

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

## 'Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985'



Leticia Parente's "Marca registrada (Trademark)," from 1975. The artist painstakingly sewing the words "Made in Brazil" into her foot. Galeria Jaqueline Martins

It's hard to overstate what a world-expanding exhibition "Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985" is. Now at the Brooklyn Museum, the show was organized by the independent curators Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta for the Hammer Museum as part of the Los Angeles-wide initiative "Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA." It spotlights 123 artists from 15 countries, the vast majority of whom are little known.

The central theme of "Radical Women" is the use of the body. Black-and-white photos and videos prevail, including documentation of actions: Lea Lublin mothering her child in a museum in France, Narcisca Hirsch inviting people to feast off a female skeleton, Victoria Santa Cruz reclaiming a racist taunt through a poem. These works create a feeling of immediacy but also one of experimentation, as if the artists were constantly probing the limits of what was possible amid landscapes of political repression.

Those landscapes form the backdrop for the show, but they don't occupy the foreground as much as one might expect. Many of the strongest works incorporate violence latently, as a suggestion or ever-present specter. It's there in Mara Álvares's photographs of nude body parts in nature and in Graciela Carnevale's locking guests into a gallery at an art opening. Anna Bella Geiger's re-creations of postcards of Brazil's Bororo Indians are funny, but they also highlight the exploitation of indigenous peoples. A performance by Sylvia Palacios Whitman, shot by Babette Mangolte, shows a group of performers suspended in a bundle like meat carcasses.

The violence, when it does move toward center stage, is visceral and stunning. The corpse in the side-view mirror in a Diana Dowek painting sneaked up on and then winded me. Leticia Parente painstakingly sewing the words "Made in Brazil" into her foot made me cringe. I was awed before Sonia Gutiérrez's Pop Art-style paintings of bound bodies. Yet for all the darkness, there's a welcome and important dose of levity too, from a hilarious video of a beauty products fair by Maria Luisa Bemberg to Regina Vater's playful, costumed self-portrait photographs.

So much is contained in and riding on "Radical Women," it can be tempting to value it foremost as a sociopolitical statement, especially when the rights of women are under aggressive attack. Fortunately, the works on view resist generalization. They remind us that art is not just images, but also the blood and sweat of the people who make them. *JILLIAN STEINHAUER*

Through July 22; 718-638-5000, brooklynmuseum.org.