

IS SCULPTURE
AT TOKARA DELICATESSEN

13

KATHY ROBINS

Axis

OCTOBER 2018



TOKARA
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CAT
ESSEN



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Curator

Ilse Schermers Griesel





Foreword

In 2014, I first met Kathy Robins. We were both in Dakar, Senegal on the occasion of the 11th Dak'art Biennale of contemporary African art. During that first encounter, I came to know Kathy as an arts philanthropist and ardent supporter of living artists; possessing a keen curiosity and a sensitive eye. Indeed, sitting together, our eyes welled watching John Akomfrah's poetic film *Peripeteia* (2012).

Having since also come to know Kathy as an emerging artist, she brings to bear that same sensitivity and curiosity. Her work encourages collaboration and also fosters collective response.

Zoe Whitley, London 2018

Left & Previous spread

Fabric of The Universe (*Detail*)

Dyed cotton on silkscreen

Dimensions variable



AXIS

Reorder | Revive | Reboot

Lerothodi Leeuw:

A world that has shifted below us, water that has drained from its sources and steel and metal taken over natural vegetation.

Kathy Robins:

Finding hidden ways to enter and leave, the staircase to heaven, to another entity – space.

(Lerothodi & Robins, 2018)

Spring
2018
Metal springs

Inspired by Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* and *The Off-Modern*, my work explores the process of replacing a world of environmental upheaval, war and economic displacement. Etymologically, the preposition "off" refers to that which is "of", "from" or "away", a small linguistic gift co-created by people located outside of dominant languages over the past two centuries. Immigrants. It suggests lives lived on the periphery or in the flux of unexpected transition. In a current global context, for many, the connection to a physical place or home is replaced with more abstract questions of belonging and connection.

The structure of my works sits within grids, used both metaphorically and physically as a reminder of the blockages and closed borders for people on the move as well as the contemporary voices of the not-so-silent grids - of the rise of nationalistic voices upholding the divisions that dictate the relationships between people and space. Overshadowing this too, is the upheaval of our climate and the sense of loss imbued within it. The crossing of borders, both physical and ideological, requires the navigation of grids or terrains into which one is grafted but not fully accepted or rooted. Recognition of the fluidity of physical movement of peoples across the globe and shifting perceptions of human relationship to environment, home, and community, requires reordering of both physical and mental constructs.

Drips
2018

Shade cloth, embroidery





Reorder

Axis explores this call to reorder that is perceived in environmental and social crises alike and defined by displacement and a sense of shifting and instability. We are on an axis. We are short of water. We are short of resources. People are suffering, particularly those others relegated to the social periphery. Acquisition and the need to possess have been and remain the organising principles of western life. Acknowledging the embeddedness of this history in the global psyche and the urgency for change, how might reordering this world look?

Mohsin Hamid's (2017) exploration of migration titled *Exit West* imagines narratives of displaced people moving away from home and stepping through mysterious, magic doors. Instead of focusing on refugees "getting somewhere", the magical virtual reality described transports them into alternative realities. However, while imbued with the appeal of newness, Hamid describes these as temporary locations, fragile in their lack of ability to provide the permanence their inhabitants so desire. This image of imagined, other worlds that are otherwise-ordered and occupied by those othered in a contemporary global context presents a means by which to reconsider urgent global needs regarding human relationships to place and home.

In *Axis*, I present an exploration of sustainable materials where possible and bio-sensitive yet impermanent structures and forms in an attempt to investigate solutions to displacement through an imaginative lens. Works such as *Cradle*, the *Dew Catcher* and the mobile wooden solar trolley titled *Reboot* provide solutions, some practical and some imagined, to interrelated crises of human displacement and disconnection from environment in both a physical and ideological sense. *Cradle* speaks of transient homes, fragile cocoons or an interactive garden that provides space for growth and



Previous spread – left & right

Planets 1 – Copper series (Detail)
Copper, resin, plant material, wood

Above

Planets 1 – Copper series (Detail)
Copper, resin, plant material, wood



simultaneously acknowledge their own impermanence. More practically, the dew catcher is an experiment in creating low-cost, sustainable methods by which to harvest and save water. The mobile wooden solar trolley speaks to the interrelation between human and environmental crises, the disequilibrium felt in both, and need for agility and creative solutions to address them.

Together, the works on show are a collection of imagined responses to a perceived global yearning for a reordering of systems and ideologies. This reordering relies on imaginative solutions to interconnected crises that account for and build towards sustainable human connection to place and home.

