



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING **LES MOULINS** HABANA

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SUSANA PILAR

Jardinera

Exhibition from 14.10.2018 until 02.06.2019

GALLERIA CONTINUA / Les Moulins is glad to present the solo exhibition *Jardinera* by Susana Pilar. After a first collaboration within the project *Cuba Mi Amor* in the spaces of Les Moulins last October and many other contributions – e.g. *Un chino de paso por venecia, camino a cuba* at ICI Venice - Istituto Culturale Internazionale, for the 57th International Art Exhibition – Biennale di Venezia, *¿soy Cuba?* at Palazzina dei Bagni Misteriosi in Milan, *Kunst x Kuba* at the Ludwig Forum in Aachen, Germany, and in the last edition of lille3000, *Ola Cuba!* – Susana Pilar is back in France with the exhibition *Jardinera*.

Susana Pilar has nourished her work with many concerns. At the same time, she is able to bring in neutral viewpoints and critical stances as well as powerful artistic solutions buttressed by scientific tools. Nonetheless, her privileged means of expression is action, which is often embodied by her lithesome body-shapes whenever intent on bizarre sorts of strains: one could even describe her body as a test subject in a laboratory. Therefore, many of her works actualise through performances. The artist herself encompasses the field of application, as a «gardener» would do: she defines the grounds where intervention is needed, whether this is going to consist in uprooting or caregiving, by means of rough yet effective methods.

Susana Pilar starts from the inner being to evoke universal themes and begins with personal experiences, focusing on women's perspective, to witness every human being's destiny, as if to feed a small flower in the attempt to look after a "garden" of history. In such a vast garden, the artist has conveyed her attention to situations of

eradication and violence, trying to trace out new horizons for those who have experienced brutality and lost their intimate connection with the world around them. In fact, a flower cannot cry, neither it can attack or defend itself, yet it is flooded by vitality, and through time its existence will depend both on accidents of fortune and nature and on the gardener's will. While nature, as well as history, can be cruel and absurd, the gardener pursues a proactive attitude to make sense of the piece of land she must oversee. Particularly in the work *El Escándalo de lo real heterologués artificial insemination*, this limit is lost when the *Jardinera* tries to intervene on the course of the nature arriving to sow in her a seed of life, seed which come from a body of deceased.

In this frame, the one of death is a recurrent theme. For instance, death is recalled in the photographic series *Anexión oculta* and then identified with the concept of incident, which does not acquire the same meaning as a discontinuity between events, but it rather becomes their organic connection.

Halfway between a scientific truth and a biological necessity, death does not imply either limits or ruptures. Intimate and universal at the same time, death sets the pace for those hidden realities the artist wants to investigate.

Jardinera continues on an island which used to be very important for France. La Réunion, a French territory since 1642, is located in the Indian Ocean, 435 miles away from Madagascar and 5830 miles from Paris. The island, wild until the early XVI century, became later a French property and has been peopled by colons and slaves for a long time. In the video *Kont pa si bato mon frèr pou sot la rivièr*, Susana has recorded a performance held in 2011 on

this very island. For one hour, the artist has brandished a mirror reflecting, grasping and interpreting reality at once. The performance scrutinised the interactions that occur on the island today and the mutual appropriations between different cultural milieux.

The exhibition ends with *Llave maestra*, a photograph in which the artist is wielding a machete as if to mime symbolically the struggle for the Cuban independency. The ominous weapon itself turns into a means of self-defence to survive the harsh Cuban everyday life.

Crafting her works with outstanding versatility, Susana Pilar makes use of photography, video production, installations and performances. From November 9th to 11th, she will take part to AKAÀ at Carreau du Temple in Paris with her monumental work *Sans titre, de la série Lo que contaba la abuela...*, and then she will travel to Sardinia as a guest of the research residence at MACC, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Calasetta, followed by Claude Corongiu and directed by Efsio Carbone.

Susana Pilar, 1984, lives and works in Habana. Her art aims at probing the obstacles and the challenges that very often brindle women's initiative both on a personal and on a political level worldwide.

Pilar has studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Havana (ISA) from 1998 to 2008 and has attended courses on media communication at the University of Arts and Design in Karlsruhe (DEU) from 2011 to 2013.