

BCN PRODUC- CIÓ '15

VISCERAL BLUE

Artists

Sergi Botella, Andrea Büttner, Valentina Desideri, Equipo re, Isaías Griñolo, Derek Jarman, Roc Jiménez de Cisneros, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Julia Montilla, Quim Pujol, Vermeir & Heiremans i WerkerMagazine

Curator

Anna Manubens

Absent from other people's meaning, alien, accidental with respect to naïve happiness, I owe a supreme, metaphysical lucidity to my depression. On the frontiers of life and death, occasionally I have the arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaninglessness of Being, of revealing the absurdity of bonds and beings. (Julia Kristeva, Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia, 1987).

'Being blue' is an expression used to refer to an imprecise morass of emotions that may signify sadness, dejection, melancholy, gloominess or depression. The argument put forward by *Visceral Blue* draws on the critical possibilities that arise from attributing a colour to a feeling. 'Being blue' avoids the analytical inertia that could be triggered by incriminatory and normative terms such as "depression", as well as its rigid boundaries, resulting in a more encompassing dimension of blueness, which makes it more difficult to remain invulnerable to it.

The exhibition stems from a wish to understand the current prominence of feeling blue and puts forward an explanation that links it with the neoliberal economic model. In broad brush terms, it could be said that the exhibition approaches this model as a toxic. *Visceral Blue* argues that neoliberal aspirations and mythologies, despite being intangible and of a narrative nature, prove mentally and physically toxic, as they are able to give rise to the blues. Regarding 'being blue' as collateral damage of the neoliberal paradigm runs counter to the explanations that conveniently confine the causes and management of mental unease to the private sphere. In contrast, it fosters a redistribution of responsibility for the blues and their relocation in the public space and public discourse.

Every economic model shapes a type of subject who, it goes without saying, benefits its dynamics. In the case of financial neoliberalism, economic principles such as speculation on value and the logic of credit are the driving force of the market, but also that which governs the construction of subjectivity and sociability. The neoliberal subject handles him/herself in the same way in which shares are managed on the financial market. Shares are expected to increase in value and attract investment in financial markets, and it seems that the same is demanded of the individual in social life. Adding a twist to current analysis of the effects of cognitive labour, it could be said that every facet of the subject and of social life is oriented towards raising appreciation and attractiveness in order to instigate investment.

This constant negotiation of one's own value in the public sphere modifies the autonomy of self-appreciation since external judgement and ratification infiltrate self-evaluation. Such

externalised speculation on one's value places us at specific mental and somatic co-ordinates. In the words of Michel Feher, "it is possible to associate speculation on value with an affective field polarised between depression and plenitude; between feeling self-shame and self-esteem". Accordingly, it is possible to understand that the possible failure to ratify one's own value before social, employment or political powers-that-be steers us to the supposed negative end of the spectrum, which is no other than that emotional morass of 'being blue': lowness, depression, shame... Embarrassment and shame, in fact, appear in many of the exhibited works.

Given that speculation on one's own value involves external and systemic criteria – silenced but nevertheless there – *Visceral Blue* opposes the privatisation of mental suffering in the belief that it is perverse to hold the subject solely responsible for an unease that is linked to prevailing circumstances. Therefore the exhibition posited as a public space is, firstly, an act of publicising. It is an attempt to facilitate shared spaces for feeling low, for being not as attractive, efficient or eloquent as seems required of us.

Secondly, the exhibition stresses the connection between feeling blue and financial needs, including pieces in which the visceral – a notion that alludes to the physical (the viscera) and the mental (a visceral reaction, for example) – is linked to economic or political powers-that-be. In many of the works, political struggles take place partially in the mind and the body that also become a part of the battlefield. Or, conversely, many political victories involve a change in affects.

