



MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN

ROLF

MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN: THE PERSISTENT GAZE | ROLF ART

Curator | **Federico Windhausen**

Avant-Première | Friday 30.09.22 - 8pm

Official opening | Thursday 13.10.22 - 6pm

Permanence | 30.09.22 - 18.11.22

Rolf Art | Esmeralda 1353

Buenos Aires, Argentina

arteba

MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN, NARCISA HIRSCH Y WALTHER MEJÍA | ARTEBA

Curator | **Federico Windhausen**

06.10.22 - 09.10.22

arteba 2022 | Costa Salguero

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Rolf Art is pleased to announce the exclusive representation of **Marie Louise Alemann Estate** (Renania del Norte-Westfalia, 1927 – Buenos Aires, 2015) **a pioneer of experimental cinema in Argentina.**

Celebrating this incorporation, **Rolf Art** presents **Marie Louise Alemann: The persistent gaze**, an exhibition project curated by **Federico Windhausen** –Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University– with the expert counsel of **Cintia Mezza** –collection & Estate management specialist– **that will take place at Rolf Art gallery, overspread at the upcoming edition of arteba 2022.**

The exhibition proposes to revindicate the rarely-seen work and unpublished archive by Marie Louise Alemann. Based on an unprecedented review of the **earlier experimental artworks of experimental cinema & performance** by the group made up of **Marie Louise Alemann, Narcisa Hirsch and Walther Mejía**, during the 1960s in Argentina. This reconsideration and revaluation returns to *Concepción, Vida, Muerte y Transfiguración* (1966), and the films & performances *Yo veo conejos* (I see rabbits) (1967), the first experimental film by Marie Louise Alemann; *Marabunta* (1967), *Manzanas* (1969) and the film which marks the end of their collective work, *Retrato de una artista como ser humano* (Portrait of an Artist as a Human Being) (ca. 1973). The proposal concludes with *Legítima defensa* (1980), genesis of a later body of works, influenced by butoh dance, in Alemann's production.

The selected artworks suggest a range of diverse interests & concerns that seem to have been overlooked within existing art-historical accounts of Argentine art and cinema of the period, especially in relation to artists who not only explored bodily representation, but who were also rethinking visual experience within the gallery space - and soon afterwards, in the cinema.

For this project release, the gallery will offer for the first time an **avant-première**, a preview of the exhibition with a careful selection of Marie Louise Alemann filmography projected at the gallery. The event -free entry- will take place on Friday September 30th, 2022 starting at 8 pm at Rolf Art gallery, Esmeralda 1353, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The official opening of the show at the gallery will take place on **Thursday October 13th, 2022 starting at 6pm.** The show -free entry- could be visited from Monday to Friday from 11 am to 7 pm until November 18th 2022.

In paralel, with a double commitment, this unprecedented project will be displayed by Rolf Art in the upcoming edition of **arteba 2022, at the booth #A3 of the Main Sector.** The Art Fair will take place from October **6th to 9th, from 12 pm to 8pm in Costa Salguero, Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

We hope you can join us in each proposal & we would also appreciate your help in spreading the word about!

MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN: THE PERSISTENT GAZE

by Federico Windhausen

"All our life is crossed by a very precise law, by which we are all ruled. It's a law that was never formulated or written anywhere, but is archaically embodied in the human condition. And it's about the gaze length. (...) Later I realize that this law on the look is very strict. Very stiff. Now you are not going to lower your eyes, your gaze, because I already told you what it is this about, but always happens, in any normal conversation. One of the two people involved always looks away and you have to interrupt, cause the gaze reveals everything."
Marie Louise Alemann

Marie Louise Alemann was a filmmaker, artist, and writer whose unique body of work in multiple media was unified by its fascination with the visible body in its various meanings and effects, including the personal, social, political, and affective.

After studying photography in New York, at the beginning of the 1960, Alemann not only shoot and revealed her own earlier photographs, but also experiment and developed her own techniques. Initially through a rare collage procedure, she focused on portraits capable to reveal and transform the human face. Later she used superimposition with the images as a growing interest in movement and time, that began to lead her towards experimental cinema.

Persistent gaze refers to an idea and practice that was, for Alemann, fundamental to her work. According to the artist, in our everyday interactions the human reflex to look away stems from our understanding of the power of looking and, maybe, as an act to protect ourselves to not be totally seen. But for Alemann persistent gaze it is possible, through film and photography, to remain on camera, exploiting the gaze of its mechanical eye, with the aim of revealing, transforming, and provoking. This exhibition sheds light on how Alemann's resistance to the averted gaze unifies the diverse subject matter of her work, encompassing personal portraiture and political allegory, fundamental questions of identity and a wide range of bodily experiences.

