

Marisa González

A generative way

The exhibition entitled *Un modo de hacer generativo (A generative way)* looks back over the career of this artist born in Bilbao in 1943, who is considered to be one of the pioneers in Spain of combining artistic creation with image-reproduction and communications technologies. She works with photocopiers, photography, video, and computers, always within the realm of the visual arts. Aged 81, and winner of the 2023 Velázquez Arts Award, her meticulous work continues to this day.

This anthology, curated by historian and researcher Violeta Janeiro Alfageme, covers five decades of the artist's production and offers a wide selection of her major series and projects.

Generative, not replicative: that has always been Marisa González's way.

From the beginning of her career, the artist has avoided conventional media and established disciplinary structures, setting herself apart by using machines—colour photocopiers, thermofaxes, and other devices that were, at the time, cutting-edge technology— as artistic instruments. However, it was not technical fascination that motivated this choice, but the pursuit of the creative possibilities these media offered, approached through trial, immediacy, and the acceptance of chance and error.

Throughout her career, González has used machinery and technology as a means of critically engaging with the present. With every piece of technology, the artist has found alternative ways to narrate and represent reality, generating images and processes that transcend their intended uses.

Azkuna Zentroa – Alhóndiga Bilbao is collaborating in the production of this project, led by the Reina Sofía National Museum Art Centre, where the exhibition has been hosted from May to September. In this second stage of the tour of this collection, the exhibition is growing and will be showcasing some of the most emblematic projects undertaken by the artist in relation to the local context. As such, and in addition to the works common to both, we will be able to view part of *Nuclear Lemóniz* and *La Fábrica – Harino Panadera 1999-2000*, two projects that draw her gaze to the industrial perspective and her tireless work as a precursor of art and technology.

Room 1 Introduction to the collection

In 1967 Marisa González moved to Madrid where she graduated in Fine Arts. Searching for horizons that were less conventional or constrained, she began to explore new creative media.

She was drawn to the materials and by-products generated by working with machines of various kinds, and began including matrix paper, printing proofs, and thermal paper into her works.

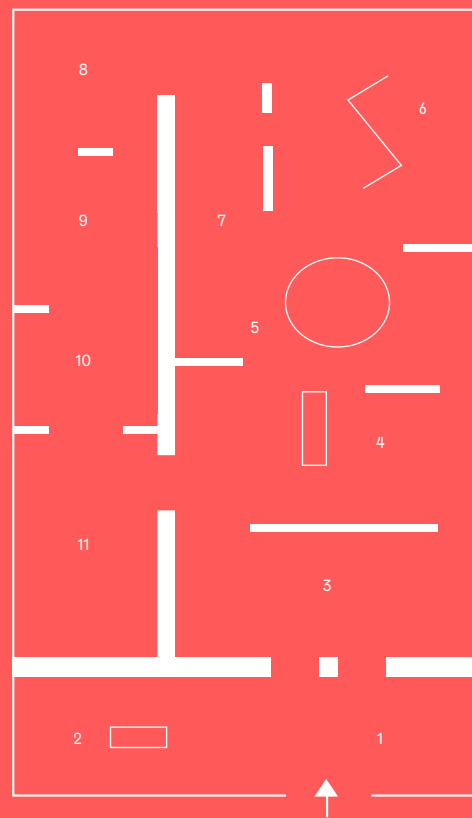
Room 2 Works by Generative Systems

In 1971 she undertook the Master's Degree programme in *Generative Systems: Art, Science, and Technology*, at the Art Institute of Chicago (United States), taught by Sonia Sheridan, which proved a defining influence on her trajectory.

Her works go through multiple reproduction and alteration processes combining slides, manipulated pieces of paper, and domestic utensils, from which she obtains new textures, colours, and visual effects.

Room 3 About feminisms

When in the United States, Marisa González came into contact with feminist, pacifist, and civil-rights movements. This is the backdrop for works as emblematic as her *Maternidad* series (1974-75), which depicts how religious, medical, and legal narratives condition a woman's body. In the 1990s she revised these materials, incorporating new tools such as the large-format photocopier.



Room 4 Musical Notation

Towards the end of the 1970s, when she returned to Madrid, painting eclipsed conceptual or technological forms of expression in the Spanish arts scene. It was in this context that González incorporated her training in music and painting into her work.

Using painting on traditional surfaces as her starting point, she added photocopied musical scores that had been treated and processed using Generative Systems.

Room 5 Estación Fax/Fax Station

In 1992, Marisa González ran a workshop at the Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid known as *La poética de la tecnología [The Poetry of Technology]*. This was the place where *Estación Fax/Fax Station* originated, a 1993 creation using material received from around the world by fax. This work encourages a more communal, less competitive, and more horizontal dynamic between artists.

