

Tufts University Art Galleries



Art for the Future
Artists Call and Central
American Solidarities

Art for the Future Artists Call and Central American Solidarities

January – April 2022
Tufts University Art Galleries, Tufts University



Claes Oldenburg in his studio discussing his poster design for Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America with Jon Hendricks and Margia Kramer, 1983. Photograph by Gianfranco Mantegna. Courtesy of Doug Ashford.



Susan Meiselas, EL SALVADOR, Arcatao, Chalatenango province, 1980. "Mano blanca," signature of the death squads left on the door of a slain peasant organizer. Photographic print, 20 x 24 inches unframed. Courtesy of the artist.

Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities focuses on the seminal 1980s activist campaign, Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America. Growing out of the friendships, solidarity networks, and political organizing amongst artists and activists such as Daniel Flores y Ascencio, Lucy Lippard, Doug Ashford, Leon Golub, and Coosje van Bruggen, the campaign resulted in exhibitions, performances, poetry readings, film screenings, concerts, and other cultural and educational events in over 27 cities across the United States and Canada.

The exhibition highlights Artists Call's history through a selection of activities and works from the 31 exhibitions and over 1,100 artists who participated in New York City including major works from **Josely Carvalho, Leon Golub, Hans Haacke, Tim Rollins** and **KOS, Nancy Spero, Claes Oldenburg, Zarina, Jimmie Durham, and Juan Sanchez**, alongside the original edition of the **Reconstruction Codex** (1984), created by **Sabra Moore** and nineteen collaborators (including **Jaune Quick-To-See Smith, Emma Amos, Camille Billops, Nancy Spero, Virginia Jaramillo, and Helen Oji**) well as an expansive collection of Latin Mail Art, including contributions by **Lotty Rosenfeld** and **Edgardo Antonio Vigo**, amongst many others. The exhibition also highlights Artists Call's legacy today in new forms of inter-American solidarity networks and visual alliances through a selection of works including **Benvenuto Chavajay, Sandra Monterroso, Carlos Motta, Muriel Hasbun, Fredman Barahona & Christian Dietkus Lord, Antena Aire, Antonio Serna** and new commissions by **Beatriz Cortez** and **Naeem Mohaiemen**.

Organized by Abigail Satinsky, Curator at Tufts University Art Galleries and Erina Duganne, Associate Professor of Art History at Texas State University. Major Support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Fully illustrated catalogue published by Inventory Press.

Key Facts

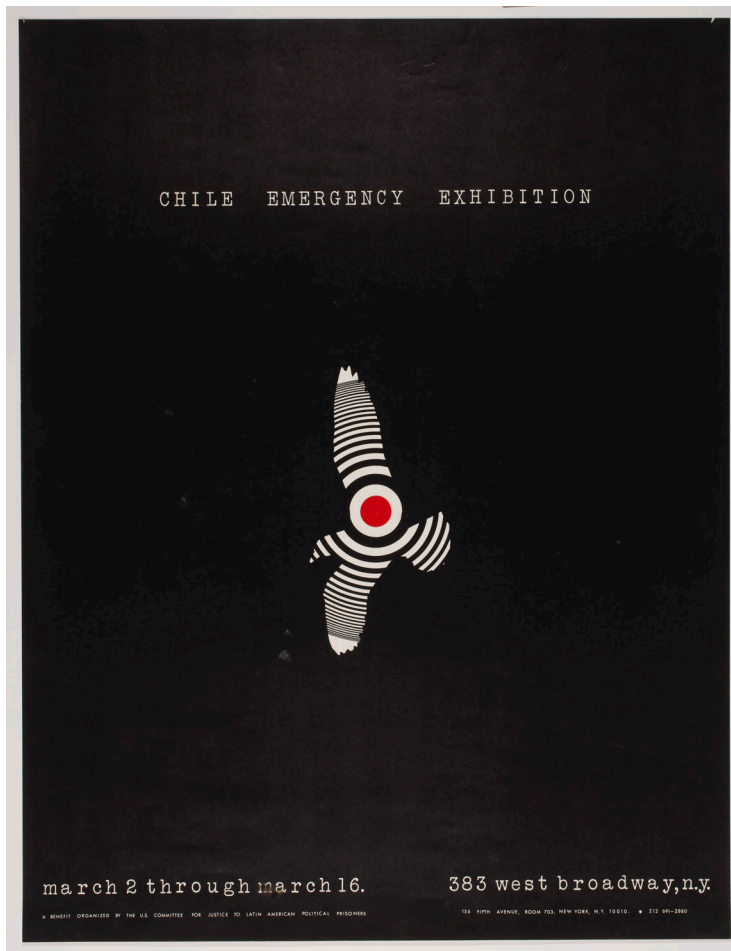
Fees: \$20,000, plus shipping
Space Required: 4,000-5,500 sq ft, adjustable
Tour Dates: Available Summer 2022

