

The first time Josu visited Espai 13 in response to the invitation to this exhibition, he noted that moving some of the works that we had been talking about from his studio on Artxanda was an apriorism that faded as he made his way through the various rooms in the foundation.

With *negarràk-negarrà*, Josu Bilbao suggests an exercise in rejecting a subrogated role in which it would seem admissible to speak *from* here but not *of* here. What he proposes is an exchange of the place of enunciation similar to the change that occurs in writing when the third person is abandoned and the first person adopted instead. It is to address a localisation by taking a stance. Straddling the method and the motive, the exhibition is a test of the possibility of opening up Espai 13 to the outside by means of an intervention delimited in size, space and time about some air vents originally designed by the building's architect, Josep Lluís Sert, and which at some point were blocked up in order to increase the surface area in the room that could be given over to museographical purposes. For the artist, this operation involves bringing this place closer to a more contemporary, more porous, capillary artistic sensibility and receptivity.

*negarràk-negarrà* establishes a superimposition between the architectural space and the artistic object that could refer to a particular genealogy of the artwork in relation to the exhibition apparatus, in which the work requests its own autonomy, requires – or infers – its own space. One of the core questions of the history of sculpture of the twentieth century has been the emergence of form into the space as a builder of the space, in which the space ceases to be a receptacle and becomes a formal element of the work. This environmental theory explores a path along which the productivist dimension of El Lissitzky's *Proun* spaces, Michael Asher's infrastructural transformations in the semiotic context of institutional critique and the minimal environments that aspire to maintaining the sense of a whole as form would gravitate.

A pretension to any glimmer of totality is, however, a maximalism that Bilbao abjures. His installations are in a permanent fragmentary state of undefinition and respond, to use a phrase that appeals to us, to non-volitional longings. The artist's work juxtaposes in equal measure a tenacious spying on desire with an insistent impulse towards collapse. It is as if *wanting*, *deciding* and *planning* are words that are too affirmative. Bilbao's operations long even as they refuse; they seek even as they reject a uniformity of meaning.

The exhibition reveals what makes it possible, which is a delicate working of the institution's practicable and interpretable frameworks of operation. These strategies have included a study of historical architectural plans and the sets of regulations governing the foundation's use and conservation, dialogues with the various echelons and levels of the foundation's organisational structure, as well as an adaptation to the scale of budgetary viability within the margins of producing and dismantling the exhibition.

The title reflects an enduring interest in Bilbao's work in the capacity for action of the sound forms uttered in dying languages. Taking as his basis the saying *esàk-esà*, he succeeded in gathering a body of work that pointed materially to *no* as a place, whereas in this instance *negarràk-negarrà* functions as an echo of that saying as *weeping*.

*negarràk-negarrà* starts from a position saturated with authority which it abandons. Not because it infers it as a pure exterior of relations, but so as not to make it prey to its subsuming logics and as a result thereof able to try out manoeuvres of intervention in the less dense areas of its inscription. This decentred positioning is revealed, for example, in the way the participation of the GOIG architects in the exhibition is understood, but also in Bilbao's determination to build exhibition and mentoring systems for other artists, to prepare processes of creation with others and to recognise an artistic community in the set of gestures that are his own and those that are not.

In adopting a permanent attitude of questioning the possibilities of making art and the conditions of its presentation and legitimisation, the artist reminds us that employing ways of looking, listening and working that are not as appropriate constitutes an act of resistance and creation in the face of disaffection. Even if it is *barely* to open a crack in a regime brazen in its perverse use of discourse increasingly adrift from sensitive practices, acts of thinking and ways of doing. Bilbao interrupts the Oedipal narrative of relations of contingency and provisionality, cutting across the divisions between showing and hiding, between being very present and absent, in order to bring about a more complex and harsher place of knowledge and ignorance.

Carolina Jiménez, exhibition series curator

*negarràk-negarrà* is an exhibition by Josu Bilbao mounted in conversation with GOIG (Pol Esteve Castelló and Miquel Mariné Núñez).

Sound: Estanis Comella