

A Straight Exhibition

20 February, 2021 to 23 May, 2021

Solo exhibition of Martí Anson.

Imagine an exhibition space. Now, imagine that you could change it. Not the layout or the contents, no adding or removing of walls, lights, objects. Imagine that what defines an exhibition space today was no longer true. What would it be like? The exhibition structure that we have inherited, which can be found everywhere from museums to art centres, where we are, is a place where a series of artworks and therefore of knowledge are grouped together, but also a series of measures that focus on guiding the thoughts and gestures of those who visit, of channelling the discourse and practice of people like you. Look at that, read here, learn this, they tell us. And this is exactly what we do when we go to an exhibition. The invisible hand that has this power, the one that orders and arranges, shows and instructs both objects and visitors, is so embedded that we follow it blindly. Accepting the rules, we call it. And this is precisely what artist Martí Anson has wanted to avoid doing by suggesting that we interfere with the codes from within, through parody and interaction.

Against the gravity of the exhibition space, against the simple inscription and transmission of knowledge, Anson suspends everything we have learnt and blows it to smithereens. The spatial unevenness and the temporal indetermination he introduces override any external and uniform vision of the exhibition, at the same time as allowing continuity between floors, between works. A way of searching, liberated, for the multiple paradoxes that move between the heaviness and grace of the creative act; to provide and arrange, so as to put into play the aesthetic and static value of the work of art. Nonconformist but tenacious, Anson alters all the constraints of time and space but adjusts to the budget and imposes a discipline: to come each day to work with whatever is in the room. As a university professor, he moves his Tuesday class to the space, inviting the students and any visitors to do the same, with or without him. Anson knows that challenging the inherited logic means not giving everything immediately but accepting the unforeseen, the more anonymous and timeless, the better. This is why he approaches this exhibition as a construction that is revealed intuitively and constantly, which takes shape and makes sense as time passes. Like life itself. Hence, the title *A Straight Exhibition*, which for David Lynch was *The Straight Story* and for Akira Kurosawa, simply, *To Live*. Without guidebook impostures, avoiding bureaucratic requirements as much as possible, the artist and the space come together to make the artistic practice seem like a potential act: an invitation to think through art rather than about art.

By conceiving the exhibition as a living process the interest is removed from the object to the action, which cannot be predefined or forced but is spontaneously revealed in each person working with the context. This is why the artist has refused to provide explanations because there are none. It tells no story or saying: nothing is taught here, it is done. Experience is the only thing that counts and in the face of the requirement of discourse, Anson responds with a whole host of anecdotes. Such as the football player, El Trinche, who, having arrived at his team's goal alone, stopped the ball and didn't shoot at goal; like the snowstorms that cut Mataró off from the world in 1867 and 1962, leading to the prediction of the next one in 40 years; or such as ski jumping and swimming world records, halted in the immortality of the feat. Frozen stories, with no conclusion, valued more for the gesture than the result, difficult to place in a vitrine. This is the enormous leap of faith that Anson makes and calls for. And seeing the room like a huge blank page on the day of the opening made it clear: what is important, isn't to insert these trivial stories into the seriousness of Art but to parody the exhibition ritual with them to discover their inexpressible nature. It's not about introducing parodies to crack the display or bring down the institution but of exposing the parody inherent in the institution itself, to identify its infinity of possibilities, which open up between the imposed limits, be they the room's ceiling or the date of the opening.

They say that parody comes from rhapsody, from when rhapsodies fell silent and actors appeared who turned everything that had been said upside down, simply for entertainment or to attract the attention of the most distracted spectator. This is what Martí Anson does: he halts the traditional exhibition system, turns it upside down and introduces the visitor. Against the weight of history and art as legends, which reduce and isolate the story, here the exhibition is a minefield – only seemingly bare, full of ideas and decisions but also of doubts, where everything moves between power and possibility –. What happens if the message isn't previously established? Could it be done or undone during the course of the exhibition? Can we consider an exhibition as a collective praxis? The issue, we anticipate, is not about the innovative idea or presentation we make of the artist's work but about how we can activate it, make it available, and this is all about encouraging a common use of the exhibition space. Rejecting the established order to make art more accessible, free and democratic is not only about unlearning its strategies and less still about the artist creating alone against all the rules but about learning to play with them, collectively inventing new ways to use this stagnant system.

A Straight Exhibition cannot be observed from a distance, it can only be experienced. To enter is to abandon the contemplation we are accustomed to in museums and take sides: to decide how much time to spend on it and what actions to make. If we want to participate in this game of possibility, against the rules and without performances, we must commit to the question that Eugene Smith posed "I didn't write the rules. Why should I follow them?"