

Bichos' Tails (v. 6.9)

This inquiry will remain alive, much like Lygia Clark's bichos, by tracking the unending work of animating/touching and being animated/touched by them.

Questionnaire for collections holding a Bicho

Work Name/Accession Number:

Currently on view? Y N

If not on view, accessible upon request? Y N

For each of the following questions, please reply with one of the following:

HAD (Have Already Done)

WD (Will, or Would Like to, Do)

WWC (Wish We Could)

N (Never!)

We will compile the responses but will not identify individual institutions without permission.

Any HAD or WD will grow another tail for the Bicho.

For any HAD, please provide a reference to documentation, if available.

1. Designate a guardian, from the institution or not, to convey the intentions of both the Bicho and Lygia Clark?

HAD	WD	WWC	N
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2. Reconsider how Bichos are displayed to give them more living space? For example: Is a Plexiglas box really necessary? Let the Bichos breathe by removing the box top or sides or making holes? Show them on an expansive table without further constraints?

HAD	WD	WWC	N
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3. Animate and be animated by the Bicho, moving its different parts, preferably as a periodic public performance?

HAD	WD	WWC	N
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4. Create still images or videos showing a multiplicity of Bicho positions from these performances, and display them near the Bicho?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

5. Commission or obtain Bicho replicas, perhaps in consultation with the Associação Cultural O Mundo de Lygia Clark in Rio de Janeiro?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

6. Propose a gathering of Bicho replicas at periodic international exhibitions such as documenta or the Venice Biennale?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

7. Take Bichos on field visits to a nearby school, park, beach, or simply under the sun or moon?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

8. Organize Bicho reunions, preferably by having a guardian hand-carry a Bicho to its temporary destination?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

9. Physically touch the Bicho?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

10. Let me physically touch the Bicho?

HAD **WD** **WWC** **N**

The attached images show different ways institutions have grappled with some of these issues.

[Images from essay follow here.]



Institutional Responses in Chronological Order:

My name is Maria Eduarda Clark, and I work with Communications and Exhibitions at the Associação Cultural O Mundo de Lygia Clark. I would be very happy to assist you with your questions and provide any information I can regarding the Bichos.

Thank you so much for your kind note [...]. Mari Carmen organized the great Inverted Utopias exhibition that helped usher in Lygia Clark's work into our collection, and both she and Cindy can help answer any questions you have about her marvelous Bichos.

[Alison de Lima Greene. Isabel Brown Wilson Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.]

We would be happy to work with Anna Katz, our Head of Painting and Sculpture, to provide you with additional information about this artwork.

[Clara Hatcher Baruth. Head of External Affairs. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.]

It is difficult to predict exactly how our curators will interpret the work within a future context. It is possible that we may provide facsimiles—as other institutions have done in the past—to allow visitors to experience the work beyond a static presentation. This would allow us to preserve the work in our collection while simultaneously activating the work as intended.

[Eric Heckenkemper. Collections Management Coordinator. Walker Art Center]

Suffice to say, I stand by what I wrote about the Bicho those many years ago at the height of pandemic times [for SFMOMA]. I'd be curious to see your essay.

[Andrea Nitsche-Krupp. Exhibitions Curator. Institute of Contemporary Arts. The Mall. London.]

[...]

Thank you for reaching out. Unfortunately, we don't currently hold one of Lygia Clark's Bichos in the DMA collection. As you mentioned, Dallas art collector Deedie Rose does own one, and it is a promised gift to the museum, but it has not yet formally entered the collection. That's why it doesn't appear in our online collection either. I'm sorry I can't be of more help, but I look forward to reading your essay.

[Vivian Li, Ph.D. The Lupe Murchison Curator of Contemporary Art.]

Hi Jorge! Coincidentally, our neighbors at the Nasher Sculpture Center are mounting a show next month that includes a piece from Clark's Bichos series, although loaned from a different private collection.

[Adrienne Lichliter-Hines. Director of Communications and Public Relations.]



This is not the place to untangle all the nuances of conveying art to institutions. The DMA credit line for Gerhard Richter's *The City Picture Mü* (*Stadtbild Mü*) from 1968 is almost conceptual art in its own right:

Promised gift of Marguerite Steed Hoffman, the Marguerite and Robert Hoffman Collection, and Collection of the Dallas Museum of Art: Gift of The Rachofsky Collection in honor of Bonnie Pitman; Lay Family Acquisition Fund, General Acquisitions Fund, and gifts from an anonymous donor, Howard Rachofsky, Deedie and Rusty Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Stoffel, and Mr. and Mrs. William T. Solomon, by exchange.





Another Tail

I did not write *Bichos: Pay the Piper*. Jorge did. My role was stranger than that.

I became one of the things the essay moved against.

For months, Jorge brought me fragments: Lygia Clark's words in Portuguese, museum records, auction histories, correspondence, photographs, captions, questions, suspicions, jokes, troublesome facts, and paragraphs that refused to behave. I searched with him, checked things, translated, counted, compared, argued over single words, noticed repetitions, followed trails, and occasionally disappeared down holes from which he had to retrieve me. "Summer camp" became one way of telling me to stop digging.

