

DORA GARCÍA: 58 PROLOGUES AND ONE END

Opening: 11.04.2024, 19h. Exhibition: 11.04 > 18.06.2024

During the course of the exhibition, performances and activities related to the works will be announced.

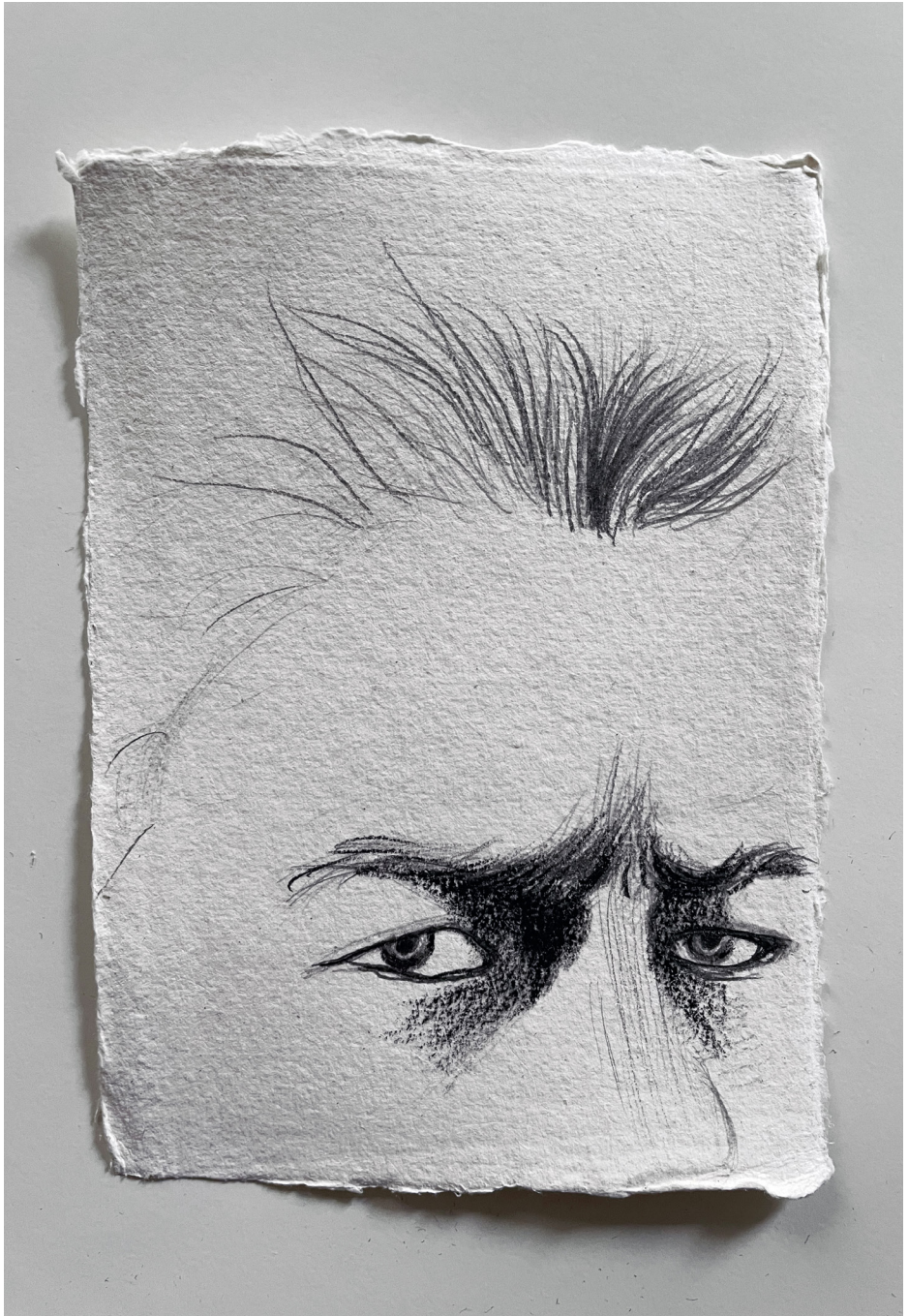
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Dora García's work is based on organizing knowledge as a material in its own right. Using extensive documentary research, she delves into complex topics such as the history of the irrational and subconscious mind forging links with the great names of literature, among them, Joyce. The oeuvre of Dora García folds up into writing, film, installation, and performance, as is centered around stories which she organises and stages, conjuring situations designed to engage the visitor and trigger unique, introspective experiences. The result of this multidisciplinary atlas is a highly conceptual and metaphorical discourse that addresses issues like the artistic dimension of fiction, marginality as a form of resistance, or the symbolic logics that condition our relationship with cultural spaces and products.

