

Invited to have tea

We are invited to drink tea. The teapot is made of porcelain, you can't see it. I don't know why. It seems that the sugar was always black but from sheer fright it changed to white, just as you see it now, I don't know why.

The poor strainers are very thirsty because the water escaped, every two out of three, I don't know why.

Extracts from Invited to drink tea by Maria Elena Walsh.

The meeting point between this work, lies broadly in the conditions of its origin, that is to say Argentinean residents living in the city of Santiago. This anecdote is redefined when we see how the production of this work is directly related to this situation and also through the themes that the artists is investigating.

The title of this work, “Invited to drink tea” is an illusion to a childhood song by the Argentinean singer – songwriter Maria Elena Walsh. Starting with her lyrics, we propose through this body of work a possible way of inhabiting an unreal, subjective and uninhabitable space.

Sofia Donovan’s work consists of an installation. For the setting of her work, she took a section of the room and covered it with floral wallpaper which covered both the wall and floor. In this section there are organic formed sculptures made of glazed ceramics which are arranged on different seats at a table covered with many different objects which aren’t completely finished. These objects are part of the tea ceremony. These pieces are inspired by the “miracles of San Isidoro” and represent the place of otherness through its capricious and absurd presence in a daily environment. These objects can be found amongst everyday ordinary objects like tables and chairs. Metaphors about the adaptation of the strange or alien within a society, remind us how people define their own parameters of normal through confrontation with the weird.

The work of Elena Losón, *Four Seasons*, is a series of mixed media paintings on MDF. Each has a full-length frontal self-portrait from childhood which always respects the same proportion relationship between figure and the background. The images appeal to a sense of emptiness left by the large amount of space without interfering with what surrounds the figure. Overall, however, the series demonstrates a sort of caution about childhood which is symbolised by the constant repetition of the girl, who does not grow, contrasted with the passage of time it manifests through the costume changes. *The Four Seasons* is a self-reflective work, which focuses on the image itself to ascertain the inevitable vastness of our existence.

While one work discusses how a space is inhabited from its omission or representation, the other represents completely the opposite, the space is inhabited by forms that refer more to a phenomenological

occupation of the site.

Both works, show the adaptation of the body to a territory – which could be that of art, the city, or simply the place we feel we occupy. That territory in turn is redefined by the inevitable confrontation with the unknown and unexpected.

Thus, the issue of the habitability of subjective spaces is complemented by the emergence of time as a necessary condition for this dwelling . In the paintings, time appears through the constant repetition of a static image, that is, into its opposite : the representation of timelessness. Drawing as a means to represent the character of the girl becomes a kind of exercise of recognition, that is, the drawing as thought. The meeting of ceramic creatures deployed on a human level: In addition, the installation's suggestion appears an absurd event. Then, the living space is a place that is built from our own subjectivity, since the definitions of territory and habitat that each of us proposes are complementary.

Finally, this project aims to introduce into Chilean exhibitions a mix of artistic influences that have been learnt locally, alongside our individual ways of tackling the artistic work. These have come from the experience of living in a new country. Both works speak of adaptation, what it is like to live abroad, what it is like to work with more of an emotional space than a physical one, how we develop strategies in order to inhabit these spaces and at other times how these spaces come to inhabit us.

Sofía Donovan – Elena Losón
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