



NEW RELEASE

Hans Ulrich Obrist (Hrsg.) Susan Hefuna – Pars Pro Toto IV

Interview by Hans Ulrich Obrist and David A. Ross
with Susan Hefuna

Excerpts by Georges Perec and Amos Tutuola

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The fourth publication in the Pars Pro Toto series deals with the video works by the internationally renowned German-Egyptian artist Susan Hefuna.

An interview with the artist by the editor Hans Ulrich Obrist and David A. Ross, Dean of the MFA Art Practice Program at the School of Visual Arts in New York, serves as a guide through the well-known *Crossroads* films, which depict passers-by at traffic intersections worldwide, including Cairo, Frankfurt am Main, London, Sharjah, and even Times Square in New York.

Each of Hefuna's videos run between 80 and 150 minutes. The films uncover the movements of people in villages or cities moving like a nervous system. All people are connected, each movement of individual pedestrians becomes part of a choreography, although the people seem unaware of being part of that interconnected structure.

Hefuna's videos require no post-production, editing or spacial effects. She does not intend to create cinema like movies, rather rough sketches of reality. The movies show life as it is – shot in one go, with digital consumer equipment. The *Crossroads* videos mark Susan Hefuna's personal relationships to place and time, intersections in life, observed in awareness and filmed without interfering.

Pars Pro Toto IV includes excerpts from the books *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris* by Georges Perec (Wakefield Press 2010), and *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* by Amos Tutuola (Faber & Faber Ltd 1952).

The *Pars Pro Toto* series of books, all published by Kehrer Verlag, accompanies a dialogue over many years between curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and the artist Susan Hefuna:

Pars Pro Toto I (2008): Three dimensional works, Mashrabiya Screens, masks, textile works

Pars Pro Toto II (2009): Works on paper

Pars Pro Toto III (2014): Architectural interventions and installations

From the interview by Hans Ulrich Obrist and David A. Ross with Susan Hefuna:

Hans Ulrich Obrist: So, thanks for inviting us to your office.

David Ross: Great to have you both here.

I thought maybe we'd begin by looking at some of Susan's videos.

HUO: Susan and I only spoke a little bit about the videos in our previous conversation, it was missing in the previous books, as you so rightly spotted. Are they in chronological order?

Susan Hefuna: Yeah, kind of, this is the first one. When I started, it was in the Nile Delta in Egypt, at my grandfather's house, which is a scene I knew from my childhood, I lived there as a child.

DR: And this is the first one that you showed me, from the window of your childhood house?

(...)

SH: This village, from a picture, looks so peaceful, but of course there are a lot of hidden stories. That was a trigger for me to do the first video at this specific crossroads. At one moment in this film I walk through the scene for some minutes. The entire film is around 120 minutes long. When I did it, I didn't know that I would do more *Crossroads*, so this was the start, and then from time to time I have always done *Crossroads*, at a place to which I'm somehow connected. Once I decide to do a new film, I put the camera up, I don't intervene, and I don't edit afterwards.

DR: I love watching a man coming by on the donkey—it's so beautiful—but then, when you appear, which you do in every one of them, it makes me think of Alfred Hitchcock, the way he always made an appearance to 'sign' his films.

Susan Hefuna, *1962, New York, lives and works in Cairo, Egypt; Dusseldorf, Germany and New York, USA.

Major exhibitions include; *Susan Hefuna- New Works*, Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin (from 16.04.2021); *Reflections: Contemporary Art of Middle East and North Africa*, The British Museum, London, UK (2021); *Susan Hefuna: Crossroads*, Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, Germany (2020); *Global(e) Resistance*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2020); *Susan Hefuna - Textiles*, Pi Artworks London, UK (2019); *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna Milano, Italy (2018); *Long Winding Journeys: Contemporary Art and the Islamic Tradition*, Katonah Museum of Art, New York, USA (2018); *ToGather*, Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK (2017); *Imperfect Chronology*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2016); *But a Storm is Blowing From Paradise*, Guggenheim New York, USA (2016); *Contemporary Art of the Middle East*, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA (2015); *Susan Hefuna: Another Place*, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (2014); *Buildings*, Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany (2014); *Here and Elsewhere*, New Museum, New York, USA (2014); *Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, MoMA, New York, USA (2010).

Hefuna's work was exhibited at several Biennales: 2019 *This Land's Unknown*, Biennale d'Architecture d'Orléans, FRAC Centre, Orléans France; Sydney Biennale, Australia 2012, *Fare Mondi*, in both the Arsenale and Giardini at the Venice Biennale, Italy, in 2009; the Seville Biennial, Spain, 2008, the 2nd Riwaq Biennale, Riwaq, Palestine, and the Ninth Sharjah Biennial, UAE in 2007.

In 2013 Susan Hefuna was awarded the international Contemporary Drawing Prize of the Daniel & Florence Guerlain Art Foundation in Paris.

Her works are in public collections worldwide such as Daimler Contemporary, Berlin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MoMA, NYC; Sharjah, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim NYC; British Museum and V&A, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Burger Collection, Zurich and ETH Zurich, Switzerland; Neue Galerie am Joanneum, Graz, Austria, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Exhibitions

GLOBAL(E) RESISTANCE
Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
01.07.2020 – 04.01.2021

EXOTIC?
Palais de Rumine, Lausanne, Switzerland
24.09.2020 – 28.02.2021

Susan Hefuna- New Works
Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, Germany
from 16.04.2021

Reflections. Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa
The British Museum, London, UK
Dates to be announced

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Press images



01 *Life in the Delta* 1423/2002, 2002, 130 Minutes
© Susan Hefuna



02 *ANA*, Cairo, 2006, 3:32 Minutes
© Susan Hefuna



03 *Edgware Road @ Edgware Road Tube Station* 2010/1431,
2010, 120 minutes © Susan Hefuna



04 *NYC Crossroads*, 2011, 80 minutes
© Susan Hefuna



05 *Sharjah Crossroads*, 2014, 80 minutes
© Susan Hefuna



06 *ANGST EATS SOUL*, Munich, 2016, 4:20 minutes
© Susan Hefuna



07 Dance Performance *ToGather*
Documentation at Whitworth Park, Manchester, 2017
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08 *Crossroads Stein*, 2018, 120 minutes
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09 *Harlem Crossroads*, 2019, 120 minutes
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10 *Crossroads Times Square*, 2019, 120 minutes
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