

Serpentine Gallery

Teachers' Resources

Magnetized Space Lygia Pape

7 December 2011 – 19 February 2012



Lygia Pape
Espaços imantados (Magnetized Spaces) 1995
Black and white photograph
Photo: Paula Pape
© Projeto Lygia Pape

The exhibition is organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, in collaboration with Projeto Lygia Pape and the Serpentine Gallery. The exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía was curated by Manuel Borja-Villel, Director, and Teresa Velázquez, Head of Exhibitions. The exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery was curated by Julia Peyton-Jones, Director, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director, and Sophie O'Brien, Exhibition Curator.

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Introduction

These notes are designed to support your visit to Serpentine exhibition, *Magnetized Space*, by Lygia Pape. They include planning prior to your visit and suggestions for discussion and classroom activities. They are aimed for key stage 3+4 but include activities that can relate to all key stages, enabling you to develop them to suit your needs and inspire discussion and practical work.

Lygia Pape – artist and exhibition

Lygia Pape (1927–2004) was a leading Brazilian artist whose work brought together formal rigour and daring experimentation. In her own words, she explained her approach: 'My concern is always invention. I always want to invent a new language that's different for me and for others, too... I want to discover new things. Because, to me, art is a way of knowing the world... to see how the world is... of getting to know the world'.

Pape was a founding member of the Neo-Concrete movement, which was dedicated to the inclusion of art into everyday life. Pape's early work developed out of an interest in European abstraction, however she and her contemporaries went beyond simply adopting an international style, and started to draw on their own local situation.

Neo-Concretism is often seen as the beginning of contemporary art in Brazil, and Pape's work – which focused on the coming together of aesthetic, ethical and political ideas – has formed an important part of Brazil's artistic identity.

The exhibition presents work from throughout Pape's career, including early drawings and poems from her Concrete period to her Neo-Concretist *Livros* (Books) and *Caixas* (Boxes) series, as well as ballets and performances such as *Divisor* (Divider) and *O ovo* (The Egg). Many of these works were created in response to the political repression growing in the late 1960s and reflected the artist's strongly critical views on Brazil's elite. Pape's late works focused on the depiction of emotion and sensation, and have been described by Hélio Oiticica – a contemporary of Pape's – as 'permanently open seeds'.

The exhibition is organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in collaboration with Projeto Lygia Pape and the Serpentine Gallery.

Themes, ideas and questions to explore

Themes, ideas and questions to explore the exhibition *Magnetized Space* by Lygia Pape include discussions and activities for the gallery and classroom

1. Space and Place



Lygia Pape
Ttéia 1, C (Web) 1976/2011
Installation view
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011
© Projeto Lygia Pape and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Discussions and Activities

Brazil, the country where Lygia Pape was born and lived, had a huge influence on her work and the work of the Neo-Concrete movement.

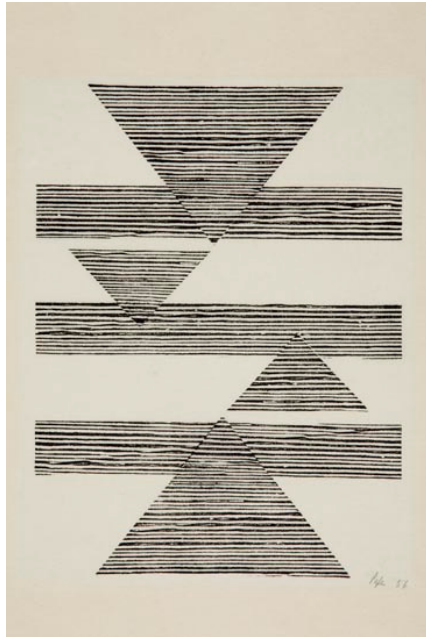
- What do you know about Brazil? Talk in your group about the things that you associate with Brazil and Brazilian culture.
- Think about your country of origin, where you are from or where you live now. How do these places inspire or influence you?
- Think about the journeys that you make through your town or city. What do you notice on these journeys? What do your observations tell you about the place in which you live?
- Next time you take your normal route to school, college or work, document this by taking photos or drawing things that catch your eye, record or write down smells, noises and conversations that you hear. Share your journey with your classmates or group.
- Lygia Pape described the city as a web, and moving through it as a spider weaving space. "While driving around the city – I use the car a lot – I became aware of a new type of relationship with the urban space, as if I were a spider of sorts weaving space. After all I start from a certain point, then go across, and turn, go up and down overpasses, go in and out of tunnels - me and everyone else in the city. It was as if we now enjoyed an aerial view of the city that was like an enormous cobweb, a huge entanglement." (1) How does this relate to the work in the exhibition *Ttéia (Web)*, 2011?
- Create your own 'woven space' in your classroom. Using string, wool, tape and other materials, create pathways, walls and barriers to affect the way people move through the space. Afterwards, write about your experience in the newly altered space.

