

(ENG)

# CATERINA ALMIRALL BECOME IMMORTAL AND THEN DIE

## CURATORIAL PROJECT

13.10.2020 – 10.01.2021

**EXHIBITION:** Samuel Beckett, Mariana Castillo Deball, Carlos Fernández-Pello, Lara Fluxà, Marc Larré, Daniel Moreno Roldán, Jorge Satorre, with the collaboration of the Museu d'Arqueologia de Barcelona.

**PERFORMANCE:** Ariadna Guiteras, Theoria (Beatriz Regueira, María González and the collaboration of Dasha Lavrennikov).

**ACTIVITIES:** Ariella Azoulay, María Iñigo Clavo, Patricio Guzmán, Alain Resnais & Chris Marker, Anton Vidokle, Roc Herms.

**PUBLICATION:** Lúa Coderch, Catalina Lozano, Anton Vidokle.

*Become Immortal and Then Die* is about envisaging the museum as a space for negotiating between life and death, understanding artistic practice from the will of permanence, as a dialogue between temporalities or in fact as a way of "talking to the dead".

It originates from the theories that Russian Cosmist philosophers developed in the late 19th century and their utopian project of an immortal humanity. The Cosmist project was to resurrect all ancestors and the space race would facilitate technology to conquer the cosmos and send people to other planets in order to

avoid the overpopulation that would be entailed by this. The planets would therefore become museums, which according to Nikolai Fyodorov would be "a technology to make things last, to become immortal".

These ideas refer to the radicalism of an ever-present time in which there is no room for imitation, copying, reproduction or renewal, and they indicate the unique value of everything that is kept in the museum, which is a contradictory space under its own terms: to preserve things away from life. The dichotomy between life and death, between preserving and living, and negotiating between past-present-future form the basic structure of this project, with revisions and counter proposals from a critical perspective from artists.

The history of museums is the history of dominant narratives, those that are imposed on objects and images. It is the history of how these linear, ordering narratives are naturalised in the mentality of the West. Édouard Glissant explains that the verb "to comprehend" (*cum-prehendere*) derives from *prehendere*: to catch, to possess. This is why, he claims, knowing within the Western context implies the possession of what is

known, be it things, nature or other people. The forms of knowledge in the West are inherently connected to fixation, to a strict separation between what is natural and what is cultural that are specifically contradicted by views of the world based on becoming. The museum is a technology of representation, a place where the illusion of reality is sustained in a complex discursive and ideological structure. It is the time capsule fantasy, a place to believe that we can travel to another reality, but for some people it is primarily a reproduction, imitation, falsification or fiction of the idea of reality. *Where is reality then? Out there, beyond the white cube and its display technologies? How about inverting this claim, somewhat polemically, to assert that the white cube is in fact the Real with a capital R: the blank horror and emptiness of the bourgeois interior.*

This quote from Hito Steyerl tells us about the ever-changing quality of our relationship with our surroundings, a quality that is not necessarily manifested in appearances and for which we are responsible. Roger Caillois insists: "There is nothing that



cannot become its [the sacred's] resting place [...] The sacred is not something that can be taken away. [...] The sacred being, the consecrated object, can in no way be modified in its appearance. Nevertheless, it is transformed in moving from person to person. [...] The sacred is always more or less 'what one cannot approach without dying'."

By invoking the body, Caillois mentions the "danger" of contact with what has been "separated" from life, and which occurs in very small gestures that lead to a transition between the sacred and the profane. Touching can perhaps be a defiant gesture – in a museum, in a ritual – which is why Giorgio Agamben talks about touching as if desecrating. Precisely because what is sacred is so because it has been separated from life and consequently from touch.

[...] *If consecration was the term that denoted the leaving of the sphere of human law, profanation signified the return to the free usage of mankind.*

Like something that constantly rewrites narratives linking the present to a past or projecting it into the future, contemporaneity radically opens up the possibilities of rethinking temporal relationships. Returning to an idea that appears throughout the project, that of the possibility of different coexisting temporalities, Boris Groys proposes the concept of "Comrades of Time", as a different meaning with respect to the complex question of "What does it mean to be contemporary?". According to him, it is not so much a matter of sharing time, but of camaraderie, collaborating *with* time. Working *with* time to comprehend the impossibility of possessing it.

Note: [The Catalan word for tombstone] "*làpida*" derives from Latin and means "stone", a stone carved with an inscription indicating a place, a presence or a permanence. The labels accompanying the works in this exhibition are similar to tombstones in a necropolis and would be the final place for, as we stated at the beginning, "talking to the dead" and a call for dialogue between temporalities.

## References:

1. Glissant, Édouard (1990-2010). *Poetics of Relation*, University of Michigan Press.
2. Steyerl, Hito (2009). "¿Is the Museum a Battlefield?". A: *E-flux Journal*, núm. 7, juny de 2009.
3. Caillois, Roger (1939-1942). *El hombre y lo sagrado*, Fondo de Cultura Económica.
4. Agamben, Giorgio. (2006) *Profanaciones*. Anagrama.
5. Groys, Boris (2009). "Comrades of Time". A: *Journal #11*, desembre de 2009.

## CATERINA ALMIRALL

## ACTIVITIES

(Barcelona, 1986)

Caterina Almirall is an independent curator and teacher. Her work has always maintained an interest in the artistic field per se, understanding artistic practice as a space for producing knowledge and learning. She has recently focused her research on exhibition and mediation practice, with a special interest in magic and rituals.

She began her work as a curator with the self-managed El Passadís space in Barcelona (2013 – 2016). Since then, she has developed curatorial projects in Barcelona at etHall gallery (2020), Bombon Projects (2019), Can Felipa (2018) and Sala d'Art Jove (2015), and also Centre d'Art Maristany in Sant Cugat del Vallès, MAC in Mataró, La Panera in Lleida and Espacio Trapézio in Madrid, among others. She was the curator of the annual season of Terrassa Comissariat 2017-18 and the Ephemeral programme of the SWAB Barcelona art fair in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

She has been a lecturer in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona (UB) since 2016. She is currently a member of Hangar's programme committee.

Screening of *Tombstones Are Not Flat*, by Carlos Fernández-Pello  
7.11.2020, 7pm. La Capella

Screening of two films + talk by María Iñigo Clavo and Nuto Chavajay  
*Les statues meurent aussi*, Alain Resnais and Chris Marker (1953),  
*Un-document. Undoing Imperial Plunder*, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (2019)  
10.11.2020, time to be determined.  
MACBA. In collaboration with LOOP Festival

Screening of *Nostalgia de la luz*, by Patricio Guzmán  
21.11.2020, 7 pm. Zumzeig Cinema.  
In collaboration with LOOP Festival

*INSTADEATH. Permanently delete your account*, with Daniel Moreno Roldán and Roc Herms  
3.12.2020, 6-8 pm. La Capella

Performance *Devenir mascarilla, aire, guante, agua, mono, tierra, museo, luz...* by Theoria group (Beatriz Regueira and María González in collaboration with Dasha Lavrennikov)  
11.12.2021, 7pm, and 19.12.2020, noon. La Capella

εξέδρα: Brassai in the MACBA Collection  
December. Date to be determined  
MACBA

Performance *Tetas* by Ariadna Guiteras  
9.1.2021, 12-2 pm and 4-7 pm

More details on La Capella website:  
<http://lacapella.barcelona>  
Prior bookings required for all the activities at: [lacapella@bcn.cat](mailto:lacapella@bcn.cat)