
#01 Armando Andrade Tudela

ahir, demà

10 March – 6 June

Capella MACBA

This exhibition heralds a new approach to considering the production of work in the setting of the Capella MACBA. All the exhibitions will share the common denominator of having been specifically produced to be shown in this space. Our purpose is not to promote a link with the architecture but to foster an awareness of the creation, through a particular 'topos', of a new work that the Museum may acquire for its collection in the future. Armando Andrade Tudela is the first of the artists in this series, which will continue with projects by Latifa Echakhch and Pep Duran.

The work produced by Armando Andrade Tudela – Peruvian artist living between Berlin and Saint-Étienne (France) – for this exhibition in Barcelona includes two 16-mm films (transferred onto video) recently made and a wall piece *Untitled* (2010), all framed by an architecture also designed by the artist for the occasion.

Armando Andrade Tudela's work explores the relationship between form, typology and meaning. Meaning emerges from very simple structures – the form of everyday objects or the shape gradually acquired over the years by the geological formations of a 'stone forest' in Peru – that are transformed by the superimposition of the context that originally gave rise to a particular form with the context (natural, social, cultural) in which that form now functions. *Untitled*, a large wall piece comprising a game of sheets of glass and reflections, establishes a curious asynchrony between form and content. Between them, the elements expected to frame the image constitute a figure, and the image is nothing other than a rebellion on the part of everything that ought to be situated at the margins rather than constituting a new image. 'Altering' the form and the original function of elements and materials is characteristic of an artistic method that explores



Armando Andrade Tudela, *Marcabuasi*, 2009-10.
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our relationship with images and our ability to place them in a context with cultural meaning. This pursuit is intended to situate not only what the artist produces for the recipient, but also the spectator's ability to make sense of what he sees, to establish relationships of meaning between the context in which he looks at the work and the context in which the work emerged.

The core of the project produced for the Capella MACBA is a film that takes as its starting point the Synanon Foundation, set up in 1958 in Santa Monica, California, by Charles E. Dederich, whose intention was to build a community based on self-help and a vision of life as a constant exercise of rehabilitation. Conceived as a religious movement with a leader and including several well known figures (like many others appearing in the media today), the organisation attracted a large following that looked for a solid support-group structure in order to overcome their addictions. By the mid-1990s, Synanon had virtually disappeared without trace, aside from a few social activities that included its second-hand furniture stores.

Synanon (2009-10) features one such store where furniture and other artefacts have ended up, giving rise to an accumulation of forms. These forms are not designed by nature but by man. As such, they are an integral part of the history of 'design' – the history of the adaptation of form in order to create styles, worlds. The amalgamation of these different ways of understanding objects, and the nature of the spaces that can be created by using them, clearly reveals the various time codes embedded in the history of taste. Contemporaneity is not the 'here and now' presented to us, but is constructed out of numerous elements and decisions. Hence, the fact of not alluding, except in the title, to the origins of the objects we see in the film and to the dream of the community behind them, transforms

everything that appears onscreen into archaeological traces of a world the viewer knows nothing about.

It is precisely this aspect that creates the area of intersection between this film and *Marcahuasi* (2009–10), also produced specifically for the occasion. Marcahuasi is a plain to the east of the city of Lima (Peru) that extends across four square kilometres in the Andes. It is a remarkable stone formation of volcanic origin situated at more than 4,000 metres above sea level. The rocks, which are impressive not only because of their size but also because of their extraordinary forms, have prompted bizarre theories concerning their origin and given rise to evocative names. In the mid-1950s, Daniel Ruzo, regarded by some as an eminent archaeologist and by others as a prophet and cryptographer, wrote an essay in which he declared that the stones are ‘sculptures’ created by what he termed Masma Culture or the ‘Fourth Humanity’ more than 10,000 years ago. In his book, Ruzo also prophesied that more stones or ‘sculptures’ would appear during this century, and in this he has been proved right. The stone that Ruzo was especially drawn to was *The Head of the Inca* or *Peca Gasba*, which was later named *The Monument to Humanity*. Ruzo writes that on its right flank (facing south-east) can be seen a series of faces that have defied the forces of erosion. One of the faces seems to be that of a black person, while another portrays a strange large-headed being of simian appearance. Needless to say, in the sixties Marcahuasi became a cult centre to which hippies from across the entire continent, north and south, flocked, and which became known as ‘the plateau of the gods’.

The largest outdoor museum of sculpture in the world, Marcahuasi represents the possibility of turning upside-down the major archaeological and historical narratives. By focusing on places geographically and etiologically closer to Europe, these narratives have long ignored not only this place but others that in actuality mark the origins of culture and civilisation. Marcahuasi and the ‘Fourth Humanity’ call for a shift in the interpretation of the past and invoke a culture prior to the modernities we attribute to Egypt or Greece. They take their place once again in history, not just as exponents of a technologically advanced culture but as the die from which all other cultures are cast; as the primordial tribe.

The notion of the matrix or die is questioned in *Untitled*, a piece that revolves around the idea that a distinction might exist between form and content, between content and container. Just as Ludwig Wittgenstein denied the existence of the mind as an entity separate from the body in his philosophical logic, so Armando Andrade Tudela plays with elements that are peripheral to the image and arranges them in such a way that they constitute the image itself. There is nothing else beyond; everything participates in the representation; no image is more real than any other, as everything is arranged around reality. What we term a document is an effort to get close to the limit of verisimilitude, but it is no more true than this play of reflections. The difference between a ‘realist’ system of representation and another that is formal or abstract is the way that its relationship with

access to immediate knowledge of the world is structured. Whereas a realistic system conceives of the possibility of obtaining information through images, formal and abstract systems deny or simply minimise the importance of the connection between what we see and the world beyond.

Armando Andrade Tudela’s work constantly establishes links with the history of modernity, the history of architecture and design and its reception in Latin America. However, rather than referring to specific projects, the artists alludes to the osmosis that exists between the widely known and disseminated modes of architecture of the 1950s and others that represent their phantom, their counter-image.

The three works, together with the exhibition architecture produced by the artist, are individual yet interdependent. As a group, they encompass the interests that Armando Andrade Tudela explores through his output. Culture is founded on the possibility of historical transmission, of knowledge travelling, repeating and transforming itself, giving rise to other systems of knowledge. This process generates numerous forms of codification – one of them without question being modernity – but codes are not transparent and contain other modes of signification within them. Changes and alterations take place in this continual journey and although they may seem to be a distortion of the original project, a form of folklore, in the end they are the key that forces us to rethink not only the great narratives but also their interpretation by the various institutions that have learned to recall certain fragments of the message and to completely forget, or exclude, others.

Chus Martínez

Activities

Tuesday 16 March, at 7 pm

Why and how do I make what I make? The artists speak

Armando Andrade Tudela in conversation with Gabriel Acevedo and Chus Martínez
MACBA Auditorium. Free admission. Limited seating

Further information www.macba.cat

Publication

#01 Armando Andrade Tudela. *Ahir, demà* is the first issue of a new electronic publication that complements the activity in the Capella MACBA: the Capella MACBA Series, available in <http://www.macba.cat/serie-capella>.

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Opening times

Weekdays, 11 am to 7.30 pm
Saturdays, 10 am to 8 pm
Sundays and holidays, 10 am to 3 pm
Tuesdays (except holidays), closed
Open Mondays

