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Performing Pop: Marta Minujín and the 'Argentine Image-Makers'

By Catherine Spencer

The June 1966 issue of *Arts Magazine* heralded the Argentine artist Marta Minujín's arrival on the international art scene as a 'Latin Answer to Pop'. This article seeks to complicate Minujín's affiliation with pop art, arguing that she performed this identification strategically, playing pop aesthetics off against happenings and nouveau réalisme in a way that prompts comparison with the works of her Argentine contemporaries.

In 1967 Oscar Masotta, the Argentine writer, intellectual and sometime creator of happenings and anti-happenings published two books titled *El 'Pop-Art'* and *Happenings* respectively.¹ Although 1967 marked their first appearance in print, the essays collected in *El 'Pop-Art'* started life as lectures Masotta gave at the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella in Buenos Aires during 1965 before he visited the United States between January and April 1966, and again at the beginning of 1967.² Through these trips Masotta came into 'direct contact with works by the North American "Pop" artists', and attended several US happenings.³ Despite this, the arguments in *El 'Pop-Art'* remained relatively unchanged from the 1965 lectures. Masotta's experiences in New York, he felt, bore out his initial understandings of pop, which prior to his travels he had assimilated through reproductions in magazines and the International Prizes organised by the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella from the early 1960s, and which from 1963 were exhibited in the Di Tella's new premises at the Centro de Visual Artes on the calle Florida under the directorship of the critic and curator Jorge Romero Brest, until its closure in 1969.⁴

By contrast, the book *Happenings* was a multi-authored volume containing texts by the critic Alicia Paez and the sociologist Eliseo Verón, commentaries from artists including Roberto Jacoby and Eduardo Costa, and an extended prologue by Masotta, which attempted to account for the proliferation of the term 'happening' in the Argentine avant-garde.⁵ Like *El 'Pop-Art'*, *Happenings* also developed from a series of lectures and performances at the Di Tella in 1966. The lectures, entitled *Acerca de: Happenings* (About: Happenings), gave an overview of the theoretical debates, while *Sobre Happenings* (On Happenings) saw a group of Argentine artists re-perform works by US practitioners including Claes Oldenburg and Carolee Schneemann.⁶ *El 'Pop-Art'* and *Happenings* navigate the complex terrain of Argentine engagements with, and developments of, pop art and happenings, a shifting ground that Masotta tried to control by separating them into two distinct volumes. Nevertheless, the books treat a shared number of themes, practitioners and works from the Argentine avant-garde, indicating the extent to which pop and performance commingled in Argentina during this period.⁷

The tendency among Argentine artists to blur the boundaries between Masotta's categories is exemplified by the work of Marta Minujín, a figure who receives sustained attention in both books. In the early 1960s Minujín moved rapidly from producing expressionist canvases and assemblages of cardboard boxes and old mattresses, to sculptures made from material covered in bands of fluorescent, psychedelic stripes. At the same time, she started to design vibrant environmental installations and happenings. Masotta illustrated *El 'Pop-Art'* with images from the two works that particularly contributed to Minujín's identification with a pop sensibility, in both the Argentine and international media. The first of these was a collaborative installation and environment at the CAV, entitled *La menesunda* (Mayhem), in 1965. The second was *El batacazo* (The Long Shot), an interactive installation that Minujín created the same year for the Di Tella's National Prize, and then transferred to New York where it was shown briefly at the Bianchini Gallery in 1966.⁸

[Figure 1]

La menesunda, which Minujín worked on collaboratively with the artist Rubén Santantonín, immersed audiences in a labyrinthine arrangement of 'situations', including a tableau featuring a couple sharing a bed, a beauty parlour where assistants applied make-up to visitors, and a mirror room full of fans and glitter.⁹ *La menesunda* became something of a cause célèbre, with people queuing along the calle Florida on which the Di Tella was situated to get inside. Art historian Andrea Giunta has observed how the Argentine media's frenzied response to *La menesunda* transformed Minujín 'into a fetish, a celebrated personality, the perfect synthesis for constructing the image of the artist who could establish and legitimize Argentine art throughout the world' (fig.1).¹⁰ The effect of *La menesunda* certainly informed a 1966 feature on Minujín by Jacqueline Barnitz for the New York-based publication *Arts Magazine*. The essay was illustrated with photographs from *El batacazo*, with its frieze of florescent tubing, playground slide and soft, figurative sculptures of rugby players and space men, and trumpeted Minujín to Anglophone readers as 'A Latin Answer to Pop'.¹¹ Yet while Minujín herself has identified with the pop label, its wholesale application to her practice risks reducing the artist's achievements to mirror-play, whereby artists of the Global South are only able to 'answer' propositions set by the North.¹² Artists such as Minujín, and others including Costa, Jacoby, Santantonín, Edgardo Giménez, Dalila Puzzovio, Carlos Squirru and Susana Salgado, analysed the premises of North American pop and happenings while developing their own innovative synthesis of popular culture and performance, with an intensity and rigour that goes well beyond the binary of call and response.¹³

Moreover, Minujín's investigations into pop art were combined with her parallel explorations of transnational developments in performance art, spanning happenings and Fluxus activities as well as nouveau réalisme in France.¹⁴ In *El 'Pop-Art'* Masotta did not explicitly identify Minujín as a pop artist, but rather included her work in a section entitled 'The Argentine Image-Makers'.¹⁵ Masotta begins this chapter by reflecting that the plurality of pop propositions by practitioners in Argentina more than matched the work he had seen in North America.¹⁶ He recounts his interactions with the output of Squirru, Santantonín, and Juan Stoppani, before concluding with an extended analysis of Minujín's performance work. Rather than pointing to the object-based nature of Minujín's practice, Masotta focused on its transient qualities: 'for Marta Minujín everything changes, everything becomes, everything is transformed'.¹⁷ Masotta argued that, despite Minujín's focus on process, ultimately 'nothing changes for her, and the development of society cannot be modified substantially'.¹⁸

This essay focuses primarily on Minujín as the Argentine artist who most overtly performed her pop identity in this period, while drawing correlations between her work and that of other so-called 'Argentine Image-Makers' (beyond those included in *El 'Pop-Art'*).¹⁹ It seeks to show how, in Minujín's case, pop was an artistic affiliation that could be deployed when it needed to be, and at other times destabilised through performance. In contrast to Masotta, it argues that the protean nature of Minujín's practice ensured its longevity beyond the efflorescence of pop art in Argentina. Equally, Minujín's ambivalent approach to a competing range of artistic methods and terminologies during the 1960s puts pressure on the seamless international continuity often conjured by the designation 'pop'.