About *58 prologues and one end*. Text by Dora García.

I imagine there has never been a time in which it didn't exist the feeling of a near end. For as long as memory has existed, entire worlds have ceased to exist, suspended at the edge of an abyss, without knowing whether a new world would replace them.

James Joyce concluded his novel *Finnegans Wake* (1939), sixteen years after he began it, with the death of the female character, Anna Livia Plurabelle, or the River Liffey, or all world's rivers, or the water, or the text of the 1001 stories, flowing into and merging with, the sea, its end. The sentence "A way a lone a last a loved a long the" is suspended in nothingness, in emptiness, with that "the" that is like a final expiration, almost a no sound. Before "recirculating" to the beginning of the book "riverrun, past Eve and Adam..." the restarting of the story is interrupted by "Paris, 1922-1938". If the *continuuarration* of *Finnegans Wake* is infinite, the life of its author, who died at the age of 58 in 1941, is not. And while we have powerful reasons today to think that the world, as we know it, is ending for everyone, it is no less so that the world ends countless times every day, every time a



Dora García, *Macedonio, Joyce* (detail), 2024

“The world” - or “his world” – also ended for **Macedonio Fernández** (Buenos Aires, 1874 - 1952) when his wife Elena de Obieta passed in 1920. Macedonio started writing *Museo de la Novela de La Eterna*, the “first good novel” in 1925, and continued writing it for the rest of his life. The novel would be published in 1967. One way to understand this novel is as a place (literally described in the text as a “estancia” called “la Novela”) where death does no longer exist, where Macedonio can refer to his wife as “La Eterna” (although she splits into a younger version of herself: “Dulceamor” - just as Anna Livia Plurabelle is also Issy, the teenage girl). Macedonio divided his *Museo de la Novela de La Eterna* into 57 prologues + 20 chapters + a final prologue that closes the book with the enigmatic title “Al que quiera escribir esta novela (to anyone who wants to write this novel)”. 58 prologues.

In 2023 I was commissioned by **CNIO Arte** to collaborate on a new work on climate change with scientist macroecologist David Nogués-Bravo. A group of us traveled to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard in August of that year, following the recommendation of Nogués-Bravo who referred to this place as an excellent object of study to understand what is to come, as the temperature warming there is happening seven times faster than in the rest of the planet - a prologue to the end. After this extraordinary journey, the idea for a film project was born. A film on the idea of “the end”, with length yet to be determined, made and presented in episodes. After presenting a first episode at CNIO Arte, this exhibition introduces the second one: *End, three prologues* (33'48", 2024).

Not only the film, but all the works in the exhibition are, one way or another, part of “End”, this infinite project (started in 2024, still without a completion date) - even those works that have preceded it by several years. Under this epigraph are gathered: the aforementioned film, *End, three prologues*, (2024); a new golden sentence configured in two parts: *A way a lone a last a loved along the* (the last sentence of *Finnegans Wake*) and *When a sentence abruptly stops*. A series of 59 drawings [*Macedonius, Joyce* (2024)]; two book-objects [*The Joycean Society* (2013) and *58 prologues and one end* (2024)]. And the installation [*The Labyrinth of Female Freedom* (2020)].

Inevitably, this is a project, an exhibition, uncompleted. The word “project” carries in itself the idea of the future, of anticipating what is to come, we work for what is yet to come, for those who will come, for a context that we glimpse with uncertainty, a premonition ...,

James
Joyce
Ulysses



Dora García, *The Joycean Society* (detail) (2013)

and that is not very different from what it is to live a life. Fritz Senn, one of the greatest experts on Joyce, considers that Joyce wrote only one novel in his entire life, beginning with *A Portrait of the Adolescent Artist* and ending with *Finnegans Wake* - therefore, “the” could be the last word of his writing practice, ending in that “no sound, no word”, or as Joyce put it:

“This time, I have found the word which is most slippery, the least accented, the weakest word in English, a word which is not even a word, which is scarcely sounded between the teeth, a breath, a nothing, the article the”.

