



LETTERS OF DISAPPOINTMENT/ LETTERE DI DISINCANTO
Dora García
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An exhibition opening at the end of the year necessarily has to contain an element of transition. This is the case with this one, titled **Letters of Disappointment**. It is an exhibition featuring works that were preparatory or research studies to other larger or collective works, together with some recurring 'reading' formats in my work such as *I Read It with Golden Fingers* or *Annotated Books*.

The work that gives the title to the exhibition, *Letters of Disappointment*, condenses almost three years of going through texts written by remarkable, historical authors such as Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai, Audre Lorde, Clara Zetkin or Angela Davis, touching on the subject of disappointment. Paraphrasing the 1855 speech by US feminist Lucy Stone, "Disappointment is the Lot of Women": "From the first years to which my memory stretches, I have been a disappointed woman."

Yet, the feelings transpiring through this collection of texts are not bitter and even less are they defeatist. They are fuel for struggle. Over these three years of collecting, I have come to realise that all revolutions have been started by women, and in all these revolutions, at a certain point on the way to victory, what was called 'the woman question' has inexorably been postponed, put off to a permanent tomorrow. The disappointment generated by these historical snubs is indeed the fuel of the feminist struggle today.

This collection of letters is presented as handwritten notes made in books that relate to the letters in different ways, just as love letters are often kept between the pages.

A preparatory study is shown as well in the form of 18 original drawings. These 18 drawings are the very first study for the collective work-in-progress **The Bug**, which was presented three times during 2022 at IUAV Venice, Carta Festival deSingel Antwerp and Centro Cultural Conde Duque Madrid. *The Bug* is a collective performative elaboration by several artists of the theatre play by Vladimir Mayakovsky *The Bedbug* (1929), written a few months before his suicide, disappointed in love and in revolution. This is the text describing the work for its last iteration in Madrid:

"The time-travel storyline of *The Bedbug* was already popular in the science-fiction craze of the '20s, and multiple works of fiction have used it ever since: a visitor from the past arrives in a future that is our present. In Mayakovsky's work, a (dubious) Soviet revolutionary is frozen by accident together with his

insect parasite in 1929, and both are brought back to life 50 years later, in 1979. [...] in our own version, *The Bug*, we imagine a collective author who analyses questions such as: 'What happens in 50 years?' 'Who evaluates and values the importance of countless events?' 'How are these events told?' 'With what words?' 'Who writes and who reads?' 'Who speaks and who listens?' Imagine that history repeats itself cyclically. In this eternal return there is a recurring fault, a parasite, an insect, something that prevents the repetition from flowing without casualties."

And what might be considered a third element of research or study, ***Amor Rojo soundtrack, to be listened to in the dark***, is presented as a sound installation. *Amor Rojo soundtrack, to be listened to in the dark* is a work derived from an old 1930 song, written by Friedrich Hollaender and famously performed by Marlene Dietrich. This song is at the very centre of my film-in-progress *Amor Rojo* (2018–2023), which establishes connections between early 20th-century Marxist feminisms and the current 'fourth wave' of feminism. The lyrics of this song may also cast some light on our *Letters of Disappointment*:

*No one had asked us,
when we were still faceless
whether we'd like to live, or rather not.
Now I'm wandering around alone in a large city,
and I don't know if she cares for me.
I'm looking into living rooms
through doors and windows,
and I'm waiting and waiting
for something.
If I could wish for something
I'd feel awkward
What should I wish for,
a bad or a good time?
If I could wish for something
I'd want to be only a bit happy
because if I were too happy
I'd long for being sad.*

Finally, the exhibition also features a new work from the series *Annotated Books*: ***Letters from Prison*** by Antonio Gramsci, and two new works from the series *I Read It with Golden Fingers*: ***The Thief's Journal***, by Jean Genet, and ***The Workers Opposition***, by Alessandra Kollontai. Speaking of disappointment...

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