a series of artists from the world of art and music that share performance and aesthetic strategies. Through exhibits and/or videographic documents, this exhibition highlights and at the same time delves into the interactions arising between these artistic genres.

Renouncing the temptation to show today's music as yet another theme in art, this project focuses on the singularity of artistic discursive practices that we see as being shared by pop, rock and other musical artists, as well as visual artists. In some cases, these artists have been part of trends such as Happening, Fluxus, Body-Art, different types of performance, etc., whereas others have followed the approaches of the artistic movements that emerged during the 20<sup>th</sup> century reinventing them by adding their own contributions, building artistic discourses that often transmit alternative values or critical political contents.

In any case, all these discourses have focused on the use of the body, re-constructed from personal parameters, as an aesthetic symbol for their public presentation. A body that has created a language which has often specifically used the voice, and which has been characterised by relating different disciplines such as the performing arts, visual arts, dance and/or different rituals of bodily movement, cinema, literature or design. But above all, a body that moves to the orders of the sound that it creates itself, the sound of musical proposals that have managed to find their place in the contemporary music scene, and which have also taken into account contexts such as the so-called *club culture*, or the pop, rock and electronic music phenomena.

The title of the exhibition —Switch on the Power!— exploits the capacity of the English language for polysemy (*connect the electricity/activate the power*), and refers to the spirit of immediacy and independence that has often characterised these musical and artistic movements. The exhibition's subtitle —Noise and Policies on Music— highlights the subversive nature of these practices, noise understood as a form of disturbance that enters a system in order to modify it, and the need to see these practices as policies with their own structures and languages.

Due to the particular characteristics of this exhibition, special attention has been paid to the layout. Instead of building walls to isolate the projections in viewing rooms, the rooms have been darkened and painted entirely black, with discriminatory projections on screens and sound systems, i.e.: visitors can see the projections simultaneously, but can only hear sound from the one that is in front of them. Thus, the illusion of being direct spectators of each of the exhibits is created, while at the same time giving the sensation of seeing them all at once, at a glance.

## A BRIEF TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION

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From the 1960s, **Andy Warhol** collaborated with the famous music group The Velvet Underground. This was the beginning of a new type of contemporary art where artists link visual art with popular music. Warhol's 1966 film *The Velvet Underground and Nico* is a good example of this interdisciplinary connection. However, in the history of the intersection between music and visual arts analysed in the exhibition, two artists stand out for being pioneers in contemplating popular music as a sphere to intervene in from an artistic standing. One of them is **Yoko Ono**, and we present her latest work *Onochord*, and the other is **Laurie Anderson**, who in works like *Oh Superman* from 1981, sets the foundations for a type of art that has currently a large number of followers. This is the case of **Chico y Chica**, **Anat Ben-David**, **Planningtorock**, **Begoña Muñoz**, **Tobias Berntrup** and **Chicks On Speed**. The latter group, composed entirely of women, will present a singular performance while the MARCO is open during the first week of the exhibition. The performance is part of the project *Musical Illustrations*, a laboratory-workshop, a work in progress offered live which will result in a video documenting the event, which will be exhibited as part of the exhibition.

The social and cultural phenomenon of Rock and Pop has also provided significant examples of artists who in music have used aesthetic and performative strategies common in the world of visual arts. **Alaska y Nacho Canut**, **Siouxsie Sioux** and **Nina Hagen** offer, for the first time in a museum, a detailed history of their careers; **Lene Lovich** presents *The Power of Performance*, a short film specifically made for this exhibition, and **Peaches** offers the visitor the world premier of the video-clip *Fuck the Pain Away*. Directly influenced by the language generated by Rock, the visitor can contemplate the work of artists such as **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard**, **Jon Mikel Euba** and **Jean-Luc Verna**, who highlight in their work the artistic relevance of performance strategies developed by Rock. For his part, in *Un mistique determinado*, **Carles Congost** analyses and recreates teenage pop culture. The success of this collection of strategies can also be found in the group from Vigo **Killer Barbies** and their video *Crazy*, made by Silvia Superstar herself.

While the Rock phenomenon developed, in the 1970s the German group **Kraftwerk** was to popularise electronic music, creating unique works that have been the inspiration for several of the events taking place in music and art in the last two decades. The exhibition contains performances by the group and several videos by another German group, **DAF** (Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft), which in the early 1980s applied electronics to Punk music.

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Questioning the frontiers between artistic disciplines and contexts and halfway between club culture, Rock, fashion and art, are two artists: **Leigh Bowery**, object of several retrospective exhibitions after his death, among which we can highlight that of the latest Venice Biennale, and which this time presents a selection of performances carried out in the 1990s with his music group Minty. In this sphere, we can also include the British fashion designer and performer **Pam Hogg**, who has created a work for this project containing a mini-collection of clothes and several videos where she sings her songs. As an example of the new practices in the context of current London club culture, the artist **Ladypat** contributes with a selection of videos of his own or made in collaboration with different artists in this field.

