

Galeria Estrany-de la Mota

<http://www.estranydelamota.com/>

Passatge Mercader 18
08008 Barcelona, Spain
T +34 93 215 70 51

ARCOmadrid 2017

General Programme, Hall 9, Booth F09
Feria de Madrid, Avenida del Partenón 5, 28042 Madrid, Spain

Professionals: 22.02.2017 – 24.02.2017. Wednesday and Thursday from 10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m.

All publics: 24.02.2017 – 26.02.2017. Wednesday and Thursday from 12.00 m.d. to 8.00 p.m.

Artists: Ignasi Aballí y Richard Venlet.

In 1972 Daniel Buren presented *Exhibition of an Exhibition* at Documenta 5 in Kassel. His project consisted in covering the walls of each one of the seven exhibition halls with a silk-screen printing paper with alternate vertical stripes, in white and crude white, with a width of 9 cm each. The piece worked as back wall for paintings of other artists such as Hanne Darboven, Jasper Johns, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden o Robert Ryman. His aim was not only to include one more oeuvre to the project, but also to invert the relation between the work of art and the way it is exhibited.

Assuming this genealogy as a starting point, for its participation at ARCOmadrid 2017, the Galeria Estrany-de la Mota suggests a dialogue between Ignasi Aballí and Richard Venlet, whose works share Buren's idea according to which the core of the exhibition is not the artwork itself rather the way it is exhibited¹.

Both artists belong to a generation that recalls the conceptual aesthetics as well as the reflection on the creative process. Their works draw inspiration from the contemplation and the following annotation of the most fragile events, really close to the concept of "infra-mince" proposed by Duchamp, which consists in the "use of a device to collect and transform all the small external manifestations of energy coming from human beings, such as: the pressure put on a power switch, the exhalation of tobacco smoke, the growth of hair or nails, the fall of urine or droppings, the impulsive movements caused by fear, astonishment, or laughter, the drop of tears, demonstrative gestures with the hands, strong glances, the hanging arms, the stretching, the ordinary expectoration or the one of blood, the vomit, the ejaculation, the sneeze, the cowlick or the rebel hair, the noise produced by blowing your nose, the snoring, the tics, the faint, the anger, the whistle, the yawn"². They realize a reconfiguration of the artistic medium, by which reality is substituted by its double that is its representation. Moreover, their works leave room to the spectator to introduce its personal experience. On one side, Ignasi Aballí (Barcelona, Spain, 1958) questions the system of conventions related to that kind of display in which the piece of art is converted into the support of something external to it, to be found in another place. On the other side, Richard Venlet (Hamilton, Australia, 1964) interacts with the architectural elements of the exhibition space and reconfigure them in order to generate an alienating experience for the spectator.

Starting from a methodology that implies a joint dialogue between the artists, they redesign the context in which they develop their artistic practices. On one hand, *Untitled* (2017), a project realized expressly for the fair and by which Richard Venlet has reconfigured the architectural characteristics of the stand in order to display the artwork *Cristal roto* (2016) by Ignasi Aballí; on the other hand, the installation *Diez blancos (blanco puro)* (2015) by Ignasi Aballí, which work as a surface to display the piece *S/T* (1992) by Richard Venlet.

For *Untitled* (2017), Venlet reconfigures the chipboard walls of the stand in a «L» shape and locate a perpendicular mirror panel on each of the two extremes. The mirrors reflect the configuration of the space in which they are located (the walls, the floor and the ceilings) and, at the same time, the art-

work by Ignasi Aballí, which consists in twenty-seven photographs arranged on a single line that goes from one vertex of the unpainted wall to the other. As a result of the optical effect generated by the mirror walls, the photographs result multiplied on both sides. As well as in his contribution at the 25^a Biennial of São Paulo in 2002, the reflection produced by the mirrors give rise to a mirage that is secondary to the intrinsic idea³. In *Cristal roto* (2016), Ignasi Aballí reproduces on twenty-seven photographs the combination of twenty-seven broken fragments of a crystal in scale 1:1⁴. Each photograph displays a crystal fragment in its original position, so that by combining all the pictures we would obtain the entire crystal. The transparent material allows the artist to reflect on the limits between the visible and the invisible starting from what we see, perceive and intend. This work derives from a recent series (*Tentación de reconstrucción*), in which the artist has rebuilt meticulously small crystal objects by pasting its fragments. However, this attempt of restauration is "useless" indeed the recipients have definitely lost their function giving the fact that they cannot contain liquids anymore, even though they have been rebuilt.

