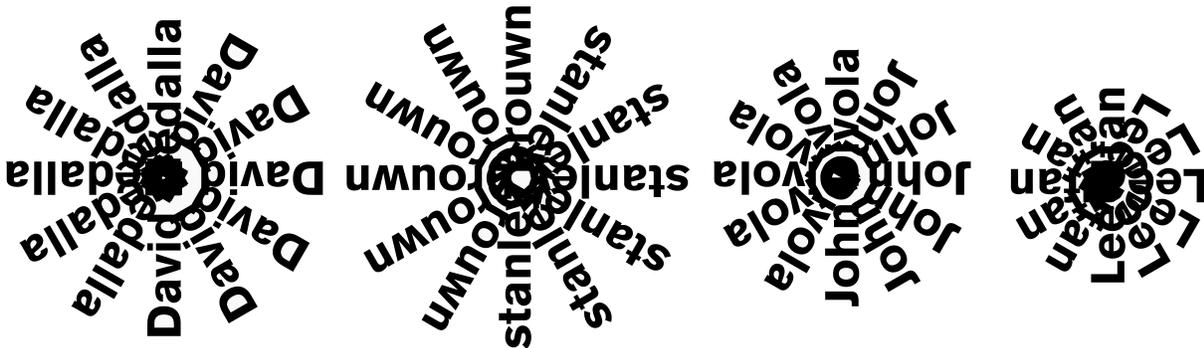


# Unidades y Continuidades

A project by Gabriel Kuri

David Medalla, stanley brouwn, John Divola and Lee Ufan



*Unidades y Continuidades* surveys the language of experimentation that four artists began developing over forty years ago. The works on display at kurimanzutto are echoes of these early experiments, now crystallized into a variety of gestures and forms encompassing sculpture, photography, as well as drawing and painting. Gabriel Kuri's curatorial project seeks to understand how geometry is unfolded in these various mediums and manifestations. To this end, he brings together the heterogeneous practices of David Medalla (Philippines, 1942), stanley brouwn (Suriname, 1935), John Divola (United States, 1949), and Lee Ufan (South Korea, 1936). Grouped together in the same exhibition for the first time, these artists exemplify a transnational and transgenerational spirit of searching.

Medalla, brouwn, Divola and Ufan developed a significant part of their artistic vocabularies during the late 1960s and early 1970s, at the same time minimalism and conceptual art were consolidating into established movements. Their work is characterized by an economy of means as well as a rigorous consideration of the use of materials and their presentation. However, they sought to transcend the prevalent anxieties concerning authorship and dematerialization of the art object. Each of the four artists developed unique and systematic methods for delineating space or creating a pause in the flow of time, with the goal of better understanding the here and now. Contrary to the practice of self-proclaimed conceptual artists, their work does not intend to catalog reality in its momentary certainties, however their processes are rigorously conceptual in nature.

The title, *Unidades y Continuidades* (*Units and Continuities*) refers to the exhibition's intertwining themes. The language of the geometry - at times reducible to simple visual coordinates or mathematical equations - reassembles and reconstitutes itself: both in the breaking down of forms and in subtle gestures that disrupt social conventions and everyday order. With this project, Kuri establishes a dialog between four voices to reveal a series of convergences and contrasts between them.

In the early 60s, David Medalla began his experiments with kinetic sculptures that transformed materials such as sand, mud, and soap bubbles. During this same period, he designed sculptures and machines that were never built. Some were technically too complex, like his remote control flying sculptures; others were more utopian in nature, such as launching the Great Wall of China into orbit around the moon. While almost all his inspiration comes from personal experiences and childhood memories, Medalla leaves interpretation of the work up to the viewer. The construction of the work depends on the artist's intervention, but once activated, the forms that arise are always unpredictable and changing. For this reason, his mechanic sculptures have been associated with hylozoism, a philosophical doctrine from ancient Greece that argued that life is a basic property of all matter. The invisible forces that constitute the natural world are made tangible in his work.

stanley brouwn's singularly radical artistic language seeks to translate his location in space and time into different units of measurement. Although he is never traditionally represented in his works, they record the distances he travels, his displacement between two points or his position in a specific place. brouwn's pieces are stripped-down to their essential components: simple records and administrative formats; words and minimal elements that refer to movement, scale, direction, dimension and space. In these works, the subject dissolves and becomes part of the geography; his biography is measured and quantified, merging with the surrounding context. brouwn's production is exceptionally consistent, eschewing the whims of the market and institutional approval, never deviating from its guidelines or being seduced by the myth of progress in the development of ideas.

In *LAX NAZ* (1975), John Divola portrays the interiors of a series of abandoned houses, which temporarily became his studio. These dwellings, deserted because they lay within the excessive noise perimeter of the Los Angeles International Airport, were the ideal place to carry out the process-oriented photographic exercise that the artist had in mind. His photographs document the abuse and forced entries into these spaces, highlighting underlying social and economic factors. More than a photographer, you could say Divola is a photo-conceptualist: in his work, he not only documents a space or situation and its socio-political context, but also systematizes the traces of experience through the photographic lens.

For his part, Lee Ufan uses simple, timeless techniques, such as sculpture or oil painting to study the relationship between material and perception. For example, with the simple gesture of a deliberate sequence of brushstrokes on a canvas, Ufan reveals a particular moment in the unfolding of space and time. In his sculptures with stones and metal or glass plates, he examines the web of perceptions that exist between the spectator, the work and the exhibition space. His work explores spatial dynamics and promotes an encounter with "the world as it is." This conception of reality responds to an idea articulated by the Japanese avant-garde movement Mono-ha (of which Ufan is one of the protagonists): if an object located in space is moved, then the surrounding space is inevitably altered as well.

David Medalla works between the Philippines and the United Kingdom. stanley brouwn resides and works in Holland. John Divola lives and works in Los Angeles, California and Lee Ufan continues producing work from South Korea and Japan.