

**THIS IS A SHOT**

En noviembre de 2020 se publicaba *Rejected Designs for the European Flag*<sup>1</sup>; libro en el que se recogían, por primera vez, los más de 150 diseños descartados presentados para el diseño de la bandera europea. Me llama especialmente la atención el de Salvador de Madariaga<sup>2</sup>: de fondo azul cobalto, cada una de las capitales de los países que formarían parte de aquella Unión Europea está representada con un círculo amarillo que coincide, espacialmente, con el lugar geográfico de cada capital. Alguien lo critica diciendo que “parecen agujeros de bala en la bandera”.

Y me rebota esta implicación del diseño de Madariaga cuando me enfrento –me sitúo frente– al trabajo de Jorge Isla (Huesca, 1992), especialmente ante su serie *Le Reflet*, el conjunto de obras que forman parte de la exposición *Blackmarket*, su segunda individual en la Galería Antonia Puyó. Pantallas de móviles ‘rotos’ recuperadas e instaladas a modo de *patchwork* sobre un canvas a pared. ¿Qué ha podido provocar las roturas en cada uno de los dispositivos? Fantasmo que ha sido un tiro sobre su superficie impoluta (no diré ‘inmaculada’, me remitiría demasiado al blanco); un tiro ‘fotográfico’ como el que se produce y se visualiza a través de esta misma pantalla. *This is a shot*<sup>3</sup>—que diría Hito Steyerl. El dispositivo que somatiza el tiro –fotográfico, pero también y, sobre todo, bélico.

Continúo con la bandera de Europa que entiendo, en relación con Isla, sinécdoque de Occidente. Porque los lienzos del artista son, de alguna forma, banderas. Formados por cuerpos –porque eso es lo que son– replicados y almacenados, como en aquella escena de *Westworld*. Blasones que continúan el camino del azul oscuro casi negro europeo hasta el nuevo oscuro brillante, inmóvil, silencioso. La bandera de un mundo como corporación. Fundido a negro.

Así, en este territorio de Isla, nos encontramos con el espacio del *apparatus* en dos de sus acepciones: como dispositivo y como sistema. Otra pregunta me sacude: ¿supone el fin del *apparatus* el fin del *apparatus*? ¿Un mundo sin notificaciones? Parece que, más bien contrariamente, el fin momentáneo del *apparatus* sea el compost del *apparatus*.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas von Lenthe (ed.), *Rejected Designs for the European Flag*, Wirklichkeit Books, 2020, <https://viceversaartbooks.com/items/rejected-designs-for-the-european-flag/> (último acceso: 12 de marzo de 2021)

<sup>2</sup> *It should both express the unity and the variety of the continent... On a blue background, the European nations that were fully sovereign in 1938 will be represented each by a golden star on the spot occupied by its capital city on the map. Strasbourg will also be represented by a slightly bigger golden star.* Salvador de Madariaga cit. en von Lenthe, *ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Hito Steyerl, *Is a museum a battlefield?*, documentación en vídeo de una lectura no-académica. Public Program, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (Holanda), 2013. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

En este mundo como corporación, Isla es capaz de obrar la quimera, de paralizar el ciclo de la obsolescencia programada, tomando fragmentos del dispositivo que, en lugar de volver a fundirse en nuevos terminales –*I'll be back*<sup>4</sup>–, se convierten en lienzos, suspendiendo así el agónico avance *ad nauseam* del *apparatus*. El sistema retiraría –por nuestra propia seguridad, por supuesto (ay, lo que daría que hablar este tema en este 2020-21)–, estos pedazos defectuosos y rotos. Isla, en cambio, los recoge, casi con afecto, componiéndolos. *Como una pequeña obra de arte, un fragmento debe estar aislado del mundo que lo rodea y ser, en sí mismo, perfecto y acabado como un erizo*<sup>5</sup>. Para el sistema, el erizo pincha: tienen que cuidarnos de él. Para el artista, el animal es perfecto y hay que protegerlo, alimentarlo. Recoger y pulir los pedazos que son la propia obra es lo que lleva entonces a cabo, mediante algo que recuerda formal y metodológicamente a la técnica del *trencadís*<sup>6</sup>, aquella estrategia de Antoni Gaudí de recuperar fragmentos de brillantes y coloridos azulejos para cubrir los acabados curvos tan característicos de su obra. La diferencia, el disparo –*this is a shot*: mientras el artista catalán entendía los fragmentos cerámicos como células vivas parte de un mismo organismo<sup>7</sup>, el corpus de Isla es una *superficie continua pero rota que resalta y exagera la forma discontinua y fragmentada*<sup>8</sup>: pura necrosis. Y sea esta, quizá, la que nos devuelva a la vida. Fundido a negro.

