

PUBLISH:

sequence / meaning

Curated by Miguel von Hafe Pérez

Opening: 6th March at 8 pm
From 6th March to 14th June 2015
First floor

CHRISTIAN GARCÍA BELLO COMO TIZÓN QUEMADO

Curated by Alberto Carton

Opening: 6th March at 8 pm
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Projects Space

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Simona Rota: *Museo Lenin (actualmente Museo de Historia), Bishkek, Kirgizstan, 2010*



José Pedro Cortes: *Untitled #23. From the series Costa, 2013*



São Trindade: *From the series Bad Liver and a Broken Heart, 2005-2006*



Xosé Lois Gutiérrez: *Untitled, 2010-2013*

Taking the experience and recognition of four Galician and Portuguese publishers (Dispara, Fabulatorio, Ghost and Pierre von Kleist) as a starting point, this exhibition has been created on the basis of the complicity established between the creative act and the subsequent publishing thereof. With a long, consolidated history in modern times as a fundamental account in the construction of an idea of the world, photography printed in books challenges textual narrativism and distances itself from the aura of the unique object. It is in the intersection between the image/exhibition where contemporary photography has most effectively demonstrated its relevance in the broad field of visual arts.

On display in this exhibition are works not only by the authors-editors themselves, and by the artists chosen by them to produce publications in the respective publishing houses, but also different material portraying the conceptual and practical process of developing an idea right up to its final result.

The portrait, the critical memory of a constantly morphing social landscape, and the connection with the possibility of the image being established as a seismograph sensitive to one's gaze approaching aesthetic thought are leitmotifs in the proposals presented in this exhibition. The radical creative idiosyncrasy of each of these artists gives rise to an improbable, but at the same time, real map of contemporaneity recovered through images which are significant in an age dominated precisely by an overabundance of images.

More than mere editors and producers of images (which can also be revealed through cinema, as is the case of André Príncipe, two of whose films are screened in the museum's auditorium), here we are giving visibility to true producers of meaning. The image as meaning. Publish: sequence/meaning

We are living in paradoxical times: many predicted that the book, as a physical object, would be destined to suffer to a harrowing demise in its battle against the massive digitalisation of content. In truth, many publishers, from all areas of human knowledge—from literature to hard sciences and from entertainment to philosophy—have had to close their doors in recent years. We are also seeing the continual closing down of



Antonio Julio Duarte: #23. From the series *White Noise, Macau*, 2010. Colección privada



Reinaldo Loureiro: *Farhana*, 2010-2014



Patricia Almeida: From the series *All Beauty Must Die*, 2011

book shops, both general and specialised. Nonetheless, over the last decade, we have been able to deduce that this breakdown has been accompanied by an underground movement: in a setting of crisis, small publishers are beginning to stand out, and this would seem to indicate an attitude of almost heroic voluntarism comparable to the more alternative and conceptual publishing movements of the nineteen seventies, where the notion of self-publishing and artist's book are championed as alternatives in an increasingly aggressive art market and as a space for reflection and experimentation essential for voices wishing to be heard in spheres parallel to pure economic speculation around art.

On the other hand, with the development of the Internet market, these small publishing houses began to perceive that they were no longer working for a local community (even though their interests may take on that dimension), rather for a global market. And this global market is defined by a knowledgeable, demanding critical mass, willing to be confronted with risk and geographic and conceptual alterity. Thus, from the least significant city, it is now possible to set up a project with an impact undreamed of in previous decades.

In the context of this exhibition, we focus on four publishing houses which, though they do not work exclusively with photography, do make it their cornerstone. We are also at a very special juncture in terms of the specificity of the photography book. Accompanied by an almost hysterical interest in modern classics, I would say that never before has so much been published, in so many different formats, and in such broad geographic areas.

This almost disproportionate character calls for a process of critical maturation when deciding on what to publish and imagining the contribution that could be made to a history which, in itself, is already dense and lavishly populated.

This is what the four publishers chosen for this exhibition, with their different tempos and itineraries, offer us: the possibility of understanding gaps in the understanding of the world through authors who publish meticulously, in processes of formal and intellectual synergy which acquire particular density in the very medium of publishing.

