



For immediate release | Sept 2012

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SPAIN arts & culture presents

ONCE UPON A TIME IN ALMERÍA... by Mark Parascandola



Mini-Hollywood, Tabernas, 2012, Pigment Print, 24 x 36 inches

WHEN

Opening & Artist Talk: Thursday September 13, 2012 6:30-8:30 pm

Exhibition on View: September 13 - November 16, 2012

WHERE

EMBASSY OF SPAIN
2375 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, 20037 Washington DC Metro: Foggy Bottom-GW

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(Washington, DC) -- European and American filmmakers discovered Almeria in the 1960s, attracted by its abundant sunlight, distinctive desert landscape, and cheap labor. Dozens of films were shot here during the 1960s and 70s, including *Cleopatra*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Patton*, and all of Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns starring Clint Eastwood. Four decades later remnants of the old movie sets remain in the desert. While a select few have been fixed up for tourists, others remain largely in ruins.

Mark Parascandola has documented this forgotten legacy of moviemaking and offers an atypical version of the ghost town in the exhibition **Once Upon a Time in Almería**. The DC artist, connected to the region through his mother's family, has been visiting these locations since his childhood. His work is also informed by his training as a PhD epidemiologist, studying the health and movement of human populations. In this case, the remnants of old movie sets provide seemingly tangible evidence of human settlements that never really existed. Film directors sought to manipulate an otherwise uninhabitable desert landscape in order to create a world more imaginary than real.

On view at the Embassy of Spain will be twelve photographic prints, chosen by Parascandola, mixing images of western movie sets along with other key locations that had a significant role in the films. The exhibit includes three large panoramic images, three feet high and seven feet wide and constructed from multiple photographs, to invoke the format of the cinema screen.

About the artist

Mark lives and works in the U Street neighborhood of Washington DC. A PhD epidemiologist by training, he uses photography to explore patterns of movement in human populations, focusing on architecture as evidence of often-invisible social, environmental, and economic processes. Mark has family roots in the desert landscape of Almeria, Spain. He is currently documenting the remains of old movie sets constructed in the region during the 1960s and 1970s.

Mark's work has been featured at various galleries in Washington DC, in the DC Art Bank, at Galería Acanto in Almeria, Spain, and appears in the DC Art Bank and numerous individual collections. He is an active member of the Mid City Artists and the Washington Project for the Arts. He was also recently selected as a finalist for the 2011 Sondheim Prize. Corcoran Gallery of Art curator Amanda Maddox chose four of his images for inclusion in her section of the FotoDC Flash exhibit. Mark creates his own limited-edition digital prints using pigment inks on photo rag paper.

More info: <http://www.spainred.us/project/once-upon-time-almeria>, <http://www.parascandola.com/>
Hi-Res Images: <http://bit.ly/T2epIt>

Government of Spain —through the Embassy of Spain's Cultural Office in Washington, D.C. and its network of General Consulates and Cervantes Institutes in key cities— promotes Spanish culture and art in the United States and strives to strengthen bilateral cultural, artistic and academic exchanges. Spanish- American cultural cooperation aims to create multiple links between the creative sectors of both countries and promote Spain's contemporary artistic expression with special attention to Americas Hispanic Community, striving to emphasize plurality expression and opinion, in line with Spain's own diversity in language, creativity in the arts and unique cultural heritage.

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