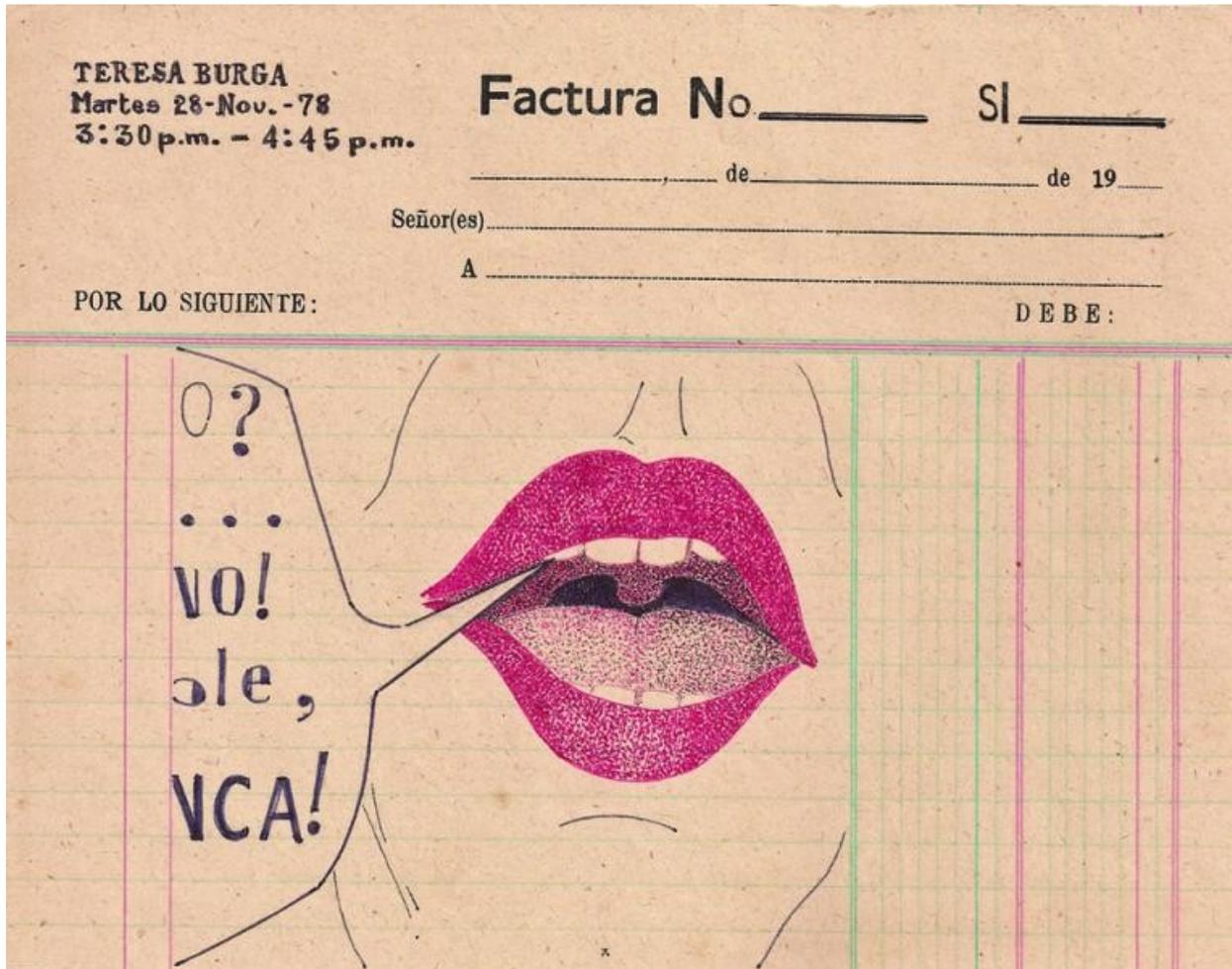


“As near as possible to fate” A dialogue with Teresa Burga

Profane Joy



Teresa Burga, *Untitled*, 1978. Ink on paper, 16.7 x 22 cm. Courtesy of Sammlung Verbund, Vienna

From the 1960s onwards, Teresa Burga (Iquitos, Peru, 1935) developed her pop and conceptual art in a country that was ruled by a nationalist military regime between 1968 and 1980, and thus at first she had to overcome significant obstacles in order to exhibit and become known. Since the beginning, Burga made views of the female body the focus of her work and thus questioned the role of women –and that in a country where women had been excluded from political life until the mid-20th century. Even in her first sculptures and pop art projects, Burga’s approach was provocative, staging the female body using objects and furniture –such as bed, for example– and thus creating an ironic picture of women in patriarchal society. Her last project *Profile of Peruvian Woman* (1980-1981), conceived and carried out together with the psychotherapist Marie-France Cathelat, was a sociological study and survey of middle-class women

between the ages of 24 and 29. This dialogue is a revised transcription of a live conversation between the author and Teresa Burga at the Lima Art Museum (MALI) on 5th December, 2011, as part of MALI one-to-one, a cycle of dialogues.

