

## Eduardo Costa

b. 1940, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

**1956-7** Studies drawing and painting with Maria Bonomo

**1958** University of Buenos Aires. Studies Literature and Art History

**1959** Editor of *Airón* magazine, with a group of writers including Mercedes Alvarez Reynolds, José María Bottaro, Madela Ezcurra, Marta Fernández, Ángel Núñez, Basilia Papastamatíu, Marta Teglia, Alicia Dujovne Ortiz and others. *Airón* exchanges issues with *El techo de la ballena* (Caracas,) *Temas* (Montevideo,) and *El corno emplumado* (México City,) among other publications. Takes courses with Jorge L. Borges and Ana María Barrenechea.

**1964** Works with Oscar Masotta, a brilliant drop-out who privately teaches and writes about art, philosophy, literature, and psychoanalysis.

**1965** Graduates with an MA equivalent.

**1966** With Raul Escari and Roberto Jacoby, he creates First Mass-Media Art Work and writes A Media Art (Manifesto). With Jacoby and Juan Risuleo creates *First Audition of Works Made of Spoken Language*, presented at the auditorium of the Instituto Di Tella, and writes the Manifesto for an Oral Literature. Travels to New York, invited by Masotta. Meets Octavio Paz, and a correspondence ensues. A phrase by Paz is widely quoted, "There is no more esthetic contemplation because esthetics dissolve into life". He creates *Fashion Fiction I*, with the help of Juan Risuleo.

**1967** *Fashion Fiction I* at Osvaldo Giesso Gallery, BA. Participates in *Change in Our Time*, a symposium organized by the Rockefeller Foundation in Caracas, Venezuela. Meets a number of Latin American and US intellectuals and artists in the symposium: Nicanor Parra, Rubens Gerchman, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Hardwick, Frank Stella, Barbara Rose, and Henry Geldzahler. In Caracas, he meets some of the writers of *El techo de la ballena*, among others Adriano González León, Edmundo Aray y Juan Calzadilla. Also meets Clara Sujo and visits several important art collections, among them the impressive Otero Silva collection of contemporary art. Travels to NYC, and shows *Fashion Fiction I* to Leo Castelli. Castelli is very enthusiastic about the work and arranges for Costa to meet Alexander Liberman of *Vogue*. Liberman calls the work, "The most exciting thing I've seen in recent years." He loves Costa's props and ideas although he thinks Costa's text (which imitates fashion copy) is perhaps inappropriate since, "This is what we are about." Liberman sends Costa to Richard Avedon's studio, where he is allowed into the photographic sessions, first with model Marina Schiano and then with Marisa Berenson. *Happenings!* by Oscar Masotta and others, among them Costa, is published in Buenos Aires.

**1968** *Fashion Fiction I* is published in *Vogue*. Lawrence Alloway's opinion on the work is quoted in the credit line. On his way to New York, Costa stops in Rio de Janeiro, where Rubens Gerchman introduces him to Helio Oiticica. In NYC, he is invited by Julian Cairol to participate on a panel organized by WRVR radio where he meets Anne Waldman and the poets of the Saint Mark's Church on the Bowery Poetry Project. Meets Vito Acconci, Scott Burton, John Giorno, Lucy Lippard, Bernadette Mayer, Lewis Warsh, John Perreault, Carter Ratcliff, Marjorie Strider, Hannah Weiner, Carolee Schneemann, among other American artists and writers. Also meets Luis Camnitzer, Beba Damianovich, Leandro Katz, Marcos Margall, César Paternosto, Rolando Peña, Susana Pesce, Liliana Porter, Alejandro Puente, Carla Stellweg, and Susana Torre among others. Lita Hornick, a well-known collector of American art and founder of Kultur Press and Kultur magazine commissions ears of gold. Costa makes the jewelry from a mold of Hornick's own ears, attaches findings to the back of the objects, and the fiction becomes actual. *Fashion Fiction I* is given a Harper's Bazaar's cover, photographed by Hiro. Meets Bill Cunningham, Charles James and Salvador Dalí. Cunningham writes about Costa for the Chicago Tribune, and commissions ears of gold.

