

# The Painter with his Back Turned

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## 1. An Agreed-to Position

In *El Pirineu de baix* (1997), among the most recently published collections of Perejaume's work, there appears, isolated from the book's main sequence of images, a photograph: a portrait of the artist and an old woman, both of whom are standing. This photograph has been placed where one might expect to find an epilogue, beside the list of works catalogued in *El Pirineu de baix*. It serves more than one purpose, functioning as a work in, a commentary on, a frame for, and a conclusion to the volume.<sup>1</sup>

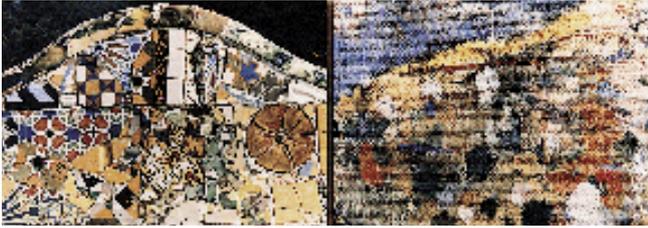
This image is a fitting marker of the place taken up by all of Perejaume's works. The difference between what does and does not form part of his body of work is worked out at the edge of the frame. Perhaps for this reason, Perejaume's work features a wide range of frames: emptied frames, frames stranded on a mountainside, buried frames, frames dragged, burnt and consumed, painted, projected, lifted and hung, deformed, curled, cut, open and closed, smashed and destroyed.

Yet the photograph in question also destroys an intangible frame. Perejaume's meeting with Consol Boquera—who posed, early in life, for Joan Miró's painting, *Retrat d'una vaileta* (Portrait of a Young Girl, 1918)—seems to erase the line between representation and referent. It is well known that the distance between representation and referent constitutes a taboo. Nonetheless, the meeting portrayed in this photograph has a hint of the impossible to it: it evokes the lost moment in which Miró himself stood before the young Consol Boquera.

The order which spills forth from this serene portrait—this image of an elderly woman squeezing hands that rest below her waist, the artist towering over her—is comparable to the images of mountains which appear so often in Perejaume's oeuvre. As so often happens in his works, anything may become a mountain. Even questions of cultural order seem to be absorbed by those of natural order.

The title of this photograph—*Els tossals* (The Hillocks, 1993; p. 122)—confirms this mirage. The title renders the image new, making it one of the artist who adds his body to the presence of a woman's body, grown pleasantly old. What had been a commentary, an addition, has become a work, just as these bodies have become mountains.

The photograph's documentary tone, in the style of August Sander (p. 122), effectively demonstrates this subversion of chronology. By coming so near Consol Boquera's body, Perejaume has freed her from the confinement to which Joan Miró's painting had subjected her. The law of physical proximity overcomes any other kind of bond. Nonetheless, the price paid for having let the original go is that of a new



Trencadís català 1993.  
(Catalan Mosaic). Photographs

attribution of authorship. Perejaume has now taken this function upon himself because he stands closest, as it were.

As a result of this synchronisation between the artist's time and Miró's model's, between Perejaume's time and Consol Boquera's, there appears a space of fiction. Kinship, which was more or less implicit in the typology of portraits of two people posing together, has then to be understood in photographic space. By dint of this kinship, Perejaume is placed in the sphere of Joan Miró. In this sense, then, this photograph provides a place in history. However, this is not a matter of stylistic continuity, nor of the kind of sequencing one finds in art history. Rather, it will show that to construe art in historical terms is to depend on a framework of causality which serves to determine what may be placed beside what and what may and may not be compared. Our placing of this portrait of the artist with Miró's model in history is, to get to the point, an example of a policy of encounters.

This kind of encounter, which owes something to the surrealists' policy of image production, has taken on an extraordinary dimension in Perejaume's work. The homely setting for this surrealist meeting ("the chance encounter, on a dissecting table, between a sewing machine and an umbrella") is extended by Perejaume to historical, cultural, and geographical levels. These unsuspected connections play an important role here: in order to re-make the explanation of reality, one must first modify causality. It is for this reason that the move into the realm of fiction seems unavoidable; there, politics become once again poetical.

In Perejaume's case, the most visible model for this course of action is to be found in the first of his books to be published. In *Ludwig-Jujol. Què és el collage, sinó acostar soledats?* (1989), this alteration in the logic of history was intended to make the rhetoric of formal history into fiction. Throughout the text, geography contracts, bringing intersections into being, yoking newly paired elements. Territories, place names, architectures, cultures, periods, and scenographies overlap in a shared space. The universes of King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845-1886) and the Catalan architect Josep Maria Jujol (1879-1949) come together through a range of varied connections. All the same, the quality of these connections cannot be verified. The logic of space having been suspended, one has to trust in poetic fluidity. As Perejaume wrote, "We shall allow a shady stream to flow from Bavaria's melting snows to a washing basin in the countryside around Tarragona."<sup>2</sup>

These connections are capricious, acting as they do against the flow of what seems to be natural. Yet nothing is more loaded, ideologically, than that which shuns comparison with alternatives. Perejaume consequently sets about inventing kinship by creating series of juxtaposed images, as in *Trencadís català* (Catalan

Mosaic, 1988; p. 124). The simulation of continuity which he achieves is intended to erase differences. Yet when he places Leonardo's *Virgen of the Rocks* beside Caspar David Friedrich's *Promeneur au dessus des nuages*, the kind of fiction one encounters is composed by a sequence of images.<sup>3</sup> The transition between one image and the next evokes a rational de-composition of the encounter.

These relationships are to be followed by a space given over to explanation. In this space, a rationality of a sort will reappear in support of such juxtapositions, thus generating the conceptual site in which Perejaume works. Just as the photograph which concludes *El Pirineu de baix* functions in relation to the other works contained in the volume, other elements of Perejaume's output do not enjoy the sort of autonomy which is characteristic of the objects of modern art. The supplementary character which we had anticipated is now confirmed and shown to be an illustrative function. More specifically, these works require the presence of an object, another body; it is only by reference to such an object that they can be explained. Otherwise, what would they 'cling' to? This explains the eagerness to 'be placed'—whether historically, spatially, culturally, or aesthetically—to which these works are subjected.

As for the scene in which Perejaume and Consol Boquera appear together, it merely makes a negotiated, historical 'placement' in time visible. In order to make the coincidence of Perejaume and Consol Boquera in a single image meaningful, one must understand that the same image viewed from a conventional historical perspective would be 'placed' very distinctly. In fact, in staging this photograph Perejaume has prepared a contradiction which leaves his own position as an artist unresolved.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Scattered Paintings

It should now seem evident that the question of Perejaume's 'place' cannot be answered in completely straightforward terms. Both the photograph and the text which situate him in history give rise to a dialectic which renders it impossible to pin him down. In the case of this artist, the sense of movement in history is answered by the geographical path which Perejaume has followed.

Some of the writers who have tried to trace the path of Perejaume's work have offered an inventory of places where the artist has worked. In 1980 the art critic and historian Alexandre Cirici Pellicer visited Perejaume's studio. The result, a text written for the catalogue of Perejaume's first individual exhibition, at the Joan Prats Gallery in Barcelona, evoked a number of places associated with nineteenth-century culture.<sup>5</sup> Ca l'Oller de la Cortada, where Perejaume was then working, became for Cirici "a Gustave Doré engraving", "a shadowy world of kitsch, of Ludwig II of Bavaria's Neuschwantsein", with "an evaporated Wagnerian perfume", as well as "an atmosphere halfway between Japanese lacquer and Millais' Ophelia". He ends by stating that "everything is nineteenth-century" and that everything to be seen in the artist's studio gives one the impression that "one is looking at realist canvases painted in 1870". Eight years later, Vicenç Altaió furthered this effort to make an inventory: "Can Riera, in Fuirosos; Ca l'Oller de la Cortada, in the Dones d'Aigua park; Can Maresme; the Torre dels Focs and Can Rocosa, on the slopes of Montnegre; the bell-tower of the Church of Saint Sebastian, in Santa Eulàlia de Riuprimer;



Braque a Costuix 1992  
(Braque at Costuix)  
Oil on canvas. 50.5 x 116 cm.

