

Media release, 19 May 2023

Doris Salcedo

21 May – 17 September 2023

This May, the Fondation Beyeler will be the first museum in Switzerland to devote a comprehensive solo exhibition to the Colombian artist Doris Salcedo (*1958), presenting eight major series of works from different periods of her career. On 1300 square metres, the presentation will bring together around 100 individual pieces, among them key works on loan from major international institutions as well as rarely exhibited works from private collections. In her objects, sculptures and site-specific interventions, Doris Salcedo addresses the experiences and repercussions of violent conflicts across the world. Even though her works often take specific events as their starting point, they are of universal significance and validity. The artist's work often revolves around reflections on loss, individual suffering and the ways societies process collective grief. Her installation *Palimpsest*, 2013–2017, has been on view at the Fondation Beyeler since October 2022.

Doris Salcedo grew up in Colombia's capital Bogotá, which she describes as an epicentre of catastrophe. Persistently confronted with her native country's political power structures and widespread human suffering, Salcedo developed a distinct social and political awareness, leading to works that lend form to the ideas and emotions triggered by these experiences. Rather than simplistic depictions, Salcedo searches for people's shared feelings and understanding. In her own words, she says: "What I'm trying to get out of these pieces is that element that is common in all of us."

A key work in the exhibition, *A Flor de Piel*, 2011–2014, consists of hundreds of rose petals stitched together to form a filigree shroud spreading in folds over a large area of the floor. The work's point of departure was a crime committed against a Colombian nurse who was tortured to death and whose body was never found. The title *A Flor de Piel* is a Spanish phrase that combines references to flowers and skin, and is used to describe emotions of such overwhelming intensity that they become exposed and visible to others, for example through a reddening of the skin. For Salcedo, the act of sewing the petals together is an important part of the work, in which the fragility of life is uniquely visualised.

The adjoining room displays the lined up tables of *Plegaria Muda*, 2008–2010. In 2008, Salcedo researched gang violence in Los Angeles and found that victims and perpetrators often shared comparable socioeconomic circumstances and came from similarly underprivileged backgrounds. Based on this observation, the large-scale installation consists of coffin-sized tables stacked one upside down above the other in pairs, each separated by a layer of earth. Delicate blades of grass sprout from this soil and grow up through the table tops. Each of these pairs stands symbolically for one of hundreds of perpetrator-victim dyads whose fates remain tragically entwined. Reminiscent of a freshly laid-out cemetery, the work also reflects the suffering of Colombia's grieving mothers looking for their missing sons in mass graves. *Plegaria Muda*, which translates to "Silent Prayer", brings to light the universal significance of dignified individual burial and leave-taking. At the same time, the work also bears witness to how, just as grass grows over a grave, the events of the past fade from memory as life goes on.

Disremembered, 2014/2015 and 2020/21, illustrates several important aspects of Salcedo's oeuvre: the almost immaterial, barely tangible specter-like forms of human scale appear to float against the wall and only reveal themselves up close. The shirt-like garments, which Salcedo designed following the pattern of her own blouse, compose of pale silk threads pierced by tiny, blackened needles. The idea for the *Disremembered* series developed when the artist spoke with mothers who had lost children to armed violence in Chicago's toughest neighbourhoods. The women's ever-present and inconsolable pain is signified by the more than 12,000 fine needles woven directly into the fabric interspersed in a deliberate, irregular pattern.

This polarity of delicacy and violence is typical of many of Salcedo's other works. *Atrabiliarios*, 1992–2004, features worn shoes set into niches in the exhibition wall sealed off with stretched cow bladder that clouds our view of them. Salcedo thereby seeks to preserve the memory of their former owners; women who have become victims of enforced disappearance in Colombia.

In the series *Untitled*, 1989, various pieces of wooden furniture have been encased in concrete. For this work, Salcedo spent time with the families of victims of Colombia's persistent violence and civil war. She used the victims' domestic furniture and clothing, rendered useless by their death, to symbolise their absence.

Unland, 1995–1998, goes back to interviews conducted by Salcedo with orphaned children in northern Colombia who had witnessed the murder of their parents. The series joins together various pairs of different half-tables using a blend of silk and human hair to illustrate the fragile equilibrium of families torn apart by violence.

