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Through The Kaleidoscope

Andrea Simpson

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MASTER'S OF ARTS IN STUDIO ART

California State University, San Bernardino

Andrea Simpson

May 20st, 2023

Graduate Coordinator:

[Alison Ragguette](#)

A.Ragguette**

Andrea Simpson

Artist Statement

Inspired by the psychedelic experience and electronic dance music. My work takes you through a visual kaleidoscope of interpreting those beats, breaks, and high hats through repetitive shapes. Those moments are expressed through movement and vivid color that mimics the interconnectedness one feels embarking on a psychedelic journey. My art practice captures these expressive movements of dancing and the feeling of ecstasy. My body of work is a homage to those beautiful experiences showing others a glimpse of what sweet bliss feels and utter chaos looks like. It is about the body's experience rather than the ego.

[Andrea Simpson](#)

Artist Bio

Andrea Simpson, a California-based artist, holds a BA and MA from the California State University of San Bernardino. Drawing inspiration from electronic dance music and the psychedelic experience, her artistic style is a fusion of vibrant colors, rhythmic patterns, and abstract forms. Working across a diverse range of mediums, including ceramics, glass, and painting, Andrea's creations are a reflection of her dynamic and experimental approach to art. Currently, she is honing her craft as a studio assistant while actively pursuing her professional career as an artist. Her works invite viewers on a visual journey that merges the realms of music, psychedelia, and contemporary art, offering a unique and immersive experience.

Andrea Simpson

Los Angeles, California
Andreasimpson.com
Instagram @Andriianoel

Education

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2023 | Masters of Arts in Studio Art
California State University, San Bernardino, CA |
| 2020 | Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art
California State University, San Bernardino, CA |
| 2017 | Associates in Art History
Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, CA |

Solo Exhibitions

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2023 | Through The Kaleidoscope.
University of San Bernardino, CA |
|------|--|

Group Exhibitions

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2023 | Ceramics Association
San Bernardino, CA |
| 2022 | Gallery VA 106. <i>Forbidden Fruit</i>
San Bernardino, CA |
| 2022 | Artist in the Ally
Pomona, CA |
| 2022 | Bitter End Gallery
Ontario, CA |
| 2022 | GLAMFA. <i>Connectivity</i>
Long Beach, CA |
| 2022 | Artist in the Ally
Pomona, CA |
| 2020 | Dutton Family Gallery <i>Visual Frequency</i>
California State University, San Bernardino, CA |
| 2019 | Robert and Frances Fullerton Museum of Art. <i>43rd Annual Student Show</i>
California State University of San Bernardino, CA |
| 2019 | Anthropology Museum <i>Lost and Found</i>
Cal State University of San Bernardino University, CA |

Work Experience

2023	Teaching Assistant For Gabriella Remeriza
2023- Present	Artist Assistant For artist Charles Long
2022-2023	Lead Ceramic Artist for the Jim and Judy Watson “Eternal Learning Mural” at the College of Education
2023	Editor for the Kind Art Collective Children's book
2021	Studio Assistant Guldagergaard International Ceramics Research Studio Assistant
2019	Artist/ Fabricator Anthropology Museum at California State University, San Bernardino, CA

Awards

2023	Judy Waston Public Art Fellowship
2020	Spring Commencement Speaker Art & Design College of Arts and Letters
2019	Certificate of Appreciation “Ceramic Artist with Outstanding Potential”
2019	Undergraduate Summer Research Program

Residences

2021	Guldagergaard International Ceramics Research. Artist in Residence
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Publications

2023	Curious Magazine Empathy and Sexuality
2022	Dotphotozine. Issue Eleven

2020 **Curious Magazine.**
Lowbrow Surrealism

2021 **Curious Magazine.**
Milestones

Other Experience

2021 **Treasure of the Ceramics Association**
California State University, San Bernardino, CA



