

EXHIBITION: 03.12.2020 - 30.01.2021
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY TO FRIDAY, FROM 11 TO 19 H.
SATURDAY FROM 11 TO 15 H.

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The months of the confinement due to the pandemic, forced Iñaki Bonillas, like so many other artists, to work only with what he had at hand. In his case, he tried to go back to the photographic archives that, for years, he has kept in boxes stacked in his study. If he had previously worked with the archive he inherited from his maternal grandfather, J.R. Plaza, here it was rather a deep immersion in a set of images that he had not noticed for many years: the photographs that he himself took when he was a fleeting student of photography. Actually a mountain of negatives, most never printed. This way, the main activity of many long weeks consisted in peering, with the help of a light box, at those small promises of negative images, that is, of scenes and moments, barely sketched, that the film delivers with colors and shapes reversed. A work more similar to that of the medieval miniaturist than that of the contemporary photographer, since it required a lot of patience and a magnifying glass, to find there the possible frames to retake. Hence, what you see in this exhibition is that: large illuminated books from which the text has been withdrawn, to leave only the images that work here, as in the old books of hours, as breviaries, only that instead of canonical hours, what they measure is the passing of the hours in times of one of the most extraordinary events, that is, the pandemic, when what is achieved is, however, as little noticeable as having a cup of tea or looking at the ceiling for a long time. The images in these books of hours thus work like windows that revolve around a void, as if they were large wall clocks, in which each hour is an opening to the world. And that's why there are seven collages, because they are the count of a whole week, which is repeated without much variation, like our lives in the confinement.

The repeated exercise of looking through those boxes or tiny windows was similar, in part, to what we had all been doing during the confinement: looking at rectangular screens, however, here it suddenly became a highly analogous task, which occurred in the antipodes of the digital, mobile, ephemeral, disposable image. It was a matter of, not only looking at rectangles, but of extracting information from them and thinking of them for what they are, matrixes from which images are generated that are not necessarily identical; the negative is not a mold: it is a possibility. But what definitely caught Bonillas' attention was that, due to the arrangement of the negatives in chronological succession, the film or the reel becomes, in turn, a multiple matrix, which carries all those images separated by black bars. Bonillas, then, decided to skip those borders, those small walls that keep each image in a territory apart from the others, and thus build new visual narratives based precisely on the idea of proximity.

We no longer remember what amateur photography was like when films had to be taken away for development. We forget that in some cases there is continuity from one negative to the other, since several images were taken of the same place, on a trip for example, or of the same celebration or of the same person. But, in others, the images could vary radically, since the roll was not necessarily finished in a single session and it happened that between one negative and another it could be a week or a month, or it could go from one country to another or from a solemn event, such as a funeral, to a children's party. The position of the camera could also vary, so that several horizontal photos could suddenly be interrupted by a vertical shot or vice versa. The seriality or the lack of it is what prompted Bonillas to read the negatives as a continuum where the cut did not depend on the black bars but on the meaning given by the contiguity of two images that, together, seemed to narrate old issues in a new way. We also forget that sometimes we had a pressing need to develop the film to relive a certain moment, but there were three or four free shots left, so we captured whatever it was we had in front: tedious photos, without much elaboration, of the dog, of the window, of the daughter with a forced smile.

In this sense, the images that make up each *Book of Hours* function as anti-postcards, as images that, although they were taken, some, in places of great tourist interest, are presented as any other unremarkable event. They are not, that is, images out of the ordinary, on the contrary, totally within the ordinary; they are the edges of the image, the remains, what was not intended to occupy the center of the photograph. And that is a subject that, without a doubt, Bonillas has explored in depth, since his idea of photography has been moving towards understanding it as an activity that is done in the attic, with the leftover images that others have taken, which are there, left aside and that, once in the light, take on an unexpected force, precisely because they are about the events that happen to all of us: the least noticeable, those of every day.

