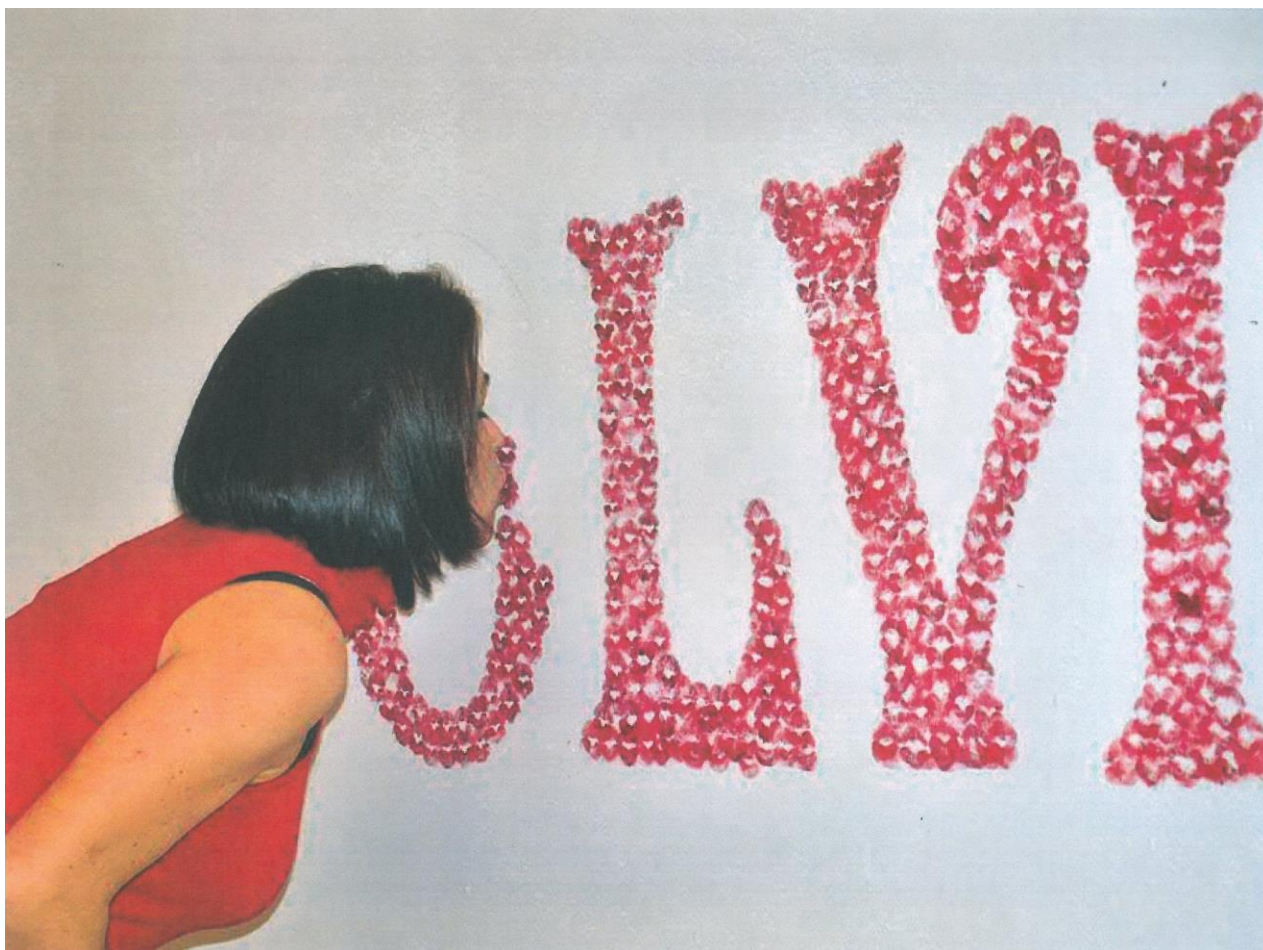


PRESS RELEASE

CELESTE GARRIDO

Your Eyes Tell What Your Mouth Silences



Celeste Garrido. *Olvido*, 2009. Carmin trace, resulting from the action of kissing the wall to compose the word *olvido* [oblivion], 31 x 155 cm.

