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Literary news about Lluïsa Cunillé on Lletra, the UOC's virtual space devoted to Catalan literature

< <http://lletra.uoc.edu/en/author/lluïsa-cunille> >

## Lluïsa Cunillé



### They Have Said ?

Cunillé is one of the most singular voices in Catalan theatre today. The characters in her plays meet and establish relationships totally by chance. They are solitary souls who are usually lost in the great desert of the modern world, seeking an arm to cling to so that they may be saved. Hence, despite the pessimism conveyed by her texts, the characters also try to keep struggling to escape the harsh situation in which they are immersed. Her plays avoid moments of high drama to focus instead on the small, everyday situations that, in fact, constitute the characters' moments of greatest truth. Cunillé is also the author of some of the best works of cabaret in Catalan theatre.

In the 22 (twenty-two!) plays written by Lluïsa Cunillé between 1991 and the time of writing, she has applied her poetry of subtraction, as I should like to call it, to different areas of theatre with results that are also different. From her total occlusion of the reference and/or situational context, which makes some texts frankly cryptic "but not necessarily lacking in humour, lyricism, dramatic tension and intrigue?" through to her resolve not to reveal, in others, the backgrounds or motivations of her characters, the connections between the different scenes that constitute a play, the degree of reality of each situation, the person to whom a word is addressed, the veracity of information of a confession and, in particular, the nature of affective bonds and the subterranean intensity of emotions and feelings, her work engages in a subtle and implacable exploration of the limits of opacity. To this, one should add her renunciation of elements of the spectacle and the extreme dramatic economy that also characterise her "subtractive" poetry.

**José Sanchis Sinisterra**, "Una poètica de la sostracció", Prologue to *Accident* (Barcelona, Institut del Teatre, 1996).

Lluïsa Cunillé, who writes in both Catalan and Spanish, is perhaps the playwright who, in venturing beyond Catalan cultural frontiers, has had most influence on the greening of the landscape of Spanish theatre today. In her work, integration of form and content is achieved in the construction of pieces that are seemingly intimate and ambiguous, and marked by a powerful enigmatic charge, texts that implacably escort the open expectations of her audiences through to a dramatic finale, which turns out to be as arid and unclear as the story that has preceded it. The effect is shocking: it seems that the play is presenting the grey and terrible page of everyday life in society, the solitude and poverty of communication, the need to fabricate excuses in order to enjoy the least social exchange? All in all, these unresolved expectations, the unfulfilled waiting, the "greyness of the characters" and the final evidence of the "paradoxical banality of the dialogues" (Sanchis, 1996: 7-8) effects that are perfectly coherent with the ethical dimension of the text" ensure that Cunillé's work enjoys the disproportionate enthusiasm of some admirers and the radical rejection of her detractors. Like Koltès, Cunillé tends almost always to present the same fortuitous encounter between two characters in a strange or mysterious setting. Curiously, however, the poetry of shock, of conflict, of the "deal" that hints at a proximity between the writing of the Catalan playwright and the poetry of her French counterpart, is not specified either, and it moves towards denouements that are somewhere between

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realism and the absurd, with a certain poetic and humorous charge. Noteworthy among her numerous works are *Berna (Berne)* (1992), *La festa (The Party)* (1993), *Libración (Libration)* (1993), *Accident* (1994) and *Privado (Private)* (1996).

**Carles Batlle**, "La nova dramàtúrgia catalana: de la perplexitat a la diversitat" *Caplletra*, N<sup>o</sup>. 22 (1997).

*La festa* shares with other plays by Lluïsa Cunillé a remarkable capacity to generate unease, unease in the milieu in which her characters dwell and in the feeling that is transmitted to her readers and audiences. This sensation is, in good part, the fruit of bringing to the stage the most utterly trivial and commonplace affairs, which is Cunillé's original way of approaching people's awareness of their solitude and their problems of communication.