Contacts:

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Curator, Abigail Satinsky, abigail.satinsky@tufts.edu

Calls to Action

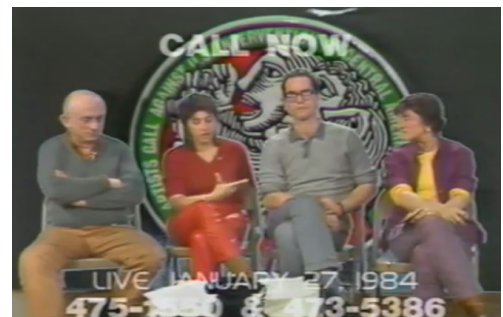
"We are starting down the road to Vietnam again." This began the January 22, 1984 advertisement Artists Call placed in the *New York Times* announcing a two-month campaign with over 1,100 artists participating in exhibitions, events and actions in New York City and with chapters organized in 27 different cities across the U.S. and Canada. Significantly, January 22 was also the 52nd anniversary of La Matanza (the massacre), the Indigenous and peasant uprising in El Salvador, brutally suppressed by the military government. Building on the calls of artists' anti-war organizing past and present, from the Vietnam War to the 1973 Chilean coup d'état and U.S. intervention in the Caribbean, Artists Call organizers linked El Salvador, along with Nicaragua and Guatemala, to an ongoing transnational struggle against U.S. imperialism, as well as pointedly calling in artists to mobilize their collective voices and act in solidarity in the present.



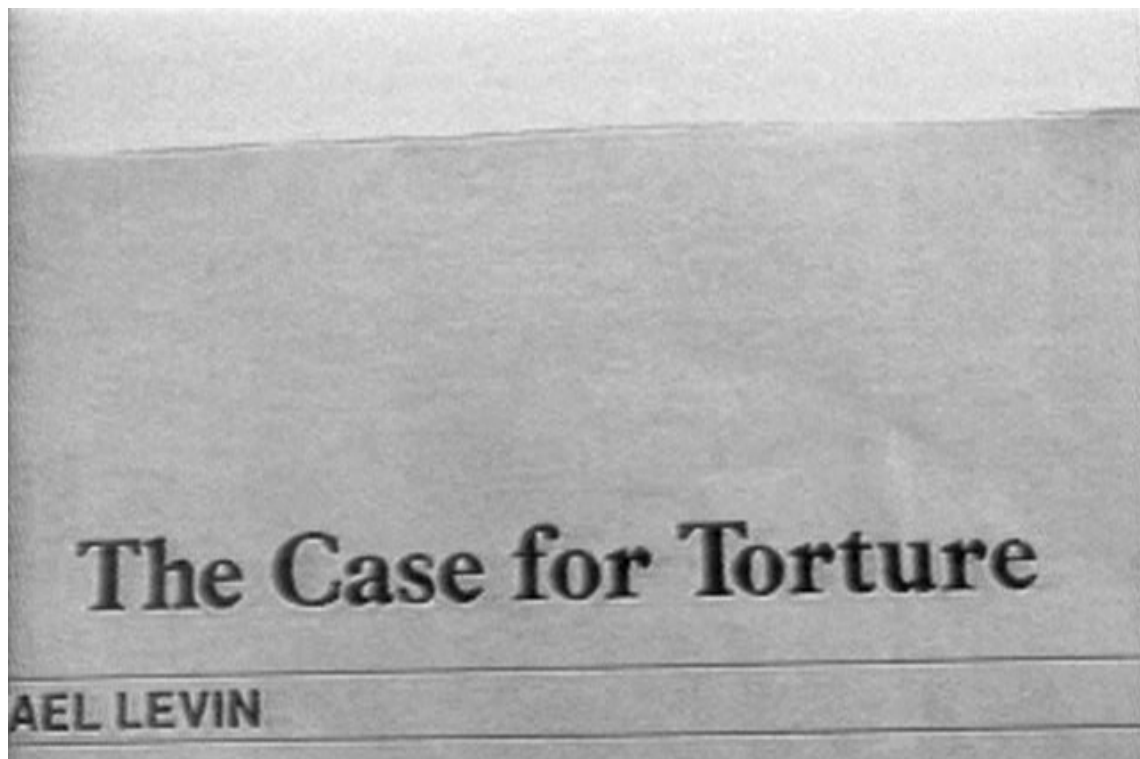
Enrique Castro-Cid and Artists Poster Committee of Art Workers Coalition, *Chile Emergency Exhibition*, 1974. Paper, 26 1/16 x 20 inches. Courtesy of International Center of Photography, New York.



