Dora García

Contes Choisis
from 09/11/2007 to 03/02/2008
organized by CASM
curated by Montse Badia

Dora Garcia. Contes Choisis

In the year 1996, Dora García carried out an installation entitled Perplexity, which consisted of cordonning off a space of an art gallery with a tape on which the word “perplexity” could be read. In this so simple manner (and in the case of the works of Dora there is an inversely proportional relationship between the ease with which her works may be described and their conceptual complexity), the artist was indicating the limits within which her work is situated: to present reality as multiple and questionable and to explore the relationship between the artist, the work, and the public. In other words, Dora indicates, she acts like a cinema director who tells stories (or simply selects them), unchains a situation, situates us in a scenario or makes us participants in a game the rules of which are very similar to reality and for this very fact allow us to question it.

Contes choisis is the title of this exhibition, which may be defined as miniretrospective, as it gathers together a selection of works that include the lapse of time between the years 1991 and 2007. Due to the marked procesual character of the works of Dora García, the presentation of these works is made in a format that the artist herself defines as "in off mode", that is to say, showing those elements that form a part of the works but in an “uninstalled” manner.

Contes choisis presents a passage over seven works: Contes Choisis (1991) is an installation presented in the De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam in which the portrait of Guy de Maupassant set off against two enigmatic sculptures define a narrative and fictional substratum. Todas las Historias (All the Stories) (2001- ) is a piece of work in process the ambition of which is to reunite “all of the stories of the world. The reader who may decide to read them out load becomes a performer of Todas Las Historias (All the Stories) and, whenever s/he may have finished, all men and women, all time and all places, will have passed over his/her lips. The difficulty lies in the fact that new stories are added to this list almost every day”. La Habitación cerrada (The Closed Room) consists of a room that must remain closed. Whenever anyone enters into the said room, it disappears and the work vanishes. The Crowd is a performance that is based on the need to create expectations and in which the public plays an essential role. The Prophets is described in this manner by the artist “[Prophets]...every day they enter into the museum and pick up the photocopies with the prophecies that there are for that day and which I had sent previously. For the next hour, they hand them out among the visitors of the museum and carry out the prophesized tasks which I wrote specifically for them on the papers that they are distributing. They never know beforehand which those tasks may be, nor in which form they will be presented to the visitors on the following day. The tension that these "prêt-a-porter" prophecies generate, the suspicion that the events that take place are part of a representation, and the constant threat of an uncontrollable reality...”. The Beggar’s Opera is the project that García presented in the Skulptur Projekte Münster’07 and which consisted of a series of performances carried out by an actor who interprets a beggar, Filch, inspired on the beggar apprentice of the opera of John Gay, which in turn inspired Bertolt Brecht in The Threepenny Opera. Filch is a character who moves freely around the streets of Münster, sufficiently marginal in order to be able to say what he thinks at all times. His adventures, encounters and observations were noted down in the log book www.thebeggarsopera.org as well as a series of monologues that were represented in the Metropolis Kino of Münster and which now appear together in a publication. Finally, C (Film contado dos veces – told twice), a proposal created specifically for the CASM, is a commented projection from Film (1964) by Beckett which is based on the notion of a subjective camera. The commented projection will take place every Wednesday at 19:00 PM in the Auditorium of the CASM.

Moving constantly between the frontiers that separate fiction from reality, the performances of Dora García (performances with actors who follow a series of instructions) explore their limits, which are none other than the limits between what is real and the representation of the same. By means of the investigation of the construction of fictions, the work of Dora García offers an autoreflexive vision of the individual and of his/her environment, in which recognition plays an essential role.

“Art is for everyone but only a select few know it”, preys one of her “golden phrases”, true statements or declarations of principles with which she makes her position public and with which it proves to be easy to identify oneself. “The difference between ordinary and extraordinary lies in that little something extra”. It is precisely there where that extraordinary about her work lies.

Montse Badia