

PRESS RELEASE

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# DANIEL VERBIS

## *With a Desire for Being*



Daniel Verbis. *God from heaven*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas and wood, 243 x 312 x 10 cm.

**February 23<sup>rd</sup> – August 25<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Ground floor rooms

Curated by: Miguel Fernández-Cid

Production: MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

## INTRODUCTION

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From February 23<sup>rd</sup>, MARCO's ground floor rooms will be offering a journey through the work of **Daniel Verbis** (León, 1968); a sample of his creative vigour through a set of artworks representative of his artistic and research efforts over the last few years. With a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Salamanca, his work has been marked from his outset by certain heterodox materials (resins, plasticine, buttons, threads and wool, rubber, foam, plastic canvases, etc.) that had traditionally been kept outside of the sphere of more traditional pictorial techniques, by a formal daring that became evident when the visibility of the stretcher turned into a fundamental element of the object-paintings he produced in the early years of this century.

The dialectic between opposing elements sustains a conceptual framework that equally supports his painting, sculpture, collages, and wall drawings, adding playful flexibility and fate to the series of formal or processual premises that create the basis of his works. In his most recent works, he establishes a dialogue between his object installations and his paintings on canvas, integrating both in a productive dialogue in which the precision of forms and processes seems to respond to approaches that are as conceptual as they are emotional or semantic.

Interwoven into the process itself, the meaning in Daniel Verbis's work always remains open, waiting, barely suggested in his titles. Verbis encourages an unfinished meaning that allows multiple readings of the image to overlap, interpretations that, when knotted together, draw a grid of polysemies that seems to fold in on itself, a place of encounters that calls on a gaze that multiplies the poetic-aesthetic possibilities of the visible. The works are presented to us as visual artefacts that begin to perform when the spectator finds some interpretative key, which may be poetic, cultural, conceptual..., but a key, in the end, never imposed by the author.

The exhibition, designed for the spaces on the ground floor of MARCO, aims to enhance the possibilities offered by its architecture with large canvases, murals, and installations of objects, creating an emotional itinerary endorsed by the collages and works on paper as a sort of complementary archival material. Their arrangement and placement aim to set up dialogues between the paintings and the pieces made in other techniques, thus making perceivable that their axis is a dynamic, organic, and changing conception of artistic expression; that painting is a physically living and semantically poetic organism, always in transformation.

## TEXTO CURATORIAL

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“Often, painting is uniform because the painter chooses a single medium on which to reiterate gesture and intention; sometimes, however, the exercise is more complex: at the same time painting can be liquid, play with flow or become an object, spread itself over the wall, occupy a given surface or be considered as an endless continuum. It can entice a large scale or be concentrated in a small, almost minimal, space; it can be a spatial, aerial gesture, a dialogue with reworked images, photographs only direct in appearance, dense collages, objects, installations.

Since his first exhibitions, **Daniel Verbis** (León 1968) has chosen to ponder the meaning of painting, its possibilities, limits, cross-contaminations, its independence. Starting with an analysis of its meaning as a language, he finds echoes, rhizomes and double meanings that trap him. Playfulness is joined by rigour that he eventually takes to such extremes that he becomes locked in. He intervenes on walls and displays books using images which are impossible to unfold, being confined to the object.

When he paints his formally uninhibited paintings, seemly completely free yet extremely complex in their composition and process, he becomes one of the key painters of his generation. In his work, nothing is what it seems, there is always a detail, an element, that make us play a guessing game, until we are trapped by the interplay of furtive glances, references and successions. The painting flows yet at the same time is solid; it is methodical yet seemingly unrestrained; it is refined and cultured yet full of life. Sometimes he paints by adding, others by subtracting or attaching modules to the initial medium, as though he had not started out with a clear idea, as though the image he had been looking for was unplanned. In effect, he ponders the process, turning the meaning of each image on its head; as he does when he suggests his never banal titles, his wonderful texts about painting, his poetic and visual books. Sometimes we wonder whether the familiar realm is the material, the echo of a form or a process that he cools sometimes, that provokes others.

