

Ragna Róbertsdóttir *Configured Landscapes*

Exhibition: 23 November, 2019 – 29 February, 2020



Configured Landscapes, 2019
Exhibition view
Persons Projects, Berlin

Persons Projects proudly presents Ragna Róbertsdóttir's first solo exhibition *Configured Landscapes*. This collection of works, from the 1980's to the present, reveals the diversity as well as the tactile sensitivity that Róbertsdóttir has continuously exhibited throughout her illustrious career. Her minimalistic roots reach back to the early 1980's, beginning with the earliest experimentations with textiles and organic materials that were inherently common to the Icelandic environment. Róbertsdóttir approaches her work methodically, leaving each element with enough space to define its own presence of being. To fully appreciate the gravity of Róbertsdóttir's art, one needs to merely image taking a walk into one of Iceland's many austere landscapes. It feels less like a trek into somewhere and more like a journey elsewhere. Her pieces project an overall sensibility that harbors both the power of its materiality combined with the lightness of its becoming, whether it be salt, stone or glass. In the interview for the newspaper Independent she said once "I always have done it very simply. Often the story is in the material".

Ragna Róbertsdóttir's long fascination with minimalism took a different turn in the late 1980's with her introduction to Donald Judd, Alan Charlton, Richard Long, Carl Andre to name a few, who all came to Iceland due to their interest in the Icelandic sagas and its minimal landscapes. These friendships opened up an even broader dialogue into new avenues to where her art would eventually go. Her method of working is all about finding the emotional balance between the gathering of her materials and absorbing the experience of creating it. Gregory Volk in his essay 'Thinking with Things', states she shapes her materials, many of which are from nature, and brings them into very specific forms; and at the same time, they in turn shape her and she learns from them." This creative osmosis between Róbertsdóttir and her work is seen and felt through her mental approach, in how she combines and places her gathered elements together. It's a merging of sorts that connects the vastness of her Icelandic surroundings with the expanse of her imagination. Whatever the shape, form or materials Róbertsdóttir chooses to use for her creations, they all share a similar manner in how she touches and embraces them to pull out their unique qualities. Her stone works feel a lightness of being while her lava paintings radiate with a spacial disproportion due to their multiple layering and subtle changes, as they find their final angles of repose. Tenderly contemplative, yet systematically resolved, Róbertsdóttir's approach is both meditative and embracing as it reflects her inner self.

Ragna Róbertsdóttir (b. Reykjavík, Iceland, 1945; lives and works in Reykjavík and Berlin) rose to renown with minimalist wall and floor pieces she makes out of lava pumice, broken glass, seashells, and chips of neon plastic. Glued to a bare wall or laid on the floor, her works create seamless transitions between a harsh nature and urban architecture. She combines the uncompromising austerity of American Land Art and the materials of the Italian Arte Povera for a distinctive aesthetic statement that has made Róbertsdóttir a star in her home country. Her work has also been shown in solo exhibitions throughout Europe, the United States, China and Australia.