

JORDI COLOMER : PROHIBIDO CANTAR / NO SINGING

AbiertoXobras, Matadero, Madrid
2012

Galerie Michel Rein, Paris
2013

'It's easier getting gold out of men than from rivers'. Bertolt Brecht,
The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, 1927-30

The foundation of a city is not necessarily a heroic act. Everyday a new city begins to be built on water, concrete, sweat and money. Some are -almost- a pure idea. In his election manifesto president Juscelino Kubitschek promised the creation of a modern capital for Brazil in three years, Brasilia was built amongst the weeds of the high central plane, faithfully following the plans of Lucio Costa. At the same time the builders, who came on foot from all parts of the country, pitched their trembling huts where they slept and founded- without knowing it- their own city.

There are glass cities that grow out of offices and others made from tin and card that dance to the rhythm of their own inhabitants. On one occasion, a group of outlaws were being tailed by the police, when their truck broke down in the middle of the desert. They couldn't keep going or turn back. So they ended up founding a paradise city, the golden city, where the worst crime was not to have any money. That city was called Mahagonny and Bertolt Brecht envisioned it at the time when Las Vegas came about shaping the image of the city that we recognise today.

In Prohibido cantar / No Singing a few characters make a gambling den where they offer entertainment games, tricks, love and food at low prices. The action takes place close to a dusty road, on the same plot of land and during the time in which a great private city was planned, with 32 casinos, called Gran Escala, which was to attract 25 million visitors, and yet never saw the light of day. These images reveal how the city of Eurofarlete thrives, under a blazing sun and strong blowing winds. Fragments of what passed there over two days may help to discern the particular form of organisation needed for survival, where everything is on sale at a bargain price or indeed at any price.

Jordi Colomer (2012)



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AbiertoXobras, Matadero
Madrid, 2012
(cur. Manuela Villa)

Exhibition views



NI
HAY
ARMONÍA
NO SE CONTENTA



TODAS
LAS GRANDES
EMPRENDIMIENTOS



Y
DEMASIADA
ARMONÍA

TOO MUCH CONTENTMENT









MADRID

Jordi Colomer

ABIERTO X OBRAS, MATADERO MADRID

At the back of a dark space in what were once the cold storage rooms of the old Madrid slaughterhouse, or *matadero*, seven glass doors opened onto a corridor leading to a dark chamber. Here, looped on screens arranged like placards, were the episodes of Jordi Colomer's *Prohibido Cantar/No Singing (Obra didáctica sobre la fundación de una ciudad paradisiaca)* (*Prohibido Cantar/No Singing [Didactic Work on the Foundation of a Paradise City]*), 2012, which together construct a fragmented narrative of the rise and fall of Eurofarlete, a fictional urban paradise, which can be read forward to the end or backward to the beginning, as you please.

Jordi Colomer,
Prohibido Cantar/No Singing (Obra didáctica sobre la fundación de una ciudad paradisiaca) (*Prohibido Cantar/No Singing [Didactic Work on the Foundation of a Paradise City]*), (detail),
2012, still from the
seven-channel video
component of a
mixed-media instal-
lation additionally
comprising portable
screens, speakers,
wooden corridor, lights,
and aluminum doors.



hegemonic economies of desire and ideas of justice. Colomer registers the rise and fall of his "paradise city"—a typically contemporary oxymoron, come to think of it, of the order of "repressive tolerance," "altered identity," or "mobile home"—under the gusts of a ravaging dry wind reminiscent of those blowing through the Nevada desert. Ultimately, economic machinations—obeisance before the power of the golden calf—lead to the downfall of Eurofarlete as well. In keeping with the closed loop described by all oxymorons, the narrative of this ruin may in fact only represent a moment of stillness, a specific incident in a dynamic that portends still more hellish paradises.

—Martí Peran

Translated from Spanish by Jane Brodie.

