José Val del Omar cannot be pigeonholed. He was a fantastic filmmaker whose work is known around the world. His films are a concrete expression of his beliefs: he was passionate about film as a medium for change and believed that his deepest roots were in film.

"I am a man, a creature enamored of creation, oscillating between theory and practice." Val del Omar worked in 1963 and 1964 (without knowing it) on a series of short documentary films on which he had been working over twenty years to bring to the screen the partially recovered archives of the Pedagogical Missions, and he was not alone. This section offers various documents covering those aspects: patents, photographs, graphic work, collages, demonstration proposals with diagrams, graphic compositions and collages.

Val del Omar conceived various systems for sound recording and reproduction, as well as for portable image mini-projectors for educational and leisure use. During the 1960s he developed over thirty different film formats (BiStandard, Intermediate, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm and Super-8). These are laid out here in two series of short documentary films on which he had been working over twenty years to bring to the screen the partially recovered archives of the Pedagogical Missions, and he was not alone.

Val del Omar spent much of his time exploring technology related to the innovations in film in his time (sound film, color, wide screen and so on), as well as inventions sought to expand the human range of expression, such as cybernetics, laser, digital video and mixed media. Moreover, Val del Omar stayed up to date on the latest technological inventions, he improved or adapted various devices commonly used in audiovisual production or exhibition.

The Petition of the Pedagogical Missions is the first area of the exhibition in movie theaters, in his notes from his final years, Val del Omar considered the possibility of other versions or reconstructions of that Triptych or Portrait of the Magic of Spain, but he never imagined that, beyond those specific techniques he invented to turn their projection into an event, one of his essay works would ever be shown in a museum space. It fills the entire space with blinking light and sound. "I am an event. My only silhouette is the ineffable" is presented in its own space and accompanied by various graphic elements in the form of oversized books, stills from the film, sheets, slides made for projection, sound recordings and other documentation.

"60 minutes of palpable mystery, three short films which everything is foreordained." The Elementary Triptych of Spain in Val del Omar’s own words was a crucial part of the present exhibition. It consists of three short films shot over the course of about ten years (between 1953 and the mid 1960s) in his native Granada, Castile and Galicia. Each is based on the symbolic elements of a specific cultural element as a motif—fire, earth and air, respectively. The work exemplifies his particular conception of film as “the border between reality and mystery” in three intense films he calls freeبرمجى، abstract documentary or simply poetry, which he conceived them for exhibition in movie theaters, in his notes from his final years, Val del Omar considered the possibility of other versions or reconstructions of that Triptych or Portrait of the Magic of Spain, but he never imagined that, beyond those specific techniques he invented to turn their projection into an event, one of his essay works would ever be shown in a museum space.

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José Val del Omar (Granada, 1904 – Madrid, 1982) was described as an “extraordinary camera artist” by Luis Cernuda, who knew him through their shared commitment to the Diagonal Missions during the Republic. And he was later called a “poet of film, of technique or of communications media without end”—an allusion to the characteristic words that close some of the few films he completed, but also to the repercussion that had eluded him until then. His work is a model of constant creation and requalification, his approach to film to electronic media, and his vision of a language of tremors that had eluded him until then.

The Val del Omar exhibition involves the challenge of charting his steps towards a syncretic approach he called PLAT (Picto-Luminic Audio Tactile). Moreover, he never lost sight of a culture of the blood he discovered through his countryman, Federico García Lorca, which he combined with technical innovation and the pursuit of a highly unusual language of tremors. So a Val del Omar exhibition involves the challenge of charting his steps and ideas, above and beyond a personal œuvre already outside the customary clausured sense of the term, because it also covers his machines, the remains of interrupted or incomplete projects, and the writings, graphic work and collages that reflect his overflowing inventiveness. There is also a reproduction of the setting in which he lived and worked until the end of his life, when he finally began to obtain the recognition that had eluded him until then.

The PLAT Laboratory: the exploration of Picito Luminic Audio Tactile presents various techniques and experiments carried out by Val del Omar in his laboratory, with a panorama of media that include all sorts of projectors, lenses, polarizers, filters, shutters, mechanical components, electronic devices that make up what he called his “adiscope for picto luminics”. His collection of machines for processing and composing images in different sources converge on a rear-projection screen in order to be shot by a film or video camera. The exhibition reveals what underlies the optical and mechanical elements that Val del Omar installed in the PLAT Laboratory: the exploration of Picto Luminic Audio Tactile. Moreover, he never lost sight of a culture of the blood he discovered through his countryman, Federico García Lorca, which he combined with technical innovation and the pursuit of a highly unusual language of tremors. So a Val del Omar exhibition involves the challenge of charting his steps and ideas, above and beyond a personal œuvre already outside the customary clausured sense of the term, because it also covers his machines, the remains of interrupted or incomplete projects, and the writings, graphic work and collages that reflect his overflowing inventiveness. There is also a reproduction of the setting in which he lived and worked until the end of his life, when he finally began to obtain the recognition that had eluded him until then.

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