

With Mayte Vieta...(Glòria Bosch)

Gloria Bosch

Mayte Vieta

G.B. How is the articulation of time and space manifested in your work?

M.V. Time is one of the most important aspects of my work. I believe it is the base, because I've always started from beginnings, in a constant return to the past to find there the guiding thread. I don't only work with photography, but also with sculpture and installation, and I don't know where I might end up because what really interests me now is movement: this began with photography and can be seen in the sculptures as well. I work images and installations with ever greater intensity because they allow me to transmit to the viewer what I feel.

G.B. There is a confluence of elements, things which apparently have nothing to do with their origins, forms, essences...

1. **V.** For me the problem is that I often feel a bit fragmented when it comes to exhibiting, for example, in a gallery. You find that some things fit here, others there, and I always attempt to work with the space. Having a specific work is not so important to me, rather I'm more interested in establishing a dialogue between pieces. If you achieve this, you reach the viewer, you are able to suggest and create an ambience. I'm very intrigued by what different materials can do; I don't just work with any old thing. I believe it's important for an artist to create these challenges and to strive to go beyond one's limits.

G.B. One unsettling aspect of your work is that you create discontinued series and give these names such as (Evening meeting), (Blind), (Time animals)...

1. **V.** Well, yes, it's a bit like what we are talking about now. In the beginning, when you're younger, you're more impetuous and what you make you leave as it is. There is also a hermetic aspect and this is why I liked to work with lookout points, to look from and by way of a vantage point...., because I suppose I must have been closed and, with time, I've opened up and allowed the works to be more open, broader. I no longer have to show what I feel so much. It is a process in which you find yourself and you have to face yourself as well as the experience of how your work operates in a given space. At first, I had no experience and then little by little you see how people react.

G.B. There is a concern for finding new proposals for language and materials, but what always prevails is the image and atmosphere that is created, it doesn't matter whether it be volume, photography, installation...

M.V. Yes, that's what I've been telling you. I'm not afraid of anything. They ask me now why I don't work with video, and the truth is, I don't feel prepared to do so, I've got respect for the medium. It's a serious matter to me, I'm very obsessive and this is why there is a constant re-encounter with the past, with memory... In fact, I began this way, each time I went about positioning myself and the work turned into something really terrible. You can't run away from that, it forms a part of your way of being, it is what is happening to me in my work. For example, when I began with photography, between 1994 and 1995, no one was using it. Nor have I ever considered myself to be a photographer. It's like when I began to paint and I realised that what made me feel alive was to get involved with the materials: to work with iron, and from iron to glass, from glass to resins and, finally, with photography, which I use in a three dimensional way, and I always attempt to place some sculpture there, or make an installation. I'm not so interested in photography, but rather in creating an ambience. In the working process, there is always an initial study, from which I later create an exhibition. I'm

am unable to place a piece in a spot they tell me to without being truly certain that the piece works with the space. A space of ten square metres is not the same as one of 2.5 square metres, because this marks for you the rhythm of the work.

G.B. You capture instants, fragments of life and dreams that meld with one another, presences that dissolve into nature (the sea, darkness, the desert, fields of daisies...), but then the created atmosphere becomes absence (between opacity and transparency, density and lightness...), a void within which you have registered images and the lived moment. Marta Dahó speaks of this instant, where everything that cannot be outlined in form remains: absence, emptiness, invisible nexus, fragility, broken there by a change that never allows a single meaning to solidify. Suspension?

M.V. It's complicated, I feel very Mediterranean, the sea is a constant in my work. I was born next to the sea, and even though it forms a part of my life, I was not aware this was so until a year ago; it formed a part of my life, but I was not conscious that this was so. It's clear that it forms part of my childhood memories and my existence. The subject of horizons, of infinities, of non-temporal places, also appear in my photography. I'm very critical and the sea suggests so many things to me! If I think of the horizon, it has a double meaning. These are deceptive images. You see a field of daisies but you don't represent it as something wonderful, such as is the fact of rediscovering your vision, but rather that the field of daisies moves toward darkness, that infiniteness created by the void of the viewer in respect to the field of daisies. And I was deeply affected when they said that I had to go to Patagonia to make the (Field of daisies), when this for me was of no importance. I made it in Girona, in Chile, and I could go to Holland and make another field of daisies there. For this reason, there are those who can identify with the image although they have never been there. You feel that I transmit something which maybe you haven't lived, but which you have dreamt.

