

` ` El oscuro en su interior ´ ´

Susana Talayero

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A friend of mine once said that our only guideline is our effort to rise above the constant rubble produced day after day in the studio. In writing about this exhibition, I want to underscore this unceasing endeavour, which is predicated on a direct, physical bond with materials and the obstinate perseverance of working. “What is it that makes us work with such tenacity?” Natalia Ginzburg wondered in *Il mio mestiere*.

I write a text on plastic, a material I use as a container for accumulated remnants and leftovers of paints. I transcribe a text that addresses geologies, detachments and recycling of organic material, and of ourselves, in the midst of a cyclical, dirty and devastating process¹. I repeat the operation with another “plastic container”, this time with a bizarre text². Over time the two materials (plastic and text) turn into the rigid, tattooed shell of a body that undertakes “a disturbing action”. In the two texts I discovered—either in a mineral/material or dreamlike/surreal tone—what was, for me, the practice of working in art. The way in which plastics and texts are combined did not follow any prior script or strategy. Rather it simply happened during the working process as a consequence of the slow time enabled by the studio. If the work flows it is because we push it, and this constant pushing comes from the conviction that “it is something that has to be done all your life long”, to fall back once again on Ginzburg. I try to draw the image for a scene from a film: a large insect crawls into the open mouth of a sleeping teenage girl and she swallows it. I record this scene, isolating it from its narrative context; and from the audio I extract “dark within...”³ And this is where the title of the exhibition comes from. It also gives the title to my latest series of drawings—which I returned to after dyeing them with black and red gouaches—furrowed with grids of lines and superimposed drawings. I view this group of works as an exercise in “worldly introspection”, akin to the continuous motion that goes with those outskirts from which the shell of inner recesses is conformed.

Besides this series of drawings the exhibition also includes the following groups of works:

Drawings made on long unfurled rolls of paper, *El festín de la araña* and *Historias inéditas de la oruga de la col* (2017). In both pieces I paint insects inspired by drawings by Maria Sybille Merian, the 17th-century German artist and explorer, together with personal imagery—provoked by the flow of paint and the action of the body on the paper extended on the floor—that somehow recalls the idea of fleetingness and death of the Baroque vanitas. I am interested in Merian’s scenes of violence provoked by the relationship of subsistence between plants and animals. These drawings led to the group of works called *Relatos de entrenamiento* (2017), provides support for a figuration composed of hybrid creatures and prickly elements over structures of thick lines that are included as parts or events in an unfinished story.

In the series of encaustic paintings *Lavas y volcanes* (2017-2018) and *Mercurizando a 200 grados* (2018) I used the encaustic technique based on the combination of hot wax with pigments. These paintings are made with heat and movement that evoke landscapes of craters, fire, flows and viscous lumps. Its specificity as a medium connects these pieces with the “written plastics” mentioned above.

The video *Una acción perturbadora* (A Disturbing Action), edited by Estanis Comella, was created from an action that took place in June earlier this year within an exhibition⁴, in collaboration with Miguel A. Garcia (electroacoustic mantra) and Leire Aranberri (Butoh dance with plastic).

In the exhibition one can perceive the accumulation of materials, the endless to-and-fro of the studio; one work is a continuation and a consequence of another, together functioning as one endless assembly line. When they leave the studio and enter another space they take on another unexpected life, or, as Annie Dillard wrote, “in the open, anything might happen.”⁵ I am now caught between a feeling of uncertainty and a longing for that ‘anything’ to happen.

¹ Max Frisch. *Man in the Holocene*. The New Yorker: New York, 1980.

² Antonin Artaud. “Art and Death” in *Selected Writings*. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988.

³ From David Lynch’s series *Twin Peaks*, 2017 “This is the water and this is the well. Drink full and descend. The horse is the white of the eyes, and dark within...”

⁴ *Relatos de entrenamiento*, Susana Talayero. CAB Burgos, 2018

⁵ Annie Dillard. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Harper’s Magazine Press: New York, 1974.



Installation view



El festín de la araña, 2017. Watercolor and graphite over mylar, 240 x 1100 cm



Installation view



Installation view



El oscuro en su interior, 2018. Mixed media over paper, 112 x 76 cm



El oscuro en su interior 5/6, 2018. Mixed media over paper, 112 x 76 cm



Installation view



Menina texto, 2018. *Menina carpa*, 2018. Textile and metal



Menina velas, 2018. Textile and metal



El oscuro en su interior 3-2, 2018. Mixed media over mylar, 200 x 110 cm



El oscuro en su interior 1, 2018. Mixed media over mylar, 200 x 110 cm



Installation view



Lavas y volcanes, 2018. Encaustic over wood, 45 x 30 cm



La bicha y Entramado, 2017. Acrylic an graphite over canvas, 230 x 210, 210 x 203 cm



Una acción perturbadora, 2018. Video, 2:28''. Performer: Leire Aranberri. Edition: Estanis Comella. Sound: Miguel A. Garcia.



Installation view



Installation view



Mercuryando a 200 grados, 2018. Encaustic over wood, 60 x 47 cm



Mercuryando a 200 grados, 2018. Encaustic over wood, 2, 60 x 47 cm



Installation view



Installation view



Para coleccionistas moteros, 2018. Graphite and watercolor over mylar, 48 x 33 cm



Relatos de entrenamiento, 2017. Ink, acrylic and graphite over paper, 170 x 140 cm. *Cactus 1*, 2017. Ink, acrylic and graphite over paper, 102 x 72 cm.