Visions of urban space are typically based either on the idea of a social contract, on the one hand, or on theories of conflict, antagonism, informality, and ungovernable flow, on the other. The complexity at the core of the contemporary city, however, must be analyzed in terms of both perspectives; its meaning lies in the tension between these two extremes. This is the underlying premise of Colomer's history of Eurofarlete. As it unfolds, his little epic clearly references two urban precedents, one also fictional and one all too real. In 1930, Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill presented the story of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, a capitalist dystopia in the middle of the desert that foretold the rise of Las Vegas after the legalization of gambling in 1931; Colomer incorporates verbatim quotes from Brecht's libretto into his videos. In 2007, a dubious consortium began developing the Gran Scala project, to be built in the desert of Los Monegros, Spain. The plan has had considerable effect on the city of Farlete, known until that time as the heroic front line held by the Republicans against the advance of Fascist troops during the same years when, in Las Vegas, roulette wheels were starting to spin. But this enormous project was brought to a halt in 2012 when Sheldon Adelson, owner of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, declared that the great leisure center EuroVegas would instead be located on the outskirts of Madrid. The project ensured such large-scale investment that all the political class could do in response was shamelessly offer tax exemptions and legislative benefits. Colomer's title pays tribute to Farlete's fluctuating fortunes, while the gloomy Brechtian lessons we've learned from Las Vegas (in both its American and European incarnations) converge in his installation.

Perhaps cities can only become spaces of happiness insofar as they are relentlessly undermined by non-

Jordi Colomer, lo que el cierzo se llevó

PROHIBIDO CANTAR. MATADERO. Paseo de la Chopera, 10. MADRID.

Hasta el 9 de diciembre.

La Historia se repite, y ficciones y realidades se relevan en la perpetuación de los mitos. Cuando los hombres inventaron la cultura urbana, hace 7.000 años, empezó a perfilarse la idea de la “ciudad del vicio”, en la que se bebe, se juega, se fornica, se roba y se mata. Sodoma y Gomorra, Babilonia, Ys, Las Vegas, Pattaya... En 1930 se estrenó en Leipzig la ópera *Asenso y caída de la ciudad de Mahagonny*, con música de Kurt Weill y libreto de Bertolt Brecht, que escenifica la fundación de una ciudad de perdición en un desierto estadounidense por parte de un pequeño grupo de fugitivos, con el fin de desplumar a los buscadores de oro que afluirían desde

la costa cercana. Jordi Colomer (Barcelona, 1962) se basa libremente en ese libreto para referirse a los megaproyectos españoles de urbanización y ocio relacionados con el juego. El fracaso de los parques temáticos ha desplazado las expectativas de crecimiento hacia varios complejos turísticos planificados en torno a casinos que, hasta el momento, no han pasado del papel. De *El Reino de Don Quijote* no quedó más que un aeropuerto sin uso y *Gran Scala*, proyecto en el que se centra Colomer, se paralizó tras entregar los misteriosos promotores, International Leisure Development, una primera entrada para adquirir los terrenos. Eurovegas en Madrid y

Barcelona World en Tarragona son los nuevos espejismos que los ávidos inversores han vendido a gobernantes que, ante la promesa de puestos de trabajo e ingresos fiscales, dejan de lado principios, escrúpulos y legislaciones.

Gran Scala pretendía levantar en Los Monegros 32 casinos, 6 parques temáticos, 12 museos dedicados a la historia de la Humanidad, 70 hoteles, 232 restaurantes, un campo de golf y un hipódromo. Un delirio absoluto. Jordi Colomer filmó durante tres días en el desierto aragonés una representación fragmentaria y surrealista en la que Mahagonny y Gran Scala quedan hermanadas. Un teatro del absurdo protagonizado por habitantes de Farlete –el pueblo más cercano a los terrenos apalabradados–, que se entregan al pecado con grandes fatigas ocasionadas por el azote inclemente del cierzo. Si en la ópera la ciudad se ve amenazada por un gran huracán que finalmente pasa de largo, en *Prohibido cantar* el seco viento del



