

LUIS CARRERA-MAUL. EXCAVATIONS, COMPRESSIONS AND TRANSFERENCES

Peter Krieger

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Hence the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

PANORAMA

This book contains images and ideas related to the artistic work of Luis Carrera-Maul, in particular that produced between 2011 and 2015. His oeuvre invites us both to a visual experience and to reflection, and reveals the prevailing environmental and cultural conditions; it stimulates surprising spatiotemporal transferences, which originate in the place where it was produced: the Mexican megalopolis. It generates synergies, alluded to in the epigram from Wittgenstein above, between seeing and recognizing, that sensorial understanding which a compelling work of contemporary art is able to facilitate. A freedom of interpretation is demanded of the readers of this book. As in the theory of Umberto Eco's *The Open Work*, the appreciations presented must also induce critical reflection, creative feedback, and perhaps different perspectives on the work.

Luis Carrera-Maul was born in Mexico City in 1972, the son of a Mexican father and a German mother. He followed a complex path of education. He complemented his university degree in engineering with philosophy studies, and later pursued visual arts in Barcelona, Nottingham and Berlin. Not only his first distinctive works reveal an interesting meeting between structured and engineering thinking and free visual expression. As we will observe in this analysis, all his subsequent artistic works are also subtly traversed by the technical-analytical habit of *homo faber*. After a four-year pause, during which he worked in his father's agricultural business, in the course of which numerous artistic stimuli were bedded down, Luis Carrera-Maul resumed his artistic career with a residence at *La Curtiduría*, in the city of Oaxaca in southern Mexico. This period gave rise to an extensive series of works, one of which I will focus on in the following section. As of 2010, the artist lives in Mexico City and in 2011 he obtained a grant from National System of Creators.

The three bodies of work presented over the following pages are a selection that are determined by three types of operation: excavate, compress and transfer. In the three bodies of work the cultural technique of compression, applied or implemented as art, receives especial attention. The two subsequent essays by Christoph Wagner and Peter J. Schneemann deal with other aspects: Carrera-Maul's analysis of Goethe's theory of colors and the processual nature of his artistic approach.

STRATIFICATIONS OF LAND / *MATRIA*, OAXACA

The project *Matria. Jardín Arterapéutico* [Motherland. Artherapeutic Garden] [i] —undertaken in June 2013 in the historic center of Oaxaca—uses the cultural technique of compression as an instrument for the artistic exploration of geologic conditions which are not taken into account in urban everydayness. The artist excavated a part of the plot (103 Murguía street) where there is a 19th-century house, uninhabited and dilapidated, with a cylinder 2.50 meters in height and 1.5 meters in diameter, in order to bring the strata of the plot to light. The strata of mud and stone, gravel and foundation materials become visible. Right there, at one side, the excavated material is lifted and placed upright inside a wooden cylindrical mold of the same size. This creates a new sculptural monument by using the technique of rammed earth. Amid a creative and alternative garden, improvised with buckets full of plants, the abstract form of the cylinder stands out. It clearly distinguishes among the remaining walls of the house in ruins. Its negative form on the land provides the garden with a moment of surprise.

With this work, the artist joins the current geologic turn,¹ an expansion of the meaning of geologic research that includes explorations by cultural sciences and artistic practice. The objective is the sensorial experience of geologic realities whose temporary framework extends beyond the history of urbanization of a city. In the historic center of Oaxaca—protected as a World Heritage Site—the partial exhibition of ancient geologic strata is innovative. The collapse of a building, and the temporary change in use of a plot of land provide the space for an artistic-geologic and experiential project.

The sculptural form (of the cylinder) and its negative form (the perforated ground) are a minimal artistic intervention, efficient nevertheless. It contributes to a different and unexpected understanding of the Anthropocene,² as it manifests itself in a historic city. Beyond the protection and the fame of world heritage sites, here an aspect of the archaic history of the

planet and the complex stratification of the earth over vast periods of prehistoric time is addressed from an artistic viewpoint.

The process is prototypical for Carrera-Maul's creation: excavation is followed by compression and transference of new contexts of meaning. In the middle of the joyful anarchy of the garden a place for introspection opens. Upon which ground do we build our houses and cities? What endures? What sits over time, what erodes, what mutates? And, how is that recognized?

For Carrera-Maul situations of transition, for instance the collapse, demolition and reconstruction of a house, are moments that inspire intervention. *In situ*, he explores the relationships—barely conscious, though decisive—between the processes of geologic and human development. The visitor to the garden becomes the spectator of a snapshot of the geologic conditions of life that also determine living organisms. Thus, in other work, the artist experiments with the autopoiesis of humus, seeds and bacteria, which he took in March 2012 from the Chapultepec Forest in the Mexican capital, filling a plastic bag with them, leaving them on their own and observing the resulting biological metamorphosis.

Like the excavation in *Matria*, this micro-project does not work with the (currently debatable) moral imperative of sustainability³—a state that is nonexistent in nature and that is rather a cultural construction⁴—but it uses the playful medium of the visual arts to make visible and tangible experiences that contribute to a different understanding of our vital surroundings. The material reality of the installation *Matria*, its structure as perforation and column, also show how in the artist's mind aesthetic, scientific and constructive considerations produce suggestive synergies. The archaic and natural character of the geologic constitution is at the same time material for the tradition of rammed earth (adobe); in the conceptual catalyst of the work of art, nature becomes, in the most general sense, culture. At the end of the temporary intervention, the soil will return to its hereditary place and, as in the German saying, "the grass will grow over it"—which means that time passes and things are overcome or forgotten—in such a way that this metamorphosis of nature and art will integrate once again into the landscape.

METONIMIAS / NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SAN CARLOS, MEXICO CITY

In the exhibition-installation *Metonimias* [Metonymies], which was open to the public from October 2012 to March 2013 at the National Museum of San Carlos, the transition from natural elements to cultural artifacts is also fundamental. There Carrera-Maul resorts to the external

appearance of the geologic material. The material reality of twelve stones placed in a circle is hidden by rice paper, meaning that from their essence other forms can emerge. This temporary exhibition is part of a processual narration in images,⁵ which begins in a town in the state of Veracruz located on the Atlantic coast. There, Luis Carrera-Maul looked in the bank of a river for twelve mid-sized stones, of fifty kilograms in weight, and asked local helpers to unearth and transport them on donkeys and then by truck to Mexico City, 300 kilometers away. A video displayed in the exhibition recorded this process of searching for stones in a tropical landscape. In it, the topographic relocation becomes comprehensible (for the museum visitor) and also a contemporary form of landscape painting suitable for the experience of images of an audience educated through television. The video is a striking mode of landscape analysis two centuries after the ecological and aesthetic explorations of Alexander von Humboldt in Mexico.

In the oval courtyard of smooth columns within the National Museum of San Carlos, Carrera-Maul carefully wraps the stones in rice paper, and places them upon twelve low pedestals, which make a circle of 8.33 meters in diameter and leaves them to be sprayed by suspended droppers, fed by paint containers with twelve different colors; the technique seems to be inspired by the intravenous drips used in hospitals. This random process lasts five months. Every few days, the artist visits the installation and regulates the droppers so that the paint bags empty at a slow rate. The absorbent rice paper becomes impregnated with the chromatic substances in an irregular manner.