Sant Martí d' Ogassa..."<sup>6</sup> Now, rather than bringing this list up to date, rather than adding to it, the task at hand is that of inquiring after the underlying economy to be found in this list of places that are both real and imaginary, after the meanings of these passages from place to place.

In many of Perejaume's paintings one finds representations of other displacements of paintings, often of nineteenth-century paintings. This displacement parodies the growing exchange of works between museums. Yet the nineteenth-century paraphernalia signals a shift not in movement, but of mover: it is no longer museum-goers who travel, but the museum itself which ventures beyond the confines of its premises. These roving works become comparable to the movement of consumer goods. In such a situation, the frame seems to propel the canvas through the air, as the museum walls had melted into nothingness. The institutional apparatus surrounding representations is largely gone, leaving behind the canvas and its gilded frame. From this point on, the frame seems all the more to function as protection for the painting, covering the edge of the canvas and shielding the work from new interpretations.

The sense of strangeness which we sense on seeing, in some of these works, paintings flying in formation across the sky, is heightened by the muteness of the trees. We know, from the titles of Perejaume's paintings, that the places portrayed are quite specific: the sky in *Costuix* (1994; p.56) is seen through empty frames and groups of paintings; in another painting, *Braque a Costuix* (Braque at Costuix, 1992; p.126), cubism is flying over the mountains in Vall Ferrera; in *Cal Peraire* (1993; p. 219), the corner of a picture gallery alights in a field; and in *La llotja dels Crous* (The Crous' Box, 1991), the painting hovers before a group of theatre stalls. These precise place names stand in the way of the universality extolled by high culture. Notwithstanding this sensation, the opposition at play may be inverted, and the presence of paintings may give the place depicted a sheen of exoticness. It is not very likely that frequent museum-goers will recognize the places which the titles designate. The geography of culture may well be imprecise, yet it is better known and closer at

Tren de postals 1981. (Postcard Train). Four postcards on paper. 29 x 98 cm.



hand than are real places found but a short distance from us.

### 3. A Silent Occupation of Space

*Tren de postals* (Postcard Train, 1981; p. 127) is an early manifestation of the ubiquitousness. A symbol of the industrial revolution, the train stands for all manner of potential connections —among them, connections, transmissions, and distributions of images. Rails, like frames, have functioned for Perejaume as metonyms of the propagation of representations. Indeed, given the overlap between rails and frames, one could sustain that frames sometimes take the place of rails, and rails of frames (*Marc's* [Frames], 1986; p. 10 and *Paysages de l'Europe. Gare d'Orsay*, 1996; p. 166).

The flow arising in these scattered works cannot be plotted on any map. It is uncontrollable flooding which bears a most striking similarity to this flow. All in all, the common objectives these paintings share is that of making a map through the route of representations. Landscape is thus, as a genre, reconceptualized at the great nineteenth-century drive to create means of transport.

Yet a more contemporary formulation of this problem would have to refer to an exchange of signs. When representations adopt fully capitalist means of distribution and consumption, they have entered the market place, however immaterial they may be. It is then that the virtual quality of representations seems to seek out materialist objectivity, thus bringing this compulsive movement to a standstill. All in all, this will lead to quite extravagant creations which allow for glimpses of their movement and their status as objects. The interruption of their movement, far from being a block, makes their identification possible.

This is because, in order to interrupt movement, one must first detect it. The visual portrayal of movement makes movement's invisible and silent occupation of space evident, although we consider this an illusion in the end. This suggests that representations may also be subject to economic and political control. Perejaume does not set out to provide a definitive account of the manner in which images and representations are propagated. It suffices to see the kind of tools which he puts in his works: *Claude Monet parant una tela d'aranya al coll de Vila-roja* (Claude Monet Placing a Cobweb at Vila-roja Pass, 1993; p. 58 ) commemorates the Impressionists' desire to capture the landscape and 'take it captive' ; *El motiu* (The Motif, 1994; pp. 128 and 129 ) shows an image pinned in the sand with four thumbtacks, the image of a place which will change, inevitably, as a consequence of environmental change. This desire to ascertain and later store is expressed in every work by Perejaume discussed so far. Yet that which evades its own visibility is likewise impossible to label and shelve. A work such as *Postalier* (Postcard Rack, 1984; p. 131) had already posed this two-faceted problem in Perejaume's development. The metallic structure intended as a commercial display of postcards is instead a display of mirrors, carried by the artist's back from place to place in a peripatetic action documented in a series of photographs. The presence of many atmospheres rendered *Postalier*



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a changing painting, visible from all angles.

#### 4. Resisting the Archive

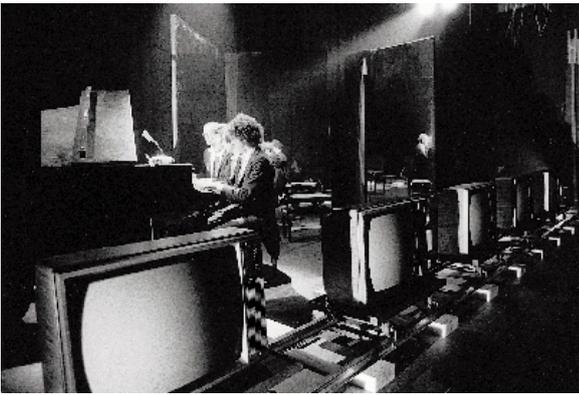
It may thus seem that *Postaler* is comparable to Robert Smithson's and Robert Morris' undertakings with displaced mirrors in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Yet it is significant that *Postaler*'s most remarkable aspect is its influence on notions of the exhibition and the archive. In historical terms, the mingling of the notion of a work and the format of an archive has its roots in a work by Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891-1956), one of the leading Russian artists in the period following the Revolution of October 1917: *Spatial Constructions* (1922). Both Perejaume's *Postaler* and Rodchenko's disassembled ovals are affected directly by the idea of a museum as a place to store representations. The conclusion to be drawn from an encounter with these two works together is that museums must, by virtue of their institutional character, take works apart (both literally and metaphorically) in order to be able to safeguard them.

The full meaning of this comparison is not borne out unless one places a well-known portrait of Rodchenko standing before dismantled elements of his *Spatial Constructions* (p. 130), beside a photograph of Perejaume carrying the postcard rack on his back (p. 130). These two images represent that which the museum would consider an unproductive moment, given that unassembled works cannot communicate what they do when they are placed in their pigeon-holes. This comparison is interesting inasmuch as it portrays the incorporation of the taking apart of a work in the process of production. This moment, which is incompatible with public exhibition, traditionally belongs to the archive. The archive is more than a place where works are stored and looked after; it is also an act which hides representation. It is for this reason that in *Postaler*, a

1 Rodchenko standing before dismantled hanging constructions, 1922  
Photograph: M. Kaufman. Georges Costakis Collection

2 Perejaume carrying the postcard rack

3 *Postaler* 1984  
(Postcard Rack)  
Postcard rack, mirrors. 197 x 56 x 50 cm.  
Photographs. 29.5 x 138.5 cm.



- 1 *Piano-xofer* 1984  
(Chauffeur-piano)
- 2 *Postaler II* 1984  
(Postcard Rack II)  
Photograph. 93 x 167 cm.

framework which is the archive par excellence, there are no images left.

*Postaler* is also in some sense the outcome of a show Perejaume staged with the musician Josep M. Mestres Quadreny. *Piano-xofer* (Chauffeur-piano, 1984; p. 132) consists of a series of staged scenes furnished with a number of the devices which are often found in Perejaume's work: a postcard rack; the curtain from Barcelona's Liceu opera house; mirrors; video monitors, and the piano on which four pianists play, both mounted on rails for the sake of mobility. The moment in *Piano-xofer* which I would like to highlight, is that in which a battery of video monitors rolls down the rails together. In the same moment, all four pianists are playing, eight hands are on the keyboard, and this image is multiplied by mirrors. Both the placement of the monitors in an assembly line-like setting and the accumulation of piano-playing hands evoke images of early twentieth-century mass production techniques, of Henry Ford's factories, images which lay behind Rodchenko's productivist approach in the early 1920s. The technique used in staging *Piano-xofer* is thus an extension of *Postaler*.

