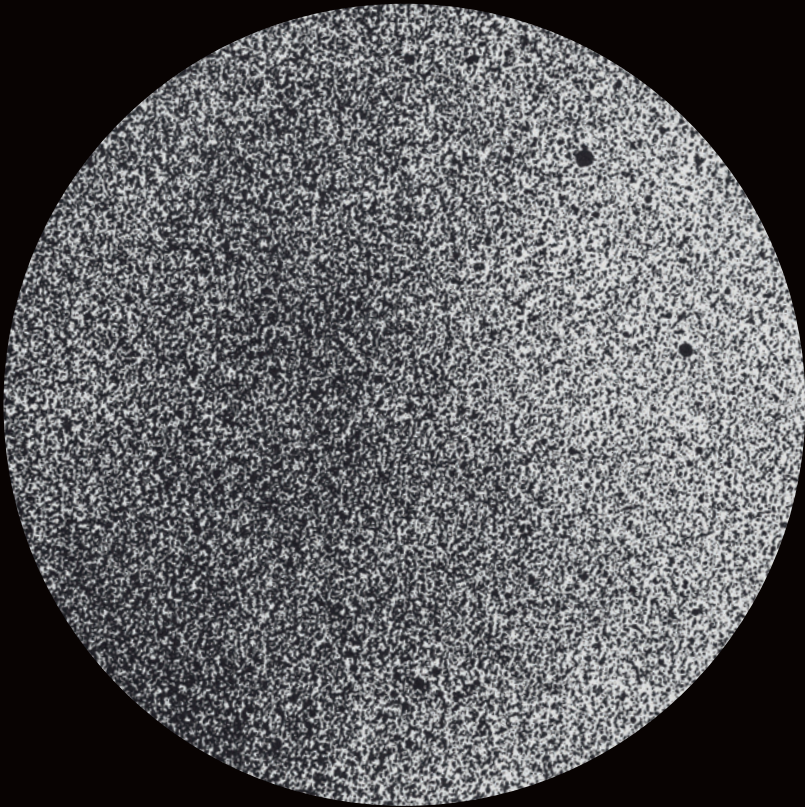


DES DEL CENTRE

EUGÈNIA BALCELLS



MUSEU
NACIONAL
D'ART DE
CATALUNYA

Multimedia installation

New York, 1982 — Barcelona, 2025

From 21.6 to 11.9.2025

DES DEL CENTRE

Eugènia Balcells

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New York, 1982 — Barcelona, 2025

Sound: Peter Van Riper

Created in New York City between 1980 and 1982, *FROM THE CENTER* is a pivotal work in both the career of the artist Eugènia Balcells (Barcelona, 1943) as well as in the history of video art itself, as the work represents one of the first multichannel pieces. The sounds of each of the twelve channels were created by the musician and sound pioneer Peter Van Riper (1942-1998). Shot over two years from the rooftop of Balcells' New York studio, each video looks at various fragments of the world: birds, buildings, traffic, the moon (with a plane miraculously crossing in front of it) and even the sun, which cannot be looked at head-on.

Eugènia Balcells has now crafted a definitive installation of the work entitled *DES DEL CENTRE*, under an iridescent dome that suggests a spherical completeness and reflects light, the very essence of the universe. The inside evokes the great megalithic monuments of antiquity, a sort of “electronic Stonehenge”, in the artist's own words. The dream of creating an empathic connection with the universe becomes, in the light of the evolution of humanity, a scientific, poetic and moral requirement for the 21st century.

The installation is complemented by a video shot in 2025 that can be seen in the room adjacent to the Oval Hall in which the artist explains the key elements of the piece.

FROM THE CENTER has been acquired by the Generalitat de Catalunya for the National Collection of Contemporary Art, and is now a key piece of art in the MNAC. Combining technology and spirituality, *FROM THE CENTER* forms a connection with the Romanesque wall paintings, the great instruments of mystical vision that represent the core of the Museum's collection.



Photo: Eugènia Balcells archive

Eugènia Balcells was born in 1943 in Barcelona, where she graduated in Technical Architecture. The daughter and granddaughter of architects and inventors, she lived in everyday contact with all kinds of devices associated with vision and mathematics. She moved to New York in 1968 and lived alternately between that city and Barcelona until 2020, when she returned for good. Settled in Catalonia, she created the Eugènia Balcells Foundation in Castellar de la Selva, a place for interaction between the arts, the sciences and philosophy. In May 2025 she was awarded the Cross of St George by the Generalitat.