Why does the artist cover the natural stones and wrap them up as if they were candies? For the transformations of this geologic material, the action of wrapping has an especial meaning. In everyday life, whether in the village by the river or in the vast extensions of the megalopolis, the archaic beauty of stones, with their complex stratifications and fusions, is paid little attention. Being wrapped or covered takes them out of that indifferent everydayness and allows them to be rediscovered as artifacts of the history of a land that precisely in Mexico produced a unique landscape aesthetics determined by volcanic activity.

Moreover, the “geologic turn” thus staged is based on a passion of the artist for the philosophy and theology of the Far East. Already Roger Caillois had discovered in his suggestive reflections in *The Writing of Stones*, the symbols, the patterns of the permanent geologic sediment as a world of its own: “The stones are seated in a universe opposed to that of humans they are more enduring [...] than anything living,”⁶ older than the existence of mankind on earth. Their formation by means of natural forces such as wind or rain or through tectonic movements is far more decisive than any human transformation of stones into construction material.⁷ This

fascination for the archaic petrographic nature was considerably marked by classic Chinese culture.⁸ Stones are a “drawing without a message,”⁹ whose enigmatic beauty is revealed in the act of contemplation.

They do not have to be necessarily in sight for this, but according to a Buddhist practice, which Carrera-Maul discovered in his early studies in Barcelona, they can be wrapped. (Asian) rice paper is far from a banal, colored plastic wrapping for candies, but a sublime, rough wrapping that records the traces of the stones. Buddhist monks have used impressions of stones on paper to induce meditative states. The impression records the geologic presence in the universe and is a facilitating piece of empirical evidence that focuses the complex reality of earth in the simplicity of Buddhist introspection. Observing them allows us to experience its essential and ephemeral character, like the contemplation of wood burning in a fire.¹⁰

In the theory of the Chinese art of the early 11th century there are also conceptual precursors of Carrera-Maul’s artistic decision to wrap the stones in white paper. In Song Di’s treatise on painting we can read:

Choose an old dilapidated wall and spread a piece of white silk on it. Then, watch it from dawn to dusk until you can finally see the ruin through the silk—its elevations, its plains, its zigzag, its cracks—and keep them in your mind and eyes. Turn the protrusions into mountain ranges, the lowest parts into waters, the concavities into gorges, the cracks into torrents, the clearest parts into the closest parts and the darkest parts into the furthest points. [...] Then, you will be able to play with the paintbrush following your imagination. The result will be a celestial thing, not human.”¹¹

However, Carrera-Maul does not play with a paintbrush but with drippers that sway freely; this is to say, he leaves the act of creation to chance and environmental conditions. The gravitational forces of earth and the movements of wind, which reach the open portico of the museum, provoke slight oscillating movements in the twelve paint bottles. As they drip and empty, random patterns are generated on the stones wrapped in rice paper, and the result is in reality, as formulated by Song Di, “a celestial thing,” not by the decided will of the artist’s hand.¹² This artistic practice of the blot (called *Klecksographie*, in German), rooted in 19th-century European classicism, was updated in the framework of the theories of complexity and chaos,¹³ and Carrera-Maul alludes to it in his work. His installation establishes the necessary conditions for an autopoietic process, which does not even end with the emptying of the paint bottles on the stone-paper, but until the rice paper soaked in paint becomes 12 paintings.

In the act of dripping transformations of energy manifest themselves, particularly in the distribution of the paint blots on the wrapping papers, determined by the energy of the wind. Wind is, according to Vilém Flusser's understanding, a "movement of gas" and indeed the word "gas" shares its etymological root with the word "chaos," according to his research. The invisible forces of the wind, which in the installation of the museum lead to a specific aesthetical configuration, are invisible and "confuse our sense of 'reality'";¹⁴ they establish an order different from the creative chaos of blots and planes of color in expansion. A paradoxical beauty of planned and staged chance is produced. At certain stages in the production of the work, the artist cedes control and practices the contemplative Buddhist art of tranquil waiting.

The provisional result of the implementation of this automatic writing—according to the terms of the theory of surrealist art—is a circle of twelve stones saturated with color. During the first stage of the exhibition the visitors witnessed the self-referential chromatic metamorphoses in real time. This processual quality is characteristic of Carrera-Maul's work, as Peter Schneemann explains in one of the texts included in this volume.

Demounting the installation, once the exhibition is over, is an ineludible part of the process. The artist (provisionally) takes the stones to his workshop and carefully removes the layers of paper the paint has stuck to them. This paper, scraped and cut into pieces, once again becomes the starting point for the final metamorphosis of the work into the paintings measuring 1.2 x 1.2 meters. After a lengthy process of topographic relocation and material re-codifications, there now begins the act of artistic creation in a classical sense: the production of a painting, upon which the artist's hand places the pieces of paper in abstract, complex and aesthetically fascinating compositions. This material compression of the treated paper marks the end of the work process. Its controlled randomness encounters its definitive structure here. The stones that were utilized to hold and retain the color remain; their archaic beauty becomes evident again. The uncovered stones, now covered in traces of color, were exhibited one more time in March 2015 in the final exhibition in the same museum, and then they were sent back to their place of origin: Veracruz.

In the twelve autonomous paintings are visualized—in the same way as the colored stones temporarily installed in the first exhibition inspired by Goethe's *Theory of Colors*—the references to six primary colors and six secondary colors, which is the topic of Christoph Wagner's essay in this book.

Luis Carrera-Maul entitled his exhibition *Metonimias* [Metonymies], which was not conceived by a curator, but was accompanied by an advisor and interlocutor. The rhetorical

figure of metonymy (from the Latin *metonymia*, and this from the Greek *μετωνυμία*, *metōnymia*) works as a guide for the installation in the National Museum of San Carlos. Metonymical operations transform the original sense of a pictorial or verbal expression into a nonliteral meaning. Rationalist Johann Georg Sulzer understood metonymy, in the framework of the “arts of the word,” as a sort of confusion of names that is born from an intense imaginative capability and that serves to mobilize attention.¹⁵

In Carrera-Maul’s work, the transmissions and transitions of different states, materials, territories and their respective connotations are concretely recognized. *Metonimias* establishes relations between primary materials (stone, paper, paint), secondary structures (installations, objects, video) and ideas (the theory of colors, topics of art, landscape and memory). His metonymy of stones conveys a different understanding of geologic and physical phenomena. Stone, paper and paint receive as parts of the work of art exhibited in the museum other possible meanings; they become materials of alternative explorations of reality. The metonymic confusion of the place with the thing in the same sphere of reality, which the work of art produces, is the one desired. This means that not only is the concrete stone the bearer of the universal geologic realities of planet earth, but it is also a medium for the physical and aesthetic exploration of the effects of color. The artistic use of stone is an acculturation process that invites viewers to renegotiate the apparently established knowledge. By means of eye tracking and brain scanning, nowadays it would be possible to reconstruct roads of neural knowledge production,¹⁶ which would surely verify that *Metonimias* sets productive irritations into motion—precisely those unforeseeable effects that an interesting work of art can unleash—in addition to explaining how it occurs.

