# SCENE 6:
# TO CLOSE BY OPENING
# 28.05.19–30.06.19

## ARTISTS
Luz Broto, Black Tulip, June Crespo, Antoni Hervàs, Ocaña, Tere Recarens, Jara Rocha + Joana Moll, Francesc Ruiz, Carlos Sáez, Julia Spínola, Y€$Si Perse + La Plebeya + Mar Pons + Georgina Soler

## CURATORS
David Armengol, Sonia Fernández Pan, Eloy Fernández Porta, Sabel Gavaldon, Anna Manubens

The exhibition ends with this, the sixth scene. We clarified the difficulty of beginning in the first scene.

We decided that we did not want to tell a story but to cut through the story. In other words, to extract possible sections from the solid density of memory strata. *Fardo* (2018) by Julia Spínola began in January as a heavy, compact mass of pressed cardboard to become *Brazos, chorros, mismo II* (2019), an uncompacted version of the original volume. Each scene has been like one of those jet arms, sections extracted from the heavy mass of history.

The difficulty is now that of closing. We have been keeping the contours of an exhibition unstable for months. Its last configuration was not able to suddenly lead to a place of detention, to a quiet place in which to surrender to the appeasement of the static. This last scene is a closing that opens. It leads to something that has to do with erasing or blurring. Erasing boundaries and identities, including that of space. This scene is not an "end", but a fade-to-black transition containing and anticipating the uncertainty of what is to come.

### BLURRING THE PERIMETER

In 2012, Luz Broto presented in La Capella *Make Way for the Unknown*. A title that encapsulates what this scene invokes. It was then a question of opening the windows and doors that had remained closed since the chapel of this former Hospital de la Santa Creu had been converted to an exhibition space. In order to carry out that action, the artist reviewed not only the history of the place but also the changes in its degrees of porosity. Especially the sum of small decisions and people who came together to manage their areas and opening and closing times. Seven years later, Luz Broto's new work, *To Extract the Locks,* extends its attention to liminal zones so as to become positioned once again at the interface between inside and outside. This time, the artist opens the hole of the lock, suppressing what makes the closure possible. The locks of the two doors of the main access have been removed, affecting the security protocol of the space.

Francesc Ruiz also generates an indoor/outdoor continuity, but with a different strategy. *Lycamobile* (2019) recreates inside La Capella the graphics of Lyca Mobile, which usually rearranges and fills shop fronts that sell its products. According to the artist, Lyca Mobile is a form of "adhesive architecture", a coating operation that is stealthily yet relentlessly standardising shops and streets at a global scale. The inside/outside relationship therefore becomes much more unsettling. Adhesive homogenisation erases the distinction between gallery and urban space, leaving us without outer corporate logic and implications.

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This same tension between inside and outside underpins the two pieces by Tere Recarens. Tere Recarens first exhibited her *Terremoto* installation in La Capella in 1996. Its staging involved fragile shelves and objects that quivered and fell as you walked upon an uneven, unstable floor. The artist now returns to La Capella twenty-three years later with two works that are related to other countries. Despite the geographical distance, the values that define her work based on a vital intensity remain the same. In this sense, her life adventures in other contexts imply a methodology of recognising and empathising with others and her experiences in places such as Mali or Iran have provided her with an intimate and emotional approach, one in which her way of life connects and equates to the people she meets. Living with little money therefore helps her to understand the country's economy and operate at a local level, in other words, based on a real knowledge of each territory's daily, social and political situations. *Écouter Mali* (2016) is an installation that collects phrases from Malian intellectuals and residents through the local technique of *bogolan*, a system of drawing and writing directly on to cotton fabrics with mud. Land and place therefore speak literally through the opinions and ideas of the people living on and in it outside of any hierarchy. In an intentionally forced manner, its staging traverses the white, neutral wall that acts as an entrance arch to the exhibition and adds a new barrier and distance between the neighbourhood and the visual arts. Hanging like washing in an outdoor space, the installation contemplates a final detail that is formally subtle yet crucial at a discursive level: the piece is facing Mecca. *Foroushieh, 1398 (For Sale)* is a recent video in which the artist (artistically) reacts to the volatile situation in Iran following the serious floods that occurred between March and April of this year (2019), but also to the corruption of its government and harmful international policies that challenge it. In this way, complicity, affection and almost belonging have led her to develop a poetic action. Recarens travels on the subway in Tehran selling drawings on translucent paper with contours of bodies and their joints. The action lasts until a transport worker tells her that it would be better if she stopped.

Jara Rocha and Joana Moll also extend the perimeter of the exhibition by addressing its virtual space. Their intervention takes as its work area the home page of the La Capella website to observe the technocolonial aspect of interfaces. The operation comprises traversing the patina of front-end information (visible layer of a website) in order to track inadvertently processed back-end data (code layer and data access).

Their attention has been particularly drawn to trackers, to the agents that are invoked when entering a website. This entry gesture is known as a "call". Rocha and Moll's collaboration investigates to whom this call is addressed; which routes are activated and which agents arrive to absorb and monetise data when we call the La Capella website. "On 9 May 2019, we inspected all the elements that La Capella's website is built upon," they explain. "This exercise in express computing microarchaeology revealed a total of 111 layers of information encapsulated in different formats, encoded by Anglo acronyms such as JS (JavaScript), HTML (HyperText Markup Language), CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) or PNG (Portable Network Graphics), among others. Through an exercise in reverse engineering, each of these layers opened up an entire world whose invisible tentacles profoundly affect the preservation of contemporary structuring that is still aligned with commercial industrial colonialism. This work is the effort of putting these layers into circulation to trigger a discussion about what response capacity –*responsi(a)bilities*– we assume when confronted by such mundane objects as a public website and which we are able to assume."

