

# PALMADOTZE

barcelona  
gallery  
weekend

IGNASI ABALLÍ "Reading pictures"

14 september – 26 november 2023

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PALMADOTZE starts the season with Ignasi Aballí and his solo exhibition "Reading pictures". This is this artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery although he has already participated in previous seasons in our programme: in 2002 - 2003 in the 5th thematic season: El tacto (Con-tact) and in the 2013 - 2014 season participating in the group exhibition "Landscape.0".

"Reading images" is a new exhibition project presented by the artist for the first time and is part of the programme of events of the 9th edition of Barcelona Gallery Weekend 23, which will take place from 14 to 17 September.

This exhibition proposes a reflection on the relationship between images and texts, between what we see and what we name, one of the transversal themes in Ignasi Aballí's work.

Based on a selection of photographs found in different newspapers (objects on the basis of which the artist has carried out several projects), a series of nineteen paintings based on these images are shown.

The working methodology consisted of scanning each image and then finding their average colour (the colour resulting from the mixture of all of them), using a Photoshop function. The image has been reduced to a single colour, or we could also say, to a single pixel that is repeated over its entire surface. This process makes it impossible to see the image as it was, since it has been altered, "erased" (or hidden), so that we can no longer identify it, thus leaving its interpretation and visualisation completely open.

These resulting half-colours (or pixels) have subsequently been painted on canvas. Each monochrome painting shows the colour of the respective image and has a format proportional to that of each reference photography.

All of them have as their subject matter the concept of the image (photographic, pictorial, scientific), exhibition spaces or reading. They show views of exhibitions and people taking photographs, reading or carrying out protest actions, to give some examples.

At the same time and replacing the traditional labels that are placed next to the works, a small publication has been published with the technical data of the paintings. Its titles are the captions of the different photographs selected from the newspaper. Thus, on the basis of the relationship between the information contained in the publication and the paintings on display, the spectator can reconstruct the images, which in no case can be seen in the exhibition, and which he or she must imagine.

The work process includes different techniques and formats, from digital technologies and printed images to a more traditional one such as painting.

The project is accompanied by an edition containing the colours of the nineteen paintings in the exhibition, reproduced in the original size of the photographs cut out of the newspaper.

# PALMADOTZE

Coinciding with Ignasi Aballí's exhibition *Reading pictures*, Antonio Monegal, Professor of Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the Department of Humanities at Pompeu Fabra University, has written the text *Reading handbook*, included in the publication published for this occasion.

## READING HANDBOOK

Is it possible to read the image without the word? When we read the word, do we not resort to the imagination? The word dwells in the heart of the image as its invisible other. The image dwells in the heart of the word as its unspeakable other. And we move between one and the other as beacons of our reading of the world. There is a border, but it is more diffuse and complex than it seems at first glance. According to Jacques Derrida's model, difference bears the imprint, the trace of the other: each, image and word, of that which it is not.

The most effective strategy to reveal the rules of the game, to unveil its functioning, is to transgress them. A strategy that Ignasi Aballí applies systematically, in the most literal of senses. In this project he works as both a researcher and an alchemist. He has distilled the colors of a set of photographs until digitally fixing their midpoint on a monochrome surface. Then, with the utmost rigor and precision, through multiple trials, he has mixed the pigments to reproduce analogically the exact color, which he paints on a canvas whose proportions replicate those of the photograph. Yes, Aballí paints the image. Or his chromatic synthesis, apparently a silent image. The last step, not a minor one, is to give the caption text to the picture as a title. This produces a semantic collision. A gap opens up between what the word enunciates and what the image shows, or, in this case, omits. The receiver is forced to reconstruct, or intuit, a leap, to trace a process that is not visible. Peering into the gap, he is invited to ask himself what links what he sees to what he reads. Thus, as is always the case when literal reading is not possible, he is compelled to resort to poetic reading.

Photography, painting, poetry. In the classical conception, they were three forms of mimesis. Here they are three poles of a movement that never ceases: from one to the other without stopping at any of them because what interests us is the tension that is generated between the three. There are those who will say that a caption is not poetry, but it is when it does not refer, redundantly, to what we see, but questions and transcends it. It is equivalent to saying something as obvious as "This is not a pipe", but in reverse. In order to deconstruct the relationship between word and image, the rigor of the exercise is inseparable from its meaning. Aballí sticks to a methodical program, like the scientist who obeys a research protocol. However, alchemy is not a science, but an art. It does not consist in discovering the laws of things and following them, but in letting oneself be drawn into the enigma and making something appear that was not there before. Something that is not a piece or a work but a fissure in the building of meaning. A gap to be read.

Antonio Monegal

# PALMADOTZE

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES

15.09.22 / 10:30h

Guided visit by the artist Ignasi Aballí to his exhibition "Reading images".

Book your place. Transport service with limited places.

Contact Andrea Rodríguez: [andrea@artbarcelona.es](mailto:andrea@artbarcelona.es)

16.09.22 / 09:30h

Visit to Ignasi Aballí's workshop.

Book in advance. Contact Andrea Rodríguez: [andrea@artbarcelona.es](mailto:andrea@artbarcelona.es)

17.09.22 / 10:30h

Guided visit by the artist Ignasi Aballí to his exhibition, "Reading pictures", followed by a wine tasting and sampling session.

Book your place. Transport service with limited places.

Contact Andrea Rodríguez: [andrea@artbarcelona.es](mailto:andrea@artbarcelona.es)

## Brief Biography

**Ignasi Aballí (Barcelona, 1958)** trained in Fine Arts in Barcelona, the city where he lives and works. Interested in the limits of representation and perception, he often works with a minimalist language and practices minimal intervention or almost imperceptible modification, both on coloured surfaces and in the incorporation of everyday elements such as dust or light. As he himself points out: "to do more with less". While in many cases, the artist disappears as a subject and lets the accumulation of dust or the corrosive action of the sun on the materials construct the work, in others he is present collecting, inventorying and meticulously arranging information and data from the press, often presented as lists or conceptual binomials, and others as a tribute to anonymity.

He represented Spain at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022). He has also participated in the Cuenca Biennial (Ecuador, 2016), the Guangzhou Triennial (China, 2012), the 52nd Biennale di Venezia (Italy, 2007), the 11th Sharjah Biennial (United Arab Emirates, 2007) and the Biennale of Sydney (Australia, 1998). In 2015 he received the prestigious Juan Miró Award and, coinciding with this event, presented the exhibition "Infinite Sequence" at the Joan Miró Foundation (2016). In 2015/16 the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid dedicated an extensive exhibition of his work to him.