

**PRESS RELEASE**

This coming Wednesday 10th February **Almudena Lobera** presents **UNA REVELACIÓN LATENTE** [A Latent Revelation], her first solo show at Galería Max Estrella.

Over the last year Lobera worked abroad in three internationally renowned art-residencies: Récollets in Paris, HISK in Ghent (to be completed in 2016) and Academia de España in Rome, and it is precisely this last-named experience which served as the source for this new project.

The art critic Luis Francisco Pérez situates “*A Latent Revelation* between parameters that ‘demand’ from the spectator, inasmuch as a creative invitation to the beholder’s gaze on the artist’s work, an ongoing visual readjustment of his/her own visual perspective, or a ‘correction’ of perceptual systems of ‘seeing’ [...] These works invite [...] a reading in which lighting plays a role identical to that of its opposite, just as, for them, touch is yet another, perhaps more receptive and participative, way of *seeing*.” (Complete text below).

Almudena Lobera’s work was seen in Spain in 2015 in an extensive exhibition held at ECCO in Cadiz, and internationally, her installation *A Sight to Behold* was seen last month in Miami as part of the Art Basel week. Her work was also exhibited in Mexico, Belgium and at the Moscow Biennale.

Some of the works created in Rome will also go on display in *INDEX Roma*, a group show opening soon at Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid.

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ALMUDENA LOBERA

GALERÍA MAX ESTRELLA. Santo Tomás, 6 (courtyard). Madrid

10th February 2016 through 2nd April 2016.

Monday to Friday: 10:00-14:00, and 16:30-20:30. Saturday: 11:00-14:00.

Opening: Wednesday 10 February at 20:00.

**ALMUDENA LOBERA*****A LATENT REVELATION...*****Exercises, manifestations and projects on the ontological regime of the image**

“A work of art, understood dynamically, is just this process of arranging images in the feelings and mind of the spectator”

Sergei Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*

Contemplating *Handmade Stereopticon Slide*, Duchamp's fragile and mysterious work created around 1918 and 1919, from the perspective of the present, it strikes me that it must have been particularly germane in the creation of the Dutch artist Jan Dibbets's celebrated “Perspective Corrections” in the sixties. In Duchamp's work the beholder sees, not without some difficulty, two drawn prisms in which the sea and the sky act as a background or, if you like, as a deep “backstage” while, in the foreground, all we see are the solitary and static prisms. Commenting on this most Duchampian of works in her essay *The Optical Unconscious*, Rosalind E. Krauss, while agreeing with Lyotard's view of the work, introduced a slight nuance: “Lyotard sees the *Slide* as just one more symptom of Duchamp's mounting concern with the physiology of seeing, a concern that would lead to the fifteen-year production of *Precision Optics*”. And she goes on: “The art historians who want to construct a conceptualist Duchamp [...] from Renaissance perspective, that is, by the way of the camera obscura [...] imagine the effect of viewing the figure through a stereoscope and the uncannily dramatic illusion of the result. The resulting sense of volume—they say—which will endow this rickety figure with the forma majesty of a Platonic solid, will not be a product of the painter's art; it will happen in the viewer's brain.” I apologise for the extent of the quote but, to my way of thinking, it serves to properly situate Almudena Lobera's exhibition, *A Latent Revelation* between parameters that ‘demand’ from the spectator, inasmuch as a creative invitation to the beholder's gaze on the artist's work, an ongoing visual readjustment of his/her own visual perspective, or a “correction” of perceptual systems of “seeing”.

Thanks to a scholarship from Academia de España, last year the artist lived in Rome for a period of six months, perhaps a little longer. Certain words, like “Rome”, are so densely charged with meaning, so heavily laden with narrative semantics, that merely writing them induces a kind of uncontrollable interpretative digression, with the added risk of not saying what we actually wish to say, or burdening it with an echo or resonance imposed by the word in question. On the other hand, one cannot dismiss it

as an misleading or biased anecdote, or help but believe that a stay in Rome would not “affect” the visitor, much less so an artist like Almudena Lobera, for whom Art History is absolutely crucial in achieving the categorical (radical, extreme, free) contemporaneity of her output. Let’s say then that, for her, Rome was, first and foremost, a “danger for walkers” to borrow from Rafael Alberti’s splendid collection of poems written in the city. In consequence, we are talking of contingency, risk and adventure. And although many of the works now on view were—or were not—made in Rome, we can indeed claim that in some of them the artist has hijacked, perhaps not the “Roman” light per se, but what it irradiated during that awe-struck, dangerous walking. Needless to say, it is a highly elaborated and nuanced light, inflected with history and passion without as a result succumbing to any narrative. Naturally enough, I am also talking about clarity, which I definitely prefer to “light”, a feature so prominent in Almudena Lobera’s works inasmuch as these works invite the spectator to a reading in which light plays a role identical to that of its opposite, just as, for them, touch is yet another, perhaps more receptive and participative, way of *seeing*. In other words, we are faced with the dilemma of how to solve or, at least, how to present with the necessary clarity, “the perpetual hole in appearances,” as Deleuze described the meaning he gleaned from Dreyer’s film “Gertrud”, which, paradoxically, is probably the “purest” and most “crystalline” (inverted commas are strictly necessary) work of the extraordinary Danish filmmaker.

But let’s return to Lobera and to that “perpetual hole in appearances” she presents us with so superbly in this exhibition. It should come as no surprise to ascertain that the level of intensity accumulated by the art object over the last century (no slip of the pen here: I am intentionally interested in prolonging the 20th century, especially when addressing such a sophisticatedly “avant-garde” practice as Almudena Lobera’s) is proportionally related to the exhaustive, accumulative, metastatic proliferation of the millions of “black holes” which swallow up even the very notion of art as practice, thought and action. This possibility would be very close to Thierry De Duve’s postulates, grounded in the assertion that modernism would have always lived off the project of its own announced end, only to later rethink that very same possibility with a different bias; that there is no historical conclusion to the modern enterprise, only ruptures and unforeseen openings, in other words, “black holes”.

Consequently we should not be alarmed to learn that the violence with which the post-Duchampian object irrupts onto the stage of the visual was an outcome of the unstoppable disintegration, not of the structures generating art as pure visibility, but more specifically of the cancellation of the temporal coordinates or of the *sine die* suspension of the utopian horizons with which the avant-garde itself measured the intensity and efficacy of its project. That being said, we are interested, very interested, in the perpetual black hole in appearances (meaning Almudena Lobera’s interpretation of that complex reality and of the highly interesting “montage” in the cinematic sense, a link between classicism and contemporaneity), as well as in the

ongoing adjustments and readjustments with the notion of the representational image (one of the issues the artist is most interested in), made visible through an analogical print that theorises and analyses itself to unimaginable limits, keenly aware that its power to seduce depends on the quantity of analogy—the bigger, the better—able to project itself in terms of “artistic truth” from our present and therefore, the conquest of a visual (and mental) meaning with a rich, complex and fertile possibility of representation. None of this would be possible without the contradictory statement that in art everything is indeed *a latent revelation*.

Luis Francisco Pérez
Madrid, January 2016