

MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO

[1963, Colombia]

“The world has worlds within worlds, both smaller and bigger.”

As a child, María Fernanda Cardoso took long nature walks with her father. Carrying a magnifying glass, Cardoso would look closely at plants and insects, studying their intricacies. These walks sparked her curiosity about the natural world and trained her powers of observation. Throughout her career, she has continued to explore nature and its links to culture and science. Curator Carolina Ponce de León writes, “Cardoso’s installations, sculptures and videos seek to unravel the parodies, paradoxes and complexities that appear in the joints where cultural systems overlap.”

In the early 1980s, Cardoso studied architecture and the visual arts at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. In 1987, she moved to New York to attend the Graduate Sculpture Program at Pratt Institute, and in 1990, she completed her MFA in Sculpture at Yale University. Her early projects make use of preserved animals such as lizards, starfish, earthworms, frogs, and snakes arranged in intricate, abstract compositions reminiscent of pre-Colombian forms. Other installations include flowers and stones turned into vertical gardens and funerary wreaths.

The Cardoso Flea Circus (1994-2000) was a six-year series of performances and installations in which Cardoso trained fleas to perform tasks and surprising feats of strength. She performed the Cardoso Flea Circus internationally, at venues including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Sydney Opera House, Centre Georges Pompidou, Arts Festival Atlanta, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, and the San Francisco Exploratorium. In 2003, she represented Colombia for the Venice Biennale. Cardoso moved to Sydney, Australia in 1997, and she currently lives and works there. In 2012, she received her PhD from Sydney College for the Arts.

María Fernanda Cardoso’s works are represented in several major collections including The Arts Centre Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise, Australia; Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá, Colombia; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, Florida, USA; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, New York, New York, USA; Daros Latinamerica, Zürich, Switzerland; The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA; Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida, USA; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Bogotá, Colombia; Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Bogotá, Colombia; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California, USA; and Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom.