

# NOTES

# FOR

# AN

# EYE

# FIRE

Exhibition from 22 October 2021 to 27 February 2022



#PanoramaMACBA

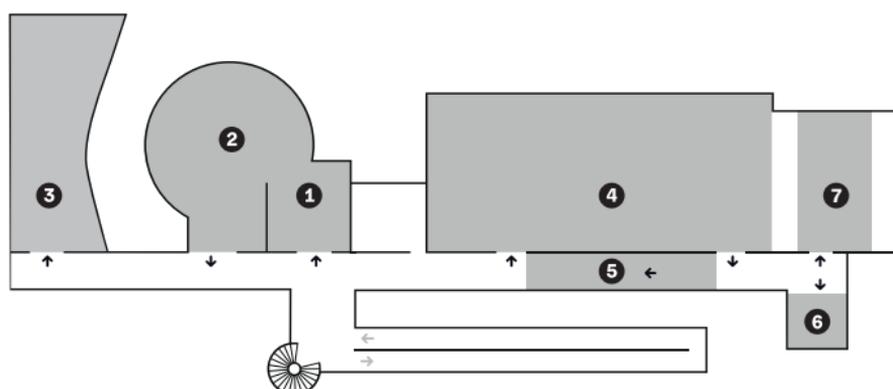
If you burn a sense  
you get a repertoire  
of phantoms.

Gabriel Ventura,  
*Apunts per a un incendi dels ulls*  
[Notes for an Eye Fire]  
(2020)

## Recommended itinerary

Meier Building

### Level 2



Ana Domínguez, El Palomar, Laia Estruch, Arash Fayez, Antoni Hervàs, Rasmus Nilausen, nyamnyam with Pedro Pineda, Claudia Pagès, Aleix Plademunt, Marria Pratts, Stella Rahola Matutes, Eulàlia Rovira, Ruta de autor, Adrian Schindler, Rosa Tharrats, Gabriel Ventura, and Marc Vives.

NOTES FOR AN EYE FIRE conjures a powerful metaphor that provokes a questioning of the dominance of vision, urging us to explore an expanded definition of seeing – one that engages our other senses through new ways of navigating the world, of remembering, and of producing knowledge. The ocular form takes on a life of its own in the exhibition's imagination, evocative of the 18th-century panorama, to encircle how the museum establishes a connection with its surroundings, and vice versa, at a time when perhaps we are all wondering anew what our own place in the world might be.

The works on display weave together diverse themes, whether addressing the self-image of the city, notions of reparation and belonging, gender dissidence, or reassessing our relationship of interdependency with non-human life. As the *notes* of the title suggests, the exhibition attempts to jot down, to lay out, and to connect without seeking to be in any way definitive.

*Notes for an Eye Fire*, titled after the 2020 book of poetry by **Gabriel Ventura**, is the first of a new series of transdisciplinary projects entitled *Panorama* with a focus on contemporary art practices and aesthetics in and around Barcelona. The exhibition brings together especially commissioned works, along with recent productions. It comprises a wide range of disciplines, including painting, sculpture, works on paper, video installation, performance, photography, and textiles.

The exhibition begins by passing through a portal created by **Antoni Hervàs** and inspired by the visual pleasure and history of the Teatre Arnau. The Arnau opened in 1894 and became one of the most celebrated popular music-hall venues in Barcelona. It is currently undergoing a major structural restoration following a community-driven social revival. Hervàs's dramatic doorway in the museum is accompanied by a vast mural, produced in collaboration with Pau Magrané, situated in front of the theatre itself on the nearby Avinguda del Paral·lel (on view until 10 January 2022).

The first galleries host three projects which directly and indirectly evoke the 18th-century panorama: vast 360 degree scenic paintings which were housed in purpose-built cylindrical buildings. **Marc Vives**'s video *SSSSS* (2020) is an immersive portrayal of the Costa Brava from the frontier of sea and land, sound and song, which creates a disorientating sensory and emotional experience of place.

The display by **Ruta de autor** is based on archival research into the panoramas that were present in Barcelona during the Universal Exposition of 1888 and analyses how their conceptual underpinnings and historical precedents lie in warfare as much as leisure.

**Rasmus Nilausen** presents an installation of 49 paintings based on the Theatre of Memory, a structure conceived by the hermetic Renaissance philosopher Giulio Camillo as a mystical aide-memoire that would offer a single spectator an overview of seven rows of seven pictures that represented no less than the entirety of human knowledge and the cosmos.

**El Palomar**'s two-screen audiovisual installation also departs from forms of visionary experience, in this case those inspired by the life of Daniel Paul Schreber. Schreber was a judge who was confined to an asylum in Germany in 1894. In his memoirs, which influenced Sigmund Freud's theory of paranoia, Schreber described being transformed into a woman. Rejecting a psychoanalytical interpretation of gender dissidence, El Palomar liberates Schreber's mental illness through a transfeminist and queer perspective.