2 October 2020 – 14 February 2021

Project rooms on the First Floor

From Tuesday to Saturday (including bank holidays), from 11am to 2:30pm and from 5pm to 9pm

Sunday, from 11am to 2:30pm

Curated by: Miguel Fernández-Cid and Pilar Souto Soto

With the collaboration of



OVERVIEW

Celeste Garrido (Marín, Pontevedra, 1972) has extensive experience in research and exhibition projects closely related to identity and gender issues. Specifically designed for the MARCO, *Your Eyes Tell...* comprises a careful selection of mostly new produced works in different formats which build a story around the body as material, medium, subject and receiver, with special mention to the female body and to the dress as symbol.

Celeste Garrido deals with the body as a conceptual issue, with special attention to the dress. The dressed body is the subject's body and through this clothing, data such as gender, social and cultural condition become exposed. Through clothing we publicly disclose an identity, and in Garrido's work dress becomes vital, precisely because it is one of the differentiating mechanisms which conform female clothing.

Her project *Nupcial* [Bridal], which spans a number of works, considers the bridal dress as a symbol of marriage within a patriarchal system underlying in our culture and that exercises a clear dominance over the woman still today, conditioning her freedom and her autonomy.

Her artistic discourse arises from the relationship between the creative experience and the feminine condition. By incorporating objects from everyday life and organic materials into her work –especially those for domestic use such as honey, jelly, grapes or 'rose petals'—, Garrido alludes to the fragility of the body, the passing of time, and the changing nature of things; instability, together with the idea of beauty that persists in our collective imaginary directly refers to desire and seduction. Garrido's works often allude to a woman whose actions are conditioned by someone else's gaze, with an emotional dependence, which makes her own will to vanish.

In recent months, Celeste Garrido has developed a new artistic project which reflects on child abuse with special attention to sexual abuse on children and adolescents. Called *Infancias rotas* [Broken Infancies] in reference to the book of the same title written by María Martínez Sagrera. Her project confronts the abuse of minors through artistic creation, denouncing the living hell that boys and especially girls face for just being born a girl in some developing countries. But Garrido also aims to expose a reality of silenced episodes of child abuse that take place around us, under an appearance of kind normality, which irreversibly hurt some people in the depths of their being. They eventually destroy their childhood. and will condition their life forever, especially when these events occur within the inner circle of the child like family or school.

Committed as an artist and as a woman, Garrido's projects are developed from a feminist perspective and a critical stance. The artist appeals to the viewer and make them complicit with that commitment. In this context some of the works that are part of his new project materialize.

The first of the pieces is a vertiginous crib-nest that rises to top of the room. This elevation turns the tulle that covers the crib into a nuptial veil which extends up from the top all the way to rest on the floor. The piece alludes to the commitment or pact that has been established since ancient times between close relatives, to offer girls in marriage in exchange for benefits. Many marriages are agreed, both in the upper social classes –for convenience between families, in search of a better social status– and in the lower ones, as a result of the extreme need that leads parents to commit true atrocities when marrying girls as young as ten or twelve, in exchange for some object of value or for some favour. The marriage of these girls becomes a space of torture assumed by some societies as part of the consequence of being born a woman, depriving them of any opportunity to develop as a duly skilled and free person, with the capacity to decide on their own future.

The second piece is made up of a girl's white dress, which seems to levitate on a circular surface. It is an organic structure that evokes the unsettling seed of the lotus flower covered with small holes. Dark bright purple grapes inserted inside in the form of threatening eyes direct their gaze towards the girl. As we approach the center of the circle, the eyes become intimidating tentacles, which lurk under the dress, generating a feeling of anguish and discomfort that gives title to the work: "Your Eyes Tell What Your Mouth Silences".

As a whole, the dress recalls the white lotus flower, which represents the highest state of a human being. It is related to the perfection of spirit and mind; originally immaculate, originally complete in nature. It symbolises innocence and purity of heart. It represents love, passion and compassion.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Celeste Garrido Meira (Marín, Pontevedra, 1972) studied BA in Fine Arts at the University of Vigo, and a MA in Applied Creativity at the University of Santiago de Compostela. Since 1997 she is a collaborating member of the Research Group ES2, UVigo, and in 2003-2004 she was a collaboration grant holder of the Caixanova Chair of Feminist Studies, UVigo.

