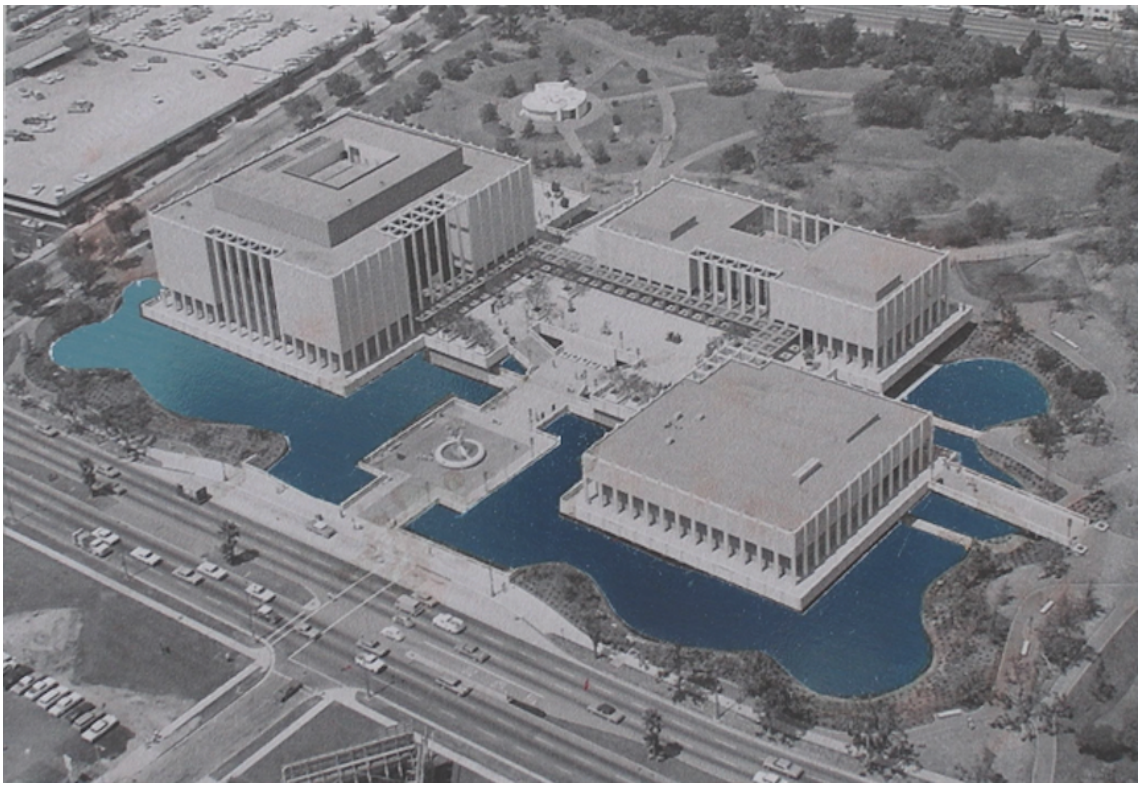
Zinny - Maidagan: Motion

[Motion: From Latin motio, --ōnis. f. Gram. Expression
of gender through a change of ending,"
Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy

Dolores Zinny and Juan Maidagan are known internationally for site specific interventions in urban space, in which they alter the architecture of iconomic buildings in order to crete new visions of those spaces. None the less, the duo bases its methodology and work process on exploring the non-specficity of things, modifying and translating the sites they intervene in in order thus to reveal the arbitrary nature of all designation, and, in general, of the creative act.

Presenting works of the last decade, *Moción* is an exhaustive exhibition of these artists from Rosario in their native country, and it allows us to understand the local roots and necessarily migrant, i.e. translated, character of much of their oeuvre and thought.

