

Bruno Serralongue: Centre National De La Photographie - Paris

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Expo 2000 in Hannover, Hong Kong's restoration to China in 1997, the Free Tibet Concert organized by the Beastie Boys in Washington, DC, in June 1998: events of unequal importance but media events all, and all of which have been "covered" by photographer Bruno Serralongue. In an age of instant information, this French artist proposes a slower mode of recording events: working without a press card, paying for his own trips, using a four-by-five-inch folding camera on a tripod, keeping his distance from official forums that provide a point of view that may appear open but which actually preestablishes the visual formatting of information. Serralongue finds in these material constraints the possibility of another way of disseminating information and documenting the real: "I offer another kind of news," he says to the art critic Pascal Beausse in the catalogue published by Les Presses du Reel in conjunction with his exhibition at CNP. "I perform a sort of reappropriation of information, because there is no reason it should stay in the hands of professionals."

What do we see, then, in Serralongue's antireportage? Sometimes the back of a courtroom in Hong Kong, elsewhere the area around the Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington, DC; here the too rapid passage of a funeral procession during the thirtieth anniversary of Che's death in Cuba in 1997, there a calm line of Zapatista police officers during the anti-neoliberal meeting organized in Chiapas in 1996 at Subcommander Marcos's military camp. But mostly we see portraits--of individuals and above all groups, but in either case the singular faces of an event that history will preserve in its collective dimension. Throughout Serralongue's work we come across men and women waiting for something, crowds on the brink of an event's eruption, hollow moments, in-between periods, the skipped beats that the mainstream media will never record. Thus Serralongue's work consists not only of the adoption of a non-official or non-event-oriented point of view; it is above all about the apprehension of time, of duration, in contrast to the instantaneity of the media event.

In this exhibition Serralongue showed a series of images taken regularly over the past two years during weekly protests at the place du Chatelet in the center of Paris by a collective of immigrants without papers. Here the photographer's faithful attendance at the gatherings allows us to forget the event itself in order to register more clearly the persistence of this social inequality and to gradually comprehend it as part of the reality of the French political landscape. In a completely different way, Serralongue also followed three Korean trade

unionists who came to Paris to seek out the former head of Daewoo, who had fled the country. This search brought Serralongue, in turn, to Korea, where he made portraits of the writer Kim Sung-Ok and the filmmaker Park Kwang-Su, artists whose works decry the crimes of capitalism. All these social actors share with Serralongue a patient resistance over the long term, even in the face of misgivings, despair, and the hollow moments of neo-liberal triumph--a strategy of slowness.

Translated from French by Jeanine Herman.

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