

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
June 1988

PROJECTS: JOAN FONTCUBERTA/PERE FORMIGUERA

June 18 - August 9, 1988

The Museum of Modern Art continues its series of PROJECTS exhibitions devoted to contemporary art with a mixed-media installation by Joan Fontcuberta and Pere Formiguera, two artists based in Barcelona. Organized by Catherine Evans, assistant curator in the Department of Photography, the installation, titled Fauna, continues through August 9.

In Fauna, Fontcuberta and Formiguera create an environment that recalls a natural history museum by presenting selections from the rediscovered archive of the "brilliant, if obscure, German zoologist," Dr. Peter Ameisenhaufen. Stuffed "specimens," photographs, audiotapes, drawings, pseudo-scientific descriptive texts in German, and a videotape are used as documentary "evidence" of the existence of fantastic animals. Among the the extraordinary hybrid species that comprise this exhibition are Alopex Stultus, which has the unique ability to camouflage itself as a shrub, and Micostrium Vulgaris, characterized as "a gregarious animal (with) a tremendous capacity for mimicry in semiaquatic environments."

In their work, the artists call into question the authority of the photographic medium and the assumed objectivity of scientific methodology and institutional display. In her brochure essay accompanying the exhibition, Ms. Evans writes, "Fontcuberta is concerned with the way in which data assumes meaning through its presentation, while Formiguera is interested in how the fantastic is codified by science, contending that what nature creates is more capricious than anything man can conjure."

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The artists, who have not received much exposure in the United States, have been represented in museum and gallery exhibitions throughout Europe. Joan Fontcuberta studied journalism and advertising at the University of Barcelona and received his Master's Degree in 1978. In 1980 he founded and coedited Photovision, a quarterly magazine devoted to creative photography. Previously, Fontcuberta completed a series of photographs titled Herbarium, a collection of plant studies that mimic the analytical style of the 1928 botanical catalogue by Karl Blossfeldt. Since 1974 Mr. Fontcuberta's work has been included in numerous private and museum collections throughout the world.

Pere Formiguera received his M.F.A. from the University of Barcelona in 1977. He is a founding member and teacher at the Workshop Group of Photographic Art of Barcelona and of the Centro de Creació Fotogràfica, Barcelona. His work has been included in exhibitions at Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid (1985); Perspektief Gallery, The Netherlands (1986); Museum Folkwang, West Germany (1987); and the Zoology Museum, Portugal (1987).

The exhibition, twelfth in the PROJECTS series, is supported by a generous grant from the Institute of North American Studies, Barcelona. PROJECTS exhibitions, which focus on the work of emerging artists, are made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, and J. P. Morgan & Co. Incorporated.

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