**Jordi Sala**, "Lluïsa Cunillé, *La festa*", *Revista de Catalunya*, N<sup>o</sup>. 127 (1998).

One of the most successful features of Cunillé's dramatic poetry is her creation of an atmosphere in which all hypotheses are possible, without favouring any in particular, without going beyond the edge of the abyss where, one step more, and it all ends in tragedy. Yet it doesn't happen. The language is a capable of distilling the information to an extreme degree, eternalising enigmas *ad nauseam*, offering a whole range of fallacious, dispensable and unnecessary information, in a kind of big trap. Like the trap entailed in the game of communication. There is a lot of playful perversion and chilly intellectualism, and the glacial creation, millimetre by millimetre, of a universe that, with its multiplicity of internal references, actually derives its sense as a work built up by sedimentation. The play seems to be an isolated piece, however, a mere exercise of style, of banal responses and counter-responses, absurd and random, without a scrap of significance (though lending itself to all sorts of lucubrations). It is her ability to suggest, to weave a mesh of enigmas that run through the articulated geography of the texts with rigorous, obsessive precision, scattering a symphony of senses that essentially assembles a universe that is extraordinary, without a doubt, although hardly seductive. This is a habitat of artificially created beings as snippets of the human condition, victims of unfinished stories from the moment that they begin to speculate on the indefinable in the links that make and unmake relations between human beings.

Cunillé's poetry is, needless to say, deliberately abstruse. Despite the fact that it is born from a partially recognisable reality in fragments of sense, it is veiled in another dimension that plays, at every rebound, with unpredictability and disarray, with assumptions and the creation of expectations. Her ability to create shadowy spaces and a dramatic atmosphere that emerges from a sculpted language and complex structuring ` based on spatial and temporal discontinuity ` has its counterpart in the suggestion of incomplete enigmas, implicit findings, (de)composition of senses and the presence of absent characters, split up into multiplicity and entrenched in their own (non-)communication. The existential void of the world in which these characters are immersed offers glimpses of futilely ritualised human relations in a grey, solitary, strange and terribly contemporary humdrumness.

**Francesc Foguet**, "Lluïsa Cunillé: *Dotze treballs i L'afer*", *El Pou de Lletres*, N<sup>o</sup>. 13-14 (1999).

Cunillé's theatre reveals very fine pen-strokes, great efficiency in staging, while playing with the sinuosities and pitfalls of language, offering deeply dramatic situations with a minimum of evocative elements. Her expressive minimalism fills on-stage space and time with the few words and characters that Cunillé constructs, from mere sketches, it would seem. The appearances of her characters are

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laconic, like remarks made in passing, never going deeper into anything, so that they left stranded in the persistent, obsessive intermittence of an ellipsis that, with pauses, silences, music and noises, has a highly calibrated dramatic beat. Each expectation that the reader/spectator creates with regard to these creatures is aborted, reply by reply, scene by scene, only to be sent back to square one again.

**Francesc Foguet**, "Dramatúrgia de la inanitat" (Theatre of Inanity), *Avui* (01/02/2001).

[The deconstructive impulse] situates Cunillé's theatre alongside a contemporary obsession that is sometimes dubbed "post-modern" because of its process of artistic representation: the tendency, explicitly or implicitly, to meditate about, or draw attention to the representational or theatrical process, and even to pay more attention to the process than to the final product. Cunillé's plays are at the limit between what can be represented and what is impossible to represent, the interstitial, fleeting dimensions of reality, the presence of which is gleaned only by means of the resorts of allusion and insinuation.

[...] Cunillé's new realism is set against the non-referential backdrop of simulation. She uses the power and the energy of the direct image, not to represent but to erase the boundary between life and art, entering into the space of hyper-reality: a pure reality that attempts to be the spectacle of life itself. And maybe it is because of all this that her theatre is so disturbing. She does not offer a realism that is grounded in psychology, and nor does she recognise the representational framework or the world of artifice that is the theatrical space, but rather confronts us with the brutal surface of a mirror. The procedure can be blood-curdling.