PROHIBIDO CANTAR,
2012

noroeste acaba disuadiendo a la troupe de trileros de tres al cuarto, *strap girls*, ludópatas rurales y ovejas, que abandonan el precario *set* devolviendo a la naturaleza el dominio sobre el lugar. La prohibición de cantar, que en Brecht simboliza la decadencia de Mahagonny y su

violenta sed de placeres, podría aludir en Colomer a la consideración del cliente como borrego, reducido a triste consumidor. El artista muestra un ácido sentido del humor, tirando a negro, y usa referencias cinematográficas que van del western a Buñuel y hasta a Pasolini. Las

siete pantallas enrollables sobre las que se proyectan las siete secuencias, unas y otras en un calculado desorden, se disponen en línea conformando una visión del horizonte desértico en “ultra-CinemaScope” que pretende evocar un exterior sin conseguirlo más que a nivel conceptual. La instalación resulta novedosa en la pequeña historia de *Abierto x Obras* porque parte en tres la antigua sala frigorífica de Matadero: un acceso oscuro, un cuarto blanco intermedio y ese supuesto exterior en el que vemos las proyecciones. Se percibe la intención de establecer un paralelismo entre esos espacios y estados mentales: incertidumbre y curiosidad, deslumbramiento paralizante y temor, onirismo y alucinación. El dispositivo arquitectónico no es todo lo eficiente que cabría pedir –tal vez con más medios– pero la estructura queda suficientemente clara.

Jordi Colomer es ya un veterano, conocido y apreciado fuera de España, con peso específico en el panorama artístico nacional. Esta instalación resulta muy coherente con su trayectoria anterior, en la que lo teatral y lo arquitectónico se aplican, en relación con la imagen fotográfica o videográfica y especialmente en la faceta cinematográfica. **ELENA VOZMEDIANO**

JORDI COLOMER : DEFENSE DE CHANTER / NO SINGING

Galerie Michel Rein, Paris
2013

Exhibition views

Sââdane Afif, Maria Thereza Alves, Maja Bajevic, Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Jordi Colomer, Jimmie Durham, Didier Faustino, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Dora Garcia, Mathew Hale, Christian Hidaka, Jean-Charles Hue, Armand Jalut, Yuri Leiderman, Didier Marcel, Stefan Nikolaev, ORLAN, Dan Perjovschi, Elisa Pône, Mark Raidpere, Michael Riedel, Franck Scurti, Allan Sekula, Raphaël Zarka

JORDI COLOMER NO SINGING

06.04 - 01.06.2013

opening on April 6th, 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Galerie Michel Rein is proud to present "No Singing", the third solo exhibition by Jordi Colomer at the gallery after "Arabian Stars" in 2005 and "Le Dortoir" in 2002.

"It's easier getting gold out of men than from rivers"*

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There are glass cities that grow out of offices and others made from tin and card that dance to the rhythm of their own inhabitants. On one occasion, a group of outlaws were being tailed by the police when their truck broke down in the middle of the desert. They couldn't keep going or turn back. So they ended up founding a paradise city, the golden city, where the worst crime was not to have any money. That city was called Mahagonny and Bertolt Brecht envisioned it at the time when Las Vegas came about shaping the image of the city that we recognize today.

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The exhibition also presents a new work by Jordi Colomer, *Poble Nou* (2013). Poble Nou is an old industrial neighbourhood of Barcelona, constantly evolving. This parking is one of the "outlaw" zones often found in Colomer's work: deserts, but also urban zones such as abandoned roofs, investigated and reactivated in *Istanbul map* (2010) or *Crier sur les toits* (2011), or again the wastelands where Anarchitekton's character walks, delimitating Barcelona, Brasilia or Bucharest. As in *Prohibido cantar / No Singing*, this "suspended" space, where a urban macro-project never took place, is used by the characters in an unexpected way. Cars temporarily parked - for a visit at the beach - or the mourning group passing by with a coffin, escape from any official planning. Here is mentioned only what "occurs", and we benefit from witnessing a fortuitous encounter, a moment where several affairs should match. A young Russian couple on holidays, who just landed, and the neighbors' accidental and ephemeral passage. As any fortuitous meeting, this one takes a Buñuel absurd appearance and is broadcasted by Yulia and Andrei's improvised commentaries, which are translated in the installation in several languages.

Jordi Colomer was born in Barcelona in 1962. He lives and works between Barcelona and Paris. Enjoying a gifted and marked sculptural sense, his work spans many mediums, centering on photography, video and the staging of both in exhibition areas. The variety of mediums called forth by Jordi Colomer's work and the transversality of his judgment are undoubtedly linked to his fragmentary education as an architect, an artist and an art historian.

