

TRAPPED BY HISTORY: THE HETAIRAS, GALA GARRIDO'S RARE FEMININE ENUNCIATIONS

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"(...) before any word, opening of the inscription and deviation of the deferred time. It is always the historical-transcendental theme that comes back into play."

Michel Foucault: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

THE STORY: WHOSE?

History, or histories, in their need for ordering, of causes and effects, of rupture, of endings and beginnings, have obliterated particular characters within their statements. The reasons, in many cases, are to be found in the definitions given in sexuality, in ethnicities, or in foreignness, which expresses their difference, their queerness, their exteriority to the discourses constructed in totalizing, phallogocentric and heteronormative narratives.

Speeches and statements of an aside, of a strangeness constructed in the absence of the action or participation of the other. Condemned to be curious characters of history, to a permanent construction of themselves, to an absence-presence determined in a characteristic of continuous lack. Something happens with these characters that do not find a real hold within the historical narratives, only fabulations, an out of order, and even more if we consider that they are all an aside of the legitimizing statements, and in this aside history women emerge in the middle of a

(...) process of suturing, by virtue of which the subject is bound to the representation and fills the constitutive absence or gap so that it can complete the production of meaning (...) the subject is the constant point of appropriation by the discourse (...); the subject is simultaneously situated in (or by) the discourse and constructed in (or by) the discourse ¹

¹ Linker, Kate: "Representation and sexuality", in: *Art after Modernity*, Brian Wallis (ed.), Madrid, Akal/Arte Contemporáneo, 2001, p.396.

Historical discourses in which women are sutured within a series of affections that have marked them in the milestone of a configuring rarity and with it they are situated, constructed and reconstructed, however, by means of it they fracture the phallogentric historical discourse, by being included within a sensationalist consideration of complementarity.

Never in themselves, only erected, from a narrative lacking in which the "analysis of the statements and discursive formations opens a completely opposite direction: it wants to determine the principle according to which the only sets that have been stated have been able to appear. It tries to establish a law of rarity (...)"².

A narrative law that centers a non-existent female subject, emptied of her interiority within a fiction that constitutes her self-formation in the historical order of rarities. A separate order that rests - as Foucault writes - on the fact that not everything has been said, since the historical woman, uninhabited of her subjectivity, becomes only a screen to be appropriated, captured, charged with significance depending on the historical discourse that modifies her, obeying an empty place of significance in which she is placed and which continually seeks to be filled.

Exploitation of rarity, in the midst of significant formulations that make use of the relations of force and power of the masculine, of the phallogentric, and that conjure women within the being trapped by history in the interiority of affective and passive relations, in the face of the concordance of meaning determined by the law of the father, coming from the patriarchal order.

Stories built on the denial of women's participation, but even more on the denial of women's subjectivity and "In this structure women are disavowed, delegitimized: they do not represent but are represented."³, but what happens when women refuse to disappear from history, to fade into the interiority of the patriarchal order and continually reappear in its exteriority and their rarefaction emerges at the center of historical narratives.

² Foucault, Michel: *La arqueología del saber*, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1995, p. 201.

³ Linker, Kate: Ob. cit.: p. 397.

A call to the totalizing discourse of a history that continually tries, despite its relativizations, to fill the absences and hollows by establishing the order of the oddities in the discourses, and that entails - as Foucault argues - the following

(...) that not *everything* has ever been said; in relation to what could have been said in a natural language, in relation to the unlimited combination of linguistic elements, the statements (however numerous they may be) are always in deficit; based on the grammar and the vocabulary available at a given time, not everything has been said, but relatively few things have been said. It is therefore necessary to look for the principle of rarefaction (...) ⁴

And in that never has *everything* been said, the history of women enters fully, contemplated in the brightness of the opacity of their histories, marked by their sexuality, by their being situated, constructed and reconstructed by (in) the discourses that continually express their scansion, a disorder that decomposes them in the appearance of historical oddities.

Women who emerge continuously fracturing the patriarchal order, appropriated, reread, visited again and again with the sole intention of not normalizing their rarity, but to exacerbate it in the commitment not to limit them to a passive role, to a historical limitation of complementarity to men, as a gender, or in the reinforcement of male identity.

They present themselves in their rarefaction and in the order of their particularity, they assume the space assigned and signified in their disauthorization as active subjectivity, to raise from there their rupture in the discourses of the law of the father, and with it make evident the emptiness of the language of history by showing their traces in time, by placing again their bodies, their names and the conflicts generated by their rarity before the gaze of the subject who sees them but who at the same time are seen by them.

Subjects looked at back and forth that await the necessary historical reinscription in the disposition of discourses, outside of any aprioristic conception of gender and sexuality, since other interpretations are only possible.

(...) because of the effective strangeness of its statements, but which ignore it, however, and take, on the contrary, as a subject the compact richness of what is said, the analysis of discursive

⁴ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit.: p. 201.

formations turns to that same strangeness, which is taken as an explicit object and tries to determine its singular system, and at the same time, it gives an account of the fact that there may have been an interpretation in it.⁵

Statements that will emerge in the making of the explicit image of rarities. Historical women, narrated again and again, appropriated, reintegrated into the order of things, from the threatening behavior of the exposed of their emptied and singular subjectivity.

Declared space with which the property of being participants is constructed, conscious of the time to which they belonged and which allows them to speak again of that which has not been completely said in the totality of a narration, which is still supported by the silence of the texts that place women in the passive complementarity of the masculine within the patriarchal system.

THE HETAIRAS THE RARE FEMININE STATEMENTS BY GALA GARRIDO

The definition of woman marked in the rarity of the statements that determine her by her strangeness and her rupture of the totalizing historical ones leads Gala Garrido's nine series 'Las Hetairas' (2017), along the path of updating women who have had a role in history, but who have been confined to marginal repertoires of action. They are texts taken to silence, and now become manifest images about the condition of women, their participation and action in various historical times, however, the legitimizing narratives have transformed these women into fabricated characters, almost nonexistent in their subjectivity and autonomy.

