

**The Binding Object** brings together a series of artistic projects that seek to impact shared modes of life by taking into account the role of objects. Technologies identified as craft, traditional art media, and even those declared obsolete, are currently renewing their status as assets when used in collaborations with communities of different types, when bringing change in institutional routines and encouraging alternative forms of planning and thought.

Nowadays, there is no credible social alternative which does not accept the role that material agency has within our lives. By experiencing the end of a humanism that understood emancipation as a strictly human concern, contemporary political and ecological thought makes evident the need to reconsider the role objects play in helping to uphold lifestyles and generate forms of consciousness.

**The Binding Object** presents different scenarios in which pondering the inwardness of objects goes hand in hand with their ability to enable social relationships, as well as to build broad collaborative networks that engage human and non-human players in developing emergent and mutually transformative processes. What is at stake here is the offer of a new working approach that deals with the controversies of the environment, migratory movements, urban gentrification, historical memory and the many faces of colonialism, while pointing out their own material basis.

Oriol Fontdevila

## **Documentary Embroidery Office**

*Bitolska Vrteška* (2013); *Aradacka Križovka* (2013); *End of the Season in Štoj* (2013); *Biograd na Neretvi* (2014); *Social struggles in Historic center of CDMX* (2016)

*Craft knowledge provides a platform for shared labor  
that can be used to mobilize new relationships.*

Grant H. Kester

*Today, the question is not between refusing of  
defending tradition, but how to desubstantiate  
tradition and how to take hold of the modern world  
from the perspective of a desubstantiated tradition.*

Yuk Hui

Documentary Embroidery Office is a collaborative and documentary embroidery initiative by artists Dejan Došljak (Belgrade, 1972), Aviv Kruglansky (Tel Aviv, 1970) and Vahida Ramujkic (Belgrade, 1973) in collaboration with different communities around the world. The concept of *in real time embroidery* is established as a way to engage in extended conversations with local agents, as well as an effective method of recording their nagging concerns. The slow working pace that embroidery requires, compared to the speed of digital technologies, calls for considerably higher doses of reflexivity. The resulting embroideries become also a snapshot of the multiple experiences that coexist in today's cities.

On display are four embroideries that Došljak, Kruglanski y Ramujkic made while touring the Balkans (2013 and 2014) and one embroidery made in the historic district of Mexico City (2016). The creation process is the same in all of them: the artists move to locations that they consider interesting to document (Stoja, for instance, a summer resort in Montenegro, where a friendly coexistence is achieved among Balkan communities that have been historically in conflict); they might establish their working space in a busy street or square (or in a café, in the case of Bitola) and, for several weeks, begin conversations with passers-by who are then invited to join the embroidery; they purchase threads and fabrics from local manufacturers (in the case of Mostar), as well as learn regional embroidery techniques (in Ardac, for example, they establish a collaboration with Harmonia, an association of Slovak emigrants that produce handicrafts). Their working space changes location when different collaborations are established.

*Bitolska Vrteška* [Donar-li la volta a Bitola / Darle la vuelta a Bitola / Bitola Turnabout]. Bitola, Macedonia. 2013

*Aradacka Križovka* [L'encreuament d'Aradac / La encrucijada de Aradac / Aradac Crossroads]. Aradac, Sèrbia, 2013

*Biograd na Neretvi* [Hi havia una ciutat a Neretva / Había una ciudad en Neretva / There Was a City on Neretva]. Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina, 2014

*End of the Season in Štoj* [Final d'estació a Stoj / Final de estación en Stoj] . Donji Štoj, Ulcinj, Montenegro, 2013

*Social struggles in Historic center of CDMX* [Lluites socials al centre històric de Ciutat de Mèxic / Luchas sociales en el centro histórico de Ciudad de Méjico]. Mexico City, Mexico, 2016

**Duen Sacchi**  
*Organoléptico* (2018)

*Weaving is a useful practice, to be sure, and an economic one; but, fundamentally, weaving is also cosmological performance, knotting proper relationality and connectedness into the warp and weft of the fabric.*  
Donna Haraway

*The text is a tissue.*  
Roland Barthes

*Organoléptico* is a text by Duen Sacchi (Araguay, Argentina, 1974) that triggers as a network of connections between transforming powers of different nature: magic objects, organs that are torn and transplanted, transoceanic displacements, protective incantations – “imagination works by accumulation of harms”, exclaims at a certain point one of its protagonists. These are stories of metamorphosis, impacting nine bodies that go through a double process of diaspora, one herteronormative, the other colonial.

