

PRESS RELEASE
EXHIBITION 'UNTAMED PARADISES'



DATES

7 March – 18 May 2008

VENUE

First floor galleries

VISITING HOURS

Tuesdays to Saturdays (including holidays)
from 11.00 to 21.00
Sundays, from 11.00 to 15.00

CURATOR

Virginia Torrente

CO-PRODUCED BY

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo
Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Consellería de Medio Ambiente, Xunta de Galicia
(Regional Ministry of Environment of the Xunta de Galicia),
Blu:sens

ARTISTS: 20

Alberto Baraya (Bogotá, Colombia, 1968. Lives and works in Bogotá)

Guillem Bayo (Barcelona, Spain, 1974. Lives and works in Barcelona)

Sergio Belinchón (Valencia, 1971. Lives and works in Berlin)

Roberto Bellini (Juiz de Fora, Brazil, 1979. Lives and works in Belo Horizonte, Brazil)

André Cepeda (Coimbra, Portugal, 1976. Lives and works in Porto, Portugal)

Peter Coffin (Berkeley, USA, 1972. Lives and works in New York)

Thomas Joshua Cooper (San Francisco, USA, 1946. Lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland)

Nir Evron (Herzliya, Israel. Lives and works in Tel-Aviv, Israel)

Cyprien Gaillard (Paris, France, 1980. Lives and works in Paris)

Rodney Graham (Vancouver, Canada, 1949. Lives and works in Vancouver)

Marine Hugonnier (Paris, France, 1969. Lives and works in London, England)

Eva Koch (Copenhagen, Denmark, 1953. Lives and works in Copenhagen)

Mireya Masó (Barcelona, Spain, 1963. Lives and works in Barcelona)

Heather & Ivan Morison (Desborough, England, 1973 & Nottingham, England, 1974. Live and work in Wales)

Marjetica Potrč (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 1953. Lives and works in Ljubljana)

Gonzalo Puch (Sevilla, Spain, 1950. Lives and works in Madrid, Spain)

Caio Reisewitz (São Paulo, Brazil, 1967. Lives and works in São Paulo)

Thiago Rocha Pitta (Tiradentes, Brazil, 1980. Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Eric Rosoman (London, England, 1975. Lives and works in Leicester, England)

Guido van der Werve (Papendrecht, The Netherlands, 1977. Lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

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WORKS ON DISPLAY

The exhibition **PARÁISOS INDÓMITOS** is made up of 46 works, most of which are videos and photographs. It also includes *Untitled (Greenhouse)* by Peter Coffin, which requires the participation of the public, and an installation by Alberto Baraya.

CATALOGUE

Accompanying the exhibition, the MARCO and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo have brought out a catalogue in three languages (Castilian, Galician and English) which includes, in addition to information and photographs of the exhibits, a text by the curator, Virginia Torrente, and two essays, by Jorge Wagensberg and José Roca. The latter is a specially adapted, Spanish version of an original text written on the occasion of the 27th Biennial of São Paulo.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Virginia Torrente (Bilbao, 1963) is an independent curator and art critic. From 1988 to 1992 she worked as assistant director of the Madrid-based gallery and art book publisher Estampa, and from 1993 to 1999 co-ordinated exhibitions at the Colección Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid. During the time that she spent working as Chief Curator of the Museo Patio Herreriano of Valladolid (2000-2003), she designed solo exhibitions on the artists Juan Ugalde, Isidro Blasco and Jorge Barbi, among other projects. From 2004 to 2006 she was responsible for the Plastic Arts section of the Casa de América in Madrid, carrying out an intense programme of solo exhibitions of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American artists, almost all of which were designed and produced specifically for the Casa de América's exhibition spaces. Parallel to this, she worked as an independent curator for other art centres in Spain and Latin America. Since 1999 she has co-curated the independent project *Doméstico*, along with Giuletta Speranza, Andrés Mengs, Joaquín García and Teodora Diamantopoulos, which organizes exhibitions in places around Madrid not usually used for contemporary art. The work undertaken in *Doméstico* has been documented and published in 2005.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The central theme of the exhibition [UNTAMED PARADISES](#), a co-production by the MARCO of Vigo and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, is man's relationship with nature. Twenty artists from various backgrounds explore their relationship with the earth they inhabit, revealing different points of view that range from the romantic to the documentary and from the utopian to the environmentalist. Drawing on nature as a subject of observation and contemplation, a testimony, or as a vehicle for denunciation, the works displayed in this exhibition represent the last stop in the evolution of the landscape genre; the culmination of centuries of human enquiry into the somewhat schizophrenic nature of our relations with our surroundings, during which time the iconography of landscape has gone from the splendour of the Renaissance, to the picturesque of the Baroque, and to the notion of the sublime of the Romantic movement.

