

Eulalia Valdoserá

Dependences



February 4
April 20, 2009

In fact, our experience of being is something global and combined. It is not only an experience of thought, abstraction and concept, but rather an overall life experience, and therefore one of our emotional, bodily, sexual, fantastic and intuitive reality.

Patrizia Violi, *Linguistic Subject and Feminine Subject*, 1990

The history of the device as a sculptural instrument transports us to the inventions of the modern theatre, to the changes in the architecture of perception that move us away from conventional places to make us play a different part in the drama —a drama that does no longer unfold before us, on the stage that separates it from the world to emphasise that it is unreal, but appears at our feet, enveloping and affecting us openly, physically, making us a part of it, transforming us into actors who perceive our own shadows.

Bartomeu Marí, *Actions, Objects and Devices in the Work of Eulalia Valldosera*, 2008

Having trained at the Barcelona School of Fine Arts in the late eighties, Eulalia Valldosera (Vilafranca del Penedès, 1963) moved to Holland in the early nineties, where she began working on *The Navel of the World*. There she developed a radical aesthetic approach that would leave its mark on all of her future work. Her practice had initially evolved in opposition to the Spanish art scene of the late eighties, where painting had held a privileged position in accordance with international trends such as Italian Transvanguardia and German Neo-Expressionism that regarded art as an object for consumption rather than as a foundation for knowledge. As a result of this focus on commercialisation in exhibitions, the media and universities within Spain, Valldosera moved to the Netherlands where, by contrast, she found a receptive environment favouring alternative practices. Valuing action over production, such practices had the potential for strong creative and critical expression, prompting her evolution from painting and drawing to performance and installation art.

The potential for creating knowledge through the body — her own body— lies at the heart of Valldosera's practice, for it enables her to break away from the constraints of single identities. Starting from this experience she develops processes that allow her to reconfigure herself as a subject, and conceive of herself in relation to others. Action takes precedence over the art object; Valldosera endeavours to make us participate in an action that can be remembered, like a flow of information that is introduced in our memory and forms a part of our life, affecting our everyday activities. Thus Valldosera moves through drawing, photography, film, video and performance to concentrate on installations, the artform which bring together and transforms those that preceded it.



In 1992 Valldosera produced the performance *Bandages*, at once the culmination of her early artistic activities and a turning point in her career. In this work, photography and film enabled her to manipulate her body, so that she appeared either empty or fragmented in relation to space, to the place she has consigned to of the other. Between 1992 and 1996 she created a series of installations under the generic title *Appearances: The Kitchen* (1992), *Love is Sweeter than Wine* (1992), *Shelf for a Hospital Bathroom* (1992), *Vessels* (1996) and finally, *The Period* (not completed until 2006). In these simple projections, light is a fundamental component together with the domestic objects that would soon become a leitmotif in her oeuvre. This series of works sets up an encounter between the body and its spatial surroundings —inhabited space— a situation described in her own words as “emptying the house of the self.” The result is materialised in installations that create a magical ambience which encompasses the viewer. The artist portrays herself through specific objects she has animated. Valldosera’s installations tell personal stories that seek an empathetic response, grounded in the recognition of universal affinities that bind creator to viewers. From this point on, spectators will abandon their normally passive roles in order to play an active part in her installations.

Over the past decade such works have evolved from simple projections based on a classical arrangement of objects—in which, for example, a carpet serves as a pedestal—to a cinematic logic in which projected images flow across a screen. At their most elaborate, they become all-encompassing, displacing the viewer’s gaze through a seemingly infinite multiplication of focal points. *Dependences*, a monumental piece from 2008, serves as the centrepiece around which this exhibition has been articulated. Here the artist foregoes a certain degree of control over her creation, inviting viewers to become consumers and push shopping trolleys containing video projectors around the gallery. The museum is thus revealed to be similar to the supermarket, the airport and other public spaces that are constantly in a state of change. The series of recorded travelling shots generated by each trolley is overlaid onto the viewers’ own movements, propelling, arresting and contradicting their trajectories through the space. By means of this simple device, viewers become aware of the way in which the images have been filmed, and of how recorded reality is always subject to the performance of the camera. The juxtaposition of public and private scenes reveals the co-existence of different narrative threads that surface when we combine individual and collective experiences. Through its experiments with dynamic forms of perception, *Dependences* reveals our need for controlled points of reference in order to determine our place in the world. By bringing together public and private experiences, audiences could be said to be realizing an unwritten score.



