

Catalonia in Venice: Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Paper Tears*

Collateral Event of the 61st International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia

Organised by the Institut Ramon Llull | Curated by Elise Lammer

The Institut Ramon Llull presents Catalonia in Venice: Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Paper Tears* at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The installation, curated by Elise Lammer, will be open to the public from May 9th to November 22nd at the Docks Cantieri Cucchini in San Pietro di Castello.

1

Catalonia in Venice: Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Paper Tears* is an installation by Claudia Pagès Rabal that investigates paper watermarks as symbolic and political devices. Through laser projections, a sculptural LED screen, and an enveloping soundtrack, these watermarks, which were created in the paper manufacturing process and historically linked to origin and authenticity, are revealed and examined. Invites us to reflect on how institutional systems of knowledge and authority have taken shape over time, ultimately colliding with the contemporary world.

The watermarks are projected onto the walls of the Catalonia in Venice space. They are activated by a set of eclectic characters who comment on them, following intuitive registers rather than institutional rhetoric. The initial watermarks connect us with contemporary realities and they mutate into unstable and hybrid forms, while performers move across historical aquifers and strategic water routes in Catalonia.

Catalonia in Venice: Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Paper Tears* unfolds through multiple points of view, both across the installation as a whole and within each individual voice and sound, oscillating between collective narration and singular experience. Its spatial and conceptual organisation is inspired by the underground and surface networks of fresh and salt water —levels, tides, and flows— that function as the topological framework of the project.

The archive that constitutes the core of the project consists of 15th-century paper watermarks preserved in the archives of the Museu Molí Paperer de Capellades (Catalonia). They reflect the artist's long-standing interest in these marks, which are only visible when backlit. Produced at a time when Mediterranean trade routes were declining and Atlantic trade was expanding, they belong to a pivotal moment in history often associated with the beginnings of modernity, which paved the way to new regimes of circulation and power. Paper disseminated alongside ideas, contracts, and codes that documented authority, ownership, and regulation. Places like Venice and Catalonia occupied key positions within this transformation, the logics of which continue to shape our contemporary condition.

In French, the expression *en filigrane* refers to something that lies beneath the surface: an idea, an emotion, or a tension that resists direct expression but remains present.

Experiencing Catalonia in Venice: Claudia Pagès Rabal, *Paper Tears* can be like stepping into a time machine. Not to reconstruct a chapter of history, but because elements emblematic of a specific era confront contemporary realities. In a moment marked by geopolitical conflicts, migration crises, and states of emergency, *Paper Tears* reveals a disturbing continuity between the power infrastructures of the past and those of the present.

Claudia Pagès Rabal is a visual artist, performer, and writer based in Barcelona. In her practice, Pagès Rabal intertwines words, bodies, music, and movement, producing visual and linguistic devices such as video installations, works on paper, and books, where points of interest converge drawing from linguistics, psychoanalysis, and decolonial studies. Her work has been exhibited at institutions such as mumok, Vienna (2025); Index, Stockholm (2025); Chisenhale, London (2025); IVAM, Valencia (2024); Sculpture Center, New York (2024); CA2M, Madrid (2023); Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2023); Tabakalera, Donostia (2022); Vleeshal, Middelburg (2022); MACBA, Barcelona (2022); Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig (2021); Sharjah Art Foundation, United Arab Emirates (2018). She participated in the 18th Istanbul Biennial (2025) and Manifesta 15, Barcelona (2024). Her first novel, *Més de dues aigües*, was published in Catalan by Empúries Narrativa in 2024.

Elise Lammer (b. Lausanne, Switzerland) is the director of Halle Nord, in Geneva. Her practice focuses on the role of space, both public and domestic, in the construction and expression of identity. Transdisciplinary in nature, her work adopts a transgenerational and intersectional approach to question and re-evaluate narratives that have suffered from monolithic and unilateral integration into history, while examining these issues from a contemporary perspective. As an author, researcher, and curator, she has contributed to numerous international projects, such as at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (Lisbon); mumok – Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig (Vienna); MACRO (Rome); Schinkel Pavilion (Berlin); Swiss Cultural Centre (Paris); MAMCO (Geneva); Kunsthhaus Glarus (Glarus); Cantonal Museum of Fine Arts (Lausanne); Swiss Institute in Rome (Rome), among others.

Institut Ramon Llull

As a public institution dedicated to the international promotion of the Catalan language and culture, the Institut Ramon Llull produces and organises the participation of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands in the Collateral Events of the International Art and Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. It has been present at the Biennale Arte since 2009 and at the Biennale Architettura since 2012. The projects presented by the Institut Ramon Llull at the Biennale Arte and Architettura are selected by a committee of experts that changes every year. For more information about this year's process and jury, click [here](#).

2

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Docks Cantieri Cucchini. San Pietro di Castello 40A, 30122 Venezia

9 May > 22 November 2026

9.05 – 27.09: 11:00 – 19:00

29.09 – 22.11: 10:00 – 18:00

Closed on Mondays (except May 11th, June 1st, September 7th and November 16th)

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