



Thea Djordjadze & George Maciunas

February 22 - March 20, 2011

For her first residency in the United States, Georgian, Berlin-based artist **Thea Djordjadze** creates an installation of new works on site. Djordjadze translates commonplace household and construction materials into poetic objects, gathering found materials from local architectural salvage yards. The installation involves a meticulous process revealing the artist's interest in the act of creation and the resulting sculptural forms, which incorporate plaster and acrylic paint with carpet, mirrors, clay brick, and metal screens. In this way, Djordjadze's art practice resembles the procedure of "scientific method" that has become standard since the 17th century, consisting of systematic observation, measurement, experimentation, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses. The title of her new exhibition at CAM, *His Vanity Requires No Response*, is taken from the third chapter of T.S. Eliot's (English, 1888-1965) epic poem *The Waste Land: THE FIRE SERMON* (1922), to evoke Djordjadze's deft gesture of creating work and meaning in a fast, if even sketch-like, process.

Best known as the founder and central organizer of the international artists' collective Fluxus from 1962 until his death in 1978, the Lithuanian-born American artist **George Maciunas** extended art and the role of the artist beyond conventional boundaries. He made organization itself integral to his practice, and produced a dizzying array of objects, performances, posters, plans, charts, atlases, newspapers, and other ephemera that cut across art, art history, world history, architecture, design, typography, musicology, film, editing, publishing, genealogy, and pedagogy. His innovative graphic design gave Fluxus its unique visual identity, including the branding of Fluxus "products" as "anti-commodities." A philosophy of economy—greatest use-value for least cost—informed everything he did. Humor was also essential to his art and



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life. He loved the simplicity of Vaudeville and the films of Buster Keaton, and wanted Fluxus to have the expulsive power of a good joke. Fluxus works were unpretentious, amusing yet thought provoking, and obtainable by everyone. Ultimately, he believed, art should be something anyone can do. This small presentation of Maciunas's graphic design, charts, ephemera, and films offers an introduction to an exceptional yet still underappreciated postwar artist.

Thea Djordjadze was born in 1971 in Tbilisi, Georgia, and she lives and works in Berlin. She has recently presented solo shows at Castillo/Corrales, Paris; Sprüth Magers, Berlin; Kunsthalle Basel; Kunstverein Nürnberg / Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, Nürnberg, Germany; and Studio Voltaire, London; and has participated in group exhibitions at BQ Berlin; Sammlung Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany; the Hayward Gallery, London; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Vienna; Raum für Kunst, Düsseldorf; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp; the *Berlin Biennale* (2008); Barbican Centre, London; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; *Lyon Biennale* (2007); and the Kunsthalle St. Gallen among others throughout Germany and Europe. This is Thea Djordjadze's first exhibition in an American museum.

George Maciunas was born November 8, 1931 in Kaunas, Lithuania; he died May 9, 1978 in Boston. He immigrated to the United States from Lithuania via Germany with his family in 1948. Maciunas earned a B.A. in architecture, and also studied music, art, graphic design, and art history. In 1962 he founded Fluxus with the help of artists from the U.S., Europe, and Asia who were creating new media performances and objects. His collaborators included Yoko Ono, La Monte Young, George Brecht, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles, Benjamin Patterson, Dick Higgins, Robert Watts, Wolf Vostell, Ben Vautier, and Willem de Ridder, among many others. The first Fluxus performance festivals were staged in cities across Europe from 1962-63. Maciunas then set up a Fluxus "headquarters" in New York City from where he organized more concerts, publications, a Flux Shop and Mail Order Catalogue, and the Fluxhouse Cooperatives, the first low-cost artists housing in the area known today as SoHo. Despite his poor health, Maciunas continued working on Fluxus until his death.

image: George Maciunas, *Self-Portrait*, 1963. Courtesy of The George Maciunas Foundation inc. 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization.

Major exhibition support is provided by Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield; William E. Weiss Foundation; and Nancy Reynolds and Dwyer Brown. General operating support is provided by Whitaker Foundation; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Missouri Cultural Trust; Regional Arts Commission; Bank of America Charitable Foundation; The Trio Foundation of St. Louis; Wells Fargo Advisors; Arts and Education Council; and members of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.



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image: Thea Djordjadze, *Caisse de résonance*, 2008. Cardboard, paint, and PVC; dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Sprüth Magers, Berlin.

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