

Galerie

Greta Meert

Iñaki Bonillas

Born in 1981, Mexico City

Lives and works in Mexico City



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Iñaki Bonillas

GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Iñaki Bonillas

(DÉTAIL)

21 April
— 2 July 2016



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2013

It had been commonly accepted in art history that details were of the utmost importance in the new élan that arose in 15th century painting, not least because of the exceptionally high quality of their technical execution. In 2001, however, David Hockney published his polemic *The Secret Knowledge*, in which he demolished the myth of the genius of the Renaissance painter by attributing the stylistic innovations to the painter's use of optical devices such as mirrors and lenses. The investigation into early forms of photography in artistic creation, is what links Hockney's research to Iñaki Bonillas' work. Indeed, since the late 1990s the latter has been focusing on an analytical exploration of the medium of photography, its material reality and image production. (*Détail*) reads like a kind of photographic pre-history of photo-like images.

The five installations along the walls of the gallery space refer to the starting point of the exhibition: old art catalogues with masterpieces by Caravaggio, Van Eyck, Ingres, etc. This visual source material has been translated into a textual structure (line, footnote, header) in which photographic sources and reproductions have been arranged on different levels of information. At the center are details photographically reproduced by the artist and enlarged to a 1:1 scale of the original painting. At the bottom and on top, we find either original pages taken directly from books or photographs of double page spreads where two or more details appear.

The artist decided to maintain the color of the central details, because the chromatic "reality" in books is almost always altered, so that the images that are portrayed differ dramatically from the original. The idea was then to emphasize that quality by grouping the pictures by their main color. In doing this, Bonillas also took some inspiration from Aby Warburg and his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, where "visual clusters" served for illustrating one or several thematic areas. Only these are not ordered here according to the history of style, but rather through visual similarity. That is: relationships caused by an affinity either of color or of form (many times what relates one image to the other is a feature: for example, in both appears the same posture of the hands, or the same kind of landscape). At the end, it has to do with the old principle of "good company".

So, thinking again on a textual structure, color details would work here as text, and the rest of the images, kept in black and white, would be like footnotes and comments made on the side. With this, not only the idea of fragmentation is reinforced (since each image is just a part of a whole), but also is the notion of painting being reproduced incessantly, up to a point where we are about to no longer know how an original painting looks—because, paraphrasing T. S. Eliot, we "know only a heap of broken images" reproduced in a book. Through a projection on a transparent surface in the middle of the gallery space, light enters as if through a window, and windows are also what the artist has chosen to project here, because they are already details in themselves, as paintings within paintings, already framed and independent. This continuous play of various scale and color defines the rhythm of the entire exhibition.

In line with the conceptual tradition, the exhibition is laced with reflections both on the relationship between visual and textual signifiers and on photographic reality through an endless process of multiplication and reproduction. (*Détail*) is a brilliant addition to the relationship with the medium of photography that Iñaki Bonillas has established throughout his oeuvre.



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2013



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2013

Iñaki Bonillas

Días de campo

March 24
— May 14, 2011



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2011

Greta Meert Gallery presents the third solo exhibition of Iñaki Bonillas (Mexico City, 1981).

The work of this Mexican artist is constituted as an analytical and empirical research into the photographic medium and its production of images. Through numerous experiments with mainly analogue apparatuses, development methods, carriers, light sources, etc in his practice Bonillas shifts the attention from the subject to extra-photographic factors. Starting from the material reality and the technological process he revalorises photographic objectivity.

More often than not the image itself is taken out of the photograph. Although they lack external reference, description or representation, Bonillas' 'imageless' works possess an explicit poetical quality. The artist not only masters light, in all its degrees and distortions but he also pays close attention to the auditive and textual aspects.

A more personal touch is involved in the uncovering of the photo archive of J.R. Plaza, Bonillas' grandfather. Apart from its intense biographical value, the significance of this archive also lies in its having been frequently exhibited since 2003. Indeed, the fact the amount of images is confined does not appear to limit the formation of meaning. Rather than a reconstruction of reality, Bonillas delivers a comment on the status of photographic reality.

