

Rosa Barba: The Color Out of Space

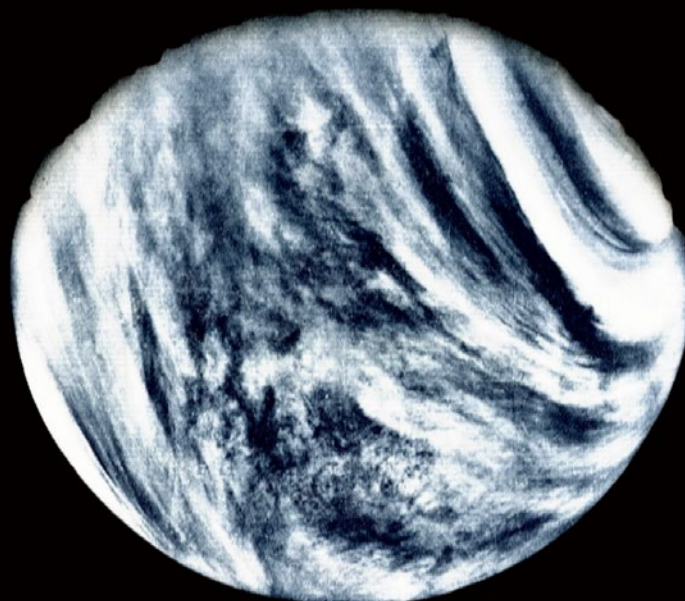
October 23, 2015 – January 3, 2016



MIT List Visual Arts Center
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listart.mit.edu

Rosa Barba: The Color Out of Space

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COVER *The Color Out of Space*, 2015, HD video still
© Rosa Barba

INSIDE *Color Studies*, 2013, 2 16mm film projectors, 2 16mm films, screen
Installation view at CAC Vilnius, Lithuania, 2014



MIT List Visual Arts Center

Rosa Barba: The Color Out of Space

Over the last ten years, Rosa Barba has created a singular body of work that encompasses films, sculptures, and text-based works. Her projects oscillate in scale as they explore the material qualities of celluloid film and the narrative possibilities of cinema. Barba's smaller-scale, projector sculptures (influenced by what is known as structural film) examine the physical properties of the projector, celluloid, and projected light. Her longer films, by contrast, are speculative stories situated between experimental documentary and fictional narrative. Barba's signature themes run throughout the exhibition at the List Center including her ongoing consideration of time, particularly "deep" geological time and the impossibility of grasping its immensity within the limited framework of a human time scale.

Color Clocks: Verticals Lean Occasionally Away from Viewpoints (2012) is a group of 35mm film sculptures that merge Barba's structural investigations with her thematic preoccupations. Each pie-shaped form represents a segment of one hour, as a single arm seesaws up and down and loops strips of celluloid to mark the passing of time. *Time As Perspective* (2012), a large 35mm film projection, continues this meditation on time. Shown from a bird's eye view, the moving pumpjacks of West Texas oil fields are reminiscent of the arms of *Color Clocks*. The film is interspersed with text fragments, the first of which reads: "One might assert that space is not real / and ask whether it is a function of time." Accompanied by a foreboding electronic soundtrack, the desert and the industrial devices are rendered strange and indeterminately situated in the past, present, and future.

Barba's film *Somnium* (2011) was partly inspired by Ludwig Kepler's eponymous novel published in 1634, which is a treatise on astronomy and considered to be the first work of science fiction. Barba's film depicts the icy shores and industrial harbors of the European North Sea. It is accompanied by a soundtrack of speakers relaying a fantastical narrative of environmental pollution and land reclamation on a mysterious planet. Barba's most recent work *The Color Out of Space* (2015), her first to use high-definition video, revolves around "real" images of stars and planets collected over the last two years at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Luminous astronomical images projected through a series of colored glass panels are complemented by the voices of scientists, writers, and artists reflecting on the universe—or rather, on the tiny part that is known.

Obsolescence threads throughout Barba's work on the level of both material as well as storytelling. If her early decision to use celluloid film was a conscious investment in an already outdated medium, the theme has only been thrown into starker relief over time. The artist's works are permeated by a sense of elegiac sadness but their sensibility is not fatalistic. Rather, they are tempered by a wary wisdom that considers the inevitable limitations of human perspective and the malleability of time and space.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rosa Barba (b. 1972, Agrigento, Italy) lives and works in Berlin.

Rosa Barba: The Color Out of Space is curated by Henriette Huldish, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

Hayden and Reference Galleries October 23, 2015 – January 3, 2016

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Artist Lecture and Roundtable
Monday, October 19, 7-9 PM
ACT Cube, E15 Lower Level

MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) Monday Night Lecture Series
Rosa Barba with Haseeb Ahmed (Artist, Brussels and Zurich), and Henriette Huldish.

Public Reception
Thursday, October 22, 6-8 PM

Family Program
Saturday, October 24, 12-4 PM
Night + Day Diptych Workshop

Curator's Tour
Thursday, November 5, 6 PM

Family Program
Saturday, November 21, 12-4 PM
Planetary Projections Workshop

Lavine Lecture
Thursday, December 3, 6:30 PM
Bartos Theater, E15 Lower Level

Surface Tension, Screen Space — a talk by Giuliana Bruno (Emmet Blakeney Gleason Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University)

SPONSORS

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SUPPORT

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