



- 
- **Exhibition:** “Anna Bella Geiger: Physical and Human Geography”
  - **Date:** July 01 - October 23, 2016.
  - **Spaces:** South Cloister
  - **Curator:** Estrella de Diego
  - **Exhibition Session:** Archive Sickness
- 

There is a great deal of meticulous care, intensely radical thought and profound decorum in the works of Brazilian artist Anna Bella Geiger (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1933), one of the soundest creative minds of her generation, who, like so many female artists before her, has perhaps not received as much recognition as she deserves precisely because she is a woman. Even so, Geiger's career has always had a luminous radiance. She soon turned away from her abstract beginnings in the 1950s to fully embrace the premises of conceptualism, especially after a trip to New York in the 1970s -at the height of her conceptual phase-where she came into contact with Acconci and Beuys.

Yet even in those years of abstract painting, her work had already been contaminated by the teachings of Fayga Ostrower, the Polish-Jewish émigré to Rio de Janeiro from whom Geiger learned the art of print-making and, in the process, the joyous freedom of creating without the pressure to produce a single masterpiece -part of the imposed discourse of power. The very concept of repetition and series associated with that medium gradually gave rise to fascinating and often unobtrusive strategies for challenging the discourse of authority, on which Geiger frequently relies.

Thus, the 1970s witnessed the emergence and development of her two major themes, which are repeated in works that frequently revisit what we might call "apparent series" strategies. This is the formula of representation she has cultivated through the years, a formula of subtle changes and parodied strategies that eventually found their way into the various media which Geiger has employed in her career: video (which she used early on), drawing, photography, three-dimensional works, collage, appropriation, etc. Physical geography and human geography have thus become the pretexts for Anna Bella to reflect on questions related to colonial policies, cultural stereotypes,



exclusions, discourses imposed by hegemonic powers and, in particular, ways of challenging those discourses with refined, fragile, delicate forms at every turn, transforming political objects into poetic ones.

This exhibition, Geiger's first solo show in Spain, reveals the subtlety of the artist's oeuvre, her political engagement, her unique subversion of chronological order (by inventing a repertoire of personal times that come and go), the diversity of her chosen media, and her extremely fine sense of humour, the mocking attitude that lets her keep her distance from things. In short, it presents her reflections on a physical and human geography where the world must be rewritten and retold from a different perspective.

### **Estrella de Diego**