

BCN PRODUC- CIÓ '16

Curatorial project
From 02.03 to 30.04.17

LA DISSIDÈNCIA NOSTÀLGICA

With

Francesco Arena, The Atlas Group / Walid Raad, Lúa Coderch, Roger Guaus, Marine Hugonnier, Odó Hurtado, Ange Leccia, Richard McGuire, Deimantas Narkevičius, Aimar Pérez Galí, Suzanne Perrottet, Julien Prévieux, Anri Sala, Adrian Schindler and Danh Võ

Curated by

Joana Hurtado Matheu

Nostalgia has become a public phenomenon, even a symptom of contemporary culture, in a society obsessed with memory, and thus with the archive, the monument or testimony.

There are, however, many kinds of nostalgia. The most widespread and omnipresent today is a regressive and commercial nostalgia purveyed by a conservatism that tirelessly erects symbols in honour of a past portrayed as heroic and immutable. A past processed by the cultural industry into an object of consumption purged of historical consciousness. But there is another nostalgia, one that swims against the tide. It is disruptive because it neither commemorates nor trivialises the past; it is a nostalgia that makes full use of perspective to reflect on history and, through this physical and temporal gap, recognises the interdependence of the individual and the collective – and in so doing forges anew the link between memory and utopia.

Here the Russian writer and theorist Svetlana Boym draws a distinction between a restorative nostalgia, a pretext for the recovery of lost values

and stability, and a reflective nostalgia posited as a challenge, urging us to reconsider the passage of time. The two versions share the emotional charge of Marcel Proust's madeleine, but they tell different stories. In love with a myth, one strives to recreate it in order to recover national identity, while for the other the importance of remembering is the journey and its dérives, real or imagined. It is not a return home, and in this sense it will maintain the future as a promise that is as living and unpredictable as the past.

Today, in opposition to an absolutist or commodified nostalgia, a national *revival* or a neutral *souvenir*, an emergent dissident nostalgia explores the ambivalence of simultaneously experiencing different times and places. This nostalgia, which can in fact be traced in modern literature and cinema, from William Faulkner to Samuel Beckett and from Jean-Luc Godard to Chris Marker, has also been a creative motif in contemporary art.

Nostalgic Dissidence proposes a journey through the work of artists who work with the past as a space of resistance and creative possibility. On the one hand the artists affirm a critical distance with which to make visible the weight of political power in the interpretation of history, and on the other they recognise the power of affect as personal and collective knowledge – whether lived, transmitted or dreamed.

This challenges and stretches the way we think of nostalgia from first principles. Our dictionaries define it as the yearning for a place, home or homeland, and by extension it is associated with displacement and loss. But we can also yearn for what we have not had or experienced – for what never was. Nostalgia, then, has less to do with space than with time, because what is longed for is not to return to a specific location, but to a vaguely locatable time, from childhood and youth to lost illusions. Looking back, we desire what was – or rather, what we imagine to have been – and what might have been. Like the exile, the nostalgic lives between memory and dreams, in a now in which reminiscence and prospection go hand in hand. Likewise, nostalgia is not so much a question of the past as of the present, of what we have, what we want and we can do and be.

