

English translations (short versions) of case studies from the exhibition *FAKE: It is not true, it is not a lie*. Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia (Spain).

October 20, 2016-January 29, 2017.

Curated by Jorge Luis Marzo.

Museum's website:

<http://www.ivam.es/en/exposiciones/fake-it-is-not-true-it-is-not-a-lie/>

Book in pdf (Spanish):

[http://www.soymenos.net/FAKE\\_IVAM.pdf](http://www.soymenos.net/FAKE_IVAM.pdf)

Showroom:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUK4eI0wRp4>

**TITLE:** *Theresienstadt. The Führer gives a city to the Jews*

**AUTHOR:** German National Socialist government: Schutzstaffel (SS) or “Defence Squadrons”

**YEAR:** 1944

**PLACE:** Theresienstadt concentration camp (Czechoslovakia)

**MEDIUM:** Film

At the end of 1943, as a result of a request for a visit by the International Red Cross, the SS undertook a programme of beautification of the Theresienstadt concentration camp (an old fortress near Prague), which was carried out by the Jewish prisoners themselves – many of them musicians, composers, poets, film makers, painters or academics – under severe threats: the streets were repaired, the barracks were painted, allotments and rose bushes were tended, grass was sown, a football field was created, and a children’s playground, a music pavilion and a library were constructed. The whole area was marked out with signs indicating the apparent function of the various areas: store, bakery, library, school, laundry, tailor, etc. After visiting the camp, the committee sent by the Red Cross made a favourable public report about the living conditions of the Jews who had been deported to it.

In the summer of 1944, taking advantage of the work that had been done to make the camp more attractive, the Nazis ordered the production of a “documentary style” film about Theresienstadt, which was to be sent to various international organisations to convince them of the “virtues” of the camp. The well-known German actor and film director Kurt Gerron, who was imprisoned in the camp, was selected to make the film. The production team also included other prisoners. The script, production and filming were supervised by the German camp commander. The filming took place between 16 August and 11 September 1944. The final editing was done entirely by the SS, and nobody from the direction and production team played any part in it.

Two weeks after filming ended, the nearly 87,000 prisoners in Theresienstadt, including all those who had taken part in making the film, were transferred to Auschwitz and killed in the gas chambers.

Even though they knew that it was a propaganda device, many of the prisoners were glad about the improvement made in their terrible living conditions for the sake of the camera. And they smiled. That expression on their faces was the formal objective of the documentary: exhibiting life to conceal death.

2

**TITLE:** *The Floor of Fame*

**AUTHOR:** Carlos Pazos

**YEAR:** 1978

**PLACE:** Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

**MEDIUM:** Action in public space

**MACBA Collection. MACBA Consortium. Gift of the artist**

In the mid 1970s, Carlos Pazos began a series of works in which he played with the stereotypes created by popular culture in order to define the status of the new icons for the young and their function in the structure of culture, traditionally divided into highbrow and lowbrow culture.

In 1978 Pazos performed an action entitled *The Floor of Fame* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. It consisted in the artist appearing in a limousine, elegantly dressed and accompanied by several bodyguards, and on his arrival being surrounded by a swarm of photographers and flashes. After being received by the director of the museum and greeting the throng that had apparently congregated in the square to see the star, he made an imprint of his hand on a commemorative plaque placed on the floor, like a film actor in the Hall of Fame in Los Angeles. After doing so, he entered the museum, accompanied by the director.

Needless to say, almost nobody knew Pazos in Paris, and the “real” public that happened to be in the square must have thought that he was a famous artist. The action commented ironically on something that with time was to become a sensational driving force in the global digital industry, the *celebrity*, the platform on which the enormous marketing apparatus of art, music, films, fashion and so on is constructed. In *The Floor of Fame* Pazos warned that culture is no longer represented by the results of cultural work but by artists converted into objects, as Dalí and Warhol had anticipated.

3

**TITLE:** *Llévame al museo, papi* (Take me to the museum, daddy)

**AUTHOR:** Guillermo Trujillano

**YEAR: 2006**

**PLACE: Santa Coloma de Gramanet, Barcelona**

**MEDIUM: TeleTaxi TV**

**Courtesy of the artist**

Guillermo Trujillano's work is fond of infiltrating spaces and times not yet contaminated by aesthetic assumptions, as is very powerfully revealed in his work *Llévame al museo, papi*. It was produced in 2006 as a result of an agreement between Trujillano and the TeleTaxi group, very popular in the area around Barcelona, to insert a video of the artist in their programme of music videos, playing the part of a musician.

Trujillano – who is, in fact, a musician – decided to invent a character, Guillermo Imaginario, and compose a song in an unusual reggaeton-flamenco style, performed in a video in which he sang and danced in front of the MACBA in Barcelona, among other places. The underlying idea was to offer a “camouflaged” reflection on the social *décalage* (discrepancy) that existed in the representation of highbrow and lowbrow culture, and also to criticise the double standards that were used by those in power to give heritage status to some forms of culture and to set others aside.

“Here I am, singing in the street,  
here I am, dancing in the street,  
and the museums are empty,  
and there's no one to manage my art.  
Promising newcomers like us  
are not all walking tall,  
we're all bottled up,  
no one listens to our complaints.”

**4**

**TITLE: *Arte de los medios de comunicación. Happening para un jabalí difunto* (Media art. Happening for a deceased wild boar)**

**AUTHOR: Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escari, Roberto Jacoby**

**YEAR: 1966**

**PLACE: Buenos Aires (Argentina)**

**MEDIUM: Press**

In the mid 1960s, more and more South American artists began to explore dematerialisation as a way of responding to the ideological marketing discourse of Pop Art from the USA. During this process it was not long before the first experiments with alternative communication and deinstitutionalisation of information appeared.

In 1966 the Argentinian artists Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escari and Roberto Jacoby published a manifesto entitled *Un arte de los medios de comunicación* (Media Art), in which they said that “In a civilisation of masses the public is not in direct contact with cultural events, and instead obtains information about them from the media. Media Art sets out to construct its work within the media in such a way that its physical manifestation can be worked on aesthetically.”

They immediately came up with the idea of giving the press a written report with photographs of a happening that had not happened. After obtaining the complicity of well-known personalities in the cultural milieu of Buenos Aires, they took a series of photographs in galleries, bars and people’s homes, in which they pretended to take part in a chaotic festive happening. They used the photos in a press release that described and documented the happening, using language normally used by the media to talk about “avant-garde events”.

The account was published with the connivance of the newspaper *El Mundo* and repeated by other friendly media. Various publications gradually added further details and transformed the action into an event with much greater dimensions. One of the headlines was *Happening para un jabalí difunto*, which eventually became the title of the work, because it was the “result of the transformation that it underwent in coverage by the media”.

Roberto Jacoby made another infiltration into the media the following year, in 1967, when he issued false reports about his love affair with the well-known model Twiggy.

## 5

**TITLE:** *Fauna*

**AUTHORS:** Joan Fontcuberta and Pere Formiguera

**YEAR:** 1985–1987

**PLACE:** Museums

**MEDIUM:** Exhibition

Joan Fontcuberta has always shown great interest in the construction of a fictitious narrative with which to question the role of photography in the world of science, with which it is connected as a result of respect for a sign system that determines what is “objective”.

In 1985, in collaboration with Pere Formiguera, he began to develop *Fauna*, an exhibition project organised around the “discovery” of the archive of a certain Professor Peter Ameisenhaufen, a biologist and naturalist at the beginning of the twentieth century, and of his assistant, Hans von Kubert, who had catalogued strange animal species. The artists used an installation to parody the rhetorical apparatus of natural science museums, with their scenic arrangements of skeletons and stuffed animals, their showcases, their explanatory panels and their pedagogical aesthetics. The visitor was confronted not only with photographs but also with X-rays, field drawings, maps of journeys, zoological records, sound recordings, films and laboratory instruments, all presented in accordance with strict museological principles. But all *objectively* false and with no warning to visitors about their fictitious nature.

Fontcuberta has said that one day, when the exhibition was being presented in the Zoological Museum in Barcelona in 1989, a visitor who was accompanied by his son was upset when the little boy rejected the arguments for the authenticity of what was exhibited there. Tired of arguing, the father exclaimed, “Of course it’s true, this is a museum.” Photographs and museums, manufacturers of truth.

6

**TITLE: “*The Weirdness Installation*”: second programme of “*Each & Every One of You*”**

**AUTHOR: Donald Goodes and Anne-Marie Léger**

**YEAR: 1997**

**PLACE: Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada)**

**MEDIUM: Video / Cable television**

**Courtesy of Don Goodes and Video Pool Inc., Winnipeg, Canada**

Inspired by Jon Gnagy, a 1950s television presenter who became very popular as a result of a programme in which he taught viewers how to paint, in the mid 1990s two Canadians, Donald Goodes and Anne-Marie Léger, devised a parodic update of the formula in relation

to contemporary art. The result was *Each & Every One of You*, a cable TV series that adopted the format of popular Do-It-Yourself programmes and didactically invited viewers to make their own works of modern art. The motto of the series was “Each and every one of you can make contemporary installation art”.