Peter Gourfain, Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America button. 2.25 inches in diameter. Courtesy of Doug Ashford.



Film still, *SoHo Television Presents: Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America* with guests Leon Golub, Doug Ashford, and Lucy R. Lippard; moderated by Traci Sampson, 1984. Courtesy of Jaime Davidovich Foundation.



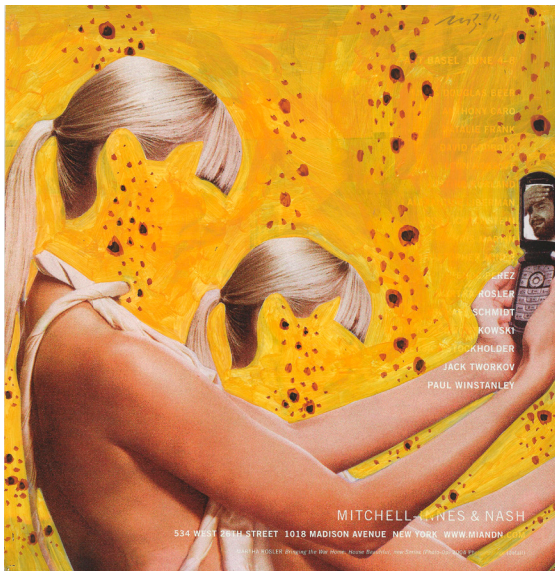
Martha Rosler, *A Simple Case for Torture, or How to Sleep at Night*, 1983. Courtesy of Video Data Bank. This work was screened at Millennium Film in New York.



Ann Messner, Barbara Westermann, and Bill Allen, *Caribbean Buoy* being carried in November 12 Anti-Intervention Demonstration, Washington, D.C., 1983, 1984. Photograph, 16 x 20 inches. Courtesy of Ann Messner. This work was exhibited in *Group Material's Timeline: A Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America* at P.S. 1 in New York.

A History of U.S. Intervention

“Central America,” U.S. undersecretary of state Robert Olds ominously wrote in 1927, “has always understood that governments which we recognize and support stay in power, while those we do not recognize and support fall.” The colonial-imperialist underpinnings of Olds’s statement remained a cornerstone of President Ronald Reagan’s U.S. foreign policy in Central America during the 1980s. To gain support for their numerous interventions, the United States government framed their military and economic presence in Central America in terms of combating the spread of communism throughout the globe. Through an attention to the long history of intervention in the region and the fabrications that legitimized their presence, Artists Call utilized news media and popular culture to elucidate the value systems and brutality of U.S. power systems. These questions around U.S. influence in Latin America continue to inform art making practices today, reflecting an ongoing struggle to recognize these histories.



Moisés Barrios, *Bananópolis*, 2014. Acrylic on Artforum cover. Courtesy of the artist.



Leon Golub, *Napalm I*, 1969. Acrylic on linen, 117 1/4 x 213 inches. Photo: Christopher Burke. © The Estate of Leon Golub. Courtesy of Hauser & Wirth.



Benvenuto Chavajay, *Doroteo Guamuche*, 2016. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



