

IN PRAISE OF MISUN  
TOURING EXHIBITIO  
MAR ARZA.CABELLO  
CODERCH.KAJSA D  
DOT.DORA GARCÍA  
NÚRIA GÜELL.ALEXA  
MARIONA MONCUNII  
BATIA SUTER.PILVI T



Diputació  
Barcelona

MATARÓ.VILA  
DEL PENEDÈS  
I LA GELTRÚ.  
BADALONA.G  
MARTORELL.S  
DEL VALLÈS.

ELOGI DEL  
MALENTÈS

Touring exhibition  
2019–2022

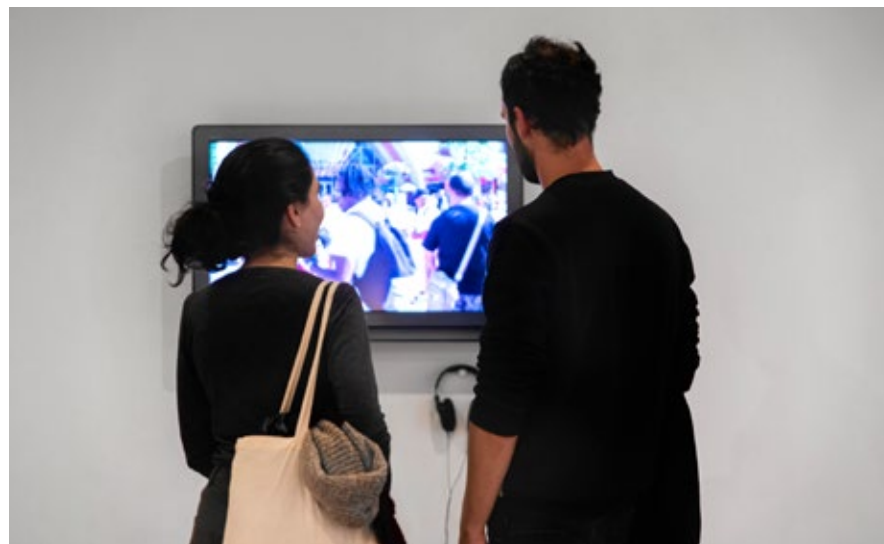
Mar Arza, Cabello/Carceller, Lúa Coderch, Kajsa Dahlberg,  
Anna Dot, Dora García, Andrea Gómez, Núria Güell,  
Alexandra Leykauf, Mariona Moncunill, Mireia Sallarès,  
Batia Suter and Pilvi Takala

Curated by Joana Hurtado Matheu

[www.diba.cat/oda/elogidelmalentes](http://www.diba.cat/oda/elogidelmalentes)  
#ElogiDelMalentès

*In Praise of Misunderstanding* (Elogi del malentès in Catalan) is a touring exhibition from the Visual Arts Programme of the Artistic Dissemination Office (ODA by its Catalan acronym) of the Provincial Council of Barcelona, curated by Joana Hurtado Matheu and organised in collaboration with the municipalities that will be hosting it.

The aim of the Visual Arts Programme of the Artistic Dissemination Office (ODA) of the Provincial Council of Barcelona is to provide support to local contemporary art policies within its remit through three strategic lines: a) contributing to the training and professionalisation of municipal visual arts specialists; b) offering municipalities contemporary art outreach projects, chiefly, touring exhibitions, and c) promoting services and resources linked to exhibitions for the education and participation of citizens.



The programme's methodology consists of conceptualising and designing projects based on the needs, interests and potential of municipalities; working with leading institutions, curators, artists, companies and professionals, and finding a balance between excellence and outreach.

# CREDITS

## Artists

Mar Arza, Cabello/Carceller, Lúa Coderch, Kajsa Dahlberg, Anna Dot, Dora García, Andrea Gómez, Núria Güell, Alexandra Leykauf, Mariona Moncunill, Mireia Sallarès, Batia Suter and Pilvi Takala

## Curation

Joana Hurtado Matheu

## Production

Visual Arts Programme of the Artistic Dissemination Office of the Provincial Council of Barcelona

## Touring programme

Visual Arts Programme of the Artistic Dissemination Office of the Provincial Council of Barcelona and participating councils

## Editing coordination and production

Office of Press and Communication of the Provincial Council of Barcelona

## Design and production of the educational service

A Bao A Qu

## Specific related activities for each municipality

Curator, artists participating in the exhibition, other artists and professionals

## Adaptation of the exhibition to each exhibition space

Joana Hurtado Matheu, TAT\_lab and Visual Arts Programme of the Artistic Dissemination Office of the Provincial Council of Barcelona

## Transport, assembly, packing and exhibition materials

TAT\_lab

## Graphic design

todojunto.net

## Insurance

Willis

## Thanks

Àlex Nogueras, Cal Cego. Contemporary Art Collection, Banc Sabadell Collection, Fundació Joan Miró, Galeria ADN, Galeria Àngels Barcelona, Galería Elba Benítez, Galería Joan Prats, Galería Parra & Romero, Galería ProjecteSD, Galería Rocío Santa Cruz, Helsinki Contemporary, Masa Projesi, Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Twin Gallery, and all the artists and professionals involved in the project.

## © Photography

Cordegat

Except:

Mar Arza, pg. 13 top

Lúa Coderch, pg. 19 top

Daniel Vega Borrego (courtesy of Twin Gallery), pg. 19 middle and bottom

Kajsa Dahlberg, pg. 21 top

Andrea Gómez, pg. 27 bottom

# CONTENTS

<i>IN PRAISE OF MISUNDERSTANDING,</i>	
JOANA HURTADO MATHEU	6
MAR ARZA	10
CABELLO/CARCELLER	12
LÚA CODERCH	14
KAJSA DAHLBERG	18
ANNA DOT	20
DORA GARCÍA	22
ANDREA GÓMEZ	24
NÚRIA GÜELL	26
ALEXANDRA LEYKAUF	28
MARIONA MONCUNILL	30
MIREIA SALLARÈS	32
BATIA SUTER	34
PILVI TAKALA	36
VISITOR SERVICES	40
DOCUMENTATION SPACE	40
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE	41
RELATED ACTIVITIES	46
TOURING PROGRAMME	48

# IN PRAISE OF MISUNDERSTANDING

*I live in fear of not being misunderstood*  
Oscar Wilde

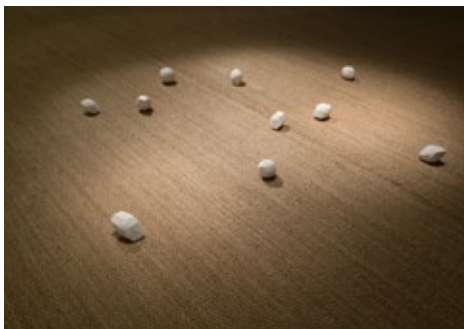
Day in day out we talk with scores of people without actually paying attention to the exact meaning of the words we use. However, there will inevitably come a time when someone asks us what we mean. One day, it may even provoke annoyance. That day we'll realise that the same word may mean something else, that the limits of our reality may be different. And on that day, everything will change, or indeed, we will change.

Misunderstanding eschews the efficiency that we attribute to language as a communication system, and with language come images. Each representation is determined by the cultural, social and emotional perspective of each individual. We don't know how things work, we only know how we perceive and interpret them. When translating our ideas into words, from our mouths to our listener's ears, we can sometimes generalise or omit necessary information. More often than not, due to the speed at which we speak, we succumb to poor descriptions; on other occasions, our thoughts and tongues become tied, leading to confusing interpretations. Thus, we are aware that many things

are hard to express with the words we have at our disposal, and that underlying, unbridled imprecision is ever-present. So, the real obstacle is not coming up against the vagueness of words but having trusted in their accuracy.