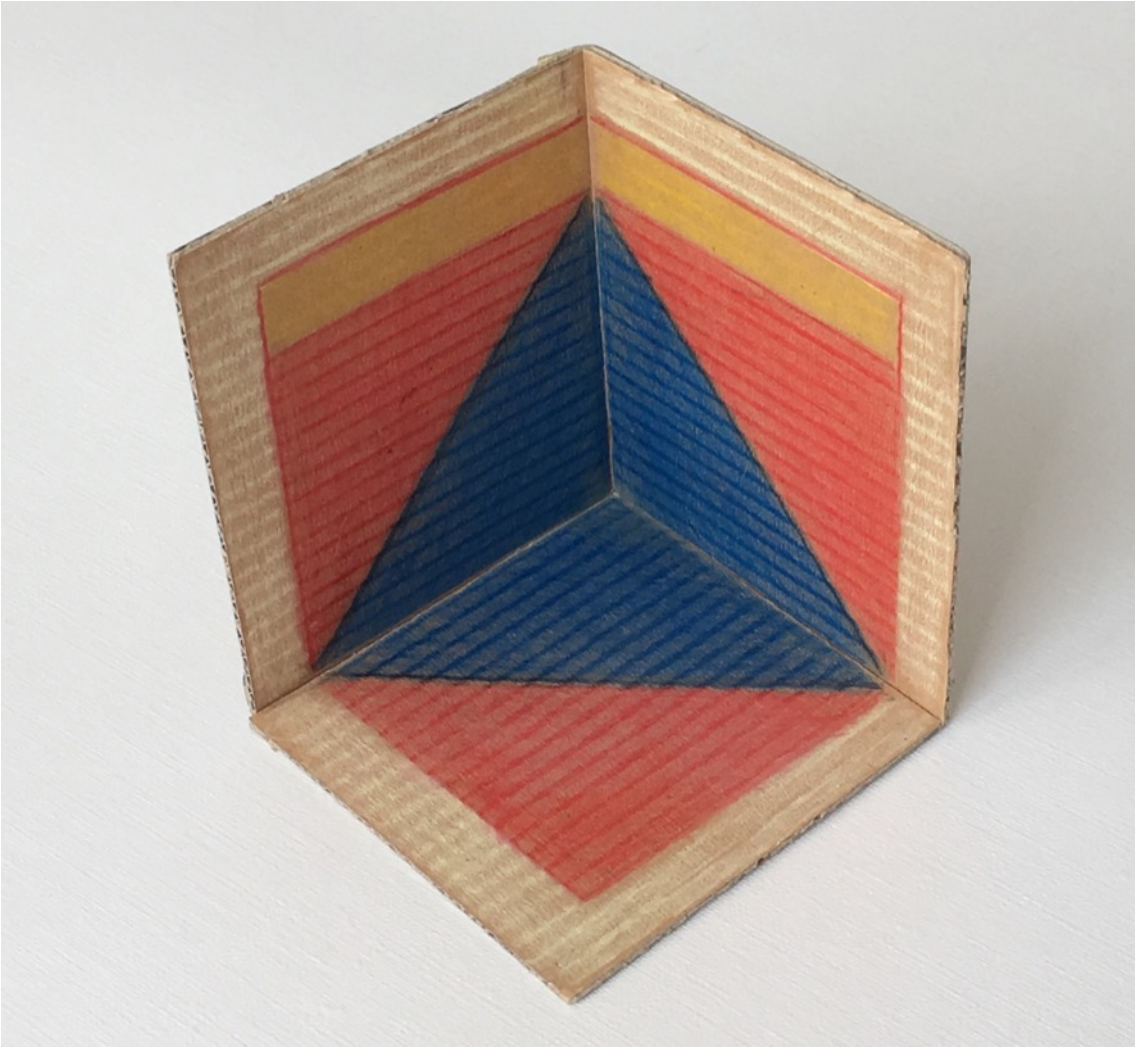
The visitor is greeted by the canvas *Leaded seams (Verbleite Nähte)*, commissioned for the ehxibition *Rules of Evidence*, curated by Okwui Enwezor in 2010. The title "leaded seams" takes into the account the work of the artists with contrasting materialities, and of their recurrent intrusion into architectonic structure with textile elements.



Emulations, 2015-2017. Pencil and collage on paper and Mylar. 30 x 30 cm (detail)

Also using composition with canvases, *Keinne banner und der sonne (Not a Flag in the Sun) from* 2003 makes explicit the question of designation and terminology in each

flag, at the same time that it questions the naturalness of its relation with a territoriy or origin. Created during the Irak War, the insignia Zinny and Maidagan propose refers to all nations and to none, at the same time that it includes an unequivocally authoritarian character through the black figure at the center, on the boundary between the abstraction and figuration of a standard, a weapon or an axe. Today, fifteen years on, the artists come up with a new reading of this work, in the face of the global resurgence of nationalisms and of other authoritarian movements.