**Sharon G. Feldman**, "El teatre d'enigma de Lluïsa Cunillé", *Catalan Review*, Vol. 161, Nº. 1-2 (2002).

## A selection of texts

### Text



**WEB: El text d'Atlàntida**

Tot el text d'aquesta peça teatral de Lluïsa Cunillé.

<http://parnaseo.uv.es/Ars/ESTICOMITIA/Numero0/indicecero/atlantida.htm>



**WEB: Accident**

Transcripció de l'obra, en català i en castellà.

[http://www.isftic.mepsyd.es/w3/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro\\_hoy/cunille/laobra/texto\\_obra.htm](http://www.isftic.mepsyd.es/w3/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro_hoy/cunille/laobra/texto_obra.htm)



**WEB: The text of Atlàntida (Atlantis)**

The entire text of this play by Lluïsa Cunillé is offered here.

<http://parnaseo.uv.es/Ars/ESTICOMITIA/Numero0/indicecero/atlantida.htm>



**WEB: Accident**

Transcription of the play in Catalan and Spanish.

[http://w3.cnice.mec.es/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro\\_hoy/cunille/materiales/autor/intro.htm](http://w3.cnice.mec.es/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro_hoy/cunille/materiales/autor/intro.htm)

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## Bio-bibliography

### Biography



**WEB: A la Hiperenciclopèdia**

[http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa\\_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0243343](http://www.enciclopedia.cat/fitxa_v2.jsp?NDCHEC=0243343)



**WEB: Fitxa al "Qui és qui a les lletres catalanes"**

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/FitxaAutors.asp?nom1=cun&nom2=&cerca=Cerca&quinform=form1&NRegistre=2&idregistre=8497>



**WEB: A la Viquipèdia**

Biografia i obra de l'autora al web de l'enciclopèdia lliure.

[http://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lluïsa\\_Cunillé\\_Salgado](http://ca.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lluïsa_Cunillé_Salgado)



**WEB: Lluïsa Cunillé a l'Institut Ramon Llull**

Nota biobibliogràfica dins l'espai dedicat a la Fira Internacional del Llibre de Guadalajara 2004.

<http://fil04.llull.cat/cat/02protagonistes/mapadombres.shtm>



**WEB: The author in the Catalan Encyclopaedia**

<http://www.grec.cat/cgi-bin/hecangcl2.pgm?&USUARI=&SESSIO=&NDCHEC=0243343&PGMORI=E>



**WEB: Guanyadora del Premi Born 1999**

Pàgina oficial d'aquest premi teatral, amb un breu currículum de Lluïsa Cunillé.

[http://www.cercleartistic.com/1PREMIBORN/CV\\_Guanyadors/lluïsa\\_cunille.htm](http://www.cercleartistic.com/1PREMIBORN/CV_Guanyadors/lluïsa_cunille.htm)



**WEB: The author in the Who's Who of Catalan Literature**

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/peq/fitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=Cunill%E9&cercauk2=Search&quinform=form1&NRegistre=1&idregistre=8497>



**WEB: Lluïsa Cunillé in the Ramon Llull Institute**

Biobibliographical note on this author on a page devoted to the Guadalajara International Book Fair.

<http://fil04.llull.cat/eng/02protagonistes/mapadombres.shtm>

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### Bibliography



**WEB: Què hi ha a la Biblioteca de Catalunya**

[http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search\\*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D](http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*cat/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D)



**WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques universitàries catalanes (CCUC)**

[http://ccuc.cbuc.cat/search\\*cat/a?SEARCH=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23](http://ccuc.cbuc.cat/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23)

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**WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques**

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SCunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&suite=pearl>



**WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres**

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/cunille-lluïsa>



**WEB: Articles de l'autora (Traces)**

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Cunill%C3%A9%20Llu%C3%AFsa&sc=1&ln=ca>



