

Gisement

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Lara Almarcegui

October 16 – December 23, 2014



Lara Almarcegui, *Mineral Rights*, 2014

Lara Almarcegui's projects have ranged from a guide to the wastelands of Amsterdam, to the monumental display of the materials—in their raw form—used to construct the galleries where she has exhibited. In 2013, she represented Spain at the 55th Venice Biennial with a striking proposal: filling in the pavilion's interior with massive piles of building rubble similar to those used for its construction. At the time of widespread urban renewal in Europe, **Lara Almarcegui** has remained a defender of overlooked, forgotten sites, sometimes even instigating their legal protection.

Gisement [deposit] is an exhibition that brings up projects with the intention of going further down underneath, while dealing with a reflexion on the

territory, the history and the origin of “the built”. Exploring what lies underneath the floor, finding out about the cities' architectural and geological layers, is a recurring matter in **Lara Almarcegui**'s practice. Her research on subsoils started in 1998 with a self-involving action: *Digging*, Amsterdam (1998), and then moved towards the organization of visits inside tunnels under construction in Madrid (2010) and the release of the book *Ivry Souterrain* (CREDAC, 2013), delving into the French city's depths.

For her exhibition at **mor charpentier**, **Lara Almarcegui** expands her excavating methods and presents three ambitious projects beyond the bounds of possibility.

On the groundfloor, the video projection ***Buried House***, Dallas (2013) shows how a house buried by the artist ends up melting with the site on which it was built. Produced by Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas (USA), the process consisted in burying the rests of a house after its demolition by using a digger. Once it was totally covered with soil, the house ended up in a small hill in the garden: a memorial carrying the house's materials and holding the account of its disappearance. **Lara Almarcegui's** action opens a space to contemplate the neighbourhood's past and future by exposing the huge urban transformations currently going on.

Presented downstairs, the wall painting ***Materials of the Foruko Haitza Mountain*** (2012) started off from an attempt to identify all the rocks of this Basque mountain being eaten away through the actions of an active quarry, in order to extract limestone, a sedimentary rock mainly used to make cement aggregate for construction materials. In their counting process, **Lara Almarcegui** and the geologist collaborating had to face two particular challenges: deciding as to where the mountain actually begins and ends, and calculating volume in a geographical site that has many internal and external chasms and caves. The list of materials they ended up with tells about the mountain's origins, when the territory took shape 200 million years ago, but at the same time it evinces the eventual destruction of the mountain. Freezing a moment in a

location's geological timeline this project evidences and appreciates the destruction and construction cycle as it loops.

Mineral Rights (2014-ongoing) are property rights to exploit an area for the minerals it harbors. The project consists in the long procedure of acquiring the mineral rights on an iron deposit deep more than 50 meters in Tabuenca (Spain). The acquisition negotiations just started, and might take long until their completion. Iron in a deposit is fascinating due to its potentiality as one of the basic and most important construction materials in modern building. Yet, the project doesn't involve any intention of extracting the iron, but it aims at drawing attention to the presence of minerals below the feet, reminding how the territory is shaped at a geological level, and how it gets split into pieces for exploitation. The installation includes two photographs of the site as well as a sample of iron from its subsoils.

In counterpoint to a contemporary impulse that weds city planning to urban regeneration schemes, **Lara Almarcegui's** artistic approach is akin to that of an archeologist or a surveyor: the three exhibited projects document and analyze the past and present layers of human activity, promoting another paradigm of development: the slow processes of decay and erosion, while questioning what is and what isn't considered remarkable in specific locations and landscapes.