G.B. Do you often let yourself be carried away by a dream in order to find its mirror in reality? Illusions, that constant struggle to make dreams real (Projecting the dreams), searching for those real places for your own fiction, to meet up again with a mystery that has become visible ... I think of the inverse of the processes that make you say: 'My works are, definitively, a mirror of the soul', because there is always that interrogative between what you feel and what you see...

1. **V.** I believe everyone should live a little in their dreams and fantasies. It's what I can give to the viewer and this is something I've only realised very recently, because it is a constant struggle that corresponds to your way of seeing things, and, because reality is much harsher, we take refuge in dreams. It's true that in my creative process, this is very important, because normally I am obsessed with my work and, without intending to, when you dream you do so with these pieces or installations as, for example, in "Rio tinto". There is an inter-play between dreams and what you can make real. There always has to be hope, you have to create and set challenges you can meet. I believe this is one difference between my earliest works and my present activity.

G.B. One of your constants is the search for non-temporality, whether it be in looking for places that implicitly bear this quality, albeit poetically, as is the case with the field of daisies, with the horizon as the dividing line towards infinity, or else when you want to stress solitude, the fragility of the body in the open air, in the sea, always in outside conditions... This merging with the same movement of nature that displaces and pushes you and distorts the body, as happens in the water with the force of currents and the filtering of natural light, with branches transformed by the action of nature, like the aftermath of pain or of a great storm. Landscapes where human presence often disappears and the metaphysics of space emerges, sensations of a past which is only a memory of dark absences in that other uneasiness produced by the present...

1. **V.** In (Plethoric sea of stars) this is seen very clearly. At that time I was in Tahiti, but that's neither here nor there, because in fact the work has nothing of Tahiti in it. What we see is an image of the sea in the

rain and nothing at all of the paradisiacal island. What interests me are feelings and this why I called the work what I called it, because it has that feeling of sadness, of melancholy, of finding me in a place apart from the world, where the idea of the horizon continued, of a non-temporal space which I consider very important. I usually create neutral landscapes, very empty, very clean and I believe this allows me to project these sensations and feelings. I am also very obsessed with the subject of roots, and even though people don't think of it, roots are like the body. The root is a body and has developed as a consequence of the deterioration of the body. The fact of seeing parents become ill and your grandparents die... is present in the work. The root represents my grandmother, a person who was always strong, but a time comes when all that is left is the mind, and the body doesn't accompany it. These are things that affect you and I've tried to communicate this. This is why I began wintering, a bronze in the shape of a root inside of a glass container, sealed and at rest. It is the body that is shrivelling up, and I wanted to halt this, so I've protected it inside of glass. The fact that one root is on the verge of touching another and that a nerve is broken is a bit like the passage of time, it is a symbol of my work.

G.B. The weight of the past occupies an important place in your activity. I remember very early works such as *Excursus* from the early 1990's. There is a link with these types of lived, felt, dreamt visual images..., which constitute memory's warehouse and, associated with other elements, act as containers of emotion.

M.V. Yes, because I'm very slow in the creative process. Normally, when I work with photography I make archives that maybe end up in a closet and then a year or two later I find them again. Photography often does harm. You portray a moment and then time goes by ... When we see an image of when we were young, of the family eating, having supper or a Sunday lunch, we find it difficult to accept that the person in the photo is not the same. In my work, I attempt to return to the past because I don't want time to go by, it's like a fight between living the present and the melancholy that I've been dragging along since my childhood and which has so marked by creative process.