**WEB: Articles sobre l'autora (Traces)**

[http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Cunill%C3%A9%2C+Llu%C3%AFsa&f=keyword&action\\_search=Cerca&c=Traces+%3A+base+de+dades+de+llengua+i+literatura+catalanes&sf=&so=d&rm=&rg=10&sc=1&of=hb](http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Cunill%C3%A9%2C+Llu%C3%AFsa&f=keyword&action_search=Cerca&c=Traces+%3A+base+de+dades+de+llengua+i+literatura+catalanes&sf=&so=d&rm=&rg=10&sc=1&of=hb)



**WEB: Works in the Biblioteca de Catalunya**

[http://catalag.bnc.cat/search\\*eng/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdr opdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D](http://catalag.bnc.cat/search*eng/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Cunill%C3%A9+Llu%C3%AFsa&sortdr opdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D)



**WEB: The author in The European Library**

<http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/search/%28%22creator%22+all+%22cunill%C3%A9+llu%C3%AFsa%22%29.query>



**WEB: The author in the Congress Library (US)**

<http://catalog.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>



**WEB: The author in the COPAC Catalogue (UK)**

<http://copac.ac.uk/search?&au=Llu%C3%AFsa+Cunill%C3%A9>

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## Comments on the author

### Criticism



**WEB: L'autora al Corpus Literari Ciutat de Barcelona**

Biografia, enllaços i transcripció d'articles sobre Cunillé.

[http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show\\_news&news\\_id=531](http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=531)



**WEB: Recursos educatius**

Informació biobibliogràfica i alguns articles al web del MEC.

[http://w3.cnice.mec.es/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro\\_hoy/cunille/materiales/autor/intro.htm](http://w3.cnice.mec.es/recursos/secundaria/optativas/teatro_hoy/cunille/materiales/autor/intro.htm)



**PDF: Sobre Vianants**

Marta Monedero comenta aquesta peça teatral de Lluïsa Cunillé i Paco Zarzoso, a l'*Avui*

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(11/02/2004).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03033.pdf>



**PDF: "Una qüestió d'equilibri"**

Sobre *Occisió*. A *l'Avui* (05/03/2005).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03585.pdf>



**PDF: "La triple A"**

Francesc Massip ressenya *Il·lusionistes* a *l'Avui* (29/09/2004).

<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03252.pdf>



**WEB: Lluïsa Cunillé on the Lletra website in Catalan**

Including more resources and reading suggestions.

<http://www.uoc.edu/lletra/noms/lluïsa-cunille/index.html>



**WEB: Lluïsa Cunillé in the City of Barcelona Literary Corpus**

Biography, links and a transcription of articles on Cunillé.

[http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show\\_news&news\\_id=531](http://www.ducros.biz/corpus/index.php?command=show_news&news_id=531)



**WEB: Lluïsa Cunillé at the International Book Fair Guadalajara 2004**

The playwright was one of the prominent personalities at the Fair with her work *Mapa d'Ombres* [Map of Shadows].

<http://fil04.llull.cat/eng/02protagonistes/mapadombres.shtm>

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## Miscellaneous



**WEB: Intempèrie**

Sinopsi, fitxa tècnica, imatges i diverses notes de premsa sobre aquest muntatge de Lluïsa Cunillé i Paco Zarzoso.

<http://parnaseo.uv.es/ars/autores/Zarzoso/Intem/indin.htm>



**WEB: Intempèrie (Exposure to the Elements)**

Synopsis, technical information, images and different press commentaries on this play by Lluïsa Cunillé and Paco Zarzoso.

<http://parnaseo.uv.es/ars/autores/Zarzoso/Intem/indin.htm>



**WEB: Winner of the Born Prize, 1999**

Official web page for this theatre prize, with a brief curriculum vitae of Lluïsa Cunillé.

[http://www.cercleartistic.com/1PREMIBORN/CV\\_Guanyadors/lluïsa\\_cunille.htm](http://www.cercleartistic.com/1PREMIBORN/CV_Guanyadors/lluïsa_cunille.htm)