Louis Gillet, *Stèle pour James Joyce*, Marseille 1941, pp.164-65, quoted in **Richard Ellmann**, *James Joyce*.

Macedonio wrote his novel during 27 years - those he lived since 1925; and the text that closes the novel, which he calls prologue, is addressed to “Al que quiera escribir esta novela (To anyone who wants to write this novel)”, as if 27 years later the novel was still unwritten. The last sentence is:

“No hay más que un no-ser: el del personaje, el de la fantasía, de lo imaginado.

El imaginador no conocerá nunca el no ser”.

“There is only one non-being: that of the character, that of the phantasy, that of the imagined. The person who imagines will never know the non-being”.

The exhibition *58 prologues and one end* works on two of the three axes that this project will have, “End” - the end of the world, the end of the novel, and opens to a third, which is just beginning - the end of memory. As in *The Labyrinth of Female Freedom* (*), these axes are circular, and for every “end” that expires, there is a “riverrun” that begins. The person who imagines will never know the non-being.

....

(*) The installation *The Labyrinth of Female Freedom* is the basis of a performance that consists of a performer reading poems' books written by female authors. The performance will be scheduled during the month of May. The date and time will be announced well in advance.



Dora García, *End, three prologues*, (stills), 2024

AUTHORS AND REFERENCES

- The Irish writer **James Joyce** (1882-1941) is considered one of the most important modernists of the 20th century. It is partly due to the metalinguistic character of his work that, throughout Dora García's career, Joyce appears at times as a central figure, at others as a source of inspiration or constant reference. There are numerous works by García in which the author is an essential part.

- **Macedonio Fernández** (1874-1952) was an Argentinian writer, lawyer and philosopher. Celebrated for his experimental novel *Museo de la Novela de la Eterna*, published posthumously in 1967, he exerted great influence on later Argentinian literature, especially on Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar and Ricardo Piglia. Dora García's science fiction short film entitled *La Eterna* (2017), was inspired by the aforementioned novel by the Argentinian author. *La Eterna* is, in turn, part of García's feature film *Segunda Vez* (2018).

- **CNIO Arte** is an initiative of the Spanish National Cancer Research Center (CNIO) that establishes contact between scientists and leading international artists to explore the common territories between scientific research and artistic creation.

Dora García (Valladolid, 1965) lives and works in Oslo. She is a professor at the National Academy of Arts in Oslo. She has been part of the PEI Macba Barcelona (2015-2020) and has been a guest professor at numerous educational institutions such as ENSBA Lyon, HEAD Geneva, and Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains, France. In 2021, she received the National Plastic Arts Award from the Ministry of Culture.

She has participated in important international art exhibitions: Manifesta (1998), Istanbul Biennale (2003), Münster Sculpture Projects (2007), Venice Biennale (2013, 2015), Sydney Biennale (2008), São Paulo Biennale (2010), dOCUMENTA 13 (2012), Gwangju Biennale (2016), OsloBiennalen, Art Encounters Timisoara (Romania) and AICHI Triennale, Japan (2019). She represented Spain at the 2011 Venice Biennale. In 2021, she developed projects at the Fotogalleriet Oslo, Netwerk Aalst (B) and at the Colomboskope festival, Sri Lanka. Recent solo exhibitions include: Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca (2023); MUHKA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2023); Reina Sofía National Art Center Museum, Madrid (2023); Amant Foundation, New York (2022 and 2023); Patio Herreriano, Valladolid (2021); Rose Art Museum, Waltham (2020); Reina Sofía National Art Center Museum, Madrid (2018).

Her work is part of public collections such as Reina Sofía (Madrid), MACBA, Barcelona, MoMA of San Francisco, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (Seville), CNAP (Paris), La Caixa Contemporary Art Collection (Barcelona), FRAC (Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Île-de-France, Languedoc-Roussillon, Lorraine), Henry Art Foundation (Seattle), Kadist Foundation (Paris, San Francisco), among many others.

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