

PALMADOTZE

"AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH".

PEP AGUT • MARTÍ MADAULA ESQUIROL • ANTONI MUNTADAS

PEREJAUME • ANNA ROURA

IRENE SOLÀ • MERCÈ SOLER

Curator: Alexandra Laudo [Heroínas de la Cultura]

From 16 March to 26 May 2024

PALMADOTZE opens on 16th March a new exhibition entitled "Y LA PALABRA SE HIZO CARNE", with the participation of the artists PEP AGUT, MARTÍ MADAULA ESQUIROL, ANTONI MUNTADAS, PEREJAUME, ANNA ROURA, IRENE SOLÀ and MERCÈ SOLER, and curated by ALEXANDRA LAUDO.

In the Western tradition, the word has often been understood as a discursive and immaterial entity, detached from corporeality. This exhibition is about the relationship between words and matter, between the word, the body and places. The works on display explore the physical dimension of words, their dependence on the body that speaks or writes them, as well as their capacity to affect the bodies to which they are addressed. They also speak of the relationship between people and their names, and of the link that words, with their indexical function, establish with the places and things they designate.

Naming people, things, phenomena and places is a way of possessing them through words, of situating them within a system of knowledge and making them our own. By naming places, toponymy creates a relationship of dominance of the self over the physical world through words. The names become the places, and the places become the names. However, it is also linked, in origin, to the act of walking, to the will to know the world from the body and the empirical fact. The installation *Quadricromia. Quatre colours aparien el món*, by Perejaume, brings together in the exhibition space the toponymic signs of the only four coloured mountains in Catalonia: Montnegre, Mont-roig, Montblanc and Mont-ros. Wonderfully, as the artist observes, the toponyms coincide with the four essential colours of Phidias, which are also the *Quatre colours que aparien el món* of a verse by J. V. Foix, which gives title to the book that the author made in collaboration with Joan Miró. Perejaume's work, in which the toponymy becomes a four-colour process that in turn refers to an artist's book, speaks to us of the possibility of recognising physical reality from the imaginary of creation, of reading the physical world from the representations that have been made in art and literature. The world is represented in art, and this representation, in turn, makes the world.

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Anna Roura's work also explores the relationship between literature and reality, between the literary topos and the physical enclave. The artist gave some copies of Mercè Rodoreda's book *La Plaza del Diamante*, originally published in 1962, to a group of people who currently live in the square of the same name in the Gracia neighbourhood of Barcelona. She asked them to read or re-read the book, and to make it their own, freely underlining the sentences they wished, and making any annotations they considered pertinent. From these nine re-readings, the artist has created a new version of the novel that brings together all the underlines and annotations made by these neighbours. Through the reading of a book that has a specific anchorage in a real and still existing place, Anna Roura's work manages to relate different temporalities and places: the time of Plaça del Diamant in the chronological framework of Rodoreda's novel and the time of the neighbours living there today; and also the literary, immaterial square, made of words and evocations, and the physical and real enclave in which it is inspired. *L'Eco de la Plaça del Diamant* tells us how reading generates an invisible community, how the fact of having read the same book unknowingly links us to all the other people who have read it before or who will read it later. It also invites us to think about how the physical world is traversed by the immateriality of literature, which connotes and shapes it, just as we as readers are. The underlining and annotations also evidence an active way of reading, which not only interpellates emotions and thought, but also the body.

In the audiovisual piece *Melic*, Irene Solà lists a set of words that refer to the human body, its biological functions and how we relate to each other. The list also includes terms that have to do with architecture, suggesting an association between the concepts of body, house and place. Each term or set of words is associated with an image that, far from illustrating it strictly, expands its meanings. *Melic* functions as a kind of spoken poetic dictionary, limited to a specific semantic field. The associations established between words and images invite us to think about the contingency of the relations between meaning and signifier, and the orality of the piece refers us to the link between language and speech, between the word and the body that speaks it.

