

Henrique Vieira Ribeiro + Alfredo Añunes

WHITE HORIZONS

Opening September 12th, 7pm

Exhibition September 13th – October 4th 2010 | Monday- Friday, 11am – 5pm

Espaço Carões da Livraria Sá de Costa | Praça Luís de Camões, 22, 4th floor, Lisbon

SUMMON THE IMAGES, REVEAL THE GHOSTS

The images presented by Henrique Vieira Ribeiro in this exhibition have the quality described by Freud as "Unheimlich" being simultaneously familiar and alienous, a disquieting strangeness between what is close and known. These are domestic pictures that belong to a family album, and now survive as ghosts coming from an undefined time and a place, collectively showing their posthumous condition. They request us to fill the blank spaces of "where", "when", and "what": who are these people? In which circumstances, what time, were they photographed?

This is just the first signification level. And, being the most immediate, it is certainly not the most interesting nor it constitutes the center of this exhibition. If everything stayed there and the artist was only a mediator in the image presentation, if he would not submit them to a strong intervention assuming his as author, this would be a documentary exhibition. But there is another signification level, a more important one, and that is where we should approach what's more fundamental in his work. That level is the one where we surpass the documentary and "where" condition to these images. In this case, the artist is not just the mediator, nor he renounces the images in his life. In a certain way, he deconstructs, searching on them a manipulation that detaches them from its original place. This manipulation has two dimensions: through digitization and enlargement, the images acquire new plastic qualities, close to an artistic discipline which is not photography anymore. There is a nullification of the photographic effect, to the point when the spectator feels like there is no more need to see: who, what, where? And the video, showing negatives, reinforces the idea of the loss of referentiality of the images.

But we must notice that this video has sound, and that sound evokes a projection machine (underlining the technical and mechanical aspects), and it is interrupted by a brief speech that sounds ridiculous or coming from the old television screens, where a sentence is pronounced in a peculiar tone. In this sentence affirms the expression that gives the title to the exhibition: white horizons. What makes this audio recording the soundtrack of the projection? They bring the viewing and listening machines to the foreground, integrating the technical devices as fundamental elements to the exhibition – including a light table and three slide projectors. Here, the media don't have an transparency quality, they don't turn off to show the mediator images and sounds. On the contrary, they have a special opacity, as they are activated as such: the machines and the technical devices are integrating part of this work, they become equivalent elements to the pictures. They are the factor for the annihilation of the documentary effect. And so, the images move forward to an enigmatic place, where their otherness-the condition is revealed.

Andrés Guzmán