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Miguel A. López: Your work is getting a lot of attention these days

Teresa Burga: Yes, indeed, I'm quite surprised about the attention it is getting, but in fact it is mostly coming from abroad, as I have the sense that in Peru things continue rather unchanged. It's something I can't explain, I've never understood why my work causes so much rejection. A kind of contempt I have always felt, but I just can't explain.

M. In my opinion the existing local historiography is very fragile which means that many ignore what has happened in our recent past ...

T. I don't know. But that's why when you and [art historian] Emilio Tarazona came to the house asking for me and saying that you were interested in having a conversation with me and review my work, I simply didn't believe it[1]. I finally accepted thinking "OK, let them come in and let's see what happens," but I was truly convinced that there was nothing to be recovered. It was quite a process. In fact, not until now have I started to observe things that I didn't see in my own work before. Especially seeing the latest exhibition at Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart in 2010 with a collection of so much of my work and so well produced, everything is different, it changes your perspective.

M. There are many things you were doing without the intention of creating work

T. I think that for work to be "work" you shouldn't create it as work. The moment you think of creating it as "work" it has already perished, the moment you say: "This is the work," it's finished. You need to create it as a non-work. You continue to create once and again, but always thinking of not finishing. Besides art is not something you make look pretty just to be sold. At times I feel that when you make art that is not for sale, it is like you were attacking. It seems strange, but I think that many feel attacked. It sounds contradictory but when I started working in art in the 60s, while in school, I would sell everything. I'm talking about the period when I made "contained expressionism," as Emilio Tarazona calls it at times, because it was the contrary of traditional expressionism, exuberant, dramatic, emotional ... It wasn't, let's say, the festive expressionism of Victor Humareda's paintings.[2] In those first days everything sold rather well, was rather well accepted, it had a lot of press. But as soon as I started distancing myself from traditional art, in order to do what I wanted, I was no longer so much liked. When I start breaking away from the figurative, to use paper, newspaper cuts on my canvas and I gradually moved towards the object, that's when I am no longer so engaging to the artistic sector. I'm talking about the period when I belong to the Arte Nuevo group (1966-1967)[3], where I produce a series of pop pieces in the style of cut out posters, and at that time to many, posters were antithetical to art. And well, that is the moment when a distancing sets in and I'm eventually being given the

cold shoulder which is the worst they can do to you, because if you are being criticized at least you get some kind of fame, but if they don't criticize you, if they don't talk about you, interest slowly dies down.



Teresa Burga, *Untitled*, 1967. Painted plywood, 95 x 143 x 0,5 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Thumm and the artist. Photo: Nici Wegener.



Teresa Burga, *Untitled*, 1967. Installation view of "Objetos" exhibition at Galería Cultura y Libertad, Lima. Courtesy of the artist

M. But when the Arte Nuevo group was founded in 1966 through a vindication of pop, of happenings and environments, claiming that recent art was the art of things, the art of the immediate, it stirred major polemics ...

T. Yes, but I have the feeling that polemics were often fueled by rumors, by what was said, many artists and critics went against us perhaps without knowing what we were really doing. I wasn't interested in that part of art. Art is one thing and unwarranted attacks are another. I always tell myself: "Just do your work and that's it." The important thing is that what you are doing is what you really want to do, and if that's so, you just need to do it.

Since university I was sort of confrontational, because at the Catholic University there are several courses in oil-painting, and everybody has to do oil-painting and learn how to set up their palettes. I don't know if they still do this. I never made a palette because I find it unconceivable to be losing my time in putting a paste here and another there; and I have loathed oil-paint all my life because it's sticky, it 's dirty and it never dries because Lima is very humid. So you needed to take a dryer or a heater to your studio ... I didn't have the patience to be waiting for that oil-paint to dry, so that I could put on the second layer, everything would get dirty. So I got some cans of latex paint called "Tekno" for walls and with that I started. How fast I would paint! At the end I would just put a bit of oil-paint here and another bit there. Some would say, "that's not on oil-painting" and I would answer "but it looks so." "It will fall off" others would say, and up to now there they are my paintings, all intact. "Nothing fell off because it is wall-paint. But in fact, in the end the drawing was well done, the works were well solved. You can imagine that from then on I wasn't so nice anymore, but you have to do what you have to do even if others don't like it. On the other hand, if you like a lot what you are doing, start doubting.

