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ARTFORUM

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"Patricia Esquivias"
Murray Guy
By Nicolas Linnert



View of "111-119 Generalísimo/Castellana," 2014.

Probing the relationship between historical preservation and individual memory, Patricia Esquivias's film *111-119 Generalísimo/Castellana*, 2014, traces stories around a 1950s housing project in Madrid's current-day financial district. Much of the film focuses on ceramic murals originally installed for the balconies of the buildings; each mural depicts a different city around Europe, the intent during Franco's reign being to project an image of Spain as a thriving, international state. Many were removed over time, some salvaged pieces of which are on view along with photographs and texts in this exhibition that, together with the video, constructs a historical narrative that oscillates between what is personal and what is factual.

The film depicts the artist's laptop screen, showing her opening and switching between various image files. The disjointed slideshow establishes that her interest in the housing development hearkens back to time spent with her father, hinting that her concern with facts is also viewed through a lens of rekindled childhood imaginations. One narrative references a refashioned marble wall element that appears to have originally resembled a seashore—the artist jokes that perhaps residents' fond memories from holidays at the beach will instigate the piece's restoration. In a printed text, Esquivias retells how a renter decided against destroying his ceramic mural after hearing of the artist's interest in the object.

Documents displayed on tables further illustrate the artist's efforts to uncover the buildings' histories, which included meeting with families of the architects and thwarted attempts to photograph more tiles. The artist's anecdotes and research foretell how objects and surroundings receive value through circumstances perhaps as fickle as they are personal. Esquivias's own instructive approach mirrors this condition as it seamlessly shifts between fact and childhood speculation, made believable via a puerile charm.