

* J.M. Espai 13

LOREA ALFARO JON OTAMENDI

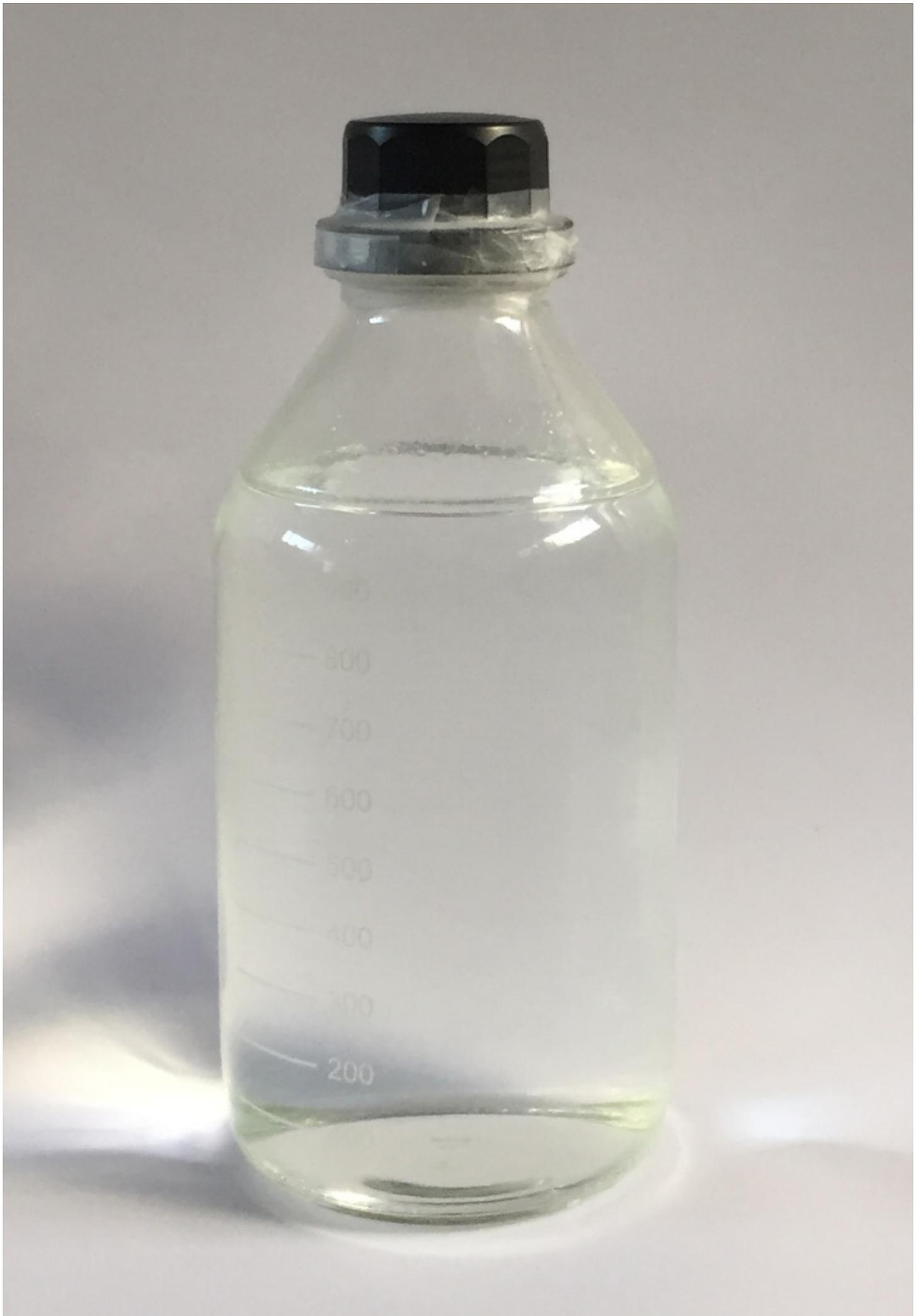
2020

26.03 - 18.07.2021

TURN IT ALL TURNS

EXHIBITION SERIES CURATED BY MARC NAVARRO

Fundació Joan Miró * J.M. Barcelona



The starting point for *2020*, the project Lorea Alfaro and Jon Otamendi present at the Espai 13, is the investigation and subsequent development of an aromatic essence. Over the past two years —its presentation to the public was originally planned for July 2020—the artists established a series of communications with manufacturers, laboratories, perfume designers and other agents involved in synthesising scents for commercial use. Something both artists integrate naturally into their projects became evident during these conversations: the way in which production processes, especially those of an industrial nature, affect the conditions of an object's presentation. When attempting to describe the compositional structure and sensory behaviour of a scent, Alfaro and Otamendi identified a language crisis: we often resort to metaphors, as well as to the symbolic characteristics or geographical origins of the ingredients with which a certain essence is made, in order to give a representational charge to something that is, in fact, manifested in an unintelligible way. The unstable and subjective nature of smells makes us utilise words and images —both tools of interpretation—in order to communicate and summarise the behaviour



and characteristics of a certain smell. At the same time, this places in parallel two processual models—the artistic and the scientific—which bring the speculative factor into play in similar ways.

