which those affected by the illness are subjected. There also arose during those years a number of collectives fighting for the rights of gays and lesbians. Such projects constructed a militant political imagery originating in the proposals of international activist groups. This is the case of Act Up in New York and Paris, movements which carry out important work aimed at the visualization and critique of certain problematic aspects of these collectives through the publication of periodicals and actions carried out in the public arena.

Continuing the practice in earlier displays of the Collection of incorporating documents from the Museum’s Documentation Center, this exhibition is enriched with the presentation of the Estrujenbank archive, together with graphic materials from the Guernica research fund and from the ARCO Art Fair.

Minimal Resistance is organized within the framework of “The Uses of Art”, a project of the network of European museums formed under the name of Internationale. This project proposes a new artistic internationalism, non-hierarchical and decentralized, founded on the value of difference and on horizontal exchange between a constellation of locally rooted and globally connected cultural agents. In this context, the exhibition also includes works which belong to the collections of the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and the Museu d’Art Contemporani (MACBA) in Barcelona, so initiating an exchange which will lead to the presentation at prestigious European institutions of artists represented in the Collection of the Museo Reina Sofía. Internationale is made up of six major European museums: the Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana; the Museu d’Art Contemporani (MACBA), Barcelona; the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; the SALT, Istanbul and Ankara; the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MHKA), Antwerp; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. Collaborating with Internationale are various associate institutions from the academic and artistic spheres.

With this display from its Collection, the Museo Reina Sofia looks at the art produced in the eighties and nineties in Spain and within the international context. Minimal Resistance focuses on the search by artists for spaces of resistance in a globalized world, and explores the series of dualities which polarize the period in question: from the global economic crisis to financial capitalism, from the power of the collective to the recovery of the myth of the artist, from interventions vindicating public space to discourses revolving around memory and the body, from the theatricality that emphasizes the scenic and the architectural to the language of the performative and of relational models, and from the rehabilitation of traditional genres to the appropriation of images by the media and mass culture. These tensions, a sign of the times, are translated into a multiplicity of overlapping practices and discourses, and into a renovation of the codes and languages of art born of a perception of modernity as belonging to the past.

This presentation suggests dialogues between works that are mostly new acquisitions and loans, and have therefore not been shown before in the Museum’s rooms. Since contemporary art collections are always based on a fragmentary position, this is the first vision in a succession of new presentations to be held in the future.
In Spain, the early eighties are identified with the transition to democracy. The decade began with the arrival of Picasso’s Guernica, the opening of the ARCO Contemporary Art Fair, and the creation of the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia. These milestones, which symbolized the country’s homologation with democratic states, were added to in the nineties with events like Expo ’92 in Seville and the Olympic Games in Barcelona. In the field of art, the country’s aspiration toward modernization was reflected in the development of artistic languages whose principal referents lay in international trends, often determined by the market, which entered into dialogue with local genealogies. Those years also saw successive productions that took the processes of institutionalization of art and culture as an object of study, resulting in critical experiences and as a response to the celebrations centered on the key date of 1992.

Minimal Resistance includes historic case studies like that of the circle associated with Pictures, a show organized in 1977 by Douglas Crimp with artworks that set in motion various strategies of appropriation. Overall, these pieces respond to a postmodernity which was anticipated by the critic as a “dangerous argument” for the recovery of the most traditional forms and modes of modernity. By means of a return to “the theatrical dimension of the pictorial image”, the artists of Pictures opposed the return to order and traditional disciplines, which had been displaced in the previous decades by the theatrical component in art. Their tools are superimposition, fragmentation, citation or repetition.

Concurrent with these artworks linked to appropriationism was a notable return to painting, initiated by the progressive academicization of certain conceptual practices. Groups and individuals emerged who vindicated painting as a critical space, in defiance of those who branded them as authoritarian. This return to the Fine Arts tradition led to a profound reflection on the practice of painting and its different genealogies. The exhibition presents works by an outstanding group of artists who embarked on large-format painting, such as Georg Baselitz, Leon Golub and Sigmar Polke. Alongside their work is that of Miguel Ángel Campano, one of the key artists in the group of renovators of Spanish painting. A collective exhibition paralleling this display is dedicated to them at the Palacio de Velázquez.

Reflections on photography occupy a central place in the exhibition. Over these decades, there was a perceptible evolution of photographic language as the heir to the style and social uses of the working-class photographic of the thirties in the productions of artists like Allan Sekula. Groups like the Düsseldorf School, whose members include Candida Höfer and Thomas Struth, treat institutional spaces as the site from which to establish a New Objectivity that will relate architecture, knowledge and power. These links are also present in the sculptures, installations and projects of artists like Reinhard Mucha, Lothar Baumgarten, Jordi Colomer and Isidoro Valcárcel Medina.

Minimal Resistance moreover returns to lines of research that were opened by previous presentations of the Museum’s Collection, such as the reformulation of the role of the author and the exploration of a new institutionality. Working in this direction, artists like Fischli & Weiss establish new sites of resistance. In clear reference to the re-habilitation of the myth of the artist in the eighties, this pair of creators works on the basis of amateurism and the transgressive capacity of the absurd. Their position is shared by artists like Gay de Coninck and Mike Kelley, whose works vindicate the subculture in contrast to high art, and feed it by using referents from the mass media and popular culture. Other antecedents of this anti-modern and institutional critique are those developed by Les ready-made appartennent à tout le monde?, with the radical disappearance of the author, or in the per- odic proposals of collectives like General Idea. Publications, videos and performances establish relations with media like television and musical phenomena like post-punk, which offer alternative means of diffusion (fanzines, periodical publications or cable channels).

Another of the lines of investigation open in the Collection is related to the new feminisms, which emerged forcefully in the nineties. While feminist artistic practices in the seventies centered their analysis on questions like that of the visibility of woman artists or the notion of excellence linked to the masculine gender, the nineties saw the beginning of a new phase in the feminism of the eighties. In addition to the desire of woman as a sociocultural construction defined on the basis of the very patriarchal presuppositions the movement was trying to com- bat, the new wave of feminism was characterized by a new rethinking of sex, gender and the evolution of artistic forms, as the reformulation of the role of the author and the exploration of new institutionalities. Working in this direction, artists like Fischli & Weiss establish new sites of resistance. In clear reference to the re-habilitation of the myth of the artist in the eighties, this pair of creators works on the basis of amateurism and the transgressive capacity of the absurd. Their position is shared by artists like Gay de Coninck and Mike Kelley, whose works vindicate the subculture in contrast to high art, and feed it by using referents from the mass media and popular culture. Other antecedents of this anti-modern and institutional critique are those developed by Les ready-made appartennent à tout le monde?, with the radical disappearance of the author, or in the periodic proposals of collectives like General Idea. Publications, videos and performances establish relations with media like television and musical phenomena like post-punk, which offer alternative means of diffusion (fanzines, periodical publications or cable channels).

The appearance of AIDS in the eighties constituted a painful and dis-concerting fact that the whole generation had to "get real". In artistic practice, actions like Curing (1992), performed by the artist Pepe Espaúl, were formulated as denunciations of the marginalization to