

das SUPER PAPER

25

NOVEMBER 2012
DASPLATFORMS.COM
FREE



AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA 2013 SEASON



MACQUARIE

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

UNDER 30: 3 CONCERTS FOR \$130 (A RESERVE)

*"BAROQUE MUSIC AS PLAYED BY THE
ABO IS A VERTICAL REPRESENTATION
OF A HORIZONTAL DESIRE"*

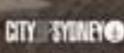
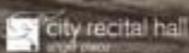
VISIT BRANDENBURG.COM.AU
TO SUBSCRIBE.



AUSTRALIAN
BRANDENBURG
ORCHESTRA



Trade &
Investment
Arts NSW



SYDNEY THEATRE CO

THE BUSINESS
OF THE BEDROOM
CAN BE BAFFLING
TO BEGINNERS

MARIAGE BLANC

By Tadeusz Różewicz

Adapted by Melissa Bubnic

1 – 16 DEC 2012
WHARF 2 THEATRE

SYDNEYTHEATRE.COM.AU/MARIAGEBLANC
9250 1777

ALL TIX \$30

WITH
GIG CLARKE
PAIGE GARDINER
SACHA HORLER
PETER KOWITZ

LUCIA MASTRANTONE
KATIE McDONALD
SEAN O'SHEA

DIRECTOR
SARAH GILES
SET DESIGNER
DAVID FLEISHER

COSTUME DESIGNER
RENEE MULDER
LIGHTING DESIGNER
GAVAN SWIFT

COMPOSER AND
SOUND DESIGNER
DAVID HEINRICH



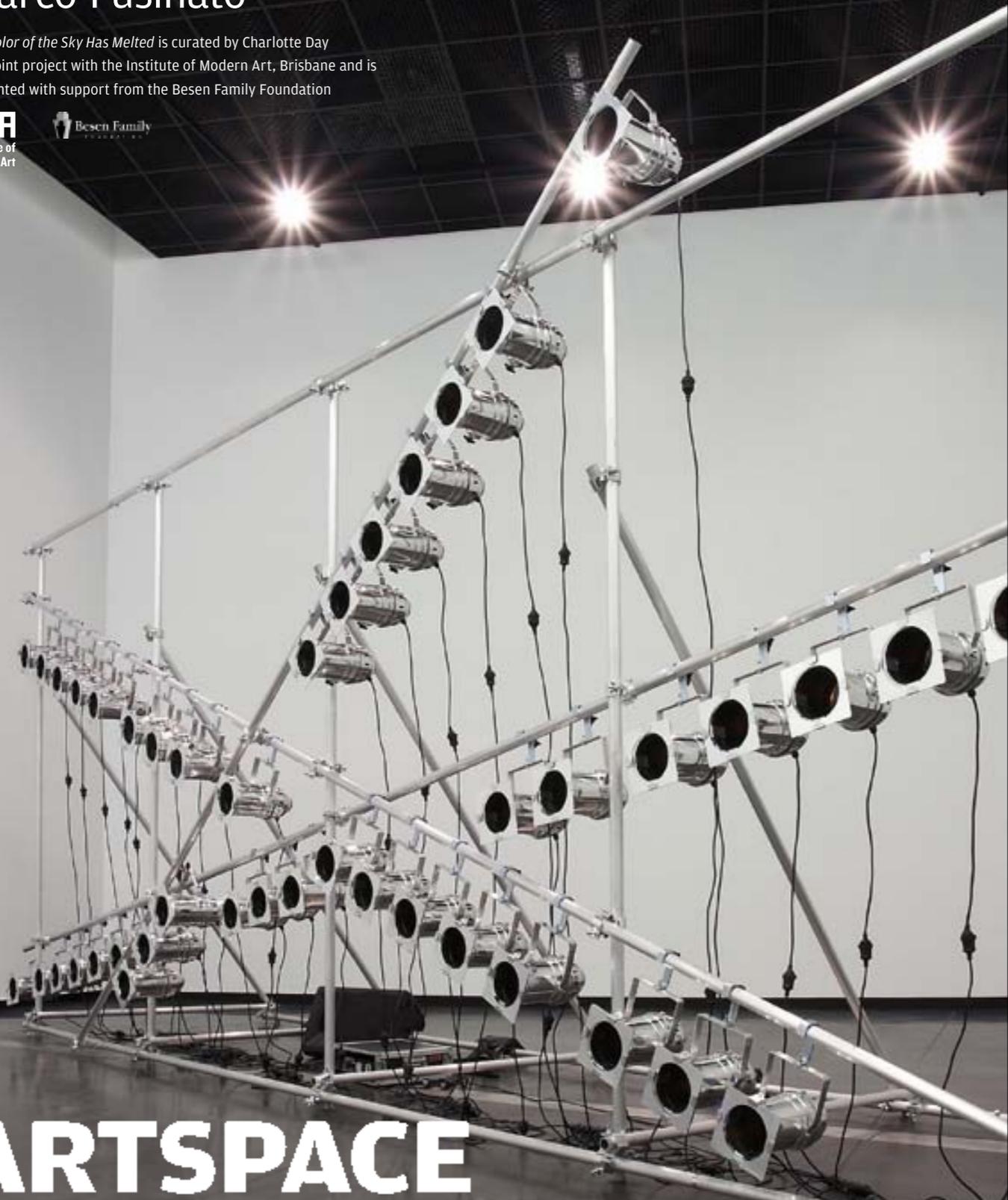
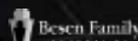
Trade &
Investment
Arts NSW

1 NOVEMBER – 9 DECEMBER 2011

The Color of the Sky Has Melted

Marco Fusinato

The Color of the Sky Has Melted is curated by Charlotte Day as a joint project with the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane and is presented with support from the Besen Family Foundation



ARTSPACE

43-51 Cowper Wharf Road Woolloomooloo NSW 2011 Sydney Australia
T +61 2 9356 0555
artspace@artspace.org.au
Office 10am-6pm, Mon-Fri
Gallery 11am-5pm, Tues-Sun
www.artspace.org.au

Artspace is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. Artspace is assisted by the New South Wales Government through Arts NSW and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its principal arts funding body. Artspace is a member of CAOs (Contemporary Art Organisations Australia) and Res Artis (International Association of Residential Art Centres).



CHALK HORSE

8 LACEY STREET, SURRY HILLS
CHALKHORSE.COM.AU

GALLERY 9

9 DARLEY STREET, DARLINGHURST
GALLERY9.COM.AU

SULLIVAN + STRUMPF FINE ART

799 ELIZABETH STREET, ZETLAND
SULLIVANSTRUMPF.COM

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY

200 GERTRUDE STREET, FITZROY
GERTRUDE.ORG.AU

THE COMMERCIAL

148 ABERCROMBIE STREET, REDFERN
THECOMMERCIALGALLERY.COM

JENSEN GALLERY

3-5 CALEDONIA STREET, PADDINGTON
JENSENGALLERY.COM

ISSUE 25 PERIFÉRICO: SPONSORS

DAS PLATFORMS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING GALLERIES FOR
THEIR VERY GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS ISSUE.

Image: Marco Fusinato, *Aetheric Plexus*, 2009
courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Sydney

HOSSEIN GHAEMI

Spirit Awl Hickey

Vox Talent / Crest of the Pious Hex-dump!

07/12/12 - 22/12/12



THE COMMERCIAL
www.thecommercialgallery.com



PERFORMANCE SPACE PRESENTS

SEXES

25 OCT - 1 DEC

CONTAINS COARSE LANGUAGE,
NUDITY, SEXUAL REFERENCES
AND ADULT THEMES

Full festival program info & booking

PERFORMANCESPACE.COM.AU

Performance Space
at Carriageworks
245 Wilson St, Eveleigh 2015

DARK MATTER OLIVER STOKES HUGHES

SHEFFER GALLERY
12-22 DECEMBER 2012

OPENING 11 DECEMBER 6-8PM

SHEFFER GALLERY

38 LANDER STREET DARLINGTON

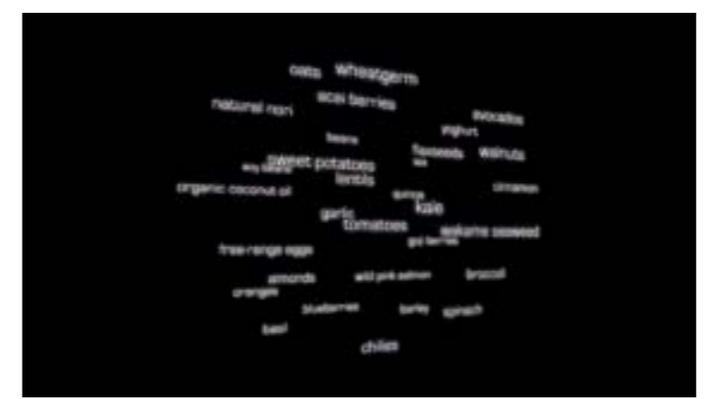
WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY 11AM-6PM

(02) 9310 5683 SHEFFERGALLERY.COM

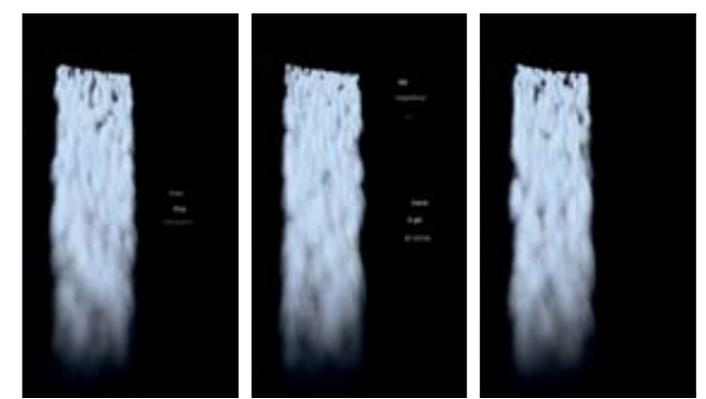
OLIVERSTOKESHUGHES.COM



24 - 27 January 2013
**Claire Healy
& Sean Cordeiro**
Art Stage Singapore



January 2013
Grant Stevens
LA Louver Gallery
45 North Venice Boulevard
Venice, California
www.lalouer.com



March 2013
Grant Stevens
Art Month Sydney
gbk pop-up exhibition



gallery@gbk.com.au
www.gbk.com.au

gallery barry keldoulis



ALASKA

WWW.ALASKAPROJECTS.COM

2013

Alex Kiers
Benjiman Forster
Chloe Hughes
Generic Art Solutions
Hamishi Jama Farah
Huseyin Sami
Jessica Olivieri
Katie Lee

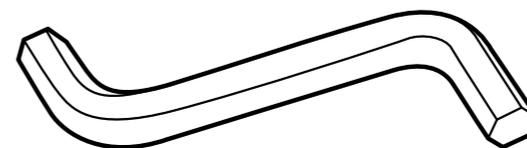
Kelly Doley
Koji Ryui
Kylie Banyard
Lauren Brincat
Lee Ralph
Liang Luscombe
Lionel Bawden
Mark Booth

Martin Baptist
Oliver Watts
Philjames
Ron Adams
Samuel Hodge
Will French
& More

Address: Level 2, Kings Cross Car Park 9A Elizabeth Bay Rd Elizabeth Bay Road
Exhibition Opening Hours: THU-FRI 6-8PM, SAT-SUN 1-6PM or by appointment

SWEDISH FOR ARGUMENT

23 Oct x 23 Nov



Modern living, consumer culture & IKEA; 8 artists unpack the flat pack.

UTS GALLERY

Level 4, 702 Harris St
Ultimo, NSW 2007

Mon-Fri 10am-6pm
www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au

CALL FOR PROPOSALS PAPER MOUNTAIN

Proposals are currently being accepted for exhibitions, performances and projects to take place April-November 2013.

All proposals due January 15, 2013.



Upstairs 267 William St
Northbridge 6003
Western Australia

papermountain.org.au/proposals
info@papermountain.org.au
facebook.com/papermountain.ari

2012 INVITATION ART AWARD



The City of Joondalup is pleased to announce the winners of the 2012 Invitation Art Award:

Overall Acquisitive Award \$15,000

'Internal Histories', mixed media installation by Kate McMillan.

The judges commented that 'McMillan's work speaks of the fragility and significance of memory and experience, as it brings a hidden history into the present and the future.'

Award for Excellence \$1,000

'A Written Perspective', digital video by Benjamin Forster.

Celebrating Joondalup Award \$1,000

'A Written Perspective', digital video by Benjamin Forster.

Judges Commendation Award

'Bec, this is Jomen junior', pigment print by Rebecca Dagnall

The Judging panel included: Dr Robert Cook, Curator of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Western Australia; Dr Perdita Philips, artist, writer, founder and co-editor of Lethologica Press; Mark Stewart, Curator at Murdoch University.

Further information available by contacting the Visual Arts Officer on 9400 4924.

joondalup.wa.gov.au

PREMIER PARTNER



KEY PARTNER



MEDIA PARTNER



VENUE PARTNER





YOSHUA OKÓN
STILL FROM *OCTOPUS* (DETAIL), 2011.
4 SYNCHRONIZED PROJECTIONS.
VIDEO SCULPTURES: SHED COMPONENTS,
FLAT SCREENS AND PROJECTION.
18:31 MINUTES, LOOPED.
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

25

GUEST EDITORS IVÁN MUÑIZ REED
& LORENA PEÑA BRITO
PRODUCER NICK GARNER
ART DIRECTOR ELLIOTT BRYCE FOULKES
GRAPHIC DESIGNER SARA MORAWETZ
EDITORIAL COORDINATOR ROBYN STUART
EDITORIAL TEAM KATE BRITTON,
MCKINLEY VALENTINE & GRACE WINZAR

PRINTING SPOTPRESS

dasSUPERPAPER ISSUE 25
NOVEMBER 2012. 10,000 COPIES.

© 2012 AUTHORS, ARTISTS, CONTRIBUTORS
AND ROCOCO PRODUCTIONS.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION
WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

ISSN 1837-0373
PRINT POST APPROVED
PP: 255003/10007

ENQUIRIES
CONTACT@ROCOCOPRODUCTIONS.COM
WWW.ROCOCOPRODUCTIONS.COM
WWW.DASPLATFORMS.COM

THANKS
DAS SUPERPAPER WOULD LIKE TO THANK
ALL CONTRIBUTING WRITERS, ARTISTS &
GALLERIES FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.
THANKS ALSO GO TO BRONWYN BAILEY-
CHARTERIS FOR HER SUPPORT.