Jordi Colomer's work was the subject of a solo show at the Jeu de Paume in Paris (2008). He exhibited (among other) in BOZAR and ARGOS, Brussels (2012), Bronx Museum, NY, USA (2011), the Centre Georges Pompidou (2010), AKBank Art Center, Istanbul, Turkey (2010).

This exhibition was presented at AbiertoXobras, Matadero, Madrid from September until December 2012
Special thanks to Manuela Villa, curator of "Prohibido Cantar / No Singing" at Matadero, Madrid.

Prohibido Cantar / No Singing a production of Matadero and CO producciones, *Poble Nou* a production of CO producciones.

*Bertolt Brecht, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, 1927-30



Jordi Colomer, *Prohibido Cantar / No Singing*, 2012
installation of seven videos

Saâdane Afif, Maria Thereza Alves, Maja Bajevic, Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Jordi Colomer, Jimmie Durham, Didier Faustino
LaToya Ruby Frazier, Dora Garcia, Mathew Hale, Christian Hidaka, Jean-Charles Hue, Armand Jalut, Yuri Leiderman, Didier Marcel
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JORDI COLOMER *DEFENSE DE CHANTER*

06.04 - 01.06.2013

Vernissage le 6 avril 2013, de 16h à 21h

La galerie Michel Rein est heureuse de présenter « Défense de chanter » la troisième exposition personnelle de Jordi Colomer à la galerie après « Arabian Stars » en 2005 et « Le Dortoir » en 2002.

« Il est plus facile de tirer de l'or des hommes que des rivières » *

La fondation d'une cité n'est pas forcément un acte héroïque. Chaque jour, de nouvelles villes s'érigent, faites d'eau, de béton, de sueur et d'argent. Certaines sont - quasiment - une idée pure. Il est des cités de verre qui poussent dans le terreau des bureaux d'études, et d'autres à partir de tôle et de carton qui dansent au rythme de leurs propres habitants. Un jour, alors que la police les poursuivait, le camion d'un groupe de hors-la-loi tomba en panne au beau milieu du désert. Ils ne pouvaient ni continuer ni faire demi-tour. Ils finirent alors par fonder une ville paradisiaque, la cité d'or, où le pire des crimes était de ne pas avoir d'argent. Cette ville fut appelée Mahagonny, et Bertold Brecht l'imagna au moment même où Las Vegas commençait à modeler l'image de la cité telle que nous la connaissons aujourd'hui.

Dans *Prohibido Cantar / No Singing (Défense de chanter)* (2012) des personnages créent un tripot où ils proposent de l'argent, des tours de passe-passe, de l'amour et de la nourriture à bas prix. L'action se déroule au bord d'une route poussiéreuse, au moment précis et sur la même parcelle de terrain où a été planifiée la construction d'une grande ville privée dans le quasi-désert des Monegros, près de Saragosse en Espagne. Avec trente-deux casinos, Gran Escala, qui devait attirer 25 millions de visiteurs, ne verra jamais le jour, mais en même temps le projet d'Euro-Vegas, près de Madrid, en a pris le relais. Ces images montrent comment prospère la ville d'Eurofarlete, sous un soleil écrasant et de fortes rafales de vent. Des fragments de ce qui s'y est passé durant deux jours permettent peut-être de comprendre l'organisation nécessaire à la survie dans un lieu où tout est en vente à prix réduit, mais aussi à n'importe quel prix.