In twenty photographs from the archive, the central composition, *Dias de Campo*, tells the story of a family tradition: eating and relaxing in the countryside, alfresco. As the archive evolves over time, the frequency of these shots diminishes and the artist experiences this development as a rupture – with a tradition, with a way of living, with our relationship to nature. In a play with photographic codes each image is broken up into a negative and a positive, creating a contrast between the photographic and the real space, between the natural and the human 'sphere'.

The theme of a disused tradition is taken up again in *The Duel*, a dynamic field of action, consisting of nine combinations of film stills from Ridley Scott's *The Duellists* (1977). The film is based on Joseph Conrad's *A Military Tale*, which sets out from the concept of the duel as "that point of honour". In the photographic staging the battle is both between the duellists and between the images themselves, bathing in symbolic red.

A third work is titled *Germinal*, after the verb 'to germinate' and the name for the first month of the spring quarter in the French Republican calendar. Six photographs register the restoration process of a late 19th century painting of a bucolic scene depicting two girls in the country. Each photograph differs a tone from the previous one, as if the light was slowly germinating (or decaying, depending on which perspective). A second discourse, more rooted in art history, refers to the original image – the painting – as the 'germ' of the photographic material.



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2011

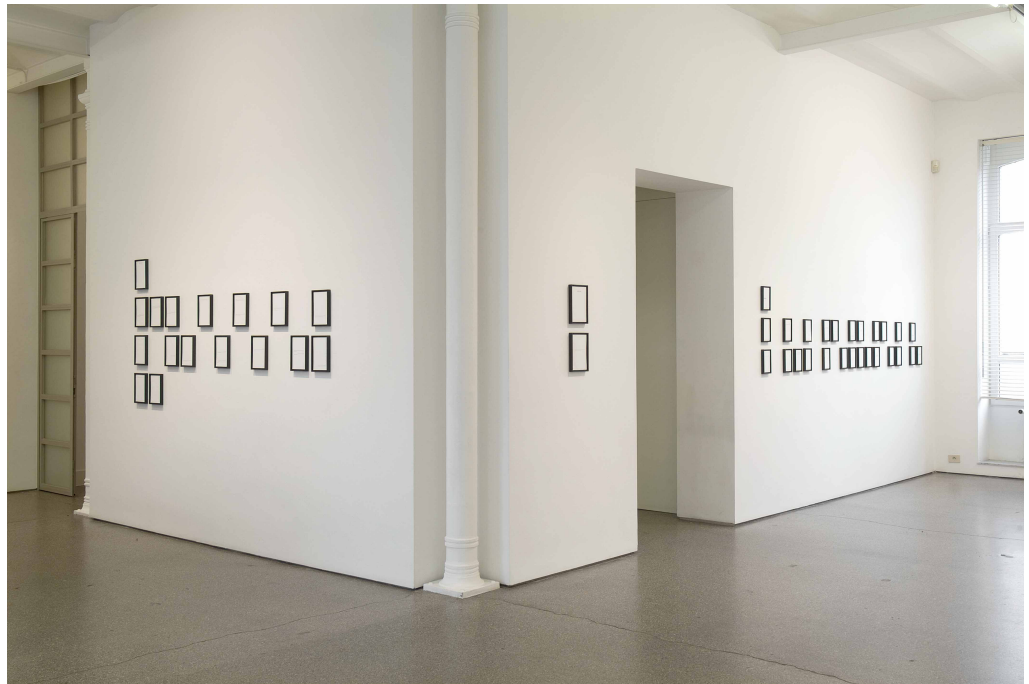


Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2011

Iñaki Bonillas

Thought Figures

February 15
— March 22, 2008



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2008

"Thought Figures", is Iñaki Bonillas' (Mexico D.F., 1981) third exhibition in Galerie Greta Meert. Rather than a passive act following what is written, reading is a kind of 'work' that engages the reader with the text.

This 'work of reading' is rendered particularly visible by the marks and underlines that are found in much-used books. Bonillas' idea is that when the texts to which these marks refer are removed, what is left is a 'thought figure', an image of the reader's thoughts.

This is the only criterion for the choice of the second-hand books in this work. Each 'marked' page is reproduced full-size and the texts are removed. The various pages are grouped per book. The whole occupies the entire gallery and evokes the image of a library, in this case a library of anonymous mental images.

