

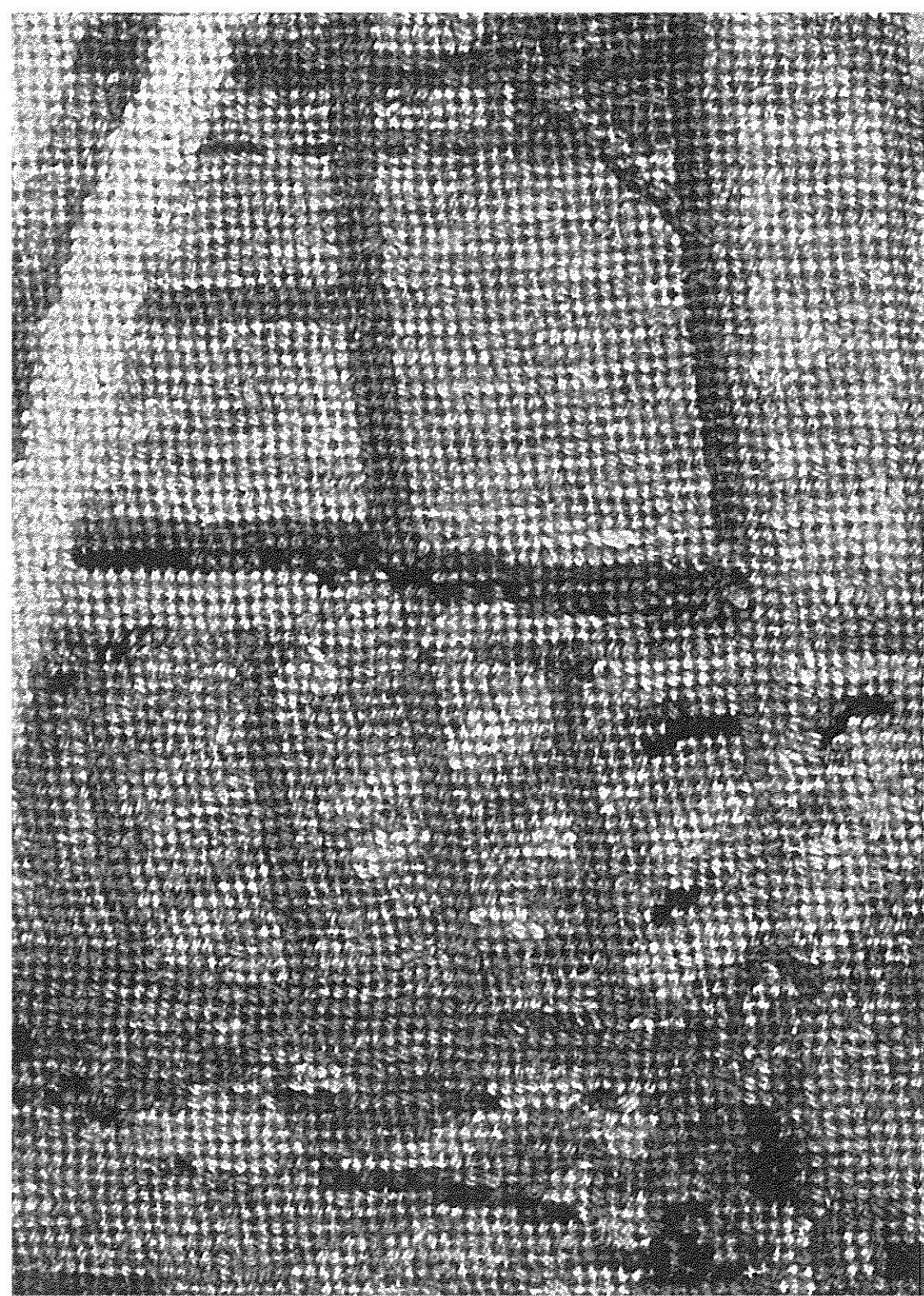
**HUMID  
TACITA DEAN  
CHRISTINE BORLAND  
JUAN CRUZ  
MARIE-ANGE GUILLEMINOT  
JEAN-JACQUES RULLIER  
NARELLE JUBELIN WITH  
MARCOS CORRALES LANTERO  
SONYA HANNEY  
& ADAM DADE**

