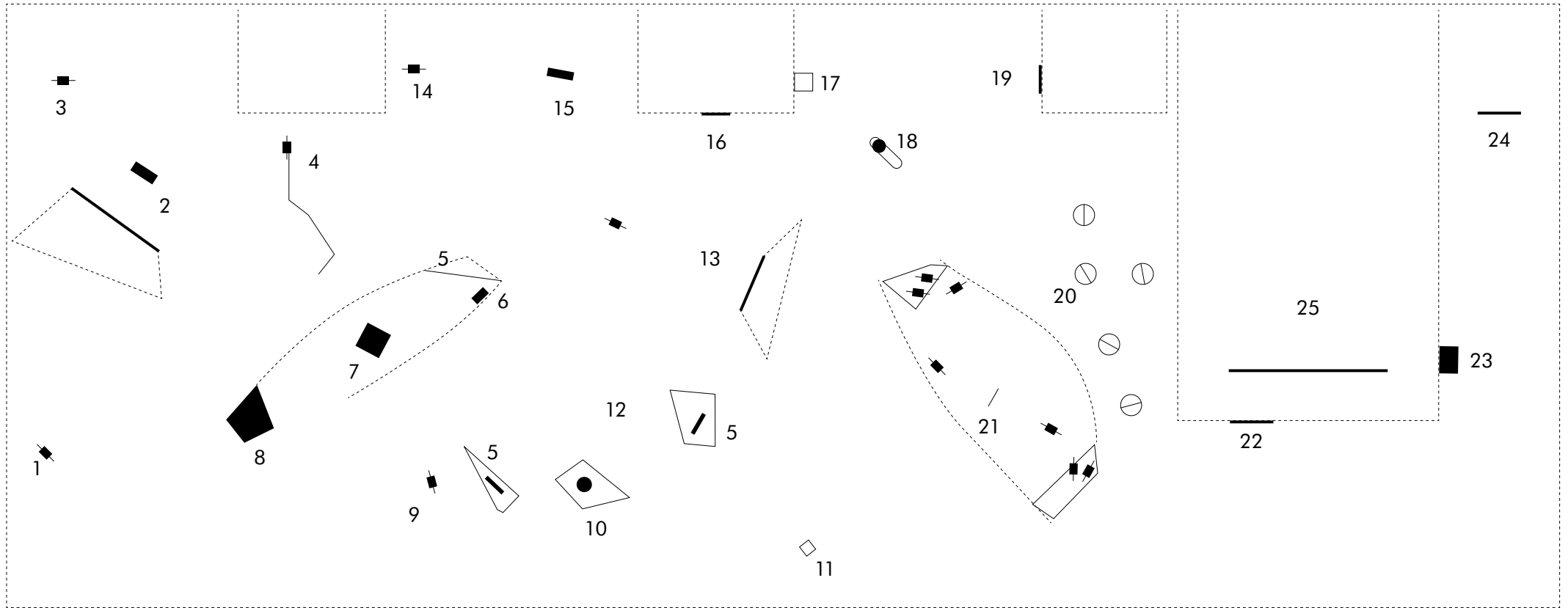


Rosa Barba.
Drawing Vocabularies
16 May – 28 Sep
2026

 CENTRO DE ARTE MODERNA
GULBENKIAN

CNM

Nave



Rosa Barba

1. *Wirepiece, Triple Stops*

2. *Solar Flux Recordings*

3. *Stating the Real Sublime*

4. *One Way Out*

5. *Color Clocks: Verticals Lean Occasionally Consistently Away from Viewpoints*

6. *Isolation of Information (Roller)*

7. *A Shark Well Governed*

8. *Ease Distance to Fetch*

9. *Boundaries of Consumption*

10. *Conductor*

11. *Sensible Suns*

12. *Off Splintered Time*

13. *Radiant Exposures – Facts Run on Light Beams These Days*

14. *Spacelength Thought*

15. *As Fixed in Flux*

16. *In Play (Hopscotch)*

17. *Lines Within and Between Are Seldom Pieced Off With Neat End Punctuation*

18. *Language Infinity Sphere*

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20. *Hear, There, Where the Echoes Are*