*With a Desire for Being* alludes to that moment when the artworks seem to hold still before our gaze. Verbis' propensity for the organic, for play, for double entendres, for eroticism and for order, is evident; his ability to inhabit processes in transformation; similarly evident is the almost classic way he finishes his most recent paintings, making them well-rounded but never over-bearing.”

**Miguel Fernández-Cid**, curator of the exhibition

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“What distinguishes a work of art is the determination of its form. In effect, each choice is perceived (perseveres) as a necessary condition. Experience confirms to us that at a certain point in the process one has the feeling or the confirmation that there is no longer a choice, that decisions are inherent to the work, independent of the initial purpose, of personal taste or of the (applied) rules. When the artist accepts a vicarious role, a mediating role, the artwork gains more solvency because the decision about form usually responds to self-regulatory needs. The (beauty of) nature is unaware of its reason, likewise the inherent form does not (necessarily) ask for the author's consent.

The open work, incomplete by definition, is nowadays our natural way of understanding a work of art; it is, most of the time, an intermediate stage in an unfinished, factually indeterminate, possibly endless process; it is, almost always, an incomplete stage in a process without immediate anchorage. Contemporary art is irremediably fragmentary and partial.”

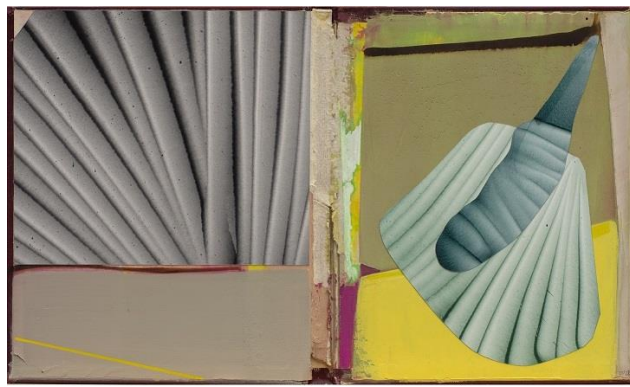


Daniel Verbis. *Iconic panic (In The Court Of The Crimson King)*, 2016-17. Acrylic on canvas and wood, 244 x 312 cm.

## DANIEL VERBIS. *With a Desire for Being*

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“The series *Who guards his mouth guards his soul* (2020-21) consists of small pictorial pieces made on the flyleaves of the unbound covers of encyclopaedias or second-hand books. These covers, which are the recycled remains of those books that I use to make collages, function as “povera” relics turned into improvised media on which I can paint with absolute freedom small diptychs that unfurl like a butterfly’s colourful wings or like the innocuous prints of a Rorschach test; diptychs that are the consequence of unfolding the media and seeing two, theoretically counterposed, images at the same time, two images previously face-to-face in their incommunicable intimacy. Starting from these pairings of Siamese images, it becomes clear that the only aesthetic debate that succeeds is, in the end, the one between what is repeated and what is differentiated.



Daniel Verbis. *Who guards his mouth guards his soul*, 2022. Paintings on book covers, 44 x 64 cm each

In this collage-painting the dehumanised fragments – disfigured and reconfigured, deconstructed and reconstructed –, the fragments of the processual anatomy, come to be some sort of mediators that make it possible to reconstruct a possible-individual in the chaotic melting pot of art dehumanisation. And to constitute this painting without a particular referent, to constitute this emotional geography, to formalise this anatomy and this physiognomy, I have no choice but to make use of the self-generation of histological structures, of the knottings and ligatures that weave a fabric, of the surfaces that fold back to create the organs, and of the muscular tensions that delimit the entrance doors and the escape routes.”

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“Ungraspable beauty cannot be portrayed. Like purity, it is an ideal. When the enveloping mantle is broken (as the chrysalis is broken) in the joyous or liberating act of the body, nature shows itself in all its rawness. Naked, made into a gaze, stripped of the mantle that proscribes its visibility, beauty loses its virginal character, loses its ideal condition, and becomes the spectacle of a brief fleeting moment, the radiance of an instant, a superficial static electricity. We see, then, that beauty, that the chromatic iridescence of these psyches that appear and disappear in the sinuosity of their fugitive flight as in a winged victory (*El paciente insecticida*, 2018) or in an angelic good fortune (*Psyche*, 2020-21), is something temporary, a brevity, a remoteness of being that ends up abandoning us and that can only be remembered or imagined.



