

# Adrian Melis -Time to relax-

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## Adrian Melis (1985, Cuba)

Adrian Melis was born in 1985 in La Havana (Cuba) and he now lives and works in Barcelona (Spain). He studied at the Art Superior Institute (I.S.A.), La Havana, and he is graduated from the Chair of Arte Conducta, directed by Tania Bruguera, I.S.A. (La Havana, Cuba). His work was exhibited internationally in Cuba, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Belgium, Russia, France, Germany, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico and China. Melis has had important exhibitions in museums and institutions such as the Kunsthalle Basel, The Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the Queens Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Santander, among others. Adrian Melis has recently received the prestigious grant of the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam for investigation and creation. In 2012 he has been awarded with the GAC Prize for the best exhibition in a commercial gallery in Barcelona with the show New structures of production at ADN Galería. Melis' artworks are part of public collections such as the MAS Santander (Spain), Fundación MACBA Barcelona (Spain) and Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej – Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (Poland); among the most prestigious private collection could be mentioned the Collection Los Bragales (Spain), Collection A.Servais (Belgium), Collection Lemaître (France), and Collection Teixeira de Freitas (Portugal).



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In his second solo show in Barcelona, Adrian Melis presents at Adn Gallery: *Time to relax*. Instead of focusing its research in the imposed socio political frameworks existing in Cuba as he did in his first exhibition, the artist confronts here the Spanish contemporary situation centring his attention in the dichotomy of concepts such as presence / absence, voice / silence, leisure / claims, political discourse / social reality.

Throughout the six proposals [*Ovation* (2013); *Replacement Points* (2013); *Light off* (2013); *Time to relax* (2013); *Moments that shaped the world – Primavera Sound* (2012) and *The best effort* (2013)] that can be seen in the gallery, the artist suggests new ways of looking at present problems from a subtitle and poetical angle. It is no longer a matter of examining the grey areas of the system nor pointing out the parallel activities that can be produced to escape the control, the Cuban artist brings in *Time to relax* the subject to the foreground. Thus, the subjectivity of the witness becomes the leitmotiv and essential tool to read the exhibition; Adrian Melis gives voice to different collaborators yet not visible in the projects they exist behind the photographs and installations.

*Ovation* (2013) – is a video piece which assembles images of the Spanish Conference Hall from the "Spanish transition" in which the deputies applaud. Acclaims to laws and to its same counter-laws that are grouped in this endless applause that questions the political state system.

*Time to relax* (2013) - The photographic series consists of sixteen shots taken from homes expropriated by banks in Spain in the last two years. Melis depicts views from windows, balconies, terraces which don't belong anymore to their owners: sky views, trees, antennas, walls and buildings compose a mosaic of lost intimacy and daydreaming. Each shot is post-produced incorporating the date of eviction and the name of the bank owner of the rather poor real estate.

*Light off* (2013) – an arrangement of four transparent cubes which are lit internally by coloured lights changing at irregular intervals from green, to red and then to blue. Visitors are invited to take a seat. The lights are connected to a website created by Melis which it –self is connected to the Spanish stock market index, IBEX 35. Via the website's connection to the stock exchange the green light signals that the index is rising, the red light indicates the fall, the blue light indicates periods of stability.



*Replacement points* (2013) - In the twenty photographs of the series *Replacement points*, Melis highlights the tension between presence and absence, voice and silence related to contemporary political and social events. The images taken in the city of Barcelona and its suburbs show freshly painted walls hiding phrases of social protest previously written on. These phrases appear below the photographs, in the form of subtitles that decode neutral images.

*Moments that shaped the world – Primavera Sound (File II)* (2012) – juxtaposes images from a popular music festival in the city of Barcelona and the audio archive of the manifestations and street protests of the M-15 movement, which marked the most recent socio-political events.

For the installation *The best effort* (2013), the artist initiated four advertising campaign in Spain for few jobs. The incoming calls of job-seekers are redirected to one of the telephones that is installed in the exhibition space at Adn Gallery. Each advertising is connected with one of the four telephones displayed at the gallery. At the same time, each telephone is connected to one speech of the four Spain's prime ministers: Felipe González, José María Aznar, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Mariano Rajoy. Every time someone calls regarding these jobs and depending on the add one of the audios is activated and can be heard at the exhibition room. All of them are optimistic and positive speeches about the Spanish growth and the creation of multiple jobs, the progress and increase of Spanish economy as well as the development of the country. While the ringing phone itself is ignored and not picked up, the four Spain's primer minister's speeches are replayed repeatedly, making visible the gap between the realities of the working world in the country and the dynamics of contemporary politics.

#### *Fragmento de discurso de José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero 14.11.2010 (Viladecans, Barcelona)*

"... Es ese contrato de futuro. Un contrato por el que, a los jóvenes con formación o con menos formación se les va a dar un crédito equivalente al salario mínimo o al salario medio según la formación para que puedan cualificarse y formarse para que puedan encontrar un empleo cuanto antes. Es una gran propuesta. Es la propuesta similar a muchas de las políticas mas avanzadas a favor del empleo en los países europeos. Estos han logrado desde hace años mas éxito a favor del empleo para los jóvenes. Nadie puede discutirnos que el conjunto de las mejoras y del bienestar de la ciudadanía en este país lleva la firma socialista. Todas las Grandes aportaciones, leyes y reformas para hacer el estado de bienestar y las políticas sociales en este país las ha hecho el partido socialista. Desde Felipe Gonzales hasta hoy..."

#### *Fragmento de discurso José María Aznar 12.2.2000 (Salamanca)*

"... Nosotros tenemos la gran responsabilidad de transmitir a todos los españoles que vamos a superar una etapa de desunión, una etapa de enfrentamiento y una etapa de retroceso apostando por una etapa de unión, una etapa de concordia. Una etapa dedicada a construir cosas, de prosperidad, de oportunidades para la gente. Eso es lo importante. Se pueden tener los presupuestos equilibrados y la economía saneada porque hemos demostrado que se puede tener. Claro que se puede hacer crecer la economía y claro que se puede tener un gobierno competente. La España que nosotros hoy vivimos en el año 2000 tiene el numero de ocupados mas alto de la historia. El numero de ocupantes de la seguridad social mas alto de su historia. El ritmo de creación e empleo mas alto de Europa y las mejores posibilidades para en tres años mas crear otro millón cuatrocientos mil puestos de trabajo en España. Es lo que nosotros proponemos..."

#### *Fragmento de entrevista a Felipe González. Elecciones 1996. (TVE)*

"...Para empezar debo decir que ya coincidimos todos en que esta es la mejor generación que hemos tenido de jóvenes. La mas preparada de la historia. El problema del empleo es un problema fundamental, básico para la entrada de estos jóvenes, los mejores formados de la historia, en el mercado de trabajo. No solo hace falta crecimiento económico, que es lógico que haga falta para crear empleo. Hacen falta políticas activas de empleo. Para empezar podemos demostrar que el año 1995 ha sido un año en el que se han creado 1300 puestos de trabajo diarios o 1200. La inmensa mayoría puestos de trabajo indefinidos. Por consiguiente ha habido 12000 contratos indefinidos, 60000 autónomos y 110000 contratos de otros tipos. Esto ya está en la práctica. Tenemos políticas activas en formación profesional y llegamos y no había programa de formación profesional. Queremos políticas activas en contratos a tiempo parcial. El nuevo yacimiento de empleo sea en medio ambiente o sea en lo que llaman trabajos de proximidad. Creemos que además de las reglas del mercado, del crecimiento económico, tiene que haber una voluntad política para abrir una brecha en ese muro que separa la juventud del trabajo.