

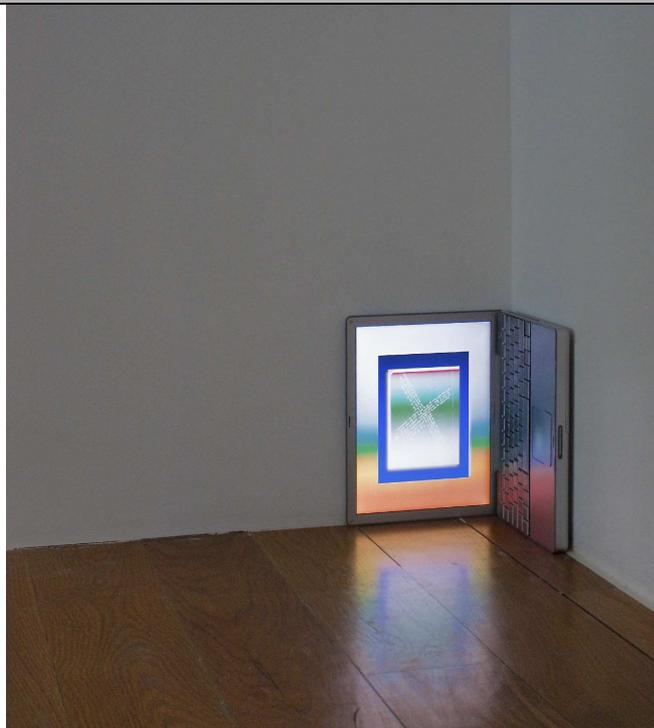
EXHIBITION

**RUBÉN GRILO**

***PowerPoint Karaoke***

June 24 – August 28, 2011

**ENTERING THE WORK, 3**



**DATES**

June 24 – August 28, 2011

**VENUE**

Exhibition rooms on the first floor

**VISITING HOURS**

Tuesdays to Saturdays (including bank holidays)  
 from 11am to 9pm  
 Sundays, from 11am to 3pm

**CURATED BY**

Agar Ledo Arias and Iñaki Martínez Antelo

**PRODUCED BY**

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo

With the support of Rijksakademie van  
 Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

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 Michiel de Wit

Rubén Grilo. *Sin título (Total Self)*, 2011  
 Courtesy of the artist/Photo: Rubén Grilo

**PRESENTATION**

Wilfredo Prieto's is the second project of a cycle of exhibitions, titled, titled 'ENTERING THE WORK', which is running in the galleries of the first floor and whose title is borrowed from the celebrated piece by Giovanni Anselmo, *Entrare nell'opera* (1971). The paradox that surrounds the concept of spectator and which situates the latter somewhere between passivity and action is the departure point of this series of projects, which analyses the public, the visitor, the viewer, and the audience as an integral part of the work.

**EXHIBITED WORKS**

**Rubén Grilo** (Lugo, 1981) makes use of conceptual and narrative strategies in order to question — through art — the statute of objects and images, through mediums as diverse as software of digital presentation, laser projection, found art, performance and installation.

The title of the exhibition, '**PowerPoint Karaoke**', refers to an event organised by Berliner collective Zentrale Intelligenz Agentur in 2006. Using this as a central argument, Grilo turns on its head the idea of the museum as an official space for distributing knowledge, confronting spectators with an apparently disjointed puzzle of projected images, objects, quotations, documents, references to other artists and formal analogies.

## SYNTHESIS OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

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### 'Entering the Work'

'Entering the Work' is a cycle of exhibitions which will run for several months in the first-floor galleries of the MARCO. The title is taken from Giovanni Anselmo's celebrated piece, *Entrare nell'opera* (1971), a photographic emulsion on canvas, in which the artist photographs himself crossing a hillside in an action we interpret as revelatory of the relationship between the artist and his work and between space and time. The artist alters his role to generate a situation of integration, causing the spectator to react also, who, while without actually physically entering the work, nevertheless participates in it as a witness of the rupture of the limits traditionally dividing subject and object. The piece's ultimate meaning, therefore, resides in the viewer's reaction.

The fundamental role of the viewer in the creation of the artwork has informed discussions and essays in recent decades. Throughout the 20th century there arose a number of concepts a propos the open work, the emancipated spectator and the death of the author, and the role of the public, by virtue of either its physical presence or its need to involve itself actively, became essential for an artwork to become considered complete. The artist ceased to be the pivot of the process and, as Douglas Crimp has noted, the coordinates of perception were defined not just by the encounter of spectator and work but also by the space they occupied. To what extent does the public actually need to be before an artwork? Does not the simple fact of looking count for something?