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**NARELLE JUBELIN WITH  
MARCOS CORRALES LANTERO**  
Owner-Builder of Modern California House

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Narelle Jubelin  
and Marcos Corrales Lantero:  
Owner Builder of Modern  
California House



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## Housing

*Owner Builder of Modern California House*

Narelle Jubelin and Marcos Corrales Lantero

Margaret Morgan

"Its wit is, of course, largely the result of the additive process, of the seemingly casual juxtaposition of different elements"

THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARTIST Narelle Jubelin and architect, Marcos Corrales Lantero, *Owner Builder of Modern California House*, is an installation that consists of modular furniture designed by Corrales upon which are displayed detailed *curios* that beg us to sit, lean, or peer over the furnishings in order better to glean their meaning. Included are a suite of Jubelin's *petite-point* renderings and two marquette like forms. The marquettes function as tropes of a mass-produced, modernist aesthetic: a ply wood folder displaying lists of official photographs from catalogues of the Case Study Houses; and a card house built to the floorplan of the titular *Modern California House*, using a commercially produced deck of cards designed by Charles and Ray Eames. The *petite point* are another story:

Have you ever returned to a house after many years absence, only to find your memory of place distorted to such a degree that you doubt your very senses? Thus, the grand rooms of your recollection are, upon re-entering them as an adult, disconcertingly small, perhaps a little decrepit. As you walk through them, the rooms seem to telescope away from you, like the past that has already incommensurably receded. You grasp at this last vestige of the memory, the physical trace of your childhood, but it is, in the re-visiting, *changed*. A childhood house is always uncanny in this respect since we can only ever 'know' it in absentia, after the fact, as a memory.

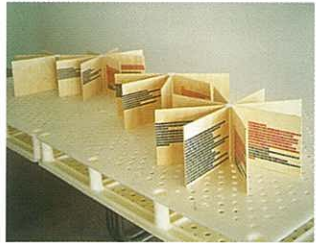
Jubelin's *petite point* are based upon pointedly anonymous photographs of a modernist home under construction. While the home in question pays homage to the Case Study Houses of California, it is in fact a house built by Jubelin's parents in the suburbs of mid-nineteen-sixties Sydney. When the photographs were first taken, they documented a home in the state of becoming: concrete foundation, timber frame, family members going about their activities as the walls went up around them. In the *petite point* renditions we see as part of *Owner Builder*, the images are transformed from snapshot into something that approaches historical document. The process of building is frozen, as if to preserve all the promise of prosperity, comfort and the good life ahead, those things augured by post-war modernism.



Up close, small sections of great arcs seem straight; it's only in stepping back that we understand the true gradient of the curve. So too, when we focus upon the minutiae in Jubelin's work, direct lines seem drawn from reference to reference. The bigger picture, however, reveals arcs, curves, concavities, soft gradients, a mesh of lines that weave in and out of our desire for order, structure, scrutiny. The materiality of Jubelin's *petite point* becomes analogous to the larger project. Each stitch, point to point, goes against the rectilinear order of the tapestry's base fabric, like lived histories that deviate from the official line. Or like the incarnations of modernism at the heart of Jubelin's oeuvre, that mutate as they migrate across the planet.



As we wander from table to table of *Owner Builder*, we may notice that the design of the display approximates the plan of the card house and we begin to understand that this 'house', this struck-



through house of the title, is psychological as much as physical, textual as much as material, labile, mutable, each reiteration an alteration. And as we examine the details and consider the geographical references put into play — Los Angeles, Sydney, Melbourne, Madrid — we recognise the uncanny iterations of the house we call 'modernism'. That the furnishings upon which the objects are displayed are made from recycled freight palettes is noteworthy: *Owner Builder* speaks not to the objects per se, neither home nor furniture, but to their status as elements of a modernism continually under reconstruction, instances in the circulation of its aesthetics, person to person, past and present, as they echo and rebound around the globe.

