

(ENG)

LOLA LASURT *CHILDREN'S GAME*

SOLO EXHIBITION

21.07.20 – 27.09.20

Lola Lasurt's exhibition of paintings, video projections and ceramics looks back at the first contemporary art event hosted in the same venue where it is taking place, now known as La Capella. Staged between November 1968 and January 1969, the retrospective *Miró. Barcelona 1968-69* was dedicated to Catalan artist Joan Miró (1893-1983). A total of 396 works were exhibited throughout the Antic Hospital de la Santa Creu, with 15 recent pieces, including the celebrated 1968 triptych *Painting on white background for the cell of a recluse*, displayed in La Capella itself.ⁱ

Miró did not attend the opening, yet appeared a few days later during a visit of 3,000 children to the exhibition.ⁱⁱ

Lasurt's project addresses the socio-political turmoil of the late 1960s through the figure of Miró, who in the later period of Franco's dictatorship could be described as a 'transitional object' – an artistic bridge between the

old regime and modern democracy. 'Transitional object' was a term used in 1951 by the English paediatrician and psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott to describe comforting objects – such as teddy bears, blankets or dolls – that take the place of the mother-and-child bond in infant development.

Miró's exhibition at La Capella ended on 19 January 1969. The following day in Madrid, the death of antifascist law student Enrique Ruano sparked student and worker agitation, and served as an excuse for the Franco regime to declare a state of emergency shortly after. In her exhibition, Lasurt is interested in how Miró's retrospective was an event on the cusp of a two-month suspension of civic norms and press freedoms, during which critical imagery was conspicuous by its absence.ⁱⁱⁱ

Lasurt's new series of paintings connects a dual sense of transition: a period of exception, at once political

and developmental. Her large canvases appropriate articles that appeared in national newspapers during the state of emergency – faits divers often related to infancy, such as an article about a baby hippopotamus named *Abrazos* (Hugs).^{iv} Each of the paintings adopts the title and format of one of Miró's La Capella paintings, and is accompanied by a reproduction of the original registrar's file documenting the corresponding work.



Lasurt has moreover conceived her exhibition as an experiment in colour which triggers visitors to sense 'absent colours' – hues between the fluorescent green of the paintings and the magenta of the illumination. "While referring to absent historical episodes, my intention here is to provoke perceptive experiences based on theories around absent or physiological colours linked to both [French painter Eugène] Delacroix's colour palette and [German writer Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe's colour theory."^v

One of the two side chapels displays ten small ceramic pieces representing children's toys gathered in Winnicott's last book *Playing and Reality* (1971). The use of ceramic also refers to the clay figures exhibited by Miró in this very same space. Lasurt accompanies each ceramic piece with a caption including an excerpt from the children's descriptions of their toys included in Winnicott's book.

In the other side chapel, where Miró's 1968 triptych originally hung, Lasurt's own triptych refers to a newspaper clipping published in *Tele/eXprés* on 22 January 1969, reporting that Barcelona Zoo's much loved albino gorilla called Snowflake now had an "official girlfriend with big dreamy eyes".

Three separate panels in the main space are based on photographs of the three public sculptures Miró produced for Barcelona to welcome visitors arriving by air (the large ceramic mural at the airport), by sea (the floor mosaic in La Rambla's Pla de l'Os), and by road (an unrealised plan for the Jardins Cervantes that, in 1983, became *Woman and bird* in the Parc Joan Miró). These images were taken by Lasurt on the second anniversary of the 2017 La Rambla terrorist attack, linking to a period of "democratic disenchantment," as she has described, and to a contemporary moment now defined by its own period of hiatus.^{vi}

The accompanying publication gathers archival material that has fed into the research and conceptualisation of the exhibition. Organised chronologically, it includes newspaper clippings published during the state of emergency offering a partial glimpse at a period of forced silence and absences.

Latitudes

ⁱ The triptych was painted in May 1968 and was later gifted by Miró to the Barcelona City Council. It is currently displayed at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona as part of their permanent collection.

ⁱⁱ *El Correo Catalán*, published on 19 November, 1968, reported that Miró did not turn up to his opening following doctor's orders, yet others interpreted his absence as his way of avoiding the political authorities. A few days later, on 30 November 1968, *El Noticiero Universal* covered Miró's attendance and emphasised the visit of 3,000 children to the exhibition. The article was illustrated with a photograph of the 75-year-old artist happily surrounded by youngsters from nearby schools.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Spanish Constitution establishes three degrees of state of emergency (alarm, emergency and siege). The state of emergency of this period is the "Estado de excepción", which literally translates as "state of exception[al circumstances]".

^{iv} Images from the newspapers *El Correo Catalán* (1876-1985), *Diario de Barcelona* (1792-2009), *Tele/eXprés* (1964-1980), *El Noticiero Universal* (1888-1985) and *Solidaridad Nacional* (1939-1979).

^v Lasurt in e-mail correspondence with the writers, 1 May 2020.

^{vi} Not least since Miró's floor mural in La Rambla now marks the spot where the van used in the terrorist incident of 17 August 2017 was abandoned.

LOLA LASURT

Lola Lasurt (Barcelona, 1983) studied Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona (2005), completed a Postgraduate in Aesthetics and Contemporary Art Theory at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (2007), and is currently completing an MPhil at the Royal College of Art, London. She has been resident at the Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee (2015), La Ene, Buenos Aires (2014) and HISK, Ghent (2013-14). Solo shows include *Definitive periodical emission*, Santcorneliarts 2, Cardedeu (2017), *Donation*, Barcelona Gallery Weekend (2016), *Promenade*, 105 Besme, Brussels (2015), *Double authorisation*, Espai13, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2014), and recent group shows include *Generation 2018*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2018),

and the travelling exhibition *Familiar constellations* (2015-16). In 2019 she was awarded the Leonardo Fellowship of Visual Arts by the BBVA Foundation.

εξέδρα ACTIVITIES

Beyond the face-to-face activities targeted at different audiences, *εξέδρα*, Barcelona Producció 2020's mediation programme, is being reformulated with a new approach to the Raval neighbourhood with a view to mediating the exhibitions vis-à-vis a potential future scenario with new confinements.

Based on Children's Game, *εξέδρα* has developed a series of relocations of exhibition elements to public and private locations in the Raval neighbourhood.