

THEY WEREN'T PLANETS,  
THEY WERE GALAXIES

EXHIBITION

Dora García

SOMEWHERE, TWO PLANETS  
HAVE BEEN COLLIDING  
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.  
(The Thinker as Poet)

BRUSSELS  
FROM OCTOBER 6 TO DECEMBER 9, 2017

CURATOR:  
GUILLAUME DÉSANGES

BALLISTIC POETRY SEASON

PRESS RELEASE

# Dora García

## SOMEWHERE, TWO PLANETS HAVE BEEN COLLIDING FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. (The Thinker as Poet)

EXHIBITION FROM OCTOBER 6 TO DECEMBER 9, 2017  
PRIVATE VIEW WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5, 2017, FROM 6 P.M. TO 9 P.M.

Since the late 1990s, Spanish artist Dora García (b. 1965, in Valladolid) has lived and worked in Barcelona, developing a unique corpus of minimalist, multi-form, conceptual, elegant work rooted in her critical approach to the phenomenology and iconology of Western history and thought. Visitors are encouraged to experience the unique quality of specific situations through a broad range of forms (performances, films, drawings, publications, workshops and seminars). García represented Spain at the 2011 Venice Biennale, and has staged a number of major solo exhibitions, at MACBA Barcelona (2002), the Reina Sofía museum and arts centre in Madrid (2005), and SMAK in Ghent (2006).

For the Foundation's Brussels art space, La Verrière, Dora García has devised an exhibition in the form of a unit: a space 'apart', magnified by the endlessly-shifting natural light pouring from the glass roof, the diagrammatic drawings on the walls, the presence of a book-sculpture... All forming a kind of stage set for a succession of performances before visitors to the gallery.

Dora García's solo show at La Verrière is part of the current 'Ballistic Poetry' season, launched by curator Guillaume Désanges in spring 2016. The cycle of exhibitions stresses the invisible connections between certain, rigorously programmatic artistic practices – from minimal and conceptual art to the extreme rigour of objective photography – and a form of radical, mutant poetry that seeks to 'show' more than it 'tells'.

All performances in the exhibition space are co-produced with ISAC  
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LA VERRIÈRE, BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)  
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INTERNATIONAL PRESS DIRECTOR,  
HERMÈS INTERNATIONAL: **INA DELCOURT**  
PRESS CONTACT: **ANNELISE CATINEAU**  
+33 (0)1 40 17 48 07 / [ACATINEAU@HERMES.COM](mailto:ACATINEAU@HERMES.COM)



## Dora García

### SOMEWHERE, TWO PLANETS HAVE BEEN COLLIDING FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. (The Thinker as Poet)

“ Since the late 1990s, Dora García has developed a unique corpus – minimalist and multi-form, conceptual and elegant – rooted in her critical approach to the phenomenology and iconology of Western history and thought. Working through performance, film, drawings, publications, television, workshops and seminars, her primary interest is in specific situations, presented with a mix of scholarship and risk-taking, science and fiction. In so doing, she stages sensitive, cognitive experiences whose meaning is left ‘in suspense’, despite their precisely-defined cultural and theoretical frame of reference. García proceeds via vast, themed ‘works in progress’, spreading from one subject to the next by a process of capillarity and overflow, fed by her reading, her natural curiosity and her intuition. Gradually, her work draws its own, subjective cartography leading us from research into the anti-psychiatry of Antonin Artaud, to James Joyce and Jacques Lacan, via ‘degenerate art’, the terrorist struggle and American-style ‘stand-up’ comedy. Each exhibition formalises a small part of the whole, contributing a piece to the wider, theoretical and aesthetic jigsaw puzzle. García is a sculptor of knowledge, shaping, cutting and carving it out like a material, to produce a series of specific (abstract and documentary) lay-outs, each bearing its own coded message. And yet the formation of this nebula of narratives points up clearly-defined, ideological positions, too: a defence of marginality, of that which contests cultural norms or holds out against the pigeon-holing of thought and ideas, and persists in plying the troubled, not to say murky waters of human intelligence.

With this in mind, I have invited Dora García to produce a new work for La Verrière, as part of the gallery’s ‘Ballistic Poetry’ season. Because her erudite oeuvre, based on a strict cognitive and theoretical programme, uses knowledge solely in order to explore its limits. Because Dora García focuses her interest on paradoxical, deliberately slippery phenomena, on the place where speculative thought becomes dogma, where analysis becomes speculation, and where logical argument becomes poetry; on the precise spot where partitions break down and structures begin to crack.



