

The Museum of Modern Art

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PROJECTS: ROSEMARIE TROCKEL

February 13 - April 3, 1988

The first solo American exhibition of work by West German artist Rosemarie Trockel opens February 13, 1988, at The Museum of Modern Art. Organized by Jennifer Wells, curatorial assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, PROJECTS: ROSEMARIE TROCKEL consists of two sculptures and approximately ninety drawings. The exhibition remains on view through April 3.

Trockel works in a variety of mediums, treating a broad range of forms and themes in drawing, painting, sculpture, fabric pieces, and installations. Diverse objects are often paired in her powerful, idiosyncratic works, creating provocative juxtapositions. Some of her work overtly alludes to the status and role of women. The vessel, an essentially feminine form, recurs as a symbol of her investigations of the role of women artists in a historically male-oriented art world. The recent machine-knitted pieces for which she is best known also exemplify her subtle feminist voice by manipulating a medium traditionally handcrafted by women.

Ms. Wells writes, "The meaning of Trockel's art is not. . . presented in simple, straightforward terms. It is rather the result of an intricate visual strategy whereby the combination of seemingly unrelated images elicits multiple associations that reverberate on aesthetic, social, political, and art-historical levels."

Since the early eighties Trockel has worked primarily on paper. The drawings on view in this exhibition, all executed from 1982 to the present,

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represent the themes and images she has explored throughout her career. In one, an apelike creature appears to be reading a book; in another, a female body is portrayed in a highly abstract form. Often the works serve as sketches for Trockel's sculpted, painted, and knitted pieces. Ranging in technique from quickly drawn lines or rapid brushstrokes to more traditionally rendered works, they recall the dreamlike images of Odilon Redon and whimsical fantasies of Paul Klee.

Created for this exhibition, the sculptures signal a new direction that has developed out of Trockel's interest in the origin and evolution of the human species. In these pieces, she incorporates and replicates archaeological artifacts and encases the fossil-like objects in crates or vitrines, giving them a false authenticity and an ambiguous relationship to contemporary culture. These sculptures have an eerie and compelling presence that is deliberately left unexplained; it remains for the viewer to supply the meaning.

Born in 1952 in Schwerte, West Germany, Trockel studied at the Werkkunstschule Köln (1974-78) and currently resides in Cologne. She has had several individual and group exhibitions in Europe and was recently included in SIMILIA/DISIMILIA (1987) at Columbia University, the Leo Castelli Gallery, and the Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

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