

cabello / carceller

Suite Rivolta

opening: saturday, april 2nd, 2011
april - may 2011



Not being trapped within the master-slave dialectic, we become conscious of ourselves; we are the Unexpected Subject. Carla Lonzi, "Let's Spit on Hegel", 1970.

As Tim Griffin points out in his new book *Compression*¹, a characteristic of contemporary art is that the 'site' of an earlier generation's site-specific work has given way to the 'location' of the more current aesthetic, becoming a sort of floating, all-purpose mise-en-scène where the representation of experience is replaced by representation as experience. In the exhibition *Suite Rivolta*, conceived and executed especially for the Elba Benítez Gallery, the artist team Cabello/Carceller occupy this same artistic space as a means of reflecting back onto the tenacious representational mechanisms that underlie contemporary culture, particularly in its imposed construction of gender roles.

Deriving its title from the radical feminist movement of the 1970's known as "Rivolta Femminile" (led by the art critic and radical theorist Carla Lonzi), and with a structure loosely based on the multi-part music and dance form known as a 'suite' (thus alerting us to the exhibition's performative undercurrents), *Suite Rivolta* utilizes the gallery in such a way so as to question the conventional relationship between subject and object, and in questioning to lend it an element of volatility -- i.e. the 'unexpected subject' of Lonzi's emblematic phrase.

Graffiti on the invitation implicates viewers even before they have entered the gallery's interior; and upon entering, they are met head-on by a photograph of a photographer pointing her camera directly at them, as if reversing the roles between viewer and viewed. The gallery's central space has been converted into a performance and recording studio, where a video presents a dancer dancing to words rather than music -- a video that was recorded in the same space in which it is projected, and which will be augmented by further dance performances and video projections during the course of the exhibition.

Elsewhere a curtain of lights alludes to strings of light bulbs in Felix Gonzalez-Torres's "Untitled (I Was Here)" (and to the democratic, participatory ethos pioneered by the deceased artist), yet here many of the bulbs have been broken, their unswept shards becoming a prop in the ongoing performance/recording. A forlorn banner of the sort carried at a public demonstration cries out for Lonzi's volatile "Unexpected Subject," while a paradoxical graffiti from Godard's 1967 film *La Chinoise* questions the integrity of hard-line ideological positions vying for power. Viewers are moreover invited to participate in reading a series of fictional texts previously published by the artists (which texts are accompanied by related photographic images) and attend a guest lecture by Sergio Rubira in the gallery during the course of the exhibition.

In all, *Suite Rivolta* in fact contains little that might be said to be 'representational,' yet the entire exhibition becomes an inexorable, overarching site of representation -- an approximation of the way our society and its hidden laws of representation shape us, wherein lies the true representational focus of *Suite Rivolta*.

Cabello/Carceller is composed of Helena Cabello (Paris, 1963) and Ana Carceller (Madrid, 1964). While informed by contemporary theory, Cabello/Carceller maintain an independent political position from which they rigorously analyze and critique the gendered politics of space and socially imposed mechanisms of representation. Their work is polemical in its discourse and yet suggestive and even elusive in its execution, employing a wide range of media -- photography, video, installation, participatory events, lectures and teaching, etc. -- and freely referencing source material from history, politics, film and contemporary art and society. Moreover, *Suite Rivolta* combines work created by Cabello/Carceller specifically for this exhibition with segments of various ongoing projects, thus offering a unique display of the transversal intersections of artistic concerns that have run through their work since the mid-1990's.

Cabello/Carceller have had solo shows such as *Archivo: Drag Modelos*, currently on show at CAAM (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) *A/O (Caso Céspedes)* at CAAC (Sevilla), *En construcción (cap_2)* at La Panera (Lérida) and *Off Escena: si yo fuera...* at Abierto X Obras, Matadero (Madrid.) They have participated in numerous group shows, such as at the Brooklyn Museum, the Reina Sofia Museum (Madrid), the Serralves Museum (Porto), the CGAC (Santiago de Compostela), Kulturhuset (Stockholm), the Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art (Finland), Casino Luxembourg (Luxembourg), the 2010 Bucharest Biennial and the Latin American Visual Arts Biennial in Curitiba, Brazil. This is their second individual exhibition at the Galería Elba Benítez.

George Stolz

¹ Tim Griffin: *Compression*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, forthcoming publication 2011

Conference by Sergio Rubira about the project *A/O (Caso Céspedes)*, with the presentation of the third movements of *Suite*. **Thursday, May 5th, 2011, 7 pm.**

June and July 2011: JOACHIM KOESTER

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10.00 - 18.00. - Contact: info@elbabenitez.com