

# On the revolution and its body

Pep Agut, Peter Downsbrough, Harun Farocki, Esther Ferrer  
Ion Grigorescu, Walter Ruttmann

Project curated by Pep Agut

14.05.13 > 26.06.13

àngels barcelona + àngels barcelona espai2  
c. pintor fortuny, 27 c. dels àngels, 16



## Pep Agut, *Memòria Personal*, 2013. Video b&n HD 13'08"

Pep Agut, in "Personal Memory" (2012) constructs an allegory of painting, the foundation of his artistic training. The artist, naked, appears suspended in a space where he crawls slowly, whilst washing its surface. It's the paint stained pavement of his studio, and he washes it as if it were a lifeless body. A list of words that relate to the body mark, as they do in Downsbrough's piece, the succession of images in the voice and mind of those who are watching.



## Peter Downsbrough, *in[to]*, 2012. Video b&n, 2'47"

In "In[to]", by Peter Downsbrough, we once again counter an image of the city, here seen from a distance. Downsbrough distances himself from documentary in order to construct an image of a city that evolves like a body that moves and breathes. An image that is articulated by the linguistic elements the artist inserts, which provide the human voice of those who aren't shown.



## Harun Farocki, *Videograms of a Revolution*, 2011. Video color, 106'

Harun Farocki, along with his Romanian colleague Andrei Ucija, collected and ordered documentary material of the events that in 1989 led to the fall of Ceaucescu, and in 1992 edited the work "Videograms for a Revolution." He shows us how, after taking over the television station, the workers of the revolution broadcasted images from all over Bucharest, a city in tumult, for 120 hours.



## Esther Ferrer, *Acciones corporales*, 1975. Video b&n, sin sonido, 39' 23"

After her stay in New York, she realizes this video with the intention to register her performances more recurrent in this moment. Nowadays is the only filmación available where include four of her more recognized actions; intimate and personal, performance, footprints, space, sound and measure a space with the body. They are scenes in a nude interior like the proper artist. Esther Ferrer realize a series of actions that speak us of the research of the location of the body and of the woman. By means of the simplest gestures and minimum, Ferrer evolves in the space and occupies it with forcefulness: she takes position, from her body, alone.



## Ion Grigorescu, *Yoga*, 2011. Video color, 11' 47" + *Our House / Casa noastră*, 1976. Video Color, 5' 20" + *Beloved Bucharest*, 1977. Video Color, 14' 37"

Ion Grigorescu in "Yoga" (2012) turns his time in a hotel—perhaps during a business trip—into an exercise of constructing the self and his body, offering us an image of a personal episode just as he has offered us so many times an image from social or public contexts. In "*Casa noastră*," (1975) he shows us, with radical sensibility and simplicity, his own home and the most basic everyday actions. "Beloved Bucharest" shows the transformations and the daily life of the city of Bucharest to ends of the 70.



## Walter Ruttmann, *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, 1927. Video b&n, sin sonido, 74'

Walter Ruttmann produces "Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis" and provides us with the most beautiful imagery of the city, full of vitality. The inhabitants revolve within this space, as the gears of a massive urban machine. Berlin has overcome the disaster of war and, unsuspectingly, its own impulse will lead it into another one. From the inside, Ruttmann does not seem to sense the historic fate of this (r)evolutionized city and its citizens in (r)evolution.

SCREEN FROM BARCELONA | LOOP FAIR'13 – àngels barcelona:

14.05.13 > 26.06.13 – P. Agut, P. Downsborough, H. Farocki, E. Ferrer, I. Grigorescu, W. Ruttman – c. pintor fortuny, 27 / c. àngels, 16, Barcelona  
23.05.13 > 25.05.13 - Harun Farocki / Loop Fair'13 – Hotel Catalonia Ramblas, c. pelai, 28, Barcelona

## On the revolution and its/his body

1927: Walter Ruttmann makes "Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt" and offers, with the ultimate vitality, the most beautiful image in the world. The inhabitants evolve inside the city, they become the core of the great machinery. Berlin has overcome the disaster of war and without any suspicion, its own impulse leads it to a new one. Ruttmann does not seem to sense the historic fate from the inside of a (r)evolutionized city and its people in (r)evolution.