Garrido has been granted with the *Lazo Violeta* [Purple Ribbon] award by the City Council of Marín, for her outstanding career in the field of the visual arts in Galicia. This journey begins in 1996 with her participation in the exhibition *Alternativas creativas* at Teatro Principal and Liceo Casino, both in Pontevedra. Since then she has participated in numerous national and international group shows, and her work has been chosen for several group shows, among which *Novos Valores* (Diputación de Pontevedra, 1996) must be highlighted; *Novos camiños* (Santiago de Compostela, 1999); *Cabanyal. Portes Obertes* (Valencia, 1999); *Bad Arts* (2003); *Clónicas* (2004); *Coser y Callar* (2010); *Género y artes visuales* (University of Vigo, 2014). *Alén dos xéneros. Prácticas artísticas feministas en Galicia* (MARCO, Vigo / Auditorio de Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, 2017).

Among her solo exhibitions, the retrospective exhibition titled *Non son as miñas espiñas as que me defenden* (Manuel Torres Museum, Marín, Pontevedra, 2016) stands out).

She has curated about twenty editions of the exhibition *Voilà. la femme*, for which she was also granted the *Lazo Violeta* award by the City Council of Marín, for her commitment in the defense of women through the world of art and for the promotion of young artists.

CELESTE GARRIDO. *Your Eyes Tell What Your Mouth Silences*

What matters in life is not what happens to you but what you remember and how you remember it.

Gabriel García Márquez

About *Bridal Series*

It is almost certain that spending fourteen years at the feet of a sewing machine is excessive. As it was watching dozens of women modeling in my mother's sewing workshop while trying on all kinds of dresses. Those dresses somehow walked with them, as a kind of charms, in their life experiences: baptisms, weddings, births, deaths... In a way, they helped them exorcise their inner conflicts.

And if there was a special dress par excellence, it was the bridal one. Those precious architectures were revealed before me, as resplendent as they were ephemeral, like promises of a sensory experience that I never got to experience. Made with tulle, satins and sumptuous silks, those dresses projected yearning for wealth and social position, becoming authentic objects of desire that kept among their empty spaces the possibility of inhabiting them mentally, from the place of imagination.

I look at dresses through different eyes, a dressed body is the revelation of a "social body", which projects an identity, a gender and even a social and cultural condition. This is the beginning of *Bridal*, a series of thirty thoughts born to be sculptures which, on their way, draw a slight trace on the paper. An ephemeral and intimate journey like that of the migratory bird, which lands in a place that is not, after all, its destination, but a necessary stop to reach it. This "social body" allows me to establish a critical stance against that archetype of a winged and evanescent woman, who walks on tiptoe. Professor Isabel Tejada refers to them when she speaks of the return of "the image of the virgin and chaste bride, dressed in an immaculate and vaporous white becoming a being from the great beyond". By doing so, she establishes a reflection on recurring idea of women as an airy, levitating being.

The first sculpture from the series, *Untitled. Bridal*, appeared in 1999 on the occasion of the exhibition *Nuevos caminantes* [New walkers]. The project refers to the wedding dress as a symbol of marriage within a patriarchal system underlying our culture which exerts a clear influence over women, conditioning her freedom and autonomy still today. The work is composed of a linen dress that seems to levitate over a bright red jelly circle, which fuels the desire for the attractive scent of strawberry capable of seducing the viewer to the point of making them come back. However, in the course of time, gelatin rots covered in white mold that eventually turns into green. At that point, the stench is so strong and unpleasant that it hardly allows the viewer to enjoy the work consequently providing the idea of the transforming power of the passage of time and our inexorable journey towards deterioration and death. The red circle refers to blood, present in the vital moments of our existence: birth, menstruation, motherhood, disease...

In the *Nuptial* series, I reflect on how women are conditioned by the gaze of the other, an emotional dependence that makes their own to fade away. The piece *(Re)vuelo* [Fly Again / Stir], produced on the occasion of this exhibition, revolves on the wrong idea of marriage as a horizon of freedom in contrast with the confinement of the parental nest. Yet, this supposed freedom is revealed as a prison at the moment in which we allow ourselves to be conditioned by the merciless glass ceiling that veils our ascension. It prevents us from flying —you cannot fly with someone else's wings, nor think that just a pair of wings will propel us; what makes flight possible is the awareness of being able to fly and our will to take off.

