

PROJECTESD

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XAVIER RIBAS: NOMADS

Opening: February 27th, 19:30h

27.02 > 11.04.09

Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00 to 19:00h

ProjecteSD is pleased to present **Nomads**, Xavier Ribas' second solo show in the gallery.

The idea of the "invisible" and the "concealed" in photographic representation is a constant subject in the work of Ribas, for whom "photography shows the appearance of things, but the meaning, and thus its possible readings, go beyond these appearances or surfaces of the visible". In earlier works such as *Invisible Structures* (2006) and *Mud* (2006), landscape was always presented as a trace of what was no longer there, the visible designated what had already disappeared.

Nomads (2008), his most recent work, presented now for the first time at ProjecteSD, shows Xavier Ribas' approach to visualizing the violence exerted on a specific urban territory. The project emerges from an event occurred in the city of Barcelona in February 2004. "Some sixty gypsy families, previously evicted from an abandoned industrial site in Poblenou, moved to another empty plot nearby. Next morning, corporate developer Necso brought in machinery to intimidate the gypsies and to force them out of its property. Over a few days, they drilled and lifted up the concrete floor of the site, leaving behind a contorted surface, a kind of 'horizontal wall' as defensive structure to protect and keep the land empty. This method of dissuasion demonstrates the economic value of violence and destruction in order to control space. The broken ground, the fissures and fragments of concrete slabs standing up like remnants of ancient Mayan stellas give testimony of this displacement. They operate a 'beautification by default', the lie of the land, achieved through the expulsion from the land of those who shouldn't belong to it." (X. Ribas).

The installation consists of 33 black and white photographs, 2 colour photographs, a text and a print on photographic paper taken from an image obtained from Google which locates, in an aerial view, the area in question. Linked both conceptually and formally to his earlier photographic series *Mud*, in *Nomads* Ribas maps a territory building again a grid, as it would be done in an archaeological survey, showing with accuracy and great attention to detail a barren image of space. The subject of the urban periphery and its social problematic, present since his beginnings in the work of Ribas, is approached in this new series in a much less obvious but probably a lot more eloquent way. In this abstract, limitless, almost neutralized cartography, the reality of urban space disappears to illustrate the remains of the assaulted landscape.

Xavier Ribas (Barcelona, 1960) studied Anthropology in the Universidad de Barcelona and Photography in the Newport School of Art and Design. Since 2000 he is professor of the Photography department of the University of Brighton and, since 2004, guest professor of the Máster de Fotografía de la Universidad Politécnica de Valencia. He has received numerous awards such as the Commande du Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication (Centre National des Arts Plastiques, France), Photo España 06 (best publication), PhotoEspaña'98, FotoPress'95 and Primavera Fotográfica (2000). His work has been shown recently at the MACBA (*Universal Archive. The condition of the document and the modern photographic utopia*, Barcelona, 2008), Fundación Telefónica (*Ocho Visiones. Distrito C*, Madrid, 2007), DA2 (*Idilio. Sueño y Falacia*, Salamanca, 2007), Fundación FotoColectania (Barcelona, 2005), The Photographer's Gallery in London (1999 and 2004), Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast (2000) or the Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon (2001). In 2009 he will participate in the exhibition *Nature as Artifice. New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art*, shown both at the George Eastman House, Rochester, and the Aperture Foundation, New York.

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