**1969** Costa with Hannah Weiner and John Perreault create *The Fashion Show Poetry Event*, a post-happening work that includes fashions by James Lee Byars, Enrique Castro-Cid, Allan D'Arcangelo, Rubens Gerchman, Alex Katz, Nicholas Krushenick, Les Levine, Marisol, Claes Oldenburg, Roberto Plate, Alfredo Rodríguez Arias and Juan Stoppani, Jim Rosenquist, Susana Salgado (now Pesce), Sylvia Stone, Marjorie Strider, Andy Warhol, and the artists/poets. This conceptual work is "pop" in its most visible aspects and is widely reported in the mass media. The three organizers write the text for the show mimicking the style of

fashion copy. Harper's Bazaar, in its literary pages, publishes the poetry. Les Levine makes the video. Edits and publishes with John Perreault *Tape Poems*, an anthology of works made specifically for stereophonic tape by artists and poets (300 copies.) The issue is offered to main libraries in the US and abroad, entering major collections. Included are works by Vito Acconci, Michael Benedikt, Scott Burton, Leandro Katz and Ted Castle, Joseph Ceravolo, John Giorno, Dan Graham, Bernadette Mayer, Anne Waldman, Lewis Warsh, Costa and Perreault. *Street Works HV* takes place in the streets of NYC. Perreault and Costa organize the events. Artists, poets and critics are invited. Among them Acconci, Arakawa, Gregory Battcock, Scott Burton, James Lee Byars, John Giorno, Les Levine, Lucy Lippard, Meredith Monk, Mr. T, Luis Wells, and Lil Piccard. *Street Works IV* is sponsored by The Architectural League.

Costa's *First Useful Art Work* is presented as part of *Street Works III* and he writes a position paper for the press and friends. Participates in Theater Works at Hunter College. Costa's contribution is *Six Absences*, an autobiography in 18 lines on as many file cards, read on the stage by the other participants. The text in the first person, which starts: "My name is Eduardo Costa. I was born in Buenos Aires in 1940," is read on different days by Vito Acconci, Scott Burton, Bernadette Mayer, John Perreault, Anne Waldman and Hannah Weiner. Teaches Spanish and Latin American Literature at The City College. Rubén Santantonín passes away in Buenos Aires. A talented friend and informal art teacher, Santantonín had introduced Costa to the work of Lucio Fontana and to his own, brilliant work. Santantonín's *Cosas (Things)* a group of rounded hollow objects shown hanging from the ceiling at the Lirolay Gallery in Buenos Aires, were made of chicken wire and covered with burlap on which paint was applied. These were the first paintings on a volumetric support.

- 1970** Participates in *4 Theater Pieces* at The Wadsworth Atheneum, organized by Scott Burton. The other participants are Burton, Perreault and Acconci.  
Participates in *Art in the Mind*, curated by Athena Spear at Oberlin College.  
Visits Puerto Rico with Scott Burton.
- 1971** Returns to Buenos Aires. Corresponds with several American friends, notably with Scott Burton.
- 1972** Receives a fellowship from the University of Buenos Aires to study new American poetry. Works on the project for two years, includes Afro-American poets, and translates them all into Spanish.
- 1974** Costa creates *Row of Ants Bracelet*, which is meant to generate *Fashion Fiction II*, and *Diamonds of Gold* as actual jewelry.
- 1975** Costa travels to Europe and then to NY. Scott Burton shoots at his place on Thompson Street, *Portrait of Eduardo*, a series of 5 frames where he experiments with partially out-of-focus images of his friend.  
Discovers Marcel Duchamp's *Bathtub* at Duchamp's last address, 24 W. 10th Street in Manhattan, where Donald Droll then lived. Duchamp's *Bathtub* is the actual bathtub of the artist, which he had "assisted" by replacing some of the original surrounding white tiles with decorated ones, showing motifs related to his work. Costa has the bathroom photographed. Introduces Helio Oiticica to Scott Burton.
- 1976** Writes Duchamp's *Bathtub* for La Opinión, Buenos Aires.  
Attempts to reconcile his media work, which is initially meant to exist in the media, with the exhibition space of galleries and museums. Makes several drawings for mass media works in the gallery.  
Irving Penn photographs *Row of Ants Bracelet* for Vogue. The photograph is extraordinary, a close up of model Iman's face, looking horrified as gold ants crawl on it, bathed in Penn's light. The shot is never published because it is thought to be too aggressive towards women, hence *Fashion Fiction II* is aborted.  
Starts working on *Media Cross*, a medium size work made of magazine pages from the 1968 issue of Vogue, which contained Costa's work, and is meant to be exhibited in a traditional art space.  
Meets Jeff Weinstein, who will become a friend, and later writes about Costa for The Village Voice.
- 1977** Participates in *Homenaje a Marcel Duchamp*, curated by Álvaro Castagnino at Galería Arte Nuevo, Buenos Aires, with a model of The Duchamp/Costa Wheel.  
Completes *Media Cross* and develops plans for a series of "mass-media works in the gallery".
- 1978** After repeatedly being detained during police background sweeps, Costa leaves Buenos Aires and moves to Rio de Janeiro. Runs into Helio Oiticica in the street. Unknowingly to Costa, the Brazilian artist has just returned to Rio after several years in New York. They meet almost daily until Oiticica's sudden death in 1980. Through Oiticica, Costa meets and befriends a most interesting group of artists, musicians, and intellectuals: Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, Ferreira Gullar, Mario Pedrosa, Antonio Manuel, Macalé, Esther Emilio Carlos, Jimmy Bastian Pinto, Sonia and George Salomao, Waly Salomao, Ney Matogrosso, Marcos Bonisson, Glauber Rocha, Marcos Rodrigues, Suely Rolnick, Jorginho Guinle, Ferreira Gullar, Oscar Ramos, Luciano Figueiredo, Regina Vater, Neville D'Almeida, and Caetano Veloso.  
Meets Mestre Didi (Deoscoredes Maximiliano dos Santos) the artist-priest from Bahia, and his wife, anthropologist Juana