At the same time, the video images which appear both in *Piano-xofer* and in the original exhibition of *Postaler* suggest a context of interpretation in which the piece is displaced into the field of electronic images. The function of *Postaler* is thus faced with a paradox: it both stops and files trade in images. This paradox may only be neutralized by providing an ontological definition for these images, fleetingly and yet incessantly caught and reflected by mirrors on whose surfaces they leave no trace.

*Postaler*, then, is an appeal for ontological precariousness and for a constantly changing position; yet neither of these qualities is suited to the museum's task of pinning works down. It follows, therefore, that *Postaler* stands in opposition to the institution of the museum: this is because it does not seek to retain representations, by virtue of which the meaning of artistic production is widened. The institution which Rodchenko himself had run in the early Soviet period, the Museum of Painterly Culture (MZhK), was not conceived of as a place to store unique objects, but rather as an archive.<sup>7</sup> In this way, the museum had side-stepped the problem of representations. Rather, it became an institution designed to control the assembly and disas-

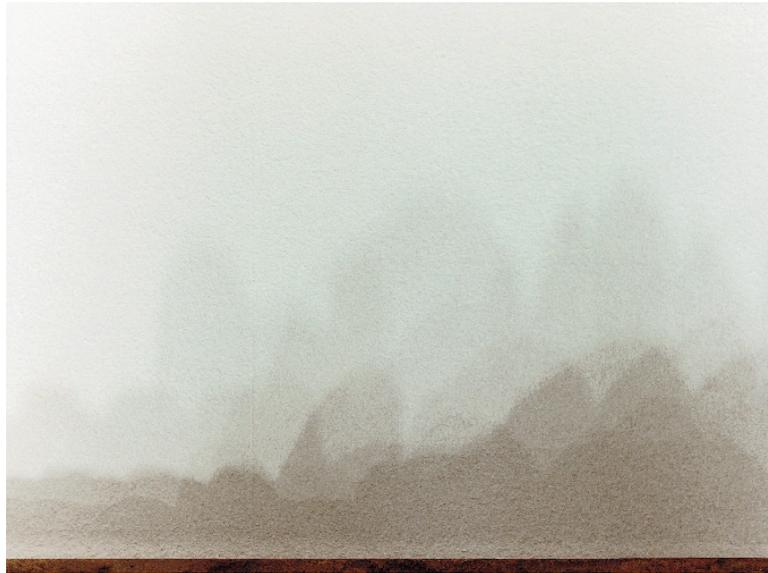


sembly of works, which process we may also associate with production.

#### 5. The Laid-down *Postaler*

Apart from rhetoric about process, there is one moment in the development of *Postaler* which helps to explain Perejaume's work. The moment in question has been recorded in a photograph which shows the metallic structure of the postcard rack full of mirrors. What makes this image different is the placement of the rack, which is lying on the ground in such a way that its perpendicular axis coincides with the horizon (p. 133). Apparently, this operation reproduces an image which occurs frequently among Perejaume's works: that of a landscape within a landscape. In this case, given the presence of mirrors, two horizons are superimposed on one another. It may be possible to see a precedent for this use of landscape in *L'entrada del mar* (Enter the Sea, 1980; p. 41), in which the landscape acts as a curtain which, pulled back, reveals another landscape. Indeed, as Cirici Pellicer remarked in his text, "[In Perejaume's works] landscape is often treated as though it were the painted landscape of a theatrical backdrop."<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the advantage of providing us with a retrospective vision, this laying-down of *Postaler* acquires a meaning that goes beyond the model of a landscape within a landscape. *Postaler*'s change from a vertical to a horizontal position has implications which we would do well to explore. In Perejaume's evolution, this kind of displacement between one axis and the other has become a methodological reference.<sup>9</sup> If to our encounter with this horizontal *Postaler* we were to add a series of works such as *Cim de Catiu d'Or* (Catiu d' Or Peak, 1988; p. 104), *Ombra de la motllura d'un quadre de Nicolau Raurich a la paret del Museu d'Art Modern de Barcelona* (Shadow of the Frame of a Nicolau Raurich Painting in Barcelona's Museum of Modern Art, 1988; p. 134) and *Pessebrisme del Quadrat Negre* (Pessebrism of the Black Square, 1993; p. 135)<sup>10</sup>, we would find the resulting collection quite heterogeneous. Yet this apparent diversity masks a similarity of movement. In the three latter pieces, a work transported at a 90-degree angle is transformed and read as though it were a deformed reflex of itself. Freud's writings speak of the acquisition of culture as representing a kind of forgetting which occurs when we incorporate the vertical; if so, in this laying down we can perceive a memory. This rela-



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- 1 **Ombra de la motllura d'un quadre de Nicolau Raurich a la paret del Museu d'Art Modern de Barcelona 1988**  
 (Shadow of the Frame of a Nicolau Raurich Painting in Barcelona's Museum of Modern Art). Photograph. 17 x 24 cm.
- 2 **Pessebrisme del Quadrat Negre 1993**  
 (Pessebrism of the Black Square)  
 Iron and photocopy of Malevich's painting  
*The Black Square* 1915. Variable dimensions

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tionship between one moment and the other maintains a causal link. Accordingly, in the third of the above-mentioned works—*Ombra de la motllura d'un quadre de Nicolau Raurich...*—we find the result of a projection, just as the title indicates. The shadow, a mechanical reproduction of the frame's moulding on the wall, imposes a change of meaning. The positivism which is evident in this procedure seems to have been betrayed by the result. The projection of the frame on the wall sketches a series of protrusions. Once again, everything has become a mountain. This brings us to the great, twisted moulding that is the *Cim de Catiu d'Or* (p. 104), in which the projection of the frame on the rock prevents the frame from keeping to the angle at which, by all rights, it should be set. The relationship of causality becomes here both a force for deformation and a source of information. By separating the frame from the rock which gives it shape, the woodwork and gilding recover their autonomy. Though the frame may seem empty to us, as others to be found in Perejaume's works seem empty, it is here filled by means of this process. The frame, then, works as index, as portable mark. The ornamental quality of this frame-index adds meaning to it. On seeing *Pessebrisme del Quadrat Negre*, we realise that the cracks in the canvas dilate and become labyrinthine when they reach the ground. This drawing of time begins with the negative (on the surface of the painting) only to reach the positive (on the ground). The black rectangle in itself loses importance, which is ceded to these unpredictable lines. Supreme abstraction is tattered amidst complex flourishes. The repressed ornamentation of Suprematism reappears by chance, naturally and by an organic process. And the ideal of the *tabula rasa*, which the avant-gardes associated with the autonomous communicative power of colour and form—and exemplified by landmark works such as the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915)—reappears here in the 'laying-down' of that same painting. Virtually, when the painting reaches the horizontal line, it dissolves in nat-

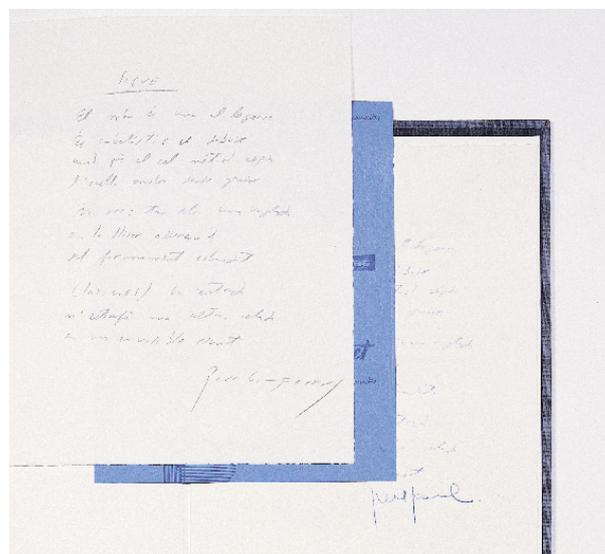
ural space in such a way that the cultural and historical are condensed geologically.

## 6. Facing Culture, Turning One' s Back to Nature

These laying-downs, projections and displacements absorb one another. The authority of the original is relegated by the authoritarianism of the process. Artists, works, frame, territory, and viewers speak during this process by means of an exchange of positions. For example, in *Metamorfofi* (p. 136), a book created together with the writer Pere Gimferrer, Perejaume replaced the poet' s name with his own. The poem entitled *Signe*, originally signed by Pere Gimferrer, re-appears on the next page.

