

PROJECT ROOM
ELENA
NARBUTAITE
DOOLS

CARRÉ D'ART - NÎMES
8 DECEMBER 2018
26 MAY 2019

www.carreartmusee.com/en/

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PRESENTATION OF THE EXHIBITION

This solo exhibition premieres five paper sculptures selected from a series of works that consist of tiny folded papers which Narbutaitė calls "Dools," as well as a laser sculpture entitled *Declare*.

Through the tracery of its folds, perceived on the opened papers, the Dools represent the seamless unity of the back and front of the body. Most of the figures in this new series were made from double-sided black and white paper; the last nine figures were made in a variety of colors.

This is the artist's first exhibition in France.

INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST. November 2018

Jean-Marc Prevost: Many of your works give the feeling of a certain fragility due to both to your choice of medium, as well as their presentation in the space. How would you define your practice?

Elena Narbutaitė: Often my series are created from simple or even cheap materials. Except for lasers and lamps, which are more expensive to make, I remain inspired by my studies of everyday life around me. A lot of my work often originates by making Xerox copies, using watercolors, cuttings, experimenting with scissors and glue, folding and ripping up a variety of papers and playing with twists and exploring the meaning of those gestures. I sometimes perceive very tenuous, or as you said, fragile connections as being all the more precious; in my eyes they can be stronger than two well laid bricks. Currently, I enjoy almost open structures, structures that are on the verge of collapse but are also relatively stable. Perhaps because it's similar to how life can feel at times. Also, it's true, I don't really like to frame any of my works. Perhaps that will change in the future, but for now the openness of things are much more interesting to me. My work is also not completely my own, it is heavily influenced and affected by other people.

JMP: Can you tell us what was the inspiration for the new series, called Dools?

EN: *Dools* represent the seamless interchange between the front and the back of the body. I also see them as dolls and money in one, this was the inspiration for the name 'Dools'. This series was created around the end of last year, while I was taking care of a friend's home in Berlin. It was winter time, the darkest time of the year. The house had exceptionally dim lighting and a low coffee table covered up with a rug. During the evening, when the faint light played tricks with the eye, was when it felt like the perfect time to make the Dools and best place to do it was on the soft surface of the table covered with the rug. Most of the figures in the series were made from black paper and the last nine figures were done in different colors. The ones in color were made using brighter lighting and on a hard wooden table. As for Dools, they aren't site specific, I will be enlarging them on the spot at the museum, as it seemed much more interesting to me to do it this way. It also seemed like a more intense way to do it, which appeals to me. And it is also easier, as I have no space to produce them here in Vilnius, nor the time to do it. After your proposal to work with the printers in Arles, I decided to use the museum as my atelier for a few days to enlarge the works at the Carré d'Art in Nimes. When I made the original small *Dools* in Berlin last year, the circumstances were in a way similar. I worked on them in a space which wasn't mine. I didn't have many resources, but I had a lot of space and time and a block of this very nice Japanese paper that was black on one side and white on the other. I've always wanted to work more with black paper...

JMP: The presence of sensual and vibrant colors also seems to be essential to your work.

EN: Color is a language which I enjoy. In a way, I think they guide me. In that sense, they remind one of sounds, which if you are a musician, can also guide you.

JMP: The live forms drawn by lasers transform our perceptions of space and seem to correspond to one of the characteristics of your practice, which is the creation of an extremely sensitive space. At the same time the enigmatic aspects of the titles lend themselves to poetic associations or evoke a sort of dream space. What are your thoughts about this?

EN: That's very beautiful the way you see it, thank you. Well I guess I don't really plan this effect, I just follow my sense of curiosity when I work with lasers and I continue to learn a lot from the laser engineers. It's always a collaboration. Still, I guess this effect is created because these laser sculptures are always constructed in a scientifically precise way and at the same time what comes out of this precision is something strange, not fully geometric or figurative in the traditional way we understand a figure. And because of that it's probably not always easy to describe at once what you see. But most often, I have clear visions in my head, like for *Declare*, which was the first work I ever made using lasers and which I, in collaboration with Optronika, have revised for this exhibition. So my task then was to create something that would be spinning in space, using the model of a revolving door. Something that would move mechanically but would also be light. That would on the one hand dominate the space but not in an overly physical sense. Recently, as I was working on it, I was also reflecting on telecommunications and journeys. These sculptures do take up some space, however you can cross straight through them and you won't bump into it or injure yourself. I think laser has the effect of making space sensitive because the beam is an intensely organized coalescence of light, the very opposite of chaos. Laser is more evanescent than say metal or wood, but it is also a dangerous material, used in for many purposes from medicine to war – it is ephemeral but not necessarily fragile. My titles are inspired by the mood and purpose of each laser sculpture. I try to be concrete and short with names myself, sometimes I invent words, like in case of 'Feyon' and 'Feyon 17'. I called this laser sculpture *Declare* because I was thinking about a person who is seen as potentially criminal but who turns out to be just a humble person. The idea of being humble but not naive, conscious of the context and the present moment.