The idea of the series was to make it seem that the work was not made in accordance with the premises of professional art practice but that it followed a mechanical logic similar to the making of a piece of furniture or a pudding. It would all become a simple routine if one followed the “Four installation art directives”: “Take a stand”, “Make aesthetic decisions”, “Develop the concept” and “Make the work”.

The result could not be more ironical: numerous Canadian families started decorating their homes in imitation of the work that the series showed them how to make. In the programme presented here, entitled *The Weirdness Installation*, the resulting work is certainly weird (or isn't it?): a large stuffed dog is destroyed in the studio and a television is inserted into its stomach, on the television there is a recording of sounds like a baby gurgling, and bits of fabric are scattered around randomly on the floor.

**7**

**TITLE:** *Las cajas chinas* (The Chinese boxes)

**AUTHOR:** Montse Carreño and Raquel Muñoz

**YEAR:** 2011

**PLACE:** Dafen (China) and Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC)

**MEDIUM:** Painting / Action

**Courtesy of the artists**

*Las cajas chinas* was a project that explored the “authority” of museums in relation to the authenticity of works of art, and that delved into the procedures that make works of art achieve the status of “originals” in a market based on hyperconsumption of images. The idea proposed by the creators of the project, Montse Carreño and Raquel Muñoz, was to commission the replication of a series of works that had been lost during the Spanish Civil War and that were inventoried in the Museo del Prado and the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). The works were by Joaquim Mir, Isidre Nonell, Marià Fortuny, Xavier Nogués and Eugenio Lucas. The copies were to be made in Dafen (China), a town devoted to mass reproduction of famous original artworks.

After a long process of research on the style of the original artists, the relevant information was sent to the Chinese copiers so that they could make the works look as plausible as possible. When they were finished they were sent to the MNAC, suitably packaged and with the appearance of an anonymous return. After several hours of excitement among the people in charge of the museum and a process of authentication of the works, the experts confirmed that they were not genuine.

The initial reaction in the museum was conflictive, and they even called the police because they suspected that they were being tricked. The artists were obliged to reveal the aim of the project immediately, which was to perform an experiment and not to defraud the museum. For Carreño and Muñoz, the ultimate objective of the project was “to examine the museum, its ideology and organisation, and look for a crack through which to infiltrate and bring about a shift: reincorporating the social life of the objects within the museum”.

**8**

**TITLE:** *La balada del valor de uso* (The ballad of use value)

**AUTHOR:** Octavi Comeron

**YEAR:** 2011–2012

**PLACE:** Nau Estruch, Sabadell, and Agencia Tributaria

**MEDIUM:** Installation / Written correspondence

**Courtesy of the curator**

In *La balada del valor de uso*, Octavi Comeron analysed the artistic/commercial imagery of the Spanish state, expressed in the current VAT (Value Added Tax) Law of 1992, by means of an installation that camouflaged a subsequent action.

The starting point of the project was a transaction that was financial and aesthetic: the sale by the artist of a mass-produced car in a gallery as a work of art, with the application of the corresponding tax rate. As a work of art, the VAT to be levied was 8% instead of the 18% that was then the standard rate for commercial products. At that point the second (camouflaged) phase of the project began: litigation with the tax authorities (Agencia Tributaria) to establish the VAT rate that should be applied, conceived as a reflection on the value of a work of art.

During the legal debate with the Agencia Tributaria, Comeron maintained that the car had been converted into a “work of art” and therefore it was not right to apply a different VAT

rate. The artist's death in 2013 prevented a formal resolution of the case. Article 136 of the VAT Law presents a detailed description of everything to which the special tax rate for works of art can be applied, and it is the only official document produced by the Spanish State that establishes what can be considered art. A document that seems more like a relic of the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

9

**TITLE:** *IVM Oficina de Gestión* (IVM Management Office)

**AUTHOR:** Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, in collaboration with Trinidad Irisarri and Daniela Musicco

**YEAR:** 1994

**PLACE:** Galería Fúcares (Madrid)

**MEDIUM:** Installation

#### **Materials provided by the artist**

In the 1970s Isidoro Valcárcel Medina began to replace directly constructivist and minimalist practices with situationist techniques leading to an “art of participation”, often by means of performance, actionism or intervention in public space.

Between 26 February and 26 March 1994 the artist performed the action/installation *IVM Oficina de Gestión de Ideas* (IVM Idea Management Office), in collaboration with Trinidad Irisarri and Daniela Musicco, at Galería Fúcares in Madrid. There they installed an office in which they offered to manage ideas for the general public. Visitors first entered a reception room where they were attended by a secretary, and then, if they had business to be dealt with, they had an interview with the artist, the person in charge of the office.

*Oficina* gave rise to an extensive report with details of the 107 topics raised – artistic or non-artistic – and the suggestions and advice that were given in response. As the artist wrote about this work, “Bureaucratic art is the craziest thing conceivable [...] Office art is defined by everything – people and things – that convert it into pure and simple images. The odyssey of art consists in depending on office workers, because they are the ones who know least about its and their function (the function of art and their own function as bureaucrats)”.

Although it was not presented as a concealed fiction, *Oficina de Gestión de Ideas* borrowed instruments that provided camouflage (legalistic language, a functionalist appearance) to de-aestheticise the experience in order to achieve a *re-mediation* or *de-mediation* of the

meaning and orientation of social and political relations when the driving force for them is art.

10

**TITLE:** *Jusep Torres Campalans*

**AUTHOR:** Max Aub

**YEAR:** 1958

**PLACE:** Mexico City

**MEDIUM:** Literature / Painting

**Private collection and Fundación Max Aub**

“A copy is a copy, and it’s sold as a copy [...] But ‘fabricating’ originals has another name,” Jusep Torres Campalans snapped to Juan Gris in one of their bitter arguments in Paris in the years of the early avant-garde movements. Could this be one of the first definitions of a fake?

But who was Jusep Torres Campalans? It was the writer Max Aub who “discovered” him. In 1958 Aub provided considerable information about him in a book published in Mexico City. Aub related that during a brief stay in San Cristóbal de las Casas he had a fleeting encounter with a strange person, a Catalan whose parents were peasants, who had come to Chiapas at the end of 1914, married a local woman and had a swarm of children. Aub was immediately fascinated. He discovered that JTC (born in Mollerussa, Lleida, in 1886) was no ordinary person. He had been one of the leading figures in the birth of Cubism in Paris, together with Picasso and Gris, and he was a friend of Cassou, Modigliani, Stein, Mondrian, Chagall, Delaunay and many others. However, after the outbreak of the First World War he disappeared without a trace.

Of course, JTC never existed. For Aub, he provided a perfect pretext for reflecting on the avant-garde, on theories about novels, on the failure of those who were not talented or clever enough to succeed, and on the paradoxical relationships between genius, success and radical independence: “If we have to lie, let’s do it openly. So that nobody knows what card to keep in their hand. It’s only with that insecurity that we can grow up, on our own, and confront other people.”

However, JTC was a painter. So where were his paintings and drawings? In 1958 Aub organised an exhibition at Galería Excelsior in Mexico City. The critics were impressed by

the work of the fictitious artist. Numerous press releases were published, praising the artist and congratulating Aub on taking this initiative, naturally without suspecting that it was he who had done the paintings. In 1962 the show was presented at the Bodley Gallery in New York. At the same time, famous figures such as Picasso, Cela, De Salas (deputy director at the Museo del Prado), Cassou (chief curator at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris), Siqueiros, Fuentes, Sender and Alexandre collaborated in writing, publicly recounting their recollections of JTC, praising his work and providing further information about it. And Josep Renau secretly made a photomontage in which JTC could be seen, for the first and only time, completely bald and sitting next to Picasso in a bohemian bar; and thus, for a while, Aub was able to give the artist a face.

Jusep Torres Campalans forms an illustrious part of a double genealogy, literary and artistic: that of non-existent, apocryphal or heteronymous authors and that of the phantoms of art who have ultimately become faithful reflections in their own right of the history of culture and its paradoxes. Notable examples in the realm of art are Pavel Jerdanowitch (1924), invented by Paul Jordan-Smith; Bruno Hat (1929), created by Brian Howard; Hank Herron (1973), given sustenance by Carol Duncan; Lenin Cumbe (1992), presented by the Agustín Parejo School group; Harry Kipper (1995), a doppelgänger of the Luther Blissett collective; Nat Tate (1998), produced by William Boyd; Darko Maver (1999), devised by Eva and Franco Mattes; and Konstantin and Yuri Shamanov (2009), fabricated by Jake and Dinos Chapman (The Chapman Brothers).