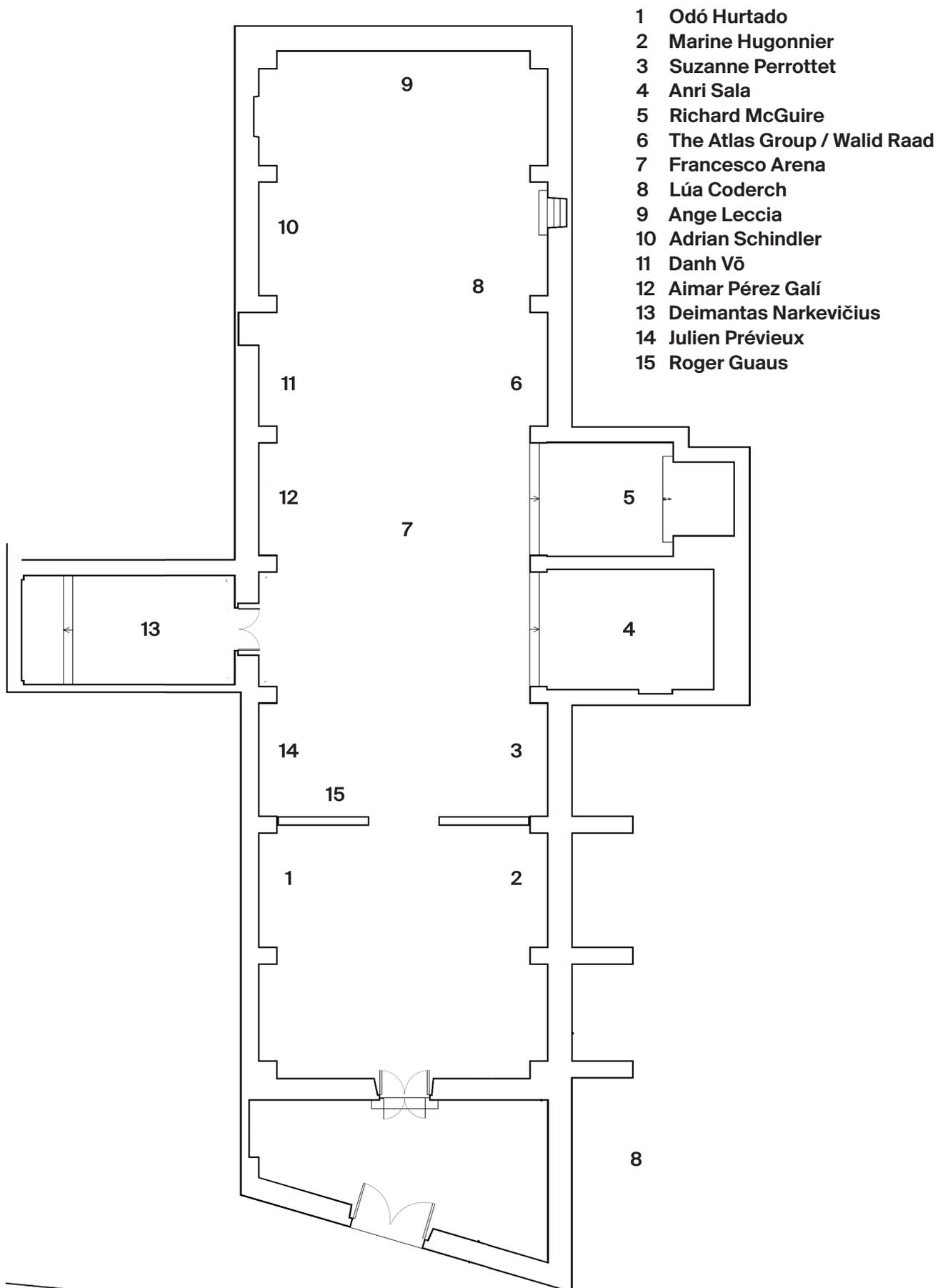
Far from the melancholic affliction with which it tends to be compared, and which is more typical of a paralysing nostalgia, this nostalgia is not an introspective or immobilising seclusion but an active and committed response. It stems from a personal feeling, but it has a social impact, because what we miss is what we long for, and the distance between its attainment and us actually involves us. To go back today to the stories and fantasies of yesterday while thinking about tomorrow opens up a past full of possibilities while also expanding and strengthening our shared space. It is therefore necessary to be aware of its uses – and abuses. We decide what use we make of the past: if we want it to be monolithic, univocal and museumified or, on the contrary, plural, critical and open to the future.

