

Rialto6

16.09.2022

16.12.2022

LANGUAGE IS FOREIGN

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“Language is Foreign” is a quote taken from an interview with Ursula K. Le Guin* which impressed me for its brevity, while still managing to express in few words a concept that has intrigued me for many years. It surfaces also in Lacan (“Language is work”), and Proust, with his famous quote: “Les beaux livres sont écrits dans une sorte de langue étrangère” (Beautiful books are always written in a sort of foreign language).

Contrary to what common sense might suggest, language is not something made with an intention to communicate, for a sound or gesture to marry a concept to a thing, but rather something to inspire wonder at how the world is constructed, the greatest marvel of all being that we are both inside and outside of it. We do not speak, “language speaks” (Heidegger).

From these labyrinthine thoughts derive the works shown in this exhibition.

The oldest one is a film, made in 2013, entitled “The Joycean Society”: A group of James Joyce Zurich aficionados get together once a week to read the most unreadable book ever, *Finnegans Wake*. It takes eleven years for those Zurich readers to return to the point in the book where they started.

Also shown is a second film made five years later, “La Eterna” (2017), directly inspired by the book by Joyce-Borgesian author Macedonio Fernández. As in *The Joycean Society*, we see a group of people in a library; only this time they are not reading one single book, but many, while - as in Macedonio’s metanovel “*Museo de la novela de la Eterna*”- , they

are aware of being in a film and of us watching them discuss topics such as performance, psychoanalysis and politics.

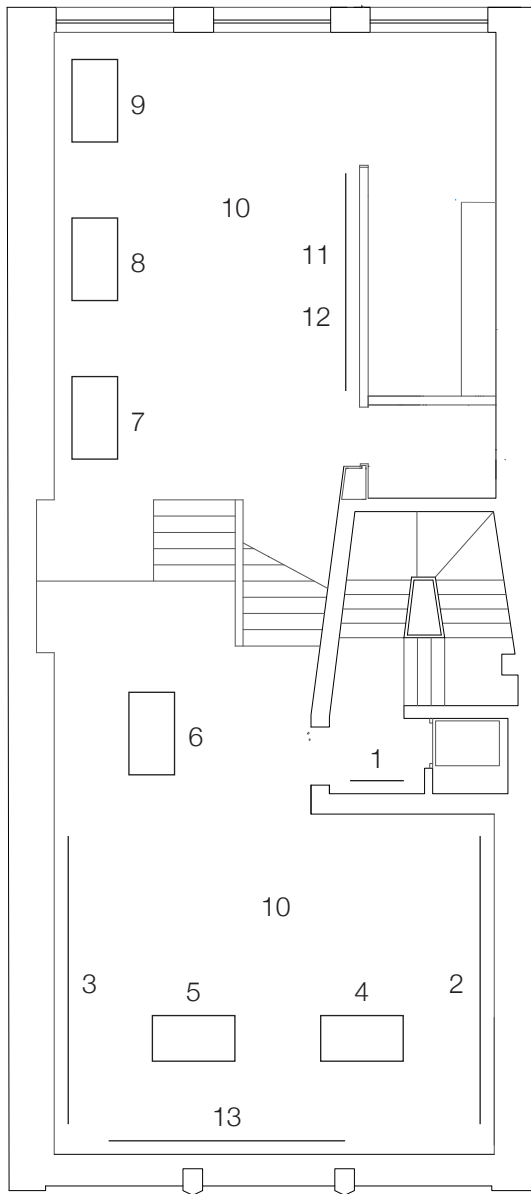
Before entering the exhibition space and visible from the street outside are two works belonging to the series “golden sentences” (begun in 2022, found/composed phrases, gold leaf on wall/on glass). The first one shares its title with that of the exhibition: “A língua é estrangeira.” (Language is foreign). The second, broken up to fit within the window’s panes: “Tudo é espelho.” (All is a mirror) takes us back to the above-mentioned reflections from the beginning of the text: language does not represent the world but mirrors it.

