



To Have & To Lose.
Three projects by Mireia Sallarès.

Curator: Moritz Neumüller

Available 2009 - 2012

Galleri Image
Vestergade 29 - 8000 Århus C



LAZANIA
CENTRO CULTURAL ESPAÑOL
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Summary

The lost Paradise, the small death, women's sexuality, freedom, identity and existence. Through three installations, consisting of video projections, neon light, posters and photographs in light shafts, Mireia Sallarès presents the viewer with her encounter with various women's narratives of destiny. Through the women's personal life stories, she depicts the way each woman creates her own identity in relation to the social structures.

The stories revolve around an Algerian woman and her mobile pizza truck, a young Spanish girl trying to get an American residence permit, and Mexican women, whose sexuality are connected with joy as well as assaults from the country's macho culture.

In "To Have & to Lose", Mireia Sallarès' projections, scenes and installations aim at recreating and reflecting on the cynicism, absurdity, pain and loneliness that she believes the citizens are often suffering from. She gets her ideas from her own story, from her friends, and not least from the people she meets in the public space.

This exhibition has been shown in the framework of the Aarhus Festival from 29 August to 5 October 2008, and at the Laznia Center for Contemporary Art in Gdansk, Poland, from 24 April to 7 June 2009.

Fact Sheet:

Exhibition title: To Have & To Lose. Three projects by Mireia Sallarès.

Curator: Moritz Neumüller

Produced by Galleri Image, Aarhus, Denmark

Works: 3 artist videos, 1 neon light 215 x 70 x 20 cm (mounted in metal structure), 1 lightbox 160 x 110 x 15 cm, 1 light box sign 45 x 25 x 315 cm, 200 posters, 100 x 70 cm (folded in 8 parts), 4 photographs framed in wood 60 x 60 cm, 11 unframed photographs (3 digital prints of 100 x 70 cm, 8 digital prints of 50x70 cm), 1 artist book 21 x 15 cm, pink silk paper (hand made) 30 x 40 cm

Space needs: 60 Wall meters including blackbox(es)

Technical Needs: 1 monitor or TV set, 2 projectors in black boxes, 3 DVD players (PAL), 3 audio systems.

Availability: 2008 – 2010

Costs: Curator fee, Artist Fee, Transport, Insurance, Parallel Activities

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Curatorial statement “To Have & To Lose”

It is a sign of our times of image mass-inflation, that “truth” has become a value, a tradable good; and “reality” an effect, a virtual experience. Furthermore, truth and reality have always been facets of the complicated relationship between art and life. This relationship is all the more interesting when a documentary focus is wedded with a pronounced artistic language. This “artistic codification of reality” usually draws on the dramatization of visual impacts, self-reference, formal and aesthetic quality, cutting-edge techniques, radical means of expression, or a special emphasis on the conceptual background.

Having and losing, tradition and renewal, preservation and fading, documentation and artistic codification are central aspects in Mireia Sallarès’ work. She has been exploring the frictions between reality and fiction in a slow and steady investigation, a field study that takes into account that the observer is also a participant in the experiment, and using this influence in the process itself. She gets her ideas from her own story, from her friends, and not least from the people she meets in public. In the three projects that make up *To Have and & to Lose*, the artist presents us with her encounter with various women’s narratives of destiny. Through the subjects’ personal life stories, she depicts the way each woman creates her own identity in relation to social structures. The stories revolve around an Algerian woman and her mobile pizza truck, a young Spanish girl trying to get an American residence permit, and Mexican women, whose sexuality is connected with joy as well as assaults from the country’s macho culture.

The three installations involve video as the starting point and narrative thread, objects that conceptualize the central theme of the work, and lastly photographs to document the implementation of these objects in different contexts. The use of various media according to their semantic capabilities is a practice that Sallarès has developed throughout her artistic career. She describes her preference for video as a narrative tool, using experience, time and image, due to the fact that everything else is too slow for her to be able to express the crux of the issues she puts forward at each moment: “Life goes at a tremendous speed and cinema or video provides you with approximately twenty-five images per second. Then you can rewind and see

what has happened again, which is nearly always something random". After pinpointing the central idea in objects that draw on the tradition of concept art, Sallarès works with a photographer to generalize this idea into a universal subject. The editing of these pictures is often decided not by the photographic eye but the memory of the experience that brought it there. The resulting installations engage the viewer in a well-defined architectonic, interactive or sensual way.

