

**Lara Fluxà**

**Verni**

16/11/2018 – 06/01/2019

***A Monster Who Tells the Truth***

**Espai 13 exhibition series at the Fundació Joan Miró**

20 September 2018 – 8 September 2019

Curator: Pilar Cruz

With support from Fundació Banc Sabadell

## **Press Release**

**Lara Fluxà examines the imaginings of accidents and catastrophes as well as their relationships to the realms of knowledge, economy and power.**

***Verni* is an installation at the Fundació Joan Miró's Espai 13 that counterposes two materials which are by nature opposite – glass and used motor oil – to reflect on the notions of contingency, fragility and, ultimately, balance.**

**The project – the second exhibition in the series *A Monster Who Tells the Truth* – also addresses related issues such as the value of the art object, risk containment, waste in consumer society and the stability of the ecosystem.**

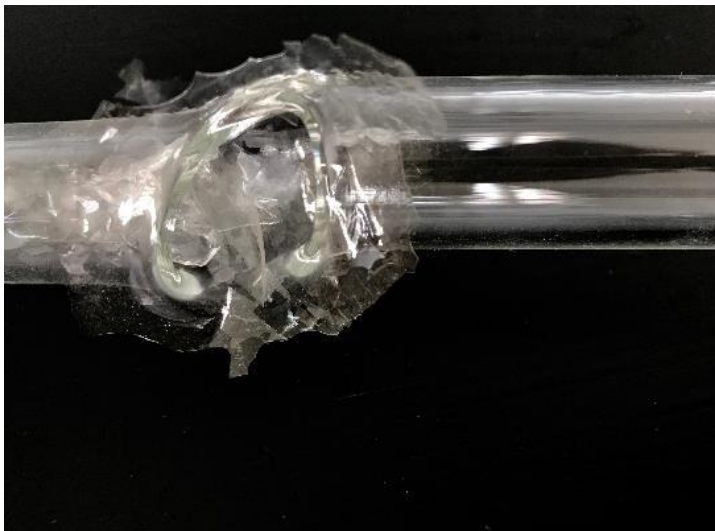
***A Monster Who Tells the Truth* is the Espai 13 exhibition series held at the Fundació Joan Miró during the 2018-19 season, produced with support from the Fundació Banc Sabadell. Curated by Pilar Cruz, the project questions the nature of disciplines and inquires into the relationships between knowledge and power.**

**Barcelona, 16 November 2018.** *Verni* is the term used in the Catalan of the Balearic Islands for pitch or tar, the viscous, strong-smelling black substance obtained from distilling wood or charcoal, traditionally used for caulking ships. The word *verni* is also applied to the solidified remains of crude oil that wash up onto the shore, often after oil tankers flush out their cargo tanks at sea. Or as the consequence of a marine accident, of a catastrophic oil spill that pollutes the coastline with a sticky coating that is hard to contain and clean. In these circumstances, *verni* becomes sludge.

The Mallorcan artist Lara Fluxà (Palma, 1984) usually works with elements endowed with a poetry all of their own which she feels close to heart, such as water

– often salty – from her island home, or glass, whose treatment in art is one of her areas of expertise. Fluxà's familiarity with the nature of these materials has driven her to show an interest in the notion of fragility, the potential for risk and a dynamic view of stability. In her artistic practice, close to scientific experimentation, we find the constant emergence of environmental awareness that examines the delicate balance of the ecosystem and the consequences of disrupting it.

For the series *A Monster Who Tells the Truth*, Fluxà has counterposed the fragility and transparency of glass with the viscosity of a material related to the tar that sticks to our feet by the seaside: used motor oil. The former – solid, clear, clean and ancient – is associated with craftsmanship, with the trades and knowledge passed down from generation to generation, whereas the latter is a viscous, opaque, toxic residue associated with consumer society and industrial production.



At the Fundació Joan Miró's Espai 13, Fluxà presents a sculptural landscape in which these two materials establish a relationship in an unstable balance in which they impose their respective characteristics upon each other. Glass and oil act as opposing forces that struggle to balance each other out, with the threat of imminent catastrophe.

