

LOQUELA (CELESTIAL MUSIC)

Oier Etxeberria

LA TALLER

Taller y Galería de Grabado

C. Zumárraga 7,

Entrada Maestro Iciar

48006 Bilbao

t: 94 679 22 92

m. 645 005 426

info@lataller.com

www.lataller.com

The word *loquela*, which was introduced into mystical terminology by Ignatius of Loyola (Azpeitia, 1491 - Rome, 1556), designates a wordless voice. A deficiency of language, noted by the saint for the first time in his *Spiritual Diary* on 11th May 1544 in reference to a voice that is never spoken, the meaning of which never becomes materialized. As we know, this and other infra-verbal manifestations such as crying (the “gift of tears”) are fundamental for a comprehension of the breadth of the Ignatian discipline and project of orienting and exhaustively organising the affective variables of the human spirit.

If we look at the etymological origin of the word (from the Latin *loqui*: talk), *loquela* can also refer to the tone of voice of a single individual or a people as a whole. The lapse in the relationship between sound and meaning also associates the word with a lack of sense, or losing one's mind. This would lead us to a arcane, subliminal *mode of speech* in which the passions of the spirit (*pathos*) and language (*logos*) coalesce and are articulated.

Locos (Madmen/women). Silent film. 16mm. By: José Antonio Laburu Olascoaga. Year: 1931. Length: 02:46 min. Musical and Historical Archive, Sanctuary of Loyola.

Paranoico Elqui (Elqui the Paranoid). Silent film. 16mm. By: José Antonio Laburu Olascoaga. Year: 1931. Length: 05:16 min. Musical and Historical Archive, Sanctuary of Loyola.

We know that Ignatius of Loyola was one of the few Catholic saints to be valued by Soviet revolutionary pedagogy. It is not surprising, then, to see a precise influence of his mnemotechnical exercises and feeling for rhetoric in the work of filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein, in Eisenstein's yearning to reach the masses with a renewed visual and poetic language which could shed theatre and bourgeois literature's psychologism and temporal density.

As film historian Martin Lefebvre points out, there are certain links and parallels to be found between the use of images in orienting the experience of ecstasy and “composition of place” in Loyola's writings and the filmic experience of Constructivism. Could we not also apply the word “montage” to the sequences of images in the

Ignatian spiritual exercises, with their sharp ascents and descents, their particular framing, and their lack of distinction between the visible and invisible? Eisenstein acknowledged that the artist's efforts to include historical reality in film composition might lead him or her to slip into metaphysical or mystical states.

The substance of vision must be accentuated until the eye is able to perceive more than it sees; what underlies visibility itself; so that beyond the fog of images what is intuited is either Metaphysical truth (as in Plato or Giordano Bruno), or the truth of Historical Materialism.

This exhibition is divided into two chapters (November 2016 / March 2017) presenting two films from the archives of Jesuit Father Laburu (1). Both of these were made during the priest's stay in Santiago de Chile in 1931, when his services were required at the "Casa Orates," the city's mental asylum, where Domingo de Zárate, known as the "Cristo de Elqui" (Christ of Elqui) had just been admitted. After interviewing the patient, a Chilean peasant who had changed his life a few years previously after apparently having several divine personages reveal themselves to him, thus beginning his widespread work as a preacher to the masses, Padre Laburu - and the Casa Orates Section for the Mentally Insane - concluded that Zárate suffered from chronic delirium and hallucinations and was lacking in any kind of "theological or ideological notions."

The film material and texts from Laburu's archive show that the priest first made small sketch-like recordings of the patients in the yard of the Casa Orates. He later went on to do a second recording of Domingo de Zárate "Cristo de Elqui" and his brother Lorenzo Segundo Zárate (acting as Saint Paul). The two films will be screened at two separate presentations which make up "Locuela: música celestial" at LaTaller. Other works will also be presented derived from and proceeding in odd, disparate ways.

(1) *Padre Laburu was one of the first documentary makers in Basque film. His films on magic rites in popular medicine, perceptual experiments on animals, and his interest in zoos and psychiatric wards have left a substantial body of work for what we know as visual anthropology, and provide a firm picture of an intellectual (theologian, doctor, biologist) who sought to explore the obscure areas of rational and scientific thought.*

(2) *Since 2013, the figure of Jesuit priest Laburu and material from the Historical and Musical Archive of the Sanctuary of Loyola and the Basque Film Archive have been the basis of different works in which sculptures, collages, photographs and text are placed together with a strongly musical orientation, so that the idea of the score is what best expresses their arrangement. Historical sources in archives and different iconographic legacies are exploited musically, so that, rather than talking of "analysis" or "reinterpretation," the forms of the "fugue" or "counterpoint" might be more pertinent approaches from which to speak of these works.*

One of these works was "Instinto-Pollos," which was included in "La Bestica y el Soberano," MACBA, Barcelona and WKV, Stuttgart.⁷