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# Isabel de Naverán

## *La ola en la mente (The Wave in the Mind)*

Isabel de Naverán begins her stay as an Associated Researcher with *La ola en la mente*, a proposal focused on somatic writing as a kind of curatorship. Placing particular emphasis on corporal perception as the connector channel for sensorial and intellectual senses, the project seeks to rehearse a writing, which at the same time is a listening device and research methodology, i.e. a material, physical, sensitive and sensual essay writing.

*La ola en la mente* takes its name from the original title of Ursula K. Le Guin's book *The Wave in the Mind* (published in Spanish as *Contar es escuchar. Sobre la escritura, la lectura, la imaginación*). It is a compendium of non-fiction texts, conferences and notes evidencing the author's commitment to writing, reading and social activism, in a relationship considered inseparable. When choosing the title, Le Guin was inspired by a letter Virginia Woolf sent to the poet, writer and garden landscapist Vita Sackville-West. In it, Woolf insists on the importance of finding the appropriate rhythm in writing. This process requires to physically place yourself in a sensitive observation mode, which Woolf compares to the movement of a silent wave starting out at high sea in the middle of the ocean and gradually moving towards the shore. According to her, the task consisted of detecting the

movement of that wave as it approaches, breaks and settles as foam. Only then, as she states, can you recognise the rhythm underlying the words.

Taking over, de Naverán describes her hypothesis as follows:

«I wonder whether writing might be a way of creating a place on several levels, such as spatial, mental, identity, and time; and whether it might be a way of connecting to what has impacted us, likewise a way of making a world from the nearest point. *La ola en la mente* is an attempt to put somatic writing into practice, which is different from the so-called performative writing insofar as it doesn't (or not only) act on the body of the person reading it. Somatic writing shows how History is etched on bodies via learnt, inherited or imitated gestures. It also shows the forms of perception physically incorporated, the way we look, feel and see, and the ways of narrating, speaking and talking. In this sense, it assumes language as something material capable of seeing and revealing the different strata comprising the relationships with that which addresses us in art research. Furthermore, it is a corporal thinking practice which questions the concept of body as anatomy, i.e. a physical space that delimits and contains individual non-transferable subjectivity».

To this effect, *La ola en la mente* wishes to hold dialogues and exchanges with a series of artists and researchers (whose work is related to the areas of choreography, performance, philosophy, sculpture or poetry), to be shared in different formats as part of the Centre programme, in addition to creating a

reference corpus to be included in the Archive collections.

*La ola en la mente* is a new phase in relation to previous projects undertaken at the Centre, like *Elipsiak* dance cycle (2016-2018).



Image: Carlos Copertone



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# Isabel de Naverán

## *La ola en la mente* (*The Wave in the Mind*)

Since last February, researcher [Isabel de Naverán](#) has been developing *La ola en la mente*, a proposal focused on somatic writing as a kind of curatorship. Placing special emphasis on corporal perception as a connector of the senses, this project seeks to essay writing, both as a listening device and a research methodology.

*La ola en la mente*, is inspired by a letter Virginia Woolf sent to Vita Sackville-West. In it, Woolf emphasised the importance of finding the correct writing rhythm, a process she compares to the movement of a silent wave starting in the high sea and slowly approaching the seaside. According to her, the task of the writer consists of detecting the movement of said wave as it approaches.

With this background image, *La ola en la mente* starts dialogues and exchanges with a series of artists and researchers whose work is related to choreography, performance, philosophy, sculpture and poetry.

The first of these exchanges, with artist Lorea Alfaro (Estella-Lizarra, 1982), is based on an attempt at portraying a state which transforms itself, as explained by Isabel de Naverán. "I've invited Lorea Alfaro because of my interest in her

sensorial and sensual work with images, and encouraged by the desire to enter into it from a physical and experimental experience. Getting to know each other through what we do implies relying on the fact that our respective manners of doing things are entwined and entangled in material and sensitive relationships. It's also a form of productive movement through mutual listening. The interest in capturing gestures which are considered fugitive or ephemeral is based on my previous research on dance and choreography revolving around corporal memory and transmission, when they become strained with great History and official omnipotent reports. The correspondence with Lorea Alfaro raises questions regarding the power of corporal states which we could refer to as physical alteration, mutation, and variation, triggering research into other areas. In some way, *La ola en la mente* deals with making space and allowing time for non-regulated experiences based on sensitive connections via the production of exchanges which, in this instance, are shared as simply as possible: from the production of writing and the production of images."



