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'Body extensions' by German artist Rebecca Horn come to Moscow

by *Vladimir Kozlov* at 20/05/2013 17:02

Rebecca Horn.' Until July 21 at the Multimedia Art Museum, www.mamm-mdf.ru

Legendary German artist Rebecca Horn has worn a mask made of pencils and made stones bleed. In Horn's latest installation, she makes a suitcase fly through the Multimedia Art Museum.

"Two years ago I [took part] in the Biennale here, and I saw this museum, and it reminded me of the spiral staircase at the Guggenheim in New York," Horn said in an interview at the museum before the opening of her new retrospective.

Horn decided to use the inner space of the Moscow venue much as she did at her Guggenheim retrospective in 1993. The resulting installation, "Suitcase for a Refugee," features a suitcase with a painting inside, which Horn said "flaps like a butterfly" while sliding up and down a metal rod.

The exhibition, which takes up three floors, features several other kinetic installations that stop and start in careful orchestration, including "Solar Admirer," which is centered around a violin.

Horn first came to the limelight in the late 1960s with her series of "body sculpture" performances, an idea she developed during a year-long hospital stay for lung poisoning. Her most famous work was 1971's "Einhorn" (Unicorn), a play on the artist's name that featured the artist in a bodysuit with an enormous horn projecting from her head.

Horn continued to explore the relationship between the animate and inanimate in later works such as "The Feathered Prison Fan," a clamshell-like construction which envelops the body in feathers. Objects assume human feelings in works such as "Broken Landscapes," a machine that stabs stones until they appear to bleed.



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"I started as a very young artist with performances and films," she said. "And that developed over the years. Because I was in different places, I would do something different in Tokyo from what I would do in New York. I watched things very carefully, and out of that I developed an idea, a story, a text, a message that I would like to give to [a specific] city or country."

Horn has also made full-length films including "Buster's Bedroom," which is screened continuously at the exhibition. The 1990 movie, starring Geraldine Chaplin and Donald Sutherland, follows a woman obsessed with the great silent film star Buster Keaton.

Horn said the idea for her film "Der Eintänzer," made in New York in the 1970s, came from a dream. "I had no money, and each summer when I went back to Europe, I had to rent out my studio," she said. "And each time I came back, nearly everything was stolen or destroyed. I was in Europe and I had that dream. I woke up and said: "Oh, my God, what happened in my studio!" Then I came back to New York, and out of that dream I created a story and it became a film."