Women who are seen in a desiring, superficial state, which situates them as objects rather than as subjects, since

A woman is assigned a place, and she learns to assume this (negative) place in accordance with this representation. For this reason, sexual difference cannot be considered as a gender function (...) but as a historical formation, continuously produced, reproduced and crystallized in the practices of signification.⁶

Practices that place women in another space, in another place, and that have constituted a relationship in which the shortcomings of power and public

⁵ Ibid: p.203

⁶ Linker, Kate: Ob. cit.: p. 397.

behavior given to men are placed upon them. These women in permanent lack are considered within an artificial construction in which they only express themselves on the surface, depending on the system of the patriarchal order through which they have access to the symbolic structures of power and its execution. They are disposed in their rarity, not as cultural heirs of the laws, nor of the universal precepts ordered by the father's commandment.

In this enunciative space, delimited by history and its relativizations, women have not attained a leading role but, on the contrary, continue in the absence that reinforces power, in the principles that are found

(...) in the limit that separates them from what has not been said, in the instance that makes it emerge to the exclusion of all others (...) The discursive formation is not (...) a totality in development (...) that drags with it in an unformulated discourse what it no longer says (...) it is a distribution of languages, of voids, of absences, of limits and cut-offs.⁷

Languages, cuts, absences and limits that have confined the narrative rarity of historical women, taken and updated by Gala Garrido within a new and contrived visualization, in which they are taken to the field of the image as their historicity is contemporaryized in the face of the relevance of the construction of a supposed female identity, intentionally expanded by the artist beyond the image itself.

Hence, 'Las Hetairas' is presented to us in a visual field limited to a reduced number of historical women, with the intention of underlining the centrality in the rarity of their presences. Each of them have marked points of rupture that have not been interpreted by themselves, as they have always been taken as an affirmation of the order of the missing, as objects-images without depth, neither different, nor equal, only rarities placed and constructed by (in) the discourses "that have deeply influenced our self-formations"⁸ on the condition of womanhood, and that the artist questions by bringing them back to the space of the visible in the construction of a scenographic artificiality.

Garrido, based on them, questions the formulation of the feminine image as a historical construction in the interiority of the fabulation of these women and

⁷ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit.: pp. 201-202.

⁸ Foster, Hal: *Bad New Times. Arte, crítica, emergencia*, Madrid, Akal/Arte Contemporáneo, 2017, p. 17.

their significance as 'hetairas' whose closest definition for our time would be that of courtesan, however the 'hetairas' possessed a social classification different from the woman confined in the gynecium, a place of habitation of women in permanent disposition of the male subjects or of the prostitutes who sustained sexual relations as an economic exchange. They, the 'hetairas', are found in other places of social action, within the difficulty of their definition.

Because,

(...) any woman who stepped out of the role of wife was considered as such, even if she did not maintain any kind of sexual dealings or offer favors to men (...) the ἑταῖρα, who were not prostitutes themselves, (...) men considered them companions rather than prostitutes, despite sexual dealings. They were the only truly free women in Athens, since they could attend various events: they went to the agora, to contests of different kinds, and to symposia. They were also educated, for they learned to read, write, converse wittily and probably erotic arts."⁹

Not obeying the role socially assigned to women in the order of discourses breaks with the given sense of behavior -and as Judith Butler states-, "The role of women in the order of discourses is not to obey.

Whether as a linguistic and cultural law that makes itself known as the inevitable organizing principle of sexual difference or as an identity forged through primary identification (...), the meanings of gender are circumscribed within a narrative framework that unifies certain legitimate sexual subjects while excluding from intelligibility sexual identities and discontinuities that defy narrative beginnings and ends (...) ¹⁰

Differentiation and discontinuity that the artist locates in her 'Hetairas'. A strangeness in the order of discourse that confines them to the fact of being women with restricted independence in terms of their historical role, since it has been marked by their sexuality and not by their subjectivity or participation.

Hence, the historical construction of the condition of women is trapped within narratives arising from the presence of the notion of subject, delimited to the masculine as universal centrality, where women are only expressed as

⁹ Keuls, E. C.: *The reign of the phallus: Sexual politics in ancient Athens*, University of California, University of California, New York. Press, California. 1985, cited by: Hernández Muñoz, Noemí: "El Discurso Feminista de las Heteras en las Dos muertes de Sócrates, de García-Valiño", in: *FORTVNATAE*, No. 26, 2015, p.58.

¹⁰ Butler, Judith: "Problemas de los géneros, teoría feminista y discurso psicoanalítico", in: *Feminism/Posmodernism*, Linda J. Nicholson (Comp.), Buenos Aires, Feminaria, 1992, pp.81-82.

reflections, in the specular sense, lacking the authority given by the presence of the phallus, but even beyond this, lacking intellectual independence and above all the capacity for transformative action of historical time.

In this way, the affectations generated by the historical discourses and their narratives subject women to a double operation insofar as their rarity, which has

(...) tried to *genderize* - to sexually mark - the notion of subject; to historicize it. To genderize and to historicize are, (...), two intimately connected strategic moves that feminism has shown to be extremely crucial for any practice that aspires to create a critical point of view on the social and cultural concretions of discourse.¹¹

Garrido begins her series at the beginning of the *genderize* that marks female presences, with the intention not only to re-stage these fabulous women, but also to make aware of their oddities in the order of discourses. The artist inaugurates the staging of her 'hetairas' with the recreation of Aspacia of Miletus, a relevant figure of Athens in the 5th century BC.

The story of Aspasia, full of gaps and voids, presents, in the deliberate image elaborated by the artist, a young woman, whose attributes lead us to the image of a foreign woman, born in Miletus, and who was defined as a 'hetero'. A foreigner could not marry an Athenian, and above all cultivated and educated, but absent of the power to represent herself as her own subject, as a consequence her story is blurred in its strangeness (Img.1).

