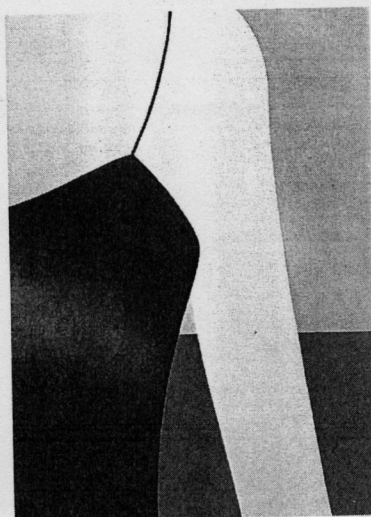


La Ribot, *Chair 2000 (Pieza distinguida no. 29)*, 2000-. Performance view.



Max Renkel, *Untitled*, 2001, tempera on canvas, 13 1/2 x 9 1/2".

contradict their sensuality or contrast it with an evocation of realism—for example *Rita (piernas abiertas)* (Rita [legs open]), 2001, in which the model is pictured in a warehouse with a mattress pushed up against the wall behind her. In *El Señor X* (John Doe), 2001, the urgency of the photograph is clear: The model has pulled down his pants in the middle of a hallway, exposing his enormous member to the camera. These erotic photographs remind us that over the years García Alix has been associated with a lowlife aesthetic. And clearly something of this tendency remains: Porn actors, Hell's Angels, and club bouncers all play important roles in the pictures. One pair of portraits, however, suffered from a sense of artificiality unusual in García Alix's work. *Una mujer para Elvis* (A woman for Elvis), 2002, and *Michelle*, 2001, recall the tiresome clichés of Spanish photographic portraiture of the '60s and '70s: unnatural, overly dramatic facial expressions and gestures—like having the subject shake her hair—are a failed attempt to give the image a sense of primitive energy and formal plasticity. Such pictures represent an unfortunate step backward.

—Pablo Llorca

Translated from Spanish by Michèle Faguet.

MADRID

LA RIBOT

GALERÍA SOLEDAD LORENZO

La Ribot comes from the world of dance but her crossover into the art context has elicited unexpected praise in the press. In

a country like Spain, where television gossip shows have stooped to a new level of crudity in their nonstop focus on sex, the supreme elegance and spontaneity with which La Ribot displays her body has awakened the curiosity of the artistic and journalistic intelligentsia. Of course, only a privileged minority has actually been able to watch La Ribot as she brings her "*Piezas distinguidas*" (Distinguished pieces) to life. Here, the gallery visitor saw scattered on the floor a series of objects (shoes, wigs, papers, ropes, splints, curios) that had been used by La Ribot in her performance piece, *Still Distinguished*, 2002. At the back of the gallery, projected on the floor, a forty-five-minute video, *Despliegue* (Display), 2001, showed the artist by turns clothed, seminude, and completely nude, surrounded by the props and costumes with which she works. This two-channel projection thus summarized the thirty-four "Distinguished Pieces" La Ribot has done so far, along with her first striptease from 1991. These are brief actions or performances, often with a touch of humor or absurdity similar to that found in certain Fluxus works. The pieces are sold to "distinguished proprietors," whose ownership entitles them to see their names appear alongside the title and to be informed of and invited to any presentation of their piece. One might ask, Without the presence of the owner, can the piece be realized? Or is it dormant until he or she appears? In fact, this "ownership" seems to be a mere formality: The performance takes place regardless.

La Ribot's "Distinguished Pieces" thus inscribe themselves within the conceptual tradition, echoing the games that such artists

as Yves Klein, Bruce Nauman, and Lawrence Weiner conceived in relation to the market. This was not about being removed from the market system (nor is that the case with La Ribot) but about irony and humor—for instance, in *De La Mancha* (*Pieza distinguida no. 31*), 2000, La Ribot kneels on the floor, dressed in kneepads and yellow high heels, and embroiders while reading, in fits and starts, a page out of *Don Quixote*. At the same time she grinds her behind against the back of a seat. The difficulty of performing multiple acts at the same time, along with the "desacralization" of the work of Cervantes in a domestic-erotic act, inevitably provokes laughter.

But not everything La Ribot does is so funny: In *Another Bloody Mary* (*Pieza distinguida no. 27*), 2000, the artist sprawls, showing her vagina. Everything is red—shoes, clothing, box—evoking blood, violence, and rape. In *Chair 2000* (*Pieza distinguida no. 29*), 2000, one of her most powerful works, La Ribot displays her anus, only inches from the eyes and nose of the public. In this way she breaks with the conventional concealment of one of the most taboo sites of the human body. Now it only remains for her to direct herself to a broader public. Apparently it is through video that she aims to achieve this, as suggested in *Pa amb tomàquet* (Bread and tomato) (*Pieza distinguida no. 34*), 2000, which shows the body of the artist covered with oil, garlic, and tomato: an appetizing object—"edible," ripe for visual consumption—that expresses complete freedom.

—Juan Vicente Aliaga

Translated from Spanish by Michèle Faguet.

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