

Regina Silveira

February 18 – March 26, 2016

Alexander Gray Associates presents an exhibition of recent work by multimedia artist Regina Silveira. The works on view emphasize Silveira's use of graphic visual language through accumulation and skewed perspective to transform our perception of spaces. Throughout more than four decades, Silveira, a critical figure in Brazilian conceptual art, has investigated the tension between movement and spatial perspective, threading political meaning into installations that respond to specific sites.

Over the course of four decades, advances in digital technology have enabled Silveira to expand her investigations into experimental printmaking to materialize in three dimension projects that she has envisioned since the early 1980s. Her use of media ranging from paper to immersive environments serve as sites to consistently transform perception through minimal intervention. Her transgressive visual language is defined by what she describes as "images with characteristics of aggregation and accumulation, with the power to cover surfaces and to function as graphic invasions or contaminations, which could radically transform the meanings of the spaces where they were placed."



Touchin' Black 1, 2016
Digital cut on aluminum plate
Dimensions variable

Touchin' Black 1 consists of 11 square prints on aluminum arranged in space as an irregular geometry depicting an oversize human handprint on the metal. Silhouetted hands have been a recurring motif in Silveira's work since the early 1980s. They represent, in the artist's words, "registers of our ancestry" and "signs of presence and identity covering the walls." In *Touchin' Black 1*, the artist imbues this familiar shape with mystery and fantasy by reproducing the handprints in an unnaturally large size. For Silveira, this alteration of dimension causes a "gap in perception," and ultimately leads the viewer to question the nature of representation and scale. The repeated presence of the handprint in a contained space exemplifies the artist's interest in creating "images with characteristics of aggregation and accumulation, with the power to cover surfaces and to function as graphic invasions." Silveira has experimented with this exercise of visual alteration through repetition through the use of a number of indexical signs including animal tracks, human footprints, and tire tracks.



Fascination, 2015
Letter press, ink, and collage on paper, 12.75h x 10w in
Edition 7 of 12

Silveira has collaborated with poets and writers since the 1960s. From 1960 to 1966 she illustrated poems in the daily newspaper *Correio do Povo* published in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and in the 1970s she collaborated with Brazilian Concrete poet Haroldo De Campos. Her most recent artist book *Fascination*, was created in conjunction with the French publisher Gervais Jausaud and Korean poet Ko Un. Printed as unbound letterpress poems on paper, Silveira responded to Ko's words through visual motifs. Her depictions are not illustrations, but rather what Silveira describes as "a parallel universe of concepts; a parallel discourse," that runs across the pages interwoven with the poems. Silveira photographed and digitally silhouetted her own hand in various gestures, and collaged cutouts of these forms onto the pages. Additionally, she used images appropriated from mathematics and science vocabularies, and paired them with motifs from her own body of work. She then digitally combined the drawn and appropriated images, which were subsequently traced onto the pages of each book. While the 12 books that she produced contain the same set of images, each differs slightly based on the human touch inherent in the act of tracing the drawings.



Voodoo Series 1,2,3, 2015
Installation view (2016)
Photoengraving
24.5h x 18.13w in each

During the 1970s, Silveira began expanding her printmaking practice and engaging with new media and forms of experimentation which have become hallmarks of her artistic practice. Silveira's four decade study of experimental printmaking techniques, in which she often integrates photographic images, informs her transgressive visual language, and provides what she considers a "dry syntax that eschew[s] autographic aspects." Silveira's most recent photoetchings, *Voodoo Series*, consist of images of a fork, screw, and scissor, which appear to pierce the paper on which they are reproduced, and to cast shadows that render a three dimensional quality to the printed object. Through formal distortion, Silveira transforms these ordinary tools by conveying a sense of violence or aggression. These works question the reality of occurrence and the nature of representation while relying on the artist's longstanding interest in *skiagraphia* (the study of shadows).



Simile (Red), 1997
Lithography and serigraphy
27.63h x 39w in
Edition 13 of 30

This lithography and serigraphy exemplifies Silveira's four decade investigation into printmaking practices in which she has experimented with traditional concepts such as perspective as well as the manipulation of shadows. Here, Silveira depicted a naturalistic fork, sitting atop a tilted red plane, contrasted with an enlarged and distorted silhouette of the fork as a false shadow. This utensil is emblematic of Silveira's penchant for depicting everyday objects. Its warped white shadow looming like a claw conveys a sense of anxiety or possible danger. The two disparate interpretations of one household object represent the paradoxical relation between absence and presence and her interest in the physical and conceptual representations of reality. The title of this work alludes to the literary device, "simile" in that the two depictions, though formally different, are being juxtaposed and compared to one another for dramatic effect.



Amphibia, 2013
Vinyl and metal grate
Dimensions variable

Amphibia is a large scale immersive work covering the walls and floor of the Gallery's second level with varied sizes of frog silhouettes flowing toward a gilded metal grate in the center of the floor. The use of vinyl to intervene in and alter architectural spaces exemplifies Silveira's practice of transformation through graphic experimentation. During the 1970s, she began expanding her printmaking practice and engaging with new media, and since the 1990s her exploration of digital resources has enabled her to realize large-scale and site specific installations that explore notions of aggregation and accumulation in three dimensions. The placement of frogs, notably one of the biblical plagues, de-familiarizes the Gallery space, employing allegory to evoke contemporary social and political concerns. For curator Paulo Miyada, "the woes that afflicted ancient Egypt might be compared in the context of Regina Silveira's work, to the current ills of corruption, war, and surveillance." The mass of frogs gravitating to a subterranean world through a gilded grate, evoke the embedded perversion that exists in political systems when people are motivated by the promise of wealth or power. Additionally, Silveira sees the metal grate as a threshold in space "for improbable and extraordinary happenings, as well as openings for the territory which can give rise to invasions and irruptions of every sort."