In this movement, the copied poem loses the name of its author and acquires Perejaume' s signature, printed in the same blue ink as the rest of the poem. In this exercise of apparent mimesis, and of illustration, Perejaume has left the poem' s authorship untouched while changing its signed attribution. This paradox may be explained if one allows that mimesis, or duplication, makes for a weakening of the singular, individual quality of that which has been copied. In this sense, Perejaume has seen fit to interrupt the mimesis which would undermine the poem with his own name, if necessary. He thus saves Pere Gimferrer' s name. In fact, this operation is already familiar to us. It is not very different from Perejaume' s having replaced Miró' s name with his own body in order to save the model in *La vaileta* from being frozen in painting.

Beyond resemblance, mimesis disorients —it causes one to lose one' s co-ordinates, the frame of reference which allows one to place something as natural or original. In *Natura i signatura* (Nature and Signature, 1990; p. 157), the title of the work as reproduced both in the exhibition and in its catalogue poses this very problem. *Natura i signatura* contains both a stone and its exact copy. The copy, which appears on the left, takes



**Metamorfofi** 1988  
Artist book by Pere Gimferrer and Perejaume

on an ordinal priority which contaminates its status as cardinal: it seems to move towards being read in terms of the axis of nature, perhaps because it is seen almost as though it were writing. The true stone, which is the second to be read because it appears on the right, seems to belong to the axis of culture. Whether or not this placement is accidental, however haphazard my interpretation may seem, what is speaking through me —as Roland Barthes would say —is the shaping force of culture. The very order of the title, *Natura i signatura*, is a mirror image of the order of the work itself, an image in which the natural and the cultural have been inverted. And this process of inversion could go on infinitely. In this spiral of substitutions, the signature establishes signs of culture's ownership of the realm of the natural. By the same token, *Gabinet fantàstic* (Fantastic Cabinet, 1985-1988; p. 138), far from appearing as a mere accumulation of copies, produces an equally disorienting effect with its signatures superimposed on a cityscape of Granada originally painted by the nineteenth-century Catalan artist Marià Fortuny.

Fortuny's painting, *Landscape of Granada* (1870-1872), is in all probability the referent for Édouard Manet's *Landscape at Oloron-St. Marie* (1871), which forms part of the collection of the Stuttgart Gallerie. In this case, Manet's copy recovers a plausible referent by acquiring a new place name. Just as the frame fell onto and moulded itself along the peak of Catiu d' Or, the image of Granada lands on that of Oloron-St. Marie. The effect of this adaptation widens the format of Manet's canvas slightly, stretching the landscape. Yet the change is not merely one of formal proportions. The corrected proportions are those of a greater closeness to nature. Thus, to legitimate itself in history, Manet's painting must evoke a first-hand relationship with landscape. Perejaume has not undertaken an essentialist recovery of this relationship with the natural; rather, he has made it into the stuff of fiction. It is thus very probable that these 'layings-down' and projections, which are presented as ostensible returns to natural values, do not in fact lead to a rediscovery of the co-ordinates of nature. When the vector of culture drops to the co-ordinate of the natural, it becomes yet another moment in culture. In a short text by Perejaume, *Em giro a mirar* (I Turn to Gaze, 1986), this effect by dint of which almost everything has become a product of culture is dramatised as a bodily gesture which, in another variation on the theme of 'laying-down', turns around completely, just as the title suggests:

"Past the mouldings of the grove, by a twist in the path, there comes into view an late-coming landscape, behind a dark and musty glaze. The hills and vales have something Romantic about them, as though they had been pessebrated by Lluís Rigalt or Francesc Xavier Parcerisa. The sky, however, is newer, seemingly drawn from an afternoon of Francesc Gimeno's as clouded over for Joaquim Mur in his youth. Where the fading sunlight is strongest at dusk, one can make out saffron-tinted brushstrokes at the foot of the gilded relief of the western sky. As it grows darker, the lights of farmhouses, half-hidden behind the oak trees, are doubtless the work Nicolau Raurich." <sup>11</sup>

Here, painting is projected on reality. Yet Perejaume, when he turns, does not see landscape or even painting but literature. What is more, by means of this gesture, he is facing culture, and perhaps turning his back on nature. That which cannot be seen, which lies outside his field of vision, is nature by virtue of lying outside the frame of culture. Yet this 'outside' is relative: were we to read this passage from a Foucaultian perspective, the landscape would break up into cell-like fragments, each represented by an author, and if we were to leave any of them we would inevitably enter another. In this sense, what this text reveals is more than cultural contamination; rather,

it is what Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents* called the guiltiness of the gaze —of the educated gaze.

#### 7. The Value of the Word “Pessebrated”

Nonetheless, the key to this procedure is to be found in the word “pessebrated”, which appears in the quotation from *Em giro a mirar*. Perejaume himself has coined this derivation, which is practically a neologism. A widening of the semantic field of *pessebrated* might well help us to discover the value of the use of this word. The fragment below, extracted from a longer text by Perejaume, provides a further example of this procedure which, beginning with the horizontal *Postaler*, I have discussed in terms of ‘layings-down’, transpositions, displacements, mimeses, substitutions, turnings, and so on:

“Let us turn to another *pessebration*. In 1908, Ferdinand Hodler met Valentine. In 1914, Valentine *fell ill* and went to a clinic in Laussane for treatment. Holder then began a series of sketches of the *bed-ridden* Valentine, each of which is dated. The realism is striking; the formats tend progressively towards that of *landscapes*. As Valentine lay slowly dying —she died on Jan 26, 1915 —Holder alternated between these portraits and views of Lake Léman *at dusk* from the window of Valentine’s room. The range of hills looming over the lake and Valentine, *lying* in bed, come to be less and less distinguishable from one another. Valentine’s body is increasingly *hill-like*, and the *mountains come to be depicted on a human scale*. Her face and hands, the pillows and the folds in the sheets, become a tucking-in of the landscape; and the real hills and foggy valleys, an echo of a human figure, a portrait. In the last portrait, Valentine’s hands are clasped on her belly, her face still and hardened: she is *lying* on the bed, *stretched out*, wearing a green dress.”<sup>12</sup>

Perejaume identifies each italicized word with this notion of *pessebrism*. Yet *pessebrism* involves more than just ‘layings-down’; it also involves raising, enlargement, extolling. Here and there we find examples of monumentalization (p. 52). The monument’s pedestal thus serves to separate and to raise. A brushstroke may be raised, literally, along a cultural axis, i.e. brought closer to our axis of vision. Thus, if the ‘redemption’ which followed upon the abandonment of the vertical line has not entailed a recovery of nature, this is because *pessebrism* also serves to sublimate. By this I mean that the very act of trying to identify with nature creates further distance from nature. The result of such an action is rather a further projection of culture, where the recovery of nature had been desired. Therefore, *pessebrism* —to refine this concept further —mixes both the falls and the ascents of these two axes. As Perejaume says, “Valentine’s body is increasingly hill-like, and [at the same time] the mountains come to be depicted on a human scale.” The sense of a single direction grows correspondingly weaker. Yet the delay in the appearance of this sought-after image of nature does not mean that it has been forgotten. Both ‘layings-down’ and sublimation serve as an approach to the same point, whether they come closer or nearer, and brand ideology onto the land. Perejaume’s work has, therefore, both material and, if you prefer, natural achievements.

‘Layings-down’ and sublimations never entail rescue. It is therefore incumbent upon us to speak of a second nature, of a nature which is superimposed on an unreachable nature. The second nature is that which offers itself to our beholding as a product of vision.

## 8. Status of Method

Perejaume presents pessebrism as something which aspires to the status of method. In this representation of his own praxis, there appears a series of works whose task it is to explain, systematize and visualize it. Drawings and objects form part of this effort to make method clear. Thus, *Métode pessebrística de lectura* (Reading the Pessebristic Way, 1990; p. 114) explains the relationship between chunks of cork, the eye, and the mind by means of a three-figured diagram. *Plenairista* (Plenairist, 1992; p. 115), on the other hand, presents pessebrism as a method of observation by placing a small clay figure which represents an artist before a piece of cork bark. The traditional materials of the nativity scene are thus extrapolated for pseudoscientific use. Works, visualizations, and texts also reproduce a triangular relationship which strips the method of any essential truth. Each vertex refers us on to the rest in a circular fashion. The result is accordingly one of a constant shifting exemplification of the method itself, rather than a clarification.

