

Teresa Ribá



Teresa Riba

Cuirasses

Texts

Montse Frisach

Journalist and art critic

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GALERIA D'ART
ANQUIN'S

Campoamor, 2, 43202 Reus

T. +34 666 674 996

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“What interests me most is the person, their identity, their worries and above all communication. That is why the interaction created between the work and the spectator is important to me.”

Teresa Riba

“Just as when in the act of sculpting the basis of a living figure appears slowly from the interior of the stone, growing as more stone is removed, so it is the indication of a job well done that the soul appears trembling, hidden below the surface, the petrified nature of flesh itself.”

Michelangelo (1475-1564)

“take the fine layers off me so I know who I am”

Teresa Riba



Tancament V. Capes

Original in plaster and paper | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.

Cuirasses

If you look up the meaning of the work “cuirass” in the dictionary you will see that the main entries are related to the military. The function of the cuirass is to protect the body and minimise the chance of injury and, indeed, death. Cuirass is also a synonym for an animal’s protective shell. It is a place of refuge. The cuirass protects against eternal aggressions but at the same time it limits sensations and movements, filters emotions, enforces rigidity. Without the possibility of expansion, life is hard and sad, very sad. Designed to protect us, the cuirass can actually work against us. There are many different types; so many that some are invisible. But the cuirass is something that all humans have. It may be soft or pervious. It may be selective: causing us to fall, making us stronger or closing up before certain people or situations. Or, it can be inexpugnable.

Art often serves to make visible what our eyes refuse to see. In one of her latest series, the sculptor Teresa Riba always shows the same girl—very young, naked and always poised in the same position. With her arms across her chest and her hands on her shoulders, head bowed, this seems like it could be a normal position and yet it could also have so many messages: reflection, cold, melancholy, fear, a silent cry for help or a moment of tenderness. Teresa Riba has called this medium format series of female figures Enclosure, because in the girl’s self-embrace there is a movement of occlusion, an inward journey. She places the invisible cuirass on view.

These figures are made of bronze but also have additions of different materials, with each work alluding to some element that makes the full life of a woman more difficult. The young girl is covered with a golden patina as if she were nothing but a decorative object. She is either

blindfolded, wearing a chastity belt or tied up. Sometimes she is enclosed in a paper house with the door open but from which she dare not go out, inside a skin or even trapped in a transparent resin shell, like an insect trapped in amber from which it is impossible to escape. Her head is shrouded by a cloud which bewilders or confuses her, or even more tragically, she is paralysed by a block of stone that she bears or by needles which torture her. The obstacle might also be that her feet are sunken into a block of stone. In another of the pieces the girl has become trapped in a tangle of plant matter and rubble, as if she had been the victim of a terrible flood which has dragged her along with it.

Whether in the form of a fine veil or a hard shell, all cuirasses prevent the expansion of both body and soul. It is no coincidence that this girl is the one to represent these enclosures. Women know more about physical, mental and spiritual bodices. “It is a really heavy subject. Everyone is tied in one way or another, but women even more so”, the artist explains.

Riba’s work also throws up many questions for the people who see it. She is not keen to give too many explanations about her works because she thinks it is the way in which they are seen by the viewer that defines their experience of the piece, enriching and finalising it. Each of her pieces transmits as many stories of cuirasses and obstructions as ways in which they are looked at, but the artist always leaves a space for hope so that with a bit of luck we can throw off the cuirasses if we have a mind to and free ourselves, because they do not form part of the essence of people but are acquired beliefs. That is the why in many of the pieces the figure can be finally “freed” of its shackles by opening the box, removing the paper house or removing her covering.



Tancament

“Infinite reflections, like
a maze with no way out.
Only by closing my eyes
can I see myself inside”
Teresa Riba

Teresa Riba

Tancament X. Regla

Original in polychrome plaster | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament III. Foscor

Original in plaster | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament I. Daurada
Original in plaster and gold leaf | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament XVII. Lligada per davant
Original in plaster and leather | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament XVIII
Detail



Tancament XII. Cinturó
Original in plaster and leather | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament II. Cordes
Original in plaster and rope | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament VI. Núvol
Original in plaster and wire | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



Tancament IX. Mocador
Original in plaster and cotton | 49 x 13 x 10 cm.