Since the late nineties, the young Mexican artist has been establishing a relationship with photography in his work. With a regard for the aesthetics and the conceptual practices of the sixties and seventies, Iñaki Bonillas has been gradually isolating the constituent elements of photography and connecting them with other procedures. Because of the artist's fundamentally reflexive attitude, which implies that the visual is always involved in discourse and procedures, he should be labelled as somebody who 'occupies' the medium of photography, rather than as a 'photographer' in the classical sense of the word. The piece entitled "10 cameras documented acoustically" (1998) is a case in point. Bonillas records the sound of the shutters of ten cameras (from 1/2000 to 1 second shutter speed) on ten audio CDs.

"Light Rooms" is a work that has been reinterpreted several times. It was first installed in Mexico in 1999, then it was shown in Puerto Rico in 2001, and subsequently in Brussels in 2003 and Madrid in 2005. It offers the viewer the sensual experience of perceiving an empty, coloured space. The version in Brussels consisted of six empty identical small rooms, each of which was lit by a bulb with a different colour. Through the different experiences in the spaces brought about by the lights, the ironic reference to the 'White Cube' and the empty space, the work refers also to photographic dark rooms.

"Photographic Views from a Wall" (2002) takes up more technical aspects: a photograph of the same white wall is printed on nine different papers and thus yields nine different colour tonalities. The work that was shown in Utopia Station (Venice Biennial, 2003) consisted of an empty, closed cube that was lit inside by a single white light source and at a constant temperature that was ideal for the preservation of photographic material.

Since 2003 Iñaki Bonillas has been introducing the vast photo archives of his grandfather, J.R. Plaza, into his work.

He links elements together that are a priori incompatible: on the one hand a personal, biographical narrative that consists of private anecdotes and emotions, and on the other a quasi-scientific element of compilation, classifying and archiving.

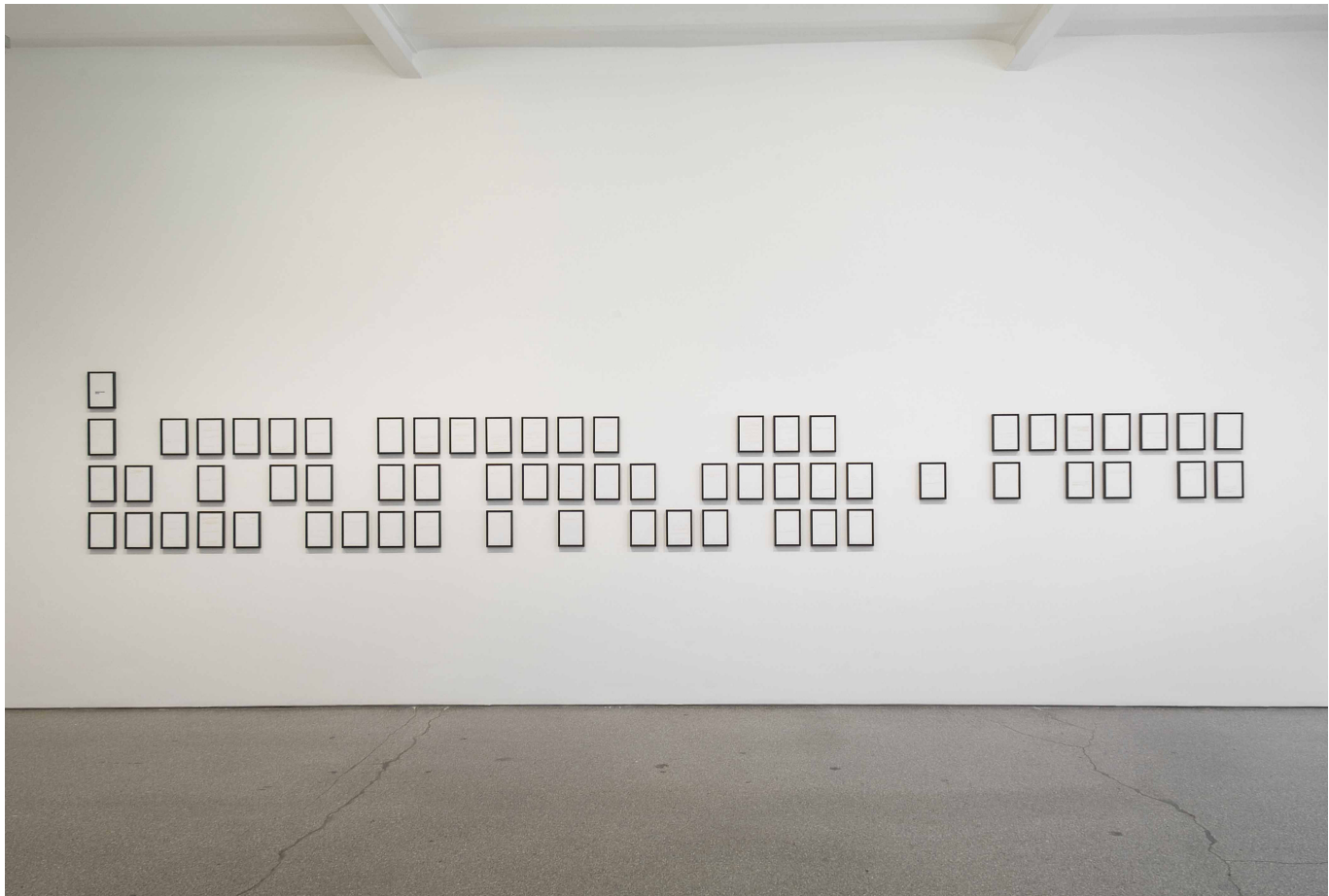
Stimulated by his grandfather's incessant, nearly compulsive activity, this 'collaboration' has resulted in numerous works.

