

# Untamed paradises

## A landscape review

19 June - 7 September 08

ALBERTO BARAYA • GUILLEM BAYO • SERGIO BELINCHÓN • ROBERTO BELLINI • ANDRÉ CEPEDA • PETER COFFIN • THOMAS JOSHUA COOPER • NIR EVRON • CYPRIEN GAILLARD • RODNEY GRAHAM • MARINE HUGONNIER • EVA KOCH • MIREYA MASÓ • HEATHER & IVAN MORISON • MARJETICA POTRČ • GONZALO PUCH • CAIO REISEWITZ • THIAGO ROCHA PITTA • ERIC ROSOMAN • GUIDO VAN DER WERVE

Exhibition organized by the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in co-production with the MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo. A catalogue with the same title accompanies the exhibition.

### Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

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### Access

Avda. Américo Vespucio nº 2  
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

### Transport

C1 and C2 buses

### Timetable

#### April - June and September

Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 21 h.  
Saturday: 11 - 21 h.

#### July - August

Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 15 h  
Saturday: 10 - 15 h.  
Nights Wednesday to Saturday:  
20 - 24 h.

Sunday: 10 - 15 h.  
Closed on Monday  
Holidays: Consult with Centre

### Library

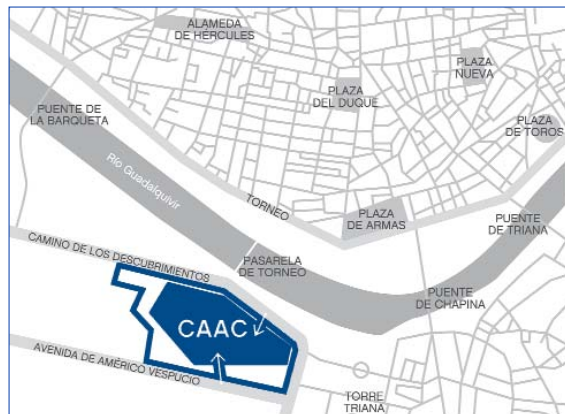
Monday to Friday (except holidays):  
9 - 14 h.

Tickets sales until 30 minutes before closing.

MARCO  
MUSEO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEA DE VIGO



Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



Cover: Guido van der Werve, Nummer Acht, 2007

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*Untamed Paradises* takes as its starting point the fascination we feel for the last frontiers, natural spaces that have not yet been explored -or exploited- and are still untouched by human influence. This age-old fascination has not lost its hold on us, though now it manifests itself in other ways than it did when there were still undiscovered territories.

The exhibition explores the survival and constant renewal of this abiding human obsession with defying nature -the obsession that underpinned the great voyages of exploration climbers and colonial enterprises whose legacy is that today there are almost no natural places on the planet free from our footprints and our waste, not only material but also cultural and symbolic. And the few that remain are, in most cases, "reserves", fenced in and thus domesticated, often reduced to mere fetishes for the tourist.

Coinciding with the increasing presence all over the world of an environmental consciousness that warns that the cost of the continued unbridled exploitation of nature is totally unacceptable, *Untamed Paradises* presents 46 works by some twenty artists from a variety of backgrounds which explore the reasons for -and madness of- this obsession with venturing into the unknown.

These artists address from different points of view our schizophrenic relationship man with the land we inhabit. Their works are contemporary reinterpretations of the landscape genre, dismissed as minor until the turn of the 19th century, when it was championed by the Romantics. In most of them there is an idealized vision of nature and its laws, its refusal to submit to human domination, and all are alert to the danger



Eva Koch, *Evergreen*, 2006



Caio Reisewitz, *Mamanguá IV*, 2008



Mireya Masó & Mercedes Masó, from the series *Variability: Registry of Esperanza Base*, 2006

that these last few "wild" places may disappear. For all that, their tone is never apocalyptic, and their reflections on the human subject's conflictive relationship with its environment are characterized by a predominantly Romantic approach, at times nostalgic, at times utopian.

In their various ways the artists featured in *Untamed Paradises* recapture the adventurous and idealistic spirit of the explorers of the past. Their attitude is not that of the conqueror or colonizer, but that of the observer eager to bear witness to something exceptional, who journeys to out-of-the-way places not to conquer and dominate them, but to take note that they still exist, in the hope that this testimony will somehow help them survive. Not content merely to document, some of these artists take on an active political role, denouncing the actions, omissions and decisions, both local and global, that lead to the destruction of the last untamed paradises.

The exhibition is articulated in four sections that reflect four different ways of addressing our troubled relationship with our environment. **The Force of Nature** includes works whose settings are natural spaces irreducible to any attempt to control and subjugation, from the wildest headlands of the Canary Islands (Thomas Joshua Cooper) to the ice of Antarctica (Mireya Masó) or the North Pole (Guido van der Werve), from a burning boat sinking in a raging sea (a tribute to J. M. W. Turner by Thiago Rocha Pitta) to a cliff top along which Eric Rosoman wanders recklessly ventures.

The section entitled **The Utopian Journey** includes works by Nir Evron, Alberto Baraya, Marine Hugonnier, Eva Koch and Sergio Belinchón and suggests, among other things, that behind every journey to remote, unexplored or inaccessible places there is always an inner quest, and that the photographs we take of "picturesque" landscapes and the souvenirs we bring back from tourist destinations say more about us than about the places themselves.

**Man and the Earth: Scientific Collaboration** presents various art projects that explore the relationship between science and nature, utilizing -and often re-inventing- perspectives, methodologies and tools borrowed from scientific research. This section thus includes works that develop a theoretical analysis of the problems and potentials of a territory and the community that inhabits it (Marjetica Potrč); set up a "musical" greenhouse for plants (Peter Coffin); convert an artist's studio into a kind of hospital for vegetables (Gonzalo Puch); mix, in a singular taxonomic proposal, images of "pure" nature with electronic sounds and clips from science-fiction films (Heather & Ivan Morison), or compile a rigorous documentary record of certain "tracks" left by a traveller (Guillem Bayo).

Finally, the section entitled **Damaged Paradises** brings together a number of works that analyse very different instances of the loss of balance in our relationship with nature: from the deforestation of the Amazon to create agricultural land (Caio Reisewitz) to forest fires and their effect on a region's environmental, social and economic assets (André Cepeda); from the impact on a natural space of a low-flying helicopter (Rodney Graham) or the introduction of extraneous materials (Cyprien Gaillard) to the ban on filming the Texas sunset if you happen to be close to the installations of a company "that jealously guards its secrets" (Roberto Bellini).



Concert at the Peter Coffin, untitled (*Greenhouse*), 2002