The work of **Eulàlia Rovira** in the second floor's largest gallery is the result of her research into the construction of the MACBA building in the early 1990s, the history of the Raval neighbourhood, and the tenets of modern architecture as a force bringing hygiene to ailing urbanism. A series of collages that depart from photographs of the building site and the excavation of what is now the Plaça dels Àngels. Moreover, one of the emblematic white columns of Richard Meier's design for the museum appears to have been chopped off and suspended horizontally from the ceiling, cancelling its structural and metaphorical function.

On the surrounding walls, **Arash Fayez's** *Apolis and Limbo* (2014–21) also deals with a form of suspension – the in-between status of a person. It traces the artist's legal limbo through official documents following his arrest in the US in 2014 through to his arrival in the EU in 2018. These 310 sheets are partially redacted with a parallel collection of quotidian photographs from the same period, and are presented alongside a coda: a slide loop documenting Fayez's residency in the UK and now in Barcelona.

Reference to nationhood, identity and representation are also apparent in **Adrian Schindler's** installation. It centres on the first part of a collectively realised experimental film trilogy that traces the contemporary spectres of Spain's colonial past in Morocco. Including scenes shot at Plaça de Tetuan and in the galleries of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, this Barcelona chapter unfolds through readings, conversations, improvisations, and the personal experiences of its actors and collaborators.

The project by **nyamnyam** and **Pedro Pineda** has been similarly conceived as an emphatically shared initiative. A group of people with diverse roles within MACBA are participating in a series of workshops that began with several tree trunks sourced from a sustainable forestry initiative. Crafted into planks before becoming furniture, this local wood takes the form of a changing social scenography adapted over the months of the exhibition by museum workers, and the role of a mediator between natural and human resources, both within and without the institution.

The hanging net structure that spans the gallery is the work of **Laia Estruch**. Functioning as both a sound score and a stage, it encompasses an audio collage and a series of remarkable performances by the artist that spring from her attempts to approximate the songs and calls of migratory bird species that nest in Barcelona, and the possibilities of voice-based “touch” at a contactless moment in history. Propelled from the body from high above the ground, tones and timbres take flight through the gallery.

**Aleix Plademunt** presents glimpses of his encyclopaedic project *Matter* (2013–21). Addressing primordial questions about the origins of life, scientific knowledge, and an individual’s place in an unfathomably complex universe, it employs photography as a poetic and critical tool that takes us from the Big Bang to the last sunset of 2020 in the town of his birth.

**Marria Pratts** presents a series of new canvases and neon sculptures. Mixing casual picture making with stains, scratches, scorch marks, and unambiguous symbols, her paintings capture a state of immediacy and levity – they are surfaces where even the ghosts of the city seem to bring a positive energy.

**Rosa Tharrats** presents her textile sculptures in the passageway overlooking the museum’s atrium. Layers of woven and printed cloth have been stitched and fused together in combination with fragments of bioplastics, and they protrude from the columns of the museum like ragged sails rigged to the masts of a ship.

The installation by **Stella Rahola Matutes** also creates an uncanny sensorium of interactions between man-made forms and semi-organic materials. Fruit-like vessels made from blown glass are entangled with metal chains, and artificial hair.

Nearby, the final gallery is devoted to the work of **Claudia Pagès**. Centred on a cylindrical video screen, *Gerundi Shipping* (2021) revolves around three performers that were filmed in a panoramic 360 degree loop and an operetta that connects global maritime routes with nautical jargon and the flow of capital between people and ports.

Lastly, **Ana Domínguez**’s graphic concept for *Notes for an Eye Fire* is an integral part of the project that comprises an evocative graphic language of eruptions and billowing smoke.

## Artists

**ANA DOMÍNGUEZ.** Graphic designer and art director. She has worked across editorial, digital, product and exhibition design and on corporate identities and projects for fashion houses, artists and art institutions.

**EL PALOMAR.** Formed in 2013 by Mariokissme and R. Marcos Mota, the artist duo behind El Palomar continue to embrace a wide range of disciplines, including video, performance, music, limited editions and curatorial projects that generate critical discourses around the politics and poetics of sexual dissidence.

**LAIA ESTRUCH.** Her practice hinges on the voice as a material reality – an expressive force and a medium that is expelled from the body. Over the last ten years, her work has broached the fields of contemporary art, spoken word and experimental theatre.

**ARASH FAYEZ.** His practice investigates conditions of displacement and notions such as statelessness and in-betweenness. His enquiries into liminal spaces, geographic or otherwise, take the form of writing, performance and video.

**ANTONI HERVÀS.** He presents enthusiastic, vividly coloured, genre-bending explorations of the possibilities of drawing that often deal with overlooked aspects of subversive popular spectacle, from carnival and burlesque to synchronised swimming and amusement parks.

**RASMUS NILAUSEN.** For Rasmus Nilausen, painting is intuitive and instantaneous – like talking – yet also deliberate and editable – like writing. Nilausen revels in the elision of brushstrokes with text, image, word, symbol and quotation.

