

HLHE Dialogue: The Human Scale

Since 2017, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld's HLHE Dialogue series has been promoting the juxtaposition of historical and more recent or contemporary positions in art, design, and architecture in the neighboring villas Haus Lange and Haus Esters, continually reflecting the legacy of modernism anew. In this iteration of the series, works by the artist Marion Baruch (b. 1929) and works by the young Anna K.E. (b. 1986) come together under the theme of *The Human* Scale. For both artists, their own and other people's bodies are surveying instruments and a yardstick for the perception of space, movement, and interaction. While Marion Baruch's textile works focus on the absent body, Anna K.E.'s installations explore spatial and social bodily experiences.

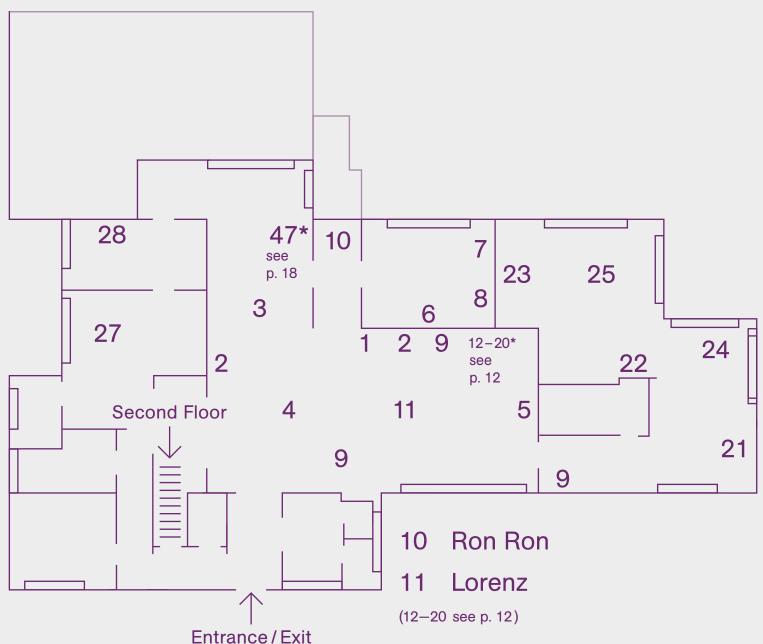
Marion Baruch Social Fabric

With the exhibition Marion Baruch: Social Fabric, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld in Haus Lange is presenting the work of an outstanding artist who has only started to receive long overdue recognition in the last few years. Born in Timişoara, Romania, in 1929, she studied painting in Bucharest, Jerusalem, and Rome; lived in England and repeatedly in Paris; and ultimately settled with her family in Gallarate near Milan. Baruch's artistic work is characterized by the political and social upheavals of the twentieth century, addressing themes such as feminism, consumer criticism, and migration. She began working collaboratively at an early stage, repeatedly involving a wide variety of cultural workers in her projects and combining art, design, and everyday experiences in a highly individual way. Textiles as a material, with their many different meanings, remain a central aspect of her work.

The exhibition spans five decades. It begins with the artist's conceptual and performative objects of the late 1960s, features design and sculptural works as well as her series created under the label NAME DIFFUSION, and finally presents her more recent pieces made from offcuts from ready-to-wear fashion, with which Baruch has become internationally known in recent years. The presentation's focus is always on the dialogue with the architecture of Haus Lange. Designed by Ludwig Mies an der Rohe and built between 1928 and 1930 as a villa for the silk manufacturer Hermann Lange, it is still considered an icon of Neues Bauen (New Building) in Germany today. Not only does Krefeld's textile history become a backdrop for Baruch's works; it is also elements such as space and emptiness, restriction and unobstructed view, and interior and exterior, that define her works as they do the architecture of Haus Lange.

