

## FELIPE MUJICA

SOMBRAS IMAGINARIAS VIENEN POR EL CAMINO IMAGINARIO

20.05.2017 - 24.06.2017

mon. to sat. from 10am to 7pm

I-

The title of the exhibition is an excerpt from the poem "El hombre imaginario" by Nicanor Parra (1914), Chilean physicist, mathematician and self-described "anti-poet". The exhibition will be composed of six Curtains, a wall installation of silkscreen prints, an artist book, a video of a notebook of drawings and maybe a something more.

II-

I call my fabric pieces Curtains because I want to direct the conversation towards the domesticity of their production. It is easy to call them flags or banners yet for me these categorizations are too charged with a specific political mind-set, and political expectations. I am interested on how they are made: cut fabric, folded, sewn, threaded, and sometimes hand embroidered, using techniques that are closer to home. It's a name that defines them as humble acts of resistance.

Their designs are related to my interest in geometric abstraction, its history and transformation, in Russia, Europe and the Americas, also the development of the debatable dichotomy -throughout this history- between its formal and its social/political possibilities. I would even go further and also look at the geometric based arts and designs of the Native People of the Americas, which adds another possible layer to the work. The material chosen, fabric and thread, and for this particular show also the use of hand embroidered lines made by the by the cooperative *Bordadeiras do Jardim Conceição*, makes the work a two-dimensional panel, just as a painting is, yet one that is prepared to receive and project information that a "normal" painting cannot. The Curtains hang in space, float, and sometimes move... they are non-paintings that sometimes are almost architecture. The fabric has a weight, a texture, a feel... The embroidered drawings contain hours and days of energy by the hands of the *Bordadeiras*, with a particular stitch, which is kind of a drawing in itself, decided and executed by them. They also contain their knowledge and culture, minds, souls, put to practice through their hands in the work. These small details are the Curtains pictorial elements. They are simultaneously specific and open.

III-

Curtains as shadows: They can receive shadows, and create them. They contain as less information as possible yet they are open to receiving as much information as possible, from the personal to the socio-political.

Curtains as shadows> sometimes the sun touches them, affecting their surface, transforming their colors into something alive, something that projects energy.

Curtains as shadows ||||| they can be moved by the viewer, activating them in relation to other curtains and space. They can also hang from a single point, in which case they move alone, or better said with the help of air circulation, of people walking by, or from an outside breeze.

Curtains as shadows= of temporary architecture, of drawings, of decoration, of monochrome painting, of geometric abstraction, of participation.

Curtains as shadows<<< of collective and open production, of the machine that sews and the hand that stitches.

Curtains as shadows... placed inside or out, contained by space and simultaneously creating space. They are intrinsically flexible, ambiguous yet generous.

Curtains as shadows -of utopian ideas, your own and others.

IV-

The silkscreen prints are all made with appropriated images. I reuse, modify, rearrange, and reprint previous drawings and prints, mostly from the 60's to the 70's, from sources such as Latin American political posters, psychedelic imagery, Japanese graphic design, Copyright-free designs, as well as book covers of publications ranging from science fiction to mathematics to

literature. Defying notions of locality these images overlap and sometimes borrow or simply steal from each other: psychedelic-like images or Op Art-like designs can be seen in Chilean political posters, Japanese commercial ads and simultaneously be found in Copyright-free image banks, a book cover of a novel or an essay about economic theories. There is a mobility and transmutation, between the high and low, between different geographies and contexts. The images are also united by a formal and universal visual language that is tied to the systems of production of their times -therefore their graphic nature. They also share the historical context of the 60's and 70's, where the communal, the collective, feminist and civil right movements, sexual liberation, experimental pedagogies and counterculture where all on the rise. My silkscreen prints then present new readings -and connections- of these historically charged yet also somehow defused and confused references, creating images in frozen-like states; new, yet somehow suspended. Installed in large unframed groups directly on the wall this presentation system intends to have the work read in relation to the poster, as a communicative tool, with all its implications: political, social, commercial, decorative, propagandistic, and so on. Somehow, it is one way to keep it true to the "origin".

V-

The third element of the exhibition is an artist book titled *Línea de hormigas*, a collection of images from a series of sculpture actions made in between 2007 and 2015. Some of these sculptures were made by myself yet most of them were made in collaboration with others, by others following instructions, or by others as part of a group workshop. Always using the same two materials (thin wood beams and electric insulation tape) the fragile and ephemeral modernist looking-like pieces became another way of interaction, inside and outside the art circuit, where the work transitions back and forward, up and down, from the individually based work to the pedagogical use of the same idea (like a kaleidoscope). As a complement and expansion of the book and the exhibition, a graphic piece containing a dialogue/conversation/game with curator and educator Sofia Olascoaga is included in this publication. The book is part of a home-operated book-editing project -with no name or title- that I have been working on since 2009 in collaboration with Johanna Unzueta, fellow artist and partner in life. Following a model of affectionate economy, the books we edit, design and print serve as a way to distribute ideas and history, both our own as well as of other artists and people we respect and admire. With a main focus on contemporary art our books have also dealt with subjects such as music, collaboration, education, poetry and experimental architecture.

*Línea de hormigas*, 2017:

Edition of 50, 28 x 20 cm, vertical

Interior, 92-pages, 84 pages risograph print / 8 pages' digital color print

Cover, Silkscreen printed cover, perfect binding with flaps

Printed by Keegan Cooke / Circadian Press, Brooklyn NY

VI-

The projected video is titled *Notebook #3 (Huecos)*, from 2015. It shows page by page of a notebook, in which the study-designs for a series of smaller curtains were made with drawings and cuts. These later become "windows" that make the drawings overlap and become more than what they actually are. Several of these designs were used as bases for a series of smaller sized curtains -not on view in this exhibition- which hang on the wall in a display that is in between a banner and movable painting. The video is both documentation and a work by itself.