**11**

**TITLE: *Comando Arte Libre S-11 (S-11 Free Art Commando)***

**AUTHOR: Lucas Ospina**

**YEAR: 2008**

**PLACE: Bogotá (Colombia)**

**MEDIUM: Action / Media**

**Courtesy of the artist**

In September 2008 an engraving by Goya was stolen from a gallery belonging to the Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño in the city of Bogotá. The title of the work was *Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer* (Gloomy premonitions of what must come to pass), from the well-known series *Los desastres de la guerra* (The Disasters of War), 1810–1815. While the police were beginning their investigations to discover the identity of the

authors of the theft, a group that called itself “Comando Arte Libre S-11” claimed responsibility for the act and issued a communiqué in which they said that the work would be shown in working-class homes, criticising the cult value of works of art and the hijacking of culture by private interests.

The truth is that the claim was false. The Colombian artist Lucas Ospina took advantage of the theft to mount a project in which he could explore how the media operate in creating states of opinion. In fact, after the artist’s communiqué, some of the media in Columbia constructed information about the robbery, using evidence and experts that were also “fake”.

Soon afterwards Lucas Ospina publicly announced that he was the author of the communiqué, which led to fierce attacks on him as a university lecturer and as an artist, downgrading the connotations of the action to mere entertainment. Numerous media encouraged the moral condemnation of Ospina and his expulsion from the university, in addition to having to testify to the public prosecutor.

12

**TITLE:** *Pavel Jerdanowitch*

**AUTHOR:** Paul Jordan-Smith

**YEAR:** 1924–1927

**PLACE:** New York’s exhibition of the Independents at the Waldorf-Astoria

**MEDIUM:** Exhibition / Painting

**Courtesy of the curator**

The last straw that made the American novelist Paul Jordan-Smith lose patience with the judgements emitted by modern art critics came in 1924 when he read the negative comments about the still-lives made by his wife, Sarah Bixby Smith, which were disparagingly described as “too realistic” and “not very modern”. One night he picked up some old tubes of red and green paint and a worn paintbrush and spent twenty minutes daubing a blurry picture with the crude and savage outlines of a woman holding up what was intended to be a starfish but turned out to be a banana. The title he gave it was *Exaltation aka Yes, We Have No Bananas*. Pretending to be a Russian with the name of Pavel Jerdanowitch, he sent the work to the exhibition of the Independents in New York, accompanying it with a brief conceptual explanation in order to conceal his lack of technical knowledge. The hoax worked.

When the press reacted enthusiastically and contacted him, Jerdanowitch made up a long, outlandish personal biography, sent a photograph in which he looked like a typical eccentric artist, and classified his work as belonging to a new avant-garde style called Disumbrationism, an ironical reference by Jordan-Smith to the fact that he didn't know how to paint shadows.

Jordan-Smith finally revealed the deception in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1927, to the consternation of all his critics and collectors.

**13**

**TITLE: *Abel Raises Cain***

**AUTHOR: Jenny Abel & Jeff Hockett**

**YEAR: 2008**

**PLACE: Video**

**MEDIUM: Video / Television**

**Courtesy of the authors**

Alan Abel, writer, filmmaker, musician and actor, is best known for being one of the fathers of media falsification, having professionally tricked all kinds of media for more than 40 years. His career as a “media prankster” began almost by chance in the late 1950s when he saw that the media were taking seriously his false and absurd crusade against animal nudity, pursued by the creation of SINA (Society for Indecency to Naked Animals), which was really a cover for a satirical allegory about censorship and the hypocrisy of puritanism. Throughout all these years he has continued to create new set-ups and extravagant plans to provoke the media and give a kick to people's intelligence while also providing entertainment. His more notable pranks include the mass fainting of various members of the audience of a live television programme; a simulation of his own death and coverage of the event in the media; the creation of a school for beggars, and of a company for euthanasia cruises; and a campaign to ban breastfeeding of babies. All these projects were intended to reveal some of the fallacies involved in the debates about social politics in the United States.

Alan Abel's work has been continued (although without any professional connection) in the activities of Joey Skaggs, one of which also features in this exhibition.

The documentary that we are presenting, directed by Jenny Abel and Jeff Hockett in 2008, explores the life and work of Alan Abel.

14

**TITLE:** *Pandora's Hope*

**AUTHOR:** Joey Skaggs

**YEAR:** 2013

**PLACE:** Film

**MEDIUM:** Film / Video

**Courtesy of the artist**

*Pandora's Hope* is a short documentary about a young journalist and film director, Kit Farrell, as she explores Kauai, a part of the tropical island of Hawaii rarely visited by the millions of tourists who go there. Through a series of interviews with local scientists, activists, philanthropists, experts on Hawaiian culture and others, Farrell describes how Kauai, in addition to possessing an idyllic landscape, is also home to companies engaged in high tech military projects, agrochemical biotechnology and genetic research, which cultivate informational opacity and commercial hijacking of the rights of their products. However, the case of Warren Dastrup, the victim of an accident that left him paralytic, opens up a debate about the benefits of some advanced technologies and the contradictions that they imply for groups opposed to certain genetic manipulations: researchers at a biological study institute have succeeded in isolating stem cells inside shark teeth which could – and in fact do – make Dastrup's life easier.

This documentary has been screened since 2013 in cinemas and international festivals about health and nature and has been awarded numerous prizes (Moondance, IndieFest, New Filmmakers, Big Apple and FlixxFest), in addition to being featured in reports in many specialist media. The most surprising thing is that nobody – not even the experts – seems to have realised that it is a hoax. In Spain, it is being presented for the first time in this exhibition.

The whole construction of the story is the work of Joey Skaggs, one of the artists most devoted to exposing how the media and their associates (politicians, religious groups, companies, etc.) project their messages by creating states of opinion and spaces of authority. For Skaggs, hoaxes offers an alternative palette in the field of criticism and dissidence, and a mirror for the human credulity that comes into play when critical analysis is suspended in favour of emotional thinking.

**TITLE:** *Coup d'état in Russia*

**AUTHOR:** Miguel Ángel Martín, Manuel Delgado

**YEAR:** 1991

**PLACE:** Barcelona

**MEDIUM:** TVE-Catalunya (Programme: *El Camaleó*)

**Courtesy of the authors**

One of the programmes in the series *El Camaleó* presented by Televisión Española (in its Catalan broadcasts) in 1991, directed by Miguel Ángel Martín and Manuel Delgado, copied the structure applied by Orson Welles in the radio broadcast of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* in 1938 for a fake news report that was broadcast live.

The presenter of the programme broke into the normal broadcast to announce an urgent news item: a coup d'état had taken place in Russia. For 30 minutes there were live telephone connections, information links and pictures of reactions around the world, all taken from the archives. The way in which the hoax was presented clearly sought to use all the codes that give "veracity" to the construction of news: anything can appear to be true if it is told to the media in an appropriate way. The newspaper *La Vanguardia* went so far as to stop printing at midnight as it waited for further information, revealing that journalists are extremely optimistic about verisimilitude when the news is big enough. The real coup d'état took place a few weeks later: the genuine pictures that were shown then were almost duplicates of the fake ones. The results of the broadcast were the immediate dismissal of the head of TVE programmes in Catalonia, the definitive cessation of the programme and a severe reprimand from the Russian Embassy in Spain.

Manuel Delgado commented, "News programmes have a liturgical function as sources of truth; their oracular function can never ever be questioned."

There have been many similar cases in television companies all over the world, intended to exploit the veridiction given by live broadcasting of a high-impact news story, with the acceleration in the provision of information doing away with reservations about the failure to comply even minimally with the supposedly strict professional rules of journalism.

On 13 December 2006, Radio Télévision Belge Francophone (RTBF) broadcast *Bye Bye Belgium: Tout ça (ne nous rendra pas la Belgique)*, a project developed by the journalist Philippe Dutilleul. The channel interrupted its normal programming to present an information bulletin based on fictitious details, in which it was announced that Flanders had

proclaimed its independence and Belgium as a nation had ceased to exist.

On 13 March 2010, the Imedi television channel in the Republic of Georgia broadcast a “war simulation” without giving prior warning to viewers. The news story was supposed to be real-time coverage of a military attack by Russia on Georgia, with an announcement that the Georgian President had been assassinated and that soldiers were dying.

In both cases, the resulting scandal was phenomenal.

16

**TITLE: *The War of the Worlds***

**AUTHOR: Orson Welles and The Mercury Theatre**

**YEAR: 1938 (30 October)**

**PLACE: Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), New York**

**MEDIUM: Radio**

*Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News. At twenty minutes before eight, central time, Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory, Chicago, Illinois, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars. The spectroscope indicates the gas to be hydrogen and moving towards the earth with enormous velocity.*

With these words, in 1938, Orson Welles, Paul Stewart and John Houseman began the inaugural hoax of the twentieth century, an adaptation of H. G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*. The employment of camouflage techniques and the precise use of devices for the construction of authority led many listeners to that broadcast to believe completely that Martians were attacking the Earth, beginning with New Jersey. During a period of nearly an hour, connections with eyewitnesses, on-site correspondents, agents of authority and academics generated a spiralling space in which listeners, recognising the characteristic format of truth (presented live, with the usual technical hitches), found it hard to detect the element of fiction.

The broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* generated an enormous scandal: people swamped the telephone switchboards of the police with their terrified calls; the police burst into the CBS studios in an attempt to stop the live broadcast; much of the press and many politicians demanded the heads of the directors and producers responsible. Welles responded by

apologising for presenting the hoax on the eve of Hallowe'en. In *F for Fake* (1974), his remarkable film about artistic falsification, Welles declared, "What we professional liars hope to serve is truth. I'm afraid the pompous word for that is art."

P.S.: On Saturday, 12 February 1949, Leonardo Páez presented a similar adaption to the Welles programme on Radio Quito (Ecuador). An announcer interrupted the broadcast of a live musical item to say that a supposed flying object had been sighted over the Galapagos, and later reported that a flying saucer had landed on the outskirts of the city. The broadcast lasted no more than 20 minutes, until people discovered the truth. There was considerable public outcry; first, people threw stones and bricks at the building in the city centre where the radio station and the *El Comercio* newspaper were based, only a block away from the post office building. A fire soon took hold, fuelled by the paper and the oil in the printing presses. The police, seeing that it was a hoax, did not help the actors, journalists and other people in the building, who tried to save themselves by jumping over to the roof of the next building. Five people died in the flames. And several people committed suicide because of the fright that was caused. Radio Quito was off the air for two years, resuming broadcasting on 30 April 1951.

17

**TITLE: *Atomic explosion – mushroom cloud in a public TV broadcast***

**AUTHOR: Ztohoven**

**YEAR: 2007 (17 June)**

**PLACE: ČT2 – Czech public television**

**MEDIUM: Television**

**Courtesy of the artists**

Viewers of the Czech ČT2 television channel who were watching the usual weather report on 17 June 2007, with its panoramic views of the landscape of the Krkonoše (Giant Mountains), witnessed a blinding "live" explosion of a nuclear bomb followed by the characteristic mushroom cloud. The previous night, the Ztohoven artist collective had switched the cables of an isolated, unsupervised camera and connected their own video, in which they had edited the usual panoramic scene by adding digital effects: they called it "Media Reality".

The channel began to receive calls from viewers alarmed by what they had seen. The collective immediately announced that it was a fiction: "We are not a terrorist or political

group, our purpose is not to intimidate or manipulate society in the very same way as we witness in everyday real life or media. [...] On June 17, 2007 our group invaded the media and television territory and intruded and poached its truthfulness as well as its credibility.”

In the days that followed, the public prosecutor was quick to accuse them in the courts of “creating social panic and propagating false information”, asking for a maximum sentence of three years’ imprisonment. A year later, the judge dismissed the charges against the artists: “The pictures of the explosion did not create social alarm. In fact, people were amused at seeing how easy it is to break into a broadcast.” She declared that the event should not be considered in terms of “public disorder” but viewed as “public entertainment”. Paradoxically (or not), the Czech National Gallery awarded one of its most important prizes to this group of artists in December 2007.

**18**

**TITLE:** *El Niño Pepita*

**AUTHOR:** Claudia Llosa

**YEAR:** 2010

**PLACE:** Lima (Peru)

**MEDIUM:** Video

**Courtesy of the artist**

“El Niño Pepita is the only saint who has decided to become part of modernity. As he is familiar with the tools of alternative marketing, he uses tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to reach his followers. His on-line teleservice is one of the most successful ones, and a pioneer in its field. Connect to the social networks and there you will find many testimonies to his miracles.” This is how the little saint from Lima was announced, converted into a lucrative business of prints and statuettes, and, as a novelty, quilts, blankets and swimming floats with image of the child.

Although he did not really exist, El Niño Pepita took his place at the end of a wide-ranging genealogy of religious images whose main characteristic is the possession of powers: the quality of being a magic space of authority. This was the idea that the filmmaker Claudia Llosa took as her starting point in 2010 for the making of this video project in YouTube, in which she used a *vérité* (truth) documentary format to portray the supposed experiences of followers of El Niño Pepita in the more impoverished districts of Lima.

19

**TITLE:** *Darko Maver*

**AUTHOR:** Eva and Franco Mattes (0100101110101101.org)

**YEAR:** 1998–1999

**PLACE:** Italy

**MEDIUM:** Information media

Courtesy of the artists

In April 1999, news reports began to appear in the European art world about the death in enigmatic circumstances of the Serbo-Slovenian artist Darko Maver in a Serbian prison near the border with Kosovo during NATO bombing. Maver was well known for a nomadic performance project that consisted in placing horribly gruesomely realistic wax and rubber models of murder victims in a series of hotel rooms and empty houses dotted around the former Yugoslavia and that had been attracting press attention. His arrest, accused by the Serbian authorities of distributing “anti-patriotic propaganda”, had led to the “Free Art Campaign” in Italy, with hundreds of artists calling for his release.

Shortly after his death, the Kapelica Gallery in Ljubljana exhibited his *Tanz der Spinne* (Dance of the Spider) project, and published his text “Disappearance of the Body and Anaphoragenetica”, a confusing and complicated piece of writing. In September 1999 he was included in the 48th *Biennale di Venezia*, and a comprehensive retrospective was presented at Forte Prenestino, in Rome, with biographical films and theatrical tributes.

The whole story was transformed when it was revealed that Darko Maver did not exist. He had been created by Eva and Franco Mattes, who are the 0100101110101101.org collective, following in the wake of the Luther Blissett activist network. But a further revelation turned red faces sickly pale: the horrifically maimed, bleeding and decapitated waxwork figures that Maver had made his name with, photos of which had been widely circulated, were not models at all, but rather photographic documents of actual atrocities, taken from “gore” websites.

20

**TITLE:** *Harry Kipper*

**AUTHOR:** Luther Blissett

**YEAR:** 1994–1997

**PLACE:** Italy

**MEDIUM:** Media / Television (RAI 3)

**Courtesy of the artists**

*Chi l'ha visto?* (Who has seen him?) is the title of a popular Italian programme on the RAI 3 television channel, which since 1989 has devoted itself to tracing teenagers who have run away from home, wives who have left their husbands, patients who have escaped from lunatic asylums and tenants who disappear after many months of not paying the rent. The editorial team is a kind of police structure, while their star presenter, Giovanna Milella, encourages human hunts among the audience. In June 1995 the anonymous Luther Blissett collective, using “guerrilla communication” tactics, decided to expose the hypocrisy of the programme by means of a hoax which made the police in *Chi l'ha visto* look like clowns in the sensational press.

The first phase of the action consisted in propagating the story of a certain Harry Kipper, a British conceptual artist, who had disappeared mysteriously on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia when he was carrying out his *Art in Europe* project, based on a psycho-geographical journey to various cities in such a way that his route on the map of the continent spelled out the word ART.

The failure to hear news of his whereabouts led to alarm among his friends and companions in the aesthetic movement in which he militated, Neoism, a parodic “ism” (one that really exists) which emerged in the late 1970s in Canada and the United States and that advocated counterculture experimental and activist practices using the formats of anonymity, appropriation and “plagiarism”, focusing on the critical practice based on the bourgeois concepts of “identity” and “authorship”.

On 3 January 1995, a news agency released the story. The next day the news was already in all the local papers, and almost no newspapers made any kind of variation in the original text submitted by Blissett. On 6 June, the producers of *Chi l'ha visto* made initial contact with the information sources with a view to broadcasting a special programme.

When the television programme had already been edited and was about to be shown, the channel learned that not only was the disappearance of Harry Kipper a hoax but also his entire existence. The channel decided not to risk its reputation and replaced the scheduled programme at the last minute. However, Luther Blissett had already informed the press of

the truth about the story. The following day the headlines in the papers announced: “*Chi l’ha visto* fooled. Milella in ridiculous search for a Harry Kipper who doesn’t exist!”

**TITLE:** *Dow Chemical*

**AUTHOR:** The Yes Men

**YEAR:** 2004 (3 December)

**PLACE:** BBC studios – Paris

**MEDIUM:** Television / Internet

**Courtesy of the artists**

Pretending to be someone else precisely in order to reveal what is really concealed: that is what was behind the memorable action performed by the Yes Men when one of their members, pretending to be a representative of the American company Dow Chemical, announced in a television interview on the BBC, speaking live and to the whole world, that the company would finally pay compensation amounting to 12,000 million dollars to the victims of the chemical disaster in Bhopal (India), an accident that occurred in 1984 because of the lack of safety systems and that caused the death of 20,000 people and consequences for about 600,000 as a result of inhaling hydrocyanic acid.

The pressure produced by the declarations of the false representative of Dow Chemical (Jude Finisterra) in the financial, media and social worlds, made via such an apparently reliable medium as the BBC, reflected precisely everything that was intended to remain covered up. The Dow share price on the Frankfurt stock exchange fell abruptly in 20 minutes, wiping 2,000 million dollars off its market value; all the media made the story “Breaking News”; and the population in Bhopal celebrated the resolution of what, after 20 years, seemed to be a lost battle. Two hours after the broadcast the real representatives of Dow Chemical had to issue a communiqué in which they declared that Jude Finisterra did not work for the company, that it had all been a mere hoax and that no compensation for the victims of the chemical disaster was contemplated. The fake announcement, a fictitious action, brought about full revelation of the truth, which always hurts.