Pessebrism is thus founded upon references to other authors, and unfolds by means of these references. Alexander Cozens, an eighteenth-century English painter, and Fuxier, a character drawn from the novel *Impressions d'Afrique* by Raymond Roussel, are superimposed in a sequence of quotations appearing in Perejaume's *La pintura i la boca*, a book by Perejaume published in 1993. Two elements are brought together: Cozen's method of basing the composition of imaginary landscapes on a series of ink stains; and the fantastic stories of a sculptor named Fuxier, who possesses the secret of coloured tablets which fleetingly catalyse figurations. Together, they add a pseudohistorical value to the method of pessebrism. This obsessive paraphrasing, which seems intended to reinforce the method, has the eventual effect of producing derivations from pessebrism. In fact, this method should by all rights be included in a genealogy which would place it after a series of former manifestations associated with the paintings Perejaume produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These sudden appearances in the landscape of elements or characters which seem to have been imposed on the artist by the very places he depicts (pp. 39-40) constitute a more primitive, somewhat surrealist formulation of the methods which were to be put into practice later in collage (discussed above as a policy of encounters), unpainting, and oism. None of these methods entails any hiding of its artificial quality. The noise which they generate in practice unmasks the silent occupation of space by images and representations. By regulating the production of images, these methods tend to become methods of figuration. It would seem impossible to introduce some degree of control in this space if it were not true that communication is mastered by exercising control in ways which entail an utter lack of transparency. Perejaume's methods constitute a critical reflection on and of this situation. The forms of his imagination, as represented and interpreted by him, do not constitute working guidelines for Perejaume alone. Rather, they engage in an

ironic dialogic with an image-saturated public space.

The dematerialization which characterises Conceptual Art and monochrome paintings would seem to be the fitting forerunners of this attitude, were it not for the fact that Perejaume himself evaluates these achievements in literary terms. Far from being monuments to the insubstantial quality of modern culture, they form the last layer of language. As Robert Smithson remarked, language “covers” rather than “discovers” .<sup>14</sup> In taking up this point, Perejaume has disclosed the weight of dematerialization. By the same token, Lawrence Weiner’ s explanations of his first ‘statements’ serves to confirm that painting, like sculpture, had become literature because of the effect and the predominance of modern criticism (“Total literature!”).<sup>15</sup>

For Perejaume, the turn to language is not a mere metaphor. Rather, by accumulating discourse in a geological volume, the turn suggested is a literal one. By this I mean that this turn entails distrust in the metaphorical quality of modern art, submitting metaphors to an absurd quantification (*Set mirades* [Seven Gazes], 1992). Perejaume thus brings about a situation in which positivism comes to be confronted directly by its own uses.

## 9. Unpainting

In practice, these methods are valuable inasmuch as they interrupt. This discontinuity consequently produces a duplication of Perejaume’ s work. In this way, he creates works which, once unfolded and self-duplicated, criticize themselves. The method of unpainting, which is manifest as well in undrawing and unsculpting, assumes the interruption of this incessant activity of representing. Unpainting, then, is Perejaume’ s means of lamenting the excess of images which characterizes the contemporary world. As though echoing Smithson’ s words, Perejaume goes on to make the practice of art serve the “discovery” of the layers which together make up the world.

Following this, unpainting appears on the line of the vertical axis, along which various strata which are both geological and cultural may be detected. Once this aim has been assumed, the various layers which have shaped the landscape may be recovered by means of an archaeological introspection. There are works of Perejaume’ s, such as *Pintura: Clisson* (Painting: Clisson, 1989; p. 142 ) and *Pintura: Fuirosos* (Painting: Fuirosos, 1990; p. 142) which both take part in this fiction and illustrate it. The excavations which these two works stage represent a desire to demonstrate what the method of pessebrism had foreseen as a hypothesis.

The yearning which this verification entails highlights a relationship with Salvador Dalí’ s 1963 text *El mito trágico del “Angelus” de Millet* in which Dalí demanded that Millet’ s “Angelus” be X-rayed to check if, as he had been told, there might be detected under the surface of the painting the concealed image of a dead child lying in a coffin between the feet of the couple portrayed. This crazed desire of Dalí’ s is not very different



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from that which drives Perejaume. As Dalí wrote in one of the latter passages of *El mito trágico*:  
 “ It appears from certain letters that a friend of Millet’ s who was then living in Paris informed the painter of changes in Parisian taste and the growing feeling against excessively melodramatic effects. Millet very probably took this to heart and hid the dead child under a layer of paint representing the ground.” <sup>16</sup>

That which Dalí was able to extract from this final phrase (“ ...and hid the dead child under a layer of paint representing the ground.” ) in psychoanalytical terms is comparable to that which Perejaume, in narrative terms, is able to extract in his own work from this layer of paint which settles on and represents the ground. Both Perejaume and Dalí consider painting as a means of forgetting which constitutes a kind of moral and physical blocking and masking.

These layers —which may also be read as accumulated interpretations of landscape —function structurally as hermeneutic circles which may only be broken by a pragmatic approach. Thus, while the rhetoric of Romanticism had been able to generate and bring forth landscape by means of poetic exaltation, in a re-incarnation of the vertical axis, we may observe the placing of the cross-section — the frame of geological perception —in radical opposition to this. The 90-degree difference which has manifested itself between the axes in Perejaume’ s ‘ layings-down’ comes now to generate different ways of talking about landscape. The resulting dialectic besieges modern aesthetic reception.  
<sup>17</sup> Dalí himself, having X-rayed Millet’ s “ Angelus” , closed his prologue to text *El mito trágico del “Angelus” de Millet* with an allusion to this conflict:

“ After this had happened, Gala told me ‘ If this result constituted proof, that would be marvellous; but if the whole book were nothing but a pure spiritual construct, that would be sublime!’ ” <sup>18</sup>

- 1 **Pintura: Clisson 1989**  
(Painting: Clisson)
- 2 **Pintura: Fuirosos 1990**  
(Painting: Fuirosos)
- 3 **Terra sobre mirall: Pineda de Mar 1997**  
(Earth on Mirror: Pineda de Mar)  
Well at Can Jaume Comas  
Well at Can Rossell  
Well at Can Benjumea

This opposition between the empiricism which requires proof and an outburst of spirit serves to deactivate, as it were, the Romantic rhetoric to which many spectators submit Perejaume's works, and which many of his works seem to demand. It reproduces, in a way, the oppositions and compensations between poetry and public rhetoric which characterized the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup> The pragmatism of geological discourse seems to drive off sensuality. The products of the spirit are confronted with examples of a rationality which is as simple or as complex as the first term of comparison.

In Perejaume's praxis, vision is not omitted from this confrontation. As vision is no longer disinterested, it becomes an accomplice. It thus recovers its dependence on text. Consider, for example, another series of works, *Terra sobre mirall: Pineda de Mar* (Earth On Mirror: Pineda de Mar, 1997; p. 143), in which wells are privileged ways into the aquifer.

The water at the bottom of these wells becomes a mirror. If we should choose to play around with this identification, it must follow that there is an immense underground mirror which can be seen now and then, here and there. In this exercise in illustration, the commonplace of depth is at once represented and dismantled. The overlap with the fictional text devised by Perejaume would now seem irreversible. Smaller-format works such as *La pintura cobrint la terra* (Painting Covering the Earth, 1995; p. 1) consequently take on the value of a mythological episode. Vision thus strengthens its optical sense as an illustration of the world.

When all is said and done, methods such as pessebrism add to the narrative structure of this myth, while unpainting is responsible for its own unravelling. This doing and undoing erodes certainty about the starting point of this whole story. As Lautrément said in one of his aphorisms, "fundamental principles must be excluded from discussion".<sup>20</sup> In this sense, the fact that the starting point can be neither returned to nor recovered strengthens myth as a foundation narration. Writing and reading thus become absolutely necessary activities if this narration is to be maintained. Vision, by way of contrast,

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**Brugaters i algòlegs 1980**

(In the Undergrowth, in the Algae)

Underwater goggles. 14 x 15 x 16 cm.