G.B. Distance makes you change the perception and value of things. Is this perhaps the exorcism of memories that you have mentioned elsewhere?

M.V. Yes, you see the moment I live now, in my thirties, in my work. Those who know me and have seen my work develop over time, see that there are memories and that I return to these. Now, for example, I'm going back to work with *(Evening Ecounter)*, begun in 1997 with the installation at the *Metrònom* and, suddenly, without consciously deciding to, I returned to it in 2001.

G.B. In the same way that you aim to integrate the viewer, what do you experience when you stand before a realised work? Has the initial feeling been transformed? In fact, the captured instant continues its trajectory. You join together experiences, sensations, other memories that come into being as the project advances. You are not interested in permanence, but rather in the fragility of a lived instant, and this allows you to capture the transitory nature of the world and of things...

M.V. What you have just said I find amusing because in fact I have serious problems with myself. I think I have to struggle so that this doesn't happen. I usually greatly enjoy the creative process, even though I'm sometimes in a bad mood because I get obsessed with what I'm doing and I get annoyed with any interruption. You suffer so much! It's a vice and when you finish, when you see the crowd on the day of the opening, a very strange thing happens to you: I act as though I'm mute and if I'm asked about some piece I'm unable to answer. I suppose I'm not so interested in what I think as much as what others think. At that moment, the works are already finished and I have difficulty enjoying them: I think about what to do next.

G.B. One of your objectives is to provoke the viewer so that he/she may find themselves (the mirror, transparency, movement, non-temporal memory) integrated into the world by way of their experiences to the point of losing themselves in their own questions and fragments of memory...

1. **V.** Yes, because I'm not interested in what I think, I've already given everything and now I'm very interested in the viewer. It's important to me that there be a dialogue between my work and the person viewing it, to make a space, a trip, because this is not at all easy. We all know that art is considered to be elitist and people are wrong. We should all go to galleries with children when they're young, because what you are transmitting is important and you can suggest many things to people. Installations such as the one at the Metrònom, for example, have helped in this a lot. When you refer to the reflex of the mirror which creates an optical effect of movement, this becomes the viewer's own reflex to the work. Some very curious anecdotes occurred: women said that it was the mother's uterus, something which I had never even considered, but which helped me a lot. Men bumped into the mirrors, they were so dazzled by the mirror! And so you feel pleased and you say: I've done it! I've made the viewer participate, the person who simply walks along the street, that person who never stops to see a show of art, but who felt curious, has entered and then mentioned it to his friends who also came to see the show, and they did this with their kids, their wife or with the grandparents, and this for me is what most gratifies me.

G.B. Let's speak about this desire of yours to approach the concerns of the world, how this world of yours, private, intimate, comes to construct an existential, universal concern. In fact, standing before your works, we are merely facing the questions that all of us ask, an infinite, fragile and non-temporal now, a work which links life and death, an abyss that opens with every step, in the end gives meaning to an artwork that is open and one which everyone can identify with.

M.V. I believe it's very important for the artist to open up. I believe I'm reaching a stage of maturity. I feel more open and my work is too. I don't work in a simply aesthetic way or for something to be attractive. I attempt to suggest a slightly mysterious ambience, because I'm not interested in gratuitous provocation. When I made (Evening encounter), I was speaking about death, even though it's much more difficult for me to make something that suggests this void. It is more important, like life is, and not everything is black and white, nor everything happiness and sadness. You can be very sad about death or an illness, but this blends with moments of hope and happiness which are very intense and, for this reason, if you're in a bad moment, you want to reflector capture light, the wind, very subtle and difficult things to transmit. The latest work has much more clarity of light, with the hanging of the photograph, with the infinities, with some poles of water which suggest something about to break. I believe that life is this way and affects everything you do. I'm very struck by the way the world is now, and so it's inevitable that I reflect this... I'm not speaking about something personal, I'm speaking generally to everyone and I hope to get people to identify one way or another.