Now, on this special occasion in the halls of the Galician Centre for Contemporary Art, visitors can enjoy the reception of these different modes of aesthetic communication: the printed object in the form of a book, a leaflet, a postcard or a poster, adhering therein to their own internal logic, and, as we have already referred to, the presence of the photographic image as a exhibitional device, in formats which purport to be individualisable, even though they are frequently watered

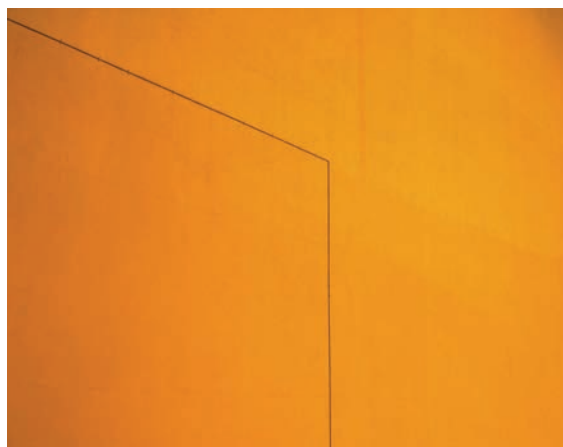
down into series, in a sort of replication of the narrativism implicit the context of the object-book.

These are, in many cases, editions motivated by a sense of resistance to mass production and levelling under the coeval publishing universe. Moments of reflection on histories constructed on the basis of a commitment towards artistic meaning through opposition to the notion of creative industry which outstrips it in contemporary culture. Where expeditiousness and efficiency are at odds with the challenging profoundness of what is real, the de-structuring of ways of seeing and understanding the world according to interpretive lines which are pre-established and prejudicial (even though prejudice may be the *cliché-ing* of any supposed radicalism). That unhurried patience, that attention to detail, that care with the printing, with the paper, with its weight and texture, with the binding, in short, with all the elements that determine the character of an edition, determine the uniqueness of the proposals that can now be seen and handled.

Conversely, it is interesting to see how, here, proposals that cross the immediately adjacent with the strangely distant so intensely are condensed into transitive processes in which the immediately adjacent ends up being strange, or the distant being repeatedly familiar. In truth, many of these authors present images from projects developed outside their experiential context, offering a personalised glimpse of realities as distant as the East, Brazil, Iceland or Eastern Europe, but also of those territories right next to them, from the Costa Caparica in Lisbon to the Barrio de las Flores in A Coruña.

This is basically a critical positioning in view of the constructive mechanisms for individual and collective memory, and how these intersect in narratives of images which converse through inscriptions within the creative trajectories themselves and at the very core of the ongoing history of photographic tradition.

The four publishing houses present here have very different backgrounds. Established by two photographers, André Príncipe (Oporto, 1976) and José Pedro Cortes (Oporto, 1976), Pierre von Kleist offers an impressive catalogue, achieved in little over five years of activity, including editions of their own books, as well as historic republications of the classic *Lisboa, cidade triste e alegre*, by Victor Palla and Costa Martins. The other Portuguese publishing house, Ghost, was founded by the photographer Patrícia Almeida (Lisboa, 1970) and David-Alexandre Guéniot, a cultural producer. As part of a production media diversification strategy, it invests not only in photography books but also in different media, of which, worthy of mention in this exhibition is the project *Souvenirs from Europe*, in which artists residing in Europe reinterpret the possibility of politicised art through posters.