The text is overtaken by the weaving of an *ammock* —a word that Saachi intentionally writes without *h*, to capture its Taino origins, a pre-colonization language of the West-Indies. An *ammock* works always as a binding story, a technique for communicating ancestral knowledge in the context of rest, dreams and communal living, while, in its material composition, remind us of the history of colonization: the *ammock* has been woven in the US with Asian cotton. Saachi has embroidered the image of a *titsil*, an insect that protects us against the misuses of images, which is indigenous of the Gran Chaco in South America, the same region that produces the thread of the embroidery, which has been span and dyed according to the *chaguar* tradition. Family and friends of the artist made the thread and sent it to him.

The presentation of the project at Casal Solleric aims to further expand its intent: the artist has asked his father to design a collection of *wej w'et*, seats designed to provide a meeting place around the *ammock*. The production of these seats uses the cuttings that are left over from pruning pines and oaks in the city of Palma. During the exhibition, Circula Cultura will program a series of public readings that will be held in collaboration with local individuals and migrant groups. To be part of the reading sessions you can contact [circulacultura.sb@gmail.com](mailto:circulacultura.sb@gmail.com)

*Fetiche*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018

*Floreciendo*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017 - 2018

*Julieta nace*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017

*Amaca*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Algodón azul*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Pirpinto*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Palo Santo*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018  
*Espinillar*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018  
*Abrazo Batey*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018  
*Bixa*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Organolepsis*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Partes de índias*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018  
*La digna piedra*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2019  
*Cauri*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2019  
*Somático con Acacias*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2017  
*Guaxu*, de la sèrie / de la serie / from the series Algodón azul, 2018.

## **Lara Fluxà**

*Fata Morgana* (2019)

*Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction,  
interference, reinforcement, difference.*  
Donna Haraway

*A common world is not a transparent community. A  
common world is a playing board on which,  
curiously, we can exchange glances.*  
Marina Gracés

*Fata Morgana* (2018) is the way how Lara Fluxà (Palma, 1985) reveals the material density of glass as a transparent medium —probably the greatest perception deceit to which eyes and human understanding have been subjected. By attaching a system of bulbous forms, half filled with water, to the window panels at the main floor of Casal Solleric, Fluxà plays with the directionality of light rays. He subjects them to the effects of refraction and diffraction, transforming the perception of exterior space.

Leon Battista Alberti chose the window metaphor to very successfully explain linear perspective, the great technical innovation of the Italian Quattrocento: perspective painting is *a window open to the world*. Although painting was far from becoming a transparent interface, the effect required a careful geometrization of the canvas surface on which two visual cones were forced to intersect, establishing a relation between the viewer's point of observation and the vanishing point of the landscape in view.

The application of perspective in painting meant, therefore, the creation of an optical effect that, for the first time in history, singled out the spectator's point of view—which was emphasized, *located* within the very geometry of the pictorial space. Linear perspective is thus considered the first material evidence of modern individualism, which, together with the direction that theory took in the following centuries, gave way to the glorification of individual vision as the only valid means of knowing the world. Indeed, vision allowed the subject to place the world *under perspective*, under the measurable conditions of being able to examine it in its totality and to think about it at a certain distance—the basis of all rational knowledge.

Fluxà undermines with his work the promise of transparency as a conductor of objective knowledge. The presumption of this in facilitating a neutral knowledge and detached from nature is discovered, in fact, as a mirage. In contrast, with the artisanal process, the glass is revealed as a technology with determinations that are very specific when it comes to generating links.

### **Patricia Esquivias**

*Colgar la reja, tumbar la puerta* (2019)

*Ornament is that vitality that we evidence in creation.*

Thomas Golsenne

*and existence depends on beauty.*

Anne Carson

*Colgar la reja, tumbar la puerta* by Patricia Esquivias (Caracas, 1979) examines the history of the Barrera family, three generations of blacksmiths who worked in Madrid for more than a century, until the 1980s.

