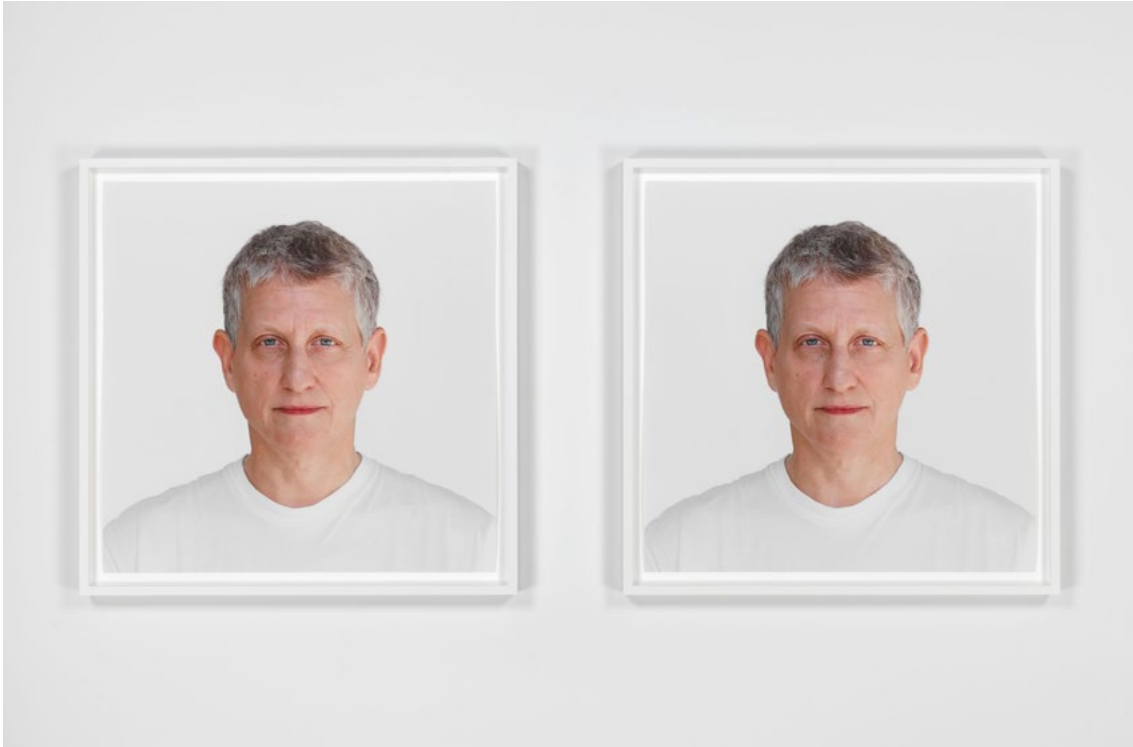


EXHIBITION LEARNING NOTES:

Roni Horn



Roni Horn, *Dead Owl*, v. 3, 2015 © Roni Horn. Photo: Genevieve Hanson

About Roni Horn

Roni Horn (b. 1955) is a New York-based artist whose work spans sculpture, photography, drawing, installation and writing. Across these media, Horn explores questions about identity, perception and meaning, often focusing on how things change through time, context and experience. A recurring theme in her work is doubling—the idea that objects, images and identities can exist in multiple states at once.

Horn studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and later at Yale University in the United States. Early in her career she began traveling regularly to Iceland, a place that has profoundly shaped her artistic thinking. Iceland's shifting weather systems, volcanic landscapes and bodies of water provided a model for understanding the world as fluid, unstable and constantly transforming. These natural conditions reinforced Horn's interest in ambiguity, mutability and the idea that identity is never fixed.

For Horn, artworks are not simply objects to interpret but experiences to encounter. She often emphasizes that meaning emerges through the relationship between the work and the viewer. Her installations are therefore carefully structured so that perception changes as audiences move around them, encouraging sustained looking and reflection.

What does her work look like and how does she make her work?