Among these was the discreet insertion of the 30 original volumes that constituted the 'J.R. Plaza Archive' into the library of Galerie Greta Meert, during the Bonillas exhibition in 2003....

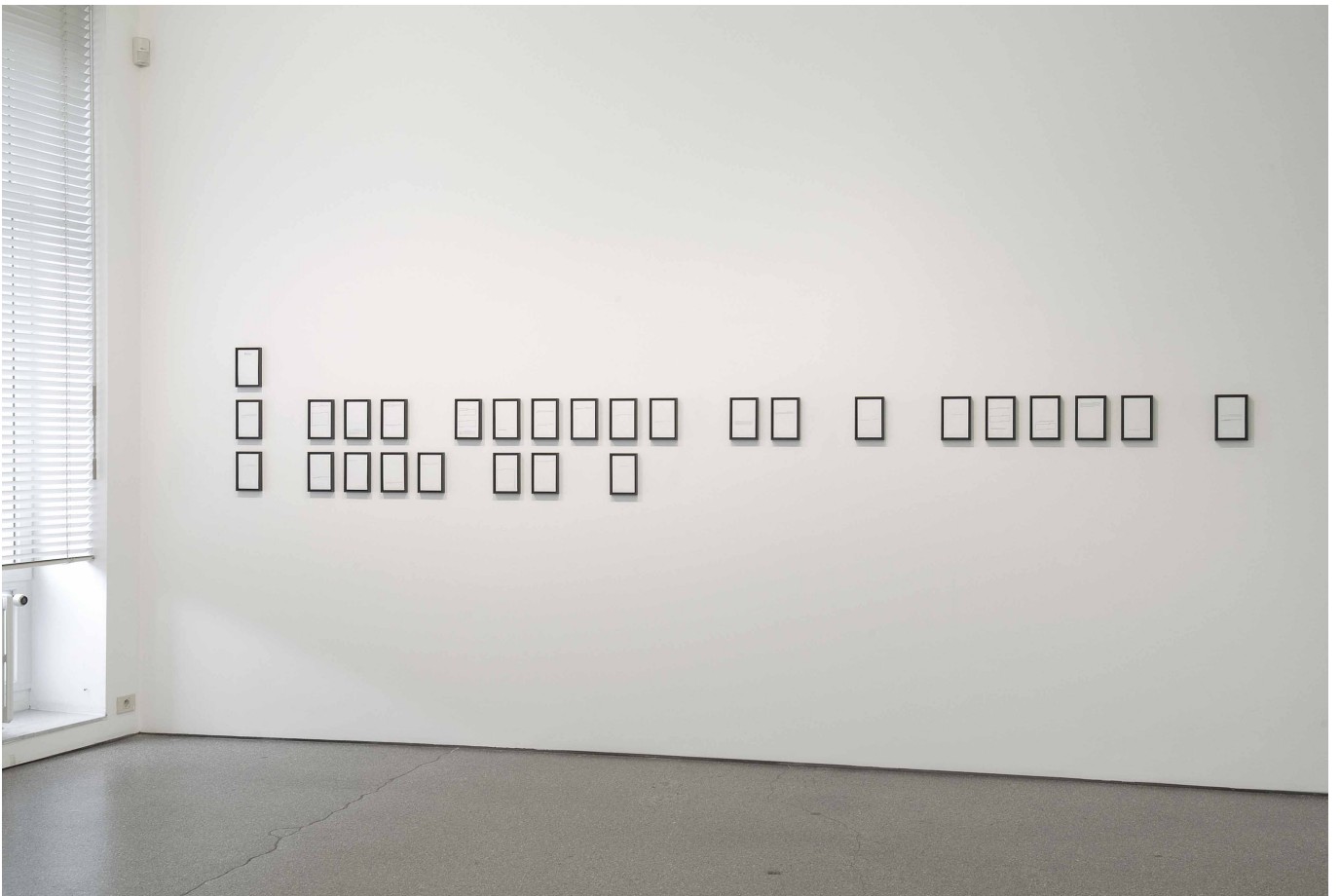
Or the complete reproduction of that family archive on transparencies set on light boxes in the MUHKA...

