

TURN ON ART

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JANAINA TSCHÄPE: NO LIMITS

[ARES CASADO](#)

When you first meet Janaina, you realize that not only her work but herself as well, fluctuate between the fragility of her oneiric unconscious universe, and the exuberant nature of organic and artificial forms, able to be equilibrated by the delicacy of her poetic gesture and the implicit strength of the message beneath. Janaina moves and transmits, she inhabits and feels, and she speaks, essentially she speaks.

Two worlds coexist and interchangeably interact, the real and the imaginary world, generating an impulsion just possible within infinity. This distinct way to look at reality, brings the spectator into a world oblivious to the ordering laws of cause and effect, an ever changing and contradictory world: the inner world.

This ambiguous dreamful experience is filled with mystery and confusion, enclosing questions about the rigid and structured reality we live in. It speaks out loud about the subjugation and domination of identities, revealing firm means of liberation to reach an idyllic and magic universe. It emanates the possibility of impossible.

Jananina works with video, photography, painting and drawing. She repeatedly mixes a number of techniques creating a dialog between moving images, the images that she sees or thinks about while travelling, and the drawings and paintings that treasure up her trips. All of it is inside her mind, when she prepares an installation or a show.

I met her in her studio of Clifton Place Street in Brooklyn, she had just arrived from Brazil, where she participated in the group show "Made By... feito por Brasileiros", located at Cidade Matarazzo in Sao Paulo. She talked to me, among many other things, about her last work, about her creative process including various disciplines, and about the role of women within the art world.

Janaina Tschäpe (JT): ...The idea was to create a fresco, a painting, and also have video installation in the same space; the video piece is called "Fern Weh", which means "longing for distance". There are two video pieces that I shot in the Galapagos last year when I was on a trip, and it is in a way, kind of based on... You know, there was this artist called Bas Jan Ader, a Dutch artist, and the last piece he did before dying was a research of the miraculous. He took a Little boat in L.A., went into the sea and disappeared. And that was his last performance. That piece always impresses me so much.

The research of the miraculous, the research of the perfect place, the perfect landscape... So when I was in the Galapagos and I was filming, and there were all these different islands, and this whole idea of the discovery, that longing that we have to find something new. It is a research that we all care inside of us. It was all about that.

"Made By ...Feito por Brasileiros", is a creative invasion that will bring back to life pavilions hallways and gardens of the old Umberto Primo Hospital, known as Hospital Matarazzo. The exhibition brings new energy into the old, poetic, building before its refurbishment.

JT: ... So I did this video piece in the Galapagos, and then when I saw that place in Matarazzo which was abandoned for 30 years (It used to be a hospital); I had this big space with this wall that was cracking up and you saw the layers... I was thinking of the idea that it was where people go with all kind of hopes, so I just thought that it was interesting to show that video piece, and then when I saw the wall with the layers, I was interested in discovering the memory of the space, so instead of just painting the fresco on the top, I just started to take the layers off and create clouds and landscape, so it was a sort of a fresco of a sea side, a horizon, an ocean in a way which relates again to the videos. And when I installed the video next to it, it was so beautiful to see, because the horizon of the video was matching with the horizon of the painting and in a way you looked at the video and you could continue into the painting. So in that sense I think that the video works in the painting, they have a dialogue.

Ares Casado (AC): I feel that you do not like to be constrained to only one technique.

JT: No, I haven't!! I've been doing even these little sculptures now (cutouts), and somehow, I tried to

express everything. I want to be free. I am an artist. I feel like I don't like to constrain myself into only one technique. I like to keep all of them open because there are all these different ways of expression. I am always curious to expand. These cutouts I am doing now, they come in a way of painting. To break my own patterns of work is one thing I like to pursue. You can move on and discover something else. I really need to do all these things. It is really nurturing for my work.

AC: Transformation, desire, myth, sex, nature, are constant themes in your world. In your earlier works you were using your own body to search for an identity, then you started using other females bodies, other muses in your work to include more information, different movements, gestures and dialogues. What about men? What is the role of men in Janaina's work

JT: In my experience, working with men is very different. I did work with men and it was really different. First there is a different intimacy, there is a different way of communication. With a woman I have more freedom. Guys are generally a little bit more vain in the way of how they want to be represented. It is a complete different universe. I think I am interested in maybe continuing doing some video pieces with men because I realize how different it is.

AC: So you already did work with men...

JT: Last year I did a trip to the Amazon. I went with a friend of mine, we have been friends for a long time, he is a biologist. We were playing with this fictional idea of us traveling together in the Amazon, like a discovery trip, like ancient trips where scientist and artist were going together and the artists were illustrating what the scientist researched. This was very different from what I was doing and it was very interesting. There are some scenes where he appears in the video, but he has outfits on, it was interesting to start expanding again my work.

AC: Tell me about your experience participating in the group *Total Art: Contemporary Video*, taken place this year at the National Museum Of Women in the Arts of Washington, which presents pioneering women artists working in video art in the 60s and 70s.

JT: I think it was very important for my work in the last years, to be very strong and very clear about the fact that I am a female artist working about the female body. Male artists always work with themselves in performances and it is not like they are making a statement about being a guy. So I just work now. It is not about having to make a statement because I am a woman. I just want to be known as an artist. Period. And that it is so hard because once you do things as a woman you already have this controversy, and I wish someday this will disappear, but it is still an issue. Why do we have to be separated? It is important to get the attention first, so it is something that people get to know and see before it can be integrated in the general art. It is the same with female artists. I think it is time, it is being a while and it is still an issue. And if you see the art market in general it is still unbalanced. If you really pay attention and you make numbers, it is unbalanced. We still have to talk about it until we won't need to point our fingers anymore. It is important that we have this space in this Museum for Women, to have enough attention, but it shouldn't be this way. But as long as we need to do it, we need to do it...

JANAINA TSCHÄPE, Art

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