L'exposition présente également une œuvre inédite de Jordi Colomer, *Poble Nou* (2013). Le parking de Poble Nou, un ancien quartier industriel de Barcelone en constante évolution, est l'une de ces zones "hors la loi" que l'on trouve souvent dans les travaux de Colomer : les déserts, mais aussi des zones urbaines comme les toits abandonnés, investis et réactivés dans *Istanbul map* (2010) ou *Crier sur les toits* (2011), ou encore les friches où marche le personnage d'*Anarchitekton*, indiquant les limites de Barcelone, Brasilia ou Bucarest. Il s'agit, comme dans *Prohibido Cantar / No Singing (Défense de chanter)*, d'un espace en «suspension», où était planifié un macro-projet qui n'a jamais eu lieu, et que les personnages utilisent de façon imprévue. Les voitures qui s'y trouvent garées temporairement - le temps par exemple d'aller à la plage - ou le groupe de personnes en deuil qui le traverse avec un cercueil, échappent à la planification officielle. On parle de ce qui simplement "a lieu" et nous avons le privilège d'assister à une rencontre fortuite, un moment où plusieurs choses doivent correspondre. Un couple de jeunes russes en vacances qui vient d'arriver dans la ville et le passage accidenté et éphémère des voisins. Comme toute rencontre fortuite, celle-ci prend un air absurde à la Buñuel, et est médiatisée par les commentaires improvisés de Yulia et Andrei qui, dans l'installation, sont traduits en plusieurs langues.

Jordi Colomer est né à Barcelone (Espagne) en 1962, il réside et travaille entre Barcelone et Paris. Son œuvre, marquée d'un fort sens sculptural, englobe de multiples disciplines, particulièrement la photographie et la vidéo. La variété des moyens que convoque l'œuvre de Jordi Colomer et la transversalité de son point de vue sont, sans doute, liées à sa formation plurielle d'architecte, d'artiste et d'historien de l'art.

Le travail de Jordi Colomer a fait l'objet d'une exposition monographique au Jeu de Paume, Paris (2008). Il a exposé entre autres au BOZAR et à ARGOS Centre for Art and Media, Bruxelles (2012), au Bronx Museum, NY, USA (2011), au Centre Georges Pompidou (2010), à l'AkBank Art Center, Istanbul, Turquie (2010).

Cette exposition a été présentée à AbiertoXobras, Matadero à Madrid, de septembre à décembre 2012.

Remerciements à Manuela Villa, curatrice de l'exposition « Prohibido Cantar / No singing » à Matadero, Madrid.

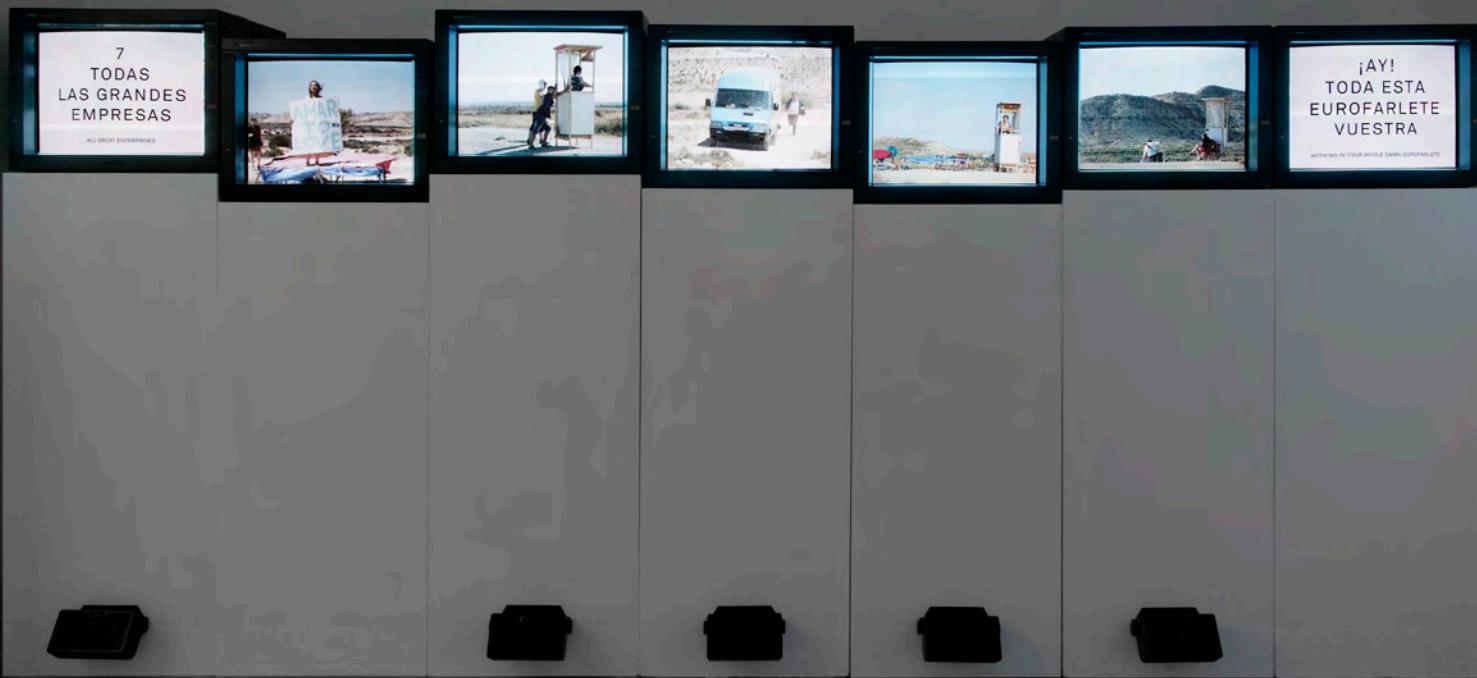
Prohibido Cantar / No Singing (Défense de chanter) une production de Matadero et CO producciones, *Poble Nou* une production de CO producciones.