Dora García, *Exhausted Books II*, 2013  
View of the exhibition *I SEE WORDS, I HEAR VOICES*, The Power  
Plant, Toronto, 2015, Collection MACBA, Barcelona  
© Dora García, photo Toni Hafkenscheid



Dora García, *The Sinthome Score*, 2013,  
Castello di Rivoli Collection  
Courtesy Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam  
© Dora García, photo Ellen de Bruijne

Because Dora García's forms are similarly inclined to mystery and *non finito*: ultimately, her artistic programme evades any form of intellectual or artistic reason. Generously, she has used La Verrière's invitation to work more precisely with the matter of poetry, taking as her starting-point a discussion between two writers (Andrea Valdes and Manuel Asín), and a poetical text by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, entitled *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (*The Thinker as a Poet* in Albert Hofstadter's English translation). The exhibition takes the form of a unit: a quasi-empty space with diagrammatic drawings on its walls, a book-sculpture... each element contributing to a space conceived as a stage set for a continuous series of performances.

What will it all be about? Writings and the spoken word, apparently. Time and space, assuredly. Theatre, philosophy, poetry and psychoanalysis, probably. The cosmos, the circularity of time, chaos and the abolition of the relationship of cause and effect, perhaps. Nothing is wholly pre-determined. Consequently, García is never interested in simple, straightforward subject matter, but in complex things that appeal to the mysteries of the human mind, where concepts encounter affects, and logic and the psyche come together. Dangerous liaisons that cannot be expressed, let alone demonstrated in simple terms. Hence García's interest in the deviant figures of literature and thought (Lenny Bruce, Robert Walser, Antonin Artaud or James Joyce), whom she readily connects to other forms of political and social marginality (political radicals, the insane, and people who hear voices).

These links between genius and madness, reason and folly are readily assimilated with the poetic act, which is not – far from it – the flip side of intelligence, but another form of the same. This is indeed the central thesis of a recent book by the French philosopher Alain Badiou, entitled *Que pense le poème?* ('What does the poem think?' Editions nous, 2016), conceived as a homage to the poem as one shore of the ocean of philosophy, the other being the 'matheme'. Invoking such writers as Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, Georg Trakl or Fernando Pessoa, Badiou praises the poem as the ideal of 'thought without knowledge', as something literally 'unthinkable', and useful as a kind of cavity, a lack, a necessary, even vital insufficiency of thought. The poem is a literary act of dazzling immediacy that scorns the careful stages of discourse and validates the existence of mystery, which is one of the dimensions of reality. From the outset, it leads us to 'use language such that it strikes the intellect of its contemporaries, like an arrow hitting its target.' This supremely ballistic view of poetry – as a metaphor for something beyond logical reasoning, that pierces and touches us all the more precisely because we do not know exactly what it is about – is connected in suitably indefinable ways to Dora García's subtly trenchant art."

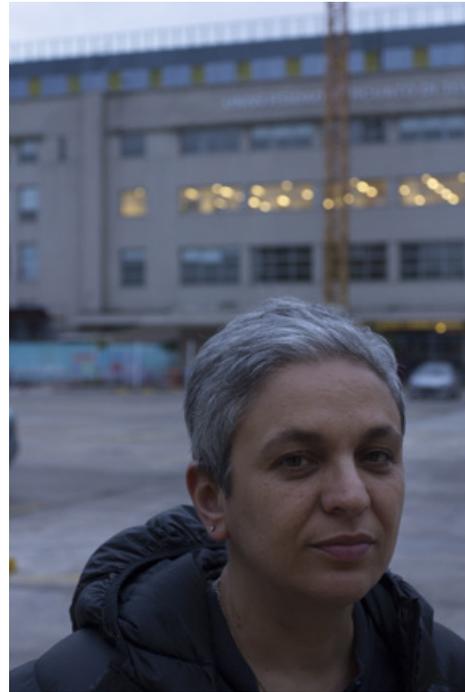
Guillaume Désanges

# BIOGRAPHY

Dora García

Born in Valladolid in 1965, lives and works in Barcelona.

Spanish artist Dora García uses a range of media including performance, HD film, text and installation. Her practice investigates the conditions that shape the encounter between the artist, the artwork and the viewer, focusing more particularly on the notions of duration, access and readability. García's pieces often involve staging unscripted scenarios that elicit doubt as to the fictional or spontaneous nature of a given situation, setting rules of engagement or using recording devices to frame both conscious and unconscious forms of spectator participation. García's work also explores the political potential rooted in marginal positions, paying homage through several works to eccentric and often anti-heroic personas. Dora García has participated in DOCUMENTA13 (2012), Biennale di Venezia (2011, 2013, 2015), Biennial de São Paulo (2010), the Biennale of Sydney (2008), Skulptur Projekte Münster (2007), Istanbul Biennial (2003)...