In spite of this turn towards movement in Valldosera's recent work, objects have continued to occupy a prominent role in her oeuvre and, in particular, cleansing products. In such works as *Interviewing Objects* the notion of art as a valuable commodity is called into question in a gesture that imparts value to banal everyday objects. First employed as a means for visualising travelling light beams (*Shelf for a Hospital Bathroom*), these cleaning products served as liquid containers for an emotional alchemy (*Love is Sweeter than Wine*). Finally, they became the vehicles for casting large-scale shadows that simulate female figures (*Vessels: Worship of the Mother*). In *Erased Vessels* (2008) the artist once again selects a mass-produced object and erases its brand name in contradistinction to typical advertising strategies, which sell commercial products by promoting an image of the object over its contents, the actual goods. In *Interactive Bottles (Forever Living Products No. 3)* (2008) viewers overhear conversations emerging from inside detergent bottles that are seemingly no different from those we have in our homes. These discussions speak about experiences that some people would rather erase from their lives, at the same time we are allowed to record our own versions of these subjects. By bringing accounts of domestic abuse and sexual harassment in work situations to light in a public venue in ways that arouse feelings ranging from humiliation to respect, Valldosera reveals an uncomfortable truth: the guilt of the innocent.

Nuria Enguita Mayo
Eulalia Valldosera
Barcelona/Valencia 2009

Two books have been published on the occasion of this exhibition. The first, including a DVD of the installation at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, contains essays by Bartomeu Marí and Mar Villaespesa, and reproduces a text by Jorge Luis Marzo. The second, entitled *The Navel of the World*, is structured around Valldosera's notebooks, and comprises a wide selection of images, texts and documentation of her work from 1990 to 1991, and a conversation between the artist and Chantal Maillard.

Solo Publications

Eulalia Valldosera. *Espacios de Trabajo, Work Places*. Saragossa: Ed. CAI, Sala Luzán and Eulalia Valldosera, 2006.

Eulalia Valldosera. *El pare y la mare/ Padre y madre/Father and Mother*. Girona: Ajuntament de Girona and Eulalia Valldosera, 2006.

Nuria Enguita Mayo, Bartomeu Marí, Jorge Luis Marzo and Eulalia Valldosera. *Eulalia Valldosera. Works 1990-2000/ Eulalia Valldosera. Obres 1990-2000*. Rotterdam/Barcelona: Witte de With center for contemporary art/Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2000/2001.

Eulalia Valldosera. *Eulalia Valldosera, on Mirrors, Control and Trust/4 prácticas delante del espejo*. Valencia: Art 3, Galería Joan Prats and Eulalia Valldosera, 2000.

Helena Tatay and Eulalia Valldosera. *Still Life, Eulalia Valldosera, una intervenció en la Galería Joan Prats*. Barcelona: Galería Joan Prats and Eulalia Valldosera, 2000.

Jorge Luis Marzo, Eulalia Valldosera, José Lebrero Stals, Lynne Cooke and Rosa Martínez. *Aparences/Appearances*. Lleida: Ajuntament de Lleida and Eulalia Valldosera, 1996.



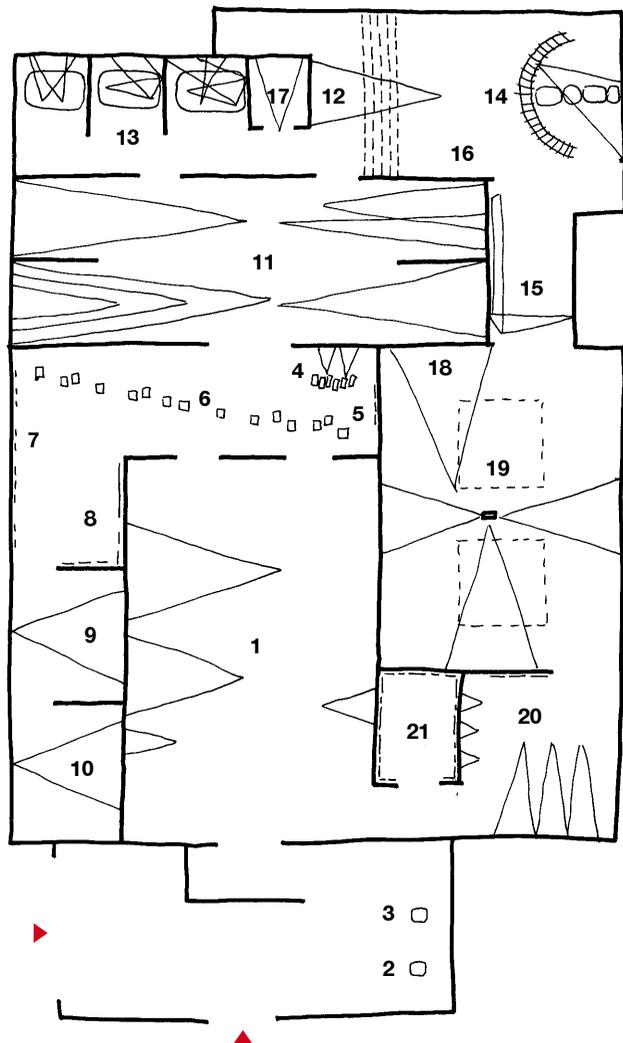
Stills from the videos
screened in *Dependencies*.

