

MARCELO
EXPÓSITO

LAS
IMÁGENES
TOMAN
LA PALABRA

04.02 – 13.04.20

OPENING – TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 7:30 PM

Compared to *No reconciliados* (Unreconciled) (2013), my first solo show at àngels barcelona, the project we present now has a more introverted or intimate character. It maintains a guiding principle: to hold a reflective gaze on a changing world that is stirring in a prolonged change of era. But in this case, we show the procedures by which the world is thought of when it's being observed.

We could say that this exhibition is an adaptation of a minor text, written by Heinrich von Kleist in what it was another hinge between two epochs: "On the gradual formation of thought in the process of speech" (1805 or 1806), although, in our case, it would be more a question of teaching how one thinks the world as one looks at it, participating in its changes, immersing oneself in the events, being pierced by its shakes, helping to propel its currents. Kleist, whose characters "were tearing themselves apart" (Christa Wolf) torn by the long birth of modernity, placed at the centre of his text the speech improvised by Mirabeau at the French National Assembly of the 23rd of June 1789. This speech, with which the French deputy confronted the emerging popular sovereignty with the powers of the Old Regime, is described by Kleist as a "singular example of the gradual elaboration of thought from a beginning dictated by necessity", thus revealing to us the x-ray of one of the great political discourses of modernity.

This exhibition shows the mechanism of elaboration of 6 speeches given in Rome, Valparaiso, Fuerteventura, Seville, Mexico City and London between 2016-2020. It includes photo-writing pieces where photography does not merely seek to document but rather to help think about events in real time. Finally, we have decided to include materials that show the "gradual elaboration" of two works belonging to the cycle of site-specific projects that I carried out between the years 1990-1995.

LAS IMÁGENES TOMAN LA PALABRA

"It is work itself that takes the word" (Walter Benjamin, 1936).

"Even when you look at a photograph that is not accompanied by any inscription there is always a text that makes its way in our mind by association and in a fragmented manner. Mental processes exchange images for words and words for images" (Victor Burgin, 1982)

And vice versa, Don't written words, beyond being able to evoke mental images because of their content, themselves form material images through their arrangement on the two dimensions of the page, the paper or the canvas?

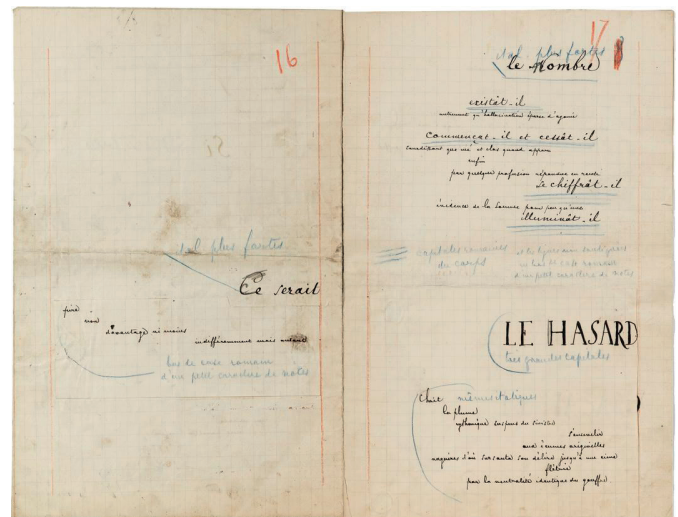
The complex and problematic relationship of both harmony and collision between "image" and "word" has been at the heart of discussions on the status of the work of art since the beginning of modernity. If the definition of the work of art as autonomous finds one of its epitomes in the critical corpus that Clement Greenberg developed between 1936 ("Avant-garde and kitsch") and 1968 ("Modern painting"), it is because of the condition that painting has (as the quintessence of an autonomous modern discipline) of purifying itself as a medium unbound by any representational principle, advancing through the characteristics that are proper and exclusive to it to distance itself from the reality of the world. A great paradox reached precisely by the development of certain artistic avant-gardes in the 1910s is the following: Once the links with the illusionism of classical representation have been broken, once the threshold, in which the work of art, the painting, does not seek to represent the world but to present itself as just another object, has been reached, What should be the next step if the horizon we seek is not to radicalise the autonomy of the work, but to recover a relationship with life - and in many cases with a reality convulsed by revolution or politics - by means other than the illusionism of representation?