- Think about how space is woven in the city, using roads, pathways, buildings, even traffic cones and signs. Imagine you are a town planner and create a map of your local area.
- Visualise the phrase “magnetized space”. What does it look like? Create a drawing or a performance that illustrates the idea of “magnetized space”.
- Why do you think the exhibition is called *Magnetized Space*?
- Discuss a current political issue and create an artwork in response.

Keywords

Location – Town – City – Map – Country – Emptiness – Orientation – Obstruction
 – Path – Journey – Route – Planning – Space – Movement – Direction –
 Repetition – Public – Private

2. Construction and Process



Lygia Pape
Sem título: Tecelar (Untitled : Weavings) 1956
 Woodcut on Japanese paper
 35 x 44.5 cm
 © Projeto Lygia Pape

Discussions and Activities

- Lygia Pape's works spans a wide range of mediums. Make a list of all the materials Lygia Pape has used that you can see in this exhibition.
- Lygia Pape was inspired by the people living in the Favela settlements in Rio de Janeiro. She admired the way they built their houses starting from nothing but found materials, sticks and mud. These settlements were in stark contrast to the modern architecture being built in Brazil during the 1960s. Create your own

construction with materials that you can find. Try to make it large and stable enough for you to sit inside. Once you are finished, make a drawing of the structure you built.

- Try to create a small structure or sculpture using materials you can collect or find in 5 minutes outside the gallery or at school. How does limiting your resources affect the way you create?

- Create a work of art with people rather than art materials, think about the relationship between performer and audience.

- Write a list of critical mass events in public space, such as flash mobs, and discuss how large groups of people can change the atmosphere of a space.

- Some of Lygia Pape's prints and assemblages or collages look quite architectural. Do they remind you of any buildings you have seen or do they make you think of anything else?

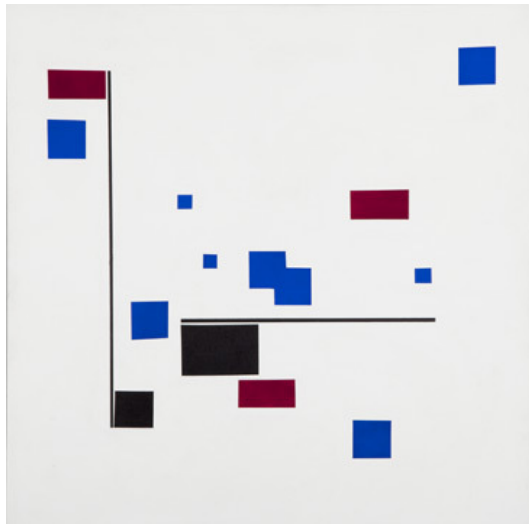
- Make a drawing or collage inspired by a building or structure of your choice. Think about the way the building is constructed, its balance or symmetry, and the materials used. Try to reflect these in your piece.

- Lygia Pape had said that the process of making her work was just as important as the finished work. Discuss this with your group. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Keywords

Materials – Construction – Structure – Create – Build – Architecture – Buildings – Modernism – Process – Plan – Senses – Performance – Improvisation – Space

3. Visual Poems



Lygia Pape
Semititulo (Untitled) 1954–56
Tempera / oil on wood
40 x 40 x 3.2 cm
© Projeto Lygia Pape

