

EIGHT ASTURIAN ARTISTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXHIBITION *EL PASADO EN EL PRESENTE Y LO PROPIO EN LO AJENO* ORGANISED BY LABORAL CENTRO DE ARTE Y CREACIÓN INDUSTRIAL

The exhibition will be open starting April 3rd, 2009, until June 29th.

The curatorial is provided by Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes who seeks "to investigate how the phantoms of memory wander through the present, influencing how we understand and construct it."

The curator Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes has selected eight Asturian artists who will participate in the exhibition *El pasado en el presente y lo propio en lo ajeno* [*The past in the present and the foreign in the self*] that will open on April 3rd, 2009. The artists are Maite Centol, Angel de la Rubia, Fiumfoto, Benjamín Menéndez, Tomás Miñambres, Juan José Pulgar, Avelino Sala and Lucinda Torre. These, alongside a group of approximately twenty other national and international artists, will exhibit works of art made to order exclusively for LABoral or will exhibit their most recent creations related to the topic of the exhibition. The exhibition will be open until June 29th.

According to its curator Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes, *El pasado en el presente y lo propio en lo ajeno* seeks to investigate how the phantoms of memory wander through the present, influencing how we understand and construct it. Avery F. Gordon has studied how the phantasmagoric – a kind of memory accretion phenomenon – appears with renewed force in the present. The phantoms are not physical projections but are, instead, the way that the past lives in the present. The traumatic past, so frequently associated with apparitions from beyond this life, returns with urgency in our times. Andreas Huyssen speaks of present preterites and of how "one of the most surprising cultural and political phenomena in recent years is the resurgence of memory as a central concern for culture and politics in Western societies."

Phantoms of memory, then, are those being called upon here. Not to be exorcised but to redress symbolically what has been silenced and thereby repressed by means of recollection and recognition. The phantasmagoric, then, is here congregations of spectres and apparitions that continue to wander in the hope of being a social force of memory.

The interrelationship between territory and memory – how they mutually influence one another and how they are resignified in a return journey – is

what this exhibition aims to analyse through the work of a number of artists devoted to the concept of terrain and its social and historical connotations. Space – whether it be geographical, architectural or mental – is traversed by memory, inseminated by it. As such, there are numerous signs that speak to us from the more or less recent past and that explain to us what our environment is like. Some of them are not so evident, but they remain present, in a secondary physical layer or in the collective unconscious. Other, in contrast, because they are so present on the surface and in our lives on a daily basis, they cease to be perceived by our vision, having become completely familiar to us.

It is for this reason that a profound effort is being made to work with the local community in a double sense: work with the artistic community and with questions related to personal, collective and historical memory related to the place in which the art centre finds itself embedded. “the place” is here understood to be a territory traversed by its memory and its social, cultural and political definition. All of these subjects are inserted (and from here is taken the second part of the exhibition title) in a global context, in the sense of how similar topics and similar artistic treatments of them have occurred in other contexts.

The conceptual groundwork of the exhibition was laid by the following texts:

- Avery F. Gordon: *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*.
- Andreas Huyssen: *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*.
- Paul Ricoeur: *Memory, History, Forgetting*.
- Henri Lefebvre: *The production of space*.

On the other hand, there are four work topics around which the contribution of the invited artists have been organised.

THE TOPICS

The exhibition *El pasado en el presente y lo propio en lo ajeno* deals with the following topics:

- 1- The Revolution in Asturias, the Civil War and Francoist repression.
- 2- The space in which the Centro de Arte and La Universidad Laboral are located, including architecture as well as para-fascist ideology, as a model of spatial renovation of sites with historical and political connotations in cultural centres.
- 3- The industrial and mining crisis in the democratic era, together with the struggle of the social and workers’ resistance.
- 4- La Llingua [the Asturian language] as a vehicle of identity through which the past survives and renews itself in the present.

The Asturian artists that will participate in the exhibition are:

Participants in the first section on the Revolution in Asturias, the Civil War and Francoist repression include Ángel de la Rubia and Juan José Pulgar. **Ángel de la Rubia** will present an installation Project carried out

specifically for the exhibition. It is based on the same principles as *La Fosa de Valdediós*, a book published in 2007 by the Municipal Cultural Foundation of the Gijón City Hall. As in the book, the illustrations are mainly photographs taken by the artist himself from region surrounding the excavation and recuperation of human remains from the communal grave near the Valdediós monastery. Extracts from and reproductions of various documents pertaining to the investigation previous to the disinterment, the subsequent forensic report, the artists own notes, a photograph of the psychiatric team that attended the deceased (taken by Constantino Suárez in 1937) and pages from the book itself will also be exhibited.

For his part, **Juan José Pulgar** will exhibit a group of photographs in which he literally has inserted scenes that occurred during the Civil War in actual locations of the city of Gijón.

In the second section on the memory of Laboral itself, **Avelino Sala** as well as **Tomás Miñambres** will each present a video and a group of photographs. The former deals with certain actions carried out in the building's central patio that address its Francoist symbols, together with photographic images of other fascist elements present in different geographic locations. The latter, Tomás Miñambres, bases his work in a series of old photographs taken by his father of certain kinds of gymnastics that were associated with the educational ideology of the time. He uses these to film a video in which he reinterprets this ideology from within the parameters of individual identity that, in turn, are within the collective.

