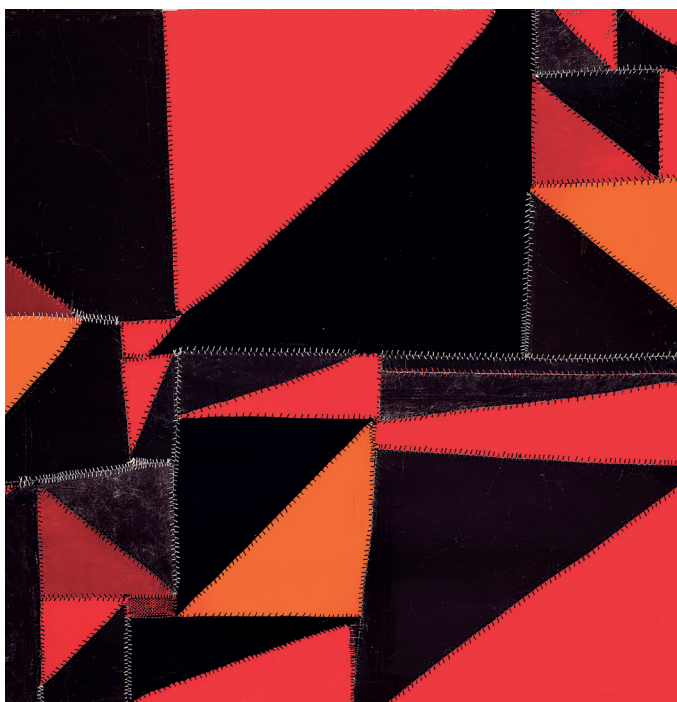


Teresa Lanceta

Weaving as Open Source

Exhibition from 8 April to 11 September 2022



Ese olor, 2019. © Teresa Lanceta, VEGAP, Barcelona, 2022. © Photo: García-Bautista

‘I fell captive to weaving, utterly and radically, beyond results and consequences. In return, weaving has helped me to penetrate unitary time – that which suffuses measured time.’

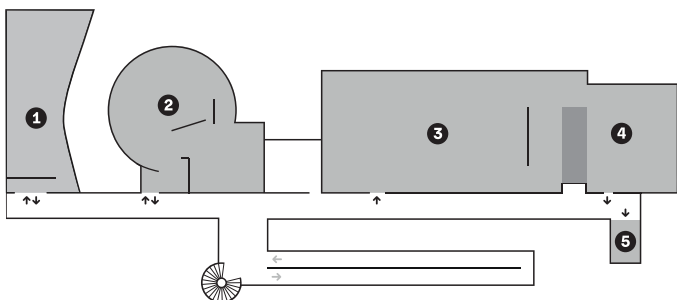
‘The rejection of useful art, of art for life, sidesteps any ecological consideration as well as the commitment it has, as any medium does, to sustainability and the environment.’

Teresa Lanceta (2013)

Recommended itinerary

Meier Building

Level 2



In the work of Teresa Lanceta (Barcelona, 1951), the act of weaving activates the critical imagination beyond the confines of materiality. Weaving represents an open-source formula of rupture and repetition, from which it is possible to read, transform and convey knowledge that is always complex and plural. It is a procedure for which there is no rough outline; where foreground and background, object and language, medium and image, come together simultaneously. Accepting the unexpected, including error and success, is for Lanceta a primordial and universal way of learning, a source or code that clearly manifests an internal law; a law that transcends physical, temporal and cultural frontiers. Weaving is a *techne* – a ‘technical’ knowledge dependent on a specific geographical, cultural and human context, be it, in her case, Barcelona’s Raval neighbourhood, where she lived, or the Middle Atlas, which she visited every year for three decades. Both of these settings fed her fascination for traditional women’s work and the non-verbal communication of stories and emotional bonds.