21. *Color Studies*

22. *Language Infinity Sphere (Recording)*

23. *Stellar Populations*

24. *Poised Compression*

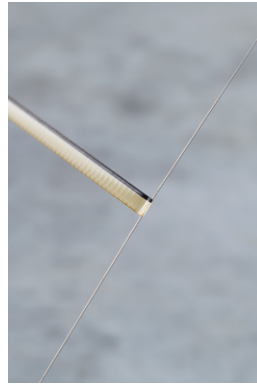
25. *Myth and Mercury*

1. *Wirepiece, Triple Stops* 2025

16 mm film projector, 16 mm film, lens, drum string, bridge saddle piece, pickup microphone, preamp, plinth

Can one sculpture agree with another to play and be played? *Wirepiece, Triple Stops* consists of drum strings, held tight between two points which are touched–played, really–by strips of film stock looped through a 16 mm projector resting at a 45-degree angle on plinth.

The strips of celluloid take on a double role: on the one hand, as is typical of its function, light is projected through them and creates a diffused illumination. On the other hand, in an unusual function, the film's movement against drum strings creates a silvery sound.



2. *Solar Flux Recordings* 2022

Steel table, color glass plates, 35 mm film, projector, loop, 11'

Solar Flux Recordings documents a site-specific installation of 2017 with the same name at the Reina Sofia Museum's Palacio de Cristal. The installation used the sun's movement to activate and record the passage of time through the light and shadows cast by the artist's sculptures, made of metal lines and colored glass. Alternating temporal registers, the film includes seemingly normal time and stop-motion passages in which time appears to accelerate, capturing, in a poetic way, the performativity of the piece.



3. *Stating the Real Sublime* 2009

16 mm film, modified projector, loop, 2'30''

Can machines take control of their components to show what accumulates as time moves?

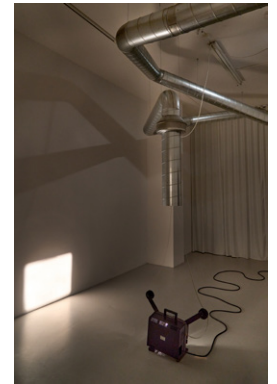
In *Stating the Real Sublime*, the material guides the machine: a 16 mm projector is suspended from the ceiling, held in balance by the support that generally 'governs' it, the celluloid. The film it projects is a square of light without an image, other than the dust scratches that breed on the surface of the celluloid, slowly accumulating over the course of the exhibition.



4. *One Way Out* 2009

16 mm film, optical sound, projector, ventilator, tube

In *One Way Out*, the film's materiality, malleability and fragility are stressed by a suspended suction mechanism that moves through a pipe that enhances the fluttering sound. What traces does the film leave behind? The image projected is a random array of scratches and marks left by the friction of the celluloid against the tin pipe during the exhibition. As both a sound piece and a film sculpture, the work extends from the architecture of the exhibition space invisible infrastructure.



5. *Color Clocks: Verticals Lean Occasionally Consistently Away from Viewpoints* 2012

35 mm film, motors, aluminum, plexiglass

Color Clocks: Verticals Lean Occasionally Consistently Away from Viewpoints consists of three objects arranged in space, whose designs are reminiscent of the operation of a clock's gear mechanism. Within their open housings, red, yellow, and blue 35 mm film strips slide through mechanical sets of rollers in a continuous loop. The film strips are each imprinted with individual letters, spelling the three colors they represent, suggesting a form of text. Each of the objects moves its color at its own specific rhythm, so that together a kinetic image is produced. Is it possible to have a 'synesthetic' experience of time flow? As a recollection of timekeeping and the experience of time itself, *Color Clocks* plays with different modes of perception: a meditation on color, time, perception, and language, repeated to infinity.