Action in which the artist dove into the sea with the mask on to observe the algae and, before leaving the water, flipped down the cover. Accompanied by a friend, the artist was driven to a dense and humid forest in the heart of Montnegre with his eyes covered. Once there, he flipped up the cover to look at the vegetation, as if the underwater greenery and the forest undergrowth were connected realities.

becomes a secondary instrument of exegesis.

10. The Painting Recorded on The Body

In this process of instrumentalization, there are works which appear to be tools whose function is imprecise. These tools may be considered technical prostheses of vision. The textual metaphors which appear throughout Perejaume's writings are very often sustained empirically by virtue of these prostheses.

*Brugaters i algòlegs* (In the Undergrowth, in the Algae, 1980; p. 144) is nothing more than a diver's face mask that has been tampered with and which is worn in a series of settings ranging from the seabed to the mountains, all of them characteristic of Perejaume's output in the late 1970s. These immersions and transitions in the landscape, accomplished by literary means in the poems *Oli damunt paper* (Oil on Paper, 1978-1981), complement one another in the space of demonstration. Without there being a user's manual handy, this object invites us to make a series of hypotheses in order that we might accord it value in terms of its function, rather than an aesthetic value. Covered by a visor that blocks forward vision, it seems likely that this mask was used by someone to experience a contiguous vision of the seabed and of wooded ravines. That much is suggested, at least, by another painting from the same period in which a lighthouse emerges from among the shade trees (*Far emboscat* [Lighthouse in the Woods], 1980; p. 43).

The mask's visor darkens the field of vision, and this manipulation of vision thus serves to disorient the user, disrupting his or her sense of place.<sup>21</sup> In the same period, Perejaume wrote verses such as the following: "Visc en el mar, però d' un aigua tan/antiga, que fingeix plans i pujols" ("I live in the sea, but the water is so/old that it feigns plains and hills").<sup>22</sup>

In some sense, this kind of darkening may be associated with a highly unorthodox pictorial technique: that of telepathic painting, which Michelangelo Pistoletto describes in his book *L'uomo nero* (1970). Pistoletto explains his experiences of telepathic painting, and how he would invite visitors to his exhibition to lie on a mattress on the floor of the gallery. Together, visitors and artist closed their eyes. Pistoletto then spoke the following words:

"Now the transmission of telepathic painting will begin. Close your eyes, everyone, and I'll create ecstatic, kinetic paintings—colours, lights, and drawings against the blackened backdrop of my closed eyes. You will see my works against the screens of your closed eyes."<sup>23</sup>



**Simulador de pintura 1993**

(Painting Simulator)

Cruets to be worn while walking in order to smell turpentine and linseed oil. Foam rubber-soled boots which give the sensation of treading on paint-like ground.

Actions of this kind, which Pistoletto often performed in collaboration with his troupe “Lo Zoo”, enable us to speak of a return to painting that has nothing to do with the return to painting which took place in the 1980s. Furthermore, these examples of Perejaume’s and Pistoletto’s enable vision and performance to discern painting. Dismantled as a genre and later reconstructed, painting will never be the same.

The performance sought by such tools as the mask mentioned above turns the body into the locus of a process of phenomenological proof. The last proof consists in causing the senses to believe in the fiction which Perejaume’s works build up. *Simulador de pintura* (Painting Simulator, 1993; p. 145) — like the mask, an example of play with tools — modifies one’s interpretation of reality. As the *Simulador*’s subtitle states, “cruets to be worn while walking in order to smell turpentine and linseed oil” and “foam rubber-soled boots which give the sensation of treading on paint-like ground”. This jump from stating method to performance does not undo the spell under which the artist willingly works: rather, it seals it. The soundness of this pictorial vision of reality depends on perception.

From this point of view, the illusion of autonomy which painting appeared to have achieved was, in fact, a contamination of the autonomy of the landscape.

In light of this, it is the fate of painting to be recorded on the body. The repertory of gestures which denote painting — hand shading eyes, the gesture of silence, or the gesture which holds painting (*Pinzellades* [Brushstrokes], 1992; p. 70) constitutes a gestural inscription, just as abstract expression-

Gran emmarcatge (Aureolació ocular) 1998  
(Great Framing (Ocular Aureola))  
Gold. ø 4 cm.

ist painting came down to the transcendental enacting of gestures. The performance depicted in the photograph entitled *La soprano Maria Dolors Aldea interpretant la pintura* (The Soprano Maria Dolors Aldea Performing Painting, 1994; p. 71) presents a repertory of gestures which evoke its reception, as had been the case in the *Simulador de pintura*. The body repeats painting as a series of grimaces until painting comes to be fixed ergonomically. In this aspect, therefore, in addition to the unfolding in territory discussed above, there also takes place a re-folding.

The last of these possible re-foldings was consummated in the form of two golden receptacles for vision. It is thus that, at either end of a line of similar tools, we find the mask of *Brugaters i algòlegs* and we have the framed eyes of *Gran emmarcatge* (Great Framing, 1998; p. 147). These two framed eyeballs de-territorialize vision and separate it from the body. As Jonathan Crary says, “[visual experience] is given an unprecedented mobility and exchangeability, abstracted from any founding site or referent.”<sup>24</sup>

But this apparent reductionism conceals the vastest of spaces in order that the distance between these two eyes might be stretched as wide as one should like. The space which opens up between the eyes embraces a set of techniques of spatial dilation. Thus, two conceptions of space, one of closed and one of open space, come face to face in this kind of practice. For a post-modern geographer such as David Harvey, these two conceptions effectively challenge the belief that there is a time and a place for everything.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, Perejaume has disentangled the extreme localization of the system of art. It was for this reason that he and a group of students carried a Miró to the top of a mountain (*Un miró al Planell d’Uja* [A Miró Painting at the Uja Plain], 1990; p. 20), and that he led a Hodler, a Lorca and a Picabia through a series of urban and natural itineraries (1996); the effect produced, on both occasions, was exotic. The natural oppositions of space were subjected to a productive friction. Thus, unbound from that discursive apparatus which protects them, these paintings came to be adapted to a kind of writing based orography, on the fact and study of relief in the land and the contour lines which represent it. This gives rise to a kind of expanded writing which, in the end, has come to form the base of Perejaume’s most recently formulated methods: oism<sup>26</sup> (*L’autor encebant la tinta en un vessant del Montnegre* [The Artist Priming Ink on the Slopes of Montnegre], 1998; p. 148).<sup>27</sup>

## 11. Autonomous Landscape

The publication of *Oïsme: Una escriptura natural a partir del croquis pirinencs de Jacint Verdaguer* (1998) has marked the reinvention of Perejaume’s career. The fiction which had constituted the setting of his work thus takes on yet another layer. Perejaume’s alter ego, the plenairist, appears in this fiction, his body covered

with branches (p. 151) The landscape and its observer are fused, just as painting cloaked the body of the soprano with gestures.

Apart from the formulation, visualization and demonstration which these methods comprise, there exists another component, which forms part of the method itself. By this I mean an illusion of passivity which is nonetheless productive, as when Perejaume set out “to dis-exhibit”. The artist thus gave up his own capacity to produce. Perejaume surrendered modern artists’ much-vaunted autonomy to the landscape. In fact, he returned a statute of autonomy which modern art —when it mirrored itself in Romanticism’s understanding of landscape as creative —had believed to be its own. From that moment on, Perejaume became a spectator subjugated to the independent life of the territory.

