

PILAR ALBARRACÍN

EXHIBITION 29 MAY - 19 JULY 2009
OPENING THURSDAY 28 MAY 2009



Untitled, 2009

Since the early 1990s, Pilar Albarracín has been creating performances and installations that address the clichés of Spanish culture. For her first solo show at the gallery, she is casting her penetrating eye on one of the most widespread and archetypal objects found in modern societies: the postcard – and, in particular, the postcard as a vector of a folkloric vision of the world.

Pilar is not exaggerating when she points out that in the imaginations of most foreigners (*güiri*) the most obvious “souvenir of Spain” is the “flamencas” print. While on the one hand such images hark back to the tourism-promoting policies of the Franco era, with its deliberating projection of a fictive, southern and festive, colourful and sensual country, they also produce a sarcastic fissure in the discourse regarding Spain’s integration in modern-day Europe. We have gone from a period of prejudices, fantasies and phantasmagorias to another, globalised age in which everyone everywhere suffers from the same boredom.

Folklore is a force that enables social groups to recognise themselves in signs and styles which codify identity and perpetuate national narratives. The tradition of Flamenco, for example, is conducive to the expression of the Spanish people’s existential and political concerns, at a time when new conflicts are developing between local identities and globalisation.

In the “flamenca postcard,” which attained its canonical form in the 1960s, everything, from the poses of the dancers, imitating amorous seduction, to the loud, lurid colours and the dazzling smiles, worked together to create a dream universe that stood in absolute contrast to political repression. These fable-like depictions were a sub-product of totalitarian diplomacy.

By pastiching this iconography, and putting these prototypes and stereotypes through the filter of her corrosive humour, Pilar Albarracín sets memories of Spain under Franco alongside the dumbing down of our society of consumption which seeks consolation in frantic obsession with fun and gadgets. The postcard works perfectly in establishing a logic of *déjà vu*. We have all succumbed to the desire to make or buy postcards, knowing full well that they are mere clichés. And in fact we must admit that that was precisely what we were looking for.

By appropriating the roles played in tourist imagery, the artist creates a recollection of the past that is designed to provoke. Her postcards, like fetishes, bear a relation to castration, with something that is lacking and that is not easy to restore. As for this militaristic, macho paternalism and its condescending attitude to popular culture and folklore, not much of it seems to be left. Or so we would like to believe.



Untitled, 2009

from “Souvenirs sarcastiques,” a text written by Fernando Castro Flórez
for the exhibition by Pilar Albarracín at the Palacio Episcopal in Málaga

RICHARD JACKSON (USA) - MARTIN KERSELS (USA) - MARTINO PURLANI (CH) - SAVERIO LUCARELLO (FR)
 BORIS ACHOUR (FR) - FELAN ALBARAKADJH (ESP) - MATTHEW ANTLEZZO (UK) - GILLES BARBIER (FR) - ALAIN BUBLEX (FR) - JULIEN BERTHIER (FR)
 JULIEN BREWITT (FR) - MIKE BOUCHET (USA) - VINCENT LAMOURoux (FR) - PAUL MCARTHY (USA) - JEFF MILLS (USA)
 JOACHIM MOGARRA (FR) - KEITH TYSON (GB) - JACQUES VILLEGLÉ (FR) - JULIA WAGSTEL (USA) - OLAV WESTPHALEN (D) - VIRGINIE YASSEF (FR)

VALLOIS

GALERIE GEORGES-PHILIPPE & NATHALIE VALLOIS
 26 RUE DE MEUX 75006 PARIS
 TEL: 01 46 34 61 07 FAX: 01 46 34 61 08
 WWW.GALERIE-VALLOIS.COM GPGPV@WANADOO.FR

**PROJECT
ROOM**

ARNOLD ODERMATT

EXHIBITION 29 MAY - 19 JULY 2009
OPENING THURSDAY 28 MAY 2009



Having introduced the artist in 2006 at our group show «Accidents», Galerie Georges-Philippe & Nathalie Vallois is happy to represent Arnold Odermatt in France and to be following his idiosyncratic career.

From 1948 to the age of his official retirement in the 1990s, Arnold Odermatt was employed as a traffic policeman in the little Swiss canton of Nidwalen, where he still lives. Surrounded by mountains and a big lake, this magnificent and isolated spot was both the subject and setting of the hundreds of photographs taken over the years by police officer Odermatt: accidents, roads, small towns, colleagues at work, portraits. Odermatt took these photographs to supplement his written reports, but he also took other series for himself. And while the deeper reasons for this practice remain mysterious, the quality and beauty of these photographs are undeniably striking. One day, the story goes, Harald Szeemann turned up at the little canton police station, saw the photographs on the wall and decided to exhibit a series of these accident shots at the 2001 Venice Biennale.



But while accidents are the dominant theme of Odermatt's photographs, his images are strangely devoid of violence or signs of physical injury. Sculptural wrecks are viewed in a calm, serene landscape. The series of "Aeroplanes" that we are presenting in this new exhibition no doubt offers one of the most striking examples of the strange, unique character of Odermatt's work. Throughout the 1970s, the artist followed the road transportation of decommissioned aeroplanes from the airport to the regional museum of aviation. The colour and black-and-white photographs that he took evoke the unexpected, poetic and almost unreal atmosphere of this last journey.

As to whether Odermatt's work is or is not art, the question is surely of little interest here. Without a doubt, these photographs touch on a number of artistic concerns of the postwar period: seriality, the uncertain border between art and life, cultural developments, and the gradual encroachments of modernity.

Arnold Odermatt never thought of himself as an artist, but it is with great enthusiasm that we plan to continue showing the different facets of his little-known oeuvre, starting next year.



FOR ANY PRESS INQUIRIES,
 PLEASE CONTACT
 THE GALLERY AT + 33 (0)1 46 34 61 07
 OR BY EMAIL GGPV@WANADOO.FR

24 APRIL - 1TH JUNE
LA FORCE DE L'ART 02 - GRAND PALAIS, PARIS
 (WITH BORIS ACHOUR, GILLES BARBIER, ALAIN BUBLEX, VIRGINIE YASSEF)

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS :

11 SEPTEMBER - 10 OCTOBER 2009
MARTIN KERSELS
 16 OCTOBER - 21 NOVEMBER 2009
ALAIN BUBLEX
 27 NOVEMBER - 21 DECEMBRE 2009
OLAV WESTPHALEN / ADAM JANES