

\* J.M. Espai 13

**JULIA  
SPÍNOLA**

**vis.**

**25.9.2020 - 8.12.2020**

**TURN IT ALL TURNS**

**EXHIBITION SERIES CURATED BY MARC NAVARRO**

**Fundació Joan Miró** \* J.M. Barcelona



The work of Julia Spínola revises the connection between writing, image and sculpture. In her recent production these systems of representation behave unusually, as they appear to be confused: sculpture becomes writing, image is language, while gesture turns into object. Through these procedures Spínola exposes the structures that uphold our perception while questioning its reliability. Although they could seem to us like highly complex operations, they are grounded in a simple will: to open up our perceptive field. Actions like seeing or touching become conscious acts when our patterns



of recognition stop working, when we are incapable of establishing a hierarchy through what we see or of applying categories able to attribute concrete meanings.

To draw nearer to vision or touch, as if we were dealing with reflexive acts, we must renounce inner experience and put ourselves in a vulnerable space, which we could define as an opposite: a radically exterior space. Spínola invites us to rethink the perceptive model as if it were a window we normally would not notice. When we look through it, we see “through”; the transparency of the glass does not allow us to see it. Only when this glass is broken or dirty can we perceive it anew and thus recognize its materiality. According to Spínola, our perception, like with this pane of glass, is a model for the construction of reality, where we are so immersed that we are unable to perceive it. Taking this for granted blocks us from adopting other models of perception and embracing other relational paths. It is necessary to be conscious of this interruption so as to situate ourselves “outside” and understand that “everything is happening, all at once.”



What, then, are the implications of being “outside”? To abandon the “space of interiority” is to renounce narratives we do not tend to question, such as the symbolic dimension, psychology, the narrative condition or subjectivity. Spínola focuses on gesture, and situates a set of interactions in the centre of her practice that make no distinction between subject and object, action and observation. This ambiguity places her sculptural work in an intermediate space, between being made and unmade: it seems that things exist in a determined way, adopt a determined colour, last a certain time, while nothing has an absolute value, nothing retains a will to permanence.

Following on this logic, we might understand her projects as a continuous storyline, a play of variables that reveals the potentiality of gesture and the possibilities of the sculptural object. In this regard, it is not by chance that Julia Spínola works using series, a production model that always begins with a problem, although exploring in this problem a space of desire and play. In its initial plan, *vis.* proposed researching into the closure of form as a strategy for opening up space. Starting with a series of cylinders in decreasing



diameters, Spínola questioned the possibility of closing down an object, reducing its volume until procuring its disappearance. This exercise, to work towards a termination in the form of a point, displaced interest towards the very body of the sculpture, whose volume had been worked on by applying pressure. A reconfiguration that causes the sculptures to lose density and acquire a fluid condition.

The pieces that make up *vis.* strive for resonances and set up relationships of proximity and distance. Spínola draws from ideas of time and space as conventions that uphold the illusion of a stable, articulated narrative, while also being aware that these are two malleable ideas which we must acquire in order to situate ourselves in the here and now. The immediacy her sculptures claim allows us to establish an analogy with movement that has “neither beginning nor end”, resisting the fixation of an image. As an alternative to this fixed image, Spínola proposes the idea of “impression”, which she identifies, among others, as the forms we see projected onto a surface after gazing directly at the sun. “Impressions” are those images that are engraved or leave a mark, which in *vis.* are made manifest as silkscreens.



Spínola orders exhibition space by searching for a reverberation between various components. A vibration which, as a driving force with “neither beginning nor end”, directs us towards spontaneity, to the relationship between bodies as they dance, to the materiality of sound or the movement of air. Phenomena which despite being inconsistent express plenitude, setting themselves up against immobility and contention, as if dealing with a reflexive act. Thus *vis.* wields a reactive working methodology that invites us to recuperate the power of our presence, our capacity to surprise ourselves, our confidence and joy.

Marc Navarro Fornós



## Interview

**Marc Navarro: *In vis.* the ideas of movement and circulation are especially relevant. Over the past few months the content of the exhibition has evolved, until coming to its definitive shape. You avoid setting down a sketch of the exhibition, and that allows it to remain open to changes. What factors influence in the decision to change a project, causing it to shift elsewhere?**

**Julia Spínola:** The exhibition is done all at once, at the same time, and it moves together. I work with few components, which go about transforming from one thing to another; they set up a relationship between themselves, between sculptures, between images and sculptures, with their movement in the exhibition space. I need that everything can be in movement all at once. Finally, when the show is being installed the positions of the various components are fixated, just as they are related with each other at that moment, so that I believe that an installation has something arbitrary about it. And I am not saying this in a pejorative sense, but that ultimately an exhibition is one possibility amongst many.



**MN: In some of your sculptures you have used materials “without history”, such as cardboard or particle board. In contrast, in *vis.* the material relationship is not as evident. What sort of connection do you establish with materials?**

JS: Cardboard and particle board are materials lacking identity, composites of fine particles that are then compressed. I worked a lot on the basis of their almost open structure, that is, being solid but about to come apart; if you look at an agglomerate up close you can see where it might break into pieces. Now I am working more on form and surface, how or where to “finish” a piece, and on its relationship to space. This shift in my way of working has decelerated the process, so that now the pieces are different.

**MN: In your proposals you include light as yet another feature of the exhibition. In *vis.* the light is entirely uniform. What is the reason for this decision?**

JS: For some time now, I have sought to light exhibitions to ensure that the objects have no shadows. When we are in an exhibition and we see any sort of shadow,





or even our own shadow on the wall or on a piece, it is because there is a focal point of light from above that is directing itself at one thing or another. Something about that seems authoritarian to me. In *vis.*, the fact that the lighting is uniform has to do with the space between the pieces and the people in the space, and here I want to ensure there is considerable leeway in this regard.



**Julia Spínola** (Madrid, 1979) is a sculptor. She has a degree in Fine Arts from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and also studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon. Spínola has participated in many group exhibitions, including *Rojamente* (Espacio Artiatx, Bilbao, 2020), *Les escenes* (La Capella, Barcelona, 2019) and *Roca* (with David Bestué, Halfhouse, Barcelona, 2016). She has shown her work individually in exhibitions like *V.* (Galería Heinrich Ehrhardt, Madrid, 2019), *Lubricán* (CA2M, Madrid, 2018) and *Cien rostros iguales* (etHALL, Barcelona, 2016–2017), amongst others.

She was the winner of the El Ojo Crítico de Artes Plásticas Award, granted by Radio Nacional de España (2013), and the ARCO Prize of the Madrid Region (2017). She has also been a recipient of the Fundación Marcelino Botín artist grant (2013) and was a resident artist at the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD, 2018-2019). Her work is found in the collections of the Museo Reina Sofía, La Panera (Lleida) and the Madrid Region.

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