¹¹ Colaizzi, Julia: "Introducción", in: *Feminismo y teoría del discurso*, Julia Colaizzi (ed.), Madrid, Cátedra, 1990, p.14.



Img.1. Gala Garrido: Aspacia of Miletus, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

Of her we know the fact of her being a 'hetaira', which confirms her education, however her role in history is only expressed in her influence on Pericles, her intellectual capacity coupled with a profound discrimination not only as a woman but also as a foreigner. Aspacia expresses her rarity, in the singularity of her presence not only sexed but also foreign to the territory in which she is found.

Pure rarity in the order of discourse, which is picked up in the constituent marginality of the environment of women thought outside the normative, but in that outside the image of Aspacia claims its enunciation. An enunciation that confers her a statute not specular of the masculine, nor seen in lack, but a historical enunciation that narrativizes her presence from the understanding and questioning of the operation of *genderize*, as a sexed mark, which directly affects the action of historicizing from considering her as a universal non-subject, as not the bearer of truth, but is located within a negative valuation of her actions in the deficiencies of the feminine, that is to say, in her rarity.

Aspasia became one of the political targets of comedians and opponents of Pericles' party. They attacked her mainly because of the influence she exercised over Pericles and because she ran a women's school which, (...), was dedicated to turning young women into heterosexuals. However, it cannot be affirmed that this was Aspasia's intention, since it is also possible that she educated women as an end in itself, especially if we take into account that Aspasia came from Ionia, where the education of men and women was not as different as it was in Athens. In any case, because of her occupation as regent of a women's school she was accused of impiety by the comic poet Hermippus and the soothsayer Diopites, both opposed to the government of Pericles.¹²

Aspasia is inscribed in history through a circulation of narratives in continuous pugnacity. She does not belong to the order of the law of the father and confined in her rarity she exercises an underlying power in the relationships of great men, questioned by the society of her time, as a woman, foreigner and hetaira, she expresses a historical content capable of transforming the presence of the narratives created on the apparent absence of the female subject, which in spite of this shows a narrative in continuous and necessary construction.

Gala Garrido, once again places this complex narrative; that of the historical woman in her rarity before our eyes. The image brought from other times by the artist shows the circulation of narratives in which a non-historized feminine existence continues, since it starts from an exclusion declared in its non-presence if not in an exteriority that ratifies the arbitrary agreement of the masculine as the order of things, as a state of domination, and of the feminine as subjection to that agreement, in which it is "Defined as "negative" according to the terms of sexual polarity, the woman functions as a category against which the masculine privilege is achieved: the value of dominance is increased through the negative value of woman."¹³

Valor, which centralizes women in a morally condemned category, that of hetaira, as women who render services to a dominant, masculine class, dedicated to power, men who must possess the feminine in a definition that is at their level. To ratify this position, history has generated pertinent fabulations of

¹² Hernández Muñoz, Noemí: "El Discurso Feminista de las Heteras en las Dos muertes de Sócrates, de García-Valiño", in: *FORTVNATAE*, No. 26, 2015, p.59.

¹³ Linker, Kate: Ob. cit. p. 404.

feminine oddities and here Garrido emphasizes his series by means of the construction of the narrativized image of Rhodopis, fabulized as the Cinderella of antiquity. (Img.2)



Img.2. Gala Garrido: Rhodopis, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

The particular story of Rhodopis is constructed within a fictional narrative. She, Greek, sold as a slave in the Egyptian market is the background of a fantastic story that Garrido knows and leads to the visual field in the realization of a scene aimed at highlighting the physicality of the model with which the image of the slave is updated, but there a sandal in the hand of Rhodopis is the focus of attention.

The rarefaction of this woman emerges in history not in her valuation as a subject, but emerges through a discursivity that erases her character of hetaira, of woman with a participation in the context of her time, in the midst of a dreamy invention that fulfills the feminine need marked by the order and universal truth of woman in her conforming negativity. The story of this Rhodopis is narrated by

the Greek geographer Strabo, in his book *Geographica*, written between 7 BC and 24 AD. There he describes a woman:

(...) graceful in beauty, intelligence and education, sold as a slave to a human trafficker named Ladmon, originally from the Aegean island of Samos, who subsequently sold her in Egypt. (...) the day comes, when luck or fate usually changes the course of people's lives, while she was taking a bath in the waters of the Nile, (...) a falcon snatches one of her sandals, taking her to Memphis, where the Pharaoh was, (...). The falcon, who was the god Horus himself, flew over the Pharaoh's head, dropping the sandal in his lap (...) Immersed in the curiosity of such an event and taking into account the imminent message of the gods, he set out to find the owner of the garment, sending emissaries throughout the kingdom in search of the maiden (...).¹⁴

This narrative concludes with the happy and expected marriage of Rhodopis to the Pharaoh. Far from what may be the role of this woman, the fiction produces an object and subject emptied of proper action through a "linguistic performativity, which indicates that what some forms of speech do have more consistency than what others do (the efficacy of truth games) (...)"¹⁵ .

Games of truth generated from the order of the discourse that encloses women in their rarefaction and that the artist makes evident by bringing back to the present the image of Rhodopis. Image of the woman who awaits the desired outcome for women who, taken out of their painful condition, reach the state of comfort planned for women: marriage, and even more so if the fictional resolution is with a man of great importance.

The true story is hidden under the linguistic and historical performativity. Rhodopis was a hetaira and as such Garrido locates her, does not hide her behind her fabulation and the image generated in the scenography composed by the artist revives the myth of *"the concubine with a heart of gold"*, (...) mourned by her lovers."¹⁶ , but emptied of individual meaning.

¹⁴ Pereira, Leticia: "Rhodopis, The Egyptian Cinderella-Fiction and Reality", in: *steemitt*, <https://steemit.com/spanish/@leticiapereira/rhodopis-la-cenicienta-egipcia-ficcin-y-realidad-faq0aie2>., Accessed: 18/03/2020, (online).