For over a decade Jubelin has been cross-hatching the motifs of modernism while tracking their appearance from object to object. In relays of exchange, from colony to centre, from origin to outpost, from literature to *belles lettres*, from woman to man, from whispered anecdote to forgotten catalogue, and, in *Owner Builder*, from the snapshot to the drafter's plan. In each instance the minor form and the lived experience are what propel this dynamic and ambiguous phenomenon. In juxtaposing quotidian object and daily life, Jubelin exposes their discursive connections to the production of what one might call Great Modernism. Narrative here is associative and fragmented, and in aggregation tells tales taller than fiction. This emphasis on fractured narrative aligns Jubelin's project with a number of artists who use historical accounts intertextually, so as to elucidate their artificiality, their multiplicity, but also their liberatory promise in the present. I am thinking of, in Sydney, Helen Grace's *Secret Archives of the Recent Past*; or, in New York, Renée Green's *Import/Export Funk Office*, or in Los Angeles, Sam Durant's *Altamont* and Allan Sekula's *Fish Story*.

In each instance the artist pointedly uses a material form loaded with (art) historical connotation, in juxtaposition with fragments of text, partial anecdotes and/or actual objects. Each refers

to a familiar story but locates it in a mesh of connections to other histories that traverse geographical and sociological space and that leap from points past into the present, and, into the personal. History is no straight line, no single location, no easy sequence of distant high points. Aleatory, obtuse and highly revealing, Jubelin's peripatetic methods come to the Case Study Houses of Los Angeles as a story about a bungalow, albeit a bungalow with multiple points of origin. And to an idea of LA that inflects the artist's mode, and in turn imbues the trans-geography of *Owner Builder* with a little bit of Hollywood.

In 1926 Philip Lovell<sup>2</sup> wrote, "Los Angeles is truly a city of homes". Raymond Chandler concurred, albeit with a different tenor, when he wrote that LA is "a big, dry and sunny place with ugly homes and no style."<sup>3</sup> Like it or not, Los Angeles is the home of homes. Its biggest buildings have little of the lure of an Empire State Building. Even Richard Meier's Getty Museum is a vast sprawl of a complex, like a gargantuan gated community. Most of Los Angeles' notable architecture is neither civic nor corporate; it is private and domestic. And it is famously quotational, all Hollywood illusion, pastiche and faux effect, *masterpieces of bricolage* as Umberto Eco might put it.<sup>4</sup>

To this day, local realtors guilelessly describe 1920s homes in Silverlake as *English Tudor*, or 1930s homes in Los Feliz as *Italian Villas*, or contemporary mansions in the Pacific Palisades as *French Chateaux* or houses anywhere in the city of any vintage as Pueblo, middle eastern, Colonial revival or Georgian manor. So too, when one first visits Hollywood Boulevard, the big surprise is that 'there's no there there', as they say, only some puny replica buildings; and the names of once-famous movie people embedded in stars on the sometimes cleaned sidewalks; these frequented by the occasional tranny after a hard night's work, or a homeless kid badly playing a worse guitar.



Yet, as I write, all this is changing: Hollywood is getting a facelift — *she's almost ready for her close-up, Mr. DeMille* — and, gleeful in the gentrification, realtors wax poetic. But the poet's muse is neither Mock Tudor nor Hansel-and-Gretel; what inspires all those breathless columns in the real estate pages is modernism — vernacular, domestic modernism.

One rhapsode of the real estate section in a recent *Los Angeles Times* even described a local modernist building as “a refuge from the world, like the architecture of Adolf Loos”. If androids can dream of electric sheep, and if Spielberg can dream of Kubric, then maybe real estate agents can write Beatriz Colomina.<sup>5</sup> And in the pages



of the trashiest stargazing magazines one learns that Leonardo di Caprio wants, but — *hasn't yet found* — a Neutra House. Modernist America has displaced imitation Europe in the fantasy life of the stars. Coveted by Hollywood celebrities, mid twentieth century modernism is the now the image *ideal* of Californian life. And in Celebrity Central we know what that means. Just a dozen years ago you could pick up a Schindler House for a song, no-one wanted Neutra houses — they leaked — and Frank Lloyd Wright places languished in the hills, falling down for want of a new owner. But now that Leonardo has graced the form with his desire, it seems that suddenly everyone knows the value of Los Angeles' home-grown modernism. So too, the histories attached to those houses are no longer ignored, but sought out — if only to bolster the value of the property.