Diez blancos (2015) by Ignasi Aballí is an installation that usually acts as a frame, recipient or surface for other piece of arts. The artwork was developed during the retrospective titled *sin principio / sin final*, given by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (2015–2016), and consists in painting ten walls with several white tones, different from the white used by the museum. Each wall is then marked by a vinyl black text reporting the reference of the painting, a tautology on the relation between the objects and the terminology implied to define them. In this sense, the conventional support to the piece of art is converted into the artwork and its function is not to display anymore, rather to demonstrate what we normally see. On this surface the piece *S/T* (1992) by Richard Venlet is displayed. This work is the result of the first collaboration between the artist and the Galeria Antoni Estrany in 1992 and it is strictly related to the architecture of the art gallery space. In that occasion, the artist located three objects in the centre of every wall delimited by the projection of the arches. They were circular shapes, between sculpture and painting, built in layers of DM wood with half of the outline and of the surface lacquered in white, grey and beige. The stratification of the untreated and unpainted outlines leads the observer to take part into the aesthetic process, marking the initial shape. The dull and almost monochrome repertoire of colours and the overlap of layers of thoughts characterizing the artworks hanging on the wall as well as the considerable tendency to what we can define as contextual submission, make the oeuvre an example of how to work with minimal conditions in order to satisfy complex requirements referred not only to the conception of the work of art but also to its distribution and comprehension as humanized object⁵.

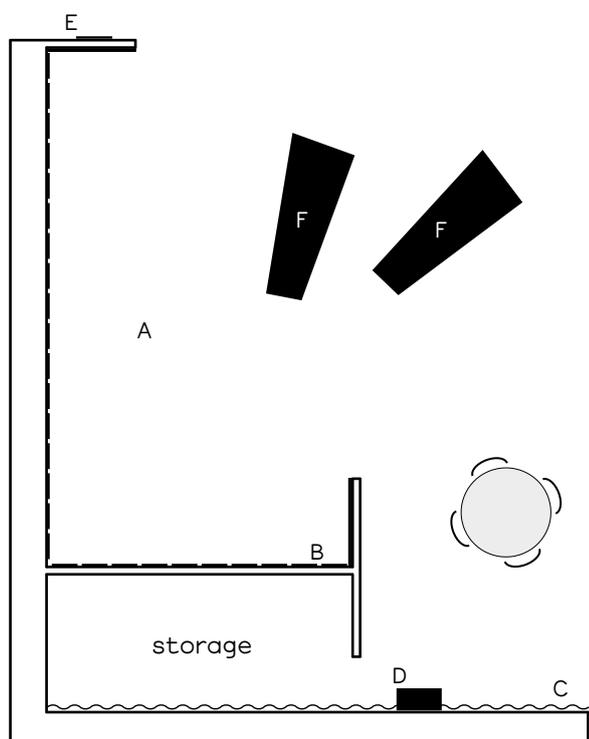
In parallel to these two pieces, two other artworks are displayed independently: *Intento de reconstrucción* (2016) by Ignasi Aballí and *Daybed Wolfers* (2015) by Richard Venlet.

