

24/7

Artist: Alby Álamo

Exhibition title: 24/7

Curator: Cristina Anglada

Music: Resonance

Venue: El Tanque, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain

Date: May 23 – July 13, 2019

Photography: All images courtesy of the artist

Exhibition text:

“One of the many reasons why human cultures have associated death with dreams for a long time is that both prove continuity in the world during our absence”
Jonathan Crary, 24/7

We do not usually remember the beginning of a dream. Suddenly, and apparently in a natural way, we are there.

Once upon a time there was a guarded, recorded, extracted and shared dream. We immerse ourselves into it through the constant and irregular murmur of the ocean and its inner beating which welcomes us. We go through a suspended and distant time at a paused pace in which various landscapes precede each other, along with the sound that strengthens a remote presence. We transit without a body, or maybe with an inactive one, disconnected perhaps. We do not get to smell; nor touch. However, the space is slowly shaped by different visual and sound layers. A buzzing and a hissing go by the hand of a sinister path through details of a machinery, left behind for the insects who try to break up the organic leftover. The hidden sound of the movement of that which hides underground, of unknown origin, of what has survived a natural catastrophe. A sick person suffering from stress listens to a similar simulated resonance.

Cut. Suddenly, a space full of banana plantations, hanging like corpses in a garage, similar to an abandoned slaughterhouse. A possible crime scene covered with traces and voids. We go through a world, in its version of dark absence of humanity, perhaps looking for signs of life in the middle of a semi-apocalyptic scene... the air seems unbreathable. The machine and the emptiness. We then switch to a bird eye's view of a drone over a Canarian banana plantation, guarding, being guarded. At the end, again, the ocean. All of a sudden, the interior of a giant group of buildings or possibly a greenhouse, where what is tropical is artificially kept for whichever reason. Again, that unpleasant sound of the heat and the decay of the still remaining leftover which will soon completely vanish. Now farther, bird eye's view, coast, rocks, ocean. We distance ourselves towards a different place by sea. Until then, almost everything took place during daytime, under an eternal sun. Nevertheless, and accompanied by a deaf sound that embraces us, we get to see a line in the horizon of an island of skyscrapers, with their lights on halfway through the night. And we recall the sound of the machinery and the decay and then the artificial watering of the plantations. Coming back, distancing.

The dream that dreams the end of the dream, the end of time to rest and the end of what is human. A dream that has lost its subject. The end of that which was an obstacle to productivity and constant consumption: the rest, the pause, the patience, the experience, what is common and the vulnerability of human cycles. The

triumph of the neo-liberal rhythms of technological capitalism, manifested in the expression 24/7. 24 hours, 7 days a week. Constant activity which raffles the differences between day and night, for the seven days that compose the convention of the week, a human construction which does not obey the relationship between Earth and the cosmos, but does obey the particular interests proposed from each earthly latitude. The triumph of what is efficient, what is lucrative, that which encourages the consumption and the production adopting the form of contemporary progress: the relentless appropriation and the domination of time and experience.

The capitalist system has generated a radical re-conceptualisation between time and work. Its initial purpose was to dissolve the relationship between mankind and Earth and its intrinsic cycles. With that, a general subscription of human life with an uninterrupted duration occurs, introducing the principle of continuous production. Beyond the measurable time of the clock. To work without breaks, without limitations. Teresa Brennan applies the term "bio deregulation" in her book *Globalisation and its terrors: Daily life in the west* (2003) to talk about the cruel disorder between the temporary operation of unregulated markets and the inseparable physical limitations of human beings to respond to such demands. The last success of this system has been to usurp our routine, considered until recently as the last standing bastion that resisted the logic of capitalism. This offence began in the 50s through consumption, organised leisure and show business. Nowadays the assault of the routine and private sphere becomes an absolute due to the influence of the internet and its multiple tentacles. Human beings end up outsourced, guarded, regulated and remain 24/7 producing value and information for others in a regardless way, while believing that they are enjoying a private leisure and improving their own identity, which is losing ownership with time.

Future visions of the broken world in which we live in, more inanimate/lifeless/spiritless as time goes by. The result of this theft of humanity achieved through the implementation of severe systems of control, observation and permanent guarding, creating in us an obvious docility and separation; the texture of the social contemporary community experience is torn. The great atrophy of patience and respect, the experience of being together, of creating a community. The end of dreaming is part of the end of community. In spite of being an apparently private or solitary activity and experience, dreaming would not happen if we did not trust each other. Thus it is a basic obligation of the community to protect those who sleep.

24/7 is an audiovisual design in a large format conceived specifically by Alby Alamo, with the collaboration of the musician Javier Perez Rodriguez, aka Resonance, for El Tanque: espacio cultural, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. The aim of the piece is to place under suspicion and to denaturalise with landscapes the principles of this society of productivity. It suggests revealing the gruesome relationship 24/7 that we perpetuate and demand out of nature. The piece explores and intervenes the imaginary of nature, specifically the Canarian landscape, looting the aesthetics derived from its functional uses, showing a clear and direct relationship with the dynamism of the work of advanced capitalism. Scenes that now are presented loaded with information, full of suspicion. The traditional romantic vision, associated to certain landscapes is challenged, suggesting a new one which places the spotlight on the consequences of the social-economic-political movements. The silhouette of the paradise muse, its topical leaves and its fruit, is the protagonist of the journey and it is with us in a more or less obvious way along the stages of the work. It was a product partially introduced by the English traders of the 19th century, with the progressive establishment of free ports. They introduced the exploitation of the single-crop farming system, after which it becomes one of the fundamental foundations of the Canarian economy and key in the economic growth of the archipelago. It also makes an example of how the progress and the work ethics of these extractive industries entered the islands and created an impact upon the landscape. The incorporation of images of the silhouette of the London district Canary Warf, old dockland that was restored in the 80s and today admits the headquarters of the major financial conglomerations of Europe, forms part of this game of associations. Its presence reminds us of the Arkwright's Cotton Mills by Night by Joseph Wright (1782), which is possibly the first painting that announces the artificial illumination of the factories and warns about the rationalised development of an abstract relationship between time and work, not having a link with time cycles and the movements of the sun and the moon.

In a world where reality appears to be demolished, an acceptance of post-truth follows, the end of truth and its substitution for a reality built beyond the facts, a lie made into a convention. Our memory seems to be getting more atrophied and almost stops recognising itself as such. Conscience and memory have synchronised massively and we surrender unconsciously to the absolute control of manipulated truth. In a world similar to a hall of mirrors, a total loss of how reality feels takes place, and we try to move in the dark, holding hands with other strategies. Perhaps some of them will be close to fiction or dreams. Either way, we leave aside the needs and the rhythms of the present to go to another place. Perceptive and intuitive skills are recovered and a space is created to reorganise in a different way, so as to untangle the mess of superficial subjectivities that one deals with and manages throughout the day. Alby's piece takes us through a suggestive journey which intertwines associations without establishing too many manifests. It assumes the

crisis that concepts like historicity, truth or objectivity suffer and it seems to follow the words of Erika Balsom when she comments that “to give priority to the register of physical reality can bring back the attention that we pay to the textures of the world where we all co-exists and that indeed exists. To believe in reality is to confirm that we inhabit a shared world... to reconfirm the power of film as a window, no matter how dirty the glass may be...”.

Cristina Anglada

Checklist:

24/7, video FHD, 32'48" projected on a plastic carafes screen, 6 x 40 meters