

The Barcelona Gallery Weekend Opens New Season

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The new season opens with an exciting cultural program in Barcelona with a long list of things to do: events, exhibitions, festivals and art fairs. But the most exciting appointment for art lovers is undoubtedly the first edition of the [Barcelona Gallery Weekend](#), taking place from October 1st to the 4th, involving 20 galleries and several institutions and public spaces.



Mathieu Pernot, Arles, 2013, courtesy of Galería Senda

Behind the scenes is the Association of Contemporary Art Galleries [Art Barcelona](#), active since 1990 but recently increasing its initiatives to protect and promote contemporary art. Offering free access to art and cultural heritage, the primary effort of art galleries is to build a strong network in the city, stating that Barcelona is not just Ramblas, Barça and cheap sangria on the seashore. Barcelona has much more potential and galleries have to be considered as 'open spaces from where reflection and debate is generated towards contemporary culture'.

Lacking an internationally influent art fair, [Barcelona](#) needs an outstanding event able to call professional agents of the milieu and art lovers from all around Europe and the Mediterranean area. The appointment has finally arrived this year and the art community is thrilled, looking forward this 'unique weekend to discover a comprehensive program in the most prominent city galleries, artistic interventions in special venues, guided routes, project spaces and exhibitions at the main museums and institutions'.

During four intense days, visitors, collectors, artists and general public can enjoy the different proposals for a total of 40 venues located in the city and its outskirts. Four routes are suggested including galleries, institutions and other unusual spaces, such as the gardens of the Library [La Central](#) in the Raval district or the Umbracle of Ciutadella Park (the lath house), hosting art interventions regrouped behind the title *Compositions* and curated by [Latitudes](#) (Mariana Cánepa and Max Andrews), featuring artists as Dora García,

Jordi Mitjà, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, Rasmus Nilausen, Pere Llobera and David Bestué. The event's aim is to expand art from galleries to the whole city in a sort of viral urban contamination, to generate a vast platform for cultural offer. Starting from the specially committed programs of the galleries, institutions such as [Caixa Forum](#), [Foto Colectania Foundation](#), [Antoni Tàpies Foundation](#) and [MACBA](#), among many others, are also opening their doors to welcome the itinerary of the Barcelona Gallery Weekend. The initiative is also accompanied by [Fundación ARCO](#) that organizes the routes with the travel agency specialized in culture [The Real Thing](#).

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Dora García, *Mad Marginal Charts*, 2014 Darling Foundry, solo exhibition *On crimes and dreams*. Photograph: Maxime Boisvert. Courtesy of the artist.

Nevertheless the main actors of the play still remain galleries and their represented artists. The program is rich and heterogeneous, ranging from consolidated international artists to local talents and emerging young artists. Beside the contemporary proposals, the historical avant-garde also finds its place with works by Joan Miró, Fausto Melotti, Salvador Dalí, Miquel Barceló, Alexander Calder and many others.

In the Eixample district, [ADN Galería](#) presents the solo show *Foreign Office* by Bouchra Khalili, Franco-Moroccan artist dealing with the concept of resistance of political minorities. *Foreign Office* is composed of a series of photographs and a video focusing on the decade 1962-1972 when Algiers was the 'capital of revolutionaries', hosting headquarters of liberation movements from Africa, [Asia](#) and the Americas. 'Foreign Office thus forms a combination of fragments suggesting an alternative historiography of utopias, aiming to reflect on the ideal of emancipation in the present-time, and potentially the future', explains the artist.



Bouchra Khalili, *Foreign Office*. Digital film, 2015. 22'. Color. Sound. 4/3 screen ratio. Original Language: Algerian Arabic, Kabyl, French, English Subtitled in English. Courtesy of the artist and ADN Galería

[Projecte SD](#) proposes the exhibition *The Meaning of Things* by internationally renowned artist Matt Mullican, including over 600 collages on paper related to his encyclopedic systematized personal universe. The artist will also present the performance *That person will be talking* on Saturday 3rd at 6.30 pm at [Espai Zero/Fundació Suñol](#).





