

A CABINET FOR ACTEÓN

A private collection is an imaginary museum, an ideal that has come true. Imaginary museums have been the starting point for numerous literary and artistic fictional accounts, some with an essay flavour such as that of André Malraux, others of an experimental nature such as Marcel Broodthaers' Department d'Aigles, others still halfway between hallucination and delirium, such as the mesmerising location of the Locus Solus, Raymond Roussel's novel made legendary by André Breton and the Surrealists, and finally, others that have made it onto the screen, such as the museum set for the 1999 remake of the thriller *The Thomas Crown Affair*.

But the concept of an imaginary museum is also the dream cherished by many artists wishing to build for themselves and for their works a space suitably adapted to the synthetic and essential nucleus of their work in a reduced yet comprehensible and domesticated space. In short, every imaginary museum results in a private collection. The essence of such a space is not unlike an office, a small-sized area, adapted for the contemplation of select works, where pleasures are shared with one's intimate friends. The Uffizi Gallery is perhaps the only museum that today still conserves a space much like an office – an imaginary museum offering a sort of an ideal collection. This is definitely a reduced space, almost domesticated, even for our age. It is called La Tribuna, and here is where some of the most outstanding and significant works of the museum are on display.

For their internal coherence, the works of Bernardí Roig take the idea of the office as a kind of strategy providing the appropriate keys for proper understanding. His exhibitions often tend to recreate private ambiances: drawings and a string of themes related to a vision of the psychologically and sexually intimate, based on references to Pierre Klossowsky or Georges Bataille facilitate this subtle move from one to another. Bernardí Roig knows how to give his "private" offices an unsettling atmosphere of mystery and secrecy, suitable only for his true initiates. His works, whether they are sculptures, drawings or video-screenings, call for a reconsideration of how we go about looking at them, redesigning and emphasising the spectator's condition as a voyeur. Looking is discovering and knowing, bringing the bright light of reality into play, reconstructing it like telling a tale or setting a new stage. Looking is adventurous, hazardous, as foretold in the myth of Actaeon, the hunter who surprised Diana bathing nude in the river and was vengefully turned into a stag only to be devoured by his own hunting dogs. Actaeon and the manner of looking are the central threads of Bernardí Roig's visual investigation. The look that burns inside and out, as shown by his busts with eyes that spit fire. The amazement of this manner of looking burns and scorches the interior of this office, offering a private collection construed as a magical woodland, drawing a link between artist and spectator, and transforming both into the ever-surprised Actaeon himself.