Untitled, 1989–93, was created in response to two massacres that took place in 1988 in Northern Colombia on the banana plantations of La Negra and La Honduras with the sculptures being composed of white, cotton shirts in plaster and impaled by steel rebar. Alluding to the absent human body, the shirts reference the standard dress of workers on these plantations as well as funerary dress for the dead. Stacked in different quantities, these sculptures also appear to take measure of the loss of human life.

In the large-scale installation *Palimpsest*, 2013–2017, Salcedo focuses on the refugees and migrants who over the past 20 years have drowned attempting the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic in search of a better life in Europe. She spent five years researching the names of the victims that appear and fade on the sand-coloured slabs covering a floor area of around 400 square metres.

Doris Salcedo's works often require years of planning, research and fieldwork leading to complex and meticulously planned processes of conceptualisation. The horrors she addresses are never shown directly. Instead, she deliberately selects materials and means of expression that obliquely visualise terror and dread while also encompassing beauty and poetics. With her work, Doris Salcedo aims to build bridges between the suffering and sorrow of human existence on the one hand and hopes and aspirations on the other hand.

About Doris Salcedo

Doris Salcedo was born in 1958 in Bogotá, Colombia, where she still lives and works today. She studied painting and art history at the University of Bogotá, then sculpture at New York University in the early 1980s. In 1985, she returned to Colombia, undertaking numerous journeys around her country to meet survivors and relatives of victims of brutality and violence. Her resulting awareness of and sensitisation to the themes of war, alienation, disorientation and displacement have informed her work ever since.

Salcedo found attention among others with large-scale installations such as *Untitled*, 2003, *Shibboleth*, 2007, and *Plegaria Muda*, 2008–2010. *Untitled*, 2003, produced for the 8th International Istanbul Biennial, consisted of about 1550 wooden chairs stacked between two buildings to address the history of the migration and displacement of Armenian and Jewish families from Istanbul. For *Shibboleth*, 2007, at Tate Modern in London, she created a long snaking fissure that ran the vast length of the Turbine Hall, allowing social segregation and exclusion as well as separation to be experienced in spatial terms. The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presented a first retrospective of her work in 2015. Last year, a solo exhibition was devoted to her in Glenstone, Maryland. Doris Salcedo was featured at the Fondation Beyeler in a 2014 collection display with works from the Daros Latinamerica Collection. In 2017, organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, *Palimpsest* was shown at the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid and subsequently at White Cube in London. This installation has been on view at the Fondation Beyeler since autumn 2022, its first presentation in the German-speaking world. Salcedo's most recent work *Uprooted*, 2020–2022, is currently on display at the Sharjah Biennial 15.

The exhibition has been curated by Sam Keller, Director, and Fiona Hesse, Associate Curator, Fondation Beyeler.

An exhibition catalogue featuring essays by Fiona Hesse, Seloua Luste Boulbina and Mary Schneider Enriquez as well as a foreword by Sam Keller and poems by Ocean Vuong is published by Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin.

The exhibition is generously supported by:

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Press images are available at www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images

Fondation Beyeler

The museum in Riehen near Basel is internationally renowned for its high-calibre exhibitions, its outstanding collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as its ambitious schedule of events. The museum building was designed by Renzo Piano in the idyllic setting of a park with venerable trees and water lily ponds. It boasts a unique location in the heart of a local recreation area, looking out onto fields, pastures and vineyards close to the foothills of the Black Forest. In collaboration with Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, the Fondation Beyeler is constructing a new museum building in the adjoining park, thus further enhancing the harmonious interplay of art, architecture and nature.

