

# Ana Maria Asan

## Euphonious ceramics

Ceramics and sound. Sound and ceramics. For the artist Ana Maria Asan, ceramics has the capacity to produce sounds. *Ceramics has always a sonorous dimension, but my ceramic objects are not conceived as musical instruments. They are useless! I am the one who decides to make them sound in front of the microphone or, in the case of certain specific installations, I let the audience in charge of it for a precise reason which categorically excludes the entertainment.* She started the *SONORES* project ten years ago, as a deep exploration of the ceramics and its sonorous dimension. The installation *Untitled (There Is No White Noise, Only Colourful Sound Serie)*, 2020 is on view at the Keramiek Triënnale 2021 in CODA Museum Apeldoorn. Through her work, Ana Maria does not look to obtain traditional results like functionality or decorative art, but a poetical approach.



*Time Capsule (Memories From The Future: Exploring the Fortress As A Woman)*, 2018. Porcelain, archaeological remains. Variable dimensions. Daugavpils Fortress Culture & Information Centre, Latvia - Collection of Mark Rothko Art Centre and Daugavpils Fortress Culture & Information Centre, Latvia



*SONORES*, 2011-2021. Work in progress

By Barbara Bunskoek | Photographic Credits Ana Maria Asan

According to Ana Maria Asan (Bucharest, Romania), we are living in an invasive and noisy world where she takes a stand and refuses to become a passive listener. In her work, she constantly pushes the limits of perception to attend the non-materiality. Sound has for her *the same triggering role as Proust's Madeleine guiding us toward a less "visible" zone of ourselves.* Listening and watching to these artworks, the audience can experience more than the amazement, they feel invited to think.

## INTUITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL

Ana Maria is both Romanian and Belgian. She lives the major part of the year in the South of France where she works and teaches. She defines herself as a visual and sound artist but a ceramicist too and a lecturer. *The same energy traverses and nourishes these three professional activities. I could elude “ceramicist” because “the visual and sound artist” already includes it, but the vast and amazing ceramics’ technology makes it special. So, I like to mention it because it represents a true richness, a knowledge I received and I want to use as an artist and a teacher. It also connects me to all the potters and ceramicists of all times.*

The *SONORES* project was born during Ana Maria’s art studies in Brussels. *The project concretely started with the intuitive sonorous exploration of the ceramic objects I was making at that time, associated with the investigation of different clays and shapes. In less than ten years the SONORES project became a complex edifice with different levels, intrinsically linked. Intuitive and experimental, my work stands all these years as a testimony for what I really am, a poet and an explorer. By having followed my vocation I became the artist that I am today and I found my right place in this changing world.*



*Untitled, There Is No White Noise, Only Colourful Sound Serie, 2020*

Porcelain, stoneware, strings, sound device. H. 160 cm, W. 140 cm, D. 80 cm. Duration: 6'47". In exhibition at the CODA Museum, Apeldoorn

Using different parts of her body (hands, mouth,...) to produce sound, Ana Maria handles the ceramic objects in front of the microphone and uses the computer for composing. *All these steps require time, silence and solitude. I also need to stay focussed. The result has nothing to do with randomness: I decide, I structure, I make mental associations, but at the same time I let myself surprised and amazed as a child.*

## PERCEPTION AND MEMORY

The key words of Ana Maria's work are "perception" and "memory". Through a deep analysis of daily life events she often finds the substance for her art. This is the case for the new body of work she has created in 2018 after her participation in the 5<sup>th</sup> International Ceramic Art Symposium (Latvia), one year earlier. *First, the sound installation presented at the symposium entered the Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre and then, in June 2018, I came back as an artist-in-residence invited by the centre. Actually, during the 2017 symposium I gave a lecture about the SONORES project and my work in general and premiered "What You See Is Not What You See, But What You Are" – my first short film. The whole event took place in the Fortress of Daugavpils, where the Mark Rothko Centre is set – an amazing site that has impressed me much from different points of view.*

