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# Marta Minujín, 'Menesunda Reloaded' At The New Museum, New York



Clayton Press Contributor   
Arts

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The New Museum, September 21, 2019

Visitor: "Where should I go? What should I see?"

Attendant: "The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (*Marta Minujín: Menesunda Reloaded*) is the most Instagramable."

In October 1959, Allan Kaprow—an artist and, at the time, a professor at Rutgers University—presented a performance piece in Manhattan at Reuben Gallery, entitled *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*. His unique combination of visual, auditory and physical action and activities evolved into a performance art form that would become known as Happenings. Happenings included all manner of traditional and nontraditional materials—paint, cloth, sounds, projections, movies and, even, food—but “the most important and ephemeral ingredient was the originality of their creators,” as described by Mildred Glimcher. (*Happenings*, 2012, p. 12.) Material components hung in overlapping arrangements, engulfing the gallery, crowding in on the viewers, “forcing them to become part of the work: colored shapes moving within larger shapes.” (*Ibid*, p. 16.)



Installation view: "La Menesunda según Marta Minujín" [La Menesunda according to Marta Minujín], Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 2015. COURTESY MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BUENOS AIRES. PHOTO: JOSEFINA TOMMASI.

About the same time in 1961, Marta Minujín (b. 1943, Buenos Aires) received a scholarship to study in Paris with the artists associated with *Nouveau réalisme*—Cesar, Arman, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, Niki de Saint Phalle. Although they were most often compared to American Pop artists, they engaged in performance art and set out to prove the death of art's preciousness by considering *reality* (emphasis added) to be the primary medium. At the end of her scholarship in France, in an act of ultimate artistic realism, Minujín, who had already developed a reputation as a lively, if not unruly, artist, decided to destroy all the works she had made in the previous three years. She made a catalog in which she explicitly announced her intentions, listed the works and, with the help of the artists Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Larry Rivers, she destroyed her work in an empty lot.





Installation view: “*La Menesunda según Marta Minujín*” [La Menesunda according to Marta Minujín], Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 2015. COURTESY MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BUENOS AIRES. PHOTO: JOSEFINA TOMMASI.

## *La Menesunda,*

Today In: [Lifestyle](#)



## *La Menesunda*

*La Menesunda* means “confusion, mixture, mayhem” in Buenos Aires’ urban slang. It was Minujín and Santantonín’s intension that *La Menesunda* would take people out of their usual routines and comfort zones, while still being art that everyone could understand since the installation was made with familiar, everyday elements and objects. In the work’s original manifestation, visitors took a multi-level journey through 11 distinct spaces, including a tunnel of blinking neon signs; a bedroom complete with a bedded couple; a hallway with a spongy floor, and a Pepto-Bismal™ pink salon with a makeup artist offering her services. Each room had a specific function, the intention of which was to generate a different visitor sensation. Moreover, the rooms were awkwardly arranged so that visitors climb stairs, push through doors and crouch. Then as now, only experimentation, accompanied by confusion, indicated the way out.



Installation view: "La Menesunda según Marta Minujín" [La Menesunda according to Marta Minujín], Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 2015. COURTESY MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BUENOS AIRES. PHOTO: JOSEFINA TOMMASI.

### *La Menesunda La Menesunda*

The exhibition concludes with the display of an 8:09 minute black and white film in an adjoining space. It is a copy of the original 1965 performance in Buenos Aires. For several reasons, it is worth a watch, not the least of which is to compare and contrast the startled and surprised reactions of museumgoers in 1965 to today's experience-oriented visitor. Without question, *Menesunda Reloaded* is the most Instagramable exhibition currently on display at the New Museum.

Marta Minujín, "Menesunda Reloaded," New Museum, 235 Bowery, New York, NY through September 29, 2019.

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