Or, always making use of the same source, the reproduction of all vertical photographs in the same size.

"A Sombra e o Brilho" (2007), recently shown in ProjecteSD in Barcelona, shows the negatives of a series of photographs taken by J.R. Plaza, in which the latter poses as a character from a Western film. This series not only questions the place of the author in the work, but also the possibility to include a personal history in a common grammar.



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2008



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2008

Iñaki Bonillas

May 16
— July 12, 2003



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2003

“The works that are assembled in this part of the gallery space are much more personal in tone; they are tightly interwoven with my personal history – not only as an artist, but as a private individual as well. Which in turn serves to deflate the harshness and the self-consciously impersonal rigor of the works in the adjoining space.”

“The decision to install the Light Rooms, the oldest work in the whole show, was informed by a whole series of personal considerations. First of all – and keeping in mind this is something of a ‘retrospective’ – this was the work that first brought me to the attention of the international art world.

It was first shown in Mexico City’s Ex Teresa back in 1999, where none other than your very own Jan Hoet bumped into it – on the strength of this work alone, he then invited me to take part in the Sonsbeek exhibition of 2001.

Being only 18 years old at the time, I of course felt totally exhilarated – but didn’t really believe him until, in the spring of 2001, I actually received the formal invitation to that very show. That not only triggered my first trip to Europe, but also inaugurated something of a love affair between myself and your country (as opposed to Holland, where the show actually took place) and its great capital city that continues until today.

I’d like to think that eventually led me to showing my work in this formidable gallery and my subsequent moving to Brussels. I want the Light Rooms to memorialize that originary moment of exposure and discovery – yes, in some way or other I’d like to think of it as a monument.”

“The picture from Casa Barragan that welcomes the visitor as the exhibition’s inaugural statement not only brings into play the double bind of the tautological and the autoreflexive that permeates my work as a whole – picturing the frame that frames the picture and so on – but also highlights some of the geo-specifics of my artistic practice.

It might not particularly show all that well in my work, but both Barragan’s use of color and space have proven very influential indeed.

The actual, original picture – here seen in its frame, against the wall of the entrance hall – was made on a trip along some of Barragan’s lesser known buildings on the outskirts of Mexico City. It depicts a blackboard in a schoolyard – I liked the pictorial drama of the blackboard as the archetypal site of learning, display, transfer of thought and information, which are of course recurring themes in my own work; incidentally, the aesthetics of display are also quite crucial to Barragan’s concept of housing.

I then decided to frame the picture and hung it on an unused little nail in the wall of the entrance hall. When the group show in which this particular work figured was dismantled, the workers forgot to take off the frame – it was that well integrated into the scenery of Casa Barragan that they thought it had always been there. Which I considered to be quite a compliment of course.”