6. *Isolation of Information (Roller)* 2015

Linoleum print ink on wax

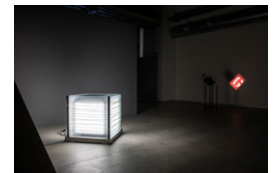
The work *Isolation of Information (Roller)* is a cylindrical wax cast of metal letterpress blocks. These vary in size, occupying space differently, and are organised into some kind of visual, rather than alphabetic or linguistic logic. The particular typeface suggests a specific period of Modernist design as well as a sense of place; a kind of knowledge or politics. In fact, these are the blocks from an Italian printer who specialized in literature. After 40 years he retired and the work series becomes an epitaph of sorts to the printer, all the books printed with these blocks, perhaps to literature itself. As with other works that involve film and its apparatus, these objects emanate a sense of a past era where the objects' original purpose and function has been superseded, leaving it to evolve new forms of film or literature that dispense with the tropes and conventions of historical cinema mutating into a future form.



7. *A Shark Well Governed* 2017

35 mm film, handwritten with ink, light box, motors

Does time follow a logic? In the kinetic film sculpture *A Shark Well Governed*, 35 mm film loops wrap around a light cube: an endlessly spinning and non-linear evolving thought, projected onto a three-dimensional screen. Words, based on the book: *An Experiment with Time* (1927) by the writer, aeronautical engineer, and philosopher John William Dunne, are getting lost around the corner.



8. *Ease Distance to Fetch* 2026

Steel and glass

The work consists of three upright structures framing handblown glass plates in shades of the red and yellow color spectrum, referencing the artist's research into astronomy and cinema. The work questions how images influence what we perceive as real – the irregularities of the glass referencing the idea that not only fiction is shaped through film, but also reality.



9. *Boundaries of Consumption* 2012

16 mm film, modified projector, film cans, 2 metal spheres

In *Boundaries of Consumption*, two metal balls move unpredictably on top of a stack of film cans. Is there a difference between what exists and what we imagine? The finely tuned interactions between the sculpture's various elements orchestrate a flickering shadow play – somewhere between a balancing act and a magic trick, the two balls morph into one and become two again in the projection.



10. *Conductor* 2014

Silicone membrane, motor, sound

What shapes can sound take? *Conductor* is a ball-shaped object with a silicone membrane, which transmits sound in intervals by transforming its shape. Like other sculptural works by the artist, the method of abstraction and fragmentation is condensed into an observable phenomenon by a looping mechanism: a continual transposition of material into an image, and back again.



11. *Sensible Suns* 2025

Acrylic glass, polarization films, steel, aluminium, motors, LED light

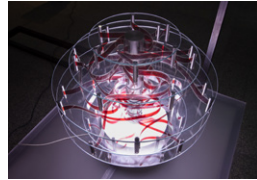
Can artworks be familiar to the investigative scientific approach? *Sensible Suns* is rooted in a physics experiment, its mechanisms witness earlier investigations in kinesis – an organism's movement responding to an external stimulus, and the potential of physics becoming art, becoming an algorithm in its own right. The work combines various materials, staging a rotating environment with various components that interact across and through each other: on one hand, a playful, intrinsic coming together of machine and motions, refractions, illuminations, and color hues, and on the other, an allusion to histories and narratives of poetic machinic life. As a meta-machine, *Sensible Suns* creates its own rationale, pointing to new experiential spaces as of yet unexplored and at the periphery of vision.



12. *Off Splintered Time* 2021

Glass, motors, LED light, 35 mm film

In this work, celluloid film escapes from its conventional position and function, transforming into a fragmented and looped movement through all the layers of glass, building up to a vertical cinematic sculpture. Can the film's motion become hypnotic?



