

Brossa Poetry, at MACBA

- ▶ A survey of Joan Brossa's complete oeuvre based on orality, the performative and anti-poetry, bringing together 800 works and abundant documentation, from his early books to his final visual experiments, as well as theatre, cinema and action art.
- ▶ The exhibition includes case studies and a visual recapitulation of his exhibitions from the 1980s, while placing Brossa's production in dialogue with the work of Marcel Mariën, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Nicanor Parra, as well as including his collaborations with Miró, Tàpies, Portabella, Mestres Quadreny and Carles Santos.
- ▶ The poetry of Joan Brossa embraces actions, images and objects, so one of the challenges facing this exhibition is to link the oral and the performative to the conventions of the museum. For that reason, a group of performers will interpret the work of Brossa in the galleries during the exhibition.
- ▶ Curated by Teresa Grandas and Pedro G. Romero, the exhibition has been produced in collaboration with the Fundació Joan Brossa, making possible the inclusion of a vast selection of documentation, and with the support of Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) and the IRL Institut Ramon Llull.

Title: *Brossa Poetry* **Opening:** Wednesday 20 September 2017, at 7.30 pm **Dates:** 21 September 2017 to 25 February 2018 **Organisation and production:** MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona **Curated by:** Teresa Grandas and Pedro G. Romero

This monographic exhibition of Joan Brossa (Barcelona, 1919–1998) brings together 800 works and an abundant selection of documentation from the Joan Brossa Fonds, in a survey that shows the consolidation of his artistic language through his visual experiments, poetry, theatre, cinema and artistic actions. Brossa is a poet, but his works always stand at the crossroads of languages, so the exhibition emphasises his *poïesis*, his way of doing. Brossa opens a new space, the space in which poetry embraces actions, images and objects. In that sense, the exhibition looks at Brossa's work from three main angles: orality, the performative and anti-poetry.

Brossa developed his artistic practice from the 1940s, in a socio-political context marked by the Franco dictatorship and in a cultural situation largely devoid of avant-garde and innovative proposals. From the beginning, his work was one of aesthetic renewal based on literary and artistic research. Until the moment of his death, he never ceased to develop new forms of expression and ways of experimenting with different media. *Brossa Poetry* begins at the moment in which the traits of his poetry are forged and defined, with his first writings dating from the Spanish Civil War, and concludes by confronting and putting his work in dialogue with that of Marcel Mariën, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Nicanor Parra. Along the way, we can see remarkable aspects of Brossa's universe such as his critique of merchandise, the poetic concept of language, the reading of Brossa as anti-poetry and Transformism, as well as gestures and political actions such as his support for the tram strike of 1951, the sit-in of intellectuals in Montserrat in 1970 and the *Anti-Tourism Itinerary* around Barcelona, which constitute some of the case studies included in the exhibition.

Brossa Poetry consists of five sections. In the first, *This made me Joan Brossa*, his earliest writings are collected, as well as works that show how he favoured Miró over Dalí, his materialism akin to the Informalist shift of Tàpies and the influence of João Cabral de Melo, among other aspects. In the second, *Game of images*, we find a wide selection of the *Suites* (1959–69) and the *Poemes habitables* (1970), in which Brossa incorporates elements such as games or dialogues with the page, resulting in a rich poetic language based on minimal interventions. *Other itineraries* reviews Brossa's poetry through Transformism and through languages not considered conventionally artistic but that he includes in his personal grammar, like striptease and magic, to name but two. In the penultimate section, *A visual recapitulation*, the presentation of the works follows the design of the triple exhibition of 1988 and 1989 in the galleries Mosel & Tschechow, Munich; Joan Prats, Barcelona; and La Máquina Española, Madrid. Finally, *Brossa Constellations* extends the references to other artists with whom Brossa shares numerous thematic and formal concerns: Marcel Mariën (Belgium), Ian Hamilton Finlay (Scotland) and Nicanor Parra (Chile).

Fundació Joan Brossa deposit

In 2011, the Fundació Joan Brossa and the Barcelona City Council deposited the collection, archives and library of the artist, amounting to over 60,000 items, at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, on a loan basis for a renewable period of 25 years. This legacy comprises some 50,000 documents, 6,000 books, 5,700 magazines, 100 artist publications, 130 visual poems (many of them unpublished), 1,000 photographs, 150

installations and 1,000 posters. Thanks to the Fundació Joan Brossa, it has been possible to include in the exhibition a vast selection of documentation, some of it unpublished. Over the last six years, MACBA's teams have worked intensively on the restoration, conservation, cataloguing, documentation and digitisation of this material.