In *Intento de reconstrucción* (2016) Aballí rebuilds the broken crystal by covering the cracks with Tipp-Ex. The artist does not use any paintings to paint the cracks but he erases them; by removing something, he forces us to suppose that previously there was something else under the plastic layer. He tells us about the invisible, what we cannot see; however, this does not mean it does not exist⁶. He tries to privilege other meanings beyond the vision. In the same way as he did with the broken crystal objects that he has rebuilt by obsessively pasting the fragments, here the artist repeats the useless restoration process using corrector liquid. He proposes a reflection on the representation and perception of mediums such as "the object", "the photograph" and "the painting".

The *Daybed Wolfers* (2015) by Richard Venlet represents a reflection on the Hôtel Wolfers, a modernist house built in 1929 by the architect Henry Van de Velde in Brussels, where the project was displayed for the first time in 2015. Herman Daled, the current owner of the building, is an art collector who has preferred leaving the spaces untouched by any transformations or renovations, thus the house has suffered from a natural ageing due to the passing of time. Originally, before the arrival of Herman Daled, some elements were modified, for instance the doors separating the spaces, which were previously covered by a reflecting surface made by silver sheet. The artist decided to rebuild one of these doors in order to intervene on the house in a permanent way⁷. Moreover, he suggested a kind of furniture inspired by the original purpose of the space; therefore, he designed a rest area in human scale that recalls the floor of the building. The platform is slightly lifted from the floor and upholstered with sheep skin. A rest area aimed at relaxing as well as reflecting on the surroundings.

While planning the stand, Richard Venlet has left the space for a small storage where more artworks by the two artists could be seen; these represent a footnote to the ones displayed in the stand.

The stand proposes a way to rethink the art starting from the acknowledgment of the relationships that binds the artistic community together, closely to the theory of the affects introduced by Baruch Spinoza in the XVII century, according to which bodies affect each other, leaving a trace on other bodies (*affectio*). This is a recurrent theme in the history of philosophy; nowadays, it is at the core of more and more academic papers, especially in the Anglo-Saxon context, which deals with the affection from the point of view of the arts and culture⁸.



^A Ignasi Aballí + Richard Venlet
Untitled, 2016

Wooden structure and mirrors
27 elements, of 42,5 x 52,5
cm each; 2 elements, of 366 x
100 cm each and variable
dimensions depending on the
installation

^B Ignasi Aballí

Cristal roto, 2016
Color photograph
27 elements, of 42,5 x 52,5
cm each

^C Ignasi Aballí

Diez blancos (blanco puro), 2015
Painting and vinyl lettering
on wall
Variable dimensions

^D Richard Venlet
S/T, 1992

Lacquered DM wood
22 x 40 (ø) cm

^E Ignasi Aballí

Intento de reconstrucción, 2016
Tipp-Ex on color photograph
42,5 x 52,5 cm

^F Richard Venlet

Daybed Wolfers, 2015
Aluminium, steel, cork and
sheep skin
212 x 83 x 10 cm

¹Daniel Buren, «Ausstellung einer Ausstellung» (1972) in Gerti Fietzek y Gudrun Inboden (eds.), *Daniel Buren, Achtung! Texte 1967–1991*, Verlag der Kunst, Dresde, Basilea, 1995, p. 181.

²Marcel Duchamp, *Notas*, Tecnos, Madrid, 1998, p. 23.

³Jon Wood, «The studio in the gallery?» en Suzanne MacLeod (ed.), *Reshaping Museum Space. Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, Routledge, Londres – Nueva York, 2005 p. 167.

⁴Para la presentación del proyecto en el stand de la feria se ha tenido que adaptar las dimensiones de las fotografías y reducir levemente su tamaño.

⁵Manel Clot, «Los muros falsos» in *El País*, January 18, 1993, p. 57.

⁶Gérard Wajcman, «Memoria, visión, espera» in *0–24 h*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, 2005, p. 73.

⁷Richard Venlet, *Untitled*, Forest, Bélgica, 2015, s/p.

⁸Katarzyna Paszkiewicz (coord.), «Prólogo» of *452^{af}*, nº 14 (*Pensar el afecto desde la cultura y el arte*), ene. 2016, s/p.