

nara roesler

lucia koch
córte

nara roesler rio de janeiro
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section francesco perrotta-bosch

In the most unlikely objects, Lucia Koch finds (and reaffirms) the argument for architecture's authority.

These 'unlikely objects' are, quite literally, rubbish. And they will continue to be, even if one wanted to camouflage them under the elegant adjectives of art criticism. The raw materials for Koch's photographs have fulfilled their original purpose – as containers for some commodity. Once the contents have been consumed, the fate of each package seems certain. This is especially true for objects produced in the mediocrity of the 21st century, in which the delicacy of things is constantly mistaken as debility. These days, every item is disposable. Every artifact is breakable. Everything is at risk of fading with the inevitable entropy of time.

Within the supreme banality of these boxes, Lucia Koch reveals an unexpected architectural spatiality. Small spaces provide snapshots of interior environments that appear to be expansive, solemn and beautiful. How can something so insignificant provide us with such a striking image? The work is something of an enigma. It's illusive. It's fanciful.

There was a time when the empirical and the scientific worlds were in favor of creating ingenious mechanisms that contradicted the limits of what was possible: Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) imagined *Flying Machines*, Agostino Ramelli (1531–1608) outlined a *Reading Machine* and a *Musical Organ with Flowers and Birds* and Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) envisioned a *Machine of Metamorphosis*. In such cases,

technique was not subservient to rationalism and in turn, the door was opened for healthy associations with fascination and illusion.

Lucia Koch is an artist with a Renaissance mentality due to her ability to move easily between different fields of knowledge. The illusions created by Koch stem from the appropriation of a method created six centuries ago by Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446).

The Florentine conceived geometric construction capable of representing three-dimensional objects on two-dimensional planes: that which allows the inside of the *Lasagna* packaging to become a visual representation with a single vanishing point perspective, which centralizes and organizes the entire visual field, following a rigorous and universal metric. In turn, everything inside the *Sans Gluten* box follows optical and mathematical coding, in which the object reveals itself by growing or shrinking in size depending on one's distance to it.

We could consider this visual verisimilitude as a discovery by Brunelleschi, but it is the invention of a cultural model. After all, there is no single correct way to provide a graphic record analogous to the way we see the world. As a matter of fact, the single vanishing point perspective contains a high degree of abstraction by assuming a fixed point of view and disregarding natural parameters such as the convexity of the human eyeball. However, a comfortable six hundred years with this optical paradigm allows us to see Lucia Koch's photograph of the interior of the *Arroz Jasmim* packaging as a

portrait clicked into the ideal position – showing to us, the perfection possible within that space.

Another Brunelleschian principle is the constant search for harmony through the use of simple geometric shapes, as seen with the inside of *Spaghetti lená*. Other principles include modulation, as with the box storing small bottles of *Kombucha*, symmetry as seen with *Silver* and repetitiveness, the very essence of mathematical relationships, that is demonstrated throughout this exhibition as a whole. Here, mathematics is the intermediary between art, technique and theory.

By sustaining the freedom of artistic creation with the foundations of a geometric and mathematical system, Brunelleschi allowed us to have full graphic control of any space in the world. With such norms for the formulation of images, the Florentine offered us the foundation of the modern conception of architecture. Since then, architects have been able to precisely predict what a three-dimensional object would look like, in order to prove the physical validity needed to execute the idea. A small drawing would be able to represent something as grand as the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore, in Florence, even before it was built. Here is the invention of the *project*. This is architecture's authority.

Lucia Koch encounters (and reaffirms) this argument of authority when she offers us a return to the basic principles of the discipline.

In the two-dimensionality of the photos, the artist makes use of these instruments of spatial representation, but with an inversion:

Koch presents something as small as a bag of groceries in a size larger than that of the human body. Therefore, it is not the conversion of a mental idea into a building, as the draftsman would do, but rather it is the conversion of the banal object into *Architecture*. In the three-dimensional space of the gallery, Koch expands the internal environments with her works. *Spaghetti lená* extends the back corridor: the line where the floor meets the wall aligns with the line where the planes of the packaging meet; both coinciding towards the vanishing point. That is, with the image of the package of pasta, the narrow environment was expanded and its perspective improved. As with Paolo Veronese's elusive frescoes on the interior walls of Andrea Palladio's Villa Barbaro, Lucia Koch's photographs constitute portals to a non-immanent space. The physical limits of the space are challenged by the artist: when we enter through the door on Rua Redentor, Sans Gluten and Kombucha allow us to see beyond the borders of that allotment in Ipanema. A small house that radiates in the alternation between both built and projected architecture.



