

Lucia Koch. Double Trouble

Curated by Matthieu Poirier

First solo exhibition in France of the artist, a major figure of the Brazilian scene, conceived in dialogue with the architecture of Auguste Perret.

18-28 October 2022

Palais d'Iéna-CESE
9, avenue d'Iéna - 75016 Paris

In parallel with Paris+ by Art Basel, the Palais d'Iéna-CESE (Conseil Économique, Social et Environnemental) is hosting this year, and for the first time in France, a solo exhibition of the acclaimed Brazilian artist Lucia Koch, who previously participated to the Biennale de Lyon, FRAC Centre or the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco.

The monumental *in-situ* project is spread over more than 1,200 sq ft. It provides a sensory experience that disrupts the perceptive habits of visitors to Auguste Perret's architectural masterpiece facing the Eiffel Tower, thanks to gigantic colored and translucent velums that are constantly animated by the lightest air currents and the passage of spectators through them.



Lucia Koch, *Tumulto*, Sao Paulo, 2019. Courtesy galerie nara roessler. Photo Erika Mayumi

The project

The notion of "Trübe" (most often translated into English as "turbidity"), which Goethe formulated in his essays *Entoptische Farben* (1817-1820) and *Chromatik* (1822), is extraordinary. This turbidity is dual: it refers to an aquatic environment whose transparency is disturbed by myriads of suspended sediments, as well as to the source of the formation of new colors in space and time.

Echoing our troubled political and social period, Lucia Koch's monumental *in situ* project for the Palais d'Iéna is part of a double logic too: on the one hand of disrupting the clarity of Auguste Perret's strict orthogonal plan and, on the other hand, of inventing new kind of colors, which are deployed in real time and space, making the site the source of a new sensory experience. Spectacular, poetic and playful, the main work is spread over more than 1,200 sq ft and 20 ft high, that is to say in almost all the spaces of the place, from the main hypostyle hall to the main staircase. It literally submerges the rigorous geometry of Perret under the immense waves of translucent and colored textiles. This main installation is completed by *trompe-l'oeil* photographs thought in dialogue with the surrounding architecture of Perret.

The primary quality of this out-of-scale work is that its material proves itself highly unstable, as the colored and translucent velums are constantly agitated by the lightest of air currents and by the passage of spectators. The installation is as much about painting (one thinks of

Mark Rothko's chromatic sfumato) as it is about sculpture (one thinks of Richard Serra's steel plates or Hans Haacke's *Blue sail*, suspended and moved by a fan). Far from these historical proposals, the work of Lucia Koch is thus highly kinetic and participative, undulating and changing according to the points of view, the number of superimposed layers, the hours of the day, the quality and direction of the sunlight.

In a space where the atmospheric phenomenon seems to invade the architecture, the long panels formed by the curtains extend over several heights. They also challenge the physical limits of the site and even extend beyond the windows of the Palais d'Iéna, crossing architectural walls to extend outside the building, on the street as well as on the interior courtyard.

Still in a dialogue with Perret's architecture, this time of the order of the image, a set of photographs will be placed on the periphery of the main installation. They consist of shots of the interior of simple packing boxes, but which give the impression of representing modernist or minimalist architectures, like that of Perret. Strongly ambiguous about their source, they form an architectural *trompe-l'oeil* – questioned by the constitutive details of the modest cardboard box that served as a subject – and complete the hollowing out of the space and question our perception of scale and appearances.

The artist

Born in 1966 and based in São Paulo (Brazil), Lucia Koch works most often within the framework of architecture, playing with spatial constraint and sensory disruption.

Her work plays with the natural lighting of spaces and the integration of forms in pre-existing architectures. Since the early 1990s, she has been creating ephemeral interventions in built and natural spaces. For example, textile veils or colored gelatins - usually used in cinema - filter and project light, covering glass surfaces, immersing the visitor in a colored atmosphere and enriching itself with the slightest movement.

The luminous color, which has become a medium in itself, takes on a double dimension, temporal and emotional, according to the course of the sun, which is moreover sensitive in its quasi-totality in the spaces of the Palais

d'Iéna. Lucia Koch's awareness of her approach is highly environmental and ecological. Lucia Koch's participation and contemplation are anything but superficial. (Some of the titles of the works speak for themselves: *A dramatic aurora*, *A twilight hour*, *A polluted sunset*).

Lucia Koch's interventions in space include gigantic colored sails - on the scale of the architecture and its glass openings - that would be installed at the Palais d'Iéna both outside (and thus subject to the winds) and inside (and thus offered to the passage of visitors). These, deeply disruptive and fascinating, would shift our attention, no longer to the content of a place, but to its envelope, not without questioning the powerful interior and exterior framing operated by the architecture of Auguste Perret.

Seeking to materialize an optical separation more than a physical one, the artist varies the colors of each panel, which complicates the vibrations that can occur according to meteorological factors. The modifications produced by these zones of color affect not only the building, but also the people who, walking in the color of a reflection, embody this encounter with the space. The work, open and participatory, would immerse the spectators in a common optical bath.

Graduate of the Federal University of Porto Alegre, Lucia Koch participated in the 11th Lyon Biennale (2011), 11th Sharjah Biennale, United Arab Emirates (2013). Her work was recently presented at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM) in 2016, at Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2017) and at the FRAC- Centre Val de Loire (2017). She was nominated for the Pipa Prize in 2011.



Lucia Koch, *Casa de Vento*, 2019. Courtesy galerie nara roesler. Photo Everton Ballardin



Lucia Koch, *Vento*, 2019. Courtesy galerie nara roesler. Photo DiRe VivaFoto



Lucia Koch, *Tumulto*, Sao Paulo, 2019. Courtesy galerie nara roesler. Photo Erika Mayumi

The curator

Born in 1976, Matthieu Poirier, Dr. Pr., is an art historian. A specialist in abstract art, he holds a doctorate from the University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) and is a qualified lecturer.

Former visiting scholar at the German Center for the History of Art, he has taught at the University of Paris-Sorbonne and has been Professor of modern art history at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris-Cergy and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris.

Author and editor in chief of numerous publications, he was the curator of many exhibitions, such as "Suspension. A History of Abstract Hanging Sculpture. 1918-2018", "Artur Lescher" or "Carlos Cruz-Diez" (Palais

d'Iéna), "Dynamo. A Century of Light and Movement in Art. 1913-2013" (Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais), "Hans Hartung" (Perrotin New-York), "Soto. A Retrospective" (Musée Soulages), "Spectres" (Roesler Hotel, Sao Paulo) or "Sous le motif" (Collection d'Art Société Générale, Paris-La Défense).

He has been the scientific advisor for exhibitions at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Museo Reina Sofia, the Louisiana Museum, the Tate Modern, the Palais de Tokyo and the Palazzo del Monte di Pieta in Padua.

He is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and the International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art (IKT).

The economic, social and environmental Council (CESE) – Palais d'Iéna

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It participates in the elaboration and evaluation of public policies in its fields of competence. Reformed in 2021, the

CESE is composed of 175 members and integrates the voice of citizens into the work of organized civil society. It can be seized by way of petition and develops its cooperation with the territories.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition *Lucia Koch. Double trouble*

From October 18th to 28th

Preview on Monday, October 17th (invitation only)

Palais d'Iéna, 9 place d'Iéna, 75016 Paris

Free entrance from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM

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