

Clara Carvajal

About my work: "Message is my language"

My work is about language and communication as primary human phenomena. Perhaps this is because I've had serious hearing difficulties since birth. We deaf people have a real communication problem with the world around us making us use different technologies.

I use a hearing aid. It's technology selects and interprets sound by differentiating background noise from speech. It converts sound waves into electricity, then digitalises and transforms them into aptacoustic signals for my brain. The hearing process does not only occur in the ear, it actually happens in the brain when it interprets the signals received. Since my childhood, difficulty with spoken language also motivated my inclination for reading, this in turn has influenced my life and interests.

These two conditioning factors have marked how I relate to others and the cultural concepts I use when doing so. None of what conditions us is innocuous, least of all what comes so directly from childhood. For example, I love Art House Cinema. I attribute this to the fact that at a very early stage I preferred subtitled movies because they helped me follow dialogues and plot. In Spain these films are generally auteur films and not generally translated into Spanish, nor widely distributed.

I trained as a sculptor and currently work with language and communication systems, focusing on cultural processes in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Amongst them I am especially interested in systems of language encryption and decryption, which have existed in different forms since antiquity. Art is, after all, another form of communication with its own particular encryption systems.

They occur, for example, when we witness shapes mimicking reality in a collection of spots and colours, or when we speak about symbolism.

Cultural history accrued in art testifies multiple variants of belief and experience, expressing concepts and judgments on value. They conceal underlying impositions which don't always correspond to the reality of historical events. In some of my work, I focus on highlighting hidden realities which have been manipulated by artistic representation. They seem, to me, to be another form of encryption which tends to influence the collective subconscious.

A good example of how I deal with aspects of encryption in my work is with QR codes. This digital technology offers multiple ways to encrypt, and lets you direct users to, for example, content lodged in the Cloud. In a similar way, I have repositioned the traditional message about the Amazons in one of my pieces, which references the metopes of the Parthenon's Amazonomachy at the Acropolis in Athens. Recent research proves that a significant number of what were taken to be tombs of Asian warriors, in fact correspond to female warriors. This confirms the existence of Amazons who fought in antiquity. Reclassifying the Amazon myth to that of real history for those women can be

prompted with artistic interventions like mine.

I believe this artistic approach to communication processes can make people more aware of how we relate to each other through the languages we use. My upcoming projects head in the same direction, broadening the field of signs to greater cultural contents.