

## "la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art

Selected by Maria Fusco

8 May 2019 – 1 September 2019

Gallery 7, Free Entry

#laCaixaCollection

30 April 2019 – What happens when artworks are given a voice? Experimental art writer **Maria Fusco** (b. 1972) explores an imaginative world between language, silence and space in this display of nine masterworks from Spain's leading collection of contemporary art.

Invited by Whitechapel Gallery to select works from "la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art and write an accompanying work of fiction, Fusco presents film, photography and sculpture by influential British painter **Alan Charlton** (b. 1948, UK), pioneering Spanish performance artist **Esther Ferrer** (b. 1937, Spain) and internationally-renowned artist **Cindy Sherman** (b. 1954, US). Her new short story *NINE QWERTY BELLS. Fiction for Live Voice* (2019) imagines the artworks speaking at a conference in distinctive voices. It is published in the exhibition catalogue and available to read in the gallery or to purchase.

Fusco was intrigued by themes of sound, muteness and the body she found in the collection and these are central to both the display and new text. Esther Ferrer's silent film *Astonishment, Disdain, Pain and So On* (2013) portrays a range of intense emotions through gesture and expression. Nearby can be heard the 'clack clack' of typewriter keys. **Ignacio Uriarte's** (b. 1972, Germany or Spain?) film *The History of the Typewriter Recited by Michael Winslow* (2009) presents Michael Winslow, an American actor with extraordinary vocal skills, recreating the sounds of 32 different typewriters using only his voice and two microphones to conjure an aural history of analogue writing.

Cindy Sherman's *Untitled #102* (1981) is a dramatically staged photographic self-portrait of a young woman poised on her haunches, here gazing inquisitively at the encounter between Ferrer and Uriarte's protagonists. A concrete arch by **Cristina Iglesias** (b. 1956, Spain) provides an architectural portal into the display's exploration of language, silence and space, whilst **Alan Charlton's** mute grey monochromes entitled *Painting in Ten Parts* (1990) are intended to articulate the white wall through seriality and repetition.

The display marks the second in a four-part series in which internationally acclaimed authors explore Spain's leading collection of contemporary art taking place over the course of a year. Founded in Barcelona in 1985, as the country emerged from a period of dictatorship, "la Caixa" was the first institutional Spanish collection to focus on postwar contemporary art, with an aim to foster dialogue between Spanish and international art. It now includes more than 1,000 works by international artists across the mediums of painting, sculpture, photography, installation and film.

### Press Release

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## Notes to Editors

- Whitechapel Gallery will present four exhibitions drawn from the "la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art from 2019 – 2020, curated by Lydia Yee, Chief Curator, Whitechapel Gallery and Nimfa Bisbe, Head of the Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa", with Candy Stobbs, Assistant Curator and Inês Costa, Exhibitions Assistant, Whitechapel Gallery.
- The second in a series of bilingual publications accompanying each display, an illustrated book will include a specially commissioned new piece of writing by Maria Fusco. An additional text by Spanish art critic and curator Neus Miró introduces readers to the history of video art in "la Caixa Collection".

### About Maria Fusco

Maria Fusco is an award winning interdisciplinary Belfast-born writer based in Glasgow. Her work is translated into ten languages and her latest books are *Legend of the Necessary Dreamer* (London: Vanguard Editions, 2017) described by Chris Kraus as 'a new classic of female philosophical fiction' and *Give Up Art: Collected Critical Writings* (LA/Vancouver: New Documents, 2017). Her touring performance work *ECZEMA!* celebrates the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service and was commissioned by National Theatre Wales in 2018; it is published as an EP by Accidental Records. *Master Rock* is a repertoire for a mountain, commissioned by Artangel and BBC Radio 4 in 2015, the experimental radio play has been experienced by more than 2.5 million listeners. She was the inaugural writer-in-residence at Whitechapel Gallery (2009–2010) and is founder of *The Happy Hypocrite*, a journal for and about experimental writing. She is a Professor at Northumbria University, previously a Reader at University of Edinburgh and Director of Art Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London.

### About "la Caixa" -

"la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art was founded in 1985 and now includes more than one thousand works. The origins of the Collection lie in "la Caixa"'s commitment to enabling people to enjoy art and culture. "la Caixa" was founded in 1904 and became "la Caixa" Foundation in 2014 following the reorganisation of the savings bank *Caja de Ahorros y Pensiones de Barcelona*.

The new Foundation inherited the social mission that "la Caixa" has pursued since its inception to improve the wellbeing of people, particularly those most in need, and work towards the advancement of society as a whole. "la Caixa" began organising exhibitions in the early-1980s, presenting contemporary work and establishing a direct connection with twentieth-century art, before going on to form its own collection. The core of the new Collection was devoted to art from the 1980s, though works by outstanding artists from the 60s and 70s were also included. The questions underpinning the Collection consider: What is the role of art in society? How can we break down the barriers that separate people from art?

From the first, the Collection focused on international contemporary art. Bruce Nauman, Cristina Iglesias, Doris Salcedo, Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Donald Judd, Mona Hatoum, Dora García, Juan Muñoz, Antoni Tàpies, Cornelia Parker, Juan Uslé, Sigmar Polke, Cindy Sherman and Paul McCarthy are just some of the highly renowned artists represented.



## Visitor Information

Admission: Free

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm

Whitechapel Gallery, 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

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## Press Information

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