As a genre, landscape is overexploited; and as a theme, global warming has become the hard currency of political and economic propaganda. We struggle to view nature as a place for mere contemplation as we inevitably associate with it an attitude of awareness. [UNTAMED PARADISES](#) shows contemporary artists' re-readings of the classical conventions defining the genre, illustrating the numerous possibilities afforded by a theme which has diversified tremendously in present times and which embraces everything from the search for virgin pastures to 21st century ecological activism.

And underpinning it all is the vision we pursue of these unexplored places, which has been the subject of much research and attention. The exhibition holds up the man-nature dichotomy to analyse the imprint that man has left on his surroundings as well as the constant struggle for supremacy that has always existed between the two. The artist adopts the role of the last 'romantic' explorer whose determination led us to discover unknown worlds.

Today, our idea of paradise is quite different and has more to do with evocations of enclosed spaces, reserves or dug-outs. Indeed, untamed paradises seem to carry an aura of secrecy, the promise of privilege to a chosen few; of conquerors-turned-explorers, defenders of a vocation that has evolved in parallel with society. Expeditions undertaken in the 20th century were politically motivated and enabled by the advances of technology, and were little inspired by artistic pursuit, the actions of which did not alter the global maps but documented and condensed 'reality'. The artist draws up a register of remote places, a test not free of critical intent, which oscillates between the utopian and the nostalgic.

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The pieces have been arranged into four sections, depending on the artists' various approaches to the exhibition's thematic axis: the **force of nature** or the spaces that withstand human action, places that resist all attempts to domesticate them – to this section belong the works by Guido van der Werve, Mireya Masó, Thiago Rocha Pitta, Thomas Joshua Cooper y Eric Rosoman; the **utopian journey** into virgin territories which develops into an inner search (Marine Hugonnier, Nir Evron, Eva Koch, Sergio Belinchón, Alberto Baraya); man and the Earth: **scientific collaboration** or the search for relationships between artists, scientists, and nature to improve the uses and transformation of natural spaces (Guillem Bayo, Marjetica Potrč, Peter Coffin, Gonzalo Puch, Heather & Ivan Morison); and, lastly, **damaged paradises**, or the upset to the balance in the relationship between man and nature (Caio Reisewitz, André Cepeda, Roberto Bellini, Rodney Graham, and Cyprien Gaillard).

A quotation by Henry D. Thoreau, included in the curator's text for the catalogue, serves as both a starting point and a summary or conclusion to some of the ideas and feelings expressed in this exhibition:

"I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains."

Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden; or Life in the Woods*, 1845

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BY THE CURATOR

"UNTAMED PARADISES stems from the idea that we are fascinated by evocations of the ultimate wild frontier, of places we believe have yet to be explored – and exploited – though they lie beyond the reach of man, in latitudes where nature imposes its own rules and these are not created by us. Man has forever been obsessed with defying nature. Now that expeditionary travels are rare due to the scarcity of places to be discovered, certain artists have taken up the role of providing a testimony of this need to discover virgin and unspoilt places, far from civilisation.

The works presented in this exhibition ponder this romantic spirit of adventure which still has some meaning in the 21st century. The images they carry evoke emotions, a voyeuristic horror, fear of the unknown, the force and the reason that renders our presence there useless, man's unquenchable thirst for conquest – even now, in the 21st century – and our unrelenting determination to stake victory over nature and social convention over natural law. We see in nature and its laws an irrational and romantic resistance to invasion, an indifference to man. These are places where scientific and technological progress is not allowed; pockets of resistance, the last indomitable paradise, but not for much longer. The exhibition holds a mirror to man's action on the planet; yet it does so not from an apocalyptic or negative point of view but from a predominantly romantic and almost utopian prism, and an optimism which, one hopes, will trigger awareness amongst the public and a desire to protect our environment. The battle is not lost.