The Yes Men emerged at the beginning of the millennium, created by Jacques Servin (alias Andy Bichlbaum) and Igor Vamos (alias Mike Bonnano). In previous years they had both contributed to the development of a new kind of activism known as Culture Jamming or guerrilla communication, which used techniques such as imposture and taking over commercial or corporate identities to denounce the shady practices of the political and consumer industries.

22

**TITLE:** *Décret n° 1* (Decree no. 1)

**AUTHOR:** Rogelio López Cuenca

**YEAR:** 1992

**PLACE:** Universal Exposition in Seville

**MEDIUM:** Action / Installation

**Courtesy of the artist and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid**

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the following decade, Rogelio López Cuenca began a series of projects distinguished by their search for a paradoxical interruption of the meaning of the communication codes associated with certain urban spaces or areas of transit, mixing up formats and messages in such a way that the confusion that was produced altered the social actors' relaxed expectations of perception.

In 1992, Rogelio López Cuenca produced *Décret n° 1* as part of the visual arts programme of Expo '92, the Universal Exposition in Seville, to be displayed in the public spaces of the event. It was an action/installation consisting in placing a series of information panels that made parasitic use of the forms and formats of the official signposting of the area. Printed on the panels were camouflaged informative icons and texts that infiltrated "other" discourses into the official structure. The words were written in various languages and they were often paraphrases in reverse of iconic literary or philosophical sayings, or else they did not convey any intelligible message.

The work was censored by the people responsible for Expo '92. The area where the signs were to be placed – in principle, the entire area of the Exposition – was progressively restricted and was finally limited to a mere "artistic zone": the organisation's main concern was that there should be no confusion and that the signs should immediately be perceived as art. In the end, *Décret n° 1* was not exhibited to the public.

23

**TÍTULO:** *Český sen* (The Czech Dream)

**AUTHOR:** Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda

**YEAR:** 2004

**PLACE:** Prague (Czech Republic)

**MEDIUM: Video / Advertising campaign**

**Courtesy of Taskovski Films**

*The Czech Dream* is a documentary that describes the process of producing an advertising campaign for a fake low-cost hypermarket near Prague. The starting point was the debate that was taking place in Czech society at the time about the constantly rising index of consumption and advertising in a country that only a decade earlier was communist, and it was precisely then that the Czech Republic had to decide whether to join the European Economic Community or not. Klusák and Remunda, the directors (who were film students), decided to construct a great fiction to reveal certain social drives which were concealed in that debate.

They went to an advertising agency and a public relations agency and persuaded them to carry out an advertising campaign in all kinds of media, announcing the opening of the *Český sen* (Czech Dream) shopping centre. Some of the promotional messages were “Don’t come” and “Don’t spend”, underlining a parodic description of the mechanisms of constructing advertising messages and their effects on the consumer; all conveyed in a narrative like a television reality show in which the leading actors are themselves the authors.

The documentary ends on the day of the opening of the hypermarket, 31 May 2003. Over 3,000 people turned up, attracted by the campaign, but what looked like a large building in the distance was in reality an empty set. The discovery that it was all a trick produced various reactions among the people present, ranging from understanding to anger and rage. The response in many of the media was enormously virulent, and the project was even discussed in the Czech parliament.

**24**

**TITLE: *Mexico vs Brazil***

**AUTHOR: Miguel Calderón**

**YEAR: 2004**

**PLACE: A bar in São Paulo (Brazil) – *Bienal de São Paulo***

**MEDIUM: Video**

**Courtesy of the artist and Kurimanzutto Gallery**

September 2004. A bar in São Paulo in the afternoon. Someone turns on the television and there is a broadcast of a football game on the Televisa international channel, a match between the Brazil and Mexico teams. The customers mutter in surprise because nobody knows about the match.

The game begins badly for Brazil, who soon let in two goals. The minutes pass and the Brazilian stars seem to be having a bad day. At half-time the score is Mexico 9, Brazil 0. A great embarrassment for the Brazilian team. Nothing changes in the second half: the Mexican goals continue to accumulate while the Televisa commentators do not conceal their delight at the hiding that the Brazilian team, five times world champions, is receiving. The final score is scandalous: Mexico 17, Brazil 0.

It was all really a hoax carried out by the Mexican artist Miguel Calderón, who wanted to short-circuit expectations about national identities by intruding for a few minutes into the immediate passions of the audience, until, of course, they became suspicious. Calderón commented: "I wanted to carry out a psychological study of Mexicans and I realised that it was possible to reflect a collective attitude through football. What happens in football is a reflection of what happens in our society; I wanted to play with manipulating reality in order to activate a sensation not only of absurdity but also of tragedy."

**25**

**TITLE:** *Consulate 5.1*

**AUTHOR:** Pep Dardanyà

**YEAR:** 2003

**PLACE:** Zwalm (Belgium)

**MEDIUM:** Action / Installation

**Courtesy of the artist**

With *Consulate 5.1*, Pep Dardanyà transformed an uninhabited house in Rozebeke, a small town in the municipality of Zwalm (Belgium), into the offices of a bogus Consulate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the former Belgian Congo. During the days before the inauguration, leaflets were delivered to the letterboxes of the population of Rozebeke and neighbouring towns, announcing the opening of the Consulate and giving a detailed account of the services that it offered.

The effectiveness of the project was based on the revival of certain conflictive aspects of

Belgian history, contextualising them metaphorically in the present. The sudden appearance of a Congolese diplomatic representation in a small town such as Rozebeke was utterly shocking: it reopened an episode of history that is still regarded with pride by some Belgians, and with outrage by others, and it attempted to restore the political dimension of public space and to convert it into a point of confrontation and social interaction.

For the artist, it is a matter of “adopting and appropriating cultural codes, behaviours and everyday formalisations, and works of world cultural heritage, and putting them to work in a different context. The goal is to learn how to appropriate these structures in order to endow them with a different content that will generate a critical reflection upon their immutability.”

**26**

**TITLE:** *¿Es mailing mail-art? (Is mailing mail art?)*

**AUTHOR:** Isidoro Valcárcel Medina

**YEAR:** 1992

**PLACE:** Madrid

**MEDIUM:** Written correspondence

**Archivo Lafuente, Heras, Cantabria**

Valcárcel Medina’s objective of making art abandon the security and visibility of its ecosystem and immerse itself in competition with the media, in which we are “forced” to be participants (“participation art”), was perfectly manifested in the mail book *¿Es mailing mail-art?* Its pages contain a meticulous memorandum of the written correspondence maintained in the course of a year with all the organisations responsible for any kind of advertising material addressed to him personally that landed in his mailbox. The aim was to maintain a dialogue with those who address us by our name, and to reply courteously to those who indicate a concern to improve our living conditions. Valcárcel Medina ignored the object that was promised in the circulars and focused on the literal expression of what they said they promised, proposing a bidirectional relationship that closed the fictitious order of communication and disclosed the fallacies of commercial fantasy, converting those who demanded his attention into those on whom demands were made.

The adoption or appropriation of the enemy’s signs is one of the main techniques of camouflage. The simulation of legalistic administrative language may serve as sheep’s clothing for the purpose of subsequently exposing the impostures of the commercial system. Disruptive actions of this kind which operate on the very space and mechanisms of

advertising language were continued in the early years of this millennium in works such as Joan Fontcuberta's *Santa Inocencia* (Holy Innocence), 2008, in which the artist dealt with the narrative possibilities of spam or junk mail by compiling an exchange of correspondence with an internet scammer known as "Captain Hook", with Fontcuberta pretending to be a priest at the Sagrada Família basilica, backed up by photographs.

**27**

**TITLE: *Opération Lune* (The Dark Side of the Moon)**

**AUTHOR: William Karel**

**YEAR: 2002**

**PLACE: Paris**

**MEDIUM: TV (ARTE France channel)**

Taking the notion of *documenteur* (liar documentary) proposed by the filmmaker Agnès Varda as his starting point, in 2002 William Karel made *Opération Lune*, one of the most remarkable fake documentaries in history. It "explains" how the then president of the United States, Richard Nixon, ordered the preparation of a film set in which to shoot scenes of men landing on the Moon, in order to be sure of the availability of pictures of an event of such iconic dimensions, given the fear that a film of the real landing might not be possible.

The documentary shows that in fact the real film of Neil Armstrong's steps on the Moon on 20 July 1969 did not go as planned because of the "clowning" that he did in front of the camera, and that the pictures that we are all familiar with now are really the result of a secret film made in the studio and directed by Stanley Kubrick, who was then shooting *2001, A Space Odyssey*.

In view of the risk that the whole plot might come to light, and spurred on by the announcement by the KGB (Soviet secret service) that they had discovered that the pictures were false, the White House decided to eliminate the whole film crew that had taken part in the shooting, only sparing the life of Kubrick.

To give credibility to the story, together with the parts played by actors Karel included real interviews with important American political personalities and with Kubrick's widow. At the same time, the use of archive material from various sources that had covered the Watergate scandal gave the general appearance of the "documentary" a surprising level of truthfulness. It was not until the end of the programme that a series of "bloopers" (recorded sequences containing mistakes) revealed that it was a hoax. But who waits to see the credits

of a documentary?

