

Ruth Beckermann

Joyful Joyce – Installation



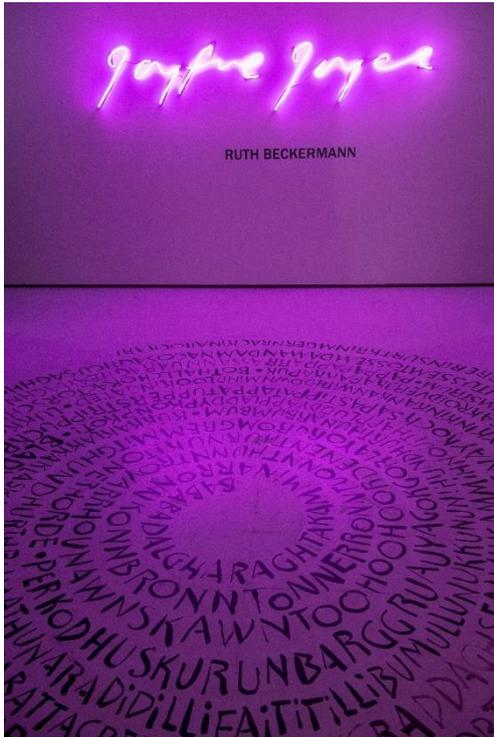
Ruth Beckermann amidst her installation. Photos: SF/Monika Rittershaus

(SF, 9 August 2019) From a gallery, the viewer looks down upon a blue sky. Clouds pass by, and from all corners of the room voices can be heard. In German and English, there is talking, whispering, singing, a cuckoo is heard again and again, and the sky turns increasingly grey until a thunderstorm erupts. The Austrian documentary filmmaker and author Ruth Beckermann explores James Joyce and his oeuvre in a film installation entitled *Joyful Joyce*; in 1928 Joyce spent a Festival summer in Salzburg for private reasons.

The loop takes nine minutes and 22 seconds. From today through 28 August, the installation can be seen, free of admission, at the Baroque Museum in Mirabellgarten. James Joyce suffered from astraphobia, the fear of thunderstorms, and Ruth Beckermann refers to this motif in her installation. When Bettina Hering, the Festival's Director of Drama, asked her a year ago to conceive this installation, she immediately thought of this fear of thunderstorms. Since she also associates Salzburg with rain and thunderstorms, this idea resonated with her. "Joyce himself was a thunderstorm to literary history, with his rebellious, revolutionary work *Ulysses*," the artist says. Before this installation, she was not really familiar with Joyce. "It was a challenge to study him and his work." To her, the message he conveys in his works is: "Be free!" And that is the spirit in which she approached her work.

In the antechamber, which is bathed in a purple light, the floor shows circles featuring the ten thunder words which James Joyce invented in *Finnegan's Wake*. Entering the installation space, the viewer is attracted by a sound collage. The visual level is consciously kept to a simple, almost meditative level, in order for the visitor to concentrate on the sound. We hear two German voices: Anja Plaschg (*Soap and Skin*), who already worked with Ruth Beckermann in the film *Die Geträumten*, and the composer and conductor HK Gruber, who repeatedly speaks, whispers and screams the thunder words. The English voices were recorded in Dublin, with a wide variety of people volunteering, from bookkeepers to taxi drivers. The Irish folk song at the end was also recorded locally, having been Joyce's favourite song.

There are numerous references to Joyce, including a short excerpt from *Don Giovanni*, his favourite opera.



The installation's anteroom.

Thu, 8 August – Wed, 28 August

Barockmuseum im Mirabellgarten

FREE ADMISSION

Opening Hours

Mon - Fri 2 – 10 pm

Sat, Sun 10 am – 10 pm

Anja Plaschg Composition

HK Gruber, Anja Plaschg Voices

Klaus Pamminger Visual Design

Georg Misch Sound Design

Jörg Burger, Klaus Pamminger, Margot Scherl Visual Images

Georg Misch Sound Recordings

Alexander Koller Mixing

Neel Bellerby, Tim Schmelzer Projection

Rebecca Hirneise Production Manager

Walli Jungwirth Text Design

Danny Cullen, Naomi Cullen, Andy Dune, Donal Donnelly, Lisa Fallon,

Des Gunning, Ann Honan, Kate Lyne, Peter O'Shea Speakers

Otto Lechner Cuckoo Clock

Miroslav Dimitrov Neon Lettering

Walter Studener, Marc Wollner Technical Assistance

Zürcher James Joyce Stiftung, Fritz Senn, Ursula Zeller Consultants

Florian Kecht Production Assistance

Biography

Ruth Beckermann was born in Vienna, where she also spent her childhood. After studying journalism and art history in Tel Aviv and New York, she completed her doctoral thesis in 1977 at the University of Vienna. As a journalist, she worked for various magazines in Austria and Switzerland. In 1978 she founded the filmladen distribution centre with two colleagues, working there for seven years. During this time, she also created her first films and books. Since 1985 Ruth Beckermann has worked as a freelance author and filmmaker. Her film *Die Geträumten* (2016) won the award for best film at the Diagonale and also received five other international awards. In 2018 Ruth Beckermann completed her latest film, *Waldheims Walzer*, which won the Glashütte Original Documentary Film Award of the Berlin International Film Festival, among others. Ruth Beckermann's installations include *europamemoria*, a collection of portraits and stories shown in a revised form at this year's Alpbach Forum, the exhibition *Leben!* for the Jewish Museum in Vienna, and the installation *The Missing Image*, which was shown at Vienna's Albertinaplatz in 2015. Ruth Beckermann's publications include the books *Die Mazzesinsel – Juden in der Wiener Leopoldstadt 1918-1938*, *Unzugehörig – Österreicher und Juden nach 1945*, *Ohne Untertitel – Fragmente einer Geschichte des österreichischen Kinos* (co-edited with Christa Blümlinger), *Jenseits des Krieges – Ehemalige Wehrmachtssoldaten erinnern sich* as well as *europamemoria – Erinnerungen Europas* (with Stefan Grisseemann). In addition, she regularly publishes in books, anthologies and expert journals. In 2016 the Austrian Film Museum showed a retrospective honouring the filmmaker and artist; in this context the monography *Ruth Beckermann* was published, edited by Alexander Horwath and Michal Omasta.

Apart from numerous awards for her films, Ruth Beckermann received the Austrian Honorary Award for Film in 1987, the Manès Sperber Prize in 2000 and the Austrian Cross of Merit for Sciences and the Arts in 2015.

Photographs can be found here:

<https://www.salzburgerfestspiele.at/fotoservice/joyful-joyce-installation>

Kind regards,
Press Office of the Salzburg Festival
www.salzburgerfestspiele.at

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