Nevertheless, for many centuries we have been convinced that it is possible to know and understand everything. Believing that, with language and reason, with the right words and suitable

classifications, we can explain away the world – both ours and that of others. And that is exactly what we have done. However, if we're capable of defining it, we're also capable of changing



it. In this sense, the conflict that reveals the misunderstanding is, in turn, an advantage, an opportunity to discover an alternative point of view, whether it be excluded, forgotten or squarely unrecognised, or inconceivable. Until that day. That day on which initial surprise gives way to possibility, imagination. That day, the exact meaning of a word, interpretations of the same event or everything that surrounds us becomes blurred, which effectively means that they are also augmented. At that precise moment in which we lose all understanding, the world that we share becomes vaguer, but also greater. As the poet Jacint Verdaguer said: 'Where you see desert, swarms of words teem.'

With misunderstanding comes difference, and this difference forces us to critically explore the conventions that govern our relationship with our surroundings. The capitalist, patriarchal system in which we live is established on a dichotomy that divides the world in terms of truth or lies, fantasy or reality, nature or culture, men or women, us or them. According to this dualist, hierarchical and exclusive logic, he who establishes the difference is always *the other*, conveniently positioned at opposite poles in regard to the norm. In this framework of differentiation, the only possible nexus is a symbiosis of dissuasive force. The best example is the discourse of love, a cultural construction that we have invented in order to connect despite our differences, whose model of romance, as dictated by our Western culture, equates to a union of two complementary parts. From finding your Prince Charming to your other half, the message is always the same: you must find someone *who fits, who*

*understands you*, in order to *join together* in a blissful union that will last forever. Faced with relationships of power that impart this system based on subordination and denial, misunderstanding fuels an active and affirmative vision of difference, which is not predefined in opposition to anything but is the beginning of an open process.

For the philosopher Jacques Rancière, disagreement is the origin of politics, stemming from the discovery that, within the same community, we do not see things or understand the world in the same way. The philosopher and political scientist Chantal Mouffe goes further still and maintains that conflict is inherent to democracy and consensus is an illusion. Recognising the plurality of our society is based on accepting differences and assimilating them while maintaining their multiplicity instead of trying to dismantle them, which means accepting that disputes will always remain. This is the challenge of politics: to facilitate constant negotiation, to be a forum

where divergence, so irreducible as it is, coexists in its effort to determine the common good. Limits must be set and pacts must be sought, but always while appreciating that they shall be pragmatic, conceivable and changeable. Impartial prescriptions do not exist, nor do definitive agreements that please everyone.

At a time such as the present, in which disagreement makes itself evident on the streets and countless social conflicts find no political response (from the refugee crisis to Catalan independence or the feminist struggle), contemporary art offers a genuine space for debate, an abundance of critical voices for questioning the status quo. Embracing misunderstanding is akin to establishing a new place of contact in which art and politics converge, not to find a solution but to rethink lessons learnt and to enable an encounter with this *other* world that will change our world forever. Rescuing vagueness by means of suspicion and discrepancy means placing ourselves in the middle of the dichotomy entrenched in a constant offence and defence in order to decide how to articulate it from within based on uncertainty.

*In Praise of Misunderstanding* takes advantage of this rift

in order to heighten indefinability and to subvert what has been predetermined. The artists participating in this exhibition seek to demonstrate this tension based on confrontations, errors and distortion, trickery and pretences, interruptions and accumulations, stories with no order or without an ending, and things read between the lines or out of context. Each one invents their own strategies to challenge both our imagination and our relationships.

Without announcing its arrival, misunderstanding bursts

forth to destroy our points of reference. As a result, the exhibition begins by creating a space for dissent and reflection on each piece (Mariona Moncunill); in other words, by opening itself up to misunderstanding and inviting viewers to interpret it in their own way. Henceforth, like an eye that adapts to darkness, we must gradually adjust our perception of each misunderstanding,



whether that is in the form of error (Anna Dot), metaphor (Mar Arza), semiotic illusion (Andrea Gómez) or perspective (Alexandra Leykauf). A critique of the representation that challenges the privileged outlook through which we have given meaning to the world. Accepting that this outlook is active and conflictive, like thinking, implies acknowledging our responsibility. And this is precisely what has been done by the artists who decide to enter the picture and partake, to expose themselves in order to expose us to the limits of what is ordinary and to put new ways of approaching reality to the test. Their work reveals the misunderstandings that are behind what unites us, be it dreams, love, sex or friendship (Pilvi Takala, Núria Güell, Mireia Sallarès, Lúa Coderch). We've gone from identifying the flaws to plunging headfirst into them, from a feeling of emptiness to an unexpected encounter with others, among other things (Cabello/Carceller). The discovery of diversity (Batia Suter) also has to do with our inability to say (Dora García) or to determine anything (Lúa Coderch) – all that remains is experiencing it and sharing it (Kajsa Dahlberg).

At a time of wild over-simplification and minimal effort, entrusting the plurality and complexity of misunderstanding in order to contradict what has already been said and determined, means creating a space of shared resistance that has nothing to do with the necessity of the result. It could be a small change, a seemingly simple gesture, that sparks a process of reflection so profound that there is no going back; or on the contrary, a shift in our frame of reference so substantial that it throws everything into disarray. Misunderstanding and the questions it gives rise to make us aware of the fact we can see reality in a different way, or they implicate us in new experiences in which new connections are possible.



# MAR ARZA

Castellón de la Plana,  
1976

We have placed more value on the written word than the spoken word. If they're not put in writing, words count for nothing. However, what exactly does writing determine? All texts can be read between

the lines, a search for deeper meaning that depends on the context; in other words, how we use the text. Physically intervening in poetry and narrative books, as well as routine paperwork – which we don't always understand, even though it has such power over our lives, such as savings account books, bills and medical reports – the work of Mar Arza occupies this disperse space that encompasses everything from saying to doing. With surgical precision and the determination of a master woodworker, the artist cuts out and removes lines of text so that all that remains is this minimal expression, which is nevertheless capable of sustaining different paths of meaning. Her incisions isolate words to point out that they're not alone; they slice through them to extend their limits.

'These words cannot be taken literally', is the only sentence set aside by Mar Arza in 2008 to make the framed piece. Ten years later, the artist receives a letter from the Spanish Tax Authorities asking for a 'specific and detailed explanation of the type of work she is engaged in' for the purposes of calculating the rate of value added tax (VAT) that she must pay. Instead of condensing what she does into just a few words, the artist responds to the government agency's

reductionist demand with shredded paper, a pile of surplus text that, paradoxically, is what best defines her practice. A physical and symbolic way of rubbing salt in the wound of language and introducing misunderstanding in order to broaden definitions of what we're told we are. Since, beyond the words that determine our profession, are the specific but indescribable facts related to our work. Beyond words and everything they mean is imagination, poetry.