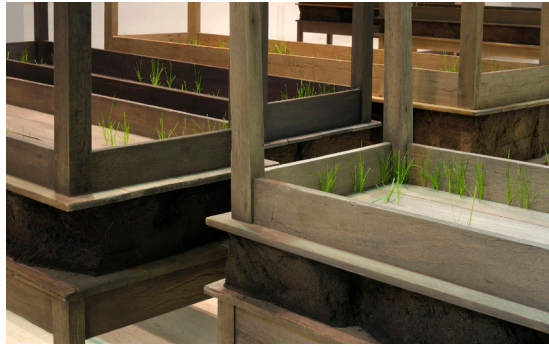
Further information:

Dorothee Dines
Head of PR & Media Relations
Tel. + 41 (0)61 645 97 21, presse@fondationbeyeler.ch, www.fondationbeyeler.ch
Fondation Beyeler, Beyeler Museum AG, Baselstrasse 77, CH-4125 Riehen/Basel, Switzerland

Fondation Beyeler opening hours: 10a.m. to 6p.m. daily, Wednesday through 8p.m., Friday through 9p.m.



Doris Salcedo
Palimpsest, 2013–2017
 Hydraulic equipment, ground marble, resin, corundum, sand and water; dimensions variable
 Installation view Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, 2022
 Courtesy of Doris Salcedo and White Cube
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Mark Niedermann



Doris Salcedo
Plegaria Muda, 2008–2010 (detail)
 Wood, earth, concrete, metal, and grass, 166 parts; dimensions variable
 Installation view CAM–Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2011
 Collection of the artist
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: © White Cube (Patrizia Tocci)



Doris Salcedo
Untitled, 1998
 Wooden armoire with glass, concrete, steel, and clothing;
 183.5 × 99.38 × 30.8 cm
 Installation view Pérez Art Museum, Miami, Florida, 2016
 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Lisa and John Miller
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: David Heald



Doris Salcedo
Disremembered X, 2020/2021
 Sewing needles and silk thread; dimensions variable
 Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Ron Armstutz



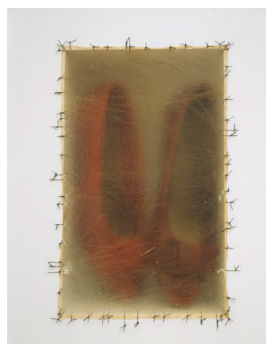
Doris Salcedo
A Flor de Piel II, 2013–2014 (detail)
 Rose petals and thread; dimensions variable
 Presented as part of the D. Daskalopoulos Gift to Tate
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Patrizia Tocci



Doris Salcedo
Untitled, 1989–2014
 Cotton shirts, steel, and plaster; dimensions variable
 Installation view Doris Salcedo Studio, Bogotá, 2013
 Collection of the artist
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Oscar Monsalve Pino



Doris Salcedo
Unland: the orphan's tunic, 1997
 Wooden tables, silk, human hair, and thread; 90 × 245 × 80 cm
 Installation view Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2015
 «la Caixa» Foundation Contemporary Art Collection
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Patrizia Tocci



Doris Salcedo
Atrabiliarios, 1992–2004, (detail)
 Shoes, drywall, paint, wood, animal fiber, and surgical thread; dimensions variable
 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Accessions Committee Fund purchase: gift of Carla Emill and Rich Silverstein, Patricia and Raoul Kennedy, Elaine McKeon, Lisa and John Miller, Chara Schreyer and Gordon Freund, and Robin Wright
 © Doris Salcedo
 Photo: Ben Blackwell



Doris Salcedo
 Photo: David Heald

Press images: www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images

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Biography Doris Salcedo

1958	Doris Salcedo is born in Bogotá, Colombia, where she still lives and works today.
1980	<p>She earns a bachelor's degree in painting from the Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano, where her teachers include the artist Beatriz González.</p> <p>After graduating, Salcedo spends one year travelling around the world studying sculptures from different cultures and periods.</p> <p>Upon her return, Salcedo enrolls at New York University to study sculpture.</p>
1984	Salcedo graduates with a master's degree from New York University and returns to Bogotá.
1987/88	She takes up the position of Director of the School of Plastic Arts at the Instituto de Bellas Artes in Cali, Colombia.
1989–1991	Salcedo teaches as a professor of sculpture and art theory at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.
1992	Her international reputation grows as her work is shown beyond Colombia, among others in exhibitions in Australia, Spain and the United States.
1993	Salcedo is the recipient of a Penny McCall Foundation grant.
1995	Salcedo is the recipient of a Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation grant.
2005	Salcedo is awarded the Penny McCall Foundation's Ordway Prize.
2006	She receives an honorary doctorate from the San Francisco Art Institute.
2007	Tate Modern in London shows her expansive installation <i>Shibboleth</i> , 2007.
2008	Salcedo receives an honorary doctorate from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
2010	She is awarded the Premio Velázquez de las Artes Plásticas by the Spanish Ministry of Culture.
2010–2014	The exhibition <i>Plegaria Muda</i> is shown at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, and travels on to the Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal, the Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome, Italy, White Cube, London, United Kingdom, and the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil.
2014	The Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, devotes an exhibition to Salcedo's work and awards her the 9 th Hiroshima Art Prize.
2015/16	The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago stages a comprehensive retrospective of Salcedo's work. The exhibition travels on to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and the Pérez Art Museum, Miami.

