

#### Poetics of Time and Place in the Work of Fiona Morrison

Anna Belsa

María Zambrano once said that inhabiting a place implies a recreation of time. This idea permeates Fiona Morrison's creative work. Hers is a body of work that transcends all disciplines, from painting to installation, from photography to video. Since the beginning of her career as an artist, she has always sought the medium that best expresses the idea she wants to convey. The notion of the passage of time, and how this passage imbues itself in the places and the people who inhabit them, is a constant theme in her work, already present at the beginning of her artistic career.

The first works I remember from Fiona Morrison are a set of photographs she exhibited at Galeria Joan Prats-Artgràfic in the summer of 2003, under the title *Malenconia*. Those photographs captured scenes, both natural and artificial, outdoors and indoors, all sharing a common denominator: the idea of space had transformed into the idea of "place." What was visible was important, but so was everything that was not seen. Everything that emanated from the idea that those places had been inhabited or experienced. They were delimited places laden with memory, with lived experience. Perhaps that's why she titled this series *Malenconia*, for all the weight of memory contained in each image.

Subsequently, she continued to delve into this idea through a series she titled A Special Place, which consisted of portraying different artists in a location chosen by them. It had to be a place where they felt free or protected, a place where they recharged their batteries, drew inspiration, felt identified; or simply a place where they felt comfortable. This work, which we could consider a work in progress, as Fiona Morrison still continues it intermittently, had a dual interest. On one hand, the qualities of the portrait, which Morrison masters perfectly, and on the other hand, because it introduced this idea of place we mentioned earlier. The location of each of the portraits, the special place chosen by each of the artists, spoke to us about their own works. Perhaps without being fully aware, their places had the essential features of their creative poetics. They were places "inhabited" by their memory, by their thoughts, places that clearly referred to the concretization of their worldview. Fiona Morrison's work had another added interest: in this quest to physically incorporate time into her portraits, she devised small booklets, which she called Foliscopis (also







Frames from the video Two walks. 2013. Musical composition: Roger Illa Prats

known by their English designation, flip books), consisting of numerous consecutive sequences of still photos. By flipping through the pages quickly, the idea of movement was incorporated, as if it were a cinematic image.

Fiona Morrison continued to explore the poetics of place, but from an autobiographical perspective. The resulting photographs, which she generically titled *Llocs/Lugares/Places*, had a deliberately evocative power of each of the places from her personal point of view. She photographed landscapes, houses, and cities, seeking to represent significant moments in her life. Those photographs reproduced visible reality, but also conveyed the invisible. Her intention was to crystallize the passage of time, to make memory tangible. This goal led her to make an explicit and conscious use of color. She often used filters to underline the emotional component of the images, to decontextualize the forms and give them a timeless quality. Her photographs taken through a blue filter, for example, endowed the images with the category of memory or even dream.

Once again, she introduced the idea of time, by incorporating a filter that created a temporal distance with visible reality. Two photographs recently exhibited at el quadern robat gallery, also embrace this idea of incorporated temporality. In one, several images of forests overlap, suggesting a parallel reality, like the one that can occur in a dream. In the other, the illuminated image of leaves, amidst the darkness of the night, suggests the idea of an intense memory engraved in the mind.

The idea of the passage of time is also the protagonist of the video *Two Walks*, which was projected at the Venice Biennale in 2014, where Fiona Morrison represented Andorra. The video depicts a walk through a forest by a grandmother with her granddaughter; two women with a consanguineous and spatial proximity, but separated by years. *Two Walks* is a moving vanitas: time passes inexorably for all living beings. Life is fragile and brief, our journey through the world and through life is ephemeral, but if we go beyond the concrete, we realize that it is eternal because everything begins and ends over and over again, and so on to eternity. In this video, Morrison recreates an interesting parallel between the two women and the natural environment through which they walk, identifying the old age of the woman with the thick

and yet fragile bark of the trees, and the freshness of childhood in the air that moves the leaves. The path they both follow is nothing other than the path of life.