The *Fundos* series synthesizes Koch's methods and structuring aspects of her artistic practice, based on the relationship between art and architecture and the use of ordinary objects, leading us to broaden the way we perceive space. Her images are capable of creating virtual or real spaces and renewing our gaze upon the world.

In the series, which has been in development since 2001, Lucia Koch photographs the interiors of food, beverage, and other packaging. Each image is named after the product of the photographed package: Tetra Pak, Tagliatelle, Cream Cracker, etc. The title of the works evokes the concrete nature of the product, straining the illusory enchantment of the perspective established by the artist's chosen photographic angle and the scale of the works, often printed in large dimensions, so that when they are displayed in exhibition spaces, they become virtual extensions of it.

Sans gluten, 2022
pigment print
on cotton paper, UV matte
edition 6 + 2 AP
240 x 110 cm
94.5 x 43.3 in

In *Double Trouble*, her first solo exhibition in France, the artist provoked a disturbance in the experience of the architecture of the Palais d'Iéna, designed by Auguste Perret, in Paris. In addition to a monumental intervention with curtains printed with color gradients that crossed the entire space of the building, the artist presented a group of photographs from the *Fundos* series in self-supporting structures that created the illusion of openings to new spaces.

exhibition view
Double Trouble, 2022
Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France





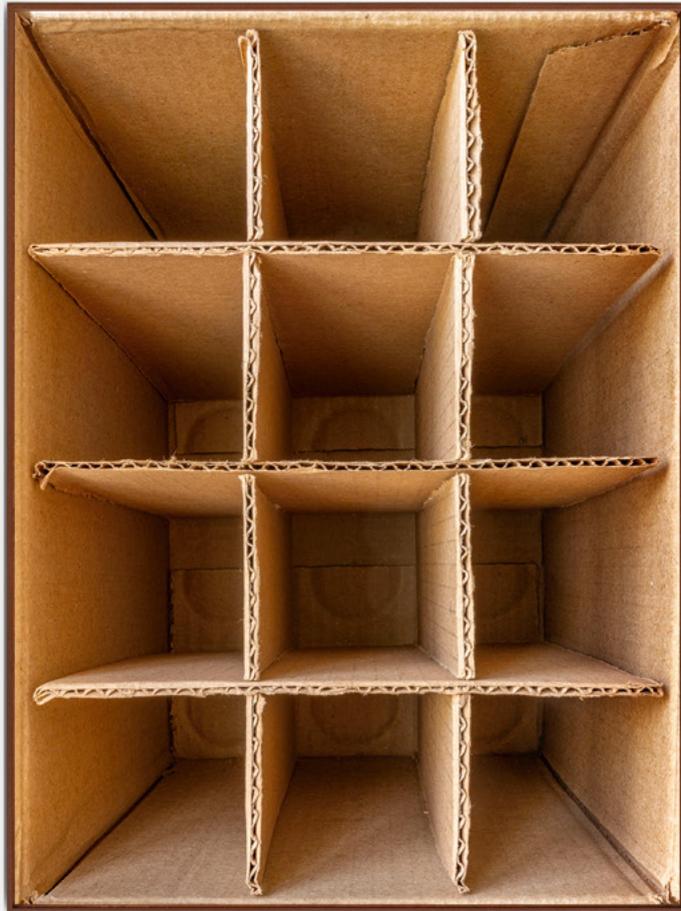
Spaghetti lená, 2022
pigment print
on cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 110 cm
94.5 x 43.3 in



exhibition view
Cóрте, 2023, Nara Roesler,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

exhibition view
Double Trouble, 2022
Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France





Kombucha, 2023
pigment print
on cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
150 x 112,5 cm
59.1 x 44.3 in



exhibition view
Cóрте, 2023, Nara Roesler,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



installation view
PROPAGANDA, 2021
Inhotim Institute,
Brumadinho, Brazil

PROPAGANDA is part of the *Território Específico* program at Inhotim, part of the Inhotim Commissioning Program. In this project, Koch occupied existing billboards in the city of Brumadinho, which were rented for the duration of the exhibition. At Inhotim, the artist developed structures especially for the occasion, presenting photographs of empty boxes and packages collected in the city and in Belo Horizonte.

