

- **Exhibition:** “Non Sine Sole Iris”
  - **Artist:** Mariajosé Gallardo
  - **Date:** December 20, 2013 – April 20, 2014.
  - **Exhibition Session:** *Beyond Figure*
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*Non Sine Sole Iris* (No Rainbow without Sun) is an exhibition project halfway between the possible interpretation of a Baroque altarpiece from a modern perspective and a contemporary "cabinet of curiosities". Knowing that visual order affects the perception and reading (and, of course, the cognitive and pleasurable experience) of the work, Mariajosé Gallardo (Villafranca de los Barros, Badajoz, 1978) appropriates the format used in *Kunstkammer* or *Wunderkammer* to display motley collections of odd objects and paintings in the age of great explorations and discoveries (the 16th and 17th centuries) to showcase her own selection with a calculated, precise structure and thematic order. More than 50 canvases are arranged around a full-length portrait of a lady beneath the evocative phrase from which this exhibition takes its title: *Non Sine Sole Iris*.

These paintings derive a large part of their aesthetic significance from symbolic interaction with the viewer. Over the years, Gallardo has built up a personal vocabulary that is the product of hard work, but also of reading, study and observation; emblems, symbols, religious and esoteric motifs, heraldry, votive objects and reliquaries reveal themselves in portraits and still lifes that invite us to think about painting from a broader perspective, beyond strictly plastic or aesthetic parameters-to consider it in terms of history, literature, representation or the latest theories about the gender binary construct. Her portraits impel us to explore the connections between bodies and garments: it is no coincidence that the majority of her models are women, and young, white, permanently clothed women to boot. She always portrays housewives, virgins, queens, female warriors and other characters swathed in clothing, forcing us to reconsider the historical role that attire (and its artistic representation) has played in the naturalization of binary identities (male or female) as a process of social organization that shapes our notions of gender.

Film, fashion, music, comics and, of course, the visual arts, but above all the history of painting, are the references that have spawned and delimited the aesthetic territory of this artist, a member of the creative group that founded the Seville gallery *Sala de eStar* (2001-2007). This show produced for the CAAC invites us to step into that personal universe, where we find a strangely harmonious blend of such diverse elements such as Vermeer's lighting, Balmain's punk aesthetic, Valdés Leal's *vanitas* and McQueen's skulls, Titian's glazing techniques and Riccardo Tisci's sinister tailoring, the Baroque exuberance of La Roldana and the excess of Lacroix, the Disney factory and Murillo's *Immaculate Conceptions*, the pages of *Vogue* and Zurbarán's female saints.

Esther Regueira Mauriz