*Opération Lune* is often cited as one of the greatest works of “mockumentary” or fictitious documentary, not only because of its impeccable construction and the intelligent humour of the script but also precisely because it deals with one of the fundamental aspects of contemporary image culture: suspicion and conspiracy theories.

The influence of *Opération Lune* on the audio-visual world has been evident since it was first shown. In Spain, it reached its height in the recent case of the mockumentary about the attempted coup d'état on 23 February 1981; entitled *Operación Palace* (2014), it was directed by Jordi Évole for his television programme *Salvados* and was directly inspired by Karel's original programme.

**28**

**TITLE: *Videocracia. Ficción y política* (Videocracy. Fiction and politics)**

**AUTHOR: Jorge Luis Marzo and Arturo “fito” Rodríguez**

**YEAR: 2012**

**PLACE: Soy Cámara programme**

**MEDIUM: Spanish Television (La 2)**

**Courtesy of the authors**

In 2008, in the context of the investigation carried out for the exhibition *Spots electorales. El espectáculo de la democracia*, presented at La Virreina Centre de la Imatge in Barcelona and devoted to an exploration of the world of electoral propaganda in television broadcasting all over the world between 1989 and 2008, Marzo and Rodríguez – the curators of the exhibition – had an opportunity to interview many of the people responsible for the electoral marketing of dozens of political parties in Spain and elsewhere. In view of the often delicate nature of the revelations made in the interviews, and in order not to compromise the sources of information, Marzo and Rodríguez decided to create a fictitious person – Roberto Alfa – and pretend that he existed, with the aim of putting in his mouth the words that they had really heard.

Alfa became one of the most important figures in Latin American political marketing, closely connected with certain Spanish parties (something that is really quite common). His assassination in strange circumstances gave the story the necessary element of dramatic and “conspiranoic” suspense. In 2011 the authors made a television version to be broadcast on

Televisión Española's Channel Two. Nobody in TVE expressed any doubts about the report and it was broadcast without any problems.

29

**TITLE:** *"National Geographic" reveals the Stonehenge swiz*

**AUTHOR:** Antonio Martínez Ron

**YEAR:** 2009 (28 December, the Spanish equivalent of April Fool's Day)

**PLACE:** Fogonazos blog

**MEDIUM:** Internet

Courtesy of the author

The ancient stones of Stonehenge are not the originals but were placed there during restoration activities at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is the bombshell that was announced in the well-known scientific blog *Fogonazos*, citing *National Geographic* as the source of the information.

This sensational news story was a trending topic in social networks and featured in numerous blogs and news websites. The hoax made a great impact in the international media, so that *National Geographic* finally had to publicly deny the truthfulness of the information. The scientific journalist responsible for the hoax and the editor of the blog, Antonio Martínez Ron, said that the pictures that accompanied the text were real photographs taken during restoration work on the original stones at the site, without any retouching apart from the addition of the well-known magazine's logo. To give greater verisimilitude, he added real people to the story.

The realm of science is precisely one of the most fertile fields for the perpetration of hoaxes, because the academic structures for the production and diffusion of knowledge use formats and mechanisms that are generally obscure and undecipherable for most of society. At the same time, the conventional elements (citations, references, etc.) on which scientists base the publication of their research are fertile ground for simulations and impostures, because the "spectacle of the result" casts its shadow over the small print of the proceedings. As Martínez Ron commented, "You can't trust everything you read, however well it's presented and however many sources it seems to quote."

**TITLE:** *Un tigre de papel* (A paper tiger)

**AUTHOR:** Luis Ospina

**YEAR:** 2007

**PLACE:** Colombia

**MEDIUM:** Film / Video

Courtesy of the author

Pedro Manrique Figueroa, born in 1934, was a Colombian artist –“discovered” in 1996 – who worked with a world of traditional images that led him to establish radical criteria for visual organisation: distributing religious prints, pasting and unpasting commercial advertisements in trams, and so on. He was an irrepressible bohemian, a political and poetic radical, constantly drifting through life, and when his work was rejected at the great exhibition at the Museo Nacional in Bogotá in 1981 he decided to disappear. All trace of him was lost and the myth began.

The life and work of Manrique Figueroa was the pretext that the filmmaker Luis Ospina used in 2007 to make the documentary *Un tigre de papel*, in which he reviewed the ideological and creative history of a period of Colombian art, that of the complex 1970s. It was a (bri)collage that juxtaposed art and politics, truth and lies, recordings and fiction, scattered fragments, recent evidence and accounts of living persons in the world of Colombian culture; all interwoven with the adventures, dreams and failures of the phantasmal Manrique Figueroa.

*Un tigre de papel* is a very stimulating kaleidoscope that successfully attempts to weigh up the “evidence”, using the documentary format – the format of evidence – to reclaim the memory of a lost, clandestine figure, and, in passing, the memory of an entire generation. Ospina develops a perspective that projects onto itself suspicion about the cultural practices used to create mythologised realities and stories.

**33**

**TITLE:** *Lenín Cumbe*

**AUTHOR:** Agustín Parejo School

**YEAR:** 1992

**PLACE:** Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville

**MEDIUM:** Exhibition

**Private collection. Antonio García and Sebastián Becerra Collection**

One of the most outstanding groups in artistic activism in Spain in the 1980s was the Agustín Parejo School (1982–1994). Convinced that creativity should not be restricted to the world of the professionals and that it could be completely anonymous, APS attempted to withdraw from the conventional territory of art, evade the value of authorship and extend formats, especially on “soft” supports capable of mass distribution such as stickers, posters and postcards, and in videos and recordings of music, graffiti and street actions.

Following an invitation issued by the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville in the context of the year of Expo '92, APS took advantage of the fifth anniversary of the “discovery” of America to present the work of an Ecuadorian artist called Lenin Cumbe. A member of APS who was passing through Guayaquil came across the story of an amateur local artist who painted in a naive style and devoted himself to painting on the surface of television screens, reproducing the news items that tended to appear on them. And he was invited to come to Spain for a future exhibition in Seville.

The resulting exhibition and the publicity about it sought to comply with all the conventions of the art system in order to blur its real nature. The show, entitled *Agustín Parejo School presenta a Lenín Cumbe* (Agustín Parejo School presents Lenin Cumbe), consisted of twelve televisions painted with scenes alluding to various sources of information: politicians, celebrities, war, sport, consumption and emigration. Several of the televisions had been specially painted for the exhibition and they bore some of the Ecuadorian artist's impressions during his brief visit to Spain: Queen Sofía making a toast, a squid sandwich, passport control and a fire at Expo '92.

**34**

**TITLE:** *No Fun*

**AUTHOR:** Eva and Franco Mattes (0100101110101101.org)

**YEAR: 2010**

**PLACE: Internet**

**MEDIUM: Action / Internet**

**Courtesy of the artists**

*No Fun* consists of an edited video of an online performance in which the artists simulated a suicide by hanging while they filmed the reactions of the users who were connected. The performance took place on a popular website (ChatRoulette) that randomly pairs people from around the world for webcam-based conversations. Thousands of viewers watched the person hanging from a rope and swinging slowly, apparently lifeless, for hours.

As Eva and Franco Mattes pointed out, “Based on actual news, *No Fun* tries to create a situation of the most dire loneliness and affect, exaggerating the distance and lack of real engagement in online encounters, to slow down the endless social media flux with a moment of absolute reality.” And they added, “Since we live online, then we should get used to dying online.”

Eva and Franco Mattes operate as a duo under the name of 0100101110101101.org, and they have worked extensively on two main lines of exploration: questioning the social assumptions printed in interactive media, thus becoming one of the most notable creative activist groups in Net Art, and ironic deconstruction of the spaces of cultural veridiction, especially in art. Their collaborative work includes hoaxes such as *Darko Maver* and others with the Luther Blissett collective, also present in this exhibition.

**35**

**TITLE: *Untitled***

**AUTHOR: Passión D. I. (Deportes e Ideas), “conceptuales en la palestra”; Aquassion,  
“Conceptuales en remojo”**

**YEAR: 1977–1979**

**PLACE: Madrid**

**MEDIUM: Action – Regional basketball and water polo championships**

**Courtesy of the artists**

In 1977, a group of artists, some of whom were former Real Madrid and Estudiantes basketball players, sought to get away from the “seriousness” of conceptual art by transferring it to the realm of games. They formed a sports club called *Passión D. I.* (*Deportes e Ideas*), “conceptuales en la Palestra” (*Passión D. I.* [*Sport and Ideas*], “conceptuals on court”) and joined the Castilian Basketball Federation (Third Regional Category) for the 1977–78 season. The club aimed “to make sport not a fight between opponents but an artistic entertainment in which there was room for the most innovative trends in contemporary art, and it came into being as an ideological counterpoint to the idea of the professional sports gladiator that modern high-class competition demands”.

