



# Lucy Orta (Contemporary Artists (Phaidon))

*Roberto Pinto, Nicolas Bourriaud, Maia Damianovic*

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The work of Paris-based British artist Lucy Orta (b.1966) examines the social bonds within communities and the relationships between individuals and their environments, bridging the boundaries of the visual arts by merging fashion, social engagement, poetry and performance. In the early 1990s Orta began a series of works called Refuge Wear that combined architecture, fashion and social activism. This series took the form of tent-like mobile structures that transform into items of clothing, sleeping bags and bivouacs. Orta envisioned them as emergency structures for nomadic populations, for the homeless and for crisis situations such as earthquake zones. Orta's work has since grown to incorporate interdisciplinary workshops, contemporary dance and other actions that explore notions of identity, shared space and networking. These projects include collaborations with such marginalized groups as the unemployed, the homeless and immigrants. Her recent series of works, entitled Modular Architecture and Nexus Architecture, continue this theme of objects that are more symbolic than practically useful. The Nexus Architecture series has taken many forms, including garments formed like boiler-suits to be worn by multiple participants to represent the social links between people. Orta is currently the first Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Fashion at the London College of Fashion and heads the new MA programme 'Man and Humanity' at the Design Academy Eindhoven. In the Survey, Italian curator Roberto Pinto traces the development of Orta's work and the social and political factors that her projects are a response to. French critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud discusses with Orta her working practices in the Interview. In the Focus, Maia Damianovic examines in detail the work 70 x 7 The Meal, a dining project for an infinite number of discussions and encounters. For the Artist's Choice, Orta has selected a text by her husband, Argentinian artist Jorge Orta, with whom she frequently collaborates, and by French philosopher Paul Virilio, whose interests in urbanism and new technologies reflect their own. Orta's writings include preparatory drawings and diaries that record her projects, and an interview with Paul Virilio.

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