Elbein dos Santos, who become close friends, introducing Costa to Afro-Brazilian culture.

Costa starts working on *The Duchamp-Costa Bicycle*, an assisted bicycle based on The Duchamp/Costa Wheel, which is meant as a model for industrial production.

- 1979** Federico Moura, later on the lead singer of the Argentinean rock group Virus, works with Costa on business ideas. Costa sees the Argentinean writers Manuel Puig and Reynaldo Mariani.  
Participates in *Esquentando Pro Carnaval*, organized by Oiticica at the Morro da Mangueira.  
Linda Shearer, then curator at the Guggenheim Museum, visits Rio. Scott Burton refers her to Costa, who introduces Shearer to Oiticica and other Brazilian artists. Barbara London, video curator at MOMA, also visits Rio and is introduced around by Costa.  
Lygia Clark gives Costa one of her legendary art-therapeutic sessions.  
Years later, Costa describes the experience in an illustrated letter to Guy Brett.  
Travels to São Paulo with Oiticica and Vater to attend the International Jazz Festival.
- 1980** Helio Oiticica passes away. The scene, that thrived around him, declines. Costa, who steadily corresponds with Scott Burton, writes to him about Oiticica's death. Burton extends condolences and offers to help with Oiticica's work in New York.  
The Duchamp/Costa Bicycle is completed.
- 1981** Costa returns to New York, with *Laminated Butterflies*, meant to generate *Fashion Fiction III*. He meets Jade Hobson, a young and talented Vogue editor who supports his projects.  
*Usable Art* opens, an exhibition curated by John Perreault at the Queens Museum where Costa's work is shown. Other artists in the show are Scott Burton, Chris Burden, and Marjorie Strider. The exhibition travels to the San Diego, El Paso and Danforth Art Museums among others.
- 1982** *Fashion Fiction III* is published in Vogue, generating another "beauty shot" with King as the photographer and Shari Belafonte as the model.  
Costa tries to design and commercialize some real jewelry, as opposed to his jewelry fictions. He is hired by Carolina Herrera, creating pieces specifically for her shows. Through Herrera, sells commercial versions of his designs to Bergdorf Goodman, Henri Bendel, and major stores nationwide.  
Costa meets Ana Mendieta. A close friendship follows. Later on, when Mendieta travels to Cuba and then to Rome for her Residency at the American Academy, a correspondence develops.  
*Recent Editions*, curated by Carla Stellweg, presents *Laminated Butterflies As Christmas Tree Ornaments* at The Americas Society.
- 1983** Works for designers Geoffrey Beene and Fabrice. Through Beene *Fashion Fiction IV* is shown to Harper's Bazaar.  
Costa makes first *Electric Painting* and *Electric Installation*, works using electrical wires and light bulbs.
- 1984** *Fashion Fiction IV* is published in Harper's Bazaar. Costa starts working on *A Portable Monument*, an 8 ft x 12 ft sculpture in screen format which used 64 original pages of *Fashion Fiction IV*. On the other side of Costa's full-color page, where a laughing model wears his fictions, the deeply troubled face of Tennessee Williams is seen. Photographed by Scavullo, this was Williams last photo session, as he committed suicide shortly thereafter.
- 1985** Ana Mendieta passes away.  
Designs jewelry for Christophe de Menil's fashion shows. Collaborates with the designer on some of the pieces.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquires *Gold Diamond Ring*, *Row of Ants Bracelet* and *Laminated Butterflies*.
- 1986** *Eminent Immigrants*, curated by John Perreault, at The Snug Harbor Cultural Center, S.I. includes Costa's *The Duchamp-Costa Bicycle*, *Media Cross*, and *Media Lingam*. Other artists in the show are Christo, Ana Mendieta, Les Levine, Naoto Nakagawa, Sylvia Sleigh, Bernar Venet.  
Mestre Didí and his wife come to New York for his sculpture exhibition at the Schomburg Center.  
Federico Moura asks Costa to write the lyrics for a song. Costa composes *Luna de miel (Honeymoon)* based on a concept by James Joyce. The song is released and becomes N°1 across Latin America.
- 1987** Burton introduces Costa to Richard Martin and Harold Koda, who are working on the final stages of *Fashion and Surrealism*. Costa is included in the show (too late for the catalog.) *Fashion and Surrealism*, opens at FIT in NYC. Costa shows *Branch Bracelets*, *Row of Ants Bracelet*, *Laminated Butterflies*, and *Gold Diamond Ring*.  
Costa writes the lyrics of another song for Moura, *Encuentro en el río musical (Encounter in the Musical River)* which also becomes a N°1 hit, and generates a popular video.