13. *Radiant Exposures – Facts Run on Light Beams These Days* 2022

16 mm film, colour, optical sound, 6'

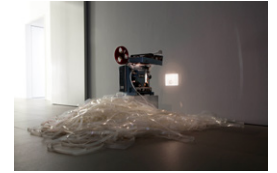
Radiant Exposures – Facts Run on Light Beams These Days (the latter part of the title quotes from Donna Haraway) returns to Rosa Barba's long-standing motifs of the desert and the exploration of modern archives as a manifestation of the human desire for progress. This film appears to represent a place outside of time and space – ethereal, timeless, and unearthly. The title *Radiant Exposures* refers to the threshold between creation and destruction where everything exists. For example, the exposure must be controlled to create an analogue image – if you let too much light into the camera, the images are lost. This balance also applies to our existence and the future of the planet, for both radiance and exposure suggest threat in times of climate crisis. At the same time, the title refers to the beauty and timelessness of the cosmos, which echoes Barba's continued research into the intersection of film and astronomy.



14. *Spacelength Thought* 2012

16 mm film, projector, typewriter

In *Spacelength Thought*, a typewriter is typing a monologue onto 16 mm blank film, projecting one letter at a time. Like in a Turing machine, a code is being recited mechanically and unveiled through its projection. Creating an imagistic form of language, the sculpture is an enigmatic machine performing an openly spread process. The typing machine acts as an author, extending the production time of a single word or even a single letter, and moves at the pace of the celluloid: a manically prolific writer, endlessly inscribing text onto film. Can a typewriter become a writer? The process of writing is highlighted and staged, while its outcome piles up on the floor in a tangle.



15. *As Fixed in Flux* 2025

Steel, aluminium, glass, motors, 35 mm film

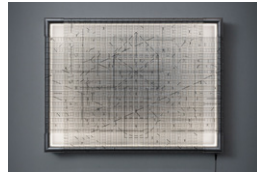
As Fixed in Flux consists of an intricate play of moving metal spools and arms hung with printed film strips. Its machine aesthetic and material novelty attest to the artist's interest in color theory, poetry, time-keeping and time-challenging devices at the intersection of astronomy and cinema. What movements conceal machines in their marking of time?



16. *In Play (Hopscotch)* 2024

35 mm film, aluminium frame, motors, plexiglass, LED lights

Is it possible to visualize the moves of a childhood game? Woven around a metallic frame and lit from behind by a lightbox, *In Play (Hopscotch)* is a 35 mm film kinetic sculpture constantly rearranging playground pattern of hopscotch children's games. It builds up to a final drawing shortly and collapses again.



17. *Lines Within and Between Are Seldom Pieced Off With Neat End Punctuation* 2023

35 mm film, aluminium frame, motors, plexiglass

Lines Within and Between Are Seldom Pieced Off With Neat End Punctuation constructs a cube structure from metal and film, the letters on the celluloid's frames forming a short poem circling around the aluminium frame. The work tests the tension of language that creates space in space.



18. *Language Infinity Sphere* 2018

Lead, steel

Is it possible to make the infinite generative power of language visible? *Language Infinity Sphere* is part of a larger series of sculptures and prints made with thousands of old metal letterpress blocks. While the function of these letters has been overtaken by new methods of printing and distributing texts, their arrangement follows the logic of form rather than alphabetical order – an encryption that formulates the instability of knowledge, or perhaps a lost or new language.



19. *Thick Harmonies* 2026

Steel, glass, motors, 35 mm film, acrylic panel, aluminium

In *Thick Harmonies*, film is tightly wound around a central core, forming a concentric spiral that evokes the logic of a machine while resisting its predictability, as suggested by its circular form. Irregular internal movements and shifting gradients of color introduce a sense of flux and tension between order and instability, rendering the work less an object than a perpetually unfolding process and at the same time echoing minimalist forms in art.



20. *Hear, There, Where the Echoes Are* 2016–2021

5 x 16 mm projectors, 5 x glass filters,
35 mm projector, shutters, sound

Hear, There, Where the Echoes Are is a piece with interactive sculptural and performative dimensions. What does cinema consist of? 35 mm and 16 mm projectors are orchestrated for a synchronized light projection, activated and rhythmized by the recorded sound of a performance by drummer Chad Taylor. The light beams echo the beat in a choreography that seems to disassemble the cinematic device and dissolve the image. As the title suggests, the image appears as the instant intersection of the installation, the architecture, and bodies passing through.



