

**Amalia Pica**

*Aula Expandida*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

February 15 - April 4, 2024

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to announce *Aula Expandida*, Amalia Pica's first solo exhibition in New York, on view at the gallery from February 15 - April 4, 2024.

Over the last three decades, Amalia Pica has examined relationships and how we communicate. Often using seemingly simple materials and found objects, she investigates human modes of interaction, especially our desire to learn and to be understood as we try to make sense of the world around us, and the accompanying pleasures and failures. Her work has an intentional lightness of touch and playfulness, which Pica prioritizes for its power to draw viewers into a conversation. Pica began her career as a primary school art teacher, an experience that continually informs much of her work. *Aula Expandida* features an interactive installation, sculptures, embroideries, and collages that explore how art, imagination, and language are connected, especially during the formative years of early childhood.

In the gallery downstairs, visitors encounter a large room filled with everyday objects that have been turned into chalkboards, and they are invited to pick up a piece of chalk to draw, write, or scribble on all surfaces around them. In *Aula Grande (outlined)* – Spanish for large classroom – Pica examines the role school plays in imparting a common visual language in our cultural imaginary, and how this way of seeing and thinking accompanies us through the rest of our lives. The installation proposes that we rewrite, redraw, and reimagine alternative narrative possibilities from an expansion of knowledge centered on daily life. By involving visitors in her work, Pica invites both intellectual and physical modes of participation as we are asked to reconsider our surrounding environment as a classroom.

In a new series of colorful embroideries, Pica continues her examination of art and understanding, and how this relationship changes over time. Using drawings made by her young son, Pica and her collaborators\* painstakingly stitch his quick gestures onto fabric, depicting a pre-representational way of conceptualizing the world around us. She highlights the freedom of expression experienced prior to formal schooling, which ultimately changes our way of seeing and conditions the way we perceive our environment. A deliberate tension between the speed with which the drawings are made and the minute care taken to embroider them exists, embodying the lasting psychological effects of childhood, as well as parental labor.

A new group of sculptures and collages from an ongoing series focus on the rhetorical device known as catachresis, the application of terms that apply to things that do not have their own word, such as the teeth of a comb, leg of a chair, tongue of a shoe, or elbow of a pipe, often named with human body parts. The extension of a word beyond the limits of its meaning reveals how language and images can interact, contributing to the definition of reality. The result is a group of hybrid figures and images, in anthropomorphic or animal forms, that demonstrate the flexibility of language and its possibly comical consequences.

Amalia Pica was born in 1978 in Neuquén, Argentina and currently lives and works in London. The artist received a BA from the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes P.P. in Buenos Aires in 2003 and attended graduate school at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam.

Pica has had solo exhibitions at Museo Jumex, Mexico City (2023); Fondazione Memmo, Rome (2022); Brighton CCA (2022); Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2020); Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville, Spain (2019); The New Art Gallery, Walsall, UK (2019); Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth, Australia (2018); The Power Plant, Toronto (2017); NC Arte, Bogotá, Colombia (2017); Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany (2016); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (2014); List Visual Arts Center, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2013); Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2013); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Neuquén, Argentina (2013); Kunsthalle St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland (2012); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2012); Malmo Konsthall, Malmo, Sweden (2010); among many others.

Her work was included in the Gwangju Biennial, South Korea (2016); *The Ungovernables: New Museum Triennial*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2015); and *ILLUMInations*, curated by Bice Curiger, 54th Venice Biennale (2011).

Amalia Pica's work can be found in the permanent collections of Tate Collection, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museo Nacional de Bellas Arte Neuquén, Neuquén, Argentina; KADIST Art Foundation, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Frac-Collection Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France; Fundação De Serralves, Porto, Portugal; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

\*Amalia Pica would like to acknowledge the work of her fellow embroiderers: Annushka Angulo, Yolanda Doku, Aya Fukami, and Indre Joneikyte.

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