**NYAMNYAM WITH PEDRO PINEDA.** Nyamnyam is an arts collective and collaborative force that focuses on ways of working above and beyond making works by creating context and process before – or instead of – production or presentation. Pedro Pineda designs what he describes as “holistic, intended physical experiences”.

**CLAUDIA PAGÈS.** Her artistic practice spins a linguistic web of micro-narratives, queer poetry and rhythmic speech as she explores the possibilities of staging the voice through music and the presence of bodies. She is particularly interested in systems of distribution, circulation and consumption.

**ALEIX PLADEMUNT.** His artistic practice is rooted in photography and publishing. Driven by a thirst for observing, discovering, questioning and understanding, he collects images while forging unexpected connections between all that inhabits our planet and beyond.

MARRIA PRATTS. A multidisciplinary artist whose practice exudes an uninhibited, spontaneous spirit. Her artistic output includes a repertoire of decidedly varied formats. Drawing, painting, sculpture, carpets, furniture and fanzines combine playful energy with a bright and optimistic colour palette.

STELLA RAHOLA MATUTES. Originally trained as an architect before turning towards visual art, Stella Rahola Matutes nevertheless continues to address placemaking and situational spatial encounters in her practice. By exploring craft techniques, especially glassblowing, her works extol our primordial capacity to produce knowledge with our hands.

EULÀLIA ROVIRA. Through sculpture, video, spoken word, photography and performance, Eulàlia Rovira's meticulous practice has explored a range of fields, including perception, etymology and archaeology.

RUTA DE AUTOR. It combines archival and historical research from a range of disciplines to investigate the city. Its walking tours through public spaces act as a conduit for bringing people together while generating critical perspectives on official narratives by peeling back the multiple layers of a city's history from its streets, architecture and monuments.

ADRIAN SCHINDLER. His practice is rooted in performance, ethics and the archive. It often confronts uncomfortable historical narratives while attempting to learn from the experiences of others without objectifying them. His current research concerns the legacy of European colonialism in Morocco and the pervasive Orientalist stereotypes of the Moor, especially in recent cinema.

ROSA THARRATS. Informed by her work as a costume designer, Rosa Tharrats is interested in sensorial and spiritual communication between different "species" of lively materials and bodies. Often inspired by the dramatic natural scenography around her home in Cadaqués, her artistic practice combines textiles, garments, upholstery, painting and performance.

GABRIEL VENTURA. His multifaceted writing practice has embraced poetry, prose, interviews, narrative fiction, scripts and the epistolary form. The visual and scenic arts have always been central to his thinking and making, whether through the imagery that accompanies his publications or in his collaborations.

MARC VIVES. A versatile artist, educator and cultural producer. From 2002 to 2012 he was one half of the artist duo Bestué-Vives. Since 2013 he has codirected GRAF.cat, a platform for contemporary art programmes in Catalonia.

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Exhibition organised and produced by MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

**Curated by:**  
Hiuwai Chu and Latitudes  
(Max Andrews and Mariana Cánepa Luna)

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### MACBA app

Enjoy explanatory pages and audio-descriptive guides on a selection of works from the exhibition with the MACBA app.

You will find detailed information on the exhibitions and activities, as well as videos, curiosities and practical information for visiting the museum.

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### Visits

Sundays, 12 am  
By the pli-é collective.  
Visits in Catalan or Spanish.  
Consult the specific programme at macba.cat.

### Accessibility visits

Visits for the hearing or visually impaired are available by prior request to educacio@macba.cat.

### Let's talk about... 6.30 pm

**Thurs 25/11** *Notes for Notes*, with Latitudes and Hiuwai Chu.

**Thurs 2/12** *Let's talk about cabaret*, with Antoni Hervàs.

**Thurs 9/12** *Anecdotes to be forgotten*, with Arash Faye.

**Thurs 13/1/2022** *Passió i cartografia per a un incendi dels ulls*. Sung guided tour, with Gabriel Ventura and Pere Martínez.

### MACBA Friends

Consult exclusive visits for MACBA Friends at macba.cat.

### Performances and Activations

**Sat 20/11 and 18/12/2021; 29/1 and 26/2/2022** 6 pm

Open rehearsals for *Ocells perduts* by Laia Estruch

### Round table

**Sat 29/1/2022** 10 am  
*Systematurgy of A quatre potes* by nyamnyam and Pedro Pineda, with the participation of Lídia Guitart, Curro Claret, Ingrid Guardiola, the artists, exhibition curators and workshop participants.

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### Opening hours

Mondays, Wednesdays,  
Thursdays and Fridays,  
11 am to 7.30 pm  
(from 25 June to 24  
September, 10 am to 8 pm)  
Tuesdays, except public  
holidays, closed  
Sundays and public holidays,  
10 am to 3 pm

Saturdays, from 4 to 8 pm, free admission thanks to UNIQLO

The entrance ticket is valid for a month. Activate your ticket at the reception desk and visit us as often as you like.

### MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Plaça dels Àngels, 1  
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macba.cat

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