G.B. Memory of disarticulated trajectories in time, without stratification, to retain only the invisible memory of time. Indivisible existence: that which was, that which is, that which no longer is, that which is not yet... Ambiences that, like a network suspended over the void, gather up instants, time that flees, ephemeral eternity, uncertainty... webs of relation that approach form. The fragility of this moment which you hold in your hands and which at the same time vanishes.

M.V. I think I'm like a sponge. It's very difficult to speak about why one piece or another appears... Everything gets disconnected, one work suggests itself and at the same time you're working on another. Working on five pieces at once (in the sense that I continue to work on one, finish that other, make a drawing, sit in front of the computer, take a photograph...) forms a part of a process, because I'm not interested in the finished work, but rather in a bit of each one. This is why what I do is so variable: I work as much with paraffin as with bronze or iron, and I manage to give each material this fragility, that weight, or that a work speak of something light, such as feelings.

G.B. Your work is a bit 'Zen' and in fact, reading a text by Gabriel Rodríguez which structures relations between the captured instant and your pieces and Japanese haikus, although also between the haikus and the drawings, he tells us that this is 'the full and contradictory outline of a present moment that vanishes'.

M.V. It was very satisfying to speak with Gabriel because I met him in Santander and he raised questions which I didn't have time to ask myself. He suggested that the latest works are spiritual and I've begun to get interested in the subject of Zen, although I didn't realise the works with this in mind, even though it has helped me very much personally.

G.B. Thresholds and (The threshold)... You incorporate the idea of thresholds, transit, making the human being into a possible threshold, the passage through which is a return to creating what has been lost. To create, to enter, to access the internal conflict of our lives. The creative process also waits (at the threshold) and traps the viewer to construct a new space.

1. **V.** El umbral is a consequence of what we're talking about now and of my entire body of work. I think that El umbral or, for example, the piece with the butterflies, (Ephemeral), De su amada memoria, Animales del tiempo, would not exist without the existence, the piece of silence, or (Corridors of light)... That is to say, everything forms part of a stage and El umbral, as I said before, I don't know whether it's the result of being bombarded by thousands of images which you have to assimilate. And you also realise that you're a mature person, that your childhood has been left behind, and yet it's something you cannot lose and blends in with the spontaneity of daily life... But you enter into a space that is difficult, because life is harsh and complicated, and I believe that El umbral reflects the transit between one place and another, between the past and the future. I myself am afraid, I'm in the process of change, and this is reflected in my work. There is a very powerful change. Now it's more open, simpler and clearer. Before, it suggest more and was more obvious.

G.B. Memory and movement allow for dialogue. Voids and emptiness remain, absences, silence, darkness..., like an emotional transit where everyone can let free their own desire, fear, hope, anxiety, pain, hope ... Space Within another space ... To inhabit the sequence, the superposition, the unfolding, that which is always latent and informs against oblivion.

Gloria Bosch



Efímera

2004

Sculpture

Mixed media and dissected butterflies

This piece by Mayte Vieta is delicate, introverted and pastoral. It immerses us in a small and obtuse universe where timelessness is made real. A mirror in the base shows that we form part of the world and draws us into the artist's reflections on beauty. We are ephemeral, we are temporal but for an instant we are trapped in a complex reflection, suspended in the thoughts of Vieta. Efímera takes these thoughts on beauty and what defines it as its starting point. Its title points to the concept of temporality which the artist has attempted to conserve in methacrylate.



Animales del Tiempo, Galgos

2003

Sculpture

Bronze

Mayte Vieta presents her work by means of different languages. Although she frequently makes use of photography, she always provides it with a physical space, thus transforming it into a sculptural object. In some cases she also experiments directly with sculpture. Simple lines and profiles, limited use of colour and great symbolic content. Animals of Time showcases totem-like figures. Dream-state greyhounds bordering on the surrealistic, recalling Dalí's elephants plucked from the subconscious.