- 1988** *Fashion and Surrealism* travels to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Costa goes to London for the opening. Meets Guy Brett and a correspondence follows.  
*The Latin American Spirit*, organized by Luis Cancel opens at The Bronx Museum of the Arts. Costa's *Fashion Fiction I* is included in Magnet: New York, the contemporary section curated by Carla Stellweg.  
 A third *Fashion Fiction III* presentation is photographed for and appears in Vogue Magazine, Jade Hobson, editor.
- 1989** Scott Burton passes away.  
 Daniel Melgarejo, a talented Argentine artist and friend from the 1970's, who works as an animator for Disney in NY, passes away.  
*Fashion Fiction IV: A Portable Monument*, the large sculpture of Costa's Bazaar pages is completed.  
*Pervasive Symbiosis*, curated by Carla Stellweg at the Carla Stellweg Gallery, presents the Torsos series, a group of semi-flat representations of male torsos using only stretched canvas.
- 1990** Begins collaboration with Marta Chilindron on various projects. *Vertical Extensions*, *Horizontal Extensions*, *Vogue Blocks*, and *Talking Paintings* involve laminated magazine pages. Other collaborations include *City Gardens*, *Touched by Light*, and *Paint Clothes*.
- 1991** *Vogue Blocks*, a temporary, outdoor installation at Queensborough Community College, curator Faustino Quintanilla.
- 1992** *The Art Mall: A Social Space*, (group) curated by Brian Hannon at The New Museum. Vertical Extensions are presented.  
 Small Street Gardens in several street locations in Manhattan.  
 Costa writes an article on Hélio Oiticica for Flash Art, editor Francesco Bonami.  
*Dissimilar Identities*, curated by Berta Sichel at the Scott Alan Gallery, NYC, presents magazine paintings and sculptures.
- 1993** Starts writing for Art in America. Editor Elizabeth Baker, whom Costa had met year earlier through Scott Burton, becomes a mentor and friend.  
*ABC*, (group) curated by Berta Sichel at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College, NYC, present a large magazine painting.
- 1994** First "Volumetric Paintings" (a name given by Carter Ratcliff.)  
 Talking Paintings are shown at IBEU Copacabana (Rio de Janeiro.) The "paintings", made of laminated magazine pages on wood, are equipped with tape recorders, and tell the audience about their own characteristics and problems. Two of them talk to each other. *Dreams* is an installation using Vertical and Horizontal Extensions shown at IBEU Madureira. The viewers have to lay on beds to see the images in the Extensions. Both shows are curated by Esther Emilio Carlos. Reunion with Lygia Pape, Antonio Manuel, Jimmy Bastian Pinto, Esther Emilio Carlos, and others from the initial Brazilian group.  
 Costa and Chilindron travel to Chile invited by Roberto Edwards to participate in *Cuerpos pintados*, curated by Luz Maria Williamson, they contribute Paint Clothes.
- 1995** Works on various volumetric paintings.  
 A group of seven representational volumetric paintings is shown at Group Show, Elga Wimmer Gallery, NYC.  
 The Portrait Now, (group) presents *Field of Poppies*, a talking painting, at the Elga Wimmer Gallery.  
 Soho Biennial, (group) curated by Abe Lubelsky, 450 Broadway Gallery, NYC. One of the Talking Paintings is presented.  
 Starts writing for ArtNet magazine, an internet art magazine, Walter Robinson, editor.  
 Works for a year as a full-time editor of children's books for Scholastic, Inc. (Spanish Language division.)
- 1996** Works on volumetric paintings. Covers the Guadalajara Art Fair for ArtNet.
- 1997** Works on volumetric paintings. Lygia Pape and Esther Emilio Carlos visit Costa in New York, and he takes molds of their faces as a basis for their volumetric portraits.  
 Travels to Cuba to cover the Havana Biennial for Art in America. Interviews Lillian Llanes, curator of the Biennial, and Achile Bonito Oliva, Pierre Restany, Robert Loder and Norbert Nobis. Article is published in 1998, editor Cathy Lebowitz.
- 1998** *Volumetric Paintings* (solo) at ICI in Buenos Aires, curated by Laura Buccellato (catalog,) José Tono Martínez, director. Reunion with Argentinean group, including Roberto Jacoby, Raul Escari, Dalila Puzzovio, Charlie Squirru, Mercedes Alvarez Reynolds, Edgardo Jiménez, Fernando Bustillo, Marta Minujin, Luis Felipe Noé, Luis Wells, Rogelio Polesello, Mercedes Robirosa, Osvaldo Giesso, Pier Cantamesa, and Ignacio Beola. Lygia Pape and Esther Emilio Carlos, whose volumetric portraits are in the show, travel to Buenos Aires for the opening.  
 Writes about the work of Magdalena Campos-Pons for Art in America. Meets the artist and a friendship develops.  
 Ruth Benzacar offers to represent Costa, which he accepts.

