

**Hannah Collins. I will make up a song and sing it in
a theatre with night air above my head**

Fundació Antoni Tàpies



Fundació Antoni Tàpies
Communication Department
Daniel Solano
t. +34 667 060 753
www.fundaciotapies.org
press@ftapies.com

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Hannah Collins. I will write a song and sing it in a theater surrounded by the air of the night.

Exhibition
21.06-13.10.2019

Opening:
Thursday, June 20, 2019, at 7:00 p.m.

Curator: Carles Guerra

The project that Collins presents at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies focuses on the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900-1989). In these photographs, either mounted in sequence and screened as a film, or presented in large formats, Fathy emerges as the spectre of a forgotten modern vernacular legacy. The remains of large projects conceived in the twentieth century, such as that made in New Gourná (1945-47) or the one in New Baris (1965-67), are subject to a perspective that seeks formulas for the future.

Through photography, the architectural works of Fathy are redeemed from the decay and ruin that threatens them. The work that Collins has done around Fathy could be understood as a collaboration that is only possible thanks to photography. This move goes beyond a tribute to the memory of the utopian projects carried out by Fathy, recognising them as one of the most important contributions in the fields of architecture and urbanism in the Arab world.

Hannah Collins (London, 1956) has been recognised for the complex documentary dimension of her photographs, which are often presented in large formats or in

sequences that bring together several images of the same place. Since the 1980s she has been considered one of the most singular photographers within the international panorama. Her cinematic installations have fused aspects of collective memory, history and daily life. With her observational approach, she brings in narratives extracted from remote geographical locations.

Despite having photographed fragments of the world, her images generate a depth of field that goes beyond the perception of what is local. This way of making articulates a composition that uses photography to take us to, and places in front of us, distant places. These common places will, in the final resolution of her works, end up looking like monuments.

Between 1946 and 1954 the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy designed and built New Gurna, introducing ecological principles for adobe architecture to the Middle East. He dreamt that rural populations throughout North Africa might have sustainable housing, clean water, schools and support for their culture.

Gurna, a settlement at Thebes on the left bank of the Upper Nile, was situated above the necropolis from which the residents lived by selling their contents. Fathy was commissioned to build New Gurna to which Gurna's population were unwillingly moved. Fathy hoped that the new town with an open-air theatre, a covered market, a mosque, schools and clean water storage would become a sustainable living system that looked to the future rather than plundering the past. It was never popular with its residents who felt forced to adapt to a new prescribed existence. Inspiration for the new town came from local mud brick towns, Bedouin settlements, Roman temples and the Nubian villages at Aswan on the banks of the Nile. Appropriated ancient Nubian and Roman building techniques freed the builder from the need for expensive wooden roof supports for the adobe domed roofs and introduced air- and water-cooling techniques.

During the 1960s underground water reserves were found at the Kharga Oasis, three hours' drive through the inhospitable desert from Luxor. Here, Fathy was commissioned to build New Baris, another adobe town that was to be a sustainable community growing and exporting fruit and vegetables from the desert. To help with the storage of perishables in the new settlement, Fathy added incrementally reduced airshafts and secondary towers to accelerate air circulation reducing outside temperatures by over fifteen degrees. New Baris remains unfinished, as construction was stopped during to the war in 1967. At New Gurna, restoration has been suspended since the 2011 revolution. The town is slowly disappearing into the decaying concrete outskirts of Luxor, where buildings are at least ten degrees hotter in summer and colder in winter.

As the need to rethink our use of readily available resources becomes ever more urgent, seeing New Gournas and New Paris is to revisit hope and optimism, a vision for the future and a possibility that we might find other paths forward. This work was made in collaboration with Duncan Bellamy, who created the accompanying soundtrack.

Hannah Collins.

Biography

Hannah Collins (London, 1956). From 1989 to 2010, she lived and worked in Barcelona, exhibiting at Galeria Joan Prats since 1992, and today lives between London and Almeria, Spain. In addition to having obtained the Fulbright scholarship and having been nominated for the 1993 Turner Prize, she has recently received the SPECTRUM 2015 International Photography Prize, awarded by the Foundation of the Lower Saxony, which included an exhibition at the Sprengel Museum, travelling to the Camden Art Centre in London and the Baltic Centre in Newcastle. Among other museums and art centres, she has exhibited at Centre Pompidou Paris; FRAC Bretagne; Fotomuseum Winterthur; Museo UNAL, Bogotá; Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; MUDAM Luxembourg; Tate Modern, London; Seoul Museum of Art; VOX image contemporaine, Montreal; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Fundació La Caixa, Madrid and Barcelona; La Laboral, Gijón; Artium, Vitoria; CAC, Málaga.

List of works

I will make up a song (Doorway One), 2018

C-print

280 x 178 cm

I will make up a song (Hand and Sail), 2018

Silver gelatin print

100 x 130 cm

I will make up a song (Wall One), 2018

C-print

302 x 363 cm

*I will make up a song and sing it in a theatre
with night air above my head
HD video, 20' 34''
Sound design: Duncan Bellamy
Edition: Daniel Goddard*

Special edition

On the occasion of the exhibition, the Fundació Antoni Tàpies has produced a series of numbered, limited edition prints, signed by the artist.

Hassan Fathy Theatre New Gourn
Image size 10 x 10 inches, paper size 12 x 16 inches.
Selenium toned silver gelatin print

Related activity

Inaugural debate

Hannah Collins, artist, and Anna Puigjaner, architect's doctor, co-founder of MAIO arquitectes and author of *Kitchenless City*, will talk about architecture, collectivism and sustainability, during the presentation of the exhibition that puts the focus on Egyptian architect figure Hassan Fathy (1900-1989).

Calendar: Thursday, June 20, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. | Price: free | Limited seating

Approximations

Guided visits to the exhibitions Antoni Tàpies. *Profound Certainty* and Hannah Collins. *I will make up a song and sing it in a theatre with night air above my head*.

Dates: Saturdays, at 17.00 h (except in August). | Duration: 1 h 15 min. | Language: Catalan. | Admission: free with museum entrance ticket. | Advance booking not required. Limited places.

Press images

The access to the press section in the Fundació Antoni Tàpies museum website is located in the upper right margin of the screen, in the section 'Museum and Library'. It includes the press dossier and images for the press.



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