*Without having the opportunity to come back in summer 2018, I wouldn't have known that meanwhile an extraordinary event occurred: while restoring an historical monument inside the Fortress, the remains of a time capsule were found. The object was meant to preserve the memory (the documents and the names of the 44 soldiers) of the Aizpute Latvian Regiment who fought for the State independence. This inspired "To The Unknown", a porcelain work that refers to the lost identity of these soldiers, to their loneliness facing the cruelty of the northern winter. I also created "The Way Back Home" related to the unbelievable journey undertook by the Latvian Troickas Batalion, from China to the Suez Canal, the Pyrenees and the Baltic Sea to join at the end, after years, their own country as a result of having been pushed by the Red Army from Latvia through Eurasia.*



**Resonances (Memories From The Future: Exploring the Fortress As A Woman)**, 2018. Porcelain, stoneware, stainless steel, sound (while handled), light. Site-specific installation, dimensions of the Nicolas Gate. Nicolas Gate, Daugavpils Fortress, Latvia - Collection of Mark Rothko Art Centre and Daugavpils Fortress Culture & Information Centre, Latvia



**The Way Back Home (Memories From The Future: Exploring the Fortress As A Woman)**, 2018. Porcelain, glass, plaster, experimental silica, archaeological remains, Variable dimensions. Daugavpils Fortress Culture & Information Centre, Latvia, 2018. Collection of Mark Rothko Art Centre and Daugavpils Fortress Culture & Information Centre, Latvia

*Fragments of objects, fragments of stories, the remains of the Fortress' buildings themselves functioned as a catalyser for me to connect the present to the past and the future in the project "Memories From The Future: Exploring The Fortress As A Woman". All the crowned heads of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century passed through the Nicolas Gate because that road was once the "main highway" from Europe to the Russian Empire and vice-versa, from the North to Europe, so I chose to place inside "Resonances", a sensitive artwork that deals with fragility and resonance (but not only referring to sound). To hear the sound of the porcelain objects, people cannot be alone inside the gate. They have to be two: one person is handling the object at one side of the arch and the other listens to its amplification; a body imprint of a human ear is set to suggest the listening experience site.*

*The core of the two site specific art installations belonging to "Memories From The Future: Exploring The Fortress As A Woman" ("To The Unknown" and "Resonances") has nothing to do with the deep admiration and the glorification of the war but testifies of a feminine sensitive approach of such an environment where the extreme fragility of porcelain simply reminds the fragility of the human being.*

## RETROSPECTIVE

*In this year of celebration of the SONORES project, Ana Maria Asan asserts: Through this ten-year exploration I discovered myself; the inner eye sees deeper, the ear becomes even more selective. By embracing a (sound) artist career, I do not enroll in a trend. I live with my time, but swim rather against the tide.*

*Different aspects contribute to enlarge the wide range of sounds. After ten years, I still resemble to a beginner and I hope that some interesting opportunities will come in the future for my work. I am looking for new shapes, new sounds, new meanings.*

[www.sonores.be](http://www.sonores.be) | [www.twistedceramics.com](http://www.twistedceramics.com)

Keramik Triennale 2021. CODA Museum Apeldoorn, Vosselmanstraat 299, NL-7311 CL Apeldoorn, +31 (0)55-5268400. Open: Tues 10:00-17:30, Sat 10:00-17:00, Sun 13:00-17:00. Until May 30th, 2021.  
[www.coda-apeldoorn.nl](http://www.coda-apeldoorn.nl) | [www.nvk-keramiek.nl](http://www.nvk-keramiek.nl)



***Intrusion***, 2013  
Porcelain, nylon strings. Variable dimensions. Galerie Vertige, Brussels, Belgium, 2013 (installation view)



***Noisy Family I***, 2014  
Stoneware, elements of domestic appliances, sound device. H. 95 cm, W. 75. cm, D. 50 cm. Duration: 5'05". CODA Museum Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, 2015 (installation view)