



Anna Bella Geiger

Circa MMXVI – New and previous works

Opening: October 15th, 2016

I try to establish in that show certain correspondences of an ontological order in my recent works together with some former ones. That is, although, this show includes mostly new works, they possess a syntony with other times.

*For instance, when I did the two new ovals from the series *Macios*, painting and embroidery on canvas, I also bring works from the series of photoprints *Lunar* (lent by NASA), as the photoetchings from the series *Local da Ação*, from 1979 on. There, the planisphere with its oval shape reminds the *Macios*. I think that as formal as conceptually, they reappear in the poetic of each artist that develops its own personal shape.*

If this means coherence only from the formal point of view, that is not what I am talking about. There is a conjunction in which the conceptual meaning precedes questions of a purely formal intention.

*Anna Bella Geiger,
14 de outubro de 2016*

It is with great pleasure that Mendes Wood DM presents Ana Bella Geiger's second solo show at the gallery. Geiger is a painter, an engraver, illustrator, multidisciplinary artist, lecturer and an almost sculptor. Beginning her career in the 1950s, the artist took part in the 1st National Exhibition of Abstract Art in Petropolis, Rio de Janeiro, in 1953. After a pause in her artistic career triggered by her attendance at the National School of Philosophy and a study trip to the USA, Geiger joined the etching workshop of the Museum of Modern Art – MAM in Rio de Janeiro, from 1960 to 1965. Geiger began her research based on Informal Abstractionism. Moving among different routes that led to complex results, floating between the exercise of subjectivity and the rigour of a profound formal understanding. Similar paths followed by De Kooning, F. Klein, Motherwell and Rothko, amongst others.

In the mid-1960s, during a period dedicated to metal engraving (etching) and tempera painting, Geiger developed a figurative style that the critic Mario Pedrosa refers to as her *Visceral Phase*, which raised a plethora of questions. In 1969, back in New York, she became a lecturer at Columbia University, returning to Rio in 1970. In the 1980s, she was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. In 1987, she co-authored *Abstracionismo Geométrico e Informal: a vanguarda brasileira nos anos cinquenta* with Fernando Cocchiarale, a seminal text on Brazilian 1950s art.

In the 1970s, her production became even more experimental, under the premise that the only way to create art is to be experimental. She, then shifted towards the use of other media, such as photomontage, photoengraving, photocopy, video and Super 8. With her audiovisual works of a strong political tone, Geiger assumes a singular position in the Arts, as her work goes through the modern to successfully reach the contemporary. The themes explored by her 1970s' works, for instance, are still incredibly relevant today both in terms of her current and past production. By raising questions about what constitutes the contemporary, Geiger's pieces bring art and critical thought closer; and by reflecting on social issues such as bureaucracy and the use of the female image, as well as an acute observation of the artistic scene, the artist has had a pioneering role in video-art.

From the 1990s to the present, Geiger has employed a variety of materials, such as in the production of *Frontereiros*, folded cartographic forms in copper, placed inside iron boxes or drawers that remain isolated through the use of encaustic paint. Her poetics inhabit the margins of painting, object, engraving, sculpture, etc. Her cartographic artworks search for the efficacy of a real geopolitics and deal with issues such as the relationship between cultural and political

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hegemony. To examine and act upon cartographic representation is to act directly on the relations of control. Perhaps there should be a different map for a different world, and Geiger often delivers a marginal viewpoint of what the centre of the world actually means.

Anna Bella Geiger (Rio de Janeiro, 1933) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. She has featured in the following shows: *Geografia Física y Humana*, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville (2016); *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, MoMA, New York (2015); *Anna Bella Geiger and her students, Videos, Ciclo: On the Edge: Brazilian Film Experiments of the 1960s and Early 1970s*, MoMA, New York (2014); *América Latina Photographs 1960/2013*, Fondation Cartier (2013); *Vidéo Vintage*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2012); *Modern Women Single Channel 5 Artists*, MoMA PS1, New York (2011); *Adding it up: Acquisitions 70-95*, MoMA, New York (1995); *39th Venice Biennale*, Venice (1980); *PROSPECTIVA 74*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea (MAC) de São Paulo, São Paulo (1974); *7th São Paulo Biennial*, São Paulo (1963).

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