Daniel Verbis. *Psyche*, 2020-21. Acrylic on canvas, 195 x 130 cm.

Like the entomologist who pierces the rigid body of a butterfly with a pin so that the iridescent pigmentation of its wings can be appreciated, the painter also immobilises the transit of forms in order to find the exact form or the right form, the harmony or the logic. Or, as it has always been called, beauty. The painter stops the flow of the psyche, the desire to be appearance in a pictorial matter that is already forever a fixed image, a death-image. But a death-image of a psyche still acting, of a psyche that seems to have life or to retain it because it is expressive, because it is the replica of a bodily semantics full of life. Painting is a paradoxical activity that reaches its maximum expression when it restores the constituent restlessness of that which has life, be this restlessness a visual thing or a mental thing. Painting will never fail to be a thought of the eyes for the eyes that becomes exemplary, precisely because it gives stability to that which quivers.”

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“My way to approach painting, both at a formal and a semantic level, is through superimposed layers of elements’ rhizomes. They expand horizontally and vertically across the painting’s surface. First, I add these exogenous elements and then I rearrange them to see what happens. At the canvas plane, sense nodules communicate with each other until they create a machine of multiple senses. There is not one single sense, but many senses which overlap, replace, complement, contradict, and coordinate each other. One might say my painting is a place of sense creation, more than a place to detail a preconceived idea.

In any case, now my painting should not only be seen in depth, I take space illusion for granted. These last paintings, which are large format, must be seen in their whole horizontal extension as well. Their approach has to do with a painting that unfolds (or unrolls, I think about Japanese screens or Chinese painting in paper rolls). The motif is narrated sequentially on a single plane, that can be as large as needed. And this expanded approach can also be applied to modular pieces.

In that sense, painting takes in a certain temporality. It is a footprint of the occurrence, but a footprint that registers different moments of such occurrence (plastic). I guess that the idea that remains is a reflection of the uncertainty of a being, of a being in a state (of great hope), of a being in transformation. The object which is represented is the fixed photo of a being that is materializing. The painting claims a lineal reading that develops into some kind of loop with neither beginning nor end, which rotates back across itself because the beginning and end coincide. The object depicted, the painted thing, is not yet completed because all these artworks allude to a vague being, precisely because that being is still taking form. The objective of that which breathes is to remain alive the maximum time possible and, meanwhile, to regenerate into new beings that carry its genetic legacy. In that respect, painting, as life, searches for a way to endure as an expressive device, exploring new forms and ways to create (itself). Life is reflected, yes, but only as some kind of inertia.”

**Daniel Verbis**

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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**Daniel Verbis** (León, Spain, 1968) graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Salamanca, 1986-1991. He develops his work as an artist in the fields of painting, sculpture, works on paper, and installations or site-specific interventions.