With this inward and outward gaze, of estrangement and of affect, the artists in this exhibition place the recollections of their own lives – everyday, inherited or invented – in relation to a collective body, with its memory and its illusions

– social, not national or identity-based. Without the accuracy and the veracity that is required of the historian or the witness, they nonetheless contemplate historical events, missed opportunities, obsolete hopes and all that has been excluded from and subjugated by the official account. In their own name or in an act of appropriation they thus formulate ways of remembering, understanding remembrance as a rewriting that includes doubt, irony, forgetting, or unattainable desire and its distortions. By way of letters, images, songs, gestures and silences, the artists posit a space of learning and action from which they explore an alternative temporality full of folds, fissures, interfaces and contradictions between past, present and future that confuses and claims us.

This nostalgic approach to dissidence is situated in the wider, more complex and problematic context that is the reading of history and the representation of memory. This is a highly topical issue beyond the exhibition: very recently, in an attempt to identify wrong turns and revive desires, we have seen the past reappear – from 1714 to the current Spanish Constitution – as we think about alternative futures. But in whose name? How and why do we look back?

Joana Hurtado Matheu is a writer, independent researcher and curator with a special interest in the relations between artistic practices, photography and film, who also coordinates Barcelona City Council's Can Felipa Visual Arts programme. She has curated exhibitions and film projects including Heretgies (LOOP, 2016-2017), Catedrals a la Capella (Capella de Sant Roc, Valls, 2011-2013), Pop Up. Veure és afegir (CaixaForum, 2011), Efecte cinema (Can Felipa, 2009) and Cinergies (CCCB, 2008-2009). She has been a guest professor at several universities and is currently the Vice Chair of the Associació Catalana de Crítics d'Art. She has been a regular contributor to the 'Culturals' supplement of La Vanguardia for more than ten years, and also writes for art and film magazines, catalogues and books by various authors.



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Related activities

Activities with the exhibition artists:

Superficie con linea, by Francesco Arena

Daily during opening hours

Sign up as an individual or in groups of two or three people at the information desk or by writing to:

lacapella@bcn.cat

Un viatge d'anada i tornada, by Lúa Coderch

April 1, 12 noon / Moll de Drassanes

(no street number)

Limited number of places. Reservations at:

lacapella@bcn.cat

This open-air activity may be affected by the weather

The Touching Community / Greenberg_1992,

by Aimar Pérez Galí

April 25, 12 noon / Boyberry

Limited number of places. Reservations at:

lacapella@bcn.cat

In collaboration with Boyberry

Der Rüstungsfluss / El riu armadura,

by Adrian Schindler

April 29, 6.00 p.m. / La Capella

Limited number of places. Reservations at:

lacapella@bcn.cat

In collaboration with the Goethe Institut

Film season

Filmoteca de Catalunya

Jean-Marie Straub i Danièle Huillet,

En rachâchant. 7', 1982

Eric Baudelaire, *The Anabasis of May and*

Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27

Years Without Images. 66', 2011

Tuesday, April 4, 9.00 p.m.

Deimantas Narkevičius, *The Role of a Lifetime*.
16', 2003

Patricio Guzmán, *Nostalgia de la luz*. 90', 2010
Wednesday, April 5. 9.00 p.m.

Sandra Ruesga, *Haciendo memoria*.

Entre el dictador y yo. 10', 2005

Michael Haneke, *Caché*. 118', 2006

Thursday, April 6. 9.00 p.m.

Zumzeig Cinema

Thursdays: March 30 and April 13, 20 & 27

Programme in preparation. See listings

Guided visits

Guided visits with the exhibition curator

Joana Hurtado Matheu

Tuesdays: March 14 & April 25, 6.00 p.m.

Nostalgic-dissidence visits of the exhibition
and La Capella with Núria Miret and Judith López
Every Saturday, 6.00 p.m.

With the collaboration of:

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Galerie Chantal Crousel,
Galeria Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, Galeria Nogueras
Blanchard, Galerie Martel

Thanks and acknowledgments:

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my family – the one I know, the one I imagine and the one
I dream about.