

## **"Estratos": Proyecto Arte Contemporaneo 2008**

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"Heterocronias. Tiempo, arte y arqueologias del presente" (Heterochronies: Time, Art, and Archaeologies of the Present)--a series of talks held in conjunction with the exhibition "Estratos," curated by Nicolas Bourriaud--takes its title from a neologism coined by Bourriaud and Miguel Angel Hernandez on the model of Michel Foucault's "heterotopies"; it seeks to express the juxtaposition, interpenetration, and coalescence of various temporalities in contemporary art practices. Because, in fact, artists today are caught between gears: between the hyperflux of images and exhibitions (and the emission of signs in general) and the slower time of the maturation of the work. Thus, Cyprien Gaillard showed several works emblematic of this disturbed temporality: "Belief in the Age of Disbelief," 2005, a group of seventeenth-century engravings into which he has anachronistically inserted modern buildings; "Geographical Analogies," 2006, a series of Polaroid landscapes assembled by formal analogy; and the video *The Smithsons*, 2005, in which, to the accompaniment of a song by the Smiths, one sees views (shot from upper Manhattan) of New Jersey, whose architectural ruin was announced by Robert Smithson. Anachronisms, "ruins in reverse," and ruins yet to come, temporal inversions and outdated notions of the future--Gaillard's work is thus deployed in a fully "heterochronic" consciousness of History. "If, as is claimed, postmodernism was the locus for the hybridization of arts," Bourriaud and Jose Luis Molinuevo say, "now may be the time to consider a hybridization of temporalities."

Bolstered by this reflection, "Estratos" is displayed in nine locations, including two public spaces. Attentive to the various temporal strata that make up this Spanish town, and to the "numerous remains of Islamic civilization surfacing beneath the European present," Bourriaud has invited artists who are presently revisiting archaeological gestures to participate. Allan McCollum brilliantly reconfigured his forty-eight identical sculptures based on the famous Dog of Pompeii, 1991, in a former church. Mark Dion placed a quasi-anthropological work in the Museo Arqueologico: *Restoring Authority*, 2007-2008, is the pseudo-reconstruction of a cell from an ancient prison in Murcia, with graffiti on the walls, the prison's original furniture, and glass cases that contain a collection of improvised weapons supposedly imagined by the prisoners. *The Rubble Mountain*, 2008, an antimemorial and fully site-specific sculpture erected by Lara Almarcegui, uses the debris of a demolished house from the center of town. Among the "descendants of Smithson," designated as such by Bourriaud, we should also

mention liana Halperin, whose project *Nomadic Landmass*, 2005, simultaneously celebrates her thirtieth birthday and the appearance of a volcano on the Icelandic island of Heimaey in 1973, the year of her birth. Drawings inspired by the eruption, mineral specimens, photographic images, and so on, make up a personal geology.

Laurent Tixador and Abraham Poincheval attacked the terrain directly with an extreme project, *Horizon moins vingt* (*Horizon Minus Twenty*), 2005-2008. Situated at the crossroads of Land art and performance, the work was an underground expedition: During the exhibition, the artists dug a tunnel more than twenty yards long, at the rate of one yard per day, which they refilled behind them. Displayed in the Museo de Bellas Artes before their departure were air tubes, food, structures to shore up the underground gallery, and other survival items for twenty days of speleological expedition. As I write these lines, Tixador and Poincheval are still en route, a few feet beneath the earth--where disappearance and disconnection become forms.

Translated from French by Jeanine Herman.

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