

EMILIO CHAPELA: Man is the Measure

Opening Reception: Wednesday, March 26, 6-9 pm

Exhibition runs through Saturday, May 10, 2014

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 11-6 pm

"Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not."
-Protagoras, quoted in Plato's *Theaetetus*

Henrique Faria Fine Art is pleased to present *Man is the Measure*, Emilio Chapela's second exhibition at the gallery and his third in New York City. The exhibition will feature a selection of recent installations, videos, lithographs and paintings that speak to the themes of limits, borders and their cartographies. By invoking Protagoras' assertion, Chapela investigates how human perception manifests physically and how it defines political, cultural and epistemological boundaries.

The works *La Mojонера* (2014) and *Radio Latina* (2013) highlight the efforts taken to map national borders, specifically between the United States and Mexico. *La Mojонера* stands as a replica of the landmarks placed along this border as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Placed along the border at intervals determined by the farthest lines of sight, the obelisks were monuments that structurally delineated the exact location of national boundaries so that the border could be recognized by the human eye and thus respected. *La Mojонера* is juxtaposed with the video *Radio Latina*, which traces, using Google Street View images, an expanse of the more recently constructed US-Mexico border wall to the soundtrack of the Radio Latina station, whose listener base is made primarily of migrant workers and undocumented immigrants. *Radio Latina* accentuates the conflicts that arise between the arbitrary delimitation of borders and the currents of information that pass freely between them. While a stark wall attempts to separate people and territories, Google, and the Internet in general, afford the ultimate freedom and accessibility of information and radio waves move unencumbered through the air, delivering data to all who have the capability of receiving it.

Holmdel Antenna (2014) is an installation featuring a miniaturized model of the antenna that first captured the noise of the Big Bang alongside a photograph of the actual device and the astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, who determined the noise's origins. The work is both a monument to the sound's discovery and to the advances, both astronomical and philosophical, that have been made since. It was Penzias and Wilson who began mapping the microwaves that pulsed throughout outer space, effectually charting what is known as the Cosmic Microwave Background. Being that the Cosmic Microwave Background forms a crucial element in the fabric of the universe, it is fitting that Chapela appropriates its image and transforms it into a rug hand woven according to a traditional Oaxacan technique. *Cosmic Microwave Background* (2013) thus embodies within its fabric two different quantifications of human knowledge: that of handed-down artisanal practice and empirical science.

With his use of widely accessible technological tools, Chapela demonstrates how their use and the information they generate can both shape and influence cultural and societal beliefs, but he also strives to give viewers a sense of what this information might actually look like. His works, like *List of Countries by GDP (Nominal)* (2014) which assigns colors and sizes to different cubes that represent the GDPs of 182 countries, blend qualitative and quantitative descriptors and illustrate how information occupies space. What underlies Chapela's various projects is the search to understand, on an aesthetic as well as philosophical level, the expansive potentials of knowledge and its ultimate, human limits.

Emilio Chapela (Mexico City, 1978) graduated from the Communication Sciences program at the Universidad Iberoamericana in 2002. He received a diploma in Photography and New Media at the Centro de la Imagen in Mexico City in 2001. He has been the recipient of several grants from the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA) including: Cultural Co-Inversions (2008) and Young Creators in two different occasions (2004-2005) and (2013-2014). Chapela was the artist in residence at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York in 2007 (supported by a grant from FONCA) and at Linnienstrasse 40 in Berlin in 2012. He was presented with the Emerging Artist Award at PULSE Miami Art Fair in 2008 and the Tequila Centenario award in the same year. Currently, Chapela is working with the support of a grant from the Jumex Foundation and Collection towards the publication of a book (forthcoming, November 2014) about distinctive artistic projects that explore the creative possibilities of books and libraries. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City (2013); Galería 11x7, Buenos Aires (2012); Linnienstrasse 40, Berlin (2012); Casa Maauad and Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York (2011); and Saw Gallery, Ottawa (2011). He has participated in acclaimed group exhibitions at Foto Colectania, Barcelona (2013); the Museo de Arte Moderno, Casa del Lago and Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City (2012); the Kunstraum and NGKB, Berlin (2012); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (2011); Pace Gallery, New York (2011); the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2010); Houston Photo Fest Biennial (2010); and the Bass Museum, Miami (2010). His work has been acquired by the following institutions and collections: Colección Jumex, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; FEMSA, Monterrey; and Sayago & Pardon, Tustin, California.

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