

PRESS RELEASE

ANDREA COSTAS LAGO

Desapego / Detachment



Andrea Costas Lago. Photograph from the *Plena* series, 2021-2022. Photo: courtesy of the artist

7th February – 2nd July, 2023

Gallery B1 and 1st Floor Perimeter space

Curated by: Miguel Fernández-Cid and Pilar Souto Soto

Produced by: MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

In collaboration with:



INTRODUCTION

MARCO, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vigo, launches its 2023 programme with an exhibition by **Andrea Costas Lago** (Vigo, 1978) entitled *Desapego /Detachment* that brings together works produced over the last two years: photographic suites, videos and a site-specific piece installed in the museum.

An artist and teacher, Andrea Costas Lago has developed her creative work in a variety of languages (installation, video and performance), although she is best known for her photography. Her personal narrative broaches subjects that are both quotidian and universal from an emotional and psychological perspective.

Desapego is the outcome of a process of research and work carried out over a number of years: an awakening to the meaning of maternity, a first person view of it through art, divorced from stereotypes and idealizations, in the footsteps of works by other women, such as the poet Adrienne Rich, the photographers Ana Casas and Elinor Carucci, or the artist Ana Álvarez-Errecalde.

The project consists of a collection of pieces (photos, videos and installations) in which the artist reflects on her own experience of maternity, from a non-idealized point of view, and using the contradictions and challenges that this life opportunity has given her to pose questions and grow.

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To be a territory. The entire known universe.

The first playing field. Shelter and food.

Overwhelming presence and present.

Desires and needs, indistinguishable and inexhaustible.

Foundations connecting them to life, to pleasure, to their own essence.

Brutal, for better and for worse. Hard to believe.

A complex, contradictory experience concealed and manipulated by stereotypes.

Neither mystic, nor essentialist: real... and as political as the rest of "our things".

Andrea Costas Lago

CURATOR'S TEXT

Art brings us closer to a variety of ways of understanding beauty, it encourages both our enjoyment and knowledge, yet it simultaneously questions, criticizes and condemns. Artists frequently examine their thoughts, ideas and emotions in their work: it is their way to comprehend things happening around them, and even those things happening inside them. Hence, this consideration of decisions from the parameters of art becomes a necessity, a pressing matter.

Andrea Costas Lago (Vigo, 1978) built a name for herself by exploring her identity as an artist and a woman; the relationship between (and the existence of) the others inside each of us; and the recuperation of images (people, memories) that define us. Without lavishing her time on public projects and exhibitions, she has produced a condensed oeuvre almost hidden from view, which when displayed shows its brimming rumours and connections for all to appreciate.

Desapego is a special project. It began when the artist decided to become a mother, in 2008. Since then, and particularly following the birth of her twins, she has lived this new period intensely, with its high demands on concentration and energy. As the artist has remarked: "This period of existential revolution led me to become fully conscious of the importance of the subject of maternity, as a driving force for personal and social evolution and, most importantly, the role of art as a vehicle to convey in first person themes related directly to this sector of the population so meagrely represented –bar stereotypes and idealizations– in society and art".

She analyses the experience from her position as an artist, jotting down situations, memories and taking snapshots; she does not conceal her searches, doubts, or the process. And she is certain that each decision raises questions and has consequences, both on life and art.

Frozen gestures, evocative images with which she defends her position as an artist and a woman, an artist and a mother, her relationship with her children, her environment and her family. Rather than seeking a happy tale, she prizes sincerity and nakedness, and reveals thus that happiness and suffering are close companions shaping life and its familiar details. Without evoking, in direct language, overcoming the fear of revealing oneself without dressing up, without manipulating reality. Without the support of models or similar lines: she analyses every circumstance, every step, every thought in an attempt to remember her journey, to be faithful to the process, her deeds and her experience. The media, format and size of each piece are decided by the situation: concise stories on video, acts synthesized in photographs, a series to describe, an object to symbolize, a mural that expands and allows one to see the key points of a thought, the meaning of an attitude.

