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the exhibition booklet

rosa barba weavers

nave & black gallery
7 october 2022 - 30 april 2023

Rosa Barba uses film as raw material to explore landscape, memory and different types of temporality. She creates fictions in which she questions History and offers new interpretations, often poetic and enigmatic.

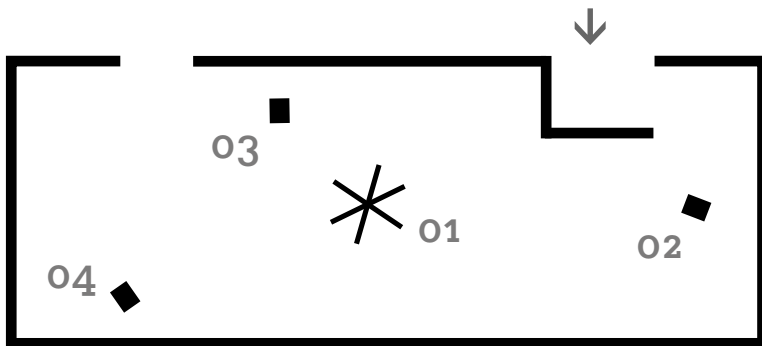
In her installations, the artist uses 16 or 35mm film as a medium and considers the sculptural and material qualities of the film, the projectors or the light beams that emanate from it. She analyzes its potential, changing our traditional cinematographic experience and questioning the notion of linear time.

In her sculptural approach to the medium of film, the artist creates site-specific installations that highlight the way film articulates space, thus establishing a new relationship between the artwork and the viewer. Questions about composition, the physicality and plasticity of forms play an important role for the artist while she also questions the film industry and its posture towards gesture, gender, information and documents. Her cinematographic works are situated between experimental documentary and fictional narrative. They often focus on natural landscapes and human interventions in the environment and explore the relationship between historical archives, personal anecdotes and filmic representation, creating spaces of memory and uncertainty.

the nave

In the Nave, the artist presents a previously unseen work created specifically for the space. It is directly related to the research she carried out during her recent residency in Touraine (at the *Atelier Calder* in Saché), where she developed an experimental sound system based on components that included piano wires and projectors connected to each other to produce a sound loop.

Another aspect of her research consisted of taking a fresh look at the plasticity and transparency of film as a medium: she had woven strips of 16 and 35mm film onto frames. The rolls had been developed in blue and red and visitors were meant to view the studio and the surrounding landscape through them. She had drawn inspiration for this technique from the type of weaving used in wickerwork, a craft still practiced in and around Saché. These colorful and sonic experiments, initiated in Calder's emblematic studio overlooking the Indre Valley, finds an echo in the ccc0D Nave's porous, monumental space.



01

Weavers, 2021

16 and 35mm films, metal frame

Courtesy of the artist

16mm film passes through and around 35mm film, creating a patterned double-sided canvas. The title refers to the know-how of the basket weavers from which the artist drew inspiration for the composition of these woven webs.

The irregular weavings are accentuated by direct light sources that are placed from above. This artificial lighting and natural light reveal ephemeral sequences of reflections during the day.

Sometimes reflective or transparent, the Weavers constitute both a cinematographic image and a suspended screen whose rotating movement can recall that of a mobile.

02 | 03 | 04

Wirepieces, 2022

16mm projectors, drum string, bridge saddle piece, pickup microphone and plinth

Courtesy of the artist

This sound installation created in 2022 consists of a drum string, held tight between two points which is touched played, really by a strip of film stock looped in a modified projector. The strip of celluloid takes on a double role: one the one hand, as is typical of its function, light is projected through it and creates a diffuse illumination.

On the other hand, in an unusual function, the film's movement against the drum string creates deep tones of sound accentuated by occasional incidents.