[+ info](#)

The artist dedicates *DES DEL CENTRE* to Dr. S. Mohanambal

Eugènia Balcells chooses a spot on the roof of the Bowery building in New York City where she lives, and decides that this will be the center. She will keep it fixed for two years. The artist unites twelve spatial axes as if she were drawing the celestial vault to observe a particular layer of reality from each axis. She chooses the appropriate lenses for each case. Finally, moved by curiosity to understand where she is, to discover the space where she herself is the center, she guides the camera to record what it sees. Little by little, the film channels acquire their own signature name, a singular voice, and each one tells its own story.

The videos that Eugènia records are interwoven with diverse music composed by the musician Peter Van Riper. This universe of sound envelops the space and, at a certain moment, demands for the presence of the word. She, Eugènia, writes a poem. He, Peter, reads it. The reading becomes the music of channel number two named *a corner*. The appearance of language precedes the aesthetic experience.

Everything moves on purpose based on an immovable point. The mechanism is reminiscent of the Earth's movement around the pole star. A geometry of perception that recognises its own limits becomes evident: the twelve channels can never be viewed at the same time.

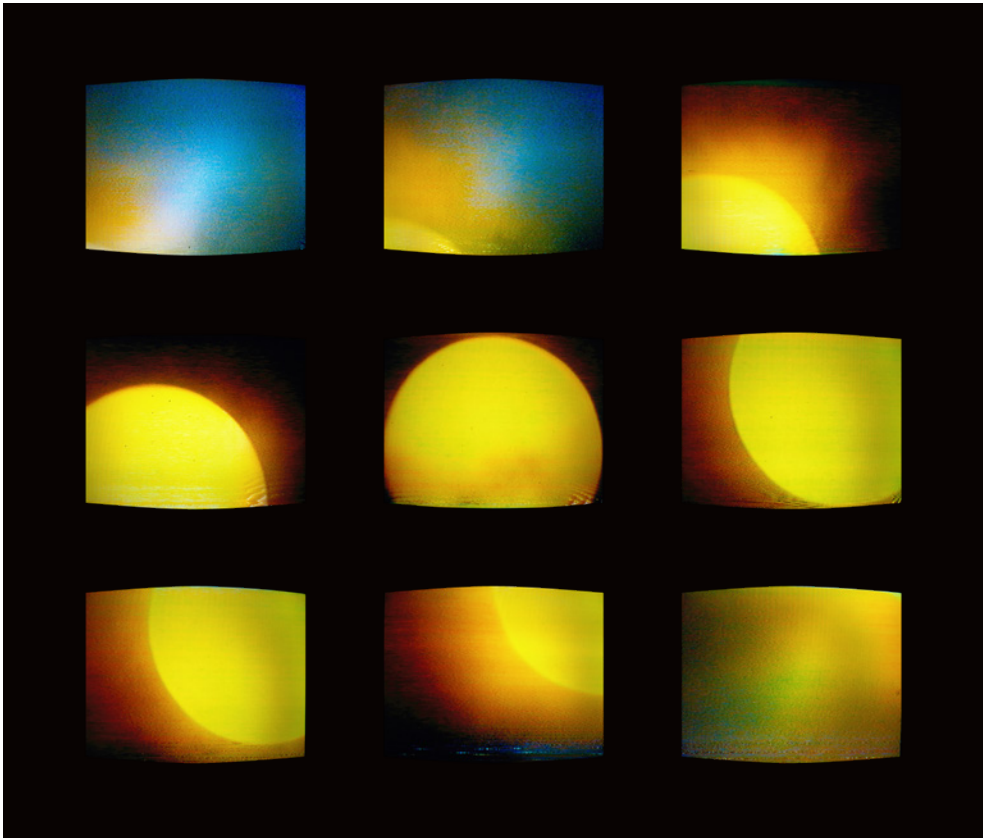
DES DEL CENTRE is the multimedia installation that results from this desire to somehow reflect the intrinsically dynamic nature of reality.

An illuminated stone marks the spot that has become the observatory. A ray of light underlines both the stillness of the stone and the artist's never-flinching eye. The monoliths in a circle, with the same dimensions as the one featured in the final sequence of the Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, delimit the twelve fields of vision. Twelve successive and complementary video channels invite visitors to move around, blending what they see with what they remember having seen. The aesthetic experience takes place in an optical globe dressed in holographic garb that changes colour in response to the light it receives. The piece was created in 2025 under the inspiration of the most extraordinary visual instrument in existence today, the Super-Kamiokande observatory in Japan, which aims to detect neutrinos. The precision of space allows us to approach the interconnection and permanent interdependence of everything that makes up the universe. The Oval Hall of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, together with its dome, adds a new visual layer to the perceptual complexity of the piece.