In like manner, the other works in the exhibition appear to be deployed by metonymical effects. In the rooms adjoining the open courtyard, Carrera-Maul exhibited a selection of his visual work that largely consists of the so-called *comprimidos*; this is to say, compressed objects. Two of these works compress the remains of the edition of an old art catalogue, which the artist found in the museum storage room, while looking for inspiring material. With the black and white pages of text he produced a compressed sphere 50 cm in circumference, a regular geometric figure. Conversely, the illustration pages were combined in a vertical format that can be seen from both sides. Over the 120 x 160 x 7 cm surface, the particles of crumpled paper, grouped into hues of ocher, orange, brown and white, even (sky and navy) blue, produce a shimmering effect.

A temporary nexus developed between the works and the place of exhibition: the suburban palace that as of 1965 operates as a museum was conceived in 1795 by architect and sculptor Manuel Tolsá for the Count of Buenavista, so it is possible to establish a flexible temporary relation with Goethe's early conceptual considerations for a *Theory of Colors*. Before his journey to Italy, Goethe had already developed his theoretical and practical interest in color. It is likely that his observations on the nature of the light of color were considerably stimulated during his stay in Naples in 1786. And Neapolitan painting is precisely what is shown in the catalogue compressed by Carrera-Maul: *I tre secoli d'oro della pittura napoletana de Battistello Caracciolo a Giacinto Gigante*.¹⁷

In the compressed work of art, the exhibition space, "museum/palace," and the unprocessed material, "art catalogue," are activated in a metonymical side effect that offers possible meanings. Moreover, a topographic transfusion can take place in the viewer's brain, which carries them from the Mexican palace to the Neapolitan landscape in the times of Goethe, which was recorded by the literature, and which is condensed in the compression of the present time of the exhibition. What Carrera-Maul offers the public is a virtual journey of images and concepts.

The catalogue cut into pieces of paper and compressed with diluted glue allows the inhabitants of the 21st-century megacity to take spatiotemporal and imaginary leaps, metonymically structured. Rereading in Goethe's *Italian Journey* the extensive Neapolitan notes, even more dimensions of understanding are noticed, for instance, on the aesthetics of geologic formations. On March 6th 1787, Goethe wrote about his travel companion, the painter Tischbein:

For him—the visual artist—who devotes himself only to the most beautiful human and animal forms, indeed, who by means of sense and taste humanizes what is wholly amorphous, the rocks and the landscapes, for him such horrendous, deformed accumulation, which consumes itself over and over and which declares war on any sentiment of beauty, would be repugnant."

Thus, Goethe distinguishes an academic artist who wants to reduce steep rocks and irregular stone formations to pleasant aesthetic patterns or who simply rejects them.

More than two centuries later, in an utterly different cultural context, artist Luis Carrera-Maul discovers different way to acculturate steep natural forms, based on Goethe's literary and scientific perspective on geologic phenomena.¹⁸ Between them lies a complex history of the representation of nature, characterized for instance by the Romantic painting of Caspar David Friedrich¹⁹ or the abstract studies of stone by Cézanne,²⁰ based on his reading of Lucretius,

but also conceptually prepared by surrealist thinker Roger Caillois and his sentence: “The stones of the landscape are places where dreams are laid.”²¹

In his installation *Metonimias*, Carrera-Maul inquires into these enclosures and activates the “spirit of pictorial conception” of stones,²² already recognized by Athanasius Kircher in the 17th century. His installation about the theory of color that accomplishes unexpected synergic effects with the compressions of the reproductions of Neapolitan art from Goethe’s time (and its assessment by Goethe himself),²³ can be understood as the rehabilitation of the geo poetry almost extinguished by scientific thinking.

In this virtual context of the meaning of the work, the Neapolitan painting, whose reproductions in catalogues were decaying in the storage room, is compressed in the work of art, and therefore is no longer legible; it is a dimension that can be put aside. Fragments of those reproductions of stone patterns²⁴ from the early Romantic epoch appear at random in the painting-compression by Carrera-Maul. The catalogue, which is already a compression of images and historical research of art, becomes the raw material for another phase of compression. This visual material, to which Goethe was exposed at that time and in that same “picturesque” place, now appears, in the mnemonic work of art of the early 21st century like a geologic cross-section that in a surreal manner shows an index.

In this way, the artist implicitly also addresses the intellectual life cycle of art catalogues and their overproduction. Following Vilém Flusser, we can even understand this process as a sort of intelligent waste recycling.²⁵ In the transition from an industrial to an information society, human beings oppose the informational decay of things. Deposits of culture such as museums, but also art catalogues—in which objects are removed from their original context and their information content is consequently altered—shall at least delay entropy. First, the (Neapolitan) art becomes waste, its information content supposedly preserved by means of a catalogue. Then, that same catalogue (poorly sold, dusty and moldy) becomes waste.²⁷ The contemporary artist radicalizes this process by accelerating the unavoidable loss of information about the art of the past and antiquated research by means of the action of compressing—through the contextualization of an art exhibition determined by metonymies new contents are established, which must halt the erosion of all values—and last, but not least, supported by a catalogue and by this book the reader now holds, and which will perhaps one day enter its own recycling process.

Just as man, at the end of his life cycle, turns into ash, with which fields can be fertilized, the return of an art catalogue to a work of art is a productive recycling of cultural waste.

Although the original content of the information cut into strips and compressed is not communicated any longer, a breeding ground for the stimulation of new standpoints on well-known things appears. Perhaps, this is one of the parameters that help us to understand the production of the compressions.

New messages are produced; but why in a compressed form? A brief summary of compressions in popular and product culture, as well as in the history of recent art can be useful to our understanding.

In *Metonimias*, the artist installed his own compression of memories. It is a cylinder 15 centimeters in height and 20 centimeters in diameter that contains the drawings produced by Carrera-Maul from 1995-1996 in the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City. A chaos of spots and colors in the surface jumps out at the spectator. The outlines of the drawings are difficult to imagine. The work archives the material substance of his early years of training. It is well known that Andy Warhol, for example, used to regularly and definitively consign his work to locked boxes—in Spanish there is a term for this: the “dead” archive (*archivo muerto*). Carrera-Maul goes one step further: he crumples and glues the sheets so that their original forms and messages can no longer be consulted. This actually is a “dead archive,” one which has undergone a metamorphosis to become a new work of art.

