

Luxembourg + Co., London, announces the opening of Mira Schendel: Journey to the End of Language, an exhibition held across the gallery's space on 2 Savile Row (12 October-12 December) and Frieze Masters art fair (14-18 October). The exhibition is organised in collaboration with the artist's estate as well as Gomide&Co, São Paulo, and marks the publication of a new book that explores the artist's original use of materials as means to define drawing and painting in spatial and sculptural terms.

Born Myrrha Dagmar Dub in 1919 in Zurich, Schendel was brought up in Italy until the age of twenty when she escaped the country at the start of the war. She spent a decade in Yugoslavia before migrating to Brazil in 1949 where she would find her mature artistic voice. Schendel's artistic methods range across painting, sculpture, drawing and monotype printing, depicting loosely arranged letters and words, as well as enigmatic line compositions and delineated fields of colour in different textures and media. These means of expression served Schendel in an attempt to cross over the limits of language as we know it – a restrictive and disciplined frame. By transforming surface and symbol into sites of bodily experience Schendel's art offers to open-up language and allow “the unutterable to enter it toward the totally different,” which is to say “non-language.”

Schendel's work can hardly be characterised according to medium-specific terms. Her numerous monotypes as well as her celebrated series of Graphic Objects were executed on thin rice paper whose transparency she exploited by displaying the work suspended in mid-air, casting shadows and traces visible to viewers from both sides. A similar principle also applies to her wall-bound paintings, where impressions she retained from architectural structures would serve as the basis for the work. During the late 1950s and '60s these would be painted using thick layers of oil applied rhythmically on a canvas to parcel out or demarcate different parts of the picture almost as a relief. In her paintings of the 1980s, however, the shiny surface of oil was replaced by a thick powdery layer of pigment made with brick dust or talc powder, creating fields of deep burgundy-brown, cobalt blue, green or ochre, contrasted with symbolic elements crafted using gold leaf. Texture, for Schendel, was always key. “No matter how much I use geometric shapes, the sensory element of the brushstroke, the texture is always there; for me this is very important. I would never make a completely smooth painting,” she would say. In the footsteps of her own description, this exhibition is dedicated to Schendel's unique material language.

The accompanying book, *Mira Schendel: Journey to the End of Language*, is published by Buchhandlung Walther König in collaboration with Luxembourg + Co., the Estate of Mira Schendel, Gomide&Co, Schwartzman&, and Lisson gallery. Contributors include Dr. Pia Gottschaller (Courtauld Institute of Art, London), Dr. Isobel Whitelegg (Leicester University), Francesco Stocchi (Maxxi, Rome), and Dr. Yuval Etgar (University of Oxford).