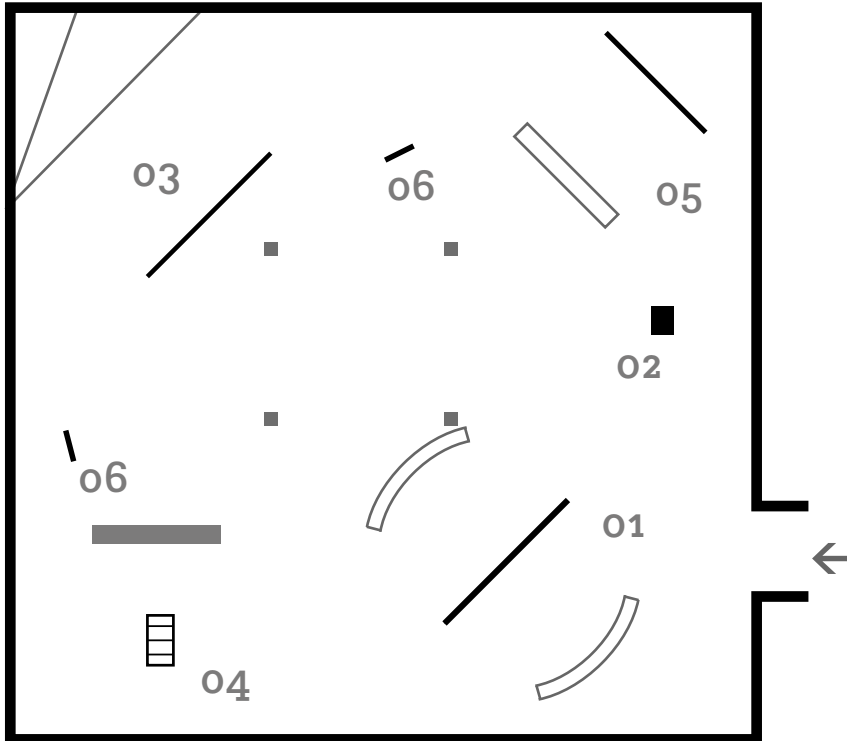
« Through my installations, I continue my exploration of film and its capacity to simultaneously be an immaterial medium that carries information and a physical material with sculptural properties. The category of film is expanded and abstracted beyond the literal components of the celluloid strip, the projector through which it passes, and the image projected onto a screen. Each component becomes a starting point for artworks that expand the idea of film as well as explore its intrinsic attributes. Projectors mutate into new mechanical objects that generate information in real time, turning on themselves and bending the conventions of cinema to the requirements, possibilities, or limitations of their new forms.



Rosa Barba, *On the anarchic organization of cinematic spaces. Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema*, ed. Hatje Cantz, 2021, p.127.

the black gallery

total exposure viewing time: approximately 2 hours



« My work takes a conceptual approach that considers cinema in an architectural sense and as an instrument, where the environment, the screen, and the projection can be combined and pushed forward to create another spatiotemporal dimension that is concurrent with and beyond the context of the interior and exterior space. Uncertainty and speculation exist within that expanded space. It is an anarchic dimension and offers a new foundation for thinking and acting through destabilizing the old hierarchy of the components of cinema, by freeing them from their original use and letting them interact in new and unforeseen ways.

Rosa Barba, *On the anarchic organization of cinematic spaces. Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema*, ed. Hatje Cantz, 2021, p.8



01 *Inside the Outset, Evoking a Space of Passage, 2021*

16mm film transferred to digital, color, sound | 31 :15 mn
courtesy of the artist

This project follows an invitation by Point Centre for Contemporary Art in Nicosia and curator Mirjam Varadinis to propose and realize a project in Cyprus. The work proposed by the artist in 2013, started in 2014 and consists of two parts: a film and a long-term open-air cinema installation. The inaugural screening took place in Autumn 2021 at the open-air cinema, then achieved.

The film has been exclusively shot in Cyprus, including underwater shots of the Mazotos shipwreck, as well as aerial shots from archaeological sites. It is an investigation into the loaded, transforming topography that is already palpable in the landscape, before we actually understand what language it creates for our society. In that, the film follows Barba's artistic approach to examine liminal states which manifest in between contested spaces, both mentally and geographically, in order to allow for a new perspective.

