

Antonija Balić

UNSPOKEN WORDS

The Muisca Art Space, Paris 2025.



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The series of textile objects under the collective title *Unspoken Words* unfolds as an intimate archive of fragments: words, thoughts, and inner states that elude direct articulation. Written in wax, often at the threshold of visibility, these interventions do not establish text in the conventional sense, but rather a trace, a gesture that suggests more than it states.

Works such as *The Autobiography of Absence*, *Fragments of Silence*, and *Forever Closed Book* (pp. 3, 9, 15) explore absence as an active space of meaning. The book here is closed, sealed, sometimes physically prevented from being opened, further emphasizing the tension between the desire for communication and the impossibility of its fulfillment. In this context, textile as a medium carries a particular symbolism: soft and yielding, yet at the same time absorbent and enduring, it becomes a surface of memory. In dialogue with these intimate formats are two large-scale pergaments (*Rosy Dawn Pergament*, *Notre Dame Pergament*, pp. 16–17), which introduce a dimension of spatiality and atmosphere. Their surfaces, marked by layers of pigment and wax, function as fields in which time and experience accumulate. Although devoid of legible text, they retain the same logic of inscription, subtle, fragmentary, and open to interpretation.

Taken as a whole, the body of work operates as a meditation on the limits of language. The artist does not offer answers or clearly articulated narratives; instead, she creates objects, symbolic forms in which the viewer becomes a participant in the process of meaning-making. Within this space, the unspoken does not signify absence, but rather a layered presence, one that is felt, yet cannot be fully expressed.

Biography

<https://www.antonijabalic.com>

Antonija Balić was born on August 24, 1969, in Patna, India. Since 1976, she has lived in Zagreb, and in 1983, she enrolled in the School of Applied Arts and Design in Zagreb, where she graduated from the Department of Ceramics in 1987. That same year, she enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, graduating from the Sculpture Department in 1992. In 2011, she began her postgraduate doctoral studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, specializing in Sculpture, and in March 2017, she earned her Ph.D. with a dissertation titled *Soft Sculpture and Its Anthropomorphic Transformation*.

From 1993 to 2009, she worked at the School of Applied Arts and Design, and since 2009, she has been employed at the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb (from 2024 as a full professor with tenure). Since 2009, she has been the head of the Department of Early Childhood Education, and from 2012 to 2014, she served as Vice Dean for Study Programmes and Students. In 2010 and 2011, she participated in the international ART@muse project in Antwerp (Belgium) and Porto (Portugal), and she contributed to the LLP Comenius RESCUR project as the coordinator of all artistic content. She teaches the courses Methodology of Art Education, Research of Children's Artistic Creativity, and Sculpture and Ceramic Design. In the doctoral program *Linguistic, Literary, and Cultural Contexts of Early, Preschool, and Primary Education*, she designed and teaches the course *Artistic Research and Research in the Field of Art*. She also lectures in the postgraduate specialist program in Drama Pedagogy, where she leads and teaches the course *Stage Art*.

She has exhibited in 18 solo and numerous group exhibitions, both domestically and internationally, and has received several awards and recognitions for her artistic work. Her works are part of the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rijeka, the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, the Koprivnica City Museum, the Gallery of Fine Arts of Slavonski Brod, the Zagreb City Assembly, the Klement Lukin Collection, the Croatian Ministry of Culture Collection, and the Božidar Jakac Gallery in Kostanjevica na Krki (Slovenia). She is a member of the Croatian Association of Fine Artists and the Croatian Association of Children's Literature Researchers. In 2018, she was elected vice-president of the Croatian Association of Fine Artists and is an active participant in shaping cultural policies in the city of Zagreb. As a designer and illustrator, she is a regular contributor to the *Libri & Liberi* journal for children's literature and culture research, and she has designed numerous publications for the Faculty of Teacher Education's publishing activities.

She is the author of several books in the field of children's art creativity and art pedagogy, as well as numerous picture books and educational materials for children. In collaboration with the Trešnjevka Kindergarten, she launched the *Professional-Development Center for Promoting Holistic Child Development through Art* in 2019. That same year, she founded ACE ZAGREB, an artistic-scientific conference aimed at promoting art pedagogy and research methods in the field of art. In 2022, she launched the *Artfulness* project, an approach to artistic activities in early and preschool education in Croatia, along with an international online conference of the same name. In 2023, she founded *Palabritas*, a private publishing house specializing in books on art pedagogy and the impact of artistic creation on personal development.

