

Press release

Paloma Polo Unrest

curated by Nicoletta Daldanise

Exhibition space: Galleria Umberto Di Marino - Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Napoli

Opening: Thursday 11 December 2014 - 7 pm / 10 pm

Duration: until 11 February 2015

Opening hours: Monday - Saturday 3 pm / 8 pm – by appointment in the morning

The Galleria Umberto Di Marino is delighted to present *Unrest*, a solo show by Paloma Polo, on Thursday 11 December 2014. The exhibition, mounted in partnership with Acción Cultural Española (AC/E), provides a preview of a long-term international project involving several institutions: Land Art Contemporary, TAAK, IBON Philippines, Mondriaan Fonds and the Centre for International Studies (University of the Philippines in Diliman).

The so-called "Special Economic Zones" or "Freeports" - regions with special economic legislation set up to attract foreign investors - have been studied by the artist for several years. She provides an interesting insight into the results of socio-economic mechanisms of the western capitalist model, underlining the contradictions implicit in normalisation processes.

The drastic transformations that have affected large parts of the Philippines have been partly due to environmental catastrophes but are mainly linked to the interests of multinationals in the agrarian reforms currently taking place in the country. The support for regulating the productive cycle of rural areas in favour of technologically more efficient cultivation systems has become so significant that it has had a huge influence on political life and the local social fabric.

In particular, intensive deforestation, confiscation and marginalisation has led to a distinctive process of adaptation to the violent changes. Deprived of their means of subsistence and their ties with their own heritage and history, entire communities have been continuously forced to retreat to more peripheral areas, adopting new forms of behaviour to cope with imminent upheavals. Paloma Polo observes their resilience, immersing herself on several occasions in the lives of a group of inhabitants who are still resisting the process of being absorbed into the capitalist model. By avoiding the prejudices and epistemological categories usually applied by scholars to this type of analysis, the artist tries to absorb the culture of this indigenous people, using her experience to formulate models of progress and knowledge that offer an alternative to neo-colonial models.

By following a woman healer, the custodian of the community's ancient "scientific" knowledge of plants and their medicinal uses, Paloma Polo constructs her own personal archive in the series entitled *A fleeting moment of dissidence becomes fossilised and lifeless after the moment has passed*. She tries to portray the physical properties of the plants as well as the complex cosmological system related to their harvesting: their use of nature is not exploitative and this is reflected in the social relations within the community.

Concepts that may appear alien to institutionalised knowledge take on a crucial role here in identifying a possible post-capitalist model, offering a critique of the ideological bias of the terminology and categories applied to anthropological studies in this field. In the video, the close-ups of the inhabitants who attended a multidisciplinary conference on the theme organised by the artist are interwoven with live images of the crumbling natural and architectural landscape. The account of the narrator induces the suspicion that the episode is not just the result of the imagination but constitutes an attempt to provide a historical reconstruction of the events that have taken place in these places. It is a request to listen carefully to a democratic concept of history in which everyone can find a real space of representation.

Paloma Polo, was born in Madrid, in 1983. Lives and works in Amsterdam

Selected solo and group exhibitions:

2013

Things from before....., Parra & Romero, Ibiza, Spain

Il Palazzo Enciclopedico, 55th Venice bienal, curated by Massimiliano Gioni.

2012

Apparent Position, Kurimanzutto gallery. Mexico city.

Apparent Position, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

Gravity and Disgrace, curated by Miguel von Hafe, Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo. CGAC. Galicia, Spain

2011

Modelling Standart, curated by Jorge Satorre y Erick Beltrán, Gallery Joan Prats, Barcelona, Spain

Zomertentoonstelling, curated by Marien Schouten, Paul Andriess Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2010

The Precarious State, curated by Olga Cerdón, The Inkijk, Skor, Amsterdam; Netherlands

Before Everything, curated by Manuela Moscoso and Aimar Arriola, CA2M, (Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo). Madrid, Spain

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