



*Montse Gallego's profile by Elena Manrique*

### **"The art world needs a reflexion"**

Stubborn, passionate, vulnerable and imaginative. This is how Montse Gallego describes herself. The Spanish artist, based in London for twelve years, has just celebrated the first anniversary of her personal project: Hundred Years Gallery, a cosy cultural and exhibition space located in the heart of Shoreditch. And, although she confesses she had never thought about having her own gallery, she values the experience very positively.

Gallego discovered her creative talent at a very early age. "I was really bored in high school. And I didn't really know what I wanted to be in the future, but art was something natural in my family. My father was also a painter and he tried to inculcate me with his passion". She assures that was not the main reason she became an artist, but her paintings are really influenced by the figure of her father, who was involved with traditional Spanish religious art. In the early nineties, she started to work with interpretations of this religious imagery, transforming them into expressions of her own sexuality. In her almost 20-year-long career, her work has always been marked by the power of the symbol and the prominence of the written word. "When I'm painting I'm also writing", Gallego says. That's why in her artwork words and symbols interact, transcending her and our reality.

Even so, the artist doesn't like to describe her art style. "I don't like to define it, because it has changed a lot during all this time. Sometimes it is illustrative, at intervals it is abstract or poetic, and sometimes it can be expressionist." Now, Gallego has shelved her artistic side to focus on the gallery. "I still continue

drawing and writing, but only as a way of expressing myself. The curator role arouses an interest in me. I enjoy curating and looking at the other artists' artworks." Gallego feels inspired by many artists, but not only painters. "I'm inspired by musicians, filmmakers, dancers, writers... I really like Louise Bourgeois, Zarkoski and Buñuel".

She moved to London running away from the Spanish art scene: "Sincerely, I was really bored there." But the market in London is really competitive: "The scene in London is oversaturated. And new art is commercial, fashionable." According to the Spanish artist, "the art world needs a reflexion". "Art is more powerful when it means expression and revolution, both in the social and the personal sense. Some people create for the sake of creating, for the aesthetic sense, but I think more important is the social and revolutionary value. We don't have to consume just for the sake of consuming."