Miguel Fernández-Cid / Pilar Souto Soto, exhibition curators

ANDREA COSTAS LAGO. *Desapego / Detachment*

“This project started way back in 2008, when I decided to start a family with my partner. We managed it seven years later after a series of treatments. They were twins and it proved completely overwhelming. I have almost no photographs (apart from cell phone ones) of their early infancy, but I found the experience so incredible that I kept wondering how I might depict and convey just a small iota of that mad frenzy. I managed to start taking proper photographs when they were 4 years old just as we were saying goodbye to that first babe in arm stage of childhood.

This period of existential revolution led me to become fully conscious of the importance of the subject of maternity as a driving force for personal and social evolution and, most importantly, the role of art as a vehicle to convey in first person themes related directly to this sector of the population so meagrely represented –bar stereotypes and idealizations– in society and art.

Due to my research work for my doctoral thesis, which these pieces are part of, I was aware of the existence in contemporary literature and photography of an increasing number of authors who were speaking very frankly from their own experience. Reading Adrienne Rich, Jane Lazarre, Rachel Epp Buller, Laura Freixas, Patricia Merino, Esther Vivas, Carolina del Olmo, María Llopis, Julia Cañero o María do Cebreiro has been essential. Becoming familiar with the work of Ana Casas, Ana Álvarez Errecalde, Elinor Caruchi, Catherine Opie, Hannah Cooke, Megan Wynne, Jade Beall, Verónica Ruth Frías, Natalia Iguñiz, Natalie Lennard, Carmen Winant, Irmina Walczak and Jess Dobkin, among many others (all of them artists that I admire greatly for daring to speak from their ‘shared room’), has given me the perspective and support I needed to embark upon a difficult job, one that might prove awkward or controversial in some of its more intimate aspects.

These are subjects about which it is worth speaking and which are beginning to be taken into account in the cultural sphere as well as in a feminist movement that is increasingly multifaceted and inclusive, capable of accepting a variety of situations of different types of women, mothers and people equipped with the ability to gestate and lactate. Indeed, over the last few years it is easy to trace the rising interest in Spain in discussing feminist maternities, the specific violence aimed at women and their young offspring, the care crisis, etc. An example of this is the appearance and rapid rise of the PETRA Feminist Maternities Association, of which I am a member, and the recent profusion of literature dealing with these subjects.

The *Desapego* project consists of an extensive group of pieces in a variety of formats (photographs, videos and installations) in which I explore the experience of my own maternity from a non-idealized point of view and using the contradictions and challenges that this life opportunity has given me to pose questions and grow.

ANDREA COSTAS LAGO. *Desapego / Detachment*

The title refers to the ongoing process of separation that has occurred since the moment of giving birth (or a few months later, if we respect the dyad). Changing stages, continual adaptation and departing. A necessary and liberating evolution, which also involves a lot of confusion and mixed-feelings.

One should point out that in terms of a visual and performative approach, I decided not to cut my hair from the time of birth to the end of the maternal lactation stage which, in my case, lasted five years. Those long locks of time-consuming, uncomfortable hair, exuberantly dyed in two-colours, acted as a symbol of the bond and the knotty existential tangle intrinsic to the maternal experience of the first years of child-raising. Eventually my children cut those locks for me, after their lips had touched my breasts for the last time.

Most of these images were taken in 2020, quite spontaneously and precariously between my home and my parents' house, where we spent lockdown. Additionally, in January 2021 we performed four action sessions at MARCO that interacted with the artists Marina Abramović, Yoko Ono, Zhang Huan and Masahisa Fukase."

This project has been possible thanks to the support of many people; to the MARCO and its team, of course – they've made me feel at home. To those friends who helped me when I asked them to: Roberto Alonso, Carolina González, Diego Fernández; and especially to David Hernández and Álex Penabade, who made the four sessions at MARCO.

And my family, obviously, to whom I owe **everything**.