21. *Color Studies* 2013

2 x 16 mm film projectors, 2 x 16 mm films, screen; 2' each

What colors can be generated by language? *Color Studies* consists of two projectors on the floor, facing each other, which share a single screen on which they each project recordings of a photographic color spectrum (red, yellow, blue). The two machines are two interpreters of one composition, establishing infinite possibilities of projection and creating endless color variations.



22. *Language Infinity Sphere (Recording)* 2018

Linoleum print color on canvas

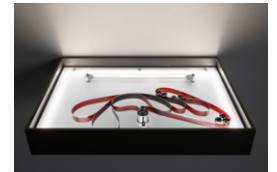
Language Infinity Sphere (Recording) is part of a larger series of sculptures and prints made with thousands of old metal letterpress blocks. The pattern printed using *Language Infinity Sphere* follows the logic of form that emanate from the sculpture - also on show - rather than a semiotic arrangement, thereby embodying the impermanence of language, knowledge and perhaps announcing a new language or evoking a lost one.



23. *Stellar Populations* 2017–2022

35 mm film, light box, motor, stainless steel spheres

This kinetic sculptural work shows a 35 mm film strip meandering away inside a light box, driven by a motor. In the celluloid's uncontrollable movements, a both anarchic and playful element is manifest, in the process of letting film gently propel metal balls, the work turns their activity into *Stellar Populations* in constant flux.



24. *Poised Compression* 2023

Steel, glass, motors, 35 mm film, aluminium

Can cinema come close to painting? *Poised Compression* consists of a framed glass box in which red strips of celluloid are attached to three spools with motors that continuously turn in one or the other direction. As these spools turn, the celluloid wraps and unwraps itself, in an ongoing play of lines. This process of loosening and straightening strips of film creates an abstract pattern through a set choreography. The piece rests shortly for two synchronized positions. The artist refers to these works as 'cinematic paintings'.



25. *Myth and Mercury* 2025

35 mm film, colour, optical sound, 22'

Can we look at the Mediterranean as a laboratory for the future? *Myth and Mercury* was filmed across various locations around the Mediterranean. Beginning at the Gramsci Library in Palermo, following a fishermen's procession at sea, diving down to a seabed neutrino telescope and exploring archives about the transformation of agriculture, migration, and the political landscape of the Mediterranean over the past centuries – the film reflects on how we might understand these interconnections and their evolving meanings in the future. It envisions the Mediterranean as both a futuristic blueprint and an idea in continual transformation.



1. Exhibition view at CCC OD, Tours, France, 2022
Photo © Aurélien Mole

2. Exhibition view: Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2022
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2021
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

3. Installation view at Wiels Brussels, 2013
© Rosa Barba

4. Installation view, AFTER IMAGES, JSF Berlin
Photo: Alwin Lay

5. Installation view at Albertinum Dresden, 2015
Photo: Berndt Borchardt © Rosa Barba

6. Exhibition view at Esther Schipper, Seoul, 2023
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2023
Photo © Hyun Jun Lee

7. Courtesy of the artist and Jochen
& Christof Beutgen, Berlin
Photo: Agostino Osio © Rosa Barba

8. Courtesy of the artist.
Photo: Bruno Lopes

9. Installation view at Albertinum Dresden, 2015
Photo: Bernd Borchardt © Rosa Barba

10. Installation view at Schirn Rotunde, 2016
Photo: Mizuki Kin © Rosa Barba

11. Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© the artist / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025
Photos: CHROMA

12. Exhibition view at Neue Nationalgalerie,
Berlin, 2021
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2021
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

13. Exhibition view at Esther Schipper,
Berlin, 2022
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2021
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

14. Installation view at Kunsthaus Zürich, 2012
Photo: Jenny Ekholm © Rosa Barba

15. Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© the artist / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025
Photo: CHROMA

16. Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© the artist / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024
Photo: CHROMA

17. Exhibition view: Esther Schipper, Seoul, 2023
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2023
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