*(literally)*  
2008  
Page of an intervened book  
35.5 x 29 cm (framed)

*In Vain (operative)*  
*En vano (operativa)*  
2018  
Glass cabinet with a letter from the Spanish Tax Authorities and the response  
20 x 110 x 45 cm  
Courtesy of the Banc Sabadell Collection



# CABELLO / CARCELLER

## HELENA CABELLO AND ANA CARCELLER

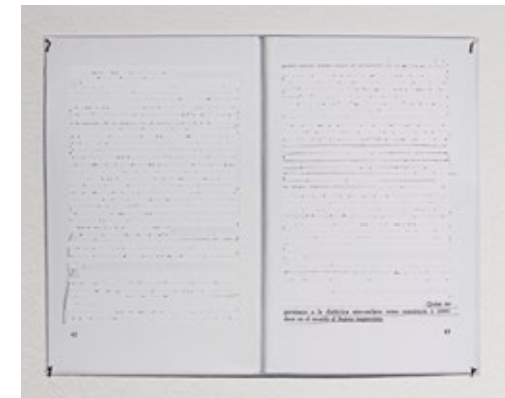
Paris / Madrid 1963 / 1964 In 1970, the art critic and feminist activist Carla Lonzi wrote *Let's Spit on Hegel*, in which she defines the women who at the time were rebelling against the ruling system: 'Not being trapped within the master-slave dialectic, we become conscious of ourselves; we are the Unexpected Subject'. If misunderstanding consists of the discovery of an entire world that appears out of nowhere, Lonzi shines a light on liberated subjectivity, which emerges from the dichotomous struggle inherent in the patriarchal order. By using a flag and a notice, Cabello/Carceller explain that it is through the body and language as positions of power that we can blur conventions in search of alternatives. Their assertion thus brings together theory and practice, subjective desire and a hunger for social transformation, to go beyond critique (or spitting), to Hegelian negativity, and to propose an assertion of potential, which is nothing predefined, no new standard. Man is not the universal protector and woman is not the 'second sex' as Simone de Beauvoir said: identity is a kaleidoscope of possibilities that is prone to conflict, through which the definition of one's self reveals what sets us apart (sex, race, class, age, etc.). Which is why, in this piece, the voice and the gesture lie in wait for the unexpected to arrive, establishing an image of change as provisional as the unstable precariousness with which it is made and leaned against the wall.

Since the nineties, the artistic duo formed of Helena Cabello and Ana Carceller have used different mediums (video, photography, performance, installation) to question hegemonic models of representation.

Through the subversive interpretation and appropriation of texts and images from a feminist, queer or decolonial perspective, the artists provide us with spaces in which the legacy and limits that we share can be reconsidered. Reflecting on otherness as something manifold and interrelated is, in their works, a mutual commitment that must be put into practice in public space, starting with the museum.

### *Unexpected Subjects* (After Carla Lonzi)

2010  
Scaffolding net, duct tape,  
aluminium pole, text printed on  
cardboard  
Pole: 169 cm in length and  
2.5 cm in diameter; net: 75 x 125  
cm; printed sheet: approx.  
20 x 26 cm  
Varying installation dimensions  
© Cabello/Carceller, VEGAP,  
Barcelona, 2019





# LÚA CODERCH

Iquitos, 1982

Sylvia Plath thought that poems should be read out loud; she wanted her poems to 'be very physical', as she wrote in her

diary. In this piece, Lúa Coderch cut ups and prints Plath's poem 'The Courage of Shutting-Up' on a heap of tie-dye cushions, which she leaves scattered over the floor. The piece invites us to sit down and listen, to entwine ourselves with these scattered verses that explore the value of remaining silent as another way of sharing our thoughts, as well as poetry.

From what makes us hold our tongues to what we make fall silent, silence affects us and moves us. However, we can also benefit from it, like we can from the space opened up by misunderstanding: we can take advantage of all the nuances offered by ambiguity to speak without saying. Which is precisely what we have done on so many occasions when we want to break up with someone. Rather than the bravery of remaining quiet, we yield ourselves to the cowardice of separation based on hackneyed phrases, like a broken record trying to sound hypocritically empathetic. *We Can Still Be Friends* is a way of bidding farewell while leaving the door open, which is emitted from the long pink tube titled *TGWNDOHM*, standing for *The Girl With No Door On Her Mouth*. Repetition clears this litany of break-up lines of any meaning and, in turn, gives them the means to sound different each time. 'What do you mean?', we will ask. And it will all be in vain. Why don't we ask the same question when they tell us they love us?

The same unrelenting tongue heard in *TGWNDOHM* reappears in the video *Not I*. A homage to the monologue of the same name by Samuel Beckett, in which a human mouth belonging to a woman strings together fragments from a story that, by all accounts, does not allude to her (*Not I*, 1973). It is also a tribute to Echo, the nymph with no voice of her own who senselessly repeats the same things and who leaves behind nothing but an echoing voice.

## *TGWNDOHM*

2005  
Painted stainless steel tube  
170 x 80 x 70 cm  
Courtesy of the Banc Sabadell Collection

## *We Can Still Be Friends*

2005  
Open digital audio  
22 min 58 sec

We believe the artist to be speaking through the mouth of her work, yet it makes no difference if that's the case or not. Subjectivity, like truth, is overvalued. Expressing sorrows no one dares to express is a way of giving voice to what has been silenced so that everyone can join in. Appropriation as an act of generosity, of sharing without holding back, is



the oxymoron of misunderstanding. In this impersonal soliloquy, what does it matter who speaks? Moreover, despite the opening's depth, the voice is elusive, and what is emitted implies an inaccessible surplus that is everything and nothing at once. In the same way that we don't express everything we feel and we see more than we contemplate, one word leads to another and behind an image always comes more. Closely linked to this mouth and everything it says are the bodies – lives – that never stop, never ceasing to speak.

*Not I*  
2018  
Single-channel digital video,  
16:9, colour, stereo  
21 min  
Text and direction: Lúa Coderch  
Image: Adrià Sunyol Estadella  
Editing: Adrià Sunyol Estadella  
and Lúa Coderch  
Mouth: Ikram Bouloum  
Voice: Lúa Coderch

*The Courage of Shutting Up*  
2018  
Transfer printed tie-dye cushions  
approx. 41 x 26.5 x 10 cm (x22)  
and 247 x 34 x 10 cm (x1)

Lúa Coderch creates scenarios that prove our (in)ability to express ourselves, to be sincere. Through the video and the installation, she explores the voice as a subject and materiality as a language for speculating on the narrative capacity of objects, the superficiality of our bodies and the adaptability of stories, whether they be personal or invented.



# KAJSA DAHLBERG

Göteborg,  
1973

In 1929 Virginia Woolf published *A Room of One's Own*, an essay on the needs and obstacles that women writers