- 1999** *The White Paintings* opens at The Work Space, curated by Judy Colischan, who brings together white works by both Perreault and Costa.  
Publication of *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (MIT Press.) The early A Media Art (manifesto) by Jacoby, Escari and Costa, is included.  
*Global Conceptualism* (group) organized by Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver and Rachel Weiss opens at the Queens Museum. Costa is included in the Latin American section, curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez. The show travels to the Walker Art Center, The Miami Art Museum, and the List Art Center at MIT.  
*En Medio de los Medios*, curated by María José Herrera, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires. A version of *Fashion Fiction I* is shown, and recordings of *The First Audition of Works Made of Spoken Language*, as well as *Tape Poems*, are made accessible to visitors.
- 2000** *Square Roots*, (group) curated by Ladd Spiegel at Cecilia de Torres, Ltd., NYC.  
Travels to BA for the Buenos Aires Art fair, where he is represented by Cecilia de Torres, Ltd.  
Ruth Benzacar passes away.  
Talk on his own work at the List Art Center, Boston, Mass.  
A version of *Fashion Fiction I* is presented at the Centro Reina Sofía in Madrid as part of *Heterotopias: Half a Century Without a Place, 1918-1968*, curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (catalog). The considerably enlarged fashion spread begins with Costa's pages from Vogue 1968, hanging from the ceiling in a "penetrable" or walk-through format.
- 2001** *Volumetric Paintings: The Geometric Works* (solo) at Cecilia de Torres, Inc. (catalogue)  
*Pop Art* (group), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (catalogue)
- 2002** A traveling retrospective exhibition is organized with the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires (catalogue)