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## Natural History on Galería Estampa

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Nuria Rodríguez presents her work in Galería Estampa, for the first time. The exhibition titled *Natural History* makes us think of Pliny the Elder and his immense project spanning the knowledge of his time. The title is not fortuitous. What we first notice in Nuria Rodríguez' work is the endeavour to classify the world which surrounds her. Each of her exhibits has a different focus: in the fashion of Pliny the Elder, Aby Warburg, Michael Foucault or Didi-Huberman, with titles as suggestive as the one to which I now refer; *Chaos in Things*, *Album*, *Painted Atlas*, *A True Story*.

Nuria Rodríguez does not leave much to chance. Her working method is very well gauged. She works from cumulative processes, starting with previously selected and classified photographs which, she says, are the initial stimulus. What, if not that, is to think? The construction of significance will depend on how reality is perceived and classified. The imagery used comes from very different fields: from postcards, magazines and books to the latest visual sources: internet, television, cinema.

The predominating whites and greys vaguely recall the flash of a photographic camera. Painting as an accident of memory is a premise the illusion represented tries to contest, assuming a process initiated with photography and resolved with great speed. Even with the speedy procedure the result requires slow, reflexive understanding. Paintings that are not about anything, that have no lyrics or narrative to accommodate the receptor in their passive

and expectant position. Rather the opposite, the paintings are disturbing and, at the same time, attractive and causing a strange and indescribable sensation.



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## Biography

Nuria Rodríguez (Valencia, 1965) was born the same year Perec published his book *Things* and Richter made his first series of silk screen prints titled *Dog*. She likes walking and exploring every day, gathering and painting, classifying and thinking, putting things in order and “losing theories”, reading and cataloguing, grouping and collecting.

She builds an *Atlas of the Impossible* and makes Paul Klee's words her own de-

fining this Kafkaian activity on the “ways of seeing”, on what to keep and how to archive the ordinary, the objects that help us understand the theatre “world”.

*The Infinite Collection* is an attempted inventory of those things that surround her, those things that she puts in a magic circle, frozen, awaiting a dialogue with the other things. “The word makes the thing”, said Borges. Perhaps this is the case; naming it, it appears in the world, it exists and occupies a place, a light mental space chained to many others, like a string of beads.

After her latest individual exhibitions, in the galleries Cuatro of Valencia (Spain) (*Chaos in Things* [Thinking, Seeing, Painting], April-May, 2014) and Estampa of Madrid (Spain) (*Natural History* [volume XXIII], October-November, 2015) or in her *Natural History*, *The Infinite Collection*, (February-April 2016) that she presents in Col·legi Major Rector Peset, the task that Nuria Rodríguez proposes to the artist/collector as collector of images, objects and curiosities they transform and re-do, a producer searching for new places in their sampler, to dialogue constantly with them, trying to establish a working method that would lead him to the elaboration of other images, where paintings gather, alongside with objects, books and videos on the storage process. This forces detailed contemplation of all, as though we were in the curio cabinet of the artist and she asked us to take a careful look at its details.

She is also lecturer in the Department of Painting of the *Universitat Politècnica de València* (Polytechnic University of València, Spain). She has written the essay “*Los textos de la mujer artista durante las primeras vanguardias*” (1900-1945) (The texts by the female artist during the first avantgardes), in this edition she points at

the possible causes for the exclusion of their writings in preceding anthologies, while she gathers a very complete collection of the texts by female artists with leading voices in the formation of movements in the avantgardes.

As it befits the role of the contemporary artist, and as it can be seen through her biography, her work expands in many directions and projects, and she understands art practice as the sum of attitudes, strategies and aims, but there may be an axis that could be the painted image. “Painted word”, as Wolfe said, although with a different intention. Her comings and goings, her ruses and tricks repeat themselves to, one way or another, go back to “painting in order to paint”, understanding this activity as a timeless enigma that questions reason and appeals to emotion. It is necessary to get away temporarily get away temporarily from the gesture of painting, by means of a video, photo, elaborated or appropriated, or by becoming enchanted by an object. It is similar to the painter before the painting, stepping back from detail, to look at its entirety. There is also dissipating her attention, breathing different airs, another rhythm and coming back to it, to continue looking, and imagining infinite ways to making it real or comprehensible. It could be said that all her work, all her activity responds to her will to narrate this process, with her tools, literary quotes and objects of her attention, but almost always as a prelude and excuse to return to painting, not as an empty, formalist combinator, but in the way Leonardo da Vinci defined it in his treaty, “an intuition that contains all forms of existence”.

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