

Hunting lions in Scotland

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With the irruption of the applications of participative communication in the network like the creation of social debate forums, collaborative encyclopaedias, logbooks, etc. the users generate and canalize increasing volumes of information that ask constantly for new ways of being organized and visually constructed. In this sense, we are living a re-arise of the aesthetics of information, with the aim of approaching these flows of data, not only as creative material but especially as a decisive tool to forehead the dizziness of the unrepresentable. It is in this context in which the Institute of Alternative Statistics of Valls is constituted – or should we say invented? – with the intention of putting the contemporary creation in relation with the statistics. This is done through the elaboration of poetical statistical studies from the information generated with the surveys that Mariona Moncunill and her team have realized at Valls's streets.

The simulation of the creation of this institute raises rules of game that do not abandon the naughty tone with which the artist seeks to disconcert the public. This can also be seen in other proposals such as *Godzilla* – a paper model of the same exhibition space that intervenes between the visitor and the entrance to the room inviting him/her to cross it carefully or to squash it in order to access the exhibition – or *The Scribe* – manual copyist of the leaflet of a random exhibition, whom the public has to order a copy from-.

In this case we attend the Capella de Sant Roc previously turned into a conferences room ready to receive around thirty spectators to the public presentation of the new organisation's first project. On that occasion a strategy of creating expectation has been carried out by distributing posters along the city's streets and advertising in the local press. The persons polled and the visitors of the exhibition play also irremediably the fiction of the IAEV as well as Mariona and the pollsters. She has used the last ones to compile the information that will shape the project and has turned the first ones them into supposed spectators of a conference that will never take place, turning them all into sporadic figures of her constructed universe.

It is a ghost presentation planned by a non-existent institute that has been elaborating a study somewhere between absurdity and irony, and its conclusions happen to be completely irrelevant. Thus it leaves again the helpless spectator in a position in which the s/he has the whole responsibility to decide whether to take seriously or not the unfolding graphs and figures. The raised premises act in the same way as the *MacGuffin* that Alfred Hitchcock¹ defined as a trap to hunt lions in the Scottish highlands (but there are none!); a plot license that despite motivating the development of a story is not significant for this one. It doesn't matter "what days of the week the polled persons dress white socks" or "what country would they care less about if it did not exist ". In fact, the final results will be completely subordinated to the way the questions have been formulated and to the corresponding possibilities of response as well as the reading, the interpretation and the visual representation that has been carried on with the gathered information. The apparent seriousness and scientific appearance in which all these matters are being treated raise questions about the methods and the reliability of the statistical science in general.

¹François Truffaut, *Le cinéma selon Hitchcock*. Paris: Seghers: Cinéma 2000, 1975.