In the action of compressing, which the artist carries out with a heavy press in his workshop, a human instinct articulates. Compressing is a useful cultural technique, which in the current digital era manifests itself above all as a chip, a hard disk drive and zip compression software. But it is also made with pills; this is to say, there are biochemical tablets of active substances, cartridges or bombs, which are nothing but compressed black powder and have become established products of our civilization. The human body itself compresses matter as a result of its metabolism: feces. And at the scale of urban megastructures, masses of humans appear as channeled, compressed elements in the metro system, as they do in the endless metal convoys of automobiles. This is true especially of hyper-urban mass societies, such as China or Mexico, but also in the traditionally dense Manhattan or in the settlements around Paris and Berlin, where instruments of mobility accumulate—cars, motorcycles and bicycles—which from a bird’s eye perspective look like vast compressed masses of tin, occupying asphalt lanes, sidewalks and tunnels.

In a strict sense, waste compression, in particular that of automobiles, whose life cycle ends in the scrapyard baling press, provides a technical-conceptual model of artistic compressions. Compressed waste also establishes a new physical reality, a different aesthetics.

Most notably in the—often improvised—installations for collecting garbage in developing countries, the attentive eye records an unexpected everyday aesthetics of waste compression. Oil drums, tin sheets from cars, cardboard and other secondary products are crushed and “exhibited” in the generally precarious, chaotic urban environment.²⁷ Here, merely documenting this quotidian-urban aesthetics might even make one or the other work of conceptual art unnecessary and superfluous.²⁸

Pressed scrap metal is also a theme of literary culture and popular films, which may absolutely be seen as a process of visual training and identification for the observation of works of contemporary art. To give just two examples from an inexhaustible collection of images on this theme: in a scene from the James Bond film *Goldfinger* (1964), his adversary’s bodyguard shoots dead a renegade gangster inside his car, and we later see the car in a scrap metal press with the cadaver still inside. However, since there was a box of gold bars in the trunk of the car, the compressed block is placed in a truck, in order to extract the precious metal. This is a typical Bond film scene: unnecessary in narrative terms—absurd, illogical even—but causing great effect. The joy of compressing—a *pressing engagement*, as the protagonist, Sean Connery, ironically comments—is transmitted to a global audience.²⁹ Popular art paves the road for art reception.

It is also possible to find this spectacular aesthetic technique for disposing of compromising bodies in recent crime fiction. In *Nos fantastiques années fric* by Dominique Manotti, which was first published in 2001, a scrap baling press is utilized to dispose of a body. The result is an aesthetic shock: “A crushed Mini Cooper is a crêpe, a large crêpe, which drips gasoline, oil and blood and that is thrown together with other compressed objects into a dump truck.”³⁰

These two examples are representative of popular culture, in which the act of compression becomes a narrative and symbolic element. A heavier densification of this *topos* manifests itself in those works of art and artistic movements that have influenced Carrera-Maul’s work. In the compression and transformation of waste into art there lies a “differentiation effect” that beyond any utility establishes its own aesthetic values, which distils, gives rise to a new order and establishes a different relation with the data and elements; it is even capable of creating its own sphere of understanding of the world.³¹

Duchamp’s urinal, declared art, signed and exhibited in 1917, is a starting point for every artistic sublimation that makes use of waste.³² However, the artists of compression give the found object an even deeper meaning. Not only do they separate the objects found—in the case of Carrera-Maul, dog-eared maps and old men’s magazines, among others—from their habitual

contexts, but they also digest this matter of civilization into an assemblage of compressed elements, making visible the phenomenon of waste in mass society.

Robert Rauschenberg may well be considered one of the most important precursors of the artistic sublimation of waste. His interest in the waste of industrial society, which he encountered in the suburban and industrialized non-places in New Jersey and on demolition sites in New York,³³ took material form in the 1960s in collages of materials, although these arranged the material inside the conventional frame of the image rather than compressing it. For Carrera-Maul's conception of the image, Rauschenberg's artistic process, with its de-contextualization, resignification and his random production procedure, is decisive. Moreover, any sort of material taken from modern, industrial, mass culture can be utilized with no hierarchization whatsoever, if it serves to cause productive irritations in the viewer.

French-American artist Arman, who in a radical action in fall 1960 filled the Iris Clert gallery in Paris with garbage, took a step forward (toward compression as an artistic expression), converting the exhibition space into a frame of compression.³⁴ From 1964, Arman piled up his waste items in polyester; after 1970, he cast them in concrete. Thus, the car—a fetish of industrial society and mobility—received a prominent place: at the 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal, Arman piled up automotive spare parts, which finally gave rise to this sort of neo-conceptual art production in the installation *Long Term Parking*, at 18 meters in height (in the gardens of Château de Montcel in Jouy-en-Josas), in which 1,600 tons of concrete were poured over 59 automobiles placed on a 6 x 6-meter base.

However, this case is not compression in a strict sense, either. Carrera-Maul takes from Arman the sculptural, sometimes geometrical, arrangement of his works. Much closer for him is the artistic conception of French sculptor César (Baldaccini), whose *Nouveau Réalisme* expressed itself in the late 1950s in welded scrap iron objects, and he even ascribed the status of art to compressed automotive spare parts.³⁵ César developed his compressions well into the 1990s,³⁶ when Carrera Maul was showing the fruits of his learning at his first exhibition *Abstracciones Singulares* [Singular Abstractions] (1995).

Another conceptual—almost obligatory—reference for compressions is the transformation of the paper edition of *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Work in 20 Volumes* (1974) into sausages by Swiss-German avant-garde artist Dieter Roth. The ironic *sausagefication* of this major nineteenth-century German philosopher took concrete post-Hegelian forms by stuffing 20 intestines with scraps of paper (from the Suhrkamp edition). However, the semitransparent

intestines barely allowed the paper used to be seen; by contrast, Carrera-Maul's compressions reveal the materiality of the fragments of the object.

The strongest impetus for his series of compressions may have been received from the work *Garbage Wall* (1970) by Gordon Matta-Clark. The New York conceptual artist gathered and compressed gravel, rubble and other household waste into a wall 180 cm in height, 300 cm in length and 50 in depth, which was exhibited as part of a three-day performance at Saint Mark's Church-In-The-Bowery, East Village, Manhattan. *Garbage Wall*, reconstructed at the Rufino Tamayo Museum³⁷ for a Mexican audience, originally spoke of the 1970s garbage crisis in New York.³⁸ Nevertheless, the problem remains relevant today; thus, the compressions by Carrera-Maul, which transform materials from recycled trash and items declared garbage into artistic products, are still pertinent. The interventions of Matta-Clark and Carrera-Maul are a critique of a consumerist and wasteful society, which leaves polluted cities and landscapes full of garbage as an inheritance for future generations.

In like manner, in *Glass Brick* (1971) Matta-Clark both criticized and compressed at the same time. He gathered discarded glass bottles, melted them down and compressed them as briquettes (17 x 20 x 7.5 cm), exhibiting them in the installation *Mushroom and Waste Bottle Recycling Cellar (Glass Plant)* at his gallery in New York.³⁹ Here, synergies were produced between technical forms (compressed materials) and sociocultural criticism (a provocative work of art), which Carrera-Maul takes up and updates in his own fashion in the present-day context of the dirty Mexican megalopolis. Furthermore, the Mexican contemporary artist shares with the New York conceptual artist, who died young, a fascination for "things embracing their own outmodedness—buildings and dumpsters, suburbs and sewers, trash heaps, catacombs, cities, property."⁴⁰ Both find their artistic themes on the street, both stake their claim to the conceptual approach of compressed materials. Not only do they accumulate the objects they find, the *objets trouvés*, but compress them to generate new appearances and senses.

