

Esther Ferrer

Self-portrait in time

01.04.08 > 03.05.08

Opening: 01.04.08, 20h.

Àngels Barcelona presents the exhibition "Self-portrait in time" by Esther Ferrer (San Sebastián, 1937), which consists of a series of photographs taken in distinct moments of her career.

In the exhibition, 3 works will be on display: the series: *El libro de las cabezas – Autorretrato en el tiempo* (*The book of heads – Self-portrait in time*) from 1981, *Autorretrato con dibujo* (*Self-portrait with drawing*), 1999 and *Evolución – Metamorfosis* (*Evolution – Metamorphosis*), 2005. The first work, *El libro de las cabezas*, is a suite of 25 photographs in process with which the artist represented Spain at the Venice Biennale in 1999 and which we will now present in the gallery in its most recent state. The project touches upon the fundamental themes that have marked Ferrer's artistic practice, such as the notion of time and the documentation of its inexorable passing. Every five years a photographic self-portrait is taken, the artist then divides it in two and combines every half of the face with that of the previous years, thus showing the development of time in her own body. The work appears as a network of variations on the topic of physical presence and its constant transformation. The systematic character of these combinations is reminiscent of another series of works *Números Primos* (*Prime Numbers*), on which the artist has been working since the 1970s.

The other presented works: *Autorretrato con dibujo* (*Self-portrait with drawing*) and the series *Evolución – Metamorfosis* (*Evolution – Metamorphosis*) play with the idea of the transformation of the subject and his/her representation. These works continue the investigation into the repetition of the same model and the experimentation with its variations throughout the passing of time. The *Metamorphosis* pieces dissolve the artist's face through its multiplication, slowly reducing its scale with each repetition, following a constant rhythm that leads to the quasi-disappearance of the subject.

Ferrer's career has been coherent, solid and without fissures, proper to a "woman of action" who is transgressive, dynamic, provocative and playful. She is well-known for her performances, which were created individually or formed part of her participation in the group ZAJ, with Walter Marchetti and Juan Hidalgo. Founded in 1964 and until its dissolution in 1996, ZAJ undertook an intense project in which their concerts and actions were the fundamental element, but which also included the production of publications, installations or postcards. Performance is the thread that connects Ferrer's body of work and for her, it represents a moment when time, space and presence intervene at once: "the *action* consists in stepping out of the canvas, out of two-dimensionality, in order to enter space, and to use the body as a the subject of a simple and direct work." Since the mid-seventies, Ferrer has also worked in different artistic mediums, creating reworked photographs, installations, objects or paintings based on the series of prime numbers.

Ferrer has shown her work in: the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía - Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Galería Trayecto, Vitoria - Koldo Mitxelena, San Sebastián - Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville (Spain); Galerie Donguy - Galerie Lara Vinci - Galerie Satélite, Paris (France); Musee for Samtidskunst, Roskilde (Denmark); Statsgalerie, Stuttgart (Germany); Museo Universitario de Ciencia y Arte, MUCA Roma (Mexico); Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Ríó de Janeiro (Brazil).

Throughout her long career as a performance artist, she has performed in numerous festivals in Spain and abroad (Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Denmark, Norway, England, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, Thailand, Japan, Korea, etc.). In addition, she has given courses at universities and the Schools of Fine Arts in Canada, France, Italy, Switzerland and Spain.