

Press Kit



# RONI HORN

EVERYTHING WAS  
SLEEPING AS IF  
THE UNIVERSE WERE  
A MISTAKE

20/06/2014 – 28/09/2014



PREMI JOAN MIRÓ 2013



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PREMI JOAN MIRÓ 2013

Fundació Joan Miró Barcelona



Obra Social "la Caixa"

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## 1. General information

***Roni Horn. Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake***

**20 June – 28 September 2014**

Press conference: 18 June at 12.00

Opening: 19 June at 19.30

### **Exhibition organised by**

Fundació Joan Miró  
"la Caixa" Foundation

### **Catalogue**

Fundació Joan Miró and "la Caixa" Foundation

Main text: Julie Ault in conversation with Roni Horn

Editions in Catalan, Spanish and English

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## 2. Press release

**The Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa" present the exhibition *Roni Horn. Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake.***

**In her first monographic exhibition in Barcelona, Roni Horn uses her work to question the reality that surrounds her, her own identity, and her relationship with the environment.**

**The works in the show include her latest sculptural installation, which has only been shown once before at Hauser & Wirth gallery in New York.**

**Roni Horn is the winner of the fourth edition of the Joan Miró Prize, a biennial award bestowed by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa", which includes a cash prize of 70,000 euros and an invitation to exhibit her work in 2014.**

The exhibition *Roni Horn. Everything was sleeping as though the universe were a mistake* is organised by the Fundació Joan Miró and Obra Social "la Caixa". It will be open to the public from 20 June to 28 September 2014 at Fundació Joan Miró, and from 13 November 2014 to 1 March 2015 at CaixaForum Madrid. The press conference was held with the presence of the artist **Roni Horn**, winner of the 2013 Joan Miró Prize, **Elisa Duran**, Deputy Executive Officer of Fundació "la Caixa", and **Rosa Maria Malet**, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró.

The show has been conceived by the artist herself, and explores the different media and approaches that she has used over the past twenty years. It covers the major themes and formats that make up her work: sculptural installations, photographic series, working drawings, and a floor piece entitled ***Rings of Lispector (Água Viva)*** that combines drawing and literary quotes. The title of the exhibition *Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake* is taken from Fernando Pessoa's *Livro do desassossego*, published in 1935.

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The exhibition is intended to offer an overall experience, like a huge installation comprised of all the pieces on display. The selection of works, which Roni Horn made with the Fundació Joan Miró and CaixaForum Madrid spaces specifically in mind, is a compendium of the elements that underpin the artist's creative process: people, the landscape, light, words, water, presence, glass, faces, change, forms, series, spaces, the appearance of the self, and time.

The show begins with a sculptural installation from the **White Dickinson** series that includes quotes from the poet Emily Dickinson in each of the pieces. It is followed by the photographic series **You are the Weather, Part 2**, an updated version of one of Roni Horn's key works that consists of one hundred black and white and colour portraits of the same woman bathing in thermal waters in Iceland. The woman's facial expressions change subtly in each image, reflecting the weather conditions around her.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is **Untitled** ('*My name is Mary Katherine Blackwood. I am eighteen years old, and I live with my sister Constance. I have often thought that with any luck at all I could have been born a werewolf, because the two middle fingers on both my hands are the same length, but I have had to be content with what I had. I dislike washing myself, and dogs, and noise. I like my sister Constance, and Richard Plantagenet, and Amanita phalloides, the deathcup mushroom. Everyone else in my family is dead.*'), a sculptural installation comprised of ten cylindrical cast glass elements in subtly shifting shades of green. This recent piece, which has only previously been exhibited at Hauser & Wirth gallery in New York, responds to the shifting light, creating a sensory experience of colour, weight, lightness, solidity and fluidity.

The exhibition also includes two rooms set aside for working drawings. As in the case of Joan Miró, drawing has been an essential aspect of Roni Horn's work over the last thirty years. She herself considers it her principal activity and the seed of all her works, regardless of the final form or material they take.

Other works in the exhibition *Roni Horn. Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake* include **Dead Owl**, a double portrait of an owl that questions appearance and similarity; the series of self-portraits **a.k.a.**, the photographic mosaic **Her, Her, Her and Her**, a project about scopophilia in the locker rooms of a swimming pool complex in Iceland, which is exhibited alongside the black glass sculpture **Opposite of White, v.2**; and **Still Water**

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***(The River Thames, for Example)***, a series of photographs showing the dark side of the River Thames as a place where people go to commit suicide.