- 14 **PERIFÉRICO**
ARTICLE IVÁN MUÑIZ REED & LORENA PEÑA BRITO
- 20 **TERESA MARGOLLES' NECROPHILIC GROTESQUE**
ARTICLE GABRIELA JAUREGUI
- 30 **A CONVERSATION WITH PEDRO REYES**
INTERVIEW GILES THACKWAY
- 36 **AN UNSTABLE SITUATION**
INTERVIEW ALINE HERNÁNDEZ
- 38 **CONGESTION AESTHETICS**
ARTICLE CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA
- 42 **10 METRE PLATFORM**
ARTICLE LAUREN BRINCAT
- 44 **POETICS OF FAILURE**
INTERVIEW JOAQUIN SEGURA
& SUMUGAN SIVANESAN
- 51 **ALMOST CACTUS**
ARTICLE WILL FRENCH
- 54 **INTERNAL PRERIPHERY, A MAP**
ARTICLE VIOLETA SOLÍS HORCASITAS
- 58 **YOSHUA OKÓN**
ARTICLE DENISE THWAITES
- 65 **NU*SPEAK**
ARTICLE REGINE BASHA
- 68 **IS IT DOWN UNDER OR SOUTH OF NORTH?**
ARTICLE JOAQUIN SEGURA
- 71 **GUADALAJARA**
ARTICLE THOMAS JEPPE
- 75 **HEADLESS CORPSES AND TOPLESS GIRLS**
ARTICLE TONY GARIFALAKIS

CONTRIBUTORS

REGINE BASHA CURRENTLY LIVES IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK WITH HER SON RUBEN. SINCE 1993 SHE HAS BEEN CURATING INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT SPACES AND INDEPENDENTLY – LONG ENOUGH TO DEVELOP A HEALTHY SUSPICION OF THE TERM CURATOR. HER EXHIBITIONS, PROJECTS AND WRITING CAN BE FOUND AT BASHAPROJECTS.COM. SHE IS A GRADUATE OF THE CENTER FOR CURATORIAL STUDIES AT BARD COLLEGE, NEW YORK.

LAUREN BRINCAT IS CURRENTLY BASED IN MEXICO CITY UNDERTAKING A MENTORSHIP WITH CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA. SHE IS WORKING ON A NEW SERIES OF PERFORMANCES AS WELL AS COLLABORATING WITH ARCHITECT GABRIELA LOPEZ DENA FOR HER NEXT SOLO SHOW AT ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY MELBOURNE. LAURENBRINCAT.COM

WILL FRENCH IS AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK ADDRESSES THE PERSONAL, POPULAR AND POLITICAL IN TRADITIONAL, MECHANICAL AND CONCEPTUAL MANIFESTATIONS. AFTER COMPLETING A MASTERS OF VISUAL ARTS AT THE SYDNEY COLLEGE OF THE ARTS IN 2005 HE WAS A DIRECTOR OF FIRSTDRAFT GALLERY, AND FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN OVERSEAS RESEARCHING ON RESIDENCY. WILLFRENCH.COM.AU

TONY GARIFALAKIS IS A MELBOURNE-BASED ARTIST WHO HAS EXHIBITED IN MEXICO CITY AND GUADALAJARA. HE HAS WORKED WITH MEXICAN ARTISTS ON PROJECTS IN MEXICO AND AUSTRALIA AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A PROJECT WITH JOAQUIN SEGURA TO BE SHOWN AT ENJOY PUBLIC ART GALLERY IN WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

ALINE HERNÁNDEZ IS UNDERTAKING A BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS IN THE CLAUSTRO DE SOR JUANA UNIVERSITY IN MEXICO. SHE HAS CONCURRENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN VARIOUS COURSES SPECIALISING IN CURATORSHIP AND CONTEMPORARY ART. SINCE 2011, ALINE HAS PROVIDED CURATORIAL

ASSISTANCE TO CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA AND HAS BEEN A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO ART PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS *CÓDIGO*, CORONA BOREAL AND FRENTE.

VIOLETA HORCASITAS IS A RESEARCHER AND INDEPENDENT CURATOR BASED IN MEXICO CITY. SHE WORKED AT FUNDACIÓN/ COLECCIÓN JUMEX AND NOW SHE WORKS AS CURATOR IN ADRASTUS COLLECTION. SHE CURATED THE SHOWS *HAPPY IS A PLACE*, *INVISIBLE MAPS*, *A ROOM FOR TWO AND FOR MANY MORE* AND ORGANIZED THE MEXICAN EDITIONS OF *SPEED SHOW* AND *BRING YOUR OWN BEAMER* PROJECTS.

GABRIELA JAUREGUI IS A WRITER AND EDITOR BASED IN MEXICO CITY. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF *CONTROLLED DECAY* (AKASHIC BOOKS, 2008) AND *TALLER DE TAQUIMECANOGRAFÍA* (TUMBONA EDICIONES, 2011). HER CRITICAL AND CREATIVE WRITING HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN MEXICO, THE US, EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING RECENTLY IN ...MENT AND FRIEZE MAGAZINES.

THOMAS JEPPE WORKS IN MELBOURNE, HAMBURG AND GUADALAJARA. WWW.THOMASJEPPE.COM

CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA IS AN ART CRITIC, CURATOR AND HISTORIAN. SINCE 1992 HE HAS BEEN A FULL TIME RESEARCHER AT THE NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO. IN 2012, MEDINA WAS CURATOR OF THE *MANIFESTA 9* BIENNIAL IN GENK, BELGIUM, TITLED *THE DEEP OF THE MODERN*, IN ASSOCIATION WITH KATERINA GREGOS AND DAWN ADES.

IVÁN MUÑIZ REED IS A MEXICAN CURATOR AND ARTIST RESIDING SYDNEY. CURRENTLY WORKING AS A CURATORIAL ASSISTANT AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AUSTRALIA, HE IS FACILITATING A SERIES OF CROSS-CULTURAL PROJECTS BETWEEN HIS NATIVE MEXICO AND ADOPTED AUSTRALIAN HOME. THESE PROJECTS AIM TO PROVIDE INCREASED VISIBILITY TO

MEXICAN ART AND CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA AND TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN ARTISTS FROM BOTH COUNTRIES.

LORENA PEÑA BRITO IS A MEXICAN CURATOR. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF WORKING FOR GALLERIES AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, SHE IS NOW WORKING AS AN INDEPENDENT CURATOR ON SEVERAL PROJECTS RELATED TO CULTURAL AND CONTEMPORARY ART PROMOTION, SALA JUÁREZ AND P.A.O.S PROGRAMA ANUAL DE OPEN STUDIOS GUADALAJARA (CURATORIAL & PEDAGOGICAL PROGRAMS, SPECIAL ACTIVITIES). SHE CO-FOUNDED THE AUTONOMOUS ASSOCIATION CERRO QUEMADO. HER RECENT WORK DEVELOPS AN INVESTIGATION PROCESS AND REFLECTION BASED ON ART & POLITICS, RESISTANCE AND EROTIC- AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ART. SHE LIVES AND WORKS IN GUADALAJARA, MEXICO.

JOAQUIN SEGURA IS CURRENTLY A NOMADIC ARTIST, PART-TIME PROVOCATEUR AND AMATEUR ARTS WRITER. HIS WORK HAS BEEN WIDELY SHOWN IN MEXICO, UNITED STATES, EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY. HE IS A FOUNDING MEMBER AND BOARD ADVISOR OF SOMA, A GROUNDBREAKING ARTIST-RUN INITIATIVE LOCATED IN MEXICO CITY.

SUMUGAN SIVANESAN IS AN ANTI-DISCIPLINARIAN ARTIST. SLOWTHEORY.ORG

GILES THACKWAY STUDIED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND LIVED IN MEXICO AS RESULT OF A ONE-YEAR UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE PROGRAM. HE IS LOOSELY AFFILIATED WITH THE ART COLLECTIVE BABABA INTERNATIONAL.

DENISE THWAITES IS A PHD CANDIDATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND L'UNIVERSITÉ PARIS 8 VINCENNES - SAINT DENIS. SPECIALISING IN LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY FRENCH PHILOSOPHY, HER PARTICULAR INTERESTS LIE IN DECONSTRUCTIVE POLITICAL THEORY AND ITS POTENTIAL RESONANCES WITH CONTEMPORARY ART.

•/•
EDGARDO ARAGÓN
EFFECTOS DE FAMILIA,
2007-2009.
13 CANALES DE VIDEO
COURTESY OF PROYECTOS
MONCLOVA, MEXICO CITY

/•
EDUARDO SARABIA
*SNAKE SKIN BOOTS WITH
SNAKE SKIN HEAD. WHITE
QUARRY STONE, 21ST
CENTURY, NORTHERN
MEXICO (PIECE)*, 2011.
2.5 X .90 X 1.8 M
ART PUBLIC IN ART BASEL
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, USA
COURTESY OF PROYECTOS
MONCLOVA, MEXICO CITY

EDGARDO ARAGÓN
EFFECTOS DE FAMILIA,
2007-2009
13 CANALES DE VIDEO
COURTESY OF PROYECTOS
MONCLOVA, MEXICO CITY

•//•
EDUARDO SARABIA
HISTORY OF THE WORLD,
2008.
HAND PAINTED
CERAMIC PLATES.
INSTALLATION VIEW AT
L.A. LOUVER, VENICE, CA.
COURTESY OF PROYECTOS
MONCLOVA, MEXICO CITY

Periférico was initially conceived as a platform to present the research undertaken between us for the development of an exhibition of Australian and Mexican artists, to be presented in Mexico in 2014. As much as *Periférico* has enriched our collaboration and will inform our future choices for the exhibition, it has also evolved and become a project of its own to a much greater extent than we had expected.

Our decision to focus this issue on Mexico was driven originally by our desire to provide Australian audiences a glimpse into the recent history of artistic practice in Mexico. However, during the process of discussing the editorial line we wanted to address an unavoidable subject: the perception of Mexico from abroad nowadays, particularly regarding warfare and the political landscape. It was an opportunity to raise awareness and inform readers about Mexico's sombre situation and for ourselves as a self-reflective exercise.

Mexico's political and social climate has been on a steady decline for over a decade and there are simply no words to describe some of the harrowing realities that the country is facing. Since 2006, more than 60,000 people have lost their lives across the country in a nearly continuous string of shootouts, bombings, and ever-bloodier murders, driven by confrontations with and between drug cartels. In addition, the outcome of the recent elections has seen the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), known for its corrupt domination of Mexico for over 75 years, return to power. It is no surprise that several artists from Mexico directly or indirectly address these circumstances: Edgardo Aragón, Artemio, Fernando Brito, Edgar Cobián, Rubén Gutiérrez, Eduardo Sarabia, Tercer un quinto, Lorena Wolfner and emerging artists Juan Caloca and Yolotl Gómez Alvarado. As the title of Teresa Margolles' exhibition at the 53rd Venice Biennale asks us gravely: *What else could we talk about?*

We found that some people prefer not to speak of what surrounds them and instead find reassurance in avoidance. Our

preference is for engagement, and so with the purpose of confronting our thesis, and to hear the perspective of Mexican and Australian colleagues, we invited our contributors to reflect on three major points of enquiry:

- Tracing some of the key developments from the 1990s which positioned contemporary Mexican art on the global art circuit and their subsequent impact on the current milieu of artists.
- The way in which art production in Mexico responds to the pessimistic situation that the country faces.
- The intersection of ideas between Australian and Mexican cultural agents in different scenarios.

We asked them to reflect on the impact that such a harrowing context has on artistic practice both as an insider and as a foreign bystander, asking questions such as: If there is a generalised crisis across all strata (political, social, cultural...) of Mexico's reality, how does it affect art? How does it affect the commonplace and individual, social, national and international relationships?

The issue's title *Periférico*, short for 'anillo periférico' or peripheral ring, refers to the name of the main road that encircles Mexico City. In one of our earlier conversations, we asked ourselves whether being perceived as operating within the periphery of the art world is something we possibly shared. We wanted to bring into question the relevance of the idea of 'periphery versus centre' (or 'alternative versus mainstream'), exposing these dichotomies as problematic – especially within an increasingly homogenised shared reality precipitated by the exponential proliferation of superhighways of cultural exchange. The 'anillo periférico' in Mexico, as a project, is a monumental failure; the road is mostly known for its constant congestion and its failed attempts to cater for ever-increasing drivers in one of the most populous cities in the world. The recent construction of a second story to the highway has not only aggravated the chaotic traffic conditions with endless construction, but it has further destroyed the road's harmony with the local urban landscape, destroying all sense of place and context in a desperate attempt to connect. And as a metaphor, the confused routes,

chose to engage with the amorphous and uncertain relationship between both countries, which initially led to this project. They preferred to address collaborative processes, similarities and mutual experience, focusing on the cross-pollination of ideas which arise from encounters between artists from both locations and from the convergence of artists and place. Tony Garifalakis, for example, introduces three works by Mexican artists which were part of a Melbourne exhibition that responded to the infamous Mexican tabloid *Alarma!* – known for its explicit depiction of violence interlaced with sexual imagery. Joaquin Segura writes a series of brief stories of coincidence and concurrence – incisive, honest and even humorous accounts of 'localisms' and encounters abroad, and Thomas Jeppe intervenes directly into the magazine, creating a collage of images and text which relate to his time spent in Mexico. Both Joaquin Segura and Thomas Jeppe resolve their participation through fragmented narratives and incisions, like bullets, to describe their experience as visitors and

Naturally, an interest arises to describe some of the roads and circuits that may already connect Mexico with Australia. Violeta Horcasitas, for example, presents us with an unofficial map of an artistic community, revealing existing lines between artists which we might not have been aware of.

As Aline Hernández points out in her text, to talk about traffic in Mexico City is to open a sort of Pandora's Box: the topic is complex, endless and has no apparent solution. For inhabitants of Mexico City it is the most commonplace topic of conversation one could choose, like talking about weather, perhaps because it affects everyone, every day, invariably – and distracts from the more woeful topics, which sadly are part of Mexico's every day. A great portion of life is spent in the stagnant concrete highways (particular *Chilangos*¹ in the cultural centre of the country): idle, enduring, waiting for change. But there are plenty of people out there who are resisting, reacting; some finding poetry in failure, and others fearlessly walking into traffic as a way to describe the world.

PERIFÉRICO by & Lorena

Iván Muñoz Reed Peña Brito

unfinished building sites, construction errors and irregularities in the line and its architectural components reflect the ethos of the social structure of the country.

We have included texts on the work of Teresa Margolles (written by Gabriela Jauregui) and Yoshua Okón (written by Denise Thwaites), providing an insight into practices from the 1990s that were crucial in laying the foundations for the current artistic climate of Mexico and its dissemination at an international level. Pedro Reyes discusses his practice with Giles Thackway, and the potential of art to act as a laboratory where new experiences can be produced. Looking from a different perspective, Sumugan Sivanesan and Joaquin Segura reflect (amongst other things) on the complications of the legacy of the 90s generation, the normalisation of violence and the implausibility of art as an agent for social change.

