
THE END IS WHERE WE START FROM

Stories, told through words, pictures or gestures, may be the most enduring form of communication known to humans. More than simply a listing of events, a story can transcend barriers of cultural diversity, geography and time period to explain how or why something came to be. In the process, personal and collective experiences intersect, and events, whether current or historical, factual or fictional, are given meaning. The projects being presented in The End Is Where We Start From all feature stories that have in some way grown from the artists' personal life experiences. Representing a range of media and working processes, these projects reflect the artists' unique, and at times unconventional, approaches to constructing a narrative.

The title of this series is taken from a T.S. Eliot poem called "Little Gidding" written in the 1940s. In the poem's final section, Eliot makes a case for the generative potential of an ending:

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

The decision to present an artwork is itself a kind of "end," representing an artist's decision to share an object or idea with other people. In this cycle, the artists open the possibility, even the necessity, for the visiting public to breathe life into their narratives by actively engaging with the works. Taking many forms throughout the five exhibitions, this engagement begins with questions the projects ask of their audiences, either explicitly or implicitly. What are the different roles that audience members can play within a museum exhibition and how might the public affect or shape the life or afterlife of an art project? How do visitors' actions, belief systems, and personal histories relate to those brought forward in an exhibition? In what ways can one's experience of an exhibition extend beyond just the act of looking? Audiences entering Espai 13 will be invited to watch, listen, read, and move through the space and in doing so will have the opportunity to chart new beginnings from each story's "end."

The artists featured in this cycle are: Mireia c. Saladrígues, Daniela Ortiz, Mariona Moncunill, Alex Reynolds and Mireia Sallarès.

Mireia c. Saladrígues (Terrassa, 1978)

Mireia c. Saladrígues understands her artistic practice as a framework defined by her unique creative methodologies, the conditions of a given context, and the active presence

of spectators. Public participation is often essential to the realization of her projects. In compelling audiences to occupy a variety of roles, Saladríguez seeks to eliminate conventional understandings of why people choose to engage with art, as well as prescribed notions regarding how such engagement can or should be carried out.

Daniela Ortiz (Cuzco, Peru, 1985)

Daniela Ortiz identifies two distinct impulses in her practice: the reactionary, driven by a sense of urgency to respond to an issue, and the archival, inspired by a desire to research a problem of contemporary existence. Working across media, Ortiz unites personal lived experiences of her everyday environments – a place of work, an art gallery, the street – with broader sociopolitical and historical narratives to generate a diverse, ever-shifting body of work. Her recent projects have included a controversial “coloring book” about international racism, an intervention into the Museu Abelló’s African masks collection, and a video portrait of a Senegalese artist working on the streets of Barcelona.

Mariona Moncunill (Tarragona, 1984)

Mariona Moncunill investigates the intricacies of the contexts in which she works. Using observations accumulated from her extensive research, she builds narratives that revolve around how people engage socially with one another, while also often reflecting on the function and use-value of physical space. Her recent projects have told the stories of sites through a variety of formats, including suites of drawings, extended performative acts and discreet spatial interventions.

Alex Reynolds (Bilbao, 1978)

Alex Reynolds’ time-based media projects are concerned with the experiential aspect of encountering art and how a viewer positions him or herself in relation to narratives. She is particularly interested in how spectators’ interactions with her projects contribute to a layering effect in which delayed interpretations contribute to the “lives” of the works. Her recent projects, which have included site-specific sound and performance pieces intended for single viewers, have employed basic filmic elements to explore devices such as the gaze, empathy, and media manipulation.

Mireia Sallarès (Barcelona, 1973)

Drawing on sociology and cultural anthropology, Mireia Sallarès engages in a decidedly cross-disciplinary artmaking practice. Executed over the course of many months, or even several years, her in-depth research looks at the social norms, political forces, and belief systems that impact the life stories of people in specific geographic locations. From these narratives, which Sallarès believes are the building blocks of a site’s history and cultural heritage, she produces multimedia projects that encompass video, audio, publications, photographs, and printed materials, as well as residue from her research process.

Karin Campbell, curator

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Espai 13 exhibition program for 2011-12