This dialogic mode of address inflected the wider response to pop and happenings within Argentina. In 1966, for example, the Buenos Aires-based magazine *Primera Plana*, which frequently included commentaries on cultural and artistic events, ran an article entitled 'Sociología del Pop' (Sociology of Pop) as part of a special issue devoted to the phenomenon. In it, sociologists interviewed Argentine artists associated with pop, and attempted to itemise the defining characteristics of their work.²⁰ Equally, through *Acerca de: Happenings* and *Sobre Happenings*, Masotta and his collaborators, including Costa and Jacoby, did not want to produce a 'complete history' of US performance, but instead to dissect selected performances in a quasi-scientific fashion.²¹ Although it is something of a truism that Buenos Aires has long been a centre for psychoanalysis, the examination to which pop and happenings were subjected in Argentina was not primarily psychoanalytic.²² It was, however, strongly informed by the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, writings on semiotics by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, and the media theory of Marshall McLuhan.²³ After establishing the multidisciplinary nature of Minujín's practice in the first two sections, the final part of this essay focuses in particular on this analytical dynamic. Far from being passively received by Argentine artists and critics, pop art and happenings were interrogated on a number of levels, a critique that became a vital, reflexive element of many works.

Cardboard pop and new realisms

Minujín's pop credentials might initially seem impeccable. The artist herself has described how, at the end of her second extended period in Paris between 1962 and 1964, she decided to go to the Venice Biennale 'just to see what was going on ... it was very Pop influenced, [Robert] Rauschenberg got the prize'.²⁴ On her way back from Venice Minujín travelled via Milan where she 'saw my first mini-skirt ... light blue with pink flowers, I bought it, and changed my whole way of looking at art. I went Pop'.²⁵ In this account the miniskirt wields a cultural significance equal to that of a Rauschenberg *Combine*. The identity of a pop artist, for Minujín, was a role that could be performed by donning the right costume, or rather brought into being through performance. Minujín determinedly employed the visual signifiers of commodity fashion to establish her artistic identity on the international stage: 'I went to Buenos Aires ... and won the Di Tella prize [in 1964] and then I went to New York and became a Pop artist'.²⁶ The performative element of Minujín's damascene conversion to pop, bolstered by her identification with works like *La menesunda* and *El batacazo*, needs attending to carefully. It serves as a useful narrative that glosses over the challenges that Minujín faced as a woman artist from Latin America, but also because it suppresses the importance of the work that Minujín had conducted up to that point in Buenos Aires and Paris.²⁷

[Figure 2]

Although Minujín began her career as a painter, in the late 1950s and early 1960s she started to incorporate non-traditional media into her canvases, including sections of cardboard to which she first applied industrial paint, and then manipulated into architectural constructions called *Cajas* (Boxes). The *Cajas* consisted of interlocking cubes, sometimes combined with sections of mattress material (fig.2). Minujín's work thus initially corresponded with the mixed-media approach of other artists in Argentina such as Kenneth Kemble, associated with informalismo, and who used found objects including broken glass and sections of metal in their work. They also overlapped with the neo-figurative productions of artists like Luis Felipe Noé, one of the other artists Masotta identified as an 'Argentine Image-Maker', and the *Cosas* (Things) made from assorted materials by Santanonín that Masotta described in 'The Argentine Image-Makers'. These three-dimensional constructions often involved wrapping and thereby partially concealing objects to form ambiguously abstracted sculptures (fig.3).²⁸ Minujín's experiments with cardboard and mattresses resonated with this wider context, fostering her early success and rapid assimilation into avant-garde circles.²⁹

[Figure 3]

Minujín had therefore already started to use discarded cardboard containers before her first visit to Paris in 1961.³⁰ Once in Paris, Minujín continued to produce cardboard structures, much to the annoyance of her landlord. Minujín remembers: 'cardboard boxes here, cardboard boxes there, everywhere. The bathtub would get blocked up. They hated me from the first day, and more so when I threw the cardboard boxes out of the window'.³¹ Minujín embraced the excessive, junk connotations of the material, exploiting the cardboard's associations with waste and obsolescence not just in the final creations, but also during her working process, which assumed qualities akin to a dirty protest. Minujín's work was displayed during this first trip as part of the exhibition *30 Argentines de la nouvelle génération* (30 Argentines of the New Generation) at the Galerie Creuze-Messine between February and March 1962. A review of this exhibition, in which Minujín showed an assemblage balanced on a tripod christened *La chien mort* (The Dead Dog), tentatively pronounced the artist 'difficult to classify'.³² Minujín's creation of cardboard reliefs and use of industrial paints (including car paint), it concluded, were ultimately expressive of a discernible degree of 'violence'.³³ While Minujín's approach reverberated with the work of other Argentine artists living in Paris at the time, as well as the use of junk objects by the French nouveau réalistes, even in this context her assemblages confounded easy identification.³⁴

[Figure 4]

On her return to Buenos Aires in 1962 Minujín showed work in two exhibitions at the Lirolay Gallery organised by Raphael Squirru, who was the founder of the Museo de Arte Moderno in Buenos Aires.³⁵ The second of these was a solo display during November, in which Minujín presented several *Cajas*. A photograph of Minujín leaning inside one of her cardboard boxes indicates a significant departure from her previous working processes. Whereas Minujín's initial use of cardboard involved obscuring the material with paint, here collaged sections of slogans and advertisements remain clearly visible (fig.4). The section of cardboard above Minujín's head, which frames her body like a miniature shop front, is emblazoned with an advertisement for the cleaning product Sunil in French, available in 'paquets économiques' (low-priced packages) that promise to 'embellit le blanc!' (enhance whites!). In his 1957 book *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes devotes a chapter to the semiology of 'Soap Powders and Detergents', noting that they 'have been ... the object of such massive

advertising that they now belong to a region of French daily life which the various types of psychoanalysis would do well to pay some attention to'.³⁶ The arrangement of text across the cardboard construction plays on the overlap between economic and physical consumption. Combined with the slogans offering cheap detergent, the words 'chocolats' and 'caramels' can be glimpsed on another folded section of card. In his accompanying catalogue essay, Squirru anticipated the potential resistance of some audience members: 'someone will ask: are these works for sale?'³⁷ By pre-empting this question, Squirru underlined the inferred conflation between the artworks themselves and the various modes of commodity consumption alluded to by their collaged elements.

Minujín's use of found advertising and packaging has parallels with the *affichiste* posters created by French artists like Jacques Villeglé, Raymond Hains and François Dufréne during the 1950s and 1960s.³⁸ The formal and linguistic vocabularies of the boxes might therefore be read as a record of Minujín's travels and artistic encounters.³⁹ Like a souvenir stamp, the word 'Paris' appears among the layers of text on the left-hand flap of cardboard in the Lirolay photograph. Yet the stakes of the *Cajas* are higher than this, in that they also reference the transnational circulation of commodities. While Minujín may have bought these 'commercial signs' back with her from France, it is equally as likely that she found packaging for imported French products in Buenos Aires.⁴⁰ Her engagement with consumption resonates with Argentina's gradual emergence from the legacy of Perónist socialism during the late 1950s, and the rapid economic growth experienced by the country as it re-entered global trade and underwent a consumer boom.⁴¹ Writing with specific reference to the Brazilian context of the 1960s, art historian Sônia Salztein has described the need to foreground 'the relevance of a local contribution in the understanding of Pop as an international phenomenon, where local and global are strangely hybridized without being ostracized from the game of mutual tensions that nourishes them'.⁴² The photograph of Minujín's *Caja* encapsulates this geographic heterogeneity, while the work's cultural politics remain decidedly ambivalent, offering neither straightforward celebration nor outright condemnation of commodity culture and global economic markets.

