

Ulla von Brandenburg. One-Sequence Spaces



View of the exhibition *Ulla von Brandenburg. One-Sequence Spaces* at the Palacio de Velázquez. November, 2023.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.
Photographic archive of the Museo Reina Sofía

DATES:	December 1, 2023 – March 10, 2024
PLACE:	Palacio de Velázquez, Retiro Park
ORGANIZATION:	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
COORDINATION:	Soledad Liaño Gibert

One-Sequence Spaces is an exhibition created specifically for the Palacio de Velázquez by the artist **Ulla von Brandenburg** (Karlsruhe, Germany, 1971) where the space is transformed and conceived as a theatrical stage on which the public plays the leading role. On a path through shapes constructed with curtains, where there are also audiovisual works and a variety of objects, the artist submerges visitors in a scenography of which they become participants.



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Marked by her training as a scenographer and her passage through the world of the theatre, **Ulla von Brandenburg** has articulated her artistic production around these experiences. All her multidisciplinary work (installations, films, murals, performances, and other creative forms) displays a rigorous control of scenic language that allows her to interweave reality and fiction, a sort of magic that tenses the spatio-temporal frontier and invites the spectator to resignify the work with his or her own experience.

The exhibition, which can be visited until March 10, is designed to encourage the public to become the protagonists of the theatrical scene, playing with the idea of the spectator being turned into an actor. Without a specifically determined itinerary, visitors to the exhibition will move among a series of textile installations with geometric forms and intense colors, which

can be crossed in the manner of stage curtains. At the same time, these structures will create a spatial continuity among themselves in which the limit between the inside and the outside is blurred.

These geometric shapes in the form of curtains are inspired by Gestalt theory and the work of the Bauhaus, as well as by the psychological theories of color of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who defended the emotional and phenomenological component of color against Newton's view of it as mere physics.



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Von Brandenburg actualizes Goethe's postulates through the Bauhaus School, and more specifically through the concepts proposed by the artist Oskar Schlemmer, who conceived a ballet based on three geometric shapes: circle, square, and triangle. He envisaged changes of color as running parallel to changes of mood, and put this concept into practice in his work *Das Triadische Ballett* (The Triadic Ballet), first performed in 1922.

Another psychological theory of color that interests the artist is the *Lüscher Color Test*, created by the Swiss psychotherapist Max Lüscher, which relates colors to the psycho-physiological state of individuals.

Along the viewer's path through the textile geometric shapes, **three films by the artist are shown in the exhibition: *Maskiert und vor allem – verschwiegen* (Masked and, above all, discreet, 2022), *Shadowplay* (2012) and *The Objects* (2009)**. All are filmed in black and white in order to establish a distance and prevent identification of a time and place. Such a choice contrasts with the chromatic protagonism of the curtains.

The films that Ulla von Brandenburg has been producing intensely and continuously since 2002 materialize in video installations that are resignified according to the different contexts in which they are exhibited.



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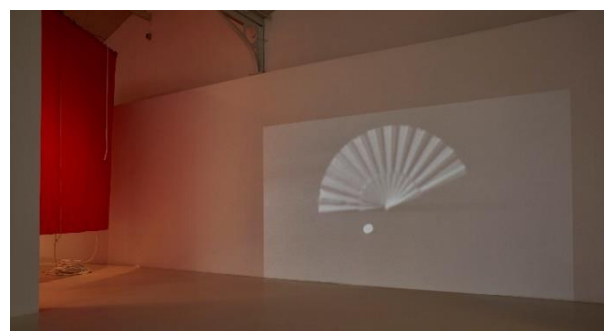


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Her films explore theatrical language, paying special attention to the performative and psychological components of the characters appearing in them. Most of them are shot in 16 mm, so the format conditions the duration of the content, which is often presented in a single sequence shot with hardly any montage or post-production. The artist thus shows how human action is as closely involved in the work as the drop scene and the unforeseeable.

