

Linda Matalon
I Absolutely Love You
[work in two pandemics]
28.10.23–16.12.23

“Work about the body doesn’t have to be representational. When we go past that first register of representation, we go inward, and inward is vast and open. The energy between the outward body and the inward self makes up a beautiful landscape.”

– Linda Matalon

Beginning in the early 1980s, American artist Linda Matalon has produced abstract objects and works on paper that resonate with the physicality of the body. As an activist in New York’s queer community, caring for people with AIDS in her personal life, she came of age at a time of social and personal upheaval that reflected the formative influences of her own family history marked by flight from nationalist pogroms in Europe to Cuba, Colombia and Honduras. Change with all its imponderable consequences, is the stuff of life. And, Matalon, with a simple repertoire of materials, creates visual metaphors for the dynamic that we cannot put into words. Matalon’s current exhibition, I Absolutely Love You [work in two pandemics], brings into dialogue two of her most important bodies of work: that of the AIDS pandemic of the 1980s and 1990s, and works from the Covid lockdown in 2020 and 2021. Based on her highly acclaimed solo exhibition at the Museo Moderno in Buenos Aires in 2022, they are presented here in Europe for the first time. Matalon says about her first group of objects and works on paper:

The early works refer to the politics of the time and AIDS, which caused the death of many of my friends. I was a young artist and activist, and I worked with other activists to try to understand the disease, so many of these works are related to the body and the politics of the body.



Pare, 1997

Wire, cloth, wax, frame
71.12 x 68.58 x 22.86 cm / 28 x 27 x 9 in

The second group of works were created 30 years later during the Covid lockdown. Isolated at the seaside, Matalon worked in a limited space outside of her New York City studio. This lockdown was literally a break from the lively exchange with other people and normality. Matalon recognizes that the second pandemic works were much more concentrated on time, death, and the deep exploration of the heart. Matalon has long worked with the limited pallet of beeswax, paper and graphite, in her drawings, with additions of gauze, tar, and wire in her sculpture. In a process that she developed over time, Matalon treats paper with beeswax, creating a surface that records every mark and every erasure, infusing the surface with the energy of memory. The drawing surface itself becomes an object. Matalon’s sculptures from the 1990s such as Hang, Pare, Breast Plates and Sobre la Tutura y Las Mujeres were created in the same tradition, combining tar and gauze with her materials.

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They are objective witnesses to the events of the time, and at the same time ritual companions to overcome those events. Her unique juxtaposition of materials are themselves a metaphor for her subject, the ineffable exploration of the soul.

I feel like I am the middle, between the energy of the materials and the energy of my life. The material is like breath, and your hand is your tool. Part of the choice of materials is just what is at hand, and part is trust, and part is that mysterious thing—why I love art, the mystery of transformation.

Biographical Note:

Linda Matalon (US 1958) works in Brooklyn, NY and has biographical roots in Germany and Cuba. Her works are included in museum collections such as the Centre Pompidou, The Brooklyn Museum, the Deutsche Bank Collection and The Hood Museum. Her art has been on view in international shows including “Risk” at Turner Contemporary, UK (2015), “The Circle Walked Casually” at Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (2014), Deutsche Kunsthalle Berlin (2013), “Linda Matalon, Agnes Martin, Joyce Hinterding” at National Art School, Darlinghurst, Australia (2014), the 11th Biennale de Lyon (2013), Immaterial, Ballroom, Marfa, TX (2010) and the 7th Mercosul Biennial, Brazil (2009). In 2022/2023 her large scale solo exhibition “Linda Matalon: Marcas Imborrables,” curated by the museum’s director, Victoria Noorthorn, was on view at the Museo Moderno, Buenos Aires.



Untitled, 2002

Graphite and wax on paper
36.83 x 44.45 cm / 14.5 x 17.5 in (framed)

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