

San Francisco

Leonor Antunes

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (SFMOMA)

151 Third Street

May 14–October 2

From the perspective of artist Leonor Antunes, the gallery is a complete volume. Every inch of the floor, ceiling, and walls plays an active role in narrating the histories reworked by the artist. Newly commissioned for SFMoMA, *A Spiral Staircase Leads Down to the Garden*, 2016, mines the creative trajectories of pioneering women autobiographically tied to midcentury California but obscured from the era's modernist cannon, such as architect and interior designer Greta Magnusson Grossman and artists Anni Albers, Kay Sekimachi, and Ruth Asawa. Their outputs are the sources for a series of sculptural pieces that hang, roll over, and illuminate the white box of the museum's dedicated new-work gallery.

Cork panels cover the entire floor, punctuated by reflective brass rectangles that replicate a pattern from Albers's 1946 weaving *With Verticals*. Points from the design also dictate the positioning of leather ropes snaked on the ceiling. Although interested in architecture, Albers was barred from the program at the Bauhaus because of her gender and instead studied textiles. Grossman was also denied formal architectural training, although it did not stop her from creating buildings in California and Sweden. As such, Grossman's renderings cite her as the "designer," a fact that made research behind the exhibition a challenge. Large suspended geometric wall partitions inspired by Grossman's signature lamps cut across the room, casting shadows. Surrounding the visitor, Antunes's skillful maneuvering of space, material, light, and texture allow the voices of a feminist history largely unsung to resound and become anew.



Leonor Antunes, *A Spiral Staircase Leads Down to the Garden*, 2016, mixed media, dimensions variable.

— Ceci Moss

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