



Instituto
de arte
contemporáneo

“Et in arcadia ego”, curated by Blanca de la Torre and Juanli Carrión

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Located in a photographic Studio in Chelsea, Thornton Room completes the cycle of thinking, making, producing and showing. Marked with an interdisciplinary character, Thornton Room will start its trajectory at the end of April 2009 with a space having the feeling of an exhibition hall, the essence of a project room and the flavor of a gallery.

For the opening and under the title ET IN ARCADIA EGO, curated by Blanca de la Torre and Juanli Carrión, Thornton Room presents a group show encompassing an international selection of artists working with video, photography and drawings.

The works included represent the classic natural/artificial dichotomy taken to the extreme. Here man’s “iron hand” is evident, for with the development and advance of technological societies, there has been an accompanying loss of the natural.

The works depict a degeneration of the landscape - a landscape made ill by a contaminated human touch - or perhaps simply as an unmeant byproduct of the new systems we inhabit, where past and future melt and it’s hard to distinguish between what is real and what illusion. Images powerfully display the condition of natural life bowing down under the weight of humans building a dystopian society, destroying in the process our lyric landscape. Riveting pictures of an askew world, created while those who dreamed of creating an ecologically sound society, were overshadowed by the ambition and desires of the so-called developers.

The artists included show a landscape conceived of as consumable property and a battlefield where the interconnections of human problems and the natural world are fought out.

Rob Carter’s Landscaping II employs photographic “reconstructions” to spotlight the iconic and political structures in the urban environment. Carter draws parallels between the inspiring beauty and symmetry of the natural world, and human manipulation and control of it in the past, present and future.

Christoph Draeger’s catastrophes series depict cataclysms, whether real or imaginary. A series of disasters reflects on the paradoxes of nature, which can be nurturing but also cataclysmic.

Over the Gallery window, Protected Zone by Chus García-Fraile appears as an escalator (leading nowhere) in the middle of a idyllic forest. The sublimity of the landscape is invaded by a mechanic conveyor, but, somehow, the vulnerability of nature becomes reinforced and enhanced by the artificial human intrusion.

With Twilight, Carlos Irijalba places a sports field light tower into Baztan, one of the last jungles remaining in Europe. Artificial light becomes a metaphor of transformation, a modification of the real that with a single gesture challenges the representation of the space.

Patrick Nilsson's drawings depict a 'folkhem', an idealized nation in the stages of disintegration. The urban settings detail human dramas situated on the verge of being engulfed by the overwhelming voluminous darkness on the horizon.

Finally, J.G. Zimmerman's Dystopia creates a unique view of altered landscapes through digital animations. Reducing a landscape to one core element, he documents the variation of our social and economic infrastructure while creating an abstract view of these newly manufactured landmarks.

Curated by Blanca de la Torre and Juanli Carrión.

April 25th - 23rd May, 2009

Reception: Saturday, April 25th, 6 - 8pm

Thornton Room, 150W 25th Sreet, New York, NY 10001