Till the last Corner, 2018. Pencil on cardboard. 9 x 8 x 8 cm

Thirteen Studies of Horizon's Line, a series of canvases that alternatea abstract, apparently non-referential compositions, may be the place where Zinny y Maidagan most deeply explore the question of translation and linguistic designation. In it, the artists posit distinct abstract re-readings of the horizon, a concept so appropriate to them as artists raised in the pampas. Revealing their roots, the title of the exhibition for which the series was commissioned, *Cabo nombre* [Cape Name], was inspired by the reading of *El río sin orillas: tratado imaginario* [The Shoreless River: An Imaginary Treatise], in which their fellow Santa Fe artist, the writer Juan José Saer, describes the

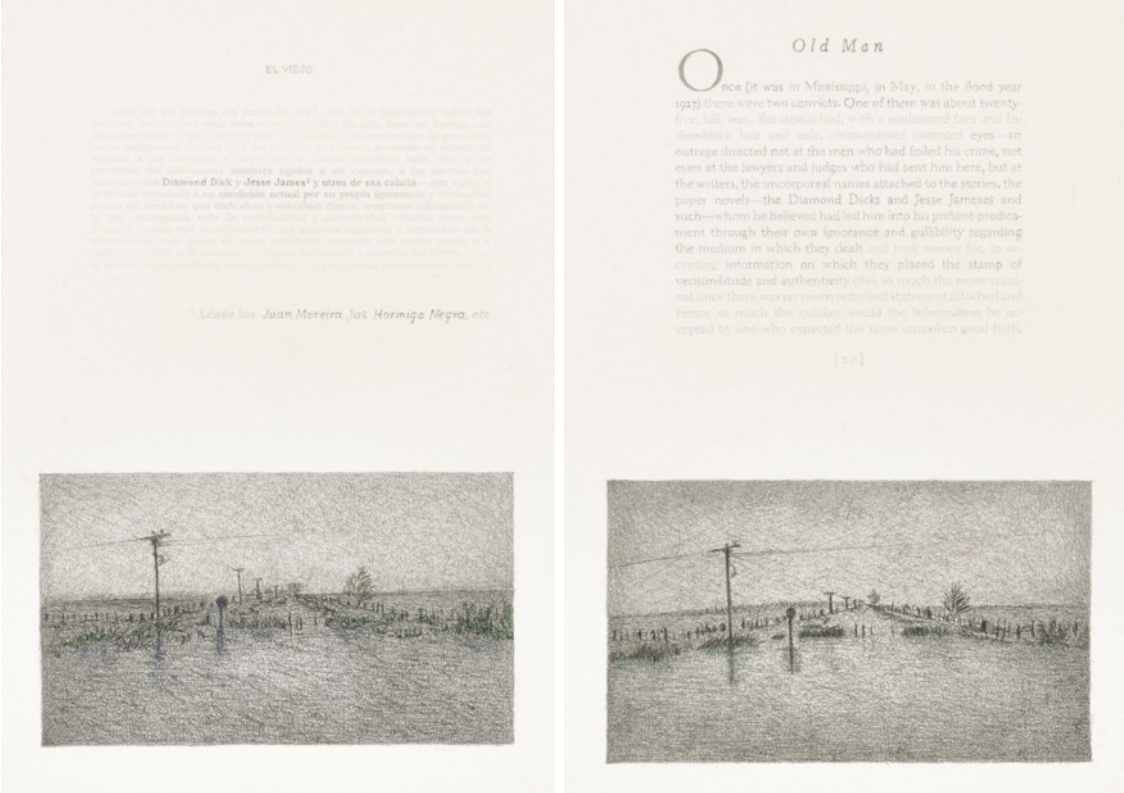
conquistadors' exhaustion as they moved on toward the south and how, bored with naming places, created self-referential terminologies such as the hillock *Pirámide* or the cape *Nombre* [Name] in Tierra del Fuego. Thus, as in visual abstraction, the conquistadors created a designation that points to nothing, or, as Saer called it, "the name par excellence."