Regarding the relationship between Art, Rock and Politics—in the classical sense of the term—the exhibition includes the emblematic work by **Dan Graham** *Rock my Religion* and the video *Save the Planet, Kill Yourself* by **Chris Korda**, inviting us to enter the strategies that in the 1990s linked music and political activism. Finally, it is a pleasure to recover –twenty years after it was first broadcast on television, the TVE programme *La Edad de Oro*, directed by Paloma Chamorro– the video by the British Artist **Genesis P-Orridge** and his group Psychic TV. With this video we include documentation on the PANDROGENY project, which is currently being developed by Genesis.

## TEXT BY THE CURATOR

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“Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several artistic movements have redefined, from several fronts, the concepts of Art and Artist, blurring, among other things, the borders between visual arts and other disciplines that were (and still are) considered ‘minor’.

In the meantime, while these struggles were waged in the field of art with greater or lesser fortune, there were serious transformations in the field of popular music. These transformations have materialized as, with a determined absence of prejudice, different musical styles and influences have mixed, enabling the emergence of new cultural and social phenomena, among which we can highlight the unique pop-rock universe, which combines elements from fashion, advertising and the performing arts. Moreover: many of these processes have taken place practically with little or no regard for the opinion of critics, institutions and other controlling bodies, and nevertheless, during the development of these processes, we have also seen the rise of charismatic figures that have acquired social relevance: pop and rock stars. Stars that became what they are by using the tactics of art to differentiate their products and public personae, choosing to explain themselves in elaborate terms and adopting a hyper-reflective discourse where a fundamental role is given to aesthetic issues.

All these events in the world of music are related to the attention being given to the phenomenon of pop-rock and other contemporary music styles in the last few years by a new generation of visual artists, resulting in an intersection between both fields (music and art) that has become one of the most interesting lines of research in the current artistic scene.

[...] In each of these fields (music and art), significant processes have occurred and are still taking place, which are also relevant for the exhibition.

On the one hand, since the 1960s, some pop and rock artists began to produce static and moving images to promote their songs and showbiz personae. These images referred to their performance strategies to present their music and to build their public personae from parameters that often resembled the premises of avant-garde artistic movements. Moreover, a good number of these people collaborated with cinema directors or visual artists to create what was a new product and format called *video clip*. This collection of performance and aesthetic strategies led to the creation of a complex artistic discourse that projected a real lifestyle, and which was soon to become a cultural and social phenomenon, of crucial importance in the foundation and dissemination of what we now call youth movements and which in turn led to urban tribes.

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An essential element of the success of these strategies was based on the potential that the pop and rock worlds have traditionally shown as an instrument for resistance and rebellion in young people, and for being an excellent vehicle for social and political content. In fact, pop and rock have created fascinating works defending socially alternative values, and even though these products have not often achieved massive success, recent publications and authors such as Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson agree on highlighting the singularity of these musical styles and the politics they represent. In their opinion 'the phenomenon of pop and rock music, focused on the singers from the 1960s, works following a phono-logo-central logic, with the voice, the logos, as a place of truth invoking an idea of social group formed by the music group and the audience. Regarding the promoters of the protest, the singers were to be the political-cultural representatives of their audience, responding to the belief that music could and should be a soundboard for their audience'.

On the other hand, in the art world, a whole generation of artists that have lived or grown up with products from the music world, have incorporated these languages into their artistic work without forgetting their performative aspect. Artists who –in some cases due to problems for acquiring status in the art world– made use of practices common in music, such as the personality cult, inspired by the Hollywood *star-system*, the insistent search for a generational element, with its specific problems, the use of mass production and a special interest in the idea of collective creation and that creation is not limited to an album, but also encompasses concert performances. In this respect, as witnessed in the sphere of music, there is a total lack of prejudice when it comes to combining styles and disciplines that once again reject the elitism of art and its determination to embrace the interests of the middle, working and other classes, one of the latest techniques for popularising art.

Likewise, in the field of art, we are witnessing a systematic revision of the 1970s; this revision is unquestionably influenced by the considerable political and social content of the art of that period, rekindling interest in artistic practices such as performance or body-art. All these questions have led to the many artistic projects nowadays that result in a recorded "product". These products are the outcome of the application of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary logic, which has become a generational symptom and is presented as a solution to the new communicational needs and concerns of this 'New' visual artist, who also projects a kind of non-conformism with the mechanisms that move the art world. Moreover, the artworks being created based on these premises, often attack the prevailing concept of a work of art, because the resulting product defies the traditional parameters of the art market, while at the same time questioning the rigid dividing line between disciplines."

Xabier Arakistain  
Curator of the exhibition

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## REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

**"SWITCH ON THE POWER! Noise and policies on music"**

### GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS:

CD with texts and photos of the exhibition, in different formats

**IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, FILL IN AND SEND THIS DOCUMENT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR POST TO:**

### MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

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