

SEAN KELLY

Grande, John K. "Rebecca Horn/ Sean Kelly Gallery," *Sculpture Magazine*, January/February 2009.

sculpture

NEW YORK

Rebecca Horn

Sean Kelly Gallery

The works in "Cosmic Maps," Rebecca Horn's recent exhibition, continued to explore her enigmatic mechanisms, whose expressive content speaks of fragility, the beauty of a moment in time, the disasters of war, and even of a destructive urge that is quintessentially human. As situations in three dimensions, Horn's sculptures ingeniously use the locus of the gallery-as-site. These new examples are somewhat scaled down but just as powerful as her earlier works in terms of their elliptical, poetic density. Sculpture has always been an extension of Horn's broader performance, film, and situational practice, and she has described her sculptures as "film compressed into its essence." Her three-dimensional works play on presence and absence, unfolding quietly dramatic events. The box pieces in this show have a stillness that becomes an equation for those moments in time that oddly escape the normal, with a touch of claustrophobic symbolism.

Shell Clock (2008) is a box-like container holding the most delicate, outer reach of a branch in an almost ikebana-like arrangement. A clock-like mechanism is affixed in the lower right section of the box; a shell placed above references the

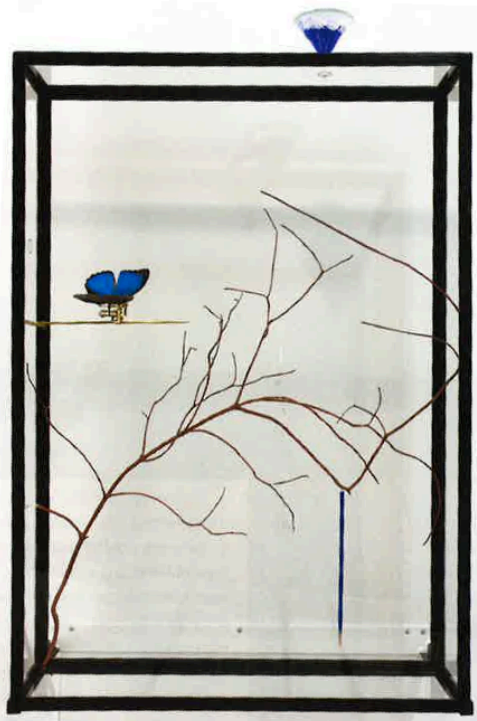
ocean and expands the mechanical mystery. The largest piece in the show, *The Snake's Ghost* (2008), occupied an entire darkened room. A cast shadow falls onto an adjacent wall, and a tiny instrument moves ever so methodically at intervals to touch the surface of a pool of water. We wait in the silence of the space as the instrument somewhat ponderously touches the water's surface and sets off ripples that reflect and resonate, just as our emotions do after an event.

In another box piece, *The Butterfly's Dream* (2008), butterfly wings open and close ever so slightly. Pure pigment placed on top of the box echoes the color of the wings, and a

funnel form could allude to the containment of beauty, the regulation of color, or the pre-digital mechanical world. The nearly alchemical arrangement suspends viewers at the edge of our place in the world and in the broader cosmos.

Horn communicates something both poetic and personal, capturing our relation to process, to time as it passes. The conjunctions in her assemblages and mechanisms can be subtle and complex—traces or strands of feelings, they communicate large issues and ideas.

—John K. Grande



Rebecca Horn, *The Butterfly's Dream*, 2008. Iron, glass, brass, motor, butterfly