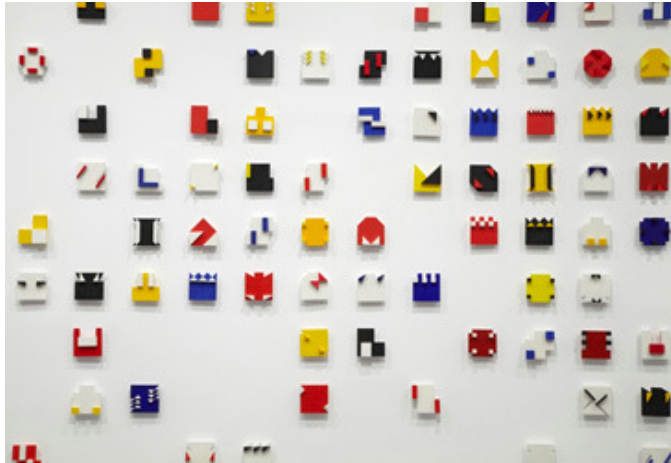
Discussions and Activities

- Some of Lygia Pape's works have been described as visual poems. Discuss the idea of a visual poem. How might this differ from any other piece of visual art?
- After discussing, create your own visual poem using one of Lygia Pape's poems as a starting point. Rather than using pictures, try to think about pace, space, colour and tone.
- Look at the way that Lygia Pape has presented her poems visually on the page. How does the way the words have been arranged affect the way the poem is read?
- Experiment with using space and layout to change a piece of text. Use an existing poem or even a short paragraph from the newspaper, cut the piece up into individual words and re-arrange them on the page. Think about starting new lines and the spacing between words, or arranging them in a non-linear form. Try reading the piece of writing out loud and mark where the natural pauses come. Consider using your new layout to exaggerate words, or deliberately make new unnatural spaces and pauses to disturb the original rhythm of the piece. Does the new layout of the words change the pace or meaning of the piece?
- Create a Haiku poem by only using words cut from the newspaper. (A Haiku is a poem with three lines, five syllables on the first line, seven on the second and five on the last.)
- Some of Pape's poems are a bit like lists of words. Make a list of words that you like the sound of. Ignore their meaning and just think about the way they sound.
- In a group, create a poem by playing a word association game. Start with a word inspired by the Lygia Pape exhibition, then have each person say a word in response to the previous word.
- Create a concrete poem, in which the visual format of the poem is reflective of or related to the context of the text.

Keywords

Rhythm – Meanings – Sounds – Syllable – Visual – Image – Imagine – Printed Word – Verbal – Shape – Layout – Pace – Line – Space – Pause – Stop – Start – Move – Volume

4. The Book as Object



Lygia Pape

Livro do Tempo (Book of Time) 1961-63

Installation view

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011

© Projeto Lygia Pape and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Discussions and Activities

Lygia Pape has questioned and reinvented the form of the book in her various *Livro* works. The books that she created often included three-dimensional pages and deconstructed formats. Reading the book now meant discovering and experiencing rather than passively reading.

- With your group, try to come up with a definition of the word “book”. What makes a book a book? Do Lygia Pape's *Livro* works defy your definition?

- Think about how books have evolved over the years. How has modern technology affected what a book is or can be?

- Many of Pape's *Livro* works were experimentations in transforming the flat surface of the page into a three-dimensional object. Taking just one plain piece of paper, try to create your own three-dimensional object by folding, cutting, or ripping the paper.

- Think about the anatomy of the book – the cover, end pages, spine, etc – and how the design of these elements impacts the way it is read. Design a book which disrupts one or more of these elements.

- Lygia Pape's work *Livro do Tempo (Book of Time)* is made up of 365 ‘pages’, each one different and representing a day in a year. What do you think about time being displayed in this way?

- Think about different ways that humans document time – in seconds, minutes, hours and days – and the ways in which time is visually represented. Try to think of alternative ways of documenting or visualising time passing.

- In response to Lygia Pape's *Livro do Tempo (Book of Time)*, create your own Book of Time, a visual diary recording a month, week or day of your life. You could use drawing, photography or found imagery and collage.

Keywords

Page – Format – Reading – Experimenting – Structure – Process – Sensory – Narrative – Paper – Repetition – Disruption – Two-dimensional – Three-dimensional – Origami – Time – Archiving – Documenting

Cross-curricular links

Art and Design – Creative and Media Diploma – Design Technology – Architecture – Social History – Anthropology – Global Studies – Political studies – History – English Literature and Language – Philosophy – Geography – Film Studies – Drama and Theatre studies – Mathematics – Cultural Studies

Further information and related links

Quotes

(1) "While driving around the city – I use the car a lot – I became aware of a new type of relationship with the urban space, as if I were a spider of sorts weaving space. After all I start from a certain point, then go across, and turn, go up and down overpasses, go in and out of tunnels – me and everyone else in the city. It was as if we now enjoyed an aerial view of the city that was like an enormous cobweb, a huge entanglement." Lygia Pape, "Espacosnimantados" [Magnetized Spaces], s/d . (*Lygia Pape: Magnetized Space*, 2011, p. 285)

Reading and web links

Lygia Pape: Magnetized Space, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2011, 978-8480264402

Constructive Spirit: Abstract Art in South and North America, 1920s-50s, Pomegranate, 2010, 978-0764952746

