

en



*The high seas took me and brought me back.
The sky turned gray and the waves disappeared.
The water wasn't the same color anymore.
I saw the birds and I saw the water lilies
that creep toward the shore, I must be
reaching land. — Ana López*

—I—

Little is left of the small Finisterre landscapes, how not to read them, then, as a whole? As a sign but also as part of a life gradually deformed into fantasy?

The story begins with three exhibitions: the first in the Capela do Pilar, in Corcubión, the second in Escola da Praza, in Cee and third in the Biblioteca Pública Municipal in Fisterra. Three shows that are one, in the whirlwind month of August, 1992, with the first running from the 1st to the 9th, the second from the 10th to the 18th and the last from the 19th to the 25th, in Galicia (Ana had traveled to Spain, having received a grant from Fundación Antorchas). It was the same show, traveling short distances with only one day for mounting in between, presented in a region far away but so close in the classic story of family immigration. Ana was painting on the wrack line of Finisterre's sea, on what would come out of it: pieces of ships, balls, fishing hooks, nets, etc. The first readings can be based on the obvious and for that reason are to be avoided, the second and third readings insert Ana in a local tradition of detritus (come with the wind).

Published on the front cover of an issue of the Agrupación Fisterra Unida's magazine is a painting by Ana that was later purchased by a man from Galicia: a crucified Christ divides the coast landscape in half and the image caption affectionately says: "Work by Ana López, daughter of Lola Da Conexa and El Xuca". Inside the magazine is another painting: "Oil [painting] of Señora Manuela da Conexa", a portrait of her great-aunt.

During this same month of residency in the land of her family, Ana carried out a casual performance, of which there is no record. She invited the women of Finisterre to come together outdoors, dressed in black, near the shore, with white sheets hanging from poles that produced sounds when struck by the wind. Her cousins arranged for the Coast Guard to anchor their ships close by, sounding their sirens. Anna dedicated her

2003 book, *Ellas* [Those Women] to these women. It is an action done there for here; I believe that Ana was thinking of these actions for herself: what then comes in subsequent years is the outer shell of these proposals, a world of fantasy distanced from the collection of family anecdotes and from proper names in order to come closer to one's own name and body ("Sirena" [Siren], 1993).

The landscapes at the beginning of this exhibition, painted in the early nineties, are not part of it; they are on one edge, on the show's coast, almost outside. They are what is concrete, geography that is defined and can be visited, the beginning of something, but also in past tense (1992 is also 1946 or 1952, the years when Ana's mother and father went to Argentina to live). These landscapes can be found a few blocks away from the Bar Miramar, which is still run by Ana's cousin today, but more than portraits of a place, they are questions that seek to understand a tone of voice or certain gestures. Much of what happened there is lost, and an affirmation in painting is to lose something all over again.

In conversations with Ana, the names Luis Seoane and Castelao emerge, Galician painters who worked with identity in different senses over the course of their work. Ana's work does just the opposite, it flees in search of a space that is much closer to her friends than to any feeling of pertaining to a territory. On account of being in Finisterre, Ana was unable to participate in "La Conquista", which was being organized at the same time in Buenos Aires by Lilita Maresca, with whom she shared a space and life. I believe that this fact is not a minor one: they are intersecting explorations, different needs at one same time. In both, however, working with the wrack of the sea or the river appears, with words and with poetry.

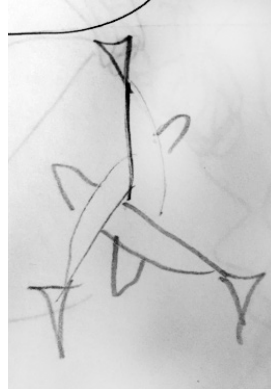
—II—

During the nineties there are two other exhibitions in which a strange mix between working collectively with other artists and a possible fatigue with thinking of works as a repetition of situations can be seen. In 1991, one year prior to Finisterre, Ana, Feliciano Centurión and Heloisa

Da Silva showed together in an exhibition titled "Preludio" [Prelude], held at the Centro Cultural Recoleta. Ana made a sculpture that was situated in the center of the space: four sides of fencing crowned above by a plane with a cone, a piece that brought a conceptual project from the seventies to mind, an object for the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas space with scant charisma due to its apparent lack of affection; but Ana tells

me that the work's reference was to René Daumal's book *El monte análogo* [The Analogous Hill]. This piece, which gives shape and duration to a sensation of discomfort, is the last work that is not based on her personal history. That's what Ana says, and yet I feel that even though the often brief stories do persist, in her works the very idea of history is diluted.

