

Smack Mellon

THE NEW SCHOOL

VERA LIST CENTER
FOR ART AND POLITICS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carmen Amengual, *A Non-Coincidental Mirror*
[Gallery One]

December 7, 2024-February 9, 2025



Carmen Amengual, *A Non-Coincidental Mirror*, still from film, 2024. Courtesy the artist.

[Public Programs]

Opening Reception

Sat. December 7, 2024, 6-8PM

Screening Program presented at e-flux Screening Room

Tuesday, January 14, 2025, 7PM

Artist-Led Tour at Smack Mellon

Sat. January 18, 2025, 5PM

Publication Launch at Smack Mellon

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 4PM

Smack Mellon and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School are pleased to announce *A Non-Coincidental Mirror*, an exhibition by 2022–2024 VLC Fellow Carmen Amengual. *A Non-Coincidental Mirror* is a film installation by the Los Angeles-based Argentine artist and her first solo institutional exhibition in the US.

The exhibition results from ongoing research that Amengual started in 2022 about a little explored event in the cultural history of Global South solidarities: the First Third World Filmmakers Meeting in Algiers in 1973 and its second iteration in Buenos Aires in 1974. The events served as hubs where self-identified “third-world” filmmakers discussed the role of filmmaking in anti-colonial struggles, made agreements, and strategized about how to produce and distribute films under dire political conditions.

Based on an archive Amengual inherited from her mother—who collaborated with the organizers of the meeting in Algiers—the artist embarked on a field investigation that took her to Algiers, Buenos Aires, and Rome to follow the thread of this forgotten event and film in these locations as she looked to reimagine a failed documentary project that the organizers, together with the artist’s mother, attempted to make as part of the follow up meeting in Argentina.

The exhibition consists of a film installation that creates a kaleidoscopic reconstruction of this experience. Using architecture as an entry point to the utopian horizons of the past, and to the ruinification of these in the present, the multichannel film installation intertwines three storylines: an inquiry on political cinema and its methodologies, as they manifested in the Filmmakers’ Meetings; a question about the role of architecture and the decolonial project—reflecting on some of the architectural projects in Algiers and the student-led efforts to decolonize architecture education at the University of Buenos Aires; and a question about the present, as it emerges from the filmic portraits of buildings and urban infrastructure that the artist conducted during her research trips.

As part of the film installation, Amengual designed a series of functional, sculptural objects and exhibition display structures that further underscore the cross-continental entanglement of localized, anti-Imperialist pedagogy and cultural expression. They offer a space for attentive viewership, communal reflection, and study while showcasing the artist’s ongoing project research, documents, facsimiles, and other printed material.

Told in the present, *A Non-Coincidental Mirror* speaks of Global South solidarities and reclaims for the current moment a concrete experience of transnational, self-organized collaboration while foregrounding the social and historical conditions that made it possible.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication featuring an essay by curators Eriola Pira and Rachel Vera Steinberg, a conversation between the artist and independent curator and writer Natasha Marie Llorens, and an essay by film historian Mariano Mestman. Designed by Jacob Lindgren, the publication features extensive images from the research and film installation.

Carmen Amengual is an interdisciplinary artist, independent researcher, and filmmaker from Argentina, now based in Los Angeles. Her work explores the emergence of collective imaginaries, identity formations, and conceptions of time and history that shape political imagination. She has presented her projects in various formats both nationally and internationally, with exhibitions at Artist Space (New York), Human Resources and 2220 Art & Archives (Los Angeles), Table (Chicago), Biquini Wax EPS (Mexico City), and Museo Centenario (Buenos Aires). Her work has also been featured in conferences such as Film Undone: Elements for a Latent Cinema (Silent Green / Kino Arsenal, Berlin) and Film Act: Third Cinema and Its Legacies (American University in Cairo), and in screenings across the US and abroad.

A Non-Coincidental Mirror is her first solo institutional exhibition in the US. Amengual graduated in Comparative Literature from the University of Buenos Aires and holds an MFA in Visual Arts from the California Institute of the Arts. She is a 2021–2022 Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Studio Program fellow, a 2022–2024 Vera List Center for Art and Politics Fellow, a 2023 and 2024 Graham Foundation grantee, and a 2024 Creative Capital awardee.

Carmen Amengual, A Non-Coincidental Mirror is co-presented with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School. It is a Vera List Center Fellowship-commissioned project and is supported by research assistance, production grants, and curatorial support by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics as part of its *Correction** Focus Theme. Additionally, it is supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and Creative Capital Foundation. *Carmen Amengual, A Non-Coincidental Mirror* is curated by Eriola Pira, Curator and Director of Programs, Vera List Center for Art and Politics, and Rachel Vera Steinberg, Curator & Director of Exhibitions, Smack Mellon.

This exhibition is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, New York City Council Member Lincoln Restler, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and with generous support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Robert Lehman Foundation, Select Equity Group Foundation, many individuals and Smack Mellon's Members. This project was supported, in part, by a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant.

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The Vera List Center for Art and Politics is an artist-focused research center and public forum for art, culture, and politics. It was established at The New School in 1992—a time of rousing debates about freedom of speech, identity politics, and society's investment in the arts. A leader in the field, the center is a nonprofit that catalyzes and supports politically engaged art, public scholarship, and research worldwide. For over thirty years, the VLC has championed the arts as expressions of the political moments from which they emerge and considers the intersection between art and politics the space where new forms of civic engagement must be developed. Through public programs and the VLC Seminars, the Jane Lombard Prize, and artist and student fellowships, publications, and exhibitions that probe some of the pressing issues of our time, the center curates and supports new roles for the arts and artists in advancing social justice