

# Jorge Ribalta

## Field Works

11.12.12 > 01.03.13

Opening: Tuesday, December 11, 20 h.

This is Jorge Ribalta's first solo show in Barcelona since 1998. This is partly the reason for which the artist wishes to confer the show with a programmatic character in the sense that it aims to show a work method with photography that contradicts the relatively dominant discourse about the aim of the documentary condition of photography in the digital age, in which we see a proliferation of paradoxically hybrid documentary practices although they often lack a sophisticated conscience of their own history and condition. In such context, the artist tries to reinvent the idea of the modern documentary and to bring back the historical density and political/public dimension, the photographic realism, far from any essentialism and nostalgia.

"Fieldworks" has a double sense: on one side the empirical observation method that delves from the Social Sciences and on the other, the cultural field as the object for observation.

The show reunites a selection of photographic series, initiated in 2005 (and in relative rupture with his previous work from the 80s and 90s), that consists in different observations regarding the cultural field, understood and presented as the result of the intersection among Art, Politics, Economy and History. The artist offers a singular institutional analysis method through photography that updates the debate on the document and provides new validity to photography as an observation, analysis, representation and comprehension mean for complex social processes. This update comes from the interpretation of the original thesis from 1930 on the birth of the documental discourse, which the artist brings to the present time and applies literally.

The "fieldworks" presented are, in chronological realization order:

*Anonymous work* (2005-2007), made in a metallurgic workshop of Can Ricart, at Poblenou during a peak moment in the campaign against the compound closure and for the preservation of the activity and industrial heritage, in the context of a civil debate about the economic growth model of Barcelona and as a social response to a neoliberal model of tertiary financial economy euphemistically named "knowledge economy", where cultural industries acquire a new and central role.

*Sur l'herbe* (In the grass, 2005-2008) is a series of photographs made during four consecutive editions of the music festival Sònar, perhaps the most paradigmatic cultural event in Barcelona today. The series consists of an observation of the behaviour rituals of the juvenile public, understood as the true show produced by the festival, where there is a singular transference of the public and private spheres.

*Petit grand tour* (2007-2008), is a series realized in Tarragona that aims to bring forward the various production processes and mechanisms of the city's history, in this case the history of the Roman city. History is not a given thing; it is made on an everyday basis. The series shows this comprehension of ancient history as something recently made through the everyday work of some of the various implied agents in the reproduction of the city as cultural merchandise.

*Savage Lacoonte* (2012-11) is a series that documents the spaces of flamenco, a wide selection of historical and meaningful landmarks representative of the historical, economic, social and administrative structure of the institutional-popular culture of flamenco art in Spain. The role of flamenco is central in the construction of a national Spanish identity discourse and here the purpose is to visualize the cultural grid that produces this art, far from a sort of dominant representation centred in the role of the interpreter that often blinds us from the structure where he interpreter is inscribed.

*Scrambling* (2011) is a series made in the Alhambra of Granada, the first national Spanish monument that shows the webbing of relations and processes implied in the everyday production of the monument; the monument's conservation, protection, exploitation, and usage efforts, which appears signified as a factory.

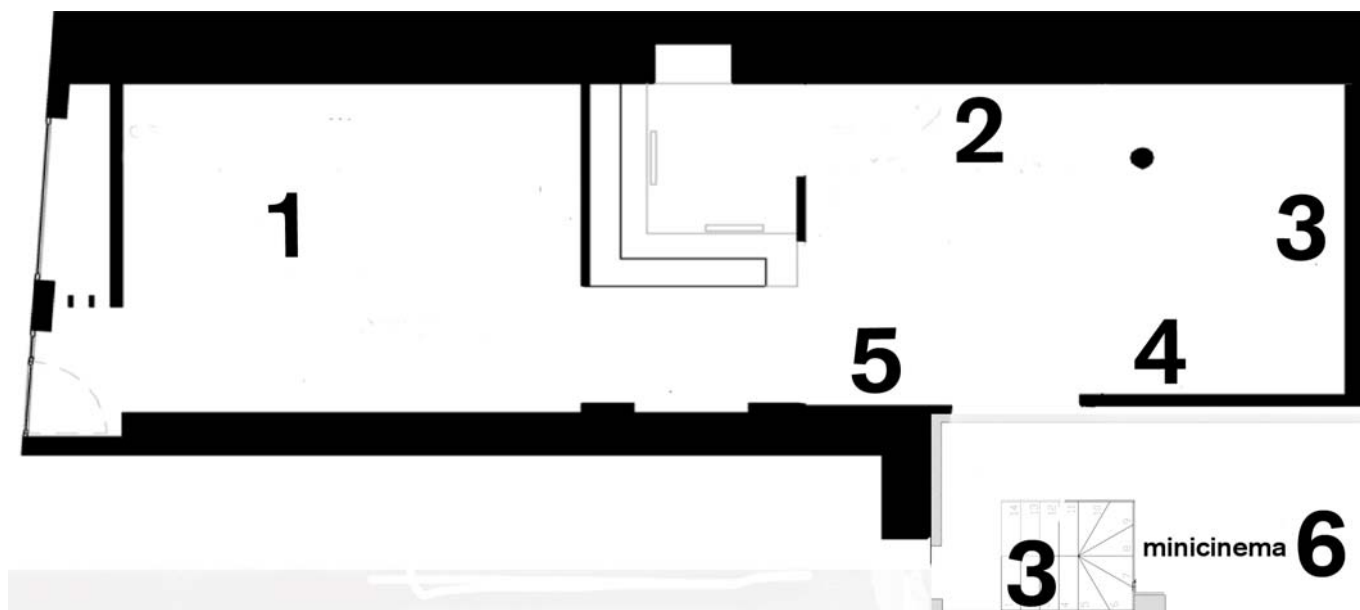
The gallery's minicinema features the audiovisual loop from: *T'en recordes de Can Ricart? Fotografies del futur de Barcelona 2010* (Do you remember Can Ricart? Photographs of the future of Barcelona, 2010), executed by Ribalta and conceived as a brief compendium of the campaign "Lets save Can Ricart". The work includes photographs produced in this context by various authors in the campaign (Juli Azcunce, Xavier Basiana, Lothar Baumgarten, Manolo Laguillo, madeinbarcelona, Jaume Orpinell, Rafael Reina, Jordi Secall and Ribalta himself; with audio from Francisco López).