The paradox surrounding the concept of spectator and which situates the latter somewhere between passivity and action is the departure point of this series of projects, which analyses the condition of the public as an integral part of the artwork. The direct relationship between the two, that is, their physical exchange and immediate reciprocity, generates a new dimension in which time and space alter the conditions of reception and perception.

### Rubén Grilo

The work of Rubén Grilo (Lugo, 1981), which drinks from the fount of conceptual art, explores art as a valid tool by which to deal with what we do not know, incorporating noise as part of the act of communicating with the spectator and analyzing the way in which the technologies of image, cultural codes, information, display, intuition, representation and cognition participate in constructing reality in both a positive and negative way.

The title of the exhibition, '**PowerPoint Karaoke**', refers to an event organised by Berliner collective Zentrale Intelligenz Agentur in 2006. This consisted of PowerPoint presentations compiled of more or less random material, mostly taken from the Internet, which the participants did not know and had to explain to the audience in real time. Beneath the entertaining surface was a critique of PowerPoint as a standard medium for transmitting ideas, learning and as a determining factor in making decisions.

Orchestrated from this premise, Grilo's works balance between the absurd and the unavoidable acknowledgement of images linked to a particular cultural context, intensifying the relationship of the viewer to the visual medium and incorporating unexpected layers of information, references to other artists, concepts, and cryptic ideas that collide, interlink and disperse at the moment of the viewing.

The looped PowerPoint presentation, the medium chosen for most of the pieces exhibited, provides an opportunity to revise the modern idea of image autonomy by means of a channel whose codes are familiar to the public. Another interesting aspect of PowerPoint — in relation to video — is that despite its temporal dimension, its content can by definition be modified, since its integrity is not based on physicality but rather on a general concept that groups together a series of interchangeable texts and images. It has to do with orality, with communication, with the speed at which ideas are transmitted and interpreted, with associations, and with cognition. The difference to the normal use of PowerPoint is that here there is no orator to narrate the images, to make sense of them, or to make associations. The idea of *PowerPoint Karaoke* beautifully explains that in this case it is the spectator that becomes the performer, or the person responsible for taking these images and recomposing them or interpreting them in such a way as to be useful to him.

The use of laser projection technology, present in the two computer-controlled animations, is another of Grilo's lines of investigation. With regard to these works, the artist refers to the following thought: 'The invariant component in a transformation carries information about an object and the variant component carries other information, for example, about the relation of the perceiver to the object. When an observer attends to certain invariants he perceives objects; when he attends to certain variants he has sensations'.

The exhibition includes the installation *A cuarenta y un metros y cuarenta centímetros de lo mismo*, 2011, in which two similar but differently-sized objects are perceived as the same if they have enough distance between them. It also includes a collection of objects — *El beneficio del ignorante*, 2009-2011— whose uniqueness lies in the fact that despite having been designed with an evident purpose, the artist does not acknowledge its use.

Finally, the work *Un museo alternativo*, 2010, which becomes visible beyond the exhibition rooms, consists in changing the MARCO logotype and replacing the original on the different communication media — the Museum's website, labelling, stationery, signage — for the duration of the exhibition, like a kind of fiction of a parallel world condensed into the design of a logo.

## CURATORIAL TEXT

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“The textual form rehabilitated by conceptual art between 1960 and 1970 and the acceptance of institutional criticism as a genre in this period are some of the things upon which the work of Rubén Grilo is based. The use of visual media such as PowerPoint, laser animation or other digital presentation software allows him to formulate new translations or meanings of information. These are technical formats that combine drawing or installation with performance in an attempt to question the processes of creation and reception by reflecting on the work’s ‘display’, its reproducibility or the new IT media that, together with narrative or conceptual strategies, determines the meaning.

Grilo, who champions visual technology as content, tries to investigate the interpretation process as well as how pieces acquire meaning in relation to different codes or presentation strategies within the institutional framework. He calls on Daniel Buren and the latter’s thoughts on the Museum’s function (1970) — the way it installs, collects and adds value to the object as an inherent condition, and which is a determining factor when it comes to attributing meaning — and on rethinking the concept of autonomy in art; a judgement that, since modern times, runs parallel to multiple (and sometimes contradictory) relationships between the concepts of alienation, emancipation of the subject, mass culture or disappearance of the spectator. The artist asks himself: ‘What if instead of it being the museum that explains the artwork, it was the artwork that explained the museum? And what if the museum was not the medium, but the message?’