M. At what moment did you decide to leave Peru?

T. When I finished university, I joined the Arte Nuevo group for two years (1966-1967), and after that I took a trip to Chicago in 1968, but I didn't really decide to leave Peru. At that point some friends said to me: "They are granting Fulbright scholarships, why don't you apply, perhaps in the end you will go." "Oh well" I said and it was the best, because at some point I started to sense that there was not much to do. And that's how I applied for the grant. I don't exactly remember the procedure but the university had an important role and it just happened so that the Catholic University presented another person for the grant, a friend of mine. But I presented my papers anyway and they eventually found their way into the hands of the people who selected the scholars in the US. And I think that after due deliberation they finally said: "We prefer this artist to the other, as he only comes to do engravings." I remember that I presented a project stating my intent to do experimental art. Perhaps at that point I didn't know exactly what conceptual art and non-object art meant, but that was what we were into in Lima then and that is what I presented. And they send me straight to the place where they were all doing that kind of art: the School at the Art Institute of Chicago and it is there where I found out about the great movement of conceptual art.

PROPOSAL.- Structures of air.

Structures formed by using compressed air.

Air expelled at a certain pressure in order to form a tubular zone or zones that can be precisely determined.

Each zone constitutes the structure itself or one of its components.

The structures should be built in closed and dark environments.

At the entrance of the environment a diagram of the structure should be placed.

The structures are destroyed in their initial configuration when they are perceived.

Examples of some possible structures.-

and so on ...

Burga
March 27, 1970.

Teresa Burga, *Structures of air*, 1970. Ink on paper, 21 x 29 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Thumm and the artist

1968

M. Your trip to Chicago took place just before the military coup by General Velasco in Peru in October 1968, which had consequences both in the social and cultural realm...

T. Yes, indeed. Oddly enough I knew a lot of people in the military as my father had a military education and had even been navy attaché in Paris.[4] They never had any problem with me because I never attacked them directly. For example, in 1974 I did the multimedia project *4 mensajes* [4 messages] at the Peruvian North-American Institute of

Culture (ICPNA). It consisted of a play on language and meaning, which however in some way touched upon the telecommunication situation at a moment when channels were being expropriated, without them realizing it, it was very difficult to become aware. This rather singular coexistence came to such a point where the inauguration of my exhibition *Autorretrato. Estructura. Informe. 9.6.72* [Self-portrait. Structure. Report. 9.6.72] in 1972 presenting a medical analysis of myself, was attended by the ministers themselves, General Velasco's wife, my mum, my aunt, they were all there, under State Security. [5] It was similar to when the democratically elected President Fernando Belaunde attended the inauguration of the project *Perfil de la mujer Peruana* [Profile of the Peruvian woman] that I produced together with psychotherapist Marie-France Cathelat in 1981. It was a great sociological research project on the role and the ways of participation of middle class women in the city. I remember Belaunde making his appearance with all his ministers accompanied of course by Security. They entered, saw the work, it pleased them, I even think it made them happy... However this initial success always contrasted with the acceptance it received in general and the short period of time the exhibitions lasted: *4 mensajes* remained open a bit more than a week, *Perfil de la mujer peruana* just about a month and *Autorretrato* only two weeks. Setting them up took longer ...

But to get back to the military context, I remember when I went to present the first version of *4 Mensajes* as a proposal to participate at the INKARI Festival organized by a governmental institution (SINAMOS – National Social Mobilization Support System). There were generals and coronels and I told them: "Here is my work" and they answered "we want Peruvian work." "And what is my work?" I responded. "It has no Peruvian character" they said. "Oh, well." At that moment an important number of official nationalist cultural proposals consisted in promoting representations of peasants and still-lives with fruits. I never saw that much fruit being drawn! All my friends painted fruits, they became true experts. What a shame!

M. Clearly your return to a Lima in 1971 under a military regime meant a drastic change for you, after the experimental effervescence you had experienced in Chicago, and according to what you say it also set certain limits to your own production. You never thought of living in US?

T. I couldn't stay in the States because Peru needed me. I'm not joking. I remember being in a meeting at a friend's house in Washington with several guests among them the Columbian Minister of Education. That person was precisely projecting an art school or something similar, and he asked me to go working for them in Colombia. Then a ministerial delegate from Peru who was there as well told him: "How is it possible you want take Teresa when Peru needs her?" And I said: "But in Peru they won't give me work, they won't give a space for research." "No Teresa" he answered "you are wrong, as soon as you get back you come and see me and we'll talk." When I got back I never found him. And he was a friend! The worst is that, at times, friends disappear, they won't even know you. So as I didn't get the promised job as an artist, I had two options: Or painting fruits to sell and survive, something I didn't want or could do, or simply do something else. So analyzing things I realized that I had studied structure and that I

