

Galería Ehrhardt Flórez

Laia Estruch
Residua

From September 8th to November 5th, 2022

Residua, Laia Estruch's first solo exhibition in Madrid, consists of a performance, iron sculptures, pieces made from stainless steel sheets, and sound works. All of these form part of a new and unprecedented body of work underpinned by the performative.

In the main room of the gallery we find the work *Residua*, which gives the exhibition its title. The work consists of a performance carried out over four different sessions during the two months of the exhibition, and a sculptural installation that the artist walks through, touches and strikes, interacting with voice, interpretation and the body.

It could be said that everything is sculpture in Laia Estruch's artistic practice. Her body and voice, essential elements in the articulation of her work, are also sculptural elements. And this is how they act in *Residua*: the voice is structured by means of abstract sounds that intermingle with the construction of texts arising from images. In this case, in the action process of the performance, many of the declamations are oriented towards singing, an almost eternal song that remains in the traditions of popular poetry, spoken word, folklore, storytelling, song and orality. But the idea of improvisation is also very present in this work in which Estruch includes phases of vocal percussion structured in measures that abandon the prevailing pattern to enter a more anarchic and experimental place. As in previous works, Estruch conceives the performances here as rehearsals that are open to the public and in which her research is advanced.

Linked to the performance are two sculptures in the form of iron slides, ramps or curvatures, marked with incisions, inscriptions, numbers and letters which, welded on the surface like scabs or scars, act sometimes as scores and at others as encrypted codes. The pieces draw lines which seem to constitute an un-orientable object, like a Möbius strip. Estruch's sculptures, which on a formal level could be related to the iron structures of Anthony Caro, on a conceptual level to the narrative work of Juan Muñoz, and from an intellectual perspective to the poetic and habitable elements of the Ciudad Abierta Group of La Escuela de Valparaíso, are situated in a space that, as with the performance itself, approaches the inexpressible. In their volume and size, Estruch's pieces adapt to and fit into the space. They cannot be circumvented, but must be walked through. They expand beyond certain limits of sculpture, but do not reach the minimum condition of architecture. An almost frustrated ambiguity that approaches the field of scenography and performance as just another body. The reverberations of the voice create intersections between the performance and its sounds, and the echoes and rebounds produced on the iron pieces as the artist walks through them and drags her feet forcefully along the metal sheet. The sculpture is therefore both figure and performer, another living body, which pushes the artist into the contortion and sound of the body, acting as script, bell and drum.

Meanwhile, a work on stainless steel plates is presented for the first time in another room of the gallery. Following the lines of a previous discourse in which Estruch uses the idea of advertisement as the container and content of the work, the artist has created two wall pieces for the exhibition, in which the titles and certain annotations (dates of the performances, images, notes, allusions to the open rehearsals of the action) occupy the mirrored surface of the sheet metal, scratching and cutting it as if it were an advertising flyer or poster.

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Finally the exhibition is completed with two sound pieces on a loop. Estruch, who has worked extensively with sound on previous occasions, here presents much more experimental works in which the intervention of the sound material itself takes on great prominence. The two sound pieces project a materiality that physically occupies the space. In the first of them, *Reflexiones Impro Plato, 22 julio, 2022*, the artist literally takes shelter under a cymbal that produces a special reverb on her voice, in the words and sounds that Estruch pronounces, generating a series of ricochets between voice and cymbal, but also between the body kneeling or squatting uncomfortably as it delivers its vocal performance.

In the second piece, *Reflexiones Copicat, 22 julio, 2022*, this experimentation with sound material is produced again, but this time through the intervention and manipulation of the recording tape itself, which is handled while the recording is being made.

If Laia Estruch repeatedly understands the voice as an extension of the body capable of synthesising questions related to language, speech or social structures, now, in *Residua*, she finds multiple voices that exist in a sculptural body capable of masking itself and of constructing different genres, speeds and sonorities.

Her work has been shown at TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Córdoba (2022); Fundació Joan Brossa, Barcelona (2020/21); La Virreina Centre de la imatge, Barcelona (2020); Festival Grec / Creació i Museus (2020); Festival Poesia i + a Caldes d'Estrac (2020); Festival Sàlmon de Barcelona (2020); Museu de Valls, Tarragona (2019); Fundación Joan Miró, Espai13, Barcelona (2019); CentroCentro, Madrid (2019); Fundación Botí, Córdoba (2018); Museo Picasso, Barcelona (2018); CA2M, Madrid (2017); Chapelle des the Beaux-Arts, Paris (2017); Antic Teatre, Barcelona (2016); Teatro Pradillo, Madrid (2016); Centro Párraga, Murcia (2016); Fundación Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2014); or MACBA, Barcelona (2012), among others.

PERFORMANCES

September 8th, 20.30 h

September 10th, 19.00 h

October 7th, 19.00 h

November 5th, 13.00 h

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