

PRESS RELEASE

Roni Horn

ON VIEW: January 31 – April 26, 2020

OPENING RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST: January 30, 4:00 – 7:30 P.M.



Roni Horn, *Pi*, 1997-98 (detail). Forty-five Iris-printed photographs on Sommerset satin paper, framed.

All artwork © Roni Horn.

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

The University Museum of Contemporary Art at UMass Amherst is proud to present the exhibition **Roni Horn**, from January 31 through April 26, 2020.

Horn's installation, titled *Pi*, concerns the landscape of Iceland, where Horn has traveled and made work since 1975, and how it has informed her practice. It features 45 Iris-printed photographs, taken along the Arctic Circle in the north of Iceland over a six-year period.

A Reception for the Artist will be held Thu, Jan 30, 4:00–7:30 P.M., and will include a Panel Discussion (5:00–6:00 P.M.) with **Roni Horn**; and **Dr. Julie Brigham-Grette** and **William Daniels** from the UMass Geology Department; moderated by Shona Macdonald.

The University Museum, located on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center at UMass Amherst, is open Tue–Fri, 11:00–4:30; Saturday and Sunday, 2:00–5:00; and until 8 P.M. on first Thursdays, when UMass is in session. The public is always welcome, and admission is free.

For more than forty years, American artist Roni Horn has developed a richly diverse practice that spans drawing, sculpture, photography, installation, and books. Exploring wide-ranging topics including human identity, ecology, landscape, weather, and language, Horn's work intermingles material and context, complicating relationships between object, subject, and viewer in the process.

Her exhibition at the UMCA concerns the landscape of Iceland, where Horn has traveled and made work since 1975, and how it has informed her practice. The exhibition's focus is *Pi*, an installation comprised of 45 Iris-printed photographs, taken along the Arctic Circle in the north of Iceland over a six-year period. Horn thinks of the work as "a collection of circular and cyclical events."¹ Combining portraits and landscapes, *Pi* charts a mode of living in a specific place, though Horn was not interested in reportage or narrative. The installation forms a frieze around the room, sewing this circular work together through memory and movement. The artist says, "There is no prescribed beginning or end, and, among the images, no single motif dominates. The potential for narrative, which is implied in the nature of the imagery, never actually evolves. Thwarting the narrative is an important way to engage people's interest."²

Unobstructed views of the ocean are interspersed with those shot through windows in the home of an elderly couple whose portraits appear throughout the exhibition. They harvest the down from the nests of Eider ducks, and Horn includes images of the feathery nests. Outside influences infiltrate and become part of the continuum. Iceland had only one television station for years, and every afternoon many tuned in to watch the American soap opera, *Guiding Light*. Stills from this program punctuate *Pi*, marking the passage of time

with the soothing recurrence of the same. Horn sets this mundane drama against the routine life cycles of birds in Iceland. This series of photographs embodies a collision of nature and culture, a haunting interruption in the entropic flow of life and death envisioned in this exhibition.

1 Roni Horn in conversation with Lynne Cooke, p. 8, *Roni Horn*, 2000, Phaidon Press Limited, London

2 Ibid, p. 9

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Roni Horn (b. 1955) lives and works in New York. Recent solo museum exhibitions include *The Drawing Institute* at The Menil Collection, Houston (2019); *Pinakothek der Moderne*, Munich (2018); *Nasher Sculpture Center*, Dallas (2017); *Glenstone*, Potomac (2017); *Fondation Beyler*, Basel (2016-2017); *De Pont Museum*, Tilburg (2016); and *Fondation Vincent van Gogh*, Arles (2015). A major retrospective *Roni Horn aka Roni Horn* (2009-10) was jointly organized by Tate Modern in London and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Her works are featured in many important public collections, including MoMA, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Kröller-Müller Museum, The Netherlands; and Kunstmuseum, Basel.

RELATED EVENTS

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST / January 30, Thursday / 4:00–7:30 P.M.

5:00 – 6:00 P.M. / Roni Horn in Conversation with Julie Brigham-Grette* and William Daniels* / moderated by Professor Shona Macdonald*

“Iceland could have been anywhere. But as it turns out, Iceland suited my needs. In fact, it seemed to form a perfect complement to my native home, New York. Iceland is the place where I have the clearest view of myself and my relationship to the world. By clearest view, I mean a view that is less constricted by social conventions.”

“Iceland is primarily young geology. Young geology is very unstable. In a literal sense, Iceland is not a very stable place. Iceland is always becoming what it will be, and what it will be is not a fixed thing either. So here is Iceland: an act, not an object, a verb, never a noun. Iceland taught me that each place is a unique location of change. No place is a fixed or concluded thing. So I have discarded the noun form of place as meaningless.”

— Roni Horn, excerpt from an interview with Jan Howard, pages 102–104, *Roni Horn*, 2000, Phaidon Press.

***Julie Brigham-Grette** is a glacial geologist and a professor in the Department of Geosciences, specializing in paleoenvironments and climate evolution of the Arctic and subarctic. **William Daniels** is a postdoctoral researcher in the Climate System Research Center in the Department of Geosciences, focusing on reconstructing Arctic climatic, ecologic, and anthropological changes. Moderator **Shona Macdonald** is an artist, professor, and chair of the Department of Art at UMass Amherst.

Wednesday, February 12 / 5:30 P.M. / ARTISTS ON ARTISTS

An **EXHIBITION WALK-THROUGH** led by local artist **Justin Kimball**, Conway Professor in New Media and Head of Studio Arts, Department of Art and the History of Art, Amherst College; among others.

Date and location TBA / FILM SCREENING / *The Juniper Tree* / Directed by Nietzchka Keene; starring Björk / In partnership with the Massachusetts Multicultural Film Festival.

Nietzchka Keene’s stark, stunning debut feature *The Juniper Tree* is filmed in Iceland and loosely based on a Brothers Grimm fairy tale of the same name. It stars Björk in her first on-screen performance.

The UMCA gratefully acknowledges the UMassFive College Federal Credit Union and Chartpak, Inc. for their support of our 2020 exhibition program.

Thanks are due to Hauser & Wirth Gallery, New York, for their kind coordination of this exhibition.

The UMCA is open Tue–Fri, 11:00–4:30; Sat & Sun 2:00–5:00; and until 8 P.M. on first Thursdays, when UMass is in session. Admission is Free. Find updates about museum programs at www.umass.edu/umca. For additional information, please contact Betsey Wolfson, Business and Communications Manager; University Museum of Contemporary Art, Fine Arts Center; University of Massachusetts Amherst; 413 545-3672; bhwolfson@acad.umass.edu. 1/14/2020