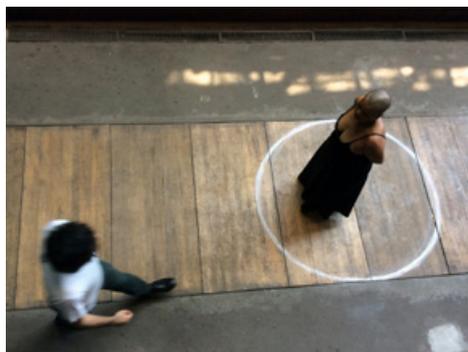
Dora García, photo Bruno Dubner

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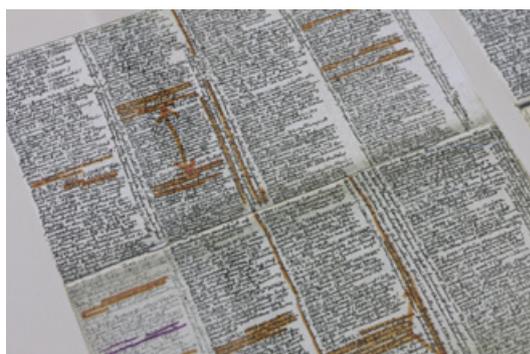
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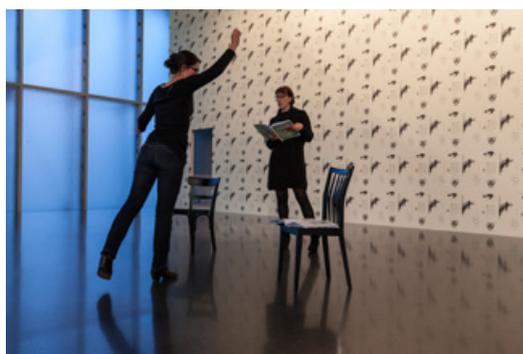
Dora García, *Steal This Book*, 2008  
 CNAP Collection, Paris  
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Dora García, *Interrogatório de Uma Mulher*, 2016  
 Improvised theater, Teatro Oficina Sao Paulo  
 © Dora García



Dora García, *The Inadequate Archive* (detail), 2011  
 © Dora García, photo Vegard Kleven



Dora García, *The Sinthome Score*, 2013  
 View of the exhibition *The Sinthome Score*, Kunsthaus Bregenz, 2013  
 Collection Castelo di Rivoli, Turin  
 © Dora García, photo Markus Tretter



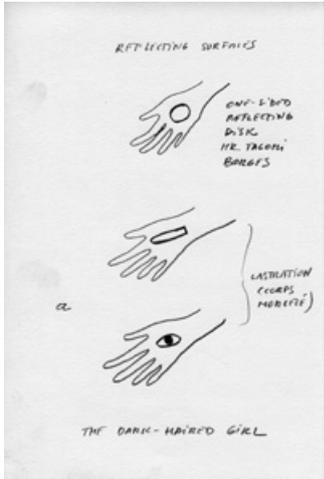
Dora García, *Golden Sentence (Il y a un trou dans le réel)*, 2005 – 2014  
 Collection 49 Nord 6 Est, Frac Lorraine, Metz  
 Courtesy Michel Rein gallery, Paris / Brussels