The desire to recreate different artistic disciplines, as we noted at the beginning, has led Fiona Morrison to collaborate with other artists in order to create creative synergies that transcend individuality and achieve a richer purpose of content. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the book "L'U," made in harmonious collaboration with the poet Laia Noguera. The result was a perfect combination of poems and photographs that reflected shared moments, complemented sensitivities. Poetry with images, and poetic images, in a happy and energetic flow that managed to infect the reader-spectator with the same attitude of admiration and surprise in front of life, which both had managed to weave with their complicity.

In her most recent exhibition, titled The Game, Fiona Morrison once again demonstrates her ability to convey her artistic ideals through various disciplines. She suggests we play, and at the same time teaches us how through play, we can understand and learn a whole philosophy of life. The game is freedom, and at the same time learning. Through play, we can learn from mistakes, and project desires and illusions. In this exhibition, we also find articulated the fundamental ideas of all her previous work, which constitute the central axis of her creative poetics: The idea of "place," in the video Birds and in the installation Territory and the video American Indian Lands. The idea of the passage of time, in the installations Time and Life. Finally, the idea of all that which is not physically there, but is present potentially, in the installation Desires, the result of a sculpture workshop with children. Thus, in the idea of play, which entails daring, we find indissolubly linked her creative poetics: for Fiona Morrison, artistic practice is a means to unveil the mystery, to transmit a secret that can help us be more aware and have a richer life. Her artistic (and also vital) work consists of building that intricate and complex fabric that exists between imagination and life.

Translation from Catalan by Fiona Morrison







Time. Installation in the forest. 90 x 140 cm (35% x 55% in.) (7 units). 2019







## Seeing if not among

#### **Ester Xargay**

I like to confuse myself, to lose myself. I always play. The game is good because it leads nowhere, it simply consists of just going on.

Pere Noguera

In the photographs, the sea appears solid; if one looks closely, we will see how, from time to time, the seemingly contradictory - or rather, antagonistic and yet identical depending on how they are viewed (and this depending on how they contrast with the second in which they are looked at and depends on who looks at them) - shapes overlap, and the sea becomes a thick glass acting as a magnifying glass. Then, one can glimpse a courtyard, where Pere Noguera observes the rain splashing into a pool of reddish water, indicating that bird flights are reflected in the water, crossing a musical staff that drips. Now we explore these folds of life, behind the marine glass that writing represents, as a reflection of a presumed reality, while the text presents the epiphany of a space, suggested by Fiona Morrison, where forms contradict meanings through papier-mâché, trompe-l'oeil, and other artistic tricks; as poetry does, as Joan Brossa understands it: «a game where, under an apparent reality, another unexpected one appears.» Therefore, it is in this poetic game where the joy of losing oneself lies, the gaze lost in the gaze, to find the intangible. And yet, it is not about a space but about an ongoing process, in which Fiona Morrison hunts the shadows of things that with her pieces freely exchange traits, highly acclaimed works for lovers of blue, green, white, stones, teddy bears, and round apricot seeds. She, bit by bit, leads us through landscapes, not at all grandiloquent, where we reflect like upside-down birches, evoking the beginning of a form of the beginning of bristles of a brush trained by a theoretical somersault, and butterflies flutter where everything they land on, among photographs, ceramics, woods, words, or papers.

Carles Hac Mor argues that: «there are moments when all the hours of all times converge before us in a space where all the spaces of the world also fit.» Thus, if a squared chalk line on the ground will never imprison a beam of light, Fiona Morrison with a butterfly net will chase, in a jump and stop, what Hac Mor describes as «the spacetime we achieve in an instant that dilates as art does when it merges with our particular tempo and seems to agree with the space that awakens us to wakefulness within the dream.»

