

# NOGUERASBLANCHARD

**Mercedes Azpilicueta**  
Katalina, Antonio, Alonso

Madrid

Sep 09 - Nov 13, 2021

















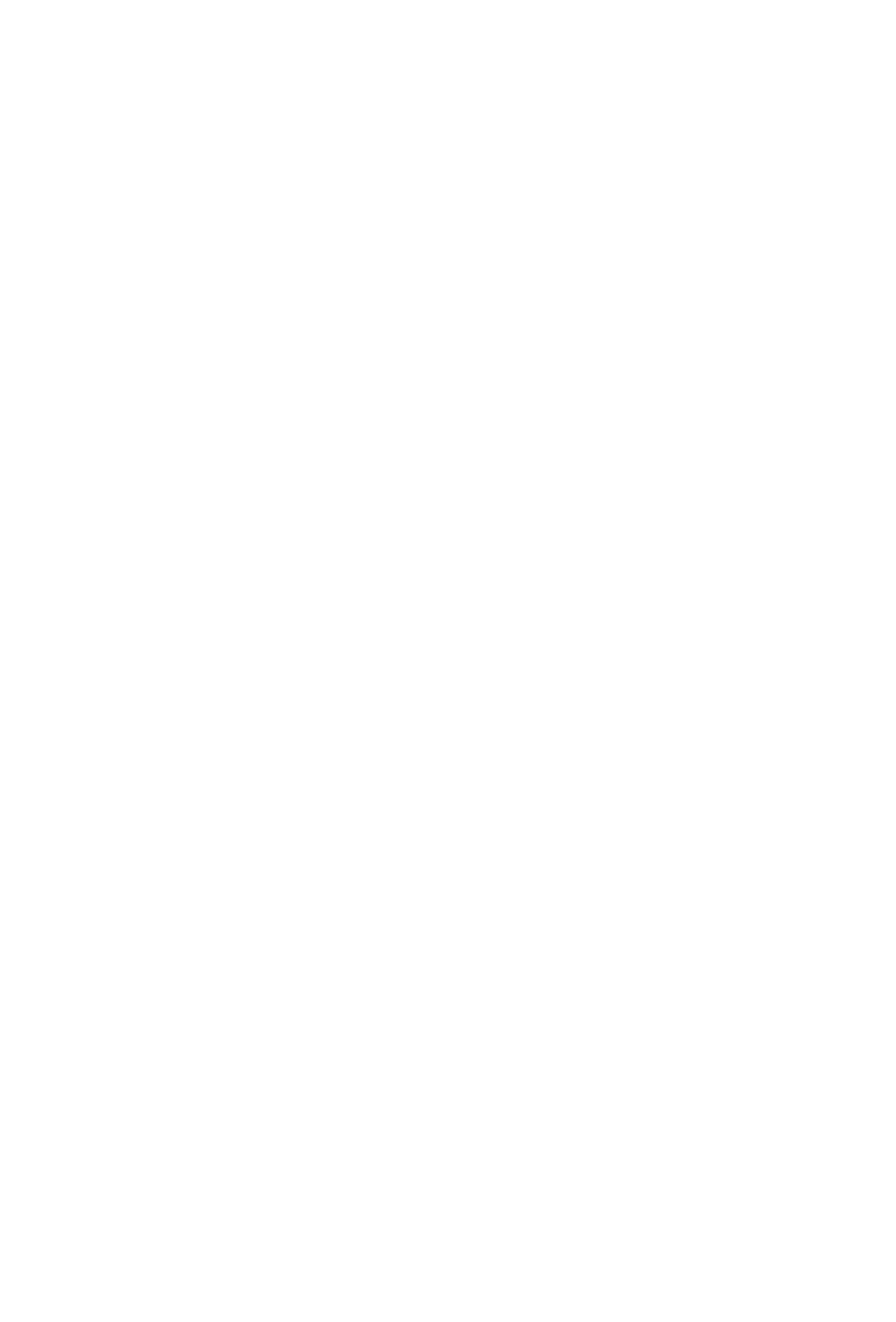


















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## Mercedes Azpilicueta Katalina, Antonio, Alonso