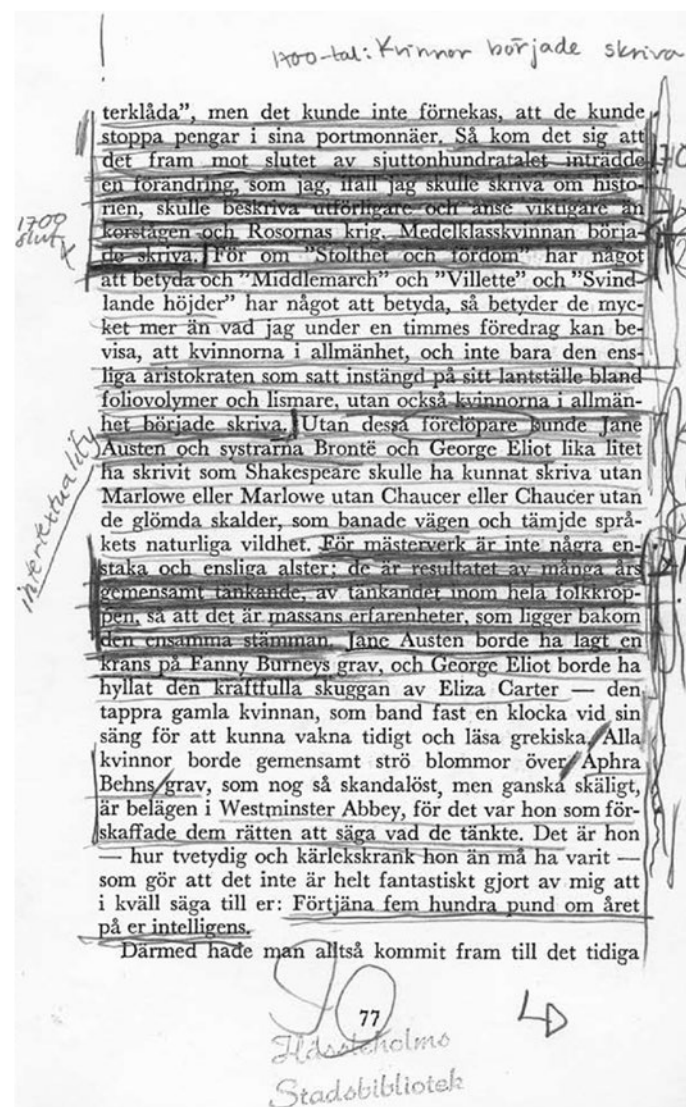
encounter. Woolf uses her own situation to speak out against the marginal and dependant role that women have had throughout history and in the patriarchal society in which she lives, which, for instance, forbids her from accessing university and libraries. By contrast, fiction serves to anticipate a different future: so they can develop their creative and personal freedom just like men, women must have financial independence and a space of their own.

Translated to Swedish in 1958, Kajsa Dahlberg borrowed copies of the book from Swedish libraries, photocopying all the pages with underlined sections and marginal notes. She proceeded to create 1,000 copies of the new book and distributed them out among different libraries. Like each one of the readings that has left its mark on the book, Dahlberg takes possession of Woolf's work in order to make it her own. Except that *hers* is the history of a shared reading, an indefinable but public community that unites, in a comprehensive and intergenerational manner, numerous, eternal witnesses of a whole genus. The artist's publication assembles 60 years of history written from the margins, in which countless annotations punctuate the text to open it up to an interpretation that is by no means definitive, while recontextualising the original work in a collective and anti-hegemonic framework such as that for which Woolf longed.

Through video and archive work, through collecting and anonymity, Kajsa Dahlberg traverses a space in which individual and collective narratives meet, in which continents and content interact to build historical, political and social discourse. In the same way that this roofless

room holds a whole universe of writing and that the proclamations of one woman reflect the voices of countless others, the artist extends authorship to include both the way in we consume a text and subsequent versions in a book's peripheral and subordinate space.

*A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries*  
2006  
Artist book  
15x10x4 cm ea. (x10)  
Wooden shelf  
Various dimensions  
Unique copy



# ANNA DOT

Vic,  
1991

In our culture, misunderstanding is a mistake and mistakes must be avoided. According to a popular Spanish saying, man is the only animal to stumble over the same stone twice; in other words, making

the same mistake twice is frowned upon. But if we cannot see mistakes, how can we anticipate them? Anna Dot has seized upon the expression and turned mistakes into stones. To do so, she selected ten fragments from a universal literary classic, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, in which Miguel de Cervantes's character makes a series of errors, including mistaking windmills for giants. With the assistance of the poet and programmer Eugenio Tisselli and a computerised system, by means of subtraction she calculated the difference between Quixote's different mistakes and how it would have been if the book was to describe things correctly. In doing so, she applied a series of numbers to ten different shapes, similar to stones, which she then brought to life by using a 3D printer.

Don Quixote confuses his imagination with reality and succumbs, time and time again, to this breakdown between fact and fiction. But if we subtract the difference and the fiction becomes real, these concepts cease to be opposing elements. Guided by Quixotesque contradictions, Anna Dot's action, both visionary and precise and epic and comical at the same time, demystifies any precision mechanism, poking fun at the novel's doctrine and realism. So, once we've got the stones, the question is: Now what? Is it safe to say we won't succumb to error again? Misunderstandings clash with our automatisms, making each mistake an opportunity to learn. 'If I'm not mistaken, the blows I give myself always strike on the same door', writes Chantal Maillard in *Lógica borrosa*. The real issue, according to Dot, is the level of expectation that we bear, which makes us lose sight of things. The more defined our beliefs, the less receptive we are to allowing ourselves to be seized by the unexpected.

The work of Anna Dot explores the infinite forms and poetic deviations that comprehension, communication and translation errors take.

*The Stones on the Path*  
*Les pedres del camí*  
2017  
10 pieces of LayBrick  
approx. 15 x 15 x 15 cm ea.  
3 wooden modules  
100 x 100 cm ea.  
DIN-A4 dossier

Whether verbal or written, from the coming together of different languages or by means of new technologies, all exercises of interpretation are an adaptation mechanism replete with misunderstanding, which Dot exposes.



# DORA GARCÍA

Valladolid,  
1965

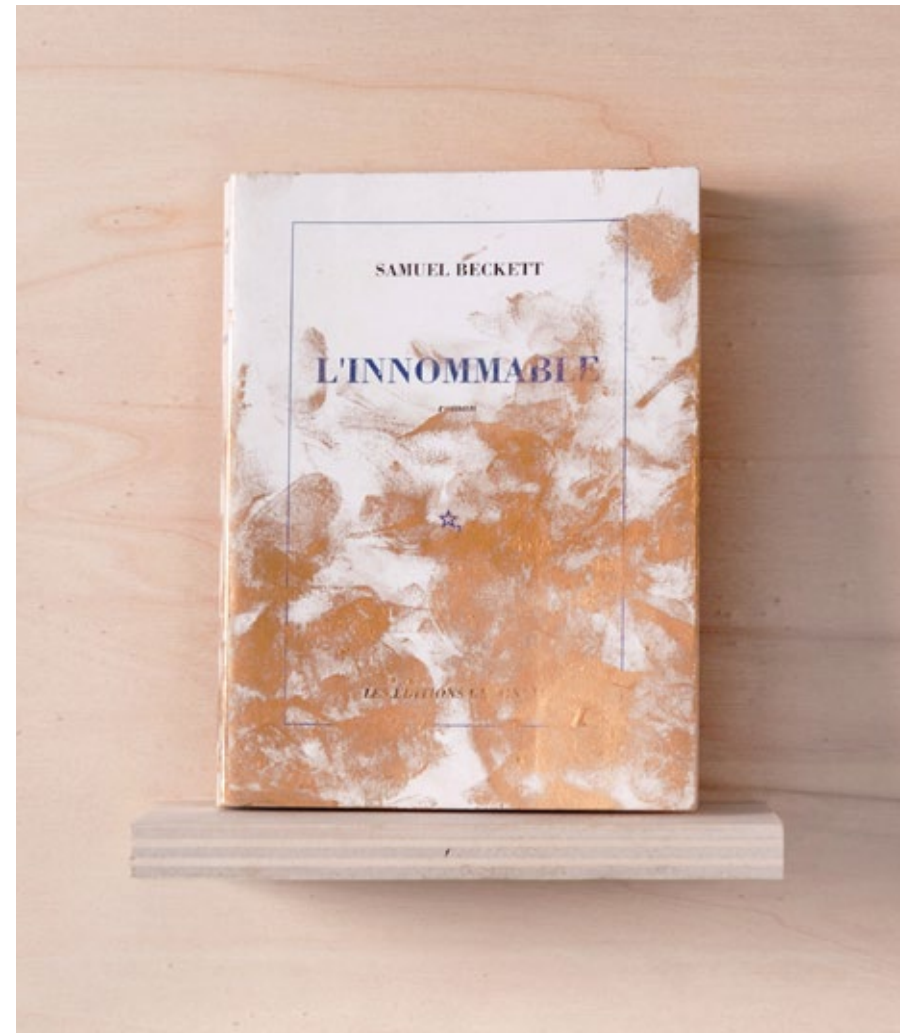
Our mouths cannot hold all the words and we are therefore sometimes found wanting. This inability to express our thoughts or to describe reality is a literary

and linguistic matter, as well as a decisive philosophical one, because the inability to put the world into words is, at the same time, a source of inexhaustible knowledge that can only be communicated through words.