As a result, the utilized materials lose volume, but gain meaning. They become indicators of themes and problems of the corresponding urban societies (New York and Mexico City) where they are spatially and temporarily situated. They almost look like geologic cross sections. They are interpretations of excavations and unveilings of everyday objects, to which we grant little attention: "I am probably more interested in the aspects of stratification than in the unexpected views that are generated with the extractions; not the surface, but the thin edge, the surface that reveals the autobiographical process of their production."⁴¹ This declaration by Matta-Clark is one we could hear unchanged (four decades later) from the mouth of Carrera-Maul.

Beyond the possible reference points from Paris or New York given above, Luis Carrera-Maul can also be related to a Mexican avant-garde model: the manifesto *Actual No. 1 Hoja de Vanguardia* inspired by the Stridentists, or Futurists⁴², which one night at the end of December 1921 artist Manuel Maples Arce hung from walls across Mexico City and which he called *Comprimido estridentista* [Stridentist Compression].⁴³ Carrera-Maul implicitly takes up that impetus of radical modernization of an urban culture, as conservative today as it was in the past, in spite of the achievements of the revolution. His installation in the National Museum of San Carlos in Mexico City can be understood as a productive and neo-avant-garde impulse for an old museum, which has almost become a mausoleum, which was in a soporific curatorial state until it became established as a niche for contemporary art.⁴⁴ It was thus a refreshing non-destructive iconoclasm that Carrera-Maul was able to stage there, as well as an example of the fact that the spirit of the avant-garde is not fully absorbed in museums; that is to say, it is not neutralized, but finds new forms of expression in the present.

URBAN ARCHEOLOGY / HOUSE "HAVRE 77," MEXICO CITY

The outstanding object in the artistic intervention to a house in a neighborhood in downtown Mexico City, whose structure dates from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, is an accumulation—188 cm in width, 155 cm in height and 310 cm in depth—of planed timber, loose fragments of steel beams, bent iron structures, doors and wall panels, matted roofs, all of this intermingled with the abandoned books and filing cabinets of the owners of the house, two deceased brothers. The artist left hanging on the wall the brothers' framed degree certificates—a surgeon and a civil engineer—granted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The solid object, which occupies the interior space that faces the street and that is covered with linoleum, compressed the vestiges saturated with memories, but declared garbage, of the dwellers of this elegant home. Their descendants did not even bother to throw away this material full of memories before selling the property; this is how it was possible to turn it into material for art. Carrera-Maul took up the challenge of compressing the chaotic diversity, and also the melancholic atmosphere of the objects found, now useless, in an impressive monumental block. The spectators of the temporary work, meanwhile displaced, were confronted by stacked order: the personal history, anonymous nevertheless, of the dwellers of

the place. In like manner to that explained with the example of the compressions of the catalogue in the Museum of San Carlos, in this case the artist also intends to preserve and at the same time reinterpret the material reduced to garbage, whose informative value he erodes, in a mnemonic installation that serves as “cultural memory,” for a contemporary and urban audience that knows nothing about the micro-history of the place. We also find here the triple step, characteristic of Carrera-Maul’s work, excavate (here rather: collect, preserve, modify the material), compress and transfer (to new levels of meaning).

Formally, *Stack* (1975) by Tony Cragg, currently exhibited at Tate Modern in London, godfathered this stratigraphy of memory. The English artist stacked up stones, wood, carpets, books and newspapers to form a cube,⁴⁵ like the sculpture *Havre-77* by Carrera-Maul, where horizontally stacked wood beams give the work structural support. Cragg’s household waste compression—similar to Matta-Clark’s *Garbage Wall*, produced five years before—was considered a criticism to the society of affluence that is drowning in abundance and where the utilization cycles are ever shorter, in such a manner that ever larger amounts of material are declared unusable, thereby, garbage. The concept of compressing waste material (simple on its own, but efficacious) and present it to an audience interested in art provokes a reflection on unrestrained material production and irrational consumption, as well as the resulting serious pollution of our vital environments. Works like *Garbage Wall*, *Stack* and *Havre-77* are voluminous blocks of thinking, random plastic compositions that disquiet the viewer. Their stratification very clearly displays the frequently repressed visual awareness that memory fades and civilization destroys itself.

The mnemonic material produced when a house is renovated or demolished is, most of the times, directly and functionally dropped in the landfills outside the city. From there artists depart: they preserve such material and transform it into works of art, which reveal both geologic and archeological dimensions of our civilization.

In his exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, a year after Carrera-Maul’s installation *Havre-77*, Anselm Kiefer explored material that has been discarded as waste—even though it is valuable for artists and archeologists of the quotidian—in *Ages of the World*, where he stacked large-format canvases and other debris in a stratigraphy that could thematize geologic eras.⁴⁶ For this “poetry of remains,” Kiefer made a selection from an enormous collection of work he had accumulated in his workshop in Croissy. Specifically, he asked for the rubble produced in demolition works in front of his office in Paris to be deposited in his studio warehouse. There was a chaotic and voluminous accumulation of waste and apparently useless

everyday objects, which the artist then stacked, compressed and modified in his works in order to give aesthetic expression to his interest in the appearance of decay, decomposition, moldering and coagulation.⁴⁷

Cragg's and Kiefer's works are important guides to understanding Carrera-Maul's *Havre-77*, which not only consists of the compressed object, but uses and works with a whole environment of demolition and reconstruction. The architectural office responsible for the renovation, *ReUrbano*, as well as the client of this firm, cleared the complex for a temporary artistic intervention, but with no defined results. The exhibition curated by Olga Margarita Dávila, which took place in situ in the second week of July 2013, not only extended over the main house, but also to the annexes for domestic workers (dating from the second half of the 19th century), which were also to be demolished.⁴⁸

From the street the house façade presented a *memento mori* of crumbling Neobaroque balustrades,⁴⁹ a visual anacrusis for the morbid whole, which Carrera-Maul intervened in an artistic manner. The additional urban context of the zone reinforced the visible aesthetics of decay that can be seen in the details. The neighborhood, once distinguished, is now chaotically intermingled with banal constructions from the 1970s, many of the existing façades have cracks due to subsidence in this seismic zone (on the former lake bed of the ancient Mexican capital), while the current speculative frenzy produces new aesthetic architectural fillings, comparable to gold teeth in a rotten mouth.

This decadent setting in a historic neighborhood of the megalopolis is the ideal place for Carrera-Maul's interventions. Following the thought of Theodor W. Adorno, Carrera-Maul releases the creative forces that take effect in the crumbling and transforms the energy of the ruined material into astonishing sculptural interventions. It is a work in and with the city, with its obsolete buildings that in an ongoing economic transformation process, not determined by urban reasoning, are abandoned.