installation view
PROPAGANDA, 2021
Inhotim Institute,
Brumadinho, Brazil





Silver, 2023
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
100 x 188 cm
39.4 x 74 in



exhibition view
Córte, 2023, Nara Roesler,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil





In her first commissioned project in Africa, on the occasion of the 1st Rabat Biennial in Morocco, Lucia Koch photographed a box of Henrys cookies, an iconic local brand. To make the images, the artist manipulated the packaging, turning the box inside out and inverting the inside and outside, photographing both configurations and exhibiting them on billboards in the city.

installation view
Terrain de proximité, 2019
1st Rabat Biennale, Musée des
Oudayas, Rabat, Morocco



Lasagna, 2023
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 150 cm
94.5 x 59.1 in



exhibition view
Córte, 2023, Nara Roesler,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil





New Development was an installation specially designed by Lucia Koch for the 11th Biennale de Lyon, France, in 2011. The outdoor structure features a gigantic photograph of an empty box printed on vinyl canvas. The image was placed in front of an old, disused silk factory that was demolished during the biennial, so that it was possible to contemplate its process of destruction behind Koch's outdoor display.

installation view
11th Biennale de Lyon, France, 2011

New Development,
from the *Fundas* series, 2011
inkjet printing
on cotton paper
280 x 700 cm



Arroz Jasmim, 2023
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
100 x 100 cm
39.4 x 39.4 in





exhibition view
Córte, 2023, Nara Roesler,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

lucia koch

b. 1966, porto alegre, brazil

lives and works in são paulo, brazil

Lucia Koch's works often engage with investigations around space and its possibilities, seeking to offer ways of understanding, experiencing and inhabiting it. By establishing a dialogue between her artworks and architectonic aspects present in the space they occupy, Koch reimagines and interferes with materiality, light, textures, colors and other tangential lines.

According to critic and curator Moacir dos Anjos, the artist 'reorganizes the understanding of visual spaces [...] and establishes an interaction with the public, through negotiating with uprooting perceptions and the disconcerting effect this causes'. Using light filters and textiles, Lucia plays with light and its chromatic effects, creating tensions between the inside and the outside, transparency and opacity, thus altering the nature of space.

Since 2001, Lucia Koch has been photographing the interior of carton boxes and empty packaging in such a way that they come to resemble architectural structures. Also playing with notions of perspective, once these images are hung on a wall, they seem to allow for an extension of the space they exist in. Koch also experiments with scale, where the typically small becomes enormous and seems to become inhabitable, raising the question of what turns space into place and uproots the norms that dictate our spatial expectations and experiences.

selected solo exhibitions

- *Double Trouble*, Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France (2022)
- *Casa de vento*, Casa de Vidro, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- *A longa noite*, Sesc Pompéia, São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
- *La temperatura del aire*, Fundación Caja de Burgos, Burgos, Spain (2015)
- *Mañana, montaña, ciudad y Brotaciones*, Flora ars + natura, Bogota, Colombia (2014)
- *Cromoteísmo*, Capela do Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil (2012)
- *Correções de luz*, Centro Universitário Maria Antonia (CeUMA), São Paulo, Brazil (2007)

selected group exhibitions

- 1st Rabat Biennial, Morocco (2019)
- *Fiction and Fabrication. Photography of Architecture after the Digital Turn*, Museu de Arte, Arquitetura e Tecnologia, Lisbon, Portugal (2019)
- 2th Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (PST: LA/LA)—*Learning from Latin America: Art, Architecture and Visions of Modernism*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG), Los Angeles, USA (2017)
- *Cruzamentos: Contemporary Art in Brazil*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, USA (2014)
- 11th Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2013)
- 11th Lyon Biennial, France (2011)
- *When Lives Become Form*, Yerba Buena Center For Arts, San Francisco, USA (2009); Contemporary Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2008)
- 27th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2006)
- 8th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2003)

selected collections

- J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, USA
- Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
- Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, USA
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

nara roesler

são paulo

avenida europa 655,
jardim europa, 01449-001
são paulo, sp, brasil
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

rio de janeiro

rua redentor 241,
ipanema, 22421-030
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

new york

511 west 21st street
new york, 10011 ny
usa
t 1 (212) 794 5038

info@nararoesler.art

www.nararoesler.art