Thus, while artists use history as their palette, another strand of history reappears against the glittering façade of LA, albeit in

reincarnated commodity form, merged with the language of real estate, a language of fantasy, desire and infinite possibility.<sup>6</sup> Yet I suppose fantasy is part of the reason all those modernist architects like Schindler, and later, Saarinen, J. R. Davidson and Neutra, moved from the cold climes of central and northern Europe to the blissfully continuous spring of southern California, building houses designed for indoor/ outdoor living: *al fresco* dining, sleeping baskets, and fireplaces facing the gardens. And so the bungalow, once low-lying, wide porched, cool, dark, in Arts and Crafts timbers a la Greene & Greene, was transformed into a place of modulated lightness, sharp regular geometries, open space and multifunction rooms overlapping indoors with out. After fifteen years of depression and world war, suddenly: “there was



something electric in the air; a particular sort of excitement that comes from the sound of hammers and saws after they have been silent too long.” The sound of hammers and saws was orchestrated by John Entenza of *Arts & Architecture* magazine, into a veritable modern symphony. In January 1945 Entenza instigated a project that Charles and Ray Eames, Craig Ellwood and Richard Neutra would soon make famous: the Case Study Houses.

In Melbourne in the same post-war building boom, the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, in conjunction with *The Age*, instigated the Small Homes Service “which put architectural design and discourse onto the pages of the newspaper on a weekly basis.”<sup>8</sup> Under the directorship of Robin Boyd, an avid proponent of modern architecture, the Small Homes Service provided affordable plans for international-style modernist homes. To add to the foment, around 1949, just four years after the first of the Case Study Houses, the

magazine *Arts & Architecture* appeared in Australia. To a nation long comfortable with the circulation of modernism through reproduction, the large, clear illustrations in *Arts & Architecture* magazine must have been comforting indeed. Presumably easy to copy and certainly easy to emulate, Californian modernism had, on paper, arrived. No doubt it took some time for the limited circulation of *Arts & Architecture* to penetrate the market as far as Sydney's North Epping — and some would say it never arrived in other areas of the city's enormous hinterland.

Be that as it may, near the very end of the Case Study project, modern architecture found its way to 11 Belinda Crescent, North Epping. Oddly out of place in the vast sprawl of Sydney's west, the Jubelin family home now makes an uncanny return — to Melbourne. For to the Melbourne viewer, the bungalow depicted in *Owner Builder* recalls those of the Small Homes Service. Interestingly, to Angeleno eyes, the bungalow might well recall Los Angeles: Australian trees are so ubiquitous in Southern California that to many Californians they seem native. Eucalypts, bottle brush and acacia frame the landscape of the Case Study House, just as they frame Belinda Crescent, Sydney, each informing the other in an endless mirror of association. And this is the significance of the struck through word, *California*: it is always present as an absence, a disavowal, a deferral, the thing by any other name. Just like the imported Australian trees transplanted to Californian Case Study architecture that is emulated in Sydney, and instigated in Melbourne, and indeed like the circulation of *Owner Builder* itself, modernism pulls in all directions.