For Horn, the meaning of an artwork emerges through direct encounter. Her sculptures, photographs and drawings invite slow looking and careful attention to subtle shifts in light, color, language and form. Rather than presenting fixed narratives, Horn creates situations in which viewers become active participants in the construction of meaning.

Over the years, Horn has developed a multidisciplinary practice, including photo installation, sculpture, drawing, artist's books and writing. Each medium allows her to explore how meaning shifts through repetition, pairing and subtle variation.



Installation view, 'Roni Horn. Seizure of Hope,' Hauser & Wirth London, 2026 © Roni Horn. Photo: Theo Niderost



Installation view, Roni Horn, Untitled ("I deeply perceive that the infinity of matter is no dream."), 2015 © Roni Horn. Photo: Marc Damage

Cast glass sculpture

Since the mid-1990s, Horn has produced a celebrated series of cast glass sculptures. These works are created by pouring molten colored glass into moulds and allowing it to cool slowly over several months (annealing). The resulting blocks of glass appear at once solid and liquid.

The sides and base retain the rough impression of the mould, while the upper surface has a glossy finish that often curves slightly like the surface of water. Light passing through the glass creates subtle changes in color and depth, meaning the sculpture appears different depending on the time of day, the weather or the viewer's position.

These works often evoke bodies of water, inviting viewers to look down into them as though gazing into a pool. The sculptures therefore operate between states: solid and fluid, heavy and luminous, stable yet constantly changing in appearance. This tension reflects Horn's broader interest in how identity is shaped through shifting relationships and perceptions.



Roni Horn, Untitled ("What happens to the hole when the cheese is gone?"), 2022 © Roni Horn.
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich



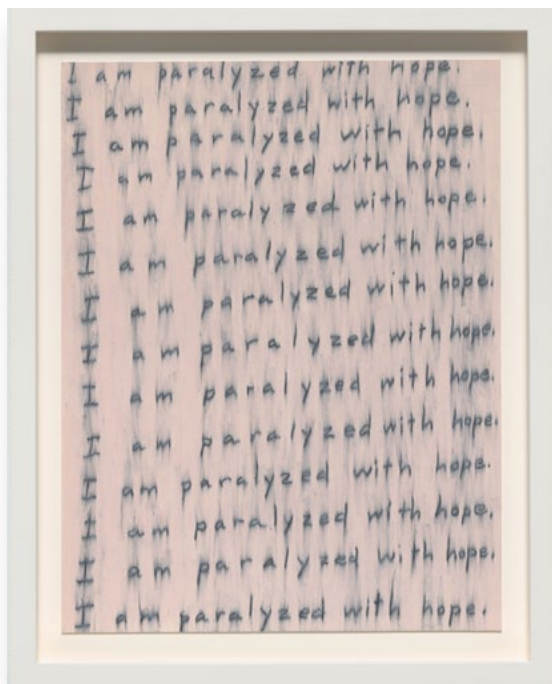
Roni Horn, Untitled ("What happens to the hole when the cheese is gone?"), 2022 © Roni Horn.
Photo: Stefan Altenburger Photography Zürich

Drawing and language

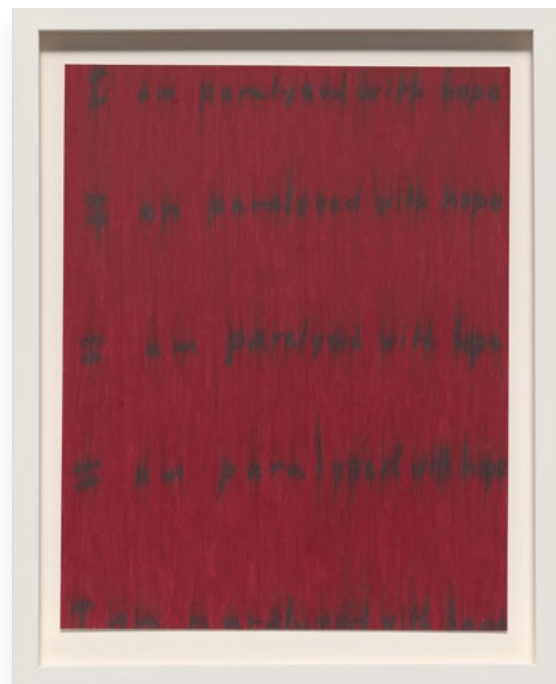
Drawing is a central and continuous activity in Horn's practice. Her works on paper often combine color, mark-making and text, exploring the sculptural potential of drawing as well as the material qualities of language.