The artist works both as an observer, from the outside, mapping out untouched territories condemned to destruction and documenting something that will soon cease to exist, and as a witness, occasionally 'intervening' using personal criteria to denounce the overexploitation and destruction of nature. From those who work from the studio or remain close to home, to those that set off on journeys in search of distant, unspoilt paradises or paradises already in the process of being destroyed, the artists have developed this interest in recording the sublime, a clear precedent of which lies in the painting of the Romantic era and the literary pastoral tradition and, in contemporary times, in the photography of Ansel Adams."

Virginia Torrente
Curator of the exhibition

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EXHIBITION 'UNTAMED PARADISES'

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

Music for plants

[*Untitled (Greenhouse)*, by Peter Coffin]

Parallel to the exhibition, and as an integral part of it, every Friday a concert will be staged in one of the galleries for the plants inside Peter Coffin's *Untitled (Greenhouse)*, 2002. *Greenhouse* is a hothouse full of different types of plants which, despite initial appearances, functions as a space for performance, experience, and participation. It has been scientifically proved that plants react favourably to music, but Coffin's piece does not seek to illustrate this theory but rather to explore the possibilities of two worlds – one organic and one creative – by playing with human intuition, improvisation and situational indeterminacy, and looking for contrasts and new relationships between science and subject, nature and culture.

- Fridays 7, 14 and 28 March; Fridays 4, 11, 18 and 25 April; 2, 9 and 16 May
- When: at 20.00 (except for the Inaugural concert, at 20.30)
- First floor galleries
- Entrance is free and unrestricted until the venue is full

PROGRAMME

Friday **7 March** / Inaugural concert

ECTOPLASMA. Orchestral Rock. Nicolás Pastoriza (voice), Iria Armesto (violin), David Rodríguez Rial (trumpet, synthesizer), Saúl Puga (bass), Gael Pintos (drums)

Friday **14 March**

Begoña González Larriba. Spanish guitar

Friday **28 March**

Santiago Comesaña. Clarinet

Friday **4 April**

2uS (dous). Pablo Carrera and Fernando Abreu [Electric guitar and processed bass clarinet]

Friday **11 April**

Najla & Lorenzo. Funk-voice and guitar

Friday **18 April**

David Váscenez. Electro-acoustics for plants

Friday **25 April**

Gaiteiro e Zanfoña. Galician folk music. Evaristo Alejos 'Alex' (bagpipe) and Luis Correa 'O Caruncho' (hurdy-gurdy, percussion)

Friday **2 May**

Nicasio Gradaille. Clavichord

Friday **9 May**

Ramón Bermejo y Pablo Seoane. Keyboards and voice to Brazilian rhythm

Friday **16 May** / Closing concert

Ensemble-s21. Jorge Montes (violin), Carlos García Amigo (cello), Vicente López Puig (clarinet)

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PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

Video programme

'A Stake in the Mud, a Hole in the Reel. Land Art's Expanded Field, 1968–2008'

Curated by: **Latitudes** | www.LTTDS.org

In May, the conference hall of the MARCO will host a video programme curated by Latitudes – a curatorial office founded in April 2005 by Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna – following its premiere at the Museo Tamayo de Arte Contemporáneo of Mexico. It will then continue its tour to Basel, Seville, and Barcelona. Borrowing its title from the writings of Robert Smithson, the programme proposes a selection of films that are part of the historical memory associated with Land Art alongside productions by more contemporary artists. The works reveal a mutual interest for remote places as well as specific locations, and traces a filmic itinerary that takes us from the sewers of New York and Vienna (Gordon Matta-Clark, Hans Schabus) to the deserts of California (Mario García Torres), the mountains of the Basque Country (Ibon Aranberri) and the idyllic beaches of Taveuni (Nikolaj Recke).

