***Tableau Vivant***, or *Living Picture*, is inspired by a real historical event depicted by the painter Théodore Géricault (Rouen, 1791 – Paris, 1824), one of the leading figures of French Romanticism, in *The Raft of the Medusa*, painted between 1818 and 1819 and exhibited at the Paris Salon that same year. The painting portrays a tragedy in which around 150 people were abandoned at sea. In July 1816, the frigate *Méduse*, sailing from France to Senegal, ran aground off the coast of Mauritania. Its captain was among the first to abandon ship and, together with the officers, left the raft on which the remaining passengers had been crammed to drift at sea. They were condemned to endure thirteen days of shipwreck, hunger, violence and cannibalism. The episode became a scandal for the French Bourbon monarchy—a regime already severely weakened—further damaging its reputation for corruption and leading to the imprisonment of its captain, a move prompted by the widespread public outrage the episode ignited.

Clara Carvajal reinterprets Géricault's painting, reproducing it at the same scale as the original so that viewers do not see it as an episode from the past, but instead step into it and recognise in that raft a situation that continues to unfold today, in those very same waters. Hand-made carvings on wood plates and divided into seven scenes, ***Tableau Vivant*** sets aside the narrative and preserves the event as a sequence of scenes, almost like still frames from a film: a purely visual narrative, independent of the original historical account yet connected to the painting through a bond of affection and admiration, opening itself up to empathy with our present.

The work invites you to become part of it. Some of the scenes stand upright, and several faces have been left as empty spaces. Step into one of them and you will complete the scene, because any one of the shipwrecked figures could be any one of us. It is a way of looking from within rather than from the shore, and of recognising those who undertake this journey today as people with faces and stories of their own. Left empty, these holes also evoke what happens when a work loses its immediacy and becomes a historical object: the absence and objectification of human experience.

Clara Carvajal lives and works between Mallorca and Madrid. Trained as a sculptor, she began working with large-format woodcut printing in 2019, with a project in Beirut that paid tribute to the way Lebanese society had constructed its identity over the previous century through image archives. Since then, her work has returned time and again to the same question: what survives of an image, its meaning and its symbolic weight when its medium, form or technique changes? She calls this pursuit *The Biology of the Image*: the ability of an image to mutate and endure across different media without losing its essence.

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