Throughout the issue we also present diverse and sometimes unexpected responses – interestingly, most authors

hosts. There are other accounts of crossed paths. Will French reflects on his experience of the streetscape of Mexico's capital (Mexico Distrito Federal), a city perpetually in motion, and Cuauhtémoc Medina and Aline Hernández both introduce an action by Lauren Brincat which resulted from Cuauhtémoc's suggestion to the artist: "you should walk in traffic."

Due to the dual nature of the publication, many similarities and coincidences emerge. The unconscious relationships between collaborators, both in the way in which they formally resolved their texts and in their approaches to producing them, have been enlightening to us. As Regine Basha's piece cleverly suggests, language also binds us, perhaps not as countries but certainly within the networks in which we operate. She identifies the evolution of a transient language (Artspeak/Nu*Speak) that originates as a means of communication between groups that do not have a language in common but need to understand each other in order to trade. The borders blur.

Without any proposed solutions, we hope that talking about traffic in this instance serves as evidence of such acts of resistance, for how boring and lonely would the world be if left undescribed?

"Whereof one cannot speak, thereof art is (fortunately) incapable of being silent."²

It has been a true joy and a stroke of luck to collaborate with so many fantastic writers, curators and artists from both countries. We thank them all very much. ■

¹ 'Chilango' is a Mexican slang demonym for a person born and/or living in Mexico City

² from Guillaume Désanges' *Tracticus Logico-Artisticus*, a pastiche of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tracticus Logico-Philosophicus*





TERESA Necrophilic by

During the Renaissance the term grotesque was born in relation to the visual arts and it is within that realm that its definition was forged. The grotesque was synonymous with the term *sogni dei pittori* (dreams of painters), and was used in relation to Roman frescoes, Raphael's frescoes, the works of Hieronymus Bosch, Brueghel the Elder, and later in relation to the works of Goya and Velázquez, to mention only a few. But as the term's application progressed from the decorative or ornamental grotesque of the frescoes to an aesthetic *quality*, its definition changed and became more nuanced. As it relates to later work in the visual arts, the grotesque becomes more complex. With the apparition of Brueghel's paintings, in addition to the caricaturesque and the hybrid, "Brueghel seems to have added a third perspective: that of the terror inspired by the unfathomable, that is the grotesque".¹ Hence, an ominous sense of fear, of the void, absent from the early Renaissance grotesque is present in the definition. This sense of terror, this dark element, was absent from Bakhtin's notion of the grotesque, as it was more closely allied to the Renaissance

notion of caricature and therefore (Folk) humour.² But the "dreams of painters" can also be nightmarish. If on one end of the grotesque spectrum, we have Bakhtin and the carnival, on the other end – on the side of terror, edged with sublimity – we have Teresa Margolles' work.

Teresa Margolles' installations certainly play with terror, for they deal with death and the after-life of the corpse in the work of art itself; they are interstitial and therefore grotesque, eliminating boundaries between what is alive and dead, what is proper and improper, where crime ends and art begins. As Ruskin explains, "the grotesque we are examining arises out of that condition of mind which appears to follow naturally upon the contemplation of death, and in which the fancy is brought into morbid action by terror." As a contemplation of death, Margolles' work crosses the line dividing the sacred from the abject, transcending the limits of legality and what is acceptable to the viewer. Her work violates the body and the senses and desires of the viewer, it is transgressive, aggressive, terrible, and yet

this terror is always pointing toward the sublime. Her work is the endpoint (yet not a dead-end) where the grotesque meets the sublime, for "to Friedrich Schlegel the ominous aspect of the grotesque reveals the innermost secret of existence"³. Through its ominous subject matter her work reveals this secret (death as the secret encrypted in existence), in all its unfathomable tremendous nature, so touching on the sublime. Margolles' work reveals a phenomenon of bordering, of the interstitial, especially since it is predominantly concerned with death (and the specific socio-political conditions of death in Margolles' native Mexico), and death is the ultimate limit. Her work comes into being at a particularly critical moment in Mexican politics and history, for the 1990s proved to be yet another one of Mexican history's bloody decades, with the signing of NAFTA, the massacres at Acteal and Aguas Blancas, the murder of a presidential candidate, the emergence of the Zapatista resistance and the daily violence of a Third World megalopolis. The dawn of the twenty-first century in

Mexico has become one of the deadliest periods in its history with daily deaths in the dozens due to drug-related violence: to this day 610 children have been murdered as "collateral" damage in the drug wars not to mention an estimated death-toll of 50,000 people killed since President Felipe Calderón started his "crackdown" only six years ago.⁴ All of this informs Margolles' practice.

Her work, described thus as interstitial, liminal, and grotesque, is a work of mourning, existing between life and death; as life and death. Margolles' work, and the radical destruction of boundaries made explicit in it, is simultaneously abject and sublime – and what else could it be then if not grotesque, always the in-between aesthetic category? As we participate in her installations, her work penetrates us physically and mentally, effectively blurring and transgressing the borders between art object and spectator. And we, as viewers, are turned into objects as well. Her installations, videos and photos have the power to physically affect us (causing nausea

MARGOLLES' Grotesque Gabriela Jauregui

and other discomfort) because they show and envelop us in an improper body, the grotesque body (as opposed to Bakhtin's notion of a "classical" or closed-off body, the "proper" body of middle-class culture): the anonymous body of the marginalised, for all of her installations deal with or use the unclaimed bodies of the Mexican morgues (and whose bodies are these if not the bodies of the most marginalized people in society? The most grotesque bodies within the body politic?). At the same time, by revealing the viewer as object (as we become inorganic while viewing her works and therefore absorbing them), they reveal our own bodies as improper and violated as well. And in *21 Rendición de Cuentas*, the *objet d'art* is itself violated, turned into a commodity to be consumed by the same middle-class that labeled the body in/of the work of art as "improper," or grotesque: Margolles' work questions, addresses and transgresses the ultimate taboo that is death on three levels: the death of the subjects she includes, of the viewer and of the work of art itself.

The obviation of the art space as grotesque is more tenuous, or rather, just as powerful, but more implicit. We can observe this in *21 Rendición de cuentas* (*21 score settling incidents*) because, when entering the exhibition space one is not immediately confronted with death and corpse. Instead, we see a series of "beautiful" jewellery pieces and the violence and death, as with *En el aire*, is present only when we read what the pieces are made with.

21 Ajustes de cuentas, first exhibited at the Salvador Díaz gallery as part of the Miami Basel art fair in 2008, consists of 21 pieces of gold jewellery, specially made at a jeweller in Margolles' native state of Sinaloa who specialises in crafting pieces for drug lords. But instead of including the typical diamond or other precious stone as a centre-piece Margolles has used shards of glass. From a distance, the pieces seem beautiful, if a little gaudy. They are simple ornaments, made to be worn, paraded, displayed – and already in this sense they include the body and they do not permit the spectacular distance between body and artwork. The jewels are the aspect of this particular piece that touches on

humour and carnivalesque excess. And yet, as soon as we read the piece's description, a text on the side of the elegant black display case, we learn that the pieces of glass have been collected by the artist either from drug execution crime scenes or extracted from the corpses themselves.⁵ Thus the high status symbolised by the jewel is immediately degraded in a grotesque move that hits the viewer like a wet towel. By doing so, these twenty-one pieces question the work of art and push it to the limit at the same time.

For *Score #1*, which is a large gold ring with a shard of glass surrounded by small diamonds, we read "Preliminary Investigation: Navolato, 17 May, 2007 at 6:15 hours. Man aged 30 was killed in a car-to-car shooting by persons unknown while on his way to work. Died as a consequence of gunshot wounds in different parts of the body. Crime registered by the Navolato Public Prosecutor's office, while experts from the Public Prosecutor's office (PGJ) recovered 28 shell casings from 9mm and 38 mm calibre firearms." The victim in *Score*

#2 was a female and the object stemming from it is a bracelet, with glass shards, small diamonds forming the shape of a four-leaf clover. *Score #3* is another, smaller bracelet. The victim was a male, who died from 7 AK47 shots to the thorax. *Score #4* is a gold bracelet with two chains; the incident is reported as the killing of a man who was driving with his wife. Perhaps the double gold chains echo the couple? *Score #5* is an especially beautiful bracelet, reminiscent of ancient Roman jewellery, classically ornate, and is the outcome of the death of a 34-year-old male. *Score #6* is a thick snake-like bracelet with several glass shards. The victim here is a 32-year-old male who was driving a "luxury SUV". *Score #7* is two dainty rings, one for each of the victims: a 17-year-old male and a 19-year-old male, both killed by AK47 bullets. *Score #8* is yet another thick bracelet, and the glass comes from a 45-year-old male victim. *Score #9* is a gold bracelet divided in 7 sections, each with a shard of glass, recovered from a 25-year-old male victim who died of gunshot wounds to the head. *Score #10* is a pair of earrings and a ring, representing three male victims. *Score #11* is another very beautiful bracelet,

decorated with foliage which would be characterised as arabesque (or grotesque) ornament. The glass comes from the murder scene of a 25-year old man. *Score #12* is a sectioned bracelet, each of the sections has three shards of glass, arranged in such a way that they almost seem to form faces, grotesque masks of death, tragedy, but also smiling. The 18-year-old victim died of bullet wounds to the thorax and head. For *Score #13*, which is a pendant we read "Preliminary investigation: Los Mochis, June 3 2007, 0:55 AM a 42-year-old male was executed at the wheel of a Cheyenne pickup by persons unknown 300 metres away from a security booth. The crime was registered by a representative of the public prosecutor specialized in homicide, who then ordered the corpse be transported to the SEMEFO (Forensic Medical Service) while federal officers picked up 20 shell casings of 7.62 mm and 39 mm calibre, a black facemask and a rosary." *Score #14* is the murder of a woman who was waiting in a pickup truck in the town of Mazatlán. The glass is arranged in lines on a small bracelet in the style that is known in Mexico as an "esclava" (slave) »



•\•|•
 TERESA MARGOLLES
 21 AJUSTES DE CUENTAS
 - INSTALLATION VIEW
 COURTESY OF THE
 ARTIST

•/
 UN DIAMANTE PARA
 LA CORONA, 2012
 DIAMOND 3/4 CARAT,
 58 FACE CUT, MADE WITH
 THE REMAINS OF BURNT
 WOOD IN BUILDINGS
 AFTER RIOTS THAT
 TOOK PLACE IN LONDON
 IN 2011 EXHIBITION
 VIEW, GLASGOW
 SCULPTURE STUDIOS,
 GLASGOW, UK, 2012.
 PHOTO: TERESA
 MARGOLLES
 COURTESY THE ARTIST
 AND GALERIE PETER
 KILCHMANN, ZURICH

/•
 TARJETAS PARA PICAR
 COCAÍNA (CARDS TO CUT
 COCAINE, MEXICO CITY),
 1997-1999.
 EXHIBITION VIEW:
 "TERESA MARGOLLES",
 GALERIE PETER
 KILCHMANN, ZURICH,
 SWITZERLAND, 2003
 PHOTO: A. BURGER
 COURTESY THE ARTIST
 AND GALERIE PETER
 KILCHMANN, ZURICH

bracelet. *Score #15* is a pendant with the image of Malverde, the patron saint of drug-dealers, from the region of Sinaloa, surrounded by four small shards of glass. 30 shell casings were recovered from the murder scene of a 34-year-old male. *Score #16* contains two rings, one for each of the two soldiers killed by AK47 gunshots. *Score #17* consists of another, larger, ring with a diamond horseshoe surrounding glass shards from the murder scene of a 43-year-old male shot to death with 15 AK47 rounds. There are only 17 display cases, but the total number of murder victims adds up to 21, hence the title.

These pieces of jewellery are traces, what is left-over, what has survived the twenty-one different score-settling incidents between drug cartels. Thus these works are doubly perverse for, on first glance, they seem polished as works of "classic" beauty, they seem to be "attractive" and desirable commodities, and yet, the "crowning jewels," precisely the elements that might mark the ultimate value of the work, enact its uncrowning, to borrow Bakhtin's language: they are doubly degrading for a) they are not precious stones, but rather, shattered glass,

and b) the glass is imbued with death: the shards are reminders, nay monstrous mirrors, of the bloodshed they silently encrypt.

Does the jewellery speak on behalf of the victims? On behalf of the murderers? Does it speak of innocence lost – because one of the questions that arise from these jewels is whether the murder victims were or were not involved in the drug business, and whether that makes their deaths less tragic, or more "deserved"? These are not blood diamonds and yet, does the jewelry speak of death? For Death? Or does it speak of survival? (I must confess that even writing out and listing the deaths as part of the description of the piece was strangely moving, and became a sort of personal mourning ritual for these victims).

Margolles' work is both relevant and controversial because it infringes upon the taboos used to regulate our relationship with our bodies and with the bodies of others, including that of the work of art. And it is precisely for its questioning and pushing of limits that it can be labeled grotesque: for, "I argue that the grotesque appears to us to

occupy a margin between 'art' and something 'outside of' or beyond art. In other words, it serves as a limit to the field of art and can be seen as a figure for a total art that recognizes its own incongruities and paradoxes."⁶

It is my contention that Margolles' art is precisely one example of such a grotesque and total art. ■

1 Kayser, Wolfgang. *The Grottesque in Art and Literature*, trans. By Ulrich Weisstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p35
 2 Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)
 3 Kayser, *op cit*, p52
 4 From a January, 11th, 2012 article by Tracy Wilkinson in the Los Angeles times: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jan/11/world/la-fg-mexico-dead-numbers-20120112> For further details of an historical account of the context from which Margolles' work emerges, please see Federico Navarrete's article, "SEMEFO" (24).
 5 It is common for drug lords to commit assassinations while their targets are in their cars. Therefore the glass in the jewels comes from the bullet-shattered windows and/or windshield.
 6 Harpham, Gregory. *On the Grottesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pg xxii





|• RESTORATION OF 32 AÑOS, LEVANTAMIENTO Y TRASLADO DEL SUELO DONDE CAYÓ EL CUERPO ASESINADO DEL ARTISTA LUIS MIGUEL SURO ARTES MUNDI 5, NATIONAL MUSEUM CARDIFF, WALES OCTOBER 2012 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST PHOTOGRAPHY: RAFAEL BURILLO

|• 32 AÑOS, LEVANTAMIENTO Y TRASLADO DEL SUELO DONDE CAYÓ EL CUERPO ASESINADO DEL ARTISTA LUIS MIGUEL SURO (32 YEARS, LIFTING AND REMOVAL OF THE FLOOR WHERE THE MURDERED BODY OF THE ARTIST LUIS MIGUEL SURO FELL) 2006 INSTALLATION VIEW ARTES MUNDI 5, NATIONAL MUSEUM CARDIFF, WALES, OCTOBER 2012 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST PHOTOGRAPHY: RAFAEL BURILLO

10:38 TODAY I SPENT TIME WITH THE RESTORERS OF CARDIFF MUSEUM BECAUSE MANY OF THE TILES FROM THE PIECE BROKE.