The circular benches arranged on either side of the double projection, recall the open-air theater imagined by Rosa Barba to project her film in the environment of Deryneia.

For the construction on site, the artist focused on incorporating the theatre in Deryneia's natural environment, avoiding materials alien to the landscape.

[Located in the north of the island, the natural site of Deryneia is close to the "green line": buffer zone controlled by the United Nations which marks the geographical separation between the North (often called the "Turkish part") and the South (often referred to as the "Greek part").]

In exchange with local architects, and under the supervision by the architect Maya Shopova, Barba worked exclusively with earth materials on site. Only the screen supporting structure and the drainage system had to be imported to the overall construction.

« Architecture, in this context, is not merely three-dimensional space, but a temporal process that constantly updates itself ; it constructs itself in the movement and perception of subjects, and thus it itself remains mobile. Moreover, here architecture is meant to create spaces for unforeseen resonances between the designing subject and social communities (bodies in motion) and their living environment.

Rosa Barba, « In a Perpetual Now », *The Brooklyn Rail*, 2021 . »

The metal structure of the screen is the only visible part above ground, while the seats are integrated in the natural terrain. This architectural technique allows the theatre to endure within the environment for the next ten years without any further necessary restoration—deteriorating gradually, as a subject to the area's weather conditions.

Barba envisions the location of this open-air installation to function as a meeting point for the members of all communities on the island. Her intention is to highlight the capacity of the art to create spaces of interaction and coexistence.

Since the inaugural screening, the open-air site is made available to Deryneia Municipality and to all film and video practitioners of the island and beyond to initiate a multifaceted dialogue or simply a meeting point.

02 *The Long Poem Manipulates Spatial Organizations, 2014*

projecteur modifié, socle, film 16mm découpé au pochoir
courtesy of the artist

The projector has been leaned 45 degrees so that the image has a diamond shape instead of a square one. It displays a series of color filters with stenciled letters that have been cut from the celluloid film. As the letters are scattered, the viewer internally spells out T - H - E - L - O - N - G - P - O - E - M, confusing his perception between what he sees, what he hears and what his mind reconstructs in terms of meaning, images and colors, in a form of hypnotic tautology lulled by the sound of the projector.

03 *Somnium, 2011*

16mm film transferred to video, color, sound | 19 :20 mn
courtesy of the artist

Somnium's point of departure is a short story by the German astronomer *Johanner Kepler*. Written in 1608 and published in 1634 under the title *Somnium, seu opus posthumum de astronomia* (*The Dream or Lunar Astronomy*), it is considered the first science fiction book.

The recordings were made in Rotterdam (Netherlands) on the site of the Maasvlakte 2 project: future port that conquers land on the North Sea and will be operational in 2030

Like a tribute to Kepler, the landscape introduced therein is itself surreal, strange and uninhabited, and captures the science-fiction tone of Kepler's story. The boundaries between reality and fiction resolve into the poetic language of the film's narrative, accompanied by the music of Jan St. Werner.

Johannes Keplern (or Kepler) is a German astronomer born in 1571, famous for having studied the heliocentric hypothesis of Nicolas Copernicus, affirming that the Earth revolves around the Sun and especially for having discovered that the planets do not revolve around the Sun by following perfect circular trajectories but elliptical trajectories. Kepler discovered the mathematical relationships (known as Kepler's Laws) which govern the movements of the planets in their orbit. These relationships were later used by Isaac Newton to develop the theory of universal gravitation.

04

The Color out of Space, 2015

5 colored glass filters, steel base, HD video, color, sound | 36 min
courtesy of the artist

production EMPAC, CURTIS R. PRIEM EXPERIMENTAL MEDIA and
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER at Rensselaer, New York (US) & MIT List
Art Center, Cambridge (US)

The 36 minute video *The Color Out of Space* (2015) forms part of a sculptural film installation which extends the probing of deep time into outer space. In this piece, the artist intends to explore the properties of the colors present in the universe by referring to *Goethe's Color Theory*, in which the latter includes a critique of Newton's color theory. Artistic investigation and scientific inquiry reveal themselves as essentially speculative endeavors.

