



fluent

## Exhibition text and Checklist

### *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education in a given context.*

14/07 – 22/09/2023

#### Exhibition text

*The archive is meaningful in its context, it is not “truth”, it belongs to an entire social environment.*

FRANÇOISE VERGÈS

*Aulas y ausencias* is an archive proposition featuring printed, audiovisual, legislative materials, publications and photographs, whose axis delves into the relationships between artistic–humanistic education and the social landscapes in which it exists.

Unfolding a period of over one–hundred years, which includes early examples from Institución Libre de Enseñanza, the writings on art and pedagogy by Escuela de Altamira member, Ángel Ferrant, or Federico García Lorca’s incursions in La Magdalena Península with la Barraca, to more recent experiences such as La Ortiga, Enrique Pérez Simón’s pioneer educational initiatives or Galería Didáctica, the materials’ disposition questions the structuring of artistic–humanistic knowledge in the local context, while presenting its sub-stories,

forms of political interaction and the power structures cutting through it.

Examining how artistic–humanistic pedagogies impact on demographic flows and the distribution of socio-cultural agency, illuminates, seemingly unnoticed, power dynamics. The organizations, people, structures, associations and collectives presented in the archive, appear as structural pillars which nonetheless, operate at the margins of a technical center. As a polyphonic force, they show us the multiple entanglements weaving the spaces of the intimate and the political.

Generally, the kind of documents, photographs and archival materials displayed in an exhibition of this nature, acquire their value through a narrative or chronological order, usually aligned with historical events. *But then, what is the motivation behind this archive’s sequence and its undisciplined materials, rather concerned with their echoes in the present?* It is somehow positioned at the edge of history or even on the limit to the arts, its title referring to the reciprocity between demographic flows and educational structures. Departing from this premise, the exhibition contains and confronts problems in our social context to open–up an emotional archive capable to articulate the potential of education and art as for other potential forms of action.

Hence, *Aulas y ausencias* invites a series of public figures and politicians to engage in working sessions to discuss the genealogies, limitations and potentialities of educational structures here and today. The displayed materials and the transformation of the exhibition space into a workplace thus serves as a knot between a historical conversation and its present relay.

The exhibition is the outcome of a collective desire and would not have been possible without Jesús Balbás Arranz, Cristina Somavilla, Laura Olea, María Montesino, Toñi de la Iglesia, Luis Alberto Salcines, José Ramón Saiz Viadero, Javier Hontoria, Javier Arce, Santi Mazarrasa, Marina Alonso, Raúl Hevia, Lidia Gil, Paz Gil, Carlos Vallejo,

<sup>1</sup> Françoise Vergès, *A museum without objects*, incluido en *The Postcolonial Museum: The Art of Memory and the Pressures of History* de Ian Chambers, Alessandra de Angelis, Celeste Ianniello, Mariangela Orabona, eds. (Londres y Nueva York: Routledge, 2016), 32.

Andrea Puente, Félix García, Javier Lamela, Tamara García, Jesús Salas Bustamante, Enrique Pérez Simón, Juan Antonio González Fuentes, José María Lafuente and Luis Bezeta. The polyphonic character of this project stems out from the awareness of its own inconclusiveness and the complexity of organizing these ideas in a unique order or hierarchy. However, when entering the archive, four coordinates will help you to navigate it

### **1. Resources.**

Getting to understand the interaction between educational structures, public policies and the role of the arts, from its most basic materiality, implies observing the flow of resources that enable or weaken those interactions.

Through a compilation of documents including public budgets, lines of structural financing, grants and subsidies, the movement of these resources speak of a time of resistance beyond historical moments. In the light of contemporary demographic and infrastructural shifts, articulating a cultural ecosystem around its own absences seems like an urgent task. There are times when the most visible materiality is a vacuum, when absences do not stay still. This is one of those moments.

### **2. Peripheral pedagogies.**

It is in opaque spaces where articulating historiography becomes possible. What does not stand still are not only the absences, but also the perimeters around them: something carefully accustomed to our attention as the denial of centrality / institutionality.

Self-managed experiences such as La Ortiga, La Escuela de Altamira, Eureka, SUR, La Vorágine, Víctor González's workshop, Puntal or librería GIL, among others, show how what does not stand still is the surrounding space which, in the lack of visibility, approaches life and invent new forms of looking.

