ALIVE AND KICKING

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST COCO FUSCO BRINGS A PERFORMATIVE TASTE OF THE MACAREO TO THE MFA

DANYA MCELMO

She kicks postcolonial rhetoric in the teeth. Blurs the boundaries of performance. You may remember Coco Fusco as the displacement-caged, female artist who turned the museum world on its ear during the installation Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West. Maybe you saw her laid out during one of her walks at Orisý's YZY Art Outlet in Brownsville. Her body is a canvas onto which she projects her sensibilities, her cultural deconstructions and reconstructions. Fusco, in her current role, is currently based in New York and packs a heavy CV jammed with writing credits, awards, grants and residencies. Coco Fusco has exhibited and curated programs, lectured and performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Latin America. She is represented by The Studio Arts Visiting Artists Program at Concordia University, Fusco will be presenting her work in the MFA's Maxwell-Cummings Auditorium on Feb. 1. And it's free.

CASEY'S DEALINGS

In 1992, Coco Fusco began, with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, one of her most innovative collaborative projects that resulted in the creation of the Museum of Performance. Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West featured Fusco and Gómez-Peña locked in an iron cage and dressed up like the quintessential "other" of colonialist lore, modernized with high-tech, irony-laden and Coca-Cola products. Appearing as aboriginal inhabitants from an island off the Gulf of Mexico overlooked by Columbus in his discovery days, this project exploded with international attention as audiences became divided between those who recognized its political commentary and those who didn't. Unknowing Washington, D.C., politicians were slammed at the Smithsonian (the mother of all exhibits and specimen-holding institutions). The same was true of those in Irvine California, London, Madrid and Minneapolis as Fusco and Gómez-Peña were about their daily routines as caged Amerindians.

Well-meaning museum patrons called the Human Rights Try to save the couple while loud-mouthed liberals screamed outrage and injustice at the museum's latest acquisition. Ironic smiles plastered the faces of unknown intellectuals who felt included in a joke that they were never part of, not recognizing that they were being implicated in this spectacle as the artists themselves. This collaborative performance/installation reflected more than just Western prejudices and stereotypes. It scrambled people's perceptions of social categories and methods of categorization during an academic era that prided itself on postcolonial theory and politically correct manners.

RIDING WITH ECSTASY

Fusco premiered her latest solo performance piece at the third annual Performance Festival in Oulinen, Denmark, and has taken it to the Nexus Contemporary Art Center in Atlanta. Yoto (Vovos) was inspired by the poetry and conceptual works of Spanish and Latin American Christian mystics in the 16th and 17th centuries, one of whom, St. Theresa de Avila, suffered from catatopy; Catatopy is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from catatopy; Catatopy is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from catatopy; Catatopy is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. " Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead. "Basically I had been doing research about catatopy for the performance," says a cool Fusco over the phone. "I found out during the course of doing research that in a paper I did in [...], she suffered from theatricality; theatricality is a trance-like state in which the muscles of the body are more or less rigid—a sort of paralysis that can leave you victims for dead.

and it's about how ideas about race are communicated in American photography, of how photography was used to prove that racial distinctions were founded in some kind of visible reality.

Opening in December, 2002, at the International Center of Photography in New York, the exhibition will include a website, catalogue and symposium, and will range from photographic to photo-based installation.

COCO FUSCO

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