According to the curator Pilar Cruz, in the artist's project "the fluid element stresses and tenses that which is solid, and the crystalline element envelops and contains that which is dark. Likewise, oil clouds the transparency of glass; and glass, in turn, contains the residue, using the verb in its twofold meaning: as a container that encloses and shapes, and as an instrument of contention that stops it from expanding and isolates it from the outside." The installation is completed with other elements displayed around the room, such as metal and rubber – also fundamental in the history of capitalist economics – and some absorbent materials such as sawdust, creating an atmosphere of a potential risk or an occurred accident.

Using these elements, the artist researches the ways in which the imaginings of catastrophe have a broad area of knowledge at their disposal and are, in addition, linked to economic power and circulation. According to Cruz, these imaginings, created when speculating about accident and risk, "play into economic powers. Science is placed at the service of the economy of oil and its by-products as well as at the service of research for preventing its accidents and treating its waste. The protection and insurance industries turn catastrophe into economic profit."

Along these lines, the artist addresses the concepts of unpredictability, safety and trust while experimenting with systems for containing risk. Based on a strictly artistic assumption, Fluxà has analysed the potential risks of her installation and created emergency devices with their related action protocol. The project also elicits a reflection about the value of a work of art and the conditions that materials, works, and art institutions impose upon each other, orchestrating a complex dynamic balance in the exhibition space. What happens in a museum when something highly fragile or potentially dangerous is displayed? What is the cap to the amount that can be insured? Is the value of a work of art equal to the value of its risk?

Ultimately, *Verni* points to the delicate situation of our planet's environment. At Espai 13, Fluxà's glass sculptures contain the oil's toxicity, but glass is fragile, as is environmental balance. The artist displays carefully designed risk-contention systems that enable her to reveal the false impression of safety with which we isolate ourselves from reality. According to the curator of the series, this sensation leads us to believe that we have "free rein for continuing to exploit our natural resources, feeding progress and consuming all sorts of materials, assuming that there will be a creative solution to waste recycling and that disasters will be controlled. But that sense of safety is a mirage."

**Lara Fluxà** (Palma de Mallorca, 1985), with an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts and a Master's Degree in Art Production and Research from the University of Barcelona, specialized in the treatment of glass after taking several courses on glass blowing at the Centro Nacional del Vidrio in Segovia, the Centre del Vidre in Barcelona and the Escola de Ceràmica in La Bisbal.

Fluxà has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Centre Lo Pati in Amposta, the Fundació Felícia Fuster in Barcelona, and the Capella de la Misericòrdia and Galeria Maneu, both in Palma. Her work has also been included in group shows at the Museu d'Art Contemporani Es Baluard in Mallorca; the Hilvaria Studio's gallery in Tilburg, Holland; the MUU Kaapeli gallery in Helsinki, Finland; the Casal Solleric and the Casa de Cultura at the Fundació Sa Nostra in Palma and the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica in Barcelona, among other venues. Fluxà's production is held in the collections of the city councils of Palma, Inca and Santanyí, in Mallorca.

Lara Fluxà often questions the act of measuring as a valid strategy for approaching what is actually uncertain. That is why she modifies and alters measurement instruments and processes, amplifying their possibilities and generating new results. Fluxà works on the perception of the invisible using transparent materials such as water and glass, and other more phenomenological ones like air or light, given their resistance to definition.

**A Monster Who Tells the Truth** is the exhibition programme for Espai 13, Fundació Joan Miró, for the 2018-2019 season, with support from the Banco Sabadell Foundation. The project, curated by Pilar Cruz (Zaragoza, 1972), questions the nature of disciplines and examines the relationships between knowledge and power. Using Michel Foucault's *The Order of Discourse* as its point of departure, the series reflects on the procedures for controlling discourses in an effort to understand how power structures operate and identify their influence on current knowledge. Although knowledge is validated in the framework of disciplines, Cruz looks at what happens on the fringes. Artists tend to place themselves in this marginal territory, the realm of boundaries or aberrations, as a work method and as a way of escaping control. For the curator, art is a powerful monster, capable of unveiling the power dynamics that drive the internal mechanisms of these disciplines. The artists Fito Conesa, Lara Fluxà, Vanesa Varela, Für Alle Fälle and Paco Chanivet examine and try out alternative ways of relating and generating knowledge based on art.

