

PROJECTESD

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XAVIER RIBAS: IT WOULD NEVER BE QUITE THE SAME AGAIN

Opening: Thursday, April 16th, 19:30 to 21:30 h.

Exhibition: 17.04 > 26.05.2015. Tuesday to Friday, 11:00 to 19:00 h. Saturday by appointment

Xavier Ribas became known in the mid-1990s with his work on the spontaneous occupation of the urban periphery. He quickly became the representative of a new documentary photography: the scenes of *Sundays* (1994-97) brought him immediate recognition. In these, he recorded the habits of people who spent their free time on the wastelands surrounding industrial estates or on the new beaches in Barcelona, stolen from a working-class district in ruins. The post-Olympic Barcelona photographed by Ribas reveals the loss of centrality of traditional forms of work and the leap from an industrial society to one based on a service economy where leisure and lifestyle have taken over the urban experience. In this process of change, the city has been transformed into a place to be consumed, and with the enormous upsurge in representations of urban life, documentary photography has found in it the ideal setting to construct a critical counter-discourse.

After two decades of work, Xavier Ribas has earned a reputation as a photographer committed to the geographies of abandonment: areas on the outskirts; roadsides where prostitution is carried on or where sanctuaries have been created to mark fatal traffic accidents; borders of all kinds and conditions; and places of temporary settlement where the human presence is the butt of politics of expulsion. Over this period, during which the photography of Xavier Ribas has effectively fulfilled its documentary role, changes in its style have been minimal. His most recent works on the modern history of nitrate mining in Chile confirm that he has not substantially changed his concept of the medium. *Nitrate* unfolds a specific documentary potential that lies between testimony to the ruins of production – obsolete and abandoned procedures – and recollection of an episode of modern-era Western colonialism*.

ProjecteSD is honoured to present Xavier Ribas' third solo exhibition at the gallery, in which he shows new work stemming from his recent project *Nitrate*, shown at MACBA in June 2014, and currently at the Bluecoat, Liverpool.

Two negatives of a South American landscape taken in 1907 by Mabel Loomis Todd, and photographed at Yale University Library by Ribas, serve as point of departure from the *Nitrate* works and as starting point for this one.

The title of the exhibition, *It Would Never Be Quite The Same Again*, which is also the title of one of the works, comes from the words uttered in court by a judge to support his verdict on the decapitation of a statue of Margaret Thatcher by an activist. They allow Xavier Ribas to weave together a constellation of stories of resistance or acts of dissent. Developed as large, detailed photographs alongside artist's texts and copies of original documentation, the work looks at a number of events and documents that are construed as distant echoes of the detonations in the 19th century landscapes of the Atacama Desert in the recent history of Chile and Great Britain.

The same judge that brought a guilty verdict against the aggression to the statue reappears in another piece, *Now You Have To Look At The Evidence Coldly And Dispassionately*, hearing the case of activists smashing up a weapons factory in 2009 while Israel was attacking Gaza. This time, however, and interestingly, the activists were acquitted. The ground-breaking house arrest of Augusto Pinochet in London in 1991, *Thus The Dream Of My Youth And The Love Of My Life Passed Away And Left Me Desolate*, is the subject of another work, where Pinochet's fate overlaps with that of a 19th century Spanish warlord, the Count of Morella, and that of ruins from a Roman city in Libya redesigned as a folly in the English landscape, then falling into a state of disrepair. *Una Voce Única e Inevitable* tells the story of a lost film interview with Salvador Allende from 1972, intended for US television channel CBS but censored, shown only at the Venice Biennale of 1974, traces of which are kept in photocopies at a local museum in Vilafamés, Castelló.

The relationship between text and image in these works is not only, or mainly, geographical, as if the photographs were just an index of places or objects. The reading of the texts opens up a reading of the image in multiple, elusive ways. The layout of the text elements recalls the page of a book, enhancing the perception of fluidity between the printed page and the gallery wall, something already explored in the *Nitrate* exhibition catalogue.

The message of the exhibition could be that this scattering of interlinked cases – small acts of activism, direct action, radical gestures, solidarity campaigns – apparently changing nothing or very little in our collective daily reality, may nevertheless serve as turning point, or inflection, allowing just-perceptible and cumulative future change.

*Bartomeu Marí- *Nitrate*. MACBA, 2014

For additional documentation, artist's full CV and/or images, please contact: María Pose, mp@projectesd.com

With the support of



1.

It Would Never Be the Same Again, 2015

Photograph and text, ink jet prints on paper (Hahnemühle Matt Fibre 200 g)
58,6 x 41 cm each
Ed. 3 + 1 AP
[XR/PH 45/1]

2.

Now You Have to Look at The Evidence Coldly and Dispassionately, 2015

Photograph, text, Ink jet prints on paper
(Epson Traditional 300g / Hahnemühle Matt Fibre 200 g)
Photograph: 150 x 190 cm; framed: 154 x 194,5 x 3 cm
Text: 58,6 x 41
Ed. 1/3 + 1 AP
[XR/PH 47/1]

3.

Thus the Dream of My Youth and the Love of My Life Passed Away and Left Me Desolate, 2015

Photograph, text, Ink jet prints on paper
(Epson Traditional 300g / Hahnemühle Matt Fibre 200 g)
Photograph: 150 x 190 cm; framed: 154 x 194,5 x 3 cm
Text: 58,6 x 41
Ed. 1/3 + 1 AP
[XR/PH 46/1]

4.

Una Voce Única e Inevitable, 2014

Photograph, text, Ink jet prints on paper
(Epson Traditional 300g / Hahnemühle Matt Fibre 200 g)
Photograph: 150 x 190 cm; framed: 154 x 194,5 x 3 cm
Text: 58,6 x 41
Ed. 1/3 + 1 AP
[XR/PH 22/1]

5.

The Evidence, 2015

Photograph, Inkjet print on paper (Harman Gloss Baryta 320 g)
70 x 90 cm; framed: 71'2 x 91,5 x 3 cm
Ed. 5 + 1 AP
[XR/PH 42/1]

6.

Detonation One, 2014

Photograph, Inkjet print on paper (Hahnemühle Matt Fibre 200 g)
58,3 x 41 cm
Ed. 1/10 + 5 AP
[XR/PH 43/1]

7.

Documentation, only for consultation

8.

Double Landscape, 2014

Photograph, Inkjet print on paper (Harman Gloss Baryta 320 g)
33 x 43 cm; framed: 33,7 x 43,7 x 3 cm
Ed. 1/10 + 10 AP
[XR/PH 44/1]