Moments of happiness and acts of violation are the central axes of the three works. They always stem from a phenomenon, a certain situation in a foreign country (Mexico, France and the USA) but do not stop there. What interests the artist is her commitment to life and the respect for all things, the universality of personal issues, and the social impact of individual experience on the community, concepts that she finds in Proudhon's anarchism, utopian socialism and contemporary feminist art practice, as epitomised by Suzanne Lacy. These installations aim at recreating and reflecting on the cynicism, absurdity, pain and loneliness that she believes citizens often suffer from. The Paradise Lost concept, not to be underestimated in the Catholic subconscious, perhaps best sums up these concerns of Mireia's work:

I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. (Genesis 3:16)

Pain, reproduction, desire, and the establishment of the patriarchal social system, all this is sold to us as a direct result of the Fall of Man. In purely biological terms, pain is a necessary survival function that warns us of physical danger to our body. In our world of experience, however, pain is commonly linked with suffering and death, a *Memento Mori*. The *Little Death* also has this dualistic configuration: in biological terms, the female orgasm is not strictly necessary for the reproductive purpose of the sexual act. It is a gift, a luxury, an often unfulfilled promise of nature. The women represented in this series have both experienced sexual pleasures and the fear of violence, whether it be physical, verbal or symbolic. Since many of these acts go unpunished, a minor significance is attributed to these deaths; they literally become *Muertes Chiquitas*.

In the project *Le camion de Zahia. Conversations après le paradis perdu*, the subtitle directly points to the Paradise Lost metaphor, as does the site-specific installation of the light-sign with the citation of the owner of the pizza truck, "Savoir que j'existais, voilà!" in different transitory and ephemeral contexts. In a society where labour is scarce and pain-killers abundant, alienation and loneliness have replaced bodily suffering. The relationship with a society that leaves us to our own fate and the melancholy of our quest for a singular individuality are the new challenges of the contemporary post-Eden generation. These "politics of solitude", as Martí Peran has called them, are a central part in Sallarès' oeuvre. In *Mi visado de modelo* she narrates the story of a Spanish girl who attempts to gain a resident visa in the USA: a true story about the need to lie, the mechanisms of contemporary society's fiction and our inevitable acts of submission before it.

Of course, the alienation of the individual within the crowd has been a recurrent theme since modernism, just as much as the juxtaposition of art and life. Mireia Sallarès' work is a finely-tuned balance. The drunken costumers of Zahia's truck approach the camera with the same natural empathy as the Mexican women talking about their little deaths, and the false Spanish model. Nevertheless, these images always depend upon the interpretation in the labyrinth between truth and fiction, and the artistic codification of the reality that separates art from life: "I need to give a social dimension to my work, such that though it may have direct, real origins, there may then be a symbolic, poetic or more formalistic work which I allow myself and need as an artist. Perhaps this is an example of one of the biggest divisions that I think came about after the avant-garde, that commitment of art to life, to the experience of life, but at the same time that autonomy of art, and the artistic experience as something separate."

Truth or reality, theatre or film, testimony or concept, art or life? Maybe a bit of everything. Raise the curtain and let the show begin!

Moritz Neumüller

Artist's biographical profile

Mireia Sallarès. Barcelona, 1973

A graduate in Fine Arts from Barcelona University in 1997, she attended the Art faculty in Athens, Greece, for six months and later trained in audiovisual studies in Barcelona. In 2000 she obtained an artist's residence at the Art3 centre in Valence, France. The same year she won a training scholarship from the Catalonia Regional Government with which she undertook film and video studies at the New School University and the Film & Video Arts Foundation in New York. While there, she collaborated on several film and theatre productions, in contact with institutions such as Women Make Movies and Vertiginosas (islands). Since 2004 she has formed part of the team of film and documentary makers in the Photographic Social Vision Foundation of Barcelona. She has received several prizes such as the INJUVE in 1999 or the Sinergias, Barcelona 2001. In 2005 she obtained the scholarship Generaciones Caja Madrid for her project *Mi Visado de Modelo II* presented at ARCO 06 as well as a grant from the Regional Government of Catalonia to produce the project *Le camión de Zahia, conversations après le paradis perdu* presented in 2005 at the Espacio Zero1 of the Museo Comarcal de la Garrotxa. Outstanding among other exhibitions are *Soy un Animal* presented at the Corner00 cycle of the Caja Madrid Cultural Space in Barcelona, 2004, *Rendez-vous, le consolador le plus romantique* premiered at New Art Barcelona in 2000, *Bienvenidos a la sociedad del espectáculo* organised by the Matar— ACM in 1999, *Ex-Parc d'Atraccions: during the Barcelona Triennial, 2000*, the video-creation *Monocanal*, inaugurated at the MNRS, 2002, and *Mirador 06*, at the O.K. Centrum, Linz, Austria.