18. Installation view at Francisco Fino, Lisbon, 2019
Photo: Guillaume Vieira © Rosa Barba

19. Courtesy of the artist
Photo: Bruno Lopes

20. Installation view at MoMA PS1, New York, 2016
Photo: Charles Roussel © Rosa Barba

21. Exhibition view at Neue Nationalgalerie,
Berlin, 2021
Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2021
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

22. Installation view at Remai Modern,
Saskatoon, 2018
Photo: Blaine Campbell © Rosa Barba

23. Exhibition view at Esther Schipper, Berlin, 2022
Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2021
Photo © Andrea Rossetti

24. Courtesy the artist and Esther Schipper,
Berlin/Paris/Seoul
© Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2023
Photo © Jörg von Bruchhausen

25. Film stills © Rosa Barba
Co-commissioned by Fondazione MAXXI
and CAM – Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian
Co-produced by Fondazione In Between Art Film
and Hamburger Kunsthalle

In *Drawing Vocabularies*, I have invited works from the CAM Collection to come together in the Mezzanine.

Perhaps this 'gathering together' is a conference, but even more a choreographed session, closer to the arrangement of a performance, with the works reacting to each other in a rhythm throughout a notation in space.

In this exhibition, the videos switch on and off in a choreographed sequence and offer a path to the viewers, but there are also reactions, which can be felt as 'calls and responses'. A specifically developed exhibition architecture for the film and video works holds the thoughts together like a hum: sculptures that measure the void, or drawings that reach for an understanding of infinity.

Many works reveal language in its impossibility and fragility, from instructions and ideas to poetry.

Some words can be cross read from one work to another, as contemporaries that meet and connect when they come together in a collection.

We are all thinking aloud, while simultaneously trying to communicate with each other, in an effort to clarify things that have not previously been made clear.

We aim to make visible the stutter and absences of an archive, and the ever-evolving connections that come to light.

Thank you for guiding me through the Collection and going onto a journey with me: Benjamin Weil, Eloísa Ejarque, Ana Vasconcelos, Leonor Nazaré, Rita Albergaria, Patrícia Rosas, Joana Correia, Margarida Mafra, Ottavia Crucitti, Laurindo Marta, Jennifer Coito, Rui Nunes, and Mary Llynch Lloyd for working on the screens design with me.

Rosa Barba

Guided tour

Rosa Barba in direct speech

16 May, 15:30–16:30

With Benjamin Weil and Rosa Barba
Nave and Mezzanine
Free admission upon ticket collection

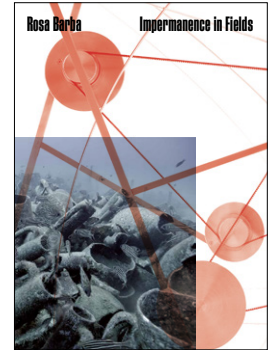
Book launch/Talk

Rosa Barba. Impermanence in Fields

16 May, 17:30–19:00

With Rosa Barba, Ana Teixeira Pinto
and Benjamin Weil
Engawa
Free entry

Book
Rosa Barba. Impermanence in Fields
for sale at the CAM Shop



Guided tour

Vocabularies of Rosa Barba

30 May, 16:00–17:30

13 Jun, 16:00–17:30

4 Jul, 16:00–17:30

26 Sep, 16:00–17:30

With Filipa Santos
Nave and Mezzanine
6€

Program subject to changes.

How to get here

Address

Rua Marquês de Fronteira, no. 2
1070 – 295 Lisbon

Metro

São Sebastião (blue and red lines)
and Praça de Espanha (blue line)

Bus

716, 726, 756 (Av. de Berna),
746 (Av. António Augusto
de Aguiar) and 713, 742
(Rua Marquês de Fronteira)

Accessibility

Lift platforms, lifts, lowered service counters, access ramps, podotactile and accessible routes, parking spaces (in the Foundation Park) and toilets equipped and adapted for visitors with specific needs.

If you have any questions,
please visit our website.

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The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation reserves the right to collect and preserve image, sound and voice records for the dissemination and collective preservation of the memory of its cultural and artistic activity. If you would like any clarification, please contact us at privacidade@gulbenkian.pt.