Empty pages, 2025. , 26x16x2 cm



The Autobiography of Absence, 2025. , 26x16x2 cm





Unspoken Words, 2025. , 26x16x2 cm



Unspoken Words II, 2025. , 15x15x3 cm



Dream Interpreter, 2025. , 9x14x2 cm



Forgotten Stories, 2025. , 14x15x2 cm



Book of Prayers, 2025. , 15x19x3 cm



Fragments of Silence, 2025. , 18x17x3 cm



Whispers, 2025. , 17x17x3 cm



Sealed, 2025. , 17x17x3 cm



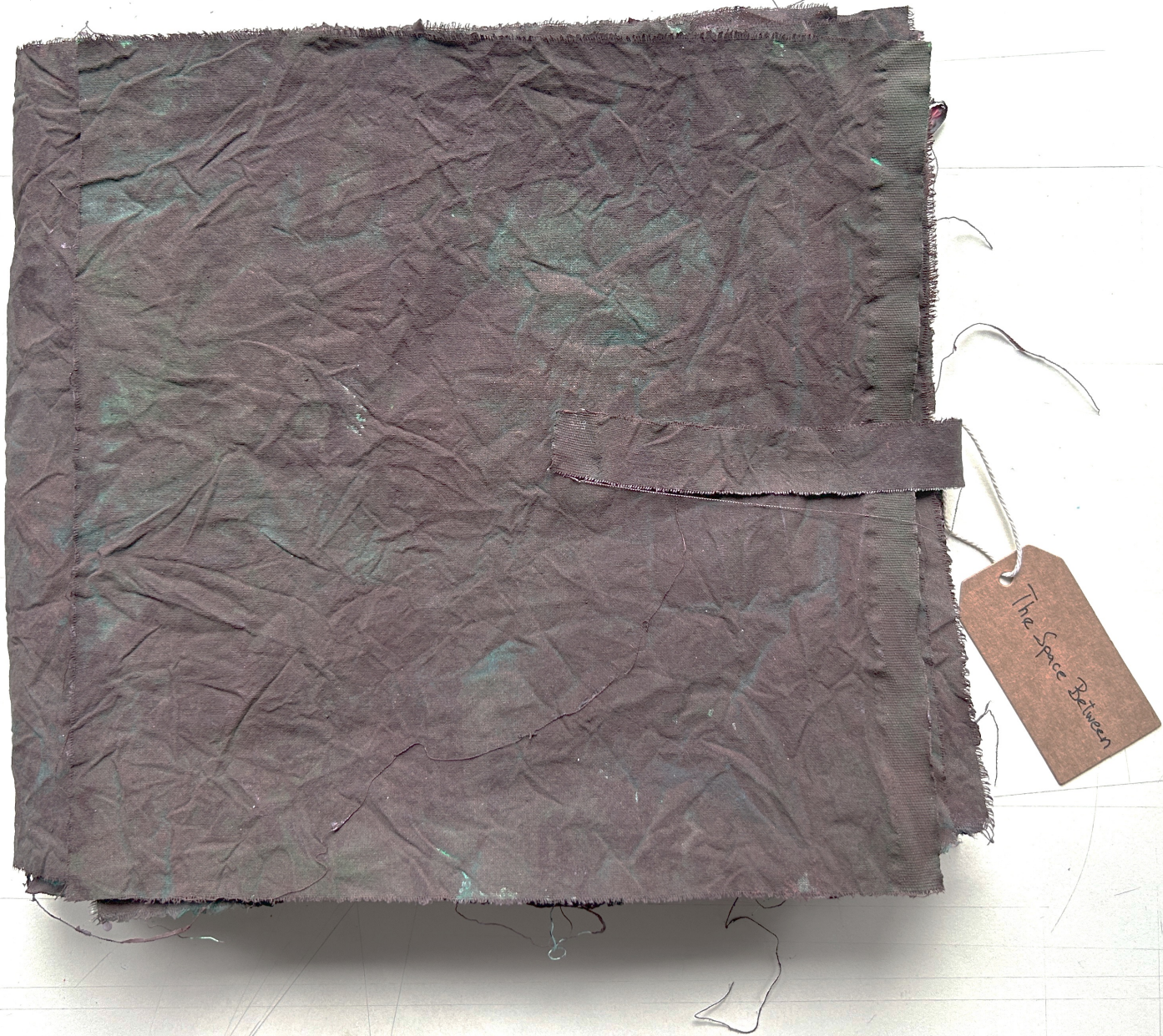
Closed chapter, 2025. , 15x15x3 cm



The Quiet Witness, 2025. , 28x30x7 cm



Silent Book, 2025. , 30x35x2 cm



Forever Closed Book, 2025. , 27x31x6 cm



Rosy Dawn Pergament, 115x 152x2 cm



Notre Dame Parchment, 115x 152x2 cm