

Richard T. Walker

In accordance with things

Curated by David Armengol

15.09.15 > 06.11.15

Opening: Tuesday 15.09 at 7 PM

It's a matter of scale. Each stone is a potential mountain, as suggested by the French sociologist Roger Caillois in his 1966 essay "Stones", where he discusses his fascination with the mineral world. This is a work of scientific contemplation, a fabulous and passionate contemplation that leads you to understand that each stone is an ancestral, pre-civilized and authentic natural cosmogony.



If we think about the relationship of distant proximity when confronted with the sublime landscape that Richard T. Walker generates through his actions on the natural environment, we have a physical and mental analysis of the territory as observed by Caillois. In both cases, the stone-landscape becomes a particular universe; in both cases, the usual relationship of the individual with nature fades in favor of a more introspective, or an even more mystical connection. In short, an activation of the landscape in Walker's work always has to do with two basic concepts: the limitations of language and the emotional charge of music.

In this sense, *in accordance with things*, the third solo exhibition of the British-born and San Francisco-based artist for àngels barcelona, is a new revision of the Western American landscape typified by the simple and magnificent prominence of the stone. This is a exercise of correlation between videos, photographs, sculptures and sound pieces where the perception of wilderness - or at least, of that which is not domesticated - depends on the multiple functions and symbols that Richard T. Walker gives to the stone, sometimes functioning as a mere object, sometimes as a performative medium, sometimes as a whole landscape in itself.

the predicament of always (as we are) (2014), is a video installation filmed in several remote locations between Austin (Texas) and Phoenix (Arizona), and acts as the main axis of the exhibition. A simple action in which the failed attempt of understanding the landscape through words leads to a fragmented musical composition that emerges from a minimal and repetitive gesture: that of throwing small stones on guitars, xylophones and drums in search of an accurate sound. This is a complex and beautiful creative exercise where the imaginary of nature merges with some of the devices normally associated to the figure of the artist (the camera tripod) or that of the musician (musical instruments and vocal harmonies).

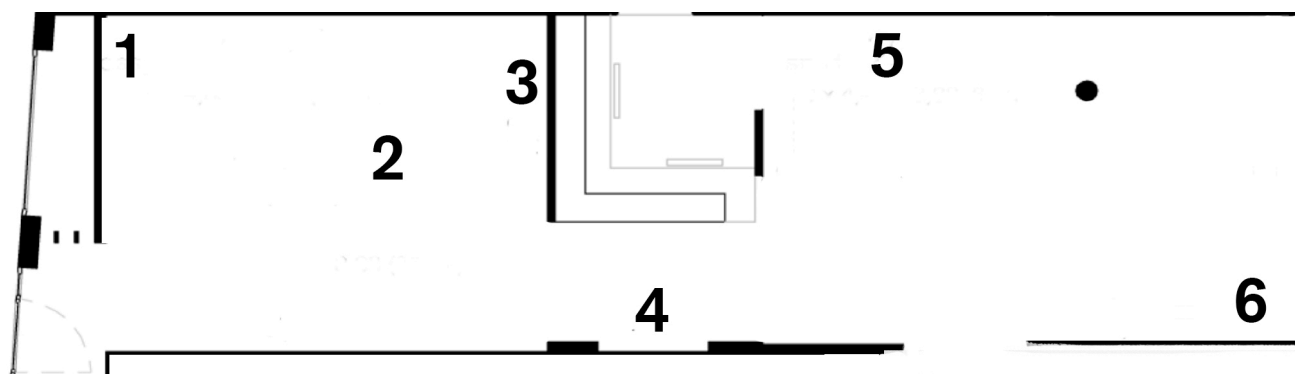
In parallel to this audiovisual narrative, in the first room we find recent works where Walker explores more objectual and sculptural dimensions of his body of work. On one hand, *a paradox in distance (repeated)* (2015), is a photographic series that freezes a performance of perfect communion between the human and the natural. An intense and fleeting moment derived from the confluence of a real horizon and another that is suggested artificially. On the other hand *in accordance with things* (2015) and *the vulnerability of the actual in the presence of itself* (2015) establish a dialogue between each other both in space and time. In the space for the physical and figurative presence of the stone (the stone as material, but also as an intellectual construction, or even as a ritual); in time due to the harmonious combination of vocals and instrumentation.

