

Duchamp and Linarejos Moreno

By Surpik Angelini

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As an emerging artist, when Linarejos Moreno took over the ruins of her father's metallurgical factory, we could say that she began to enact her own foundational myth, counterpointing the rational, conscripted, mechanical realm of the father with her own unbounded feminine imaginary. Linarejos Moreno was born and raised in Madrid. She, and other female members of her family were made to turn a blind eye to the emblematic world of the railroad industry her father was engaged in most of his life. Following Spain's economic crisis in the last decades, the factory was forced to shut down, and thus, Linarejos finally entered that secret world in ruins, charged with industrial, mechanical and mathematical symbols and an aura of a past life she could scarcely fathom. Empowered as an artist, she still turns to this space again and again, infusing her countless transformative performances and installations in an "infinite regress," as David Joselit would put it. Linarejos has photographed instances of her ritual performances amidst architectural ruins, industrial molds, machines, etc. She has also crafted phantasmagoric "mise-en-scènes" using clusters of threads that criss-cross empty spaces, or radiate in and out of thresholds, windows, mechanical parts, while, suddenly, they may appear in the act of being cut by fleeting actors holding scissors... their undulating fall caught by the eye of the camera. See *Architectural Intersections*, 2010, *Cutting and Rebounding of Threads*, 2010, *Lacrimarios*, 2007 and *Wailers* 2007. Her perspectival "mise-en-scenes" as well as the falling strings remit to Duchamp's interest in optical phenomena, and his experiments with chance, as for example in the making of *3 Standard Stoppages*. More importantly, what we take from Linarejo's photographs of her performances, is how they elicit poetic evocations of what we do not see with our naked eye, in other words, what Benjamin called the "optical unconscious," thus, showing her conviction that a full presentation or re-presentation of a given performance, with all its implications, in all its spatial/temporal dimensions is impossible. Hence, the incommensurable nature of a performance, "even" as Duchamp would put it.

Linarejos drives this point further in other photographic works, such as *Stalker, Uncertainty Assessment* from 2006, and *Stalker-Black Square* from 2007, which literally capture mathematical formulas for indeterminacy scribbled by hand on interior and exterior decayed walls and furnishings. Seen in hindsight and following closely David Joselit's analysis of Duchamp's *The Great Glass* in his book, *Infinite Regress*, Linarejos's oeuvre - from the start - seems to be staged with underlying Duchampian references (though it is also phenomenologically grounded in her own biography). Both the measurable, mechanical realm of the Bachelors, found in the lower portion of *The Great Glass*, and the incommensurable gaseous realm of the Bride, in its upper portion seem to have left a metaphoric imprint on her work. In fact, Linarejos actually alludes to *The Great Glass* in a witty, ironic feminist statement, photographing nine women dressed in black, as they move through the industrial setting. The work is titled *Nine Female Molds*, 2007. The same subjects reappear in a series titled, *Automats*, 2007.

While Linarejos's initial performances seem to ground her oeuvre with a mythic narrative, more recently the artist has proceeded to dismantle, or illuminate the mechanical paradigm underscoring a modern vision of the world, revealed in different spheres, in the period between 1880 and 1925. As Joselit states it, during that period, the economy of mechanical production, reproduction, and desire, conceived in technological, financial and sexual terms, not only defined industrial production as an ever increasing capacity to manufacture goods but also as a function of the fluctuating demands for commodities in the marketplace. In further discussions, citing Ford, Freud, and Lacan, Joselit explains how the mechanical paradigm is not only intrinsic in Capitalist production, but also in our modern understanding of sexuality, and visual representation, among other things. Its incommensurable opposite polarity is also produced. Lacan, for example, introduces the subjective concept of the gaze in opposition to his study of measurable perspective. Freud speaks of the deferred, repressed principle of desire as opposed to sexual reproduction, and in Duchamp's case, the notes contained in the *Green Box*, also point to the concept of delay as a factor in the indeterminate realm of the unattainable (sexual union, mind/body integration of self, consumer satisfaction /commodity).

In Linarejos's later work, *Art Forms in Mechanism*, the artist focuses on 19th Century botanical models. She photographs them in detail, showing how the mechanical paradigm permeates rational explanations of nature. At the same time, she intervenes a book by Karl Bossfeldt, *Art Forms in Nature*, changing the word "nature" for "mechanism" wherever the word appears. In *La Camara de Niebla (The Cloud Chamber) from 2017*, recently exhibited in Madrid, the artist discovers how this 1911 inventive machine, made to record images of cosmic rays, seems to have inspired Kandinsky's abstract compositions, though the artist does not acknowledge those scientific sources in his famous manifesto, *The Spiritual in Art* published the same year the Cloud Chamber was invented.

Linarejo's reconstruction of *The Cloud Chamber* with a display of its cosmic images in her installation work mingles objective and subjective content. On the one hand, she presents the original mechanical tool which can be seen in operation, and on the other hand, she constructs its simpler version, in her own terms, using domestic "found" objects, such as a champagne glass, a flower vase, a fishbowl. With this act, the artist seems to align herself with a Duchampian idea, that in art, machines do not need to be functional but rather, be allegorical. More significantly, with Linarejo's feminine choice of "found objects", her allegorical act points towards the unattainable cosmic dimension mankind wishes for, but will never attain.

