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HYPNOTIC SHOW

MARCOS LUTYENS (UK, 1964)

With a text by Raimundas Malašauskas

12 September

9 November 2024



OPENING: Thursday, September 12th, from 5pm to 8pm

Alberta Pane Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition *Hypnotic Show* (in pictures) by British artist Marcos Lutyens in its Parisian venue, accompanied by a text by curator and writer Raimundas Malašauskas.

This solo exhibition plunges us into the world of hypnosis, tracing the history and creative mechanisms of the *Hypnotic Show* performance series through archives such as sketchbooks, notes, a video and previously unseen artworks.

Conceived and first realized in 2008 by Lutyens and Raimundas Malašauskas, *Hypnotic Show* is a performance project in the form of a “temporary social structure where we engage in cognitive creative acts during a collective practice of art and hypnosis”.

Spectators are invited to take part in an artist-led hypnosis session, during which the artist transposes an exhibition and works of art directly into the minds of participants. The

Hypnotic Show is collaborative and scalable: many artists have contributed their own hypnosis session scripts, conceiving them as works of art in their own right, but completely dematerialized.

Since its creation, this project has travelled the world, visiting the São Paulo Biennale, the Kadist Foundation in Paris and San Francisco, Documenta 13 in Kassel and the Guggenheim in New York.

In resonance with the *Claude Cahun / Marcel Moore* exhibition presented in the gallery's second space, Marcos Lutyens also offers a hypnotic induction linked to Cahun's work, providing a narrative linking the two exhibitions and enriching their immersive journey.

Lutyens will also stage a series of three hypnotic performances at the Centre Pompidou on September 12, 14 and 15, as part of the Lithuanian Season in France.

Dates & Opening hours

12.09.2024 - 09.11.2024
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 7pm

For further information

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In 2008 when I was living in San Francisco, Jessica Silverman extended a carte blanche invitation to me to curate a show at her newly opened space there. I proposed “an exhibition in the mind of the audience that happens only through hypnosis.”

There is a lot to unravel about that statement from today’s perspective, but to keep the matters focused on the subject of this publication — this is what I had in mind back then: the public, not the artist, would be hypnotized, so that the site of creative force is transferred from artist to the public as a fundamental condition of the project; we would need scripts of artworks to be invoked; and we would need someone who could actually hypnotise people.

In my initial attempts to procure what would become hypnotist’s scripts, I asked several artists: “Can you suggest an artwork that can function within the protocol of hypnosis?”

The scripts would be the vehicles for the experience, and commissioning them was almost like commissioning a piece of software that generates chains of action. The letter elaborated: “The basic idea of the show is to radicalize the “hypnotic power” of an artwork into pure hypnosis (i.e. to see the brain space as an ultimate medium for art and to transmit/instruct an artwork through a medium of hypnosis). For example, imagine an empty room: ten people and a hypnotist. The hypnotist hypnotizes the ten people to experience an exhibition there, or to experience something that was proposed by artists. So the work of art exists only in the brain of an audience. How does it sound for you? Would you have anything in this show?”

Shortly, with the premise of “an empty room” I had a bunch of first scripts in my hands. Now a more serious challenge loomed on a horizon: I had to find a hypnotist. Thanks to Ronni Kim in Los Angeles to whom I described my inquiry in a long car ride, I got a telephone number of Marcos Lutyens, someone she described as a “multiverse artist”.

I sent him a following text message: “Hello, I am curating an exhibition where the audience is hypnotized and experiences the exhibition under hypnosis. Let me know if you would be interested to discuss a possible collaboration to make this exhibition happen.” Shortly after I received a response and this is where our adventure began. A few years later I was writing about him the following passage:

“Marcos is the Master of the Ceremonies of the Hypnotic Show. He is deeply immersed in neuroscience, cognitive bio-machinery, artificial and animal intelligence, eco-dreams, self-educational complexes, bacterial visualization techniques, and all kinds of indigenous knowledges of the world at large. He speaks several languages, cracks jokes that make people of different countries laugh at the same time and, among other things, practices post-Ericksonian hypnosis as a way to access what he calls an unconscious mind. Marcos is convinced of the existence of forms that trespass the division between the conscious and unconscious mind. He relentlessly searches for them. He believes that people have been repressed by various systems economy, belief, the morals and tastes of their social class and as a result have become highly automated, desensitized, violence-prone individuals driven by greed, function, and reason. To access the unconscious mind means activating other ways of sensing and being, and this is where he inserts himself: at the interstices of the possible. His transversal social connectivity is remarkable: once in Bordeaux, we induced several scenarios of the hypnotic experience suggested by artists there. That same night Marcos was on a Skype conference hypnotizing 9 Raellian bishops in Las Vegas. His aim was to encourage them to draw visual schema that they saw in their minds, which were then extruded into sculptures and installations that visitors could walk within and around. Recently, he also worked with a group of third gender people known as the Muxhe, part of the Zapotec cultures of Southern Mexico. Through a process of hypnosis, thought-forms relating to archetypes of family, home and surroundings were translated into large scale firework sculptures, and set off at the culmination of an involved procession through the streets of Oaxaca. Besides physical and mental fire-works Marcos builds architecture and immersive environments at the convergence of time, mind, body and narrative.”

