

The Development of a Project: The Process

When I read *If This Is a Man*, by Primo Levi, in the Fall of 2001, I could not have anticipated the cataclysm that would be unleashed within me, nor its subsequent effects. Reading the book necessitates immersion into violence and an evil so extreme that it is difficult to imagine. Levi's narrative provoked in me a great upheaval: in response to a growing outrage (how is it possible?) and a feeling of shame and anger for belonging to the same species as the perpetrators, my empathy towards the victims took hold, an opening up toward others and their pain. In this and other testimony I found the ethical resistance of some men and women against extreme harm and the preservation of their dignity in the face of the total dehumanization to which they were subjected by their executioners.

These readings propitiated an ethical shift in my positioning as an artist. The question, "how to develop an ethical vantage point?" was the point of departure to commence an artistic investigation that would take shape in the project *Memòria i Ceguesa* (Memory and Blindness). Four years later, I had the opportunity to travel to Mauthausen on the 60th anniversary of its liberation. Setting foot on the stage of its crimes, walking down the steps of the "death staircase", entering the gas chamber and visiting the crematorium gave me access to a more precise knowledge of the place where the events occurred.

Nevertheless, what impressed me most was that which I could not see: the annexed camps of Gusen and Ebensee were not only erased from the map after the war, but settlements were built upon them. The absence of any trace, and the indifference of the living, that obscene enjambment of the present over a past that was doubly annihilated, awakened a desire in me to work to make the erased memory of that place visible.

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