Alfaro and Otamendi became interested in the fern or *fougère* olfactive family. In the laboratory, the technique known as chromatography allowed them to analyse the molecular structure of these plants, which grow in the coastal region near the place where the artists live and work. The objective of this analysis was to isolate the plant's odour molecules to then reproduce them synthetically, but, actually, the analysis raised doubts as to whether the synthesised substance would end up having any odour qualities at all: ferns are odourless plants and, therefore, their scent cannot be perceived by humans. This fact had an impact on the development of the research, which from that moment on, in addition to questioning the spectrum of senses from a capacitive perspective—what can and cannot be perceived—also brought into play the notion of presence: what spatial occupation strategies are appropriate for that which resists sight and smell? In that sense, a fern's aroma, or



what we assume as such, can only be described based on its context, by association. The smell we attribute to it is actually the product of the specific conditions of the environment in which it grows, such as the humidity of the soil or the nearby presence of other plant species. The experience in the laboratory led the artists to evaluate the technologies that currently allow us to create and access the sounds, images and, in this case, smells located outside our perceptual framework. The technicisation of these processes causes a disconnection between the models and their highly constructed and mediated representations.

2020 experiments with forms of dissemination. The absence of the perfume responds to a work methodology that adopts hollow structures—a perfume we cannot smell—to trigger and sustain specific motifs, images or texts, such as this one. At the same time, these structures highlight the strategies of circulation and communication that give the objects an enunciative quality.

On the other hand, the t-shirts, towels and light projections function as moulds, temporarily occupied by bodies, which also establish positions. These objects become



open to appropriation and to the appearance of possible echoes that go beyond the spatial and temporal framework of the exhibition. Alfaro and Otamendi generate a multi-speed coexistence: what already happened, what is happening in real time, and what is going to happen. Simultaneously, they place on the same plane—that of the exhibition—phenomena that refuse to be located, thereby atomising the space and submitting it to a state of permanent construction.

Marc Navarro Fornós

Lorea Alfaro and Jon Otamendi
2020 (lighting installation)

As part of *2020*, the current project by Lorea Alfaro and Jon Otamendi at Espai 13, the artists present a lighting installation located in a few selected spots around the Fundació Joan Miró. As they walk around the museum, visitors come across a number of signs, projected onto the walls and on the floor, that establish a dialogue with the building. The projections are located inside, in the hallways, but also outside, onto the Sculpture Garden next door to the museum. These projections will stay lit around the clock.



Lorea Alfaro (Estella, 1982) is an artist. Some of her recent projects are *No lo banalices*, CarrerasMugica (Bilbao, 2019) and <3 S P S <3, Tabakalera (San Sebastián, 2017). Her work has been shown at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao (2019), Azkuna Zentroa (Bilbao, 2018), Galería Moisés Pérez Albéniz (Madrid, 2017), Fundación-Museo Jorge Oteiza (Alzuza, 2017), Galería Elba Benítez (Madrid, 2016), Artium (Vitoria), the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2013) and CA2M (Móstoles, 2012).

Jon Otamendi (Getxo, 1978) is an artist. Some of his recent projects are *Instalación*, EtHall (Barcelona, 2019), *Antes de la imagen*, Cuarto asalto, Caniche Editorial (Bilbao, 2019) and *La palabra suceder*, Tabakalera (San Sebastián, 2018). His work has been shown at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao (2019), Azkuna Zentroa (Bilbao, 2018), San Telmo Museoa (San Sebastián, 2014), Museo Artium (Vitoria, 2014) and the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2013).

Credits:

T-shirts screen printing: Ibai Labega (Arranku Press)

Chromatography and chemical synthesis: Luis Bartolomé (SGIker)

Aknowledgments:

Luis Bartolomé, José Martinez (CIC bioGUNE), Pedro Uribarri (Barri Perfumes), Beatriz Setién, Maia Villot de Diego, Alazne Zubizarreta, Javier Rosales, Carlos Copertone, Patxi Eguiluz, Caniche Editorial, Martina Millà, Jordi Juncosa, Enric Gili, Jorge Bravo, Imma Carballés, Juande Jarillo, Fundació Joan Miró, Etxepare Euskal Institutua and most specially to Marc Navarro and Ibai Labega.



#Espai13Gira

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