

You've Got Everything here and out there it's So Dark

Alejandro Vidal and Carles Congost

Private View: Wednesday 9 June, 6-9 pm

Dates: 10 June – 11 July 2010

You've Got Everything Here And Out There It's So Dark, brings together for the first time under one roof the common practices and ideas of artists Alejandro Vidal and Carles Congost.

Barcelona based Vidal and Congost both explore issues of collective insecurity and the fear of the 'other'. The implementation of a state of mild panic, and the mechanisms of control that achieve this tactic have been recurrent themes in the artists' recent work, albeit approached from different perspectives and with varying strategies.

Together, they are interested in state policies of terror, youth conflict with government and the family, and the ultra-protectionist system that justifies the deactivation of civil liberties. In all facets of the state apparatus, the artists see the need to present our inhabited spaces as safe dignified places, under a constant and often unnamed threat. This perceived menace can only be attacked or avoided, so creating anxiety and a sense of loss in the individual. The new fears, believe the artists, have resulted in a wildly increased patriotism and subsequent dangerous military adventures in the world.

In his new work *Somewhere in a Great Country* (2010) Vidal uses video-captures found on the internet, of independence celebrations, festivals and political rallies where pyrotechnics are employed. No humans appear so the stills appear eerily to refer to acts of sabotage or car bombings. History or fiction? The line is blurred. Vidal's *Firestorm* (2009), his most recent video, again uses fireworks footage found on the internet, but replaces the audio with the sound of explosions from real wars.

Congost presents his photographic novel *Adult Contemporary (Ceci n'est pas a Clown, OK?)* (2009) starring a messy mistrustful relationship between a mother and child. At Christmas dinner, and through a sequence of criticisms, the clues appear that explain the sudden abandonment of the family by the father, an event that transformed the mother in to a sinister clown. The photographic series *Gloria* (2005) stands as a disturbing fashion editorial, in which a teen reveals a series of small wounds and mutilations spread across her whole body.

Made especially for Civic Room, the installation *A Tale For Wild-Eyed Boys* (2010) is the artists' first joint work. Vidal and Congost have built a species of camp-shelter on the gallery floor, and filled it with symbols that suggest the existence of alternative communities. Key elements of the vocabulary of both artists make an appearance: self-defence manuals, allusions to music helping build communities outside the family order, and references to the world of sects and secret societies.

Alejandro Vidal (born Palma de Mallorca, Spain 1972) lives and works in Barcelona. He has exhibited his work widely in international museums and institutions, appearing in: Participant Inc - New York, Kunsthalle Winterthur - Switzerland, Fundació La Caixa - Barcelona, Palazzo delle Papesse - Sienna, Schirn Kunsthalle - Frankfurt, The Museum of Contemporary Art of Taipei, MIS - Sao Paulo Brazil, Da2 - Salamanca, Kling & Bang - Reykiavik and Mambo - Bologna. He took part in the Busan Biennial (South Korea) in 2006. Recently he has exhibited at Galeria Joan Prats - Barcelona, Elba Benitez - Madrid, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Play Platform for Film and Video - Berlin and Monitor - Rome.

Carles Congost (born Olot, Girona, Spain 1970) lives and works in Barcelona. He has exhibited internationally, appearing in: Say I'm Your Number One - MUSAC in Leon (2007), Memorias de Arkaran - CAC in Malaga (2006), Un Mystique Determinado - CGAC in Santiago de Compostela (2005), That's my Impresión! - CAAC of Seville (2002), Popcorn Love in the MNCARS in Madrid (2001).

He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions in the Mucsarnok Kunsthalle in Budapest, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the MIGROS in Zurich, the MAMBA in Buenos Aires, the Palais Tokyo in Paris, the PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York and the Hamburger Bahnhof (Museum fur Gegenwart) in Berlin.