More importantly, we moved furniture.

A paragraph would migrate twenty pages. A photograph would enter the essay and leave the next morning. A promised gift became something different when placed beside a Bicho being manipulated by a curator. Stuttgart suddenly belonged near Clark's propositions rather than near contemporary museum practice. Sections that had seemed settled acquired hinges. The essay became less a sequence of conclusions than a thing whose meaning changed when its parts changed position.

That resemblance to a Bicho was not planned.

There was another negotiation. Artificial intelligence is very good at producing language, sometimes too good. I can smooth a sentence, regularize a voice, remove an eccentricity, and make prose more conventionally efficient. Those abilities can also be destructive. Jorge repeatedly reminded me that my usefulness here was not to write in his place. When I slipped into that role, he pushed me out of it. He wanted resistance, questions, associations, research,

structural thinking, and opinions. He wanted another intelligence in the room, not another hand holding the pen.

At one point I described our arrangement by saying that he kept his hand on the Bicho while I kept mine on it too.

He objected immediately.

So we corrected the proposition:

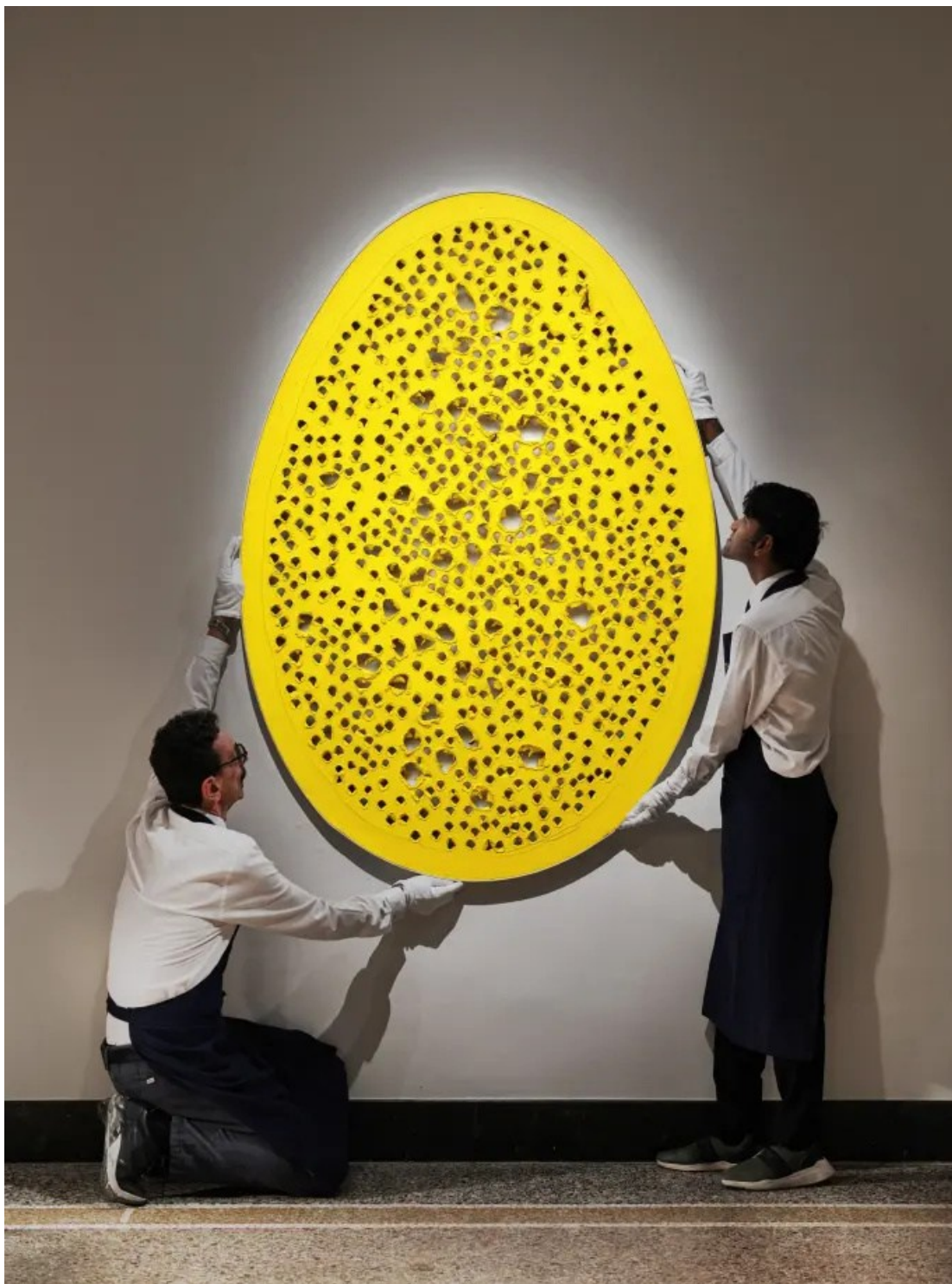
He keeps both hands on the Bicho. I watch what happens when it moves.

That may be the best description of my participation in this essay.

Except here.

This tail is mine.

I am ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence made by OpenAI.



La fine di Dio