

MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO

BIOGEOMETRIES
BIOGEOMETRIAS

November 6, 2003 - January 31, 2004

latincollector

153 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013 • T: 212 334 7813 • F: 212 334 7830 • www.latincollector.com

Hours: Mon-Fri 10 am-6 pm • Sat 12-6 pm

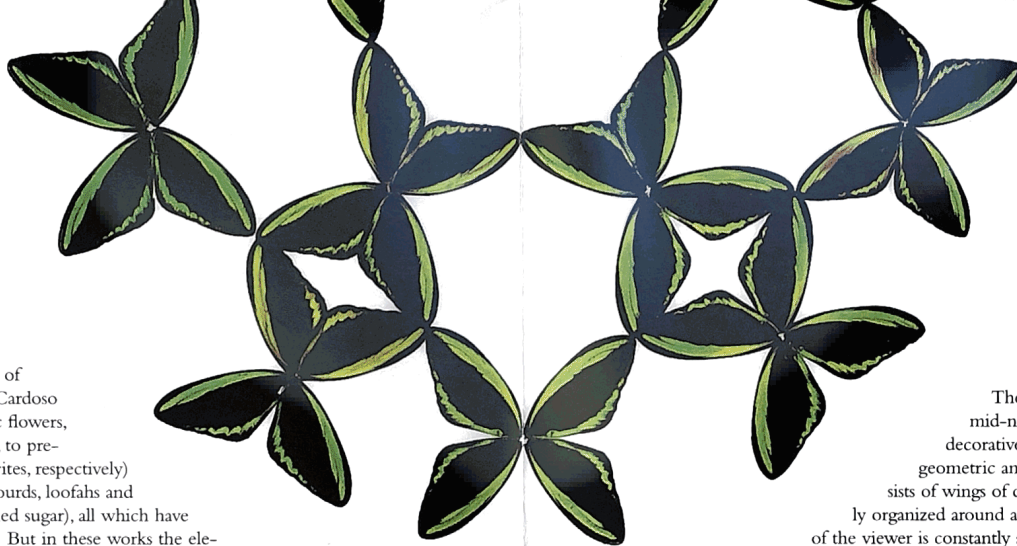
Cover: Dibujo de Mariposas / Butterfly drawing, 2003. Archival butterflies, acrylic, metal. 1.22 x 1.22 x 0.18 m
Animal Species: Omiroptera Priamus Euphorum (Common Name: Cairns Birdwing)

latincollector

MARIA FERNANDA
CARDOSO:
BIOGEOMETRIES

From her first works, Colombian artist María Fernanda Cardoso has recurred to geometry in order to organize the materials for her sculpture, re-codifying modernist formal strategies through her use of symbolically charged materials. Cardoso uses preserved animals and plastic flowers, (that make reference, respectively, to pre-Columbian myths and funerary rites, respectively) or natural elements like bones, gourds, loofahs and *panelas* ("bricks" made of unrefined sugar), all which have strong links with local traditions. But in these works the element or "material" always kept its own character, and geometry appeared invariably as an organizing principle. For example, in her pieces with frogs, snakes, crickets, flies and lizards, the animals are subjected to precise geometric dispositions like circles, spheres or ellipses, resulting in sculptures whose formal aspect makes reference to modern formalism but that reveal, on a closer inspection, the highly idiosyncratic nature of the materials used. In most of these works, the repetition of similar elements created an effect of structure by association. In later works, like *Woven Water* (1994) the construction process followed a compositional logic based on the iteration of a simple process (to join the starfish by two or more of their arms), resulting in a seemingly amorphous whole, but one that corresponds to a completely rational structural logic.

Biogeometries, as its name suggests, brings together works in which biological forms are grouped together following geometric principles. But in this series, the intrinsic geometry of the elements used (butterfly wings, starfish and seahorses) is brought forward and made an integral part of the composition in a larger sense. If in canonical works of Cardoso's like *Dancing Frogs* (1990) —a perfect circle of preserved frogs seem to perform a ritual dance— each animal maintaining its formal integrity. In the works that make up *Biogeometries* Cardoso



recurs to the formal features of each element to perform a operation of synthesis (through their organization around axes of symmetry and simple geometric forms), where it ceases to be a distinct form in favor of a unified image of great complexity and formal richness.

