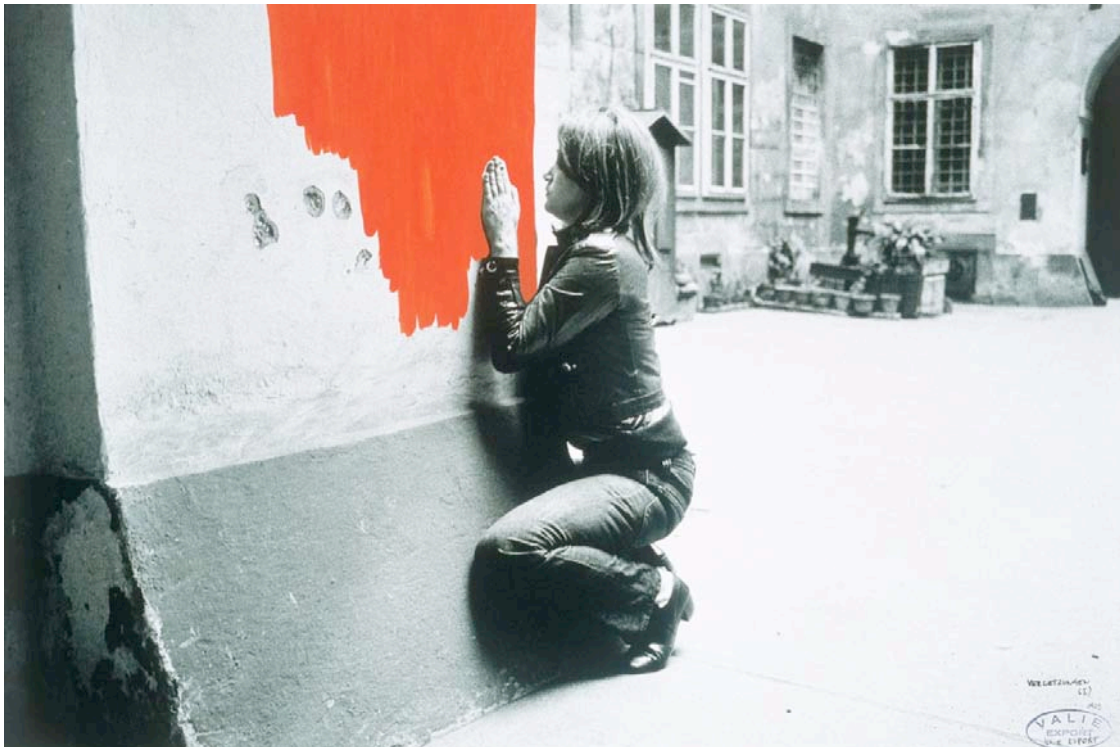


GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG



VALIE EXPORT *Verletzungen I*, 1972,
color pencil on b/w photograph, 42 x 61cm
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg
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VALIE EXPORT **BODY CONFIGURATIONS, 1972-1976** Curated by Caroline Bourgeois

12 January – 24 February 2018

Opening
Friday 12 January 2018, 6-8pm
with the artist present

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
7, rue Debelleye
75003 Paris

PRESS RELEASE

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present the exhibition *VALIE EXPORT, Body Configurations, 1972-76* curated by Caroline Bourgeois, chief curator of the Pinault Collection. This new exhibition marks the first collaboration with the Austrian artist, represented by the gallery since October 2017.

The French curator details the concept for the exhibition:

“VALIE EXPORT has always refused conventions. Rejecting the role of housewife, she turns to art with a sense of urgency. Her first and seminal gesture is when she dubs herself VALIE EXPORT—in all capital letters—to match the strength of another self who may bear a masculine name. Defining your name instead of enduring your father’s. In 1967 she invents her artist’s name in order to export her ideas and works. Later she appropriates a cigarette pack of the Austrian brand Smart Export and names it after her new artistic self. The work presented in the exhibition documents this first action: *VALIE EXPORT-SMART EXPORT-Selbstporträt* (1970).

The exhibition presents major early works from 1968 to 1976. In 1972, VALIE EXPORT invents the concept of the first international woman exhibition *MAGNA. Feminism: Art and Creativity* (Vienna, 1975), which becomes a reference for the feminists of her time and those who follow in their footsteps.

She questions in a nearly phenomenological way the image and role of the female with her series entitled: *Identitätstransfer 1, 2, 3* (1968), where she presents herself “in disguise” to demonstrate the importance of the staging of the female body. This action also stresses the expectations in terms of appearances and the place of seduction in relationships. It is then followed by a tattoo: *BODY SIGN B* (1970) representing a garter on the thigh. This action and its photographic representation speak for themselves. She continues her revolution of the fate of women with: *Identitätstransfer B* (1972), which evokes the question of rape, a subject that still resonates today. In this series she underlines the necessity of appropriating one’s own body and taking out the social effects of patriarchal culture. She looks closely into the consequences of these effects on her own body. With these actions, she takes a stance.