His project for MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, brings together a series of pieces — some already existing, others made specifically for this exhibition — under the title ‘PowerPoint Karaoke’. In 2006, the Berlin collective Zentrale Intelligenz Agentur ‘invented’ an event by the same name in which the participants had to improvise in public a conference through the ‘PowerPoint’ program. This form of improvised theatre, as its creators called it, consisted in crafting different presentations with material chosen from their own files or collected randomly from the Internet. The departure point was a critique of the program for standardizing information transmission systems, which can affect determine decisions made at different levels and with serious consequences.

The audience reacts in the exhibition space by associating and relating the different elements distributed throughout the rooms. Elements found, images projected and altered visual codes are the object of a displaced meaning that is the fruit of new relationships established between them. Thus the installation *Sin título (Total Self)*, 2011, is composed of four laptop computers located in a regular, square space, one in each corner, and adapted to the space by shape. The formal references to *Untitled (Corner Piece)*, 1964, by Robert Morris, as well as to minimalist self-referentiality, are widened, alluding to the involvement of a spectator who absorbs the experiences and filters them until they become conscious. Rooted in Carl Jung’s theories as to how the ego works, the artist organises the piece based on the four mental functions that allow us to form

judgements or make decisions — thought, emotion, sensation and intuition — in an 'attempt to deal with all the possible levels of experience that a spectator may have in one space.'

The laptop content is organised into PowerPoint presentations, which follow one another throughout the exhibition space, displaying completely autonomously. Without a speaker or lecturer to put forward the information, the spectator becomes the only interlocutor and interpreter of the information.

Thus the PowerPoint projections bring together the performative, visual and textual element that Rubén Grilo uses as a metaphor for the relationships that are established and dislocated — they are open, manipulable systems — between the elements confirming different realities: 'I'm interested in the intersection between visibility, understanding and performance, which is highlighted particularly well by the idea of 'PowerPoint Karaoke', which I believe is a nice way of rethinking the modern idea of image autonomy through a very contemporary medium; with codes that people know, and constructed with a technology to which anyone has access.

Laser technology is something that Grilo is using for the first time and allows him to create abstract, non-existent, unrecognizable and indescribable forms and give them their own autonomy or body in the real world. Within the exhibition, the *Pieza-láser*, 2011, shares space with *El beneficio del ignorante*, 2009-2011, a collection of objects bought at street markets from different countries, and which conceal the secret of their function in their strange shapes and industrial manufacture. It is difficult to grasp the purpose for which they have been designed, something that broadens their semantic possibilities. 'The title refers to the idea that if you don't know the rules it's easier to transgress them. That is to say that for someone who knows what they are, the objects will only be for one thing, while for me they have infinite uses hypothetically. The objects will disappear from the collection once I discover their purpose, or when someone tells me what they are,' explains Grilo.

Again, Rubén Grilo resorts to language as a medium by which to represent these relationships, returning to Buren — on changing the pre-established mode of presentation — and to Joseph Kosuth's *Art after Philosophy* (1969): that the nature of all artistic proposals is linguistic — the fact that the artist names the object as a work of art is what actually makes it art."

[Extract of the curatorial text for the exhibition catalogue]

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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### Rubén Grilo

Rubén Grilo (Lugo, 1981) lives and works in Amsterdam. He has exhibited solo in Espai Zer01, Olot, Girona (*El beneficio de la ignorancia*, 2011) and at the Maribel López Gallery, Berlin (*Here, There, Backward, Forward, Mirror, Hole, Through, Against*, 2010). Among the group exhibitions in which he has taken part, his notable works include *The Circulating Action of Things*, CSS Bard - Center for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture, New York; *Antes que todo*, CA2M, Móstoles; *En Casa*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid; *Situación*, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela; *La historia no es más que cosas pequeñas en un cierto desorden*, Instituto Cervantes, Stockholm; *Zweck Gemein Schafft*, Micamoca, Berlín; and *Try Different Keywords*, Galería Estrany de la Mota, Barcelona. He is currently the resident artist at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam.

### Solo Exhibitions and Projects

- 2011 *El beneficio de la ignorancia*. Espai Zer01, Olot, Girona, ES
- 2010 *En casa*. La Casa Encendida, Madrid, ES  
*Here, There, Backward, Forward, Mirror, Hole, Through, Against*. Solo exhibition including *The Abstract Rug* by Maria Loboda. Maribel López Gallery, Berlin, DE
- 2009 *The Close Talker and the Newcomers*. Ballhaus Ost, Berlin, DE  
*Solo Project Art-O-Rama*. Maribel López Gallery, Marseille, FR

