



Espai Cub

ALICIA KOPF

DIARI DE CONQUESTES

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Conquests always impose some or other visual element in order to demonstrate that they have happened. This might be summed up in a single act: raising the flag. We've already been warned by Deleuze that, in the animal kingdom, this flourish of noticeable insignias is an indispensable element for constructing any kind of territory and, in passing, he also noted that this set of signals, this impulse of needing to display and promulgate such an array of visual inferences is to be found at the origin, the very bedrock of all art. In her exhibition, *Diari de conquestes* (Journal of Conquests), Alicia Kopf lays bare the paradoxes and contradictions deriving from the mechanics of this construction of territory in order to bring them into the sphere, not of mere interminable geographic expansion and battles against the world, but of an exploration of the wish and lust for power, and of the everyday epic.

Diari de conquestes is part of the "Àrticantàrtic" cycle which, taking the notion of the conquest of the poles as a metaphor for artistic inquiry, has produced a wide range of works focusing on the "Heroic Age" of explorations which came to an end in the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, coinciding with the birth of photography and cinema. In contrast with the emphatic outlines of topographic projections and the certainty that all meridians converge at one point in the north and at another in the south, the whiteness of the ice and snow that blankets everything is presented as a continuous non-existence of references wherein total visual disorientation prevails, a setting that tests the audacity of all who dare to defy it. It might be said that, in these surroundings, or on this blank page, we confront a basic need and find ourselves at zero level of the hieratical instinct. This is all flat territory and, if we end up there, it is always hard to understand. In our efforts to establish its bounds and its forms, our gaze asymptotically follows its extension to the horizon and falls into the anamorphic abyss that enfolds it. In this endless free fall, its relevance remains irremediably indeterminate. It doesn't matter if we take a couple of steps forward, move to the right, keep walking a little further, or move back kilometres and kilometres. We shall remain lost, and still unable to see any difference. Only those elements that are presented perpendicularly to the eyes' scrutiny become intelligible, and established as a reference, as a figurable potential. This territory is calling out for flags to be raised and mountains to be built.

This is, we might conclude, a matter of warning, of caution, about everything that is able to use the traumatic power of the blemish, of the clarity of black on white. This contrast, the selfsame contrast clamouring the semiotics of flags, is only seen because of the interruption it causes.

In brief, it is the accident that claims our attention. In the everyday realm, more than in any other, there is a need to shake up, to surprise, and to sabotage the inanity of humdrum routine. As a result of this, we have the cult of achievement, the insatiable proclivity for adding moments of ontological condensation to the biographical attainments of any person. This is where *Diari de conquestes* focuses its critical labours. This is where it urges us to contrast these moments of exception, of loftiness and iconographic clarity with the interminable fog of daily existence.

After studying at the University of Barcelona, Alicia Kopf consolidated her line of work with a series of public presentations, notable amongst which was *Seal Sounds under the Floor* (2013), in the Joan Prats Gallery, Barcelona. She has shown her work in several collective exhibitions, including *Nonument*, in the Capella dels Àngels of the MACBA (2014); *Fugues*, part of the "FAQ" cycle of the Sala d'Art Jove at Tàpies Foundation (2013); *Kosmopolis*, at the CCCB (2013); Atrium Artis Foundation, Les Bernardes Culture Centre, in Salt (Girona, 2012); CaixaForum, in Barcelona, and BIAM (City of Amposta Art Biennale), Tarragona (2008), among others. She has received several awards for her work, for example the 2013 Government of Catalonia "Sala d'Art Jove" Prize for Research and the 2011 Girona City Council KREAS grant for publishing her book *Maneres de (no) entrar a casa* (Ways of (Not) Coming Home).