What the photograph of Minujín inside her *Caja* does make clear is the artist's fascination with the wear and degradation of urban street life. The understanding of the commodity form here – as something continually in the process of being consumed, digested, and broken down – is very far from the sleek surfaces of Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes from 1964, which Masotta would reference in *El 'Pop-Art'*.⁴³ While the tired sections of the *Caja* in the photograph replicate the life-cycle of commodities, Minujín could equally be seen to intervene in these processes with an act of salvage. The layering of advertisements on movable, collapsible sections of cardboard, which enacts a physical deconstruction of consumer culture, moreover infers a participatory quality that heralds Minujín's growing interest in environmental situations and performances. Minujín's early work complicates her association with pop art, while simultaneously demonstrating the need for expanded understandings of pop during the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁴⁴ This is particularly evident in Minujín's subsequent move into happenings.

Manifestations and events

During her second visit to Paris between 1962 and 1964, Minujín continued to explore the processes that had resulted in the *Cajas* and *La chien mort*, producing strange composite structures such as *La poupée* (The Doll) dated to 1963.⁴⁵ This was a figure constructed from sewn and stuffed sections,

which Minujín hung from the ceiling with metal springs: its grotesquely humanoid form might almost be read as a hyperbolic pastiche of nouveau réaliste junk assemblage (fig.5). More significantly, it was during this visit in June 1963 that Minujín organised her first happening, entitled *La destrucción* (The Destruction) 1963. In the same month Minujín appeared in the *Programme des manifestations* organised by Jean-Jacques Lebel at the Galerie Raymond Cordier on the Rue Guénégaud.⁴⁶ The other artists involved were Jacques Gabriel, Daniel Pommereulle, Robert Filliou and Emmett Williams, whose work encompassed happening and Fluxus activities in Europe and the US.⁴⁷

[Figure 5]

The performances occurred on three separate evenings during a display of Lebel's paintings, collages and objects, which the exhibition poster advertised as 'some supplementary reflections on death and its presence in the activity of the avant-garde'.⁴⁸ Minujín appeared alongside Pommereulle in *Le coq* (The Cock) 1963. The artist recalls that the action entailed being 'pecked' by Pommereulle in the guise of a rooster. A performance photograph shows Minujín swaddled in material and lying submissively on the floor against a backdrop of Lebel's writhing collages and designs, her body partially bisected and blocked from view by the silhouette of what looks suggestively like a be-suited male viewer or voyeur (fig.6).⁴⁹ Another image from the series reveals the roles reversed: now Minujín surveys Pommereulle from her perch atop a small ladder, while the topless male artist prostrates himself abjectly at her feet, gazing upwards at her apparently unobtainable body. These images convey a performance concerned with dynamics of dominance and vulnerability, played out in terms of gender identity and erotic desire.

[Figure 6]

Cultural historian John King has argued that the 'rational structures' of the happenings designed by Argentine artists like Minujín and Jacoby were the antithesis of Lebel's 'irrational, instinctual and orgiastic' performances.⁵⁰ Yet Minujín's involvement with the *Programme des manifestations* demonstrates that she was at least familiar with what art historian Alyce Mahon has described as Lebel's 'radical, counter-cultural understanding of desire'.⁵¹ This is underlined by Minujín's collaboration between 1963 and 1964 with the French artist Mark Brusse on a three-dimensional structure entitled *Chambre d'amour* (Room of Love), which merged sensuous soft forms with brutal, sadomasochistic spikes and chains.⁵² It is, however, significant that unlike many women artists who appeared in performances by Lebel during this period, Minujín remained clothed in *Le coq*, while the violence she stage-managed in her own performances provided a significant counterpoint to the machismo and sexism of many early happenings.⁵³

[Figure 7]

This was particularly apparent in the happening that Minujín had herself executed at the beginning of that month. *La destrucción* occurred at the finale of an exhibition Minujín held of her work, together with that of the Portuguese artist Lourdes Castro and the Venezuelan Alejandro Otero, in her studio on the Rue Delambre. At the exhibition's close Minujín rounded up her sculptures of cardboard and mattress, transported them to an empty lot on the Impasse Ronsin near what was once Constantin Brancusi's atelier, and proceeded to instruct a group of artists she had gathered there to adapt each work according to their own style. Minujín then directed the artist Paul Gette to attack the works with a hatchet, before they were set alight (fig.7). Reflecting on his experience

assisting with the preparation of Minujín's assemblages for this 'assault', the critic José Pierre compared what he identified as Minujín's 'perspective of annihilation' with the appearance of 'pop art' in New York.⁵⁴ Stressing the connection between pop and nouveau réalisme, Pierre noted the number of 'common points' shared by both, particularly their basis in materials from the 'everyday universe' and manufactured objects at various stages of consumption: 'new, used or already arrived at the state of debris, of waste'.⁵⁵ While art historical accounts have tended retrospectively to separate pop art from happenings and even, to a certain extent, nouveau réalisme, in the early 1960s these distinctions had by no means concretised.⁵⁶ Even when situating Minujín in relation to pop art, contemporary critics observed the plural nature of her practice. In her 1966 article on Minujín for *Arts Magazine*, Jacqueline Barnitz noted:

It is no accident that the Latin Americans refer to their new realism as the 'art of things' (like the French *art des objets*) rather than Pop art. While popular images are used, their implication is very different. Pop art speaks of 'things', the things that surround us, whereas the 'art of things' paradoxically speaks of people. It employs objects in order to create an image of man.⁵⁷

Barnitz's reference to the French context, and her invocation of humanism in relationship to Minujín's work, corresponds with an essay published by the French nouveau réaliste critic Pierre Restany in *Domus* the year before, entitled 'Buenos Ayres et le nouvel humanisme' (Buenos Aires and the New Humanism). Restany penned the essay after his first visit to Buenos Aires in 1964, when he was invited to judge that year's National and International Prize at the Di Tella, alongside American critic Clement Greenberg and Romero Brest.⁵⁸ Restany positioned Argentine art within a network of activity that included 'the folklore of the Nouveaux Réalistes in Paris, the neo-Dadaists and the Pop artists of New York'.⁵⁹ For Restany, artists in Buenos Aires, like those in Paris and New York, had rejected abstract painting in favour of the 'modern nature, industrial and commercial, of a sociological urban folklore'.⁶⁰ Restany proposed that, differences aside, these artists were fundamentally linked by their concern with city life, and with sifting its waste to create work. Like Barnitz, Restany feted Minujín as the 'symbol of a rising generation' not simply in Argentina, but within this wider constellation.⁶¹ Yet his attribution of a universal humanism to Minujín's work – and that of the Argentine avant-garde more generally – is debatable, and arguably more revealing of Restany's desire to establish solidarity between European and Latin American artists in the face of American art's ascendancy after the Second World War.

