

BIOGRAPHY

Catalina Swinburn (Santiago, Chile, 1979)

Catalina Swinburn (Santiago, 1979) has been working with the geopolitical concept of displacement. Her practice of weaving vintage documents paper sheets as support became a manifest of political disagreement by using documents of displaced patrimonial treasures, or musical scores of operas with exile thematics, or geopolitical maps. Her weaving exercise is trespassing by a diasporic feeling with a poetic and subtle aesthetic. She pursues to rescue ancestrals rituals related to sacred places, ancestral geography and original memory.

Catalina's work translate into key messages and universal concerns such as: sustainability, identity, gender equality and globalisation underlining the connections of the Global South throughout history. The use of weave and vintage documets are used by her as a vital and dynamic language for raising awareness both physically and conceptually while aiming to strengthen the integration between various communities from the Global South in making reference to female resilience.

The work of Catalina Swinburn operates on a shifting border she establishes between cult and artistic practice. Her exploration of different visual media –video,

installation, photography and performance results in often metaphoric and symbolic manipulations, which challenge reality as a representation of a world the artist is living in. Her practice summarises her identity as a female Latin American artist in an era with a multiplicity of encounters and realities.

The starting point of the series of paper works, is an investigation related to displaced archaeological pieces that were taken from their original place, and travelled to different institutions around the world to be exhibited as a power emblem. These skins —with their various folds and contingent aspects— are the place of fissures and traces bearing witness to memory. The process in which Catalina Swinburn creates her inter-personal work emphasises on the human necessity of the conditions of being, loss and destruction. Regenerating these narratives articulates for the artist both a sense of urgency and a mode of resistance.

The artwork is therefore activated by the artist's position as both fabricator and performer of the sculpture. This could be seen as a metaphor for resistance, where woven narratives are portrayed as a substitute for the silence of women throughout history.



Swinburn's sensational sculptures are produced by intricately weaving pages of texts together into constructed robust structures. Through this labour intensive approach, the material transforms from delicate pages of books to garment-like arrangements that the artist then wears as a cloak to perform in, as such her works undergo an important process of transformation and recycling.

The recycling aspect in this work happens through many dimensions: content, form and process. Following her performances, the works become sculptures with a history of their own and result in an amalgamation of history and memory.

Textiles are eloquent expressions of women's concern with cultural tradition and transmutation, and are recognized as fundamental to studies of gender, social identity, status, exchange and modernization. Weave, tends to demarcate a suspension of ordinary existence and are among the most visible signs of sacred space and sacred roles. Textiles have played a prominent role in exchanges between the West and indigenous peoples throughout the world. There is also an essential correspondence between the realms of agriculture and weaving, an isomorphic relationship.

There are profound, conceptual, linguistic and religious connections between them two.

While textile production is rooted in a specific time and place, textiles become objects that function within a system of exchange. The pages from archival books, ripped, folded and transformed into coded messages already destined to such a purpose by the folding, mark the line that determines the scope of an enigma. The weaving thus restructures the ruins of the book to prepare them for an unimaginable role, as the singular components of a new object: a blanket that can be used as a garment or a shroud. The woven piece is transformed into a portable investiture. Porting a cloak it alludes to both female and male attributes; it's a dressing, imposing and ritual piece that acts as and gendered identities on the frontier. The Cloak is also a talisman from harm, keeping one safe and secure throughout transitions.

By using weaving as a metaphor for resistance, this work on paper brings us closer to our cultural identity and offers an alternative view of the function of art as a vehicle of consciousness by meeting various forms of knowledge; opening a dialogue between conservatism and innovation, between continuity and transmutation. ■