* Bertold Brecht, *Grandeur et Décadence de la ville de Mahagonny*. 1927-30.



Jordi Colomer, *Prohibido Cantar / No Singing*, 2012
Installation 7 vidéos

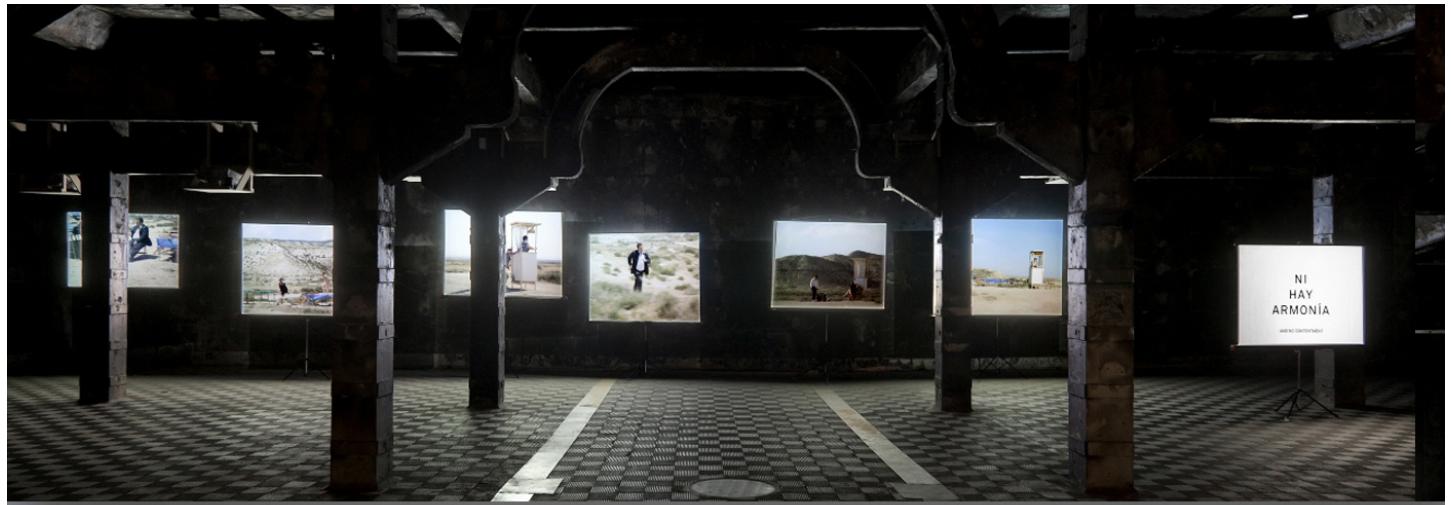








Prohibido Cantar / No Singing, 2012



Jordi Colomer

Prohibido Cantar / No Singing, 2012

