

Text by [Brad Feuerhelm](#)

Alberto Feijoo's *Something we used to know* is a quiet gem of a book, bent on the precipice of solitude wherein the divide of screen-based memory and empire of collated events from late 90's to the early noughties collide.

Comprising pixellated, stepped, and glitched images of youth culture in wild throes, music concerts are revisited via DVD rips and images made from grabbing reconciled YouTube clips of the crowds at these events. All are awash in a sombre palette of colour hinting at the coppery smell of blood or an air of violence when wires get crossed at uncomfortable intervals. There's a palpable sense of nostalgia too, but one slightly askew, as if forced into a colander and the remnants from the sieve are mashed into one idea of a memory of the time and place where scores of people shared a perception of an experience. Orphaned images, orphaned lives are appropriated for our collective familiarisation, and within this disequilibrium we conjure meta-memories fecund with what photography had previously presented us in material form.

Thinking 'Was I there? I remember being there, but this face here in the crowd...its distortion...its dragged features...Could this have been me? It looks like me...I had that Nailbomb shirt' and yet with a shaky hand I fondle the same shirt and I can attach no transference to it and the monster on the screen. This is the meme of self-given birth to the next meme of self, desperate for a "real" genetic disposition for the flesh that fingers its image from the console of the computer. Concrete matters dissolve into utopian super memory which collapses upon itself when applied to the representation we desperately seek through the locus of photographic image.

That said, the Spanish photographer's book is not all fodder for woe in terms of its content. There are very soft interludes of images that we can only presume are taken by Feijoo himself. Delicate still lifes in abject surroundings, such as oranges left to rot on discarded and soiled mattresses found in alleyways are interspersed with portraits - more lyrical fragments of friends, people collected, impressions even. They stand as sentimental bastions of memory for the author, his culture, the good life and currently his life under the economic collapse of his country. They represent the boom, the bust, and the lust for looking back to the golden days of untroubled youth.

There is almost a passive sublime in the work although it is achieved through the depiction of people as opposed to landscape - not a Friedrich-type sublime, but rather oracles of the personal divine found in the slow burn of change through descent. As such, this is a book full of disquiet. Yet the disquiet that is found here is asking more questions of our recent past, its interpretations and the way in which we will navigate our troubled futures.

Text by [Barry W. Hughes](#)

The title suggests is about the past – more precisely, about the artist’s past experience as a heavy metal moshing teenager. It can be seen as a reminiscence, a ‘coming-of-age’ narrative whereby the protagonist must deal with social liberation associated with adolescence, while at the same time a window into a sub-culture typified by the 90’s metal scene (the Golden Age for those who remember). In much the same way as Jason Lazarus’ Nirvana, music is the vehicle on which the story rides. For what else is there during these years of confusion and experimentation, these years of searching for a place within society and in preparation for adulthood. The bands we see live, the music we listen to as teenagers are the guiding system for our uninformed youth. The clothes, the hair styles, the attitude all belong to what is generally accepted as normal rebellious behaviour and a right-of-passage most if not all partake. If the hair and clothes and music baffle and intimidate parents then all the better – this time in life, above all other periods, is at once crucial to future development while simultaneously a last ditch effort to hold on to the freedom of childhood.

So the book is filled with photographs that mix, quite well it must be said, dark yet colourful abstractions made by taking photographs of a TV screen with straightforward portraits and sculptural still lifes. Through the pixelated lights, images appear of raging teenagers squashing and moshing at live music events. Nailbomb, Led Zeppelin and Iron Maiden tee-shirts, dyed hair, ripped jeans and blood included. Feijóo manages the context within the work by visually linking individual images regardless of source so that the work flows evenly from page to page. Physical interventions occur within the book itself as the artist includes loose 10x15cm photographs which act as a sort of memento for the reader. We soon see little difference between poetic interventions in nature – a mirror hanging from a tree, painted fruit or discarded clothes – with those pictures of gurning youths.

There is a general sense of nostalgia throughout, and a feeling of a lost paradise, but on each occasion this arises Feijóo quite literally smashes it. The glass bottle, the CD or the piece of fruit which was used to construct a simple but effective sculpture in one photograph appear again later as only a fragment, a piece or a slice. The recurring motif of the oranges and painted fruit go likewise. They appear to symbolise a ripening of age, or character, but as with most people they also conceal. So the fruit we encounter can reflect a kind of secrecy necessary in adolescence, the secret locations teenagers use for drinking, smoking pot, and other nefarious antics; the lying to parents, and police, even the lying to oneself.

Despite the blunt subject matter and hardcore scenes there are quiet moments of tenderness and surprisingly silent sentiment. These usually come with Feijóo’s real-time portraits of the kinds of kids we see documented in the music videos. Now they stand at ease, unconcerned with the world beyond, showing off what makes them unique or ignoring the camera altogether. As one encounters them, surrounded by noise and dirt, a single phrase lingers: The Kids Are Alright.

The final interactive element to Something We Used To Know is the including of a QR code which provides a soundtrack to the book consisting of many metal greats from Motorhead to Pantera to Led Zeppelin.

Texto por MAKMA.NET

Tras su exposición en el Centro 14 (Alicante), Alberto Feijóo (Alicante, 1985) nos explica su trabajo *Something we used to know*: “Los lugares frecuentados, los acontecimientos presenciados, las relaciones interrumpidas, todos esos fragmentos de recuerdos que, como los objetos que antes atesorábamos, ocupan un espacio en un almacén que es nuestra memoria.

“Something we used to know” que se podría traducir como: “algo que solíamos conocer”, es un trabajo que gira en torno a la Juventud y a sus recuerdos.

El foco se centra en la etapa de la vida comprendida entre la adolescencia y la vida adulta, de límites difusos y abierta a miles de interpretaciones y enfoques.

Todos estamos configurados de nuestras experiencias pasadas y somos un producto de las mismas. La manera de expresión física y mental de un determinado tramo vital en un individuo deja un remanente que lo acompaña para siempre.

De esta manera, se pretende que dos momentos en el tiempo se pongan en relación, pasado y presente se entrelazan formando así superposiciones de capas que, en definitiva, son recuerdos.

Uno de los elementos catalizadores es la Música, mediante la cual canalizamos nuestra energía.

Dicha disciplina, es una forma más de encuentro social y de expresión artística. Un elemento diferenciador que agrupa y a la vez disgrega grupos de personas con los que nos sentimos identificados e incluso formamos parte.

“Something we used to know” se configura de fotografías en su mayoría, pero también de objetos y de documentos de épocas pasadas, cosas que se desentierran para la ocasión y que forman parte de un imaginario personal. Este trabajo consta de dos formatos, por un lado una publicación y por otro una exposición. Ambos tienen cosas comunes y lugares de encuentro aunque están concebidos de manera independiente.

En resumen, “este proyecto es un intento de analizar la identidad, el anhelo de recordar lo que fuimos y de recuperar lo perdido”.