La última cuestión que me surge antes de terminar fundida con mi dispositivo –*I'll be back*– es si deberíamos volver al destornillador para controlar el *apparatus*. Quizá sí, solo que no para abrir el móvil e instalar una nueva pantalla.

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<sup>4</sup> Recuerdo que "I'll be back" es aquella frase asociado con Arnold Schwarzenegger, pronunciada al final de la película *The Terminator*, de 1984. El 21 de junio de 2005, fue elegida como la frase #37 en la lista del American Film Institute, "AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes". Disponible en web en: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I%27ll\\_be\\_back](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I%27ll_be_back) (último acceso: 13 de marzo de 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragmentos (seguido de Sobre la Incomprensibilidad)*, Marbot ediciones, 2011, p. 1334.

<sup>6</sup> No extraña, en estos tiempos, que sea el nombre de una empresa, en cuya web deja claro su objetivo: *There's no need for many words to describe our vision: we know that you need technologies that are easy to use and that will produce sustainable and visible effects. Therefore, since 2007, we've been working continuously on innovating the information solutions for the public and private sector. Because the administration and businesses require a solid, easy to maintain and easy to access infrastructure. When the road to success is already in front of you, it is our pleasure to make your trip faster and safer. If the road is blocked, we find a new, shorter, and direct one.* <https://trencadis.solutions> (último acceso: 13 de marzo de 2021). *Trencadis* es parte de la super-multinacional Deloitte, parte de las *Big Four* (apodo utilizado para referirse colectivamente a las cuatro redes de servicios profesionales más grandes del mundo, que consiste en las redes globales de contabilidad Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG y PwC).

<sup>7</sup> Mireia Freixa, Marta Saliné, *Gaudí y el Trencadís Modernista*, Triangle Books, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Del original: *Its result is not a continuous surface but a broken one that highlights and exaggerates the discontinuous and broken form* (traducción propia). Josep-María García-Fuentes, "Reinventing and Reshaping Gaudí. From Nation and Religion to Tourism. Architecture, Conflict and Change in Barcelona's Tourist Imaginary" en Maria Gravari-Barbas, Nelson Graburn (eds.), *Tourism Imaginaries at the Disciplinary Crossroads: Place, Practice, Media*, Routledge, 2016, p. 68.

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In November 2020, *Rejected Designs for the European Flag*<sup>9</sup>, a book that gathered, for the first time, the more than 150 discarded designs submitted for the European flag, was published. I was particularly struck by Salvador de Madariaga's<sup>10</sup> design: a cobalt blue background with each of the countries that would be part of the European Union represented by a yellow circle that matches spatially the geographical location of each capital. Some people criticised it because "they look like bullet holes in the flag".

This implication of Madariaga's design came back to me when I faced the work of Jorge Isla (Huesca, 1992), especially his *Le Reflet* series, the group of works that are part of the *Blackmarket* exhibition, his second solo show at the Antonia Puyó Gallery. Broken cell phone screens brought back to life, patchwork style, on a canvas aimed to be hanged in the wall. Whatever happened to each of these devices? I fantasize that it was a shot on their pristine surface (I won't say "immaculate", for it would be too much of a reference to the colour white); a "photographic" shot like the one produced and visualized through this same screen. *This is a shot*<sup>11</sup>—as Hito Steyerl would say. The device that somatises the shot—the photographic one, but also, and above all, warlike.

I follow on with the European flag, which I understand, in relation to Isla, as a synecdoche of the West. Because the artist's canvases are, in a way, flags. Formed by bodies—because that is what they are—replicated and stored, as in that scene from *Westworld*. Blazons that continue the path from the European dark blue almost black to the new shiny, immobile and silent dark. The flag of a world as a corporation. Fade to black.