Broken Infancies

In recent months, I have developed a new artistic project which reflects on child abuse with special attention to sexual abuse on children and adolescents. It is called *Infancias rotas* [Broken Infancies] in reference to the book of the same title written by María Martínez Sagrera. My project confronts the abuse of minors through artistic creation, denouncing the living hell that boys and especially girls face for just being born a girl in some developing countries. But my intention was also to expose a reality of silenced episodes of child abuse that take place around us, under an appearance of kind normality, which irreversibly hurt some people in the depths of their being. They eventually destroy their childhood. and will condition their life forever, especially when these events occur within the inner circle of the child like family or school. *Your Eyes Say What Your Mouth Silences* denounces all those disturbing looks that are projected on a girl's dress that innocently levitates on them.

The second of the pieces in this series is *El pacto, la ofrenda, el miedo... la culpa* [The Deal, the Offering, the Fear... the Guilt]. A cradle-nest that rises vertiginously to the top of the room and a dense tulle falls as a bridal veil which extends up from the top all the way to rest on floor, drawing a circle on the ground. Several reflections are established around this piece, one of them is child marriage, a space of torture assumed by some societies as part of the consequence of being born a woman, depriving them of any opportunity to develop as a duly skilled and free person, with the capacity to decide on their own future.

Celeste Garrido, October 2020

CELESTE GARRIDO. *Your Eyes Tell What Your Mouth Silences*

*Do not cower in a corner,
cultivate yourselves and hold the pen...*

Christine de Lizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 1405

Six hundred years later, Celeste Garrido could stay in the Pizan's *City of Ladies*. Mother and artist, with her generous and active artistic practice Garrido manages to create a poetic work that helps the viewer perceive the vindication of feminism from her most delicate sensibility.

Whilst wandering around the exhibition rooms at the MARCO we slip into the intimate universe of an artist who make us think about patriarchy in our culture; about motherhood, birth and marriage; about the passing of time, deterioration and death...

In Celeste Garrido's words: "I deal with the idea of the body –especially the feminine body–, as a medium, as subject and receiver, and the dress becomes a symbol for its gender". Garrido repeatedly tells us about couple relationships, emotional dependency, ideas, and feelings; about our pain for the loss, and the subsequent freedom deriving from for the loss itself... She achieves it through works like the Bridal series in which has been working for years. Whatever begins as an image of seduction ends up becoming –with the use of organic materials (gelatine) and the effect of time elapsed during the exhibition–something undesired (a blanket of mould, first white then green). Now our perception of the work has changed.

With a poetic and committed attitude, Garrido pursues the complicity of the viewer by denouncing child abuse through two new produced works: *Your Eyes Tell What Your Mouth Silences* and *The Deal, the Offering, the Fear... the Guilt. Automaton Dance* and *Mortal Dance* suggest an idea of instability and resistance to what is expected of a woman from the time she is born: to assume socially imposed roles, submission, and subordination, therefore hindering their decision making and freedom. Even so, such position is a starting point...

Garrido's most optimistic work, resulting from the action of kissing the wall with a carmine trace to compose the word *Olvido* [Oblivion] become a transformation, longing for what is still to come.

Miguel Fernández-Cid / Pilar Souto

GENERAL INFORMATION / DOCUMENTATION / ACTIVITIES

Documentation

The Library-Documentation Center at MARCO has prepared a **documentary dossier**, which brings together links to articles and other information about Celeste Garrido which is available on the website www.marcovigo.com at [Library/News](#) and [Exhibitions/Present](#).

Learning Activities

For groups of Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, High School and others.

With the support of: Obra Social “la Caixa”

From 20 October, 2020

Place: exhibition halls and Laboratorio das Artes

Hours: Tuesday to Friday from 11am to 1:30pm / For booking please call +34 986 113900/113904

Information & guided tours

The exhibition staff is available for any questions or information, as well as regular guided tours:

Daily at 6pm

‘A la carte’ group tours, please call +34 986 113904 / 113900 to book

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