10:39 SOME BASICALLY SHATTERED.

10:39 WHEN THEY GOT TO WALES THE CURATORS WERE FRIGHTENED.

10:40 AND CALLED THEIR RESTORER. THEY'RE CLEANING TILE BY TILE THE CEMENT THAT WAS LEFTOVER FROM THE PREVIOUS ASSEMBLY,

10:41 GLUING METICULOUSLY EVERY LITTLE PIECE.

10:43 AND SO THE TWO RESTORERS, WITH TWEEZERS AND A BRUSH, ARE DOING A MAGNIFICENT JOB IN SILENCE. IT MAKES YOU WANT TO CRY. THE RESPECT FOR THE WORK AND THE MEMORY.

10:46 IT WAS VERY POWERFUL SEEING A CHINESE MAN AND AN ENGLISH MAN CLEANING WITH GLOVES DELICATELY, WITH DIAGRAMS TO SHOW ME THE DIFFERENT FRAGMENTS EACH TILE HAD.

10:47 THEY HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR DAYS.

10:51 THEY ARE THE ONES THAT RECONSTRUCT AND REPAIR CERAMICS. THEY TREAT THE PIECE AS IF THEY WERE WORKING ON A PLATE FROM THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY OR A VASE FROM THE TANG DYNASTY, PROFESSIONALS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO CARE FOR MEMORY, THEY ARE METHODICAL AND PRECISE, LIKE A PERFORMATIVE RITUAL.

FRAGMENT OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TERESA MARGOLLES AND LORENA PEÑA BRITO ABOUT TERESA'S WORK 32 YEARS, LIFTING AND REMOVAL OF THE FLOOR WHERE THE MURDERED BODY OF THE ARTIST LUIS MIGUEL SURO FELL.



•/
PALAS POR PISTOLAS
2008 TO PRESENT
SHOVELS MADE FROM
MELTED WEAPONS,
WOOD

SANATORIUM, GOODOO
2011 TO PRESENT
INDIVIDUAL THERAPY
FABRIC DOLLS

/•
LAUGHTER WORKSHOP
2012
KARLSAUE PARK,
KASSEL, DOCUMENTA 13,
SEPTEMBER 2012
IMAGE COURTESY THE
ARTIST, MILANI GALLERY
AND DOCUMENTA 13

•//
TORRE DE LOS VIENTOS
1996-2002
ARTISTS' SPACE

//•
CAPULAS
2008
VINYL, WIRE FRAME

A conversation PEDRO by

PEDRO REYES IS A MEXICAN ARTIST WHO TRAINED AS AN ARCHITECT. HIS NUMEROUS PROJECTS, WHICH CROSS ALL MEDIUMS, ARE LIKE TOOLS DESIGNED FOR USE. HIS WORK GIVES THE AUDIENCE AGENCY, HEIGHTENING THEIR AWARENESS OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS. HE HAS EXHIBITED AT THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM IN NEW YORK IN 2011, DOCUMENTA IN 2012 AND NUMEROUS BIENNALES. IN 2006 THE CARPENTER CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY HELD A RETROSPECTIVE OF HIS WORK AND HE HAS PRODUCED A COMMERCIAL TELEVISION SERIES ENTITLED *BABY MARX*.

THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION BETWEEN PEDRO REYES AND MYSELF WAS CONDUCTED OVER SKYPE ON THE 26TH OF OCTOBER 2012. I WAS IN MY ROOM AND PEDRO, IN HIS STUDIO, HAD JUST DELAYED OUR MEETING BY AN HOUR TO FETCH HIS CHILDREN.

GILES THACKWAY: Your earlier work is often referred to as a scientific experiment. I get the impression of it being a new discovery, a new innovation or

breakthrough; you even refer to the project *Torre de los Vientos* (The Tower of the Winds) (1996-2002) as a test tube for activity.

PEDRO REYES: I often think there are two ways to look at spaces, institutions and museums. I think of them as either ovens or fridges. Sometimes a museum is like a fridge where you store things for prosperity, where you can control the temperature and control the environment to keep something in the same state forever. I also think museums, institutions and spaces can be like ovens where you put ingredients through this process and something new is produced. The museum is less a depository and more an agent that can produce new realities. I am interested in this idea of the museum as laboratories or ovens. Often the museum is a producer or some kind of social experiment.

GT: Is the city vital to your work? Hans Ulrich Obrist referred to Mexico City as your large architectural studio.¹ Does the city, your studio, differ from the museum-as-laboratory for you?

PR: I use the museum as an incubator but I hope that my projects don't stay there. I like museums or institutions that produce works that have a life in the wider sphere of culture. For instance, *Palas por Pistolas* (2006-ongoing) consists of shovels that were formally guns, which were donated by communities in exchange for coupons for domestic appliances. 1527 weapons were collected, and were publically crushed by a steamroller, melted down and recast into 1527 shovels. The shovels now travel around Mexico and the world and kids are invited to plant a tree with a shovel. It is a kind of ritual that has a social effect as well as an interior psychological effect in the person or the individual. It's an excuse to get together but also it has a transformative power. It is something that can't be achieved so easily within the exhibition space.

GT: Is transformation something you consider when approaching a project? I am thinking specifically of *Pistolas por Palas*, but also *Capulas* (2008), your penetrable woven sculptures that bridge the gap between furniture and architecture.

There is a literal transformation of materials or space as well as a symbolic change.

PR: I think there are varying degrees of agency or involvement. Some works are a place for encounter. People stay in a place, maybe they are with strangers or friends and they have a little conversation. In other projects there is a script or an instruction or a score of a more elaborate activity. I am always interested in the idea of the "spect-actor" – where a spectator becomes an actor and also where there is an opportunity for people to bring their own narrative.

GT: *Sanatorium* (2011 to present), your work for Documenta, speaks to this idea – it is like a theatre where you have used therapy to directly interact with the audience.

PR: Exhibitions are often about the artist and his or her own universe. Here, instead, it is about the spectator. It is important to create a space for people to say something. Obviously this is something that exists on the Internet with user-generated content, on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and so on.

An individual can put their intention into form by using objects in an anthropomorphic way. This is closer to anthropology like totemic or ritual practices or shamanism. However, I am more interested in the anthropological specificity and authenticity of these [practices]... only their physiological effects are universal. I want to take elements from ritual but without the authenticity: without saying "here is a shaman from this community and you [the spectator] have to rely on him", or the artist, or the doctor, or the scientist, or this guru, or that speaker. Instead of a need for these heroes I am more interested in creating procedures, protocols or instructions that someone with two days of training can facilitate and any other person can participate in.

GT: Can you really remove the artist, as you are suggesting?

PR: To a certain degree. In Documenta, 15000 encounters and individual therapies were conducted; an average of 150 people signed up as 'patients' everyday. There

Separately to my work, Stuart Ringholt's *Laughter Workshop* (2012) was created with the group at Documenta. This was created by Stuart and was autonomous to my work in the park... Stuart's *Laughter Workshop* inspired a lot of breakthroughs and discoveries within the group.

GT: This was very successful in *Palas por Pistolas*, because for that community the story is what is left...

PR: For some people who participated in this project it did not even cross their mind that it was art, though it is still meaningful.

GT: Recently you were witness to another transformation with the Mexican election. This was also out of your control – do you think this political environment will affect the way you work? As a Mexican and an artist can you work outside of this political life?

PR: Obviously, I wish the left were in power; I am forty years old and for the next six years I cannot withdraw myself from my country. I am doing a project with the Defense Department who give me the

with REYES Giles Thackway

In *Sanatorium* there is a protocol or a procedure where you are the protagonist and someone without credentials can help you arrive at a different place where you can have an insight or an epiphany or discovery about yourself. I am interested in the idea that this can happen between strangers, and that it can happen without the mediation of a professional, in a plastic playful way. Not only is there talking but also physical elements that are closer to sculpture, and...

[I hear Pedro's children enter the room]

... you move around objects similar to how you play. When you are a kid you arrange objects and you create the map of the world and a narrative by means of rearranging your toys in a room. But when you grow up you rely more on words than objects so you lose a certain hold on physical devices. But art retains this hold. Artists have a monopoly on being allowed to present themselves with objects and sculpture. I am interested in letting everyone rearrange an exhibition of his or her life.

were two groups of 20 students, a total of 40 students spread over 100 days, and I was a supervisor...

Take, for instance, Marina Abramović sitting in a chair [*The Artist is Present*, 2010]. People queued for days to sit 5 minutes looking at her. It is all about the artist as commodity and Abramović giving her time. That's ok, but that only increases the value of the artist; I am more interested in providing a tool for someone else to do something with.

For example, within the Sanatorium group there were initially some struggles and strikes within the group because the students didn't feel they had ownership of the project, entirely. There was a moment of crisis when two students decided to leave. Then they decided they would rearrange the way things would be run. They ran the usual therapies but they also ran experimental therapies. From my own point of view, I was most satisfied when there was a departure from my control and the resourcefulness of the group came through.

weapons to make musical instruments [*Imagine*, (2012)]; I would have to do this regardless of the party that is in power. I believe that the worse the government is the greater the need for artists' involvement as critics and as agents of change. If I was living in Switzerland and the government was doing just fine, believe me I wouldn't be doing this type of work. I would be painting nudes.

WWW.PEDROREYES.NET

¹ Hans Ulrich Obrist interviews. Volume 2. / edited by Charles Arsène-Henry, Shumon Basar and Karen Marta. Milan: Charta Art; Hove: Roundhouse [distributor], c2010 pg. 786





|•
WALK IN TRAFFIC
(PRODUCTION STILL)
2012.
SINGLE-CHANNEL HD
VIDEO, 9:16 RATIO,
COLOUR, SOUND
IMAGE COURTESY OF
THE ARTIST AND ANNA
SCHWARTZ GALLERY,
SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE
© THE ARTIST
VIDEOGRAPHY: RAFAEL
ORTEGA

Translated by
Iván Muñiz Reed

needed to find a site in which it was possible to not only walk in moving traffic, but also to record the action. Finally the decision was made: the artist would walk across the city's Viaducto –dividing the city into north and south, it is one of the most complex and highly transited traffic arteries. Viaducto had not only suitable topography, but also ample concurrence, fruit of its grave deficits of traffic capacity and controlled pedestrian crossings.¹

Such practice is reminiscent of artist Richard Long, whose primary medium is walking and who stated that "art is resolved in the very act of walking." However, Brincat's piece was distinct in that it was founded on an experimental logic which functions through the uncertainty and chance inherent in the act of intervention. This was accentuated by the many balloons that the artist was holding during the action. It was this interventional act of rupture that created an opening in which perceptual reconfiguration became possible, both in the passersby and the artist herself. Her entry established a temporary zone of

AN UNSTABLE SITUATION: The witness of overflow & its consequences by Aline Hernández

Any discussion of Mexico City is, on some level, a discussion of traffic. The city's traffic problems are so complex, so commonplace, and so deeply entrenched that authorities have not been able to fix upon a solution, in spite of efforts like the second floor of Periférico.

In a city where the population, currently 8 million (21 million in the greater Mexico City metropolitan area), is not just growing but accelerating, and where the government appears to have no interest in a long-term public transport strategy, the need to acquire a vehicle is increasingly urgent. As a consequence, there has been a proliferation of credit options and financial plans from banks, car dealerships and less reputable operations.

Through this example you can see the vicious logic that operates, where further enabling conditions allow the unbalanced system to continue functioning. This logic applies to more than just traffic, that chaotic and mechanism which finds release in the phenomenon of 'parking'.

It was precisely this phenomenon that Australian artist Lauren Brincat dealt with in her piece *Walk in Traffic*, performed in Mexico City earlier this year. The title was a remark made to Brincat by curator and critic Cuauhtémoc Medina after seeing her work in Australia. Later, when Brincat had the opportunity to visit Mexico City to produce work, she witnessed the reality of constant traffic that overwhelms and leaves no space for solitude. In the face of this, Medina's comment, "you should walk in traffic", seemed increasingly significant.

To Brincat, the phenomenon of traffic, coupled with the irrepressible driving style of the city's inhabitants, and the incredible saturation which occurs at specific times of day, necessitated a response. Brincat would walk through these spaces of transit, a journey which would be both a momentary loss of control and a clear intervention into the urban landscape and its every day dynamics.

First Brincat had to determine an appropriate place to carry out this intervention. Traffic congestion in the city is common but she

mutual agency, and hence went on to become an instrument that allowed us to question such spaces of transit.

The relevance of Brincat's action lies in the physical limitations of her movement which oscillated between inclusion and exclusion with the flow of traffic. That is, if on one hand, as Heidegger suggests "to position something in space admits something (...) it allows for it to roll open and unfold, which, among other things, enables things to appear present to which human habitation is referred to (and) on the other hand, to position something summons the possibility of mutual belonging, each existing in their respective space, and from where they open up to other things."¹ Brincat's action, seen through this mode of oscillation, allows for an event to open up: firstly by seeding new approaches that can in turn open up gaps for new speculations, and secondly by allowing for a confrontation which reveals itself as a fertile ground from which to embark upon a reflective trajectory which, by way of subversion, seeks encounters where what happens concerns us. ■

¹ <http://www.fimevic.df.gob.mx/problemas/3todolo.html>



•/•

WALK IN TRAFFIC
(PRODUCTION STILL)
2012.
SINGLE-CHANNEL HD
VIDEO, 9:16 RATIO,
COLOUR, SOUND
IMAGE COURTESY OF
THE ARTIST AND ANNA
SCHWARTZ GALLERY,
SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE
© THE ARTIST
VIDEOGRAPHY: RAFAEL
ORTEGA

CONGESTION by

A storm was falling the morning Lauren Brincat and I met for a coffee in a hotel in Sydney. I was drying my hair with a napkin when she opened the computer to show me a few of her actions and films: a mixture of solitary walks and delicate performances that staged short fables of self-absorption, intimacy and circularity, revolving all around more or less unsaid parables. While reviewing the material, Lauren spoke about her interest in going to Mexico City to confront an entirely different environment and get to explore the places where some of her favourite artists had produced memorable works. I listened to her, thinking on my astonishment about the easy-going feeling of the street in Sydney, so drastically different from the inescapable noise, dirt and urgency of the spirit of my home town. What could she do in a overcharged place like Mexico City, one of the biggest and most complicated cities on earth?

The day before, in fact, I had been visiting Sydney, going from Artspace in Woolloomooloo to the new MCA at the

harbour, and back to the galleries in Kings Cross, and I was a bit overwhelmed with the gentleness, tidiness and friendliness of the city. Running the risk of revealing the extent of my envy, I have to say that all that comfort and order felt to me extremely exotic: a cosy postcolonial urban fantasy.

Looking at the images of one of the actions of Lauren, when she walked with determination, but all alone, on the tarmac of the old Tempelhoff airport in Berlin, I could not help blurting out something along the lines of: "Sure. I think you should walk in traffic". This was meant to be a slightly ironical remark about what would it mean to visit Mexico. I did not mean it to be a literal suggestion.

