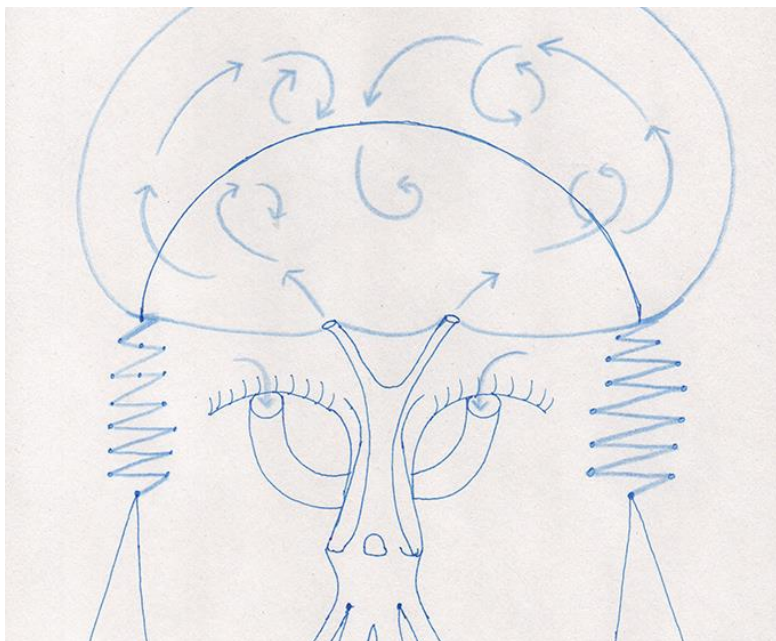


G A S W O R K S

Eduardo Navarro: (breathspace)

1 October – 20 December 2020



Gasworks presents the first UK solo exhibition by Buenos Aires-based artist Eduardo Navarro. His work moves away from representation, instead creating sensorial experiences with the potential to induce a radical transformation of the self and others.

In recent years, Navarro has sought to adopt the slow metabolism of a reptile, experimented with ways for dancers to embody the physical properties of light, and invited a large group of performers to animate a mechanical octopus, in order for them to become part of its decentralised nervous system.

First scheduled for April 2020, Navarro's original plans for the exhibition at Gasworks consisted of transforming the gallery into a living, breathing organism. Developed in the months preceding the Covid-19 outbreak, his immersive installation in the form of a gigantic lung was designed for visitors to synchronise their most vital functions with one another, offering a space for collective meditation and oceanic breathing. But the construction of Navarro's installation would coincide with the onset of a global pandemic with unprecedented effects on our lives.

As the exhibition was postponed until further notice, Navarro made a habit of drawing every day during the lockdown in Buenos Aires. In his words, this practice enabled him to 'relocate the studio to inside my own head'. Produced in self-isolation, the one hundred drawings featured in the exhibition became a portal between unknown dimensions and timelines, past and future visions, unrealised and impossible ideas.

Instead of looking back at what the exhibition could have been, Navarro's drawings resist any melancholy towards the possibilities foreclosed by the pandemic. Inspired by quantum physics, according to which information in the universe cannot be created nor ever destroyed, his drawings metabolise the original exhibition and enact its transformative spirit in a more intimate language.

Sitting in a corner, the viewer encounters *Self-Doll* (2020), a stuffed humanoid covered in orange fleece. Navarro's soft and cuddly robot is fitted with a phone compartment, providing a sense of physical warmth in long-distance communications, where *Self-Doll* stands in for the caller.

This work was conceived as an emotional support tool for children. However, in a time of strict distancing regulations, *Self-Doll* has become a surrogate for the artist, acting as Navarro's proxy in the gallery and for public events. Throughout the exhibition the artist will communicate through the doll at random times, inviting conversations with the audience.

Projected in the second gallery, a hand-drawn animation features a colossal head with a bellows mechanism, reminiscent of Navarro's unrealised plans to build a large-scale breathing device at Gasworks. Like the universe after

the Big Bang, the head expands and contracts at regular intervals. The cyclical nature of Navarro's cosmology is highlighted in the film's soundtrack, a recording of the artist's breathing during a meditation session.

As the sound spills into the main gallery with each exhalation, Navarro's breathing connects the works in the exhibition, encouraging viewers to sync their biorhythms with one another.

--

Eduardo Navarro's exhibition is commissioned and produced by Gasworks.

Gasworks commissions are supported by Catherine Petitgas and Gasworks Exhibitions Supporters.

Ask Self-Doll

For the online programme accompanying his first UK solo exhibition, Eduardo Navarro makes himself available to London audiences in the form of *Self-Doll*, a stuffed humanoid which has become a surrogate for the artist in a time of strict distancing regulations.

Visitors are welcome to submit a question to the artist, both in person and online. Questions may address any topic ranging from the works in the exhibition to art, life, love or the universe. Navarro will answer selected questions in a series of videos hosted by the artist's surrogate.

Questions can be submitted in person at the gallery or via email:

askselfdoll@gasworks.org.uk

Episodes will be available to view on Gasworks' website from November.

Commissioning partners and exhibition supporters



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**