The Cloud Chamber (La Cámara de Niebla)

Thursday, October 25, 2018
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

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Curated by Surpiik Angelini

Linarejos Moreno's work explores the relationship between science/technology, capital, and contemporary forms of Romanticism. In an event hosted by the recently unveiled Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology in Houston, the artist takes advantage of the formal and temporal (1911) convergence of the first photographs of cosmic rays and the first text by Vasily Kandinsky (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*) to question the birth of pictorial abstraction as a break from representation. In eliminating the borders between objectivity and subjectivity, nature and culture, and in considering human productions not as a struggle between opposites but as a rich and coherent unit; Linarejos reclaims "the right to manifest our otherness as a strategy policy, to practice a form of resistance to reification, trademark of capitalist societies." The Cloud Chamber is an exhibition based on the "expanded" practice of photography, founded in research and marked by an overwhelming phenomenological experience of space, and the memory laden austere printing materials, which speaks from the antithesis of neutral "technological reproductivity."

[Download Dossier by Linarejos Moreno](#)

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Biographies

LINAREJOS MORENO

Artist, scholar and associated professor in Design and Fine Arts at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). Linarejos Moreno has been an invited Fulbright scholar at Rice University in Houston and a visiting professor of The School of Art in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Houston. Her work explores subjectivity as a mode of resistance to reification, focusing on the non-productive uses of industrial spaces and scientific representation as a tool for interrogating modernity.

Linarejos's site-specific practice focuses on photographic documentation of the interventions that she enacts upon spaces in ruin, and their later expansion in the exhibition space. This practice led her to her doctoral thesis, *Ruin as Process: Robert Overby, Francesca Woodman, Gordon Matta Clark and Their Legacy*, in which she traces the origins of these practices and their connection with the crisis of capitalism and the development of anthropology. Her research interests include the sociology of science and the relationship between capital and contemporary forms of Romanticism.

She belongs to the research group "Prácticas artísticas y formas de conocimiento contemporáneas" (Artistic Practices and Contemporary Epistemologies, Cod.588, UCM), and she forms part of the I+D+I Project "Interacciones del arte en la tecnosfera" (Art Interactions in the Technosphere, MINECO, 2018-2021). She cooperates as a curator with the National Museum of Science and Technology (MUNCYT). Her recent book, *Art Forms in Mechanism*, was published by Turpin Editorial in 2017.

Linarejos's work has been internationally recognized and abundantly exhibited, recently in the solo exhibitions *The Cloud Chamber*, Alcobendas Centro de Arte (Madrid); *Tabularia. Laboratorios de Ciencia e Imaginación (Tabularia. Laboratories of Science and the Imagination) 2017* in the Royal Botanical Gardens (Madrid), and *La construcción de una ruina (The Construction of a Ruin) 2017* in the Tabacalera. *Promoción del Arte (Madrid)* – both of which formed part of the international photography festival *Photoespaña PH16*; and *Artifactual Realities*, 2016 in the Station Museum (Houston). Linarejos is represented by the Pilar Serra gallery (Spain) and the Inman Gallery (US).

SURPIK ANGELINI

Surpiik Angelini is a Houston based artist, independent curator, and writer. Her work is rooted in the overlapping disciplines of art, architecture, and cultural anthropology. Trained in art at Mills College and Cornell University (1966-68) and in architecture and urban planning at the Universidad Central de Venezuela (1971-76), she obtained her BArch from the University of Houston (1979). With artist-theorist Abdel Hernandez, she founded the Transart Foundation: a workshop for Art and Anthropology based in Houston, TX. Surpiik has directed since 1996, pushing the foundation's mission to support artists and scholars involved in relevant social, anthropological and interdisciplinary research.

Surpiik's artistic vision was impacted by her collaborative performances with John Cage and Gordon Matta Clark (1966-68); her theoretical studies with Thomas McEvilley (1990-1994) at Rice University and her association with the Rice Department of Anthropology (1997), when they co-sponsored Transart's *Artists in Trance: New Methodologies in the Work with the Other*, a semester program of lectures, documentary films and cutting edge exhibitions of anthropologically based art, she co-curated with Hernandez in 1997. As an artist she exhibited in solo and group shows in Houston. As a cultural researcher, she lectured in universities and museums throughout the country. Her critical essays have been published in art magazines, academic journals, artist's catalogs and monographs.

FABIOLA LOPEZ DURAN

Adopting a transnational and interdisciplinary perspective, Fabiola López-Durán's research and teaching focuses on the history and theory of modern and contemporary European and Latin American art and architecture. Her book, *Eugenics in the Garden: Architecture, Medicine and Landscape from France to Latin America in the Early Twentieth Century*, investigates a particular strain of eugenics that, at the turn of the twentieth century, moved from the realms of medicine and law to design, architecture, and urban planning—becoming a critical instrument in the crafting of modernity. Her work analyzes the cross-pollination of ideas and mediums—science, politics and aesthetics—that informed the process of modernization on both sides of the Atlantic, with an emphasis on Latin America.

López-Durán earned her Ph.D in the History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art from MIT. Prior to joining the Rice University faculty, she was the 2009-2011 Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities at the Department of History of Art at UC Berkeley. Her awards include predoctoral fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Dedalus Foundation, CLIR, Harvard Center for European Studies, Camargo Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation and the Fulbright Program. Her work has been published in Europe, Asia, South America and the United States.