



Sala Gran

IGNASI PRAT

EL MÓN DELS VENCEDORS.

SALÓ DE MAIG

28/05 – 29/06

Ignasi Prat (Sant Esteve de Palautordera, 1981) holds a degree in Fine Art from the University of Barcelona and a post-graduate qualification in photography awarded by the IDEP. He also holds an advanced qualification in photography awarded by the Escola Groc and studied travel and artistic photography at the IEFC. For political reasons and personal interest, his work expresses a political and aesthetic discourse that combines an awareness of photographic theory and a mastery of its practice, and takes the form of series of works, installations, the reappropriation of images, interventions in the public space, video and drawing. He has been awarded grants by the VEGAP, the Sala d'Art Jove and Can Felipa and has received various honours for his work, among them first prize for photography in the Pancho Cossío art competition in Santander, second prize in the Granada Young Plastic Arts Competition, third prize in the Plastic Arts Competition organised by Ourense Provincial Council and the València Crea National Photography Prize. His work also appears in *Arte español contemporáneo (1992-2013)*, published by La Fábrica under the supervision of Rafael Doctor.

Disturbed by the events recounted in Benjamín Prado's novel *Mala gente que camina* (Alfaguara, 2006; *Evil People Walking*) and motivated by the brutality of the harsh repressive measures implemented by the Franco dictatorship, and in particular by the impunity the regime still enjoys today, Ignasi Prat delves into the history of the Franco era by adopting the approach of the archaeologist and by examining the aesthetics of the facades of the homes of the leading figures responsible for the oppression.

The first – and still ongoing – research phase of the project involves these individuals' death certificates, which detail the official addresses of the places where they lived up until their death. These homes were then sought throughout Spain until they were identified and photographed. Prat captures an image that is not so much a memory as it is a spatial and temporal folding of a political instant that has survived, camouflaged in the historical event. He turns a spotlight on these hidden refuges of power that have outlived their owners and which offer not only a home but also all the privileges that go with them to their heirs.

With sharp insight, the photographer subtly draws attention to the absurdity that underpins official history. His work is an unambiguous manifesto of a generational break – the change in the generation with no direct experience of the regime – that explores the economy of the signic experience today and turns the portraits of the world of the victors into the very setting in which doubt is cast on their account, an account which, by consensus, ensured their

immunity, safeguarded their vested interests and silenced the story of the defeated.

Prat's review of the regime's aesthetic premises, which were symbolically fundamental as a mark of social class in its self-portrayal, uses the visible exterior of the places where the vanquishers lived their private lives and presents us with the flipside of their image, a subversive turn which, in an exercise of poetic justice, expresses a commitment to the settling of the debts owed by the past that the present continues to demand. This is a critical cultural practice that draws on historiography and archives, which Prat combines with a body of scrupulous photographic work that employs the medium and its mnemonic function as a means to contradict: the ability of the photograph to convey a revision of history that overturns rather than continues it. Somewhere between visual language and historical narrative, this fusion of political and aesthetic discourse is an act of semiotic responsibility from a particular perspective, the viewpoint of the photographic act and an ethical consideration of historical events.

In this, his first solo exhibition, subtitled *May Salon*, the photographer embraces, with intelligent and perceptive irony, the aesthetics of the art salons mounted by the regime, some of which were held in La Capella itself. The exhibits on display are further complemented by a screening of all the photographs that are part of the project as it stands today and by a publication that accompanies the exhibition.

In the future, *The Victors' World* will incorporate additional material, other homes and new methods, references and tools such as Google Earth. It will also adopt various formats and complementary subtitles to foster new readings and stratagems depending on the context of each exhibition and the degree of its development. It is an open artistic process that is also a provisional historical medium, a way of continuing to focus attention on the urgency of that which is still pending resolution.