Jubelin quotes Mike Davis quoting Walter Benjamin:

"The superficial inducement, the exotic, the picturesque has an effect only on the foreigner. To portray a city a native must have deeper motives — motives of one who travels into the past instead of into the distance. A native's book about his city will always be related to memories; the writer has not spent his childhood there in vain."<sup>1</sup>

In *Owner Builder*, Jubelin is the native returning and traveling into the past. Yet she is also the foreigner of Benjamin's words,

who, expatriate, and now living in Madrid, is effected by the "superficial inducements of the picturesque", seduced perhaps by the remarkable sensitivity of the domestic modernism that is so abundant in Los Angeles precisely because it, in her experience, echoes her childhood. In this she is not alone; all the artists whom I mentioned earlier — Grace, Green, Durant, Sekula — are highly invested in their subjects, their personal stories imbricated with the broader historical narrative. "To not spend one's childhood there in vain" is to desire purpose, meaning, connection to that place about which one has so much ambivalence.

Jubelin's *petite point* are made up of tiny knots, or *amphaloi*, to use Elisabeth Bronfen's term,<sup>10</sup> the trace by which the artist's deeper motives are registered. In one image there is a single child, standing alone, a vertical form among the unclad uprights, an insistent presence from a distant past, mediated through time, architecture, the snapshot, the embroidered rendering, and the transformation that is implicit to the image's place as art in the public sphere. Incomplete, the house is a threshold between plenitudinous babyhood and the rise of an autonomous self — such as would have a room — but not a bathroom — of one's own. And as Jubelin renders the image, each knot is tied and cut like an umbilical cord, each stitch a mark of separation and remembrance, a break *and* a link to the artist's childhood home, and to the modernism whose child she also is.

<sup>1</sup> Michael Brawne on the Eames House, in 'The Wit of Technology', *Architectural Design*, September 1966 quoted in Reyner Banham, 'Klarheit, Ehrlichkeit, Einfachheit ... And Wit Too! — The Case Study Houses in the World's Eyes' in ed. Elizabeth A. T. Smith, *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, Los Angeles, California: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1989, p. 186

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Philip Lovell commissioned Rudolf Schindler to build a number of houses including the famous but no longer extant Lovell Beach House, Newport Beach, California, 1926. See Elizabeth A. T. Smith, *The Architecture of R. M. Schindler*, Los Angeles, CA: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001, p. 12

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Kevin McMahon, 'Displacements, Furnishings, Houses, and Museums: Six Motifs and Three Terms of Connoisseurship' in ed. Erika Suderburg, *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 220

<sup>4</sup> Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986, p. 23

<sup>5</sup> See Beatriz Colomina on Adolf Loos in 'The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism' in ed. Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, p. 82

<sup>6</sup> If artists are very often the unwitting first wave of gentrification in the real estate market, perhaps artists are now the first wave of a kind of "renovation of history" or "textual gentrification". — I remember once overhearing a youth in downtown Brooklyn, New York, remark: "Hey, I knew Fort Greene *before* it was historic."

<sup>7</sup> Esther McCoy, 'Introduction [to the First edition]', *Case Study Houses 1945 - 1962*, Santa Monica, California: Hennessey + Ingalls, 1977 (second edition), p. 8

<sup>8</sup> Max Delany, 'Structural Acrobatics, Small Homes and the City', in ed. Juliana Engberg, *1956: Melbourne, Modernity and the XVI Olympiad*, Melbourne, Victoria: Museum of Modern Art at Heide, 1996, p. 59

<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin, quoted in Narelle Jubelin, *Owner Builder of Modern California House*, Exhibition Three-fold, Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles, California, 2001, quoted from Mike Davis, 'Excavating the Future in Los Angeles', *City of Quartz*, New York, NY: Vintage, 1992, frontispiece

<sup>10</sup> Bronfen uses the term "Omphalos", or navel, as the bodily sign of the originary trauma of birth. Her argument confounds Freud's schema by privileging the subject's link to and split from the maternal body as the primary 'castration'. Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject, Hysteria and Its Discontents*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 11

