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ITINERARIOS XXV

Nora Aurrekoetxea | Fernando García | Cristina Garrido | Fermín Jiménez
Landa | Rosell Meseguer | Shirin Sabahi | Blanca Ulloa | Celia-Yunior &
Henry Eric Hernández

A YEARLY FORAY INTO THE MOST RECENT CONTEMPORARY ART

16 FEBRUARY - 12 MAY, 2019

Muelle de Albareda, s/n. Jardines de Pereda. 39004 Santander (Spain).

RECENT TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY ART AT ITINERARIOS XXV

- Fundación Botín presents the XXV edition of *Itinerarios*, a fascinating insight into the production of a new generation of contemporary artists.
- This exhibition will be on view to the public from 15 February through 12 May 2019 in Gallery 1 at Centro Botín.
- The latest edition of this event, first held in 1994, offers a snapshot of what's happening today in art with works by Nora Aurrekoetxea, Fernando García, Cristina Garrido, Fermín Jiménez Landa, Rosell Meseguer, Shirin Sabahi, Blanca Ulloa, and Celia-Yunior & Henry Eric Hernández.

Santander, 18 January 2019.- In 1993, Fundación Botín created a programme of Visual Arts Grants to support young artists and help them to produce and exhibit ambitious research-based projects, while also providing them with an opportunity to seek further professional training. The following year, as a logical conclusion of the grant, the foundation instigated *Itinerarios*, **an exhibition conceived to present the works created by the artists during the course of their grant.**

Year after year, this exhibition provides young artists with a unique platform to show their work in an institutional setting while giving audiences a splendid opportunity to acquaint themselves with recent trends in contemporary art. Created across various disciplines and locations, the works are also featured in a catalogue published by Fundación Botín.

Benjamin Weil, curator of the exhibition and artistic director of Centro Botín, explains "as of 2019, Fundación Botín will have exhibited the work of 200 young artists, originating primarily from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, but also from the Middle and Far East, as well as North America. Most of these artists now have work in the Fundación Botín collection, thanks to their generous donation of a work featured in *Itinerarios* or to later acquisitions by the Foundation to reinforce its holdings."

This ambitious exhibition includes the works of the eight artists selected in the XXV Call for the Fundación Botín's Visual Arts Grants from among 531 applications received from 35 countries, chosen by a multidisciplinary jury made up by Ferran Barenblit, Suzanne Cotter, Sandra Gamarra and Juan Ugalde.

As is now customary, the artists, on this occasion coming from Spain, Cuba and Iran, avail of the unique opportunity to deploy new projects or to give new momentum to others already in progress, together offering an overview of recent trends in art in thought-provoking works.

According to Benjamin Weil, in each new edition of *Itinerarios* "one can decipher synergies in the concerns as well as in the operating principles of the artists. Exhibiting together in a common space also stimulates dialogue between the projects and generally reveals a proximity in shared concerns, thus providing an overview of recent trends in contemporary art."

This XXV edition of *Itinerarios*, on view to the public from 16 February through 12 May 2019 in Gallery 1 at Centro Botín, offers a snapshot of the current state of play in art practice and insights into the work of many promising talents.

Itinerarios XXV - Artists

NORA AURREKOETXEA (Bilbao, 1989)

After graduating in Fine Arts at UPV-EHU, over the last eight years Aurrekoetxea has developed a number of different projects which were awarded with, among other distinctions, the Diputación Foral de Bizkaia grant and the BilbaoArte grant, which led to the tie-in exhibition *Katalepsis* in 2016. She is also a founding member of OKELA creation factory, an artist-run contemporary art space in Bilbao, which fosters formal and discursive dialogue between creators from various generations and backgrounds.

Aurrekoetxea lives between Bilbao and London where, thanks to the Fundación Botín Grant, she is taking the postgraduate sculpture programme at the Royal College of Art, which she claims, allows her to work individually and to develop her practice in a favourable context.

The artist is currently working on a new project exploring the place allotted to touch, care, affection and emotions within contemporary relationships, contingent on the individual cultural and political context in which they appear.