¹⁵ Larruari, Maite: *La espiral foucaultiana. Del pragmatismo de Foucault al pensamiento de la diferencia sexual*, Vol. 138, Valencia, Episteme, 1996, p.10.

¹⁶ Pereira, Leticia: Ob. cit.

In this sense, both Aspacia of Miletus and Rhodopis shape in the series layers of reading on the rarity of the historical statements that have served Garrido as an excuse to delve into the history of women. A history centered on the order of the discourses concentrated in the formulation of the law of the father, generated through a discursivity that places the man -sexual- as heir of the universal truth and where the woman appears as a representation adapted to the male canon and in continuous dependence on his authority, as evidenced by the artist in the history of these women.

Women who participate in power but are tied to a constituent negativity within the order of discourse in which they express their oddities and here Garrido goes one step further by unveiling through the image the historical discourses that bind them, for this he places his emphasis on women who inevitably must be mentioned and in his series he takes them as an example of the rarefaction of the statements to be *genderized*, with the intention of producing a displacement on and in the history of women as subjects of full independence.

In his appropriation of the oddities Garrido will form another layer of visual reading, and here the recreated Cleopatra will function as another layer of reading of a common point: the management of power through the female figure as a lover, as a curse, from the universal sexed truths, and not in the necessary operation of historicizing.

Operation meaning:

(...) to locate each of these socio-cultural concretions within a network of interconnected and interacting practices that operate at a specific point in time and space, to show how their effects can only be understood within the complex field of power(s) that articulate the connections within different practices.¹⁷

Interconnected and interacting practices that in the stories of women and their connections with the power of discourses and actions, are diluted within the performativity of narratives and the sexed truths that mark them. Cleopatra is the irrefutable proof of this, historicized in her shortcomings, valued in her beauty, mythomized by literature and cinema, she appears as a screen-surface now appropriated once again by Garrido. (Img.3)

¹⁷ Colaizzi, Julia: Ob. cit.: p.14.



Img.3. Gala Garrido: Cleopatra, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

Garrido's Cleopatra reenacts our self-fashioning of the feminine in its cultural conformation from the use of the established discourses in which she appears "Converted into an icon of beauty and pigeonholed in the role of *femme fatale*, her myth was nourished by the written sources of Roman tradition."¹⁸ . Narratives that stabilize a discourse of rarity, trapped by the regulations of her location in history, and in which innumerable appropriations of her, of her narrative, demonstrate the field of powers that have articulated Cleopatra's historical presence in a distorted discursive sense.

Meaning built from the significance given to the absence of a proper feminine subjectivity, seen only in the reflection that the masculine allows, and that the artist takes as an excuse to focus on the discourses permanently built on the history of these women. Discourses that have cemented closed ways of thinking

¹⁸ Gil Paneque Cristina: "Cleopatra, queen of Egypt", in: *La Vanguardia*, <https://www.lavanguardia.com/historiayvida/historia-antigua/20161124/47312298634/cleopatra-reina-de-egipto.html>, Accessed: 19/03/2020, (online).

about the historical woman, about the experience that these have produced as corporealities configured incorporally, understood in a significance that has been established through interpretative modes of interpretation that locate women, their meaning and their participation in the network of historical discourses, from narratives that do not produce reality, but relationships, ways of being trapped on the surfaces.

The incorporeal, in the feminine, marks the field of rarity, in the mixture of women's bodies, of the norms that subject them, and of the language with which is created -as Maite Larruari writes- a discourse and an object of discourse, which in the case of women is taken and retaken from a diversity of representational fields, which, however, continue to focus on the vision of a female object dependent on fictionalized narratives, forced to fulfill an aestheticization of "the enigma of the feminine and soften its traditional inaccessibility. It is the way, in short, to offer the woman (...), dispossessed of herself"¹⁹.

A presence constructed by interpretation that marks a presignifying order, prior to the order of recognition, in the absence of phallic power as the primordial entity of paternal law, which arises in the beginning - as Judith Butler argues - from a "sexuality without power, then power arrives and creates both the culturally relevant sexual distinction (gender) and hierarchy and domination."²⁰

Spaces that, like gender, hierarchy and domination, run through the statements on women's histories and that in the layers of reading of the same executed in Gala Garrido's images amplify the field of the incorporeal and its oddities, not in a strictly temporal, diachronic sense, but in the sense of the survival of the statements constructed in the presence of a historical ideology arising from the initiative of the paternal law.

From there, the artist expands through diverse contextual and temporal spaces with which she demonstrates the immanence of the postulates of the historical confinement of women and the place in which the unique statements are

¹⁹ Lipovetsky, Gilles: *La tercera mujer. Permanencia y revolución de lo femenino*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 2007, p.110.

²⁰ Butler, Judith: Ob. cit.: p.82.

expressed with which the incorporeal is hidden, dominated and hierarchized in its rarity, however, the uniqueness of the discourse of the paternal law can be put in evidence outside of all temporality. In this sense, the series of Garrido's 'Hetairas', places its preponderance.

This gallery of women expands from the situation of seduction and feminine beauty to the field of knowledge expressed in them, not by them, but as a small detail next to the aestheticization of the so-called beautiful sex, always in a state of conforming lack. There the artist opens the discourse towards other women fictionalized in their rarities, in the incorporeal of their presences, since they emerge again appropriate "(...) always occupying their own place. They are reinstalled in a space that is supposed to be entirely unfolded and that does not entail any reduplication"²¹ in the vision and consciousness that the artist has operated in the opening of the historical statement before the unsaid and the singularity of her place.

Garrido, in this field of the unsaid, takes other historical women, handling simultaneous times in different contexts, with the intention not only to take them out of history and to express again their mythography, but to make evident the confinement produced in a place of original identification, culturally constructed, which is halfway between the opening of resignifications and recontextualizations of the statements, and which for the artist function as forms of rarities with which to visualize again transhistorical essentialist forms of the identity of the feminine gender.

