

NATHALIE
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selected works

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Live well, Die well

This project began with a striking realization: even in death, we remain consumers. From coffins sold as luxury items to catalogues of “personalized” urns and embalming services, the funeral industry reflects the same capitalist logic that shapes our lives—only now extended to our final moments.

Death, once part of the natural order, has become a sanitized, commodified process governed by an industry more concerned with profit than with meaning. In a world increasingly aware of ecological collapse, I felt the need to explore how the way we treat death reflects our disconnection from the cycles of life.

Live well, Die well is a reflection shaped by personal research, current legislation, and embodied practice. It emerged after the COVID pandemic—when mourning became invisible—and evolved through comparative studies of funeral practices in France, Spain, Germany and Turkey.

Through multiple media such as sculptures, installations or performances, I question how we might reclaim death from capitalist logic and reimagine it as a space of ecological, emotional, and collective transformation. Whether through a biodegradable coffin made of wool, a forest growing from the ruins of a cemetery, or a delicate diamond crafted from hair and paper, my work seeks to reestablish a



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dialogue between humans and the living world.

I believe death is not the end, but a transition. By embracing our own finitude and the fact that we are, in the end, biodegradable matter, we can loosen our grip on the material world and leave it behind without regret.

Exhibition's views at **Gate 27**, Istanbul, 2024: Photos 1 and 2

Exhibition's views at **Guinardo Civic Center**, Bcn, 2025: Photos 3 to 8

The Passing Body performance at **Performistanbul**, Turkey, 2024: Photo 9

©Gülbin Eriş

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State of Siege

State of Siege, composed of concrete blocks, plastic toys, and audio recordings, is an installation presented in multiple shapes and sizes, the first of which was conceived during the COVID-19 lock-down. At that time, Rey noticed how, with the absence of human presence, nature resurfaced, and normally reclusive animals could be seen roaming the empty streets of large cities. For Rey, these scenes provided a glimpse into a possible future, especially given the real threat of human annihilation due, if not to a virus, then to one of the many ills that plague our planet at present. *State of Siege* is a way of meditating upon such a future, but not in a way that highlights destruction and loss. The animals, which symbolize the return of nature, are hopefully represented by plastic children's toys. And their journey through Rey's concrete maze of cubes and cylinders seems not a funeral march, but rather a triumphant parade of new citizens, immune from our dangers and free of our rules, inaugurating a new civilization.

Project funded by **Reddis Private Foundation for Contemporary Art**
Exhibition's view at **Alalimón gallery**,
Barcelona, 2022

Photos 1, 2 and 3 ©**Ricardo Portero**

Photos 4, 5 and 6 ©**J.L. Tercero**



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Le Solitaire

When I was 20, I went to study at an American university near Chicago. During the first few weeks, I experienced a sharp feeling of strangeness, the reason of which I could not understand. And then in a flash, I saw it. Or, to be more exact, I saw what had disappeared: on this campus of 50,000 students, there were no children.

This memory came back to me during the COVID-19 lock-down. During my rare outings, the absence of children in the city (much more striking than the absence of traffic) disconcerted me. It was as if I were in the forest and all nature had gone silent due to an invisible threat.

At the end of the lock-down, I began returning to work in my studio in Hospitalet. On the way there, I would pass a nursery school (pictured in the photo), which had been empty since March 13, 2020. It appeared to me as a wasteland.