A few months later, Lauren Brincat did indeed walk in traffic. She chose a particularly hectic junction that I have to cross at least twice a week on my way to the analyst in the Condesa neighbourhood: the start of Monterrey Avenue, just before crossing the Viaducto Piedad freeway, where

at least three roads try unsuccessfully to bring the cars into Colonia Roma. People tend to negotiate their way through with all the classical Mexico City rudeness: the traffic lights are more or less decorative, as this traffic funnel forces the cars towards the north.

The artist, however, did not dare to go into the clogged lanes without a festive prop: I guess inspired by the vendors that frequently walk in parks or even busy avenues like this, she made her way carrying a beautiful bouquet of helium balloons. Given the heavy traffic, it's no wonder the artist walked quickly through the cars until the balloons were lost in the distance, as if to underline the way cars in our cities are frequently useless sofas with wheels, unable to move faster than five kilometers per hour.

In retrospect, I have to say that the image of people walking the pavement is one of my preferred after-images of modernity. I do not remember whether I explained to

Lauren, during the course of our conversation in Sydney, that the street vendors and windshield cleaners that swing through cars at every traffic jam in Mexico City, frequently remind me of one of my favourite avant-garde images: the sequence in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí where the main characters are watching from the balcony a young woman in the street entirely surrounded by cars in movement, until one of them runs over her as Buñuel and Dalí write, in rather graphic ways, "horribly mutilating her"¹. Rather than horror, the accident provokes sexual arousal in the couple watching from the balcony, as if they were the forefathers of the technological fetishism evoked by J. G. Ballard and Cronenberg. Beyond that, the accident sequence in Buñuel and Dalí's film has always appeared to me as one of the most eloquent embodiments of avant-garde's shock. Here we find the whole brutality of modernity provoking the arousal of an unknown mystery and desire. This is, indeed, the epic of the eternal daily civil war between bodies and machines that is fought in the roads of our cities.

Marquez Olympic swimming pool in the south of the city, where Lauren Brincat was meant to overcome her fear of heights by jumping from the ten metre diving platform. This was one of the impressive facilities left from the Mexican 1968 Olympics, which by a matter of political irony, since it is administered by the city government, is not used for the training of high performance athletes but by hordes of children and elderly men and women that go there to learn to swim or receive physiotherapy. In fact, this was the second time Brincat and her crew had been there: in the first attempt, the artist had unsuccessfully tried to convince herself to jump while Rafael Ortega's cameras were rolling.

Taking care not to cross in front of the lens, I sat quietly to watch the action hoping to encourage the artist to take the flight, ideally, in the first attempt. Lauren walked all the stairs to the top of the platform, and once she reached the edge she simply froze to contemplate her reflection in the water. Still wearing her jeans, Brincat tested every possible posture to try to fall into the mirror of water: standing as if wanting to commit suicide, crawling to the edge in the hope of

this time, at least, she could be pretty sure she would never dare to jump. She had missed her second chance. Her failure had been sanctified by repetition. The whole experience, nonetheless, left me quite satisfied thinking that unlike in Mexico, in a sport obsessed society like Australia, failure might be some sort of a provocation. Or maybe not. However, next time I may take more care when projecting fantasies on performance artists. I would not want to suggest that next time Lauren Brincat should swim with sharks. In any case, such a thought would never have crossed my mind. ■

AESTHETICS Cuauhtémoc Medina

To have been unwillingly and unconsciously at the point of origin of an artwork is both flattering and worrying: it makes you feel self-conscious of the pregnancy of images, the way they are transmitted with our breath through bodies and minds, a bit like viruses. Rather than the source of our daily frustration, traffic appears in Lauren Brincat's work as the overgrown bushes and flowers of a new kind of mechanical garden. I guess the image of the slender woman carrying her bouquet of balloons in the midst of the impatient drivers could be seen as some sort of contemporary aristocrat that appears to have taken the disaster provoked by our selfish reliance on door to door travelling as the occasion for a stroll. It is as if, against my original intention, Lauren managed to bring the spirit of the relaxed days in Sydney in her suitcase, and unpacked them in the megalopolis.

Revenge came, however, sometime in June 2012 when I accompanied the artist, filmmaker Rafael Ortega, and production assistant Aline Hernández to the Francisco

being able to hang from the platform to finally letting herself loose to reach the bottom, or simply sitting contemplating the height with her two legs on the void, trying rather clumsily to throw herself with her arms, in a pose that was redolent of Narcissus contemplating his image on a distant lake. Once again, the planned jump never occurred. Her failure had a highly dramatic quality: a silent confrontation with her own demons where, after six or seven hours of film as a whole, Brincat was unable to break the spell.

Fear is, of course, extremely idiosyncratic. While watching Brincat procrastinating on the ten metre platform, I had enough time to remember a conversation with an optometrist that had unsuccessfully tried to examine a parachute jumper who was terrified of things or lights coming anywhere near to his eyes. I guess audiences will necessarily compare both images of Brincat: the happy congestion hour flâneur, the miserably failed diver. After failing to jump for the second time, Brincat was much less angry with herself:

¹ "Un Chien Andalou" (original script published in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no 17, December 15 1929); in: Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, *Un Perro Andaluz Ochenta Años Después*, ed. Amparo Martínez Herranz, Madrid, La Fábrica Editorial, 2009, p. 15, 20-21.



|•
LAUREN BRINCAT
10 METRE PLATFORM
(PRODUCTION STILL)
2012.
SINGLE-CHANNEL HD
VIDEO, 9:16 RATIO,
COLOUR, SOUND
IMAGE COURTESY
THE ARTIST AND
ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY,
SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE
© THE ARTIST
VIDEOGRAPHY:
RAFAEL ORTEGA

10 METRE PLATFORM: by Lauren Brincat

The documentation of this action was made on the 13th of June 2012.

10 Metre Platform was, as Cuauhtémoc termed it, "an epic failure". My task was to lower myself over the ledge of the top platform and hang for as long as possible until I fell. It wasn't a happy ending.

At first I was devastated that I didn't fall from the platform, but I've since realised the success of the piece. The one performance that depicted competitiveness and required success resulted in failure. It truly tested my limits, my necessity to be in control. I was shocked that after an hour and a half I couldn't let go. I felt grounded on a 10 metre platform.

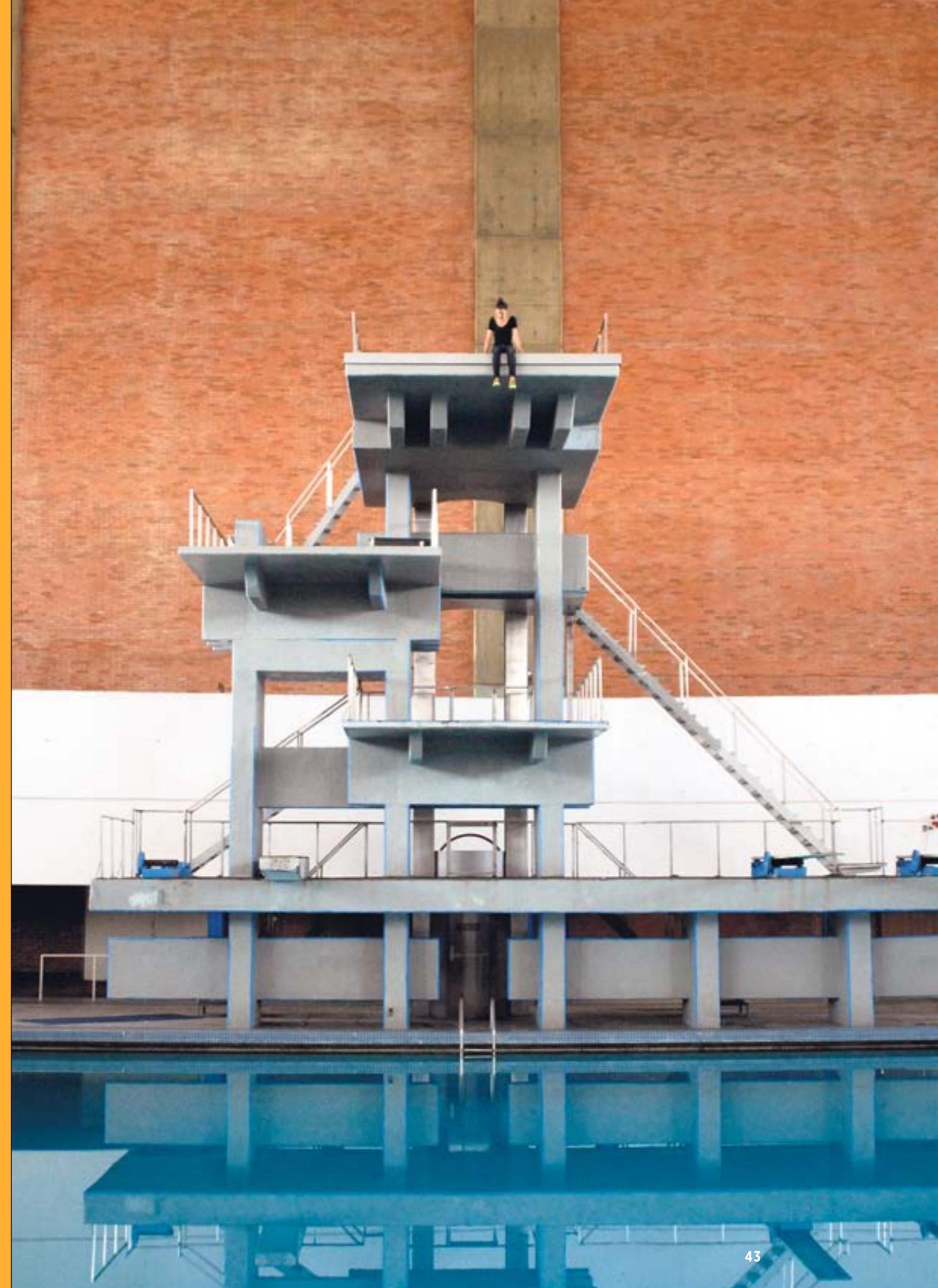
The art had become a test of my own personal limits. I sat at the top of the platform looking down at my reflection before attempting to manipulate my body into the final position, holding myself on the edge. The tension was palpable, both from myself and my crew, who openly questioned whether I would be able to complete the

task. My mind was racing as I experienced hot flushes of fear, but my determination to succeed, to win, kept me on the edge.

When Rafael indicated I had five minutes left to attempt the task, I found myself in direct confrontation with fear, battling with my strength.

In the end I had found my limit, I couldn't relinquish control.

The performance had taken everything out of me and left me feeling frustrated - that at that moment, I couldn't complete the action. I didn't get to stand on the podium. The 10 metre platform was a public struggle on the highest stage.



•/ JOAQUIN SEGURA
TOMADORES DE LECTURA
EN SUCURSAL. RECHAZO
TOTAL A LA REFORMA
FISCAL Y ENERGETICA
FROM THE SERIES
EXERCISES ON SELECTIVE
MUTISM, 2012.
HANDMADE PROTEST
BANNER & LATEX PAINT
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

/• EXIGIMOS JUSTICIA PARA
FRANCISCO RAMIREZ,
JOSÉ LUIS RAMIREZ Y
ALVARO JACINTO, QUIENES
FUERON ASESINADOS POR
PARAMILITARES DEL MULT-
PUP-UBISORT-PRI FROM
THE SERIES EXERCISES ON
SELECTIVE MUTISM, 2012.
HANDMADE PROTEST
BANNER & LATEX PAINT
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

•//• EXERCISES ON
SELECTIVE MUTISM
(INSTALLATION VIEW A),
2012.
HANDMADE PROTEST
BANNERS, WOOD, ROPE,
STEEL WIRE & LATEX PAINT
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

•/// PORQUE TENEMOS LA LUZ,
LA RAZÓN Y LA FUERZA
DEL PUEBLO UNIDOS
VENCEREMOS FROM THE
SERIES EXERCISES ON
SELECTIVE MUTISM, 2012.
HANDMADE PROTEST
BANNER & LATEX PAINT
DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

ALL PHOTOS:
ERNESTO ROSAS PINEDA
ALL IMAGES COURTESY
OF THE ARTIST AND
YAUTEPEC GALLERY

POETICS Joaquin Segura with

JOAQUIN SEGURA'S INSTALLATION *EXERCISES ON SELECTIVE MUTISM* (2012) COLLECTS A SELECTION OF PROTEST BANNERS FROM MARCHES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STREETS OF MEXICO CITY THAT HAVE BEEN REDACTED WITH WHITE PAINT. PREMIERED EARLIER THIS YEAR AT YAUTEPEC GALLERY, MEXICO CITY, THESE SYMBOLS OF STRUGGLE WERE HUNG AND ARRANGED AS MUTE MANIFESTATIONS OF WHAT IS NOW ACCEPTABLE AND ULTIMATELY INEFFECTUAL DISSENT. SUCH OBFUSCATION OF CONTENT IS INDICATIVE OF SEGURA'S MORE RECENT TURN TOWARDS 'NEGATION-AS-AESTHETICS'.

SS: I am interested in the idea of postnationalism and am trying to get a sense of how the idea exists beyond political theory. [In an earlier interview Segura rejects the notions of 'identity' and 'nation' as outdated modes of understanding cultural differences and as contexts for exchange.] Like you, I am averse to notions of 'identity' or 'nation', however sometimes when I'm working abroad I have a sense of being 'made in Australia', in that certain events and ideas have shaped the concerns that I find myself returning to.

JS: I've spent much time lately thinking about those very notions you touch on. Overall, I think the importance we consciously or unconsciously convey to localisms may be, in the end, a survival strategy. It may very well represent a desperate attempt to rely on uniqueness as an exchange token in the market of symbolic capital. In other words, to make a rather fragmented context mean something somehow. In the end, perhaps we'll be able to see it from a distance and perceive that it always was about totalitarian systems of thought ... in every sense you can possibly imagine.

Along with postnationalism, the idea of failed states is one that has been haunting me over the past few years. I consider my work to be a sketch on some sort of poetics of failure and disenchantment. There are a few key concepts that I've briefly incorporated into this glorification of downfall: impossibility, absurdity and nonsense as vital driving forces behind any human act. Wherever this may have taken me, I'm always experiencing a deep feeling of disenfranchisement; not as something I've been pushed to but as a

strongly personal choice. After all, I may be more interested in the sole existence of these concepts as an idea. I've grown sick of the idea of contemporary art as a tool or platform striving towards meaningful social change. I don't believe in change, I believe in failure.

SS: You've exhibited in a number of prestigious shows, received several prizes and garnered international acclaim, yet when we contacted the Mexican consulate here in an attempt to bring you out as a representative of the country's 'dynamic contemporary arts scene' we suspect you weren't the kind of artist they had in mind.