*“Drawing is the magical moment to capture a gesture, a gaze,
an instant that could be eternal”*

Teresa Riba



Tancament 0, I, II, III,
Charcoal on paper | 120 x 80 cm.

Metamorphosis

As is normal in the work of sculptors, drawing plays a crucial role in Riba's projects. Her hand creates silhouettes and outlines which may or may not become three dimensional works. However, she does not consider drawings to be a stage prior to her sculptures or sketches for posterior works. Her drawings have a life of their own and they even contain their own story which is no longer visible. In one of these drawings Teresa Riba first outlined a female figure tied up with a rope. Using all her creative power she managed to untie the girl as she completed the sketch. For us, as we view the drawing, the girl is completely freed. Art is much more than we see on the surface—it is a metamorphosis.



Tancada I
Bronze | 25 x 12 x 20 cm.

Tancada II
Bronze | 25 x 11 x 18 cm.

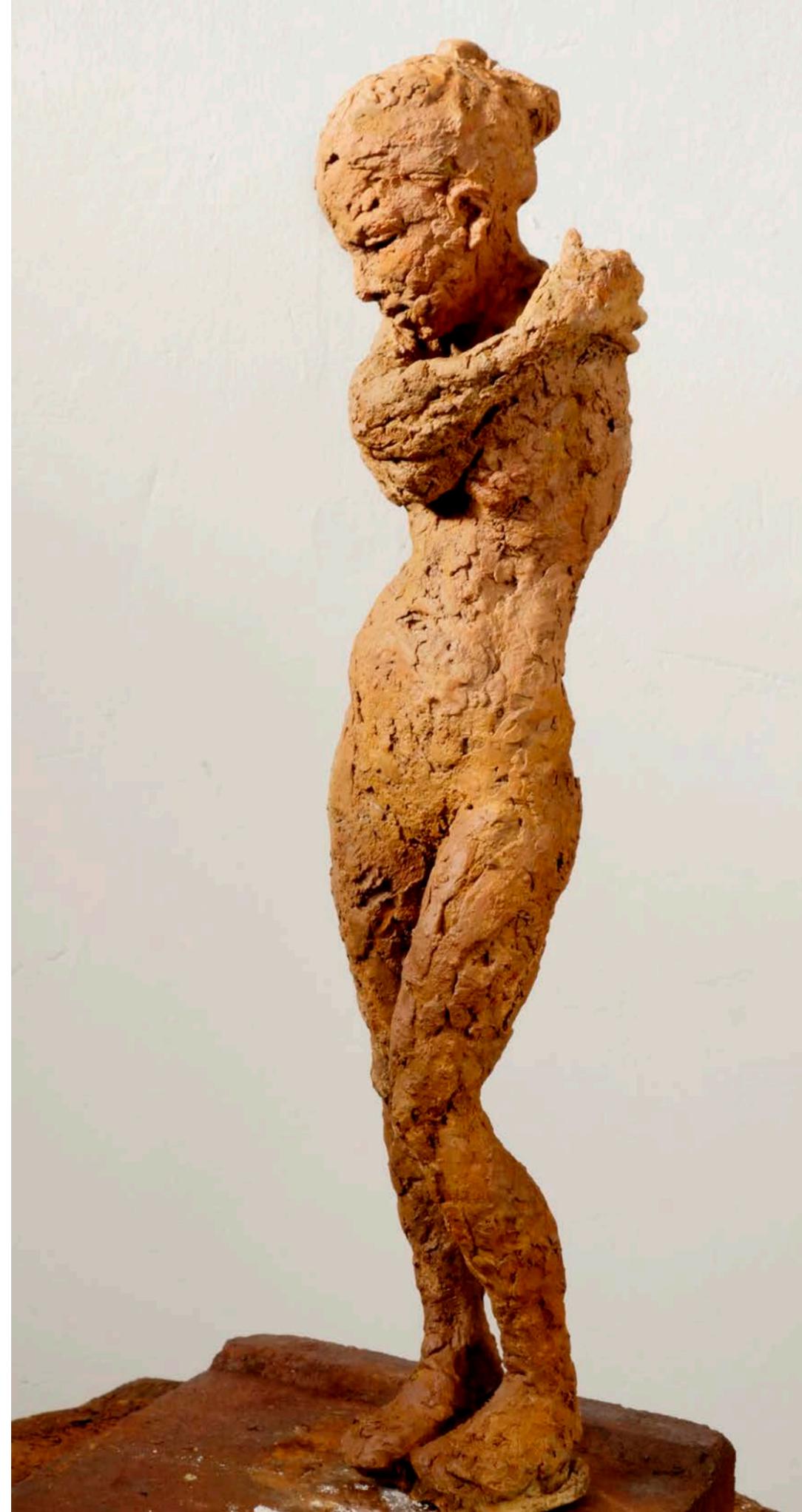
Tancada III
Bronze | 21 x 17 x 15 cm.

