

Rosemarie Trockel: A Cosmos



ROSEMARIE TROCKEL
Park Avenue, 2006
Bocetos para libros infantiles. Proyección de diapositivas.
© Rosemarie Trockel, VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2011
Colección privada

- DATES:** 22 May – 24 September 2012
- PLACE:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.
Sabatini Building, 3rd floor
- ORGANISED BY:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
- CURATED BY:** Lynne Cooke
- COORDINATED BY:** Soledad Liaño
- ITINERARY:** New Museum, Nueva York (24 October 2012 – February 2013)
Serpentine Gallery, London (Spring 2012)
Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn (28 June 2013 – 29 September 2013)
- ACTIVIDADES PARALELAS:** Conference by Anne Wagner with an introduction by Lynne Cooke. 13 June 2012
- Summer Workshops for children 8 to 12 years
25-29 June and 2-6 July 2012

With the collaboration of the German Foreign Office and the Goethe-Institut Madrid

“Kosmos” was the title given by the great naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) to his culminating work, a book on the theme of discovery, more specifically, on the discovery of the Americas. In awarding the palm to Columbus, von Humboldt, who was well aware that the Spanish explorer was not the first European to discover the New World, made his decision on philosophical grounds. Since progress, he believed, comes from accumulated knowledge; the real discoverer is the one who opens up new frontiers of knowledge. In this exhibition the German artist **Rosemarie Trockel** (Schwerte, 1952), long been admired for her highly independent, even intrepid, exploration of certain fundamental questions, places her work in the company of others whom she regards as kindred spirits.

For over thirty years Trockel has deflected any identifiable stylistic signature: films and videos, installations involving animals, projects for children, knit paintings, ceramics, drawings and collages, plus a panoply of sculptures in myriad materials, are among the extraordinarily varied forms that comprise her oeuvre. Certain constants - issues which have long troubled her thinking - underpin her diverse activity: contending notions of feminism; purported antagonisms between the amateur and the professional, the celebrity and the anonymity, and the fine as opposed to the applied arts and crafts. More broadly, through her works she probes not only interrelations between humans and animals, but also our impact, as a species, on the natural world.

Many of the artefacts chosen for this exhibition were not originally created as art objects. Among those that first belonged to the realm of natural history are watercolours by the pioneering botanist and entomologist **Maria Sibylla Merian** (1647-1717). By means of experiments she first undertook while still an adolescent, Merian became one of the first to understand the metamorphic life cycles of such insects as moths and butterflies. Later, during a two year expedition to the jungles of Surinam, she hunted, bred, cultivated, studied, and recorded many insects and plants then unknown in Europe. Though her contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the 17th century was considerable, it was later unjustifiably eclipsed. **José Celestino Mutis** closely supervised the discovery and then the detailed illustration of almost 7000 plants while heading an expedition to Latin America in the

late 18th century. However, because these drawings were never published with the appropriate scholarly documentation during his lifetime, recognition of Mutis's achievement within his field has been both hugely delayed and skewed. The **Blaschka family** established a thriving business outside Dresden in the later-19th century that specialized in the production of virtuosic replicas of marine invertebrates. Initially acquired as research tools by amateur and professional naturalists with no access to living specimen, once adequate methods of preserving the ephemeral organisms were developed, the fragile models became obsolete. Today, though little more than a footnote in the history of science, they are increasingly prized for their aesthetic qualities.

Also included in this exhibition are self taught artists, **James Castle** and **Judith Scott**, who, like both **Morton Bartlett** and **Manuel Montalvo**, worked in isolation and obscurity. Employing the most humble materials and economic of means, and intensely committed to the pursuit of a singular vision, often at the expense of all other activity, these solitary artists sought few audiences beyond those they conjured in imagination. Also ex-centric are the works of **Ruth Franken** and **Gunter Weseler**: possibly too partisan for comfortable consumption, they similarly occupy positions on the margins of the contemporary art world. Trockel's appreciation of these variously under-recognized artists stems from her empathy both with the questions their work addresses, and the unself-conscious directness and inventiveness with which it is realized. Whether operating within the frame of a disciplinary field, such as botany, or propelled by more autonomous internal directives, these mavericks provide models of disinterested dedication to their chosen vocations that, for Trockel, are exemplary, and inspiring.

Biographical notes

Rosemarie Trockel was born in Schwerte (Federal Republic of Germany) in 1952. She studied art between 1974 and 1978 at *Werkkunstschule* in Cologne, where she currently lives and works, teaching at the Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf.

She has exhibited individually in institutions such as the Moderne Museet in Stockholm; the Dia Art Foundation, New York; the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London; Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; Museum Ludwig in Cologne; Museum Moderner Kunst in Frankfurt or the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía held a show by the artist in 1992. Also, institutions like MoMA in New York exhibit works by Rosemarie Trockel in their collections.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Conference Anne Wagner: *Trockel's Wonderland*, with an introduction by Lynne Cooke

Date: 13 June 2012

Time: 19.30h

Place: Auditorio 200. Nouvel building

Access: free until full capacity

Anne M. Wagner (emeritus professor from the Art History Department in University of California, Berkeley) presents in this conference a guide to the cosmos of the German artist, beginning in the study of several recent pieces, in an analogy with Lewis Carroll's work, who, as Trockel, invented a world in which objects, though familiar, didn't make any sense anymore.

Summer Workshop: *Building universes* with Ignacio Chávarri

Aimed at: boys and girls 8 to 12 years

Dates: 2–6 and 9–13 July 2012

Time: 10.00h–12.30h

Seating: 15 children per session

Participation: free by previous registration: actividadesinfantiles@museoreinasofia.es

Young artist Ignacio Chávarri (Madrid, 1982) will re-interpret this exhibition for the young public in two creative experiences that will develop during the month of July.

Both the contents and spaces of the Museo, as well as those of the children's personal environment, will be the starting point for the boys and girls to select, classify, ordinate and reject those elements susceptible of conforming their particular cosmos and thus contrasting it with the group's collective one.

FTP ACCESS DATA ROSEMARIE TROCKEL EXHIBITION

<ftp://77.226.250.242>

User: TrockelExpo

Password: 925UTD709

For further information:

PRESS DEPARTMENT

MUSEO REINA SOFÍA

prensa1@museoreinasofia.es

prensa2@museoreinasofia.es

(00 34) 91 774 10 05 / 06

www.museoreinasofia.es/prensa/area-prensa.html