



The exhibition "PARTIR / REVENIR" is an encounter between three artists that emerged from an idea of art as an expression of movements and displacements, of leaving and returning. The urge to move arises both out of necessity and as a desire to experience another kind of encounter; another way of thinking, another cultural context or perhaps even another language. Movement or displacement is an experience that can include moments of meaningfulness and creativity, but can also evoke feelings of distance and estrangement. In this exhibition the three artists seek and ponder the possibilities and limitations of this kind of experience.

The poetry and philosophical work of Edouard Glissant and his views on how cultures emerge and take shape in circuitous and often unpredictable, became a primary inspiration for this exhibition. Glissant grew up in Martinique in the Caribbean, a lush and fecund natural environment where endless varieties of plants intertwine, blossom and wither. His texts arise out of his peregrinations throughout his life between there, Paris and New York. In his travels he noticed that the epic growth of the Caribbean had a tendency to obscure the physical and psychical paths of his childhood.

He uses these shifts in nature and geography as a metaphor to describe human and cultural changes; how continents slide apart and then merge again through the phenomena of conquest and colonization, through languages, and religions. He writes about how we acquire knowledge by following these movements ourselves, by travelling from place to place. In his understanding of the knowledge he emphasizes the importance of the boundaries we encounter and what remains obscure or opaque, what we do not or cannot immediately understand. That opacity is a sort of limitation that exists within ourselves, a place we cannot grasp. He urges us to accept this limitation and to respect these boundaries, yet not allow them to prevent us from relating to and feeling affinities for one another. Glissant acknowledges our ability to recognize other people without fully understanding them.

It is this ambiguity in relationships and his view of the limits of our understanding, which we have found particularly interesting. The geographical distance between us can be traced with a line between Sweden in the north through France and Morocco in the south. It cuts through linguistic, political and cultural borders and traditions. At the center of our lives, however, there is something we have in common. We share, each in our own way, the daily routine of artistic practice.

Christine, Katarina and Safaa met for the first time in Safaa's hometown Tetouan, Morocco in the fall of 2017. They had conversations in Safaa's

studio that would continue as they followed her through the city completing the daily tasks required of her as an artist, a mother and a resident of a city. It was through this collective experience of her quotidian activities and in the continuing conversation that details from our separate worlds began to emerge and coalesce. The conversation touched on art and its multiple directions, on memories of childhood, on love and on death.

Situated on a mountainside overlooking the Mediterranean, the architecture of the ancient city of Tetouan is almost completely white. Medina, the old city in the center of town, is a maze of alleys, winding streets and buildings whose architecture testifies to the site's many layers of history. The whiteness and the bright, shining light that characterize the cityscape are reflected in Safaa Errua's artwork. She works with white paper and textiles but also with "hard" materials such as wire and needles. Her work often evolves in a clear interaction with the site itself as site-specific sculpture or installation. Looking at her work one feels as if she cut pieces out of her own inner and outer realities and allowed them to merge into completely new formations. In her light, minimalist and seemingly fragile works there is a captivating dualism between the soft and the hard, the ethereal and the sharp, the abstract and the concrete.

Christine Ferrer, in contrast to Safaa Errua, uses darker, comparatively muted colors in her work. The needle and thread are important to Ferrer and at times she uses them to embroider text in her pieces, such as PARTIR, RESPIRER, REVENIR (going, breathing, returning). In her work her sensibility of craft becomes a testimony to the movements of the hand and memories that are both physical and existential. We meet and separate, we reunite and drift apart again. Christine Ferrer's work is a journey into a language of metaphors and symbols, which take form in different objects, drawings, textiles and sculptures. There are many references to her own life that she splits between Uruguay and southern France. In her small beautiful studio in the little village of Goult there is a seemingly infinite amount of objects, archives and material. Here, she creates her artworks, often with an idea of situating them in places outside the gallery context, such as churches. In a similar vane, she produces mail art. She posts her work as letters that sometimes disappear along the way, never reaching their destination.

One day, such a letter from Christine arrived in Katarina Eismann's mailbox with a stamped address and carefully sewn edges. In Katarina's work such an act has a special meaning. Opening up and receiving is one of the foundations of her way of working. She has invited people into her studio in Stockholm and to other places, creating a space for encounters between different artists and artistic disciplines. She often shares a personal starting

point and encourages others to use it as inspiration and/or turn it into new forms. The focus of the meetings is the process of listening and waiting for others to receive and reflect. To enter into another person's thought pattern is to tear away a border. It can take time and it can be difficult and there are mental, linguistic and cultural barriers, but what ultimately happens can never be calculated in advance and perhaps never be recreated. Katarina often uses the video camera as an artistic tool. Sometimes she uses it as an eye to record the movements and approaches of others and sometimes for her own observations. There is often a stillness in these works, something that happens and changes almost imperceptibly or over a long period of time. It is as if she wants to remain in the moment of waiting, to sense without immediately claiming to understand.

In the exhibition there is a dialogue between the works, perhaps not clear and at times hardly perceptible, but still, it exists. We have traveled and visited each other and talked in different languages but mostly it has been in the quality of our daily lives that our paths have crossed and not in the geographical context. The people with whom we connect, or the social milieu that we create, is partly determined by our motivations and partly by external factors outside of our control. The connection between the far north and the south for instance, will not forge itself, we have to establish it through our own efforts. It is precisely the obstacles and boundaries that arise as a result of differences in language, history and political conditions separating us that "Partir/Revenir" seeks to bypass. Through the realization of this exhibition and through art we have seen that this sense of connection is a very real possibility.

Text: Eva-Lotta Holm Flach

A collaboration between artists Katarina Eismann (Sweden), Christine Ferrer (France) and Safaa Erruas (Morocco), curator/gallerist Eva-Lotta Holm Flach (Sweden) and gallerist Stéphanie Borsa (France).

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