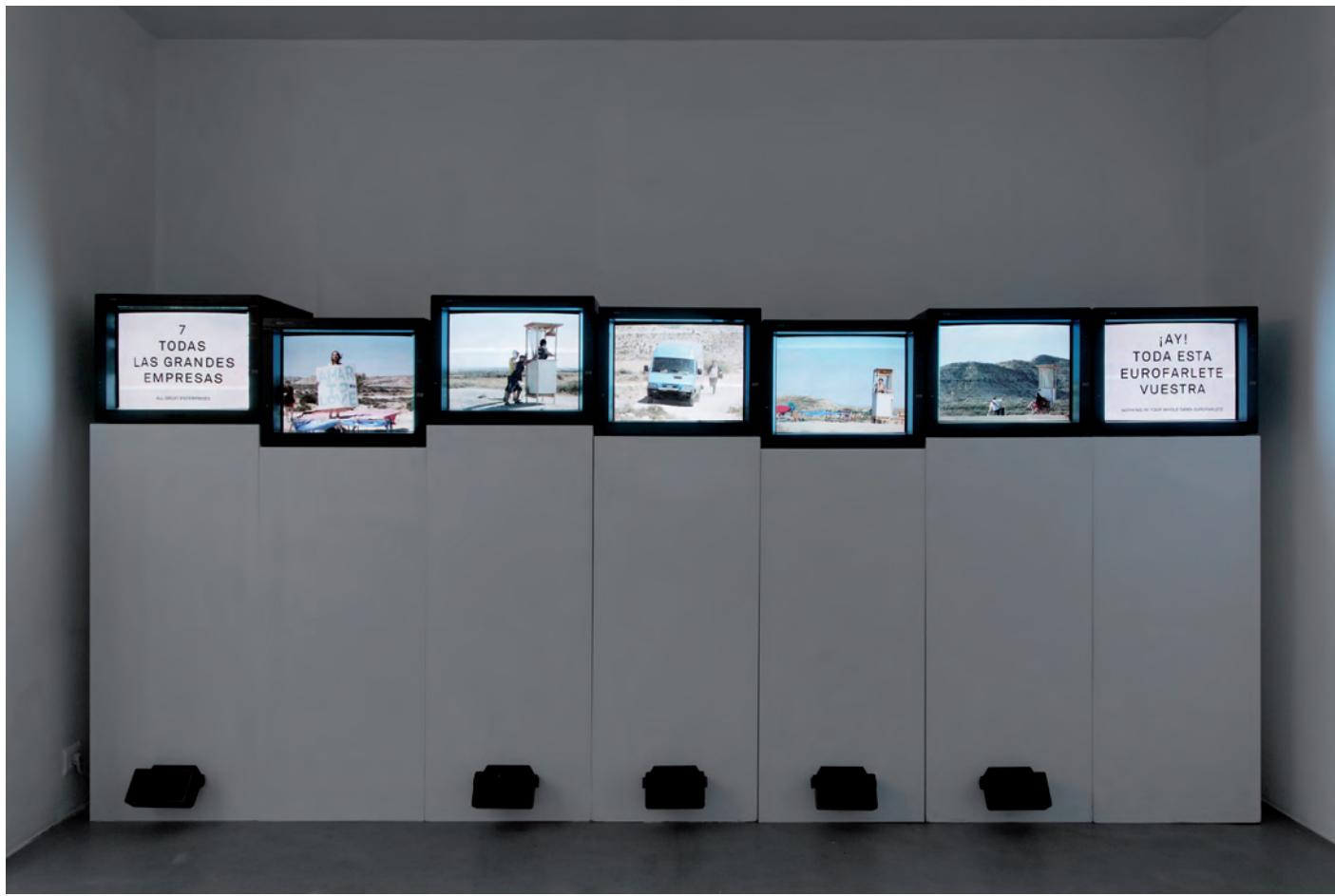
Installation vidéo pour 7 écrans, son, Master HD Cam transféré sur Blu-Ray

Projection 1 : 01'45", Projection 2 : 04'14", Projection 3 : 10'21", Projection 4 : 01'49", Projection 5 : 06'36", Projection 6 : 06'44", Projection 7 : 00'31"

