

Between Words and Space: Ana Esteve Llorens

Thao Votang | Austin 2015

Ana Esteve Llorens talks with her hands, eyes, and the spaces between words. This isn't due to an inability to talk about her work or a lack of conceptual rigor. In her pauses, that second-long search for the perfect word, there is the knowledge that no word or phrase is a precise substitute for the experience of her work.

Llorens grew up in the Spanish coastal town Oliva, one hour south of Valencia. During her bachelor's degree, she completed a year at The University of Texas at Austin through an exchange program.

In her earlier works, Llorens explored the roles and functions of objects and the presence of the artist or viewer. The use of various media (sculpture, photography, and performance) punctuate *Looking into the Void* (2009) and *The Journey of Spaces* (2009). The latter exhibition was Llorens' first solo exhibition and demonstrated an exploration of actions completed by the artist or participants and the function of an object.

Llorens returned to the US in 2010 and completed an MFA in Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). *Duet* (2010) originated from an experiment with light and material. For this project, she used perforated vinyl that is commonly used for bus advertisements. It allows people inside a bus to look out, even though the windows are covered by the ads, which can be viewed by people outside of the bus. A horizon line taken from Spain was printed onto the vinyl, which was then installed backwards on the gallery windows. Llorens was thinking about James Turrell's *Mendota Hotel*, her life in Richmond, and the time difference between Virginia and Spain. Changes in the intensity of the light source inside the gallery and the outside sun caused the yellow color of the printed horizon to appear and disappear with the rising and setting of the sun.

The Relative Size of Holes, Abysses, and Gaps (2011); and *Mapping the Distant* (2011) depart from a singular process of object making. In these two exhibitions, Llorens expanded her play with sight and obscurity within a space and between the objects. She subtracts the presence of the artist from the objects and allows viewers to focus their experience to the object, the gallery, and their body.

Llorens uses scale models in preparation for exhibitions to explore the relationship between the pieces, materials, shapes, and audience.

“Sometimes, I’m—maybe—obsessive. I always do mockups of the spaces,” says Llorens, “That allows me to compose, like if I was painting, but in the space.”

Llorens has an upcoming exhibition at Big Medium’s gallery at Canopy (opening at the end of May). In the exhibition, she will replicate light intensities she experienced in Mexico, where she recently completed a residency. Although Llorens frequently travels, she is based in Austin, Texas.

“Austin is a good place to work, quiet. I call it my desk,” Llorens says. “The other places are places where I get fed with information, experiences, other artworks. Coming to Austin is like sitting at my desk and organizing all that information and hopefully getting something out of it...and I love Austin.”

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