Our cities are much more fragile than they

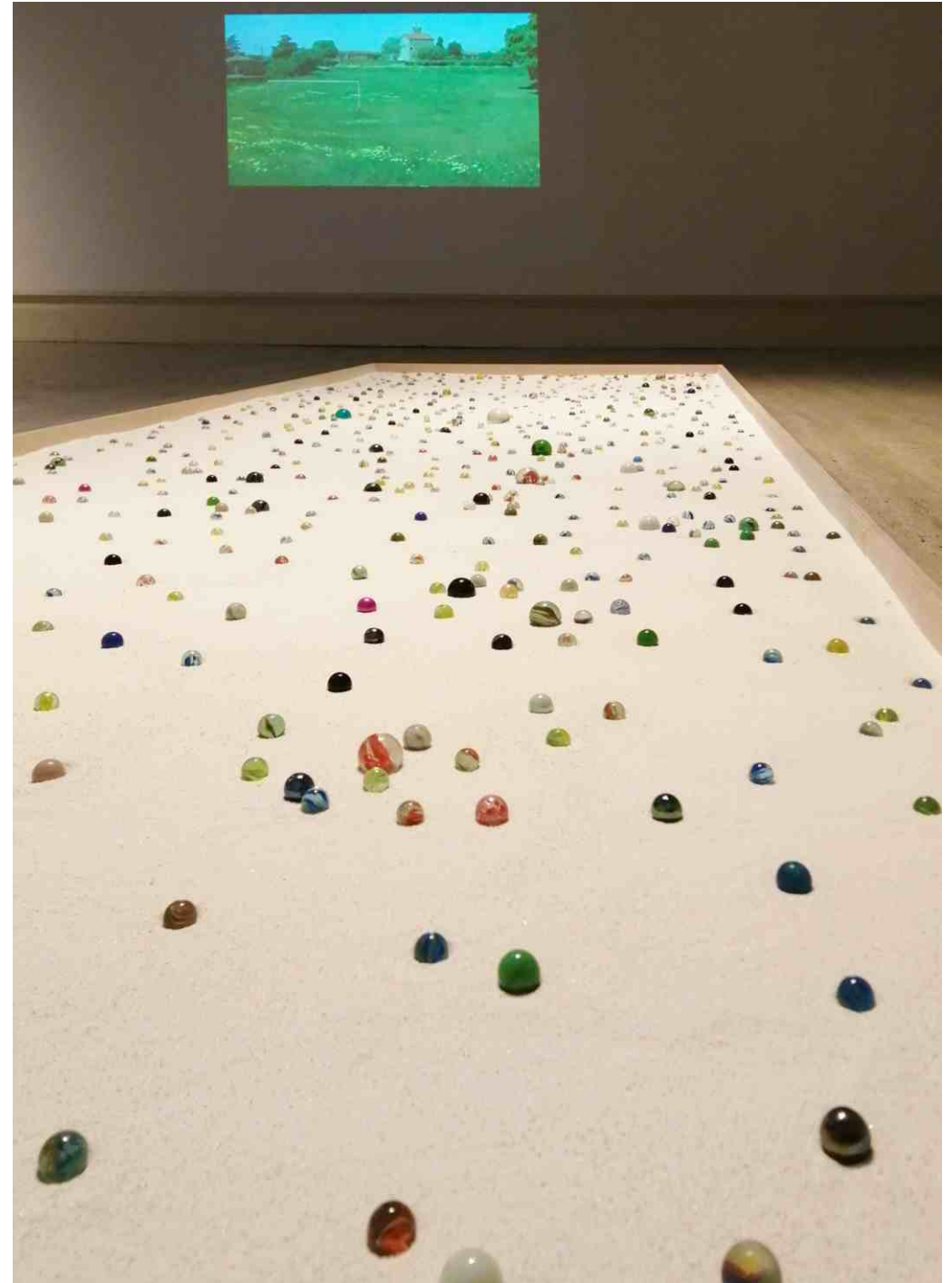


first appear, and their seeming interconnectedness can mask a great loneliness. *Le Solitaire* is a way for me to come to terms with this and give tangible shape to the invisible emotional strands that weave members of a society together.

In the game called "Le Solitaire", players remove one marble after another until there is only one left. So too, the pandemic has played a similar game, turning each of us over time into a solitary, a detached individual no longer part of the fabric of a once bustling city.

Barcelona, May 7 2020

Project funded by **Reddis Private Foundation for Contemporary Art**
Exhibition's view at **Centre de lectura, Reus, Spain**



Liquidació per Tancament

Liquidació per Tancament, an immersive multimedia installation, is thematically connected to the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, in particular his concerns with the disordered nature of space and time and the borders that exist between reality and fiction, violence and innocence, and order and chaos. Rey offers us here a labyrinthine set of signs of a premonitory nature that anticipate the apocalypse. The project arose from a conversation with the artist Enric Maurí, who told her about some automated bears that he had seen in a shop window with the sign "Clearance sale". She wants to incorporate them into her work, but in the end it is not possible to get them and the thing ends with the search for a small teddy bear in another place. Rey documents the conversations on WhatsApp and the images that are exchanged between them, along with a series of comments about other artistic works that they have in hand and

everyday things that appear in the conversation. From here on, the project expands in a haphazard and providential way, and finally Rey decides to complete it with a series of photographs of stores that have closed during the pandemic, with the collaboration of José Luis Tercero; another photographic series by Ricardo Portero; and an apocalyptic Christmas story, which she expressly requests Marcelo Laugelli to complete. This literary typology reinforces the anticipatory and visionary nature of the fictional events narrated by Rey, which are closely related to popular culture and myths and legends.

Text by **Mercè Alsina**

Exhibition's view at **Alalimón gallery**, Barcelona, 2022: Photos 1 and 3

Exhibition's view at Fine **Arts Academy of Sabadell**, Spain, 2021: Photos 2 and 4



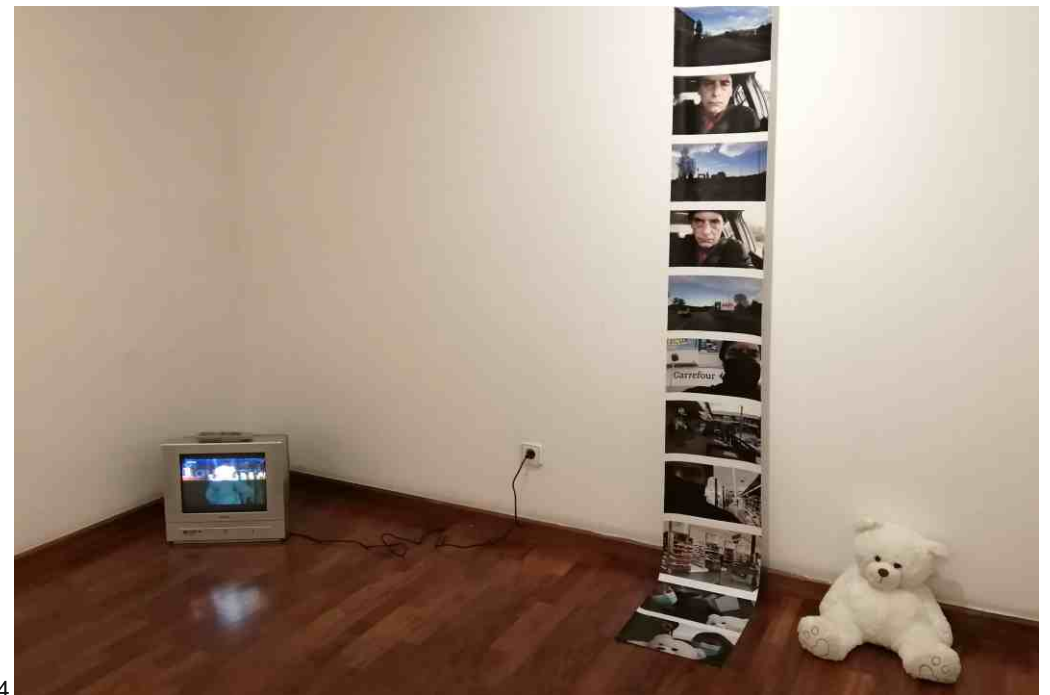
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Le Grand Voyage

The genesis of this installation can be found in Jorge Semprun's eponymous Holocaust memoir. While reading it, I was struck by the author's ability to traverse time and space. Chronologically and geographically distant events are uprooted and reordered contiguously, allowing the events of Semprun's prewar life to intermingle seamlessly with his experiences in the camp. Much in the way Semprun draws thematic connections, I began to see stories that related to his life everywhere, from fairy tales to newspaper articles. This installation, the physical manifestation of this, is linked in particular to a passage in the memoir that describes the author's journey from Compiègne to the Buchenwald concentration camp, one of Nazi Germany's largest. Yet here I have replaced the words at the entrance of the camp, "Jedem das Seine," ("to each what he deserves") with "*Arbeit macht frei*," ("Work sets you free"), which in fact hangs over the gates of Auschwitz. The prisoners also have been replaced by chicks and eggs, a reference to a newspaper article in which I read how eggs, due to the harshness of transport, will sometimes hatch on the way to markets; and the slogan is now "Pleasure Island," the amusement park where Pinocchio, along with other misbehaving young boys, is taken in the 1940 Disney film. In both cases, the words are ironic. "Freedom" for the inhabitants of

Buchenwald usually meant being worked to death, and the "pleasure" Pinocchio was to experience was that of being turned a donkey and sold into a similar life of servitude. The installation projects on the wall over the entrance images of concentration camps, of animal cruelty, and of the film *Pinocchio*, reinforcing these associations, but in no way forming a rational narrative. Such a narrative, in my mind, can never come to terms with the enormity of these events.