Pep Agut's work *Avec tes yeux, avec ta voix* refers us to the body and the voice from the very title, in this case, to those of the loved one, evoked and longed for in the distance. Each of the pieces that make up this four-coloured work is a sentence perforated in matter, a set of words made of emptiness that express the love that persists in the absence of the other (*Malgré ton absence je t'aime*), the intensity of a desire that makes the subject who loves mimic the thoughts, dreams and desires of the loved one (*C'est avec ta pensée que je pense, C'est avec tes rêves que je rêve, C'est avec tes désirs que je désire*). The work makes evident the capacity of words not only to affect emotions and feelings, but also to strike the body and affect it physically. *Avec tes yeux, avec ta voix* also speaks to us of the word as a vehicle of love in the absence and distance of the esteemed subject, of its capacity to represent the other and make him or her present.

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Longing, absence, distance and intimacy are also central themes in Martí Madaula's work. In January 2017, the artist moved to Manchester to live for six months. Some time later, back in Sabadell, his city of origin, he felt the desire to recover the sheets he had slept on during his stay in England, which had also sheltered family, friends and lovers. These textile pieces, in contact with his body and that of other loved ones, were a connection between the two cities, and a materiality that linked, in time and distance, a set of affections, of words spoken, of intimate gestures. After a process of searching, the artist located the sheets, and a few months later was able to recover them. He then decided to transform them into tablecloths and napkins, with which he would organise a dinner party to which he would invite all the people who had slept there. *Recuperar els llençols de Manchester* brings together visual elements and objects linked to the process of transforming those sheets into tablecloths, and to the projection of the future dinner, in which the dimension of the artist's personal and private relationship with each of the people who slept in his bed will be reconfigured in a celebration also of a private but collective nature, crossed by the act of eating together and by joint conversation. In the work, the names of each guest that the artist embroidered by hand on the napkins speak to us of the craft of writing, of the body that writes, as well as of the capacity of the name itself to invoke the person and make them present in absence. This presence of the writing body is also found in the texts which, like fragments of a personal diary expanded over time, tell us about the sheets and the process of recovering them. The artist traced them by hand after having previously typed them on the computer, as if through the meticulous and slow calligraphic gesture he wanted to personalise the standardised appearance of the written words and insist on their meaning.

In *Puntuacions*, Antoni Muntadas contrasts the calligraphic version, traced by hand, of a set of punctuation and alphanumeric signs with its office version, produced with technical means. Both refer to the body that writes, but the former shows a unique and singular stroke, while the latter is the result of a rapid and more mechanical gesture, which gives rise to a standardised sign, which is always the same regardless of who writes it. The work of Antoni Muntadas speaks to us of the processes of the technification of writing and of the decreasing degree of the human body and human effort in the increasingly digitalised and automated forms of writing.

In the installation *diary*, Mercè Soler takes as her starting material the six notebooks she used to write down her personal experiences over almost a decade, which constituted the intimate diary of the entire time she lived in Berlin. One of the elements of the installation is an artist's book made up of all the pages of these notebooks, torn out of their spirals and unified into a single volume in an airtight glass case. By transferring them from their domestic environment to the exhibition space, the artist brings these personal texts closer to the anonymous visitor, but the glass protection keeps them inaccessible. Only an accident or an aggression could cause the glass to break and these intimate writings to be exposed, both literally and metaphorically.

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The glass thus acts as a temptation and, at the same time, as a warning about the violence involved in any non-consensual access to another person's intimacy. The fragility of the material also refers to the vulnerability that lies in this possibility of opening up and revealing our most intimate thoughts and feelings. The other element of the installation is a painting that contains the spirals of the notebooks without the pages, as if they were remains or skeletons. The remains of the paper and the deformation of some of the wires reinforce the idea that the transfer of a private document to a public space is not free of violence.

But diary also speaks to us of the symbolic action of trying to encapsulate a place and in spite of what we have lived in it, of the desire to retain time and to stop a self that is constantly changing, of wanting to give a physical body or some kind of materiality to a set of experiences. It also reflects the impossibility of returning to what we have already lived and of reliving what we are going to be. The potential buyer or purchaser of the work not only acquires the object, but also the responsibility of deciding whether to break the glass in order to be able to read the writings contained inside, or whether to respect their privacy by keeping it in its current state.

From different approaches and through different formats, the works gathered in "And the word became flesh" question the belief that words have only a discursive nature, detached from the body and materiality, and review the presence - latent or explicit - of bodies in speech and writing.