The floor piece ***Rings of Lispector (Água Viva)***, another example of the importance of literature in Horn's work, consists of passages from Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector arranged in concentric circles on the floor that visitors can walk on. The literary titles offer a narrative way into her work, while still maintaining its ambiguity.

The exhibition includes three videos on the work of Roni Horn: a documentary by US television network PBS; an episode from *Contacts*, a documentary series on photographers by Jean Pierre Krief; and the video of the performance *Saying Water*, which features a monologue by the artist.

## **2013 Joan Miró Prize: Roni Horn**

Roni Horn was born in 1955 in New York, where she lives and works. She holds a BFA from the Rhode Island Design School and an MFA from Yale University. She received the CalArts/Alpert Award in the Arts and a Guggenheim fellowship. Throughout her career, Horn has explored the mutable nature of art through sculptures, photography, works on paper and books. Her work revolves around the relationship between humankind and nature –a mirror-like relationship in which we attempt to remake nature in our own image. Since 1975, Horn has travelled often to Iceland, whose landscape and isolation have strongly influenced her practice.

She has had solo shows at the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; MoMA, New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Her group exhibitions include Documenta in Kassel and the Venice Biennale, among others.

Roni Horn was the winner of the 2013 Joan Miró Prize, which includes a cash prize of 70,000 euros and the opportunity to produce a monographic exhibition in Barcelona and Madrid. The jury emphasised that Horn "impresses audiences with a multifaceted practice that links aspects of nature, the landscape and popular culture with mechanisms of perception and communication."

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The jury of the 2013 Joan Miró Prize was made up of leading professionals from the contemporary art world: Alfred Pacquement, former Director of the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris); Vicent Todolí, former Director of the Tate Modern (London) and current Director of Hangar Bicocca (Milan); Poul Erik Tøjner, Director of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Humlebæk, Denmark); Rosa Maria Malet, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona); and Nimfa Bisbe, Director of the Contemporary Art Collection "la Caixa". The previous winners of the Joan Miró Prize are Olafur Eliasson, Pipilotti Rist and Mona Hatoum.

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### 3. Jury statement – Joan Miró Prize 2013

Following a friendly and enriching discussion, the jury of the fourth edition of the Joan Miró Prize has unanimously resolved that the best candidate to receive the award is US artist Roni Horn (b. 1955).

After Olafur Eliasson (2007 winner), Pipilotti Rist (2009 winner), and Mona Hatoum (2011 winner), the choice of Roni Horn as the recipient of the Joan Miró Prize adds yet a new layer to the prize. With Eliasson, the jury highlighted the artist's zeal to explore new dimensions and horizons, which he shares with Miró. With Rist, the aspect that was emphasized was the free portrayal of personal and collective consciousness through a boundless imaginary of form and colour. Thirdly, with Hatoum, the jury stressed an artist's ability to fuse personal experience, current history, and universal values.

During the past two decades and more, Roni Horn has not ceased to impress international audiences with a multifaceted artistic practice that links aspects of nature, the landscape, popular culture, as well as other subjects related to materiality, with the mechanics of perception and communication. Horn is an artist that has authored an elusive oeuvre that, like Miró's, is endlessly open, does not discriminate between media, and has a special focus on place and placement, as well as on drawing as a process and a compass.

It is for these important points in common with the work of Joan Miró that the jury is unanimous in awarding his Prize to Roni Horn.

Barcelona, January 2013



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## 4. Biography of Roni Horn

Roni Horn was born in 1955 in New York, where she lives and works. She holds a BFA from the Rhode Island Design School and an MFA from Yale University. She received the CalArts/Alpert Award in the Arts and a Guggenheim fellowship, among other awards. Since 1975, Horn has travelled often to Iceland, whose landscape and isolation have strongly influenced her practice.

Throughout her career, Horn has explored the mutable nature of art through sculptures, photography, works on paper and books. Her work revolves around the relationship between humankind and nature –a mirror-like relationship in which we attempt to remake nature in our own image. Roni Horn's interest in perception lies behind her tendency to work with repetition, a strategy that makes viewers reflect on the notions of appearance and similarity.

The granddaughter of Eastern European Jewish migrants and the third of four children, Roni Horn grew up in a small county in upstate New York. She quit high school at the age of sixteen and enrolled at the Rhode Island School of Design. On graduating at nineteen, she flew to Iceland for the first time on a camping trip, and was struck by its landscape and the perpetually unstable weather. Since then she has felt the need to keep going back. Iceland inspired her to start taking photographs and she soon became a self-taught photographer.