Haus Lange Ground Floor





- 1,2 Abito-Contenitore
- 3 Porta nel paesaggio
- 4 La galeriste
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1 Abito-Contenitore

ca. 1969 In collaboration with AG Fronzoni Linen-cotton blend (exhibition copies)

2 Abito-Contenitore

1971–2023 In collaboration with AG Fronzoni Gelatin silver prints, reedition Photos: Gianni Berengo Gardin/ Fondazione Forma per la Fotografiaa

Baruch's earliest works include the groundbreaking performative work Abito-Contenitore (Dress Container). Depending on how this fabric "garment container" is used, it resembles a religious vestment or transforms the body into a work of art, a geometric sculpture. Baruch herself describes it as both a boundary between two bodies and a communicating surface activated by the wearer herself. In a way that is as playful as it is incisive, Baruch expands the artistic media and addresses contemporary issues: the image and status of women, the role of the artist, the gap between fashion and tradition. When Baruch herself strolled along Via Monte Napoleone, Milan's fashion street, in Abito-Contenitore, she was photographed and a few days later featured on the cover of the weekly magazine Panorama. Working in collaboration with the Italian photographer Gianni Berengo Gardin, Baruch has captured potential forms that the worn garment can take in precisely composed photo series.

3 Porta nel paesaggio

2017
Polyester and wool blend

A mixture of curiosity, openness, chance, and artistic intuition set Marion Baruch on the path to pursue her textile installations, which she has been developing since 2012. In a restaurant in the Italian city of Gallarate, where she lives, she met a family friend who works in the fashion industry. When he heard about her artistic interest in fabric remnants. he brought her a bag of offcuts from fashion production, pieces that are normally destroyed. Baruch became fascinated by the suggestive shapes. Without altering the pieces of fabric herself, such as by cutting them up, she selects materials and arranges them in fragile constellations. The titles, which the artist at times formulates in English or French, and in other instances in Italian or German because the specific sound of the words is also important to her, are associative interpretations or lyrical additions to the forms of the material. Porta nel paesaggio, the "gate into the landscape," frames the view of the garden through the large window. The villa's retractable window fronts on the garden side are one of the most striking features of Haus Lange and link the interior and exterior in the sense of Mies van der Rohe's concept of fluid, interconnected space. Artistic work and architecture come together here in a dialog about spatial boundaries and openness.

4 La galeriste

2017 Silk and viscose blend

From waste, from remnants neglected by industrial and urban society, forms are created that are characterized by a moving geometry. Hanging from the ceiling or pinned to the wall, these works reflect a history that is determined as much by social and societal circumstances as by individual ones.

The work was created for an exhibition organized by the French gallery owner Anne-Sarah Benichou and is also dedicated to her.

5 Mr Horror

2015 Bonded cotton

There are several pieces with this title. They are all characterized by the use of black, fraying strips of fabric, which Baruch places on the wall as markings or intersections and whose cobweb-like appearance she takes into account when formulating a piece's title.

The series titled *Mr Horror* was created in the wake of the targeted, Islamist-motivated terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, in which 130 people died and several hundred were injured. Having spent many years in Paris, Baruch was deeply affected by the events and created the series as both a means to mark those days of violence and an attempt to erase them.

6 Title unknown/Un albero

Fondazione Pagani, Castellanza, 1967 Photographs (exhibition copies)

In the 1960s, Baruch turned her attention from painting to an art oriented toward objects and movement; she herself speaks of a "search for a sculptural language." In collaboration with a metal workshop, she created large iron sculptures on a human scale. They resemble walk-in drawings in outdoor space with which the artist herself measures space in relation to the body—a theme that would occupy her throughout her life.

7 Arpa 2014

Viscose

This work is part of an extensive series from 2014 titled *Arpa (Harp)*. The drawings of the fabric remnants used here all form similar shapes reminiscent of a stringed instrument and emphasize the analogy between architecture and music.

8 Self-standing attitude

2022 Cotton Kunstmuseen Krefeld, acquired 2022

Throughout her life, Marion Baruch transcended the boundaries of the visual arts and drew inspiration from other disciplines. From the late 1960s on, she collaborated with two designers to create a small but key group of works: Abito-Contenitore (Dress Container, no. 1-2) and Contenitore-Ambiente (Container Environment, no. 9) as well as the furniture objects Ron Ron (no. 10) and Lorenz (no. 11). They are all characterized by a radical reflection on the relationship between the body and its surroundings. With her usable sculptures, Baruch suggests possibilities for changing habitual positions and attitudes; as Beppe Finessi puts it, she is "designing new behaviors."