The Uruguayan artist and writer Luis Camnitzer has revealed that, during the 1960s, he believed 'attempts to produce vernacular Pop Art in Argentina, Brazil and Columbia' resulted in 'only facile and folklorized versions of the formal solutions developed in New York'.⁶² Yet at the same time, Camnitzer infers a suggestive degree of room for manoeuvre in his statement that 'the international power of the US managed to distribute the formal tricks of the aesthetic but not the essence, which remained local'.⁶³ Minujín's direct participation in, and contribution to transnational routes of exchange blurs clear distinctions between the local and the global, indicating a shared interest in urban beachcombing that spans cities such as New York, Buenos Aires and Paris, but which, as Camnitzer has suggested, assumed distinct properties and qualities at each different geopolitical urban site. Equally, pop art's collapse of high and low culture, its engagement with technologies of mass reproduction, and exploration rather than outright dismissal of the copy, engendered a fundamental assault on traditional artistic hierarchies and

their reductive conceptualisation of influence.⁶⁴ Despite Minujín's affiliations with pop and nouveau réalisme, her actions in *La destrucción* anticipated those of Masotta and his collaborators in *Sobre happenings* of 1966. Her role in the performance was akin to a collector of different artistic models, which she then proceeded to destroy, just as Masotta and Costa would feel that the examples of the US happenings already seemed 'exhausted' as they re-performed works by Schneemann and Oldenburg.⁶⁵ Performance provided a means of questioning and analysing competing approaches and definitions.

La destrucción marked a definitive movement for Minujín away from static reliefs and sculptural work to action and events.⁶⁶ After her return to Argentina in 1964 Minujín's first happening in Buenos Aires towards the end of 1965 debuted live on television, as part of the programme *La campana del cristal* (The Glass Bell). Minujín began the performance, which the artist also refers to as *Cabalgata* (Procession), by layering paint onto a canvas that had been installed in the studio.⁶⁷ Minujín arranged for horses to enter the performance space with tins of paint attached to them that dripped all over the floor; she then released a flood of balloons, which a group of muscle men she had hired to be part of the show proceeded to burst. The result, predictably, and presumably intentionally, was mayhem, with the show's compere desperately attempting to halt proceedings and get Minujín off air. Although deliberately confusing, the basic trajectory of *Cabalgata* – its 'procession' or progression – is clear enough, with the figure of the artist placed traditionally in front of an upright easel gradually engulfed and replaced by a fracas of animals, people and balloons. Minujín's use of a television show, meanwhile, not simply as a venue for an event but a medium in its own right, parallels the American performance artist Allan Kaprow's intuition of the expanded field that pop could occupy, which included what he referred to as the 'gold mine' of television advertisements, while complicating and even collapsing the geographic borderlines of artistic production.⁶⁸

Popular performance and mass communication

[Figure 8]

[Figure 9]

The fusion of pop and happenings in Argentina became acutely apparent during 1966. This was the year that Susana Salgado won the Di Tella's National Prize for a sculptural relief of acrylic sunflowers. The British critic Lawrence Alloway, who together with the German writer Otto Hahn and Romero Brest made up the jury, later claimed that Argentina 'was the only Latin American country that could have Pop art'.⁶⁹ Alloway here invoked Argentine achievements to claim a level of internationalism (albeit a distinctly qualified one) for pop that overlooks specific characteristics and risks homogenisation. Salgado's highly stylised sunflowers, with their smooth acrylic surfaces (fig.8), are the antithesis of Minujín's rough and ready sculptures combining old cardboard boxes and sections of mattress. Minujín and Salgado's work also differs greatly from that of Dalila Puzovio, who was also nominated for the 1966 prize, which had closer connections with fashion design. Similarly, the artist Edgardo Giménez, another Argentine artist associated with pop art, was distinguished by his involvement with advertising and architecture.⁷⁰

The award of the National Prize to Salgado's sunflowers moreover obscured the extent to which pop in Argentina was filtered through performance.⁷¹ Romero Brest could not 'find a way to consider Pop art works in isolation. They constitute one of the poles of the current art scene at the other end of which we have Happenings'.⁷² In 1965, for example, Giménez was partly responsible for a series of events entitled *Microsucesos* (Micro Events). These were short, frenetically paced performances that followed on one from the other in the style of a 'fashion show'.⁷³ Working with Puzzovio and Carlos Squirru, Giménez also developed one of the most iconic works made at the intersection of pop and media art in Argentina during the 1960s. In 1966 the three artists displayed a huge poster on an advertising hoarding at the crossroads of Calle Florida and Viamonte in Buenos Aires (fig.9). It was adorned with their smiling faces and the words '¿Por qué son tan geniales?' (Why are they such geniuses?). What is particularly interesting about this work is the answer to the question apparently provided by Minujín, as reported in *Primera Plana*. The magazine described:

an aggressive manifestation presided over by Minujín, who on the same day of the poster's inauguration threw mattresses and furniture from the windows of the Guernica gallery, and populated Calle Florida with motorcyclists ... strongmen in skimpy briefs, and a rock group.⁷⁴

If this intriguing event did indeed occur, then there was a distinctly competitive edge to Minujín's response, whereby the artist deployed her own signature motifs (strongmen and motorcycles featured in her 1965 Uruguayan happening *Suceso plástico* [Plastic Event]). It created what was presumably a rather distracting foil to the sleek advertising-inspired bravura of Puzzovio, Giménez and Squirru's poster.

Minujín was conspicuous by her absence from a key marker of Argentine pop in 1966. The August cover of *Primera Plana's* special issue devoted to pop featured a colourful photograph of smiling Argentine artists lined up in a row, including Puzzovio and Giménez.⁷⁵ Minujín's absence partly reflects the fact that by 1966 she was spending increasing amounts of time outside Argentina in New York and other US cities. Yet it also underlines that she had largely stopped making objects, instead employing mass media technologies as tools to create performances. Indeed, the special issue quoted Minujín, maintaining in 'a firm voice', that 'what I do ... is the most anti-Pop that one can do, I always make anti-pop; I speak with people in a direct dialogue'.⁷⁶ Minujín's antagonistic relationship with pop overlapped with the turn towards communications media by many Argentine artists in their work as the 1960s progressed.⁷⁷

An interest in communication and its facilitation – as well as potential obfuscation – through messages and codes, had in fact been a defining characteristic of Argentine approaches to pop art. In *El 'Pop-Art'* Masotta drew upon the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's understanding of myth, together with writings on semiotics, to analyse the images produced by pop artists. Masotta describes how Lévi-Strauss's mythology and structural linguistics are united in their concern with the variability of meaning, and its concretisation in symbolic archetypes.⁷⁸ He then proceeds to analyse works by Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein accordingly, proposing that: "pop art" is a movement that intends to "reduce" the structure of the image to the status of a semiological sign, and does this in order to problematize the relationship

between the image and the physical object to which all images refer.⁷⁹ As Barthes stated in *Mythologies*, the semiologist treats writing and pictures in the same way: 'what he retains from them is the fact that they are both signs, that they both reach the threshold of myth endowed with the same signifying function, that they constitute, one just as much as the other, a language object'.⁸⁰ For Masotta, pop images are codes that function linguistically as well as pictorially, witnessing a fusion of the signifier and the signified in a sign that can be received and understood, but which also acknowledges the possibility of pluralistic meaning, undercutting the apparent surety of the stable referent.⁸¹

A similar approach can be detected in many works by Argentine artists associated with pop, such as those that Giménez and Puzzovio contributed to the 1967 *Experiencias* (Experiences) exhibition, which replaced the Di Tella's National and International Prizes. Puzzovio's work consisted of identical high-heeled shoes placed in a Perspex display case. The shoes were presented as reified signs of commodity desire, as much as practical items of clothing to be worn. They were more communication than substance, as inferred by their imprisonment in gleaming plastic shelving. Giménez showed a sculptural installation that consisted of stars cut out of wood and painted black, lined up in a row against a wall, presented directly to the viewer devoid of contextualisation (fig.10). In *8 estrellas negras* (8 Black Stars) the link between signifier and signified is obscure. It is difficult to determine the fixed 'sign' that these stars might be said to constitute. Their possible meaning encompasses nationalist symbols, military badges, and celebratory awards. While their stylised, identical shapes resonate with contemporary fashion and design, their ambiguity and hermeticism results in a confrontation with the viewer.