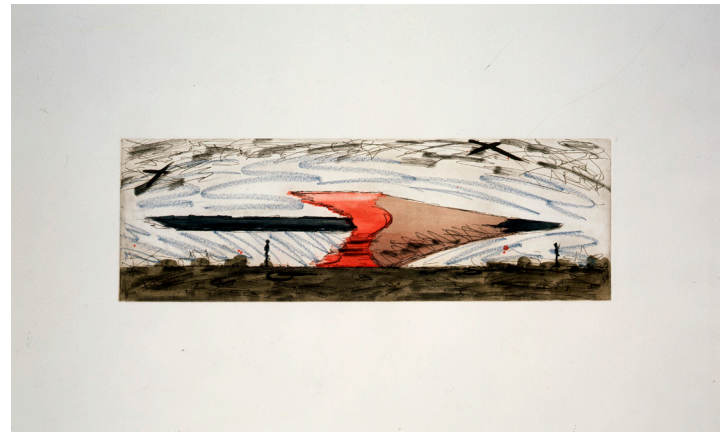
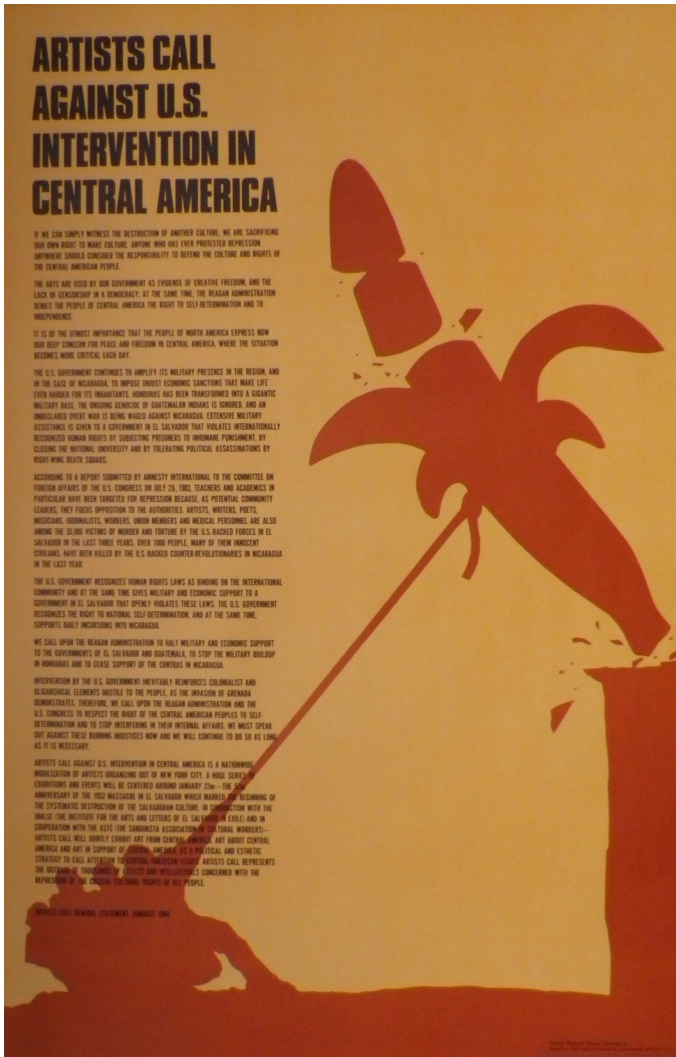
Carlos Motta, *A Brief History of Leftist Guerrillas in Latin America*, 2005. B&W newsprint, printed on both sides, 22 1/2 x 16 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



Alfredo Jaar, *We're All Created Equal*, 1984. Pigment print face-mounted on plexiglass back-mounted on aluminum, 24 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist. A related work *Strawberries*, which is now lost, was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York and in *Call and Response: Art on Central America* at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine.

Temporality and Counter-Temporality

Many of Artists Call's contributing artists took an expansive approach to the construction of history, memory and knowledge, creating space for artworks to activate and reconfigure our understandings of present, past and future. These included rethinking the historical inevitability of women's oppression and trauma as well as torture under military dictatorships. They also encompassed proposals for future monuments and visions for utopian futures of collective revolutionary action. By unsettling a linear progression of history, Artists Call opened the opportunity for new forms of belonging, visual alliance, and solidarity with Latin America that had the potential to disrupt the deep-rooted legacies of U.S. imperialism and colonialism.



Claes Oldenburg, *Proposal for a Monument to the Survival of the University of El Salvador: Blasted Pencil (That Still Writes)*, 1984. Softground aquatint, spit bite, 22 3/8 x 30 1/8 inches. Courtesy of Oldenburg Studio. This work was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York and in the *Benefit Print Editions by Five Artists* at Marion Goodman Gallery in New York.

Claes Oldenburg, Poster (without listings) for Artists Call against U.S. Intervention in Central America, 1984. 37 1/16 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Oldenburg Studio.



Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women III*, 1981. Typewriting and handprinted collage on paper, each panel: 17 1/2 x 83 3/4 x 1 3/8 inches. Photograph by Lee Stalsworth, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Courtesy of the Hohenia Trust Fund, in memory of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 2009. This work was exhibited in Group Material's Group Material's ¡LUCHAR! An Exhibition for the People of Central America at El Taller Latinoamericano in New York.



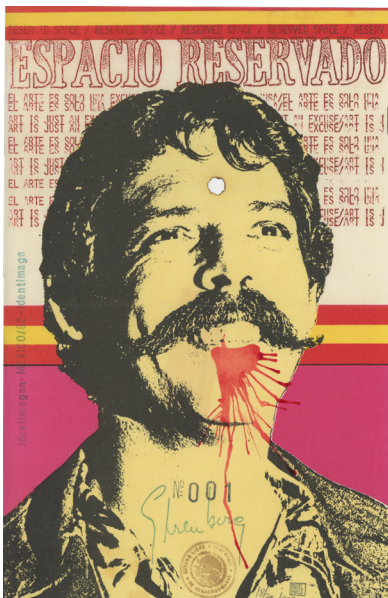
Michele Oka Doner, *Descending Torsos*, 1975. Clay. Photograph by Dirk Bakker. Courtesy of the artist. This work was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York.

Information/Disinformation

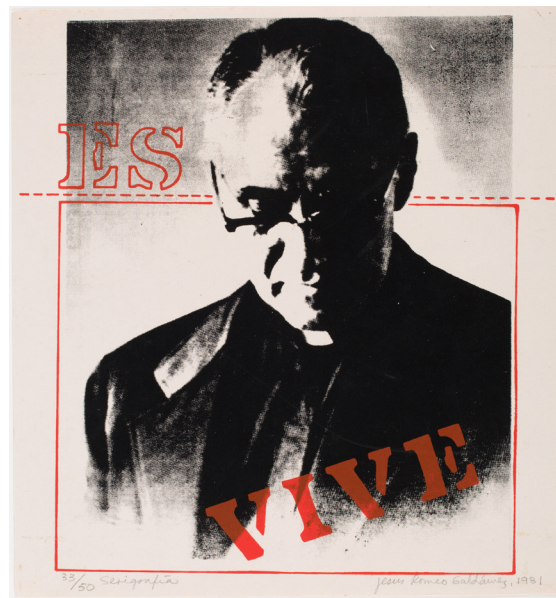
Though fake news continues to flourish in our current political climate, disinformation is not new. Nor are efforts to unmask its deceptions. During the 1980s, the Reagan administration depended on disinformation to uphold its interventionist agenda in Central America. To subvert these fictions, many Artists Call participants turned to information to reveal power systems and engender community, network, and exchange. Artists Call's organizers also invited artists from across the southern hemisphere to join these efforts. 115 artists from more than ten countries in South and Central America as well as the Caribbean submitted mail art. Ranging from straightforward photocopies and prints to collages, books, and drawings, these works collectively speak out against U.S. intervention in Latin America.



Hans Haacke, *U.S. Isolation Box*, Grenada, 1983, 1984. Wood planks, hinges, padlock, spray painted stencil lettering, built by Jeff Plate, 96 x 96 x 96 inches. Courtesy of the artist. This work was exhibited in the Benefit exhibition for Artists Call at CUNY Graduate Center Mall in New York.



Felipe Ehrenberg, *Espacio Reservado*, circa 1983. Courtesy of Josely Carvalho. This work was exhibited in *Solidarity Art by Mail* at Judson Memorial Church in New York.



Jesús Romeo Galdámez, *Es VIVE*, 1981. Serigraph, 9.5 x 9 inches. Courtesy of Doug Ashford. This work was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York.



Tulio Restrepo, *Sitio de Tortura*, circa 1983. Courtesy of Josely Carvalho. This work was exhibited in *Solidarity Art by Mail* at Judson Memorial Church in New York.



Lucy Lippard and Jerry Kearns, "Happy Newsyear," *Village Voice*, January 31, 1984. Courtesy of Jerry Kearns.

Making in community

It was a community of artists who made Artists Call happen, one that had its alliances, friendships, and exclusions as well as divided ideologies and opposing views on the political function of art and artists. Artists Call was a wide-ranging platform of response to the situation in Central America that included artists' direct political response in their imagery as well as visual meditations on place, belonging, and dispossession. This refusal to create a singular definition of political response, and the acknowledgment of community informing their practice, extended to Galería el laberinto, happening conterminously but off the radar to Artist Call organizers. The legacy of this gallery space and community continues as a site for relational exchanges for underknown art histories and experiences of Central America communities today.