### Group Exhibitions

- 2011 *Belvedere*. Galería Estrany de la Mota, Barcelona ES  
*The Action of Things*. CSS Bard - Centre for Curatorial Studies and Art in Contemporary Culture, New York, USA  
Turku Biennial - *Patterns of the Mind*, Turku, FIN  
*La Cuestión del Paradigma*. Genealogías de la emergencia en el arte contemporáneo en Cataluña. Centre d'Art La Panera, Lleida, ES  
*SON*. Auditorio Nacional de Música, Madrid, ES
- 2010 *A Library Project*. Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, USA  
*Antes que todo*. CA2M, Móstoles, Madrid, ES  
*Ref. 08001*. Galería Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona, ES  
*89 Km. Colección CGAC*. MARCO, Vigo, ES  
*Try Different Keywords*. Galería Estrany de la Mota, Barcelona, ES  
*Veú entre línies*. Centre d'Art La Panera, Lleida, ES
- 2009 *La història no es més que petites coses en cert desordre*. Espai Zer01, Olot, Girona, ES  
*Zweck Gemein Schafft*. Micamoca, Berlin, DE  
*La historia no es más que cosas pequeñas en cierto desorden*. Instituto Cervantes, Stockholm, SE  
*Trobades Fortuïtes*. Centre Cívic Sant Andreu, Barcelona, ES  
Proyección en Storr Cinema. Storr Cinema, Stockholm, SE  
*Miquel Casablanças*. Fabra i Coats, Barcelona, ES
- 2008 *Fuck You Human*. Maribel López Gallery, Berlin, DE  
*Situación*. CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, ES  
*Old News México*. Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico DF, MX  
*Old News #4*. Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis, USA  
*BCN Producció'08*. La Capella, Barcelona, ES

## PRESS RELEASE

- 2007 *Información contra información*. CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, ES  
*P\_O\_4 Oficina*. Sala Muncunill, Terrassa, ES  
*Building Societies*. Centre d'Art La Panera, Lleida, ES  
*Tigres de paper*. Sala d'Art Jove, Barcelona, ES  
 Loop'07 Video Art Festival. Hotel Catalonia Ramblas, Barcelona, ES  
*Temperatura Ambient*. Centre Cívic Sant Andreu, Barcelona, ES
- 2006 *Sense Títol*. Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, ES  
*La audiencia disponible*. Mediateca – CaixaForum (con #e Freesound Project), Barcelona, ES

### Publications

- 2010 *The Weight of the Words*, Stuffinablank (<http://www.stuffinablank.com/>)  
 Text. Contribution. Self-editing, David Bestué, Daniel Jacoby and Gabriel Pericás Ed., Barcelona, ES  
 Ref. 08001. Contribution. Galería Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona, ES  
*Here, There, Backward, Forward, Mirror, Hole, Through, Against*. Artist's Book. Maribel López Gallery, Berlin, DE
- 2009 *Julio #3* ([www.thisisjulio.com](http://www.thisisjulio.com))  
*The Comedian*. Artist's Book. Crani Ed., Barcelona, ES  
*Cinco coincidencias entre el museo y el resto*. Contribution. *Situación*, Exhibition catalogue, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, ES
- 2008 *I Want To Believe*. Text. On Laia by Alex Reynolds. Included in the catalogue of the exhibition, Capella de Valls, ES  
*La primera vez que me viste*. Contribution. Included in the catalogue of the exhibition, BCN Producció'08, Barcelona, ES
- 2007 *Old News #4*. Contribution. Work in progress by Jacob Fabricius  
*Un montón de ideas*. Poster. Secretaría General de Juventud, Barcelona, ES  
*Berta y el factor exógeno*. Text. On *Versión Postal* by Luz Broto. Public!, Barcelona, ES  
*Decir lo que sea pero rápido*. Text included in the exhibition catalogue *Información contra información*. CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, ES  
*Ànim!* Artist's Book. Centre d'Art La Panera, Lleida, ES  
 Sala 15 nº1. Contribution. Olot Local Museum, Olot, Girona, ES

### Talks and Presentations

- 2011 Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina MADRE, Naples, IT
- 2007 *Eleva, expande, resiste*. Mediateca Caixaforum, Barcelona, ES  
 Facultad de Bellas Artes. UB, Barcelona, ES

### Awards and Grants

- 2011 Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten / Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Amsterdam, NL
- 2008 Beca d'Arts Visuals Ciutat d'Olot, ES
- 2007 BCN Producció'08. Institut de Cultura de Barcelona, ES  
 Guasch Coranty'07. Fundació Guasch Coranty, Barcelona, ES  
 Premi Miquel Casablanca (Project section), Districte de Sant Andreu, Barcelona, ES

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