9 Contenitore-Ambiente

1971

In collaboration with AG Fronzoni Photos: Gianni Berengo Gardin/ Fondazione Forma per la Fotografia 1 Vintage print (large photo) 4 gelatine silver prints (re-editions)

The important Milanese designer AG Fronzoni, whom she asked for advice on marketing her creations, thus became the co-author of the two Contenitori. For Contenitore-Ambiente, Baruch used the modern material Plexiglas. The transparent sphere once again focuses on the relationship between the body and its surroundings. The piece is just large enough to contain a human body like a cell, simultaneously protecting and exposing the person inside. Baruch creates a micro-environment defined by the factors of movement, dynamics, and instability, constantly in search of balance. Baruch exhibited the Plexiglas sphere Contenitore-Ambiente at the Domus gallery in Milan and had a boy roll through the streets in it in the middle of traffic as a happening.

10 Ron Ron

1972 Polyurethane, artificial fur, reedition GUFRAM, dia. 80 cm Kunstmuseen Krefeld, acquired 2024

11 Lorenz

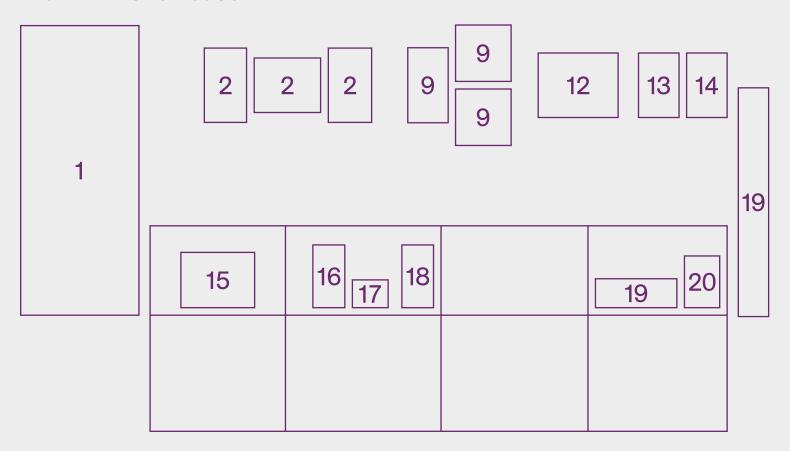
1971 Produced by Dino Gavina, artificial fur Private collection

The work came to the attention of Dino Gavina, one of the most radical Italian designers at the time. His original idea of mass producing Contenitore-Ambiente was not realized due to lack of funding, but he asked Baruch to contribute to his Ultramobile series, for which Gavina collaborated with such artists as Meret Oppenheim, Man Ray, and Sebastián Matta. For her part, Baruch designed Lorenz and Ron Ron: carpet and seating furniture made of artificial fur, half utility object, half pet. The humor inherent in these objects continued to be part of Baruch's work. She is always interested in gestures that question what already exists and is familiar in a humorously subversive way.

"For me, fabric is a living, pulsating material; I feel the indescribability of its breath or flow, a continuous flow that is also the flow of an entire society. The textile fabric reflects the history of humanity and at the same time the social dimension of the work."

Marion Baruch, 2018

Haus Lange Ground Floor Wall with showcase



12 Contenitore-Ambiente

ca. 1969 Notes, typewritten, technical drawing

13 Lorenz

1972 Advertising card, produced by Dino Gavina

14 Ron Ron

1972 Advertising card, produced by Dino Gavina

Marion Baruch wearing

Abito-Contenitore

II Milanese, I, n. 2 May 16, 1971

16 Review of the presentation of

Contenitore-Ambiente

at the Centro Domus Milan 1971, Panorama Uomo June 24, 1971, IX, n. 271

17 Flyer for the presentation of Contenitore-Ambiente

at the Centro Domus Milan 1971

18 Review of the presentation of

Contenitore-Ambiente

at the Centro Domus Milan 1971, Il Milanese I, n. 11, July 11, 1971

19 The series "Ultramobile"

1972 Advertisting leporello, produced by Dino Gavina

havortioning toporollo, produced by Billo davi

20 Dino Gavina sitting on Ron Ron

1972 Gelatin silver print

21 Le trou à l'intérieur de l'espace

2018 Cotton

22 Eingang

2014 Polyester

"I want to point more and more to the void," Marion Baruch said in 2017, by which she regards void not as an absence or erasure, but as free space, as a condition for something new and as a dynamic element. The visible omissions in her fabric works are negative forms; they refer to the absent body and are simultaneously abstract structures, zones of energetically activated space.