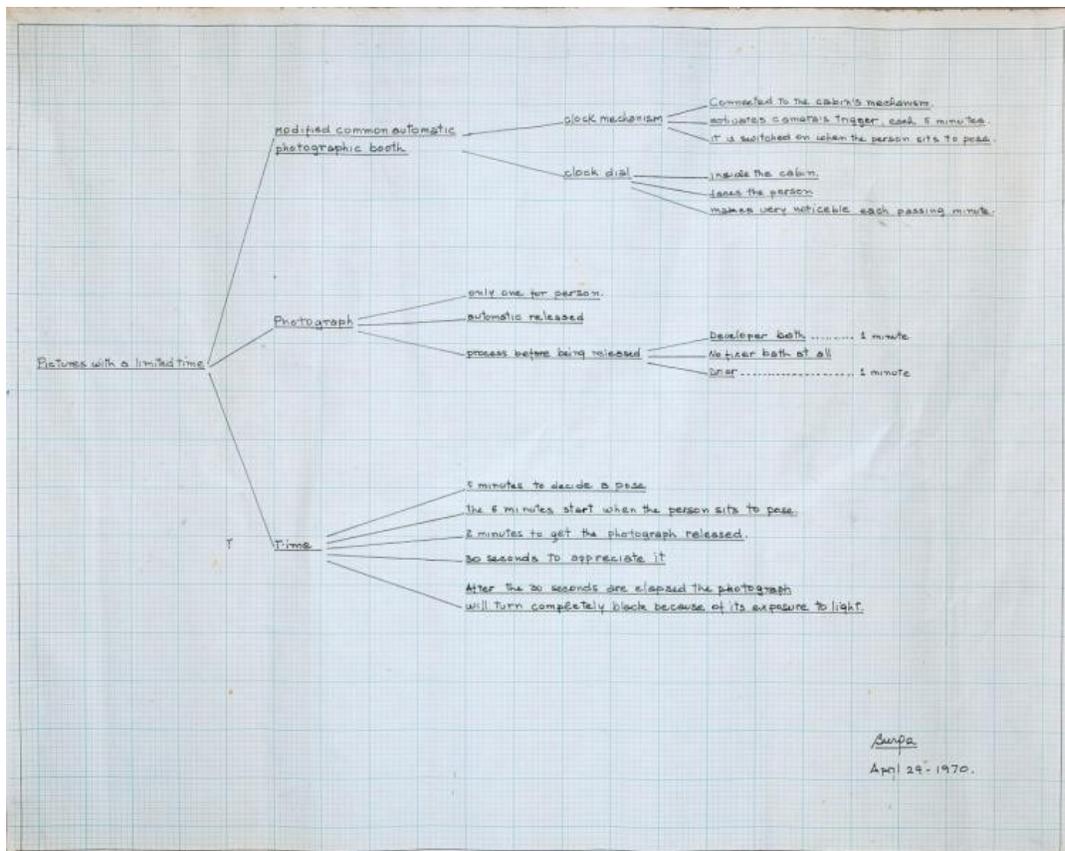
could use that knowledge in different jobs. Not before long I was working at the Custom Office, where I stayed for three decades.

M. Let's go back to 1968. When you receive the Fulbright scholarship you had practically stopped painting.

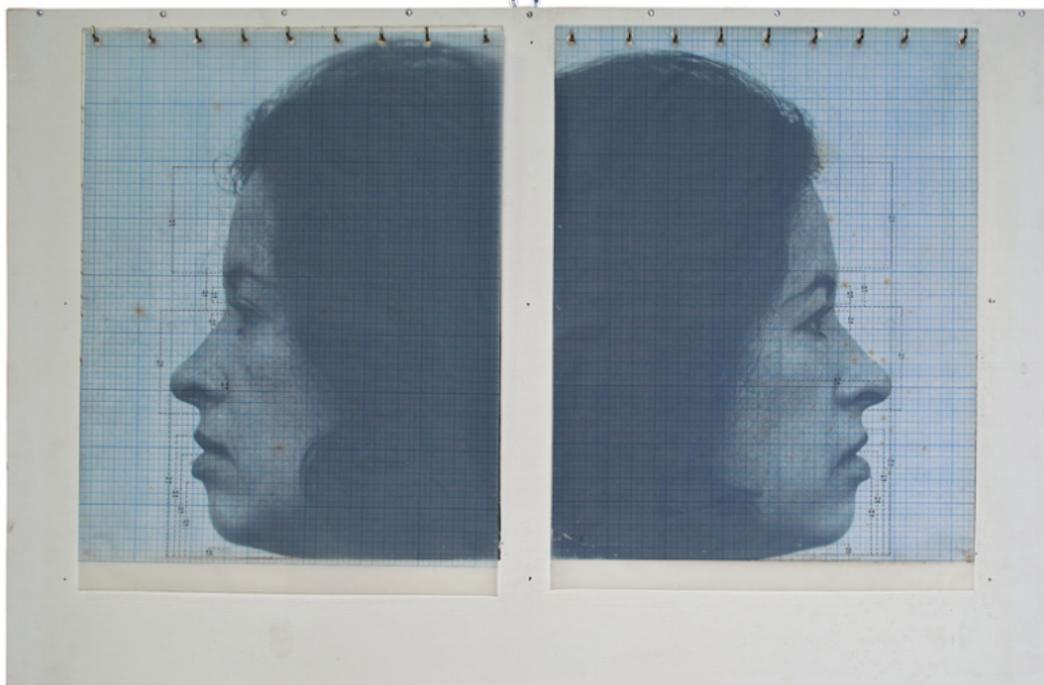
T. Yes, you could say so. Many of my last works had been commissioned. I would still make some figures or graphic work, but most of the time my friends would come and paint following my instructions and sketches, anybody who wanted to participate and after that I would do the exhibition. For the environments I didn't do anything either. As a premise, I was not going to add my subjectivity, nor do the work myself. That took me even so far as to wanting to choose the colors. In fact, in the last sculptures I made in Lima, geometric pop pieces with colorful representations, the figurines and colors were chosen randomly. If they came out nice, it was by pure chance...

