

Artist Statement - La Posa (2008-2009)

In my series "La Posa" (2008), I'm interested to explore themes of local identity and the importance of home to one's continued sense of self.

Tyneham was a lively, rural community in Dorset, situated on the Isle of Purbeck, next to Worbarrow Bay on the Jurassic Coast. Inhabited since the Iron Age, with 47 days notice, the population of 225 people was told on 1st November 1943 they would have to move out by the village's new landlords – the army for whom the village became an obstacle for the military manoeuvres deemed essential for the war effort. Following official assurances of their right to return after the war, most villagers accepted the army's decision and evacuated the village on the 17th December 1943. Their dream of returning to Tyneham went never fulfilled and the village remained abandoned, subject to the decay of passing years. Today the original buildings in ruin remain: all sense of human habitation has vanished.

"La Posa" engages with the idea of the house as an architectural and visual metaphor, comprising the idea of home as a place of identity, a point of origin and return, offering the possibility of acquiring a place in the world. "La Posa" is both house and home. The bare walls offer no emotional particularity, the physicality of the walls talk about the space as the exterior, the house, but in actual fact, it is the interior, the home, that is presented: barren, with all social interactions being removed. Blocked windows and doors refer to an impossibility of entering the house itself. There is no sign of everyday-existence like death stalking through the centre of life, offering a form of blocked vision. The series "La Posa" is reliant on the given locality and the existent houses of Tyneham but the windows, doors and floor are covered by black-out material, transforming the images into staged photographs. By incorporating elements of artifice and make-believe into the series, Tyneham becomes the backdrop of a stage to exaggerate the events that have taken place there. Part document, part construction, my images intend to produce a tension that is echoed by their subject matter and their composition. The familiar space of the home is disturbed, turned inside out and the question remains: If the house has been turned inside out, how can one ever go home?

The title "La Posa" refers to a faux-anthropological narrative by Juan Munoz featured in his small publication 'Segment'. Munoz's tale evokes the site of the '*posa*' related to the village Zurite in the highlands of Peru where every year a house is built, only to be destroyed a short time after. The '*posa*' is an ephemeral building, almost skeletal, its form and destruction cyclical.

Referring to Munoz's '*posa*', allows my images to delve into the psychological effects of space as did the building of the '*posa*' and the locals reflections on it. The '*posa*' gestures the impossibility of permanence and in its annual rhythmic interruption of its duration stems from the need to remember a story and from the suspicion of having forgotten it already. Like the destroyed houses in the village of Tyneham, to burn the '*posa*' is to confront any possible nostalgia with the evidence of distance.