Haus Lange is also of particular interest to the artist as an exhibition venue because it still houses a permanent work of art dedicated to emptiness: *Le Vide (The Void)* by Yves Klein. As part of his legendary solo exhibition *Monochrome und Feuer (Monochrome and Fire)* here in 1961, Klein decided to paint a small windowless room on the ground floor of Haus Lange white from floor to ceiling and illuminate it solely with a neon tube. The artist wanted to make the immaterial, the invisible, tangible. In fact, the longer we linger in the pictureless cell, the more the white blurs the boundaries of the room.

Baruch's work *Le trou à l'intérieur de l'espace (The Hole Inside the Space)* includes a direct reference to Yves Klein, not only because the fabric is reminiscent of the specific blue used by Klein. Its poetic title is also borrowed from the title of the performance The Hole Inside the Space Inside *Yves Klein's Asshole* (2000) by the political Performance and Conceptual artist William Pope.L. The American artist Pope.L often referred to Yves Klein and the idea of emptiness, although he saw it not as a philosophical space of the immaterial but as a politically charged zone of lack. With her wealth of allusions, Baruch positions herself between these radical concepts of emptiness.

The work *Eingang (Entrance)*, whose textile structures form the outline of a door, becomes an installation tailored to the location. When Klein conceived *Le Vide*, in 1961, there was actually a second door at this point through which visitors could leave the room.

23 L'enchanteur

2016 Wool

The work was originally entitled *Mago Merlino* (*Wizard Merlin*) because the structure of the fabric suggests a raised magic wand held by a hand. Baruch later decided to change the title to *L'enchanteur* (*The Enchanter*), which still contains the idea of a magic process. Changing the titles of works is typical of Baruch's practice, which always remains open to ideas, impressions, and suggestions from others.

24 Bandiere 25, 26 Bandiera

1985-87 Wood, glass, acrylic paint, wax

Baruch assembled painted wood and glass from old window frames into objects that resemble flags lying on the floor. The works are as formally austere and simple as they are complex in terms of content. Baruch abstracts the symbolic function of the flag and uses transparent surfaces instead of a color code. Here, too, the empty space becomes a free zone that rejects national categorization and suggests a transparency and openness that the artist herself exemplifies in her numerous collaborations with people of the most diverse origins and in her own multilingualism.

27 Marion Baruch and the House in the Hills

2023

Curator: Fulvio Irace, director: Francesca Molteni production: Muse Factory of Projects with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute Haifa and Tel Aviv

In the 1960s, Marion Baruch commissioned the young architect Carlo Moretti to build a house for her and her family in the hills of Gallarate. She cites Frank Lloyd Wright and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as her architectural role models. Moretti designed a radically modern building, an open structure made of glass, iron, and concrete. Since then, the artist has lived and worked in a domestic atmosphere characterized by a dialog between the exterior and interior, by the coexistence of architecture, art. and nature.

Made in Baruch's studio in Gallarate, the documentary traces the development of the project using interviews, plans, and photographs and demonstrates the structure's relevance for Baruch's work as a whole. It is an intimate portrait of the over ninety-year-old artist. "I was born very old, but have grown younger and younger throughout my life. Today I can finally say that I am really young."

The salvaged and never purchased cardboard boxes with their various inscriptions reflect Marion Baruch's process of exploration, study, and categorization—both physical and mental—of the textile offcuts that have been the undisputed protagonists of her artistic research since 2012.

Initially, Baruch titled these scraps by dedicating them to artists she held dear for aesthetic or conceptual reasons, in a play of associations that range from their work to her memories. And so, the first boxes began to emerge: *Morris, Klee, Agnes Martin, Picabia, Boetti, Beuys,* and others.

