



## SERENA GARCIA DALLA VENEZIA

---

10.237

FRONT OF HOUSE

## PREFACE

---

YIANNI DOULIS, Architect and JHID Collaborator

The name of Serena Garcia Dalla Venezia's new piece for Front of House, 10,237, refers first of all to the distance between Santiago, Chile, where she works, and Portland, Oregon. That her piece has traveled here is a very contemporary testament to the globalizing power of the Internet, but there is nothing abstract or distant about her work. The immediate impression is of exuberant color, a sense of play, and of an organic generosity both of detail and scale. But in learning more about her method, the idea of craft becomes central to understanding her work as it sits between art and manufactured thing.

First of all she uses techniques that are fundamental - almost pre-historic - and that we all understand: wrapping, stuffing, stitching. This connects her art to a long tradition of hand-work that makes it accessible, almost democratic: we can understand how the pieces were made and can imagine our hands doing it. At the same time, there is a clearly modern sensibility behind the use of color and the pointillist accumulation of small elements into an organic whole. Secondly, though, she does the work herself. This is very much a conscious choice on her part, to resist the modern pressure to outsource, off-shore, and thus abstract the production of our material culture. The repetitiveness of the work acts as a kind of meditation, of course, and feels deeply rooted in human activity: repairing fishing nets, splitting shingles, weaving cloth. But more than that, the fact that this work comes from one hand makes it both more personal and more impressive, a testament to Garcia Dalla Venezia's conviction and perseverance. We might feel overwhelmed by the labor involved, but this feeling comes from seeing it as an abundant and generous gift, rather than as the output of a superhuman force. The artwork derives some of its power and meaning precisely from being a handmade thing.

Finally, our experience of 10,237 in three dimensions benefits from the way it inhabits the gallery. Garcia Dalla Venezia's earlier work was suggestive of growth in the manner of a lichen or amoeba: spreading across a surface opportunistically. The Front of House space adds a landscape-like dimension to her work that was only implicit before. The topography of the gallery walls and the way she has used them to her benefit has allowed the piece to be more explicitly dynamic. It is up to us whether we see it as a map of some private terrain, as a snapshot of a flowing liquid, or as a living, hopefully benevolent, but a surreally beautiful organism.



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

---

My work originates from an interest for handcrafts and as such, carried out in a patient and laborious way, it uses the sum of gestures that are repeated and prolonged through time in order to transform materials as simple as fabric and thread into large sculptural and pictorial objects that are structured in an organic and flexible way.

This gesture which I refer to has become a construction strategy whose main actions are: wrap, intertwine and tie, that is to say, the production of parts that connect and adhere in order to form a larger total which may continue to grow.

Another important aspect is the observation of nature as a reference, mainly in regard to growth and expansion systems; my work resembles plants, roots and other organic beings that interconnect forming real construction systems in which the total is formed by many small parts.

My pieces are driven by the personal pleasure that meticulous work gives me, labor that requires time and dedication as well as the challenge that results in seeing what large dimensions can be reached or how much accumulation I can generate from these small actions and simple materials.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

---

I live in Santiago – Chile, in the south west of South America. Here, throughout the whole of 2017 I have been working on a textile piece, thought specifically for “The Front of House” Gallery in Portland, United States 10,237 km away.

It is a place I do not know, however, during months I have visualized it as the destination of my new project. Through images and blueprints, I have come to give myself an idea of the characteristics of this architectural space that I intend to intervene and dress with my work.

It is a soft, smooth and organic piece, composed of thousands of small parts that will invade the space with colors and shapes. It is handmade through the sewing of piece by piece, joined between them by the same technique. It is repetitive laborious work that I have undertaken day by day while the date to travel and bring my work to the place for which it was intended, approaches.

The dimensions of my work have grown with the passing of time, it has appropriated the corners of my workshop and my home, messing every space and imposing visually like it has a life of its own, like it wants to take on the 10,237 km on its own and arrive in Portland.

Throughout the whole elaboration process, I have thought of this great distance that separates me from my next destination, but of what unites us as well. I think about the Pacific Ocean that communicates our distant shores and how my work behaves just like a tide that grows and invades and that will soon arrive to settle so far away.

My mind is flooded by the words of the great Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda:

The sea,

The Pacific Ocean got out of the map. There was nowhere to put it. It was so big, messy and blue that it would not fit anywhere. That is why they left it outside my window.”





PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICAH FISCHER