His individual exhibitions over the past few years include *La piel y lo que hay debajo de la piel*. Sala Provincia ILC (León, 2023); *Ser de paso (cautivo)*. Galería Daniel Cuevas (Madrid, 2022); *Unción y anunciación del ser*. Galería Trinta (Santiago de Compostela, 2022); *Psiques*. Galería Llamazares (Gijón, 2021); *Ex-Libris*. Galería Siboney (Santander, 2021); *Cartografías de una des-aparición*. Galería Ármaga (León, 2021). As well as groups exhibitions, such as, *JUST Madrid*. Galería Trinta (Santiago de Compostela, 2023); *Expo Chicago*. Galería Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts (Miami, 2023); *Arte Santander*. Galería Daniel Cuevas (2023); *Regresar a un espacio conocido*. DA2 (Salamanca, 2023); *Art Miami*. Galería Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts (Miami, 2023); *Expo Chicago*. Galería Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts (Miami, 2022); *Drawing Room Madrid*. Galería Daniel Cuevas (Madrid, 2022); *Building, Colección Campocerrado*. Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca, 2022); *Art Miami*. Galería Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts (Miami, 2022); *Colectiva*. Galería Ármaga (León, 2022); *3spacio Mínimo*. Galería Espacio Mínimo (Madrid, 2022); *Estampa, 2021*. Galería Daniel Cuevas (Madrid, 2021); *Expo Chicago*. Galería Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts (Miami, 2021); *Drawing Room Madrid*, Galería Siboney (Madrid, 2021); *Esta luz*. Galería Ármaga (León, 2021); *El color abstracte*. Sala de Exposiciones Fundación Mediterráneo (Elche, 2021); *Territorio contemporáneo. Colección Enaire* (Santander, 2021); *Palimpsesto creativo*. M Monastery of Sandoval (León, 2021); *Paper València*. Galería Siboney (Valencia, 2021); *Drawing Room, Lisboa*. Galería Siboney (Lisboa, 2021); *Una historia de arte reciente (1960-2020)*. Museo de Arte Abstracto de Cuenca (Cuenca, 2021), among others.

He has received distinctions such as The Artist's Book Prize, Ankaria Foundation (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2016); Premio Cultura Emprende, Fundación Creativa Santander (2014); Premio Ángel de Pintura (2007); Endesa Scholarships (2001); Premio de Pintura Fray Luis de León, Junta de Castilla y León (1999); Adquisición VI Mostra Unión Fenosa (1999); or Primer Premio de Pintura L'Oreal (1998).

His work is part of museum collections such as CGAC Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, MUSAC Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, ARTIUM Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del País Vasco, Museo Patio Herreriano, MNCARS Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Museo de Bellas Artes de Asturias, Museo de Teruel; and many public and private collections like Banco de España Collection, Coca-Cola Foundation Collection, DKV Collection, AENA Collection, Fundación Barrié Collection, Unión Fenosa Collection, L'Oreal Collection, Ayuntamiento de Alcobendas Collection, Caja Madrid Collection, Junta de Castilla y León Collection, Gobierno de Cantabria Collection, Ayuntamiento de Madrid Collection, and many others.

+INFO about his work, texts, and supporting documentation in <https://danielverbis.es/>



## GENERAL INFORMATION / DOCUMENTATION / ACTIVITIES

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### Opening hours

From Tuesday to Saturday (public holidays included), from 11.00 to 14.30 and from 17.00 to 21.00  
Sundays from 11.00 to 14.30

### Catalogue

On the occasion of this exhibition, MARCO, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Vigo, will edit a publication that, along with pictures of artworks and the artist's writings, will include texts by the curator and director of the museum among other authors.

### Schedule for students

Collaborating: "la Caixa" Foundation

Until June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

From Tuesday to Friday from 10.00 to 11.30 and from 11.30 to 13.00

Prior appointment: tel. +34 986 113900 Ext. 200 / 986 113900 Ext. 308 / E-mail:

[comunicacion@marcovigo.com](mailto:comunicacion@marcovigo.com)

### Workshops for children

Collaborating: "la Caixa" Foundation

Until May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Saturdays from 11.00 to 12.30 (from 3 to 6 years old) and from 12.30 to 14.00 (from 7 to 12 years old)

Previous registration: tel. 986 113900 Ext. 200 / Correo-e: [recepcion@marcovigo.com](mailto:recepcion@marcovigo.com)

### Information and guided tours

Room staff is available for any enquiry or information related to the exhibition, in addition to the usual guided tours: every day at 18.00 / Visits on demand for groups require prior appointment.

### Interactive routes through App Vigo

The interactive routes system through App Vigo grants visitors access to all types of content about the exhibition (videos, pictures, specific information about artworks), either at the space itself through beacons or Bluetooth devices placed in the room, or anywhere else, following the route through the phone's screen once the application has been downloaded, or through the Vigo City Council website.

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### Press & Communications Department

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