André Cepeda: From the series *Rua Stan Getz*, São Paulo, 2012



Luis Díaz Díaz: *Untitled*. From the series *Cíes. Primeira aproximação*, 2015



David Barreiro: *Barco/coche*. From the series *Behind the Waterfall*, 2013



André Príncipe: From the series *Antena 2*, 2014



Jesús Madriñán: *Untitled (Shot Girl)*. From the series *Good Night London*, 2011



Tono Mejuto: From the series *Unidad vecinal*, 2014



Tono Arias: *Untitled* From the series *Atlántica*, 2014

With regard to the Galician publishers, we must stress their *youthfulness*. They are recent projects, arising in differentiated contexts. *Fabulatorio* is a project conceived by two trained architects, Cibrán Rico López (Boimorto, Coruña, 1978) and Suso Vázquez Gómez (Vigo, 1978). Interested in the world of typography and graphic design, they opened their doors to photographic projects, now on display alongside their editions: Luis Díaz Díaz (A Coruña, 1978), Jesús Madriñán (Santiago de Compostela, 1984), Reinaldo Loureiro (Santiago de Compostela, 1970), Simona Rota (Macin, Romania, 1979) and Tono Mejuto (A Coruña, 1983). Finally, *Dispara* is a publisher, book shop, study and exhibition space, inspired by Tono Arias (Allariz, Ourense, 1965) in A Estrada. In addition to his own production, work by David Barreiro (A Estrada, Pontevedra, 1982) and Xosé Lois Gutiérrez (Pontevedra, 1976) is also on display.

The other authors appearing in the exhibition are André Cepeda (Coímbra, 1976), published by Pierre von Kleist, António Júlio Duarte (Lisbon, 1965), published by the both the previous publisher and Ghost, and São Trindade (Coruche, Portugal, 1960), published by Ghost.

It is with particular satisfaction that, at the end of a five-year cycle as director of this unique institution, I am presenting a project which I believe will succeed in intensifying dialogue between Galician and Portuguese creators in a setting where local idiosyncrasies will attain an increased global profile. I have always conceived art as a de-nationalised territory, as the notion of any such association immediately invokes a structure of bureaucratised thought. Nonetheless, one must clearly always be aware that all authors bring with them a cargo of local memories and experiences which will condition them positively in the construction of their creative identity. And what these artists and cultural producers are showing us, right now, is that sense of belonging to nowhere, as they are, by default, universalists, but at the same time they are implicated in realities which invoke a unique feeling: a vital territory, which is the critical geography of their ideas.

Miguel von Hafe Pérez

CHRISTIAN GARCÍA BELLO COMO TIZÓN QUEMADO

The human condition inevitably falls subject to the ultimate reason of death. From the moment we are born, this planned ending forces upon us—in a way that is narrow and closed off—a sort of irrepressible tautness that, over the course of our lifetime, translates into a fondness for the appraisable acquisition of our own acceptance and, in some cases—common and ordinary—that of others as well. Durability and sustainability are measured according to the probable certainty of the permanence suggested by our actions—sheltered or participatory—over time: our legacy. We possess that intellectual vocation for transcendence from the very moment in which we recognise ourselves in our ability to reproduce. This is how this certainty of an eventual expiration finds an ethical exercise of commitment to oneself within one's own individuality, which brings us to the aesthetic task of determining how to be considered, identified, preserved.

Como tizón quemado is an approximation that results from the solidification of that radicalism that is established as fact in the work of Christian García Bello (A Coruña, 1986): permanence through absence. The installation, which was created with great emphasis on the spatial art of the possible, highlights the disregard for the circumstantial nature of materials things, converging on a fondness for the understandable interaction with one's surroundings. Formal, as well as emotional, stability—which can be deciphered by applying the exercise of participatory bipolarity (the conscious introduction into the visual language provided to interpret it and, following a critical assessment, to understand it, adopt it, or discard it) to the exercise of contemplation—is not a mere appearance of the fancy but, rather, inconclusive meditation: a conclusion implies that there is an end, and the end means the impossibility of recreating. It is the creative implication of a dialogue that should predispose us to avoid the reigning doctrinaire prejudice.

These previous assessments underscore tautness that, like a sort of middleman, is present in the space: allegorical pulleys that impose the ambivalence of the dual journey (ascent and descent) but also the expanding drive of the sustaining effort; the rope as the transmission of that pressure that vertically and horizontally transfers its suspended vectors to the baseline that bends in the lower orthogonal region. The desinences derived from the creation of the voids are symmetrical planes that act as

interlocutors of an above-average complexion that is the pre-existence of the construction. Bearing this in mind, we must postpone the simple geometric assumption to move toward the completeness of a piece that investigates, as previously mentioned, man's two faces: the absolute being and the interfered being.