Matt Mullican. *Books Representing Books*, view of the exhibition at Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz, Germany 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Mai 36, Zurich. ©Kunsthalle Mainz. Photograph Norbert Migueletz.

Gallery [Estrany - de la Mota](#) presents *The Surroundings* by Francesc Ruiz. Inscribed in Ruiz's aesthetic of drawings and comics, *The Surroundings* reproduces the outer perimeter of the block in which the gallery is located, using doors and windows as if they were part of an active narrative formed by frames or balloons which contain the surrounding activity. Currently at the Venice Biennial, the work of Francesc Ruiz is inspired by psychogeography and the Situationists *détournement* considering the language of comics as an element able to catalyze and modify dynamics of the context where it is shown.



Francesc Ruiz, *The Surroundings*, 2015. courtesy of the artist and Galería Estrany De la Mota

Comics also pervade the exhibition space of [etHall](#) with the works of Matt Madden, *20 Lines*. Following the words of the artists the aim of this work is to 'concentrate on the most basic elements of drawing-lines on a ground-to reflect on how lines fill space, how they fit together'.

Galleries [Sicart](#) and [Joan Gaspar](#) introduce the artworks on spatial investigation of Ruth Morán. The formalism of her production starts from the dots as generator for whirling composition in big format, where a new landscape emerges.

The landscape is also the protagonist of another show, *In Accordance With Things* of Richard T. Walker curated by David Armengol and presented at the gallery [àngels Barcelona](#) in the Ciutat Vella district. Through videos, photographs, sculptures and sound pieces Walker uses the stones to activate the landscape, attributing to them symbols and creating new meanings in accordance with juxtaposed objects and material.





Richard T. Walker, Production still of *The Predicament of always (as we are)*, courtesy of àngels Barcelona

[Gallerly Senda](#) selected two photographic series by French artist Mathieu Pernot for the occasion, both related to the act of destruction, disappearance and permanence of memory through the photographic archives collection. The series *Le Feu* (the Fire) portrays a gypsy community looking at their caravan burning. The nomadic ethnicity has a different concept of memory and they usually don't leave traces of their past behind them. The series *Grand Ensemble* focuses on the failure of urban utopias of the 1960s, at a time in which the peripheries were saturated by building and blocks repeated infinitely.

Memory and photography are also the focus of [Trama](#) gallery with the series *Alrededor del sueño* (About dreams) by Ángel Marcos, reflecting on the obsolescence of collective dreams of the 18th and 19th centuries. Their vestiges are now ghosting with a strong historical value.



Ángel Marcos, *Alrededor del sueño 5*, Barcelona, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Trama.

[Palmadotze_pop up gallery](#) sets a dialogue between Daniel G. Andújar and Rogelio López Cuenca in the show *The Art of Seduction*, a series of works in progress (photography and video) started in 2008 on the iconographic exploitation of the stereotyped image of the artist's attitude by advertising and other commercial productions.

Ana Mas opens her new space ([Ana Mas Projects](#)) in Hospitalet de Llobregat also with a dialogue between two artists: Irene van de Mheen and Lucia C. Pino in the show *Place, no emphasis*, 'an exhibition that works the notion of place through the object and the physical dimension of the drawing' (according to curator Sonia Fernández Pan).

Tours come to an end in Hospitalet, where [Nogueras Blanchard](#) presents *White Absence* by [Serbian](#) artist Mladen Stilinović. Quoting the artist himself, 'white is the color of very intimate silence and pain is something very intimate, too'. He uses the color white on paintings and objects in order to covering a range of concepts: silence, void, absence, pain, poverty and absurd. 'Some of these works were executed during the Croatia war as an answer to a turbulent situation for everyone concerned, a time when the artist was unable to establish no connection with any political factor'. (Branca Stipancic)

By *Susanna Corchia*

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