



FRANCISCO RUIZ DE INFANTE

FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos)

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Votive objects have an almost untraceably ancient lineage in human society, much as they have almost unfathomably profound roots in the human psyche. These objects have been identified as having been produced in civilizations dating from the Neolithic period to the current day, in every inhabited area of the globe, and within nearly every known religious context. Almost anything can be made to become a votive object, regardless of appearance, size, material, function, provenance, etc.; what lends a votive object its unique charge, what separates it definitively from its materiality or functionality, is the distinctive mix of hope, desire, fear or relief it has been endowed with by the individual offering it, often in despair, to unseen forces felt to be otherwise beyond the reach of human will. Above all, votive objects most frequently possess a dual function: that of petition and that of gratitude for the fulfillment of that same petition, a semantically paradoxical “thanks in advance”, an elasticity of time, a compression of future, past and present.

The notion of the votive object (or ‘ex-voto’) plays an essential role in Francisco Ruiz de Infante’s exhibition *FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos)* [False Dualities (Ex-Voto Workshop)]. This role is not literal, it is not manifested explicitly in votive objects *per se*, it is not a question of one-to-one formal correspondences; instead, the notion of the ex-voto is here used conceptually, repurposed into a deeper artistic concern, a tool that allows this restless artist to explore certain fundamental paradoxes and our manner of resolving those paradoxes. Are things what they seem? Or what we make of them? Is perception a window? Or a mirror? Or both? Or neither? And above all, in the exhibition *FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos)* -- what is the relationship between thought and belief? What is the difference? What of elasticity? What of compression? What of stasis, and what of flux? How might these questions be approached, if at all? It is an

extraordinarily relevant concept with regard to the structures of contemporary art discourse, where belief, thought and will are understood as paramount; its relevance goes beyond the art world.

As is usual in Ruiz de Infante's practice, *FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos)* presents the spectator with a complex web of videos, objects, texts, photos and *in situ* architectural interventions; it is, in the artist's own description of his working method "a juggling act between advanced technology and emergency bricolage." Nonetheless, despite the acknowledged elements of improvisation and haphazardness, there are subtle motifs recurring throughout in *FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos)*, there is an equally subtle internal logic, there are orchestrated sequences, physical as well as intellectual; as a result, the exhibition as a whole (in keeping with Ruiz de Infante's work) comes together as a *mise-en-scène* where spectators might endow the objects at hand with their own votive-like meanings via thought and / or belief, and above all via experience. Such is art.

George Stolz

Francisco Ruiz de Infante (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1966; lives and works between Strasbourg and Auberive, France) combines images, texts, sounds and objects into complex installations that embed advanced technology within rough-hewn materials, while at the same time infusing a rigorously critical conceptual framework with an assured poetic sensibility. Often created *in situ* and ephemeral in nature, Ruiz de Infante's work is characterized by a do-it-yourself aesthetic in which forces of construction and destruction operate simultaneously, giving rise to environments that appear to be unfinished while simultaneously already in a state of ruin. Although often seemingly precarious and fragile, Ruiz de Infante's installations are in fact carefully orchestrated assemblages that function like three-dimensional drawings or diagrams, becoming *de facto* stage settings that deftly transform spectators from passive viewers to active participants.

Ruiz de Infante has had solo exhibitions at CROPCF Le Centre de Réadaptation Cardiologique et Pneumologique de Franche-Comté (Pont-d'Héry, 2022); Centre National de Création Musicale (CNCM) (Marseille, 2021); Fundación BBVA (Madrid, 2019); Artium Museoa. Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo de Vitoria-Gasteiz (2018, 2011); Centre d'art Contemporain de la ville d'Ivry sur Seine (Paris, 2017); SNE Le Maillon (Strasbourg, 2016); ZKM | Zentrum für Kunst und Medien (Karlsruhe, 2009); Fundación Telefónica (Buenos Aires, 2009); Centre d'Art la Panera (Lleida, 2007); Fundació "la Caixa" (Barcelona, 2006); La Gallera (Valencia, 2003); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, 1998) and elsewhere. His feature-length films, such as *Campos Eventuales* (2020), *Los Lobos* (1995) and *Las Cosas Simples* (1993) have been well-received critically, with the latter being awarded the Prix Découverte at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma de Montreal. His work forms part of collections such as the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, Kunsthau Zürich, JVC Collection (Tokyo), FRAC (Alsace, Champagne-Ardenne and Île-de-France) and MUSAC – Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (León). Since 1999, Ruiz de Infante has been artistic director of the research group *Art Out of Format – Arts of Time* at the Haute École des Arts du Rhin (Strasbourg).

FALSAS DUALIDADES (Taller de Ex-Votos) (which belongs of Ruiz de Infante's ongoing thematic project «JAMÁS-JAMÁS») is Ruiz de Infante's fourth exhibition at the Galería Elba Benítez. The show forms part of the Festival Off of PHotoESPAÑA 2022.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the artist will present a performance titled *Notas para el retrato de Dorian Black* [Notes for a Portrait of Dorian Black] during the inauguration on July 5, 2022.