In series such as 'Hack Wit' and 'Seizure of Hope,' Horn reworks idioms, proverbs and familiar phrases into fragmented or rearranged expressions. Words appear scattered across the surface of the paper, sometimes overlapping or dissolving into abstraction. Letters can look blurred or distorted, as though viewed through water.

Through these drawings Horn treats language as both image and material. By destabilizing familiar phrases, she invites viewers to reconsider how meaning is constructed and how language shapes perception.



Roni Horn, Seizure of Hope (21), 2024 © Roni Horn. Photo: Ron Amstutz



Roni Horn, Seizure of Hope (81), 2025 © Roni Horn. Photo: Ron Amstutz

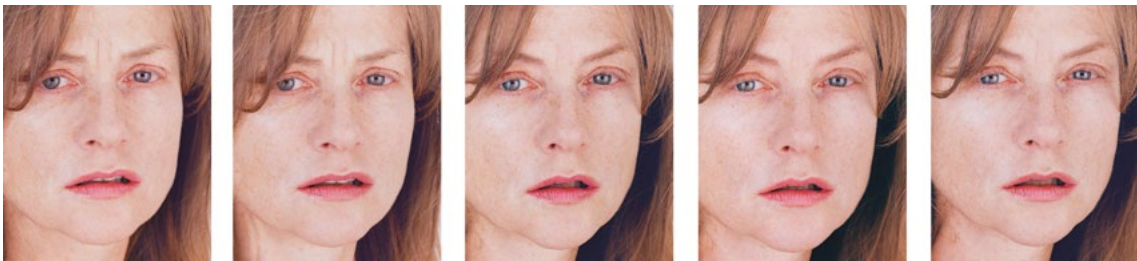
Photography and seriality

Photography plays a key role in Horn's exploration of identity and memory.

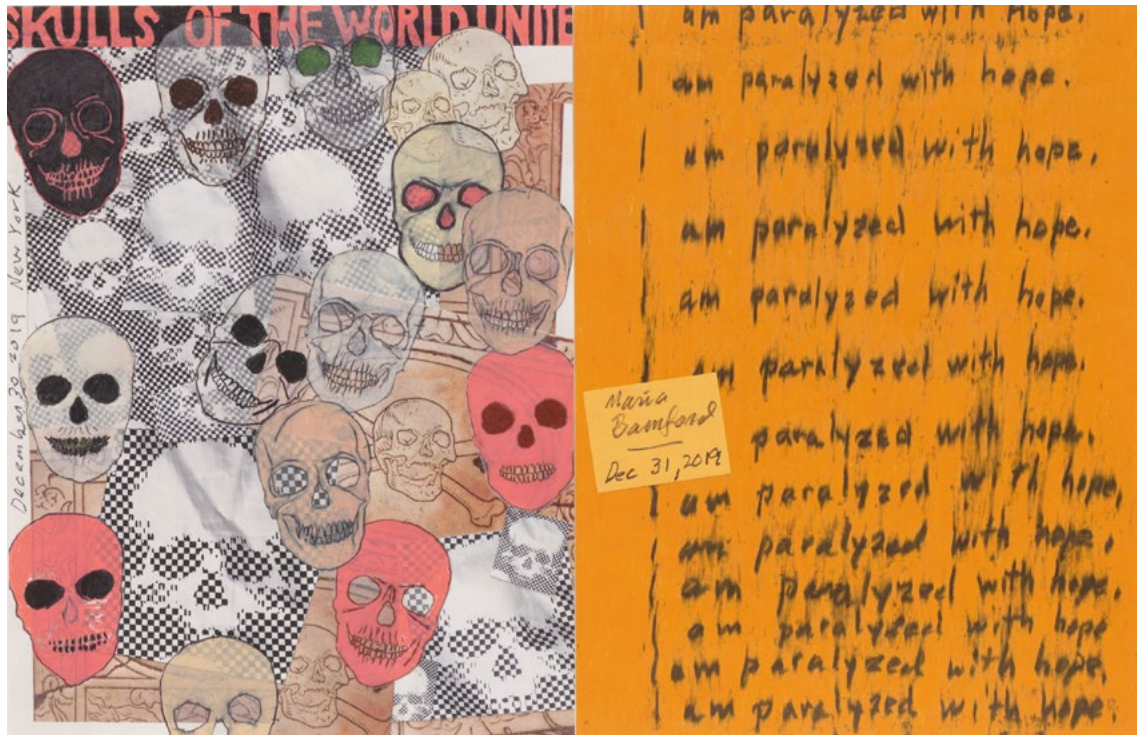
Her photographic works are often presented as sequences or groupings, rather than single images, encouraging viewers to notice subtle differences between similar forms.