In this way, the generation of the statements in their rarities transcends territories, relations and forms of power by being *gendered*, sexually marked, as the artist expresses in the images of Diana de Poitiers (France, 1500-1556) and that of the Malinche (Mexico, 1500-?). Both women are part of different histories of power, of different socio-cultural performances, yet simultaneous in time. What is there in common in them? or what unites them in the discursive order of the law of the father, thought of as universal truth?

Diana of Poitiers is characterized by a great beauty, and like other historical women are not seen on a reproductive level, but on the level of sexual

²¹ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit. p. 202.

pleasure. A level they reach through an appearance marked by the "requirement of a fair complexion, (...) the use of cosmetics, sophisticated hairstyles, luxurious ornaments, corsets and high heels: so many codes or artifices intended to mark a higher social rank and that reveal the links between the cult of feminine beauty and aristocratic values." ²²

Values, which will serve as a masquerade for the efficacy of a marginalized subjectivity, individually constructed on the plane of knowledge. Thus the image of Diana de Poitiers by Gala Garrido expands in her beauty within a scenario in which the main attribute of the scene is herself, in the splendor of her sexuality.

Surrounded by the artificiality of the environment, this deliberate image is based on an identity marked by the sensual as a capacity to trap the other. Bow and arrow at the feet of the artist's Diana, as well as the dogs that accompany her, direct us to another Diana, Diana the hunter. Strategy with which the artist generates the subtext that directs us to that other mythical Diana, equally known for her inestimable beauty and capacity of dominion over the natural and the human. (Img.4)

The women appropriated and represented by the artist overlap in their stories, regardless of their temporalities or legitimizing narratives. They are united in their oddities, in their being outside the order of the system of discourses that have been established with respect to women, within the cultural and historical productions in the evolution of time, in which a continuous qualification of their sexuality appears as a distinctive, as an object, and not as a subject of discourse, centered on their autonomy.

Historical rarities, centered on mythical literatures, which emerge from the artist's gaze in the concatenation of the signifiers given to the feminine gender on the surface, which tries to go beyond by staging them in these images that complement each other in their narratives and in which they are used,

(...) the description does not consist, with regard to an utterance, in finding out which non-saying occupies the place, nor how it can be reduced to a silent and common text, but on the contrary, which singular seat it occupies, which junctions in

²² Lipovetsky, Gilles: Ob. cit.: p. 99.

the system of formations allow to locate it and how it is isolated in the general dispersion of utterances.²³



Img.4. Gala Garrido: Diana de Poitiers, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

Women, scattered throughout history, narrated and mythologized, are taken by Garrido to the visual plane, by weaving the discursive bridges of their singularities, in which the forms of apprehension given through historical statements are extracted in the scenes constructed by the artist. In them, the artifice of the narrative is expanded through the attributes with which each of these women has been marked. The artist places the emphasis on a simultaneous timelessness with which she questions the confinement of the feminine as a category of being to be looked at, of being to be desired, of being to be sexualized in negativity, and there it is possible to isolate the general dispersion of her statements as 'hetairas', of lovers with knowledge and knowledge.

At this point, the temporal lines of history and territorial conformations given by the phallogentric discourses of historical narratives are dismantled by the artist, as she leads in her series to women who are united by the character of their

²³ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit.: pp. 202-203.

rarity, and here Garrido locates the Malinche, absolute expression of difference, of otherness. She emerges from another world, from a different temporality, however, she is narrated from a myth that appears as the foundation of the narratives about the feminine in all areas and that "builds a discrete gender identity and a relatively fixed discursive location"²⁴ , thus becoming an essentialist narrative about the feminine.

La Malinche accesses history through a negative condition, determined in her knowledge, and which has marked her as a traitor in the process of conquest and colonization of Mexico, in which she played the important role of translator of the conquistador Hernán Cortez. The timeline that establishes her presence in history is simultaneous to that of Diana of Poitiers, both confined to the narration of a condemnable female sexuality as lovers of prominent men, both contemplated in negativity, in moral reprobation.

Garrido, in this appropriation of discursive essentialism, explores a historical incorporeal, gestated in a multiplicity of language mixtures that have defined this woman as the culprit "**of all national misfortunes** and of all lost battles in the history of Mexico"²⁵ . The reason for this lies in the role played by her and in a great simplification of history, accompanied by the historical and analytical essentialism that continually expounds on the condition and definition of women.

The artist's Malinche (Img.5), brought before us requires new interpretations before the expression of knowledge and not the simplification that it has had through a construction given by the order of the law of the father, present in the historical statements with which this woman is excluded or marginalized in negativity, seen in the rarity "(...) of the statements, the form full of gaps and dents of the enunciative field, the fact that few things, in total, can be said"²⁶ under the order of the *genderized* essentialist speeches.

²⁴ Butler, Judith: Ob. cit.: p.82.

²⁵ Brooks, Dario: "La Malinche: the defiant life of the most despised woman in Mexican history", in: *B B C*, <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-47503433>, Accessed: 20/03/2020, (online).

²⁶ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit. p. 203.



Img.5. Gala Garrido: La Malinche, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

Gala Garrido, through her 'hetairas', expresses the order of essentialist discourses that expand in time, without geographical distinction. The 'hetairas' are not their own subjects, nor participants of great deeds, nor of diplomatic achievements, nor expression of autonomy, their presences are only seen as an attachment of power from a reflex role, assigned in a never to be recognized in the place of their historical singularity, and

Having never considered her labor as such labor, but as part of the mysterious 'mechanisms' of nature, she has been stripped of her products in the same way that nature has been; she has always been owned, never really possessed; always the property of a man under whose name she was subsumed.²⁷

Under this consideration of mysterious mechanisms, women have been stripped and possessed within narratives that populate different historical times. Discursive times in which it does not matter their territorial or social origin, their scope as influential characters or participants in power. They are only shadows of amatory support, beds of rest for the men who possess them, women who

²⁷ Colaizzi, Julia: Ob. cit. p. 17.

show an intelligence about the other, but always centered on sexuality, and on the action of sex as dominion and condemnation.