Works from the *Body Configurations* (1972-76) series are on view in the ground floor and upstairs rooms. They constitute another type of action taking place in the city or in nature, where she uses her body in a nearly sculptural way to underline the lines, the spaces, and the powerful constraints of her surroundings. With this, she proposes—ahead of other practices—to appropriate the exterior as a museum, to act outside.

By playing with her body in public spaces, she reveals how power relations inhabit the actual structure of the street and its buildings. She adds a conceptual dimension, where the body becomes like a pencil drawing lines. The insertion of lines and colors on the photograph emphasizes this dimension. This almost pictorial approach to photography is even more present in the works set in nature, which references her conceptual photographs.

VALIE EXPORT also experimented with video, a medium which, at the time, offered a larger space for freedom, and shows how the artist elaborates on and conceptualizes her own work. Two video works, *BODY TAPE* (1970) and *Remote..., Remote...*(1973), are included in the exhibition. In addition, to recognize the importance of the symbolic inversion of gender codes, posters of *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (1969) are displayed on the gallery walls as they once were in the street.

VALIE EXPORT seeks in a phenomenological manner something on her body, her place, the question of the artist. I think she has a process, which is close to Bruce Nauman’s, where everything must be questioned in order to then exist. Like she says, her nerves spoke and her rebellion became the motor which pushed boundaries, including her own. I think this goes further than a psychological dimension, as it touches on artistic questions both structural and conceptual. She transcends the political with her photographic work, which stuns with its atemporal pertinence.

More than ever before, her work seems relevant. Unfortunately – or fortunately – we must now and always remain in high alert around the question of the place of women in our societies. It's far from being won. I think it's precisely because of work like VALIE EXPORT's that women today are more able to take on different roles for themselves and others. Like every great artist, she opens doors, widens the field, and transforms the territory. The work of VALIE EXPORT offers us an example of how to invent your own life, while still questioning oneself constantly in order to act on oneself and the exterior.”

Caroline Bourgeois



VALIE EXPORT
VALIE EXPORT-SMART EXPORT-Selbstporträt, 1970
Photography black/white, 69,5 x 61 cm, Ed. 4/5
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London · Paris · Salzburg
© VALIE EXPORT / Adagp Paris, 2017

VALIE EXPORT

Born in Linz (Austria) in 1940, VALIE EXPORT lives in Vienna. After attending the Arts and Crafts College in Linz (1956-59), she enrolled at the Design Department of the Higher Federal Teaching and Research Institute of the Textile Industry in Vienna, where she studied from 1960 to 1964. In 1967, she decided on the name VALIE EXPORT as an artistic concept and logo. In 1967 she co-founded the Austrian Filmmakers' Cooperative in Vienna. VALIE EXPORT has taught at numerous international institutions, including the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (USA), The San Francisco Art Institute and the University of the Arts in Berlin. From 1995/96 until 2005 she was professor for Multimedia-Performance at the Media Art Academy in Cologne. VALIE EXPORT's practice includes video environments, photography, installations, performances, films, documentaries, sculptures as well as texts on contemporary art and feminism. VALIE EXPORT is today considered as one of the most important artists in the field of performance and new media.

VALIE EXPORT's work is represented in many collections: Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Reina Sophia, Madrid; MoMA, New York; MOCA, Los Angeles etc.

Since 1968 she participates in numerous international exhibitions: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1980); Generali Foundation, Vienna (1990, 1996); ICA Institute of Contemporary Art, London (1997/1998); Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles (1998, 2000, 2014); MoCA, Los Angeles (1998, 2009); Camden Arts Centre, London, MAMCO Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, Reina Sofia, Madrid (2004); Ludwig Museum, Cologne (2006); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2007); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2011); MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006, 2010, 2016).

She participates at the documenta 6 (1977) and la documenta 12 (2007). In 1980 she represents Austria at the 39th Venice Biennale in 1980 and participates at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and in 2011.

In November 2017 the University of Linz, Austria, opened the VALIE EXPORT Center, a research center for media and performance art, in collaboration with the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.. At the Lentos Museum, her exhibition *Das Archiv als Ort künstlerischer Forschung* will be on view until January, 28th, 2018.

Caroline Bourgeois

In 2003, she organized a monographic exhibition on VALIE EXPORT at the Centre National de la Photographie, Jeu de Paume, in Paris, which travelled at the CAAC, Sévilla; the MAMCO, Geneva; the Camden Arts Center in London, and finally, the Sammlung Essl Privatstiftung in Klosterneuburg, Austria. She was the former artistic director of Plateau Paris, FRAC Île-de-France and the president of TRAM Réseau art contemporain Paris. She is currently chief curator of the Pinault Collection, for which she has organized several exhibitions. In 2018, she will notable curate: *Albert Oehlen*, Palazzo Grassi, opening the 8th of June 2018, and a group exhibition from the Pinault Collection in Rennes, Couvent des Jacobins, from the 22nd of June to the 9th of September 2018.

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Share your thoughts on social media
@ThaddaeusRopac, #ValieExport, #BodyConfigurations
#Identitaetstransfer #Aktionshose #Genitalpanik

Images available to the press

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Please always mention the name of the artist in capital letters: VALIE EXPORT.

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