

## MUSEO JUMEX PRESENTS A RETROSPECTIVE OF ULISES CARRIÓN, KEY FIGURE OF MEXICAN CONCEPTUAL ART

ULISES CARRIÓN

DEAR READER. DON'T READ.

09.FEB.-30.APR.2017

**Mexico City, February 9, 2017** -- *Ulises Carrión. Dear reader. Don't read*, a retrospective devoted to the work of Ulises Carrión (San Andres Tuxtla Mexico, 1941 – Amsterdam, 1989), a key figure in Mexican conceptual art, opens today at Museo Jumex. The exhibition focuses on Carrión's personal and groundbreaking approach as an artist, editor, curator and post-1960s international avant-garde theorist and seeks to illustrate all aspects of his artistic and intellectual work, from his early career as a successful writer in Mexico to his untimely death at the age of 49.

Composed of nearly 350 pieces of original work including books, magazines, videos, films, sound pieces, mail art, public projects and performances, the exhibition highlights every facet of Carrión's production and emphasizes his constant search for new cultural strategies. The title of the exhibition, *Dear reader. Don't read*, taken from his diptych of the same name, also underscores the artist's exploration of both structure and language, which were pervasive in his work, and illustrates his ambiguous relationship to literature.

Carrión was interested in new art forms and innovative trends and he actively participated in most of the artistic disciplines of his time. He co-founded the independent artists' run space, In-Out Center in Amsterdam and founded the legendary bookshop-gallery, Other Books and So (1975-1979) in Amsterdam, the first of its kind dedicated to artists' publications. The name "Other Books" indicates the purpose of the bookshop-gallery: the presentation, production, and distribution of publications that were no longer literary texts nor about art, but rather books that were art. Carrión referred to these as "non books, anti books, pseudo books, quasi books, concrete books, visual books, conceptual books, structural books, project books, statement books, instruction books" (Advertisement flyer, 1975). The second part of the name "and So" refers to all kinds of publications, such as magazines, newspapers, LPs, postcards, posters, musical scores, multiples, etc.

In addition to his artistic activities, Carrión developed a wide range of theoretical work, highlighted by his 1975 manifesto "The New Art of Making Books." Though conceived with the goal of opening new avenues for traditional writers, it would have a great influence on young visual artists. Carrión's theories are seemingly word-forward precursors to more recent art theories of the twenty-first-century digital world. His idea of plagiarism is cited as the "starting point of the

creative activity.” In a type of pamphlet the artist stated, “Why is there plagiarism? Because—There are too many books—It takes so long to read or write a book—Art is not private property—They represent love for the author—They give a book a second chance to be read—They make reading unnecessary—They do not lend themselves to psychological interpretations—They do not have utilitarian purposes—They lack commercial value—They are simple and absolute—They are beautiful” (*Fandangos*, no.1, Maastricht, December 1973).

Clues to Carrión's oeuvre may also be found in artists' books such as *Looking for Poetry* (1973), films like *The Death of the Art Dealer* (1982) or the video *TV-Tonight* (1987). During his most creative artistic period, his participation in the international mail art network gave birth to, among others, the magazine *Ephemera* (1977-1978), dedicated to the daily receiving of works circulating throughout this network. For Carrión, mail art was a kind of guerilla strategy. Whether one uses the mail system as a support—as one would use canvas, paper or wood—or as a means of distribution, both “art” and “mail” coalesce to control the production and distribution of art (*Mail Art and the Big Monster*, 1977).

For the presentation at Museo Jumex, Taller de Arquitectura Rocha-Carrillo adapted the exhibition design to present the artworks in a cabinet-like structure emphasizing the character of the artist's printed work. The walls of the gallery will be occupied by wall texts and video projections.

Exhibition organized by Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, and coproduced by Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo.

Curator: Guy Schraenen

Research Assistant: Maike Aden

Coordinated at Museo Jumex, by Viridiana Zavala, Curatorial Assistant

## PUBLICATION

The exhibition catalogue includes texts by Guy Schraenen, Felipe Ehrenberg, Jan Voss, João Fernandes, Heriberto Yépez, Javier Maderuelo and Maïke Aden, who provide different perspectives on the personal and professional life of Ulises Carrión, his experimentation with literature, language and linguistics, as well as some of the reasons that led him to develop his many creative facets outside of Mexico. The publication, edited by Guy Schraenen, contains a series of photographic and archive images which illustrate themes and practices that Ulises Carrión made: art mail, cinema, collaborations, conferences, exhibitions, performances, video, ephemera, among others. The book is accompanied by a CD with the sound work *The Poet's Tongue* (1977).

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

Guy Schraenen is an internationally known curator, publisher and advisor. He is the founder of the Gallery Kontakt (1965-1978), the publishing house Guy Schraenen éditeur (1973-1978) and the Archive for Small Press & Communication (A.S.P.C.) [1974]. He is the author of essays and various publications. His many activities are mainly focused on artists' publications of the various international avant-garde and independent art movements from the late 1950s until the 1980s including visual poetry, sound poetry, sound art, conceptual art, Fluxus, and Mail Art. As editor he has published artists' books, magazines, catalogues, ephemera, postcards, multiples, posters, records and films. It is to be noted that his interest in the Latin American art scene led, among others, to his exhibition *Editions & communications marginales d'Amérique Latine* (Le Havre, France, 1974).

The Archive for Small Press & Communication (A.S.P.C.) based in Antwerp, now located in the Centre for Artists' Publications in Bremen, collected and preserved all types of art documentation, emanating principally from artists' initiatives and covering all fields the contemporary artist is active in. The collection includes artists' publications mainly from the 1960s to the 1980s. These are visual works, sound works, text works and artists' writings.

For many years Guy Schraenen has been responsible for the collections and exhibitions of artists' publications in the Neues Museum Weserburg in Bremen, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Fundação de Serralves in Porto, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), the International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana (MGLC) and other institutions.

## ALSO IN MUSEO JUMEX

From February 18 to March 19, 2017, in Gallery 1 Museo Jumex will present the second edition of the *Passersby* series focused on the American writer and architecture critic Esther McCoy (1904-1989) and on the country that she saw during her travels to Mexico in the 1950s.

From March 4 to April 30, 2017, in Gallery 2 Museo Jumex will present *Robert Ryman*, an exhibition which brings together six decades of Ryman's paintings. Since the 1950s, Ryman's compositions have been identified by their achromatic surfaces.

*Robert Ryman* is organized by Dia Art Foundation, with curator Courtney J. Martin with assistance from Megan Witko. At Museo Jumex, it is coordinated by Begoña Hano.

## MUSEO JUMEX

Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo's main platform. It opened its doors to the public in November 2013 as an institution devoted to contemporary art, whose aim was not only to serve a broad and diverse public, but also to become a laboratory for experimentation and innovation in the arts. Through its exhibitions and public programs, the Museo Jumex aspires to become a relevant institution in the field of art by producing and co-producing original exhibitions and research, and familiarizing our audiences with the concepts and contexts that inform current art practice. Through the use of critical and pedagogical tools, the museum's educational programs further the institution's commitment to build links between contemporary art and the public.

### ADMISSION

General admission / \$50 pesos

Mexican citizens / \$30 pesos

Teachers\* / \$15 pesos

Free for: Children under 15 / Students\* / Senior citizens\*

\*with valid ID

Sundays free

### HOURS

Tuesday - Sunday / 11AM - 8PM

Monday / Closed

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