Rarity configuring the 'hetairas' of which the artist opens a new discursive layer in her series by appropriating the image of Madame de Pompadour (Fig. 6). Garrido operates again in this image the appropriation of the rarity, but this time it is not only *gendered*, it also expresses the mark of social ascent denied to the bourgeoisie in their access to the nobility. Madame de Pompadour, like the other 'hetairas' produced by the artist, breaks with diverse cultural and social schemes of her time in which the only way to influence, or to be part of the power, was to become a courtesan.

Fiction, knowledge, cunning, sexuality, are the narrative lines that confine the history of this woman, as a substantial explanation of her presence, which represents in the artist's 'hetairas' a topographical model that situates the discursive incorporeals that attend to the law of the father in terms of their essentialism. Madame de Pompadour trapped in a stable substance in the interpretation of a generalized identity given to the feminine that fails to explain itself as a narrative of autonomous participation in the fields of history and that does not attend to defined territories, hence the extension in its essentialism.



Img.6. Gala Garrido: Madame de Pompadour, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

If the artist recognizes something in these women, and in Madame de Pompadour, it is the presence of knowledge and not only of a fictionalized story about them, whose origin of rarity appears linked to a fanciful creation of a reflex personality to be possessed, as can be seen in the story that describes her:

(...) born Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, (...) the most prominent mistress of King Louis XV of France (...) educated by the Ursuline nuns to be a brilliant wife and a cultivated woman. (...) she belonged to a bourgeois family of great economic power (...) her youth was noted for her beauty and her intellect, befriending, through famous Parisian *salonnières*, characters of the stature of Voltaire and Montesquieu, with whom she would have contact throughout her life (...).) With her whole family pushing her to fulfill her destiny and live up to being the "prey of the king", (...) So that she could live in Versailles, the separation from her husband was legalized, a noble title of a family that had left no descendants was unearthed and she was named Marquise de Pompadour.(...)

The descriptions of her contemporaries point to her as someone friendly and who, in principle, got along well with almost everyone - even with the Queen, who gave her all kinds of attention and for whom Pompadour even said she would die - but not so with the king's sons and his allies who called her

"maman putain" (mother whore). For many, despite her charms, she would never cease to be considered an upstart, an outcast who had used her body to gain royal favor.²⁸

Condemnation hovers over the role of this woman in history, admitted but not recognized. All of them provide a genealogical reading of the 'hetairas': women, foreigners, others and declassed. Madame is the rarity that does not comply with the social normative statements of the 18th century French nobility, but in this singular woman, the artist goes a step further in the attributes of her singularity.

Garrido consciously places, in the hands of his Madame Pompadour, a book, which as in many of his representations arises as an attribute of knowledge, but in this case highlights the sexual history of singularity. A text by the Marquis de Sade 'Philosophy in the boudoir' is carried by this historical rarity. A text that speaks of different layers of the human mind through the numerous sexual experiences of Eugenia its protagonist. Experiences that break through all kinds of boundaries in both pleasure and enjoyment, and in the multiple faces of 18th century morality.

Gala Garrido, reactivates the essentialist narrative of this historical woman, as uncontrollable or morally rejectable, at the same time that she builds a bridge to the literary characters with which she identifies herself, since authors like the Marquis de Sade or George Bataille, have appeared in other of her series in the representation of their texts, which like this one, are placed as dynamos of reflection (Img.7). (Img.7).

In this sense, the subtexts created by the artist continuously refer to the oddities of the discourses, to spaces that pretend to be silenced and that inevitably conform to the discourses of the order of the father who imparts disciplinary narratives and sanctions based on the cultural taboos that are found in our self-formations, in which what can be seen and what cannot be seen, what remains hidden, are combined and that the artist places in evidence at the moment in which she makes a simultaneity of calls that impels us to read in her images.

²⁸ Catta, Victoria: "Madame de Pompadour, the touch of a woman", in: *History Today*, <https://www.historytoday.com/ar/madame-pompadour-el-toque-una-mujer-n895>, Accessed: 23/03/2020, (online).



Gala Garrido: Homage to Bataille, Bellmer and Mauro, 2011.
(Courtesy of the artist)

Hence, the 'hetairas' function in the genealogy of a narrative that opens towards diverse fields of the human, where its singular interpretation, centered on the image of the unsaid woman, not recognized in her work, enabled, by the artist, to establish her difference in terms of the property of an exegesis.

(...) whose very existence is only possible because of the affective strangeness of the utterances, but which ignore it, however, and take, on the contrary, the compact richness of what is said as their subject, the analysis of discursive formations turns to that same strangeness, which it takes as an explicit object and tries to determine its singular system, and at the same time it gives an account of the fact that there may have been an interpretation in it²⁹

Interpretations of women that in their enunciative rarity, in their singular system give account of the essentialist discursivities that mark them, to which the artist appeals within the artifice of the scenarios, of their attributes and takes sexuality as the explicit center of the process that has confined them in the richness of their ambiguities between feminine/masculine, sexuality/power, *genderized body/knowledge*, and here in this particular genealogy of the 'hetairas' added to

²⁹ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit. p. 203.

a topography of the discourse of the law of the father Gala Garrido opens one more door towards the presence of the feminine rarefaction in the images of two women plus one that has been treated with the epitome of 'the liberator' and Bolivar's lover, Manuela Sáenz of Ecuadorian origin (1785-1856) and another defined as a spy and lover of Napoleon III, the Countess of Castiglione (1837-1899), Italian and cultured.

Both try to be autonomous, free women, but their history, like that of all women, led to the image by the artist, are trapped in the repetition of a normative subordinated to the masculine, with which from the origin women are fixed or their meaning is stabilized depending on the statements or narratives, in this case quasi-historical, that depend on their circulation.