Yet all is not horror and loss. Both Semprun and Pinocchio escaped their fate, as did the some of the chicks, who could no longer be consumed as breakfast. As in many of my other works, it is in these ironies and contradictions, these small kernels of hope in the face of brutality, that my interest chiefly lies.

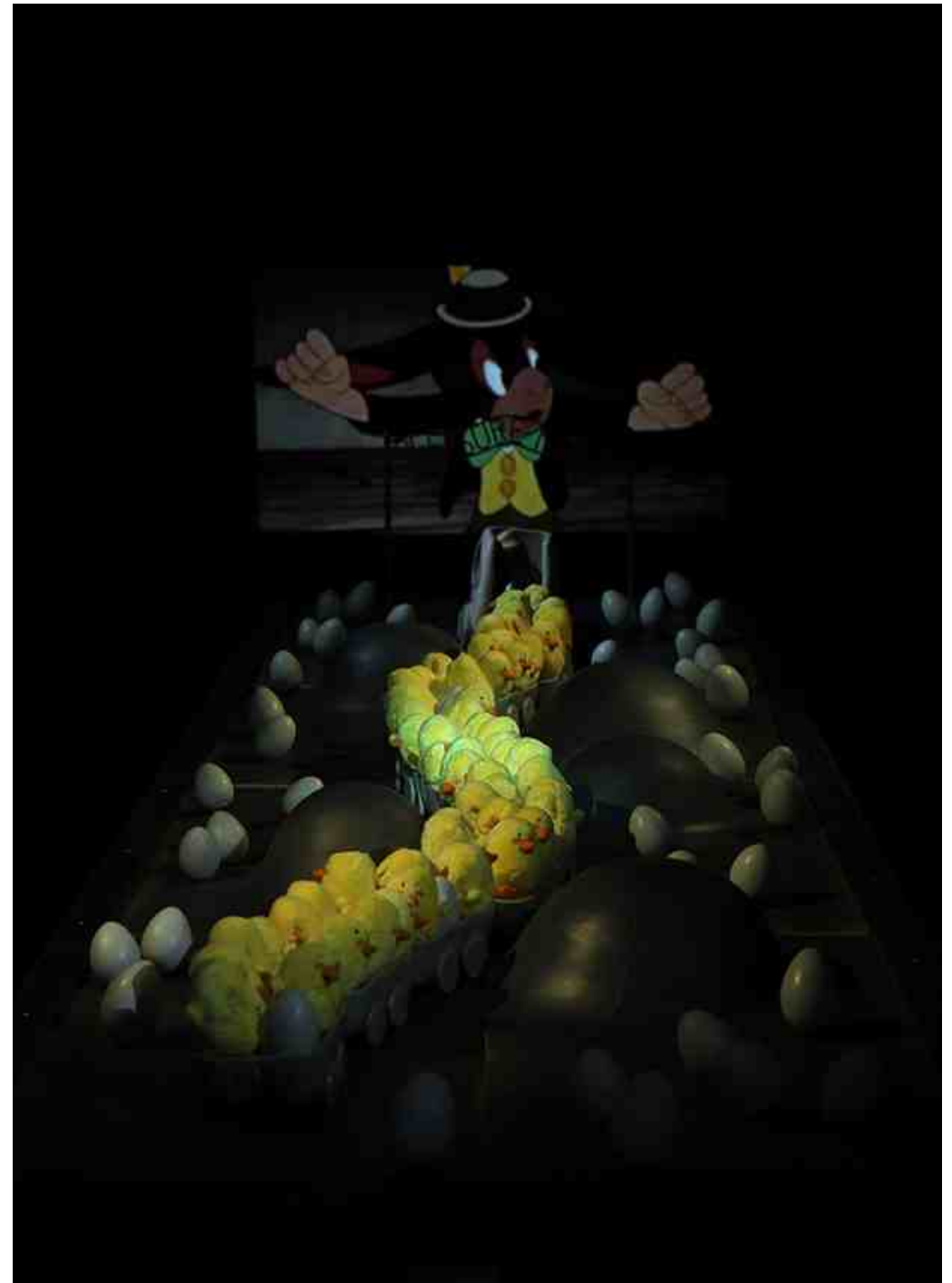
Exhibition's view at **Alalimón gallery**,
Barcelona, 2022

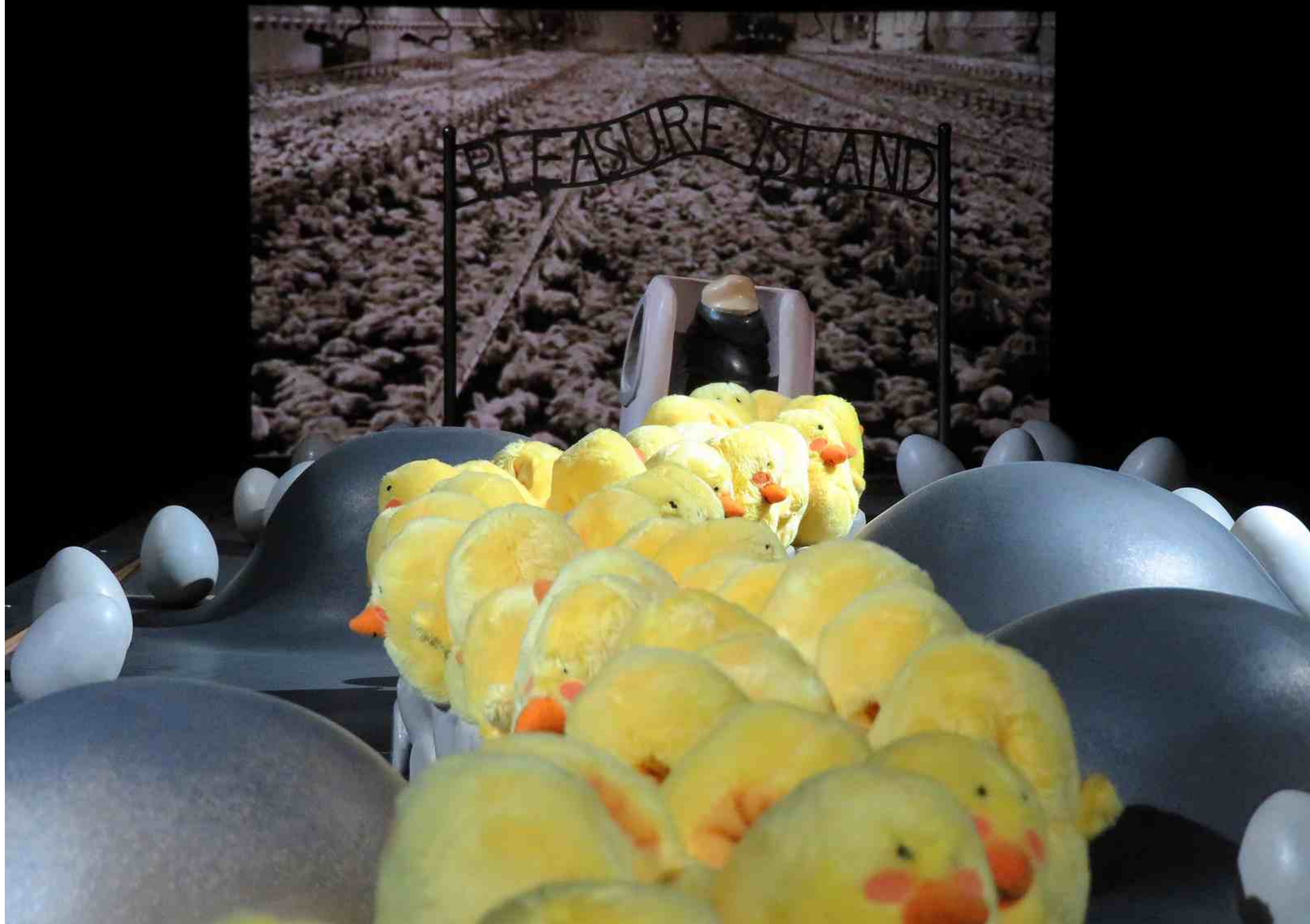
Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAAVpWuX06o>

Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5lGoALSZA>





Reconstruction

This project began as an extension of my work with stuffed animals, one in which canvas compositions were linked into diptychs and triptychs displayed side by side on the wall. However, with all the ruptures and dislocations of the pandemic, such an approach began to feel an insufficient way to reflect my current state of mind. As with many of us, my social and professional world had shrunk considerably, yet at the same time, my artistic world grew, encompassing a larger and larger part of my everyday life. I thought of Louise Bourgeois' Cells and how they, in a theatrical and immersive way, gave a window into the artist's inner-life. And I thought of similarly Monet's massive curved canvases in L'Orangerie, where the space was specifically designed to fit the vision of his gardens at Giverny. Thus, I began to think of this series in a similar way. I wanted to share my absorption into an intimate and private world at a time when so many of us were undergoing a similar experience; and I imagined the piece as a great circle into which viewers could step.

The construction of this work was also a concern. Rather than presenting viewers an already completed work, I wanted to share my process with them, to show them how my artistic world is constructed. This led me to build pieces of the installation in different spaces. Videos of my work were taken and live streamed, and when a section was

completed, it was displayed in the space in which it had been made. As I worked, I had the idea to interview the curators of the spaces. They had been devastated by the pandemic and now found themselves isolated from clients and artists alike. These interviews allowed them, like myself, to share their pandemic experiences and connect with others in a time of great isolation.



Eventually, the physical aspect of the work was completed and I was able to display it in the round at Espai d'arts Roca Umbert in Granollers, Spain. Viewers could see both the exterior, with its unfinished wood and roughly stitched backs of canvases, and the interior, soft, warm and colorfully inviting. Alongside the installation, videos were shown of its creation in all the spaces in which I worked.

The final phase of this project will occur this October at Alalimón gallery in Barcelona. Here I will combine the pieces displayed in Granollers with a compilation of the interviews conducted throughout the process, thus connecting the artist and audience with all those who give so much of themselves to make projects such as this possible.



Click to video by J.L. Tercero

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAIX2WEPgHo&t=8s>

Views of the different construction phases at **Chiquita Room:** Photo 1; **Espronceda Center for Art and Culture:** Photo 2 ©**Vitor Schietti**; **Espai d'Arts Roca Umbert F.A.:** Photos 4, 5 and 8; **Pol & Grace Hotel:** Photo 6; **Santcorneliarts2:** Photo 7.

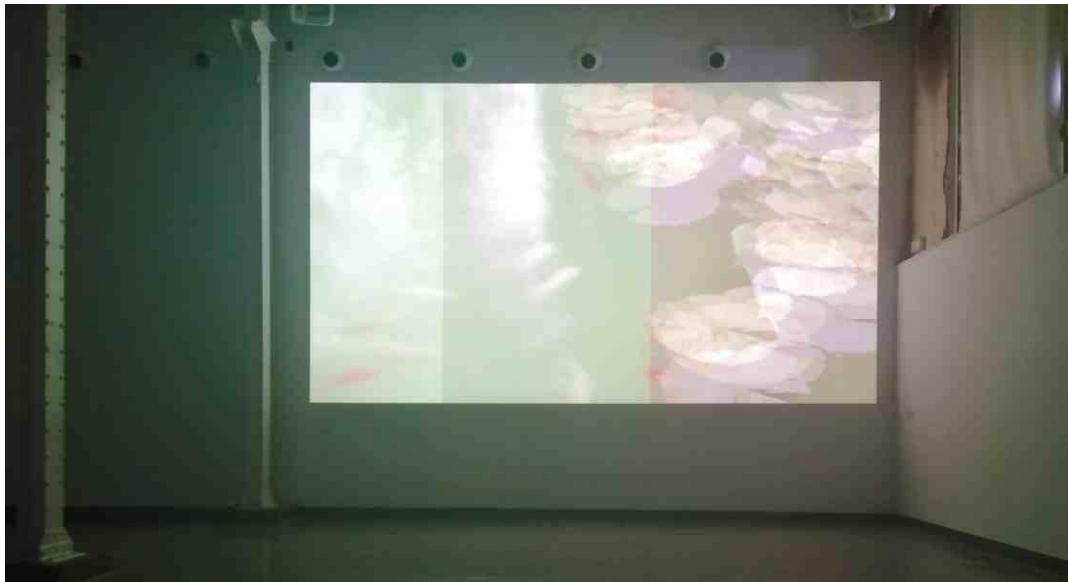
2020 - 2021



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Rabbits

Rabbits delves deep into themes such as mass consumption, the pervasive influence of media, and the ever-blurring boundaries between reality and simulation. It poses a fundamental question: Have the socio-economic systems, behavioral patterns, and societal norms that shape our lives evolved into a new form of reality, or do they merely constitute simulacra that dictate our existence? Within the exhibition, the rabbit character embodies both a symbol of desire and a reflection of our immersion in a hyperreal world.

