Serpentine Gallery

Teachers' Notes

Allora & Calzadilla
Clamor

17 – 29 April 2007

Live Performance Event
Tue 17 April
6.30 – 9 pm

Allora & Calzadilla, *Clamor* 2006
Mixed media, dimensions variable
Installation views at The Moore Space, Miami
© 2007 Allora & Calzadilla
Photograph © 2007 Dawn Blackman

Supported by City of Westminster

These notes are designed to support in the planning, execution and follow up of a visit to the Serpentine Gallery. They are aimed at Key Stage 3 but include activities that can relate to all key stages. They are not intended as a fixed structure, but rather as a collection of ideas. Feel free to adapt them to suit your needs and inspire discussion and practical work.

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Background Information

Allora and Calzadilla

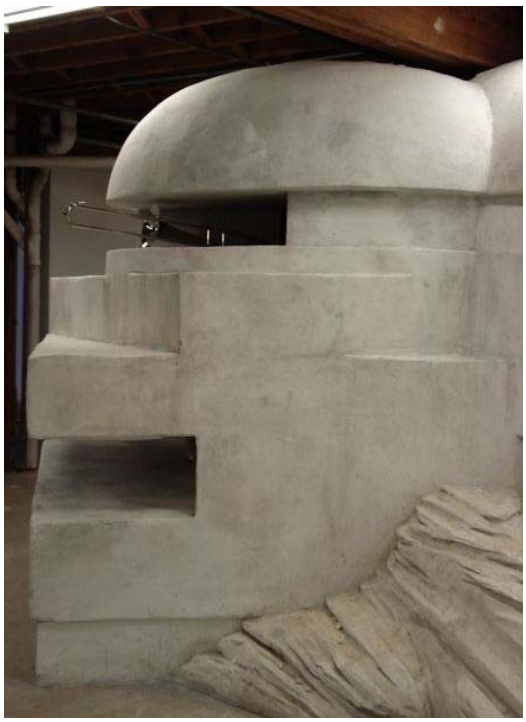
"For us the potential of art is to insert something into a situation to stir things up, cause a catalytic change, or detonate a chain of events."
The Art of Response-ability: An interview with Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora and **Guillermo Calzadilla** produce work that focuses on the challenging and conflicting effects of globalisation. Through photography, video, sculpture, installation and performance they explore issues of power and acts of resistance as well as environmentalism and consumerism.

The diversity of media used is determined by the needs of the concepts they are exploring, for example sculptures are made from industrial waste materials, paintings from charcoal footprints and films record incidents which are more performance than documentary.

***Ruin*, 2006**, transformed industrial waste material into a minimalist sculpture made of layers of steel sheets into which shapes of functional objects had been punched out. The remaining sheets of steel took on the delicacy of paper cut outs.
***Charcoal Dance Floor,* 2006,** sees the destruction of figure drawing by the movement of people through the gallery space, leaving only abstract swirls of dust broken up by footprints and marks depicting brand names across a canvas.
While these works highlight global consumerism and take place in the gallery environment, Allora & Calzadilla also work closely with activists and community groups particularly in Puerto Rico where they are partly based.
***Returning a Sound,* 2004** documents a local activist traversing newly liberated land on a moped with a trumpet welded onto the muffler. "As the bike moves along, it produces a resounding call to attention. Of course, the trumpet sometimes sounds like an ambulance, an alarm, or Morse code--even experimental salsa"
Allora & Calzadilla Talk About Three Pieces In Vieques

The artists live in Puerto Rico and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Their work has been exhibited in international galleries and festivals including : the *Biennal de la Habana*, 2000, *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age*, 2003, the *51st Venice Biennale*, 2005 and the *Whitney Biennial*, New York, 2006.



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Clamor, 2006

Located in the North Gallery, *Clamor* initially appears to be a large bunker-like sculpture, but when viewed from different perspectives it takes on multiple identities. The artists have described it as a *'sculptural hybrid chamber resembling a bunker, a ruin, and a sound booth.' Clamor* investigates the bodily and physical dimensions of the music of war through both live performance and recorded music.