(...) within the culture *-and-* serve to confirm and reduplicate the positions of the subject. Representation *-and interpretation-* is almost never neutral; it works to normalize and define the subjects it addresses, placing them, according to class or sex, in active or passive relations vis-à-vis meaning. Over time, these fixed positions acquire the status of identities and, in their broadest scope, of categories. Hence, the forms of discourse are at the same time forms of definition, means of limitation and modalities of power.³⁰

The representation, and the interpretation, of the emptied feminine subjectivity, has been throughout history captured within the essentialism of patriarchy that tries to normalize its presence in the subject image, sutured to the masculine and the narrative of Manuela Sáenz ratifies, once again, the normalization of a category defined in sex, in the *gendered*.

Manuela Sáenz continues to express a mode of discursive power that confines her to the manipulation of her autonomy and does not lead her to the historical operation of temporal and contextual relations; however, the place to which she is confined in history can be evidenced at the moment when the image is placed before our eyes again, and here the artist locates the discourse of the rarity that threatens the law of the father.

Gala Garrido appropriates the well-known narrative of Manuela Sáenz, in which she condenses the image of a woman who challenged a time in the support of a cause, that of independence. A narrative that tries to be dismantled in this challenging image whose intentional scenario is not that of subjection to the

³⁰ Linker, Kate: Ob. cit.: p.396. (*The italics are ours*).

masculine, but that of the concretion of knowledge (Img.8), a place only allowed to the non-procreative woman, who was allowed a different performance given by her rarefaction and justified by a classificatory narrative of women already initiated in ancient Greece, that of the 'hetaira'.

(...) known as **the lover of the Latin American independence hero Simón Bolívar**, whom she met in Quito and with whom she left for other lands (...) Her role as the **Liberator of the Liberator** has also been widely spread, an epithet given to her by Bolívar himself, after the Ecuadorian woman discovered a plot against him and saved him from an assassination attempt, on September 25, 1828, in Bogotá, Colombia.

"She was excluded from the history of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century most historians highlighted, fundamentally, her beauty, her intelligence and her generosity in love, as well as her profile as [Bolívar's] lover."

"as the fighter who **broke with the strict norms in force at the time**, wore military uniform, learned to use weapons, developed espionage tactics to help the independence plans". She was also **"an early feminist"** who disobeyed the social schemes of her time, imposed by traditional morality and millenary patriarchalism, by leaving her husband to follow the man she loved, at a time when the Church did not accept the breaking of the sacred bond of marriage³¹ .

A rupture of behavioral norms, of social strata, surrounds this woman's narrative, but does not explain it by itself, but in its rarity.

An out of order of the statements that is able to permanently reconstruct its history, out of all logic of relationships and pre-established discourses in which the rarity extends in time accentuating its outside, its other place, as to the unfolding it can achieve in the interpretative vision given by the artist, "(...) not only through copying or translation, but by means of exegesis, commentary and internal proliferation of meaning. Because the statements are rare, they are gathered in totalities that unify them, and the senses that inhabit each one of them multiply". ³²

³¹ Romero G, Edgar: "La facta más importante y menos conocida de Manuela Sáenz, la Libertadora del Libertador", in: *RT*, <https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/300373-manuela-saenz-libertadora-bolivar-feminista-latinoamerica>, Accessed: 27/03/2020, (online).

³² Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit. p. 203.



Img.8 Gala Garrido: Manuela Sáenz, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

Historical statements that in the rarefaction granted to women, are collected by Gala Garrido in the realization of a genealogy of the rarities of women marked by sexuality, and not heirs of the order of the father, because they are conceived within fictional stories of faithful or treacherous lovers, not locked in the gynaecium, nor dedicated to reproductive work. Women who suffer from the absence of their subjectivity in the interpretations that continually consider them in complementarity.

Garrido examines once again the place of feminine complementarity, by gathering these women, in her particular genealogy of rarities, under the difficult definition of 'hetaira', coming from the patriarchal order, which is taken by the artist in a deferred time with which she reviews the historical postulates in which women are trapped in an idea of

(...) subject (male) as One, that is, as a stable and unified principle of organization and control, only possible because its negativity was refused and displaced towards a second term, Woman, whose (vital) function within the system of signification was never assumed as such. Identified with "Nature" and juxtaposed to "Culture" (which was understood, as equivalent to Man) the notion of woman has functioned as a mirror in front of men's eyes, whose flat surface only returned the reassuring

mirror image of the unity and uniqueness of a subject that not only contains itself but is capable of self-production as such.³³

Trapped in a definition that the artist appropriates: the 'hetaira' conceived in negativity from the origin. These rare women break the system of the imposed order, out of all narrative and signifying historicity, yet they are returned by the father's discourse in the sense of a reflex space, never in autonomy, linked to someone, dependent as their vital function. A function with which the woman is understood in the reproduction as opposed to the production signified by the man. Hence, its mythification and absence as a historical subject.

One more woman, signified in the order of the father in a reflex sense, closes the intentional series of Gala Garrido's 'Hetairas', in which these women evidence the discourse that has trapped them in history. Discourse that for the artist opens in a new space of meaning about women, in which the meanings of the universal father order, without fixed territory, still manifest that not everything has been said, that narratives must be revised within new interpretations as "(...) ways of reacting to the enunciative poverty -that *has interpreted the definition and role of women-* and compensate it by the multiplication of meaning; a way of speaking from it and in spite of it".³⁴

Seeing and speaking of herself as the center of an individual discourse of presence with which the Countess of Castiglione defined her subjectivity emptied by the social order. Like the other women staged by the artist, the Countess of Castiglione is estimated in history as a great lover, thereby erasing her autonomy as a subject, her participation in a historical context and time in which she played a decisive role in the unification of Italy, and beyond that, the figure of this woman is explored in the photographic medium of the moment. Medium, with which she captured the evolution of herself as an image in permanent mutation in the sense of the image as a field of decisions.

The name of Virginia Oldoini, Countess of Castiglione, is linked to the political intrigues of the Second Empire, to the splendors of the Court of Tuileries and to the radiance of a cosmopolitan Paris, capital of fashion and pleasures.