Marie Louise Alemann was part of the group composed by Narcisa Hirsch y Walther Mejía, dedicated to avant-garde artworks, related to experimental cinema & performance, in the 1960's in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The first group exhibition *Concepción, Vida, Muerte y Transfiguración* took place in 1966 at Lirolay Gallery, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The show brought together a diverse range of visual works: a promotional poster by Edgardo Giménez, some photographs by Aldo Sessa, an early sculpture by Narcisa Hirsch -which included a series of stereoscopic photographs made with Marie Louise Alemann and Walther Mejía- and a wall photographic installation in which Marie Louise Alemann presented the *Transfiguration* series of portraits.

Alemann's film *Yo veo conejos* (1967) extends her exploration of faces in to the cinema with a series of intimate & autobiographical portraits, never seen in Argentine experimental cinema before, until that early period of her brief history. Hirsch's film *Marabunta* (1967) registers the group performance in which cinema audiences became active participants in an action centered around a sculpture of a female skeleton. Hirsch's second register of the group performance, *Manzanas* (1969), continues with their focus with actions on the public space, in this opportunity related to the green apples offered to the public for free on the streets. Finally, *Retrato de una artista como ser humano* (ca. 1973) returns to the objects, actions and films made by the group, to summarize and close the collective experience, with performances exclusively made for the camera at Hirsch studio, or in the beach, and other places.

The proposal concludes with *Legítima defensa* (1980), genesis of a later body of works, in which Marie Louise Alemann proposes a focused and more direct exploration of her own face, in her cinematographic work, with a key link between her cinema and her following work influenced by Butoh dance.

The selected artworks suggest a whole range of diverse interests & concerns that our current art-story chronicles from the sixties in Argentina seem to have been overlooked, specially in relation with this artists who explored not only the body representation, but also represented the visual experience inside the gallery space -& soon later, inside the cinema.

Drawing from an extensive and unknown personal archive that includes a significant collection of rare materials documenting Argentine experimental film of the 1970s, this exhibition pays special attention to her consistent focus on the relation between the camera and the look, an issue of growing importance for women artists and filmmakers during that decade. How the face is seen and represented, what it can reveal and conceal, how it responds to and resists the camera - this complex dynamic is central to Alemann's provocative, idiosyncratic work in film and photography.

MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN

Bio

Marie Louise Alemann (1927-2015) was born in Germany and traveled to Argentina in the late 1940s. From 1967 to 1985, she shot at least 35 short films. The themes of the clandestine and bodily representation stand out in her filmography. In several of her short films Alemann presents herself and other performers in preconceived or improvised settings, in urban and rural spaces, with costumes and elements that can be strange, threatening or humorous, placed within visual compositions that range from decorative to the minimalist. Alemann was interested in how the camera can capture and transform something of the identity of the person she is filming. Typically, when she focused on masks, faces, and moving bodies, she addressed questions of identity and role-playing, seeking to generate psychological tensions through ambiguity. Alemann arrived in Buenos Aires after the Second World War. She had grown up in Germany and as a young woman lived in Czechoslovakia, working for a circus and as a model until the communists took over. Over time, she went on to work as a journalist, film critic, newspaper columnist, commercial photographer and, later, an actress. Her first foray into her artistic practice was in the area of photography, which she studied in New York in the early 1960s. She was also part of a trio, along with Narcisa Hirsch and Walther Mejía, who held events (similar to happenings) in different types of public spaces in downtown Buenos Aires. In 1967 she made *Yo veo conejos* (I See Rabbits), a 16mm short film that launched her career as a filmmaker. In the 1970s she was part of a network of filmmakers who consciously and explicitly associated themselves with experimental cinema - a set of ideas, aesthetic tendencies, and practices that they considered more artistically liberated than other forms of filmmaking. Together with Narcisa Hirsch, Alemann attempted to provide a stable and institutional site for experimental cinema in Buenos Aires at the Goethe Institute on Corrientes Street. In the later years of her film work, Alemann became increasingly interested in the Japanese theatrical dance form called *Butoh*, and she created several *Butoh* works during the heyday of the performance space *Cemento*. Furthermore, throughout her extensive film-making period, Alemann kept an archive of not only her own works and performances, but also the activities of her friends and colleagues. This archive offers an invaluable record of film and performance in Buenos Aires from the 1960s to the 1980s.

