

Among Tender Roots:

Laura Anderson Barbata



Laura Anderson Barbata, *Que Tiene que ver la Piel, el Pelo, la Pluma, la Madera, con el Jaguar, Brujo, Mago, Sabio?*, 2008, detail of installation of five paper columns, 108" x 12" x 8" each.



Peek-a-Boo, still from *Shapono* animation, 2008, 16 mins. 43 secs.

Widely recognized for her series of collaborative community-directed projects, Laura Anderson Barbata's work finds expression in the service of cultural exploration and group participation. Born in Mexico City, currently living in New York and Mexico, she exhibits internationally in Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Europe, and the United States, and has shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro.

Ms. Barbata works within a wide variety of cultures to create art that has great meaning and relevance for her collaborators. This exhibition documents Barbata's collaborations with these communities through books, handmade paper, printworks, sculpture, video, installation and photographs.

Included in the exhibition are projects with an indigenous people of Venezuela, the Yanomami, with whom she created two handmade book, *Shapono* and *Iwariwe*; the GRAS project in Trinidad, where local school children in Grande Riviere are taught art through recycling; and finally, *Moko Jumbies*, a multidimensional project involving brightly-costumed stilt walkers in locations ranging from Trinidad to Brooklyn. The aim of these projects is two-fold: to reduce local deforestation through the use of recycled paper and locally sustainable plant fibers, and to assist communities in developing long-term paper and printmaking projects that aid in cultural and economic sustainability.

Barbata's own videos, sculptures, and prints are an integral part of these social projects, both inspired by them and engaging in another means of mirroring back these concerns. In the words of the artist, "I started my work in more of a conventional way in the studio and felt that it really needed to address those things that touch my life, and I couldn't do it from my studio. I would say that my main motivation is to put my concerns into action."

This exhibition is curated by Melissa Potter, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Arts Faculty, Columbia College Chicago.

Exhibition Dates: January 15–April 9, 2010

Special Events in the Gallery:

Reception: Thurs., February 11, 6:00–9:00 p.m.

Artist's Gallery Talk: Wed., March 17, 7:00 p.m.

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Related Events

Reception and Gallery Tour

Thursday, February 11, 6:00–9:00 p.m.

In collaboration with the “Evening at Columbia College Chicago” tour for the 2010 College Art Association conference.



Above and right: Moko Jumbies performing at the Keylemanjahro School of Arts and Culture in Cocorite, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The costumes are made of moriche fibers and recycled paper and cardboard. Photo: Stefan Falke.



Samples of papers produced by the Yanomami community of Platanal-Mahekoto, Amazon State, Venezuela.



Yanomami recycled paper and block prints made into notebooks and cards. Platanal, Amazon State, Venezuela.



Examples of traditional drawings used for body painting and decorating baskets.



Samples of Amazon fibers. From left to right: Moriche palm fiber, wasp nest (in basket), shiki, tavarí of different qualities. Above: blond tavarí, palm and inner bark.

Gallery Talk:

Laura Anderson Barbata: *Among Tender Roots*
Wednesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m.

Center for Book + Paper Arts Gallery, 2nd fl., 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

In this illustrated lecture, Laura Anderson Barbata will discuss the origin and development of her work. She will relate the experience of bringing her studio practice into the community and show examples of the culturally-enriching and economically sustainable work that the projects have generated.

Presented by the Columbia College Chicago Department of Interdisciplinary Arts, the Center for Book and Paper Arts, and the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media. Supported in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

ELLEN STONE BELIC
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF
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