One example is her work 'The Selected Gifts, (1974 - 2015)' (2015 - 2016), which documents personal objects collected over four decades. Photographed against plain backgrounds, these items appear at once intimate and detached. Horn describes the project as a form of 'vicarious self-portrait,' suggesting that identity can be understood through relationships to objects, memories and other people.

Across her photographic projects, repetition and variation invite viewers to question how perception shifts over time and how meaning emerges through comparison.



Roni Horn, Portrait of an Image (with Isabelle Huppert), 2013 © Roni Horn



Roni Horn, Skulls of the World Unite • Orange Hope, 2022 © Roni Horn. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging

Roni Horn, An elusive Red Figure darting about in the Venetian darkness; a red dwarf burning out beyond Saturn; a nasty gang of runts in red snowsuits acting out in a North American suburb; an attractive young Italian woman dressed in red is stalked by a lesbian serial killer; a village girl, the prettiest you can imagine, in a red velvet hood cut from the belly of a sleeping wolf , 2022 © Roni Horn. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging

What are the main themes in Roni Horn's work?

Identity

Horn approaches identity as something multiple and unstable. Her works suggest that the self is not fixed but constantly shaped by context, perception and relationships.

Doubling

Repetition, pairing and mirroring recur throughout her practice. These strategies encourage close looking and highlight difference within similarity.

Mutability and Water

Water is a central metaphor in Horn's work. It reflects, absorbs and changes, offering a way to think about identity as fluid and responsive. As she suggests, water both reflects and receives, connecting the viewer to their surroundings.

Language

Horn integrates language into her work without hierarchy between text and image. Words become visual forms, inviting viewers to question how meaning is constructed.

Material

Her use of materials such as glass, copper and gold emphasizes sensory experience. Surfaces reflect light, absorb color and shift with their environment, creating a dialogue between artwork, space and viewer.

Experience

Horn's work resists singular interpretation. Instead, it invites viewers to engage actively, becoming aware of their own position, perception and movement. Meaning is not contained within the object but produced through encounter. Through this approach, her work continues to explore how perception, identity and experience remain open, unstable and continually evolving.

Questions for discussion

- Horn's works often change depending on where you stand and how long you spend with them, encouraging slow looking and shifting viewpoints. How does your perception of a work change as you move around it?
- Through sequences and pairings, her work highlights subtle differences and invites comparison across images and objects. How do repetition and variation shape our perception?
- By using words as visual material, Horn unsettles the boundary between reading and looking. What happens when language becomes visual rather than purely descriptive?

Additional information

- **Artist page**
- **'Roni Horn. Seizure of Hope,' Hauser & Wirth London, 2026**
- **'Roni Horn,' Hauser & Wirth Menorca, 2024**
- **Exhibition Learning Notes: 'Roni Horn'**
- **Ursula film: 'Garden of Paradox,' Hauser & Wirth Menorca, 2024**