



Alexander Gray Associates

Coco Fusco

Unlimited | Art Basel 2019 | Switzerland

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Cover: *Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*, 2018, detail, aluminum and steel, 120h x 47.25w x 39d in (305h x 120w x 99d cm).
Courtesy the artist and The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, FL. © Coco Fusco/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

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Coco Fusco's *Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*, 2018

Over the past twenty-five years, Coco Fusco has explored the ways that intercultural dynamics affect the construction of the self and ideas about cultural otherness. Her work is informed by multicultural and postcolonial discourses as well as by feminist and psychoanalytic theories. Her investigation of intercultural dynamics has yielded art projects about ethnographic displays, animal psychology, sex tourism in the Caribbean, labor conditions in free trade zones, suppressed colonial records of indigenous struggles, and military interrogation in the War on Terror. Much of her recent work focuses on Cuban culture in the post-Communist era.

Fusco's newest sculpture is a collaboration with artist Chico MacMurtrie titled *The Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*. This ten-foot tall depiction of President Donald Trump parodies grandiose representations of political leaders that adorn public spaces. Fusco's rendering of the president resembles the Tin Woodman character from *The Wizard of Oz*, but her version is far more rotund than the original. The original film character's lack of a heart and need for oil to be able to move inform Fusco's version of the Tin Man. While the film character may have been overly sentimental, his behavior can also be interpreted as petulant and self-centered, adding another layer of symbolism to the sculpture.

About *Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*, Fusco has stated: "The November 2016 election was a watershed moment for me. I sensed that our country would be changed forever. A very different concept of presidential power was ushered in, one that has affected every aspect of social, political and cultural life in America and the rest of the world. That is what motivated me to create this work. Not every artist wants to respond to what happens in the political arena, but in the course of history many have done so, and I embrace that venerable tradition."

Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century was first shown in 2018 in *Twilight*, Fusco's solo exhibition at the Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida.

Coco Fusco was born in New York City in 1960. She received her B.A. in Semiotics from Brown University (1982), her M.A. in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University (1985) and her Ph.D. in Art and Visual Culture from Middlesex University (2007). She is a recipient of a 2018 Rabkin Prize for Art Criticism, a 2016 Greenfield Prize, a 2014 Cintas Fellowship, a 2013 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2013 Absolut Art Writing Award, a 2013 Fulbright Fellowship, a 2012 US Artists Fellowship and a 2003 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts. Fusco's performances and videos have been presented in the 56th Venice Biennale, Frieze Special Projects, two Whitney Biennials (2008 and 1993), BAM's *Next Wave* Festival, the Berlinale, Mercosul and other biennials in Liverpool, Sydney, Johannesburg, Shanghai and Kwangju. Her iconic performance *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West* (1992–1994), created in collaboration with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, was featured in the 1993 Whitney Biennial. The video documentary about the performance, *The Couple in the Cage*, has been screened in over 200 venues around the world.

Fusco's creative practice also encompasses writing about art and cultural politics. Her most recent book *Dangerous Moves: Performance and Politics in Cuba* was issued by Tate Publications in 2015. A Spanish translation was published by Turner Libros in 2017. She is also the author of *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas* (1995), *The Bodies that Were Not Ours and Other Writings* (2001), and *A Field Guide for Female Interrogators* (2008). She is the editor of *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (1999) and *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self* (2003).

In addition to creating numerous works inspired by postcolonial issues, Fusco has engaged in multidisciplinary research in Cuba since the 1980s. Her most recent video essays concentrate on iconic sites that define the island's culture and censored Cuban artists and poets who have engaged with political issues in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.



The Undiscovered Amerindians Tour (Snack Time), 1992–1994/2019, archival pigment print in 10 parts, 12.88h x 18.88w in (32.7h x 47.94w cm)



A Room of One's Own: Women and Power in the New America, 2006-2008, performance



TED Ethology: Primate Visions of the Human Mind, 2015, single channel video, still



Coco Fusco with her video *The Confession* (2015) during the 56th Venice Biennale. Photo by Alessandra Chemollo.



Coco Fusco (in collaboration with Chico MacMurtrie), *Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*, 2018, aluminum and welded steel