A series of books including “L’Angoisse, Vol 1, Vol 2” (Lacan) and “On the way to language” (Heidegger) lie on tables beside corresponding handwritten “copies”. These doppelgängers have been produced by carefully annotating each page of the original book: noting down what seemed important, creating footnotes and references, drawing diagrams, drawing drawings.

Reading as action, as a labour of love, time taking on a physical shape, reading as writing as reading, books of books. How did this library of mirrored books come about? The origin of the idea is exhibited as a work in itself: the artist’s (profusely annotated) copy of *Finnegans Wake* is shown next to Roland McHugh’s “*Annotations to Finnegans Wake*” - a book made up entirely of annotations, where the original text (*Finnegans Wake*) is no longer there.

* I apologise for being unable to provide further details, as the quote comes straight from my -imprecise- personal notebook.

Dora García



1- Mad Marginal Charts Series
"Dream", 2022

2- Mad Marginal Charts Series
"Little object <a>", 2022

3- Mad Marginal Charts Series
"Lucia Joyce's eyes" 2022

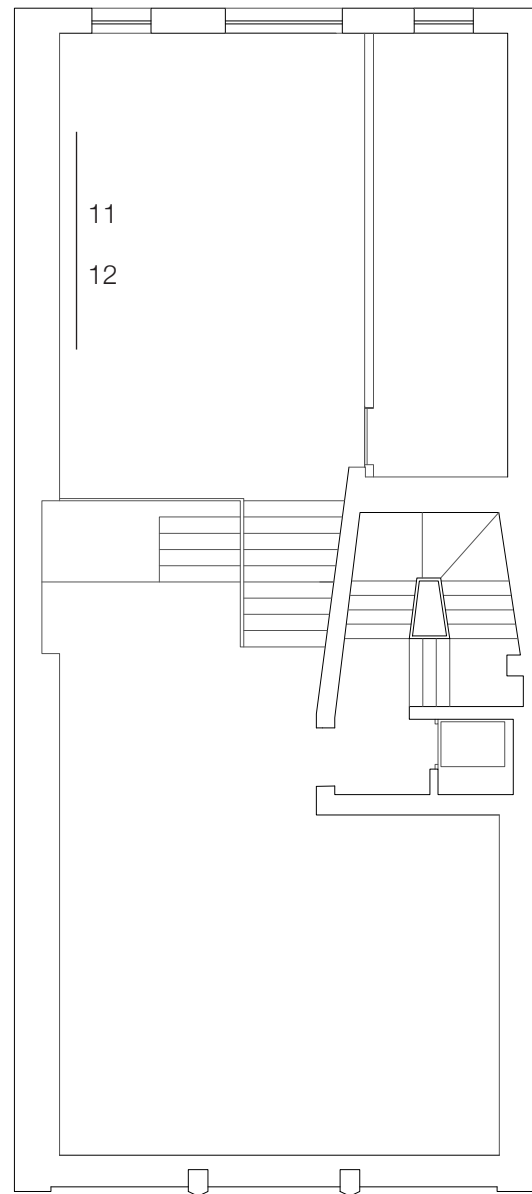
4- Annotated Books Series
L'Angoisse I, J. Lacan, 2022

5- Annotated Books Series
L'Angoisse II, J. Lacan, 2022

6- Annotated Books Series
Annotated Finnegans Wake, 2022

7- Annotated Books Series
On the Way to Language, M. Heidegger, 2017

8- Annotated Books Series
Réponses à des Étudiants, J. Lacan, 2022



9- Annotated Books Series
L'Amour, J. Lacan, 2022

10- Little Object <a>
performance, 2021

11 - The Joycean Society
digital film, 2013
color, 16:9, English spoken, BE, 2013, 53'

12 - La Eterna
digital film, 2017
color, 16:9, Spanish, French & English spoken, BE/NO, 2017, 49'

13- Golden Sentences Series
Language is Foreign, 2022

(GROUND FLOOR WINDOW)

14- Golden Sentences Series
All is Mirror, 2020