

Interview/ Janaina Tschäpe
Nuevo New York Book
Writer: Mayra García

You were born in Germany and raised in Brazil. What brought you to New York?

I came to do my Masters at School of Visual Arts. I had finished college in Fine Arts at Hochschule fur Bilende Kuenste in Hamburg and ended up getting involved with the city and stayed. Before I had my daughter, I used go a lot more to Brazil, and lived half time between Rio de Janeiro and New York. Now that she is 10, I only go on school holidays to Brazil.

Do you remember your first studio in New York? What can you tell us about it?
It was in my apartment, in the East Village.

- Were any of your parents related to the world of fashion of the arts?

Not really. My mom was an English, Portuguese and German teacher, and my father was a businessman.

- What took you to the world of fine arts? Why did you become an artist? Can you tell us more about this and when and how this happened?

I always liked to draw. I remember going with my mom to the salon, where while waiting for her to have her hair done, I used to draw the cover of the magazines, so I wouldn't get bored. I was always drawing my family, my teachers... It was something natural. It was my way relate to the world.

- In your artwork, the body of the woman takes central part and it is said that it is your muse. Why is that and how did you start working around this subject?

I wouldn't say that the female body is exactly my muse, rather than the ocean, the landscape, and nature in greater aspects. Especially nowadays. In the past, one could say that the feminine presence was recurrent in my work, since I started with performance using and exploring my own body. Because I am a woman, that connection was inevitable. These days, I could say that imaginary landscapes, places I've visited in person or in my imagination are the main inspiration to my work.

- Who has been your greatest career mentor and what have you learned from he/she?

I couldn't say I have one mentor. I do have many artists as references; their work definitely influences mine. But not exactly one mentor.

- What do you love the most about New York City and how has it influenced your career and your personal life?

I live in Brooklyn, and really love it. It has everything I need, although it is close enough to the city. I am also always traveling, that is big passion of mine. Especially to the beach, close to the sea.

I believe that living in New York, such a dynamic and multicultural city has the advantages for my career as I have the chance to attend many cultural events.

- Can you share an anecdote / craziest/weirdest moment in New York?

Well, New York is a crazy city, and I've been living here for the past 17 years. It is hard to remember of just one...

At my first studio and apartment, I was working with water and balloons. I remember once I had this huge balloon filled with a lot of water, and my roommate tipped on it exploding the balloon; the whole apartment was underwater! There was so much water that it started leaking to the apartment under mine...

- Please mention your favorite place in the city (can be a park, a restaurant, backstage, etc.) and why?

I love my studio. But I also really like the Oyster Bar at The Grand Central Station. I love the moody waiters, the environment and the vast options of oysters!

- Finally, a word of advice for entrepreneurs and artists in general who wish to make it in New York?

Just stay focused on your own work, and don't let yourself be overwhelmed by the city.