



ole, Variable Dimensions, Emu feathers, fiberglass net, glue, 2006-2008, Photo: Jon Bader, Copyright: Maria Fernanda Cardoso

Maria Fernanda Cardoso*
Mimicry
September 13 – October 4, 2008

Opening Reception

Saturday September 13, 7-10 pm

Emu Wear Performance Event from 7-10pm

Maria Fernanda Cardoso, a Colombian living in Australia, utilizes the National Emblem of Australia to identify with local culture. The emu, the national bird, provides Cardoso with a way to form an understanding of the Australian landscape and the means to survive within it. She explores the importance of camouflage, sacrifice and the intersection of defining symbols.

Emu Wear is a collection of outfits that captures Cardoso's history of working with organic specimens formalistically, but still embraces the chaos of nature. The outfits create a sense of highly stylized forms through visually defined shapes covered in emu feathers. The *Emu Wear* video installation, in collaboration with Australian artist Ross Rudesch Harley, of women wearing these emu outfits forces us to question the extent to which we dress in order to be fashionable within our world. The emu alters its feather color based on its location in the Australian landscape in order to survive, while humans form visual characteristics based on their social context. We modify our clothing just enough to blend in with our environment, but still we desire to stand out.

Cardoso explores animals, who have developed a means of surviving. *A Garden of Insects That Looks Like Plants* is housed in museum display cases that contain various dead insects that use their ability to camouflage in order to disappear. Is Cardoso suggesting that these creatures have the intelligence to disappear from their predators? This work becomes at once a landscape, a diorama, and a garden. The artist implores us to observe in this work.

Cardoso has created a very personal language that explores issues of form as well as humankind's complicated relationship to the natural world. Animals and plants enrich our lives, nourish us, and sustain us, yet we view them as expendable.

Born in Columbia, a graduate of Yale University, and currently living in Sydney, Australia, Maria Fernanda Cardoso's diverse background makes her a distinctive contemporary artist. She uses the natural world as inspiration and a source of artistic materials. Cardoso has shown her work around the world. In 2003, she had a solo show at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale. Her installations are included as part of permanent collections of the Tate Gallery in London, Miami Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Daros-Latinamerica Collection, and the National Art Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

**Emu Wear and Stick Insect videos by Ross Rudesch Harley and Maria Fernanda Cardoso*

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY
3550 N Miami Ave - Miami, FL 33127
T 305 573 2700 - F 305 573 2722
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

Valet parking available