Hold
2018
Cement

Revive

“Revive” is a derivative of the French word “vivre”, meaning “to live”. Recalibrating and reimagining the ways in which humans live in relation to one another and embedded in their environments is central to Axis. In this exhibition, poetic gestures call for an increased sensitivity to the connections between organisms and ecosystems. Transient works that are transformed by the environment in which they are placed - i.e., fading in the sun or becoming heavy with the weight of dew drops resting on synthetic fibres - speak to the silent interconnection between the processes that sustain life on this planet. By “inviting surrounding forces to influence the physical state of [the] artworks”, processes of entropy and collapse are considered. While the transience that is defining of life itself is evident in these works, a sense of stability and promise is implied in the eco-consciousness of which these works speak.

Right & Following two pages

Hold
2018
Cement







Reboot

In the contemporary moment, most people have 24/7 access to pixels, visuals and sounds that create alternative realities that allow us to be “out of ourselves”. However, perhaps these imagined realities may inform our vision of a reordered, revived, rebooted reality. The kaleidoscope is used throughout *Axis* as a metaphor for such windows into other worlds. Through the fracturing of the image by the kaleidoscope, the everyday habits of sight and perspective are disrupted and new possible relationships between parts are suggested.

However, while the works on show promote this imaginative thinking through different perspectives, this is not solely an individual activity. The formation of many of the pieces on show through communities of artisans, academics, and experts emphasize the need for community engagement in finding solutions to current crises. This exhibition seeks to emphasize the productive potential of many imaginative minds working together in an interconnected manner to dismantle and re-envision the structures that have caused environmental and social disequilibrium. This inter-disciplinary collaboration that stems from imaginative problem-solving is disruptive in a generative sense.

Kathy Robins
September 2018

Pods
2018
Found branches, metal, paint

Next

Cradle
2018
Wood





Pods
2018
Found branches,
metal, paint



Space (*Work in progress*)

2018

Bronze, compass

30 x 10 x 50cm





References

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The Future of Nostalgia
Basic Books: New York

Boym, S. 2017
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Bloomsbury Publishing: London

Hamid, M. 2017
Exit West
Penguin Group: New York

Lerothodi, L. & Robins, K. 2018
Conversations
January-September 2018 (ongoing)

Weintraub, L. 2018
*Visionary eco-art: next/now/
past. In Eco-Visionaries: Art,
Architecture, and New Media after
the Anthropocene*
Pedro Gadanho (Ed.) 2018
Hatje Cantz Verlag: Berlin

Shared Earth 1
2018
Bronze
Edition 1/4



Dream 1
2018
Copper

Following spread (Left)

Dream 2
Bronze
Edition 1/1

Following spread (Right)

Wait
Bronze
Edition 1/6







Artist Biography

Kathy Robins has an MFA and PG Diploma in Fine Art from the University of Cape Town (2016, 2012), a B.Soc.Sci degree from UCT (1983) and a textile and product design degree from Parsons School of Design in New York (1989).

Kathy has worked in community development, art, design and social activism throughout her working life. She founded and developed a Corporate Social Responsibility Programme in 1999 and continues to work in creative and educational development initiatives.

She has exhibited her work in local and international group shows, most recently The Space Between (South African Jewish Museum, 2016), Displacement (AVA Gallery, 2016), The Christmas Show (ISArt, 2016), Muse Montage (Ecclectica Gallery, 2016), Fog Catcher Installation (Design Indaba, Cape Town, 2017), Master's Showcase (Michaelis Galleries, 2017), Dream Rift (Ecclectica Gallery, 2017) and Mixed Metaphors (Kalk Bay Modern, 2017). Upcoming projects include a solo show at ISArt (2018), the Arteles Residency (Finland, 2018), and Cape to Tehran (Gallery MOMO, 2018).

Previous spread (1, 2, 3)

See-shell

2018

Bronze

10 x 10 x 10cm

Edition 1/3

(4)

Seed

2018

Bronze

10 x 10 x 10cm

Edition 1/3





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Kobus La Grange
Getting into the shot



Kathy's Team

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is art
ilse schermers art gallery

IS SCULPTURE
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IS Sculpture is a venture of Anne Marie Ferreira of Tokara and Ilse Schermers of IS Art in Franschhoek of finding and exhibiting some of our country's best sculpture in one of the most beautiful surroundings of the Cape winelands.

All artworks in this exhibition are for sale. Prices on request.

Ilse Schermers

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