Exhibition: Sep 9 – Nov 13, 2021  
Opening: Sep 9 from 12h to 20h  
Hours: Tue to Fri from 10h to 19h and Sat from 11h to 14h30  
Apertura Gallery Weekend Special Hours:  
Thu to Sat from 12h to 20h. Sun from 11h to 14h

NoguerasBlanchard is delighted to present the latest project by Argentinian artist Mercedes Azpilicueta. The exhibition *Katalina, Antonio, Alonso*, offers a speculative vision of Catalina de Erauso, also known as “the Lieutenant Nun”, one of the most legendary and controversial figures of the Spanish Golden Age. In the early 17th century, Erauso escaped convent life in the Basque Country and travelled to the New World, where s/he assumed various male identities and became a ruthless conquistador at the service of the Spanish Empire, obtaining the Pope’s blessing to continue life as a man.

Taking the autobiography that Catalina de Erauso left in writing, in the words of Verónica Rossi, Azpilicueta carries out “an exercise in historiographical imagination that gives another twist to the succession of stories that construct the past”, weaving a work from memories, archives and imaginaries, rethinking history and breathing new life into dissident figures and trajectories of colonial history. The central work in this exhibition is a Jacquard tapestry, the result of collaging archival imagery sourced from historical maps, etchings and colonial art contemporary to the time of Erauso, such as the *Arquebusier Angels* by the Master of Calamarca, *Los mulatos de Esmeraldas* by Andrés Sánchez Gallque, and *Battle of Las Cangrejeras* by Francisco Núñez de Pineda y Bascuñán. The title *Abya Yala (Tierra Madura)* which in Guna language means ‘land in full bloom’- is the name used among indigenous peoples to refer to the Americas. The piece is exhibited on a structure inspired by the biombos used in colonial Mexico, an adaptation of Japanese screens, to demarcate spaces of intimacy within domestic interiors. In this way, *Abya Yala (Tierra Madura)* allows other spaces to appear: the reverse, a place where the body can both be seen and not seen, where it can dress and undress.

When the nun Catalina escaped from the convent in San Sebastián, hiding in a grove of chestnut trees, she cut her hair and transformed her nun’s habit into men’s attire. The sculptures distributed throughout the exhibition space recover and transmute elements of colonial fashion, fragmenting their forms and recreating their ambiguity. Made using crude, manual or artisanal methods often associated with women’s domestic work and subaltern forms of knowledge, they reflect on the construction of gender and masculinity, adding a satirical touch in their title: *On the dignity of Codpieces*.

*Katalina, Antonio, Alonso* shifts between queer and baroque echoes, immersing itself in the memories of Catalina, or Antonio, or Alonso, to arrive at the body which moves, migrates, passes through. The textile acts as a witness to the weft of stories past. Somewhat like *cronopios* in the exhibition, figures from the official reports of conquistadors, reproduced on holographic vinyl, acquire, in the words of Sabel Gabaldón, “a phantasmagorical quality, providing an oblique commentary on the elusive nature of historical knowledge”.

Mercedes Azpilicueta (born in La Plata, Argentina in 1981) lives and works between Amsterdam and Buenos Aires. She was a resident at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, in 2015-16, and received the Pernod Ricard Fellowship in 2017. Her solo exhibitions include: Gasworks, London (2021); CAC Brétigny, Brétigny-sur-Orge (2021); Museion, Bolzano (2020); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2019); Centro-Centro, Madrid (2019); and MAMBA, Buenos Aires (2018). Her work has also been presented at City Museum of Ljubljana, Ljubljana (2021); MOCA, Busan (2020); TextielMuseum, Tilburg (2019); Villa Vassiliev, Paris (2018); REDCAT Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); MACBA, Barcelona (2018); CA2M, Móstoles (2017); Onomatopee, Eindhoven (2016); TENT, Rotterdam (2015); and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2014). Azpilicueta has been nominated for the Prix de Rome 2021.

With thanks to Gasworks, London.

For further information and images please contact Cristina Spinelli  
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Photography Roberto Ruiz