M. You abandon the idea of the gesture and the hand of the artist in the artworks, as a means of rejecting or criticizing a certain, much craft-like conception of art that was the norm then.

T. Yes. I wanted to escape from the artist's taste and from that subjective self-abstraction, because the worst thing an artist can do is to be self-complacent and please the public. I've always believed that. In this sense I fully agree with Duchamp who said: "The moment you like a work, it means that you already got it totally wrong." Moreover my interests were very eclectic, clearly Duchamp was very significant, but I also looked at Velázquez or Picasso... there wasn't one single logic. Also for example the Italian futurists. I wasn't a person to look for one story or one single course of work to follow as a reference, more relevant to me are ideas at a given moment. Like what for example the surrealists propose: drop a sentence haphazardly and let that sentence take you to produce a work.



Teresa Burga, *Pictures with a limited time*, 1970. Ink on paper. 44.5 x 56.5 cm. Museo de Arte de Lima. Comité de Adquisiciones de Arte Contemporáneo 2011



Teresa Burga, *Self-Portrait, Structure, Report, 9.7.72 (detail), 1972*. Element of installation. Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Thumm and the artist

Science, technology

M. In your work there is an amazing dialogue of several disciplines.

T. When you use different sciences from where to approach your work, you can more readily grasp its complexity without the need to solely remain in the aesthetic part. For example, in my installation *Autorretrato. Estructura. Informe 9.6.72*, you can see some of the medical reports, like electro-diagrams and phonocardiograms from “*Informe Corazón*,” and you realize that I specifically asked the doctor to not leave any element out. So for example all chemical components of my blood-test also come perfectly detailed and specified (“*Informe Sangre*”), I expressly asked for them because you never get this kind of precise information. I took all tests and they became adequately registered, because I had the great advantage that the doctor was a friend of mine. This play is precisely part of art, this play between you and your doctor who agrees to make a larger and more detailed report. So I took the report and added it to a drawing that was a project for a possible sculpture all made of liquid, modeled in glass or in transparent plastic elements suitable to hold any possible proportion of the elements contained in blood. Entering a dialogue with medicine and science, affords you something different, particularly to steer away from the mere traditional art. That is what I’m interested in: to interrelate artistic thought and the different sciences, be it semiotics in the installation *4 mensajes* (1974) or all that concerns social studies in the project *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* (1981). It may be understood as an artistic translation of other languages, or an appropriation of other languages for your own use.

M. Precisely because of the use of those medical elements and technical language, many thought that the project *Autorretrato* was a joke, that it simply could not be considered art...

T. They thought I was fooling them! But luckily enough my architect friends arrived and said to me: “Teresa have you made this? This is what you call a true topographic rendering.” As soon as engineers and some artists saw that indeed it was a real and rigorous topographic rendering, they shut up, because they were about to say that I had falsified it all. The art critic Elida Román stood by my side at that moment, she was one of the few who defended my work in the press, after years of being distanced. Because throughout the years we worked as part of the Art Nuevo group in the 60s, she was mainly interested in the work of my colleague Gloria Gómez-Sánchez. And I understand her because Gloria was very good in terms of working solutions, very well achieved manual work. She did work with corduroy, plaster, collages and wood: the colorful puppets, the things she would stuck to herself to makes sculptures of bodies, her paintings with figurines and magazine cut outs...

Instead my work at best, were small paintings or repetitive shapes, like an idiot painting badly. It showed that I hadn’t done anything. But who had done it? Anybody. In those early years critic Elida Román never talked about me, she probably thought it wasn’t interesting enough, or it may have even seemed superficial to her. But I remember that

when I presented *Autorretrato* she was one of the few to take it seriously and to praise it.

M. Those projects you sketch in Lima since 1971 with the projection of slides, 16 mm film, light boxes, sound and sensors, among others, introduced materials and formats wholly unprecedented here. It's like an extension and local translation of the experiments you would do at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago...

