

Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative
Under the Same Sun:
Marta Minujín on Demystifying the Statue of Liberty

I am Marta Minujin, from Argentina. When I was New York in the sixties, I was working only with mass media. I was creating happenings and performances. I became a kind of hippie here in New York. And when I went back to Argentina, I saw the Obelisk, so straight, and I said, the world is changing. We have to take the Obelisk and lie it down, because it's the way that we can create a new "universal myth." We are entering the third millennium. We have to do something to demystify those myths—the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids in Egypt, the Obelisk—all those universal myths, where people meet and they get together.

First of all, I started with the Obelisk lying down, that I did at the São Paulo Biennial in 1978, where the people walked 74 meters, horizontally, to watch how the Obelisk from Buenos Aires was "falling down" and "flying" to São Paulo. I decided that, to demystify the myth, really, the people have to *eat* the myth. How they should eat it? Via the most typical word of these countries. So in Argentina, the typical word for Christmas Bread is *panettone*—Italian panettone. So, I created an Obelisk with thirty thousand fresh panettone. Then came the crane to lie the Obelisk down, and the people grabbed [the panettone].

When I go to a country, I invent something. Like when I went to Ireland, I did the James Joyce Tower in bread—the demystification of the Martello Tower where James Joyce wrote *Ulysses*. I still find Irish people who remember that. Each country has its own myth.

Here in New York, I went to the Statue of Liberty and took all the measurements. I worked one year doing drawings of the Statue of Liberty lying down, made with a steel structure and iron. And I wrote to McDonald's to sponsor it. The idea would be to have, lying down in Battery Park, another "Statue of Liberty" that's fifty meters long. And the people will walk in. It would be something great to see. So the people of McDonald's would come and cover, with pre-cooked hamburgers, the whole "Statue of Liberty." Then the firemen would come and would grill it. And then, from a helicopter, ketchup would be thrown. And [there would be] trucks with bread. And the people would eat the "Statue of Liberty." At the moment a person eats one hamburger from the "Statue of Liberty," it becomes culturalized. And the "Statue of Liberty," eaten by the people would disappear, but would stay in the popular memory, in the fantasyland and the imaginary world where all things never disappear.

So I was ready to do it. I received some letters. I was really negotiating that, but then the Mayor of New York forbade it, saying that the food could be poisoned and so on. So that was the idea of the "Statue of Liberty." I could not do it.

But I would like to create, in Central Park, this "Statue of Liberty" with a metal structure, which people can walk inside. Then maybe one day, cover it with candies, or with something that will not poison the people. So maybe it could be done. I would love to do this project.

I never go against any of my projects, because time does not exist. So it's the same—1991 or 2014—for me. It's exactly the same. Time does not exist. The ideas always are there, and you can do it. They are not old ideas—I don't have "old" or "young" ideas. It's always high.