Sex Pot
2021
Stoneware and Glaze
18x22x20



Melting My Face Off
2022
Stoneware and Underglaze
23x6



Lost in the Sauce
2022
Stoneware and Underglaze
10x11



Sliding On A Rainbow
2022
Stoneware and Underglaze
10x9



Consciousness Growing
2023
37x8



Bubble Geode No. 2
2022
Glass and Stoneware
6x6x7



Bubble Geode No. 3
2022
Glass and Stoneware
8x6x5



Light Bubble No. 1
Glass
6x4



Light Bubble No. 2
2022
Glass
4x5



Eternal Radiance
2021
Stoneware and Glaze
13x5x12



Leopard Dance
2022
Stoneware and Glaze
10x7x7



Creature Of Shine
2023
Stoneware and Glaze
4x3x4



Everything Eye Know
2023
Stoneware and Glaze
10x4x10



Halos Of Light
2023
Stoneware and Glaze
15x10x25





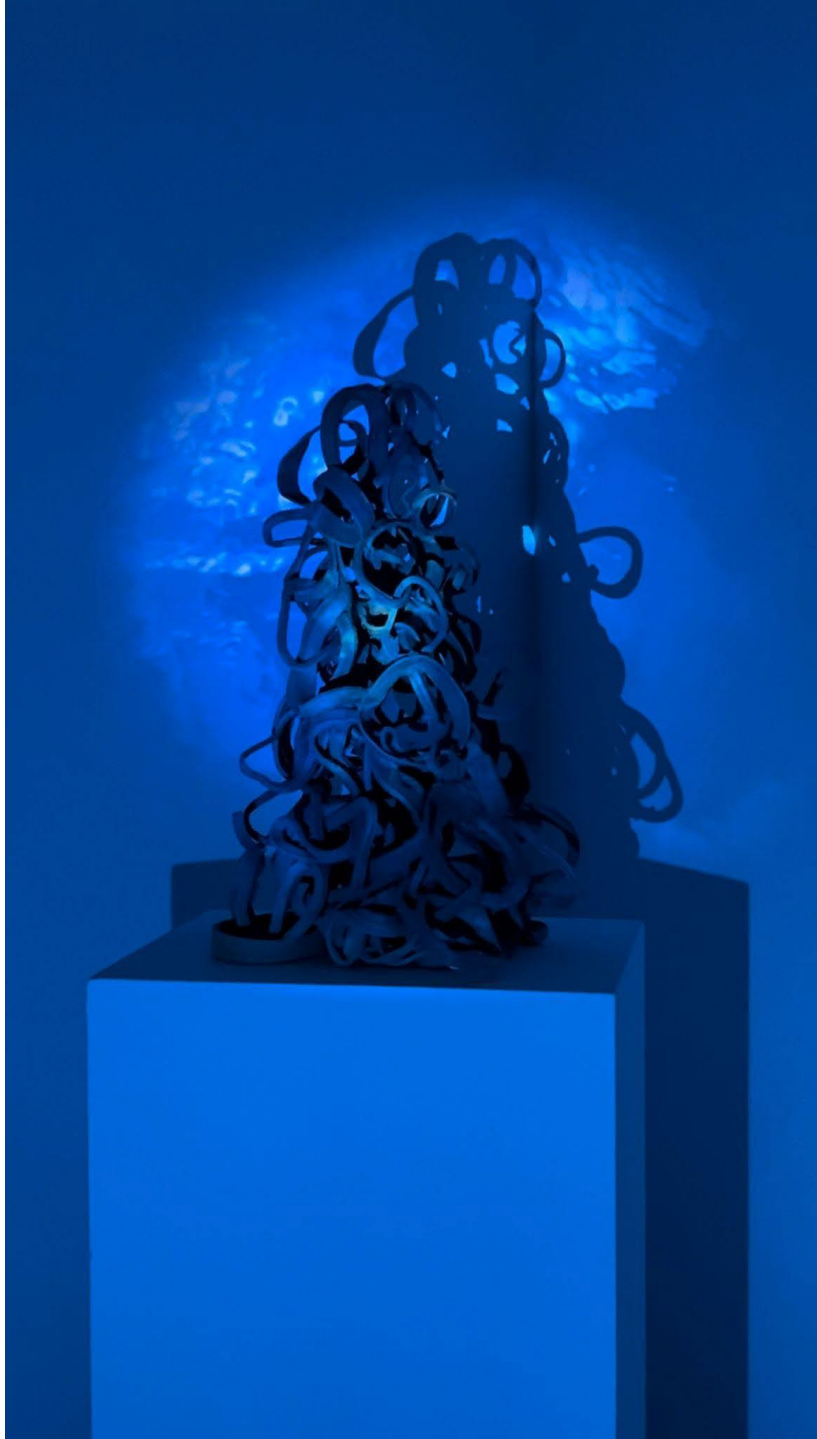
Celestial Kaleidoscope
2023
Stoneware
12x12x23