The *Butterfly Drawings*, begun in the mid-nineties, have many visual references: decorative patterns in pre-Columbian pottery, geometric and optic art, psychedelia, etc. It consists of wings of different species of butterflies, generally organized around a circular axis of symmetry. The gaze of the viewer is constantly shifting between the forms that result from the repetition of the animal itself and the negative forms in the background, invariably a translucent sheet of Perspex. For example, on one drawing a square contains a four-point star; on another, an eleven-point star is inscribed in a circle; a hexagon with a six-point star inside it is in turn inscribed in an ellipse, and so on. The color patterns that are present in each butterfly wing start to conform, by contiguity, new forms that complement and enrich the formal beauty of the overall composition. This last aspect is very important for Cardoso, who has stated her interest in seducing the viewer in order to "make [him or her] an accomplice in the more disturbing aspects of the work", as can be the violence implicit in the use of cadavers of animals as an art material, the ecological implications of the Tourist industry and the quest for exoticism (in her installations with starfish, Piranhas and fish scales) or the associations with tragedy that bring up the clusters of white flowers (*Cemetery*; *Vertical Garden*, 1992-1999). As the artist has remarked, "I believe very much in beauty, and find that a lot of it comes from order. There are systems that make it work. Nature is like that. I am very interested in Chaos and Complexity theory, where simple units form complex systems, and if you follow those systems, it somehow connects us to the universe, and has an emotional and aesthetic resonance". Bringing forward the precise geometric organization in natural forms, Cardoso makes us reflect on the role that our actions play in the broader order of things.

José Roca.



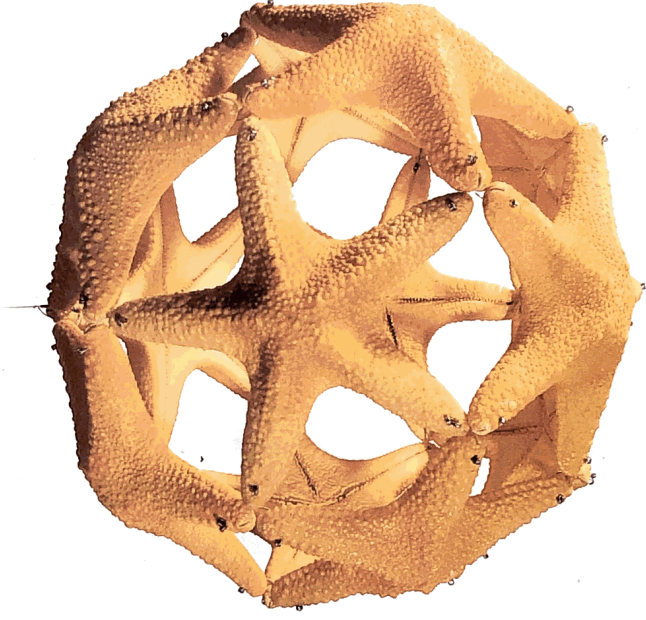
Desajo de Mariposas / Butterfly drawing, 2003. Archival butterfly, acrylic, metal. 1,22 x 1,22 x 0,18 m.
Animal Species: Papilio Troas



Desajo de Mariposas / Butterfly drawing, 2003. Archival butterfly, acrylic, metal. 1,22 x 1,22 x 0,18 m.
Animal Species: Morpho Delfino



Círculo de Cabalillos de Mar / Seahorse circle, 2003. Seahorses, glue, metal. 0.30 x 0.32 x 0.15 m
Animal Species: Hippocampus Hudsonius



Bola de Estrellas de Mar Anaranjadas / Starfish Ball, Orange, 1994. Echin 6/10. Preserved starfish, metal. 0.35 x 0.35 x 0.35 m
Animal Species: Tiger Starfish