Tancada II
Bronze | 25 x 11 x 18 cm.



Tancada IV,
Bronze | 21 x 13 x 24 cm.

Tancament
Bronze | 49 x 13 x 10 cm





Blocs

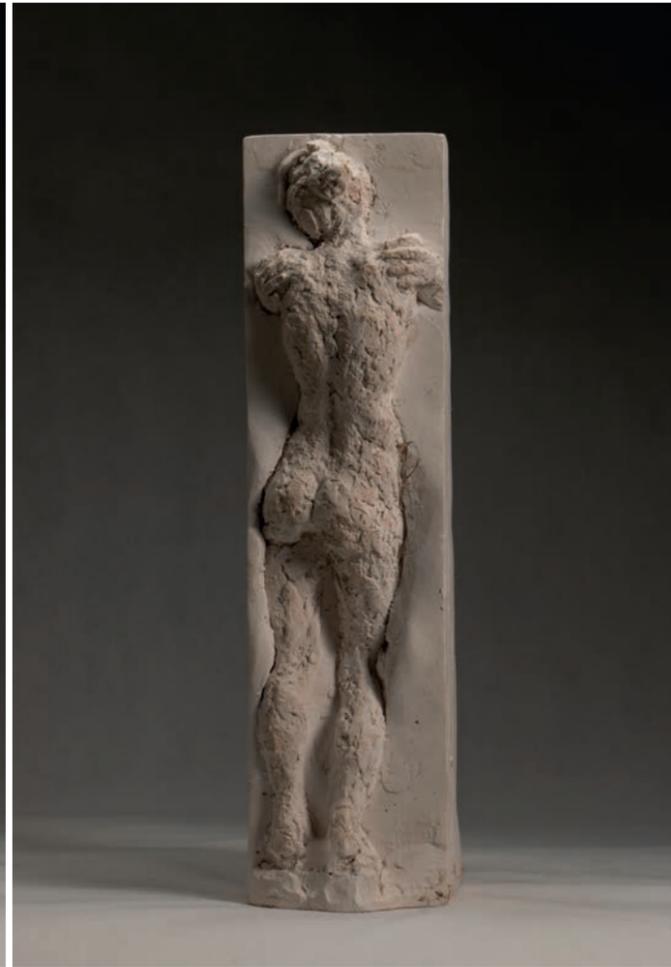
“I speak about limitations,
fears, dialogues and
silences

Teresa Riba

Cap a fora I
Plaster and concrete | 49 x 24 x 13 cm.



Davant IV
Plaster and concrete | 49 x 18 x 13 cm.



A cada costat IX
Plaster and concrete | 50 x 52 x 10 cm.



A cada costat IX
back



Blocs

The other series on show in this exhibition at the Anquins Gallery in Reus is called *Blocks* and it features the same female figure, this time accompanied by one or two concrete blocks. The pieces have a certain architectural quality with the figure occupying different positions with respect to the blocks. Here it is the blocks that exemplify the cuirasses. The enclosure exists outside the limits of the female body.

Whereas the figures in the *Enclosure* series display different cuirasses that girdle the body, here the obstacles come from the outside. The blocks separate, imprison, capture, engorge or form a barrier. Again, in some of these pieces, Teresa Riba offers the viewer the freedom to change the position of the blocks as they see fit. This opportunity for interaction between the sculpture and the space is a recurrent theme in all of the artist's work, which is highly influenced by her sculptural pieces in the public space.

