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FRANÇOIS BUCHER REDISCOVERS THE ARCHAEOLOGIST DANIEL RUZO AT THE 55TH BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

François Bucher (b. 1972) is the artist chosen to represent Colombia at the Latin American Pavilion -ILLA of the 55th Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte- la Biennale di Venezia, at the invitation of the curator Alfons Hug, who presents the exhibition "The Atlas of the Empire".

The vision created by Hug explores the new geopolitical aspects of contemporary art, the experience of cross-fertilization between Latin American and European artists, presenting the theme with a communicative and expository structure that is complex and intriguing, and from which the constant dialogue between cultures emerges.

François Bucher, in perfect consistency with this concept, exposes a large video installation titled "The Second and a Half Dimension – An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau", made in 2010. The work of this Colombian artist is based on the narrative of Olivares Severiano, who is not just a simple guardian, but a true trustee of the historic memory of the Marcahuasi plateau in Peru, a mythical place situated at 4,000 meters above sea level.

Bucher, directed by the historic park's tutor, traces the steps of Daniel Ruzo's famous exploration. In the fifties, Ruzo was the first person who discovered this place full of ancient sculptures: huge blocks of natural rock sculpted in a distinctive technique that reveal, according to the sun's position, anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and mythological figures.

Bucher meticulously reconstructs Ruzo's scenes and theories, investigating details of history, and reviewing the footprints of his investigation. In this way he exposes next to the video a photograph of the explorer's terminated file, and a letter from the Royal Society of London containing the explanation of Ruzo's new methodology, which represents his scientific contribution to archeological investigation. Both refer to a sensational discovery: knowing that from the negative of a photograph one could see other figures in relation to the positive. From this there arose a curiosity to better understand what was later

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denominated the “park of sculptures with figures”, named so because the human faces and the animals carved in the stones are only visible on certain hours and seasons of the year, since they were made with a technique that took into account the rays of the sun and the moon.

As Halfons Hug and Paz Guevara, the project’s co-curator, write in the exhibition catalog of “The Atlas of the Empire”: “Bucher returns to the paths and hills that Daniel Ruzo has already traveled, and uses his work, ‘The Second and a Half Dimension - An Expedition to the Photographic Plateau’, to guide us in an exercise of perception that takes place between the observer, the rock, the Sun, and the Earth’s axis, revealing the photographic aspect of this experience – since it is an impression of light – and the convergence of man, the world and the cosmos”.

François Bucher lives and works in Berlin, Germany, and Paris, France. He is an artist, writer, co-editor, and founder of “Valdez Magazine”. His video work is consistently linked to the construction of history, politics, and the moving image’s transition from cinema to television. His interest is especially centered on ethical questions, such as the thin line between violence and the image of violence. He has presented his work all over the world, and has worked internationally at institutions and festivals, including Tate Britain (London), the Indonesian Independent Film Festival, and the Kassel Documentary Film Festival.

François Bucher’s work can be seen at the Latin American Pavilion -IILA at the 55. Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte - la Biennale di Venezia, Islet Arsenal, until November 24, 2013.