Keenly aware of the importance of the relationship between biographical issues and social-political context within her practice, Aurrekoetxea wanted to change scene and context in order to ascertain how that process of signification plays out in a different culture: to see whether it makes sense for other people and to find out whether the codes are the same or not. A new "crisis" that has allowed her to grow and to question and revisit her work from a critical angle.

In the artist's own words, "taking part in the Royal College Postgraduate Programme has opened up a new phase in my career. On the other hand, starting to work as an individual, detached from my context, has given me an invaluable opening to expand my horizons and to develop new

aspects in my work, to be critical with my previous projects and to set out on new paths in my practice and in my research. It has enabled me to return to my studies in sexology and to work with that discipline from the optic of art. I want to explore other formal languages I have never used before, like text, action and sound. To leave my comfort zone and take risks in exploring new paths is very exciting."

According to Benjamin Weil, some of the artists taking part in this year's *Itineraries* "have chosen to work with installation, some clearly site-specific, as is the case, for instance, of the work of Nora Aurrekoetxea, whose sculptural composition is inflected by the relationship to the landscape as seen through the monumental bay window of the exhibition space."

FERNANDO GARCÍA (Madrid, 1975)

With a BA in Fine Arts from Universidad Complutense in his hometown of Madrid, García currently lives and works in Barcelona. He has had artist-residences at the Jyväskylä Centre for Printmaking in Finland and at Fonderie Darling in Montreal, Canada. His work has been seen in numerous solo and group exhibitions and is included in many collections, such as Fundación Montemadrid/La Casa Encendida, Madrid; Centro de Documentación de Ex Teresa Arte Actual (CDXT), Mexico City; Centro de Documentación de Arte y Naturaleza at Fundación Beulas, Huesca, Spain; Fundación Antonio Pérez, Cuenca, Spain; Jyväskylä Art Museum in Finland; Casa de Velázquez, Madrid; and Colección Olor Visual, Barcelona.

The very day he learnt that he had obtained the Fundación Botín Visual Arts Grant, while in Alaró (Mallorca), Fernando García unconsciously began to reflect on the project he would present at *Itinerarios XXV*. After putting sugar in his post-lunch coffee, he held on to the "little ball" he made with the empty sachet. From then on he began to keep all the little balls he was to make. He had no preconceived purpose for them, but sensed that he could find something he was looking for in that little gesture.

As the days and coffees elapsed, he accumulated countless sugar sachets of various colours, shapes and materials. He started to take the sugar-sachet project seriously when the glass flask he kept them in was full to overflowing. He then started to see them differently. Looking for his own individual experience, he did not want to build a sculpture per se in which to present or place his hand-shaped sachets. They should stand on their own, without any other element competing with them.

When he hit on its mode of representation, he was able to understand the work. The unconscious process of creating a little ball with an empty sugar sachet led to a conscious work developed at the studio in which he made concentric circles made of sugar, somehow lending the private gesture of making the little balls with greater import, putting it on a par with the time used in

creating the work: between nine months and one year. The idea is that the difference of scale between one sachet of sugar and the overall whole would be evident in relation with the scale of its human consumption.

A work that, like all the others created by this artist, sets up serene intellectual placements based on restraint, but allowing us to discern in them a certain sardonic air. García presents his work without subterfuges, at all times seeking to provoke a sense of wonder in the eyes of the beholder. In Benjamin Weil's words, "core to his formal research is a reflection on such traditional subject matters as Still Life."

And the artist himself had this to say: "In my view, the best art comes from the natural development of events that occur in life. Much of my output happens in between my work and my leisure, mostly owing to the use of improvisation and experimentation and to the importance I give to them in my practice. I am interested in everyday life and in the routines it creates, but also in experimenting things through the senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) or through emotion or desire."

CRISTINA GARRIDO (Madrid, 1986)

After studying Fine Arts at Universidad Complutense in Madrid and the Camberwell College of Art in London, Cristina Garrido completed a Master in Fine Arts at the Wimbledon College of Art. She has been awarded the Generación 2015 Proyectos de Arte Fundación Montemadrid Prize and the ARCO Young Artist Award in 2018.

