

GALERIA MOISES PEREZ DE ALBENIZ

JOHANNA CALLE

Semantics

November 19, 2016 – January 14, 2017

The gallery Moisés Pérez de Albéniz opens the first solo exhibition of the Colombian artist Johanna Calle, titled *Semantics*.

Johanna Calle (Bogotá, Colombia, 1965) started to deal with art through painting as a way to name and give name to the ideas that language simply couldn't achieve. She belongs to that generation that have positioned Colombia as a great source of artists and creators of unique significance, which includes, amongst others, Doris Salcedo, Leyla Cárdenas o Antonio Caro. This generation of artists belonged to the boom of the Colombian art scene and have acquired a leading position in international contemporary art. In *Semantics*, Calle advances with techniques and themes, that are already fundamental to her artwork, a certain unwavering condition of her point of view, translated into disagreement with reality. Here, language takes on a new significance and the act of drawing is addressed as a *raison d'être*.

In *Semantics*, the artist, who is based in Bogotá, delves deeper into themes that have coexisted within her artwork since her very beginnings: social injustice, environmental issues, gender roles and fundamentally, the conventions of language. Her work is concerned with how words demarcate or strangle the edges of reality that we all inhabit, how as humans we are dependent on what we can name and how all else is left outside, commonly known as reality. The different methods that Johanna Calle uses when approaching drawing revolve around various techniques she has been working on and researching for years. In some artworks in *Semantics*, she creates drawings using all kinds of materials such as industrial sewing needles, copper, wire and surgical thread and pushes drawing into new and multiple aesthetic functions. Among others, the influence of Colombian drawing masters such as Miguel Ángel Rojas, Óscar Muñoz y

Luis Caballero can be seen in Johanna Calle's work. A tradition the artist keeps very much in mind.

Calle, student and assistant of the artist Doris Salcedo for some months, spent 3 years in London concentrating solely on the medium of painting until her return to Bogotá in 1995. While in London, she discovered the work of the artist Rachel Whiteread and explored art and new ways to approach sensitivity which affected to a degree her creative instinct. On her return to Colombia she took on some long-term projects, such as *Nombre propio* (1997-99), in which she used embroidery as a medium and took two years to knit the faces of abandoned children into a great album of pain. Calle's career is unique and outstanding career and this exhibition displays all her classic artistic features: subverted structures, lines as the metaphor of strict and normative teaching or alphabets that have lost their communicative purpose.

Daniel Fernández-Cañadas

Johanna Calle (Bogotá, 1965) studied visual arts at the University of the Andes (Bogotá) and she earned her Masters of the Arts from Chelsea College of Art & Design (London). She currently lives and works in Bogotá. Her most recent solo exhibitions include: *Silentes 1985 -2015*, Museo Amparo, Puebla, México, 2016; *Johanna Calle Dibujos*, Centro Cultural García Márquez, Colombian Embassy in Spain, Madrid, Spain, 2016; *Silentes 1985 – 2015*, Museo de Arte del Banco de la República, Bogotá, Colombia, 2015; *Grafos*, Galería Marilia Razuk, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2014; and *Indicios*, Casas Riegner, Bogotá, Colombia, 2014;

Among her most recent selected group exhibitions: *Contingent Beauty. Contemporary Art from Latin America*, MFAH, Houston, USA, 2015; *Paper and Performance. The Bent Page*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, USA, 2015; and *Lines*, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, Switzerland, 2014;

She attended International Biennales such as: *The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed*, 20th Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 2016; *4 Trienal Poli/Gráfica de San Juan*, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2015; *31 Bienal de São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brazil, 2014; y *SITELines: Unsettled Landscapes*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, USA, 2014.