Adding depth to the exhibition is the inclusion of the short film "Pink Bunny's Travels." This cinematic journey explores themes of fractured identity and the experience of disorientation in the modern urban landscape. The film's narrative draws parallels with the complexities found in iconic works, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, and David Lynch's films, inviting viewers to



empathize with the rabbit character's fluctuation between hedonism and suffocation within the hyperreal cityscape.

Text by **Ayça Okay**

Project realized during a residency at **Scope BLN**, Berlin

Exhibition's view at **Scope BLN**, Berlin, 2023

Photos: ©**Vilma Leino**

Click to video

Pink Bunny's Travels into several not so remote nations of the world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pnRZlUuEw>

Performance at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L87GxYPITMI>

Performance at Museuminsel, Berlin:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naJD0I3IsJM>





L'Ourse Écorchée

This performance takes as its starting point the Work Sessions Performance TRASA V = BPLWB 78 79 carried out by the artists belonging to *el grup de treball*, a group that set out to build collective strategies of resistance and creation. It was formed in Catalonia by people related to the arts: — painters, critics, teachers, and others linked to literature, cinema and music — who saw in the group an alternative against the oppressive dictatorial system of Franco.

In the performance by Jordi Benito at the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona from June 13 to 15, 1979, the artist slit open a bull hanging from the ceiling of the foundation and entered its viscera right after, performing a ceremony between the attraction of the primitive and his admiration for the bullfighter "Manolete" who died in the ring the day he was set to retire, a fact considered by Benito as the perfect end for an artist.



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In the performance *L'Ourse Écorchée* by Nathalie Rey and Enric Maurí, the bull is replaced by a giant teddy bear filled with confetti and the artists cover themselves with chocolate or honey instead of the bloody entrails. The performance takes on a maliciously festive, superfluous and banal character, with different nuances as it progresses. It is in its final part when it takes a radical turn, referencing *We Keep Our Victims Ready* by Karen Finley.

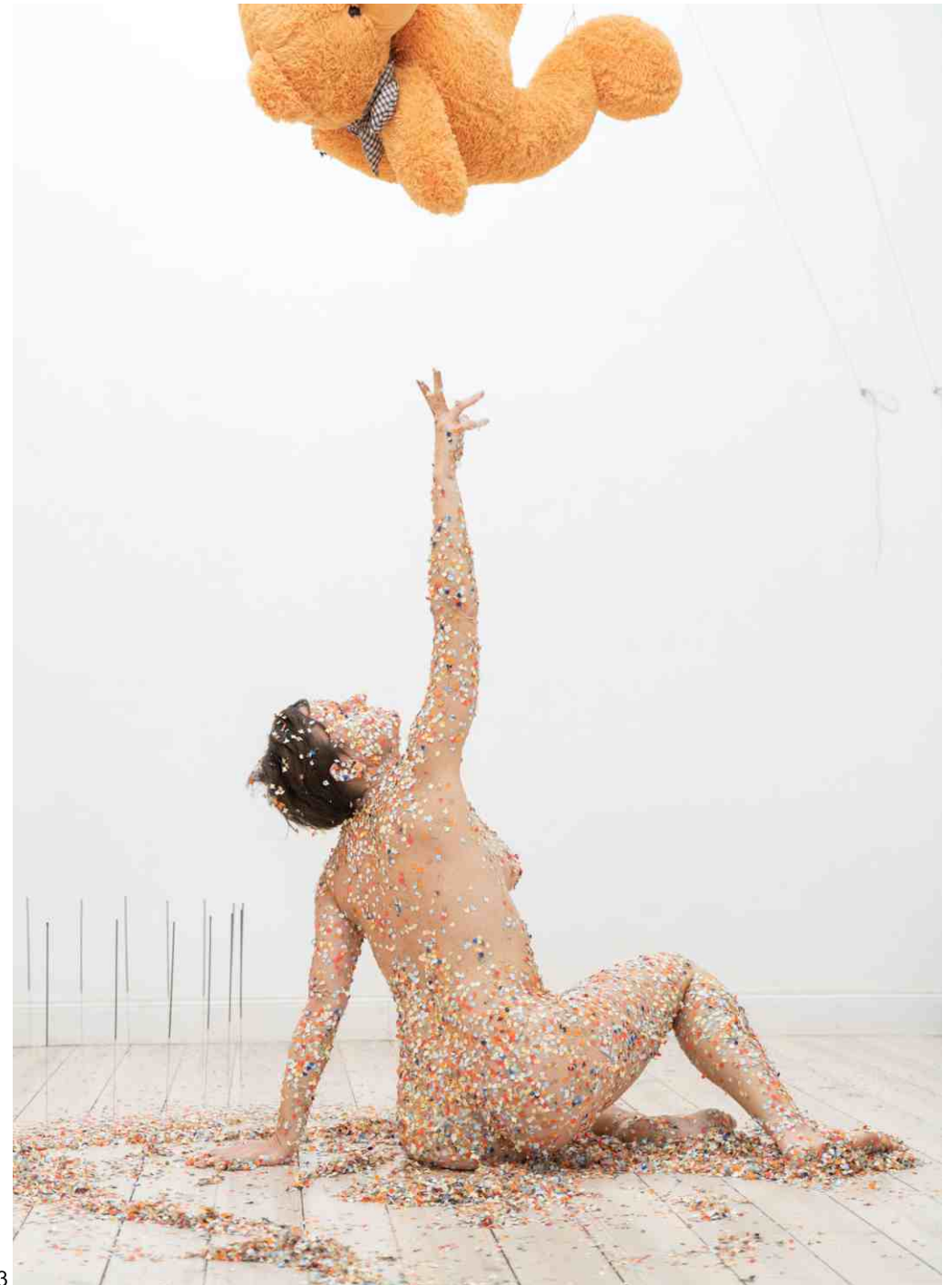
Performance's view at **GlogauAIR Project Space**, 2021: Photos 1 and 3 ©Beatrice Lezzi

Performance's view at **Kastanien Projektraum**, 2022: Photo 2

Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc6R9uPYBIY>

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Pig!