In *Itinerarios XXV*, Garrido focuses her research on how art is photographed and hence how the subjectivity and creativity of the photographer of art create a specific context for the understanding of the work, in passing also reflecting on how the exhibition is just one instance in the mediation of an artwork, with the photograph being another.

Rendered in a video-installation and a publication, *The (Invisible) Art of Documenting Art* focuses on the role of photographers who document exhibitions and contemporary artworks as a key albeit subjective filter between the work and the spectator. She interviews these professionals to lend them greater visibility and to discover how they go about their commissions.

Cristina Garrido's work shows how society compels us to be constant producers of ruins that we have no time to assimilate, a growing proliferation of objects and spaces without memory. Garrido identifies with the idea of the artist as a refuse collector, an archaeologist or a curator of found images and objects. Using appropriation and recycling as creative strategies, she renders each idea differently, depending on the media and materials most suitable to convey it.

FERMIN JIMÉNEZ LANDA (Pamplona, 1979)

Jiménez Landa studied at the School of Fine Arts of Valencia. Through public interventions, videos, installations and drawings, in his practice Fermín Jiménez develops relationships of resemblance, correspondence, transposition and permutation. His goal is to show life from a perspective half-way between irrationality and balance, intimacy and heterodoxy, between what can and cannot be demonstrated. In point of fact, as the artist himself admits, "there is a lot of absurdity in my work. I'm very traditional in that regard."

To create *Canción para 22° 33' N 91° 22' O*, Jiménez Landa turned his attention to the island of Bermeja, a tiny islet lying off the coast of Yucatan, in Mexico, documented by cartographers since the sixteenth century. Interest in the island arose in 2008, fuelled by the fact that if such an island did exist, it would be important in demarcating the boundaries of exploitation rights for oil in the area. However, a survey carried out by local authorities at the time was unable to locate it.

Intrigued by its ghostly status, the artist commissioned Teresa N. Pavia, a contemporary musician from Merida, the closest city to Bermeja and capital of the Yucatan Peninsula, to compose an anthem for the island. Together they put together a band that would play the anthem which, in turn, had to be adapted to the instruments and number of musicians in the band. There were two options for the work: a modern, comfortable tourist boat or an old rundown fishing boat. The choice of the latter was a poetic decision that would change the outcome for the better, lending a certain epic tone that only increased when the captain refused to take the boat out to high sea in a little boat due to the rough conditions, making it necessary to film in the stern of the fishing boat. The result is a video in which both boat and musicians remain static from the viewpoint of the camera, while the horizon line sways back and forth.

This action is recorded in a video and a publication, the latter a visual essay that includes research materials, documents, maps and images of the process.

ROSELL MESEGUER (Orihuela, 1976)

A visual artist with a PhD in Fine Arts from Universidad Complutense of Madrid, where she currently teaches in Master and Graduate programmes, since 2005 Meseguer has developed her career between Europe and Latin America thanks to a number of alliances with museums, galleries and art workshops at several universities. She is a member of the Interfaces Culturales research group in Cuenca.

Meseguer's practice cuts across a diversity of media, including photography, installation, archive, publications, drawing, painting and video, and is grounded in research into historical processes and their social-political and economic consequences. She studies the construction of history and the creation of documentation methodologies since 2001.

For this exhibition, Meseguer focused her research on the geopolitical implications of the exploitation of rare earth elements which are essential components in mass consumption products like smartphones. As often in her work, she deliberately leaves “clues”, inviting viewers to reflect on how the exhibition creates a specific context for the understanding of objects. One clue, for instance, is the inclusion of a display case on loan from the Geomining Museum of Spain.

Engaging with themes of war and affection, closely related to mineral colonialism, in this work the artist expands the geopolitical reading of the theme as well as the issues currently deriving from it.

SHIRIN SABAHI (Iran/Germany, 1984)

The Berlin-based Iranian artist returns to the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, an institution opened just before the 1979 coup that led to the Ayatollahs’ regime in Iran. Working in close collaboration with the Japanese artist Noriyuki Haraguchi, whose work was permanently installed in the museum forty years ago, she engages in a multi-layered reflection on the status of the artwork in the museum, ranging from its conservation to the way it is perceived and interpreted by the visitor.

