

Joan Fontcuberta

Fictions (guided visit)

08.03.13 > 10.05.13

Opening: Friday, march 8, 20 h.

àngels barcelona presents Joan Fontcuberta's (Barcelona, 1955) third solo show at the gallery. The polyhedral work of Fontcuberta revolves around a fundamental axis: the critique of photography's verisimilitude, its potential as a container of conviction and truth. Many of his pieces deal with the way in which the photographic image interacts and supersedes reality, about how the relations that arise from its role as a trail determine its latter acceptance as testimony. Fictions (guided visit), is a selection of recent works (Ensanche, 2009), previous works (Paisajes industriales, 80s) and texts in vinyl that are articulated as a guide that explains the concepts of fiction and reality within photography.

Fictions (guided visit), or how to lean into the precipice

Among humans the concept of company is fundamental. There is no society without company as there is no reality without the fiction that relentlessly proposes the vision of our companions – or guides – into the great journey that is life; a vision that is necessarily diverse, estranged from our own.

Kharon has long been our companion or guide through the sidewalks of our fate, at the edge of the river Styx, like Thomas a Kempis guides us in the Imitation of Christ. None of us – Southern Europeans, Mediterranean, true Europeans: Jerusalem, Athens, Rome – has ever stopped dreaming or taking a journey to Italy that ever since the Romanticism is presented as the guide to our roots, if not ours, to those of our imagery.

In the Gospels (Mathew 15,14) it is said: "Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit."

Pieter Brueghel the Elder represented this splendidly in his famous painting-fable and knowing Joan Fontcuberta, botanist, astronaut, orthodox friar, or documentarist of imaginary Basque sailors, we can no less than imagine him armed with his camera in the front row. Fontcuberta is a strange photographer that has turned the camera into a blindness producing apparatus that can do nothing else but lead us to the precipice. The precipice of imagination, where the gaze is a personal desire, a choice, politics, mere democratic participation with the observer in the construction of the common space of world representations. Representations that will forcefully be more complete since they will host within themselves, in their execution, the eye of all those who conform society, company.

In "Fictions (Guided Visit)" we approach from one side, the images of Barcelona in near darkness, during nightfall, when vision is limited and photography seems to testify the moment of its evanescence. On the other side it shows the entrails of the city, in complete darkness, in which Fontcuberta has created a path of his own using his flash and has forced the camera to embrace his desire of seeing and showing. Beyond the document - that can be seen as the core of its genesis- they are counter images of the seeming reality they force us to read, to interpret and take the risk to participate.

Yet, the artist offers fragments alongside, – all the images are necessarily fragments and just fragments – of their own texts as if they were also images; written images that, like the visual, are the mere conditions that make our reading, our commitment, possible.

Pep Agut, march 2013

Joan Fontcuberta (Barcelona, 1955) is a well-known conceptual photographer, writer, editor, curator and professor. He has had a powerful influence on attracting international recognition to the history of Spanish photography. Fontcuberta received the graduate degree in Communication from the Autonomous University of Barcelona in 1977. After working in advertising he became a teacher at the University of Barcelona's College of Fine Arts from 1979 to 1986. He was one of the founders of the magazine Photovision that came to life in 1980 and became an important publication in the field of European photography. Since 1993 he has been a professor of Audiovisual Communication at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Some of the most representative institutions where he has shown his work are: MACBA (Barcelona), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), CCCB (Barcelona), MNAC (Barcelona), Galería Zabriskie (New York), Hermitage Museum (Saint Petersburg), Harvard University (USA), MOMA (New York), among others. In 1994 he was ordained Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters from the French Ministry of Culture. In 2011 he received the Spanish National Essay Award and in 2013 the Hasselblad Award.