2012: In "In[to]", by Peter Downsborough, we find the city's image. It's a city seen from the distance. It doesn't transport us to the disaster of 2001 that undoubtedly holds a significant place for the American artist established in Brussels. Downsborough goes far from the documentary in order to build the image of a city that evolves as a body, it moves and breathes. An image that is articulated by the linguistic elements the artist inserted. It's the human voice from those who aren't shown.

It seems that both artists, by working with the interior and exterior human levels, get us closer to the old theme of form and substance. They inscribe any gesture, place or event in the plain of History using time and the relation between the intimate and ordinary with that other level— so pervasive – constituted by the public (the city itself and also the work of art). But following the tracks of artistic productions we can expand on the cultural territory of a great date in History. And this is one of the social functions of art, that of setting milestones within a rich and complex time.

Therefore we know that in order to build History we condense a pile of events into one date, as if the passing of time acted as a centripetal force that keeps us from recognizing, aside from the great events, those that develop at the same time. We build a blind spot, a black hole that engulfs multiple realities that constitute the mass, hiding its true body, perhaps the very body of our existence. But what happens in those scenarios where History does not recognize itself, when the voice of time alone, always revolutionary, bounces back like an echo over those bodies – our own – over where its episodes articulate?

Esther Ferrer, Pep Agut, and Ion Grigorescu often work with their own bodies. Establishing them as the medium for actions that build art, city, society. They build episodes within a cluster of stories. They work at the inside of a city, at their house, their studio or any given hotel.

Esther Ferrer (trained in the revolutionary Paris of May of 68) in "Body Actions" (1975) – filmed by Benet Russel-, conducts a series of actions that refer to the woman and the understanding of the body's place. Through nude interior scenes the artist, nude herself, evolves and occupies the space decisively, she makes it her own with the simplest and smallest gestures.

Pep Agut, in "Personal Memory" (2012) constructs an allegory of painting, the foundation of his artistic training. The artist, naked, appears suspended in a space where he crawls slowly whilst washing its surface. It's the paint stained pavement of his studio, and he washes it as if it were a lifeless body. A list of words that relate to the body, as they do in Downsborough's piece, pace the succession of images for the witness' voice and reading.

Ion Grigorescu in "Yoga" (2012) turns his time in the hotel – perhaps during a business stay- into a practice of self building his body, and offers us the image of that personal episode as he has offered it before in social or public contexts. In "Casa Nostra" (1975) he shows us, with radical sensibility and simplicity, his own home and the most basic everyday actions. He lives in Bucarest, a city that a few years later would become the stage of a revolution captured in the work of Harun Farocki. But lets go back to the beginning, back to Berlin. 1989: the dividing wall falls and brings down a way of perceiving the world and its political relations. But the wall was only the physical landmark of a much more radical fracture: the division of Europe into two blocks after World War II.

Harun Farocki, along with his Romanian friend Andrei Ujica, collects and orders documentary material of the events that in 1989 lead to the fall of Ceausescu, and in 1992 cuts his work "Videograms for a Revolution." He shows us how, after taking over the television station, the workers of the revolution broadcasted images of all the corners in Bucarest during 120 hours. When we think about Farocki we can't help but thinking about his teacher Ruttmann and the hidden revolution, latent in his symphony. That revolution that stirs or would stir everything around it. The epicenter that while degrading its identity generates a limbic periphery where most people and artists work, the places where History atones itself through small, ordinary gestures, in the interior stages of the deepest intimacy, where revolutions fall everyday upon everyone's bodies.

Pep Agut, may 2013