

PRATS NOGUERAS BLANCHARD



Mercedes Azpilicueta

Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana

Barcelona

May 30 - Sep 14, 2024

Let's suppose there are multiple lives living in a body. Lives that live momentarily through gestures, gestures transcribing, scratching language on the surface.

Almost a century ago, in an empty ballroom with mirroring ceilings, somewhere in central Europe, right before dawn, a masculine figure finds himself freed. He is traversing the floor, spinning in a forgotten tutu, and his spins are not only gestures but also music. Meanwhile, marks of his movements are imprinted on the reflecting ceiling.

Suddenly the room seems full again, inhabited by friends, ambiguous characters from the past and the future. All mirrored upside down.

The masculine figure realises then that each character –regardless of their gender, generation, or coordinates – has something from him, a common red thread that ties them together. As he observes the body of bodies spinning, and therefore dancing, he also realises that transformation is possible.

To capture this moment one could only paint it. Paint it by spinning it, by wiping it off a ballroom floor.

Like a kind of script, the paintings are articulated further as Mnemonic Visuals, which Mercedes or the masculine figure have been using throughout their artistic practice as scores for their performances.

On the surface of the canvas, dancing their way through opacity and transparency, past and present come together in a gestural ball –a collaboration of bodies and essence – which again points towards performativity.

Similarly, the drawings emerge on paper: a kind of dancing writing, which seems to carry a timeless, non linear message.

To dance with desire.

Under the name Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana, Argentinian artist Mercedes Azpilicueta presents a group of new works in Prats Nogueras Blanchard – encompassing painting, drawing and sculpture– that explore the idea of multiplicity within one's self. Bringing together diverse characters from the past and present is a common gesture within the artist's practice; the gesture of painting is a sounding board for the echo of the past. Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana moves in a spiral, revisiting performance scores, textile and furniture sculptures, revealing traces of other lives, giving them new voices.



Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Mercedes Azpilicueta
The Magic Kitchen and the Spicy Kangaroo, 2022
(*Kinky affairs at home*)
Vintage leather skirt, vintage
leather belt, copper, wood closet
41 × 177 × 195 cm



Detail



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana VII, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm



Detail

Mercedes Azplicueta
Dancing Scripts IV, 2024
Watercolor and ink on paper
41,5 × 29 cm
52 × 39,5 cm (framed)





Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana III, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm



Detail

Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana IV, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm





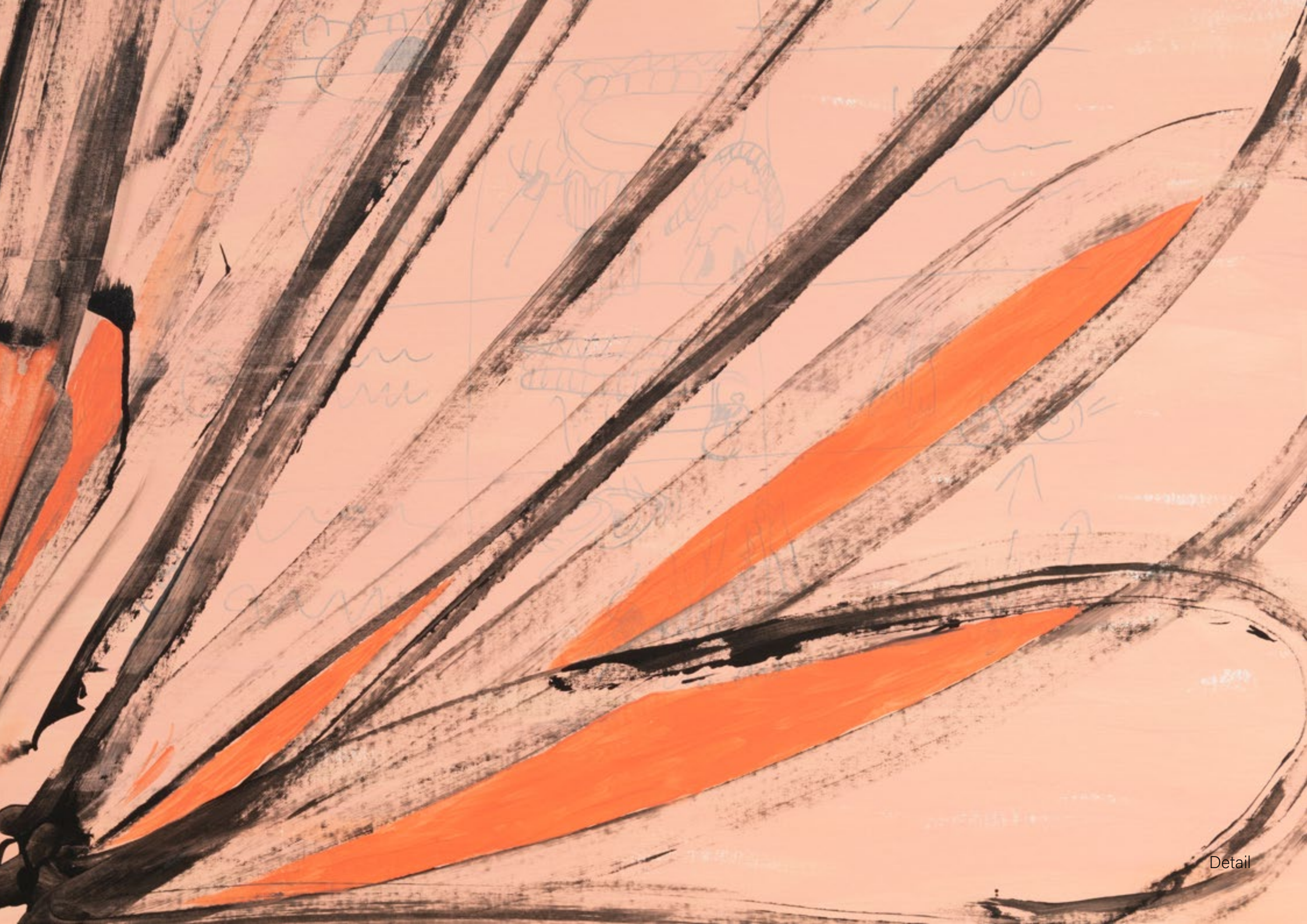
Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana II, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm



