

Press Kit

Beatriz González

Retrospective 1965–2017

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For image requests and text material please contact us: press@kw-berlin.de

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Press Release Berlin, September 27, 2018

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KW announces Fall Program 2018

Beatriz González

Retrospective 1965–2017

October 13, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: October 12, 2018, 7 pm

Curators: María Inés Rodríguez, Krist Gruijthuisen

Steve Bishop

Deliquescing

November 3, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: November 2, 2018, 7 pm

Curator: Anna Gritz

Sidsel Meineche Hansen

Real Doll Theatre

November 3, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: November 2, 2018, 7 pm

Curator: Anna Gritz

Tamara Henderson

Womb Life

November 3, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: November 2, 2018, 7 pm

Curator: Anna Gritz

KW Institute for Contemporary Art continues its exhibition program this fall with a major survey of the work of Colombian artist **Beatriz González**. It marks the first presentation of this scale outside of Colombia and is produced in collaboration with CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

In the late 1950s, González established an artistic practice that was strongly influenced by icon paintings, art-historical motifs, and local styles. Since then, González' work deals with scenes from everyday life in her native Colombia as well as public rituals of protest. The artist broke with Pop Art's anonymous, impersonal style by addressing political events from the country's recent history through personal and intimate matters.

The exhibition features 60 years of González' internationally acknowledged work and displays a selection of over 120 works created between 1965 and 2017. A comprehensive monographic publication accompanies the exhibition *Retrospective 1965–2017* by Beatriz González.

Three monographic exhibitions by artists **Steve Bishop**, **Sidsel Meineche Hansen**, and **Tamara Henderson** will be presented three weeks after the exhibition opening of Beatriz González. The three presentations include newly commissioned work, each of them reveals subtle connections to González' work by tracing the relationship between the appropriation of imagery, body politics, and subjects taken from contemporary culture.

Steve Bishop focuses on creating complex, surreal spatial structures. He is invested in questions of memory, the possibility of preservation, and how architectural spaces can reflect interior states. The conjuring of subtle emotional worlds through more or less abstract, biographical, dream-like, and parallel worlds is a leitmotif in Bishop's artistic practice. The exhibition *Deliquescing* unfolds through interaction with an abandoned modern town in northern British Columbia and the restorative qualities of the Lion's Mane mushroom, exploring the fragility of memory and the possibility of its preservation against the effects of time.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen's practice focuses on the industrial complex that connects virtual and robotic bodies with human labor within the pharmaceutical, pornographic, and tech industries. For the exhibition *Real Doll Theatre*, Meineche Hansen continues this line of enquiry, with focus on the concept and marketisation of sex robots, as one derivative of automated reproductive labour. Along different but parallel veins, the exhibition also explores art's consumption and the services that artists are expected to provide.

Tamara Henderson's creative process develops its own mythology out of the ongoing process of writing and drawing, notes on everyday objects and their movement patterns, as well as records of their appearance under hypnosis and in dreams. Her practice takes an instinctive approach and inanimate objects often become implicated in storytelling, shape shifting across different bodies of work, time zones, and spaces. For KW, a hypnotic encounter at Gatwick Airport forms the foundation for a new body of work entitled *Womb Life*, consisting of a film in six parts, a group of characters masked as items of furniture, and custom-made curtains enveloping the space.

The exhibition by Beatriz González is funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. The exhibition by Steve Bishop is generously supported by the British Council through Arts Council England, the Henry Moore Foundation, the Embassy of Canada in Berlin, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The exhibition by Sidsel Meineche Hansen is funded by the Danish Arts Foundation and co-produced by Kunsthall Aarhus Gallery of Denmark – Statens Museum for Kunst, and KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

The exhibition by Tamara Henderson is generously supported by the Embassy of Canada in Berlin, and Kvadrat.

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

Exhibition Text

Beatriz González

Retrospective 1965–2017

October 13, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: October 12, 2018, 7 pm

This fall, KW Institute for Contemporary Art presents the first major survey exhibition of Colombian artist Beatriz González in Germany. The exhibition features over 50 years of González' internationally acknowledged work and displays a selection of 120 works created between 1965 and 2017. Growing up in Colombia in the 1940s and 1950s during an era of political unrest known as *La Violencia* (The Violence), González became a pivotal figure in the Latin-American art scene. In the late 1950s, González established an artistic practice strongly influenced by icon paintings, art-historical motifs, local styles, and mass media. Since then, González' work has been concerned with everyday scenes, public protest rituals, and scenes of collective pain in her home country, Colombia. The artist broke with the anonymous, impersonal style of Pop Art by addressing political events from the country's recent history through personal and intimate matters. González effortlessly juxtaposes formerly opposing elements— art and design as well as high and low culture. Her use of canonical motifs and art historical subjects enables her to critically reformulate their iconography, thus finding the congruence between Western and South American traditions. In 1965 the artist started to use press clippings as templates for her portraits as she wanted to appropriate the aesthetics of popular imagery while still working within the parameters of painting's unique specificity, such as in her iconic work *Los Suicidas del Sisga No 2* (1965) which is located in the first room of the exhibition. This experimentation results in a style that neglects three-dimensional space and embraces silhouetted floating fields of color. The latter soon expanded almost accidentally onto furniture pieces that are prominently displayed in the hall of the building. One day, the artist bought a metal bed from a local market, and only after assembling it at home did she notice that the dimensions of the horizontal surface were almost identical to a painting of Christ she had just finished. With the furniture and curtain works, she proposes a "ready made" idea that does not follow the canonical logic. By introducing the element of narration, she corrupts the pure aesthetics of production and yet again challenges the autonomy of painting.