The second show is one held at the Centro Cultural Recoleta featuring the same trio, with the addition of Juan Pablo Renzi. Here the work is collective, produced by all four and titled "Superficies iluminadas" [Illuminated Surfaces].



In it, wall installations are presented with combinations of materials either found or sought out and then intervened by each artist. Ana painted a drawing of three intersecting fish taught to her by her sea-faring grandfather on a series of pieces of wood and metal.

—III—

Today, in this exhibition, Ana presents a sea floor that confounds geographies. She continues a story already begun, with the Siren still playing a central role, perhaps that of her emergence, like in the book

La sirena [The Siren], presented by Manuel Mujica Lainez in 1950:

She moves through patriarchal rivers from end to end. She fears neither eddies nor falls that raise curtains of transparent rain; neither winter's rigor nor the flame of summer. The water plays with her breasts and with her hair; with her agile arms; with tail of blue scales that stretches out in fine, flowing rainbow-colored fins. At times she stays submerged for hours, and at others she reclines in the calm current and a sunbeam lays across her cool torso. The yacarés accompany her for a while; the ducks and the doves called apicazú flutter around her, but soon grow tired, and the Siren continues her journey, downstream, upstream, arched like a swan, her arms as fluid as braids, bringing certain Renaissance jewels with baroque pearls, enamels and rubies to mind.

—Have you found? Have you found?

But here, the leading lady is absent, rather constructed or delineated by what surrounds her, with the inventive, mercurial sense of plants and animals. I would like to think of these sculptures from the standpoint of their intentions, rather than from an external view. There are inventions and a non-reasoned catalog that can only be thought of as a sensitive appearance that begins with the hands. They are a chorus, not because they sing, but because they are organized and extend a time between the island of emotions and the island of words (as Ana calls them). In the book *Le sens artistique des animaux* [Animals' Artistic Sense], Etienne Souriau talks about *the enthusiasm of the body* as a way to think about possible choreographies in some animals that use fiction in order to create, like a dog on the coast creates when simulating a fight or chasing something in the waves, just to make up an adventure. Souriau says that in plants, the work and the artist are one, without distinction or separation.

For Ana, paper is a toxic love, much like clay: the relationship begins with rejection, damage and resistance, and the conquest, through caring and with the possibility that things may fail. There is

a fictitious proposal of conquest, a fiction by way of denunciation, but it is another work in which no history is possible; there are no precise dates, just an intention to start over again. Some readings must be done by disconnecting some things from others. In Ana's work, the principle of movement originates in the work and affects the artist, and this is why the movement generates disorder, converting the body into a living political archive.

(*) *Adentro lo misterioso, afuera lo conocido* in Spanish, a title extracted from the book *Copiadador*, by Ana López, 1994-1995.

The Siren
by Marta Dillon

Now that Finisterre the slimmest tip
might lay like a tongue
beneath the sea's gargle
the Siren has submerged before
the deluge of white waters
looses all solid consistency
The earth is dry it scrapes crackles It does not
hear
her alarm She feels the coast's dry pain
The Siren sinks down
her sound is within A continuum
of throbs and bubbles the viscera's gurgling
the body like a glove turned inside out
so weathered that it shines How provocative
that shore that brought plants with it under the sea
with the little red mouths of brainless animals
deep hollows caves intestines everything
that sways is fragile Pieces thorns antennas
the Siren's hands arrange the substrate
of black waves the connections between
hermaphrodite
barnacles adhered to the sea floor pearled
zoophytes
marine tongues anxiously awaiting contact What
a garden
of delights the oven's fire gave birth to
a belly swollen with disobedient creatures
made out of errors and fish scales of sins
of laughter kept within the artist's work
deaf to noise
attentive to the creation of its entities A cosmos
where being imposes no more than care
for the small parts of the tentacles that set
their suction eyes on the boundary
between the fine layer of Earth and the dampened
sound of the water
The Siren's amphibious heart no longer bleeds
it distills the material of what will be
a dialog with no cables nor words
in the tangle of time
all swaying in the same substance
At the same time making the world

