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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
MX ESPAI 1010**

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Nestling among the venerable walls of the old city, MX ESPAI 1010 is ensconced in an old building on well-loved Llibreteria Street, in the immediate vicinity of La Seu, Barcelona's gothic cathedral. The historic location belies what there is to be discovered on the second floor of the ancient building, a treasure of a gallery. Founded by Nora Ancarola and Marga Ximenez, the venue houses a quest for beauty, a striving sensibility directed toward the future that is entirely coherent with the preservation of history.

I am a Japanese-American artist now living in Istanbul, Turkey. Initially, I corresponded with Marga through letters, then email. For me, MX ESPAI 1010 is not only an essential gallery but also a home, a major artistic presence and a rare beacon of authenticity. Consequently, the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MX ESPAI 1010 calls for a celebration: it represents a victory for what is highest, best, and most genuine in the human spirit. Whoever has the good fortune to see an exhibition there sees absorbing work, selected by curators of prodigious imagination and impeccable taste.

In various ways, I have had the honour of participating in the entire range of MX ESPAI 1010 experiences. My work first appeared at MX ESPAI 1010 in 2005. It was shown in the Angel Kitchen Gallery that predates and now abuts the Book Room. In 2007 my first solo show took place in the Main Gallery. This was an event of great consequence for me. My location and schedule allowed me to attend the opening in Barcelona and to meet Marga and Nora directly. Observing the work of artists whose work appeared in other galleries, I came to recognize the distinctive and independent sensibility of these two curators. It is a rare achievement for a gallery to maintain its original mandate yet consistently stretch the boundaries of the ever-challenging atmosphere of a global vision.

The El Aleph exhibition, which took place at MX ESPAI 1010 in 2008, travelled soon thereafter to the Esposta Gallery in Verona, Italy, a new gallery focused on women's issues. The gallery provides an encouraging environment where women can meet and discuss matters that affect them. Part of the purpose of Marga's trip to Verona was her desire to assist these talented and highly motivated young members of the art world on their important venture. I saw Marga in Verona at the vernissage and we met a number of women artists at various stages of their careers.

On my most recent visit, I satisfied a long-held desire to become a collector of one of Marga's own extraordinary books. In the Book Room, MX ESPAI 1010 revives the traditional activity of Llibreteria Street, named after its numerous establishments dedicated to the care and sale of books. The nostalgic street was the haunt of literati, bibliophiles, and the instinctive worshipers of rare books. Her own personal "library" on the top floor is a wonder to behold: a living area/installation that is itself a work of art, as well as a treasury of the Catalan language and of Art History.

I returned in 2008 to show work as part of the "10 Years Later" exhibitions, a year-long series of shows to feature the work of the artists who have exhibited at MX ESPAI 1010 during its first decade. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of MX ESPAI 1010 is to culminate in a major display at Hangar, showing the artists who have worked with the gallery during this period. The exhibition and the artists in the catalogue are a demonstration of the elegant thought processes of Nora and Marga, their constant work to hone the gallery to perfection, and an indication of the promise it holds for a brilliant future.