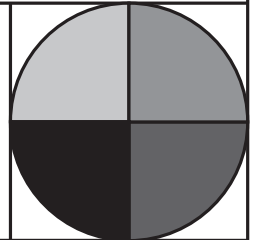




RUBÉN GRILO

02.10.15 / 08.12.15

ENG



WHEN LINES
ARE TIME

ENG/ As a general rule, visiting an exhibition requires us to adopt a series of acquired behaviours, such as attempting to understand and assuming that everything has a meaning. But what if the meaning lies outside of the exhibition? And what if there is nothing to understand, only questions, or a language to work out? Disconnected situations and the need for a logical narrative thread; two elements, two situations.

The Rubén Grilo show that opens the Fundació Joan Miró's Espai 13 exhibition series *When Lines are Time* presents several elements in an asynchronous dialogue. First of all, the light. Grilo modifies the lighting system at Espai 13, turning an element that is usually part of the behind-the-scenes set-up into an artwork in its own right. Instead of a uniform light generated by supposedly neutral lighting, there are numerous light bulbs, all different. These now almost banal domestic objects once implied a revolution: the revolution of electric lighting, and of the power to artificially, accurately delimit time. With night and day under control, it was the start of the separation between the "human" and the "natural" world. Factories were able to dispense with windows and skylights and start continuous production, 24 hours a day. For many years, filament light bulbs have been our companions in life, providing a particular type, tone, rhythm, and colour of light. But following the eco-friendly argument, and given that new types of bulbs are more energy efficient, the market is now backing other types of light sources. The pace has changed, and it seems that we are required to learn anew. There is a great diversity of products (with many different types of light bulbs available), and we still don't know when the ones we are now using will die off. The colour, durations, and trajectories are also unstable, and these variations draw attention to the inner workings of light. Being aware of the mechanics, seeing the process thanks to displacement.

And just as the light fills the space, so does the sound. A layer of sound runs through the entire exhibition. Sound as pitch, as the start of something that may come to be. In an orchestra, the process of tuning instruments to achieve a uniform pitch is crucial: it implies the need for homogeneity and consensus, the desire to participate in a system that is ordered from the start. But the tuning itself is not part of the presentation. In a concert, the accepted consumer code requires that audiences ignore the tuning process, considering it an initial noise that makes it possible for the rest of the performance to sound as it should. An oboe starts off the process by playing a note that all other instruments try to match as closely as possible... instruments being tuned, seeking a standard point of reference for a collective work. Grilo incorporates synthesized oboe sounds in the exhibition, introducing another paradox of industrialization and technology in the face of human randomness.

The exhibition also includes a selection of tubes of paint. Working with the company Kremer Pigments, Rubén Grilo created a new product: paint specifically designed to never dry. And that means never. If you paint a painting with these paints it will remain wet. The paint will always leave a mark, passing from sleeve to sleeve, canvas to canvas, brush to brush. It would be almost impossible to

package or transport such a painting without substantially modifying its surface. Grilo does not paint paintings, rather he changes the temporality by means of technology: by manufacturing paint, going to the source, modifying the code so that everything changes. But is there any point in displaying tubes of paint in an exhibition? These same tubes can also be purchased online and at the Fundació Joan Miró gift shop. We could ask whether there is any difference between the tubes on display in the exhibition, and the tubes that find their way into the market. The tubes in the exhibition are "inactive"; visitors contemplate the paint as an idea, and on the level of ideas they offer endless options waiting to be activated.

And while the tubes of paint are not "paintings", a series of two-dimensional surfaces hang painting-like on the walls of Espai 13: metal sheets with abstract compositions, artificial, magnetized objects that incorporate human movements that are now commonplace in factories. Think of chocolate blocks, for example. They all look the same, but there is always a slight variation or error that sets them apart. The nature of the basic product, chocolate, means that changes in temperature affect their appearance. There are traces in the moulds, and the handling process during packaging introduces the possibility of error. In a reverse engineering manoeuvre, Rubén Grilo takes blocks of chocolate and uses them to make moulds that are then used to make further three-dimensional copies. Blocks of chocolate that are imperfect from the outset, and are subsequently copied by means of new moulds with the help of technology. Machines analyze and map the object to create a supposedly objective copy. Once again, the possibility of error is present, but there is a patent desire to take the chocolate blocks into a different temporality. There is a work in the MACBA Collection by Dieter Roth made out of chocolate that requires a special conservation protocol. In his amazing chocolate factory, Willy Wonka sought total emotion and a child's perspective full of desire and happiness in a factory where time had stopped. If stopping time is possible.

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