Luminous Whirlpool
2023
Bisqued Stoneware
10x8x16





Flashback
2023
Stoneware
15x13x28

Tania Bruguera, Confronting Those in Power

Andrea Simpson

Art History 6617: Critical Theory

May 16, 2023

Tania Bruguera, a Cuban installation and performance artist, is well recognized for her work rejecting the use of gallery space while highlighting her cultural identity. Deeply rooted in political activism, her politically charged and socially engaged works discuss social justice, migration, censorship, and surveillance issues in her country. By examining the connection between the social impacts of political and economic power, she plays with the notion that art plays a function in political life by assisting others in realizing their place in a collective of historical and modern social memory. She asks the audience to reconsider the ideas about terror, vulnerability and self-determination, independence, and freedom, as well as submission and obedience as social survival strategies. In this paper, I will be taking a further look at how she specifically exploits the white cube and its institutional power from an art historian's perspective by discussing her performance piece *Destierro* and its relevance to critical theory in art history. This paper will explore how Bruguera challenges traditional art spaces and how her work challenges and subverts cultural norms. The Cuban government has been one of Bruguera's main critics since she views it as an oppressive entity that stifles creativity and freedom of expression. Despite being detained and subject to censorship in Cuba for her creative endeavors, she persisted in pushing the envelope and upending the order of things with her work. I will be backing up my argument by using critical theory analysis including text written by Brian O'Doherty's text, "Notes on the Gallery Space," discussing the understanding of the neutrality of the gallery space by creating a site-specific work that discusses political engagement and activism. Also, diving into Douglas Crimp's essay, "On the Museum's Ruins," in relation to how Crimp's argument about how museums are a site of exclusion and domination. Also, I will be tying it all

back together with Karl Marx and his explanation of the Marxist theory and how these political power structures are the downfall of society's dumpster fires.

Bureguera confronts the white cube and its controversial exhibition space in her 1998 piece *Destierro*, which translates to displacement in Spanish, by dismantling the societal notion between religious faith and the people's trust in the effectiveness of its rulers. She demonstrates how political engagement and economic inequality are impacted by government regulations as well as by problems in regulated power within cultural institutions. Bureguera's performance piece begins with her strolling through the streets of Havana on Fidel Castro's birthday dressed as a spiritual deity called Nkisi Nkonde. During the revolution, Castro implemented a range of socialist policies in Cuba, some saw it as positive but others criticized him for his leadership and policies. Especially those who were marginalized under the previous capitalist government. Wearing a full-body suit, Bureguera recreates wore a life-sized costume of the spiritual deity made of soil and nails that puncture the skin. According to belief, each nail is placed with respect to granting a wish in return for a promise to be made, and for the people who do not comply with the promise they made to Nkisi, they unleash their power against them in return. For those who practice this spiritual deity that is mainly native to the Congo, "Nkisi" is referred to as a religious icon, and is believed to have power over certain aspects of life, such as healing, protection, and justice. The term "Nokonde", refers to the act of hunting, which is associated with the aggressive and powerful of these figures.¹ *Destierro, (Displacement)* is a metaphor for the social promises that were made but never promised to the Cuban people. The year 1998 was

¹"Displacement, 1998 - 1999 - Tania Bruguera - WikiArt.Org."

brought on by many events leading up to Cuba's developments in politics, religion, economics, and natural disasters that all impacted the country in various ways. Those who were followed, adored, feared, and who desired a better state of their country believed the efforts that were made to invest in the social promises the Cuban government promised to the people. By reconnecting her people with their roots she walks through the streets she searches for Castro demanding for his debt to be paid to his people. Brugeran challenges the traditional gallery space by creating a new kind of experience for the viewer, both in the performance and the gallery setting. She depicts the hardships brought on by Cuba's financial situation and how was impacting daily life she draws attention to the empty promises made by the Cuban government to its people during the revolution. Each time this piece is shown she evokes a new reaction in her audience, every time she creates a lived memory blurring the boundaries between art and life. She disrupts the neutrality of the gallery space by shifting the subject into something more visceral and challenging for the viewer to debate.