FROM THE CENTER was intended to be a work about vision, about what video, an instrument still largely unknown in the 1980s, would allow us to see from a fixed point. During the creative process, the spatial axes became temporal channels, and the entire installation – recalling the vision of reality as an energetic dance that Fritjof Capra suggested in his 1975 book *The Tao of Physics* – was transformed into an authentic instrument of vision that today questions the world of art, science and philosophy alike.

Eulàlia Bosch

Curator of *DES DEL CENTRE*



circles of time (east)

the odyssey
fragments
reflections of a rhythm
and a dream
to open the eyes
to find
to get lost
to remember
to follow the thread
and to weave finely
to learn to walk
among the signs
hidden under the stones
and
the asphalt
of cities

to flow

hearing subways
while looking
at airplanes

survival

through all this
places
lots of joy
and
so much
sadness

night after day

continuity of things



moons

all this movement
before the real dance
maybe it is
already
the dance
and even
before
it is
already
the dance
and before

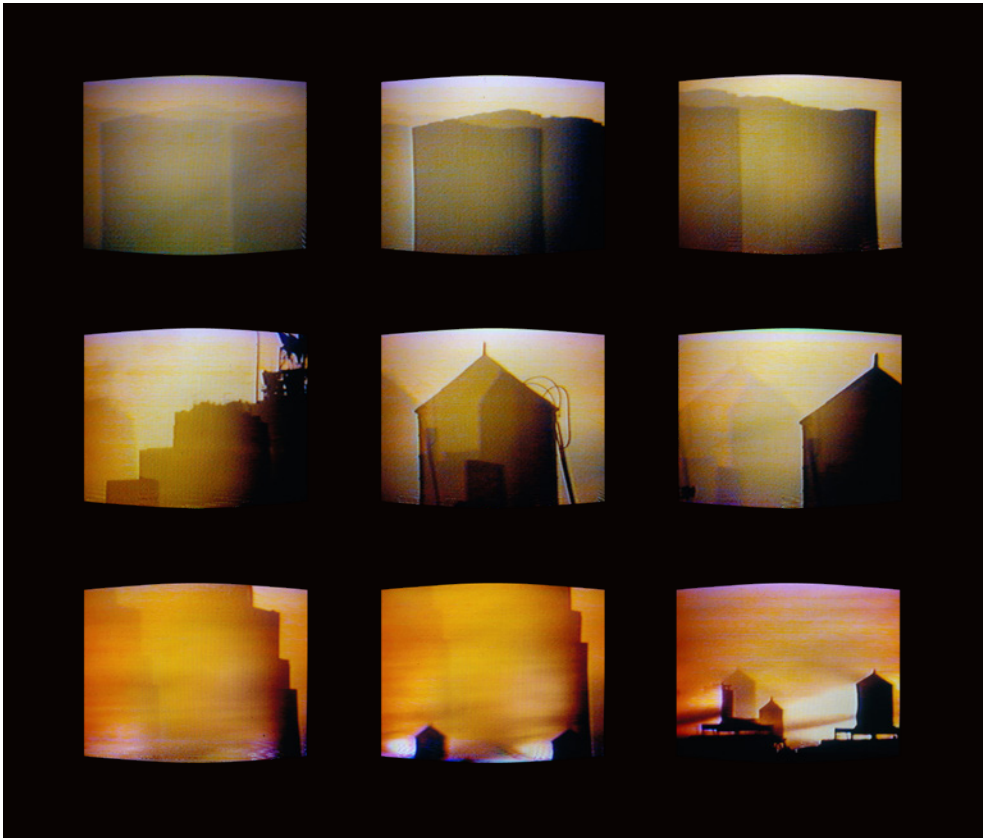
invisible lines
that hold us
together

wonder

light steps
soft
almost no sound

it is
all
the same place
this center
in time

(...)



the tower

time
nor space

four dimensions snapshot

living continuum

new knowledge

coming and going

interweaving forces
of nature

events occurring

a web

probabilities

the
side
by side
existence
of things

direct pointing

concrete reality

energy
dance

unity of life

Read the poem
by Eugènia Balcells
in full [here](#)

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