
adrian melis

memoria selectiva (selective memory)

10.02.2018—28.03.2018

ADN Galería presents *Memoria selectiva* (Selective Memory). The exhibition presents a set of artworks that reflect upon the concept of the intentional selection of memories, not only in a mentally and psychological level but also in a socio-political dimension, which finally filters and even erases those evocations, replacing them for fake memories created upon convenience. Censorship, reproduction and construction of memories in Adrian's works state that new speeches generate new realities upon self interests, providing evidence of methods and manipulations adopted by post-truth politics.

Empty Page (2016-2017) is a company based in Baden, Switzerland, founded by Adrian Melis. The company acquires and processes information, data and statistics online that report other companies or Swiss banks that carry out a "questionable" activity, fiscal fraud, tax evasion, money laundering and so on. Empty Page protects the Swiss image, its financial and bank systems and its reputation applying a "damage control" strategy as manual shredding, audio distortion or even audiovisual censorship. Therefore the information is manipulated, transformed, erased and changed by the employees who apply absurd methodologies bordering on surreal office-chores tasks and performances.

Adrian Melis reminds us that corruption is a global phenomenon. The cases are innumerable, the economic data indecipherable, the prejudice towards the public affairs unquantifiable and the informative misunderstandings, coped with the spectacularization of *infotainment*, becomes imperceptible. According to Roland Barthes, an idyllic and utopic community is characterized for being a space without repression, "without listening", where it could be heard but not listened and, by extension, it wouldn't be possible to act consequently. So we should reflect upon our relationship with corruption from the literality of what would mean belonging to a utopic, isolated and remote community from any kind of listening.

In *Omertà* (2018), Adrian Melis collects fragments of different trials and interrogatories to politicians and public servants imputed for corruption in Spain within the last 5 years. The moments selected are those in which the judges and the lawyers, as well as those interrogated, remain in silence. Background sounds like microphones, the spectators whispering, people taking notes, the browsing of pages and so on, are some of the sounds that can be perceived during the course of the video, with a silent background that again proves its continuity in the space that belongs to the spectators. The performativity of silence include the background sounds—whispering, interferences and other residual sounds—if we accept the conclusion made up by John Cage in his own anechoic camera, which establishes that the absolute silence doesn't exist.

We tend to imagine the act of exhibiting as a sometimes revolutionary declaration, an act made to elaborate the best possible noise within a silence that rests. Any possible revolution needs its images to resonate and to be as eloquent as possible. During the 90s, in a post-soviet Cuba marked by the lack of government's plan towards the intern economy and the lack of sources, Cuban people managed to survive the so-called "special period". *Planificación encubierta* (2018) narrates the story of Marta Teste, the artist's grandmother, and its particular world of survival composed by an important number of community micro-companies, some of them from a surrealist imaginary, applied in the neighbourhood of la Timba (Havana) where both lived after the fall of the USSR. As if they were sections of a big company, these micro-companies are divided in: resource administration, traffic and raise of Siamese cats, distribution of goods, manpower resources, ideology (applied to the Cuban socialism with the benefits of capitalism) and importation.

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c/Enrique Granados, 49, SP. 08008 Barcelona. (+34) 93 451 0064, info@adngaleria.com www.adngaleria.com

Carlos Aires — Iván Argote — Marcos Ávila Forero — Virginie Barré — Abdelkader Benchamma — Tobias Bernstrup — Santiago Cirugeda — Igor Eškinja — Mounir Fatmi — Daniel & Geo Fuchs — Kendell Geers — Núria Güell — Margaret Harrison — Bouchra Khalili — Adrian Melis — Eugenio Merino — Carlos Pazos — Bruno Peinado — Federico Solmi

Through this diary in progress, Marta Tese and Adrian Melis involve themselves and manage to hack, at punctual times, the communist reality of their neighbourhood in the isle through the insertion of a system that twenty-five years later holds many valid keys and could be reused.

As a transition from reproduction to construction, *The New Man and My Father* (2015) reflects upon the events that changed the history in Cuba and its new relationship with the United States. The video consists of a silent interview with the artist's father, Antonio Melis, raised during the height of the Revolution, and his confrontation towards Adrian Melis' questions regarding the aging of the revolutionary dream and the possible arrival of capitalism. The video approaches sociopolitical issues related to the idea of a possible change in the island. His father doesn't say a word and avoids answering while the video goes by. A silent environment, discomfort and multiple ambiguous expressions complete a failed interview that shows the main character's confidence in the revolution's triumph and the materialization of a utopia.

In different doses and point of views, this very same idea is present in the lives of the 25 Sirian, Afghan and Iranian refugees of *Anechoic Room* (2017). 25 refugees that ended up "trapped" in Athens along their way to Europe are gathered in a recording studio and play the role of *Foley artists**. They fill silences in the past and replace non-desired sounds for ideal sounds by reproducing the original soundtrack of their journeys: Hayfa recreates an imaginary family meal with her son Tarek; Ghazi reproduces the trip to his son's grave, who was killed in the border between Turkey and Syria, now under ISIS domination. The objects that were used by the refugees are instruments along with the soundtracks created by the *Foley artists*, and invite the spectator to imagine a narrative that existed only in the refugees minds and the recording studio. The *Foley artists* are real acousmatic beings, in charge of codifying a sounded landscape that unites them in the tragedy of their leakage and brings them closer to the idea of a temporary community after the disaster. *Anaechoic Room* is one more attempt to reconcile opposites—the mute, the sound—and make silence perceptible to the ear in a way that we can listen to the *unnamable*, as Thoreau once wrote.

Adrian Melis compiles in his work ruins of utopia, dreams and nightmares, bounded by images, lines and walls visible and invisible, marked by the economy and its social effects. He has brought them close to the cultural bustle of a space for art, apparently in an area placed in the middle of a geographic and economic spot that is denied to many people's lives. Maybe this decision has let us come closer, for an instant, to that revolutionary quote claimed, among others, by Berríos and Jakobsen, which states that the Revolutionary Exhibition is going to turn the museum's saloons into places to express real subjects in the real world.

**Foley artists* are responsible for any sound effect that is included in a movie during post-production to improve the audio's quality and create a clearer and more realistic atmosphere of the scene, filling gaps of sound that don't exist in reality throughout the reproduction of sounds from steps to heave breathing, traffic, turning pages, doors cracking and so on.

bio

/Adrian Melis, 1985

/Adrian Melis takes as a starting point the socioeconomical circumstances in Cuba and Europe and reflects upon how the constantly changing *status quo* affect people's lives and the ways in which society operates in its structural frames. Adrian Melis has exhibited solo in institutions such as Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia in León and Kunsthalle Basel in Switzerland. He has participated in several institutional group shows such as MoMa in New York, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art in United Kingdom, Es Baluard in Palma de Mallorca, Stedilijk Museum in Amsterdam, Centre Pompidou in Paris and Centre d'Art La Panera in Lleida.

/His works are in different institutional collections such as MACBA in Barcelona, Kadist Art Foundation in San Francisco, Collection Alain Servais in Belgium, Museum of Modern Art of Warsaw, Modern and Contemporary Art Museum in Santander, or the Bragales Collection. He has won many awards such as Art Nou Award 2013 to the best Exhibition and GAC Award 2014 to the best exhibition in a private gallery.

/Web: <https://www.adrianmelis.net> | Instagram: @adrian_melis