We can begin to look further into this work by referencing Brian O'Doherty's text "Notes on the Gallery Space" and its main arguments about how the tradition of the white cube and how the space is utilized. The white cube term was coined by O'Doherty to describe the standard minimalist exhibition space that we see in most contemporary art galleries today. The significance it has in the contemporary art world is profound and it is a space that is essentially a blank slate for an artist to display their work in without any outside world distractions. The white walls are seen as sterile and artificial we give their value as stepping into a place where time and space are irrelevant. In relation to the viewer's presence before a work of art he writes, O'Doherty says, "The

ideal gallery subtracts from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is “art.”

²The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself.

This gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values. Some of the sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, and the mystique of the experimental laboratory join with chic design to produce a unique chamber of esthetics.”³ Meaning that this experience of viewing art is the ideal one. This calls for getting rid of any cues, like excessive decorating or displays that are unrelated to the artwork, that can draw attention away from the actual piece of art. To enable the observer to concentrate entirely on the artwork and its qualities, the ideal gallery should be cut off from everything that would interfere with its own assessment of itself. The gallery space then begins to become more sacred than the actual art hanging on the walls; we gather in this place where art begins to take on its own life and some are lucky enough to see it. However, this space has been criticized for being too clinical. Further in his essay, he goes on to describe how the white cube removes the artwork from any aesthetic or historical context. Bruguera’s work can be seen as a response to this idea. By bringing world problems inside a space where we are disciplined to praise and critique works of art and where we aren’t influenced by others’ opinions. The white walls are merely a resting place for the eyes to break away from the subject of the work. Although O’Doherty doesn’t describe it this way, he says that by creating an immersive and participatory experience Bruguera’s work disrupts the neutrality of the gallery space

² O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space, Expanded Edition*. 12

³ O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space, Expanded Edition*.

creating a discussion for political engagement and activism. She describes her work by saying that, “to be completely linked with life and not a function or virtual reality, but as alive as possible. My art had to be a real function for myself, to heal my problems or to help other people to reflect or improve...”⁴ It contributes to the larger conversation about the role of museums in society, and how they can challenge dominant power structures. Challenging the traditional assumptions and norms associated with the white cube, this opens up new possibilities the viewer can experience and encourages them to engage with the art and the space in a new way. The relationship between the viewer and the artwork encourages engagement and participation, and how opens up new spaces for dialogue and debate. *Destierro* is a piece that is continuously evolving each time it is shown it is relevant to the contemporary issues faced in Cuba’s economic crisis and the locations it has been on display. This statement reflects the institutional power of the white cube and the higher power that society holds against her people. “The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself. This gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values”⁵. As a result, according to O’Doherty the perfect gallery space creates a distinct and reverent atmosphere that celebrates the beauty and value of art by letting the artwork speak for itself, unhindered by distractions or other influences.

While O’Doherty’s essay focuses on the gallery space and its impact on the viewer’s experience of contemporary art, Douglas Crimp discussed more on the

⁴ “Displacement, 1998 - 1999 - Tania Bruguera - WikiArt.Org.”

⁵ O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space, Expanded Edition*.14

museum as an institution and its role in shaping our understanding of art history. In his article "The Museum's Ruins" from 1993, Crimp criticized the conventional museum model and asserted that it reflected the ideologies and power structures that shaped it. He argues that the museum is not neutral and that it is influenced by political and social forces that are both inside and outside of the institution. Crimp argues that "The set of objects the museum displays is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated metonymic displacement of the fragment for totality, object to labeling, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a representation that is somehow adequate to a nonlinguistic universe. Such fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can produce a representational understanding of the world."⁶ It indicates that this viewpoint is predicated on the idea that, like museums, the universe is intrinsically structured and orderly. This presumption, however, ignores the fact that the world is complicated, disorganized, and frequently chaotic. The worldviews presented in the museum should be contested, and their construction and subjectivity should be taken into account. It emphasizes the value of critical thinking and knowledge of how information is constructed and presented, both in museums and other contexts.

Even tho Crimp doesn't talk explicitly about race, gender, age, ability, and even class all of these things impact and shape the way we engage with the institutions themselves. Crimp today could have criticized the historical or marginalization of specific groups, such as women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people, by museums

⁶ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*. 50

and would still be relevant when he wrote this essay. In order to attain more diversity and representation, museums must confront their own role of oppressors in these institutions.

