

BARCELONA PRODUCCIÓ

SOFÍA MONTENEGRO

Maquinal

30.04 – 07.07.2024

The aim of this text is to accompany you as you make your way through *Maquinal*, Sofía Montenegro's exhibition at La Capella. I'll write this piece from memory, without notes. Letting myself go with the flow of my conversations, visits and get-togethers with Sofía. To do this, the only possible solution for me is to imagine what this exhibition will be like, because the deadline for this article doesn't sync with the production time of the exhibition, and everything might have changed between me writing and you visiting. And that's not a problem.

We enter the main room in La Capella, at first we can't see anything. In an –unconscious– initial and very quick composition of the place, it's not at all clear to us what's happening.

In fact, I'm sure everything will have changed, as in her proposals, the form is constantly generated in real time. In reality, nothing is fixed.

The space is in half-darkness, disordered lights and the occasional reflection. Softly we stop and begin to hear something. Our eyes start to grow accustomed to the dimness.

There's constant movement around and through the exhibition space, people coming and going, lights getting brighter then dimmer, sounds that catch our attention. This proposal invites us to perceive reality from somewhere else, with alert eyes.

Some windows have been intervened or uncovered.

This level of perception perhaps invites us to slow our pace just slightly in order to pay attention to things that ordinarily we'd miss. To achieve this, Sofía proposes to immerse us in a series of scenes that are gradually connected with each other thanks to the eyes, the light, the sound and our capacity for speculation. Each scene lasts around ten minutes.

As we pass through the space we notice that the natural light is mixed with the sound. The two elements come from outside. But we know that we are inside, and the sound and light are here, with us, accompanying us mutually.

I can't tell you what these ones are about because they change all the time. A person walks a dog dressed up in clothes, and they cross paths with two boys. The person suddenly stops, they've dropped something. A call. A seagull in the distance. A cat approaches... Here we have a multiple point of view from which we can pick off layers of reality. The scenes form a never-ending film.

New images gradually appear. There, in the distance, reflection catches our eye. Where does all this light come from? Curiosity moves us through the space.

In fact, La Capella is a huge camera obscura, a space where we come not to see things but through which we can look. From here, we can observe the details that make up our surroundings when we look outside. It's an invitation to let ourselves go, let ourselves go as a working methodology. It's very alert and reacts to what takes place. It does not project. And I invite you, as visitors, to do the same, to try not to project your visit. Can we do away with what we expect to see? With what we expect will happen?

The change in perspective and the passage of time allow other stimuli to appear. Has that always been here? Today La Capella seems to be a space that is simultaneously empty and full.

Sofía invites us to look attentively and calmly. To focus on the details as if we were a camera. A camera with a memory of its own, a subconscious that will necessarily lead us to interpret what we see differently.

Can that be possible?

'I don't trust reality', I think she said to me one day. Unnoticed details suddenly come into focus, forging connections with each other. Perhaps looking must necessarily be that, looking in a different way. Looking at something familiar, everyday, the space of La Capella, from another state. And that is what makes this exhibition so exciting and necessary today. It doesn't easily admit depictions generated by information technologies, it is a radical, pleasant and thought-provoking here and now. Perhaps there is nothing to see here, but if we focus our attention for a moment, everything is in sight.

What is the gap between what is seen and what is imagined?

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