

Denise Lira-Ratinoff

Biographical Note:

Denise Lira-Ratinoff was born in Santiago, Chile and currently lives and works in United States. Graduated with a BFA from the Universidad Finis Terrae, Santiago, Chile and a MFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design, Atlanta, GA, United States. Additionally, she has studied Experimental Graphics in Havana, Cuba and Paper-making in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. She has received numerous awards including the 1999 Best Young Artist of the Year, Chile. As a multi-disciplinary artist, she has held individual exhibitions in Chile, Peru and Cuba and participated in numerous group exhibitions in Chile, Argentina, Peru, El Salvador, Mexico, United States and Switzerland. Her works are included in public and private collections in America and Europe such as the collection of the Musee de l'Elysee, Lausanne, Switzerland, MAVI Museo de Artes Visuales, Santiago, Chile, Memorial Health Hospital, Savannah, GA, Darby Bank & Trust Company, Savannah, GA. Her work has appeared in several publications and won the cover photograph on the Kodak Professional Magazine (October 2004). For 2008, she is preparing two public art projects and a solo show for the 3rd Festival of Photography, Fotoamerica, in Chile.

During the last eight years, Denise Lira-Ratinoff has explored the interaction of nature and the audience through installations related to the awareness of the importance of time and to establish closeness between nature and the world today. The work is presented as an experience between photography, video, organic materials and direct contact with the space, based on a constant awakening of the senses.

In Chile, one of the most emblematic installations took place in 2000. With her peer video artist Isabel Garcia, Denise Lira-Ratinoff created "Art for the Sighted, KM 9 Route 68", an installation placed close to the airport and along the highway. The installation was seen at high speed from the connector, from cars arriving or departing the city and from the planes taking off and landing. "Art for the Sighted, KM 9 Route 68" was based on the principle of visual perception, understanding and association of reality; the subject was to relate the image and the reality as the work itself with the place. Utilizing architectural elements, it poses a game of perceptual relationships between the territory and the ones that function within it. The project was a triptych that consisted of an enormous straw house made of 5000 bails of a geometric volume of 20 square meters and two billboards of 12 meters by 4 meters each with 4 photographic images generating in the spectator a reflection between the "image and the imaginary".

Later, amongst boldo modules (a tropical herb that only blossoms at night) and total darkness in one of the spaces at Museo Casa Colorada (Red House Museum), in Santiago, Chile Denise Lira-Ratinoff presented a new installation named "Nicatgenias" (flowers that only open in the dark). This was an installation based exclusively on the senses of smell and touch. In the form of bricks, it was built of four large walls the size of the entire room, allowing only a narrow walkway to be traversed through the perimeter and for the spectator to encounter a massive wall of boldo bails, disallowing any other view. There was a great vacuum in the space, but it was contained by the scent. The intention was to make us re-direct our perception, exploring plastically seldom-touched territories.

It was through this project, that Denise was invited to present her photo-installation "Chepica-Bermuda" in Lima, Peru, utilizing photographs, videos and Bermuda grass. Its objective was to establish a rapport between nature and culture, observing the vegetable versatility with all of its senses and confronting the simplicity of things. The monotony and monochromatic shape of this element, induces recognition of the strength of nature. The intense scent of the earth within a given light space transports us to a special frame of mind, quiet, sensitive and makes us want to travel through memories and sensations.

After experimenting with several organic matters and interacting not only with the audience, but as well having a constant dialogue between nature and the use of new technologies, Denise presented her new proposal "At First Sight I". These were direct and precise images that deal with universal elements and need no translation.

Visuals regarding these projects are available upon request.