

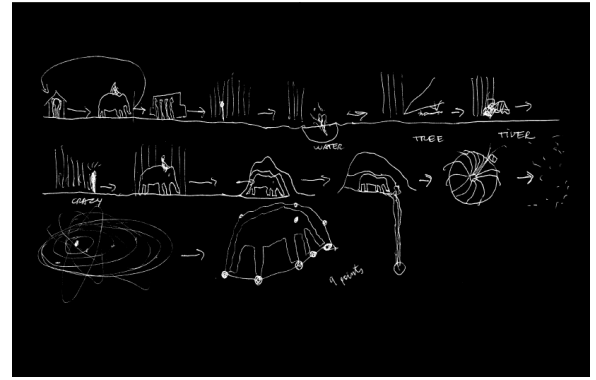
**CARLOS CASAS****Notes on a film about elephants**

22.01.21 &gt; 02.03.21

Opening Friday 22 January from 5 PM

"It is a historical fact that the great emancipatory movements of postmodernity are driven and fuelled by the resurgent 'others': the women's rights movement; the anti-racism and de-colonization movements; the anti-nuclear and pro-environment movements are the voices of the structural Others of modernity. They inevitably mark the crisis of the former humanist 'centre' or dominant subject-position and are not merely anti-humanist, but move beyond it to an altogether novel, posthuman project."  
— Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (2013)

"Teach me to speak the language of men."  
— Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912)



*Notes on a film about elephants* is an exhibition where all its works originate from a journey, a journey that starts with an in-depth research work based on a myth, that of the elephant graveyard. This is a myth anchored in the collective imagination to which multiple itineraries are incorporated to finally bring us closer to an imminent reality, that of our fragility as a species. The project presented is an open reflection on our own journey as a species, an investigation that is born out of fiction, to highlight the vulnerability of our weakened ecosystems, to return, in the end, to the world of imagination in the form of a film.

Through video, photography, collage or drawing, the exhibition works as an open dialogue with the visitor through which different approaches that emerge from the fictional imagination are exchanged, where nature is represented to bring us closer to the present reality of the Anthropocene, and thus deepen our relationship with the rest of the living beings with whom we coexist on this planet.

*Notes on a film about elephants* shows the essence of the elaborate research carried out by Carlos Casas on a subject that has interested him since his childhood: the myth of the elephant graveyard. So much so, that his latest film *Cemetery* (2019), a work of fiction, documentary and visual experimentation, uses as its narrative thread the last journey of an elephant to a mythical jungle cemetery while being stalked by poachers. This journey, in which sound produces images beyond those that appear on the screen, ends up becoming the sensory adventure of the spectator himself, embodied in the experience of the elephant. A film influenced both by Buddhist and Hindu mystical thought and by the landscapes of films by Michael Snow, the imaginary found in literature, classic adventure films and science fiction documentaries.

The video installation *Cemetery Archive Works* (2020) functions as an audiovisual puzzle, in which the public can stop and observe the processes of audiovisual experimentation and video notes, presented on different monitors. Through them, Casas subjects the classics of cinema, which have forged his imaginary to a kind of audiovisual alchemical process; experimenting with their times, narrative modalities, colours, textures and formal structures, of films such as S. Van Dyke's *Tarzan* (1932), *The Jungle Book* (1942), and *Elephant Boy* by Zoltan Korda, or *Chang* (1927) by Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Schoedsack. All of them adventure films in which the jungle serves as a stage for the encounter between humans and animals, as well as the breaking of borders and limits of nature in its pure state. In these films the imaginary of Western culture is woven, the one in which, as Edward Said pointed out in *Orientalism* (1978), it defines itself as developed, rational and superior, and where the white man adapts perfectly to a habitat that is not his own, even to the point of completely dominating it.

On the other hand, the series of works *Archive Boards* (2020), produced exclusively for the exhibition, act as visual atlases, friezes that break down the DNA of the research process, and that function as multiple micro-narratives, or contact sheets catalyzing other possible thematic and narrative paths. These speak to us of the crossings between spiritual myths (*Mythologies*) passing through cinematic notes (*Cinema*) with which parallel worlds are drawn, possible worlds beyond the human, in the style of science fiction, or the decline and darkness reflected in paintings pointing to a possible beginning or end (*Black*), ending in remote landscapes, premonitory of our end as a species (*Postnature*).

Finally, the author's original drawings, from the series *Film Drawings and diagrams* (2018-2020), delicate notes on paper, contribute to the evolutionary process his investigation, and act as conceptual maps that illustrate some of the most relevant elements during the making of the film.

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The film *CEMETERY* (2019) will be screened on Saturday 23rd January at 6 PM at the ZUMZEIG cinema and at different dates during the exhibition.

In Madrid the film will be screened between the 29<sup>th</sup> of January and the 31<sup>st</sup> at 8 PM at the Cinemateca of Matadero.

The book *CEMETERY Journeys to the elephant graveyard* and beyond published by Humboldt books in Italy will be presented during the exhibition and will be available in the gallery.

The film is currently available for viewing at home at the video on demand platform MUBI.

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Pep Agut | Lúa Coderch | Peter Downsbrough | Marcelo Expósito | Harun Farocki | Esther Ferrer | Joan Fontcuberta | Ion Grigorescu | Daniela Ortiz | Mabel Palacin | Mònica Planes | Jaime Pitarch | Oliver Ressler | Jorge Ribalta | Pedro G. Romero | Mireia c. Saladrígues | Michael Snow | Ania Soliman | Richard T. Walker

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## BIO

**Carlos Casas** (Barcelona, 1974) is a filmmaker and artist whose artistic practice encompasses film, sound and the visual arts. Casas studied Fine Arts, Film and Design between Barcelona and Vienna. His films have been screened and awarded at festivals around the world, such as at the Venice Film Festival, the International Film Festival of Rotterdam, the International Film Festival of Buenos Aires, the International Film Festival of Mexico, the FID of Marseille, etc. His visual and sound works have been presented and exhibited at international art festivals, institutions and museums, such as the Tate Modern, London, Fondation Cartier, Palais de Tokyo, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Hangar Bicocca, Milan, CCCB Barcelona, Matadero Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Madrid, MAAT Lisbon, GAM Torino, Bozar, Kunsten Festival des Arts Bruxelles, Retrospectives of his work have been presented at the Cineteca Mexicana, CINEMATEK Bruxelles, DocumentaMadrid and Cineteca Matadero in 2019. His NDT installation is being presented at the Bangkok Biennale, and he is preparing projects for the Shanghai Biennale and the Venice Architecture Biennale 2021.

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