



Espai 13

EXHIBITION – ESPAI 13

***El «cuadro» de la «calleja»* by Julia Montilla**

Perplexity series

Curated by **David Armengol**



From 22 February to 21 April 2013

Opening: 21 February 2013, 8pm

Julia Montilla brings the collective imaginary of Marian apparitions to Espai 13.

Julia Montilla's *El «cuadro» de la «calleja»* is the third exhibition in the *Perplexity series* curated by David Armengol at Espai 13, Joan Miró Foundation. The exhibition will open on 21 February and run until 21 April 2013.

For the *Perplexity series*, Julia Montilla presents a project that revolves around the sightings of the Virgin Mary that took place in the village of San Sebastián de Garabandal, in northern Spain, between 1961 and 1965. Based on an intensive research project, the narrative of the exhibition deals with the concept of visionary experience beyond the framework of religious faith, and explores the dramaturgy and codes of representation linked to the phenomenon of divine ecstasy.

Following the apparition of the Virgin Mary to four local children, the village of Garabandal became a pilgrimage site and a space for the construction of a religious imaginary. Forty years later, Julia Montilla uses this setting as the starting point for **an artistic project that focuses on the visual representation of religious identity and on the mythification of the phenomenon of apparitions**. Her research into the visual and written records of the apparitions allows Montilla to cut across issues of gender, tradition and the popular imagination.

As part of this process, the artist analyses the various elements that make up the phenomenon – the characters, the settings and the rituals – by studying the representations that were generated around the case of San Sebastián de Garabandal, including press photographs, family albums and holy cards as well as amateur footage filmed during the apparitions. In this sense, the project falls within Julia Montilla's long-term interest in the contrived, instrumental construction of images in our society by means of formal and ideological manipulation, a subject that she has approached in her work from many angles including film, television and, more recently, religious contexts.

In the exhibition, three formats come together to recreate this collective imaginary: audiovisuals, photographs projected as slides, and a compilation of images and texts linked to the object of study. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to witness the direct link between one of the earliest apparitions in 1961 and recent video footage filmed by the artist.

The space in which the slides will be projected, along with an audio narrative, will emphasise the performative, theatrical nature of the phenomenon by presenting archival images of the four visionaries from Garabandal. The exhibition also includes four display cabinets that will allow visitors to discover an abundance of written and graphic material stemming from the myth, and read the media accounts of the controversial apparitions that the phenomenon has generated over the years.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to take home a previously unpublished text by Julia Montilla, and in addition, a publication along the same line as the others in the *Perplexity* series will be published. It will include images from the exhibition and two texts by Julia Montilla and the series curator David Armengol, and will be launched on 4 April in the framework of the exhibition.

The *Perplexity* series that this project forms part of is the year-long exhibition programme of Espai 13 at the Joan Miró Foundation, and runs from October 2012 to August 2013. The series is driven by the idea of the feeling of tension and bewilderment that comes from our perplexed reflection on the things that we can't quite fully grasp or understand. A sense of uncertainty that drives us to explore limits through a mix of faith and scepticism.

Julia Montilla's project ties directly into the concept of the series, given that it explores the perplexed reception of a supposedly divine phenomenon, and at the same time talks about the artificial construction of religious beliefs.

Julia Montilla

Barcelona, 1970

<http://www.juliamontilla.com>

Julia Montilla focuses her work on research into the iconic configurations of our culture, through concepts such as gender, affect and faith. She uses an anthropological, conceptual approach that leads her to analyse existing models of popular culture and to destabilise the codes through which we read collective identity constructions, in order to reveal their artificial and arbitrary nature. Her work has been exhibited at Spanish and international museums and art centres, including MUSAC, León (2005), the International Video-Art Biennial, Tel Aviv (2006), CGAC, Santiago de Compostela (2006), La Panera, Lleida (2009 and 2011), and La Capella, Barcelona (2011) Julia Montilla was recently a recipient of the Botín Foundation Visual Arts Grant (2011-2012).

Dates:

Opening of the exhibition *El “cuadro” de la “calleja”*: 21 February 2013, 8pm

Exhibition dates: from 22 February to 21 April 2013

Launch of the exhibition publication, with Julia Montilla and David Armengol: 4 April 2013, 7.30pm

Images:

Press room - Joan Miró Foundation website:

<http://www.fundaciomiro-bcn.org/salaprensa.php?idioma=4>

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