

art for social transformation – and Gabriela Rangel, the Chief Curator for the America's Society whose mission is to promote social dialogue on a global level. Meyenberg fulfills the faith in him by all three institutions.

RICH LESLIE

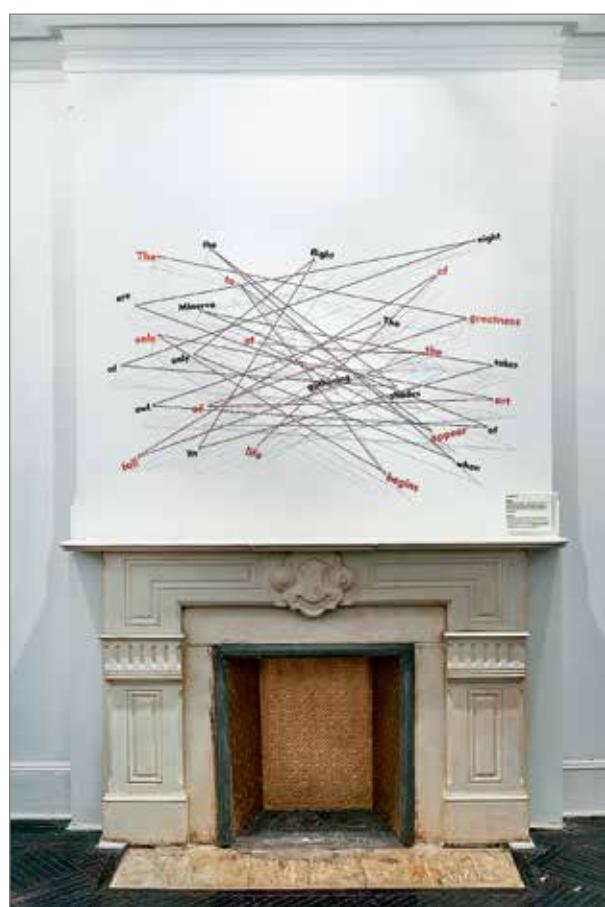
Leandro Katz

Henrique Faria

Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt contradicted a famous phrase by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in their book *Empire* (2000) when they wrote the following: "Philosophy is not the owl of Minerva that takes flight after history has been realized in order to celebrate its happy ending; rather, philosophy is subjective proposition, desire, and praxis that are applied to the event." From this perspective, philosophy would inhabit a present always conceivable as a place where art and life converge, and its formulation would not be determined by a Roman goddess or, say, by any other thing that adheres to the progressive design of the West.

An installation, consisting of black and red words printed in a plotter, is an ideal work to ponder a central theme in the third solo show by Leandro Katz (Argentina, 1938) titled *Leandro Katz: A Canoe Trip*, presented at the Henrique Faria Fine Art gallery in New York. Affixed with pins to a wall that expands over a chimney, the words refer precisely to the quote by Hegel that Negri and Hardt criticized. Katz once again deconstructs the phrase, not only by fragmenting it but also by including another phrase, this time by Guy Debord, quoting Hegel. Titled *Two Quotes (Hegel/ Debord)*, this work created between 2016 and 2017 invites viewers

Leandro Katz. *Two Quotes (Hegel / Debord)*, 2016-2017. Plotted words, needles and color string. 75 x 70 in. (190.5 x 177.8 cm).



to a double action in which the physiological exercise of the gaze and the symbolisms generated by perception converge: by following the black threads that lead to the black words, viewers can construct, with a certain degree of difficulty, the phrase by Hegel in English: "The owl of Minerva takes flight only when the shades of night are gathering." If, instead, they opt to connect the red threads to their corresponding words, then they can form the second phrase, this time by Debord: "The greatness of art only begins to appear in the fall of life." But if viewers choose to approach the work as a constellation of unified words that are nonetheless isolated from their original meanings—at least those intended by their authors—then, not only the linear chronology of the phrases is interrupted, but so are the specific contents of the phrases disseminated in the piece. In this instance, the viewer, more or less aware (not a minor factor), would consciously or unconsciously ignore the fact that art and philosophy are only possible in that time-space in which the event approached has already occurred. Since the 1970s, Katz has been using language to create new languages and, with them, other times and images turned into words, and vice versa. Now he has created a language that contradicts itself time and time again: it exists to be read and learned like a phrase or image that quotes the past and the linear history celebrated by the present; but, at the same time, it negates all of the above. It is in this double operation which rather than a reflection results in a negation, and sometimes in doubt—although it never stops questioning canonical models like Minerva—where all the 28 works of the exhibition by Katz intersect.

Berta Sichel wrote the following in the curatorial text for the exhibition: "Those who have been following Katz's career over forty years and are passionate, like I am, about his short and oblique experimental films, his documentaries on recent Latin American history, or his conceptual photographs of Mayan ruins, will find that in this exhibition he is not afraid to challenge his long-time admirers. Once more, Katz wants to show that to him art is a wide subject and open to experimentation." Sichel proposes then a scriptural "travel guide structure" to assist visitors in their walk through the exhibition and the observation of Katz's "experimentations," seemingly heterogeneous at first glance. This setup not only generates a temporary guided tour for the appreciation of the works but, at least in my opinion, appears to be designed to interrupt any linear chronology.