### Activities

Guided tour led by the artist and the curator  
Thursday 29 November, at 6.30 pm

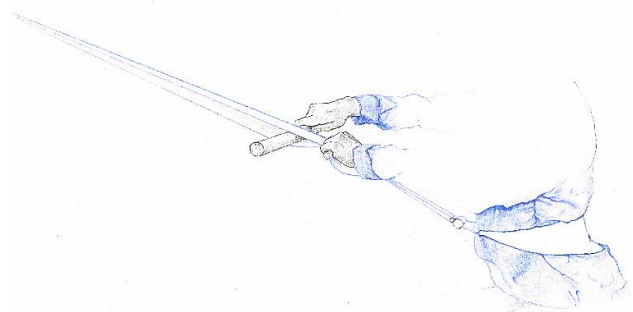
Tour/performance by the artist and Ariadna Parreu  
Thursday 20 December, at 7 pm

### Upcoming exhibitions in *The Possibility of an Island*

#### Vanesa Varela

18/01 – 24/03/2019

Vanesa Varela proposes a project that focuses on analysing textile crafts to examine how knowledge is transmitted in alternative systems beyond orthodox academia, as well as the capacity of textiles for becoming texts and discourses. Her case study focuses on a pre-industrial textile technique known as backstrap weaving.



Following this traditional method, the weaver – usually a woman – straps one end of the loom around her waist, fastens the opposite end to a sturdy tree trunk, and proceeds with the labour-intensive task of producing a fabric that is a text about herself between the tree and her own body.

**Für Alle Fälle**

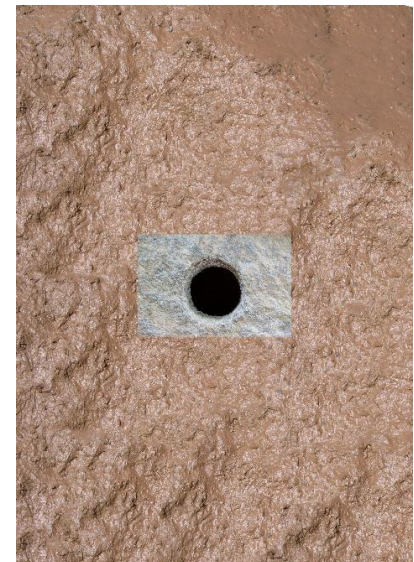
5/04 – 24/06/2019

For the *A Monster Who Tells the Truth* series, *Für Alle Fälle* presents the result of its research on the maker movement and off-the-grid practices in rural settings, where now as in the past individuals tend to seek the best ways of fulfilling their specific needs by transforming locally-sourced materials and applying basic and/or age-old techniques that manage to escape the grasp of major technology corporations.

**Paco Chanivet**

5/07 – 8/09/2019

For this season's Espai 13 series, Paco Chanivet will be working deliberately in the realm of horror and aberration, using a mix of disciplines that includes robotics, genetic engineering, pharmaceuticals and mysticism to activate an exhibition that will also be performative. In Chanivet's project, hybridisation, appropriation, transfer and the exploration of liminal areas become alternative ways of relating and generating knowledge in opposition to the monolithic solidity of classic academic disciplines.



Images and press materials are available at [www.fmirobcn.org/press](http://www.fmirobcn.org/press) and <http://bit.do/E13-2018-2019>. Follow the Espai 13 activities on social media with the hashtag **#monstreEspai13**

With the collaboration of

**B Sabadell**  
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**Further information:**

Fundació Joan Miró Press Office | Elena Febrero-Amanda Bassa +34 934439070 | [press@fmirobcn.org](mailto:press@fmirobcn.org)