

INTRODUCTION

Every winter, for the past twenty-four years, Fundación Botín has showcased the work carried out by the eight recipients of its visual arts grant during the course of the 18 months preceding the exhibition. *Itinerarios* therefore acts as a conclusion to the grant cycle, and an integral part of the support the foundation seeks to provide to emerging artists. This publication also serves as a key instrument for the dissemination of these projects.

Each year since 1993, a changing jury of artworld professionals comprising artists and curators awards up to eight grants, on the basis of the merits of a project: therefore, while the resulting exhibition cannot be curated per se, it is nonetheless interesting to observe how the works on view provide a perspective on artistic trends of the moment. In each new edition of *Itinerarios*, one can decipher synergies in the concerns as well as in the operating principles of the artists who exhibit together. Perhaps, then, the task of the curator is to point out those common threads.

For the first time, this yearly display of new work takes place in the recently inaugurated Centro Botín, the new home of Fundación Botín's art, education and public programmes. It is all the more interesting that it is precisely this year when all the works featured in the show seem to address the issue of space as an essential component. Most of them incorporate sculptural objects, and the treatment of the image as projection in some of the artistic proposals somehow also echoes that concern. Indeed, they provide a specific physicality to the footage, an effect somehow enhanced by the prominence of the soundtrack in many cases. The

notion of real space experience seems to be of great relevance to all the artists in the exhibition.

The processes vary from one artist to another: one has installed oversized objects, and thus confronts the visitor with the notion of scale, and the way one relates to the architecture; another has hung a large moving object that somehow resembles a screen, which frames the view and alters our perception of it; another has scattered a multitude of small objects on the floor. In other instances, the space is used to unfold a three-dimensional narrative that requires the movement of the visitor to experience it, in contrast with the static experience of a moving image. The immersive quality of the media installations nonetheless seems to also call for an acute perception of the environment and its alteration by the projected image and the sound. In one way, all the projects on view seem to posit a real time physical experience as essential, in a day and age when a growing part of one's time is spent in front of screens, which serve as mediators as much as they function as communication tools.

Perhaps, this keen interest in using space as an essential component of the work also calls for a reflection on what constitutes reality nowadays. The constant fluxes of information one has to process on a real-time basis has profoundly transformed our understanding and experience of everyday life. This perceptual shift takes place in a realm that has become global; one is aware of what is taking place in real time on the other side of the planet as if it were down the street. The hierarchy of information has also been profoundly affected by the fact that one's experience of one's immediate

surroundings also tends to be increasingly mediated. As a result, the boundaries between *here* and *there* tend to be increasingly blurred, as the notion of *now* and *then* prevails. Moreover, the flow of information also tends to affect one's ability to relate elements received over the course of time, thereby affecting the notion of historical continuum in which a constant present carries the day.

Artists tend to explore means of representing the complexity of our world, whether in a figurative or abstract fashion. They reflect upon how the hierarchy of information affects one's experience, as well as how cultural difference may result in various interpretations of the same facts. The time and space of the exhibition become key elements to unfold artistic proposals that "restage" fragments of the real which may otherwise have gone unnoticed or overlooked. The sharing of the common space of the exhibition also brings together a dialogue between the existing projects. The proximity of some concerns is revealed, and the exhibition thus provides a good perspective on the most recent trends in contemporary art.

We would like to thank the members of the jury who selected these compelling projects: Ibon Aranberri, Lorena Martínez de Corral, and Wilfredo Prieto, with a special mention to Bárbara Rodríguez Muñoz for her insightful essay. We would also like to thank Irma Álvarez Laviada, Elena Bajo, Josu Bilbao, Felipe Dulzaides, Rafa Munárriz, Alex Reynolds, Leonor Serrano Rivas as well as Pep Vidal for the great works on view in *Itinerarios XXIV*.

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