Photograph: Lorea Alfano



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# Isabel de Naverán

## *La ola en la mente* (*The Wave in the Mind*)

"In an article titled *Contar es escuchar* (Counting is listening), writer Ursula K. Le Guin makes a comparison between oral communication and the way in which amoebas have sexual relations by "exchanging genetic information". Two amoebas come together, she says, "stretching and fusing their pseudopods into a little tube or channel that connects them [...], literally transferring internal parts of their bodies to one another through a channel or bridge composed of the external parts of their bodies".

*La ola en la mente* puts writing that works like this to the test, like a device for exchange and transformation, a form of writing to listen in which the parties involved are mutually altered.

Last March, I started a conversation with the artist Lorea Alfaro (Estella-Lizarrá, 1982) that basically went something like this: it started with the commissioning of a portrait and resulted in the production of shared situations in which I was willing to enter or be part of her images as one of the elements operating inside her rhythms. But this is something that requires space and time. It requires being open to continuous oscillations, entering a movement that you move and that moves you, that displaces you and sometimes throws you off. Sometimes it gets you high, in the sensual sense of getting high, of altering the perception of the senses."

Isabel de Naverán

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1 Úrsula K. Le Guin, *Counting is Listening*, in *COUNTING IS LISTENING* (translation by Martín Shifino), Ed. Circulo de tiza, Madrid, 2018 p. 343.



Photo: Lorea Alfaro, 2021

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Cover image: Cabello / Carceller. *Una voz para Erauso. Epilogo para un tiempo trans.* Exhibition

# Isabel de Naverán

## *La ola en la mente (The Wave in the Mind)*

Isabel de Naverán will be developing *La ola en la mente*, a proposal focused on writing as a kind of curatorship, between 2021 and 2023.

The name is borrowed from the original title of Ursula K. Le Guin's book *The Wave in the Mind* (published in Spanish as *Contar es escuchar. Sobre la escritura, la lectura, la imaginación*). Le Guin chose the title inspired by a letter Virginia Woolf sent to the poet, writer and garden designer Vita Sackville-West, where she emphasised the importance of finding the correct writing rhythm. This is a process that requires being physically in sensitive observation mode, which Woolf compares to the movement of a silent wave starting mid-ocean and slowly approaching the shore. According to her, the task of the writer consists of detecting the movement of said wave as it approaches, breaks and settles as foam. Only then, she states, you can recognise the rhythm underlying the words.

Going from there, de Naverán describes her proposal as follows:

«I wonder whether writing might be a way of making a place on several planes, i.e. spatial, mental, identity and time based. A way of connecting to what has affected us, likewise a way of making a world from the nearest point. *La ola en la mente* is an attempt to put somatic writing into practice,

which is different from the so-called performative writing, insofar as it does not (or not only) act on the body of the person reading it. Somatic writing shows how History is etched on bodies via learnt, inherited or imitated gestures, but it also the forms of perception physically incorporated, i.e. the way we look, feel and see, likewise the ways of narrating, saying and talking. In this sense, it assumes language as something material capable of seeing and revealing the different strata comprising the relationships with that which addresses us in art research. Furthermore, it is a corporal thinking practice which questions the concept of body as anatomy, i.e. a physical space that delimits and contains individual non-transferable subjectivity.»

To this effect, *La ola en la mente* wishes to hold dialogues and epistolary exchanges with a series of artists and researchers, giving rise to a book which writes itself over 2 years as a listening device and research methodology to connect intellectual and sensual senses.



*La ola en la mente*. Design & drawing @ Raquel G. Ibañez 2022