

Rosa Barba
Fixed in Fleeting
Performative Objects and Tape Journals
July 3 – August 22, 2021



Detail: Rosa Barba, **Liberties**, 2020
Photo © Roberto Ruiz

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce **Fixed in Fleeting: Performative Objects and Tape Journals**, Rosa Barba's first presentation with the gallery.

In advance of the artist's major solo exhibition at Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie, entitled **Rosa Barba: In a Perpetual Now**, opening on August 22, we present four works. In addition, a special boxed edition of the artist's series of publications, **Printed Cinema**, published by Dancing Foxes Press, New York, will be launched on the occasion of her presentation at the gallery.

Rosa Barba engages with the medium of film through a sculptural perspective. The artist's installations and site-specific interventions analyze the ways film articulates space, placing work and spectator in novel relationships. With great conceptual elegance and a marked attention to the materiality of the medium, Barba examines the history and industry of cinema and its staging vis-à-vis gesture, genre, information and documents.

Fixed in Fleeting foregrounds the artist's sculptural approach to the very medium of film—celluloid—both as material and as repository of knowledge. Thus, the construction of **Color Clock (red): Verticals Lean Occasionally Consistently Away from Viewpoints** (2012), for example, is reminiscent of the operation of a clock's gear mechanism but within its open housing a red 35mm film strip can be seen moving through a mechanic sets of rollers in a continuous loop. The film strip is imprinted with individual letters, spelling the color it represents, and suggests a form of text, albeit one which appears to have become obsolete.

Another work employing film stock both as sculptural element and as screen through which light becomes modulated, is the installation **Invisible Act** (2010). A silver ball balances on a moving strip of celluloid in front of a projector's light beam. Blank film runs through the projector and throws a white rectangle on the wall on which a shadow is cast by the projector's exposed mechanics. The absence of a projected image—except for the outline of the ball's continuous balancing—shifts the focus to its material conditions, creating a performative setting.

Two works from the series **Liberties** (2020) are a sculptural elaboration of fragmented texts based on American poet Susan Howe's collection **The Europe of Trusts**. By abstracting Howe's text **Liberties** to its smallest unit, the letter, and casting these in wax in a cascading wave of text, Barba assembles a new archive of fragmented narrations, rhythms and semantic layers.

An integral part of Barba's presentation is the limited edition boxed set of her **Printed Cinema** publications. The series, begun in 2004, is published alongside Barba's film projects, creating a kind of secondary literature, sourced from film stills, text, and photographs, including research material and unused filmic fragments. Addressing key tendencies in her work, the issues are intended not as companions to Barba's installations but rather as extended and free-form experiments in word and image that can be encountered alongside cinematic experiences or stand on their own.

Rosa Barba was born in 1972 in Agrigento, Italy. She currently lives and works in Berlin. Barba studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. Her PhD with the title **On the Anarchic Organisation of Cinematic Spaces: Evoking Spaces beyond Cinema** at the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University was completed in 2018. It will be published by Hatje Cantz in August 2021. The artist has been a visiting professor at MIT, ACT (Program in Art, Culture and Technology), in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Barba holds a professorship in Fine Arts at the University of the Arts, Bremen.

Her work has been exhibited at numerous institutions. Recent selected solo exhibitions include: Rosa Barba, **Touched by the Same Breath of Air**, Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku (2020); **Rosa Barba**, CCA Kitakyushu (2019); **Rosa Barba**, Armory Park Avenue, New York (2019); **Rosa Barba: History as a Sculpture**, Kunsthalle Bremen (2018); **Rosa Barba: Send Me Sky**, Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018); **Rosa Barba: From Source to Poem to Rhythm to Reader**, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2017); **Rosa Barba: Solar Flux Recordings**, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Palacio de Cristal, Madrid (2017); **Rosa Barba: Spacelength Thought**, Vienna Secession (2017); **Rosa Barba: From Source to Poem**, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2016); **Rosa Barba: Blind Volumes**, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2016). Rosa Barba's permanent sculpture, **Pillage of the Sea**, was inaugurated as part of this year's Beaufort Triennial in Oostende in May 2021.