Ana López (Buenos Aires, 1977)

Is an artist graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes Prilidiano Pueyrredón and the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes Ernesto de la Cárcova. She also studied with artists Juan Pablo Renzi and Juan Carlos Distéfano. Since the nineties she has been experimenting with sculpture, painting, drawing and writing. Based on intersections between these disciplines, her work deals with the realms of intimacy, emotional relationships and the stories that comprise the past, closely tied to ritual, immigration and religion. López has carried out actions and produced installations and scenography for theatrical works at auditoriums and cultural centers such as Auditorio Losada, the Parakultural space, Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas and Espacio Giesso. She has had group and solo exhibitions at Centro de Arte y Comunicación, Centro Cultural Recoleta and Fundación Proa (Buenos Aires), Centro de Artes Visuales (Asunción) and Museo de Arte de Río Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre). In 1992 she received a grant from Fundación Antorchas. She undertook intensive study in handmade paper and created a line of special papers which opened the way to book binding and wallpapers. In 2010, she gave a workshop for artists working in a large-scale printing factory, where she was able to research and share techniques and methods which in turn led to the *Imágenes aplicadas* exhibition in Suzhou (China). She has published the books *Un sueño del siglo pasado*, 2001 and *Lourdes Ventura, una vida ejemplar*, 2006. She also did illustrations for the book by Marta Dillon *Vivir con virus*. Outstanding among her recent exhibitions are: *Las comandantas y las otras... nosotras*, 2020, at waldengallery, *Tácticas luminosas*, 2019, at the Museo Colección Fortabat, *Celebración del día de los santos y los muertos*, 2017, at the Museo Sívori and *Recorrido audiovisual*, 2016, at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires.

Santiago Villanueva (Azul, Argentina, 1990)

Is an artist and curator living and working in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He led the Department of Extended Influence at the Nuevo Museo Energía de Arte Contemporáneo (La Ene, 2011-2018), and was curator of *Bellos Jueves*, a series of one night art events and interventions at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires (2014-2015). He worked at the educational program of Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2016-2017). In 2021 he was curator of Public Programs and Education at MALBA (Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires). Together with Fernanda Laguna and Rosario Zorraquín, he coordinated 2019 Spazio de arte. Some of his books include: *El surrealismo rosa de hoy* (Ivan Rosado), *Las relaciones mentales. Eduardo Costa* (Museo Tamayo), *Pintura Montada Primicia. Juan Del Prete* (Roldan Moderno), *Mariette Lydis* (Ivan Rosado). In 2018 he co-curated the exhibition *Traidores los días que huyeron*, a retrospective of artist Roberto Jacoby at MACRO (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Rosario, Argentina). He was editor of *Tradición* and a member of the editorial board at *Mancilla* magazine. Now he is editor of *Segunda época* magazine. He is part of the curatorial studies faculty at the Universidad Nacional de las Artes (Argentina).

Marta Dillon (Buenos Aires, 1966)

Is a journalist, it is her second profession. The first also had to do with letters: she would delineate them precisely on metal sheets that would later be signs for the rent, sale or exchange of properties in the city of Mendoza. Later she corrected the linotype for the first edition of books for a publisher whose name no longer matters, switching the places of the lead figures that corresponded to each letter. From that form of printing to today's pdf, she has never stopped writing. Out of pure admiration, she reviewed artists' works, especially during the '90s, when she curated the *Erotizarte* show at Centro Cultural Recoleta, an offshoot of *El Libertino* magazine, which she edited independently at the outset and until mid-way through that decade. She worked at different graphic media and stayed at *Página/12* newspaper, where she is the editor for the feminist supplement *Las 12*. Of all her books, she chooses to mention those that have the least to do with journalism: *Vivir con virus*, (2004, 2016), *Aparecida* (2015) y *La Intensidad* (2021). She has also written documentary and fiction film scripts, including *La bella tarea* (2012) and *Línea 137*, 2020. She defines herself as an eternal apprentice, activist, lesbian and feminist. She knows that art does not need words, but sometimes poetry can take from its inspiration. And vice versa.