



Detail of Weather Sticks, 2019. Pigmented ceramics. Private collection, Belgium. Photography by Pep Guerrero. Courtesy of ProjecteSD Gallery, Barcelona.

Defined by the silence that distinguishes her approach to life, Patricia Dauder (Barcelona, 1973, trained in Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona with stages in Holland, New York and Prague), fills the space with questions that pose new horizons and possibilities based on her memories. Her work stands out for its simplicity, through which she addresses the passage of time, space and matter, moving comfortably between the distortion and serenity implied by a number of her works in different media (drawing, sculpture, textiles, film and photography). At times, this tendency is made visible by the superimposition of layers with which she reiterates and reinforces the meanings she is interested in emphasizing. In the manner of a serial creation, the space is configured through gestures that abandon their autonomy to function as an installation entity, in direct interaction with the space in which they are inserted. All this is the result of years of committed and tenacious formal, analytical and conceptual study of the materials and their relationship with the environment.

Her works can be found in international collections such as “La Caixa” Collection, Barcelona; Spanish Ministry of Culture; Fundació Banc de Sabadell; Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, MACBA, Barcelona; Fundación Caja Madrid, Spain; Bank of Spain.

You are considered to be an artist with a processual and abstract approach. If so, why, what do you find in these processes that you do not find in other artistic languages?

The fact that my works are developed over very long periods of time and that they mostly consist of non-recognizable shapes is not something that I decide to do deliberately, but something that comes naturally. And that’s the way it has been ever since I started painting.

I don’t think my work involves abstraction in the sense of

creating shapes or marks without any reference to reality, nor with a fixation on formalism. Rather, the shapes that appear in my drawings, fabrics, sculptures or films as a result of sequential interactions with materials and images, carried out over weeks, months or years, are not related to the external appearance of things, nor to the immediate, nor to a discourse or a story to be told, but to a vision of reality in constant transformation, which I try to understand or internalize through my experience. The topics that interest me do not have a body or a permanently defined physicality, they are constantly shifting.

Natural rhythms, ephemeral events and traces of the passage of time may not have a concrete appearance, but they are real. My field of work is that of intuitions, sensations and perceptions, but based on reality, not imagination.

For me, reality is not a set of isolated, compact and permanent objects or matter. I suppose that is why I have always had a certain difficulty in understanding works of art as finished objects and I have been more interested in the phases they go through in their formal and conceptual development, with the final result being a manifestation of an accumulation of these phases.

Now, how does one represent these perceptions and ideas about mutability, impermanence or transience? The idea of representation is a controversial question. I have always felt a certain aversion to understanding representation as a metaphor for something. Instead, I feel more akin to the idea that the object that results from artistic work is not a representation of anything but something in and of itself, however vague that may sound.

Nevertheless, and despite how contradictory it may seem, my practice is closely linked to the material world, that of the manual and the tactile. I have the imperative need

Patricia Dauder

By Jesús Castaño

to use the senses and the material to understand a series of ideas about the context in which I find myself. Despite the fact that through experience I have acquired a greater knowledge of my references and my own stance, when I undertake a piece of work I am always at ground zero, always needing physical contact with the material in order to begin to establish connections. In other words, establishing a dialogue with the material, handling it and observing it, helps me make connections, feel and think. It is impossible for me to devise a piece mentally and follow pre-established guidelines because I need the experience factor and because my procedure is not linear, along with all the resulting time investment problems and the difficulty of delegating part of the work to third parties.

When defining your work, space has always been a determining factor for you. This means that, although your work uses minimal resources, the energy of the place and the memory of your experiences are a necessary part of the dialogue between work, space and spectator. Is it therefore necessary for you to see how the spectator interacts with your work?

For me, the interaction between the work within the space and the spectator is necessary. As you point out in your question, my works contain a series of events and personal experiences, often related to a place or the memory of a place, which are not explicitly manifested but which, somehow, are transferred to the piece during the work process. Despite the absence of readable or visible references and the usual undefinable formalization, the viewer can establish a relationship with the piece through the elements in the space and its configuration. I believe that silence or the silent encounter between the viewer and the work of art is an important starting point to generate an experience that can be unique and enriching, not only for my work but also for that of many artists. My work is not meant to be understood in a specific way, nor do I propose a reading in any particular direction. There is no instruction manual. In many of my sculptural pieces and in drawings or canvases, a series of visible, tangible elements appear, but there is also something missing, an emptiness, an absence. The viewer's interaction is based on careful observation, activating their own emotions and perhaps completing what they see or don't see.