The project critiques the role of current power structures and their capacity to seduce by exploring the tension between the beautiful and the unpleasant.

To children, pigs are often seen as endearing figures, forming a pleasant part of their collective imagination (dolls, piggy banks, cartoons). For adults, however, they can be charged with more negative meanings, often referring to what is obscene, dirty, sexual, or excessive. Thus, in our culture, pigs are paradoxical creatures.

In this proposal, the paradox is reinforced through a staging in which the animalized characters that compose it explore the dichotomies of life and death, the visual and the visceral, and desire and repulsion. These tensions contrast with the soft, pastel-colored forms of the works, opening them up to various interpretations.

Text by **Gabriela Berti**



Exhibition's view at **Can Puget**, Manlleu, 2023

Click to video

The Pigs' Lunch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMKbDZYBsMo>

The Dance of the pigs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz2dAUz0RI4>



Cerdo!



Cerdo!



Cerdo!



L'Été des serpents

This project, composed of four multimedia installations, began with the piece *Sticky Fingers* in its early, raw form: a group of school desks entirely covered in chewing gum chewed by myself. This obsessive gesture was inspired both by Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900* and by my own memories of a rigid education and the internalized silence of a timid child. From this initial act of resistance, the project expanded.

Sticky Fingers evolved into its final form with the addition of a video projection where I write the word "merde" on an imaginary blackboard, alongside a participatory performance in which performers read aloud their own painful childhood memories. Around this core, three further installations emerged, each anchored in a video performance where I embody a universal character—vulnerable yet rebellious—confronting various values and norms of Western society: the family unit, the taboo of sexuality, the intuition of an unjust world, early experiences of violence, and the many prohibitions that shaped our upbringing.

This is a struggle for survival and transmutation—a process of reclaiming. Beyond Walter Benjamin, an infinite constellation of artists, especially women, have helped me shape my own tools for salvation. Their presence runs through the project, notably in the homage to Louise Bourgeois and Niki de Saint Phalle. In one



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installation, I literally take aim at the audience and myself with a rifle, nodding to de Saint Phalle's *shooting paintings*, and reclaiming that gesture as a form of catharsis and rebellion.

L'Été des serpents is ultimately a tribute to the rage of childhood: pure, immediate, and unapologetically lucid in the face of injustice. That same rage still fuels the artist's voice—a tool of resistance against a world that wounds, excludes, and disciplines. In each profanation—of self, of childhood, of freedom, of faith—I seek to return the sacred to the profane, to strip power of its aura, and to offer space for transformation and revolt.

Exhibition's views at **Arranz-Bravo Foundation**, L'Hospitalet, Spain, 2025:

Photo 1 © **Nathalie Rey**

Photos 2 to 5 © **Josechu Tercero**

Photo 6 © **Jordi Garrido**

Photo from the *Sticky Fingers* performance at **L'Estruch**, Sabadell, Spain, 2025: Photo 7



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The Garden of Earthly Delights

The space of the garden is suggested by an interlacing of thick woolen threads that "creep" on the ground, "climb" on the furniture, and in which twenty silicone breasts are placed. Likewise, the chairs are invaded by curious plants in the form of crocheted penises sewn into the seats.

It is a wild, exuberant, and luxurious garden—a paradise of Adam and Eve, only after the sin. Hence the reference, through the title, to the work of Hieronymus Bosch, which represents countless scenes of pleasure involving fragments of bodies. Due to the religious framework of the artistic production of that time, it is clear that the viewer was faced with the very Catholic vice of fornication. This is also the question that implicitly arises in the homonymous film by Carlos Saura (1970) in which sexuality, repressed by a conservative society embodied by the Cano family, can only be expressed unconsciously.

The installation is a dreamlike scene, somewhat grotesque and monstrous, which could have been taken from one work or the other, a sort of symbolic painting, an expression of an unconscious desire, but where the notion of vice is replaced by that of fantasy and play.

Exhibition's views at **SomoS**, Berlin, 2022



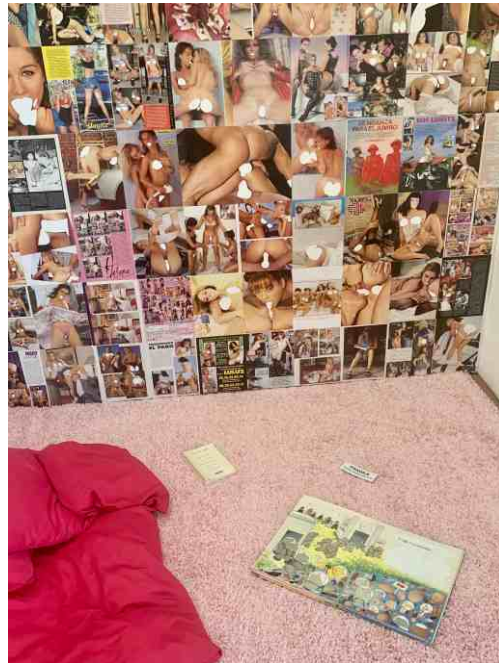


The Censor, the censor's son and the artist

All eras have had their organs of censorship; In Spain, conspicuous examples include the Inquisition or the dictatorship of Franco (referred to in another part of the project). Today, despite the evolution of much of the world towards democracy and freedom of expression, censorship still exists everywhere and at all levels of society.

This installation, in progress, is the story of a meticulous censor who has given himself the task of eliminating all the vaginas, breasts, buttocks, lips, penises from all the pornographic magazines that fall into his hands. His son, intrigued by these cutting sessions, collects lost papers and pastes them into his Babar album. And since it is a fable about the cycles of censorship, the artist intervenes in her turn with her barbaric cutting of the novel by the Marquis de Sade, *Justine or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (1791), from which she removes the pages that correspond to the philosophical reflections – after all, boring – saving the sex scenes in an inverted act of censorship.

Exhibition's views at **SomoS**, Berlin, 2022



The Philosopher's Stone

Since the beginning of time, artistic activity has been closely linked to magical rituals. In his article *Art and Magic* (1953), L.R. Nougier explains how since the Paleolithic, the fundamental anxiety of the tribes whose survival depends on the abundance of hunting is reflected in the the sorcerer, who exploits this feeling in the diverse forms of rituals, costumes, drawings, etc.

The "sorcerers" of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance who sought the secret of the Philosopher's Stone pursued a barely different goal: that of immortality.

In this 15 minute short film, the stone, which represents pristine nature, and the cream puff, which as a result of a chemical transformation (or magical act), symbolizes artifice, switch from one to another until they become one. In the process, the line between the natural and the artificial completely disappears.