New donations to MACBA

Lluís Permanyer has donated a set of personal recordings, letters, postcards, notes, handwritten and typed documents, and other materials demonstrating his relationship with the poet since the early eighties. Included in this documentary collection, preserved in the MACBA Archive, are 12 cassettes in which Brossa shares his memories with Permanyer, later published under the title *Brossa x Brossa: records*.

Manuel Maria Bosch Puig (Barcelona, 1947 – Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 2015) bequeathed MACBA in his will the work *El sastre* (The Tailor, 1986), which was exhibited for the first time in the artist's anthological exhibition that took place in the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, under the title *Joan Brossa o les paraules són les coses* (1986). This work is included in the current MACBA exhibition.

About Joan Brossa

Poet in the broadest sense of the word, Joan Brossa (Barcelona, 1919–1998) produced an extensive body of work that involved experiments with different languages. In the 1940s he met the poet J.V. Foix, one of his literary references, the philosopher Arnau Puig and the artists Modest Cuixart, Joan Ponç, Antoni Tàpies and Joan-Josep Tharrats. With them he founded the avant-garde group and magazine *Dau al Set* (1948), collaborating with Surrealist texts full of dream-like and hypnagogic images close to psychic automatism. It was the beginning of a large body of literary work that used language as a means of experimentation and that led its author to visual poetry, dramaturgy, sculpture and performance. The elements of his poetry, such as irony, association, decontextualisation and rejection of the differentiation between word and object, crystallised in the making of objects. His work reflects the concerns that had been accumulating throughout his poetic itinerary: the search for everyday magic, social denunciation and transgression. By the end of his life, Brossa had received wide recognition with numerous translations of his written work, exhibitions of his artistic production and awards, which made him one of the main figures of the Catalan avant-garde. In addition to his literary production, Brossa's visual creation was seen in numerous exhibitions and retrospectives such as those at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (1986), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1991), and again at the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2001), among others.



FOTOS aquí www.macba.cat/press/poesiabrossa0001

RELATED ACTIVITIES

PUBLICATION (forthcoming)

Brossa Poetry. With curatorial essays by Teresa Grandas and Pedro G. Romero, a selection of texts, works and poems by Joan Brossa, and a glossary by Roger Bernat, Isabel de Naverán and María Salgado. 180 images approx. Barcelona: MACBA 2017. 260 pp. Catalan, Spanish and English editions.

LIVE ART

Cabaret

Taking its inspiration from Brossa's subordinate and subversive spirit, the Capella MACBA will be transformed into a *Cabaret* on Fridays 27 October, and 3 and 10 November. Terremoto de Alcorcón will be master of ceremonies during the sessions featuring Úrsula Martínez, Rodrigo Cuevas, Jorge Dutor, Guillem Mont de Palol, Pere Faura, Antoni Hervàs, Felix Kubin, Arantxa Martínez, David Domingo and Jonny Woo.

Curated by Pablo Martínez and José Luis Villalobos

Friday 27 October, 3 and 10 November. Capella MACBA. 10 € per session. Free with Amic card. Advanced booking at www.macba.cat

COURSE

People Speak Brossa

by Pedro G. Romero

Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 November, from 6 to 8 pm. Meier Auditorium. 10 €. Free with Amic card. Advanced booking at www.macba.cat

LA MERCÈ

Open Day

Sunday 24 September, from 10 am to 8 pm. Presentations on the hour. From 11 am to 1 pm, visits with a sign language interpreter.

LET'S TALK ABOUT... BROSSA

Consult specific programmes at www.macba.cat

■ MORE INFORMATION www.macba.cat and @MACBA_Barcelona

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■ MACBA: Plaça dels Àngels, 1, 08001 Barcelona, www.macba.cat

■ OPENING HOURS: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 11 am to 7 pm (from 25 June to 24 September, until 8 pm); Saturday 10 am to 9 pm; Sundays and public holidays 10 am to 3 pm; Tuesday closed, except public holidays.