This is an ideal situation that I strive for, but I am aware that it is not an easy one, especially nowadays, because it requires effort. Nowadays there is a widespread attention deficit and we have become accustomed to facing things through explanations or the eyes of another

person, the author or a mediator, without activating our own minds and without trusting our senses and our own criteria. Nowadays, direct, personal, individual and silent experiences are completely devalued.

Do you communicate better through your work than with words?

Yes, much better. I like reading a lot and I spend a lot of time reading. I also write regularly, but I write only for myself, on a personal level, never or almost never with the intention of being read. The written language, words, is something that I find fascinating, but also very complex. I think it is very difficult to be precise and open at the same time. Perhaps the problem is that my standard reference is a writing style or a type of text that is structured as an essay, of a discursive or academic type, in which I am not comfortable and which demands a capacity for relational articulation, which is difficult for me.

This is perhaps common in artistic endeavors, but I am constantly jumping from one concept to another without them being related in any way. I am constantly making these types of associations, but I also believe that there are many sensations and experiences that cannot be translated into words, or that are simply more natural for me to communicate in a different way.

It is true that in recent years I have paid more attention to the possibilities of language as an association tool and I am particularly interested in the relationship it has with the place from which it emerges and its sonority, linked to an experience of a context, but I am not sure that I will use it in the presentation of my work, at least in a regular way and in writing.

For Susan Sontag, “Photography is, first of all, a way of seeing. It is not seeing itself.” And it is precisely from that depth that I believe you work with, with a simultaneous analysis of space and form, that I understand your practice as an exercise in reflection. Is it possible to go beyond the visible world in this medium?

Yes, but it all depends on how you understand what is visible and the concept of reality. We live in a culture -the Western culture- that always establishes very clear divisions between spheres and categorizations. It is either one thing or another. Visible or invisible. There can be no middle ground.

For years I have seen my work as a set of contradictory, antithetical concepts: empty-full, construction-destruction,



Patricia Dauder en una de las salas de su exposición Suelo y Subsuelo, La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, 2021. Fotografía: Pep Guerrero. Cortesía galería ProjecteSD, Barcelona.

“I believe that silence or the silent encounter between the viewer and the work of art is an important starting point to generate an experience that can be unique and enriching, not only for my work but also for that of many artists.”

En esta página; *Waterlily*, 2022. Litografía sobre papel japonés. Fotografía: Roberto Ruiz.
En la página derecha; *Passage*, 2019. Pastel de color sobre tela. Fotografía: Roberto Ruiz.
Cortesía galería ProjecteSD, Barcelona.



material-immaterial, visible-invisible. The question of how to represent the non-visible logically was always looming in the air. In recent years I have begun to understand that there are no such opposites, but that there are transitory states. One can move from matter to non-matter and vice versa. In my opinion, it is more a question of a certain time and space than a question of materiality and visibility.

We usually consider vision as a purely physiological, optical phenomenon, and we have a certain aversion to contemplating it from broader parameters. I am not only referring to spiritual matters, although I also include those, in spite of the rejection they usually generate. I am also referring to using one's senses, one's sensibility or one's individual inner conscience to discern, to feel that there is a reality beyond the one we have in front of us, at this moment. That is somehow an open and infinite field of work, which artists, or many of them, have been trying to do for a long time, from the concept of the void in sculpture, capturing the passage of time, internal visions of one's own body or the universe, to give some examples. I also believe that the concept of visibility will be challenged as scientific advances question it and as societies evolve.

In the last edition of ARCO, you participated through your parent gallery, ProjecteSD. What did you make of the Spanish representation at the Fair?

As a visitor I was only at the fair for one day, which is not enough to see things with a certain attention and depth. I always try to pay attention to what is exhibited, regardless of its provenance or familiarity, but the context of a fair is visually very noisy and exhausting, so I end up being very selective.

I think there was a good representation and some optimism. There is always a bit of attention-seeking, especially at Arco, and logically there are a lot of works that achieve that purpose. I am particularly inclined to pieces that do not seek to be spectacular. I have also detected in recent years that, with certain nuances, whether in Madrid, Paris or Basel -I mention these cities because they are the ones where I have participated with works in fairs- there is a kind of globalized style, obviously marked by trends that are imposed internationally, in which Spanish artists also participate. In general, more than style or trends, I am interested in individual proposals that have a very distinct particularity, and there are definitely good artists in Spain with a strong language of their own, some of them present at Arco. •