(...) Virginia Oldoini married at a very young age to Count Verasis of Castiglione. Cousin of Cavour and close friend of

³³ Colaizzi, Julia: Ob. cit. p. 15.

³⁴ Foucault, Michel: Ob. cit. p. 203.

Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, King of Piedmont, she was sent to Paris in 1856 to defend the cause of Italian unity before Napoleon III. Her haughty beauty caused a sensation at Court. The same year, she became the Emperor's mistress. Separated from her husband, she kept many relationships in the world of high finance, aristocracy and politics. Virginia de Castiglione marked her time. The photographs that represent her illustrate most of the publications of the time. She is the subject of some five hundred photographs taken over forty years (1856-1895) in collaboration with the imperial court photographer, Pierre-Louis Pierson (1822-1913).³⁵

The Countess of Castiglione, like the other 'hetairas', is imprisoned in her condition of not being a historical subject, not belonging to a context of change in which she participates, but condemned to the role of the lover. A role capable of breaking with the established orders within a look of curiosity for her daring. Gala Garrido recreates this woman from one of the portraits made by Pierre-Louis Pierson in which the Countess hides behind the mask that she herself has decided to wear (Img.9).

Her fictionalized life is treated as fascinating. A valuation that distances her from all representativeness and that accuses of the interpretative poverty given to the objectified woman, only desired, absent, produced as a narrative emptied of meaning, therefore, appropriated by the order in the rarity that is expressed as a determinant of her necessary autonomy. A face that disappears behind the mask and the gesture. Only image, only screen, ready to be filled with meaning, turned "(...) into a device carrying metaphysical "Lack", placing it outside the symbolic, outside the social, outside the cultural (...) a dark and mysterious continent of insignificance." ³⁶

³⁵ S/A: "The Countess of Castiglione by herself", in: *Musée d'Orsay*, https://www.musee-orsay.fr/es/eventos/exposiciones/archivos/exposiciones-archivos/browse/13/page/0/article/la-comtesse-de-castiglione-par-elle-meme-3995.html?S=&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=258&cHash=c6e8d406d9&print=1&no_cache=1&, Accessed: 27/03/2020, (online).

³⁶ Colaizzi, Julia: Ob. cit. p. 16.



Img.9. Pierre-Louis Pierson: The Countess of Castiglione

<http://david-g.com/blog/2019/06/29/las-mil-caras-la-condesa-castiglione/>

Image-screen, in an apparent daring of insignificance, with which the Countess of Castiglione defines herself as a presence, and which the artist takes advantage of in her genealogy by taking it as an appropriable referent of the image of this woman, who understood the photographic medium as an estate of meaning, as a place in which to place the feminine fictionality as a subject, with full right to define herself as herself in each of the images she decided to project.

Image remade by the artist in the sense of a "(...) phantasmatic substance at the same time alien to the subject and intimate to him, too intimate in fact, and this over proximity generates a panic in the subject (...) alludes (...) to the fragility (...) of the passage from the maternal body to the paternal law."³⁷ , at the moment when the image of the Countess returns and becomes present as a screen that the artist uses as a representative sample of these women imprisoned in, and by, history. (Img.10)

³⁷ Foster, Hal: Ob. cit.: p. 23.



Img.9. Gala Garrido: The Countess of Castiglione, 2017
(Courtesy of the artist)

In this sense, Gala Garrido's 'Hetairas' accentuate the transit of the subjectivities continuously constructed about, and by, women in the fictionality of their stories. Stories that center them in the oddities of their statements, in which the historical-transcendental theme always comes into play -as Foucault affirmed- in which woman was always considered a figure treated in complementarity and seen as an incorporeal agent, read and structured through the order and the law of the father, already separated from the maternal body and with the absence of the phallus, being *gendered* and sexually marked.

The 'Hetairas' represent in the recreation or regeneration of the historical discourse of women operated by Garrido, through the photographic image, a genealogy of the history not only of the women she appropriated, but also of the discourses that have trapped them in the centrality of permissive definitions of a morality institutionalized by the order and law of the father, who tolerates them. An order from which they inevitably emerge in their rarity. A rarity that escapes through the security of knowledge as the endower of meaning and the construction of the subject.

The layers of the artist's reading of these women's stories highlight the discourses of the father's order, marked by paradoxical positions - as Julia Colaizzi writes - in which women are absent as theoretical subjects, yet continually escape from this absence through the rarefaction of their statements, and imprisoned, trapped, as historical subjects of men's culture.

History and culture, which have determined women within the incorporeal, in which the narratives belonging to the sphere of the feminine are related to their specular location with respect to men. Sphere in which she has always been possessed, never really possessor, nor producer of meaning, nor of sense, however the 'Hetairas' express, through time, their radical resistance to the instituted order.

An order, which crosses borders and historical times, present in our social and cultural self-formations in which "Being a man, being a woman is the result of the in-corporation of practices -of *location and construction of sexually marked identities*-, but these practices have been historically generated by individuals with male bodies (...)"³⁸ . Individuals who have established the forms of discourse and legitimations in which women are diluted within the incorporeal, absent of the substance of subjects with autonomy and participation.

The fact of bringing them back from other times, of leading them to the image that is made anew, that brings them up to date in the interpretative action carried out by Garrido, colludes in the direct observation of the rare statements to which it leads us within the artifice that the image produces. They look directly at us, they open the door of the unsaid by trying to bring to light the speeches of these women trapped in history and that throughout history, even today, lack a pertinent meaning.

From there, the calls to other texts, to other situations, to other interpretations, executed by the artist with the intention of not perishing before the role that has been assigned to these women by history within the discursive practices that contemplate them. Practices that lead them to a mutism and from which the artist extracts them to place them again on the scene, in the immediate experience, in other incorporeals, in which the rarities and their statements

³⁸ Larruari, Maite: Ob. cit.: p.15 (*The italics are ours*).

enter into a different game, to that of sexual marks, in order to generate new meanings.

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