The film begins by showing a quirky fairy

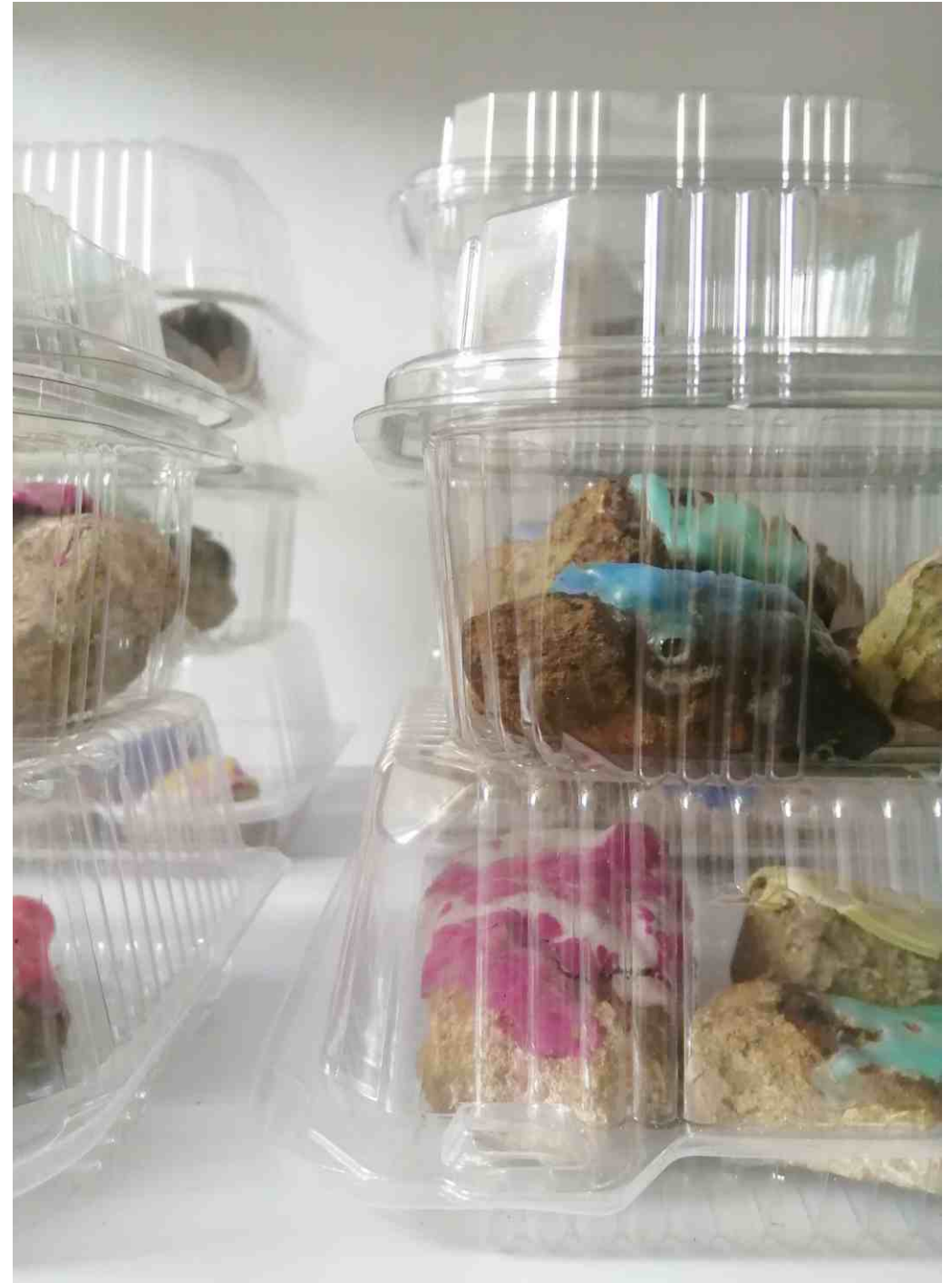


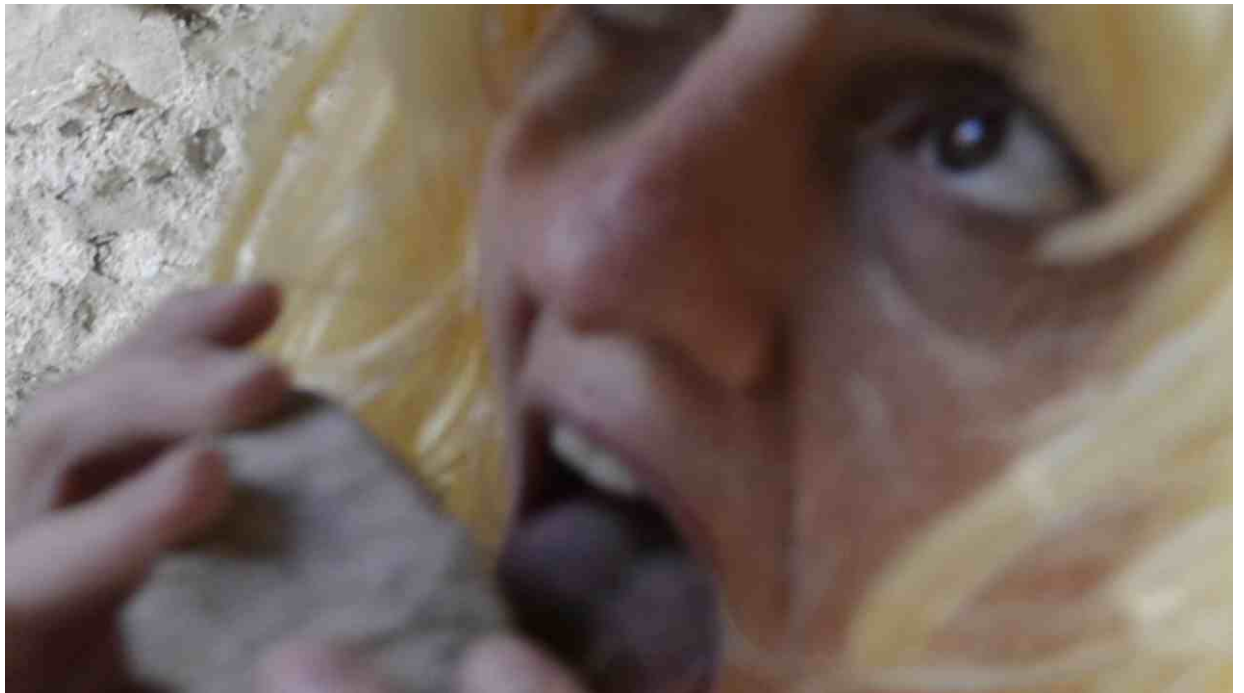
with little talent for cooking. This fairy, wearing a blonde wig (like Catherine Deneuve in *Peau d'Âne* (Jacques Demy, 1970)) is preparing a dish with magical powers. Soon, however, the images overlap with other characters working on the same dish. The viewer is no longer sure if it is the fairy, one of the directors, or even Rey's parents, who is cooking, nor the type of dessert that will come out of the oven. Ultimately, the preparation turns into a disaster and the disgruntled fairy goes to the supermarket to buy industrial cakes that she devours in a last attempt to access eternal happiness.

Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLtC0Icyaxk>

Exhibition's view at **Espai d'Arts Roca Umber F.A.**, Spain, 2021





Shipwreck III

Shipwreck III (2018-2020) continues my investigation of the myriad ways that plastic waste has invaded our natural landscapes. As elsewhere, I find the tensions and juxtapositions of this issue intriguing. There is nothing inherently ugly in a plastic container, so why do we perceive it as so when we come across one in nature? In these videos, I probe this question by littering hundreds of multicolored cups in otherwise virgin landscapes. What results is, to me, a beautiful scene composed of the visual unification of a victimizer with its victim. Afterwards, I clean up the cups, erasing the signs of my transgression and returning the scene to its pristine state. Thus, this performance highlights in a personal way the problem of plastic waste, a reflection upon this problem, and a thoughtful act that solves it.

Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRN5Mc79X0E>

Click to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLTNLWJ33j8>

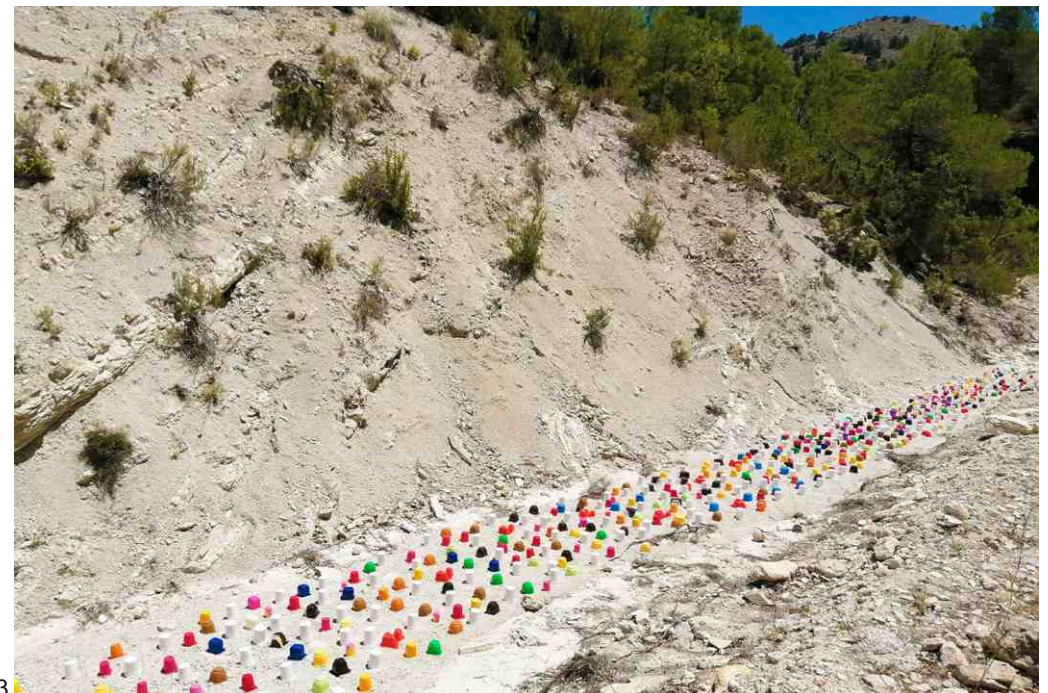
Photographic documentation of the action at Monte de la Virgen blanca (2019) Photos 1 and 2, María los Vélez (2022) Photo 3 and Port Skeul (2021) Photo 4



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Plastic Sea

In *Plastic Sea*, I've crocheted the shape of the world's seas onto a circular fabric. All landmasses, however, have been left empty and can only be understood as an unstitched relief. Making these works was painstaking, involving thousands of hours of labor, and as I filled in these shapes I imagined our seas likewise filling as the discarded products of our land-based productions slowly emptied into them. At some point in the future, it seemed to me, there would be no longer a dividing line between the two. Land and sea would have become one.

As with much of my work, there is a tension between these internal thoughts and the objects produced by them. The beads I use are plastic as well, mass produced in a factory in China, and so are part of the problem I'm exploring. Yet they are also the beautiful and highly versatile media for



works of art. These ambiguities reflect those with the use of plastic itself. Disposable and unnecessary items, such as used bags and beverage containers, form much of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch; but plastics, when shaped into water purifiers and medical components, provide many of the world's most vulnerable with invaluable support.

Work in progress at **Nectar**, Spain, 2019: Photo 2
Exhibition view at **Alalimón gallery**, Barcelona, 2022: Photo 1
Exhibition view at **Espronceda Center for Art and Culture**, Barcelona, 2020: Photo 6
©Vitor Schietti





Décharge chic

For the 18th edition of the Cahors Juin Jardins Festival, Nathalie Rey proposes to create a resilient garden in which the vegetation has developed in the middle of plastic waste (multicolored wrapping of straw bales) from a "private" dump, collected, cleaned, and stored by the artist. "I imagine a kind of literal transposition of this pile of rubbish whose strangeness in the middle of the landscape had caught my eye, which thus becomes the device allowing me to illustrate in a very concrete way one of the aspects of the problem of pollution", explains Nathalie Rey. Thus, the basis of her approach is drawn from the dustbins of consumerism, from the waste which invades, pollutes, and poisons us.



Project led by **PETR Grand Quercy** in partnership with **Juin Jardins**
With the financial support of the **Regional Department of Cultural Affairs Occitanie**

Views of the installation on the Mediatheque forecourt during the **Cahors Juin Jardins Festival, 2023**





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