Two works by El Lissitzky dated 1919-1920 give an account of this historical crossroads. One, the panel he placed at the gates of a factory in

Vitebsk, a huge suprematist painting to which he added one of the calls of Lenin's first government: Workers, Return to the Factory Benches. Another, the constructivist picture to which he added a slogan celebrating a decisive military victory of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks in the civil war that continued beyond Lenin's 1917 seizure of power: Hit the whites with the red wedge. These are two formal monstrosities, if we can only conceive of the evolution of pictorial discipline as a self-referential, self-contained process. But, they would be two useful errors, on the contrary, if we understand that, at that moment, prototypes are being produced in various ways, trials that seek to go beyond the "zero degree of painting" reached through a methodical deconstruction of the Renaissance mode of representation. And, they are executed in order to reconstruct a link with the material reality based on some different principles of illusionism. In those same years, for example, Picasso introduced the fragment of a word ("CORT") into his painting *Nature morte sur un piano* (1911-1913), in a way similar to the way in which collage attempts, beyond dismantling the Renaissance mode of pictorial representation, to introduce material fragments of reality itself (thus "presented", not "represented") into the interior of the painting.

Therefore, the various conceptualisms, and their precedents, made of the tension between "image" and "word" the very engine of many of their formal operations. It comes to mind the tautological conceptualism in Joseph Kosuth, paradoxically not so far removed from the Greenbergian ideology, to the consideration of the art criticism essay as a work of art in *Art and Language*; as well as the prescriptive word in Lawrence Weiner. Also, we cannot forget the self-referential text as a way of revealing the materiality of the support of art criticism in Dan Graham, the destabilization of the supposedly univocal meaning of photography through writings in Victor Burgin or Martha Rosler or the word as a tool of Brechtian estrangement of the image in Barbara Kruger. Without forgetting, the reconstruction of the materialistic documentary in Allan Sekula, or the different types of assemblages of drawings, photographs and writing that we find in Robert Smithson, Gordon Matta-Clark or Grup de Treball. In this order of things, we can also think of

original milestones that archetypically condense all of these tensions: Let us take into consideration, *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897), Mallarmé's poem that, beyond evoking a mental image through its "theme", reveals a material image through its arrangement on the printed page; and, *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (1953), the "pictorial" image that Robert Rauschenberg provokes by erasing an original drawing by Walter de Kooning and framing it with the descriptive title embedded in the passpartout. Rauschenberg's operation is thus something that can certainly be considered a reactivation of the double gesture of desacralizing modification of the image of the Mona Lisa by Marcel Duchamp in 1919 through an irreverent inscription: L.H.O.O.Q.



ACTIVITIES:

Tuesday, February 4th – 7 PM
Conversation between Ingrid Guardiola and Marcelo Expósito.

Saturday, February 8th – 7 PM
Screening of the film *Mudanza* (20 min., 2008) with presentation by Pere Portabella and Marcelo Expósito.

