

Amsterdam, 28 March 2024

ALBERT SERRA – LIBERTÉ

Eye Filmmuseum presents *Albert Serra – Liberté*, the first exhibition in the Netherlands about the work of Catalan film and theatre director Albert Serra. For the occasion, the artist will transform the entire exhibition space into an immersive set full of nocturnal, clandestine encounters that bring together theatre, film and exhibition. This new installation is based on *Liberté*, a noticeable play about libertines that he staged at the Volksbühne in Berlin in 2018 and adapted into a film a year later.

Albert Serra – *Liberté*, 7 June – 29 September 2024, Eye Filmmuseum, IJpromenade 1, Amsterdam. [Eyefilm.nl/en/AlbertSerra](https://eyefilm.nl/en/AlbertSerra)

The exhibition at Eye is a disorientating experience that unites elements from the theatre and cinema. Visitors wander around a nocturnal woodland setting that puts the imagination on edge. The decor calls to mind a mix of the flowery landscapes of the rococo painters Jean-Honoré Fragonard and François Boucher with a post-industrial derelict site. Viewers participate in a game of seeing and being seen, searching for the true, naked meaning of freedom.

Liberté at Eye

This exhibition forms a new chapter in Serra's adaptation of his stage play *Liberté*. In *Liberté* we witness a group of French aristocrats who, after fleeing the conservative court of Louis XVI, seek out Prussian companions in a woodland clearing to share their libertine ideals à la Marquis de Sade. As the moon rises, the freethinkers explore the woods in search of sexual encounters, blurring the boundaries between social levels and bodies. Amidst the bushes or in the cramped confines of their litters, the characters engage in a game of revealing and concealing, spying and touching.

Serra turns *Liberté* at Eye into a mysterious cruising zone where fragments of nocturnal, clandestine encounters appear on multiple screens. The set, specially designed for Eye, blends recognisable rococo props from the film and contemporary elements to suggest a wooded landscape. The play, film and exhibition all evoke a world replete with psychological and moral ambivalence. Only in this way, in the immeasurable gray area between right and wrong, can you understand, according to Serra, the 'contradictions and hypocrisies of our time'. In the dead of night, when people exchange rationality for hedonism, *Liberté* poses a pertinent

question. How much self-control are we prepared to relinquish in order to be completely free?

Fiction and friction

Albert Serra is renowned for his subversive films that question and challenge the status quo. Unconventional, provocative and innovative, his oeuvre is often rooted in European myths and literature. In *Honor de cavalleria*, for example, he depicts the literary figure Don Quixote in an idiosyncratic and contemporary manner. In *Història de la meva mort*, he stages an encounter between the two icons Casanova and Dracula in which these historical figures explore present-days themes and ideas related to freedom, opaque power and moral ambivalence. In the process, Serra confronts 'the hypocrisy of the zeitgeist'. By its very nature, subversive art raises questions and discussions. For it always challenges the spirit of the times. Motifs such as provocation and absurdity are deployed with the aim of making society take a critical look at itself. But what are the limits of provocation? Where do we draw the line? Or is everything permissible in art and film? How can art cross the safe boundaries of its own context? Such questions create a critical framework for subversive film and art, both past and present. The exhibition and film programme *Albert Serra – Liberté* form a perfect opportunity to contemplate such questions.

Film, talks and events

The work of Albert Serra will be illuminated through lectures, masterclasses and film screenings. Besides Serra's feature films, a selection of his shorts will be programmed, some for the very first time in the Netherlands. These screenings will be supplemented with an eclectic collection of films (some on 35mm from the Eye collection) that are important to him and have in common a sometimes subtle contradiction in form or content.

During the exhibition period, Albert Serra will visit Eye a number of times to discuss his work. In addition, Artur Tort, Serra's regular cameraman and winner of a César for his camerawork in *Pacifiction* (2022), will shed light on his way of working during a masterclass. Moreover, the programme will highlight the subversive in film and art and opposing the status quo.

About Albert Serra

Albert Serra (born in Banyoles, Spain, in 1975) has made ten feature films, short films, video installations and theatre productions. Serra studied Spanish philology and literary science at the University of Barcelona. In 2001, Serra set up the production company Andergraun Films. His debut film *Honor de cavalleria* (2006) was selected by Cahiers du Cinéma as one of the ten best films of 2007. He won the Golden Leopard at Locarno Film Festival in 2013 for *Història de la meva mort* (2013), and bagged the Prix Jean Vigo in 2016 for *La mort de Louis XIV* (2016). *Liberté* received the Un Certain Regard - Special Jury Prize at Cannes Film Festival in 2019. *Pacifiction* (2022), his most recent feature film, was selected for the Golden

Palm competition at Cannes in 2022. For Documenta 13 he made *Three Little Pigs*, a 101-hour film presentation based on the historical figures of Goethe, Hitler and Fassbinder. A retrospective of work by Serra was held at the Centre Pompidou in 2013. In 2019, Serra adapted images from *Liberté* into the two-channel installation titled *Personalien* that was shown at Reina Sofia.

Note to editors, not for publication

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