

Joan Fontcuberta

Blow up Blow up

28.01.08 > 28.03.09

Opening: 28.01.09, 20h.

Blow up Blow up, the new project by Joan Fontcuberta (Barcelona, 1955) is based on the well-known movie from 1966 by Michelangelo Antonioni, in which the director takes the heterodox tale of a murder as a pretext for exploring the conceptual nature of the border between objective reality - that which appears assimilated by photography - and the illusion.

Using stills duplicated from a copy of the movie in 35mm, Fontcuberta continually expands a few negatives to a point beyond where Thomas, the protagonist, stops. Rather than revealing the presence of a corpse in a park, Fontcuberta's gesture points to the corpse of representation itself: an inert body in which the tensions between event and representation, documentary and fiction, experience and image are shown with a radical economy of means dictated by the procedure.

The paradox is that the monumental enlargements surpass the threshold of intelligibility, losing any reference to the original scenes from the movie. Yet, as a result, they allow the intrinsic information provided by the film itself (the grain, the scratches, the unrecognizable forms of white and black spots ...) to emerge. Fontcuberta thus brings us to the most basic level of the medium and transports us, traversing all possible meanings, to its most intimate nature. It is as if we were trying to investigate what images are made from.

Joan Fontcuberta's polyhedral work revolves around a critique of the verisimilitude of the photography, its potential for serving as source of conviction and truth. Many of his pieces look at the way the photographic image interacts with and supplants reality, addressing the relationships that result from the way the fingerprint-like nature of a photograph later determines its posterior status as a witness. Other projects (more narratives) critically analyze the possible social functions of photography, such as its use in science, in the press or in politics or art.

In undertaking this systematic analysis of the image and the defense of doubt, for Fontcuberta, every kind of strategy is valid—the spectator is never exempt from a marked sense of humor—including parody, or actions such as information intoxication that keep our credulity in check. Certain tactical means associated with illusionism are also put to use, relying on motifs from fantasy or from a scene dramatized to the point of becoming satirically grotesque to build deceits that offer us the tools to deactivate them.

As real as they may appear, any image contains an inevitable threat of falseness. **Blow up Blow up** may be read as a contribution to the art of prevention: minimalistic in its unfolding but ambitious in its will.

Joan Fontcuberta has had individual exhibitions in national and international institutions such as the Musée-Château (Annecy), the Instituto Cervantes (Pekín, Nápoles, Paris), the Australian Center of Photography (Sydney), the Aperture Foundation (New York), the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica (Barcelona), MNAC (Barcelona), the Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró (Palma de Mallorca), the Fundació Telefónica (Madrid) or in IVAM (Valencia), among others. In addition, he has shown in a number of collective exhibitions in museums such as ARTIUM (Vitoria-Gasteiz), MACBA (Barcelona), CCCB (Barcelona), the Fundació Tàpies (Barcelona), MARCO (Vigo), MOMA (New York) or the Centre George Pompidou (Paris). Some of the awards he has received throughout his career include the Spanish National Photography Prize, the UK Year of Photography and Electronic Image Grant Award or the David Octavious Hill medal, awarded by Fotografisches Akademie GDL in Germany. In 1994 he was distinguished as a *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture. His work can be found in some of the most notable private and public art collections in the world. Until the 8th of February a retrospective of his work, *De Fact. Joan Fontcuberta. 1982-2008*, can be seen in the Palau Virreina, Barcelona.