Andrea Costas Lago

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Andrea Costas Lago (Vigo, 1978) is a visual artist and a photography lecturer at the Fine Arts Faculty of Pontevedra, Vigo University, and at the design school, Aula D. She carries out her creative work in a variety of languages such as installation, video and performance, though she is best known for her work as a photographer. Her personal narrative broaches subjects that are both quotidian and universal from an emotional and psychological perspective.

Currently, she balances her work as an artist and a teacher with researching and she is preparing her doctoral thesis about “Breastfeeding in the work of 21st century photographers”.

Her works have been shown in exhibitions such as *Cruzamentos na arte galega da Colección CGAC* (Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea. Santiago de Compostela, 2022); *A paisaxe e a súa pegada* (Casa do Cabildo, Santiago de Compostela, 2019); *Alén dos Xéneros. Prácticas artísticas feministas en Galicia* (MARCO Vigo y Auditorio de Galicia. Santiago de Compostela, 2017); *Alivio* (Alterarte, Ourense, 2011); *Mapas creativos. Nuevos nombres en el arte gallego* (Galería Orígenes, Havana, 2008); *Márgenes y mapas. La creación de género en Galicia* (Auditorio de Galicia, Compostela, 2008); *La jeune création photographique en Galice* (Espace Bonefoy Toulouse, 2007); *La buena vida* (CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, 2006); *O Feito Fotográfico* (MARCO, Vigo, 2004).

Additionally, works by Andrea Costas Lago have been purchased by public procurement by the CGAC (2020) and have won several prizes such as Artes Plásticas Ourense (Diputación de Ourense, 2007), Injuve (2002) o Novos Valores (Diputación de Pontevedra, 2001). As well as publishing photography books, *Formas de Ser* (CEF, 2002) and *Persoal e transferíbel* (CEF, 2006), she is co-author, with Yolanda Castaño, of the book *Cociñando ao pé da letra* (Galaxia, 2011), which was a finalist in the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2012 as the best Spanish cookery photography book, and one of the four best in the world.

GENERAL INFORMATION / DOCUMENTATION / ACTIVITIES

Opening Hours

From Tuesdays to Saturdays (including holidays), from 11.00 to 14.30 and from 17.00 to 21.00. Sundays, from 11.00 to 14.30

Conference/discussion on “Feminism and maternity”

Date and times: to be confirmed

Conference hall

Limited editions by Andrea Costas Lago at LASAL BOOKS

On occasion of this exhibition, the artist has issued three limited editions consisting of 20 boxes containing 4 photographs (10x15 cm each). Additionally, there is an edition of 10 photographs (60x65 cm each) from the *Plena* series. Both editions are available for sale at LASAL BOOKS (MARCO, main hall) and on the website www.lasalbooks.com.

School programmes

With the collaboration of Fundación “la Caixa”

Starting 14th February 2023

Times: Tuesdays to Fridays 10.00 to 13.00

By reservation only: tel. 986 113900 Ext. 100 / 986 113908 / Email: comunicacion@marcovigo.com

Children’s workshops

With the collaboration of Fundación “la Caixa”

Starting 21st January 2023

Times: Saturdays at 11.00 to 12.30 (3 to 6 year-olds) and at 12.30 to 14.00 (7 to 12 year-olds)

By reservation only: tel. 986 113900 Ext. 100 / Email: recepcion.marco@gmail.com

Information and Guided Visits

Gallery staff are happy to respond to questions and queries related to the exhibition. Additionally guided tours are available:

Daily at 18.00 / ‘A la carta’ visits for groups are available by appointment.

Interactive Maps via the Vigo app

The interactive maps system accessible on the Vigo app allows visitors to consult exhibition-related content (videos, pictures, information about the pieces on show), either via beacons or bluetooth devices located inside the museum spaces or anywhere else via the map on your mobile phone’s screen after downloading the app, or on the Concello de Vigo website.

Contact Communication and Press Office

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