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2003



Exhibition view, Galerie Greta Meert, 2003

Iñaki Bonillas

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

LIGA

ESPACIO PARA ARQUITECTURA I DF



Exhibition view LIGA, *The Story of the Sinking Ship, Which Is a Ship and yet Is Not*, 2013



Exhibition view LIGA, *The Story of the Sinking Ship, Which Is a Ship and yet Is Not*, 2013

✧ FUNDACIÓN JUMEX
ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO

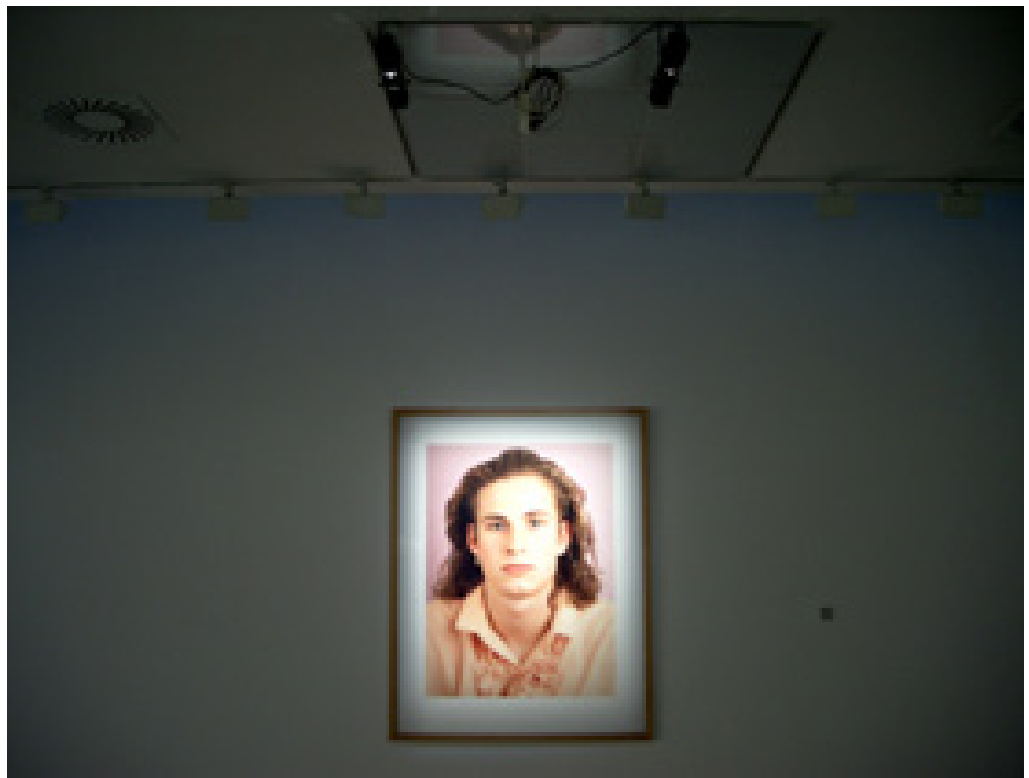


Exhibition view, Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, 2004



Exhibition view, Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, 2004

M HKA



Exhibition view MUHKA, 2003



Exhibition view MUHKA, 2003

Iñaki Bonillas

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016

Artissima, Turin, Italy

Secretos. Estancia Femsá, Casa Luís Barragán, Mexico City, Mexico

2015

Photogravures. BORCHs Butik, Copenhagen, Denmark

2014

The Idea of North, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain

Dia Artists' Web Projects, New York, New York

La Desaparición, Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm, Sweden

2013

(Détail), Gallery Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

Captain Oates, Art Basel 44/Art Unlimited, Switzerland

The Story of the Sinking Ship Which Is a Ship and yet Is Not, LIGA, Space for Architecture, Mexico City

The Rain Came Last, OMR, Mexico City

2012

The Encyclopedia of the Dead, Nordenhake, Berlin, Germany

The Eyes, Niels Borch Jensen Gallery and Editions, Berlin, Germany Arxiu J.R. Plaza, La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, Barcelona, Spain

2011

Los ojos, Capella de Sant Roc, Valls, Spain

Double Chiaroscuro, Les Rencontres d'Arles, France

Days in the Countryside, Gallery Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

2010

Historias de fantasmas de un anticuario, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain

The Expression of the Emotions in Men and Animals, Hermes und der Pfau, Stuttgart, Germany The Mirror's Ideas, Sonia Rosso Gallery, Turin, Italy