On the rooftop of the main house, the artist irregularly laid out, as if they were thrown dice, eight cubes of 70 cm x 70 cm x 70 cm, into which the metal sheet roofs, already removed from the adjoining house, had been compressed. The undulations, folds and crushing of the metal sheets cast doubt on the cubical form, as well as the visual effects of the shiny or opaque corroded metal surfaces. Thus sculptural, abstract and independent results were produced—different to the previously mentioned assemblages by Arman or César—compressed blocks, whose raw material, in this case sheet metal roofs, was only recognizable in part.

Moreover, as unique and independent pieces, after taking down the installation *Havre-77*, they can form part of art collections.

A fragile metal spiral staircase, which cast a disconcerting shadow play on the deteriorated walls, led from the rooftop to the rear patio, where the built structures surrounded the other intervention space. There the artist covered some of the gaps between beams with Plexiglas sheets; these filtered the bright sunlight and projected rectangular color planes, marked out on the worn floor; a sort of Mondrianesque effect, which gave rise to evocative visual contradictions between the well-defined rectangular color compartments and the irregularities of the deteriorated material.

The decayed material situation of the dilapidated house, by and large, communicated a wide range of aesthetic experiences to the attentive viewer. The iron fragments that corroded dull steel beams, the surviving ravaged stucco, and above all the peeling plaster of the walls, mixed with remains of wallpaper and paint—a sort of Leonardo-esque effect⁵⁰—generated, together with the window frames and absent doors, a surrealist film set, whose various standpoints transmitted new knowledge.

Aided by a group of builders, Carrera-Maul removed some parts of the building such as the sheet metal roof (later processed as a compression) and the layers of wooden beams which he transformed into a coarse and irregular timber wall. The structure of the building (even its surfaces, such as the worn linoleum floors or the cracked paint) was forced to undergo a metamorphic process as a result of the artist's creative power, which eventually became a very complex installation about memory. To carry out these processes, Carrera-Maul set up his workshop on site; his "*work in progress*" with the stratigraphies of the house with its charges and meanings, was a work with the construction material of the place, which after the exhibition week ended was removed to waste material disposal sites on the city outskirts; a spatial and temporarily limited metamorphosis, of which the compressions is all that remains.

The analytic-artistic disassembly of a house, the unveiling of its memory strata, somewhat like an architectural surgery, and the *in situ* transformation of construction waste into artistic material is a work of aesthetic awareness, which leads to alternative spatial determinations that break with the monotonous routine of production and the destructive logic of real estate speculation. Two works by Gordon Matta-Clark are precursors of these works.

In what is perhaps his best-known work, *Splitting*⁵¹, produced from March to June 1974, Matta-Clark used a chainsaw to systematically cut in two a ruined and abandoned two-story wooden house, approved for demolition, in Englewood, New Jersey. He removed the interiors of

the house (helped by an assistant) and placed them compressed in the ground floor, which rested upon a stone pedestal. The fragmentary parts of the building and constructive skeletons—in *Splitting* as in *Havre-77*—came to life because of the sunrays that entered and provoked a metamorphic play of light.⁵²

This work, based and carried out in a specific location (what we now call *site-specific*), at the time also known as processual art, is similar to Carrera-Maul's *Havre-77* (almost four decades later); a necessary, "parasitic and incisive"⁵³ traumatic experience for architects and urbanists. A modality of the "*unbuilding*" that interrupts the production logic of the banal enlargements and densifications of the city. Albeit, there are but fragments of the processual work; in the place of the installation, soon a new construction appears, ready for the real estate market. In the ruthless production process of the dysfunctional and banal city, the artist—with alternative and dilatory proposals—can only fill the intermediate gaps, the delimited time frames. What remains is the record in video and photography and the temporary preservation of the forgotten and eroded information through essays in art catalogues.

In 1972—the year of the birth of the Mexican artist—the common point between Matta-Clark and Carrera-Maul became more evident in the projects performed over several stages called *Bronx Floors*. Together with his assistant Manfred Hecht, the New York-born artist illegally entered ruined houses in the decaying Bronx and sawed rectangular sections from the floors of the empty apartments, which were later exhibited at the 112 Green Street gallery in SoHo, Manhattan. The stratifications of carpets and other flooring coverings, painted papers, wooden constructions and empty spaces were recorded in the object itself and by means of photographs taken in the place.⁵⁴ In 1977, a year before his death from cancer, Matta-Clark also worked in Paris with rubble and scrap metal imbued with history, gathered from the demolition of the legendary Les Halles market, presented in a photographic series, *Underground Paris*, and finally exhibited.⁵⁵

In contrast to this documentary stance, Luis Carrera-Maul made a radical decision after disassembling *Havre-77*: he would only preserve the compressions and the wall of wooden beams from the inner courtyard, which would be transported elsewhere. The photographic record of the group of works created in the place remained as documentation and was not transferred to an artistic format, but illustrates this essay, thus becoming visually compressed and printed information.

PERSPECTIVE

The three spheres of production of artistic meaning dealt with here—the excavation in Oaxaca, the metonymies in Museum of San Carlos, and the memory work in the house to be demolished in 77 Havre Street—probe the discursive potential of contemporary art. Beyond the writing they thematize in the middle of the (three dimensional) image the cultural technique of compression and resource management. Carrera-Maul's work suggests readjusting the established viewpoint—sometimes devoid of inspiration—we hold about the objects in our life, and rediscovering them in a new and different way. This critical impetus, which is latent in his work, is not articulated with the wagging finger of someone who holds a monopoly over interpretation, but in the playful manner of a work of art of increasing complexity. His production wagers the creation of environmental knowledge through powerful images. Their advantageous use is an act not only performed by means of words.

Goethe described the intrinsic value of the image in a diary entry dated March 17, 1786, in Naples: "If I want to write words, I always have images before my eyes [...], and I lack the organs to represent it all." Here, the old technique of contemplation is implicitly reclaimed so that the production of presence takes place by means of the image. Not only does this apply for the artist, but also for their audience, who should emancipate themselves from interpretation of meanings based on words, without wholly renouncing the written word, as in this text, for example.⁵⁶ Wittgenstein identified this productive paradox of the artistic contemplation between visual fascination and linguistic fixation in the epigraph above: "Hence the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought."⁵⁷

Probing the potential of understanding works of art is today a subject for neuroaesthetics. The permanent change from word to image in neuronal processes generates a complex diversity of possibilities of interpretation, which do not always agree with the frames of interpretation determined by artists, curators and authors, but can trigger unexpected effects in relation to understanding. Even what is apparently incomprehensible in a work of art can inspire unsuspected perceptions.

In this sense, this text closes with an invitation to readers to make the most of the following pages of visual narration of Luis Carrera-Maul's work, under the premise that art can frequently represent complex states of things in a better way than rational language. And only if knowledge—for example, in relation to the geologic nature of human existence, the technique of civilization of preserving through compression or urban metamorphoses—becomes sensorially

tangible can it guide our actions.⁵⁸ The capacity for contemplating visual information enables the construction of world models; in this respect, Luis Carrera-Maul provides much food for thought.