Artists from Latin American Cultures: a Biographical Dictionary, Kristin G. Congdon, Kara Kelley Hallmark, Greenwood Press, 2002, 978-0313315442

<http://www.lygiapape.org.br/>

http://www.museoreinasofia.es/exposiciones/2011/pape_en.html

Lecture: *The Concrete and Neo-Concrete Movements in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela* <http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/11>

Related Artists

(in chronological order)

Piet Mondrian
El Lissitzky
Franz Weissmann
Amilcar de Castro
Lygia Clarke
Hélio Oiticica
Bridget Riley
Alighiero Boetti

Planning a Visit to the Serpentine Gallery

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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, 452, 94 and 148 stop near the Gallery

Group Visit Guidelines

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 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 20 please split them into smaller groups in the exhibition space and do not lecture in rooms where talks are already in progress.
- Drawing: If you would like to do some drawing please check with the gallery what materials you will be able to use in the exhibition

Education and Family Events

Education is at the core of the Serpentine Gallery's activities. Through practical, artist led workshops and discussion, talks, events and projects the Education Programme offers a diverse range of innovative ways to engage with modern and contemporary art and architecture for all ages.

Please refer to the Serpentine Gallery Bulletin or www.serpentinegallery.org for information on events and activities taking place as part of the Education Programme during the exhibition *Magnetized Space* by Lygia Pape. Our entire Teachers' Notes are also available to download free at www.serpentinegallery.org:

Anri Sala, 1 October - 20 November 2011
 Michelangelo Pistoletto, *The Mirror of Judgement*, 12 July- 17 September 2011
 Peter Zumthor, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011, 1 July-16 October 2011
 Mark Leckey, 19 May-26 June 2011
 Nancy Spero, 3 March-2 May 2011
 Marcus Coates, 3 March-2 May 2011
 Philippe Parreno, 25 November 2010-13 February 2011
 Klara Lidén, 7 October-7 November 2010
 Anish Kapoor, 28 September-13 March 2011
 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 designed by Jean Nouvel, 10 July-17 October 2010
 Wolfgang Tillmans 26 June-19 September 2010
 Nairy Baghramian and Phyllida Barlow, 8 May-13 June 2010
 Richard Hamilton: *Modern Moral Matters*, 3 March-25 April 2010
 Design Real, 26 November 2009-7 February 2010
 Gustav Metzger: *Decades 1959-2009*, 29 September-8 November 2009
 Jeff Koons: *Popeye Series*, 2 July-13 September 2009
 Luke Fowler, 7 May-14 June 2009
 Rebecca Warren, 10 March-19 April 2009
 Indian Highway, 10 December 2008-22 February 2009
 Gerhard Richter, 23 September-23 November 2008
 Richard Prince, 26 June-7 September 2008
 Maria Lassnig, 25 April-8 June 2008
 Derek Jarman, 23 February-13 April 2008
 Anthony McCall, 30 November 2007-3 February 2008
 Matthew Barney, 20 September-11 November 2007
 Hreinn Fridfinnsson, 17 July-2 September 2007
 Paul Chan, 15 May-1 July 2007
 Allora & Calzadilla, 17-29 April 2007
 Karen Kilimnik, 20 February-9 April 2007

In the darkest hour there may be light, works from Damien Hirst's murderme collection, 25 November 2006-28 January 2007
Runa Islam, 25 October-5 November 2006
China Power Station: Part 1, 8 October-5 November 2006
Uncertain States of America, 9 September-15 October 2006
Thomas Demand, 6 June-20 August 2006
Ellsworth Kelly, 18 March-21 May 2006
Elmgreen & Dragset, 26 January-26 February 2006
Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, 19 October 2005-8 January 2006
Oliver Payne & Nick Relph, 6 September-2 October 2005
Rirkrit Tiravanija, 5 July-21 August 2005
Andreas Slominski, 26 April-12 June 2005
Tomoko Takahashi, 22 February-10 April 2005
Monika Sosnowska, 5 December 2004-16 January 2005
Glenn Brown, 14 September-7 November 2004
Gabriel Orozco, 1 July-30 August 2004
Cy Twombly, 17 April-13 June 2004
State of Play, 3 February-28 March 2004
Hiroshi Sugimoto, 18 November 2003-18 January 2004
John Currin, 9 September-2 November 2003
Cindy Sherman, 3 June-25 August 2003
Takashi Murakami, 12 November 2002-26 January 2003
Kutlug Ataman, 11 February-9 March 2003

This exhibition is organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in collaboration with Projeto Lygia Pape and the Serpentine Gallery.



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And those who wish to remain anonymous

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