

## PROJECTESD

T 934 881 360 F 934 881 360

INFO@PROJECTESD.COM

WWW.PROJECTESD.COM

PASSATGE MERCADER, 8 BAIXOS 1

08008 BARCELONA

### ASIER MENDIZABAL

Opening: 16 November, 19:30 to 21:30 h

Exhibition: 16.11.2012 > 11.01.2013. Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00 to 19:00h

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**Asier Mendizabal** has been constructing a remarkable body of work over the past ten years, in which he pays most attention to the relations between form, discourse and ideology. He puts into perspective the complex articulations between the aesthetic and the political, and reconsiders the legacies, the possibilities, but also the failures, of the tradition of sculpture as a monument, certain historical artistic vanguards, political and militant cinema or punk music movements. Being abstract sculpture his most representative register, Mendizabal's work unfolds in any number of other mediums, from film to silkscreen, from flags to photographic series and collages, always with an instinctive feel for sculptural and graphic form.

For his second exhibition at ProjecteSD, Mendizabal presents a new series of sculptural works that, attached and together with a set of silkscreen printed compositions that reproduce photographs of multitudes from illustrated press, problematize the idea and the representation of the notion of collective. The artist uses as tool and basis for his research a graphic element inherent to offset printing, the dot screen, to which he refers both in the silkscreened collages and the sculptural modules that he builds.

The four sculptural constructions from the series *Untitled (screen)* consist of various plates made of a regular gridded dot/hole metal structure that when overlapped and clung together with a certain rotation, cause a moiré pattern with a visual effect that may recall op art. The own superposition of the plates themselves constitutes irregular geometric modules, in some cases almost bidimensional, in other of volumetric quality. These modules function as structures over which Mendizabal attaches the photographic reproductions mentioned earlier. In *Untitled (screen #1)* and *Untitled (screen #3)* the artist presents a collection of original etchings taken from mid-19th century illustrated publications, in which representations of massive gatherings appeared like delicate almost abstract filigrees that, due to the engraving technique used, generated a grid of textile-like quality. The detail of each individual was masked. The represented form was then the totality of the mass, but not the addition of all its parts. In *Untitled (screen #2)* and *Untitled (screen #4)*, the sculptures hold collages made with silkscreen print cuttings that the artist recombines trying to follow a detail contained in the image itself, again, representations of distorted multitudes, appearing now even more tangled and abstract. One more time form affects or contraposes content.

Presented on the wall and framed, *Rotation (Moiré, Rome)* and *Rotation (Moiré, Egin)* reveal more clearly Mendizabal's system. The artist refers again to social massive gatherings, which historically became a fundamental element of modern imagery with the advent of photography and the circulation of the illustrated press. These works are compositions of four silkscreen prints repeating the very same image, which paradoxically looks different in each of the four sections. The formal element that makes them different is the deliberate rotation in the dot screen of the printing process. The grid of little points of the printing overlaps with the pattern of little heads forming the crowd making them an unrecognizable mass.

Two other works, formally very different from the ones in the central part of the exhibition, complete the show. *Not all that moves is red (Tangram) #3* is part of a series of a patched combination of red and black flags bisected horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Though the radical references of the colours black and red are considerable, the identification of these powerful signs may fail through excess with the recombination of its elements in a geometrical puzzle. Displayed in the opposite corner of the exhibition space, a double projection entitled *Das Unbekannte Spanien/España, tipos y trajes* is shown. This new work consists of a series of slides taken from two photography books, one showing the work of Spanish pictorialist photographer José Ortiz Echagüe and the other the work by German photographer Kurt Hielscher. Both artists, contemporary, documented with their photographic work Spain, its landscapes, cities, monuments and its people in the early XX century. Travel photography became possible then, thanks to the new possibilities offered by photographic equipment in those years. Mendizabal does not just introduce the found pictures in a sequence. One more time he acts overlapping, interlacing both projected images generating a distortion that is not purposeless. On the contrary, it intentionally adds a subtle significance to the subject that the exhibition and every work in it addresses the difficulty to link form with content, figure with background and, in the end, to represent reality. In the artist's own words: "the ever present contradiction in the articulation of the political, the impossible conciliation between individual and collective".

**Asier Mendizabal** (Ordizia, Spain, 1973) lives and works in Bilbao. Asier Mendizabal's exhibitions include Manifesta 5 (2004), shows at W139, Amsterdam (2006), Artis Den Bosch (The Netherlands, 2007-2008), Museo Guggenheim Bilbao (2007), Fundación Marcelo Botín (Santander, 2007), Museum of Contemporary Art, MACBA in Barcelona (2008). In 2009 he had exhibitions at Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, Germany; Artium-Centro Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria, Spain. More recent shows include his first survey exhibition outside of Spain, *And/Or*, at Culturgest, Lisbon (Portugal), the 4th Bucharest Biennale (2010) and the show *Às Artes Cidadãos!* at the Museum Serralves in Porto, Portugal. In 2011 MNCARS (Madrid, Spain) dedicated him a comprehensive solo exhibition. He was featured at 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2011) and in a solo exhibition at Raven Row London and gallery Anthony Reynolds (2011-2012) both in London.

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For additional documentation and/or images, please contact:

Silvia Dauder, [sd@projectesd.com](mailto:sd@projectesd.com)

Carolina Núñez, [carolina@projectesd.com](mailto:carolina@projectesd.com)

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