

# Esther Schipper

Rosa Barba

## Radiant Exposures

September 9 – October 15, 2022



Rosa Barba, **Off Splintered Time**, 2021 (detail)  
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce **Radiant Exposures**, Rosa Barba's first solo exhibition with the gallery. On view will be films and works using film as sculptural and painterly medium.

In **Radiant Exposures** the artist introduces an exhibition architecture with two angled walls that steers visitors through the space and also provides a structure in which Barba's films are screened and the artist's sculptural works installed in a carefully orchestrated setting. Yet, signaling the importance of both film and sound as major themes in Rosa Barba's practice, visitors will encounter the first—or last—work, **Wirepiece**, 2022, in the vestibule created by the wall element.

**Wirepiece**, 2022 consists of a drum string, tightly strung/held between ceiling and column, which is touched—played, really—by a strip of film stock looped by a modified projector. Creating a silvery tone, the piece of celluloid takes on an unexpected role: a medium on which light encodes information, it doubles as a mechanical instrument producing sound. Once inside the space, the sound complements the sonic ensemble created by exhibition's films, sculptural and performative objects, and “cinematic paintings.”

Cinematic sculptures—such as **Color Response**, 2022, two projectors that cross their beams of light, traversing an object made from sheets of glass and rollers to project indexes of filmed color filters—manipulate the apparatuses of cinema and submit the machines and the materials to the requirements of their new forms.

Some works seem to paint or draw in space: **Mending Clear Positions**, 2022, for instance, which tightens and loosens strips of celluloid, creates a constant play of horizontal lines straightening and slackening, or, in the case of, **Stellar Populations**, 2017/2022, in the process of letting film gently propel metal balls, the work turns their activity into ever-changing drawings.

In Barba's practice, time is not treated as a fixed entity, not as a linear expansion. Instead, her works seem to modulate it: time is slowed down in films and broken-up or halted by stuttering apparatuses. The 2017 **A Shark Well Governed** makes manifest this topic in Barba's work: Strips of celluloid, with hand-written text with the artist's speculations on time, move across the sides of an illuminated square light box. The film strips take on a double function as repository of knowledge and as screen through which light becomes modulated. Barba brings together works in **Radiant Exposures** that all appear to have their own rhythm and exist in their own time but also become integral part of a choreographed whole. In this context, the film **Solar Flux Recordings**, 2022 takes a central role in the exhibition. For her 2017 solo exhibition at the Museum Reina Sofia's Palacio de Cristal, Barba constructed a delicate frame (a reconstruction of the palacio's formal vocabulary) inside the nineteenth-century structure and placed shapes with filters high up in its roof. Made from handblown colored glass, the locations of the filters were precisely calculated according to the passage of the sun. The building "became a kind of machine" as Barba noted, in effect turning the entire Palacio de Cristal into a sundial. **Solar Flux Recordings**, 2022 captures the passage of time through shadows and the movement of the sun produced over the course of the Madrid exhibition. At the gallery, in an echo of its conception, the film is projected through glass filters that emulate the ones Barba installed in the Palacio de Cristal and refract the film as it is projected.

The new 16mm film **Radiant Exposures—Facts Run on Light Beams These Days**, 2022, (the latter part of the title quotes from Donna Haraway) returns to Rosa Barba's long-standing motif of the desert and its exploration of modern archives as a manifestation of human's desire for progress. As in previous films, **Radiant Exposures—Facts Run on Light Beams These Days** appears to portray a site out of time and space—ethereal, timeless and unearthly.

The exhibition's title, **Radiant Exposures**, alludes to this dichotomy as well: it draws attention to the threshold of creation and destruction at which everything exists. Thus, while the exposure of celluloid must be controlled in order to produce the image—let in too much light into the (analog) camera and the encoded images are lost—this balance also holds true for our existence and the future of the planet, as both "radiance" and "exposure" carry in them a certain threat in times of climatic crises. At the same time, the title also introduces the beauty and timelessness of the cosmos and alludes to Barba's continued research into the overlaps of film and astronomy.

Rosa Barba was born in Italy. The artist currently lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne followed by a fellowship at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; and has completed 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 in 2018.

Her work has been exhibited at prestigious institutions and biennials worldwide. Among recent solo exhibitions are: Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2021-2022); Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku (2020); CCA Kitakyushu (2019); Armory Park Avenue, New York (2019); Kunsthalle Bremen (2018); Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Palacio de Cristal, Madrid (2017); Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2017); Vienna Secession (2017); Malmö Konsthall (2017); CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux (2016); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2016); Albertinum, Dresden (2015) and at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA (2015). Forthcoming exhibitions include: Tate Modern, 2023, Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours (2022); PICA Perth Australia (2023), MALI Museo de Arte de Lima (2023), Museu Calouste Gulbenkian Lisbon (2024). In 2021, Rosa Barba inaugurated **Inside the Outset: Evoking a Space of Passage**, 2021, a permanent Open-Air Cinema sculpture in the United Nations Buffer Zone in Deryneia, Cyprus and **Pillage of the Sea**, a permanent sculpture in the sea in Ostende, during the Beaufort Biennial.

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