NOTES

[i] TN: Although *matria* (motherland) makes sense in Spanish, it is not used and the Royal Spanish Academy does not include it in its dictionary. The word used to refer to one's homeland is *patria* (fatherland).

[1] *Making the Geologic Now. Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life*. Brooklyn, New York: Punctum Books, 2013. Edited by Elizabeth Ellsworth and Jaimie Kruse, pp. 6-17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 20: On the basis of an idea presented for the first time by Antonio Steppani in 1870, Paul Crutzen developed in 2000 the concept and notion of Anthropocene; published in 2002 in *Nature*. The *geologic turn* fosters the broadening of meanings, of the geology of sciences of culture and artistic practice, in view of enabling sensorial experiences on the geologic realities in quotidian life.

[3] Joachim Radkau, *Die Ära der Ökologie. Eine Weltgeschichte*. Munich: Beck, 2011, p. 190: the concept of "sustainability" introduced in Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit 1992 (according to Timothy Doyle, *Environmental Movements in Majority and Minority World – A Global Perspective*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2005) is nothing but the "legitimation of the exploitation of natural resources by the actors who can afford a public relations department to look after the public image related to ecology" [Own translation].

[4] Hansjörg Küster, *Das ist Ökologie. Die biologischen Grundlagen unserer Existenz*. Munich: Beck, 2005, pp. 162-167 and 137.

[5] For a further reading on the processual see Peter Schneemann's essay in this volume.

[6] Roger Caillois, *Die Schrift der Steine*. Graz, Vienna: Droschl, 2004 (first edition in French in 1971 and 1975), p. 12. [Own translation]

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 133. [Own translation]

[10] See Wolf Singer / Matthieu Ricard, *Hirnforschung und Meditation. Ein Dialog*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008, pp. 10-11 and 20.

[11] Song Di, "China, Treatise on 11th century painting" (cit. Hubert Damisch, *Theorie der Wolke. Für eine Geschichte der Malerei*. Zurich/Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013) (*Théorie du/nuage/pour une histoire de la peinture*. Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1972), pp. 53-54 [own translation].

- [12] For a further reading on the creative act and autopoiesis see Friedrich Weltzien. *Fleck – Das Bild der Selbständigkeit. Justinus Kerner und die Klecksografie als experimentelle Bildpraxis zwischen Ästhetik und Naturwissenschaft*. (Aesthetic Collection in 1800, edited by Reinhard Wagner, vol. 6) Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. And *Entwerfen und Entwurf. Praxis und Theorie des künstlerischen Schaffensprozesses*. Berlin: Reimer, 2003. Edited by Gundel Mattenklott / Friedrich Weltzien [own translation].
- [13] See Klaus Richter / Jan-Michael, Rost. *Komplexe Systeme*. Frankfurt am Mein: Fischer, 2002; Sandra Michell, *Komplexitäten. Warum wir erst anfangen, die Welt zu verstehen*. Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp (Unselde edition), 2008; *Fundamental Principles of Urban Growth*. Wuppertal: Müller + Busmann, 2002. Edited by Klaus Humpert / Klaus Brenner / Sibylle Becker.
- [14] Vilém Flusser, *Natural: Mind* (Flusser Archive Collection, edited by Siegfried Zielinsky). Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing (first edition 1979), pp. 98, 100, and 104 [own translation].
- [15] Johann Georg Sulzer. See *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* articles listed sequentially one by one in alphabetic order by artistic term at: http://www.textlog.de/sulzer_kuenste.html. Biel/Bienne: Heilmann, 1777; article "Metonymie."
- [16] Christoph Wagner, "Der Mythos vom 'unschuldigen Auge' – zur 'Anschauung' der Kunst nach der neuroästhetischen Wende," in: *Künste und Regelwerk*. Munich: Silke Schreiber, 2013. Edited by Hans Rudolf Reust, Peter J. Schneemann, Anselm Stalder, pp. 47-55.
- [17] *Catalogue I tre escoli d'oro della pittura napoletana de Battistello Caracciolo a Giacinto Gigante*. Naples: Polo Museale Napolentano / Mexico: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2003.
- [18] As an instance I quote the diary entry on February 24th, 1787, in *Italian Journey* by Goethe, he wrote in *Sant'Agata Bolognese*: "On both sides limestones standing and bare" and "curious rockeries: more frequently the usual limestone rocks, then serpentinite, jasper, quartzes, quartz veins, granites, porphyry, varieties of marble, green and blue crystals" [own translation].
- [19] Hans Dickel, *Kunst als zweite Natur. Studien zum Naturverständnis in der modernen Kunst*. Berlin: Reimer, 2006, pp. 55-85.
- [20] The reading of *De Natura Rerum* by Lucretius inspired Cezanne to study the geologic principles of landscape through drawing. He represented the rock formations (with their stratifications, cracks and dislocations) as though they were clouds; see: Hubert Damisch, *Theorie der Wolke. Für eine Geschichte der Malerei*. Zurich/Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013 (*Théorie du/nuage/pour une histoire de la peinture*. Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1972), p. 305.
- [21] Roger Caillois, *Die Schrift der Steine*. Graz, Vienna: Droschl, 2004 (first edition in French in 1971 and 1975), p. 28 [own translation].

- [22] See Rainer G. Schmidt, "Einschlüsse / Aufschlüsse. Eine phantastische Mineralogie," in: Roger Caillois, *Die Schrift der Steine*. Graz, Vienna: Droschl, 2004, p. 187 [own translation].
- [23] In the entries of *Italian Journey* for March 5 and May 28, 1787, Goethe verifies "that no painter of the Neapolitan school has ever been so conscientious and great."
- [24] Catalogue *I tre escoli d'oro della pittura napoletana de Battistello Caracciolo a Giacinto Gigante*. Naples: Polo Museale Napoletano / Mexico: Museo Nacional de San Carlos, 2003, p. 75: Salvator Rosa, *Marina*; p. 113: Carlo Bonavia, *Paesaggio costiero* and p. 115: *Vista de las islas de Prócida e Isquia desde la playa de Miseno*.
- [25] Vilém Flusser, "Gespräch, Gerede, Kitsch. Zum Problem des unvollkommenen Informationskonsums" in: *Kitsch. Soziale und politische Aspekte einer Geschmacksfrage*. Munich: List Verlag, 1985. Edited by Harry Pross, p. 47, and pp. 51-52.
- [26] This might also occur to this book-catalogue.
- [27] See the photographs in Anupama Kundoo, "Das Tauziehen zwischen Umweltschutz und Entwicklung" in: *Stadtbauwelt* # 189 (November 2011) "Stadt & Energie," pp. 59-63, and mainly, p. 63.
- [28] Peter Krieger, "Revolución y colonialismo en las artes visuales - el paradigma de la *documenta*" in: *Universidad de México*, no. 617 (November 2002), pp. 89-92.
- [29] According to calculations about a third of mankind has watched one James Bond film.
- [30] Dominique Manotti, *Roter Glamour*, Hamburg: Argument, 2011, p. 54 (Original Edition in French, 2001: *Nos fantastiques années fric*. [Own translation])
- [31] John Scanlan, *On Garbage*. London: Reaktion, 2005, pp. 89-90.
- [32] *Ibid*, p. 96.
- [33] *Ibid*, pp. 102-106.
- [34] Arman's exhibition "*Le Plein*" on October 23, 1960, was considered a reaction to Yves Klein's "*Le Vide*," which the latter carried out in the same place in 1958, for which the artist emptied the gallery, painted it in white and lighted it in blue.
- [35] César (Baldaccini) presented these works of welded scrap metal in 1956 in the Venice Biennale; in 1957, in the São Paulo Art Biennial; in 1958, in the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and in the Universal Exposition in Brussels; in 1959, in *Documenta II* in Kassel.
- [36] The corresponding works are *Coque Vallelunga n° 1*, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1986; and *Compression bicyclette*, Val-de-Marne, Fonds Départemental d'Art Contemporain (FDAC), 1995.