2016	In honour of Salcedo's designation as the inaugural Nasher Prize Laureate, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, presents an exhibition of her work.
2016/17	The Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, present an exhibition of Salcedo's work under the title <i>The Materiality of Mourning</i> .
2017	The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, Spain, shows the vast installation <i>Palimpsest, 2013–2017</i> , at the Palacio de Cristal. Salcedo is awarded the Rolf Schock Prize for Visual Arts.
2018	She receives an honorary doctorate from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
2019	She is the recipient of the Nomura Art Award and the Possehl Prize for International Art.
2022	Glenstone Museum, Maryland, presents a selection of Salcedo's sculptures.
2023	Salcedo presents her work <i>Uprooted, 2020–2022</i> , at the 15 th Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates. She is awarded the Sharjah Biennial Prize.

Associated Events “Doris Salcedo”

Fridays*, 6p.m.–10p.m.

*“Friday Beyeler” will not take place on: 19 May, 16 June, 23 June, 25 August, or 15 September.

Friday Beyeler

“Friday Beyeler” is an invitation to start the weekend off with a relaxed Friday evening visit to the museum. Visitors are welcomed to enjoy dinner and drinks at the “Beyeler Restaurant im Park”, and to explore the current exhibitions by joining a variety of tours, workshops and studio sessions. The museum remains open until 9 p.m. and the Restaurant until 10 p.m.

“Friday Beyeler” is included in the regular museum admission. No registration is required. Further information available here: fondationbeyeler.ch

Monday, 22 May
Montag 5 June
2p.m.–3p.m.

Works in Focus – in German

Thematic tour of the exhibition “Doris Salcedo”. Topic: Time and materials
Price: admission fee + CHF 7.–

Wednesday, 24 May
Wednesday, 31 May
Wednesday, 7 June
5p.m.–8p.m.

Open Lab – in German

Our Open Lab is open to all young people aged 16 to 25. Come by, get to know like-minded young people and share your questions, your ideas and your skills! An inspiring look behind the scenes at the Fondation Beyeler awaits. The Open Lab is organised by Art Lab. Without registration. Attendance is free of charge.

Wednesday, 24 May
6.30p.m.–8p.m.

A conversation about migration and humanitarian engagement – in German

On the occasion of the exhibition “Doris Salcedo”, cultural mediator Diana Segantini discusses humanitarian aspects of current world events with Barbara Hintermann (Chief Executive of Terre des Hommes, Lausanne) and Roger de Weck (member of the Board of SOS Méditerranée Switzerland).

The conversation will be held in German.

Admission to the museum is included in the ticket.

Sunday, 28 May
3p.m.–4p.m.

Visita pública en español «Doris Salcedo»

Una mirada a la exposición actual.

Precio: Entrada + CHF 7.–

Saturday, 3 June
11a.m., 1p.m., 3p.m.,
5p.m.

Migrating Voices

Working with a small collective of singers from different countries, Lynsey Peisinger choreographed a music installation that expresses longing for togetherness and our human need for deep connection. It platforms voices and languages from different parts of the world and seeks to create a container for collective thoughts on displacement and loss. The music consists of existing songs as well as a few original pieces written by the singers.

Performer: Mer Ayang, Lynn Aineo, Jelena Dojčinović, Sandra Nickl, Nadja Stoller; Director: Lynsey Peisinger

Price: admission fee

Saturday, 3 June
Saturday, 26 August
2p.m.–4p.m.