SELECTED
SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020
- Archaic Contingency. Selma Feriani Gallery. Cromwell Place. London, UK.
- 2018
- Narratives of Displacement. Selma Feriani Gallery. Tunis, Tunisia.
- 2016
- La Frontera Perfecta. Centro Cultural Matta. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Fissures. Selma Feriani Gallery. Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia.
- 2013
- Arqueologia Anticipada. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2012
- Indulgences. Selma Feriani Gallery. London, UK.
- Utopia installation. Farm Street Church. London, UK.
- 2011
- Paraíso Perdido. Fundacion Collahusi. Iquique, Chile.
- Lujoso Silencio. Cecilia Gonzales Gallery. Lima, Perú.
- 2010
- Status Quo. Sala de Arte ccu. Santiago, Chile.
- 2008
- Lugares Comunes. Project Public Space. Vitacura. Santiago de Chile, Chile.
- No Hay Peor Ciego, Que El Que No Quiere Ver. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2007
- In Contemplation. 5006 Gallery. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- 2005
- Piezas de Colección. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2004
- In Memoriam 12.05.04-05.06.04. Die Ecke Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- In Memoriam. Animal Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- Obituario. Animal Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2002
- Memoria Velada. Animal Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- En Memoria. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.

COLLECTIONS

- Pilar Citoler Foundation. Cordoba, Spain.
- Balanx Capital Collection. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Petitgas Collection, London, United Kingdom.
- Latin American Art Collection Artnexus. Bogotá, Colombia.
- ccu Art Collection. Santiago, Chile.
- icc Contemporary Institue of Culture. Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- Arte Al Dia Collection. Miami, USA.
- Rosenblum Foundation. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Permanent Public Intervention. Vitacura Parks. Santiago, Chile.

SELECTED
GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020
- Matters of Material, curated by Dina Nasser-Khadivi, Christie´s, London, UK.
- 2020
- Untitled, Selma Feriani Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunis.
- 2020
- Viaje hacia la Luz, Curated by Thiago Verdi, Galeria Aninat, Santiago, Chile.
- 2020
- We all need Opera. Mam Contemporary Art Salzburg. Salzburg.
- 2019
- Imagen del Texto. Galeria de Arte Isabel Aninat. Santiago. Chile.
- 2019
- DES/COMPOSURE. Video, 6.48 min, Bienal de Artes Mediales, Santiago, Chile.
- 2019
- Art Basel Hong Kong. Selma Feriani Gallery. Hong Kong, China.
- 2018
- FRÜHLING [´fry:ling], der: weiblich. Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art Vienna. Vienna, Austria.
- 2017
- Examples to Follow / Expeditions in Aesthetics & Sustainability. Global Touring Exhibition.
- Curated by Adrienne.
- Goehler. Parque Cultural de Valparaíso. Valparaíso, Chile.
- 2016
- Arte Con-Texto. Museo de la Universidad de Antioquia & Museo de la Universidad de Medellín. Medellín.
- 2015
- Migrations in Contemporary Art. Muntref. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- 2014
- Portrait Redux. Selma Feriani Gallery. Tunis, Tunisia.
- 2013
- Portraits. Selma Feriani Gallery. London, UK.
- 2012
- About Change. World Bank. Washington, USA.
- 2011
- Con-Texto. Artnexus Space. Bogotá, Colombia.
- Art & Money, Dangerous Liaisons. Curated by Sebastian Gokalp. Monnaie du Paris. Paris, France.
- 2010
- Pieta. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2009
- Cohortes. MAC Museo de Arte Contemporaneo. Santiago, Chile.
- 2008
- Sesgos Miticos en el Arte Chileno. Extention Centre of the University of Chile. Santiago, Chile.
- 2007
- Haber. MAVI Museo de Artes Visuales. Santiago, Chile.
- Handle with Care. Museo de Arte Contemporaneo. Santiago, Chile.
- 2005
- Relocacion. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- 2004
- Fotoamerica. Isabel Aninat Gallery. Santiago, Chile.
- In Memoriam 12.05.04-05.06.04. Valenzuela & Klenner. Bogota, Colombia.
- 2003
- Non Slte. Cultural Centre of Las Condes. Santiago, Chile.
- El Objeto en el Arte Chileno. Telefonica Foundation. Santiago, Chile.
- 2002
- Kent Installations. Santiago, Chile.
- Erased Borders. Miami, USA.