

EVENTS: AMALIA PICA, "LOW VISIBILITY"

stefania facco - 29 July 2013



Amalia Pica's "Low Visibility," Johann König, Berlin, 2013. Courtesy Johann Köni. Photo by Roman März.

In an era of communication hypertrophy, the distinction between information and meaning continues to generate debates and to be a subject of investigation. The Argentinian artist **Amalia Pica** (1978, Neuquén Capital) **on exhibition at the Johann König gallery in Berlin until September 7th with the solo show "Low Visibility"**, explores communication and civil participation, and investigates limits and the contradictions of language, the common aspects and the misunderstandings of perception. Born and raised in Argentina, but based in London, Pica uses drawing, sculpture, performance and photography to talk about responsibility and participation, through simple materials and by creating visual metaphors.

In the new body of works Pica revisits a few information technologies that have fell into disuse. The wireless way in low visibility (recreation of the first system for non cable transmission, as seen on TV) (2013) recreates one of Guglielmo Marconi's experiments on wireless communication from the end of the nineteenth century. The system included a blown up helium ball connected to a wire attached to a loading coil. As some captions state, in the attempt to produce a trans-oceanic telegraphic transmission, the system failed and was soon abandoned. Shutter Telegraph (as seen on TV) (2013) instead reproduces a type of optical telegraph, previous to the invention of the electric version, used to send simple messages in Morse code. The gallery's staff, not trained in the field of Morse code, will try to operate on the rotating shutters during the course of the exhibition, reproducing inevitably incoherent messages.

At the entrance to the exhibition, a kinetic sculpture, Playing solo and indoors (mechanical jump rope) **invites us to interact with the work, to take part in a game that reminds us of childhood and the collective games of long ago.** Once a week a performer plays with a jump rope, fluctuated without pauses and at a constant rhythm by the mechanical device, while she talks about her daily errands. After a few minutes, the repetitive exercise joined with talking, exhausts the performer's energy in contrast with the constant moving of the machine and it reminds us of the effort that we make daily to express our thoughts in a clear and comprehensible way.

In the middle of the main room, a paper collage of large dimensions, Constructed View #2 (2013), portrays the artist from the back on the background of a mountainous landscape, while she holds a frame. The visitor's eyes immediately stops on what is highlighted in the frame and it's the artist herself that, creating a direct tie between the figurative and the performative, suggests, through distance, an intimate vision of the whole. **Distance between event and documentation, therefore, between memory and de-codification.**

In the last room of the exhibition we go back to words, to language and writing as main communication systems and we're confronted with a poetic composition created by the artist herself. The series of sculptures, entitled Cathacresis (2013), is the materialization of normalized rhetorical figures. What we see are the expressions indicated in the captions, like the neck of a bottle, the head of a vine, the teeth of a comb, translated into poetic ready-made assemblies that meld into a whole with the written text. Jorge Luis Borges stated: "Every language is an alphabet of symbols whose use presumes a past that the speakers share" and the dedicated compositions

created by Pica give us codes that are visually understandable, decodable thanks to a shared cultural heritage. In Low Visibility Pica creates, with simple materials, sculptures and installations that are aesthetically captivating but conceptually rigorous and complicated. **She drags us into a deep study on the importance of communication as a collective experience and on the privileged role of the artist as a medium for messages**, even when they aren't understood and abandoned to misunderstood subjective interpretations.

Johann König (Berlin), 29 June – 7 September, 2013. Summer break 29.7–11.8.