Entre parets VI

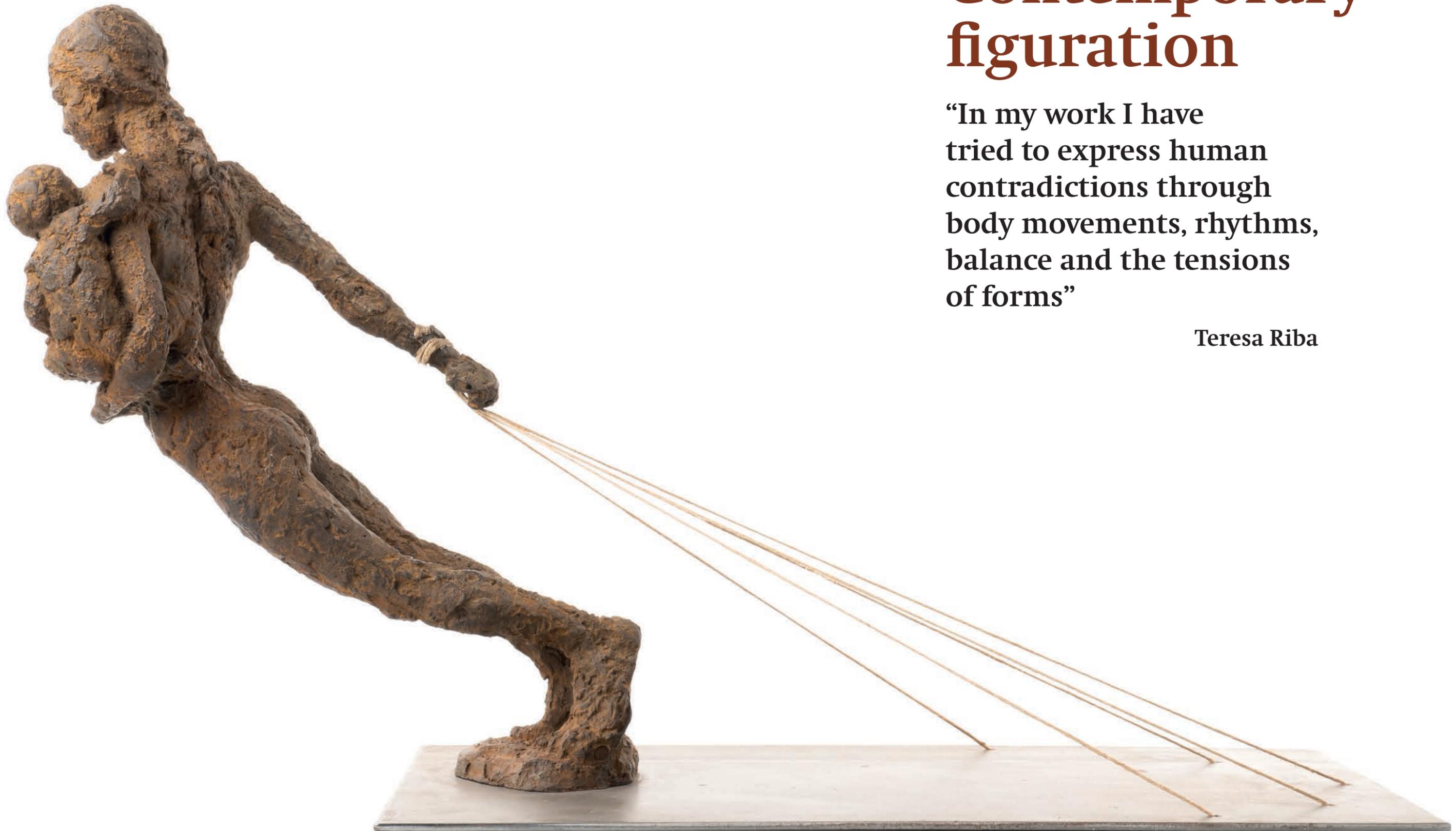
Bronze and concrete | 49 x 26 x 13 cm.
(sculpture that can be opened and closed)



Contemporary figuration

“In my work I have
tried to express human
contradictions through
body movements, rhythms,
balance and the tensions
of forms”

Teresa Riba



“The plain truth is that the more you work on a piece the more you know it will never be finished”

Giacometti Giacometti (1901-1966)

“I feel very light using clay in sculpture as it gives a freshness, texture, colour and possibilities for movement which I later pass to bronze. I also work directly with wood leaving the gashes of the chainsaw. An stone, a material that consumes me, although I use it very little, where the process and concept of the work is very different, as is the finish.”

