

Felipe Mujica - All Tomorrow's Parties

All Tomorrow's Parties is the first solo show of Chilean-Born, New York-based artist Felipe Mujica at von Bartha, Basel. The project comprises a collection of preparatory drawings and sketches for several projects executed since the mid-90s', when he was an undergraduate student in Santiago. Twelve works from his series *Cortinas* (*Curtains*) also hang and occupy the space of the gallery. Lastly, his book *An Argentinian Lost in Chile*, about the work of concrete artist Claudio Girola, was published for this occasion. These works - from textiles to editorial projects - attest to Mujica's versatile and original production.

The drawings and sketches displayed at the gallery on cardboard panels are useful to discuss recurrent concerns in Mujica's production. The artist holds a collection of documents and notebooks containing preparatory plans, designs and series variations for all his projects and works which are rarely exhibited. *All Tomorrow's Parties* features a collection of them from 1996 to 2018. In these pieces, it is possible to see his constant research on abstraction through different solutions that seem to reflect on the legacy of non-objective art in Latin America and elsewhere. Another aspect that can be observed is his intention to integrate and modify space through his works. From the production of murals to the use of wooden doors and tables (*Wood*, 1999), Mujica's projects tend towards the architectural. Some of his interventions, in this regard, can operate as strategies of display. If these works aim to articulate complex spatial scenes, in other projects (suchas *Tetris*, 1996) the artist highlights complexity through change, variation, movement and reconfiguration – as if he wanted to evidence the presence of a constant state of flux.

These aspects are at play in his *Curtains*, a group of works that he began in 2006. Their designs are executed under a system based on a play on grids which is, first, drawn on paper or notebooks. These works recall the wooden panels used in projects previous to 2006, but their solution is more flexible and practical in terms of its display and handling. Regarding their materiality and tactile character, they are also completely different. Moreover, since 2013, Mujica has made of the production process of the works moments of collaboration and, in occasions, social situations. The curtains that are part of *All Tomorrow's Parties*, were produced with a group of women in Gothenburg over a period of two weeks. They met regularly to sew and socialize around the traditional *fika*. Recently, he produced several curtains in Zacatecas, Mexico, in collaboration with two Wixáritari artists that used their traditional method of embroidering and sewing of colorful plastic beads in the execution of his designs. As such, these collaborations can also expand the formal character of the works through new materials, methods of sewing or color schemes.

The presence of the curtains, hanged in the gallery, alters the spatial scene and, at times, highlights its constant change. The artist locates the curtains to fragment space and its flow or to interact with possible light sources or air currents. The later, along with interaction from the public, moves and rotates them, defying a static situation. In other projects, like *As Branches Moved by The Same Wind* presented in Mexico City at the Experimental Museum El Eco in 2014, the curtains operated as artworks and as a strategy of display: they established a dialogue with the

pieces of other artists that he selected to showcase in the museum and, simultaneously, these textiles afforded a flexible system of light “walls” for the exhibition of such artworks. Constant change was the order of the day either through new dispositions of the curtains or the sequential presentation of different artists. The aesthetics of non-objective art, such as constructivism and concrete art, the attention to display and a conception of the space of exhibition as a complex situation were aspects of Mujica’s project that resonated with the spatial experience that Mathias Goeritz sought to achieve with the architecture of his museum.

The book *An Argentinian Lost in Chile* can offer a glimpse to Mujica’s production as editor, graphic designer as well as researcher and promoter of lesser known avant-garde figures or movements based in Chile. Such is the case of Girola, associated with MADI – the international concrete art initiative launched in Buenos Aires in 1946. He has also organized archival exhibitions of the School of Valparaíso, an educational avant-garde initiative active in the 1950’s and 1960’s. In Girola’s book, Mujica not only pays attention to his artistic production but also to his activities as exhibition maker and his display strategies. It is probable that Mujica’s use of cardboard to display his preparatory drawings in *All Tomorrow’s Parties* is, in part, inspired in such strategies; the panels “create and play with the notion of ephemeral architecture..., and position themselves as large neutral surfaces in space”. Through this kind of acute research, Mujica’s work reflects and keeps a dialogue with the history of abstract art. His interest in avant-garde artists or collectives from Latin America, *a la par* of others of Europe or North America, points to the global character of modernism and seems to continue their radical solutions that sought to articulate new and different spatial situations.

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