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Lyon
2011

Caracas
1979

Where do you feel home?

I feel home where my son Matías and my partner are. But maybe I am still searching for a real place called "home". For me home was when I could sleep with the smell of the blankets of my grandmother. These familiar smells and sounds have disappeared. These sensations are part of me and if I am far from them, I miss them. This is what I would like to find again.

How did migration change your biography?

At the beginning I had dreams that I was still in Venezuela. I had just rented an apartment in France. I had the feeling I could not leave Venezuela behind me, but the apartment and my life in France made me a split person. That created Angst.

You learn that the only thing you have is yourself. There is no floor under your feet, but you must not fall. You have to be strong and stable like a tree, and you have to integrate another culture in your body. That takes time. In the beginning you have the feeling you do not understand anything. But then, little by little, you feel more and more comfortable with the language.

Sometimes you want to learn things about this new culture faster to be better integrated. But then, when you understand it better, you can also eliminate things and adopt only those aspects you want.

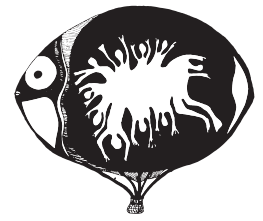
Now I feel that I am not anymore attached to my country. If I were able to return there, I would also be a kind of migrant. I do not know whether

I would even recognize the cities and places I was familiar with. I do not feel European, French or Spanish either. As soon you decide to migrate, you will not be from anywhere anymore.

So your attitude towards migration is more a pessimistic one?

The negative aspect is, that it is a lot of effort. After all everyone wants to return home at the end of his life - maybe. And it is sad to know that you will not find this "home" again.

But it is positive in a way that you have another sight on the situation of your country and even on the country you have arrived to. It is like reading a book, you are a third person with a different view. That is interesting.



How did you develop migration as a subject of your work?

At the beginning of my career in Venezuela I started to work with garbage. The things I collected told me a lot about the people. I wanted to restore them and I used bandages, like a doctor restores an arm with a bandage. I did a series of chairs with this method. My idea was to create a whole living room like that. The bandages represent a way to cure the things.

Then I focused more on women, especially those who had difficulties to express themselves. In that period I made my bronze sculptures of Alice in Wonderland - one of them is now in Mexico, another one was acquired by a diplomat from the Philippines.

Then I came to Europe, and at the beginning I could not make any art at all. My life was about surviving and speaking another language made me tired.

About two years ago I started to think more and more about migration because of the migration crisis in Venezuela, but also in Europe and Mexico - that country has a long history of migration. Nowadays all my friends are spread all over the world, so we are all migrants. That happened so fast that we almost did not notice. And now migration is an integral part of my work.

How did you take the step to become a professional artist in Venezuela?

First I did not imagine to take this path. But it was the only thing that made me feel happy as a job. I started to feel the freedom that nobody can change your colours. For me it was always difficult to communicate, even in my mother tongue Spanish. But I could express myself through images, and sometimes the messages in my own works even surprised me.

And then there was this important art critic in Venezuela, Perán Erminy. He was always very critical about the artists and their work, but with me he was so positive.

I had made an exhibition with my chair, a mixed media installation. And a few years later I heard that Perán Erminy was telling his students at the university about my chair. That was so important for me.

Is art in your home country limited to the elites even more than in Europe?

Music is more accessible in my country. Every child makes music in school, there is music in for children in the favelas. And there is a national public system of orchestras, that even people in prison can be part of as musicians.

But visual arts are not so developed. Not everyone has access.

If you could take one thing from your migrations back to your country, what would it be?

The consciousness of the use of energy. In my country we could learn a lot about how to save energy.