Eulalia Valldosera

Dependences

Nouvel Building

First Floor



I Dependences



1

Dependences 2009.

Participatory multi-channel video installation with supermarket trolleys.



2

Trolleys (Dependences #2)

2008. Sequence of still video images.

3

Bottles (Forever Living Products #0)

2008. Sequence of still video images.

II Products



4

Erased Containers (Forever Living Products #1)

2008. Installation with manipulated detergent containers, double video action, photograph.

5

Illegible Prognosis

2003. Facsimiles of a modified document.

6

Interactive Bottles (Forever Living Products #3)

2008. Participatory objects: manipulated cleaning product containers, some broadcasting audio (real testimonies), others allowing users to record their own voices, images with user instructions.



7

Digital Frames (Forever Living Products #2)

2008. Sequences of still images projected on seven home-digital screens.

III Objects



8
Generated Objects 2008.
Selected photographic series.



9
Interviewing Objects #1: Reloaded 1997-2008.
Interviews with three people linked to the art world and their household objects, arranged on a category map.

10
Interviewing Objects #2: Migrant Objects 2001-2008.
Interviews with three immigrants and their household objects, arranged on a category map.

IV Appearances

11
Vessels: Worship of the Mother. I Seed-Woman, II Trinity, III Fairy, IV Seductress 1996.
Series of four light installations with cleaning product containers.



12
The Kitchen 1992.
Film installation.

13
Love is Sweeter than Wine. Three Stages in a Relationship 1992. Light installation.



14
The Period 2006. Participatory light installation.

15
Shelf for a Hospital Bathroom 1992. Light installation.

V Bodies

16
Devotion Portrayed "...confía demasiado en su cabeza..." 1997. Video performance and cleaning trolley with monitor.



17
Photographs (1991-2006)
(Burns series) 1991
Appearances 1993-1994
Embrace and Struggle 1995
Fighting 1996
Still Life 1999
Work Places 2006
Series of photographs projected in a sequence of slides.



18
Bandages 1992
Brief documentation of the performance on 16mm film.
Loop 1996. Documentation of the performance.

VI Waste



19
The Navel of the World: #1 The Belly of the Earth, #2 Breasts, #3 The Arse of the World 1991-2001.
Installation, floors, text, slides and videos.



Slides showing the process of installing and sweeping cigarette ends from the floor, and for other similar installations such as *Table* or *Bed (Documents series)*.

Sweep #1 (The Belly of the Earth) 1991, **Sweep #2 (Breasts)** 2000, **Sweep #3 (The Arse of the World)** 2001
Video recording of the artist sweeping each of the three floors with cigarette ends.

VII Maps



20

The Navel of the World.

Documentation 1990-2008.

Image Archive

Images from the artist's archive produced before, during and after the creative process for

The Navel of the World series.

Notebooks IV, VI, VIII

(1990-1991) 2008.

Video showing three of the artist's notebooks.



21

The Navel of the World. Inks

1990-1991. Series of forty-eight Indian ink drawings.

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Monday to Saturday
from 10.00 to 21.00.

Sunday
from 10.00 to 14.30.
Closed on Tuesday.

Visitors are asked to clear the rooms 15 minutes before closing.

www.museoreinasofia.es

Photographs

Eulalia Valldosera © VEGAP, 2009

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I welcome you
to my space. I'm
capable of erasing,
of eliminating
everything you
wish to forget.
If you tell me,
I will keep it inside,
and in a few days it
will have disappeared
from my space
forever, and from
yours, too.

From Interactive Bottles (Forever Living Products n°3)

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía



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