

Seal sounds under the floor

An exploration of exploration

What you call "spirit of those ages" / Is after all the spirit of those sages / In which the mirrored age itself reveals

Goethe

To re-appropriate an epic and scientific imaginary for the present is the purpose of the visual and narrative project that shapes *Àrticantartic*.

The Project, from which this exhibition shows a part of deals from a personal perspective with the so called "heroic age" of polar expeditions, which spanning from the late XIX century to the early XX, coincided with the birth of photography and cinema.

The XIX century was the century of geographic explorers. Joseph Conrad said on referring to the polar explorers that their ambitions were as pure as the air of the latitudes they breathed. Once the maps were drawn, the white background on which the expedition towards the polar conquest unfurled enhances the degree of abstraction own to such an intangible geographic goal as their coordinates on a surface. What drove so many men to attempt to conquer white spaces, without plain commercial or strategic interest? What is... and how to represent a conquest?

Russell A. Potter identified the early features of a visual culture destined to conquer, mainly, the public opinion. Not only should the explorers return with new knowledge, but they were also to document (and so to represent) these discoveries to finance new projects, instituting heroes and martyrs in the Pantheon of National Glory. In this way sublime images were created, every so often found among the frozen remains of their authors. The documented contributions of Frank Hurley (*South*, 1919) or Herbert Ponting (*The Great White Silence*, 1933) were remarkable examples.

The symbolism of snow, peaks, and the polar conquest is inevitably linked to the eagerness to overcome, one of resistance and purity. But if we search deeply we can find many fictional interpretations that draw the topic further. Méliès' *A la conquête du Pôle Nord* (1912) is one of its funniest commentaries. The exploration is subsequently a crystal with multiple awns, creating under the light of the imperialism of the great powers of the time.

Emulating the explorers of the XIX century, the documental discoveries of this ongoing investigation have been "appropriated" by the author herself. The re-elaboration of the graphic and narrative documents of those explorers into biographic documents attempts to turn a historical account into a first person narrative on resistance and search.

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