So, in this territory of Isla, we encounter the space of the apparatus in two of its meanings: as a device and as a system. Another question shakes me: does the end of apparatus mean the end of apparatus? A world without notifications? It seems that, on the contrary, the momentary end of apparatus is the compost of apparatus.

In this world as a corporation, Isla is able to work the chimera, to paralyze the cycle of programmed obsolescence, taking fragments of the device that, instead of melting back into

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<sup>9</sup> Jonas von Lenthe (ed.), *Rejected Designs for the European Flag*, Wirklichkeit Books, 2020, <https://viceversaartbooks.com/items/rejected-designs-for-the-european-flag/> (last accessed: March 12, 2021)

<sup>10</sup> *It should both express the unity and the variety of the continent... On a blue background, the European nations that were fully sovereign in 1938 will be represented each by a golden star on the spot occupied by its capital city on the map. Strasbourg will also be represented by a slightly bigger golden star.* Salvador de Madariaga cit. in von Lenthe, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Hito Steyerl, *Is a museum a battlefield?*, video documentation of a non-academic reading. Public Program, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (The Netherlands), 2013.

new terminals –*I'll be back*<sup>12</sup>–, become canvases, thus suspending the agonizing advance *ad nauseam* of the apparatus. The system would remove –for our own safety, of course (what a talking point this would be now in 2020-21), these defective and broken pieces. Isla, instead, collects them, almost with affection, and puts them together. *A fragment, like a small work of art, must be entirely isolated from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a hedgehog*<sup>13</sup>. For the system, the hedgehog is prickly: they have to protect us from it. For the artist, the animal is perfect and must be protected and fed. Then, he collects and polishes the pieces that are the work itself, through something formally and methodologically reminiscent of the *trencadís*<sup>14</sup> technique, that strategy of Antoni Gaudí that consisted on recovering fragments of bright and colourful tiles to cover the curved finishes so characteristic of his work. The difference is in the shot –*this is a shot*: while the Catalan artist understood the ceramic fragments as living cells, part of the same organism<sup>15</sup>, Isla's corpus is *a continuous surface but a broken one that highlights and exaggerates the discontinuous and broken form*<sup>16</sup>: pure necrosis. And this is, perhaps, what shall bring us back to life. Fade to black.

The last questions that pops up before I end up fused with my device –*I'll be back*– is whether we should go back to the screwdriver to control the apparatus. Maybe yes, just not to open the phone and install a new screen.

Virginia de Diego

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<sup>12</sup> I'd like to recall that "I'll be back" is that phrase associated with Arnold Schwarzenegger, uttered at the end of the 1984 film, *The Terminator*. On June 21, 2005, it was chosen as the #37 quote on the American Film Institute's list, "AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes." Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I%27ll\\_be\\_back](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I%27ll_be_back) (last accessed: March 13, 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragments (followed by On Incomprehensibility)*, Marbot ediciones, 2011, p. 1334.

<sup>14</sup> These days, it is less than surprising for it to be the name of a company whose website makes clear what its primary goal is: *There's no need for many words to describe our vision: we know that you need technologies that are easy to use and that will produce sustainable and visible effects. Therefore, since 2007, we've been working continuously on innovating the information solutions for the public and private sector. Because the administration and businesses require a solid, easy to maintain and easy to access infrastructure. When the road to success is already in front of you, it is our pleasure to make your trip faster and safer. If the road is blocked, we find a new, shorter, and direct one.* <https://trenCADIS.solutions> (last accessed: March 13, 2021). *Trencadís* is part of the multinational Company Deloitte, which is one of the Big Four (nickname used to collectively refer to the four largest professional services networks in the world, consisting of the global accounting networks Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PwC).

<sup>15</sup> Mireia Freixa, Marta Saliné, *Gaudí y el Trencadís Modernista*, Triangle Books, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Josep-Maria García-Fuentes, "Reinventing and Reshaping Gaudí. From Nation and Religion to Tourism. Architecture, Conflict and Change in Barcelona's Tourist Imaginary" in Maria Gravari-Barbas, Nelson Graburn (eds.), *Tourism Imaginaries at the Disciplinary Crossroads: Place, Practice, Media*, Routledge, 2016, p. 68.