In the third section on the industrial and mining crisis, **Lucinda Torre** will present a full-length documentary entitled *Resistencia* [*Resistance*] on the workers' struggle in Duro Felguera during the 1990s. **Benjamín Menéndez** will present an audiovisual installation on the research he has been carrying out in recent years on the dismantling of the large industries in Asturias, especially in Avilés. As he himself has said, "this project takes only a few steps towards synthesising years of searching through the debris of a century's glory and the eclipse of the industrial landscape."

In the final section on La Llingua of Asturias, **Fiumfoto** and **Maite Centol** are each completing their own sound installations. The Fiumfoto group begins its work with the Archivo de la Tradición Oral [The Oral Tradition Archive] in order to para draw upon histories, stories, songs... The object is to explore this archive and extract declarations and sound recordings that facilitate the communication of a new message that speaks ironically and poetically of memories and how the oral tradition is a key element of collective memory. For her part, Maite Centol works with the sound geography of Asturias. Her installation is an attempt to poetically revindicate the Asturian Llingua by centring upon toponymy through a sound project interested in naming geography and its spatial references, starting with the human being's inherent need to feel linked to a reference point.

OTHER FEATURED ART WORKS

In this exhibition it will also be possible to see the project *No Tours* by **Escoitar**, coproduced by LABoral with the Municipal Cultural Foundation of Gijón. This work uses the increasingly popular format of tourist audio guides that provide information on those places in the city that are categorised as relevant and of public interest. The work questions their value as official discourses on that which they pretend to construct. The goal of *No Tours* is to deconstruct these accounts and sketch other guides that intervene in the perception of urban space that is understood as a flow, an event and as collective memory. With the objective of designing this kind of guide, a creation workshop will be organised in which the potential of sound as a constructor of reality and a path to knowledge will be explored from the theoretical as well as the practical perspectives. This workshop will be directed by the musicologist Juan-Gil López, the anthropologist Chiu Longina and the engineer Enrique Tomás.

Marta de Gonzalo and **Publio Pérez Prieto** will also present their own videoceation made expressly for the occasion of the exhibition. Its axis is the complex task of "rememorisation and inspiring the fulfillment collective hopes."

CURATORIAL

Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes is an art critic and exhibition curator.

As a critic, he currently collaborates with the *ABCD* (the cultural supplement to the *ABC* newspaper) *Artecontexto* magazine. Previously, he worked with the newspaper *Diario 16* (1995-1997) and was chief editor of *El Periódico del Arte* (1998-2002), all this while also acting as a correspondent for *The Art Newspaper*, *Le Journal des Arts* and *Il Giornale dell'Arte* and concurrently contributing to numerous specialised national and international publications. He has written hundreds of critical reviews and essays in the most renowned publications such as *Flash Art*, *Exit*, *Lápiz* and exhibition catalogues and co-authored books. He has also directed and taught courses and seminars in numerous universities and museums.

He was a curator for La Sala Montcada of La Fundación "La Caixa" from 1997-98 and was the Director of the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Párraga (Murcia, España) from 2002 to 2004. Here is a selection of the exhibitions for which he has been curator: *La casa, su idea* (Comunidad de Madrid, 1996), *El yo diverso* (Fundación La Caixa, Barcelona, 1997), *Ciudades sin nombre* (Comunidad de Madrid, 1998), *Escenarios* (Injuve, Madrid, 2000), *Mas vivas muertas que nunca* (MEIAC, Badajoz, 2002), *Monocanal* (Museo Reina Sofía, CGAC, Centre d'Art Santa Mónica, Koldo Mitxelena, Museo Patio Herreriano, CajAstur, Casa Díaz Cassou y Centro José Guerrero, 2003), *Esfuerzo* (Koldo Mitxelena Kulturunea, 2004), *Sesiones Animadas* (CAAM, Las Palmas, y Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2005), *Actions Tour* (Nit Niu, Mallorca, 2005), *Historias animadas* (Caixaforum, Barcelona, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao y Le Fresnoy, Lille, 2006), *En un mundo mágico* (Nit Niu, Mallorca, 2006), *Fantasmagoría* (Fundación ICO, Madrid, 2007), *Madrid Abierto 07* (Intervenciones en el espacio público, Madrid, 2007), *Geopolíticas de la animación* (Centro Andaluz de

Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla, 2007 y Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Vigo, 2008), *Los Límites del Crecimiento* (Sala Alcalá 31, Comunidad de Madrid, 2007), *Try Again* (La Casa Encendida, Madrid y Koldo Mitxelena Kulturunea, San Sebastián, 2008), *Psicogeografías* (Comunidad de Madrid, 2008) y *Mil Veras, Mil Prinzessinen, Mil Centralias* (Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Móstoles, 2008). He is currently preparing the exhibition *El pasado en el presente y lo propio en lo ajeno* [*The past in the present and the foreign in the self*] for LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, in Gijón, during 2009.

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Monday, from 12:00 to 8:00 PM.
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