

The MUSEUM of MODERN ART

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y.10019

Variaciones Ornamentales by Catalina Parra

December 4- January 5, 1982. Video Gallery

Variaciones Ornamentales is a five-part Installation by Chilean artist Catalina Parra. The work consists of a continuously playing five-minute videotape, which lends its title to the exhibition, and four assemblage wall pieces: Sinus, Black and White, Chilean Spring and Jean Harris. Each piece is composed of materials taken from the artist's household or from New York City streets, or else those given to her by friends. This includes neutral substances such as gauze, plastic, and fur, as well as associative media images such as X-rays of a friend's skull and sensational photographs torn out magazines and newspapers. There is Jean Harris behind bars, and Patrice Lumumba being forced to eat the speech in which he asserted his claim to the Republic of Congo in 1961. The ways the different materials were actively assembled- wrapped, bunched, draped, and ripped, then painfully taped and stitched together in the wall pieces, and aggressively recorded and edited in the videotape- invite closer reading of Parra's subtle political statements.

Catalina Parra was inspired by the works of the Pop artists, who abstracted and called attention to the commercial objects found in everyone's homes. While Parra also takes her images from mass media and from mundane, daily activities, she transforms these banal, lifeless materials into emotional visual codes.

Born in Santiago, Chile, in 1940, Catalina Parra comes from a distinguished family of artists. Her father is poet Nicanor Parra, and her aunt was the singer and artist Violeta Parra. Catalina lived in Germany for four years during the 1960's, and at that time traveled extensively in Europe. Her work has been shown in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. She moved to New York in 1980, when she received a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation.

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