Teresa Lanceta. Weaving as Open Source traces the artist’s trajectory from the 1970s to the present day and includes a broad selection of tapestries, weavings, fabrics, drawings, photographs and videos, offering the most comprehensive overview of her work to date. The exhibition also explores Lanceta’s interest in collaborative formats based around dialogues that she establishes with the help of ‘creative accomplices’, including the artists Olga Diego, Pedro G. Romero and Xabier Salaberria; the curator Leire Vergara; the collective La Trinxera; the filmmaker Virginia García del Pino; the artist and thinker Nicolas Malevé who, together with members of the Museum’s Education Department and students and teachers from Miquel Tarradell secondary school, have spent the last few years developing the project *The Trades in the Raval*.

Lanceta’s practice reveals the construction of a popular narrative recalling that described by Annie Albers in her book *On Weaving* (1965), written after her journeys through various Mexican communities. Like Albers in Monte Albán (Oaxaca), Lanceta found in the Middle Atlas traditional techniques with which she identified, techniques that looked to the present of the popular, to the inherited, to the everyday world of the senses and to a possible material representation of the unfathomable.

Rather than proceeding in chronological order, the exhibition traces a narrative through various series of projects with the aim of identifying Lanceta’s voice. The five rooms present works that poetically question concepts formerly considered antagonistic. For example, collectivity and authorship, understood traditionally through the exaggerated lens of the individual; remediation and history, or the capacity to negotiate uncomfortable pasts still felt in the present; performativity and materiality, where labour occupies the space of shared experience of the bodies and objects responding to conscientious work; and, finally, orality and biography, which reveal the feminist teachings that saw art as a life practice. In this sense, Lanceta’s work is memorable work: its critical potential lies in its ability to construct memory.

Teresa Lanceta studied History at the University of Barcelona from 1969, the year she took up weaving. Turning her back on academia and the Conceptual art prevalent at the time, her decision to weave was both a political and aesthetic way of uniting worlds.

In 1989, the year that witnessed, among other events, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the creation of the Internet, Lanceta presented *La alfombra roja* (The Red Carpet) at the Museu Tèxtil i d'Indumentària in Barcelona. It was her first foray into the textile tradition of the Berber women of the Middle Atlas, from whom she learned a universal art that has accompanied her ever since. Emptiness was set against ornamentation, discrete motifs against net-like patterns, something that changed in her second exhibition, where net-like patterns already filled her tapestries. In *Tejidos marroquíes* (Moroccan Weavings), held at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, and at the Ville des Arts, Rabat, in 2000, she also included cushions, *handiras* and *hanbels*. Indeed, by placing these in the same building as the contemporaneous *Guernica*, the installation aimed to challenge the various ways 'originality' is understood in Western thought. Other core questions in her work of that period explore ideas such as common and shared learning, the time spent at the loom as a full-time occupation, and the significance of repetitive structures and geometries in the popular arts of many continents and in the twentieth-century avant-gardes.

Anonymity, ornamentation and collaboration feature more profoundly in her third exhibition, *Adiós al rombo* (Farewell to the Rhombus), held at La Casa Encendida, Madrid, and Azkuna Zentroa, Bilbao, in 2016, within the context of the 31st São Paulo Biennial (2014) and the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), where she participated. *Adiós al rombo* was a farewell to innocence, given the impossibility of keeping images without the presence of the people who maintain them. It signalled a turning point in her work and a desire to transcend individual experience which, as this exhibition shows, is always the sum of many lives.

Fabrics, the first gallery, confronts us with a mural of dozens of weavings dating from the late 1970s to the present, demonstrating how weaving is a binary source – a warp and weft conjunction – that incorporates both a personal and a cosmic intimacy and generates cosmotechnics: a union of different ways of being, thinking and inhabiting the world, as well as rituals and handicrafts. Weaving is a structural process that enables the simultaneous creation of language and object. It is therefore a language and a form of speech; a universally recognised source that chronicles multiple unfoldings, develops ideas, integrates stories, reflects moods, propitiates intimate and collective moments. An open source that Lanceta harnesses in an art joined to life. In contrast to contemporaneous interests, making ‘useful art’ in the form of these rugs is in itself an ecological stance and a defence of sustainability that was ahead of its time. Indeed, the kind of poetic economy it proposes is quite foreign to the capital-accumulation binomial.