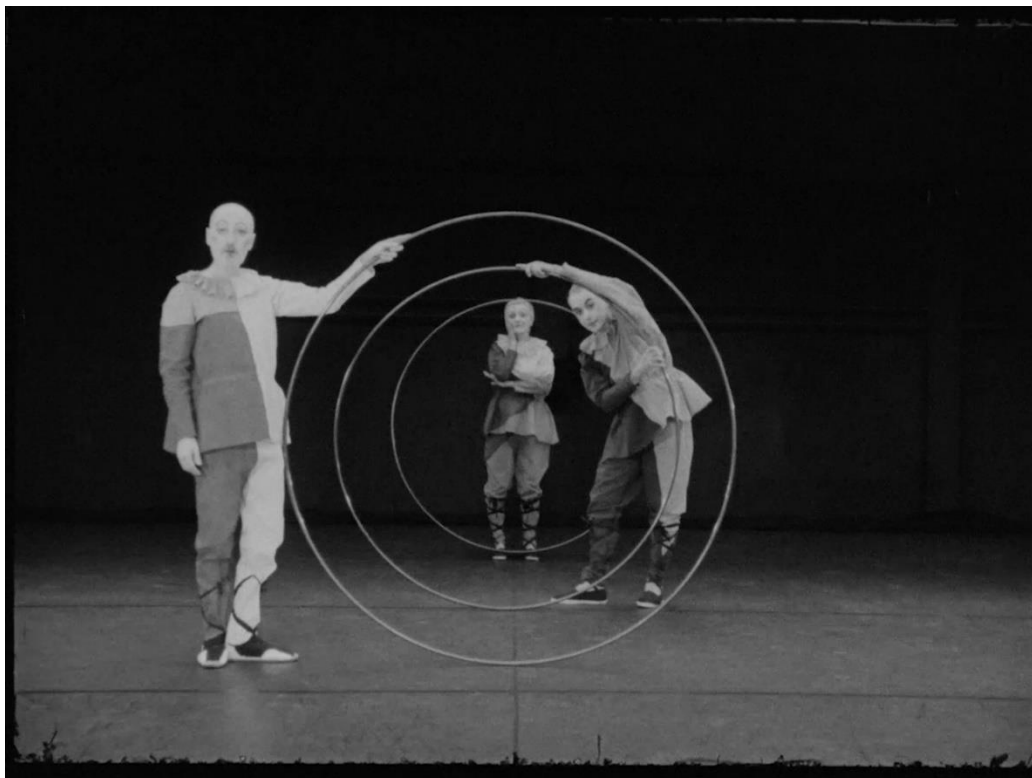
In one of the three video installations, *Shadowplay*, recorded in digital format, the play of shadows of the title represents a theatrical story with one female and two male characters, establishing a direct reference to the myth of the Platonic cave.

The Objects meanwhile shows a theatre of objects that succeed one another in a single sequence. The objects are moved choreographically on visible strings, an evidence that reminds us of the relation between reality and illusion.



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In the third film, *Maskiert und vor allem – verschwiegen*, the narrative straddling reality and fiction is amplified with a stage setting and a montage that go beyond the screen. This installation presented at the Palacio de Velázquez is complemented with objects distributed apparently randomly around the space, looking like props that seem to have escaped from the film. In their turn, the characters in the film will come to life in a performance on the opening day of the exhibition.



ULLA VON BRANDENBURG

Maskiert und vor allem – verschwiegen [Masked and, above all, discreet, 2002].

Courtesy of the artist and Art: Concept (Paris); Meyer Riegger (Berlin/Karlsruhe); Pilar Corrias Gallery (London);
Produzentengalerie Hamburg (Hamburg)

In *One-Sequence Spaces*, as in the rest of her work, Ulla von Brandenburg offers us a complex narrative with multiple readings for a viewer who is situated in the center of the action. Through theatrical language, the German artist refers us to life itself, to our existence in society, and to the role we play in it: the sequence of existence as a *mise-en-scène*.

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