

# A Monster Who Tells the Truth

\* Espai 13

English

Exhibition series curated by Pilar Cruz

# Für Alle Fülle

## Trapalladas, espantallos, farandulos

From 5 April to 24 June 2019

*It's up there in the haystack, but why do you want the scarecrow?  
Here we do them anyway we like.  
The clothing he is wearing white or printed,  
but we wear dark clothes because we are always working;  
white is for those who don't work,  
if not you look a mess all day,  
dark clothes have been through a lot more.*

Testimonies gathered by the ethnologist and poet Emilio Arauxo in *A roupa gastabámola escura* [We Wear Dark Clothes]

Für Alle Fülle, a collective featuring Vanesa Castro (A Coruña, 1979) and Iñaki López (Alfajar, Valencia, 1977), have created a research project for the Espai 13 dedicated to rural Galicia, sifting through self-sufficient tech practices that are low in complexity yet high in efficacy.

In their escapades along rural paths and through tiny villages, they interviewed various people who had come up with clever inventions, also known as *trapalladas*. According to the dictionary of the Royal Academy of Galicia, a *trapallada* is something that has not been done well, it is careless and artless; it could just as well be a set of things with no value. This negative meaning is accepted by the inventors

themselves, who while proud of their own ingenuity, tend to minimise the value of their creations, contraptions that have been transformed and adapted to address needs arising at home or when working in the fields.

One kind of *trapalladas* they came across are the *espantallos*, or scarecrows, one of the most mythical images in the rural world. Für Alle Fülle finds various typologies of scarecrows, such as those that base their utility on visibility, occasionally bolstered by some kind of reflecting material producing optical effects, reflections or shifting shadows. While some have anthropomorphic shapes, they do not always follow that model, or do so in a rather synthetic way. On the other hand are those based on audio, made with bottles or other materials that are activated by the wind, causing sounds to frighten animals away. Finally, there are those whose daily presence convinces the animal that there is someone there, helping it understand the place is also a home. All these typologies have various factors in common, such as simplicity, recycled use and exploitation of resources: old clothing, containers and bins, bags and sacs of feed, cords, sticks and other things that are easily found in the countryside, such as branches and pine cones.

In this same idea of taking full advantage of what you have are the *farandulos*, typical figures of the *entroido*, or Galicia Carnival, found in

some areas of A Coruña. They are costumes made with whatever one finds at home, with literally anything, from the oddest clothes that can be found in drawers to customised face masks made with anything from pantyhose, a small rug, a rag attached to your head or a piece of cardboard with two holes for eyes, held on with a piece of tape. The wildest get-up is good enough at the lowest budget possible.

Für Alle Fälle provides audiovisual documentation, while in the gallery we find a selection of these devices as found in rural Galicia. They are all examples of the ingenuity and creativity of their makers, driven quite frequently by low budgets, but mostly by the satisfaction that comes from solving a problem and coming up with the solution on your own. Aesthetic intention is minimal, and much of what we see is unattractive, since efficiency and utilitarianism are more important than beauty. This way of doing things is fully set apart from the idealised, touristic way of looking at the rural world as an exotic realm, anchored in the past, and is equally unrelated to the commercially-motivated revival of traditions.

These maker-inventors also distance themselves from tendencies that may be seen as acritical, cute or paradoxically neoliberal, often taking the form of suprarecycling or new forms of craft. Indeed, they have little to do with the maker movement, despite being what they might most readily be identified with, sharing as they do an interest in solving problems by fabricating artefacts. These rural practices are only marginally related to community orientations, the shared creation of knowledge,

self-knowledge or belief in the social value of work that can be found in the origins of the maker movement, although such values are not altogether real unless they are accompanied by self-criticism in relation to their own practice and especially to technology. In the maker context, with the need for specialised training, dependency on high technology and related expensive tools, there is the risk of making devices as a kind of expensive hobby, addressing superficial situations and problems or limiting the range of activity to an endogamic sphere of users with upper-middle buying power.

The Für Alle Fälle exhibition proposal does not emphasise observing economic necessity as the stimulus for invention. Rather, it sets out a more valuable proposition, defending the existence of a special perspective which, when faced with a problem, looks around and proposes an intuitive, home-grown solution, something inventive that will have no impact beyond its immediate context. It is an attitude grounded in self-sufficiency and genuine degrowth, showing how human ingenuity does not have a sine qua non need for large-scale machinery as it ably makes use of a blend of traditional know-how, common sense and imagination.

To aestheticize and homogenate creativity, or to put costly technology over and above the rest of factors requiring creation, could cloud the veritable meaning of the activity of invention, which involves nothing other than finding solutions for things we need and situations that concern us.

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