[Figure 10]

This embrace of semiotic instability infiltrated Minujín's performances, notably *Leyendo las noticias en el Río de la Plata* (Reading the News in the Río de la Plata) 1965, which took place in the same year as the much more well-known *La menesunda*. In *Leyendo las noticias* Minujín swathed herself in sections of newspaper and lay on the ground by the Río de la Plata near Buenos Aires, reading sections of newsprint before gradually entering the water, where she let the newspaper – and its messages – gradually disintegrate around her (fig.11). On the one hand, *Leyendo las noticias* indicates the impact of McLuhan's thinking on Minujín, particularly his assertion that the media, 'being extensions of ourselves, also depend upon us for their interplay and their evolution'.⁸² Yet the work also manifests an interest in the tension between physical experience and the transmission of information that is entirely Minujín's own. During the first part of the happening Minujín's body is contained, constricted even, her head covered by a newspaper hood that is both ridiculous and sinister in its effect. Minujín's performance acknowledges the limiting and constraining effects of the mass media, but also celebrates its transience and ephemerality, enabling movement and change rather than the ossification of meaning.

[Figure 11]

Leyendo las noticias sees an artist who was a favourite subject of the media veiling her body, actively confounding spectacle. Despite the presence of a photographer, there is a private, ritualistic quality to the happening. This simultaneous engagement with, and resistance to,

mass media and its desire to transform the artist into a commodity is especially significant given the conflicted status of women artists within established discourses on pop. Despite the valuable work that has been done to uncover the contribution made by women artists to pop, art historian Hal Foster has argued that while ‘there were female artists involved in Pop (for example, Pauline Boty, Vija Celmins, Niki de Saint Phalle, Rosalyn Drexler, Lee Lozano)’, they ‘could not act as its principle subjects in large part because they were conscripted as its primary objects, even its primary fetishes’.⁸³ In *Leyendo las noticias* Minujín was able not simply to reflect on such forms of reification and fetishisation in her work, but also to evade them and create blocks and barriers against gendered responses.⁸⁴

Despite her interest in mass media communications, Minujín did not collaborate closely with the artists whose conceptual work would become closely identified with a second, more overtly politicised phase of the Argentine avant-garde during the late 1960s, as the grip of the military government which had come to power in a 1966 coup tightened.⁸⁵ Equally, Minujín’s work maintained a decidedly ambiguous position regarding attempts to consolidate either an identifiably Argentine pop art, or an ‘internationalised’ pop art encompassing North America and Latin America. It is important in this respect to note the capacious quality that infuses Minujín’s definition of pop. For Minujín, pop art encompasses a wide range of potential activity including ‘popular art, art that all the world can understand, happy art, fun art, comic art’.⁸⁶ This expanded conceptualisation of pop enabled Minujín to explore and analyse a range of positions, and to align her work predominantly with pop and the creation of images for transmission rather than object production. As Minujín has stressed: ‘I made things for television ... There are things at the popular level, not at the aesthetic level of museums and galleries; this bores me. What I did was always at the popular level. Because Happenings were very popular here [in Argentina].’⁸⁷ It is this understanding of the popular that has enabled her practice to shift and mutate beyond potentially restrictive terms and definitions. Among the artists Masotta identified as ‘Argentine Image-Makers’, the multiplicity of Minujín’s practice has enabled it to endure and continue to resonate beyond the 1960s, albeit in a manner that Masotta did not perhaps quite anticipate.⁸⁸

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1. Masotta lectured on the writings of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, as well as producing a body of writing on contemporary art in the mid to late 1960s. Philip Derbyshire has described him as ‘a maverick figure within Argentine Letters’, whose work across literature, the arts and psychoanalysis was characterised by ‘a lack of specialisation’. See Philip Derbyshire, ‘Who was Oscar Masotta? Psychoanalysis in Argentina’, *Radical Philosophy*, vol.158, November–December 2009, p.11. Masotta also became involved in the creation of ‘anti-happenings’: these were events which did not actually take place, but which Masotta and his collaborators arranged to have reported in the media; this ‘message’ then constituted the work. See Olivier Debrouse, ‘Looking at the Sky in Buenos Aires’, *Getty Research Journal*, vol.1, 2009, pp.127–36.
 2. The Instituto Torcuato Di Tella was a multidisciplinary institute that incorporated three art centres: the Centro de Artes Visuales (CAV); the Centro de Experimentación Audiovisual (CEA); and the Centro Latinoamericano de Alto Estudios Musicales (CLAEM), together with

centres for economics and sociology. For a history of the Di Tella see John King, *El Di Tella y el desarrollo cultural Argentino en la década del sesenta*, Buenos Aires 2007.

3. Oscar Masotta, *El 'Pop-Art'*, Buenos Aires 1967, p.9. '...entre enero y abril de 1966, y de nuevo a principios de 1967, estuve en contacto directo con las obras de los pops norteamericanos'.
4. During the early 1960s the Di Tella embarked on an ambitious programme of annual prizes, which comprised a National Prize for Argentine artists and an International Prize for artists from other countries. In her foundational study Andrea Giunta has described how these prizes functioned as part of 'the internationalist project in Argentina'. See Andrea Giunta, *Avant-Garde, Internationalism, and Politics: Argentine Art in the Sixties*, trans. by Peter Kahn, Durham 2007, p.198.
5. 'A year ago', Masotta reflected, 'Allan Kaprow referred to us as a country of Happenistas, even though up until this date manifestations of the genre had hardly appeared.' Despite this, he felt, 1966 had been a significant year for happenings in Argentina. See Oscar Masotta, 'Prólogo', in Masotta (ed.), *Happenings*, Buenos Aires 1967, p.9. 'Allan Kaprow hace un año atrás se refería a nosotros poco menos que como a un país de happenistas, en tanto que hasta esa fecha apenas si existían en la Argentina manifestaciones expresas del género.'
6. The choice of a happening by Claes Oldenburg is significant given his fusion of pop art and performance. See the essays collected in Achim Hochdörfer and Barbara Schröder (eds.), *Claes Oldenburg: The Sixties*, Vienna 2012.
7. Art critic Ana Longoni has traced these interrelations. See Ana Longoni, 'Estudio preliminar: Vanguardia y revolución en los sesenta', in Oscar Masotta, *Revolución en el arte: Pop-art, happenings y arte de los medios en la década del sesenta*, Barcelona 2004, pp.9–105.
8. El batacazo was a fun-house environment that contained a number of different elements, including a transparent tunnel made of plastic in which flies buzzed, and a slide that deposited visitors onto a large soft doll effigy. The work also contained rabbits: when these died during the Bianchini show, the exhibit was shut down. Masotta's reflections on the event formed a substantial part of his essay 'Tres Argentinos en Nueva York', in Masotta (ed.), *Happenings*, 1967, pp.98–110.
9. The flyer distributed to accompany *La menesunda* stated its aim to create 'difficult / strange / embarrassing / "situations" / for those who are willing to accept them'. Marta Minujín, Rubén Santantonín and Jorge Romero Brest, 'La menesunda', trans. by Marguerite Feitlowitz, in Inéz Katzenstein (ed.), *Listen, Here, Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, New York 2004, p.107.
10. Giunta 2007, p.162.
11. Jacqueline Barnitz, 'A Latin Answer to Pop', *Arts Magazine*, June 1966, pp.36–9.
12. In their major 2004 exhibition *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea used the model of the network in order to contest such oppositions: 'like stars in a constellation, the net allows for a diachronical reading of the selected works'. See Mari Carmen Ramírez, 'A Highly Topical Utopia: Some Outstanding Features of the Avant-Garde in Latin America', in Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (eds.), *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, exhibition catalogue, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston 2004, p.7.