Esquivias begins with the partial disappearance of the Barrera's workshop just within meters of her own home. From there, she will discover an art that tends to be underappreciated, because it is either seen, in the consciousness of people, as a natural part of the urban context—unable to value the unique shapes of wrought iron fences, although they walk by them almost every day—, or because it remains there as a leftover—the shrinking traces of a more sensitive and affective city that, all covered in dust, is just unable to confront the prevailing rationalization of urban spaces.

Curiosity is the driving force behind Esquivias's research. Her fascination with forms acts as access to the ways of life that they carry attached, those that the artist discovers when she enters the human and material networks that made them. Curiosity is also the effect she seeks to awaken in the viewer. For that reason, the artist narrates her discoveries, as if they were a fictional story or as gossip heard on the street. Esquivias not only commits herself to document the creative processes of others, but, most importantly, she transforms them into new creations. A case in point is the monumental tapestry on which she has transferred the design of a fence that the Barreras never completed, a fence that, as she explains, ceases to be a barrier and becomes an access door.

## **Lola Lasurt**

*A visit to the CP Nel Museum with MO* (2015)

*Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters,  
unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of the  
meaning –these are some of the perils of writing in  
the contact zone.  
Mary Louise Pratt*

*Wear the ostrich feather with pride again.  
Gucci*

*A Visit to the CP Nel Museum with MO* tells the story of visiting a museum that, like many, is embroiled in a past of domination. *A Visit...* is, nonetheless, a comic that aims to reverse that history through the creation of a space intended to multiply exchanges, to transcend layers of meaning and transfer of knowledge. In a word, it is a space dedicated to spread collaboration based on dissent.

Mogorosi Motshumi (Bolemfontein, 1955) is a South African reference for underground comics ever since apartheid. Mo and Lola Lasurt (Barcelona, 1983) met at an artist residency in Cape Town while they visited the CP Nel Museum, the private collection of a businessman and former officer of the British Empire —Charles Paul Neil— which memorializes the ostrich feather trade that made the city of Oudshoorn prosperous until almost the onset of the Second World War.

Opened in 1937, the CP Nel Museum is a relic of the past, both for the collection it holds as for the nature of its displays which still evidence a racially coded stand. By celebrating the ostrich feather trade, highly prized by the European fashion industry of the 19th century, a particularly bloody chapter of

Africa's colonial history is somehow covered up. To Mo and Lasurt, the expansion of farms for the domestication and breeding of ostriches in the Oudshoorn region becomes a kind of laboratory for the infamous *shanty towns*, which, with apartheid, would spread all over in parallel with the museum beginning activities.

On leaving the museum, Lasurt suggested to Mo that they should make a comic book documenting their visit. A relationship based on postal correspondence was established between the two artists over the following years, a replay of north-south exchanges that became somehow reversed by the instructions that Mo sent to Lasurt telling her how she should make a comic book.

### **Marc Larré**

*Roca y boca* (2018–2020)

*This habit of parsing the world into dull matter (it, things) and vibrant life (us, beings)*

Jane Bennett

*To give oneself as a thing that feels and to take a thing that feels.*

Mario Perniola

*Knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from a direct material engagement with the world.*

Karen Barad

Stony surfaces made long time ago, paper mats from some bar table, and the patient fingers of Marc Larré (Barcelona, 1978) come together in *Roca y boca* as a collection of unique events.

The link of fire to smoke is the example that linguistics often uses to distinguish signs from indexes. Smoke cannot properly be considered a sign for fire, but it refers to it insofar as it is its material consequence. Larré brings the representation of nature back to this stage, understanding the replacement of sign by its indication as a possible way to wreck the autonomy that we humans have assigned to language.

As representations of landscape, Larré's compositions are little more than traces, extremely fragile objects, the product of a tactile contact. In these cases, language stops being a force external to nature, one that, supposedly, would

have had an impact on inert matter for centuries. With the paper mats, Larré forms a language that is generated by the intimacy of bodies in contact.