In a series begun in the year 2000, Dora García reads her favourite books with her fingertips covered in gold leaf. Traditionally used in religious icons and altar pieces, gold in this case has a two-fold physical and symbolic message, which simultaneously distinguishes and at the same time sullies the novel. Thus, the artist places reading above the author, as it is the former who grants the latter immeasurable value. However, marks left behind by her fingers blot out the text and relegate it to the still silence of a glass cabinet. The stream of unanswered questions made by the nameless narrator of Samuel Beckett's book is, in the hands of the artist, a precious but silent object. A work of art in which misunderstanding takes advantage of what is infinite to include us: What options open up for us when the book is closed? The marks we leave are unique things that cannot be named, only shared. A gesture as pointless as speaking, which we nonetheless cannot stop doing. An action that renews our commitment to the infinite void of words.

Since the nineties, Dora García has occupied that undefined space between thought and language, literature and action. Her publications, installations, films, drawings and performances are replete with philosophical and literary references that seek to implicate the viewer in the work's creation process.

*Read with golden fingers*  
(*L'Innommable* – Samuel Beckett)  
2010  
Book and gold leaf  
18x13.5 cm  
Courtesy of Cal Cego.  
Contemporary Art Collection



# ANDREA GÓMEZ

Medellín,  
1977

*Illusion* brings together a selection of drawings based on the type of human behaviour that is associated with language and communication, failed attempts, invisible walls and chains of meaning. The loose and at once delicate brush strokes of Andrea Gómez speak to us of love and power, of tremors and distortion, either unconscious or voluntary, which minimise or broaden the scope of what we seek to explain. Through simple but incomplete gestures, a series of words and sentences and symbols and codes appear like fragmentary signs. Graphic representations that intertwine and thwart one another to the point that we no longer know if we are deciphering or distorting a statement. In opposition to the solipsist exercise of granting meaning, the artist creates and appeals for an articulated and brokered composition of meaning.

Through the combination of words and images, the contrast between black and white, and a mixture of references that encompass everything from science to philosophy through to art (from Epicurus to Ursula K. Le Guin, and from Desmond Morris to Angus Fairhurst), the work of Andrea Gómez is akin to countercultural comic strips. Her underground language of voices and hands emerges as parts of a whole, a body that becomes lost in the void of the page or in the ellipsis

of sequential narrative in order to avoid closed messages. Critical of the reductionism of advertising, Gómez distributes misunderstanding throughout the room, beyond pages and walls, onto the street, where decontextualisation transforms her drawings into a series of posters with no aspirations other than that of the exhibition: disseminating misunderstanding.

## *Illusion*

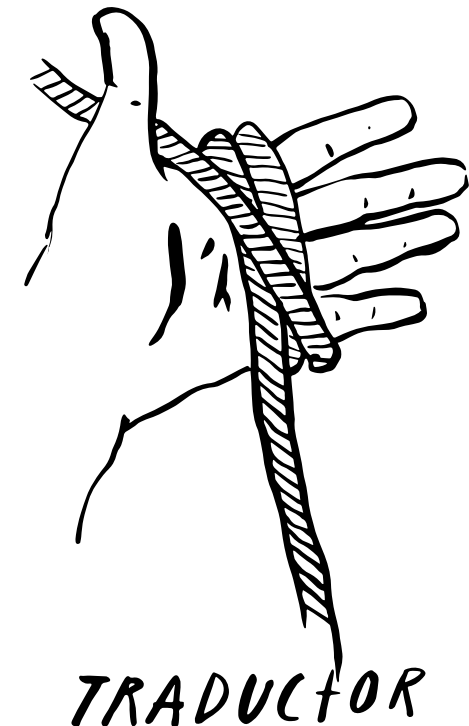
*Ilusión*

2018

Indian ink drawings on  
framed paper  
40 x 30 cm ea.

(not including frame)  
(24 + 2 distributed throughout  
the room)

Varying installation dimensions  
25 posters distributed throughout  
the town/city



# NÚRIA GÜELL

Vidreres,  
1981

After a stint living in Cuba, Núria Güell offered to marry whichever Cuban wrote her 'the most beautiful love letter in the world'. The

advertisement stipulated that the artist would cover the cost of the wedding, flights and applying for Spanish citizenship. A jury composed of Cuban prostitutes chose the winning letter and, in doing so, her future husband. Once married and having obtained citizenship from the Spanish government, they got divorced. Through this union, the artist subverts the boundaries that span an island and a law to denounce migratory policies, as well as their social impact: games of seduction, both infantile and pre-established, become a matter of ridicule, and desire, marked by personal benefit and escapism, transfers what is experienced in the streets –where Cubans and tourists conceal their own interests with misunderstood love– to a contract. Güell thus attacks the power relations that we have come to accept and even idealise, from romantic love to global capitalism, through to altruistic humanitarian aid volunteering, which lends its name to the action.

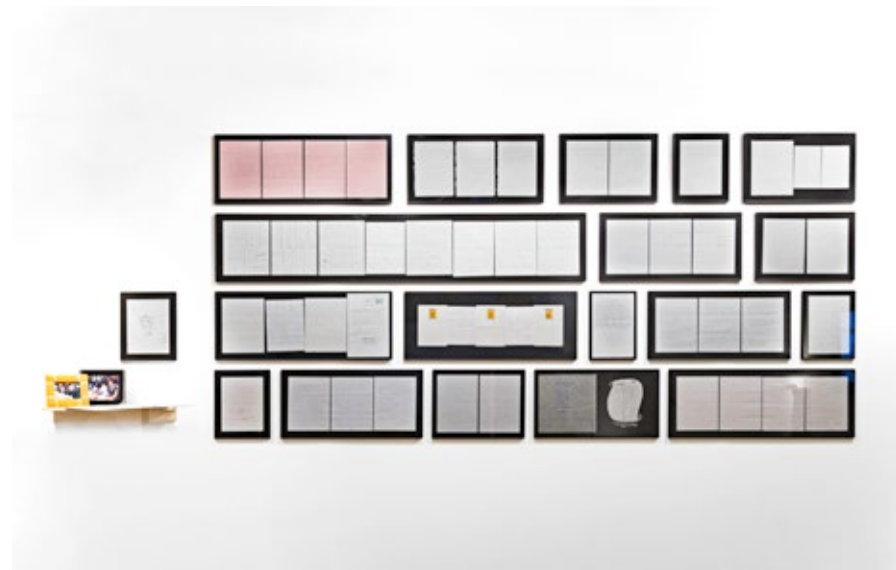
For Núria Güell, art is a place of struggle for probing the legal and ethical boundaries that condition our existence. Aware of the privileges that she enjoys due to artistic context and her European status,

*Humanitarian Aid  
(The competition and  
the outcome)*  
2008–2013

Framed letters and shelf  
with documentation and  
two framed photographs  
(21 x 2 x 16 cm and 23.5 x  
1.2 x 18.5 cm)

Varying installation dimensions

Güell leverages the situation to search for complicity and to immerse herself in the cracks in the system. In doing so, her practice penetrates everyday life and vice versa, experiencing first-hand the difficulties involved in dismantling the established order and facing up to the consequences.