In 2014, Rosa Barba had a residency at EMPAC (New York), within the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. When she discovered that EMPAC was very close to the University's astronomy department and the Hirsch Observatory, she considered creating *The Color out of Space*. She was there free to experiment and produce thanks to the cutting-edge technologies available on site. She offered a collaboration to Heidi Jo Newberg, professor of astronomy who uses the Hirsch observatory in her research, and to two physics students, Nicholas Palmieri and Jake Weiss.

For a year, they photographed objects from our solar system at night. These images formed the basis of the work of Rosa Barba, who edited them together, introducing movement and a notion of time, images of nebulae, planets and navigations on the moon as well as light in movement and flickering effects.

For the soundtrack, Rosa Barba conducted interviews with artists, scientists and writers speaking about the universe and its enigmas. They read fiction, poetry and scientific literature, including Ingrid Wiener, Georgia Horn, Emma Hedditch, Barbara Hammer, Laetitia Sadier, Evan Calder Williams, Jimmy Robert, Jean-Pierre Luminet, Colin Attwood, Daphne Beal, Heidi Newberg, Matthew Newby and Oswald Wiener. An astronomer describes the use of colored glass filters in the imaging of celestial bodies: without these, what the human eye can make out through a telescope are, basically, “white or gray blobs.”

« In recent years, I have been further struck by affinities between astronomy and cinema. On one level, both engage with concepts of light, time, and distance ; indeed, it might be argued that both astronomy and cinema are essentially composed of only these elements. On yet another level, both can be understood as sharing, in different ways, fundamental aspects of uncertainty and speculation. »

Rosa Barba, *On the anarchic organization of cinematic spaces. Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema*, ed. Hatje Cantz, 2021, p.17.

05

***The Empirical Effect*, 2010**

16mm film transferred to video, color, sound | 22 min
courtesy of the artist

The topographical starting point of *The Empirical Effect* is the area around Mount Vesuvius in Southern Italy. The protagonists of the film are all survivors of the last active eruption of the volcano in 1944 and live in the so-called “Red Zone” – the immediate danger zone of the volcano. In this film, they brought their past and memory to the film shoot and used them like tools. Rosa Barba filmed them in the former Italian volcanological observatory, now a historical museum and library. Barba used the old volcanic observatory as a scenographic platform because it alludes to a performance that unrolls within a theater of memory.

Rosa Barba is interested in the notion of ruin. For writer and filmmaker Svetlana Boym, ruin literally means collapse. But for Rosa Barba, it has to deal with leftovers and reminders.

« The film is an empirical observation guided by experience and experiment. That’s why I chose the title “The Empirical Effect”. »

Rosa Barba, *On the anarchic organization of cinematic spaces. Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema*, ed. Hatje Cantz, 2021, p.96.

A small group of older people move around the seismographic machines. Sheep also walk around the observatory and stare. They occupy the same place as the actors, and everyone walks on a floor that has a large map of Italy imprinted on it. The artists point out an unstable relationship between society and politics in contemporary Italy. The volcano is a metaphor for the many layers of society and politics in Italy. A secret alchemist invention from which to hide and protect yourself. The past is always piling up behind us and these memories change our perception of the future.

The film starts with a voice reading the artist's translation, from an older Italian into English, of an inscription on a marble stone from 1632, which is now in a densely populated town under the shadow of the volcano. The stone's warning has become completely hidden by surrounding inhabitations and construction.