For the live performance a group of musicians will be inside the sculpture playing songs and music from different geographical territories and historical periods inspired by, and in response to, war. Ranging from patriotic songs to hip hop and heavy metal, they will be performed simultaneously; at times in harmony and at others in total discord, to produce both a symphony and cacophony of sound.

For the duration of the exhibition the artists will create a soundtrack sampling music that has been invoked in times of conflict - for example '*We're not gonna take it'* by Twisted Sister, used by the Americans in the 1989 Panama invasion, the music of Janissary bands from the Ottoman Empire and ballads of the October Revolution - to stage a sonic war. This will be played will be played inside the structure and the public will be able to see musical instruments through openings in the installation.

Discussion Topics, Words and Questions

"We don't feel we have to explain anything. Works of art have teeth"

Occupying space

Brass - bunker - blast - space - shelter - explode - smooth - jagged - harmony - resonate - occupy - form - colour - texture - strength - empty - echo - power

Pre-visit
What would you use a bunker or shelter to protect you from?
What would it need to make it strong?
During an attack what would be the difference between inside and outside of the structure? Which would be the noisiest, safest etc?
What would be the effect of having a shelter inside another building?

In the gallery
How does the sculpture and noise fill the gallery?
How easy is it to move around the sculpture?
Does the sculpture feel protective and defensive or aggressive? Why?
How does the sound affect the space?

Draw the space that remains between the sculpture and the gallery walls and ceiling.

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War, noise and protest

protect - defend - attack - hide - weapon - defence - armour - fight - battle - protest - revolt - peace - violence - military - armed - hostile - friend - foe - explode - blast

"We are interested in the relationship between sound and war, sound as a weapon, sound as an instrument of war, and in tracing the history of this form of sonic expression back to the earliest military encounters."
Putting everything in context. Interview with Adrian Dannatt.

Pre-visit
How can works of art make a protest? Can you think of examples in visual art, music and literature?
In the past were artists generally seen to agree or disagree with those in power?
Can you think of any paintings or sculptures that make comments about war?
What aspects of war did they refer to – was it usually pro- or anti-war?

In the gallery
In what ways does this work refer to war?
Do you think the work is pro- or anti-war? Why?

The Janissary of the Ottoman army went into battle playing music to drive their warriors wild and make them ready for battle, more importantly the noise would terrify their enemies with the ear-splitting sound. What effect does the sound here have on you?

Draw or describe other places where you experience such a cacophony of sound?

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Globalization

communicate - together - global - united - shared - similarity - difference - equality - power - sharing - balance - question - respond - responsibility – tradition - culture

" globalization is a condition of our world. You're part of this whether you want to be or not. So as artists we deal with globalization because we feel we have to, and because it's impossible not to…… we want a different idea of globalization, one that suggests new ways to confront, respond to, and act in the world."
Allora & Calzadilla Talk about Three Pieces in Vieques

Pre-Visit
In what ways do works of art communicate with people?
How does visual art compare with other media such as TV? Which is more effective?
How can artists share their work and ideas with others across the globe?
What are the advantages of sharing work and ideas? What are the difficulties?
Do you think there are universal themes that affect all people? What are they?

In the gallery
What traditions, cultures and influences are identifiable in this work?
Is the work national or international?
Why have the artists used a number of references in their work?

Find a section of the work that is significant to you. Draw a sketch of that section and write on the words you associate with it.

Activities for the Classroom

English: How do words change their meaning when you add a prefix or suffix eg form / reform, response / responsibility?
Music: Record sounds you hear around you in your daily life – some are music, but are there others that could be music? How?
History: Research the use of sound and music in war– from the Janissary bands of the Ottoman Empire, the music bombardment in Panama, to the singing revolution in Estonia.

Key Stage 1 &2
Art & Design: 2C - Can buildings speak, 6C - A sense of Place, 5B - Containers
Citizenship: 1 & 2, **Music**: 3 & 5

Clamor is a solid structure with music exploding out from inside. Is there music that you love to listen to? Or are there sounds you would like to escape from?
Design a place where you can escape to or from the noise.
What would it be built of? What shape would it be? How would you keep it sound proof? How would you get in or out?