The postcards they present reflect this microarchaeology: have a URL on the front (a coordinate in virtual space) and the opacified ramifications underpinning it on the back: geopolitical routes, loading time and private companies that support a public website. Thereby proving the almost total crushing of public institutional infrastructures by the privatisation force of international business conglomerates with a locally situated case.

EGO-ERASING

In 2013, Halfhouse presents, or rather hosts, the action by Black Tulip entitled *To Consume a Tree*. Black Tulip is an intermittent group identity that has been conducting actions in Barcelona for ten years. Each Black Tulip action attracts a varied group of people who remain unidentified. Black Tulip therefore resists the parameters of valorisation and merit that operate within the context of art by prioritising the value of collective agency skills. *To Consume a Tree* was about looking for a fallen tree, bringing it to the space of Halfhouse and enabling it to enter through the window by leaving the top outside and the trunk in the chimney. The idea was to reduce the tree to ashes by taking turns to keep the fire alive. It took five days. The ashes of the tree in the exhibition are the remains of a coexistence and bring into play an agency that cannot be identified. "Les Escenes" closes with what it cannot contain.

In September 1983, a few months after his exhibition in La Capella, Ocaña celebrated carnival in his hometown, Cantillana (the county of Sevilla). He had made a sun costume for the occasion and it was burned during the celebration, causing wounds that aggravated his state of health and precipitated his death. The group of La Rosa de Vietnam, whose activity shares and preserves the memory of Ocaña, recently launched a crowdfunding campaign to restore that sun and it can now be seen in La Capella.

*Sol* by Ocaña echoes the reverse or negative image of *To Consume a Tree*. In one case, the ashes are the remains of gathering together around a fire and, in the other, the reason for gathering together and restoring what causes the fire.

We would like to use poetic license to claim that they are animated by the same heat, to use the title of the sculpture *Same Heat* (2018) by June Crespo. The radiator and the fabric would come to illustrate the centre that magnetically attracts presences around it to give rise to something that exceeds the isolated decision of the subject artist, something overflowing in the collective.

## VOLATILISE ONESELF IN AGGREGATION

Antoni Hervàs presents an installation in the exhibition that combines sculpture and drawing: *It's Behind You*. The former is a disguised synthesis of his research into pantomime and, in particular, into Joey Grimaldi, a clown who made this figure the main character of his pantomimes. The figure of a clown is a shape-changer, has no gender and does not participate in moral conventions. It is a shell or skin – like the one hanging from La Capella – that allows whoever inhabits it to become another and avoid reprisals or judgments as regards its satirical, comic actions. This disguise, with a presence that combines the disturbing and the playful, is made up of material quotations of elements accumulated during his research. Furs that allude to the workings of transforming into an animal, an egg that refers to the practice of capturing and archiving make-up designs on eggs, market nets in which fish and wigs are transported, popcorn related to entertainment or a mirror that incorporates the visitor into the clown's identity as someone who depends on and needs laughter.

The drawings accompanying this ghostly skin contain traces of its creative process. It mixes fragments of shows (not only clown, but also cabaret, burlesque or drag), as well as films, series or conversations, all with the aim of inducing a mood from which to look at the sculpture.

Y€$Si Perse is an empty space of identity and gender paradigms. It is its crossing-out, its randomness or alloy, its shapeshifting. Y€$Si Perse is an avatar that was born and resides in social media, maintaining its identity in a state of trance by drawing on influences ranging from the Radical Faeries of the 1970s to recent otherkin and also cyborg culture.

In a kind of accelerated *flash-forward*, *The Accelerationist Opera – Act 1* by Y€$Si Perse + La Plebeya + Mar Pons + Georgina Soler recaptures both the world of Ocaña and the Frankenstein-like feature of pantomime to usher in what may be its performative update by bringing together DJ Set, text and song.

Between Antoni Hervàs and Y€$Si Perse, between the scenic as technological skin and technologies as foundational scene, the sculptural group by Carlos Sáez functions as an archaeological remainder of the prosthetic identity game from another era. It is a kind of "desert of the real" by Jean Baudrillard – with the shells of an interior that flew through the air – now that it no longer astonishes anyone that the real does not exist. Resin, Arduino and laser are the materials used by Carlos Sáez for his installation entitled *Lanza de Gadamer* (2019). A work that questions the dichotomies between smooth and striated, mechanical and organic, industrial structure and rough retraction. It is a video projector, a forest of wiring, an alloy of materials.

Despite its continuous updates and replacements, technology never disappears. It survives residually through its inherent materiality. From the centre of the image to outside the frame. Similarly, they say it is not entirely true that it is possible to delete a digital file. That these survive in imperceptible data of extremely fragmented information. Perhaps the elements making up a scene –in the form of pixels of a contingent, mutant image that can never be made visible and present– are always within it. Sometimes in the centre of that image that can never be obtained. Sometimes in an outside the frame that leads to a crisis of the so-called space/time borders of any artistic context.