The club distributed pamphlets among the players and spectators, setting out their ideas and intentions. They achieved a certain amount of understanding with some teams and referees, although the Competition Committee fined the club for being “unsportsmanlike”. Some of their directives were:

- Geometry: “Give value to space, geometry is part of the game and it has a great deal to do with visual art; covering a corner is something very serious; make tangents to a circumference; spin round driven by centripetal force and speed off.”
- Competition: “Beating the opponent is not interesting, it’s more worthwhile infecting the opponent with certain attitudes, making the opponent participate in the plays, formally and geometrically, and in your movements in space. It’s interesting to see how they respond to the lack of interest in beating them, and to the interest in creating artistic plays. Playing with what is not stipulated in the rules: feinting or dribbling past a member of the opposing team, and after getting past them keeping the ball bouncing and reciting a fragment of a poem to them; carrying concealed confetti or feathers and dropping them or throwing them – for example, at the same time as shooting in a free throw and scoring; variables in free throws; a free throw like shot putting, throwing as far as possible; the use of humour is fundamental.”
- Interrupted plays: “The stopping of a play as a result of a foul, for example, a backcourt violation, may be part of the play that has been rehearsed, like contemporary dance, where a sudden movement is arrested.”

The team also proposed a series of plays:

- *Flight* play: “On the signal, all the players who are defending run off court in different directions. A vacuum is produced, the attacking team don’t know what to do, they are left on their own, they are not used to having everyone disappear.”
- *Mondrian* play: “Four players keep forming squares in space. The player with the ball tries to pass it to one of these squares, and after releasing it he becomes part of a square too. The player who receives the ball stops being part of a square and tries to make another pass. The players in the other team run round them, drawing lines.”
- *Dada* play: “The players advance in space, making close passes to each other and saying

DA DA DA.”

– *Moebius strip* play: “The players run over the court like a Moebius strip, the ball wanders among them. Squaring of the circle.”

After their experiment with basketball they went on to water polo, joining the First Division for the 1978–79 season under the name of Aquassión, “conceptuales en remojo” (Aquassión, “conceptuals in marinade”). They informed the spectators and the other team of their intentions before each match. They analysed the aesthetic possibilities of their clothing, the playing area, the rules and the referees. In the end they were fined by the Competition Committee and they gave up.

**36**

**TITLE:** *El Gran Trueque* (The Great Exchange)

**AUTHOR:** Matthieu Laurette

**YEAR:** 2000

**PLACE:** Canal Bizkaia (Bilbao)

**MEDIUM:** Television

**Courtesy of the artist**

In 2000, as part of the programmes produced by the Consonni group, the French artist Matthieu Laurette presented *El Gran Trueque*, a television contest broadcast by Canal Bizkaia (the Metropolitan Bilbao television channel), which offered the public a real exchange process: a series of sequential swaps. Using advertising rhetoric and marketing strategies, the programme questioned the capitalist logic of profit.

A leaflet distributed to 150,000 mailboxes provided all the inhabitants of Bilbao with information. Starting on 3 January, every day on Canal Bizkaia, before and after the news, the programme *El Gran Trueque* presented the object of the week. The viewers were invited to phone in to propose the object that they could buy and offer to exchange. Only the highest offer was selected. The purchase of the proposed object and its exchange for the object being offered took place every week in shops in Bilbao before the television cameras and the media, revealing the person who had made the best offer. The object that had been bought and exchanged became the Great Exchange offer for the following week. The first object that was offered was a new car and the series ended with the exchange of trifling objects. The programme was presented by Alicia San Juan and it reached over 50,000 homes every

day.

In using the television as a medium and questioning the criteria of the establishment, Matthieu Laurette went beyond a questioning of the status of the work, ambiguously basing his approach on the relationships existing between the media and the market.

**37**

**TITLE:** *Ever dream this man?*

**AUTHOR:** Andrea Natella

**YEAR:** Since 2006

**PLACE:** The whole world

**MEDIUM:** Graphic campaigns / Internet

**Courtesy of the artist**

In 2006, one of the original participants in the Luther Blissett network, Andrea Natella, created the campaign *Ever dream this man?* It simply consisted of a poster with a man's face accompanied by the recurrent question and a web link. The website explained that in January that year a patient of a well-known New York psychiatrist drew the face of a man who had appeared to her repeatedly in her dreams. On more than one occasion the man had given her advice about her private life. The woman swore that she had never seen him in real life.

One day, another patient recognised the face in the drawing and told the doctor that the man often visited him in his dreams. He also declared that he had never seen him when he was awake. The psychiatrist was surprised and decided to send the portrait to some colleagues. After a few months, four patients had also admitted having seen the face when they were asleep. They all referred to him as "this man".

That's where it all began. A viral graphic campaign all over the world, in which a face on a poster asks, "Ever dream this man?" Thousands of people have admitted having seen this man in their dreams: in Los Angeles, Berlin, São Paulo, Teheran, Beijing, Rome, Barcelona, Stockholm, Paris, New Delhi, Moscow, etc.

*Ever dream this man?* is a kaleidoscopic project that plays with the most elemental techniques of visual and psychological manipulation and desire for social integration, but at the same time it reveals crudely and ironically how contemporary marketing techniques work.

**38**

**TITLE:** *Ha llegado la hora del saqueo* (The time to loot has come)

**AUTHOR:** Preiswert Arbeitskollegen (Sociedad de Trabajo no Alienado)

**YEAR:** 1995 (17 October)

**PLACE:** Madrid

**MEDIUM:** Advertising hoardings and El Corte Inglés

In 1990, some of the collaborators of the Agustín Parejo School collective in Madrid created a new network, Preiswert Arbeitskollegen (Sociedad de Trabajo no Alienado) (Value for Money Workmates [Non-alienated Work Society]), devoted to activism by means of stencilled graffiti, alterations on advertising hoardings and in streets, distribution of printed T-shirts and placing of stickers, providing a direct relationship between maximum circulation and minimum investment. The group defined itself as a “mass movement aiming to regain control of the channels of communication that constitute the real contemporary ecosystem”.

In 1995, anonymously, they began the project *Ha llegado la hora del saqueo*, which consisted in altering an El Corte Inglés advertisement in the Sol (Madrid) metro station and giving out leaflets, encouraging people to go to the branch of this department store in Calle Preciados and take away whatever they could carry. The action was performed and was met with passivity by the shop’s security staff, who saw that the activists were carrying video cameras and assumed that the action was legal. More than twenty-five people responded to the announcement and picked up everything that they could, especially items on the ground floor, but the goods were taken from them by the staff before they left the store.

Later, in 2002, the YoMango (I Pilfer) collective followed the same tactical path: removing clothing from department stores as part of a performance, as a way of disrupting the commercialised public space.

**39**

**TITLE:** *Inserções em circuitos ideológicos* (Insertions in ideological circuits).

*Projeto Coca-Cola* (Coca-Cola project), 1970, and *Projeto Cédula* (Banknote Project),

**1975**

**AUTHOR: Cildo Meireles**

**YEAR: 1970–1975**

**PLACE: Brazil**

**MEDIUM: Legal cruzeiro and dollar bills, and Coca-Cola bottles**

**Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid**

In 1970 the Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles began what he called a series of “insertions in ideological circuits” by graphic manipulation (infiltration) of texts printed on Coca-Cola bottles; for example, “Yankee Go Home”. The words, applied by means of transfers, were in white and were hard to see when there was no liquid. When the bottle was recycled and refilled the text could be read perfectly against the dark background of the contents. According to the artist, the *Inserções* arose out of “the need to create a system for the circulation and exchange of information, circuits that did not depend on any kind of centralised control. A language.”

In 1975 Meireles produced a new series, called *Projeto Cédula*, consisting in altering genuine banknotes by adding messages against the military dictatorship that was then governing Brazil. In one of them, with the message “Who killed Herzog?”, the artist asked about the fate of Vladimir Herzog, a journalist with communist leanings, whose apparent death by suicide in a military cell aroused well-founded suspicions of assassination. Accentuating its viral nature, the project included instructions for the reproduction of the action and declared, “The reproduction of this piece is free and open to all”. Another of the alterations on banknotes (dollars) was “Which is the Place of the Work of Art?”

It is also worth recording a similar action performed in Spain by the anonymous Preiswert Arbeitskollegen collective in 1992, at the time of the Gulf War, when they printed 50,000 stickers with the colours of the national flag and the inscription “ESTADO UNIDENSE” (BELONGING TO THE UNITED STATES) and stuck them on coins.

**40**

**TITLE: *The Domestic Violence Milk Carton***

**AUTHOR: Peggy Diggs**

**YEAR: 1991–1992**

**PLACE: United States**

**MEDIUM: Product design**

**Courtesy of the artist**

This project of “infiltration” by the artist Peggy Diggs consisted of an image printed by Tuscan Dairy Farms on over one million milk cartons, which were distributed throughout New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. The intention was to raise awareness of domestic violence and distribute a helpline. The graphic insertions on the cartons said, “When you argue at home, does it always get out of hand?”, together with a silhouette of a hand and the statement: “If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, call 1-800-333-SAFE.”