JS: Quite fair, I could perfectly imagine that. It would be totally natural as I do think I'm not really the artist I myself expected to be.

My practice relies on understanding legitimating structures, the way they're built and how they operate. The next step is to use these conjectures – however deep or superficial they may prove – to cause a collision within the structure itself. I'm absolutely repelled by the idea of state and

Mexican contemporary art in the past few years has contributed to what I think is a certain loss of edge, at least in the younger artists that came after – which I'm undeniably part of, willingly or not. Think of it as the unavoidable hangover after a rather eventful night out. A process of normalisation.

Truth is you can't really have fun all the time. There's a moment in which you are forced to stop and reflect; this may very well be the actual point where we failed as a generation. Yes, the artists you mention all paved the way but there is one point when my generation should have taken command, or at least shared their provocative mindsets, not just get the free drinks. I think we missed that critical moment – perhaps it happened over a museum cocktail or during the annual Mexico City art fair – although it's definitely not too late.

SS: We first met at the opening of Simon Fujiwara's *Letters from Mexico* (2011) at Proyectos Monclova, Mexico City. *Letters...* is a series of semi-fictional missives to 'Yorop' that recount Fujiwara's observations (and

soft drinks lined up on a *rosa mexicano* coloured tablecloth at a street restaurant somewhere in Mexico. The show was actually named after the combination of the beverage's brand names. Really? I don't think that postnationalism has anything to do with exoticisation at all. I think it actually has to do with the denial of that exact same notion. ■

OF FAILURE: corresponds Sumugan Sivanesan

institution. I cannot deny that I've received support from institutional structures in the past – and continue to do so – but I don't see this as a contradiction to what I'm stating in these few lines. I think it is one of the most pressing duties of a contemporary artist nowadays: confront, discomfort and challenge. Although I can always wear a mariachi hat and drink my brains out if strictly necessary.

SS: A number of critically acclaimed artists over the last decade have contributed to the perception of Mexico as an incubator for subversive practices. Immediately I think of Teresa Margolles and Yoshua Okón, alongside Santiago Sierra when he was there in the '90s. It gives the impression that the Mexican art world has a lot of game?

JS: The artists you mention attracted attention initially because of their provocative modus operandi, not only practice-wise, but as icons of rupture. It's just that it turns out this has not been as positive as it sounds. I can see that the excessive attention brought down on

deliriums) as he travelled to sites of historical significance over the last days of 2010 – a year that marked the bicentenary of Independence, and the centenary of the Revolution. Fujiwara had dictated his thoughts touching on colonial legacies and class discrepancies, in English, to street typists who transcribed his words as a phonetic Spanglish that needs to be read out aloud to be understood. Fujiwara's account takes some clever narrative turns and there is a final twist where the typists themselves revolt.

I still think of *Letters...* as a rather elegant collaboration that makes use of mistranslation and self-effacing humour, but I recall the patrons were divided.

JS: I found it to perfectly fit with one of my most personally dreaded sub-genres of recent contemporary art in Mexico – *el arte de turistas*. Famously practiced by Gabriel Orozco, a tourist in his own country, yes, but with a solid following in the years after him. Just a few weeks ago, I saw a Ryan Gander invite for his show in a major Mexican museum. It displayed three bottles of local

JOAQUIN SEGURA EXHIBITED IN *CRISIS COMPLEX*,
CURATED BY SUMUGAN SIVANESAN AND
LAURA MCLEAN, AT TIN SHEDS GALLERY,
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,
14 SEPTEMBER – 13 OCTOBER 2012.

1 From Yauteppec Gallery press release "Joaquin Segura: A Brief History of Breakdown." URL: <http://yau.com.mx/exhibitions/a-brief-history-of-breakdown>
2 URL: <http://continentcontinent.cc/index.php/continent/article/viewArticle/35> Accessed 05 May 2012





•//•

MEXICAN BEETLE

2012

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH
AND FOUND IMAGE.

23 X 13 CM

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

ALMOST CACTUS by Will French

On the 17th of April 2012 I travelled to Mexico.

I had no expectations and very little planned. I had never been there before, I was open to possibility and there was plenty of that.

Before arriving in Mexico I spent a week in New York and during that week I visited *The Ungovernables*, an exhibition at the New Museum on the Lower East Side. I was very taken by a work of Amsterdam-based Mexican artist José Antonio Vega Macotela entitled *Habemus Gasoline*. The work consisted of a series of timber tequila stills alongside other apparatus typically used for distilling tequila. The home brew apparatus had been adapted to allow it to refine raw crude oil into petrol. The work references a trade agreement between the US and Mexico, under which Mexico, which has huge reserves of oil, sells a million barrels of crude oil a day to the US to process and then buys back the same oil, now refined back to sell to the Mexican public. The agreement benefits the US corporations enormously.

José Antonio Vega Macotela's work was beautifully poetic, a homebrew or moonshine set up to make your own petrol. It set the tempo for the trip.

I saw Damián Ortega's work 'Cosmic thing' at the 2003 Venice Biennale. It is perhaps his best known work. The work is a disassembled 1989 Volkswagen Beetle, presented in an exploded view. Seeing the work in Venice was incredible, but it became infinitely more so upon arriving in Mexico.

Mexico City moves constantly, and no matter where you look there is always a Volkswagen in view. The Beetle in particular is synonymous with Mexico as much as it is with Germany and Hippies. Is easy to understand Ortega's sentiment: the Beetle has been there since 1954, and was produced in Mexico since 1967, manufactured in Puebla. The Volkswagen factory produced Beetles and Kombis long after the German factories moved onto newer models. It was only when the use of Beetles as taxis was outlawed and emission limits introduced that the vehicle became no longer viable in the financial downturn. It wasn't until 2003 that the production of the Mexican Beetle ended, some twenty-five years after the car had stopped being produced in Germany. Francis Alÿs has also made a work using the Beetle, pushing one around Wolfsburg in Germany, where the car was originally built in 2003, the year that production was closed in Mexico. Coincidence?

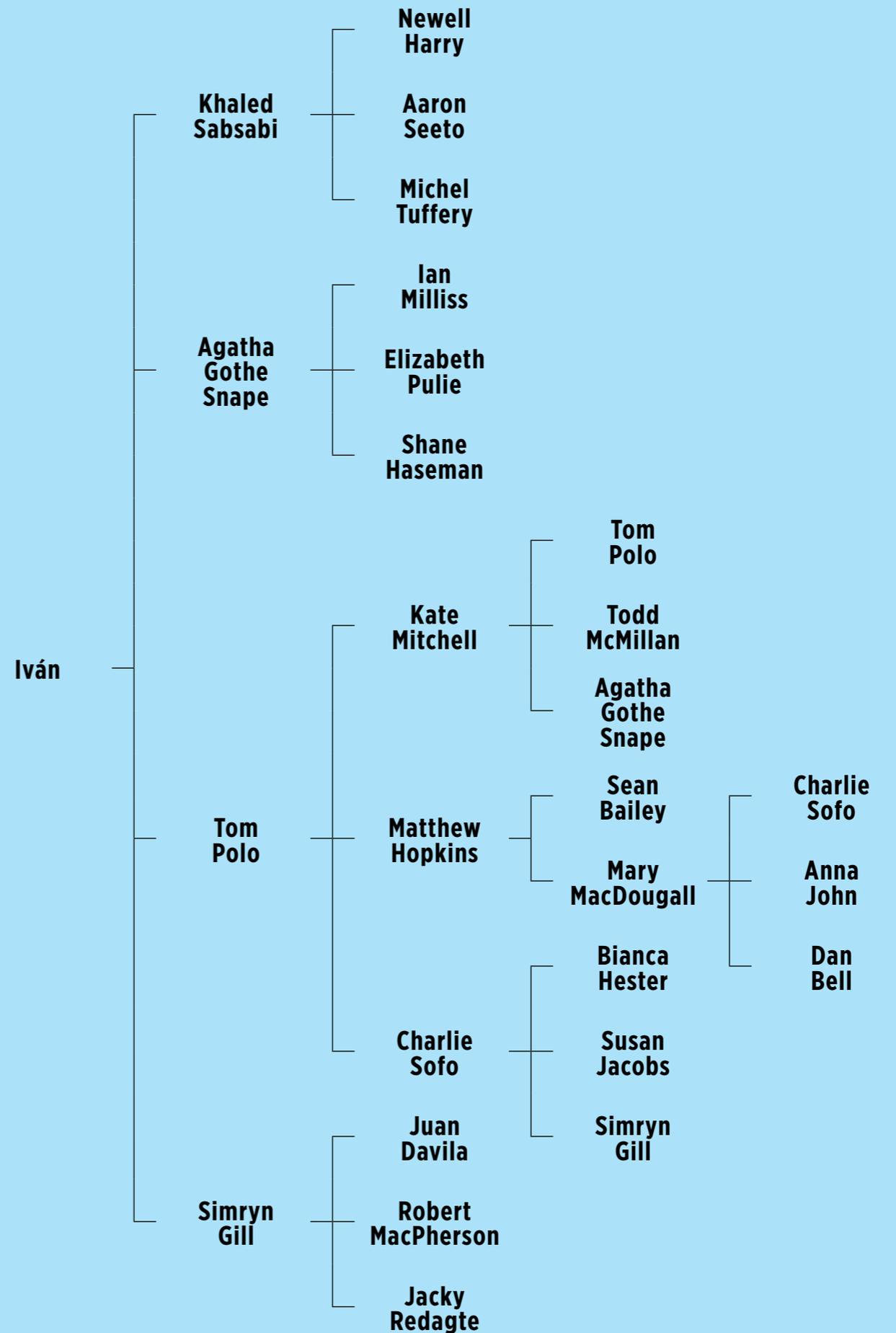
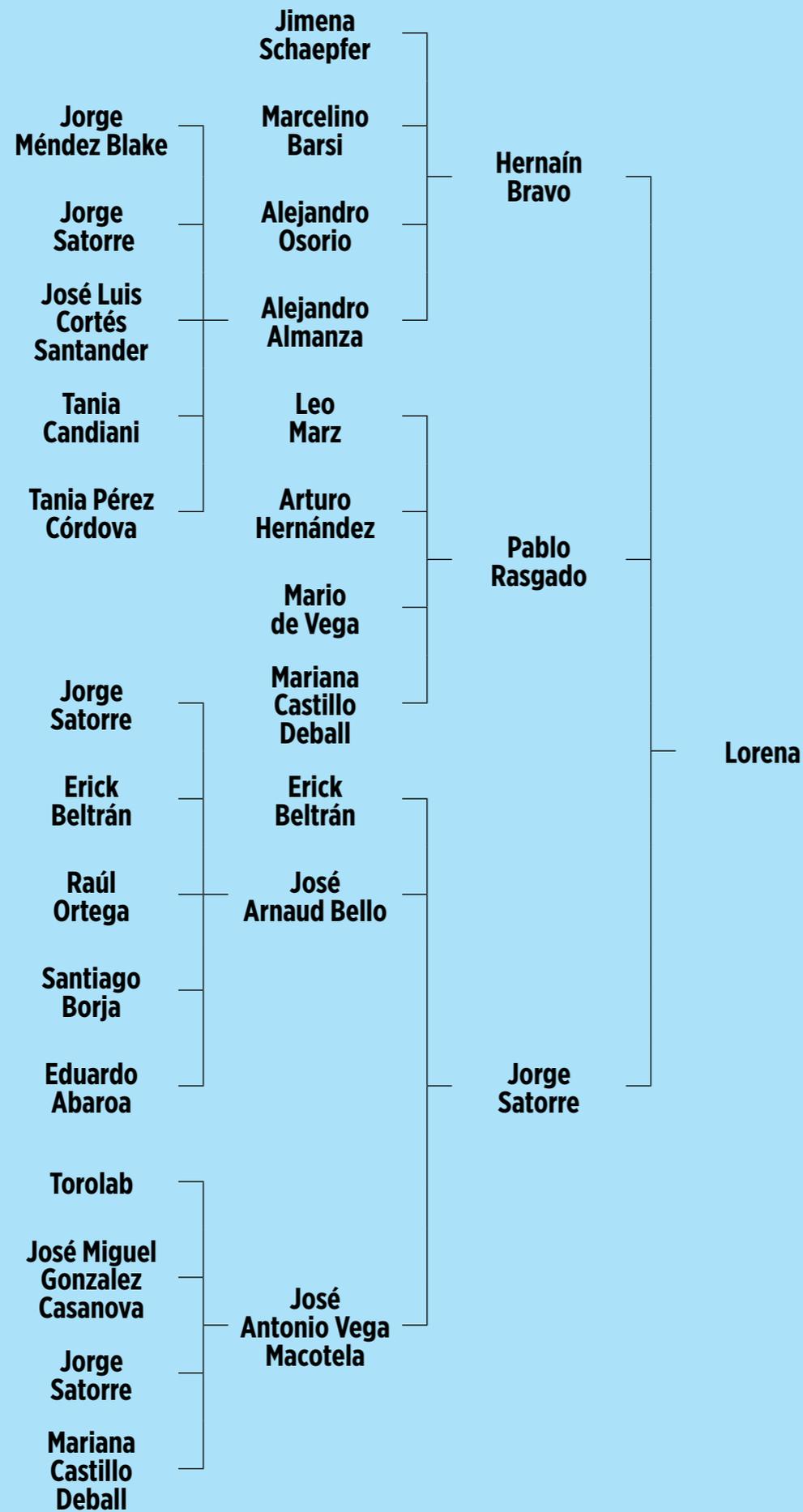
Much like the intention of José Antonio Vega Macotela's DIY oil refinery, the Volkswagen itself became a self sufficient use of what was once foreign produced. Using what was available and affordable, the Volkswagen Beetle and the Kombi lived on longer than expected, kept alive in a DIY kind of way and existing in a Frankenstein-like manner, kept on the roads with a resourceful ingenuity as well as parts from over 21 million Mexican-produced Beetles.

But the love affair has taken its toll. Somewhere in the cocktail of US-refined Mexican fuel and Mexican-built German cars, a residue has been left. The city struggles to breath with incredibly high levels of pollution. A kind of soot covers surfaces outside, and leaves a trace like a memory or a shadow when things move.

This photograph of a garage wall in Mexico is the same green and white as the notorious Mexican VW taxis. The dirt bunting clings to the wall although the flags are long gone. Things aren't meant to last forever, but sometimes they die hard. It's admirable.

