

ENG

# Hot Iron

Adrià Julià

From 18.05.17 to 02.07.17

As part of the exhibition programme *One Foot Out*, Adrià Julià presents *Hot Iron*, a project based on a photographic archive compiled by Ramon Julià Alemany (1908-1994), who catalogued 556 Romanesque churches, most of them in Catalonia, between the 1950s and the 1990s. Using this archive as a springboard, Adrià Julià draws on extensive research and various conceptual strategies to explore the notion of transfer and the effects of the economic transactions involved in cultural imports and exports. These dynamics also indirectly affect other areas such as the exploitation of land, of our cultural heritage and of women's bodies, and the redefinition of culture through the imposition of tourism and sport. In short, in this project Adrià Julià investigates the cross-links between seemingly unrelated events such as the sale of Catalan Romanesque paintings to American buyers in the early twentieth century and the introduction of American football in Barcelona almost a hundred years later, just as Montjuïc was being transformed into one of the city's sports venues.

This exhibition takes its title from the saying "to strike while the iron is hot", which means to take advantage of an opportunity when conditions are favourable. During his research, Adrià Julià found the phrase "the

iron is now hot" in a letter dating from 1917 in which Gustavus T. Kirby, from the American Art Association, talks about a commercial interest in acquiring Romanesque artworks. This letter is currently conserved at the Historical Archive of the City of Barcelona.

During the 1910s, numerous frescos were removed from the walls of Romanesque churches in order to be sold. Many of those mural paintings were acquired by museums, collectors, and antiques dealers in the United States. The apse from the church of Santa Maria de Mur, for example, was bought by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in a transaction that took place in room 69 of the Hotel Savoy in New York in 1921. And the Philadelphia Museum of Art purchased the cloister from Sant-Genis-des-Fontaines along with other Romanesque works.

In a reverse gesture, against the backdrop of the lead-up to the Barcelona Olympics in the early nineties, Catalan entrepreneurs backed the introduction of a minor sport in Europe: American football. The fruit of their efforts was the Barcelona Dragons, a team founded in 1991 that played its last game in 2003. Adrià Julià traces the connections between the extraction, exportation, speculation, and reinsertion of cultural and sporting heritage. Transfer is heavily involved in both

of these operations, and in both cases the outcome could either evoke the phantasmagorical reconstruction of the original, or a transformation of the cultural territory and the popular imaginary.

In the same vein, Julià uses the staircase leading up to the MNAC to explore and transcribe a technological milestone in the glorification of sport. In 1974, Garrett Brown, the inventor of the steadicam, filmed his wife Karen running up the stairs of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to show off his new contraption to Hollywood producers. A year later, Sylvester Stallone recreated the sequence in the iconic scene from *Rocky*. As well as the cloister from Sant-Genis-des-Fontaines, the Philadelphia Museum of Art also has the door from La Bisbal d'Empordà that Duchamp used in *Étant donnés* and his painting *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, in 1912.

*Hot Iron* presents a rereading of the photographic archive and a two-channel installation. Firstly, there is the work *Ramon Julià Alemany Archive (reading number 1)*, c.1950-2017, which consists of 24 albums containing photographs of Romanesque churches, mostly located in the Catalan Countries, organised in alphabetical order by county. The archive always includes a panoramic view of the exterior of each church

and an architectural detail such as a door or an apse. Only rarely, a human figure appears, and when it does it is always the photographer's wife, Rosa Brugués. The second part of the installation, *Rocky's Ghost Ascending the Staircase (MNAC)*, produced in 2017, consists of two projections: a looping 16mm film that repeatedly recreates, in front of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, step by step the footage that Garrett Brown shot on the stairs of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and a digital overview of the documentation that Adrià Julià assembled for this project. This material, printed and mounted as a mural, has been transferred to video and now frames the project in the form of a backdrop. This piece alludes to the flow and movement of images, and their constant recommercialisation. Similarly, by recreating Garrett Brown's staircase scene, Julià questions the presence of the female figure in the construction of the history of the image, which connects this episode with the photographic archive of churches.

These works are a co-production between the Fundació Joan Miró and Tabakalera, Centro Internacional de Cultura Contemporánea, with the support of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) and Alegria Fenals Mar hotel. With this exhibition, which will be on show at Espai 13 until 2 July, the Fundació Joan Miró participates in the 2017 Loop Festival programme.

One Foot Out exhibitions curated by Jordi Antas

#Peuafora

## Fundació Joan Miró

 Barcelona

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# Hot Iron

## Credits

### Film crew:

*Production Manager*

Bibi Palay

*Production Assistant*

Iván Alberich

*Production Intern*

Júlia Cahner

*Director of Photography*

Iván Romero

*Steadicam Operator*

Sergio Molina

*Steadicam Assistant*

Roger Tort

*Focus Puller*

Adrià Guardiola

*Camera Assistant*

Marina Cano

*Gaffer*

Pablo Aybar

*Sound Technician*

Pablo Gregorio

*Make-up and Hair*

Marta Baliarda

*Still Photographer*

Víctor Baladoch

*Props Buyers*

Anna Julià

Maria Àngels Marquès

Ramon Julià

Francisco Bravo Freire

### Cast:

*Runner*

Irune Olivan

*Trainer*

Marcos Guirles

*Player 1*

Oriol Egea

*Player 2*

Victor Lozano

### Suppliers:

*Car Hire*

Conchi

*Camera and Lighting*

Servicevision Bis SL

*Steadicam*

Joan Morató

*Wardrobe*

Vestida para Rodar

*Sound Equipment*

Diagrama Polar

*Casting*

Demil Models

*Film Stock*

Alex Paino (dist. Kodak)

*Negative Cutter*

Chris Weber

*Laboratory*

Fotokem, Andec

### Locations:

MNAC, exteriors

Public thoroughfare (Ajuntament de Barcelona)

### Architecture:

Roger Miralles Jori

### Acknowledgements:

Debora Aantscherl

Charo Canal

Manuel Castiñeiras

Steven Chodoriwsky

Pau Coll

Ignacio Genzon

Berta Julià

Joan Morató

Joan Morey

Lúcia Prancha

José María Sánchez (Alegria Fenals Mar)

Sally Stain

Sergio Taborda

Andy Vizcaino y Héctor Giró (Servicevision Bis)

Gemma Ylla-Català