An example of this is the work that inspired the title of the exhibition and that is displayed by the gallery entrance. The first thing that catches the eye are the two dates that appear in it: 1970 and 2016. Having recently read about what Joaquín Barriendos has called the "archival twist" in Latin American art, when referring to the conceptualist practices performed during the 1960s and 1970s, revived and reconstructed in recent years,¹ I thought that this was one of those instances; that, perhaps, having already exhibited these photographs more than four decades ago, now, as he considered them for this retrospective, Katz probably decided to insert texts in them. But the images, according to Katz,² had actually never been printed before. Although they were created a long time ago, the photographs did not materialize until 2016. Katz revisited the past and used memory to construct the present and his experience. Argentinean writer Tutuna Mercado reminds us that in *En estado de memoria* (In Memory State) the photographs allude to a trip that Katz took by canoe around Mayan archeological sites. In this linear temporality, the ruins do not scar until they disappear. The Mayan civilization does not disappear either in the monolog by poet and playwright Stephan Brecht shown in a small monitor. Written by Katz for the screenplay of his film *Mirror on the Moon* (1970), it combined Brecht identity and a story about documents lost in the river during the Colonial

era. By naming and remembering them, the voice prevented the documents to disappear twice. In this manner, without grief or melancholy, the artist and poet in Katz reminds us that, while Minerva's owl exists, there are other owls, other serpents and other birds out there, which do not wait for nightfall, for the glorious sunset, to write, photograph or travel through Mayan ruins; that, like ruins, his works exist, resist and persist in his memory, in the present.

NOTES

1. Joaquín Barriendos, "Reterritorializando los sesentas. Archivos, documentos y posestructuralismo en el museo de arte," in Alejandra Castillo y Cristián Gómez-Moya, eds., *Arte, archivo y tecnología* (Santiago, Universidad Finis Terrae, 2012).
2. Leandro Katz, correspondence with the author June 22, 2017.

FLORENCIA SAN MARTÍN

Iván Argote

Perrotin

Perrotin gallery opened in April its new space on the Lower East Side with the exhibition *La Venganza del Amor* by Colombian artist living in Paris Iván Argote. The title of the show refers to one of the scenes of the video *As Far as We Could Get* (2017) projected on one of the walls of the gallery. Filmed in two antipodal towns, Neiva (Colombia) and Palembang (Indonesia), the film draws a parallel between them and shows how, despite being geographically opposed, they have much in common. In one of the scenes the characters express in Spanish and Indonesian their intention to take control of their communities and, unlike those who hold power, they hope to do so with respect and affection. As Argote explains, *La Venganza del Amor* is a state of mind, it is rage, it is tenderness, it is the desire to change things and make them work under parameters other than domination." The title, written in Spanish, has a certain air of soap opera and constitutes a "statement" in the context of his first solo show in the United States, a country where this issue is the order of the day due to the current political climate.

In addition to the video, the exhibition includes seven concrete sculptures from the series *Among Us* (2017), four installations of the series *Setting Up a System* (2017), two works from the series *Covers* (2017) and a sculpture titled *Sweet Potato* (2017). Each of the works is related to the artist's intention to modify the perspectives from which

Iván Argote. *As Far As We Could Get*, 2017. Video HD. Courtesy of the Artist and Perrotin.



we look at history and how we conceive concepts such as knowledge, truth, progress and the idea of the "other." The works refer to specific data, historical facts, archives and/or documents, but are treated as short fictions. The sculptures in concrete look like architectural ruins. Except for the titles, the phrases that appear written and punched by big holes – *Be with Me, Love Me, We hope they Hope and Extremely Opposites, Extremely Close* – are practically illegible.

The collages are made with texts and images of political propaganda and historical archives that he intervenes through meticulous laser cuts and perforations. The different layers of texts and images, made of paper and wool, symbolize the multiple perspectives through which one can observe reality or interpret a text. An over-sized aluminum sweet potato covered in gold leaf is a commentary on large-scale globalization and the transit of goods and values since colonial times. Despite having saved Europe from hunger and having been integrated into all cultures, the sweet potato still has a humble and austere connotation. In this case, the large size and its golden tone also make reference to the gold that the conquerors took to Europe. According to Argote, his intention is to propose a new icon and to draw attention to the type of images used globally to represent knowledge and value.

Argote's work is based on the research of sources and archives. The images and texts included in his collages come from books, posters and comic strips that have to do with ideological conflicts or are made in political contexts where there is some kind of tension. According to him, "even the most banal of images contains a world of information and ideology. The most trivial images are sometimes much more violent than the others, because of that quiet normality that is scary." Questions like Why does a certain image exist? What ideological standard has been produced? or On what ideological pedestal is it posed? serve as a starting point for analyzing the material, questioning it, and modifying it in order to reveal intrinsic contradictions and assume compromised positions. The carefully chosen texts can be read as intimate and personal messages, but at the same time they are closely related to more general concepts such as power and knowledge.

The works included in this exhibition speak of the way in which each person assumes, in the private and the public realms, his or her own history. This is defined by multiple factors such as being born in a specific place, living in one way or another, and being part of a community in a specific social, economic, political and cultural context. Through his work as an artist he asks how, individually and collectively, we negotiate with the social groups with which we interact, with specific cultures, traditions and ideologies. His intention is not to accurately account for specific events. On the contrary, he makes interventions and makes them obvious. His works, regardless of the technique, generate reactions and questions about the construction of values and ideologies, at both local and global levels.

FRANCINE BIRBRAGHER

William Cordova

Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

William Cordova intersects the traditional historical line with the drawings, photographs, constructions, mixed media, prints, and writings that result from his research and travels. Born in Peru in 1971, Cordova learned about traveling at an early age. He lived in Miami, Houston, Chicago and New York, studying art in the latter two cities.

Titled *Smoke Signals. Sculpting in Time*, in this third solo exhibition by Cordova at the Sikkema Jenkins & Co. gallery, in New York, the