Moving toward a formal analysis of the full and empty spaces that constitute her works, Baruch first focused on remnants bordered by a whole edge, the completi, which led her to categories such as cadres and portraits. Later, it was the incompleti that attracted her attention—works in which the missing part is what fascinated her—and then came the lambeaux, actual shreds of fabric.

The artist rearranges and moves the pieces from one box to another, renegotiating their categories, creating new ones, and continuing to expand her selection and imagery. The inscriptions on the boxes are often erased and rewritten. Some boxes are too small to contain an ever-expanding category and ultimately accommodate only a few early portraits. Others multiply because they cannot contain the growing selection of a particular category, such as the polyester voiles, whose abundance demonstrates a phase of deep fascination with this particular material. Sometimes the type of fabric or its color determines the name of a box: wool, techno brown, striped, nylon, printed... These boxes will later contain works that arise from the nature of their material, such as the objects-small pieces of fabric that will make up the Collage series.

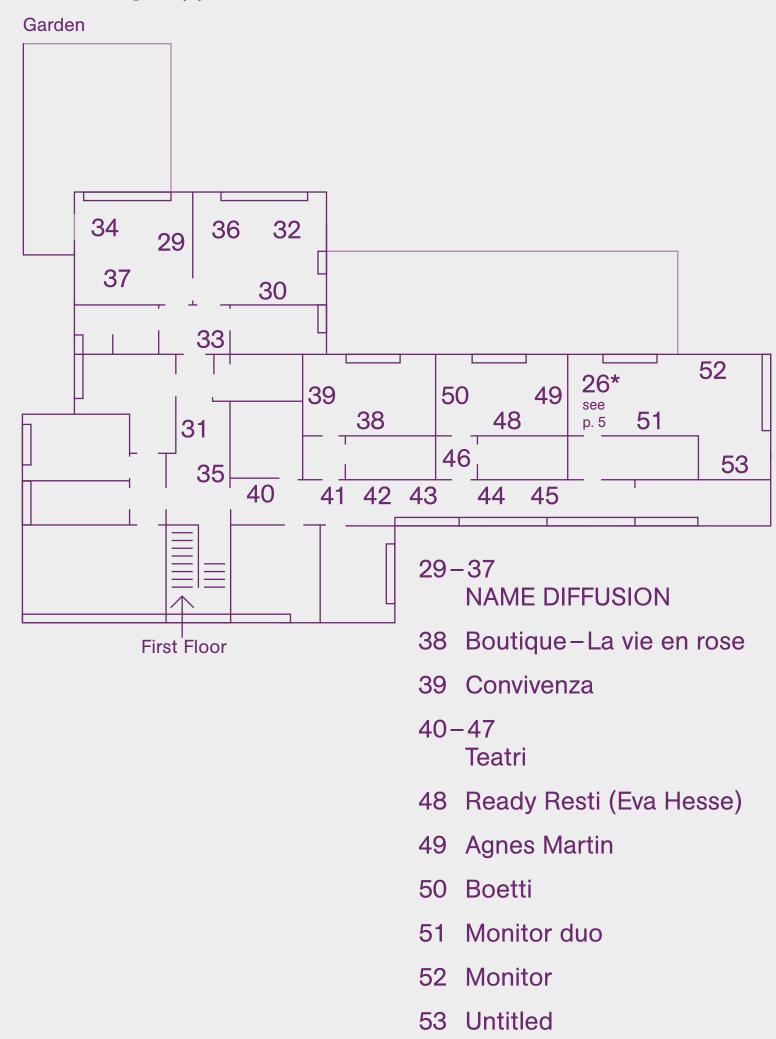
As interest in Baruch's work began to grow, she started preparing boxes for the critics and curators she collaborates with. For these, she brings together works from different categories according to her intuition and to inhabit new exhibition spaces.

Originally piled up in Baruch's home and now in her studio, the boxes may seem to represent disorder. In fact, they bear the visible traces of an initial method of categorizing her works—a step that is necessary but never binding. The boxes are a tangible record of the stages of a journey that began twelve years ago and is still evolving, allowing us to understand the enthusiasm with which Baruch engages with the remnants she rescues from the flow of industrial production, as she navigates freely, always seeking new possibilities.

