

## Press Information

### Rosa Barba

30th april - 04th june 2011

Opening as part of the Berlin Gallery Weekend: 29th april, 4 - 9 pm

We are happy to announce the first solo exhibition of our artist Rosa Barba at carlier | gebauer, opening at the Berlin Gallery Weekend 2011. With her filmic works and sculptures, which she exhibited widely in major institutions for contemporary art in Europe, Rosa Barba (born 1972 in Agrigent/Italy) has fundamentally recontextualized the discourse of celluloid-formats in the visual arts today. In her manifold techniques Barba challenges her own medium, the 16 mm and 35 mm film, as a historic innovation of modernism - and demonstrates, that his epoch, as much as the medium itself, remained incomplete, open for aesthetic, narrative and technical potentialities. The artist turns the celluloid into a contemporary and living medium, into an artistic field in which past and present are retranslated into one another.

At carlier | gebauer, Rosa Barba shows six works of the last two years, which demonstrate the wide angle of her artistic production. In her objects she identifies the narrations of historical cartographies, diagrammatic texts and demonstrates the ensnared operations of the projectors themselves. Barba's works bring together views onto a medium in a state of disappearance and its radical presence. She investigates in the forms of the content and the contents of the forms, finds visual, temporal and spatial differences in that which hardly ever meets our everyday gaze, the undergrounds, the archives, deserts and landscapes. Barba's works delineate a search, in which new starting points are demonstrated, news lives of things and people. She demonstrates a sculptural approach to society itself as a structure, which transforms what was unrelated into a relation. Barba demonstrates dispositions of the unrelated.

In the main space of the gallery the 35 mm film *The Hidden Conference*: about the discontinuous history of things we see and we don't see (2010) will be presented as a ground-covering projection. Equipped with a hand-held camera, Barba entered the storage of the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, a "memory location of cultural memory". Here, unseen and uncurated works encounter one another in an endless line of objects, which, ordered by alphabet or by year, open up another art history. Generations of cultural hegemony, of political systems and curatorial fashions celebrate their oblivion in these dark rooms. The camera observes a fictive, unwatched conference of a rejected art history, which Barba drags into the light for a short moment to demonstrate that those who were deserted have long ago established new affinities with one another.

The 16mm work *A Private Tableaux* (2010) turns this gaze around and points the camera at a series of drawings, which only remain art for as long as their perceiver cannot decipher them. Just as *The Hidden Conference* also this film begins with short fragments of text, introducing the perspective one is lead into, staging the scenery and - again and again - dividing it with textual insertions. The camera navigates along sparsely lit walls of a system of tunnels on which the engineers have been marking flaws and cracks for decades. Those drawings, left by men, cover almost each section of the wall, but still this network of deficiencies prevents the structure's breakdown. The traces of all these cracks in the arches of the tunnel, their repetitions in chalk demonstrate, just like the artworks in the

storage, an indirect imprint of what waits outside, of the ruling narrations of art history in one and of the menacing traffic above ground in the other case. The boundaries of art are opened up within a filmic archive of views, which construct new relations out of old rejections.

The three installative projections *Invisible Act* (2010), *One way out* (2009) and *Double Whistler* (2011), present further inversions of the shown in the act of showing. In *Invisible Act* the celluloid of a 16 mm film takes its course over an external reel, at which a metal ball circles on the celluloid, in *One way out* (2009) the strip is diverted in its ways by the projector itself, gravitating towards the maelstrom of a ventilation pipe installed at the ceiling and in *Double Whistler* (2011) the celluloid strips of a film are lead around two conspiring projectors in seemingly endless channels. On this strip, a conversation is recorded, which timed with the projectors, returns in bits and pieces. Drawings, texts and projections are lead through the apparatus and re-performed by it. The collaboration of the apparatuses, in the case of *Invisible Act* that of the metal ball and the film strip, generates an effect which stretches far beyond its individual parts. Within the projection on the wall the turning of the metal ball and the movement of the film are still decipherable, but they seem to introduce also a new form, a new content in itself. Reality re-emerges as a relation in constant flux, which leaks and cracks and in which clearness is not that of an authentic representation but rather that of a shadow play.

The second new work in Rosa Barba's exhibition at carlier | gebauer - *Optic Ocean* (2011) - consists of a large, untreated canvas on which a text is printed in a double silkscreen print in red and green, which seems to shift into a distortion of phase in front of the viewer's eyes. The text quotes a film script, that is based on the first science-fiction narrative entitled "Somnium", envisaged by the philosopher and optician Johannes Kepler - in which he demonstrated a parallelism. As the ocean, which it deals with again and again, the lines move in front of the eyes, as a projection which got out of joint, and now is splitted into two colours. What in another genre would classify as a format of history painting in Barba's case becomes the cinematographic ground of a projection, which gives rise to the question what its reverberations onto history painting might be.

Rosa Barba studied at the University of Erlangen and at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, followed by a two year residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. A comprehensive solo exhibition of her work is currently on view at the Kunstverein Braunschweig (until May 22, 2011). Her work was widely exhibited at a.o. the Tate Modern Level 2 Gallery, London (2010/2011), at the Center of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2010), at the Centre International d'Art et du Paysage de l'île de Vassivière (2010), at the Villa Romana in Florence (2008) and at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2007). On May 28th, 2011 two institutional solo exhibitions will open at the Foundation Galleria Civica-Center of Research on Contemporary Art, Trento and the MART Museum, Rovereto, Italy. On this occasion, Hatje-Cantz Press will publish a monograph on her work.