Young Studio – in German

Discover the exhibition “Doris Salcedo”, discuss it, and try your hand at some artistic activities in the studio. A workshop for everyone from ages 15 to 30.

Price: ages 15–25 CHF 10.– / ages 26–30 CHF 20.– / free for Young Art Club members

Sunday, 4 June
Sunday, 9 July
Sunday, 13 August
4.30p.m.–5.45p.m.

Performative Tour – in German

Together with a performance artist, you will deepen your acquaintance with the art works in the exhibition through different performative exercises, making use not only of your eyes but your whole body.

No prior knowledge or skills needed.

Price: admission fee + CHF 10.–

Wednesday, 14 June
10a.m.–11a.m.

Doris Salcedo in conversation with Nick Serota

Doris Salcedo’s compelling artworks merge personal conversations with victims and their relatives, political engagement and philosophical reflections. In conversation with Nick Serota, British art historian and former Director of the Tate, London, Doris Salcedo discusses her artistic practice.

The conversation will be held in English.

Admission to the museum is included in the ticket.

Thursday, 22 June
4.30–5.30p.m.

Tour for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Visitors – in German

Visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing are invited to discover the artworks in the current exhibition “Doris Salcedo” in this signed tour.

Price: admission fee

Sunday, 25 June
3p.m.–4p.m.

Public Tour – in English

Insight into the current exhibition

Price: admission fee + CHF 7.–

Saturday, 12 August
10a.m.–10p.m.

Summer Party

That’s summer: going to the park to lie in the sun, learning something new at a workshop, discovering the region’s culinary offerings, taking guided tours of the exhibitions “Doris Salcedo” and “Basquiat. The Modena Paintings” and the collection display “THE MIND’S EYE. Images of Nature from Claude Monet to Otobong Nkanga”, dancing to live music in the open air – all over the course of a single day at the Fondation Beyeler.

Admission to the park is free, admission to the museum CHF 10.–

Podcast

NAH DRAN (Close) – Voices in a context of crisis, displacement and settling in. A Fondation Beyeler podcast – in German

In approximately seven-minute-long podcast episodes Basel-based journalist Naomi Gregoris talks to individuals involved in various organisations and initiatives in the region to support people living in zones of war and crisis, fleeing their homeland or attempting to gain a foothold in Europe.

All podcast episodes can be followed at a listening station set up in the museum or downloaded from the website:

<https://palimpsest.fondationbeyeler.ch/>

Factsheet

Doris Salcedo



Description

Experiences of violence and loss take shape in the work of internationally acclaimed Colombian artist Doris Salcedo. Although her sculptures and installations are often based on concrete events, feelings of grief, alienation and loss of home take on a universally valid, heartfelt expression in her works. Different materials such as stone and cement, wooden furniture, grass, petals, hair or pieces of clothing are transformed/processed and charged with meaning. Rarely do individual pain and collective grief find such a touching form and is their social overcoming formulated so forcefully. Created in close collaboration with the artist, the catalogue offers a comprehensive survey over Salcedo's work from 1986 to 2022.

Biography

Doris Salcedo was born in 1958 in Bogotá, Colombia, where she still lives and works today. She studied painting and art history at the University of Bogotá, then sculpture at New York University in the early 1980s. In 1985, she returned to Colombia, undertaking numerous journeys around her country to meet survivors and relatives of victims of brutality and violence. Her resulting awareness of and sensitisation to the themes of war, alienation, disorientation and displacement have informed her work ever since.

Exhibition

Fondation Beyeler, Riehen | Basel
May 21 – September 17, 2023

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Fiona Hesse and Sam Keller for
Fondation Beyeler

TEXTS BY
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Ocean Vuong

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Vertrieb / Sales:
c.squara@hatjecantz.de

Presse / Press:
j.berndt@hatjecantz.de
Tel: +49 30 34 64 678 23

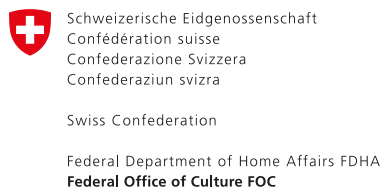
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