This photographic series are formalized as a broad compendium of images (from 50 to 200), which include texts and where the relation among the images is fundamental. In the exhibition, the series are presented in part; therefore the coexistence of the series within the space generates a new set of relations by itself.

Through these “fieldworks” the idea is to de-naturalize the cultural field, understand how it works and what its role of ideological production is. The work’s intention is to provide a materialist representation of such a cultural field, that helps understand the structural relation of art and its historical conditions. The art, institutionalized creativity, is not immobile and untimely, but is something that we produce and reproduce collectively, everyone who is implied, from his or her specific everyday tasks. Having interiorized the auto-reflexivity of representation theories and the institutional contemporary technique, the artist defends that photography maintains its full capacity of translating abstract ideologies into concrete sensations, and therefore can provide the raw material for a different reasoning and action.

**Jorge Ribalta** (Barcelona, 1963). After studying in the University of Barcelona School of Fine Arts, started a fruitful career abroad. First in Nice, where he obtained the Award from the Jeune Création Européenne (Prix de la Villa Arson) Art Jonction 89. On the following year he settled in New York thanks to a scholarship. In 1990 he went back to Nice, in the Villa Arson. In 1992 he was a visiting artist at the Slade School of Art (University College) in London and in 1996 of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1997 and 1998 he participated in the International Studio Program of New York. Ribalta directed from 1999 to 2009 the Department of Public Programmes of the MACBA (Contemporary Art Museum of Barcelona), and has edited several reference books through the publishing house Gustavo Gili. His work has been shown since his first exhibition in the gallery Forum of Tarragona (1998), in solo shows such as the Zabriskie gallery in New York (1994, 2000, 2005) and Paris (1996), Estrany-De la Mota (1998), University of Salamanca (2006) or Galería Casa Sin Fin (Caceres, 2011 / Madrid, 2012), aside from numerous collectives among which we find: Estampes Apòcrifes (Metrònom, Barcelona and Galerie Municipale du Château d'Eau, Toulouse, 1998); Questioning Europe. Photography Biennial Rotterdam (Róterdam, 1988), Confrontaciones (MEAC, Madrid 1998), Création Photographique en Espagne 1968-1988 (Musée Cantini, Marseille, 1988), Award for Young European Photographers, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 1988); Deixeu el balcó obert. La fotografia en l'art contemporani a Espanya (Fundació La Caixa, Barcelona, 1992); En Avion (Palais de Tokio, Paris, 1992); Anys 90. Distància Zero (Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, 1992); New Photography 10 (MoMA, New York, 1992); Fragments (MACBA, Barcelona, 1996); The Play of Substitutions: Rhona Bitner, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Laurie Simmons, Jorge Ribalta (Musée Henri Martin, Cahors, 1996); Making it Real (Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 1997); Civitas. Carambolage IV (Museo Della Permanente, Milan, 2000); Sets and Situations (MoMA, New York, 2000); Experimentación en la colección de fotografía del IVAM, IVAM, Valencia, 2004).

Exhibition Map:



**1- From the series *Laocoonte Salvaje (Savage Laocoonte)*, 2010/11**

160 Shown of a total of 200 gelatin-silver prints mounted with silk screen text. 50 x 50 cm. each

**2- From the series *Scrambling*, 2011**

33 shown from a total of 78 gelatin silver prints 30 x 40 cm. each.

**3-From the series *Trabajo anónimo (Anonymous work)*, Iracheta SL, Can Ricart, Poblenou, June-July, 2005**

11 Shown from a total of 14 photographs gelatine silver print, 50 x 60 / 50 x 50 cm. each.

**4- From the series *Sur l'herbe (In the grass)*, 2005/08**

Shown 27 from a total of 28 copies mounted unmated with plexiglas on wall, 20 x 25 cm. each.

**5- From the series *Petit Grand Tour. Tarragona, August 29- October 6, 2007 (2007/08)***

Shown 6 from a total of 51 framed gelatine-silver prints, matted with silkscreen print text. 50 x 50 cm. each.

**6- *T'en recordes de Can Ricart?. Fotografies del futur de Barcelona (Do you remember Can Ricart? Photographs of the future of Barcelona)***

Photographs by Juli Azcunce, Xavier Basiana, Lothar Baumgarten, Manolo Laguillo, madeinbarcelona, Jaume Orpinell, Rafael Reina, Jorge Ribalta and Jordi Secall. Sound by Francisco López. Edition by Jorge Ribalta. 2010. Digital Video-projection in HD. 25' 25"