We couldn't meet each other that time in LA. He arrived in San Francisco the same day that the Hypnotic Show premiered at Jessica Silverman Gallery: the sixteenth of March, 2008. We met over

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lunch in the Mission District and I remember being slightly anxious on my way over to see him knowing that I was making the acquaintance of a man with whom, in a few hours, I would ask people to give up control and immerse into a group exhibition in trance. I realized quickly that my new accomplice was more than a nice person and I felt confident that at the very least we would be able to make people laugh or talk about some unobtrusive techno-gnostic matter.

His presence remains a warranty that makes people feel comfortable; they develop an instant trust in what's going on. And yet Marcos has remained opaque to the social standards of the contemporary art-world; he is an alien with a soothing and reassuring voice. It changes when you listen to it carefully, and this is what he asks you to do: listen carefully to the tone of his voice, surf its rhythm. Even as you sense your reluctance to surrender to the vocal authority, you don't want to stop listening to it. Multiple cascades of perception follow, projections overlap, narratives diffuse.

That afternoon, we prepared a sequence of scripts with which to induce the public. We went through each of them and Marcos made a drawing that would later serve as a score for the guided daydreaming session, as he calls them. More than a decade later these scores are being exhibited in his solo exhibition in Paris. They display his passion for a complex world-making through images and scenes, a movement from one thing to another one in a caring and gentle way, rich in color and vertiginous edges.

Walking towards Jessica Silverman Gallery on that rainy evening, we didn't know what the night would be like. There had been no rehearsal or "hypno-check".

The passing cars on the wet asphalt were splashing more sound than usual, perhaps we were already affected by what we were about to do in an hour: amplify sensorial awareness.

There were many things we had no sense about that night. For instance, neither Marcos nor Yi-Ping, his partner, knew that the project would continue on, that both of them, along with their son Jasper, would be spending the entire summer of 2012 at DOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel, Germany, where Marcos would perform 340 sessions of the Hypnotic Show in his dualist Reflection house in Karlssaue Park, a place where illusion and the real sank into each other. I didn't know that some of my friends would keep sending the same apologetic note over the next couple of years whenever the Hypnotic Show was presented; it took a while for people to accept the fact that there is no opening reception and no show in the gallery. We didn't know yet that by gathering people through the expectation of hypnosis, we would end up producing a social situation of conscious and engaged conversation. We also didn't know that some other day four writers would be writing scripts based on historic exhibitions for a series of hypnotic sessions at Artissima in Turin, under Francesco Manacorda's direction, or that we would one day have to sign a document in Stockholm pledging "not to read the mind of the people," or that the use of smell created by artist Sissel Tolaas for one of the Hypnotic Shows would provoke an outrage in a lecture in London. What I didn't know was that what I'd imagined as the most dematerialized project was in fact the most embodied one, transmitted by body and through bodies. And that people would keep wondering whether or not they'd been hypnotized. This is what actually happened the first night too in San Francisco: During the conversation that followed the session (we always do a conversation after the session it is part of the format) some of the visitors said they hadn't experienced anything, while others could not really speak.

"Imagine," Marcos said after asking people to relax and close their eyes, "there is a magnet in your hands. You don't have to understand what I am saying, just follow my voice." 'Dreaming and drifting, dreaming and drifting' he keeps moving you along the path of words. Words are heavy, translucent, rounded. You sink in lucid somnolence where supposed oppositions are not excluding each other. Sharp is opaque, fast is slow, distant - close. Justice is everywhere, truth is never old, life is never short of hope. A new imagination of our world is clear and doable.

These scores are maps of movement through this world.

MARCOS LUTYENS

Born in 1964 in London, UK.
Lives and works in Los Angeles, USA.

Marcos Lutyens' artistic practice aims at the psychic and emotional well-being of her audience by skilfully leading participants through hypnotic exercises that touch the deepest levels of their psyche. His works take the form of installations, sculptures, drawings, short films, writings and performances.

In his explorations of consciousness, Lutyens has collaborated with renowned neuroscientists V. Ramachandran and Richard Cytowic, while studying with shamans from different cultures. Based on his investigations and research, he has worked with visitors' unconscious states at events in museums, galleries and biennales around the world.

