

Esther Schipper

Mutable Structures

Rosa Barba, Ann Veronica Janssens, Sojourner Truth Parsons, and Anicka Yi

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Esther Schipper, Paris

Esther Schipper Paris is delighted to present **Mutable Structures** featuring works by Rosa Barba, Ann Veronica Janssens, Sojourner Truth Parsons, and Anicka Yi.

At a time of contrasting impulses and shifting boundaries Esther Schipper presents works that explore what can be learned from the everchanging structures of organic life, as well as examining their already existing impact on many knowledge systems. The works on view engage with biological structures, chemical components of life forms, highlight the changeability of the human physiology, engage with ideas of fusing (human and non-human) forms and structures in AI-assisted aesthetics, or, in an act of near-archeological appropriation, extrapolate a way to produce images from technological apparatuses now considered almost obsolete. With its Latin etymological roots the title acknowledges the constancy of change.

At the entrance of the gallery, the first work on view is Anicka Yi's **A Telescope**. Yi's lenticular prints offer a glimpse into a haunting space where the digital and the biological merge. The imagery is generated from a machine learning model that was fed selective works and reference images from Yi's archive. By hybridizing her machine learning model with organic images, abstract patterns emerge that fuse heretofore separate formal registers. Lenticular printing is a technology that uses lenticular lenses to create printed images with an illusion of depth that can also change as one moves across them.

In the first room on the right upon entering the gallery, works by Rosa Barba, Ann Veronica Janssens, and Sojourner Truth Parsons are installed in natural light. Rosa Barba's practice is grounded in the material and conceptual qualities of cinema. By employing modified apparatuses her works represent her innovative and poetic use of the materiality of the cinematic. **Off Splintered Time**, first conceived for Barba's 2021 solo exhibition at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, employs celluloid film as a sculptural medium, held in constant motion along several parallel planes. The film strips are connected to the sculpture's central axis—consisting of individual rotating sections—which is activated by a motor. Each section has their own rhythm as the rotating center functions as a spool around which the film strips tighten and loosen as it changes direction. The different levels of moving disks create an engaging dance of color and light, as the red film strips continuously change shape.

With their constant transformation, Ann Veronica Janssens' works heighten the viewer's awareness of the mutability and transience of human cognition. On view are two works from her series known as **Structural Color**, which have a uniquely patterned nanofilm on the surface of the panel. Unlike pigment, structural coloration is created by microscopically structured layers that interfere with visible light—as seen in nature in the skin or plumage of beetles and peacocks for instance. The artist's research project aims to invent biodegradable and non-toxic ways of coloring, but also to question the common understanding of color. A block of optical glass that captures the space and colors of its surroundings, Janssens' **Untitled** retains the shape of the raw casting from its cooling process. Clearer and more transparent than commonly produced glass, the small block of glass, installed on the floor, suggests an intensely luminous accumulation of light.

With their intermingling bright colors, silhouetted bodies, **Sex yourself**, and black fields doubling as architectural markers and framing devices, Sojourner Truth Parsons' paintings have an astounding atmospheric intensity. Composed from overlapping elements—layers of paint alternate with thin washes,

matt surfaces with slightly glossier and iridescent passages—the artist’s iconography constructs an interior environment, more psychic landscape than forest or city block, embodying emotional truth. References to the communal activities of African American quilt making in the American South provide an entry to the charged subtext that emerges from Parsons’ abstracted scene in **You destroy you**. The Gee’s Bend quilts of Alabama, with their uneven forms and kaleidoscopic central swirls, have been a major influence on Parsons, showing structures that dissolve, change, and transform into new constellations.

On the left gallery, an expanded dialogue of works by Rosa Barba, Anicka Yi, and Ann Veronica Janssens explore expanding forms and structures through the use of technologies in distinctive ways. **Enterprise of Notations**, 2013, Barba’s filmic sculpture continues the artist’s research which began with works like **Invisible Act** (2010) and **Boundaries of Consumption** (2012). Several metal spheres are transported on a rail by perforated film while being projected simultaneously. The process alludes to early forms of telecommunication or the punch cards of early music transcripts. Barba engages within the medium of film through a sculptural approach. In her works, she creates installations and site-specific interventions to analyze the ways film articulates space, placing the work and the viewer in a new relationship. Barba’s filmic sculpture is presented in dialogue with **The World Then No Longer Formed A Whole**, another unique iteration of Anicka Yi’s lenticular prints.

Visible in the gallery’s long perspective, Janssens’ sculpture **32 Earl Grey, Rooibos, Abricot Blocks (607)** is assembled from thirty-two blocks of glass. As light is refracted through the different surfaces, the grid melts and fuses, creating different shades of orange. The work is an example of a solid structure that nonetheless exemplifies a high degree of fluidity, as light and color of its surroundings constantly change the appearance of the work. Janssens’ works foreground the body’s perception of the world and itself in it. She often uses light, natural optical phenomena or glass as medium. Her works exude the impression of great simplicity yet create vivid experiences of the act of seeing, evoking a heightened awareness of the changeability and fleetingness of individual perceptions.

Rosa Barba’s **Weavers** is made from woven film stock. Similar to cloth or tapestry, the surface is created from interlaced vertical and horizontal strips around a frame. Creating grids from light and dark film and patterns from differently colored (exposed) celluloid, each **Weaver** is unique. While the process alludes to the ancient tradition of producing cloth, **Weavers** also evoke Barba’s filmic works which are characterized by an artful editing—interweavin—of still and moving pictures, of complex issues and beautiful imagery.

Rosa Barba was born in Agrigento, Italy. She studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and has completed her PhD at the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University in 2018. She currently lives and works in Berlin.

Ann Veronica Janssens was born in 1956 in Folkestone, England. She studied at L’École de la Cambre in Brussels. The artist lives and works in Brussels.

Sojourner Truth Parsons was born in 1984 in Vancouver, Canada. She is an artist of Afro-Indigenous and settler heritage. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The artist lives and works between the southern Catskill mountains and Brooklyn, NY.

Anicka Yi was born in 1971 in Seoul, South Korea. She studied at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Hunter College, New York. She lives and works in New York, NY.

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