T. Yes. As I told you, it was in Chicago where I became linked to conceptual art. Over there, the art institutes, all schools and universities, in order to keep up quality, had to invite professors and people from different universities to enter in debate with us. Or to be more precise, it is like the School of Fine Arts in Lima would not be able give classes, unless they brought in professors from the Catholic University (PUCP), the National University of Engineering (UNI) or even universities from abroad. At that moment, if you didn't bring in professors from different places to teach classes and talk with the students, you wouldn't have academic or artistic legitimacy.

So while I was at the art institute, painters arrived from New York, like those doing action painting, the famous ones. They would go from class-room to class-room, talking to each student, because that is typical of the American artists, they don't feel like "god" and you certainly learn from that. They all would walk very relaxed up to where each student had their work space and say: "Let's see, what are you doing? Tell me... OK... I think that you should continue in that direction..." and walk off. And the artists visiting us were the very artists who were introducing new ideas... like the one who was doing the pop hamburgers...

M. Claes Oldenburg...

T. Yes, Oldenburg, but it could equally be Frank Stella or Christo. They were famous and the important thing was that their work was generating controversy. So I thought: "Wow, isn't it great that they just come up to you, when in Lima the fact that a very famous artist would enter a critical dialogue with you, would almost be a fantasy, often they didn't even address you. Or even worse, don't rebut him, because he will get annoyed!"

In Chicago, our professors were the artists who were already beginning to appear in the books. I remember my first class, I didn't say a word and the professor said to me: "If you don't contradict me, say something to me, I'll throw you out of class." I felt like contradicting him and raised my hand: "I don't agree with anything you have said." I seemed to have hit the nail, big applause of the audience and they all became my friends. Something that doesn't happen here because if a woman stands up and says something like that, all men in the class immediately become her enemies: "There is the wise-nose, who does she think she is?" And the professor thinks so too. Those things are important.



Teresa Burga, *Untitled*, 1975. Ink on paper, 29.7 x 21 cm. Courtesy of Sammlung Verbund, Vienna



Teresa Burga, *Untitled*, 1979. Ink and pen on paper, 17 x 22.3 cm. Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Thumm and the artist

Representation and gender

M. In the Arte Nuevo group there were only two women, Gloria Gómez Sánchez and yourself. And that's interesting because in both your work this gender component is always present, you both evidence that difference, and you in particular seem to go beyond parodying certain models of what is considered feminine. How was the relationship with your male colleagues in the group?

T. The men would always take the forefront and at the end, there were the women. In catalogues, the first mentioned was a man and the last as well, as those are the best places. The women in the center, mixed in with the rest. That doesn't change. It is like the woman's role in marriage. Men always say: "My wife gives the orders and I obey," a lie. I don't agree that marriage is fantastic, wonderful, but there are decisions involved in becoming a married person, much like there are decisions that one takes to become a teacher. I know people who were the first in their class at university, economists, gone to Harvard and returned with a doctoral degree. And suddenly her she comes and gets married and I see her in the kitchen and she doesn't do anything, I think that's terrible. If a man were to do that, what would happen? Society would kill him. If a man goes and says: "I have already done my studies, now I am going to take care of babies, cook, take care of the house, that's it. Because it depends on me that my kids become somebody," I am sure that both dad and mum would give him a serious bashing. On the contrary for a woman, everybody backs her: "How great, she is the perfect lady of the house." That needs to be changed. But I'm not against marriage; the problem is that when you get married, you become "property."

M. Some of those questions about independence and true participation versus certain social stereotypes were a driving force behind the project *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* that you and Marie-France Cathelat produce in 1980 and 1981. That work, which in fact was an inter-disciplinary sociological research in a survey and study format, has the virtue of presenting the so-called feminine body as a landscape and source of political knowledge...