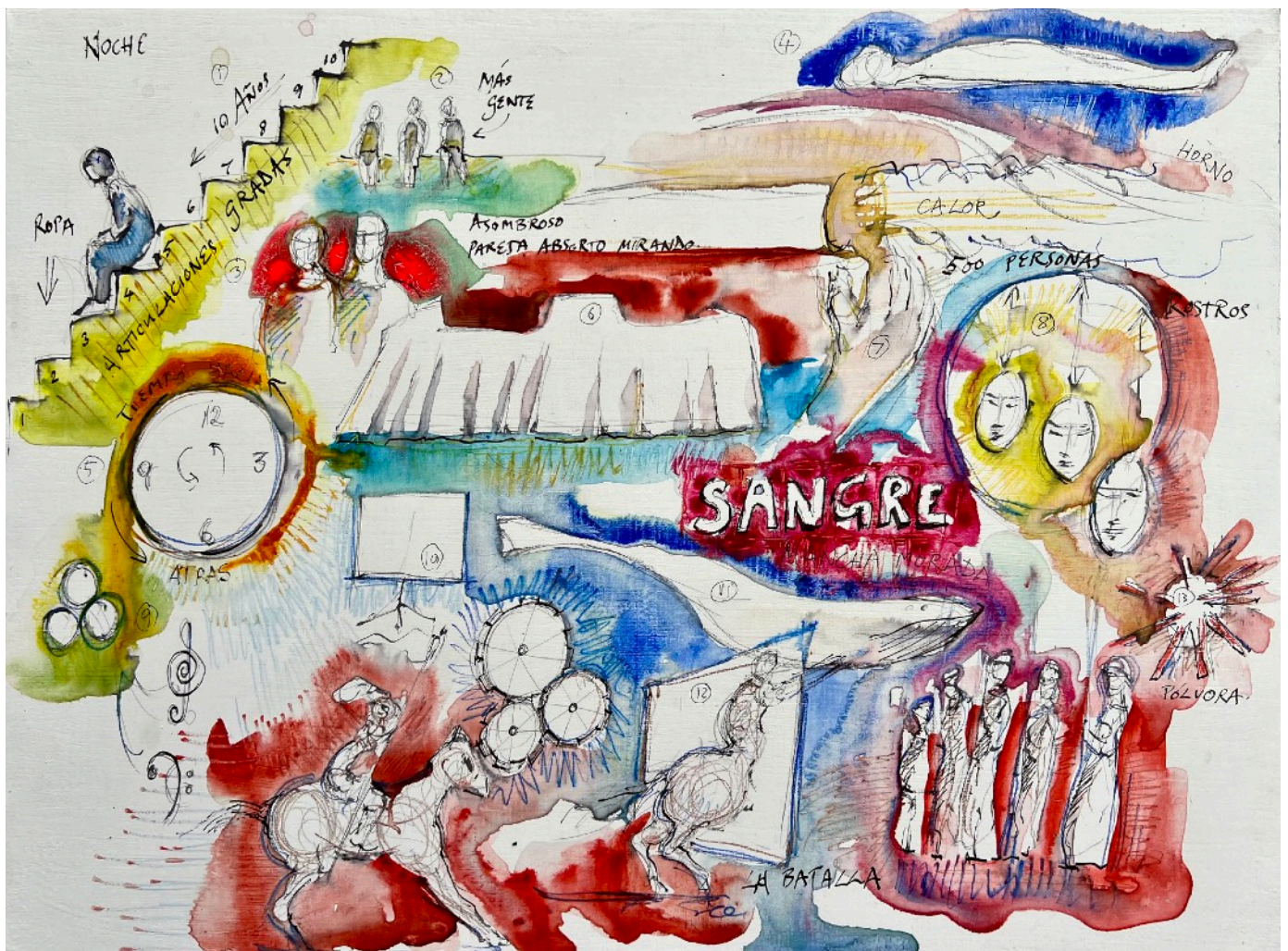
Lutyens has exhibited at numerous museums, galleries and biennales, including Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover (2024); Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York (2022); MAO Museum, Turin (2022); Laumeier Sculpture Park, Missouri (2022); GAM, Turin (2022), Orange County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2021); at the Havana Biennial (2019) and as Guggenheim Principal Guest Artist at Culture Summit Abu Dhabi 2019, at the Frye Museum, Seattle (2018), at the Miró Foundation, Barcelona (2018), at the Main Museum, Los Angeles (2018), at the National Art Museum of Latvia (2018), at the 33rd São Paulo Biennial (2018), at the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2017), at The Armory, New York (2017) ; Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2017), Palazzo Fortuny, Venice (2017), La Monnaie de Paris (2017), Palazzo Grassi, Venice, (2017), 55th and 57th Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition (2013 and 2017), Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool (2016); 14th Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul (2015) ; MoMA PS1, Queens (2014); National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2014); dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (2012); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2010); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2010 and 2014); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2010); 7th Venice Architecture Biennale (2000).

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Marcos Lutyens, *No Art, No Ownership, No Power, No Authorship*, ink, acrylic, graphite on watercolour ground on linen canvas, 40,6 x 50,8 cm.

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Marcos Lutyens, *Tiempo Hacia Atrás*, ink, acrylic, graphite on watercolour ground on linen canvas, 40,6 x 50,8 cm.