By means of this concession, the artist has achieved an inversion of the process of production. Unpainting is, together with its variants, doubtless the method best able to foster this. The reversibility of process (*Desescultura* [Unsculpture], 1991) provides the spectacle of repetition, like the instant replay of televised sports, as well as providing an ecological compensation and restitution.<sup>28</sup> We said earlier that ‘layings-down’ redeem culture; we are now able to state that repetition holds out the promise of revealing an absence, which is of an order at once material and moral. To use a cinematic model: the machine of nature may withdraw beyond the reach of any human intervention. Afterwards, this machine would take charge of repeating the landscape until it produces a second nature. It is this kind of repetition which leads to that which Perejaume has called *Tedi museogràfic* (Museographic Tedium, 1997; p. 216), a sort of calculated boredom belonging to an image factory. The model of nature’s productive autonomy is thus the most appropriate model to take the place of the model of a Romantic creator. The fact that characters appearing in Caspar David Friedrich’s landscapes stand with their backs to the observer is not entirely irrelevant here. They are workers in nature’s factory. By contemplating nature, they produce nature.

What this entails is a shift in the locus of production, which is now set in nature. Indeed, the notion of the artist’s studio has never been especially relevant for Perejaume. It is rather the plenairist, the protagonist of the fiction which sustains Perejaume’s works, that marks the territory of production with his incursions. It is this character who comes and goes to the factory of nature.

The linguistic and cognitive inversion which the forming of this image of the landscape has entailed brings Perejaume face to face with a complex machine. As Toni Negri has written, “nothing would be more false than to pretend that the determinations of this machine are *natural* in the true sense of the word.”<sup>29</sup> From this perspective, the immediate opposition between exploitative reason and nature is mitigated. The installation entitled *A imatge i semblança* (In Image and Appearance, 1988;



**Excavadora recollint postals 1983**  
 (Excavator Retrieving Postcards)  
 Toy excavator and postcards. 10 x 16 x 35 cm.

**Pintor plenairista 1996**  
 (Plenairist) Detail  
 Mixed media on paper. 30 x 42 cm.

p. 12), along with the 1984 piece *Excavadora recollint postals* (Excavator Retrieving Postcards, 1983; p. 151), could lead to a denunciation of the aggressiveness of humanity's intervention in the landscape; in fact, the purpose accomplished is quite distinct. The excavator, though an evident sign of an attack on the landscape, works together with nature here as an extension of the machinery which defines and explains landscape. Landscape is not, from this perspective, outside the discourse of progress which machines symbolize.

Faced with the threatening possibility that this machinery might make him feel alienated, Perejaume has reproduced forms of emancipation. Oism entails the recovery of hearing as a sense which, given its historical marginalization, has acquired a certain degree of independence from sight. The sense of hearing's autonomy balances the acculturation of the sense of sight. Given that Perejaume's works had denied their own autonomy, though such autonomy is characteristic of modern artworks, his placing of hearing at the centre of forms of artistic production recovers the ideal of an emancipating practice. Another aspect of Perejaume's work which manifests this recovery is the appearance of homophones which, for some time now, have compensated for the lack of common logic in Perejaume's output. For example, the term "pic-ment" (peak-ment) has appeared recently in the titles of works and brief

texts by Perejaume. This neologism invokes “ pigment” and the Catalan words for “ peak” and “ the mind” , thus suggested both the lowliness of pigment and the greatest of the mind’ s peak. Once again, everything becomes a mountain.

Oism carries out this emancipation by criticizing sensorial naturalism. The destruction of synchrony between the signifier and the signified, between image and voice, leaves a gap in a space which seems compact. The invisibility of this fissure which Perejaume introduces is, however, a sign to us that this link is in and of itself an ideological and mental construct which must be made visible. It is only when it has been made visible that we shall realize that access to representation is denied. Just as painting had come to be seen on the body, this obstacle is experienced physically.

In dismantling the naturalism of the spectacle —which is based on illusory synchronies between voice, image, and gestures —the spaces pertaining to each of these senses initiate a process of segregation from one another. Thus, the Catalan word for a drawing, “ dibuix” , is deconstructed in a 1998 video entitled *Dir-buix* (Say-draw, 1998; p. 153), projected behind a glass wall. This title incorporates the verb “ dir” , meaning “ to say” . The viewer hears a voice, yet this voice emerges from the viewers side of the glass wall rather than from the space of the projection itself. At the same time, there appears in the video a mouth which moves as if to produce speech and yet it is mute. Sound and image emerge from different spaces, divided by a wall which triggers a neutralization of learnt correspondences. Shifts in point of view to the internal elements of representation, as was the case of those characters who looked upon Informalism from inside a painting (p. 51), or those appearing in *Olzinelles* (1988; p. 55), solve this problem in advance. This projection of the point of view into the interior of the space of representation nonetheless betrays the fact that this space —despite an illusion of transparency and accessibility —is impenetrable. We may only come to see through another gaze which is already anchored in the field of representation. This projection repeats the gesture Perejaume used to transfer autonomy to the landscape. Landscape will only speak from landscape, as though it were imitating the behaviour of a modern artist, reflexive and withdrawn into his or her own subjectivity (*Entintar els pics, escriure amb el Pirineu* [Ink the Peaks, Write with the Pyrenees], 1998; p. 149). As Michael Fried has commented in a discussion of the theatricality of nineteenth-century French painting, “ The Painting would be sealed in front as by an invisible wall.” <sup>30</sup> This “ invisible wall” materialised in an installation Perejaume realised at Girona’ s Teatre Municipal, *Retable: Teatre Municipal de Girona. De com posar vidre al marc d’un escenari* (Retable: Girona Municipal Theatre. How to Put Glass on a Stage Proscenium, 1997; p. 98-99). The inaccessibility of the stage of performance tells us that if a recovery is intended, it belongs to the world of fiction and of spectacle. Thus, if it is nature that is represented, it will surely be a second nature. And if we should insist on finding “ nature” , we will discover that it has “ chosen to hide” .<sup>31</sup> It was this that the series of layings-down discussed earlier in this essay essentially demonstrated. The advantage of recognizing this second nature comes, of

1 This photograph seems to draw on another Perejaume's work, *Tres vailetes* (1993), which contains a photograph of Consol Boquera (the model appearing in Joan Miró's *Retrat d'una vaileta*) with a pile of paint on her skirt. The latter image reproduces both *La vaileta* and a fragment of *Allegory: Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time*, a painting by Agnolo Bronzino. Plates of *Els tossals* and *Tres vailetes* are included in Perejaume's *El Pirineu de baix: Mont-roig, Miró, Mallorca*. Barcelona: Edicions Polígrafa, 1997.

2 Perejaume, *Ludwig-Fujol. Què és collage, sinó acostar soledats?* Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1989, p. 84.

3 This illustration appears in the prologue to a book by Perejaume, *El paisatge és rodó*. Vic: Eumo Editorial, 1995.

4 While it is true that we could link Perejaume to the milieu of the Catalan art group Dau al Set, we should realize that by continuing this contextualization, we would be completing the paradox. Nonetheless, we would do well to consider the situation of the political and artistic avant-gardes in Catalonia in the mid-1970s if we are to interpret Perejaume's position in that period, at the beginning of his career.

Dau al Set was one of the few attempts to renew contacts with the avant-garde on a collective level in the Barcelona of the post-Civil War years. The heterogeneity of the aesthetics which comprised Dau al Set's effort to re-animate modernity in the city's art circles had an effect which did not go beyond a strictly local level. Antoni Tàpies, who came to be well known outside Spain from the early 1950s on, constitutes the exception to this. In the absence of open communication with other countries, most of the output in the period was marked by introspection. Not surprisingly, Dau al Set produced variants of Surrealism and aesthetic derivations from Abstract Expressionism. Perejaume's early work could also be read in terms of this background.

Of course, in retrospect it seems surprising that we should have to link Perejaume to art produced immediately after the Spanish Civil War. Meanwhile, other artists such as Antoni Tàpies, Albert Ràfols Casamada, Josep Guinovart, Joan Hernández Pijuan, Pilar Palomer, and Frederic Amat, often considered to make up the "second Catalan avant-garde", fell within the traditions of Informalism or of Abstraction (see Daniel Giralt-Miracle, "L'art català de la posguerra", in *La segona avantguardia catalana* [Vallechi, 1979]). In the mid-1970s, the somewhat surrealist tone of Perejaume's paintings combined informalist surfaces with scenes reminiscent of Max Ernst's engravings in *Une semaine de bonté* (1934). It is likewise possible to see in Perejaume's works the influence of nineteenth-century Catalan landscape painting. These two influences, the local and the international, come to be fused in these landscapes in such a way that the limits of each one cannot be discerned.

