



ARTS + CULTURE ART LOOKS

A 24/7 switchboard connecting participants to ‘The Dead Woman’

In 'A morta,' Cinthia Marcelle fuses art, theater, and telecommunication—and yes, you can play at home.

BY EMILY WILSON - JANUARY 8, 2020

For her first solo show in California, Brazilian artist [Cinthia Marcelle](#) has converted the galleries at the [CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts](#) into a temporary radio station. Through computers at the Wattis and on personal computers or phones, members of the public here and around the world can participate 24 hours a day in [Marcelle's work](#), which is structured around Brazilian writer [Oswald de Andrade](#)'s 1937 play *A morta* (*The Dead Woman*).

In this play, Andrade investigated the relationship between theater, life, and death, and he considered the social implications of artists' relationship to their work and in the conflicts of everyday life. This reflected some of Marcelle's questions about her art with rising social inequality in Brazil and around the world.

Marcelle has worked in lots of different forms, including installation, performance, drawing and video, and [Kim Nguyen](#), CCA Wattis curator, says her art has lots of attention to detail while being lighthearted and having a satirical humor.



'A morta'

"The proposition here is all of us together get to rewrite the script and retell the story," Nguyen said at the opening of *A morta*. "The show embraces chaos and disorder."

The characters in Andrade's play are on the wall of the gallery—including "The Poet," "The Precocious Tourist," "The Living," and "The Dead"—and the character name lights up when chosen by a participant. Through song selection those taking part at home or at the gallery, assume a role in the play, so their choices construct—and deconstruct—the script.

The audio streams into the gallery space, where visitors listen to the sounds and voices, as well as the moments of silence. Nguyen and Marcelle say the exhibition was partly inspired by collective action, like that of protest movements.



From 'A morta'

At the opening of her show, Marcelle, who has exhibited all over the world, including representing Brazil at the Venice Biennale, and who currently has work at San Francisco

Museum of Modern Art’s SOFT POWER exhibit, said she was drawn to Wattis partly because of the window looking into the gallery from the street.



“This work deals with outside space and inside space and brings it together,” she said. “This room is inside, but it’s automatically connected to outside because it will be online 24 hours a day.”

The gallery has been hosting public programs along with A *morta*, including **Chris E. Vargas** with a *Transcestor Radio Hour*, and **PJ Gubatina Policarpio** with a conversation on kinship. On **January 10**, **DJ Lynnée Denise** will do a lecture and screening of her latest project, Circle Formation, an experimental video installation which uses the “ring shout” dance style “to highlight the link between gospel and the queer roots of disco and house music.”

CINTHIA MARCELLE ET AL.: A MORTA

The Wattis Institute

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