

M^oCHA

Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art



ESTHER VAINSTEIN
PARACAS: SCULPTURES and DRAWINGS
September 18, 1987–November 12, 1987

M^oCHA

Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art

584 Broadway ■ New York, New York 10012
212-966-6699

Friends of Puerto Rico, Inc. / A non-profit cultural organization

(Cover)
Adobes
100 conical adobes

Nazca
sand drawing
16.40 mts. x 2.03 mts.



CURATOR'S PRESENTATION

Like Baudelaire, Esther Vainstein invites us to take a voyage. Her work transports us to the disappearing Paracas desert of Peru, South of Lima, where a brilliant pre-Columbian civilization flourished nearly one thousand years ago. The installation reconstructs the burial grounds at Nazca and Chan Chan, reinvesting contemporary art work with a sacred dimension.

Vainstein is an excellent guide. Since 1980, she has travelled extensively in the desert, staying there for months, transforming herself into a recording device for the dune movements and strong winds that give the desert its name.

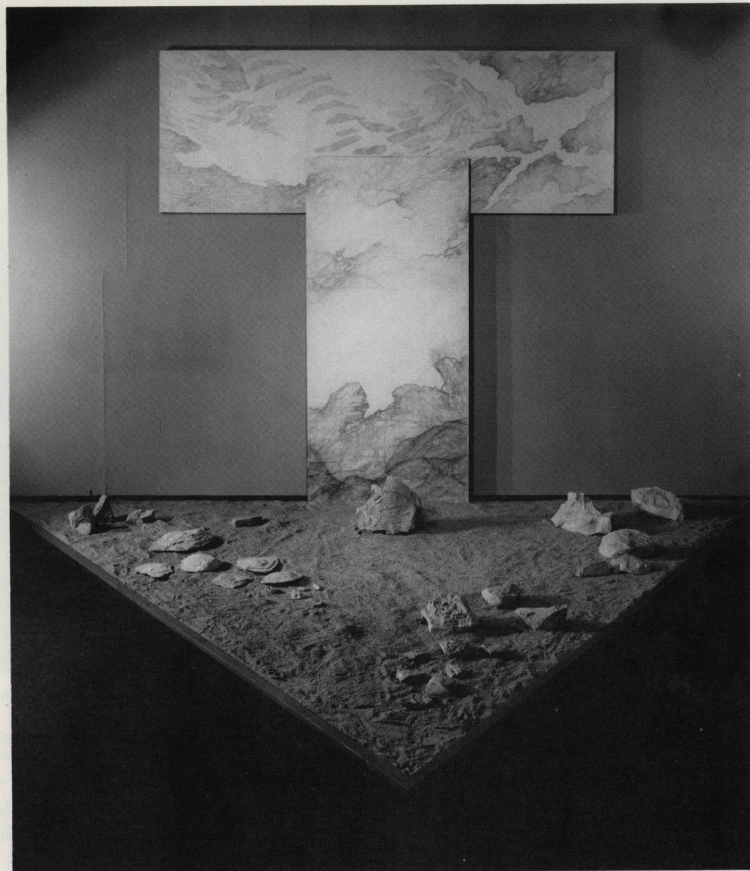
Like the French poet, Vainstein is a skilled manipulator of reality and artifice. Her work juxtaposes materials natural to the desert with the artful products of a rigorously trained sensibility. The beautiful drawings provide whimsical charts for the eye and mind. Here archaeological reality and mythic fancy coexist as comfortably as in Garcia Marquez' Macondo. Their strong light/dark contrasts, their alternation of highly personal emotion with detached discipline reflect the process at the core of the work.

In the voyage from the distant Paracas to this urban exhibition space, Vainstein, in critic Mirko Lauer's words, "does not allow herself the luxury of a single oasis". Like Baudelaire, her ultimate obsession is death. Her installation—a vast memento mori—mourns the death of a culture, of a people, of art.

For Vainstein, as for those who choose to follow her, the esthetic voyage includes a moral dimension. Its final destination, the Paracas desert, provides a juncture between past and present. Vainstein's "rescue" of it is a personal solution to the dilemma that so many Latin American artists face—the hard choice between contemporaneity and identity. Vainstein achieves both.

Susana Torruella Leval
Curator, MOCHA
July 1987

Paracas
drawing on paper
sand and stones installation
3 mts. x 1.07 mts. x 3 mts.



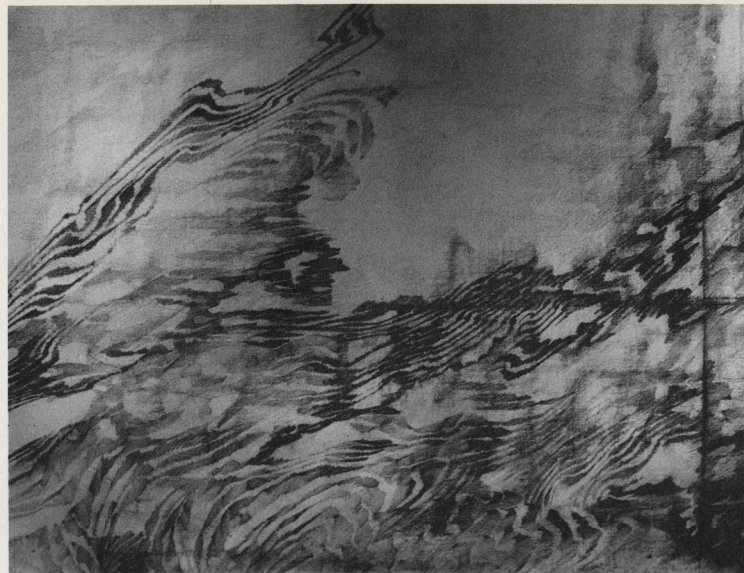


ESTHER VAINSTEIN
Born in Lima, Peru, 1947
Individual Exhibitions:

- 1987 Paracas: Sculptures and Drawings, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art (MoCHA), New York, NY
- 1986 Paracas V, Galeria 9, Lima, Peru
- 1986 Three installations: Paracas IV, Chan Chan, Nazca. Sala de Exposiciones de la Municipalidad de Miraflores

- 1984 Paracas III, Galeria 9, Lima, Peru
- 1984 Paracas II, Sala de Exposiciones de la Municipalidad de Miraflores
- 1983 First series of Paracas, Galeria 9, Lima, Peru
- 1980 Ink Drawings, Galeria 9, Lima, Peru

(Detail)
Paisaje Paracas III
charcoal, pencil, acrylic on muslin mount paper
24 mts. x 54 cmts.



(Detail)
Paisaje Paracas III
charcoal, pencil,
acrylic on muslin mount paper
24 mts. x 54 cmts.

Group Exhibitions:

- 1987 XIX Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brasil
- 1985 II Biennial of Trujillo, Peru
- 1985 Latinamerican Drawing Competition sponsored by PREALC, OIT, Santiago, Chile
- 1985 "Peruvian Roots in Contemporary Art," Casa de Espana, New York, NY; Banco Central de Venezuela, Andean Pact, Lima, Peru
- 1985 "Abstract Art in Peru," Sala de Exposiciones de la Municipalidad de Miraflores
- 1984 First Cuban Biennial, Havana, Cuba
- 1984 Banco Central de Reserva, Lima, Peru
- 1983 XVII Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brasil
- 1983 Solidarity Museum with Nicaragua, Managua, Nicaragua
- 1983 Galeria Petroperu, Lima, Peru
- 1983 Young Peruvian Artists, Havana, Cuba
- 1982 V Biennial of Maldonado, Uruguay
- 1982 "Propuestas II," Museo de Arte Italiano, Lima, Peru
- 1981 IV Biennial of Cali, Colombia (Drawing Prize)
- 1981-87 Galeria 9; Galeria Forum; Galeria Yvonne Briceno; Galeria Praxis; "Evenings of Art," United States Embassy (all Lima, Peru)

PRESENTATION BY MIRKO LAUER

Esther Vainstein's art proposes an alternative way of grasping Peruvian realities that have been long considered understood in the realm of art. Her re-stating of the visual meaning of pre-Inca form in the South Pacific coast cultures is the most striking case in point, but not the only one. Esther Vainstein has re-defined for our art the metier of drawing, the possibilities of sculpture, the uses of non-objectuality and the intellectual dignity of archaeological wares and spaces.

Esther Vainstein's first drawings (1980), deliberately evocative of inorganic chemistry and crystal rock geology, were in themselves a major statement about the possibilities of drawing, a relatively neglected ability of our artistic tradition. She then went on to establish the Peruvian coastal desert—Paracas, Nazca and Chancay cultures—as a cultural scenario for the visual arts.

Her later large-scale reproductions of pre-Inca visual spaces, the conical bricks, burnt wood stakes, bones in llama cemeteries on the coast (1983–1986) proposed successfully that Peruvian, and in general Latin American, art can have a non-dependent and non-parochial relationship vis-a-vis the archaeological approach to the past. This has been a much-sought-after feat in Peruvian art of the latter half of the century.

While exploring the contemporary signs of the past, Esther Vainstein has also made a substantial contribution to Peruvian non-objectualism; if she had to be classified from this point of view, she would be one of the artists that have given the concept and the ethics of the hard edge a successful second chance in our visual arts. She has shown that non-objectuality is more a useful tool for seeing than an instrument of verbal polemic.

Her talent is a factor that gives most of its coherence to such a many faceted output. When you get down to it, it is a poetic capacity for grasping the essential freshness and intrinsic intelligence in all that seems arid in the vast expanse of sand of Peru and its history.

Mirko Lauer
Lima, Peru
August 1987

Estaqueria
wood: 2l @ 1.60 mts.
adobes: 2l square





Fardos
1.50 mts. (height)

MOCHA

The Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art

Board of Trustees

Elba Damast
Wallace Edgecombe
Fernando Fletes
Nellie Pagan Healy
Carmen Herrero
Peter Mackie
Rosemary Ravinal
Freddy Rodriguez
Jorge Luis Rodriguez
Rodd Rodriguez
Edward Ramos Sousa

Staff

Nilda M. Peraza, Director
Susana Torruella Leval, Curator
Marie R. Spiller, Director of Development
Daniela Montana, Administrative Assistant
Mirta Rodriguez, Curatorial Assistant
Margarita Merced, Public Relations Associate

The exhibition program at MoCHA is partially funded by:
National Endowment for the Arts, New York State
Council on the Arts and Department of Cultural Affairs of
the City of New York. Additional funds for this exhibition
were provided by Textil San Pedro S.A., Lima, Peru.

Photographers:
Jose Casals
Javier Ferrand