Teresa Riba



Contemporary figuration

Teresa Riba (Igualada, 1962) was already inclined toward sculpture from very early on when in 1985 she graduated in this specialism from the Sant Jordi Faculty of Fine Art at the University of Barcelona. At the beginning she experimented with a certain abstraction but she would soon realise that figuration, uncomplicated but seen from a contemporary viewpoint, was the best vehicle for her to express herself, and the human figure was the absolute protagonist of her work. In Teresa Riba's figuration there is no intention to simply represent reality. The series which she has produced throughout her career contains an implicit cry for the freedom and dignity of the human being. And from that point she has focused especially on the groups that are often unable to enjoy that basic right, such as women, children and adolescents.

Teresa Riba's own view of the people she represents is a humanistic one and that includes the feminist viewpoint that is always present without forcing it upon you. Her message is found implicitly in the legs, arms, delicate testes, breasts and feet which she models by hand, since she is of the traditional school of sculptors for whom art is inconceivable without the physical process of modelling. Over the years her art forms have progressively lost their smooth lines and sharp definition to become more gestural, with gashes in the material, almost piercing, never smooth. It is no coincidence, then, that among her sculptural references she cites Michelangelo and Giacometti.

Riba is especially concerned that soul hidden within the sculptural material should reach the spectator and so she insists that her works have to be “living” in a way, so as to transmit that life to the viewer. In the series *Between-the-fingers* and *Communication* Riba immerses herself in the world of children and adolescents. But unlike some of the more condescending approaches she shows them playing games which for adults are just a distant memory—elastics, cat's cradle, marbles—which could be read as an exercise in nostalgia, beside other works in which the children have their backs turned and are not even looking at each other, mobile phones in hand, in a clear allusion to the in-communication of our society where everything seems to be virtual. The young people seem to be alienated by their phone screens. Apart from electronic devices, in the series *Let's Return*, the artist explores scenes of loneliness, uncertainty and doubt at the turning point in people's lives. It has sometimes been said that Riba's works are sad, but what they really have is a melancholy that is inherent in the nature of any change. Despite the fact that the protagonists in this series are adolescents anyone can feel themselves reflected in the attitudes that Riba portrays in these works. Art as an emotional experience; art as a living thing. Teresa Riba has seen for herself how the works change and grow in contact with their surroundings and with the spectator. One of her latest projects, which is still a work in progress, is *Elna*. In principle this is the of the sculpture of a young girl, but it covers a lot more ground. It is a transdisciplinary project which Riba takes into nature, into urban spaces and schools and it includes sculpture, photography and video. *Elna* is a very light sculpture made of polyester resin which Riba binds with rope and “abandons” in different places. The work is completed with the reactions of the spectators. Every time the sculpture interacts with people (or animals, because once a horse tried to untie it!) it attains a new life.



Comunicació?
Group of sculptures in
polychrome bronze



Tornem-hi
Group of sculptures in
polychrome bronze



Public works

“When I finish the pieces it is they that form part of the world, it is they that relate to and play with the space and with those who look at them”

Teresa Riba

Vaixell
Bronze | 73 x 57 x 87 cm
Passeig marítim Platja d'aro, 2008

Horitzó
Bronze | 153 x 49 x 80 cm | Platja d'aro. 2008



El noi de la Rambla
Bronze and granite | H. 150 cm | Igualada



Nos(altres)
Bronze | Life size | Atlas Foundation. Igualada



La nena
Bronze | 110 x 100 x 70 cm | Conesa. 2014



La nena de la bola
Bronze and granite | 140 x 58 x 44 cm.
Ø 80 cm. | Rambla d'Igualada. 1997