The interconnection between power and the absorption of alteration aimed at taming it and measurable empiricism (all of Christian García Bello's recent work is rigorously subjected to a proportion that can be scaled from its own height) bears witness to a Vitruvian poetics where man hones in on all that is essential and, from this focal point, becomes independent. The intent is not to socialise in isolation, but rather to become more understanding through inner exploration and to emancipate oneself. We could say that from a Euclidean, rational, transparent perspective, one of vital harmony, excess is intolerable while stability and honesty are investigated. This is not an attitude that lacks a measure of level-headed romanticism, the result of observation and internal militancy: it is about destroying systematised vulgarity, distancing oneself, and become an object within one's microcosm, which makes it possible to elevate oneself, something that becomes impossible when one aligns himself with the level convention.

Certain symbolic and iconic additions result in the effectiveness evident in his repeated language. Visitors must position themselves at the centre of each of the intersections he sets



Como tizón quemado, installation view, CGAC, 2015

up throughout the perceived tour of the installation and the three pieces borne from it to support its complete intellection: from the point of access imposed by the facility itself to the arbitrary and discontinuous dissolution caused by the sensation of open sky that is incorporated into the room's diverted layout (indeed, a true challenge when it is considered the basis for the piece's organisation and layout, since it was designed specifically for the artwork, and it was set up within it not in alienation but in commitment). Neither this compositional reality, nor the extermination of "ornamental happiness", should be distorted by the ratification of the artist's metonymies: precision, tidiness, and the conceptual hierarchy of the materials used which, in addition to those already mentioned, include wood, sackcloth, and metal.

However, above all, there are two substantial components that merit further consideration: graphite and charcoal. The artist has used the former to create a pigment for which the base is the aforementioned mineral; he has taken the powder of the latter to tinge surfaces to the point of giving them a physicality that surpasses that of its adhesive support. And this desire to investigate has much to do with the specifics of his work: a self-controlled yearning for flight (thus, the dissolution and nebulisation of organic matter, the interference of the metaphor of combustion, and, without a doubt, the acceptance of mortality without reticence). A dialectic construction/deconstruction that brings us before a bifocal spectrum of successive clashes: the mathematic and Pythagorean against the ultraterritorial and dematerialisation. Sheltering the intimate and its evolution toward disappearance, in conflict with the abundance of light that envelops it (it is worth mentioning here—without developing a thesis on the matter that could damage the voyage of discovery that he proposes—Immanuel Kant, who established that "the night is sublime and the day is beautiful". Thus, daytime, the sun, corresponds to the incorporation into the piece of the side window that irradiates a plethora of light linked to the outside and categorising the inside in an ever-changing chromatic sound) neither alters nor hides the arranged order of its inner soul, though it sculpts it. The nocturnal is blackness, the absence, therefore, of light, the impossibility of colour; it is infinite, though, with no precise borders, and it allows us contemplate ourselves, both before and within our own limits (and limitations), quite the opposite of an uncertain daily exodus. At a difficult fork in the road, one that is also necessary because of how we can identify with, this insertion by John Ruskin becomes a paradigm that we must infer from *Como tizón quemado*: "We never see anything clearly".

Lastly, there is a notable conspiracy between the central piece and the three supporting ones. Without referencing numerology, which is irrelevant here, we can appropriate the eurhythmics that the comparable repetitions enable: the primary octagon, essential for understanding the importance of having shelter to fend off enemies—opposition—, broken down into a block of wooden slats (the recurring and knowable roaming, an evasion not lacking an *internal journey* that is not necessarily retracted and sceptical); the rope, which initiates the discourse at its different knots; and, insisting upon the unquestionable tragic phenomenon that we can distil after bolstering and invigorating the impossible separation between life and thought, we reach a

conclusion riveted by the emphatic and final sentence that suggests the drastic and uncomfortable presence of the head of the axe hanging from a rope, shock and melancholy in the face of the bottomlessness of any abyss.

