



Albert Serra. *Roi Soleil*, 2018 © Albert Serra. Andergraun films. 2019.

Albert Serra. Roi Soleil

14.03.2019 - 16.05.2019

Opening: Sunday 17 March 2019, at 11.00.

Curator: Carles Guerra

The films of Albert Serra (Banyoles, 1975) have enjoyed resounding success at museums and cinemas. His film, *La mort de Louis XIV*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016, depicts the agonising pain of the Sun King alone on his deathbed.

It reveals how the most powerful figure in France of his time, played by Jean-Pierre Léaud, drew his last breaths, dying of gangrene. One year later, Serra restaged the death of Louis XIV in a performance entitled *Roi Soleil*. The performance was conceived as the twin sister of the feature film.

In *Roi Soleil*, Serra returns to the original idea of keeping Jean-Pierre Léaud, a legendary figure in the French New Wave movement, on his deathbed for several weeks in the lobby of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. This time round, Lluís Serrat played the role of the monarch. The work, presented as an installation in several places, perfectly illustrates Serra's quest for a certain innocence in the thespian's acting, specific to Serra's work. By merging performance and installation, this *Roi Soleil* is 'a minimalist beast', in the words of a film critic, bathed in red neon light.

A conversation between Albert Serra and Àngel Quintana

Extract from the conversation held between Albert Serra and Àngel Quintana in Banyoles, Factoria de les Arts, 4 February 2019. See *Albert Serra. Roi Soleil*, Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2019.

[Àngel Quintana. Albert Serra. *Roi Soleil. Una conversa entre Albert Serra i Àngel Quintana*. Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona 2019.]

A.Q. [...] this friction between seeking the spotlight and private affairs is a constant feature in your work. This friction was already palpable in how you dealt with the figure of Lluís Carbó as Don Quixote in *Honor de cavalleria* or in the manner in which Vicenç Altaió played the part of Casanova or Eliseu Huertas that of Dracula in *Història de la meva mort*.

A.S. All my films are ultimately performances. There aren't any other filmmakers I know of for whom this friction element is so important. It's interesting how all this contention surrounding friction has stemmed from our conversation about how private matters are portrayed when faced with the taboo of death or the taboo of sexuality in the context of performance. Needless to say, these are two burning issues in today's media landscape.

A.Q. Since you have gotten rid of the theme of performance as a defining feature in your films, I think there is a fundamental difference between the old artistic tradition and your films that lies in your aesthetic intent. It's obvious that you do not limit yourself to documenting in your works, but you create ambiances or you propose complex audiovisual forms. *El cant dels ocells* features the portrayal of three innocent characters, but there is also a series of very complex long takes of outstanding beauty. The artistic tradition of performance called for a camera that would shoot what was happening, but its purpose was testimonial. If we return to Marina Abramović, one of the most internationally acclaimed performance artists, we see that, in one of her works such as *Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful* (1975), the camera is functional. In this piece in which she does not stop combing and brushing her hair, the strength lies in her performance as an artist, in no way in how it was filmed. By contrast, when I see *Roi Soleil*, I certainly see a performance, but also an independent work of great beauty. This brings me to raise another matter. How do you create an artistic ambience in films and in your installations?

A.S. I think this artistic value is the product of modernity. It was the invention of digital technology that allows the work to be shot in an infinitely more sophisticated manner. But again I insist that it also has a lot to do with the role of post-production. All the performances I see from the 1960s and that were shot on video are now nothing more than a document. In contrast, now with digital technology, they can be something else entirely.

Feature films:

- *Honor de cavalleria* (2006. *Quinzaine des Réalisateurs*. Festival de Cannes)
- *El cant dels ocells* (2008. *Quinzaine des Réalisateurs*. Festival de Cannes)
- *El senyor ha fet en mi meravelles* (2011. Festival de Locarno)
- *Història de la meva mort* (2013. *Leopardo de Oro*. Festival de Locarno)
- *La mort de Louis XIV* (2016. Festival de Cannes)
- *Roi Soleil* (2018. Gran Premi de la Selecció Internacional. Festival de Marsella)
- *Liberté* (2019)

Installations:

- 2010. *Els noms de Crist* (Museu d'Art contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona).
- 2011. *Albert Serra. El cinema en llibertat* (Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona).
- 2012. *Els tres porquets* (documenta 13, Barcelona).
- 2013. *Albert Serra / Lisandro Alonso. Cinéastes en correspondance* (Centre Georges Pompidou, París).
- 2015. *Singularity* (Biennal de Venècia, Venècia, i La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, Barcelona).
- 2019. *Personalien* (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid).
- 2019. *Roi Soleil* (Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona).

Theater:

- 2010. *Pulgasari* (Teatre Lliure, Barcelona).
- 2011. *Més enllà dels Alps* (Teatre Lliure, Barcelona).
- 2018. *Liberté* (Volksbühne, Berlín).

Acknowledgments

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Work

***Roi Soleil* (2018)**

62 min / Color /HD/1.85:1/Dolby digital 5.1

Direction and script: Albert Serra

Producers: Joaquim Sapinho, Albert Serra

Curator: Alexandre Melo

Executive production: Montse Triola

Actor: Lluís Serrat

Image: Artur Tort

Edition: Ariadna Ribas, Albert Serra

Sound: Jordi Ribas

Music: Marc Verdaguer

Artistic direction: Montse Triola

Postproduction: Xavi Pérez

A production of Andergraun Films and Rosa Filmes by Albert Serra.

Grand Prix International Competition FID Marseille 2018

FID Marseille 2018 / Indie Festival Brazil / Black Canvas FCC Mexico / III Moscow International Experimental Film Festival MIEFF / 56th New York Film Festival / Split Film Festival Croatia / 22th Ji.hlava International Film Festival / Viennale 2018 / 15 Seville Festival / 33rd Mar del Plata International Film Festival / Kochimuziris Biennale, India / Film Mutations: Festival of Invisible Cinema, Zagreb / Cineteca Matadero, Madrid / 5th Berlin Critics' Week / New Horizons International Film Festival, Wroclaw.

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