Zarina, *Seed*, 1982. Cast paper with terre-verde pigment and surface sizing with the same pigment, 20 1/2 x 19 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches. © Zarina; Courtesy of the artist and Lühring Augustine, New York. A related work, which is now lost, was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York.



Muriel Hasbun, *ARTE VOZ* (with works hung nearby by Carlos Cañas, Rosa Mena Valenzuela, Muriel Hasbun, and poster), 2016. Interactive installation at American University Museum, mixed media. With assistance and support from Baltasar Portillo, Caroline Lacey and ThinkLabs. Courtesy of the artist.



Tim Rollins and K.O.S., *Frankenstein (after Mary Shelley)*, 1983. Acrylic on book pages mounted on canvas, 113.75 x 158.25 inches. Courtesy of Bronx Museum of Art. This work was exhibited in *Call and Response: Art on Central America* at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine.



Jimmie Durham (1940), *Half Off*, 1992. Installed, pine, acacia, acrylic paint, human hair, ink, paper, and cardboard, 53.54 x 24.41 x 24.8 inches. Courtesy of kurimanzutto. A related work, which is now lost, was exhibited in the Artists Call Benefit exhibition at Judson Memorial Church in New York and in *Call and Response: Art on Central America* at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine.

Self-determination and Sovereignty

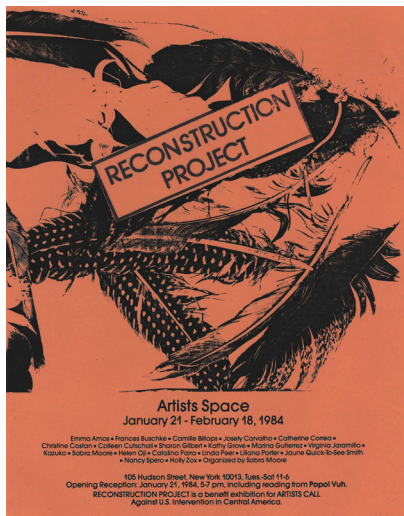
The right to cultural self-determination was a key concept in Artists Call's articulation of art as solidarity. This brought with it attention to land sovereignty, colonial erasure of Indigenous life and practices, the decolonization of knowledge and spiritual traditions, and the need for international fellowship. An ethos of care and mutual exchange between artist, landscape and peoples, as well as cultural and spiritual survival were also critical, especially in the collaborative practices taken on by a number of Artists Call's women practitioners. These strategies and commitments continue to resonate with contemporary practices today.



Ana Mendieta, *Untitled: Silueta Series*, 1979. Lifetime color photograph, 10 x 8 inches. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong & Co. A similar work was exhibited in Group Material's *¡LUCHAR! An Exhibition for the People of Central America* at El Taller Latinoamericano in New York.



Maria Thereza Alves, *Recipes for Survival*, 1983. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist. Though submitted to the exhibition committee for Artists Call, this work was exhibited as part of a student art exhibition at Cooper Union in New York.



Sabra Moore, Flyer (front) for *Reconstruction Project*, 1984. 11 x 8 1/2 inches. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.



Sandra Monterroso, *Expoliada*, 2011, paddle and dyed threads (with the video *Colorando las Hebras*). Courtesy of the artist.



Installation view, *Reconstruction Project*, Artists Space, New York, 1984, with contributions by Emma Amos, Camille Billops, Francis Buschke, Josely Carvalho, Catherine Correa, Christine Costan, Colleen Cutschall, Sharon Gilbert, N. Kathleen Grove, Marina Gutierrez, Virginia Jaramillo, Kazuko, Sabra Moore, Helen Oji, Catalina Parra, Linda Peer, Liliana Porter, Jaune Quick-to-see Smith, Nancy Spero, and Holly Zox. Designed by Sabra Moore. Courtesy of Roger Mignion and the Barnard Archives and Special Collections. This work was also exhibited in *Call and Response: Art on Central America* at the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine.



About the Galleries

Housed within a research university and an art school, the Tufts University Art Galleries engage with artists, scholars, and works of art to provoke discourse around cultural and social contexts. Through exhibitions, programming, research, and collecting, we create a pedagogical platform for the Tufts community and wider publics.

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