After this first trip, Roni Horn entered the sculpture department at Yale University in order to discover other artistic media. While at Yale, Horn also began drawing, which became an essential element of her artistic practice. She describes drawing as the key activity that runs through all her works, regardless of the language or material that they use.

At the start of her career, Horn lived as an independent artist, without representation, and self-financed her work. As she herself says, "When I was really young I made a commitment to myself that money would never be a factor in inhibiting my options."<sup>1</sup>

Literature plays an important role in Roni Horn's oeuvre. Her literary titles, which she refers to as 'introductions', offer a narrative portal through which to enter work, while still retaining its ambiguous quality. Literary quotes also make their way into some of her sculptural installations.

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Roni Horn is fascinated by water, which is one of the subjects that she keeps returning to in her work. She considers it to be an intuitive, familiar interest: “You spend your life in it, near it, you are it. It becomes whatever it is but it’s still itself. These paradoxes fascinate me.”<sup>2</sup> Along with water, the weather also has a strong presence in her work. As she says: “Water changes state, weather changes everything.”<sup>3</sup>

Roni Horn has had over 130 solo shows at major museums and galleries including the Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, MoMA in New York, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. She has taken part in some 300 group exhibitions, including Documenta in Kassel and the Venice Biennale. Numerous catalogues, books and articles have been published on her work, and she is the author of some twenty books and various articles in art journals and magazines.

Roni Horn was the winner of the 2013 Joan Miró Prize, which includes a cash prize of 70,000 euros and the opportunity to produce a monographic exhibition in Barcelona and Madrid. The jury emphasised that Horn “impresses audiences with a multifaceted practice that links aspects of nature, the landscape and popular culture with mechanisms of perception and communication.”

More information on Roni Horn and her career at:

[www.hauserwirth.com/artists/14/roni-horn](http://www.hauserwirth.com/artists/14/roni-horn)

<sup>1</sup> Belcove, Julie L., “Roni Horn”, *Wmagazine*, New York, November 2009, p. 150-159.

<sup>2</sup> Gavin, Francesca, “Water works”, *Dazed and confused*, London, June 2007, p. 148-150.

<sup>3</sup> Jamie, Kathleen, “The weather woman”, *The Guardian*, London, 14 March 2009.



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## 6. List of works

All the works exhibited come from the Hauser & Wirth gallery.

### ***White Dickinson*, 2006–10**

Aluminum and solid cast plastic.

I THINK OF YOUR FOREST AND SEA  
AS A FAR OFF SHERBET

100¾ x 2 x 2 in. / 255.9 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm

SCIENCE IS VERY NEAR US – I FOUND  
A MEGATHERIUM ON MY  
STRAWBERRY –

128 x 2 x 2 in. / 325.1 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm

I KEEP AN OTTOMAN IN MY HEART  
EXCLUSIVELY FOR YOU –

96¾ x 2 x 2 in. / 244.5 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm

I GIVE YOU A PEAR THAT WAS GIVEN  
ME – WOULD THAT IT *WERE* A PAIR,  
BUT NATURE IS PENURIOUS

168 x 2 x 2 in. / 428.3 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm

THE SNOW IS SO WHITE AND  
SUDDEN IT SEEMS ALMOST LIKE A  
CHANGE OF HEART –

143 x 2 x 2 in. / 363.2 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm

THE MIND IS SUCH A NEW PLACE,  
LAST NIGHT FEELS OBSOLETE

107¾ x 2 x 2 in. / 273.7 x 5.1 x 5.1 cm



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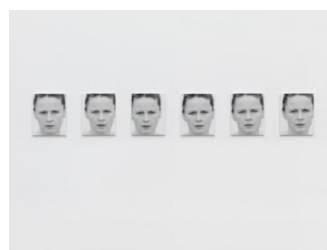


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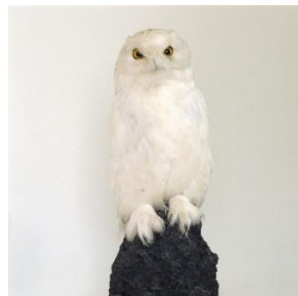
## ***You are the Weather, Part 2, 2011***

100 pigment-printed photographs  
mounted on Sintra  
10 x 8½ in. / 26.5 x 21.6 cm each



## ***Dead Owl, 1997***

2 Iris-printed photographs on paper.  
29 x 29 in. / 73.7 x 73.7 cm each



***Untitled ("My name is Mary Katherine Blackwood. I am eighteen years old, and I live with my sister Constance. I have often thought that with any luck at all I could have been born a werewolf, because the two middle fingers on both my hands are the same length, but I have had to be content with what I had. I dislike washing myself, and dogs, and noise. I like my sister Constance, and Richard Plantagenet, and Amanita phalloides, the deathcup mushroom. Everyone else in my family is dead."), 2012–13***

Solid cast glass with as-cast surfaces. 10  
units, 18½ x 36 in. / 47 x 91.4 cm each.