The work was part of an extensive investigation by Diggs concerning women’s rights, which included interviews with counsellors of rape victims, lawyers, police officers, social workers and two women in prison, one of them jailed for killing her aggressor. The imprisoned women suggested presenting projects not only in galleries but also in places where the women most severely affected could see the work: in food shops, on bread wrappings, cigarette packets and milk cartons.

Diggs’s interventions form part of the activist practices on behalf of civil rights which began in the late 1970s when the media and marketing established themselves as influential elements in the public sphere and became vehicles that could be occupied and appropriated.

**41**

**TITLE: *Todo es sospechoso* (Everything is suspicious)**

**AUTHOR: Domingo Sánchez Blanco**

**YEAR: 2003**

**PLACE: New York / Barcelona**

**MEDIUM: Action**

**Courtesy of the artist**

Domingo Sánchez Blanco’s work can be described as a series of gestures capable of challenging the status of art. By means of performances, actions and the use of formats that

generally seek to go beyond the boundaries and codes established in the space of art, Sánchez Blanco's work allows us to track down the paradoxes of a social and cultural morality the interpretation and legitimation of which change according to the context in which they operate. A shift in meaning towards the exterior, in the form of a boxer, porno actor, teacher or interviewer, makes it easier for the artist to subvert the expectations of the receivers. Sex, death, love, violence and pornography are his main radical, poetic and ironic points of reference.

In 2003 he decided to perform *Todo es sospechoso*, an act of infiltration in which he presented himself in museums in Barcelona and New York, pretending to be the bodyguard of famous directors, with their connivance. As the artist has written, "The decision to include myself in the milieu of security was due to a desire to unite my memories and experiences of when I was a professional security guard. I wanted to invert the role of the passive artist and enter the protocol of a real situation [...], an institutional project, transporting art to the meccas of prestige and recognition among policies for promotion."

**42**

**TITLE:** *Real Snow White*

**AUTHOR:** Pilvi Takala

**YEAR:** 2009

**PLACE:** Disneyland, Paris

**MEDIUM:** Action

**Courtesy of the artist**

The reality that is acquired by commercial icons, those signs produced in the iconosphere of fantasy, often reveals a series of paradoxes about the condition of the contemporary image and its social use.

In *Real Snow White*, the artist Pilvi Takala presents herself at the entrance to the Disneyland park in Paris dressed in the same way as in the popular 1937 film version of the classic story. Numerous visitors ask her for autographs and photographs until the security services in the park intervene, pointing out to her that it is not allowed to enter dressed as the "real" character. In this way Takala reveals the absurd logic of the "real icon" and the way in which that "reality" is administered, since the American company actually encourages visitors to come dressed as their favourite characters and purchase a large quantity of merchandising products.

The Disney motto that “Dreams come true” acquires a clearly defined meaning: they are dreams produced exclusively by the company. Anything that may slightly question that control immediately conjures up the fear experienced in real dreams, which may be dark and perverse. The reason given to the artist by the park’s security guards for prohibiting the Snow White costume (“we don’t know what kind of activity you may engage in in the park or what image the character will present”) makes the boundary of reality quite clear: the Disney icon does not do bad things, whereas other replicas (“fakes”) may get out of control. The definition of reality is based on managing fear of reality.

**43**

**TITLE:** *Presentation action*

**AUTHOR:** Selección de Euskadi de Arte de Concepto (SEAC) (Basque Country Concept Art Team)

**YEAR:** 1994

**PLACE:** Museo Guggenheim construction work (Bilbao)

**MEDIUM:** Action

**ARTIUM de Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz**

The Basque Country Concept Art Team (SEAC in Spanish) originated in 1994, consisting of Arturo “fito” Rodríguez, Pepo Salazar, Juan Martínez de Ilarduya and Natxo Rodríguez. During a period of four years, SEAC fabricated a series of works in which they often parodied the prevailing structure of art, blurring the boundaries between contemporary art and ordinary events.

In June 1994 the four members of the team, wearing their sporting attire, presented themselves at the site of what was to become the Museo Guggenheim in Bilbao, with the aim of carrying out an “inspection”. They approached the men working in the trenches and had a cordial conversation with them, and then did stretching exercises. After that they went to the museum’s information and enquiries office: “We are the Basque Country team. Can we talk to the person in charge?” They were received by Juan Ignacio Vidarte, an administrator in the Biscay Provincial Council with little aesthetic experience but who became the director of the museum the following year. Vidarte took them to a large room where there was a model of the museum and the surrounding area. With the model before them, and with serious, professional expressions, the team discussed the layout of the buildings and analysed the general view of the estuary. Vidarte, of course, understood

nothing. He thought that they were an under-21 team representing the Basque Country in something and that he should only give them superficial explanations. He was tremendously surprised at the serious museological and urbanistic terminology used by the youngsters, who made acute observations not to be expected from young athletes. The guided visit continued until the end, and throughout it Vidarte was not sure how to appear relaxed. The four members of the team left the building and immediately plunged into the old quarter of Bilbao to down a few pints and take photos of themselves with some fans of the Athletic team and their flags.

**44**

**TITLE: KALAS**

**AUTHOR: Nuria Carrasco**

**YEAR: 2014**

**PLACE: Cartagena de Indias (Colombia)**

**MEDIUM: Action / Advertising**

**Courtesy of the artist**

*KALAS* is a fake version of the magazine *CARAS*, the number one Colombian publication for lifestyle and society, always associated with luxury, elegance and sophistication. Nuria Carrasco reproduces the publication's visual glamour, style, format and layout, but in terms of content she replaces the reality of the Colombian elite with that of the population of African origin in Cartagena de Indias, presenting them without following standard practice with regard to poses and technical quality, but exuding warmth, closeness and a desire for "truthfulness" in a testimony resulting from direct and strongly empathetic personal experience.

*Kala* means "face" in Palenquero, a creole language which has developed from a mixture of Spanish, Portuguese and African languages and which is spoken in San Basilio de Palenque, a town that represents the resistance and survival of the slaves who escaped from capture during the colonial period.

To carry out the Colombian project, Carrasco started from her previous experience in a Saharan refugee camp in the Algerian desert, where she parodied the format of the magazine *¡HOLA!* to reproduce the reality of the experiences of the refugees, with the title translated into the local language as *AHLAN!*

**TITLE:** *Fills de puta* (Sons of bitches)

**AUTHOR:** Víctor Serna, Sofia Tatay, Pau Rausell

**YEAR:** 2014

**PLACE:** Valencia

**MEDIUM:** Video

Courtesy of the artists

This short documentary tells the story of how a large part of Valencian traditions came from certain practices performed by the descendants of the prostitutes in one of the most famous brothels in the Mediterranean, founded in Benimaclet in the fifteenth century, the first report of which mentions a fabulous prostitute, a Persian princess, known as Sara “*la Negrellona*”.

The *fills de puta*, the children born as a result of the sexual relations of the prostitutes, often with customers of high social standing, instead of being abandoned or killed as was customary, were handed over to local families to be brought up and were trained to work on the land. They are responsible for the evolution of the regional gastronomy, such as the paella, among other things. The offspring of the prostitutes were also noted for their great ability to rise in politics, and in the social and cultural world, and for their defence of their specific rights, an aspect that inspired Diderot to write *Le Fils naturel ou Les épreuves de la vertu* (The Natural Son or The trials of virtue) in 1757.

The documentary also describes the first meeting of the *fills de puta* in 1907, which ended with a *kermesse* in full communion with the other residents of Benimaclet, thus giving expression to the longing felt by the *fills de puta* for freedom and integration with civil society. Currently, many residents who are descendants of that brothel merrily continue celebrating their distinctive characteristics together.

On 17 March 2014, the company that produced the documentary, Barret Films, with the participation of Valencia University, announced the first showing. The news reached the editors of the newspaper *Levante-EMV*, who, after viewing the material online and having various conversations with the producer of the video, confirmed the authenticity of the content and published the story the following day. When it was revealed that it was all a hoax the newspaper accused the authors of having carried out a strategy of harassment and abuse of the newspaper.

46

**TITLE:** *Viterbo*

**AUTHOR:** Luther Blissett

**YEAR:** 1995–1997

**PLACE:** Italy

**MEDIUM:** Media

**Courtesy of the artists**

Another of the actions of the Luther Blissett collective (see no. 20) triggered off a whole array of media revelations. Between 1995 and 1997, dozens of people from the region of Lazio, in central Italy, performed a spectacular action in which there were simulations of black masses, ritual sacrifices and witch hunts in the mountains around the city of Viterbo. Newspapers in the city began to report the supposed events, adding various details, and the story eventually appeared in a television programme at a peak time with a roughly made video which contained a kind of satanic ritual abuse, giving rise to collective psychosis. Responsibility was claimed by Luther Blissett during the weekly news programme on the main Italian television channel, with an enormous amount of evidence. The activists used the description “homeopathic counter-information”: by introducing a controlled dose of falseness into the media, Luther Blissett demonstrated the lack of professionalism of most journalists and the senselessness of the moral panic.