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Tania Mouraud

TEXT Ioana Chira

Tania Mouraud, *City performance 1*, 1977-1978, intervenție urbană | urban intervention, Paris, 54 planouri publicitare 154 billboards, 300 x 400 cm. © Tania Mouraud, ADAGP. Prin amabilitatea | courtesy of Tania Mouraud, Eastward Propaganda.



O artistă unică, imposibil de încadrat într-o categorie, TANIA MOURAUD (n. 1942) nu încetează să-și reinventeze practica, de la sfârșitul anilor '60 până în prezent, explorând alternativ diferite medii: pictură, instalație, fotografie, performance, video, sunet ș.a. Un lucru a rămas însă constant: lucrările ei cercetează raporturile dintre artă și legăturile sociale.

În 1968, a propus să adăugăm câte o cameră de meditație în apartamente. În acea perioadă începuse să creeze *Initiation Rooms* - „spații unde oamenii pot merge pentru a scăpa de ritmul alert al vieții și pentru a căuta alinare în ei înșiși”, după cum explică într-o notă din 1970. În anii care au urmat, a imaginat diferite tipuri de spații — unele dintre ele aminteau de idealismul romantic (suspendate pe o pantă muntoasă sau construite în stâncă, erau menite să permită o contopire cu natura), în timp ce altele facilitau introspecția și transcendența.

Cu influența lucrare *City Performance* no. 1 (1977), a adus cuvântul „NI” (nici) pe 54 de panouri publicitare din estul Parisului, jucându-se cu strategiile tradiționale din publicitate. Scopul era de a-și exprima opoziția

Tania Mouraud (b. 1942) is a unique artist in a class of her own. Her practice has continuously evolved since the late 1960s, alternatively exploring different mediums including — but not limited to — painting, installation, photography, performance, video, and sound. Yet one thing has remained constant: her works investigate the relationship between art and social connections.

Back in 1968, she proposed adding a meditation room to our standard apartments. During that time she had started creating *Initiation Rooms* — “places where people can go to escape the hectic rhythm of life outside and seek solace in themselves,” as she explains in a handwritten note from 1970. In the following years, she imagined different types of spaces, some adhering to romantic idealism (suspended on a



Tania Mouraud's father did in the 1920s, was coming back to Romania through the medium of the French language?

For CTJLFDM, as for the wall paintings she has produced beginning with 1989, the artist prefers to use poetic or literary phrases with multiple undertones and to render them rather difficult to read. Pushing the boundaries of legibility, she calls out to passers-by to take time to decipher the work, just as they would with any abstract painting.

Tania Mouraud's body of work on the plasticity of language also comprises the consequential *Words* series (1989). Deployed directly on the wall, the letters are white and made by the wall itself, forcing the viewer to reverse their habits of decoding words. This series inaugurated a long line of works that investigate the limits of perception — a theme that the artist continues to explore today through *Mots-Mêlés* (2017-2018), which uses what can be rightly called today's sole universal language, that of computer programming.

Photography has been a recurring medium in her work. From the modest format of *Vitrines* (1981), to the

monumental quality of *Balafres and Désastres* (2014), from silver prints to digital photography, Tania Mouraud has addressed how photos picture the world.

Influenced in particular by German Romanticism, she aims to create pictures at the fringe of photography and painting. Her favourite subjects are the world of work and its human traces in nature, as well as our gaze toward history, especially the recollection of World War II.

The artist's recent works in photography and video (*Once Upon a Time*, 2011–2012, and *Ad Nauseam*, 2013–2014, among others) reveal an awareness of the environment, emphasizing the conflict between humans and nature in contemporary society. Through direct reference to history, she shows the insanity of the mass destruction process.

"I have often been considered a politically engaged artist," says Tania Mouraud. "But I don't see myself in this way, because I do not belong to any political party and because I have always claimed my freedom. I feel closer to the notion of citizenship, which is for me an attitude towards life. Being a citizen means keeping your eyes open and looking at the world." 🗨️