With a sextant in hand, before dropping anchor, we raise a sea sheet over the day's neck and contemplate how darkness slips away when things arise incognito in the light of the secret that conceives them. And with Fiona Morrison, we rediscover that the star reigns over all effects, but cannot with time, which it dominates with a twist, and on the horizon it is reborn, in another hemisphere. A radiant turn that imposes the night where everything hides in full freedom, and in the moonlight the waves sparkle, brandishing their permanence. Joan Brossa lowers the sails: «behind the words the paper transforms / into the sea. And the letters into colorful fish.» We drift, and Felícia Fuster throws us the lifeline, not sparing answers: «what sea step tightens the book of the voice / and this blue wine where I must read the fortunes / orphaned / abandoned / by the low tide." And so we return to port «with the unknown» quoting J.V. Foix: «Don't you always, when you go out to sea and forge ahead, see rocks that appear as giant frames, often strangely and mysteriously symmetrical?.»















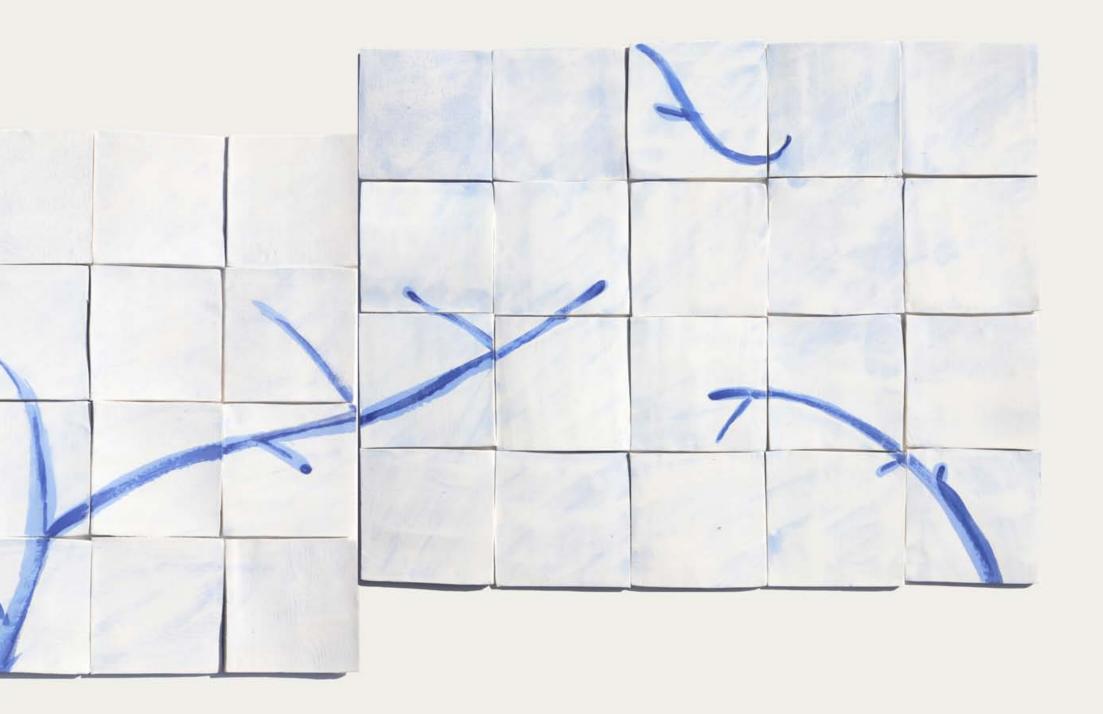




Un pájaro de papel en el pecho dice que el tiempo de los besos no ha llegado vivir, vivir, el sol cruje invisible, besos o pájaros, tarde o pronto o nunca. Para morir basta un ruidillo, el de otro corazón al callarse, o ese regazo ajeno que en la tierra es un navio dorado para los pelos rubitos. Cabeza dolorida, sienes de oro, sol que va a ponerse: aquí en la sombra sueño con un río, juncos de verde sangre que ahora nace, sueño apoyado en tu calor o vida.







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PUBLISHED BY Fundació Valvi DIRECTED BY Maguí Noguer GRAPHIC DESIGN BY Jaume Geli PHOTOGRAPHY BY Fiona Morrison PRINTING BY Palahí Leg. Dep. GI-774·2019 Paper bird. 38 x 29 cm (38 5/16 x 11 7/16 in.). 2019