

Cuca Nelles

(Santander, 1974)

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Hiding / Discovering Charlotte, 2021
Acrylic on canvas

In the eighties, the Valencian artist Andreu Alfaro developed the cycle *On Goethe and Our Times*, motivated by his interest in dialoguing with the great achievements of the history of humanistic culture. This cycle includes the Banco Santander Collection sculpture *Charlotte von Stein*, which Alfaro dedicated to one of the most important women in the life of the German writer Goethe. The figure, which is made of Carrara marble, acquires somewhat fantastic features: a kind of abstract and inclined face, on a neck and a portion of the body, a sensually rounded torso. It is precisely these features, the soft and delicate lines, which have led Cuca Nelles to be inspired by this work to carry out her intervention.

Through her forceful pictorial style, Cuca Nelles invites us to a parade of masks in which certain images dialogue with others. *Hiding/Discovering Charlotte* is an enigmatic composition in which the legs of a woman in an empowered position appear on one side, and on the other, a male figure with a bird's head that turns towards the woman. Between these two figures in dialogue is the discreet image of Charlotte von Stein's sculpture, dressed in a rabbit mask.

Finally, Nelles tries to dialogue with the great names of the history of humanistic culture as Alfaro did. To do so, she takes a piece of Goethe's own writing and crosses out words to find her own text in it, much like secret messages:

*Ahora mismo le daría tierra al diablo, a la maledicencia para dar
satisfacción a la vida.*

No me importa ser un cerdo de libros y borracheras.

*Y si alguien viene a mí, no me negaré nunca a celebrar una fiesta de
máscaras a la llegada de la primavera.*

Hay que sentir amor, hay que encariñarse con uno.

*Me moriría, me ahorcaría si pasase un solo día no ocupada con todo
cuanto sucede.*

SELECTED WORK FROM THE BANCO SANTANDER COLLECTION



Andreu Alfaro (Valencia, 1929-2012)
Charlotte von Stein, 1981-1987