

# OFELIA RODRIGUEZ

## OPEN STUDIO RECEPTION with DAWN ADES | RURIK INGRAM | SANDRA HIGGINS

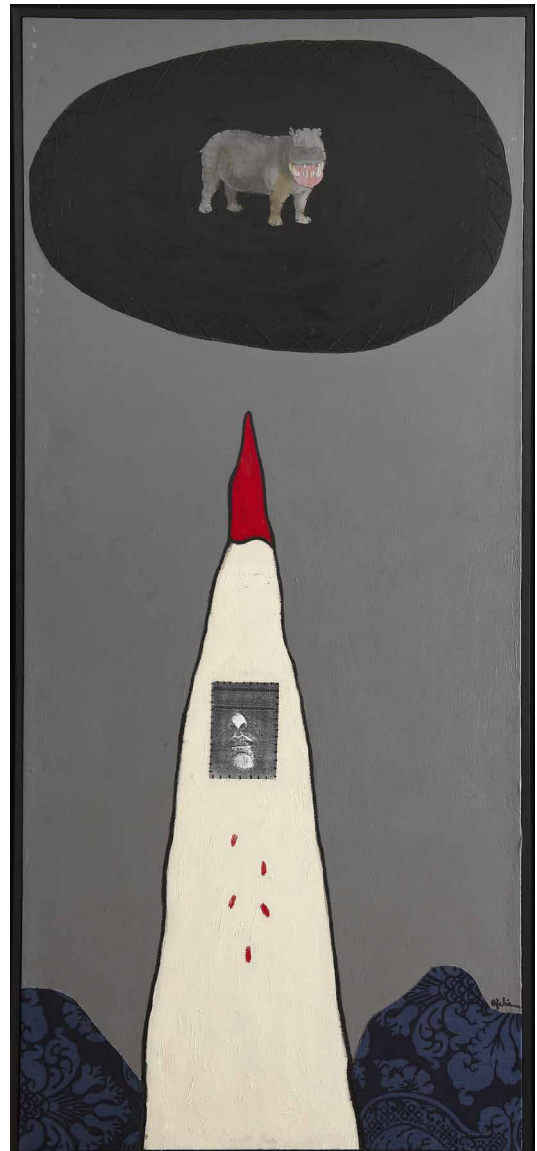
A conversation exploring the work and career of Ofelia Rodriguez in her London studio with the participation of Professor Dawn Ades, Rurik Ingram -Ofelia's husband- and her London gallerist Sandra Higgins.

*“Ofelia Rodríguez works in a fluid visual language that ignores the artistic hierarchies of ‘high’ and ‘low’ and forges an original links between the exuberant traditions of Latin America, the ephemeral seductions of mass culture, the modernist wit of Pop Art and the energies of the dada ready-made and the surrealist object”.* - Dawn Ades

Ofelia Rodríguez's career spans 40 years during which she has materialised an extraordinary artistic vision through paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints of vibrant colours that incorporate everyday objects such as brushes, scissors and sewing needles as well as printed fabrics, stuffed exotic animals, plastic airplanes and dolls.

Her use of figurative elements, connected by strange associations and embedded in fantastic backgrounds, results in an artistic production that is unequivocally Latin and yet universal, possessed by a passionate primitivism that appeals to all sorts of public. Her works, like beautiful, thorny, flowers, manage to be simultaneously playful and acid, tender and feisty.

Rodríguez studied for her BA at the prestigious University of Los Andes (Bogota) between 1964 and 1969, completing an MFA at Yale under the tutelage of Al Held and Lester Johnson in 1972.



*An Indian dreaming from inside a mountain, Mixed Media on canvas, 184.5 x 80.5 cm, 2008.*



*Attacking an Injured Heart*, Mixed Media on canvas, 116x91cms, 2008

At the time, the cycle of Pop Art was coming to an end, but Rodríguez grabbed its remaining energy and subversive power and - combining it with a Latin take on Surrealism - developed the unique style that underpins her whole oeuvre, making her one of Colombia's most recognized and recognizable artist, both locally and internationally.

After a period in Paris, Rodríguez settled in London in 1984, where she resided until 2013, when she returned permanently to Cartagena. Her studio in Whitechapel, where she has worked for the last ten years, has been left intact since her departure, like a time capsule that bears witness to her creative process. On the 26th of June 2014, Rodríguez's UK dealer Sandra Higgins will open the doors of the studio to a selected group of guests, who will have the opportunity to observe first hand the space where Rodríguez crafted some of her best known pieces, amongst artworks, tools and artistic materials.

This special occasion will be accompanied by an introductory talk by Professor Dawn Ades in which she will discuss the work produced by Ofelia Rodríguez during her London

years. Over the past two years Rodríguez has been honoured with three major retrospectives in Santa Marta, Cartagena (Colombia), as well as at the Consulate-General of Colombia in London, which was curated by Sandra Higgins and opened by the Colombian Ambassador, Mauricio Rodríguez. Among other highlights of her career, Rodríguez won the 31st Salón Nacional de Artistas, Colombia's most prestigious art prize, and has exhibited at the Sao Paulo Biennale, the 5th Havana Biennale and the 2nd Biennale of Santo Domingo. She has also exhibited in the Haus der Kulturen, Berlin, Art Basel Miami, Latin American Arts Association in London and the Grand Palais in Paris.

Dawn Ades is a Fellow of the British Academy, Professor of the History of Art at the Royal Academy and was awarded a CBE in 2013 for her services to art history. She has been responsible for some of the most important exhibitions in London and overseas over the past thirty years, including the recent Hannah Höch retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery, Dada and Surrealism Reviewed, Art in Latin America and Francis Bacon.

Most recently she organised the highly successful exhibition to celebrate the centenary of Salvador Dalí at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice (2004) *The Colour of my Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art*, at the Vancouver Art Gallery (2011), and was Associate Curator for Manifesta 9 (2012). She has published standard works on photomontage, Dada, Surrealism, women artists and Mexican muralists.



*Magic Box with Banker Pondering Whether to Turn Cowboy*, Mix media.