

Implosión, explosión.

Artificio Galiery, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 2003.

IMPLOSION-EXPLOSION

At six in the afternoon, the hall gradually began to fill with public. Individuals, groups, large groups sometimes, young and not so young, and children, all apparently with very different cultural origins, although we did spot a large number of Africans. Among the public, and next to a large formal work where light sequences appeared and disappeared on the black-as night backcloth, a character, completely still and silent, wrapped up in a strange absence... and next to him, a rucksack. The hall was pervaded by a sense of unease... an anxiety as uncanny as that caused by suddenly silent birds -something was going to happen at any moment. That man, of undefined race, serious and absent, started to slowly remove his clothes with strange movements revealing the tragic end of a very real story. In silence he began to change his clothes, and his neutral western wear became transformed into what seemed to be Arable trousers and a camouflage jacket. Those who were unaware of what was occurring were frowning with uncertainty, unease and curiosity, and we of us who had some idea became infected with the tension in the air. We walked with him from the exhibition hall to an adjacent office and rest area. In the centre, a chair, and behind it a large photograph of Arafat giving blood the day after, September 12, for the WTC attack victims. The camouflaged character, now real, sits on the chair and starts to remove a mess of cables with controls, possibly switches, from the rucksack. They could not be seen clearly in the shadows but were really frightening. Slowly and silently, he started to surround his body, in a ritual and continuous sequence of movements, with those daunting cables. A few moments later, he had covered his face with a ski mask before the inevitable, tragic and violent end. His thumbs pressed the switches and... his body was lit up by hundreds of fairy lights. We breathed again when we saw the syncopated lights of those new year garlands. Although we were aware that we were seeing a performance in an art gallery, the tension and even fear were unbearable. In any case, something had imploded inside us, something of which we necessarily had to relieve ourselves, in an explosion of remarks on the contradictory sensations and feelings that had invaded our minds and bodies during the unforgettable and intense performance entitled Jappy New Year by artist Pedro Déniz

in the Camouflage gallery in Brussels. We arrived three days before the opening just in time to install the works in such an interesting gallery, once a chocolate factory and now producing artistic, cultural and political projects, according to the definition of the Camouflage gallery in Brussels, managed by artist, cultural manager and promoter Fernando Alvin.

Camouflage was embarking upon a series of exchanges that we had programmed at the Espacio C gallery in Camargo with the aim of sharing experiences and presenting our proposals in other forums and scenarios on an international scale. Trans/Action was the title we decided upon to define our wish to transcend our own surroundings and establish a sharing programme in which artistic, social and political action would be our basic tools of work. In Trans/Action, we presented a selection of interdisciplinary works belonging to the Espacio C gallery with works by Guillermo Gómez Peña, Juan Ybarra, Tracey Rose, Barthélémy Togue, Azat Sargasyan, Juan López, Tania Bruguera, Mounir Fatmi, Luis Sosa and Pedro Déniz, including installations, photographs, sculptures, objects, videos and performances. To exhibit in Brussels was really symbolic and with multiple connotations for us all. Not in vain is the home of the European Commission and NATO. The significance of our actions was all the more emphasized in such a committed gallery as Camouflage, located in the heart of an immigrants' district. From Pedro Déniz we took his work 20th of October, which became part of our collection after it was included in the Image and Power exhibition held in Espacio C in January, 2002. In this project, Pedro Déniz presented a series of works that hit the nail right on the head, with different pieces referring to the blatant manipulation, both visual and of content, that we suffer daily in the media, which is nothing but a puppet in the hands of power. Reality is artificially created and disguised based on the interest of a few lobbies, pressure and power groups, in spite of the high costs involved, including wars, interference in previously stable nations, environmental destruction, contempt for human rights, and a long and immoral etc. And society, our society, is an astonished and disbelieving witness of the performance of a never-ending lie. Fortunately, increasingly large sectors of civil society have started to feel uneasy in the midst of so much manipulation and lying. But we still face a series of inevitably difficult stages, the first of which implies a state of self-awareness and assimilation, driving the mechanisms of self-implosion, followed by a critical explosion. Society must sleep no longer. It has to open its eyes and go into action; critical and pacific but firm, constant and intense action where the idea of and demand for a better and fairer world must become our constant point of reference, the utopia to which

we come a little closer every day. We must accept that we have a duty to implode and explode in critical action every day, with real daily awareness of the importance of the events occurring in our world, so that we can act rapidly and demand that those who can, do indeed change the world, creating a society based on justice and solidarity.

Orlando Britto Jinorio

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