

Title, Jorge Orta, Ritual Performance "an alternative art tool for social questioning"

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The political & social situation of Argentina in the 70 & 80's, brought about a dramatic questioning of the artist's role. More specifically, artists started to develop new art forms that corresponded with this socio-political context and for those engaged in the social turbulence, it was fundamental to consider an art form that extended toward a wider public.

For Jorge Orta, performance, "body action", was a response to a series of needs within this socio-political context:

- 1 The body was used as an "instant tool"; economic, flexible and adaptable to unpredictable situations.
- 2 The actions placed individuals physically into the process of exchange.
- 3 Body performance was used as a statement of commitment to the reality, and often implied the taking-over of a public space at a precise moment.
- 4 This type of performance marked a rupture with an official art form.

Orta's performances pioneered a new art form as: ritual, public, collective, meditative & social.

- 1 ritual as they are inspired from beliefs, myths and popular tradition, extracted from the life & culture of Argentina or Latin America;
- 2 public as they attempt to dialogue with a very large public, a rupture with the official enclosed art system;
- 3 collective as they involve a large number of participants, in which each performance/experience articulates the framework of the work;
- 4 meditative as the principal objectives aim to provoke a questioning about the environment in which we live, stimulating the need to think about the role of individuals in the community;
- 5 social as art needs to find a new sense of meaning, to become a catalyst for community dynamics, exploring the passage from an art of aesthetics to an art of ethics.

IMPRINTS ON THE ANDES 1992

Commemorating the 500 anniversary of the discovery of the Americas. The festive European preparations seemed to forget the genocide of the Indians and the annihilation of a great culture. The general silence faced with the distress of many people across the Andes Cordillera motivated the origin of this meditative performance.

June 1992, during the Inca Sun Festival (Intiraymi) a ritual took place in the Inca sanctuary of Quenko in the Andes, in the presence of the inhabitants of this region.

A second representation was staged on European territory as a symbol of cultural exchange and as a reminder of the actual situation of the Indian people.

The performance is inspired from a series of ritual actions from the fundamental myths and contemporary contextual signs:

"Mother Earth, natural & cultural, man and cosmos. Dust, ash, corn kernels... project us to birth and death, and these never-ending cycles represent the disappearance of what is long-lasting and the permanence of what is doomed to disappear.... But as he recovers these myths, symbols, sacred traditions and secular values, Orta emphasizes man's creative spirituality, which is eternal and unchanging, setting it against a world that diminishes and fragments it."