As events, these compositions are also an indication of the radical contingency in which we find nature placed. Larré juxtaposes the ancestral temporality of geological phenomena with the exaggeratedly ephemeral temporality of the paper mats. Both are, meanwhile, juxtaposed to the dilated time that Larré invests in linking these three bodies with his fingertips. If the laws of nature seem to remain unchanged to us humans, this probably speaks more to the brief span of time that humans occupy Earth than to the unchangeability of nature.

### **Rosalind Fowler**

*NowhereSomewhere* (2016)

*Reproductive work, as the material basis of our life  
and the first place in which we practice our capacity  
for self-government, is revolution at point zero.*

Silvia Federici

*The institution of commons has developed powerful  
ontologies of beauty, excess and luxury in countering  
the dehumanizing and belittling logic of capitalism.*

Massimiliano Mollona

*An emphasis on means as opposed to ends is  
innately utopian insofar as utopia can never be  
prescriptive of futurity.*

José Esteban Muñoz

Rosalind Fowler (Birmingham, 1975) uses film as means of re-enchanting the world. Instead of the rationalization and technification of nature that capitalism has imposed to us, Fowler creates moments that highlight the potential of community life, which she understands as the cooperation between human and non-human ways of life, and between diverse forms of consciousness. In the processes that the artist develops, the ethnographic register converges with the collaborative staging of fictional situations, which can give rise to the development of shamanic, astronomical and therapeutic experiences.



With *NowhereSomewhere*, Fowler examines William Morris's science fiction novel, *News from Nowhere* (1880). In this story, Morris placed artisanal modes of production at the center of a potential socialism based on an exponential multiplication of wealth, the achievement of a fulfilling life, and a restoration of a harmonious relationship with nature. He does this in such a way that, when his protagonist, William Guest, espouses the dream of a communal life, one gets the sense that he travels into the future, but also that he could be moving into medieval times.

Fowler invited members of the Organiclea agricultural cooperative to read and comment on some excerpts from the novel. Its members seem to be doing a reenactment of the text, imbuing the film with a strange phantasmagorical effect, halfway between the utopia that, at the end of the 19th century, Morris located in a medieval past—that he idealized—and the daily life of this cooperative in North London more than a hundred years later, a group which lives entirely according to communal principles.

Fowler has manually processed parts of the footage in Organiclea, using an environmentally friendly formula for the 16mm film production.

### **Ruben Verdú**

*Swallow* (2008 and ongoing)

*The fateful process of civilization would thus have set  
in with man's adoption of an erect posture.*

*Sigmund Freud*

*Physical contact is a nonnegotiable requisite for  
many different kinds of life.*

*Lynn Margullis*

*Swallow* is all about a swallow's nest that Ruben Verdú (Caracas, 1962) has built on the upper corner of Casal Solleric's roof, using the same technique that those birds use: his own mouth.

At least, during three days of work, Verdú patiently transports all of the necessary pieces of clay and straw using this part of his body, and adopting the same technique used by swallows to give this nest its form. This is how this artist develops intimate approaches with other animal species, studies their functioning mechanisms and, above all, exploring their perception of the world and the consciousness that they evolve.

With *Swallow*, Verdú is focused specifically to enter into contact with a non-visual epistemology. That is, he aims to contact modes of knowledge that dispense with the superiority that we humans have conferred on vision. In the psychoanalytic interpretation that he makes, this phenomenon is constitutive of a neurotic behavior that shapes us as a species. If we humans have risen and distanced ourselves from the ground, from Earth—first with the body, then with highrise buildings and finally with aircrafts—, it has been to enhance the scrutinizing activity of the eye. This has been an uplift, therefore, motivated by the surveillance and control of nature, and not by a wish to intimate with her.

Verdú sees, in the swallow, the possibility of setting also a trap to the neurotic apparatus. On the one hand, the action of building a nest on the roof of the exhibition space is a way to reinterpret the human vertical drive. On the other hand, the camera used to record the whole process is confronted by the entrance hole to the nest, once the artist completes its construction —the nest looks at us also. This configuration produces, therefore, a sort of face-to-face encounter between two structural states of the *camera obscura* —the nest becomes a remote predecessor of this visual artifact and the monitoring camera its technological refinement.