13. As art historian Nadja Rottner has noted, Minujín's work 'combines otherwise separate historical aspects of performance art and Pop art'. See Nadja Rottner, 'Marta Minujín and the Performance of Softness', *Konsthistorisk tidskrift / Journal of Art History*, vol.83, no.2, 2014, p.110.
14. For established narratives of pop which focus on the US and UK contexts see, for example, Suzy Gablik and John Russell, *Pop Art Redefined*, London 1969; Marco Livingstone (ed.), *Pop Art*, exhibition catalogue, Royal Academy of the Arts, London 1991; and David Brauer, *Pop Art: US/UK Connections 1956–1966*, exhibition catalogue, Menil Collection, Houston 2001.
15. Masotta, *El 'Pop-Art'*, 1967, pp.21–8.
16. *Ibid.*, p.21.
17. *Ibid.*, p.28. 'Para Marta Minujín todo cambia, todo deviene, y se transforma, constante y rápidamente.'
18. *Ibid.* '... nada cambia tal vez para ella, ni el desarrollo de las sociedades puede ser modificado sustancialmente.'
19. Minujín's role in transnational networks that merged pop art, new realisms and performance has been touched on by several major exhibitions. See Guy Brett, 'Life Strategies: Overview and Selection, Buenos Aires / London / Rio de Janeiro / Santiago de Chile, 1960–1980', in Paul Schimmel (ed.), *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object 1949–1979*, exhibition catalogue, Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 1998, pp.197–225; and Sabine Brietweiser (ed.), *Vivências / Lebenserfahrung / Life Experience*, exhibition catalogue, Generali Foundation, Vienna 2000.
20. Anon., 'Sociología del Pop', *Primera Plana*, vol.4, no.191, 23–29 August 1966, pp.77–8.
21. 'Like some animals, Happenings continue to live when divided into sections; and it can be done in such a way that these parts group together, as in other parts of the biological world, into colonies.' Eduardo Costa and Oscar Masotta, 'Sobre Happenings, Happening, (a). Reflexiones y relatos' in Masotta (ed.), *Happenings*, 1967, p.178. 'Como ciertos animales los happenings siguen viviendo si uno los secciona en sus partes; y se puede hacer también de manera que esas partes se agrupan, como en otros niveles del mundo biológico, en colonias.'
22. Masotta published commentaries on the writings of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan the year after *Happenings* and *El 'Pop-Art'* in his 1968 book *Conciencia y estructura*. See Oscar Masotta, 'Jacques Lacan o el inconsciente en los fundamentos de la filosofía', in *Conciencia y estructura*, Buenos Aires 1968, pp.69–93.
23. Minujín recalls: 'we were reading a lot of Lévi-Strauss and also Ferdinand de Saussure, and Marshall McLuhan, whose book *Understanding Media* was very important to us.' See Daniel R. Quiles, '1000 Words: Marta Minujín talks about Minucode, 1968', *Artforum*, April 2010, p.158.
24. Marta Minujín, interview by Elsa Garcia and Hemma Schmutz, Vienna, 12 and 14 September 2000, in *Breitwieser 2000*, p.231.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. Regarding her involvement with the Experiments in Art and Technology initiative during 1967, which she approached for help with her Minuphone project, Minujín noted that:

'Billy Klüver never liked me ... That circle was very sexist, and it was really strange for a woman, and all the more so a South American one, to get involved in art and technology.' See Marta Minujín, "'Technical Psychedelia": An Interview with Marta Minujín', in Ana Longoni and Fernanda Carvajal, *Marta Minujín: Minuphone 1967–2010*, exhibition catalogue, Fundación Telefónica and Fundación Espigas, Buenos Aires 2010, p.126. The Minuphone was a psychedelic, interactive telephone booth displayed at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York.

28. Noé's writings on pop art are significant in this context. In his first book *Antiestética* (1965), Noé argued that: 'in Pop Art there exists an acceptance of reality, a sceptical acceptance which is ever more critical, but ultimately acceptance.' Luis Felipe Noé, *Antiestética*, Buenos Aires 1988, p.160. Noé was highly critical of Masotta's use of the anglophone term 'happening' for the title of his 1967 book, arguing: 'wouldn't it have had greater international significance, not just local, if instead of referring to the U.S. "Happening" and some imitations done in Argentina, you had put them aside and only referred to the happenings as a precursor of so-called "media art", and shouldn't that have been the main subject of the book and basis of your title, because it raises authentically novel and contemporary issues?' Luis Felipe Noé, letter to Oscar Masotta, 1967, trans. by Eileen Brockbank, in Katzenstein 2004, p.219. 'En el Pop Art existe una aceptación de una realidad, una aceptación escéptica, aún mas critica, pero aceptación al fin.'
29. Curator Marcelo Pacheco has traced the interest among the first wave of avant-garde Argentine artists during the early to mid-1960s in 'transitional, porous spaces, which situated themselves between the pictorial and the sculptural – as an ostensible multiplication of objects and three-dimensional constructions'. Marcelo Pacheco, 'Posh Art and Post-Historic Art: Argentina (1957–1965)', in Ramírez and Olea 2004, p.130.
30. Minujín first travelled to Paris between 1961 and 1962 when she was invited to be part of the Argentine delegation to the second Paris Biennial. On her arrival Minujín secured a fellowship from the French government that allowed her to remain for the 1961–2 academic year. Javier Villa, 'Marta Minujín: una biografía', in Victoria Noorthoorn (ed.), *Marta Minujín: Obras 1959–1989*, exhibition catalogue, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 2010, pp.133–4.
31. Marta Minujín, interview with Victorian Noorthoorn, July 2010, in *ibid.*, p.134.
32. Simone Frigerio, 'Actualité de l'art Argentine', *Les Beaux Arts*, no.966, 23 February 1962, page number not known, Archivo Especial Marta Minujín, Fundación Espigas, Buenos Aires. 'Marta Minujín est difficilement classable, a mi-chemin entre la sculpture et la peinture'.
33. *Ibid.* 'Elle fait des reliefs en carton passés à la peinture des carrosseries automobiles, elle traduit avec violence les émotions que lui inspire la vie comme on la juge à vingt ans.'
34. Noé, Alberto Greco and Jorge de la Vega all spent time in Paris in the early 1960s. See Giunta 2007, pp.143–58. See also Isobel Plante, *Argentinos de París: Arte y viajes culturales durante los años sesenta*, Buenos Aires 2013.
35. Although founded in 1956, the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), which Squirru accepted the directorship of that year, was an itinerant museum until its building opened in 1960. In 1986 is moved to its present location in the San Telmo district of Buenos Aires, and is known as the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (MAMBA).

36. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers, London 2000, p.36. For an analysis of cleaning products and their symbolism in French post-war culture see Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1995.
37. Rafael Squirru, 'Marta Minujín', in *Marta Minujín*, exhibition catalogue, Galería Lirio, Buenos Aires 1962, unpaginated. 'Y alguien preguntará: ¿Estas obras están en venta?'
38. For studies in English of *nouveau réalisme*, see Jill Carrick, *Nouveau Réalisme, 1960s France, and the Neo-Avant-Garde: Topographies of Chance and Return*, Farnham 2010; and Kaira M. Cabañas, *The Myth of Nouveau Réalisme: Art and the Performative in Postwar France*, New Haven 2013.
39. Minujín's trajectory correlates with that of US artists such as Allan Kaprow as they moved into performance. Judith F. Rodenbeck notes that Kaprow's 'freestanding proto-environmental projects of the late 1950s are part of a broader set that includes the désaffichages of artists associated with *Nouveau Réalisme*'. Judith F. Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2011, p.51.
40. The display included 'works with cardboard boxes, commercial signs and mattresses'. Several also featured military paraphernalia: Minujín caused a minor scandal by arranging a military march for the exhibition inauguration. See Villa 2010, p.135.
41. Cultural historian Laura Podalsky has traced how after the fall of Juan Domingo Perón's socialist government in 1955, in Buenos Aires 'modern skyscrapers and innovative buildings brokered Argentina's break from the Peronist past and re-entry into the world market'. Laura Podalsky, *Specular City: Transforming Culture, Consumption, and Space in Buenos Aires, 1955–1973*, Philadelphia 2004, p.17.
42. Sônia Salzstein, 'Pop as a Crisis in the Public Sphere', in Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures*, London 2007, p.96.
43. Masotta described the work of North American pop artists like Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein as 'hygienic and cleanly anti-metaphorical'. See Masotta, *El 'Pop-Art'*, 1967, p.98. '... higiénica y limpiamente antimetafóricos'.
44. In his writings on pop art historian Thomas Crow offers a compellingly diverse view of pop. See Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Age of Dissent 1955–1969*, London 1996; and Thomas Crow, *The Long March of Pop: Art, Music and Design, 1930–1995*, New Haven 2014.
45. On this occasion Minujín went to Paris having applied for a second fellowship to study painting in France from December 1962 to the summer of 1963; she prolonged her stay and then travelled in Europe before returning to Buenos Aires.
46. Lebel completed this circle of exchange by visiting Argentina in 1967. See King 2007, p.239–40.
47. Filliou also penned a short reflection for the pamphlet accompanying the exhibition Minujín held of her works together with those by Castro and Otero at her studio before *La destrucción*. See José Augusto França and Robert Filliou, 'Marta Minujín, Lourdes Castro and Alejandro Otero', exhibition pamphlet, 22 Rue Delambre, Paris 1963, unpaginated.
48. Jean-Jacques Lebel, exhibition poster, Galerie Raymond Cordier, 1963. Jean-Jacques Lebel, artist's file, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris. 'Quelques indications supplémentaires sur LA MORT et son incidence sur l'activité artistique dite d'avant-garde.'

49. Marta Minujín, conversation with the author, the artist's studio, Buenos Aires, August 2014.
50. King 2007, p.239. 'El trabajo de Lebel era irracional, instintivo y orgiástico, en contraste con las estructuras racionales de Marta Minujín o Roberto Jacoby, que trabajaban dentro de los medios de comunicación.'
51. Alyce Mahon, 'Unbirth and Rebirth: The Festival of Free Expression, 1964–1967', in Axel Heil, Robert Fleck and Alyce Mahon, *Jean-Jacques Lebel: Barricades*, Cologne 2015, p.68. For a reproduction of the second image from *Le coq* discussed in this paragraph, see p.82 of this publication.
52. See Noorthorn 2010, p.55.
53. The sculptor Liliane Lijn, who participated in Lebel's 1962 happening *Pour conjurer l'esprit de catastrophe*, which involved stripping naked, later recalled: 'I didn't like to use my body that way. I felt that either I was being exploited because I was a woman, or I was exploiting myself as a woman to achieve certain things.' Liliane Lijn, interviewed by Penelope Curtis, London, 1998–2000, National Life Stories Collection: Artists' Lives, Henry Moore Institute, C466/092, tape 6 F7820.
54. José Pierre, 'Pop! Pop! Pop! (D'une esthétique des lieux communs)', *Combat-Art*, no.102, 1 July 1963, p.2. '... cette perspective d'anéantissement'.
55. Ibid. '... la charte de ce qui fut à Paris baptisé du nom de Nouveau Réalisme el présentait avec le pop-art de nombreux points communs. Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, en effet, les matériaux de base sont empruntés à l'univers quotidien. Directement, lors que les objets manufactures – neufs, usés ou à l'état de débris, de déchets – servent à composer l'œuvre originale'.
56. For early books which responded to this overlap – often, significantly, penned from a European rather than US perspective – see Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell, *Happenings: Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme*, Hamburg 1965; and Hans Joachim Dietrich, *Happenings (& Actions): U.S. Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, etc*, Dusseldorf 1965. This latter publication consists of three sections on happenings, pop art and nouveau réalisme, and includes works by Wolf Vostell, Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Roy Lichtenstein, Jean Tinguely, Yves Klein, Arman, Dieter Roth and Ed Kienholz. Although curator Lucy Lippard's 1966 book on pop does contain a chapter featuring continental European and particularly nouveau réaliste artists, it opens with the statement that: 'the further in spirit the cultural heritage of a country is from that of America, the more tenuous is the bond between Pop Art and related manifestations in that country'. Lucy R. Lippard, *Pop Art*, London 1966, p.173.
57. Barnitz 1966, p.37.
58. The three awarded the National Prize to Minujín.
59. Pierre Restany, 'Buenos Ayres et le nouvel humanisme', *Domus*, vol.425, April 1965, p.35. 'A travers ce folklore les Nouveaux Réalistes à Paris, les néo-dadas et les pop-artistes à New York sont en train d'expérimenter les moyens et de reconnaître les approches de ce qui sera demain le grand art classique du Troisième Millénaire.'
60. Ibid. '... les possibilités expressives d'une nature moderne, industrielle et publicitaire, d'un folklore sociologique urbain.'
61. Ibid., p.36. 'Marta Minujín, qui a 23 ans, est en quelque sorte le symbole d'une génération montante, consciente de son destin et de l'enjeu des ses recherches.'