"I was born very old, but have grown younger and younger throughout my life. Today I can finally say that I am really young."

Marion Baruch, 2023

Haus Lange Upper Floor



29 Untitled (Statement) NAME DIFFUSION for Art Basel

1991

Photocopies on colored paper

30 NAME DIFFUSION News

1993

Promotional newspaper

31 NAME DIFFUSION Il punto di vista di Penelope

1992

Cibachrome on aluminum

32 NAME DIFFUSION Rose Fashion

1991

Metal, fabric rolls

33 NAME DIFFUSION Light box

1991 Light box

34 NAME DIFFUSION Campionario

1991

Clothes rack, fabric

35 NAME DIFFUSION Index

1993

Light box

36 NAME DIFFUSION Candy Fashion

1993

Metal, neon tubes, glass, fabric

37 NAME DIFFUSION Stand Name Collection 92

1992

Printed fabric, pedestal

When Baruch began working with the Milanese gallery owner Luciano Inga-Pin in 1989 and thus came into closer contact with the mechanisms of the art market, she responded by founding her own company, which she registered with the Chamber of Commerce. As an artist, she made herself an entrepreneur. For at least three years, she exhibited her works at important art fairs and galleries exclusively under the label NAME DIFFUSION. The installations looked like trade-fair stands for the presentation and marketing of products from the textile industry. Baruch used her own fabric samples, which she had designed in the 1960s as a means of earning money.

Her fictitious company mixed a feminist perspective with a consumer-critical one, equating the principles of the art market with those of global fashion production. By stepping back as an artist behind the pseudonym, Baruch emphasized the importance of cooperative work. She also expressed the realization that it is the name that gives things their identity, and that it is the brand that makes the product marketable. In collaboration and exchange with numerous people from a diversity of contexts, projects were created in which the boundaries between art and everyday life almost completely dissolve.

The photo *Il punto di vista di Penelope (Penelope's Point of View, 31)* was also created under the NAME DIFFUSION label. The wife of Odysseus, who constantly works at her loom in an effort to keep suitors at bay during her husband's long absence, is a symbol of the faithful and clever wife who nevertheless threatens to succumb to social constraints. In 2007, Baruch exhibited at MA*GA, the gallery of modern art in Gallarate, in a group show titled *Le Trame di Penelope (Penelope's Plots)*. There she filled an entire room with textile remnants—an important step toward the fabric works she created a few years later.

38 Boutique - La vie en rose

2018

Polyester, viscose

The composition of this (and similar) *Boutiques* differs from the other fabric works in that Baruch combines numerous small remnants to create a kind of wall painting. The arrangement resembles a shop window decoration and is thus reminiscent of her NAME DIFFUSION period: *Boutique – La vie en rose* is a humorous reference to the idea of a store in which waste becomes a consumer product again. This reading is underlined by the title, which quotes Edith Piaf's famous song of that title and corresponds not only to the colorfulness of the pieces of fabric, but also to the beautiful illusion of seeing life through rose-colored glasses.

39 Convivenza

2021 Cotton

The title, which means "coexistence" in English, is inspired by the form of the colorfully patterned fabric, which resembles a floorplan.

40 Piccolo teatro

2013 Cotton

41 Teatrino

2013 Cotton

42 Piccolo teatro

2013 Wool

43 Piccolo teatro

2013 Cotton

44 Piccolo teatro

2013 Cotton

45 Teatro

2013
Cotton and viscose blend

46 Teatrino

2013 Polyester

47 Teatro

2013 Cotton

48 Ready Resti (Eva Hesse)

2013

Silk and cotton blend

49 Agnes Martin

2012

Polyester and cotton, viscose blend (two-part)

50 Boetti

2013

Linen and cotton blend

In 2012, Marion Baruch created her first works using fabric waste from ready-to-wear fashion. A central aspect of these early series, which bear titles such as *Piccoli teatri (Little Theaters)*, are references to the history of art. The *Piccoli teatri* retain the rectangular form of a painting, as if the artist were reflecting on the medium from her student years using new means. At the same time, the empty spaces in the fabric develop an obstinacy that makes them appear like small stages, spaces of the imagination.