# ALEXANDRA LEYKAUF

Nuremberg, 1976

In a park, various people walk along a path that branches off in different directions. One couple seems to reappear at different points along the path. The title of the piece indicates that it is a public park in Munich. However, the photographer has not captured the shot herself but has instead taken a photograph of an image in a book. The image is reminiscent of the film *L'année dernière à Marienbad*, directed by Alain Resnais, from a screenplay by Alain Robbe-Grillet, based on the fantasy novel *The Invention of Morel*, by Adolfo Bioy Casares. The invention that the book deals with is a machine capable of capturing reality, an artifice propping up all films, which today, almost a century later, continue to deceive us. According to the art historian Estrella del Diego, photography and film exemplify the misunderstanding that dominates our visual system. Since their invention, mimetic means of reproduction transformed copies into reality, a 'fabulous entanglement' that established a new outlook: with apparent transparency, the line between what is real and what is fiction dominates our view of the world, while also manipulating and controlling it.

As opposed to that 'open window on the world' with which L. B. Alberti defined perspective in Renaissance painting and which André Bazin would later apply to film, Alexandra Leykauf exposes the constructed character of all forms of representation. By means of appropriation, enlargements and superimposition, on both a small and large scale, her work centres on the superficiality of images and the false impartiality of exhibitory elements, from books to museums. In this case, the fold in the page and the break that it creates expose the misunderstanding as a way of introducing the dialogue. A visual game

that shatters the image's perspective to reveal the kaleidoscope of fictions upholding it. It is another way to make us see, as Magritte said, that it is not a park, a film, or a book.

*Luitpoldpark*  
2003  
Framed photograph  
73 x 113 cm  
Private collection, Barcelona





# MARIONA MONCUNILL

Tarragona,  
1984

If confusion is inherent to language, we cannot talk about misunderstanding *from the outside*. For that reason, we have invited Mariona Moncunill to

question the exhibition's discourse, responding, from her own point of view, to the texts explaining the artworks. The labels that accompany the pieces are thus formed of two different pieces of writing, corresponding to each one of these two perceptions. By contradicting what is described, a space of communication and dissent, which extends to the visitor, is able to prosper, while demonstrating the false objectivity of these labels, which always possess a kind of consensual authority. Since the labels are placed on the fringes of the artwork, but they are also what give it meaning, they become a place in which the work is interpreted and contextualised. Modifying these shortcuts means revealing the implicit power that we have given them without realising. Moncunill calls into question the supposed neutrality of the exhibition space, shattering the contemplative safety of a normal exhibition visit and highlighting that behind the selection of artists, the layout of the room and the way each piece deals with the theme, there is a series of decisions and criteria that someone has set out in order to guide your interpretation. With the help of the artist, this is the exhibition and curator's way of applying the lessons learnt and making visible what is being asked of viewers: that they open themselves up to misunderstanding.

Through analysis and dialogue, Moncunill intervenes in contexts shaped by convention and codes, such as museums, libraries and botanical gardens, in order to reveal their preconceived – and therefore dismountable – character. With a critical, although often camouflaged gaze, she addresses both institutional framework and the users

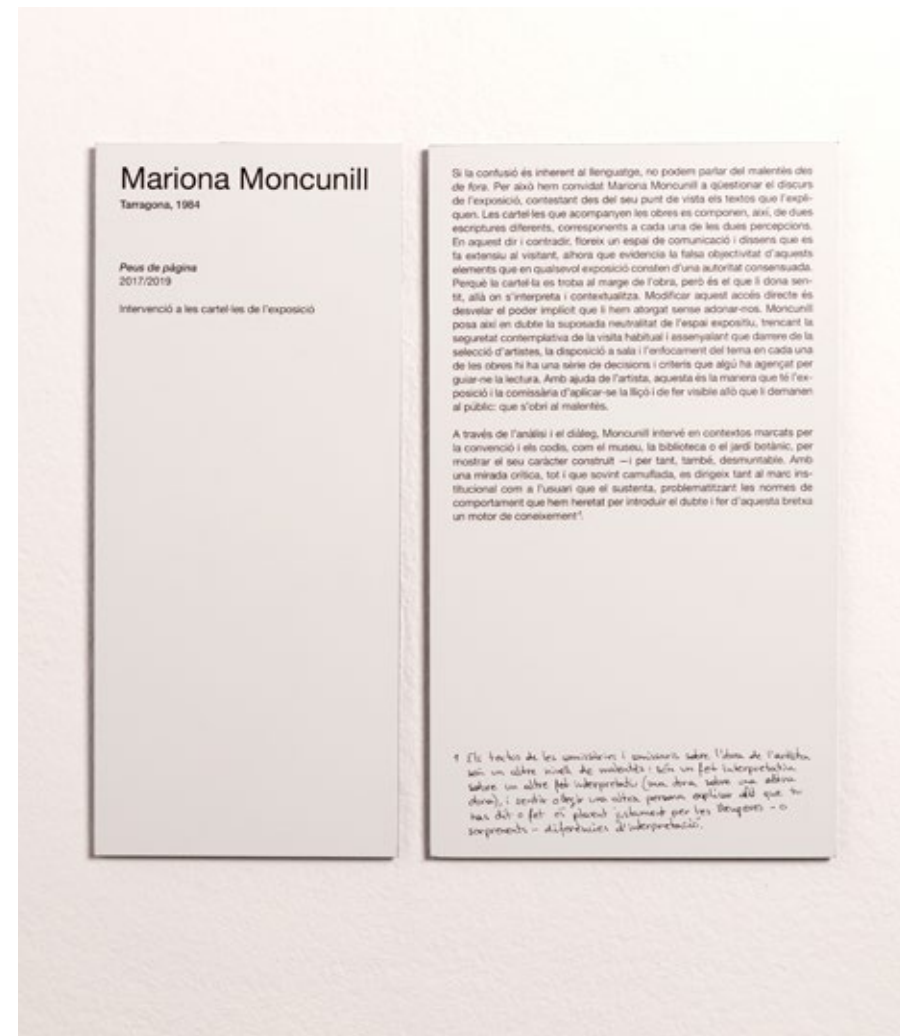
that sustain it, by questioning the social norms that have been passed down to us, in order to instil doubt and make this gulf a driving force for change.

## Footnotes

Peus de pàgina

2017/2019

Exhibition label intervention



# MIREIA SALLARÈS

Barcelona,  
1973

The female orgasm is one of the most misunderstood and fascinating aspects of human history. Aside from the subjective experience which makes an exact definition impossible, the indifference and violence exerted by men throughout centuries of history is of little help. Only 60 years ago did people begin to ask and observe women. Up until that point, and even to this day, female pleasure and genitals have been, if not ignored, understood in male terms and made taboo. Everything from physiological and psychological aspects to those of a moral, religious, cultural and scientific nature have exploited the female body and sex.