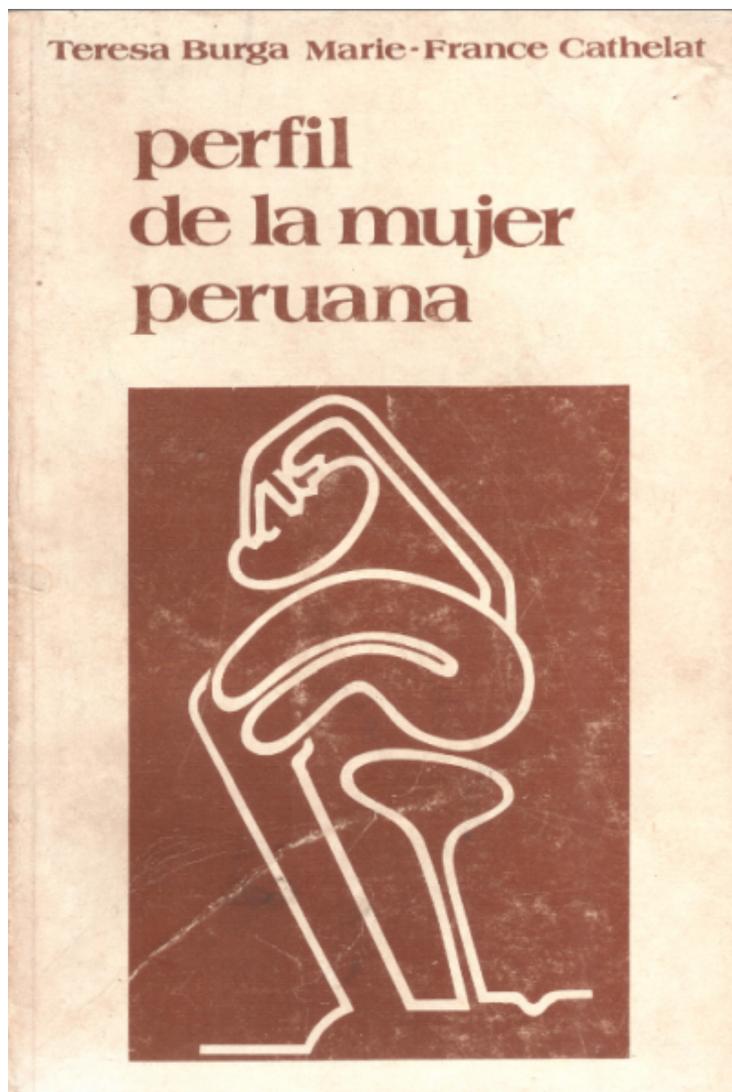
T. Exactly. I remember that I wanted to continue my research on the means of identification and representation of the body and that's when the idea of making *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* appears. The Peruvian art critic Juan Acha, then in exile in Mexico, and his wife, the artist Mahia Biblos, suggested meeting the sociologist Marie-France Cathelat. It was necessary to work as a team, because it was very large work. The exhibition comprised four entire rooms of the Banco Continental art gallery. To produce it we had the assistance of the Cayetano Heredia University, the Catholic University, the National University of San Marcos, as well as several private and public institutions. So we did it. The Cayetano Heredia University gave us support allowing us about 25 young men. At those days in Peru nobody knew very well how to do somewhat complex statistics, or at least we didn't. So the Pacific University had to prepare a special program to know how to carry out the possible surveys concerning the different aspects or profiles of those middle-class "Peruvian women," aged between 23 and 29 years, who were supposed to be researched for the project for almost a year. It was a very serious endeavor. Its initial impact was huge, everybody was commenting. Even more

so, because President Belaunde himself attended the opening with several of his ministers.

M. But later on it caused a major public discussion. It is very symptomatic for an artistic scene that hasn't paid attention to debates about sexuality and gender. But it also says a lot about the very fragile link between the social sciences and artistic production and thought.

T. It was very strange. More so because thanks to Belaunde's presence the project was run in all the media, in numerous newspaper articles, but then it all fell silent, even the authors. It would have been important to see more about women, but society is like that. Perhaps if an Argentinian had put it on here, it would have had an impact, but being Peruvian and even worse being a woman, you are destined to fall into oblivion. I also think that what happens it that we are too much accustomed to see a certain type of formalization of artworks. That is very difficult to change. My work continues to not get any public, even though I have clearly noticed that among the younger people there is much more interest than among the older generations. It's the young artists who now come to visit, talk to me and ask me things. And I think "young people ought to be interested in the things I address in my work, because they are not as old as we are." And in Europe, recently now with the exhibition of my work at the 12th Istanbul Biennial and shortly afterwards with the retrospective this year in Germany (2011), it has been the same. There were even some funny scenes, like when a Chilean female art critic in Istanbul was looking for the author of the installation *Autorretrato* (1972) that was shown at the Biennial, she said to me: "I thought that this was the work of the youngest of all artists present!" She was looking for a twenty year-old young woman and when she found me she couldn't believe that at age 76 I was the artist in person who had produced this work!

Before and after this last big project, *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana*, I continued to make work but without being able to produce it. In those same years the project *Paisaje Urbano* (1979) came out and I remember that I took the project to the Municipal Gallery of Lima. I explained that my project was an attempt to imagine the Plaza de Armas (Main Square of Lima) "from the center of the square to the moon, but also from the center of the square to the center of the earth." They didn't understand and said: "That can't be, because in the first place the Plaza de Armas is squared. ¿And what happens with the city's landscape, where is the town hall, where is the Government palace? The Plaza de Armas is something else and certainly not what you are wanting to tell me with these graphics." Nothing came of that. And suddenly, now I get curators, critics and even collectors asking me how to produce it. Even now it continues to seem to me a rather difficult task[6]. Imagine having to analyze the material elements from the square to the center of the earth! But in fact everything is in the blueprints, sketches and instructions. They are all serious scientifically studied geometric projections.



Teresa Burga y Marie-France Cathelat, *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana*, Lima, 1981. Book cover.