Other works bear the names of artists who are important to Marion Baruch, an homage to role models and companions. For example, Baruch gives a cascade of transparent fabric the allusive title *Ready Resti (Eva Hesse)*. Not only is it reminiscent of the German American sculptor who became known for her innovative material aesthetics in the 1960s. *Ready Resti* is also a humorous reference to Marcel Duchamp's pioneering idea of the readymade, with which he elevated an ordinary everyday object that he selected and modified to a work of art. Baruch picks up on this gesture by turning fabric remnants into a work of art solely through the arrangement she chooses.

51 Monitor

1985 – 89 Plywood, glass, acrylic paint, wax, metal box

52 Monitor duo

1985-89

Plywood, glass, acrylic paint, wax, metal box

With these sculptures, Baruch approaches the aesthetics of Minimal Art, which in the early 1960s developed a serial design language reduced to basic forms. Here too she underpins the formal rigor with connotations of the everyday world. Taking up the format of paintings, the *Monitors* also play with perspective and their cutouts are reminiscent of screens, each of which is controlled or fed by a box on the floor. During this period, Baruch explored an increasingly mediatized society and formulated an early reflection on the ubiquitous technical devices in our domestic environment.

53 Untitled

ca. 1985 Canvas, painted, wood, glass

In this unusual work, various themes from Baruch's works of the 1980s flow together. The aesthetics of the monitors are combined with a reflection on painting and textiles. The floral pattern painted on canvas is reminiscent both of the fabrics created for NAME DIFFUSION and of designs for wallpaper as they emerged in the context of the English Arts and Crafts movement in the nineteenth century. Rembrandt's famous Self-Portrait at the Age of 34, which Baruch saw at the National Gallery in London at the beginning of a longer stay in England, recurs several times as a miniature within the floral patterns. Baruch dealt with Rembrandt's self-portrait almost obsessively in various works from this period, repeatedly copying the iconic painting and also seeking to expose the patriarchal structures within art in general.

Brief biography and selected solo exhibitions

Born on September 1, 1929, in Timisoara, Rumänien

1949 – 50	Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts,
	Bucharest

1950-54 Studies at the Bezalel Academy for Arts

and Design, Jerusalem

has first solo exhibition, Micra Studio,

Tel Aviv

1954 – 57 Receives a scholarship to study painting,

Accademia delle Belle Arti, Rome

1956 Exhibits at La Cupola, Rome

1958 – 1965 Lives in Rome, Milan, and Paris;

gives birth to three children;

she and her family settle in Gallarate

From 1967 Begins search for a sculptural language;

collaborates with the designers AG Fronzoni and Dino Gavina

1971 Exhibition Baruch + Fronzoni:

Contenitore-Ambiente, Centro Domus, Milan

1989 Founds the company NAME DIFFUSION,

creates works and exhibits under this label

1991 Exhibition *Mattia knows it*,

Galleria Luciano Inga-Pin, Milan

1991 – 2011 Has longer stays in Paris

2009 Exhibition Une chambre vide,

Galerie du Buisson, Paris

2011 Relocates to Gallarate

2013 Exhibition Lampi di memoria,

MAMCO, Geneva

2020 Has her first major retrospective, in

four museums: Kunstmuseum Luzern,

Lucerne; Magasin des horizons,

Grenoble; Les Abbatoirs, Musée – Frac Occitanie Toulouse; MA*GA – Museo

d'Arte Gallarate

2021/22 Solo exhibitions are shown in:

Gallery of the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig;

the CCA Center for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv-Yafo; and the MNAC, National Museum of Contemporary Art of Bucharest Romania, Bucharestt

Colophon

Marion Baruch Social Fabric

Kunstmuseen Krefeld Haus Lange 06.10.2024 – 09.02.2025

Director Katia Baudin

Exhibition Curator Magdalena Holzhey

Intern Mari Biefang-Holthover (Philipps-Universität Marburg)

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Opening Hours

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Haus Lange Haus Esters Tue—Thur, Sun 11 am—5 pm Fri—Sat 11 am—6 pm

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