BIOGRAPHY
Luciana Lamothe
by Ana Inciarte

Ojalá se derrumben las puertas
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Luciana Lamothe
Ph_Lucia Bonells

Luciana Lamothe (Buenos Aires, 1975) trained as a sculptor at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes Prilidiano Pueyrredón (1999) and in two spaces that proved decisive for her work: the studio of Aroldo Lewy (1995–99) and the clinic by Pablo Siquier (2003–04).

Lamothe explores the concept of tension in a variety of supports and media, including sculpture, performance, drawing, photography and video. She takes the potential of materials and tools to extremes, tensing such constituent binomials of modernity as use/function, form/function, construction/destruction, hardness/softness, feminine/masculine, human/non-human.

Lamothe's early pieces already exhibited the core components of her poetics. In the series of *CARTONES* [Cardboards] (2000), she worked the material in layers with stripped-down symmetrical curved patterns and left the surfaces untreated, pushing the relationship between ornament and raw material to its limit. In *GOFRADOS* [Embossings] (2001), she incorporated the urban space by treading on long rolls of paper to imprint paving stones and fencing scrolls on them.

Between 2003 and 2006, Lamothe left the studio to perform and record acts of urban vandalism. She used tools whose original function of building or repairing was subverted for destructive purposes, thus disrupting the use/function and construction/destruction binomials and radicalising the potential of tools and materials, as in the series I*NTERVENCIONES VANDÁLICAS* [Vandalistic Interventions] (2003–06) or the videos *AUTOR MATERIAL* [Material Author] and *5 ACCIONES* [5 Actions], both from 2005, the year she was awarded a prize in the Ruth Benzacar Galería de Arte's Currículum Cero competition in Buenos Aires. In *CRIMINAL* (RB, 2008), she introduced urban objects into the gallery using a criminal logic. She blended violence and potential action in *FUNCIÓN* [Function] (2011), a sharp-pointed scaffold exhibited after punching holes in the gallery walls. Along the same lines was the video *TESTA* (2006), which linked the idea of destruction with the work of Italo-Argentinian brutalist architect Clorindo Testa.

As a recipient of a 2010–11 Kuitca Fellowship, Lamothe exhibited *PLAN* (subsequently presented at the 11th Biennale de Lyon, 2011), a scaffolding structure suspended from a stripped, bare wall, thus contradicting its own forms and functions. As reticular form and modular tool, scaffolding and its components – metal tubes and couplers, wooden planks – formed the basic unit of Lamothe's lexicon in articulating the concepts of architecture, body and material.

The body of the viewer plays an integral part in heightening the tension of the artist's works. In the large-scale participatory work *CONTACTO* [Contact] (Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 2013), the flexing of the wood and vibration of the metal in the scaffolding platform triggered vertigo. This search was taken to the extreme in the exhibition *THE FUNCTION OF FORM* (Galleria Alberta Pane [GAP], Paris, 2014) and the works *PRUEBA DE TENSIÓN* [Stress Test] (RB, 2014; Museo Provincial de Arte Contemporáneo [Museo MAR], Mar del Plata, 2015; Centro Cultural Recoleta [CCR], Buenos Aires, 2023), *METASBILAD* (La Maison Rouge, Paris, 2015 and Prisma KH, Buenos Aires, 2016) and *PROCESO DE INICIO* [Starting Process] (Centro Galego de Arte Contemporáneo [CGAC], Santiago de Compostela, 2017). The increase in scale entailed a return to the public space, as in *STARTING ZONE* (2018), a temporary open-air tower exhibited under the curatorship of Cecilia Alemani during Art Basel Cities Buenos Aires, or *REPETICIÓN POR QUIEBRE* [Repetition due to Breakage] (2021), a tunnel of broken red timbers at the entrance to the Museo de Arte Decorativo de Buenos Aires, or *AMORFA* [Amorphous] (2023), a wooden belt propelled through the streets of downtown Buenos Aires by the performers inside it. The scale of Lamothe's works may also call for collaborations with dance, sound or lighting specialists, as *IN INVOCAR EL ACTO* [Invoking the Act] (2022), or form a space of containment, as in *CIEN CAMINOS EN UN SOLO DÍA* [A Hundred Roads in a Day] (2023), where she designed a suburban landscape for the exhibition of works from the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires collection.

Lamothe explores the concept of transformation by devising different ways to perceive tools and materials in interaction, integrating their points of view to escape from preconceptions of genre or species. To this effect, she bends wooden sheets in such sculptures as *PROTOTIPOS* [Prototypes] (CCR, 2015) or *LAYERS* (Steve Turner Gallery [STG], Los Angeles, 2016), or participatory works like *BANCO* [Bench] (Premio Braque, Buenos Aires, 2015), and in *BIDIMENSIONAL BISAGRA* [Two-Dimensional Hinge] (Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti, Buenos Aires, 2015) or the exhibition *FRICCIONES* [Frictions] (RB, 2022). Likewise, metals may be softened by the radical use of cutting and welding tools acting through flexion and linear openings, as in the exhibition *MUTATION* (GAP, Venice, 2018), or by making irregular openings reminiscent of plants, as in the exhibitions *ENSAYOS DE ABERTURA* [Opening Tests] (RB, 2018) and *I'M BURNING HERE* (STG, 2019), or in *BRUTAL AMBIVALENCE*, exhibited at Meridians: Art Basel, Miami Beach, in 2019, the year she received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. This technique extends to railings or handles, small-scale architectural features for manual use, as in *ONE FRAME LIFE* (GAP, Paris, 2022).

The hardness/softness dualism is also present in the dialogue between solid materials and bodily fluids, as in *MEADAS* [Pissings] (2003), a record of the act of urinating on the pavement, *SPIT ON THE CEMENT FLOOR* (GAP, Paris, 2012), a floor covered in cement powder spat on and hardened by viewers, or *ESCUPIR EN EL ESPEJO* [Spit on the Mirror] (2013), where saliva trickles over the artist's reflection.

Lamothe has also explored the limits of the camera and drawing as tools, articulating visibility/opacity with excess/absence of light in series like *ÍCONO NO* [Icon No No] (winner of the First Itaú Prize, 2011), *ENCD* (2013) or *RETRATO BORDE* [Edge Portrait] (2022), in which the city is a setting and the body a referent. In her drawings, the outlines of such everyday work elements as pipes, pliers or hands function as modular units in abstract compositions, integrating and condensing her poetic acts of search and insistence.

In addition to the above exhibitions and recognitions, Lamothe won First Prize at the Lichter Art Award, Frankfurt (2011), and has been shortlisted for the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation's (CIFO) Grants and Commissions Programme, the 2023 Alberto J. Trabucco Sculpture Acquisition Award, the Federico Jorge Klemm Award (2021, 2022), the 8M Acquisition Award (2022), Argentina's National Visual Arts Exhibition (Special Mention, Sculpture, 2021) and others. She has participated in the 3rd Montevideo Biennial (2016) and the 5th Berlin Biennial (2008).