

CATALONIA IN VENICE

TO LOSE YOUR HEAD (IDOLS)



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Eventi Collaterali

CATALONIA IN VENICE—TO LOSE YOUR HEAD (IDOLS) Collateral Event of the 58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia

For the 6th time, the INSTITUT RAMON LLULL presents a Collateral Event for the Biennale Arte. Pedro Azara curates the exhibition *CATALONIA IN VENICE—TO LOSE YOUR HEAD (IDOLS)*.

The multi-authored exhibition explores the theory of art reception and documents the complex life of public statues in our time. In a world of images, where iconoclasm, iconodulia and the transformation of aesthetic and are ways for reality and power to relate to each other, the exhibition questions the fetishism of images, iconoclasm and iconodulia this exhibition questions the fetishism of images as living entities and encourages conversations as a way to foster human happiness, awareness and freedom.

With a PERFORMANCE BY MARCEL BORRÀS, VIDEO WORKS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AN ARTIST'S BOOK and AN ARCHIVE, *Catalonia in Venice—To Lose Your Head (Idols)* investigates the issue of art reception with a specific focus on naturalistic and figurative statues. Using 20th-century statues in public spaces in Catalonia as a starting point, it considers the objectives of images from a theoretical point of view, moving between paradigms of old and new, documenting and analysing the experiences of statues, which could be enriching or destructive, lucid or irrational. The exhibition narrates the history of these statues from Catalonia, their experiences, the passionate relationship they have maintained and maintain with us, experiences that have left traces. These recent histories are similar to those that have taken place and are happening all over the world, in all cultures in which the image has played or plays an important role in personal and community life. The participating artists will interpret the ability of images to create feelings and to generate physical reactions beyond kitsch, beyond contemporary iconodulism and iconoclasm, while exploring the fascination and meaning of the power of images, as well as how and why works of art attract our attention and “awaken” passionate “feelings”.

Supported by four main pillars: performance, video works, an artist's book and an archive, and accompanied by references to poetry, literature, theatre and architecture, the exhibition documents cases in which statues from public spaces have the power to change their meaning despite their author and commissioner's will, or the passage of time and space.

The ambitious PERFORMANCES of Marcel Borràs, whose explorations of identity have made him one of the most renowned theatre and film artists in Catalonia, will bring the power of images to a territory where representation, action and word play a fundamental role. With Marta Aguilar, the human statue actress, ‘She appropriates in present’ is a performance that will relive and contextualise, both historically and aesthetically, the experiences of statues in the exhibition. The performance will evolve to be complemented by the interactive sculpture ‘E.Y.M: (a F***** vending machine)’, a response to the work which will take on its own identity.

With the DOCUMENTARY, “EYES/EYES/EYES/EYES”, Albert García-Alzórriz will present the statues examined by the exhibition, focusing on the ambivalence of image, matter and subjectivity of naturalist images expressly created for public spaces. The space design by architect Tiziano Schürch is also inspired by the murky, disturbing and devastating impressions left after a visit to a municipal storehouse to search for monuments that have been removed from public space. The worn, mutilated, profaned and irrecoverable statues offer a poignant reminder of the complexity of life.

Catalonia in Venice—To Lose Your Head (Idols) and Pedro Azara's curatorial research will culminate in an artist's book published by Tenov publishing house, in which six of the most relevant artists in Catalonia across two different generations reflect on the power of images. With designs, illustrations, poems and essays, David Bestué, Lúa Coderch, Lola Lasurt, Daniela Ortiz, Perejaume and Francesc Torres will explore

how concepts such as iconoduly, iconolatry and iconoclasm are confronted with the history of public art and perception of art.

“... and the statues want to die. The stone, wrenched from stones, material that is then cut, molded or cast, constrained into an imposed form, wants to return to its mineral reign. Statues are artificial bodies. Like strange beings that ignite passions, desires and fears. Statues dominate us. They expose what we do not always want to see. We plead with them or we decapitate them. Desperate before their disdain, or grateful for their unexpected revelation, we react, by thanking them – or by serving them their final coup de grâce. Before statues, our idols, we lose the forms – and we disfigure them - so that they don't look at us anymore, so that they no longer see us reflected in their eyes.”

Pedro Azara, curator

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Pedro Azara (Bois-Colombes, 1955) holds a PhD in architecture (1986) and has been a Professor of Aesthetics at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona - Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC-ETSAB) since 1987. He is a member of, and advisor to, numerous councils of cultural institutions, both public and private, including the Architecture Commission of Barcelona City Council, IVAM (Valencian Institute of Modern Art), the international archaeological mission (Franco-Italian-Spanish) in Tell Massāikh (Syria) and in Qasr Shamamok (Erbil, Iraq). Pedro Azara has curated several contemporary art exhibitions, bringing together archaeology, aesthetics, semiotic ideas and sociology. These include *The Last Look*, at MACBA, 1997; *Mirage Town Baghdad, from Wright to Venturi* at COAC, Casa Àrabe, COAMI, Center for Architecture, Society of Architects, Riwad Biennale, Barcelona, Madrid, Murcia, Boston, New York and Ramallah, 2008-- 2011; *Mediterranean. From Myth to Reason*, CaixaForum Barcelona and Madrid, 2014; *From Ancient to Modern. Archaeology and Aesthetics*, SAW, New York, 2015; and *Sumeria and the Modern Paradigm*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, 2017.

ABOUT THE INSTITUT RAMON LLULL

The Institut Ramon Llull has produced and organised Catalonia's presence as a Collateral Event of La Biennale di Venezia since 2009. The Institut Ramon Llull is a public body founded with the purpose of promoting Catalan language and culture abroad. To select the winning proposal the IRL nominated a committee of experts chaired by artist Dora García and made up of members João Fernandes, deputy director of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía; Carles Guerra, director of the Fundació Tàpies; Cèlia del Diego, art critic and director of the Centre d'Art la Panera.

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CALLE QUINTAVALLE, CASTELLO 40, VENICE. MAY 11TH TO NOVEMBER 24TH
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[Facebook.com/CataloniaInVenice](https://www.facebook.com/CataloniaInVenice) [Instagram.com/CataloniaInVenice](https://www.instagram.com/CataloniaInVenice)

PRESS PREVIEW
May 8th from 2pm

OPENING
May 10th. 6pm Drinks to follow

'SHE APPROPRIATES IN PRESENT' PERFORMANCE AND INTERACTIVE SCULPTURE
May 8th at 5pm, May 9th at 12pm and 17h, May 10th at 12pm.
Registration required at: idols@llull.cat

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