In all of these pictures there is a magical air that takes on more importance than does the equally present Informalist tendency. With the appearance of small figures incrustated on the painted surface, there also appears an element which interrupts contemplation. In paintings such as *En un racó de món* (In Some Place in the World, 1979), the narrative presence of such characters deactivates the strictly visual dimension of the painting. This aspect shows the affinity existing between Perejaume and the poet Joan Brossa, a member of Dau al Set. In this sense, Perejaume absorbed a literary vein which appears translated in both his visual works and in the books he has been putting out since 1989. This is so much so that it may seem that Perejaume's starting point is a text.

This operation consists, then, in consigning Informalism to the background of the picture in such a way that it should participate in the action, thus releasing its transcendental character. By withdrawing the textures of Informalist paintings, Perejaume caused mountains to appear in his landscapes. Whatever the case, by the end of the 1970s Informalism had ceased to be a heroic practice and had become a synonym for modern refinement. From the perspective of Perejaume's practice, Informalism would seem to have been continued literarily. Thus, it passed into the realm of fiction. Informalism began then, for Perejaume, a new life as a natural territory.

5 Alexander Ciriç Pellicer, "Perejaume i la seva poesia", in *Perejaume: Obris i objectes*, exhibition catalogue; Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats, 1980.

6 Vicenç Altaió, "Visita guiada o abans existí la impremta que l'escriptura", in *A 2000 metres de pintura sobre el nivell del mar*, exhibition catalogue; Tarragona: Tinglado 2, 1988; p. 24.

7 "[T]he Museum as a storehouse of the unique object has turned into an archive." Quoted in Maria Gough, "In the Laboratory of Constructivism: Karl Ioganson's Cold Structures", in *October* 84 (Spring 1988), p. 114.

8 Ciriç Pellicer 1980.

9 Both Freud and Robinson Crusoe distribute these attribution along the two axes. The natural is associated with the horizontal axis; culture, with the vertical. To this characterisation of the axes we might add a meaning adapted to the field of vision. Indeed, Hubert Damisch has stated that the scopic drive and the drive to civilize go together (see Hubert Damisch, *The Judgment of Paris* trans. John Goodman, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. In fact, as much is suggested in Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1962; translated from the German and edited by James Strachey.), in which he plots the process of humanization between one and the other axis. According to Freud, the conquest of verticality (and hence of culture) is followed by a 'redemption'. The most immediate parallel with the laying-down of the postcard rack in *Postaler* is, however, Rosalind Krauss's analysis of Jackson Pollock's decodifications. This analysis earmarks Eva Hesse's shapeless sculptures, Robert Morris' fallen felt, Andy Warhol's urine-rusted paintings, and Carl Andre's bricks on the ground, and classes them as successors to Pollock's gesture, which brought painting up from the ground onto the wall. According to Krauss, all these works have the effect of returning Pollock's vertical plane of painting to the plane on which it had been originally produced. If painting sublimated, then these works desublimated. In the psychoanalytical map onto which Krauss plots her thesis, this gesture should reveal the lowliness of that which would later come to be Pollock's painting when it is hung for exhibition (Rosalind Krauss. *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993. p. 276).

Of course, to insist on this parallel would be to fall into an anachronism. The photograph in *Postaler* was taken in 1984, while the text in which Rosalind Krauss discussed these decodings dates from 1993. The fallen postcard rack could, nonetheless, be added to the list which Krauss proposes. This tucking-in may be understood as a gesture shared by many practices employed in the second half of the twentieth century. Yet we must seek out the background against which *Postaler* and other works appear.

10 This Catalan term was first used in an English-language text by the art critic and translator Jeffrey Swartz in his prologue to *El grado de verdad de las representaciones* (Madrid: Galería Soledad Lorenzo, 1991; pp. 43-44). In that text, Swartz both explains Perejaume's highly individual use in his own writing of *pessebrism* (derived from *pessebre*, meaning 'creche' or 'nativity scene') and his own decision to naturalise it typographically by foregoing the italic typeface to which loan words are normally consigned. I have followed Swartz's practice. As for the place of *pessebres* in Catalan popular culture, "Such scenes include additional, often lightly irreverent representations of rural life and customs. From inside each house, then, the *pessebre* serves to exteriorise the onlooker's vision, setting up a miniaturised scenographic transference; a piece of cork bark becomes a mountain range; a few twigs create a forest; a chunk of moss is a pasture" (Swartz, p. 43)

Quoting Perejaume, Swartz goes on to say that "every rock or tree is an opening with worlds folded into it". That is what *pessebrism* is all about" (43). [Translator's note.]

11 Perejaume, *Em giro a mirar*, exhibition catalogue; Sabadell: Museu d' Art, 1986. Also published in Perejaume, *La pintura i la boca*, Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1993, p. 20.

12 Perejaume, *Mont-blanc, Mont-roig, Mont-negre*, catalogue for an exhibition entitled "Perejaume"; Barcelona: Galeria Joan Prats, 1990, p. 24 (my italics).

13 Raymond Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*. London: Calder, 1983, trans. Lindy Foord and Rayner Heppenstall.

14 Robert Smithson, "A Museum of Language in the Vicinity of Art" in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt, New York: New York University Press, 1979, p. 67.

15 Carles Guerra, "The Only Thing that Knows its Own Essence is the Thing Itself: An Interview with Lawrence Weiner" in *Cave Canis*, Barcelona, Spring 1996. A Catalan-language translation of this interview appears in the same issue.

16 Salvador Dalí, "Pró logo a la edició original francesa" in *El mito trágico del 'Angelus' de Millet*, Tusquets Editores, Barcelona 1983, p. 15.

17 See Christoph Menke, *The Sovereignty of Art: Aesthetic Negativity in Adorno and Derrida*, trans. Neil Solomon. Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1998.

18 Dalí 1983, pp. 15-18.

19 Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*. London and New York: Verso, 1981, p. 106.

20 "Les premiers principes doivent être hors de discussion." Isidore Ducasse, Count of Lautréamont. I encountered this in the following Spanish edition: *Poesías*, trans. Ángel Pariente. Seville: Renacimiento, 1998, pp. 17-18.

21 This disorientation might very well constitute a gloss on what we might call a tradition of lost poets. In texts such as *Nadja* (New York: Grove, 1960; translated by Richard Howard.) and *Cròniques de l'ultrason* (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1996; edited by Jaume Vallcorba), both André Breton and the twentieth-century Catalan poet J. V. Foix allowed themselves to be led, eyes half-closed, by mysterious female characters, in order to reach an unknown place. The characteristically surrealist unlearning by which one is surprised anew by something familiar is thus added to the economy of representation which characterizes Perejaume.

22 Perejaume, *Oli damunt paper*. Barcelona: Edicions Empúries, 1992, p. 49.

23 "Maintenant commence la transmission de peinture télépathique, tout le monde ferme les yeux, je vais créer dans l'espace noir de mes yeux fermés, des tableaux, couleurs lumières dessins, statiques et en mouvement. Vous verrez mes travaux sur l'écran de vos yeux fermés." Michelangelo Pistoletto, *L'homme noir, le côté insupportable*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1998, p. 35.

24 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1990, p. 14.

25 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

26 This neologism appears to have been coined from the Catalan verb *oir*, meaning 'to hear'. Suggested translations include 'hearingism' and 'hearingism'. As *pessebrism* has set a precedent, I have preferred to use *oisism* rather than either of the English renderings suggested above. [Translator's note.]

27 This photograph appears in the appendix to Perejaume's *Oïsme: Un escriptura natural a partir dels croquis pirinencs de Jacint Verdaguer*. Barcelona: Proa, 1998.

28 "Put gold back into the earth, scatter the mountains with bronze and marble and ivory, so that they might represent just what we are missing most: the place from whence they came." Translated from Perejaume, "Torneu a posar", in *La pintura i la boca*. Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1993, p. 113.

29 Toni Negri, "De la fábrica a la máquina ecológica" in *Fin de siglo*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1992, p. 85. The English source text is *The Politics of Subversion: a Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Polity, 1989.

30 Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 79.

31 Perejaume 1995, p. 13.