Word for Word: Pools for Fire presents the duo's research for intervening in the facade of LACMA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, commissioned in 2017 as part of the exhibition series Pacific Standard Time LA/LA. The plans the artists reproduce in their drawings explore the design the famous architect William Pereira devised for the museum, and specifically the controversial pools that framed it till its reodeling in 1974. Rather like the conquistadors, Pereira was famous for creating autonomous buildings, not necessarily related to the landscape or the history of the site. In lthe drawing series Zinny and Maidagan include a reproduction of Ed Ruscha's famous painting *Museum on Fire* (1965), which depicts the LACMA in flames. Through these references, the artists supersaturate with history and meaning the building they themselves were invited to interpret through a site specific intervention. Thus they posit the work of art as a palimpsest, in which, only understanding the weight of prior meaning, thought may be translated into a new form: that is, creation.

Thirteen Studies of Horizon's Line, 2013. Fabric. 150 x 150 cm each

Pursuing this line, in the drawing series *Word for Word*, Dolores Zinny transforms into a drawing the translation Jorge Luis Borges made in 1939 of William Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*. In a grammatical sense, motion (moción) refers to the determination of gender through the use of a morpheme, as, for instance, the ending in "o" for the masculine or in "a" for the feminine. This operation often and necessarily comes up in the translation

of words which, being neuter in one language, have to be defined by gender in another. In these drawings, Zinny contrasts the text's two versions and at the same time translates them into representations of palm trees, emphasizing in her choice Borges's lack of faithfulness to the original, which forces the motion to the point of altering not just the grammatical gender of certain words, but also the literary genre of the piece of the novel, turning from being a psychological to being an adventure novel.



DOLORES ZINNY. *Word For Word: Jesse James for Juan Moreira (Borges and Faulkner),* 2018. Pencil on paper. 30 x 30 cm each (detail)

Zinny and Maidagan conceive of this exhibition in their native land not only as a return, but rather as a chance to conduct a rereading of their oeuvre. Or, to put it in Borgean terms, they view it as the reorganization of an index.

Translation is a process that necessarily requires a betrayal, since there is always a modfication of meaning in the passage from one language to another. Migration is another such process, since the expatriate always finds himself midway between the point of origin and the new destinantion. In their abstract reinterpretation of buildings, forms and places, Zinny and Maidagan rename, translate and resignify meaning as only a migrant, at once in and outside two cultures, can do.

Mauritia, 2018. Mixed media on paper. 108,5 cm x 84 cm

Dolores Zinny and Juan Maidagan have been grant recipients from the Whitney Museum ISP [Independent Study Program] and fellowship winners in the artist program of the DAAD in Berlin, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the Pollock Krasner Foundation.

Their work has been shown internationally in events such as the 50th Venice Biennale, the 2nd Seville Biennial, the 5th Berlin Biennial, the 8th Gwangju Biennial, the 1st Cartagena Biennial, and in institutions such as MIT, the Fundación Generali, and the Haus del Kulturen del Welt. They have had solo exhibitions (as a duo) at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Moderna Museet de Estocolmo, the Museo Rufino Tamayo in Mexico, the Lunds Kunsthall, la DAAD Galerie-Berlin, and the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, among others.

Zinny - Maidagan make art works in public spaces, including Graz City Hall, the Bibliotèque Royale in Brussels, and the Fundación Proa in Buenos Aires. They recently won two international competitions for a permanent work financed by the government of Hesse: for the University of Applied Sciences in Fulda, and in 2016 for the Goethe University in Frankfurt, with a specially designed sculpture for the IG Farben Haus. In 2017, Zinny - Maidagan exhibited at LACMA Los Angeles County Museum, as part of the Getty Foundation's project Pacific Standard Time LA/LA.

A number of catalogs and monographs have been published on their works, including *Zinny Maidagan Compartment/Das Abteil*, published by the MMK, Museum für Moderne Kunst, with an essay by Ranjot Hoskot, and *Zinny Maidagan, Such a Good Cover*, published by the Berliner Künstlerprogramm DAAD, with an essay by Lynne Cooke.

Their works are in public and private collections such as MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; the Moderna Museet, Stocolm; the Museum für Gegenwartskunst [Museum for Contemporary Art], Siegen; the Daimler Chrysler Collection, Berlin; the Bankhaus Spängler, Linz, and the Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Collection for Contemporary Art of the German Republic], Bonn.