As for Bruguera, she is creating a flux in the contemporary art world by doing what Crimp describes as how the museum has become a space of political and social contestation. He notes that the museum is a site of struggle, where different groups can unite and engage in debate and discussion. Bruguera is an example of this kind of struggle, she challenges the traditional art space by providing the viewer with a lived memory. As Crimp describes in his essay talking about the objects, and their functions, he goes on to say "It is the same with figures that in reproduction lose both their original significance as objects and their function (religious or other). We see them only as works of art and they bring home to us only their makers' talent."⁷

After performing *Destierro* she documented this piece and displayed the video alongside her full-body costume of Nkisi allowing viewers to be confronted with the severity of the subject matter and creating problems to be dealt with in the gallery space. Crimp might describe this piece by saying "We might almost call them not "works" but "moments" of art."⁸ This moment of Bruguera's work isn't about her talent it is politically fueled and socially engaged works that discuss social justice problems. She presents the gallery space with something that is larger than her own body of work by challenging privileged museum goers to interact with the unfamiliar in reevaluating the stereotypes they posed, and presumptions usually connected with cultural taboos. The

⁷ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*.52

⁸ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*.52

museum frequently marginalizes voices and viewpoints that are not representative of the prevailing culture and places a higher value on commercial success and spectacle than on preservation and education. After all this piece wasn't created for people to awe in of beauty over it, it was designed to express her concerns with those in power and the false promises that were made. Crimp goes on to describe how a museum is a place for storytelling "The museum, in fact, occupies a central position in the novel; it is connected to the characters' interest in archeology, geology, and history and it is thus through the Museum that questions of origin, causality, representation, and symbolization are most clearly stated."⁹ Overall, the remark suggests that the museum is a crucial part of the book because it is a focus point for delving into its main topics and concepts. It exhibits the characters' interest in the world they live in and their effort to comprehend their place in it. "Yet diverse as they are, all these objects... speak for the same endeavor; it is as though an unseen presence, the spirit of art, were urging all on the same quest..."¹⁰

O'Doherty and Crimp are American-based writers, and Bruguera being an internationally exhibited artist that is antagonizing these structures within and beyond the geographical bounds of Cuba. Bringing her cultural history Bugera shows the economic inequality in Cuba by showing people suffering and standing by their side through cultural folklore to evoke fear towards the government. By creating an argument within the museum's walls, she is challenging other artists in the gallery with third-world problems in the gallery space. The word *Destierro*, translated into English literally means displacement; the moving of something from its place or position. This is exactly

⁹ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*.49

¹⁰ Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*.53

what she is doing by taking this issue off the streets into other cities and countries around the world presenting its problems to the forefront of the art world.

Tania Bruguera's art has been strongly influenced by Marxist theory, both in terms of the concept she examines in her pieces and in regard to the social and political action she takes on. The idea of class struggle, which holds that society is divided into various classes with opposing viewpoints is one of the main concepts of Marxist philosophy.

Marxist theory has had an important influence on Tania Bruguera's art, both in terms of the ideas she explores in her works and the social and political activism she engages in.

One of the major tenets of Marxist philosophy is the concept of class struggle, which maintains that society is divided into several classes with conflicting opinions.¹¹

According to the philosophy of Marx, the ruling class utilizes its power to hang onto its position of authority while the oppressed class struggles to overthrow its oppressors and build a society that is more fair and just.¹² Tania Bruguera has frequently explored

questions of power and oppression and resistance in her work drawing on the Marxist notion of the need for radical change and the significance of class struggle. By

examining the connection between the social impacts of political and economic power,

she plays with the notion that art plays a function in political life by assisting others in

realizing their place in a collective of historical and modern social memory. She asks the

audience to reconsider the ideas about terror, vulnerability and self-determination,

independence, and freedom, as well as submission and obedience as social survival

strategies.

¹¹ Marx, Engels, and Riazanov, *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*.

¹² Marx, Engels, and Riazanov, *The Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*.

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Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, 1993,
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n.d., <https://www.wikiart.org/en/tania-bruguera/displacement-1999>.

Signature: 

Email: 000112254@csusb.edu