## Works

11 COTTON & SILK PETIT-POINT RENDITIONS OF COLOR SLIDES TAKEN BY RAYMOND DOUGLAS JUBELIN DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF 11 BELINDA CRES NORTH EPPING, 1964. SIZE OF LOT: .75 ACRE; AREA OF HOUSE: APPROX. 1700 SQUARE FEET EXCLUSIVE OF PATIO AND GARAGE BELOW PATIO; ONE STOREY; LIVING-DINING ROOM, KITCHEN, 1 BATHROOM, LAUNDRY, 2 TOILETS, 2 BEDROOMS, STUDY; MATERIAL: BRICK VENEER, WOOD FRAME, 1/2 TIMBER, 1/2 CONCRETE FLOOR. RENDITIONS PRODUCED MADRID & SYDNEY 2000-01, STAINLESS STEEL FRAMES H6" X W 8 1/2" X D 1 1/2" OR H 5" X W 11" X D 1 3/4"

PROTOTYPE MODULAR FURNITURE DESIGNED BY MARCOS CORRALES LANTERO 2000; BENCH AND TABLE SURFACE 87 X 87, EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN MM. L865 W865 D129 AND 110 X 120, EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS IN MM. L1100 W1100 D129 MATERIALS: HIGH TENSILE 100% RECYCLABLE PLASTIC, STEEL. INTERNATIONAL PATENT PENDING

FLOORPLAN OF DETACHED SINGLE FAMILY HOME AT 11 BELINDA CRES. RENDERED IN THE HOUSE OF CARDS (PICTURE DECK) DESIGNED BY CHARLES EAMES THE EAMES OFFICE 1986. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, PUBLISHED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK

18 PLYWOOD PANELS 8" X 10" WITH ADHESIVE VINYL TEXT COMPILATIONS OF SELECTED JULIUS SHULMAN ILLUSTRATION CREDITS FROM ESTHER MCCOY, CASE STUDY HOUSES 1945-1962 FIRST ED. PUBLISHED IN 1962 UNDER TITLE: MODERN CALIFORNIA HOUSES. WITH REPEATED JULIUS SHULMAN PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS FROM BLUEPRINTS FOR MODERN LIVING: HISTORY AND LEGACY OF THE CASE STUDY HOUSES PUBLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EXHIBITION PRESENTED AT THE TEMPORARY CONTEMPORARY OF THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES, OCTOBER 17, 1989 – FEBRUARY 18, 1990



## Narelle Jubelin

Narelle Jubelin's projects trace the journey objects make through the world and highlight the history that accrues to them. Her practice acknowledges that modernism is fraught with dislocations. Jubelin pursues a cumulative analysis of her installations as they come to be received in one place or another. Narelle is Australian born and has worked in Spain since 1996.

Her work has been presented widely in group and solo exhibitions which include George Paton Gallery Melbourne (1989), Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow (1992), Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago travelling to Grey Art Gallery New York and Monash University Gallery, Melbourne (1994-5), Art Gallery of Ontario and York University Gallery, Toronto (1997), Pavilhao Branco - Museu Da Cidade, Lisbon (1998) and most recently with Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles (2001). A forthcoming exhibition will be a development of *Quarta Saldar* of Modern Gothic House in Landhaus Karl Lemke designed by Mies Van der Rohe in Berlin. During 2001-02 she is working with a Fellowship Grant from the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

Narelle Jubelin is represented by  
Mori Gallery, Sydney and  
Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles



## Marcos Corrales Lantero

is a Madrid based architect and has collaborated with Narelle on several projects including *Arco*, *Elvira* *Revolucion* produced in collaboration with the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia (1996), *Cast. RT* 1997-2001 Tate Gallery, Liverpool (1998), *Unconstr* Galeria Luis Serpa, Lisbon (1999) and *Quarta Saldar* of Modern Gothic House, with Lord Mori Gallery, Los Angeles (2001)

## Margaret Morgan

Margaret Morgan is an artist who lives in Los Angeles with her sweetheart in a Hollywood house built for a silent screen star. Her work runs the gamut from writing to drawing to photography to installation and video. For the past ten years her primary interest has been the symbolic value of plumbing in twentieth century modernism. Her video entitled *Toilet Training* is currently scheduled to be shown in the UK, Stuttgart, Zurich, New York and Los Angeles. Visit her website:  
[www.margaretmorgan.com](http://www.margaretmorgan.com)

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project manager: Geraldine Barlow  
installation: Luke Parker

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