Detail

Mercedes Azpilicueta
The Tasty Quote, 2022
(*Kinky affairs at home*)
Wig, piece of furniture
80 × 49 × 45 cm





Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana I, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm



Mercedes Azpilicueta
The Resting Quote I, 2022
(*Kinky affairs at home*)
Furniture
35 × 90 × 42 cm



Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona

Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Dancing Scripts VIII, 2024
Watercolor and ink on paper
29,5 × 22 cm
40,5 × 32,5 cm (framed)





Mercedes Azpilicueta
The Dance that Shines, 2024
Stainless steel, tulle, upcycled clothes, cotton thread, acrylic paint
Dimensions variable



Detail

Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona





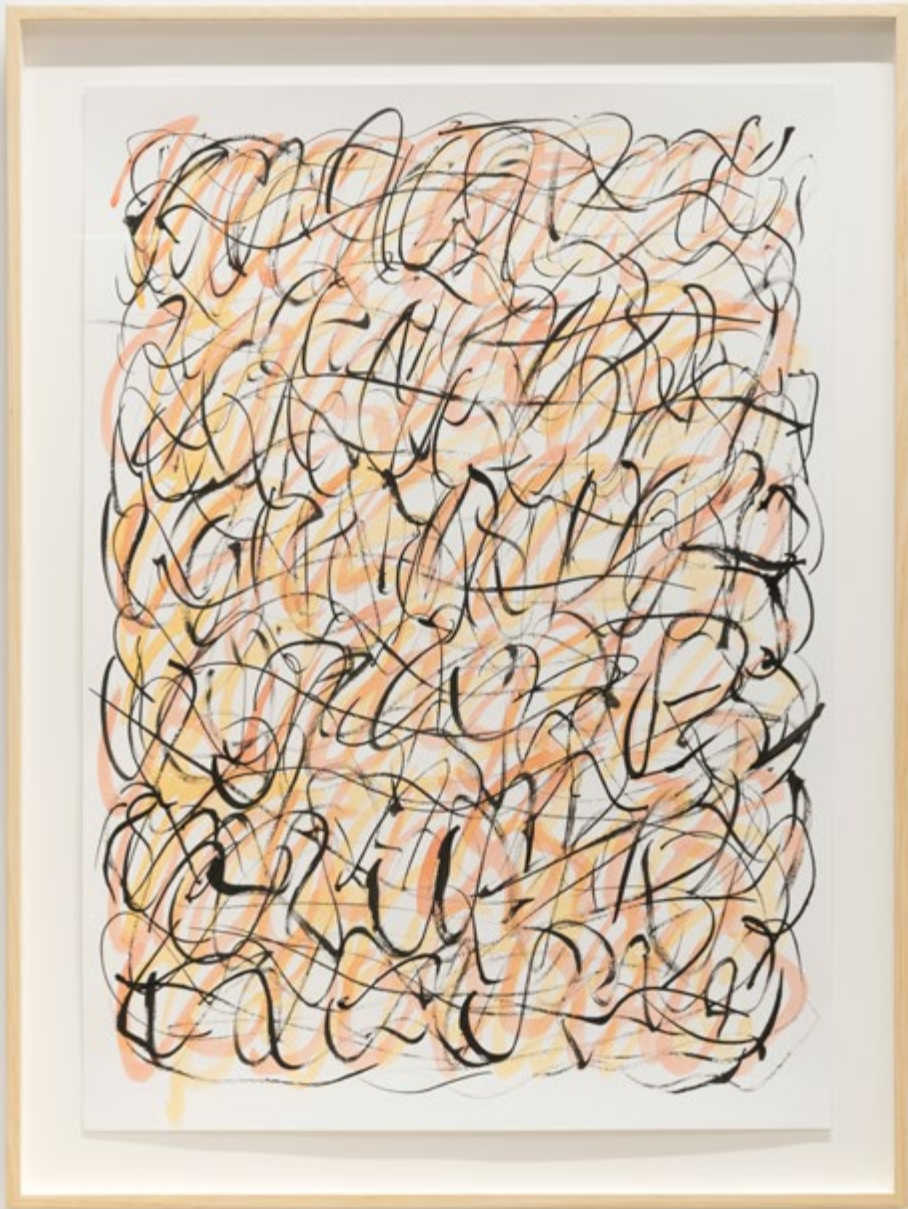
Installation view at Prats Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona

Mercedes Azpilicueta
Un primer encuentro con Mercedes Maga Estrella de la Mañana VIII, 2024
Mixed media on canvas
113 x 83 cm





Detail



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Dancing Scripts IX, 2024
Watercolor and ink on paper
69 × 50 cm
80 × 60 cm (framed)



Mercedes Azpilicueta
Dancing Scripts III, 2024
Watercolor and ink on paper
44,5 × 30 cm
50,5 × 40,5 cm (framed)

Mercedes Azpilicueta
Dancing Scripts VI, 2024
Watercolor and ink on paper
32 × 22 cm
40,5 × 32,5 cm (framed)





Mercedes Azpilicueta is a visual and performance artist known for her language-based works who calls herself a “dishonest researcher.” Through her manifold research work, from art history to popular music, from literature to street culture, she brings together various characters from the past and the present, and reflects on their dissident trajectories —feminist, queer, migrant, exiled— by imbedding their voices, shapes, texts, traces and memories into her multi-layered works. Far from indulging into cold reverence or archival fascination, her work successfully engages the body with all its flaws and potentials —her own body, that of her muses and collaborators, that of the spectators, but also fantasized ones— she embraces its fragility as well as its capacity for resistance and care.

Azpilicueta’s practice has evolved recently into exploring the theatrical possibilities of sculpture and installation. Disguised as sculptures, her pieces should not be taken for granted, as they always bear the potential of being activated in various ways — as scores, set designs, props, mnemonic devices or records. Her artistic practice involves “poor,” craft-based techniques that are often associated with the domestic work of women and with subaltern knowledge, such as sewing, embroidering or dying. The materials used, either recycled or natural (latex, leather, wool, silk, wax) claim their own narrative: that of the circulation of resources and knowledge often acquired through the violent exploitation of humans and nature.

Azpilicueta was a resident at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, in 2015-16, and received the Pernod Ricard Fellowship in 2017. Her works have been exhibited in venues such as: Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen (DE); Barbican, London (UK); GAMeC, Bergamo (IT); Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul (KR); Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf (DE); Gasworks, London (UK); Museo Collegium, Arévalo (ES); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (NL); MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (IT); CAC Brétigny, Brétigny-sur-Orge (FR); Museion, Bolzano (IT); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL); CentroCentro, Madrid (ES); and MAMBA, Buenos Aires (AR); Kunstmuseum, Liechtenstein (LI), City Museum of Ljubljana, Ljubljana (SLO); MOCA, Busan (SK); TextielMuseum, Tilburg (NL); Villa Vassiliev, Paris (FR); REDCAT Gallery, Los Angeles (US); MACBA, Barcelona (ES); CA2M, Móstoles (ES); TENT, Rotterdam (NL); and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (IR). This year she will present a new solo show at Centro de Creación Contemporánea de Andalucía – C3A, Córdoba (ES). In 2021, Azpilicueta was shortlisted for the Prix de Rome. Mercedes Azpilicueta currently lives and works in Amsterdam.

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Photography: Roberto Ruiz