

STOCKHOLM

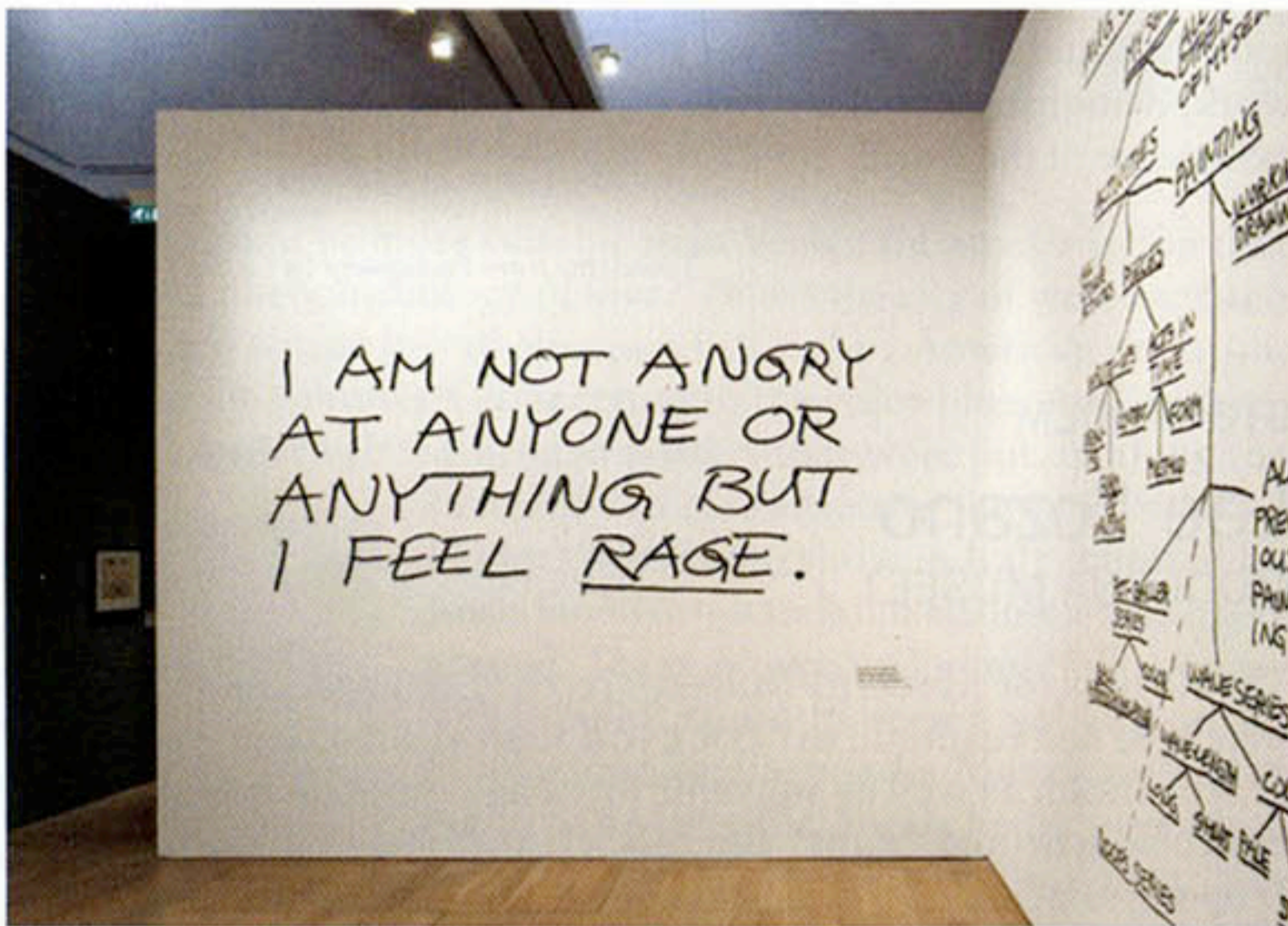
Lee Lozano

MODERNA MUSEET

The slogans for Moderna Museet's recent Lee Lozano retrospective were bold and beautiful: EAT COCK FOR MENTAL HEALTH graced posters in Stockholm as well as souvenir tote bags. Another version of the motto substituted "cunt" for "cock"; the phrase was lifted from Lozano's salacious early drawings of the 1960s. Both were modified as ads, suggestively featuring a pink dot over the "oc" and the "un." SEE EVERYTHING AT THE MODERNA MUSEET, they suggested.

As this was the largest overview of Lozano's oeuvre to date, with more than two hundred works, there was plenty to see, with some of the pieces being shown for the first time. That the exhibition was organized in Sweden was somehow appropriate, as the country was a beacon of sexual enlightenment in the '60s and '70s. Lozano's "mystery" was deeply emphasized in the exhibition and catalogue—she is known, if at all, for her mythic and extreme performance pieces: boycotting women in 1971, gradually withdrawing from the art world through her *General Strike Piece*, 1969, and dropping out completely around 1972 to move to Dallas. (She died in 1999.) Consequently, the peculiar process of recovery and the pressure to amend the art-historical canon, as outlined by curator Iris Müller-Westermann, weighed heavily on the show—perhaps too much, as it was Lozano's third significant posthumous exhibition (following those at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in New York in 2004 and the Kunsthalle Basel in 2006).

Lucy R. Lippard's essay in the catalogue broadens the scholarship on Lozano while importantly de-escalating the mystery, which has for too long received the lion's share of attention. The relationship between the two was brief but significant: Lippard curated Lozano's work into a show at Paula Cooper Gallery in 1969; the artist later boycotted her. Just when Lozano withdrew from the art world, Lippard registered Lozano's major contributions in her seminal book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. In her essay, Lippard focuses on the "incredibly personal" aspects of Lozano's language pieces that were installed in a corridor here between her paintings of the late '60s and early '70s. Pulled from Lozano's notebooks, these pages underscored the tension between the sprawling exhibition and the sense of privacy that suffuses her art, particularly *Dialogue Piece*, 1969, here represented by a handwritten copy, and for which the artist invited guests to her studio and then recorded the interaction through cryptic notes (for example: MAY 30, 1969: DAN GRAHAM AND I HAVE AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION IN THAT DEFINITE CHANGES WERE IMMEDIATELY EFFECTED BECAUSE OF IT). Although several of the original notebook pages were on view, there were photocopies of others, which Lozano made and sent to friends. A number of recent and current group shows have featured such copies; a concurrent exhibition at Andrew Kreps Gallery in New York had two facsimiles paired with a number of works by Stephen Kaltenbach. The significance of these copies deserves more consideration (as does Primary Information's recent publication of Lozano's notebooks, one marked private). Beyond her interest in ephemera, they stress her desire to use language to render opacity and to high-



View of "Lee Lozano," 2010. From left: Photo enlargement from artist's notebook, dated December 20, 1969. Right: Photo enlargement from artist's notebook, dated August 6, 1969.

light the impenetrability of private encounters rather than opting for apparent linguistic transparency as in some conceptual works of the era such as those of Joseph Kosuth.

Lippard's essay highlights Lozano's unnerving aptitude for self-criticism, which in the notebooks can sometimes read as madness or eloquence. "It is almost impossible to avoid psychologizing when discussing these works, though Lozano might have hated it," Lippard writes. To be sure, the demands of the art historian—and of the art market—are not always in line with the artist's wishes, and those can never really be known.

—Lauren O'Neill-Butler