Key Stage 3
Art & Design: 7B - What's in a building? 9C - Personal places, public spaces
Music: 3a & b, **History**: 4a

Compare Erich Mendelsohn's: The Einstein Tower

The origins of the design of Erich Mendelsohn's Einstein Tower in Potsdam near Berlin can be found in the letters and sketches he sent from the front during the First World War. The rounded, irregular forms of the tower were inspired by his passion for music and his interest in Einstein's revolutionary ideas. It is considered a key Expressionist building with curved, organic forms which depart from all traditional expectations of what a tower should look like

Although built nearly 90 years apart, both works combine influence of sound and structure – what other links can you find? Think about size, structure, colour, materials. Which do you prefer? Why?

Are there sounds that you love to listen to? Or ones you would like to escape from? How could a building replicate those sounds?
Design a place where you can escape to or from the noise.
Consider size, shape, material, sound-proofing, access & how the structure would reflect or hide its function. Build a 3D model of your structure.

Further Reading

Allora & Calzadilla. New York: Americas Society, 2003
Bossé Laurence, and Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *Ici: Didier Fiuza Faustino, Jennifer Allora & Guillermo Calzadilla, Oliver Payne & Nick Relph, Tino Sehgal, Francis Alÿs.* Göttingen: Steidl, 2004
Dannatt, Adrian, *Putting everything in context*. Interview with Adrian Dannatt. The Art Newspaper December 2006
Morgan, Jessica, ed. *Common Wealth*, London: Tate Publishing, 2003
Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *Allora & Calzadilla Talk about Three Pieces in Vieques.* Artforum International, March 2005
Schmelzer, Paul. *The Art of Response-ability*: *An interview with Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla*
http://eyeteeth.blogspot.com/2004/04/insurgent-inquiry-art-of-allora.html

Sound and war
http://www.turkses.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1100&Itemid=48
http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-history-panama-invasion.htm
http://www.singingrevolution.com/estoniassrhistory.html
http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/248700.html
http://www.aip.de/einsteinturm/

Planning a Visit to the Serpentine Gallery

Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London
W2 3XA

T 020 7402 6075
F 0207402 4103
www.serpentinegallery.org

Transport
The nearest tube stations are South Kensington (1.25 km walk), Knightsbridge (1.25 km walk) or Lancaster Gate (1 km walk)

Bus routes 9, 10, 52, 94 and 148 stop near the Gallery

Education and Family Events
Education is at the core of the Serpentine Gallery's activities. Through workshops, events and projects, the Education Programme offers a range of innovative ways to engage with modern and contemporary art and architecture.

Education Projects in 2007 supported by

Bloomberg

Please refer to the Serpentine Gallery Diary or www.serpentinegallery.org for information on events and activities taking place as part of the Education Programme during the exhibition *Allora & Calzadilla.*

Group Visit Guidelines

We recommend calling to arrange a group visit to avoid overcrowding of the galleries
To make your visit as enjoyable as possible, please read the following:

Before your Visit:

- Adult supervision of students under 16 is required at all times, including in the shop. An adult student ratio of 1:5 for under 5's, 1:10 for 5 - 11 year olds, 1:15 for 11 - 16 year olds and 1:20 for 16 - 18 year olds is required.
- We recommend a preliminary planning visit, as for some exhibitions there may be works that you consider unsuitable for your group.

During your Visit:

- Teachers/group leaders and accompanying adults are responsible for their group's behaviour whilst at the Serpentine Gallery.
- Please make sure your group is aware of the following Gallery guidelines:
  - No running
  - No touching
  - No leaning against walls or plinths
  - No shouting
  - No mobile phones
  - No photography
- Many contemporary artworks are fragile and damage easily. Please make sure that your group understands that this is why they are not allowed to touch the art.
- Lecturing: If your group is larger than 30 please split them into smaller groups in the exhibition space and do not lecture in rooms where talks are already in progress.
- Sketching: If you would like to do some sketching please check with the Gallery what materials you will be able to use in the exhibition

Contact Details

Sophie Higgs,
Education Organiser
Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London W2 3XA

T 020 7298 1516
sophieh@serpentinegallery.org