Room 6 The Lumena system and the Transgénicos series

The works displayed in this Room, carried out between 1986 and 2000, reflect the different ways in which Marisa González works across the unique and the multiple. They also show how, in this period, her art focused on the contrast between what is alive and what is inert. In addition, they review her experience of using the Lumena computer graphics system.

Room 7 Works made using lint

In 1977, Marisa González discovered, quite by chance, a material that captivated her: the fluff that builds up in the filter of a tumble-dryer, which she calls “guata” or lint.

With this material she generates “painting by light”, tampering with the original images, adjusting how much light can enter, and moving the objects during the photocopying process.

Room 8 Ellas, filipinas Project

From the early 2000s, her interest shifted to photography as a medium for questioning the political and social reality of the time. *Ellas, filipinas* (2010-2013) [*They, Filipino Women*] presents us with portraits of these female workers during their only rest-day, demonstrating the inhuman conditions they have to endure, such as long working hours, low wages, and frequent abuses.

Room 9 Nuclear Lemóniz Project

Nuclear Lemóniz [Lemóniz Nuclear Power Station] documents the process of decommissioning infrastructure that never went into service thanks to the intense mobilization and social pressure of the local population. For this project, Marisa González used long hours of video recordings, innumerable photographic takes, and an endless mass of objects, documents, and materials salvaged from the Plant.

Room 10 Bakery

La Fábrica – Harino Panadera 1999-2000 [The Factory] is an audio-visual project put together on the basis of the disappearance of Harino Panadera, converting it into a journey through the historic past and collective remembrance. The artist documents the dismantling of the industrial architecture of the 20th century, symbolized by the factory that for a whole century supplied the people of Bilbao with daily bread.

Room 11 Luminarias Installation

Marisa González repurposes the lamps recovered from Harino Panadera to light up fragments of its history, such as the contents of the books of the Board of Directors of the company. These are combined with projected images of the Family Books of the employees, whose names and professions are read out by a voice that today resounds like a loudspeaker for the exploitation of workers and patriarchal hierarchy.

Marisa González

Winner of the 2023 Velázquez Plastic Arts Prize for her extensive career as a multimedia artist, Marisa González is a pioneer in the use of new technologies from the 1970s to the present day.

She was born in Bilbao in 1943, and lives in Madrid. She studied Piano to degree level at the Bilbao Conservatory, and graduated in Fine Arts at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Complutense University of Madrid (1971), followed by a Master's Degree at the Art Institute of Chicago in the Generative Systems Department (1973) and a BFA at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington D.C. (1976).

Feminism, remembrance and industrial archaeology, recycling and ecology, likewise paying attention to processes of exclusion and vulnerability, are other themes that have characterized her career.

Her works are held in numerous museums and collections, and she has had over 60 solo exhibitions and 150 joint exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale, the Reina Sofía National Museum Art Centre, Tabacalera (Madrid), or the Barcelona Contemporary Culture Centre (CCCB). She has been cited as a reference in numerous publications, such as *Arte en España* (1939-2015) by Jorge Luis Marzo and Patricia Mayayo, or *La fotografía en España. De los orígenes al siglo XXI*.

Violeta Janeiro Alfageme

Violeta Janeiro Alfageme (Vigo, 1982) holds a Ph.D. in History of Art by Santiago de Compostela University. Her work focuses on the remembrance of women's movements resisting the Spanish dictatorship, and on collaborative, communal, and procedural artistic practices with repercussions in the public sphere. She has co-curated exhibitions at the Reina Sofía National Museum Art Centre; CA2M, Madrid; MUAC, Mexico; MARCO, Vigo; and projects at Kubus, Hannover, and Matadero, Madrid.

