

## Carlos Casas

(Barcelona, Spain, 1974)

Casas has devoted all his film and video production to the representation of the landscape. He has traveled to the ends of the earth, venturing to lands where survival is something that is conquered on a daily basis in a confrontation with nature. He sees these extreme regions as both physical places and places of the spirit.

Many of his films deal with the theme of the end, understood as the geographic end typical of zones at the edge of the earth, such as Patagonia and Siberia; but also the end of a geological era, as in the case of the Aral Sea, now transformed almost to desert; or the end as a vertical limit, like the roof of the world in the case of a village in the Pamir mountains, almost ten thousand feet above sea level; or, again, the end as a place where nature goes to die, as in his film *Cemetery*, dedicated to an elephant cemetery.

The theme of the end envelops formal aspects of the romantic sublime, where man confronts a nature that possesses traits of the infinite: the horizon is endless, and the earth is a unified and vast expanse that seems to continue beyond the frame, for hundreds of miles. However, the sublime that Casas depicts is composed not only of the visual data of the pictorial and photographic tradition, but also of sound. The audio element, even more than the image, is evocative of mental spaces. Casas records the murmuring of the wind, and he interweaves images with shortwave radio frequencies that contribute to the sense of alienation, from geography to regions of the spirit. In all his works sound projects places into a dimension of expanded time: "As Marconi says," Casas has stated, "I am sure that the cries of all men throughout history still wander in the atmosphere. This is why I am so fascinated with radio frequencies. They not only carry the voices of the present, but also the screeching of the aurora borealis, the melodies of every sound of the past."

*Zeitgeist* is a work he created at the invitation of the *Club to Club* music festival, devoted to the city of Istanbul. He portrays the landscape, lens focused westward on the Bosphorus port and its lighthouse, shot at dawn. While the sun rises over the city along with the muezzin's call to prayer, the framing steadily and slowly turns from the lighthouse eastward, toward the nascent light; without pausing it moves beyond the east to achieve a complete rotation, evoking the movement of the cosmos. Without interruption, dawn transforms into evening and then into the dead of night. The horizon line is erased in the profound darkness illuminated only by the distant lights of the lighthouse and the moon.

(EV)