Exposing this connection is intended not only to provide an understanding of and to democratise feeling low as the collateral damage of an economic model, but also – and above all – to think of it as a space of dissidence against that selfsame model; to view the inadequate not only as something that does not suit the system but as that which wilfully refuses to adapt. The exhibition is written using works and archives that explore what the potential of inhabiting, saying and sharing 'being blue' may be. *Visceral Blue* perceives forms of belligerence within fragility and examines the possibility that a visceral reaction could be triggered from within the blues. Blue dissent however, is not grandiloquent; it is often made of anti-heroic gestures such as building a shelter of vinyl records in order to abandon oneself to the hangover generated by the constant high of Wall Street's cokeheads.

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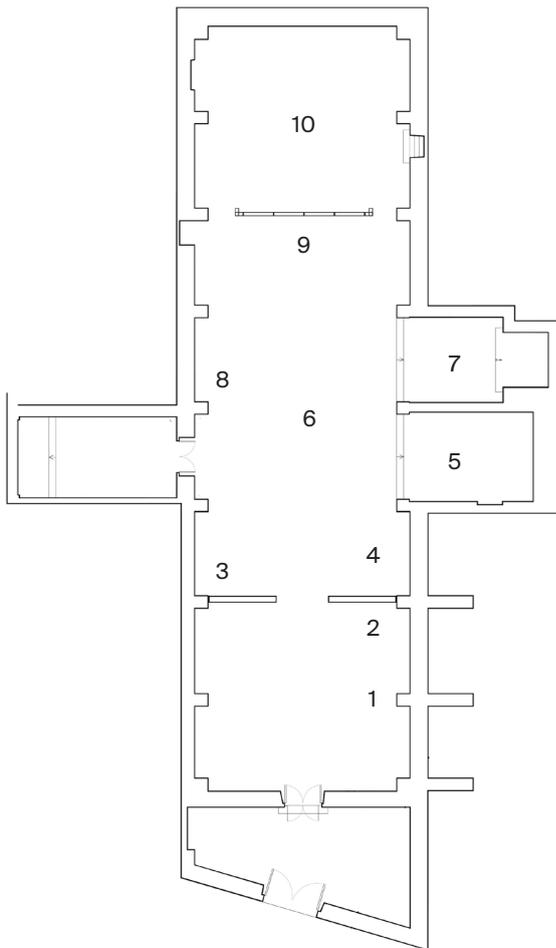
Valentina Desideri: *Political Therapy*,
individual therapy sessions
2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 March / La Capella
Bookings: La Capella – lacapella@bnc.cat
(one person per session)
In collaboration with Bar Project

Quim Pujol: *BDSMmm*
10 March 7.30 pm / La Capella
Presentation of the theoretical and practical framework
for individual sessions that will take place
from 11 March to 3 April

Presentation of the book of the *Visceral Blue* exhibition,
with Anna Manubens and Eloy Fernández Porta
22 March 7.30 pm / Múltiplos bookshop

Presentation of the book by Isaías Griñolo
Debla de las palabras
2 April, time TBC / La Capella

Festive encounter on the initiative of Julia Montilla, with a
swap market, an aperitif, and an open mic for everyone
3 April from 1 pm to 3 pm / Plaza de la Trinitat
(Sant Andreu)



Exhibition room

1. Vermeer & Heiremans
2. Julia Montilla
3. Sergi Botella
/ Roc Jiménez de Cisneros
4. Sidsel Meineche
5. Julia Montilla
6. Isaías Griñolo
7. Andrea Büttner
8. Werker Magazine
9. Equipo re
10. Derek Jarman

Other spaces & times

- Valentina Desideri
Quim Pujol
Julia Montilla
Curator
Anna Manubens

Anna Manubens writes, curates and supports artists' productions on a freelance basis and has a preference for hybrid roles and initiatives at the intersection between research, programming, curating and project development. She lives in Barcelona but regularly works in Brussels for the artist-run platform Auguste Orts, which specialises in the production of artists' films and in the ideas around them. Anna Manubens combines all this with teaching at Pompeu Fabra University. Her most recent exhibitions include *When you fall into a trance* (La Loge, Brussels, 2014), *Contornos de lo audiovisual* (Tabakalera, San Sebastián, 2015) and *Hacer cuerpo con la máquina* (Blue Project Foundation, Barcelona, 2015-16). Before this, she worked as the artistic director of the LOOP Barcelona festival.