

ROSA SANTOS

SANDRA MAR

La sangre, los ojos o el ramillete

Blood, Eyes or The Bouquet

03/03 – 28/04

Like a castle wall.

Vibrantly assailing me day after day, on the dot of every hour.

I can't help repeating it.

Like a castle wall I defend desires; like a castle wall, constructed with my own hands which are made of mud and straw. I build it bit by bit and raise it to its limit, to its highest part. I stop where it cuts off the outside, if there is one. Atop are the battlements which are pure emotion, ones you hug so tight till you smother them and shatter them to pieces. I peer out over the scene with cold blood-shot eyes as it rains fire outside. The blood pours out, gushing in spurts. I start all over again.

My fate is to protect myself in the castle which are the steps of my life, steps that go up and down and vice versa. And the other way round. A place of *Great Expectations* replete with cornices I graze with the palm of my hand, exploring them with my fingers, highly ornate with lots of scrolls, animals, acanthus, palmettes, crowned in a gable with tracery

like the one in your hair.

Tangle, knot,

comb (you) and start again.

Like a place that doesn't exist.

In its long high halls, I race along its corridors and hide behind the curtains and write them. I can scribble something in the pleats; I make a memory map that contains my thoughts; that detains them. Writing is an inexact and awkward science that restores my thoughts. When I get tangled up in words I wish to keep believing that there is a fanatical reason to believe and not to give in. We are what we feel. I wrap myself up in the fabric and take shelter inside its hollow after *I ran away from pain. What is, is. No fantasy. Pain. Just the details [...] I don't know if the world is better or worse than it has been I know the only anguish comes from running away.* (Kathy Acker, *Great Expectations*).

An ode to you.

Your hair-tie, mine.

A bouquet.

Sandra Mar's work is grounded in writing a diary and setting down experiences and sensations. For her first show at the Rosa Santos gallery she is presenting a series of previously unseen works largely predicated on the use of clay and metal. The exhibition, whose title is *Blood, Eyes or The Bouquet* is a project based on individual works which are presented as a set of poems throughout the gallery space in different images or installational situations. The work she has created for the show is committed to endowing text with material corporeality and to drawing attention to forms of sculptural production that have been spurned and brushed aside as minor arts, as is the case of ceramics, jewellery and metalwork.

In her essay *Furor escribendi*, Octavia E. Butler claimed that writing is an obsession in which genius or bravura have no place in putting it into practice: *Write. Write every day. Write whether you feel like writing or not. Choose a time of day.* Sandra Mar's work concurs with this method of writing, a practice rooted in habit. Each day she writes or scribbles on paper, builds a notebook of clay, and then afterwards scratches it with her writing. She writes on clay to preserve it like a law, to bear witness to interrupted emotions and offer the reader an open narrative. The works on show here evince the literary devices of her practice, like drawings, rewritings, clippings, memories, the poetry—her own or by others—that fills her objectual archive. She makes her notebooks as part of a praxis that is later materialized in clay with the goal of putting down in writing what she thinks, lives or desires.

The castle as the central metaphor of this series of works is protected and coddled like a vase. Sandra builds it piece by piece with her fingers. It is the body of one emotion after another she orders as she goes along. The objects produced are connoted by an iconic power that is negotiated in the masses and forms in dialogue with the clay. The end result of her work process is built on accumulating material, stretching it until it breaks, and it is in this breakage where the surplus of narrative and language is engendered. Rhythms and counterrhythms in which she claims to always break, explode and deform the components with which she works.

This project reflects how Sandra's artistic production is intimately marked by a profound commitment between her body and an experimental focus on the materials she uses. This tension means that her sculptural approach becomes fractured and metaphorically porous, so much so that it becomes a field to explore the human experience in all its physical and psychological reality. And so, by stringing together the works that punctuate the exhibition, we can construct our own personal emotional narrative through the snippets of texts to be found in each individual work.

Curated by: Paula Noya de Blas

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