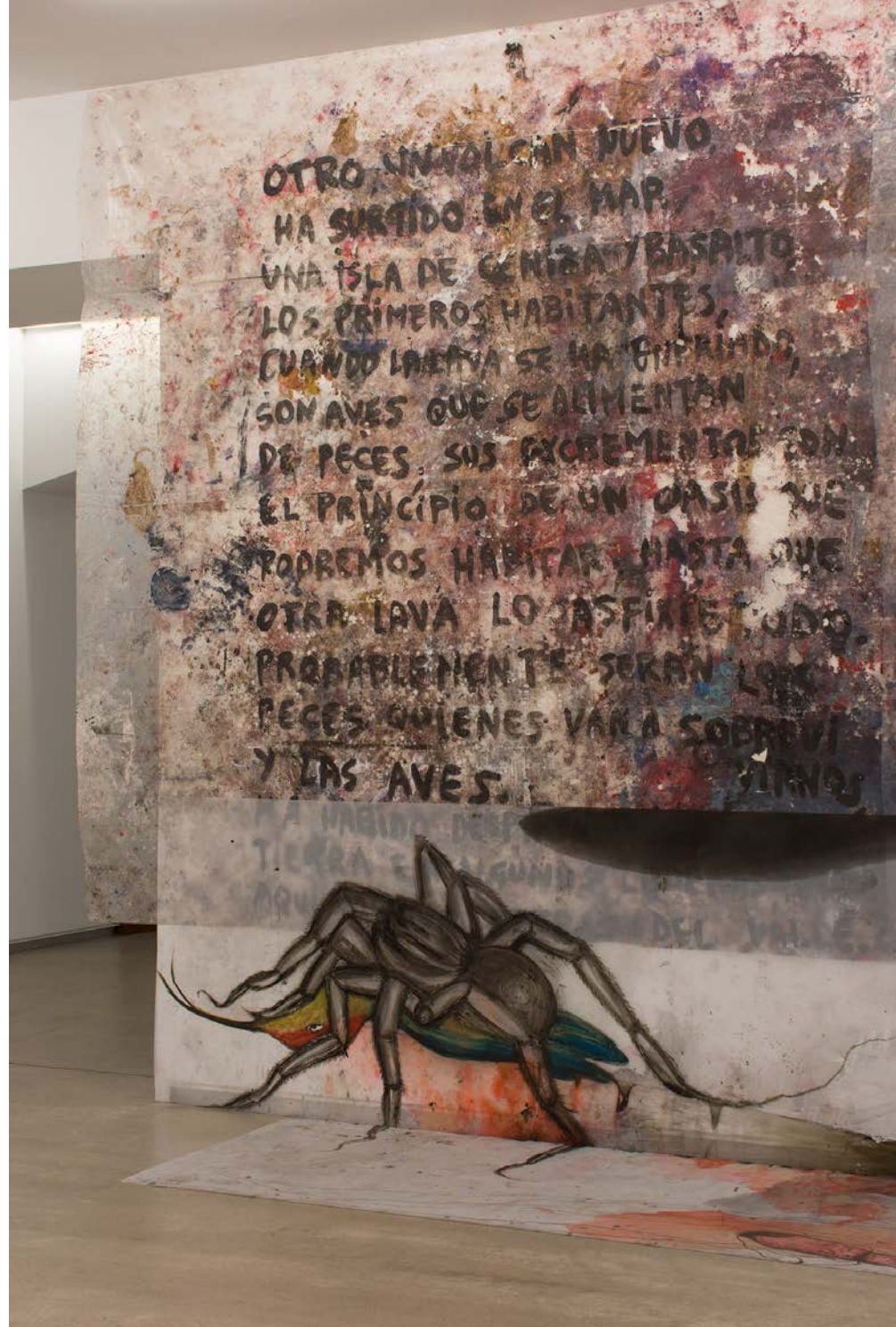
Detritus I, 2018. Ceramic.



Historias inéditas de la oruga de la col, 2017. Watercolor and graphite over mylar, 800 x 315 cm



Historias inéditas de la oruga de la col, 2017. Watercolor and graphite over mylar, 800 x 315 cm



El festín de la araña, 2017. Watercolor and graphite over mylar, 240 x 1100 cm



Installation view

After graduating with a BA in Fine Art from UPV/EHU, Susana Talayero (Bilbao, 1961) moved to Rome where she lived and worked between 1986 and 1996. She has recently had a solo show *Relatos de entrenamiento* at CAB in Burgos (2018), which then led to the current exhibition; she has taken part with Acción bulto in the project *Verso Nikà, Pantelleria-Sicilia* (2018) and is co-organiser with Amparo Badiola of *L'occasione*, (2017-18), a series of public encounters in Bilbao since 2011. Among her recent solo shows are: *Una certa organizzazione delle cose*, AOC F58, Rome (2017); *Crónica inquieta*, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao (2016); *Cabezonas*, CarrerasMugica, Bilbao (2014) and *Reponer la mesa* (procesos gráficos), La Taller, Bilbao (2012). She has also shown her work in the group show *Trittico*, Trale volte, Rome (2013); and currently has work on display in the exhibition *Después del 68. Artes y prácticas artísticas en el País Vasco 1968-2018*, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao.

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