M. Since *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* you have not exhibited any work again

T. No, because there was really no space for work like mine in the galleries. And after Belaunde, in 1985, we get an APRA (Popular American Revolutionary Alliance) government, which tried to launch a project, intended to be a confluence of the interests of all local artists. I'm talking about SICLA in 1986, with people from everywhere, including Luis Arias Vera, a colleague of mine from the Arte Nuevo group. But it is interesting that even in those circumstances I wasn't taken into account, I wasn't mentioned. They lost my trail. It was like they were saying. "You are not anymore." That's it.

But I feel like keeping on producing. By chance I found something new that could be useful to continue to work: a small notebook that my father kept while being a cadet in 1923. The notes are dated with the day and the time they began and it deals with how to make a canon out of wire. And the little notebook ends on a day and time in 1924.

The little notebook got lost, I had never seen it and suddenly there it was. I say to myself “how interesting could it would have been to see that canon in 1924.” That’s how things happen in my life: something appears, then it gets lost and again I have to search for it, until it turns up again. The phonocardiogram from the *Autorretrato* project got lost for forty years! And in the process of recovering those works for the exhibitions that year in Istanbul and Stuttgart, I found it, but just when I was about to send it off it got lost again, I couldn’t find it anywhere. But again it showed up.

To me that’s what fate it all about: I am walking and suddenly a situation comes up and an image strikes me and I say: “Ah, now I know what I’m going to do.” It’s similar to when I approach color and figures, fate comes into place: to me it’s like grabbing twenty colors, smash them on paper and the color that drops in a predetermined spot, that’s the one it is going to be. I like it to be always as near as possible to fate, my taste shouldn’t interfere, but then again, perhaps it is never totally fate, is it? I don’t know. Today with quantic physics we don’t know many things anymore that before we would take for granted. Everything around us has changed. Everything we thought of as real has completely collapsed. With quantic physics there is no linearity between past, present and future. If in the famous Schrödinger experiment in quantic physics the cat can be simultaneously dead or alive, what is left for us, 0, nothing...

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[1] It concerns the first visit by the curators Emilio Tarazona and Miguel A. López to the artist’s house in 2009. In 2005 Tarazona had visited her in the context of his research on performance in Peru. In 2011 Tarazona and López presented the first retrospective of her work entitled *Teresa Burga: Reportes. Diagramas. Intervalos. 17.9.10* in the spaces at the ICPNA (Peruvian North-American Cultural Institute) in Lima. The exhibition then travelled to Germany additionally co-curated by Dorota Biczal under the name *Die Chronologie der Teresa Burga, Berichte, Diagramme, Intervalle / 29.9.11* at the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart. See: Teresa Burga, *Informes. Esquemas. Intervalos. 17.9.10* (Cat.), Lima, ICPNA, 2011.

[2] Victor Humareda (Puno, 1920 – Lima, 1986) was a Peruvian expressionist painter, a large part of whose pictorial work was a reflection of his intense life in the city, often festive and lavish, but also sad and disenchanting.

[3] The Arte Nuevo group was founded in 1966. Its steady members were Luis Arias Vera, Gloria Gómez Sánchez, Teresa Burga, Jaime Dávila, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, José Tang, Armando Varela y Luis Zevallos Hetzel. Victor Delfín also took part in their first presentation. The Arte Nuevo group was the main actor in the experimental and vanguard offensive in the plastic arts (pop-art, op, geometric art, settings and happenings) that takes Lima in the mid 60s. The group was very close to the art critic Juan Acha. See: Miguel A. López: “Cosmopolitan f(r)ictions. Aesthetic and political redefinitions of a concept of avant-garde in the 1960s”, in Sharon Lerner (ed.), *Arte contemporáneo – Colección Museo de Arte de Lima*, Lima, MALI, 2013, pp.16-45.

[4] In 1961 the artist’s father is appointed as Navy Attaché at the Peruvian embassy in Paris, the city where later the then Brigadier General Juan Velasco Alvarado was appointed as Military Attaché. During the two years in Paris, the artist’s parents tighten their relationship with General Velasco, who as of 1968, as a result of the military coup, was in command of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces. Those ties remain even after Burga’s father’s death in the late 60s and the artist and her mother are intermittently invited to meetings with persons connected to the military regime. (Conversations between Miguel López and the artist, March-April 2010)

[5] *Autorretrato* is an installation based among others on medical reports and diagrams, like and electro-cardiogram, phonocardiograms, a topographic rendering of Burga’s face, frontal and profile photographs, a biochemical report of the artist’s blood, that provided a scientific approach to the artist’s body. The work is divided in three areas: “*Informe Rostro*” (Facial Report), “*Informe Corazón*” (Heart Report) and “*Informe Sangre*” (Blood Report).

[6] The book with all the project’s files (instructions, writing and graphic sketches) has recently been published as part of Centro Abierto 2012, organized by Centro Fundación Telefónica, MALI, the Art Museum of Lima, and ATA, Alta Tecnología Andina. See: *Teresa Burga, Paisaje urbano 19.* Lima, 2012