### **Teresa Solar**

*Chicken* (2015); *Ghost* (2015); *White Noise* (2015)

*All mediation harbors within this blind spot, however  
successful or complete it may be.*

Eugene Thacker

*What lies beyond the named, is unnamable. By  
being unnamable, it is related to the unnamable par  
excellence, that is, to death.*

Jacques Lacan

*The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There  
was a lock on the door...*

Ron Smith

The appearance that Thamsanqa Jantjie in the Nelson Mandela Memorial made him internationally famous. That gestures of this sign language interpreter resisted the decoding of the speeches at the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg on

December 2013 was not something understood as absurd, but, on the contrary, publicly rebuked.

Teresa Solar (Madrid, 1985) mentions this incident as the starting point for a series of experiments in ceramics, for instance, *White Noise* and *Chicken*. In both of these pieces, the artist has applied sign language to specks of clay while they were spinning on a potter's wheel, letting her fingers be out of control when they came into contact and tried to exerted pressure on the material.

The pieces that are the result of this process are neither signs nor have the capacity to symbolize, but are, literally, residues of language. They are the signs of a failed communicative act that, nevertheless, should not be considered meaningless. On the contrary, when Solar recalls the international discomfort with Jantjie's performance, he underlines the power of language to generate bonds even before it acquires meaning, because, as bodies, *no one can determine what language can do* either.

However, the body that Solar shows us is an object that, being consubstantial to the communicative act, resists symbolization. If there is something really disturbing with *White Noise* and *Chicken*, it is the ghost that lives inside language and that, surprisingly, endows it with agency.

With *Ghost*, the artist puts the aforementioned ghost in correspondence with other moments of radical incomprehension —the Air Malaysia Ghost Plane, mysteriously lost in the middle of the Indian Ocean in 2014, the speculated wilderness in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), or also the fortifications, both physical and mental, in W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz* (2001).

### **Alba Mayol**

*Anamnesi/Cartografies* (2009); *Colette* (2019)

*Their misunderstanding of me was not the same as  
my misunderstanding of them.*  
Roy Wagner

*The things of nature become free to be what they  
are. But to be what they are they depend on the  
erotic attitude.*  
Herbert Marcuse

*The object never fulfils its promise.*  
Jacques Lacan

The work of Alba Mayol (Barcelona 1979) is characterized by using the indeterminacy of the object as a way of widening relational possibilities—which she, meanwhile, takes to the limit.

*Anamnesi / Cartografies* is a collection of drawings made by seventeen survivors of the Quinta del Biberón—the recruiting of troops by the Republican Army between 1938 and 1939, consisting of underage boys. Having lived in first person the battle of the Ebro—one of the bloodiest and most decisive of the Civil War—their memories have been the subject of historiographic and media interest, a fact that has had, over the years, consequences on the perdurance of their own stories.

Mayol asked the survivors to make cartographic drawings of their movements on the battle front, as a strategy to dissociate them from the official story and to return their experiences to the subjective realm. Likewise, by making maps, she made evident another mode of alienation, that of transferring to a bird's eye view the experiences they had lived on the ground. Bewildered, the survivors hesitated to carry on her request, which had the potential to dissolve the consensual narrative into seventeen different battles.

*Colette* is an attempt to infuse utopia with a material reality, an attempt to connect with the history of the libertarian legacy. Mayol sent a letter to Colette Durruti, daughter of Bonaventura Durruti, which contained a drawing of a landscape that the artist had imagined. It consists of a series of indeterminate forms full of that revolutionary potential that was lost when her father died in December 1936. The artist, furthermore, presents her objects as a cluster of desires that transform utopia into a sort of inhuman libidinal force, which is no longer only oriented to drive social relations, but to eroticize them together, as a whole with nature.

When she was about to formalize the objects that were included in that landscape, Mayol forced on herself the condition of visiting Colette, who is currently living in a village in the south of France. She said to her “*Je ne suis pas mon père*” when she heard about the project.