



## The accordion

It must be more than two years ago – it takes time to do things properly – since Sebastià Alzamora spoke to me about a possible exhibition: Barcelona-Valencia-Palma. To put it another way, three cities, three capitals, with a shared linguistic field – albeit it neither exclusive nor excluding –, complex-enough histories, and desires for modernity – with their corresponding fervour –, which keep a permanent eye on one another.

Barcelona-Valencia-Palma is a triangle laden with potentials, but at the same time reluctant to share them. Three cities that cross-pollinate although, at times, they can't be bothered to admit it. Nevertheless, it's good to know that we have learned from one another. Three spaces in a process of rapid acceleration because the rhythms of the world have an impact everywhere. The different demographic dimension of each city may lead us to think that the comparison is disproportionate. It's not about comparing, it's about locating and pointing out the flows – money, goods, ideas and people – that circulate from one to another, the replicas of the models with which they grow and the ghosts that pursue them.

Barcelona-Valencia-Palma is part of the now long-standing tradition of exhibitions connecting cities, but what is new about it is that it is concerned with proximity. Exhibitions of this type have usually been concerned with distance (Paris-Moscow, Paris-New York, Barcelona-Paris, for instance, and even, Barcelona-Madrid, here at the CCCB) in order to bring cities closer at a later date by highlighting their common factors. In this case, we have chosen to carry out an exercise that is the reverse: to base ourselves on proximity in order to reveal the spontaneity of what binds us together and, at the same time, bring out the differences.

This exercise is likely to arouse a certain morbid curiosity. The discourse about the *Països Catalans* (Catalan territories) has triggered noisy disagreements and generated paranoia, that is to say, imaginaries of threats duly manipulated for political returns. However, the exhibition, in fact, eschews these fixations, which become obsessive in some cases, that have sown resentment and irreconcilable political differences. The exhibition talks about the physical, cultural and imaginary links, among which there is, of course, the eternal psychopathology of the minor differences of opinion between neighbours. There is always the temptation to use the person closest to hand to reinforce the supposed unity of your own kin.

The best way to build the communication protocols necessary for cities to accumulate and reencounter complicities is to know them. And to do so with a methodology that will allow us to see what is shared and what is different, what is mimetic and what is invented, what is real and what is an ideological construction, what belongs to each one and what belongs to everyone. And so, like an accordion, the exhibition shapes its sounds, now open, now closed. Because, deep down, this is what it's about: bringing out those aspects of recurrent music and what is specifically unique to three cities subjected to the impact of tourism, of immigration, of the unstable economic flows of the times we live



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in. On a decidedly cosmopolitan route, the exercise of looking at one another is a way of saying that we come from the same world and we are bound for a new world where, inevitably, we will continue to meet up. Three cities, three ways of being, and a certain family resemblance.