Life stories, in all their glory and diversity, are the main focus of Mireia Sallarès. As part of her long-distance research, the artist explores concepts such as love, violence, immigration and the truth through travels and interviews that take the form of videos, publications and interventions in public space. *Little Deaths* is a book and five-hour-long documentary that compiles four years of conversations on sexuality with over 30 Mexican women of different ages, social class, creed and profession. First-person accounts that expose a sense of intimacy constructed and exploited by male power from its public platform. Sharing is liberating, and thus, a varied group of voices come together to show how orgasms differ but also to highlight their common denominator: the political status that comes with being a woman. The title of the piece alludes to *la petite mort*, an expression used to refer

to a post-orgasmic state: a fusion of pleasure and pain that also represents the daily struggle against silence of so many women who experience first-hand repression, prostitution, femicide or exile.

*Little Deaths*  
*Las muertes chiquitas*  
2006-2009  
Video, colour, sound  
20 min 45 sec  
Clip from a five-hour-long film  
Publication



# BATIA SUTER

Bülach,  
1967

Centuries ago, in our quest to comprehend the world, we created the encyclopaedia, replaced just several decades ago by Internet databases. Criterion for selecting and re-

distributing this knowledge has always been systematic in its approach, in the same way that the scientific frame of reference, through which we have observed and indoctrinated the world, is far from objective.

For over 30 years Batia Suter has been making cuttings and collecting images from more than 1,000 science, history and art books and magazines. Her collection is compiled in the form of artist books or distributed across the room's walls. When observed out of context, the images are stripped of their original meaning and cease to be factual illustrations to instead become constellations of shapes and textures of the most extraordinary nature. Faced with this natural world with no imposed learning systems or hierarchies, our associations teach us that meaning is an endless game of compromise. The more we wish to know the world through images, the more we distance ourselves from it.

Her *Parallel Encyclopaedia*, now in its second volume, is understood not as a compendium of everything that exists but rather as speculation on everything that is possible. Suter thus alters the order

of the discourse and exposes the potency of imagination beyond the power of science and photography. As opposed to the idea of truth and fidelity, the artist upholds notions of eclecticism and indetermination to state that ambiguity is not the opposite of definition and that an image heralds a rich imagination.

*Parallel Encyclopaedia #2*  
*Extended*  
2018  
Artist book  
29 x 22 x 4.5 cm  
Display of parts of the book  
on walls  
Varying installation dimensions



# PILVI TAKALA

Helsinki,  
1981

At the entrance to Disneyland, the artist, dressed as Snow White, is expelled from the park so that she does not get confused with the 'real' character, an employee also wearing

costume, who complies with established codes of conduct. The irony of the action, both subtle and obstinate, demonstrates the character's false naivety and the absurdity of the arguments used by security personnel to ward against intrusion. Two positions that reveal the cynicism of one of the greatest empires in the world, a factory of dreams that doesn't only construct and manipulate the fantasies of those at the most vulnerable age, but that takes ownership of them for business and marketing purposes. In a theme park in which the motto is '*Dreams come true*' the truth is a complete lie: innocence is the sole preserve of children, and dreams are owned by Disney.

Pilvi Takala uses video to document her actions, whereby the artist herself or hired actors gatecrash restricted contexts in order to breach and disrupt the unspoken rules legitimising the social and labour conventions that govern our day-to-day lives. Not everyone has access to this exclusive, and therefore exclusionary, system, which controls everything from work to leisure. Rethinking what we have come to accept and normalise in terms of human relationships, the concept of time and financial remuneration means distancing ourselves from any preconceived ideas. Therefore, we know how Takala's performances start but not how they end. Her gesture is a minor breach, not necessarily an offence, yet uncomfortable tension gradually intensifies until

she comes across as a threat, a public danger. Raising the subject of suspicion from personal experience is an invitation to question appearances from within, to *assimilate* criticism; in other words, to become aware in order to take sides.

*Real Snow White*  
2009  
Video, colour, sound  
9 min 19 sec  
Team: Raphaël Siboni,  
Ahmet Ögüt, Pénélope Gaillard,  
Anna Savolainen





# VISITOR SERVICES

In order to offer visitors resources for contextualising, exploring and engaging with the themes and ideas set forth in the exhibition and the artists participating in it, *In Praise of Misunderstanding* also offers a documentation space, an education service and complementary related activities.

# DOCUMENTATION SPACE

- AAVV, *Manifiesto errorista*. Autonomous City of Buenos Aires: Etcétera, 2005.
- BACHMANN, Ingeborg. *Poesia completa*. Valencia: Alfons el Magnànim, 1995.
- BECKETT, Samuel. *El innombrable*. Madrid: Alianza, 2012.
- BLANCHARD, Daniel. *Crisis de palabras*. Madrid: Acuarela, 2007.
- BRAIDOTTI, Rosi. *Por una política afirmativa*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2018.
- DIEGO, Estrella del. *A propósito del malentendido*. Madrid: online, 2016.
- LE GUIN, Ursula K. *Contar es escuchar*. Madrid: Círculo de Tiza, 2018.
- HARAWAY, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- LONZI, Carla. *Escupamos sobre Hegel*, Barcelona: Anagrama, 1981.
- MAILLARD, Chantal. *Matar a Platón*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2004.
- MORALES, Cristina. *Lectura fácil*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2018.
- MOUFFE, Chantal. *L'illusion du consensus*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2016.
- PAZ, Octavio. *La llama doble. Amor y erotismo*. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1993.
- PLATH, Sylvia. 'El coratge de callar'. In: *Arbres d'hivern*. Barcelona: Edicions del Mall, 1985.
- RANCIÈRE, Jacques. *El desacuerdo. Política y filosofía*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1996 [La Mésentente. Paris: Galilée, 1995].
- RUSSELL, Bertrand. 'Vaguedad'. In: Bunge, M. (ed.), *Antología semántica*. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1960.
- VIDAL, Blanca Llum. *Aquest amor que no és u*. Barcelona: Ultramarinos, 2018.
- WOOLF, Virginia. *Una cambra pròpia*. Barcelona: La Temerària, 2014.

# EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

The educational services of the Visual Arts Programme of the Provincial Council of Barcelona:

- are led by **professionals specialising** in art and education.
  - are aimed at and adapted to **different sections of the public**: individuals, families, schools and specific groups (entities, kids' activity groups, elderly people, etc.).
  - factor in **accessibility and functional diversity** (special education, people with Alzheimer's, etc.).
  - are designed as **enhanced learning tours, interactive tours, performative visits and experimental workshops**.
- have the following **general objectives**:
    - To stimulate curiosity and interest in the themes set forth in the exhibition.
    - To promote active reception, participation, respect, the association of ideas, experimentation, critical thinking and creativity.
    - To foster individual or group work.
    - To offer tools of knowledge, contextualisation and analysis.
    - To create the confidence to approach contemporary art and current issues (social, political, economic, scientific, etc.) in an autonomous manner.
    - To share the enjoyment of learning.