Double Chiaroscuro, Art Basel 41/Art Statements, Switzerland

The Return to the Origin, Galeria OMR, Mexico City

2009

Pensamiento circular: una antología, MAM, Mexico City No Longer, Not Yet, Galleria Sonia Rosso, Turin, Italy

2008

Thought Figures, Gallery Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

2007

A sombra e o brilho, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain El topoanalista, Matadero, Madrid, Spain Naufragio con espectador, OMR, Mexico City

2006

Bañeras, La Casa Verde, Mexico City

Iñaki Bonillas: Isabel Price, Fundación COFF, Sala Kubo Kutxaespacio del Arte, San Sebastián, Spain

2005

Archivo J.R. Plaza, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain

Intervención al pabellón, Mies van Der Rohe Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain Archivo muerto,_h4cht, Mexico City

2004

Five Minutes to Die, Galeria OMR, Mexico City

2003

Little History of Photography, MUHKA, Antwerp, Belgium Work in Collaboration, OMR, Mexico City

Iñaki Bonillas, Gallery Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium

2002

Photographic Views from a Wall, Galería de Arte Mexicano, Mexico City 2001

Audiovisivi, Gallery Bordone, Milan, Italy

2000

Sala de proyectos, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City Dark Room, Colima 385,
Mexico City

607 W, Proyecto Zapopan, Guadalajara, Jalisco

1999

Lighting, Zacatecas 89, Mexico City

1998

Photo Aperture, La BF.15, Monterrey, Nuevo León Trabajo fotográfico, Regina 51,
Mexico City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2016

Pierre Menard: About Rewriting. Maison de l'Amérique Latine, Paris, France Duets (Ulay – Iñaki Bonillas). DUM projects space, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Crisis of Presence. Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland
Variaciones sobre tema mexicano. Torre Iberdrola, Bilbao, Spain

2015

Another Part of the New World, Collection CA2M – Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moskau, Russia Plaza Rio de Janeiro 54, 1983-2015, Galería OMR, Mexico City
Indisposició General. Assaig sobre la Fatiga Fabra i Coats, Contemporary Arts Center, Barcelona (Ready) Media, Laboral, Arts Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, Gijón, Spain
Esto-no-ha-sido / Técnicas de visualidad. Obras de la Colección CA2M and Colección Fundación ARCO CA2M, Móstoles, Madrid, Spain
Desires and Necessities, curated by Bartomeu Marí, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain

2014

Rumeurs du Météore, 49 Nord 6 Est, Frac Lorraine, Metz, France
América Latina 1960-2013. Photos + Text, Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico Punctum, Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria
Pieces for a Collection, Bernal Espacio, Madrid, España

2013

Latin America 1960-2013, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France
Reanimation Library, Talcual, Mexico City
Thinking and Speaking, Nordenhake, Stockholm, Sweden
Paint it Black, FRAC Île de France, Le Plateau, Paris
Turn off the Sun: Selections from The Jumex Collection, ASU Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona

2012

Accrochage X: Works on Paper, Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium
Donde el lenguaje es material, Casa del lago Juan José Arreola, Mexico City
Narrativas domésticas: más allá del álbum familiar, Sala de exposiciones Diputación de Huesca, Spain
The Imminence of Poetics, Thirtieth Biennial of São Paulo, Brazil
Poule!, Jumex Collection, Mexico City
Resisting the Present, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris / ARC, France

2011

Exhibition, Galerie van der Mieden, Anwerp, Belgium
Tiempo de sospecha, MAM, Mexico City
The Space Between Now and Then, OMR, Mexico City
Beyond, KUMU Art Museum, Tallin, Estonia
Resisting the Present, Amparo Museum, Puebla, Mexico
A Serpentine Gesture and Other Profecies, FRAC Lorraine, Metz, France
Accrochage IX: Photography, Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels, Belgium
Mexico: Expected / Unexpected, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, California

2010

Drawing Time / Le temps du dessin, Salle Poirel, Nancy, France
Modelos para armar, MUSAC, León, Spain
Entre tiempos' (Photo España), Theater Fernán Gómez, Madrid, Spain