Curator's biography

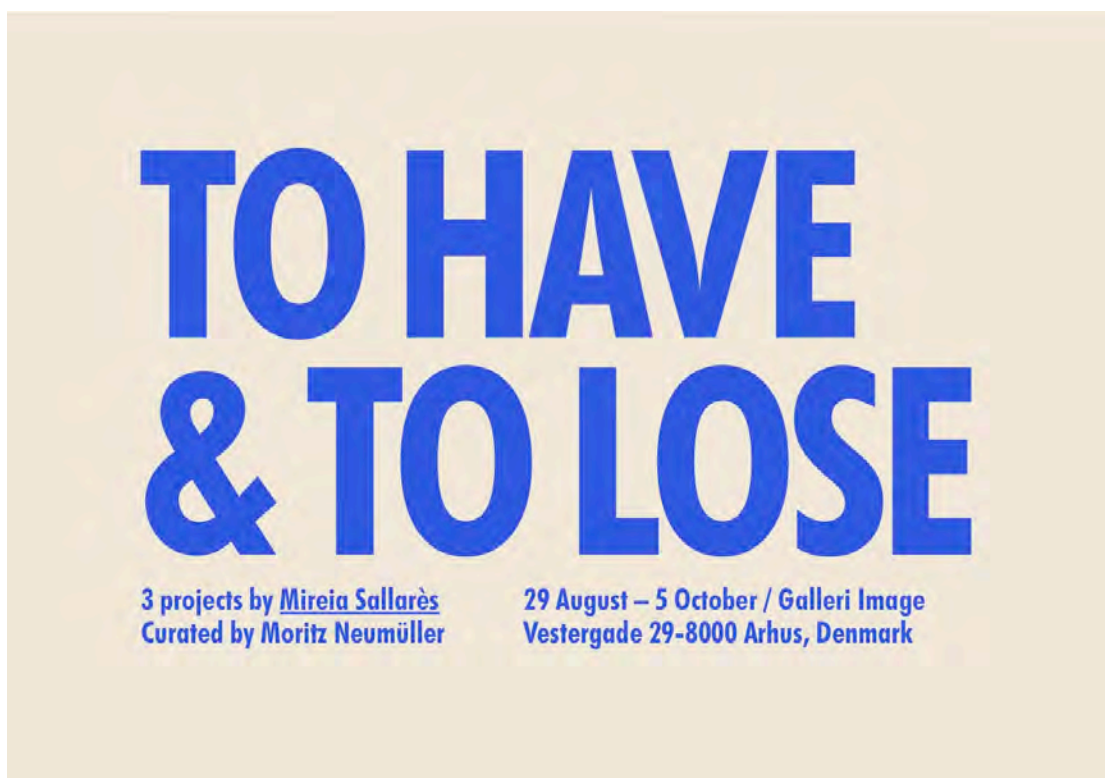
Moritz Neumüller. Linz, Austria, 1972. Lives and works in Barcelona

A graduate from the University of Vienna in Art History and from the Vienna University of Economics in Commerce, he has worked for the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among other institutions. He has directed various activities of PHotoEspaña, the Spanish Festival of Photography and Visual Arts, in the editions of 2004-2007, and the International Video Festival&Fair LOOP Barcelona, in its edition of 2008. Publications include *El Otro Lado Del Alma*, on syncretisms in contemporary Cuban photography (2005); the interview-book *Bernd & Hilla Becher speak with Moritz Neumüller*, published by Fundación Telefónica, Madrid (2005); *Import/Export. Un diálogo fotográfico*, Centro Cultural de España, Guatemala (2006); and *All Inclusive*, Fotofestival Lodz, Poland (2007). Participations in exhibition projects such as *Mapas Abiertas*, Fundación Telefónica/Museo Virreina (2003) and *The Ecstasy of Things*, Fotomuseum Winterthur (2003). Co-Curator of several international festivals including Pingyao International Photography Festival, China 2008; International Month of Photography, Vienna 2008 and CeC Festival 2009, Bhimtal, India.

Graphic Implementation



Postcards Las Muertes Chiquitas



Catalogue cover, Aarhus

TO HAVE & TO LOSE

MIĘĆ I STRACIĆ. TRZY PROJEKTY MIREII SALLARÈS

24 KWIETNIA – 7 CZERWCA 2009 / 24 APRIL – 7 JUNE 2009

24 KWIETNIA, GODZ. 18⁰⁰ / 24 APRIL AT 6 PM
WYKŁAD "SPOŁECZNY – INTYMNY – SPOŁECZNY" MORITZ NEUMÜLLER
W ROZMOWIE Z MIREIĄ SALLARÈS NA TEMAT JEJ TWÓRCZOŚCI
/ A LECTURE "PUBLIC – PRIVATE – PUBLIC" MIREIA SALLARÈS
TALKS WITH MORITZ NEUMÜLLER ABOUT HER WORK

24 KWIETNIA, GODZ. 19³⁰ / 24 APRIL AT 7.30 PM
WERNISAŻ WYSTAWY / OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION

Kurator / Curator: Moritz Neumüller

Współpraca ze strony CSW Łaźnia / Cooperation at Łaźnia CCA: Anna Szyrwelska
Współpraca / Cooperation: Beata Cegielska, Galleri Image, Aarhus, Dania

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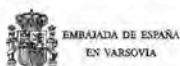
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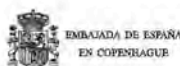
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HONORARY PATRONS OF THE EXHIBITION: SPANISH EMBASSY IN WARSAW AND SPANISH CONSULATE IN GDANSK



GDANSK 2016
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Invitation (verso), Gdansk, Poland

Installation Shots



Installation *Las Muertes Chiquitas*



Projection *Le camion de Zahia*



Installation *Mi Visado de Modelo II*



Light Sign *Savoir que j'existais, voilà!* in the New Port district of Gdansk, Poland



Light Sign *Savoir que j'existais, voilà!* on the façade of Image Galleri, Aarhus, Denmark