De su amada memoria

2003

Installation

Wood and resin

Memories carefully stored and arranged, biding their time and surviving in cages, on the alert for the moment they can spread their wings and fly. Captives. Mayte Vieta's figures, immobile and threatening waiting inside their black cages, ready and expectant. Allegories perhaps for those prized moments, all the more valuable for being so volatile and ephemeral. And the artist, as a metaphor of time passed in danger of fading into oblivion, has decided to keep her memories in birdcages. Despite knowing that this will only preserve a small part of them. Nostalgia, memory and the past are constants in the artist's work.



El umbral

2003

Installation

Stainless steel rods and resin

The artist awaits us at the threshold, present in the delicacy of her work. Hundreds of wings show us the doorway to cross. It is the entrance from one world to another. For the artist it may be the pathway from life to death, from the present to the past or maybe the future. These are all recurring themes in her work. She also works with the exhibition space, creating a special atmosphere for inducing in the viewer an atemporal state in which only emotion and concept exist. Reality retreats to make way for the emotions the artists aims to transmit to the viewer. To this end she often establishes dialogues between her pieces and between them and the space. In this particular piece the artist offers us a choice; whether to cross the threshold or simply remain spectators.



La bise noire

1992

Installation

Photographic installation

She sees water both as a refuge and a wrecker of ships, as a union of opposites, as emptiness and plenitude. The Mediterranean, nostalgic, envelopes her and her models. Le bise noire pulls us down into the depths of an atemporal space. Absence is in turn totality. Mayte often swings between opposites; the natural and the human, darkness and light, the past and present, movement and immobility. These dualities culminate in a strange, bucolic, at times surreal, universe in which we are immersed.



Mujer raíz

2000

Sculpture

Resin and roots

Roots are often used by Mayte Vieta as a symbol of the passing of time. Root Woman is a translucent being nurtured by time. Roots, like arteries, feed this being, whose existence is made up of the minutes, hours and days that pass. It feeds, grows, twists upon its self and seeks sustenance with impossible movements, constituting this being's structure which, although static, remains filled with experiences and as such life.



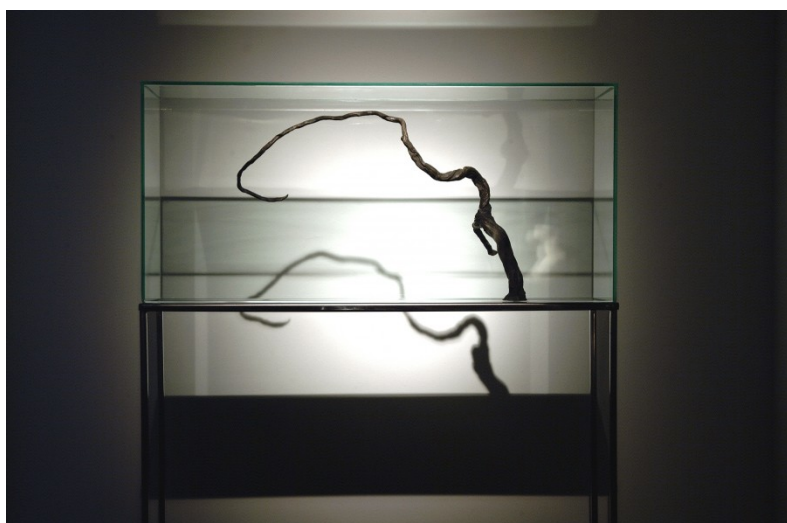
Tarde de encuentro

2002

Photography

Photography

Bucolic images swinging between dreams and reality. Far horizons endowing the space with a sense of openness. Silent and imposing nature. Mayte Vieta often travels to the past in her photographs. She makes use of the Mediterranean Sea as a context. It is automatically transformed into her quintessential symbol of nostalgia. Her landscapes induce in us a bitter-sweet melancholy that defines passed time that will never return. It is perhaps an attempt to control time. The artist, who describes herself as a nostalgic person, travels as often as she can to those places that take her back in time. Encounter Afternoon is perhaps an encounter with an experience already lived.



