

Galeria Estrany-de la Mota

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

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

WAA. On Second Reading

Opening: Friday, September 30th 2013, 19.00 p.m.

Exhibition: 05.06.2009 – 08.05.2009. Tuesday to Saturdays from 10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Artists: Ignasi Aballí, Guy Ben Ner, Juan Cruz, Aurélien Froment, Emma Kay, Joachim Koester, Kris Martin, Allen Ruppersberg and Yann Sérandour.

Curated by Glòria Pou

To a large extent, our individual outlook on the world depends on the information we receive through the texts and books that pass through our hands. Taking a somewhat idealistic stand, it could be said that we are what we have read and that the size of the library in our heads is the size of our personal universe. Based on this point of view we can understand and judge people by the books on their shelves because over the years, as Jorge Luís Borges did, we construct our ideal library, which accompanies us as we grow wiser and older. With the passage of time we add new volumes to our book shelves, we curse them every time we have to move house, they encroach upon our personal space and they change and grow with us. A good book collection contains high-brow books, others that embarrass us, unread works, inherited copies, unreturned books, texts that we have learnt by heart... The works of Borges, as are those of Baltasar Gracián, are made up of other books, and they both conceived the world as a library in which to live and die. For them, books and reading constitute the "Figure of the World", the way to understand and measure it, the tool to access knowledge and the bridge to create new realities.

On Second Reading is another possible library. The works chosen are taken from literature, they are appropriations of texts by others that are in everybody's mind, which form part of our knowledge and education. They are works with which we are all familiar, works that we have read out of persuasion, obligation or that have become so internalised that we believe we learnt them without ever reaching beyond page two. Artists use them as pretexts to create new works that expand on the meaning of the original by taking a new conceptual and formal approach to them and thus build up a library in essence, not in form. Each work stands alone but is connected to the others and leaves the path open to many more links, as is the case of our personal collection of books.

Ignasi Aballí forces us to exercise inverse reading skills: to read the space between the lines clearly whilst making us decipher and second-guess what the incomplete letters by Foucault, Blanchot or Beckett are saying. Guy Ben Ner represents *Moby Dick* in his home by using elements from his domestic surroundings and his children as actors. Emma Kay rewrites Shakespeare's plays from memory and demonstrates that what we thought we knew is not always what we remember. Words and texts are habitual tools in the works of Juan Cruz. For *A Translation of Don Quijote* he locked himself in the basement of the Cervantes Institute to give an oral translation of the whole of the work, which has been recorded on 70 hours-worth of audio material. Kris Martin reproduces the very end of some of the most important books in his life. Thus, the simple signs of punctuation on which we dwell for a few seconds on finishing a book contain a poetic summary of the whole work. Yann Sérandour opts for an exercise in literalness by turning a number of copies of *The White Cube* by Brian O'Doherty into an actual White Cube. In contrast, in *The Frontispiece Piece* he has once again turned a chance finding into a gap in which to slip in order to carry out his work. Allen Ruppersberg says that *Art is Simple* is one of his favourite works. Formally extremely straightforward, it is a photograph of the title of a series of books published in the 1950s that were supposed to make difficult subjects easy and that dealt with all kinds of subject matters except art. Together they turn this work into a sort of haiku that is laden with irony. Aurélien Froment, following one of the

main lines of research that characterises his work—the transfer of information—presents a video on a stark set that gives the viewer no information whatsoever. A static shot of an actress links up with silent shots of various film scenes of readers as an exercise in examining the act of reading in movies. In 2003, Joachim Koester reproduced Jonathan Hacker's journey across Transylvania to Count Dracula's castle, which resulted in landscapes that take us on a journey through the mind—bland landscapes that are strongly imprinted on our imaginations.

In any case, these second readings merely seek to serve as a prologue that enable spectators to construct their own ideal libraries.

— Glòria Pou

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*For further information and/or images contact to galeria@estranydelamota.com.