

RICHARD SALTOUN

EDGARDO ANTONIO VIGO

Un Arte a Realizar [An Art in Becoming]

3 April, 2017 - 19 May, 2017

Richard Saltoun Gallery presents the first solo exhibition in the UK dedicated to Argentinian artist Edgardo Antonio Vigo, a pivotal figure of the 60s and 70s South American avant-garde and recently the subject of an exhibition at MoMA, New York, in 2014.

Argentinian artist Edgardo Antonio Vigo (b. 1928 – d. 1997) was born (and died) in the small city of La Plata, a few kilometres away from Buenos Aires. Despite never leaving La Plata, he is recognised internationally as the founder of mail art in Argentina. Touching on the fields of performance, sculpture, mail art, and land art, he was at the epicentre of a truly international network of artists and poets. Vigo's commitment to radical forms of poetry manifested itself in the periodicals *Diagonal Cero* and *Revista Hexa'gono*, of which he was editor, and became an important vehicle for social and political critique in Argentina.

Vigo's son, Abel Luis, was "disappeared" under the military junta in 1976 and from that point on his work became more explicitly political. Using humour and irony as the means to recount the everyday life of "the South American ghetto", and the international mail network as his form of communication, Vigo quietly revolutionised the way in which artists spread their work and message in Latin America.

The exhibition at Richard Saltoun Gallery features a selection of artworks, multiples, magazines and performance documents spanning Vigo's entire life: from original photographs of his early "useless machines"; to his prints, multiples and mail art commenting on the social and political system; and the stand-out sculptural work *Poemas Matematicos(In)Comestibles* (1968) made out of two welded aluminium sardine cans - this exhibition gives a taste of Vigo's quizzical presentation of art as a riddle to be solved by spectators who are turned into active creators.

Biography

Edgardo Antonio Vigo was born in La Plata, in 1928. The son of a carpenter, Vigo enrolled in the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of La Plata in 1950, graduating with a degree in drawing. After his graduation, Vigo travelled to Europe where he came in contact with the international avant-garde for the first time thanks to Venezuelan artist Jesús-Rafael Soto.

Upon Vigo's return to Argentina, neither his early sculptures nor his 'useless machines' fell into the favour of the public and of local critics. As an employee of La Plata's Ministry of Justice, Vigo developed his practice outside of the established circuits of artistic production and presentation.

It was only in 1991, when collector Jorge Helft organized his first retrospective at Fundación San Telmo, Buenos Aires, that Vigo's oeuvre was first presented in a public

institution. Vigo's inclusion in Argentina's pavilion for the 1994 San Paulo Biennial, in Brazil, finally recognized his strategic position in the whirling topographies of Latin American conceptual art.

Recent retrospectives include: *The Unmaker of Objects: Edgardo Antonio Vigo's Marginal Media*, MoMA, New York City (2014) and *Edgardo Antonio Vigo: Works 1953 - 1997*, Museo de Arte Moderna de Buenos Aires (2016).

Exhibition and sales inquiries - email niamh@richardsaltoun.com

Press Information - email cristina@picklespr.com or info@richardsaltoun.com

Visitor Information - Richard Saltoun Gallery

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Gallery Hours: Monday to Friday 10:00 am - 6:00 pm or by appointment

Nearest tube: Oxford Circus and Great Portland Street.