A recipient of the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Award, Shirin Sabahi presents an installation at Centro Botín consisting of two short films created in collaboration with Noriyuki Haraguchi, who she invited to restore his work *Matter and Mind*, a monumental sculpture consisting of a steel tank filled with used engine oil, on permanent display at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. In addition, the objects tossed into the pool by visitors and found at its bottom during restoration will be exhibited in a number of display cases.

In her work, the Iranian artist explores the materiality of time, looking at representations from the past in the present time through photo and film images in circulation. In her image- and text-based projects, Sabahi uses both narration and documentary, while investigating the competitive identifications and interpretations fostered by language and image.

BLANCA ULLOA (Madrid, 1991)

After graduating in Fine Arts from Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Ulloa obtained a grant for the Performance Studies programme at New York University.

Ulloa is a visual artist concerned with the connections between subject, time and space, as well as with the boundaries on which fiction and reality are elaborated. In *Itinerarios XXV*, the artist reflects on the status of the exhibition space as a potential locus for an action rather than the display of objects, as well as objects as the traces of an action. Her time-based narrative also questions the notion of time as a medium in contemporary art.

Her performative and experimental project for this show is materialised in an installation consisting of a projection with audiovisual fragments and three pieces of text presented on three chairs which members of the public can read in the exhibition space.

In her work, Ulloa explores the image of the body-object relationship, proposing new forms of interpreting their meanings, transforming, suspending or saturating them. What constitutes and restricts that synthesis? How can we work with movement without marking divisions? She is interested in movement generated as an effect 'outside' the relationships between subject and object, body and thing, living and inert, animated and unanimated, stage and auditorium, performers and public, semantic and somatic. Her works are developed from a live project that includes performances together with video, text, gestural language and the creation of objects and installations.

CELIA-YUNIOR (Havana, 1985) & HENRY ERIC HERNÁNDEZ (Camagüey, Cuba, 1971)

Investigating a theme with socio-historical ramifications, in *Bendita Prisión* Celia-Yunior & Henry Eric Hernández took a look into the history of a building in Güines (Cuba) once used as a prison, then as a market, and more recently as a shelter for people who lost their homes in a hurricane. The status of a historical monument that has fallen into disrepair and its value as testimony to the island's colonial past are also part of the investigation carried out by the artist duo.

The work presented in *Itinerarios XXV* is the latest output within the prolific collaboration of these two Cuban artists who have been working together for several years. Audiovisual, video-installation and other forms of documentation help them to use art, not just as a language, but as a subjective method of observation. Created with the advice of the historian and archaeologist Hugo Camejo Zamora, this installation consists of a number of pedestals showing documents and objects, as well as of three videos (*Bendita prisión 1, 2 y 3*) of 7', 3' and 8' respectively.

For these artists, there is a problem of speed between the needs of any given human being and the structures established to respond to them. Hence their interest in the various forms of managing life in society and in how the individual reformulates those devices to turn them to their benefit.

Fundación Botín Visual Arts Grants

The annual exhibition *Itinerarios* is the result of the work developed by the artists during the period of their Fundación Botín Visual Arts Grants. Year after year, their artistic experimentation is documented in a catalogue as a form of displaying the various projects.

The Visual Arts Grants programme is conceived to foster the training, research and development of international artists. Since its inception in 1993, this initiative has helped to discover and support the careers of hundreds of artists, some of whom now enjoy widespread recognition.

CENTRO BOTÍN CENTRE

The next call for applications for a Fundación Botín Visual Arts Grant will be announced in the month of February.

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Centro Botín

Centro Botín, designed by the architect Renzo Piano, aspires to become a benchmark private art centre in Spain and a stopover on the international circuit of world-class art centres, contributing from Santander, through the arts, to the development of creativity as means to generate economic and social wealth. It is also a pioneering centre in the world for the development of creativity, leveraging art's potential for the development of people's emotional intelligence and creative powers. Finally, it is a meeting place in a unique setting in the centre of Santander, adding to the cultural offer on Spain's Northern coast and becoming a driving force for the national and international promotion of the city and the region of Cantabria.

Further information:

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