BIOGRAPHY

Elena Narbutaitė was born in Vilnius in 1984.

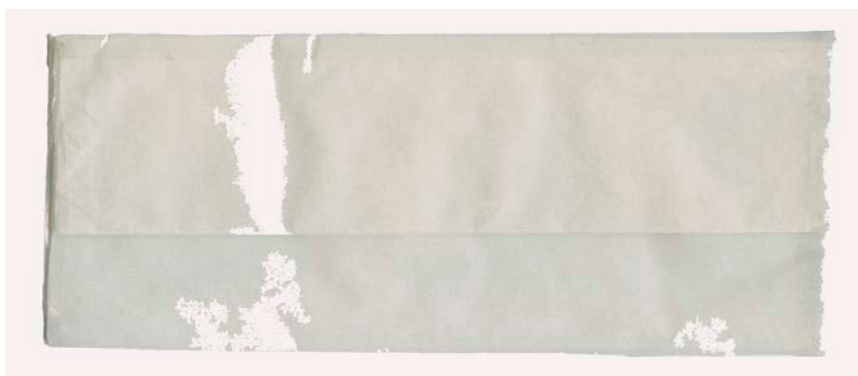
Narbutaitė has participated in several international exhibitions, including the joint Lithuanian and Cyprus pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2013, and the Liverpool Biennial in 2016. Group exhibitions include venues such as Di Tella University, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2014, Marco Museo de Arte Contemporanea, Vigo, Spain, 2015, Escola De Artes Visuais do Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2015, CACP Bordeaux, 2016, and Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, 2018.

In 2017 Elena Narbutaitė presented Prosperity at the Contemporary Art Center in Vilnius, her first solo exhibition at a public institution. She has also contributed to the periodicals *The Federal*, *Nero*, *Bill* and *CAC Interview*.

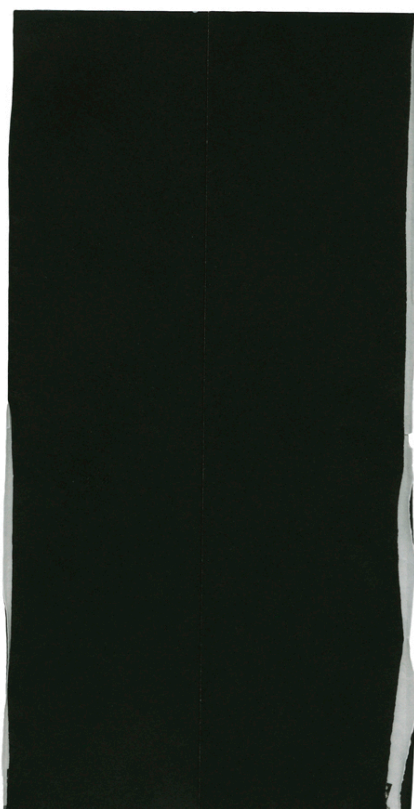
Curator of the exhibition: Jean-Marc PREVOST



Feyon 17, 2018, laser. Photo taken in exhibition Rehearsal, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery PM8



Dool #17, 2017, paper. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery PM8



Dool #13, 2017, paper. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery PM8



Dool #22, 2017, paper. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery PM8

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Open from Tuesday to Sunday included from 10 AM to 6PM.

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Admission Fees

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1st Sunday of the month: Permanent collection + Project Room: free

* reduced fee: those eligible include groups of more than 20 people, people seeking employment, students (upon presentation of written proof), members of the association Amis des Musées de la Région Occitanie (Friends of the Museum of the Region of Occitania).

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