INTRODUCTORY TOURS

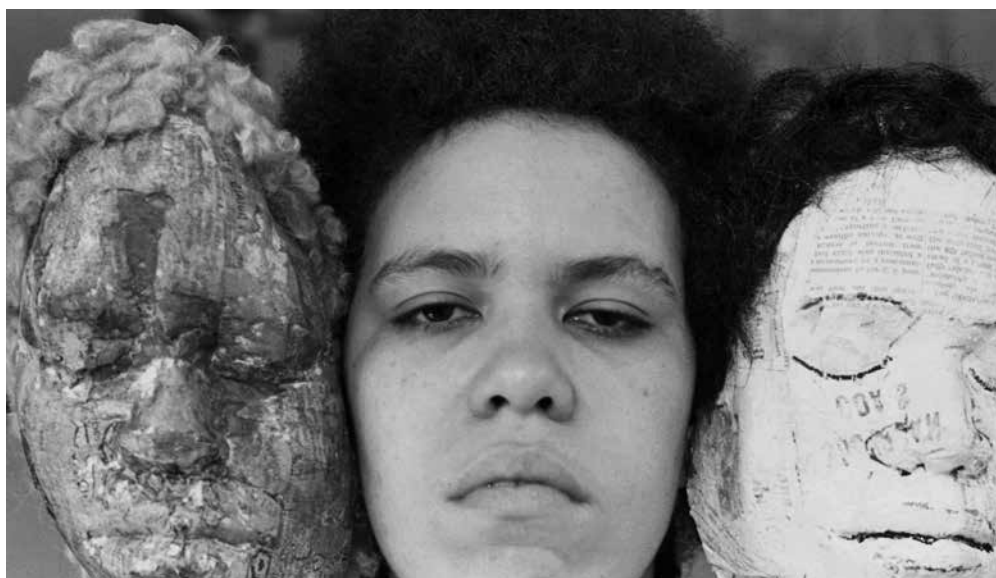
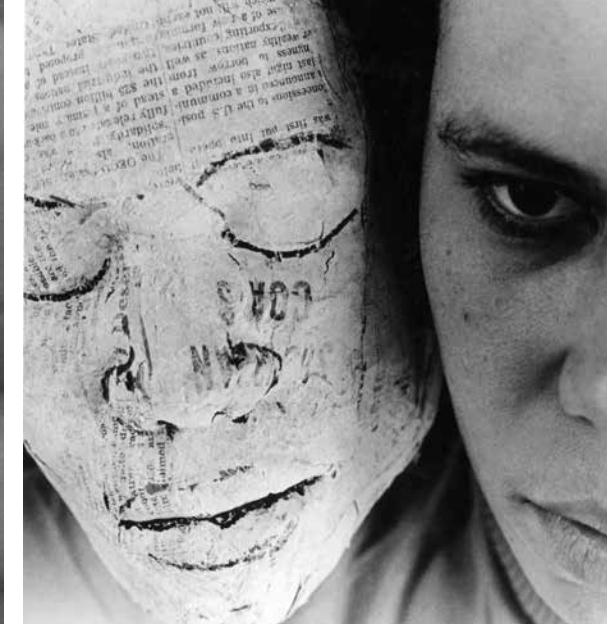
Free admission upon registration
Basque and Spanish



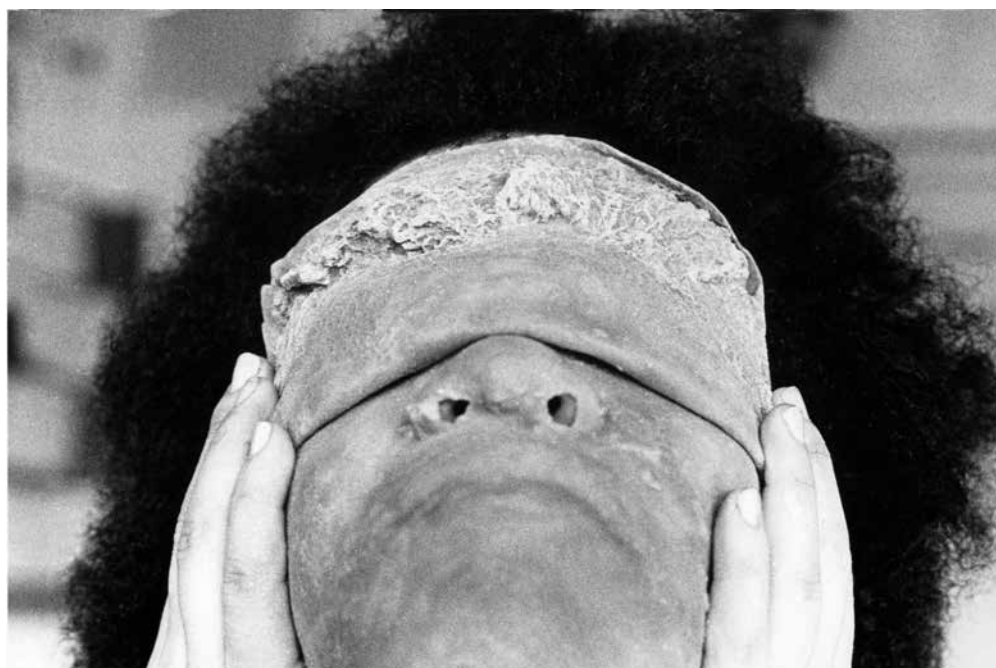
AUDIO GUIDES



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Liz Williams y sus máscaras (Violencia mujer series), 1973-1976



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