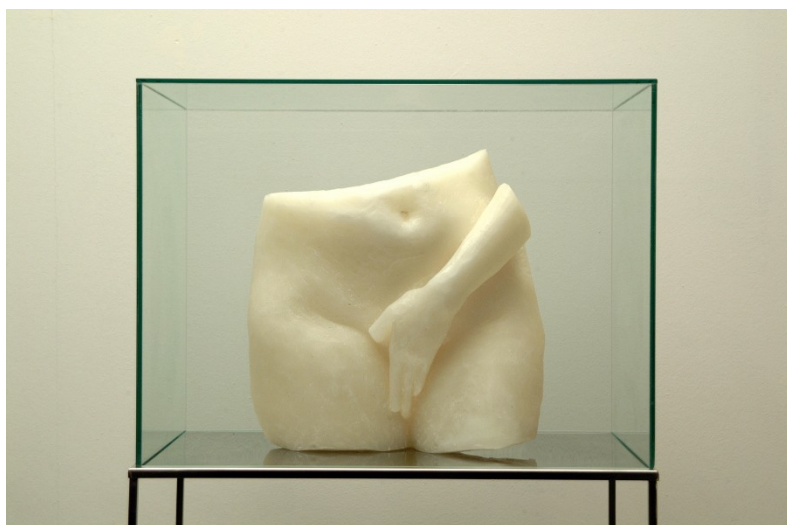
Ivernando

1999

Sculpture

Case of glass and bronze

The root waits, now dead and desiccated, to return to life. On pause and in repose, preserved under glass, displayed and theatrically lit. It is resigned to not growing, to waiting, to wintering. Time does not pass, time is detained inside its case and the root remains, waiting, wintering. For the artist roots are often a symbol of the passing of time. While we preserve this root we can metaphorically control the passing of time. Or perhaps not; perhaps Vieta wants to show us how time toughens, how hours and days create curves, convolutions and knots. How time defines us, forms us and twists us. How it allows us to grow. Perhaps Mayte is showing how we exist thanks to time, and that without it we would cease to exist and simply winter, waiting for time to pass once again.



Cabellera del Tiempo

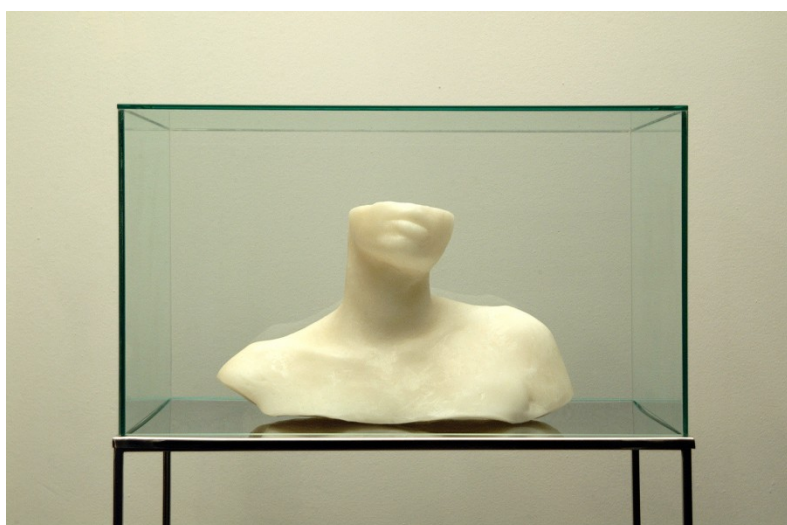
2002
Sculpture
Paraffine

Trail of Time is a work consisting of three paraffin wax sculptures placed in steel and glass display cabinets. Once again we can see the artist's obsession for preservation and slowing down the passing of time. Delicate figures representing the female body appear translucent and understated. They show the delicacy and ephemerality of the body. Far from representing only the artist and being mere self-portraiture, they speak for the fragility of the human body, at times showing it as defenceless. Vieta does not focus simply on a self-portrait but a representation of all bodies of all people. She looks for a universal representation.