NARCISA HIRSCH

Bio

A seminal figure in Latin American experimental cinema, Narcisa Hirsch devoted herself to artistic practice, concentrating first on painting, then moving on to performances in public spaces, and finally taking a crucial step towards experimental cinema. Reflecting, in part, the influence of 1960s art and film on her practice, Hirsch's films depict the body and corporeal experience in a variety of ways, some of which directly reflect her gendered perspective. Her films combine her own treatment of existential and spiritual questions with lyrical imagery; many of them were shot in the interior spaces of Hirsch's domestic life, the rural landscapes of Patagonia, and the urban sites of Buenos Aires. Born in 1928 in Germany and a resident of Argentina since childhood, Hirsch exemplifies a type of cosmopolitan emigrant found throughout the history of her adopted country. Her personal journey intersects in intriguing ways with pivotal moments in art and film, such as the happenings at the Instituto di Tella in Buenos Aires and the early years of the Anthology Film Archives in New York. But within the wide range of her travels and encounters, she has sought to follow her own path, primarily avoiding strong institutional affiliations and often seeking to engage with artists and thinkers on her own terms. However, Hirsch's strong and determined individualism did not prevent her from seeing cinema as a social and collaborative practice, even as she made more intimate films based on her personal life. Since the days when she worked alongside an informal network of filmmakers that included filmmakers such as Alemann, Claudio Caldini, and Horacio Vallereggio, among others, she has contributed extensively to the formation and sustained development of the communities of experimental cinema in Argentina.

WALTHER MEJÍA

Bio

Walther Mejía Suárez was born in Colombia in 1933 and described himself as an artist, although little is known about his independent artistic output. In Buenos Aires he worked mainly as a yoga instructor. In the second half of the sixties, he collaborated with Narcisa Hirsch and Marie Louise Alemann in a series of performances carried out mainly in public spaces. After breaking with Hirsch, he later resided in Spain for many years.

Federico Windhausen | Bio

Federico Windhausen is a writer and curator based in Buenos Aires. He received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University and has taught at California College of the Arts, Stanford University, Sarah Lawrence College, and the University of California, Berkeley. He has curated film programs for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, the London Film Festival, the National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.), the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), the Ambulante film festival (Mexico), the Center National d'Art et Culture Georges Pompidou (Paris), Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur (Switzerland) and the Mar del Plata International Film Festival, among others. His writings have been published in various anthologies and in magazines such as October, Grey Room and La Fuga. He is the editor of *A Companion to Experimental Cinema*, an international anthology of new academic studies that was published by Wiley in 2022. His current research project covers Argentine experimental cinema from the 1960s to the 1980s, initiated thanks to a grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation.

Cintia Mezza | Bio

Cintia Mezza is an Art Historian from the UBA; Professor of Drawing at UNA; She graduated from the Postgraduate in Management of Non-Profit Organizations and is currently studying for a Doctorate in Literature and Cultural Criticism at UdeSA. In 2019 she was an Ibermuseos Fellow in the Collections area of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and in Artist Archives in Berlin to develop her research in Artist Archive and Legacy Management (Estates). She has completed the Programs in Arts Administration at the Guggenheim Museums and New York University (2017), and the Executive Education Program for Museum Leaders, The Getty Museums Leadership Institute, Claremont University, California (2015). She currently coordinates the management of the Collection, Archive and Learning Space of the Federico J. Klemm Foundation. She previously served as director of the Programming and Curation Area of Fundación Proa (2013-2019); and she worked at MALBA as Coordinator of the Registration and Collection Management Area (2001-2012). At the same time, she was trained in photography, preventive conservation of cultural assets and archive management, and since 2013 she has been a university professor at the UBA, UNSAM, UdeSA and UTDT. In recent years, she has worked on the cataloging of works and archive management of Alicia Penalba, Marta Minujín and León Ferrari and coordinated the Mirtha Dermisache Archive (2013-2018) and currently directs her Legacy.

ABOUT ROLF ART

Rolf Art, located in Buenos Aires and founded by Florencia Giordana Braun in 2009, is the only art gallery specialized in technical image in Argentina. Focused on contemporary Latin American visual arts, the gallery features works exploring photographic media and its boundaries. The selection of artworks considers pieces with an inextricable union between critical density and aesthetic value. The curatorial profile challenges the political context & considers the social and economical background of artistic production as a determining factor for art's interpretation. We are committed to a select group of contemporary established Latin American artists, promoting them on a national and international basis. We support their artistic production together with editorial and audiovisual projects.

In order to contribute to the production and appreciation of contemporary art, looking forward to pushing the boundaries of the Latin American visual arts, the gallery develops an important exhibition and educational program. Working alongside leading researchers, curators, and art critics, the gallery organizes exhibitions in collaboration with national and international institutions & photo festivals; leading the way towards a sustained participation in the most important art & photo fairs worldwide; managing the incorporation of Latin American artists in renowned institutions; in addition to multiple private collections; contributing to the legitimation of the visual expressions from the Latin American region worldwide.

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