« Listen. Twenty times since the sun has shone unless history is mistaken, has Vesuvius burnt. I was with the terrific massacre of those who were slow to flee in order that after the final bereavement it may not strike you again. I warn you, the depths of this mountain are full of bitumen, alum, sulphur, gold, silver, nitrate, water springs. Sooner or later it burst into fire, but first it grounds, trembles, shakes the ground, mixes smoke and flames and flashes of light, shakes the air, echoes, thunders, roars, chases the inhabitants to the bordering areas. But you, if you are wise, listen to a marble slab that speaks to you and tells you not to worry about the shrines of your ancestors. Flee without wasting time.

(...)

There is a continuous interaction between the volcano and the people living next to it. A kind of malediction but also benediction because the microclimate is magnificent but it is extremely strange that after such a destruction like written in marble in Torre del Greco, "posta fata resurgo". After the catastrophe I will be reborn. It's really the mentality you don't find this anywhere else.



movie soundtrack

Color Clocks : verticals lean occasionally consistently away from viewpoints, 2012

35mm film, motors, aluminium, light, plexiglass
courtesy of the artist

This work consists of three objects arranged in the space, one of which is visible from outside the art center, in the transparent galleries. Their design is reminiscent of the operation of a clock's gear mechanism.

Within their open housings, red, yellow and blue 35mm film strips slide through a mechanic sets of rollers in a continuous loop. The film strips are each imprinted with individual letters, spelling the three colors they represent, and suggest a form of text, albeit one which appears to have become obsolete in the space-time continuum. Each of the objects moves its color at its own specific rhythm so that together a kinetic image is produced. As a re-collection of timekeeping and the experience of time itself, *Color Clocks* plays with different modes of perception: a meditation on color, time, perception and language, repeated to infinity.

« For me, a machine performs activity : you can see how one thing leads to another, and everything can be examined. When I invent a new machine, it involves playing with these elements. I discover another aspect of cinematic expression by separating off an element or inventing an element that hadn't been there before. It is this positive act of introducing the element of play that goes against the conventional notions of cinematic production. I question the regularity and closure of the world of production by introducing play : anything can happen here. Play, here, does not indicate a game with rules but rather functions in a more philosophical sense, suggesting a ludic mentality and quality. »

Rosa Barba, *On the anarchic organization of cinematic spaces. Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema*,
ed. Hatje Cantz, 2021, p.127

an exhibition in partnership with the atelier calder in saché (loire valley)

Since 1989, the Atelier Calder has been a place of residence and artistic creation and has been pursuing a welcoming policy for more than 30 years, the ambition of which is to enable artists to carry out specific projects, to pursue research or of experimentation. For three months, artists benefit from technical and financial support that promotes the creation of artistic projects.

Regularly, the Atelier Calder joins forces with places of diffusion (art center, museums, historical monuments, etc.) in order to organize exhibitions following the residencies, allowing the public to discover the works produced in Saché. As a place of exchange and openness, the Atelier Calder promotes meetings between its residents and regional cultural actors (school of fine arts, art centers, FRAC, museums, etc.), school groups thanks to mediations and with the public in the context of studio visits.

In 1954, Alexander Calder settled in Saché (south of Tours), a village he discovered thanks to his friend Jean Davidson. First of all in the so-called "François 1er" house located on the banks of the Indre, then in 1963, he decided to build a large workshop on the Carroi site, overlooking the Indre valley. Alexander Calder's houses were always located in the middle of nature, the artist being inspired by the tranquility of the environment in which he lived. The geometric shapes of his works had a direct link with the nature that surrounded him. His stables, the monumental sculptures composed of metal plates riveted together, were designed and assembled in Saché, in collaboration with the Biemont company in Tours.

In 1969, Calder began the construction of his house near the workshop. At that the time, Calder participated in the social and economic life of the region and developed many links with the inhabitants of Saché.

The Atelier Calder benefits from the support of Ministère de la Culture Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles (DRAC Centre Val de Loire), de la Région Centre Val de Loire and Calder Foundation.

www.atelier-calder.com

going further...

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There is a selection of books about the exhibition in CCCOD's bookshop.

the artist's website : www.rosabarba.com

more information www.CCCOD.fr