

Gerard Ortín

Reserve

22/09/2017 – 05/11/2017

The Possibility of an Island

Exhibition series at the Espai 13 of the Fundació Joan Miró

22 September 2016 – 11 September 2017

Curator: Alexandra Laudo [Heroínas de la Cultura]

In collaboration with Banco Sabadell Foundation

Press release

Gerard Ortín opens the exhibition program for the 2017-2018 season at Fundació Joan Miró's Espai 13

With *Reserve*, the artist approaches the notion of boundaries with a sensory installation evocative of how animals perceive space.

Different case studies related to the decline in the wolf population in the forests of Álava form the basis of Ortín's proposal, an installation constructed from architectural, sculptural, audio, olfactory and visual elements in dialogue with each other.

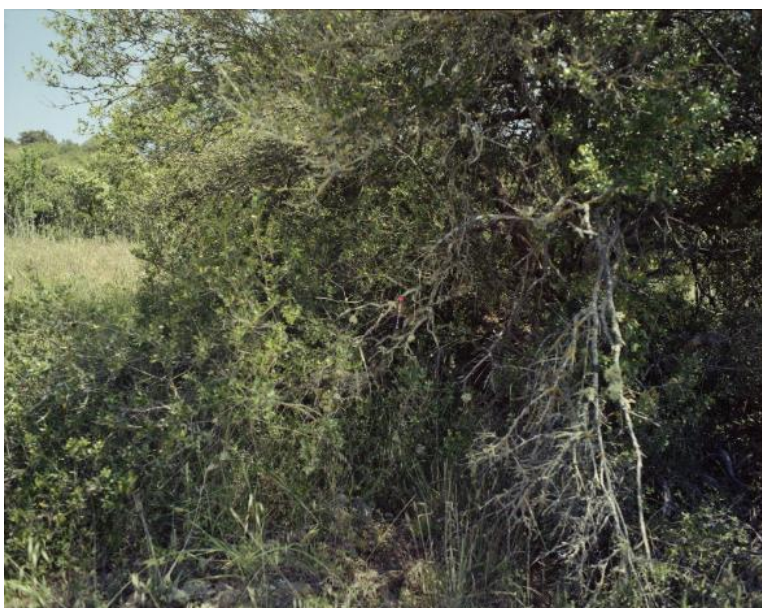
***The Possibility of an Island* is the exhibition program for the 2017-2018 season at Fundació Joan Miró's Espai 13 in collaboration with Banco Sabadell Foundation. Curated by Alexandra Laudo [Heroínas de la Cultura], the project explores some of the symbolic and sociocultural meanings that have historically been associated with a paradigmatic space in the collective imaginary: the island.**

Barcelona, September 18, 2017. To think about an island is also to reflect on the boundary that defines it. This boundary may be strictly geographic, but it may also be based on less tangible elements, such as a social or legal limit establishing a certain condition of exceptionality. Much of Gerard Ortín's artistic practice reflects an interest in exploring the meaning of the boundaries that human beings establish in certain natural environments, endowing them with a singularity that makes them function as isolated territories.

The inaugural exhibition for this year's Espai 13 program draws on the work carried out by Ortín, with the support of the Tabakalera culture center, the Azala art space, and the artist co-op Tractora, in various areas of the province of Álava subject to different conservation measures. The resulting exhibition, entitled *Reserve*, consists of a set of pieces that question spectators through their senses, with a specific circumstance as their common denominator: the dramatic decline in the wolf population these areas have witnessed in recent decades. Based on this fact and, specifically, four different case studies, Gerard Ortín shows us some of the consequences of the absence of this predator, as well as some of the human interventions carried out to counteract them.

The first object of study is wolf pits, traps once used to hunt wolves in the northern Spanish mainland that today have all but fallen into disuse. The nature, form and function of these traps are reflected in the reconfiguration of Espai 13, as well as through sensory proposals. In this regard, the artist uses the noises made in the hunts to drive the animals into the pit as a sound boundary conditioning spectators' passage through the room.

Another of the elements included in the exhibition route is a green LED light activated by a motion detector. The device emits a wavelength of light that is invisible to many animals and, thus, often used in bow hunting. This light introduces an additional sensory stimulus in the exhibition, putting us in mind of animals' thresholds of perception. At the same time, it provides a link to another of the research subjects: the parallel evolution experienced by the wolf population and archers. Gathered in a specific space in the room, visitors will find sculpted figures of animals from the Iberian fauna that are, in fact, targets used for a type of recreational archery that does not involve killing. Ironically, these archers are reclaiming their role as hunters in forests whose ecosystems have been thrown off kilter due to the gradual disappearance of predators.



The territorial marking wolves do with their urine is today artificially reproduced on roadsides, where bottled urine is used to drive animals away from the road. A photograph bears witness to this phenomenon – the project's third object of study – as does a large pool of wolf urine on the floor of the room.

For Ortín, this olfactory stimulus is “an organic sign that we manage to use perfectly, despite having forgotten how to interpret – whether due to atrophy, numbness or domestication – the sensitive component.”

The decline in the number of wolves has led to a similar decline in the presence of the remains of dead animals, which certain scavenger species depend on. To compensate for this absence, the maintenance staff of some protected areas must obtain food for some animals. This dynamic is the subject of Ortín’s final case study, reflected in *Reserve* in a film of a fenced off feeding station for vultures in a natural park.

Many of the phenomena and situations defined in the different case studies reappear in a film projected on a large screen made out of black foam panels at the end of the exhibition route, which architecturally conjures the sheer wall of a wolf pit. According to Alexandra Laudo, it is the final element “of a sensory installation that exposes us to less anthropocentric ways of recognizing space, perhaps more typical of animals and other non-human forms, and which offer a sensitive and perceptive, rather than conceptual, approach to the meaning of boundaries.”

Gerard Ortín (Barcelona, 1988). He lives and works in San Sebastián. Gerard Ortín holds a degree in fine arts from the University of Barcelona and recently completed an M.F.A. at the Sandberg Instituut (Gerrit Rietveld Academie Amsterdam). He has participated in numerous group exhibitions, such as *Lost&Found*, at Oude Kerk (Amsterdam), *Fictions. Caves/Cascades. Blindness of love*, at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau (Amsterdam), or *Viaggio al Centro della Terra*, at the Museo di Città (Sardinia). Some of his most recent solo exhibitions include *Lycisca*, at Arts Santa Mònica (Barcelona), and *Vijfhoek*, at Galeria Estrany de la Mota (Barcelona), for which he won the 2016 Art Nou Prize. A unique and recurring format in Ortín’s art in recent years has been that of walk performances, which he has carried out in collaboration with Sala d’Art Jove, La Capella (within the framework of BCN Producció), Mercat de les Flors (in the Irregular Section), Consoni, the Saandberg Instituut and CuratorLab, among others. The artist has also worked with video and film formats and has presented his work at film festivals and platforms, such as the Zumzeig cinemas, the New York Film Anthology, the Reykjavik International Film Festival and the Loop Festival. <http://gerardortin.com>

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Photos for the press and digitized press kit available at our online press office at www.fmirobcn.org/press and at <http://bit.ly/2tqjyFs>.

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In collaboration with:

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