62. Luis Camnitzer, 'Political Pop', in Rachel Weiss (ed.), *Luis Camnitzer: On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias* (1998), Austin 2009, p.32.
63. *Ibid.*, p.33.
64. Cultural theorist Patrick Greaney has taken a compelling approach to the role of imitation in Argentine conceptual art, in relation to its North American and European counterparts, by exploring how works by artists such as Costa played with the possibility that 'imitation plays an important role even in works of great originality'. The same inversion might be applied to exchanges concerning pop art. See Patrick Greaney, 'Essentially the Same: Eduardo Costa's Minimal Differences and Latin American Conceptualism', *Art History*, vol.37, no.4, September 2014, p.649.
65. Costa and Masotta 1967, p.177.
66. While her contact with Fluxus artists such as Emmett Williams, and later with Kaprow, was significant in this respect, Minujín's use of performance tactics can also be linked to her close friendship with her fellow Argentine artist Alberto Greco. Daniel R. Quiles has argued that Minujín and Greco 'participated in an international exchange of ideas that influenced their turns to multimedia performance within a year of one another'. See Daniel R. Quiles, 'Burn Out My Potentiality: Destruction and Collectivity in Greco and Minujín', in Victoria Noorthoorn (ed.), *Beginning with a Bang! From Confrontation to Intimacy: An Exhibition of Argentine Contemporary Artists, 1960–2007*, exhibition catalogue, Americas Society, New York 2007, p.70.
67. 'Cabalgata' relates specifically to Twelfth Night traditions in Spain and Latin America, when children go to bed expecting presents from the Three Kings, and torch-lit processions are held.
68. Allan Kaprow, lecture on 'Pop Art', presented at the Jewish Museum, New York, 3 March 1963, Caroline Lerner Goldsmith Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., p.9.
69. Lawrence Alloway, interviewed by John King, New York, September 1980, in King 2007, p.379. 'La Argentina es el único país latinoamericano que podría tener un arte pop y fue el que lo tuvo'.
70. After the CAV closed in 1969, Romero Brest and Giménez started a short-lived advertising agency called Fuera de Caja (Outside the Box), which involved Minujín, Puzzovio, Salgado and Squirru.
71. By contrast, art historian Philip Ursprung points to the belated acknowledgement of the role played by happenings and Fluxus in US art history, arguing that the 'steady silence' of art histories and museum institutions on the subject until relatively recently can be linked to 'the advent of Pop Art as the mainstream art form of the 1960s'. See Philip Ursprung, *Allan Kaprow, Robert Smithson, and the Limits to Art*, trans. by Fiona Elliott, Berkeley 2013, p.66.
72. Jorge Romero Brest, 'Report and Reflection on Pop Art', trans. by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, in Katzenstein 2004, p.124.
73. King 2007, p.241.
74. 'Pop: ¿Una nueva manera de vivir?', *Primera Plana*, 23–29 August 1966, p.72. 'La repuesta fue una agresiva manifestación presidida por Minujín, quien en el mismo día de la inauguración del cartel arrojó colchones y muebles por las ventanas de la galería Guernica, y pobló la calle Florida con motociclistas, Mister Chile y otros forzudos con mínimos slips, y

un conjunto de rock, que esforzadamente trataba de cubrir los sonos de las “nuevaoleros” convocados en la esquina de Viamonte por Puzzovio, Squirru y Giménez.’

75. The artists on the cover were: Carlos Squirru, Miguel Ángel Rondano, Dalila Puzzovio, Edgardo Giménez, Pablo Mesejean, Delia Cancela, Juan Stoppani, Susana Salgado and Alfredo Rodríguez Arias. Front cover of *Primera Plana*, 23–29 August 1966.
76. ‘Pop: ¿Una nueva manera de vivir?’, p.74. “‘Lo que yo hago – enuncia con voz firme – es lo mas anti-pop que pueda haber, yo siempre hago anti-pop; me dirijo a la gente en un dialogo directo.’”
77. For this shift see Karen Benezra, ‘Media Art in Argentina: Ideology and Critique “Después del pop”’, *ARTMargins*, vol.1, nos.2–3, June–October 2012, pp.152–75; and Daniel R. Quiles, ‘Dead Boars, Viruses, and Zombies: Roberto Jacoby’s Art History’, *Art Journal*, vol.73, no.3, Fall 2014, pp.38–55.
78. Towards the end of El ‘Pop-Art’ Masotta draws directly on Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *Structural Anthropology* of 1958, making a comparison between his analysis of ‘split representation’ across the decorative arts in a variety of cultures and the semiological function of pop art images. See Masotta, *El ‘Pop-Art’*, 1967, pp.102–9.
79. *Ibid.*, p.52. ‘Nuestra tesis consiste en afirmar que el pop-art es un movimiento que intenta “rebajar” la estructura de la imagen al “status” de signo semiológico; y esto con el fin de hacer problemática la relación de la imagen con el objeto real al que toda imagen se refiere.’
80. Barthes 2000, p.115. Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman have observed that Mythologies ‘constitutes a fundamental intertext’ for the anti-happenings that Masotta, Costa and Jacoby would develop. See Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, ‘After Pop, We Dematerialize: Oscar Masotta, Happenings, and Media Art at the Beginnings of Conceptualism’, trans. Lisa Philips, in Katzenstein 2004, p.165.
81. This approach can also be linked to Masotta’s initial encounter with works from North America through reproduction in magazines.
82. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1994, p.49.
83. Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter and Ruscha*, Princeton 2012, p.14–15. See Kalliopi Minioudaki and Sid Sachs, *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958–1968*, exhibition catalogue, Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery of the University of the Arts, Philadelphia 2010; see also Cécile Whiting, *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender and Consumer Culture*, Cambridge 1997.
84. Minujín’s significance in this respect was underlined by her inclusion in a major 2007 exhibition on feminist art production. See Lisa Gabrielle Mark (ed.), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles 2007. See also Rottner for a compelling account of Minujín’s proto-feminist explorations of gender and sexuality.
85. These two main phases of the Argentine avant-garde see the first wave of the early to mid-1960s replaced by a more deeply politicised, activist approach that culminated in the *Tucumán arde* (*Tucumán is Burning*) initiative in Rosario, Cordoba. See Giunta 2007, pp.243–79; and Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella A ‘Tucumán Arde’: Vanguardia artística y política en el 68 Argentino*, Buenos Aires 2013.

86. Marta Minujín, interview with John King, Buenos Aires, September 1978, in King 2007, p.362. 'Popular, arte popular, arte que todo el mundo pueda entender, arte feliz, arte divertido, arte cómico.' '... hago cosas por televisión... pero hay cosas a nivel popular, no a nivel estético de museos o de galerías, eso me aburre. Siempre fue popular lo que hago. Porque los "happenings" se hicieron muy popular acá.'
87. Ibid.
88. As well as featuring in Tate's major 2015 exhibition *The World Goes Pop*, Minujín's work appeared in *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, also in 2015.

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