

Study Resource for In the Studio: Lee Lozano

What is the book about?

'In the Studio: Lee Lozano' is a vibrant archival resource for readers. Written by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti, writer and Head Curator at the Swiss Institute in Rome, Milan and Palermo, the book includes intimate material about Lozano's life, practice and spirit. Filled with insights into the artist's career and work, Calabrò Visconti outlines her bold drawings from the early years of her practice beginning in the 1960's, her large minimalist paintings and finally the renowned 'Life-Art' pieces. Readers can also explore key creatives and friends that Lozano surrounded herself with in New York, along with intimate examples of the artist's voice ranging from her personal notebooks to an excerpt from Lozano's lecture at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax.

Who is it for?

Whether you are learning about Lozano for the first time or want to know more about the artist's internal world, this book is for any curious reader.

Why is it great for learners?

Learners will receive an in-depth understanding of the artist's major works and series in a digestible format. The text is accompanied by images of Lozano's paintings, written works on paper and of the artist herself, allowing readers to visually learn about her concepts and philosophies. Lozano's ideas were reflected in her creative practice and her personal life – she sought to consistently intertwine both. Readers will understand Lozano not only as an artist, but primarily as a human being and how she developed her unique stance amongst the world around her. Through her practice, Lozano encourages others not to take what is in front of them at face value, and to challenge existing spaces to make room for something new. Never satisfied with the status quo, Lozano will inspire learners to advocate for a world they want to see.

What will you learn?

Readers will have an exclusive view into the artist's interior world. A creative and personal roadmap; the book provides an extensive account of the artist's life values and outlooks. Calabrò Visconti guides readers through how Lozano's values and her everyday life were directly transferred to her artworks. The reader will finish the publication with a new understanding of how the artist's body of work progressed and how her ideas built upon each other over, paving the way towards her final creative gesture.

Discussion Questions

Power and Patriarchy

- Refer to pages 100-103. Lozano emphasized that all people are negatively impacted by the societal system of their generation, suggesting that an injustice for one is an injustice for all. Calabrò Visconti outlines that the 'feminist movement, for Lozano, was not a space of liberation but one that imposed its own set of boundaries' and she separated herself from 'systematic forms of organization and group definitions' and this individualized approach was reflected in her work (Calabrò Visconti, 102-103). How do your sociopolitical values in today's society impact your outlook on the world and, if at all, your practice?
- Refer to page 132. Lozano found ways to make the existing patriarchal system work for her through various connections she forged in the New York City art world, before separating herself from these connections completely – she ultimately garnered her own power. How do you cultivate your voice within the structures around you? Are there other artists, creatives or thinkers who have similar outlooks to Lozano? Any that may have opposite perspectives? Spend some time comparing and contrasting and relate these outlooks to your own perspectives.
- Refer to page 139. Through her work, Lee Lozano actively defied the 'conservative, sexist, racist and capitalist patriarchal society' which surrounded her (Calabrò Visconti, 139). The artist also saw these systems as 'insignificant conventions in light of deeper energies' (Calabrò Visconti, 139). How do you understand Lozano's work as it relates to power? Through her art, do you think Lozano took power away from the systems of power she targeted? How so?

Satire through Language and the Body

- Refer to pages 21-23. At the beginning of her career, Lozano created paintings and drawings, reminiscent of cartoons, displaying tools and household items colliding with 'dissected bodies' (Calabrò Visconti, 21). She also included swear words alongside her bold imagery, furthering her use of satirical humor as she rejected dysfunctional social conventions around her. In what ways do you think humor can 'mock etiquette and disrupt societal expectations' (Calabrò Visconti, 60)? Does humor play a role in your practice? What messages do you convey or want to convey through humor and why?
- Refer to pages 53-55. Calabrò Visconti explains how Lozano's satirical imagery targets power dynamics within religion, formal education and American nationalism, to name a few, and symbols associated with these institutions are often merged with graphic scenes nodding to male-dominated systems in Lozano's work. Does humor inspire you? Do you think humor can alter perceptions people have about the world around them? How and why?
- Refer to page 61. Through language, especially puns and riddles, Lozano encouraged people to connect with their intuition, analyze reality on a deeper level and challenge knowledge structures around them. What effect does Lozano's use of humor have on you and why? How does Lozano use language as a method to redistribute power?

Revolution and Refusal

- Refer to pages 15-16. Lozano created a series of experiments called “Life-Art’ pieces: gestures, actions, and experiences elevated to conceptual artworks’ (Calabrò Visconti, 15). One of many ‘pieces’ include *Withdrawal Piece*, signaling Lozano’s withdrawal of a painting in a gallery show, *General Strike Piece* which refers to the removal of herself from art world social gatherings, and *Dropout Piece*, her final separation from the art world as a whole and relationships she had within it. From your perspective, what is the significance of Lozano’s life decisions being framed as art? What do you think Lozano was trying to say through these ‘pieces’ and why? If at all, do you see a separation or a connection between your everyday voice and your creative voice? How has this shifted over time?
- Refer to pages 40-41. Lozano turned her back on social convention from an early age. Lozano changed her name when she was a teenager from Lenore to Lee, later owning different abbreviations and names as her life progressed. ‘Throughout this evolution, she was concerned with the ‘rejection of the traditional American middle-class female trip’ – she believed in ‘redesign[ing] yourself to suit yourself’ and she eventually embodied the name ‘E’ in the final stages of her life, connecting to her preoccupation with energy and transformation (Calabrò Visconti, 40-41). What do you think was the creative and social impact of this refusal on Lozano’s life and practice? How do you understand your own identity? Is this understanding, if at all, reflected in your practice?