Delia Cancela

Quiere, o no quiere usted entrar en el baile ?
Voulez-vous entrer dans la danse ?
10.12.26 → 07.01.27

Press release



Delia Cancela
Corazon Destrozado, 1964
Courtesy of the artist and Xippas

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Opening on Thursday, December 10, at 6 pm
Curated by Patricia Bentancur

Emerging during the tumultuous 1960s, Delia Cancela proved to be a pioneering artist in both her visual language and conceptual approach. While not explicitly subversive, her work was imbued with the freedom of a culture undergoing structural transformation. Her practice challenged the norms and expectations that governed the lives of many women—in a society that still relegated them to caregiving roles and a secondary, “adjectival” existence.

In this context, the uniqueness of her work lies in its departure from other forms of Pop art—which were often anti-expressionist and steeped in irony or mass-culture tropes—toward a language rooted in the intimate. The personal becomes political; desire, identity, the body, and fantasy emerge as the very substance of her aesthetic vision. It is precisely this apparent innocence that gives her work its power: the ability to transform the everyday and the feminine into a realm of art, using the autobiographical as a tool for disruption and social critique. Her output articulated the experimental languages of an avant-garde movement—one she helped shape—which both preceded and outlasted her time at the iconic, foundational Instituto Torcuato Di Tella.

This exhibition brings together her recent work, offering a vitalist, affirmative review focused on the present and the ongoing process of her own evolution. The heart, a

recurring motif since her early career, serves as the exhibition's central axis. This iconic image permeates her entire body of work, unfolding in various, constantly shifting meanings, all while remaining deeply connected to themes of love and desire.

The exhibition's layout incorporates subtle allusions to Lewis Carroll, without ever overshadowing Delia's own distinct universe. Between the everyday and the possibility of escape, a tension unfolds, one that permeates the works and activates new relationships between images, objects, and their meanings. The totem-like masks on display represent characters from the "Lobster Quadrille" and other guests—hybrid, enigmatic figures drawn from the universe of Lewis Carroll. Their presence resonates with the world of Alice, where the subversion of norms and identities creates a space for the fantastic and the unexpected.

These masks also transcend their status as mere objects, becoming embodied by moving figures in a performance filmed between a Parisian kitchen and the coast of Uruguay. The video, created by Celeste Leeuwenburg, captures a sense of intimacy, serving as a tribute to slowness and the beauty of gesture. Two worlds oscillate back and forth; through this transition, the characters inhabit—if only for a moment—different bodies and identities. This extends a reflection on hybridization and the fluidity of forms, a space where the boundaries between the self and the other, the human and the non-human, become permeable.

Patricia Bentancur