

Rosana Ricalde

Trama e Urdidura – Weft and Warp

Opening, 17th September 2021, 5 – 8 pm

Exhibition, 19th September – 20th November 2021

Life is made up of stories. Incessantly, we tell the story of who we are, who we were, who we will be – whether in conversation with others, or only silently, to ourselves. These stories weave the threads of our existence. In the ancient myths, this weaving took place quite literally. In secret, the goddesses of destiny that the Greeks called Moirai and the Romans Parcae – and whom we call the Fates today – wove the threads of life. The Brazilian artist Rosana Ricalde takes up the idea of these mythological threads and assimilates them into her artistic work. Not with spindle and distaff, needle and thread or – as the title of our exhibition suggests – “weft and warp”, but rather with brush and paint.

Rosana Ricalde was born in Niterói in 1971. Today she lives and works in the Portuguese city of Coimbra. Having studied the traditional and challenging art of copperplate engraving at the School of Fine Arts at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, she has shown her work in numerous exhibitions in Latin America - especially in her home country of Brazil – as well as internationally in major cities such as Tokyo, Lisbon, Paris and Oslo. In 2011 she was represented at the Art Positions sector at Art Basel Miami Beach by Baró Galeria of São Paulo. And in 2017, in connection with the previous year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, she collaborated with fellow Brazilian artist Felipe Barosso, presenting an installation of colorful sculptures in the garden of the Musée Olympique in Lausanne. Her works are also included in public and private collections around the world, such as in Brazil, Portugal, Dubai, Switzerland and Spain.

History and stories; tales and memories. The mythical threads of the Fates illustrate what is, in reality, a difficult thing to grasp: that the thread of events, the lines of life, the stream of consciousness pervades and flows through everything. It is their threads that make things real and yet the Fates themselves always remain invisible. Ricalde takes this idea of storytelling onboard as the engine that drives life forward. In her earlier work, she would take lines from the writings of Italo Calvino, José Saramago, Emily Dickinson, and Michel Foucault, blending the pattern of these texts into the pattern of the weave. Meaning and structure. Text and texture. In her work, the boundaries between visual poetry and drawing become permeable.

Ricalde's latest works take this one step further. To a certain extent they delve behind and beneath the text, the artist taking up the invisible threads that are, it could be said, the essence of life. With her brush, she traces the yarns and threads that were not only used in traditional handicrafts like weaving and embroidery to make warming, decorative fabrics, but also to create pictures of the world, to tell stories and relate history. Stories like the one about Eden, a place of bliss that both the Islamic as well as the Christian world see as a beatific garden. Traditional Persian rugs were created as images of this exhilarating paradise with its refreshing waters and colorful floral splendor, which must have seemed magical to all those people whose lives were normally characterized by the desert's monochrome.

Rosana Ricalde

Trama e Urdidura – Weft and Warp

Opening, 17th September 2021, 5 – 8 pm

Exhibition, 19th September – 20th November 2021

Rosana Ricalde picks up on these carpet patterns and with them, something of the way thoughts are expressed, life stories are told, reality is put in order and explained in the world. In her images she draws upon the vocabulary of the forms and colors of traditional weaving and embroidery. With paint and brush, she brings lush floral designs into existence, adorned with fragrant lace, allowing the hidden language to be revealed that recalls the faraway civilizations, stories and histories associated with these patterns, moving across time.

Stories such as the tale of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, who waited for her husband to return though he was believed to be lost at sea, and how she staved off the many suitors who surrounded her house by day, all unwelcome, by telling them that she would marry one of them when she was finally finished with the shroud she was weaving – but then every night undid the work she had done that day. Here, the thread woven by Penelope becomes a cleverly managed thread of life – one that can stretch out time and give it a different shape. Similarly, in the tales of the One Thousand and One Nights, the beautiful Scheherazade continues to weave a narrative thread night after night in order to be able to save her very life – a precious fabric indeed.

And so, just as you read and listen to the intertwined tales of Scheherazade and the myth of the clever and cunning Penelope, you can follow the colorful “threads” in Rosana Ricaldes’ images with your eyes and see how the most wonderful patterns form from this idea: the thread of life.

Alice Henkes