Art takes to the streets

For Teresa Riba the interaction of her work with the spectator is fundamental and is one of her intentions every time she makes a work destined for the public space—a facet of her career which carries particular significance. Since 1997 her public and monumental works have been present in Catalan towns such as Canovelles, El Prat del Llobregat, Santa Margarida de Montbui, Vilanova del Camí and one near the Sanctuary of Montserrat, and further afield in places such as Calcinaia (Italy) and Priego (Cuenca). But it is in Igualada, her place of birth, where her sculptures are particularly popular. The first to be installed on the Rambla of the town was *La noia de la bola* (The ball fountain) (1997), where a pigtailed girl gently pushes a huge ball, which in fact is a drinking fountain. Riba tried to make the sculpture highly dynamic, where both the girl and the ball could move from their positions at any moment. The second sculpture, also in the Rambla, is *El noi a la rambla* (Boy on the Rambla)

(1998), which evokes one of the artist's memories of her adolescence when the boys would sit on a railing in the Rambla waiting for the girls and for their friends. With this work Riba combines the aesthetic emotion of the piece with the emotion of her memory.

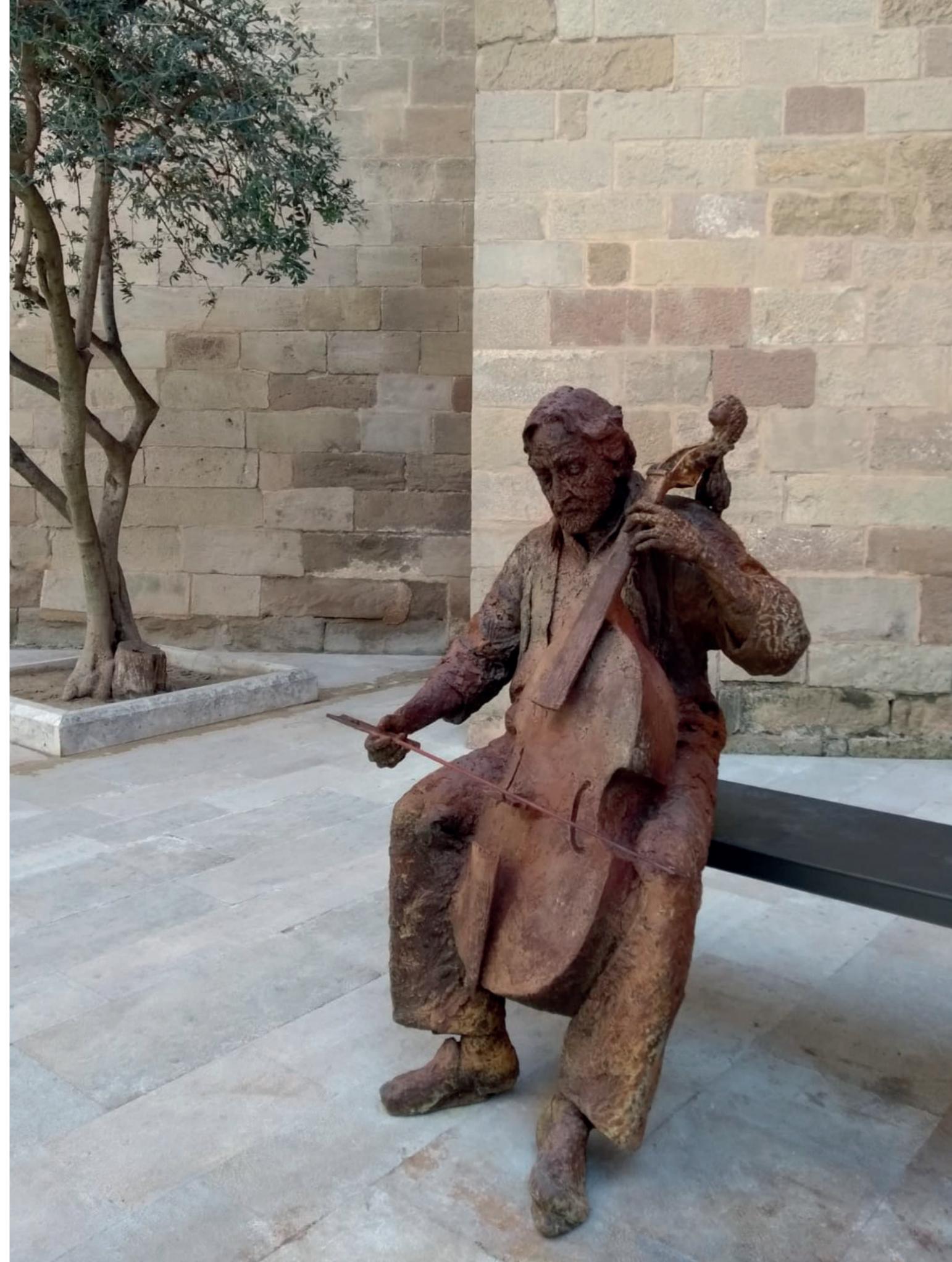
Close by, in the Plaça Cal Font, there is the sculpture *Nos(altres)* (Us) (2015), which was commissioned in collaboration with the socio-cultural Atlas Foundation. In this work Teresa Riba tackles the subject of immigration through two figures represented by a Maghreb girl and a Latin girl side by side, as if they had met in the street without speaking or touching each other. Riba invites the spectator to become the protagonist of the piece since the separation of the two girls (based on real people) is just enough to be able to squeeze between them and take their hands. At the foot of the sculpture on the ground is an inscription which reads "You hold the key to living together".