Alberto Carton

- 1 Christian García Bello extracted the title from the *Book of Psalms*, 102:3.
- 2 Other recent work by this artist imposes this dimension as a commitment, not only to himself; it is also a matter of interest in controlling his surroundings and an awareness of finitude. This does not mean that the umbilical element of magnitude is limited exclusively to its place of respect but, rather, that he connects it with the vision and study of which the landscape is worthy, in the elements through which it exists, which are those that result from the intellectualisation of nature. In *Un ariete contra* [A Battering Ram Against] (2014, finalist in the VI Premio Internacional de Artes Plásticas Fundación María José Jove) we see a tilting perspective of time and the horizon, as well as the convincing support that man, on his march toward death, borrows to balance himself on: a cane (a prolongation of ourselves in the form of a third leg of sorts, a metaphor for a peaceful walk and for scrutiny that goes beyond the superficial). Something similar occurs in *Un golpe de ataúd en tierra es algo perfectamente serio* [The Sound of a Coffin Hitting Earth is Something Utterly Serious] (2013, created during his residency at the MAC [Modern Art Museum] in A Coruña). Concern is clearly established here over time and its imposition, which, in a truly violent manner, determines our ritual and practical outlook on human existence. In *Como tizón quemado*, another cane or staff is disguised as a twisted—exhausted—side of a frame, this time corresponding to the length of one stride (the second of the sides).
- 3 In *Refugio mínimo para lugar limítrofe* [Minimum Shelter for a Bordering Area] (2014, piece included in the project entitled *Finisterre / Land's End*, INJUVE 2013 scholarship), by distilling his materials evenly with the void consolidated by the geometric shapes resulting from two oars crossed over each other, *Como tizón quemado* delves deeper into the concept of shelter. However, this overlapping that does not interrupt the space makes it possible to form a valid connection between two constructions, one that receives it but does not inhibit it (the Álvaro Siza building) and the other, which is the artist's installation itself, created specifically for this place and, therefore, a part of it. But we mustn't forget the meaning of *shelter*, which is key for immersing ourselves in the art of poetry defined here: distancing or flight from the fraudulent assault of a destabilised society in order to unequivocally re-establish oneself in conscious solitude and in the uniqueness of one's self-identification. One of Christian García Bello's previous pieces, *Codo, linde, ocase* [Elbow, Frontier, Sundown] (2014), uses a sackcloth as a geomorphological transformer that, once more, alerts us to the presence of a horizon, in this case clearly crepuscular. The sackcloth, in the last supporting piece exhibited at the CGAC, safeguards but does not conceal the rigid and piercing strength of another outcome, not a geographic one but a personal one that is private and cannot be transferred: death, shown here through mute and constrained intimidation, which avoids the perhaps promotional or affected system of a greater void on the perimeter.
- 4 Kant, I., *Lo bello y lo sublime*, Barcelona, Espasa, 1998.
- 5 Ruskin, J., *Modern Painters*, vol. IV, p. V, c. III from "Turnerian Mystery", London, Adamant Media Corporation, 2005, p. 55. This quote is not inconsequential: the lack of rhetoric in the monochromatic scheme that Christian García Bello favours is indicative of his prudence and austerity in the use of resources, but it also affords his pictorial piece a sort of coherence impassioned by the deductive spatiality provided. Additionally, the transition of the black toward mineral greys (which are accepted in the impregnations of powdered charcoal on wood or in the certainly plutonic colouring of his recipe concocted, among other additives, of graphite) prioritises the atmosphere of sublimation and, perhaps, of self-exile, above the ecumenical rhythm that the colour demands.
- 6 For detailed information on the concept of *internal journey* and scepticism of the French Humanist, from his writings, please refer to Montaigne, M. E. from *Ensayos completos*, Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2014 and *Sobre la vanidad y otros ensayos*, Madrid, Valdemar, 2000.

CGAC

PRESS & COMUNICACION DEPARTMENT

Rúa Ramón del Valle Inclán 2

15703 Santiago de Compostela

Ph.: 981 546 632 / Fax: 981 546 625

cgac.prensa@xunta.es

www.cgac.org

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