I left Mexico after a few months charmed and determined to join the nostalgia and get a Bug or a Kombi on my return. Not quite.... Close but no cigar. ■





•/•
ORILLESE A LA ORILLA :
POLI IV
 1999-2000
 VERTICAL PROJECTION
 (AS PART OF A SERIES
 OF 6 VIDEOS)
 2:42 MINUTES, LOOPED.
 IMAGE COURTESY OF
 THE ARTIST

•//• •///
STILLS FROM OCTOPUS
 2011
 4 SYNCHRONIZED
 PROJECTIONS. VIDEO
 SCULPTURES: SHED
 COMPONENTS, FLAT
 SCREENS AND PROJECTION.
 18:31 MINUTES, LOOPED.
 IMAGE COURTESY OF
 THE ARTIST

YOSHUA

An Uncomfortable

by

The frontiers that distinguish outrageous hilarity from outright indecency are perilous grounds to navigate, separating the humorous from the awkward with swift efficacy. Mapping the terrain of human decency demands a shared understanding of the boundaries of accepted decorum. The traditional placement of the artist in the cultural vanguard has seen many explore this territory by challenging its limits, illuminating the shaky ground on which such borders are often built. As such, artistic practices that make us laugh or blush have long been powerful devices of critique.

A stereotypical image of Mexico City today would see the tragic and the comedic living in close quarters, with kitsch constructions of mariachi bands and *lucha libre* neighbored by spectacular drug-related violence and police corruption. The reality of contemporary Mexico City is of course far more complex, yet one cannot deny that serious poverty-related issues surrounding health¹, discrimination² and social justice³ affect the lives of many in Mexico today. While such socio-political issues merit earnest

attention in the public eye, are there other ways to engage with these concerns? Despite traditional associations with escapism, might a light-hearted chortle at the everyday absurdities of life in Mexico City provide a means through which the weight of socio-political concerns can find expression?

Mexican artist Yoshua Okón's work undermines any romantic notion of the artist as a trail-blazing force of social truth and political change. In fact, his performance-based, mockumentary-influenced practice can be interpreted as an inversion of that very image. It is through the banal kind of humour and absurdity of his work, as the performances that Okón films challenge the bounds of human dignity, rationality and history, that we as the viewer become politically engaged and implicated in the conditions that affect the people Okón depicts.

An earlier work of Okón's, *Orillese a la Orilla* (1999-2000), enables an encounter with the police force of Mexico City that, while operating on a humorous level, exposes

simmering tensions between different social strata of contemporary Mexico. This large-scale six-channel video installation displays policemen recorded in circumstances of varying degrees of manipulation. In regard to his process, Okón describes his camera as a 'detonator' that allows his subjects to play out otherwise suppressed and un-scripted fantasies.

Amongst them we find an officer in *Poli I*, who engages in an absurd yet playful dispute with Okón, resulting in the policeman's hurling of violent and vulgar insults and threats that allude to a history of socio-economic divisions within Mexico City. *Poli II* shows an intercepted radio conversation between two policemen in which they discuss, graphically, their strategy to entice passing girls to have sex with them. Perhaps most startling is the officer in *Poli IV* who, having been asked to demonstrate his baton twirling for the camera, spontaneously begins to touch himself, "intertwining his weapon handling abilities with short, but intense, interludes of crotch rubbing."⁴ Intensely bizarre and

funny, the macho performances of all the officers bring to light profound social issues regarding the respect and authority of the law in Mexico City today. Indeed, Okón demonstrates how the boundaries of propriety for some of these officers are ambiguously located and require a minimal catalyst to be transgressed.

The boundaries of decency are put to the biggest test in Okón's work *Bocanegra* (2007), in which he collaborates with Third Reich aficionados to create a series of orchestrated situations, exhibited as a full-room video installation. The title refers to the location of their weekly meeting, at which this motley crew of Mexican history buffs, hobbyists and fascists re-enact the salutes and parades of the National Socialist Party. Among the constructed scenarios is *The Movie*, which presents a short film, 'Masturbanfuhrer', written and directed by a member of the group, which follows the sexual arousal of the character 'Ejaculhector' in response to the mere image of Hitler. This film consciously mediates between the ridiculous, the repulsive and the utterly perplexing.

OKÓN

Kind of Humour

Denise Thwaites

The incongruence of this imagery is matched by the peculiar interpretations of Nazi ideology expressed in *The Gathering*, in which members of Mayan heritage identify with the propagandised 'purity' of the Aryan race. An ethical discomfort immediately arises for the viewer as these perverse and historically-loaded ideologies, rituals and imagery are played out before our eyes. Furthermore, our laughter at the absurd behaviours of these characters is tinged by uncertainty over whether we have transgressed an ethical limit by laughing at the symbols of a blood-stained history. Of Jewish heritage himself, Okón deliberately rattles the bounds of comfort in order to draw out disconcerting resonances between contemporary nationalism and histories of genocide. His work has been described as that of "a collaborator in all the complex senses of the word", the work emerging through an economy of implication between subject, Okón and the viewer. Critic Andrew Berardini has examined this dimension of Okón's work, suggesting that,

"[F]or Okón the collaboration (with all its messiness) doesn't stop at the borders of the frame or the walls of the gallery: the collaboration includes us. We are not allowed the simple voyeurism of the average consumer of images. The works involve us, our relationship to power and history, our expectations, and prejudices. Our discomfort, always subtle, becomes our contribution as viewers to the collaboration in the ethical and political transaction that occurs".

The transformation of the voyeuristic viewer into an implicated participant by Okón leads us to self-examination. Does our laughter arise through our comfortable self-distancing from these socio-political traumas? Is our amusement at the expense of Okón's collaborators, both immediately and politically?

The subtle implication of the viewer is revisited in Okón's more recent work *Octopus* (2011). In an inversion of traditional historical re-enactment, this work sees actual veterans of the 1990s Guatemalan Civil War re-enacting their experiences in a Home Depot parking lot in

makes light of them. Rather, through Okón's absurdist humour, he illuminates the way in which the symptoms of such political acts cannot be reduced to the spectacular images of violence and warfare seen in the media, but persist through the everyday experiences of victims.

So, as we laugh at the ridiculous performances of the Mexico City police, *Bocanegra's* Third Reich buffs and these Guatemalan civil war re-enactors, we cannot distance ourselves from a sense of implication in the persistence of political corruption, the dangers of nationalist ideology, the omnipresence of violence and social and economic political disenfranchisement. These ills manifest in the most banal, albeit funny moments. In this sense, perhaps Okón's humour is best understood in light of Robert W. Corrigan's description of modern comedy as "a special kind of comedy, a grotesque kind of comedy, which makes us laugh with a lump in our throats". Once the laughter subsides we are left with the simple discomfort of being implicated, or indeed, being a collaborator in these scenarios. This feeling of culpability is harder to laugh off. ■

Los Angeles. On first appearances, the work immediately recalls the playful imaginings of 'make believe' scenarios, with people pointing imaginary weapons at imaginary enemies in the quotidian environs of an LA parking lot. However, the reality of these enacted scenarios is rendered clear, as the men filmed draw from real and personal memories of war while simultaneously referencing their current struggles. These members of the LA Mayan community, due to their status as recent undocumented migrants, must gather to look for work as day labourers in the parking lot.

The implicated nature of the US in this conflict is highlighted by the title of the work, *Octopus*: the nickname used in Guatemala for the US-owned United Fruit Company (now Chiquita Banana). Based in Guatemala, this company was linked to the CIA-led coup against democratically-elected president, Jacobo Árbenz, which in turn led to the Guatemalan Civil War. While the humour of the work enables a light-hearted engagement with histories of injustice and violence, it would be wrong to suggest that the work

1 For a thorough account of some of the poverty-related health issues facing communities in Mexico City, see David J. Fox, 'Patterns of Morbidity and Mortality in Mexico City', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr., 1972), pp. 151-185
 2 An insightful analysis of the effects of ethnic discrimination in Mexico is found in René Flores, 'Social Stratification in Mexico: Disentangling Color, Ethnicity, and Class', *American Sociological Review* June 2012 77: 486-494
 3 The particularly tragic issues that haunt the Mexican justice system are explored in the documentary film, 'Presumed Guilty' by Roberto Hernández and Layda Negrete.
 4 <http://www.yoshuaokon.com/ing/works/orillesealaorilla/text.html>
 5 From Andrew Berardini's, essay 'A Dark Play' in *Yoshua Okón*, p. 99







The Guide to Nu*Speak for the Perplexed

by Regine Basha

Nu*Speak is inspired by the term “Nu-language”, which was recently coined by the British philosopher Nina Power, who links it with other fast-turnover genres in music like Nu-Rave and Nu-Metal. The terms of Nu-language are “abstractions that have the surface appearance of discussion and the exchange of ideas, but which in fact serve only in order to maintain the illusion of communication and creative dialogue.”¹

Recently I have been keeping a running list of new terms that I hear in contemporary art discourse. Terms which arise from describing and deconstructing theoretical ideas and production values in contemporary art today. These include the domain of both art making and curating – which some may say is now a form of art making. This guide includes research from English press releases, lectures, magazine essays, conversations and other printed matter from the past couple of years. It hopes to offer relief to the uninitiated.

What is interesting about these terms is their timing, as if they have been waiting in the wings to spring out as soon as last year’s terms become exhausted. Often these terms refer to the very same ideas as the ones they are replacing, yet their

very change invests the idea with new energy. Or these terms shift the older terms just slightly, so as to offer a new angle on the same position. And sometimes these new terms are precise contradictions to the old terms. Translations of these terms might be tricky, but approximations and inventiveness are highly encouraged.

Please note that this list may not represent perfect grammatical pairings – in some cases, nouns are replaced by verbs, or nouns turn into verbs for the sake of efficacy. Such is the way of Nu*Speak. These terms are malleable and can be used and discarded or mixed and matched in any direction. Perhaps some do not appear in the dictionary, but art institutions have no issue with that. Many of them are, as we like to say, “context-specific” – meaning they are homonyms that carry different meanings in different contexts. For instance, the words ‘condition’ or ‘practice’ would mean entirely different things to the medical industry. You may read these terms in press releases throughout China, Mexico, Turkey and Australia, thanks to disseminating vehicles such as e-flux. You may hear them spoken internationally in conferences, lectures, curatorial programs, MFA graduate departments, biennials, art fairs, and at late-night after-parties after

many drinks – wherever an exchange of ideas or a trade of immaterial labour is taking place. In some cases they determine positions, not meaning. They act like currency and must flow in trade routes in order to garner more value. They produce effect. They are close to philosophical marketing tools. They are close to theoretical code words, perhaps. Though Nu*Speak arises from a global intellectual class mingling with a global elitist class, linguistically it might resemble a kind of pidgin.²

Learning Nu*Speak takes practice and great concentration! But do not get too attached to the terms that follow, as they have a lifespan of 2-4 years.

Good luck! »

¹ See Nina Power. “The Artworld is not the World.” in *Gest/LaboratoryofSynthesis#1*, ed. Robert Garnett and Andrew Hunt, London: Book Works, 2008, pp. 106-7.

² According to Wikipedia, a pidgin language is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common, in situations such as trade, or where both groups speak languages different from the language of the country in which they reside (but there is no common language between the groups).

OLD TERM	NEW TERM
CURATOR	CURATORIAL
RELATIONAL	MUTUALITY
PROGRESSIVE	LATERAL
CONFRONT	SIDELONG
NARRATIVE	EPISODIC
PURPOSEFUL	RE-PURPOSE
ENGAGE	IMPLICATE
INNOVATION	INGENUITY
ARCHIVE	INVENTORY
PREMISE	CONCEIT
ACTION	AGENCY
SERIES	CONCATENATION
COLLABORATE	PARTICIPATE
INTERPRET	READ
COMMUNITY	COLLECTIVITY
MULTICULTURALISM	CREOLISATION
SHARED INTEREST	COMMONALITY
INDEPENDENT CURATOR	IMMATERIAL LABOURER
EVENT	OCCASION
TRAVEL	VIATORISATION
IDENTIFY	CODIFY
FAILURE	CONSCIOUSNESS
ALTERNATIVE	ALTERITY
INTERNATIONAL	TRANSNATIONAL
POST HUMAN	POST-LINGUISTIC
SITE-SPECIFIC	TIME-SPECIFIC
HETEROGENOUS	HETEROCHRONY
THE AUDIENCE	THE IMPLICATED
PRACTICE	PRAXIS
POSTMODERN	ALTERMODERN
TERRIFIC	SUPER
CRITICAL	CRITICALITY
GLOBAL	TRANS-TERRITORIAL
KNOWLEDGE	ACTUALISATION
DECONSTRUCT	DESTABILISE
CHALLENGE	PROVOCATION
OPPOSE	FRACTURE
QUESTION	INTERROGATE
INTERVENTION	INFILTRATION
EDUCATIONAL	PEDAGOGICAL
PERFORM	RE-ENACT
RE-ENACT	RE-CONFIGURE
ARTSPEAK	NU*SPEAK

Pidgin languages, which usually have a low prestige, are only recently being taken as seriously as “official” languages. According to Manuel De Landa, pidgins offer more insight into the overall evolution and processes of the language than do official or fixed languages.³ Because of their rapid turnover and fluidity, pidgins illuminate how languages grow and spread and say as much about the culture of trade as about linguistics. Pidgins exist for efficiency’s sake and allow diversified groups of people to share terms in order to recognise one another and negotiate short-term, consensual relationships. This might be the positive side to Nu*Speak. If Nu*Speak is indeed a pidgin, then we are validating the fantasy that the art world is in fact a separate world unto itself, one that strives to be accepted on the outside but remains insistently inscrutable to others.

Rather than bemoan the demise of the English language in art-speak, (as George Orwell did as early as 1946 in his famous essay, “Politics and the English Language”;⁴) consider the learning exercise inherent in its abstraction. You may discover freedom from the shackles of meaning and “truth”. You might actually hear words differently. Words you know well might sound strange

and alien all of a sudden, as if you were becoming a foreigner in your own country. What you once thought you understood is suddenly incomprehensible. This destabilising effect might in fact become pleasing, as would floating in amniotic fluid where sounds are acknowledged but not impactful in any distinct way. This non-commitment to meaningful speech and/or text allows us to change our mind at any time without too much repercussion. We might even decide to contradict ourselves within a single sentence if the mood arises. All of the possibilities and potentialities to strive, fail, construct, and deconstruct reoccur without the “real” world noticing much of any of it. In this world, responsibility, accountability, communicability become relative terms through Nu*Speak.

Though my interest in creating this guide is not for amusement or irony, nor is it in any way a moral tale. Like a simple 12-step program, the guide invites us to face the problem, perhaps give it a name and recognise it each time it appears. We should feel that we own the speech that comes from our own mouths. We shouldn’t feel as if we have been “programmed” (graduate programmed, educational programmed, art

programmed) into repeating empty terms in order to legitimise or ingratiate ourselves. To communicate is one of our greatest and most challenging tasks in this “art world” of ours.

As Orwell said in his essay, “to think clearly is the necessary first step towards political regeneration.” ■

³ Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*, New York: Zone Books/ Swerve Editions, 2000. pp. 183-206.

⁴ George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language,” *Horizon*, 1946; later included in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1950.

I still can't say I yet fully understand all the aspects that may relate Mexico to Australia in terms of contemporary art practice, but over these past few years this suspected correlation has been confirmed – at least to me – as some assumptions have proved themselves right.

