los restos
Oriol Vilanova

Spanish Pavilion
Venice Biennale
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los restos

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Los restos unfolds in the Spanish Pavilion at the 2026 Venice Biennale as an immersive, large-scale environment that reconfigures the space into a provisional “anti-museum” shaped by processes of accumulation and repetition. The project draws on a body of work that Oriol Vilanova has sustained over two decades through the continuous gathering of postcards sourced from flea markets and informal economies.

Detached from their original circuits of exchange, these printed images—once carriers of personal messages—are reassembled into a dense visual field that foregrounds their afterlives. Rather than stabilising meaning, the installation mobilises the postcards as unstable documents, marked by circulation and loss. What emerges is not a fixed archive, but a shifting constellation of fragments that resists narrative closure.

Installed across the Pavilion as a non-hierarchical display, the work avoids both chronology and typology. Its logic is instead iterative and open-ended, privileging duration over completion. In this sense, Los restos operates less as an exhibition than as an ongoing procedure, in which acts of collecting, sorting, and re-presenting remain visible as forms of thinking. Vilanova’s practice situates itself at the intersection of persistence and erosion, where the accumulation of images is inseparable from their gradual disappearance.

Recurring questions within the artist’s work—concerning value, memory, and the circulation of images—are here intensified. Collecting is articulated as a situated and durational activity that unsettles distinctions between private and institutional frameworks, as well as between affective attachment and systematic classification. The project thus proposes an alternative economy of attention grounded in repetition, care, and contingency.

Extending beyond the Pavilion, Los restos takes form through additional iterations. An artist’s book, designed by Zak Group with texts by Carles Guerra, Catherine Mayeur, Pedro G. Romero, Joëlle Tuerlinckx and Oriol Vilanova, functions as both document and artwork. Combining critical essays with an extensive visual sequence of postcards, the publication rearticulates the project in book form, echoing its modular logic while framing the archive as a speculative, portable dispositif.

In addition, throughout the Biennale Arte 2026, the project extends beyond the site-specific installation through The Phantom of Liberty (2026), an unannounced performative intervention.

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