

My Jaw is On The Floor

Esther Gatón

14.09.23 - 11.11.23

(...) a language is like a net you throw into the world, and according to the mesh of the net, where and how it is thrown and pulled back in, different fish turn up. A language is what brings back certain kinds of fish, a certain kind of world.

Barbara Cassin (*More Than One Language*, e-flux Journal #80)

My Jaw is on the Floor is the title of the second solo exhibition of Esther Gatón at Cibrián. It is also the title of the artist's latest video, on display in the exhibition, and in which we follow a female character who evolves erratically in incongruous spaces.

Here, the use of language –verbal and physical– is distorted yet familiar, as the script is based on lines coming from dating apps and manuals on how to pronounce English. The main character, originally from Ireland, is also the narrator. We assist to a delayed bodily reaction to the sentences she's mouthing. Some of them, acting on her unconscious memory, might have been thrown at her in the past, and here seem to be possessing her. This altered relation between the character and her own voice, creates a sense of vitality and malleability in the way she communicates, as it happens to those who are new to the tongue, such as non-native speakers and kids.

Orality, together with the density of the cheap sauna where the main action takes place, trigger the character's behaviour. At the same time, the bas-reliefs shown in the exhibition echo these voices, environmental sounds and musical effects. Their titles are sentences borrowed from the video but, more importantly, their materiality is thought through audible and reverberating qualities. The pieces can be seen as physical remains of the film's sounds.

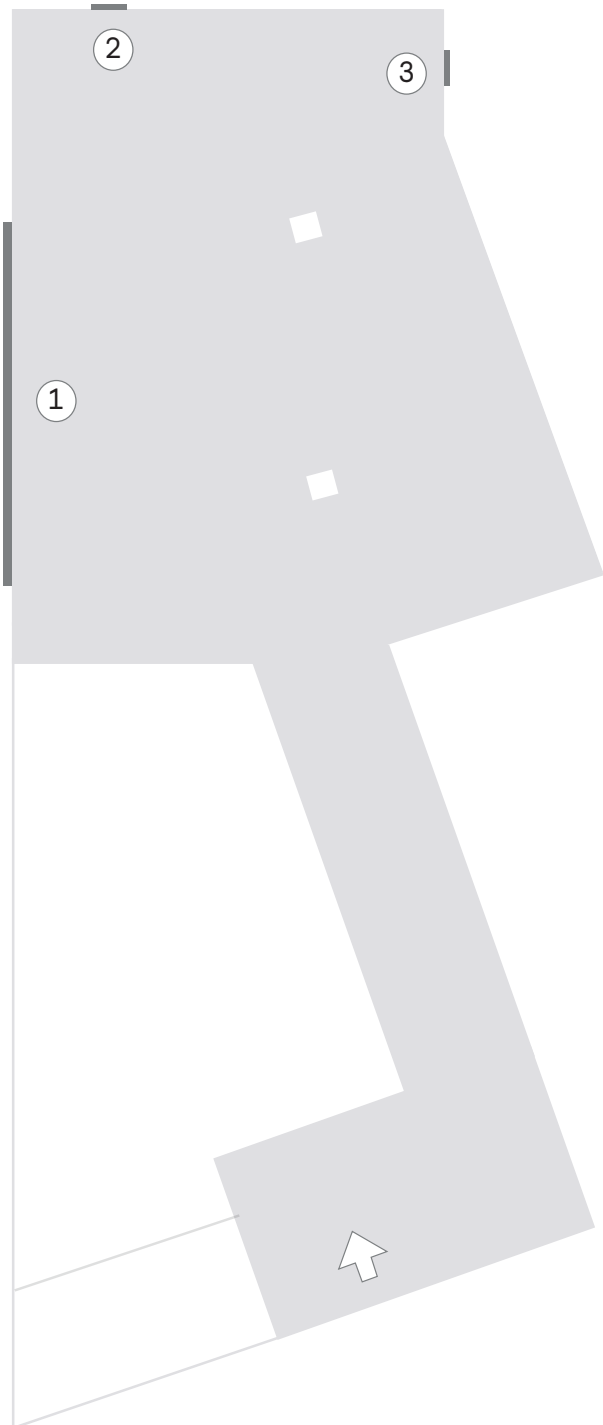
The video was filmed in spaces that relate and intensify Esther's experience in the city, which she perceives as humid and dense. She speaks about it in the last installment of ATALKA_ATALKA (Nº 4, available on the gallery's website) describing the making of the video, as connected to her encounter with displacement and with inhabiting a new language:

(In London) The surfaces are not clear. Rather than the distinct contours and sharp edges, that dark shades produce, we are often surrounded by fog and grey skies, by greater light pollution, with its mixtures of colours, and sheltered behind a crystal covered with condensation and mist. Gleaming and phosphorescent materials, used to improve visibility on the road, multiply and produce reflections everywhere.

Then, the day unfolds under a paler and much more changing solar radiation, the soil feels less stable; it is wet and presents deep irregularities. Well, this also happens because the asphalt in the area where I live, is very deformed and full of cracks.

A palpable influence that can be seen in my work is that, since I moved, I use bright colours, and the silhouettes that I engrave and draw tend to be blurry.

Esther works across sculpture, installation, writing, drawing and video. The exhibition *My Jaw is on the Floor* acts as an interconnected element, in which she depicts the contours of a unique body of work. Through a visual investigation around the idea of orality, and its possible physical iterations, the artist sheds a raw yet artificial light on the mechanisms of language –sometimes pulpy and subtle– that give us shape.



① **My Jaw is On The Floor**
2023
Digital film 16" 40'
Variable dimensions.
Edition of 3 + 2AP

② **Use a pet name**
2023
Wood, walnut stain, clay, shell,
acrylic paint, metal flakes.
48 x 30 cm

③ **Did he throw himself into the jaws?**
2023
Wood, walnut stain, clay, acrylic
paint, pastel, metal flakes.
43 x 23 cm