Some others have proved themselves wrong.



I landed in Melbourne on an absurdly hot March day almost three years ago. It was quite comforting to see friendly faces after the long trip all the way from Mexico. Tony and Vikki from the Margaret Lawrence gallery came to get me from the airport. I was actually a bit concerned about one of the works we were showing there – an important element of it was a taxidermied dove and we had found out it was actually way more viable and less time-consuming to refabricate the work locally than to attempt to get the original stuffed animal through the strict sanitary controls enforced by Australian customs.

diametrically distinct scenes, such as the Australian and Mexican art circuits, but I love arbitrariness.

The Mexican art world is a rather contradictory one. From the outside, as I've personally experienced during the time I've spent working abroad in the past several years, it is widely perceived as a booming scene, with unique untapped possibilities and serious creative potential. Of course, this may be partly true but it's not particularly exact. Yes, there are things happening, but this is true for almost any city with a developing art scene desperately struggling to integrate into a global circuit infected with the fad of the exotic and the new.

Think of disposable multi-culturalism if you will, and you may be close to what I'm trying to state.

Truth is, the Mexican circuit is now way more complex than when the art boom exploded in the early 2000s. There's an overtly delicate balance there between the cultural industry and the individuals

It was fun. We spent entire days scouring the local markets looking for "flor de calabaza", an edible pumpkin flower pretty common in Mexico... or at least I thought so. I myself rarely eat it. We could never find a single leaf in his time there. I was quite puzzled by this, but didn't think much about it as it was just probably out of season.

A few months later, I got an email from Thomas letting me know he managed to grow some in his backyard back home. He was still getting the hang of how to prepare it but he was almost there.

I remember thinking: "Pretty nice".



Maybe what I was writing about a few lines above has to do with a condition we pretty much coincide in: a feeling of insularity. More than the geographical and social implications this contingency may refer to, I am talking about a state of mind.

in a different context to the one you usually move around. Me included. But I still didn't like the show at all.



In January 2011, Brett Schultz, Tony and I drove the five hundred or so kilometres that separate Mexico City from Guadalajara in order to get Tony there and help him install his exhibition, due to open maybe a week after we were scheduled to arrive. I was a bit concerned about the military checkpoints in this drug-war stricken road, as most of the journey crosses through Michoacán, an infamously known state in Mexico due to its heavy involvement in the violence that permeates the country now. I had transported inactive hand grenades – part of an installation – a few times on that same highway before and nothing had happened, but still. I could imagine the puzzled face of the military if they stopped us for a routine check and pulled out the works we were carrying in the trunk. There are only very few things that I despise more than army men, but that's not the story.



There is a common saying that refers to Mexicans as 'offspring of crisis'. Probably an understatement. More than just a clever choice of words, it accurately shows the panorama my generation and several before us have been forced to operate in, a place as indeterminate and unpredictable as Mexico. We have learned to function in a state of quasi-emergency and because of that we now embrace these erratic and almost unattainable circumstances as our ordinary day-to-day.

The crisis the saying refers to goes way deeper than apparent. We live in a place where the welfare state never actually consolidated, where all institutions and social understandings are slowly crumbling to the ground and where the only certainty is that there are no certainties at all. Some sort of controlled dissociation, I guess.

As far as made-up phrases go, what doesn't kill you might, in fact, make you stronger.

IS IT DOWN UNDER Brief stories of coincidence by

I first met Tony Garifalakis in New York a few years ago. We were both resident artists in a not-for-profit institution that had just recently moved from Manhattan to what they fancily called East Williamsburg. It was actually Bushwick I think, but again, that's hardly the point.

We both shared a love for tobacco so we would have a cigarette break now and then at the doors of this ex-factory, now art-studio compound, and just talk. I can say we became pretty good friends as we had interests in common going further than just the themes that both our practices revolve around, which include but aren't limited to extreme ideologies, cults, outsider art, guerrilla groups, horror movies, loud music, infamous moments in world history and army surplus stores.

It was hard to imagine at that time that this chance encounter would be a silent prelude to a series of joint projects and collaborations still happening between two distant points in the world, separated in space but perhaps sharing similar contextual characteristics that I could not see at the time.

So we got ourselves a local pigeon and now I have two pigeon deaths on my back and not just one.

I used to drink quite a bit around that time. I still do but not as much as I'd like. I may be getting old; hangovers can get pretty rowdy these days.

I remember my surprise when I got to the apartment I was going to stay at, on the 15th floor if I remember right, and found a case of Australian wine as part of the welcome pack my hosts had kindly prepared for me. I think I drank most of it in the first few days over there, but I can only vaguely recall that.

I just remember wandering around Southbank at sunset in a strangely ecstatic drunken stupor.



It may be quite subjective to state that there are a few shared circumstances that link what one would think are two

working within it. If we had to define the exact relationship between these two factions of the same phenomenon, it would definitely be one of animadversion.

I sometimes think of it as constantly waging war on ourselves.

Or maybe everyone is just trying to cash in and get a piece of the cake through divergent means.

Who knows.



The young Australian artist Thomas Jeppe visited Mexico some time ago, maybe it was 2010? I think that was his first time there, although I'm not really sure. I was living in Guadalajara at the time, the second largest city in Mexico and which I personally consider to be a livelier and more challenging scene than the one in Mexico City, with its ups and downs. More on that later or maybe not.

OR SOUTH OF NORTH? & concurrence Joaquin Segura



I used to joke about the fact that the couch in my Guadalajara apartment was almost always taken by people visiting the city, both Mexican and from various parts of the world. I told everyone I ran my own low-budget residency program, by only providing a place to sleep, free beer and whatever else was in the fridge at the moment. That was actually the exact thing I told anyone who expressed an interest to crash at the place. Sumugan Sivanesan was there once (twice?). We had only briefly met before at a Simon Fujiwara opening in Mexico City. I remember thinking the show was crap, the kind of art one would do if travelling to Mexico on a professional visit and attempted to do a project solely based on the fact that you're in a different country – if Mexico can still be defined as one, that is.

Then I thought that maybe that was pretty much the same thing that happens to anyone that works for a brief period of time

I was terribly hungover as I had been drinking heavily until early hours in the morning the night before. We decided to stop for some food at a random roadside joint, not too unlike any other establishment of the sort, very common in any road trip in Mexico. We ordered barbacoa, a common dish in Mexico, which is basically steamed goat or sheep accompanied with a pungent hot broth. As soon as the food had been delivered to our table, the cook came out of the kitchen running after a small dog. We didn't give it a second thought. A few minutes later, this guy comes back holding the dead puppy by its ears, throws the carcass into a bag and takes it into the kitchen. Brett, a Chicago-born gallerist/musician that has been based in Mexico for several years now, just chuckled.

I remember us saying: "Well, I guess that means we just ate dog."

Tony was silent.



All of the above may be accurate or not. But then again, I don't think that's actually relevant.

It is just the way I remember it. ■



GUADALAJARA: Desert of Dreams by Thomas Jeppe

**PAGES REFLECTING ON
THE VARIOUS EXPERIENCES
OF LIVING AND WORKING
IN GUADALAJARA MEXICO
IN THE LEAD UP TO THE
EXHIBITION *ACAPONETA*
1891 HELD AT CURRO &
PONCHO IN MAY 2012.**

GUADALAJARA

PARAMO DE SUEÑOS



“the work attends in a multifaceted way to the powers and limitations of transmutation; for, although a translation is inevitably a misrepresentation of an original source, the process of translation also has its own power. Not only is it possible that a translation, though compromised, would be newly strengthened by the talents of a particular language – the forthrightness of English mixing with the expressiveness of Spanish – it is also true that, simply through the restatement of an original message, it is propagated. And, perhaps most importantly, a translated statement, one abstracted from its original context and meaning, structurally resists instrumentalisation. It perpetually slips through the grasp of its would-be possessors, leaving them to mutely mouth words that are not theirs; without striving to meet the work on its own terms and in its own language, they will never fully understand it”*



When dedicated craftsmen are unable to carry out the simplest of tasks, when ordinarily available supplies are lost in chaos, the third world concept, with its attendant disorder and disillusion, shifts from a loose idea to a distinct present condition.

How to reconcile between this



The curious hybridity of Mexican Modernism

Everyone seemed to be quitting their jobs in the art world. The galleries that were active 2 years prior had slowed down to as little as one show a year.



Why were the museums closed?
Where is the permanent collection?



An artist talk the day before the opening attracted 100 students. One of them came to the opening. There is evidently a perceived divide, reinforced by so many associative class structures. How to break this, if personal invitation and energetic discussion aren't enough?

<< Do promotional strategies like this make it better or worse?



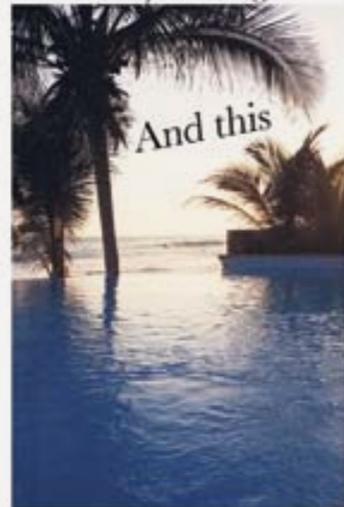
The Critical Moments >>>





Not prevalent on a social level, against stereotype. But flow-on effects of drug industry have been, on occasions, devastating. Daily life is happy and easy, yet sometimes it felt that this benign good-nature must be the human instinct that all people engage in the moments before the apocalypse.

Surfing, jumping fish, birds skimming the water, turtles popping their heads up and swimming on; salvation in the water by a town gone mad



“as critical as art may be – as conscious as it may be of labour conditions – it will always end up looking more like recreation than anything else”*



Good work ethic is priceless in moments of uncertainty.
Carlos is the hardest working man in showbiz.



Installation views: ACAPONETA 1891 by Thomas Jeppé at Curro Y Poncho, Guadalajara Mexico, May 31-July 27 2012



*John Besson, from *Art Writing as Treaty* Catalogue essay published on the occasion of ACAPONETA 1891

•/• FELIPE MANZANO
UNTITLED
2011
COLLAGE
IMAGE COURTESY
OF THE ARTIST

•// RUBEN GUTIERREZ
ANXIETY, PARANOIA
AND RESTLESSNESS
2011
COCAINE
IMAGE COURTESY
OF THE ARTIST

//• MARIA ALOS AND
CLAUDIO CASTELLI
DRUGS, PROSTITUTION,
HARDCORE CRIME
(DETAIL), 2011
THREE XEROX ZINES
COMPOSED OF ARTICLES
AND PHOTOS FROM
THE ARCHIVES OF
ALARMA! MAGAZINE
IMAGE COURTESY
OF THE ARTISTS



HEADLESS CORPSES AND TOPLESS GIRLS by Tony Garifalakis

Alarma! is a Mexican tabloid that is known for its graphic depiction of violence. It is notorious for its explicit documentation of traffic fatalities, murder victims and its body-by-body coverage of the Mexican drug war.

I first came across a copy of *Alarma!* a couple of years ago when I was in Mexico and, for someone unaccustomed to such grisly reportage, the experience was indeed a harrowing one. As I flipped through the magazine I discovered that interspersed amongst its gore filled pages were pin-ups of bikini-clad babes and classifieds for Cuban singles, as well as crossword and horoscope pages. Although these elements are the regular, banal fare for your run-of-the-mill tabloid, I found them incredibly incongruous and unsettling in this context and difficult to reconcile with the extremely brutal violence on display in the rest of the publication.

These dizzying juxtapositions were the nucleus for the exhibition *Alarma!* In 2011 I invited twelve Mexican artists to contribute work to an exhibition based on the tabloid *Alarma!* It was held at Death be Kind in Melbourne. The participating artists were – Eduardo Abaroa, Maria Alos & Claudio Castelli, Artemio, Edgar Cobian, Daniela Edburg, Cristian Franco, Ruben Gutierrez, Ilan Lieberman, Felipe Manzano, Manuel Mathar and Joaquin Segura. ■

FELICIDADES

MAMACITA!

EL NUEVO
ALARMA!
COMUNICACIÓN Y SEGURIDAD

ALARMAMA!



Teresa Hernández Antonio (a) "Alejandra" y un activista llamado "Mariano", fallecieron al sostener un enfrentamiento a tiros en el interior de



CU, con agentes policiales. Tres sujetos más, tre éstos David Jiménez Sarmiento, lograron se a la fuga.



MIEMBROS de la Liga Soviética 23 de Septiembre tuvieron triste final cuando en desesperada escapada, fueron a refugiarse a la Ciudad Universitaria y ahí fueron muertos a tiros por la policía, en un episodio que causó gran pavor entre los cientos de espectadores que asistían a una Exposición Canina, estando a punto de ser muerto durante la balacera el conocido amaestrador de perros José Rojo de la Vega.

El Procurador General de la República, licenciado Pedro Ojeda Paulada informó ampliamente a la prensa nacional sobre este sangriento acontecimiento y lo desligó completamente del conflicto universitario recientemente surgido con motivo de la huelga de los catedráticos. El alto funcionario afirmó que "los llamados guerrilleros se enfrentaron a la policía y resultaron muertos".

Los cuerpos de un hombre y una mujer quedaron tendidos sobre el césped del lugar cono-

SANGRE EN

cido como "Las Islas" dentro de la Ciudad Universitaria, fueron identificados como Teresa Antonio Hernández (a) "Alejandra" y un terrorista participante en numerosos asaltos y crímenes, al que solo se le conocía con el mote de "Mariano", de una gran peligrosidad.

El enfrentamiento a tiros no pudo haber sido más dramático, el último domingo como a las 10.30 de la mañana, ya se había reunido un numeroso público en "Las Islas" con motivo de una exposición canina organizada por el canófilo José Rojo de la Vega. Un ambiente de fiesta en soledad mañana dominical cuando de pronto se vio correr a una gran

velocidad un automóvil, por la ruta central asfáltica de la Ciudad Universitaria.

El automóvil fue directamente hacia donde estaba agolpada la multitud en la exposición mencionada. Cinco individuos bajaron precipitadamente, y armados con metralletas y pistolas se les vio que disparaban sobre otro grupo que fue identificado como de agentes de la policía.

Intencionalmente los del primer grupo, trataban de cubrirse con los espectadores, que unos atónitos y otros enloquecidos de pánico empezaron a dispersarse. Esta situación de terror era lo que esperaban los que huían para propiciar su escape; sin im-

portarles que inocentes en su corria inminendas. El enfrentamiento policía fue brutal, las ametralladoras y metralletas fue parábargo la policía, al verse a la exposición de haberlo conbiera ocurrido masacre.

Los momentos rriendo en medtismo de muerte cas, se parapeta que luego fueromo miembros d tica 23 de Septie traron que estab



Arcadio Iturralde Hernández.



Víctor Mendoza Sánchez (a) "Pelé".