1 **Libro de horas: Lunes** [“**Book of Hours: Monday**”], 2020
Set of 8 digital prints, pigmented ink on Hahnemühle Photo
Rag 308 paper
126 x 93 cm
Ed. 1/3 + 1 AP

2 **Libro de horas: Martes** [“**Book of Hours: Tuesday**”], 2020

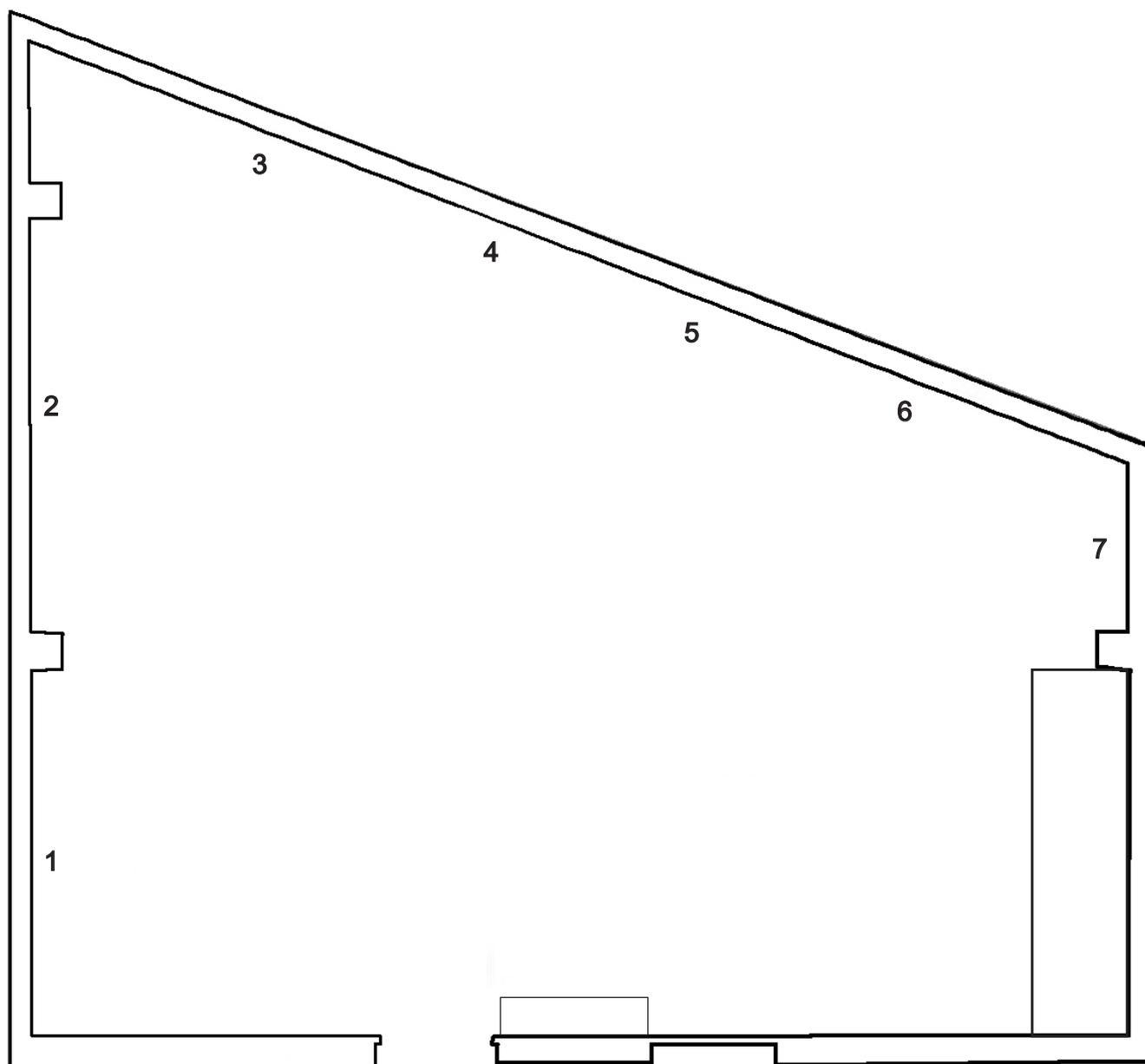
3 **Libro de horas: Miércoles** [“**Book of Hours: Wednesday**”], 2020

4 **Libro de horas: Jueves** [“**Book of Hours: Thursday**”], 2020

5 **Libro de horas: Viernes** [“**Book of Hours: Friday**”], 2020

6 **Libro de horas: Sábado** [“**Book of Hours: Saturday**”], 2020

7 **Libro de horas: Domingo** [“**Book of Hours: Sunday**”], 2020



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