The latest sculpture to be installed in Igualada in 2019 is a homage to a universal figure from the town—the musician Jordi Savall, and it is situated next to the Basilica of Santa Maria. In this work, commissioned by Igualada Town Council, Riba is inspired by the music of the maestro and has made a living portrait of him, showing him in deep concentration while playing the instrument for which he is best known: the viola de gamba.

It has been demonstrated that all creative activity helps to liberate us from the restriction of our stays. In this exhibition, just like in any other by Teresa Riba, there is just one stage in her creative process on display. Giacometti said that he made art to protect himself. “The plain truth is that the more you work on a piece the more you know it will never be finished”, he said. Teresa Riba invites us to work towards that end by contemplating her work.

Mestre Savall
Bronze | 140 x 82 x 78 cm.
banc 50 x 148 x 40 cm | Igualada 2019



Teresa Riba

Born 10 March 1962 in Igualada. Studied at the Faculty of Fine Art Sant Jordi, University of Barcelona. Graduated in 1985 in the specialism of sculpture with modules of doctoral studies.

Teacher of sculpture and drawing at LA GASPAR Municipal Art School in Igualada, History of Art at the Feli Academy and member of the jury for different competitions.

Lecturer in the FACULTY OF FINE ART SANT JORDI of the University of Barcelona since 2014.

Prizes

- 2007** Finalist in the IV JOSEP AMAT International Drawing Biennial, Sant Feliu de Guíxols.
- 2003** Honorary Mention in the "International Sculpture Competition in the Calle San Fernando". Cadiz.
- 2002** Finalist in the XL INGLADA-GUILLOT Foundation International Drawing Competition. Barcelona.
- 1989** 1st Prize for Sculpture in the Youth Art Competition of Igualada.

Documentary

"SAVALL SEEN BY RIBA" Gormezano & Manel Almiñana Documentary. RALDAWORLD. 2019.

Public works

- 2019** "Mestre Jordi Savall". Igualada.
- 2015** "Nos(altres)" per Fundació ATLES. Igualada.
- 2014** "La nena", Conesa.
- 2011** Parc quitxalla. Canovelles.
- 2010** Conjunt escultòric "Camí de la fàbrica". Prat del Llobregat.
- 2008** Realització de 3 escultures públiques al Passeig Marítim de Platja d'Aro.
- 2007** Escultura pública "Cap de bou" Sta Margarida de Montbui.
- 2003** Participació en complements de l'òpera "Lissístrata d'Aristòfanes realitzada per Carles Santos.
- 2002** Monument "L'amistat". Vilanova del Camí, Anoia.
Monument "L'amistat II". Calcinaia, Itàlia.
Monument dedicat a la " Mare Paula Montal", Montserrat.
- 1999** "Monumento a los Ganberos ". Priego de Cuenca.
- 1998** Monument a "l'Esport". Igualada.
"El noi de la rambla". Igualada.
- 1997** 1ª font escultòrica: "La nena de la bola". Igualada.

