

In the Eye of Bambi

"la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art

Selected by Verónica Gerber Bicecci

14 January – 19 April 2020

Gallery 7, Free Entry

#laCaixaCollection

The artist and writer Verónica Gerber Bicecci (b. 1981, Mexico) explores the effects of human and environmental catastrophe on landscape and language in this free display of photography, video and installation.

In the Eye of Bambi brings together works by **Carlos Amorales** (b. 1970, Mexico), **Bleda y Rosa** (each b. 1969, Spain), **Carmen Calvo** (b. 1950, Spain), **Victoria Civera** (b. 1955, Spain), **Sophie Ristelhueber** (b. 1949, France) and **Concha García** (b. 1960, Spain), drawn from "la Caixa" Collection, Spain's leading collection of contemporary art. The display is the fourth and final instalment in a series of exhibitions and new texts highlighting the collection, guest-curated by leading writers over the course of a year. Accompanying Gerber Bicecci's selection is an original short story in which the words of Greta Thunberg, Donna Haraway and W. vB. Yeats pepper a cautionary tale of the destruction of the natural world by humans represented as 'the creatures with three hands'.

Gerber Bicecci proposes a science fiction scenario based on the aftermath of a catastrophic event envisioned by Carlos Amorales in his animated film *Useless Wonder* (2014). In this double-sided projection, a world map disintegrates into small fragments on one side while on the other humans and animals struggle to co-exist. An enlarged eye peers out of Victoria Civera's circular canvas. The gaze is that of Disney's plucky fawn orphaned by the destructive actions of humans in one of the earliest environmental novels, *Bambi, A Life in the Woods* (1923) by Felix Salten.

The sinuous, red woollen tendrils of Concha García's *Trepadora roja (Red Creeper)* (2004) invade the gallery and alert visitors to an unspoken earthly danger. Carmen Calvo's ecru-coloured painting is described by the artist as a 'cemetery of nature', with tiny ceramic trees sprouting across its surface. *Fait #7* by Sophie Ristelhueber examines through photography the marks and debris strewn upon a landscape scarred by war. Bleda y Rosa (María Bleda and José María Rosa) revisit the sites of colonial-era battles in Latin America where they photograph the now desolate places where humans once lived.

In a second work by Victoria Civera, *A-be-ce-da-rio* (1991), viewers are presented with a new alphabet of painted forms which point to an uncertain and changeable future. These themes are elaborated in Gerber Bicecci's experimental writing, which transcribes the sounds of mutating creatures, groaning plants and disintegrating languages into a post-apocalyptic chorus.

Press Release

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Gerber Bicecci is a visual artist who also writes. She is best known for her novel, *Empty Set* (Coffee House Press, 2018), which combines text and drawings to tell a story of modern loneliness, exile and imagination.

Notes to Editors

- Whitechapel Gallery will present four exhibitions drawn from the "la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art from 2019 – 2020, curated by Lydia Yee, Chief Curator, Whitechapel Gallery and Nimfa Bisbe, Head of the Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa", with Candy Stobbs, Assistant Curator and Inês Costa, Curatorial Assistant, Whitechapel Gallery.
- The fourth in a series of bilingual publications accompanying each display, an illustrated book will include a specially commissioned new piece of writing by Verónica Gerber Bicecci.

About Veronica Gerber Bicecci

Verónica Gerber Bicecci has published the books: *Mudanza* (2010) and *Empty Set* (Coffee House Press, 2018). In other media, her most recent pieces include: *Migrant Words* (2017), Art Association, Jackson Hole, Wyoming; *The Speakers No. 2* (2016), Museo Amparo, Puebla; and *The amplified void* (2016), Casa-Taller José Clemente Orozco, Guadalajara. She has participated in interdisciplinary residences at OMI International Arts Center (US), Ucross Foundation (US), Santa Maddalena (Italy), and the Sommerakademie im Zentrum Paul Klee (Switzerland). She obtained a BA in visual arts from the ENPEG, "La Esmeralda" (Mexico's national school of painting, sculpture, and printmaking), and an MA in art history from the UNAM. In 2013 she was awarded the third Aura Estrada prize for literature and in 2014, she received an honorable mention in Mexico's national award for essays about photography. Verónica has led workshops on reading images, visual writing, abstract writing, and mural writing in numerous institutions across Mexico, as well as courses in the theory of art and drawing in higher artistic education programs. She is an editor with Tumbona Ediciones, a publishing cooperative with a catalogue that explores the intersections between literature and art, and coordinates the Seminario de Producción Fotográfica (Photographic Production Seminar) at Centro de la Imagen.

About "la Caixa"

"la Caixa" Collection of Contemporary Art was founded in 1985 and now includes more than one thousand works. The origins of the Collection lie in "la Caixa"'s commitment to enabling people to enjoy art and culture. "la Caixa" was founded in 1904 and became "la Caixa" Foundation in 2014 following the reorganisation of the savings bank Caja de Ahorros y Pensiones de Barcelona.

The new Foundation inherited the social mission that "la Caixa" has pursued since its inception to improve the wellbeing of people, particularly those most in need, and work towards the advancement of society as a whole. "la Caixa" began organising exhibitions in the early-1980s, presenting contemporary work and establishing a direct connection with twentieth-century art, before going on to form its own collection. The core of the new Collection was devoted to art from the 1980s, though works by outstanding artists from the 60s and 70s were also included. The questions underpinning the Collection consider: What is the role of art in society? How can we break down the barriers that separate people from art?

From the first, the Collection focused on international contemporary art. Bruce Nauman, Cristina Iglesias, Doris Salcedo, Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys, Donald Judd, Mona Hatoum, Dora García, Juan Muñoz, Antoni Tàpies, Cornelia Parker, Juan Uslé, Sigmar Polke, Cindy Sherman and Paul McCarthy are just some of the highly renowned artists represented.



Visitor Information

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am – 6pm; Thursdays, 11am – 9pm
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