- Thursday 8 and Friday 9 May at 8 pm
- Thursday 15 and Friday 16 May at 8 pm [repeat]
- Conference hall
- Free and unlimited entrance until seats are full

PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME 1 [Total duration: 1 h 38']

Thursday **8** and Thursday **15** May

Gerry Schum. *Land Art*, 1969. 32', b/w. Sound (introduction). 16mm transferred to DVD

Richard Long. *Walking a Straight 10 Miles Line Forward and Back Shooting Every Half Mile (Dartmoor England, January 1969)*, 1969, 6'

Barry Flanagan. *A Hole in the Sea*, 1969, 3'45"

Dennis Oppenheim. *Time track*, 1969, 2'05"

Robert Smithson. *Fossil Quarry Mirror with Four Mirror Displacements*, 1969, 3'05"

Marinus Boezem. *Sand Fountain*, 1969, 4'

Jan Dibbets. *12 Hours tide Object with Correction of Perspective*, 1969, 7'30"

Walter de Maria. *Two Lines Three Circles on the Desert*, 1969, 4'45"

Nancy Holt & Robert Smithson. *Mono Lake*, 1968/2004. 19'54". Colour. Sound. Super 8 and Instamatic slide images transferred to video

Robert Smithson. *Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island*, 1970/2005. 16'. Colour. Sound

Gordon Matta-Clark. *Substrait (Underground Dailies)*, 1976, 30', b/w and colour. Sound. 16mm transferred to DVD

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PROGRAMME 2 [Total duration: 1 h 15']

Friday **9** and Friday **16** May

Francis Alÿs. *When Faith Moves Mountains (Making off)*, 2002, 15'. Colour. Sound. Spanish with English subtitles. Courtesy of the artist and the Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich

Donna Conlon. *Country Road*, 2002, 1'29". Colour. No sound

Hans Schabus. *Western*, 2002, 11'. Colour. Sound

Ibon Aranberri. *Zuloa (Ir. T. n° 513)*, 2004, 8'. Colour. Sound

Mario Garcia Torres. *Abandoned and Forgotten Land Works That Are Not Necessarily Meant To Be Seen As Art*, 2004, 7'. B/w. No sound

Thiago Rocha Pitta. *Zênite invertido / Inverted Zenith*, 2005, 11'54". Colour. Sound

Maria Thereza Alve. *The Sun*, 2006, 5'03". Colour. Sound. Italian with English subtitles

Damián Ortega. *Reticencia al trabajo, Segunda parte*, 2006, 5'15". Colour. Sound

Nikolaj Recke. *Tomorrow is today*, 2006, 3'. Colour. Sound. Originally a two-screen projection

Jordan Wolfson. *Landscape for Fire*, 2007, 7'. Colour. Sound

Cyprien Gaillard. *Real Remnants of Fictive Wars VI*, 2008, 1'40". Colour. No sound

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PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

Didactic activities

NATURAL PARADISES. Workshops about recycling and the natural world

Especially designed for children aged 3 and up, the workshops about recycling and the natural world are part of the programme 'NATURE ALONG THE ROAD', a group of activities organised by the Mayor's Office and the City of Vigo's Environment Department for various parts of the city and its environs and designed to educate children about sustainability and respect for the natural environment. These workshops also attempt to raise awareness about the environment while teaching about art through a series of activities in which recycling is the core element. A new way of respecting the natural world and teaching sustainability, while at the same time bringing nature into the museum's spaces.

Organized by: the Mayoralty and the City of Vigo's Environment Department

Produced by: Estela Loxística e Proxectos S. L., in collaboration with the Education Department of the MARCO

- From 9 February to 26 April 2008
- Where: Arts Lab (1st floor)
- When: Saturdays, from 12.00 to 14.00
- Entrance is free and unrestricted until places are full

Documentary display in the Library

Throughout the entire exhibition period, the MARCO Library will offer a bibliographic display of documents regarding the artists represented in this exhibition as well as other artists whose work reflects a relationship between art, nature, and the environment. Complementing the display is a selection of theoretical treatises that explore the relationships existing between humans, art, and nature.

Guided Visits

- There are guided visits every day at 18.00.
- Specially tailored visits are available for groups subject to prior arrangement. Telephone: 986 113900/11
- Visits for associations are available on Thursdays and Fridays subject to prior appointment. Telephone: 986 113900/11

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REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

"UNTAMED PARADISES"

GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS:

CD including texts and photographs of the exhibition in different formats.

IF YOU WISH YO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR MAIL POST TO:

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

Rúa Príncipe 54
 36202 Vigo (Pontevedra). Spain

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