This is illustrated in the second gallery, **Don’t Buy the Hours**, which presents a three-decade-long investigation into the textile tradition of the Middle Atlas. In the mid-1980s, Lanceta realised that the original weavings of Berber women are the perfect medium for conveying weaving as an open source. Her desire to work collectively grew, as did her appreciation of those arts the West considered ‘minor’. She began to understand ornamentation as a structural element and as a way of protecting a material through emotional attachment and the object’s durability.

Lanceta developed her weavings by drawing on a specific element of the Middle Atlas (*handiras*, rugs and *hanbels*), not to make new versions of them, but rather to draw attention to them. Her use of abstraction is extraordinarily rich, with some rugs presenting a hermetic geometry, while others display open and changing patterns. Straight lines, zigzags, diamonds... the repetitive structures undergo variations and transgressions.

Following on from the Middle Atlas, we come to **The Fifteenth-Century Spanish Rug**, which recognises another history and tradition. The Spanish word for rug or carpet, *alfombra*, comes from the Arabic *al-khumra*, meaning ‘mat’. Rugs were highly valued, and the Muslim presence on the Peninsula significantly facilitated their development. In the fifteenth century, there was a flourishing Islamic carpet industry in Albacete and Cuenca. Muslim craftsmen continued to work on Christian soil for royalty, the aristocracy and the Church. The wealthy were admirers and patrons of an art and culture that they both harassed and persecuted.

The weavings not only serve a purpose, they are a language. In this series of rugs, the structures are closed: in contrast to the expanded field of Persian or rural rugs, Spanish rugs have a small central area delimited by several heavy borders, which are sometimes interrupted by the coats of arms of the Christian overlords who purchased them.

The third gallery, **Waiting for the Future**, exhibits pieces inspired by the artist's experiences in Barcelona's Raval district, the old *Barrio Chino*, where she lived between 1969 and 1985, and to which she returned, decades later, as an art teacher at the Escola Massana (from 2013 to 2020). The Raval is a place on the map, but also a place where diasporas have come to settle: from Andalusia, Extremadura and Galicia in the past; from Pakistan, India and the Philippines today.

Lanceta made this series of predominantly red-and-black canvases in her studio in Alicante, between 2019 and 2020. Hung like walls, they invite viewers to revisit the streets of the Raval and some of the places where she lived: *Jerusalem*, 8 (1984), *Plaça Reial*, 13 (1984), *Hospital*, 56 (2019), *Gardunya*, 9 (2020), *Obradors*, 5 (2020). We hear her talk about her experiences in this neighbourhood – this palimpsest of life stories, which made her want to focus on things that are broken, destroyed and mended, as her series *Cosidos* (Stitched) bears out. In this gallery we also see a piece that Lanceta co-authored with Olga Diego, consisting of a little theatre inside a ceramic-lined wooden box containing a world where life unfolds and art flows through characters that move as if they were alive.

In the same gallery we find **Las cigarreras** (The Cigarette Makers, 2011/2022) and **Gallinero** (Chicken Coop, 2019). The first gathers the memories, stories and reflections of the women who worked in a tobacco factory in Alicante, recorded after it was closed down. We only hear their voices, as the artist wanted the women to talk more freely. Edited by Virginia García del Pino, the audio tells a story of effort and solidarity in the confines of state Fordism. *Gallinero* is a *jarapa* tapestry, made in collaboration with Pedro G. Romero using old bits of clothing donated by friends and neighbours of Lanceta, which a brood of hens had chosen to occupy for a while. While the Romans gave us the system of rules constituting what we call 'law', this proposal reminds us that it was precisely these chickens, with their dances on other geometrically patterned floors, that ultimately ratified the laws.

The fourth gallery contains **El paso del Ebro** (The Crossing of the Ebro, 2013–15) and **Trabajo de estudio** (Studio Work, 2020–22), made in dialogue with La Trinxera and Leire Vergara respectively. *El paso del Ebro* articulates an experience that combines collective memory and personal experience: a heterochrony covering the Battle of the Ebro, in 1938, one of the bloodiest battles of the Spanish Civil War, family memories and the weekly trips Lanceta made over the course of seven years from Alicante, where she still lives, to Barcelona, when she was teaching there. Journal entries, photographs, a video and five textiles (one of which is a piece of cloth that the artist's grandmother used to wrap bread) reveal a past marked by fear and violence. The quest for survival that ensued is illustrated in the artefacts loaned by La Trinxera. *Trabajo de estudio*, on the other hand, is a chronological record of twenty-one online conversations Lanceta and Leire Vergara held during the academic year of 2020–21. Beginning

in the 1970s (soon after Lanceta took up weaving and Vergara was born) and leading up to the present, the conversations revolve around objects that each brought in to channel both individual and collective stories from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology and art.

