



wanderings

Curated by Gregory Lang

OPENING 23 NOV. 10 pm

23 NOV. 5 JAN. 2018

Francis Alÿs | Christian Andersson | Juan Araujo | Robert Barry | Michael Biberstein | Katinka Bock | Julien Bismuth | André Cadere | Rui Calçada Bastos | André Cepeda | Filipa César | Luis Paulo Costa | Edith Dekyndt | Peter Downsbrough | Alexandre Estrela | Andreas Fogarasi | Pierre Jean Giloux | Marco Godinho | Dan Graham | Sabine Hornig | Gonzalo Lebrija | Renato Leotta | Matt Mullican | Melik Ohanian | Thomas Ruff | Fabrice Samyn | Vittorio Santoro | Julião Sarmento | Wolfgang Tillmans | Rui Toscano | Oriol Vilanova | Lawrence Weiner

'wanderings' brings together an ensemble of artworks that reveal urban moments and snapshots through the artist's lens. The exhibition echoes a creative process in which walking and looking without a definite aim opens a space for the unexpected.

The works capture the details and resonances that shape a city like transient memories, which are perceived through light, air, sound and texture. The show proposes a nonlinear, cinematic experience that invites the viewer to engage in personal wanderings, observations, and dialogues within the gallery.

The project was inspired by three films depicting urban journeys through Lisbon: 'Dans la Ville Blanche' by Alain Tanner, 'Lisbon Story' by Wim Wenders, and 'Drifts' by Ricardo Costa. These films are portraits that reveal the artists' poetic visions while offering a sense for filmmaking with the city as a protagonist. This apparent redundancy underlines the fascination for picturing reality through introspective travels and encounters, known as wanderings.

The urban 'flâneur' figure in Rousseau's 'Reveries of the Solitary Walker', sketching on a deck of playing cards along his 'promenade', relates to Plato, Heidegger or Kant's philosophical practice. Notwithstanding, the modern version of this 'flâneur' refers to Walter Benjamin's 'modern walker' in his book 'Passages', or to Kafka's land surveyor and Baudelaire's 'passante', among others.

Walking through a landscape generates a rhythm of thought. This specific dynamic stimulates a back and forth reflection between exterior and interior territories. Ideas often appear as elements of the environment waiting to be grasped, as thought in a movement rather than in a process. This alchemy becomes even sharper while wandering through a city street with its contrasted public spaces, which can be at a time exposed or intimate, protected or shared.

Wanderings are often preceded and ignited by idleness. These journeys happen when artists decide to move away from themselves, to leave their studios behind, to follow their most fleeting ideas, and to allow the spirit to emerge. This informal state of boredom accompanied by physical movement awakens a 'letting go' state of mind, which grants the action of walking the status of artistic act. Walking as a medium was given new strength by the Situationists' 'theory of drift', as they created and imagined new geopolitical maps and emerging cities.

Ultimately, artists have established walking in their practice as a medium, claiming the essence of this action in detriment of its result. The most important part of the creative stroll is the wandering, not the destination. Walking becomes a kind of ritual. Roaming disrupts our usual trajectories and allows us to escape our daily constraints. Wanderings are the expression and feeling of freedom, of being in a state of wonderment, always where we are not expected to be.

The exhibition presents different ways of exploring the world, different strategies artist's use to translate their experiences during random wanderings around the city. The works often become the evidence of an intimate vision, restoring the memory of perceptions. The curatorial display presents several sequences composed of multiple points of view that engage the viewer in an immersive play of photographs and films.

The atmosphere created in the entrance and main space invites the spectator to experience a rather direct cinematic take on urban landscape, which comprises several images and evocative texts. In the adjacent part of the gallery, we can find a selection of works that trap and deposit air on different mediums. A blue balloon floats halfway up and wanders freely about the exhibition space. In the lower room, the selection of works relates to the purposeful exercises performed by artists during their travels.

Among the featured artists, a dialogue emerges: in the entrance, Filipa César presents a freeze-frame of a film stage in a city street while Alexandre Estrela superimposes a video frame with images of city icons, each exploring their different cinematic visions; on the entry level, Peter Downsbrough accentuates perspective in small B&W photographs, while Melik Ohanian utilizes large and colored images, offering us a sample of their world's image data base; Katinka Bock and Fabrice Samyn capture in their particular ways the ephemeral nature of a place; in the lower room, Edith Dekyndt draws and Vittorio Santoro writes repetitively during their journeys and walks; André Cadere underlines the action of motion with a colorful stick, revealing that wandering lies in the foundation of his work since the 1970s, while Francis Alÿs convenes the figure of the 'flâneur' by claiming the simple status of a pedestrian, as it analyzed by Walter Benjamin in his 'The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire'.

Gregory Lang (November, 2017)