Coming up next, we find two works that are directly linked to games of visual perception; here everything seems evident, but at the same time the pieces escape the cultural convention that defines them. On a microphone stand, *more than this* (2015) holds the lit silhouette of a distant mountain range. A stereotypical image that puts a strain on our ability to read the our surroundings: what we see as a magnificent skyline is perhaps nothing more than an illusion produced by the light of a neon. In a similar way, *the fallibility of intent* (2015) retrieves an old engraving displaying the epic image of a summit. A stable and recognizable icon that takes up the scale issues of which Caillois talks about, thus confusing and questioning its own formal and conceptual condition.

As a complementary activity *in accordance with things* will shortly incorporate *the predicament of always (as it is / as we are)* (2015), the first vinyl released by the artist to date. A work that condenses into a single and intimate commodity object all the signifying layers that define his reflections on landscape. In the end this is, an approach to the natural environment that looks for a fantastic and unusual connection: the landscape that looks at us, and not vice versa.

David Armengol

Exhibition plan



- 1 . *a paradox in distance (repeated)* (2015)**
12 color photographs, Fuji Crystal Archive print x 12
37 x 46 cm (each one)
- 2 . *the vulnerability of the actual in the presence of itself* (2015)**
Mounted archival inkjet print, easel, rocks, Casiotone MT 68 keyboards
- 3 . *in accordance with things* (2015)**
Cassette recorder
27 x 5 x 14 cm
- 4 . *the fallibility of intent* (2015)**
Cut-out archival print
47,5 x 47, 5 x 6 cm
- 5 . *more than this* (2015)**
Neon, microphone stand
164 x 147 cm
- 6 . *the predicament of always (as we are)* (2014)**
2-channel HD digital video installation, colour, sound
12 min 2 sec

Richard T. Walker (1977, Shrewsbury, UK) makes videos, photographs, sculpture, installations and performances that reveal a frustrated, obsessive relationship with landscape and at the same time explore the complexity of human relations. He received his BA in Fine Art from Bath Spa University College in 1999 and his MA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2005. His work has been in exhibitions at: Fabra i Coats, Barcelona (2014), Cristopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, James Cohan Gallery, New York; Carroll/Fletcher, London; Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Witte de With, Rotterdam; and K21, Düsseldorf. Walker was a recipient of a fellowship at Kala Art Institute, Berkeley in 2007 and received an Artadia Award in 2009. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, in 2009 and he was an artist-in-residency at the Headlands Center for the Arts (California) in 2011. The artist is currently a senior lecturer at California College of the Arts and has been a visiting lecturer at the University of California, San Diego; San Diego State University; Mills College; Stanford University; and at the Århus Kunsthøgskolen. His work can be seen in private and public collections such as: the Kadist Art Foundation (Paris and San Francisco), K21, Düsseldorf and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Richard T. Walker currently lives and works in San Francisco.

* Richard T Walker's upcoming show, *everything failing to become something*, will be held at Carroll / Fletcher, 56-57 Eastcastle Street, London, W1W 8EQ, from the 25th of September until the 15th of November 2015.

David Armengol (Barcelona, 1974) is an independent curator who combines his curatorial practice with other parallel activities such as cultural management and teaching. He is mostly interested in the social status of the artist and the functionality and / or dysfunctionality of art. In recent years he has worked on exhibition projects emerging from different narratives and performative readings of the landscape. His projects have been exhibited at contemporary art spaces such as: Caixaforum Barcelona (2008), Matadero Madrid (2010), the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona (2012-2013), Fabra i Coats Centre d'Art Contemporani of Barcelona (2014) or EAC Art Space contemporary in Montevideo, Uruguay (2015).