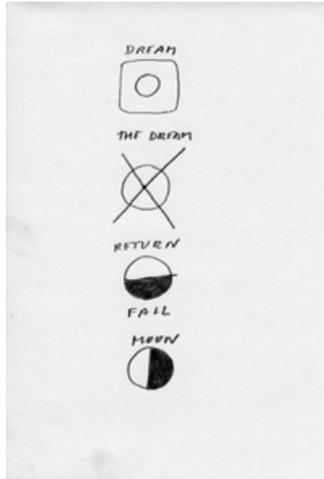
Dora García, *Exhausted Books II*, 2013  
 View of the exhibition *I SEE WORDS, I HEAR VOICES*, The Power Plant, Toronto, 2015, Collection MACBA, Barcelone  
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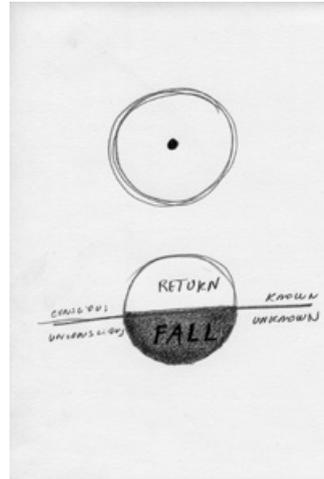
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Dora García, *Mad Marginal Charts*, 2015 - ...  
 pencil on paper, A4  
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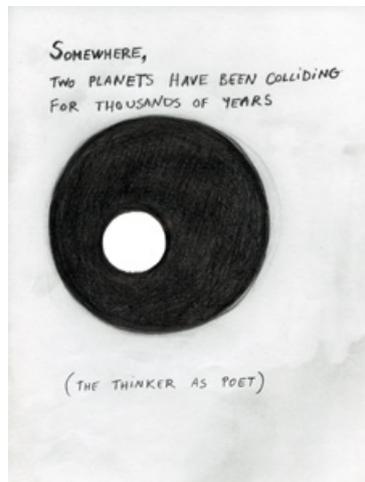
Dora García, *Mad Marginal Charts*, 2015 - ...  
 pencil on paper, A4  
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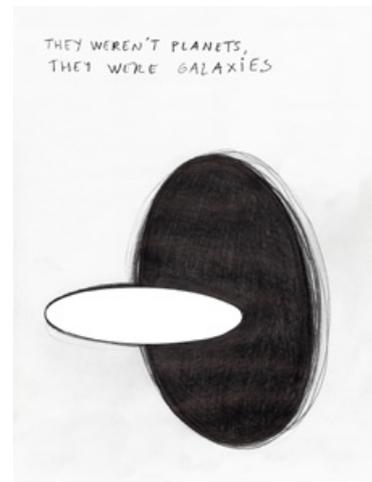
Dora García, *Mad Marginal Charts*, 2015 - ...  
 pencil on paper, A4  
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Dora García, *Mad Marginal Charts*, 2015 - ...  
 pencil on paper, A4  
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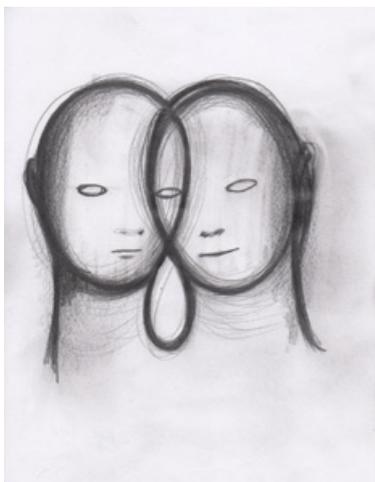
Dora García, *Two planets*, *Mad Marginal charts series*, 2014-17  
 pencil on paper, A4  
 © Dora García



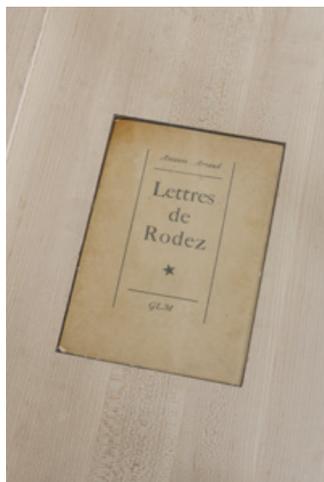
Dora García, *Two galaxies*, *Mad Marginal charts series*, 2014-17  
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Dora García, *Eco Oscuro*, 2016  
 © Dora García



Dora García, *Lettres de Rodez (Mezuzah)*, 2014  
 (detail), 2014  
 Courtesy Michel Rein gallery, Paris / Brussels  
 © Dora García, photo Vegard Kleven



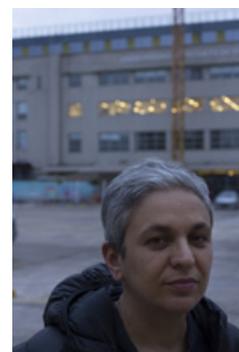
Dora García, *Lettres de Rodez (Mezuzah)*, 2014  
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 Courtesy Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam  
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Dora García, *Exhausted Books*, 2013  
 MACBA Collection, Barcelona  
 © Dora García, photo Vegard Kleven



Dora García, photo Bruno Dubner

# GUILLAUME DÉSANGES



Guillaume Désanges is a freelance curator and art critic, founder and director of Work Method, a Paris-based agency for artistic projects. He organizes international exhibitions projects and lectures.

Latest projects : *Amazing! Clever! Linguistic!*, *An Adventure in Conceptual Art* (2013, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria), *A Universal Exhibition, documentary section* (2013, Louvain-la-Neuve biennale, Belgium), *Curated Session #1: The Dora García files* (2014, Perez Art Museum, Miami, USA), *Ma'aminim*, *The Believers* (2015, Museum of Art and History, Saint-Denis & Tranzitdisplay, Prague, Czech Rep.), *The Méthode Room* (2015, Chicago, USA), *Ballistic Poetry* (2016-..., La Verrière, Brussels), *L'Esprit français, Contre-cultures 1969-1989* (2017, la maison rouge, Paris).

## FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION AT LA VERRIÈRE

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LE FORUM, TOKYO, JAPAN

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NOVEMBER 24, 2017 – JANUARY 7, 2018

## **PUBLICATION CAHIERS DE RÉSIDENCES**

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CO-EDITION WITH ACTES SUD – OCTOBER 2017