[37] *Garbage Wall* originally exhibited from April 20 – 23, 1970, in the outside wall of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, East Village, Manhattan; then it was thrown into a container. The work was reconstructed for the exhibition in Museo Tamayo in 2003. See *Gordon Matta-Clark. Proyectos arquitectónicos*. Exhibition catalogue, Museo Rufino Tamayo, curated by Willy Kautz and Tania Ragasol Valenzuela. Mexico: *Olga y Rufino Tamayo* Foundation, 2004. Edited by Beatriz Eugenia Mackenzie, p. 15.

[38] John Scanlan, *On Garbage*. London: Reaktion, 2005, pp. 198 and 201: "garbage was everywhere. In the most inevitable sense, garbage was the environment built" [own translation].

[39] *Gordon Matta-Clark. Proyectos arquitectónicos*. Exhibition catalogue, Museo Rufino Tamayo, curated by Willy Kautz and Tania Ragasol Valenzuela. Mexico: *Olga y Rufino Tamayo* Foundation, 2004. Edited by Beatriz Eugenia Mackenzie, p. 17.

[40] Pamela M. Lee, *Object to be Destroyed. The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*. Cambridge, Mass. / London, England: MIT Press, 2001, p. xvi [own translation].

[41] *Gordon Matta-Clark. Proyectos arquitectónicos*. Exposition catalogue, Museo Rufino Tamayo, curated by Willy Kautz and Tania Ragasol Valenzuela. Mexico: *Olga y Rufino Tamayo* Foundation, 2004. Edited by Beatriz Eugenia Mackenzie, p. 22.

[42] Pontus Hulten, *Futurismo & Futurismi*. Exposition catalogue, Palazzo Grassi, Venice. Milan: Bompiani, 1986, pp. 588-599, "*Stridentismo*."

[43] Tatiana Flores, "Actual No. 1, o los catorce puntos de Manuel Maples Arce," in: *Vanguardia Estridentista. Soporte de la estética revolucionaria*. Mexico: CONACULTA / INBA, Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera, 2010, pp. 37 and 41. See also *Vanguardia en México. 1915-1940*. Mexico: Munal / INBA, 2013. Edited by Renato González Mello and Anthony Stanton.

[44] Thorsten Brinkmann's exhibition can be considered an exceptional instance of this revitalization; see *Thorsten Brinkmann. Amanecer*. Mexico: Conaculta, 2012. Edited by Carmen Gaitán Rojo.

[45] John Scanlan, *On Garbage*. London: Reaktion, 2005, pp. 115-116. This sculpture is one of the five works of a series that Cragg produced between 1975 and 1985 in the Royal College of Art. See also *A Quiet Revolution: British Sculpture Since 1965*. Exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1987, pp. 56 and 61; *Tony Cragg*. Exhibition catalogue, Hayward Gallery, London, 1987, p. 45; *Tony Cragg: Sculpture 1975-90*. Exhibition catalogue, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, 1990, pp. 30 and 33. An interesting biographic detail: Cragg not only studied art, but also natural sciences; similarly to Carrera-Maul, who enriched his artistic stances and techniques with advanced engineering knowledge.

[46] Firstly, Kiefer prepared *Ages of the World* in his workshop, then he installed it in the museum in London; see the photograph of the assembly. *Anselm Kiefer*. Exhibition catalogue No. 60, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014. Edited by the Royal Academy of Arts.

[47] Richard Davey. "In the beginning is the end and in the end is the beginning," *Anselm Kiefer*. Exposition catalogue No. 60, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2014. Edited by the Royal Academy of Arts, pp. 49-50.

[48] "H77" took place from June 9 to 16, 2013, in the house no. 77 on Havre Street (which dates back from the end of the 19th century) and the annex of domestic workers of 1830 in central *Colonia Juárez*. The installation marks the time before the renovation by *ReUrbano* architect studio.

[49] On the aesthetics and iconography of the neo-baroque balustrade in the current megacity, see: Peter Krieger, "Decoración de la decadencia. La balaustrada neobarroca como síntoma crítico en la mega ciudad de México" in: *Intervención. Revista Internacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museología*. No. 2 (July – December 2010), Mexico: Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía – INAH, pp. 16-23.

[50] I here call Leonardoesque the conversion of old and dilapidated walls into surfaces for artistic imagination; see Leonardo, *Traktat von der Malerei, cod. urb. lat., 1270, 35v*: the action of contemplating the spots of a wall (*muri imbrattati di varie macchie*) is a "way to broaden the mind and lead it to various inventions" (*Modo d'aumentare e destare l'ingegno a varie inventioni*) [own translation].

[51] *Splitting*, 1974, 322 Humphrey Street, Englewood, New Jersey; see: Pamela M. Lee, *Object to be Destroyed. The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*. Cambridge, Mass. / London, England: MIT Press, 2001, pp. x, xii, 18.

[52] *Gordon Matta-Clark. Proyectos arquitectónicos*. Exhibition catalogue, Museo Rufino Tamayo, curated by Willy Kautz and Tania Ragasol Valenzuela. Mexico: *Olga y Rufino Tamayo* Foundation, 2004. Edited by Beatriz Eugenia Mackenzie, p. 33.

[53] Pamela M. Lee, *Object to be Destroyed. The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*. Cambridge, Mass. / London, England: MIT Press, 2001, p. xiii [own translation].

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[56] Peter Krieger, "Words don't come easy - comentarios a la crítica y exposición de las artes plásticas actuales," in *Universidad de México*, October/November 2000, no. 597-598, pp. 25-29.

[57] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus. Tagebücher 1914-1916. Philosophische Untersuchungen*. (Complete Works vol.1) Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 1999, p. 525 (*Philosophische Untersuchungen* Teil II, XI) [G. E. M. Anscombe's translation].

[58] Wolf Singer, "Neurobiologische Anmerkungen zum Wesen und zur Notwendigkeit von Kunst" in: *Der Beobachter im Gehirn. Essays zur Hirnforschung*. Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 2002, pp. 211-234.