Finally, ***Los oficios del Raval*** (2019–22) in the fifth gallery shows a collaboration between Lanceta, Nicolas Malevé, students and teachers from Miquel Tarradell secondary school, and the MACBA Education Department. The group project consists of a digital map reflecting the experiences, resources and emotional bonds of the participants and their families in their daily working lives. It aims to reveal the multiple gazes and trajectories converging on the Raval, a significant place for all, and show how work experience and skills get displaced when people move elsewhere to live.

The exhibition layout has been designed by artist Xabier Salaberria in dialogue with the artist and the curators, and brings together an array of exhibits, including mantles, *handiras*, a suspended mural, the streets of the Raval and the various collaborations.

Exhibition co-produced by MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona and IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia.

Curated by: Nuria Enguita and Laura Vallés Vilchez.

Publication

Teresa Lanceta: Weaving as Open Source documents Lanceta's exhibition at MACBA. It includes her co-authored projects, a conversation with the curators and contributions by Miguel Morey, Bonaventure Ndikung and Laura Vallés Vilchez. Co-edition with IVAM.

Visits

With pli-é collective
Sundays, 12 noon (included in the entry ticket).

MACBA Friends

Consult exclusive visits for MACBA Friends at macba.cat.

Hosts

Group conversations
With students from Miquel Tarradell secondary school, as part of the project *The Trades in the Raval*, in collaboration with Teresa Lanceta and Nicolas Malevé.

Let's talk about... Teresa Lanceta

Conversations 6.30 pm

Thurs 21/4 Francesc Royuela and Clara Castelltort, teachers at Miquel Tarradell school.

Thurs 28/4 Juan Alberto Pérez Díez, Director of the Secretarial Office of Pastoral Gitana of Barcelona's Archdiocese.

Thurs 5/5 Mercè Amor and Fatima Ahmed. Associació Diàlegs de Dona.

El círculo y la flor

Co-authorship

Sat 30/4 6 pm and 7 pm (two 30 min. sessions)
Activation by Teresa Lanceta and Olga Diego.

Subir y bajar escaleras. Sobre el trabajo de Teresa Lanceta como escritora.

Co-authorship

Sat 14/5 9 pm

A proposal by Pedro G. Romero and Teresa Lanceta in the context of the Night of the Museums. Reader: Pedro G. Romero. Dancers: Javiera de la Fuente, Fuensanta 'La Moneta' and Ana Morales.

Trabajo de estudio

Co-authorship

Sun 18/5 7 pm

Conversation between Teresa Lanceta and Leire Vergara.

Looking out of the corner of one's eye: Weaving and politics.

Seminar

Weds 1/6 and Thurs 2/6 6.30 pm

With Teresa Lanceta, Natasha Ginwala, Bonaventure Ndikung, Grant Watson, Luz Pichel, Iniciativa Sexual Femenina, Nuria Enguita and Laura Vallés Vilchez.

Between action and object: Artists' laboratory

Course for teachers

From 4/7 to 7/7

With Nicolas Malevé.

Free activities. Advanced booking and further information at macba.cat.

MACBA App

Enjoy the explanatory files and audio-descriptive commentary on some of the works in the exhibition with the MACBA App.

Opening hours

Mondays, Wednesdays,
Thursdays and Fridays,
11 am to 7.30 pm
(from 25 June to 24
September, 10 am to 8 pm)
Tuesdays, except public
holidays, closed
Sundays and public holidays,
10 am to 3 pm

Saturdays, from 4 to 8 pm, free admission thanks to UNIQLO

The entrance ticket is valid for a month. Activate your ticket at the reception desk and visit us as often as you like.

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