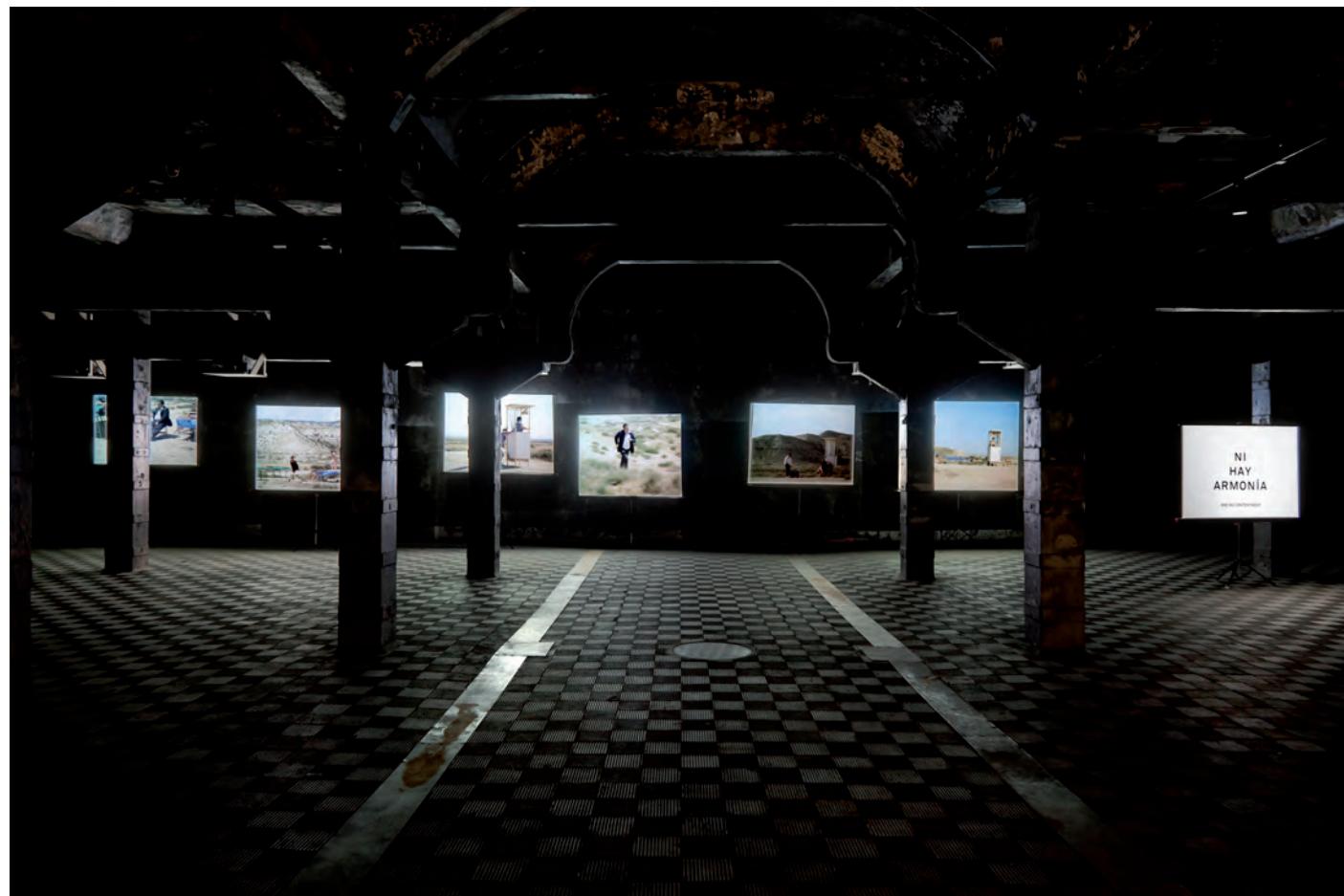
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Courtesy de l'artiste et de la galerie Michel Rein, Paris

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VIDEO STILLS



Poble Nou, 2013



Jordi Colomer
Poble Nou, 2013
vidéo, son, Master HD Cam transféré sur Blu-Ray
4'45
Edition de 5 + 1 EA
Courtesy de l'artiste et de la galerie Michel Rein, Paris
N° Inv. COLO130902