The educational service of the exhibition *In Praise of Misunderstanding* provides active tours of the exhibition hinging on three ideas:

- Approaching contemporary art as a fertile playing field for thinking and as a space for questioning and reflecting on aspects that sometimes go unnoticed or that we take for granted in our everyday lives. On this basis, we will also discuss our experiences of misunderstanding in our day-to-day lives.
- Work and reflection based on the exhibited works. The starting point will be the exhibition pieces, with which we wish to engage based on their creators' ideas and the questions they pose, by reflecting on their possible intentions.
- Developing the activity by putting visitors at the centre of the tour and the dialogue, using their concerns, discoveries and uncertainty as the basis for initiating conversation on the exhibited works. For this reason, each tour will be unique and will depend to a large extent on the interests and contributions of the group.

From the moment the tour begins, when we will reflect on the title of the exhibition *In Praise of Misunderstanding*, we will recognise that the exhibition and the works that it comprises challenge language and communication, and that it is precisely the way in which we approach them that also depends by and large on words and conversation. Therefore, during the course of the tour, we will also experience misunderstanding in all its many facets and intricacies. We will thus explore the various meanings that the words we frequently use possess without realising: we will spend some time examining them some more, reflecting on their living nature and we will ask them questions so they can do the same to us.



## FOR SCHOOL GROUPS

### Let's explore misunderstanding

- Aimed at: groups of primary school pupils
- Type of activity: enhanced learning tour and experimental workshop
- Duration: 1 hr. 15 min
- Aimed at: groups of compulsory and higher secondary education and advanced vocational training pupils
- Type of activity: enhanced learning tour and experimental workshop
- Duration: 1 hr. 30 min

We will begin the tour with a dynamic activity, which will open the way for our first, introductory misunderstandings. We will pay particular attention to certain pieces in the exhibition in order to reflect on ideas and notions such as set phrases, errors, whether or not synonyms exist, the accuracy of words, contradictions and meaning, among others. The activity will conclude with a creative activity related to the piece *Parallel Encyclopaedia* by Batia Suter in which we will think about the scope of knowledge and its relationship with language. Throughout the whole tour we will be equipped, as witnesses of misunderstanding, with a full range of dictionaries. In fact, we will also contribute to the creation of new dictionaries!

## FOR GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S

### More than words

- Aimed at: groups of people with Alzheimer's together with carers and/or relatives
- Type of activity: enhanced learning tour and experimental workshop
- Duration: 1 hr. (flexible)

We will take a look at the works and discuss them; we will engage with contemporary art in order to converse, share experiences, imagine and, above all, get excited.

## FOR ADULTS

### Crosswords

- Aimed at: those over 16 years of age (with or without an advance booking)
- Type of activity: interactive tour
- Duration: 1 hr.

In order to contemplate and enjoy the artworks, first we must talk – to find the words we need to think about them. However, by talking among ourselves and with the pieces we will soon notice that, at times, the more we need words, the more we seem to lack them or the more confusing, almost odd, they seem. The tour will be structured around a creative, interactive tour in

which conversation – the words we're able to find and those we're not able to find – will be the common theme.

## FOR FAMILY GROUPS

### Word play

- Aimed at: families with children preferably over the age of six
- Type of activity: enhanced learning tour and experimental workshop
- Duration: 1 hr. 30 min

Based on the same approach of the activities aimed at school groups, the tour will be structured around minor creative actions, through which we will simulate some of the ideas that form the basis of the works comprising the exhibition: we will cut out texts, combine words, put names to things, invent things with names, etc.

The educational service of the exhibition *In Praise of Misunderstanding* is designed and produced by A Bao A Qu, a cultural organisation dedicated specifically to devising and developing projects that combine culture, artistic creation and education. Ever since it was founded in 2004 it has sought to introduce creation to schools together with creators from various artistic and cultural fields (filmmakers, photographers, visual artists, etc.) by means of a process in which teachers also play an active role. The organisation develops all its projects from a triple perspective: cultural, educational and social.

A Bao A Qu is responsible for the programmes *Cinema en Curs* (started in Catalonia and now international in its scope) and *Fotografia en Curs*; it heads the European project *Moving Cinema*, and it devised, together with the Culture Institute of Barcelona and the Education Committee of Barcelona, the programme *Creators in Residence* in Barcelona's schools. The organisation regularly collaborates with the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB), the Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona, Foto Colectània, Filmoteca de Catalunya and the Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe (CGAI), among others.  
([www.abaoaqu.org](http://www.abaoaqu.org))





## RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Visual Arts Programme of the Provincial Council of Barcelona promotes the organisation of specific related activities in each municipality that its touring exhibitions visit. Said activities are conceptualised and designed based on the interests, needs and potential of each municipality, which is responsible for choosing those that are of the most interest to them from a range of proposals or proposing new activities.

*In Praise of Misunderstanding* offers talks, conferences, performative activities, poetry recitals, training activities, shows, etc., led by the curator, artists participating in the exhibition and other artists and professionals:

- Guided tour of *In Praise of Misunderstanding*, led by the curator of the exhibition, **Joana Hurtado Matheu**.
- Action *La Tarte Tatin*, led by the artist participating in *In Praise of Misunderstanding* **Anna Dot**.
- Screening of the full film *Little Deaths* followed by a possible presentation and/or debate, led by the artist participating in *In Praise of Misunderstanding* **Mireia Sallarès**.
- Performance *Moat I*, led by the artist **Laia Estruch**.
- Reflections on misunderstanding and the recital *Aquest amor que no és u*, led by the poet and translator **Blanca Llum Vidal**.
- Poetry and electronic music performance *if true: false; else: true*, led by the poet and teacher **Maria Sevilla** and the musician and mathematician **Joan Martínez**.
- Talk *Art, Censorship and Political Correctness* based on the book *Lectura fàcil*, led by its author, the writer, choreographer and dancer **Cristina Morales**.
- Contemporary dance performance *Catalina*, led by the contemporary dance company *Iniciativa Sexual Femenina*.



# TOURING PROGRAMME

- 1. Mataró**  
From 14 September  
to 17 November 2019  
Can Palauet exhibition space
- 2. Vilafranca del Penedès**  
From 17 January to 22 March 2020  
Sala dels Trinitaris
- 3. Vilanova i la Geltrú**  
From 27 March to 14 June 2020  
Centre d'Art Contemporani La Sala
- 4. Manresa**  
From 27 August 25 October 2020  
Centre Cultural El Casino
- 5. Badalona**  
From 6 November 2020  
to 17 January 2021  
Sala Josep Uclés  
Centre Cultural El Carne
- 6. Granollers**  
From 22 January  
to 21 March 2021  
Museu de Granollers
- 7. Martorell**  
From 25 March  
to 20 June 2021  
Muxart. Espai d'Art i Creació  
Contemporanis
- 8. Sant Cugat del Vallès**  
From 17 September  
to 14 November 2021  
Centre d'Art Maristany
- 9. Terrassa**  
From 19 November 2021  
to 22 January 2022  
Sala Muncunill

AFRANCA  
S.VILANOVA  
.MANRESA.  
GRANOLLERS  
SANT CUGAT  
TERRASSA

UNDERSTANDING.  
ON 2019 — 2022  
O / CARCELLER. LÚA  
DAHLBERG. ANNA  
. ANDREA GÓMEZ.  
ANDRA LEYKAUF.  
LL. MIREIA SALLARÈS.  
TAKALA



Diputació  
Barcelona | Àrea de Cultura

**Oficina de Difusió Artística**

Comte d'Urgell, 187  
Edifici del Rellotge  
08036 Barcelona  
oda.artvisuals@diba.cat  
[www.diba.cat/oda/arts\\_visuals](http://www.diba.cat/oda/arts_visuals)  
@ArtsVisualsODA