BIO

Marcelo Expósito (1966) is an artist, essayist and teacher. His work has been regularly exhibited in festivals, meetings, lectures, conferences, exhibitions and institutions such as *Hambre de la época* (solo show at Fúcares Gallery, Almagro, 1989), *Les urnes de l'honor* (solo show at Sala Montcada, Barcelona, 1990), *Madrid. Espacio de interferencias* (Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 1990), 2nd Biennial of the Image in Movement (Reina Sofía Museum, Madrid, 1992), World Wide Video Festival (The Hague, 1992, 1994), *Aperto* (Biennale di Venezia, 1993), *Impuros. Última generación* (Canal de Isabel II, Madrid, 1993), *Los cuadernos de guerra o ligeramente fuera de contexto* (solo show at Sala Parpalló, Valencia, 1994), *Señales de Vídeo* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, 1995-1997), *Materiales 1989-1998: el malestar en la libertad* (solo show at Sala La Gallera, Valencia, 1998), *Non Place Urban Realm* (South London Gallery, London, 1999), *Procesos documentales y Antagonismos. Case studies* (MACBA, Barcelona, 2001), 3rd Berlin Biennial (2004), *Spectacle, Pleasure Principle or The Carnival* (Shedhalle, Zurich, 2005), *If it's too bad to be true... it could be Disinformation* (ApexArt, New York, 2005), *Disobedience* (Play-Gallery, Berlin and touring throughout Europe since 2005), *The Imaginative Hypothesis* (solo at Espais, Girona, 2005), *Self-Education* (National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, 2006), *L'Europe en devenir* (Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, 2007), *A History of Irritated Material* (Raven Row, London, 2010), *Principio Potosí* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2010), *The Cold-War Avant-Gardes* (Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, 2010), *Manifesta 8* (Murcia, 2011), *steirischer herbst* (Graz, 2011), *Ejercicios de memoria* (La Panera, Lleida, 2011), *Die Irregulären* (NGBK, Berlin, 2013), *No reconciliados* (solo show at galería àngels barcelona, 2013), *Playgrounds. Reinventing the Square* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014), *History Lessons* (Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas, 2014), *Hard Gelatine. Hidden stories of the 80s* (MACBA, Barcelona, 2017), *Art to think the new reason of the world* (BIENALSUR, Buenos Aires, 2017), *Colonia América. Notes for a Postcolonial Cinema* (MUSAC, León, 2017), *Open Skies. Art and Extractive Processes of the Earth* (Cen-

tro de Arte y Naturaleza, Huesca, 2019), *Tearing Up the Past* (Tate Liverpool, 2019) and a very long etcetera. Curators and critics such as Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann, Ute Meta Bauer, Marius Babias, Max Jorge Hinderer, Octavio Zaya, Eugeni Bonet, Ana Longoni, Brian Holmes, Gerald Raunig, Manuel Borja-Villel, Juan Vicente Aliaga, Rafael Doctor, José Miguel G. Cortés, Teresa Grandas, Juan Guardiola, Teresa Blanch, Gabriel Villota, Isabell Lorey, Jean-Christophe Royoux, WHW or Marco Scotini, have contributed to the exhibition or theorisation of his work.

As an author and editor he has published - alone or in collaboration - about twenty books and monographs among which we find: *Plusvalías de la imagen* (1993), *Chris Marker. Retorno a la inmemoria del cineasta* (2000), *Modos de hacer. Critical Art, Public Sphere and Direct Action* (2001), *Stories without a Story. El cine de Pere Portabella* (2001), *Brumaria 5. Arte: la imaginación política radical* (2005), *Brumaria 7. Arte, máquinas, trabajo inmaterial* (2006), *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes* (2008), *Los nuevos productivismos* (2010), *Walter Benjamin, productivista* (2013), *Desinventario. Esquirlas de Tucumán Arde en el archivo de Graciela Carnevale* (2015), *Conversación con Manuel Borja-Villel* (2015) and *Discursos plebeyos. The Taking of the Word and Institutions by Ordinary People* (2019).

For his political activity he has served as secretary of Congress and deputy for Barcelona in the Spanish Parliament during the XI-XII legislatures (2016-2019). Of his current artistic activity, he has upcoming projects at the University Museum of Contemporary Art (Mexico, curated by Cuauhtémoc Medina) and La Virreina Centre de La Imatge (Barcelona, curated by Valentín Roma).