Art fairs:

- 2020** LA ART SHOW Los ANGELES, EEUU
- 2019** AFFORDABLE ART FAIR HAMBURG. Alemanya.
- 2019** KUNSTSRAI AMSTERDAM. Holanda
- 2015-2018** AFFORDABLE ART FAIR AMSTERDAM. Holanda.
- 2013-2019** AFFORDABLE ART FAIR BRUSSELS. Bèlgica.
- 2018-2019** AFFORDABLE ART FAIR STOCKHOLM. Suècia.
- 2017** FOR REAL AMSTERDAM. Holanda.
- 2013** Art Copenhagen. Dinamarca.
- 2013-2016** ARTFAIR KÖLN, Colònia. Alemanya
- 2012- 2020** ART KARLSRUHE. Alemanya.
- 2012-2019** ART BODENSEE. Àustria.
- 2010 -2018** ST'ART. Strasbourg. França.
- 2008** ARTMADRID. Madrid.
- 2001** ARTBARCELONA. Barcelona.
- 2000-2001** ARTESANTANDER. Santander.

Symposiums:

- 2005** Simpòsium d'escultura de l'Alt Penedès.
- 2003** Simpòsium d'escultura a Calcinaia. Itàlia.

Individual exhibitions:

- 2020** "Cuirasses". Galeria d'art Anquin's. Reus.
- 2017** "Mirades". Vilassar de Mar.
Instal·lació Basílica Sta. Maria de Castelló d'Empúries.
"Fora del paper" Molí Paperer. Capellades.
- 2016** - Teresa Riba / Modest Almirall. Galeria d'art Anquin's. Reus.
"Lligats" Galeria Arteria. Igualada.
- 2015** "Ludere". La galeria. Igualada.
- 2014** Escultura i dibuix. Galeria LAUTH. Ludwigshafen. Alemanya.
Galeria JULIA DORSCH. Berlín
Escultures a l'Ambaixada d'Espanya a Berlín.
- 2013** - Teresa Riba/ Carlos Morago. Galeria d'art Anquin's. Reus.
"Com nosaltres". Casa Irla. Sant Feliu de Guixols.
- 2011** "Semblances" galeria Espai G d'art. Terrassa.
Escultures. Centre cultural. Conesa.
Escultura i dibuix. Sala Municipal. La Pobla de Claramunt.
- 2010** Espai G d'art. Terrassa.
EXPARI, col·legi d'Arquitectes tècnics i Enginyers d'edificació de Barcelona. Mataró.
- 2009** - Galeria Anna Maria Burger. Munic. Alemanya.
"Una Mirada" Espai d'Art, Sant Feliu de Boada.
- 2008** Galeria FECIT, Sant Feliu de Guíxols.
- 2007** Museu Sant Feliu de Guíxols.
- 2006** "Comunicacio?". Galeria ARTLOFT. Reus.
- 2005** Centre Cultural Àgora de Cambrils.
Escultures. Càpua, Itàlia.
- 2004** Escultures. Benevento, Nàpols.
Galeria SUSANY, Vic.
- 2003** Galeria d'Art Espai 28, Mataró.
Galeria d'Art Segovia Isaacs. Barcelona.
- 2002** Casa cultural CAL BLE. Igualada.
- 2000** Galeria Segovia Isaacs. Barcelona.
Galeria Pedreguet-Art. Amer.
- 1999** Galeria SUSANY. Vic.
- 1998** Galeria 22. Igualada.
- 1997** Galeria Pedreguet-Art. Amer.
- 1996** Exposició Fòrum Berger Balaguer. Vilafranca del Penedès.
- 1995** Sala Rembrand. Vilanova i la Geltrú.
- 1993** Galeria 22. Igualada.
L'Escala d'art. Sitges.
- 1991** Centre Cultural Caixa Terrassa, Terrassa.
- 1990** Reial Cercle Artístic de Barcelona. Barcelona.

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