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<p><b><i>That XV</i></b>, 1994</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 37 x 38¾ in. / 94 x 98.4 cm</p>	
<p><b><i>That I</i></b>, 1993</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 42 x 85 in. / 106.7 x 215.9 cm</p>	
<p><b><i>Too V</i></b>, 2000</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 42½ x 57¾ in. / 108 x 146.7 cm</p>	
<p><b><i>That VI</i></b>, 1993</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 66¾ x 78 in. / 169.5 x 198.1 cm</p>	



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<p><b><i>Enough 10</i></b>, 2005</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. Diptych: 66½ x 70½ in. / 168.9 x 179.1 cm each</p>	
<p><b><i>Through 5</i></b>, 2007</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 106 x 90 in. / 269.2 x 228.6 cm</p>	
<p><b><i>Else 9</i></b>, 2010</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 92½ x 96 in. / 235 x 243.8 cm</p>	
<p><b><i>Else 11</i></b>, 2010</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 92¼ x 96 in. / 234.3 x 243.8 cm</p>	

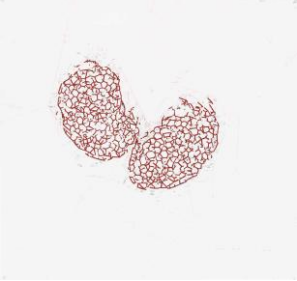

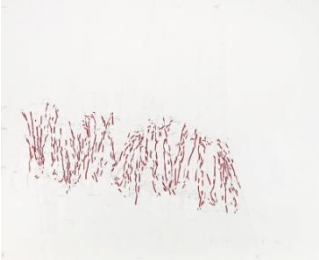

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<p><b>Such 1</b>, 2012</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 92 x 96 in. / 233.7 x 244.6 cm</p>	
<p><b>If 6</b>, 2011–2012</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 95¾ x 103 in. / 243.2 x 261.6 cm</p>	
<p><b>But 1</b>, 2013</p> <p>Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and varnish on paper. 82 x 100 in. / 208.3 x 254 cm</p>	
<p><b>Still Water (The River Thames, for Example)</b>, 1999</p> <p>15 photographs and text printed on uncoated paper 30½ x 41½ in. / 77.5 x 105.4 cm each.</p>	







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<p><b>a.k.a.</b>, 2008–2009</p> <p>30 inkjet-printed photographs on paper. 15 x 13 in. / 38.1 x 33 cm each.</p>	
<p><b>Rings of Lispector (Água Viva)</b>, 2004</p> <p>Texts from <i>Água Viva</i>, Clarice Lispector. Rubber tiles with rubber text inserts. Each tile is 1¼ x 49 x 49 in. / 3.2 x 124.5 x 124.5 cm. Overall: up to 1,500 sq. ft. / 139 m<sup>2</sup></p>	
<p><b>Her, Her, Her, and Her</b>, 2002</p> <p>Version No. 6, 64 B/W photographs printed on rag paper coated with light-sensitive emulsion. Overall: 96 x 96 in. / 243.8 x 243.8 cm</p>	
<p><b>Opposite of White</b>, v. 2, 2007</p> <p>Solid cast glass with as-cast surfaces. 15 x 40 in. / 38.1 x 101.6 cm</p>	

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## 7. Practical information

### Opening times

Tuesday to Saturday, from 10.00 to 19.00 (until 20.00 from July to September)

Thursday, from 10.00 to 21.30

Sunday and public holidays, from 10.00 to 14.30

Monday (except public holidays), closed

### Admission

€7 Advance tickets: [www.fundaciomiro-bcn.org](http://www.fundaciomiro-bcn.org)

### Annual pass

Admission to the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions for one year:  
€12

### 2x1 admission

Thursday, from 18.00 to 21.30

### Guided tours of the exhibition

Saturdays at 11.00. Free of charge

### Group reservations

Tel. 934 439 479

[education@fundaciomiro-bcn.org](mailto:education@fundaciomiro-bcn.org)

### Download video on the exhibition:

Statement from Roni Horn: <http://vimeo.com/fundaciojoanmiro>

**Images** at [Press Room](#) on the website of Fundació Joan Miró

Follow the exhibition with the tag: **#ronihorn**

### Further information

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