

Pep Agut

Memento mori: Artist at his workplace

21.05.14 > 01.08.14

After treating the unavoidable political position of the artist in "Hercules" (2007) and the problems related to the psychological aspects of perception and language in "Problemes d'horitzó" (Horizon Problems) (2011), Pep Agut now proposes a physical and visual experience that brings us closer to the moment zero of artistic creation, the moment in which the artist, confronts himself with his work and begins to think about it.

Agut departs from three simple actions in order to create their allegorical constructions. Set in a totally white and empty space, he takes hold of his table, his workplace. The overwhelming brightness of the place, the lack of spatial references, the absence of props, that could bring it into context, as well as the deliberate lack of a narrative structure in the actions performed, they all bring the audience to witness the moment when the artistic practice (as Hans-Georg Gadamer called it) is still only a ritual and a game becoming the point of origin in the implementation of thought and the possibility of representation.

Using his working table, the artist evolves in the space developing three actions: the meditative act of turning around his work desk; the link with his workplace by tying together his leg to the table, thus becoming one single body, rotating in the space; and lastly, by looking for something in his desk, as if he was almost starting a dialogue with it, lifting it, knocking it, spinning it around, and looking at it from different viewpoints.

The first work of the exhibition is the large format projection "Artista al seu seu lloc treball" (Artist at his workplace). Here we see the artist making contact with his workplace. The shapes and sounds generated in the performative sequence of the different movements, the color sequences, which refer to the formation of the image itself, and the physical occupation of the space, articulate the connections between the artist's body and this abstract space. The scale of the projected image on the exhibition space, the angle of the shot and all the elements mentioned above, provide a strong environmental character that goes beyond the visual experience thus transforming itself simultaneously into a physical experience for the viewer and the moment of uncertainty in the creative act, that in which the discourse starts to take shape.

The second piece, "Memento mori", contains two sets of alternate scenes: the artist in an interior space meditating around his desk, and the exterior negative takes, that refer to the images recorded on the retina and the symbolic significance of the river. The images of the artist going around his working table and the camera turning 360 ° in each take in order to record the totality of the visible in each of the landscape's positions associate themselves as thought and memory do in the 'Vanitas' of Baroque painting.

The last piece, "Naixement de la forma" (The Birth of form) is a video that deals with the appearance of the object created and the consequent disappearance of the artist. Agut puts himself in relation to the only object that he has, his desk, and he ties his leg to the table with packing tape. Using a mirror effect, the rotational movement of the artist attached to his table generates the appearance of infinite possible forms. Agut chooses not so much a new object but the only one which will allow his own disappearance: the same table where he works. For Agut, the place of the artist is thus based on his own *non-presence*, in the creation of something that will always remain open to the gaze and the thought of the other.

Pep Agut (b.Terrassa, Barcelona, 1961) studied at the Sant Jordi Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona (1979-84). He participated in the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles in 1984. Between 1988 and 1991 he lived in Cologne (RFA), up until 1991, when he is invited by the Cartier Foundation to work in Paris. In 1992 he returns to Barcelona and he is currently based in Terrassa.

He has had solo and group shows in places such as the XLV Venice Biennale (1993), Prospekt (1996), the XI Sydney Biennial (1998), Art Unlimited, Basel (2004) and in institutions such as the Contemporary Art Museum of Tel Aviv (1993) or the MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2000), amongst others. He has coordinated and participated in numerous debates and conferences as well as having taught different seminars at the University of Barcelona.