

ELIZABET CERVIÑO
solo show

Opening: November 30th, 4.00 pm – through December 30th, 2018
Pabellón Cuba – Calle 23 (La Rampa) entre M y N, Vedado
Monday to Sunday from 12.00 am to 7.00 pm

SLAPS

An artist stretches out a large piece of fabric on the clean stream of a river. With a paddle, she starts striking the fabric against the mass of water, and occasionally uses the rocks that make the water surface uneven as support. Energetic and tireless, she torments the virgin canvas, subjecting it to a long process of washing and recomposition of its internal structure.

Water, air, rock, sun, ssslap!!, ssslap!! The gesture is repeated rhythmically as the fabric tosses and frosts from her body, buffeted by the water waves

Water, air, rock, sun, ssslap!

Water, air, rock, sun, ssslap!

The tenacious and tiring procedure will leave permanent traces, evidences. The tight, machine-woven fibres start rearranging themselves, they start recognising the logic of the breeze, the urgency of the small whirlpool generated by the mass of liquid. The warp transforms its artificial brightness into a humble – dull – ochre shade, as mandated by the rays of sunlight; the threads of the original weave embrace the stone, and create their own extraordinary geometries: craters, faults, mounds. Finally, as by miracle, the doors sought by the artist open. A tapestry has taken shape. Through its scars seep water, air, light and dust: the most subtle and ungraspable forms of nature and, at the same time, the cardinal axes of life.

The works of Elizabet Cerviño cannot be analysed without mentioning these axes, on which the entire conceptualisation of her work as an artist is affirmed, and that constitute the essential materials which sustain her entire discourse. Although she has relied on supports as diverse as her body, alabaster, a graphite plaque, or a garden creeper to materialise her works, this short review aims at pointing out how she has subverted the use of such an ancient and conventional material as canvas. From a very early stage, when she started her cycle of works on canvas, the young creator moved the public and critics by recontextualising – as a fundamental part of her creative process – the classical function of the pictorial support; moving away from the inert and utilitarian materiality historically attributed to it, she demonstrated that it has within itself an active and unexpected existence full of plastic quality. She thus achieved, for instance, a sophisticated visibility of the ignored existence of the particles it contains, by washing it time and again simply using common water.

Through this perspective, she found ways to reverse the unchanging traits imposed on it by tradition, for which it would always be a simple structural surface, inexpressive per se, and magnetised her canvases – indeed, just canvases – with an intense protagonism, as logical-discursive elements. Terms such as contemplative, orientalist or religious have often been invoked to describe her works. However, her proposals could not be more daring and irreverent, difficult to classify under a given denomination. A detailed essay would be required to explain the formal and conceptual contributions of the already extensive works of this artist. Actually, Elizabet Cerviño's art could be considered among the most relentlessly experimental procedures developed at present by Cuban contemporary art, while its contents achieve a dimension of extraordinary universality.

Although her messages have been conveyed, on countless occasions, with water, mud, and clay, Elizabet's works, more than with the art of the earth, poor art, or with her own conceptualism, are intimately linked with poetry, which could undoubtedly be noted as a generational trend. Let us dwell for a moment on the delicate sensitivity and the austerity of this series that Elizabet is now offering us and in which she reverts to the original concept of tapestry not made to decorate, but rather to modify the physical conditions of an environment. The artist hands us back this same ancestral notion, while subverting it once again. The pieces of linen gathered in this installation have been remodelled by water and by the action of its physical force. The rips and cuts that would, in any case, be irreparable tears, are instead invigorating pores that give the onlooker a sensory impression, translated into aesthetic experience, capable of letting the universal and the essential flow: water, air, sun...
ssslap!!, sslap!! ...

BEATRIZ GAGO

Elizabet Cerviño was born in 1986 in Manzanillo (Cuba). She lives and works in Havana. She studied at the Academia de Artes Carlos Enríquez and, in 2005, she graduated in painting and drawing. In 2009, she graduated from the Instituto Superior de las Artes (ISA).

Some of her most important solo exhibitions include: Mónadas (2018), Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy. Na (2017), Arte Continua, Havana, Cuba. Pausa (2017), La Columnata, Lima, Perú. Paisaje a 360° (2014), Galería Villa Manuela, Havana, Cuba. Hábitos (2013), Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana, Cuba.

Her collective exhibitions comprise: Remnants (2018), Green Gallery, Dubai, UAE. Ola Cuba (2018), Lille 3000, Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, France. La tierra dada (2018), Pabellón Cuba, Havana, Cuba. ¿Cómo está el agua? (2018), Arte Continua, Havana, Cuba. On the Horizon: Contemporary Cuban Art from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection (2017), Pérez Art Museum, Miami, Florida, USA. ¿soy Cuba? (2017), Palazzina dei Bagni Misteriosi, Milan, Italy. Cuba mi Amor (2017), Les Moulins, Galleria Continua, France. South-South (2017), Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. Intersecciones: Havana/Portland (2016), Galería Hoffman, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, USA. Anclados en el Territorio (2015), Arte Continua, Havana, Cuba. Muestra central 12na Bienal de La Habana, Cuba. RIAP. 18ème Édition, Rencontre Internationale d'Art Performance (2014), Quebec, Canada. Para quebrar los muros (2013), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Arte Cubano, Cuba.