### **3. Transfers and cycles.**

It is at moments like this when circulation becomes a political issue. Promoting our exchanges becomes a matter of care, maintenance and nurturing those encounters every time they take place. In order to integrate this as a form of continuity and a structural position, it is fundamental to imagine social dynamics where knowledge is capable of circulating. Historically, those transfers have found their space through praxis, by the very gesture of making. From arts and crafts schools to unregulated teaching workshops, practice itself has been the core of those transfers and cycles.

### **4. Seasonal attention.**

The discontinuity of the encounters reveals the context as inherently ephemeral. This temporality shows the potential of those things that seem to stand still. The decision to study abroad and this of a summer course by the beach: both so full of life and determination. The experience of time as something powerful in the need to be unlocked: an elastic, exciting force. The perversity of late neo-liberalism knows no limits when it comes to creating the perspective of time as a symptom of decay and finitude. And yet: *Is there a better ally than time when it comes to understand education as a transformative force?* Given the seasonal dynamic of knowledge production, the possibility of imagining other temporalities guide us through temporary opacities.

Paying attention to educational structures such as the Santander Summer University, Universidad Internacional Menéndez, and initiatives such as Arte en las Aulas, some questions arise: What are the politics of its temporality? Do these time-forms allow for the distribution of knowledge so that it can really filter into the social tissue?

In times of fragmented attention, existence depends on matching the times of learning and life.

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# Checklist

**Image 1:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition view. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 2:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition view. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 3:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition view. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 4:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition view. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 5:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition view. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 6:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 7:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Compilation of public budgets, subsidies and funding lines. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 8:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 9:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 10:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 11:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail showing a document made during the 1994/95 co-education workshop, promoted by Enrique Pérez Simón. Fondo Enrique Pérez Simón. Courtesy of the University of Cantabria. Library; film *Supongamos... Santander*, directed by Jesús Garay. Piquito Films, 1983; press extract *Cantabria se olvida de la cultura*. Alerta newspaper, 1990, and images and leaflets from Galería-Librería SUR, circa 1957; and Puntal gallery. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 12:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail showing the publication *El balsamo de fierabrás*, self-edited by students at Facultad de Filosofía y Letras at the University of Cantabria. Courtesy of Universidad de Cantabria. Library; *Sísifo Magazine* n° 0. March, 1981. Courtesy of the Gerardo Diego Foundation; Issues No. 1 and No. 2 of Cuévano magazine. Courtesy of the Gerardo Diego Foundation; 1977 Issue of Ramaizal magazine. Courtesy of the Gerardo Diego Foundation; *Poetas de Cantabria Hoy*, Edited by Luis Alberto Pérez Salcines. Courtesy of the Gerardo Diego Foundation; Preliminary notes towards Mule magazine. Courtesy of Mule magazine; *About Proel* (extracted from no. 8 of *Peña Labra* magazine); Issue No. 0 of *Draga*, 1978. Courtesy of the Gerardo Diego Foundation and Issue No. 8 of *Peña Labra* magazine. All courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 13:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 14:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 15:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail showing: Angel Ferrant, *El estado y las artes plásticas: diseño de una configuración escolar*. Courtesy of Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid; Portrait with cows, of some members of Escuela de Altamira, Pancho Cossío, José Llorens-Artigas, Rafael Santos Torroella and Ángel Ferrant in Santillana del Mar in September 1950, Manuel Arce Collection, Courtesy of CDIS, Santander Image Documentation Center; *La escuela laica de don Aurelio Herrerros*. Article published in Hoja del lunes on July 28, 1980; Payment receipt from the first GIL bookstore. Courtesy of librería GIL; Diagram by Ángel Ferrant as included in the essay *Diseño de una configuración escolar*; Portrait of Ángel Ferrant with a donkey in September 1950. Manuel Arce Collection, Courtesy of the CDIS Image Documentation Center of Santander; Portrait of ACAI (Cultural Association of Independent Artists) composed by the artists Laura Irizábal, Zaida Salazar and Laura Escallada. Photography by Javier Lamela. Courtesy of La Caverna de la Luz; Photography of Florentina Soto in the second location of Librería GIL. Courtesy of Librería GIL; Santander and La Vanguardia 1900 – 1960 Publication. Menéndez Pelayo International University, 1977.; 1975 poster announcing the performance of two independent theater groups (CRAC and TIS). All courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.

**Image 16:** *Aulas y ausencias: Notes on art, politics and education.* Exhibition detail. Courtesy of fluent. Photograph: Pablo Madariaga.