2009

Les enfants terribles, Colección Jumex, Mexico City
El mal de escritura, Centre d'Estudis i Documentació, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain
Dialogues in Mexican Photography, Mexican Cultural Institute, Washington, D.C.
IX Monterrey Biennial, (guest artist.) Centro de las Artes, Nuevo León
Cultural Memories / Récits parallèles, In Situ, Paris, France
[sic], OMR, Mexico City
The Poetics of Space, Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris, France
Protective Coloration, Bard College, New York, New York
Trienal Poligráfica de San Juan, Puerto Rico
Little Theater of Gestures, Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; Malmö Konsthall, Sweden
There is No(w) Romanticism, Galerie Filles du Calvaire, Brussels, Belgium

Pequeña historia de la fotografía, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

2008

Recursos incontrolables y otros desplazamientos naturales, MUAC, Mexico City

Expected Mexico Unexpected, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France

An Unruly History of the Readymade, La Colección Jumex, Mexico City

El norte del sur, Galería Baró Cruz, São Paulo, Brazil

OMR 25, OMR, Mexico City

Prospect 58, Hessenhuis-Middelheimmuseum, Antwerp, Belgium

2007

Ephemeral: Explorations in Light, Claremont Museum of Art, California

2006

O futuro da actualidade, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Departamentos Río Balsas 37, Cuauhtémoc district, Mexico City

Seeing Double, Ramapo College, Mahwah, New Jersey

Esquiador en el fondo de un pozo, La Colección Jumex, Mexico City

Dust in the Wind, Galería Ramis Barquet, Monterrey, Nuevo León

Photography: Robert Adams, Iñaki Bonillas, Louise Lawler.' Galerie Greta Meert,

Brussels, Belgium Inmaterialidad sensible, Casa del Lago Juan José Arreola,

Mexico City

2005

Alguns llibres d'artista, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain

La reconstrucción del lugar común (imágenes de autor), MACD, San José, Costa

Rica Detonantes, Oficina para Proyectos de Arte, Guadalajara, Jalisco

Eco: arte contemporáneo mexicano, MNCARS, Madrid, Spain

Double Vision, Prague Biennial, Czech Republic

Seeing Double, Bard College, New York, New York

2004

Los usos de la imagen: fotografía, film y video en La Colección Jumex, MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Regarding Muybridge, ProjecteSD, Barcelona, Spain Multitasquin, Galería OMR, Mexico City

La colmena, La Colección Jumex, Mexico City

2003

R2, Rothenbaum-Chaussee, Hamburg, Germany

Mexico Illuminated, Freedman Gallery, Reading, Pennsylvania Stretch, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada

Utopia Station, Venice Biennial, Italy

Espectacular, Centro Cultural España, Mexico City

2002

The Air is Blue, Casa-Estudio Luis Barragán, Mexico City

Orden del día O.D.D, VIII Salón de Arte Bancomer, Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City

Zebra Crossing, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany

Axis Mexico: Common Objects and Cosmopolitan Actions, San Diego Museum of Art, California Pictures of You, The Americas Society, New York, New York

2001

Do It, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City

Tendencias: VII Salón de Arte Bancomer, Museum of Modern Art, Mexico City

Scape, Tirana Biennial, Albania

Vanishing Cities, Programa Art Center, Mexico City

Locus Focus, Sonsbeek 9, Arnhem, Holland

Present, Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem, Holland

Short Stories, La Fabrica de Vapore, Milan, Italy

Ruido blanco silencio blanco, Programa Art Center, Mexico City

2000

Contra el muro, Fortaleza 302, The Old San Juan, Puerto Rico

Mutations, Arc en Reve Centre d'Architecture, Bordeaux, France

Humor y aliento, Festival Internacional de Arte Sonoro, Acceso A, Mexico City

Antes y después de Kraftwerk, EX Teresa Arte Actual, Mexico City

1999

Ctrl + C / Ctrl + V, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City

Frontera, Novena Bienal Internacional de Fotografía, Centro de la imagen, Mexico

City Bad Photographer, Foro Encamera, Mexico City
Blind Spot, Art & Idea, Mexico City

1998

Made in Mexico Made in Venezuela, Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada Regina 51,
Expoarte Guadalajara, Jalisco
Fotoseptiembre 1998, Tower Records, Mexico City
Dos obras sonoras, Regina 51, Mexico City

AWARDS

Premio Isabel. COFF Foundation, Spain, 2006 Programa de jóvenes creadores.
FONCA, Mexico, 2003