

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film 120

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INSTALLATION IN THE VIDEO GALLERY:

CATALINA PARRA'S "VARIACIONES ORNAMENTALES"

Continuing the investigation of Latin American video art currently on view in MoMA's Video Gallery, an installation of four "assemblage" wall pieces and a continuously playing black and white videotape by Chilean artist Catalina Parra will be on exhibit from December 4 through January 5, 1982.

Catalina Parra left Chile after receiving a Guggenheim Foundation grant in 1980. She has been creating her assemblages for about thirteen years; the four in MoMA's exhibit were all constructed in 1981. She uses ordinary household materials, such as yarns, plastic bags, cellophane and gauze, images and printed words torn from magazines and newspapers, and material found in the streets or chanced upon (for example, the X-rays of a friend's head used in Sinus.) This stock culled from everyday life and the media is combined to form, literally and figuratively, multi-layered references to aesthetics, politics, the personal and intimate, and the mass-produced and mass-distributed.

Sinus, Black and White, Chilean Spring and Jean Harris, along with Variaciones Ornamentales, the 5-minute videotape which lends its title to the entire installation, all surround a charged central image with 'life-and-media' images, forming an ambiguous commentary. Jean Harris' central image is self-explanatory; Black and White uses photos depicting Patrice Lumumba eating, under force, the speech in which he asserted his claim to the Republic of Congo in 1961. The tape's tense focal confrontation between two anonymous people reflects the assemblages' use of a forceful image in an undefined context.

Catalina Parra comes from a distinguished family of artists; her father, Nicanor Parra, is one of Chile's foremost living poets, and her aunt, Violetta Parra, was a greatly admired musician, as are Catalina's cousins. When a broad selection of Catalina Parra's work was exhibited at the Galeria Epoca in Santiago, her work became known to a large and enthusiastic number of critics and viewers.

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MoMA's video program is directed by Barbara London, Assistant Curator in The Department of Film. Her research into Latin American video art was funded by MoMA's International Council. Video exhibitions at MoMA are made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

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