Cabellera del Tiempo

2002
Sculpture
Paraffine

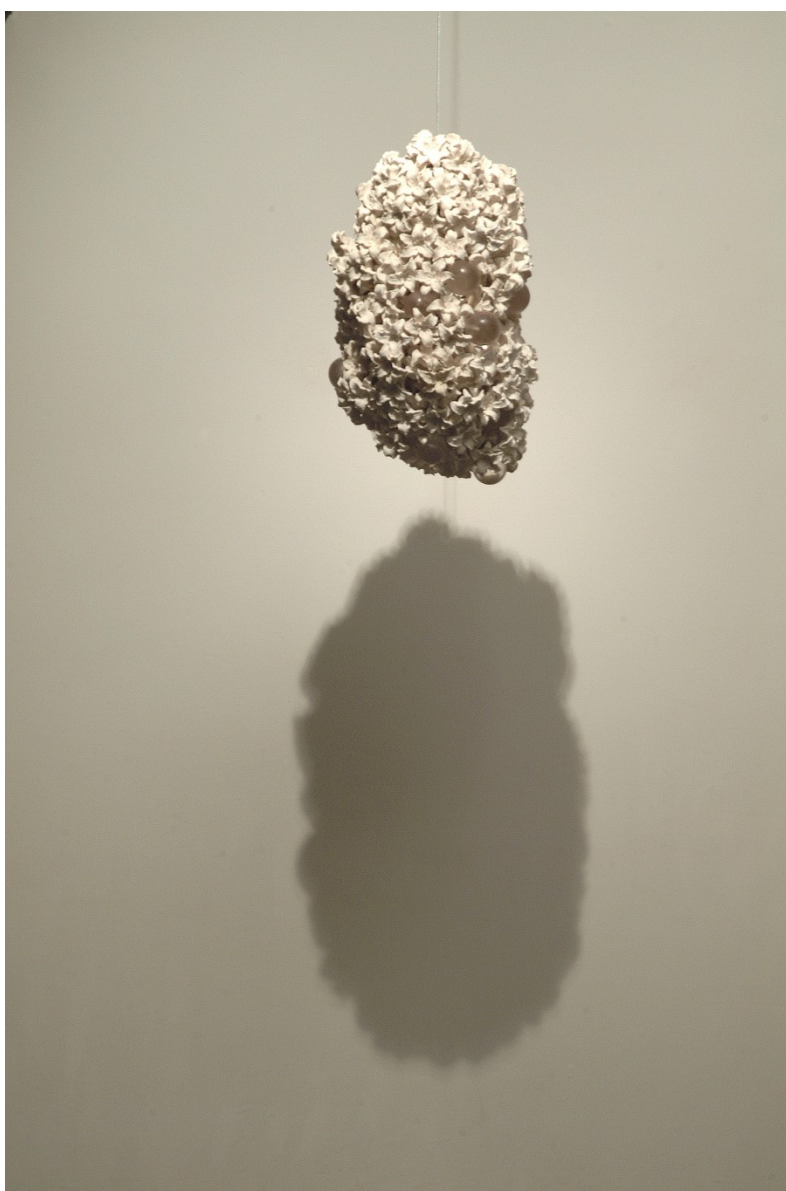


Cabellera del Tiempo

2002
Sculpture
Paraffine



Raíces
2003
Sculpture
Bronze



El cebo
2003
Sculpture
Resin and glass



A ciegas

2003

Photography

Duratrans photography, metacrilate and glass



A ciegas

2003

Photography

Duratrans photography, metacrilate and glass



Nafragio

2003

Photography

Duratrans photography, metacrilate and glass



Tarde de encuentro

2002

Photography

Duratrans photography, metacrilate and glass