



Everything Was Moving:
Photography from the 60s & 70s
BARBICAN, LONDON
13 SEPTEMBER - 13 JANUARY 2013

Although its remit is extremely broad, encompassing the manner in which photographers bore witness to major events, in *Everything Was Moving* the Barbican has realised a powerful exhibition of themes so complex that the viewer can be absorbed for hours. While photojournalism and reportage are intended to reveal the world in its rawest form, this is the kind of experience where you leave feeling more ignorant than when you entered, such is the multi-faceted, completely democratic way that these photographers look at their themes.

Along with the photography of high profile artists such as William Eggleston and Sigmar Polke, there is a refreshing reportage covering great moments of human bravery and atrocity throughout the world. At first glance, David Goldblatt's projects on Afrikaners show a world that epitomises suburbia, but when these are contextualised through his and Ernest Cole's observations of Apartheid, they take on a bleak acknowledgment of the abnormalities of inequality in these civilised people.

Continuing the agenda of politics and race, the ground floor shows the heartbreaking bravery of Martin Luther King Jr's Freedom Riders through the eyes of Bruce Davidson, and the remarkable tale of two nations as he chronicles the segregated South and the more enlightened North. Upstairs, the curation focuses loosely on the issue of censorship, with photographers working in the more restrictive regimes of China during the Cultural Revolution (Li Zhensheng), Mali during the Traoré police state (Malick Sidibé) and Soviet-controlled Ukraine (Boris Mikhailov). It's an astonishingly varied but meticulously edited collection.

Ruby Beesley



Alina Szapocznikow:
Sculpture Undone, 1955 - 1972
MOMA, NEW YORK
7 OCTOBER - 28 JANUARY 2013

Little known outside of the country, Alina Szapocznikow was one of Poland's most prominent post-war artists. Classical figuration influenced her early sculpture, but following a move to Paris in the 1960s, she rejected this academic style, favouring pioneering materials such as polyester and polyurethane to cast her own body in a unique fusion of Surrealism, Pop and Feminism. She died prematurely from cancer in 1973, and *Sculpture Undone, 1955 - 1972* is a timely reappraisal of her work.

Displayed chronologically, figuration quickly progresses to a looser approach – pen on paper drawings of organic forms show early experimentations with abstraction, whilst *Noga* (1962), a disembodied leg resting casually on a plinth, is the first cast from the artist's figure, paving the way for a number of surreal and erotic works using her own form as a starting point. Limbs are detached and placed in new contexts; in *La Couronne de la Mariée* (1968), plump mouths protrude on fungal stalks from a bed of moss, while in *Petit Desert I* (1970 - 71) a sensuous mouth is set in an oozing custard-like substance, and *Desert III* (1971) offers a bowl of multi-coloured breasts with nipples appetising as jelly sweets.

The most poignant works are those directly inspired by her battle with cancer. In *Tumeurs Personnifiées* (1971), the artist's face morphs into bulbous growths on a bed of gravel, whilst another visceral series of works embeds personal photographs and clothes into fleshy resin lumps. Szapocznikow articulates instinctively the body as a source of both humour and pain, and her unique objects continue to resonate.

Leela Clarke



Alice Maher:
Becoming
IMMA AT NCH, DUBLIN
6 OCTOBER - 3 FEBRUARY 2013

Spanning painting, sculpture, photography, animation and video, the work presented in Alice Maher's mid-career retrospective exists in a state of metamorphosis; a state of "becoming." The show forgoes a chronological layout in favour of rooms that combine different media and time periods, prompting the viewer to uncover the preoccupations of the artist.

Playfully renouncing divisions of high and low art, kitsch figurines are cast in bronze (a material typically reserved for monumental sculpture), drawings of humble subjects are hung at a height suggestive of a classical frieze, decorative illustration is not dismissed but celebrated and the unassuming objet trouvé becomes the uncanny source of new meaning.

In *Ombres* (1997), giant figures shrouded in hair simultaneously call to mind Christianity's Mary Magdalene as well as *The Addams Family's* Cousin Itt and, in one element of *Familiar I* (1994), flax reminiscent of Rapunzel's hair cascades from the gallery wall and trails onto the floor. The artist's focus on hair is laden with reference to the female, and its recurring presence is only one instance of the feminist undercurrent that runs throughout Maher's oeuvre. The dual video animation *Flora* (2009) showcases the artist's distinctive drawing style, which is rooted in the mythic and medieval.

Maher's work engages both physically and psychologically. Like the thorns that appear in choice works, her art seems to prick our unconscious, sting our sensibility and remain lodged in our thoughts. *Becoming* confirms Maher's position as a singular artist of immense intrigue.

Sarah Marie Allen