The newspaper clippings, some of which are displayed in several rooms of the exhibition, have a specific type of image that González started to collect. Central to the work of the 1960s and 1970s is the question of taste and the juxtaposition of supposedly oppositional types of imagery. Western masterpieces that she paraphrases in her own style, like *Télon de la móvil y cambiante naturaleza* (1978) appear next to popular graphics, which add a sense of humor to the complexity and were very fashionable throughout Latin America at that time. The political dimension of her work is already prevalent here, but becomes explicit during the 1980s and 1990s, mirroring the increase in brutal conflicts in the country. For example, *Decoracion de Interiores* (1981), which marks this shift, shows president Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala (in office from 1978–82) together with noble society at a private reception, drinking and laughing. During his governance, Colombia underwent a horrific period of violence caused by the clash between guerrillas and the military. To counteract public unrest, he chose a harmless, private portrayal of his persona in the media. The *Las Delicias* series (1997) contains large-format depictions of indigenous people crying.

Works such as *El silencio*, *El paraíso*, *Autorretrato desnuda llorando* (1997), all located in room six, capture the history of the country, the victims, and traces of violence. Here the use of an overall darker color palette and the schematic contours of the figures add a contemplative, serene component that almost transcends the violent aspect. This dedication, not to the perpetrators but the victims, is still present in the more recent works and expresses the activity of mourning and memorializing a collective history. The series *Los Cargueros* (2007–2008) is the most recent example of how the artist perpetuates these aspects of her work. It repeats the motif of the silhouettes of two people carrying a dead body in an improvised hammock and appears in various ways, such as in the big graphite drawings *Carguero de la sombra* (2008) and *Carguero a la luz* (2008), which are placed next to each other right before entering the hall, or in an in situ work that repeats almost endlessly on the facade of Bogotá's central cemetery. Taking the architectural layout of KW into account, a section of the columbarium's facade was reproduced and installed in the transitional area between the street entrance and the yard of KW.

Aside from her purely artistic practice, the artist has been very important in fueling Colombia's art scene on a discursive level in her role as a teacher and critic. Through her multifaceted and outspoken body of work, González has become one of the most important female artists from Latin America, who manages to respond to questions of form and media, as well as questions of history and representation, like no other.

In conjunction with the exhibition on the artist, Diego García Moreno's documentary *Beatriz González ¿Por qué llora si ya reí?* will be screened at Pogo Bar. On October 13 and 25, November 22 and 29, December 13, and January 5 the film will not be on view.

The exhibition *Retrospective 1965–2017* by Beatriz González marks the first presentation of this scale outside of Colombia and was produced in collaboration with the CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid.

Curators: María Inés Rodríguez, Krist Gruijthuijsen
Assistant Curator: Cathrin Mayer

Biography

Beatriz González (born 1938 in Bucaramanga, CO) is an artist based in Bogotá who deals with issues related to the historical and cultural situation of her country through drawing, painting, graphics, and sculpture. She has studied architecture at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia from 1956-58 and fine arts and art history at the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá from 1959-62. In addition to her artistic work, she has also worked as a professor, writer and art historian with a focus on 19th century Colombian art.

Growing up during the civil war *La Violencia* (The Violence), which began with the assassination of the Colombian lawyer and politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, Beatriz González was influenced by the events in her surroundings, which she then implemented in her artistic life. Escape, expulsion and identity, as well as the pain of those affected, play an increasingly important role in her work.

Beatriz González has curated numerous exhibitions in Colombia, including the Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, and has written various books and articles on 19th century art and artists in Colombia. Her works are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Tate Modern, London. Her work has been represented at the Venice Biennial of 1978 and the São Paulo Biennial of 1971. The artist received great attention through her participation in Documenta 14 (2017), where the older works *Telón de la móvil y cambiante naturaleza* (1978) and *Decoración de interiores* (1981) were on display.

Public Program

Curator's tour through the exhibition with María Inés Rodríguez

October 13, 2018, 3 pm

Meeting point: Counter

Book launch with Beatriz González

Diario del Guernica. Diario de una obra sin sentido Mural Para Fábrica Socialista

October 13, 2018, 5 pm

Venue: Pogo Bar

Assistant curator's tour through the exhibition with Cathrin Mayer

November 22, 2018, 7 pm

Meeting point: Counter

Colombian film afternoon

2 films selected by Beatriz González (Spanish with English subtitles)

December 2, 2018, 5 and 7 pm

Venue: Studio at KW's front house

Admission: 5 € / 3 € reduced

Curator's tour through the exhibition with Krist Gruijthuisen

December 13, 2018, 7 pm

Meeting point: Counter

Mediation

Visitors can constantly take part in free guided tours through the exhibitions during the opening hours. Please contact Duygu Örs at do@kw-berlin.de or +49 30 243459-132, if you would like to receive more information on guided tours for groups.

Upcoming Exhibitions

Steve Bishop

Deliquescing

November 3, 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening: November 2, 2018, 7 pm

Sidsel Meineche Hansen

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Opening: November 2, 2018, 7 pm

10th anniversary Videoart at Midnight: Christian Friedrich

December 8–16, 2018

Opening: December 7, 2018, 7 pm

Partners

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The exhibition Beatriz González *Retrospective 1965–2017* is funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.

Berlin in English since 2002

EXBERLINER

Media partner of the exhibition Beatriz González *Retrospective 1965–2017* is Exberliner.

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